

TOPAKLI: CAMPAIGN OF EXCAVATION 1968

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The 1968 campaign of excavation in the hüyük of Topaklı (Turkey) took place between 26th April and 8th July. The first fortnight was taken up with the journey and transfer, in going through the usual formalities with the Turkish Authorities and in setting up the base camp, which this year was to have the use of a different and more spacious house than the one we had last year.

We payed particular attention to resolving the problem of dumping the soil removed during the excavations. An attempted solution by constructing two long galvanized iron slips placed along the E and W slopes of the hüyük turned out to be a good one but still insufficient given the vast quantity of material excavated and the difficulty of giving these slips sufficient incline above all for the descent of wet soil (a not infrequent event). It will probably be necessary to provide for the construction of scaffolding with Innocenti poles.

The last fortnight was spent on closing the excavation, in arranging the material in store-rooms, in handing over some of the most noteworthy objects to the Turkish Authorities namely the Nevşehir Museum, and of course on the return journey.

To the excavation itself 43 days (including Sundays) were devoted. This period however was upset by rain and above all by a disastrous flood, which, having flooded our house (thus making it to a large extent uninhabitable) prevented us from working for almost a week. Following this event the Expedition was compelled to return to last year's small house while using a few rooms of the other for

storage purposes only. The two trailers which we had bought last year turned out to be invaluable in the circumstances. Nevertheless if the enterprise is to continue successfully, a radical solution must be found to the problem of accomodation for the Expedition.

Since Prof. Meriggi was unable to be present, I myself directed the Expedition; with me as Assistants on the dig were Dr. L. Capuis, Dr. I. Favaretto, Dr. G. Lucchi, Mr. G. Leonardi, Miss F. Ghedini, the technicians geom. D. Gerlini (surveyor), Mr. G. B. Frescura (repairer), Mr. A. Perissinotto (photographer), Mr. G. Penello (draughtsman); Mr. S. Ton with the help of a turkish cook looked after the house.

Şemsettin Köksal was this year also the representative for the Turkish Authorities. The Turkish personnel employed on the dig and in collateral operations numbered between 35 and 45 Individuals.

The excavation which extended over an area of about 130 sq. mts. covered, in addition to the trenches opened last year (Fig. 1), eight complete squares according to the squaring of the complete hüyük which was one of the first things I asked geom. Gerlini to do.

1 — We proceeded to the cleaning, verification and completion of the survey and to a careful examination of the building (Figs. 2,3) appeared last year (ex sector II; which now covers part of the squares G. 15-16, H 15-16), ascertaining its form and type. We are certainly dealing with a Protobyzantine martyrion with a greek cross in square. The presence

outside the work of a large column base is quite unjustified, given its size, on the summit of the hüyük and leads one to think that in the neighbourhood of the martyrion there must also be the ruin of a related basilica. So far however the soundings carried out to the S of the Martyrion have shown no positive results.

2 — In the big trench (Fig. 4) traced out last year (which now covers part of the squares H 13 - 14, I 13 - 14, G 14 - 15, M 16 - 17, N 16 - 17) we went deeper with the intention of establishing by means of this trench a basic diachronic scale. In so doing we brought to light another three architectural layers, which however do not go back further than the Hellenistic period.

3 — The excavation of the complete squares M 16, N 15 - 16, O 15 - 16 and the completion of the excavation of the square M 15 are at an early stage (figs. 5, 6, 7). A large cemetery came to light here which provided 81 graves (some with two skeletons) though on the whole rather poor; about ten tombs however did show a careful structure. The cemetery is Christian of the early Byzantine period and it belongs to level A. Among the stones in re-use a few inscriptions have been found and architectural blocks that have been carved; among the offerings some objects of glass paste or bronze of which a perforated bronze disk is particularly note-

worthy. Going deeper below the cemetery, some structures of buildings (corresponding to level C) have appeared. (fig. 8). As yet they are not recognizable but they do show a certain architectural intention (courtyard and a colonnade).

4 — At the W extremity of the uppermost platform of the hüyük the squares T 15-16 were excavated. So far three architectural levels have come to light of Byzantine and Roman periods. Here the dig was particularly fortunate in finds; a beautiful inscribed gem, vases of various shapes in yellow-brown clay or painted, a bronze lantern with three lamps, a complete horse's harness with three large bells with the decoration incised on them and their relative chains, etc..

On the whole the 1968 campaign of excavation, although it has remained at the superficial strata, given the relatively limited time available, has none the less confirmed through the abundance and interest of both the architectural and removable finds that the settlement corresponds to that of a locality of considerable importance. We can therefore hope for even better results in the future especially if, as we trust, we can employ an even bigger team for the purpose, can dedicate a longer period of time to the excavation and can count on some what less uncomfortable living conditions.

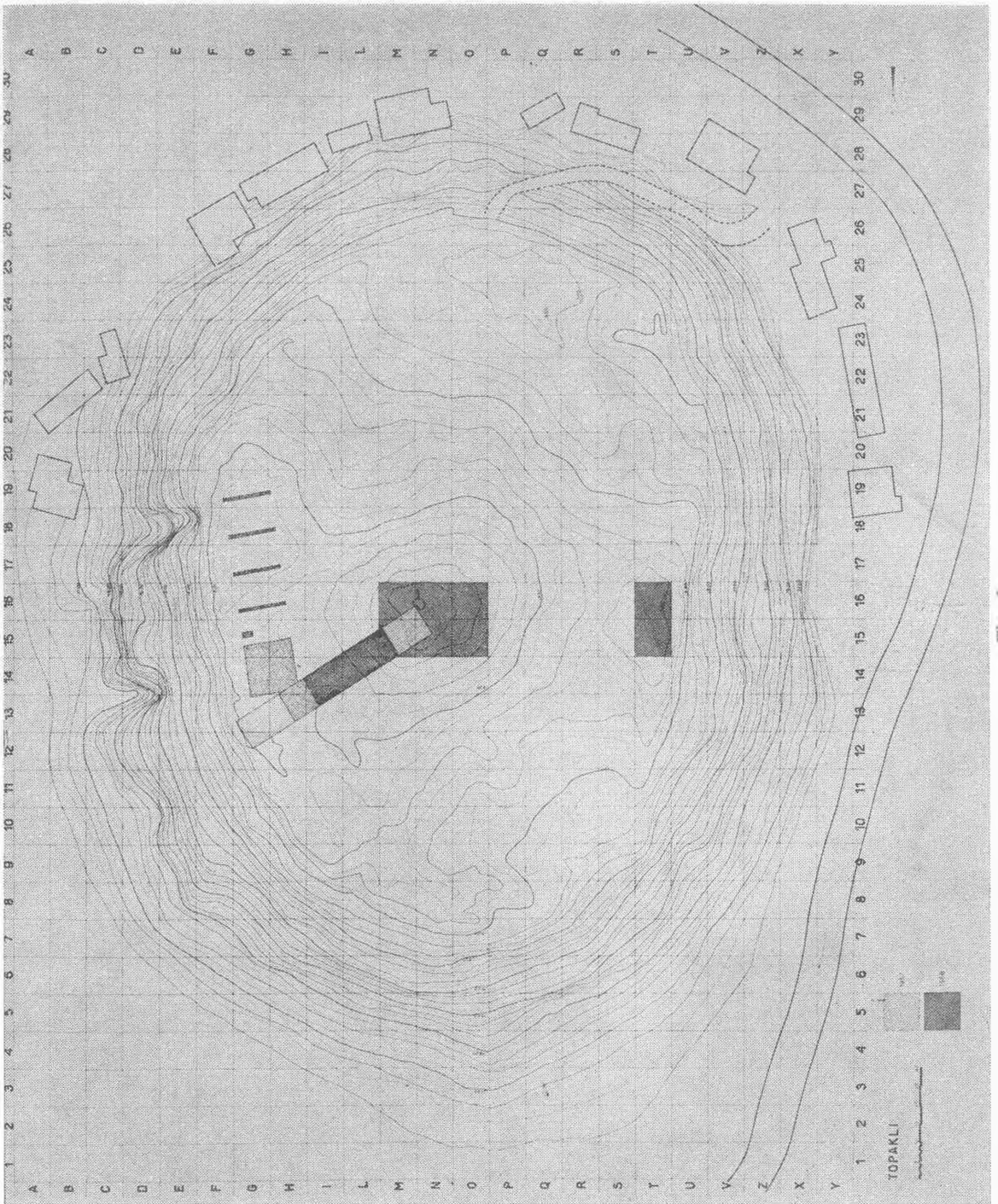


Fig. 1

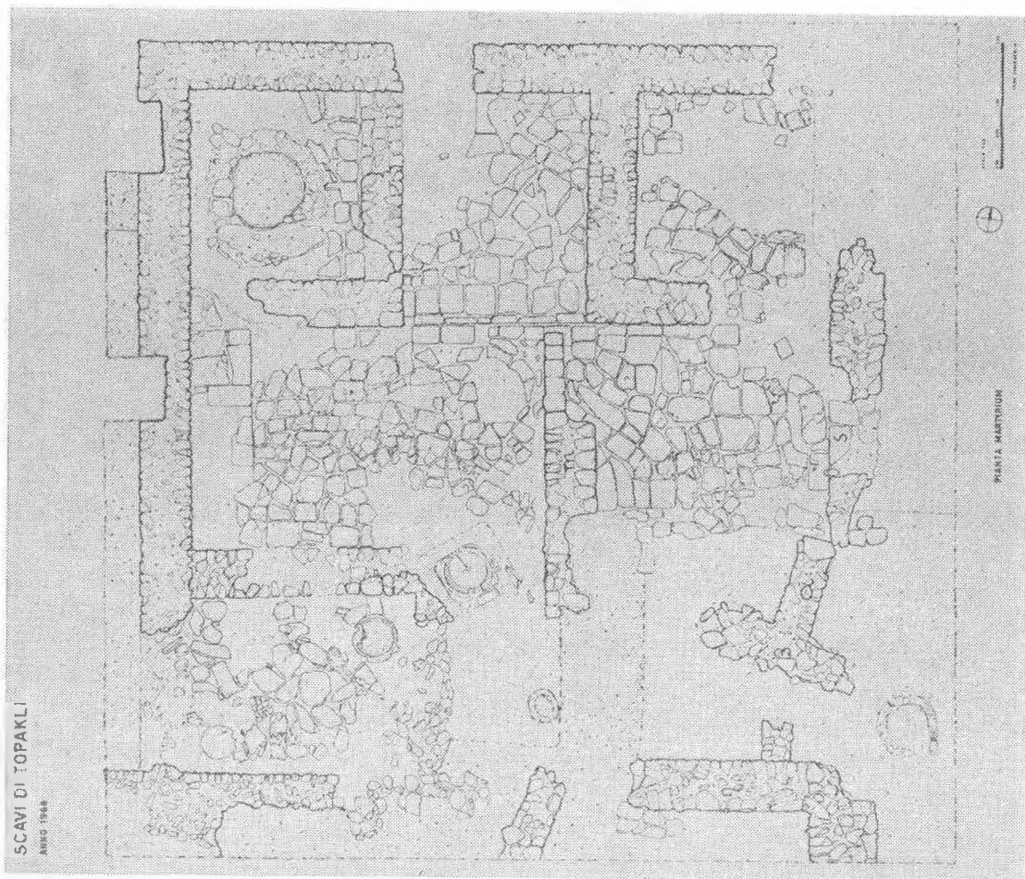


Fig. 2

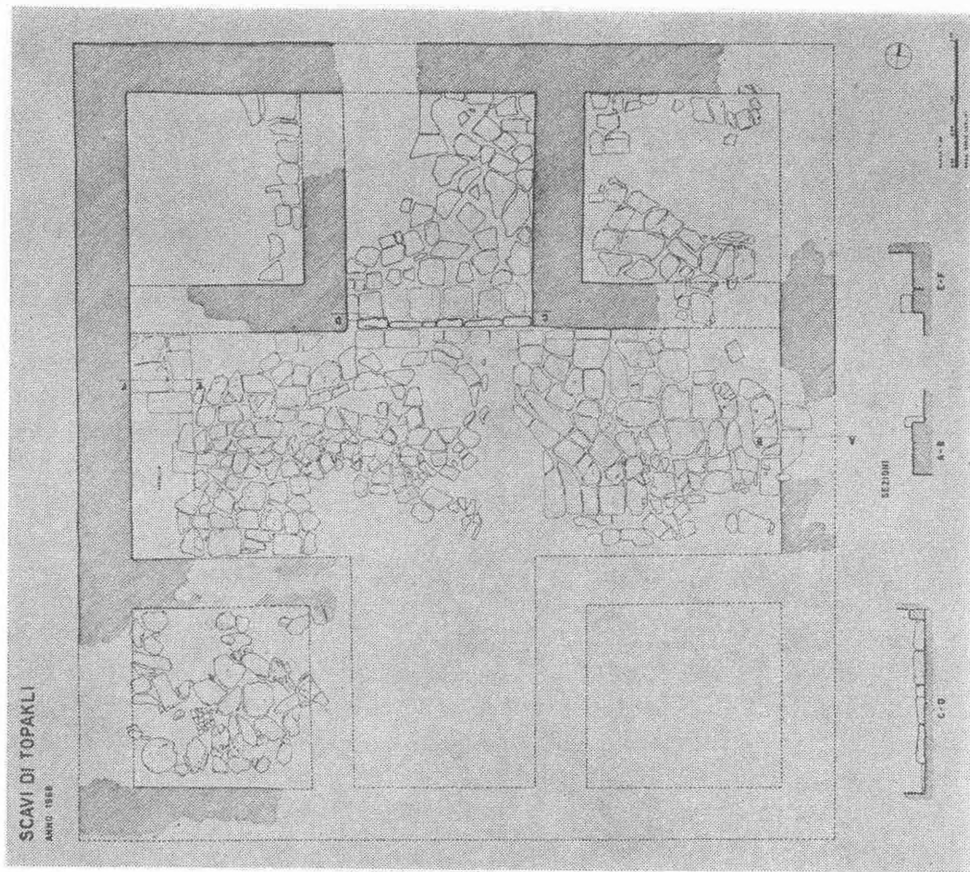


Fig. 3

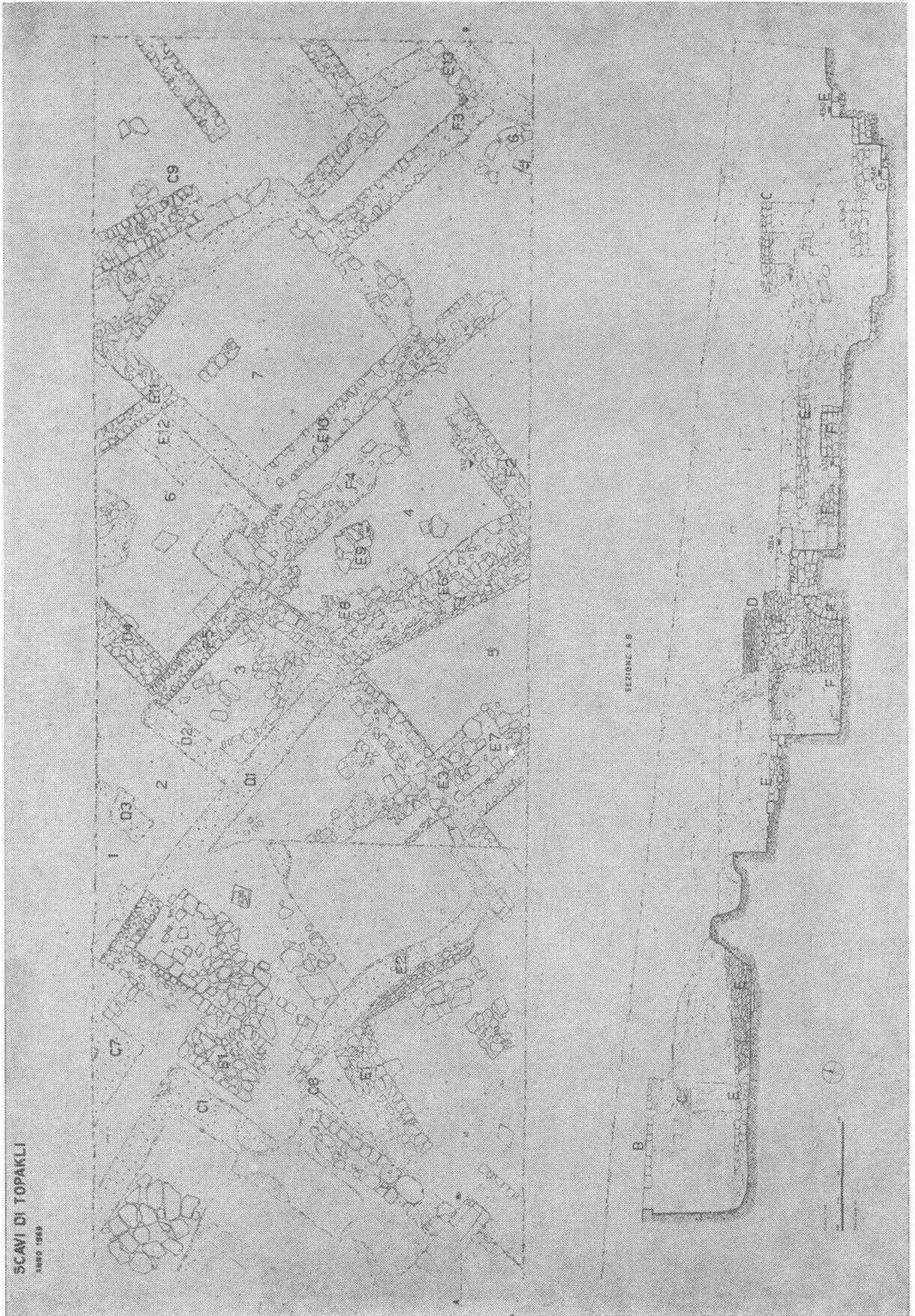


Fig. 4

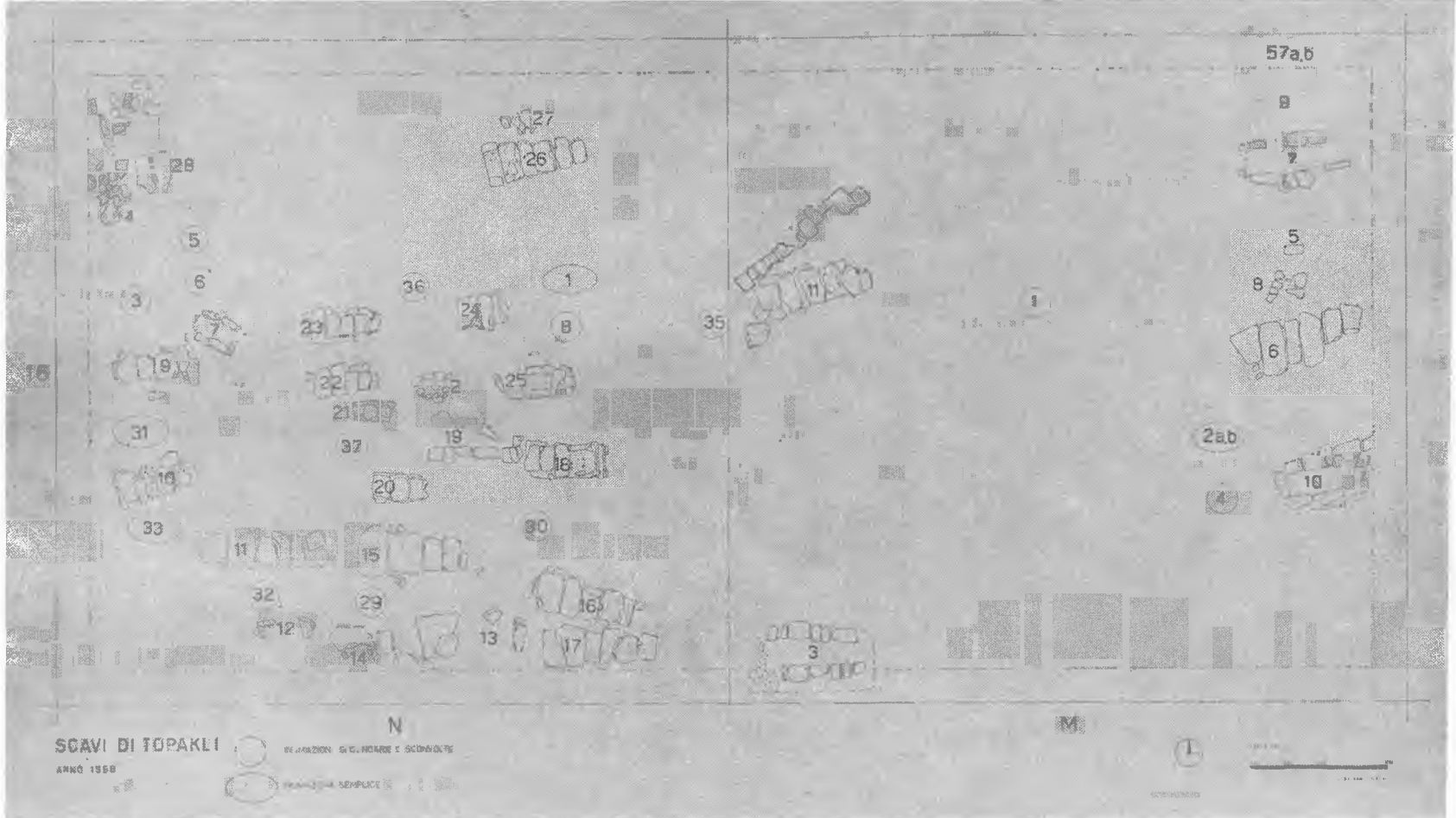


Fig. 5

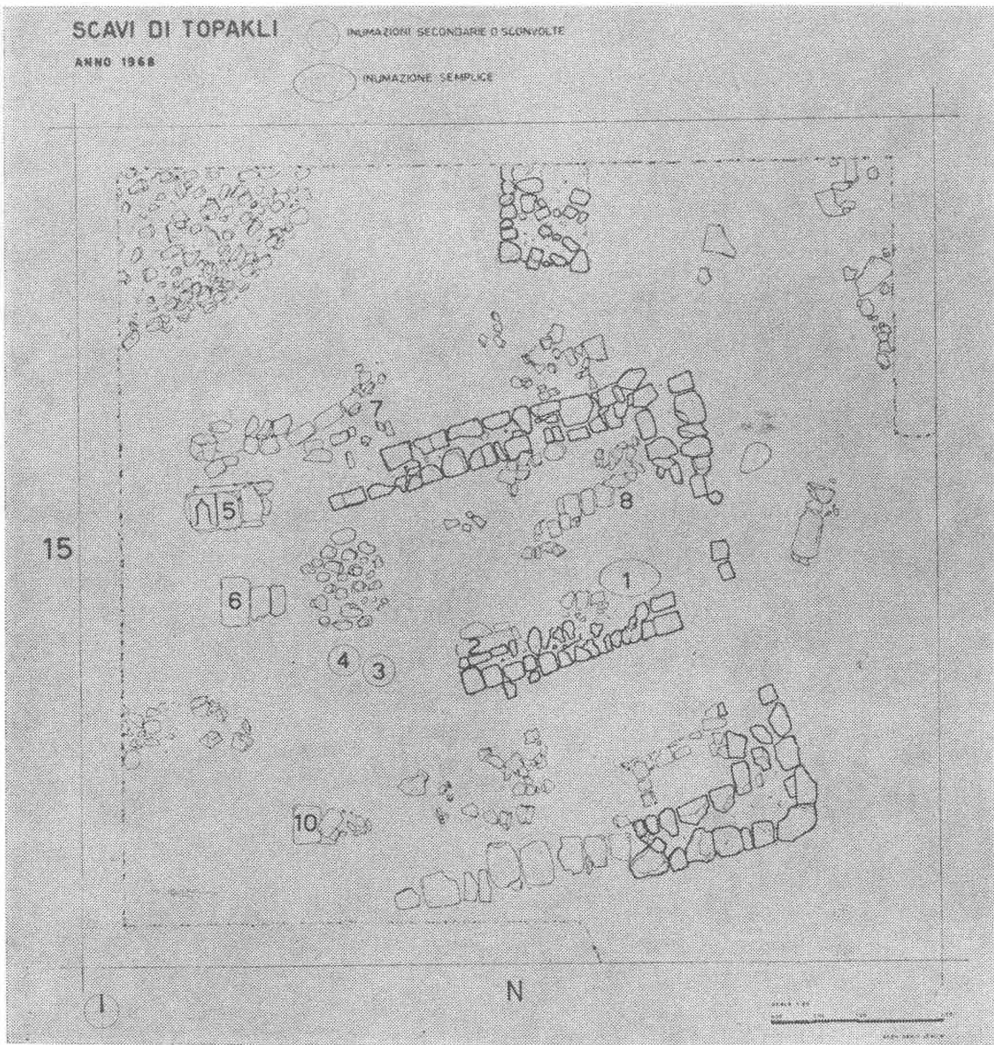
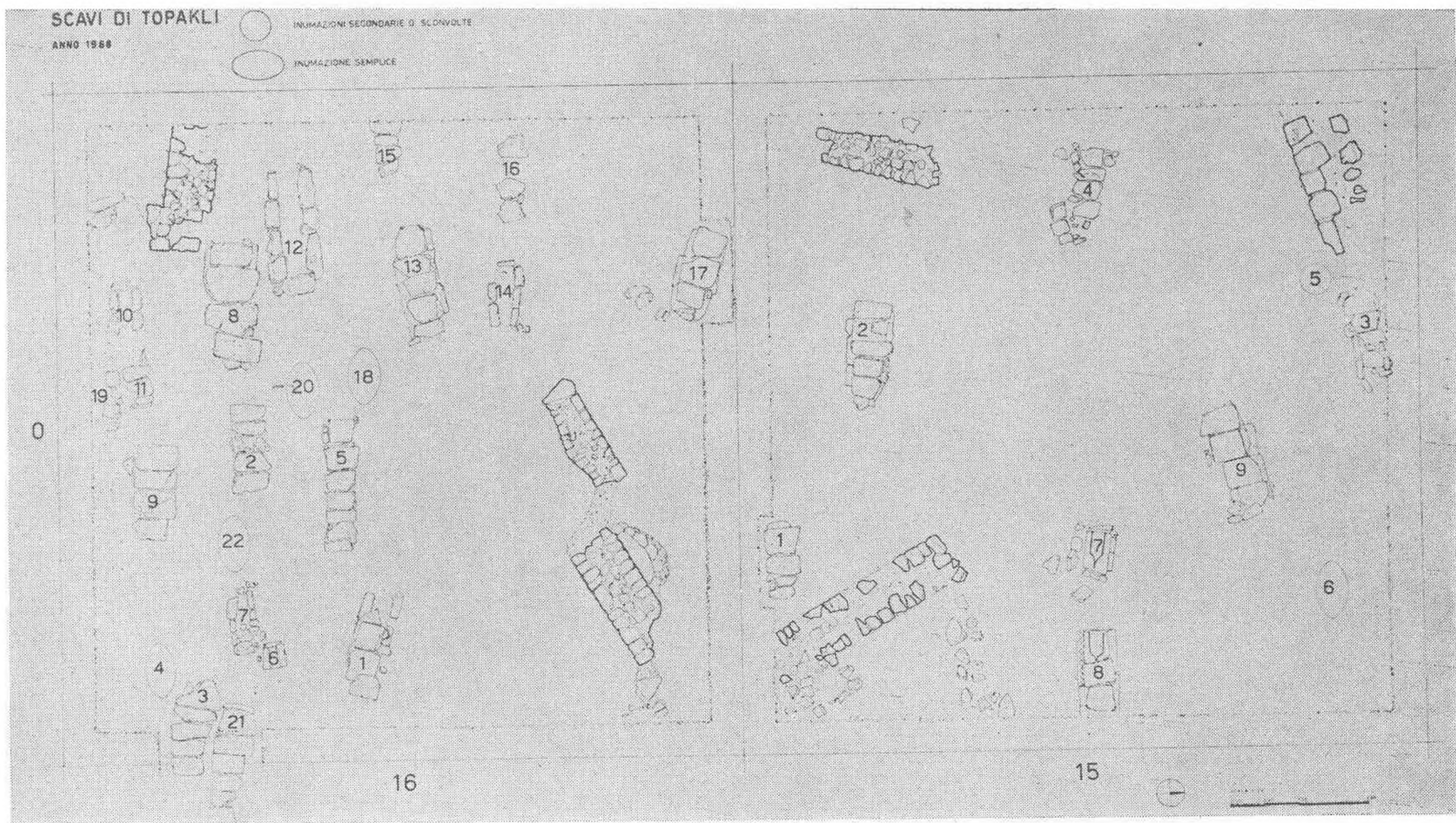


Fig. 6



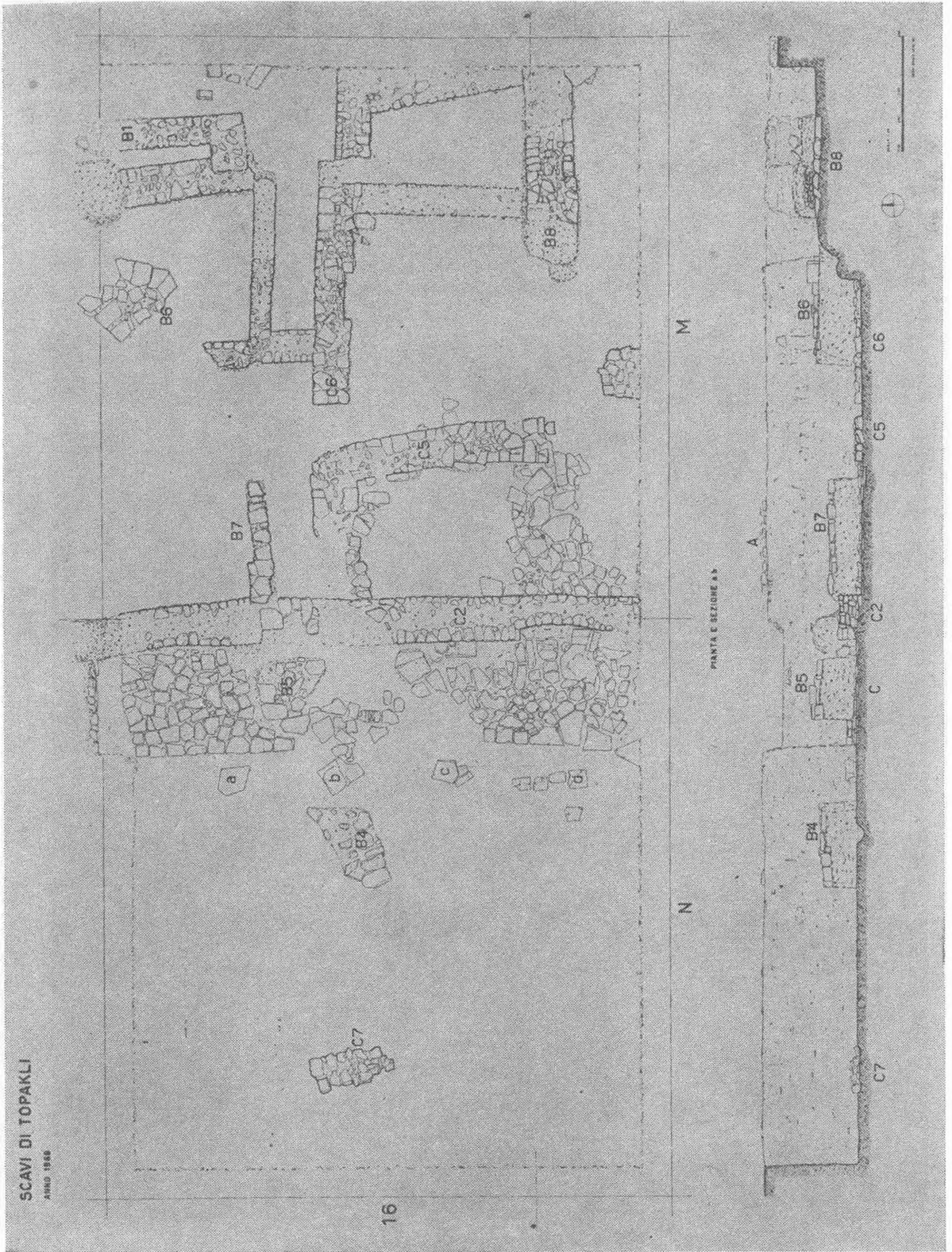


Fig. 8

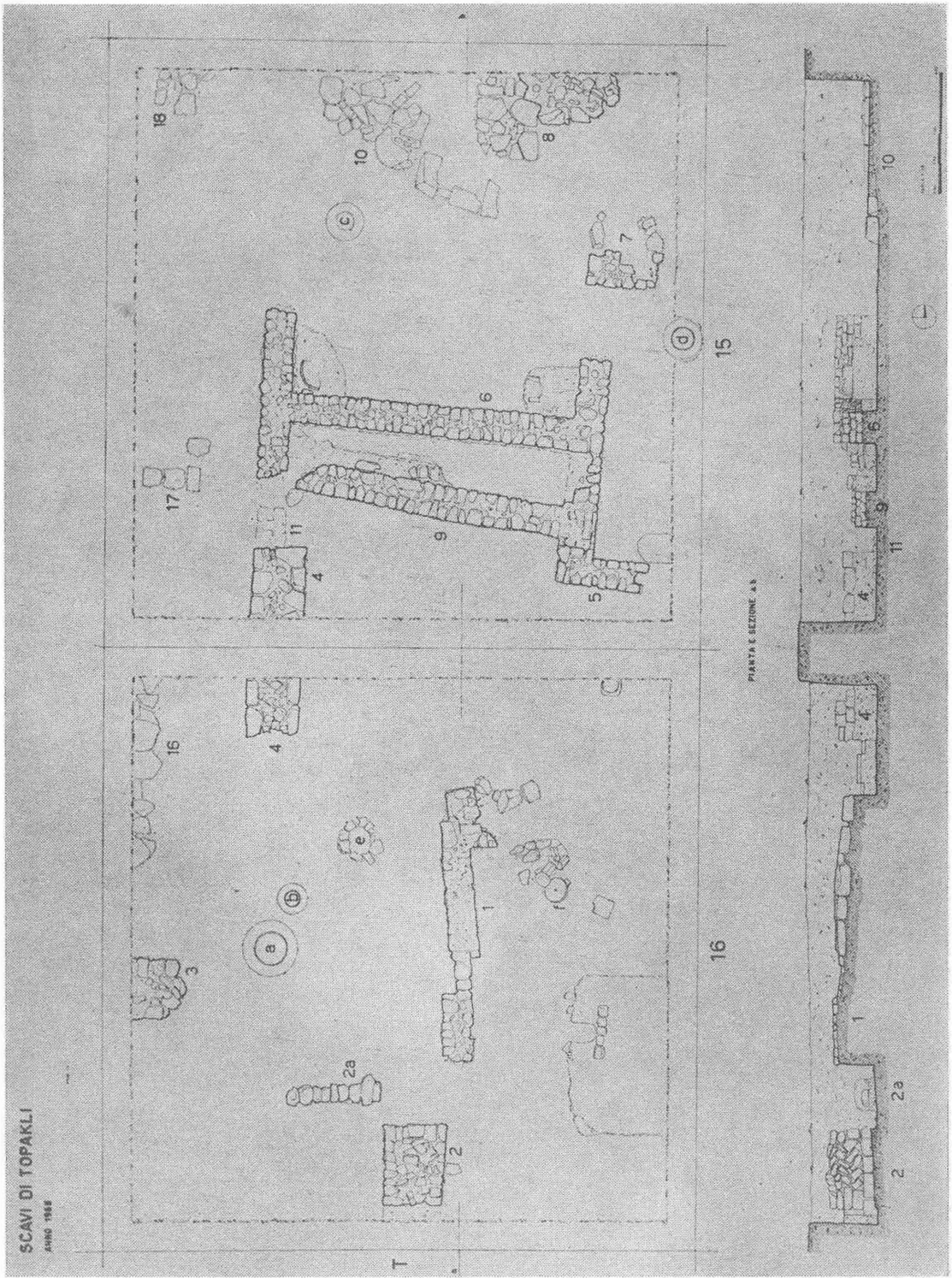


Fig. 9

SCAVI DI TOPAKLI

ANNO 1968

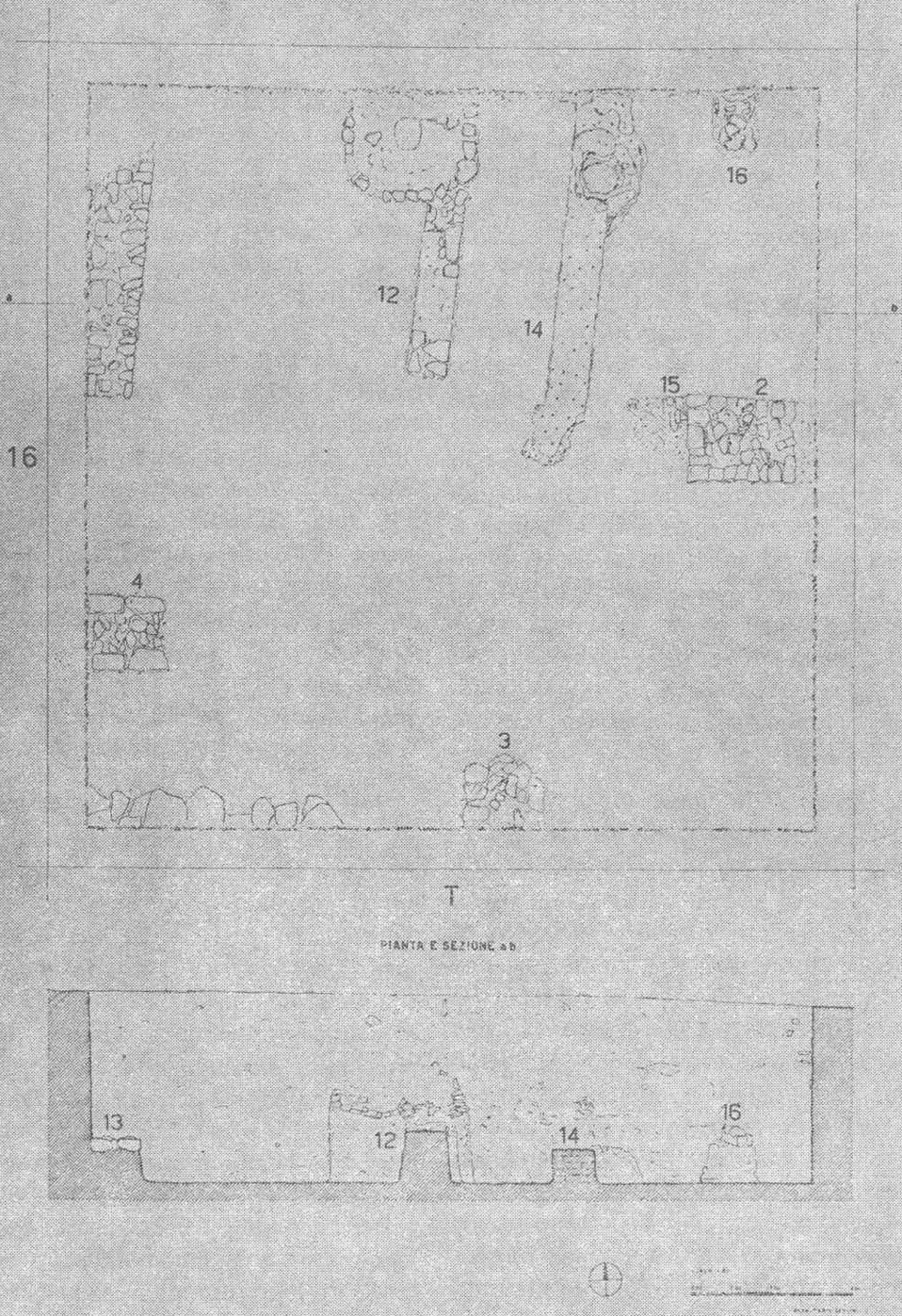


Fig. 10