

SHORT SOUNDING AT TELL QALINJ AGHA (ERBIL)

by
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Tell Qalinj Agha is a large mound, roughly circular in shape, covering c. 33,000 square metres of land (cf. pl. I, site plan). It is situated within the boundaries of the city of Erbil, to the south of the Qal'at, at a distance of about one mile. The main road leading to Kirkuk has already cut part of its western slope. An eight-day sounding (January 29th February 5th, 1966), conducted by the writer, brought to light a group of Uruk potsherds from a well-stratified context. The purpose of this short excavation was to examine the nature of the site, which was threatened by an expanding adjacent residential area. Sounding I (6x2.50 m.) was cut at the summit of the mound, and went down to a depth of 2.22 m.; six occupational levels were encountered between the surface and the bottom of the pit¹ (numbering from the top, level I is the latest, and VI the oldest). As virgin soil was thought to be considerably deeper, and the available time short, the writer chose another spot near the western end of the mound, where nearly three metres of earth had already been

removed in local building operations (cf. pl. III, Fig. 1). Sounding II was started here, at a height equivalent to the surrounding plain. Virgin soil was reached at a depth of 2.15 m. Five levels were found, level I resting on virgin soil (see pl. III, Fig. 2). Sounding II was comparatively small in size; it measured 1.80x1.24 m. No actual walls were found in either sounding. It should be noted that all floors between levels II and VI in sounding I were burned. The small size of the two soundings must be kept in mind in any attempt to draw conclusions from this site.

The Pottery:

The main bulk of material obtained from both soundings is pottery, which is predominately Uruk in date; a few obsidian and flint tools were also found². Plain buff ware was by far the

(2) Scattered on the surface are some 'Ubaid and Halaf sherds; none of the latter were found in the sounding, but a few 'Ubaid sherds occurred (two in level VI, sounding I; and one in level III, sounding II). It seems likely that the Ubaid and Halaf occupations were limited in size, and probably restricted to the core of the site. The Uruk settlement occupied a much larger area, and covered a considerable span of

(1) See pl. II (Figs. 1-2, The edge of the trench was unfortunately damaged by children shortly after excavation.

4. Crude buff ware, hand-made, from open bowl with flaring sides.
5. Several fragments of this thin-walled open bowl occurred: it is of dark-blackish ware, neither slipped nor burnished.
6. Buff ware, from an open bowl with slightly carinated shoulders.
7. Fine buff ware specimen, slipped but unburnished.
8. Very fine buff ware example, thin in section, five incised grooves around the neck.

Level III

1. Heavy flaring rim, buff ware.
2. Heavy rim, from large open bowl, buff ware..
3. Brownish-buff ware, flaring rim, from globular cooking pot.
4. Brownish-buff, flaring rim, from globular cooking pot.
5. Reddish-buff clay, small beaded rim, from open bowl with flaring sides.
6. Incurved rim, from hemispherical bowl, in reddish-buff clay.
7. Buff ware, thin in section, fine wheel-turned example, from a small hemispherical bowl.
8. Buff ware, thin in section, fine wheel-turned specimen, from a hemispherical bowl with slightly carinated shoulder and small beaded rim.
9. Fine buff ware example, thin in section, incised shoulder.
10. Very fine greenish-buff specimen, highly fired, thin in section, resembles plain Nin. V pottery.

Level IV

1. Reddish-buff clay, plain rim, wheel-turned.
2. Crude hand-made open bowl, reddish-buff clay.
3. Reddish-buff clay, wheel-turned.

4. Buff-cream clay, incurved rim, wheel-turned.
5. Buff-cream, thin in section, wheel-turned.
6. Chocolate-brown, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
7. Chocolate-brown, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
8. Dark-brown, highly smoked, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
9. Buff-cream, thin in section, wheel-turned.
10. Buff-cream, thin in section, wheel-turned.
11. Very fine greenish-buff ware, thin in section, wheel-turned, resembles plain Nin. V pottery.
12. Small sherd, plain with brown bands.

Level V

1. Large open vessel, ledged flaring rim.
2. Brown clay, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
3. Buff ware, wheel-turned, small flaring rim.
4. Brown-buff colour, flaring almost straight rim, from a globular cooking pot.
5. Brown-buff, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
6. Dark-brown, slipped and burnished, from a globular cooking pot.
7. Greenish-buff, smoked example, probably from a hole-mouthed cooking pot.
8. Reddish-buff clay, from an open bowl.
9. Fine red-ware example, slipped and burnished, small beaded rim.
10. Greenish-buff, probably from a hole-mouthed pot.
11. Buff ware, thin in section, from an open bowl.
12. Reddish-buff clay, crudely hand-made, from an open bowl.

are the following: 1. two painted al'Ubaid sherds from level VI (sounding I) and one from level III (sounding II), all in situ⁷; 2. some obsidian knives, levels III-IV (sounding I) and levels II-III (sounding II); 3. long flint blade, level VI (sounding I).

The absence of bevelled rim votive bowls, spouted jars, and handled cups was noted in both soundings; this may be entirely owing to the small size of the sounding. Only further excavation can show whether or not these types were present, but the absence of the bevelled rim votive bowls at Tepe Gawra should be noted. Further excavations, which the writer has strongly recommended, will also reveal information concerning not only the early Uruk but also the Halaf and Ubaid periods⁸

(7) Note the small size of sounding, and the fact that no house floors were found.

(8) A further short season of excavations was carried out at Qalinj Agha between the 4th — 31st March 1967, under the direction of the writer and Shah es-Siwani. The aims of the 1967 season were to penetrate deeper into lower levels of Sounding I, and to examine the unexcavated area between Soundings I and II by driving a trench linking the two points. Excavation at Sounding I revealed below level VI another six occupation levels (VII-XII) to a depth of 5 m. One would expect at least another six levels before reaching virgin soil which lay not less than 3 m. below level XII. The following pottery and objects were found:

Level VII: Painted 'Ubaid sherds are in the majority while the number of Uruk sherds has decreased. For this reason the writer would like to consider both levels VI and VII at Qalinj Agha as a transitional stage between the Uruk and 'Ubaid periods. One flint blade and one obsidian knife were found.

Level VIII: Uruk sherds were absent, the sherds of this level consisting of painted 'Ubaid. Two clay nails, and two flint scrapers.

Level IX: Painted 'Ubaid sherds. One obsidian knife. Small fragments of an unidentified object (or objects) of grey stone.

and may probably shed some light on earliest occupations at Qal'at Erbil itself.

Description of Illustrated Potsherds

Sounding I (pl. IV)

Level I

1. Heavy rim-sherd, probably from a large globular vessel, cream-buff in colour, well fired.
2. Flaring rim, from medium sized globular pot, red clay, not slipped.
3. Plain rim, from open bowl with flaring sides, buff ware.
4. Small incurved rim, from straight-sided bowl, buff ware.
5. Plain rim, probably from hemispherical bowl, buff ware.
6. Small flaring rim, probably from globular pot, buff ware.

Level II

1. Heavy flaring rim, from large, probably globular vessel, cream-buff ware.
2. Buff ware, from open bowl of hemispherical body.
3. Crude buff ware example, hand-made, from open bowl.

Level X: Painted 'Ubaid sherds. Four flint scrapers. Two ground-stone door-sockets.

Level XI: Painted 'Ubaid sherds. One painted Halaf sherd. One obsidian knife.

Level XII: Painted 'Ubaid sherds (still the majority). Three painted Halaf sherds.

The most significant discovery made in the trench to the west of Sounding I is a medium-sized necklace consisting of Gold, Lapis-Lazuli, Carnelian and Shell beads. The necklace came from a grave dug from level V, early Uruk in date. It should be noted that gold beads and gold ornament were found in tombs and graves of Gawra XIA-IX, and even as early as Gawra XII (Cf. Tepe Gawra Vol. II, p. 88-89 and pls. LV-LVI, LVIII-LIXa).

A detailed account of the 1967 season will be published shortly in this Journal.

4. Crude buff ware, hand-made, from open bowl with flaring sides.
5. Several fragments of this thin-walled open bowl occurred: it is of dark-blackish ware, neither slipped nor burnished.
6. Buff ware, from an open bowl with slightly carinated shoulders.
7. Fine buff ware specimen, slipped but unburnished.
8. Very fine buff ware example, thin in section, five incised grooves around the neck.
4. Buff-cream clay, incurved rim, wheel-turned.
5. Buff-cream, thin in section, wheel-turned.
6. Chocolate-brown, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
7. Chocolate-brown, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
8. Dark-brown, highly smoked, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
9. Buff-cream, thin in section, wheel-turned.

Level III

1. Heavy flaring rim, buff ware.
2. Heavy rim, from large open bowl, buff ware..
3. Brownish-buff ware, flaring rim, from globular cooking pot.
4. Brownish-buff, flaring rim, from globular cooking pot.
5. Reddish-buff clay, small beaded rim, from open bowl with flaring sides.
6. Incurved rim, from hemispherical bowl, in reddish-buff clay.
7. Buff ware, thin in section, fine wheel-turned example, from a small hemispherical bowl.
8. Buff ware, thin in section, fine wheel-turned specimen, from a hemispherical bowl with slightly carinated shoulder and small beaded rim.
9. Fine buff ware example, thin in section, incised shoulder.
10. Very fine greenish-buff specimen, highly fired, thin in section, resembles plain Nin. V pottery.

Level IV

1. Reddish-buff clay, plain rim, wheel-turned.
2. Crude hand-made open bowl, reddish-buff clay.
3. Reddish-buff clay, wheel-turned.

Level V

1. Large open vessel, ledged flaring rim.
2. Brown clay, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
3. Buff ware, wheel-turned, small flaring rim.
4. Brown-buff colour, flaring almost straight rim, from a globular cooking pot.
5. Brown-buff, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
6. Dark-brown, slipped and burnished, from a globular cooking pot.
7. Greenish-buff, smoked example, probably from a hole-mouthed cooking pot.
8. Reddish-buff clay, from an open bowl.
9. Fine red-ware example, slipped and burnished, small beaded rim.
10. Greenish-buff, probably from a hole-mouthed pot.
11. Buff ware, thin in section, from an open bowl.
12. Reddish-buff clay, crudely hand-made, from an open bowl.

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| <p>13. Buff, fine wheel-turned example, from a hemispherical bowl.</p> <p>14. Buff, incurved rim, wheel-turned.</p> <p>15. Buff, incurved rim, wheel-turned.</p> <p>16. Fine buff ware specimen, thin in section, small beaded rim.</p> <p>17. Fine buff ware example, thin in section, small beaded rim.</p> <p>18. Fine greenish-buff example, wheel-turned small beaded rim, resembles plain Nin. V pottery.</p> <p>19. Another specimen like no. 18 (above).</p> | <p>buff ware, thin in section, wheel-turned.</p> <p>16. Fragment of small hemispherical bowl, slightly flaring rim, thin in section, wheel-turned.</p> <p>17. Greenish-buff, highly fired, base-fragment with triple knobs.</p> <p>18. Greenish-buff, thin in section, highly fired, wheel-turned, from a small spherical bowl, resembles plain Nin. V pottery.</p> <p>19. Seven different specimens of this type occurred, all are highly fired, and of fine greenish-buff ware, strongly resembling plain Nin. V pottery.</p> |
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Level VI

1. Dark-brown, burnished, from a globular cooking pot.
2. Blackish-grey, burnished, from a globular cooking pot, flaring rim.
3. Dark-brownish, slipped and burnished, from a globular cooking pot, flaring rim.
4. Grey, almost black, burnished, from a globular cooking pot, flaring rim.
5. Grey, burnished, from a globular cooking pot, flaring rim.
6. Brownish-grey, flaring rim from a globular cooking pot.
7. Grey, from a globular hole-mouthed pot.
8. Reddish-buff clay, smoked, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
9. Buff ware, probably from a globular pot.
10. Crude hand-made open bowl, reddish-buff clay.
11. Crude hand-made open bowl, reddish-buff clay.
12. Fine buff-ware example, open bowl, wheel-turned.
13. Buff-ware, thin in section, small beaded rim, from a hemispherical bowl.
14. Fragment of small hemispherical bowl, buff ware, thin in section, wheel-turned.
15. Fragment of small hemispherical bowl, slightly carinated shoulder,

Sounding II (pl. V)**Level I**

1. Heavy flaring rim, buff ware, well fired, probably from a large heavy globular vessel.
2. Heavy flaring rim, buff ware, well fired.
3. Dark-brown, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
4. Buff ware, from open bowl.
5. Greenish-buff, from a large heavy vessel.
6. Greenish-buff, thin in section, highly fired, from a globular jar with high straight neck and incised shoulder.
7. Buff ware, shallow open bowl.
8. Fine buff-ware example, thin in section, small beaded rim.

Level II

1. Heavy rim, buff ware.
2. Chocolate-brown, smoky, from a globular cooking pot.
3. Reddish-buff clay, crude, hand-made.
4. Brownish buff, smoky, from a globular cooking pot.
5. Reddish-buff clay, crude, hand-made.
6. Buff-ware, from an open bowl.

Level III

1. Brown, smoky, flaring rim, from a cooking pot.
2. Brown, flaring rim, from a globular cooking pot.
3. Brown, smoky, from a globular cooking pot.
4. Brownish-buff, highly burnished, from a globular cooking pot.
5. Fine grey ware example, highly burnished on both exterior and interior.
6. Fine red ware example, slipped and burnished.
7. Brownish-buff, from a hole-mouthed pot.
8. Brownish-buff, from an open bowl.

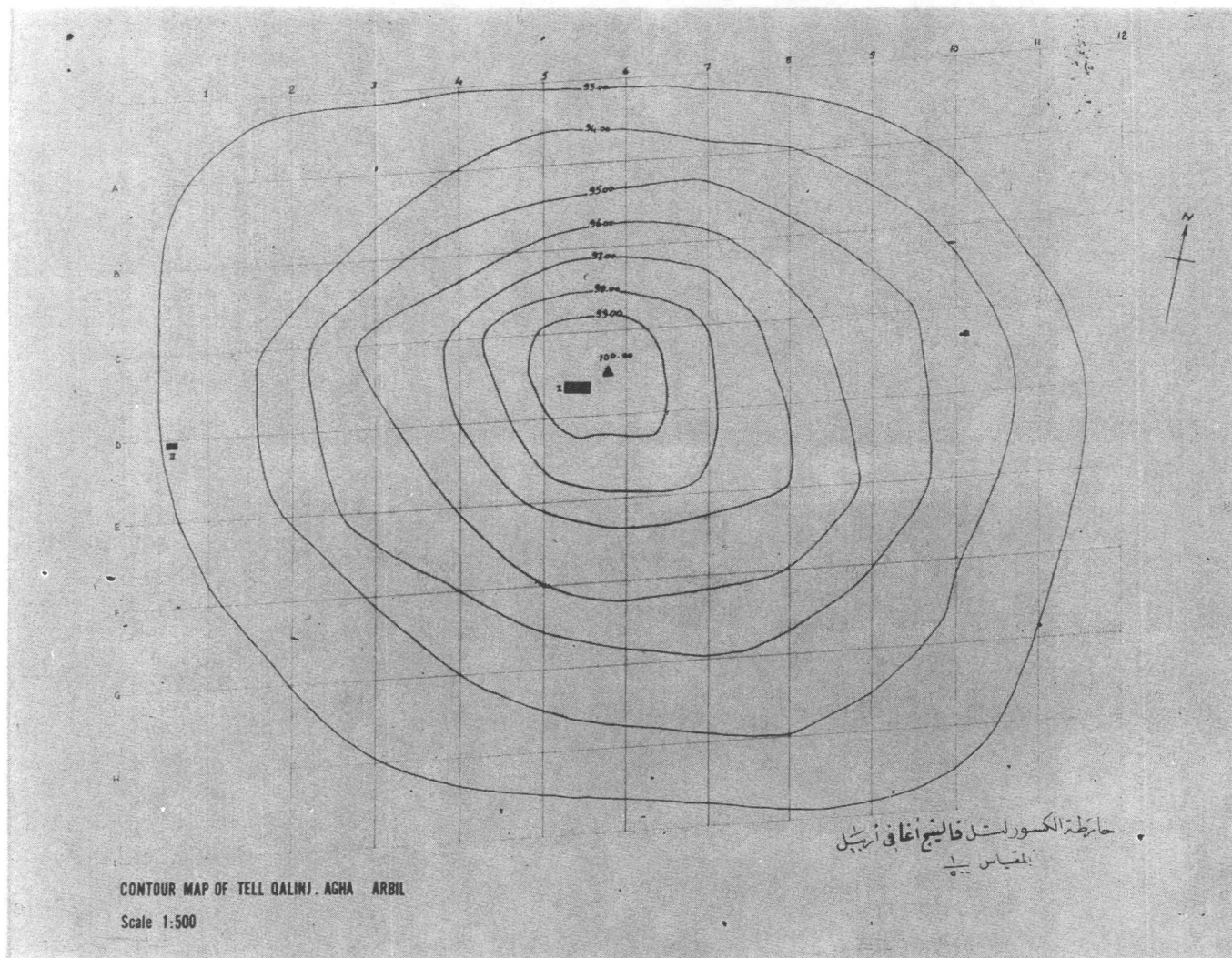
Level IV

1. Heavy rim, buff ware.

2. Brownish-buff, from a globular cooking pot.
3. Dark-brown, almost black, smoky, from a globular cooking pot.
4. Fine buff-ware example, highly fired, from a small globular jar with straight neck and incised shoulder.
5. Buff ware, plain rim, probably from a deep open bowl.
6. Large heavy open bowl, buff ware, traces of bitumen coating still visible on the interior.

Level V

1. Chocolate-brown, smoky, from a globular cooking pot.
2. Buff ware, from an open bowl, with slightly flaring rim.
3. Buff ware, from an open bowl, with slightly flaring rim.
4. Buff ware, from a small bowl.



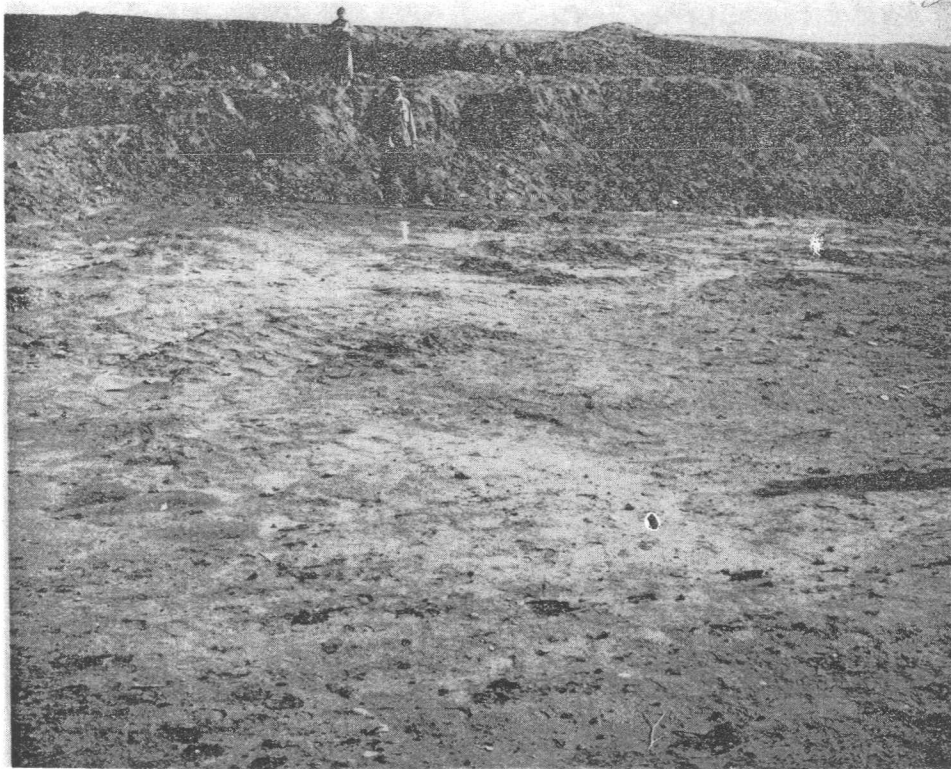


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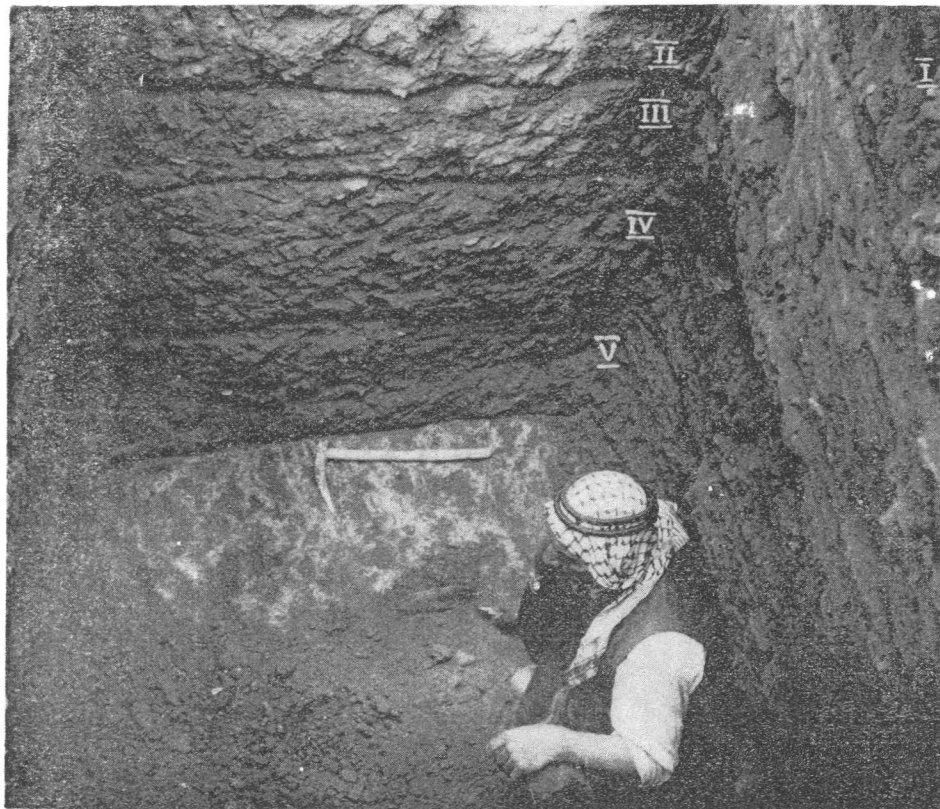


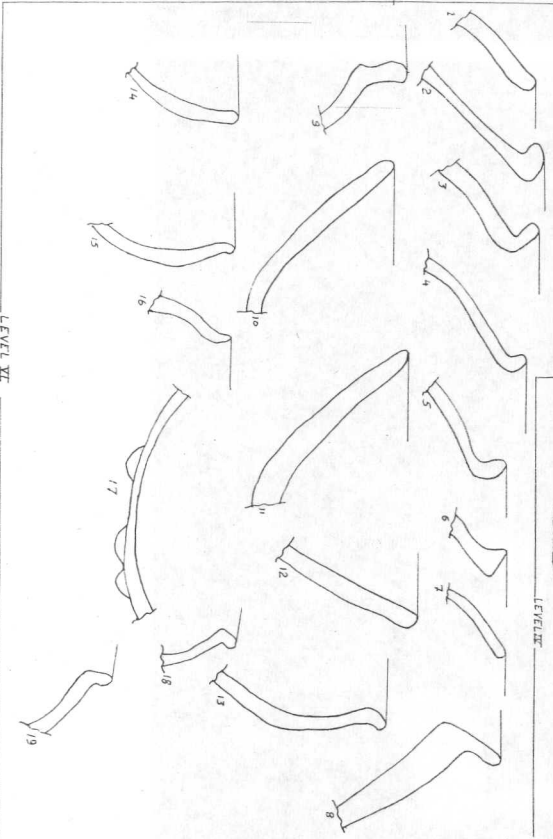
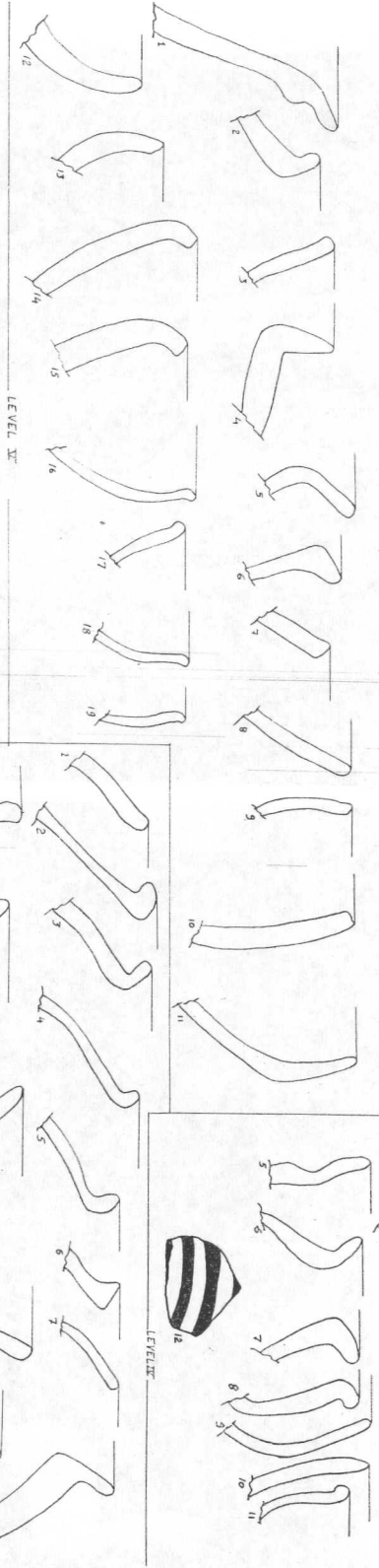
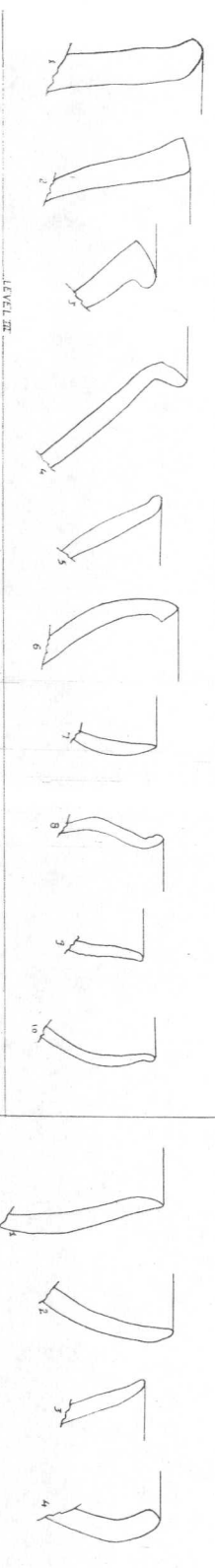
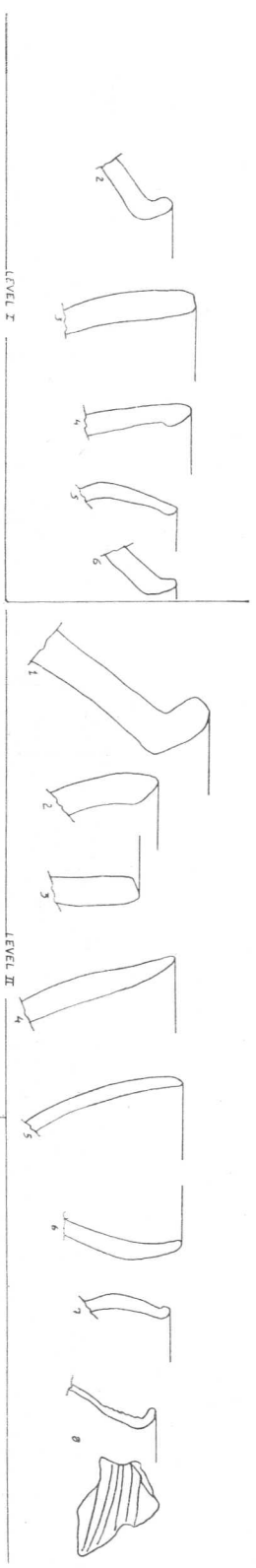
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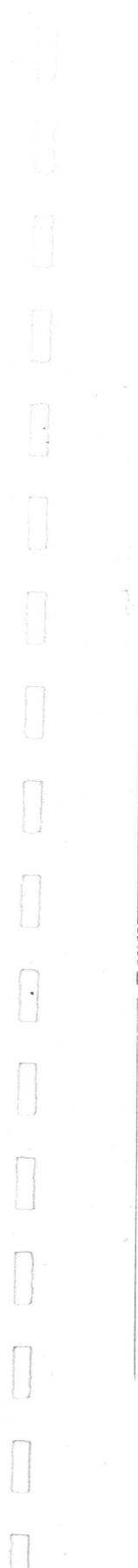
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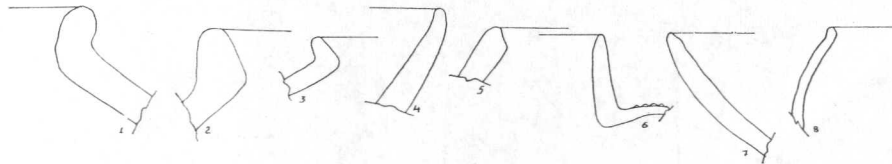




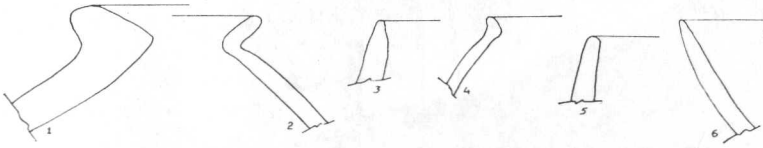
PL. IX
TELL GALING AGHA (ARPII)
URUK POTTERY FROM SOUNDING I
SCALE 1/1

Pl. IV.

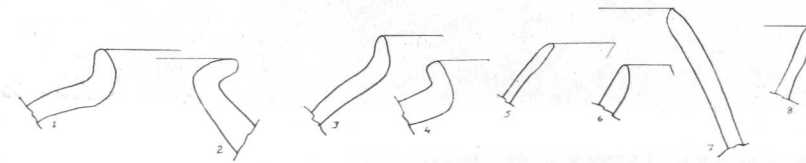




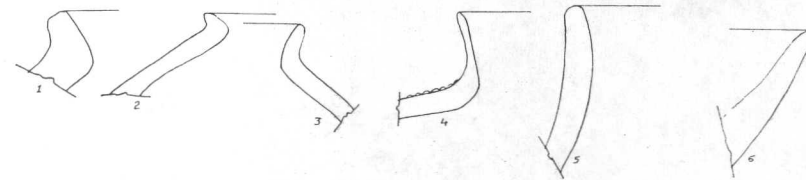
LEVEL I



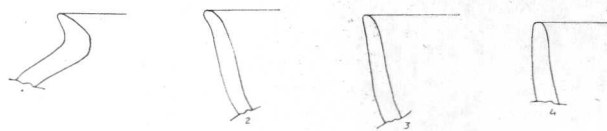
LEVEL II



LEVEL III



LEVEL IV

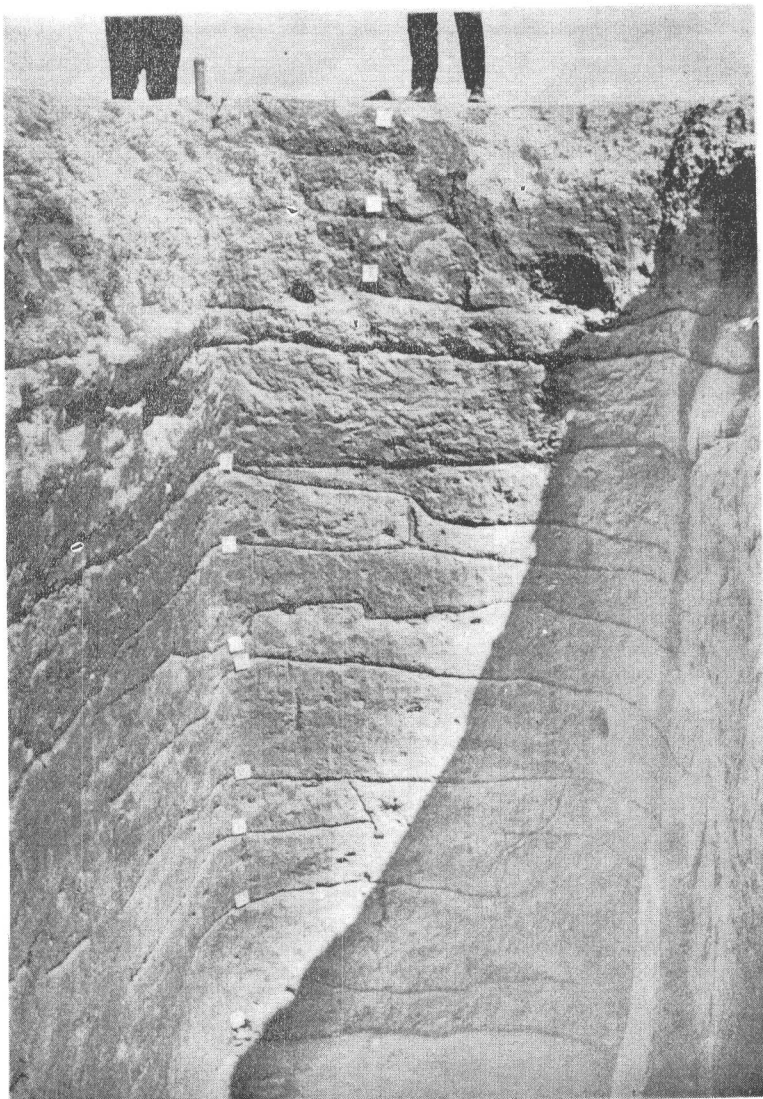


LEVEL V

PL. V
 TELL QALING AGHA (ARBIL)
 URUK POTTERY FROM SOUNDING II
 SCALE $\frac{1}{4}$

PI. V

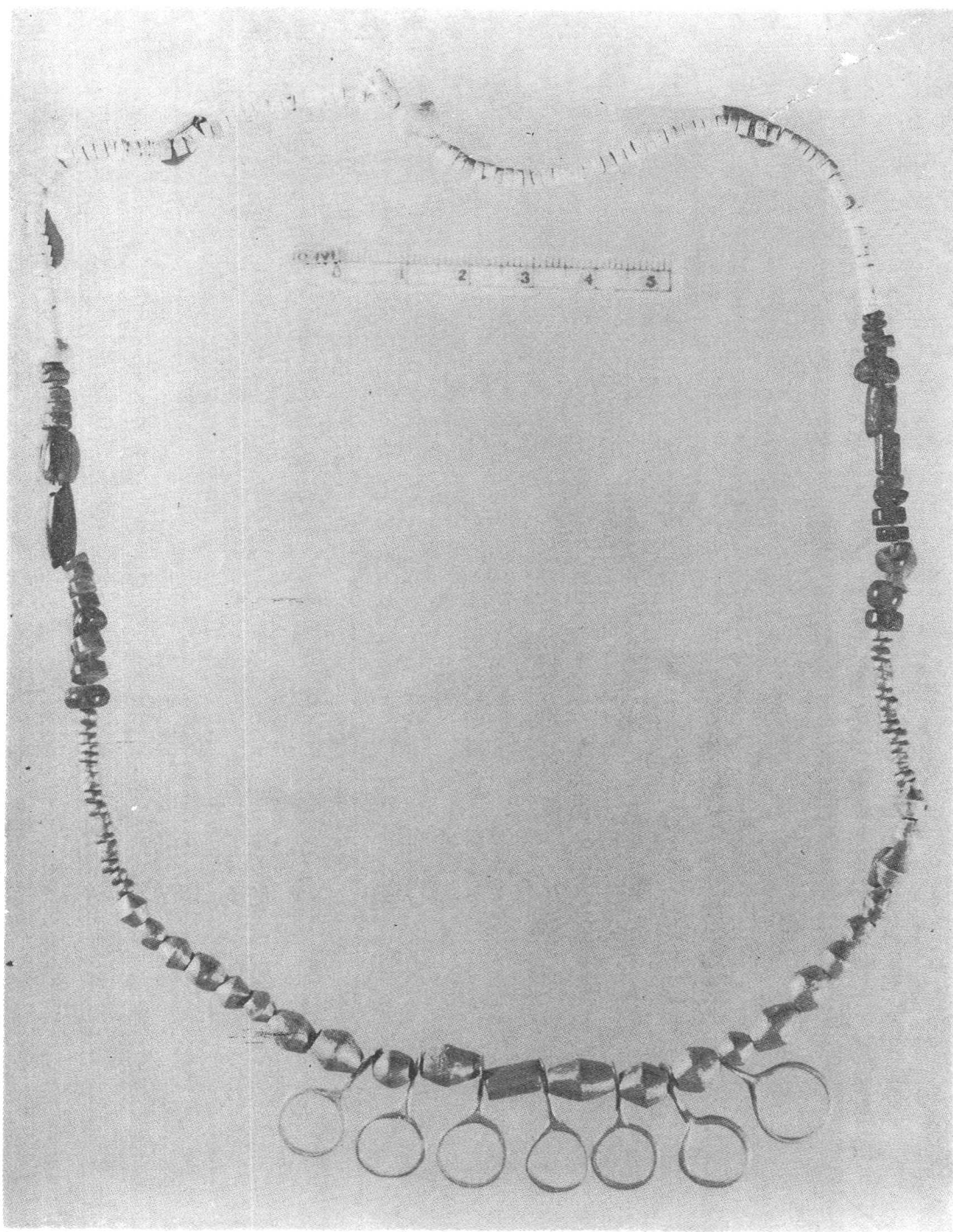
Pl. VI.



1. Qalinj Agha, Sounding I with additional work in Spring 1967.

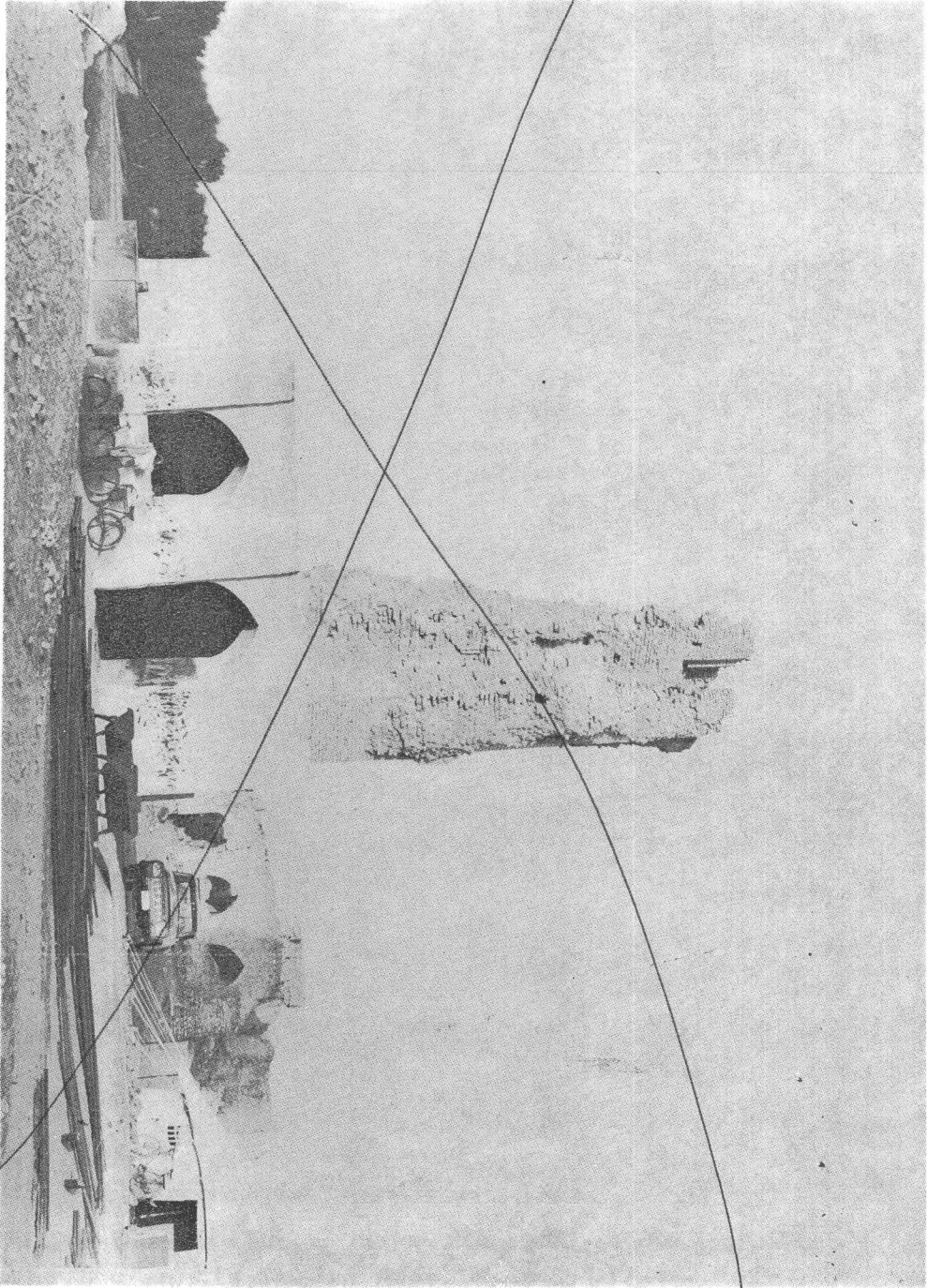


2. Qalinj Agha, Stepped Trench. Spring 1967.



الشكل ٨ - تل قالينج أغا : قلادة من خرز من الذهب واللازورد والعقيق والصدف ،
وجدت في تل قالينج أغا في أحد قبور الطبقة الخامسة من أوائل عصر الوركاء .

Fig. 8. Qalinj Agha: Medium-sized necklace consisting of lapis-lazuli, carnelian and shell beads, found in one of the graves of level V, 1967.



الشكل ٩ : منظر عام للمأذنة ومقام الامام علي (ع) في الزبير سحبت الصورة بعد
اكمال أعمال الصيانة الاثرية التي أنجزتها مديرية الآثار العامة في هذا الموقع
سنة ١٩٦٦ .

Fig. 9. General view of the minaret and shrine of Imam Ali in Zubair,
after restoration works in 1966.