

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHAEO-ZOOLOGY OF THE *ĀBI*

by Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati

The analysis published in the following article by Silvia Di Martino is based on animal bones excavated from several strata deposited in a large underground structure located just to the south of the palace of Tupkish. The structure predated the construction of the palace which has its southern wall stepped back to accommodate the preexisting construction¹. (Ill. 1).

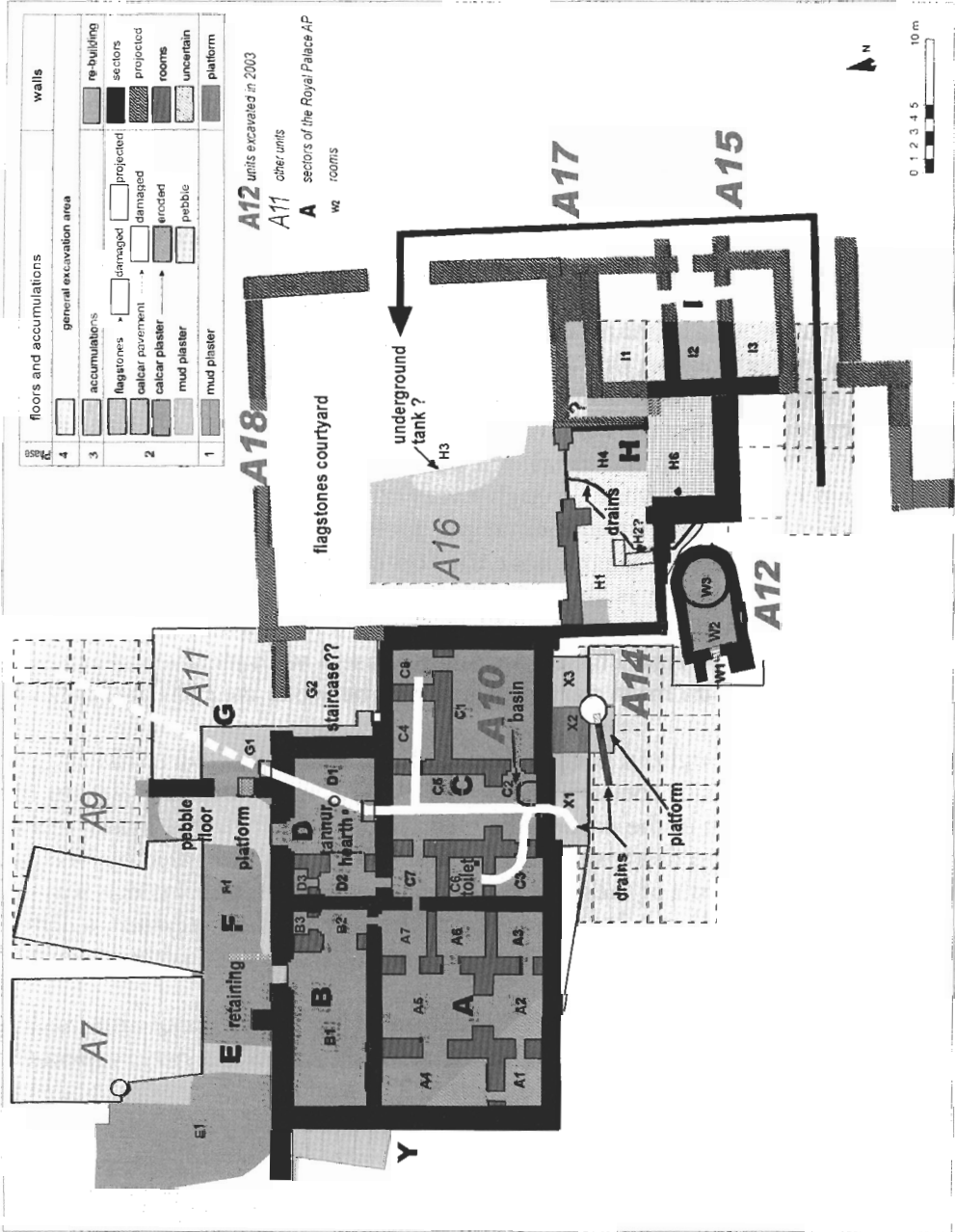
This stone lined hypogeum consists of two chambers: the circular one, constructed first, and the square chamber added later to the circular portion by removing a part of the stone wall on the western side of the circle (Ill. 2). The resulting structure has a keyhole shape. Presumably the western perimeter of the circle, which was later removed for the construction of the square, contained the original stair since it is not present in the excavated portion of the circle. The square portion did have a preserved entrance through a very narrow doorway and steep stone steps. The final stage of this monumental pit, including both the circle and the square, is over 7.5 meters in length near the top of the walls as preserved. The width of the circular chamber is about 4 meters in diameter near the top.

Even though the structure has not yet been completely excavated, the ceramics excavated thus far date it from Phase 2 through Phase 4 with its abandonment in Phase 5, indicating that its main period of use was between ca 2300 and ca 2100 B.C.

The stratigraphy throughout the use-life of the structure indicates that the circular portion was the major focus of the activities. The accumulations within the later, square portion were in the nature of a clean fill, especially in the lower strata. Within the circular portion there were smaller, ephemeral pits indicated by circular depressions. The outer limit of these depressions were indicated in various ways: a placement of stones (Ill. 3), a color change from the surrounding stratum, a difference in deposition such as traces of burning or an accumulation of bones either inside or just outside these pits.

The most important clue in the identification of the function of this underground structure came from the animal bone analysis published here, especially the large number of piglet and puppy dog bones. The majority of these bones were excavated in the circular part of the structure. Inside the circular portion there is a clear continuity within the bone deposits from the lowest feature, f351, to the high-

¹ For a discussion of this structure see M. Kelly-Buccellati, "Ein hurritischer Gang in die Unterwelt," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 134 (2003), pp. 131-148. The stratigraphic reconstruction of the development of the structure is discussed in G. Buccellati and M. Kelly-Buccellati, "Der monumentale Palasthof von Tall Mozan/Urkeš und die stratigraphische Geschichte des *ābi*," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 136 (2004), pp. 13-39.



III. 1 – Plan of the ābi and adjacent palace.

