



Fig. 1. Map of Tell F3 and Tell F6.

1. Introduction

The beads presented in this volume were recovered from excavations carried out in Tell F3 and Tell F6 on the island of Failaka in Kuwait by the Danish Archaeological Mission between 1958 and 1963. The architecture uncovered dates to the 2nd millennium BC and consists of several phases of domestic architecture along with a small temple courtyard in Tell F3 and a large production and storage installation called the “Palace” in Tell F6 (figs. 1 and 2). The architectural remains and their dating have since been published (Kjærøum & Højlund 2013), along with material studies of stamp seals (Kjærøum 1983), pottery (Højlund 1987), and stone vessels (Hilton 2014).

The corpus of beads from the 1958-1963 investigations consists of 167 beads from Tell F3 and 348 beads from Tell F6, a total of 515 beads. Originally, the material from the Danish excavations included 114 additional beads, but they were lost during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Thus, the combined number of beads from the Danish 1958-1963 excavations would have amounted to 629 beads.

The lost beads were registered under Kuwait National Museum numbers KM 374 (n=53), KM 375 (n=40) and KM 376 (n=21). The National Museum of Kuwait kindly provided photographic documentation of these beads and therefore it was possible to determine that they resemble the rest of the bead assemblage with respect to forms and materials. Apart from their being attributed to Tell F3 or Tell F6, there is no information on their archaeological contexts.

The excavations were continued at Tell F3 and Tell F6 in 1973-74 by the Johns Hopkins University whereby fifteen further beads were found (Howard-Carter 1984).

In 1984-85, French excavations uncovered a temple in Tell F6 east of the “Palace”; this produced further fifty-one beads (Calvet and Pic 1986 p. 66-72).

In 2008-2012 the Kuwaiti-Danish Archaeological Mission to Failaka resumed excavations at Tell F6, and during these excavations 200 beads were recovered and subsequently published (Andersson 2016).

Kuwaiti-Danish excavations continued at Tell F3 in 2012-2017 bringing a further twenty-seven beads to light (Andersson 2021). The total number of beads found at Tell F3 and Tell F6 from 1958 to 2017 thus amounts to 922.

The available 515 beads found during the 1958-1963 excavations are the object of the present work and are referred to as the assemblage in the following pages. They are kept in the Kuwait National Museum, and they were studied by the author during several stays on Failaka (2009-2019) as a member of the Kuwaiti-Danish Archaeological Mission to Failaka directed by Dr Flemming Højlund. Final preparation of the manuscript was made in 2022.

This study uses two parallel systems for numbering the beads, the Danish field number and the Kuwait National Museum number. The field number consists of a tell prefix, F3 or F6, combined with letters or a number (e.g. F3.ei and F6.60) (cf. Højlund 1987 p. 8-9). A field number can be assigned to a single bead or a group of beads, up to fifteen, from the same context. Any information attached to the field number (trench, find level and horizontal coordinates, along with a description of form and material) was registered in paper-based documentation (“white registration cards”), stored at Moesgaard Museum. The registration system used by the Kuwait National Museum consists of the prefix KM, followed by a number (e.g. KM1681), which is usually assigned to a group of finds, from one to sixty-one beads. Each KM number has been registered in paper-based documentation (“blue registration cards”) and photographed by the staff of the Kuwait National Museum, which has provided invaluable information.

The present study of the beads deriving from the 1958-1963 excavations consists of a typology (Chapter 2), a classification of materials (Chapter 3) and an analysis of the dating and distribution of the beads (Chapter 4). Manufacturing techniques including perforation and use-wear will also be considered (Chapter 5). In a final discussion, the bead corpus from Tell F3 and Tell F6 will be compared with similar material from contemporary sites on Failaka and in Bahrain, along with some thoughts on connections and trade relations that may be inferred from the materials and forms in the bead assemblage (Chapter 6). Relevant information on each bead as well as photos and drawings are listed in a catalogue (Chapter 7).

All drawings and photos are reproduced in full size (1:1).

KASSITE	MC	4B	Houses 23,30		?				
	1350				↑ Phase 8				
	1400	4A	Houses 12-15	Phase II	Phase 7	Phase 5		IIIb1	
	1450								
	1500					Phase 4			
	1550								
	1600	3B	Temple courtyard I-III	Late Phase I	Phase 6	Phase 3	III	IIIa	
	1650					Phase 2		<i>Enigmatic pottery</i>	
	1700	3A	Houses 1-11, 16-17 and 22						
	1750								
OLD BABYLONIAN	1700		Houses 28-29	Early Phase I	Phase 5		IA,IB,II		
	1750	2B			Phase 4				
	1800				Phase 3			IIc	
	1850								
	1900								
ISIN-LARSA	1850	1/2A	Houses 26-27	Pre- 'Palace' Phase	Phase 2		IA,IB,II		
	1900								
	1950								IIb
FH 2021			TELL F3	TELL F6	TELL F6	TELL F3	STAMP SEALS	QALA'AT AL-BAHRAIN	
		FAILAKA	1958-1963		2008-2012	2013-17			

Fig. 2. Chronological chart for the 2nd millennium BC in the upper Arabian Gulf (Højlund & Hilton 2021 fig. 50).

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