THE 2005 SOUNDINGS AT KHIRBAT AL-MU'MMARIYYA IN THE GREATER WĀDĪ AL-MŪJIB AREA

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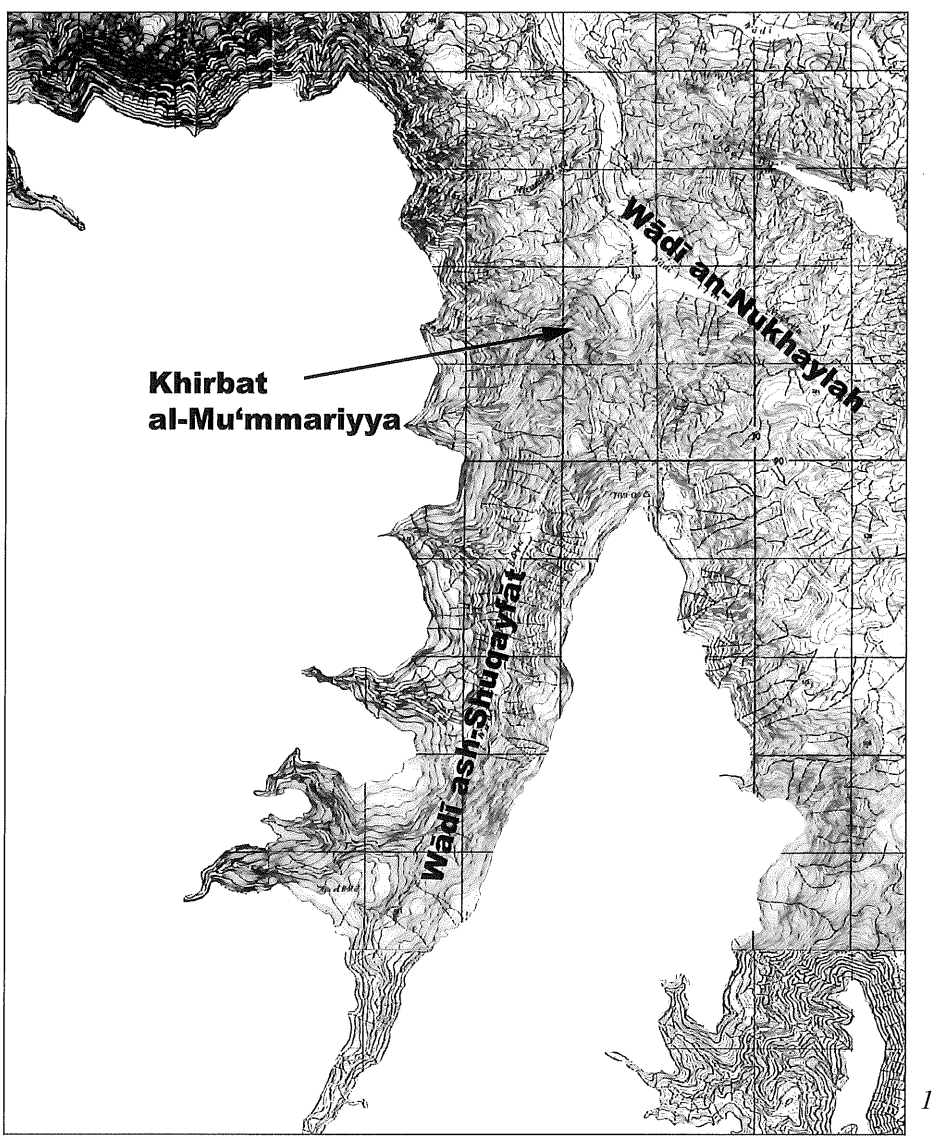
During the month of August 2005 a team from Theologische Hochschule Friedensau carried out further soundings at Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya in the vicinity of Wādī ash-Shuqayfāt which is one of the major southern tributary wadi system of Wādī al-Mūjib. Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya is situated near the point where Wādī ash-Shuqayfāt empties into the major southern branch of Wādī al-Mūjib, Wādī an-Nukhayla. The site is situated on a hillside overlooking both Wādī ash-Shuqayfāt and Wādī an-Nukhayla (see **Fig. 1**; PG E249400/N186600; UTMG E787600/



1. Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya above Wādī an-Nukhayla.

N357470; one can get a good overview of the site from the northern tip of the Khashm as-Sanīna plateau southeast of Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya). Toward NW one can see the newly erected dam and the reservoir which is quite full even during the summer time.

During the 2002 and 2003 soundings at Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya we investigated the main citadel of the site on top of Jabal al-Mu'mmariyya (472m above sea level). Our main goal was to get an overall idea of the ground plan of the site and especially the citadel on the upper hill. Several squares were opened —in particular the gateway that lead into the citadel. In addition to our investigation of the citadel we opened two other squares beneath the citadel: one about 25m SE of the citadel and another square near the line where the plateau of the upper site ends and the steep slope of the lower site begins (see Ninow 2004a, 2004b).

This year's soundings concentrated on a round tower-like structure to the south of the site (see **Fig. 2**). This tower is situated on a small path leading into Wādī ash-Shuqayfāt that provided a perennial source of water for the people living on the site. Furthermore, the last room of the southern casemate wall was opened. It formed the corner of the casemate wall that runs from the citadel down to the base of the site and then turns in a northern direction. In addition, we opened some rooms that are situated adjunct to the casemate wall.

T

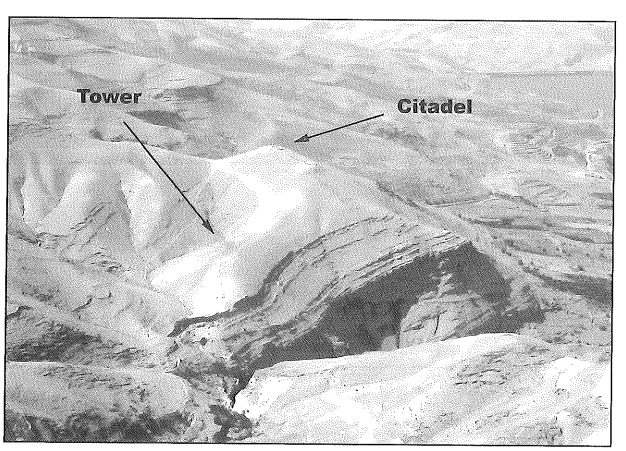
On a natural descent from the main site down into Wādī ash-Shuqayfāt a tower with adjacent walls is situated. The structure forms a circle (wall RW) of about 5.50m in diameter (inner side of the walls). The width of the wall is ca. 1.30m. The circle itself and the width of its wall is pretty much regular. Judging from the existing remains it is unclear from where access to the tower was situated. If there was a door it must have been on the south eastern side of the tower. Possibly, the tower was accessed by a ladder.

From the round tower like structure two wall lines extend in a northern direction (W10 and W20). These wall lines have about the same width as the round wall line of the tower (see **Fig. 3**).

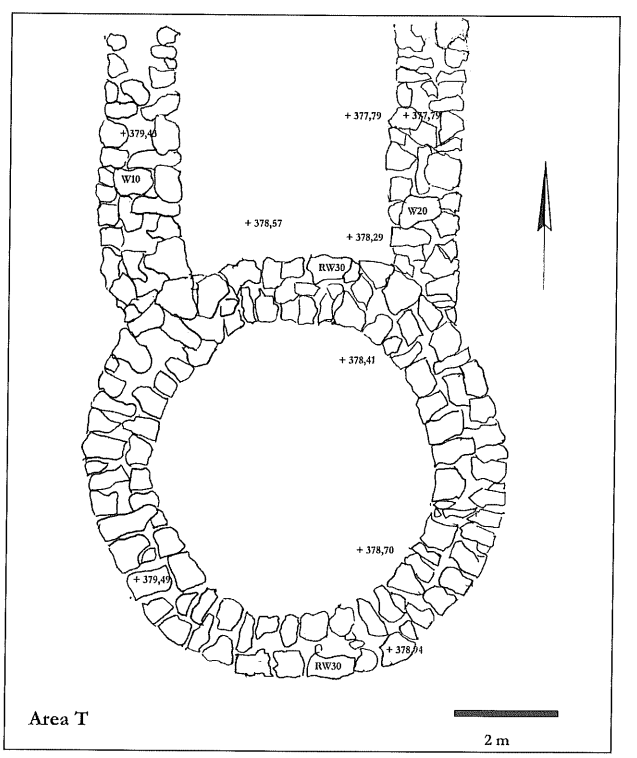
The inside of the tower was covered by a carefully laid pavement of flat stones. To get an even foundation for building the tower, the uneven surface of the bedrock was cut or respectively filled to achieve an even surface.

The two wall lines running in northern direction form an area with a breadth of about 3.50 to 4.00m. It is unclear how far these walls extend to the north. While near the tower the wall lines are visible on the surface, further to the north they become invisible. The immediate area in front of the tower has a pavement. There was relatively little pottery to be recovered.

From the pottery that was recovered it be-



2. Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya as seen from the Khasm as-Sanīna plateau.



3. Area T: Tower.

comes clear that this structure has to be associated with the main site of Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya. All the forms of pottery recovered are also represented at the main site and date this tower to Iron I. The occupation of the site was rather limited over a period during the early Iron age period (for some pottery examples, see **Figs. 4** and **5**).

F1

Where the southern casemate wall reaches its upper end and turns northward to form the base of the site, a small room was excavated which formed the southeastern corner of the fortification, whilst at the same time being the lowest point of the site (see **Fig. 6**).

This room is formed by the three main casemate walls W1000, W2000, and W5000. This room forms roughly a square of 5.00 x 5.00m (see **Fig. 7**). The average width of the walls is 1.00m. The surface of this room was cut into the bedrock (especially in the upper half of the room). The lower part of the room follows basically the form of the bedrock. The room is sloped due to steep slope that drops into the wadi (see **Fig. 8**).

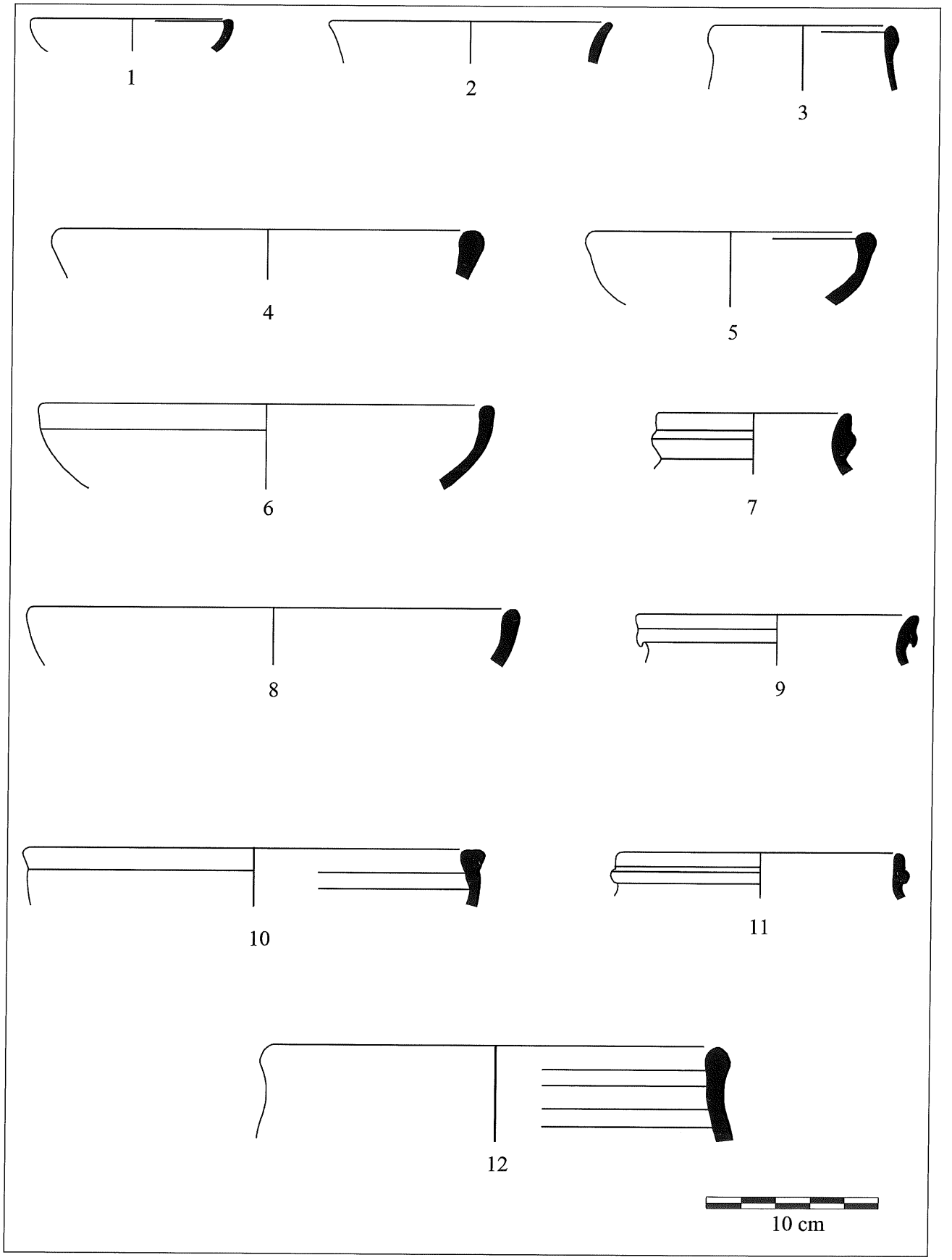
Area G

This area is situated on the slope of the lower site adjacent to the southern casemate wall W1000/W2000. It consists of the casemate, several rooms, and an open area respectively (see **Fig. 9**). In order to achieve an even foundation the bedrock was cut (in the upper portion of G4/G5) or filled with silt to compensate for the sloping surface of the site. This led to a huge amount of filling in Rooms G1 and G2. Once an almost even level was reached with G4/G5 the rooms were given a floor. The floor in G1 consisted of solid beaten earth/silt; G2 had a pavement. G1 was a square room of about 2.30 x 2.30m. It could be entered from G4/G5 by a doorway that was in the southwestern corner of the room. In G2 two different phases could be distinguished. G2 consisted in its first phase of a kind of open room with an entrance way in its northeastern corner. The western side of the room was limited by two pillars that are characteristic for the site. In a later phase the western side was blocked; the pillars were used as part of this new wall (see **Figs. 10 and 11**). This modification could well be due to intensified food processing that took place in the area of G4/G5. Two big grinding stones were found *in situ* with several working stones nearby (see **Fig. 12**). A complete jar was recovered near W620 (**Figs. 13** and **14**). From area G4/G5 the casemate G3 could be entered through a passageway. This passageway consisted of cut bedrock. The surface of this casemate corresponds roughly to the natural surface of the bedrock. Inside the casemate many fragments of various storage jars were discovered. Unfortunately, none could be recovered intact or complete.

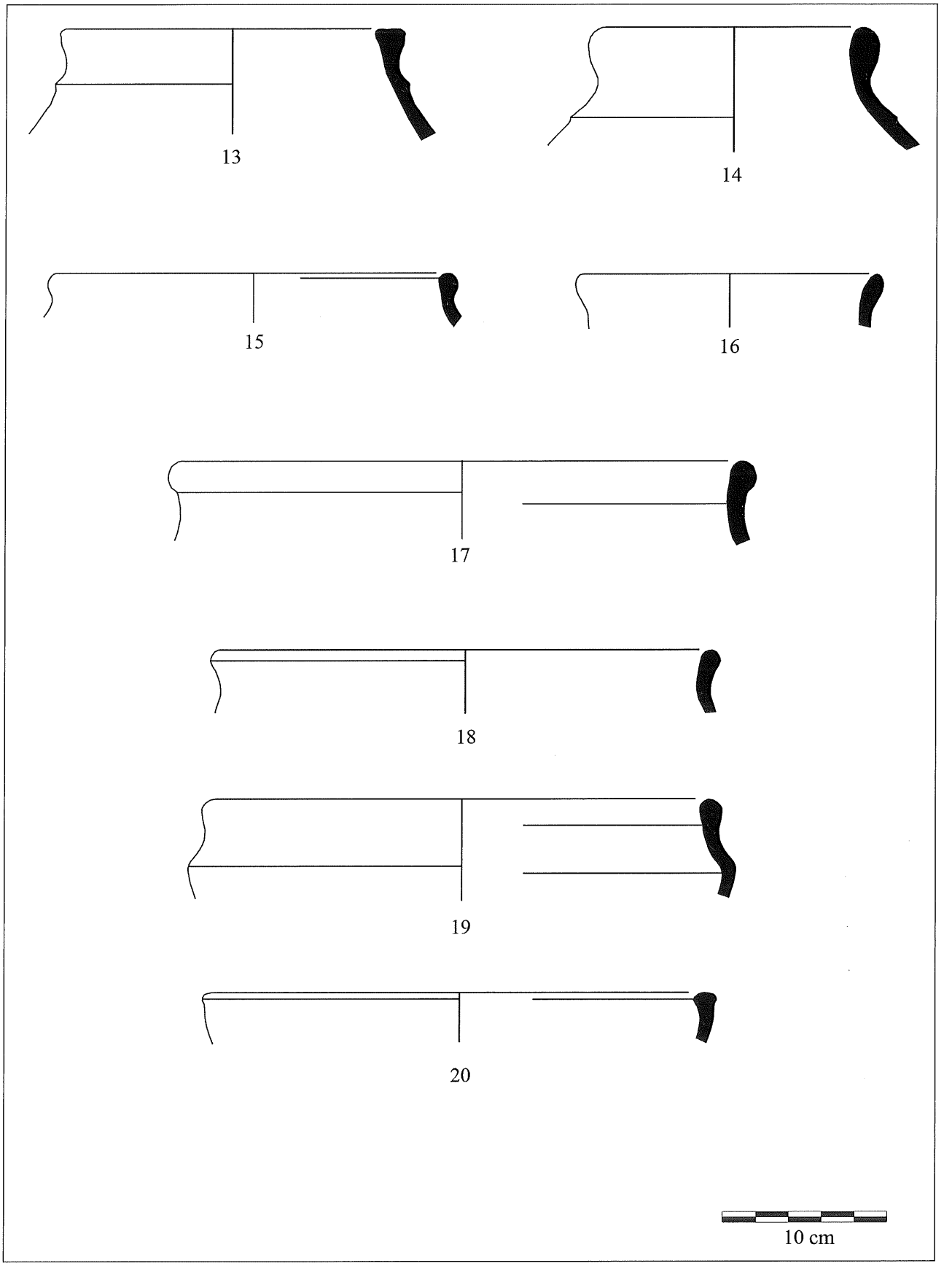
It appears that where the site sloped down steeply, it consisted of several units that were built on an even level; W610 and W620 would delimit such a unit. Within these units the surface was leveled (either by cutting the bedrock or filling in the difference with packed silt). Thus the site can be seen to have the characteristics of terraced living levels. Within the upper city this building strategy was not necessary due to the relatively slight sloping of the site. The lower city needed a different building strategy. Thus, the builders employed a terrace type structure of single living units that were delimited by long walls that led across the site.

Conclusion

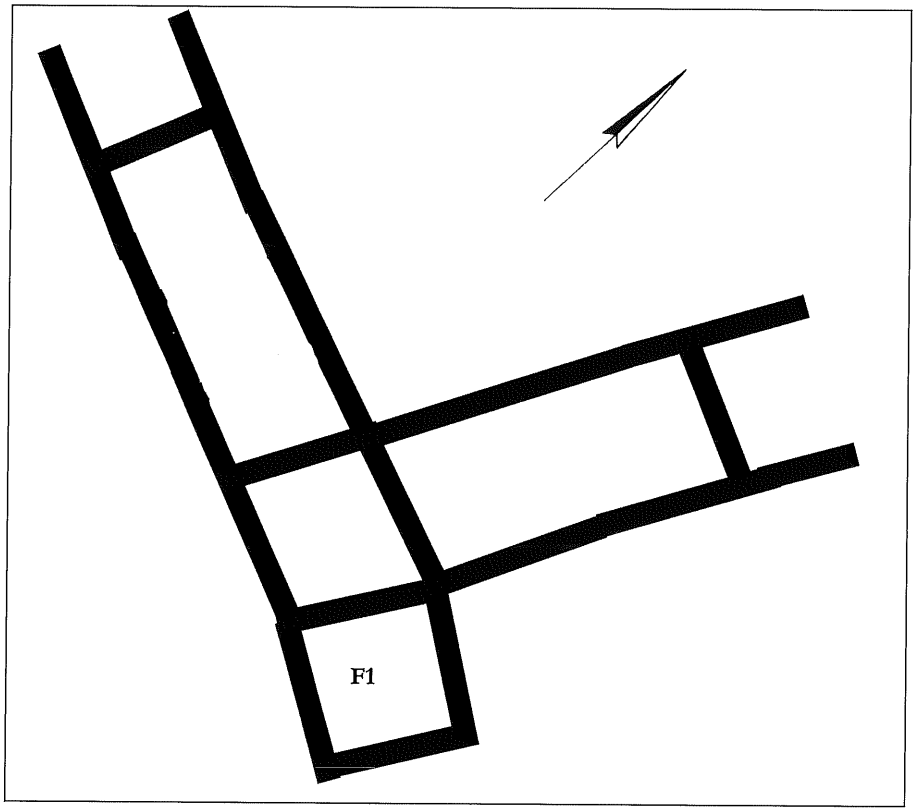
The 2005 sounding at Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya revealed further insight into the architecture of the site, as well as insights into the tower structure to the south of the site. The excavated pottery supports the preliminary conclusion that Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya is most probably contemporary with sites such as Khirbat al-Mudayna al-'Āliyā and other Iron Age I sites in the wider vicinity of the northern Arḍ al-Karak plateau (see Routledge 2000, 2004: 87-113). The analysis of the pottery of the tower shows that it must have been be connected to the main site; i.e. its contemporary. The sounding has further revealed that the people of Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya employed a particular building strategy to cope with the steep slope of the site. They formed small terraces to build various small living and working units. The pottery reveals a broad spectrum of Iron I pottery that testifies to food production and food processing as a main occupation of the inhabitants of Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya.



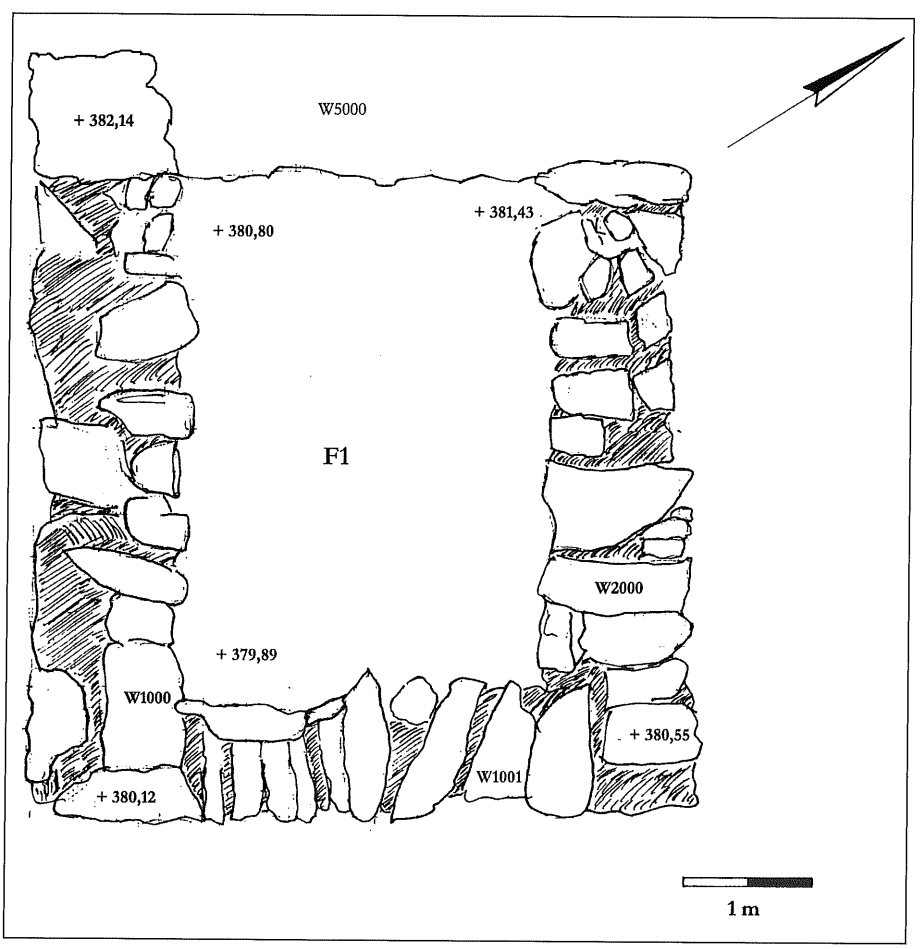
4. Ceramics from Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya – 1.



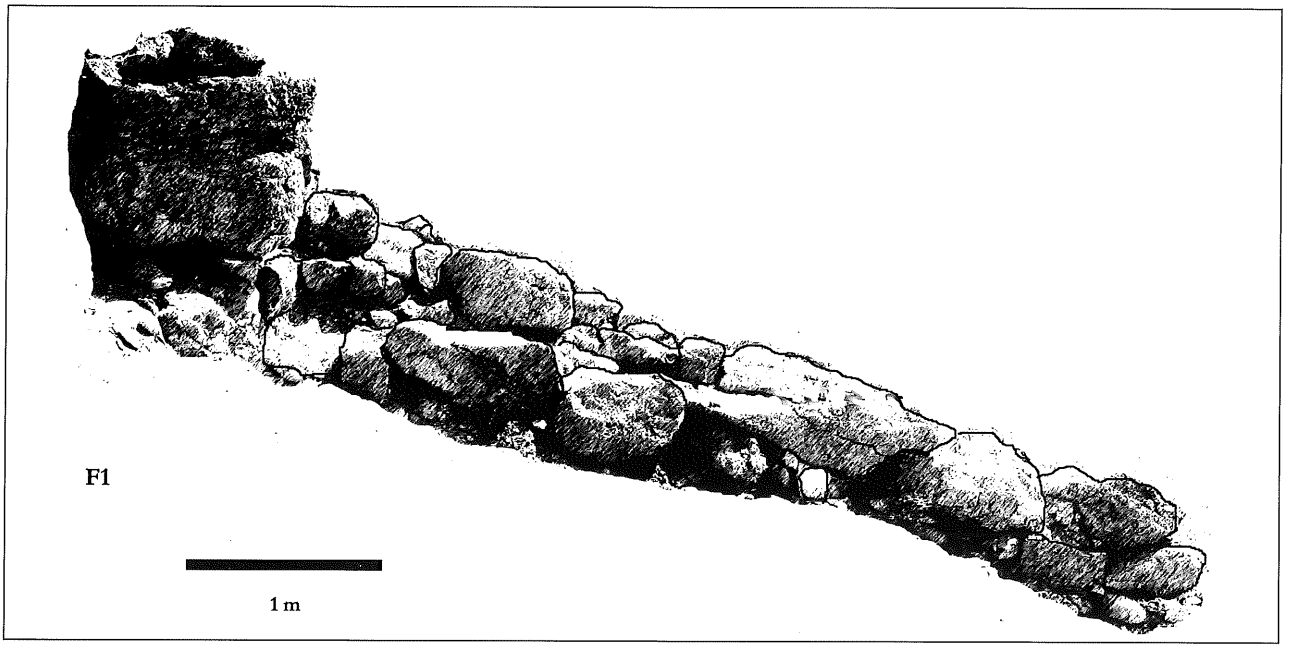
5. Ceramics from Khirbat al-Mu'mmariyya – 2.



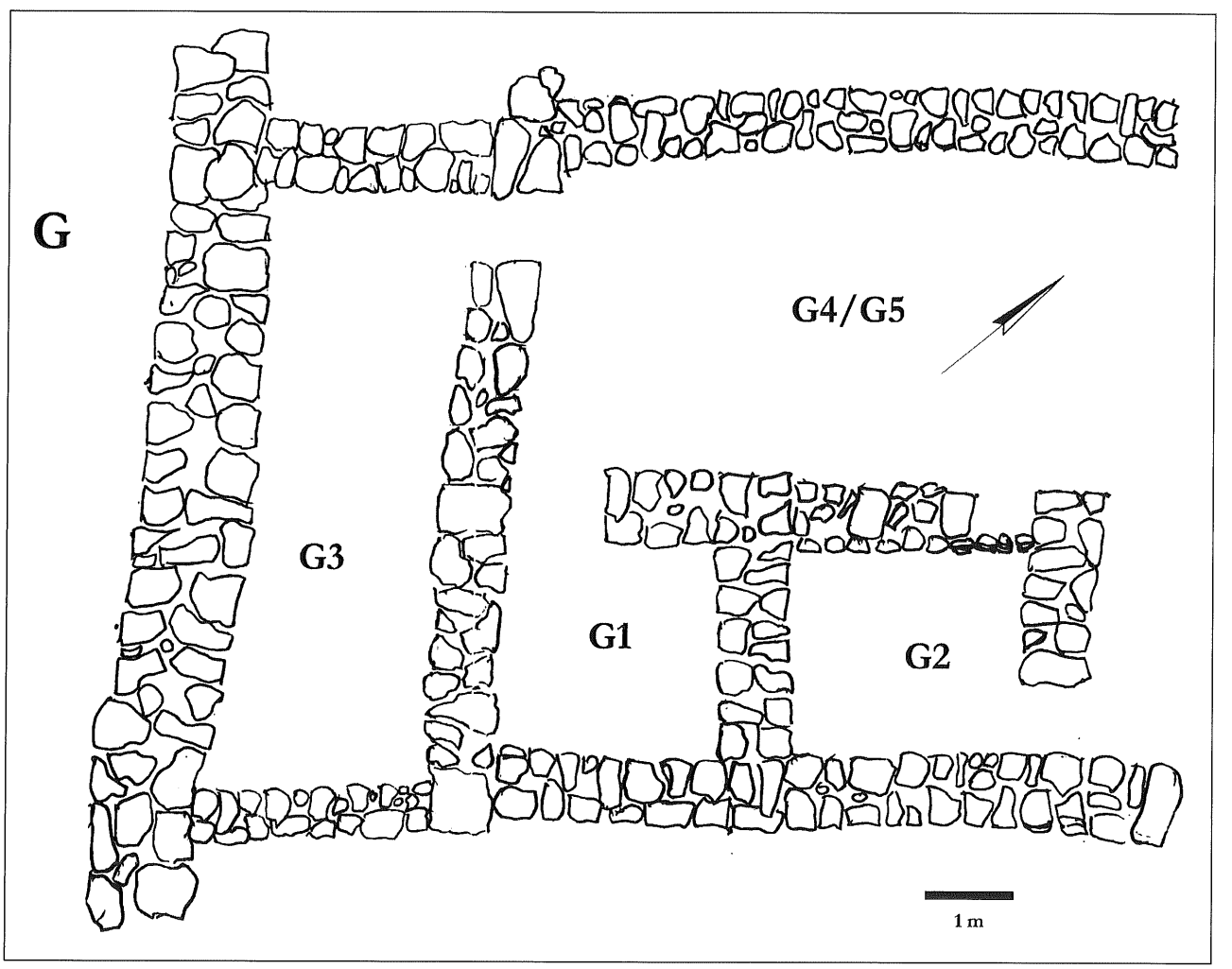
6. Area F.



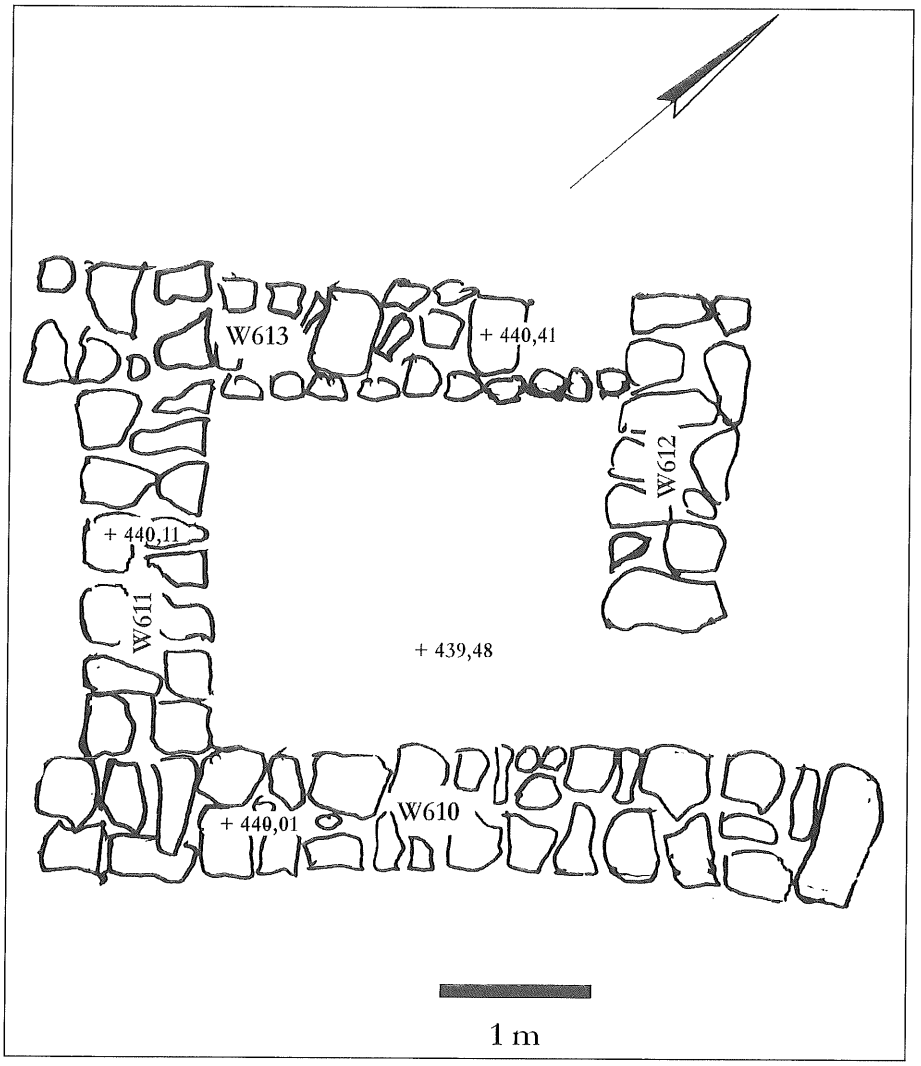
7. Top plan F1.



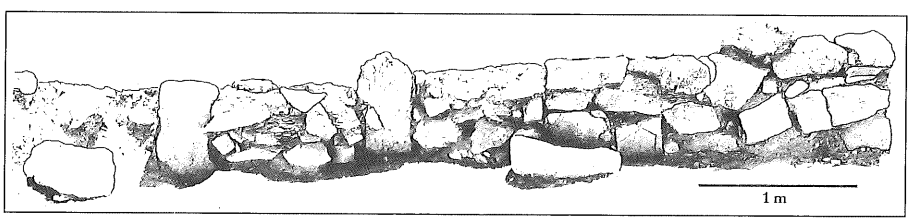
8. F1 - W1000 from S.



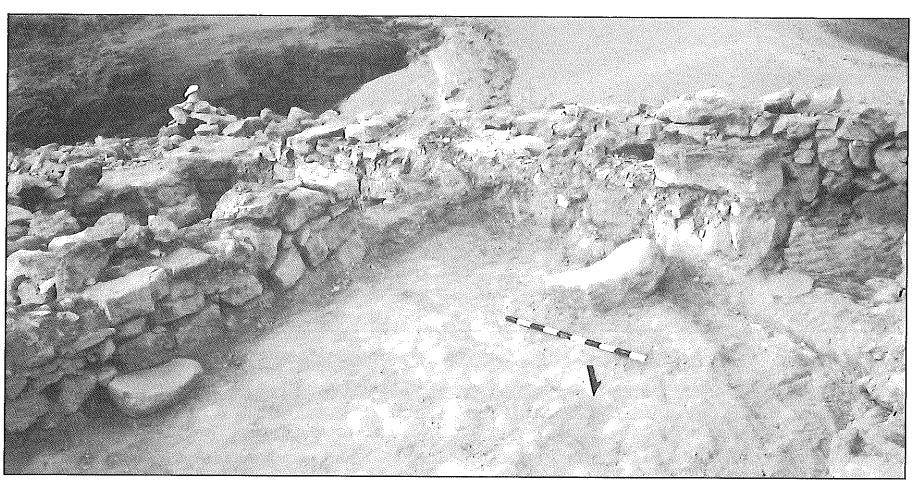
9. Area G.



10. Top plan G2.

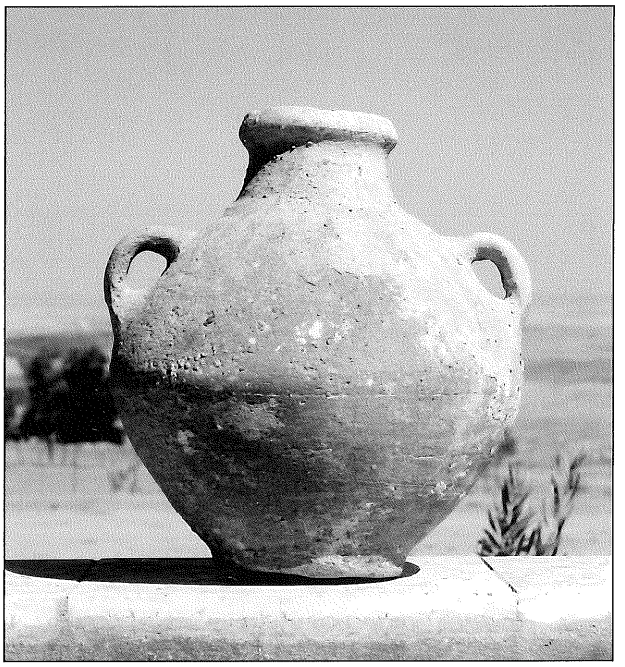


11. G4 - W613 from W.



12. Grinding Stone Installation.

13. Jar in situ.



14. Jar.

Acknowledgments

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