Architectural and Artistic Remains in level three From Tell Al-Faras in Makhoul Region

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Abstract:

Buildings with urban planning are among the most prominent architectural features that appeared in the ancient Iraqi architecture, which dates back to the history of man's knowledge of house building when he left the cave. But its appearance in the Age of the Dynasty had a distinctive character, especially since it was concentrated in the northeastern region of modern Iraq. The archaeological excavations in Hamrin and Makhoul have provided us with several models of circular buildings whose functions varied according to the aims of their construction, as well as their internal divisions. In this study, we will tackle one of these buildings, named 'Tell al-Faras', which is located in the Makhoul area, that was found during the rescue excavations of the site. The study is an attempt to accurately identify the function of the building by comparing it with models of other buildings. In addition, the artistic finds will be part of the study because of their importance in obtaining evidence to identify the function of the building.

Keywords:

Circular buildings, Archaeological excavations, Age of the Dynasty, Cylindrical seals, Ornaments, Ninevite V pottery, Scarlet ware, Makhoul, Tell al-Faras.

بقايا عمارية وفنية في الطبقة الثالثة من تل الفرس في منطقة مكحول

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الملخص:

تُعد المباني ذات التخطيط من أبرز السمات العمارية التي ظهرت في العمارة العراقية القديمة ، والتي يعود تأريخها الى معرفة الانسان ببناء المساكن عند خروجه من الكهف، ولكن ظهورها في عصر فجر السلالات كان له طابعاً مميزاً لاسيما وانها تركزت في منطقة الشمالية الشرقية ، اذ زودتنا التنقيبات الاثرية في منقطة حمرين ومكحول بنماذج متعددة من المباني الدائرية والتي تنوعت وظائفها تبعاً للغاية من انشائها كما اختلفت في تقسيماته الداخلية ، في هذه الدراسة سوف نتناول احد هذه الأبنية وهو مبنى تل الفرس الواقع في منطقة مكحول، والذي تم العثور عليه اثناء التنقيبات الانقاذية للموقع، ونحاول الوصول بشكل دقيق الى وظيفة المبنى من خلال مقارنته مع نماذج لمباني أخرى ، فضلاً عن ذلك ستكون اللقى الفنية جزءاً من الدراسة لأهميتها في الحصول على ادلة لمعرفة وظيفة المبنى

الكلمات المفتاحية : المباني الدائرية ، التنقيبات الاثرية ، عصر فجر السلالات ،الاختام الاسطوانية، الحُلي، فخار نينوى ، vالفخار القرمزي، منطقة مكحول، تل الفرس.

Introduction

The circular structure represents the first form that ancient man took when he dwelt in small seasonal settlements after emerging from caves. The circular plan continued to be used in architectural buildings during the Neolithic and later eras[1], to appear clearly in the Age of the Dynasty, especially in the northeastern regions adjacent to Hamrin[2], each of which was characterized by architectural characteristics that came as a result of the function for which it was established. Hence, the importance of studying Tell al-Faras (translated as *the Mare's Hill*) site, specifically its third layer of it, as it includes one of the most prominent circular buildings that date back to the Age of the Dynasty, having distinctive features from the rest of the other models whether in the Makhoul, Hamrin, or Adhaim Dam areas.

[1] Al-tulbi, Jumaa Aziz. " The Shift in the Scheme of the Circular House to the Rectangle in the Neolithic Period in the Upper Mesopotamia Region". Ain Shams Periodicals, Vol. 48 (April-June 2020), P. 414.

[2] Al-nawwab, Ruwaida Faisal Moosa. The Historical Origins of Ancient Iraqi Architecture (Age of the Dynasty, the Akkadian Era, the Era of the Third Dynasty of Ur). An unpublished MA thesis (University of Baghdad, 2010), P.32.

This study includes three axes preceded by an introduction to the site and the archaeological excavations. The first axis includes a description of the circular building in the two excavations seasons, while the second axis presents the most prominent artistic finds that were found through the archaeological excavations inside the building. As for the third axis, it presents a proposal for the function of the building by comparing the building with other circular buildings, in addition to reviewing the archaeological finds.

Tell al-Faras: Location and Shape

Tell al-Faras is located within the area known in northern Iraq as the Makhoul Basin[3] which extends from the city of Ashur in the north to the Fatha area in the south, including the area between the Makhoul mountains in the west, to the Tigris River in the east (Fig. 1). Tell al-Faras is 5 km northwest of the dam, and 2 km from Al-Shajara village, directly on the eastern bank of Tigris. This hill is one of the archaeological sites that were discovered in the rescue excavations carried out by archaeological missions in the Makhoul Dam area[4].

The shape of the hill is circular, with a diameter of 110 m and a height of 7 m from the adjacent plain, and about 12 m from the cliff of the river. It seems that it has been subjected to construction excesses from all sides due to agricultural work, except for the southern side overlooking the river, which was destroyed by floods, in addition to the presence of newly-constructed graves[5]. As for the site's name, according to local narrations, one of the residents of the village had a mare, which he threw at this site after its death[6].

[3] At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was decided to build a dam in the Makhoul Mountain area, to the north of the Al-Fatha at the corridor separating between the Hamrin and Makhoul Mountains, but this idea was later cancelled. For more, see: Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Iraqi excavations in the Makhoul Dam basin (Ruprecht University - Karls - Heidelberg 2010), Part.12, P.3.

[4] The idea of establishing the dam required carrying out rescue excavations for archaeological sites in areas threatened by water flooding. Mr. Burhan Shaker Suleiman was chosen to be a general supervisor of the excavation missions sent by the General Authority for Antiquities and Heritage. The excavation was between 2001 and 2002. Jirk, Osam Bahr. Architecture of Makhoul Dam Basin Sites in the Middle Assyrian Period. Journal of Modern and Heritage Sciences (2017), 5(1), p. 22

[5] The surface of the hill was covered with dozens of newly-established graves. According to the local residents' claim, the graves belong to children, but during archaeological excavations,

Excavations in Tell al-Faras

The site was excavated in two seasons. The first season started in 17/5/2001 and lasted for nearly seven months, while the second season started in 4/1/2002 and ended in 10/10/2002. In addition, the archaeological mission made probes for detecting for the purpose of determining the cultural roles at the site, and the remains of five layers that are associated with different cultural periods were discovered, as follows:

1. The first layer: The Modern Assyrian Era (911-612 BC).
2. The second Layer: The Akkadian Era (2371-2230 BC).
3. The third, fourth, and fifth layers: Age of the Dynasty (2900-2371 BC).

As shown, the history of settlement at the site dates back to the Age of the Dynasty, followed by the Akkadian Era, and then there is no settlement at the site to reappear in the Modern Assyrian Era[7].

The Architectural Remains in Tell al-Faras (The Third Layer)

- **Description of the Circular Building**

The circular building is one of the most prominent architectural remains that were discovered in the third layer of Tell al-Faras, which dates back to the Age of the Dynasty. It is the building that occupied the entire layer in this site[8]. The following is the description of the building according to the excavation season:

As mentioned above, excavation was done in two seasons, and at the start of work in the first season and upon reaching the third layer of the site, which dates back to the Age of the Dynasty,

hundreds of graves of adults were discovered, some of them dated back to the First World War. Other graves were established in the Islamic style, prior to the outbreak of the World War The first. Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Op.cit, p.23

[6] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker, Ibid,2010, p. 23.

[7] The General Authority for Antiquities and Heritage, Documentation Department, Tal al-Faras file / first season, Document No.1 , pp. 1-5. Also: An interview with Mr. Muhammad Abd al-Rahman, head of the excavation mission at Tal al-Faras.

[8] The prospector indicates that there is a room outside the building, possibly belonging to other buildings in probe No. 2, which was opened in the second season. See: Suleiman, Burhan Shaker Op.cit, 2010, p. 31.

the circular building in Tell al-Faras was invoked, which occupied almost the entire hill, with the exception of the southern parts that were exposed to sabotage. The building generally consists of two walls dominated by a circular shape, confining between them structural divisions, some of which were added later, and the reason for the incompleteness of the circular shape may be due to the damage suffered in later ages, as the foundations of buildings belonging to the second layer (Akkadian era) were built over its ruins[9]. This resulted in some damages starting from the building's center towards its southern part, its southwestern part in particular. Therefore, it is not possible to certainly determine the building's features unless all its parts are found, especially as it differs somewhat from the other circular architectural models that appeared in the same era- which will be mentioned later for the purpose of comparison-. It is noteworthy that the northwestern part of the building was burnt, which caused the clay brick to turn into the solidified state[10].

The building consists of a large number of rooms with open courtyards and corridors, in addition to the presence of pockets which are cavities within the walls designated for storing supplies, perhaps similar to what is present at some modern-time classical houses in Iraq[11], known as (*Haṡimu*) in Akkadian language[12]. These pockets were of different sizes and shapes, the most important of which is pocket No.(7), as it was oval in shape, with its area getting narrowed as the wall rose. Its sides and floor were plastered, as its ceiling was exposed to collapse. This pocket is surrounded by a number of other pockets, which bear the numbers (3,4,2,69,23,15,5,6,13,24), and they were of different shapes, such as the trapezoid shape as in the pocket (3 and 5), and half an arc as in the pocket (2).

The building facilities in this construction are wide enough to occupy all the distance between the internal and external walls in the rooms (38, 62, 65, 61), but the internal and external walls are fading at this point due to vandalism.

[9] Ibid, 2010, p. 24

[10] Al-Humaydah, Ghassan Saleh Ahmed. "Archaeological sites in the Tigris basin between northern Assyria and Al-Fatha area in the light of archaeological surveys and excavations". MA Thesis, University of Mosul, 2012, p.93.

[11] This word is still used in the local Iraqi dialect in the city of Mosul, known as (*Khashim*), which has almost the same pronunciation in the Akkadian language.

[12] Al-Jubouri, Ali Yasin. "Akkadian-Arabic Dictionary", Abu Dhabi 2010, p.188.

It can be noted that the boundaries of the outer wall change their course in room (57), specifically at its western side, as a series of rooms begins, which are located on its path to form perhaps a separate building unit, namely rooms (60, 59, 58, 57, 48,49), adjacent to it on the west side are rooms (56, 55, 54). To the bottom of this group the rooms (21, 29, 51). It seems that these rooms were one room and were later divided by partitions, and that the group of rooms (56, 55, 54, 21, 29, 51) constitute a separate building unit located to the north of the previously mentioned pockets.

As for the room (10), it forms a self-standing unit and opens to the courtyard (16) through two separate entrances located on the western side. Three floors were found in room (10), which indicates their use in the third and second layers of the site. It seems that this room is of special importance, as we note that it has three entrances on all sides except for the western side. The southern entrance overlooks Room (1), whose walls were irregular, except for the northern side. A louver was found on its southern side, which was covered from the inside with plaster. As for the courtyard No. (16), it was an open space. Rooms (47, 63, 67, 19) were added along its northeastern side, which led to the abolition of its function, and eventually linking it to the corridor (64).

Rooms (11, 14, 33, 34, 12, 21, 22, 25 and 28) were extended by two rows, one above the other. The top row represents rooms (11,14,33,34), while the bottom row consists of rooms (12,21,22,25,28). It seems that room (21) was added later by placing a partition wall in room (12). This building unit is adjoined on the east side by two pockets bearing the numbers 17 and 18 respectively.

Concerning the eastern unit of the circular building, its rooms were characterized by their large size and regularity of shapes, almost as in the rooms (20, 26, 27, 41) and the smaller rooms (42, 66, 68). This building unit is linked by entrances overlooking each other. A stove was found on the western side of the room (26). As for room (27), traces of colors were found on its western wall, drawn in the form of parallel broad lines, in black, white and gold.

It is noteworthy that the primary material used in construction is adobe, with dimensions (39 x 18 x 7 cm). As for the floors, they were in general covered with mud, and some of them were

plastered, as shown in pocket (7), and others were constructed using coarse gravel saturated with mud[13] (Fig. 2).

As for the second season, there were not too many changes in the shape of the building, as it continued its general form with some differences that can be clarified with regard to the sides of the building. Starting with the western side, specifically room (62), it was completed in this season and has taken a certain shape. As for room (61), its wall adjacent to the outer wall of the building was taken by torsion inward as much as the torsion occurred in the outer wall, which was rectangular. A change has been noted concerning the wall on the southwestern side, where its end has become tapered. With regard to room (38), we note that in the first season it was adjacent to the wall and was separated by a slight separation, but in the second season, we see that it was merged with the inner wall, which was 6 m thick.

Furthermore, new rooms appeared between the inner and outer wall, of which were large in size, namely, rooms (71, 52, 50). Of these, room (50) was perhaps one of the most significant, due to the presence of colors on its walls, which are red, yellow and black. This is in addition to the emergence of new pockets in the walls bearing the numbers (53, 74, 73, 72, 70, 78) which were of different shapes. Two of which, however, were of narrow longitudinal shapes that extended along the western wall of the building.

On the eastern side, two important rooms can be seen, and their importance derives from the fact that they mark the end of the outer wall of the building, specifically rooms (36 and 37). Yet, unfortunately, their northern and eastern walls have been damaged. Three rooms (77, 76, 75) were also discovered inside the outer circular wall. This is in addition to revealing the remains of the outer wall. On the northern side, no new rooms or building units were found due to the damage suffered.

The space confined between the northern and western units of the building and between the outer wall was identified with the number (79). Through the excavations, using the probes, carried out by the excavation mission, no traces of the building units were found. Therefore, this space is considered an open yard due to the remnants of a stone waterway that extends approximately in the middle, sloping towards the east to a well of stone designated for the

[13] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker Op.cit,, 2010, pp. 24-19.

wastewater that descend from this yard. It is worth noting that this waterway has been renovated three times with the renewal of the yard floor and raising the height of the wellhead[14] (Fig. 3).

The Artistic Remains in Tell al-Faras (The Third Layer)

It is known that artistic remains are the most important means that help in studying the history of archaeological layers, just like the cuneiform texts do. In addition, it helps researchers to know about the artistic and technical style used on the site in that era. At Tell al-Faras (the third layer), many artistic remains were found during archaeological excavations. It should be noted here that most of the artistic finds from the Makhoul region have been studied and published. Reviewing some information about them in the current study can help determine the function of the building, though.

These artistic remains can be classified as follows:

Pottery pots: Two types of contemporary pottery pots appeared in Tell al-Faras[15]:

Scarlet ware: It was very popular in the Age of the Dynasty, and various forms of which were found in the first season of excavations. Most of these pots were made of red clay or reddish brown clay, most of which represent bowls and plates, in addition to jars of different sizes and a pottery holder. In the second season, models of hemispherical bowls appeared, along with other pottery vessels. It is worth noting that these pots are similar in their manufacture to the pots that appeared in Tell al-Naml area[16] (Fig. 4)

[14] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker, Ibid, 2010, pp. 30-32.

[15] This discovery constitutes an important development in the study of the era and culture of Nineveh V, as the scarlet ware, which is known as Diyala pottery dating back to the First Age of the Dynasty, is contemporary with the pottery of Ninevite V pottery. For more, see: Al-Jumaili, Qusay Sobhi Abbas. "The Era of Nineveh, the Fifth Layer: An Archaeological Study", PhD thesis, University of Baghdad, 2006, p. 80.

[16] The prospector calls the bowls from the sites of Tal al-Fars and Tal al-Naml "bowls of local industry". For more, see: Suleiman, Burhan Shaker Op.cit, 2010, p. 28.

Ninevite V pottery: This type of pottery appeared in the third layer of Tell al-Faras in both seasons, but what was found of it in the first season represents broken pottery vessels. In the second season, the cups found were common among the forms of Ninevite V pottery[17]. (Fig. 5)

It is worth-mentioning that the types of Ninevite V pottery that appeared in this site were simple, such as the painted and grooved pottery. It should be taken into consideration that the type of engraved pottery, which represents the advanced stage of Ninevite V pottery, did not appear in Tell al-Faras and Tell al-Naml sites[18].

Gemstone and Metal Ornaments

The use of ornaments from ancient times until now reflects the economic status of the community, as well as the artistic style used by the city's residents or settlers, alongside the burial rituals and customs of the peoples. In the circular building of Tell al-Faras, many models of ornaments were found in the third layer, specifically in room (25). This room is located in the eastern side of the building, which together with the group of rooms adjacent to it form an independent building unit, except that it is linked with the rest of the building through the outer wall. These ornaments were found in a small circular hole covered with mud, with a diameter of 40 cm and a depth of 25 cm. The burn marks are visible on this hole. In addition to this group of ornaments, cylinder seals were found.

Most of the ornaments models discovered were in the form of necklaces, some of which were made of gemstones and semi gemstones such as lapis lazuli and agate, in addition to the use of mother-of-pearl and white stones. Other forms of this group are represented by pendants with

[17] Ninevite V pottery acquired its name thanks to the British prospector Max Mallowan distinguished shapes of types of painted, grooved, chiseled and simple pottery, which inspired him use this name, which is in fact the number of the layer in which it was discovered in the deep probe of the Quinjaq hill within the ancient city of Nineveh. see: Al-Jumaili, Qusay Sobhi Abbas, Ibid, p. 16 and onwards.

[18] For more on the pottery of the Tal Al-Faras site, see: Suleiman, Burhan Shaker, Op.cit, 2010, pp. 27-34. Also: Qusay Sobhi Abbas. Op.cit, p.81

animal and human shapes (bird shapes), and some of them made of lapis lazuli and gold[19] (Fig. 6).

Two models of ornaments were found outside room (25). The beads found may have been used in the manufacture of necklaces in room No. (10). A distinctive model of a cow-shaped pendant made of ivory was also found in pocket No. (72)[20] (Fig. 7).

Cylindrical Seals

A group of cylindrical seals was found in a hole belonging to the third layer, and next to it was a group of ornaments - as mentioned above -. The majority of these 23 seals were made of white stone, while some others were made of lapis lazuli and wax stone[21].

These seals carry artistic scenes with a variety of contents, including scenes of drinking councils, a struggle between predators, or a struggle between the Nude Hero with animals. There were also scenes of two animals facing each other, between them a tree with large branches. Some of these seals were executed in an abstract style[22].

Stone Artistic Finds

Some stone artistic finds were found, most of which were damaged and did not remain in an integrated condition[23]. One of the most prominent models of stereoscopic sculpture in this site is the lower half of a life-size statue that may belong to a ruler or a priest, since he wears clothes with thick tufted horizontal rows, which was common in Age of the Dynasty, particularly in the Second Intermediate Period (First Dynasty of Ur). This is evident from the movement of the feet,

[19] For more on the ornaments of Tal al-Faras and those found in the Makhoul area, review: Al-yaqoot, Burooj Faleh Mahdi. "The Ornaments in the Light of the Excavations of the Makhoul Dam Basin (An Archaeological-Artistic Study)", MA thesis, University of Baghdad, 2019.

[20] Al-yaqoot, Burooj Faleh Mahdi, Ibid, Table No. 2, p. 215 and onwards.

[21] For more on the Tal al-Faras seals and the scenes executed on them in detail, see: Suleiman, Burhan Shakir, Ibid, 2010, pp. 35-37.

[22] For more on seals in the Age of the Dynasty, especially those executed in the abstract method, review: Murtkat, Anton. Art in Ancient Iraq. Translated by: Issa Salman and Salim Taha Al-Tikriti. Baghdad 1975, p. 94.

[23] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Ibid, 2010, p. 33.

which suggests a state of walking[24]. This statue was made of limestone, with its remaining part being 60 cm high and 40 cm wide. It seems that this stone part of the statue was broken into two halves and lost its base and feet[25].

It is worth noting that this statue was part of the wall of the stone well, which has a diameter of 90 cm and a depth of 10 m, and its function was to drain the water of the circular building's yard. This well is connected to a stone waterway that extends from inside the yard ending in the well outside the building's and towards the southeast[26] (Fig.9).

Furthermore, it is important to mention that most of the finds from the Makhoul area have been studied and published, but what was mentioned above can help us in our study and thus determine the function of the building, as the presence of cylinder seals indicates the existence of an economic process that may relate to the quantities of stored grain. As for the presence of ornaments and artistic finds, the most prominent of which is the stone statue, they indicate the presence of a person of a distinguished position who lived in this building because it reminds us of models of stereoscopic sculpture from the Second Intermediate Period, i.e. the era that followed King Mislam's and its artistic style. This is in addition to the presence of pottery with two different styles, indicating the presence of daily life activities taking place in the building.

Investigating the Building's Function in Comparison with other Buildings and the Artistic Finds

One of the architectural features of the Age of the Dynasty is the emergence of circular buildings, which were considered a unique phenomenon in ancient Iraq, its northern and eastern regions in particular. These buildings have been used for several purposes, including religious and secular. They are distinguished in most of their models by being central. They are also distinguished by their fortifications and the multiplicity of thick walls that surround the center of

[24] For more on clothes with transverse folds of this type, see: Murtkat, Anton. Ibid p.132. Also, see: Reda, Haza Abdul-Jabbar. "Fashion and Clothing in the Antiquities of Kurdistan During the Third and Second Millennium BC", MA Thesis, University of Sulaymaniyah, 2016, p. 78.

[25] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker Op.cit, 2010, p. 33.

[26] Information that Mr. Mohammed Abdulrahman from the Investigation Department in Baghdad provided me with thanks ; Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Op.cit, 2010, p. 31.

the building and are separated by circular corridors, as their area varies from one site to another[27]. Some circular buildings are called Compound Buildings[28].

The most significant sites that include the circular buildings are Tell al-Shawk al-Sagheer[29], Tell Razooq[30], Tell Madhoor[31], Tell al-Naml and Tell Madina[32], Tell Saleema[33], and Tell al-kabba[34]. Most of these sites date back to First Age of the Dynasty (2800-2650 BC), with the exception of the Tell al-Kubba building, whose construction dates back to the Jemdet Nasr Period (3100-2900 BC). Here we can review some of these circular buildings, each of which had a special function and differed in its interior design, as it can be compared with Tal al-Faras building to reach the function of the building and the purpose of its establishment. The first comparison model is the building that was found in Tell al-Naml[35], as it, alongside that of Tell al-Faras, is located within the same geographical area, in addition to the fact that the two

[27] Hussein, Atheer Ahmed. "The Architecture of Palaces in Ancient Iraq until the Ancient Babylonian Era", MA Thesis, University of Baghdad, 2009, p. 118.

[28] Al-Azami, Muhammad Taha Muhammad. “Fences and Defensive Fortifications in the Ancient Iraqi Architecture” , PhD. Dissertation, University of Baghdad, 1992, p. 99.

[29] Tal al-Shawk al-Sagheer building: This circular building, which dates back to the First Age of the Dynasty, is located at the Great Dam basin, to the south of al-Zanjilia village, and at a distance of 8 km to the northwest of it, Tal al-Shawk al-kabeer building is located, as the distance between them does not exceed 100 m. For more, see: Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. "Results of Excavations in the Azim Dam Basin in 1990 and 1992", Sumer, Vol. (59) 2014, p. 18. Also: Al-nawwab, Ruwaida Faisal Moosa, Ibid, p. 34.

[30] Tal Razooq: It is one of the three important hills of Uj Teppe site, which is located at the northern end of Hamrin valley, not far from Tal Madhoor. It is an approximately triangular hill with dimensions of 170 x 140 x 120 m, with its highest point rising by 4 m from the level of the neighboring plain. For more, see: Hussein, Atheer Ahmed, Op.cit, p. 34.

[31] Tal Madhoor: It is located in the northeastern part of the Hamrin Dam, with its height is about 3 m and its diameter is 100 m. For more, see: Kilic, Robert. and Rove, Michael. "Tal Madhoor ". Sumer, Vol. 35, 1979, p. 530. Also, see: Khalil, Ghaith Hussein, "Mesopotamia in the the First Age of the Dynasty", MA thesis, University of Baghdad. 2004, p. 17

[32] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Ibid, 2014, p. 17.

[33]Tal Saleema: It is one of the largest sites in the Hamrin Basin, located 3 km southwest of Al-sa'diyya on the eastern bank of the Diyala River. See: Al-Azami, Muhammad Taha Muhammad, Ibid, p. 111.

[34] Tal al-Kabba is located about 110 km northeast of Baghdad, 12 km from the city of Saadiya, and 19 km west of Jalawla. For more, see: Fuji, Hideo, "The Japanese Excavations in Hamrin and the Preliminary Report No. 2 on the Archaeological Campaign in al-Kabba and Sangur Hills.". Sumer, Volume 40, Parts 1-2 1984, p. 40.

[35] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Ibid, 2010, pp. 115-120.

buildings date back to the same era. The second model proposed for comparison is the Tell Madina building in the Adhaim Dam area, which differs in terms of function and internal division from the first model. Finally, the Tell Saleema building represents the third model[36].

- **Tell al-Naml Building**: In the second layer of the Tell al-Naml site, a circular building was found, which generally consists of several walls separated by corridors. In the third floor, which is the oldest, five walls were found, with a part of the sixth wall on the northeastern side. The center of the building was in the form of a regular circular cavity with a diameter of 1,20 m, with an entrance on the eastern side facing the building's main entrance. It is separated from this external entrance only by a small partition, the floor of which is paved with coarse gravel, and on its inner wall there are traces of burning - as is the case in Tell al-Kubba-. To the right of the entrance there is a spiral staircase that leads to the roof of the building. Following the center of the building and the staircase are two walls, the second and the third are separated by a corridor 80 cm wide. Small pockets and partitions occupy most of the space between the two walls. Revolving around the third wall is a corridor, which is the main corridor in the building, bearing the number (12), and is free of divisions. The outer face of the third wall is adorned with beams containing ten louvers, nine of which are impermeable, except for one which was filled with broken pottery and animal bones. The pillars in the third wall are offset by similar pillars in the fourth, and in this corridor found a well which is located to the left of the entrance, probably used in religious rituals. As for the second floor, we notice the expansion of the building through the addition of many pockets of different sizes and shapes between the fourth and fifth walls. Yet, the northern part is only remaining due to the building being damaged from the following layer. On the first floor, the remains of the sixth wall were found, specifically in the north and north-eastern part of the building[37] (Fig.10). Some researchers indicate that this building was a temple[38], and that it was dedicated to the worship of the god of fire known in ancient Iraq as BIL.GI[39].

[36] Burhan Shakir Suleiman suggested several circular buildings to compare with the buildings of Makhoul area. For more on these buildings, see: Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Op.cit, 2010, p. 121.
[37] Ibid, 2010, p. 119.
[38] Ibid, 2010, p. 120.
[39] Ibid, 2010, p. 111.

- **Tell Madina Building**: It is one of the important circular buildings discovered in the Adhaim Dam area, which dates back First Age of the Dynasty. It was found during the second season of excavations that took place in 1992[40]. The building was found in the main hill of the site, and it generally consists of a central circular room, with its diameter is 5 m from the bottom and 5.70 m from the top, while the height of its walls reaches 1.5 m. This room is surrounded by two circular walls separated by only a slight partition, as it seems that the outer wall was added later. The thickness of the wall is 2.5 m and the height of the rest of it reaches 1 m, whereas the diameter of the entire building is 15 m[41]. Within the building center, remains of ash and charred grains as well as burnt clay bricks at the walls of the circular chamber have been revealed. At the confluence of the two walls on the southern side of the building, there is a 'kasra' (a floor which structural traces have been, anciently or recently, removed) of an oval shape. On the western side of the wall, there is an abnormal width in a sloping shape that is equal to the adjacent floor. This slope was probably used to enable the animals that carry grain to enter the building, as archaeologists believe that this building was a granary[42] (Fig. 11).
- Tell Saleema Building: This building was found in the sixth floor of the site, separated from the rest of the buildings by a wide alley or corridor. The building consists of a central area with dimensions (18 x 15) m divided into rooms of different sizes and surrounded by five walls with a circular or oval extension adjacent to each other. It seems that this building was constructed in successive periods, as its entrance has not been found. Some researchers suggest that the entrance is located on the eastern side, which has disappeared due to the demolition of this side[43].

Some of the rooms were marked by the presence of burn marks on their walls and floors, which were covered with pebbles. It is worth noting that rooms (7 and 10) were clay ovens whose walls showed signs of severe burning[44]. It is likely that this building represents a large workshop that may have been dedicated to mining. And this explains the reason of the thickness

[40] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Op.cit, 2014, p. 17.
[41] Ibid, 2014, p. 18.
[42] Ibid, 2014, p. 19.
[43] Al-Azami, Muhammad Taha Muhammad. Op.cit, p. 18.
[44] Ibid, p. 19.

of the walls, which is attributed to the thermal insulation of the workshop from the residential houses so as to preserve the mineral assets. (Fig. 12).

It is clear from the above that there is more than one function for the circular buildings in ancient Iraq. Some researchers, on one hand, demonstrate that the function of each of these buildings is for sanctification and worship, as in the Tell al-Naml building. On the other hand, others view their function to be a fortress or castle, or perhaps a granary as in the Tal Madina building, or even a large workshop as in the Tell Saleema building.

As for the circular building in Tell al-Faras, it is likely to be of a secular function representing an administrative-residential fortress that included in some parts granaries. The reason beyond the presence of these fortifications was due to the importance of the building and to protect it from external aggression. This can be confirmed based on the opinion of the archaeologists about the presence of some walls that extended outside the circular building's wall[45], which may have been damaged or destroyed by an attack on the settlement or because of environmental factors.

The researcher tends to adopt the idea that these buildings have secular rather than religious functions

1. The absence of a central circular room around which the walls are centered, since the building lacks centrality or symmetry, as is found in the Tell al-Naml building and the similar models.
2. The presence of a number of various-size rooms in addition to a large number of pockets designated for storage, which may indicate that the use of the building was for daily-life purposes. What supports this opinion is the presence of the well, which is connected to the building through a stone waterway that reaches to the yard 79.
3. The building is larger in size as compared to the buildings designated for storage only. For example, the diameter of the Tell Madina building is only 15 m, while the Tell al-Faras building has occupied almost the entire hill.

[45] Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Ibid, 2010, p. 31.

It seems that the style of circular buildings was known before the dynasty era. Perhaps such buildings were used for ritual purposes or for those of fortification. The **Tell al-Kubba building**, which dates back to the Jemdet Nasr era (3100-2900 BC), represents a pattern of distinctive circular building with fortifications. The diameter of the building is 80 m, and it consists of a central terrace with a diameter of up to 5 m and it is of a cylindrical shape, surrounded by eight walls and trench. The building was roofed with a gabled roof, as it appears from the fortifications of the building and the way of organizing the entrances that do not fall on the same straight line, which indicates that this building has a religious specificity.[46] (Fig. 13).

As for the **Tell al-Shawk al-Sagheer building**, located in the Adhaim Dam area and dating back to the first age of the dynasty, it consists of a central room surrounded by three walls that confine corridors and narrow rooms between them. Perhaps the function of the building is religious, as evidenced by the presence of burn marks on the walls of the central room and the presence of ash on its floor [47] (Fig. 14).

The **Tell Razooq building** does not differ from the previous circular buildings, as it consists of two circular walls surrounding a central courtyard with a diameter of 11.5 m. The building included 5 walls that extended horizontally on the main circular walls, dividing them into narrow rooms. The building was also roofed with a gabled roof on which a flat roof rests (Fig. 15). This building is similar to the circular building referred to in Tell Madhoor.[48]

Whatever the function of these circular buildings, their existence was the result of great collective efforts. Such buildings require a strong administrative authority to manage and supervise the construction process. Perhaps the concentration of their presence on this very side of ancient Iraq might have represented a defensive line against the hazards coming from the east[49].

A similar example of the Tell al-Faras building from outside Mesopotamia is the Tell al-Raqa'i building, located on the eastern bank of the khabur river, 12 km. from al-Hasakah in

[46] For more, see: Fuji, Hideo, "Hamrin Reports -6- The Excavations in in al-Kabba and Sangur, and Humaidat Hills.". Al-Rafidain, Volume 2 , 1984, p. 10 and onwards.
[47]Suleiman, Burhan Shaker. Ibid, 2014, pp. 19-20.
[48] Al-Azami, Muhammad Taha Muhammad. Op.cit, pp.107-109
[49]. Ibid, pp.99-114

Syria. A circular building was found that covered the entire site, this building was of an economic nature[5050](Fig. 16).

Conclusions

1. **The Tell al-Faras building does not represent a complete temple building as is that case in that of Tell al-Naml, due to the lack of many elements available in religious buildings according to the circular plan. This includes the absence of the central room that represents the sacred room in the temple, as well as the absence of cracks that appeared in the inner walls of the Tell al-Naml building, besides the lack of symmetry in the building's units, as explained above.**
2. **The use of the building for administrative purposes, and the best evidence for this is its thick walls and fortifications. In addition, the presence of seals and ornaments in a hole inside the wall of room No. (25) may enhance the importance of the building and the possibility of its residents being exposed to danger, especially since its northwestern parts have been exposed to severe burning.**
3. **That the statue was broken in the above-mentioned manner and its use in building the wall of the well indicates an event that has occurred which caused the statue to lose the importance for which it was erected. Especially since it is known that such statues were erected for rulers or city lords, and this supports the argument that the building enjoyed an administrative status.**
4. **Parts of the building were used for economic purposes, indicated by the presence pockets designated for grain storage.**
5. **The full presence of the building during the Age of the Dynasty up to the Akkadian era, as evidenced by the continued use of some of its rooms during the Akkadian era, including rooms (1 and 10). This is in addition to the use of the abstract method, common in the seals of the Second Age of the Dynasty, in the design of Tell al-Faras seals, alongside the artistic method used in sculpting the statue there.**

[5050] Schwartz, Glenn.M. and Curvers,Hans,H.” Tell al-Raqa‘I 1989and 1990: Further Investigations at a Small Rural Site of Early Urban Northern Mesopotamia” AJA Vol. 96,No.3 July 1992,P. 397-398.

6. **The presence of colors on the walls of room 27 and 38, as well as the presence of a stove and a clay oven in room 26, in addition to the presence of several pottery forms indicate that various activities were conducted inside this building.**

Fig. 2

Suleiman, Ibid, 2010, Tablet No.27

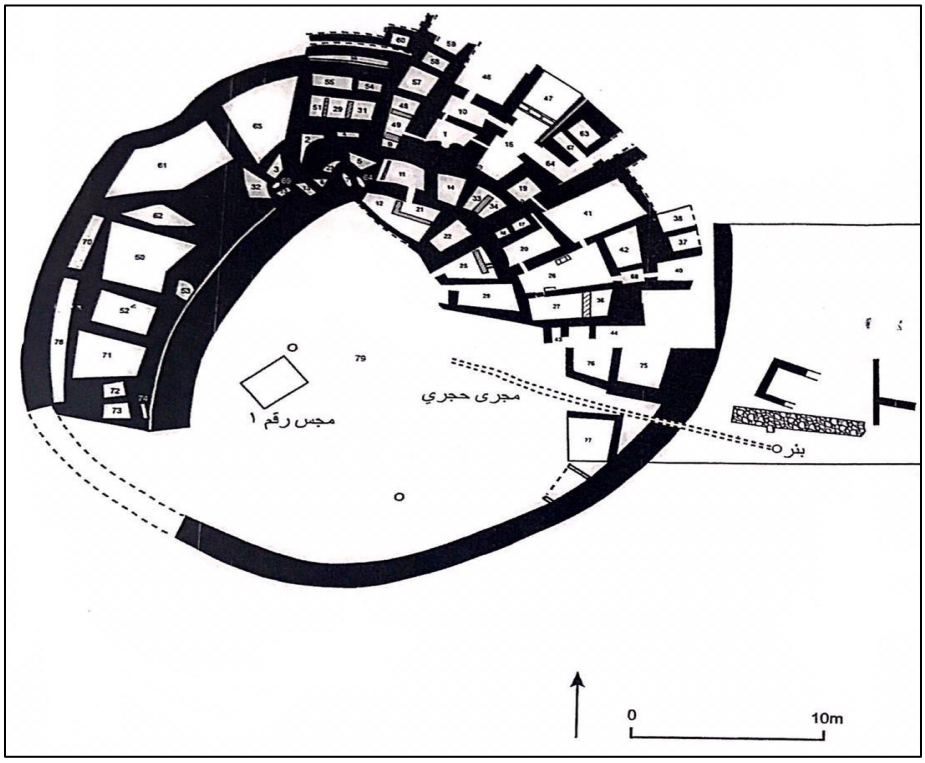


Fig. 3

Suleiman, Ibid, 2010, Tablet No.44

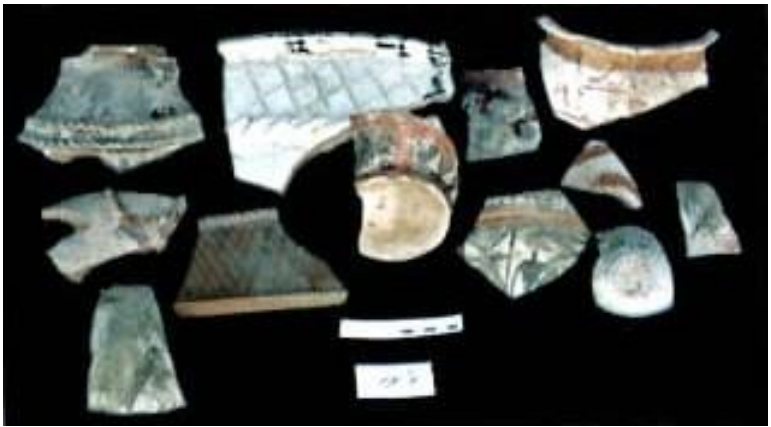
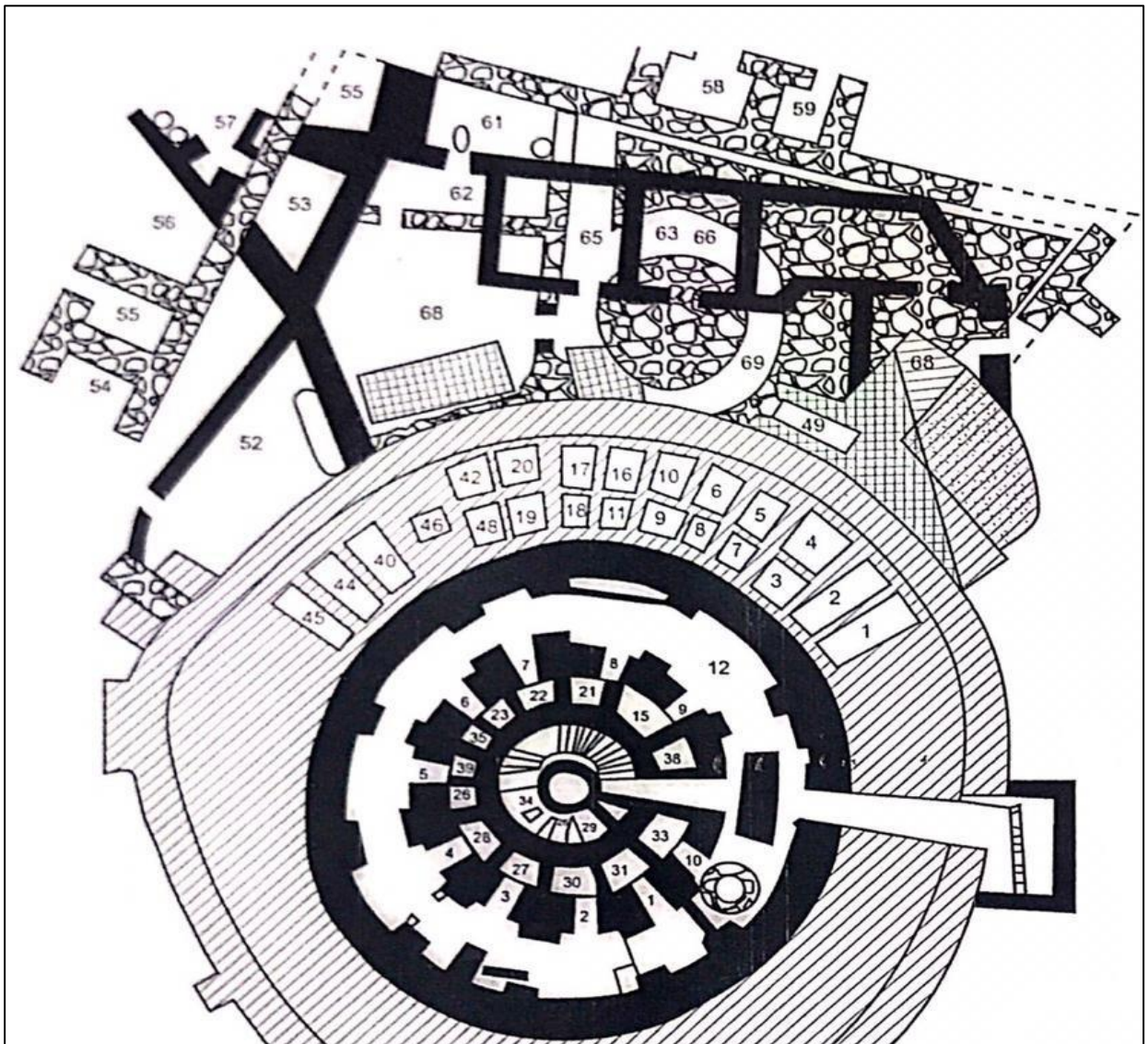


Fig. 5

Suleiman, Ibid, 2010, Tablet No.33

Fig. 8

Suleiman, Ibid, 2010, Tablet No.41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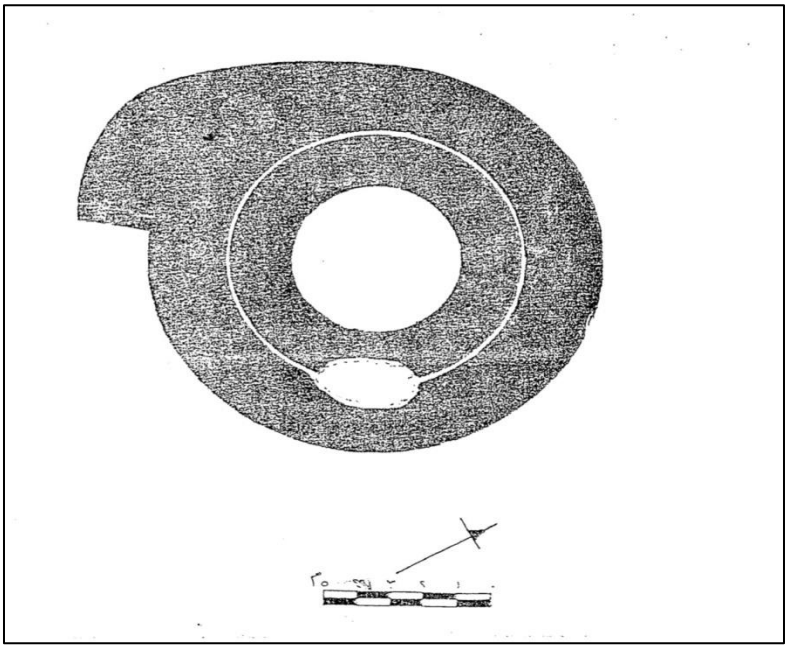

Fig. 11

Suleiman, Ibid, 2014, Sketch No.5

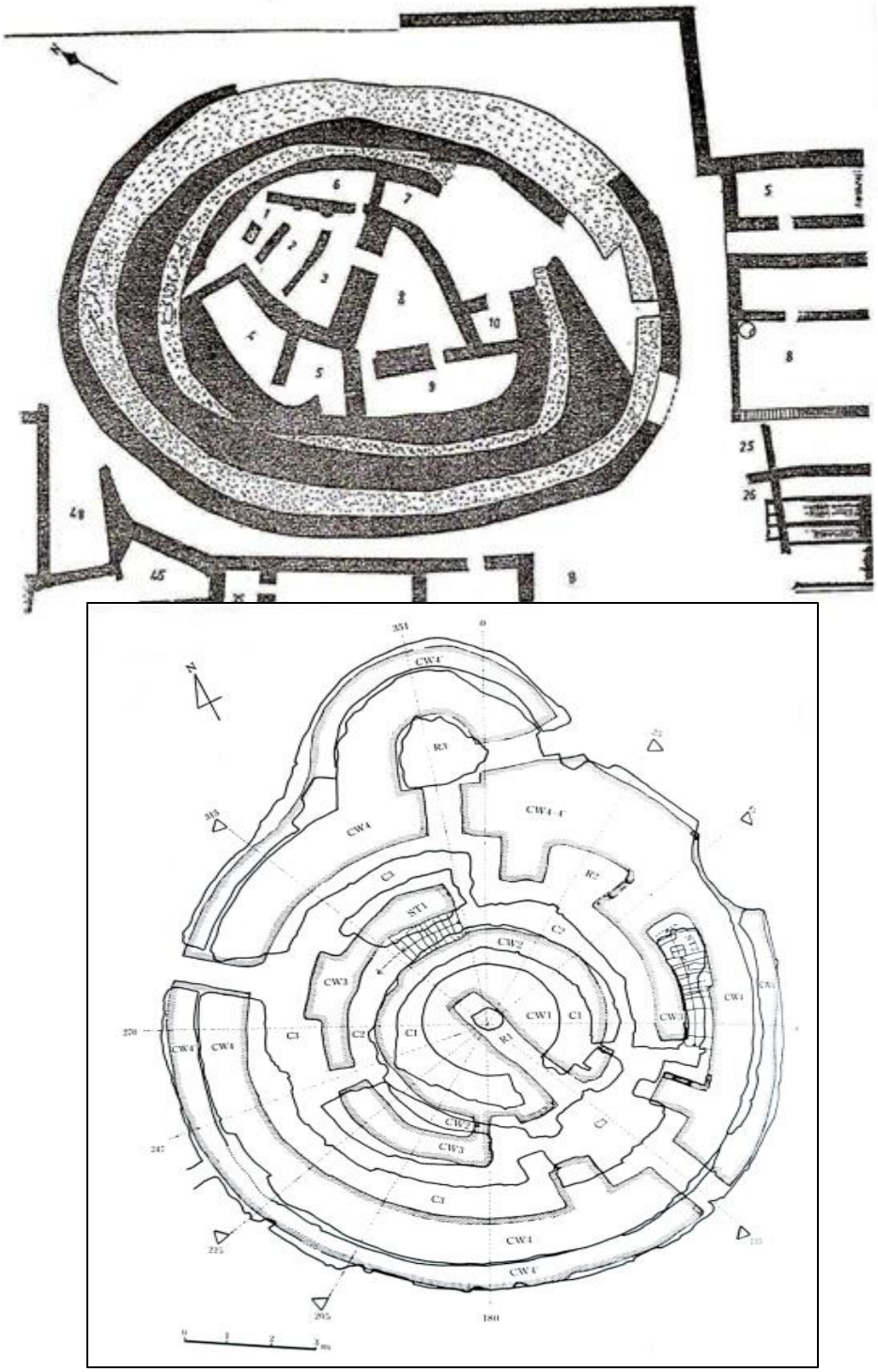

Fig. 13

Fuji, Ibid, 1981, Fig.6

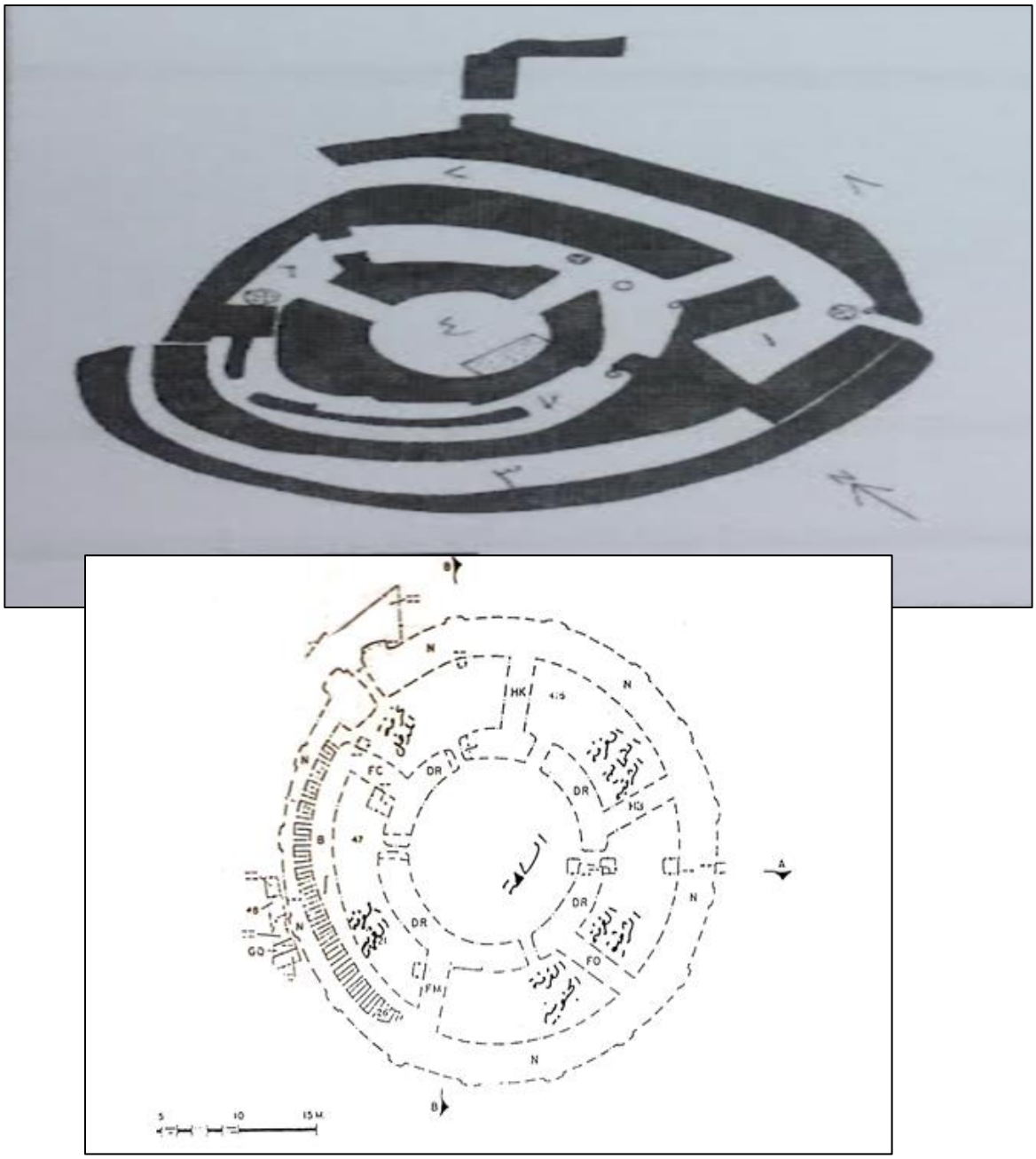

Fig. 15

Al-Azami, Ibid, Fig. 26

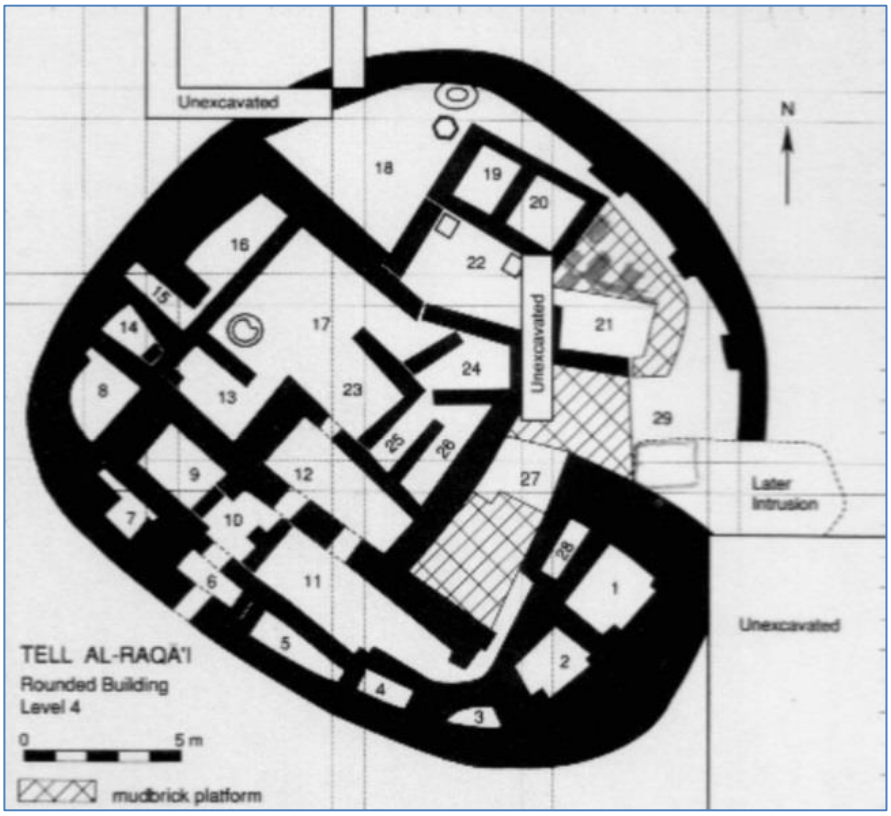

Fig. 16

Schwartz, Glenn.M. and Curvers,Hans,H, Ibid, Fig.10