

AN UNNOTICED ANCIENT METROPOLIS OF ASIA MINOR

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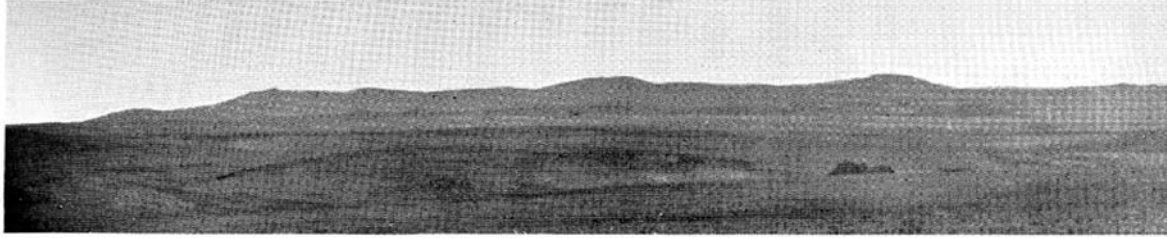


FIG. 1—The ridge of Kevkenes Dagh from the east, crowned by the unknown ancient city. From right to left the elevations are: Keykavus Kaleh, the citadel; Kiramitlik; Gös Baba.

THE “unnoticed metropolis” of this paper is a remarkable site, the existence of which has long been known but which has apparently never been described. Yet it is the site of the largest pre-Greek city of Asia Minor, a city that in its day must have been one of the chief cultural and political centers of the great Hittite Empire that flourished in the second millennium before the Christian era. In the last few years the decipherment of Hittite cuneiform records has greatly stimulated our interest in that Empire and its mysterious and little-known people.¹ Its survivals, however, cover a vast territory, scattered as they are from one end of Asia Minor to the other, and little has heretofore been done to recover and study them.

In the summer of 1926 the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago began a campaign of research in the field. The first step was the making of a preliminary archeological survey in the basin of the ancient Halys River, the Küzül Irmak² of today.

FIRST VIEW OF THE CITY ON THE KEVKENES DAGH

One evening during the course of the preliminary explorations of 1926 on our way back to Yozgad we passed a remarkable site which appears on Kiepert's map of Asia Minor³ simply as a mountain called Kjerkjanos Dagh, our Kevkenes Dagh, with nothing to indicate the imposing ruins awaiting us. The inhabitants of the village at the foot

¹ For a summary of our present knowledge of the Hittite Empire see H. H. von der Osten: *Explorations in Hittite Asia Minor, Oriental Institute Communications No. 2*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1927. See also D. G. Hogarth: *The Hittites of Asia Minor*, in: *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 2, 1924, pp. 252-274.

² Turkish names transliterated according to the system now being worked out by the Oriental Institute.

³ *Karte von Kleinasien*, 1:400,000, Berlin, 1902-1906.

of the mountain told of a *büyük kaleh*, big castle, at its summit and a *chök büyük sur*, very big wall, reaching from the castle itself to Kiramatlik, "the place where there is pottery," a still higher point in the lofty mountain ridge nearly 1.5 kilometers southward (Figs. 1 and 5). Though it was already late we climbed up to the "castle," whence we had a comprehensive view of the wide plateau between the two elevations just mentioned, the entire plateau being surrounded by the



FIG. 2.—The general location of the ancient city of which the citadel is now known as Keykavus Kaleh.

from the name of the neighboring modern village as Boghaz Köi (see Fig. 2). The necessary concession for excavation was granted by the Angora Government, which throughout has shown a spirit of cordial coöperation, and the expedition established itself in the field late in May. From Alishar it was possible to make excursions to neighboring sites and ruins noticed or discovered during the preliminary work of the preceding summer. Among these was a visit to the site on the Kevkenes Dagh, which was undertaken at the first opportunity.

SECOND VISIT TO KEVKENES DAGH

Accompanied by Mr. Erich Schmidt, of our staff, and Tachsin Bey, our Turkish dragoman, I traveled over the road taken the year before towards the impressive ridge of the Kevkenes Dagh. The Anatolian sun, usually so brilliant, was hiding behind a screen of black clouds from which rain was descending upon the villages in the distance, a fact which unfortunately interfered with our photographic record. We passed through Karavilly, one of those pleasant, clean,

⁴ Additional support for the first year was also contributed by a group of interested friends: Mrs. Murray Crane, Mr. Henry J. Patten, Mr. James A. Patten, and Mr. Frank G. Logan.

ruins of what must have been a great wall built of large stones. The place was of such magnitude and importance, and the interval before sundown so brief, that we abandoned any thought of even a sketchy survey, promising ourselves to return the following year.

Our first year's investigation in the region had made so obvious the need of systematic archeological work that the General Education Board granted an appropriation for the support of a five years' campaign of Hittite research in Asia Minor.⁴ In pursuit of these plans the Institute selected for excavation in 1927 an unidentified but extensive site near Alishar, about 128 miles (205 kilometers) east-southeast of Angora, in the heart of the Hittite country, and not far from the ancient capital, now known

flat-roofed little Anatolian villages, which came to life at our approach. Ragged little brown children came tumbling out of the gates, and among other strange characters appeared a *hodja*, the village priest and teacher, who alone is still permitted to wear the fez and turban. Our curiosity was roused by a peculiar long, flat rock resting on two smaller

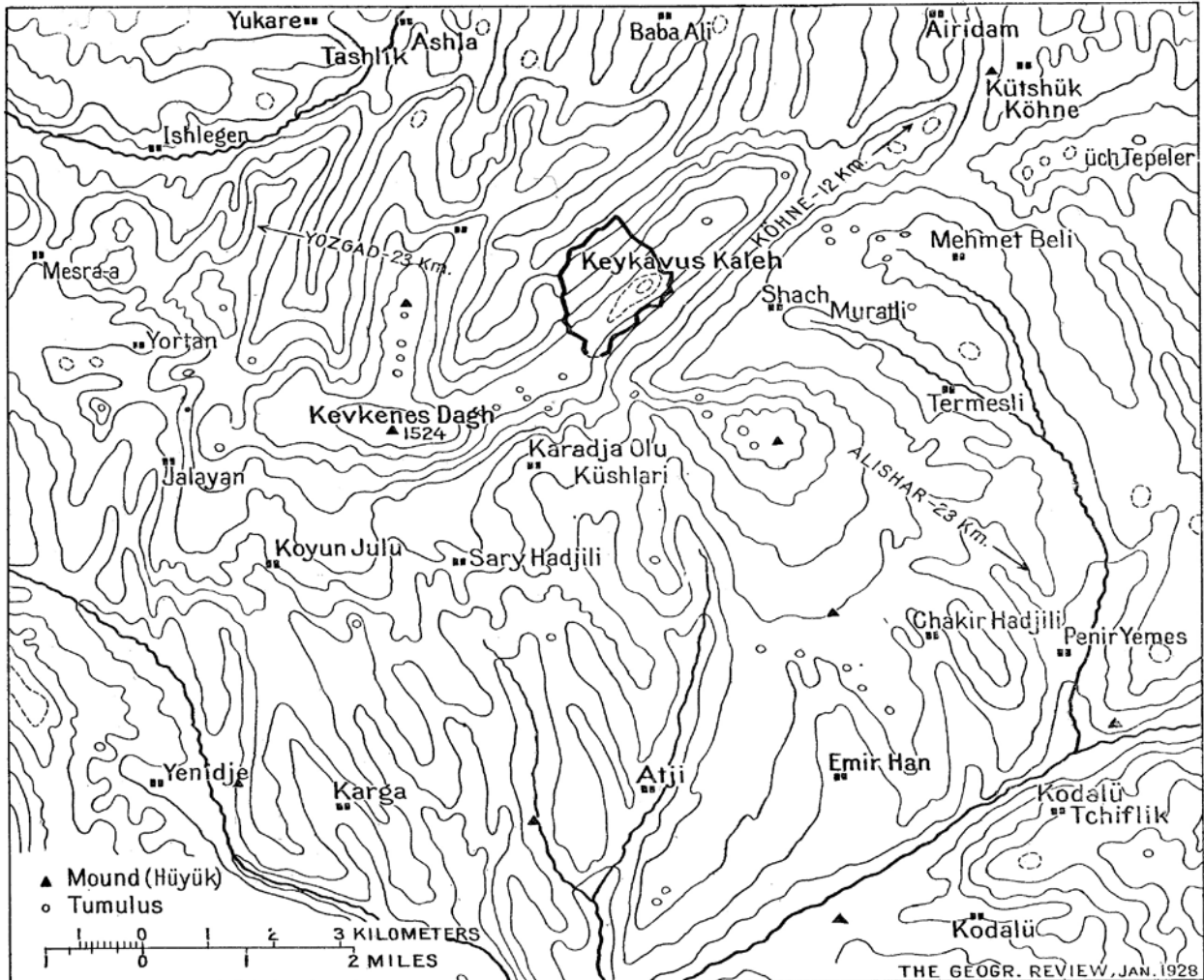


FIG. 3—Sketch map showing the site of the ancient city in relation to neighboring antiquities and modern villages.

ones—we had seen similar rocks in nearly every village. Tachsin Bey informed us that this is the “death stone” of the village, upon which are laid the bodies of the dead before their burial.

In the next village, Kerbiyeh, we sought in vain the explanation for the pear-shaped lava rocks resting on the corners of certain roofs, and also employed as gravestones. We had observed similar stones in other villages. Their meaning still remains a mystery to us. At Yazili Tash (“inscribed stone”), the next village, we rephotographed the late-classical architrave we had seen the year before. Halfway between Yazili Tash and the village of Penir Yemes (“there is no

cheese"), a good-sized ancient city mound called by the natives Chadür Hüyük ("the tent-shaped *hüyük*," mound) is visible from the road. After passing Termesli we reached Shach Muratli, a village at the foot of the long mountain range on which was situated our goal.

Half an hour's hard climb over slippery rocks and grass brought us to the ancient city enclosure, beyond which we continued to climb until we reached the top of the *kaleh*, some forty meters higher (Fig. 4). From this point the panorama is impressive. One looks far over the city and across the surrounding plains. To the west, toward Yozgad, and to the north is a mountain landscape, the higher peaks being surmounted by tumuli. Southward lies the irregularly divided plateau upon which is situated the larger part of the ancient city we had come to survey, stretching out to the elevation of Kiramitlik, behind which is visible the large tumulus of Gös Baba ("eye-father"), perched on the southernmost tip of the Kevkenes Dag. Still farther southward and eastward extends the wide and fertile plain through which flows the Konak Su with its many tributaries. Hundreds of villages dot the plain and the hills with their groups of flat-roofed houses huddled together. The villages nearer at hand are clearly visible, but those at a distance stand out by reason of the groves of trees among which they nestle, such groves in this region being found only near human settlements.

Numerous tumuli can be observed on the mountains as well as on the slopes of the Kevkenes Dag and on smaller elevations in the plain, where I could also distinguish at least five ancient city mounds (Fig. 3). From the plain, about twenty-three kilometers away, emerges the Sivri ("points"), a steep mountain, near which one could discern the site of our own *hüyük* and excavations. Limiting the view beyond the plain to the east lie the Chomak Dag and a range of high mountains, with groups of tumuli near Terzili Hammam; while to the southeast also may be seen a large part of the high plateau south of the Konak Su, with the tumuli near Battal and the city mound of Sarnen Ören. And finally, far away beyond all these, almost floating in the clouds, rises the vast pyramid of Erdjas Dag (Mt. Argæus) near Kaisariyeh, its peak snow-capped.

As to the silent ancient city immediately before us, it is nothing short of imposing. The surrounding walls, which when viewed from the *kaleh* at the easternmost angle of the city appear like long welts of piled-up rocks, enclose an area approximately three times the size of Boghaz Köi,⁵ the ancient Hittite capital. The great expanse of ruins, once a city teeming with the life and resounding with the voices of a powerful people who dominated most of Asia Minor, now lies mute and barren. A few scrub trees, stunted by the harsh winter winds

⁵ See Otto Puchstein: *Boghasköi, die Bauwerke*, Leipzig, 1912, Pl. 1. The north-south length of the enclosure of Boghaz Köi is about 1450 meters, and the greatest width east and west about 1150 meters. The area is shaped roughly like a shield.

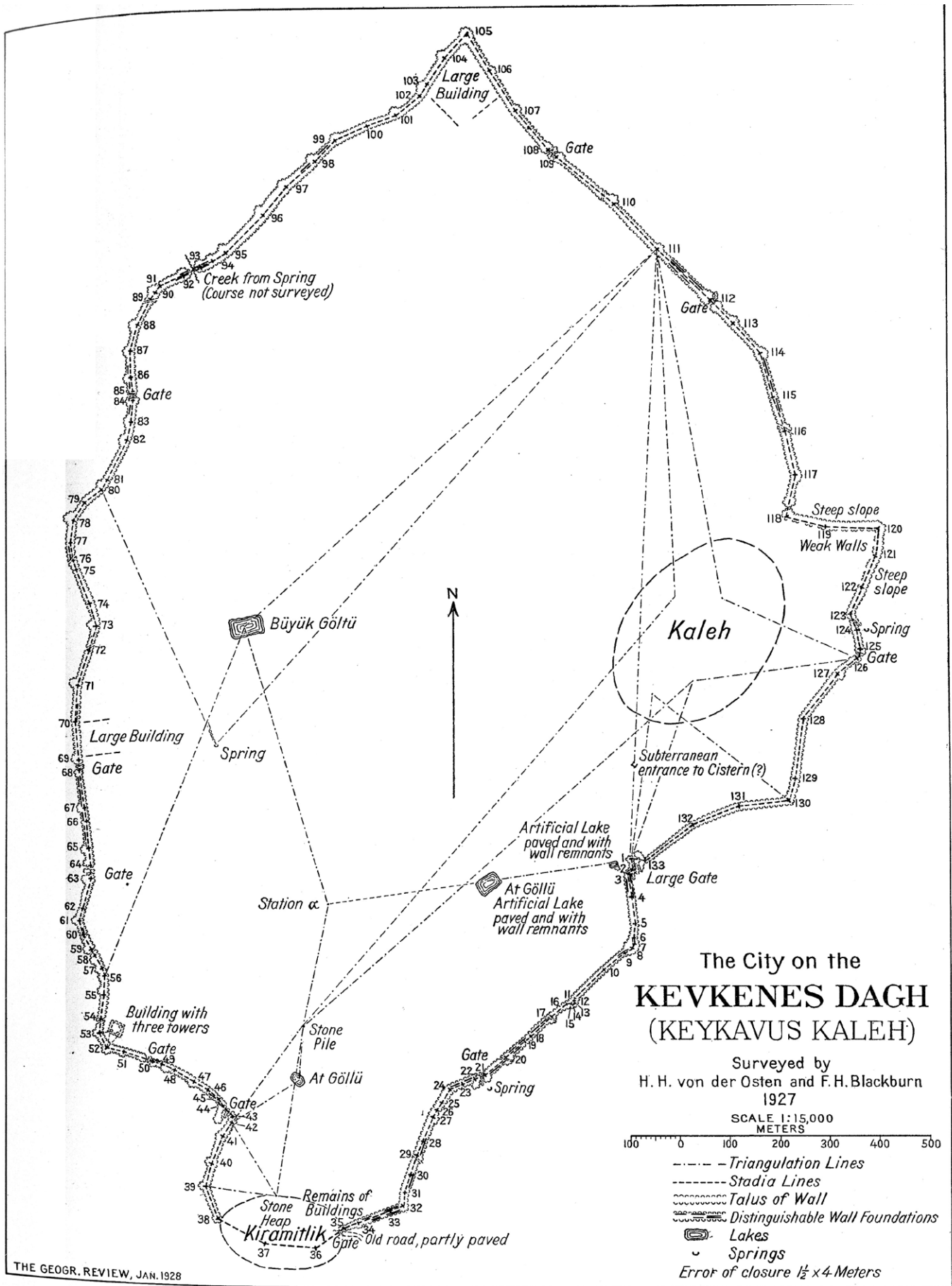


FIG. 4—Map of the main enclosure of the city on the Kevkenes Dagh.

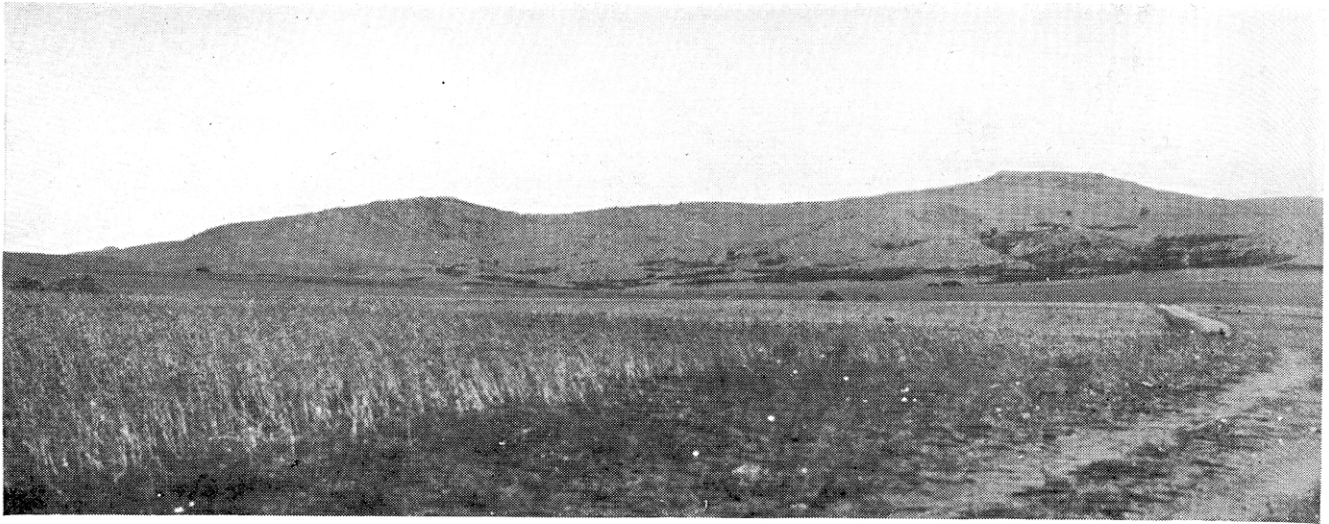


FIG. 5

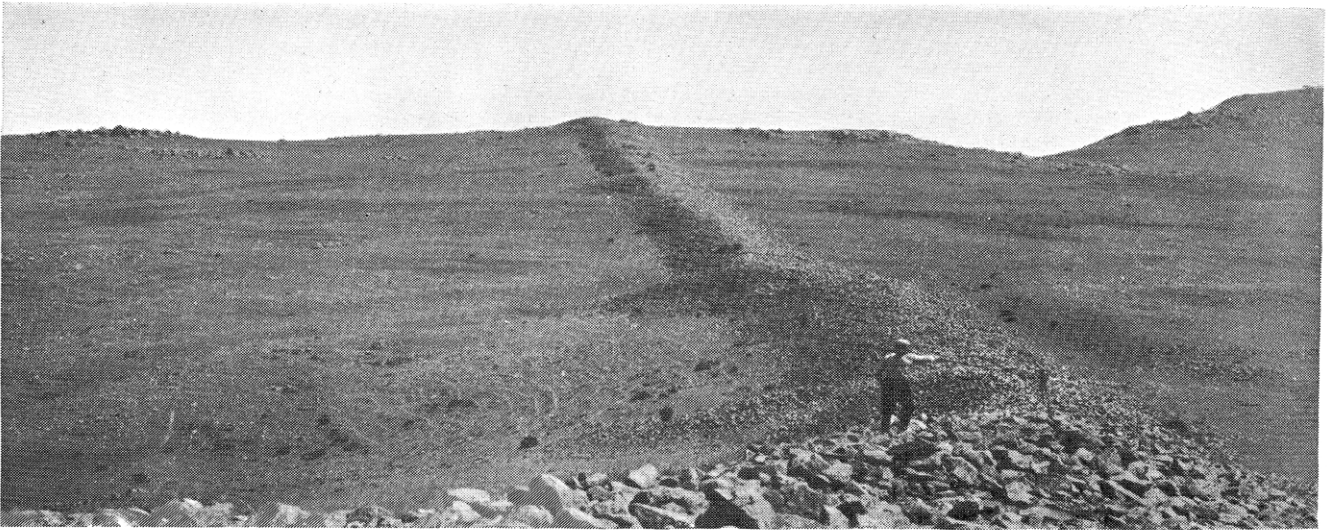


FIG. 6



FIG. 7

FIG. 5—The ancient city from the east, with the village of Shach Muratli at its foot.

FIG. 6—Looking southeast along the northeast wall from station 106 to station 111.

FIG. 7—Ruins of gate in the west wall at stations 84 and 85.



FIG. 8



FIG. 9

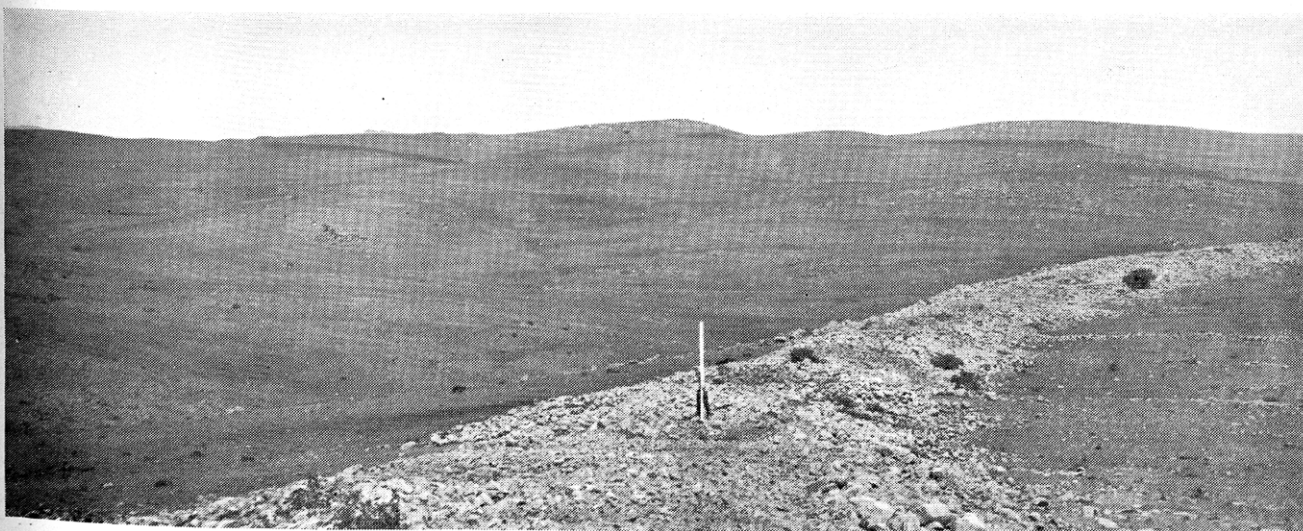


FIG. 10

- FIG. 8—Gate in the east wall at station 112.
FIG. 9—The western wall near station 76.
FIG. 10—The present widespread condition of the fallen walls on the west of the city, as seen from station 71.

which sweep over this now deforested region, timidly sprout from amongst the jumble of rocks at the base of the *kaleh* immediately below us. Otherwise the great enclosure is a picture of desolation. Northwest from the steep *kaleh* the ribbon of tumbled wall stretches away in gentle undulations until it reaches what was the northernmost limit of the city (see Fig. 4, station 105; also Fig. 6), where it turns back sharply upon itself southwestwards, and from the *kaleh* can be



FIG. 11



FIG. 12

FIG. 11—Stone pavement on the slope of the citadel (*Kaleh*).

FIG. 12—Example of the east wall near station 112. It rests on a massive stone foundation.

seen, almost a mile away, continuing southward until it reaches the abrupt, steep slope of *Kiramitlik* which for a short distance serves to break its continuity (stations 35 to 38). East of *Kiramitlik*, the city's southern limit, the wall is resumed, winding sharply northward again toward the *kaleh*, to complete an enclosure nearly a mile in width and over a mile and a half in length (1520 meters by 2564 meters).

The enclosure walls follow the natural elevations rising from the plateau; and within them well-marked contours of ancient structures are visible, although here and there at higher points the bed rock comes to the surface. On the *kaleh* itself room divisions are well defined by rectangular lines, once building walls but now simply piles of stones. In some places can still be seen remnants of the actual walls, with stones still *in situ*, the thickness of the wall at such points measuring about 1.85 meters.

SURVEY OF THE RUINS

We selected a place which would be suitable for our tent when we later returned for the survey and took some preliminary notes to

assist us in this latter task. Returning a week later accompanied by Mr. Frank H. Blackburn of our staff at the Alishar excavations, we were able after three days of hard work to map the main enclosure of the great city and make the necessary notes.

The survey of the wall was achieved by "shooting" 133 stadia lines. At each station thus secured the width and height of the fallen wall was measured, as well as the dimensions of any other adjacent construction. The height of the now fallen wall averaged 2.50 meters,

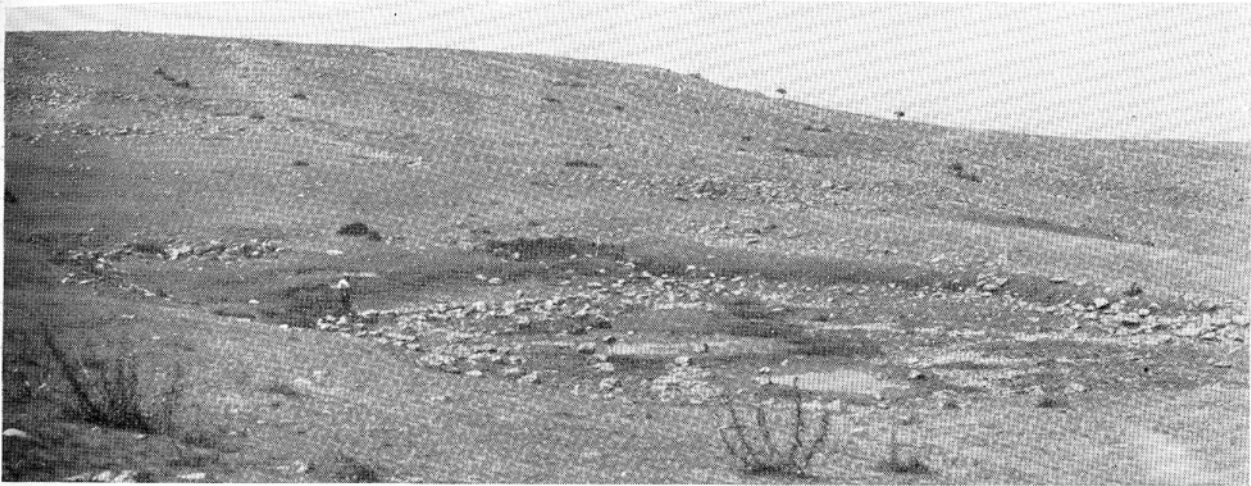


FIG. 13—Artificial lake basin (at Göllü) inside the city wall. Part of the ancient water system.

sometimes attaining 3.50 meters, while in its present tumbled and dispersed condition the width of the débris varied between 10 and 16 meters, the sections near stations 90 and 105 bearing evidence of having been especially massive. Near the slope to the east (stations 118 to 122) only very scanty remains of the wall are to be found. In addition to the stadia lines a few triangulation lines also were "shot," in order to locate some artificial lakes and a subterranean spring at the foot of the *kaleh* (Fig. 13). Of interest was the fact that on the Kiramitlik side the wall was for some distance discontinued (stations 35 to 38). At the same time we prepared also a small map (Fig. 3) showing the general situation of the city and its relation to surrounding tumuli and *hüyüks*.

Closer investigation of the outer wall, as partially preserved in some places, revealed that it was built upon a massive stone foundation some 5 or 6 meters thick at its top (see Fig. 12). To determine the original thickness at the base of the foundation would have required the removal of much fallen masonry, often consisting of very large stones. The angle of the outer slope of the foundations averaged about 60 degrees. Upon this foundation was built the city wall, which varied in thickness from 4 to 4.5 meters.

Protective towers had been built at irregular intervals, usually at points of obvious strategical or tactical advantage or near gates

(stations 59 and 89, and Figs. 7 and 8). I found only one tower whose walls were in the least preserved (station 52); all the others could be recognized only as great heaps of stones which had fallen outward from a structure of indeterminate height, the stones in some instances having tumbled to a distance of 17 meters from the actual tower wall. Apparently the towers were round or, at least, had rounded corners.

Of the large gates, only two are sufficiently preserved to enable us to discern something of their architecture (stations 1 and 84). In the case of the gate near station 84 the foundation walls of the two large, round-cornered gate towers are still visible (Fig. 7). On one occasion, in returning to our car we took another route and had to climb down over some 60 meters of refuse and rocks, the talus of the *kaleh* or castle itself. At several points we noticed that the slope of the elevation on which the *kaleh* was built had been paved with large stones (Fig. 11). Without excavation it is difficult to determine how far up into the talus the bed rock reaches.

The potsherds seen on the surface of the ruins are of a kind usually designated as "Hittite," with red or brown-red decoration on a grayish-white or buff-colored slip. Other sherds were simply plain buff and plain red ware. Interspersed among them were great numbers of Roman and even Byzantine glazed ware.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SITE

As to the origin and history of this city, or regarding its possible name and identity, I would not venture to hazard any premature statement at this time. I would only call attention to the fact that the character of its walls, the rounded corners in much of the construction, and the slope of the foundation walls, are reminiscent of the ruins at Akalan, near Samsun; while the general emplacement of the site reminds one of Boghaz Köi. In other respects, however, this city on the Kevkenes Dagħ is not only very different from Boghaz Köi but encloses an area three times the size of the latter.

This city so spacious and so extensively fortified may well have been a long-forgotten rival of Boghaz Köi, lying behind the chain of mountains visible to the west; and it goes without saying that even the partial excavation of the place would yield splendid results. So large is the site that a campaign of less than seven or eight years would be of comparatively little use. Even a detailed survey of the surface remains would require at least six or seven months' work by a staff of experienced field workers.