

The Future of Ashur



List of ISIS Destruction at Ashur

- Attempted explosion of the Tabira Gate
- Destruction of the SBAH viewing platform for the royal tombs.
- Destruction of the on-site museum.
- Destruction of Walter Andrae's original excavation house that served as administrative offices for SBAH.

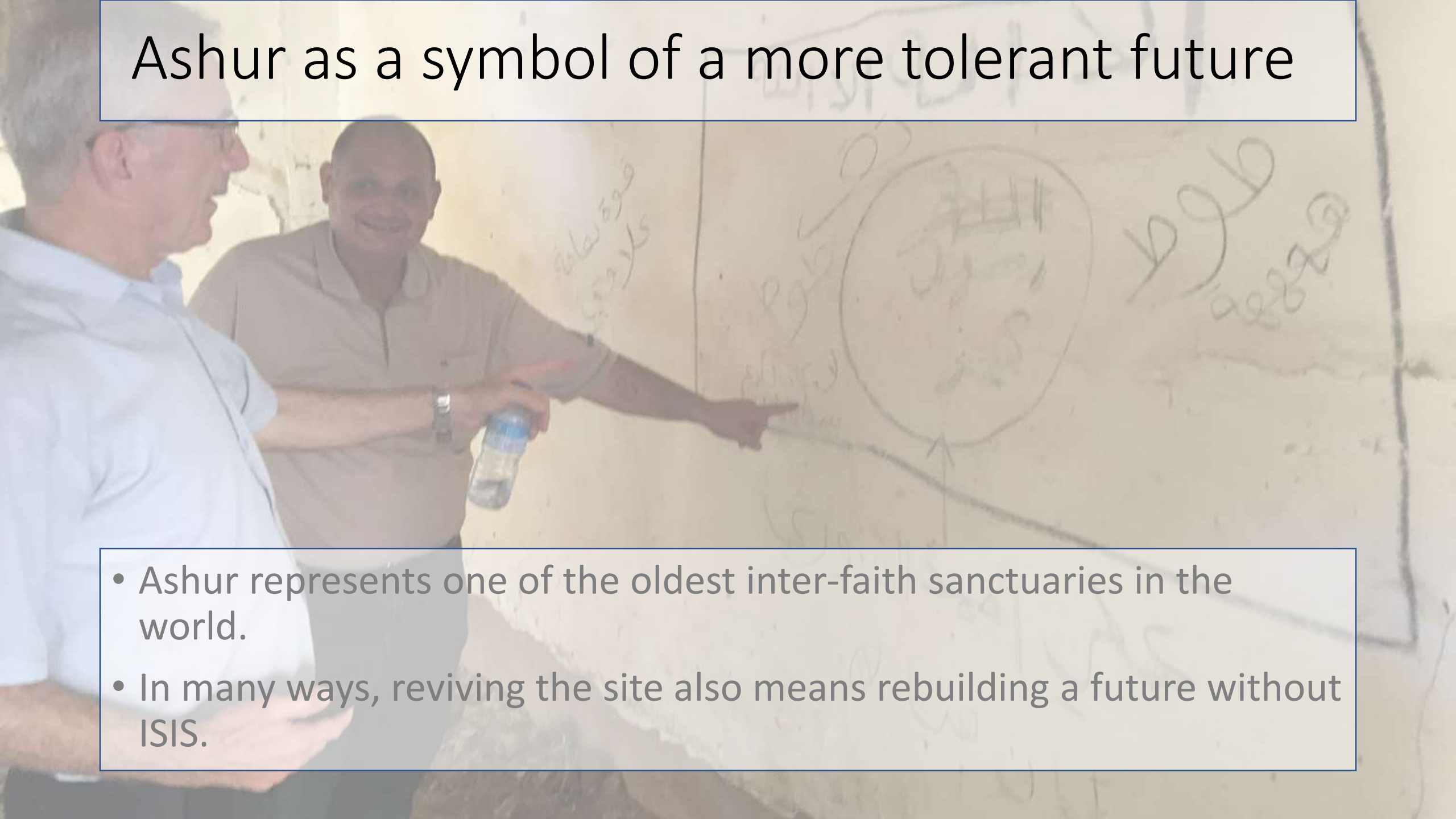
The looting of the SBAH headquarters

- There was no reliable electricity, as the connection to the transformer for the National Electricity Grid was weak.
- There was no laptop or printer, as these had been stolen.
- There was only limited water in the office, as compared to the guard house.
- The water fixtures in the bathrooms had been stolen.

Destruction of the BRC Fence that protects Ashur

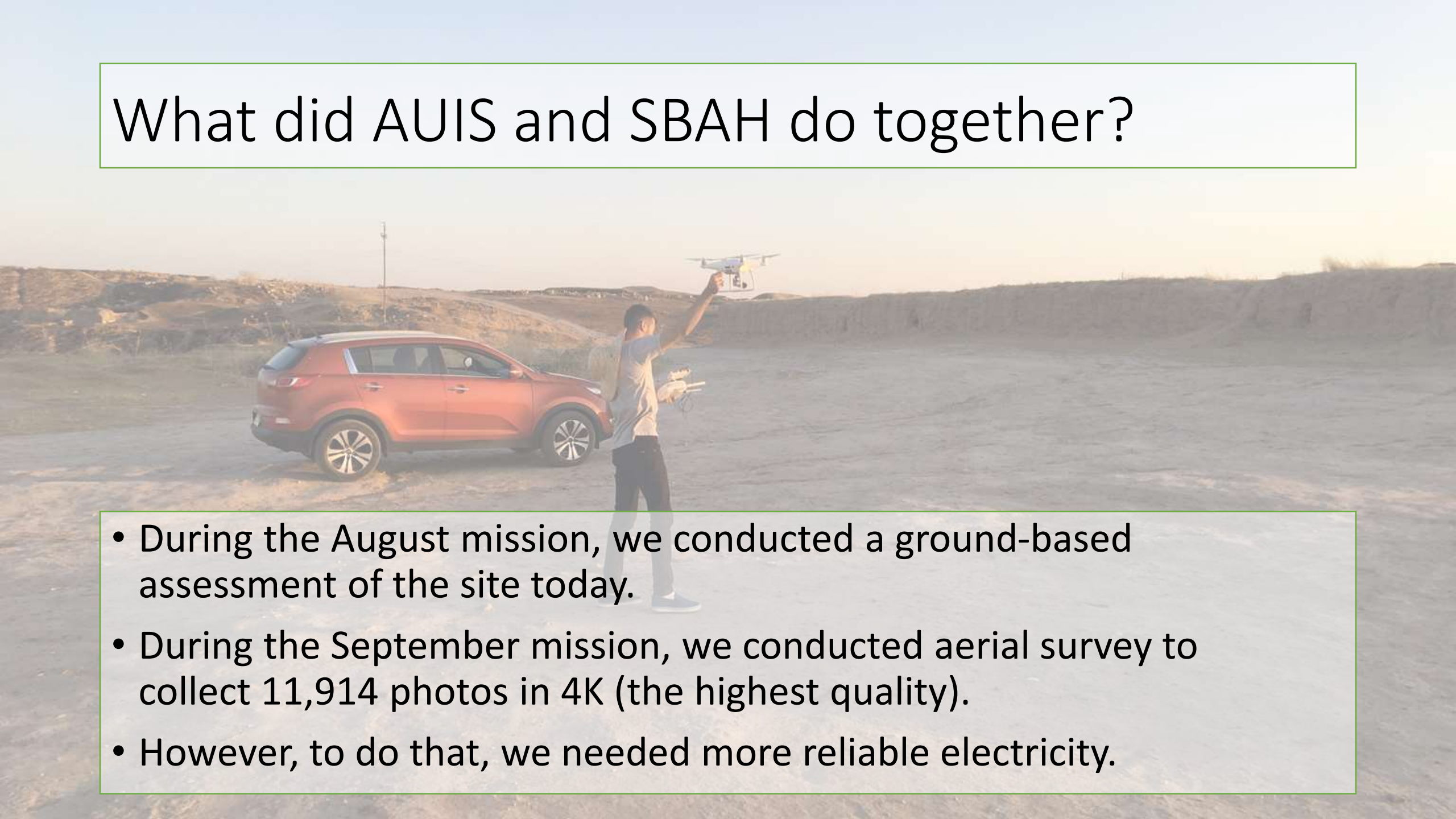


Ashur as a symbol of a more tolerant future



- Ashur represents one of the oldest inter-faith sanctuaries in the world.
- In many ways, reviving the site also means rebuilding a future without ISIS.

What did AUIS and SBAH do together?

- 
- A person in a light blue shirt and dark pants is standing in a desert-like environment, holding a remote control and a small white drone. A red SUV is parked to the left of the person. The background shows a vast, flat, arid landscape under a clear sky.
- During the August mission, we conducted a ground-based assessment of the site today.
 - During the September mission, we conducted aerial survey to collect 11,914 photos in 4K (the highest quality).
 - However, to do that, we needed more reliable electricity.

Improving the SBAH Office at Sherqat

- We also donated a laptop and a printer to SBAH Sherqat, so that it is easier for them to administer the site and stay in touch with stakeholders.

Coming Soon: A new map of Ashur

Temple of Ashur

- Our 11,914 photos will create a high-definition 3D map of Ashur.
- We will then use Artificial Intelligence to map the structures visible on the surface of Ashur, in order to produce a more accurate map of the post-Assyrian remains.

Proposal: A symposium on Ashur in Baghdad

- A joint press conference and small event about Ashur would highlight both the challenges the site faces, new results, and the possibilities for future research.
- This joint press conference and event should be hosted in Baghdad, and I would suggest that the Ministry of Culture and/or the SBAH should host the event with the help of AUIS Communications team.

Temple of Ashur



What comes next? Geophysics by drone ...



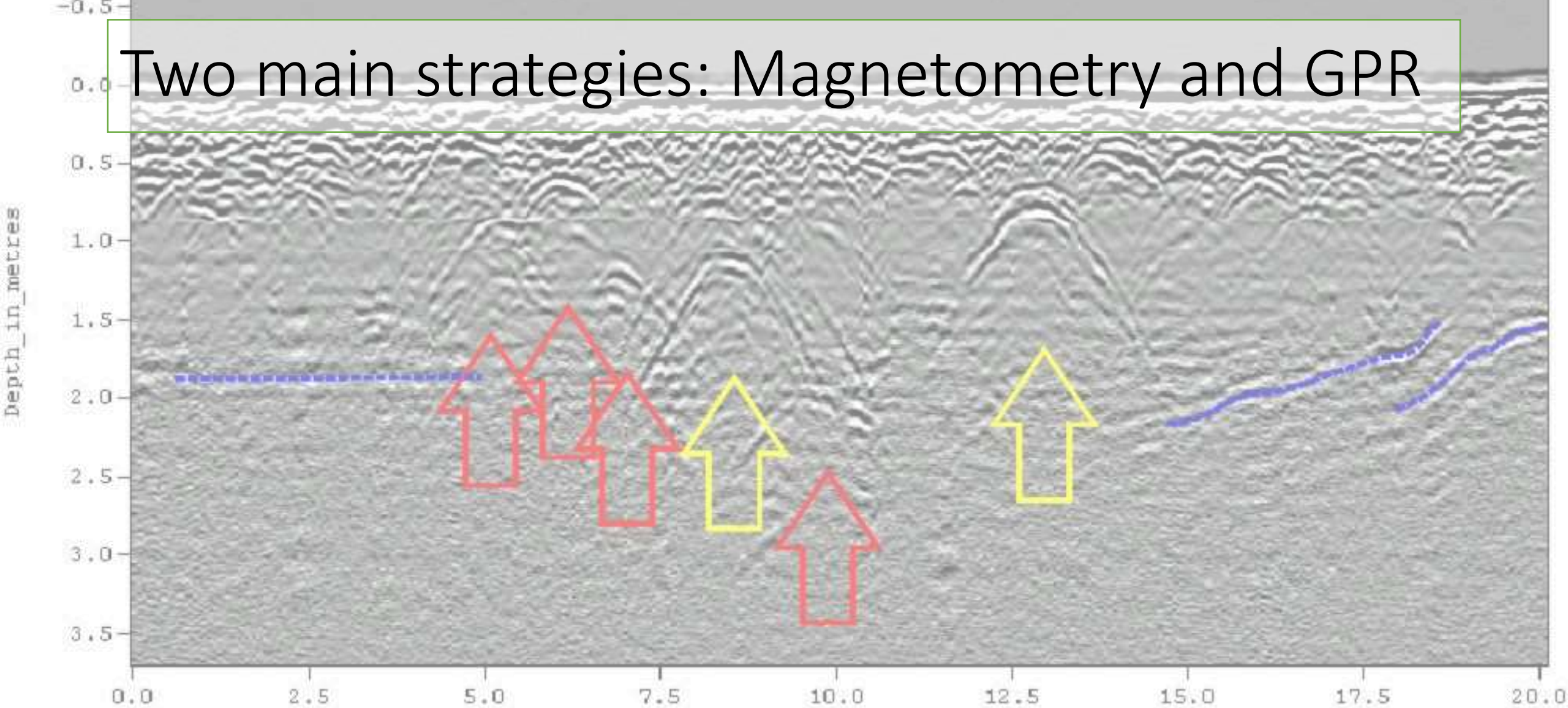
Two main strategies: Magnetometry and GPR

Magnetometry will reveal the last phase of construction down to 1.5 m.

500 feet



Two main strategies: Magnetometry and GPR



Advanced GPR can reveal structures up to 15m down with 10 cm accuracy. Thus, the historical build-up of Ashur is accessible through GPR.

#1

#3

Areas of Interest
for Geophysics

#2

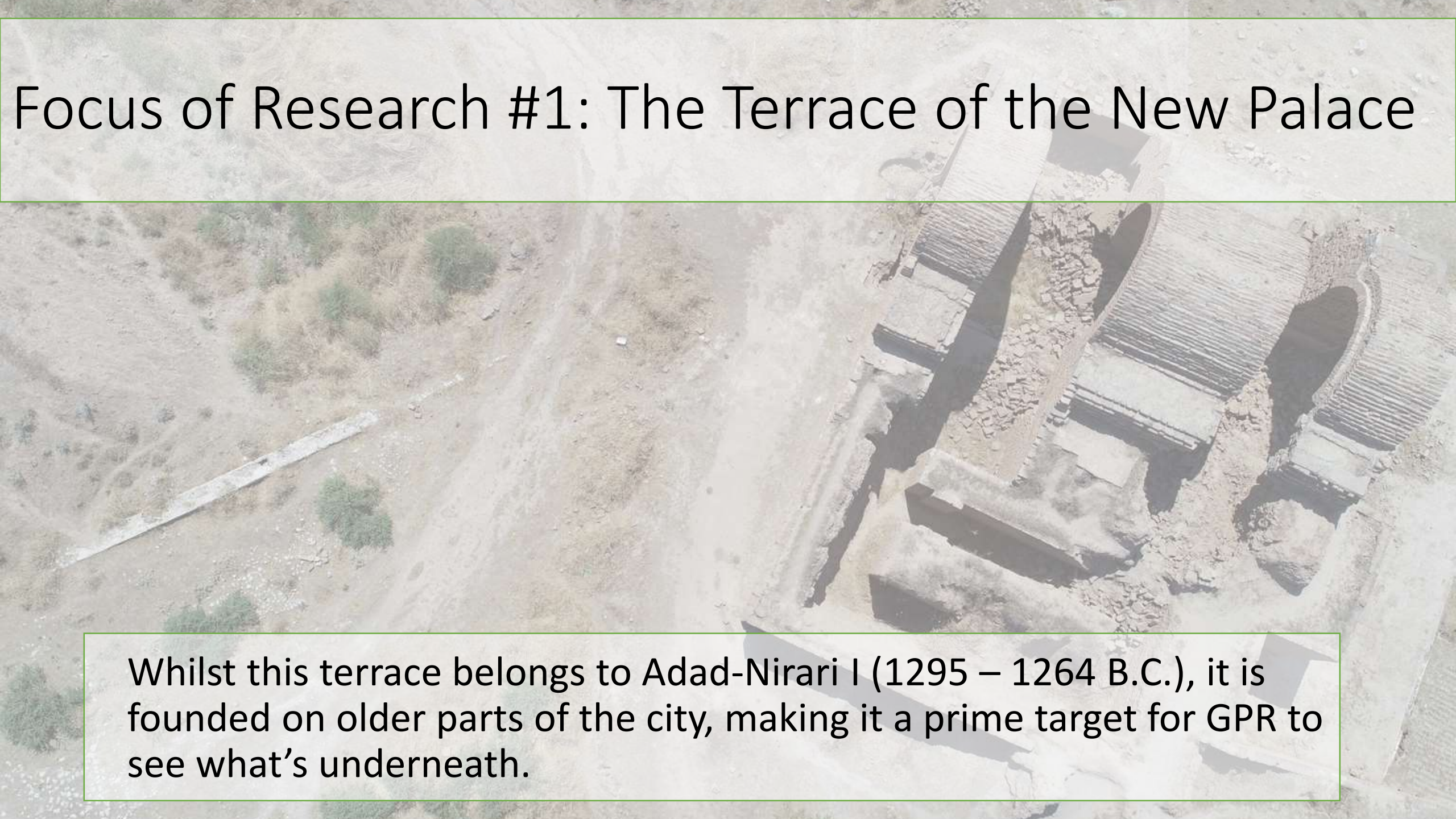
Temple of Ashur

#4

#5

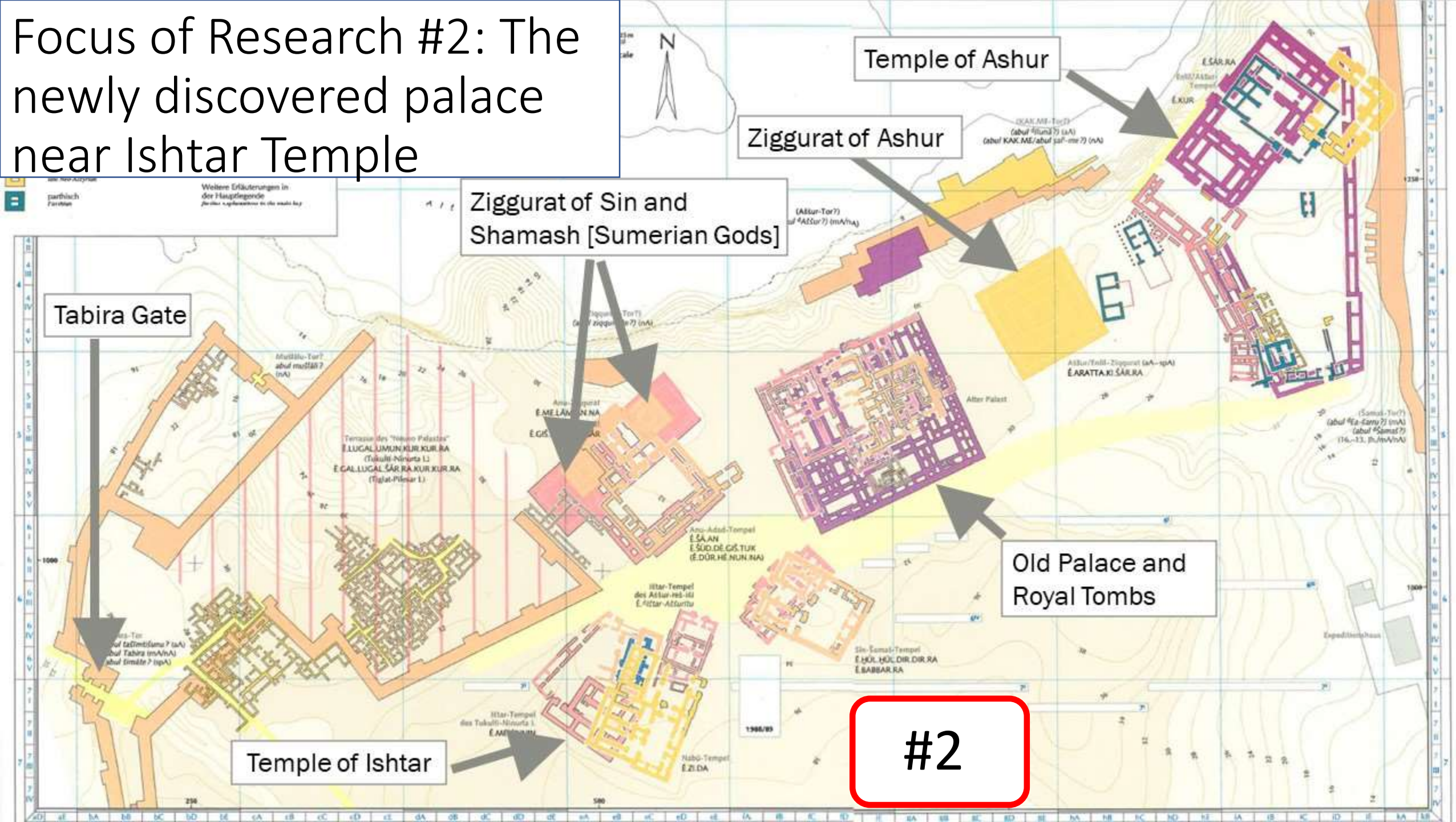


Focus of Research #1: The Terrace of the New Palace

An aerial photograph of an archaeological site. On the right side, there are several large, rectangular stone structures, some of which appear to be part of a larger complex or palace. To the left of these structures, there is a long, straight, light-colored path or road. The ground is dry and dusty, with some sparse, low-lying vegetation. The overall scene suggests an ancient city or settlement.

Whilst this terrace belongs to Adad-Nirari I (1295 – 1264 B.C.), it is founded on older parts of the city, making it a prime target for GPR to see what's underneath.

Focus of Research #2: The newly discovered palace near Ishtar Temple

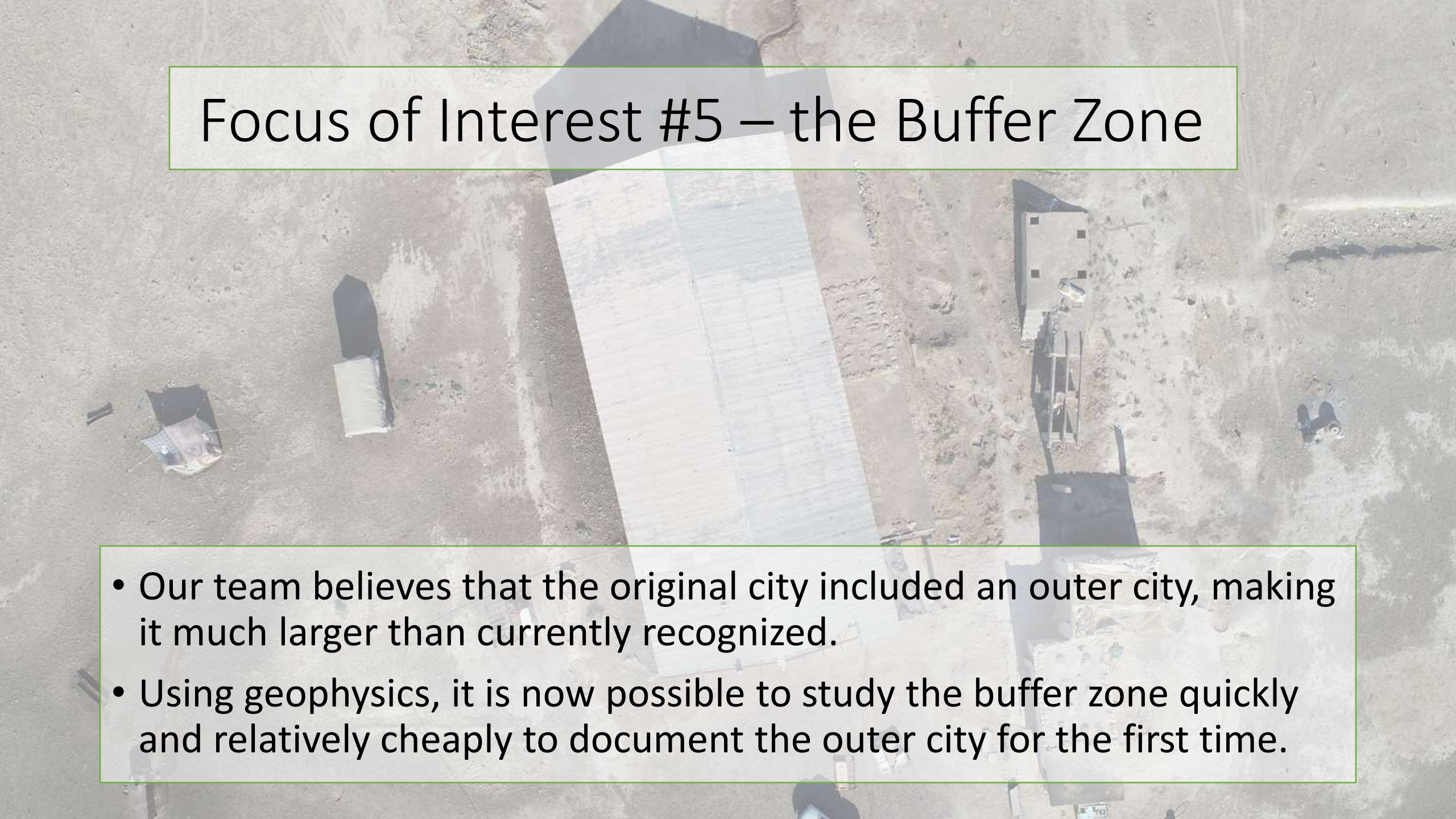


Focus of Research #3: The Ziggurat

The ziggurat had a history of use and re-use for over 2,000 years, if not more. It will be an important site for GPR survey.

Focus of Research #4: Beside the infant's cemetery near the People's Gate



An aerial photograph of an archaeological site. A large, rectangular, light-colored structure, possibly a wall or a large building, runs diagonally from the top center towards the bottom right. To the left of this structure, there are several smaller, irregular structures and what appears to be a pile of debris or rubble. To the right, there are more ruins, including a small structure with a dark roof and some scattered stones. The ground is dry and sandy, with some sparse vegetation. The overall scene suggests an ancient city or settlement.

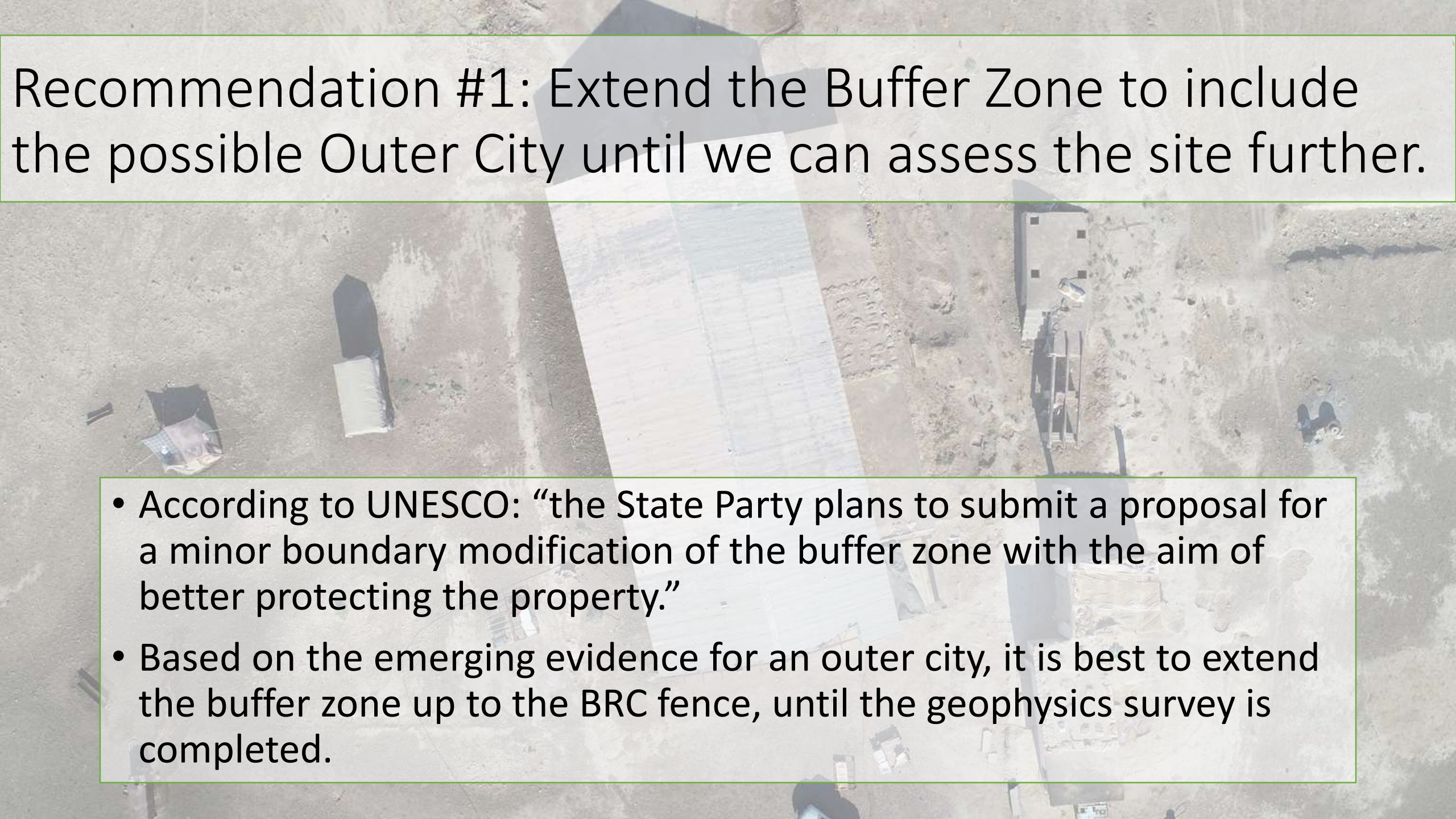
Focus of Interest #5 – the Buffer Zone

- Our team believes that the original city included an outer city, making it much larger than currently recognized.
- Using geophysics, it is now possible to study the buffer zone quickly and relatively cheaply to document the outer city for the first time.

A large earthen mound, likely an archaeological site, with a person standing on the peak for scale. The mound is covered in dry grass and has a steep, eroded slope. The sky is clear and blue.

Future Needs: Dating the Walls of Ashur

- Over the next three years, our project would like to systematically section the walls of Ashur.
- These sections would be designed to collect samples for dating the construction of the walls.
- In this way, we can write a new history of Ashur based on its phases of expansion and rebuilding.



Recommendation #1: Extend the Buffer Zone to include the possible Outer City until we can assess the site further.

- According to UNESCO: “the State Party plans to submit a proposal for a minor boundary modification of the buffer zone with the aim of better protecting the property.”
- Based on the emerging evidence for an outer city, it is best to extend the buffer zone up to the BRC fence, until the geophysics survey is completed.

Recommendation #2: Preventing further erosion of the Ziggurat

- The ziggurat is eroding from the inside out with every rainy season.
- The mud brick core currently stands at 17m, whereas original estimates were much higher.
- SBAH Sherqat formulated a plan for stabilizing the ziggurat with work on the foundation and the main points of erosion.

Recommendation #3: Smart Signage



STATE BOARD FOR ANTIQUITIES
& HERITAGE, IRAQ



Proposal: Continue the partnership between AUIS and SBAH into the foreseeable future

Thank you for supporting our work at Ashur.



STATE BOARD FOR ANTIQUITIES
& HERITAGE, IRAQ



Funding for our work was provided by the Australian Embassy in Baghdad.