

BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE

19

**LE PROCHE-ORIENT DE JUSTINIEN
AUX ABBASSIDES**

PEUPLEMENT ET DYNAMIQUES SPATIALES

*Édité par A. Borrut, M. Debié, A. Papaconstantinou,
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Actes du colloque

« Continuités de l'occupation entre les périodes byzantine
et abbasside au Proche-Orient, VII^e-IX^e siècles »

Paris, 18-20 octobre 2007

Ouvrage publié avec le concours du Centre national du livre

Image de couverture :

Khirbat al-Samrā, église Saint-Jean, 634-636 (cl. A. Desreumaux)

Image de quatrième de couverture :

Centre de Jarash, mosquée de la congrégation, VIII^e siècle,
d'après A. Walmsley, dans ce volume, p. 277, figure 7

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- ISBN : 978-2-503-53572-2
- D/2011/0095/145
- Printed in EU on acid-free paper

Secrétariat de rédaction : Emmanuelle CAPET

Mise en page et infographie : Fabien TESSIER
<http://www.tilcara.eu>

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THE AGRICULTURAL HINTERLAND OF BAGHDĀD, AL-RAQQA AND SĀMARRĀ'¹

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN THE DIYĀR MUḌAR

STEFAN HEIDEMANN

Résumé : Le Diyār Muḏar, – aujourd'hui un coin reculé de la République arabe syrienne –, fut autrefois une région clef des Empires byzantin et islamique ancien. Situé dans la partie occidentale de la vallée de l'Euphrate, il fait partie de la Jazīra, en Mésopotamie du Nord. Il mettait en relation la Syrie, l'Asie Mineure, le Caucase, l'Iraq et la péninsule Arabique. Les califes Marwān II et Hārūn al-Rashīd y établirent des résidences impériales.

Cette étude examine le développement économique de la région durant la période byzantine jusqu'à son déclin au X^e siècle. Elle met l'accent sur les sites ruraux à l'époque des grandes fondations impériales aux VIII^e et IX^e siècles (Baghdād, al-Rāfiqa/al-Raqqa et Sāmarrā'). Le Diyār Muḏar servit d'hinterland rural pour ces métropoles et prospéra avec elles.

L'article utilise les sources textuelles comme le matériel archéologique et numismatique. Un certain nombre d'études de cas (Al-Raqqa, Harrān, Hiṣn Maslama, Bājaddā, Tall Maḥrā et al-Jārūd) argumentent l'analyse.

I. QUESTIONS AND SOURCES¹

The Diyār Muḏar – today a remote corner of the Syrian Arab Republic – was once a key region of the Byzantine and early Islamic empire (figures 1, 2). It is part of the Jazīra, northern Mesopotamia, situated along the Euphrates on the western side. The Khābūr river is its eastern boundary and the mountainous region of the Diyār Bakr its northern one. The Diyār Muḏar was of strategic value for the Byzantine empire against the Sasanians. In the early Islamic empire its economic, strategic and political importance even increased. It connected Syria, Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula. Here, the caliphs Marwān II and Hārūn al-Rashīd established imperial residences. Just south of the Euphrates lies al-Ruṣāfa which was used by the caliph Hishām as a residence. Later, in the middle 'Abbāsīd period, in the 3rd/9th century, al-Raqqa on the Euphrates became the capital of the western part of the empire.

1. This contribution shares much of its argument with S. Heidemann, *Settlement Patterns, Economic Development and Archaeological Coin Finds in Bilād al-Shām: the Case of the Diyār Muḏar – The Process of Transformation from the 6th to the 10th Century A.D.*, in K. Bartl, Abd al-Razzaq Moaz (eds.), *Residences, Castles, Settlements. Transformation Processes from Late Antiquity to Early Islam in Bilad al-Sham. Proceedings of the International Conference held at Damascus, 5-9 November 2006* (Orient-Archäologie, 24), Rahden, p. 493-516, however, the question, focus and scope here are different. The latter article focuses on the archaeological and numismatic aspects of settlement patterns. In 2005, a grant by the German Research Foundation (DFG), as part of the project 'The New Economic Dynamics in the Zangīd and Ayyūbid Period', allowed me to visit the smaller settlements and sites in the Balīkh valley.

Compared with earlier periods, Byzantine and Islamic archaeology in Bilād al-Shām and northern Mesopotamia seems to operate within a well-known historical environment, but historical information about medium-sized cities or smaller settlements, compared to major urban centres, is scant at best. Almost nothing is known about villages in the countryside, in many cases not even their contemporary names. Archaeology in general, and coin finds from archaeological contexts, can provide independent information about the settlements.

Economic development and settlement patterns in the Diyār Muḏar will be studied in relation to the foundation and growth of major urban agglomerations² in the empire. Four phases of the development will be addressed:

- Firstly, the flowering agricultural landscape in the Byzantine period and in the early decades of Arab rule.
- Secondly, the rise of Umayyad agricultural estates and their transformation into rural towns.
- Thirdly, the development and changes in settlement patterns after the foundation of Baghdād in 146/762, al-Rāfiqa in 155/772, and Sāmarrā' in 221/836.
- And finally the decline of the region, due to the military, political and economic collapse of the 'Abbāsīd empire.

2. Agglomeration means legally separated cities which form one urban agglomeration, such as al-Raqqa comprised of the cities al-Raqqa and al-Rāfiqa, and Baghdād of Madīnat al-Salām, Karkh, al-Ḥarbīya and many more. About this problem see in detail S. Heidemann, *Defining an Imperial Metropolis: The Palace Area of al-Raqqa. From Madīnat al-Salām/Baghdād and Qaṣr al-Salām/Isābādh to al-Rāfiqa/al-Raqqa*, in N. Rabbat (ed.), *The Islamic City in the Classical Age*, Leiden, (forthcoming).



Figure 1 - Diyār Muḍar. (Google Earth – by courtesy 2006 Terra Metrics and Europe Technologies)

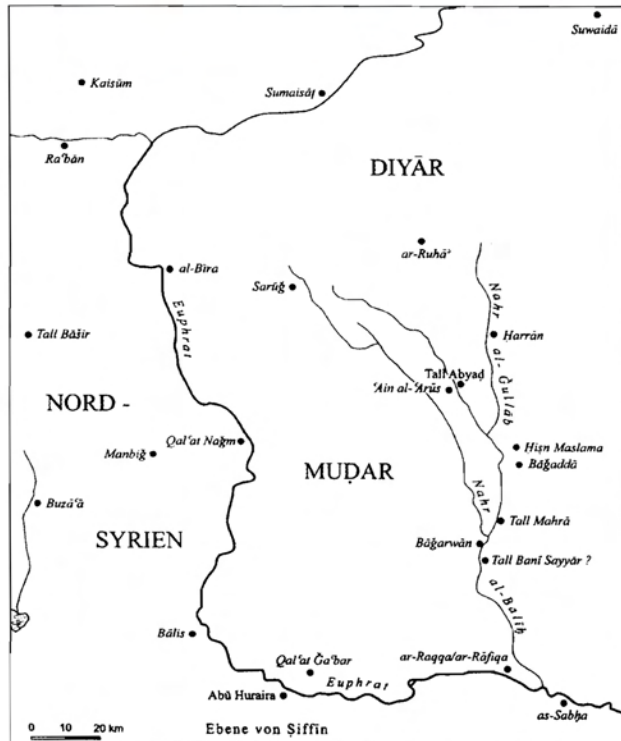


Figure 2 - Diyār Muḍar. (German Archaeological Institute - Jena University)

II. THE STATE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The Osrhoene or Diyār Muḍar in present-day Syria is one of the best-surveyed and archaeologically explored regions of the early Islamic period. Exploration started in 1907 when Mark Sykes surveyed the archaeological sites in the Balīkh valley, published in his 'Journeys in North Mesopotamia'.³ In the early 1980s Kay Kohlmeyer conducted a survey in the middle Euphrates region at the delta of the Balīkh valley.⁴ In 1994 Karin Bartl's analysis of the pottery laid the foundations for all future research on Islamic settlement patterns in the Balīkh valley.⁵ In the same project Tony Wilkinson studied historical water management.⁶ Recently, under the direction of Jan-Waalke Meyer, Islamic settlements in the Wādī Ḥamar adjoining the north-east of the Balīkh valley have been surveyed.⁷

Important early Islamic archaeological sites were excavated by various joint missions: these are al-Raqqā⁸ and Tall al-Bī'a⁹ in the south (figure 3), and Harrān¹⁰ and Ḥiṣn Maslama (present-day Madīnat al-Fār) (figure 4) in the north. The latter lies almost at the junction of the Balīkh river with Wādī Ḥamar. It consists of a square complex (330 × 330 m) with an attached, walled, almost trapezoid

extension with sides about 1 000 m long.¹¹ The urban ruin of present-day Kharāb Sayyār, located within the Wādī Ḥamar, measures 650 × 650 m (figure 5). In the middle 'Abbāsīd period it had served as a regional centre and can be identified with the small 'Abbāsīd town of al-Jārūd.¹² The major town between Ḥiṣn Maslama and al-Raqqā was Tall Mahrā (present-day Tall Shaykh Ḥasan), measuring 450 × 450 m (figure 6).¹³ Five important sites and settlements which are mentioned in the sources are still missing from the map of early Islamic archaeology to complete the picture.

3. M. Sykes, *Journeys in North Mesopotamia*, in *The Geographical Journal*, 30, 1907, p. 237-254, 384-398.
4. K. Kohlmeyer, *Euphrat-Survey*, in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 116, 1984, p. 95-118; Id., *Euphrat-Survey 1984*, in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 118, 1986, p. 51-65. Berthold Einwag conducted a 'western Jazīra survey' but focused on the Ancient Orient; B. Einwag, *Vorbericht über die archäologische Geländebegehung in der Westgazīra*, in *Dam. Mitt.*, 7, 1993, p. 23-43.
5. K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung im Balikh-Tal/Nordsyrien* (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient, 15), Berlin, 1994; Id., *Balikh Valley Survey. Settlements of the late Roman/Early Byzantine and Islamic Period*, in K. Bartl – S. R. Hauser (eds.), *Continuity and Change in Northern Mesopotamia from the Hellenistic to the Early Islamic Period* (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient, 17), Berlin, 1996, p. 333-348. Jodi Magness brought to light such problems of settlement surveys in general and counting of sites per period in particular in the case of a region in historical Palestine: there are questions of continuous use of pottery types, and communal installations without alterations as well as historical preconceptions; J. Magness, *The Archaeology of Early Islamic Settlement in Palestine*, Winona Lake, 2003, esp. p. 72-74, 195-199.
6. T. J. Wilkinson, *Water and Human Settlement in the Balikh Valley, Syria*, in *Journal of Field Archeology*, 25, 1998, p. 63-87; see also W. Schirmer *Landschaftsgeschichte um Tall Bi'a am syrischen Euphrat*, in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 119, 1987, p. 57-71.
7. J.-W. Meyer, *Wadi Ḥamar-Survey – Frühislamische Perioden – Kartierung der Siedlungen (1997-2000)*, to be published.
8. See S. Heidemann – A. Becker (eds.), *Raqqā II – Die islamische Stadt*, Mainz, 2003; V. Daiber – A. Becker (eds.), *Raqqā III – Baudenkmäler und Paläste I*, Mainz, 2004.
9. S. Heidemann, *Die Fundmünzen vom Tall al-Bī'a bei ar-Raqqā und ihr Verhältnis zur lokalen Geschichte*, in *Zeitschrift für die Archäologie des Orients*, 1, p. 330-368.
10. D. S. Rice, *Medieval Harran. Studies on its Topography and Monuments*, I, in *Anatolian Studies*, 2, 1952, p. 36-84; S. Heidemann, *Die Fundmünzen von Harrān und ihr Verhältnis zur lokalen Geschichte*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 65, 2002, p. 267-299.
11. C.-P. Haase, *Madīnat al-Fār/Ḥiṣn Maslama – First Archeological Soundings at the Site and the History of an Umayyad Domain in 'Abbāsīd Times*, in M. A. al-Bakhit – R. Schick (eds.), *Bilād al-Shām During the 'Abbāsīd Period (132 A.H./750 A.D.-451 A.H./1059 A.D.)*, *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference for the History of the Bilād al-Shām 7-11 Sha'ban 1410 A.H./4-8 March, 1990, English and French Section*, Amman, 1412/1991, p. 206-225; Id., *Is Madīnat al-Fār in the Balīkh Region of Northern Syria an Umayyad Foundation?* in *Aram*, 6, 1994, p. 245-257; Id., *Madīnat al-Fār: The Regional Late Antique Tradition of Early Islamic Foundation*, in K. Bartl, S. R. Hauser (eds.), *Continuity and Change in Northern Mesopotamia from the Hellenistic to the Early Islamic Period* (Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient, 17), Berlin, 1996, p. 165-172; Id., *Une ville des débuts de l'islam d'après les fouilles effectuées à Madinat al-Far (Syrie du Nord). Les premières fondations urbaines umayyades*, in *Archéologie islamique*, 11, 2001, p. 7-20; Id., *A Preliminary Report on Some Objects Found During the Danish Campaign at Madinat al-Far in Northern Syria*, in *Journal of the David Collection*, 1, 2003, p. 99-109; Id., *Frühabbasidischer Stuckdekor eines Nischenraumes in Madinat al-Far/Ḥiṣn Maslama und seine östlichen und westlichen Bezüge*, in M. Müller-Wiener, C. Kothe, K.-H. Golzio, J. Gierlich (eds.), *Al-Andalus und Europa. Zwischen Orient und Okzident*, Petersberg, 2004, p. 49-58; Id., *The Excavations at Madīnat al-Fār/Ḥiṣn Maslama on the Balikh Road*, in H. N. Kennedy (ed.), *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria. From the Coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period* (History of Warfare, 35), Leiden, 2006, p. 54-60.
12. J.-W. Meyer, *Die zweite Grabungskampagne in Kharab Sayyār 1999*, in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 132, 2000, p. 297-309; Id., *Die Ausgrabungen im islamischen Kharab Sayyār (1.-3. Kampagne 1997-2000)*, in *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 14, 2001, p. 189-215; J.-W. Meyer et al., *Die dritte Grabungskampagne in Kharab Sayyār 2000*, in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 133, 2001, p. 199-223; J.-W. Meyer, *Die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen im frühislamischen Kharab Sayyār (2. Kampagne 1999)*, in M. Müller-Wiener, C. Kothe, K.-H. Golzio and J. Gierlich (eds.), *Al-Andalus und Europa. Zwischen Orient und Okzident*, Petersberg, 2004, p. 59-66; Id., *Recent Excavations in Early and 'Abbāsīd Kharāb Sayyār*, in H. Kennedy (ed.) *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria. From the Coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period* (History of Warfare, 35), Leiden, 2006, p. 45-53; and S. Heidemann, *Die Fundmünzen von Ḥarāb Sayyār im Verhältnis zur lokalen Geschichte*, in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 135, 2003, p. 103-112.
13. C.-P. Haase, *Madīnat al-Fār/Ḥiṣn Maslama*, cit. (n. 11), p. 207, identified the site. Karin Bartl studied the pottery; K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung*, cit. (n. 5), p. 215-217, 255-256; Id., *Tell Sheikh Hasan. A Settlement of the Roman-Parthian to the Islamic Period in the Balīkh Valley/Northern Syria*, in *Archéologie islamique*, 4, 1994, p. 5-17; Id., *Tell Sheikh Hassan. Funde aus römisch-parthischer, spätrömischer-frühbyzantinischer und islamischer Zeit*, in *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 46-47, 1999-2000, p. 447-489. Murhaf al-Khalaf and Lidewijde de Jong are currently exploring this site; L. De Jong and A. Kaneda, *Al-Tanqīb fi Tall Shaykh Ḥasan, Wādī Balīkh, al-'imāra wal-fakhhār fi maṣīim al-'amal li-'āmal li-'āmal 2005*, in *Les Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire syriennes*, 47-48, 2004-2005, p. 179-190.

In the north these are the major urban centre al-Ruhā'/Edessa/Urfa and the smaller city Sarūj (present day Sürüç), both in modern Turkey. Two other places are mentioned in the sources, but need more archaeological investigation: Bājaddā, presumably present-day Khirbat al-Anbār¹⁴ (figure 7), a few kilometres south of Ḥiṣn Maslama, and Bājarwān, which was identified by Karin Bartl with Tall Dāmīr al-Sharqī and al-Gharbī on opposite banks of the Balīkh river.¹⁵ A fifth site on the western side of the valley between Madīnat al-Fār and Ḥarrān also requires closer archaeological attention. 'Ayn al-'Arūs¹⁶ has so far yielded a hexagonal geometrical mosaic of 92 m², presumably belonging to a late Roman bathhouse. The settlement probably continued in the early Islamic period.¹⁷

III. THE BYZANTINE PERIOD

AND THE EARLY DECADES OF ARAB RULE

During the Roman and Byzantine period the Diyār Muḍar was called Osrhoene.¹⁸ The emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565 AD) rebuilt the eastern border defences of the

empire and, according to the historian Procopius (d. 555 AD), Batnae (Sarūj), Edessa (al-Ruhā'), Carrhae (Ḥarrān) and Kallinikos (al-Raqqā al-Baiḍā') were restored and fortified.¹⁹ In the Diyār Muḍar, this period left very few archaeological traces.²⁰ Literary sources, archaeological evidence and coin finds suggest a steady rise of this region. The sixth century is well represented by coin finds from Ḥarrān,²¹ al-Raqqā²² and Tall al-Bī'a.²³ Also, if we look to the south of the Euphrates to al-Ruṣāfa²⁴ and to the west of it to Bālis,²⁵ coin finds give the impression of a flourishing Byzantine landscape. Karin Bartl identified 37 sites dating to the Roman-Byzantine period, 23 of which could safely be ascribed to the late Roman/Byzantine era.²⁶ Only the mountainous northern Diyār Muḍar, just north of the Euphrates at Samosata, however, seems to have suffered a decline from the Byzantine to the early Islamic period.²⁷

Prior to the foundation of al-Rāfiqa in 155/772, the centre of growth lay in the northern fertile plain with al-Ruhā' and Ḥarrān as major cities. Until the Islamic conquest, Edessa/al-Ruhā' remained the capital of the province of Mesopotamia.²⁸ The Sasanian wars and occupation of the Osrhoene between 606/7 and 628 and later the Islamic conquest in 18/639 left no archaeological remains: there are no destruction layers²⁹ or

14. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), *Kitāb Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, *Jacut's geographisches Wörterbuch*, 6 vols., Leipzig, 1866–1870, here vol. 1, p. 453; K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung*, cit. (n. 5), p. 219, 255.

15. Ibn Khurrādādhbih (d. about 244/848), *Kitāb al-Masālik wal-mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik (Liber Viarum et Regnorum)* (Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, VI), Leiden, 1889, reprint 1967, p. 97; Yāqūt, *Buldān* I, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, cit. (n. 14), p. 454. K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung*, cit. (n. 5), p. 209–210, 256.

16. K. Regling, *Zur historischen Geographie des mesopotamischen Parallelogramms*, in *Klio*, 1, 1901, p. 443–476, here p. 461–462. R. Gogrāfe, *Die Grabtürme von Sirrin (Osroëne)*, in *Dam. Mitt.*, 9, 1995, p. 165–201, pl. 21–28, esp. 179 (extensive discussion of the literature), and T. Weber, *Kallinikos – Leontupolis – al-Raqqā: griechische und lateinische Schriftquellen*, in S. Heidemann – A. Becker (eds.), *Raqqā II – Die islamische Stadt*, Mainz, 2003, p. 65–79, suggest that 'Ayn al-'Arūs might be identified with the late Roman Davana at the spring of the Balīkh. Ibn Khurrādādhbih (*Masālik* [n. 15], p. 175) and Yāqūt (*Buldān* II, ed. Wüstenfeld [n. 14], p. 725) mention al-Dhabāna or al-Dhabāniyya indeed as a source of the Balīkh. Yāqūt, *Buldān* I [n. 14], p. 734–735 (lemma *Balīkh*), however, mentions that it was close to Ḥarrān and that Ḥiṣn Maslama is located 5 miles (8 km) downstream. This reference was not used by the aforementioned authors and makes an identification of Davana with 'Ayn al-'Arūs unlikely. The first mention of 'Ayn al-'Arūs in the historical records is, according to the present author's knowledge, in connection with a skirmish which occurred in 497/1104; S. Heidemann, *Die Renaissance der Städte in Nordsyrien und Nordmesopotamien. Städtische Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Bedingungen in ar-Raqqā und Ḥarrān von der Zeit der beduinischen Vorherrschaft bis zu den Seldschuken* (Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts, 40), Leiden, 2002, p. 193–194.

17. M. al-Ḥalaf, T. Weber, *Spätantiker Badeluxus an der Quelle des Balicha. Ein unveröffentlichtes Mosaik aus 'Ain al-'Arūs in Nordsyrien*, in *Antike Welt*, 26, 1995, p. 273–277; T. Weber, *Kallinikos*, cit. (n. 16), p. 72. A continuation of this town into the Umayyad period should be investigated.

18. For Byzantine Osrhoene see L. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents. Contribution à la géographie historique de la région, du V^e s. avant l'ère chrétienne au V^e s. de cette ère* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, 72), Paris, 1962, p. 104–110; R. Gogrāfe, *Grabtürme*, cit. (n. 16), p. 173–179.

19. Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, ed. J. Hauriy, G. Wirth, Leipzig, 1964, chapter II.VII.1–18, p. 67–68.

20. T. Ulbert, *Procopius. De Adificiis. Einige Überlegungen zu Buch II, Syrien*, in *Ant. Tard.*, 8, 2000, p. 137–147.

21. S. Heidemann, *Die Fundmünzen von Ḥarrān und ihr Verhältnis zur lokalen Geschichte*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 65, 2002, p. 267–299, no. 1 and a second among the coin finds preserved in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul.

22. S. Heidemann, *Katalog der Fundmünzen aus ar-Raqqā/ar-Rāfiqa*, in S. Heidemann – A. Becker (eds.), *Raqqā II – Die islamische Stadt*, Mainz, 2003, p. 169–196, nos. 20–26. S. Heidemann, *Der Münzumschlag und die Lokalgeschichte von ar-Raqqā/ar-Rāfiqa*, in S. Heidemann – A. Becker (eds.), *Raqqā II – Die islamische Stadt*, Mainz, 2003, p. 163–167, here p. 163.

23. S. Heidemann, *Die Fundmünzen vom Tall al-Bī'a*, cit. (n. 9), nos. 21–29.

24. L. Ilisch, *Die islamischen Fundmünzen*, in D. Sack, *Resafa IV. Die Große Moschee von Resafa – Ruṣāfat Ḥiṣām*, Mainz, 1996, p. 110–132; L. Korn, *Resafa: Fundmünzen der Stadtgrabungen 1997–1999*, in *Dam. Mitt.*, 14, 2004, p. 197–206, pl. 30–31.

25. G. Hennequin – M. al-'Ush, *Les monnaies de Bālis*, Damascus, 1978.

26. K. Bartl, *Balikh Valley Survey*, cit. (n. 5), p. 334.

27. T. J. Wilkinson, *Town and Country in Southeastern Anatolia* (University of Chicago. Oriental Institute Publications, 109), 2 vols., Chicago, 1990, here vol. I, p. 126–129.

28. See O. Schmitt, *Untersuchungen zur Organisation und zur militärischen Stärke oströmischer Herrschaft im Vorderen Orient zwischen 628 und 633*, in *ByzZ*, 94, 2001, p. 197–229, here p. 204–206; C. Foss, *The Persians in the Roman Near East*, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 13, 2003, p. 149–170, here p. 156; S. Heidemann, *Die Geschichte von ar-Raqqā/ar-Rāfiqa – ein Überblick*, in S. Heidemann – A. Becker (eds.), *Raqqā II – Die islamische Stadt*, Mainz, 2003, p. 9–56, here p. 13.

29. Gábor Kalla, however, suspected a destruction of parts of the monastery on Tall al-Bī'a during the middle of the 7th century, the period of the Sāsānian wars and the Arab conquest; G. Kalla, *Das Refektorium und die Küche des byzantinischen Klosters in Tall Bi'a (Syrien)*, in Laszlovszky József et al. (eds.), *„quasi liber et pictura“: Tanulmányok*

any significant strata of coins;³⁰ nor do the literary sources mention any destruction in this region.³¹ The immigration of the Arab Muḏar tribe into the Balīkh valley went without any detectable interruption in the settlements, and they seem to have taken over the pastures of the Ghassanid tribes which moved to Byzantine territory.³²

IV. FROM Umayyad LANDED GENTRY TO EARLY ʿABBĀSID RURAL TOWNS

Faced with vested interests in taxation and redistribution in the provinces, the Umayyad caliph Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743) initiated a policy of development of rural estates in the Diyār Muḏar. The provinces were reluctant to share the tax proceeds, booty and the tribute with the central government. Hugh Kennedy suggested that the Umayyad investments in agriculture were induced by the necessity to finance their regime to a great extent by their own means.³³ Members of the Umayyad ruling house and their retainers founded estates in the Diyār Muḏar as elsewhere. They invested in irrigation, following the Sasanian pattern, thus laying the foundations for the economic blossoming of the region.³⁴ The chronicles mention much building activity, especially during the reign of Hishām

while he was residing in al-Ruṣāfa. Irrigation canals were constructed for adjacent estates (*dayʿa*), for example al-Hanī wal-Marī, as well as a manor (*qaṭīʿa*) south of al-Raqqa, Wāsiṭ al-Raqqa; in al-Raqqa a bridge and a market were built; in the northern part of the valley Ḥiṣn Maslama and its nearby villages such as Bājaddā were founded or developed. Other villages and estates are known from the sources but not yet located.³⁵

At that time, al-Raqqa/Kallinikos remained a provincial rural town, probably still retaining certain Hellenistic features such as the almost rectangular city wall. The population was probably Christian and Jewish in its majority with few Muslims. The chronicle of Dionysius of Tall Maḥrā (d. 230/845) mentions Jacobite monasteries around Kallinikos/al-Raqqa, among which the Zacchäus monastery or Dayr al-Zakkā was the most important.³⁶ In the north around al-Ruhāʿ, Jacobite monasticism – usually connected with agriculture – was also flourishing.³⁷

In the 70s/690s Umayyad Ḥarrān and the old provincial capital al-Ruhāʿ occasionally issued copper coins, evidence of their importance as major regional urban markets. In the last decades of Umayyad rule Ḥarrān surpassed al-Ruhāʿ in importance.³⁸ Ḥarrān became the capital of the Umayyad super-province of the north, which extended from the Euphrates to the Caucasus and was called al-Jazīra.³⁹ In 127/744, Ḥarrān even became the caliphal residence of Marwān II (r. 127-132/744-750) and possessed a dirham mint, thus adding to the growing political and economic importance of this region which was at the crossroads between Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Asia Minor and the Caucasus.⁴⁰

Kubinyi András *hetvenedik születésnapjára. Studies in Honour of András Kubinyi on his Seventieth Birthday*, Budapest, 2004, p. 257-264, here p. 263 n. 36. But on the contrary, Umayyad coins of the 2nd/8th century are well represented on the site; see S. Heidemann, *Tall al-Bīʿa*, cit. (n. 9). Kalla's supposition would weaken the identification of this monastery with Dayr al-Zakkā mentioned in the sources until the 10th century. K. Krebernik, *Schriftfunde aus Tall Bīʿa 1990*, in *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 123, 1991, p. 41-70.

30. The Museum in al-Raqqa, however, preserves a hoard of about 20 Byzantine gold coins from the 7th century, mainly from the period of Heraclius, which need further attention. It was briefly studied by the author in 1991; S. Heidemann, *Katalog*, cit. (n. 22), p. 170.
31. For the history of this period see C. Foss, *Syria in Transition A.D. 550-650: An Archeological Approach*, in *DOP*, 51, 1997, p. 189-269; C. Foss, *Persians*, cit. (n. 28). For al-Raqqa see S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 12-14.
32. Aṣmāʿī (d. 217/833), *Tārīkh al-ʿArab qabla al-Islām ʿan nuskha kutibat ʿām 243 h. bi-khāṭṭ Yaʿqūb ibn al-Sukayt*, ed. M. H. ʿĀl Yāsīn, Baghdād, 1379/1959, p. 111-112. N. F. Posner, *The Muslim Conquest of Northern Mesopotamia. An Introductory Essay into its Historical Background and Historiography*, PhD Diss., New York, 1985, p. 328-329; N. F. Posner, *Whence the Conquest of Northern Mesopotamia?* in: F. Kazemi – R. D. McChesney (eds.), *A Way Prepared. Essays on Islamic Culture in Honor of Richard Bayly Winder*, New York, 1988, p. 27-52; S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 13-14 and Kh. ʿAthamina, *Arab Settlement during the Umayyad Caliphate*, in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 8, 1986, p. 185-207, here p. 199.
33. H. N. Kennedy, *The Financing of the Military in the Early Islamic State*, in A. Cameron (ed.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III - States, Resources, and Armies* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, 1), Princeton, 1995, p. 361-378, here p. 372-373.
34. Compare H. N. Kennedy, *The Impact of Muslim Rule on the Pattern of Rural Settlement on Syria*, in P. Canivet – J.-P. Rey-Coquais (eds.), *La Syrie de Byzance a l'Islam vii-viii siècle. Actes du colloque international Lyon – Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen Paris – Institut du Monde Arabe 11-15 Septembre 1990*, Damascus, 1992, p. 291-297;

M. G. Morony, *Economic Boundaries? Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 47, 2004, p. 166-194.

35. J. L. Bacharach, *Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities. Speculations on Patronage*, in *Muqarnas*, 13, 1996, p. 27-44, here p. 30-31; S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 18, 20-22.
36. K. Krebernik, *Schriftfunde*, cit. (n. 29); S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), 15-17.
37. W. Hage, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche in frühislamischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1966, p. 60-61, 106-109. For the agricultural development of Christian monasteries see in the case of an endowment in Naṣībīn the early 2nd/8th century J. Pahlitzsch, *Christian Pious Foundations as an Element of Continuity Between Late Antiquity and Islam*, in M. Frenkel – Y. Lev (eds.), *Charity and Giving in Monotheistic Religions* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients, N.F., 22), Wiesbaden, 2009, p. 125-151.
38. For the dirham mint of Ḥarrān see M. Bates, *The Dirham Mint of the Northern Provinces of the Umayyad Caliphate*, in Y. T. Nercessian (ed.), *Essays Dedicated in Honor of Dr. Paul Z. Bedoukian on the Fortieth Year of His Contributions* (Armenian Numismatic Journal, 15), Los Angeles, 1989, p. 89-111; S. Heidemann, *Fundmünzen von Ḥarrān*, cit. (n. 21), p. 271. For the lesser importance of the Kallinikos/ar-Raqqa at that time see S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 11-23.
39. Kh. Y. Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State. The Reign of Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads*, Albany, 1994, p. 50-57.
40. For the numismatic evidence of these interregional exchanges see S. Heidemann, *Settlement Patterns*, cit. (n. 1).

In the early 'Abbāsīd period the centre of growth in the Diyār Muḍar lay still in the fertile northern part. Until the construction of al-Rāfiqa in 155/772, Ḥarrān remained the most important town in the Diyār Muḍar. It was the seat of al-'Abbās ibn Muḥammad, governor of the northern, now 'Abbāsīd, super-province al-Jazīra between 142/759 and 155/772. He was the first powerful governor in the area after a period of turmoil caused by the 'Abbāsīd usurpation and the wars of succession that followed the death of the first 'Abbāsīd caliph Abū l-'Abbās (r. 132–136/749–754). In his capital Ḥarrān, al-'Abbās ibn Muḥammad struck copper coins, which remained the main, abundantly available petty coinage of the area until the import of copper coins from Iraq in the 160s/780s, thus covering the period before al-Raḡqa became the residence of the imperial court. The frequent archaeological survival of coins of al-'Abbās ibn Muḥammad is most significant for the sites in Ḥarrān's vicinity, and the Diyār Muḍar in general.

The transformation of agricultural estates of the landed Umayyad elites into early 'Abbāsīd rural towns can be demonstrated in the case of Ḥiṣn Maslama (figure 4). In the literary sources the foundation of Ḥiṣn Maslama is connected with the famous commander Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik (d. 121/738). In 114/732, he resigned from military service and retired to his estates in the Diyār Muḍar, probably to Ḥiṣn Maslama.⁴¹ Part of his estates, Bājaddā, he gave to a retainer for further cultivation. The foundation of the Ḥiṣn by Maslama can be identified with the square northern enclosure in the built-up area of about 330 × 330 m. Surprisingly, in Madīnat al-Fār no Umayyad coin finds can be associated with Maslama's lifetime.⁴² The sequence of coin finds begins after his death, in 121/738, with about 4 coins datable to the 120s/740s. The following issue of al-'Abbās ibn Muḥammad is surprisingly abundant, with 9 examples. This issue formed the most numerous group among the coin finds of Ḥiṣn Maslama, thereby making it the most common coin type in archaeological excavations in the region.

How can this be explained?⁴³ There are at least two possibilities. First, the building complex might have served as military post with the character of a princely residence. This seems unlikely and can be rejected because garrison sites usually yield an abundance of small coins which were used as a means of exchange for the daily needs of the rank and file. Secondly, Ḥiṣn Maslama could have been the

administrative centre of Maslama's rural estates in the northern Diyār Muḍar. The coin finds then suggest that – at least during the first two or three decades – Ḥiṣn Maslama existed as an *oikos* in the Greek sense. Large rural estates tend to be self-sufficient and had less need for local markets and their associated petty coinage. This might explain the almost total lack of coins dateable to Maslama's lifetime. The origin of Ḥiṣn Maslama as an agricultural residence fits into the pattern of late Roman and Umayyad estates (*quṣūr*).⁴⁴ With the beginning of 'Abbāsīd rule, the character of the large estate might have changed. Ḥiṣn Maslama became urban and developed into a small rural town with coin-based market activities. Probably the large trapezoid, hitherto almost unexplored southern urban extension – about 1 000 × 1 000 m – was built up then (figure 4). From that time onwards the sequence of coins is almost continuous until the 3rd/9th century, parallel to the coin finds in Ḥarrān.

V. IMPACTS OF THE URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS, BAGHDĀD, AL-RAḠQA AND SĀMARRĀ'

The strategic importance of northern Mesopotamia in general, and that of the Diyār Muḍar in particular, and its growing prosperity during the 'Abbāsīd period, is evidenced by the numerous newly planned cities, enlarged villages, and other construction works and building activities. The growth of urban population in Iraq, especially since the foundation of the imperial centre in Baghdād in 145/762, stimulated agricultural production in the Diyār Muḍar. These large urban agglomerations such as Baghdād and al-Kūfa on the Euphrates, al-Baṣra at the Gulf, and later Sāmarrā' on the Tigris could no longer feed their growing population solely on the basis of regional production. Their rapid growth depended on a number of exceptional economic factors. As imperial centres and main garrisons of the caliphal army, they were supported by transfer of tax monies from the entire empire, from North Africa to Central Asia. Their urban population had thus superior spending power, making large-scale investments in food-production and expensive transportation from distant regions attractive.⁴⁵ The Euphrates, the Tigris and the Nahr 'Īsā provided

41. Maslama possessed a homonymous estate close to Bālis, currently excavated by Thomas Leisten, Princeton University.

42. There are yet not found any coins of the Ḥarrān-type from the 90s/708s nor regular issues of Ḥarrān and al-Ruhā' from the 116/734-5 reform or any other type.

43. The following facts are taken for granted: the foundation of Ḥiṣn Maslama by Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik according to the reports of Ibn Ḥawqal and Yāqūt and Claus-Peter Haase's identification of layer I as the Umayyad foundation.

44. Compare H. N. Kennedy, *Impact*, cit. (n. 34), esp. p. 293, 294, 296; M. G. Morony, *Economic Boundaries?*, cit. (n. 34), esp. p. 168–170. For the development of that type of buildings from late Roman origins see D. Genequand, *Umayyad Castles: The Shift from Late Antique Military Architecture to Early Islamic Palatial Building*, in H. Kennedy (ed.), *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria. From the Coming of Islam to the Ottoman Period* (History of Warfare, 35), Leiden, 2006, p. 3–25. For the term see L. I. Conrad, *The Quṣūr of Medieval Islam*, in *al-Abḥāth*, 29, 1981, p. 7–23.

45. A. Northedge, *Remarks on Samarra and the Archaeology of Large Cities*, in *Antiquity*, 79, no. 303, 2005, p. 119–129, esp. p. 120–121. For some estimates about the size of the new large agglomerations see H. N. Kennedy, *Military Pay and the Economy of the Early Islamic State*, in *Historical Research*, 75, 2002, p. 155–169.

a comparatively cheap and easy access to the Iraqi markets for products coming from Syria and Northern Mesopotamia. This system of provisioning more than one huge urban agglomeration was only feasible in a highly-developed monetary economy, which did exist.

The port of al-Raqqā⁴⁶ (figure 3) probably served as the main hub for agricultural and industrial products from northern Syria and the Diyār Muḏar, from which foodstuffs and goods were shipped downstream to Baghdād and Iraq.⁴⁷ Al-Raqqā was the most suitable port situated at the junction of the rivers al-Balīkh and Euphrates. Ya'qūbī (d. 284/987) describes it as being ice-free during the whole year, and al-Dimashqī (d. 727/1327) adds that the Euphrates sometimes froze upstream beyond al-Raqqā.⁴⁸ Tanūkhī reports that a merchant from Baghdād named al-Marzawī (d. 297/909-910) speculated in olive oil prices in al-Raqqā.⁴⁹ Ibn al-'Adīm adds that oil arriving from northern Syria was traded in al-Raqqā to be shipped to Iraq and the Gulf.⁵⁰

Although the foundation of Baghdād already had a strong economic impact on the Diyār Muḏar, the most important change in the life of the region came in 155/772 with the decision of the second 'Abbāsīd caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–774) to build a fortified garrison city west of al-Raqqā (figure 3) in order to stabilise the fragile 'Abbāsīd power in northern Syria, Cilicia and northern Mesopotamia, to reorganise the border defences and to establish a base for assaults against Byzantium. An eastern Iranian detachment from Khurāsān, loyal to the 'Abbāsīd cause, was settled here. The caliph named the new city al-Rāfiqa, literally

'the companion' to the city Kallinikos/al-Raqqā with an indigenous population.⁵¹ At first the local people resisted the new foundation. They were afraid that the new settlement might spoil their markets; they feared for their sustenance and the restrictions on their living space.⁵² They probably expected that the huge additional demand for foodstuffs would raise their cost of living. Contrary to these expectations, the foundation of al-Rāfiqa fostered rapid agricultural and industrial growth in the Diyār Muḏar.

The centre of economic activity shifted from the provincial capital Ḥarrān in the north, to al-Raqqā in the south, which now became the capital of the Jazīra province. After the foundation of the garrison al-Rāfiqa, al-Raqqā became one of the fastest-growing urban settlements in the 'Abbāsīd empire.⁵³ Al-Raqqā was composed of the cities of al-Raqqā/Kallinikos and al-Rāfiqa. Twenty-five years later, in 180/796-7, the speed of urban development further accelerated when Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–193/786–809) added a vast palace area to the north of the twin cities, which comprised about twenty major building complexes. He invested in additional water-supply and irrigation. Canals were dug along the Euphrates, the Nahr al-Nīl, and also along the Balīkh to the north in order to transport water from the vicinity of Sarūj to the bustling agglomeration of al-Raqqā and the palace gardens.⁵⁴ In the north, Ismā'īl ibn Ṣubayḥ, a high-ranking secretary at the time of al-Mahdī and Hārūn al-Rashīd, is known to have commissioned an irrigation canal (*qanāt*) for Ḥarrān which was about 10 miles (16 km) long.⁵⁵

46. The port of al-Raqqā is not yet located, see S. Heidemann, *History of the Industrial and Commercial Area of 'Abbāsīd al-Raqqā Called al-Raqqā al-Muḥtariqa*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 69, 2006, p. 32-52, here p. 37.

47. I. M. Lapidus, *Arab Settlement and Economic Development of Iraq and Iran in the Age of the Umayyad and Early Abbasid Caliphs*, in A. L. Udovitch (ed.), *The Islamic Middle East, 700-1900. Studies in Economic and Social History*, Princeton, 1981, p. 177-208, here esp. p. 181; H. N. Kennedy, *Military Pay*, cit. (n. 47), p. 159-167; S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 20-21, 29. Compare E. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1976, p. 42.

48. Ya'qūbī (d. 284/897), *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, *Kitāb al-Buldān* (Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum VII), Leiden, 1892, reprint Leiden, 1967, p. 231-373, here p. 250. Dimashqī, *Nukhbat al-dahr fi 'ajā'ib al-barr wal-bahr*, ed. A. F. M. Mehren, *Cosmographie de Chems-ed-Din Abou Abdallah Mohammed ed-Dimichqui*, St. Petersburg, 1865-6, reprint Osnabrück, 1982, p. 93-94.

49. Tanūkhī (d. 384/994), *Nishwār al-muḥādara wa-akhbār al-mudhākara*, ed. 'Abbūd al-Shālikhī, *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge*, 8 vols., w/o place, 1972-1973, here vol. III, p. 79-82; about al-Marzawī, see vol. I, p. 78 n. 3.

50. Ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262), *Bughyat al-Ṭalab fi tarikh Ḥalab*, ed. S. Zakkār, 12 vols., Damascus, 1988, here vol. I, p. 60. For other references of this text see S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 29 n. 224. The economic rise of Diyār Muḏar can be paralleled with that of the Thughūr province in Cilicia, starting with Khurāsānian military settlement; P. v. Sivers, *Taxes and Trade in the 'Abbāsīd Thughūr*, in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 25, 1982, p. 71-99.

51. S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 24-25.

52. Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Tārīkh al-Rusul wal-mulūk*, ed. M. J. De Goeje, 3 parts in 15 vols., Leiden, 1879-1901, here vol. III, p. 372-373; trans. H. Kennedy, *Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī* (The History of al-Ṭabarī, 29), Albany, 1990, p. 67-69.

53. For an outline of the urban development of al-Raqqā see S. Heidemann, *al-Muḥtariqa*, cit. (n. 46), and Id., *Defining an Imperial Metropolis: The Palace Area of al-Raqqā. From Madīnat al-Salām/Baghdād and Qaṣr al-Salām/Īsābād to al-Rāfiqa/al-Raqqā*, in N. Rabbat (ed.), *The Islamic City in the Classical Age*, Leiden (forthcoming).

54. K. Toueir, *Le Nahr el-Nil entre Raqqā et Heraqlah*, in B. Geyer (ed.), *Techniques et pratiques hydro-agricoles traditionnelles en domaine irrigué. Approche pluridisciplinaire des modes de culture avant la motorisation en Syrie. Actes du colloque de Damas 27 juin-1^{er} juillet 1987* (Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, 136), Paris, 1990, vol. 1, p. 217-227; W. Schirmer, *Landschaftsgeschichte*, cit. (n. 6), p. 68; T. J. Wilkinson, *Sabi Abyad: The Geoarcheology of a Complex Landscape*, in P. M. M. G. Akkermans (ed.), *Tell Sabi Abyad, the Late Neolithic Settlement*, Istanbul, 1996, p. 1-24, here p. 17, 23; T. J. Wilkinson, *Water and Human Settlement*, cit. (n. 6), p. 67-69, 82-83; S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 35.

55. Yāqūt, *Buldān II*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, cit. (n. 14), p. 96 (lemma *Jullāb*); D. Sourdel, *Nouvelles recherches sur la deuxième partie du « Livre des Vizirs »*, in *Mélanges Louis Massignon III*, Damascus, 1956-7, p. 271-299, here p. 277. The time of the construction work is not determined. Ṭabarī reports that Ismā'īl ibn Ṣubayḥ was in 170/786-7 as official in Ḥarrān; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ed. M. J. De Goeje, cit. (n. 52), vol. III, p. 572.

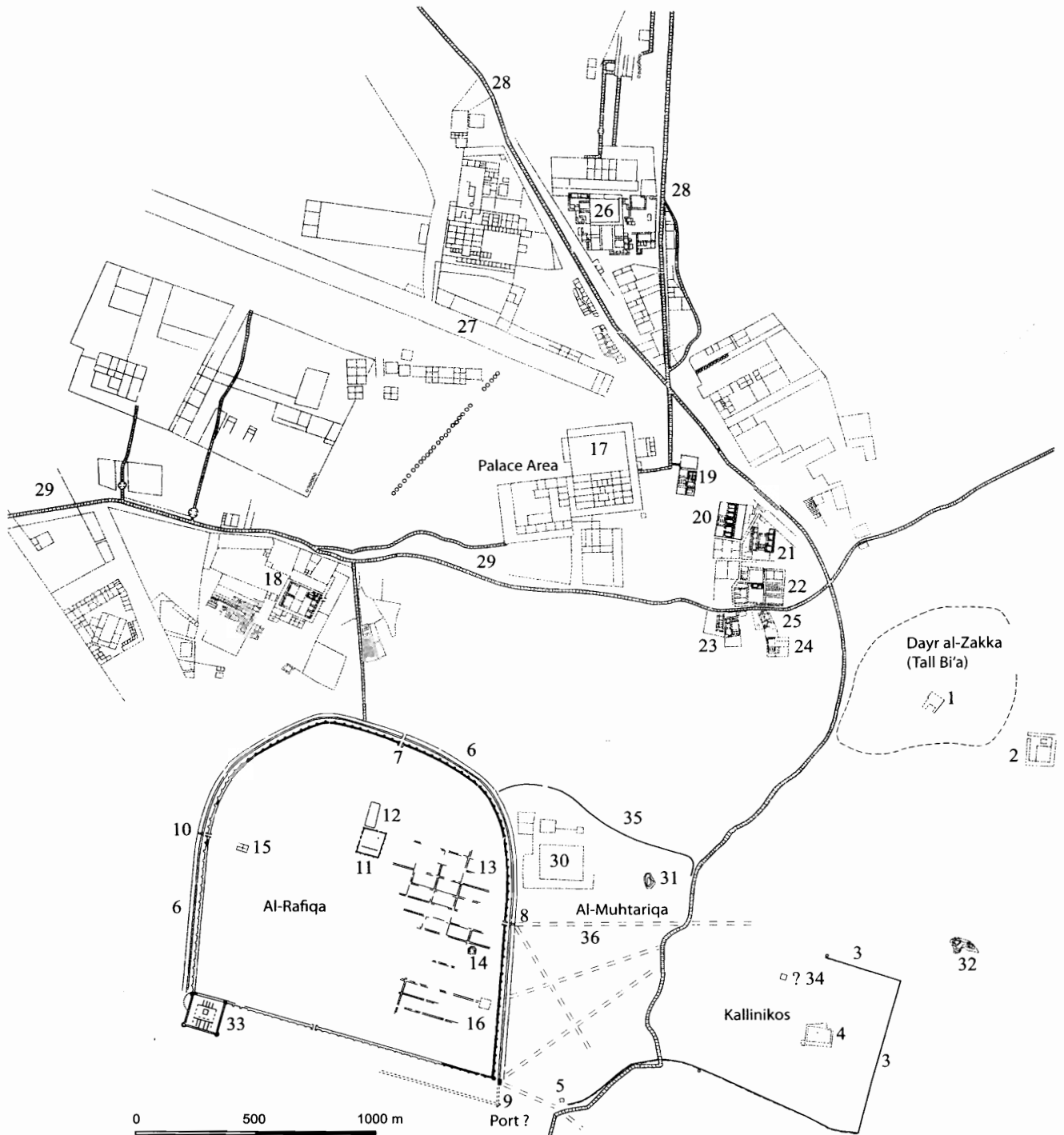


Figure 3 - Agglomeration al-Raqqā.
(German Archaeological Institute - Jena University)

The army, the administration and the court of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd created a vast demand for foodstuffs, industrial products, and services. The demand resulted in an increase in industrial and agricultural production which in turn led to an increase in the number of villages and small rural towns. In 200/815-6 the industrial facilities were enclosed by a wall and formed an urban entity of their own. It was later called al-Raqqa al-Muḥtariqa. The name means “the burning al-Raqqa”, probably an allusion to the industrial glass and ceramic furnaces, which let out thick smoke. This agglomeration was the largest city west of Baghdād until the foundation of Sāmarrā’.

In 221/836 the next boost in agricultural development came with the foundation of the new imperial centre Sāmarrā’ on the Tigris in northern Iraq. The extended military and administrative agglomeration stretched about 40 km from the north to the south and 20 km from the east to the west in its final stage. This rapid urbanization created an enormous new demand for foodstuffs.⁵⁶ In the Diyār Muḍar this is visible in increased building activity in the countryside. The different phases of this growth cannot always be archaeologically distinguished or precisely dated. The economic effects of the large urban agglomerations were probably felt at all sites in the Diyār Muḍar. For the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries, settlement expansion can be archaeologically traced at Ḥiṣn Maslama (figure 4), al-Jārūd (figure 5), Tall Maḥrā (figure 6) and Bājaddā (figure 7). These small towns share an almost rectangular layout and have distinct city walls. Excavations at the first three sites have revealed projecting half-towers, similar to those of the city walls of al-Rāfiqa. These walls served almost no defence purposes. They seem to be symbols of urban pride and wealth in small rural towns. The above-mentioned villages, Bājaddā and Bājarwān, have not yet been archaeologically explored. The impact of the foundation of Sāmarrā’ is evident in the blossoming of al-Jārūd in the Wādī Ḥamar, and very probably in the case of Ḥiṣn Maslama and Bājaddā. All three sites lay in the north of the Balīkh valley and the adjoining Wādī Ḥamar.

Tall Maḥrā, although a Byzantine Christian settlement, became a thriving rural small town in the ‘Abbāsid period. It is best known from Dionysios of Tall Maḥrā, the 3rd/9th-century chronicler and Jacobite patriarch of Antioch, whose seat was in Kallinikos/al-Raqqa. An ancient settlement mound is located in the centre of the urban precinct of Tall Maḥrā. The town has an impressive church, a small mosque,

a *quadriburgium* of unknown function and an almost rectangular ‘Abbāsid city wall, about 450 × 450 m, with projecting half-towers (figure 6). Tall Maḥrā constituted the largest and most important rural town between Ḥiṣn Maslama and al-Raqqa.⁵⁷ The small early Islamic town of Bājarwān, situated between al-Raqqa and Tall Maḥrā was identified by Karin Bartl with present-day Tall Dāmīr al-Gharbī and Tall Dāmīr al-Sharqī on opposite banks of the Balīkh river. In the literary sources its existence is attested from the Umayyad period to the 4th/10th century.⁵⁸

Present-day Khirbat al-Anbār, identified by Karin Bartl with Bājaddā, lies to the south of Ḥiṣn Maslama.⁵⁹ The name is of Aramaic origin thus probably reflecting an indigenous Syriac-speaking population. It appears to be almost square, 800 × 700 m, consisting of a low mound with a flat top, suggesting one main building-phase. Its most significant and currently only visible monument is a large dome seemingly covering an underground cistern or well (figure 7). It was first discovered and photographed by Mark Sykes in 1907.⁶⁰ Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī (d. 286/899)⁶¹ who traversed the Balīkh valley in 271/884-5 reports that the small town had been given to a retainer of Maslama ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, named Usayd al-Sulamī: “He built the city and surrounded it with a wall. In it, there are gardens (*basāfīn*) irrigated by a well (‘*ayn*) which springs up in the midst (*wasatuhā*) of the town. People drink from that fountain. With the surplus water, the grain fields are irrigated”.⁶² This spring might be located under the dome. Tall A‘far, an ‘Abbāsid village also mentioned by al-Sarakhsī as having gardens and vineyards, lay close to Ḥiṣn Maslama on the way to al-Raqqa, but it has not yet been located.⁶³

56. Ya‘qūbī, *Buldān*, cit. (n. 48), 262-264 (transport routes to Sāmarrā’); Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, cit. (n. 52), vol. III, p. 2110 (price increase in Baghdād because of Sāmarrān demand). A. Northedge, *Remarks on Samarra* (n. 45), p. 121. J. Johns, *Feeding the Army*, in C. F. Robinson (ed.), *A Medieval Islamic City Reconsidered. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Samarra* (Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 14), Oxford, 2001, p. 183-190.

57. M. De Jong – A. Kaneda, *Tell Sheikh Hasan*, cit. (n. 13); K. Bartl, *Tell Sheikh Hassan*, cit. (n. 13), offers a different picture of Tall Maḥrā. Based on the pottery collected mostly from the top of the ancient settlement mound, Karin Bartl suggested an end the occupation after the beginning of the 2nd/8th century. In comparison, the settlement mound in ‘Abbāsid al-Jārūd has almost no traces of an early Islamic occupation.

58. Ibn Khurrādādhbih, *Masālik*, cit. (n. 15), p. 97.

59. K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung*, cit. (n. 5), p. 219, 255. K. Bartl did not describe the dome and did not mention 12th-13th century pottery. In September 2005, during a visit of the author, however, some blue-glazed medieval pottery lay on the surface. Bājaddā was probably inhabited in the 6th/12th and early 7th/13th centuries. It was the origin of the famous family of the Ḥanbalī scholars, the Banū Taymiyya, Yāqūt, *Buldān* I, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, cit. (n. 14), p. 453.

60. M. Sykes, *Journeys*, cit. (n. 3), p. 240, see the photo of the dome p. 243. He identified this site with Ḥiṣn Maslama. The map at the end of the article makes it obvious that he did not see Madīnat al-Fār but Khirbat al-Anbār.

61. F. Rosenthal, *Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib as-Sarakhsī* (American Oriental Series, 26), New Haven, 1943.

62. Al-Sarakhsī in Yāqūt, *Buldān* I, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, cit. (n. 14), p. 453; trans. F. Rosenthal, *as-Sarakhsī* (n. 61), p. 73.

63. Al-Sarakhsī in Yāqūt, *Buldān* I, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, cit. (n. 14), p. 864; trans. F. Rosenthal, *as-Sarakhsī*, cit. (n. 61), p. 73. This reference dates the site to at least the second half of the 3rd/9th century.



Figure 4 - Hişn Maslama (Madīnat al-Fār).
(Drawing: Norbert Hagen, by courtesy of Claus-Peter Haase)

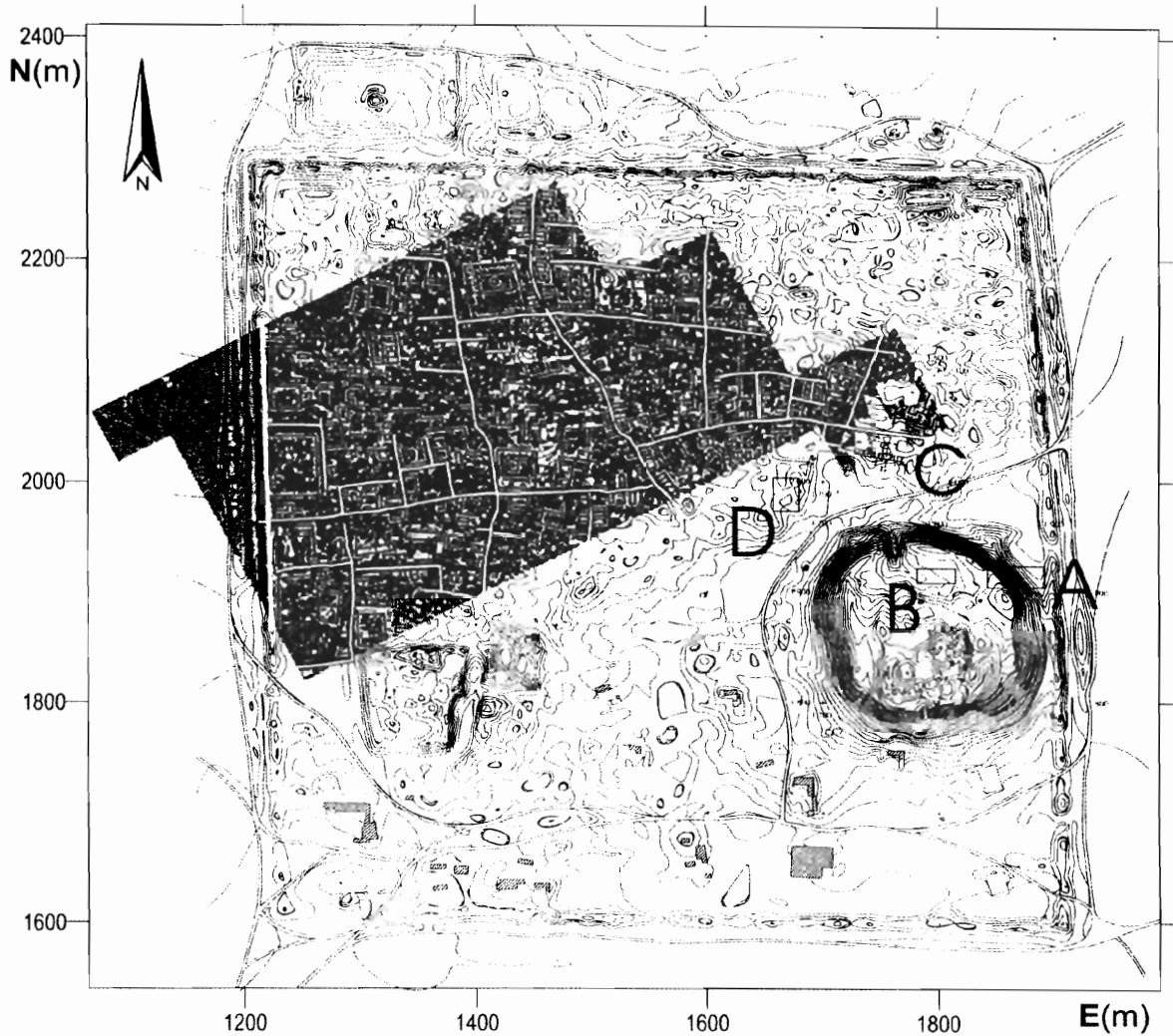


Figure 5 - Al-Jārūd (Kharāb Sayyār).
(By courtesy of Jan-Waalke Meyer)

For al-Jārūd Jan-Waalke Meyer had previously suggested the existence of an Umayyad and early ‘Abbāsīd phase.⁶⁴ In al-Jārūd, however, no regular dated coin issues of the neighbouring mint of al-Rāfiqa or any other ‘significant’ copper coins from stratified contexts prior to the 240s/850s were found. According to the coin finds, the settlement of al-Jārūd seems only to have been built, to any significant extent, after about the 230s/840s.⁶⁵ Jan-Waalke Meyer now also excludes settlement in the Umayyad and early ‘Abbāsīd

period, but based on other archaeological evidence. The main settlement phase of al-Jārūd, corroborated by Sāmarrā’-style stucco, can thus be dated to the middle of the 3rd/9th century. It is the period when Sāmarrā’ was the imperial capital and its demand for agricultural products was at its peak. Al-Jārūd itself was a centre of a flourishing agricultural landscape. Within a range of about 13 km there were at least 60 medieval Islamic rural settlements.⁶⁶ The north of the Diyār Muḍar, especially the rain-fed and extremely fertile Wādī Ḥamar, was well connected with the Tigris

64. In previous publications Jan-Waalke Meyer had favoured an Umayyad phase; see the publications of J.-W. Meyer in n. 12, and recently in J.-W. Meyer, *Recent Excavations*, cit. (n. 12), p. 48.

65. S. Heidemann, *Fundmünzen von Ḥarāb Sayyār*, cit. (n. 12).

66. *Wādī Ḥamar Survey*, cit. (n. 7).

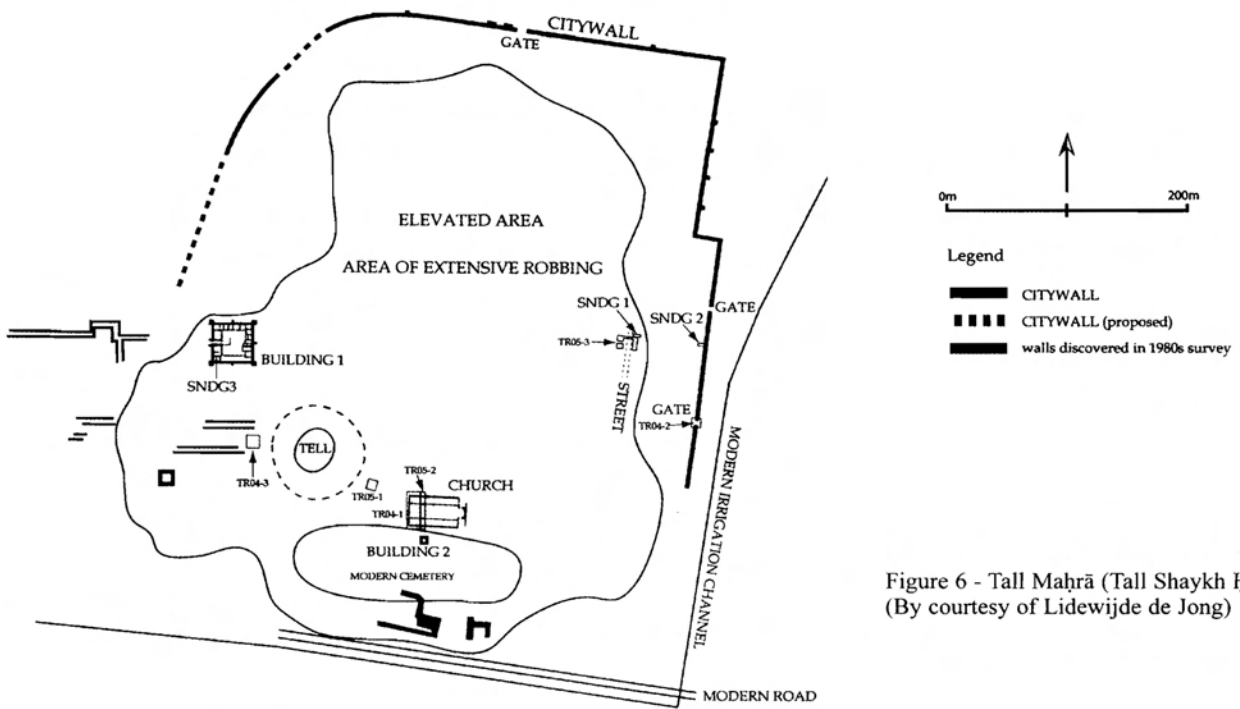


Figure 6 - Tall Maḥrā (Tall Shaykh Ḥasan).
(By courtesy of Lidewijde de Jong)

Figure 7 - Dome in Bājaddā (Khirbat al-Anbār).
(Photographs: author, Sept. 2005)



region via Ra's al-'Ayn and Mosul.⁶⁷ Ḥiṣn Maslama was also an agricultural centre between al-Jārūd and Ḥarrān. Stuccos of the first two Sāmarrā'-styles have been found, while the later, 'bevelled' style remains yet to be discovered.⁶⁸ A hoard of two gold *dīnārs* might be connected with the provision of food for Sāmarrā', although two coins are not hard evidence. Surprisingly, both *dīnārs* came from distant places, Egypt (dated 229/843-4) and the North African mint of Ifrīqiyya (dated 234/848-9), suggesting that they arrived as tax money first to Sāmarrā' before they went to the rural area.⁶⁹ In this period Bājaddā, described by al-Sarakhsī in 271/884-5, probably also thrived.

VI. THE DECLINE OF THE URBAN CENTRES AND THEIR RURAL HINTERLAND

Defining the decline and abandonment of most settlements in the Diyār Muḏar raises certain methodological problems in terms of both numismatics and archaeology. The case studies of al-Jārūd and Ḥiṣn Maslama are illustrative.

Regular copper coins had ceased to be struck in the core lands of the 'Abbāsīd empire by the middle decades of the 3rd/9th century. It seems that petty-coin circulation – at least in the first half of the 3rd/9th century – was still dominated by cast copper coins whose prototypes are barely recognisable, and by roughly octagonal-shaped coins made of cut sheet-metal. These coins are associated with the last occupation phase of the industrial and commercial quarters of al-Raqqā and Ḥiṣn Maslama; they are also known for Ḥarrān.

The use and production⁷⁰ of any form of copper coinage was widely abandoned in the central Islamic lands about the last third of the 3rd/9th century to be replaced to some extent by fragments of precious metal coins. We know from coin hoards and single finds that, from the last quarter of the 3rd/9th century onwards, fragments of silver and gold coins were used as small change for daily expenses. These fragments usually remain undetected in excavations, even by an experienced eye, because they are almost indistinguishable from any irregular piece of dirt. Thus whole strata of coins are potentially lost for archaeological, numismatic and historical research alike.

The coin finds of Ḥiṣn Maslama and al-Jārūd can provide an approximate date for the end of the circulation of the cast and octagonal coppers in this region and thus for the end of the occupation of these settlements. In Ḥiṣn Maslama⁷¹ and al-Jārūd,⁷² the latest dated evidence are coin fragments of the 270s and 280s/880s to 900s. Literary evidence corroborates the existence of Ḥiṣn Maslama at this time. In the year 271/884-5, Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī had visited the city of Ḥiṣn Maslama and left a short note about it in his report.⁷³ It corresponds to the period immediately after the Sāmarrā'-style stucco which was found here.⁷⁴

Karin Bartl counted nearly 80 early Islamic settlements in the Syrian part of the Balīkh valley. The dating of 25 of these to the early Islamic period is uncertain.⁷⁵ This figure nevertheless indicates a significant increase from the late Roman/Byzantine period and stands in sharp contrast to the 4 settlements detected for the following 5th/11th century. Karin Bartl coined the word 'Siedlungslücke', the 'lack of settlements'.⁷⁶ How can this evidence for the decline or the end of settlement in Ḥiṣn Maslama, al-Jārūd, al-Raqqā al-Muḥtariqa, Bājaddā and several other places be explained? First, systematic errors should be considered because the cast coppers and cut sheet-metal coins cannot be dated precisely. Secondly, fragments of silver and gold coins have usually been systematically overlooked in archaeological excavations. Thirdly, the sequence of pottery is still not well established for the period between the 3rd/9th and the 6th/12th centuries.⁷⁷

67. This argument is partly based on coin evidence, see S. Heidemann, *Fundmünzen von Ḥarāb Sayyār*, cit. (n. 12), no. 2 (Mosul). Id., *Die Fundmünzen von Ḥarrān*, cit. (n. 10), nos. 23 (Ra's al-'Ayn), 29 (Mosul). Ḥiṣn Maslama, inv. nos. MF89-42 (Ra's al-'Ayn), MF93-97 (Mosul).
68. C.-P. Haase, *Preliminary Report*, cit. (n. 11), p. 102; Id., *Excavations*, cit. (n. 11), p. 58; Id., *Stuckdekor*, cit. (n. 11), p. 49.
69. Inv. nos. MF01-9.7.01a and MF01-9.7.01b. Cf. C.-P. Haase, *Preliminary Report*, cit. (n. 11), p. 101. The two gold coins were found in the same room as the Sāmarrā'-style stucco.
70. By the middle of the 3rd/9th century, regular copper coins had ceased to be struck in the core lands of the 'Abbāsīd empire. For example, the last known, extremely rare, dated copper issue for al-Raqqā was struck in 279/892 but it has never surfaced in any controlled excavation.

71. A fragment of a contemporary forgery of a dirham of Naṣībīn, year 273/886-7. Madīnat al-Fār, inv. no. MF99-29.
72. S. Heidemann, *Fundmünzen von Ḥarāb Sayyār*, cit. (n. 12), no. 4, dirham fragment of al-Mu'ṭaqid billāh dated 2[79-89] h.
73. Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī passed Ḥiṣn Maslama in the year 271/884-5; in Yāqūt, *Buldān* II, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, cit. (n. 14), p. 287.
74. J.-W. Meyer *et al.*, *Die dritte Grabungskampagne*, cit. (n. 12); S. Heidemann, *Fundmünzen von Ḥarāb Sayyār*, cit. (n. 12). In 2006 a second dirham fragment was found, minted between 133/749 and 206/821-2.
75. K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung*, cit. (n. 5), p. 186-187; Id., *Balīkh Valley Survey*, cit. (n. 5), p. 335. Compare H. N. Kennedy, *Impact*, cit. (n. 34), p. 297; M. G. Morony, *Economic Boundaries?*, cit. (n. 34), p. 173.
76. K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung*, cit. (n. 5), p. 116, 187; Id., *Tell Sheikh Hassan*, cit. (n. 13), p. 477-478. The term refers to the almost complete lack of datable artefacts and architectural structures for the period of Bedouin domination, that is between the early Islamic and the Zangīd/Ayyūbid period.
77. See K. Bartl, *Frühislamische Besiedlung*, cit. (n. 5); C. Tonghini, *A New Islamic Pottery Phase in Syria: Tell Shahin*, in *Levant*, 27, 1995, p. 197-207; C. Tonghini, *Qal'at Ja'bar Pottery. A Study of a Syrian Fortified Site of the Late 11th-14th Centuries* (British Academy Monographs in Archeology, 11), Oxford, 1998; C. Tonghini – J. Henderson, *An Eleventh-Century Pottery Production Workshop at al-Raqqā*, *Preliminary Report*, in *Levant*, 30, 1998, p. 113-127, and M. Jenkins, *Early Medieval Islamic Pottery: The Eleventh Century Reconsidered*, in *Muqarnas*, 9, 1992, p. 56-66.

The narrative sources explain the economic, political and military reasons for the decline of cities, towns and villages during the late 3rd/9th century. The return of the caliphal court from Sāmarrā' to Baghdād in 279/892 resulted in a steady decline of the population in the former imperial centre and thus a decline of their demand for food. This must have been felt immediately in the agricultural centres in the northern Diyār Muḍar such as al-Jārūd and Ḥiṣn Maslama and most probably also in Ḥarrān. Markets with a high purchasing-power disappeared and made investments in extensive agriculture less profitable. The region of the southern Diyār Muḍar suffered from the 'Abbāsīd-Ṭūlūnid wars in the 270s/880s and the following destructive wars against the Shiite Qarmaṭian groups which ravaged the region.⁷⁸ During those wars, nevertheless, al-Raqqā retained its position as a fortified garrison city between Egypt, Byzantium and Iraq. Yet for the year 271/884-5, Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī reports that al-Raqqā was also in decline, even though al-Raqqā's and Ḥarrān's continued importance is shown by a period of almost uninterrupted minting of gold and silver coins until the year 323/934-5. After this date, only sporadic issues occur. The conquest of al-Raqqā by the Ḥamdānids in 330/942 marked the end of al-Raqqā as a military garrison. Economically, this meant an end to the transfer of military income from Iraq to al-Raqqā for the maintenance of a garrison. The purchasing power of the citizens, and therefore the income opportunities for craftsmen and artisans in the city must have decreased. This was followed by the devastating reign of the Ḥamdānid ruler Sayf al-Dawla 'Alī (r. 333–356/945–967). In 351/962 he deported the Shiite population of Ḥarrān in order to re-populate Aleppo after the massacre in this city carried out by the Byzantines.⁷⁹ In the year 353/964 he dismantled the iron gates of al-Raqqā.⁸⁰ The contemporary chronicler Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 378/988) was very outspoken about the deliberate devastation in his home region.⁸¹ Conversely, this devastation of a formerly agriculturally productive region must have been felt in its former markets. Baghdād, dependent on the import of foodstuffs from northern Syria and the Diyār Muḍar, declined considerably during the

4th/10th century. One factor, among others, might have been the lack of sufficient food supply.

The first half of the 4th/10th century saw a new migration of nomad tribes from the Arabian peninsula to the Diyār Muḍar at the expense of the sedentary population. Since the 380s/990s the Bedouin amīrs had been in control of the land, cities and towns in the Diyār Muḍar and the Middle Euphrates area. As a rule, the Bedouin amīrs had no interest in urban life. Their power base was in the pasture land and they usually resided in their camp (*hilla*) outside the cities.⁸² Judging from the sporadic mint activity, and the relative frequency of references in the literary sources, in the second half of the 4th/10th century, Ḥarrān in the fertile northern plain once again became more important than al-Raqqā. The Banū Numayr, who were in control of the Diyār Muḍar during most of the 5th/11th century, usually had their main *hilla* in the northern plain, in the vicinity of Ḥarrān. During the 5th/11th century, al-Ruhā', Ḥarrān and al-Raqqā remained urban centres and were still mentioned in the literary sources. But decline went on. In 423/1032 or 424/1033, the pagan temple in Ḥarrān was finally destroyed and the pagan Šābian community was exterminated by impoverished Shiite groups.⁸³ The congregational mosque of al-Rāfiqa fell into ruins.⁸⁴

VII. SUMMARY

During the 6th century several fortified cities, Edessa/al-Ruhā', Carrhae/Ḥarrān and Kallinikos/al-Raqqā, marked the Byzantine border with the Sasanian empire. Edessa remained the capital of Osrhoene and housed its military headquarters during the Sasanian occupation and afterwards. Numerous monasteries were built and prospered during that period.

The first phase, spanning from Byzantine rule to the early 'Abbāsīds, is that of steady agricultural investment and development: life went on during the transition period, through the Sasanian occupation and the Arab conquests in the first half of the seventh century, without any disruption detectable so far. In the early Umayyad period the two cities of the northern plain, al-Ruhā' and Ḥarrān, remained the dominant economic and administrative centres. Ḥarrān took over from al-Ruhā' as the provincial centre and capital of the Umayyad super-province in the north and later even as the residence of an Umayyad caliph. During the Umayyad period the ruling family had acquired land in the Diyār

78. For al-Raqqā see S. Heidemann, *Geschichte*, cit. (n. 28), p. 41-46. Al-Ruṣāfa was ravaged in the year 289/901-2; B. Kellner-Heinkele, *Ruṣāfa in den arabischen Quellen*, in D. Sack (ed.), *Resafa IV. Die Große Moschee von Resafa – Ruṣāfat Hiṣām*, Mainz, 1996, p. 141.

79. R. J. Bikhazi, *The Ḥamdānid Dynasty of Mesopotamia and North Syria 254-404/868-1014*, PhD. Diss., Ann Arbor, 1981, p. 867-868; Th. Bianquis, *Pouvoirs arabes à Alep aux X^e et XI^e siècles*, in *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 62, 1991-94, p. 49-59, here p. 54; S. Heidemann, *Renaissance*, cit. (n. 16), p. 54-56.

80. R. J. Bikhazi, *Ḥamdānid Dynasty*, cit. (n. 79), p. 899-902; S. Heidemann, *Renaissance*, cit. (n. 16), p. 51.

81. Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 378/988): *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-ard*, ed. J. H. Kramers, *Opus geographicum, Liber Imaginis Terrae* (Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, II), Leiden, 1938; reprint Leiden, 1967, p. 225-226.

82. For the decline and its reasons see in detail S. Heidemann, *Renaissance*, cit. (n. 16), p. 29-60.

83. S. Heidemann, *Renaissance*, cit. (n. 16), p. 91-93.

84. S. Heidemann, *Ein Schatzfund aus dem Raqqā der Numairidenzeit, die „Siedlungslücke“ in Nordmesopotamien und eine Werkstatt in der Großen Moschee*, in *Dam. Mitt.*, 11, 1999, p. 227-242.

Muḍar and invested in its cultivation and irrigation, thus further stimulating the prosperous agriculture, as witnessed by the numerous estates, among which Ḥiṣn Maslama and Bājaddā. In the early 'Abbāsīd period Ḥiṣn Maslama may have changed its character from a self-sufficient rural estate, owned by a leading member of the Umayyad family, to a small rural town with a local market using petty coinage for day-to-day transactions.

The second phase saw the economic impact from the demand of large metropolises such as Baghdād, founded 145/762, and al-Rāfiqa, founded 155/772. In 180/796-7 the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd transferred his court and government to al-Raqqa. This shifted the centre of economic growth from the fertile northern plain to the delta of the Balīkh in the south. The demand of the new metropolises for services and industrial products thus stimulated industry and provided a growing population with income. Their need to be fed, in turn, fostered the growth of agricultural settlements. Even after the return of the court in 193/809 to Baghdād, al-Raqqa remained the capital of the western half of the

empire and a garrison city. In 221/836 the foundation of Sāmarrā' on the banks of the Tigris and the new, increasing demand of this urban agglomeration for foodstuffs gave the northern plain around Ḥarrān and the Wādī Ḥamar with the rural centres al-Jārūd and Ḥiṣn Maslama an economic advantage and made agricultural production there highly profitable. Sāmarrā'-style stuccos from al-Jārūd, Ḥiṣn Maslama, al-Rāfiqa and al-Raqqa al-Muḥtariqa are witnesses of a flourishing region in the middle of the 3rd/9th century.

The last dated coins from Ḥiṣn Maslama and al-Jārūd from the last third of the 3rd/9th century indicate a decline beginning with the decreasing demand of Sāmarrā' and the Ṭūlūnid and Qarmaṭian wars, which affected the region. The final blow for the smaller rural towns and villages may have occurred during the devastating rule of the Ḥamdānids and the immigration of superficially Islamicised Arab nomads, namely the Banū Numayr, in the middle of the 4th/10th century. In what was one of the richest agricultural areas of the empire, with an extensive system of irrigation canals, nomadic pastoral life now prevailed.