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KİNET HÖYÜK 1992-1997: THE ACHAEMENID PERSIAN AND HELLENISTIC PERIODS

(Lev. 100-105)

*Charles GATES

ABSTRACT

Achaemenid Persian and Hellenistic periods mark the final 500 years of ancient habitation at Kinet Hövük. Excavations conducted since 1992 by Bilkent University have revealed three major building levels dating to the Persian period. Of particular interest are a building of massive mud brick walls on the east side of the mound, and a stone tower foundation of the city wall, found on the west side. Both belong to the fourth century BC. These architectural improvements of the fourth century BC recall similar constructions elsewhere in southern Anatolia, and must reflect the town's importance as a regional center for the later Persian empire.

One major architectural level represents middle to late Hellenistic occupation. The modest remains indicate the decline in the town's strategic and commercial significance, surely the result of both the damaging effects on its harbors of erosion from the Amanus Mountains and the prosperity of recently founded Antioch and its ports.

Article:

This paper summarizes the archaeological evidence for the mid-sixth to the mid-first centuries BC discovered at Kinet Höyük from 1992 to 1997. Findings from the 1998 season will be touched on only briefly. The remarks here are preliminary; detailed study of the finds, notably the pottery, remains to be undertaken¹.

The Achaemenid Persian and Hellenistic deposits, approximately 2.5 m deep, contain four main architectural levels. These remains represent the final period of ancient habitation at the site. M. V. Seton-Williams, in her Cilician survey conducted in 1951, included Kinet Höyük among sites inhabited in Roman and Byzantine times², but our survey and excavations on the mound have

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¹ This paper was read at the First International Symposium for Cilician Archaeology, Mersin, 1-4 June, 1998. I would like to express my thanks to Serra Durugönül for organizing this stimulating conference; Mark Lawall and Nicholas Rauh for identifications of amphoras; Keith DeVries for sharing his detailed knowledge of Attic black-glazed pottery; and Marie-Henriette Gates, director of the Kinet Höyük excavations, for discussion of many issues presented here. For the abstract of a short talk on the same subject delivered at the 98th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, 29 December, 1996, see C. Gates 1997.

² Seton-Williams 1954, p. 161. But she found the "mound so overgrown that sherd collection was difficult". She identified the site as "possibly Nicopolis". Alexander the Great granted the title of Nikopolis to Issos after the Macedonian victory over the Persians (Hellenkemper 1984, p. 44).

uncovered nothing later than late Hellenistic, until the brief Medieval reoccupation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries³.

1. Persian period: introduction

The Achaemenid Persian period falls within what is called at Kinet Höyük the Late Iron Age, Phase III:1 (seventh-fourth centuries BC). The monumentality of certain architectural remains indicates the importance of the town during this period⁴. Architectural levels assigned to the Persian period have been found in two areas on the mound (Fig. 1): three levels on the west side, the sea side (in Operations E/H and C) and one on the east (in Ops. A, AII, and D). According to the stratigraphic sequence as defined in the step trench (Op. C) on the west side of the site, the levels on the west side correspond to Kinet Höyük Periods 5, 4, and 3. The level on the east side must fall within Periods 4 and 3. Let us first examine the remains from Periods 5 and 4, then those from Period 3.

2. Persian period: Periods 5 and 4 (4B and 4A)

Evidence for habitation at Kinet Höyük in the century 550-450 BC is fragmentary. On the west side, the substantial pre-Persian architectural complex of Period 6 (late seventh century--ca. 575/550 BC) is succeeded by Period 5, a thick layer of fill at least 0.50 m thick. Pottery finds include carinated bowls of Achaemenid type⁵. The few architectural features of Period 5 consist of only fragments of stone wall foundations, nowhere forming a room or even a corner, and the lower part of two ovens or hearths, small circular pits lined with thick coarseware sherds or pieces of baked clay. The area must have been an outdoor space used for a variety of activities during a period lasting as much as 100 years.

The succeeding Period 4 (divided onto Levels 4B and 4A) marks a return of substantial architecture to the trenches on the west side of the mound. A major east-west wall, preserved (as is typical in all periods at Kinet Höyük) only in stone foundations of two to three courses of naturally shaped river stones⁶, is shared by cross walls of clearly two different periods. These periods have been called Level 4B (the earlier, lying below: Fig. 2) and Level 4A (the later level, lying above: Fig.

³ On recent exploration of Kinet Höyük, see M.-H. Gates and I. Özgen 1993; M.-H. Gates 1994a; M.-H. Gates 1994b, p. 261; M.-H. Gates 1995, p. 227; M.-H. Gates 1996, pp. 293-295; and M.-H. Gates 1997, pp. 253-254.

⁴ Kinet Höyük may well be Issos, the town known from textual and numismatic evidence near which Alexander the Great and Darius III famously clashed in 333 BC. See Hellenkemper 1984 and Bing 1985 [1993], pp. 97-100.

⁵ As exemplified by Sumner 1986, p. 5, fig. 3, N

⁶ The extreme humidity and high rainfall of this coastal plain, where the Amanus Mountains block the moisture-bearing winds travelling eastwards across the Mediterranean, necessitate the protection of mud brick walls from ground water and dampness.

3). Level 4A also includes a ramp-like feature of unknown function (Fig. 3: 101); this ramp is an inclined surface, sloping down toward the south, measuring ca. 2.00 m (north-south) x 1.80 m (east-west). It is made of small to medium sized river stones with some sections added in baked clay, all atop a packing of earth.

The purpose of the rooms of 4A and 4B is not certain, but another striking item of Level 4A may give a clue: a partially preserved burnt clay feature (1.40 x 0.60 x 0.25 m, as preserved) with several holes cut out of it (the diameters of the holes range from 0.32 to 0.08 m). This feature (Fig. 3: 30) may be a holder for amphoras. No amphoras were found in the holder, but fragments of many were uncovered elsewhere in Level 4 deposits. Types include basket-handled amphoras of Cypro-Levantine character, with one example of a late type dated ca. 430--375 BC7 found directly below a wall (Wall 12) of the succeeding Period 3, and a knobbased Chian amphora dated ca. 425 BC. Solokha I amphoras also occur, a type generally attributed to the south-east Aegean in both earlier and later varieties, later fifth--early fourth centuries BC for the earlier, fourth century BC for the later⁸. An example of the earlier type belongs probably to Period 4B, or possibly Period 5. The later type has come from a Period 4A deposit. Thanks especially to such amphoras, Levels 4B and the succeeding 4A may be placed in the second half of the fifth century, perhaps into the fourth century BC. Other finds from these levels include a bronze elbow fibula, a gold bead, five spearpoints and arrowheads, and fragments of carinated bowls of Achaemenid type.

3. East side: a Large brick building

On the opposite, east side of the mound stood a roughly contemporaneous structure consisting of thick mud brick walls on a broad foundation of naturally shaped river stones, preserved to a height of 1.10 m (Fig. 4). The building has been uncovered in an area of ca. 100 m²; because it extended beyond the excavation areas of Ops. D, A, and AII, its plan has been only partially recovered. The structure was imposing and surely important, with its interior walls one meter thick and a corridor that runs the full 10 m north-south length of the excavation trench Op. D. Scorched walls and heavy brick collapse suggest a violent end -- a fate not attested in the buildings on the west side of the mound. The exact date of the building is uncertain, because the floors were remarkably clean of any objects. The stratigraphic position of the building places it firmly in the Persian centuries, however. It lies sandwiched between datable levels: it sits above Period 6 (mid seventh - early/mid sixth centuries BC), a level characterized by wave-line wares

⁷ As in Buhl 1983, pp. 20-23, Type E. For a useful introduction to amphora types, see Grace 1961 and Alpözen, Berkaya, and Özdaþ 1995.

⁸ On Chian and Solokha I amphoras: Mark Lawall, personal communication.

and Ionian bowls. From above, pits filled with earliest Hellenistic pottery cut down into its walls.

Parts of two buildings similar in form, projected size, and probable date were uncovered in 1992-96 at Hacinebi, at Birecik on the Euphrates, some distance to the north-east⁹. The connection bears keeping in mind.

4. Late Persian and Early - Middle Hellenistic: Period 3

At some point in the early fourth century BC, Kinet Höyük underwent a major building campaign, with a new city wall with towers or buttresses and a glacis girdling the slopes of the mound, by then of considerable height, ca. 20 m above sea level. Remains of the city wall and its glacis have been recovered notably on the north and the west. The best dated section was discovered on the west side of the mound (Ops. E/H and C) in an exposed area of approximately 130 m²; these structures comprise Period 3, divided into Architectural Levels 3B and 3A (Fig. 5)¹⁰. The original construction (Level 3B) can be dated to the first half of the fourth century BC, thanks to the amphoras and numerous Attic black-glazed sherds of early fourth century BC discovered at the foot of the tower base in Op. H. These architectural improvements indicate the town's importance for the later Persian empire as a regional center on the northern Levantine coast between the Cilician plain and the pass over the Amanus Mountains, and perhaps reflect a reorganization of Persian administration in Cilicia in the early fourth century BC¹¹.

The most striking element that emerged on the west side in Op. H was the stone foundation of a small tower or buttress, 2.4 x 3.1 m, and 1.05 m in height, with its sides oriented to the compass points. The foundation sat on top of a low platform, a levelling area bordered at least on two sides with stones. This platform cut into the earlier Level 4A, destroying, for example, part of the "amphora holder". The tower foundation was made of packed rubble and earth; its sides were faced with large river stones and roughly cut blocks of purple volcanic stone, with squared limestone blocks in two projecting corners. The wall complex of which the tower base was a part connects directly down the west slope of the mound with an exterior retaining wall not parallel to the tower, but oriented at a

⁹ A. McMahon, "The Achaemenid-Hellenistic Occupation at Hacýnebi", in Stein <u>et al</u>. 1996, pp. 222-229. The buildings are dated to the fourth century BC.

¹⁰ An additional and even more substantial section of city wall was excavated in 1998 on the north side of the mound, complementing findings from 1992. Although this north section seems contemporaneous with the fourth century BC construction in Ops. E/H and C described here, then later reused, the evidence for its dating is equivocal and needs further evaluation.

¹¹ This last conclusion was suggested to me by Olivier Casabonne (personal communication). Comparable architectural evidence elsewhere in southern Anatolia, indicating a broad pattern of fortifications at this time, was presented at this conference by Thomas Marksteiner.

right angle to the slope. The tower and retaining wall were also connected with a glacis that covered the hill; this glacis consisted of small stones packed densely but irregularly into a yellow clay bedding. The rubble used in the glacis was identical in type with the fill inside the tower base.

The tower connected to its east with walls forming a complex of gravelled courtyards and passageways and rooms. Joining on the south (in Op. C) was an unusual stone foundation for a gate whose opening measured 5 m across. This foundation consisted of a single course of large limestone ashlar blocks, smoothly fitted to each other and smoothly cut on the top surface. The blocks varied in size, however, and were roughly shaped on their sides and bottoms -- surfaces not intended to be seen. The opening of 5 m was marked at each end by a large upright limestone block set on top of the foundation. Each block preserved traces of plaster; the plaster on the north block was unpainted, but remains of painted plaster were noted on the south block, red (west face) and yellow (north face). The upper surface of the line of ashlars was coated with cement-like mortar and, on top, gravel. This gravel surface continued into a courtyard lying to the east. Evidently this finely built stone foundation was a threshold for a grand entrance into the citadel that the mound had now become.

Continuing use of the tower and walls through the third century BC, thus well into the Hellenistic age¹², is attested by modifications in the walls and the ground plans (Level 3A) and by pottery finds. Small rooms were created; older doors were blocked, new ones opened. In this later phase of Period 3, a large anchor of volcanic stone was utilized as a building block. Pottery from these later rooms included Hellenistic black glazed wares and fishplates, and in the latest deposits the matt black to brown glazing characteristic of third century BC Hellenistic wares¹³. Sigillata, however, is absent. The several dozen examples of stamped amphora handles from Hellenistic levels begin in the mid third century BC.

5. Late Hellenistic: Period 2

The modest architectural remains of Period 2, belonging to the second and early first centuries BC, the final period of ancient habitation at Kinet Höyük, indicate the decline in the town's strategic and commercial significance, surely the result of the prosperity of the Hellenistic foundations of Antioch and ports nearby at Seleukia and Alexandria (İskenderun). The decline may also reflect the damaging effects on the town's harbors of erosion from the Amanus Mountains¹⁴.

¹² At Kinet Höyük, the Hellenistic period is called Phase II.

¹³ For comparanda, see Waagé 1948, pp. 1-18, 28-31, and 80-82; and Jones 1950, pp. 149-150, 152-172, and 212-231 (late fourth-mid second centuries BC).

¹⁴ See Ozaner 1994.

Nevertheless, the pottery finds indicate that this coastal town was very much part of the cultural koiné of the Mediterranean basin in the Late Hellenistic period¹⁵.

Period 2 is attested on the west, the north, and the east sides of the mound. On the west, the Period 3 tower had gone out of use; the Period 2 wall foundations (Fig. 6) lay at a higher absolute level than the top of the tower base. Moreover, the Period 2 walls formed an architectural complex completely different in plan and orientation from the earlier Period 3 buildings. In an excavated area of ca. 60 m², a group of residential rooms and courts lined the north side of a street running eastwest¹⁶. The stone foundations of these mudbrick buildings are distinguished from earlier construction by the use of medium sized polygonal volcanic blocks, dark purple in color, together with the familiar naturally shaped river stones and mud mortar. In addition, roof tiles of baked clay were used for the first time. The street was littered with a great quantity of pottery, animal bones, and pebbles. Domestic floors, made of well-packed earth, occasionally cobbled, have also provided useful deposits.

The badly eroded east side of the mound has presented excavators with a complex stratigraphy difficult to understand. The dominant features are pits with much overfired pottery of late Period 3, the third century BC. A small gate of Period 2 was discovered, however, with two steps still remaining of a stepped ramp of large river stones leading out the gate and down the slope. On the north side of the mound, in Op. G, Period 2 remains appeared directly below the important Medieval finds, but have not been excavated.

Eastern Sigillata A makes up roughly 25 per cent of the domestic wares, and dates Period 2 to the Late Hellenistic, second to mid first centuries BC. Other pottery types are paralleled at Tarsus¹⁷, Hama¹⁸, and certain Palestinian sites¹⁹. A fine example of West Slope ware came from an earlier Period 4 context, surprisingly. Long-distance trade is attested by the imports of amphoras from Rhodes, Kos, and Chios, and late in the period, of Italian amphoras of Dressel IC and Lambroglia 2 types²⁰. The finds of Dressel IC amphoras may be among the earliest in this region. Additional objects recovered from this period include stamped amphora handles; clay loomweights; miscellaneous metal items, of which

¹⁵ For a helpful perspective on regions, towns, and rural areas in the Hellenistic world, of the sort to which the findings from Kinet Höyük can contribute, see Alcock 1994. Berlin (1997) offers a useful survey of Hellenistic Palestine, one well-explored part of the eastern Mediterranean.

Because the street lay at the south end of the excavation trench, only a small section south of the street was uncovered.

¹⁷ Jones 1950, pp. 172-179 and 231-240 (mid second to mid first centuries BC).

¹⁸ Papanicolaou Christensen and Friis Johansen 1971.

¹⁹ Berlin 1997, pp. 46-47.

²⁰ Nicholas Rauh, personal communication.

two bronze furniture legs, paralleled at Al Mina²¹, are the most striking; and a small number of terracotta lamps. Of the few coins found, only one has a legend that can still be read, a bronze coin from Antioch, of the reign of Demetrios I, 162-150 BC.

Kinet Höyük was abandoned in the mid first century BC. The principal reasons seem to be two. First, the town's harbors may well have filled completely with silt from erosion, thus drastically curtailing maritime commerce²². Perhaps malarial swamps resulted, creating an unhealthy place to live. Second, a destructive earthquake may have been the immediate cause, an explanation indicated by the roof tiles found neatly arranged, tilted against the foot of several walls. Further, the discovery of an unusually high number of complete vessels and bronze and iron objects suggests the sudden departure of the inhabitants. According to written sources, notably Justin's Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus²³, a severe earthquake struck Antioch some time before 69 BC, during the reign of the Seleucid king Tigranes, shortly before Pompey secured the Seleucid territory for the Romans in 64 BC. Perhaps this was the earthquake in question.

In any case, regional settlement and economic patterns were changing. Epiphaneia²⁴ with its own harbor at Küçük Burnaz²⁵, not far to the north of Kinet Höyük, became the major town of the region in the Roman period, the center for seaborn commerce and regional agriculture. Kinet Höyük would lie abandoned until the twelfth century AD, when its commanding hilltop would attract a new group of settlers.

FIGURES

- Fig. 1) Kinet Höyük: Site plan, with Operations
- Fig. 2) Kinet Höyük: Plan, Ops. E/H/C, Period 4, Level 4B
- Fig. 3) Kinet Höyük: Plan, Ops. E/H/C, Period 4, Level 4A
- Fig. 4) Kinet Höyük: Plan, Ops. D/A/AII, Large building (Persian period)
- Fig. 5) Kinet Höyük: Plan, Ops. E/H/C, Period 3, Levels 3A and 3B
- Fig. 6) Kinet Höyük: Plan, Ops. E/H/C, Period 2

²¹ Woolley 1938, p. 138, fig. 16: MN 255, from Level 3, House A.

²² Ozaner 1994.

²³ 40.2.1-2. The Latin text of this passage is found in Downey 1938, p. 106, n. 1. For an English translation, see Justin, <u>Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus</u>, translated by J. C. Yardley, with introduction and explanatory notes by R. Develin (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1994), 40.2.1-2. According to Justin (Justinus), 170,000 people died and many cities were destroyed.

²⁴ Gough 1976; and Hellenkemper and Hild 1986, pp. 102-104.

²⁵ For exploration at Küçük Burnaz: M.-H. Gates and I. Özgen 1993, p. 391; Ozaner, M.-H. Gates, and I. Özgen 1993; Tobin 1995 and in this volume; and M.-H. Gates 1996, pp. 329-330.

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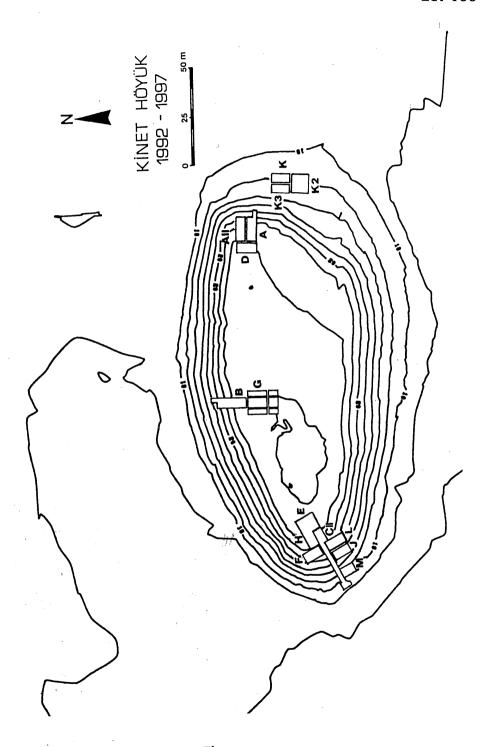


Fig. 1

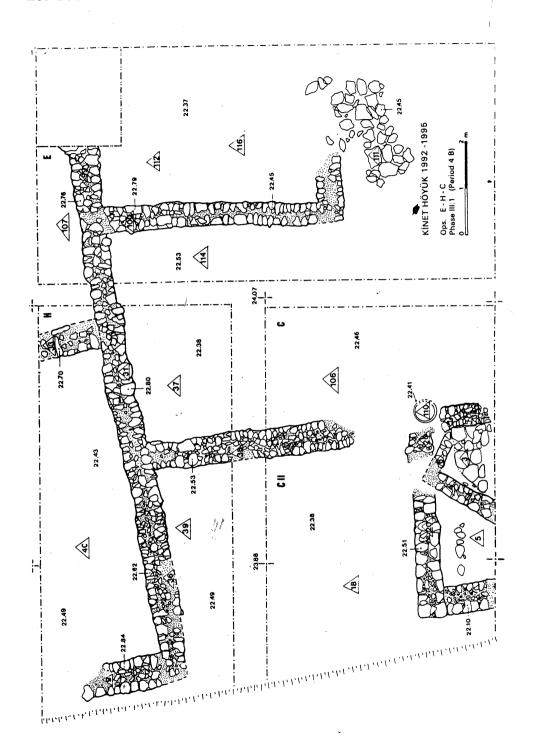


Fig. 2

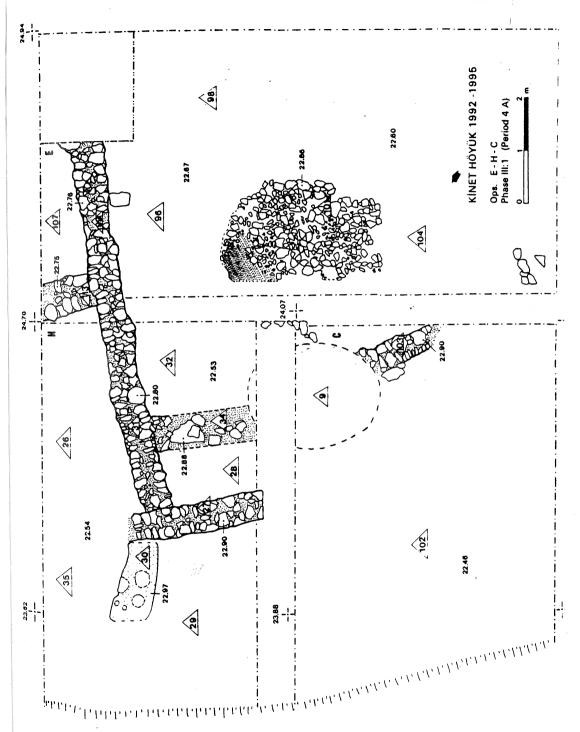


Fig. 3

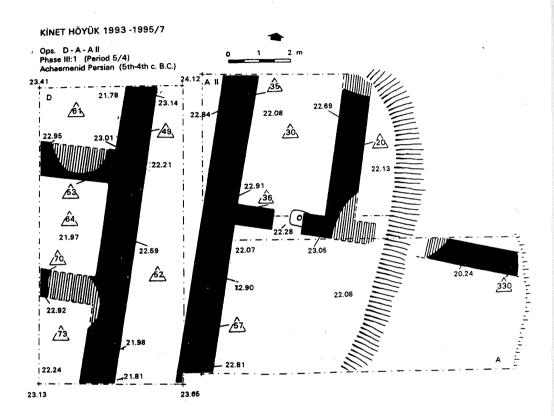


Fig. 4

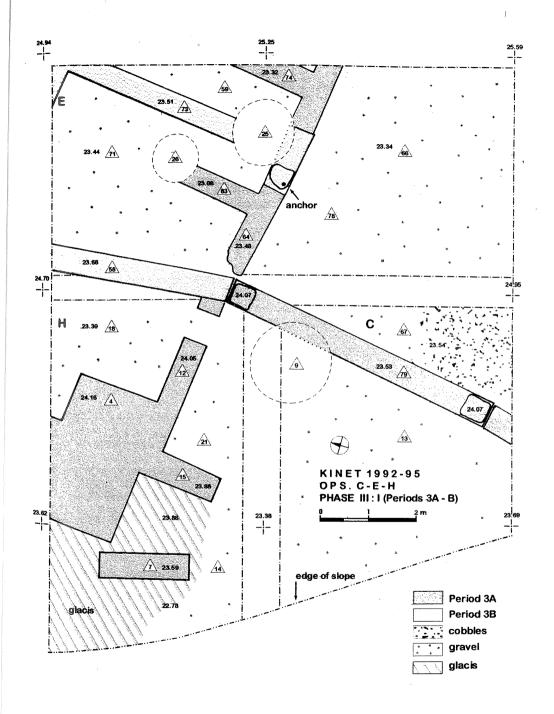


Fig. 5

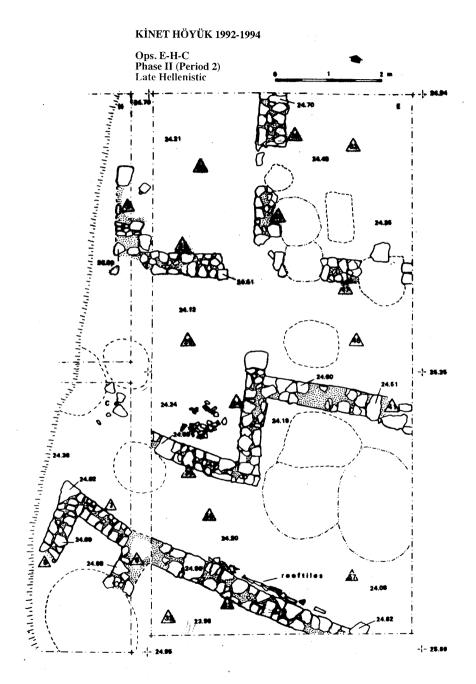


Fig. 6