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# NEO-LITHICS 2-3/00

## A Newsletter of Southwest Asian Lithics Research

## Editorial

This issue (*Neo-Lithics* 2-3/00) appears as a combination of two issues, as is reflected in the relative thickness of the publication. There are several reasons that we have combined them, which brings up the focus of this editorial.

When *Neo-Lithics* began in 1994, the newsletter was intended to be a means to communicate issues of lithic analysis: it was to be a forum where approaches to analysis could be proposed, explained, and modified as a consequence of friendly exchange among researchers dealing with common interests. *Neo-Lithics* has provided this channel of communications, but it is clear that the progress of lithics analysis did not proceed at a rate at which an annual newsletter was worth publishing.

As a consequence, the role of *Neo-Lithics* was expanded by the co-editors to include brief reports on current Neolithic (and even late Epipaleolithic) field work and aspects of non-lithic research as a means of rapid exposure of what is being examined by excavation projects and what is being pursued in the laboratory in addition to lithics analysis.

We have been able to cobble together some useful newsletter issues in the past as a result of the cooperation of field directors and laboratory researchers. It is pleasing for us to note, for example, that many recent publications cite reports in *Neo-Lithics* in their bibliographies simply because other avenues of publication are more time-consuming before other reports eventually emerge.

But we would also like to point out that the publication of *Neo-Lithics* is not an easy task. Both of the co-editors are fully employed in academic work and research projects themselves, and while we are very happy to produce this newsletter, we desperately need the cooperation of our colleagues. We very much appreciate the manuscripts that have been submitted for past issues (repeatedly by some colleagues, which we admire). We have appealed via email and other avenues for others to contribute manuscripts, and we have received several responses to these appeals.

It is in this regard that we raise the question of future issues of *Neo-Lithics*. We want to reserve *Neo-Lithics* as a primary communications vehicle for discussion of lithics analysis. But we realize that research projects on lithics analysis per se will not produce manuscripts on a predictable basis, so other aspects of Neolithic (and late Epipaleolithic) research are also encouraged as foci for publication in *Neo-Lithics*.

We ask again that short reports on research be submitted to *Neo-Lithics* when the opportunity arises. It might be the case that we have to reduce the current number of three issues per year to two (as is the situation for *Neo-Lithics* 2-3/00).

What has been written above are the views of the co-editors. What is not present there, or anywhere else, are the views that you as the subscribers might hold. We can easily establish a "Letters to the editors" column to include comments and criticisms that you might wish to communicate on a "less-than-article" means. Let us know.

Gary Rollefson & Hans Georg K. Gebel

**Deadline** for the coming issue of *Neo-Lithics* is  
**May 1st, 2001** (next deadline: Sept. 15th, 2001)

Please, note that the text of contributions should be send directly to Dr. Gary Rollefson (Email: [rollefgo@whitman.edu](mailto:rollefgo@whitman.edu) or to the Department of Anthropology, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA, 99362 USA). Illustrations should be sent separately to H.G.K. Gebel at the Berlin address (Free University of Berlin, Hüttenweg 7, D-14195 Berlin, Email: [hggebel@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:hggebel@zedat.fu-berlin.de)).

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### Dr. Mujahed al-Muheisen Rahmatu Allahi Aleik A Personal Obituary

Dr. Mujahed al-Muheisen, born in Tafila, devoted his academic life to Jordan's prehistory. He died in Irbid in July 2000 at the age of 46. His family lost a caring and loving father and husband, and we who knew him and worked with him have lost a friend, an expert in chipped lithics analysis, and a colleague who demanded high standards of research from himself and others.

Dr. Mujahed taught prehistory at the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan, a tenure interrupted by a period as curator at the Museum of National Heritage at Yarmouk University. He was the excavator of Epipaleolithic Kharaneh IV and co-director of the Basta and 'Ain Rahub Joint Archaeological Projects, in which he represented his institute, shared the direction of the excavations and analyzed the chipped lithic materials that were recovered. He was also involved in many other projects, both in analysis of materials and excavation.

Dr. Mujahed finished his studies in 1988 with the *Doctorat d'Etat* in Bordeaux, France, using materials from his excavations at Kharaneh IV.

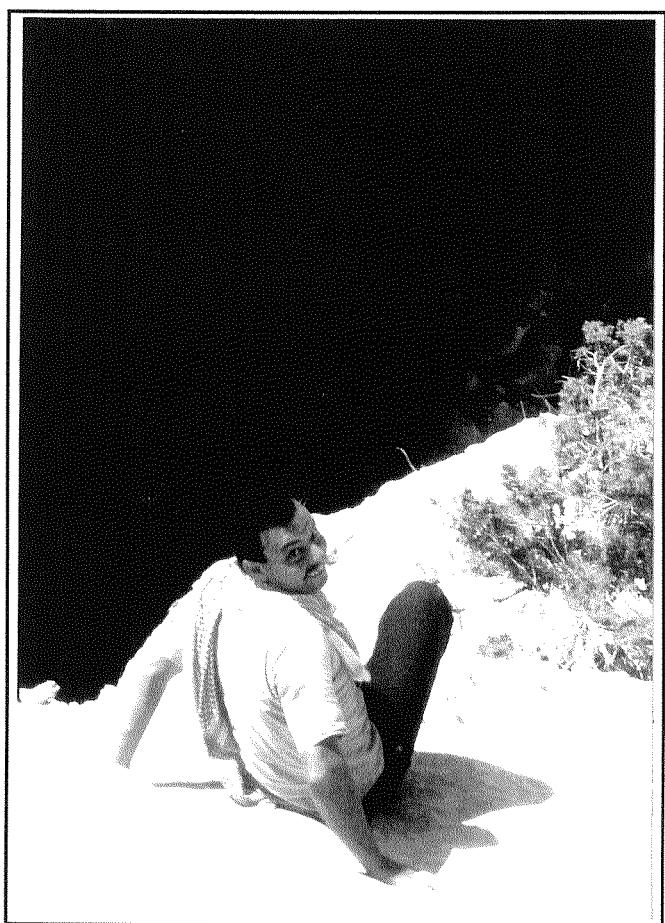


Fig. 1. Dr. Mujahed Muheisen visiting Ba'ja in 1987.  
<photo: H.G.K. Gebel>

Mujahed was my dear friend for 19 years. I met him first in 1981 when he was appointed as the Department's representative for my first surveys in the Petra area. Something one immediately noticed about him was that he liked to joke, and one of his favorite phrases was "No problem!" when real problems occurred. But already by 1981, when we dreamed of working together on an Arabic-English-French-German dictionary of chipped lithics terminology, in order to promote more Arab specialists in the field, he often withdrew from others to take rest in the shade; he did not talk about the severe headaches he suffered. These signs were not understood when he sought medical help in France, where he worked on his *Thèse du Troisième Siècle* until 1986. By 1985, we excavated together at 'Ain Rahub, a time that was one of his most productive. One year later, Mujahed was – among others – instru-

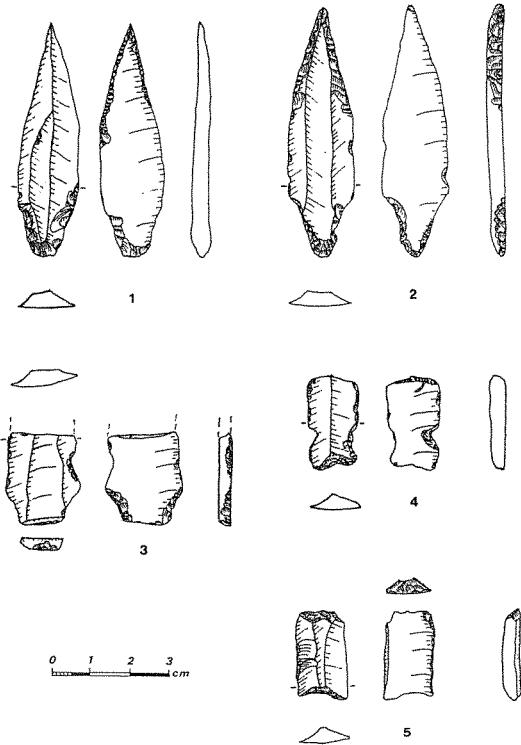


Fig. 5. Şanlıurfa, Yeni Yol Street: Flint arrowheads, and notched and retouched pieces from the 1997 examination of the Yeni Yol profile.

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## A New Early-Neolithic Settlement: Karahan Tepe

Bahattin Çelik (University of Harran)

Karahan Tepe lies some 63 km east of Şanlıurfa (Urfa), southeastern Turkey in an area called Tektek Dağları (Tektek Mountains). Some 266 *in situ* pillars were observed in the fields on the northern and eastern slopes of the hill. Since this area, which was discovered by the author in 1997, was not named on the maps, it was thought to be suitable to name the site "Karahan Tepe" after a hill nearby (Footnote 1).

Geomorphologically, the Tektek Mountain area in the vicinity of the Karahan Tepe settlement in the southeast part of Harran plain is more of a range of high hills rather than mountains (Güzel n.d.: 170-171). It is a dissected Eocene and Miocene limestone formation whose valleys which were formed by erosion during interglacial and post-glacial periods under humid climatic conditions (Atalay 1994: 280-282). There is no basalt in Tektek

Dagları; the nearest basalt source is 15 km to the north of the settlement. Flint probably was obtained from the nodules found in the limestone of the area. The region has an average altitude of between 600 m and 800 m. It is a rural area where people today are

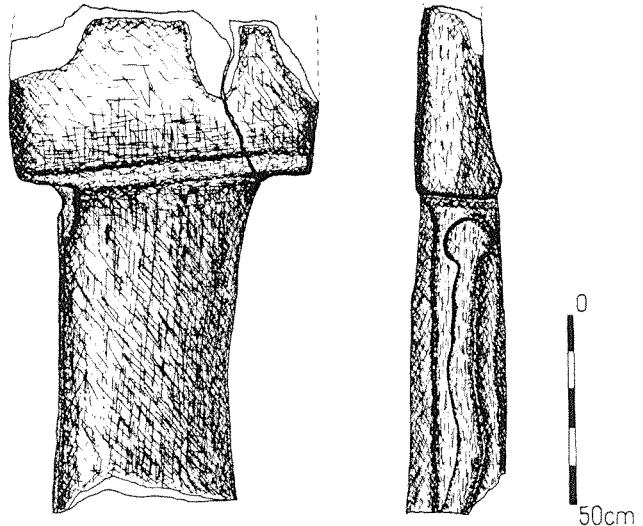


Fig. 1. The limestone "T"-shaped pillar with a snake relief.  
<drawing: B. Çelik>

involved primarily in animal husbandry and some agriculture. This poorly watered area was also settled in Antique Age (Sinclair 1990: 183-184). It is still observed in the autumn that nomadic families come down from Karacadağ Mountain in northern Şanlıurfa to stay in the Tektek Mountain area during winter and graze their animals on the pasture. The vicinity is also very rich in wild

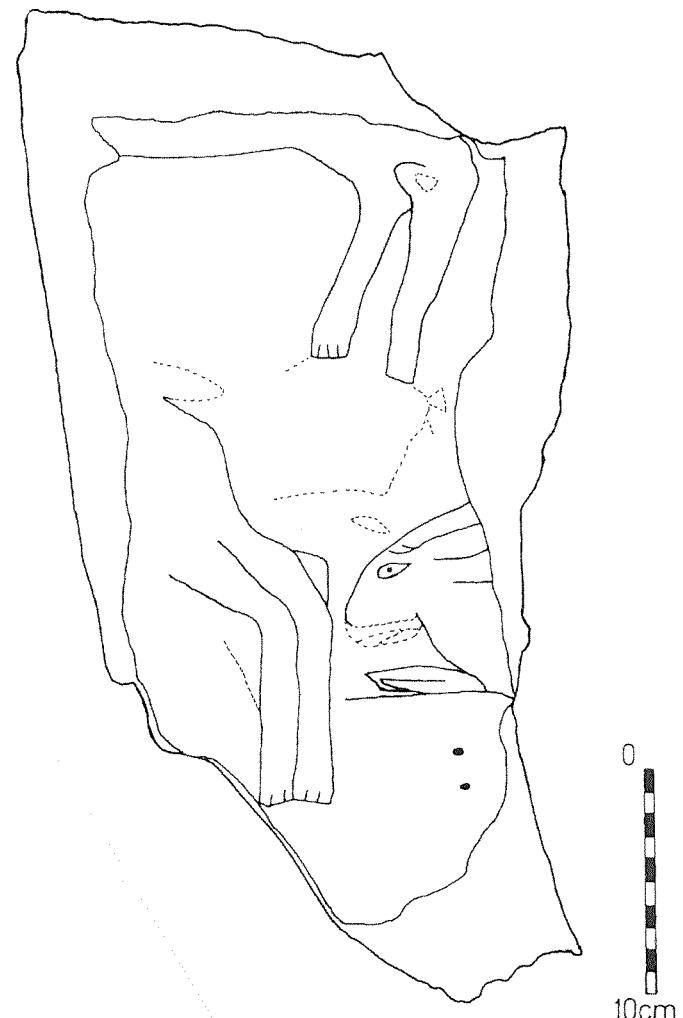


Fig. 2. Part of a limestone pillar decorated with animals.  
<drawing by B. Çelik>

game and is a locally popular hunting area even today. Except towards the NW end, where pistachio trees (*Pistacia khinjuk*) are present, there is no woodland on Tektek Dağları, (Güzel n.d.: 203-204).

On the 1:5000 maps of Karahan Tepe, the height of the hill is 705 m. The eastern terrace, where the settlement is located, has an average height of 680 m (Note 2). The southern and western slopes of the hill are very steep and rocky, and the settlement mostly occurs on the eastern and northern slopes. The eastern part of this settlement ends at a rocky plateau. There is a dry streambed along a north-south line and a terrace to the west. To the north there is a hill known as Keçili Tepe and an eponymous little village.

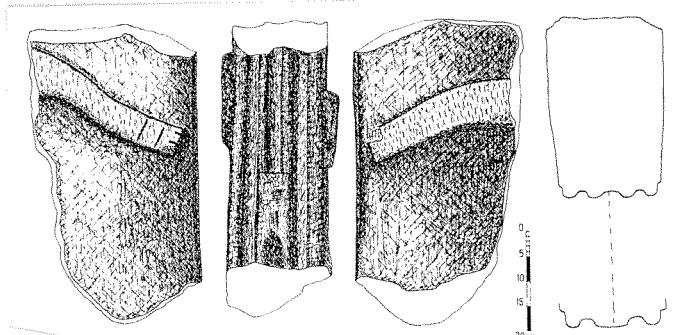


Fig. 3. Part of a limestone pillar ("tied pillar"). <drawing: B. Çelik>

Karahan Tepe ruins covers an area of 325,000 m<sup>2</sup> (32.5 ha). Except for the agricultural field in the east, surface is almost wholly covered with still-stranding pillars peering about 50-60 cm above ground level. These pillars occur at a distance of 1.5 - 2 m from each other. These "T-shaped pillars" are similar to the others found in upper levels of Göbekli Tepe, Nevalı Çori, and at Hamzan Tepe approximately 10 km south of Şanlıurfa (Schmidt 1998b: Fig. 15; Hauptmann 1993: Figs. 7,15; Çelik n.d.: Fig. 1).

In some areas near the pillars it is possible to see clearly the upper sides and corners of Neolithic walls. Some cavities 30cm in diameter and 10-15 cm depth were carved into the bedrock to create pools, also known from Göbekli Tepe and Hamzan Tepe (Beile-Bohn *et al.* 1998: Fig. 20, Çelik n.d.: Fig. 2, DAI 1996: Fig. 3).

In one exposure west of Karahan Tepe, a 4.5 m long T-shaped pillar is ready to be removed from the parent bedrock, similar to a situation at Göbekli Tepe (DAI 1997: 551-553; Schmidt 1998a: 1-5, 1998c: 17-49). In other cases, there is "totem-pole"-like statue of superimposed animals, part of a pillar engraved with animals, some animal patterns engraved into groundstone, and a T-shaped pillar with a snake relief similar to those from Nevalı Çori and Göbekli Tepe (Hauptmann 1993: Fig. 19, Schmidt 1999: Fig. 5). There are two side-by-side pillars 1.5 m distant from each other in a ruined sector partly destroyed by treasure hunters. On one of these broken pillars there is a relief of a snake at least 70 cm long, with a round head and a wavy body (Fig. 1). Examples of stairs also have been seen on the platform of a nearby rock exposure. And what is most interesting here is that on both corners of the rock there are two 40x70 holes that might have been pillar bases. This is likely a ceremonial area.

The snake relief on this pillar is different in size compared to the ones from Göbekli Tepe. It resembles the snakes on flat engraved stones from Jerf el-Ahmar (Stordeur *et al.* 1996: Fig. 5) The snake pillar has dimensions of 130 x 50 x 30 cm. Dimensions of this pillar and the pillars of lions from Göbekli Tepe are almost the same (DAI 1997: 551-553). In addition, except for the agricultural field of Göbekli Tepe, pillars that have been found there *in situ* have the same dimensions.

Some animal motifs carved on a smoothed limestone base were detected as a surface find. Across ca. 40 cm of this 86 cm stone, on a smoothed place, there are the figures of a rabbit's head and feet, long back feet and tail of a gazelle, and evidently the back feet of another animal (Fig. 2). Even today it is possible to see these animals in the vicinity. Due to the danger of extinction, gazelles are under a protection program on the State Production Farm in the east of Tektek Mountains. For the very first time we have found a part of a tied pillar with reliefs of animal feet.

We have one piece of a tied pillar that bears animal legs on the sides. Pillars found at Nevalı Çori and Göbekli Tepe had human arms and legs on both faces and human fingers figured on the side with a tie (Hauptmann 1993: Fig. 16, 1992/1993: Fig. 21; Schmidt 1999: Fig. 9). Although Karahan Tepe example has some similarities to the those specimens, this pillar has a different form of the tie. We have a great difficulty to interpret this, since the feet of the animals were made in different directions (Fig. 3).

There is no pottery at this site, but there are many flint tools (Fig. 4a), a "normal" proportion of obsidian finds, stone bugles, animal bones, little axes, basalt grinding stones, a large basin carved into limestone as at Göbekli Tepe, and a stone bowl (Fig. 4b) also known from Hallan Çemi (Rosenberg 1992: Fig. 8) and Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 1999: Fig. 26). Although terrazzo floors are not visible so far, natives of the nearby village claimed that they had seen terrazzo floor-like structures, so they must be at the underlying levels.

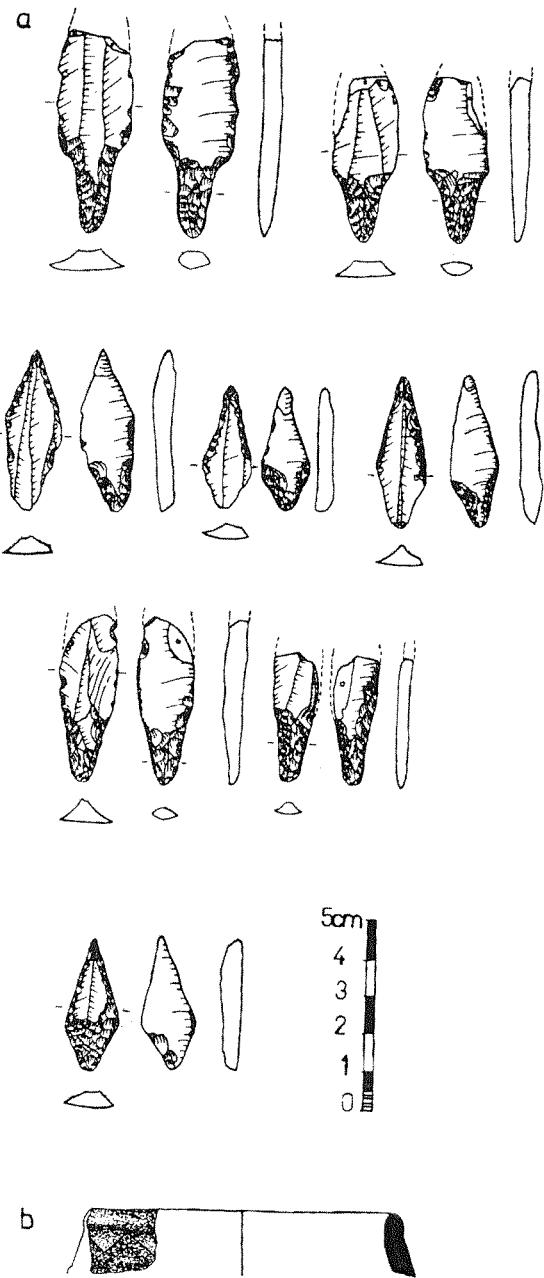


Fig. 4. Selection of flint arrowheads (a) and carved stone bowl (b). <drawings: B. Çelik>

In the light of all these finds it seems that Karahan Tepe, the upper levels of Göbekli Tepe and Nevalı Çori III (Schmidt 1998b, 1998c: Fig. 1) are contemporaneous. Since there are not any Palmyra Points (Schmidt 1996) or Çayönü Tools at the Karahan settlement, it is possible for us to date this settlement as MPPNB.

The in situ pillars detected on the surface of the site provide us an unprecedented opportunity in the Şanlıurfa region. Future excavations at this site will prove very enlightening.

Note 1. This place was earlier named "Keçili Tepe" by colleagues.

Note 2. According to the *Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü*'s 1975 map.

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## Architecture from the 1999 Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad II, Syria

Marc Verhoeven (Leiden University)

As reported earlier in *Neo-Lithics*, Tell Sabi Abyad II, located in the Balikh Valley in northern Syria, is a small mound dating between ca. 7550-6850 BC (calibrated), i.e. the Later Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period (Figs. 1 and 2; Verhoeven 1997; Verhoeven and Akkermans n.d.). So far, the remains of eight main levels of occupation have been unearthed in nine 9 x 9m squares. Here I will focus on the architecture as encountered in 1999 in one of the upper levels: Level 3, to be dated at ca. 6850 BC, and which has been unearthed over an area of ca. 540 m<sup>2</sup>. Architectural features consisted of 13 rectangular, multi-roomed buildings made of pisé, as well as a large platform in the north. The level consists of three (early, middle and late) building phases (respectively levels 3C, 3B and 3A; Verhoeven n.d.). These sublevels were closely related: taken together they represent one settlement that gradually ex-

panded in the course of time. Whereas some buildings remained in use during the entire Level 3 sequence, others were abandoned.

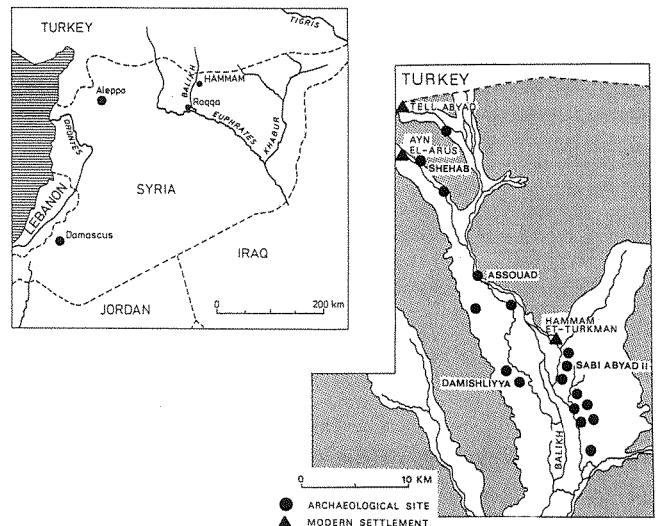


Fig. 1. Map of the Balikh valley and the location of PPNB sites.

All buildings are rectangular and consist of small, more or less square or rectangular rooms (Fig. 3). The buildings are closely spaced, with only small open areas or courtyards between them. The buildings are oriented NNW-SSE in Levels 3C and 3A but N-S in Level 3B. Characteristic is the irregular appearance of most of the buildings. The walls of the various buildings were generally 30 to 35cm wide and they were made of orange-brown pisé slabs. Floors were difficult to recognize but it seems that they consisted of tamped loam. All buildings were simply founded on earth. Mud or lime plaster on the walls was observed in a few instances only. In general the doorways were marked by small buttresses. Occasionally, buttresses were found at the corner of walls or along the wall façades. Some doorways had simple clay thresholds. Although the walls of the various buildings were generally preserved to a height of ca. 50cm, many rooms gave no evidence of doorways. Probably these chambers were accessible from an opening high in the wall or, even more likely, from the roof. Features inside the houses were sparse. There was a cluster of ovens in one building (No. IX), but most of the other buildings lacked ovens and hearths. The only other interior architectural features were low mud benches. The main architectural features outside of the buildings are the large platform in the north of the village and an extended platform in the west.

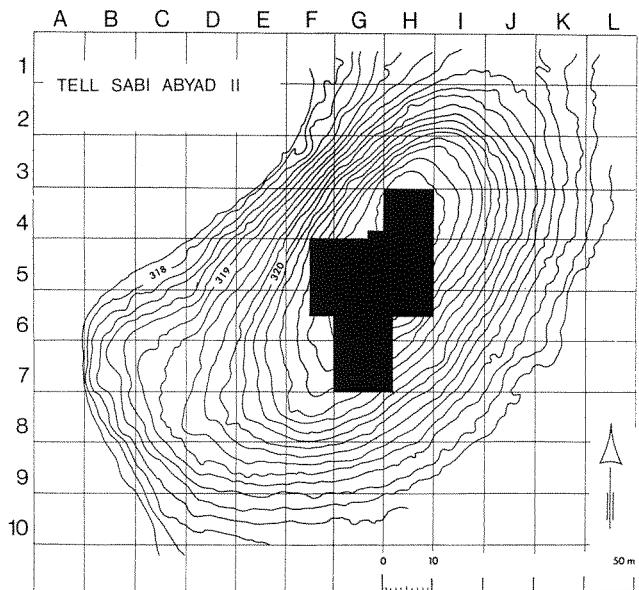


Fig. 2. Contour map of Tell Sabi Abyad II with the areas of excavation.

At first glance, the plan of the settlement in its late phases seems to have been characterized by buildings very irregular in