

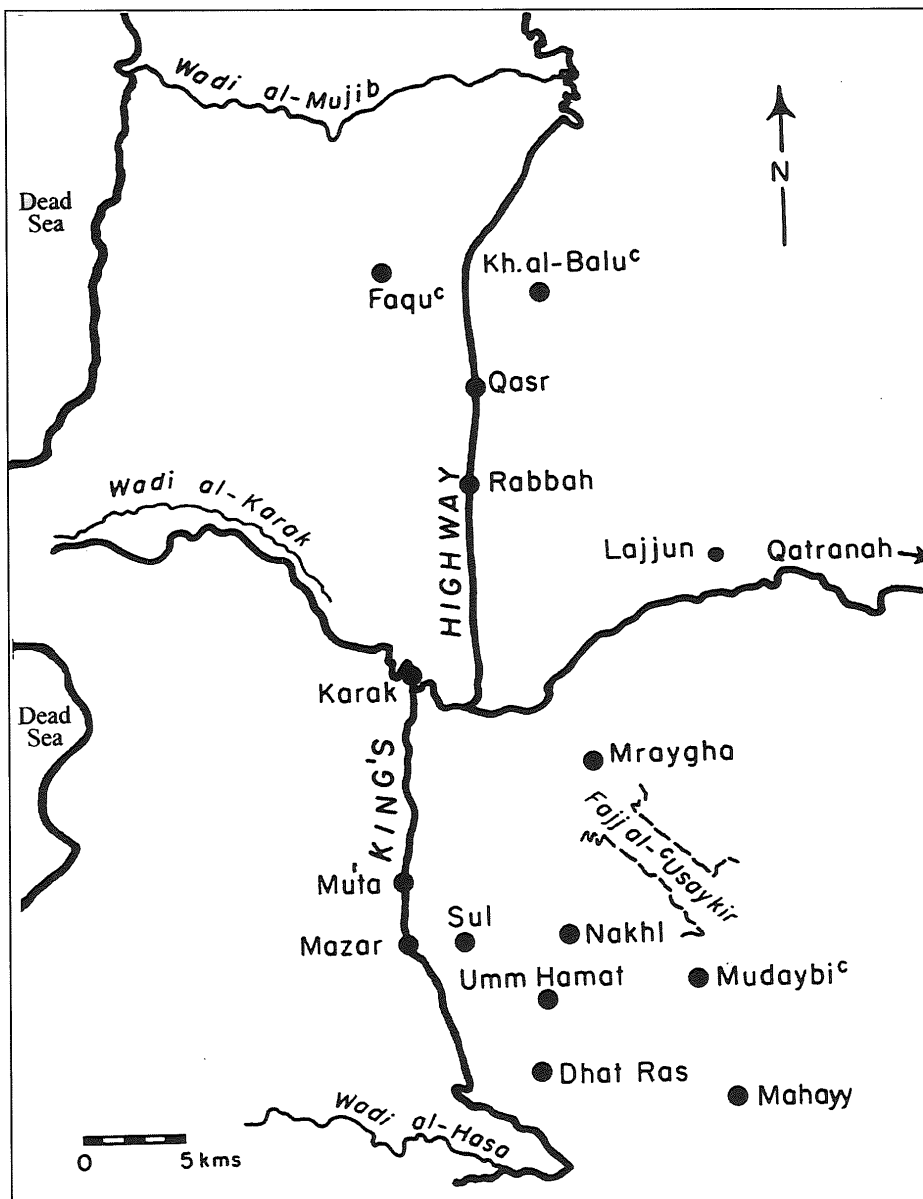
THE KARAK RESOURCES PROJECT 1999: EXCAVATIONS AT KHIRBAT AL-MUḌAYBI^c

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Introduction

A third field season of the Karak Resources Project (KRP), the second season of excavation at Khirbat al-MuḌaybi^c (خربة المضيبع) (Fig. 1), was held from June 25 to July 27, 1999. A total of 43 staff members, representing 24 institutions, participated in the project. The project's purpose is to document ways in which occupants of the Karak plateau have utilized natural resources, including

site locations and local and long-distance trade. In addition to the continued work of KRP's regional archaeological survey team, a geological survey team and a National Geographic Society-funded ethnographic team, three fields of excavation were operated at Khirbat al-MuḌaybi^c — KRP's case study in resource utilization. Various aspects of the project's research are featured on the "Virtual Karak Resources Project" website, www.vkrp.org.



1. Map of the al-Karak plateau, with Khirbat al-MuḌaybi^c in the south-eastern region.

Work in Fields A (north side) and B (east side) continued from 1997; a new, two-square field, Field C, was opened in the site's southeastern quadrant (Fig. 2). The following report considers the history of use/construction (i.e., phases) in each of the three fields.

Field A: The North Side (John I. Lawlor)

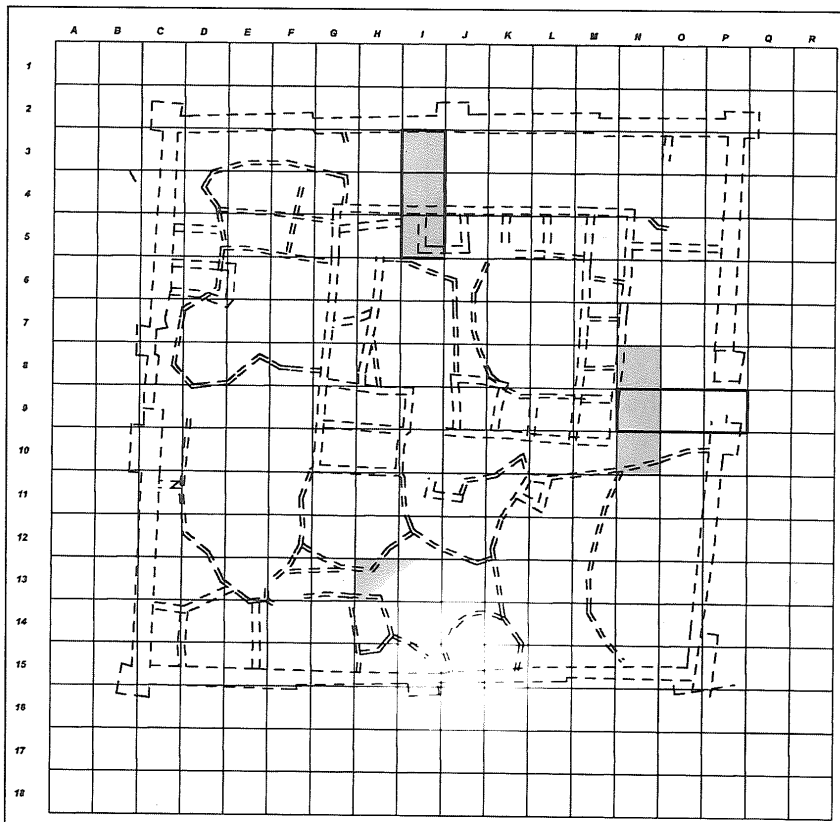
Five field phases were reported for Field A in 1997, ranging from Byzantine (AD 325-640) to Modern (1918-present) (Mattingly *et al.* 1999). Expanded field phasing for Field A is based on the results of the 1999 season. Some revisions of the Byzantine and Islamic loci/ phase association also seem appropriate, based on continued excavation and observation. The expanded and revised field phasing is reported here in the sequence in which the phases were historically developed.

Field Phase IX (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC) (Fig. 3)

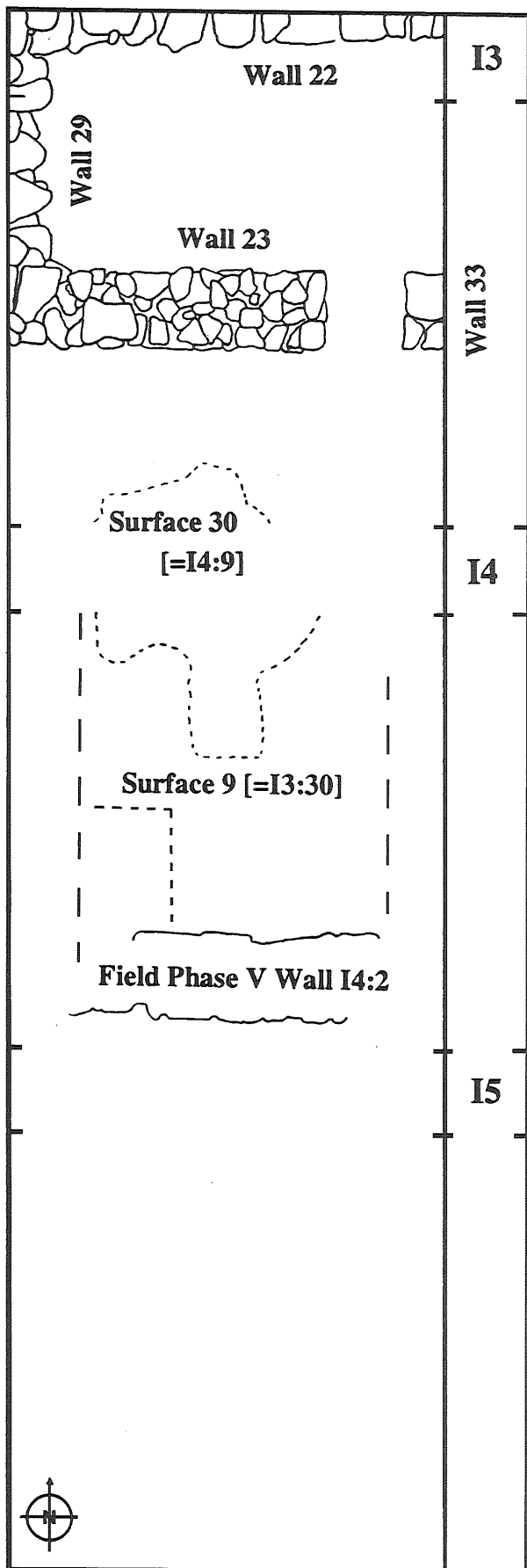
Evidence supporting four Iron Age II phases in Field A was clear. Sterile soil (Earth Layer 13), directly beneath Field Phase IX I4 Surface 9, was encountered in a 1 x 1.5m probe in the southwest quadrant of Square I4. The very hard, dry earth in this probe was "strong brown" (7.5YR 5/6; dry: "pink" 7.5YR 7/4) in color and contained no pottery; KRP's soil scientist identified this as the "B horizon" soil. Protruding through this earth layer

was large boulder-size basalt rock, believed to be bedrock (Fig. 4). The excavation of Square I3's north balk provided access to the south face of Wall 22 — the site's exterior wall. This east-west (76°) oriented wall extended 0.3-0.5m into Square I3's domain, based on the official site grid, and became the square's north balk (Figs. 2, 3). Although the founding level of the wall was not reached, the upper 3-4 courses of the wall's south face were exposed. Constructed mostly of basalt, its individual components were chiefly medium-to-large boulders. Wall 22's south face extended along the entire 5m of the square's north balk (Fig. 3). This wall is visually traceable from Square I3 both west and east to points where it bonds with corner towers; from these northwest and northeast towers, walls extend southward, continuing the west and east perimeter walls of the site (Fig. 2).

Approximately 2.5m south of Wall 22, Wall 23, another east-west (76°) oriented wall was founded parallel with Wall 22. Wall 23 extended eastward out of the west balk for 3.6m. This boulder-and-chink wall was 2-3 rows wide (0.85-1m) and was excavated to a depth of 0.72-1.27m (4-5 courses). East of Wall 23's east end, and aligned with it, was a wall stub protruding 0.5m westward out of the square's east balk. Identified as Wall 33, it was 0.9m wide (2 rows) and was excavated to a depth of 0.48-0.59m (4 courses). The west end of Wall



2. Survey grid of Mudaybi' that illustrates Field A on the north side of the site (Squares I3, I4, and I5), Field B on the east (Squares N8, N9, and N10), and Field C on the south (Squares H13 and I13).



3. Plan of Field A's Field Phase IX.



4. Photo of Square I4 probe into sterile soil, with basalt boulders protruding from bedrock; view to the south.

33 stopped 0.9m short of the east end of Wall 23, thus creating a doorway in this wall line. At 0.4m inside I3's west balk, Wall 23 bonded with north-south (350°) Wall 29 which extended 2.5m north — as far as the south face of Wall 22. The precise nature of the relationship of Wall 29 to Wall 22 (i.e., bonding versus abutting) was unclear. Thus, it could not finally be determined if the construction of Walls 23, 33, and 29 was contemporary with the construction of the site's perimeter wall. The plan and alignment of Walls 22, 23, 29 and 33, however, indicated that these architectural features created a room with a 0.9m wide entrance on the room's south side (Fig. 3). Wall 29 demarcated the western end of the room, the exposed dimensions of which were 4.5m (east-west) x 2.5+m (north-south) (Fig. 5). Further excavation in the northern half of Square I3 is required to answer the critical question of Wall 29's precise relationship to Wall 22. Excavation in Square J3 will, perhaps, further clarify the plan, nature and purpose of this Iron II room (Fig. 2).

To the south in Square I4, Surface 9 (=I3:30) was situated directly above sterile soil (B horizon, as in I4:13) (Fig. 6). Surface 9 (=I3:30), exposed over an area 3.55m (east-west) x 4.80m (north-



5. Photo of Iron II room in Square I3 (on the right = north); view to the west.



6. Photo of Field Phase IX Surface I4:9 (in foreground); view to the north.

south), was a hard, compact beaten earth surface which appeared to extend north into Square I3 where it was interrupted by later Iron II activity. Pottery associated with Surface 9 was Iron II. Field Phase V Wall 2A in Square I4 was founded directly on top of Surface 9 (Fig. 7).

Field Phase VIII (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC) (Shaded Pits in Fig. 8)

Field Phase VIII was characterized by a series of pits, which are shaded in Fig. 8. Pits 14, 16, and 18, located in the northern half of Square I4, were dug from Surface I4:9; they were dug through Surface 9, through sterile soil (I4:13) and around bedrock (Fig. 9). The purpose of these pits was undetermined. The earth layers in the pits (Earth Layer 15 in Pit 14, Earth Layer 17 in Pit 16, and Earth Layer 19 in Pit 18) were distinct from the sterile

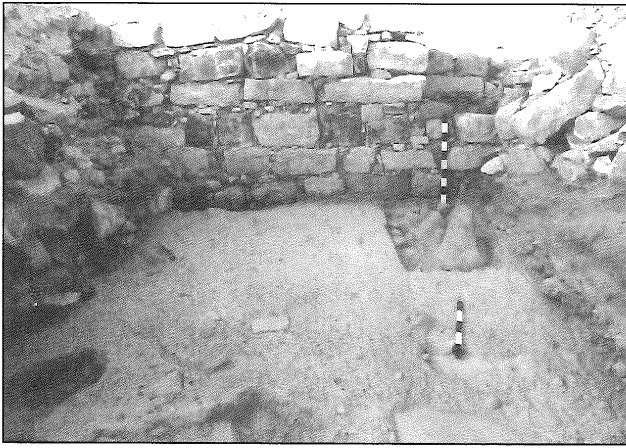
soil of Field Phase IX and contained only Iron II pottery; Earth Layer 19 yielded no pottery.

Field Phase VII (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC) (Fig. 8)

Field Phase VII was, in part, represented by the blocking of the doorway in the south wall of the Field Phase VIII room-Blockage Wall 32 (Fig. 10). The dimensions, orientation (76°) and alignment of this blockage clearly indicated that while the intent was to close the doorway of the Field Phase VIII room, the preservation of the wall line was also intentional. A series of ephemeral bin walls (I3:24, 35, 37), located in the southeast quadrant of Square I3, was constructed subsequent to the blocking of the Field Phase IX wall (Fig. 8). The purpose of these bin walls was undetermined. Evidence of Field Phase VIII appeared to be limited to Square I3. Earth Layer I3:34, a 0.20-0.44m deep layer of light, yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) earth, seems to have been the “transitional” earth layer between Field Phase VII and Field Phase VI above. Its matrix included characteristic features of Field Phase VI, while its deposition covered the series of bin walls.

Field Phase VI (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC) (Fig. 11)

Extensive evidence of furnacing activity distinguished Field Phase VI. Slag from the furnacing operation was spread over the entire southern half of the Square I3, south of Walls 23, 33 and Blockage 32. Ash Layer I3:25, which was 0.16-0.23m deep and covered an area 2 x 2m in the southeast corner of the square, appears to represent the location of this furnacing activity on the site's north

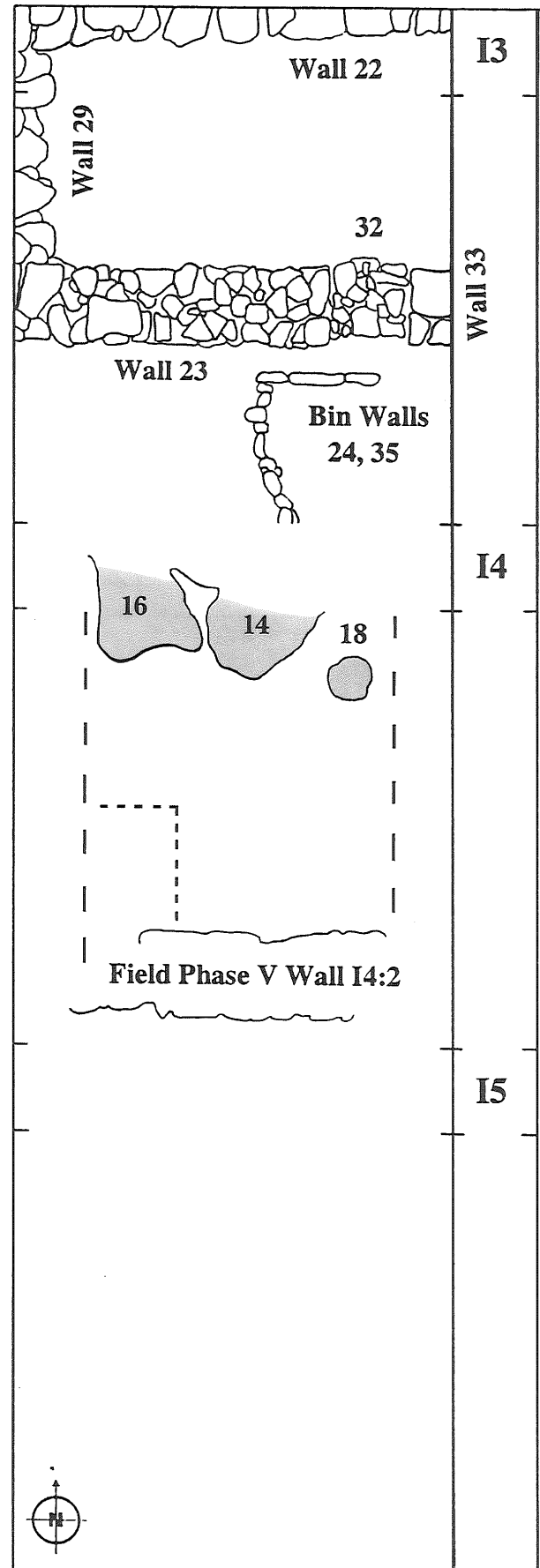


7. Photo of Field Phase V Wall 4:2A, which sits directly on top of Field Phase VIII Surface I4:9; view to the south.

side. Earth Layers I3:27 and 28, located in the southwest quadrant of Square I3, were fill layers associated with this furnacing activity and contained large amounts of slag. Traces of this furnacing activity, including slag, extended 2.5m south into Square I4, where it was situated above Field Phase IX, VIII, and VII Surface I4:9 (=I3:30). Field C also yielded some slag, although not in a quantity equal to that of Field A.

Initial tests of the slag from Squares I3 and I4 in Field A, as well as Field C slag, indicate that the slag was, most likely, the by-product of the burning of limestone, probably for plaster production. Some obvious questions emerge from this information. For what purposes was plaster manufactured at Muḏaybi'? What was the source of this limestone? While much of the gate architecture in Field B was constructed of fossiliferous limestone, it appears to have been brought to the site from several kilometers to the northwest in al-Fajj (الفجج). A "bench" located immediately east of the main gate was plastered; might this represent at least one use of such plaster at the site? Can it be shown that the plaster used on the bench was manufactured at the site? No other evidence of the use of plaster at Khirbat al-Muḏaybi' has yet been encountered. Does the presence of this furnacing activity on the north side of Muḏaybi' relate to the characteristic daily north-west-to-southeast wind pattern of the area?

This latest Iron II phase also appears to have been represented in Square I5, the southernmost square in Field A. Surface 21, located in the northeast corner of Square I5 was isolated, but not excavated. The exposed area of this isolated segment of Surface 21 was 0.90m (east-west) x 1m (north-south) and was situated about 0.70m south of the south face of I4's Wall 2. Earth Layer 22, situated north of Surface 21, sealed against the south face of I4's Wall 2; a 0.40m deep probe (0.90 x 0.80m)



8. Plan of Field A's Field Phases VIII and VII.



9. Photo of Pits 14, 16, and 18 in Square I4 (below = west of the sandbagged balk); view to the east.



10. Photo of Square I3's blocked doorway (32) in Walls 23 and 33 (left = west of scale stick); view to the north.

yielded only Iron II ceramics. I5:21's level was 985.63, while Field Phase IX I4:9's level in the square's southeast corner was 985.47. No definitive stratigraphic connections between this surface and earth layer in Square I5 and Field Phases VII or VI remains, north of I4's Wall 2, were established. Given the limited area of access and exposure in Square I5, excavation in Square J5 may be necessary in order to integrate Earth Layer I5:22 and Surface I5:21 with the Iron II phasing sequence north of Wall I4:2.

Field Phase V (Byzantine: ca. AD 325-640) (Shaded Wall in Fig. 12)

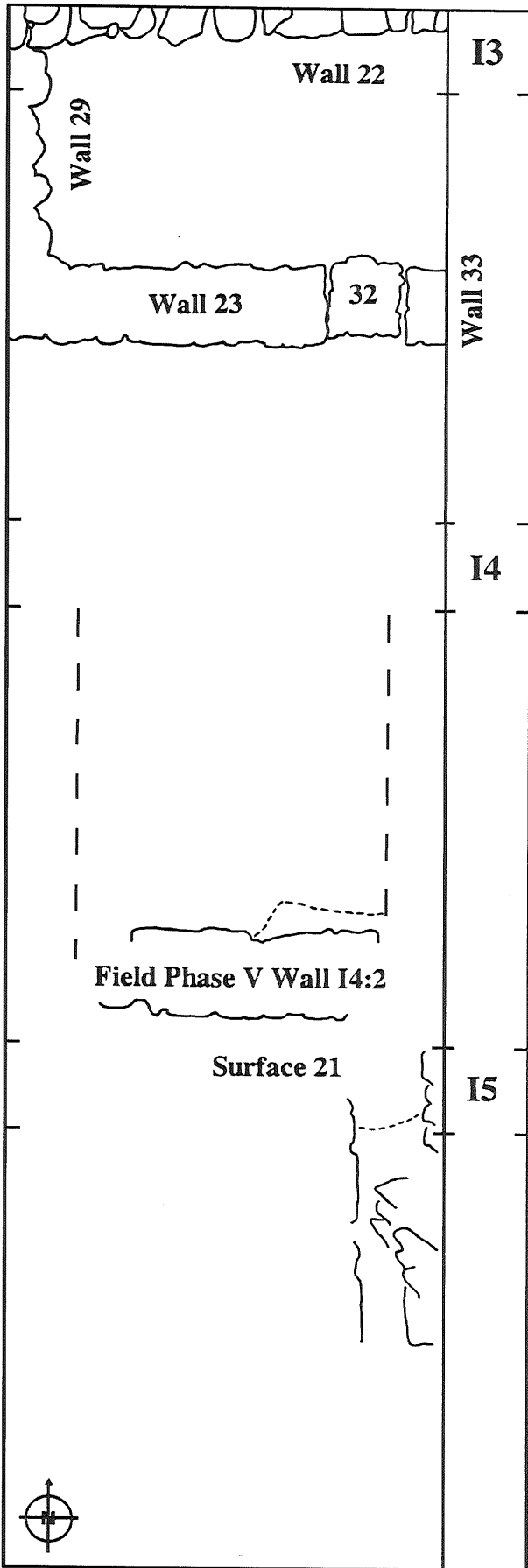
Subsequent to the abandonment of the Field Phases IX, VIII, and VI Iron II surface, Wall I4:2A (shaded in Fig. 12) was founded directly above Surface I4:9. That there was no accumulation of

windblown soil between Surface I4:9 and Wall I4:2A suggests that either the wall was founded soon after the Iron II surface was abandoned or the area was scraped down to the surface in preparation for founding the wall; probably the latter. While the westernmost exposed 2m of Wall I4:2A sat directly on Surface I4:9, a 1.5m foundation trench (I4:20) was dug in order to found the easternmost exposed 1.5m of Wall I4:2A. Probes on both the north (Square I4) and south (Square I5) sides of Wall I4:2A's east end indicated that the wall's builders had apparently cut through the surface in order to lay founding courses for that 1.5m of the wall. This might have been done in order to level up a sharp decline to the east of the site's natural contour at that point. Further excavation in I4's southeastern quadrant and I5's northeastern quadrant is necessary in order to clarify the exact reason for this phenomenon.

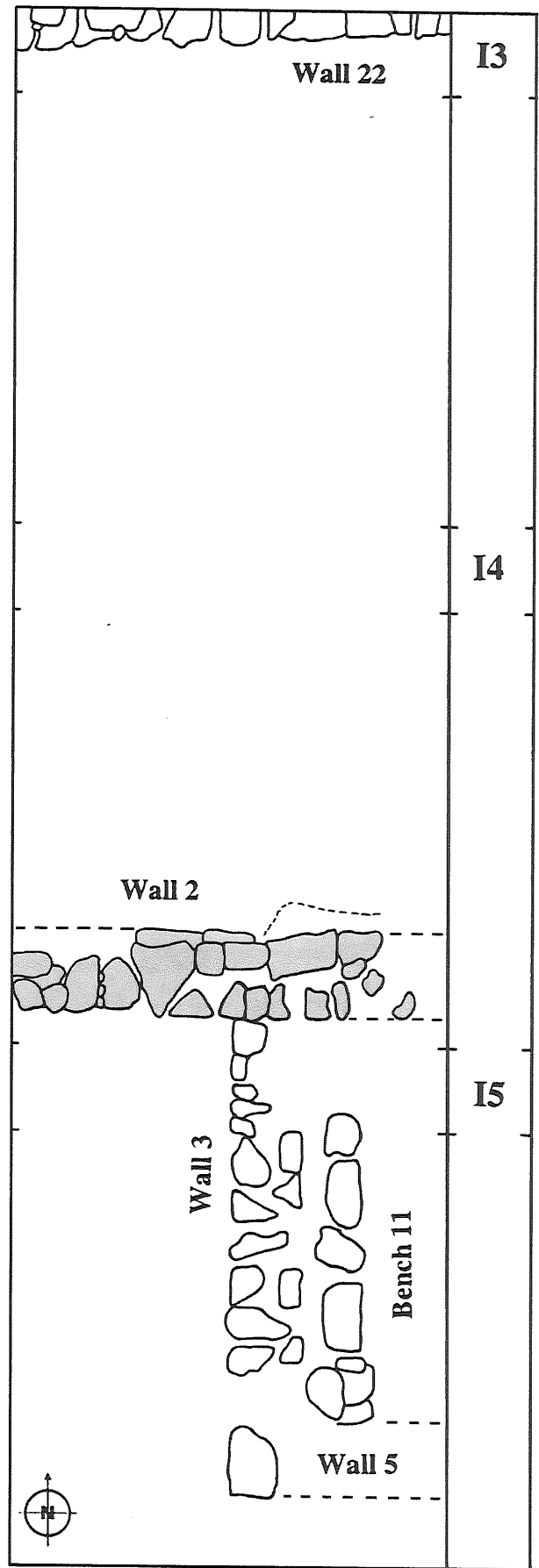
Two phases for the east-west (77°) oriented Wall I4:2 were clarified; the first appeared to be associated with the wall's initial construction. This initial phase was preserved in the wall's lowest three courses, and stood 1.10m. The uppermost course of Wall 2A was exposed for 5m; because subsidiary balks were maintained on both the square's west and east sides, the lower two courses of Wall 2A were exposed to a length of 3.30m (Fig. 13).

Field Phase IV (Early Islamic: ca. 640-1100) (Fig. 12)

Square I5's north/south Wall 3 was previously associated with 1997's Middle Islamic phase (Field Phase III; Mattingly *et al.* 1999). Further examina-



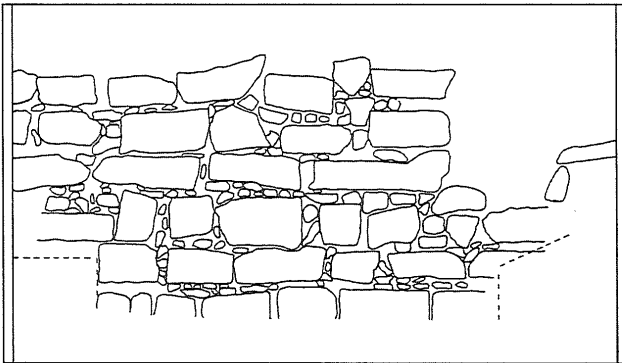
11. Plan of Field A's Field Phase VI.



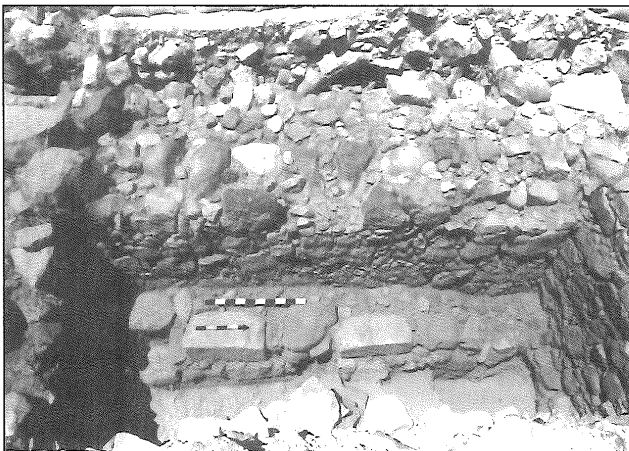
12. Plan of Field A's Field Phases V and IV.

tion during the 1999 season, however, suggested that the two-row Wall 3 in I5, which abutted the south face of I4's Wall 2, was constructed earlier than initially suggested. That its founding preceded that of Field Phase III Wall I5:4 was evidenced by its apparent western face, the line of which was clearly identifiable in plan. Although Field Phase III Wall I5:4 was subsequently laid up against the western face of I5's Wall 3, the facing line of the latter's uppermost course was evident.

Square I5's "Pedestal 11," which was constructed against the east face of Wall 3, proved to be more substantial than first thought (Mattingly *et al.* 1999). What was initially described as a 0.8m (north-south) x 0.7m (east-west) "pedestal", built against the east face of Wall 3, actually was a 4.60m (north-south) bench along the east face of Wall 3, between the south face of I4's Wall 2 and the north face of I5's Wall 5 (Fig. 14). Founded on Surface 23, the bench was constructed of alternating large limestone and basalt boulders; three limestone components were hewn ashlar, while the basalt components were unhewn. The limestone ashlar retained chevron-like tooling marks on their east faces. Their use in this architectural context was, most likely, secondary. At the south end, the



13. Elevation of Wall I4:2A/B's north face.



14. Photo of Square I5 Bench 11; view to the west.

bench featured a basalt storage bin created by two rectangular basalt members set on edge which supported the larger basalt boulder "top" (Fig. 14). The precise function of the bench was undetermined. While its construction was clearly subsequent to that of Wall 3, it could not be determined how much later. Earth Layer I5:14, a 0.33-0.38m thick layer of wind-blown loess sealed against the bench's east face.

Field Phase III (Middle Islamic: ca. 1100-1516) (Fig. 15)

Wall I5:4, described in the 1997 report (Mattingly *et al.* 1999), was laid up against the west face of Field Phase IV's Wall I5:3. At the time of the construction of Wall I5:4 a realignment of Wall I4:2 also occurred, hence, a later phase was evident in Wall I4:2. At the point where Wall I5:3 abutted the south face of Wall I4:2, a corner was created and a doorway was opened in Wall I4:2, west of the newly created corner (Fig. 16).

At the north end of Field A, Rock Tumble I3:21, excavated to a depth of over a meter, sealed against the south face of Wall I3:22 and dated to the Middle Islamic period. Numerous medium-to-large basalt boulders were part of the rock tumble's matrix, suggesting that the rock tumble represented wall collapse. Ceramic material taken from the tumble dated the locus to the Middle Islamic era (1100-1516). The wall collapse, which appeared to have been caused by seismic activity and which collapsed the wall in a southward direction, signals the conclusion of Field Phase III.

Field Phase II (Late Islamic: 1516-1918)

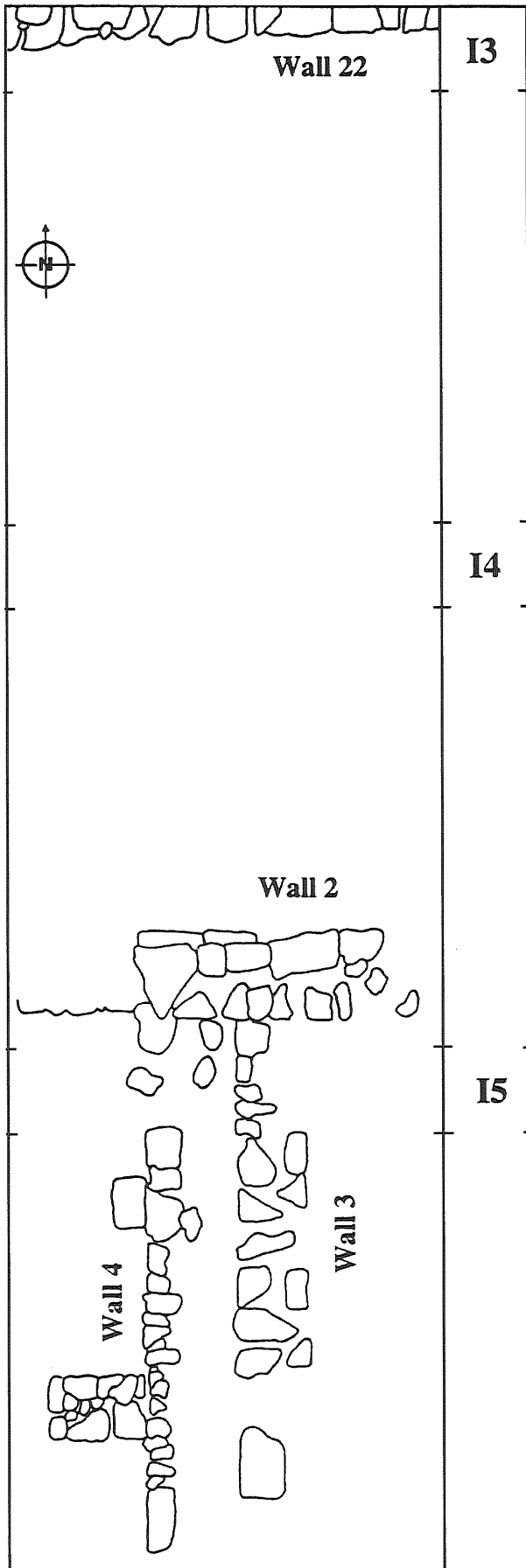
No new evidence relating to Field Phase II was encountered during the 1999 season.

Field Phase I (Modern: 1918-Present)

No new evidence relating to Field Phase I was encountered during the 1999 season.

Field B: The Eastern Gate (David R. Berge)

The 1997 season of excavation in Field B placed three 6 x 6m squares (N9, O9, P9) (Fig. 2) in a west-east line traversing the southern half of the gate entrance. The 1997 excavation revealed, in addition to the large gate tower visible on the surface, the remnants of two walls that appeared to comprise the inner pier walls of a four-chambered gate. Excavation in 1999 sought to define further both the history and overall plan of the gate area. To this end, the westernmost square of the 1997 season (N9) and two new squares, one to its north (N8) and south (N10), were excavated in the 1999



15. Plan of Field A's Field Phase III.



16. Photo of "cornering" or I4:2 with I5:3, with threshold of doorway visible in the photo's lower half, just left of center; view to the east.

season. Four field phases were reported for Field B following the 1997 season extending from the Iron II period to the present (Mattingly *et al.* 1999: 133-138). New excavation uncovered an additional phase. Further analysis has also suggested a revised phasing scheme that comprises six field phases. These phases will be discussed in the order in which they occurred historically.

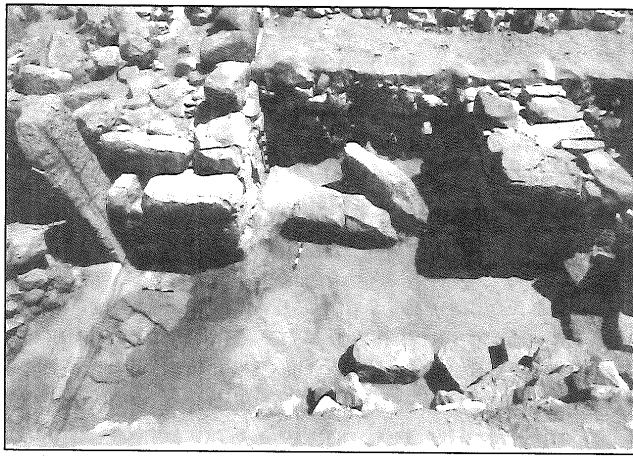
Field Phase VI (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC)

Earth layers that were cut during the construction of the Field Phase V gate complex demonstrate the occupation of the site before the gate construction. The extent of these layers was limited to a 4m² area in the northwest corner of Square N10. No associated features were discovered. The limited pottery from these layers was identified as Iron II. No distinction from the pottery found in association with the Field Phase V gate could be determined. It is unclear whether these layers are remnants of a significant occupation before the construction of the gate, or are to be attributed to settlement associated with the development of the site as found in the following phase.

Field Phase V (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC)

The 1997 excavation uncovered the southern gate tower and portions of the gate piers belonging to the southern half of the gate complex (Mattingly *et al.* 1999: 134-137) (Fig. 17). Additional excavation in 1999 uncovered the southwestern corner of the gate in Square N10 and a portion of the innermost pier of the northern half of the gate in Square N8. Although much remains uncovered, sufficient portions are now visible to demonstrate the existence of a four-chambered gate (Fig. 18). From the portions uncovered, it can be extrapolated that the gate complex measured 14.6m east-west and 19.7m north-south. The southern gate rooms meas-

ured ca. 3.45m in width and 6.4m in length. The passageway between the two westernmost piers measured 4.1m in width. The three piers uncovered thus far ranged in width from ca. 1.55-1.65m. Wall N10:10, the back wall of the southwestern chamber, was slightly narrower at ca. 1.4-1.45m in width. The construction style throughout the gate was boulder and chink; however, there was a clear tendency to use large rectangular stones, several measuring over a meter in length, especially at the ends of the piers that flank the gate passage (Fig. 19). The walls are composed of predominantly semi-hewn stones. A few stones showed signs of partial dressing, but no clear tooling was evident. The construction style suggests a familiarity with ashlar masonry. Lack of time and/or financial resources may have necessitated a slightly cruder



17. Photo of Field B's Phase V southern gate tower and threshold (on the left = east) and first chamber and pier wall (on the right = west); view to the south.

construction. The presence of skilled masons and imported limestone is evident from the capitals, which required both of these elements.

Apart from the expected features of a four-chambered gate, several additional architectural features were partially uncovered which require further investigation for a proper interpretation. Along the eastern balk of Square N8 alongside Wall N8:17 near its southern end, one large, flat-lying stone was uncovered suggesting an east-west wall or an installation of some kind within the northeastern chamber of the gate. A large monolith was also found fallen over apparently in a pit resulting from the investigation of Negueruela (Negueruela 1982). Although further excavation is needed to clarify its original position, it is possible that this stone originally stood upright near the southern end of Pier Wall N8:17, narrowing the entranceway at this point. At the southwestern corner of the gate complex in Square N10, an additional wall extending to the south was uncovered (N10:11; see Fig. 20). Although this wall was not essential to the four-chambered gate plan, all three walls (N10:8, 10, and 11) were clearly bonded together. This simultaneous construction technique demonstrates that the original plan of the gate complex involved more than the gate proper; however, much more excavation is needed to reveal the plan of this larger complex.

There is no clear evidence for multiple phases of use for the four-chambered gate. This lack of evidence may be due in part to the limited excavation to date. Only the founding level of Pier Wall N9:10 has been excavated thus far. Here the builders



18. Wide angle photo of Field B gate excavation, with gate tower and threshold and two chambers and piers in Squares P9, O9, and N9 (moving from left to right = east to west); view to the south.



19. Photo of Pier Wall O9:5, illustrating general construction style of the gate complex; note broken lintel in chamber left (= east) of the gate pier; view to the southwest.



20. Photo of southwestern corner of Field B's chambered gate; note how Wall N10:11 was incorporated into the plan of the chambered gate; view to the north.

founded the wall upon bedrock. The identification of actual use surfaces for the gateway has been difficult. The lack of clarity stems from two factors: the scarcity of material remains and the destructive force of the collapsing superstructure. The latter may have disturbed much of the surface in the gate passageway. A small fragment of paving was found just inside the gate threshold in the 1997 season

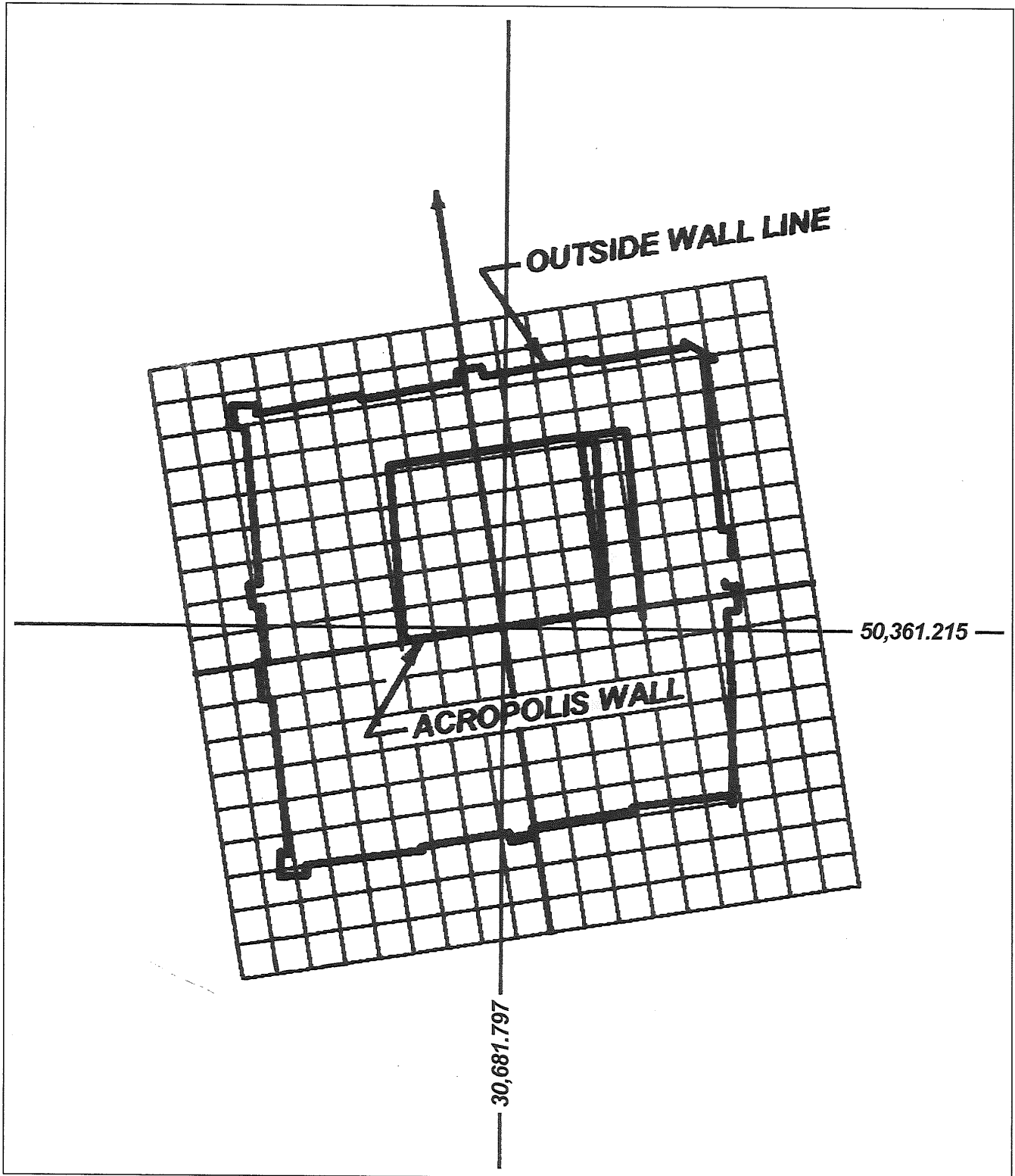
(P9:24). Beaten Earth Surface N9:29 and the previously excavated Surface P9:25 suggest that significant portions of the gate passageway may not have been paved. The two gate chambers which have been partially excavated appear to have had beaten earth surfaces (N9:20, P9:23); however, to date, only a small percentage of these chamber surfaces has been uncovered. In addition, these surfaces were not firmly packed and did not show signs of significant use.

Little new evidence was discovered for the nature of the destruction of the gate complex. The gate passageway in Square N9 contained more evidence of the wooden beams and baked earth containing reed impressions. Although the burnt remains were concentrated in the gate passageway, the collapse from the gate superstructure filled the passageway and chambers with fallen boulders to a depth of 1-1.5m. The capitals and many of the large architectural fragments have been found in the upper layers of this rock tumble and on the modern surface. It seems likely that other smaller stones from the gate superstructure were included with and possibly even covered, these architectural pieces, and that a significant portion of this stone material was reused in the construction of the later Islamic structures. The capital fragment that was found in the Field Phase IV perimeter wall illustrates this phenomenon. Although it is possible that the collapse could have been spread out over some time, there is to date no visible separation within the meter or more of collapse. Small pottery sherds dating from the Late Byzantine and later periods have been found within the rock tumble. This is most probably due to rodent activity of which there was much evidence and to small pieces percolating down through the crevices of the rock tumble.

Dating of this phase is based upon the recovery of Iron II pottery and the Carbon 14 dating of two charcoal samples from different wooden beams recovered in the 1997 season. The sample from O9:14 returned a calibrated date of 760 BC with a +/- 50-year margin of error. The sample from P9:22 returned a calibrated date of 740 BC with a +/- 40-year margin of error. These dates correspond with the pottery recovered and "fit" well with the style of gate and decorated volute capitals.

Field Phase IV (Late Byzantine/Early Islamic: ca. AD 500-1100)

After a substantial period of abandonment, the site was again reoccupied at the end of the Byzantine Period. The construction during the period is confined primarily to an area of ca. 40 x 35m within the larger Iron II walls (Fig. 21). The eastern pe-



21. Site plan showing later Byzantine-Islamic structure, the so-called “acropolis,” sits within the larger Iron Age perimeter wall.

rimeter wall of this building complex runs along the western edge of Field B (N8:3B=N9:1B=N10:20B). To date excavation in Field B is outside of the building complex of Phases IV-II, and excavation has provided little information about these periods. Due to the scarcity of pottery and other

material remains, precise dates for these periods are not available.

In addition to the portion of the eastern perimeter wall excavated in 1997 (N9:1B; see Mattingly *et al.* 1999: 137-138), the east face of the sections of the wall located in N8 and N10 were excavated

in 1999. Foundation Trench N9:14=N10:17 cut into the rock tumble remains of the Iron II gate complex in order to found the earliest phase of this wall. Excavation in N8 did not reach the founding level. The wall continues out of the field to the north, but its southern end (N10:20B) extended less than 1m into Square N10 before cornering toward the west. The wall continues to maintain its use of rectangular limestone in a boulder and chink fashion as discovered in 1997.

Given that the area of Field B was outside the Phase IV building complex, it is not surprising that clear surfaces were hard to trace. Earth Layers N8:16 and N10:14 likely comprise the surface associated with the construction of the first phase of the above-mentioned wall. The accumulation of Ash Layer N8:15 on this surface supports this conclusion. The ash was not a solid layer as would result from a single destruction, but, rather, a complex mixture of ash and soil lenses. Such an accumulation supports the previous interpretation that this area likely served as a place for campfires, using the building's eastern wall as a windbreak. Rock Tumbles N8:14 and 19 signal the collapse of Wall N8:3B=N9:1B=N10:20B.

Field Phase III (Middle Islamic: ca. 1100-1516)

The pattern of use during the present phase is similar to the previous. The eastern perimeter wall was reconstructed (N8:3A=N9:1A=N10:20A) although in a cruder fashion. Instead of rectangular blocks, boulders of various shapes were used. Instead of the preference for limestone evident in the earlier periods, the builders readily used basalt. This more haphazard construction suggests a lower level of organization at the site. As in the previous period, the lenses of ash and earth were laid down along the eastern face of the wall, suggesting further use of this wall as a windbreak for occasional campfires.

Field Phase II (Late Islamic: 1516-1918)

The area to the east of Wall N8:3A=N9:1A=N10:20A continued to be used for campfires into the Late Islamic Period. The separation between Phases II and III is not distinct. The isolation of this phase is based upon the secondary buttressing of Wall N9:1A (Mattingly *et al.* 1999: 138), the possible remains of two ephemeral walls (N8:9, 10), and architectural modifications elsewhere on the site (see Field A Phase II; Mattingly *et al.* 1999: 132-133). These two walls, placed at right angles to one another, were constructed of one row of medium and large boulders (Fig. 22). Only one course of each wall was preserved. Although Wall

9 abutted Wall 3A, it was far from perpendicular to it. Such an angle precludes the use of these walls as an exterior room. In fact, given the nature of their construction, these walls were probably never much more than one course. Unfortunately, no evidence for their usage was uncovered. They may have been additional windbreaks or *ad hoc* bin walls. In Square N10, the ash remains of a small hearth were identified. The end of this phase is marked by a line of rock tumble (N8:8, N9:6, and N10:4) along Wall N8:3A=N9:1A=N10:20A.

Field Phase I (Modern: 1918-Present)

The primary use of the site in recent history has been as an assemblage of sheepfolds. Pen Wall N10:1 was constructed following the contour created by the collapse of the Iron II gate complex. The pit created by Negueruela, partially detected in 1997 within Squares N9 and O9, was further encountered in Square N8.

Field C: The Southern Plaza (Stephen J. Andrews)

In keeping with KRP's primary purpose of investigating and documenting resource utilization at Khirbat al-Muḏaybi', the 1999 KRP team opened a new field of excavation, Field C, in the extensive open area or "plaza" south of the interior acropolis and north of the southern defense wall (Fig. 2). At issue was the nature of the function played by this plaza area in the utilization of natural or imported resources through the site's various occupational levels. Two 6 x 6m squares (H13 and I13) were surveyed and opened on an east-west axis over the tumbled remains of modern sheepfolds constructed of basalt boulders robbed from older structures.

Ceramic evidence from both squares in Field C revealed an occupational sequence consistent with that discovered elsewhere on the site. This same basic sequence extended from Iron Age II to Late



22. Photo of ephemeral walls in Field B's Phase II walls in Square N8, in lower half of the photo; view to the east.

Islamic times. Both squares hit bedrock beneath Iron II deposits.

In general terms, Field C contained multiple layers of lightly beaten earth surfaces, thinly dispersed destruction debris, and windblown deposits, suggesting that the area may have functioned as the outer area or courtyard of a domestic area. The lack of major architectural features and the presence of several garbage pits tend to confirm this conclusion. The Iron II remains of two unrelated walls and a finely constructed stone lined pit built upon the bedrock slope suggest the need for future investigation in Field C to the west and north of square H13. The following provisional field phasing for Field C is based on the results of the 1999 season.

Field Phase X (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC)

Hard-packed soil containing a small number of Iron II sherds (Earth layers H13:20, 21 and I13:36) was encountered quite quickly in both H13 and I13 at an average depth of less than 0.75m in the northern quadrant of the squares and sloping to a depth of over 1.5m toward the south. These earth layers were similar in color (7.5YR 5/6) and consistency with that encountered in a 1 x 1.5m probe in Field A (I4:13; cf. the discussion of “B horizon” above). In addition, large boulder-size basalt rock protruded through these layers in both squares (Fig. 23). A total of 24 Iron II sherds were sifted from the earth layers in both squares. The majority were body sherds. Only three diagnostic pieces were discovered. Given the results of the probe in Field A, Square I4 (see above) the existence of Iron II sherds in what appears to be B horizon soil in Field C is perplexing. However, this may be due to the large amount of disturbance in the earth layers in both squares due to the cutting of pits and robber trenches — which might actually equate Field Phase X with Phase IX, which is more clearly demarcated.

Field Phase IX (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC)

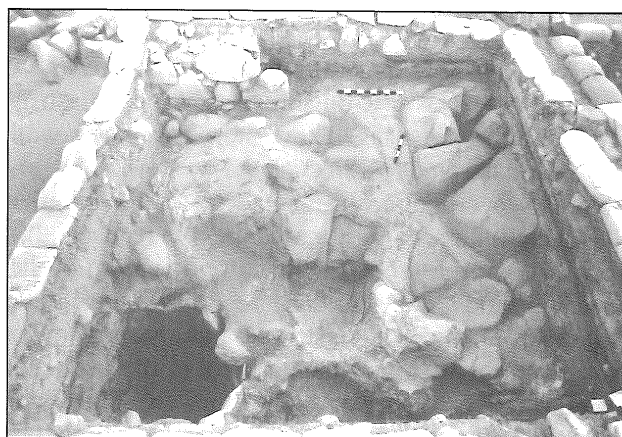
Another phase of Iron II occupation in Field C may be provided by “garbage” pits cut into the B horizon soil of Phase X down to bedrock. In the northeast quadrant of H13, along the east balk, a small pocket of ash containing no pottery (Locus 23) was discovered cut into the sterile soil down to bedrock (Locus 22). Another elongated pit, Locus 24, was also cut through the sterile soil (Locus 20) to bedrock along the southern balk. This “pit” was rectangular in shape, 3.5m in length and on the average 0.5m wide, and continued into the south balk of H13. It contained a large number of Iron II sherds and a polished bone object, possibly a gam-

ing piece. The same phase may be represented in the southeast quadrant square I13 by Earth Layer 33 and Pit 34. Both of these loci were located above the B horizon of I13:36 and contained a large number of Iron II sherds, as well as an iron point.

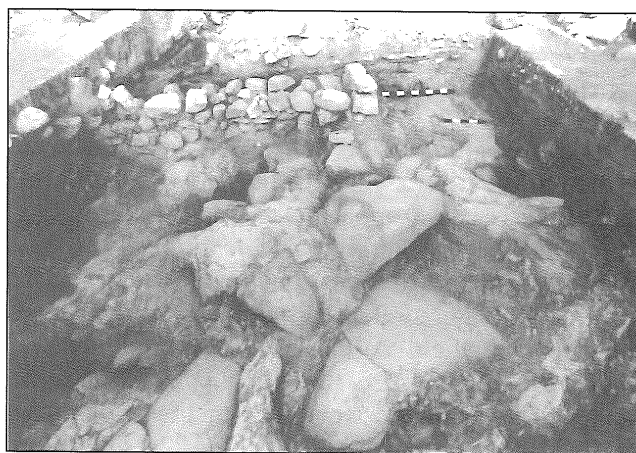
Field Phase VIII (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC)

Two significant architectural features in Field C are assigned to this phase. The first, Wall 25 in Square I13 extends just over 3m on a north-south axis along the west balk (Fig. 24). This wall was founded on bedrock (Locus 39). A portion of the wall remains unexcavated in the east balk of H13. The width of the exposed wall averages just over 0.75m. The function of the wall is unclear.

The second significant feature is a finely constructed stoned-lined storage pit in square H13 (Fig. 25). Pit 27 is located in the southwest corner of the square. It cuts through Earth Layer 20 and is cut an additional 1m into a softer limestone section of the bedrock. Soil samples were taken for flotation specimens. The pit was empty when it fell into disuse. Flat cobble and small boulder size rocks



23. Photo of H13:23 bedrock, with Pit 27 in southwest corner; view to the north.



24. Photo of Wall 25 in Square I13; view to the west.

filled the pit. This may have been done intentionally or resulted from the lining collapsing. A large cobble size piece of “slag” was found near the bottom of the pit. This “slag” was probably from lime slaking process. Many Iron II pottery sherds were recovered from the contents of the pit.

Field Phase VII (Iron II: ca. 925-586 BC)

In this occupational phase Pit 27 in H13 was filled and a new surface, Locus 19, which sealed over the debris utilized to fill the pit. Surface 19 extended nearly the entire length and width of H13 and was encountered through the east balk of H13 into I13 as Surface 10. Surface 19 contained small and large cobbles, rodent droppings, and a large number of Iron II sherds. Surface 19 sealed against the base of Wall 17 in H13 (Fig. 26). A 1 x 1m probe in the southern end of the east balk between H13 and I13 indicated that Surface 19 also sealed against the top course of Wall 25. Wall 25 of I13 continued in use during this period but its exact purpose is not known. Wall 17 extended 1.5m parallel to the north balk of H13. A robber trench to the east of the wall indicates that the wall originally extended another 1m. The exact function of Wall 17 is unclear.

Field Phase VI (Iron II: ca 925-586 BC)

A very compact Surface 12 extended over the entire area of H13 (and possibly into the northwest section of I13 as Surface 6). Surface 12 sealed against Wall 17 in H13 and fell into disuse when Wall 17 collapsed onto it (Fig. 27). Several layers of extremely hard plaster directly above the pit in the southwest corner of the square are associated with this surface. One Iron II body sherd was found in Surface 12. However, this surface effectively sealed the Iron Age occupational levels discovered below.

Field Phase V (Byzantine: ca. AD 325-640)

Pottery from the late Roman and Byzantine period were unearthed in Field C, but none was found in clearly sealed loci. This may be due to the large number of pits, trenches, and general disturbances discovered in Field C. No architecture that could be attributed to this period was found. This may be due to the possibility that Field C was outside of any domestic area during the period.

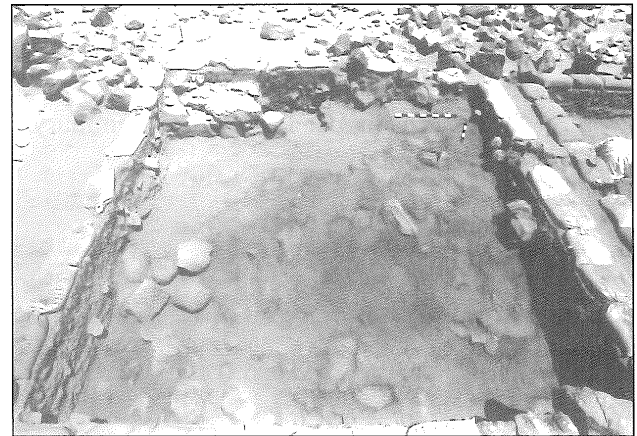
Field Phase IV (Early Islamic: ca. 640-1100)

Pottery from the Early Islamic period was also unearthed in Field C in mixed contexts. It is possible that Wall 8 in H13 and Wall 14 in I13 may date to this period. Part of Wall 8 appeared to have been

constructed with the collapse of Wall 17. These low walls may have been used as terrace walls or sheepfold walls. Several coins, lamp and pipe fragments, metal objects and glass fragments were discovered in loci related to the Islamic periods discerned in Field C.



25. Photo of Pit 27 in Square H13; view to the west.



26. Photo of Square H13's Surface 19 and Wall 17 (in upper left = northwest); view to the north.



27. Photo of Square H13's Surface 12 and Wall 17; view to the north.

Field Phase III (Middle Islamic: ca. 1100-1516)

Pottery from the Middle Islamic period was unearthed in mixed contexts in Field C. A number of small installations (fire pits, small rock bins, etc.) may be dated to this period. Because of a lack of sealed loci for this period, however, it is not possible to ascertain the exact dating sequence for these installations. A leather fragment found in Earth Layer 5 in Square I13 may also date to this period.

Field Phase II (Late Islamic: 1516-1918)

A sheepfold wall (Wall 1 in H13) was constructed on Surface 5. A fragment of a Turkish pipe was found on Surface 5. Late Islamic pottery found in Trench 15 suggests that the Iron Age Wall 17 was robbed out at this time.

Field Phase I (Modern: 1918-Present)

Wall 1 in H13 continued to be used as a sheepfold on into modern times.

KRP plans to continue its fieldwork in the summer of 2001, when further excavation will be undertaken to answer some of the questions raised by the first two seasons.

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