

FILIKTEPE: A STEP TOWARD UNDERGROUND TOWNS

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Riassunto

La collina di Filiktepe, pochi chilometri a Sud-Est del villaggio di Ovaören (Göstesin), rappresenta uno dei rari casi in cui la presenza di sviluppati sistemi ipogei non è accompagnata dalla contigua presenza di un villaggio. Come a Göstesin, le strutture più propriamente sotterranee si dipartono da una serie di vasti ambienti in diretto collegamento con l'esterno. La collocazione di tali ambienti lungo la falesia meridionale è da porsi con ogni probabilità in relazione con la necessità di una buona insolazione invernale. I vasti eventi franosi che interessano la stessa porzione di falesia sono probabilmente conseguenza dell'apertura delle cavità artificiali scavate lungo la parete tufacea. L'esplorazione ha rivelato tutto un insieme di sistemi ipogei dei quali viene riportato un dettagliato rilievo. La struttura di tali ipogei, pur presentando in generale un primo locale di difesa paragonabile ai ridotti di Göstesin, si prolunga e si apre a molti altri locali in cui sembra di poter riconoscere magazzini per derrate alimentari per una comunità della consistenza di qualche centinaio di individui. In tal senso gli ipogei di Filiktepe appaiono come un caso intermedio tra i semplici ridotti di Göstesin e le complesse strutture delle città sotterranee. Sono state trovate evidenze dell'esistenza di un livello inferiore di ipogei, purtroppo solo marginalmente accessibile. Alcuni indizi, tra i quali l'anomala collocazione di alcune porte-macina, suggeriscono che i sotterranei siano stati teatro di una violenta, progressiva conquista.

1. Introduction

In the course of 1993 mission evidence was found near the village of Göstesin for underground redoubts, forming a defensive system devoted to receive small groups of people with their domestic animals, probably for a short interval of time. As already discussed in these mission reports, such an evidence probably tells us of familiar groups headed by farmer/soldiers holding the territory and defending it against the recurrent attacks by groups of marauders. During 1994 the investigation was shifted a few miles away, along the scarp of the butte of Filiktepe (NE 45), where evidences for artificial cavities were abundantly spread (Fig. 1).

The interest for such a new investigation was mainly driven by the further evidence that at Filiktepe (= the hill of goats) one is dealing with the rather peculiar and interesting occurrence of a network of cavities apparently lacking of the accompanying surface village, as no evidences for recent or ancient habitations appeared on the flat fields surrounding the butte. It was obviously interesting to investigate if such a lack of external evidences was connected or justified by peculiar features of the underground. In the same time, Filiktepe gave us the exciting opportunity of exploring a system abandoned in ancient times and much more preserved from occasional visitors than systems near modern villages do.

As for the butte, it appears rather similar to the butte of Göstesin, both in dimension and shape. The rocky walls emerge abruptly from the rather flat surface of the surrounding fields, with an height of the order of about ten meters. All along the SE portion of the butte one finds an uninterrupted series of openings, often largely covered by collapsed stony blocks. In front of these openings, in the field at the

foots of the scarp, one finds some shafts connecting the surface with artificial rooms excavated a few meters below and largely filled by loose soil. A quick inspection of the openings along the wall disclosed large rooms often connected by cuniculi to a more internal underground system of artificial cavities. Along the wall, a few cavities to be unequivocally interpreted as churches, showing that the area was certainly inhabited during the Byzantine times. Curiously enough, one finds a cuniculus cutting the apse of a church, an occurrence which should indicate that at least this cuniculus has been dug after the Byzantine time.

As a first remark, one again finds, as in the case of Göstesin, that the cavities occur along the southern portion of the butte only, the northern scarps showing very scarce tracks of excavations (three or four tombs). In this context, one has to notice that the large evidence for collapsed rocks can be hardly attributed to a natural process of progressive collapse of the edge of the butte. If this would be the case, one would expect to find the butte surrounded by a large number of blocks collapsed before the start of the human digging activity. On the contrary, one finds that no previous block are scattered either around the northern scarps or in front of the cavities, which thus appear to be excavated when the butte was a solid body emerging abruptly from the fields. Thus one is driven to conclude that the collapse of the entrances has to be regarded as a direct consequence of the dug of the cavities, which weakened the structure of the rock producing with the time a generalized series of collapses. A conclusion which can be applied to all the buttes we investigated in the region.

A second point of some relevance is given by the evidence of a continuous and relevant presence of man in the area since the most ancient times. Less

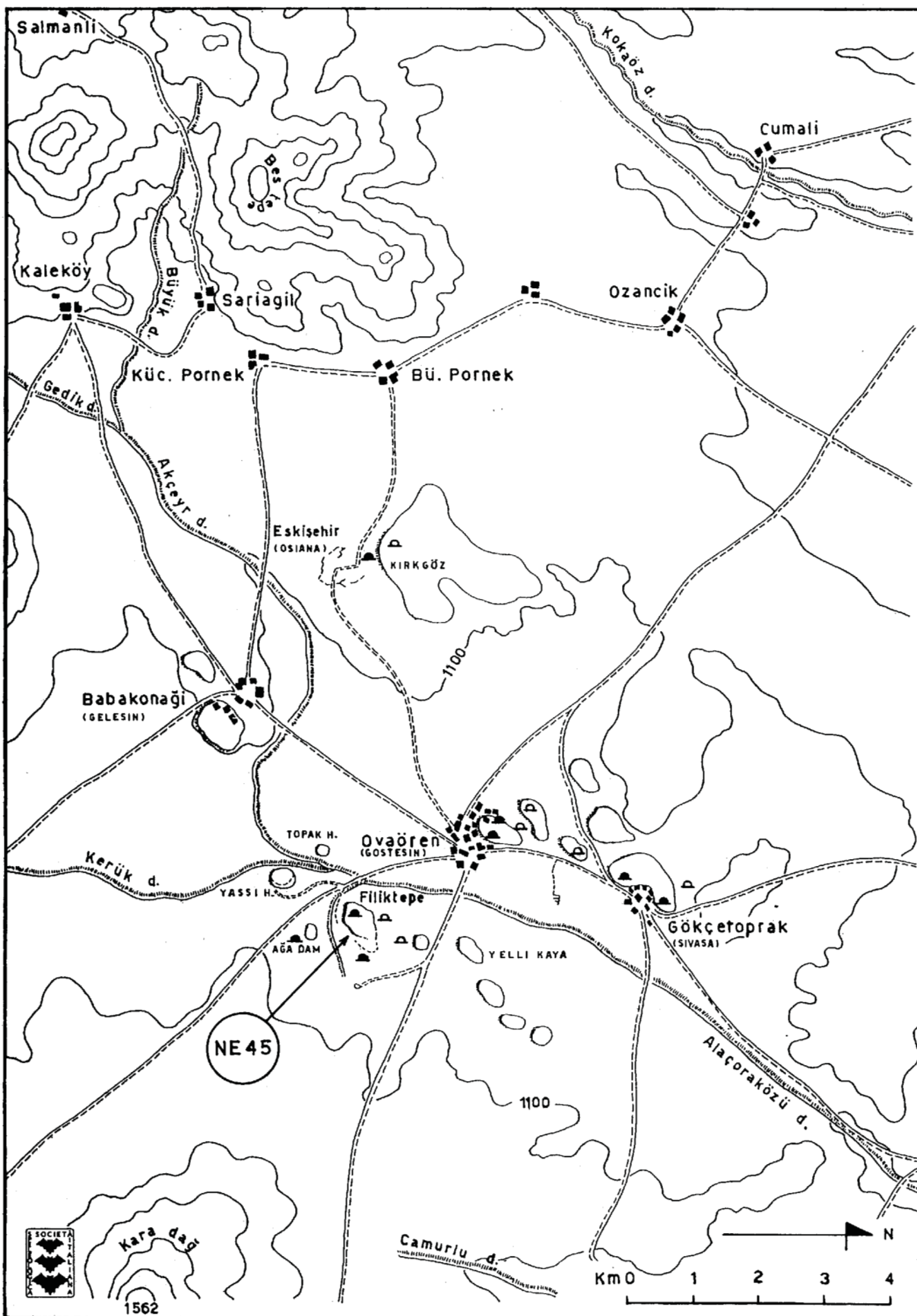


Fig. 1

The location of the hill of Filiktepe (NE 45), near the village of Ovaören (Göstesin), in the district of Gülşehir
 Ubicazione della collina di Filiktepe, nei pressi del villaggio di Ovaören (Göstesin), nel distretto di Gülşehir

than 1 mile south of the butte one finds a clear relief of the field with a rough annular shape, which is the remnant of a rather large Phrygian town, as shown by the abundant fragments of pottery scattered on the ground. A few hundred meters far to the West, a small hill has to be regarded as the surviving evidence for an ancient neolithic village, as again shown by the numerous fragment of pottery. Interesting enough, one finds that the Turkish designation for the hill (hüyüç) is just the one given to the small hills formed by the overlapping rests of prehistoric villages. As a whole, a similar concentration of historical evidences not only shows that the area was inhabited since well before the second millennium B.C., but also suggests that since that ancient times the area was of particular relevance in the context of the other human settlement in the surrounding region.

Surprisingly enough, one finds evidence that the system of underground cavities appears more developed and extended than in the case of Göstesin. Thus the absence of an external village becomes even more intriguing and interesting. As a matter of fact, the simplest explanation for such a feature coming to the mind is to be in presence of only a marginal

and peripheral system of cavities, supporting small groups of people when farming in the field. The evidence for the peculiar development of the undergrounds of Filiktepe runs out such an hypothesis. Thus the problem arises of why such a well developed settlement is now completely abandoned. Moreover, if the absence of an external village also in the past will be confirmed, thus one would face the remarkable evidence that undergrounds cavities can be regarded as self consistent system, supporting the life and the activity of rather extended groups of people. Moreover, and finally, one could speculate about a possible connection between the evidence for peculiarly developed undergrounds and the already quoted evidence for a continuous presence since very ancient times of relevant human settlement in the area. We will back on this argument in the final discussion closing this paper.

2. The undergrounds of Filiktepe

In the course of the mission our efforts were mainly devoted to survey all the undergrounds not filled by soil and thus open to the exploration. This

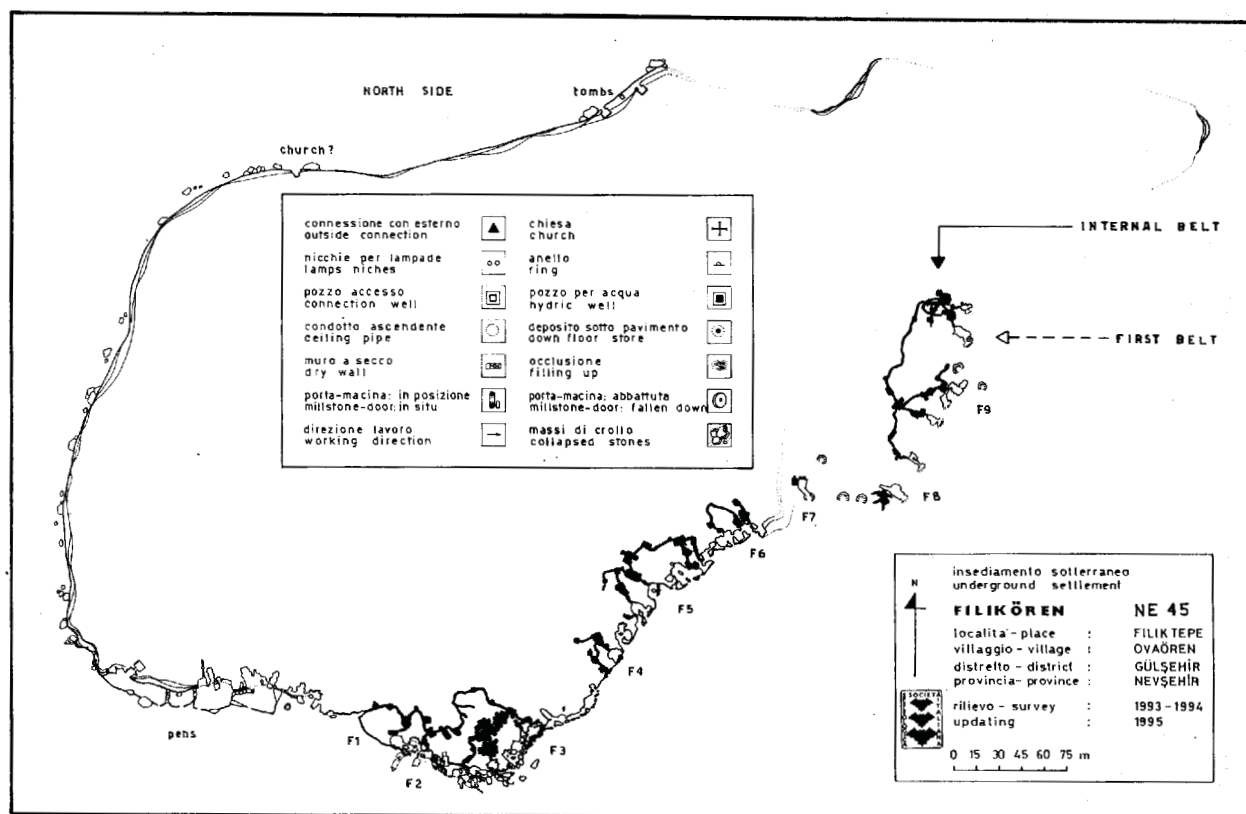


Fig. 2

Map of the butte of Filiktepe with the network of surveyed undergrounds
Pianta del butte (collina a cima piatta e fianchi ripidi) di Filiktepe con il reticolo dei sotterranei topografati

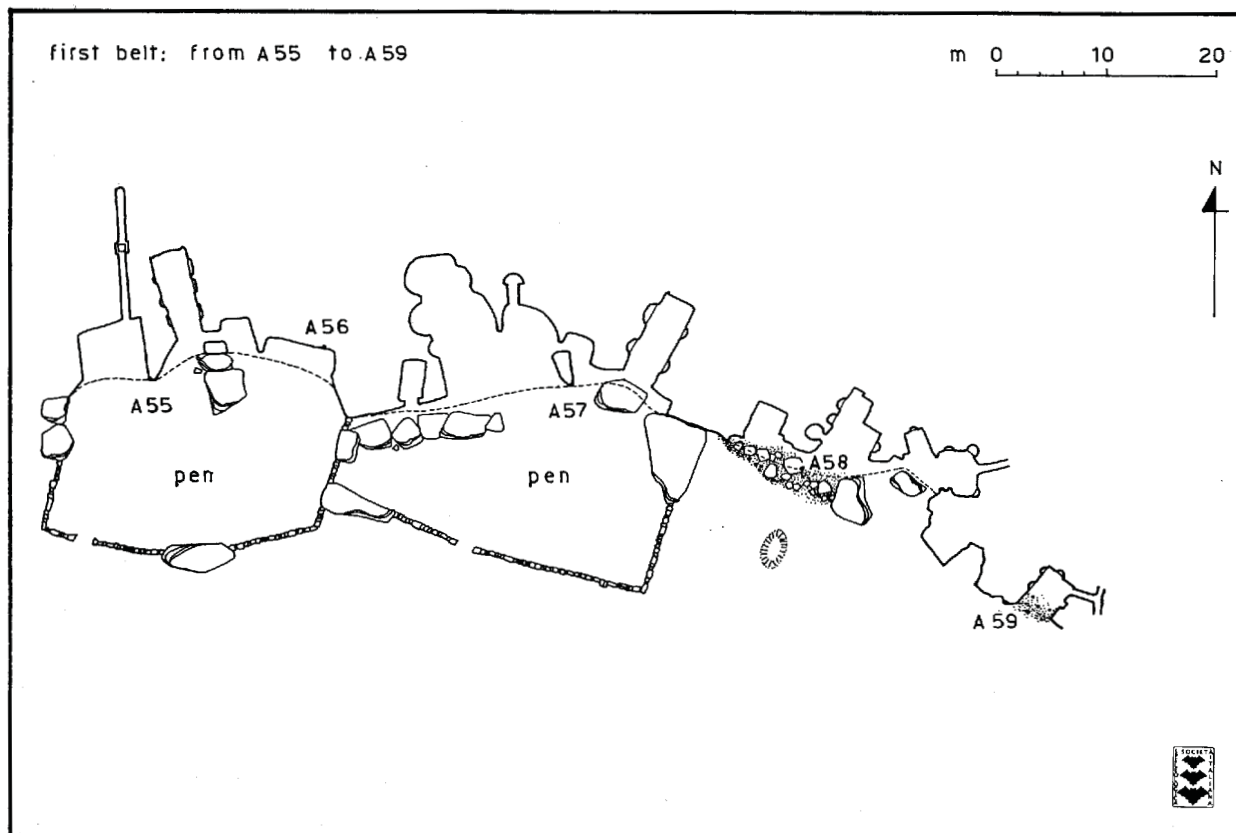


Fig. 3

The system of cavities surveyed along the southern face of the Filiktepe butte: the external rooms from points A55 to A59 of the polygonal

Il sistema di cavità rilevate sul lato sud del butte di Filiktepe: i vani della fascia esterna dal punto A55 al punto A59 della poligonale

task having been accomplished, Fig.2 gives an overall view of the butte of Filiktepe with the network of surveyed undergrounds. Fig. 3 to 10 give with more details the map of the whole system of cavities developing along the southern slope of the butte, reporting the codification adopted to mark the various entrances. All along the wall of the butte one finds the openings of a rather continuous series of large rooms, some with cuniculi leading to more or less developed internal systems.

As for these internal systems, in their first portion one can find recurrent similarities with the system of redoubts of Göstesin: a short cuniculus is connecting the first room open to the exterior with a corresponding interior room, defended by a millstone door. However, this last room is lacking of the "escaping way" we found in Göstesin, nor the system is limited to a simple connection with contiguous similar systems, as in Göstesin. As a general rule, one finds that this first portion of the undergrounds is now connected by cuniculi with further, rather developed and more internal systems, creating a network of undergrounds in connection with several

entrances.

Before entering into a detailed discussion of these systems, there are two further differences with Göstesin to be at least indicated. The first one is that the entrances of the undergrounds are not properly limited to the rocky walls delimiting the butte. As a matter of fact, moving East from the entrance F1, which is just on the southern extremity of the butte, one reaches the system F6 which is the last one opened along the rocky scarp. After this system, the wall disappears into a continuous flat surface, gently sloping toward the top of the butte. Three further undergrounds (F7 to F9) have the entrances located along this surface, as produced by excavating the flat surface till obtaining small craters, of the diameter of few meters, allowing the dig of cavities along the rocky face of the crater located toward the top of the hill.

Moreover, in addition to these typical structures one finds scattered along the sloping surface or at the foot of the scarp small shafts opening in the ground and leading to the roofs of subterranean rooms a few meters below. Unfortunately, the large majority

of these rooms appear filled by earth. Thus one remains with the evidence for the existence of a probably well extended system of undergrounds located at a lower level, of which we found only marginal evidences in the exploration of the upper system we are dealing with. As a final point of this general overview, one has to notice that in the explored portion we found two new features, namely same shafts connecting the roof of more external rooms with the surface and, in one case, a cuniculus opening not in a room but directly on the surface and leading with a series of steps toward a (filled) interior.

To go deeper in this problematic in the following we will discuss in some details the various undergrounds surveyed during the mission, grouped according to the evidence for different blocks of mutually interconnected undergrounds.

2.1 The system F1/F2/F3

The undergrounds opening beyond the entrances F1-F2 were the first ones surveyed during the mission 1993, suggesting the relevance of the Filiktepe system. The survey was completed during the mission

1994, revealing an extended system of cuniculi and rooms connected to several entrances marked from F1 to F3, as reported in Fig.4. The digging marks along the surface of the cuniculi clearly indicate that one is in presence of two main systems (F1/F2 and F3) eventually merging through the encounter of two cuniculi started from both systems and pushed in the interior till reaching the connection (point "a"). The two systems show quite different characteristics, so let us discuss separately these two subsystems before discussing the rather peculiar connection.

2.1.1 The system F1-F2

As for system F1/a-F1/b, Fig. 5 shows a more detailed map of the underground cavities. According to Fig.5, one can recognize in the cavities following the entrance F1/b the well known sequence "external room - redoubt" already recalled throughout this paper. The small room at the bottom of the entrance room is a new feature, but the deviation of the cuniculus before reaching the millstone door has been already found and discussed in some systems of Göstesin.

According to the digging evidences, the external

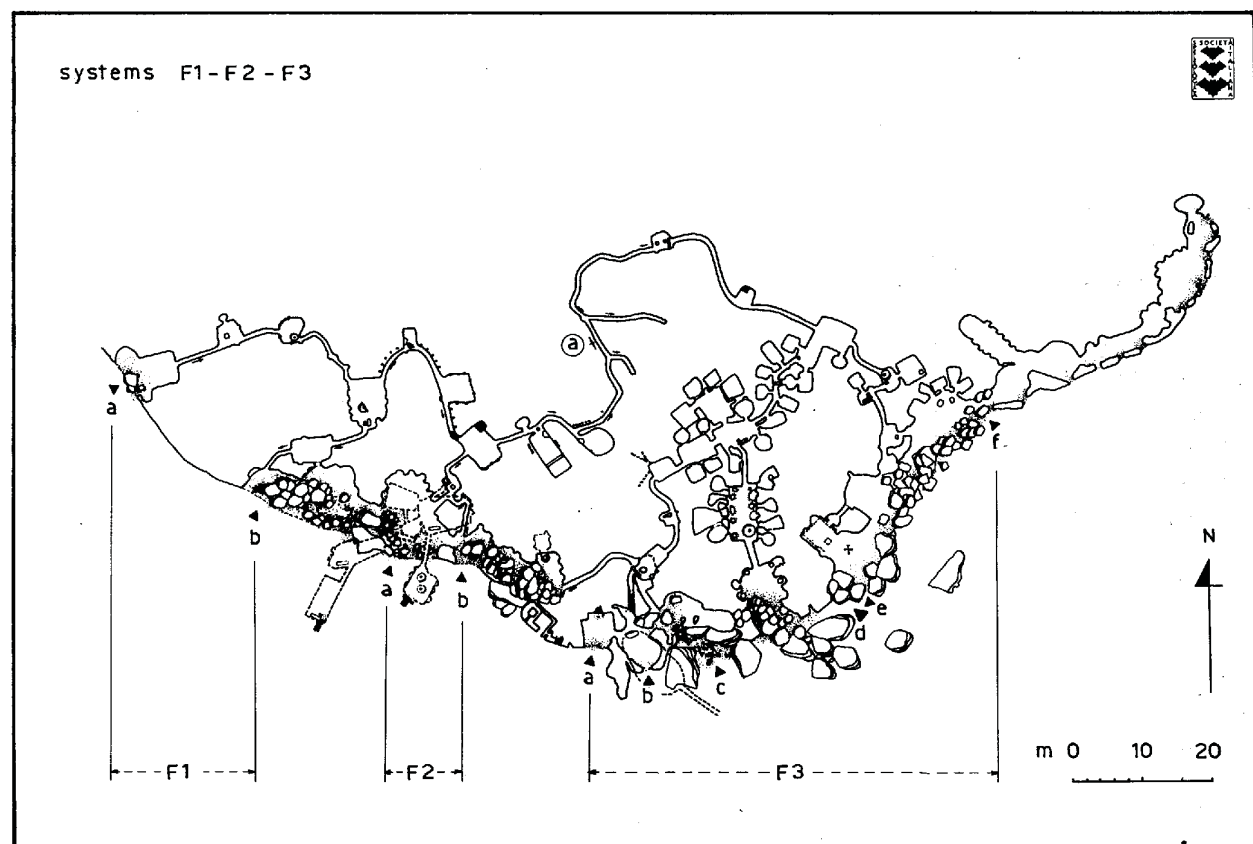


Fig 4

Detailed map of the underground systems F1-F2-F3. Arrows show the digging direction, derived from digging marks.
Pianta dettagliata dei sistemi sotterranei F1-F2-F3. Le frecce segnalano la direzione di lavoro rilevata dalle tracce di scavo.

room opening in F1/a has been directly connected to the redoubt (room 4 in Fig.5) by means of rather long cuniculus dug from this room and which intercepts a cuniculus from the inner left corner of the redoubt only in a point close to this last room. Along the long cuniculus, two small rooms devoted to operate millstones defending the redoubt. Of course, all this can be easily understood as an evidence that people in F1/a preferred to join the people from F1/b in the redoubt rather than digging a "private" redoubt for F1/a, probably on the basis of the well known principle that "unity is strength".

However, one may notice that F1/a is no more than thirty meters from F1/b. The problem thus arises of why two accesses to the redoubt at so small a distance. A possible explanation is the opportunity of allowing an easy and quick access of men and domestic animals to the internal rooms. The access to the redoubt had to be a narrow cuniculus, for safety's sake, allowing the passage of only one people or animal at a time. The evidence that in all cases this is also a short cuniculus probably tells us that the refuting time was an important factor taken into account in planning the underground. Thus one can

regard the branch from F1/a as suggested by the opportunity of facilitating a quick access to the redoubt from the external rooms. One has finally to notice that the branch if defended by two consecutive "operating rooms". However, in the present status one finds that the millstone in room 3 is defending against the redoubt, and we find no satisfactory explanation for such a curious feature since room 1 is not defended and opened to the exterior. One could think to use both rooms 3 and 4 as a last refuge for a reduced number of men in an already invaded underground, but this appears to us a rather unlikely planning for the system. We will be back on the argument when discussing a similar evidence from system F3.

From the inner right corner of room 4 a new cuniculus has been started, making a large curve to reach room 8. Just in the middle of this semicircle a small room with a basement by black sediments. A kitchen? Room 8 has abundant rocky rings along the walls, at various levels from the floor up to the ceiling. This suggest that the room was mainly devoted to shelter animals. The cuniculus keeps going beyond room 8 arriving near room 7 a few meters

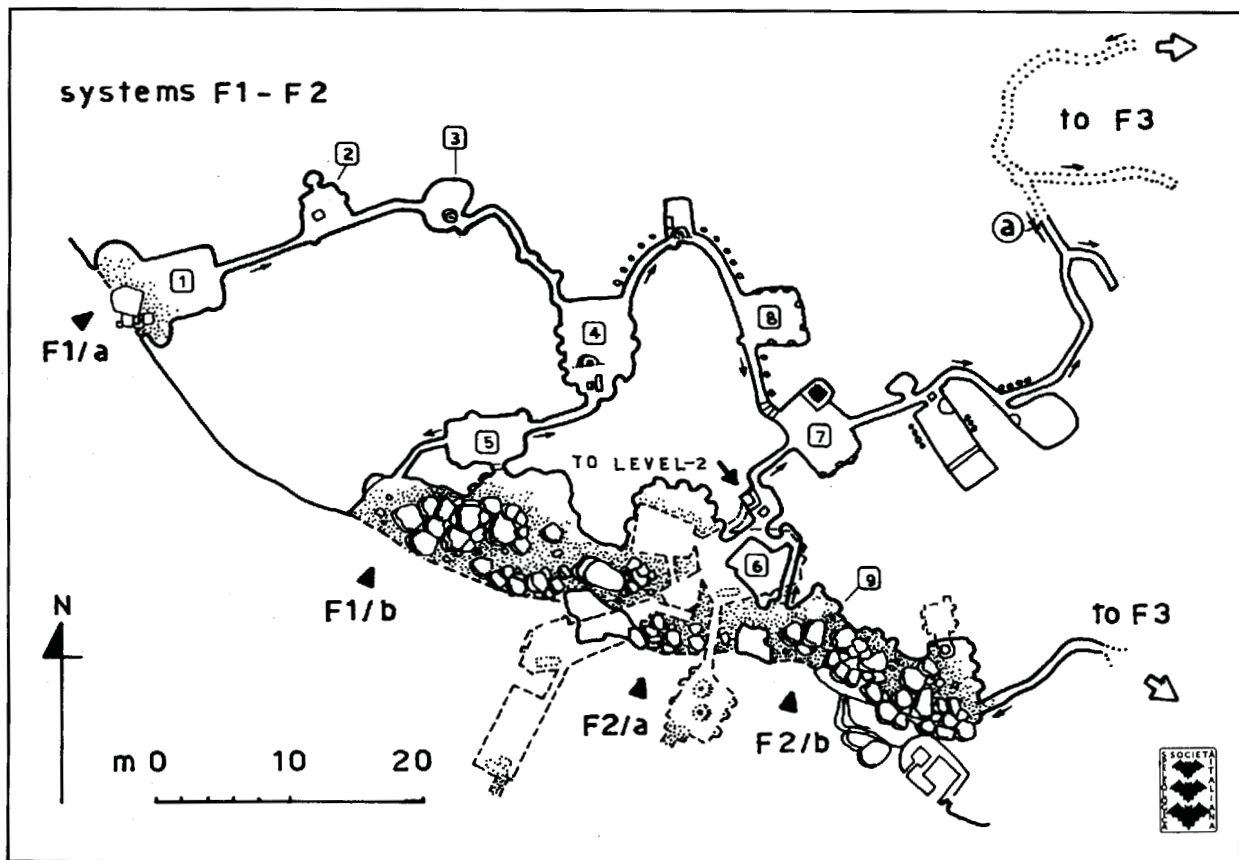


Fig. 5

The first level of the systems F1-F2 (full line), with the rooms belonging to the levels below (dashed line)
 Il primo livello dei sistemi F1-F2 (linea continua), con i vani appartenenti ai livelli sottostanti (linea tratteggiata)

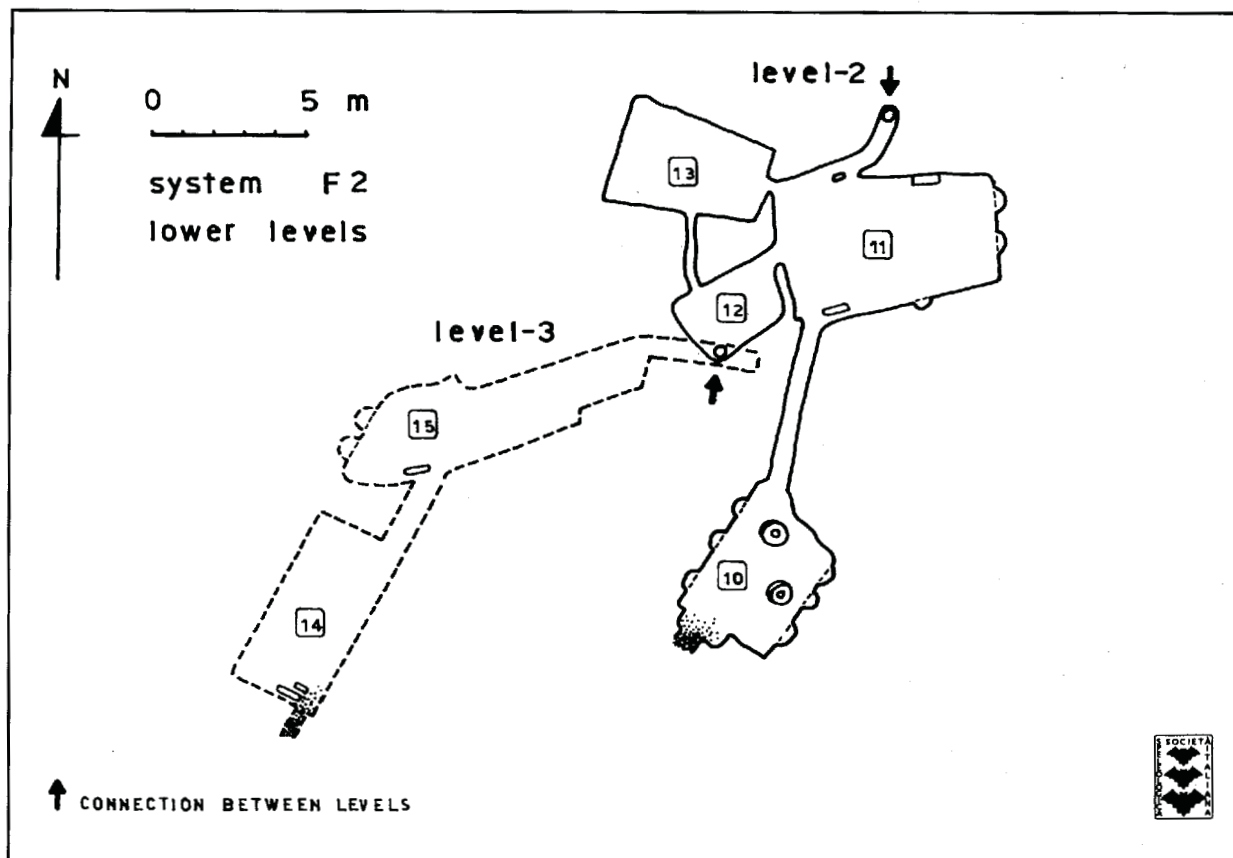


Fig. 6

The lower levels of system F2: level -2 (full line) and level -3 (dashed line)
I livelli inferiori del sistema F2: livello -2 (linea continua), livello -3 (linea tratteggiata)

above the level of this room. One can regard rooms 1 to 8 as a first subsystem concerning the entrances F1/a and F1/b, a system which was finally connected with room 7 originally belonging to a subsystem connected with the entrances F2/a and F2/b. As a whole, one finds a selfconsistent system, based on the redoubt 4, with additional room for animals. As already quoted, room 7 should belong to a second subsystem which appears of relevant interest being the only one out of the explored cavities giving evidence for various interconnected levels of undergrounds. To discuss first this point, let us refer to the portion of the system given in Fig.5 and Fig.6. In the upper level, the one roughly at the level of the cavities of the system F1/a-F1/b, this second system originates from the entrances F2/a and F2/b. Inspection of the map given in Fig.5 suggests that the main original branch of the system was formed by the entrance F2/a, the corresponding room 6 with its connection with room 7, whereas the entrance F2/b and the corresponding room 9 was connected with the cuniculus starting from room 6 only in a second time.

All along this system we did not find millstones.

However one should have no doubts that millstones were a necessary ingredient of the system and that they have been very likely taken away after the undergrounds were abandoned. If this is true, there are at least two reasons for suggesting that the door was defending from the exterior the small room located between room 6 and room 7. The first (and weaker) reason is the angle made by the cuniculus before reaching the quoted room, which is a feature recurrent before a door. A second and more relevant reason is that in the room one finds a well which at a first inspection appears like all the other wells which, both at Filiktepe and Göstesin, reach the watertable to supply with water the undergrounds. One is dealing with shafts opening in the floor with a square cross sections about 1 meter wide. However, exploring the bottom of this shaft we found no water but a cuniculus leading to a large room belonging to a lower level of the underground.

This large room (room 11 in Fig.6 is directly connected with two smaller satellitic rooms and by a cuniculus with room 10 from which a further cuniculus is rapidly filled by earth. Millstones in both rooms 10 and 11 show that room 11 has to be regarded

as the more internal room of a system which reaches the exterior through the filled cuniculus and where room 10 could be regarded as the first redoubt following the entrance. However, at the surface there is no evidence for the large rooms which are at the origin of the internal systems of the first upper level. One may only conclude that the second level originates from small openings now filled by earth. The already quoted evidence for shafts or cunicular entrances scattered along the surface surrounding the butte strongly suggests that this second underground level directly originates from the surface, lacking of the open room which characterize the first level and the subterranean systems of Göstesin. In this respect, one finds that the first level recalls the structure of Göstesin redoubts, whereas the second lower level shows a structure recalling much more sophisticated and extended undergrounds, like the underground town of Derinkuyu which opens with shafts and cuniculi scattered in the fields of the Cappadocian flat plains.

This conclusion is further supported by similar evidences given by a third lower level connected with the second one by a shaft on the roof of room 12 of level 2 (see again Fig.6). Again the shaft reaches the more internal room of a system of two, whose entrance is again somewhere in the fields at the foot of the butte. The extensive filling of these lower levels did not allow to reach a clear insight on the extension of these systems. However, the quoted evidence for shafts scattered along the surface suggests to us that the extension of the lower levels could be not smaller than the surveyed upper level. One has finally to notice that in both cases the connection between two levels appears performed in a second time and with a rather crude and approximated technique. A rough cuniculus is connecting room 11 with the bottom of the upper shaft and a short cuniculus has been dug from room 15 at the third level to search for a connection with the upper level.

In our feeling, these features can be taken as an evidence that the original planning did not foresee a connection between the levels, a connection having been realized only in a second time, maybe as an emergence operation. However, let us notice that these connections should have been performed during the activity of the systems, since the modality of connection requires people on both systems following the noise of digging on the opposite side.

Coming back to the first level, Fig. 5 shows that after room 7 the system goes on with a cuniculus reaching a rectangular room, with a sort of elevated basin cut in the rock at the bottom of the room. Within the basin, a layer of dark soil. After this room, the

cuniculus turns right ending in a last room with an irregular shape. On the ground, fragments of two grindstones apparently cut out from the surrounding (soft) rock. Just a few meter before the entrance of this last room, about 1 meter above the floor of the cuniculus, the entrance of a further cuniculus connecting this subsystem with subsystem F3, a connection which will be discussed later on.

2.1.2 The system F3

The subsystem F3 originates from the six entrances F3/a, F3/b, F3/c, F3/d, F3/e and F3/f shown in Fig.7. Inspection of the map given in this figure reveals that the branch starting from F3/d initially develops according to the already recalled scheme of the redoubts: the open room followed by a short cuniculus leading to the protected redoubt. However the "redoubt" is now characterized by a rather peculiar amplitude of "stores" both as rooms opening along the wall of the redoubt and as reservoirs opening in the floor. In this scenario, the branches starting from F3/a and F3/e could be regarded as "escaping ways", though exceptionally protected by a sequence of -at the least- two millstone doors with their operating rooms. In the branch F3/a one finds again the already discussed curious evidence for the two operating rooms working the first one against the exterior and the second one against the interior. Tracks of a third millstone door has been found at the beginning of branch F3/e.

What is really much more impressive is the huge amount of rooms grouped beyond the redoubt. One can roughly evaluate to be in presence of a total of more than 200 square meters of covered surface, a value that has to be at least doubled if considering the whole system F3. Such an evidence suggests two different orders of considerations. The first one is an estimate of the amount of work needed to produce similar system. According to the estimate given by people still digging rooms in the nearby rocky village of Üçhisar, in a 7 hour working day a man digs out about 1 cubic meter of tuff. Adopting 1.7 meters as the mean height of the cavities, one can conclude that something of the order of 800 cubic meters of tuff, if not more, were removed to produce the system, which implies a similar number of working days. This is a not negligible amount of work, suggesting to look at the undergrounds as the product of a skilled manpower rather than of the occasional work of farmers.

As an example, let us quote that the first external room of F3 would have been required about two months of workdays by one or more people, the short cuniculus leading to the redoubt about a week by

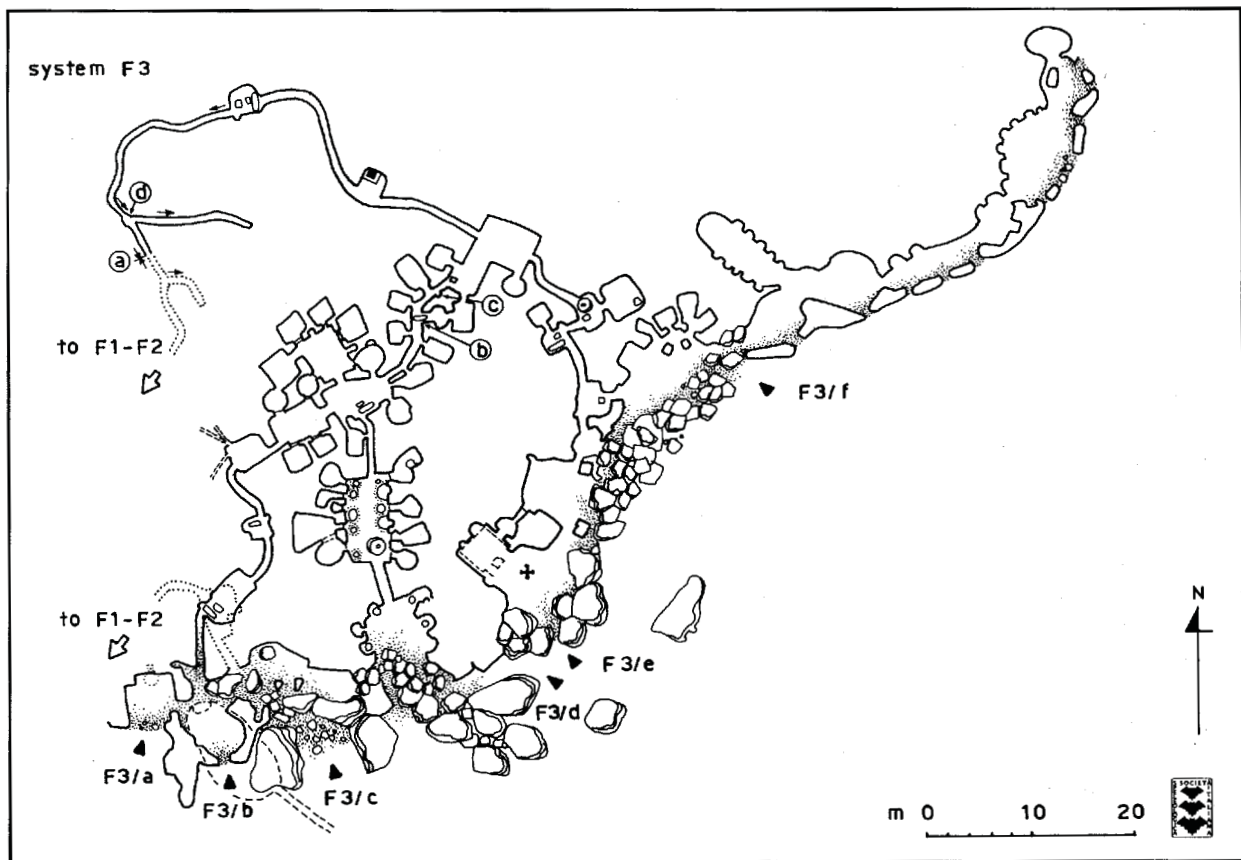


Fig. 7
Detailed map of the underground system F3 - *Pianta dettagliata del sistema sotterraneo F3*

one man and the redoubt only, without the stores, again about two months of workdays. As a whole, one finds that the systems could have been produced even in a relatively small number of years if small groups of skilled people (say 5 to 8) were simultaneously working to proceed with the excavation and to carry the resulting material to the exterior. In this context one has to notice that on the outside there is no evidence for any accumulations of debris. This indicates that this material was very likely spread around in the field, may be taking advantage of the fertility of this soil rich in mineral salts. A similar procedure is still in use in the tuffaceous cultivated valleys of the region.

A second and relevant consideration is that this system appears much more developed than expected for an occasional refuge of a small group of people. In particular one can appreciate the large number and the large dimension of what we already interpreted as storage rooms. This evidence suggests to us that we are in presence of the main store of a rather large community. J. Carcopino (1939) estimates in about half a cubic meter the annual amount of wheat needed to satisfy plebs' hunger. By using this figure, one

derives that F3 can easily store the annual production of corn for a community of some hundreds of people. This can thus be a reason for the sequence of millstone doors protecting the "core" of the system.

Interesting enough, one finds that the millstone door now closing the cuniculus at point "b" is not in its original location, having been translated from its maneuvering room (point "c") to be used as an emergence closure obstructing the cuniculus in a location where no maneuvering room was foreseen or prepared. A first straightforward reason for such an occurrence appears rather clear: the room immediately to the right of the actual location is now passing in a second room only thanks to a rough breaking of the wall originally separating these rooms. Thus, in the original condition the millstone in "c" was able to block the passage into the cuniculus leading to the core of the system. The new passage opened between the two quoted rooms opened in the same time a free passage to the core, bypassing the door. Thus the millstone was translated in "b" in such a way to block both the old and the new passages.

However, such an evidence probably tells us something more, something about the history of

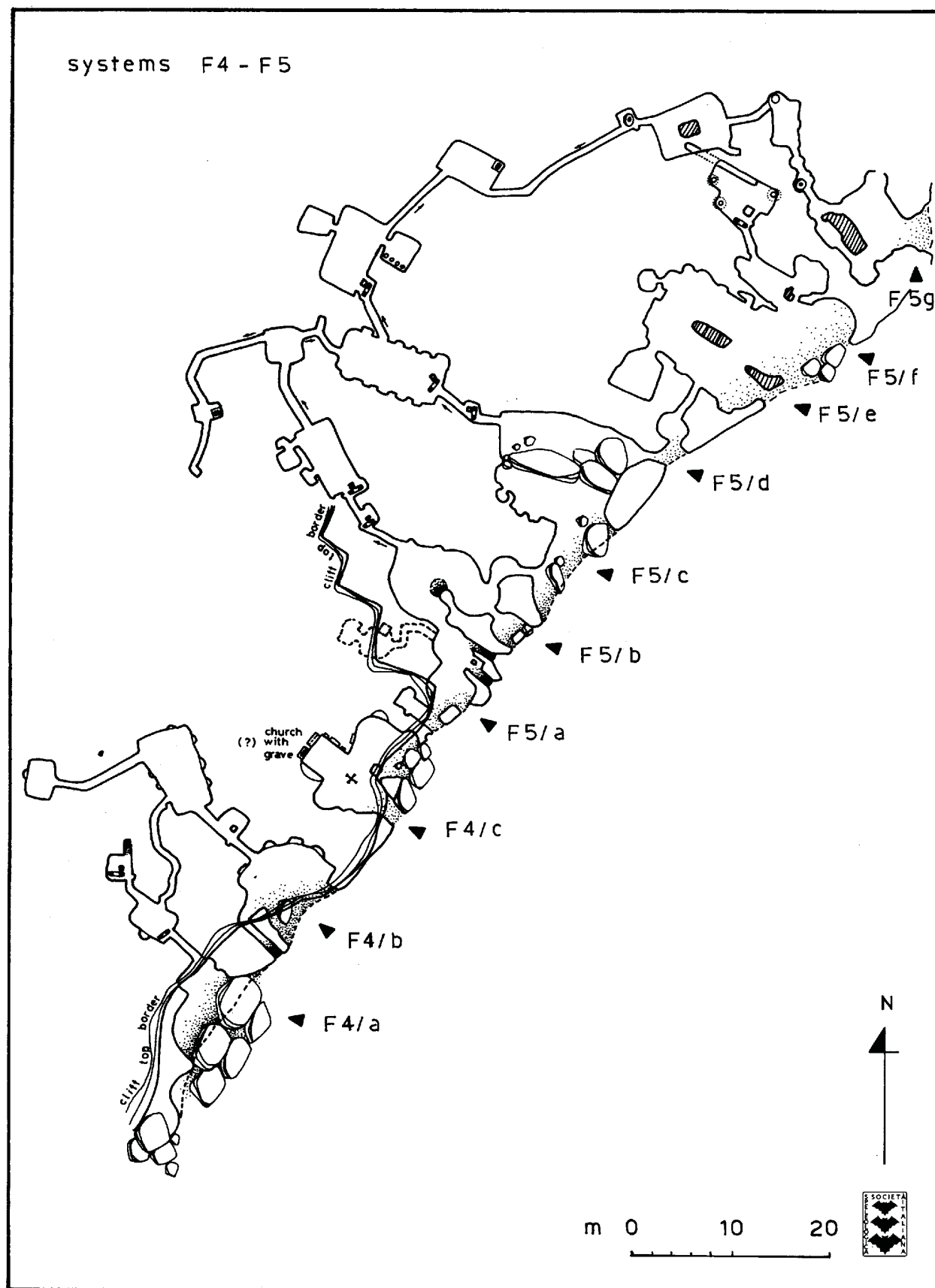


Fig. 8
Detailed map of the systems F4-F5 - *Pianta dettagliata dei sistemi F4-F5*

the system. The break of the narrow wall between the rooms and the resulting irregular passage suggest an episode of attack from the exterior and the attempt of bypassing the blockage of the defenders. One cannot know if the attack was eventually successful. But we know that after this attack the defenders did have the opportunity and the time for translating the door in its new location. But no time enough to dig a suitable new maneuvering room, leaving the millstone embedded in the rock to close precariously the passage. An indication that probably the defensive system collapsed short time after the previous attack.

As a final point one can now notice that in both branches F3/a and F3/e, the first maneuvering rooms, the one closed between two millstone, appear larger than usual, large enough to contain a small garrison to defend the door.

2.1.3 The connection between F1/F2 and F3

Another feature deserving attention is the rather long cuniculus connecting the system F1/F2 with F3. As shown in Figs.4 and 5 digging evidences show that the connection was started from both sides with two cuniculi which, before reaching the final connection (point "a" in Figs.4 and 7), have both a ramification turn back toward the core of system F3, both excavations having been abruptly interrupted. The shape of the cavities at the starting of the upper ramification (point "d" in Fig.7) suggests, but for the moment is only a suggestion, that the connection was dug first, followed by the ramifications. If this is the case, one should conclude that a multiple connection between the storage area and the connecting cuniculus was planned but interrupted by some unknown events. However, it is difficult to understand why two nearby cuniculus with a similar task. On the other side, one could disregard the suggestion quoted before, looking at the ramifications as a first attempt to reach the connection, further corrected with the final connection. However, it would not easy to understand a so large error in the directions.

As a relevant feature, one finds that the original height of the cuniculus starting from F1/F2 does not exceeds about 1 meter, starting about half a meter from the floor of the previous cuniculus. In our feeling, such a feature strongly suggests that the connection was pursued as an emergency link, which could not be used by invaders, forced to proceed on their knees one at the time, defenseless against even a single defender. Along the cuniculus of the upper branch one finds two interesting features. The first one is a small room with a well. The well, of course, is to have water, thought it is not clear why in such a

location. The second features is another small maneuvering room, with a millstone originally defending the room against the cuniculus from the F1/F2 system. However, the millstone has been found, it appears as an emergency, translated to defend the cuniculus against F3. This again could suggest that something happened, the system F3 collapsed, and people in F1/F2 had the time to try a extreme defense against the invaders.

As a final point, let us suggests that an overall inspection of the whole system, could suggest that F1/F2 was mainly devoted to contain animals, whereas F3 was devoted to store food.

3. The systems F4 and F5

Moving eastward from the entrance F3/f one finds first the opening marked F4 leading to the small underground mapped in Fig.8. One recognizes the typical distribution with the "redoubt" placed beyond the external room F4/b. The only new feature is that the redoubt is not directly defended with a millstone, which is now placed in a small operating room preceding the entrance to the redoubt. In the redoubt one finds the opening of two further cuniculi. A first one reaches, after about ten meters a small room. The rather long cuniculus implies a defensive function, indicating that this room has not been devised as a simple store room serving the redoubt. Rocky blocks on the ground have a shape similar to the opening of the cuniculus and could be interpreted as a rocky shield prepared to block the entrance from the interior of the room. The second cuniculus connects the redoubt with the first operating room of a defensive branch starting from the entrance F4/a. However, the exploration of this branch is prevented by deep sediments occluding the cavity. This is a curious feature, since it strongly suggests that the rooms beyond the second operating room have some communication with the exterior, in spite of their internal location.

The hypogeum F5 (Fig.8) is much more extended, showing some similarity with the already discussed system F1/F2/F3. In its southern portion this system is formed by two subsystem (F5/a-F5/b and F5/c) based on the entrance/redoubt sequence. Again one finds that both the redoubts are preceded by a "millstone room". However, both redoubts are also directly defended by a further millstone, which double the blocking producing, as a whole, an impressive defensive system. From the redoubt of F5/a-b a rather long cuniculus reaches a small room (note the similarity with F4) connected with the companion redoubt of F5/c, on one side, and with a long cuniculus on the other side, interrupted after a

small room with a well (note the similarity with the connection from F3 to F1/2). Beyond some ambiguous indications collected in the previous system, this is the first time we found an unequivocal evidence that a system was still in excavation when stopped for unknown reason. One is tempted to read such an occurrence as an evidence that, at that time, the defenses were overcome by some unknown assailant and the system was abandoned by its inhabitants.

The redoubt of F5/c has been further connected by medium length cuniculi first with a rather large (and defended) room and then with a further room with a well just in a corner, recalling the similar structure found in F1. This first portion of the system is reached by a cuniculus dug from an opposite system connected with entrances F5/d, F5/e and F5/f. Interesting enough, near the entrance of the cuniculus, one finds a small operating room defending the cuniculus against the opposite system. This occurrence indicates that the whole system is something more than the mutual connection of single groups of undergrounds serving different groups of people. People from F5/d-e-f dug the cuniculus to reach the last room of the previous system and thus

defended this cuniculus against his own system, so that the two following rooms became a new internal redoubt defended on both sides from the exterior. An occurrence which suggests a general and cooperative planning of the undergrounds.

The system F5/d-e-f is formed by a large network of rooms in connection with the exterior, further connected with a redoubt defended by a single millstone. The further connection with the more internal room is peculiarly achieved through a cuniculus opening more than 1 meter below the floor and reaching the opposite room at the same height. Perhaps we are in presence of a innovation devoted to increase the difficulty for the assailants. A suggestion not very strong, but the only one we find for the moment.

As a final point, F5/g give access to a small room, previously defended by a millstone in an operating room. The connection with the previous system was obtained through a short rough cuniculus in a corner of the room and which goes down by about 2 meters before turning toward the opposite room. As a whole, it appears much more a provisional connection rather than a proper cuniculus carefully planned and excavated.

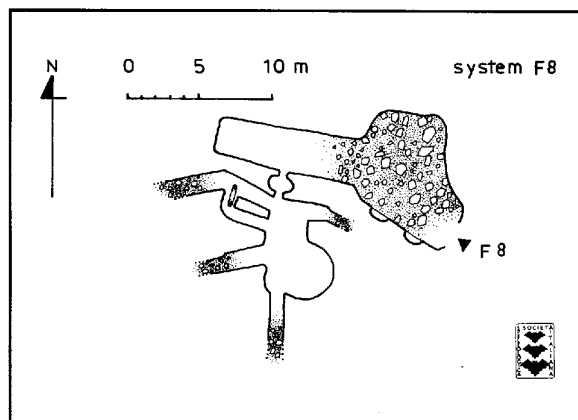
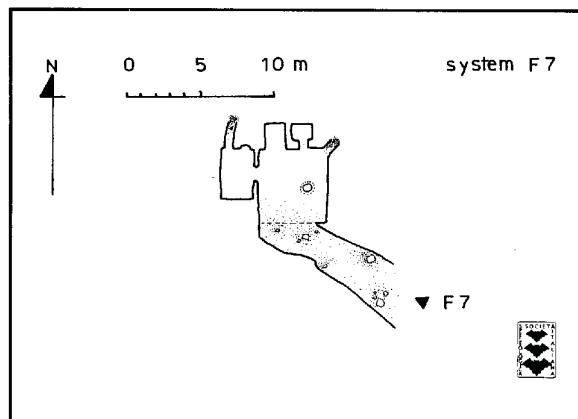
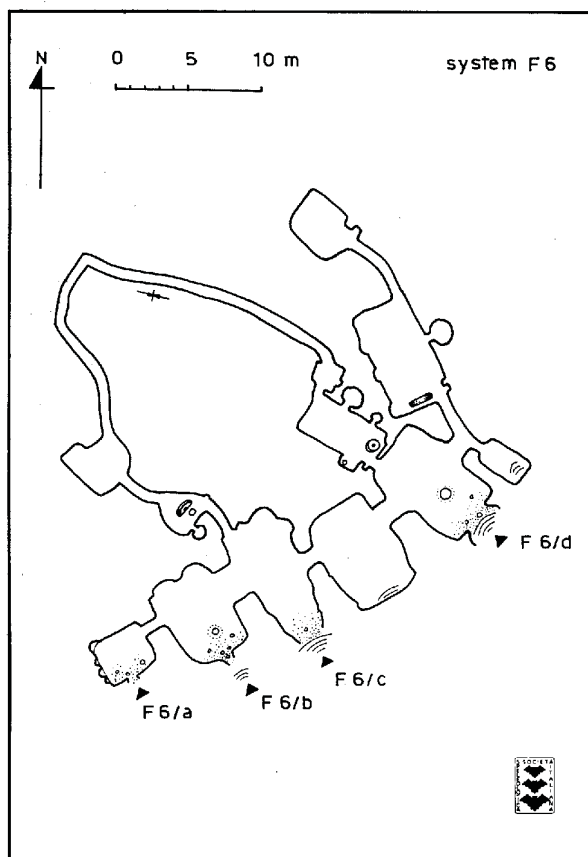


Fig. 9
Maps of the systems F6-F7-F8 - *Piante dei sistemi F6-F7-F8*

4. The systems F6, F7, F8 and F9

To the right of F5/g, the system F6 is formed by five large rooms aligned along the scarp of the butte, all open to the exterior and mutually connected by a series of passages. The internal system is very simply formed by a redoubt in connection with the fifth room, further connected by a long cuniculus coming back to the third room. A small operating room with a millstone blocks the cuniculus near the exit. The digging marks show that the two branches starting from the third and the fifth room have been independently excavated, turning the cuniculus from the third room till reaching the final connection (see Fig. 9). Such a simple system should be the more adequate to infer the reasons supporting the distribution of the underground. However, in its present form it appears difficult to find out a clear and reasonable explication for the system.

The internal room behind the fifth room is, of course, the typical redoubt to contain and to defend people and animals. But why the cuniculus starting from the third room goes toward the interior before turning down to meet the cuniculus from the redoubt? As already discussed, the length of the cuniculus should be justified as an expedient to make difficult the passage, discouraging the assailant. But why this second exit so short a distance from the main entrance? It is difficult to believe in an "escaping way", since this exit should be as dangerous as the main entrance. Thus the only reason coming to the mind is not an escaping way but a second entrance, to make easier and quicker the refuge of the people. If this right, one should conclude that the people of the undergrounds were under the pressure of sudden and unpredictable attacks.

As a new interesting evidence, we found two shafts opening on the roof, connecting the room with the exterior. An occurrence which should be related with evidence for several other shafts opening in the field but leading to subterranean room completely filled by earth. The reason for these shafts is not clear to us. One may think of opening for the smoke of fires, but one cannot exclude the shaft to be used for passing people or foodstuffs. This last suggestion being maybe supported by the recalled evidence of several shafts in the field without the occurrence of accompanying entrances.

A second redoubt was produced again from the fifth room, further connected with a more internal room, in analogy with similar structures already discussed in the previous system. This last room appears abandoned before completion. This could be due to a sudden collapse of the defensive system, as discussed for the interrupted cuniculus in F5.

However, in this case the stoppage of the work could also be suggested by the evidence that the excavation were progressing in a loose and inconsistent soil rather than in solid tuff. As a matter of fact, the system F6 opens on the last extreme emergence of the tufaceous scarp, and the progression of the excavation toward the right already reached the loose soil compressed on the rocky basement.

According to such an evidence, we first regarded the system F6 as probably the last system of Filiktepe. However, inspection of the hill's slope beyond F6 revealed, as already indicated, the existence of further undergrounds opened excavating the surface of the slope till reaching the underlying rock. Two further openings, F7 and F8, are largely filled by earth and the maps of the short explored portion are given in the previous Fig.9. Further on, we found five more openings, free of earth, which resulted leading all to a common system that we marked as system F9. Further evidences for openings were scattered around, as shown in the general map of Fig.2, but none open to exploration.

As for F9, Fig.10 gives the map of the hypogeum. One finds that three contiguous redoubt systems, opening respectively in F9/a, F9/b and F9/c, have been connected into a common central room, two cuniculi having been defended from the exterior. The cuniculus coming from F9/a has a very small cross section, smaller than the cross section of the cuniculus connecting F3 to F2, probably for the same reason of safety. Within the central room, the opening of the cuniculus was defended by a peculiarly small millstone, not larger than about 70 cm. The millstone defending the room from the nearby entrance F9/b is, on the contrary, a very large one, exceeding the diameter of 1,2 meters. No evidence for a millstone defending the connection with F9/c has been found.

After the redoubt of the branch F9/a one finds the new features of two subsequent long rectangular rooms, the first one with the opening of two cuniculi interrupted after a short run. In both rooms one finds the interesting new evidence for which the opening of the cuniculi were defended not by millstone but by rectangular rocky shields, with the regular hole just in the middle. A small frame cut in the rock around the opening of the cuniculi allow the shield being put into the right place with accuracy. As a whole, one could regard the interrupted cuniculi as an evidence of the collapse of the defending system, whereas the rectangular shields could be the result of an emergence intervention, producing a provisional defense, useful but much less efficient than a real millstone door.

After the central room and the two stores in it,

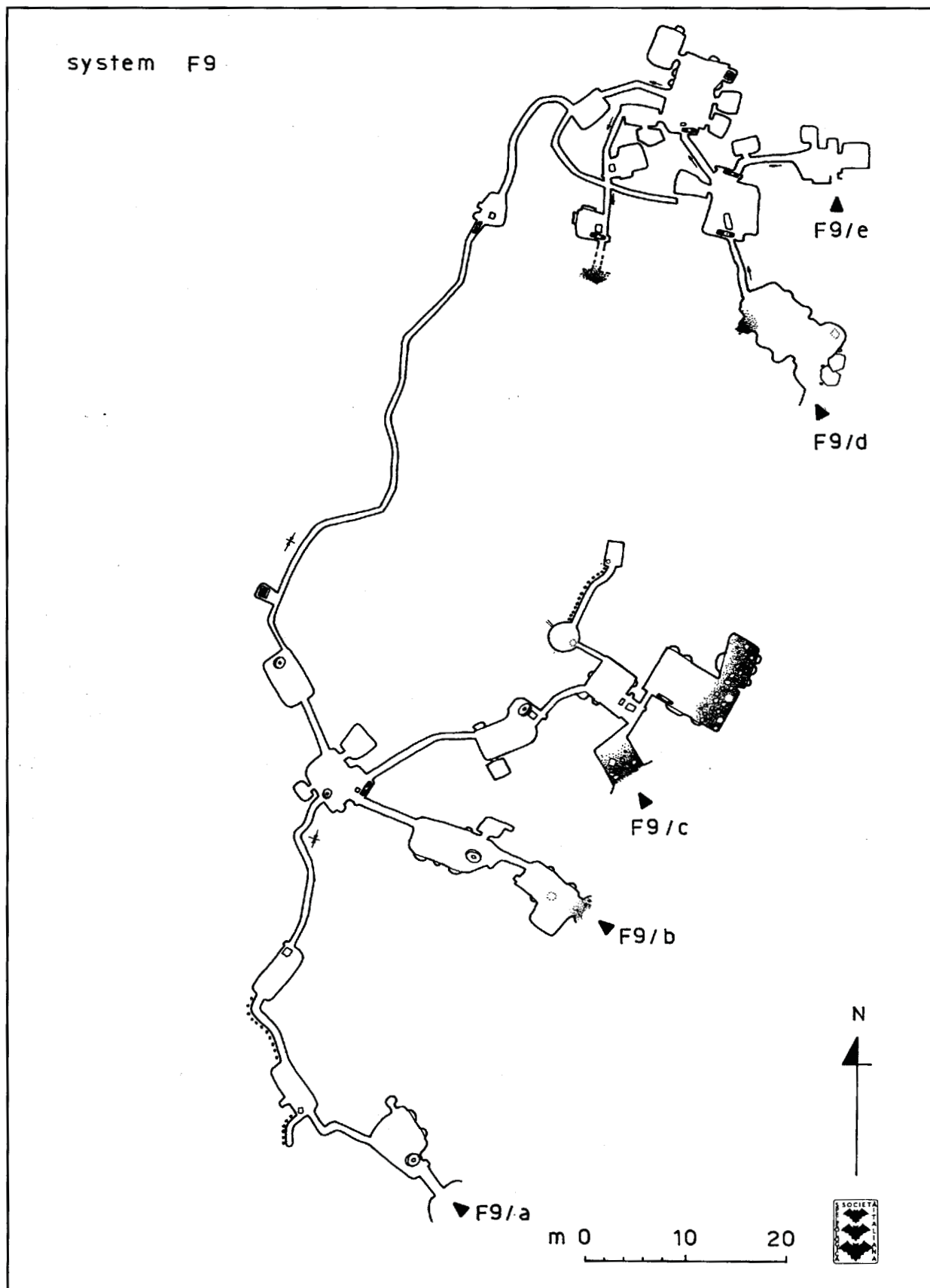


Fig. 10
Detailed map of the system F9 - *Pianta dettagliata del sistema F9*

the dug was continued producing another room, defended with a millstone against the continuing cuniculus and a small room with a well with a water level of about 7 meter below the floor. Shortly after the cuniculus meets a long cuniculus coming from the last section of the system, the one in direct connection with the entrances F9/d and F9/e. This last section is formed by a redoubt in connection, but defended by millstones, with the two entrances. The system is in further connection with what appears a further redoubt, defended toward the exterior by a further millstone, and with several large storing rooms and a well for water.

From this room, the dug has been continued to give a rather complicated network (see Fig.10), with a branch reaching the previous system with a millstone in a small operating room and another branch going probably toward the exterior (as suggested by the filling of earth) after passing a new millstone operating room. A cuniculus connecting these two last branches appears to have been interrupted short before reaching again the second redoubt. The rather intricate development of this section does not allow, in our feeling, a meaningful approach to the history and the meaning of this section. We can only notice that in the whole F9 system we did not find the double defense we found a common feature in system F5.

5. Final remarks

No doubts that the undergrounds of Filiktepe appear as a peculiarly developed system, rich of subterranean rooms, wells and millstone doors. The whole system implies the existence of a rather large community, well organized and fearing the

occurrence of sudden attacks by invaders. Discussing the topographic evidences, we already advanced several hypotheses and suggestions. Now is time to state that all this scenario should be regarded as a preliminary working hypothesis, an effort to list the possible implications rather than to reach final and firm explanations.

Before driving firmer conclusion there are further investigations to be performed, for which we hope to have here presented a useful starting point. Archaeological excavations of the wells should be a first relevant work to get information on the epoch of the undergrounds. The connection of the churches is a vital point to be investigated in details. Unfortunately, in no cases one finds a clear evidence linking the churches with the millstones, though the existence of the churches clearly indicates that churches and undergrounds were at least for some time, coeval.

As a further point to be investigated, there is the large amount of bones of domestic animals grouped in some, and only in some rooms. Maybe we are in presence of bones transported in the undergrounds by wild animals. But it appears also possible we are in presence of the rest of domestic animals trapped into the underground in the final collapse of the system. Palinological investigations of the soils in the rooms can give light on the utilization of the rooms, revealing the existence of cereals or pasture and so on. Only a guess of the further investigations which should be performed, on the basis of the present topological investigation, to give more and more light on the problem of the old subterranean towns in Cappadocia.

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