

A THIRD SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT PELLA, 1980/81

by
A.W. McNicoll, J.B. Hennessy
A.G. Walmsley, T.F. Potts

The third session of the University of Sydney Expedition took place between 16 December, 1980 and 23 February, 1981, with a staff totalling thirty-three¹ and a locally hired work force numbering up to 105. As usual the dig was greatly aided by the co-operation and active assistance of the Director-General of the Department of Antiquities, Dr. Adnan Hadidi and members of his staff, particularly Mr. Brian Bowen who is in charge of architectural conservation of the site. The principal financial support for the excavations came again from the Australian Research Grants Committee, the Australian National Gallery, Canberra and the University of Sydney. Other contributions were received from The University of Queensland (St. Lucia), The University of New England (Armidale) and The Australian Institute of Archaeology (Melbourne).

Excavations took place in Areas III, IV, V and VI, and a preliminary geological study of the district was carried out by Phil Macumber. Further ceramic studies were undertaken by Ian Edwards. In the present report some of the excavated finds of the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Byzantine periods are outlined briefly, while the Early Islamic material is discussed in greater detail by Alan Walmsley. The first three seasons' preliminary reports in *ADAJ* will be superseded in great measure by the lengthy interim publication prepared by the three codirectors during 1981. (McNicoll, A., Hennessy, J.B. and

Smith, R.H. *Pella in Jordan: report of the Joint Sydney University-Wooster College, Ohio Excavations, 1979-1981*, Canberra 1982 (forthcoming).

The Bronze and Iron Ages (Area IIIC)

Three phases of occupation associated with architectural remains were reached in the lowest levels of Plot IIIC in the final weeks of the 1981 season. The phasing is tentative and a great deal of work remains to be done in the area. On the evidence so far available, three periods of occupation are represented. They are treated in chronological order.

Phase A² (Figs. 1, 2)

East of wall 3 a large east-west mudbrick wall Fig. 1, 10 on stone foundations separates two rooms which yielded large quantities of pottery and other artefacts. It is cut irregularly just before reaching wall 3 by a wash gully (F 35) which runs southwards along the line of wall 3. Into the gully thus formed fell some of the collapse of wall 3.

The room south of wall 10 is bounded to the south by a huge mass of crumbly green mudbrick which has been faced at floor level with a row of stones. This mudbrick is, in fact, the very top of a massive wall about three metres wide, predating wall 3, which runs south-west to north-east across IIID (the plot immediately south of

1. Basil Hennessy and Anthony McNicoll (Co-directors), Alan Walmsley (Field Director), Margaret Wheeler, Elizabeth Roberts, Priscilla Wadham and Margery Edwards (Recording), Annie Searight-Macdonald (Conservator), Tamara McNicoll and Susan Balderstone (Architects), Ian Edwards (Ceramic technologist), Phil Macumber (Geomorphologist), Melissa McCord (Photographer), Colin Hawke and Chris Willing (Cineasts), Stephen Bourke (human bones), Timothy Potts, Peta Seaton, Pam Watson, Phil Edwards,

Robert Deane, Robyn Stocks, Georgina Payten, Greg Wightman, Annette Berryman, Richard Champion, Susan Bassett (Site Supervisors), Catriona Bonfiglioni (Au pair). Sultan Shraideh and Antiquities. Our foreman was Badri Hasan Ma'adi and Abu Arif our cook.

2. This phase has been given an alphabetical designation for the present as the intervening wall 3 (Fig. 1) prevents any stratigraphical correlation with phases V and IV to the west of the wall.

IIC) and into IIC. Rather than build a new wall, the people of Phase A reused this much older one, cutting it back to give them the desired space.

The floor of this room (Fig. 1) was littered with broken pottery (a series of jars, bowls, krater etc.; Fig. 3: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6; Fig. 4: 1, 3), two intact saddle querns (one with its grinding stone), a spindle whorl and a bronze pin. The room to the north (Fig. 1) yielded an even richer bounty; again a fair amount of pottery, a broken saddle quern,

a loom (?) weight, more than fifteen knuckle bones in association with two smoothed pebbles, one oval and white the other conical and black, a conch shell and the striking sculpture illustrated in pl. CXI. This last piece, carved from brown chert with a chalky white slip, is very delicately worked in a highly stylised, almost Brancusi-like manner. What, if anything, it was intended to represent is not clear. This intriguing complex of contemporaneous artefacts and pottery makes Phase A of

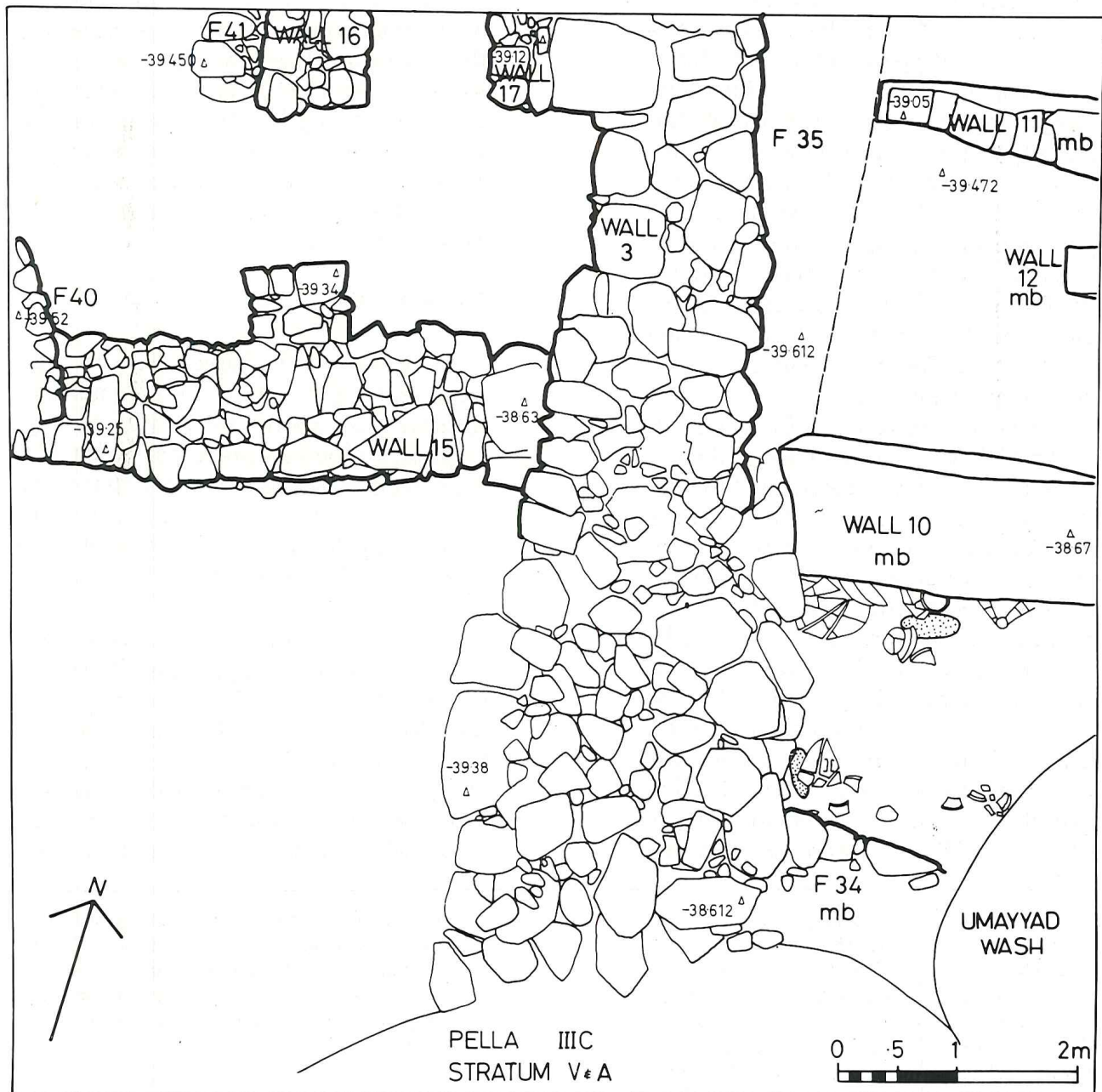


Fig. 1. Pella. Area IIC. Plan of Bronze Age Walls.

particular interest.

Phase V (Figs. 1, 2)

Thus far, Phase V has only been uncovered in the north-western corner of the plot. There we find a series of walls (15, 16, 17) bonded to wall 3, defining two rooms connected by a doorway, and what seems to be another doorway leading to a third room further north. Two thinly separated floors were exposed inside the structure but no contemporary surface has yet been reached south of wall 15.

The rooms seem to have served a domestic function. On the floor of the westernmost were fragments of a large, coarse pithos and, in the south-east corner, the remains of a storage jar broken *in situ*. In the eastern room was more pottery (Fig. 5: 1-4) and a basalt saddle quern. The superstructure of the walls evidently consisted of variously coloured mudbricks; above the floor lay a meter - originally, no doubt, more - of vivid green, chocolate brown, tan and cream coloured mudbrick tumble, laced with a few ashy lenses.

Phase IV (Figs. 1, 2)

The most prominent architectural feature of Phase IV, the latest of the Bronze Age horizons, is the massive stone wall (3) running north-south through the centre of the plot. We know from the 5 metre section at the southern end of the plot, created by erosion during the Umayyad period, that this wall was built a considerable time before Phase IV; and that it continued in use into the Iron Age of Phase III. During Phase IV it had already begun to collapse westwards. The other architectural remains of this Phase consist of the corner of a house (walls 14 and 19) in the south-western quarter of the plot and an east-west wall (13) in the north. This latter wall ends quite abruptly with no return and in this instance erosion is clearly not to blame. It is very carefully constructed of a single course of stones with a flat top; probably it served as a foundation course or as a low bench. A fire pit (F 39) just north of wall 14 contained the remains of at least two tabuns, the later one surrounded by jar fragments and thick ash deposits. The associated sur-

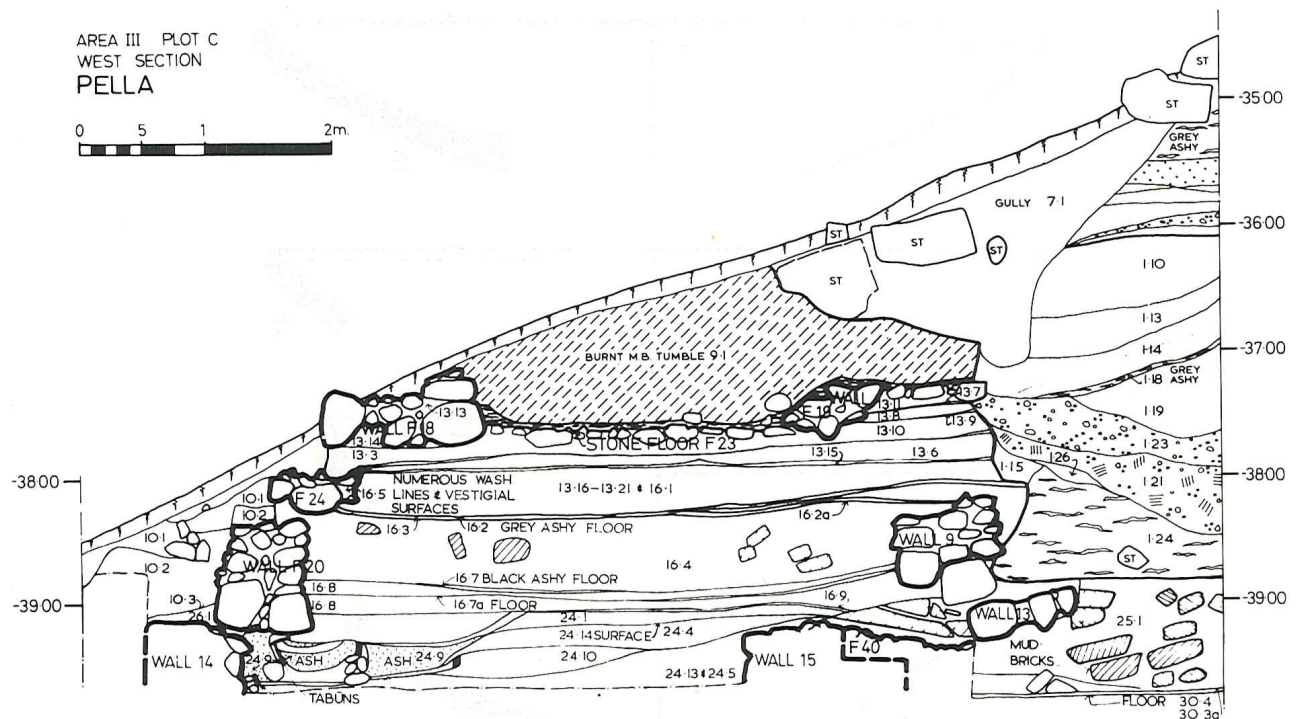


Fig. 2. Pella. Area III C. West section. Bronze and Iron Age levels.

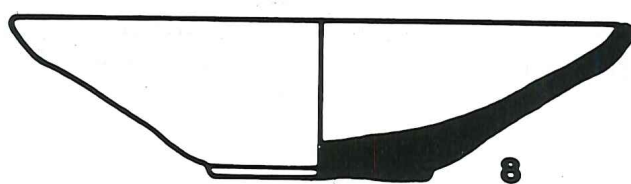
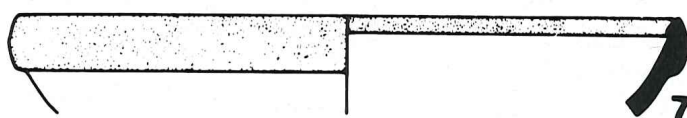
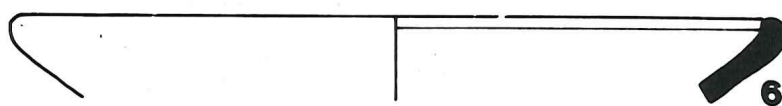
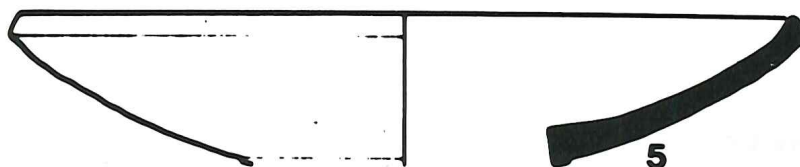
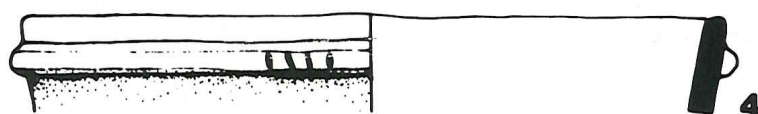
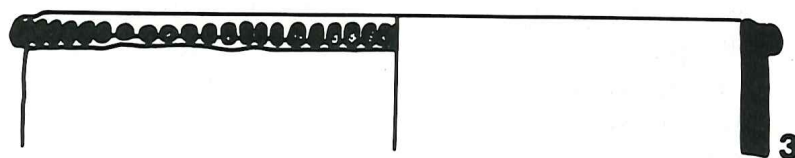
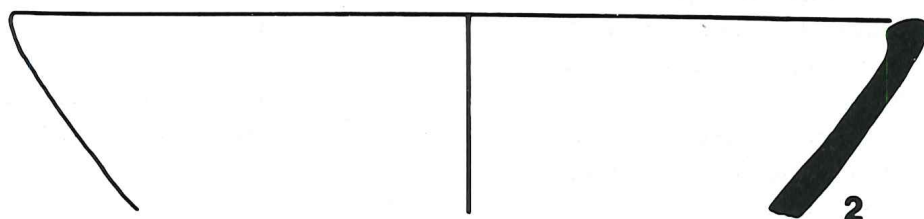
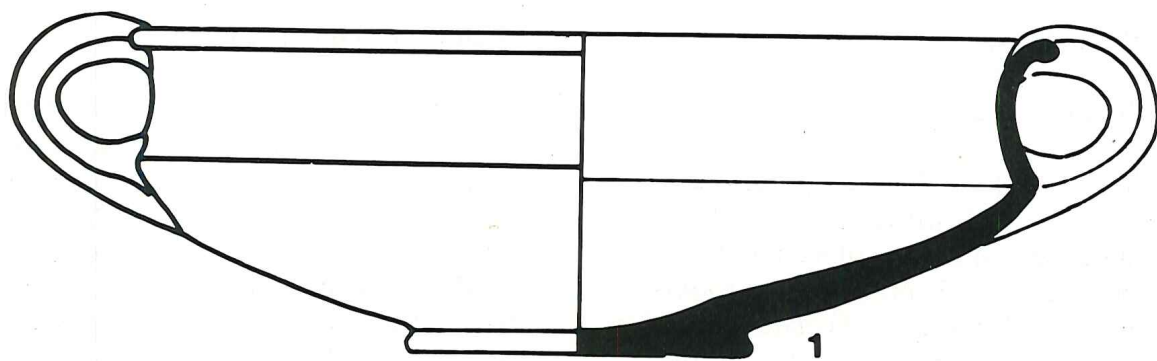


Fig. 3. Pella. Area IIIC. Middle Bronze Age II pottery.

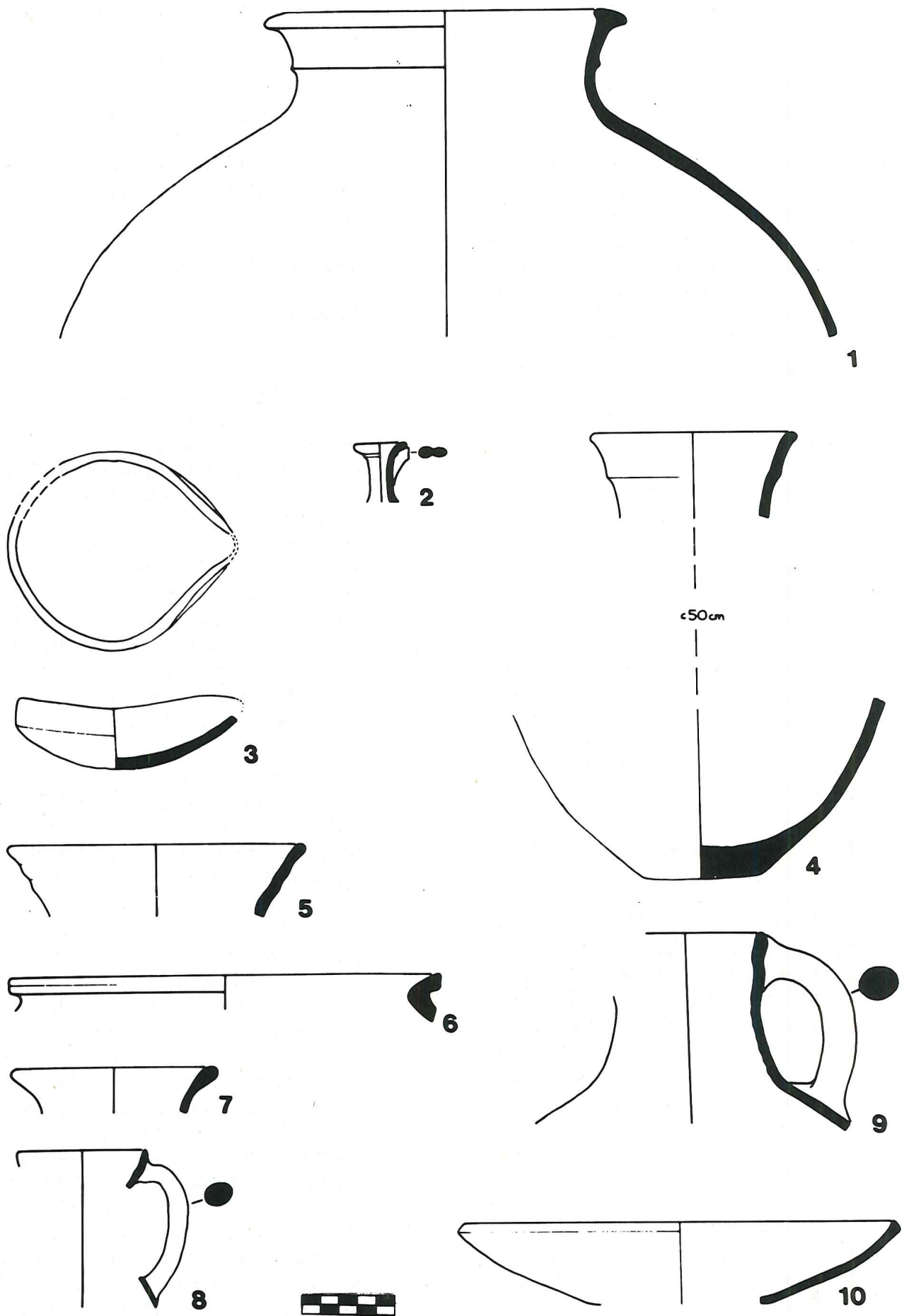


Fig. 4. Pella. Area IIIC. Middle Bronze Age II pottery.

faces excavated so far (there may be more) slope up to the north, over wall 15 of Phase V.

Protruding from the western baulk is the edge of what seems to be an area of stone paving F40 (Figs. 1, 2), running from the top of wall 15 (Phase V) to the bottom of wall 13. Immediately above it lies a clump of mudbricks, perhaps *in situ*, onto which run the surfaces going with the tab-uns and walls to the south. These features, along with the enigmatic wall 13, have yet to be fully explained. It seems that we have just clipped the very edge of a complex of features the rest of which lies further west, awaiting investigation.

The Pottery (Figs. 3-6)

The pottery from Phases A, V and IV is especially important in that it represents the only stratified material excavated at Pella so far which is at all comparable in date with the rich tomb deposits. However, since these phases were not reached until the most recent of the three joint Sydney-Wooster seasons, some of this pottery has not yet been fully processed and studied. All comments on this material must, therefore, be taken as provisional and are sure to require revision in the light of further analysis.

The pottery of Phase A (Fig. 3, 4) seems to belong to the very end of the Middle Bronze Age and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, i.e. to the middle of the sixteenth century B.C. Typical Middle Bronze forms are the decorated bowl (Fig. 3: 7) and the incrustated cooking pots (Fig. 3: 3,4). The krater (Fig. 3: 1) also has good sixteenth century parallels. Other types, such as the bowls, juglets, jars and lamp have a wider range and are less diagnostic.

In moving from the eastern to the western side of wall 3 we also take a chronological step forward.

The pottery of Phase V (Fig. 5. 1-4) appears to belong somewhere in Late Bronze II. Of the very limited repertory, the miniature juglet (Fig. 5: 3) is the only piece which might perhaps argue for a date rather more towards the end than the beginning of this period.

Phase IV (Figs. 5: 5-7 and 6) appears to date to the end of Late Bronze II. Apart from the typical bowls and cooking pots, the distinctive red burnished pedestal bowls (Fig. 5:5, 6) and painted bowls (Fig. 6) may be noted. After the destruction of Phase IV and the building, along similar lines, of Phase III, Iron Age forms begin to appear.

The Early Iron Age

Phase III

Phase III (Figs. 1, 2) comprises a massive north-south stone wall; the corner of a building (walls F20, F21), most of which has been destroyed by the Umayyad wash; a rough north-south retaining wall (wall 6); and an east-west return (wall 9). Three of these walls - walls F20, F21 and 9 - follow approximately the same alignment as walls 14, 18 and 12 of the preceding Phase IV, attributed to the Bronze Age. The walls of Phase III are narrower than their predecessors and are positioned slightly differently but the general correlation in layout is clear, and indicates that we are dealing here with a rebuilding by the same people.

From this phase down, the plot is dominated by the massive stone wall (3) which divides the plot into two independent and stratigraphically unconnected halves. Its size is suggestive of a city wall rather than of domestic architecture. It was constructed a good deal earlier than Phase III, though exactly how much earlier we do not yet know. In any case, it is clear that it survived for a considerable time, gradually collapsing to the west, before being completely sealed over by Phase II. Wall 6 seems to have been constructed from some of this collapse material as a slightly more seemly alternative to the dilapidated wall 3. It is built right up against wall 3 on the same alignment. It is met at its northern end by wall 9. The associated floors (16.7, 16.7a, Fig. 2) yielded nothing exceptional. There was some black ash on the latest (16.7) but not enough to suggest conflagration. The phase is sealed by a thick (0.6 m.) mudbrick collapse. The room comprising walls F20

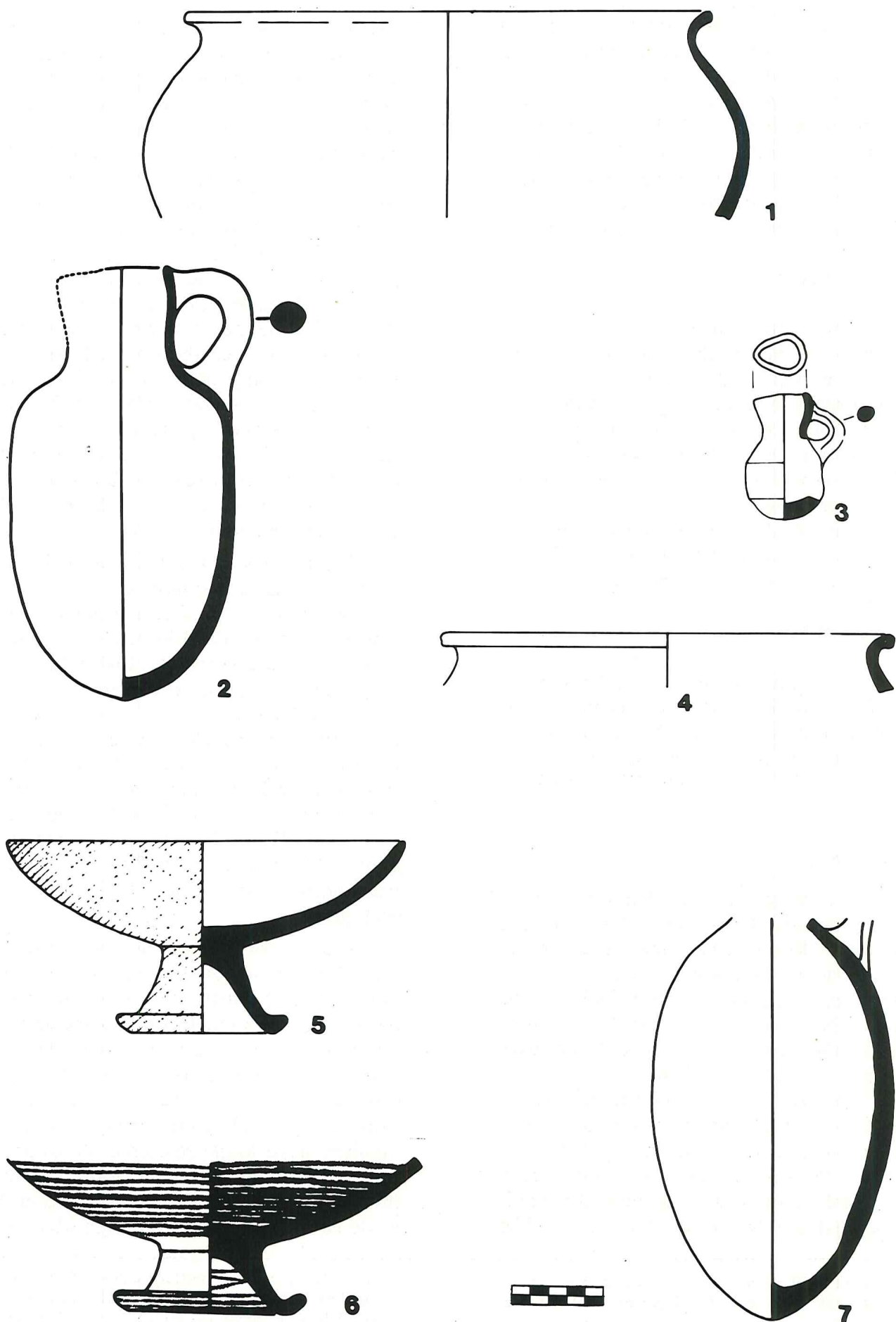


Fig. 5. Pella. Area IIIC. Late Bronze Age pottery.

and F21 was built on a different alignment and seems to have been completely independent. Yet again, however, with so little left, one can only guess at the original character of the building. Only the very corner of the interior floor (level 10.3) survived. It was very clean with no signs of burning.

Phases below this were from the Bronze Age, and have been discussed above.

The Pottery

The pottery of Phase III (Figs. 7, 8) appears to date to the first century of the Iron I period,³ and is clearly very close to the Bronze Age and may even bridge the transition. A more definite statement must await more extensive excavation of these levels (now in progress) and further study of the material.

Imported fabrics are present but scarce. Cypriot White Slip II and Base Ring II wares are attested for Phase III.

Hellenistic

A minute amount of Hellenistic startified material of the late second - early first centuries B.C. was added to the corpus excavated in the first two seasons (*ADAJ* XXIV (1980): 16-22 and *ADAJ* XXV

Roman

Extensive startified Roman remains have not yet been encountered on the mound. However, in a new trench on the south slope of the tell (Area III, Plot N) a small part of a Late Roman Building was unearthed, giving promise of further finds when the neighbouring trenches are excavated to a greater depth.

In Area VI south of the occupation area two intact, rock-cut tombs of Roman date were located and investigated. One, Tomb 30, was notable for its abundance of skeletal material (at least thirty-three individuals) and its paucity of artefacts; while

the other, Tomb 39A, was remarkable in that the sparse skeletal remains in it had the consistency of dust and were irretrievable, whereas the artefacts were legion, and many were attractive and extremely well preserved. The skeletal remains of Tomb 30 are yet to be examined in detail, so the following brief account is concerned with Tomb 39A and its artefacts.

The tomb (Fig. 9) is one of two or possibly more opening off a large bay-like dromos cut into the north side of a hillock in Area VI. The other tomb investigated, Tomb 40, had been thoroughly looted by robbers smashing their way in from the south. Nearby a surface scatter of six stumpy columns with square bases and truncated conical tops may have formed part of the funerary complex. The investigation of these columns and of the dromos will continue in the coming season.

The tomb is rock-cut, and irregular in shape. Closing the stomion was a flat, rectangular stone with a slightly rounded top which was firmly fixed in place with mud mortar and snecking stones. Inside the entrance, steps down give access eastwards to a small vestibule, two walls of which were neatly built with roughly dressed limestone blocks set in lime (?) mortar. The chamber proper is roughly rectangular, c. 1.90 m. x 1.90 m. and 1.60 m. high, with three shallow arcosolia each containing a simple grave 1.90 m. x 0.75 m. There were no indications of more than a single burial in each grave.

The bulk of the finds was made up of ceramic lamps and glass vessels which date to the third or fourth century. In addition there were various metal objects, including six coins, three small plaques (two of bone, one of ivory), bone pins, stone beads, miscellaneous pottery vessels, and a single wooden object. The lamps, thirty-seven in number, were found scattered all around the chamber and arcosolia. Most (about two thirds) are of that bi-lanceolate mould made type with impressed design which is

3. Good parallels can be found, for example, from Megiddo str. VIII-VII: Hazor Str. XII, XI, Ia; Taanach periods IA, IB; Dier 'Alla Phases A-D; Beth Shan level VI; Gezer Field I Str. Iv, Field II

Str. XII-IX. Selected pottery shapes of the succeeding Iron Age I phases Area IIIC have been published in previous reports (*ADAJ* XXIV (1980) and *ADAJ* XXV (1981)).

so common at Pella that it was surely manufactured on or near the site (Fig. 10, Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 6). The remaining third of the lamp population shows greater variation, but belongs also in the third and fourth century range.

By contrast with the lamps the majority of the other objects was found in the grave in the southern arcosolium. Of the five bronze coins from this grave, four could be identified exactly or approximately. The earliest is a follis of Maximinus as Caesar (305-308 A.D.), then follow two coins (a follis and an AE 3) of the reign of Constantine I (307-337 A.D.), and the latest coin a centenionalis of Constantius II (337-361 A.D.). The fifth coin from the grave is certainly not later and its weight (9.30 g.) suggests that it is considerably earlier, than its four companions, but its types are obliterated. The sixth coin's find spot was uncertain, and it cannot be identified, but its module and fabric point to the fourth century A.D.

While the latest coin in a tomb does not necessarily give a close *terminus post quem* for its closure, the half-century span of the four identified coins, along with the fact that there was only one skeleton in each grave, may point to a brief period of use for tomb 39A. More specifically, the southern grave of tomb 39A may have been used within a generation or two after the date of the last coin. If this hypothesis is accepted, it has important implications for the dating of the glass vessels, tomb 39A (Pls. CXII-CXIII), for all but one of them (pl. CXII, no. 3) were found in the southern grave beneath the capstones. Nearly all the glass must therefore have been deposited after the Constantius II centenionalis, which was struck in the 350s. Like the lamps, the glass can be broadly dated by analogous finds (at Jebel Joffeh, Amman, at Hanita, at Beit Fajjar, etc.) to the third or fourth century. On internal evidence we may suggest a tentative date of deposition, between about 350-375 A.D. For only one piece, the head flask (pl. CXII, no. 11) does this date seem rather late; possibly it should be viewed as aberrant - an heirloom or some such.

Among the other objects found in the

southern grave of tomb 39A, three carved bone and ivory plaques and a tiny repoussé bronze plaque deserve attention. The bone and ivory plaques (Pl. CXIV nos: 1-3) do not appear to belong to the local Palestinian School identified by Rosenthal (*IEJ* 1976, 96-103), perhaps they were imported from Egypt. Certainly the dancing maenad has stylistic parallels in the Cairo Museum, and a plaque like this one was excavated by Petrie at Shurafa. The tomb 39A plaques, like the lamps and glass, can be broadly dated to the third and fourth centuries.

The most surprising object from tomb 39A is the bronze repoussé plaque 2.4 x 2.4 cm. (Pl. CXV, nos. 1,2). It appears to have on one side a representation of the holiest shrines of Christendom, i.e. the twin sanctuaries of Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre. On the other side, the rider on the donkey is surely to be identified as Christ entering Jerusalem. If the date proposed above for the burial in tomb 39A's southern grave is correct, the shrines shown on the plaque are those erected by Constantine the Great in 336 A.D.

Byzantine and Early Islamic

From this tiny memento of Christianity's most important holy place we turn to a Christian monument erected at Pella itself. The East Church, Area V, is dramatically situated on a hillside overlooking the Wadi Jirm and Khirbet Fahl. During the 1981 season the area west of the church was completely excavated, and what was referred to in earlier reports as the tetrastyle front of a Temple proved to be the west portico of an atrium belonging to the church. Some of the Corinthian columns of the portico have been re-erected by the Department of Antiquities (Pl. CXVI). It remains likely that there was a building on this site before the construction of the church in the fifth or sixth century.

Area IV

In the area excavations (Area IV) at the east end of the main mound, two important findings stand out. Firstly, the exc-

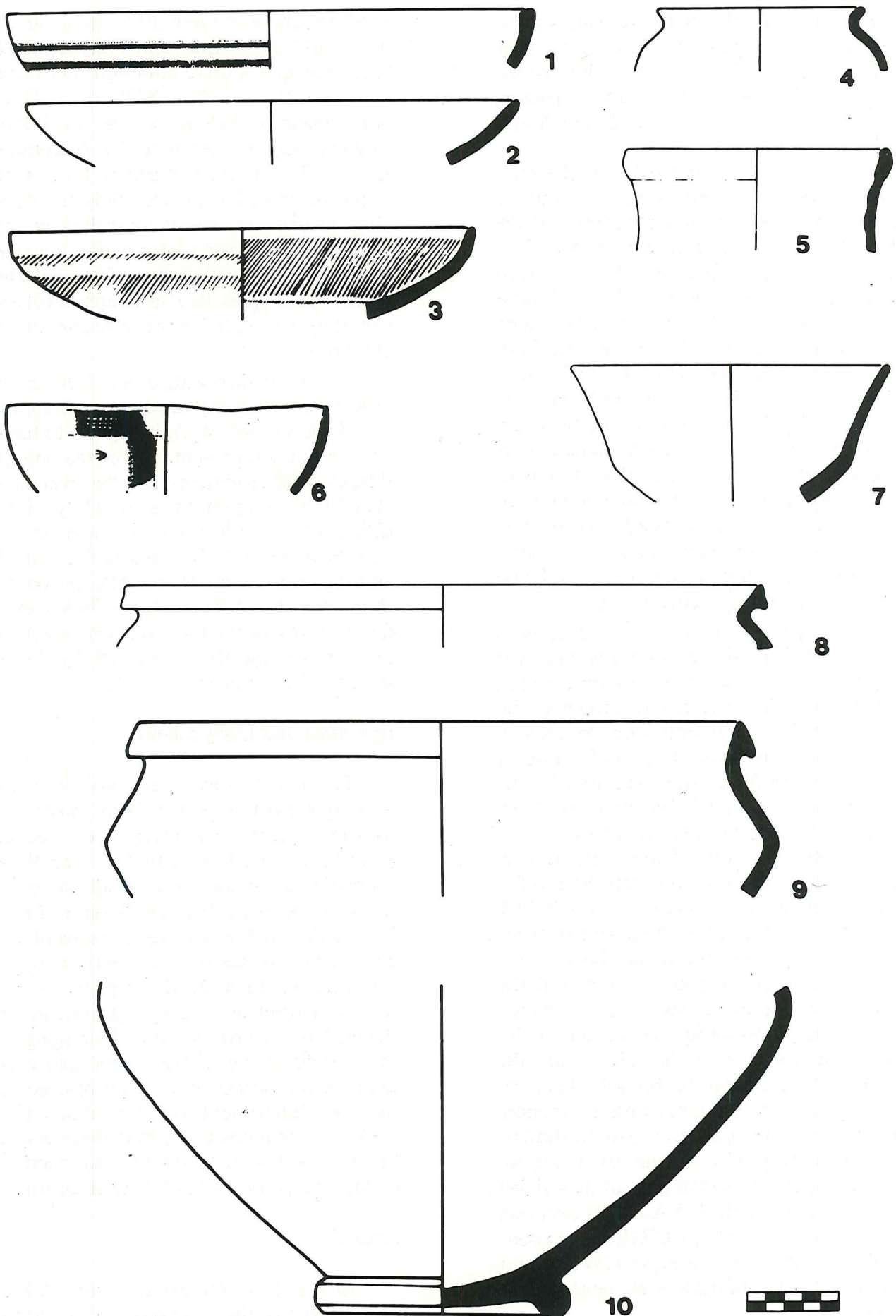


Fig. 6. Pella. Area IIIC. Late Bronze Age Pottery.

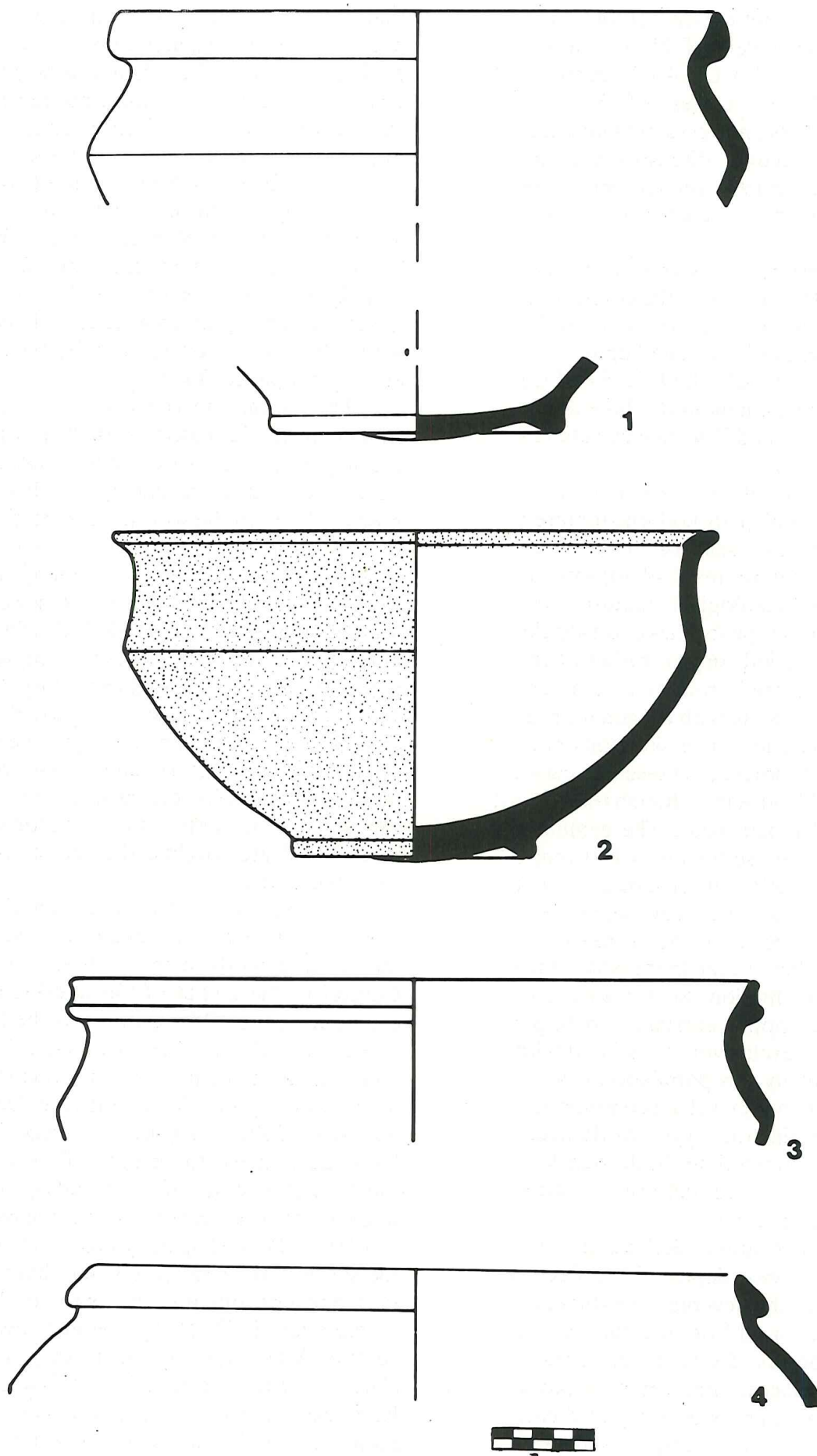


Fig. 7. Pella. Area IIIC. Iron Age I pottery.

avations confirm that the end of the Umayyad occupation at Pella (Fihl) was caused by the earthquake of A.D. 746/7; secondly, they provided a clear view of the Late Byzantine-Early Islamic ceramic sequence. The following account discusses first the trenches opened in 1981 and the finds from them, and then the trenches begun in the 1980 season.

The high priority of excavation in Area IV for the 1981 season was the connection by four new plots (IV J, L, M and P) of the two areas of excavation opened up in 1979 (IV A-E) and 1980 (IV H, O, R, S and U) on the top of the main mound. Three of the new plots, IV J, M and P, were excavated as one unit (Fig. 11).

The progress of excavation in these new plots was similar to that encountered during the first two seasons in the Area Excavation. After removal of topsoil the first major archaeological feature encountered is copious pit-burials dating to the late Medieval period. Initial studies of the osteological material from this cemetery suggest we are dealing with a standard pre-industrial population. The skeletons bore no evidence of violence or disease; caries were remarkably absent although there are often cases of molar wear. The cemetery may have been in use for up to 150 years, perhaps by two different groups as at first burials appear to have been segregated, with males in one area and females and infants in another. Later there was a breakdown in this division. So far jewellery, usually simple copper earrings and finger rings, has been exclusively associated with women. It is likely this population is to be associated with the revival of economic activity in Syria during the Ayyubid-Mameluk period, during which time the Jordan Valley was noted for its agricultural products, particularly sugar cane.

The major feature underlying the burials is the yellowish deposit identified as *pisé* collapse. In the new plots the thickness of the deposit varied from less than one to over three metres. Its removal revealed occupation surfaces, either mud or paved floors or in IV L an extensive paved courtyard (Fig. 11). This courtyard showed a long period of use. Constructed of soft

mud-stone, the constant traffic of man and beast led to the fragmentation of the paving slabs, until the original surface became so irregular that a hard packed mud surface was allowed to form over it, most probably during the Umayyad Period. On this new surface were found tabūns (ovens) and stray capitals, the latter inverted for use in the preparation of bread dough. Probably at about the same time rooms 25 and 26 (Fig. 11) were open to the sky, as here too tabūns and columns were found, along with a thick seven-layered ash deposit over an original paved floor.

The final destruction and abandonment of the houses clustered around the large central courtyard in IV L seems to have occurred simultaneously. This can now be dated to the well-documented earthquake of A.D. 746/7, for in room 16, along with the skeleton of a young man, were recovered four Umayyad dinars, the last dating of A.H. 117 (A.D. 735) which is long after any of the recorded earthquakes dating to earlier in the eighth century A.D. This numismatic evidence now provides an absolute date for the end of large scale occupation of the eastern end of the main mound, a chronological cut-off point that can equally be applied to the vestiges of material culture caught in the *pisé* collapse from the houses.

The excavation of IV J, L, M and P in 1981 gives us a clearer idea of the plan of the housing north of the east-west street. Central to the layout of the housing exposed during the 1981 season was the large courtyard 9.20 m. x 6.80 m. (N-S x E-W) which connected with the Byzantine street to the south by a 11.50 m. long lane. On the east side of the courtyard a staircase probably gave access to an upper floor (as in the Byzantine cities of the Hauran), while to the north was located a stable, excavated in 1980 as IV O. Originally rooms 31-34 to the south of the courtyard would have formed one unit opening out onto the Byzantine street in IV D. By the mid seventh century A.D. access to the street was blocked and the unit rebuilt to allow entry from the south end of the courtyard into room 31. The bin indicates the room was used for stabling animals, while rooms 32

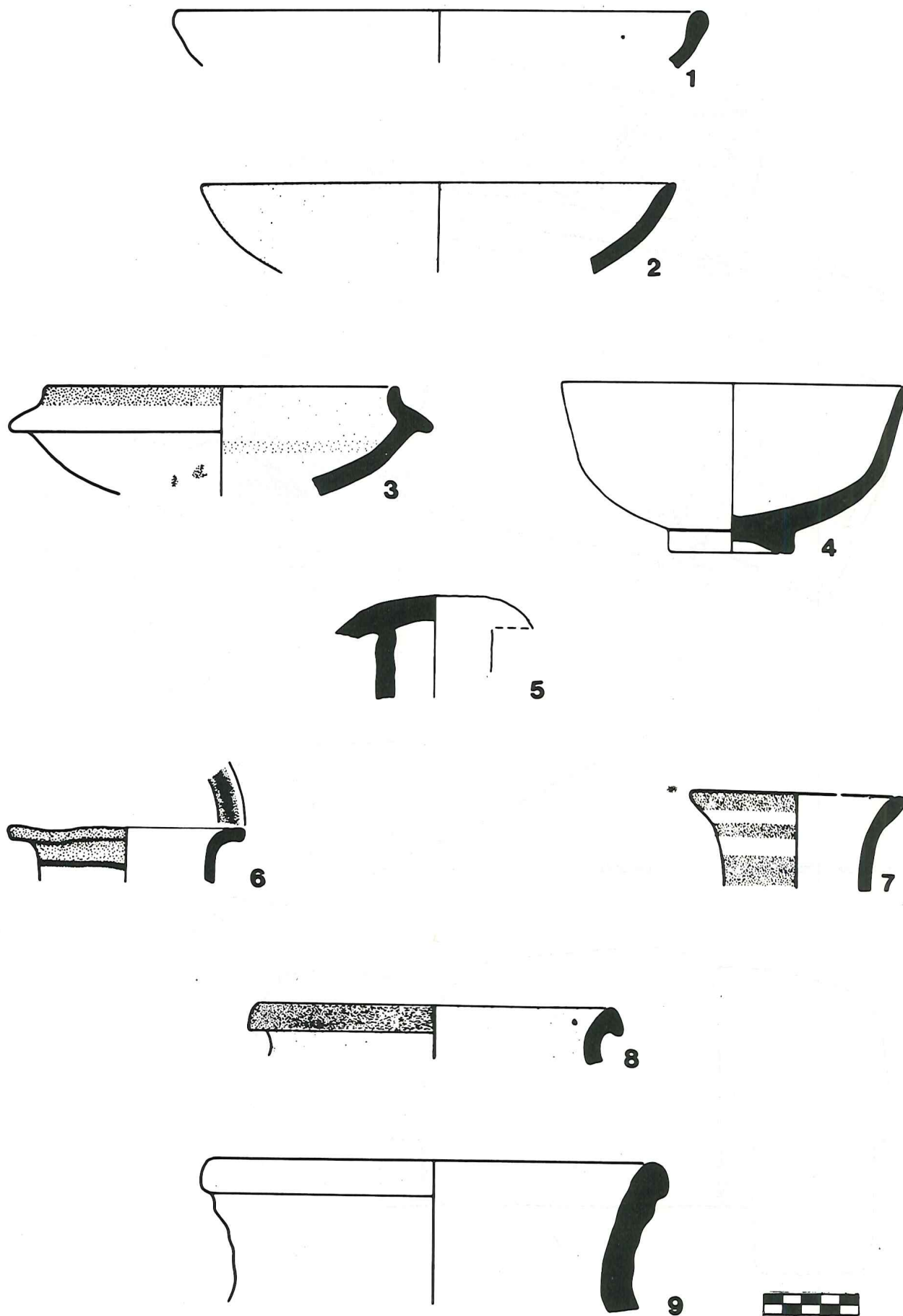


Fig. 8. Pella. Area IIIC. Iron Age I pottery.

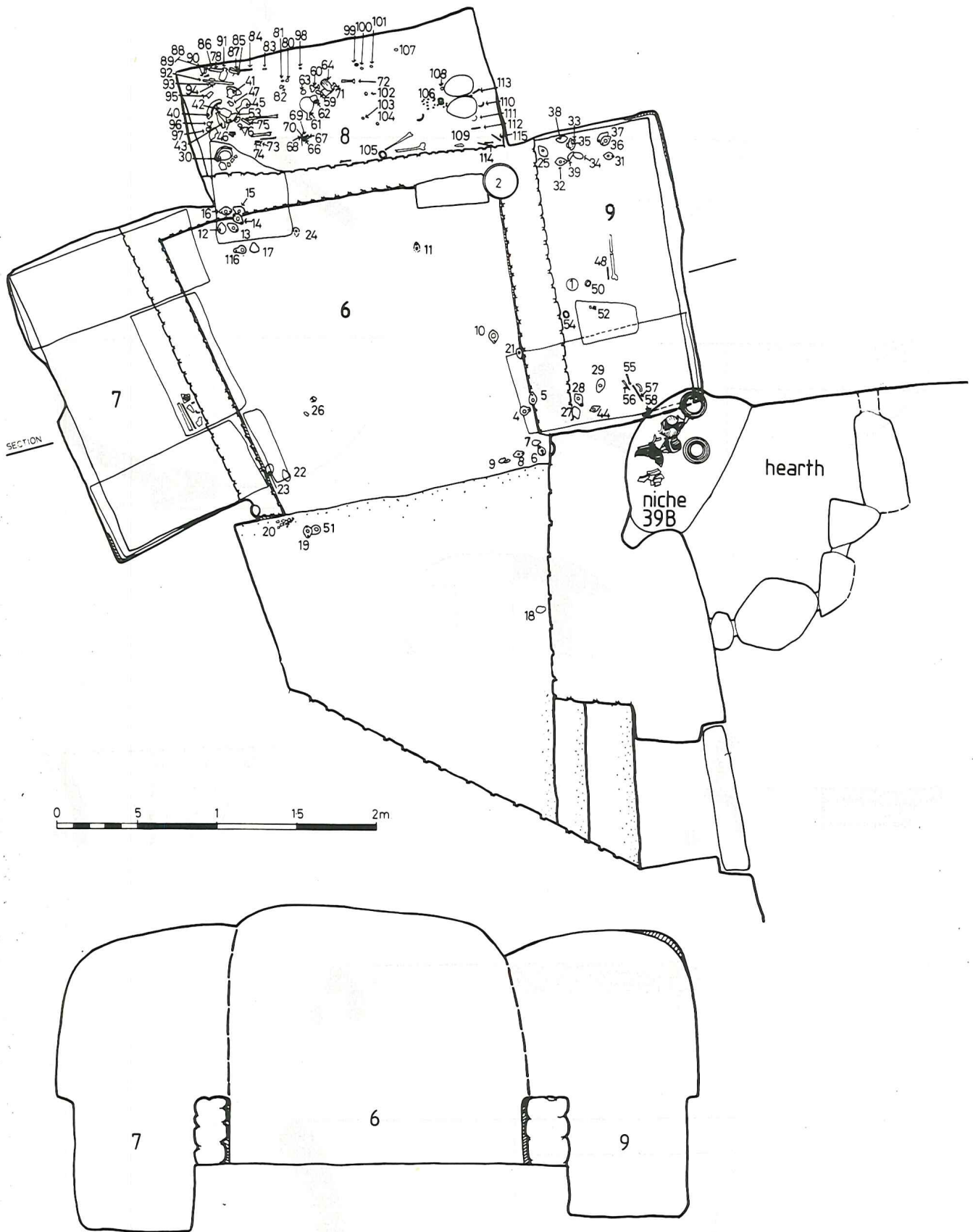


Fig. 9. Pella. Tomb 39. Plan.

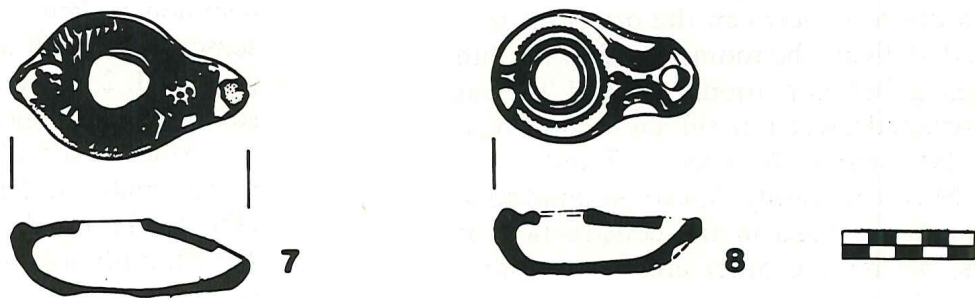
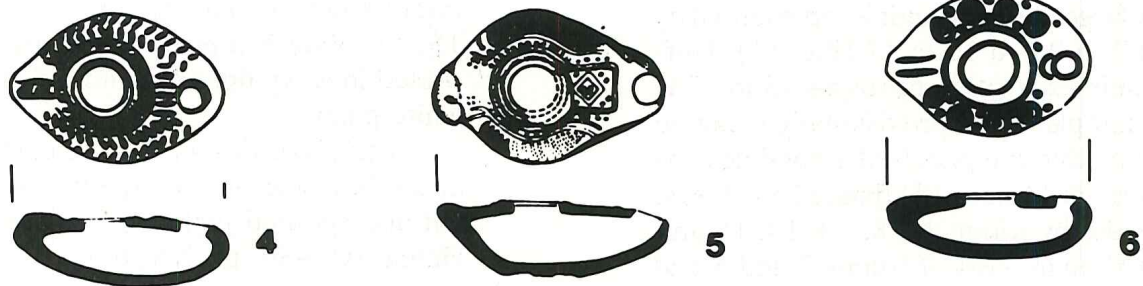


Fig. 10. Pella. Tomb 39A. Lamps.

and 34 are curious in that they had no access from ground floor level (cf. rooms 18 and 19).

In the period immediately before the final devastating earthquake at Pella the area to the east of the lane connecting the courtyard to the street seems to have been in ruins. A rough wall that could not have carried any weight divided room 28 from the lane. The large pavers here run underneath the wall. Rooms 25 and 26 were used for cooking, and ash from the fires eventually covered the base of the staircase in the north-east corner of room 25. Access was probably over the broken wall from the stable room 17, and were probably dilapidated. Thus although a barrier would have existed between the courtyard and lane, and rooms 18 to 19 and 25 to 26, it is unlikely this area was roofed in the period immediately before the A.D. 746/7 earthquake.

A large domestic unit is represented by rooms 7 to 9 and 13 to 17 (Fig. 11). Unfortunately excavation of rooms 13 to 17 is still incomplete, but provisionally it can be suggested that the plan is of a possible central courtyard (room 15) flanked on at least three sides by rooms (7, 8, 13, 14, 16 and 17). Although most of rooms 7 and 8 had been excavated in 1980, a full clearance of room 7 in 1981 exposed another cow skeleton. A total of two cows, a horse and at least one sheep/goat were killed in the collapse of these two rooms. From room 8 a small side entrance, too small for animals to pass, connected to another courtyard. Rooms 14 and 17 originally interconnected via a doorway between the orthostat feed bins that divide the rooms. Against the late blocking between rooms 17 and 18 was constructed a feed bin, similar to those against the north walls of rooms 7 and 8.

Most commonly limestone, mudstone and tufa are used in the construction of walls, paving and other architectural features. The upper storey, it is suggested was of *pisé*, most likely with roofs of compressed mud over wood beams and reed matting, a form of roofing that with adequate drainage can withstand the damp winters of the north Jordan Valley.

In a small room (no. 16) just off the

central courtyard of the domestic unit described above was a victim of the earthquake with his worldly possessions of money and utensils. When the room is fully excavated the contents of this room will be published as a complete unit - until then a preliminary account of the ceramics must suffice.

Vessels recovered from within the room with the skeleton and coins divide into various wares.

1. Purplish brown paint on light buff. Two vessels are of note; a jug CN 1869 (Fig. 12:1) and a jar CN 2030 (Fig. 12; 2). Ware is creamy-buff with small grits, decorated with purplish-brown paint in spirals and lines. This ware is not common at Pella, possibly because it was in use only a few decades before the destruction of the site in A.D. 746/7.
2. White paint on metallic terracotta. Of interest here is the jug CN 2022 (Fig. 13; 1). Ware is a gritty terracotta decorated in wavy lines in bands of thin white paint.

Vessels of this ware were common in the first season, mostly smallish jars but also spouted juglets (McNicoll and Hennessy 1980: pl. XX, 6-8).

3. Coarse terracotta. The common cooking-pot ware; two open pots and one lid were found close to a rough hearth in the centre of the room. The lid (CN 2052, Fig. 13;2) fitted very neatly one of the bowls (CN 2051, Fig. 13; 3). Ware is loose and gritty.

Cooking pots of this type are very common at Pella both from the 1979 season (McNicoll and Hennessy 1980: pl. XXIII, 2, 3 and 5) and Smith's 1967 season of excavations.

Made of a similar coarse terracotta is the small one-handled jar CN 2021 (Fig. 13; 4), as is the moulded lamp (Fig. 13; 5), both also from room 16.

4. Pale cream ware. Two pilgrim flasks of this ware were recovered from among the possessions of the earthquake victim. One (CN 2028) is of interest in that one handle was missing and the rim was chipped before the collapse of the building (Fig. 13; 6). The ware is fine and

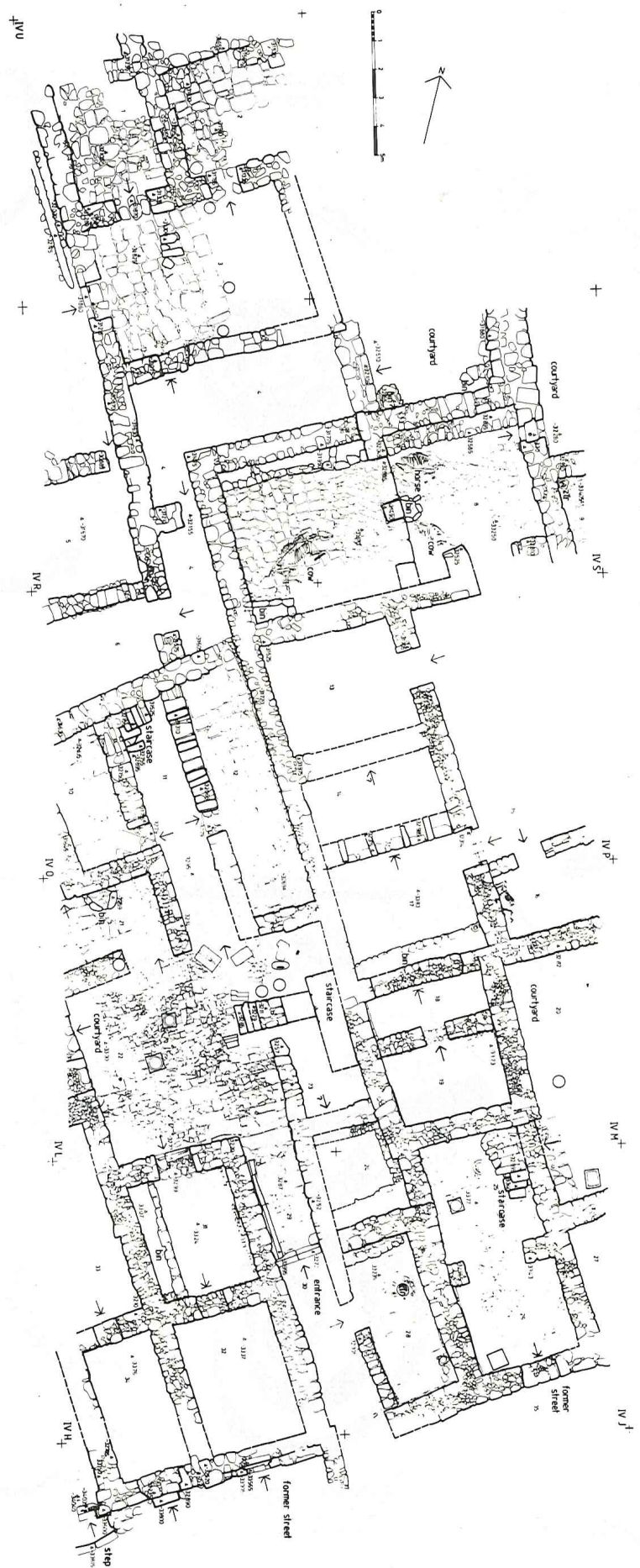
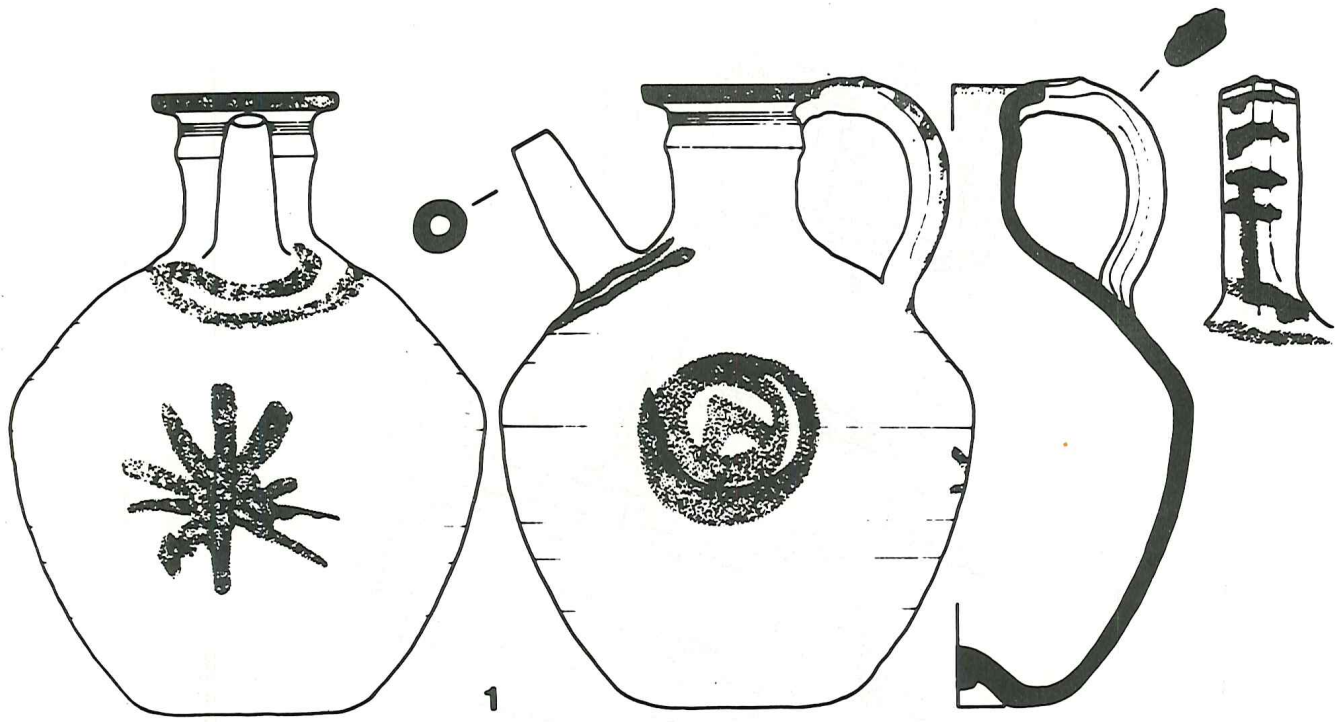
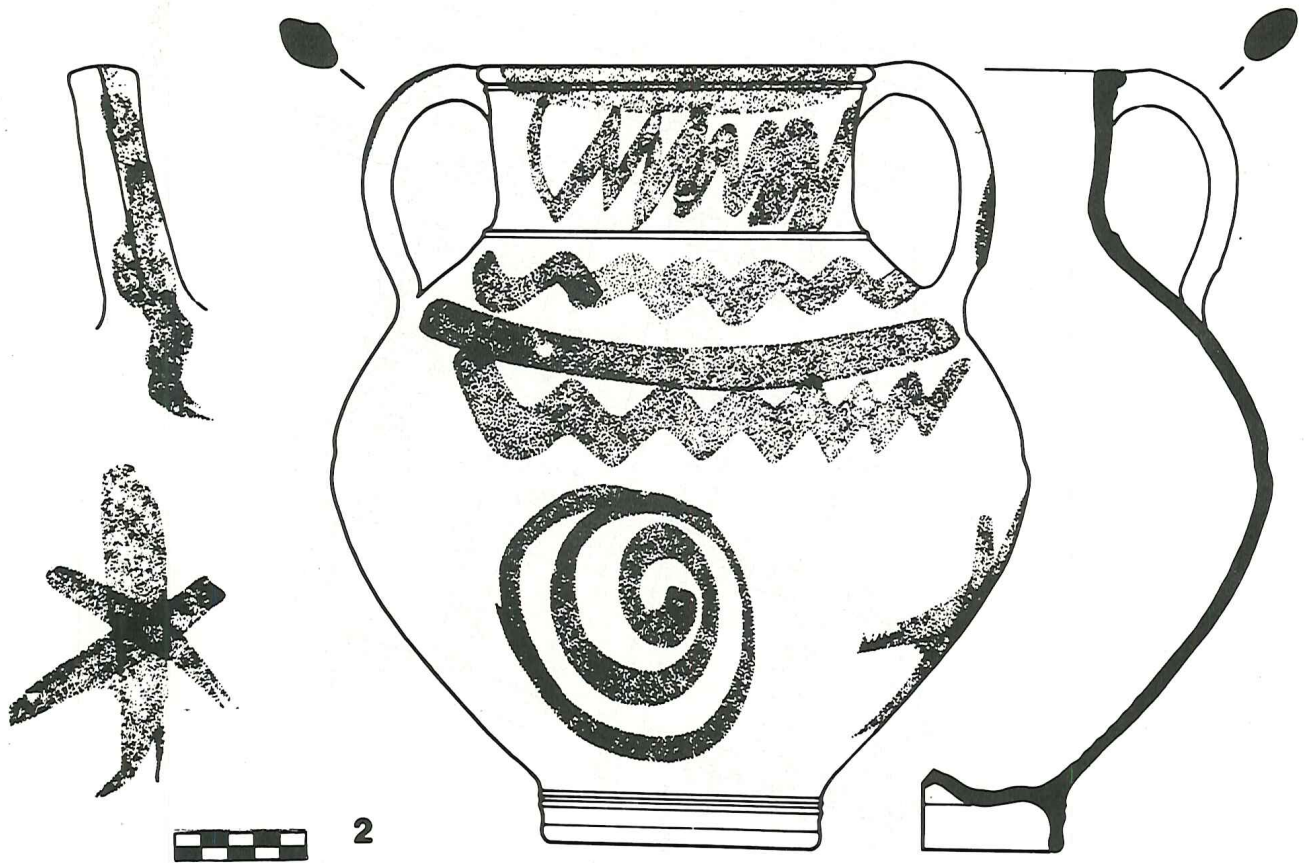


Fig. 11. Pella. Area IV. Plan.



1



2

Fig. 12. Pella. Area IV. Umayyad pottery.

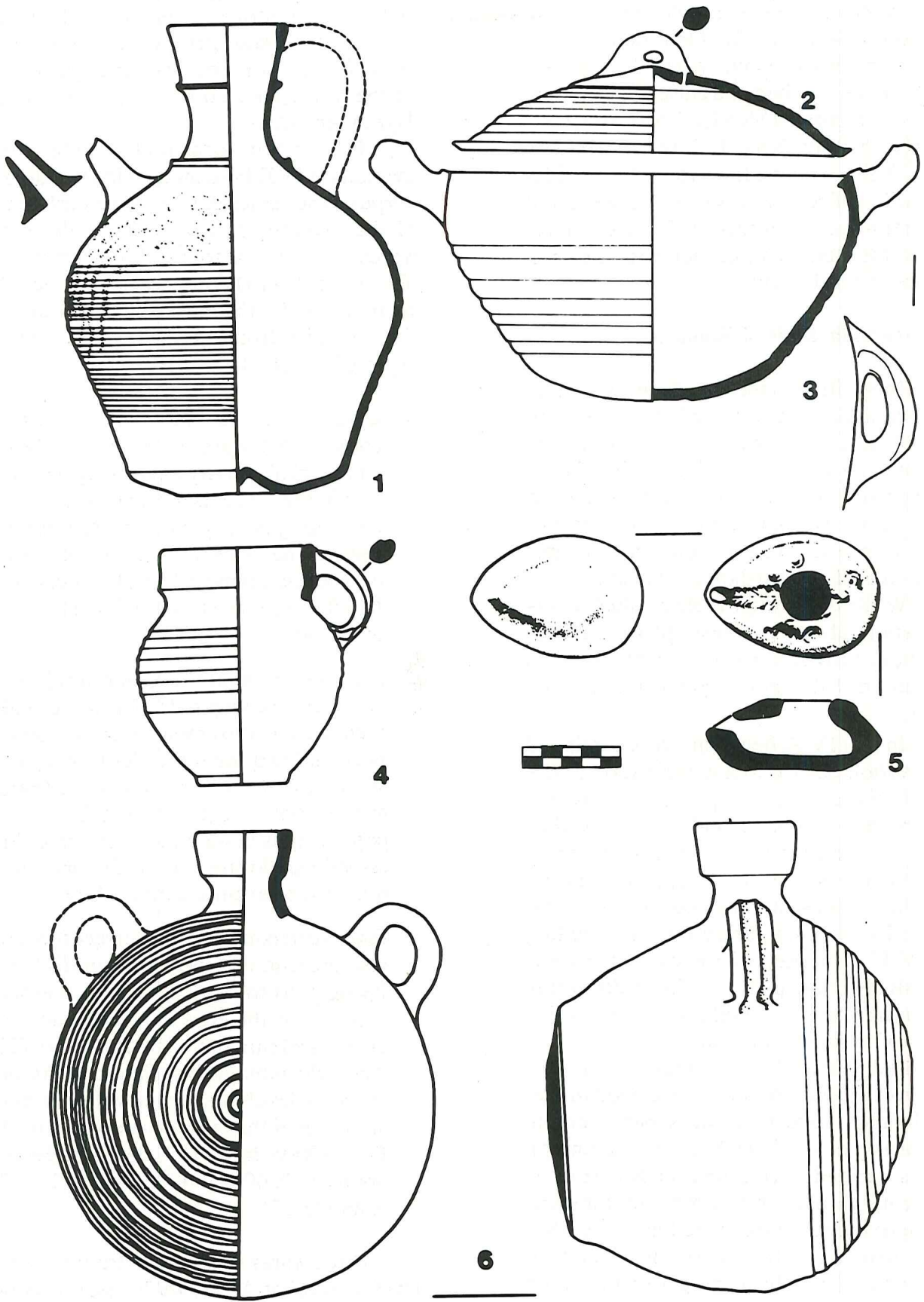


Fig. 13. Pella. Area IV. Umayyad pottery.

softish, and has a distinctive pale cream to pale green colour. It is unpainted.

Although these are by no means all the Umayyad wares so far identified at Pella e.g. dark brown white painted, and dark grey to buff combed and chiselled wares are not represented (McNicoll and Hennessy 1980: 28-9; pl. XXI, 1, 3 and 4; XXIII, 6 and 7), the ceramics from room 16 provides a useful collection of wares and vessels of the mid-eighth century A.D., and a fixed point for studies on earlier and later ceramics in the Levant.

Non-ceramic finds of Room 16.

In addition to the four dinars, the other non-ceramic artefacts included a square ended hoe identical to one found at Amman by Harding (1951: pl. II, 12), an iron pruning knife and a wood bucket on an iron frame. No significant object of bronze or glass was recovered, indicating the Spartan life of the earthquake victim.

While the new plots gave valuable information about the final phase of occupation, further work in two of the plots begun in 1980 also provided important data.

In plot IV R, begun in 1980, continued excavation has led to a modification of the "early phase" and "late phase" proposed in the report on the second season. Rather than a sequence of pre- and post-earthquake phases, it now appears that the building represented by rooms 7 to 9 and 13 to 16 is contemporary with the building in IV U composed of rooms 1 to 3 (previously the "late phase"). The walls of this latter unit are a rebuilding upon earlier walls of an uncertain date.

Following the delineation of the east-west Byzantine street described in the preliminary report of the second season (Hennessy et al *ADAJ* XXV, forthcoming) it was decided to continue further work in the courtyard of the Umayyad building south of the street excavated in 1979. This work resulted in the uncovering of remains which in their earliest phase formed part of the building excavated in 1979. At some time, perhaps about or just after the Islamic invasion, the building was altered by the

construction of a small internal courtyard and by the blocking of doorways that led out onto the street. This altered building was razed at a later period, perhaps around A.D. 700, to form the large courtyard west of the now truncated building south of the Byzantine street.

The major contribution the excavations in IV E have made is in providing a corpus of ceramics dating to the early part of the seventh century A.D. While some wares are the same as those described above (pp. 18-19) there are noticeable differences. By far the most common wares in the ceramics from IV E are the various types of terracottas.

1. Coarse terracotta. The common cooking-pot ware as described above. The "open" variety of cooking pot, like that in Fig. 13; 3, is present suggesting it has a long history, but also present are pots of the "closed" variety with thick over-turned rims and small vertical loop handles from rim to shoulder. The body is ribbed.
2. Medium terracotta. Present in this category are cooking pots of a type usually identified as Byzantine, with an upright neck and two small handles from rim to shoulder, and finely ribbed body. Initial impressions suggest that this form's popularity is at an end by the time this assemblage formed about the first quarter of the seventh century A.D.
3. Finer terracottas. Finer terracottas are also present, and used for utensils from frying pans to cups. Of a very fine terracotta are the Red Slip wares as described and catalogued by Hayes (1972). The chronologically latest example from the levels associated with the construction of the internal courtyard in IV E is ARSW form 105, dated by Hayes about A.D. 600-660 (Hayes 1972: 167, example 17).

Three wares well known from the destruction level of A.D. 746/7 appear in deposits associated with the internal courtyard of IV E. Their lesser frequency and restricted number of shapes may indicate that

they were just beginning to become popular. They are:

- a) Grey to buff combed and chiselled wares
- b) Dark brown white painted wares
- c) White paint on metallic terracotta.

These wares appear to have been introduced more or less simultaneously at Pella, perhaps not much before the end of the sixth century A.D.

Absent from this early seventh century group of pottery is the purplish-brown paint on light buff and pale cream wares. The date at which those wares make an appearance at Pella is uncertain, it depends

when the large courtyard in IV D and IV E was laid down. It seems unlikely this can be dated prior to A.D. 700, which means these two wares appear at Pella in the early eighth century A.D. Greater detail on the Umayyad pottery and its antecedents can be found in the Interim Report on the Sydney-Wooster excavations at Pella (McNicoll et al 1981 (in press)).

A.W. McNicoll
J.B. Hennessy
A.G. Walmsley
T.F. Potts