

MORE SOUNDINGS AT TELL QALINJ AGHA (ERBIL)

by

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A further short season of excavation was carried out at Qalinj Agha¹ between the 4th-31st. March 1967, directed by the writers². The aims of the 1967 season were to penetrate deeper into the lower levels of Sounding I (at the summit of the mound), and to examine the unexcavated area between Sounding I and II (towards the western end of the site) by cutting step trench³ linking the two points. Although this was not an ideal site for such a trench, it has nevertheless enabled a considerable amount of evidence to be collected over a vast area. Sixteen levels of occupation were excavated between the summit and the western end of the mound; virgin soil was encountered about two metres below the level of the surrounding plain and the adjacent Kirkuk road.

A. Deep Sounding

Excavation at Sounding I revealed below level VI, six more occupation layers (VII-XII). One would expect at least another six levels before reaching virgin soil which lay perhaps not less than three metres below level XII.

Due to lack of time the lower part of level VI had been left unexcavated during the first season. The total thickness of level VI was c. 27-35 cm. In addition to what was previously reported from this level⁴ the following were found: 4 rimfragments from smoky chocolate-brown cooking-pots (see pl. I, fig. 3 for an example of this type of Uruk pottery); one rimfragment with a combed shoulder; one painted 'Ubaid body-shoulder; 2 obsidian knives, and 2 stone sling-pellets (pl. II, fig. 1).

(1) For a description of the Site and its location Cf. Abu Al-Soof, *Sumer* XXII (1966) p. 77.

(2) Shah Es-Siwvani began the excavation, joined by Abu Al-Soof one week later.

(3) It is 95 metres in length (from the summit to the western end of the mound), and 6 metres in width. Due to lack of time the width had to be reduced to 5 m. at a point 31 m. to the west of its beginning; and again to 3 m. after 59 m.

(4) Cf. *Sumer* XXII (1966) p. 81, and pl. IV.

C. J. J. Sumer 1967

Level VII

The thickness of the debris was c. 25-40 cm. in which there was the remains of a mud-brick wall, constructed of rather large mud-bricks (48 × 43 × 12 cm.). Further excavation revealed that this wall originated in level VIII and was later reused at the time of VII. The height of the wall was 88 cm. Potsherds and other finds were as follows: 5 buff-ware, Uruk rimfragments; 7 painted 'Ubaid rimsherds; one painted 'Ubaid bodysherd; one flint blade, and one obsidian knife (pl. II, fig. 2).

Level VIII

The thickness of the debris was c. 53-67 cm. Potsherds and other finds were as follows: 21 painted 'Ubaid rimfragments; 4 painted 'Ubaid bodysherds; one painted Halaf body-fragment; 4 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments; 2 'Ubaid bent clay nails; and 2 flint blades.

Level IX

The thickness of the debris was c. 27-35 cm. in which there was the remains of a mud-brick wall. Potsherds and other artefacts were as follows: 11 painted 'Ubaid rimsherds; 4 painted 'Ubaid bodyfragments; one chocolate-brown Uruk rimfragment and another base-fragment of the same ware, both being from large globular cooking-pots; 3 ground-stone fragments perhaps belonging to crudely made stone vessels, rough on the outside; one ground-stone door-socket (perhaps used also as a mortar); a rubbing stone; and an obsidian knife (pl. II, fig. 4).

Level X

The thickness of the debris was c. 36-48 cm. in which there was the re-

main of a mud-brick wall. Potsherds and other finds were as follows: 5 unpainted 'Ubaid rimfragments; 12 painted 'Ubaid rimsherds, one of these painted 'Ubaid fragments has a double rim (i.e. a channeled rim); 9 painted 'Ubaid bodysherds; a broken cylindrical spout from a tortoise-shaped vessel resembling those of Gawra XVII-XIX⁵ and Eridu VIII-XIII; a highly fired broken clay nail probably used as a pounder; two ground-stone door-sockets; seven large clay beads (Qa 2-8); and four flint blades (pl. III, fig. I).

Level XI

The thickness of the debris was c. 62 cm. Potsherds and other artefacts were as follows: 27 painted 'Ubaid rimsherds; 12 painted 'Ubaid bodysherds; one painted 'Ubaid fragment with a double rim; another 'Ubaid fragment also with a double rim, but having in addition, just below the rim, a rudimentary spout; a large painted 'Ubaid rimfragment has the same tiny rudimentary spout, just below the rim; 5 unpainted 'Ubaid rimfragments; a fine-ware, greenish, bodyfragment has a wide band of incised decoration; 2 small painted Halaf bodysherds; a rimsherd from a hemispherical bowl has a broad band of dark brown chevron design on the shoulder, and both the ware and the style of painting suggest that this fragment may belong to the Samarra painted tradition (pl. III, fig. 2 the fragment on the extreme left, bottom row); an 'Ubaid terra-cotta animal head of an unidentified species; two flint blades; and one obsidian knife.

Level XII

The thickness of the debris was c.

(5) Cf. *Gawra II* (1950) pls. LXXIII b, LXXV d-e, and CXXIII, no. 113.

28-32 cm. The following finds were recorded: 19 painted 'Ubaid rimfragments; 9 painted 'Ubaid bodysherds; 2 unpainted 'Ubaid bodysherds each with a pierced hole; 3 small painted Halaf fragments—a rim and two bodysherds—and one obsidian knife (pl. III, fig. 3).

B. Step Trench

The 95 metre-long step trench (pl. IV, figs. 1-2), cut between the summit of Qalinj Agha and its western end, its yield of potsherds which were any-produced in its various strata the following material. The top level (level I), being the surface layer, was badly eroded, thus no attempt was made to study way mixed with other surface occurrences.

Level II

The second layer in the trench was better preserved, though large parts of its eastern side were considerably disturbed, mainly by modern graves dug down from the surface of the mound (p. V, ground plan of level II). The thickness of the debris here was c. 34 cm. but there were no architectural remains visible. The majority of potsherds were Uruk in date, but a few fragments of the thin greenish ware with small beaded rims, familiar in upper levels at soundings⁶ were also present. The proportion of potsherds was as follows: 28 chocolate-brown rimfragments mostly belong to globular cooking-pots, both large and small having plain, flaring rims; 3 rimfragments resembling plain Ninevite V pottery; one large fragment with cylindrical spout belonging to a deep open bowl

(6) Strongly resembling plain Ninevite V pottery, Cf. Abu Al-Soof, *Sumer* XXII (1966) pp. 80-81, and pls. IV-V.

resembling those of Gawra XIA'. The other artefacts found were: one long obsidian knife, and one flint sickle blade.

Level III

The thickness of the debris was c. 38 cm. The remains of a wall were found (pl. V) constructed of rather large mud-bricks, measuring 49 x 23 x 9 cm. The following types of pottery and objects were found: 18 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments from plain, shallow bowls and large, globular jars with flaring rims; 2 rimfragments resembling the plain Ninevite V pottery; 2 buff-ware Uruk bodysherds; one grey-slipped fragment, highly burnished, from a small, hemispherical bowl with a plain, straight rim; one red-slipped fragment from a large, globular pot with a small, flaring rim; 2 highly fired clay spindle-whorls (Qa2-13 and 14); 3 obsidian knives; and one flint knife.

Level IV

The thickness of the debris was c. 40 cm. Most of the western part of this layer was badly damaged, mainly by modern graves (pl. V). Despite this, architectural remains, Uruk burials, pottery and other artefacts were recovered. A stone door-socket was found beside one of the short walls, at the western end of the cut, near the platform. Almost all the western half of the layer was occupied by a solid mud-brick construction, perhaps part of a platform. Further excavation will throw more light on the functions and connections of this platform. Three infant Uruk-burials (pl. V, OBI-3) were located on or near the floor of this level

(7) *Gawra II* (1950) pl. CXII, nos. 340-341; also Cf. Abu Al-Soof, *Iraq* XXIX (autumn 1967) pl. XLVII (chart III, type 22 a-b).

(OB2 and 3 were in fact breaking into actual walls). With the OB no. 2 was found, as a burial gift, a necklace of shell beads (Qa 2-4). All three burials, apparently, were dug down from level III. Potsherds and other finds were: a nearly complete small, hemispherical, buff-ware bowl (Qa2-21), Uruk in date; 17 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments; 2 broken bone awls (Qa 2-5 and 6); a clay spindle-whorl (Qa 2-15); a little black-stone nail (Qa2-16) perhaps used as a hair separator; 12 obsidian knives; and 6 flint sickle blades.

Levels V-VI

The approximate thickness of debris in level V was c. 32 cm. Traces of a very thin layer of ashes overlay the well defined floor and in two places there were extensive charred remains⁸. Three heavy mud-brick walls, buttressed in places, were found to belong to level VI proper. These wide walls were constructed of mud-bricks measuring 43 × 25 × 8 cm., 43 × 22 × 10 cm. and 43 × 22 × 10 cm. respectively. As a rule, walls belonging to level V were thinner but heavily plastered on both sides. Due to intrusive modern graves, the floor of level VI was damaged in many places. An Uruk burial sunk into one of the heavy walls of level VI was that of an adult female in a contracted position, orientated towards the west (pl. V, OB4). Two large brownish-buff Uruk pots were supplied as a burial gift, one being placed by the head and the other near the chest. The latter, larger in size, and covered with a plate may originally have contained some food-stuff. However the pot placed by the head was the more important. In it were a fair number of gold, lapis-lazuli, carnelian and shell

(8) This was the remains of roofing mats and timbers.

beads which would make a medium-sized necklace (pl. VII)⁹. This burial, dating from the early Uruk period, was apparently dug down from level VI. The pottery from both levels was predominantly Uruk in date. Two clay spindle-whorls (Qa 2-17 a and b) were found in the fill of level V; a small, shallow, lid-like saucer with curved bottom (Qa 2-9) occurred on the floor of level V. Other potsherds found in level V were: 2 black, highly burnished rimfragments, from small-sized bowls with carinated sides; 15 brownish-buff rimfragments from globular jars of various sizes, the rims being universally everted; 3 buff-ware rimfragments from small, deep bowls with wide mouths; one buff-ware short fat spout from a deep open bowl, similar to those familiar in Gawra XIII¹⁰; 2 buff-ware rimfragments with slight ridges just below the rims on the outsides; one large, brownish-buff rimfragment covered with holes probably belonging to a tall jar-like colander such as one known from Gawra XIIA¹¹. Pottery occurrences in level VI were: 17 buff-ware rimfragments mainly from large globular jars; one black, highly burnished rimfragment from a bowl with carinations; one buff-ware fragment with tubular upward-pointing spout, perhaps from a deep open bowl; 3 large rimfragments from chocolate-brown, deep, open bowls with sharply carinated shoulders. The other artefacts were: 3 obsidian knives in level V, and 2 flint blades in VI.

Level VII

Some 19½ metres in length remained

(9) Also cf. Abu Al-Sooif, *Sumer* XXII (1966) p. 7-9, n. 8.

(10) Cf. *Gawra* II (1950) pl. CXXI, nos. 340-341.

(11) Cf. *ibid* pl. CXLIII, nos. 360.

of the floor of level VI and excavation went down beyond this, in order to reveal the underlying stratum. The thickness of level VII (i.e. its debris) was c. 56 cm. Traces of a thin layer of ashes (2-3 cm. in-thickness) was found covering large areas of the floor. The remains of a solid mud-brick platform were visible at the eastern edge of this layer (pl. VI). Further west, parts of three walls constructed of fairly large mud-bricks, measuring $42 \times 29 \times 12$ cm., were found. In the area between two of these walls three infant Uruk Urn-burials were excavated (OB nos. 5-7). These Urn-burials were located in the fill a little above the floor, apparently dug down from the level above. Pottery and artefact occurrences were: 14 buff-ware Uruk red rimsherds from medium-sized globular pots, shallow plates, and tall jars; a buff-ware handle fragment from a ladle resembling those of Gawra XI-VIII¹², Uruk in date; 2 black burnished rimfragments, from fairly deep carinated bowls; 2 clay spindle-whorls (Qa 2-18a and b); 2 tiny turquoise beads (Qa 2-7) perhaps belonging to one of the burials, but found alone in fill; a broken clay animal figurine, probably a ram (Qa 2-1); 3 obsidian knives, and one flint blade.

Level VIII

The thickness of the debris was c. 35 cm. A lower part, or perhaps the foundations, of the solid mud-brick platform, visible at the northern corner of this level (pl. VI), belonged in fact to a platform erected in level VII above. The remains of two mud-brick walls, constructed of Libn measuring $47 \times 27 \times 12$ cm., were also found. A third wall with a stone door-socket was loca-

ted at the western end. It has been observed that the floor of this layer was sloping eastwards, i.e. towards the core of the mound. Potsherds and other finds were: 23 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments; 4 grey-burnished Uruk rimsherds; 7 painted 'Ubaid rimfragments; 2 painted 'Ubaid bodysherds; one painted Halaf bodysherd; one clay spindle-whorl (Qa 2-20); a pear-shaped alabaster mace-head (Qa 2-19); 3 flint blades, and one obsidian knife.

Level IX

The thickness of the debris was c. 50 cm., and consisted of reddish earth with traces of a thin layer of ashes. The entire floor of this level was covered with a pebble-laid pavement (pl. VI), which may have been a street or some other open space. Potsherds and other artefacts were: 14 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments, from various types of vessels, the best identified shape being the well-known globular cooking-pot; 3 buff-ware Uruk bodysherds; one buff-ware neck-fragment has traces of two bands of red paint on the outside: one obsidian knife, and one flint sickle blade.

Level X

The thickness of the debris, measuring c. 49 cm., consisted mainly of layers of ashes and burnt organic matter. It may be that this area was a dumping place for the inhabitants of level X. An infant burial (OB 8) was found 23 cm. below the floor of the previous level IX, having been dug down by its inhabitants. With the skeleton was a small-sized necklace of shell, stone and bone beads (Qa 2-2). Potsherds and other finds were: 23 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments; one black burnished Uruk rimsherd, from a deep hole-mouthed pot; one buff-ware neck-fragment decorated, on the

(12) Cf. Abu Al-Soof, *Iraq XXIX* (autumn 1967) pl. XLVII (chart II, type 29).

outside, with deep horizontal grooves; one buff-ware Uruk bodysherd; an incomplete animal clay figurine (Qa 2-12) perhaps a sheep; a copper bracelet incised in parts (Qa 2-11); 8 obsidian knives, and 2 flint blades.

Level XI

The thickness of the debris was c. 73 cm. 73 cm. Some seven isolated mud-bricks were found scattered at various points in this level (pl. VI). It should be noted in particular that the floor of XI was completely burned and was covered by a layer of ashes some 10-15 cm. thick. Potsherds and other finds were: 24 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments; 3 thin, greenish-buff, highly fired rimfragments, resembling plain Ninevite V pottery; a broken globular jar, which may have been used as an infant burial (OB 9); 23 obsidian tools, and 2 flint sickle blades.

Level XII

The thickness of the debris was c. 63 cm. Pebble-laid foundations and pebble pavements were visible over large areas in this level (pl. VI). Adjacent to the pebble-laid foundations were remains of a semi-circular mud-brick potter's kiln with remains of a highly fired clay floor and vitrified lumps of clay. Potsherds and other finds were: 32 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments. One large buff-ware fragment with a double rim, the channel formed by this rim being pierced with a small hole, is perhaps an example of the large double-rimmed pots familiar in Gawra XIA-IX¹³. One brow-

(13) Cf. *Gawra II* (1950) pl. CXLII, no. 346. There is a probability that such utensils were used for distillation purposes, see in this context, Levey (Martin): 1959, "Chemistry and Chemical Technology in Ancient Mesopotamia", pp. 32-35, and figs. 18-19.

nish-buff short spout; 3 highly fired, greenish-buff ware bodyfragments, resembling plain Ninevite V pottery; one painted 'Ubaid rimsherd, from a shallow open bowl; a little white-stone bead, perhaps a pendant, the upper surface covered with incised decoration consisting of three tiny circles accompanied, on top, by three lunar-shaped grooves, perhaps representing a stylised face a broken ground-stone mace-head; 52 obsidian knives, and 4 flint blades.

Level XIII

The thickness of the debris was c. 40 cm. A thin layer of ashes covered the well-defined clay floor. Finds here were: 13 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments; one painted 'Ubaid bodysherd; and 2 little obsidian blades.

Level XIV

The thickness of the debris was c. 40 cm. The entire floor of this layer was covered with a pebble-laid pavement (pl. VI). Potsherds and other finds were: 23 buff-ware Uruk rimfragments; one buff-ware neckfragment with horizontal grooves just below the rim; one painted 'Ubaid bodysherd; one painted Halaf bodyfragment; 3 obsidian knives, and one flint blade.

Level XV

The layer of debris overlying the floor here was c. 36 cm. in thickness. The floor of this level was also covered with small and medium-sized pebbles. Potsherds and other finds were: one buff-ware Uruk heavy "club-headed" rim; 10 buff-ware Uruk rimsherds; 12 painted 'Ubaid rimfragments; 8 painted

'Ubaid bodysherds; and a small-stone loom-weight.

Level XVI

The thickness of the debris was c. 30 cm. Traces of ashes were visible in fill just above the floor. Directly below the floor of this level natural soil was encountered, but excavation continued through it to a depth of nearly one

metre¹⁴. Potsherds and other finds in level XVI were: 4 buff-ware Uruk rim-fragments; one unpainted 'Ubaid rim-herd, from a small cup; 6 painted 'Ubaid rimfragments; 5 painted 'Ubaid bodysherds; one 'Ubaid bent clay nail, and two ground-stone loom-weights.

(14) A little more than two metres below the surrounding plain level and the adjacent Kirkuk road.

Pl. I

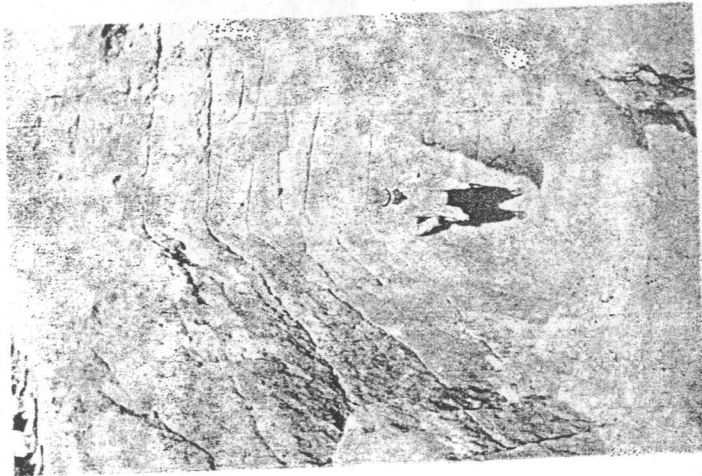


Fig. 1

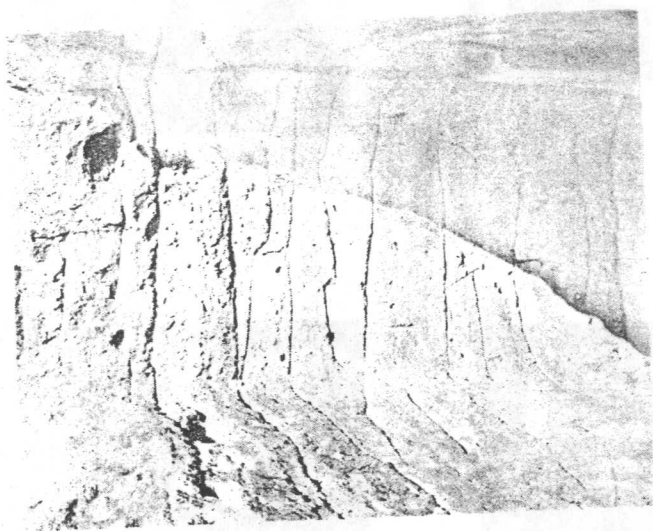


Fig. 2

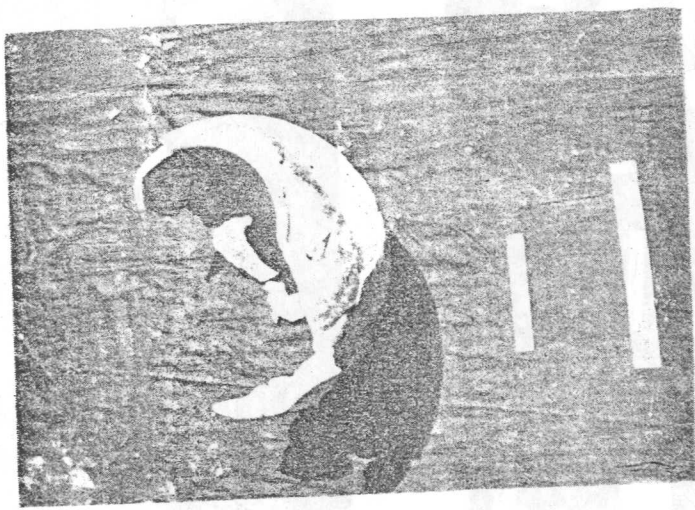


Fig. 3

red, re- one low per- cov- ting, ap, ken tan

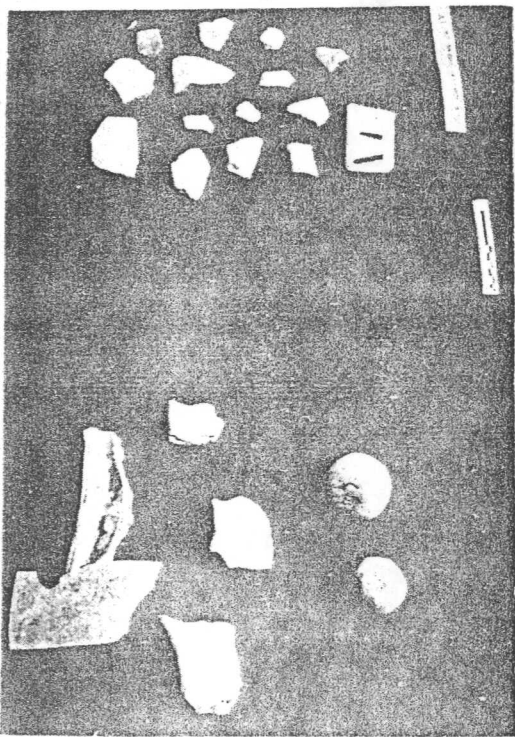


Fig. 1

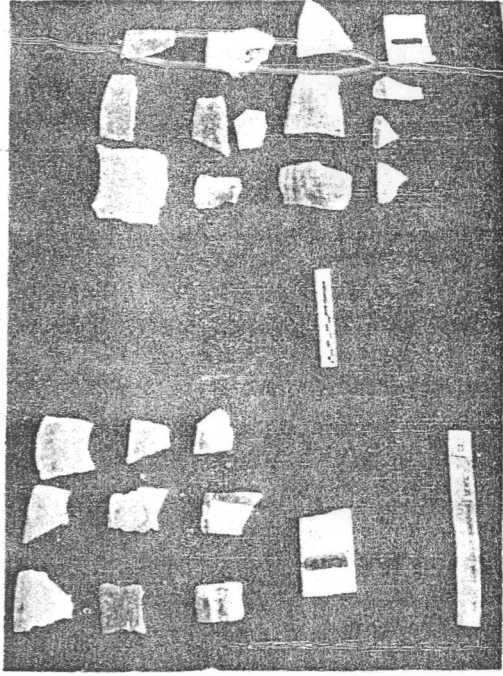


Fig. 2

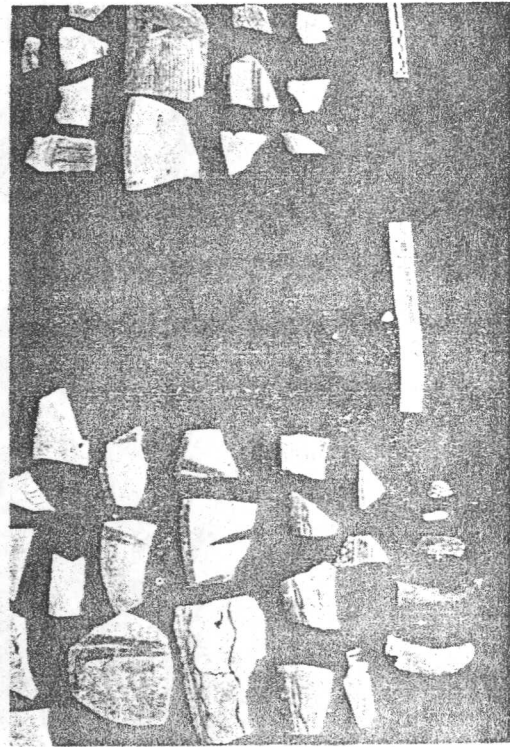


Fig. 3

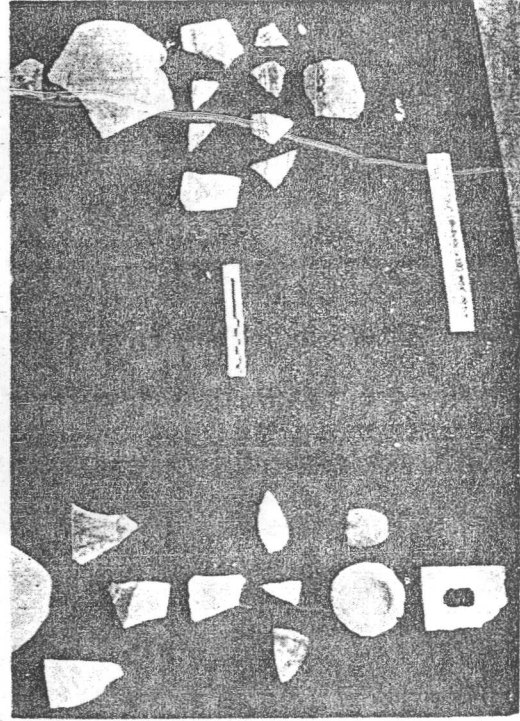


Fig. 4

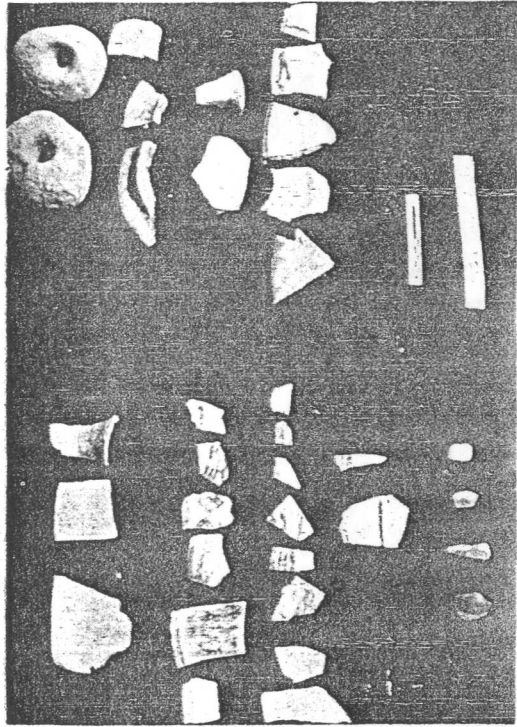


Fig. 1

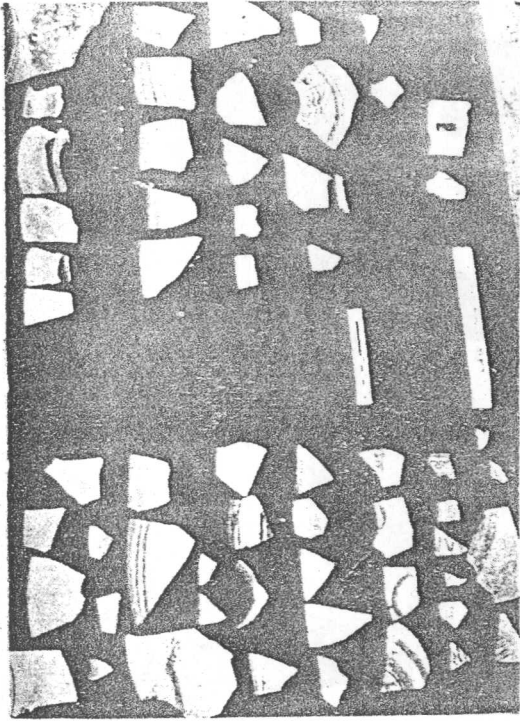


Fig. 2

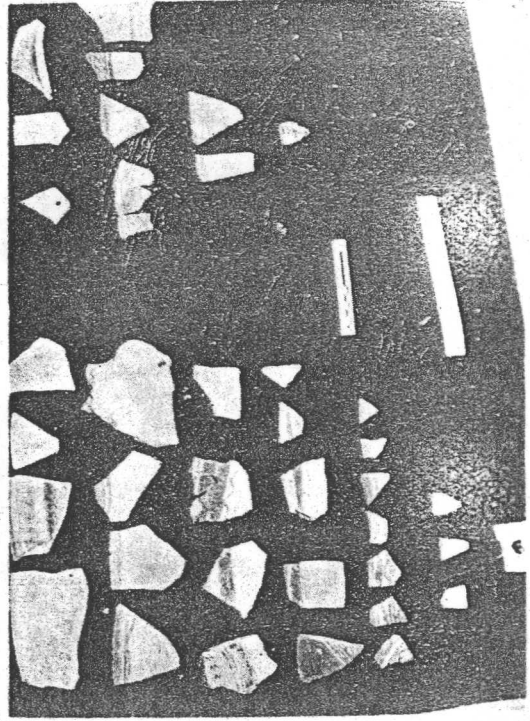


Fig. 3

Pl. IV

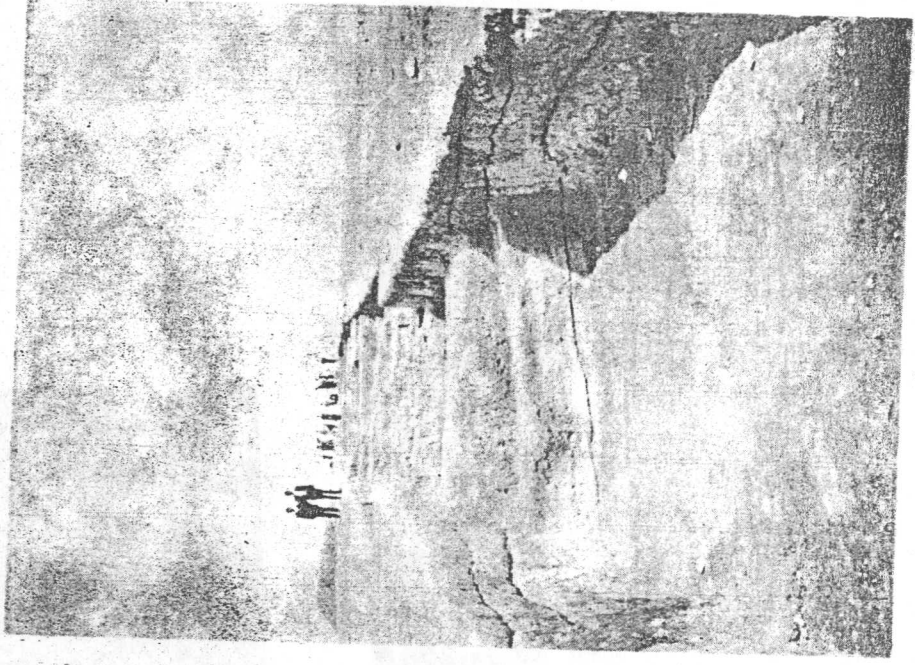


Fig. 2

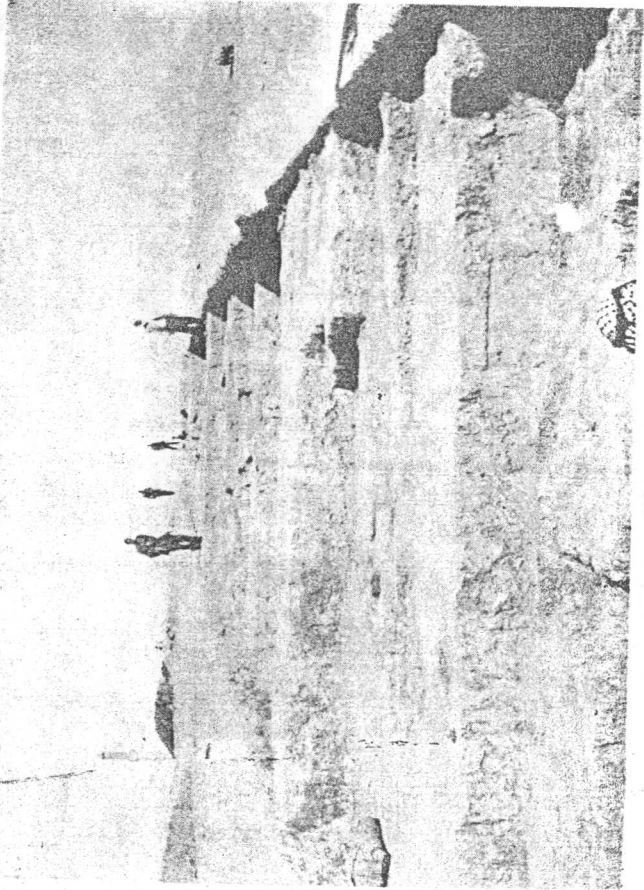
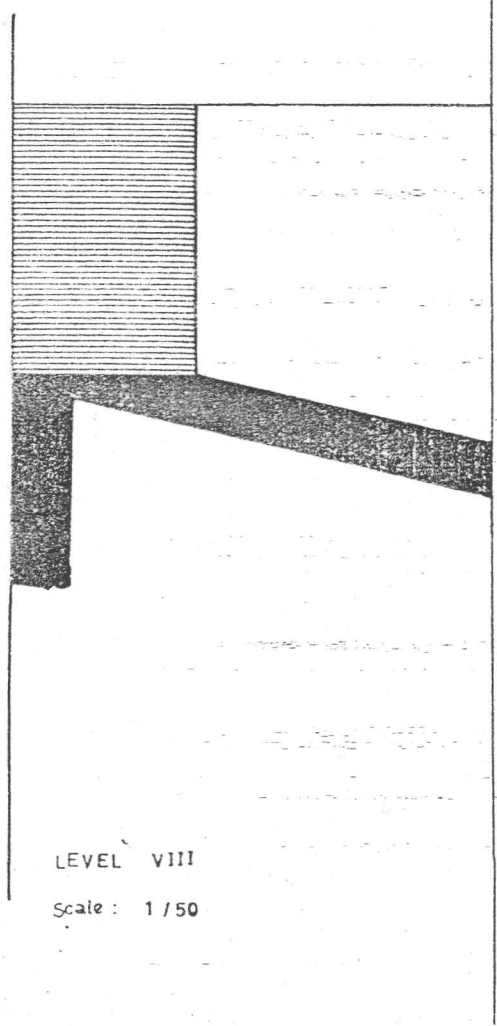
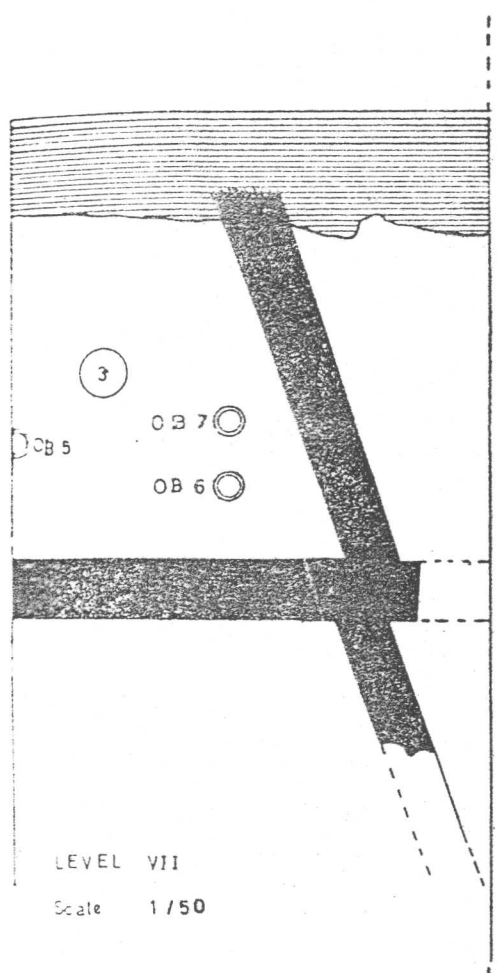



Fig. 1


PLATE V



 MUD BRICK WALL

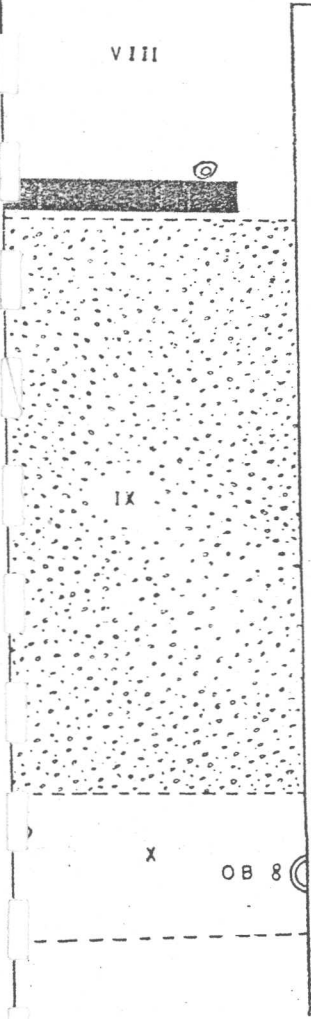
 PEBBLE LAID FOUNDATION

 MUD BRICK PLATFORM

 PEBBLE LAID PAVEMENT

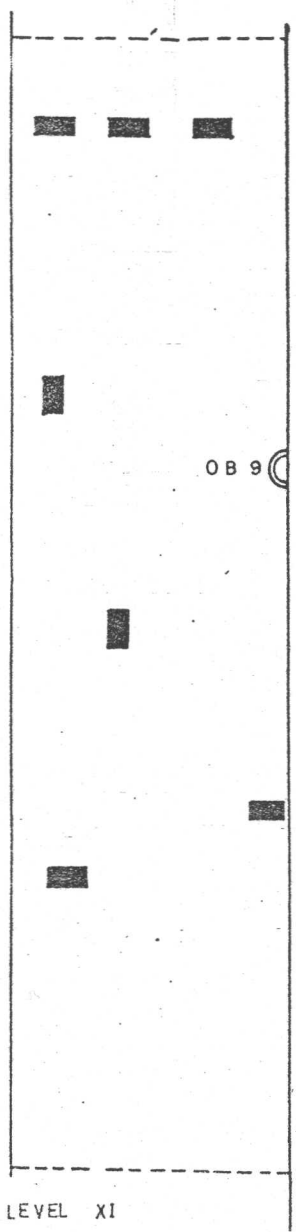
 OVEN

QALINJ AGHA (Erbil)
1967



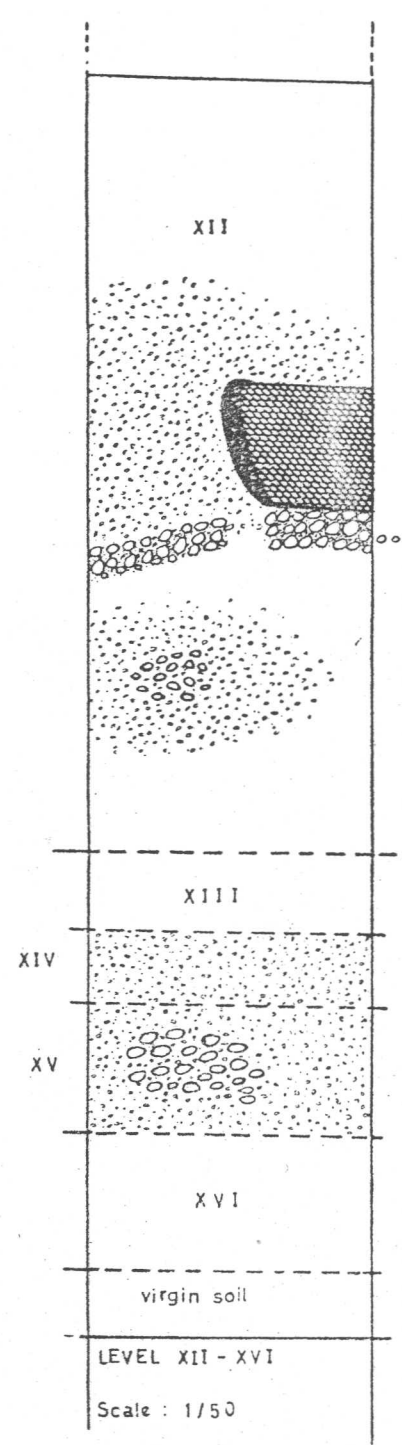
EVELS VIII - X

Scale : 1/50



LEVEL XI

Scale : 1/50



LEVEL XII - XVI

Scale : 1/50

