

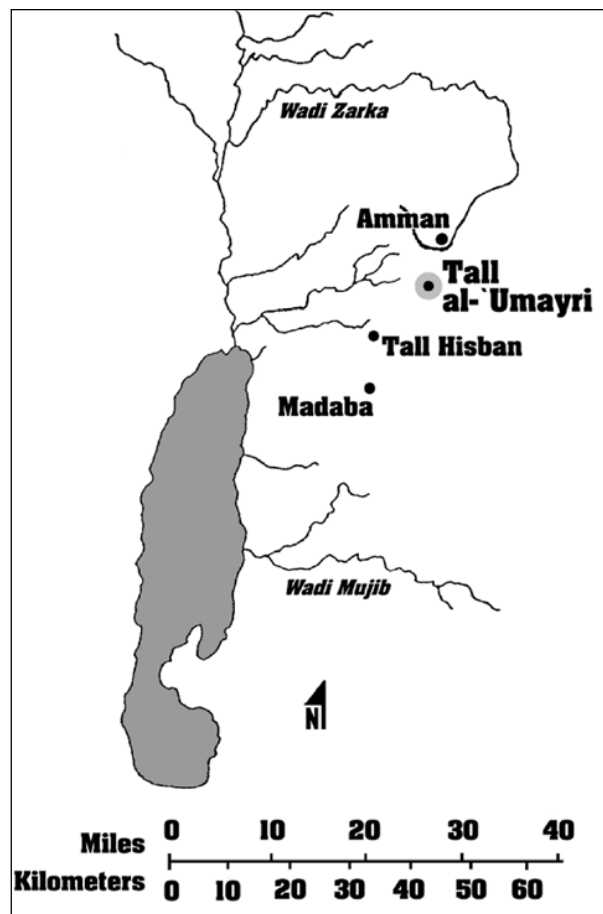
MADABA PLAINS PROJECT: EXCAVATIONS AT TALL AL-‘UMAYRĪ, 2006

Larry G. Herr and Douglas R. Clark

Introduction

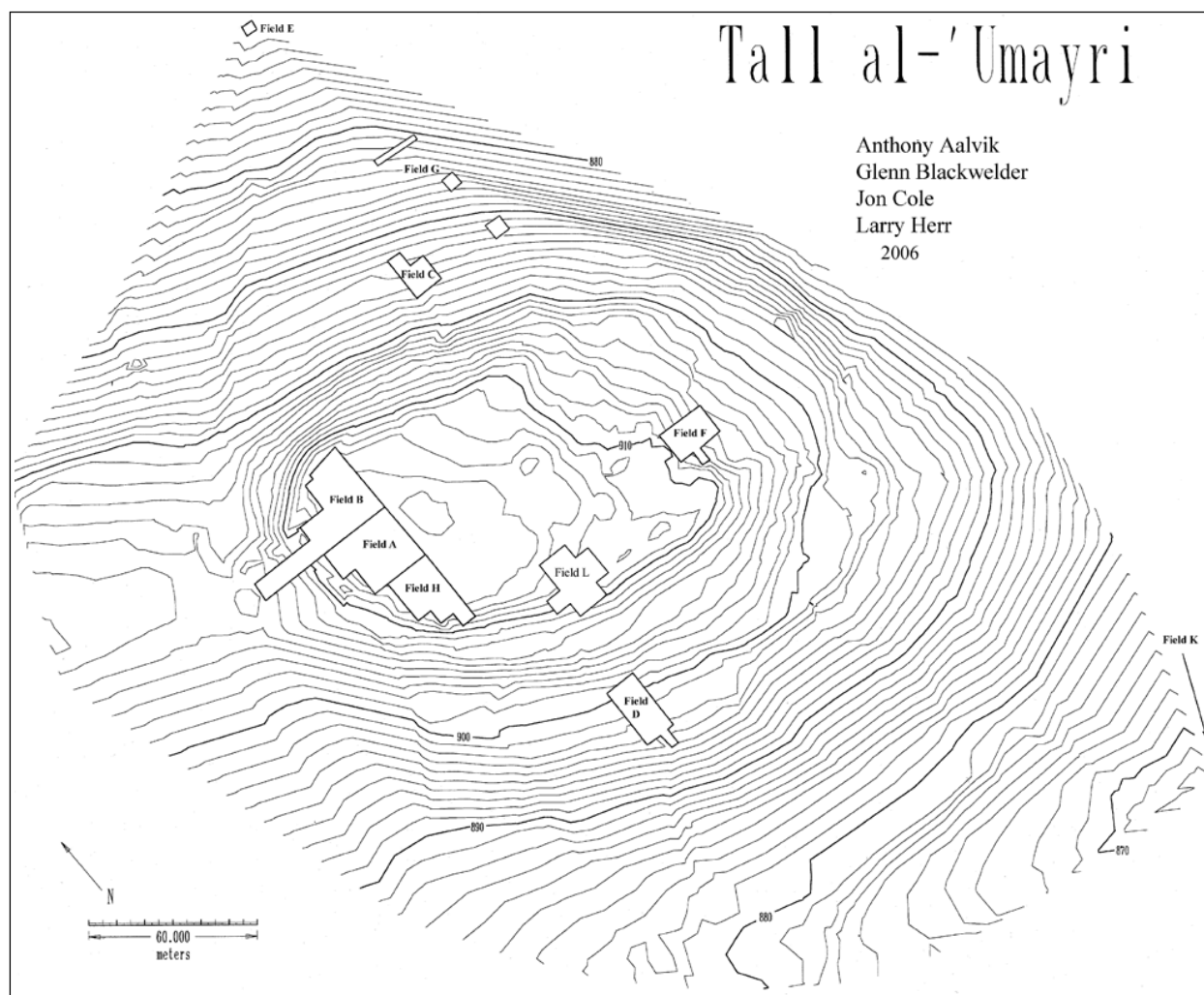
An eleventh season of excavation by the Madaba Plains Project at Tall al-‘Umayri occurred between June 28 and August 2, 2006. It was sponsored by La Sierra University in consortium with Andrews University School of Architecture (Michigan, USA), Canadian University College (Alberta, Canada), Mount Royal College (Alberta, Canada), Pacific Union College (California, USA), and Walla Walla University (Washington State, USA). Full reports have already been published for the first five seasons (first season [1984]: Geraty *et al.*, eds. 1989; second season [1987]: Herr *et al.*, eds. 1991; third season [1989]: Herr *et al.*, eds. 1997; fourth season [1992]: Herr *et al.*, eds. 2000; fifth season [1994]: Herr *et al.*, eds. 2002). Preliminary reports have also been published (first season [1984]: Geraty 1985; Geraty *et al.* 1986, 1987; second season [1987]: Geraty *et al.* 1988, 1989, 1990; third season [1989]: Younker *et al.* 1990; Herr *et al.* 1991; LaBianca *et al.* 1995; fourth season [1992]: Younker *et al.* 1993; Herr *et al.* 1994; fifth season [1994]: Younker *et al.* 1996; Herr *et al.* 1996; sixth season [1996]: Younker *et al.* 1997; Herr *et al.* 1997; seventh season [1998]: Herr *et al.* 1999, 2000; eighth season [2000]: Herr, Clark and Trenchard 2001, 2002; ninth season [2002]: Herr and Clark 2003, 2004; and tenth season [2004]: Herr and Clark 2005a, 2005b).

In the 2006 season, a team of 27 Jordanians and 62 foreigners (15 of whom were present only during the first or second half) participated in the fieldwork and camp activities of the interdisciplinary project at ‘Umayri, located about 10km south of Amman’s Seventh Circle on the Queen Alia Airport Highway at the turnoff for Amman National Park (Fig. 1).



1. Map of the central plateau of Jordan with the major sites of the Madaba Plains Project.

In the first season (1984) four fields of excavation were opened (Fields A, B, C, and D) (Fig. 2). During the second season (1987) three of the four were expanded (Fields A, B, and D), one was completed to bedrock (Field C), and two new fields were opened (Fields E and F). In the third season (1989) one field expanded (Field A), three fields reopened old squares and expanded slightly (Fields B, D, and F), another re-



2. Tall al-'Umayri: Topographic map through the 2006 season with the location of the fields of excavation.

duced excavation from two squares to one (Field E), and a new field was opened on the northern slope as a series of three soundings (Field G). In the fourth season (1992) three fields deepened previously opened squares (Fields A, D, and F), one deepened existing squares while expanding by one square (Field B), and two Fields were discontinued (Fields E and G). During the fifth season (1994) one field deepened (Field A), another expanded and deepened (Field B), and one was added (Field H). In the sixth season (1996) three fields expanded (Fields A, B, and H). The tomb excavations on the southeastern slopes of the tall, already begun under the hinterland survey in 1994, became part of the 'Umayri excavations as Field K. During the seventh season (1998) two fields deepened their squares (Fields A and B), two expanded (Fields H and K), and a

new field was opened on the southern lip of the site (Field L). In the eighth season (2000) we deepened three fields (Fields A, B, and H) and expanded and deepened in two fields (Fields K and L). During the ninth season (2002) Field A was not worked, while Field B expanded to the north and continued in two other squares; Field H limited itself to the large plastered and cobbled courtyard near the northern extent of the field (next to Field A); in Field L we exposed more of the Hellenistic structure by opening two new squares and reopening one other. During the tenth season (2004) Field A deepened squares begun during the 1980s; Field B deepened three earlier squares and expanded to the north to intersect the northern edge of the site; Field H deepened earlier squares in its northern part; and Field L deepened three previous

squares and opened one new square.

This season (**Figs. 2-3**) Field A concentrated on removing balks and small areas between walls to deepen the western part of the field to late Iron I levels; one square was opened at the southwest corner of the field to examine the possible existence of a gateway. In Field B excavation concentrated on uncovering the floors of the northern extent of the remarkably preserved LB building; no new squares were opened and most of the surfaces and a monumental doorway were discovered. Excavation in Field H concentrated on bringing the southern part of the open-air sanctuary down to late Iron I levels; probes

were also sunk to test for earlier surfaces, but Iron I domestic remains were found instead. Field L, on the southern lip of the site, expanded to the east and north with three new squares (see **Fig. 21**), digging through a thick layer of topsoil to uncover the eastern limits of the Hellenistic building.

FIELD A: THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

Robert D. Bates (La Sierra University)

Field A is located at the central western edge of the site (**Figs. 2-3**). Nine previous seasons in Field A (the field was unexcavated in 2002) had

						8K20	8K21	8K22	B
						8K10	8K11	8K12	
						8K00	8K01	8K02	
				7J98	7J99	7K90	7K91	7K92	A
7J84	7J85	7J86	7J87	7J88	7J89	7K80	7K81	7K82	
				7J78	7J79	7K70	7K71	7K72	
				7J68	7J69	7K60	7K61	6K62	
					7J59	7K50	7K51	7K52	
					7J49	7K40	7K41	7K42	
						7K30	7K31	7K32	
						7K20	7K21	7K22	
							7K11	7K12	
								7K02	

↑ 0 3m

3. Tall al-'Umayri: Schematic grid of squares for Fields A, B, and H.

discovered a large administrative complex from the end of the Iron 2 period extending into the Persian period. Domestic dwellings, perhaps belonging to the officials who worked in the administrative complex, were built to the north and south of the complex. To the north and west, outside the area of this complex, were multiple phases of Iron 1 remains, including very significant structures from the earliest decades of that period. These were found primarily in Field B to the north, but also somewhat in the north-western parts of Field A. This season there was a lot of work in balk removal and the excavation of very small areas between walls. We thus reopened parts of Squares 7J59, 7J69, 7J78, 7J79, 7K40, 7K50, and 7K60, and began Square 7J49. Many of the operations were very small. Some even straddled two sides of an intervening balk. Square Supervisors were often called upon to jump from one square to the next.

The goal of our work in Field A this season was to reach the early Iron 1 period in the area south of Field B and inside the perimeter wall and to examine Iron 1 remains that suggest the presence of a city gate in the southwest corner of the field just north of Field H in Squares 7J49 and 7K40.

Field Phase 13 (LB/Early Iron 1 Transition)

In the 1998 season we had discovered that the north-south perimeter wall curved into the city in Square 7J59 in an east-west orientation (Herr *et al.* 1999: 102). This season we traced the wall as it continued into the city in Squares 7K50 and 7K40 where it seems to have been robbed by the late Iron 2 administrative basement structures. As early as the 2002 season we had wondered if a large parallel east-west wall about four meters to the south could be the southern side of an entrance way into the city. We could discern no gate tower structures, but posited a simple entrance between two parallel walls. We further suggested that a large north-south wall at the western edge of Field H, whose founding level had not yet been reached, could be the continuation of the perimeter wall around the southern part of the site.

This season we opened a new square, 7J49, to ascertain if the possible southern wall of the entrance, or “gate,” extended farther west and to see if there were any monumental features as-

sociated with the exterior of this structure. It became abundantly clear almost immediately that the new square was outside the town. During balk removal between Square 7J49 and 7K40 the monumental end of the southern wall of the “gate” was discovered, complete with one stone measuring 2.4 x 1.2 x 1m (Fig. 4). In Square 7K40, we discovered the tops of what may be small piers in the gate area, dividing it into very shallow chambers. But the exact form of the “gate” needs to be clarified during the next season (Fig. 5).

Field Phase 12 (Iron 1)

The earliest phase above the LB/early Iron 1 transitional Phase 13 consisted of several wall fragments with earth and rubble deposits beneath the square structure of Phase 11 discovered in previous season. So far, we have not been able to make coherent sense of the fragments.

Field Phase 11 (Iron 1)

Above the wall fragments of Phase 12 were the stone walls and surfaces of a cobbled room with a doorway leading north. These remains were found in the 2004 season (Herr and Clark 2005a: 248). This season, more of the remains were cleared, but they consisted mainly of wall fragments disturbed by the walls of Phase 10. The walls were oriented parallel to the east-west portion of the perimeter wall after it had turned into the city and become part of the gate. They must have belonged to a multi-roomed house tucked into the corner made by the bend of the perimeter wall. Unfortunately, parts of it were destroyed by later Iron 1 and Iron 2 structures.

It seems that the gate continued in use during



4. Tall al-'Umayri: Photo of the western terminus of the southern wall of the gateway complex.



5. Tall al-'Umayri: Plan of Field A during the transitional LB/Iron 1 period, Field Phase 13. Some of the walls in the gate area and to its north are late Iron 1 or Iron 2.

this period, but more excavation is needed to be positive.

Field Phase 10 (Late Iron 1)

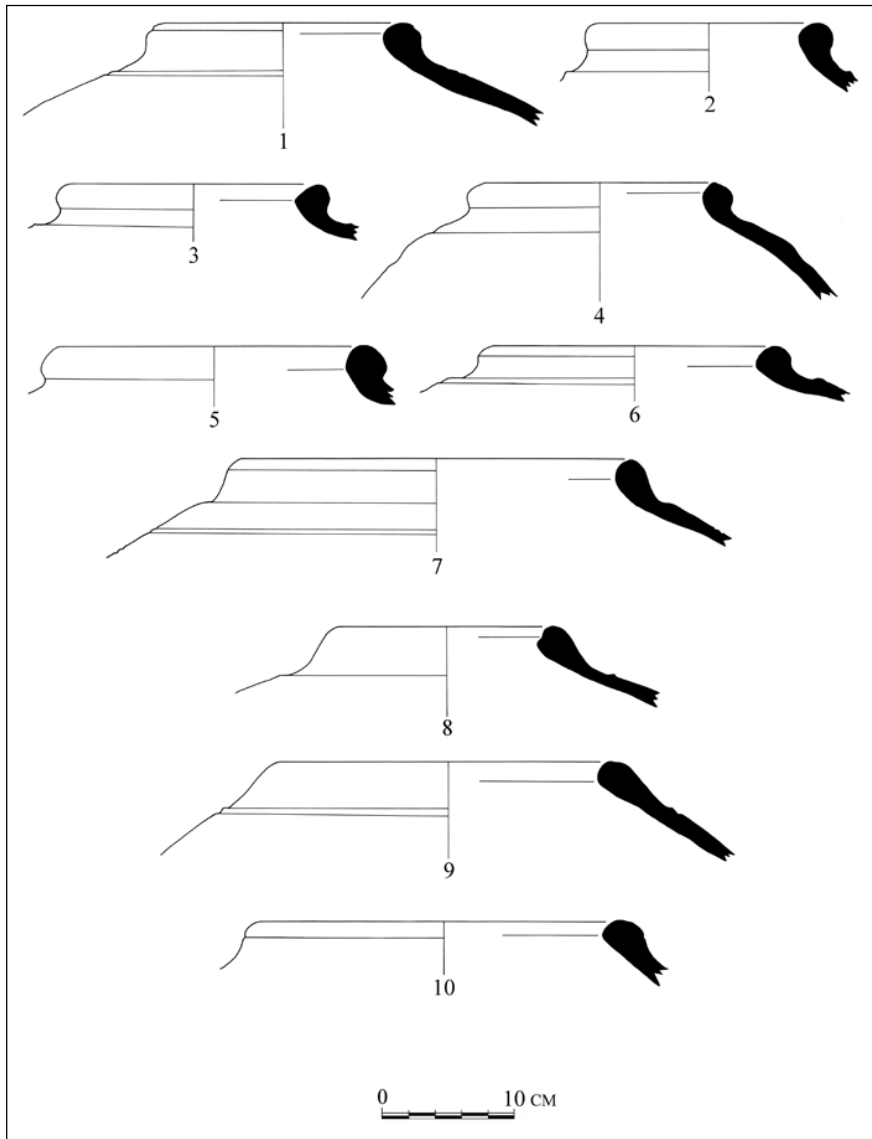
Walls from earlier phases continued. Especially clear was the perimeter wall and the gate may have been re-used. Otherwise, this phase is represented by fill layers. The site seems to have abated in importance during the last part of the Iron 1 period and was not very significant during the 10th century or Iron 2A (Field Phase 9). Nothing new from this phase was found this season.

Field Phase 8B (Iron 2)

Although we began to find evidence in 2004 for this phase, this season we established for the first time clear stratigraphic evidence for the mid-

dle Iron 2 period. Previously, we had collected only potsherds. This time, in Square 7K40, over a meter of compact reddish earth was excavated which contained reconstructible pottery dating most likely to the ninth and eighth centuries (**Figs. 6-11**). None of the layers was a surface. Everything seems to have been a secondary fill deposit which, because of the reconstructible pottery, originated from one location. This pottery has, heretofore, been very rare at the site and no other *in situ* deposit has been found in all eleven seasons. It seems a number of the earlier walls were reused and that the earth layers filled a room constructed into the Iron 1 gate.

Whereas the square room with two pillars discovered in earlier seasons has been ascribed to Iron 1 in prior reports (Herr *et al.* 1999: 103), it seems that, after excavation of the walls, it



6. Tall al-'Umayri: Pottery from Field A, Field Phase 8B, dating most likely to the middle parts of the Iron 2 period.

was actually built about this time. Each one of the walls contained several Iron 2 sherds. This is more than can be accounted for by contamination. Thus, the structure has been moved to this phase.

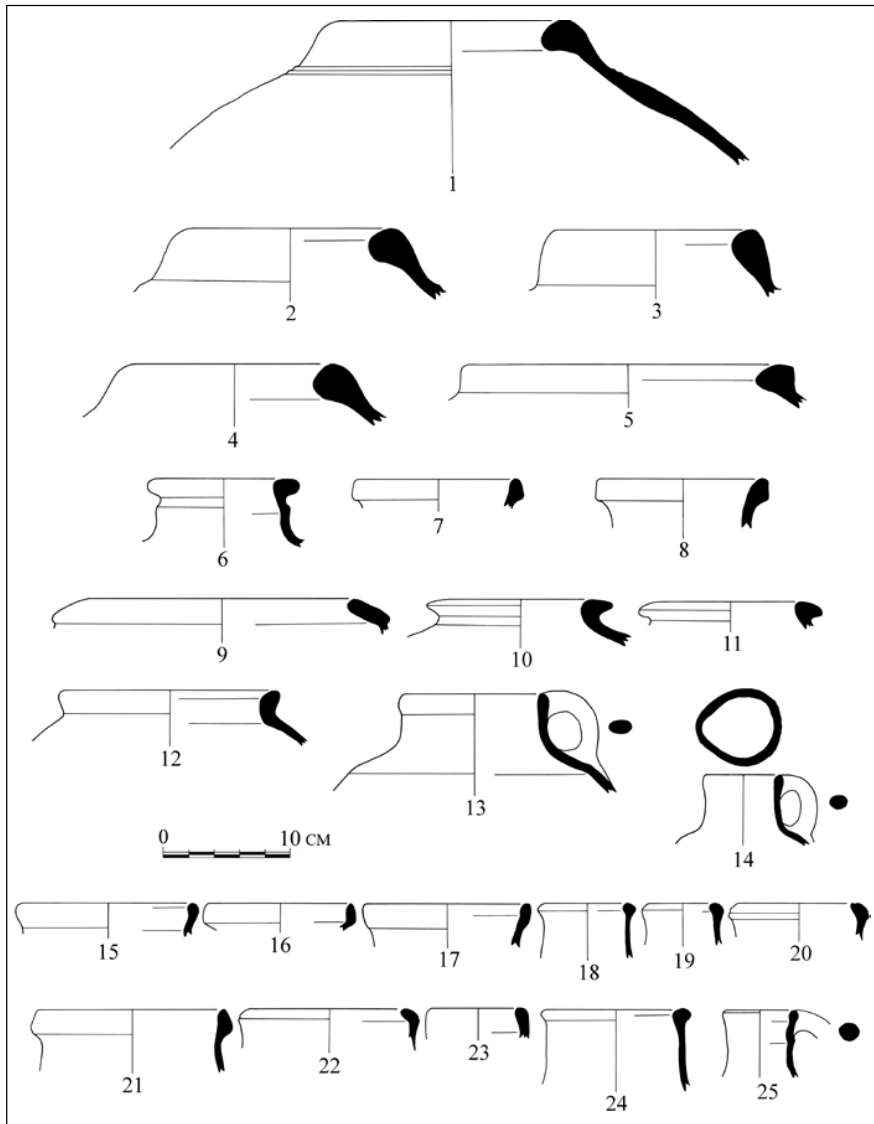
Field Phase 7B (Late Iron 2/Persian)

This phase was a complicated mix of remodeled old walls, stone tumble, and fill layers excavated primarily in balks that were being dismantled and in tight corners between walls and balks. Most of the layers were deposited outside the administrative structure of this phase farther east in Field A. A possible bin and another small enclosed area may suggest a small informal domestic dwelling immediately

to the west of the administrative complex, but it was difficult in such small excavation areas to be confident that we were excavating a surface. One layer that included plaster and ran up to stones that seemed to outline a bin was probably a surface. However, the surface could not be traced over a large enough area to suggest a coherent room.

Field Phases 3 and 2 (Classical and Islamic Ages)

These were topsoil and sub-topsoil layers in the balks that we excavated. They were made up of older debris that was reworked during agricultural activities on the mound during Roman to Ottoman times.



7. Tall al-'Umayri: Pottery from Field A, Field Phase 8B, dating most likely to the middle parts of the Iron 2 period.

FIELD B: THE WESTERN DEFENSE SYSTEM AND NORTHWESTERN DOMESTIC AREA
 Kent V. Bramlett (University of Toronto)

Field B is located at the northwestern corner of the site (Figs. 2-3) and has been excavated during all our field seasons. In earlier seasons it probed the western fortification system and uncovered the two well-preserved houses from the LB/Iron 1 transitional period. The primary objective for excavation in Field B this season involved the discovery of the northern limits of the Late Bronze Age palatial building, its surfaces, and entrance in the northeastern corner. With this in mind, we traced the surface in Squares 8K11, 8K12, 8K21, and 8K22. We also did touch-up work in Squares 8K01 and 8K02.

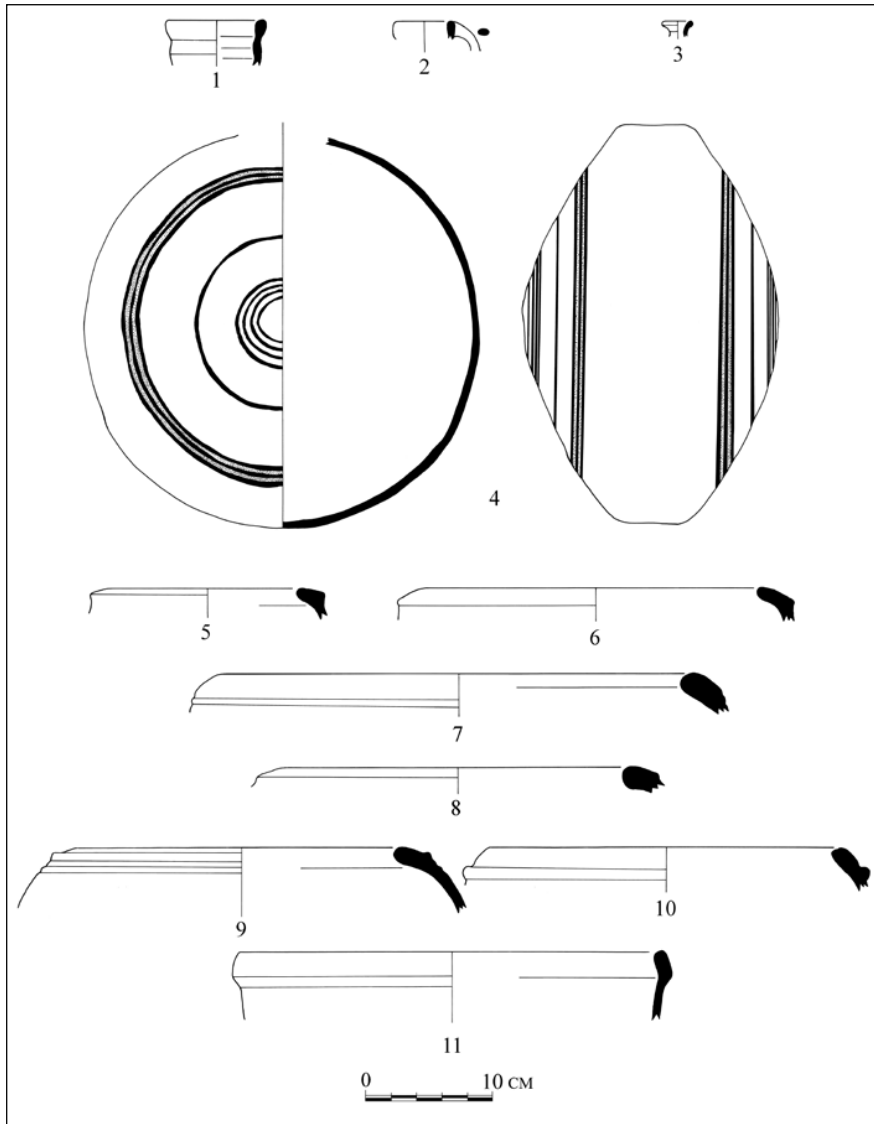
Fieldwork in 2006 did not alter our understanding of Field B phasing deriving from the most recent past seasons. Our work this year involved primarily remains from the Late Bronze Age.

Field Phase 15 (Middle Bronze 2C)

The probable top of the MB 2C rampart was located on the northern side of the site, but was not excavated.

Field Phase 14 (Late Bronze 2)

By far the majority of the season's work in Field B was located within the Late Bronze Age monumental building, especially in Rooms 3 and 4 (Figs. 12-14). Two teams worked in both rooms. The plan of the building is now com-



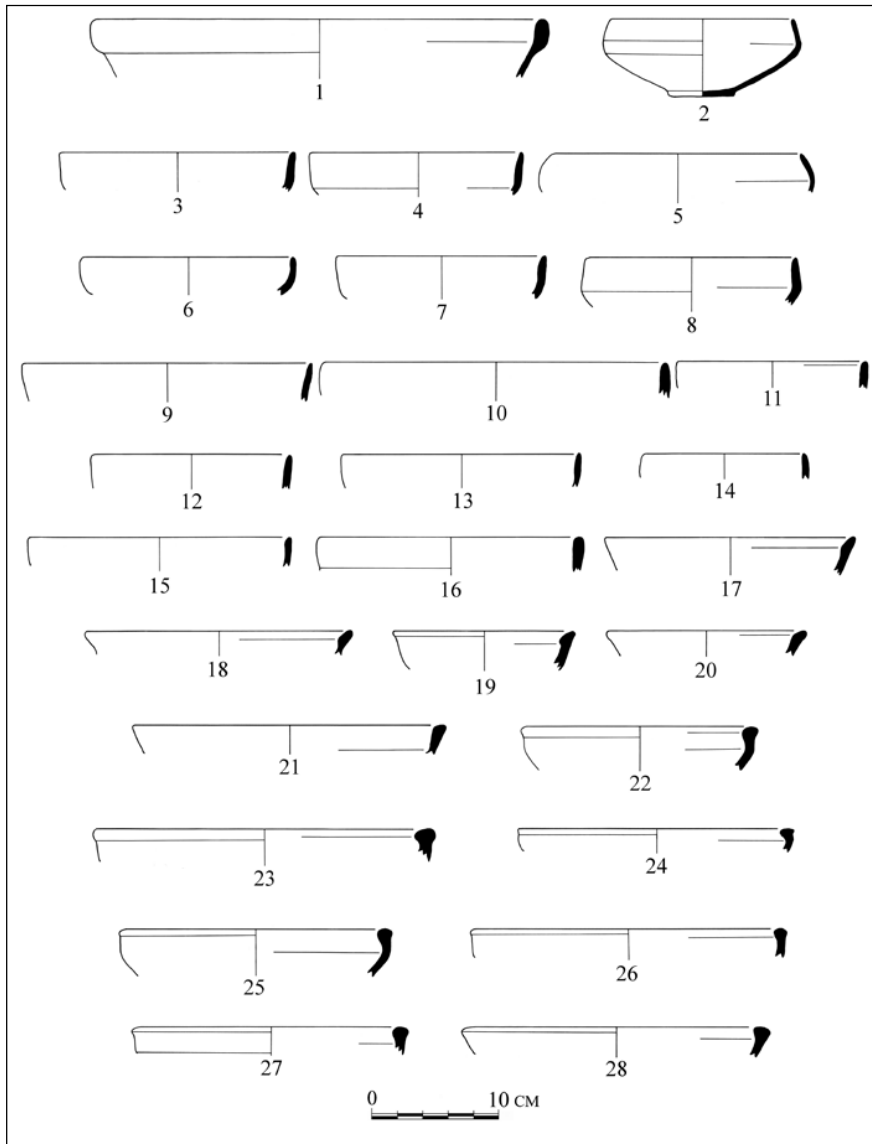
8. Tall al-'Umayri: Pottery from Field A, Field Phase 8B, dating most likely to the middle parts of the Iron 2 period.

plete. Remaining work will focus on exposure of the floor(s) and a few loose ends in corners here and there.

The LBA destruction layer filling Room 3 was sealed against all the walls of the room as well as a stone bench along the eastern wall and a mud-brick altar in front of the cultic niche (**Fig. 15**). The thickness of the destruction debris ranged between .75 and 1.4m and corresponded to the preserved height of the mud plaster preserved on the eastern and southern walls. It was also the height of the mud-brick wall between Rooms 3 and 5. The destruction layer consisted mostly of fallen mud brick from the upper wall levels mixed with numerous ashy and burned inclusions. The tumbled mud bricks interlaced vertically throughout

and provided certainty that the entire destruction layer derived from a single destruction event. The southern third of Room 3 showed the most evidence of burning and, on or just above the floor, contained several burned beams, especially near the altar and between the altar and the southern wall of Room 3. Samples of the beams were taken for species identification, 14C dating, and dendro-chronology analysis. The pottery in the destruction level derived primarily from the mud bricks and dated best to the LB 2A to early LB 2B periods (**Figs. 16-18**).

Directly beneath the destruction layer was the latest surface of Room 3. It was exposed across the entire room. A lower surface was found in probes along the eastern wall and in

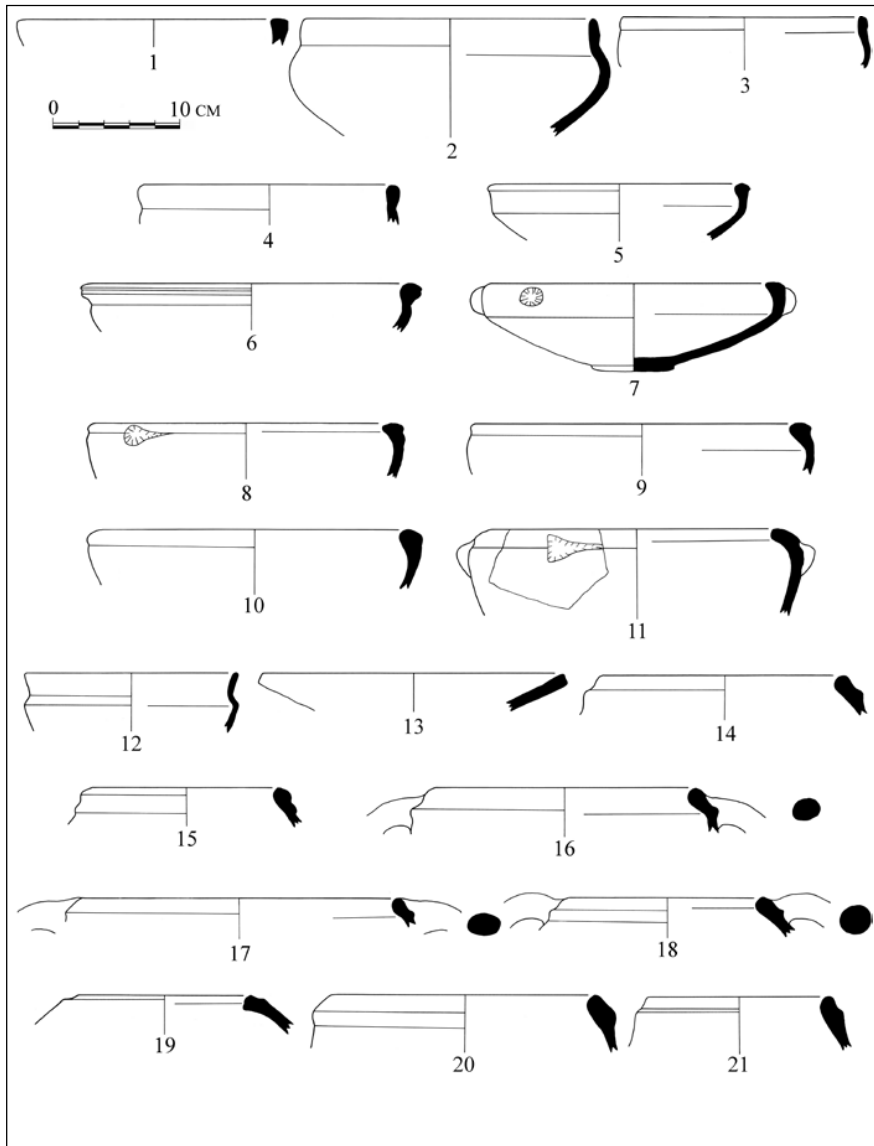


9. Tall al-'Umayri: Pottery from Field A, Field Phase 8B, dating most likely to the middle parts of the Iron 2 period.

a meter strip along the northern wall. The upper floor was made of compacted earth and nari with some plaster and bricky material. The surface sealed against the mud-brick and plaster altar, which was constructed of stacked mud-bricks of the same dimension as those found in the destruction layer and measured .56 x .38-.39 x .10-.12m. The two lowest bricks were coated with the same thin plaster with which the mud brick wall and the cultic niche were coated on its eastern and western faces. The upper part of the altar was coated with a thick white plaster similar to that used on the floor of the cultic niche and around the standing stones. The altar flared out along its northern and southern edges. The flares, though partially broken and incomplete,

appeared to be constructed mostly of plaster and increased the length dimension to .69m. The preserved height of the altar ranged from .55m to a maximum of .63m above the surface. A small table of flat stones, possibly analogous to stone libation tables, was placed in front of the altar and was not plastered.

A series of stacked flat stones lay against the eastern wall of Room 3. They formed a probable bench 2.3m long, .48-.54m wide, and .18-.20m above the floor. Several of the stones were plastered against the wall. Similar benches are commonly found in LBA temples and cultic rooms. The northern exterior wall of the building was further clarified. It was exposed to a height of five courses and was confirmed to measure 1.5-

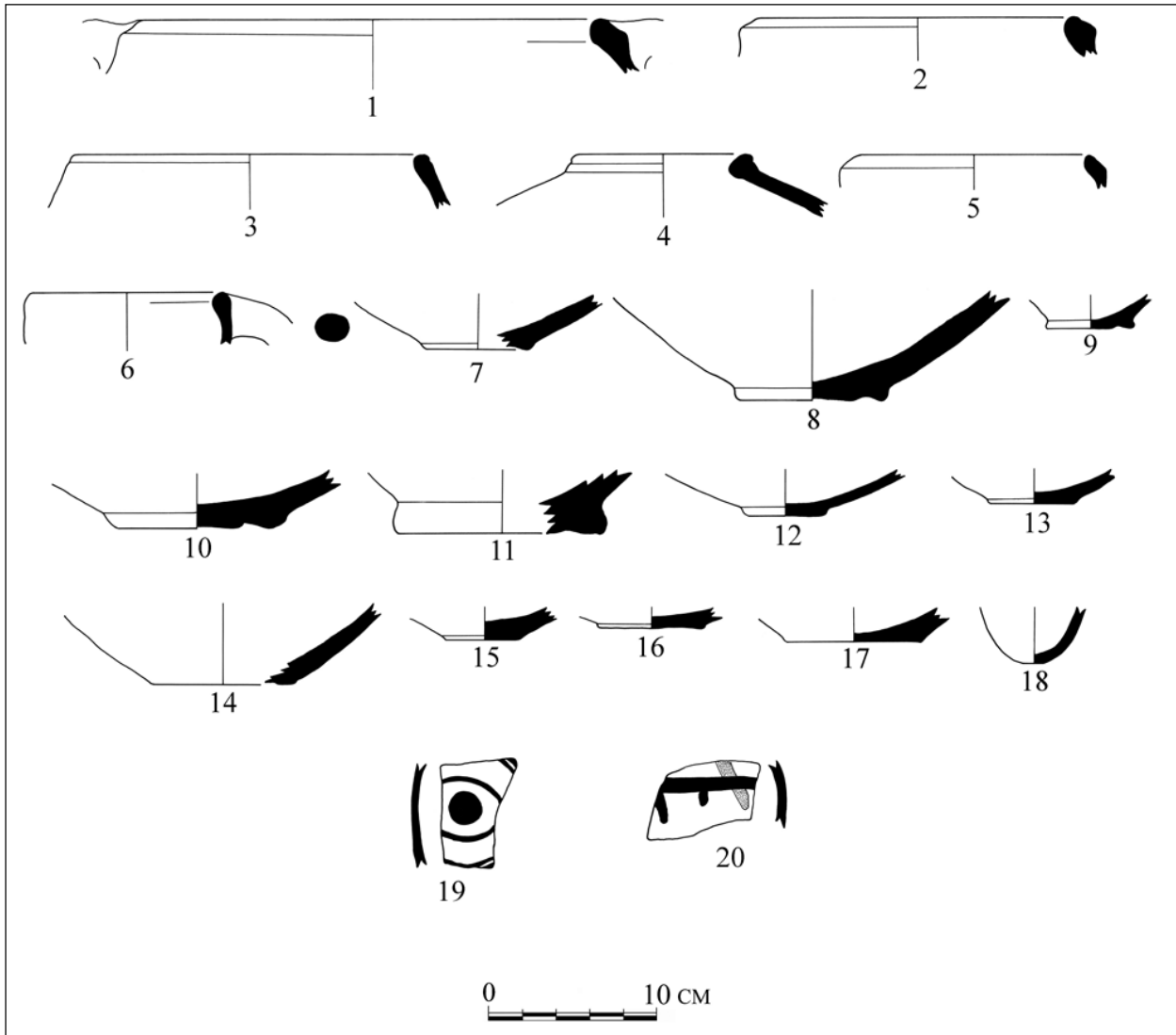


10. Tall al-'Umayri: Pottery from Field A, Field Phase 8B, dating most likely to the middle parts of the Iron 2 period.

1.6m wide.

Excavation in Room 4 also clarified several problems from previous seasons. As in Room 3, the destruction layer is now clear. It sealed against the walls of the room and the newly discovered entry and stairs (**Figs. 12-14**). Removal of the destruction layer exposed the surface of the room, which has so far been uncovered only in the southern third of Room 4. An earlier surface was also exposed in a probe in the eastern side of the room (adjacent to the entry stairs). The eastern wall of the room was divided by an entryway 1.5m wide. The entry consisted of stairs descending into Room 4 from a threshold midpoint in the entryway. The external features of the entry, whether additional stairs descend

from the doorway outside or whether the approach is level (except for one known step up to the threshold) is unknown but may be revealed in future excavation. The interior stairway contained several parts. A landing just inside the building offered the choice to turn right descending to the floor of Room 4 or to turn left ascending toward the south. Flat orthostatic stones lined the entry and portions of the stairway. The treads of the stairway, consisting each of two flat stones placed side-by-side, had been splayed apart in apparent earthquake damage. Also, a large hewn stone forming the door jamb in Wall 27 had been split in two and splayed wide apart. This earthquake damage may help to date the destruction of Building C, if the burning can



11. Tall al-'Umayri: Pottery from Field A, Field Phase 8B, dating most likely to the middle parts of the Iron 2 period.

be attributed to the aftermath of an earthquake. Generally, earthquake damage evincing this much movement is not considered possible to deeply buried structures, which are inadvertently reinforced by the surrounding matrix. There appears to be no reason this same earthquake could not be accountable for the damage to the rampart, in which case, the Phase 12 repair to the rampart would not have been immediate but following a lapse of time.

There is at present some debate about the function of this building. Some of us believe that the building was primarily a cultic, or temple, structure with associated rooms. Others believe that it was a palatial building that included a major shrine room.

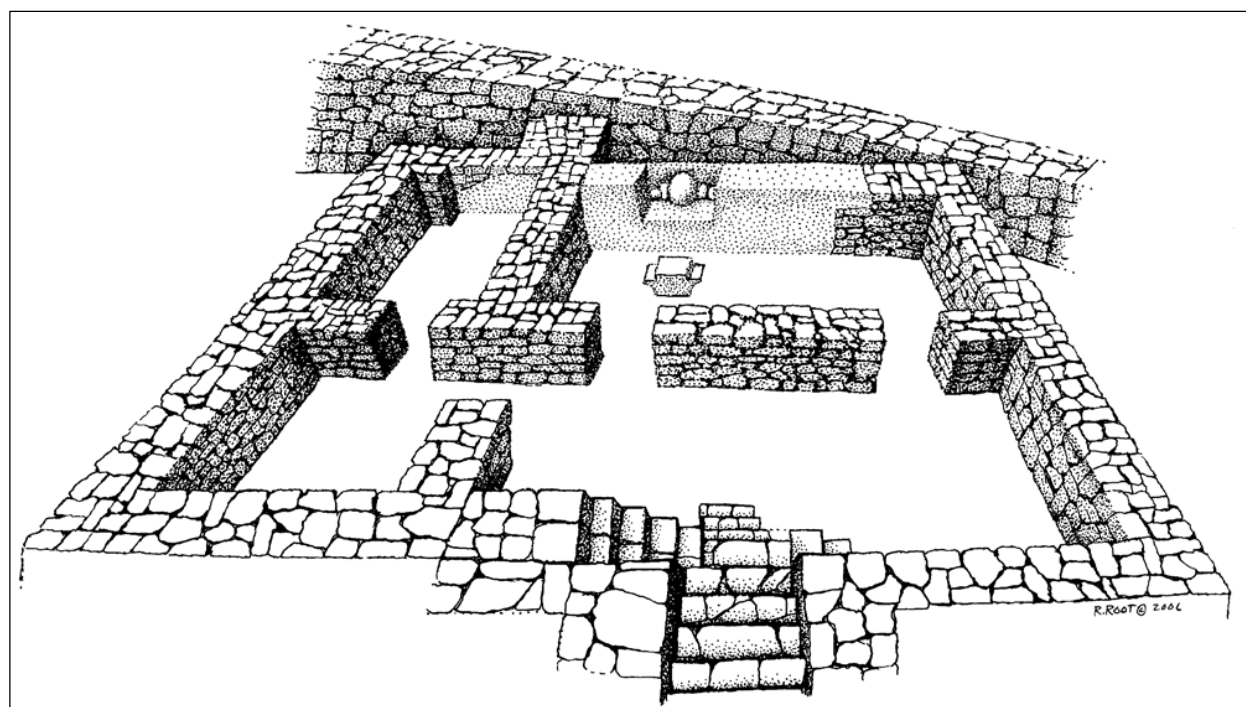
Field Phase 7 (Late Iron 2/Persian)

A significant problem was resolved conclusively this season, which was, it turns out, correctly interpreted following the 2004 season. In 2004, the Phase 7 reuse of Room 4 in Late Bronze Age Building was evident in a series of earth layers and one associated wall found above the LB destruction layer. Although these layers contained LB pottery, it is now proven that they were not a part of Phase 14, but, as suggested in the 2004 report, derived from redeposition as fill of excavated LBA debris from nearby at a time when the Phase 7 reuse of Room 4 was ceasing.

The eastern wall of the Phase 7 reuse of Room 4 was only partially preserved for a



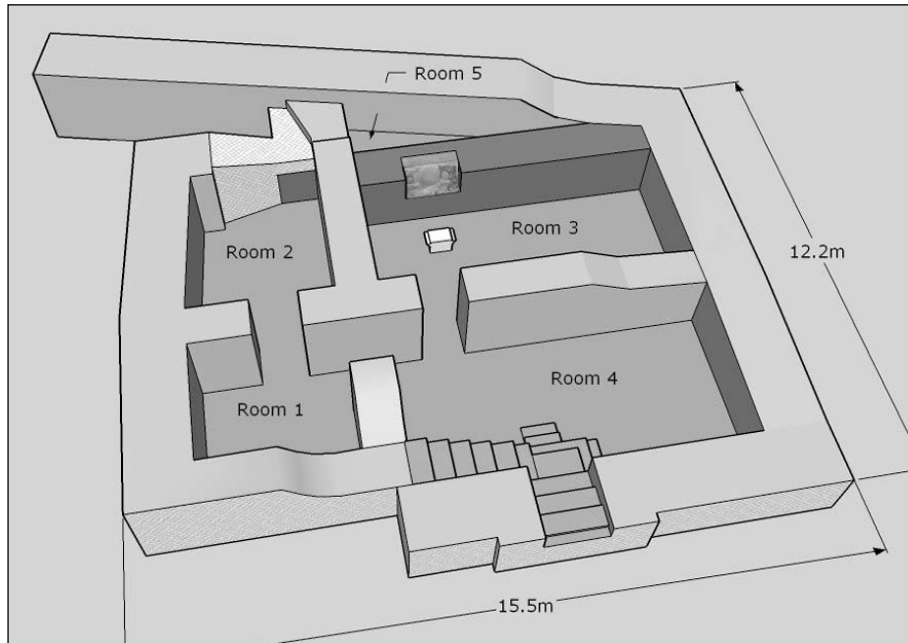
12. Tall al-'Umayri: Field B, the LB building from the east; the entrance and stepped descent into the building are at the bottom; the cultic installation is at the top.



13. Tall al-'Umayri: Field B, the LB building from the east (drawing by Rhonda Root).

length of 2.9m at its southern extent. In most places in the LB building the Late Bronze Age walls were located and heightened for the later Iron Age reuse; in some locations they were heightened but in rebuilding were slightly misaligned to the earlier wall lines below. The evidence for the re-dating of the northern wall

is very clear and centers around a layer with straw inclusions (phytoliths). The absence of more Iron 2/Persian ceramic readings would be due to the rarity of pottery sherds becoming mixed in with the straw placed in storage. Thus Room 4 was probably used as a haymow during Phase 7 until subsequent construction



14. Tall al-'Umayri: Field B, isometric sketch of the LB building from the east (drawing by Kent Bramlett).



15. Tall al-'Umayri: Field B, the cultic niche of the LB building with a small plastered brick altar on the floor in front.

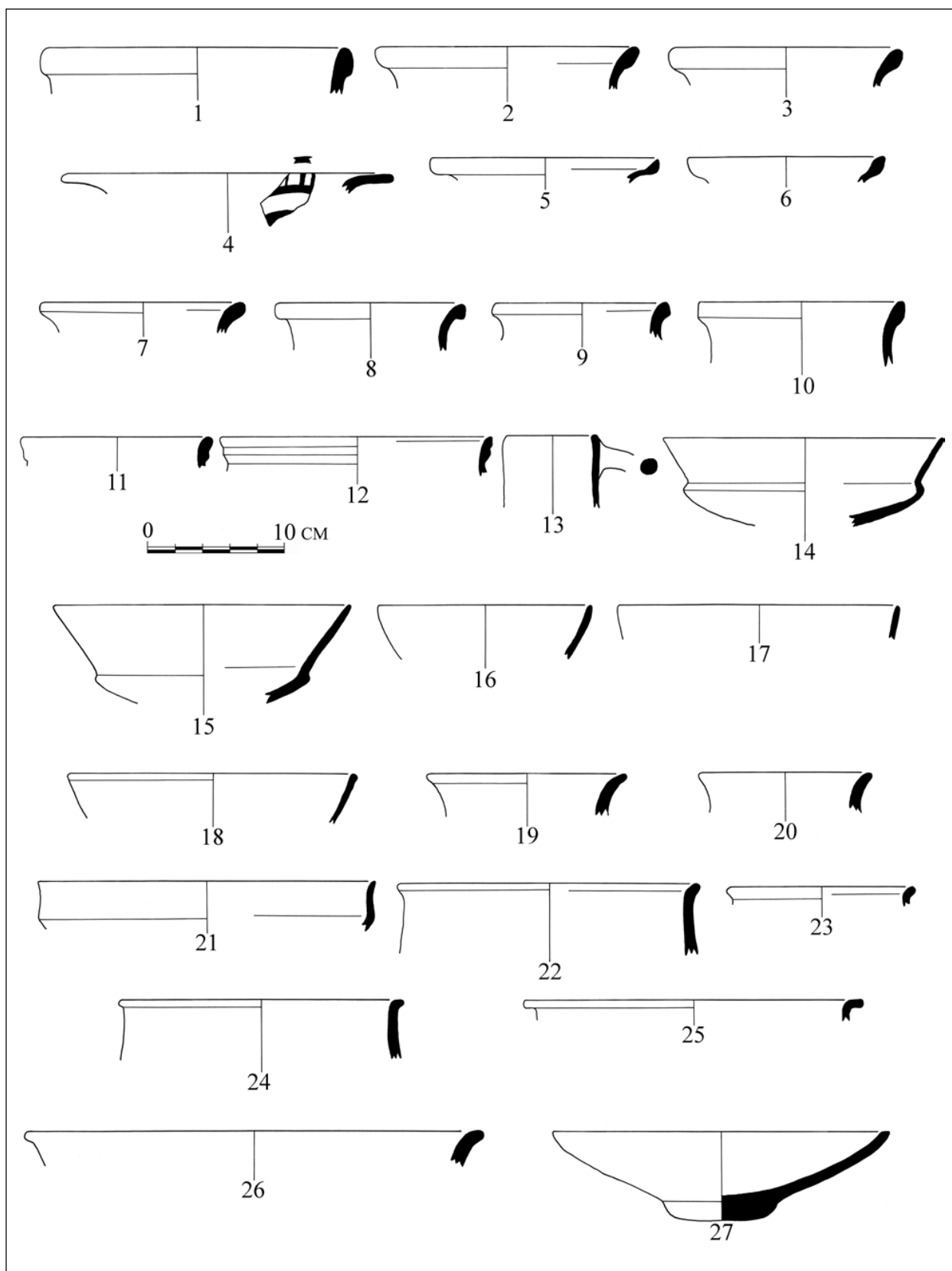
activity in the area filled it with excavated debris and the room was leveled and built over as Building D.

FIELD H: THE OPEN-AIR COURTYARD SANCTUARY

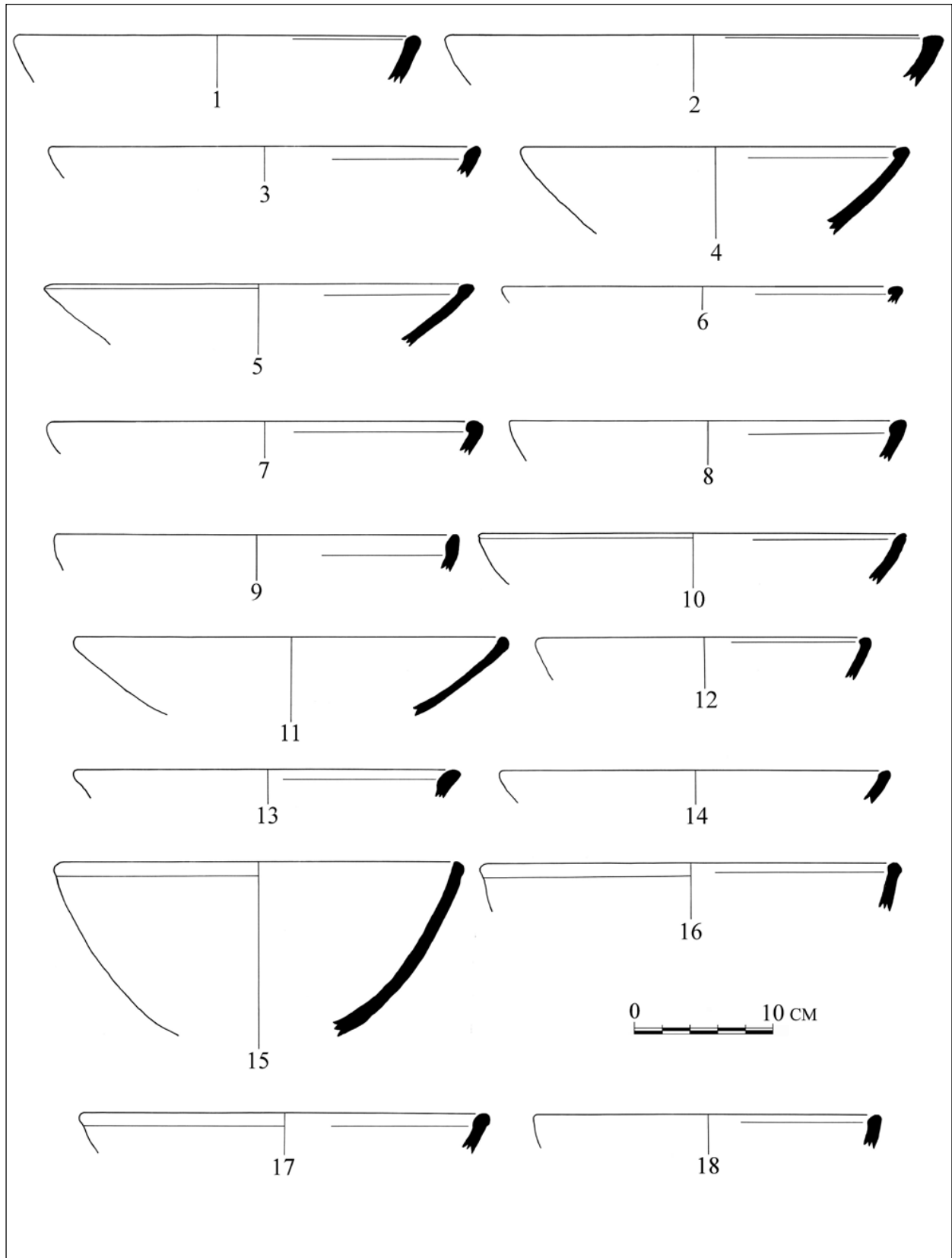
David R. Berge (Portland, Oregon)

Field H is located at the southwestern corner of the flat top of the site (**Figs. 2-3**). Excavations here began in 1994 for the initial purpose of exploring the southern extension of the Ammonite

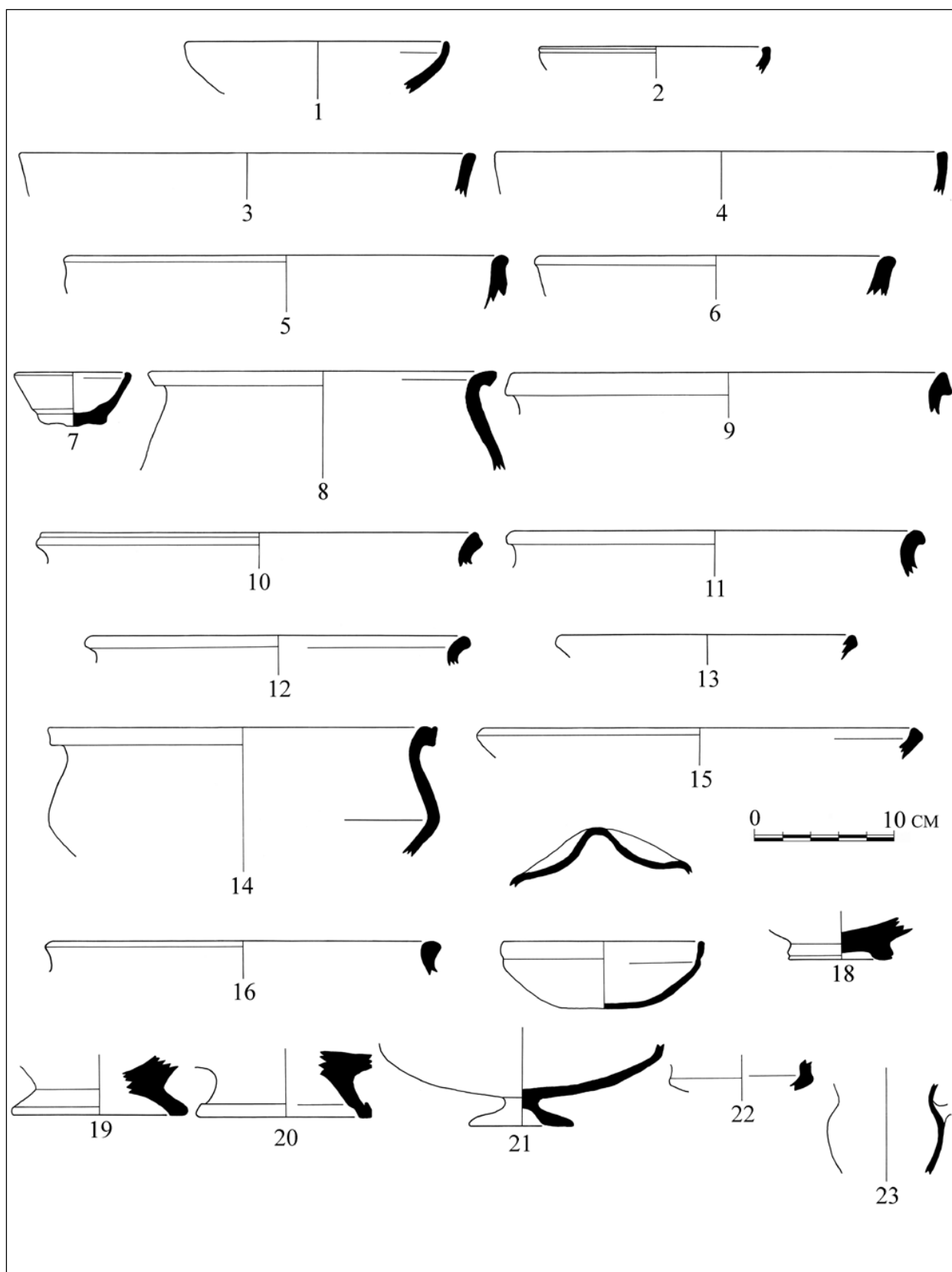
administrative complex in Field A, directly to the north, but instead found a large courtyard sanctuary paved by alternating layers of cobbles and plaster. Its religious function is based on the presence of figurines and model shrines found on the surfaces (Herr and Clark 2003: 290-291). This season we probed beneath the lowest cobble floor of the late Iron 1 open-air sanctuary in Squares 7K21, 7K22, and 7K31, while also clearing the southern part of the cobbled complex in Square 7K11 and 7K12.



16. Tall al-'Umayri: Field B, Phase 14 LB pottery from the bricks in the destruction of the LB building.



17. Tall al-'Umayri: Field B, Phase 14 LB pottery from the bricks in the destruction of the LB building.



18. Tall al-'Umayri: Field B, Phase 14 LB pottery from the bricks in the destruction of the LB building.

Field Phase 12 (Iron 1)

This phase had already been discovered in a small area outside the courtyard to the west in Square 7K20. At that time we interpreted it as Iron 1 domestic structures. This season, more domestic remains were uncovered, including a bin and oven on the beaten-earth floors of two room fragments (**Fig. 19**). A collared pithos, lacking both rim and base, was found placed upside-down into the floor. Reused pithoi like this are often interpreted as ovens, but there were no signs of burning on the pithos itself; however, surrounding it on the floor was a thin layer of ash. Both rooms used a single very thick wall (ca. 2.5m wide) as their northern wall. It may have been the continuation of one of the city gate walls discovered in Field A this season as it led into the town. We have given the general date of Iron 1 to the phase, because the pottery seems to be later than the typical transitional LB/Iron I pottery we have found in the two houses to the north in Fields A and B.

Field Phase 11 (Iron 1)

Above the debris of Phase 12 were a few wall and possible surface fragments from which a large amount of destruction debris originated. Not enough has been found to suggest a possible plan or to characterize the nature and function of

the structures. However, the pottery continued to be no later than the Iron 1 period.

Field Phase 10B (Late Iron 1)

This is the lowest level of the courtyard sanctuary with its cobble and plaster surfaces. Previous reports have described its extent and discoveries (Herr and Clark 2003: 290; Herr and Clark 2005: 254-255). This season we discovered that the lowest cobble surface, which we thought had sloped to the east, was actually the product of two surfaces, the later one “blended” with the earlier one, making it seem as if it were one surface. The lower surface dates to the late Iron 1 period, while the later one may be early Iron 2. Surrounding the surface our team discovered the boundary walls of the courtyard **Fig. 20**, at the top. They abutted the east-west passageway that led into the town from the gate farther to the west. The courtyard thus was very near the gate on the south of the entranceway.

The function of the area must be connected with outdoor activities. The area was much too large to be roofed. There was one central “column base” or “altar” sunk into the cobble floor, but we could not connect it with any other feature of the structure. Although we found no cultic objects on this lowest surface, other such finds were made in several of the subsequent



19. Tall al-'Umayri: Field H, Domestic architecture of Phase 12 below the lowest cobble floor of the courtyard sanctuary.



20. Tall al-'Umayri: Field H at the end of the season; Phase 12 remains are at upper right; the lowest cobble surface has been removed in two squares in the center; and later cobble floors and walls are visible at the left.

floors during the Iron 2 period.

Field Phase 10A (Early Iron 2)

This phase represented a repair to the cobble floor of Phase 10B, in which the later surface “blended” into the earlier one, making them difficult to separate until the upper one was actually removed. It is this repair that caused the slope of the Phase 10 cobble floor noted in previous reports. The pottery here was early Iron 2, probably Iron 2A.

Field Phase 9 (Early Iron 2)

After a short period of abandonment when a thin layer of earth accumulated over the Phase 10A surface, the walls of the courtyard were changed slightly and a new surface was laid.

Field Phase 8 (Iron 2)

This phase was mostly excavated in the 2000 season when a model shrine was uncovered on the floor of the courtyard sanctuary. The courtyard was made smaller and a row of very large stones was placed on the northern side (but see earlier reports). This season a small part of the phase not excavated in 2000 was removed.

Field Phase 7 (Late Iron 2)

Excavation of the southern reaches of the courtyard revealed later cobbled floors of the

courtyard along with subsequent buildup of surface debris (Fig. 20). Associated walls were reused from earlier Iron I and early Iron 2 phases. A small room in the southwestern corner seems to have been associated with the courtyard. However, no finds were made on the cobbled floor of the room or in a stone-lined pit that could suggest a function for the room.

Field Phase 6 (Late Iron 2/Persian)

Like Phase 7, the architecture of previous phases was reused and reworked. The majority of remains dating to this phase have been already excavated in previous seasons. However, excavation in 7K12 revealed that one wall was constructed over the large cobble surface of Phase 7. This discovery necessitates reassigning to this phase the doorway and threshold which were previously assigned to Phase 8 in the 2004 report.

No new remains were found from Phases 5-1.

FIELD L: THE SOUTHERN EDGE

David C. Hopkins (Wesley Theological Seminary) and Mary Petrina Boyd (University Temple United Methodist Church, Seattle)

Field L is located at the southern edge of the flat top of Tall al-'Umayri roughly in its middle (Fig. 2). Excavations in this field began in 1998 for the initial purpose of exploring the transition

of the top of the site to the southern slope where several surface architectural features were visible or had appeared in ground-penetrating radar images. This season we opened two new units in Squares 6L70 and 6L80 and expanded Square 6K98 to its full size (**Fig. 21**). The goal of excavations was to ascertain the eastern and northern limits of the Hellenistic farmstead and uncover the top of Iron 2 remains. However, all three operations ended before Hellenistic remains were completely excavated. In the eastern portions of the field, the Hellenistic sediment diminished in thickness and no *in-situ* finds were discovered.

Field Phase 7 (Iron 1)

In one square (6K98) excavations proceeded through topsoil and stone rubble. No coherent remains were discovered from the Hellenistic and late Iron 2/Persian periods. Instead, after the removal of fill layers, the top of a massive wall constructed of very large boulders was discovered running north-south (**Fig. 22**). More of this wall had been discovered to the south in earlier seasons. It is part of a series of massive walls stratigraphically pre-dating the late Iron 2 period. Only one of the walls has so far been dated to the Iron 1 period, but we have not reached the foundation levels for any of the walls (**Fig. 22**, in the square to the right of the meter stick). The stone construction is similar to the large stone construction in the gate area of Field H.

		6K98	6K99	
		6K88	6K89	6L80
	6K77	6K78	6K79	6L70
		6K68	6K69	
			↑ 0 3m	

21. Tall al-'Umayri: Schematic grid of squares for Field L.

The presence of such massive stone walls in the center of the site is surprising, especially if the Iron 1 date is confirmed. Most Iron 1 structures except the perimeter wall near the gate tend to be made of small to medium boulders or large cobbles. Such walls indicate the probable presence of public architecture, also a rare item during the Iron 1 period. These walls must be a major long-range research question for future excavation at the site.

Field Phase 6 (Late Iron 2/Persian)

The very tops of walls from this phase were uncovered, but none of the destruction/abandonment debris was removed. The most that can be said is that the wall fragments beginning to emerge under the Hellenistic levels seem to be orientated similarly to walls discovered in earlier seasons.

Field Phase 5 (Late Hellenistic)

Remains from the lower Hellenistic phase were not clearly discovered this season. A few fragmentary installations and debris layers may reflect activities in a courtyard on its eastern side, but not enough was found to present a coherent picture of the phase. Some of the wall fragments attributed to Phase 4 below probably continued in use from Phase 5.

Field Phase 4 (Late Hellenistic)

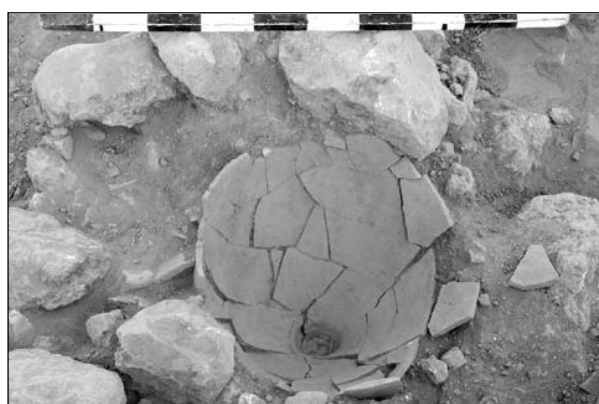
Features from this phase were the clearest phase discovered this season. A long wall along the north side of the excavated area (**Fig. 23**) may be the northern wall of a courtyard for the Hellenistic farmstead. A parallel wall fragment in the southern area of our excavations may have been the southern wall of the courtyard. Fragments of a plaster surface were discovered that were very similar to the plaster surfaces found in other rooms of the structure to the west. Placed into the surface was a continuation of a stone-lined drain found in earlier seasons to the west. It was oriented in the same direction and constructed in the same manner and must be the northeastern continuation of the drain. Other fragmentary remains, such as pithos bases and reused jars turned upside down, were also discovered (**Fig. 24**). There were no signs of the eastern wall of the complex.



22. Tall al-'Umayri: Field L; the tops of large walls made of very large boulders are visible under the later, Hellenistic architecture (they are also slightly darker in color); they may date to the Iron I period.



23. Tall al-'Umayri: Field L; features between two parallel walls that may have been part of a courtyard associated with the Hellenistic farmstead found in earlier seasons in the top part of the photo.



24. Tall al-'Umayri: Field L; one of the pithos bases from the possible courtyard of the Hellenistic farmstead.

The relatively large space between the north and south walls of the room suggest that it was an open courtyard with typical domestic activity areas that included storage facilities and possible work areas, if the several boulders with holes in them were interpreted as weights as we are inclined to do.

Field Phases 3-1 (Classical to Islamic)

Topsoil and sub-topsoil contained archaeological sediment with post-Hellenistic pottery and must be related to the debris which accumulated after the farmstead was abandoned and the area was turned into agricultural fields.

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