

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 1985
SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT TELL
ES-SA'IDIYEH, JORDAN

by
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Introduction

The imposing double mound of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh lies in the central Jordan Valley, 1.8 km. east of the Jordan river, on the south side of the Wadi Kufrinjeh. The two elements of the site comprise an upper *tell* to the east, rising to a height of some 40.00 m. above present ground level and covering an area of about 10,350 sq. m. at its summit, and a low, bench-like mound to the west, measuring approximately 90.00 x 40.00 m. and about 20.00 m. lower than the upper tell (Pl. XV).

In 1943, the site was visited by Nelson Glueck during his survey of Eastern Palestine: his surface collections indicated a long history of occupation from EBI-II through to the Iron II period, with extensions into the Roman and Byzantine periods.¹ To the west of the bench mound and separated from it by a gap of about 40.00 m., Glueck identified an additional site with sherds not only of EBI and II but also of the Chalcolithic period.² It was this very low mound, described as "Tell es-Sa'idiyeh el-Tahta", which was investigated in 1953 by H. de Contenson. In a number of small soundings a very thin occupation deposit was found, associated with pottery of the Middle Chalcolithic period.³

In 1964, systematic excavations were begun at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh by a University of Pennsylvania expedition under the directorship of J.B. Pritchard. Since 1980 the cemetery area has been published and

recently, the excavations on the *tell* appeared.⁵

A number of areas were investigated both on the upper and lower tells during four consecutive seasons. On the north-west side of the upper mound, a large area (1375 sq. m.) produced a sequence of Iron II strata dating between the tenth and eighth centuries B.C. Below a stratum of eroded walls and large circular grain pits (stratum I), remains of a well-planned building complex were excavated, consisting of a series of regular two-roomed houses or workshops leading off two parallel north-south orientated streets. Functional specialization was indicated by areas devoted to bread production and weaving. Regular planning also characterized the two underlying strata: again, streets and passageways gave access to carefully laid out rectangular buildings constructed of mud-brick on stone foundations. The lowermost stratum (IV) excavated by Pritchard is said to have been built over a destruction level.

On the highest part of the upper tell, the so-called "acropolis", a monumental building, described as a palace, was excavated. Consisting of seven rooms set around an open paved court, the building formed a square in plan and was constructed of massive mud-brick walls on stone foundations. On one of the floors of the palace was found an inscribed incense altar bearing the name *y-k-n-u*, and this object and the building have been dated to

¹ N. Glueck, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV*, AASOR, 25-28, New Haven, 1951, p. 290-295.

² *Ibid.*, p. 293.

³ H. de Contenson, Three Soundings in the Jordan Valley, ADAJ, (1960) p. 49-56.

⁴ J.B. Pritchard, *The Cemetery at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh Jordan*, University Monograph 41, Philadelphia, 1980.

⁵ J.B. Pritchard: *Tell Es-Sa'idiyeh Excavations on the Tell*, 1964-1966, The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1985.

the four century B.C.

One of the most impressive finds of the Pennsylvania expedition was a staircase leading from the foot of the mound to the Iron Age city. The stone-built structure had, along its centre, a mud-brick wall which, according to the excavator provided support for a roof of wooden beams, producing in effect a concealed passageway giving access to the spring at the base of the tell. This construction was dated by Pritchard to the Iron I period, between 1200 and 900 B.C.

On the low mound Pritchard opened an area on the north side, hoping to expose part of the Early Bronze Age settlement, the presence of which seemed to be assured by the dense concentration of EBII-III sherds. Instead, however, almost immediately below the surface, a cemetery of the Late Bronze-Iron I transitional period was revealed. During the course of a six-week season forty-five graves were excavated, many very eroded and poor, but some quite extraordinarily rich. One in particular, Tomb 101, produced, in addition to a fine corpus of pottery vessels, a bronze wine set and tripod stand, ivory cosmetic containers and a rich assemblage of items of personal adornment including many of gold and electrum.

The Pennsylvania expedition ceased operations in 1967 due to the war of that year and excavations were not subsequently resumed. In 1985, with the encouragement of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and Professor Pritchard, the writer applied for and was granted a permit to resume excavations at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, now on behalf of the British Museum. Between April and mid-May a preliminary six-week season was held, sponsored and funded by the British Museum, with further sponsorship provided by the British Institute in Amman for Archaeology and History and Alia, the Royal Jordanian Airline.

The staff of the 1985 season consisted of the writer (British Museum) — director, Peter Dorrell (Institute of Archaeology, London) — associate director, Barbara Pritzkat (U.C.L.A.) — surveyor, Janet Henderson (Institute of Archaeology,

London) — human osteologist, Alan Hills (British Museum) — photographer, Sherif Omar (British Museum) — conservator, Constantine Politis (Institute of Archaeology, London), Karen Bradley (Oriental Institute, Chicago), Derek Kennet (Institute of Archaeology, London) and Debra Chase (Harvard) — area supervisors. The expedition was joined for a short time by Robert and Janie Miller (A.U.B.) who initiated the excavations in area DD, and by Gillian Bentley (Oriental Institute, Chicago) who undertook the supervision of the trial trench, area CC. Bedri Hassan al-Madi was technical services advisor and camp manager and Sheikh Sadiq, a veteran of Jericho, served as foreman. The staff was completed by Sa'ad al-Hadidi, representative of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, who assisted with the supervision of area AA.

Thanks are due to the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and in particular to its Director-General, Dr. Adnan Hadidi for all his help, kindness and enthusiastic support for the project. Finally, a special debt of gratitude is owed to Professor James Pritchard, not only for all his advice, but also for making available much of his yet un-published material: the contour plan (Fig. 1) is re-drawn from his original.

Results of the 1985 Season

Three main areas were begun in 1985; area AA on the upper tell and areas BB and DD on the low mound. Area CC, also on the low mound, was a trial probe, the excavation of which will probably not be continued in subsequent seasons. Figure 1, which is adapted from Pritchard's contour survey plan, shows the 1985 areas in relations to those of the Pennsylvania expedition.

Area AA

Situated in the south-east corner of Pritchard's main trench on the north-west side of the upper tell, this area is intended to continue the sequence of occupation levels below the base of the Pennsylvania excavations.

Area AA currently defines an area

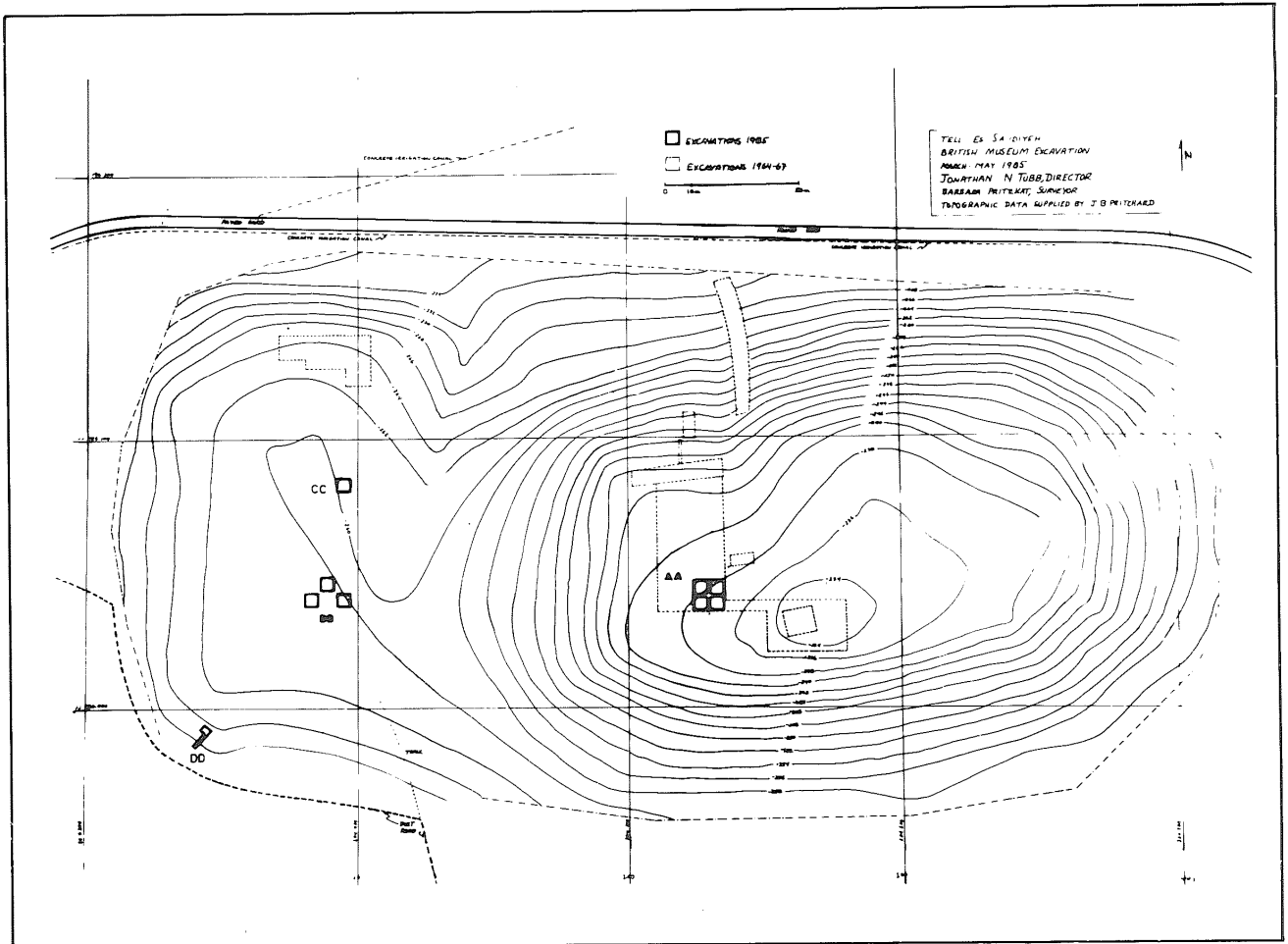


Fig. 1 Contour plan of the site showing the 1985 areas in relation to those of the Pennsylvania expedition.

11.00 m. x 11.00 m. divided into four, five metre squares with one metre cross-baulks and orientated on Pritchard's grid. Considerable erosion of the south-east corner of Pritchard's trench necessitated the cutting back of his south and east sections by one metre. This allowed the opportunity to excavate and study the upper (otherwise removed) stratigraphy in two narrow strips along the south and east baulks and hence to provide a correlation overlap between the old and new excavations.

Detailed discussion of the complex stratigraphy of area AA must await analysis of the ceramics and only a few preliminary remarks can be made at this stage. Excavation of the one metre wide "shelf" on the east side of AA produced, of course, little in terms of architecture, but did provide a detailed stratigraphic record of the layers otherwise removed by the previous excavations. In very general terms, the sequence of four strata outlined by Pritchard could be verified, but with a certain degree of necessary sub-division and refinement.

Beneath an extremely eroded and weathered layer in which no features could be isolated or distinguished, remains of a substantial building were uncovered. Part of a wall, well-constructed of large well-formed mud-bricks on stone foundations, was found together with its associated surface of mud-brick paving. This construction corresponds almost certainly with Pritchard's stratum II. Beneath this, and under a layer of rubble fill which may be interpreted as a levelling up, were found walls of a much poorer nature, associated with a series of occupation levels consisting largely of beaten earth surfaces covered with ashy deposits. A *tannur* was found associated with one of these surfaces and the overall impression gained is one of an area of industrial rather than domestic utilization. This building phase, which can be equated with Pritchard's stratum III, is in fact composed of two distinct sub-phases: most of the walls show a clear rebuild, and correspondingly, the occupation surfaces fall into two discrete bands with a layer of soft fill separating them.

The isolation of Pritchard's lowest excavated phase, stratum IV, proved to be extremely difficult. It involved not only the excavation of the one metre strip on the east, but also the complete clearance of the remainders of the squares, removing all of the section collapse, silting and rubbish that had accumulated in the base of Pritchard's excavation during the past eighteen years. When the area had been cleared, it became apparent that the surviving plan, consisting of streets and alleyways with rather poorly constructed, narrow walled rooms leading off, did not represent one single coherent phase, but rather was an amalgamation of several interrelated and overlapping sub-phases. All were based on the same general plan, but differed in detail, suggesting an area that had been continuously used with the consequent processes of rebuilding, repair and modification. Since Pritchard's excavation had ceased generally at the point of isolation of the latest sub-phase, it was possible to continue the excavation of his stratum IV, adding more details and separating out, where possible, the individual sub-phases. Again, this area seems to have been given over to specialized industrial usage rather than domestic occupation. Changes in the usage of various rooms in the different sub-phases could be observed: a room that in the lowest sub-phase had contained four bread ovens had been re-floored with stones to cover them completely and afterwards was associated with weaving, to judge from the large number of loom weights found there. One room of the lowest sub-phase contained a curious installation consisting of a stone-lined depression with a number of grinding stone fragments at the bottom. The pottery from this feature was intensely stained green and an almost rust red and it is possible that the installation was associated with dye preparation (Pl. XVI).

Pritchard had indicated that stratum IV was built on a destruction level and certainly removal of the lowest sub-phase of his stratum IV revealed a layer of intensely burnt material, black and choco-

late brown with lenses of yellow, white, blue and even pink ash. This layer extended over all four squares of AA, cut through in only one place by a deep pit associated with stratum III.

This ash deposit was shown on excavation to be approximately 0.40 m. deep and, despite its vivid multicoloured appearance, was composed of fine material with few inclusions and very little pottery. It rested on an irregular sloping surface or reddish orange natural silt, homogeneous in texture and again, with no inclusions and virtually no pottery.

Excavation of the silt layer has not yet been completed, but it extends in depth at least 0.30 m. A mud-brick wall has begun to be exposed in AA 100 within the silt layer, its top just in contact with the overlying ash. Its alignment is different from those of stratum IV and it has the appearance of having been much weathered and eroded.

Although little can be said as yet about the nature of the deposits below Pritchard's stratum IV, it is at least clear that the level upon which it was founded was not one of the destruction, not, that is, in the conventional sense. Rather, it would seem that this area of the site had been abandoned for some period of time, during which natural silting occurred, largely covering whatever structures had existed previously. The ash deposit can only be explained in terms of burning off vegetation and rubbish in preparation for the construction of the buildings of stratum IV.

Excavations on the Low Mound

The low mound, as noted by both Glueck⁶ and Pritchard,⁷ has a dense surface concentration of EBII-III sherds, perhaps indicating the presence here of an extensive Early Bronze Age settlement. It was this consideration which led Pritchard to excavate an area on the north side of this mound. His finding here of a cemetery of the LBII-Iron I transitional period explains the occurrence of sherds of this period

Glueck, *ibid.*, p. 292.

⁷ Pritchard, *ibid.*, The Cemetery, p. 1.

amongst the surface materials of the low mound. Further, he demonstrated that the graves had been cut directly into Early Bronze Age occupation remains, in many cases with the utilization and adaptation of standing walls. Certainly, in the area exposed by Pritchard, there seems to have been no occupation between EBIII and the establishment of the cemetery towards the end of LBII.

An examination of the surface materials of the low mound this season suggested that the same periodization was true for the whole of the site; EBII-III and LBII-Iron I only. On the east side, at the foot of the high tell, a few Iron II sherds were found, but these must be presumed to have been washed down the slope. Late Roman-Byzantine sherds, dating probably to the mid-6th century AD were encountered only in the area of the large stone-built building remains on the north side of the mound described by Glueck.⁸ Contrary to Glueck, it seems unlikely that the exposed stones are in fact foundational, particularly in view of the large number of similar massive stones which are concentrated in the immediate vicinity. A limited sounding next season will test this view and will also attempt to recover a complete plan of this interesting building.

The proportion of LBII-Iron I sherds to those of the Early Bronze Age was found to vary across the low mound; highest on the north side, low towards the centre and on the south and negligible on the west. Based on this observation, three areas were opened; BB on the south side, CC near to the centre (south of Pritchard's excavation and the Roman/Byzantine building) and DD on the extreme south-west slope.

Area BB

BB, located on the southern side of the low mound, was initiated as an area 17.00 m. x 11.00 m., divided into six 5.00 m. squares with 1.00 m. cross-baulks. The intention here was to establish the basis of an open area excavation in which to expose and investigate the Early Bronze Age

settlement.

Once again, the unreliability of surface indications was brilliantly demonstrated, for not only were graves uncovered immediately below topsoil, but also their concentration was vastly greater than in the area examined by Pritchard, with much inter-grave cutting and associated disturbance. The complexity of the cemetery in this area meant that only two of the six squares (200 and 400) could be excavated and these two alone produced 40 burials. By the end of the 1985 season these two squares had still not been cleared of burials: in the deepest part of square 400, which had attained a depth of over 2.00 m. below ground surface, further burials were still being encountered.

As Pritchard had found during his excavation,⁹ it proved impossible in the majority of cases to establish the exact level from which the graves had been cut, and in many cases, particularly the simple pit burials, the edges of the grave-cuts could not be accurately determined.

The continued, heavy re-use of this part of the cemetery with the consequent inter-cutting of graves allows several linked sequences to be defined, with the possibility of establishing an internal chronological phasing. Unfortunately, the paucity of grave-goods in most of the burials renders this treatment of only limited value.

There was considerable variation in both the type of grave and in the burial practice. Mostly, the graves consisted of simple, roughly oval pits. In some cases, rather irregularly vertically placed mud-bricks were used to line the pits, sometimes in conjunction with field stones (or perhaps stones taken from Early Bronze Age structures). There is no evidence to suggest that these pit or lined pit graves had been covered, but in a few instances the body itself had been partly covered with large sherds from store-jars. Stones, frequently found above the skull, are presumed to have served as grave markers (apparently without much effect!).

A few of the graves were more neatly constructed with well-cut rectangular pits,

⁸ Glueck, *ibid.*, p. 292.

lined with regularly placed mud-bricks. In these cases, enough mud-brick was found in the grave fill to suggest that they had originally been covered over. This was certainly true for the two brick-built graves (24 and 32) in square 200 which still had remains of mud-brick slabs in position over the deposits. These two graves were set so deliberately next to each other and were both constructed of large horizontally laid mud-brick slabs, four to five courses high, that it seems likely that they were built to stand, at least in part, above the ground surface.

In addition, there were a number of infant jar burials which had been set into simple pits. In every case, the jar had been broken at the shoulder in order that the burial might be inserted.

The skeletal remains were, on the whole, reasonably well preserved, especially in the deeper lying burials, but there was a considerable degree of disturbance as a result of secondary and frequently multiple intrusion. However, enough evidence was preserved to indicate that the majority of the graves contained the remains of single articulated skeletons. The orientation, where discernable, was east-west or west-east in all but one case which was north-south. Normally the body lay extended on its back, but in three graves the deceased had been placed on its side, facing south.

A few of the graves which were otherwise undisturbed by later intrusion contained disarticulated remains which might imply a secondary practice. It is conceivable, however, that they are secondary in the sense that they represent reburials of skeletons disturbed by the cutting of later graves. This would help explain the rather extraordinary collection of human remains found in both of the large brick-built graves, 24 and 32, which each contained in addition to a single articulated skeleton, a number of additional bones and two and four extra skulls respectively.

Human skeletal remains were recorded by Miss Henderson in the field, and the majority were subsequently lifted and removed for further analysis. Her detailed

report will be presented in a later publication.

With a few exceptions, the graves excavated in 1985 were not especially rich. Many contained no associated finds, and others just a few beads or a single pottery vessel. It is interesting to observe that the commonest funerary vessel was an imitation Mycenaean pyxis: altogether eight examples were found.

A fine collection of objects was associated with grave 27, the burial of a young girl aged about 5 years old. She had a bronze anklet on each leg and on each wrist a bracelet, one of small white paste beads and the other of carnelian and silver beads. Around her neck was a necklace, again of carnelian and silver beads but here interspersed with larger black stone beads. Close to her shoulder was found a bronze fibula which when cleaned revealed a silver drop earring adhering to it. Above the skull was a bronze clasp which was probably some type of hair ornament. In addition were found silver and steatite finger rings, a bronze weaving spindle, a finely engraved stamp seal and a zoomorphic pot (Pl. XVII).

Perhaps the most attractive find from the cemetery, however, was a beautifully preserved three-piece bronze wine set comprising bowl, strainer and juglet (Pls. XVIII; XIX). This was found in grave 32, one of the brick-built graves referred to above in connection with the skeletal remains. It is interesting to note, that in addition to the four extra human skulls found with the articulated skeleton, bones of a large animal, possibly a cow, were also included in this deposit.

A detailed discussion of the dating of the graves excavated in 1985 must obviously await a full analysis of the finds. In general terms, however, there is nothing to suggest that they differ chronologically from those excavated by Pritchard on the north side of the site, and a dating within the transition from LBII to Iron I (13th-12th centuries B.C.) would seem appropriate.

The following is purely a working inventory of the graves excavated or examined in 1985 and is not intended as a

final statement.

1. BB 400 Brick lined pit, burial covered by store jar sherds. Single articulated, feet missing. W-E. *Finds* T1:1 Shell bead, T1:2 store jar (from covering sherds)
2. BB 200 Brick lined pit (using part of N wall of T32). Single articulated W-E. *Finds* T2:1 Jar, T2:3 Bowl, T2:4 Carnelian bead, T2:5 Faceted bead. (Note: T2:2 re-assigned to T40).
3. BB 400 Pit, burial covered by store jar sherds. Single articulated. W-E. *Finds* T3:1 Jar. The store jar covering sherds are from several vessels and no complete profiles were reconstructable.
4. BB 400 Pit? Very eroded. Few store jar sherds (no profile possible) and scatter of bone fragments.
5. BB 200 Very eroded and disturbed burial consisting of a fragmentary storejar and skull fragments only.
6. BB 400 Pit. Single articulated adult with No. of associated infant bones. E-W.
7. BB 400 Pit. covered by number of stones. Only partially excavated (in baulk). *Finds* T7:1 juglet.
8. BB 400 Pit? Broken skull and poorly preserved associated bones extending into W baulk. Probably single articulated, E-W.
9. BB 200 Pit, partly stone lined. Disarticulated. *Finds* T9:1 pyxis, T9:2 stamp seal (found inside pyxis).
10. CC 100 Not excavated - store jar and bone appearing in E baulk.
11. CC 100 Pit? Very eroded and disturbed by ploughing. Few store jar sherds (no profiles) and scatter of bone fragments.
12. BB 400 Scatter of bone fragments only - may not be a grave.
13. BB 200 Type of grave not clear - appears to have been placed on top of mud-brick slab associated with T24. Disarticulated. *Finds* T13:1 grinding stone, T13:2 Carnelian bead.
14. CC 100 Pit. Single articulated. E-W. No associated finds.
15. BB 400 Pit, covered by number of stones. Disturbed by T16. Collection of long bones only. *Finds* T15:1 unfinished limestone bead, T15:2 twisted bronze wire.
16. BB 400 Pit, partially stone lined. Single articulated with arms folded. E-W. No associated finds.
17. BB 200 Very eroded and disturbed collection of store jar sherds and bone fragments. *Finds* T17:1 Alabaster jar.
18. BB 200 Pit. Single articulated. N-S. *Finds* T18:1 Jug, T18:2 painted shoulder fragments of jar (thought to be in primary association despite incomplete nature).
19. BB 200 Pit? Very eroded and disturbed collection of store jar sherds (no profiles) and bones.
20. BB 400 Jar burial - store jar broken off at shoulder and provided with "lid" sherd. Infant burial. *Finds* T20:1 Store jar (container for burial).
21. BB 400 Pit, stone lined. Largely destroyed by later grave cutting. Only two disintegrated long bones surviving.
22. BB 400 Pit, covered by stones. Not excavated.
23. CC 100 Pit. Articulated adult with child. W-E (adult), E-W (child). *Finds* T23:1 3 white paste beads.
24. BB 200 Brick-built. Single articulated adult plus skulls and a few bones from 2 others. W-E (articulated burial). *Finds* T24:1 Alabaster stopper, T24:2 Frit bead, T24:3 Carnelian bead, T24:4 Carnelian bead, T24:5 Carnelian bead, T24:6 Bone bead, T24:7 Carnelian bead, T24:8 Iron dagger, T24:9 Pyxis, T24:10 Pyxis, T24:11 Store jar, T24:12 calcite spindle whorl, T24:13 Carnelian bead.
25. BB 400 This seems to be a pit or trench rather than a grave. It disturbs T31 which underlies it. The bones, especially the skull and jaw probably belong to T31. *Finds* T25:1 Pyxis (probably derived from T31), T25:2 small store jar (incomplete).
26. BB 400 Pit, stones over skull. Single articulated on side. E-W facing S. *Finds* T26:1 bronze earring.
27. BB 400 Pit. Single articulated girl, aged about 5-6. E-W facing S. White traces from garment observed over

- and around bones. *Finds* T27:1 Bronze anklet, T27:2 bronze anklet, T27:3 bracelet of small white beads, T27:4 silver finger ring, T27:5 bronze hair clasp, T27:6 steatite ring, T27:7 Stamp seal, T27:8 necklace of silver, carnelian and stone beads, T27:9 bracelet of silver and carnelian beads, T27:10 bronze weaving spindle. T27:11 bronze fibula, T27:12 silver earring, T27:13 zoomorphic pottery vessel.
28. BB 200 Pit. Disarticulated jumble - 4 skulls and several bones. *Finds* T28:1 pyxis, T28:2 carnelian bead, T28:3 calcite jar.
 29. BB 400 Jar burial - store jar broken at shoulder. Set into and disturbing T25/31. Infant bones inside jar. *Finds* T29:1 store jar (container for burial).
 30. BB 400 Pit, possibly covered by stones. Single articulated child (feet and lower legs to knee caps only - cut by T37). W-E. *Finds* T30:1 pyxis, T30:2 pyxis, T30:3 jug.
 31. BB 400 Brick lined and covered pit. Below and disturbed by T25. Single articulated adult missing skull (probably to be found in T25). W-E. *Finds* T31:1 clay ball. The pyxis, T25:1, should probably be associated with this burial.
 32. BB 200 Brick-built. Single articulated adult plus disarticulated bones and skulls from 4 other individuals. W-E (articulated burial). Deposit also contained bones of large animal, possibly a cow. *Finds* Bronze wine set: T32:1 bowl, T32:2 strainer, T32:3 juglet.
 33. BB 400 Pit. Single articulated adult. W-E. Possibly associated with child burial T33A which directly overlies it. *Finds* T33:1 jar, T33:2 Stamp seal, T33:3 carnelian bead, T33:4 paste bead, T33:7 bronze loop, T33:8 inscribed plaque.
 - 33A. BB 400 Articulated child burial, possibly associated with T33 above. SW-NE. *Finds* T33A:5 bronze and iron bracelet, T33A:6 4 bronze earrings. T33A:9 necklace of mixed beads, T33A:10 scatter of small beads.
 34. BB 400 Brick lined and covered pit.

- Single articulated adult. W-E. Not completely excavated.
35. BB 400 Jar burial? Not excavated.
 36. BB 400 Brick lined and covered pit. Single articulated adult on side. W-E, facing S. *Finds* T36:1 pyxis.
 37. BB 400 Pit? Very disturbed by T26. Portions of legs and pelvis only. E-W?
 38. Mistake in numbering = T35.
 39. BB 200 very disturbed jar burial (?) below T32 (running under wall) Not excavated.
 40. BB 200 Jar burial - very eroded and no profile possible for jar itself. Infant bones inside remains of jar. *Finds* T40:1 Iron bracelet, T40:2 Iron bracelet, T40:3 Iron bracelet, T40:4 Bronze earring, T40:5 Necklace of 36 assorted stone and shell beads.

Early Bronze Age Occupation in BB

Only one small "pinnacle" of undisturbed Early Bronze Age occupation could be isolated on the north-east side of 400, measuring approximately 2.20 m. by 0.50 m. and defined as locus 450. The upper stratum (450.1) consisted of burnt mud-brick debris mixed with ash, and below this and sealed by it was a dense black ashy layer (450.2) containing a heavy concentration of burnt and crushed pottery. 450.2 rests on a surface of greenish clay, possibly a floor. On the basis of a preliminary examination of the pottery from this deposit which included a number of complete profiles of platter bowls and jars a date in the latter part of EBII or early in EBIII would be indicated.

Area CC

Looking down at the surface of the low mound from the upper tell in the early morning light, a number of dark, roughly oval patches could be seen, especially on the north side. These has obviously resulted from differential drainage and drying and the suggestion was made that they might be signalling the presence of graves. In such an event, the recording of these patches would provide a very rough but rapid method of plotting the extent of the cemetery.

In order to test this theory, a single 5

m. by 5 m. square, defined as area CC, was laid out immediately over one of the dark soil patches in approximately the centre of the low mound, just to the south of the Roman/Byzantine building.

Removal of the topsoil revealed a very disturbed layer containing many stones, LBII-Iron I sherds (mostly from store jars) and fragments of human bone, mixed with sherds of the Early Bronze Age. The disturbance, which had obviously destroyed a number of graves, had been caused by ploughing, the furrows clearly visible as channels running east-west, approximately 0.10 m. deep and 0.40-0.60 m. apart. Below the ploughed level, a stone wall, running roughly north-south was revealed on the west side of the square, close to the baulk. Composed of rather irregularly laid field stones, varying in size from 0.10-0.30 m., this wall was about 0.65 m. wide. It joins the western baulk at either end but curves away from it slightly in the middle implying that it represents the outside wall of a building which extends to the west. East of this wall (wall a), eroded but undisturbed graves were encountered below the ploughed level, similar in nature to those of area BB. Since it was never the intention to open an extensive area at this location, and since the excavation of BB was already demonstrating the lack of correlation between differential surface soil indications and the presence or absence of graves, operations in area CC were brought to a close. The defined burials were excavated or recorded and the human remains were removed for further study. These graves appear in the inventory above, together with those from BB. It is planned to re-open CC at a later stage, extending the area westwards in order to investigate the building associated with wall a.

Area DD

Begun as a small scale operation to investigate a stone-built structure eroding from the south-west slope of the low mound, an original 1.50 m. wide slit trench running north-east - south-west and called DD, was extended later in the season with the addition of a 3.00 m. by 2.00 m. trench

at the north-east end. (Fig. 2).

Immediately below topsoil (DD 100+) was found a layer of greenish, washed and eroded mud-brick detritus (101.1) extending over most of the trench. The stone structure visible before excavation proved to be a wall (wall a) running north-south with a short eastward return at its northern end. It is only preserved as one course and is almost certainly foundational. It is 0.95 m. wide, constructed of large flat stones.

East of wall a and below the level of washed mud-brick detritus was a 0.30 m. thick destruction level (102.1) composed of lumps of burnt orange mud-brick, large pieces of charcoal and dense ashy pockets. It rested upon a blackened floor surface with occasional patches of white plaster (102.2). To the north, this floor runs up to a mud-brick wall (wall c) of which three courses are preserved. The bricks are of size 0.40 x 0.22 x 0.14 m. and the wall is constructed of two parallel rows of bricks, being therefore, only 0.45-0.50 m. wide. Along part of the southern face of this wall was found a mud-brick structure, possibly a bench, upon which rested an incised, decorated bone tube.

To the west, the extent of the floor is unknown due to erosion of the mound at this point, but it appears to run up to a curious installation made of three large mud-bricks, set vertically to form a type of box. This mud-brick feature (called initially wall b) abutts the north-east corner of wall a, but the relationship between the two is not clear. Neither is that between the floor surface and the presumed inner face (east) of wall a, this relationship again having been lost through erosion. It is possible that the mud-brick "box" is associated with an entranceway into the building, and further excavation to the north-west, where erosion has been less, may help to clarify the architecture on this side of the building. Certainly, expansion of this area to the un-eroded north-east should yield the rest of the plan of the building.

Lying directly on the floor surface was a heavy deposit of pottery, much of it burnt and crushed, representing several com-

plete vessels. Also found were grinding stones and clusters of bivalve shells. Some of the pottery was leaning up against the mud-brick "box", confirming its association with the floor surface. (Pl. XX).

A preliminary examination of the pottery from the burnt floor surface in DD, which includes red plain and pattern-

burnished platters, holemouth and loop-handled painted jars and Abydos juglets, suggests a date for the building in the EBII period.

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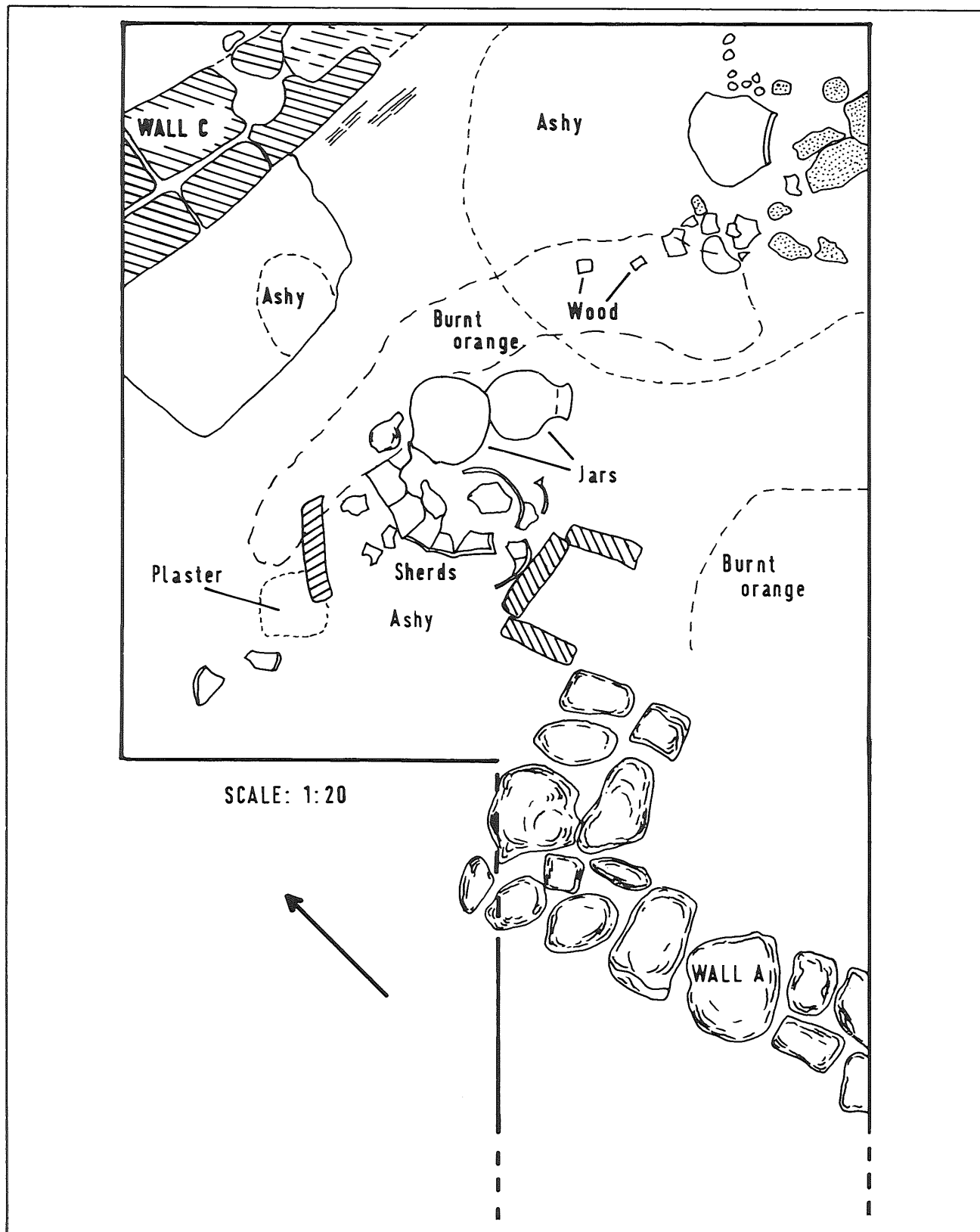


Fig. 2 Plan of Area DD