

TELL EL MAZAR, FIELD I PRELIMINARY REPORT OF AREA G, H, L, AND M: THE SUMMIT

by
Khair Yassine

Introduction

This article is intended as a preliminary report for Field I: The Summit. It has resulted from four seasons (1977-1981) of excavations. Another article will be written dealing with Field 2: The Southern Slopes. A summary of the results of the seasons are given by reporting the material found for each stratum involved, beginning with the latest (designated by Roman numerals). The areas excavated were:¹

Ge7, Gf7, Gg7, Gh7,
Ge8, Gf8, Gg8, Gh8,
Ha7, Hb7, Ha8, Hb8,
Le1, Lf1, Lg1, Lh1,
Le2, Lf2, Lg2, Lh2,
Le3, Lf3, Lg3, Lh3,
Le4, Lf4, Lg4, Lh4,
Le5, Lf5, Lg5, Lh5,
Ma1, Ma2, Ma3.

(Fig. 1, 2)

As early as 1969, the University of Jordan arranged to begin its own excavation at a major site so as to provide its

students with practical archaeological training. Furthermore, the University had plans to develop its facilities ultimately in the various phases of archaeological research; e.g., restoration and conservation; laboratory analysis; documentation; the building up of its own archaeological artefacts and archives.

The first project for the University was the joint expedition with Leiden University of Holland and Dr. Hanke Franken, to excavate the site of Jalul, 5 km. east of Madaba. Unfortunately, the excavation was interrupted because of the constant Israeli bombing of the area during the summer of 1969. In 1977, a full agreement of a joint expedition was drawn between the University of Jordan, the Department of Antiquities and the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania to resume excavating Tell es-Sa'idiyeh. Dr. James Pritchard, of the University Museum and I were named co-directors. After ten days of excavation, Dr. Pritchard became aware of the possible danger

¹ The 1977 campaign was sponsored by the University of Jordan, while the campaigns of 1978, 1979, and 1981, were sponsored by the University of Jordan and the Department of Antiquities, as a joint expedition. The staff was comprised of students from the University of Jordan and from abroad, and the employees of the Department of Antiquities, consisting of between ten and fifteen individuals in all seasons. Volume I is assigned to the "cemetery of Tell el Mazar - Mound A" of the fifth century B.C. This volume will be sent to the publisher very soon, and hopefully, will be out at the same time when this article appears in this annual. An article on the "Ammonite Seals from Tell el Mazar" was published in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan I* (ed). A. Hadidi 1981: 189 ff. The Aramic Inscriptions from Tell el Mazar will appear in *BASOR* 1984, and "The Iron Age I Open Court Sanctuary from Mound A" will appear in the forthcoming issue of the *ZDPV*. Carbon-14 dating will be conducted by the University of Pennsylvania, and the animal bones will be analyzed by Dr. David Reese.

The staff consisted of the following people:

1977: Father Pierre Proulx, SJ; Dr. A. Hopper; Barbara Porter; Elizabeth Simpson; M. Mac Clinan; Foad Hassan; Imjahid Moheesen; Omar Yunis; Rabha Yassine; Janiet Millen; Dr. Zeidan Kafafi.

1978: Father Pierre Proulx, SJ; Emsaytif Suleiman; Nabil el Qadi; Khairiyh 'Amer; M. el Muragtan; Frida Stoll; H. Rothe; Anne Rossell; M. Mayer; Rabha Yassine; 'Aiesh Abu Helal.

1979: Dr. A. Hopper; E. Suleiman; Al Abu Daiyah; Ali Sa'aidi; I. Haj Hassan; I. Tayeb; 'Aiesh Abu Helal

1981: E. Suleiman; A. Abu Daiyah; Ali Sa'aidi; Helda Ayub; Hanan 'Azar; Sabah Abu Hadaib; Abdel Nasser; Hamad Qatamin; Nesfat Mohmoud; 'Aiesh Abu Helal.

Architects: Langer de Polaski and Mahmoud Adam

Photographic Processing: Sarkis Labejian.

Also students from the course of Archaeological Training.

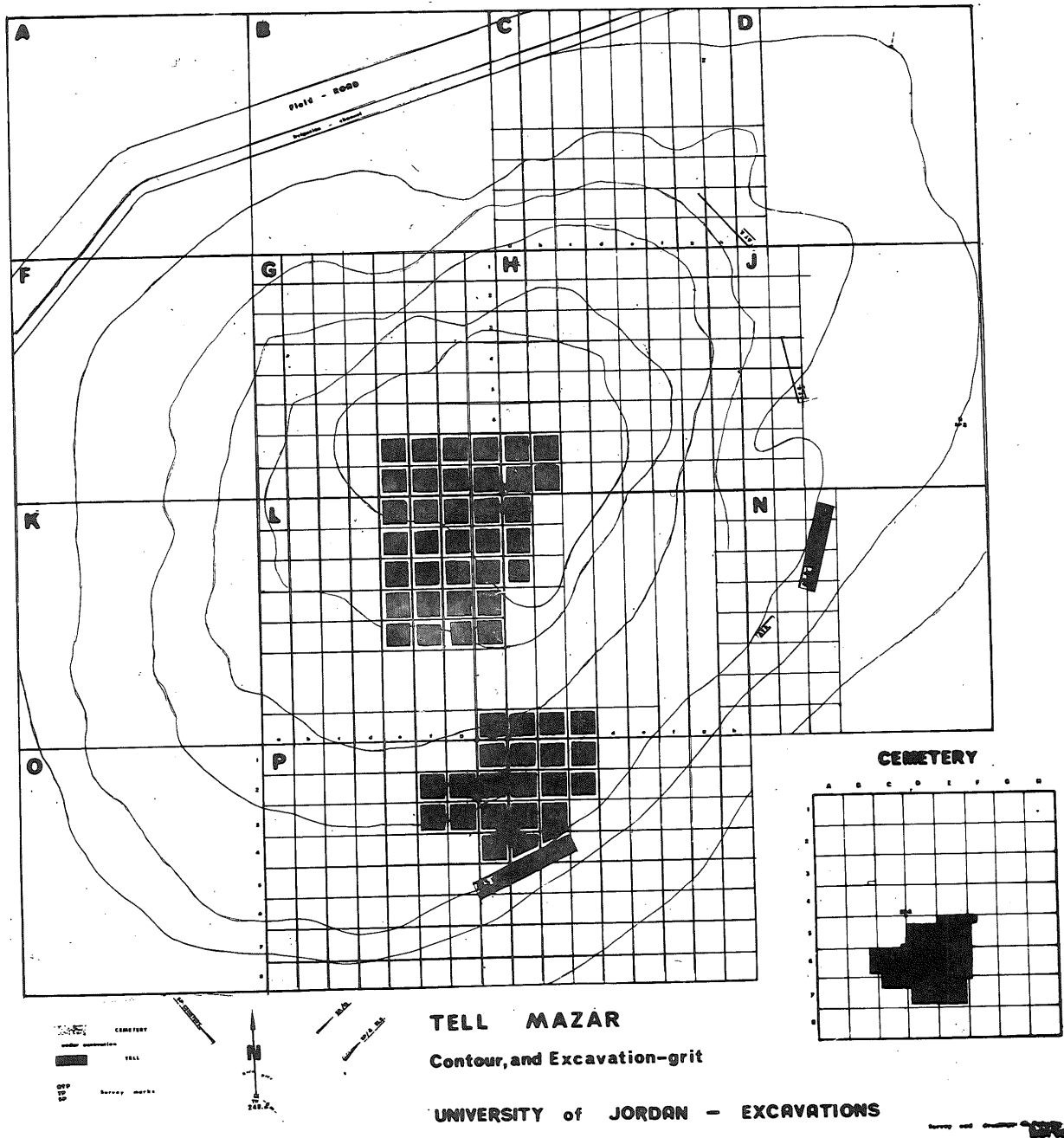


Fig. 1

involved at the site, due to many unexploded artillery shells from the Israeli campaigns against the area from 1968 to 1972.

I was encouraged by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dr. Ghrayba, the Assistant to the President of the University, Dr. Samra, and my colleagues at the University and the Department to choose yet another site. The late Mr. Y. Oweis, then Director of Antiquities, and Dr. A. Hadi-di, provided much assistance and kindness.

The site of Tell el Mazar was chosen as a location which would be ideal for student training. It provided us with complex and challenging stratigraphy because its architectural complexes and installations had been constructed almost entirely of mudbricks.

The climatical conditions of the location are ideal for excavation during the school's winter semester, fitting in perfectly with that semester's curriculum. Furthermore, students graduating in the fall are encouraged to join the expedition, since most jobs and army recruiting usually do not begin until June or July. The University Farm in the Jordan Valley and its facilities, e.g., classrooms, laboratories, kitchen and dormitories, are well-suited for the use of the expedition, serving both as a camp and a teaching facility.

Tell el Mazar is situated between Wadi Rajeb-north (1.5 km.) and Wadi Zarqa-south (3.5 km.), in the mid-Jordan Valley (map. 1959 - 1718). Although the mound does not exceed 30.00 square metres in size, it rises to a height of some 24.00 metres above its surrounding (Fig. 1, Pl. C1: 1). The Tell is a man-made mound with no natural hill. The location of the site lies in an area plotted with several sites dated roughly to the same period. Those already excavated are Tell Deir 'Alla, 3 km. south, and Tell es Sa'idiyeh, 6.5 km. north.

The source of water for Tell el Mazar would have been the steady stream driven from the Zarqa River. Old maps show several canals were driven from the Zarqa River, running north along the foothills, then turning west, passing the Tell on the north side, and one at the south side.

These canals ceased being used and finally disappeared after the reploting and changing of the grids occurred during the deployment of a newer system of irrigation (East Ghor Canal Project) in 1966. Presently, a new cemented canal runs at the northern side of the Tell.

During excavations the mound was found to contain occupations of different installations dating as early as the Late Bronze II age and continuing to the Hellenistic Period. From the second half of the thirteenth century to the Middle of the fourth century B.C., the site underwent several clear-cut destructions, which terminated the strata. Though no historical source explicitly mentions the destruction or seizure of Tell el Mazar during these periods, we may rather confidently relate the various strata with well-known historical events, based on the material culture and its typological chronological sequence.

We must emphasize that our relatively small mound was not identified (at least to the present day) in ancient texts. Furthermore, we believe Tell el Mazar was connected at all times to the main towns of the district in this part of the Jordan Valley. The entire existence of the site was dependent on the internal administrative organization of the district and the degree of security it provided. The historical stratigraphy of Tell el Mazar corresponds to that of Tell Deir 'Alla (phases A-M) (Franken, 1969) and Tell es Sa'idiyeh (unpublished). We assume that Tell el Mazar had no independent existence and although smaller, should be considered a sister town to them.

As we stated above, our knowledge of history and of historical geography is lacking. The present day name must have been derived from the near-by burial and Mosque of Mazar of Abu 'Ubidah, the commander of the Arab Muslim Army in A.D. 622. Parts of the summit were covered with late (modern) graves, which might have been considered contemporary with those graves of Mazar Abu 'Ubidah (1.5 km.), east of Tell el Mazar. These graves contained no artefacts, so we cannot fix the date of these graves with any real certainty.

Stratum I: Fourth Century B.C. (Fig. 4)

Installations 100: The uppermost stratum in the mound dating to the first half of the fourth century B.C., was damaged in parts by erosion during the long period of abandonment as well as by the late (modern) graves. These graves might have been contemporary with the graves of Mazar (Mosque) Abu 'Ubidah. In the area excavated several graves were discovered, however, none contained artefacts. Since no objects were found in these burials, we cannot fix the date of these graves. However, the striking features of Stratum I were the deep, circular pits and silos found in every excavated area. In other words, the distinctive feature of this stratum was the dozens of rounded storage pits and silos. In several cases, these cut through walls and deposits of Strata II, III, and IV. Some of these are just over 2.00 m. in diameter and more than 4.00 m. deep (Fig. 4).

There are various sizes, shapes and construction types; material also varies, some had a brick lining preserved to a height of nearly 3.00 m (Pl. C1: 3, 4). In a few cases stones were used within the lower courses, or mudbricks at the lower courses and then at the top stones were used (Fig. 3, 4). Many were dug and found without any lining either of stones or bricks (Pl. C1: 2). In shape they range between cylindrical or barrel shape, while others were cone-shaped, especially those dug without any brick lining or stones (Fig. 4). These were found to have been used for chaff only, and not for grain. The floor of one silo, built of mudbrick, was found to be paved with small flag stones. Another floor was paved with mudbricks, while many others were found to be of hard clay. The rounded (barreled) shape of the grainaries suggest that the roofs were conical shaped (Fig. 2). Deposit of the collapsed mudbrick conical roof was found in some of these silos. The deposits in these grainaries do not necessarily represent the initial, original, use, for it appears that people used them for different purposes, since the content of deposit in them, ranged from charred grains, chaff, pottery, copper, stone vessels, rub-

bish (stones, animal bones, pottery fragments, loom fireworks, charcoal, etc.).

The construction of these installations on the summit of Tell el Mazar for grainaries (also Deir 'Alla and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh) was for a good reason: the dry climate of the Jordan valley; the lack of rain; the high altitude of the tell; and the steep slope and its compacted deposit, all would create the right atmosphere for grain storage. The above ground water table allows rain to run off quickly, thereby, permitting the interior deposit to stay dry. (We were able to resume excavation immediately after a couple of hours of heavy rain). The presence of the silos and the grain pits suggest that they were built without proper protection or permanent installation; that is, it was safe to store without proper protection.

The presence of these deep pits with the contents of heavy chaff and grain indicates massive grain storage, used as a security against famine, as a tax gathering facility, or as support for a military force. The site in this period apparently served as a supply depot.

The settlements of the Iron Age II in this part of the Jordan Valley became very thin at the end of the fourth century B.C., despite the dense chain of settlement of the Iron Age II, (Ibrahim, Sauer, Yassine, 1970: 26). No open spaces between the various towns and villages were within sight. The settlement of the Hellenistic Period was found at the foothill of the East Jordan Valley. During the Hellenistic Period our site might have been connected with the urban centre situated 3 km. east of Tell el Mazar, and is called 'Ammata. During the survey of the Jordan Valley, the site had been labelled as Hellenistic (Ibrahim, Sauer, Yassine, 1976: 58).

The material artefacts recovered from inside these pits were dated to the Early Hellenistic Period (Pl. CX: 1-5). P. Lapp dated the storage jar to 333 B.C. (Lapp, 1970: 179). The abandonment of the site apparently occurred at the time of Alexander the Great (333 B.C.) This is also confirmed in Palestine from Tell Abu Hawam (Hamilton, 1935: 1-69) Megiddo and Samaria and also from our ceramic chronology, (Pl. CX: 1-5).



Stratum II: Fifth Century B.C. (Fig. 5)

Installations 200: The division of strata used in this context is based on the architectural stratigraphy. The beginning of this period is marked by a massive filling operation (especially in squares Gf7, Gg7, Gh7, Ha7, and Hb7), designed to cover and level off piles of debris and stumps of walls. Evidence of an intensive destruction was found wherever trenches reached below the level of Stratum II (this debris represents the destruction of Stratum III). The filling's deepest area was at the northern and eastern extremity of the excavated areas. Since those were in Stratum III and were lower than the area in squares Lf1, Lg1, Lh1, Lf2, Lg2, and Lh2, protection was achieved for the northern installations by a stone retaining wall extending from the southeast corner of square Ge8 to the middle of square Gg8. The northern face of the stone wall was lined with upright stones at a straight line; however, the southern face was merely a filling of irregular stones, since this side of the wall was below the ground level of the middle open courtyard in squares Lf1, Lg1, Lh1, Lf2, Lg2, and Lh2, (Fig. 5, Pl. CII: 1). The levelling fill was covered by a thin floor of clay.

In plan, the buildings of Stratum II consisted of a central open courtyard enclosed on two sides by architectural units. There may also have been a row of units (rooms) on the south side of the courtyard, however, since this area was very much eroded, we can only hypothesize that possibility (Fig. 2). Stratum II extended over the entire excavated area, however, much of the different parts of these buildings had been removed in the process of digging the silos, the grainaries, the modern graves, and the natural erosion, during the long period of abandonment. To this effect, some errors were made since the excavators recorded that they found no floors, in some parts, and since some areas of this upper level were not clearly stratified, some vessels may have actually lain beneath the floors, and were included in the above loci only because of their discovery within their four walls.

The major installation of this stratum was the area to the north of the raised open courtyard, occupied by three units: (1) 201, 202, 203, 204, 205; (2) 206, 207, 208, 209; (3) 210, 211.

To the east, different installations were built, but we are unable to establish the extent of their uniformity, partly because the area excavated was small, and much of it was devastatingly damaged by the construction of the silos and the grain pits of the Stratum I Period.

Unit 1 was built with a stone retaining wall to the south of room 201 and 202. It is not known if a mudbrick wall was superimposed on the stone retaining wall since this stone wall was protruding at the surface. It is also possible that the superimposed wall was totally washed away. In room 209 of Unit 2, two *tawaben* (tabuns) were found adjacent to the east wall. The western wall of room 207 has a stone foundation. The extent of those two units must extend to the northern unexcavated side of the mound. Rooms 210 and 211 seemed to have been paved in their early phase of use, for few stone patches were found, and the rest were lifted up when the silo and the grain pits were dug.

One *tabun* was found at the northeastern side of square Hb7, in room 211. It is only partly excavated since the other half extends to the eastern baulk (Pl. CIII: 2). The middle open courtyard did not reveal much of the type of activities it might have played because of great erosion that it had suffered. It is the highest on the mound. Aside from the two circular stone built storage installations, and the portion of paved working floor, much of the courtyard deposit was washed away. Circular installation 220 was built of big sized stones. It measures 2.00 m. in diameter, and 0.90 m. deep, the same as the circular installation no. 221, except that no. 220 has its upper courses built of mudbricks.

In summary, the special features of Stratum II's installations are that they show uniform planning, despite the leveling operation which proceeded the construction procedure. In comparison to the installations from Stratum III, IV, and V, the building materials of Stratum II were poor in quality. The brick clay was of

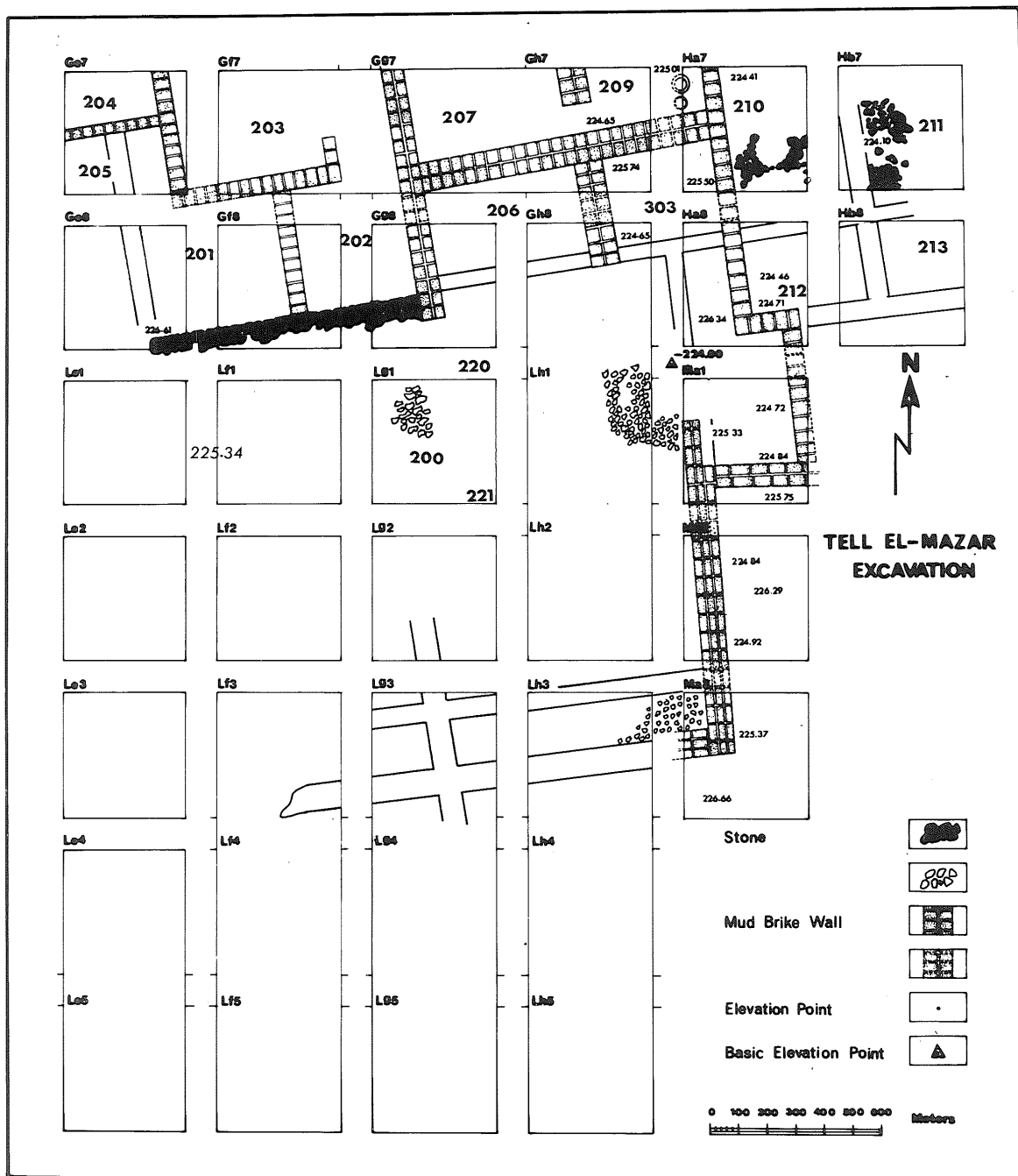


Fig. 5

inferior quality which was improved with the use of better quality plant chaff. Clay apparently was collected from decomposed occupational deposits. It is composed of loose ash and clay wastage consolidated with water to make into hard-packed bricks. For this reason it was (at the beginning) very difficult to distinguish between the actual deposit and wall installations. From the study of the layout of Stratum II, it was certain that Stratum II buildings were built on the ruins of Stratum III structures, having the same orientation, but varied in planning, and nature.

In many cases reed matting was laid underneath the walls before the walls were built, apparently to prevent sinking and cracking of the walls. This reed matting provided a stable surface underneath the walls (as a foundation) since the mound composition is a deposit of decomposed occupational and building material which makes it vulnerable to sliding and cracking. The reed net consolidated the different installation units into one coherent joint architectural complex. In a few cases a stone foundation was used. The lining of bricks was in a header and stretcher arrangement (Pl. CII: 2, CIII: 1).

There is no doubt that these installations were used as private industrial houses. Most seem to contain domestic utensils and industrial artefacts; nevertheless, these installations indicate considerable planning. The buildings consist of a central open court enclosed on two or possibly three or four sides by architectural units.

This type of court building is common throughout the Near East, and is known in various periods (Yasine, 1974: 85). These later ones may have been of Mesopotamian origin (Amiran, 1958: 25).

The Persian domination of Syria extended over 200 years beginning with the triumphant entrance of Cyrus the Great into Babylon in 539 B.C. and ending with the conquest of Syria by Alexnader and his officers beginning in 332 B.C.

From 400 B.C. onward, Syria was the scene of many military expeditions and conflicts. For more than fifty years (408-343), Egypt endeavoured to assert her

independence of Persia, and with Artaxerxes II, Mnemou (404-358) and Artaxerxes III Ochus (358-337) fought her, across the natural obstacles which defended her from Asian invasion.

The Persian rule of Egypt required that the route should always be secured and controlled. The Syria-Palestinian met directly with the Persian. A true discovery of this level, from Tell el Mazar, and from other sites is still growing; however, the Persian influence was geographically restricted and socially superficial in all but in a few areas over which they, (at one time or another) had authority. It is generally agreed, among scholars of Palestinian material, that the impact of the Achaemenid Persian upon the country was not extensive, (538-332 B.C.). In government and administration, they adopted and modified rather than radically changing what they had gained by conquest or annexation. Existing administrative hierarchies were crowned and reinforced with imperial civil servants. Their rule is reflected in Tell el Mazar mainly with official stamps and stamp-impressions, military equipment and weapons, metal products, cups, jugs, bowls, ladels, and jewellery, made of bronze and silver as well as bronze fittings. These Achaemenid style metal objects were common in Syria, Palestine and Jordan. Recently, after the discovery of Tell el Mazar more parallels have been discovered at Umm Uzzainah in Amman. Scholars are still not in agreement as to whether these objects were all imported from Achaemenid centres or were locally made in various regions in imitation of Achaemenid prototypes. However, there can be no doubt that the popularity of the Achaemenid metal form in Jordan, led to many imitations of these types in various materials such as glass, faience, alabaster and also clay (for this historical reference see Bennett, 1978: 165; Cooney, 1965: 39 ff; Katezensteir, 1979: 23 ff).

Stratum III: Sixth/Seventh Century B.C. (Fig. 6)

Installations 300: The builder of Stratum II cleared the remaining walls and

rubble of the installations and pushed things into different directions. Also, Stratum I builders had engaged themselves in disturbing the stratigraphical arrangements of this upper area. To this effect, the complete assemblage and plan of Stratum III could not totally be ascertained; however, from the frequent untouched stratification from a number of squares, it appeared to be a large structure consisting of a massive and most impressive building. Crowning the centre of the mound, it dominates the summit, situated on its most prominent heights. It has been called the "Palace Fort". The view from the Palace Fort is magnificent in all directions. When it was built, it must have been a central residence of the governor of this area.

The building complex (No. 300) of Stratum III was constructed according to a single plan, enjoying the natural protection provided by the height of the mound (*ca.* 23.00 m.). Its internal division was dictated by the function of each unit. One unit forms a large rectangular podium (rooms: 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308). It measures 10.00 x 15.00 m., encircled by a thick mudbrick wall. The interior of the podium was filled with a mass of soil up to *ca.* 1.20 m. Above the field soil and the earlier wall, the main interior walls were built. To the north of the raised unit there was a large stone paved open courtyard (315) partially excavated (Fig. 6, Pl. CV: 1). To the east a unit of rooms was built attached to the massive east wall of the podium (rooms: 310, 311, 312, 313), the floors of these and the open stone paved courtyard were lower than the podium unit. A flight of stone stairs (one was excavated) was built to make an axis from this lower unit to the podium unit. This lower unit apparently (at the last phase of the usage of the building) served as a storeroom, kitchen, weaving room, a meat preparation room and for other domestic tasks. The pottery rooms (312 and 313) (Fig. 6) clearly indicate that they served as a storage room for various food stuffs and industrial tools. A variety (presumably) of provisions were stored in each room. The variety of products and the presence of different vessels (bowls, jugs, juglets, cooking pots, jar-silos, looms and

loomweights, point out that this building was in constant use (Pls. CXI: 1-12, CV: 2, 3). Products were brought in, measured, prepared, and then taken out according to the needs of the administrative unit (civilian or military) for which they were intended. Room 311 revealed great quantities of animal bones (cattle), a few show a sharp cut, which indicate that the room had been used for meat preparation.

The doorway leading to room 307 seemed to be the major one between the podium unit and the other units of the Palace Fort, (Fig. 6). The door must have been made of two rafts, opening toward the inside, since the two (one on each side) stone sockets were found at the inner side of the wall. The wooden frame of this door was found totally burned on the floor of room 307, (Pl. CV: 3).

Hall no. 316 might have been a middle courtyard (partially excavated), since the material deposit in its stratigraphical composition was totally different. No reed impressions used for the roof were encountered from this part, which indicates that this hall was not roofed. Also, the floor(s) of this hall shows different layers of compacted clay mixed with chunks of lime plaster. The different numerous floor phases are representatives of the annual seasons, and washed material of the daily activities. It is hoped that we will clear up this point in future excavations.

If this were the case, hall no. 316, as part of a middle courtyard, would strongly indicate Assyrian character. Since we know very little of the local architectural planning of this period, we are reluctant to comment on its local affinity; however, we cannot rule out the local original planning. We have to wait for the final publication of the architectural complexes from Busyrah, Sahab, Tawalan, Tell es- Sa'idiyeh, etc., sites having architectural installations of the same period (see bibliography). Further proof establishing the affinity of the Assyrian/Babylonian building and planning techniques is seen in the use of the buttresses in the west wall of rooms: 301, 303, and 309, (Fig. 6; Pl. CIV: 1).

The main entrance to a stone-paved open courtyard was from the west side

through a staircase, no. 318 (a few flights of stairs were uncovered). Room 317 had a compartment found full of chaff. In the middle of the room three huge stones were built on top of each other, possibly forming the lower part of a column, to support the roof. The intensity of the heat caused by the fire (see below) indicates that the room was full of material vulnerable to burning. Very little was recovered from room 309. The area here is very much eroded. On the south wall, only one course of its mudbrick wall was saved. The west wall in hall 319 was built on a slope, running south.

Two clear construction phases were evident in Installations 300. The doorway leading to the podium unit (room 307) was narrowed. In the first phase this doorway was leading to a long hall. The partition walls between the rooms: 305, 306, 308, and 303 were built at the second phase. These rooms at the second phase were used for daily domestic duties, e.g., cooking, weaving, and other domestic activities (Pls. CIV: 3, CV, 2,3). Some of the most useful contexts, archaeologically, are architectural. Structures, rooms, and features, all define the locations of certain activities, and corroborate inferences made from their contents. They contribute spatial, temporal and functional information in their own right. The changes took place in the second phase and the material culture was found in installations 300 before it was razed in a severe fire, indicating that a fundamental change took place in the function of the building, namely, the transformation of the "Palace Fôrt" into a domestic dwelling. This may also be reflected in the reduction of the size of the big hall, making it into four compartments (rooms: 305, 306, 308).

This "Palace Fort" suggests that Tell el Mazar was probably a garrison rather than a large settlement of the usual type. Assuming this was built by one of the kings of Ammon, a name of Ammonite kings was written on one of the ostraca found in one of the rooms. The name is H S L', El delivers or protects, also attested by a Tell Siran inscription found in Amman (Cross, 1973: 15). This Palace Fort could be taken as evidence that the site now served as a

centre for the Ammonite administration. The function of the building was primarily concerned with the official business activities of this part of the Jordan Valley. Thus, this defensive fort may have been commanded by "royal officials". It was equipped with foodstores, oil and grain, which were stored in large clay containers.

The fate of the Palace Fort came to an end when the whole building was put to fire. Every room was burned to the ground. The walls from the inside were baked and became very hard, an indication of the high degree of firing. A good number of the furniture pieces (in addition to other materials) were in the rooms before the building was set on fire (Pl. CIV: 2,3; CV: 2, 3). No skeletal remains were found inside the building which means the people had fled the place, but were unable to carry their belongings with them. Storerooms were stacked with vessels of all sizes and types. Figurines of horses were found in the debris, as well as figurines of other animals.

In its historical context, the Babylonian conquest that brought an end to the independence of the different state of Jordan has relevance here. The destruction of Tell el Mazar must have occurred before the end of the sixth century B.C.

We read in (Jer. 40: 14) that Ammon had played some part in plotting the assassination of Gedliah the Babylonian, appointed governor, and later he had given sanctuary to his murderers (Jer. 41: 1, 15). We can probably assume that Babylon would have retaliated sooner or later. The retaliation came probably in 582 B.C., according to Josephus... "on the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was in the twenty-third year of the reign of Nabuchadrezzar, when he made an expedition against Goelesyria, and when he had possessed himself of it, he made war against the Ammonites and the Moabites, and when he had brought all of those nations under subjugation, he fell upon Egypt."

The references in Jeremiah (40: 11ff) and in Josephus indicate that up until about 586 B.C., the Jordanian states of Ammon, Moab and Edom, were in

existence and under the control of their own rulers who chose to direct their own affairs independently.

The seventh century witnessed a significant rise in the fate of Tell el Mazar. Jordan was a nominal Assyrian vassal, but it was permitted to have its own native ruler without the presence of an Assyrian provincial governor. Thus, the area enjoyed internal administrative freedom. Moreover, Assyrian protection meant a lessening of threats from external enemies. A striking literary documentation of Ammonite prosperity at this time occurs in one of the letters found at ancient Nineveh, (apparently written to king Esarhaddon). It says that the Ammonites were assigned the largest amount of tribute to be paid to the Assyrian monarch. This shows the relatively more affluent position of the Ammonite state during this period. Under beneficent Assyrian protection, the Ammonites were able to keep control of the lucrative caravan trade from the desert thereby enhancing their prosperity.

From later resources in the Assyrian Annals, it was not only tribute of gold and silver paid under Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) by his subjects of Qaus Gaber, king of Edom, Musuri king of Moab, and Puduil, king of Ammon together with nineteen other kings, they were also employed in transporting various materials to Nineveh for building of the palace.

In Assurbanipal's reign (668-627 B.C.) these subject peoples were either pressed into or perhaps volunteered for military service, Qaus Gaber of Edom, Musuri of Moab and Ammin Abdi of Bet Ammon are listed among the twenty-two kings who helped in his war against Egypt (for the historical references see Lindsay, 1976: 23ff; Bennett, 1978: 165 ff).

Stratum IV: (Fig. 8)

Installations 400: From the study of Stratum IV architecture it is certain that Stratum III buildings of the podium unit were built on the ruins of Stratum IV structures having the same orientation.

Stratum IV buildings represent an earlier stage of the Palace Fort of Stratum III. Stratum III is an installation of an

architectural complex, less grand than its successor. Due to the alterations made for the construction of Installations 300, many features of the original planning of Installations 400 have been obliterated, and on the other hand, some parts were integrated into installations 300. The chronology of Stratum IV was retrieved from the area of the podium units of the Palace Fort, since this area was left without uprooting the remnants of 400 during the construction of the podium unit, and since it was built at a higher level than the other units.

Deposits of pottery sherds from the floor of rooms 410, 411, 412, dated to the later period (Stratum III period). However, rooms 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, and 408, and their walls were only used in Period IV, and since they were filled with soil by the builders of Stratum III (to gain a higher altitude for the podium unit) these walls were left standing, reaching below the floors of the podium.

The layout of Stratum IV is very much like that of Stratum III, except that walls which were added for Stratum III are much thicker.

The plan of the excavated parts is that of a residential quarter. There is no doubt concerning the use of these installations for private houses, in which were found mainly domestic utensils. The complete plan of the houses could not be exactly ascertained, because the walls of Stratum III and the walls of Stratum IV, in addition to the 1.00 m. thick baulk were not removed during excavation, waiting to establish the relationship between those and their exact chronological sequence.

The pottery sequence of the last phase of Stratum IV is not clear because of the re-use of the installations by the builder of Stratum III. In the podium area, it seems that it was cleared out totally at the time of the filling operation. However, in the earlier phases, the deposits of the different loci revealed material and information that indicated the function of the installations.

As stated earlier, the nature of the settlement seemed to be that of a non-military one. The walls of Stratum IV are thinner than those of Stratum III, even

TELL el MAZAR

Structure within
Area: G, H, L, M

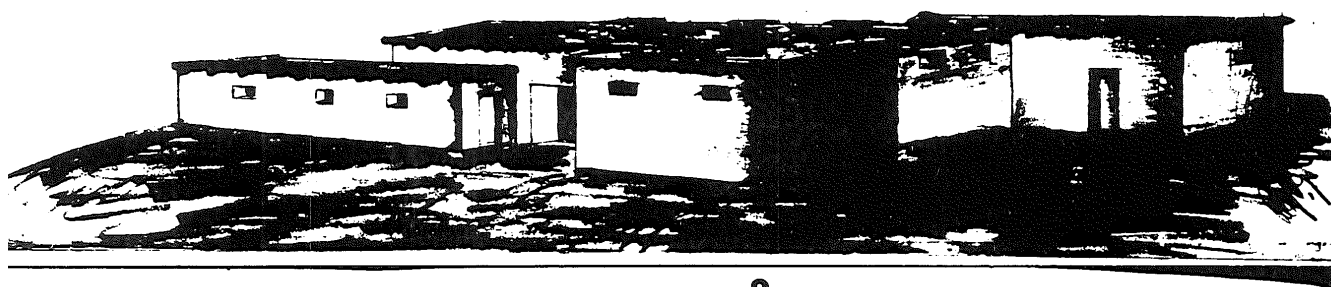
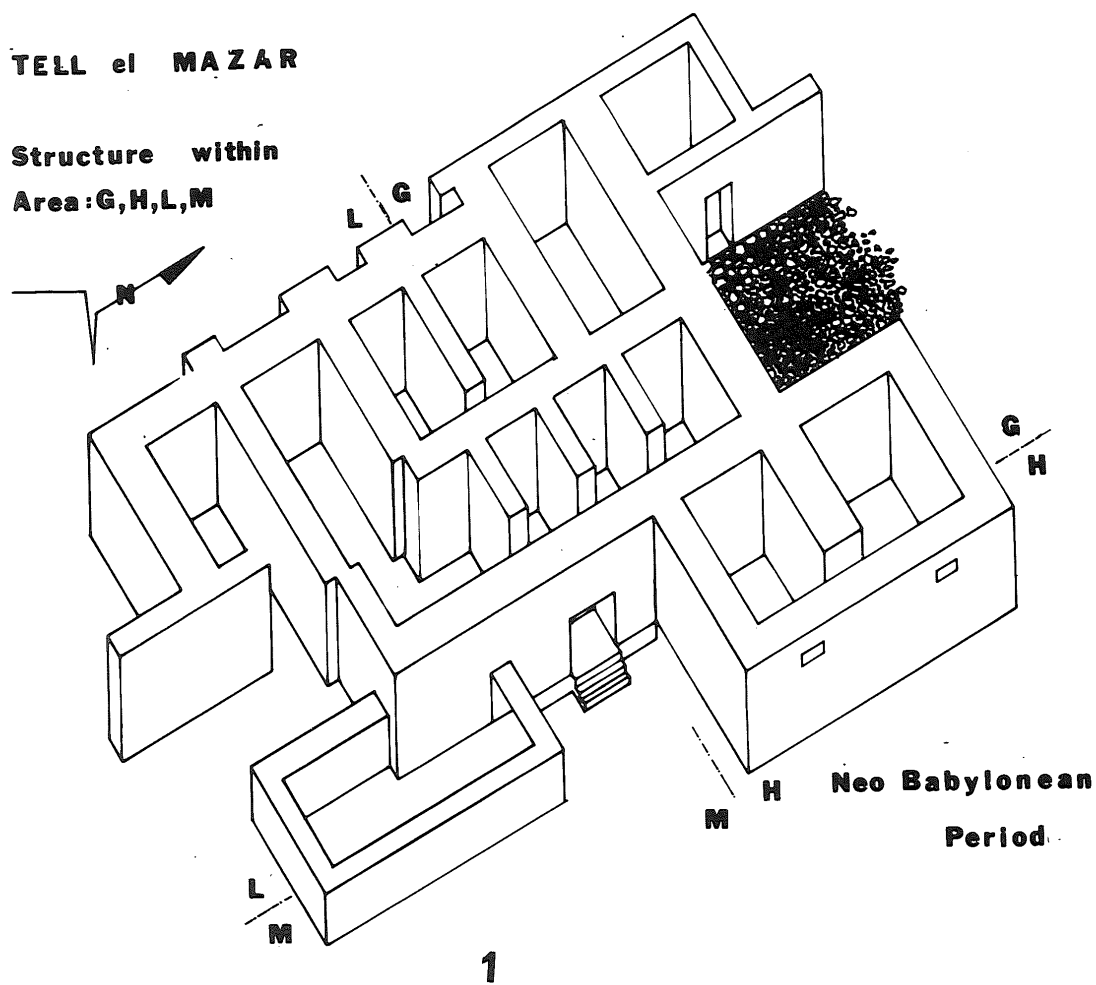


Fig. 7

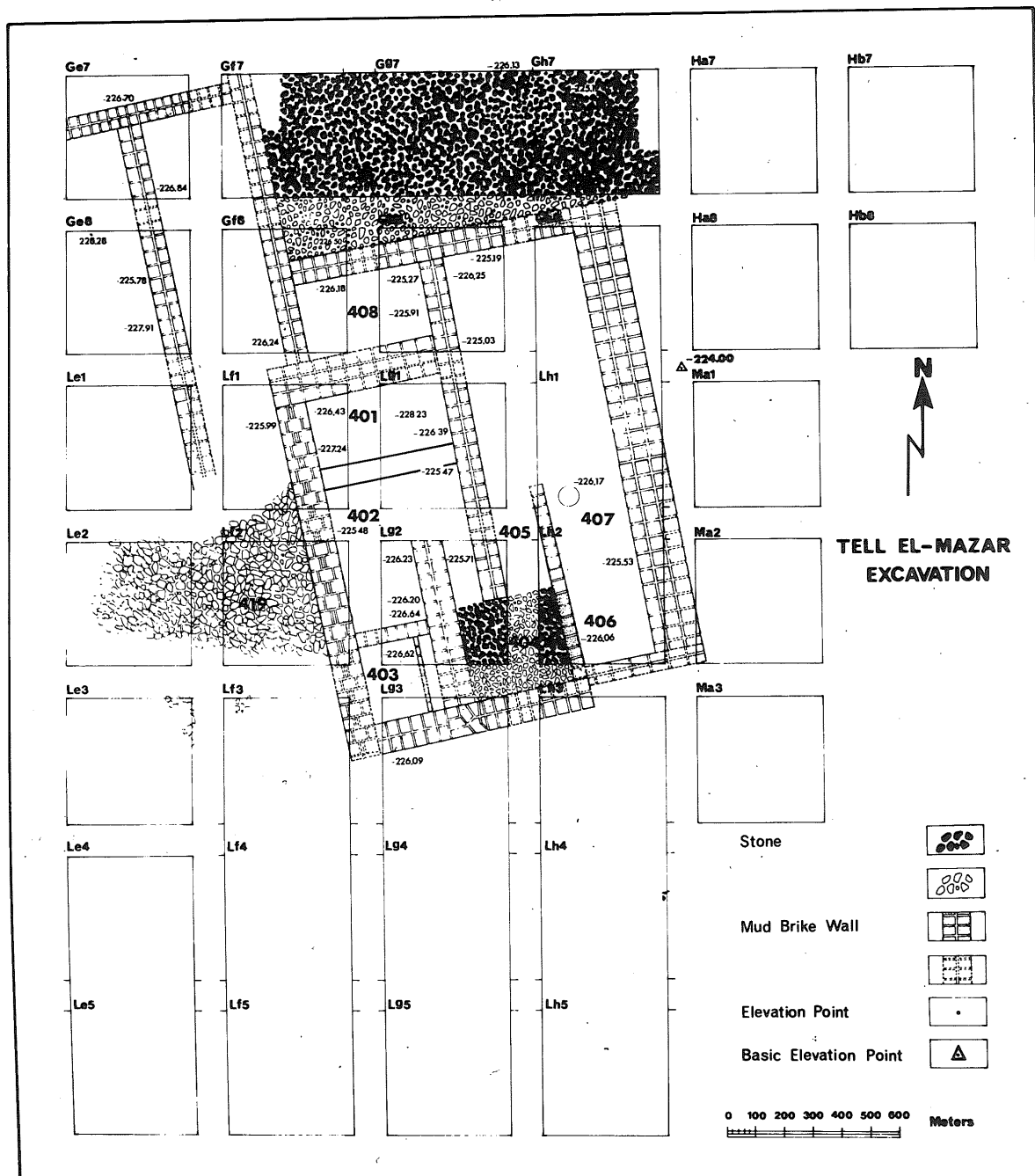


Fig. 8

though the building technique and the building materials used were exactly the same. The orientation and general tradition of planning also was the same.

We are not yet able to speculate upon the extent of the installations of 400 to the east of the podium unit because we did not go below the floor levels of Stratum III and all of our speculation was based on the architectural analysis. For this same reason in our plan (400), this area is shown as a blank awaiting future investigation.

The available data of Stratum IV (building 400) indicates that it is comprised of a building whose plan is strongly reminiscent of building 300. The stone paved courtyard (no. 415) was used in both strata. Room no. 412 on the east side presumably was the same. The only changes were in the distribution and functions of rooms 408, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, and 407. Rooms 403 and 404 showed evidences of kitchen and storage rooms (Pl. CVI: 1). Numbers of cooking pots, storage jars, as well as a great deal of grain, were found in them. Room 407 has a *tabun* and heavy remains of ashes, and brushwood (Pl. CVI: 2). The area to the west of the building (area 419 and 420) was a stone paved open area with three *tawaben*, and a circular working area (Pl. CVI: 3). The main entrance to the summit seemed to be the same as that of Stratum III in Square Ge7, no. 418.

We would assume the changes which have taken place in Stratum III were presumably due to the changes in the administration in this part of the Jordan Valley. No evidence of any destruction or conflagration could be noticed for the termination of Stratum IV. We might anticipate (that is, in the last phase of occupation), that the city was probably abandoned.

Stratum V: Seventh/Eighth Century B.C. (Fig. 9)

Installations: 500: Stratum V on the summit was reached only in a few squares. Enough details of the architectural complexity were uncovered allowing us to draw a clear picture of the nature of the uncovered level.

The stratum is characterized in one area as having a building with a middle square courtyard (Fig. 9; Pl. CVIII: 1). The floor was paved with flag stones. One room (No. 503) contained loom weights and storage jars filled with wheat grain. In one part of the room a bathroom was built where a bathtub was placed on a brick platform (Pls. CVII: 1, CVIII: 2; CIX: 1). Two sides along the square courtyard were uncovered. The silos of the Hellenistic period inflicted substantial damage to the stratigraphical and architectural composition of this stratum, but it is clear that the architectural affinities at least are closer to Syro-Hittite inspiration. It would be premature to begin to analyze the architectural plan, since the area uncovered is still very small. In one of the rooms (no. 504) a beer juglet was found having the relief of the goddess Astarti.

The square courtyard and the rooms were built on a lot used to house different kinds of animals, mainly gazelles. This animal yard extended and covered a large area on the summit of the mound (Pl. CIX: 2).

Our assumption is that the settlement of the eighth century B.C. was a centre for a much larger and more complex administration. The settlement of this level is destroyed. Rooms were destroyed by fire. From the end of the ninth century and including the eighth century B.C., the states of Ammon, Moab, and Edom already existed and from what little evidence is available, both in the Bible and in the Assyrian Annals, they had a treaty agreement with the Assyrians prior to Tiglath-Pileser III's (ed.) (744-728). On a stone slab found at Galah (Nimrud) which records Adad Nirari III's (810-783) expedition to Palestine, reference is made to the countries including Edom, in which he intimidated Sanipu of Bit Ammon, Salmanu of Moab and Kaush Malaku of Edom.

The destruction of level 5 has been attributed to the end of the eighth century B.C. It was a severe conflagration which actually signified the end of the settlement.

We may attribute this destruction as being connected with Sennacherib's

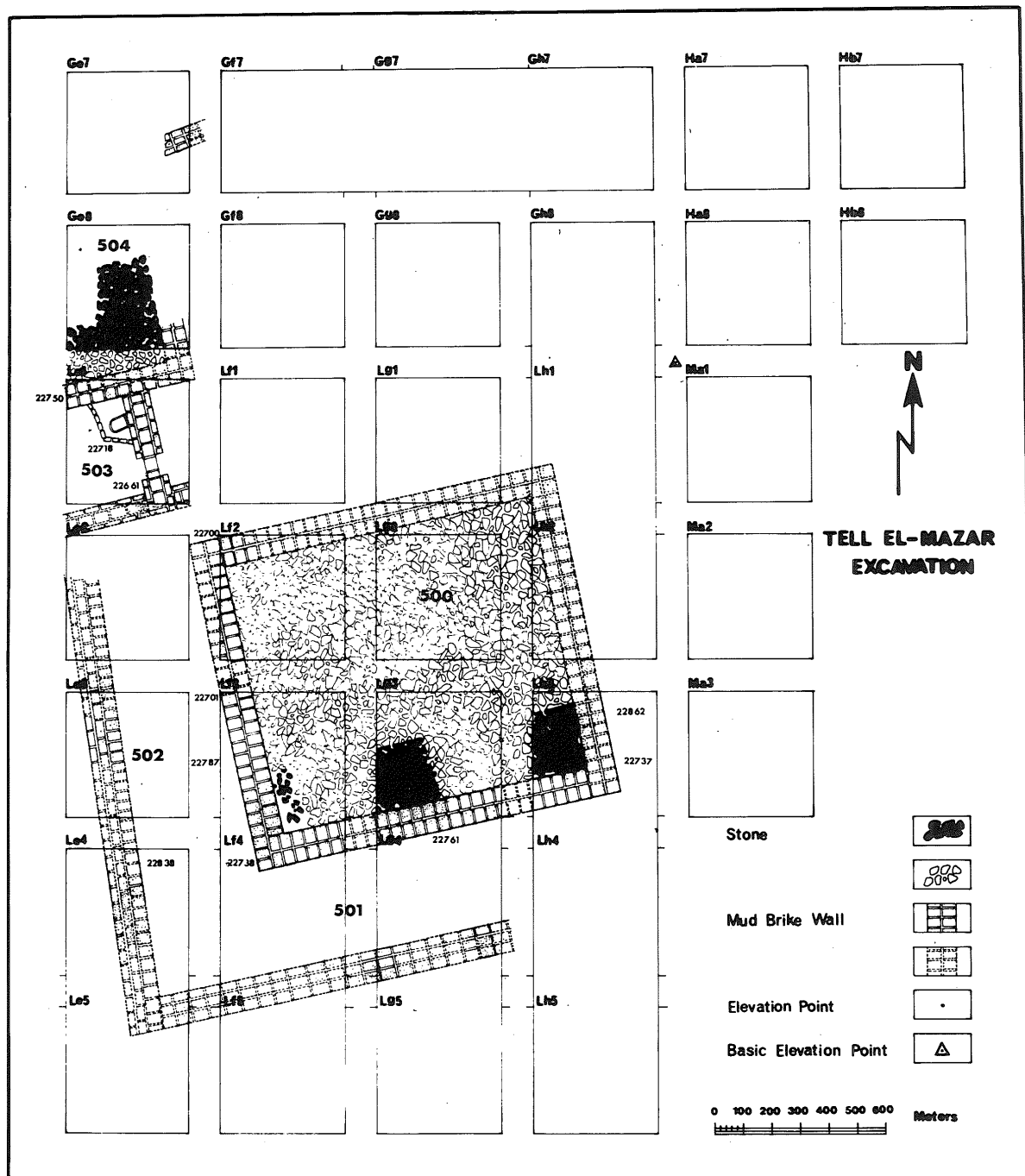


Fig. 9

campaign in 701 B.C. Sennacherib states: "forty-six of his strong city's fortresses, and countless small towns in the vicinity, I besieged and conquered by earth-works, by bringing up siege engines with the help of assault troops by breaching the walls, by mines under the rampart and onslaughts

with battering rams. I deported from among them and counted as spoil 200,150 persons, young and old, men and women, horses, mules, asses, camels, sheep and cattle, in countless number." (see, for the history part: Bennett; 1965: Lindsay 1976).

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