

Tell Abu Sheeja/Ancient Pašime

Report on the First Season of Excavations, 2007

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Abstract: The Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) initiated excavations at Tell Abu Sheeja in 2007. The site, located seven kilometers from the Iranian border, was partially occupied by the Iraqi military during the Iran-Iraq War and was, therefore, in need of salvage operations. The first season of excavations exposed a temple with stone inscriptions that allow an identification of the site as ancient Pašime, a city that scholars had previously located on the Persian Gulf.

INTRODUCTION

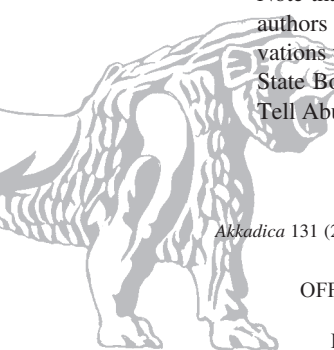
In 2007, Iraq's State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH) began excavations at the site of Tell Abu Sheeja (تل أبو شبيجة). This site was chosen for excavation because, by this year, the area had become relatively peaceful and work was feasible. Located very close to the Iranian border (Fig. 1), the site and the region around it were near the front lines during the Iran-Iraq war, and as a result there was significant damage to the mound, especially from the digging of protective enclosures for large equipment.² As with much of the area along the border, this site has never been investigated before by archaeologists. Excavations began in June 2007, with the season continuing into the fall and early winter. Further investigations were planned for 2008 or 2009, but political decisions in the governorate prevented the resumption of work.

Given the importance of the findings from these excavations, as published in Arabic (MOHAMMAD *et al.* 2005-06),³ Mr. Hussein Ali Hamza and Dr. Altaweel established in 2008 a collaboration to present in English these results from Tell Abu Sheeja and complement them with other sources of data. It is hoped that periodic reports published in Arabic and English will continue to present information on future excavations at Tell Abu Sheeja. Dr. Benjamin Studevent-Hickman, of Harvard University, has been added as an author for an analysis of the cuneiform inscriptions from the site.

¹ Edited, and with additional notes, by McGuire Gibson.

² [The image we show here as Figure 3 is from Digital Globe. But even the readily available Google Earth image shows that the site is riddled with square and rectangular holes left by the military. Figure 4 was especially ordered from Digital Globe to verify the orientation of the building in Area A. MG]

³ Note that the names of the authors in the *Sumer* article (Arabic) may be rendered differently, but the first three authors listed here are, in fact, the three authors given in *Sumer*. It should also be noted that although the excavations took place in 2007, the report appears in *Sumer* 53, which is given a publication date of 2005-2006. The State Board of Antiquities is still catching up with back issues of the journal, but it obviously thought that the Tell Abu Sheeja report was important enough to publish right away.



SITE BACKGROUND

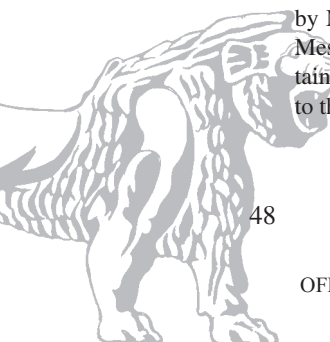
Tell Abu Sheeja (32° 23' 45.17" N, 47° 08' 51.90" E, measured at Area A) is located approximately 7 km from the Iran-Iraq border (Fig. 2), which runs along the Jebel Hamrin in this area. The Jebel Hamrin is the westernmost fold of the Zagros Mountains, and since it rises to a height of about 150 meters, the ridge is a barrier to movement. A watercourse like the River Tieb, which cuts through the ridge in this vicinity, creates a natural funnel of communication. Tell Abu Sheeja, on the western edge of the river, is in a position to benefit from communication and trade along this route and to act as a strategic staging point for Mesopotamian armies that were poised to enter ancient Elam. Across the river from the tell, an outlying ridge called the Band i-Buzurgan on older modern maps,⁴ would have served as a secondary defensive position behind the Jebel Hamrin, while also forming with the Hamrin a sheltered passageway leading southeast. The area to the south and southeast of the site has, historically, been occupied by marshes, fed in part by the River Tieb. Although the river, which has its source in the Pusht i-Kuh in Iran, is today a wadi with only a seasonal flow, in the past it must have carried much more water to sustain a site like Abu Sheeja. There is evidence of erosion of the tell caused by flooding. The nearest large city today is Amarah, 66 km to the south. In ancient times, Susa would have been one of the closest cities at 104 km to the east. As will be seen below, some of the pottery found at Tell Abu Sheeja can be paralleled by items at Susa.

Made up of eight hillocks, Abu Sheeja is approximately 18 ha in size (Figs. 3-4) and has a maximum height of 6 m above the plain. The meaning of the word Sheeja, is not currently known. Most probably it is a word in the local dialect of Arabic. Inscriptions found during the excavations indicate that the ancient name was Pašime, and its patron god was Šuda (see inscription section below).

EXCAVATIONS

Archaeological work began at Tell Abu Sheeja with the creation of a site plan (Fig. 5) with a grid of 20 x 20 m squares. Three areas, A, B, and C, were chosen for excavation. Area A is located at the northeastern edge of the tell, Area B in the middle section of the site near a deep gully that feeds into the Wadi Tieb, and Area C farther south at the base of the slope of one of the hillocks. Excavations in Areas B and C were primarily exploratory, intended to give an idea of the range of periods in these areas. Most of the effort focused on uncovering a temple in Area A.

⁴ [E.g., WW I Geographical Section, General Staff Map No. 2563, 1 :1,000,000. On this map, there is a Tell Guedam mentioned in this area, but it is probably not the same as Tell Abu Sheeja. A Tell Haddam is reported by Mr. Hussein to be on the same side of the wadi. Sheet 11 of the British Army. 2 miles to one inch maps of Mesopotamia (1917) places Haddam at a ford, directly across from the northwestern end of the Buzurgan mountain. Some other older maps of this area give other names for parts of the Jebel Hamrin, such as the Kuh-i-Gutba to the west of the wadi (British Admiralty 1944 : 66). MG]



AREA A EXCAVATIONS

Area A is located at an elevation 6 m above the plain. During the course of the excavations, the team sometimes found plastic and other modern debris left by the Iraqi military in the bottom of rectangular pits that they initially thought might be ancient rooms. Further complicating the excavations was the fact that much of Area A had over it several courses of mudbricks that had the appearance of a massive platform (Fig. 6), making it very difficult to define the walls of the building below.

Initially Area A was opened in square L17 and then expanded north and west (Figs 7-9). Two levels were uncovered, with the upper one, Level 1, having three phases associated with changes in architecture. In an exploratory pit below Level 1, the excavators exposed a tiny part of Level 2.

Level 2

This level was reached by a 1 x 1 m square probe, which was dug adjacent to the southwest corner of the main building of Level 1 (Figs. 8-10). The outer wall of the building, of mudbricks with thick mortar, continued down as far as the probe reached. We presume that the lower part of the wall was an earlier version of the Level 1 building, which also served as the foundation for the Level 1 structure. Level 2 could not be dated due to a lack of ceramic remains in the probe.

Level 1

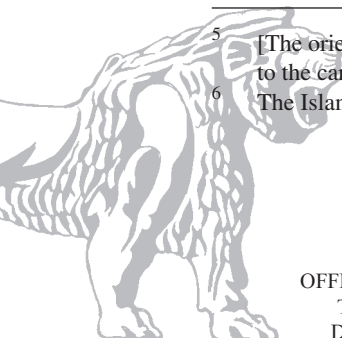
The architecture in Level 1 consisted of a large building that the excavators could identify as a temple to the god Šuda, based on two stone inscriptions found in it. Surrounding the building was a curving enclosure wall. The building itself was obscured by the superimposed mudbrick platform (Figs. 6-7), which was initially encountered at about 80-90 cm below the surface. Only the top two mudbrick layers of the platform were removed throughout Area A, but a few trenches gave information about the extent and phases of the structure below. The building was oriented with the sides to the cardinal directions, as can be seen in the satellite image (Fig. 4).⁵

Level 1, Phase B (Figs. 7-8, 11)

The earliest part of Level 1 was Phase B, reached mainly in Loci 1 to 4, at the southwest corner of the building. That corner was badly destroyed by Islamic period graves⁶ and recent intrusions, but enough remained to determine that it was rounded and its outer face was battered, in the sense that the face sloped inward as it rose. At Locus 13, the excavators exposed

⁵ [The orientation of this building is unusual, since temples in Mesopotamia tended to be oriented with the corners to the cardinal points. The satellite image, Fig. 4, confirms the orientation. MG]

⁶ The Islamic burials, some of which may have been relatively modern, were not recorded.



a corner that they initially took to be the southeast outer corner of the building; this corner was square and not battered.⁷

The curving enclosure wall a meter thick was located 3 to 5 meters from the building along the western and southern faces. The northern extension of the wall of this phase along the western side was not intact or was obscured by the enclosure wall of Phase A. The squared-off end of this earlier enclosure wall may have marked a gateway into the complex. At the south, a subsidiary wall ran off at an angle from the enclosure wall, forming Locus 5. This wall was not exposed completely because a Phase A building lay above it. Mudbricks in Phase B measured 34 x 34 x 8-5 cm and 36 x 36 x 10 cm.

The space (Locus 1) between the platform and the enclosure wall in Phase B consisted of at least three living floors, with a buildup of debris averaging 10-15 cm between the floors. The oldest floor, 3, was 1.7-1.9 m below the surface. On this floor west of the temple were several small altars or benches of baked bricks, and nearby were a horizontally-laid ceramic drain pipe and a mortar-like vessel of gypsum with gravel inside it. Farther to the south against the enclosure wall on the same floor, were two conical bread ovens (*tannurs*).

Within the main building, several Phase B rooms were exposed. The western-most room (Locus 2) was an entrance measuring 1.2 m wide and 6 m long. It was paved with baked bricks. Although it was cleared completely only at the uppermost floor, this room had evidence of three phases marked by baked brick sills and plaster floors (Figs. 7, 14a). At the outer edge of the building, the paving of that upper floor extended to the north, giving the room an L-shape. The short leg of the L leaves only a sliver of outer wall, however, so the situation is not clear. The walls related to the uppermost floor were mud-plastered, but only a few centimeters of the wall's height have remained.

The doorway at the eastern end of Locus 2 gave access to a rectangular room (Locus 3), in which were three floors, the lower two of which were mud-plastered. At the southern jamb of the doorway, sunk into Floor 3 (Fig. 14b), was a stone door socket with an Old Akkadian inscription, probably to be dated to the Ur III period or not much later (see below for inscription), recording the erection of the main door of the temple of the god Šuda (Fig. 15). In the doorway, at Fl. 1, the excavators discovered a large stone object that must be interpreted as the upper anchor of the doorpost (Figs. 16-17). The anchor was decorated with horizontal grooves on the barrel, which would have been visible, while the long tongue that went into the wall was left rough. The small hole in the side of the barrel may have functioned as part of a locking system. A metal pin, inserted through this hole and into a corresponding hole in the wooden post, would have made it difficult to open the door. This anchor is an unusual find, especially at this early a period, although stone anchors sunk into the wall are known from the Neo-Assyrian period (e.g., HALLER 1954, 179 and Fig. 196; DAMIRJI 1999, Fig. 16). But a bronze anchor with a similar ridged decoration was found at in the Mari palace of Zimrilim, along with a copper shoe for the bottom of the door post (PARROT 1959, Fig. 66).

⁷ [Viewing the plan, it seems unlikely that this corner was an outer one. It is more likely that the outer wall at this point was at the south edge of Locus 19a, which should have been an interior room rather than an outside space. MG]



At the opposite, northern, jamb of the same doorway was a square-shaped hole (25 x 25 cm) that had been dug into Floor 3 (Fig. 14a). Originally, this hole probably had housed a door socket. The doorway may once have been closed by a pair of doors using two door sockets, but one was removed for use elsewhere when a single-leafed door was substituted here. But more likely, originally the pivot stone for a single door had been set at the northern jamb and was later moved to the southern jamb.

Opposite the doorway from Locus 2, on the west wall of Locus 3, two pilasters of mud-brick were set against the wall (Fig. 10). Between the two pilasters and resting on Floor 3, was a wainscoting of 5 courses of baked bricks (34 x 34 x 8 cm) set both flat and on edge to a height of 60 cm. Above the wainscoting, the wall face was coated with mud plaster. When the excavators were trying to define a room in the area to the east of Locus 3, they struck something hard. Upon investigation, they found a stone relief stele standing slightly askew just behind the upper part of the wainscoting and the plastered face that rose above it. In other words, before the wainscoting and wall plaster were applied, the face of the stele would have been visible. Although he was not on the site when the discovery was made, Mr. Hamza was able to see exactly where the stele had sat from the impression it left in the wall. He concluded that originally the stele had been mounted in the wall so that it was about 50 cm above Floor 3, but it may have been associated with an even earlier floor that the excavators did not expose. By Floor 3, the stele was no longer of relevance and was plastered over. On the stele, there is a representation of a man and a cuneiform inscription (Fig. 18). As will be seen below, the relief, which initially might be taken for an Early Dynastic representation, has peculiarities of style that place it later in time. The Old Akkadian inscription indicates that the stele was dedicated to the god Šuda by the person depicted, Ilšu-rabi of Pašime, who can be identified as the son of Maništušu (2269-2255 BC), the third Sargonic ruler.

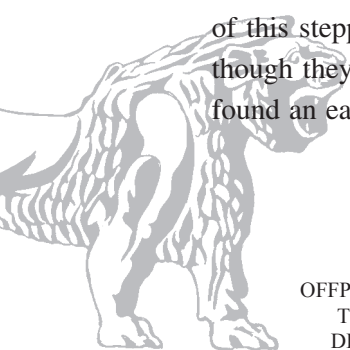
In the debris of the platform near the find spot of the relief were found several fragments of statuary, including one with enough of the lower part intact to recognize it as a statue of a man, with its distinctive tassel at the rear (Figs. 32a-b).

A round hearth, measuring 40 cm in diameter, was located near the center of Locus 3. An L-shaped altar or bench was set into the southeastern corner of the room.

In addition to the main entryway from the west, Locus 3 had two other doorways, to the north and east, each measuring 60 cm in width.

Locus 11 (Figs. 7, 14b) was the designation for a short corridor and small room to the north of Locus 3. The lower part of the walls of the locus was reinforced with several courses of baked bricks. Two courses of baked bricks lay at the northern end of the room, perhaps marking the raising of a sill in a doorway that has not yet been exposed.

Locus 4, to the east of Locus 3 (Figs. 10, 19), was a rectangular room running east to west, and paved at Fl. 3 with baked brick only at its western end. On this initial paving rested two more courses of baked bricks, which the excavators concluded had been stepped. Because of this stepping, in effect, Floor 3 of Locus 4 was contemporary with Floor 3 of Locus 3 although they were at different elevations. Under the brick pavement in Locus 4 the excavators found an earlier well (1.1 m in diameter) lined with baked bricks (27 x 17 x 7 cm) set in bitu-



men. The stratum around the well consisted of a layer of sand, possibly used for purifying the site prior to the construction of the Phase B temple.

The unpaved part of Locus 4 was equipped with a round hearth 40 cm in diameter. Against the southern wall was a low, narrow bench that ran from the pavement to the partition wall that bounded the locus to the east. The bench was covered with 11 centimeters' thickness of mud plaster.

Upon an accumulation of about 20 cm of debris, Floor 2 of Locus 4 ran up to and over the brick paving. The accumulation amounted to only a centimeter or two on top of the baked bricks (Fig. 19). Resting on top of the pavement against the northern wall was a rectangular basin of mud bricks plastered with gypsum that had been smeared down onto the pavement.

Locus 19 was exposed at Phase B only in its eastern end, which was not paved. We assume that the room existed at this level along the same lines as in the succeeding Phase A3, and we have reconstructed it and Locus 19a in dashed lines on the plan.

The excavators exposed Phase B also in a search trench at the northern side of the building (Figs. 10, 20). Here, in Locus 17, a floor with broken pottery on it was tentatively assigned to Phase B; it ran from the enclosure wall about ten centimeters under an angled wall associated with Level A3. The wall of the Phase B temple was only slightly exposed here.

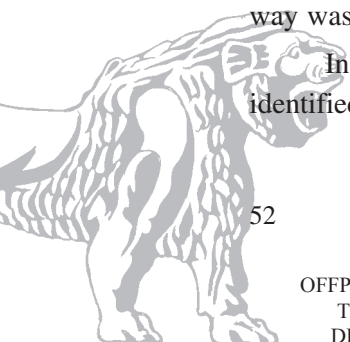
In square L18, a small trench (2 x 4 m) was excavated in order to search for the northwest corner of the structure (Fig. 10). Part of a wall or corner was found. The three courses of mudbrick examined had rectangular baked bricks (8 x 13 x 28 cm and 8 x 28 x 38 cm). A later grave (not datable) intruded into this trench and destroyed the probable corner. A baked-brick pavement ran against the wall, but it could not be assigned to a particular phase.

Area A, Level 1, Phase A3 (Fig. 11)

Most of the evidence for Phase A3 was discovered in the space between the building and the enclosure wall and in Loci 4, 19, and 19a. Locus 4 had a mudbrick pilaster built against the southern wall at this time. In Locus 19, remains of this phase lay about 50 cm above the uppermost floor of Phase B. Few alterations were made in the building's walls, as far as can be determined, and a little room was cut into the southern wall of Locus 19, just beside the doorway that led to Locus 19a. Locus 19 was paved with baked bricks to form a 2.2 m wide ramp leading down from Locus 19 through 19a and into Locus 13. In its 20 m length, this ramp dropped 1.8 m (Figs. 21, 23). The squared-off end of the outer wall in Locus 19a might have been a jamb of a major doorway, but it is also possible that the outer wall, which must have existed here, was cut away at this point, leaving the appearance of a jamb. The southern edge of the paving in Locus 19a should mark the inner face of the destroyed outer wall.

At the western end of Locus 19, a stone door socket was sunk into the baked brick pavement of Floor 3 against the northern jamb of the door that led to Locus 19a (Fig. 22). At Floor 3, this doorway was quite wide, (c. 2.2 m). As will be seen below, in Level A, Fl. 2 the doorway was narrowed to 1.3 m and a new stone door socket was installed.

In Locus 17, at the north edge of the temple (Fig. 20), a floor that has been tentatively identified with Phase A3 ran directly under an angled wall of mudbricks laid on edge. The



mortar of the angled wall was greenish mud. Thoughts that this might be a fallen wall were negated by the fact that there were many layers of wall plaster (up to 30 cm thickness) on the northern face of the platform (Fig. 24). This structure seems to have abutted the A3 temple wall but the A2 temple wall ran at least in part over it. The outer wall of the temple, at the southern edge of Locus 17, we estimate to be 3.2 m in thickness. The enclosure wall to the north was about a meter thick.

Locus 10 (Figs. 11, 25), located to the north of Locus 4, was exposed enough in this phase to show signs of having been repaired. The eastern wall had a course of rectangular baked bricks laid on the edges above three courses of baked bricks laid flat, all set in bitumen. On one surface of some of these bricks there were two grooves made with fingers.⁸ The wall repairs appear to be very similar to the wainscoting in Locus 3 of Phase B (see above).

Area A, Level 1, Phase A2 (Fig. 12)

In some areas, the Phase A2 building represented a continuation of the previous building, but some significant modifications were made at this time. The doorway between Loci 19 and 19a was narrowed and fitted with a new doorsill of baked bricks about 30 cm above Floor 3 (Fig. 22). At the same time, a new stone door socket was placed at the new northern jamb.

Loci 4, 19, and 19a were modified and reconstructed in this phase. The northern wall of all these rooms was given a new face, making the rooms narrower. The mudbricks of the new face rested on the sloping bricks of the Floor 3 pavement. At the same time, a new square room, Locus 15, was located north of and connected to Locus 19. But the only floor defined in the new room was a baked brick pavement nearly a meter below the level of the pavement in Locus 19, leading the excavators to speculate that the room served as a storage facility in the Phase A2 building. At this time, a rectangular mudbrick bin was constructed along the southern wall of Locus 19, and a rectangular baked brick basin was constructed to the west and plastered with gypsum.

Locus 9 appeared to be a small courtyard that had two floors associated with it, the upper one coated with gypsum plaster. The older floor was composed of baked bricks (36 x 36 x 6 cm) with a gypsum plaster coating applied in only a few places. Upon the lower floor were a small plastered hearth (20 cm dm) and a circular basin (20 cm dm). The baked brick floor sloped down toward the northwest (Fig. 25, upper left) where bricks were lost due to the insertion of a tomb in the northwest corner. The burial, with a slightly arched roof of mudbricks (no illustration available), had its base on an earlier baked brick pavement. The tomb had no evidence of bones or other furnishings, but embedded between bricks in the earlier

⁸ [Measurement of the bricks in the photograph (Fig. 25) makes it appear that they were approximately 20 x 16 cm. Although brick sizes are not an absolutely reliable gauge of period, it can be said that this size can fit with baked plano-convex bricks. In the later phases of the use of baked plano-convex bricks (late ED-Akkadian), both baked and unbaked bricks had very slight convexity and usually had two or more grooves, whereas in the earlier phases (ED I, early ED III) the convex side would usually have only one groove or just an indentation. It should be emphasized, however, that rectangular baked bricks of slightly larger size were typical for the Isin-Larsa period, some with shallow grooves (GIBSON *et al.* 1978, Fig. 13 : 3), being used along with square bricks. MGJ]



pavement below was a copper/bronze dagger (Figs. 26, 39) that is of a type manufactured in Early Dynastic and Akkadian times, but may be found as late as Ur III (M. Muller-Karpe, personal communication).⁹

No floor of this phase was found in Locus 10, which is just west of Locus 9. Remains of a ceramic pipe used for water drainage and a broken stone statue were found in between the mudbricks of the platform that capped the locus.

At this phase, the enclosure wall was rebuilt (Fig. 12), and at the western side, it had a north-south orientation with no curve. A gap between it and the partially refurbished curving wall to the south may have had a doorway to replace the one that was signified by the gap in the southwest stretch of the curving wall at Phase B. It should be noted that this upper enclosure wall extended to the east beyond Locus 12 but was not followed to its full extent, implying that the temple building itself continued farther toward the east. Locus 13, to the east of the temple proper, may have been an open courtyard.

A small two-room building (Loci 6-7) was constructed against the inner face of the outer wall. Finds in these new rooms were minor, and the excavators presume that the structure was used for an auxiliary function for the main structure. Locus 8, the space between the new building and the temple, abuts Locus 14, which is bounded on the east by a new wall that reached from the enclosure wall to the temple, blocking access. Against the east face of this wall and the temple façade was an irregular saw-toothed platform-like mass of mudbricks. The function of this platform is unclear.

In Locus 17, at the north of the temple, the outer wall and the enclosure wall were reconstructed. The Phase A2 walls appear to have been built directly on the Phase A3 and Phase B walls, showing continuity in the plan of the temple.

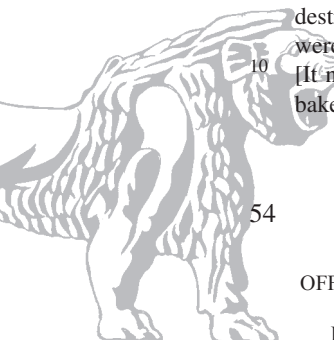
Fragments of what appear to be two sets of walls running north to south in the north-western part of the plan (Fig. 12) are judged by Mr. Hamza to be only places where the upper “platform” has been removed, leaving a semblance of a corridor.

Area A, Phase A1 (Fig. 13)

The remains of this phase are not extensive, with just fragments of walls and foundation trenches for later buildings. Above the ramp in Locus 19, there occurred a gradual accumulation of debris in Phase A2 that completely covered the A3 ramp (Fig. 21). Atop the accumulated debris, in Phase A1, some large pebbles were laid in places. A horizontal drain was constructed under the sill of the doorway into Locus 19a, where a small bit of a new pavement was found (Figs. 22, 27). But the excavators report that this door appeared to have been completely blocked at this time.¹⁰ With the slope of the pavements and the drains under the door-

⁹ [The tomb must be seen as intrusive into this locus, coming down from a level that has been eroded away or destroyed. Its presence indicates that by the time of the burial this area had ceased to be a temple, since burials were not made in Mesopotamian temples. MG]

¹⁰ [It need not have been blocked. Preservations is so poor at this phase that a raising of the doorway above the baked brick sill to adapt to continuing accumulation of debris might have looked like a blocking. MG]



way, we must conclude that in all phases, Loci 19 and 19a, although seeming to be corridors, were either open to the sky or were subject to water damage, and thus had to be paved.

In Locus 12, at the eastern end of the excavation area was a large hearth measuring 1.7 meters in diameter. Mud brick and large rocks were found scattered nearby, but no finds were *in situ*.

Outside the building, south of Locus 19, a horizontal baked brick drain ran alongside the outer wall in Locus 12, above the saw-toothed platform of the earlier phase.

Exploratory Trenches in Area A (Figs. 8-9)

Directly north of Locus 4, near Locus 3, a small probe (2 x 1 m) was excavated into the mudbrick platform, reaching a depth of 1 m below the top of the platform. It was in this operation that the stele was encountered. No other finds were found, aside from some statue fragments in the mudbrick debris.

The excavators ran a narrow trench (1 m wide x 30 cm deep) from Locus 11 up to the northern edge of the temple, cutting into the platform of mudbricks. On the plan (Figs. 12-13) it appears that this trench exposed a corridor with doorways, but as mentioned above, the “faces” of the walls may be just bricks of the platform left when other bricks were removed from between them. Within the debris of the trench were found some baked bricks measuring 37 x 37 x 10 cm.

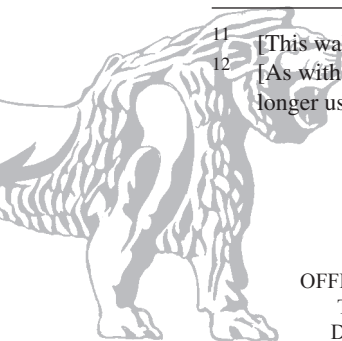
To the east of the main excavations, were two other probes. One (2 x 1.5 m) was excavated near the border between N17 and N18, following the Phase A3 floor and the supposed eastern wall of the building. The area covered is directly north of Locus 13. Here, were encountered a damaged wall of Phase A3, measuring 1.2 m in thickness and running to the east from the temple wall.¹¹ The area north of the wall, designated Locus 16, yielded few artifacts. Approximately 19 m north of this wall in Square N 18 but near N19, the other exploratory probe (2 x 2 m) was made. The goal was to find the northeast corner of the temple. But only remnants of damaged wall and debris were found, with mud bricks measuring 34 x 34 x 10 cm. The dimensions of these bricks are similar to the Phase B building, suggesting that these remains date to that phase. And have been placed on the plan for that phase (Fig. 10).

Surface

Intruding into Locus 1 was a damaged, low-vaulted tomb (Figs. 13, 28) in square L17, with no intact remains, though indicated by a stick-figure on the plan. The vault was made of mudbricks (37 x 37 x 7 cm). Another simple interment grave was also nearby. The entire surface was extraordinarily disturbed, so the level from which these two burials were made could not be ascertained.¹²

¹¹ [This wall would seem to give additional evidence that the temple extends farther to the east. MG]

¹² [As with the other vaulted burial intrusive into Locus 9, these graves must have originated after the area was no longer used as a temple. MG]



AREA A FINDS

Stone Objects

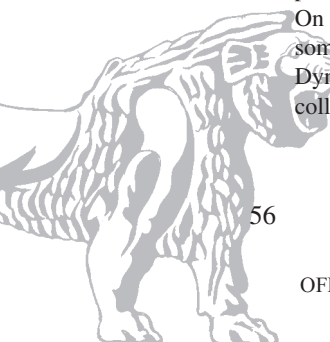
Stone objects found in the excavations include the relief stele (Figs. 18, 29), which, from its position, may have been an orthostat (65 cm h, 40 cm wd., 22 cm th). The stele is made of gray and white alabaster. A man stands facing left beside an inscription in which Išū-rabi of Pašime dedicates the object to the god Šuda (see inscription section below). Based on the stylistic elements, specifically the dress and stiff posture, this relief at first sight might be thought to be Early Dynastic, but the inscription firmly dates the artifact to the Akkadian period.¹³

The other very important inscribed object is the stone door socket (45 cm dm, 17 cm h) found sunk into the floor of Locus 3 at the southern jamb of the doorway leading to Locus 2 (Figs. 15, 30). The cavity on the top surface that received the pivot post is stained with a greenish color, caused by the corrosion of copper/bronze residue from a fitting or shoe that protected the bottom of the post. The inscription (see below), which is in the Old Akkadian language and dates most probably to Ur III or slightly later, mentions the main door of the Temple of Šuda.

Inscriptions on the Stele and Door socket

The inscriptions were transliterated and translated by Dr. Benjamin Studevent-Hickman. The treatment here differs somewhat from that given in the Arabic report on Abu Sheeja (MOHAMMAD *et al.* 2006). Note that the citations here have been changed from the usual cuneiform style in order to conform to the style of the rest of the article.

¹³ [It should be noted that the eye is more three-dimensional than is normal in Early Dynastic sculpture, with the part nearer the nose more deeply cut, as is the case in Akkadian relief. Compare, e.g. Ur Nanše plaque and Stele of the Vulture (STROMMINGER 1964, Pls. 73, 66) with Akkadian reliefs (STROMMINGER 1964, 14, 18-19). The hatching of the eyebrow, although known in Early Dynastic statuary from the Inanna Temple at Nippur (personal communication, Jean Evans) and at Mari (PARROT 1953, Pl 28), is relatively rare. This treatment of eyebrows is common in Akkadian, Gudea, and Ur III statues (STROMMINGER 1964, Pls. XXII, XVIII, *et passim*). The rather sinuous, naturalistic feet are unlike the flat feet of southern Mesopotamian Early Dynastic reliefs. Such a treatment does occur at Mari (PARROT 1953, Pl. 70) in shell inlays that feature bound prisoners and soldiers with flat caps, identical to the flat caps in early Akkadian cylinder seals (BOEHMER 1965, Tf. VI-7, *Akkadisch* 1b). Sinuous, naturalistic feet are common on reliefs and cylinder seals later in the Akkadian period (STROMMINGER 1964, Pls. 113, 118). The up-curving lower hem of the garment also marks this stele as unusual. In April of 2009, when this relief was shown on-line in a story about the reopening of the Iraq Museum, some colleagues thought it was a fake. But it is, in fact, an excellent piece of evidence for the carrying over of Early Dynastic style into early Akkadian, with some subtle changes. Perhaps we should re-evaluate a lapis lazuli disk that appeared on the antiquities market some years ago. On one side was the Anzu bird grasping two horned animals. On the other was an Early Dynastic-looking man and an inscription reading Rimuš, Lugal Kiš. It was argued by some art historians that the inscription had been put on well after the disk was made, but given the lag of Early Dynastic style into Akkadian, that solution need no longer hold. I understand that the disc is now in the Rosen collection in New York. MG]



The inscription on the stele (Fig. 27) found in Locus 3 leaves little doubt that Tell Abu Sheeja is to be identified as the ancient site of Pašime.¹⁴ This new evidence places the site considerably farther north and west of where previously thought. Cuneiform sources, principal among them a hymn of Išbi-Erra that provides the territorial extent of the kingdom of Kindattu, ruler of Elam and Anšan, indicate that Pašime lay on the ancient coastline of the Persian Gulf (VAN DIJK 1978, 193-194 [ll. 22-23]). Based on these texts, P. Steinkeller suggested that its territory extended from southern Khuzistan down to modern Bushire, thus agreeing with W. Hinz's earlier claim that it lay near modern Basht.¹⁵ The new evidence that Pašime is Abu Sheeja calls this into question. In ancient times, the head of the Gulf extended much farther north than it does today, and while Pašime may have controlled part of its shore, it seems unlikely that it held territory all the way to Bushire.

The grammar, paleography, and orthography of the stele inscription all date it to the Sargonic period, and, based on its contents, it can be dated more precisely to the reign of Maništušu, plus or minus a few years. In support of this, the figure mentioned in the inscription (and depicted by the relief), namely Išū-rabi, appears as the "governor of Pašime" (ÉNSI Ba-si-me^{ki}) in the Maništušu Obelisk, while his son, Ipulum, acts as a witness to one of the transactions there (Side A xiv :14-17, GELB *et al.* 1991, 124).

Statue inscription

i

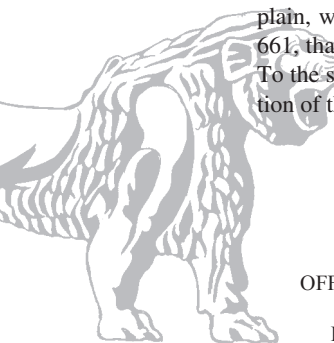
1. *a-na*
2. ^d*su-da*
3. *il-su-ra-bí*
4. *ba-si-me^{ki}*

ii

1. *šū GIŠ.TUKUL*
2. ALAM
3. *u-se₁₁-rí-ib*
4. *pá-si-iṭ*
5. *su₄-mi-im*

¹⁴ For the reading Pašime, as opposed to Bašime, see STEINKELLER 1982, 240-241 n. 13. As noted there, the Sumerian and Akkadian pronunciations of the name (Mišime and Pašime, respectively) follow the same bifurcation and development as those of the toponym Marḡaši/Paraḡšum and its derivatives (see pp. 237-238, n. 1). Support for the voiceless plosive is found in forms written with an initial PA.

¹⁵ Steinkeller writes, "In consideration of the above data [i.e., the cuneiform sources], it can be suggested that the territory of Pašime formed a belt, stretching parallel to the Persian Gulf and encompassing the coast and the adjacent mountain ranges. In the west, Pašime appears to have extended up to Southern Ḥuzistan. Pašime's northern neighbor in all probability was the land of Ḥuḡ(u)nuri... [which] was convincingly located... on the Fahliyān plain, with the Tang-i Ḥās gorge as its focal point... This would agree with W. Hinz's suggestion, *CAH* I/2, p. 661, that "Bashimi is probably in the neighborhood of the present-day Bāsht (between Bihbahān and Fahliyān). To the south, Pašime possibly reached as far as the Bay of Bušire, the main natural port on the northeastern section of the Persian Gulf" (1982, 243, n. 18).



iii

1. *ap-la-am*
2. *a 𒀭-tá*
3. *su₄-ma-am*
4. *a ir-ši*

For (the god) Šuda, Išū-rabi (of) Pašime, the soldier, brought in (this) statue. May the one who erases the name (on this inscription) not find an heir; may he not acquire a name (for himself).

Commentary

i 2: The Elamite deity Šuda is attested sporadically in Babylonian sources. For local usage outside these inscriptions, note the personal name Šuda-bāni, a ruler (literally, “man”) of Pašime who married Tarām-šulgi, daughter of the Ur III king Šulgi (STEINKELLER 1982, 241 n. 16); compare also the patronym in the seal legend discussed below.

ii 1: For šu ^{giš}TUKUL, see, e.g., MEEK 1935, 81, 4’; cf. GELB and KIENAST 1990, 111 (Narāmsîn B 8 :4).

iii 2, 4: The same verbs are used in the curse formula of an inscription of the Elamite ruler Puzur-Inšušinak (GELB and KIENAST 1990, 329 [Elam 4 :2 :12-14] see also, possibly, Elam 3, in the same volume).

Based on similar criteria, the door-socket inscription is clearly later than that of the stele. Here, too, the inscription can be dated more precisely – to the Ur III period or shortly thereafter. In support of this, it employs the sign ŠU for the genitive suffix (see lines 3 and 8), a feature first attested in Ur III times (note also the use of the sign for the sibilant in the divine name Šuda). Furthermore, there is a lack of vowel contraction one expects by the Old Babylonian period (see line 9).

In addition to this inscription, note the cylinder seal now in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, images of which were available on the website of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative at the time of this report.¹⁶ The legend of the seal reads *Ša-limbe-lī, dumu Puzur₄-Šu-da, nu-bànda Ba-si-me^{ki}* (“Šalim-belī, son of Puzur-Šuda, colonel of Pašime”). This may be the colonel by the same name mentioned in Erlenmeyer 93, an Ur III text from Drehem dating to the 46th year of Šulgi’s reign (see ENGLUND 1992, 90-91, 4 :5 [copy on p. 104]).

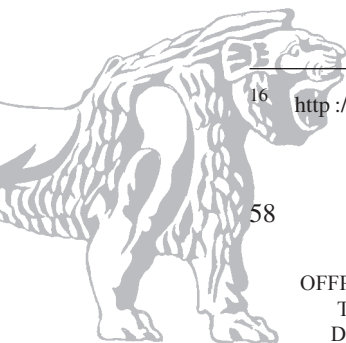
Door Socket

1. *a-na*
2. *š^du-da*
3. *be-lī-šu-nu*

16

http://cdli.ucla.edu/search/result.pt?id_text=P272876&start=0&result_format=single&-op_id_text=eq&size=100.

58



4. 3 DUMU *tā-bu-um*(?)-LUGAL(?)
5. ^{giš}IG.GAL
6. É ^dšu-*da*
7. *a-na*
8. *ba-la-ti-šu-nu*
9. *ir-da*(?)-ú
10. 0.0.1 GÁNA NÍG.BA
11. SANGA(?) 1(?) ÁB(?) 3(?)

For Šuda, their lord, the three children of *Tābu(m)*-...(?), for their (long) life, the main door of the temple of Šuda, they set up(?). One iku, the gift, the temple administrator(?), 1 three-year-old bull(?).

Commentary

4 : Here taking *Tā-bu*-... as the beginning of a personal name. The last few signs are unclear. The last sign may be IR, or possibly NI since parallel hatchings are not necessarily part of the graph (see, e.g., BE in l. 3).

9 : The reading is not certain. One expects a plural verb, and the form *irda'ū* /*yirda'ū*/ is good Old Akkadian for *redû*, “to arrange” (see CAD, s.v.).

Perhaps read *ir-tá/ta-ú*, for *retû/reṭû*, “to set up,” which is used specifically for doors but is otherwise unattested until the Old Babylonian period.

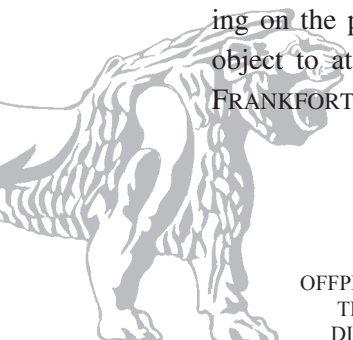
10-11 : These lines are puzzling, the latter particularly so. One expects “...they gave/established,” or the like, but the last sign of line 11 does not appear to represent the suffix of a plural verb.

Other Stone objects

Several fragments of statues were found in Locus 3 and in the mudbrick debris of the platform above. One white marble piece (AS number unavailable at present), found in Locus 3 at Phase B, appears to show two fingers and a thumb grasping a staff (Fig. 31). The lower half of an alabaster male statue with a flounced skirt and the end of a sash hanging below the waist at the back (Fig. 32) lacks its feet. It measures 33 cm high and 20-25 cm thick.

A fragment of another marble/alabaster statue was found in Locus 10. Although not intact enough to know for certain the placement of this fragment on the original statue, we suggest that it was from the knee of a seated deity wearing a flounced skirt (Fig. 33).

Recovered from the mudbrick platform in square L17 was a fragment of an alabaster statue with the lower body of a goddess seated on a dais (Fig. 34). There is evidence of burning on the piece. The styling of the skirt, in registers of flattened, sinuous tassels, dates this object to at least as late as the Ur III period (STROMMINGER 1964, 129, right ; 142 right ; FRANKFORT 1956, Pl. 57).



There were a few other stone objects from Area A, including two irregularly shaped objects with curvilinear grooves (Fig. 36a), from Locus 10 in Phase A ; and a cup-shaped object, perhaps a finial from a staff (Fig. 36b) ; and fragments of stone bowls (Figs. 36d-e, 37a), most of which were from within the upper platform. A lion-headed stone stamp seal (Fig. 37b), most probably of Uruk date, was recovered from the upper fill of Locus 1 in Phase A. Several hones (e.g., Fig. 36c) and loom weights (not shown), as well as a biconoid weight (Fig. 37c) also were discovered in the platform or fill. A fragmentary two-lobed alabaster amulet (Fig. 37d) came from Locus 10 in Phase A).

Terracotta objects

A fragment of a mold-made nude female figurine and two broken animal figurines (not illustrated) were recovered from Phase A2. A mold-made baked clay spindle whorl with grooved decoration (Fig. 37f) was recovered from Phase B, Locus 3.

Metal Objects

Besides the dagger blade from Locus 9 (Fig. 39), there was a badly damaged and corroded pin (Fig. 38) from the surface debris of Area A.

Pottery

Pottery finds from the debris and the building phases in Area A date from the Uruk to the Old Babylonian periods. There were some sherds of Late Uruk burnished gray ware and bases of Early Dynastic I solid-footed goblets in the debris. A few other types can be dated to the third millennium BC, e.g. a small bottle of Early Dynastic type (Fig. 40a). A small mold-made bowl with rows of raised ovals on the outer face is typical of the late Early Dynastic and early Akkadian periods (Figs. 40b-c).¹⁷ This example was found in Locus 1, between the temple and the enclosure wall, in Phase B.

A fragmentary carinated bowl (Fig. 40d), also from Locus 1, is of a type that began in the Akkadian period and continued through most periods in Mesopotamia. This particular example, with a diameter of 16 cm, is likely to date to the Ur III period, and might suggest a date for Phase B, but there is not enough information available on the pottery from the temple to date the phases accurately, so we will have to rely on other criteria. The excavators emphasize that there was in the debris of the upper platform and in the rooms in the temple pottery of Old Babylonian types, similar to that illustrated below for Areas B and C. Unfortunately, almost no illustrations or findspot information for Area A ceramics can be given at this time. Two vessels that definitely came from Area A are, unfortunately, difficult to date exactly, although one (Figs. 41a-b) may find a parallel at Susa (GASCHE 1973, Pl. 12 : 20, late OB).¹⁸ The other

¹⁷ DELOUGAZ 1952, B041.710 ; MACKAY 1929/Part II, Pl. XLV,4. [I noticed that sherds of this type were common on the surface at Abu Salabikh in 1964. MG]

¹⁸ [We wish to thank James Armstrong and Hermann Gasche for commenting on the pottery from Abu Sheeja. MG]



(Figs. 42a-b), with its narrow, awkward base, is unusual and hard to fix in time. Both these vessels are from Phase A2.

One extraordinary sherd is a fragment of a bowl that originally had tripod feet and an inner surface decorated with raised ovoids (Figs. 43a-b). Found in debris of Locus 1, this type is rare, but Mr. Hamza recalls pottery of this kind at the Old Babylonian site of Tell Muhammad, in southern Baghdad.

SUMMATION OF AREA A

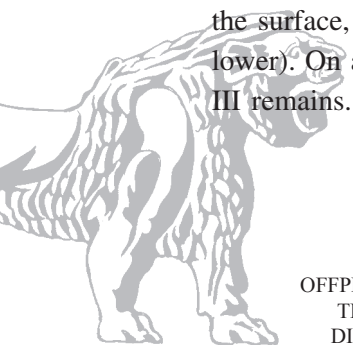
The evidence presented in this report argues that the building exposed in Area A was the temple of the god Šuda in the city of Pašime. The inscription in Old Akkadian on the relief stele identifies a city ruler who can be identified as a son of Maništušu. The style of the sculpture combines Early Dynastic and Akkadian characteristics, illustrating the phenomenon of style lag that occurs in all historically designated periods. The original version of the temple, not yet reached, may have been constructed at least as early as the Early Dynastic period, judging by some of the pottery sherds and the fragmentary stone sculpture found in the excavation. The intricacies of the rebuildings of the structure have not been investigated thoroughly enough, as yet, to detail the full history of the temple, but the inscribed door socket provides a fixed point for Phase B in the Ur III period or only somewhat later. The “platform” overlying the entire building would seem to be the first step in the construction of a new building that may or may not have been completed. At this time, that platform cannot be dated. The excavators insist that there were examples of Old Babylonian ceramics found in rooms of the temple below the platform, and it must be concluded that the temple lasted into that period. The rounded corner of the building would be relative uncommon at so late a time, however.

AREA B EXCAVATIONS

Area B is located in square M11, near the eastern edge of the site, close to the Wadi Tieb (Fig. 5). In addition to digging here to explore the potential for future excavations, the location was chosen because of the numerous baked clay figurines and plaques found on the surface, indicating a possible place of manufacture. Surface remains in the area not only included terracotta figurines of naked human females and animals, but also pottery dating to the Ubaid (Fig. 46, upper), Uruk, Early Dynastic (Fig. 46, lower), and Old Babylonian periods.

The excavation trench (10 x 5 m ; Figs. 44-45) descended to the earliest level at 7 m below the surface. The trench was stepped, with each stepped area becoming smaller as the pit was dug lower.

Level 4 may have had up to six floors, but no intact walls were found, although there was mudbrick debris. In the lowest three floors there were few artifacts and the pottery was not sufficiently preserved to give a date. But at the next floor above, at about 5.7 m beneath the surface, there were black and red pottery sherds of Early Dynastic Scarlet Ware (Fig. 46, lower). On a floor about 5 m below the surface, we encountered what may be Early Dynastic III remains. The highest floor of the level at 4.5 m from the surface had built into it at least



two plastered circular installations that measure 30-35 cm in diameter, but the functions of these installations are not discernable due to their fragile state and poor preservation. Near these installations, there were baked brick fragments and a few unidentifiable pottery sherds.

Level 3 rests at 1.85 m below the surface, and the remains include portions of a wall with mud bricks measuring 36 x 36 x 8-10 cm. Five floors are apparent in this level, and all are datable to the Old Babylonian period by the ceramics.

Level 2 was based at about 1 m below the surface. Its walls were of mud bricks measuring 35 x 35 x 6 cm. Two floors were found in the level, and the pottery is datable to the Old Babylonian period.

Level 1 was more damaged than the lower levels, and only foundations of walls were evident. Approximately 30 cm below the surface, mud bricks measuring 38 x 16 x 8 cm were found and two floors were distinguishable. The level contained an intrusive hole with gray fill as well as some of green. The excavators speculate that the intrusion indicates a drain that crossed the area.

AREA B FINDS

Pottery

Sherds found on the surface include those datable to the Ubaid (Fig. 46, upper) and Uruk periods. Level 4 has some of the earliest pottery found in context at Tell Abu Sheeja, the Early Dynastic I scarlet ware mentioned above (Fig. 46, lower) and other sherds from ED III. The other levels (Levels 1-3) had fairly typical Old Babylonian pottery (no illustrations available). One small jar is not very distinctive and is difficult to date securely (Fig. 47).

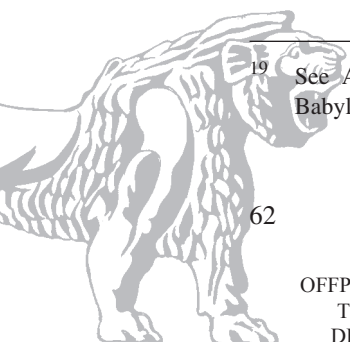
Terracotta Figurines, Plaques, and Model beds

Terracotta objects include those that were recovered from the surface as well as the excavations within Levels 1-3. Most of the figurines were of human nude females and were mold-made, primarily of the type in which the woman holds her breasts. The style suggests an Isin-Larsa or Old Babylonian date (Fig. 48). Several molded bed fragments show couples in a sexual attitude (Figs. 49a-b). In contrast to most of the female figurines and the model beds,¹⁹ the animal figurines of Levels 1-3 were hand-formed (Fig. 50).

AREA C EXCAVATIONS

The excavations in this operation (10 x 10 m) were conducted in square O8 (Fig. 5), which lies between two rises near the southern end of the mound. The goal of this excavation was to provide a preliminary indication of expected archaeological materials in the area for future excavation. Remains found at or near the surface include Old Babylonian pottery, female figurines, mudbricks, and baked bricks (26 x 26 x 8 cm).

¹⁹ See ASSANTE (2000) for further discussion on this type of art in southern Mesopotamia during the Old Babylonian period.



In the square, one building with two phases (Level 1A and B) was uncovered (Figs. 51-52). Parts of the building were damaged by later activity, but there were some intact walls of mudbrick (34 x 34 x 10 cm). The walls generally measured 1 m in width, suggesting that the building was a significant one. The structure uncovered for both these phases has evidence it was used for domestic activities.

During Phase B, the lower one, in Locus 7, an altar or bench of mud bricks (1.6 x 1 m) was constructed in the southeast corner. Locus 5 was meant to serve as a small room or kitchen. Locus 2 was damaged by an arched roofed tomb (83 cm wide) from a subsequent occupation, either Level 1A or a level now eroded away. Mud bricks used in the tomb measure 35 x 35 x 20 cm, which was noted to be of an unusual size for Old Babylonian bricks. In the tomb were two bone pins (or makeup application pencils) and a stone weight.

In the Phase A building, Locus 5 appeared again to have been used as a possible kitchen, with hearth and *tannur* installations. Locus 4, which may have served as a bathroom, had a baked brick paved floor, with some of the baked bricks shaped as trapezoids. A small drain was found near the entrance connecting to Locus 3. Installations in the Phase A building included a liquid drainage system that originated from Locus 7, or even farther north, and emptied into two round ceramic basins, one of which was relatively well preserved, installed within the floor of Locus 2 (Fig. 53). The drainage grooves in the Phase A building were made of a very hard gypsum plaster with an ashy inclusion (*nura*).²⁰ The function of this liquid system is not clear. Locus 7 continued to be used in Phase A, but it appears to have been made into a smaller room. However, this is not entirely certain since the locus was damaged along the north wall. A horizontal ceramic pipe found partially intact within the north wall of the locus connected to the liquid/drainage system associated with Locus 2.

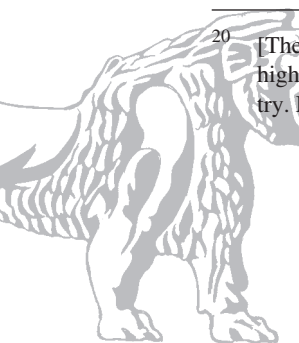
AREA C FINDS

The finds from Area C include pottery datable to the Old Babylonian period (Figs. 54-55). The first one is a relatively rare jar form, at least in the excavations of Tell Abu Sheeja, with shoulders that are somewhat flat and a cylindrical neck that narrows. Both forms are definitely in the Old Babylonian range, but show characteristics that link them to Susa in a level that H. Gasche (personal communication) dates to the early-mid 17th Century, using the new shorter chronology. Parallels are given in the catalogue.

One terracotta plaque shows a dwarf playing a musical instrument and/or dancing (Fig. 56a), which is similar to terracotta plaques found in other Old Babylonian sites (OPIFICIUS 1961). Other finds in Area C include hand made figurines, with one representing a bull with a hump on its back, and baked clay spindle whorls (e.g., Fig. 56b).

²⁰

[The sounds something like *qudadh*, a mixture of lime and volcanic ash that is still being used in Yemen. It is highly durable, and can be seen on the ancient dam at Marib and in much earlier water installations in that country. MG]



Stone objects include large, irregular stone weights (Figs. 56c-d), probably for looms. There is also a barrel weight, found in a grave of Locus 2 (Fig. 56e) along with a bone pin (Fig. 56f).

GENERAL SURFACE FINDS

We recovered a number of artifacts from the surface of the mound, in a variety of locations. These include flint blades, stone hones, and terracotta wheels (Fig. 57).

OVERALL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The buildings exposed in Areas A and C have been dated to the Old Babylonian period, but the situation in Area A is more complicated than that, with the probability of a stack of temples from successive periods that go as late as the Old Babylonian. Other remains found in the levels of Area B as well as pottery finds on the surface in other locations suggest that the site was occupied as early as the Ubaid and Uruk. By the Early Dynastic I and III periods the site was clearly established. There is probability that at this date there was a temple in Area A. The sand found underneath Locus 4 in Area A may imply a purification process similar to the one found at the Temple Oval at Khafajah (DELOUGAZ 1940), a structure that dates to the Early Dynastic and early Akkadian periods. But the inscribed objects of Akkadian and Ur III date dedicated to the god Šuda, a god previously known only from rare written sources, clinch the argument that the building in Area A was a temple. Most important, we can now place ancient Pašime firmly on the map.

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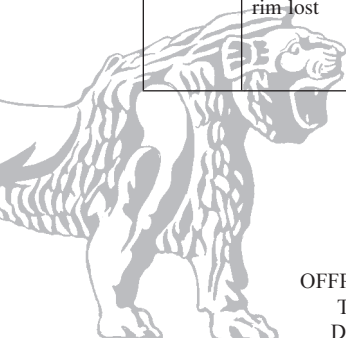
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Catalogue

Number	Object	Area	Square	Locus	Phase/Level	Measurements	Description	Illustration
1	Objects (2) stone, decorated	Area A		Locus 10	Phase A	Object 1 : lg 21 cm, wd 9 cm, th 6 cm Object 2 : lg 14 cm, wd 8 cm, th 6 cm	Decorated sand stone objects with stylized grooves.	Fig. 36a. See MOHAMMAD, <i>et al.</i> 2005-06, p. 97, middle left, for second fragment
2	Jar (?), stone, fragmentary	Area A		Locus 10	Phase A	ht 1.5 cm, dm 6.5 cm	Top portion (?) of a cylinder shaped alabaster jar (?). Grooved. Top has triangular incisions.	Fig. 35
3	Finial, stone	Area A		Locus 9	Phase A	ht 4.8 cm, dm 6 cm, dm hole beneath 2.5 cm	Stone object drilled to receive wooden (?) shaft, which was to be held by a pin inserted through narrow side channel.	Fig. 36b
4	Bowl, stone, fragmentary	Area A		Locus 10	Phase A	ht 7.2 cm, dm rim 18 cm, dm base 8 cm	Conical bowl, clear white and orange colored alabaster. Simple rim, flat base.	Fig. 36d
5	Bowl, stone, fragmentary	Area A		Locus 10	Phase A	ht 7.5 cm, dm rim 22 cm, base dm 6.5 cm	Unusual shape, upright sides, high solid foot, alabaster.	Fig. 36e
6	Bowl, stone, fragment	Area A		Locus 10	Phase A	4 x 7 x 5 cm with th 1 cm	Rim fragment, alabaster. Holes for mending had fragments of copper wire.	Fig. 37a
7	Seal, stamp, stone, lion head	Area A	L17	fill outside the enclosure wall	Phase A	lg 3.3 cm, wd 2.9 cm, th 1 cm	Lion head seal made of a reddish stone. Unclear, worn design on stamp surface, drilled for suspension. Datable to Uruk period.	Fig. 37b
8	Hone, stone, fragmentary	Area A	L17		Surface	lg 6.5 cm, wd 4.7 cm, th 2.5 cm	Upper part of hone, pierced.	Fig. 36c
9	Weight, stone, finished	Area A	M17	top of platform	Phase A	lg 8.7 cm, dm 3.8 cm	Gray stone, tapered toward ends.	Fig. 37c
10	Pendant, alabaster, fragmentary	Area A		Locus 10	Phase A	ht 4.3 cm, wd 4.4 cm, th 0.9 cm	Pendant, right "wing" lost, scalloped edge. Pierced for suspension.	Fig. 37d
11	Sickles, flint (3)	Area A		Locus 14	Phase A.2	lg 3 cm, wd 2 cm, th 0.4 cm	Three flint sickles, one with serrated edge, another has remains of bitumen used to set the object.	cf. Fig. 57a

Number	Object	Area	Square	Locus	Phase/Level	Measurements	Description	Illustration
12	Jar, pottery	Area A		Locus 12	Phase A.2	ht 7 cm, dm rim 3.1 cm, dm body 4.9 cm, dm base 1.8 cm	Hand-formed jar, simple outturned rim, flat base.	Fig. 41
13	Jar, pottery	Area A	M17	floor	Phase A.2	ht 12 cm, dm rim 7 cm, dm body 9 cm, dm base 2 cm	Small reddish colored jar with a wide mouth, rounded body, and disc shaped base.	Fig. 42
14	Flask, pottery, rim lost	Area A	M17	fill	Phase A.2	ht 7.0 cm, dm body 10 cm	Reddish body, yellow slip, carinated body.	Fig. 40a
15	Bowl, pottery, mold-made, fragmentary	Area A	L17	near north baulk	Phase B	ht 3.5 cm, dm rim 7.5 cm	Yellowish buff, mold-made, everted rim, rounded body, 3 registers of raised ovoids..	Fig. 40b-c
16	Bowl, pottery, carinated, fragmentary	Area A	L17	Locus 1, near drain	Phase B	ht 5.0 cm, dm rim 6.0 cm, dm base 5.8 cm	Reddish color, well made.	Fig. 40d
17	Figurine, female, baked clay, fragmentary	Area A	L17	Locus 11	Phase A.2	ht 4 cm, wd 4.2 cm	Mold-made, hands to breasts, head and lower half missing.	no illustration available
18	Figurines (2), animal, baked clay	Area A	L17	on latest floor of the phase	Phase A.2	ht 5 cm, wd 3.1 cm	Missing heads, handmade.	no illustration available
19	Spindle whorl, stone	Area A		Locus 3 floor	Phase B	ht 1.7 cm, dm 3.7 cm, dm hole 0.8 cm	Spindle whorl with rounded surface, flat base, well made.	Fig. 37e
20	Fragment of decorated ware, pottery	Area A	M17	inside platform	Phase A.1	4 x 4 x 5 cm	Decorated ceramic, mold made, raised ovals on inner surface.	Fig. 43
21	Disk, baked clay	Area A	L17		Phase B	dm 8.5 cm, th 2.2 cm	Ceramic disk, pierced, concentric circle decoration, mold made (?).	Fig. 37f
22	Dagger, copper/bronze	Area A		Locus 9, in the northeast corner under grave	Phase A.2	lg 18.0 cm, wd 5.0 cm, th 0.4 cm	Dagger, worn on edge, rounded point, two rivets through tang, corroded.	Fig. 39
23	Jar, pottery	Area C		Locus 6	Inside a hole	ht 18.0 cm, dm rim 10.0 cm, dm. base 5.0 cm	Simple rim, tall neck, ledge shoulder, slumping body, disc base.	Fig. 54
24	Jar, pottery, neck and rim lost	Area C		Locus 2, inside a grave	Level 1	ht 13.5 cm, dm body 8.5 cm, dm base 4.5 cm	Shallow ridge at base of neck, slumping body, disc base. Very similar to AS 25.	See MOHAMMAD <i>et al.</i> 2005-06, p.90, top row, middle.



Number	Object	Area	Square	Locus	Phase/Level	Measurements	Description	Illustration
25	Jar, pottery, damaged	Area C		Locus 2, inside a grave	Level 1	ht 10.8 cm, dm rim 6.7 cm, dm body 8.0 cm, dm base 4.0 cm	Simple rim, flaring neck, shallow ledge at base of neck, slumping body, ring base. See AS 24.	Fig. 55
26	Pin, bone	Area C		Locus 2, inside a grave	Level 1	lg 11.0 cm, dm 0.7 cm	Thicker end rounded.	Fig. 56f
27	Weight, stone, finished	Area C		Locus 2, inside a grave	Level 1	lg 3.5 cm, dm 1 cm	Cylindrical black stone weight, tapering at ends.	Fig. 56e
28	Basin, pottery	Area C		Locus 2, parallel to the north wall, embedded into floor	Level 1, Phase A	ht 45 cm, dm rim 51 cm, dm base 25 cm	Everted rim, ring base. Installed within a hard plaster and ash material (<i>nura</i>) as part of darinage system.	Fig. 53
29	Weight, stone, irregular shape	Area C		Locus 2	Level 1, Phase A	dm 4.5 cm, th 1.5 cm	Rough stone disc pierced toward one side.	Fig. 56c
30	Figurine, animal, baked clay	Area C		Locus 2	Level 1, Phase B	ht 7.5 cm, lg 14.0 cm, wd 3.7 cm	Hand formed, perhaps a humped bull. Much missing.	See MOHAMMAD <i>et al.</i> 2005-06, p. 98, bottom left.
31	Model bed, fragmentary	Area B	M11	Near the southern baulk of the exploratory trench	Inside a hole	h. 5.0, wd 4.2 cm	Part of a model bed with molded surface. Sexual scene.	Fig. 49b
32	Figurines (3), animal	Area B	M11	near the southern baulk of the exploratory trench	Inside a hole	ht 5.0 cm, lg 8.0 cm, wd 2.0-3.5 cm	Three animal figurines, hand-formed, one possibly representing horse; heads and tails missing.	Fig. 50
33	Jar, pottery	Area B	M11	in the debris	Level 1	ht 4.8 cm, dm mouth 2.2 cm, dm body 5 cm, dm base 1.5 cm	Plain rim, slightly flaring neck, carinated body, flat base.	Fig. 47
34	Flask, pottery, fragmentary	Area B	M11		5 m below the surface	ht 5.4 cm, dm body 8 cm	Yellowish body. Neck and much of body lost. Rounded profile.	no illustration available
35	Figurines (8), female, baked clay, fragmentary	Area B			Surface	ht 3.5-6.3 cm, greatest wd 5.0 cm	Mold-made nude females, holding breasts, badly damaged.	Fig. 48
36	Figurines (7), baked clay, fragmentary	Area B			Surface	Average ht 6.3 cm, average wd 3.7 cm	Parts of hand-formed animal figurines,	no illustration available

Number	Object	Area	Square	Locus	Phase/Level	Measurements	Description	Illustration
37	Hone, stone	Area A	M16		Surface	lg 6.0 cm, wd 4.0 cm, th 2.5 cm	One end flat, the other rounded, pierced for suspension.	cf. Fig. 57b
38	Figurine, animal, fragmentary	Area C		adjacent to the east baulk	Surface	lg 7.6 cm, ht 2.3 cm	Hand-formed animal figurine, of good quality, much damaged	no illustration available
39	Weight?, whorl?, pottery	Area C		near east baulk	Surface	dm 8.7 cm, th 1.4 cm	Crude disc shaped weight or spindle whorl, pierced. Made from a portion of a pottery vessel. Large for a whorl.	Fig. 56b
40	Plaque, dwarf	Area C			Surface	ht 6.7 cm, wd 5.2 cm, th 1.3 cm	Male, bow-legged dwarf, playing a musical instrument and/or dancing. Mold-made. Top and bottom missing.	Fig. 56a
41	Weight, irregular stone	Area C			Surface	lg 17.0 cm, wd 12.0 cm, th 9.5 cm	Large weight, irregularly shaped, pierced. For a loom?	Fig. 56d
42	Arrow head		N15	south of Area A	Surface	lg 8.7 cm, wd 1.3 cm	Corroded arrow head that is « almond shaped. »	Fig. 38
43	Weight, stone	Area A	M17		Surface	lg 7.8 cm, dm 3.8 cm	Roughly cylindrical weight, gray stone, pierced.	no illustration available
44	Wheel, baked clay		F15	western edge of the square	Surface	dm 7.1 cm, th. axle 3.5 cm, th wheel 0.9 cm	Buff color.	Fig. 57c
45	Hone, stone, end broken off		O5		Surface	lg 7.2 cm, wd 2.4 cm, th 1.4 cm	Dark gray, end broken away, signs of use on surfaces.	Fig. 57b
46	Blades (5), flint			different parts of the site	Surface	lg 3.0-5.0 cm, th 1.0 cm	Two serrated	Fig. 57a



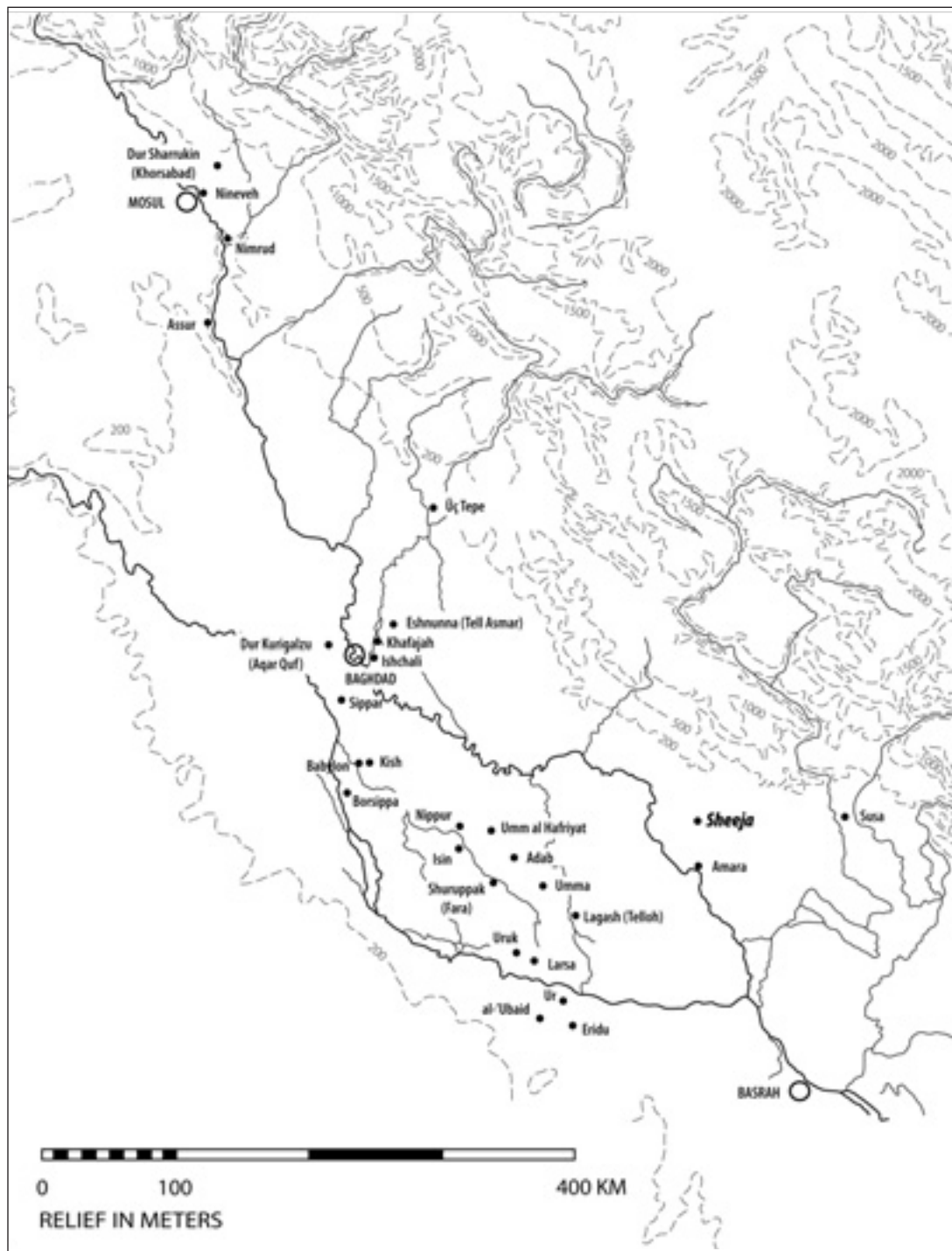


Fig. 1. Map of Mesopotamia showing location of Pašime/Abu Sheeja.



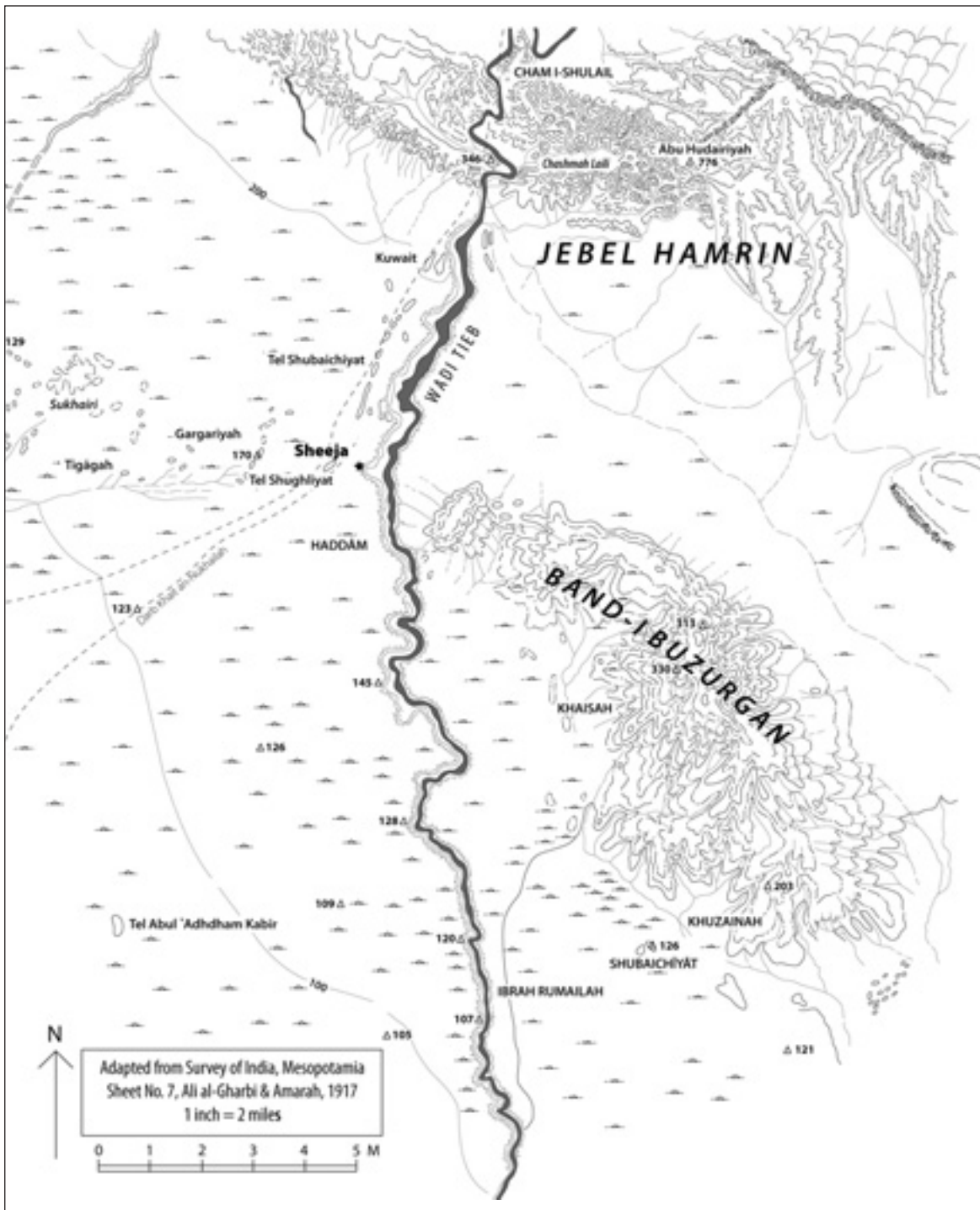


Fig. 2. Topographic map showing location of Abu Sheeja/Pašime in relation to the Wadi Tieb after it passes through the Jebel Hamrin.





Fig. 3. Digital Globe Image, Dec. 28, 2006, showing state of Abu Sheeja before archaeological excavations.

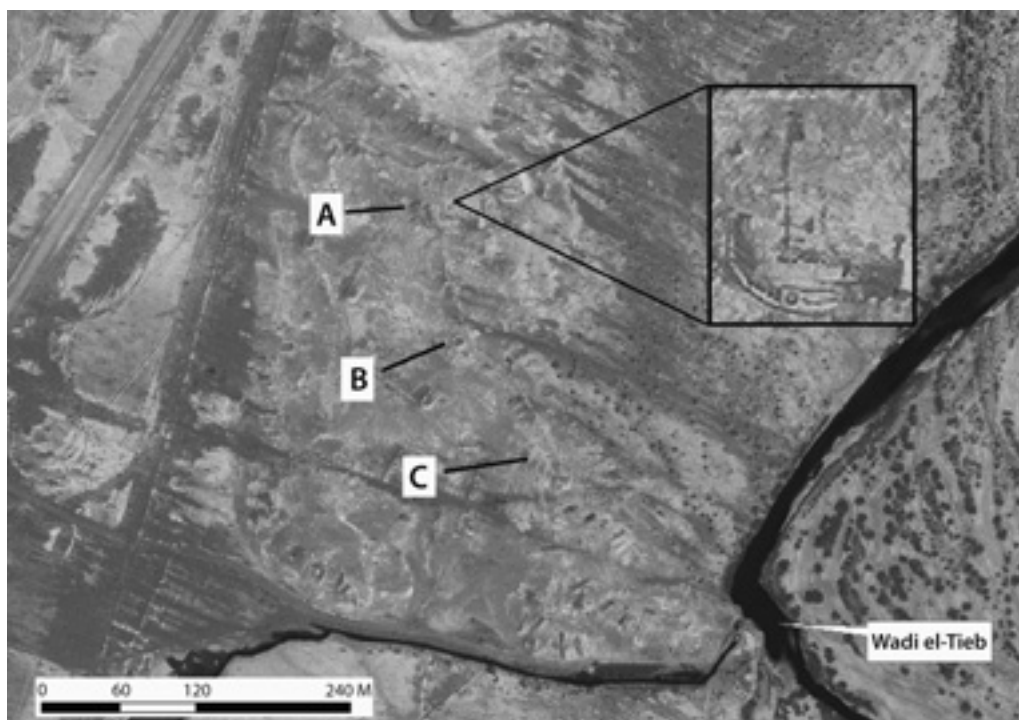


Fig. 4. Digital Globe Image, August 18, 2009, showing areas of excavation, with inset enlargement of Area A.



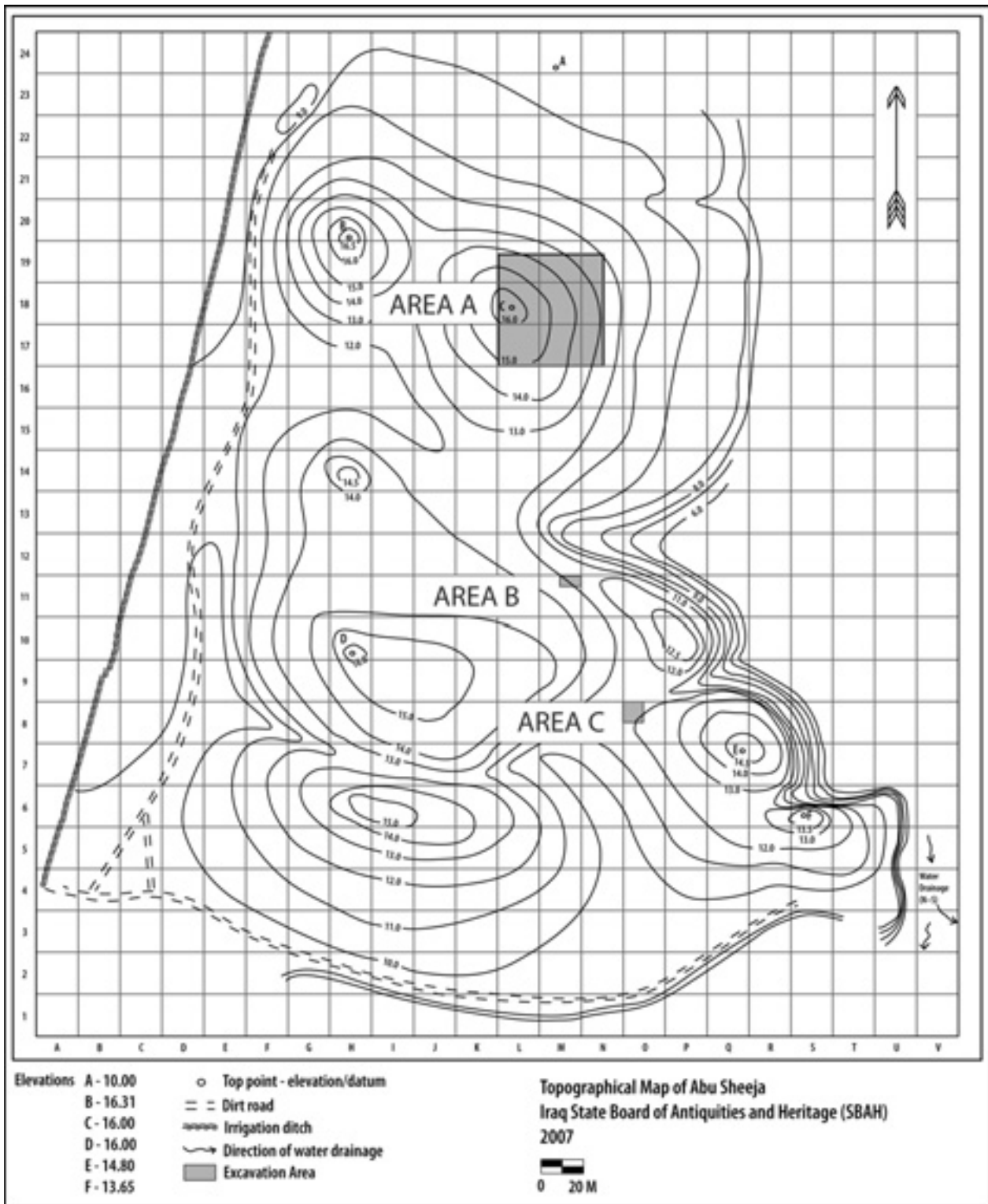


Fig. 5. Abu Sheeja site map showing area excavations.





Fig. 6. Platform detail.



Fig. 7. General view of Area A from west. Rectangular pit to Level 2 visible just beyond outer wall in middle ground.





Fig. 8. Area A from the southwest, with Hamrin in background. Loci labeled.

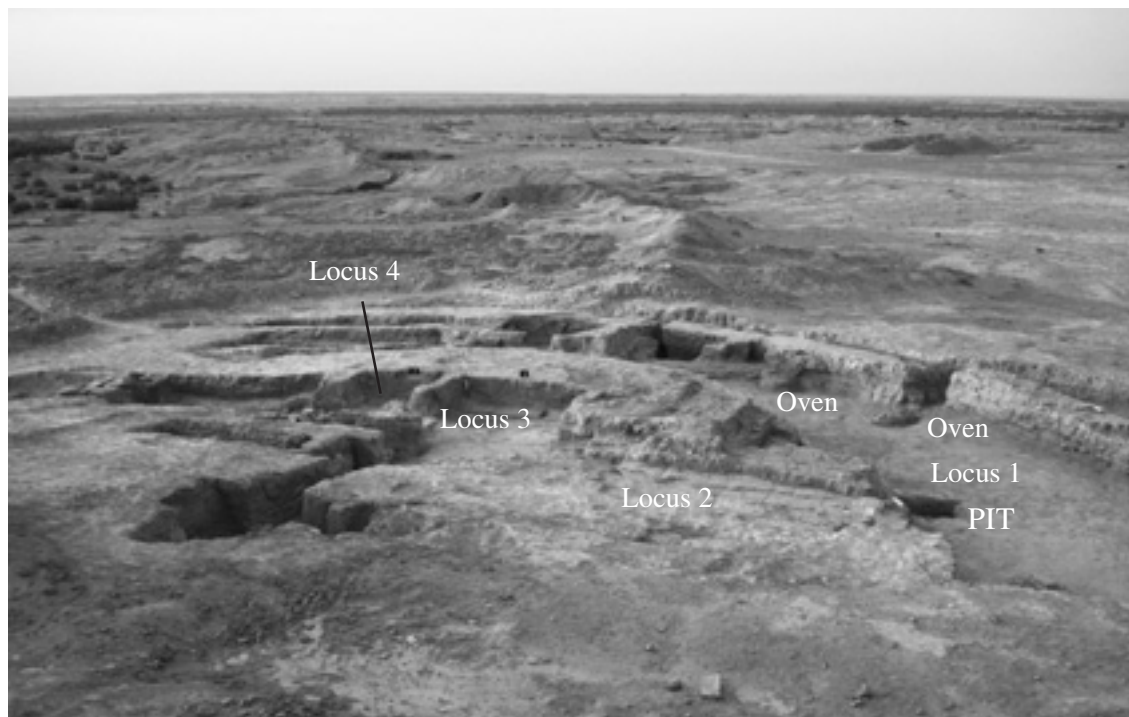


Fig. 9. Area A from the northeast. Loci labeled.



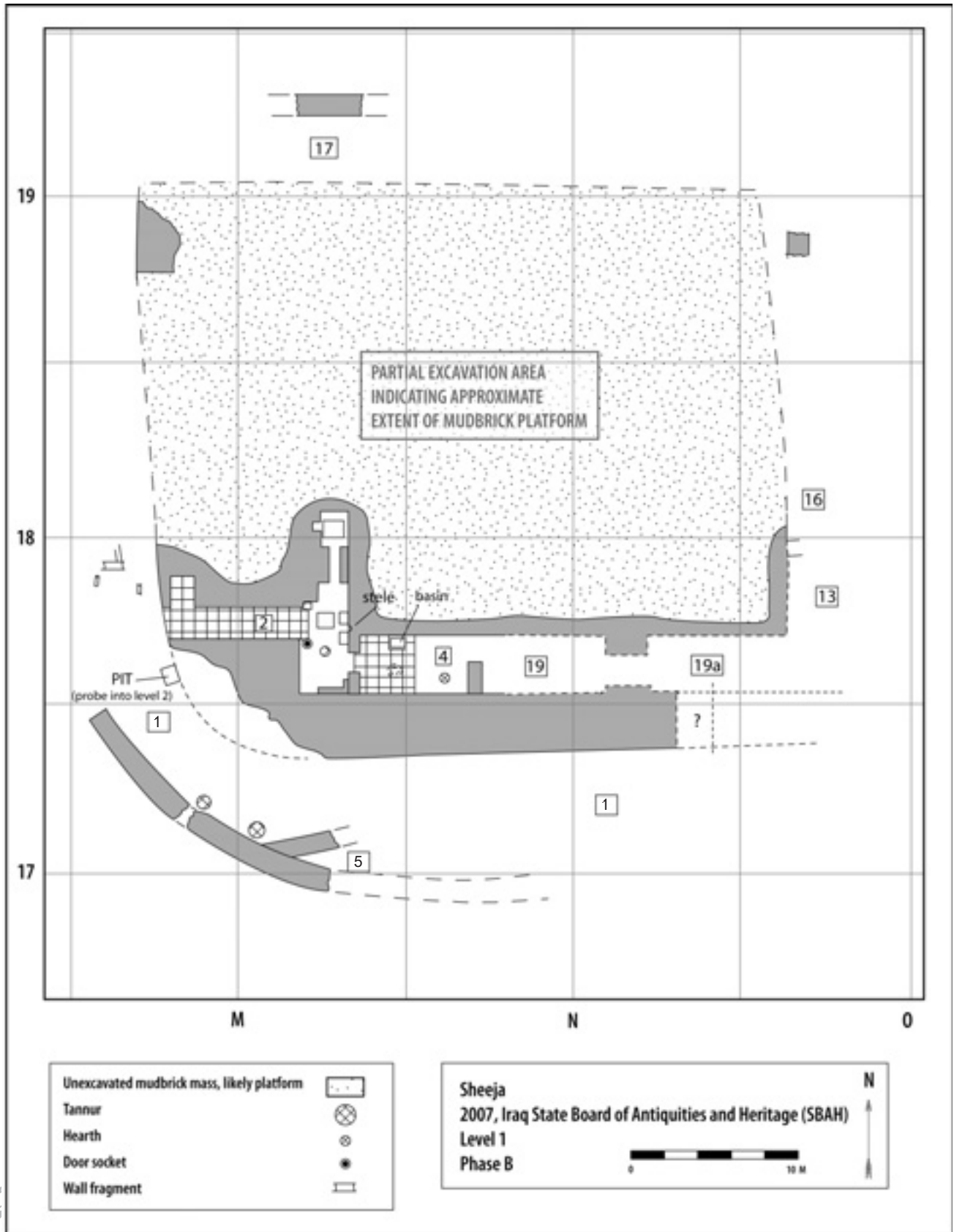


Fig. 10. Plan of Level 1, Phase B.

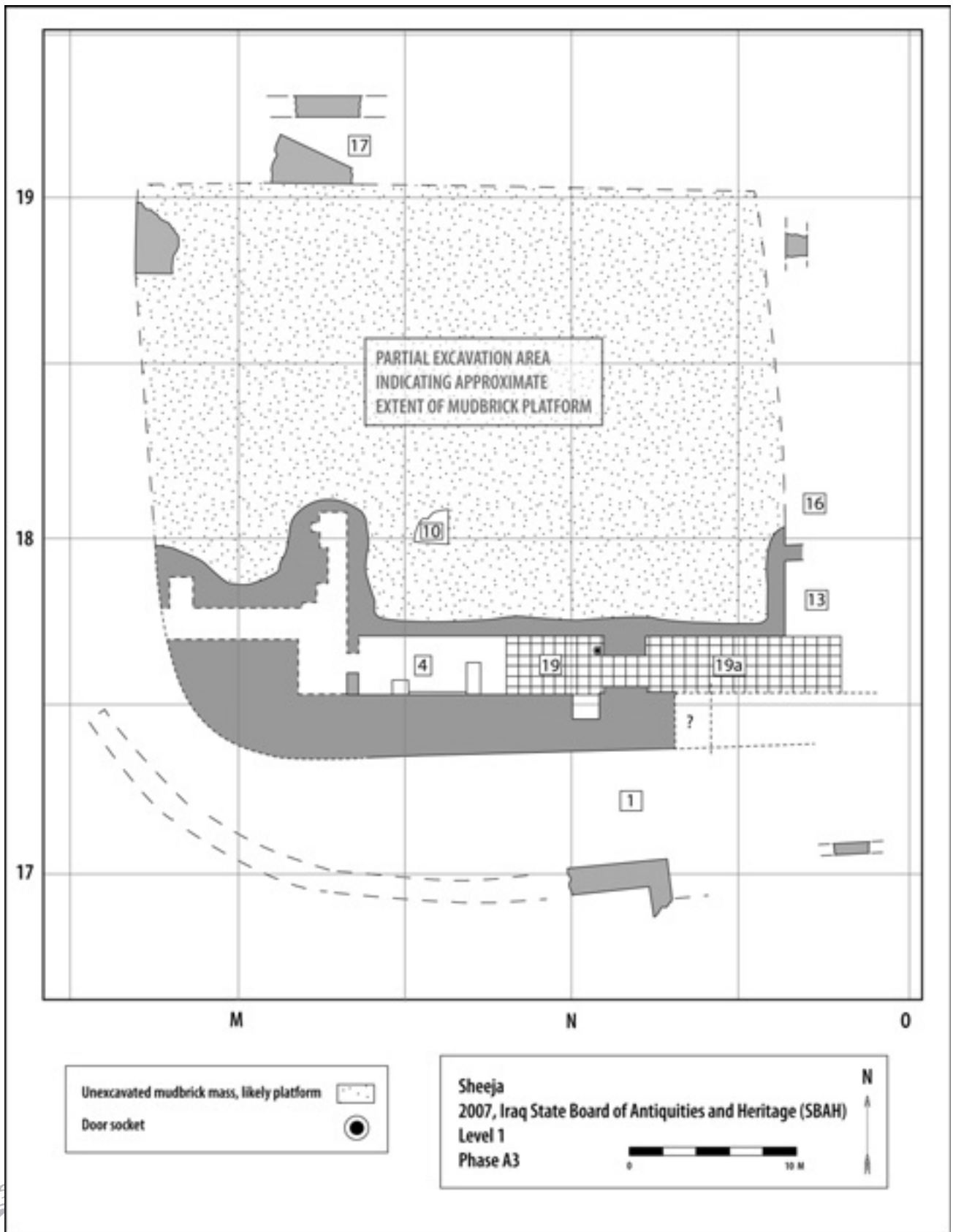


Fig. 11. Plan of Phase A3.

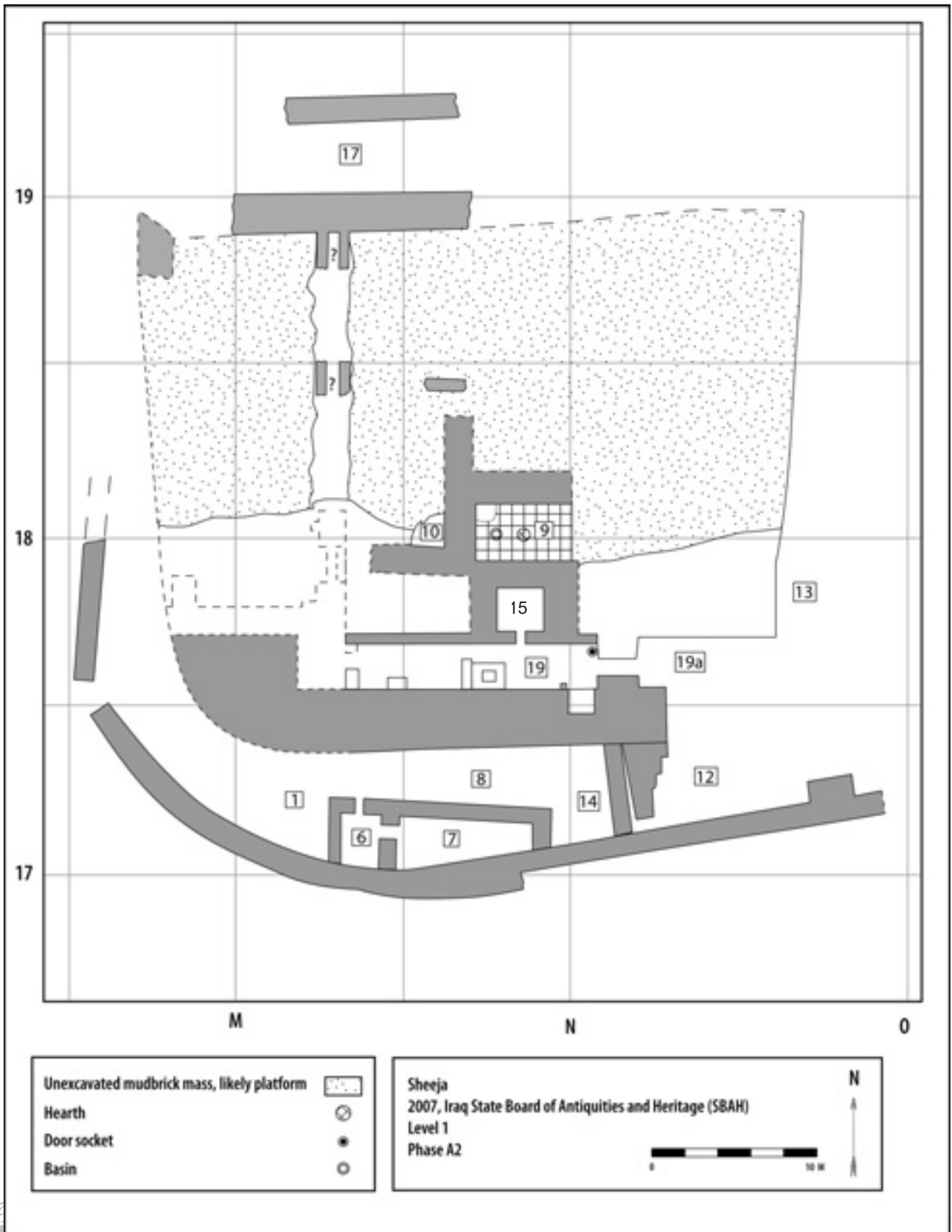


Fig. 12. Plan of Phase A2.

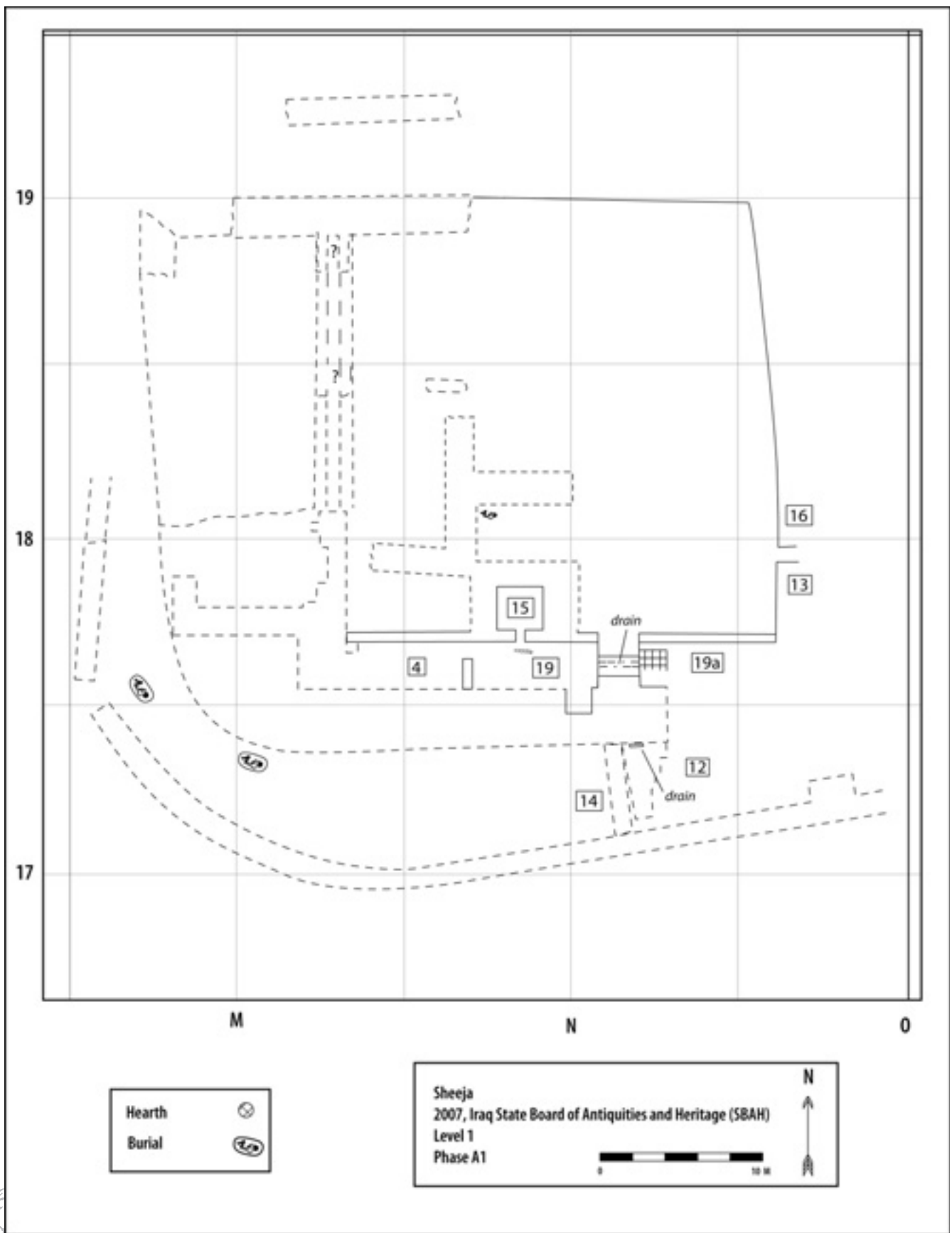


Fig. 13. Plan of Phase A1.

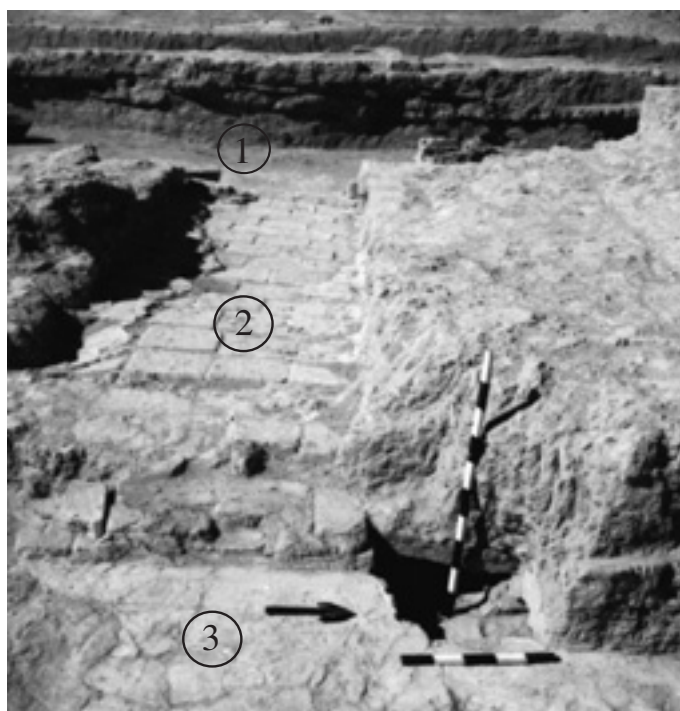


Fig. 14a. Area A, Loci 1, 2, and 3.

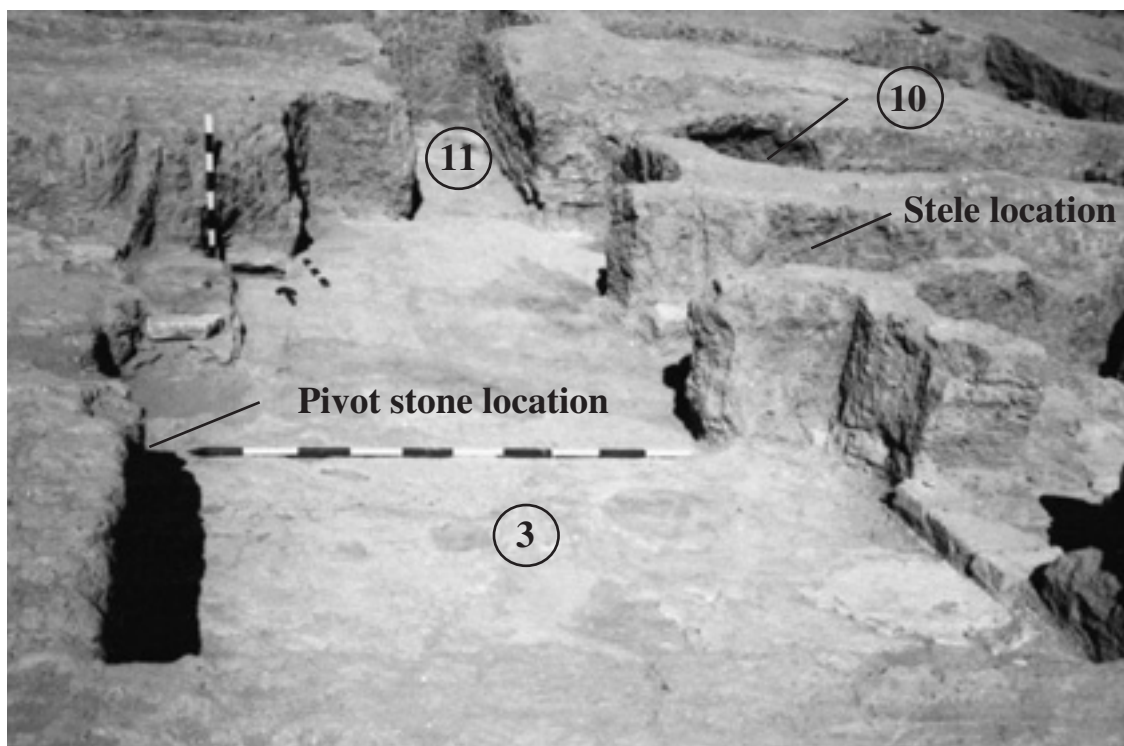


Fig. 14b. Area A, Loci 3 in foreground, 10 to the right (beyond wall), and 11 (center rear).

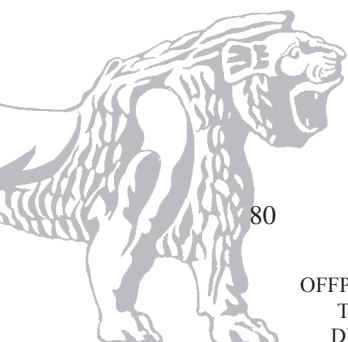




Fig. 15. Area A. Inscribed doorsocket.





Fig. 16. Area A. Stone door anchor.

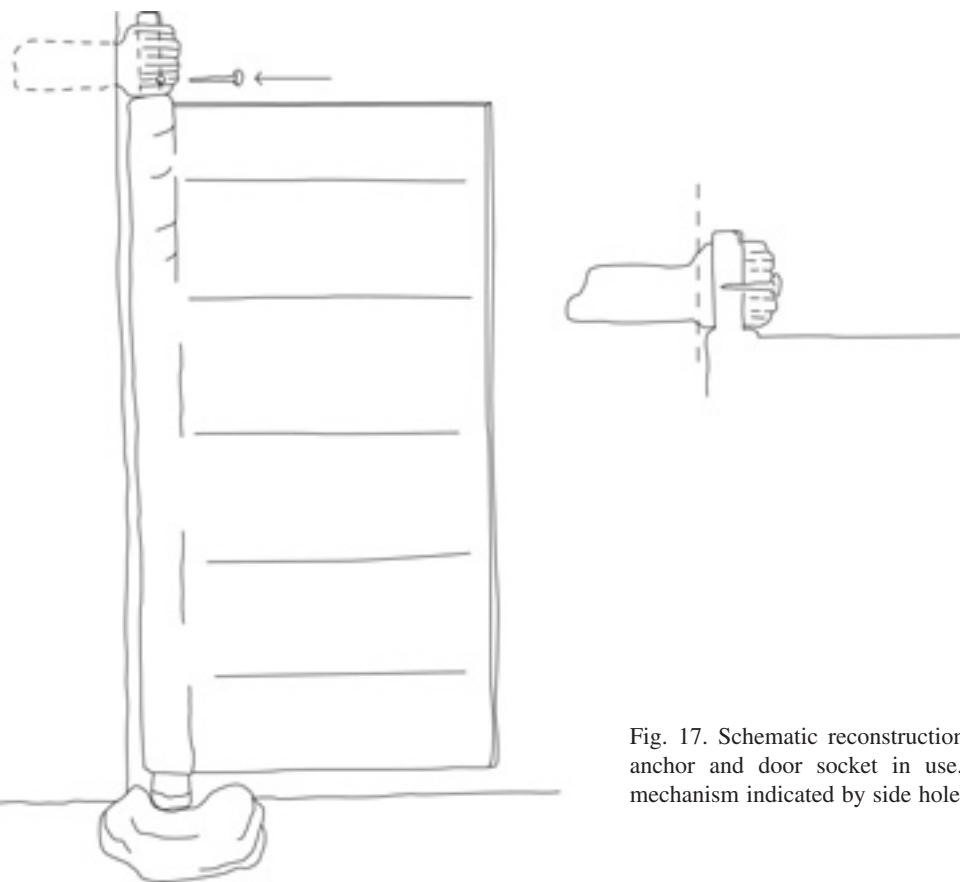


Fig. 17. Schematic reconstruction of stone door anchor and door socket in use. Note locking mechanism indicated by side hole in Fig. 16.



Fig. 18. Area A, Inscribed stele of Išurabi, dedicated to the god Šuda.





Fig. 19. View of Area A, Phase A3, Locus 4, from northeast.



Fig. 20. View of Area A, Locus 17, Phases B, A3. Floor with broken pottery runs 10 cm below angled wall of A3.



Figure 21. View of Area A, Phase A3, Locus 19, showing ramp sloping down toward doorway and Locus 19a. Note pebbles on upper surface, Phase A2.

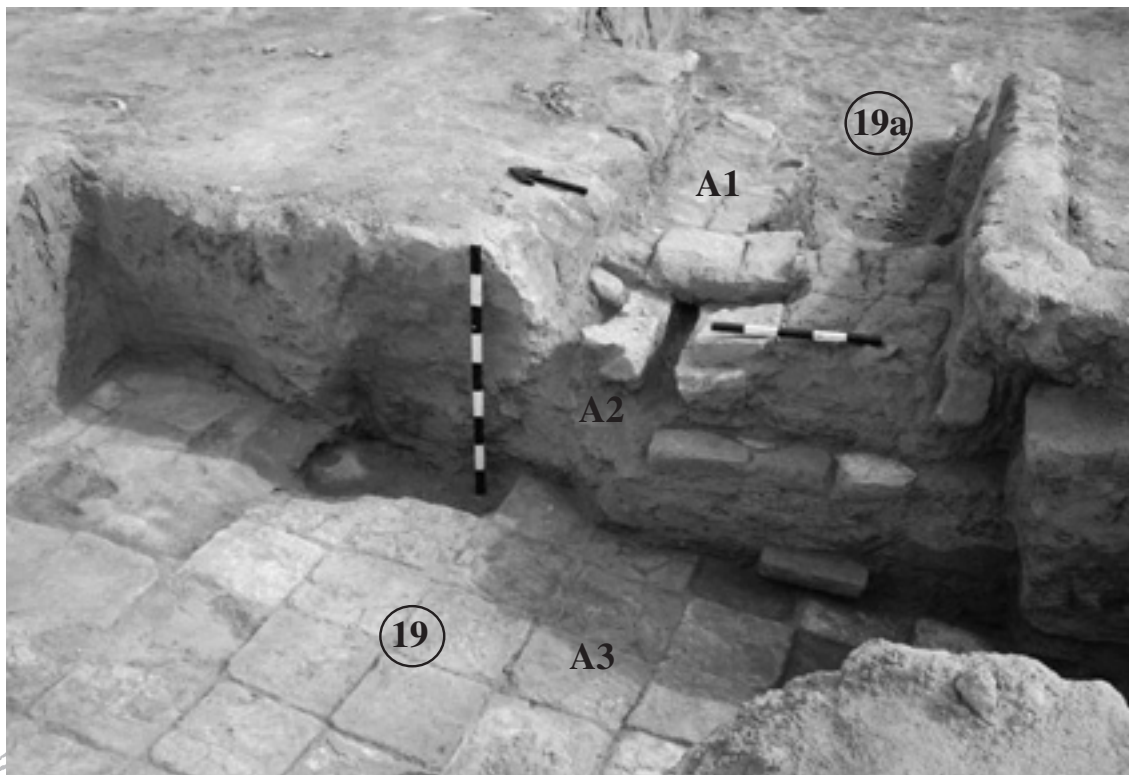


Figure 22. Area A, Phases A3 to A1, doorway between Loci 19 and 19a.



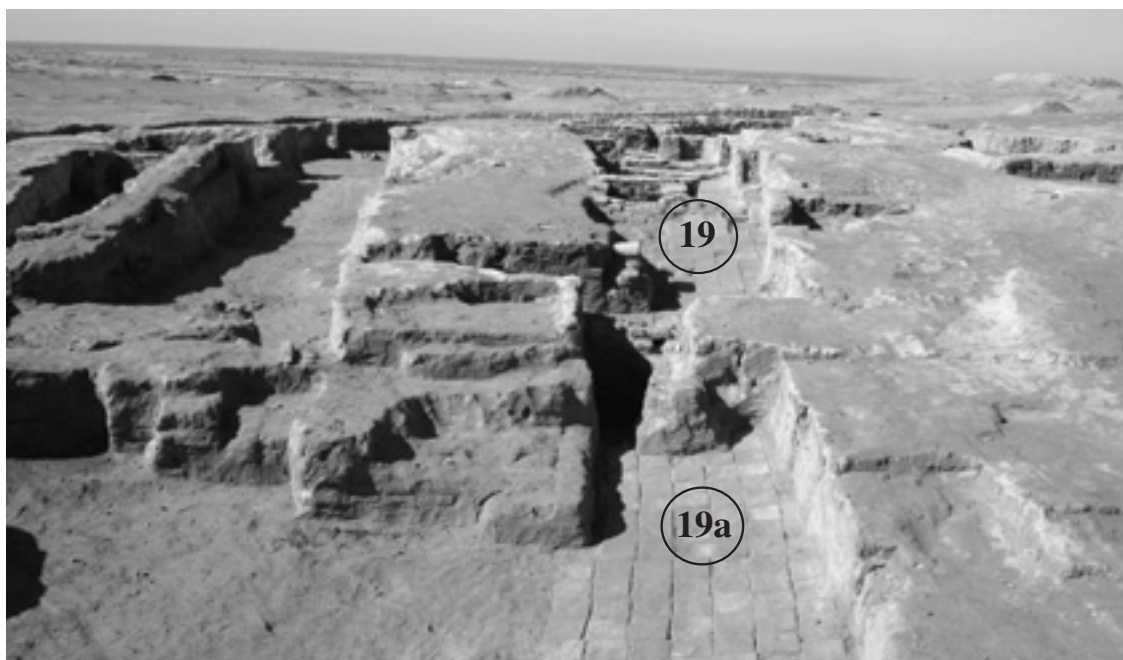


Fig. 23. Area A, Phase A3, from west, showing upper slope of ramp in Locus 19 beyond partially excavated doorway and the continuation of that ramp in Locus 19a.

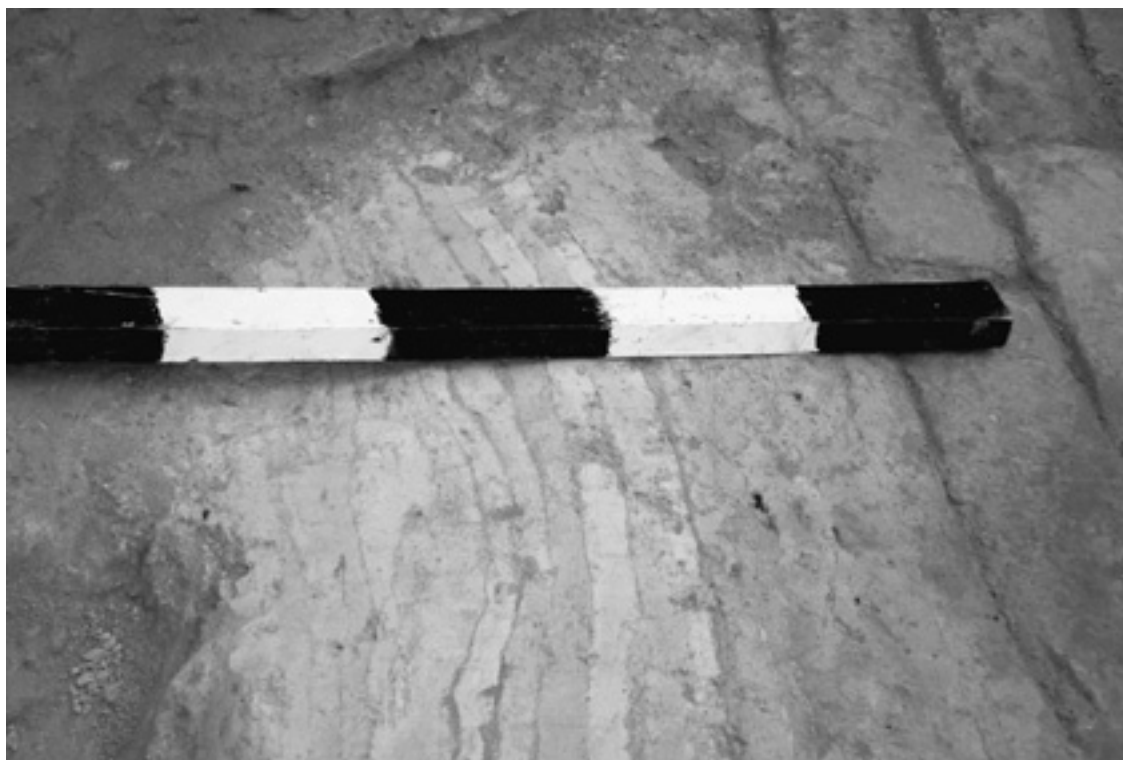


Fig. 24. Area A, Phase A3, Locus 17, multiple plasters on angled wall.



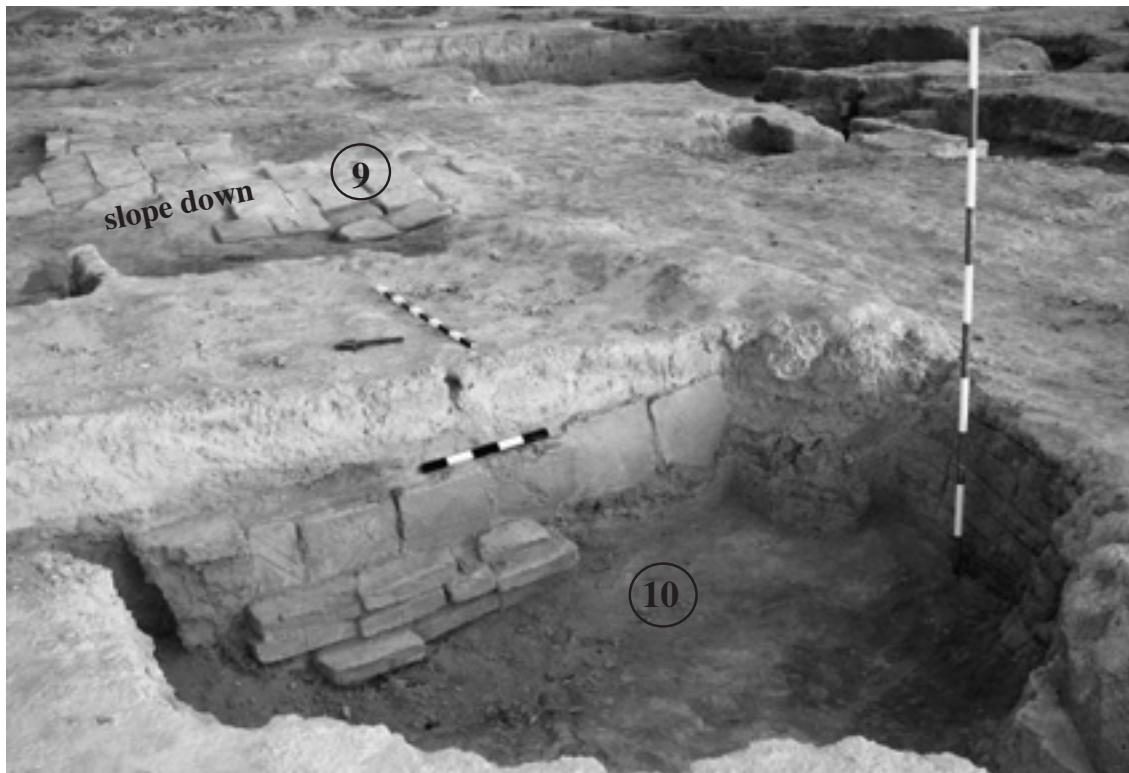


Fig. 25. Area A, Phase A2, Loci 9-10, from northwest.



Fig. 26. Locus 9, northwest corner, knife blade in situ.



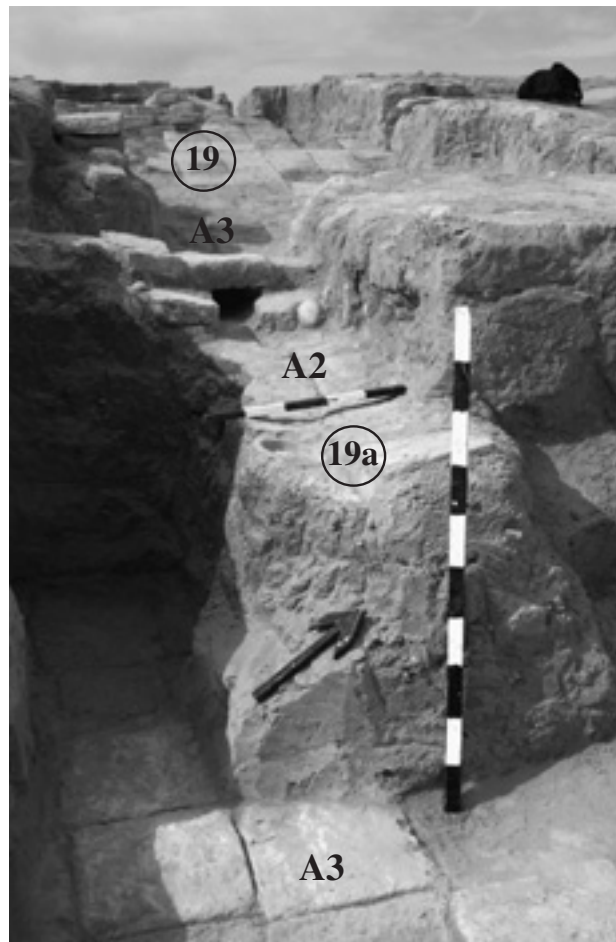


Fig. 27. Area A, doorway between Loci 19a and 19, from east.



Fig. 28. Area A, Locus 1, intrusive vaulted tomb.





Fig. 29. Detail of inscription on stele of Išū-rabi.

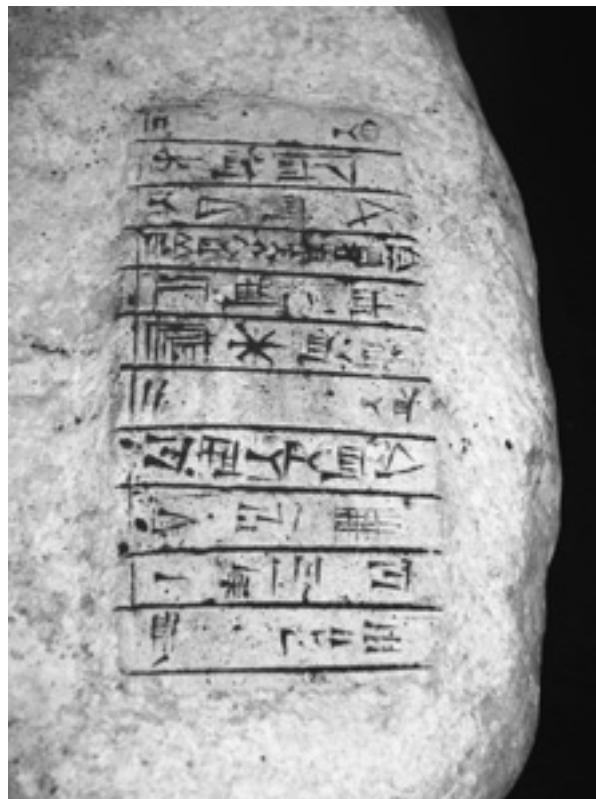


Fig. 30. Detail of inscription on doorsocket.





Fig. 31. Statue fragment.



Fig. 32a-b. Statue fragment with reconstruction.

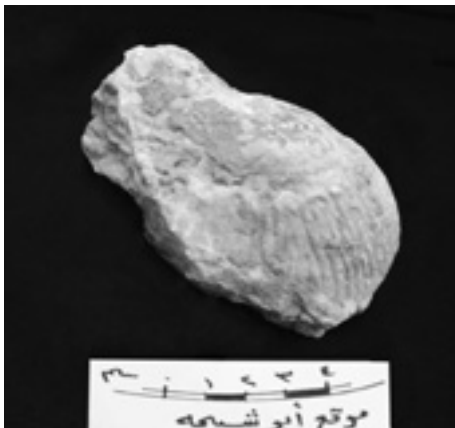


Fig. 33. Statue fragment.



Figure 34. Statue fragment.

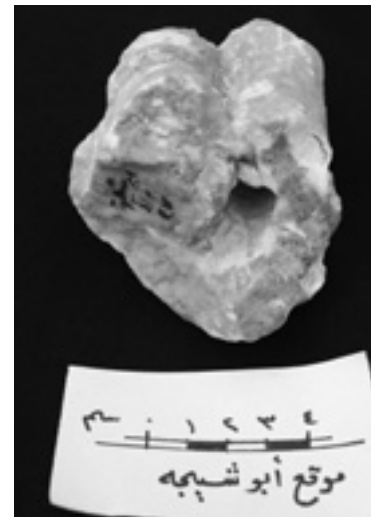


Fig. 35. AS 2, Area A, Locus 10.

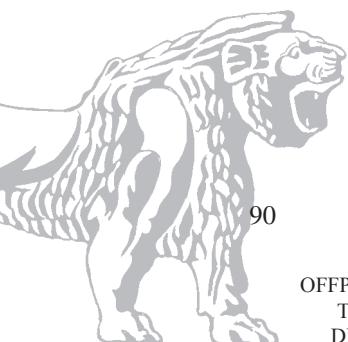
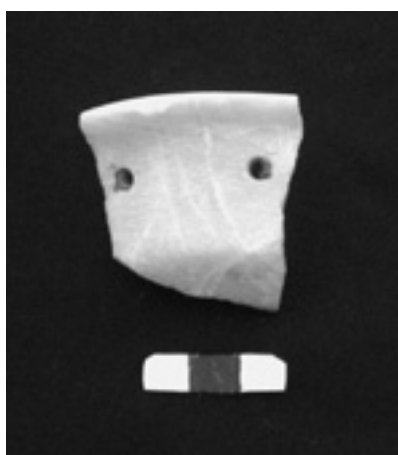


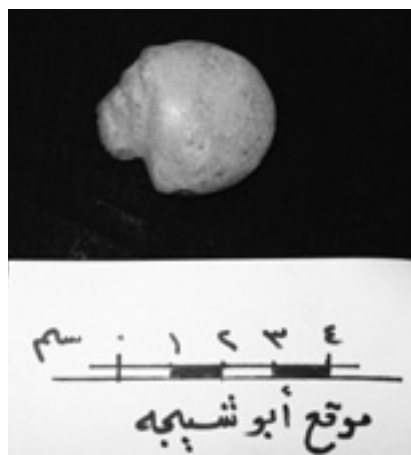


Fig. 36. Area A small finds. a. AS 1, grooved baked clay object ; b. AS 3, stone finial ; c. AS 8, stone hone ; d. AS 4, stone bowl ; e. AS 5, stone bowl.





a



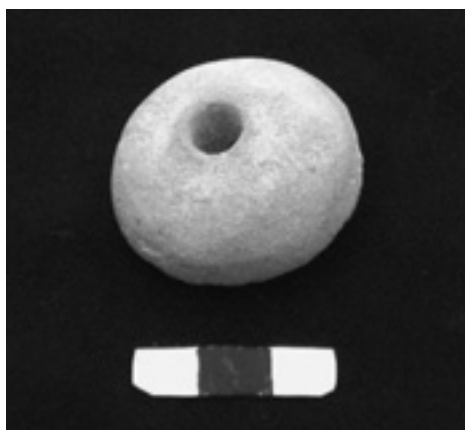
b



c



d



e



f

Fig. 37. Area A small finds. a. AS 6, stone bowl fragment ; b. AS 7, stone stamp seal ; c. AS 9, stone weight ; d. AS 10, fragmentary stone pendant ; e. AS 19, terra cotta spindle whorl, f. AS 21, stone bead.



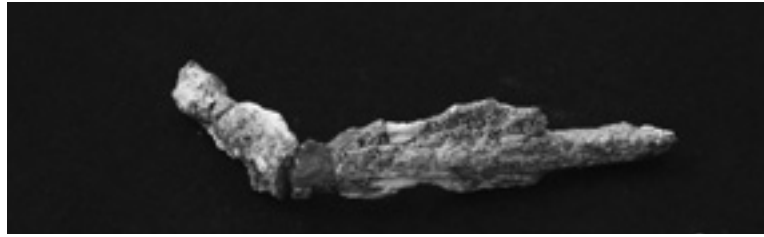
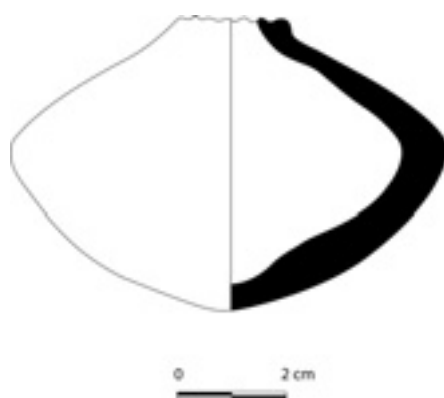


Fig. 38. AS 42, bronze point or pin.



Fig. 39. AS 22, bronze dagger.

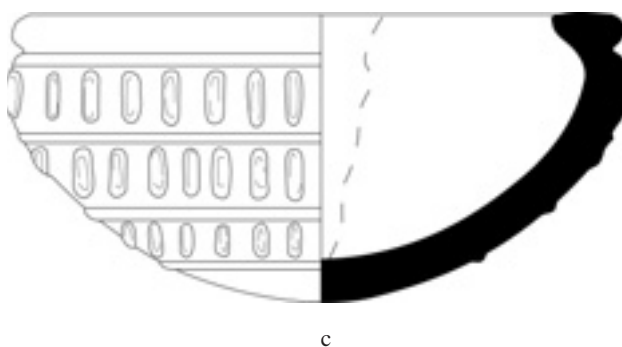




a



b

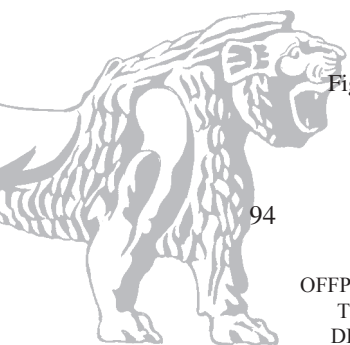


c



d

Fig. 40. Area A pottery. a. small bottle. b-c, AS 15 mold-made bowl; d. AS 15, carinated bowl.



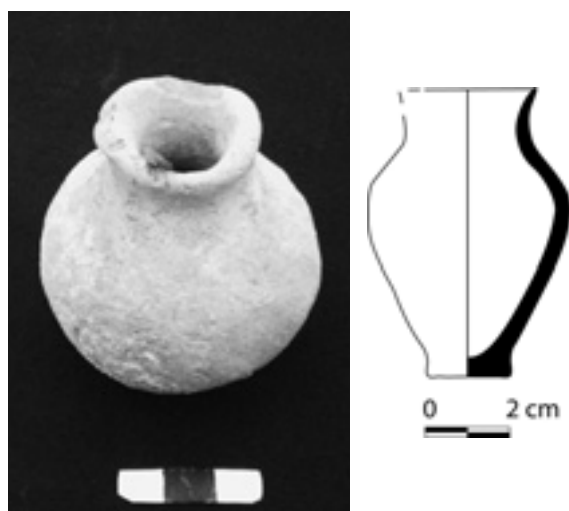


Fig. 41. AS 12, Area A, Locus 12.

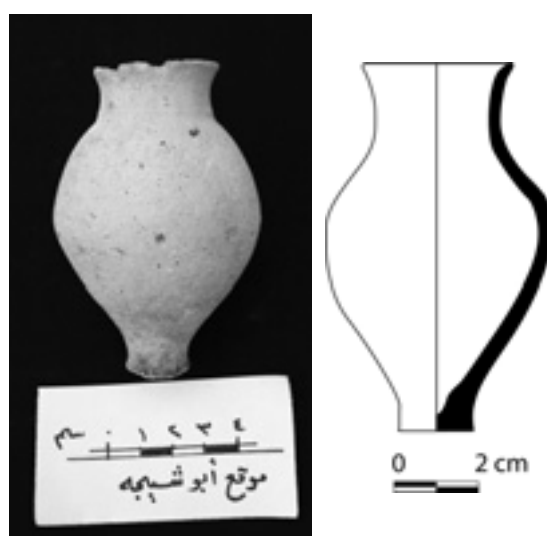


Fig. 42. AS 13, Area A, floor, M17.



Fig. 43. AS 20, Area A, inside main platform, M17.





Fig. 44. Deep pit, Area B.

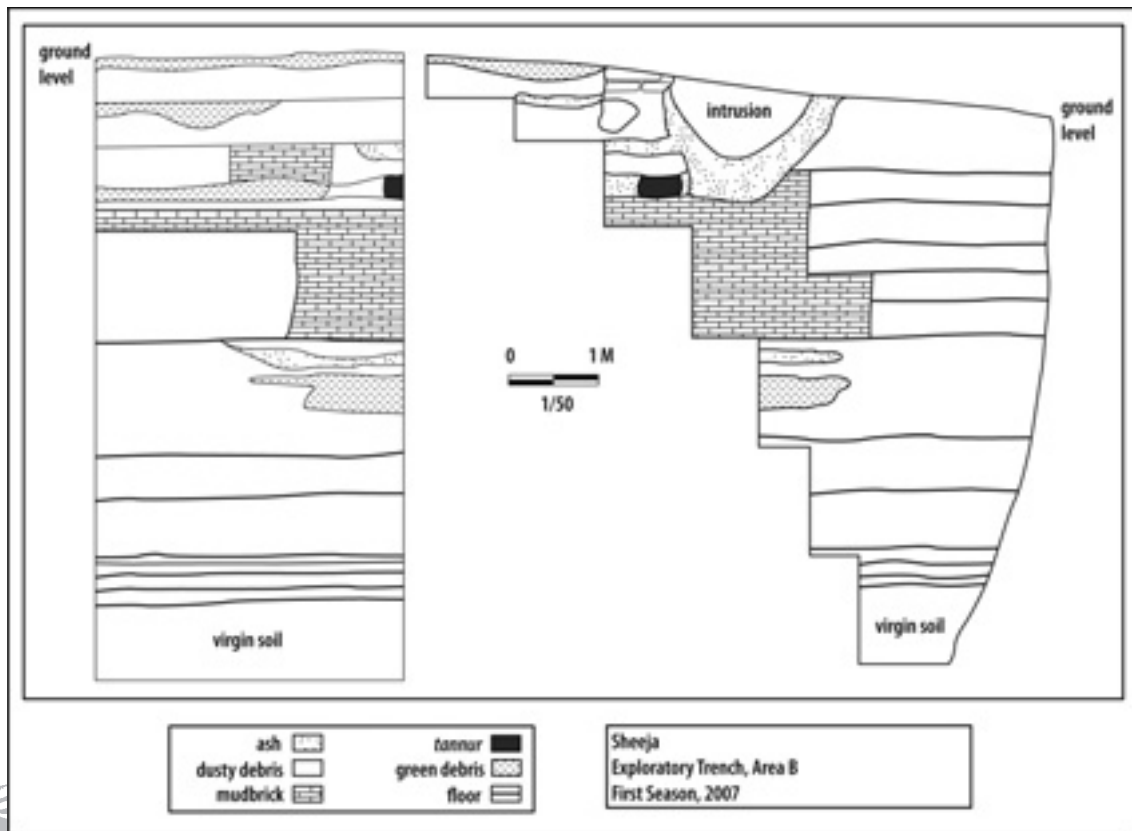


Fig. 45. Area B, drawing of sections.



Fig. 46. Area B, Ubaid and Early Dynastic (Scarlet Ware) sherds

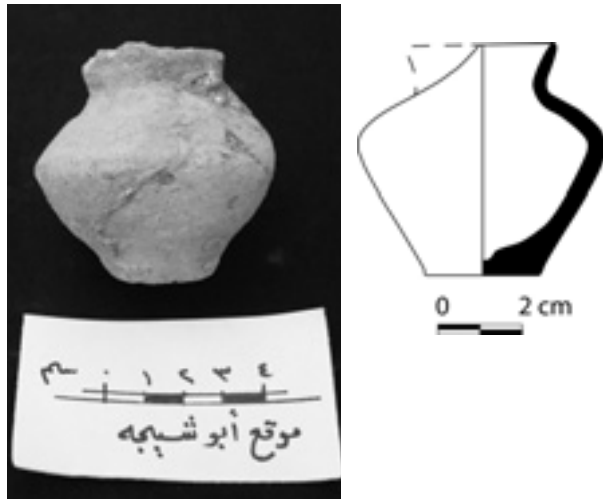


Fig. 47. AS 33, Area B, debris



Fig. 48. AS 35, Area B, surface.





Fig. 49. Area B, Fragments of model beds with couples. a. No AS numbers available. b. AS 31.

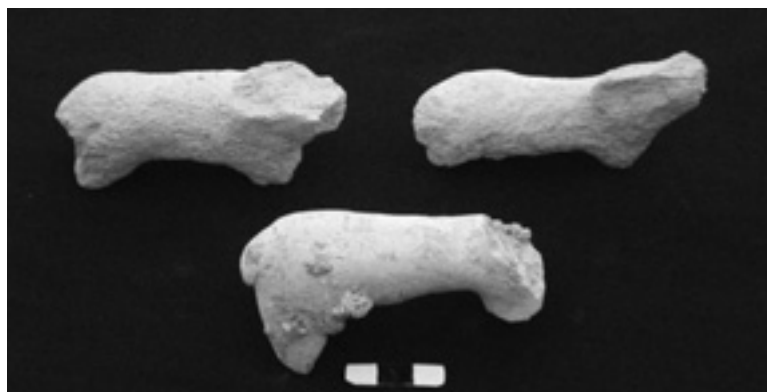


Fig. 50. Area B, AS 32, fragmentary animal figurines.



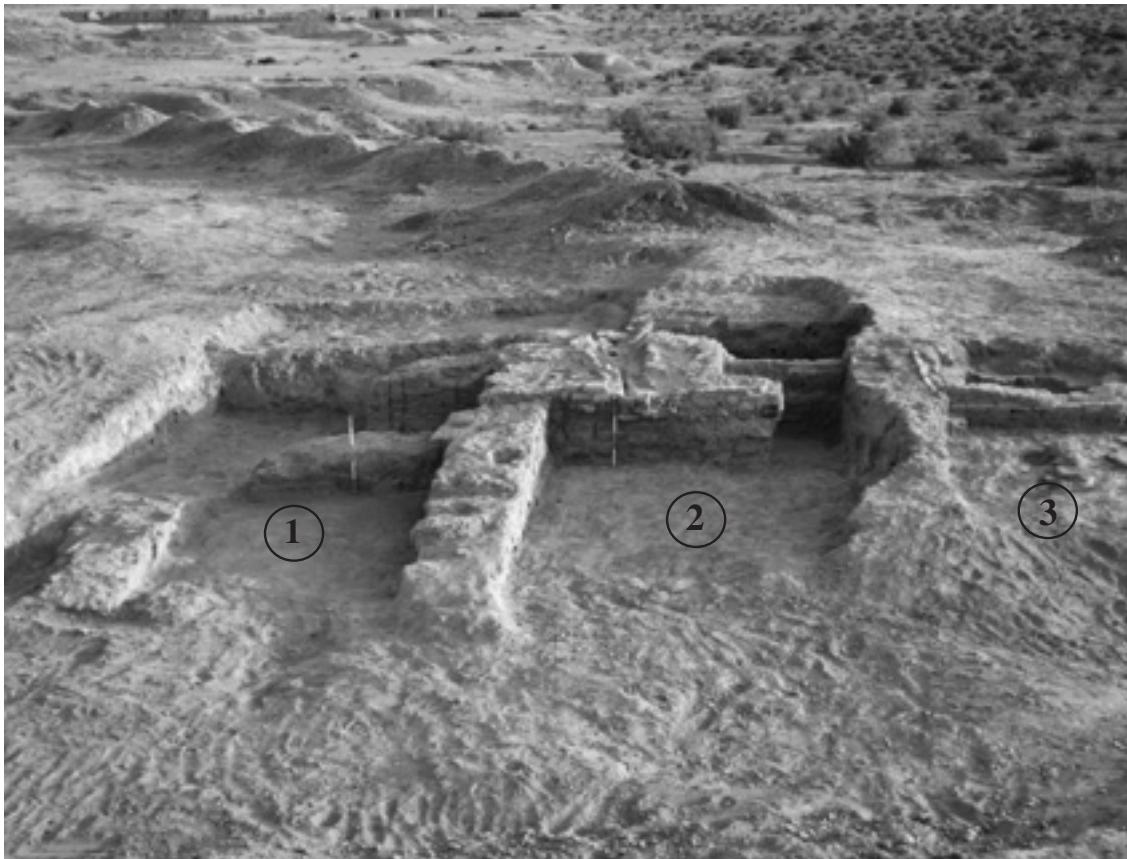


Fig. 51. Area C viewed from south.



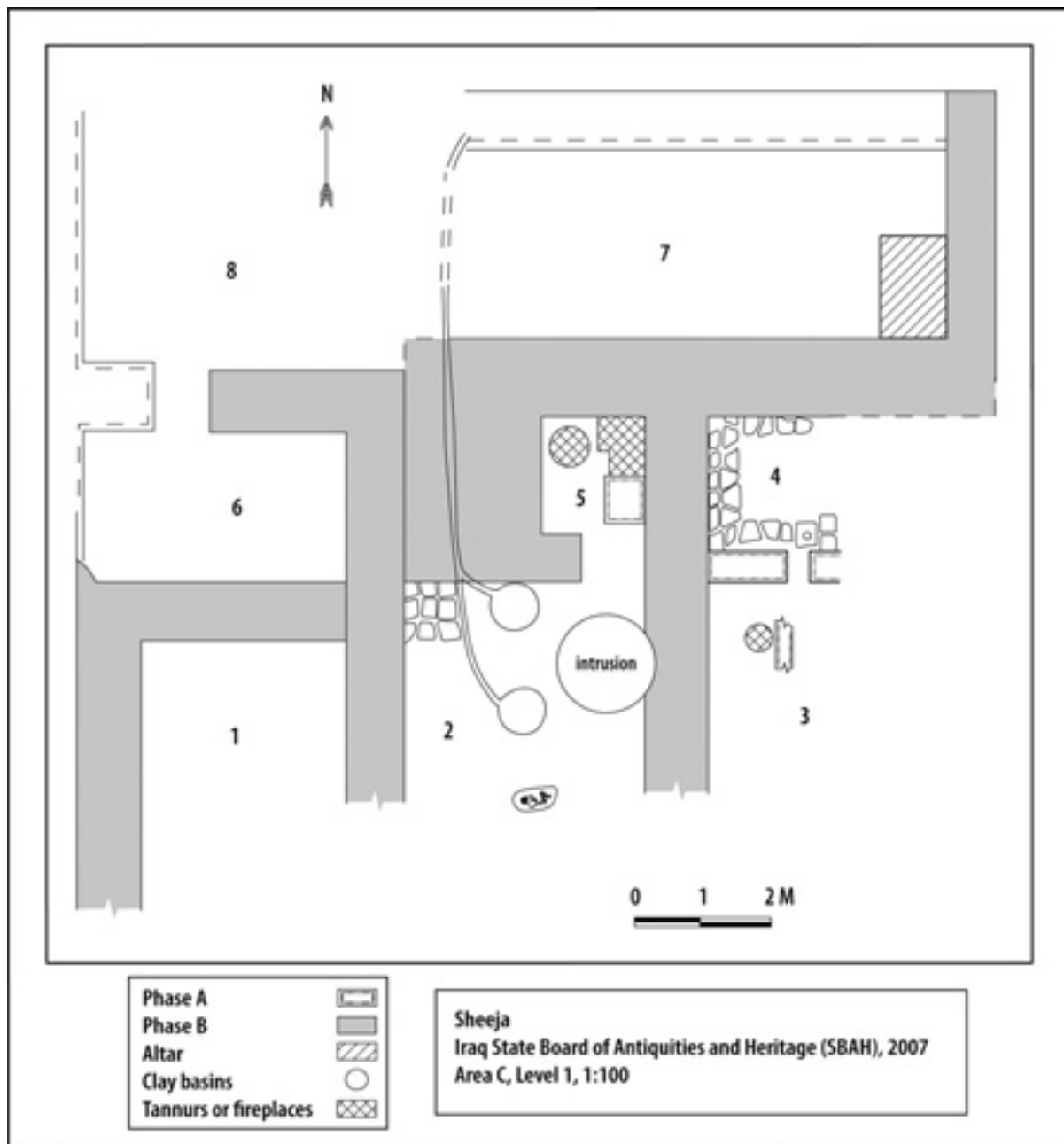
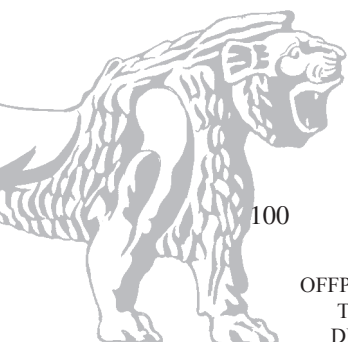


Fig. 52. Area C building plan.



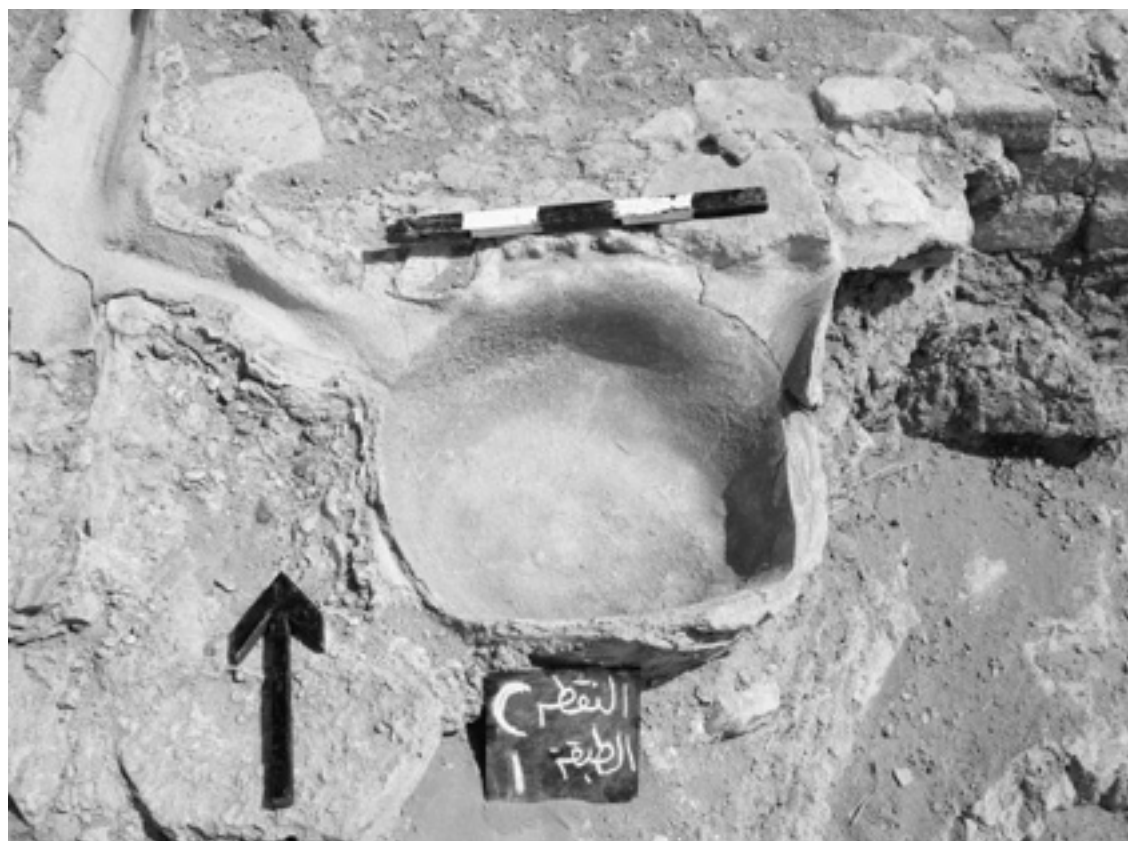


Fig. 53. AS 28, ceramic basin in Area C.

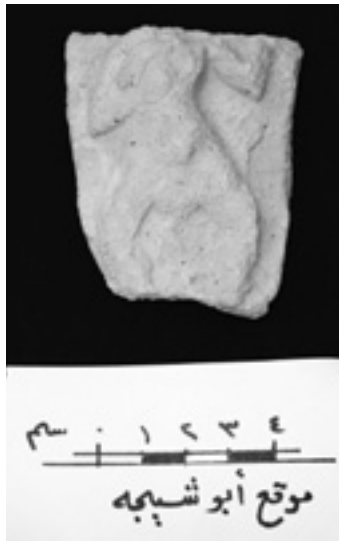


Fig. 54. AS 23, Area C, Locus 6.



Fig. 55. AS 25, Area C, Locus 2, inside a grave





a



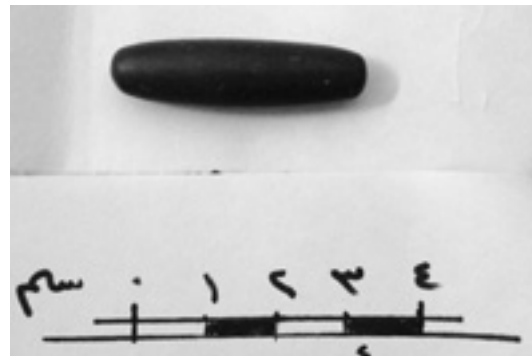
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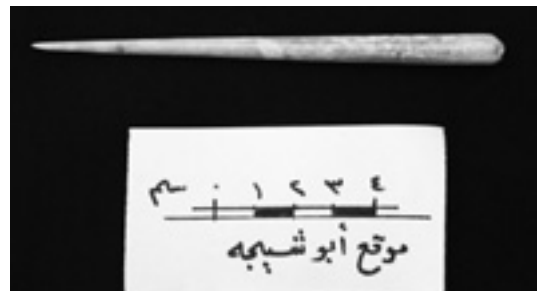
c



d



e



f

Fig. 56. a. dwarf plaque, AS 40; b. whorl, AS 39; c. stone loom weight, AS 29; d. stone loom weight, AS 41; e. stone weight, AS 27, in grave; f. bone pin, AS 26, in grave



a



b



c

Fig. 57. a. flint blades, AS 46 ; b. stone hone, AS 45 ; c. terracotta wheel, AS 44.

