

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE THIRD SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT TELL JAWA, JORDAN (1992)

by
P. M. Michèle Daviau

Introduction

The third season of excavations at Tell Jawa on the central Jordanian Plateau took place from June 18-July 30, 1992 with the authorization and support of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and its Director, Dr. Safwan Tell. Ms. Nasmieh Rida Tawfiq Darwish served as Department representative and resource person. The 1992 season was part of a three-year research programme funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada¹ and sponsored by Wilfrid Laurier University. Student participants and staff provided additional funding.² Thirty-one people made up the field team along with several specialists and 13 local workers.³

Research Strategy

Excavation in 1989 and 1991 exposed several structures characteristic of an Iron Age walled town in central Transjordan. The features currently under investigation consist of the fortification system, a four-room style house and additional structures that probably served economic, political, religious and domestic purposes. The goals of

the 1992 season were 1) to investigate further the casemate wall system that surrounds the tell and determine its construction techniques (Fields B and E), 2) to explore the southern terrace where the casemate system is interrupted in order to identify the pillared building in that area (Field C-west), 3) to determine the nature of the two towers(?) that run parallel to the wall system on the west and southeast sides of the tell (Fields B and C-east) and their association with the wall system, 4) to identify the plan of the late Byzantine-early Umayyad building in Field D, and 5) to document and sample the rock-cut installations surrounding the tell (Fields M and L) that may have been in use with the Field D building.

The excavation strategy involved sampling of the wall system at selected points (Squares B53-43, C7, in C-west, and E55-56; Fig. 1) to expose details of construction and to clarify the arrangement of casemate rooms. In addition, new squares in two Fields (B:15-16, 25-26, on the west, and C:61-64, on the east) were opened to determine the relationship of the casemate walls to the towers identified in previous seasons (1989, 1991) (Daviau 1992a: 121).

1. Funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Grant # 410-92-0134) is provided for a three year period, April 1, 1992-April 1, 1995.

2. Generous support for the project also came from Mr. Naser Mukhar, of the Aladdin Restaurant, Waterloo, ON; Mr. Roger Witmer of Witmer Studio and Gallery, St. Jacobs, ON; and the Graduate Student Association of Wilfrid Laurier University.

3. Thanks are due to all members of the staff who made possible our successful field season. Planning and organization was under the direction of Dr. P. M. Michèle Daviau of Wilfrid Laurier Uni-

versity assisted by Mr. Robert Hutson, administrative assistant. Members of the 1992 field team were Dr. James R. Battenfield, Director of Survey and Documentation; Robert Force, Robert Hutson, and Robert Saunders, surveyors/draughtsmen; Margaret Judd, Brenda Silver, Julie Witmer, and Michael Wood, field supervisors; Janice Beaupr, Laurie Cowell, Shona Hunter, Karen Kane, Pat Kenny, Manal Natour, Fatma Marii, and Brooke Ridsdale, square supervisors; Laurie Cowell, ceramic technologist; Margaret Judd, object registrar; Brenda Silver, pottery registrar; Oystein LaBianca, osteologist; Shawn Thompson, lithics registrar; and Shona Hunter, photographer.

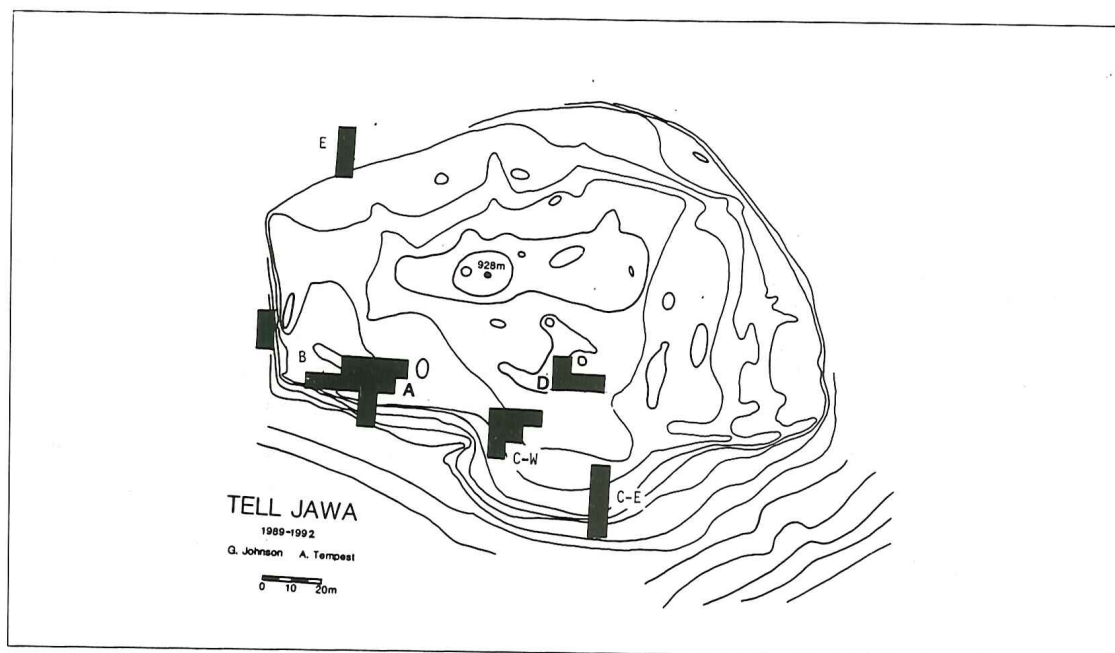


Fig. 1. Tell Jawa, topographic map with 1992 excavation areas.

In the vicinity of the tell, survey and documentation of rock cut installations begun in 1991 continued in three fields: Field M extending south of the tell and currently part of a modern housing development, Field L, on the east slope of the tell, and Field S on the west (see below). In the centre of the tell, two squares were located along the east side of the Umayyad building in Field D that would encompass its outer east wall.

Excavation Results

The Fortification System

Field B: The construction of the Iron Age casemate wall system that surrounded Tell Jawa consisted of two parallel walls built of medium to large size boulders in boulder-and-chink style (Daviau 1992b: 152). The outer wall, investigated in Fields B43 and B53 on the south, B25 and B26 on the west, and E55-56 on the north, consisted of roughly hewn limestone boulders that ranged in size from 0.75-1.00 x 0.50-0.75 m. In Field B (Daviau 1992b: Fig. 3), the outer wall formed the south side of Casemate Room 201 which had a plastered cob-

blestone floor. Room 201, partially exposed in 1991, appears to represent the third and latest use phase of the wall system. Its plastered floor ran up to one row of cobbles that was in position against the western cross-wall. This feature was part of a common building technique also in use along the outer casemate wall on the north side of the tell (see below, Field E).

Beyond the crosswall that formed the west end of Room 201, the inner face of the outer wall could be determined only with difficulty because of a complex rebuilding pattern and subsequent filling of the entire space between inner and outer walls with rock rubble (Pl. I, 1). The reason for the solid wall at this location appears to be its proximity to the southwest corner where the wall turned north. Although destroyed by a modern path, the corner was probably located 28 m west of the end of the casemate room. The overall thickness of the wall system remained constant at 5.25 m.

Several phases of construction were also apparent at the point where additional cross walls bound the rubble together and rested above large boulders of an earlier wall. Because of a change of alignment at the point

where a large basin was built into the wall, it appears that the inner wall was rebuilt during the final phase of occupation. Much of the wall system subsequently collapsed and stones filled any space between the inner and outer walls, making it difficult to determine which stones constituted a deliberate rubble core and which were just part of the rock fall from the superstructure. In the debris immediately above this stone fill was a ninth century scarab (Fig. 2) of Tuthmosis III (personal communications, N. B. Millet and J. Weinstein).⁴ Such a date for the scarab corresponds well with that suggested for the Iron II pottery from Fields A and B (Daviau 1991) and the wall system itself.

To the north of Room 201 only a limited area that consisted of debris layers above a hard-packed surface was exposed. Ceramic remains from these layers were almost exclusively Iron Age II ware forms. The surface itself probably represents the latest occupation on the tell. Evidence for an attack on the town consisted of two metal points that can be associated with more than 20 points recovered in neighbouring squares in previous seasons (Herr *et al.* 1991: 171).

Because the southwest corner of the fortification wall was destroyed by bulldozer

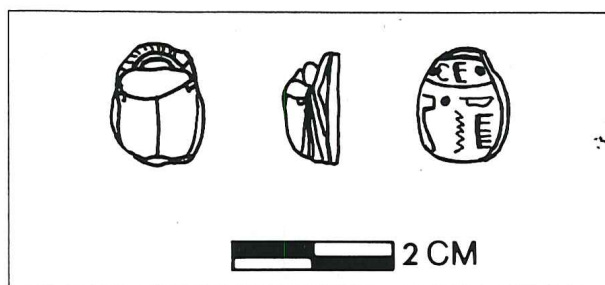


Fig. 2. Scarab of Tuthmosis III. XXX dynasty style, Men-kheper-re, chosen of Amun.

activity and is now a modern path, it is impossible to trace the complete casemate system on the surface. However, immediately north of the path, a single West Wall is visible at ground level (Fig. 3). This outer wall was only partially excavated in Squares B25-26 and its inner face is poorly defined. The maximum thickness of the West Wall is ca. 2.00 m, comparable to the outer wall in Fields B and E. Within the confines of the area excavated to date, no evidence exists for an inner wall.

The construction techniques of the West Wall seem to reflect two building phases; the outer face consisted of two rows of large, semi-hewn boulders (0.75-1.00 m) and chink stones sealed with mortar (B26:9); the inner face was built of medium-sized limestone boulders (0.50-0.75 m) in boulder-and-chink style without mortar. In the case of the West Wall, its construction features may have been the result of its association with the Western Tower.

The tower was built of extra-large boulders (ca. 1.25 x 0.80 m) similar in size to those in the outer casemate walls in Fields B and E. At present, the tower is preserved to a height of ca. 2.35 m and consists of at least four courses and five rows. The outer faces of the tower on the west and south sides may have been plastered in modern times obscuring details of ancient construction. Whether or not this plaster is modern will only be known after analysis of samples.⁵ Ancient mortar filled depressions up to 0.08 m deep and 0.15 m across around chink stones and sealed the outer surface of the boulders themselves on the tower's east face.

Between the Western Tower and the

4. The author would like to thank Ms. Carolyn Routledge who first identified Men-kheper-re in the cartouche, also Dr. Nicholas B. Millet, chief curator of the Egyptian Department, Royal Ontario Museum for his reading of the epithet (personal communication, October 30, 1992), and Dr.

James Weinstein of Ithaca, New York who suggested a ninth century date (personal communication, November 21, 1992).

5. Dr. Ronald Hancock of the University of Toronto is currently testing plaster samples from both the Western and Southeastern towers.

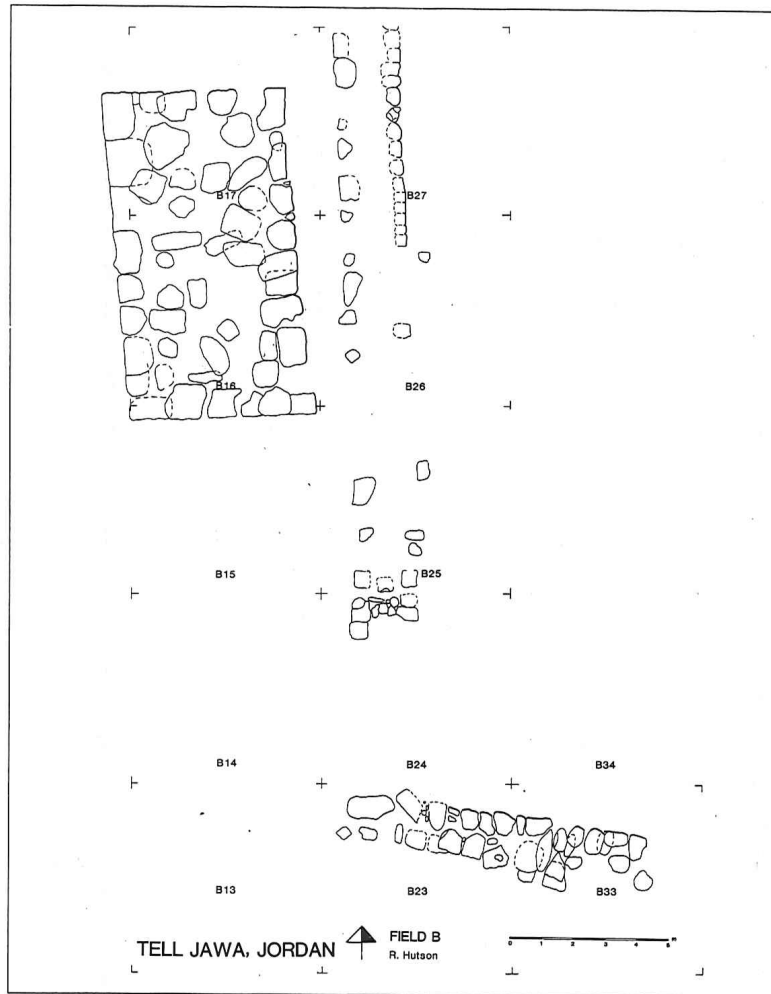


Fig. 3. Field B, Squares 16-26, Wall and Tower.

West Wall was a space ca. 1.50 m wide that appears to extend the full length of the tower, although it was only excavated to a distance of 3.0 m. The tower and wall lean away from each other 10° to the east and to the west. Both of these features may have been founded on a consolidation layer that consisted of soil and debris with medium-sized stones since bedrock has not yet been reached. A series of superimposed consolidation layers that conceal the lowest courses of the West Wall consist of hard-packed soil and pebbles covered by an accumulation of soft, chalky plaster (ca. 0.10 m thick). Immediately above were chunks of hard, rough plaster in a soil and rock layer that appear to be a surface or the remains of construction debris from activities related to building the West Wall and plastering its

upper courses. Also within this Debris Layer was an ash deposit which sealed against the tower and contained one olive pit, smashed cooking pot sherds, burnt plaster, bones and a broken metal point. Adjacent to the ash lens was one ashlar stone that measured 0.59 x 0.43 x 0.40 m and was coated with plaster on one long, dressed side. The plaster may represent the original finishing of the stones that had been part of the superstructure of the tower which collapsed when the town went out of use. Also within this Debris Layer were 28 metal points. Five more iron points were recovered from rock fall that filled the space between the wall and the tower. By contrast with this large number of artifacts, only 82 pottery sherds were present in these loci

(from 92 baskets of soil).

Field E: Both an inner and outer casemate wall were preserved along the north side of the tell (Fig. 4). Along the face of the outer wall was a single row of medium-sized cobbles (0.10-0.20 m) that probably protected the foundation stones from erosion. Above these cobbles, the North Wall remains standing 2.28 m. By the end of the 1992 season, an additional 1.64 m of wall foundation was exposed. At this point, the base of the outer North Wall had not yet been reached.

One layer of plaster sealed against the line of cobbles while two superimposed plaster layers covered them and sealed directly against the North Wall. These layers were 0.08-0.20 m thick and extended to a maximum of 1.14 m down the slope north of the wall. The outer edges of the plaster

layers appear to have been destroyed by subsequent rock fall that accumulated after the wall system went out of use. The north edge of the Rock Fall was parallel to the North Wall suggesting that the stones had formed part of the superstructure of the wall itself instead of the usual mudbrick wall for which there is as yet no evidence.

The most distinctive feature of the outer wall identified in Field E was a series of offsets and insets along its outer face (Pl. I, 2). At the northwest corner of the tell, one section of the wall was offset possibly to strengthen and re-align the wall where it turned to the east. The angle formed is 120° and the offset just out 0.40 m from the wall line. This offset extended east for 20.80 m where a complementary inset of 0.35 m, with an angle of 90° , is located in E56. A second offset of 0.46 m, with an angle of

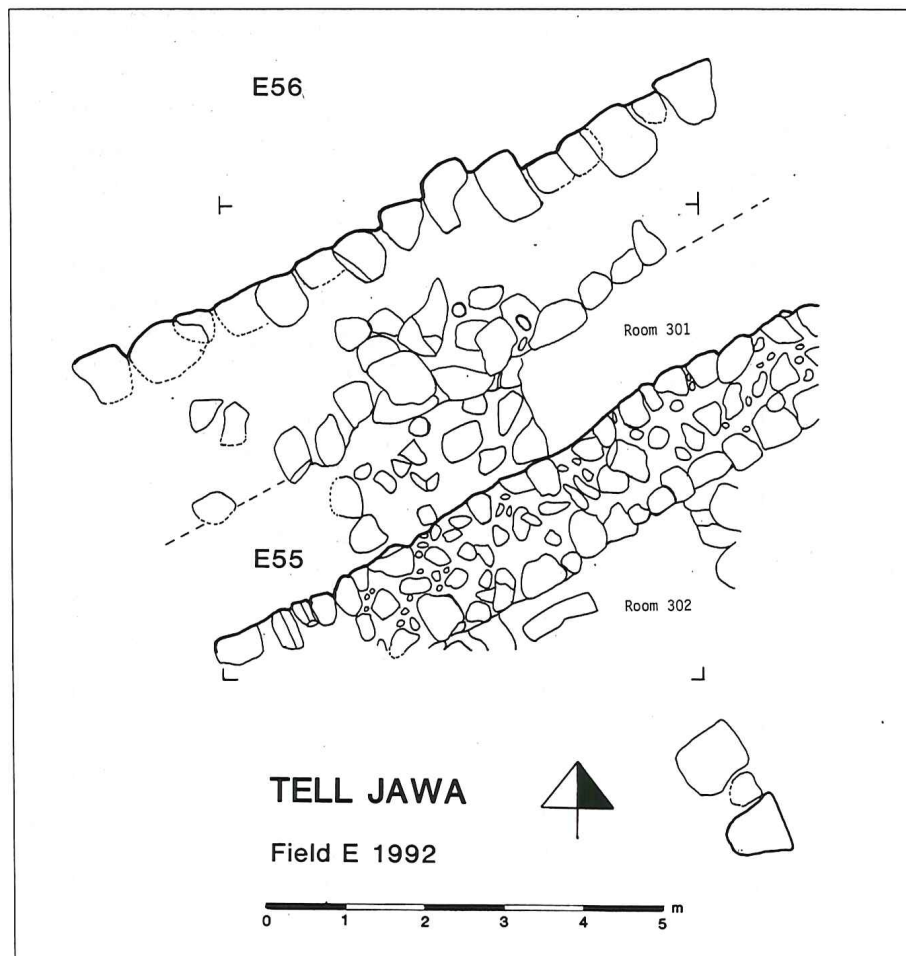


Fig. 4. Field E, Squares 55-56, casemate wall system.

120°, was identified 12.65 m further east (E76). Although the outer wall is exposed for a total length of ca. 140 m along the north slope of the tell, no other offset-inset formations have been identified to date; all other alignments seem to have been gently curved.

The date of offset-inset walls at Ammonite sites is not yet fixed. At Hazor, the offset-inset wall is dated to the ninth century B.C. and the casemate wall to the earlier tenth century B.C. stratum. The style of this wall with its 0.30 m depth of each inset and 10 m lengths for each section (Ben-Tor 1992: 258) are a close parallel for the construction of the Tell Jawa wall.⁶

The inner wall of the casemate system was well preserved on both its north and south faces and averaged 1.5 m thick. Room 301, between the walls, was ca. 1.3 m wide, comparable to Room 201 on the south. The full length of a typical casemate room along this north side of the wall system has not yet been determined and the function of the casemate room is also unknown. In E55, the west part of Room 301 was paved with flat stones (L. 17) while the eastern part had a beaten earth floor (L. 16). The Debris Layer immediately above these surfaces contained 11 sheep/goat bone fragments, 2 grinders, 1 stopper, charcoal bits and ceramic sherds. Unfortunately, such an assemblage is not definitive of room function (see Daviau 1993). Earlier debris layers underneath the beaten earth floor contained 14 sheep/goat bones, 1 cow bone, 1 burnt cobble stone, charcoal flakes and ceramic sherds. Especially noticeable is the presence of large sherds from pithoi, strongly suggesting storage activities. However, the earliest possible floor level was not reached this season. All of these surfaces were covered with a series of soil and rock layers, probably collapse from the su-

perstructure. Topsoil and rocks from the modern wall covered the ancient remains.

Immediately inside the fortification system were the remains of Iron Age occupation (Room 302). The earliest surface uncovered in 1992 consisted of a charcoal stained earth layer with burnt orange areas. Smashed in place on this surface was a deep accumulation of ceramic vessels (Fig. 5) including bowls, storejars and a krater with holes in the base (Fig. 5: 5). Associated with this pottery were bone fragments, 1 starfish bead, 1 millstone, 9 grinders, 1 unbaked loom weight, 1 projectile point, 2 large saddle querns, 1 pestle, and 1 polisher. The food preparation tools among these artifacts were located against the south face of the inner casemate wall and continued into the east and south balks surrounding the smashed pottery. Broken red slipped vessels (Fig. 5: 3) were concentrated in front of a possible bench/shelf; this feature consisted of two large superimposed stones. The uppermost stone, which was completely exposed, was trapezoidal in shape and measured 0.94 x 0.19-0.30 x 0.12 m. On this bench/shelf was the lower part of a pillar figurine, a miniature mortar, an upper loaf-shaped millstone fragment reused as a mortar, and a small chert pounder. Probably fallen from the east end of the bench was a large sandstone saddle quern. A second group of flat rectangular stones, located in the northwest corner suggest the extension of the bench/shelf along the inner casemate wall that may have served as an outer building wall. Additional debris that accumulated above these artifacts contained charcoal bits, 18 flints and flint debitage, bone fragments, and Iron Age II pottery.

During the 1992 season, the bottom of the inner casemate wall was not exposed in Room 302. A series of superimposed loci that consisted of debris layers and rock fall

6. Dever suggests a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the outer wall at Gezer of the mid

tenth century B.C. and a period of use during the ninth-eighth centuries (1993: 49).

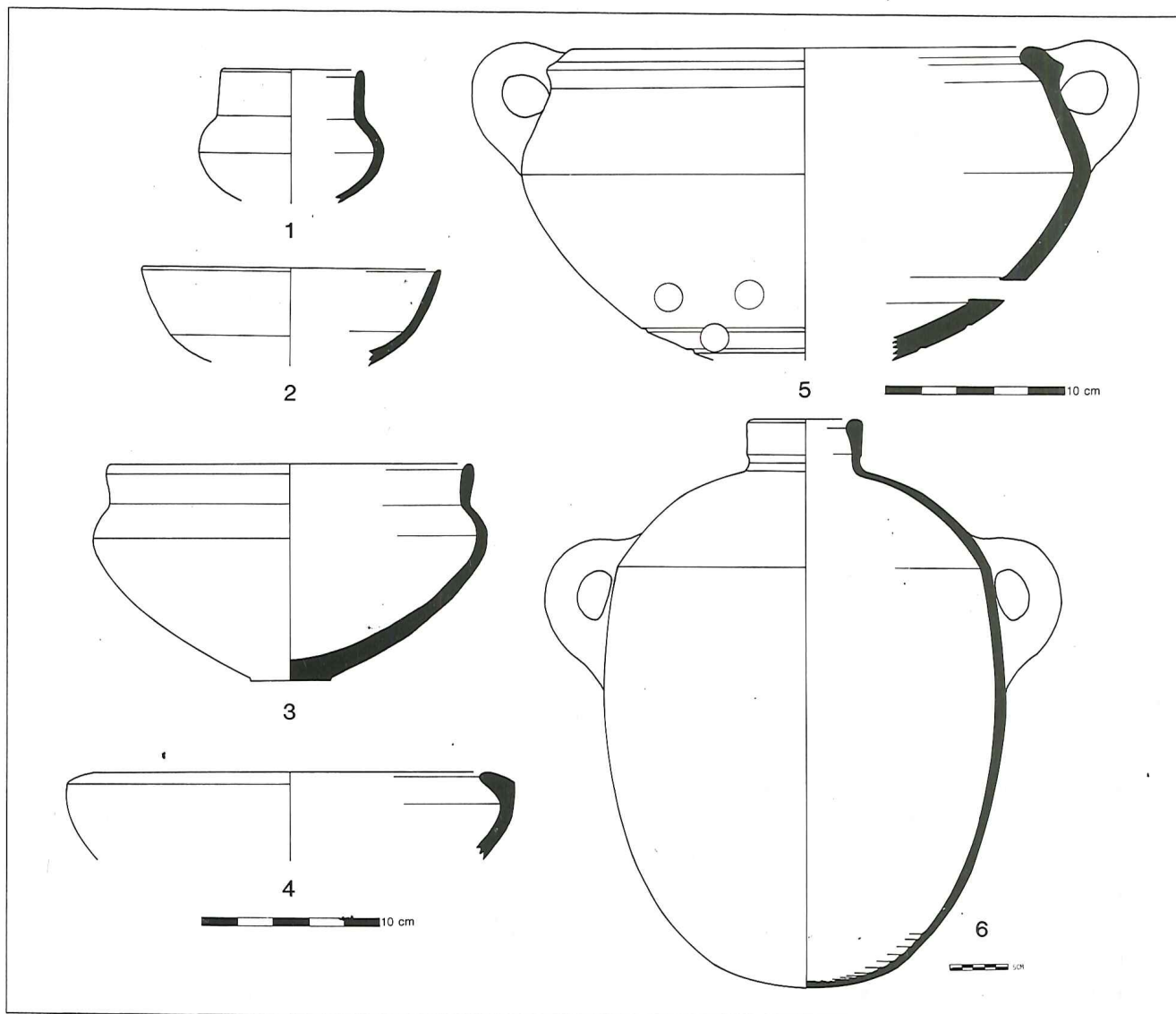


Fig. 5. Ceramic vessels from Room 302, Floor 21; 1=E55.59.1, small deep bowl, buff; 2=E55.53.4, simple rim bowl; 3=E55.56.1, straight neck bowl, red slip and burnished; 4=E55.53.3, inverted rim bowl; 5=E55.51.1, krater with holes, buff; 6=E55.52.2, storejar with handles.

accumulated above the occupational remains. These were sealed by soil and rocks from modern wall building activities.

Field C: On the south side of the tell, the casemate system ran east from Field B for a total length of 63 m before it was interrupted in Square C7 (Fig. 6) by a group of buildings constructed of very large boulders (1.00-2.00 m; see below). At this point, the inner (north) wall of casemate Room 801 appears to have had two construction phases, with the lower course of stones forming a square corner while its upper courses

curved gradually to the south.

Outside Room 801 on the north was a Debris Layer that contained a layer of medium size pebbles and 838 ceramic sherds. This layer may have been an Iron Age midden since Iron Age II sherds were dominant with only small amounts of Late Byzantine and Early Islamic ware forms.

Immediately east of Room 801 was a boulder and chink wall (C17:21) that formed the back side of broad Room 802 at the west end of a pillared building partially excavated in 1991 (Fig. 6). In the debris layers that filled the room, the ceramic re-

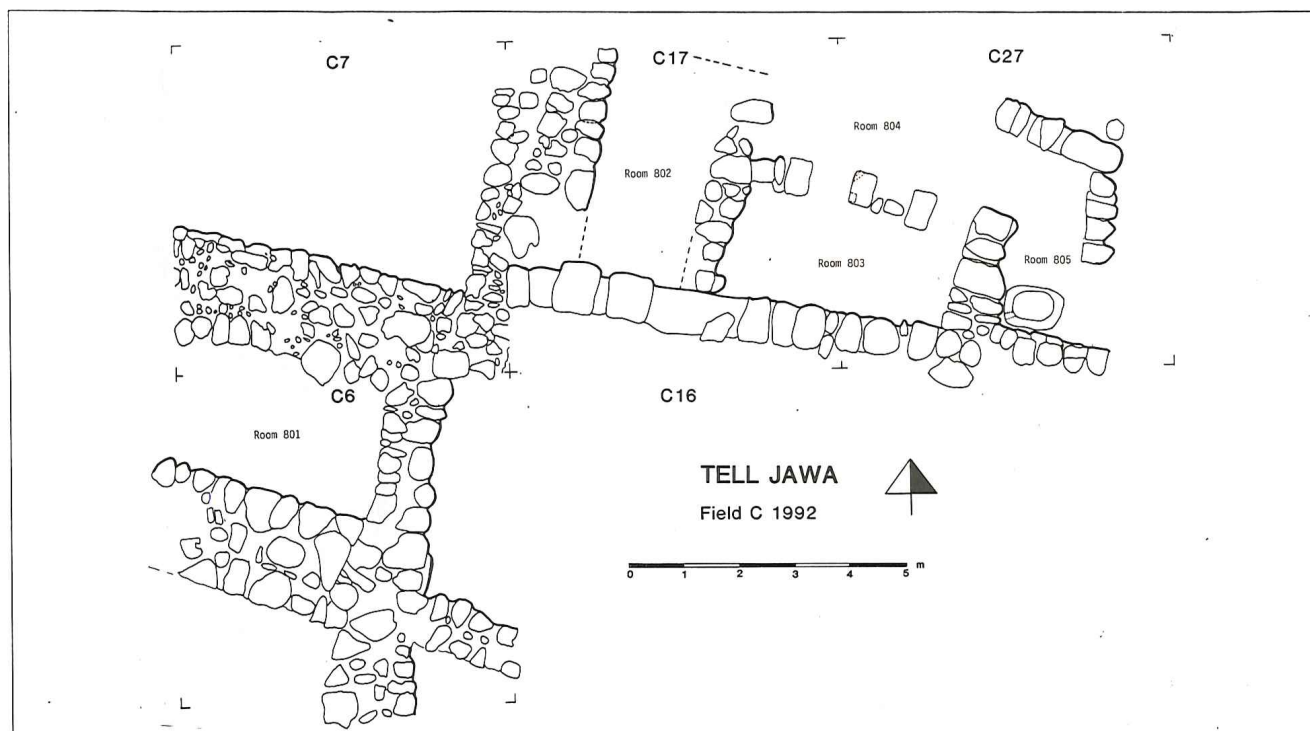


Fig. 6. Field C-west, casemate wall, house with pillars and stone basin.

mains consisted of Iron Age II ware forms, especially red slipped bowls, plates, jugs and pithos sherds. Objects include 1 spindle whorl, 3 pounders and 1 grinder. A certain amount of contamination from modern disturbance was evident in the presence of Late Byzantine and Umayyad sherds.

During the 1992 season, a third pillar, in line with those uncovered in 1991, was identified. This Pillar (C27:19) stands 1.43 m high and measures 0.76 x 0.47 m; it shared a partition wall with the pillar immediately to the west. Pillar 19 formed the western side of a second entrance into Room 803. Further information was acquired concerning the Middle pillar that measured 0.57 x 0.43 x 1.35+ m and tapered slightly at the top where a hole was cut through the northwest corner. A second hole on the southwest was not completed. The function of these holes has not been determined although it may relate to the role that the pillars served as door frames (see Daviau 1992b: 152) as well as supports for the ceiling. This interpretation seems rea-

sonable since no partition wall was found between these two pillars. The same pattern of two pillars joined by a low partition wall was repeated on the west side of the central doorway where the westernmost pillar was built into a wall.

Near the southeast corner of Room 803 was a boulder mortar that may have been associated with a stone cut basin reused as a mortar with 1 hand mortar, grinders, 2 upper loaf-shaped millstones, and some bone fragments. Ceramic vessels smashed in place include red slipped and black burnished bowls, a cooking pot and a krater (Daviau 1992b: 152-153). Originally, this room was paved with flagstones, a construction technique employed in comparable four-room houses excavated at other Palestinian sites (Chambon 1984: Pl. 15; Braemer 1982; and see Geraty *et al.* 1991).

To the north of the pillared dividing wall was the central room of the house (804). Due to limits of excavation this season, the floor levels for this room were not reached. A series of fill layers and col-

lapsed wall stones covered the earliest levels.

At the east end of the house there was a small entrance room (805; 3.5 x 1.5 m) that contained a stone cut basin inside the doorway (Fig. 6). The basin (Pl. II, 1) had external measurements of 1.00 x 0.75 m and an internal depth of 0.35 m (the total height was 0.45 m). In the southwest corner of the basin there was a drain, 0.18 m below the rim, with a 0.13 m diameter that tapered toward the exterior. The bottom of the drain hole was 0.04 m above the floor of the basin which was covered with sediment which is currently undergoing analysis.

The function of this basin is unclear even though the floor level in Room 805 has been reached. The basin was supported by medium-sized cobble stones (ca. 0.15-0.25 m) that sat on Surface 34, marked by the presence of several flagstones. This surface was disturbed by rock collapse that probably fell from the super-structure of the adjoining walls. Scattered through the debris were numerous sherds of Iron Age II pithoi, red slipped and black burnished bowls, jugs, 1 basalt pestle, a chert pounder, an iron point and a limestone roof roller. The plan of this structure and the installa-

tions and artifacts recovered to date suggest a four-room style house (Chambon 1974: Pl. 15; Braemer 1982: Fig. 26). Complete exposure of this structure is planned for the 1993 season.

The Southeast Tower(?): Located on the southeast slope of the tell, downslope from the line of the casemate system, was a structure that consists of an impressive wall supported by a buttress along its south face. The wall consisted of two rows of boulders that range in size from large to very large (0.75-1.00+ m). These boulders were hewn on the outer faces of the structure and coated with lime plaster that filled in the gaps between boulders at selected locations and served as mortar to bond chink-stones together (Fig. 7). The plaster extended west away from the face of the wall bonding with a glaucis-like layer that contained small cobbles (0.06-0.12 m) and pottery sherds. Where it was relatively undisturbed, the glaucis sealed a series of superimposed loose soil and rock layers that contained chunks of plaster. At the base of the wall was a second group of boulders that extended beyond the west face of the structure and probably served as the lowest course of the wall. Un-

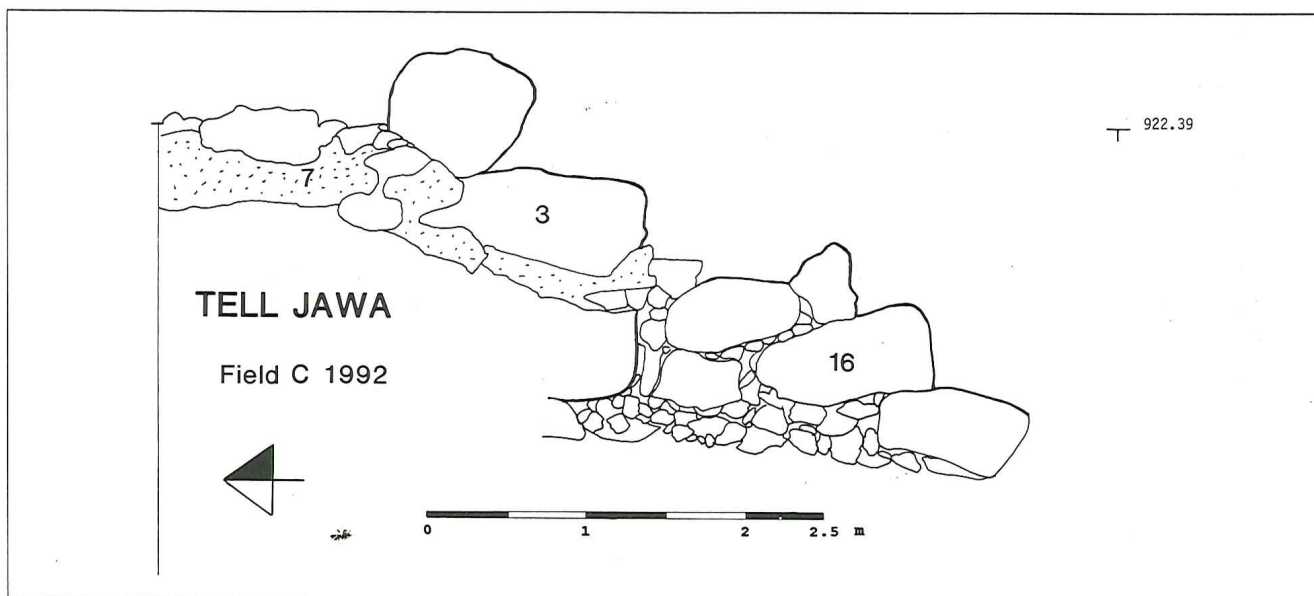


Fig. 7. Tower in Field C-east showing Wall 3, Buttress 16, and Plaster 7.

derlying these boulders a layer of cobbles ran under the wall and under the first course of the buttress. The wall itself measured 1.72-1.84 m in width and 15.3 m in length. The preserved height on the west side is ca. 1.40 m.

Leaning against the south face of the wall was a buttress formed of one row of extra large boulders or two-to-three rows of large stones preserved to a height of 1.78 m (usually 3 courses). Plaster sealed the entire lower course of boulders along its founding level, filling gaps between the stones to a depth of 0.08 m. The buttress itself extended along the face of the wall covering the total length of 15.3 m. At its base, the buttress ranged in thickness from 1.69 to 1.74 m, and at the top from 1.30-1.41 m. The direction of slope for the outer face of the buttress is 26°. No evidence exists to show that the buttress bonded with the wall. Instead, one row of chink stones appears to separate the wall from the buttress, suggesting that the wall was constructed first and the battered buttress was added subsequently.⁷ At the southwest corner of the buttress, its lowest course of stone rested on a layer of flagstones and several superimposed layers of cobbles along with one extra large boulder that extended beyond the outer edge of the buttress itself. No evidence of a superstructure has been preserved.

In a probe along the south face of the buttress, a similar sequence of construction techniques is visible. The earliest construction element was a single course of flagstones sealed by a Soil Layer and a subsequent layer of cobble stones that ran under the lowest course of boulders. A small (ca. 0.23 m) ash pit that may have been the remains of a cooking area was located south of the founding level of the buttress. Imme-

diately below the ash pit was a Debris Layer that contained bones and pottery sherds suggestive of a living area. Ceramic evidence from the wall and from the founding level of the buttress dates both structures to the Iron Age II.

From the northwest corner of the tower, a single wall formed of medium to large sized boulders (0.50-1.00 m) ran north. It was sealed on its west face by plaster, demonstrating that it was contemporary with the east-west wall and buttress. The north-south wall consisted of three rows of boulders and was strengthened on the west side by one additional row. The earliest hard-packed earth surface that sealed against the entire length of this wall contained pottery that was entirely Iron Age II.

Although only a small amount of plaster was visible on the west face of the north-south wall, random chunks of plaster were associated with a series of superimposed Debris Layers that consisted of tumbled cobbles ranging in size from 0.06-0.25 m along with scattered small boulders and loose soil. This debris may represent rock fall from the superstructure. Due to the limits of excavation, the founding level of the north-south wall was not uncovered this season.

A crosswall associated with a pit that produced pottery from various periods, predominantly Byzantine, ran east-west on the crest of the south slope of the tell (Field C-east). Because the Crest Wall does not share the typical Iron Age II construction features and ran over these earlier features, it appears to have been a field wall, probably constructed during the Byzantine period reuse of the tell. Further north, several features were visible on the surface, although

7. For a comparable construction, see the 3-zone wall at tell el-Heṣi, Field III where the innermost wall (zone A) was supported by a buttress with a sloping outer face (zone B). In this case, the walls

and buttress were of mudbrick and supported a massive glacis on the north side of the tell (Rose and Toombs 1978: 132-133).

their association with the wall and buttress system is not yet known.

The Late Byzantine—Early Islamic Building

During the 1991 season, excavation began in Field D (Fig. 8) of a building partially preserved above ground. Several rooms (601, 602, 603) along the south side of a Late Byzantine-Early Islamic structure yielded Umayyad pottery and glass, lamps, jar stoppers and a lump of sulphur (Daviau 1992a: 127). Extension of the excavated area during the 1992 season opened additional rooms (604, 605, 606) on the east side of the building.

A series of hard packed surfaces in Room 604 sealed against the south wall and a stone threshold of Room 603. Six vaulting stones (Pl. II, 2), measuring ca. 0.65-1.0 m

in length, ca. 0.40-0.60 m in width, and ca. 0.22-0.34 m thick, had collapsed onto the debris that filled Room 604. These six stones would have had a total width of 2.78 m, suggesting that there were several additional stones needed to vault the entire length of the room (2.95 m). Two such stones that measured 0.40 and 0.45 m respectively were recovered from Room 603.

A series of fill loci that accumulated above the floor of the room underneath the vaulting stones were covered by rock fall from the walls of Room 604 and contained pottery sherds from various periods, especially Iron Age II, Byzantine and Umayyad.

A major wall extended north from the threshold separating the eastern rooms of the building from the central room or court. At least two perpendicular walls abut this wall and run east to the outer wall forming

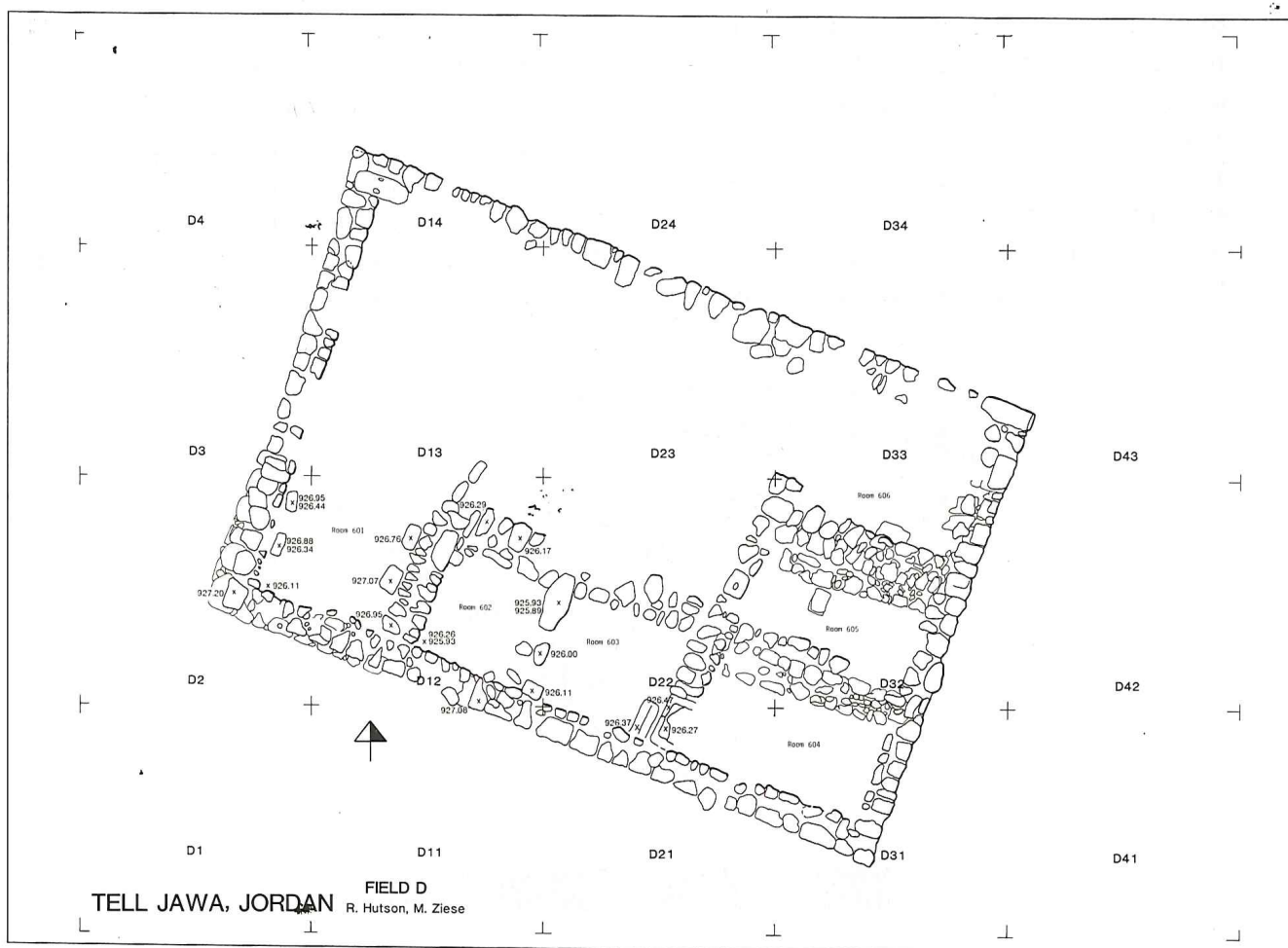


Fig. 8. Field D, showing rooms excavated during 1991 and 1992.

Rooms 605 and 606. The southern wall of Room 605 was two-row boulder-and-chink style with medium sized (0.50-0.75 m) limestone boulders and rectangular chink stones and cobbles (0.06-0.25 m). The north wall of Room 605 appears to have had two phases of construction in that a third row of stones appears to have been added to an original wall that was two rows thick. Room 605 appears to be the smallest of the three rooms on the east side of the building, measuring 4.00+ x 2.59 m. Inside this room, against the north wall, were two superimposed hewn boulders (each ca. 0.62 x 0.44 x 0.23 m) that were sealed together by mortar. Against the east side of the boulders was a cooking area with an Ash Pit ca. 0.98 x 0.50 x 0.24 cm deep, that contained numerous lumps of charcoal, ash and compacted soil. Within the pit itself, there were few ceramic sherds (67 sherds in 25 baskets of debris). By contrast, in the Cooking Area, immediately above the Pit, there were 253 sherds from 49 baskets. The contents of this cooking area consisted of ash, bones, glass fragments, charred cooking pots, charcoal, and painted Umayyad pottery.

Above the Cooking Area and immediately east of the hewn stones was a column

base (0.42 x 0.35 x 0.37 m) decorated on three sides with grooves. The diameter of the column support was 0.32 m. The original position and function of this column base are unclear.

Only half of Room 606 was excavated this season. Two possible arch supports, one on the east (0.80 x 0.45 x 0.53 m high) and another on the west (0.60 x 0.38 x 0.22 m) were positioned against the south wall. Because this room was only partially excavated, the matching pair of arch supports along the north wall have not been exposed. Two flat, hewn stones formed a lower course of the outer wall on its western face inside Room 606, at the point where the outer wall was only one row thick. Sitting on these stones were the remains of several late Umayyad lamps and numerous stone tesserae.

It appears that in modern times, these two eastern rooms (605, 606) were filled with *terra rossa* soil that covered and probably destroyed a white mosaic floor. Almost 500 individual tesserae (ca. 2.0-3.0 cm²), with mortar still adhering, have been recovered but cannot be reconstituted to form a floor. A small number of coloured tesserae and glass tesserae (ca. 0.6 cm²)



Fig. 9. Field D, ostracon in early Arabic script.

have also been recovered.

The most outstanding find of the season was an ostrakon (Reg. No. 359, Fig. 9). The sherd is triangular in shape, and probably came from an undecorated jug. The text was incised with a sharp implement and appears to be a prayer for forgiveness, "In the name of God, the merciful, forgive O God, Aḥmed bin Muqlis".⁸ The writing may be Kufic script, but further discussion must await special analysis.

Survey and Documentation

Off the tell proper, survey work was conducted in Field M to complete work begun in 1991 (Daviau 1992b: 155). J. Battentfield prepared section drawings of caves, cisterns, a winepress, grinding mills and quarries. The relationship of individual in-

stallations to other features, and clues to their use in antiquity, remains undetermined.

Selective excavation was carried out by the survey team in an attempt to determine the periods of use of certain installations in Field M. Additional installations were recorded in Field S, south and west of the tell and a limestone crushing area was recorded in Field L immediately east of the tell. Many of these features are now on private property as the construction of a housing development continues. Further survey is planned for 1994.

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8. The text was read in the field by Nasmieh Rida Tawfig Darwish of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Further suggestions were made by

Professor Birnbaum, Department of Middle East and Islamic Studies, University of Toronto (personal communication, Feb. 15, 1993).

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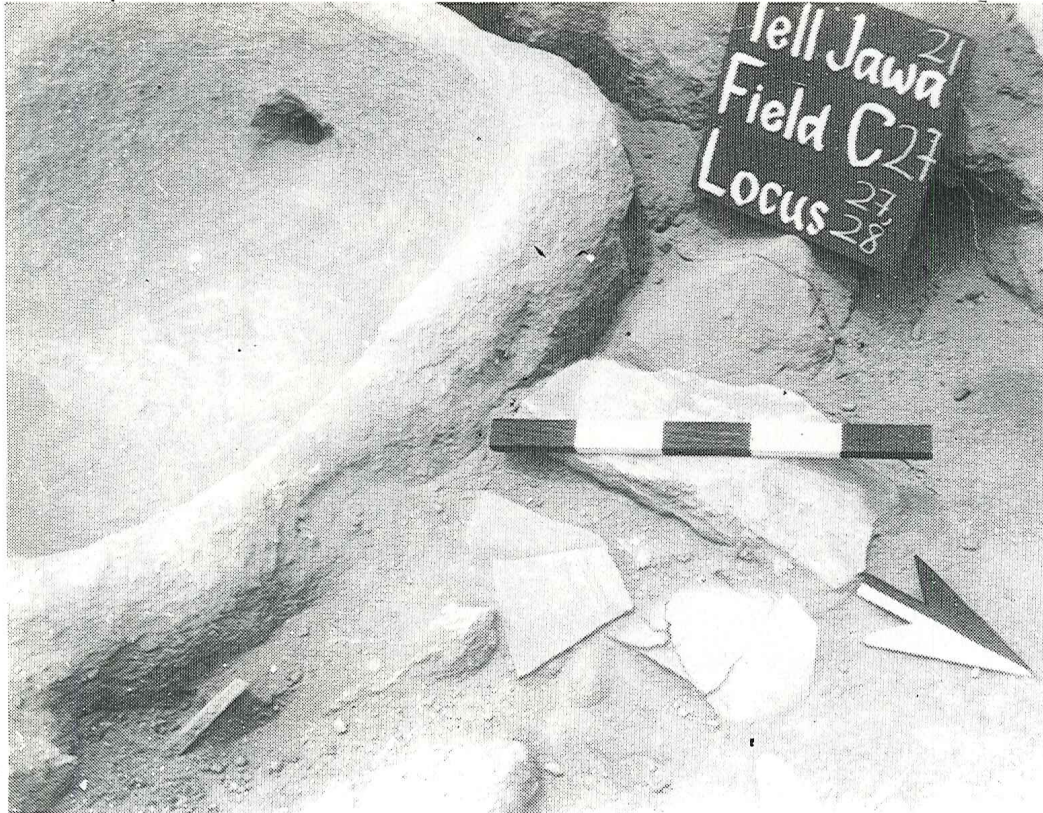
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1. Field B, Squares 53-43, casemate wall system.



2. Inset-offset wall visible in Field E.



1. Field C, stone basin in Room 805.



2. Field D, Square 31, vaulting stones in Room 604.