

TOPRAKLI-1974 FIELD EXPEDITION EXCAVATION

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The 1974 digging and all connected operations carried out by the Italian Archeological Mission on the Topakli höyük started on July 5th and lasted up to September 8th¹.

The mission was composed in the following manner : Professor Luigi Polacco : Head of Mission, Dr. Guido Rosada and Dr. ssa Maria Trojani : Assistant Archeologists, Dr. Arch. Benedetto de Scarpis : Architect, Mr. Giuseppe Penello : Draughtsman and Restoration Expert, Mrs. Evermont de Scarpis : Personnel Manager. Again this year Mrs. Nihal Koloğlu of the Ankara Ethnographic Museum acted as the able Inspector for the Turkish Government.

For the first time, this year, we have examined the possibility of engaging Tur-

kish elements to work at the higher levels of our mission, consequently our restoration expert, Mr. Penello, had Mr. Erdal Baykal of Topakli to work beside him.

Digs

Once we had concluded digging on the great Stratum Levels Trench (abbreviation SLT) with our 1973 campaign, we were in a position where we could state that the structure of the Topakli Höyük could, in essence, be considered as already known. When, from the outside we had ascertained the consistency of the 25 archaeological levels dating from Byzantine to the late Bronze Age² and deduced the presence of a still earlier stratification at the center, we proceeded to select our work program and the ensuing methods to go about it.

Keeping in mind that in an archeological digging enterprise there are 'a priori' problems that are preferable one to another, the consistency of R and S levels and the successive stratas, made evident by the presence of enormous enclosure walls³, led us to concentrate our attention on those levels. Therefore our plan was two-fold :

a) to cut down to the center of the höyük, at least in correspondance with those quadrants already excavated in relation to A-D levels (MNO 15, 16, 17 quadrants) where, according to our past experience, presumably all the stratifi-

¹ For preceeding bibliography see the last report *Missione archeologica per l'Oriente. Relazione preliminare della campagna di scavo 1973 a Topakli* in "Atti Ist. Ven. SLA" cl. mor. CXXXII 1973-74, p. 125 ss. A further publication in 1974 : *Topakli. The 1969 Campaign of Excavation* in "T. A. D." XXI 1974, p. 147 ss.; *Topakli. 1972 Field Expedition Dig-Preliminary Report* in "T. A. D." XXI 1974, p. 159 ss.; M. TROJANI, *La strada Kayseri-Karahasanli-Yozgat nel contesto della rete viaria dell'Anatolia romana* in "Atti Ist. Ven. SLA" cl. mor. CXXXII 1973-74, p. 141 ss. Now being edited, by L. POLACCO *Le mura urbiche di Topakli* in "Acts of the Xth Internat. Congress of Classical Archaeology. Ankara 1973"; *Topakli'daki Italian kazilarinda : tarih öncesinden Bizans döneminde* in "Anadolu" 7, 1974; *Suggestioni minoiche a Topakli di Cappadocia* in "Antichita cretesi. Scritti in onore di D. Levi", Catania 1975. The various excavation campaign reports first published in "SMEA" then in "Atti Ist. Ven. SLA" are quored in abbreviation : *Topakli* 1967 etc.

² See the summarized chronological table in *Topakli* 1973, p. 135.

³ *Le mura urbiche* cit.

cation could be discovered at a higher level than what appeared at the outskirts and therefore it would be possible to reach the heart of the various settlements⁴; b) to start digging from outside the fortifications of level S, already perceptible on the surface for more than half the perimeter of the höyük⁵ in order to find a way of access with which to enter the corresponding city.

Unable to sustain the financial weight of two adequate work-yards, we chose the first part of our working plan (a), notwithstanding the fact that the second part (b) would have been far less difficult to carry out and obviously more consistent. But, all in all, the first choice, in our opinion, appeared to be more organic even though it had to be circumscribed to the MNO 15, 16 quadrants.

With this objective in view, we engaged a group of skilled spademen to supply an average 25 workers daily on the mound.

If digging in the Stratum Levels Trench (SLT) offered an archeological stratigraphy under the aspect of a relative chronology, the object of digging in the Central Sector (abbreviation CS) aims at an 'historical evaluation and classification' of the that stratigraphy. Therefore, the 25 levels A-ZZ of the SLT to which, obviously we shall always have to refer, will be quoted in an opposite sense with numbers that begin from 1 (= ZZ) and reach 25 (= A)

If, in future we should have the good fortune to be able to discover earlier levels, namely those before 1, we should then set up a fresh series, and the difference would probably also have an objective reason touching the more closely prehistoric period of the höyük. Nevertheless, in view of the intention that the new phase of excavations on the CS should, above

all, be seen in a critical light, we are of the opinion that we should have to adopt a more adequate classification; going by the *period* rather than by the *level* or *stratas*. That is to say that now our aim was to read the cultural evolution through and beyond the archeological documentation. Hence, for the present we will only refer to the fundamental historical phenomena (Phrygian, Hellenistic, Byzantine, etc.) distributing the outcome of our excavations with an internal classification.

The Byzantine period. To begin with, we had to make an examination of the general results of the 1967-69 field expedition campaign in the CS, from which, obviously we had to start out this year⁶.

The vast cemetery that occupied the entire so-called Acropolis of the höyük, is a Christian burial place of the first Byzantine period. After this stage, life ceased to exist on Topakli höyük. The tombs and finds can be dated around the VI-VII centuries a. d., and this leads us to the theory that the radical and extensive looting and destruction caused in Cappadocia by the Sassanidae wars was the true reason that brought about the end of the settlement.

In the history of the forementioned cemetery we can place the apsidal chapel on the very top of the mound; a rectangular edifice divided into two rooms is adjacent to it.⁷

This period which we shall call *Byzantine A*, corresponds to level 25 (= A), however, there existed another one before this, *Byzantine B* (level 24 = B), of the IV-V century, and this, in view of its religious and civil structures is to be considered of noble build; but the whole of it was looted and radically destroyed. It is to this period that the important 'Martyrion' belongs, which we have mentioned more than once during the course of our

⁴ *Topakli* 1972, p. 132 For reference to quadrants, see general plan of höyük reproduced in all preceding editions.

⁵ *Topakli* 1972, p. 181.

⁶ *Topakli* 1967, p. 78 ss.; *Topakli* 1968, p. 56 ss; *Topakli* 1969. See also summary in announced *Topakli'daki İtalyan kazılarında* etc.

⁷ *Topakli* 1976, p. 78 s.; *Topakli* 1968, p. 59 s.

various campaigns⁸ though it lies outside the CS.

The Hellenistic period. Below, in correspondance with levels 24 and 23 (C and D) a Hellenistic culture is firmly attested if one may judge from the typological and artistic characteristics of the finds; nevertheless this culture, always in the wake of certain revealing finds⁹ takes place during the full Roman period. It is a vast agricultural quarter that consists of dwellings which alternate with paved porticoes and courts, oriented towards the cardinal points¹⁰.

This is where our 1974 excavations were inserted. To begin with we eliminated the underground earthen cube on which the Byzantine shrine stood at M 15, which had been respected by us up to the present with the aim of preserving that unassuming but significant architectural relic¹¹. In spite of this, weather and time had effected its erosion although we made repeated efforts to protect it, and, by now, the Eastern portion of the chapel had already disintegrated as it was more exposed to the weather.

For its preservation, such a powerful work of consolidation would have been necessary that, aside from its cost, this would have altered the face and feasibility of the whole excavation work-yard. Naturally we regret that we were obliged to cancel such a moving testimony of the last Christian community in Topakli. But the archeologist, just as the surgeon, must be aware of the need to effect mutilations where, as happens in the excavation of a höyük, such interventions are very frequent, because they answer the requirements of further progress in the search for knowledge.

In the stratas below the shrine, a child's tomb was found near the Western

corner of the chapel itself. The tomb was very simple, just a few stones placed side by side; no ornaments. A confused little heap of bones, namely a second class burial, was also found in correspondance with the small apsis. These bones evidently belonged to a child as well, and perhaps represented more than one. This confirms the theory that the little chapel used to be fully inserted in the history of the cemetery¹².

At about 1.20 m., some wall structures appeared that integrated those already noted at levels 24 and 23 (C and D). Here there was no find of particular note : in excavating a path for the earth disposal wheel-barrow near the North West corner of 0.15 m., a fine cordonnated 'pithos' was salvaged intact; it was made of a compact, light coloured clay; and also an ovoid shaped oil-jar with opening and stopper on its body. Other examples of these pots in various dimensions, with orifices, were found successively in the lower levels.

Under the forementioned Hellenistic-Roman quarter, for the whole width and breadth of MNO 15-16, another vast dwelling quarter was uncovered, and this, owing to its orientation and general structural lines appears to correspond to the former (Plate I and figg. 1, 2). Certain architectural themes appear to be repeated in practically the same manner such as the long rooms XVII, XVIII, XXV as well as the adjacent ones XIX, XXVIII. Certain wall structures too seem to be more or less superimposed one upon the other; this set-up applies to walls 1, 2, 7 and less important ones as well. But here we do not again find the theme which was the characteristic element of the later Hellenistic/Roman quarter, namely the paved and porticoed court. Apart from two limited paved areas, one in the center and the other on the South Western corner of room VI and another circumscribed area

⁸ *Topakli* 1967, p. 80 ss.; *Topakli* 1968, p. ss.

⁹ Oil lamps and an amphora seal, cfr. *Topakli* 1969, p. 16 s.

¹⁰ *Topakli* 1969, p. 13 ss.

¹¹ *Topakli* 1968, p. 56.

¹² On grave typology *Topakli* 1968, p. 57 and *Topakli* 1969, p. 10

beside the fireplace in room XIV, no porticoes exist in this period which, for the moment, we shall call *Hellenistic B*. Certain rooms must have been paved either entirely or in part as seen in the II, the III, VII and XXVII, perhaps there were even more; but these are a matter of closed rooms, well defined, belonging to the first phase of this period. In fact, remains of the pavings had been buried by a successive pavement of beaten earth, as is revealed by certain thresholds which rest higher than the remainder between IX and VII, VII and III, I and II. Therefore this period has had two phases which can also be proved by other enlightening elements.

Wall 6 was originally joined to 26 for which room III, was at first, divided into two smaller rooms; on the other hand, it can be seen that wall 10 was added successively, for which reason, in the first phase, rooms VIII and XIII represented one room alone. Also the portion of wall 11 which separates XIII from XII, appears to have been built in the second phase; at least, XIII and XII originally used to communicate one with the other. Finally, wall 14 is not in alignment nor constitutes a unit with wall 12, situated more to the North, but in part built over the corner of 7 with 12; it turns to the West with wall 16 which, in turn is not tied to 7.

We must repeat that the two paved places in VI (the central area must be integrated to form a rectangle of approximately 1.50×3.20 meters) are not actual floors but special raised spots which were probably used for the activities of artisans. This is no novelty, as such raised places have already been found in the SLT, for example at levels G and I, both in circular as in rectangular shapes¹³. Many pieces of vitreous dross, various iron fragments and cakes of clay were found in all these places.

Finally, in this period (*Hellenistic B*), a very compact and unitarian rectangular structure is uncovered, its perimeter being delineated by walls 1, 2, 7, 12. All the elements in the vicinity be they to the North, South or West are not linked to it and are different not only in altitude (at times higher such as to the South and wall 34 to the North, at others lower, which applies to the Western group), but they also differ in the building techniques owing to the fact that they are mostly constituted of low, slender walls obviously intended to support accessory periferic architectural forms. There is only one exception, made by rooms XXIII and XXIV to the North East, which are an integrative part of the rectangular block even though situated on the outside.

This block offers three places of entrance from the outside, one to the West between rooms XVIII and XIV from where rooms IX and XIII could be reached and, in the first phase to VIII. A second access was to the South between IX and VII; from this room VII it was possible to pass to rooms XII and III. During the first phase there must also have been a passage between XII and XIII. Likewise there was an access to the South in correspondance with room VI; from this, one could pass to V, to IV, then to I and from I to II.

There is no proof that allows us to discover a passage towards rooms XXIII and XXIV. As wall 2 reveals no traces whatsoever of a passage, we can only make a conjecture that rooms XXIII and XXIV could be reached from the outside through a possible passage in 33 alone (here the wall is in a very bad state of preservation indeed). For the same reason it would have only been possible to enter room IIIA by III passing through the part of 6 that was suppressed successively.

In the second phase at a higher level, the possibility of access amongst the various rooms increase no end, however,

¹³ Topakli 1970 Plates I below, II below.

it follows that the general distribution of the rooms was not substantially changed. It should be noted also that the raised platform in II and the corresponding one in III whose superior plane is at a level with the top of the adjacent walls, probably belong to the second phase.

As can be clearly seen in the rectangular block of phase one, a division is given by wall 6. Between the Eastern quarter and the Western there is no communication. The West quarter, close by, seems to be articulated in two groups, the central one comprising rooms III, VII, XII, and the other in a more Westerly direction consisting of rooms VIII, IX, XIII, XIV.

Only this third Western quarter has a fireplace; the central one is completely without; the Eastern one has a small circular fireplace in what we could call the Northern 'dependence' (room XXIII); in the vast area X (certainly roofless) traces have remained of various unbuilt fireplaces which are attested by the usual platforms of cooked clay as well as heaps of ashes.

This rectangular housing consequently appears to be : to the East an artisan quarter; and a master quarter complete with entertainment rooms and domestic services in the center and to the West.

The outlying rooms X, XI, XVII, XVIII must have been roofless; the rest, however, were probably used for secondary activities. In room XXII there is a finely constructed well; room XX presents two powerful plinths, perhaps to support a deep portico. The two series of narrow rooms XVII-XVIII and XIX-XXV-XXVIII used to represent passages for clear accesses from the North to the rectangular edifice on one side, and to the services on the other.

From a general examination of the ruins, there emerges the physiognomy of a unitarian house, of which, above all, we must note the compact and geometrical shape that faintly brings to mind certain minor domestic architecture of Minoan Crete. Also the labyrinthine distribution

of the rooms and relative entrances, the jointed articulation of the inside walls cannot but forth suggestive echoes of that far away world.

The dominant position of this dwelling makes it a real little palace-castle right on the summit of the höyük, in fact in correspondance with the so-called acropolis. Its importance is further stressed not only by its elevated position and the structural and functional difference from the other, neighbouring buildings, but also by the circumstance that right nearby to the East the orientation of the other buildings change abruptly, as has been ascertained at levels E-F and at the successive levels (up to O) of those structures that appeared in the SLT which were all with a North East-South Western orientation as required by the slope at that point.

The two phase articulation of the life of this edifice and the substantial cultural uniformity of the finds, all confirm their definite Hellenistic character.

Besides a considerable quantity of loom-weights, spindlewhorls, reels and bobbins made of various materials, shapes and qualities, that constitute an interesting repertoire, there do not appear potteries of the very shiny red or black varnish which, instead is a characteristic of the successive period; whilst beside an unvarnished yellow, red and greenish paste ceramic, at most decorated by rather simple geometric patterns, there is a type of pottery with simple geometrical designs painted on a buff coloured varnish that has been polished.

The shapes are varied, from the large oil-jar to the small urns and those that run from the little basin to the bowl, often with angular profiles. At times the geometric decorations have been painted onto a white background. This pottery is found in correspondance with E-F levels and perhaps even the G of the SLT.

The only observation here that could be made is the fact that these finds are

so few, above all in relation to the great rectangular building.

It would be natural to believe that before having been set ablaze (as can be attested by the layers of ashes found in large patches over an extended area) this dwelling had been systematically spoiled and then abandoned by its own inhabitants.

As in archeology we use a term *ante quem*, at level D, in turn established as *post quem* - I, b.c. and I, a. d.¹⁴, this edifice could be chronologically dated at the late Hellenistic period (II-I century b. c. ?). Its end could, perhaps be placed and linked up with the Mithridatic wars that raged for a long time around these parts.

The skeleton of a young man was found intact, in a crouching position in room XVI, partly under wall 13. This was obviously a casual burial. The anthropological examination and tests will, no doubt, give further useful data for our evaluation.

Proceeding with excavations in the underlying levels, we reached an approximate depth of 4.00 m. Here the situation was of an entirely new nature.

In quadrants M 15, M 16, and N 16 the height of the architectural levels was approximately 0.60 higher in comparison to quadrants N 15, O 15 and O 16.

The digging on the more elevated part of our area brought to light some rather vague wall structures of humble dimensions that jutted out; these must have belonged to other phases, at least three of them, owing to their stratigraphic position relationship, and to their different orientation; it is difficult to link them together amongst themselves in an organic unitarian architectural structure.

These constructions are more centered at M15, whilst they peter out at N 16 and at M 16 there are hardly any at all. We

must report a large grain bin at M 16 on the North East measuring 2 meters in diameter, but here, however there were no more significant finds; still another rather neatly built well was found on the South East O 16 and another bin of medium size at M 16 North West. According to the evidence, one could say that in this period the higher part of the mound had been abandoned or perhaps left to inhabitants of a more humble nature.

Worthy of note, instead, are the ruins which were uncovered at approximately 0.60 further down, in the quadrants NO 15 (Plate II and fig. 3). This is the South East corner of a greater living quarter group of buildings. Number I is a courtyard limited to the South East by a small oblique escarp positioned in a North East-South Western direction.

At the feet of this escarp under wall 17 a great rectangular fireplace with its floor and borders made of small fired bricks was found. Through an ample door measuring 2 meters in dimension, of which there remains the nucleus of a step threshold, near the spot where walls 21 and 33 meet, there is an entrance to a vast room (II) at least 6 meters 50 in width. From this, near the South West corner, it is possible to pass through wall 21 into another room (V) which is much smaller, measuring 2.00 × 1.50 meters, of which 0.90 × 1.50 meters is occupied by a staircase of three steps, each one 0.15 m. in height; down these we reach the remaining room, as if it were practically a deep hollow measuring 0.45 meters in respect to the top of wall 21. Owing to its position near the great door between I and II and for its shape, this room can be considered as a place for cleansing, to be used for ritual and practical purposes at the same time, because no specific finds authorize us to exclude one use rather than another.

Another entrance was discovered in correspondance to room IV. This is a lengthy corridor upon which, to the East, a room looks out (III) and this in turn is

¹⁴ Topakli 1969, p. 16 s.

divided in a transverse sense by a pillar and two semi-pilasters. The existence of the semi-pilaster S, adhering to the wall 31 is a fact but semi-pilaster N is hypothetical although by rights it should be necessary for reasons of symmetry.

None of these rooms are paved; we must assume that the pavement used to be of beaten earth covered by matting and carpet as is the custom even today in the Anatolian region even for the more better-to-do houses.

In the same way, the wall structures, constituted by a stone socle for the foundations and the base of a green brick wall implies that the inhabitants used a plaster surface of fine clay covered over with mats and carpets.

The outside entrance of room IV is not in line with walls 29 and 31, but just out approximately 0.60/70 meters, so that it practically forms a sort of 'protiro' (covered entrance space); furthermore it should be noted that the two walls 29 and 31 are not in exact alignment and that wall 30 takes a right about turn to the East. In its present state of ruin, wall 33 does not come up to 31 and, the question is, did not room III also communicate in the past with I? Supposing that 33 and 31 are disconnected owing to the fact that they have reached a state of ruin, it appears difficult (even if this theory should not be entirely excluded) that besides the great door in II and the 'protiro' in IV, there once existed a third entrance on this side.

Corridor IV continues towards the North, always with the same dimensions but is interrupted before the end of wall 21, then there is a threshold made of large squared stones^{37a}. It is evident that in correspondance with wall 21, we must assume that there existed another threshold, even though the more important one, owing to the material with which it is made, must have been 37a. Room VII must therefore be considered as a small passage or vestibule or even waiting room situated before the first door proper. The

fact, however, is noteworthy as this door does not lead to a large hall but to a room (IX) that continues with the same dimensions and orientation as IV and VII.

Even more to the West there are two rooms, VI and VIII. The second is particularly spacious, but, notwithstanding its dimensions, we must consider it as having been a covered room, not a court, because of the enormous strata of coal and ashes found there, spread all over its extension. Notwithstanding the fact that it is only partially known to us, this group of structures presents a series of detailed characteristics; they are :

- the oblique shape of courtyard I
- the amplitude and asymmetry of entrance from I to II
- the washing-room V near forementioned entrance
- the pillared room III
- the long articulated corridor IV-VII-IX
- the 'protiro' to the forementioned
- the general layout and jointing of wall elements.

All this data makes of this construction something which is of a most singular nature. In this regard we have already mentioned Minoic influences. This is certainly a particular case which points to the residence of a small country nobleman living in the Hellenistic age. It is truly surprizing to see, still preserved (or re-emerging to light) such structural elements of architectural inspiration from times that are so far away. Perhaps we lack the proper information in this regard.

The finds here correspond to those of levels G-H-I of the SLT; unlike the preceding period here, they are many and varied. The pottery is, in prevalence, painted with geometrical patterns or figures, wide, light, of far distant Phrygian inspiration (fig. 4). The paste is generally of a firm and solid quality. The varnish runs from a dark red colour to buff and black

of the reddish 'bucchero' clay type. Amongst the most outstanding forms, mention must be made of a small pitcher with reddish brown surface that has an opening at the side, an unusual column vase with small bowl on the top and a second encircling container at the base (could this be a lantern or a perfume burner, or even a sauce-boat?) (fig. 5), a collander (fig. 6), a mushroom shaped tray (fig. 7), the delightful fragment of a red vase painted with figures of birds and other phantasies (fig. 8).

All this pottery, taken as a whole, for its shape and decoration must be considered far from the traditional Greek balance and rather seems to gather its inspiration from Phrygian or Hittite models : angular handles, keel-like bodies, high-necked and bell shaped forms.

There were many finds of tools and implements (above all iron spear tips, knives, and other various fragments) besides the usual considerable repertoire of spindle-whorls, reels, loom weights. Nor were beads, fragments of vitreous paste and bone objects lacking.

On the whole, the period represented in this report (Hellenistic C) has proved

rich, vital and varied : as yet not immersed in the Greek atmosphere, but still not completely foreign to the attraction of Ionic elegance and grace, which was perhaps received through indirect tradition. Chronologically, this level may be dated at III-II centuries b.c.

Research

When digging of the SLT came to an end with the 1973 Field Expedition, a revision was started this year of all data that had been gathered in order to establish a uniform and organic edition of the stratigraphy. Dott. G. Rosada meanwhile had seen to the cataloguing and study of the Hellenistic pottery finds; with Architect B. de Scarpis a series of surveys were carried out in order to establish the links within the SLT. Furthermore at the conclusion of the Field Expedition work, Dottoressa M. Trojani stayed on at Topakli to file and revise all the material that had been unearthed at the Martyrion. This important monument will be the subject of a specific monograph besides a report, by dott. Trojani at the V International Congress of Christian Archeology to be held in September 1975 at Rome.

(Translation by Evermont De Scarpis)



Fig. 2

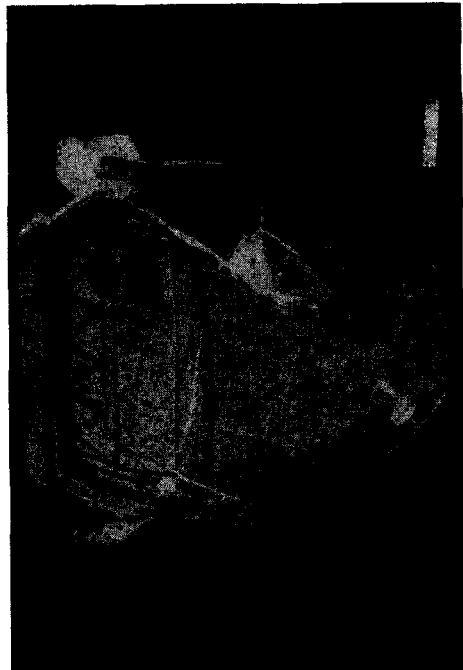


Fig. 4



Fig. 1

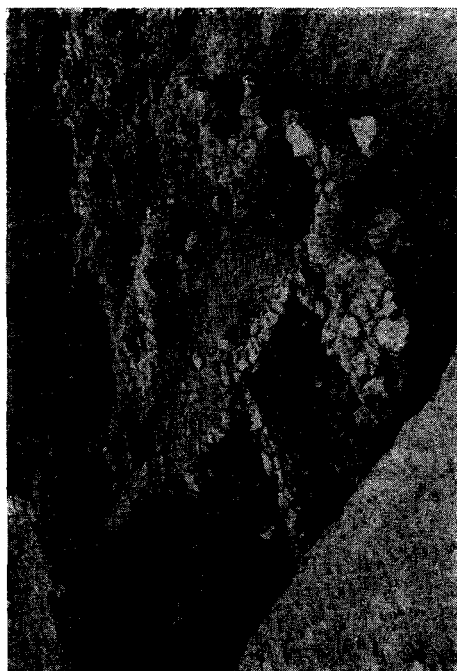


Fig. 3

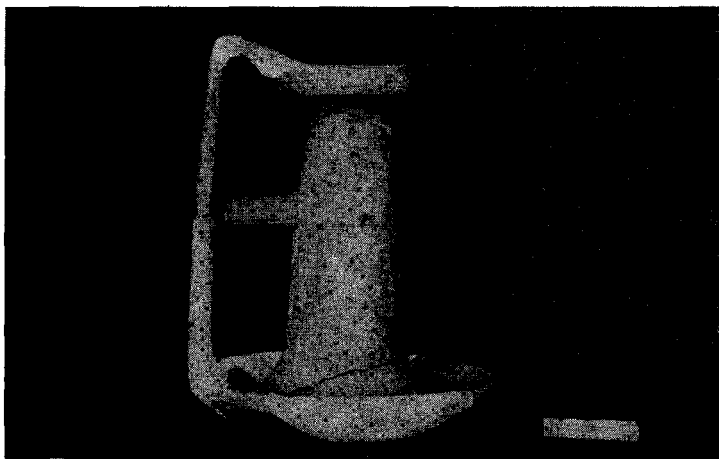


Fig. 5

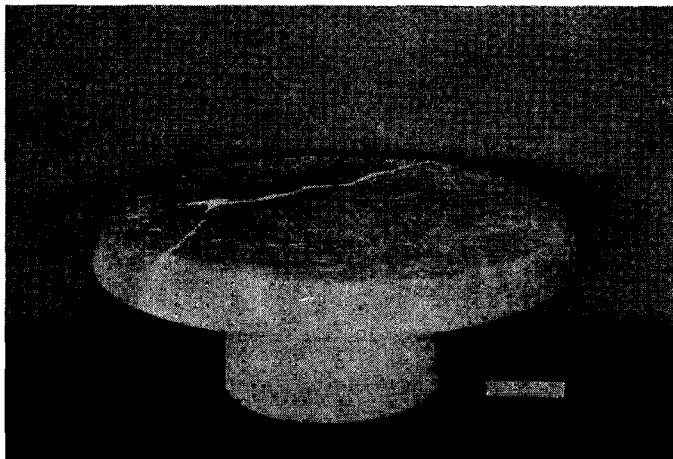


Fig. 7



Fig. 6

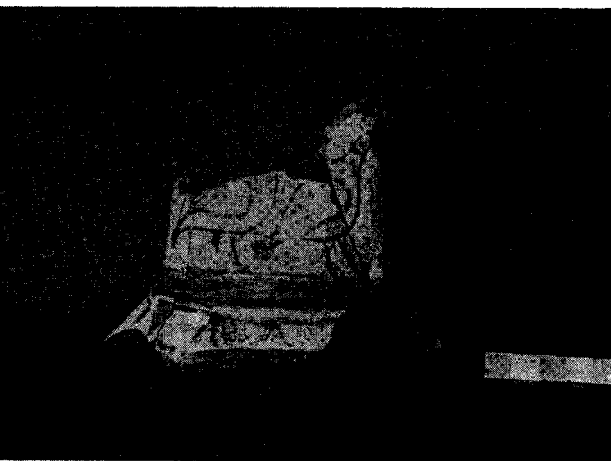
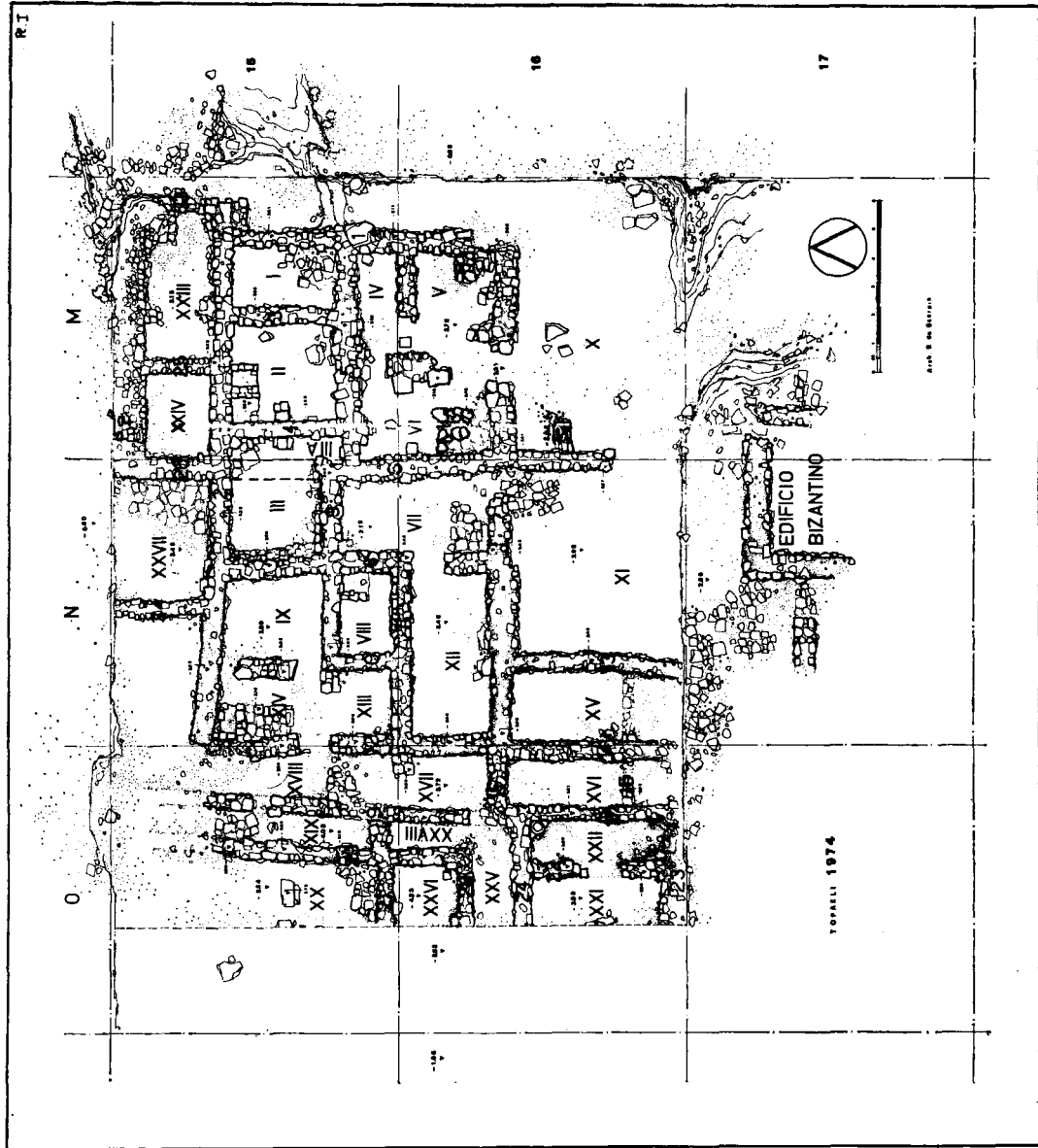
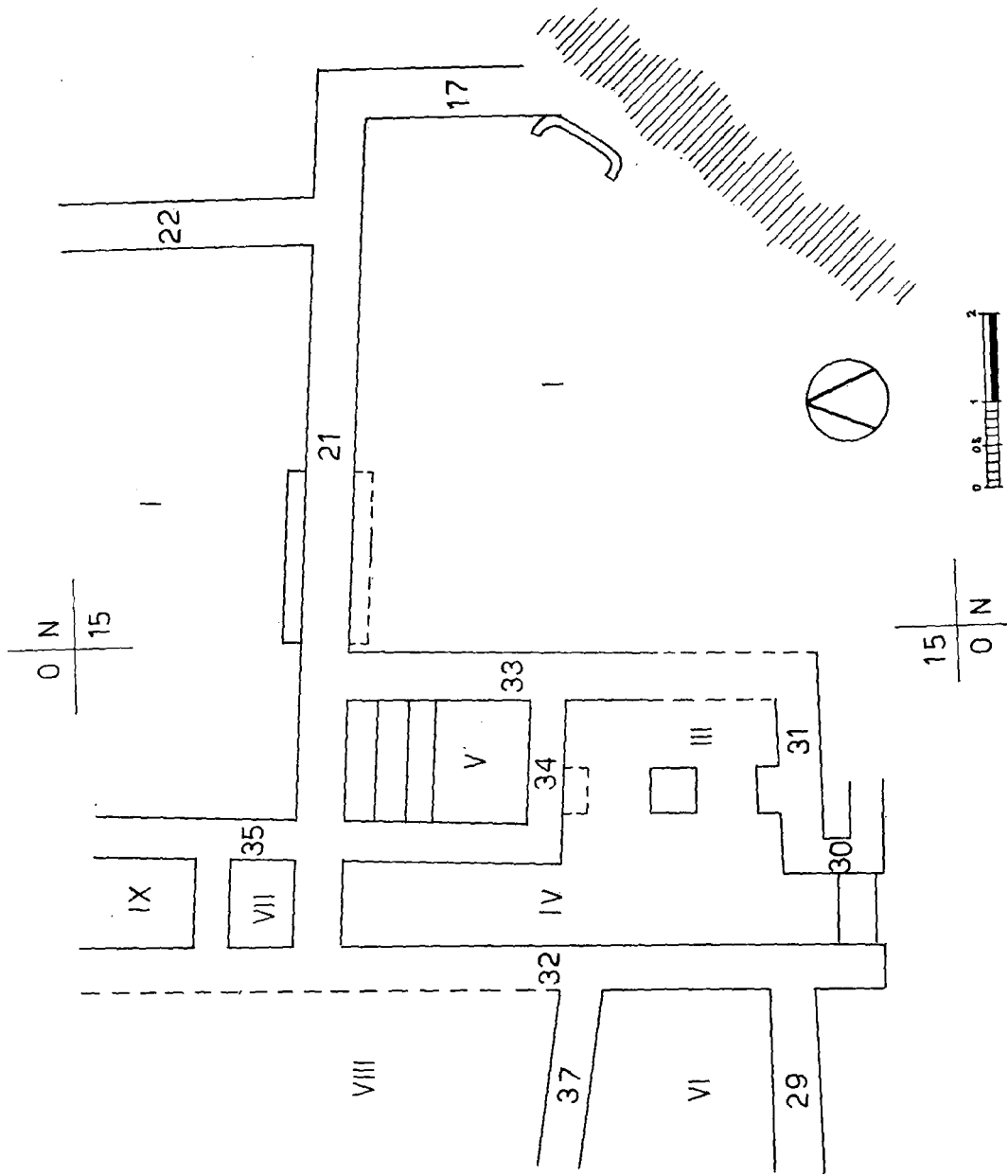


Fig. 8



Pl. I



Pl. II