

KURBAN HÖYÜK EXCAVATIONS, 1984

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In the summer of 1984, a fifth season of excavation and study was undertaken at the site of Kurban Höyük in the Atatürk Barrage reservoir basin (Lower Euphrates Project). As before, the project was sponsored by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and was directed by the writer. Since the 1983 season had been a very successful excavation season, a large backlog of unanalyzed artifacts remained to be processed. In addition, the scheduled completion of the preliminary dam and tunnel in June 1985 by the DSI, and the appropriation and compensation of the village lands in the summer of 1984 made the processing of backlog artifacts imperative. The 1984 campaign consequently changed its objectives from an excavation season to a study season, with the intent of analyzing as much of the existing material as possible. Excavations were to be undertaken only in order to clarify the most important problems left over from the preceding seasons.

The 1984 season lasted for two months (July 3 - August 27). During the 54 days of fieldwork, 6 weeks of excavation took place, 3 weeks on the clearance of Area D, 3 weeks on the completion of Area A, 3 weeks on the expansion of Area B, and 3 weeks on the conclusion of Areas G and C. No work was undertaken in Area CO1. A maximum of about 30 villagers were employed as workers onsite, while an additional 5 were employed in the dig house to help with processing.

There was an average of 16 staff members during the field season. Apart from the director, the fulltime staff included: T. J. Wilkinson (co-asst. director & geographer); M. Ingraham (co-asst. director), B. Verhaaren, P. Wattenmaker (archaeologists); G. Algaze (ceramics), K. Ataman (groundstone), Dr. N. Miller (botanist), J. Wilkinson (photographer/registrar), S. Ashley and T. Rickards (illustrators). There was also a large number of parttime staff that participated for most of the season: Dr. M. McDonald (chipped stone), C. Snow (conservator), C. Öztürk (Sr. archaeological asst.), Dr. A. Yener (archaeologist), H. Karagöz, B. Tekkok, G. Pulhan, C. Kafescioglu, C. Bezmez, G. Stein (archaeological

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assts). Bay Ömer Severoglu was the representative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Thus, a total of 21 persons participated.

The 1984 Season

The activities carried out in the 1984 season can be described under two headings: excavation and lab work. In addition, a general summary of the five seasons of fieldwork can be attempted.

Excavations

One focus for further excavation was the completion of the stratigraphic sequence on the south mound, particularly for the critical transition between the end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. In addition, with the operations on the topmost and bottommost steps of the step trench (Area A) concluded, the sole task remaining in this area was the clearance of the middle step down to the mudbrick «fortification wall» of the mid/late Early Bronze Age.

Area A

In the step trench, the main task was the final clearance of phase 14, and the clarification of its relationship to the building level above, phase 11. In 1981, the mudbrick fortification wall and two interior adjoining rooms formed what we knew of Phase 14. The area to the south of these two rooms were excavated in 1984, bringing the total exposure of the level to over 50 m². First, the southern walls of Rooms 1 and 2 were discovered, thus defining the dimensions of the two rooms (Room 1 = 2.5x1.7 m; Room 2 = 3.6x2.0 m).

To the south of Room 1 was found Room 3, which included an oven. Only a small portion of this room was revealed however. To the south of Room 2, excavations revealed Room 4. The preserved portion of this room measured 3.2 m (N-S) and roughly 2.0 m (E-W), with the western portion remaining beneath the trench balk. The preservation of the walls were somewhat lower than that recovered for Rooms 1 and 2 (ca. 1.25 m), about 1 m. The floor was plastered and contained a hearth, but few artifacts were recovered from the floor. To the south of Room 4, yet another room, Room 5, was found partially extending into the south balk of the trench. The uncovered area, which lies 1.5 m south of Room 4, is about 2.3 m (E-W) and 1.1 m (N-S). It contained a hearth and pebbly surface. Fragmentary remains of two other rooms, Rooms 6 and 7, appears to the west and east of Room 5, respectively.

It is now apparent that the constructions of phase 14 were incorporated into the fairly substantial rebuilding program that constitutes phase 11. The same orientation of the earlier plan was retained, and the walls were integrated into the foundations of the later phase. One of the principal features of this continuity was the cutting of a foundation trench that circumscribed the remains of phase 14 Room 4, and formed the basis of phase 11 Room 2 (cleared in 1983). Another was the replacement of phase 14 Room 5 by phase 11 Room 3. And yet a third was the construction of phase 11 Room 1 along the same orientation as phase 14 Room 2.

Area D

On the top of the south mound, the final operations included excavations in three sectors of Area D. The largest operation was centered around the large courtyard complex (units 7, 38 and 41) of D66 and adjacent trenches. Unit 38, at the south end of the complex, had been partially cleared in 1983. The 1984 excavations revealed the remainder of this «room», which was littered with a large number of broken vessels. At the northwestern corner of the complex, unit 7 was also cleared, revealing a small utility room. This room had an entrance off the street (unit 8), a pit and the usual pebble based platform.

The most interesting work, however, concerned the clarification of the relationships between the mid/late EBA levels of Area A and the so-called EB/MB transition of Area D (Bldg. Phase II). By excavating in trench D76, a connecting link was established between the two areas. It is now clear that after the abandonment of Area A phase 4, the final phase of the mid/late EBA period, several pits of the EB/MB transition were cut into the abandonment fill layer. These pits belong to the exterior «courtyard» surface of Area D Bldg. Phase II, just outside the northeast courtyard complex discussed above. In addition, a probe placed within this courtyard yielded plastered floors of the mid/late EBA directly beneath the floor of the courtyard. This relationship was also demonstrated in the entryway excavated in 1981 in trench D53. Here, a probe in the entrance showed that the massive orthostat-like boulders of the EB/MB transition (hitherto called Bldg. Phase IIc) was built directly over the mid/late EBA levels. In short, they demonstrate a short but distinct stratigraphic gap between the end of the mid/late EBA settlement and the construction of the earliest subphases of the EB/MB transition settlement.

A second objective of the Area D excavations in 1984 was the determination of the eastern edge of the EB/MB transition settlement. To

wards this objective, the strips excavated in D37 and D38 in 1983 were extended eastward into D39, where the edge of the slope seemed to indicate a termination of the settlement. The edge was not found, however, and instead, it appeared that a series of terraces might have extended downslope. An accidental discovery was made near the apparent junction of two of these terraces. Here, a cist tomb of the EB/MB transition period was found. Unfortunately, it had been robbed out in antiquity, apparently by the builders of the 9-10th century caravanserai. Fortunately, the problem of the extent of the Area D settlement was resolved by the excavations in Area B.

Area B

Area B was excavated in 1980, at which time four trenches had been opened to reveal a domestic quarter of the mid/late EBA period. This included three rooms and a cobbled street. In 1984, the exposure was expanded to the west and south in order to obtain a larger sample of the domestic areas in the mid/late EBA period. This expansion yielded a total of over 300 m² of horizontal exposure in the area.

Two principal building phases were identified, corresponding to the phases 1-2 designated after the 1980 season. Building phase II is the main phase of occupation exposed, and includes the rooms and street found in 1980. In the southern expansion in trenches B61/62-B71/72, it became clear that the cobbled street continued southwards, and consisted in fact of several street levels. East of and adjacent to the street were a series of rooms in a block, of which Room 1 found in 1980 was a part. Although the floor levels of the mid/late EBA period were not reached in all rooms, at least one was found just beneath the modern day surface. On the poorly preserved floor, a number of broken vessels of the period was found.

Perhaps of greater chronological concern was the discovery that the poorly preserved upper phase, Building Phase I, was in fact part of the EB/MB settlement, and indeed, formed the easternmost edge of the settlement in Area D. With this discovery, all four preserved borders of the Area D settlement have now been found, yielding dimensions that are approximately 70 m (N-S) by 140 m (E-W), or roughly 1.0-1.2 hectares. Equally important was the discovery that the structures of this phase were built directly on the structures of the mid/late EBA, to the extent that walls were mere rebuilds along the same plan. The borders of the street were maintained between the two periods, indicating a continuity between the two periods.

In addition to the clearance towards the south, an expansion of the area towards the west yielded more rooms of the period, for a possible total of ten or more rooms for the mid/late EBA period. Excavations within these rooms yielded a complex series of floor resurfacings and wall rebuilding so that at least four subphases of the Building level can be isolated in various parts of the exposure. Thus, this clearance provides a useful point of comparison with Area C, where another 400 m² of domestic architecture had been cleared in previous seasons.

Area G

To provide yet another exposure of the mid/late EBA period, Area G, which was probed in 1981, was expanded. Roughly 100 m² were cleared during the season. Lying about 80 m east of Area C on the north mound, Area G had been aimed towards a delineation of the broad lower settlement of the mid/late EBA, which seemed to have extended for a substantial distance in an easterly direction. Occupied during the same period as the uppermost phases of Area C, the area represented part of the tremendous growth of the site during the mid-3rd millennium.

The excavations revealed a large room with a plastered floor approximately 0.5 - 1.0 m beneath the surface. This room, with the exception of a few pots was empty. The room appeared to have been bordered by a possibly open area to the east, with the separation provided by a long, poorly constructed wall.

Area C

Yet a third area of mid/late EBA occupation was excavated in Area C. Here, we hoped to clarify the nature of the courtyards found in C55-C56 in 1981. Two strips were excavated in C66. They revealed yet another set of single room structures similar to the ones found in the courtyards in 1981.

Summary of Site History

Five seasons of fieldwork entailing approximately 27 weeks of excavation now permit us to outline the general history of the site by specific periods. Very briefly, eight major periods of occupation can be discerned.

Period VIII. Halaf. Four phases of occupation on the south mound overlooking an early spring located in the current saddle between the two mounds; with tholoi and graves.

Period VII. Middle Chalcolithic. Possibly contemporary to what is generally known as «peripheral Ubaid» cultural traditions in nearby regions, a new settlement was established on the north mound, again adjacent to the water source.

Period VIA-VIB. Late Chalcolithic. In VIB, around the mid-4th millennium, a resettlement again occurred on the south mound, related in its ceramic tradition to Amuq F and Malatya VII. In VIA, the settlement expanded to include the north mound, thus surrounding the spring in the saddle. Most notable in this period is the introduction of Late Uruk-like ceramics similar to that found at Hassek and Habuba Kabira, as well as in the Keban.

Period VA-VB. Early EBA. In VB, at the end of the 4th millennium and the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, the Late Chalcolithic/Late Uruk settlement was transformed into a small settlement on the north mound, while the south mound lay abandoned. Period VIA represents the later evolution of this settlement in three major building phases. This roughly corresponds to Hassek EB I.

Period IVA-IVB-IVC. Mid/Late EBA. Following a gap of several centuries, the site was resettled around the middle of the 3rd millennium, roughly corresponding to the ED III-Akkadian periods in Mesopotamia and EB III in Anatolia. The initial phase of settlement, IVC, occurs on the south mound. Thereafter, there was an expansion across the entire site encompassing both mounds, Period IVB. At this point, the spring source in the saddle was clearly out of use, and indeed was built over, with water being provided by wells. By the late 3rd millennium, Period IVA may represent a diminution of the settlement, with a contraction to the south mound.

Period III. EB-MB Transition. At the end of the 3rd millennium, the site was abandoned for a brief period. Resettlement occurred on the south mound in Period III, which forms a transition between the EBA and MBA traditions. Approximately 20 % of the original settlement and perhaps 40 % of the preserved settlement has now been excavated. Although large numbers of sites appear on survey in this period, there are few excavated parallels.

Period II. 9-10th century AD. After a long gap, a **khan** was built on the top of the south mound at the time of the Hamdanid emirate. Like some later caravanserai, the complex formed an open square surrounded by uniform rectangular rooms.

Period I. Late Medieval? At some later period, portions of the south mound were used for Islamic burials.

Study of Archaeological Finds

Less than half of the staff was engaged on excavation work. The remainder were engaged in the analysis of the finds collected during this

and preceding seasons. The status of these studies can be summarized briefly.

Virtually 100 % of the ceramics from primary contexts from the 1980-83 seasons and a few groups from the 1984 season have now been processed and recorded. This comprises about 200,000 sherds. Over 3000 have been drawn. About 25 boxes of unstudied pottery from primary contexts of the 1984 season have been deposited in the Urfa museum, along with 2 boxes of unstudied ceramics from earlier seasons. In addition, 49 boxes of material from the best contexts and 6 boxes containing the type series have been deposited in the Urfa Museum.

About 15,000 pieces of chipped stone have now been analyzed, forming about 50 % of the material from primary contexts of all seasons. The still unstudied material consists of 5 boxes studied in a preliminary fashion from 1980-83, 18 boxes of primary context material from 1980-83 and 4 boxes from 1984.

The groundstone material has been completely studied. This includes over 500 pieces. Only 3 boxes of representative types and unusual pieces have been kept. Similarly, all of the objected small finds and all of the miscellaneous collections of baked clay, etc. have been studied. All of the objects (199) and a sample box of miscellaneous material have been stored in the Urfa Museum. The materials from the archaeological survey have also been analyzed completely. They comprise about 5,000 sherd of which 4 boxes of representative types have been kept. At the end of the season, a total of 126 boxes of all materials were left in the Urfa Museum.

Acknowledgements

Once again, the project wishes to express its gratitude to Dr. Nurettin Yardımcı, Director General of Antiquities and Museums, and to Bay Kudret Ata, Director of Excavations, and Bay Adnan Mısır, Director of the Urfa Museum. As before, they were unfailing in their continuing aid, hospitality and cooperation. Grateful acknowledgement is also made to Sevim Buluc, Director of the Lower Euphrates Project. Similarly, Professors Richard Ellis and Marie-Henriette Gates, Co-directors of the Grille Project, and Dr. M. Behm-Blanks, Director of the Hassek excavations were extremely hospitable and kind, as were officials of the DSI at the Atatürk Barrage. Dr. Toni Cross and Dr. David French, directors of ARIT-Ankara and the BIAA respectively, once again were kind enough to enable project members to use their fine facilities. Without the strong support of all these people, many aspects of the project would have been much more difficult.

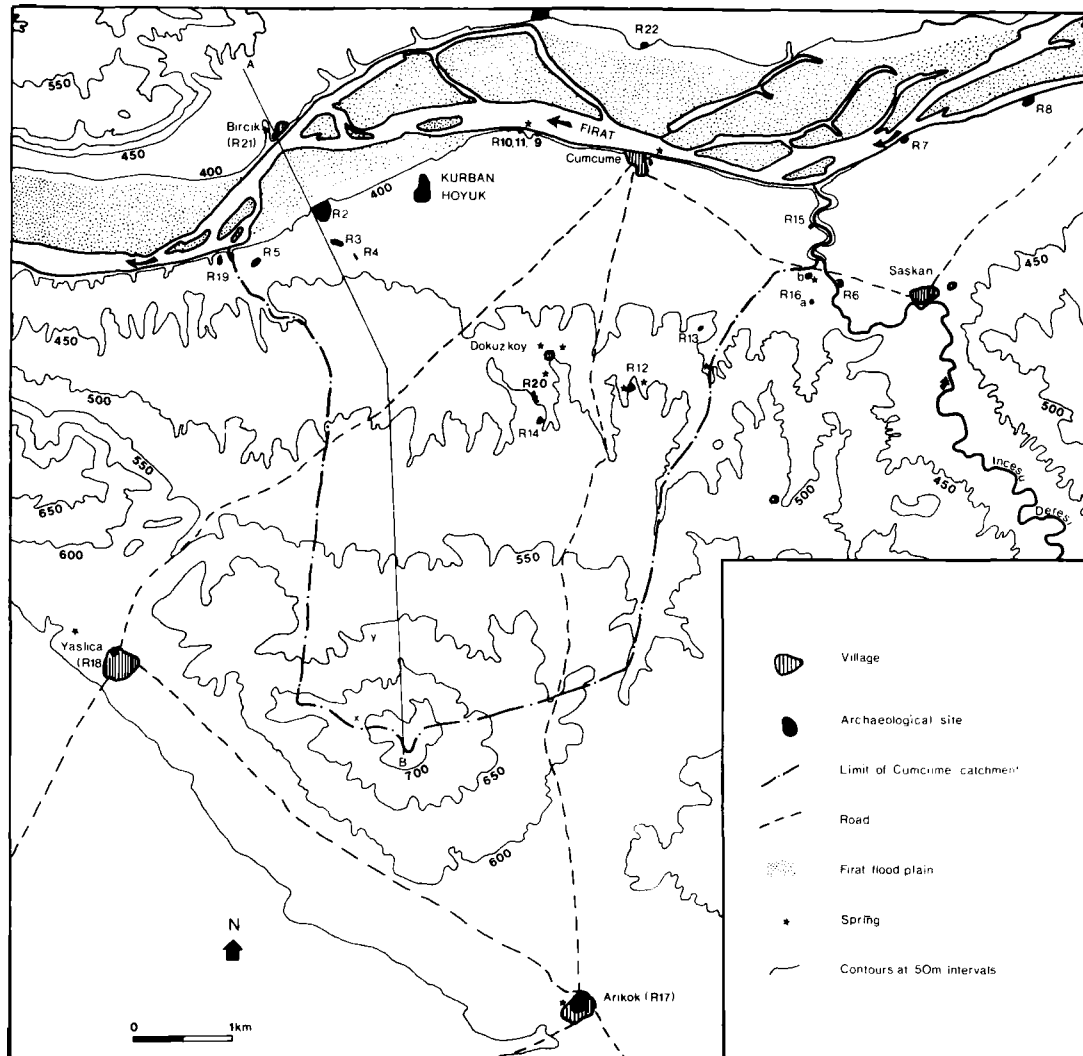


Fig. 1 — Kurban Höyük Regional Map: archaeological sites and topography.

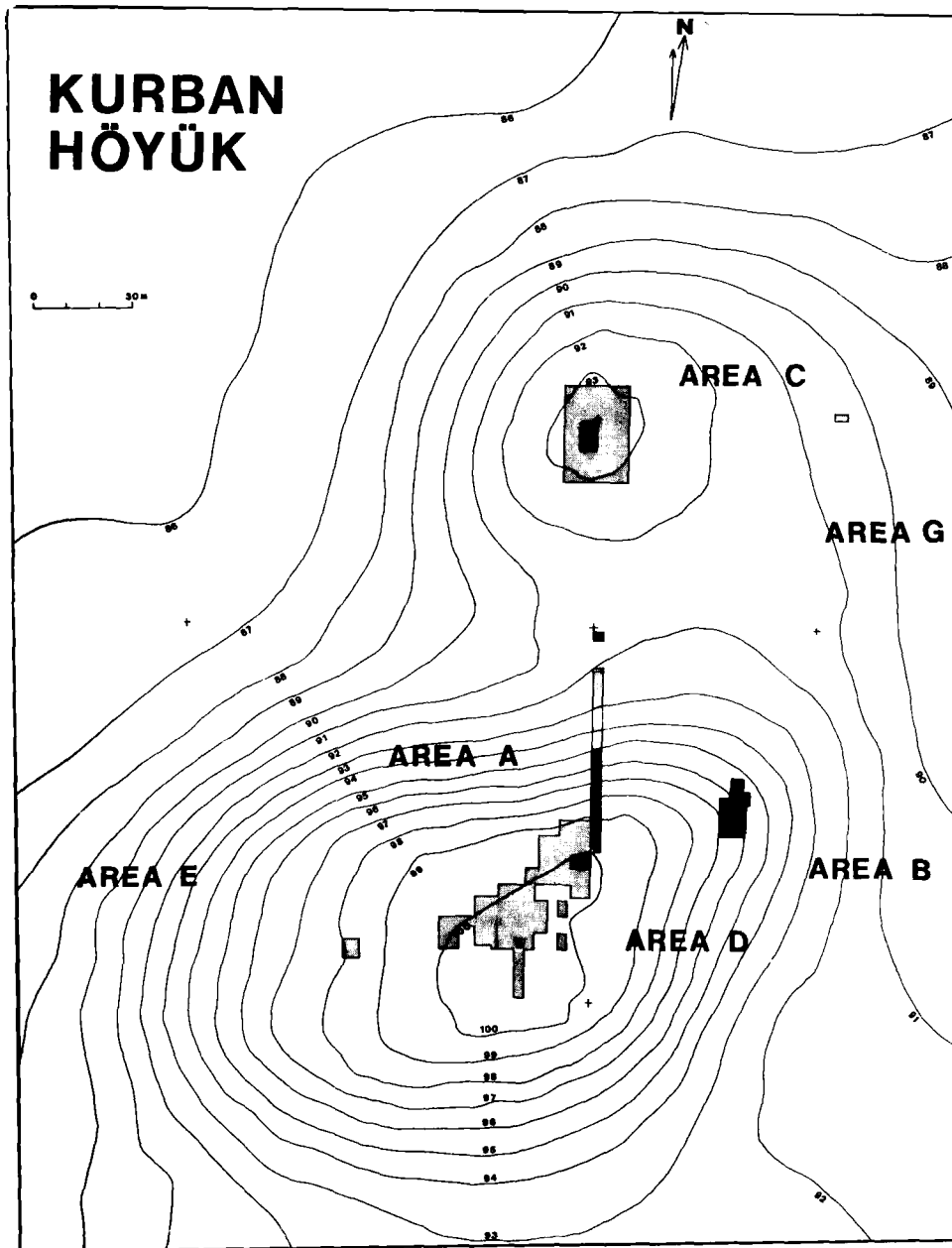


Fig. : 2 — Kurban Höyük Site Plan, 1980 - 81.

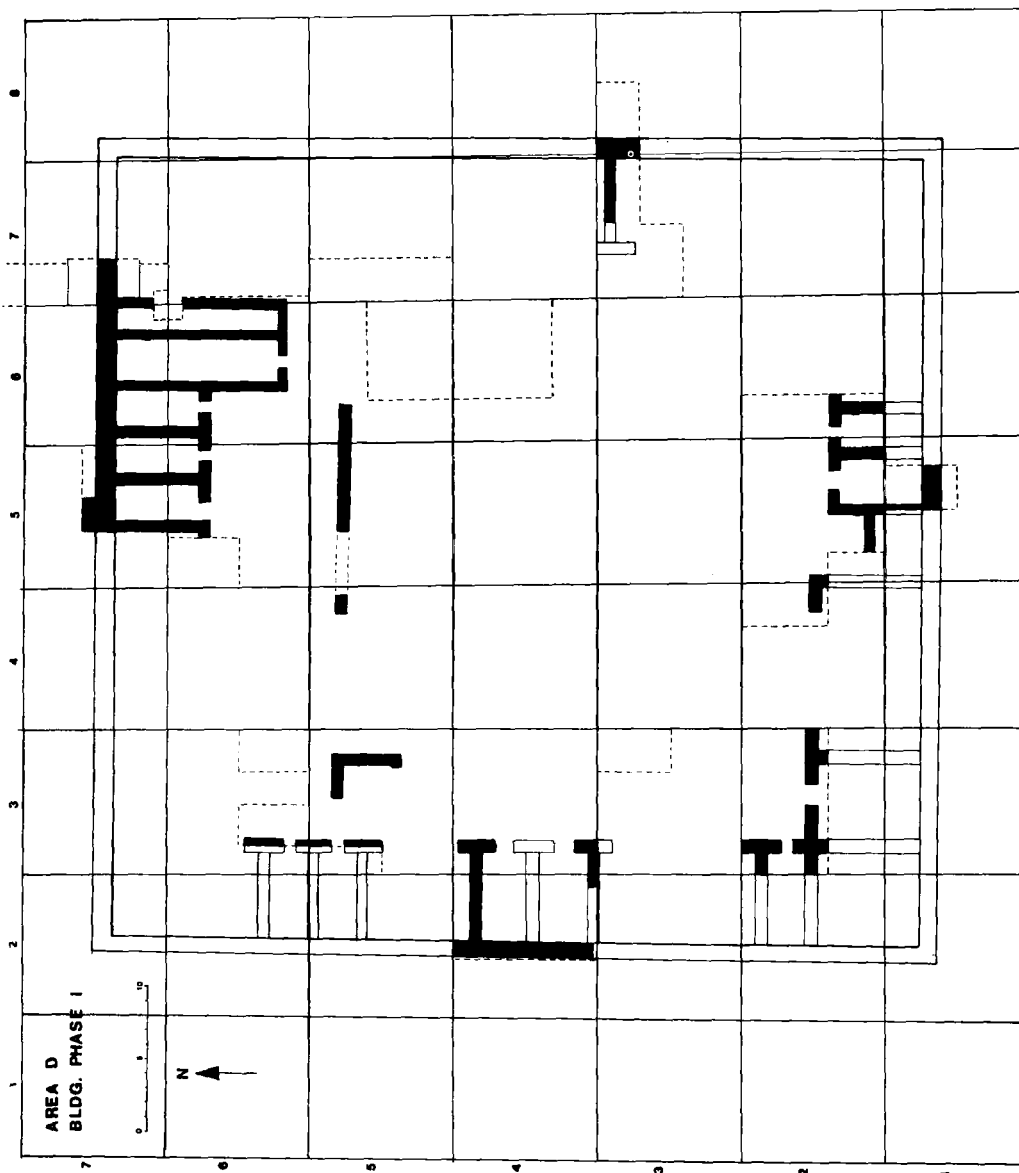


Fig. : 3 — Area D. BLDG Phase I

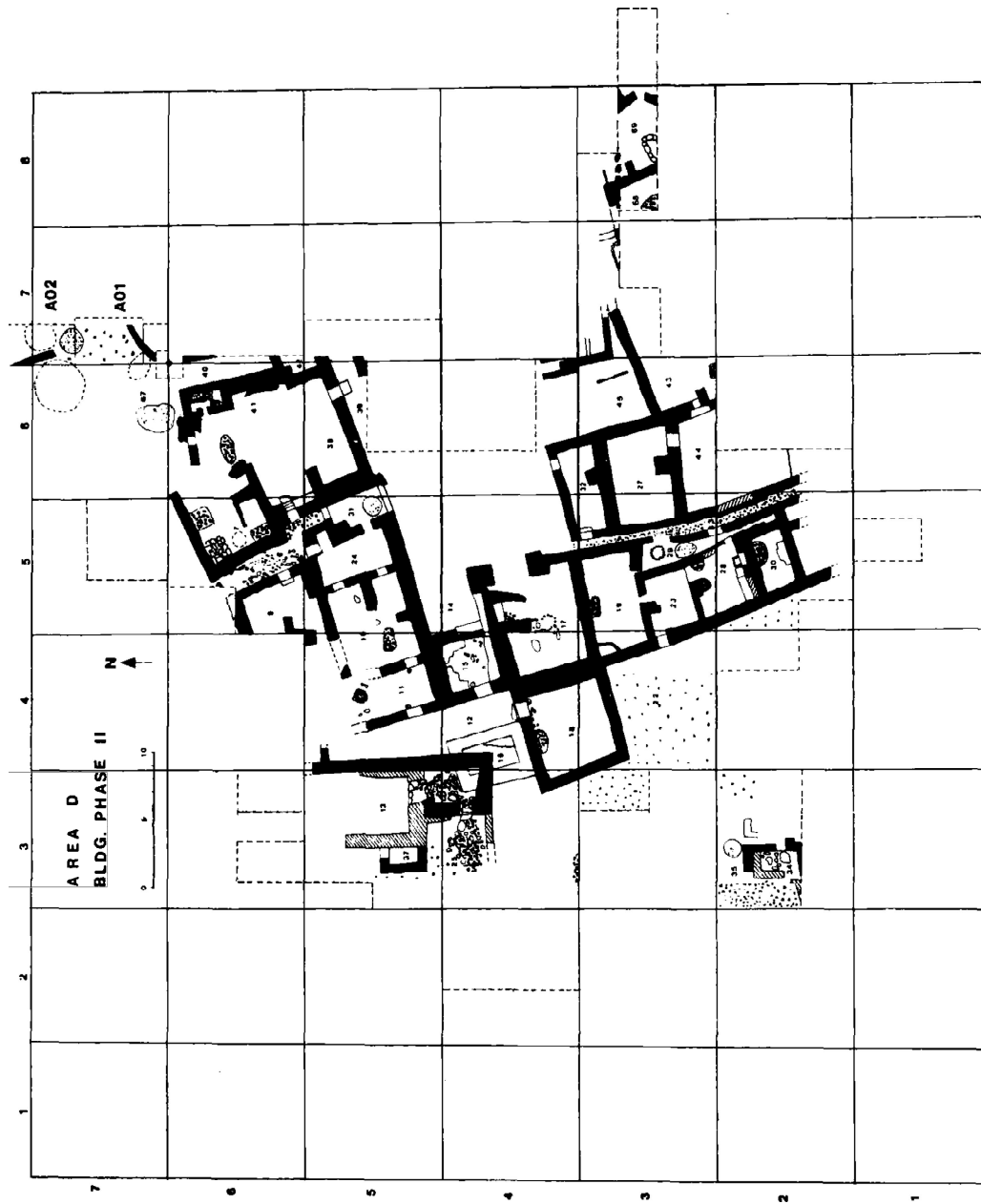


Fig. : 4 — Area D. BLDG. Phase II

AREA B
BLDG. PHASE I-II

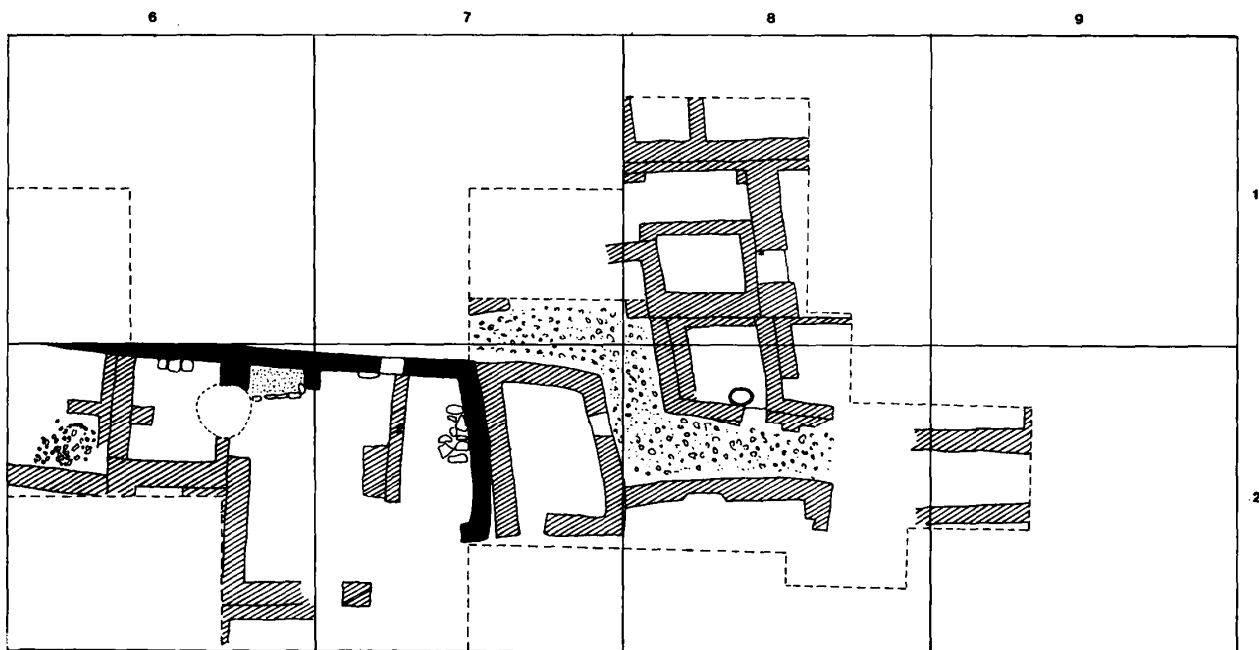


Fig. 5 — Area B. BLDG. Phase I - II