

The general program of scientific research of the Joint Kuwaiti-Polish Archaeological Mission consists of several independent, yet complementary, archaeological projects commenced during previous campaigns in the As-Sabbiya region. They include the exploration and studying of a remarkable Ubaid-period settlement site, Bahra 1, investigations of tumuli graves and other stone structures in the As-Sabbiya plateau, investigations of well sites and an archaeological prospection in the vicinity of the excavated zone. Our intension is to continue all these research projects during the upcoming campaigns. Apart from these ventures, several supplementary and relevant projects aiming at examining the material culture and archaeological remains of Northern Kuwait in their different respects will be undertaken in the nearest future.

Geomorphological and geological investigations

What we would like to learn from the geomorphological and geological investigations, are factors substantial for the reconstruction of ancient life modes at the Ubaid-period sites discovered in the region. The key questions are centered around the paleoclimate's change during the Holocene period. The possibility for farming could be evidenced by the presence of Holocene humid-climate soils. Tracing changes of relative sea level and former shoreline during the time of existence of the Ubaid settlements and establishing freshwater sources (springs or wells) available for ancient communities might resolve questions regarding the subsistence mode and possibility of animal husbandry at the sites. Checking the availability of sources of clay needed for manufacturing pottery, may help to verify the provenance of the "local" and "imported" pottery wares.

Local and imported pottery from the site Bahra 1 as evidence for cultural interactions in the Gulf area in the Ubaid period (6th–5th millennium BC)

An archaeological analysis along with laboratory studies of the ceramic material are to enable the achievement of several goals. One of the most important is establishing the provenance of the pottery found at the settlement site Bahra 1, which yielded two main categories of pottery: Ubaid and co-called local (or Red Coarse Ware). Chemical and petrographic analyses should provide an answer to the question if the pottery was locally manufactured in the As-Sabbiya region or if it was imported from Mesopotamia or other centers in the Gulf region. Another important issue is identifying the pottery's production centers and its manufacture techniques, along with methods of clay preparation and of forming and firing the vessels. Through the identification of provenance and location of pottery workshops, an attempt will be made at characterizing the relationship – including trade, economical and cultural ties – between Mesopotamia and the Gulf in the Ubaid period.



Anthropological investigations

In order to get more specific evidence *regarding* the nature of the ancient population that inhabited the land of Kuwait, the anthropological examination of skeletal remains will be continued. Supporting it with biochemical methods may be helpful in determining the ancient diet and subsistence strategies of individuals buried in the graves. This might answer a key question regarding their mode of life: were they nomads, farmers or fishermen.



Archaeological prospection

The archaeological survey within the plateau of As-Sabbiya, around the zone where excavated sites are localized will be continued. We generally aim to make a territorial survey of the eastern As-Sabbiya region to join several areas, explored separately up till now, into one large zone under archaeological prospection. The main aim is to create an archaeological map of the region. As a supplement for current excavations, we intent to conduct a precise and methodical mapping of further structures, for quantitative analyses which will enable a study of their distribution and relations between different types of archaeological sites and stone features. In far-reaching plans, our intension is to extend the prospection to the interior of Northern Kuwait. The objective of the reconnaissance is to look for some archaeological remnants that could indicate a link between Kuwait and Mesopotamia, for instance further settlements, burial mounds or wells on an assumed caravan route, as well as sites that might be considered as southernmost Mesopotamian outposts.

Failaka – Qusur, a mediaeval settlement

Excavations at Qusur a medieval settlement at the Failaka Island is a new leg of the KPAM activities, which is planned to begin in the fall of 2011. The object of the project is the study of the north-eastern part of the Qusur site, comprising nine archaeological features registered on the surface.

Among the principal aims of the investigations are analyses of spatial organization within the early mediaeval settlement based on the results of the investigations and defining the spatial organization of the Qusur settlement as a possible reflection of social structure. This should enable an attempt on a reconstruction of mediaeval, pre-Islamic societies' daily life and at defining the Qusur settlement's society in comparison to other Near Eastern societies of this period.

Plateau of As-Sabbiya in the Bahra region. In the middle – archaeological team exploring tumulus SB 65.