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LUCIO MILANO - ELENA ROVA
PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 1997 EXCAVATIONS
OF CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE AT TELL BEYDAR (SYRIA)

1. Introduction

Archaeological excavations at Tell Beydar (in the Syrian Jazirah) have begun in 1992 as a joint project of the European Center for Upper Mesopotamian Studies (ECUMS) and the Directorate General for the Antiquities and Museums of Syria (DGAM)¹. General information about the site is provided in the preliminary report of the first three seasons (1992-1994)².

Tell Beydar is located ca. 35 km north of Hassake, east of the Khabur river and close to one of its tributaries, the Wadi 'Awidj. Three archaeological areas can be distinguished on the site. The first one (Beydar I) corresponds to the *Kranzhügel* of the 3rd millennium BC. On the western side of the tell, at its base, there is the area of the so called "Lower City" (Beydar II), which was inhabited during the Mitannian and Neo-Assyrian periods. Finally, a small 'Obeid site (Beydar III) was identified a few hundred meters south of the outer wall of Beydar I.

So far, most of the archaeological activity was carried out on the main tell, which is a typical *Kranzhügel* (Beydar I), covering an overall surface of ca. 28 ha, surrounded by an Outer Wall of 600 m of diameter. This outer, circular fortification ring is mirrored by an inner, concentric wall delimiting the Upper City and its "Acropolis" (ca. 7 ha), standing at about 27.50 meters from the surface of the plain, whose absolute elevation is 360 m.

The main occupation period of Beydar I covers four centuries, from 2600 BC to 2200 BC, corresponding to the Early Jazirah II-IV periods in Upper Mesopotamia³. After its abandonment, following the collapse of the Akkadian presence in the region, the site was only briefly resettled during the Hellenistic period, when a small village and a central public building were built on the top of the mound.

Excavations in Fields B, E, F, G and H (Fig. 1) have provided the general outline of the ancient history and topography of the 3rd millennium city - of its palace and temples (Field F, EJ IIIb-IV), of its private houses (Field B, EJ IIIb), of its main storage facility (the so-called "Granary" in Field E, EJ IIIb), and of its Inner and Outer Walls (Fields H and G, EJ II-IIIa-b). Furthermore, the recovery of about 200 cuneiform tablets and of several hundreds of seal impressions has allowed for a better understanding of the cultural and historical relationships of Tell Beydar (whose ancient name was most probably

Nabada)⁴ with the main regional center of Tell Brak.

The investigation of the fortification areas has proved particularly interesting for the study of the early phases of the urban settlement at Beydar, both in terms of stratigraphy, and architecture. This was the main reason for opening a new field in 1997 on the NE slope of the mound (Field I), in order to study the stratigraphical sequence from EJ IIIb to EJ IIIa, and to identify the main topographical features of the area.

Excavations in Field I have been carried out by a team of the University Ca' Foscari of Venice over a period of 5 weeks (from August 31st to October 8th)⁵.

2. The Northeastern Stratigraphical Sounding (Field I)

2.1. Topography

Field I is located on the NE slope of the Upper City of Beydar I "Kranzhügel" (Fig. 1), where a

¹ Official partners of the ECUMS are the "Katholieke Universiteit Leuven," represented by Prof. K. Van Lerberghe, the "Université Libre de Bruxelles," represented by Prof. Ph. Talon, the "Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia," represented by Prof. L. Milano, and the "Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster," represented by Dr. J. Bretschneider. The coordination and the overall direction of the excavation are entrusted to Dr. M. Lebeau and to Dr. Antoine Suleiman on behalf of ECUMS and of DGAM, respectively.

² Cf. LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, esp. 7-20.

³ The periodization adopted here is that suggested in LEBEAU et al. 2000, which slightly modifies that proposed by PFÄLZNER 1997 and 1998.

⁴ See SALLABERGER 1999.

⁵ The team consisted of Prof. Lucio Milano, Dr. Elena Rova and Miss Sabrina Favaro (Ca' Foscari University - Venice). Miss Agnieszka Zysek (Warsaw University) joined the team from September 15 until the end of the season. Architectural plans were drawn by Gerben R. van Veen and prepared for publication by Brahim Abansir, with the help of Dennis Cecchin and Luca Marigliano. Sections and part of the small finds were inked by Dennis Cecchin, and pottery plates were assembled by Monica Tonussi. Grants for 1997 season has been provided by the following institutions: Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica; Ministero degli Affari Esteri; Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, and by a private sponsor (A. Tognana Group).

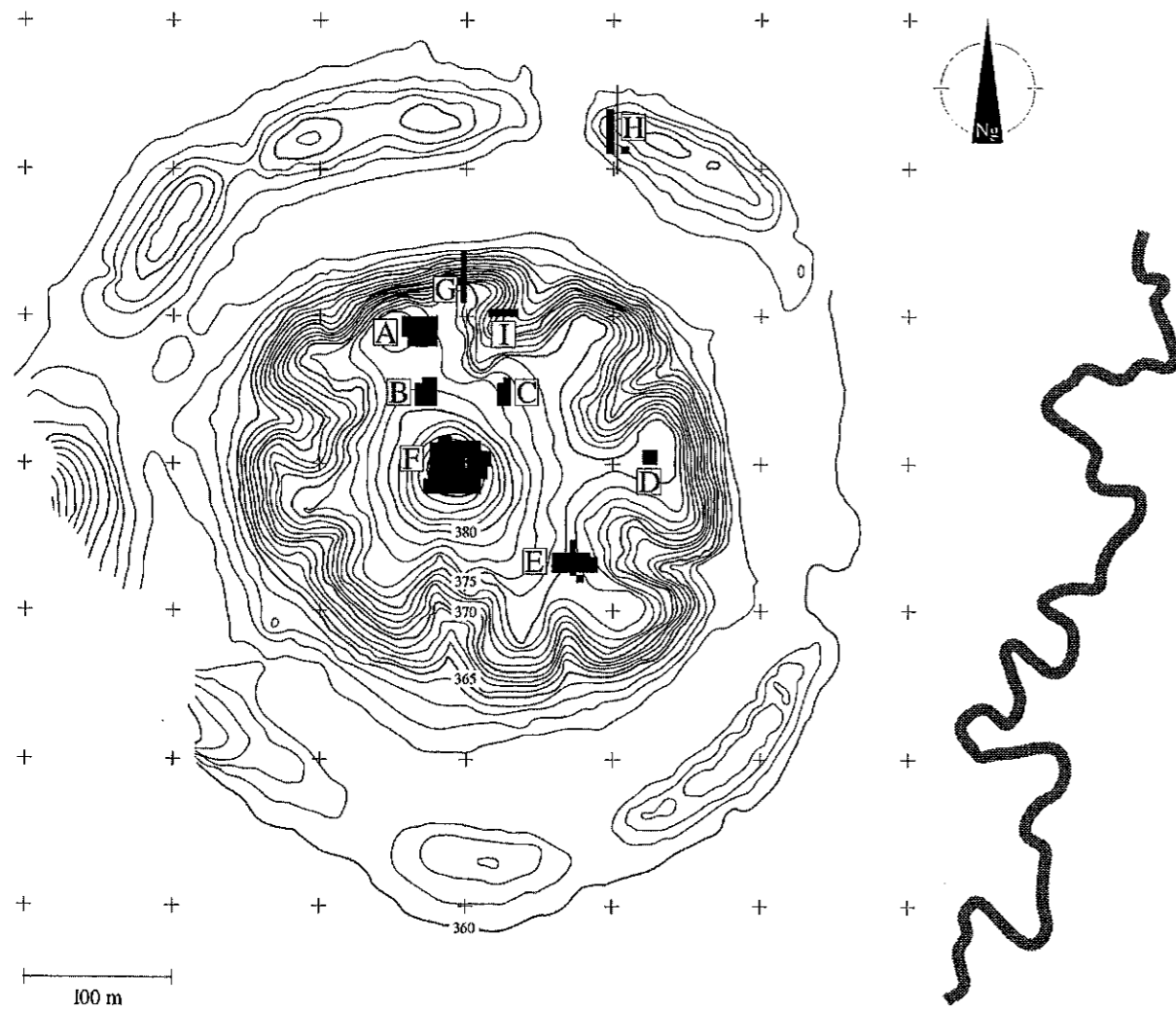


Fig. 1 - Tell Beydar: general topography of the site with location of the excavated areas.

gully cut by a *wadi* had deeply incised the mound surface. The approximate alignment of the gully with one of the major gaps in the outer fortification wall (possibly a city gate) suggested that the *wadi* followed the direction of one of the ancient accesses to the Upper City⁶. An earlier sounding in a close-by area (Field G2) had already detected the limits of the Inner City wall and the presence of a dwelling area just behind it. It had also shown that EJ IIIa levels were present in this area just under the surface with very little later disturbance, and – contrary to Field G further to the west – no substantial 1st millennium BC occupation level⁷.

The aim of starting excavation in this area was fourfold: a) to outline its ancient topographic setup and its relation with the present *wadi*; b) to study the layout of the area in relationship to the inner fortification wall and the presumable presence of an Inner City gate; c) to investigate the ancient way of access-

ing the top of the mound from this side, checking for a possible street leading to the central official complex in Field F; d) and finally to obtain a stratigraphic sequence and stratified ceramic assemblage for the earlier phases of the 3rd millennium occupation, to match the evidence from the neighbouring Field G.

During the 1997 campaign, work essentially concentrated on issues a) and d). An E-W oriented step-trench was set up, following the general grid, on the northwestern slope of the wadi (Figs 2 and 13), about 3 m south of the limit of the G2 sounding. Excavation was carried out in a sequence of four 5×5 squares

⁶ Cf. Bluard et al., in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 185, fig. 1.

⁷ Cf. Quenet, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 169.



Fig. 2 - Field I. General plan.

(quadrants 102.040d, 103.040c/d, 104.040c). Baulks between quadrants were not spared, allowing for a total excavated surface of 100 square meters. The highest absolute point, at the NW corner of quadrant 102.040d, was 372.93 m asl; the lowest absolute point, at the bottom of pit 9331 in quadrant 104.040c, was 366.61 m asl, giving a total range of ca. 6.50 m of excavated archaeological deposits. In terms of elevations, this sequence overlaps to a large extent with that of A. Suleiman's 1997 excavation in Field G⁸. At the end of the 1997 season the virgin soil had not yet been reached. Excavation in this area will be therefore resumed in the next campaigns, in order to complete the stratigraphical sequence.

2.2. Stratigraphy and Architecture

As expected, in most of the excavated area 3rd millennium levels were found immediately below the surface. They were damaged to some extent by some Seleucid-Parthian pits and by surface erosion which, due to the steep slope of the gully, heavily affected the southeastern corner of each of the excavated quadrants. Apart from pits, only scanty remains of late 1st millennium occupation were preserved.

The 3rd millennium levels unearthed during the 1997 season seem to mainly date back to a relatively early phase within the EJ III sequence, maybe EJ IIIa to early EJ IIIb. They consist of a sequence of densely superimposed occupation layers which have been preliminarily subdivided into several phases. In fact, the whole area was occupied by private dwellings and workshops, showing several successive phases of rebuilding or restoring, with no gap in occupation, nor major episodes of destruction.

A number of larger walls were found as well, which might be interpreted as retaining walls. This circumstance supports the hypothesis that the slope was already considerably steep in ancient times, so that the *wadi* would have found its way down into an already existing depression.

Another interesting feature associated with 3rd millennium occupation levels in the excavated area is the presence of a large number of different kinds of both in-house and open air installations (tannurs, fireplaces, platforms, and, most noteworthy, a series of complex white-plastered basins).

Level I: Seleucid-Parthian

The central part of quadrant 102.040d was heavily disturbed by a large bell-shaped pit (9048), the SE part of which had been completely eroded away, and whose outline was not clearly defined⁹. The filling of this pit consisted of heavily mixed material (including mud-bricks, large stones, fragments of plaster and pottery sherds, some of which being

clearly Seleucid-Parthian). Some poor structures, lying above it, probably belong to a later phase of the same period, though they yielded no diagnostic sherds. The most interesting one was an installation (9071) consisting of a slightly concave, white-plastered basin of irregular trapezoid shape, surrounded by three low mud-brick walls, leaning against the remains of 3rd millennium strata cut by the pit. The inside plaster coating (bottom: alt. 370.52 m) was only partially preserved, but it is clear that it raised at the centre of the basin to form a sort of lump. A grinding stone (9071-M-2) and fragments of animal bones were found inside. The perimetral walls of installation 9071 (9081, 9090, 9093) were formed by a single row of bricks (30 × 17-20 cm, 35 × 17-20 cm, and 20 × 17 cm, respectively). The presence of pit 9048 had caused part of the surrounding 3rd millennium structures to subside towards it (see below), and made the stratigraphy of the area not easy to understand.

Two pits in quadrant 103.040c (9112+9113 and 9114) can also be assigned to the Seleucid-Parthian period, since they contained some late 1st millennium BC sherds along with 3rd millennium pottery. Pit 9114 was very large (Ø more than 500 cm), but most of it was lying outside of the excavated area in the adjacent quadrant 103.040a. Due to surface erosion, the limits of the pit could be followed only approximately. Its bottom was slightly curved and covered by a thick layer of white plaster (9118). It was preserved to a maximum depth of 130 cm from the surface, the upper part of it having been eroded. Its filling consisted of several layers of bricky material, partially homogenised with surface soil, containing a few stones and very few sherds. Pit 9114 cut the tops of the 3rd millennium walls. It also cut a second pit (9113), containing Seleucid-Parthian pottery, which penetrated deeper into the 3rd millennium layers.

Pit 9113 was roughly cylindrical in shape (Ø ca. 160 cm) and had a flat bottom. Its filling (preserved depth, ca. 70 cm) consisted of several layers of ashes and loose brownish soil, containing fragments of bricks, 4 spindle-whorls and a number of animal bones, including three complete skulls.

The dating of three more pits (9133-9213, 9212, 9302) to the Seleucid-Parthian period is doubtful, but

⁸ Suleiman, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.), in press (highest alt. is 371.66 m; virgin soil was reached at 364.66 m). It may be useful to notice that the highest point in Field I lies approximately at the same absolute elevation as the beginning of the second 3rd millennium level (couche II) excavated in Field G in the 1993-1994 seasons: cf. Quenet, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 169 and fig. 1, p. 173.

⁹ The lower part of this pit (9424), which was much better preserved, has been excavated in the 1998 season.

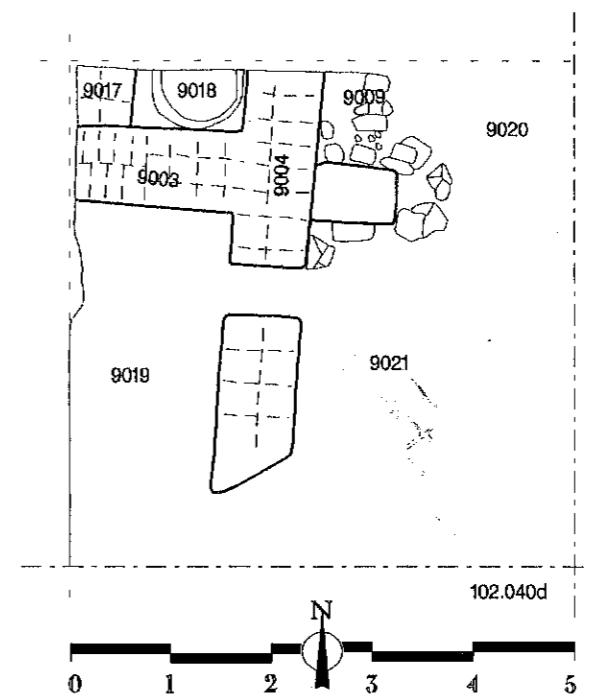


Fig. 3 - Field I. Schematic plan of level II, phase 1.

highly possible. In fact, although they did not contain 1st millennium diagnostic sherds, they showed the same features as the two previous ones.

Pit 9133-9213 in quadrants 103.040c-103.040d was heavily damaged by surface erosion (preserved depth: max. 95 cm). It was bell-shaped (bottom: Ø 220-240 cm; top: Ø 160-180 cm) with a flat bottom (yellowish surface with small white inclusions), and filled with alternate layers of compact mud, looser reddish soil and greyish sandy soil. It contained very little material, except for a few bones and the skull of a cow (?).

Only the edge of pit 9212 was included in the excavated area, in the north-eastern corner of quadrant 103.040d, making it impossible to define its outline. An almost entire skeleton of a dog and a few non-diagnostic sherds were found inside. The bottom of pit 9302 was preserved as an ashy layer immediately under surface soil, near the northern limit of quadrant 104.040c.

It cannot be ascertained whether these pits are all that survives of occupation levels (corresponding to the one excavated in Field G¹⁰) which have been almost completely eroded away, or they represent a dumping area at the periphery of the Seleucid-Parthian settlement.

Level II: EJ III occupation

Phase 1 (Fig. 3). The remains of Phase 1 were found only in the NE portion of quadrant 102.040d, just below the surface. They were heavily damaged by erosion. As for the walls, in particular, only their outline could be followed, since the bricks had almost completely disintegrated.

Two main walls (9003 and 9004) crossing each other defined four different areas. Wall 9003 was ca. 80 cm wide (corresponding to two bricks of 35-37 × 17 × 10 cm) and run in an approximately E-W direction for ca. 190 cm from the western limit of the quadrant. Wall 9004 (60 cm wide) run perpendicular to it from the northern limit of the quadrant to the south. Some of the preserved bricks measured 35-37 × 20 × 10 cm. After crossing wall 9003, it continued for 40 cm before being interrupted by a 42 cm wide opening (door?) filled with ashy soil (9002), on the floor of which a complete bottle (9002-C-1) was found (Pl. IV, 5). The continuation of wall 9004, beyond the opening, could be followed as a reddish bricky stripe, for at least 210 cm to the south. East of wall 9004, wall 9003 extended for ca. 60 cm, its width being reduced to a single row of bricks (ca. 35 cm). It ended against a group of stones put all around it, thus forming a sort of buttress.

Of the two spaces east of wall 9004 very little was preserved. The series of stones set against the extension of wall 9003 would suggest that they were outside open areas. The southern one (9021) was completely lost. In the SW corner of the northern space (9020) there was a noticeable installation (9009) formed by at least three baked bricks (35 × 15 × 7 cm) lying parallel to each other at a distance of 40 cm and 23 cm respectively, the spaces in-between being filled with a layer of pottery sherds. These

¹⁰ Cf. Quenet, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997.

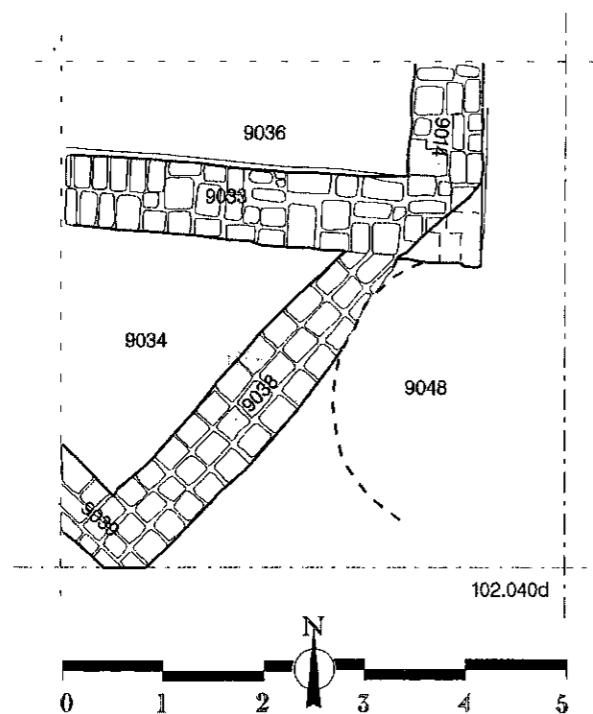


Fig. 4 - Field I. Plan of level II, phase 2.

bricks were resting on a one-brick high, grey-plastered mud-brick "platform" (9024), which extended for 150 cm east of wall 9004 and continued under it, as well.

Room 9019, south of wall 9003 and west of wall 9004, was only partially preserved. Traces of two successive floors were detected. The lowest one (9011) was a greyish surface gently sloping towards the south (alt.: 372.00 m near wall 9003; 371.82 m at a distance of 2.20 m to the south, where it is eroded away). This is the floor on which bottle 9002-C-1 (see above) was lying. Above a 20 cm thick filling (9007: soft brownish grey ashy soil), scant remains of another floor (9010) were found, along the eastern limit of the square (see Fig. 10). It was white-plastered and gently sloping in the same direction. Its filling (9005) was quite compact and light in colour.

Only a small part of room 9022, in the NW part of quadrant 102.040d, was excavated. It had a thick, white-plastered floor (9028: alt. 371.86 m) rising against the northern face of wall 9003. On this floor, a layer of bricks was laid, on which a wall running N-S (9017) was built. It actually consisted of two adjacent walls (the eastern one seemingly lower and added later on) joined by a thick line of mortar. In the corner between 9017, 9004 and 9003, tannur 9018 was built, possibly at the same time as the eastern portion of wall 9017. Its bottom – a layer of large stones – had an alt. of 372.14 m. More than one half of the tannur lies in the excavated quadrant: its preserved height was 70 cm; its external Ø at the bottom was 75 cm. Its walls were made of a thick layer of mud, internally coated with a white plaster and externally protected by large sherds. Inside the

tannur there was a 30 cm thick layer of ashes (9025), covered by a filling including fragments of the upper part of the tannur's wall (9023) (see Fig. 11). The layer of bricks on which the tannur was resting (9027) can be correlated to the "platform" 9024 in space 9020. Correlation with room 9019 is less sure; however, we would be inclined to correlate the phase in which the tannur was in use to the upper floor 9010.

Phase 2 (Fig. 4). Remains of Phase 2 were also unearthed only in the upper quadrant 102.040d. This phase represents a major re-shaping of the excavated area, aimed at retaining the slope which was probably beginning to subside. Two large walls (9033, 9014) were first built, which approximately matched the outline of earlier walls (9063, 9057). Wall 9033, the western part of which was later reused during Phase 1 as wall 9003, was 85 cm wide, corresponding to two rows of 37×17 cm bricks with a thick line of mortar in-between and coated with mud plaster. It extended for 350 cm to the east, before crossing wall 9014, the corner being heavily damaged by pit 9048.

Wall 9014 was probably 90 cm wide (its eastern side was both eroded and bulged) and run from the northern limit of the quadrant until meeting the corner of 9033 (total preserved length: 170 cm to the south). Both faces were plastered (red plaster inside; grey plaster outside). Bricks of variable sizes were used: some of them measured $35-37 \times 25-27$ cm.

Walls 9033 and 9014 delimited a room (?) (9036). There probably was a door in wall 9033, which was however filled in. It is doubtful whether space 9036 was ever used as a room, since no floor

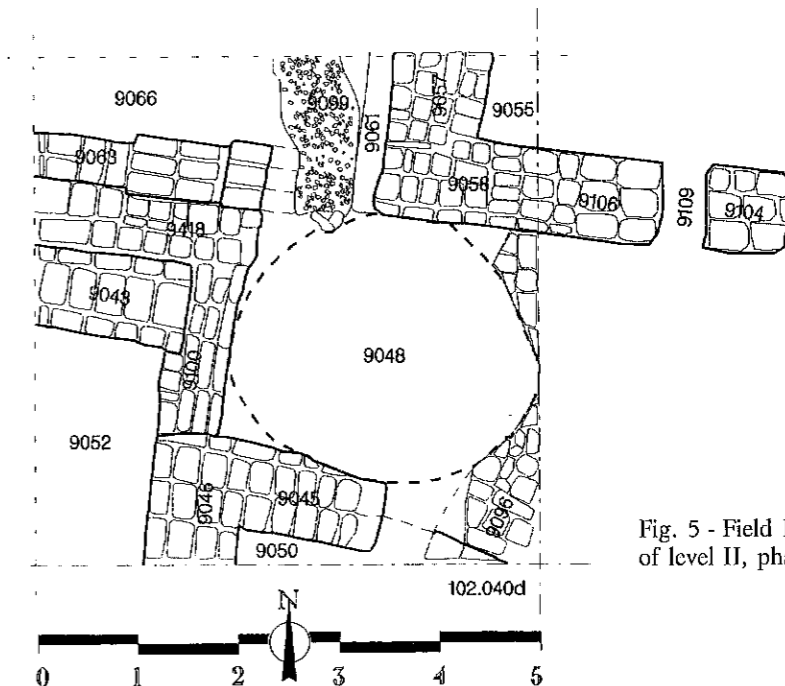


Fig. 5 - Field I. Plan of level II, phase 3.

was detected in it, but only accumulation layers (9032-9037), consisting of mud brick debris, a few baked bricks, small patches of ashes and fragments of plaster, for a total depth varying from 20 to 40 cm. Over this filling, an irregular layer of bricks was laid (9031). Structures of Phase 1 were built over this layer.

The SW part of the quadrant was occupied by a retaining structure formed by two perpendicular walls (9038, 9039), whose orientation – presumably determined by the slope of the mound – strongly diverged from that of the other existing walls. Wall 9038 abutted upon wall 9033 and run in SW direction to join wall 9039. Only two or three layers of bricks were preserved (base: alt. 371.28 m; top: 371.54 m), but even originally it cannot have been much higher. It was 85 cm wide, and made of three rows of bricks measuring $30-35 \times 25 \times 8$ cm, regularly laid along their long side. Pit 9048 had only slightly cut the eastern face of wall 9038, but caused the partial sinking of the entire wall in eastern direction.

Wall 9039 was built together with 9038. It made a right angle with the latter and run towards the N-E, to continue in the adjacent quadrant 102.040c. It was 70 cm wide: one row of bricks identical with those of 9038, joined by two parallel rows of long bricks ($35-37 \times 15 \times 8$ cm).

The space (9034) delimited by 9033, 9038 and 9039 was filled with layers of bricks (9042), leveling the remains of the previous phase (Phase 3), and possibly contemporary to the brick layer 9031 in space 9036. Over this brick surface miscellaneous bricky filling (9029, 9032, 9035) accumulated, on which floor 9011 was laid.

Phase 3 (Fig. 5). Phase 3 occupation was preserved in quadrant 102.040d (except for its SE corner) and extended into the NW corner of quadrant 103.040c. Pit 9048 had destroyed the central portion of the excavated area, which was presumably occupied by a small open air space. The walls delimiting four different spaces, (9050, 9052, 9066, 9055=9111), possibly rooms belonging to different buildings, had been spared by the pit, but had partially collapsed into it.

Room 9055 was delimited by walls 9057 and 9058. Wall 9057 (width: 95 cm) was later reused as wall 9014. Wall 9058 (ca. 85 cm wide, formed by bricks of different size) run perpendicularly from its southern limit in eastern direction, continuing in quadrant 103.040c (wall 9106), for a total length of 280 cm. It was then interrupted by a door (9109), 50 cm wide, provided with a brick threshold (9110). Beyond the door, the continuation of wall 9058-9106 could be followed for ca. 80 cm (wall 9104), after which it had eroded away.

The floor of room 9055 (9074) was preserved – at an alt. of 370.90 m – only in the SW corner, since the rest of it had been cut by pit 9114. It consisted of a rough reddish surface, on which a few sherds were found. Along wall 9057, it was covered by the brickfall of the same wall (9073), which was also cut by pit 9114.

In the southernmost part of quadrant 102.040d, walls 9045 and 9046 delimited space 9050, most of which was lying outside of the excavated area. Its eastern part had completely disappeared due to the surface erosion. Wall 9045 run in W-E direction: it was ca. 80 cm wide and its southern face was white-

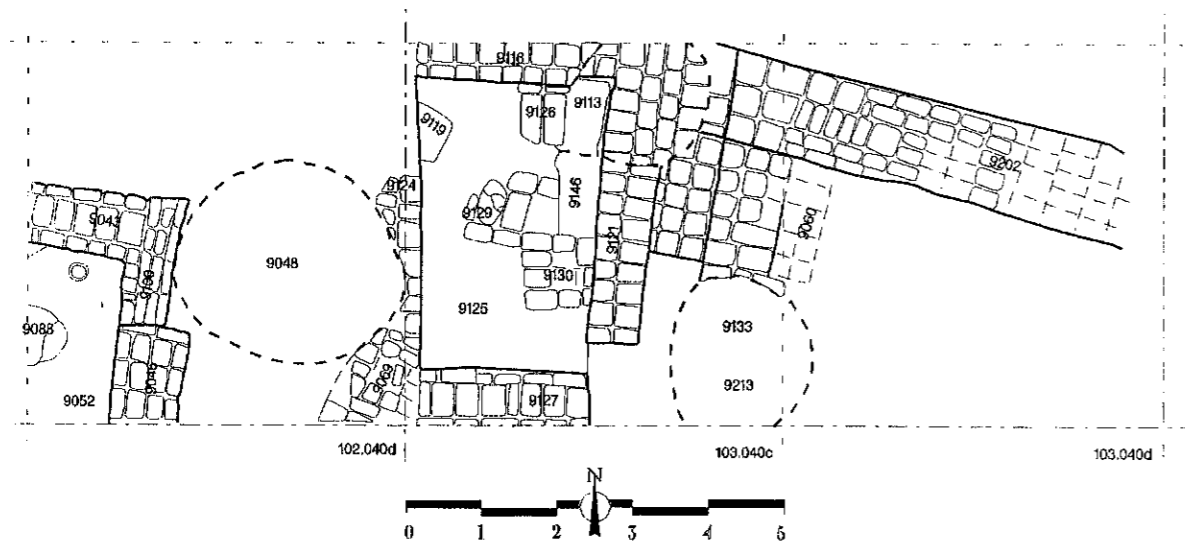


Fig. 6 - Field I. Plan of level II, phase 4 (sub-phase 4a).

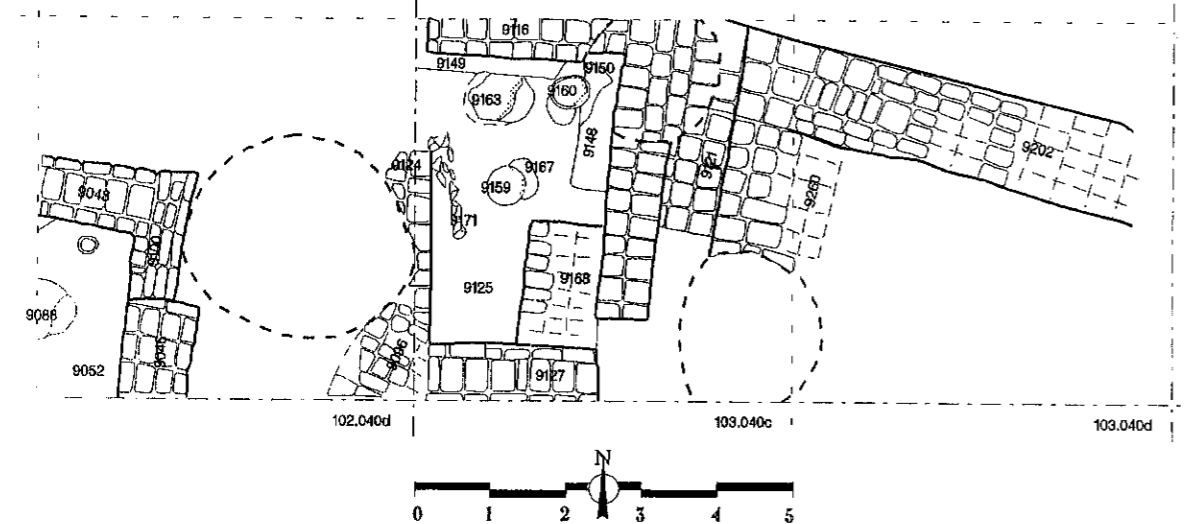


Fig. 7 - Field I. Plan of level II, phase 4 (sub-phase 4c).

plastered. It could be followed for ca. 240 cm. At its eastern edge, a series of stones standing against it may represent an intentional addition following the partial collapse of the wall. Wall 9046 was certainly an earlier wall, which was still standing in this phase. Top alt. of both walls was 371.19 m. The floor of room 9050 was not reached. Its filling (9085) was heavily disturbed.

Room 9052, part of which was excavated in the SW corner of quadrant 102.040d, had been built during the previous phase (Phase 4). It was delimited by wall 9046-9100 (9100 being the northern extension of 9046, in the area damaged by pit 9048), and by wall 9043. It is certain that both walls were still standing in Phase 3, and it seems that they underwent some modification during this phase: e.g., a

niche (9049) set in the corner between the two walls was filled in. A reddish surface raising against wall 9043, clearly visible in the western section (Fig. 10) on top of a sequence of ashy layers (9044), and covered by mud-brick collapse (9051), represents the floor belonging to Phase 3 (alt. 371.13 m).

A portion of room 9066 was excavated in the NW part of quadrant 102.040d. It was delimited to the east by wall 9057 and to the south by wall 9063. The access to the room was from its SE corner, in an area which has been damaged by pit 9048. It was ca. 70 cm wide. Wall 9063 was preserved to a height of only 30-35 cm. (top alt.: 371.12 m). It had a peculiar shape: the excavated part of it (240 cm from the western limit of the quadrant towards the east) consisted of three sections of increasing width (45, 55 and 66 cm), to make a series of small projections both on the inside and on the outside face. Size of the bricks (50 × 16-20 cm; 40 × 25 cm) was larger than usually. This wall was apparently built over, or adjacent to, an earlier wall (9418), which was not excavated.

The room was in use for a certain time (a series of at least seven successive floors could be defined), before being completely filled in with mud bricks (3 to 6 layers) (see Fig. 11). The lowest excavated floor (9092=9095, alt. 370.76 m to 370.81 m, sloping westwards) consisted of a red mud surface, covered by patches of ashes. It could be followed from the eastern limit of the quadrant to the entrance area, where it ended against a narrow stripe of hard, compact pebbles (9099), which stretched, parallel to wall 9057, from outside the room toward the north. The width of this pebble area progressively increased from 50 cm, near the entrance, to 80 cm at the northern quadrant limit. Floors overlying 9092 were present both in the eastern and western part of the room, but not in the central area, where they were cut by a large deep patch of ashes (9070, 9072). The best preserved sequence (floors 9094, 9082, 9077, 9076, 9075, 9067), spanning to a total depth of less than 30 cm, was recovered in the eastern part. These floors were close one to the other (2-4 cm), greyish or reddish in colour, sometimes with small white gypsum inclusions, and covered by a thin irregular layer of ashes, with only a few sherds lying on them. They probably represented no more than successive replastering of the floor. The pebble area 9099 was still visible when associated with floor 9082. Later on, a low clay bench (9061, 9401, 9402) leaning against wall 9057 was built on its eastern part. The rest of 9099 was covered with a hard, grey mud coating (9078), which was covered in turn by the latest floors.

Phase 4 (Figs. 6 and 7). Phase 4 is mainly represented in quadrants 103.040c and 103.040d. However, in the SW part of quadrant 102.040d, floor 9089 – which was reached at the end of the 1997

season in room 9052 – can also be assigned to this phase on the basis of its absolute alt. (369.95 m). Floor 9089 was a reddish clay surface, covered by a very thin ashy layer with a few sherds lying on it. On the floor, against the western limit of the quadrant, there was a fireplace consisting of a circular area of ashes (9088: Ø 70 cm). At the corner between wall 9043 and the western baulk, an area of gravel mixed with plaster might have been the preparation for a second fireplace. Over floor 9089, there was a 10 cm thick layer (9080, probably corresponding to the destruction of the room), formed by ashes mixed with fragments of plaster and a number of pottery sherds, including an almost entire jar. This was overlain by a loose accumulation (9054) of ca. 100 cm of collapsed bricks containing some ashes. Only the inner face of walls 9043 and 9046 was excavated down to the floor of room 9052. On wall 9046, at the corner with 9043, there was a ca. 70 cm wide niche (9049) at a height of ca. 100 cm from the floor, which was later blocked. The outer profile of both walls during Phase 4 is not clear yet, since they were obviously re-shaped during Phase 3.

A single Phase 4 room (9125) with a long sequence of occupation layers was excavated in the eastern half of quadrant 103.040c. The rest of the quadrant, which was damaged by both surface erosion and pits 9113 and 9133-9213, was occupied by a system of major retaining walls, extending into quadrant 103.040d.

This system consisted of two large perpendicular walls: 9121, running in N-S direction, and 9202, running from this toward the east. Only the western face of 9121, which represents the eastern limit of room 9125, was excavated to a certain depth, though its base has not yet been reached. As it appears now (top alt.: 370.42 m), this wall is probably the result of a series of successive building operations. Two different sections are visible from the top of the wall: the first one, 75-80 cm wide, is made of red bricks measuring 35-40 × 25 cm; the second one, which joins it to the east, has approximately the same width, and is made of squarish grey bricks measuring 30 × 30 cm. ca.

Wall 9202 (base alt.: 369.13 m) appears to have been deliberately built as a retaining wall, since its southern face is both unplastered and doubly stepped (see Fig. 12). It was made of reddish bricks, 37-40 × 20 × 8-10 cm large; its width was 120 cm at the base, 80 cm at the top, ca. 80 cm higher. The outline of this wall could be followed for more than 500 cm, from the western to the eastern limit of quadrant 103.040d, although its eastern half was heavily eroded. The foundations of wall 9202 (9217, an irregular layer of bricks) cut a thick layer of ashes (9215) most likely belonging to the previous phase (Phase 5), which extended south of the wall. After the construction of wall 9202, the whole area south

of it was deliberately filled (see Fig. 12), first with thin layers of different material: 9214 (lying over ash layer 9215) made of soft, greenish soil, 9211, over it, made of ashes overlaid by reddish mud, then with a ca. 50 cm thick irregular accumulation (9209) of ashy, bricky debris. Finally, the whole area between walls 9121 and 9202 was filled in with an homogeneous layer of bricks (9260, maximum preserved height 50 cm). This filling also extends on the top of wall 9202, and its northern limit represents the continuation of the northern face of the latter. Furthermore, it is made of the same reddish bricks as this wall. We presume, therefore, that the whole series of actions described above represent a single building operation.

It is not clear how far 9260 extended both in eastern and in southern direction, and whether it was limited by other large retaining walls. In fact, toward the east, its bricks had completely eroded away already ca. 100 cm from the western limit of quadrant 103.040c (the underlying filling layers, e.g. 9214, however, could still be seen ca. 150 cm further), whereas 200 cm south of wall 9202, it was cut by pit 9133-9213.

The synchronisation of this system of retaining walls with the occupation of the room (9125) located west of it is not yet possible, since the earliest phases of the latter have not been reached. It seems likely, however, that the room was built first, but was still in use for a considerable time after the construction of the retaining walls.

Within the occupation of room 9125 at least three different sub-phases (a, b, c) can be preliminary distinguished.

Room 9125 was delimited by walls 9116 (to the north), 9121 (to the east), 9127 (to the south) and 9124-9096 (to the west). Its whole inside space was located within quadrant 103.040c and could be excavated completely. The outer face of walls 9116, 9127 and 9124-9096, however, lay outside of the excavated area, so that their widths could not be ascertained.

Wall 9121 has been discussed above. It was cut by Seleucid-Parthian pits 9113 and 9133. Its western face was mud-plastered. It was damaged, in its lower part, by a 3rd millennium pit (9146), cut during the period in which the room was in use. Some stones belonging to feature 9140, were inserted into this wall ca. 250 m from the NE corner of the room (see below).

Wall 9116, 260 cm long, made of 30-35 × 20 cm large mud bricks, was well preserved (top alt.: 370.52 m). In the course of time, a series of benches (9149, 9139, 9145, 9126: see below) were leant against its southern face. The white plaster presently coating it dates back to the very last occupation layer, since it covers the upmost bench (9126), as well. It seems that this wall underwent some modifications over the time,

e.g. it was probably 15 cm thinner in the beginning.

The top of wall 9127 (max. alt.: 370.30 m) was badly eroded. As we said, the width of this wall could not be measured; however, some bricks belonging to it were still clearly visible on the surface beyond the southern limit of the quadrant, allowing for a minimal width of 90 cm. Two different building phases can be recognised for this wall. Its lowest part (top alt. 369.85 m, about 50 cm above the earliest excavated floor) was 15 cm thicker on the northern side. On the wall there were two niches (or windows), both filled with mud. The first one, 30 cm east of the western baulk, was 50 cm wide and may also have been a door. The second one was located at the corner with wall 9121 and was 30 cm wide. The upper part of the wall was thinner, and showed no interruption.

The eastern face of wall 9124 approximately run along the line of the western limit of quadrant 103.040c, although with a slightly different orientation. The corner with wall 9116 is located some 10 cm east of the limit between the two quadrants, and part of its thick, white plaster is preserved along the latter. Some 35 × 17 cm. large bricks, presumably belonging to this wall were found, at the end of the 1997 season, in quadrant 102.040d (wall 9096, max. alt. 370.52 m).

The latest floor of the room (9122) was covered by a ca. 30 cm thick brickfall (9117) including large fragments of plaster and lenses of ashes. Floor 9122 (alt. 370.15 m) consisted of a rather fragmentary, thin plastered surface, with occasional patches of ash lying on it. Beside a few pottery vessels (a cup, a strainer, a miniature pedestal), the following objects were recovered from this floor: a metal hook (9122-M-6) (Pl. VI, 5), two polished stones, possibly grinders or polishers (9122-M-4 and M-5), a grinding stone (9122-M-7) and a clay sealing (9122-M-1) (Fig. 17).

While floor 9122 was in use, the room was equipped with two different features (9119 and 9126), both of which had been built earlier. 9119 (top alt. 370.32 m) is a low, carefully plastered clay bench, which projects from wall 9124, but not at a right angle with it, 20 cm south of wall 9116. It is 60 cm wide, and 40-76 cm long. 9126 (top alt. 370.25 m) is a roughly quadrangular bench made of mud bricks. At the time of floor 9122 it was 90 cm long (10 cm more than its original length), while the width cannot be determined since it is cut by pit 9113.

Floor 9123, a regular, mud-plastered surface, was found ca. 20 cm under floor 9122 (alt.: 370.00-369.95 m), slightly sloping towards the north. Between them, a continuous series of less preserved floors, overlain by a thin layer of ashes, were noticed, but not individually excavated. On this floor, clay sealing 9123-M-1 was found. Benches 9119 and 9126 were built over the burnt surface of earlier floor 9134, and first used with floor 9123. In this phase,

bench 9126 was slightly smaller than later on (see above): along its southern face three stones were found. Another bench, or platform (9130) was leaning against wall 9121, ca. 100 cm north of the SE corner of the room. This bench was built earlier than the previous two, since it rested on floor 9135 (see below). It was no more in use at the time of floor 9122, which covered it. The bench was made of bricks (40-45 × 20 cm) and was 85 cm long by 95 cm wide.

Approximately in the middle of the room, a working installation (9129) was placed. It consisted of a shallow depression (bottom: 369.90 m), ovoid in shape, dug from floor 9123, cutting the earlier, burnt floor 9134. This depression (50 × 30 cm) was surrounded on its eastern, southern and western sides by a line of bricks and fragments thereof. Both the depression and the surrounding bricks were coated by a 0.5 cm thick white plaster. The space between this installation and bench 9130 was occupied by an irregular brick platform (9136) (60 × 70 cm), joining both of them. Two fragments of the same grinding stone (9129-M-1, 9136-M-1) were recovered inside installation 9129 and on the adjoining platform 9136. It is possible that pit 9146 was contemporary with this group of installations, although it was identified as pit only deeper down. An area of soft soil (9132) between installations 9129, 9136, benches 9126, 9130 and wall 9121 may in fact belong to it.

The next floor (9134: alt. 369.96-369.91 m), sloping towards the north, was a fine white-plastered floor, 0.8 cm thick. It showed traces of repairing in some sectors. It was overlain by a ca. 5 cm thick accumulation of ashes and burnt brick fragments. Within the ash accumulation – but actually lying on the floor, a clay sealing (9131-M-1) was found. Resting on the floor, there was a pottery vessel. When this floor was in use, the only installation which was associated with it was bench 9130, built over the plastered surface of earlier floor 9135.

Floor 9135 lay less than 10 cm under 9134 (alt. 369.88-369.84 m). Its surface was heavily burnt and covered by patches of ashes. Two large concentrations of burnt seeds were found on it: one in the SW corner of the room, the other one ca. 200 cm NE of it. In the SE portion of the room, a number of clay sealings were found lying on this floor (9135-M-1 to 9 and 9135-M-11 to 16) (Pl. VI, 1, 2).

The bottom of the upper and thinner part of wall 9127 lies a few centimeters under floor 9135: therefore, we may suppose that they belong together. The hypothesis of a major reshaping of room 9125 at this time is supported by the discontinuity between the occupation layers above (sub-phase a) and below floor 9135 (sub-phase b).

In sub-phase b, the interior space of the room is divided by a slightly curved alignment of stones (top alt. 369.85 m) and brick fragments interspersed with

-and covered by- compacted clay (9140), running from wall 9124 to wall 9121 in NW-SE direction (width: 90-80 cm). Some of the stones intruded into wall 9121. Neither the function of this feature is clear, nor the time of the construction can be precisely defined. As a result, the correlation between the northern and the southern parts of the room is uncertain.

South of feature 9140, no good floor sequence was found. There were two main layers of accumulation (9137 and 9141), divided by an irregular surface, which we tentatively equated with floor 9138 (see below). 9137, which was also found north of feature 9140, consisted of a rather soft, brown filling (ca. 20 cm thick in the southern part of the room). In the SE corner of the room, a further concentration of clay sealings (9137-M-3 to M-8 and 9137-M-10) and a stone object (9137-M-9) were found. 9141 (bottom: alt. 369.44 m) was reddish-brown in colour, and also yielded a good number of clay sealings (9141-M-1 to 11; 9141-M-14 to 17) (Fig. 18, Pl. V, 3) beside some shells. Under 9141, floor 9157 was reached.

North of feature 9140 the floor sequence was more consistent. Under filling 9137 there was floor 9138, a smooth, not plastered clay surface (alt.: 369.70 m at its lowest point). Under the latter was floor 9143 (alt.: 369.67 m), overlain by an ashy layer (9142), containing one clay sealing (9142-M-2), some animal bones and burnt grains. Bench 9139 (top alt. 369.87 m), was built on ash layer 9142, and used with floor 9138. It was made of mud-bricks, 40 cm wide, and extended along wall 9116 for 110 cm. Two isolated mud-bricks and a stone were found leaning against its SW corner.

Under 9139 there was an earlier bench (9145-9149, 9150, top alt. 369.74 m), which was covered by floor 9138. It extended along the whole length of wall 9116. This bench dates back to a phase earlier than floor 9143, when it was 35 cm wide and was connected to bench (?) 9148 (see below) – as shown by the plastered corner between the two benches, which is still preserved. At the time of floor 9143, its eastern section, together with bench 9148, was obliterated. Its western part lay only a few centimeters above the floor level and was reduced in width by the addition – over its original plastered surface – of a 15 cm thick row of bricks along the original face of wall 9116.

Approximately in the middle of the room, a fireplace (9144) was found, sunk into floor 9143 (bottom alt.: 369.52 m), and cutting an earlier fireplace (9159). It was slightly ovoid in shape (max. Ø 50 cm) and was full of ashes and burnt seeds.

The next floor (9157, alt. 369.57 m) was overlain by a thick destruction layer (9155) consisting of an accumulation of collapsed bricks, partially baked by fire, mixed with ashes. This floor also extended to the

southern part of room, under filling 9141, where it was very uneven (min. alt. 369.44 m).

Beginning with these layers a new sub-phase (c) can be distinguished (Fig. 7). At this time, room 9125 was equipped with a fireplace (9159), a stone installation (9158) along wall 9124, a low bench (9149) along wall 9116, and a storage jar (9160) embedded on floor 9157 at the corner between bench 9149 and 9148 (Fig. 14).

The fireplace (9159) was located NE of fireplace 9144, partially overlapping with it. It was circular in shape (\varnothing 55 cm), ca. 20 cm deep (bottom alt. 369.35 m), and cut two earlier floors (9161, 9166) and an earlier fireplace (9167).

Installation 9158 consisted of an assemblage of stones topped by fragments of burnt bricks. It lay over the plastered surface of floor 9157 and was aligned along wall 9124. In the corner between 9158 and bench 9149, another small bench (9162, top alt.: 369.61 m) was sitting on the same floor.

The function of benches 9149-9150 and 9148 during this time is doubtful. In fact, the top of 9149 lies 17 cm above floor 9157, while the plastered top of 9148 lies only 2 cm above it. Furthermore, in the corner between the two benches, a jar (9160) was sunk from this floor, which partially damaged both of them. The top of the jar was ca. 5 cm higher than the floor; the rim was broken. Its upper part had broken in antiquity and had been repaired with a patch of plaster laid against its inner side. The jar (max. \varnothing : 44 cm; preserved depth: 36 cm) was full of ashes and carbonised grains.

About 5 cm under 9157, another floor (9161) was found, covered by an ash layer. Floor 9161 was sloping towards south (top alt. 369.51 m to the north; 369.43 m to the south). It is not clear whether or not there was a fireplace in the center of the room when this floor was in use. However, at this time another fireplace (9163, top alt. 369.54 m) located near wall 9116, against bench 9149, was certainly used. In fact, this was an earlier feature, originally associated with floor 9166, which had been spared to a smaller size by the builders of floor 9161. Benches 9149-9150 were probably both in use at this time. The southern face of 9149 bears clear traces of fire, obviously from fireplace 9163.

Under stone assemblage 9158, a similar, but more regular feature (9171), also made of stones and brick fragments (ca. 40 cm wide), was associated with floor 9161. A badly preserved low platform (9165, top alt. 369.49 m) in the SE corner of the room, partially cut by pit 9146, was also associated with this floor. It measured ca. 150 x 90 cm, and was made of bricks: a row of regular bricks (30 x 18-20 cm) delimited it on the eastern side, while more irregular brickwork was apparently used inside.

The lowest floor reached in room 9125 is 9166, which could not be excavated completely. In the

northern part of the room, where the overlying accumulation was very thin and moderately ashy, it consisted of a good mud-plastered surface. In the SE corner it was less well preserved, and covered by a thicker, bricky filling (9169) which also contained some kiln slags (?). Like the previous ones, this floor was sloping southwards (alt. 369.45 m, 369.40 m).

Fireplace 9163 was built on this floor and first used with it. It consisted of a hard, slightly raised, roughly quadrangular 92 x 56 cm preparation of grit embedded into white plaster; a burnt ovoid area in the center of it represented the proper firing place. A second, smaller fireplace with a similar preparation of grit (9170, top alt. 369.50 m) was located ca. 30 cm east of it, in the corner between benches 9145-1949-9150 and 9148. Its diameter was ca. 30 cm; it had been cut and partially obliterated by the later insertion of jar 9160. A third fireplace (9167), which also had a grit preparation, was associated with floor 9166. It lay in the central part of the room, approximately in the area later occupied by fireplaces 9159 (which cuts it) and 9144. It was circular in shape (\varnothing 50 cm), slightly sunk into the floor (bottom alt. 369.43 m), and contained some burnt material. S-W of this fireplace, a small portion of the floor was white-plastered.

Under brick platform 9165 another similar platform (9168) was found, which was preserved at approximately the same level as floor 9166 (top alt. 369.40 m), but was presumably associated with it. Like 9165, its westernmost row of bricks was very clear, whereas the inner part was very irregular. The stones belonging to structure 9171, in the western part of the room, were not removed, therefore we do not know whether they were already present at the time of floor 9166.

Benches 9149 and 9148 were certainly in use with floor 9166, although they dated back to an earlier phase, as proved by the fact that the plastered faces of 9148 can still be seen at a lower level than floor 9166, at the bottom of pit 9146 (alt. 369.34 m). Bench 9148 was 36 cm wide, and 140 cm long from the corner with bench 9149. The top of bench 9148, a white-plastered surface slightly sloping towards the south, was 11 cm lower than the top of bench 9149. The resulting step, which was also white-plastered, was clearly visible and well preserved.

Phase 5 (Fig. 8). Phase 5 occupation was essentially documented in quadrant 103.040d. In 103.040c, structures belonging to this level were discovered under the bottom of pit 9133=9213. As for 104.040c, Phase 5 structures were lying only a few centimeters under surface soil and were completely eroded away, although some of them were still visible in the western profile of the quadrant. In this phase, the eastern part of quadrant 103.040d, heavily damaged by surface erosion, was occupied by

significant wall structures (9231, 9222). An open area (9221, 9228) extended over the rest of the quadrant (Fig. 15). It consisted of an irregularly paved space extending in N-S direction, onto which a series of installations located in the NW part of the quadrant were looking. In general, walls belonging to Phase 5 structures were preserved for no more than 20-30 cm. Possibly, the whole area had been levelled before building the large retaining structures of Phase 4.

As already stated, the large retaining wall 9202 was built on the thick ash grey layer 9215 (base alt. 369.06 m). Under the latter, an accumulation of reddish soil mixed with ashes (9218, 9226, 9240), of varying depths, covered Phase 5 structures (see Fig. 12). It contained a few clay sealings (9218-M-1, 9218-M-2) and a fragment of a bone (?) ring (9218-M-3).

The floor (9241) of open area 9221, 9228 was sloping towards the S-E (alt.: 368.86 m near the northern baulk; 368.73 m near the southern baulk; 368.76 m in the middle of quadrant). It was paved with gravel and pottery sherds interspersed with groups of larger stones. Both sherds and stones were concentrated in some areas. Even if this floor was not completely removed, it is possible to state that its depth was not homogeneous. It seems that a section of it - a 40-70 cm wide, slightly curved stripe, running in approximately N-S direction and forking near the southern limit of the quadrant - was considerably deeper. This feature may have been connected with a draining system running below the paving.

The surface of 9241 was very irregular, so that it

cannot be excluded that it was covered by a layer of compacted mud, representing the actual walking surface. In fact, two fireplaces belonging to this phase were found ca. 10 cm above the gravel pavement. The first one (9253, alt. 369.02 m) lay almost completely outside of quadrant 103.040d, but could be clearly seen in the profile as a slightly concave patch of gritty white plaster with fragments of charcoal on it.

The other fireplace (9247=9164) was located under the bottom of pit 9133=9213 (see Fig. 12). It was built on a surface of a compact reddish mud (floor 9230=9151, alt. 368.78 m), which covered some earlier structures (wall 9259 and brick platform 9255). The fireplace consisted of a concave area, filled in with white plaster and grits, quadrangular in shape, with rounded corners (100 x 60 cm), whose bottom (alt. 368.69 m) cut the top of platform 9255. A black, ovoid surface inside this area marked the actual firing place.

The area north of fireplace 9247 was occupied by a complex installation (top alt.: 368.89-368.93 m; bottom: 368.80-368.82 m), formed by a number of small irregular walls and benches (9225, 9223, 9224, 9235, 9251, 9236, 9250), whose function was difficult to define. The main of these walls (9223) run N-S. It was 220 cm long, 50 cm wide, and was made of 50 x 30-35 cm bricks. Two short walls (9235, 9224) projected from it of 60 and 40 cm, respectively, towards the east. One of them (9224) showed a stepped outline. A sort of small niche, measuring 80 x 70 cm, was thus formed (9252), which was partially closed on its fourth side by a white-plastered block of compacted clay (9250) joining wall 9235,

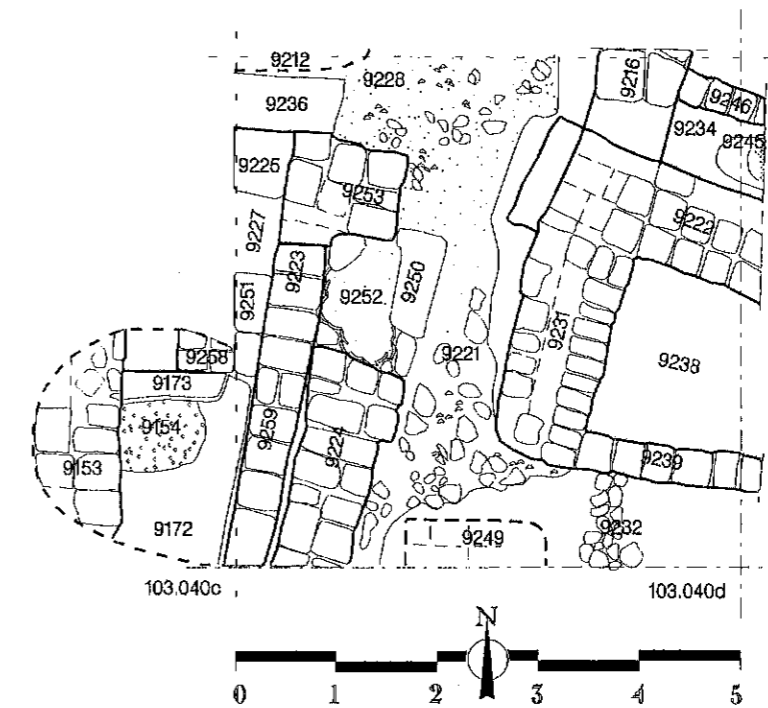


Fig. 8 - Field I. Plan of level II, phase 5.

though not in line with it. The SE corner of space 9252 was therefore left open. However, a line of sherds vertically set along the inner white-plastered faces of walls 9223 and 9224 continued with the line of the latter, to join 9250. The base of this peculiar installation (alt. 368.56 m) was covered with gravel and corresponds to floor 9241 elsewhere. Inside space 9252, a partially plastered large stone was found.

On the western side of wall 9223, wall 9225 and bench (?) 9251 projected from it in western direction, disappearing under the western limit of the quadrant. North of wall 9225, an earlier brick structure (9236, top alt.: 368.89 m) along its northern face was probably used as a bench, its upper surface being coated with a layer of fine, soft clay (9229).

During the last days of excavation, these structures were partially dismantled, revealing an earlier, slightly different setting of the same area, which could be followed into quadrant 103.040c, under the bottom of pit 9133=9213. Lying under wall 9223, but extending southwards under floor 9230=9151, and fireplace 9247=9164, there was an earlier wall (9259, top alt. 368.81 m to the north, 368.74 m to the south), 360 cm long (southern limit marked by a plastered corner) and 45 cm wide, made of one row of 45 × 32 cm bricks. One of the two projecting buttresses in the eastern side of this wall (9224) was already present at this time, while 9235 was a later addition. Under feature 9250, a similar, but free-standing feature (9256) was found. Its shape was more regular (quadrangular: 90 × 40 cm) and its surface was white-plastered.

West of the northern limit of wall 9259, under wall 9225, a large wall (?) was found. It is the northern part of this wall that was later reused as a bench set against wall 9225 (9236). South of bench (?) 9251 a 125 cm long wall running westwards from 9259 was found (9258=9156, width uncertain, top alt. 368.80 m). A third wall, 150 cm long (9153, top alt. 368.78 m), run from 9258=9156 to the south, roughly parallel to 9259. Its width is not sure: a line ca. 50 cm west of its eastern face might represent its other face, or the limit of its first row of bricks. A 100 cm long, 25 cm wide bench (?) (9173) was leaning against wall 9156=9258.

Walls 9153, 9156=9258 and 9259 surrounded a small, white-plastered, open space (9172), provided with a greyish floor (9152, alt. 368.74 m). In the corner between wall 9153 and bench 9173, a fireplace (9154), ovoid in shape and similar in structure to 9247=9164 etc., was sunk into the floor (alt. 368.69 m).

Walls 9153, 9156=9258 and 9259 were preserved only a few centimeters (4-6 cm) above the level of floor 9152. They had obviously been artificially erased and levelled. It is not sure when this happened, but they were apparently still standing when floor 9151 with its fireplace 9247=9164 was in use, since the

mud plaster of this floor raises against them. On the other hand, wall 9259, or at least its southern part, was no more in use at this time, as demonstrated by the fact that it lies under both floor and fireplace.

The eastern part of the quadrant was less well preserved, because of surface erosion. The main features were two large perpendicular walls: 9216-9231 and 9222. 9216-9231 (top alt. 368.89 m) run in approximately N-S direction. It was formed by two different adjoining walls: 9216 (badly preserved, extending from the northern baulk for about 100 cm southwards) and 9231, south of it. Near the point where these two walls joined (which had been damaged by a cemented peg set during a previous campaign), there was a sort of irregular buttress, ca. 20 cm wide, projecting from wall 9231. Wall 9231 was 90 cm wide. It could be followed for 260 cm to the south, after which it was interrupted by a ca. 100 cm wide, path-like eastward extension of floor 9241, some stones of which raised against the wall, as to protect its base. An alignment of stones (9232), set ca. 50 cm east of wall 9231, but approximately with the same orientation, seemed to mark the limit of floor 9241, and, at the same time, to make a step toward the east. South of this "path", near the southern limit of excavation, traces of red bricks represented the beginning of another wall (9249, top alt. 368.71 m), whose eastern face was aligned with that of wall 9231, but which was wider than it (140 cm).

Wall 9222 (top alt. 368.95 m) run in eastern direction from wall 9131. It was still visible, ca. 10 cm under the surface, in the western profile of quadrant 104.040c, but could not be followed further east. Like 9131, it was 90 cm wide, and had clearly been built together with it, while wall 9216 was leant against the corner made by these two walls.

As it became clear when we dismantled them, this system of walls was built by re-using, and connecting together, different structures belonging to an earlier phase (Phase 6?). In particular, both walls 9231 and 9222 consisted of an earlier, thinner wall (9231a and 9222a, respectively), 40 cm wide, made of a single row of 35 × 17 × 8 cm large reddish bricks, against the outer face of which two rows of more irregular, greyish bricks had been added, wide- and respectively lengthwise. Another earlier structure (9254) was incorporated in the wall during this operation. It was a small square "platform" (top alt. 368.80 m, measuring 78 × 78 cm), originally located NW of the corner between walls 9231 and 9222a, whose western face corresponds to the "buttress" projecting from wall 9231.

Walls 9231a and 9222a were originally part of a room (9238), which was delimited to the south by a third thin wall (9239). At the time when both walls were extended and reused as 9231 and respectively 9222, wall 9239 was obviously abandoned, since it is partially covered by the alignment of stones 9232.

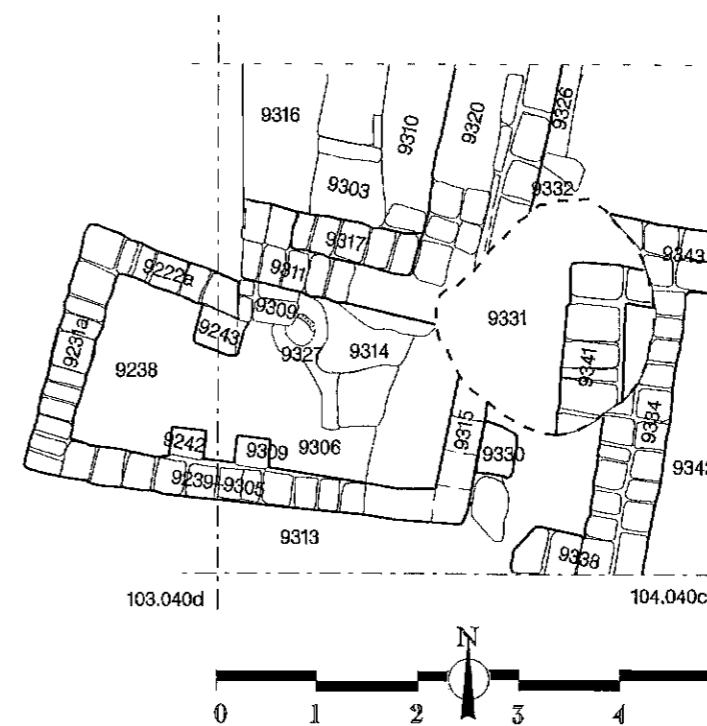


Fig. 9 - Field I. Plan of level II, phases 6 and 7.

It seems, therefore, that the area east of wall 9231 (9219, previously room 9238) was no more used as a room. Its filling (9220) is very soft, greenish in colour, very similar to filling 9214 associated to the large, later retaining wall 9202.

We can thus suppose that walls 9216+9231, 9222 and 9249 formed part of a system of retaining walls, the function of which was to stabilise the area east of the open space 9221, 9228. The base of the later addition of walls 9231 and 9222 (alt. 368.73 m and 368.71 m, respectively - 11 and 25 cm higher than the base of the original walls 9231a and 9222a), is ca. 5 cm lower than the paved floor 9241, which stops against it, and was therefore probably laid immediately after the whole area had been thus arranged.

Further Phase 5 structures were excavated in the NE corner of quadrant 103.040d, east of wall 9216 and north of wall 9222. Here, probably at the same time when the system of walls 9216-9231, 9222 was put together, or immediately after, a low tiny wall (9246: top alt. 368.71 m, base alt. 368.53 m) was built, joining 9216 and running parallel to 9222, 70 cm north of this. It was 31 cm wide, made of a single row of reddish bricks, measuring 35 × 25 × 9 cm. The small space (9234) between walls 9216, 9246 and 9222 was almost completely occupied by a fireplace (9245); we suppose, therefore, that 9246 was not a proper wall, but rather a low structure protecting the fireplace. Fireplace 9245 (top alt. 368.68 m, bottom 368.57 m) was similar in structure to other fire installation described above: it consisted of an ovoid, concave area, filled with hard white plaster

and grits, with a blackened patch in its center. It lay against the base of wall 9222, and was partially covered by its debris. The rest of space 9234 was covered by a loose filling (9244) merging into surface soil.

Phase 6 (Fig. 9). Phase 6 structures were exposed only on a limited area, approximately corresponding to the western half of quadrant 104.040c. Further to the east they had almost completely eroded away, while west of this area, in quadrant 103.040d, only their top was reached. These structures are likely to belong to different sub-phases - if not to two different phases. However, a precise phasing cannot be proposed yet, since in no place excavation proceeded beyond the highest layer encountered.

The latest sub-phase, whose connection with Phase 5 is still unclear, might be represented by the room (9238) delimited by walls 9239=9305, 9222a, and 9231a excavated in the SE corner of quadrant 103.040d. The alignment of its walls appears to roughly correspond to that of the earlier walls of room 9306 in the adjacent quadrant, so that we may suppose that we are dealing with successive occupations of one and the same room. The latest preserved floor of room 9306, however, was about 100 cm lower than the level reached in 9238.

Room 9238 was 170 cm wide on its western side, presumably less on the opposite, lost one, since walls 9239=9305 and 9222a were not exactly parallel to each other. Maximum preserved length was 160 cm, until the limit between the two quadrants. Two of its delimiting walls (9222a, 9231a) have been described

above. The third wall, 9239=9305, was also 40 cm wide, and made of reddish bricks, 35×25 (?) $\times 8$ cm in size. 80 cm east of wall 9231a, a 40×30 cm (?) buttress (9243 and respectively 9242) projected from both walls 9222a and 9239=9305. The filling of the room (9237, top alt. 368.60 m, underlying greenish filling 9220) was reddish and bricky; the floor has not been reached.

During Phase 6, quadrant 104.040c was occupied by small architectural units equipped with a series of complex installations (white-plastered basins).

In the western portion of the quadrant, two, and possibly three rooms (9316, 9306, 9313) were aligned along a N-S direction. Of the northernmost one (room 9316), only the SE corner was lying in the excavated area. It was delimited by two walls: wall 9311-9317, running in E-W direction, and 9320, running perpendicular to it towards the north. Wall 9311 (80 cm wide, 250 cm long – the corner was not preserved – top alt. 368.14 m) consisted of two rows of grey bricks (40×17 -20 cm). On top of it, in its northern part, there rose a single row of reddish bricks (9317, top alt. 368.36 m), surrounded by white plaster. An irregular bench (9303) of mud bricks (37×17 cm) was leaning against wall 9317 (top alt.: 368.35 m). Wall 9320 was ca. 80 cm wide and badly eroded (top alt. 367.68 m): it also seemed to be formed by two adjoining parts, the relation between which could not be ascertained.

The SE corner of room 9316 was occupied by installation 9310, a shallow white-plastered basin of irregular, quadrangular shape (max. width 120 cm; length from the baulk: 140 cm; base alt.: 368.08 m), whose sides rose against wall 9320, bench 9303 and wall 9311-9317. A low white-plastered "rib" projected from its southern side, dividing this part of the basin into two sections of different sizes.

The second room (9306) shared wall 9311 with room 9316. Its eastern limit was wall 9315, which was lying just under the surface and was preserved to a max. height of 20 cm. The eastern face of this wall run approximately on the same line as that of wall 9320, and might therefore represent its continuation, although the junction point was disturbed. Wall 9315 (top alt.: 367.77 m) was made of reddish bricks (40×27 cm), and was 40 cm wide. Its base (alt. 367.54 m) was strengthened by stones. To the south, room 9306 was limited by wall 9305 (35 cm wide, top alt.: 368.40 m), made of reddish bricks ($35 \times 25 \times 8$ -10 cm), representing the continuation – or an earlier phase – of wall 9239 in the adjacent quadrant 103.040d. The corner between 9315 and 9305 was well preserved. It seems that room 9306 was rather trapezoidal in shape. Its eastern side measured 150 cm. For the reasons stated above, one may guess that its western limit roughly corresponded to that of the later room 9238. The hypothesis of a similarity between the layout of rooms 9238 and

9306 is further supported by the presence of two symmetrical buttresses (9309, ca. 35 cm wide, long side partially hidden by the baulk), projecting from walls 9311 and 9305, which mirror buttresses 9242 and 9243 in room 9238.

The filling of room 9306 (9304) consisted of mudbrick debris including numerous fragments of white plaster. In this filling an axe of green stone (9304-M-1) (Fig. 19) was found. Under 9304, there was a layer (9307) of grey ashes rich in pottery sherds and containing few animal bones, which overlaid a complex installation (Fig. 16), including at least two small, white-plastered basins (9314, 9327). Basin 9327 (bottom alt.: 367.72 m) was a small, sub-circular receptacle (\varnothing 35 cm), partially overlain by buttress 9309, which seems therefore to be a later addition. Basin 9314 (bottom alt.: 367.65 m), 20 cm deep, had a quadrangular shape with rounded angles (90×50 cm). Adjoining these basins to the south and west, was a plastered surface (9328, alt.: 367.58 m) whose western and eastern limits were not preserved. As a result, it is not clear whether it represented a third, larger basin, or the floor of the room. Between basin 9314 and "floor" 9328, there was a raised, plastered feature (top alt.: 367.84 m), the shape of which is uncertain, the eastern side being lost.

Wall 9305 run only 70 cm from the southern limit of the quadrant. Therefore, only a small portion of the space south of it (9313) could be excavated. No wall was found which delimited it to the east, implying that it might have been an open space. The filling of space 9313 was a thick, bricky accumulation (9312). Its floor (9336: alt. 367.53 m) was a smooth surface of compacted mud. A shell necklace, or bracelet (9336-M-1) and a large piece of burnt wood (a fragment of pole?) were lying on it. A few centimeters above floor 9336, a round small white-plastered receptacle (alt. 367.60 m, \varnothing 13 cm) was found, adjacent to wall 9305. A line of white plaster, running in NS direction, was noticed immediately east of this. It is not clear whether these features represent the remains of some installation, possibly associated with a later floor, which had completely disappeared, or if they were accidentally incorporated in the brickfill.

East of wall 9320, a series of floors were discovered (9325, 9337, 9340) under sub-surface filling 9321 (animal figurine 9321-M-1: Pl. V, 1 was found within this filling).

Floor 9325 (alt.: 367.35 m) was a white-plastered surface, raising against wall 9320, and therefore associated with it. It extended approximately 160 cm to the east, and ca. 100 cm from the northern limit of the quadrant to the south. A metal ring (9325-M-1) (Pl. VI, 6) was resting on it. A row of mud-bricks (bench 9326, 25 cm wide; top alt. 367.45 m) was later laid on it, against wall 9320. Floor 9337, reddish in colour, was lying only a few centimeters under

QUADRANT 102.040d
W section

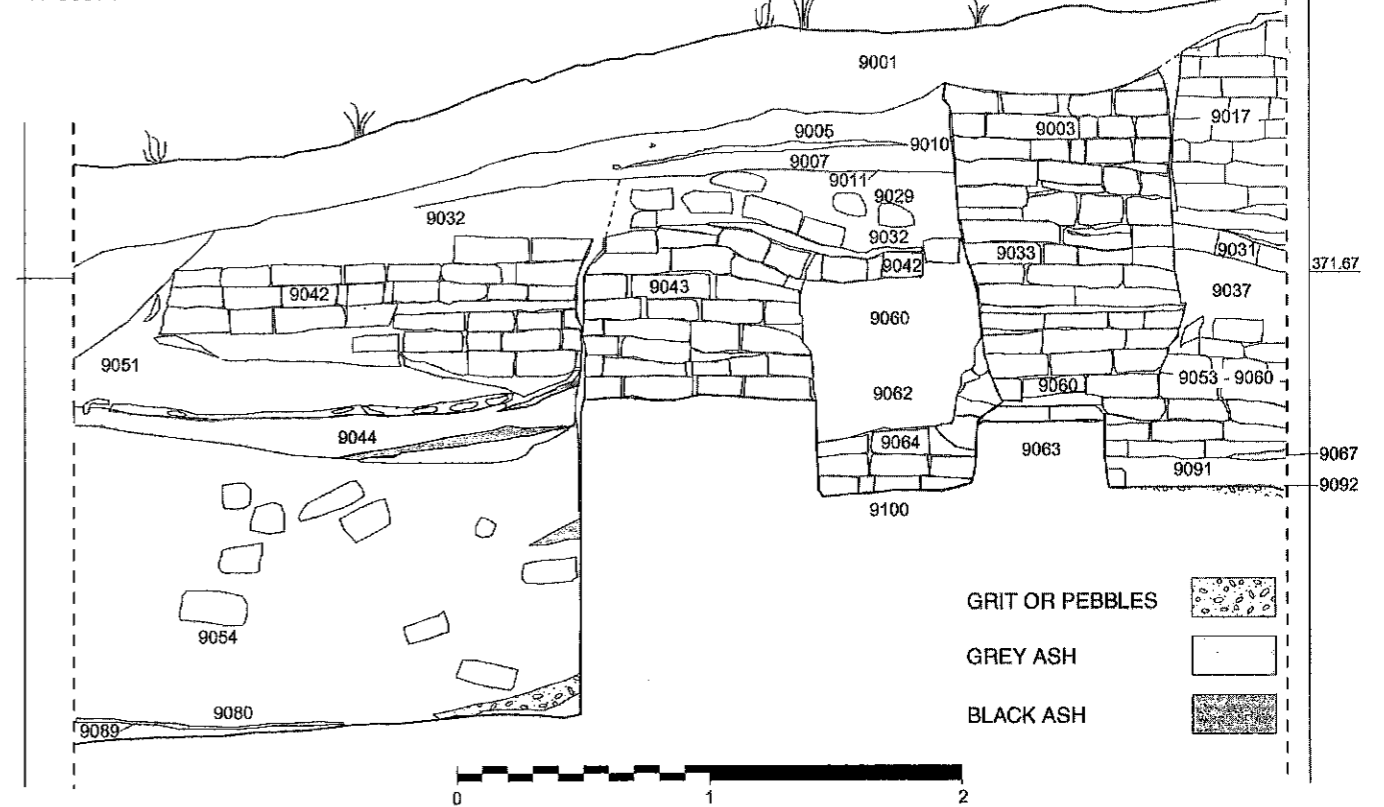


Fig. 10 - Field I. Quadrant 102.040d, western section.

QUADRANT 102.040d
N section

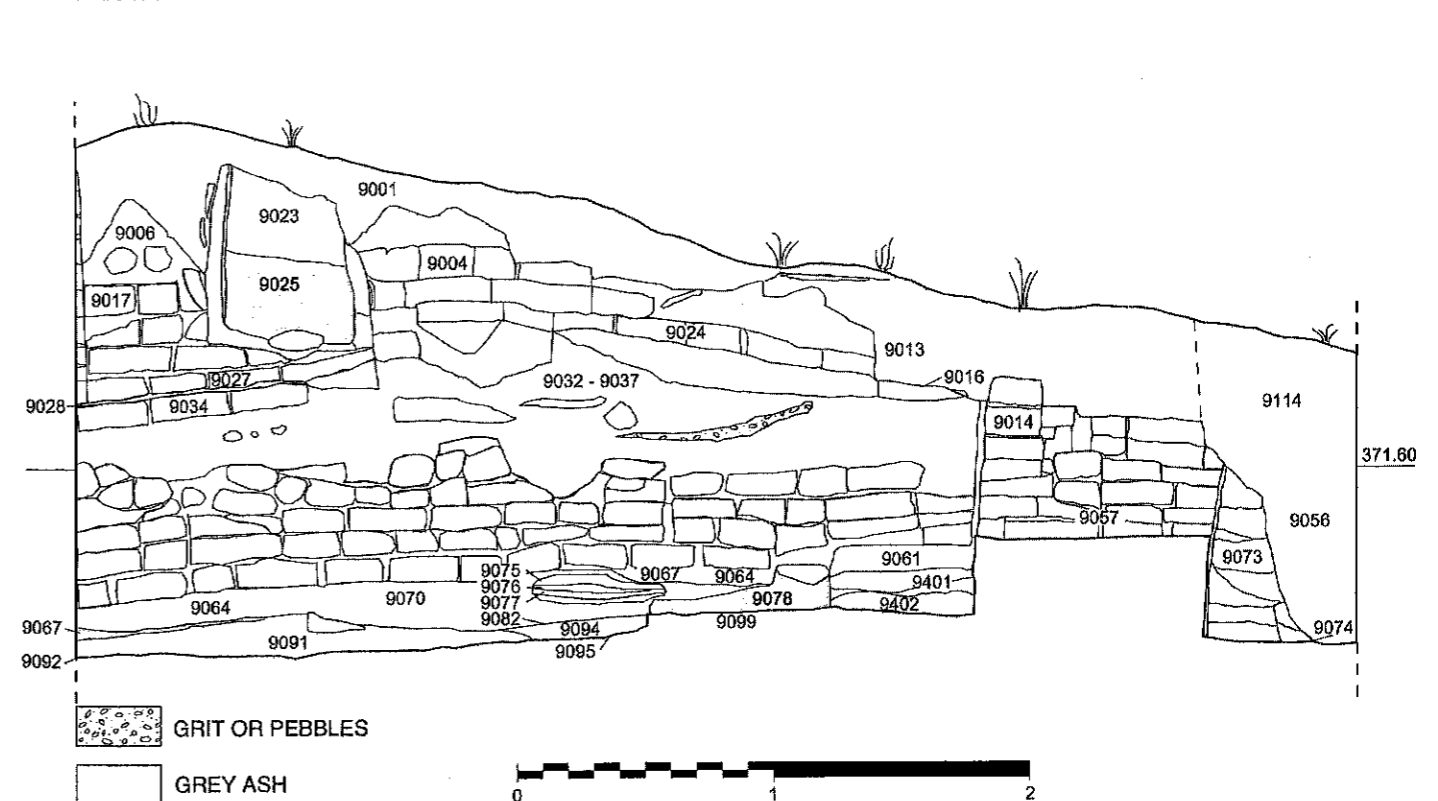


Fig. 11 - Field I. Quadrant 102.040d, northern section.

QUADRANT 103.040d
W section

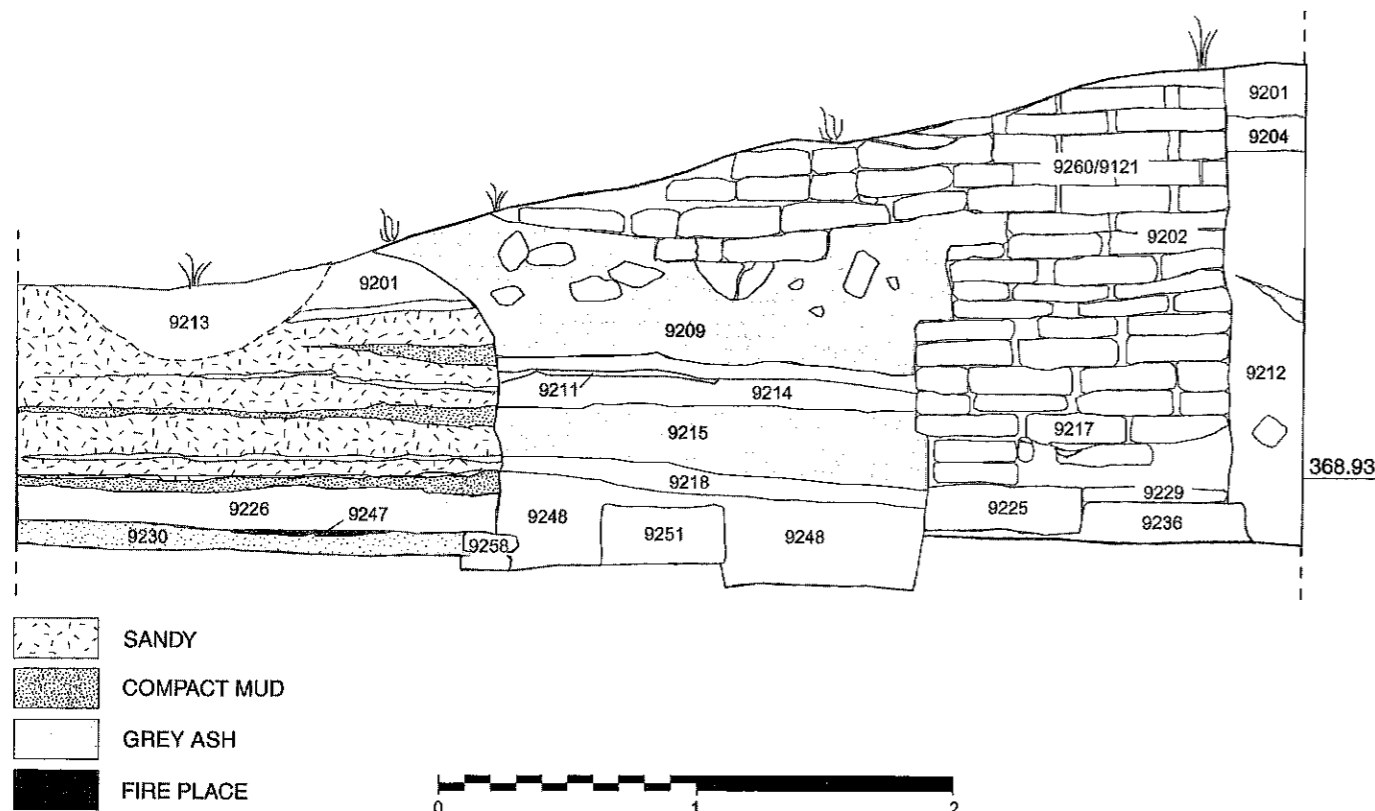


Fig. 12 - Field I. Quadrant 103.040d, western section.

9325 (alt: 367.31 m). Floor 9340, greyish and covered by a thin layer of ashes, lay 6 cm under it. Since floor 9325 was not completely removed, we do not know whether 9337 and 9340 were also associated with wall 9320, or belonged to an earlier wall.

On the other hand, a fragment of white-plastered floor (9329), found in the southernmost part of the quadrant, at approximately the same alt. (367.25 m), was clearly earlier than wall 9315, since the latter covered both this floor and a bench (9330) associated with it. The bench (9330, top alt.: 367.56 m) was 55 cm long and 35 cm wide; it was white-plastered on its sides, and was leaning against an earlier wall, of which a line of plaster marked the face. Ca. 50 cm south of the bench, this plaster line deviated to the east, suggesting the presence of a second bench or buttress (?). A sort of niche (9335) was thus created in the wall.

Finally, a large pit (9331: Ø 240 cm), only the eastern part of which has been completely excavated (bottom alt. 366.82 m), was found in the area between floors 9325 and 9329. It was filled with soft brown earth, and contained abundant pottery sherds and some fragments of grinding stones (9331-M-1, 9331-M-2). The level from which this pit was dug is

uncertain. Both floors are not well preserved near its limits, so that it is not sure whether it cuts them or not. Wall 9320, on the other hand, is definitely not cut by it, and seems to partially overlay it. Since the western part of the pit was heavily eroded, however, we can not exclude that its actual limit was located immediately west of the wall, instead than under it. In this case, the pit might well have been later than the wall. In any case, no Seleucid-Parthian pottery has been found in its filling, which would support a 3rd millennium date.

Phase 7 (Fig. 9). Structures earlier than Phase 6 were reached only in the easternmost part of quadrant 104.040c. They were included in one and the same phase, although they actually belong to at least two different phases, as shown by their being placed one on top of the other. All of them were cut by pit 9331.

Wall 9334 (top alt. 367.09 m) was badly eroded. It was ca. 80 cm wide, apparently formed by two parallel rows of bricks measuring 40 × 25-30 cm. It was delimited, to the N, by a perpendicular wall (9343: top alt. 367.19 m, ca. 60 cm wide) running eastwards. Traces of plaster were found along the

northern face of 9343. The southern limit of wall 9334 is less clear. Ca. 30 cm north of the southern limit of the quadrant, it is joined by a perpendicular wall – or buttress – (9338: top alt. 367.09 m) which extends toward the west. This wall could be followed for only 75 cm, after which it is covered by plastered floor 9329. Its southern face lies outside of the excavated area; we do not know, therefore, whether it represented the end of wall 9334, or if this wall continued beyond it. Nothing can be said of the space (9342) east of wall 9334 and south of wall 9343, the filling of which merged with surface soil.

A tannur (9332) cut by pit 9331, some fragments of which were to be seen in the NW profile of the pit, might have been contemporary, or possibly slightly later, than walls 9334, 9338 and 9343, to judge from its absolute alt. (top: 367.41 m).

A large N-S wall (9341, top alt. 366.61), whose northern limit was visible under the bottom of pit 9331, was, on the contrary, clearly earlier, since it was partially overlain by walls 9334 and 9343. Wall 9341 was made of very large bricks (50-55 × 35 cm), joined by a thick line of mortar. Both length and width of this wall are unknown.

2.3. Final Remarks

Although the small excavated surface did not allow to expose any complete building plan, nor, with the exception of room 9125, any complete room, some preliminary remarks can be attempted about building techniques, and the function of some of the unearthed structures and installations, as well as about the general layout and function of the investigated area during the 3rd millennium BC. These will be checked and further specified during the next seasons, in which, after completing the stratigraphical sounding, we plan to extend the excavation to reach a larger horizontal exposure.

In general, a considerable part of the excavated area was occupied, during different phases, by either open spaces – 9020, 9021 (Phase 1) in quadrant 102.040d, 9221, 9228 (Phase 5) in quadrant 103.040d – provided with different installation, or by in-filled areas delimited by large retaining walls – 9036, 9034 (Phase 2) in quadrant 102.040d, 9260 (Phase 4) in quadrant 103.040d. Well preserved floors with *in situ* material and relevant ashy accumulations, providing evidence for roofed rooms, were encountered only in some spaces: e.g. 9019, 9022 (Phase 1), 9066 (Phase 3) and 9052 (Phases 4 and possibly 3) in quadrant 102.040d, and 9125 (Phase 4) in quadrant 103.040c. Only in the latter case, however, the dimensions of the room (375 × 250 cm) could be ascertained.

For the reasons outlined above, doorways were very rarely encountered (on walls 9004, 9033, be-

tween walls 9063 and 9057, 9104 and 9106, and possibly on wall 9127). Some of them were not sure, since they had been later blocked and filled-in. Those which seemed more sure were generally quite narrow (42 to 50 cm), and apparently – with the only exception of doorway 9109 between walls 9104 and 9106 – not provided with a proper threshold. In no case did they lead to another room, but, when it was possible to decide (walls 9004, 9033, 9063-9057), always to an open space.

It is, therefore, impossible to know whether the excavated rooms belonged to multi-room dwellings, or rather to simpler single-room units¹¹. As far as the function of these rooms is concerned, we can mainly rely on the evidence of room 9125, the only one in which some *in situ* material was found on different floors. Benches, platforms and other features (e.g. pottery jars sunk into the floor) belong to the normal inventory of contemporary domestic buildings. The recovery on the floors of fire installations, pottery vessels, grinding stones, grinders, pestles etc., as well as that of carbonised seeds, suggests normal domestic activities, especially connected with food preparation. The kiln (?) slags found within bricky filling 9169 are the only hint to more specialised functions. More specialised activities were apparently carried out, however, in the neighbouring open areas (9221-9228). These were actually provided with “basins” and other special installations, and also, in the case of 9221-9228, with both fireplaces and draining facilities. A specialised function can also be supposed for the concentration of basins located in quadrant 104.040c.

That the inhabitants of the area were somehow involved with handicraft or other not purely domestic activities is also hinted at by the “numerical tablet” (?) found in room 9125 (Pl. V, 3), and by the concentration of sealings found in the south-eastern corner the same room, which suggest that some administrative activities were carried out there. Interestingly enough, the concentration of seal impressions showed a remarkable continuity, in the same limited space, throughout different, successive floor layers.

As far as we can judge, there was a certain continuity, but also significant changes, in the use of different areas. Within a single phase, continuity was high in the general layout of the spaces, as best shown by the examples of room 9125 during phase 4, but also of open space 9221-9228 in phase 5. Individual features (benches, fireplaces, installations, etc.), were, however, often renewed and modified, and even the main walls (e.g. wall 9127) were obviously subjected to substantial modifications, involv-

¹¹ For different house types in 3rd millennium Jazirah, see, among others, LEBEAU 1996, PFÄLZNER 1997.

ing, among others, the in-filling of doors, niches etc. In this respect, it is useful to remark that those sub-phases which we have been able to distinguish – e.g. in the case of room 9125 – were probably very near to each other in time, as shown by the sequence of superimposed floors and, even more, by the fact that sealings belonging to different floors bear impressions in same style and, in more than one case, of the very same seal.

Continuity between different phases can be better judged from the evidence of quadrant 102.040d, in which structures of three different phases (1-3) have been unearthed. See, e.g., the presence of an open area in the central part of the quadrant, and of rooms in the northern (9022, 9036, 9066), and respectively western (9019, 9034, 9052) part of it, as well as the location of some main walls (cf. the sequence of walls 9003, 9033, 9063). However, the layout and dimensions of different rooms differed considerably from phase to phase. In phase 1, for instance, wall 9003 was crossed by wall 9004, running in N-S direction, whereas its phase 2 forerunner (wall 9033) was longer, and made a corner with wall 9014, which run from it towards the north, roughly parallel to the later wall 9004, but further to the east. Finally, in phase 3 wall 9063 was shorter and thinner than 9033, while the forerunner of 9014 (9057) joined another wall (9058), which run from it towards the east.

The major source of discontinuity in the use of space were, however, static problems, which forced the inhabitants to repeatedly abandon, level and fill-in several rooms and to build large retaining structures (walls 9039 and 9038 in quadrant 102.040d, wall 9202-9121 and brick filling 9260 in quadrant 103.404c-d, maybe also 9216+9231, 9222 and 9249) over previously inhabited areas.

Architectural structures were made almost exclusively of mud-bricks, compacted clay being used only for some small-sized installations (benches, basins etc.). Baked bricks were only exceptionally used, obviously for special purposes (e.g., installation 9009 – further fragments were encountered in filling layers).

The use of stone was equally rare. Groups of large stones were apparently used to strengthen the outer limit or the corner of walls (9003, 9045, 9231) which had partially collapsed or tended to collapse, or to stabilise the ground of outer spaces (feature 9232). No examples of stone foundations or wall bases were encountered. Stone thresholds were absent, as well, the only encountered example (9110) being made of mud-bricks. Pebbles and stones of different sizes were also used for the base of tannur 9018, and for a few in-door features of unknown purpose: preparation 9099 in room 9066, and, together with brick fragments, installations 9140, 9158, 9171, all of them in room 9125. Finally, in the paving – or preparation – of open areas (9241, 9252), use was made of both gravel and larger pebbles, together with pot-

tery sherds, most probably to increase drainage of surface water.

As a rule, walls were laid directly on the ground, without proper foundations. In a few cases (e.g., wall 9202), a low foundation trench filled in with one or two irregular layers of mud-bricks and fragments thereof could be detected. Earlier walls running in approximately the same direction, but with a slightly different outline, were often reused as foundations.

As is not often the case in contemporary domestic architecture¹², the width of the walls was often quite substantial (75 to 90 cm in most cases), corresponding to two-to-three adjacent rows of bricks. We suppose that this is due to the special problems posed by the nature of the ground, which was clearly prone to subsiding along the line of the slope. Not only was this repeatedly stabilised through the deliberate construction of massive walls (up to 120-140 cm wide) with an exclusively retaining function (9038, 9039, 9202, 9249), but also through the strengthening and re-use as such of walls originally built for different purposes (9216+9231, 9222, possibly also 9033, 9014, 9045), and the deliberate in-filling of entire spaces with layers of bricks. For the same static reasons, however, also walls which clearly delimited inhabited spaces – e.g. those of room 9125 in quadrant 103.040c – often had a considerable width.

Thinner walls (30 to 50 cm wide) were present, as well. They were generally formed by a single row of stretchers. In many cases, however, it was clear that these did not delimit roofed spaces, but low open-air features: tannurs (the eastern part of wall 9017 for tannur 9018), fireplaces (wall 9246 for fireplace 9245), and other installations (walls 9223 and 9259 with adjoining short walls and buttresses). Only in quadrant 104.040c proper “rooms” (9316, 9306=9238), made of such thin walls, were found; since, however, no doors were found to access them, and their bottom was mostly occupied by complex plastered installations, some possibility exists that we are also dealing with low, partially open-air enclosures. This hypothesis might be supported by the fact that the plaster coating bench 9303, adjacent to wall 9311, run up to the single row of bricks 9317, lying on top of this wall.

The bricks were mostly reddish in colour. Greyish-greenish bricks were also occasionally used (walls 9121, 9231, 9222, 9311). They were apparently of a lesser quality – they are actually less well preserved – and were chiefly used for large retaining walls (9121, 9231, 9222).

As already remarked, most excavated walls lay relatively close to the present surface of the mound,

¹² As far as Tell Beydar is concerned, see e.g. the dwelling area in field B (Bluard, Poinot, Quenet, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 47-58).

and were therefore heavily damaged by erosion. Furthermore, a number of them were preserved only to a limited height because of the numerous, successive re-buildings which took place in the area. As a result, the outline of individual bricks was often impossible to follow. It is clear, however, that bricks of different sizes were in use.

Most common was a rectangular brick, the ratio of whose sides being approximately 4:2:1. We can suppose that its “standard” size was 37 × 17 × 9 cm, though a tolerance of up to 5 cm (35-40 × 15-20 × 8-10 cm) was observed in individual cases. This was not only due to different preservation of the single bricks, since sometimes it was clear that resulting irregularities in the brickwork had been evened up with thick layers of mortar or brick fragments. Another recurrent brick type was less elongated, its length: width ratio tending towards 3:2. Its size can be approximately reconstructed as 30-35 × 20-25 × 8 cm. Square bricks (30 × 30 × 8 cm) were observed only in one case (wall 9121). Much larger bricks, measuring 50 × 35 cm, which are commonly found at roughly contemporary sites in the Khabur region¹³ were only occasionally used (walls 9223, 9341). No clear changes in brick size can be detected in the course of time, though a tendency can be observed, in the deepest layers, toward slightly larger bricks: starting from Phase 3, bricks measuring 40-45 × 20-25 cm and respectively 40-45 × 30-35 cm repeatedly appear beside the most common types mentioned above.

Construction techniques were in general rather simple. Bricks were mostly laid stretcher-to-stretcher, in one or two (exceptionally three) parallel rows, while more sophisticated layouts, involving a row of stretchers flanked by one or two rows of headers, were only occasionally observed (9039, 9222, 9231, 9309). Different layouts sometimes alternated in successive layers of bricks of the same wall.

If we do not take into account later additions to earlier walls (e.g., walls 9121, 9231 and 9222, 9311-9317), bricks of the same type and size were generally used for a single wall. Only in a few cases (e.g., walls 9039, 9058, 9063) the intentional use of bricks of different size could be ascertained. More frequent was, instead, the use of single bricks of different sizes and fragments thereof, or of larger patches of mortar, within an otherwise regular layout of bricks (e.g., walls 9014, 9033). The presence of a wholly irregular brick core delimited by a row of regular bricks could be observed, however, only in mud-brick features other than walls (platforms 9165, 9168).

With the exceptions of a few walls purposely built with a retaining function, wall faces were usually coated with a simple layer of mud. White gypsum plasters of better quality were rarer, but occasionally present on the interior walls of inhabited spaces (e.g., walls 9045, 9116, 9124; see also the frequent presence of

plaster fragments within brickfall accumulations).

Floors mostly consisted of a layer of compacted clay, greyish or reddish in colour, at times containing small gypsum inclusions, which was frequently renewed, possibly on a yearly basis, to judge from the sequences of tightly packed floors excavated in rooms 9066 and 9125. In some cases, they alternated, in the very same spaces, with less frequent white-plastered floors, generally not of very good quality. A several centimeter thick white lime (?) plaster of much better quality was used only for floor 9028 in room 9022.

White plastering was very common, on the contrary, on the surface of both in-door and open-air features: benches (9126, 9148, 9149, 9330), sort of “niches” (9172), working installations of different type (9129, 9252, 9250, 9256) and especially “basins” (9310, 9314, 9327). The plaster could be rather thick, but was generally not of a very good quality, and tended to flake off easily. Furthermore, it was not waterproof, though certainly more resistant to water than a simple mud plaster.

In the following, the main categories of architectural features and installations encountered in the excavated area will be shortly summarized.

Benches and platforms were relatively common, as shown by the only completely excavated room (9125). They were often renewed and modified both in location and especially in dimensions, although in some cases a remarkable continuity could be seen. A case at issue is the series of different benches (9126, 9139, 9145, 9149, 9150) leaning against wall 9116 in room 9125.

The difference between benches and platforms is not clear. Benches were most often located along the inner faces of room walls, or, more rarely, along the walls of open, or partially open spaces. They were often made of compacted clay, though mud-bricks were also occasionally used. Their surface and walls were carefully coated with either a clay or a white gypsum plaster, which often extended on the adjacent wall. Two main types can be distinguished: elongated benches which followed the outline of the wall (e.g., 9061, 9401, 9402, 9139, 9145, 9149-1950, 9148, 9173, 9303, 9326) and smaller, more squarish benches which projected from it (e.g. 9119, 9126, 9330). With only one exception (benches 9149-9150, 9148), benches of the first type neither extended over the whole length of a wall, nor over two adjacent walls.

Benches were certainly used for a number of different functions, among others as seats, shelves and probably also as working surfaces. Bench 9148, with its sloping white-plastered top, may be an example of the latter. Elongated benches set along the walls, belonging to an earlier floor layer, were occasionally

¹³ See KOLINSKI, LAWĘCKA 1992, 195 f.

left standing only a few centimeters above a renewed floor (see for instance bench 9145-9149, 9150 at the time of floor 9143), probably to protect the corner between floor and wall, as a support for vessels and other movable objects.

Platforms (9024, 9136, 9165, 9168, 9254, 9255) were larger, more squarish in shape, generally made of mud-bricks and unplastered. Examples were found both inside rooms and in open spaces, either free-standing, or leaning against the face of walls.

Compacted clay was used for a number of irregular raised features, generally white-plastered, either free-standing (9256) or forming part of so-called "basins" (9314-9327-9328) or other installations (9250).

Three different types of fire installations were encountered. The first, and most common one (8 examples have been found), are flat fireplaces with a preparation of grit and white plaster. They consist of a slightly concave area of ovoid or vaguely quadrangular shape filled with a layer of hard, white plaster mixed with grit and often slightly raised on the surrounding floor, with a smaller, heavily burnt ovoid or circular area on top of it. The dimensions of the whole feature can reach 100 × 60 cm, those of the firing area generally do not exceed a diameter of 30 cm. This type of fireplace has been found in open areas (fireplaces 9154, 9247=9164, 9245, 9253), and inside rooms (fireplaces 9163, 9167, 9170, and a possible fireplace in room 9052); it was often leaning against a wall, or was located in the corner between two walls. In one case (9245), it was also protected by a low wall supposedly built against it. Similar fireplaces are occasionally present at other sites of the Khabur region¹⁴.

The second type of fire installation consists of a deeper concave area (depth up to 20 cm), usually of more regular circular or ovoid shape, filled with ashes and other burnt material. It is represented by three examples (9088, 9144, 9159), all of them from roofed spaces (rooms 9052 and 9125), all of them apparently lying in the middle of the room, and often with a remarkable continuity in their location (room 9125). This suggests a functional difference with the previous type, which, however, can not be further specified. In this respect, it is interesting to notice that large amounts of burnt seeds were found inside one of these fireplaces (9144).

Finally, there were two examples (9018, 9332) of open-air bread-ovens of the well-known tannur type. 9018 was especially well preserved (for a detailed description see above), while only fragments of the wall of 9332 were left. Constructed in-door ovens, a common feature in contemporary settlements, were, on the contrary, never met with.

The presence of white-plastered "basins" (9129, 9310, 9314, 9327, 9328) was apparently a typical feature of the excavated area. Similar structures have been often encountered at 3rd millennium north

Mesopotamian sites, especially in the Khabur area¹⁵, but have not yet been subjected to a detailed analysis. In spite of their apparent similarity, they were probably used for a number of different functions. Some of them are provided with drain-pipes and have, therefore, been connected to different activities involving liquids. This does not seem, however, to be the case for those excavated in field I¹⁶, which never had draining facilities, and were, as we said above, not waterproof. Furthermore, in some cases (e.g. 9310, 9328) they seemed to be very low and possibly open on one side. In no cases special traces of use (e.g., coloured patches, or similar) were found on their surface. This was, in general, carefully smoothed, but not very resistant to wear.

Working installation 9129 was located inside room 9125 and was probably used in connection with the adjoining platform 9136. The recovery of two fragments of the same grinding stone in the area suggest that the activities which took place in the area involved grinding cereals and possibly mixing the resulting flour with some liquids¹⁷.

As we remarked before, it is not sure whether or not the "basins" area (spaces 9316, 9306) which occupied the western half of quadrant 104.040d was at least partially open-air. A special feature of these basins was their being made of multiple compartments of different shape and depth, which suggests that they were used in a set of connected activities. Unfortunately, these structures were lying very near to the present mound surface, so that no *in situ* material could be collected from them. The excavation of the immediately underlying layers, which seem to be functionally similar, will hopefully help to clarify the function of these complex installations.

3. The EJ Ceramic Sequence (by E. Rova)

A total of 5673 pieces of pottery (including 16 entire vessels) were recovered in Field I during the 1997 campaign. Out of these, 533 pieces (all entire or reconstructable profiles, decorated fragments and those diagnostic sherds which were considered use-

¹⁴ They are quite common, for instance, at Tell Abu Hafur (KOLINSKI, LAWECKA 1992, 198 f.), though they are said (*ibid.*) to be rarely encountered at other sites of the area.

¹⁵ For some selected examples, cf. LEBEAU 1997, 132 (Melebiya), KOLINSKI, LAWECKA 1992, 184 f., 189, 199 (Tell Abu Hafur), PFÄLZNER, DOHMANN-PFÄLZNER 1996, *passim* "Gypsmulde" (Tell Chuera).

¹⁶ The same has been remarked about basins from Tell Abu Hafur (KOLINSKI, LAWECKA 1992, 199).

¹⁷ Though definitely different, one might recall the white-plastered grinding table from Tell Bderi mentioned in PFÄLZNER 1997, 118-119.

ful for typological purposes)¹⁸ coming from 97 different loci were selected for drawing and physical description. With the exception of few late 1st millennium sherds from the Seleucid-Parthian pits, which will not be discussed here, these all belong to the EJ III (= ED III) period. They mainly came from secondary contexts (filling layers, including mud-brick collapse, etc.) and were mostly in very fragmentary conditions. Only rarely was pottery found *in situ* on floors and, in these cases (e.g. in room 9125), in rather limited amount. It must be considered, however, that most filling layers recovered had clearly been formed in a very short time and were sealed by immediately later layers, so that, if the material recovered in them is not totally safe from contamination, it can still be considered as representative of a contemporary assemblage.

The following remarks are based on preliminary data, and will need to be further elaborated. Pottery from all excavated areas appears to be quite homogeneous: no clear functional differences (e.g. in the amount of different wares) can be noticed between different contexts, while only slight changes in vessel morphology from the earliest to the latest excavated phases are suggestive of diachronic developments.

As elsewhere on the site¹⁹, by far the largest amount of sherds belongs to the common and fine wares. Cooking Pot Ware represents less than 5% of the recorded sherds. Metallic Ware (Pl. I, 1-3) is rather rare (ca. 2% of the recorded sherds), while only a sherd of (excised) Ninevite 5 ware (not illustrated) was found, in one of the deepest loci reached in quadrant 104.040c.

To judge from identifiable fragments, open vessels (bowls, cups and large bowls, or "basins"), were slightly more frequent than closed ones (jars, bottles and cooking pots). Among the former, bowls are by far the most common (ca. 200 fragments, representing almost 2/5 of the total I Field diagnostics). Most characteristic is a bowl (Pl. I, 4-8) with thin, straight walls and slightly rounded or flattened base. The junction between the wall and the base in some cases (Pl. I, 9-10) turns into a slight but perceptible carination, but it is generally quite smooth (Pl. I, 11). The rim is straight, in most cases slightly sharpened (Pl. I, 12-17). Hemispherical, round-based bowls with curved walls (Pl. II, 1-4), generally with a plain simple or sharpened rim (Pl. II, 5-9), are the second most frequent type. Flat-based bowls (Pl. II, 10-12) are, on the contrary, quite rare. Bowl rims are on the whole rather standardised: among the rarer types, beaded rims (Pl. II, 13-14) appear to be especially typical of open, shallow bowls.

Large bowls -or "basins"- show a variety of shapes (two complete examples are shown in Pl. II, 15-16). Most common, however, is a large, slightly open type with straight or curved walls and rounded or flattened base. It often was oval in shape and mostly bore lugs

on the upper part of the wall, just under the rim²⁰ (Pl. III, 1, 2). The latter is either rounded (Pl. III, 2-3), or, more often, flattened (Pl. III, 1, 4-5).

About 2/3 of the closed vessels rim sherds can be attributed to medium-sized jars. They show a large number of variants, most common being everted rims, with either simple or, more often, thickened rounded profile (Pl. III, 6-11). Among more characteristic rim profiles, the following (in order of decreasing frequency) seem especially noteworthy: banded rims with oblique (straight or slightly convex) outer profile (Pl. III, 12-14), rims with an elongated (generally not very emphasised) concave outer profile (Pl. III, 15-16), simple outturned rims with concave outer profile (Pl. III, 17) and rims with a concave upper-inner side (Pl. III, 18-19). The latter (less than ten examples) seem to be slightly more common in the earlier (Phases 6-7) than in the later phases.

Small-sized jars and bottles, though definitely rarer, were also well represented. A selection of rim types is shown in Pl. IV, 1-4. Especially interesting is a high-necked bottle (Pl. IV, 5), which was found *in situ* on a floor belonging to the latest phase of occupation (Phase 1). Large storage jars, on the contrary, seemed to be rather rare in the excavated area, as only few rim fragments, of different shapes, were found (Pl. IV, 6-8).

Cooking pot ware is limited to two vessel types: the well-known cooking pots with triangular-shaped lugs (Pl. IV, 9) and, less frequently, large hemispherical bowls (Pl. IV, 10) often provided with lugs. Special types - potstands (Pl. IV, 11), strainers (Pl. IV, 12) and miniature vessels (Pl. IV, 13) - are only occasionally attested.

Vessels have for the most part rounded (Pl. IV, 14-15) or flattened (Pl. IV, 16) bases. As far as the former are concerned, slightly curved examples (Pl. IV, 14) have approximately the same frequency as more markedly convex ones (Pl. IV, 15). Flat bases are relatively common, and occur on a number of different vessel types; on the other hand, string-cut (Pl. IV, 17), slightly concave (Pl. IV, 18) and pointed (Pl. IV, 19) bases are only sporadically attested.

With the exception of the above mentioned Ninevite 5 sherd, and of a single sherd bearing a cross-hatched incised pattern, no decorated pottery was found. A dozen of jar sherds bore incised/impressed potter's marks, as is often the case at contemporary sites in the Syrian Jazirah²¹ (Pl. IV, 20-21).

¹⁸ I.e., all rim and base sherds and all fragments of lugs, spouts etc. which were large enough to be attributed to a specific type.

¹⁹ Cf. LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, *passim*.

²⁰ For more complete examples from elsewhere on the site, see LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 63, pl. I, 14, 142, pl. IV, 4, 5.

Only a tentative synchronisation of the pottery sequence from Field I with those from other excavation areas at Tell Beydar, as well as from other sites showing comparable assemblages (Tell Chuera²², Tell Bderi²³, Tell Raqa'i²⁴, Tell Abu Hafur²⁵, Tell Melebiya²⁶, Tell Brak²⁷, to mention only those for which larger pottery samples are published), can be presently attempted. Undoubtedly, all of the excavated levels pre-date the Akkadian period, since they did not yield any of the typical diagnostics of the period²⁸. Typical EJ II (= late ED II) diagnostics were not found, as well, except for a few sherds (a Ninevite 5 excised fragment, a pointed base) all from the deepest (Phase 7) layers reached in quadrant 104.040d in the area of pit 9331. With this exception, no clear change can yet be singled out within the excavated material, which appears to be rather homogeneous throughout the sequence of building phases, though further study will probably reveal significant trends in the changing amounts of single types from the earliest to the latest phases.

From a morphological point of view, the pottery repertoire from Field I is rather similar to that published from the dwelling quarter in Field B²⁹, which was attributed by the excavators to the ED IIIb period. We refrain, therefore, from a detailed discussion of the single types, and refer, for relevant parallels from other sites, to those listed there. However, pottery from Field B represents a largely contemporary assemblage, since all unearthed structures belonged to a single phase of occupation³⁰. The assemblage from Field I, on the contrary, should cover a relatively longer span of time.

We can notice, in this respect, that types (round-based, curved-sided bowls, banded jar rims) which are considered of earlier origin, appear to be relatively more common in Field I than in Field B. Among straight-sided bowls, those with smoother wall-base junction, presumably another early feature, definitely prevail. The frequency, among round bases, of markedly convex examples, and the relative rarity of flat bases, as well as the presence of a number of jar rims with concave upper-inner part, are further hints to a relatively early date. On the other hand, types, or features, which occasionally occur in Field B, but are on the whole considered later, are either completely absent (e.g. goblets) or extremely rare (e.g. slightly concave bases) in the Field I assemblage. Finally, some types characteristic of the Field B assemblage have been to all appearance exclusively found in the upmost part of the Field I sequence: see e.g. the high-necked bottle (Pl. IV, 5) from Phase 1. We can preliminarily consider, therefore, the ED IIIb (=EJ IIIb) date of the Field B pottery as the latest possible limit for the sequence represented in the stratigraphical sounding in Field I.

The latter runs partially parallel to the sequence from the neighbouring Field G, though this certainly covers a longer span of time. A preliminary compar-

ison suggests that the Field I sequence mainly corresponds to levels II and III in the 1993/1994 seasons³¹ and to the upper part (first and possibly second phase) of the sequence excavated by A. Suleiman in 1997³². Taking all these facts into consideration, we can consider the Field I sequence as representing a time span roughly corresponding to EJ IIIa to early EJ IIIb.

As for synchronisation with the sequences of different sites, this is hampered by problems of regional variation, different terminology and by the preliminary state of publication of much of the material discovered during the last decades³³. We do not, therefore, enter into details, but limit ourselves to suggest a rough correspondence for the pottery from Field I with that of the later part of phase IC and especially of phase ID *früh* at Tell Chuera³⁴ to the west of Beydar, and with that of Tell Raqa'i level 2³⁵ to the south-east. At Tell Brak, the most important centre to the east of Beydar, pottery from the Late ED III destruction level³⁶ does show several significant similarities with that of Field I, but is definitely later, as shown by the presence there of later types (especially the flat-based conical bowls with a sharp angle at the base) of which not a single example was found in Field I. On the contrary, we believe that a largely contemporary assemblage from that from Field I at Tell Beydar might be represented by pottery – of which unfortunately only a few examples are published – from phases 6 and especially 5 in trench HS3 (= phases 2-3- and respectively 1 in trench HS4:2) at this site³⁷.

²¹ See KOLINSKI 1993/94.

²² ORTHMANN et al. 1995.

²³ PFÄLZNER et al. 1988.

²⁴ CURVERS, SCHWARTZ 1990; SCHWARTZ, CURVERS 1992.

²⁵ KOLINSKI, LAWECKA 1992.

²⁶ LEBEAU 1993.

²⁷ FIELDEN 1977; OATES 1982.

²⁸ For a selection of Akkadian pottery from Tell Beydar, see Bretschneider, Jans, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 135 ff., Debruyne, *ibid.* 145-154. For contemporary pottery from Tell Chuera (Level 1 of Palace F), cf. ORTHMANN et al. 1995, figs. 78-82.

²⁹ See Quenet in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 59-63; Lebeau, *ibid.*, 65-87.

³⁰ Although different subphases might be distinguished, on the basis of the sequences of floors (up to 4) recovered in most rooms (Quenet, *ibid.*, 50; cf. Bluard, Poinot, Quenet, *ibid.*, 47 ff.), these are certainly very near to each other in time.

³¹ Quenet in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.), 1997, 169-177.

³² Suleiman, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN, in press.

³³ Some of these problems have been discussed during the "1st Syrian Jezirah Field Workshop" held at Tell Beydar, Syria, 8-14 May 1998. Cf. LEBEAU et al. 2000.

³⁴ ORTHMANN et al. 1995, *passim*; A. Pruss, personal communication.

³⁵ CURVERS, SCHWARTZ 1990, 7-10, figs. 4-6; SCHWARTZ, CURVERS 1992, 400 f., fig. 7.

³⁶ OATES 1982.

³⁷ MATTHEWS 1995, 93, fig. 17, 1-8.

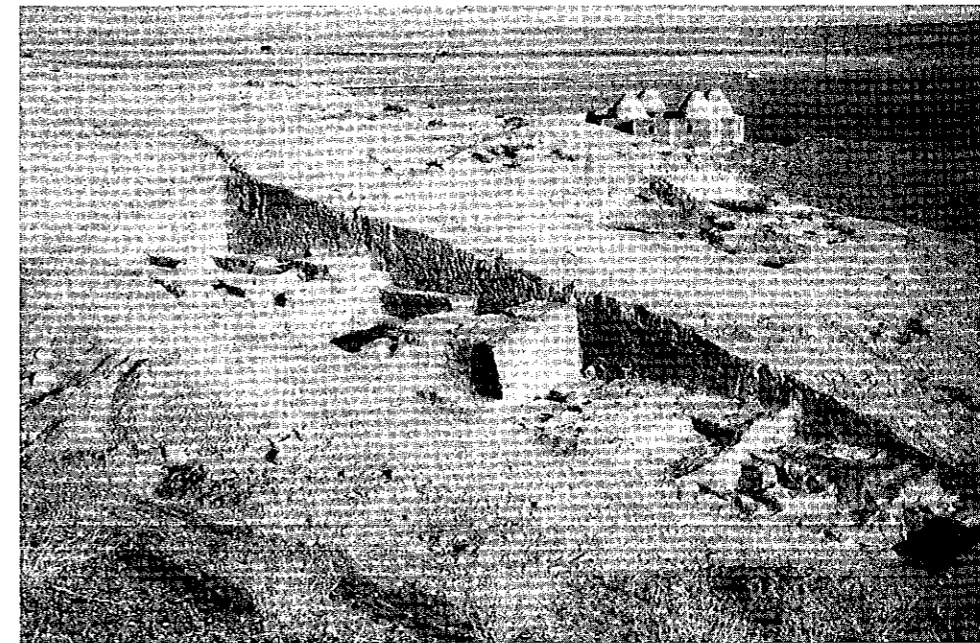


Fig. 13 - Field I. General view of the excavated area from SE.

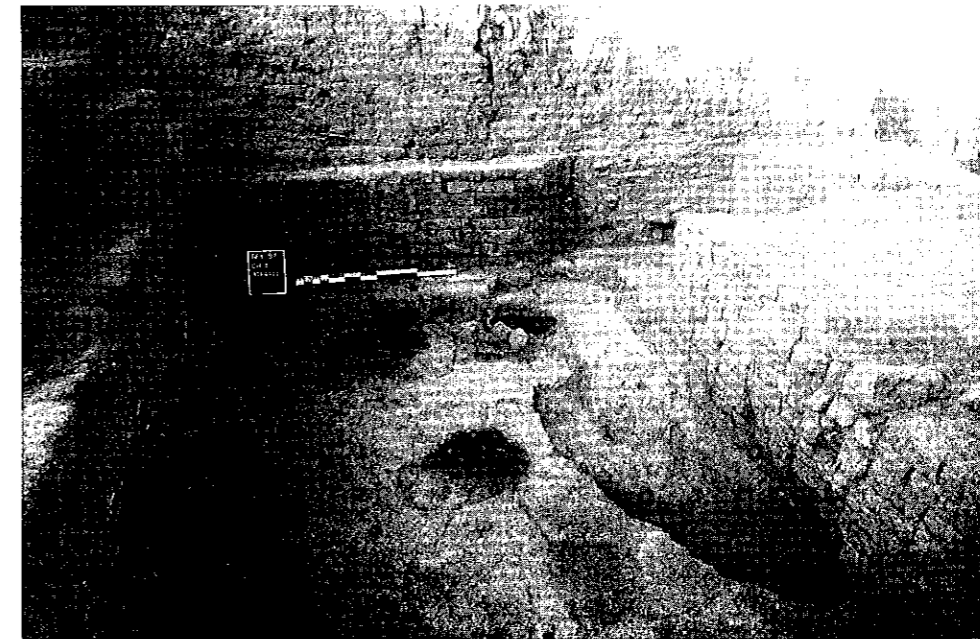


Fig. 14 - Field I. Level II, sub-phase 4c, room 9125 in quadrant 103.040c from S.



Fig. 15 - Field I. Level II, phase 5, open area 9221-9228 in quadrant 103.040d from S.

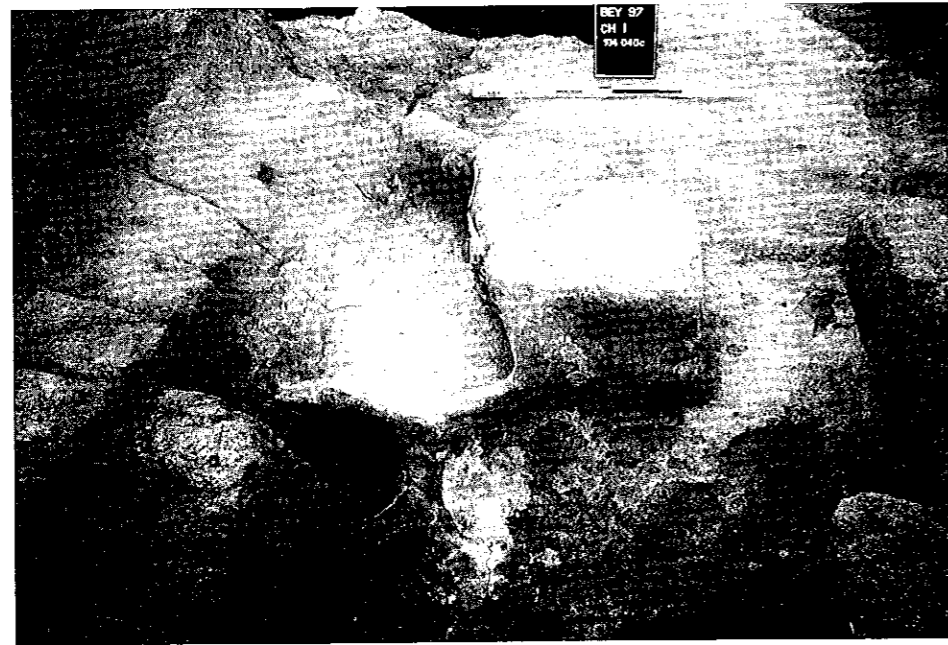


Fig. 16 - Field I. Level II, phase 6, complex of white-plastered basins 9314, 9327, 9328 from W.

Field I - Ceramic - Physical Description³⁸

Pl.	Fig.	Nr.	Ware	Fir.	Tex.t.	Temp.	In. col.	Surf. col.	Smooth.	Pol.
I	1	9226-C-1	CMT	2	3	-	5/9	9,5/9	3	1
I	2	9035-C-5	CMT	2	3	-	9,2	8,2	3	2
I	3	9142-C-8	CMT	2	3	M	8,5/9	8,5/9	3	-
I	4	9117-C-5	CCM	2	2+	M+V	2	2,1	2	-
I	5	9323-C-1	CCM	2	2+	M	2	2/2,1	2	-
I	6	9323-C-2	CCM	2	2+	M	2	2,1	2	-
I	7	9201-C-9	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2	2	-
I	8	9301-C19+24	CCM	2	2+	-	2,1	2,1	2	-
I	9	9049-C-2	CCM	2	2+	M	7,1	2,7	2+	-
I	10	9131-C-12	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2	2	-
I	11	9049-C-1	CCM	2	2+	M+V	7,3	2,3	2+	-
I	12	9038-C-2	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,8	2,5	2	-
I	13	9044-C-1	CCM	2	3	-	3	9,2	3	-
I	14	9064-C-5	CCM	2	2+	M	8,5	2	2+	-
I	15	9125-C-2	CCM	2	2+	M+V	2	2	2	-
I	16	9165-C-3	CCM	2	2+	M	2	2,1/2	2	-
I	17	9211-C-3	CCM	2	2+	M	2/2,8	2,5	2	-
II	1	9130-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2	2	-
II	2	9323-C-5	CCM	2	2	M+V	5,2/2	2-5,2/2-2,5	2	-
II	3	9131-C-10	CCM	2	2	M	2,8	2,8	2	-
II	4	9140-C-4	CCM	2	2	M+V	5	5,2	2	-
II	5	9102-C-2*								
II	6	9049-C-5	CCM	2	2	M+V	5	2,5/5	2	-
II	7	9094-C-5	CCM	2	3	M	2/5	2,5/5	2	-
II	8	9009-C-4	CCM	2	2	M+V	8+9	5,2	2	-
II	9	9302-C-3	CCM	2	3	M	8	2,1/2,8	3	-
II	10	9054-C-3**	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,8	2,5	2	-
II	11	9215-C-7	CCM	2	2	M+V	2/5/2	2,5	2	-
II	12	9142-C-5	CCM	2	2	M	8	2,1/2,9/2,9	3	-
II	13	9211-C-2	CCM	2	2+	M	8,2	2,1-2/2	2	-
II	14	9003-C-3	CCM	2	3	M	2	2,4	2	-
II	15	9135-C-8*								
II	16	9202-C-3	CCM	2	2	M+V	5	2/2,5	2	-
III	1	9018-C-5	CCM	2	2	M+V	2/9/2	2	2	-
III	2	9024-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,5/2,9/2,5	2,5/2	2	-
III	3	9040-C-12	CCM	2	2	M+V	5,2	5	2	-
III	4	9331-C-12	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,8	2	2	-
III	5	9134-C-11	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	5,2	2	-
III	6	9117-C-7	CCM	2	2	M+V	7	2,1/2	2	-
III	7	9307-C-6	CCM	2	2	M+V	5,2	1,2/2,5	2	-
III	8	9044-C-7	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,5/2,9	2,1/2	2	-
III	9	9211-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,7	2,7	2	-
III	10	9018-C-4	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2,1/2	2	-
III	11	9009-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	5	2/2,5	2	-
III	12	9217-C-4	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2,5	2	-
III	13	9062-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,8	2,1	2	-
III	14	9307-C-2	CCM	2	2	M+V	7,9	2	2	-
III	15	9301-C-3	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2,1/2	2	-
III	16	9037-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2,1/2	2	-
III	17	9301-C-20	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,1	2,1	2	-
III	18	9109-C-1	CCM	2	2	M	2,1/2/2,1	2,1/2	2	-
III	19	9035-C-7	CCM	2	2	M+V	7,2	2,1	2	-

³⁸ For the codes used in pottery description one should refer to LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 21.

IV	1	9140-C-1	CCM	2	3	M+V	7,1	2,1	2+	-
IV	2	9218-C-1	CCM	2	2+	M+V	2	2	2+	-
IV	3	9161-C-2	CCM	2	2+	M+V	2	2,1	2	-
IV	4	9201-C-6	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,8	2,8,7	2	-
IV	5	9002-C-1	CCM	2				2,1	2	-
IV	6	9141-C-27	CCM	2	2+	M+V	2,5	2,3,1	2+	-
IV	7	9202-C-5	CCM	2	2	M+V	5/9/5	2/2,5	2	-
IV	8	9307-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2/10/2	2	2	-
IV	9	9331-C-17	CCS	2-	2	M+V	8,5	8	3	2
IV	10	9080-C-4	CCS	1	2	M+V	8,2	9,8	3	3
IV	11	9141-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2	2,1	2	-
IV	12	9122-C-1	CCM	2	2+	M+V	2,1	2,1	2	-
IV	13	9056-C-1	CCM	2	2+	M	5	5	2	-
IV	14	9231-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	7,3	7,3,1	2+	-
IV	15	9117-C-3	CCM	2	2+	M+V	2	2,1	2	-
IV	16	9047-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	8	2,8	2	-
IV	17	9035-C-12	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,8	2	2	-
IV	18	9033-C-3	CMT (?)	2	3	M	9	2,1/5,2,3/2,5	3	2
IV	19	9331-C-5	CCM	2	2+	M	2,1	2,1	2	-
IV	20	9009-C-2	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,5/9/3,7,3	2/9,2	2	-
IV	21	9165-C-1	CCM	2	2	M+V	2,5	2,1/2	2	-

* Description missing.

** Repaired with gypsum.

4. The Small Finds

Apart from pottery sherds, finds from the 1997 campaign in Field I were not plentiful. Only part of them came from primary contexts, while several were found in fill layers or in mixed, sub-surface contexts. They can, therefore, only provide an overall picture of the functional use of the excavated area. In this respect, the most interesting assemblage is that recovered from the sequence of floors and occupation layers in room 9125 in quadrant 103.040c.

Clay objects included one female (9201-M-2) (Pl. V, 1) and two animal figurines (9109-M-1, 9321-M-1) (Pl. V, 2), three large spindle-whorls or clay weights (9113-M-2 to M-4) and a number of objects which may be connected to "administrative" activities: one numerical tablet of non canonical type (9148-M-1) (Pl. V, 3), three small objects (9035-M-1, 9113-M-1, 9331-M-3) (Pl. V, 4) possibly to be interpreted as tokens, a jar stopper (9157-M-2) (Pl. VI, 4), and more than 50 sealings and fragments thereof (Figs. 17, 18, Pl. VI, 3).

Although they were not completely missing elsewhere, sealings come for the most part from room 9125 in quadrant 103.040c. Here, they were often found in small groups, especially in the south-eastern part of the room, lying on its successive floors (9122, 9131, 9134, 9135) or in the overlying fillings (9137, 9141, 9142). Different types of sealings were represented, the most characteristic being very thin, flat elongated stripes of clay of irregular quadrangu-

lar shape ("test-strips" according to Matthews 1997, 182 f., or "Langetten" according to Otto 1995). Most examples were very fragmentary and heavily damaged: although they often bore seal impressions, only in rare cases were these clearly visible, and only a few scenes could be partially reconstructed. Animal contest scenes in a fine, almost miniaturistic style, mostly on two superimposed, reversed registers (designs nos. 42, 43, 50) appear to be especially typical, though complex scenes with sitting figures and cuneiform inscriptions (design no. 51) and geometric patterns (design no. 44) are attested as well.

These sealings do not show any of the most characteristic features of the "Brak style"³⁹, which are well attested elsewhere at Tell Beydar, and in particular in the impressions from the third phase of the official building in Field F. Since this is dated in the late EJ III (= ED IIIb) period, an earlier dating (in the EJ IIIa (= ED IIIa) period?) for the levels excavated in Field I, as suggested by their pottery assemblage, might be confirmed. Functional differences between the two excavated areas, however, might play a role in this respect, as well. As a matter of facts, a number of sealings with animal and other scenes in miniaturistic style, which show some similarities to those from Field I, have been found in the F Field official build-

³⁹ MATTHEWS 1997, 136-137 *et passim*.



Fig. 17 - Clay sealing 9122-M-1 (design no. 42).

ing⁴⁰. Among the previously published specimens, a seal impression from Field E⁴¹ seems to us especially similar to some of those from Field I, with which it shares both the fine, diminutive style, and especially the composition on double registers with reversed scenes. As already remarked by Teissier, this feature is extremely rare elsewhere⁴² and might represent an hitherto poorly known local style.

Chipped lithics were quite rare: beside smallest fragments, less than 20 examples were recovered, all, with the exception of a thin obsidian blade (9218-M-3), made of flint. They were mostly flakes, though some fragments of blades were present as well. Macrolithics (ca. 15 examples) mainly consisted of grinding stones and other grinding tools (grinders, pestles). Especially noteworthy is a polished axe of green stone (9304-M-1) (Fig. 19).

Metal (copper/bronze) was extremely rare. Only three objects were found: 9001-M-1 (the fragment of a pin), 9122-M-6 (a hook) (Pl. VI, 5) and 9325-M-1 (a spiral-shaped ring) (Pl. VI, 6). A fragment of iron (9913-E-5) was recovered into one of the Seleucid-Parthian pits.

Finally, a few ornaments of different materials were found, mostly out of context. These include a stone pendant (9202-M-1), three fragments of gypsum (?) rings (9240-M-1, 9308-M-1, 9335-M-1) (Pl. VI, 7), a small animal figurine of gypsum (?) (9335-M-2), a pierced shell (9029-M-1) (Fig. 20), and a small, pierced shell plaque (9166-M-1) (Pl. VI, 8). Especially noteworthy is a necklace, or bracelet (9336-M-1), made of 35 white shells of different dimensions, which was lying on a Phase 6 floor in quadrant 104.030c.

Selected small finds of different categories will be described in the following catalogue.

Terracotta Figurines

Fragment of female figurine: 9201-M-2 (Pl. V, 1)
H: 7,5 cm W: 4,5 cm Th: 3 cm
Provenance: 103.040d, surface soil.

Hand-made, traces of fine mineral temper, grayish core, pinkish buff smoothed surface. Legs and the upper part of the body are missing. The figure wears a fringed belt, or short skirt. For a similar detail, see Orthmann et al. 1995, 242, n. 2, Rumpf Typ 8.2, from Tell Chuera.

Fragment of animal figurine: 9321-M-1 (Pl. V, 2)
L: 7 cm H: 5 cm Th: 3,5 cm

Provenance: 104.040c, sub-surface filling.

Hand-made, mineral-tempered, grayish core, pinkish smoother surface. Head and legs are missing; the back, which appears to have been humped, is damaged.

Clay Sealings⁴³

Design no. 42 (Fig. 17)

- 9122-M-1 (Bey. 97-84)

H: 2,5 cm W: 4,3 cm Th: 0,6 cm

⁴⁰ Bretschneider, Jans, in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.), in press.

⁴¹ Teissier in LEBEAU, SULEIMAN (eds.) 1997, 160, fig. 2, no. 16.

⁴² See also MATTHEWS 1997, 107.

⁴³ Reconstruction and drawings of seal designs have been kindly provided by Greta Jans. Full publication of this material will be provided by her in the near future.



Fig. 18 - Clay Sealing 9141-M-14 (design no. 50).

Provenance: 103.040c, floor 9122 in room 9125 - 9135-M-5 (Bey. 97-86)
H: 3,4 cm W: 6,1 cm Th: 1,9 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, floor 9135 in room 9125
Contest scene on two superimposed, reversed registers. Crossed rampant animals.

Design no. 43 (Pl. VI, 1)
- 9135-M-3 (Bey. 97-86)
H: 3,9 cm W: 4,0 cm Th: 1,6 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, floor 9135 in room 9125
Two superimposed, reversed (?) registers. On the upper one, row of standing human beings and crossed rampant animals. On the lower one, animals and different symbols (a rosette, etc.).

Design no. 44 (Pl. VI, 2)
- 9135-M-6C (Bey. 97-86)
H: 2,4 cm W: 2,6 cm Th: 0,5 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, floor 9135 in room 9125 - 9142-M-3 (Bey. 97-90)
H: 3,8 cm W: 2,6 cm Th: 1,5 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, ashy layer overlying floor 9143 in room 9125

Abstract design: chevron pattern with three horizontal rows. Comparanda: Matthews 1997, nos. 407-410 (Tell Brak, Tell Abu Hujeira). According to Matthews, *ibid.*, 74, 143, the last occurrences of this widespread design type (which originated as early as the Jemdet Nasr period) in eastern Syria seem to belong to the ED IIIA period.

Design no. 50 (Fig. 18)
- 9141-M-14 (Bey. 97-89)

H: 3 cm W: 4,2 cm Th: 0,6 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, accumulation 9141 in room 9125
Impression not very clear. Animal scene on two superimposed registers. In the upper one, three passing caprids; in the lower one, reversed, crossing rampant animals.

Design no. 51 (Pl. VI, 3a-c)
- 9141-M-6 (Bey. 97-89)
H: 1,4 cm W: 3,2 cm Th: 0,5 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, accumulation 9141 in room 9125
- 9140-M-2 (Bey. 97-88)
H: 2,7 cm W: 4,3 cm Th: 0,8 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, stone alignment 9140 in room 9125
- 9141-M-8 (Bey. 97-86)
H: 1,9 cm W: 2,5 cm Th: 0,6 cm

Provenance: 103.040c, accumulation 9141 in room 9125

Complex scene, probably on two registers, tentatively reconstructed from several different fragments. In the upper register, two figures sitting one in front of the other, each on a different kind of stool, flanking an elongated object; in the lower one, two caprids passing in opposite directions. Cuneiform inscription extending on both registers.

Other Clay Objects

Numerical tablet (?) or accounting device: 9148-M-1 (Pl. V, 3)

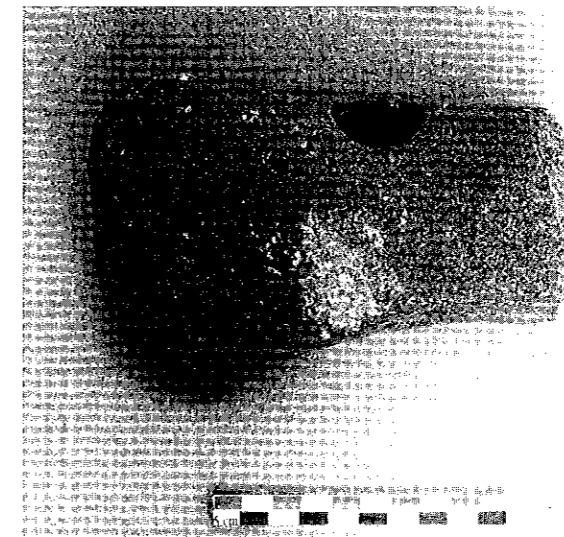


Fig. 19 - Polished axe of green stone 9304-M-1.



Fig. 20 - Gypsum animal figurine 9335-M-2.

L: 5,2 cm W: 2,3 cm Th: 1,5 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, near bench 9148 in room 9125

Flattish, slightly trapezoidal clay tablet, smoothed surface, dark buff in colour. Three rows, each formed by 6 to 7 impressed points, roughly parallel to its short sides, near the latter. The central part is blank.

Spindle-whorl or clay weight: 9113-M-3
Ø: 4,8 cm H: 3,1 cm Ø perforation: 0,4 cm.
Provenance: 103.040c, Seleucid-Parthian pit 9113.

Pierced object of slightly biconical shape, buff in colour, damaged on the edges. Two other similar objects (9113-M-2, M-4) have been found in the same pit.

Jar stopper: 9157-M-2 (Pl. VI, 4)
Ø: 7,5 cm Th: 3,5 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, floor 9157 in room 9125
Brownish-gray clay disk, showing a circular depression (Ø 4,9 cm), probably the impression of a jar rim, on the bottom. Two small round depressions (Ø 1 cm) on the top.

Stone

Polished axe of green stone: 9304-M-1 (Fig. 19)
L: 8 cm H: 6 cm Th: 3,2 cm Ø perforation: 1 cm.
Provenance: 104.040d, fill of room 9306.
Very well polished, no visible traces of use.

Metal Objects

Copper/bronze hook: 9122-M-6 (Pl. VI, 5)
L: 2,2 cm Th: 0,2 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, room 9125, floor 9122.

Copper/bronze ring: 9325-M-1 (Pl. VI, 6)
Ø: max.: 1,3 cm Th: 0,2 cm.
Provenance: 104.040c, white-plastered floor 9325
Spiral-shaped object, probably a finger- or hair-
ring.

Miscellaneous small finds

Small gypsum (?) animal figurine: 9335-M-2 (Fig. 20)

L: 2,2 cm H: 1,3 cm Th: 0,8 cm.
Provenance: 104.040c, niche 9335.

Small figurine, possibly representing a donkey.
The surface is heavily eroded, the legs are broken.

The eye is marked by an impressed circle; on the back, there is a small, artificial (?) cavity.

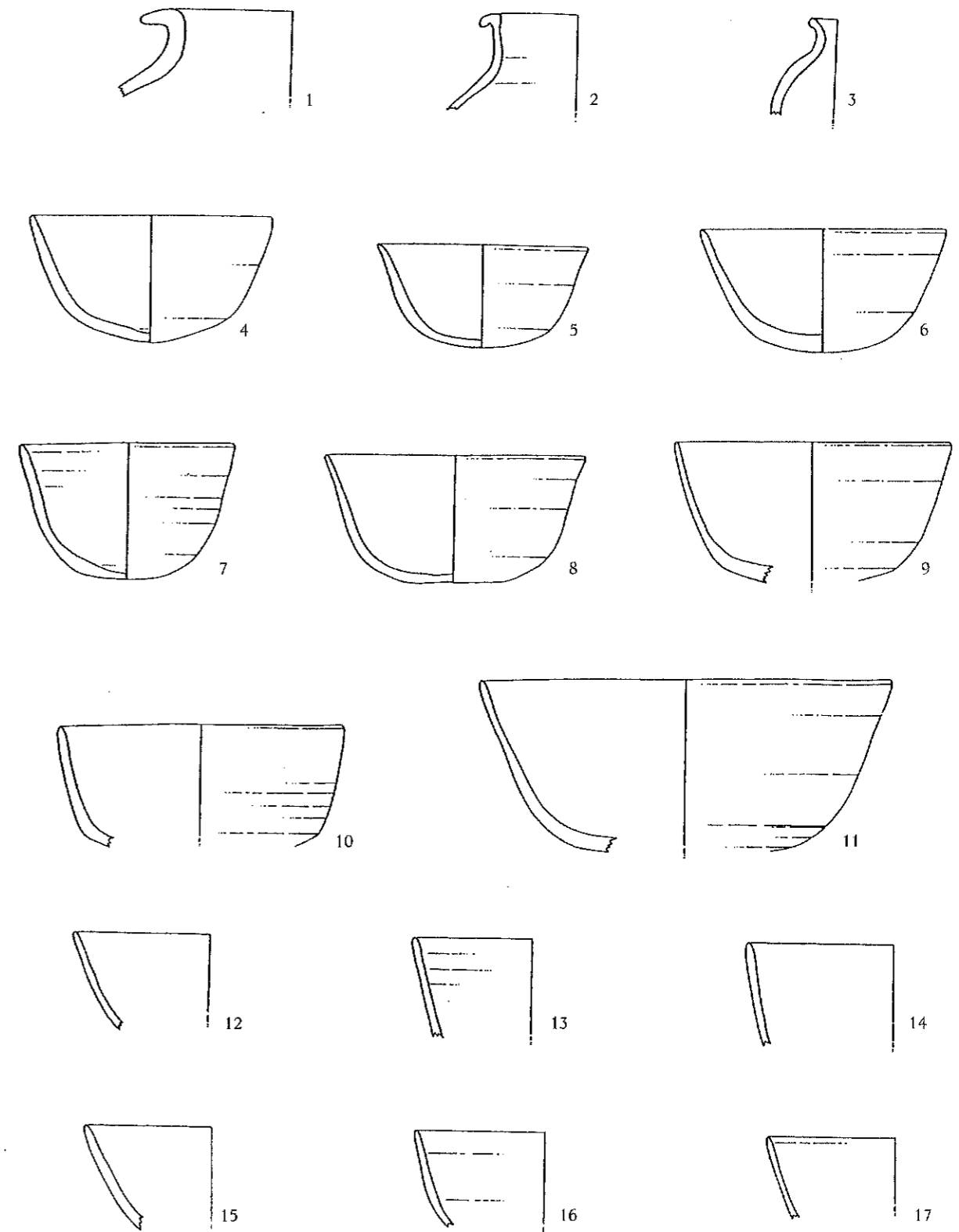
Fragment of gypsum (?) ring: 9335-M-1 (Pl. VI, 7)

L: 2,2 cm H: 1,3 cm Th: 0,5 cm
Provenance 104.040d, niche 9335.

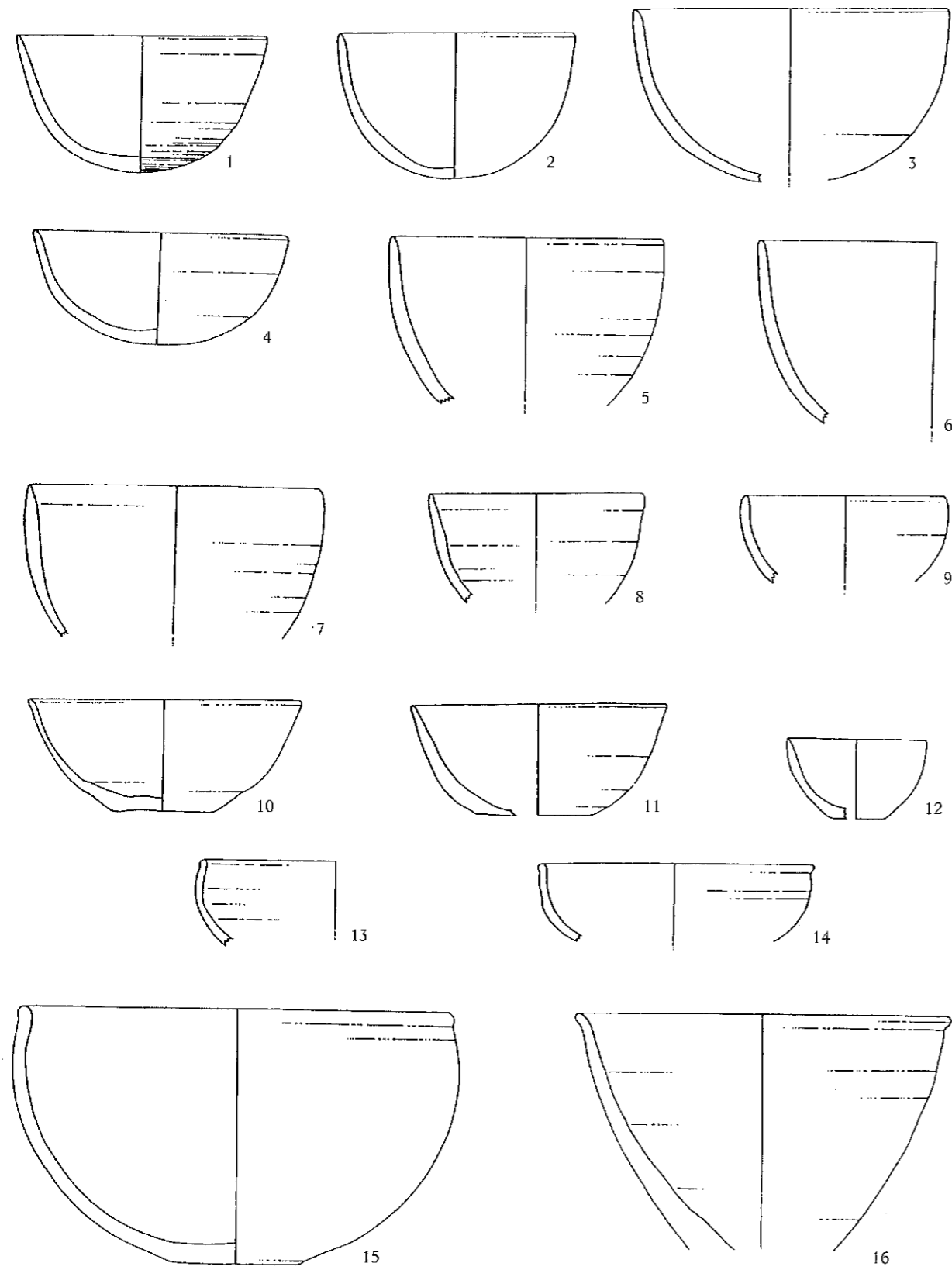
Small pierced shell plaque: 9166-M-1 (Pl. VI, 8)
L: 2,5 cm W: 0,8 cm Th: 0,2 cm
Provenance: 103.040c, floor 9166 in room 9125
Pierced quadrangular plaque of white shell, probably used as a bead.

Shell necklace or bracelet: 9336-M-1
Average dimensions of shells: L: 1,4 cm W: 0,7 cm
Th: 0,06 cm

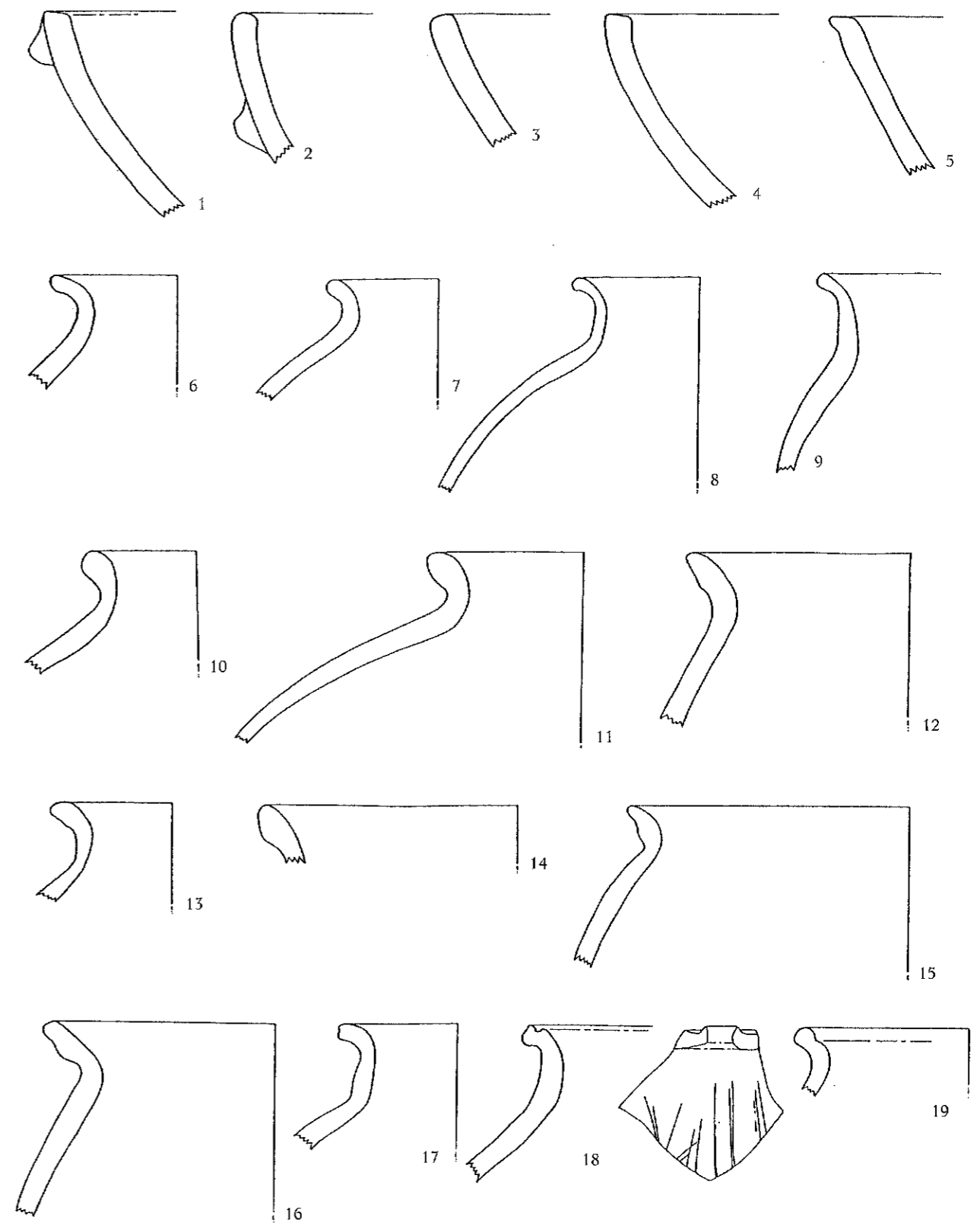
Provenance: 104.040c, floor 9336
Necklace or bracelet consisting of 35 elongated shells of white colour, of slightly different shapes and dimensions, perforated in the upper part.



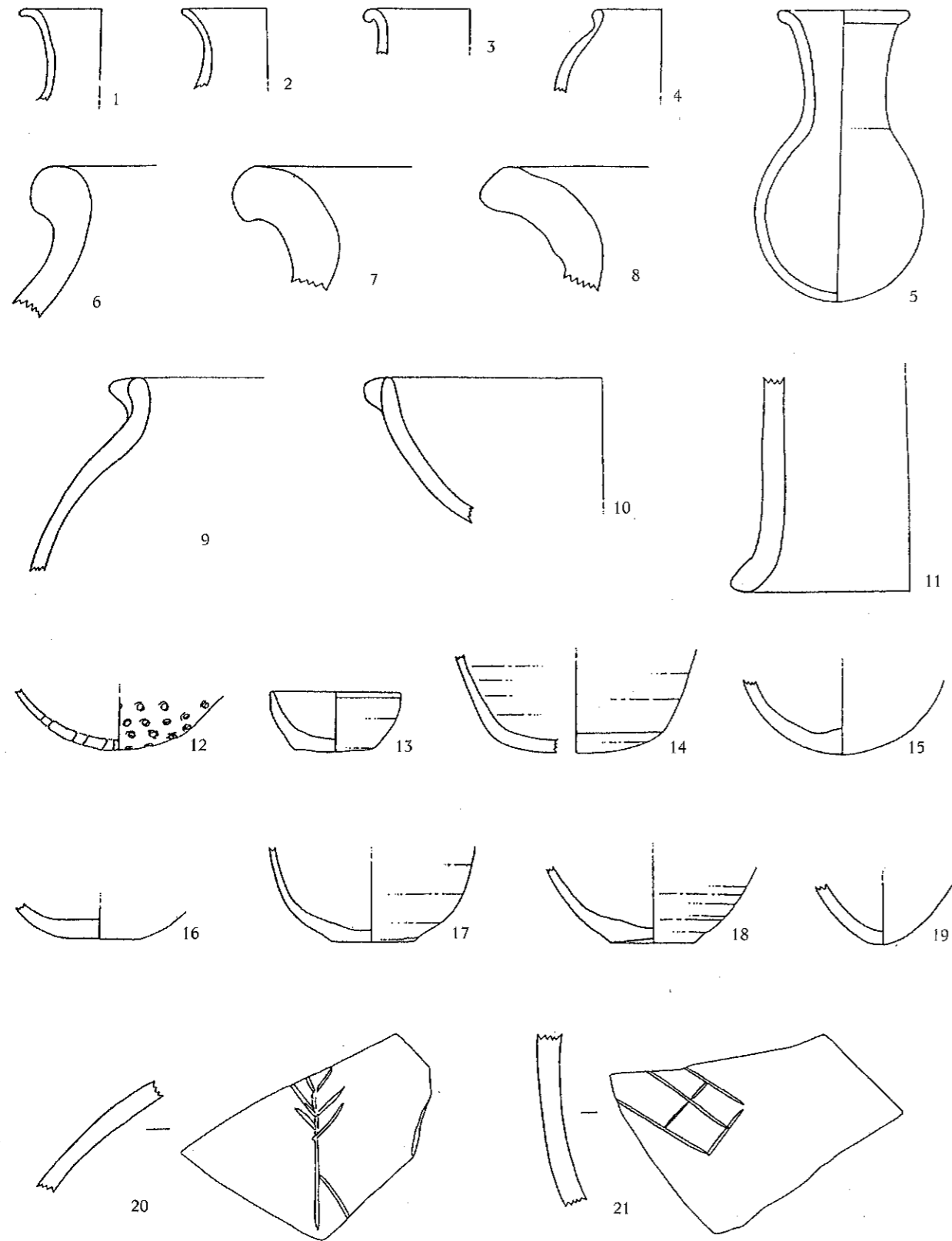
Pl. I - Field I. EJ III ceramic. Scale 1:3.



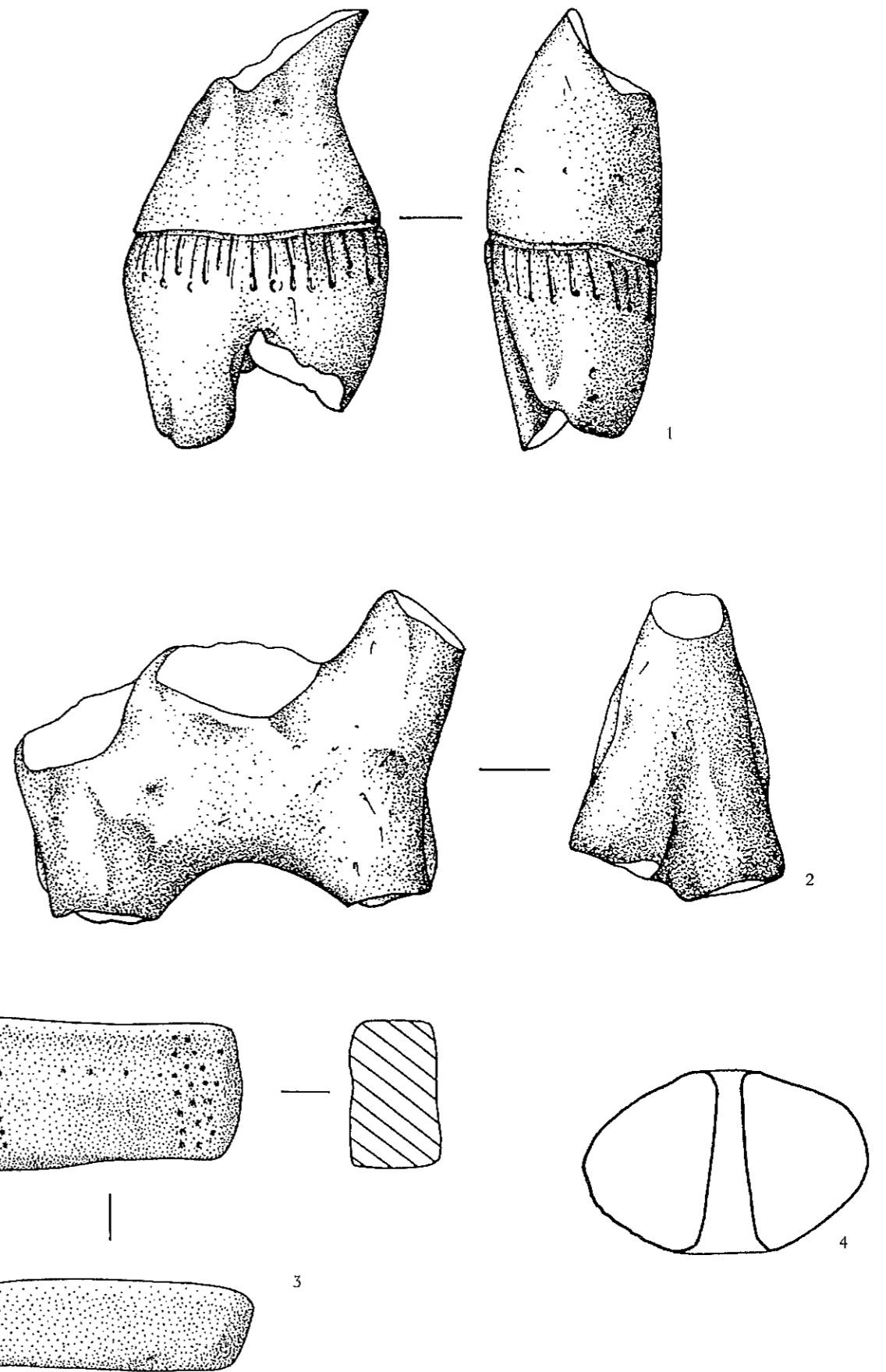
Pl. II - Field I. EJ III ceramic. Scale 1:3.



Pl. III - Field I. EJ III ceramic. Scale 1:3.



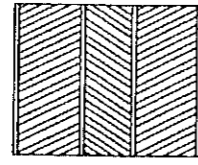
Pl. IV - Field I. EJ III ceramic. Scale 1:3.



Pl. V - Field I. Small finds. Scale 1:1.



1



2



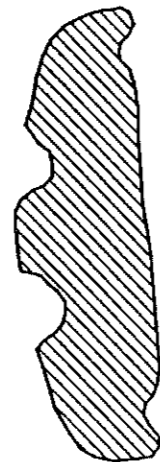
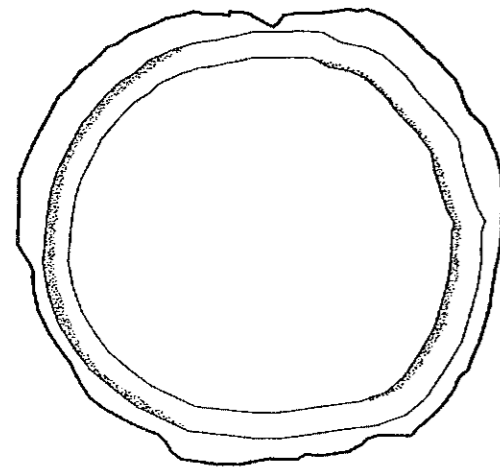
3a



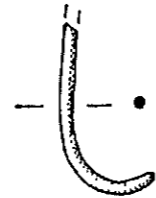
3b



3c



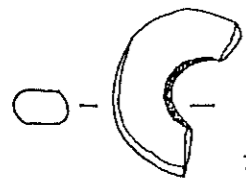
4



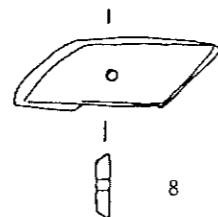
5



6



7



8

Pl. VI - Field I. Small finds. Scale 1:1.

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