

المرحلة الثالثة

النص 3

الجزء 1

Archaeological Survey of Al-Hira/Iraq: Fieldwork campaign 2015

The historical site of al-Hira is located to the east of al-Najaf and to the south of al-Kufa in south-central Iraq. It covers some 25 square kilometres on the easternmost end of a rocky bluff stretching in northwest-southeast direction. The foundation of al-Hira probably goes back to the 3rd century, when a change in the course of the Euphrates resulted in a shift of the major branch of the river to the west. In the 5th and 6th centuries al-Hira became the capital of the Arab Lakhmid rulers. Under their domination the city developed its proverbial

splendour that was still praised by the Arab poets in the 9th and 10th centuries. In the year 633 al-Hira was taken by the troops of the Muslim general Kalid ibn al-Walid. Only six years later, in 639, the garrison town of al-Kufa was founded nearby. Whereas al-Kufa subsequently developed into one of the centers of early Islamic Iraq, the sources indicate that al-Hira continued to exist until the 10th century at least. After its final abandonment the relics of the city went into decay, but they have never been transformed by construction activities until recently. Today a considerable part of the area of ancient al-Hira has been built over, and the rapid growth of al-Najaf threatens the undisturbed areas that remained.