

DONALD P. HANSEN

AL-HIBA, 1970-1971: A PRELIMINARY REPORT

The second season of excavations at al-Hiba (ancient Lagash) in southern Iraq was undertaken in the fall and winter of 1970-1971. The expedition was again made possible by the Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University. Travel for senior staff personnel was contributed by Mr. John Clark of Binghamton, New York. The Ford Foundation provided once more for travel and maintenance in the field for students from the Institute of Fine Arts, the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and the University of Buffalo.

Field work began on October 7, 1970 and was completed on January 8, 1971. The staff for the second campaign included: Vaughn E. Crawford, Project Director; Donald P. Hansen, Field Director; Edward L. Ochsenschlager, Assistant to the Field Director; Robert D. Biggs, Epigraphist and Archaeologist; Archaeologists Elizabeth Carter, Elsie Holmes Peck, Roberta Lewis, Abdullah Masry; John Benczkowski, Surveyor; Anne Searight, Conservator and Draughtsman; Julia Crawford, Treasurer. The Department of Antiquities of Iraq was represented by Munir Yousif Taha and Fadhil Madhloum. We are deeply indebted to the Department of Antiquities for its encouragement, kindness and helpfulness.

This second campaign was brought to a tragic conclusion on January 14, 1971 when a boat accident on the canal fatally injured Roberta Lewis, a graduate student at the Institute of Fine Arts. The following brief report is dedicated to her memory.

A good part of the season was devoted to further work on the Temple Oval located in Area A on the southwest edge of the mound.¹ Inscribed stones from the foundation deposits of Level I indicated that the temple was the Ibgal of Inanna, apparently located in the Eanna, an area as yet undefined.² These inscribed stones also revealed that Enannatum I built Level I. As most of Level I was excavated during the first season, the chief task remaining was to remove the balks in order to complete a plan of the building (Fig. 1).

In the course of removing the balks four more foundation deposits were recovered; their positions have been indicated on the plan. Two deposits were complete in that they contained both an inscribed stone and a copper figurine of Shulultula, the personal god of Enannatum I. The other two deposits contained only the stone.³ Like the deposits uncovered in the first season,

¹ The preliminary report of the first season appeared in *Artibus Asiae XXXII*, 4 (1970), pp. 243-250. For a general report of the first two seasons see, V. E. Crawford, *Expedition XIV*: 2, (1972), pp. 12-20.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 247-248.

³ For comparable deposits from the first season, *idem.*, Figs. 8-13. The figurines were identified as the personal god Shulultula from the inscription. The new deposits were located in the following balks: x 1120 - y 1150/1160, figurine and stone; x 1120/1130 - y 1150, figurine and stone; x 1100 - y 1140/1150, stone; x 1120/1130 - y 1140, stone.



Roberta Lewis
(1941-1971)

the figurines faced roughly east, and all the stones sat on the top of the third course of the mud brick foundation.

A description of the complex foundation system of Enannatum's Ibgal appeared in the earlier report. To the present writer the foundation system is not explicable in purely architectural terms, and the complicated method of building may be due to the elaborate ritual practices sometimes connected with temple construction as known from later texts. During the last campaign the over four meter wide oval wall was investigated; Fig. 4 shows clearly the method of construction.⁴ The east or inner face of the oval wall is on the left, with the fills and floors of the open courtyard in the center and on the right of the photograph. The thick upper stratum of earth represents the foundation courtyard fill of Level I. Below, the articulated courtyard floors of Level II slope upward towards the Level II wall (completely destroyed by Level I). These floors are cut by the large foundation trench made for the Level I wall. The foundation trench was filled first with a layer of sand and then with hunks of broken mud, the same materials employed in the foundations inside the building.⁵ Here the use of mud and sand might have been purely functional to facilitate the drainage by allowing water to pass quickly through the broken mud. Fig. 4 also shows the great depth of the foundation wall of Level I, and hence, why so little of Level II is preserved.

Level II was partially excavated during the first season, and completed during the second campaign (Fig. 2).⁶ Unfortunately, the construction of Enannatum's Ibgal destroyed a good portion of the building. The building sloped downward from west to east so that remains in the higher area were completely destroyed. There Level III served as the substructure for the Level I foundation. This makes the foundation system of Level I even more curious. Why the builders of Level I should have been so careful to preserve the walls of Level II rooms in some areas, even to refilling the rooms with clean earth, while in other areas the walls of Level II were completely removed in order to compensate for the slope of the *tell* is very puzzling indeed.

In the first report it was questioned whether or not the Level II building was also a temple oval, due to the fact that an exterior buttressed wall was found in the southern part of the exposed area.⁷ However, since Level I and Level III (see below) were both temple ovals, the same must have been true for Level II. This would mean that in Level II the oval wall contained an open space to the south of the building. The Level I building may have had a similar plan, that is, the building may not have filled the entire southern part of the oval, but it is impossible to be certain. It is clear, however, that the Level I building, although on a grander scale, in many ways reflects the plan of Level II. Both have a north-south complex of rooms on the west, an east-west complex of rooms on the south, and a return towards the north in the southeast. Both also have a large open courtyard formed by these room complexes.

In the court of Level II was a baked brick podium described in the previous report, but nothing indicated how this podium was used.⁸ A small mud brick bench stood near the podium

⁴ The section is located in square x 1070/1080, y 1130/1140.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 248-249; Figs. 14, 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249, Fig. 15. The plan is incorrectly oriented. The north arrow should be turned 90 degrees to the right. Footnote 7 on p. 244 should be corrected. The y coordinates are north-south and the x coordinates east-west. The completed plan, here Fig. 2, has the correct orientation.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 248, Fig. 14.

against the west wall in which a single step was preserved further north. Although the step is small, it suggests that there was a staircase leading up to a low platform on which the temple stood. This idea is strengthened by the fact that the inner face of the wall was irregular, just as was the face of the opposite wall further west (Fig. 2). There was also no real face to the short north wall. The long space created by these walls was probably not a room but was filled with earth as a foundation platform. A similar platform existed for the north wall, but here it was made of solid mud brick. No reason could be found for the elaborate treatment of the façade at the northwest corner. There was no evidence that anything stood in the corner "cut outs". Level I foundations destroyed, for the most part, the inner rooms in this western portion of the building.

Two round ovens or kilns were found to the north of the north wall. The oven nearest to the wall was preserved to a height of 0.20 m. above the court floor (Fig. 5). An already broken "fruit stand" whose top had been sunk well down in the earth served as the central support. The stand had been covered with mud which was baked into terra cotta during use. Only sherds and bones were retrieved during the cleaning. Evidence of more kilns to the north of the building suggest that this part of the court was a working area.

Very little of the wall plaster and floors remained in the room complex A-J. For the most part these had been removed during the construction of the Level I foundations. Although every wall was carefully checked for blocked doorways, it proved impossible to understand the method of circulation through the building. Rooms A-F form a comprehensible unit, yet no way of entering or leaving the complex could be found. The same holds true for the group of rooms H, G, J.

The south exterior wall was buttressed as mentioned above. There is also a projection on the east exterior wall which is not bonded to the wall and is probably not a buttress, but a kind of bench.

The reasons for the double wall on the courtyard side are obscure. The fact that the bottom of the wall rests directly on the courtyard floors indicates that the northern half of this wall was a later addition. Furthermore, this wall was cut into the west courtyard wall with a mortise and tennon joint. It seems probable that the northern half of the double wall was added shortly after or even during the original construction.

The fragmentary wall on the eastern side of the courtyard was also a later addition and was not part of the original construction. It was built directly on top of the original series of courtyard floors and thus is contemporary with the double wall added against the southern wall. A staircase was built into the eastern wall with two steps preserved 1.25 m. wide. It is difficult to see how these steps functioned. Some fragmentary baked brick paving was preserved to the north of the wall.

Level III was a smaller and earlier version of Level II, but unfortunately was even less well preserved (Fig. 3). Part of the curving oval wall was recovered on the west. In contrast to the more monumental, over four meter wall of Level I, the outer wall of this earlier building measured only 1.50 m. wide. There were regularly spaced buttresses on the exterior of the wall and three entrances in the western façade. Two of the entrances led into rooms which opened onto the inner courtyard. A curious curtain wall was constructed in front of the entrances. It was only 0.70 m. wide and had a small doorway of the same dimensions. Evidence of nicheing existed on the exterior of this wall to the north of the doorway, but no niches were found on the long portion of the wall south of the doorway. Both rooms F and G were furnished with hearths and there was a

accumulation of ash on the floors. Room F had a low dado made of broken sherds from a large storage vessel. Very fragmentary walls indicated that like Levels I and II, there must have been an east-west complex of rooms on the south.

Level I is securely dated to Enannatum I. The sparse pottery finds from Levels II and III do not indicate a change in period, and thus they may be assigned also to Early Dynastic III and probably to Early Dynastic III B. A sounding approximately 3.50 m. by 7.00 m. was made in room E and the western part of room F in order to determine what periods were represented in Area A down to water level. Water was reached approximately three meters below the top of the Level III wall. In the photograph of Fig. 6 the lowest level is Level X. The earlier Level XI was found under water. Architecturally it was impossible to determine from the small sounding whether or not the remains of these earlier levels were temples, nor did the finds provide any indication. Even sherds were sparse and not numerous enough to see a development in the pottery types. However, the water and mud of Level XI yielded two large spouted jars and three cups. The pottery, on the basis of comparisons with the Diyala and Nippur, indicated a date of Early Dynastic I for Level XI.⁹ The absence of any solid-foot chalices might indicate that the lowest level or levels are late Early Dynastic I as the solid-foot chalice type tends to die out in the later part of the period. This would mean that there are an extraordinary number of levels for Early Dynastic II and III in Area A.

The preliminary report of the first season mentioned an extensive Early Dynastic Cemetery situated in the east—central portion of the mound where walls of baked plano-convex bricks, thought to be parts of tombs, were visible on the surface. This area, called Area C, was extensively excavated during the second season. Our initial assumption that it was a cemetery could not have been more wrong, for it was apparent at the beginning of the excavation that the walls belonged to a badly burned building whose plano-convex mud bricks had been turned into baked brick.

The portion of the building excavated covers an area of more than 1000 square meters (Figs. 7 and 8) and is curious in plan and room circulation.¹⁰ It is clear that this agglutinative structure was not originally planned as it now exists, for rooms or groups of rooms were added from time to time as needs demanded. Indeed, the building was constructed with as many unbonded walls as bonded walls. Two levels were excavated called IA and IB. Although there were some changes in plan between the two levels, the basic room layout was repeated in many parts of the building. Where the burning was most extensive in the later building and the mud brick had turned to baked brick, the remains of the earlier building (IB) had been burned to a charcoal black.

It was difficult at the beginning to disentangle the two levels in many areas. This was due to the fact that the lower part of the earlier walls were left standing in many places unlike temple architecture where the walls of a temple are cut down and an entirely new building is constructed on top of the earlier remains. The later wall was built on top of this earlier stump and both walls were then plastered. This meant that the floor level of IA was often lower than the preserved top of the IB wall. During the rebuilding, a layer of reeds or reed mats was always placed on top of the earlier wall. This use of reeds helped immensely in sorting out the architectural phases. Where

⁹ The al-Hiba spouted jars (2H96, 2H97) are similar to Diyala types C556.242, C542.242. Delougaz, *Pottery from the Diyala Region*, Oriental Institute Publications, Vol. LXIII (Chicago, 1952), Pl. 38 a, b. The type dates to Early Dynastic I. The cups are almost identical to cups found in Innanna IX (Early Dynastic I) of Nippur, 7N560 and 7N566 (unpublished).

¹⁰ Since the excavations are not complete, the plan will be published in the next preliminary report.

fire had turned the mud brick into baked brick, the reed layers appeared as white lines. In areas where the building was less burned the line was black, and where there was no burning it was only possible to find the rebuilding by dismantling the wall and searching for the impressions of the disintegrated reeds.

There was no consistency in the technique of wall construction. Some walls were built entirely of flat courses of plano-convex brick. Other walls had varying numbers of brick courses laid on edge, alternating with flat courses. Rectangular bricks were used in building repairs, as pavings and in some room furniture as, for example, a bench or platform. Since the building dates to the later part of Early Dynastic III (see below), it is not surprising to find rectangular bricks used in conjunction with plano-convex bricks.

The number of floor levels varied in the many rooms. Fig. 9 is a view of room 4 from the east. Against the north wall, to the right of the photograph, a small section of the floors was left *in situ*. The top two floor levels represent Level IA. Below this, a north-south IB wall and the floor of IB are visible. Most rooms, however, did not have two floors for Level IA.

Throughout the entire building the floor levels (and frequently the walls) were heavily destroyed by numerous cuts. It is difficult to decide why and when all these cuts were made, and in some cases the holes were so small and deep that it is difficult to understand how they were made. Occasionally the cuts did produce some obvious second millennium pottery, but for the most part, it was not possible to discern any difference between the pottery found on the floors or in the undisturbed fill and the pottery from the cuts.

As mentioned previously, the plan of the building is strange. In a large residence one might expect to find rooms planned and oriented around a series of courts, but there are very few rooms in the building which are obviously open courts. Furthermore, there were numerous tiny rooms and corridors frequently with many miniature vessels lying on their floors. Often doorways were blocked as was the doorway seen in Fig. 10. Here the doorway was replaced by a niche constructed in the form of an arch. It was preserved only because the mud bricks had been turned to baked brick in the fire. This is a fine example of a true arch in Early Dynastic III B, but there is no indication as to how it was capped.

Considering the non-residence quality of the plan and the nature of the small finds discussed below, the excavators tentatively suggest that this huge structure was some kind of administrative building; realizing, of course, that this conclusion may have to be revised with future study.

The building may be dated to the later part of Early Dynastic III on the basis of inscribed documents. A sherd, a sealing, a cone and tablets all bear royal names of the Lagash Dynasty. The large sherd was found in room 12 of Level IA (Fig. 11). The pot could have belonged to either Eannatum or Enannatum: DUG X, [x]-an-na-tum, [PA]. TE.SI, [ŠIR.BUR.L] A. [KI]. A clay cone fragment with the name of Entemena was found in room 55.¹¹ It came from a cut in Level IA and, hence, is not well stratified.

The fragmentary royal sealing of Eannatum was found in the fill of room 89 of Level IB (Fig. 19), while his brother Enannatum I was represented by two tablets from fill in Level IB. One was a fragmentary administrative tablet which mentions Lummatu, son of Enannatum. A more important tablet in room 4 (found in the far left corner of the room in Fig. 9) contains the dedica-

¹¹ The cone is a duplicate of E. Sollberger, *Corpus des inscriptions "Royales" présargoniques de Lagash*, (Geneva, 1956), Ent. 45.

tion of a building by Enannatum I to Hendursag. The reverse of the tablet recounts his contest with his opponent Ur-Lumma of Umma. Although the tablet and sealing were found in the fill and not directly on the floor, they indicate that at least part of the Level IB building was used during the reigns of Eannatum and Enannatum I. Level IA, then, would be contemporary with rulers of the later part of the dynasty. The fact that royal inscriptions were found in the building contributes to the supposition that it served an administrative purpose.

Since there were a number of small objects and a large quantity of pottery from both Levels IA and B, only a few of the more interesting finds can be presented in this preliminary report.

Figs. 12 and 13 represent two views of a large copper hoard buried beneath the floor of Level IA in room 5 against the north wall of the room and just east of the doorway connecting rooms 4 and 5. The find spot offers no indication for the reason of the burial. The hoard either had been placed in a large reed basket or else wrapped in matting, for traces of reeds adhered to the outer surface. A large flaring vessel was inverted over a bucket with a round base, a narrow neck, and rim to which was attached a handle. Outside the vessels were two concave circular lids, an axe, and an adze. The inner bucket was sealed with two smaller concave lids and contained a variety of small vessels and utensils including an axe, six bowls or "sauce boats" mostly nestled together, three small vessels, and two strainers. The majority of these objects were extremely well preserved and showed various degrees of patinization. Groups of such small vessels are known from other sites such as in the Diyala and particularly at Susa, where the famous *cachette* of Susa Dd was recovered.¹²

The jar of the Susa hoard is a crude type of Susa D pottery. Actual examples of Susa D, or Second Style, pottery were found in the al-Hiba building such as the small pot of Fig. 15 which has geometric designs and a frieze of seven birds painted with dark brown paint on a pale yellow fabric. The sherd of Fig. 14 is also a yellowish fabric with dark brown paint. In comparison with the large amount of Sumerian pottery recovered from the building, these imported sherds were rare.

A necklace of carnelian beads found in an ordinary undecorated vessel from the fill of Level IA proved most interesting. The largest bead of the necklace had an etched design of two concentric circles. Etched carnelian beads are one type of object which provides links between Sumer and the Indus.¹³

Another object which has connections with other sites and areas is a clay die found in an oven in room 68 of Level IA (fig. 17). The numbers are formed very much like our modern dice, but the opposite sides do not add up to seven. Here the dots are arranged 1:3, 2:4, 5:6. Early dice have been found at Tepe Gawra, Tell Asmar, Ur and Harappa.¹⁴

Fig. 18 shows a selection of the very popular miniature vessels which were found in the building. Over fifty were recovered from various rooms in both Levels IA and IB. There was nothing preserved inside these vessels to indicate their function. Although they are frequently thought to be cosmetic containers, there is no proof for such an assumption.

Over fifty sealings were found in both Levels IA and IB. The sealing designs show an extra-

¹² Le Breton, "The Early Periods at Susa," *Iraq* XIX (1957), p. 118, Fig. 40; Amiet, *Elam*, (Auvers-sur-Aise, 1966), p. 201 ff.

¹³ Porada, "The Relative Chronology of Mesopotamia. Part I. Seals and Trade (6000-1600 B.C.)," in Erich, *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology* (Chicago, 1956), p. 164.

¹⁴ See Dales, "Of Mice and Men," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 88:1 (1968), pp. 14-23.

ordinary diversity of styles and many of the compositions are unique. A few examples are shown in Figs. 19 to 25.¹⁵ Fig. 19 is the sealing with the name of Eannatum and is executed in a magnificent, fully modeled style. The hero and bull-man contest beneath the inscription would be a subsidiary scene of the major contest with figures filling the entire seal to the right and left. The small animal dangling from the hand of the bull-man appears unique. There is a small lion on the back of the large bull with head turned back. Small animals used in this fashion are common in Early Dynastic III glyptic, but not in this identical pose. Similar in style to this sealing and hence probably also a royal seal is Fig. 20. The small lion and bull group apparently used as a filler also seems unique. An Imdugud biting the back of the standing bull is a motif found on seals from Telloh.¹⁶

The horned animal file of Fig. 21 is without parallel. The upper part of the sealing has a large swirl which grows out of the register dividing lines. These lines are formed, in part, by the animals' immense horns which have three sections as if they were antlers.¹⁷ The fragmentary sealing of Fig. 22 is equally unique and very difficult to interpret. The field is filled with a group of almost unrecognizable objects, one of which might be either a curled serpent or snail (?).

The banquet scene with temple façade is shown in the sealing of Fig. 23. This is a fairly common theme. The lower register, however, shows a combination of the animal file and guilloche or intertwined serpents. Although Fig. 24 is reminiscent of a banquet scene, there is no good parallel for a man seated before a table piled high with objects (?) from which he takes a loaf of bread (?).

Fig. 25 is a seal design reconstructed from eight fragmentary impressions. The style of execution is extremely abstract. Depicted are two seated (?) figures with a jar and drinking straws between them. They are sitting in a boat with a plant form fore and aft. Although the style may be compared generally to a seal from the Royal Cemetery at Ur, there is no close parallel.¹⁸ The composition is clearly derived from such a seal as U. 11401, also from the Royal Cemetery.¹⁹

Several burials were found in association with the Area C building. The most interesting was a burial found immediately to the south of the exterior wall consisting of a man and animal with several pottery cups as burial gifts. One might presume that this was a rider and his mount. The animal (Fig. 26) has been identified as an ass but we do not know yet what type of ass it was or whether or not it was domesticated. Further research on the floral and faunal collections from the site promise interesting results.

During the next season of excavations at al-Hiba in 1972-1973, digging will continue in both Areas A and C with the hope of completing both the temple oval and the administrative building. A series of soundings will also be made in various parts of the mound in order to plan for future campaigns.

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¹⁵ The sealings are drawn to a scale of 2:1.

¹⁶ Amiet, *La Glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque*, (Paris, 1961), pl. 82:1086, 1088, 1096.

¹⁷ The register line formed by one horn of an animal is known in a simplified version on a seal in the Moore Collection, Amiet, *op. cit.*, Pl. 86:1139.

¹⁸ Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery, Ur Excavations*, Vol. II (Oxford, 1934), Pl. 195, Fig. 42.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Pl. 200, Fig. 94.

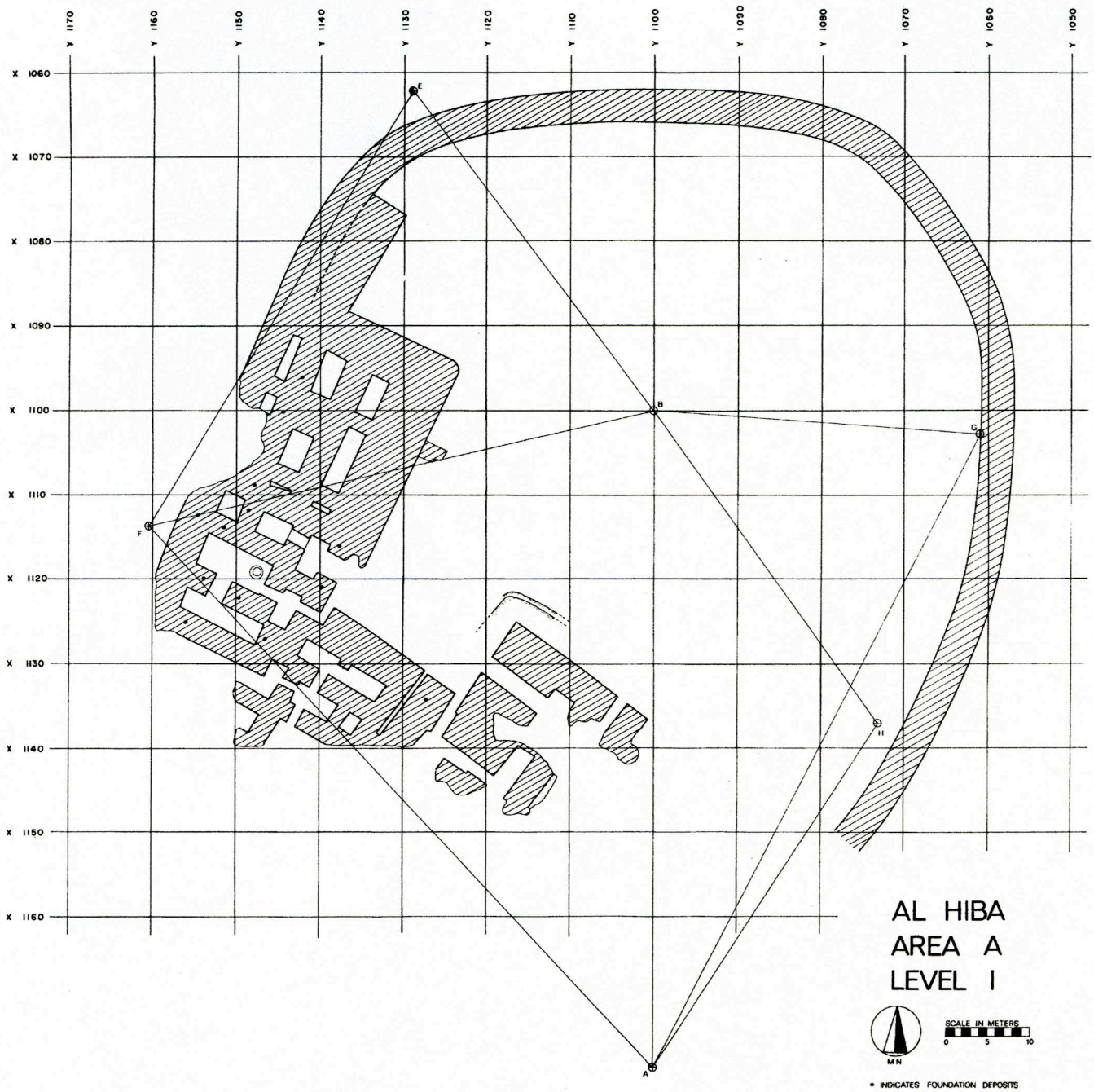
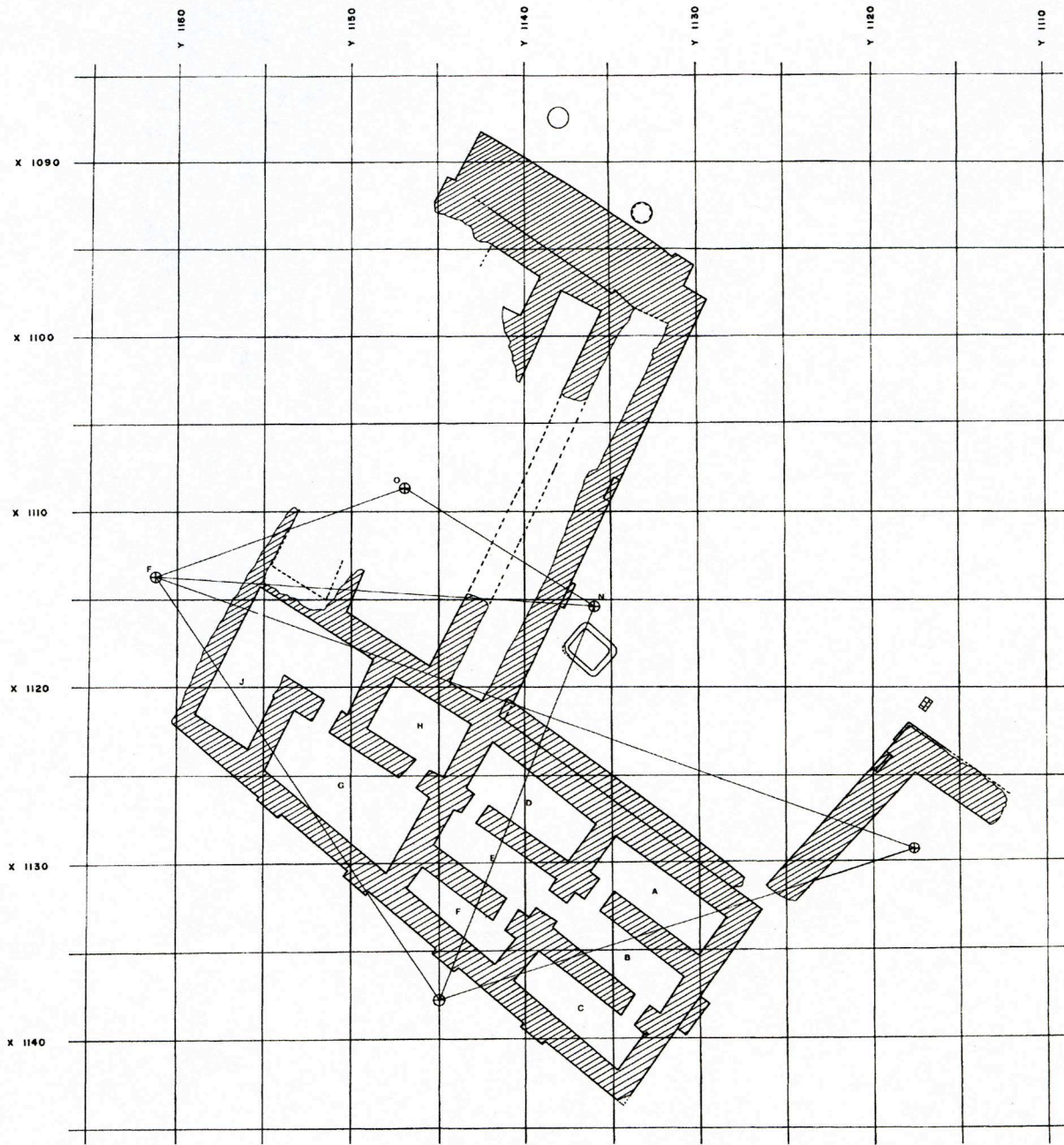
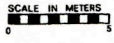


Fig. 1 Area A, Level I



AL HIBA



AREA A, LEVEL II

Fig. 2 Area A, Level II

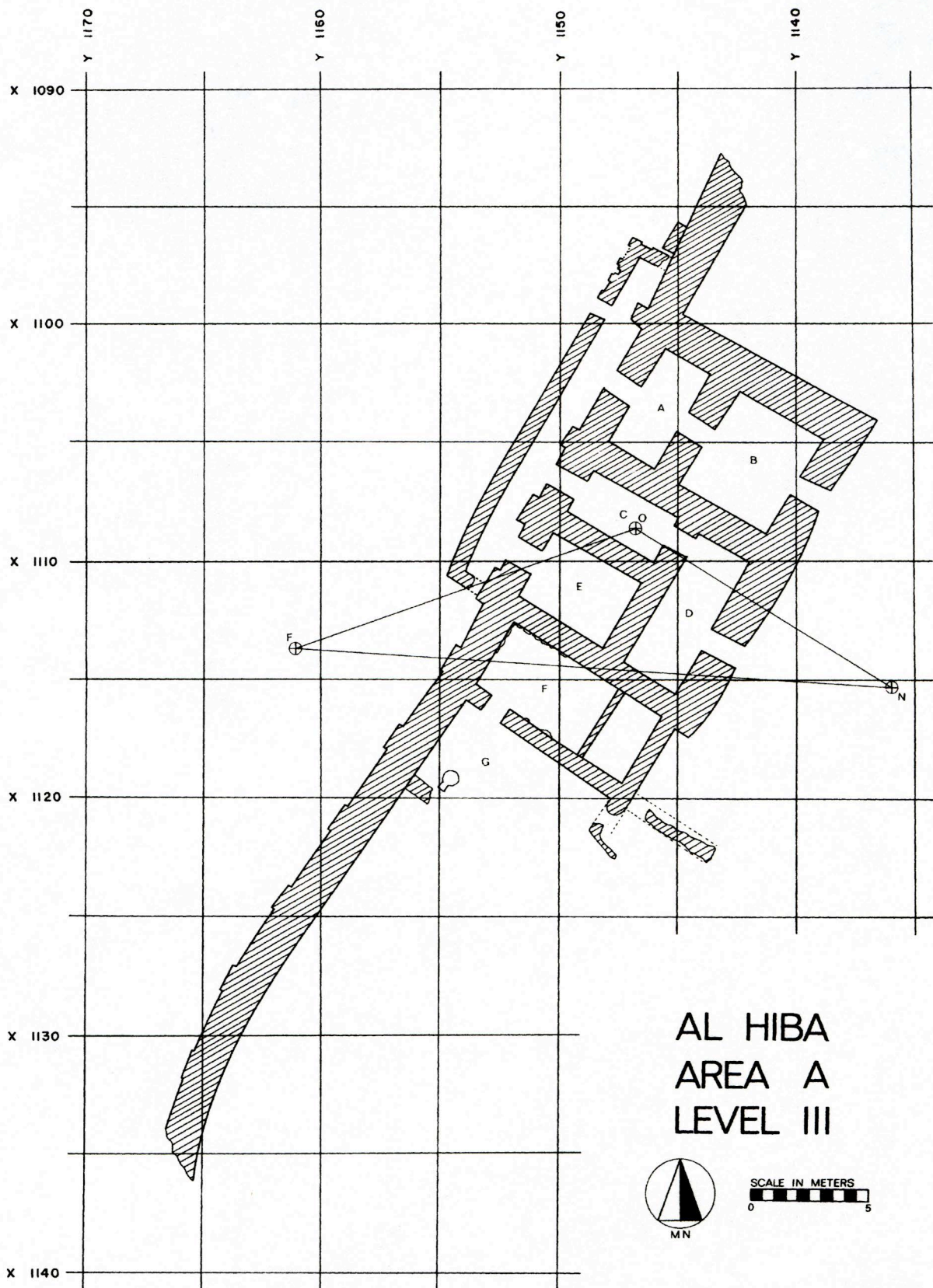


Fig. 3 Area A, Level III

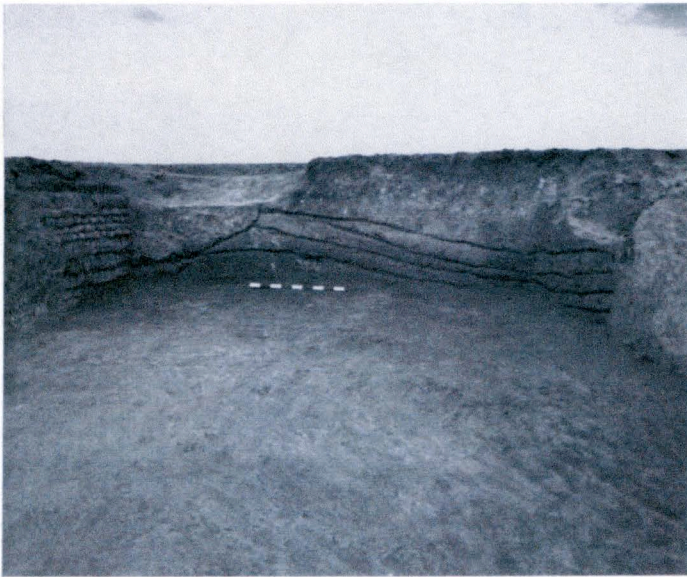


Fig. 4 Area A, Foundation trench and Level I temple oval wall



Fig. 5 Area A, Oven of Level II

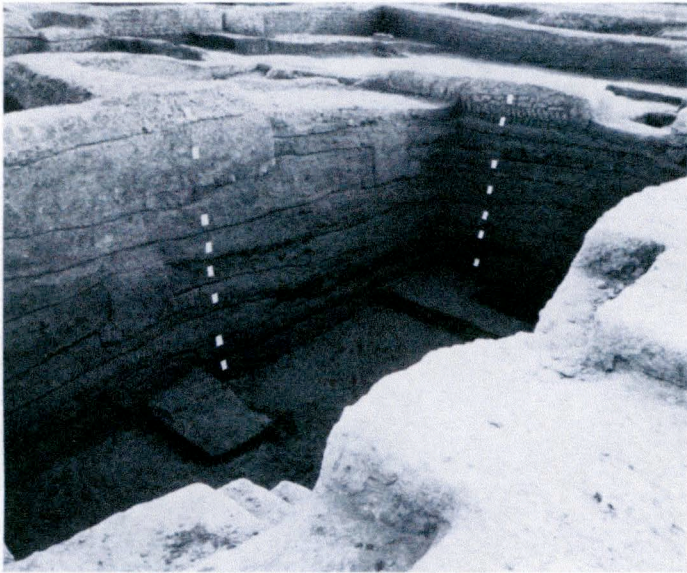


Fig. 6 Area A, Sounding



Fig. 7 View looking north of Area C Building



Fig. 8 View looking north of Area C Building



Fig. 10 Area C, Vaulted niche in doorway between rooms 4 and 9



Fig. 9 Area C, Room 4



Fig. 11 Area C, Sherd inscribed with the name of Enannatum or Eannatum

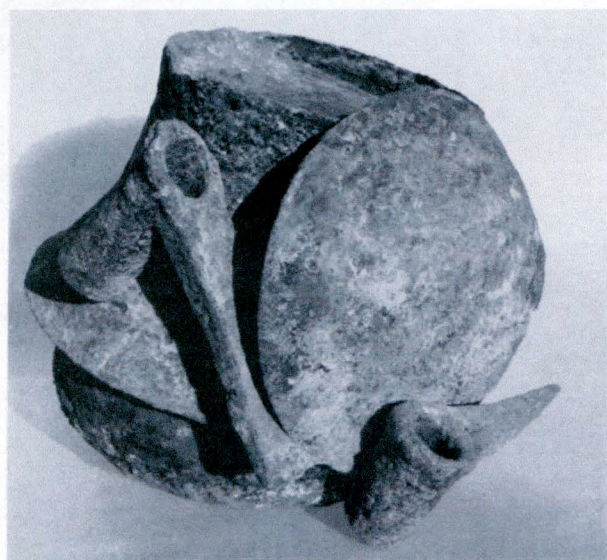


Fig. 12 Area C, Copper hoard buried beneath the floor of Level IA in Room 4

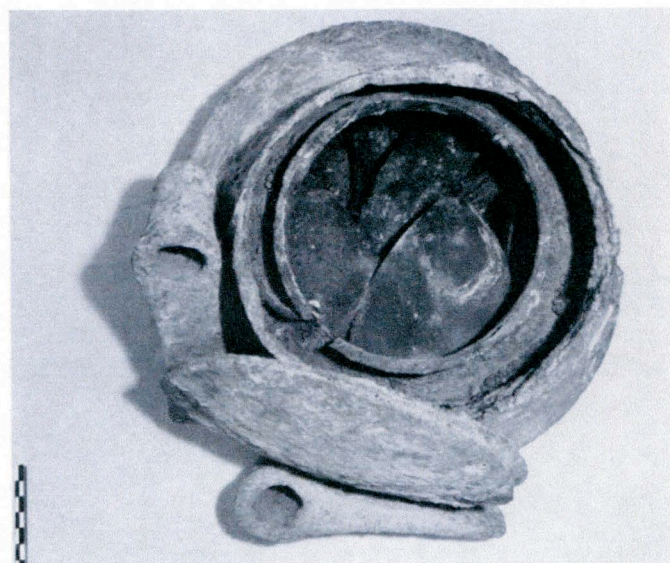


Fig. 13 Area C, Copper hoard buried beneath the floor of Level IA in Room 4

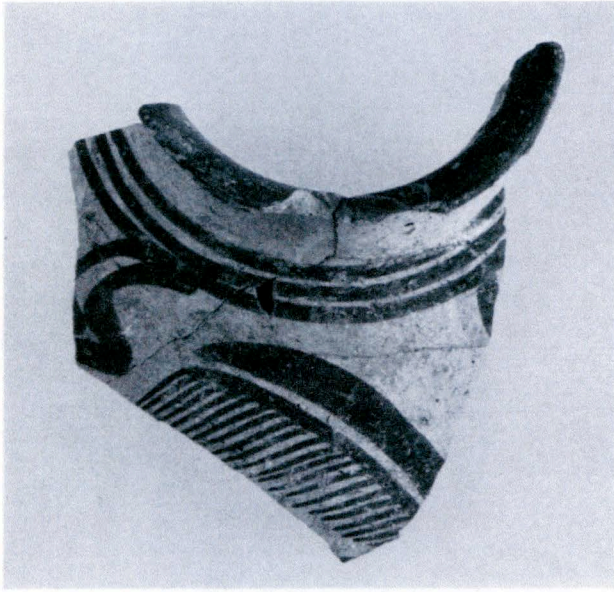


Fig. 14 Area C, Sherd of imported ware



Fig. 15 Area C, Small jar of imported ware

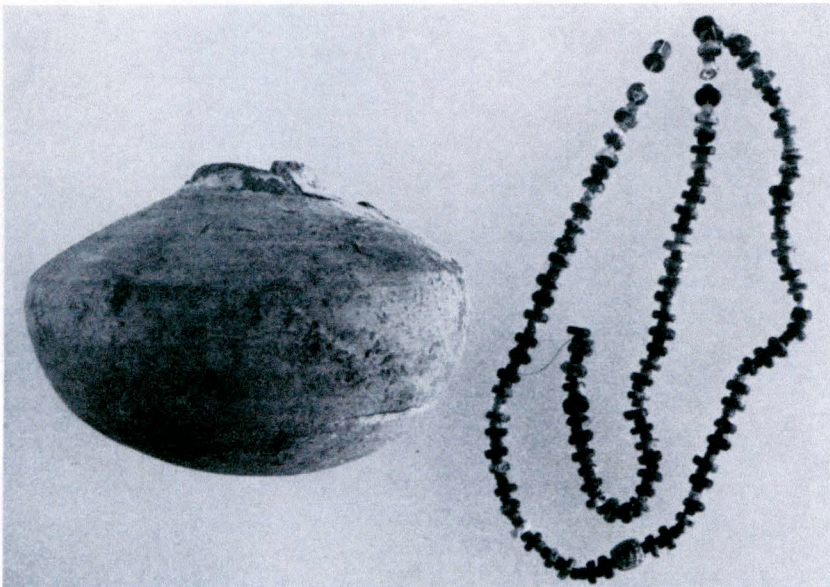


Fig. 16 Area C, Plainware jar and carnelian necklace

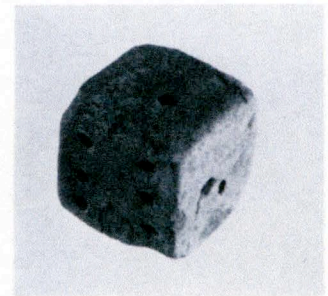


Fig. 17
Area C, Die from oven in Level IA

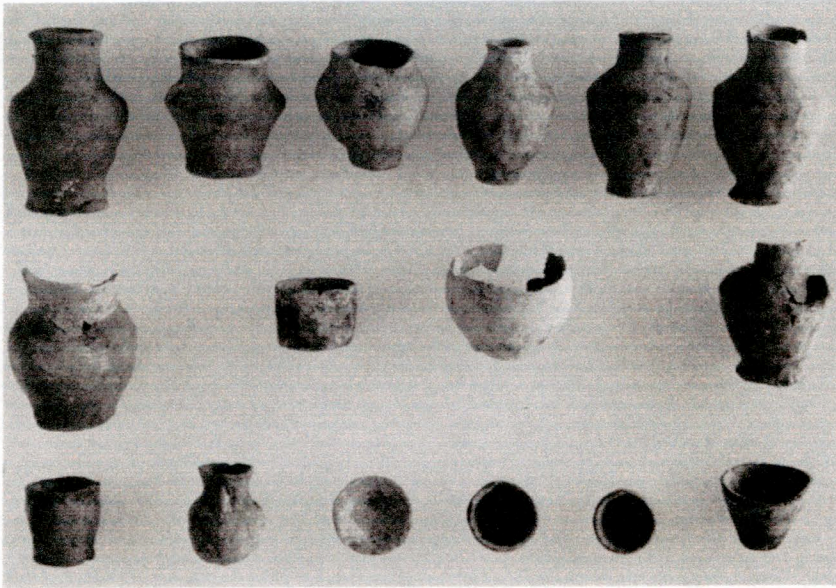


Fig. 18 Area C, Miniature pots



Fig. 19 Area C, Seal impression



Fig. 20 Area C, Seal impression



Fig. 21 Area C, Seal impression



Fig. 22 Area C, Seal impression

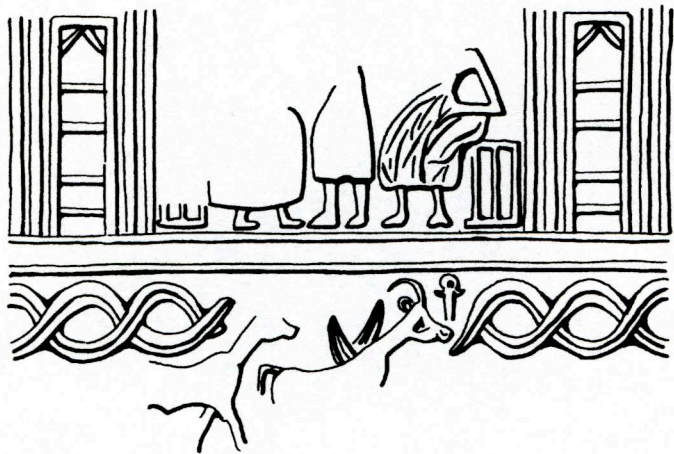


Fig. 23 Area C, Seal impression

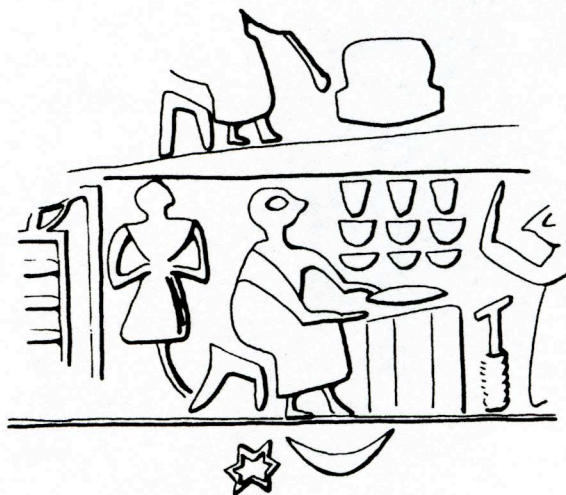


Fig. 24 Area C, Seal impression

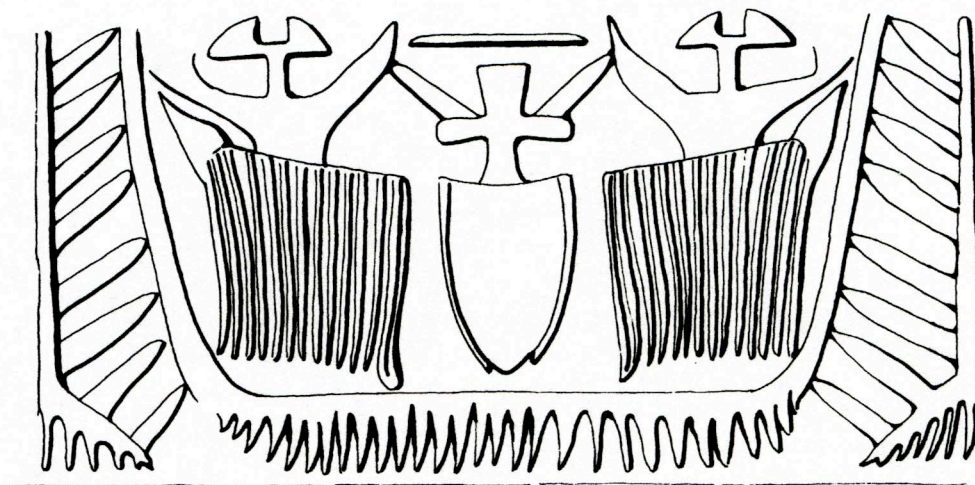
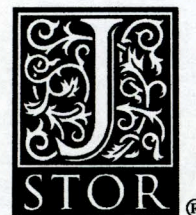


Fig. 25 Area C, Seal impression



Fig. 26 Area C, Equid burial



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