

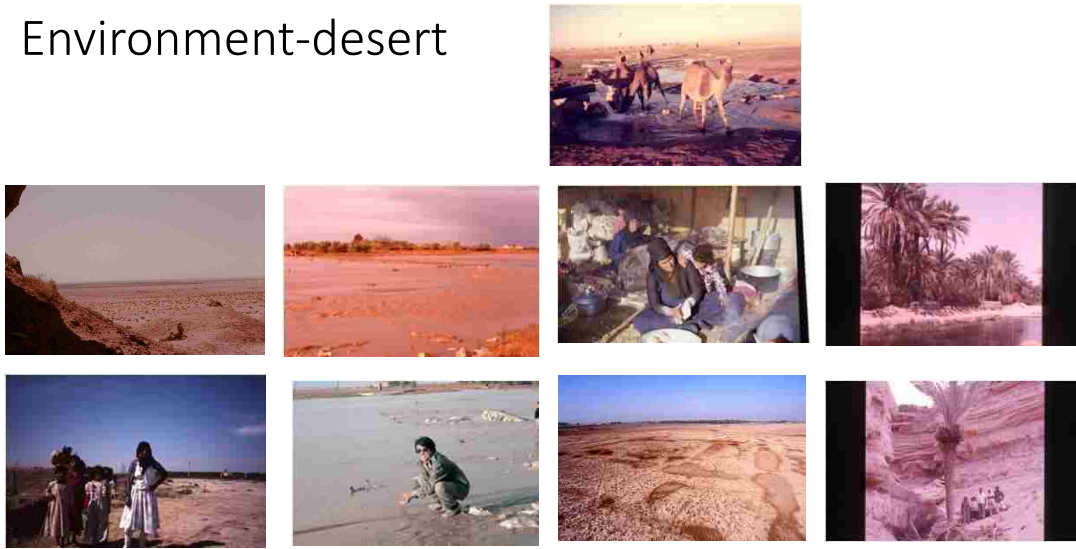
# Excavations at At tar caves (1972-1975)

Ken Matsumoto , Professor Emeritus of Kokushikan University

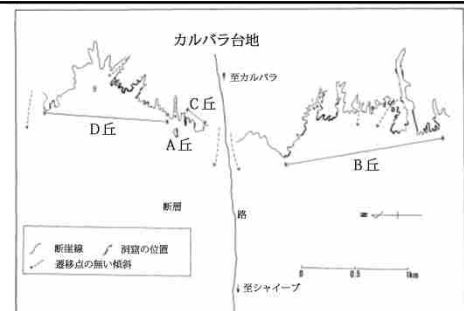
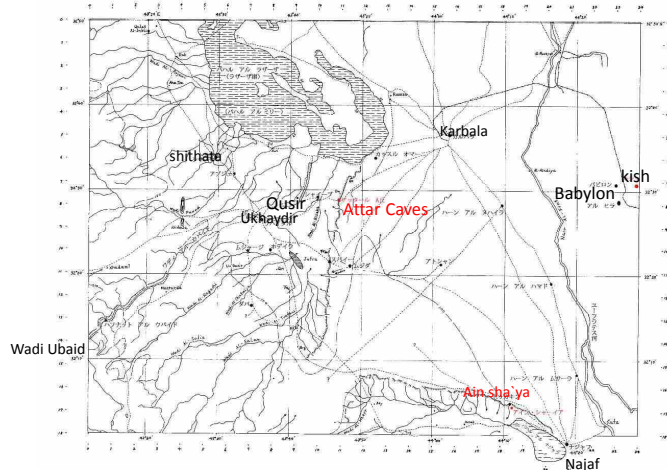
## Archaeological sites



## Environment-desert



## South-western desert of Iraq



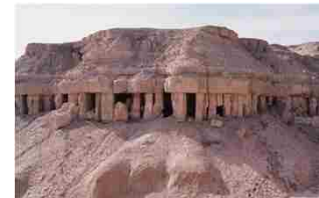
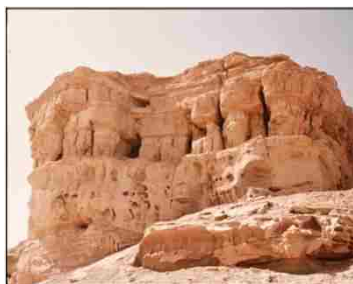
## Attar caves, Hill –A, Hill C



### Attar Caves -Hill A-



The excavation at Attar caves has started on 1970.



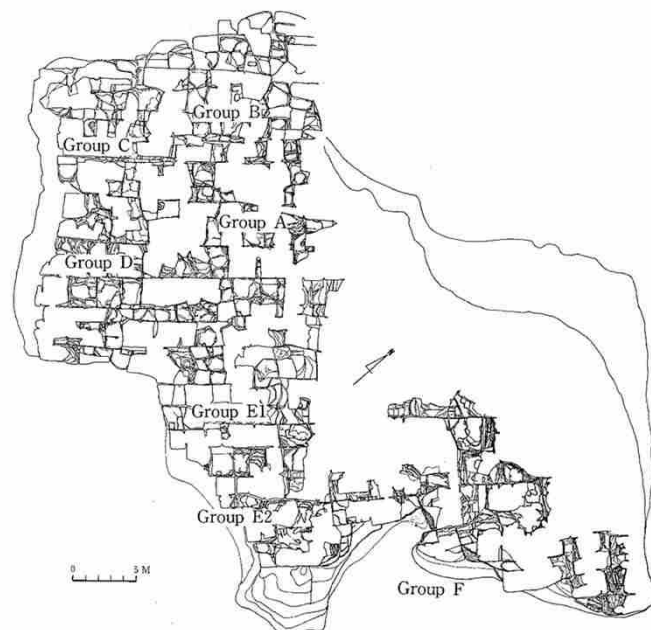
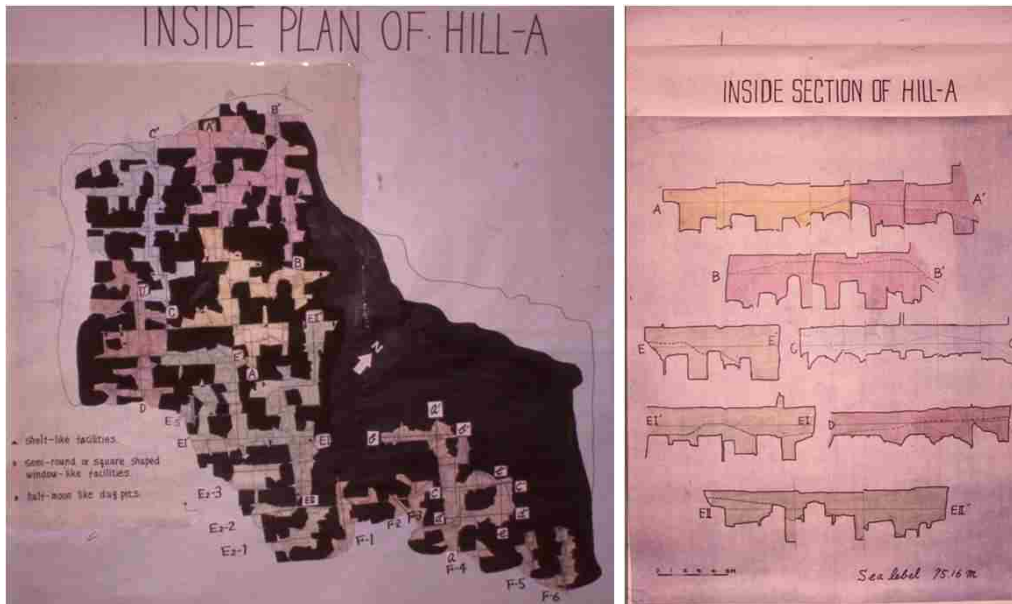
Hill-B



Ducakin cave

The Institute for cultural studies of Ancient Iraq has been established on 1975.

## Plan and section of Hill A, Attar caves



## C-17cave Hill C, Attar Caves

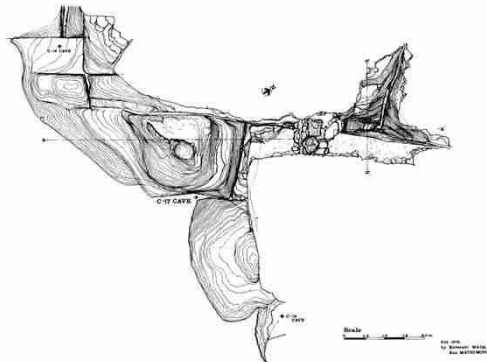
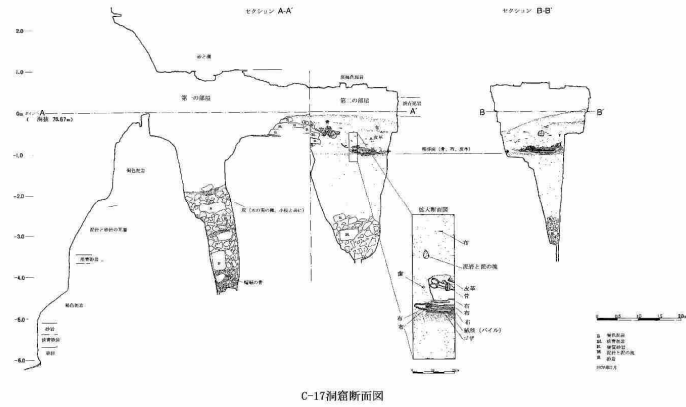


Fig. IV-2 Plan of HB-C-17 Cave



C-17洞窟断面図

## garve in C—17cave

a Crouched burial

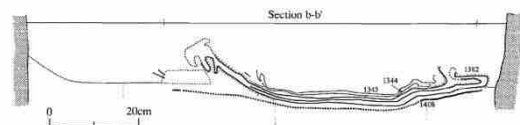
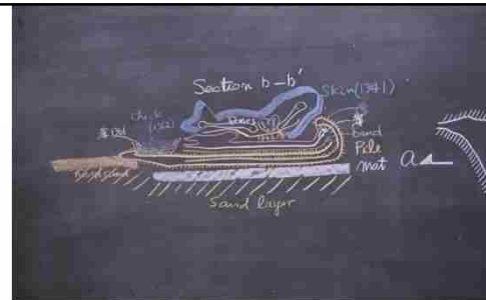
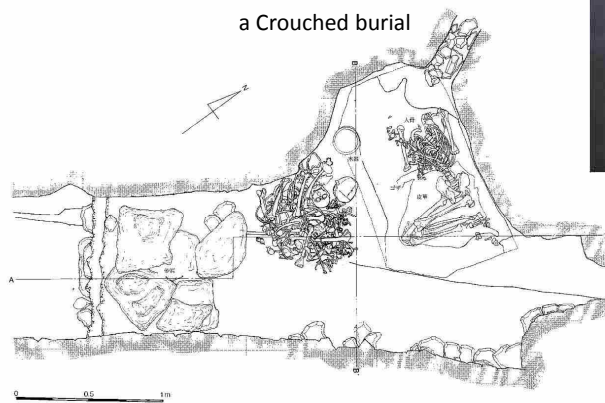


Fig. 11 Section b-b' of the burial.

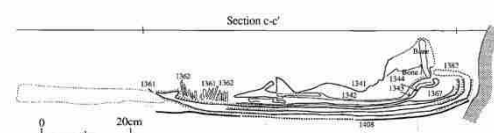
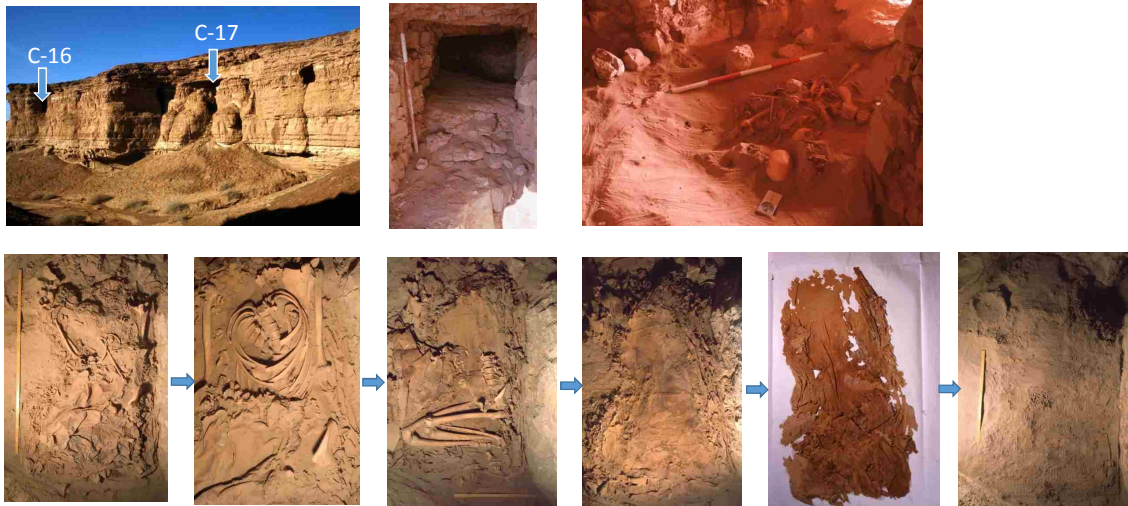


Fig. 12 Section c-c' of the burial.



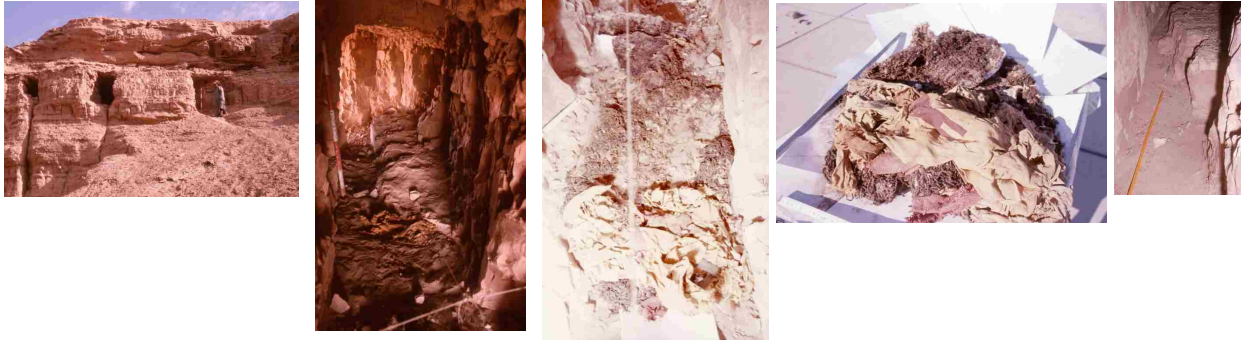
## Grave in C-17cave



## Textile, leather, mat



## C-12cave



Progress of working of textile

1, fumigation (insect, mold etc.)

2, cleaning

3, forming

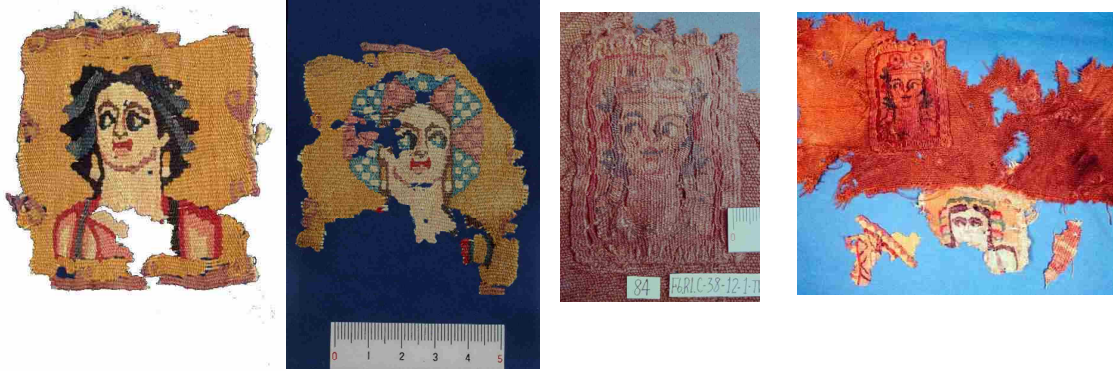
4, analysis (fabric, weave, twist, material, color, dyeing etc.)

5, joining, assemble

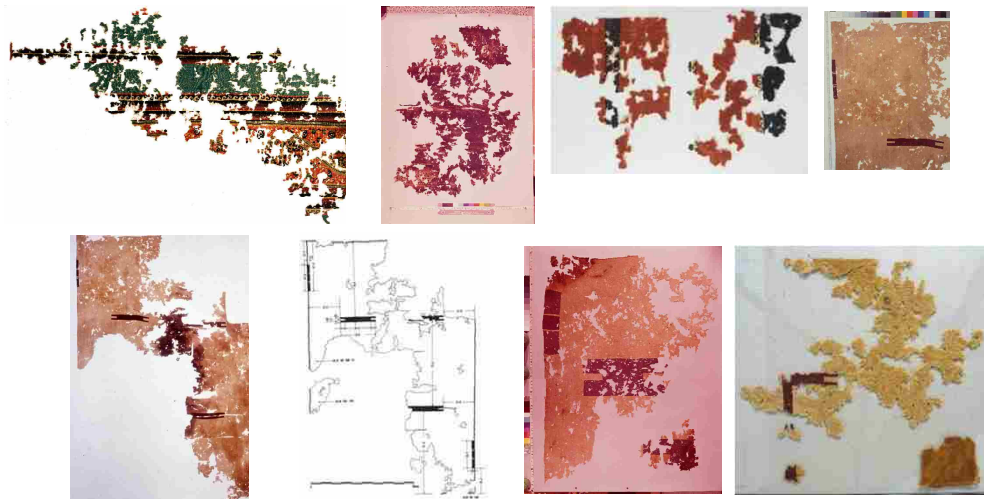
6, wrapping up in paper or packing

7, putting in a storage kept a thermo-hygrostat (20°C, 55%)

## Textiles(emblem) from Attar caves



## Textiles (H,Γ shape) from Attar caves



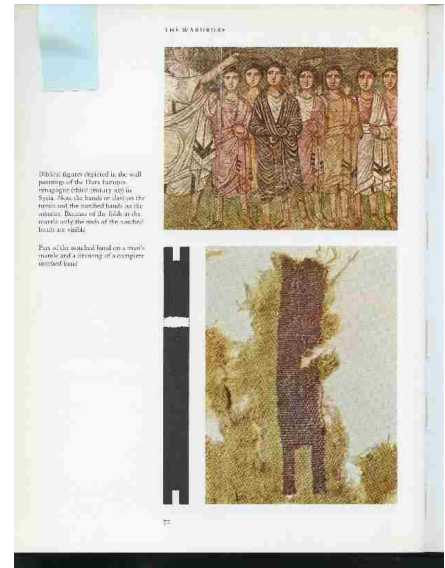
The graves in the At-Tar caves that might date to the Roman/Parthian periods (2nd to 4th centuries) were very important events. The occupants may have been one of the apostles or have worn a large cloth with the symbol "H" or "Γ", and may also have worn a large cloth with patchworks of divine or human figures as one of the feudal lords in this area.



# Dura Europos, Hatra, Bar Kokhoba, H, Γ shape



432-440 ローマ、サンタマリア、マッジョーレ聖堂



## Grave goods

ネックレス



イヤリング



指輪



鼻輪



ガラス器



木器



貝殻



## Pottery fragments from Attar caves



BC1000、middle Assyrian



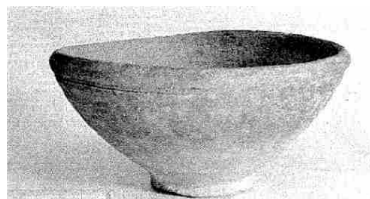
BC.600 Neo Babylonian



8 century AD、the Abbasids



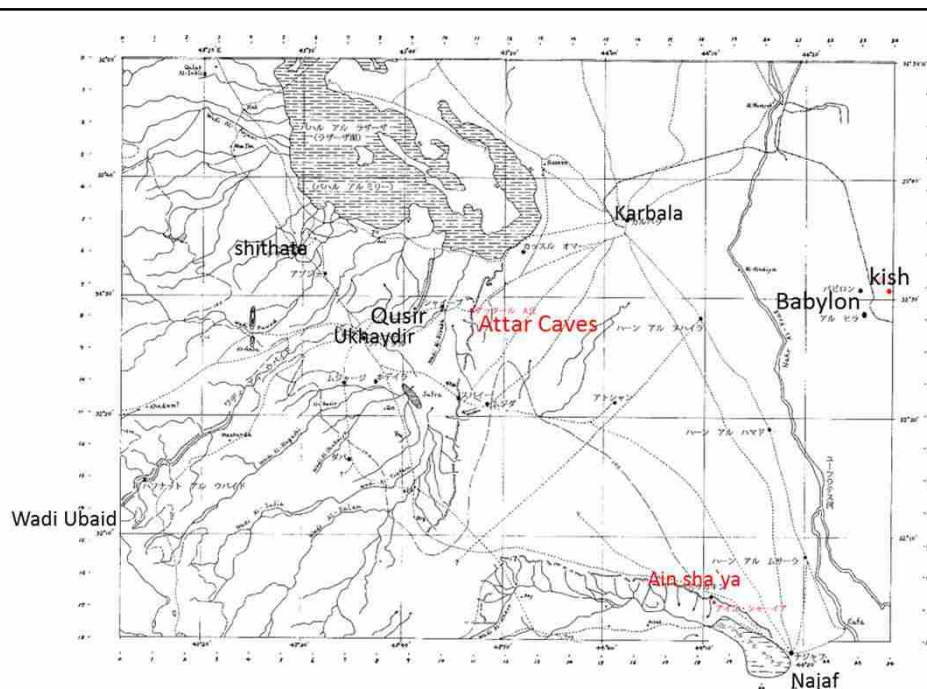
## Objects from Attar caves



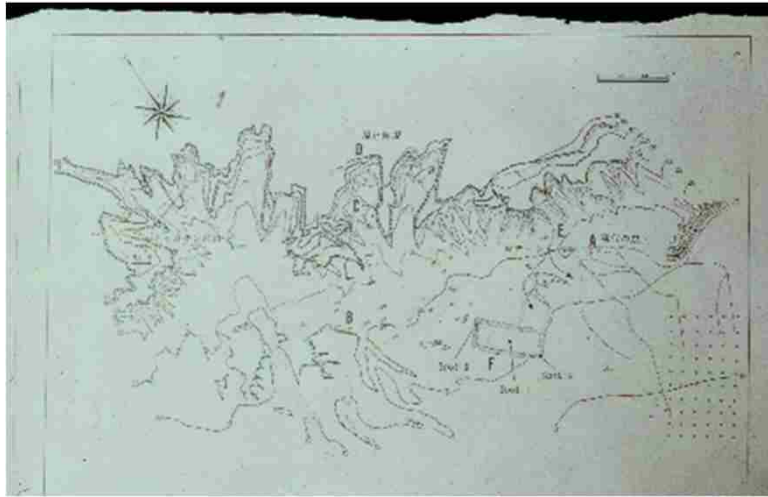
Two perfectly shaped bowls that were found in Attribute Group D of Hill A at the At-Tar caves are similar to the bowls from Babylon and Kish from the Neo-Babylonian period (6th century BC). On the other hand, as is commonly known, Nabonidus (555 BC – 539 BC), the last king of Babylon, spent ten years in Taima in Saudi Arabia. I imagine that he went from Babylon via the At-Tar caves and Dumat al-Jandal to Taima through Wadi Ubaid.



Further back in the middle Assyrian period (10<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), Arabs controlled the trade, especially of frankincense, spices, gold, ivory, horses, sheep, camels, etc. between Arabia and Mesopotamia, and its trade centers are Dumat al-Jandal (ancient Adummatu), Taima, Dedan (al-Ula). It also could be said that the Arabs, Assyrians, and Babylonians already knew Wadi Ubaid as the trade route between Dumat al-Jandal and Babylon via the At-Tar caves, since fragments of Assyrian pottery have been found in the At-Tar caves.

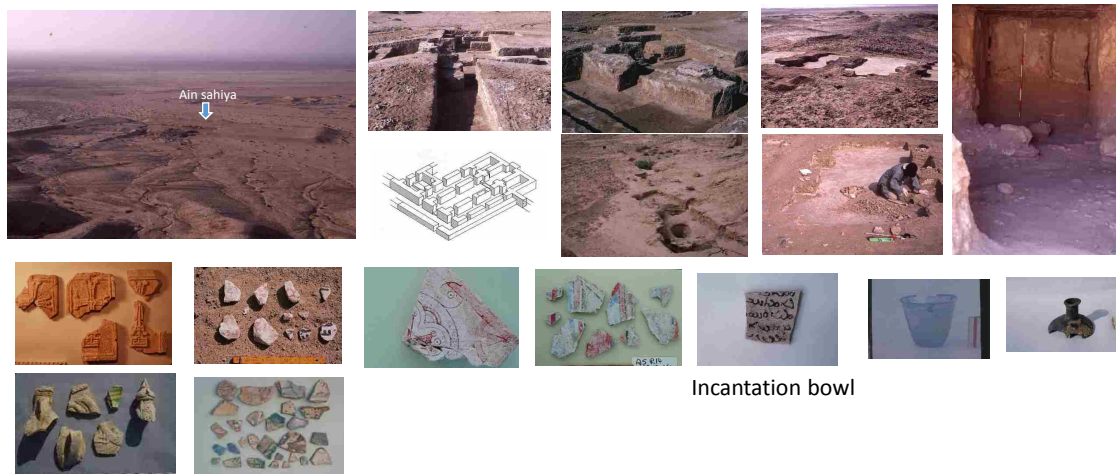


## Ain Shaiya and Dukakin caves



## Ain shai'ya and Ducakin caves near Najaf

Church(basilica) and monastery in Abbasids period







Islam spread throughout almost the entire southwestern desert of Iraq during the 7th and 8th centuries AD, but also coexisted with the Christian and Jewish faiths, in Shithata, Tell Ukhidar, Quseir, and there was a church and monasteries in Ain shaiya and Ducakin caves in the desert near Najaf. Furthermore, the Ukhaidir palace was built in the desert by Isa ibn Musa of the Abbas dynasty and perhaps at the same time as Atshan, Mujidah, Zaba. There also were some Abbasid pottery shards in the E2-3 cave of the At-Tar caves.

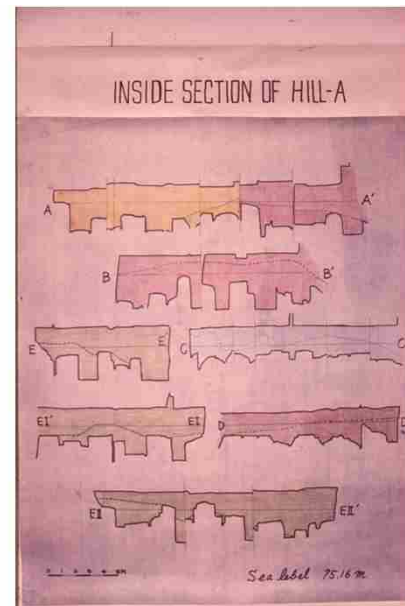
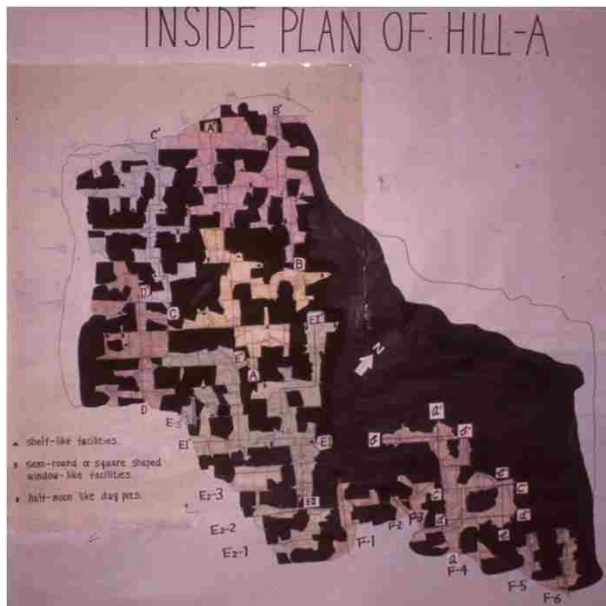
I suppose Ukhidir has not only a function of Palace but also as a fortress or a custom of trade route between Baghdad and Arabia.





At tar caves -Hill A-

How is your intuition or imagination about Attar caves ?

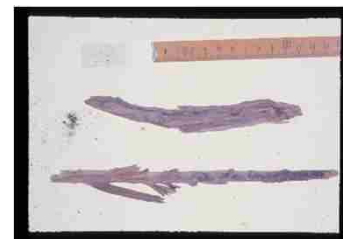


## What have been these caves dug out for ?

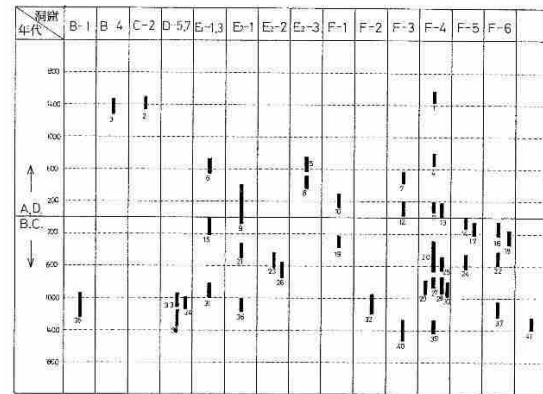
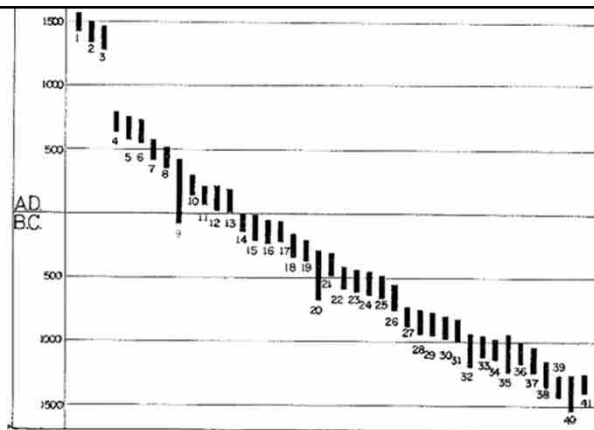
How is your intuition or imagination about Attar caves ?

While the nomads have always been on the move in the desert since ancient time, and the gatherers of bat feces have also worked in the At-Tar caves since ancient time about 1100 BC dated by C14 dating

The caves might have been dug out by the gathers of bat's feces to collect them which are in the cave and cracks. The bat's feces have been sold as a fertilizer of plants in a garden.



Leaf of date palm, 1100 BC dated by C14



A丘 洞窟 C4年代測定結果

- ご静聴ありがとうございました。
- Thank you for listening



## summary

- I would like to note some attributes through my experience in the research,
- 1, Two bowls with perfect shape that have been found in attribute group D of Hill-A, at-Tar caves are the similar type of the bowls from Babylon and Kish which belong to Neo Babylonian period (BC.6th century). On the other hand, as is commonly known, Nabonidus(BC555-BC539), last king of Babylon had stayed ten years at Taima in Saudi Arabia. I suppose that he had gone from Babylon via At-Tar caves and Dumat al-Jandal to Taima through wadi Ubaid.
- 2, Go back to the Assyrian period (BC. 10th century ~BC. 7th Century). Arabs have controlled the trade, especially of spices, gold, ivory, horse, sheep, camel etc. between Arabia and Mesopotamia, and its trade centers are Dumat al-Jandal/Adummatu, Taima, Dedan(al-Ula). It also could be said that Arabs, Assyrian, and Babylonian have already known the wadi Ubaid as the trade route between Dumat al-Jandal and Babylon via At-Tar cave, because small pieces of Assyrian pottery were found in At-Tar cave.
- 3, The graves in At-Tar caves that might be Roman period/Parthian period (2nd Century ~4th Century) were a most important events. The occupants might have been one of apostles or as apostles that worn the large cloth with the symbol of "H" or "r", and also worn the large cloth with patch works of god or human figure as one of the feudal lords in this area.
- 4, During Byzantine period before Islam in the desert, there were Gassan Kingdom and Laham Kingdom. And there had happened a big movement that is the spread of Islam, Islam-Arab army had moved from Mecca to Yarmouk through Thithata, Dumat al-Jandal, 634AD, and a man curved the state of the mind with the epigraph on the rock of Hafnat in Wadi Ubaid.
- 5, The Islamization has happened to the most whole of the south-west desert of Iraq is during 7th - 8th century AD., but also coexisted with Christian and Jewish, in shithata, Tell Ukhidar, Quseir, and there was church and monasteries in Ain shaiya and Ducakin cave in the desert near Najaf. And Ukhaidar palace has been built in the desert by Isa ibin Musa of the Abbas dynasty and perhaps in same time with Atshan, Mujidah, Zaba. There also were some Abbasid pottery shards in E2-3 cave of at Tar caves.
- I suppose Ukhaidir has not only a function of Palace but also as a fortress or a customs of trade route between Baghdad and Arabia.
- As above-mentioned, At tar caves and its surround have been full of activity as trade route through wadi Ubaid from ancient Assyrian and Babylonian periods or Sumerian,
- and Qseir and Tell Ukhidar has been built as roman cities, and Christian or Jewish cities, and Ukhaidar palace of the Abbasid dynasty, and of course Bedouins always are moving from ancient in the desert
- and the gathers of bat's feces have also worked in the At-Tar caves from ancient time.
- The caves might have been dug out by the gathers of bat's feces to collect them which are in the cave and cracks. The bat's feces have been sold as a fertilizer of plants in a garden. And the pieces or chips of marl stone were reusing as soap etc..