

Introduction

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Bonatz, D., Introduction, http://www.fecheriye.de/pdf/01_introduction.pdf (Date: 18.05.2011).

Tell Fekheriye is located in north-eastern Syria in the source basin of the Khabur River, a tributary of the Euphrates. The site is not only one of the largest in the region but also one of the most important. Its settlement history is most prominent in the pre-pottery Neolithic as well as the second millennium BC – during the Mittani and Middle Assyrian periods – and in the late antiquity and early Islamic periods.

Since its discovery the site has been closely related to the question whether the site includes the capital city of the Mittani rulers – Waššukanni – a site that at present has not been identified. The heartland of the Mittani Empire has been recognised early to be located in the fertile, so called, ‘Khabur Triangle’ although the information about this area is drawn either from foreign sources – Egypt, the Hittites or Assyrians – or from the periphery of the Empire, Alalakh or Nuzi. Particularly in the western ‘Khabur-Triangle’ there have been few excavations and the previous projects at Tell Fekheriye, of which none could be carried out over a longer period of time, were able to confirm but not fully tap into the archaeological potential of the site. Questions concerning the historical development of the site in the middle of the second millennium BC as well as in the Aramaic period at the transition from the 1st to the 2nd millennium BC remain unanswered. During the Roman period the site grew to an important urban centre, which has been the subject of extensive archaeological and geophysical surveys undertaken in the lower city area of Tell Fekheriye.

The new German-Syrian research project initiated in 2005 intends to establish a continuous and comprehensive documentation of the archaeological remains at Tell Fekheriye. The project is conducted by the Syrian Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums and the Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology at the Freie Universität Berlin in cooperation with the Slovakian Archaeological and Historic Institute (SAHI) and aims to represent a step towards the long-term study of the ancient upper Mesopotamian region.



Fig. 1: Geographical map of Syria with the location of the site.



Fig. 2: View of the main mound from the west.



Fig. 3: Panorama of the high mound with Trenches C-I to C-IV in the foreground and C-V and D in the background.