

TALL ABŪ AL-KHARAZ: THE SWEDISH JORDAN EXPEDITION 2009 TWELFTH SEASON PRELIMINARY EXCAVATION REPORT

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Introduction

The twelfth season of excavation at Tall Abū al-Kharaz was carried out with the kind support of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan between 27 September and 1 November. This year's field work was a direct continuation of a research project which started the year before (see *ADAJ* 53, 2009) and which is mainly devoted to the Iron Age occupation of the site (see the earlier publications on the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Ages in Fischer 2006a, 2008; Fischer ed. 2006). The excavations were resumed in order to collect new material and include refined stratigraphic evidence and additional radiocarbon dates for the next publication, namely, that on the Iron Age (Fischer forthcoming). Excavations were continued in the most westerly part of Area 7, which is in the northern part of the tall, and in Area 9, to the south of the tall (for map see Fischer 2008: 21, fig. 9). Both areas fulfilled the research objectives of this project: many intact architectural installations and a large number of artefacts, more than a few of them imported from Cyprus, Phoenicia and Assyria, were discovered.

The 2009 team consisted of Peter M. Fischer (director), Rainer Feldbacher (assistant field director), Hikmat Ta'ani (foreman, trench master), Muwafaq al-Bataineh (surveyor, draughtsperson), Eva Björkander-Mannheimer, Michaela Rinner, Simone Schedl and Sheba Schilk (all trench masters) and Katarina Nordström (assistant trench master). The representative of the Department of Antiquities was Khalid Jannaideh. The team was once more supported by Ismael Melhem, for which we are most grateful. Further support was provided by Musa Mohammed Ahmad (transport) and Khalid Mohammad Dheeb (cook). Fifteen local workers from Pella

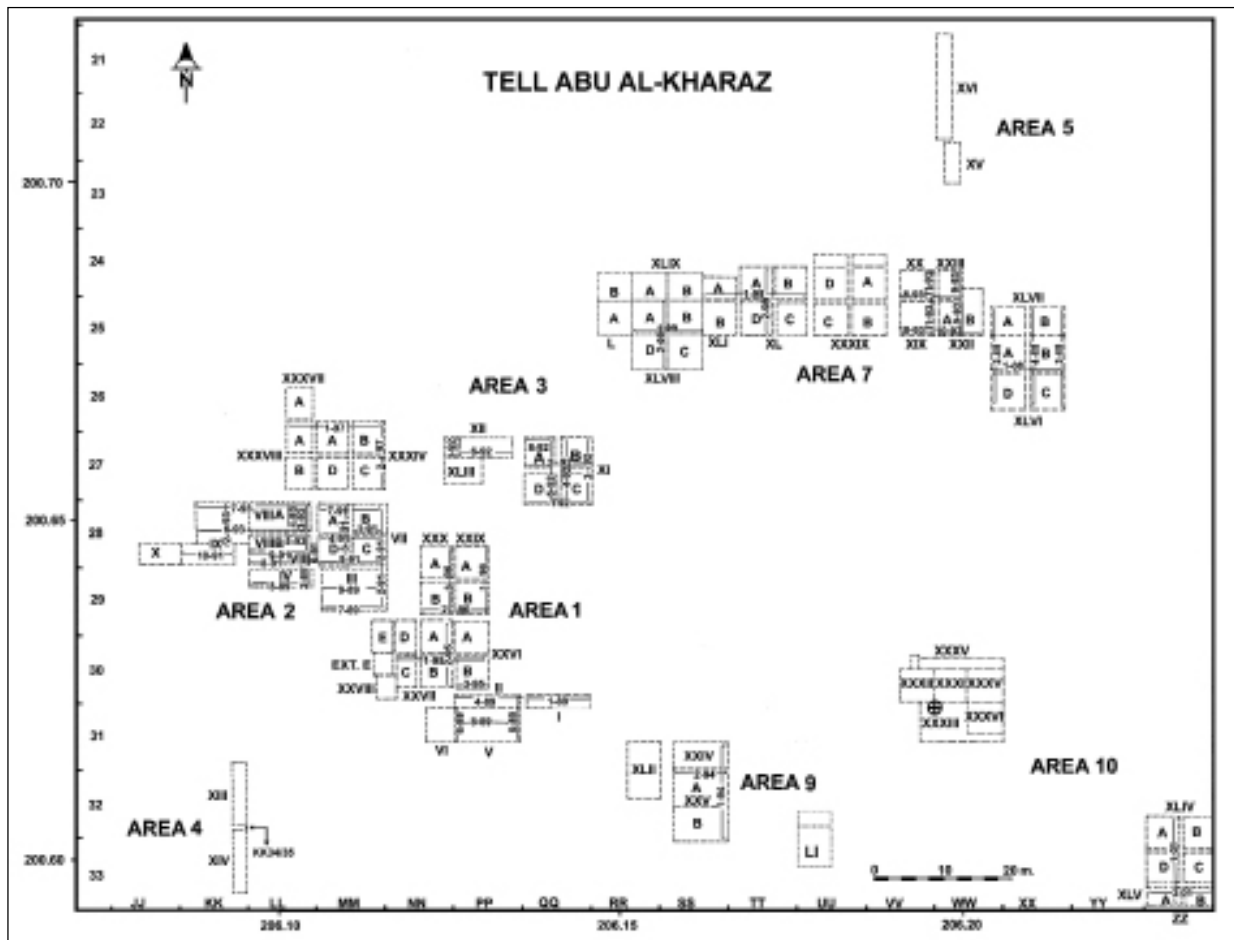
and al-Mashāri' were engaged in the excavations.

The Royal Court, represented by T.R.H. Prince Raad Ibn Zaid and Princess Majda Raad, and the Swedish Embassy again showed sincere interest in our work: H.R.H. Princess Majda Raad and H.E. the ambassador of Sweden, Charlotta Sparre, visited the site. The Department of Archaeology and Anthropology of the Yarmouk University in Irbid, headed by Dean Professor Zeidan Kafafi, supported the expedition in many ways and also arranged a public lecture at the Yarmouk University, where the director of the expedition presented an overview over 20 years of excavations at Tall Abū al-Kharaz. Another, more popularised, lecture was given at the Friends of Archaeology and Heritage Society in Amman, presided over by Professor Moawiyah Ibrahim. Members of the society also visited the site.

RESULTS

Area 7 (Fig. 1)

Three trenches (eight sub-trenches) were opened in the westernmost part of Area 7, which lies in the central-northern part of the tall (**Fig. 1**): Trenches XLVIII A-D, XLIX A, B and L A, B. The trenches are in Grids RR/SS-24/25 (see e.g. Fischer 2008: 21, fig. 9). The opened but only partly excavated area corresponds to 190 square metres. The area of the excavations slopes from east to west 2.05 m in 15 metres (measured in the central part), and from south to north 1.73 in 14 metres (measured along the eastern boundary of the trench system). The occupational phasing presented here is only applicable to the area of excavation from 2009 but parallels to the earlier excavations in Area 7 and its general phasing will be referred to.



1. The 2009 Trenches XLVIII-L are in Area 7, Trench LI in Area 9.

Strata 1A1 and 1A2¹

The most recent occupational phase should be placed in the Abbasid period. The architectural remains from this period are scanty and limited essentially to the Abbasid city wall (W592). This wall is only visible in the north-eastern part of the exposed area just below colluvial soil where it is approx. 0.6 m wide and 9 m long. Only the lowest courses of its stone foundation are preserved. It rests on a hard, almost cement-like surface, which covers the most recent Iron Age remains. This city wall corresponds to

Walls 232, 167, 155, 446 and 486 from east to west from the excavations of 1993 to 1998, and to W548/569 from the excavations of 2008 in the easternmost part of Area 7. This gives the hitherto exposed Abbasid city wall in Area 7 a total length of approx. 70 m.

In addition to small pits the Abbasid settlers dug a large pit approx. 4.4 m in diameter in the northern/central part of the area, thereby mixing up their material with material from the Iron Age. There are some installations in the southern part of the opened area which are difficult to

1. "Stratum" should only be considered as a term of convenience for use during the field work and in the preliminary reports (see Fischer 2006: 26). It is used to designate a level of occupation regardless of the area and numbered as it is excavated. From 1989 to 1994 consecutive numbering of the strata was used in the preliminary reports submitted to *ADAJ*. Nevertheless, after the excavation of 1995 it was decided that Stratum 1 A, B ... designate the phases from the Islamic period back to the Iron Age. Stratum 2 with sub-divisions is

reserved for the Late and Middle Bronze Ages, and Stratum 3 with sub-divisions for the Early Bronze Age. All these divisions and sub-divisions are only valid in the preliminary reports. The final phasing for the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Ages is in Fischer 2006a,b; 2008. There are six sub-phases for the Early Bronze Age (IA,B; IIA,B; IIIA,B), two sub-phases for the Middle Bronze Age (IV/1 and 2) and four sub-phases for the Late Bronze Age (V-VIII). The final phasing of the Iron Age will consequently start with Phase IX.

ascribe to either the Abbasid period or the most recent Iron Age occupation. These include three *ṭābūn*(s) and a stone-built, 1.3 m deep, circular grain silo. However, judging from their construction they should be dated to the most recent Iron Age phase. These findings suggest dividing Stratum 1A into two sub-strata.

The most recent pottery is typical of the Abbasid period of the 9th century AD (see the pottery from the 1993 season of excavation described by Walmsley 1995: 107, 116-7), e.g. vessels with “turban” handles. Another find from the Abbasid period is a partly preserved bracelet of bronze. Nonetheless, Iron Age II C pottery dominates the majority of the loci. Amongst the finds from the Iron Age is a Cypriote Black-on-Red juglet and an elaborate bronze/iron fibula (**Fig. 7**, see also Appendix 2).²

Strata 1B1 and 1B2 (one of the sections in Fig. 3)

These phases of Iron Age occupation, by convention designated Iron Age IIC, are largely unaffected by Abbasid settlers with the exception of the large pit in the northern-central part of the area, which was dug in Abbasid times and which cut through some of the Iron Age walls (see above).³ There are the remains of two domestic buildings to the north, of which the most northerly construction elements are missing due to erosion of the northern edge of the tall (see the observations during earlier seasons in the eastern part of Area 7). However, it may be anticipated, judging from the evidence in Area 7 East, that they were built against the city wall, which is also missing. Many architectural elements were taken over almost unchanged from the previous phase of occupation (Phase 1C). The two houses are separated by a 0.3-0.6 m wide, stone-paved, gutter (L424), the purpose of which is to drain rain water from the upper part of the tall down the slope. The building to the west is 7.6 m (east-west) by at least 7 m (north-south) in size. The mudbrick superstructure of some of the approx. 0.6 m wide, stone-foundation, walls is still in a good state of preservation (W601, 598 and 597). The outer walls of

the western house are W601,⁴ 600/580 and 579. There are two well-preserved dividing walls inside the building (W598, 597), of which W597 takes a different direction, thus not fitting into the fairly rectangular system of the structure. This wall might represent a later addition. The space to the west is 1.6 m wide and that to the east 4.3 m (the later addition, W597, is not taken into consideration). In the south-eastern corner of the eastern space there is a 0.9 by 0.5 m large stone-built bench.

The next house, which is approx. 4 m to the east of the gutter, measures, in its southern part, 7.5 m (east-west) by approx. 7.5 m (north-south; reconstructed). It was taken over almost unchanged from the previous period. The outer walls, 0.5-0.6 m wide, are W595, 587, 585, 485 and 487 (the latter two to the east are from the excavations in 1998). Two dividing walls, W602 and 489 (from 1998) created three spaces of which the central space is a courtyard. The western space, 1.7 m wide, could be entered from the west via an approx. 0.8 m wide entrance where a door socket was found, and from the south through a 0.9 m wide, stone-reinforced, entrance. The eastern space, approximately 2.5 m wide, to the east of the courtyard had an approx. 1 m wide entrance in W485 from the south. There is a 2.6 m wide annex to the south, of which W589 and 582 are preserved. This annex is somewhat larger than the corresponding annexes in the eastern part of the area. The southern part of the exposed area revealed the northern ends of additional structures (W594, 583 and 581; 0.4-0.6m wide). Between these two compounds there seems to have been a street running west-south-west to east-north-east.

Between the two houses, directly east of the gutter, are three well-constructed walls: the parallel north-south W584 and 596/603 and the transversal short W604, all them 0.5 m wide. Their interpretation is speculative. It might be that they represent the eastern limits of a walled external yard and, at the same time, functioned as stabilizers of the soil and the walls along the gutter. The narrow space between the two parallel walls might have been used as a storage

2. This is one of four fibulae which were discovered during this season.

3. It seems that the Abbasid settlers dug this and other large pits in order to get building material for their own

structures.

4. This house might extend towards the west. In that case W601 is not an external wall.

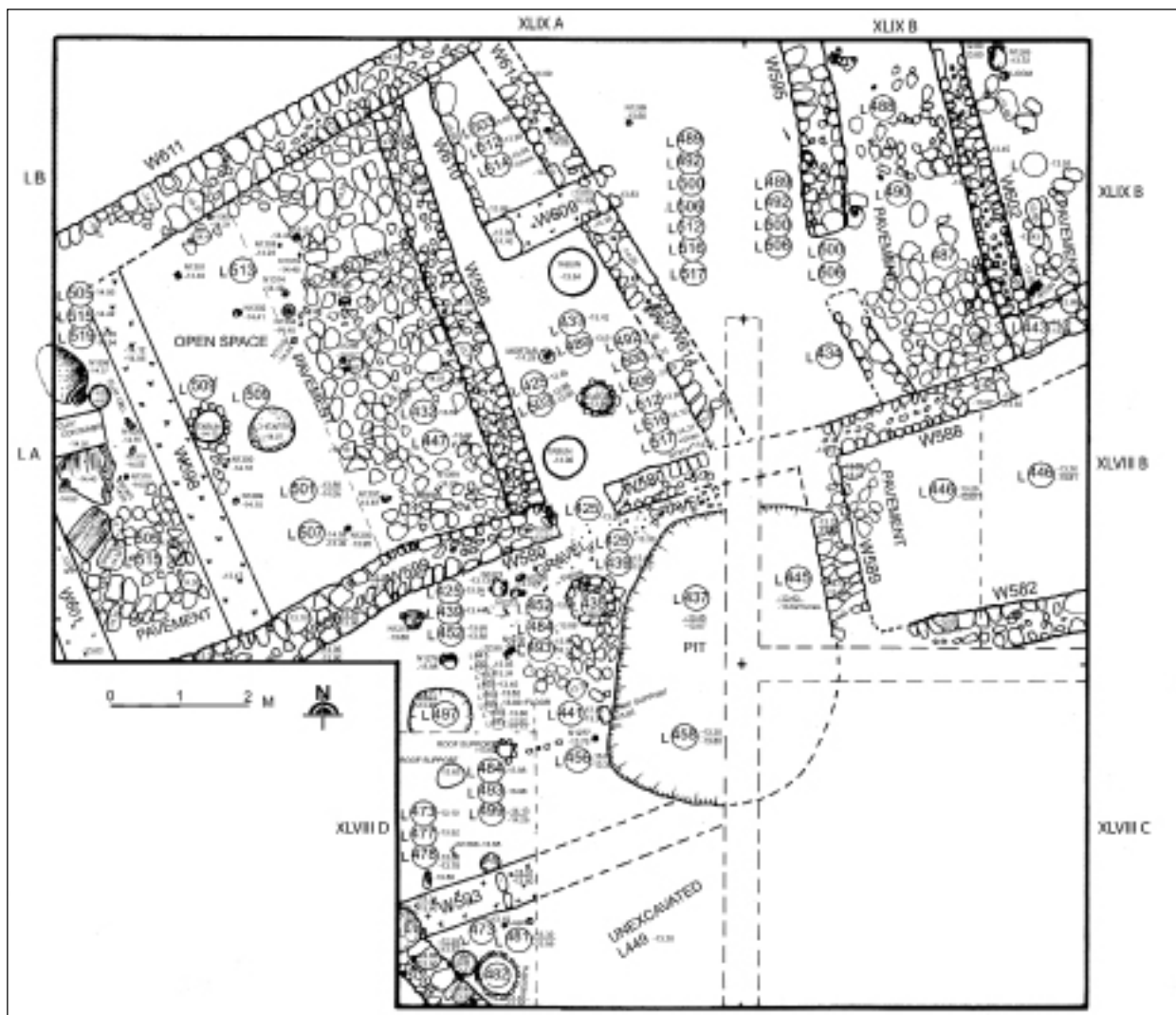
facility, although there are no finds, which could confirm this theory.

Numerous objects for daily use belong to this phase. Amongst these are millstones, mortars, flint blades, loom weights of sun-dried clay and arrow heads of iron. The pottery belonging to the typical Iron Age II repertoire of the site comprises, inter alia, rounded and carinated bowls, juglets, both plain, shaved and burnished, and the characteristic “black juglets”, jugs, cooking pots and storage jars, one of which once contained more than 100 l of fluid. There is also a clay pot with three stump legs, obviously an imitation of the more elaborate and expensive tripod bowls of basalt, of which there are several from our Iron Age contexts.

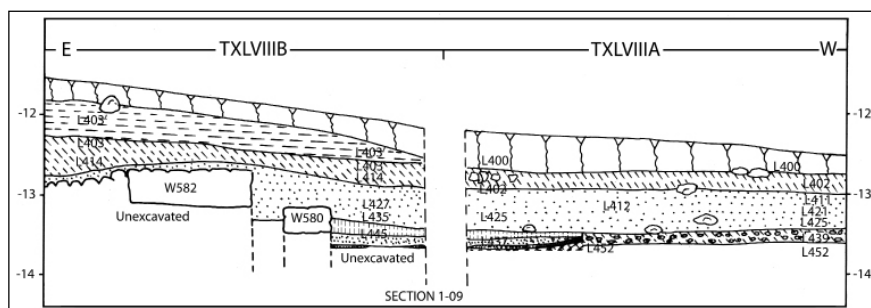
Stratum 1C (Fig. 2; one of the section in Fig. 3)

Many of the structures which have been ascribed to Strata 1B1-2 were originally built in this phase, which according to the locally produced pottery can be dated to the Iron Age IIB/C. This phase is even better preserved than the previous one and produced many well constructed structures and *in situ* find assemblages which contain numerous intact or complete earthenware vessels and other objects, one of which is unique so far (see below).

The overall plan of the architectural remains is approximately the same: to the north are two houses separated by a drainage, and to the south — on a higher level — south of a terrace-retaining wall (W593) is another only partly exca-



2. Area 7, plan of Iron Age phase 1C.



3. Area 7, Section 1.

vated structure (W594).

The ground plan of the building to the west surrounded by walls W601, 600/580, 614 and 611, is approximately 10 m (east-west) by 7.2 m (north-south). The widths of the wall vary between 0.5 and 0.8 m. The complex contains three rooms separated from each other by W598 and W586, both approx. 0.6 m wide. The mudbrick superstructure of some of the stone-based walls is still in a good state of preservation (W601 and 598). The space to the west is 1.6 m wide and is partly stone-paved. It contained, in addition to many small finds, including a black juglet, a lamp (see Appendix 2) and five arrow heads, two large storage jars (contents more than 100 l each), a large millstone and a rectangular clay trough.

The next room to the east in the western house, centrally placed and 4 m wide, was most likely roofed in its eastern half. The western, open, part contained a *ṭābūn* and a hearth, and several tools which include spindle whorls of limestone and fired clay, working tools of basalt, and a bronze earring with a knob. The western, roofed part, contained tools of limestone and basalt, for instance, a mortar, a pestle and a polisher. There is also a tripod of basalt, another arrow head and unfired clay loom weights. Jewellery includes three carnelian beads, a fibula of iron and an extraordinary find: an intact cosmetic palette of alabaster/calcite (**Fig. 6.1**). Excellently manufactured and decorated with incised circles, it still contained the remains of the cosmetics last used: one is of an intensive light-blue pigment, and the other of lilac colour.⁵

The third space of the western house to the east is 2.5 m wide to the south and narrows to 1.25 m to the north, obviously adapting to the topography of the tall. This room is divided into

two small spaces by W609 which leaves a 0.5 m wide corridor towards the northern room, which contained a stone-paved bench in its north-eastern corner (“W610”). The bench was most likely used as a working table for the preparation of food in connection with the two *ṭābūn*(s), with a mortar between them, and the hearth in the southern room. There is a 0.8 m wide exit in the southern room, from which a partly roofed and stone-paved backyard could be reached.

The backyard contained three stone pillar supports which are positioned in line halfway between the southern house wall and the terrace-retaining wall towards the south, a distance of approximately 4.2 m. This backyard was one of the most rewarding find spots in Area 7 in this season: in addition to another, quite large, stone-paved *ṭābūn* there were several complete earthenware vessels: a carinated bowl, a crater, a pilgrim flask, jugs and juglets, the latter including a “black juglet”, and a tripod bowl. A carinated, red-slipped, Assyrian bowl should be mentioned. Other finds were a millstone and a bronze/iron fibula. A large pit is in the eastern part of the courtyard.

To the south of terrace-retaining W593 and on a higher level is a stone-lined hearth (dia. 0.6 m) and next to it a clay-lined recessed container (diam. 0.3 m) and several loom weights of sun-dried clay.

There is an open space between the two exposed houses. An interesting find from there is a handle of a storage jar with a rectangular seal impression. The next house lies approximately 2 m to the east. The outer walls, 0.5-0.6 m wide, are W595, 587, 585, 485 and 487 (the latter two are from the excavations of 1998). Two dividing walls, W602 and 489 (from 1998), created three spaces, of which the central one is a courtyard.

5. Analysis of the cosmetics is planned.

The western room, 1.7 m wide, which in this stratum is stone-paved, could be entered from the west via an entrance approx. 0.8 m wide, where a door socket was found, and from the south through an entrance 0.9 m wide, stone-reinforced. The eastern room, 2.5 m wide, had an approx. 1 m wide entrance from the south in W485. Amongst the finds from the eastern house are a jug of obvious Phoenician origin, several tools of stone and bone (shuttle) and a complete tripod bowl of basalt.

There is another walled and stone-paved space to the south of the eastern house, the function of which is not clear. It is surrounded by the 0.5-0.6 m wide W588, 589 and 582 and partly paved, but devoid of any finds of interest.

A collection of Iron Age pottery can be studied in Figures 5 and 6.

Stratum 2 (Figs. 8, 9; see also Appendix 2)

The terrace which lies south-east of the terrace-retaining wall W593 (Stratum 1C) actually represents remains from a much earlier period which were found on the same level as the remains from Phase 1C (immediately to west). The earlier remains are ascribed to the Late Bronze Age Phase V according to the phasing of the site (see Fischer 2006a). These remains cover an area of approximately 3 m x 2 m and consist of the (partly excavated) corner of a domestic building with a 0.6 m wide entrance from the north-west. Numerous complete earthenware objects, which include a bichrome-decorated Chocolate-on-White Ware juglet, a lamp, storage jars and tools of basalt, were discovered imbedded in a substantial layer of ash which also contained plenty of grain. A selected number of ceramic finds can be studied in Figures 8 and 9.

Stratum 3

Three test soundings revealed structures and finds which belong to various phases of the Early Bronze Age. The exposed structures are three walls, W590, 591 and 605, all approximately 0.6 m wide. In W591 (Trench XLVIII B), in particular, it was possible to study the structural details: 0.64 m in width, it is preserved to a height of 1.05 m. There are 1-2 courses of stones at its foundation which lie directly on bedrock/levelled surface. The preserved superstructure above the stone foundation consists of four

courses of sun-dried mudbrick, approximately 0.6-0.64 m x 0.3-0.35 m in size. The mudbricks seem to derive from two clay sources because alternating yellow and brown mudbricks were used, certainly intentionally. Remains of clay plaster were found on the north-western surface.

W591 and the associated Loci 454 and 476 are dated to the local Phase IB, which corresponds to Early Bronze Age IB. This date is based on the absence of Metallic Ware, which is typical of Early Bronze Age II and which corresponds to Phase II at Tall Abū al-Kharaz, and the presence of pottery shapes which are identical with those from earlier excavated Phase IB contexts (see Fischer 2008). Another observation strengthens our date: the ceramic finds to the north-west of Wall 591 are all imbedded in a thick destruction layer which contained a considerable amount of grain: it has been demonstrated that Phase IB came to a violent end due to a general conflagration.

Whereas the date of W605 is difficult to assess, the provisional date of W590 is Early Bronze Age II or the local Phase IIIA based on an almost complete cup (*in situ* ?) which has a fairly good parallel in the eastern part of Area 7 (Fischer 2008: 254, fig. 260:4).

Area 9 (Fig. 1)

At the outset of the 2009 season of field work it was intended only to clean and consolidate the city walls from the Early Bronze Age through to the Abbasid period in Area 9. We were able to expose and clean some 30 m of the defence system of all periods in Area 9 east of the trenches which were excavated in 1994 and 1995. All walls visible on the surface were recorded by our total station in order to present them digitally in a three-dimensional view, and some were also consolidated. During the cleaning process an almost square structure, 4.4 m x 4.2 m in size (outer dimensions), built on top of the MB/LB city wall and protruding towards the south was exposed. Further cleaning during the last week of our field season exposed several complete vessels which required immediate excavation before we could leave the site. Thus work forces were moved from Area 7 in the north to Area 9 in the southernmost part of the upper tell, and regular excavations were initiated (Trench LIA). Two phases of Iron Age occupation, which are

provisionally matched with Strata 1B and C in Area 7, were exposed.

Stratum 1B

This phase of occupation suffered a great deal from erosion due to its closeness to the surface. However, we were able to expose a 0.6m wide wall (W613) of which only the stone foundation remained. To the north of the wall, inside a domestic building (?), was a stone silo, 0.4 m in diameter, and a pierced basalt weight of approximately 2 kg. We also found numerous lumps of yellow, red, brown and lilac pigments which might have been used, for example, in the production/decoration of pottery.

Stratum 1C (Fig. 4)

This stratum represents the best-preserved spot of Iron Age occupation at the site. After the removal the burnt-down roof construction, which consisted of a 0.1-0.15 m thick layer of twig-reinforced sun-dried clay, we exposed a “primary find context” in the shape of a storage room with numerous intact or complete finds. This excellent find situation, where none of the room’s many objects were disturbed after the conflagration, came as a surprise when one considers the room’s closeness to the surface, especially in its southern part. The space was enclosed by the walls W606, 607, 608 and 612 — some of them preserved up to 1 m high. There was a 0.12 m thick wooden roof support approximately in the centre of the room. There



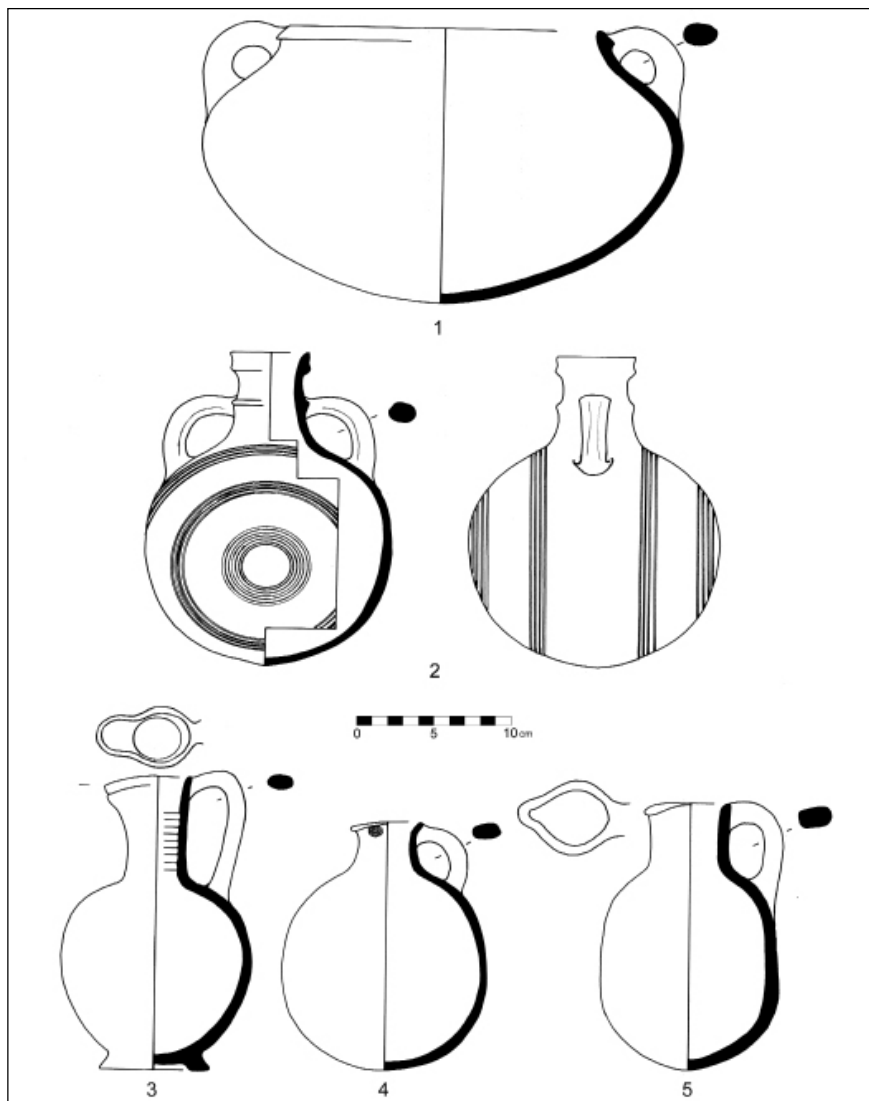
4b. Barley flour from one of the storage jars (approx. 4 kg).

is an entrance 0.8 m wide in the north-western corner together with a step leading up to the next room, which could not be excavated due to shortage of time. In the south-eastern corner of the passage to the next room is a door socket of limestone. The room was crowded with finds intermingled with an ashy destruction layer which made the excavations somewhat difficult.

Eighteen earthenware vessels were exposed: three juglets, one strainer jug, one crater and 13 jars. Three jars contained the remains of (barley?) flour, of which one contained as much as four kilograms (!), and the crater contained the dried remains of, most likely, olive oil and olive pits. Finds of basalt include a mortar and a mill-



4a. Area 9, uppermost layer of Iron Age storage room after removal of the collapsed roof. Observe the olive press of limestone to the right of the photograph's centre. Vessel to the left of olive press contained approx. 4 kg of barley flour.



5. Selected Iron Age pottery.
1. Cooking pot. 2. Pilgrim flask. 3. Red-burnished imported jug. 4, 5. Plain juglets.

stone, and a spindle whorl which was probably reused because its shape and production technique are definitely at home in the Early Bronze Age. Another find of an uncommon shape is a ribbed spindle whorl of fired clay. A sheet of bronze might belong to the door construction. A stone cylinder, 0.3 m long with 0.23 m diameter, shows a centrally placed depression on one side whereas the other side is broken off. This stone was used for crushing olives. Immediate restoration of the contents of this room was initiated.

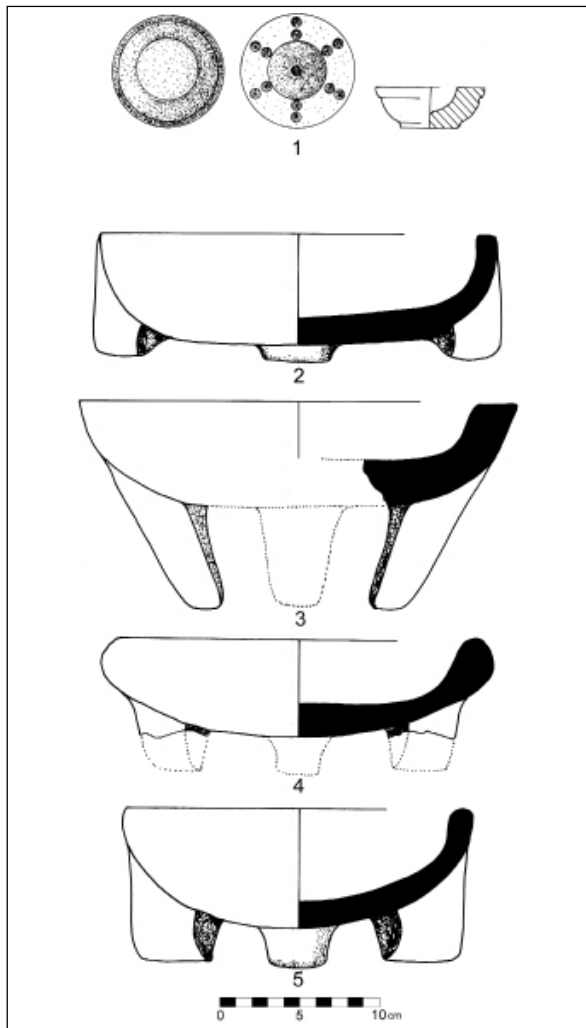
Appendix 1: Iron Age Fibulae from Tall Abū al-Kharaz (M. Rinner)

Introduction

The specific shape of the four fibulae which

were discovered in an Iron Age II context during the excavations at Tall Abū al-Kharaz in 2009 derives originally from Europe and the Mycenaean culture of the thirteenth century B.C. and arrived in the Near East via Cyprus (Pedde 2000: 3). The discovery of a number of fibulae in the Caucasus area indicates that various Near Eastern forms of fibulae arrived there via Urartu in eastern Anatolia (Stronach 1959: 181). Although the roots of the fibula are not in the Orient, independent fibula shapes developed there according to Pedde (2000: 3).

In general there are two types of fibulae described in the Near East: the one-piece fibula, i.e. bow and pin are integrated, and the two-piece fibula, i.e. bow and pin are produced separately (Pedde 2000: 99). The two-piece fibulae



6. 1. Cosmetic palette of alabaster. 2, 3. Tripod bowls of basalt. 4, 5. Tripod bowls of fired clay.

can further be subdivided, for instance, according to material, geometry of the catch plate or ornamentation. An especially important criterion for the classification is the arrangement of so called “beads” (plastic decorations resembling beads). Pedde (2006: 6) used these decorations for typological studies.

The basic function of fibulae is to hold clothes together. The forerunner of the fibula is the toggle pin. These two objects differ at first glance, but their function is the same. Beside practical aspects, toggle pins and fibulae were used as jewellery. Fibulae might also have had an apotropaic function (Pedde 2000: 8). While they were in widespread use in the European area, they rarely appear mass-produced in the Near East (Pedde 2000: 3). Furthermore, as observed by Pedde (2000: 373), in the latter region fibulae seem not to relate to social status. Here Pedde describes fibulae as grave goods in both elaborate tombs as well as in simple trench graves. Only in exceptional cases like a princess grave, discovered in Nimrud in Mesopotamia, were richly decorated fibulae found (Pedde 2000: 373). Therefore, unlike in Europe, the Near Eastern fibulae do not necessarily allow conclusions about the social status of the user, according to Pedde.

Description (Table 1)

All fibulae derive from domestic contexts. One, N1250, was found in a *ṭābūn*, possibly lost by the owner during the preparation of food

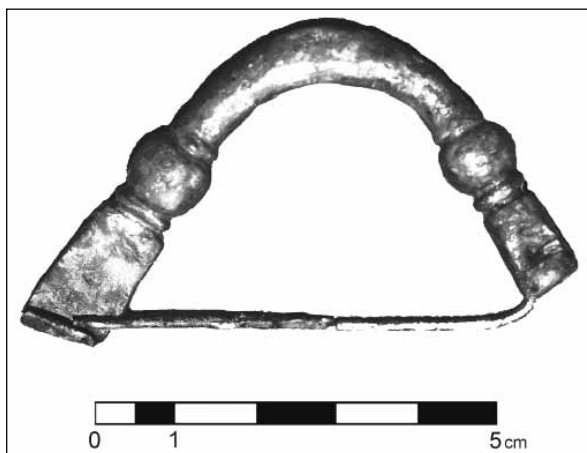
Table1: SEQ Description of our four fibulae from 2009. Maximum dimension in cm. “beads” refers to rounded decorations on the bow.

Object	Trench	Material	Length	Width	Height	No. of “beads”
N1250	XLVIIC	bronze	7.5	1	3.8	2
N1250/pin		iron	5.7	0.5		
N1268	XLVIII A	iron	7.3	1.1	4.7	0
N1283	XLVIID	bronze	5	0.6	2.6	1
N1283/pin		iron	4.6			
N1303	LA	bronze	4.7	0.5		1

(Fig. 7). They all have a circular, asymmetrical, bow and differ in size: their lengths vary between 4 and 7.5 cm and their widths between 0.5 and 1.1 cm. N1268 is a simple one-piece fibula made of iron, without decoration or ornamentation. It has a triangular form and a sharp angle between bow and pin. Despite the rather simple design some processing after casting is evident. The bows of the other fibulae (N1250, N1283 and N1303) are made of bronze while the pins consist of iron and were obviously manufactured in a second step. Only N1250 has two “beads” while N1283 and N1303 are decorated with one. N1250 and N1283 are especially well preserved, with their iron pins intact, which is rare.

Discussion

The fibulae dated to Iron Age II at Tall Abū al-Kharaz were all found in domestic contexts. Although the Iron Age settlement at Tall Abū al-Kharaz is quite extensive there are only five complete and a few incomplete fibulae, which could support Pedde’s (2000: 372) claim these items are fairly uncommon in the Near East. Contrastingly Stronach (1959: 203) assumed that the fibula became fairly common in the Near East in the first millennium. He supports his claim with the discovery of 175 fibulae from a royal tomb at Gordion in 1957 dating from the 8th century. However according to Pedde (2000: 372), a total of only 280 fibulae, dating from the 13th century to the beginning of the 8th century, are recorded from the Near East. The high number of fibulae found at Gordion is thus likely to be an unusual case. After that, and until the



7. Fibula of bronze with preserved iron pin.

end of the Iron Age, fibulae became more common items. This can be deduced from another nearly 850 fibulae that were discovered between the 7th and 4th century in the Near East (Pedde 2000: 372).

Pedde (2000: 373) also reports that fibulae of the same type were used by both sexes and by infants. Consequently fibulae do not relate to sex or age of the owner. Wealth and social position do not seem to be reflected in the possession of fibulae. Nevertheless, in the present author’s opinion, as bronze and iron were very expensive goods, fibulae were certainly reserved for a higher social class.

Three of our four fibulae are made in the two-piece-style, which could be used longer than the one-piece fibula because the iron pin could be replaced when broken. The handicap of the one-piece fibula is its fragility. When the pin is broken, the fibula is unusable. The fragility of the pin is demonstrated by the fact that only two of our four fibulae (N 1250; N 1283) were found with their pins. This may also depend on the heavy corrosion of iron common at Tall Abū al-Kharaz. Complete fibulae are therefore rare (cf. Green 1998: 68). The two-piece design seems to have been established in the north of Syria and Iraq at the end of the 8th century, and one-piece and two-piece fibulae were for some time used side by side (Pedde 2000: 121). Objects similar to our two-piece fibulae were excavated, for instance, in Megiddo, Hama, Lachish and Enkomi (Pedde 2000: tables 7 and 25).

As proposed by Pedde, the presence and the arrangement of decoration are important criteria for classification. Of the four discovered items the three of bronze have at least one “bead” while the iron pin is plain. It may be speculated that the bronze fibulae were predominantly used as jewellery and were therefore more extensively processed, while the rather simple iron form may have been designed for daily use. An example is N1250. It is a two-piece fibula composed of a bow with two symmetrically arranged artificial “beads”, a catch plate at one end of the bow and on the other end a precast hole to attach the pin. This type of fibula was manufactured by casting (Pedde 2000: 7). N1250 has similarities with fibulae from Tall en-Nasbeh (Pedde 2000: table 25), Tall Knedig (Pedde 2000: table 27) and Ugarit (Pedde 2000: table 24). This type of

fibula was cast in a straight form and bent afterwards (Pedde 2000: 171-172). The catch plate was bent to hold the iron pin and the pin was also attached to the bow by hammering. N1250 has a design common in the whole near eastern area (Falkner 1971: 60). Characteristic details are for example the catch plate resembling a hand or the rounded, asymmetrical bow of the fibula (Stronach 1959: 182). According to Pedde (2000: 371) the type of the bow can be used for dating.

In 1989, during the first season of excavation at Tall Abū al-Kharaz, a fibula, dating from Iron Age IIC, was found (N0043; Fischer 1991: 83, 16). This two-piece fibula was even more decorated than N1250 from 2009: it had a carnelian and a faience bead still threaded on the iron pin, which was attached to the bronze bow (Fischer 1991: 76). This fibula has a more triangular general shape. Unlike this year's fibula the ornamentation of N0043 resembles flower buds. The sparsely decorated fibulae N1283 shows similarity to objects found in Tall Michal (Pedde 2000: table 20). Although manufactured in the two-piece-style it has only one artificial "bead". The diameter of the bow is not constant but tapered at both ends. The catch plate clearly shows the irregularities derived by hammering. Compared to N1283, N1250 is more accurately manufactured. The four fibulae found during this year's excavation, all different in style and size, confirm the vast variety in design described, for example, by Stronach (1959: 182).

Future studies of well-stratified fibulae may provide a hint as regards chronology. It should, however, be kept in mind that they represent a significant value and — at least where the two-piece fibulae are concerned — that they were certainly kept for a considerable time.

Appendix 2: An Isolated MB/LB Context from 2009 (*S. Schilk*)

Introduction

During the excavations at Tall Abū al-Kharaz in 2009 an isolated, undisturbed, Late Bronze Age context was exposed. It was discovered on the same level as finds from the Iron Age and is part of a terrace-retaining structure which was left untouched by the Iron Age occupants. The current report focuses on the find material from

this specific context, mainly the pottery, and on parallels from earlier published material from Tall Abū al-Kharaz and the nearby Pella (Fischer 2006; Fischer ed. 2006).

Stratigraphy

The context includes loci L419, L423, L430, L440 and L449, which stretch over Trenches XLVIII C and D. The 0.5 m wide baulk between these two trenches could not be excavated due to lack of time and there might be additional finds within the small baulk area. In regard to architecture the stone foundation of Wall 581 in Trench XLVIII C and the mudbrick Wall 583 in Trench XLVIII D, both fairly well-preserved, form the corner of a structure which could be entered through Wall 583 via a 0.7 m wide entrance. Loci 419, 423 and 440 are regarded as belonging to an indoor space, whereas Loci 430 and 449 seem to belong to a courtyard. There is an Islamic pit to the north of our context. To the west and to the east on the same level are Iron Age contexts and to the south the southern limit of the 2009 excavations (see above).

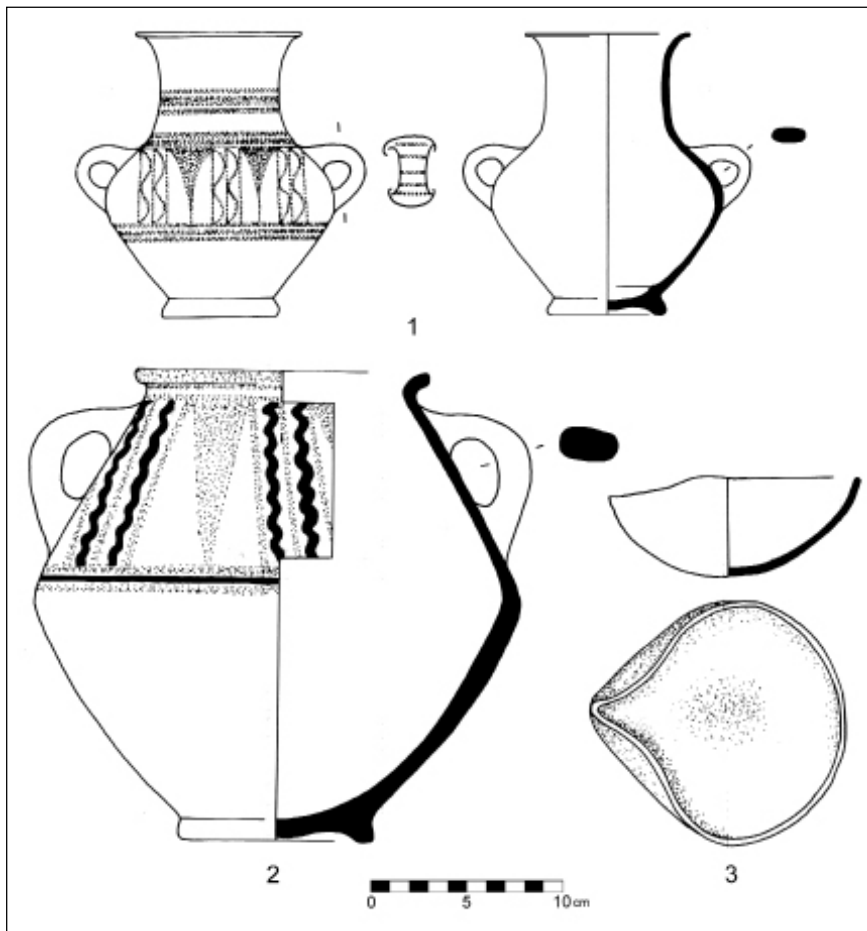
Our context was covered by ash and burned mudbrick. Grain, most likely barley, and straw were found in considerable quantities, which enabled us to take samples for radiocarbon dating. This destruction level is also clearly visible in the section.

The Finds

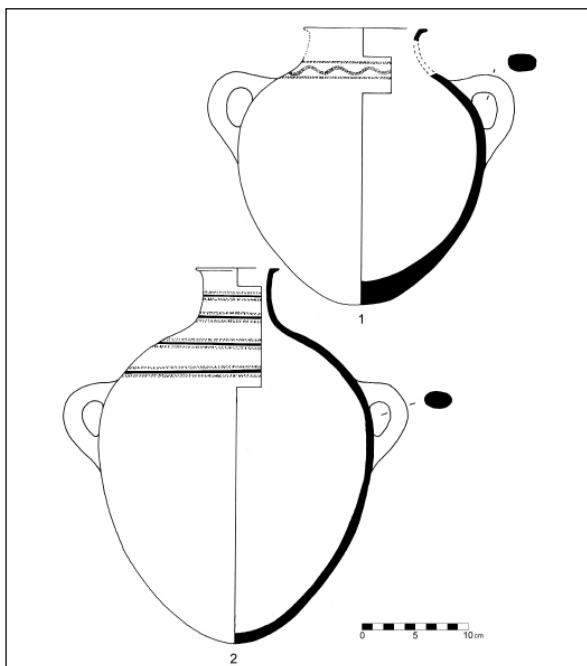
Pottery

Many earthenware vessels were found on a flat surface which was obviously a floor. These vessels include several storage jars of different size, jugs/juglets including Chocolate-on-White Ware, a lamp which was intact and cooking pots (Figs. 8, 9). Most of the vessels were broken but complete or almost complete.

Courtyard: Find N1261 from the courtyard is a Chocolate-on-White Ware juglet with a wide mouth and flaring rim, and a globular/biconical body with two vertical handles on the shoulder and a ring-base. The bichrome decoration is typical of Chocolate-on-White Ware with horizontal bands and a metope pattern which consists of alternating groups of straight and wavy lines flanking triangles or stylized trees. There are sherds of two more juglets/jugs which have parallels at Tall Abū al-Kharaz (Fischer 2006:



8. Selected finds from the Late Bronze Age context (Phase V). 1. Chocolate-on-White II juglet. 2. Bichrome decorated biconical jug. 3. Lamp.



9. Selected finds from the Late Bronze Age context (Phase V). Monochrome and bichrome decorated jars.

117.1,2, fig. 122.1,) and at Pella (Bourke, Sparks and Schroder 2006: 50, fig. 43.1,2 but here with one handle). From the previous excavations the presence of Chocolate-on-White at Tall Abū al-Kharaz was ascertained in Phases IV/1 and 2, V and VI. Chocolate-on-White Ware includes six subgroups: Proto-Chocolate-White, Chocolate-on-White Bichrome Ware, Eggshell Ware, and Chocolate-on-White I, II and III (Fischer 2006: 255). Our almost complete Chocolate-on-White Ware juglet belongs to the Chocolate-on-White II group which was found in Phase V context in earlier seasons (Fischer 2006: 259; 274).

A jar (N1274), egg-shaped with a rounded base and two handles on the belly, which does not belong to the Chocolate-on-White Ware group, shows bichrome decoration of horizontal bands in black and lilac beneath the rim and on the shoulder. There is another partly preserved jar with a rounded base (L430-3) with reddish-brown decoration on the neck in the shape of two bands flanking a wavy line. A large storage

jar (pithos; N1262) is only partly preserved, viz. the rim, neck and the shoulder. It has parallels in Phase V (see this type in Fischer 2006: 241). Another one (L430-4), also only partly preserved, belongs to the same group. A cooking pot (L430-5) has parallels in Phase V (Fischer 2006 (ed): 127, fig. 58.1,2). The base of another jar or large jug (L430-2) also seems to belong to Phase V. Many other sherds belong to two other jars which could not be reconstructed (one of them is L430-6). The latter, which was of the biconical jug type, although not Chocolate-on-White Ware, was bichrome decorated (cf. Fischer 2006: 269). An intact lamp (N1263) also belongs to the courtyard assemblage. Although a little deeper in profile, it belongs to Phase V (VI), as is evident from its slightly pinched spout (Fischer 2006: 245, fig. 276.3). All the vessels were very much affected by fire.

Indoor space: Locus L 419 produced a partly preserved, plain, one-handled jug with a trefoil mouth (N1259). It is comparable to the jugs belonging to Phase V of the site (Fischer 2006 (ed.): 111, fig. 44.1). Next to it eight rims of LB cooking pots were found. These are also representatives of Phase V cooking pots (Fischer 2006: 248, fig. 279.7 and 279.8). There was a high concentration of sherds in L 423 and L 440, but only one juglet (N1253) could be partly reconstructed.

Other Objects

Intermingled with the pottery was a grinding stone of basalt (N1256A/B), complete but broken, and a pestle (N1260). The limestone pestle fits into a group of stone tools found in Area 2, on the level belonging to Phase V (Fischer 2006: 127, fig 139.2-4). Close to wall W583 was a stopper of fired clay (N1258).

Discussion

The condition of the finds and the find circumstances of our context very much indicate that we are dealing with a destruction level caused by a conflagration. The entire area was covered by ash and almost all the finds were affected by fire. The catastrophic event caused the collapse of the roof, which explains the burned mudbrick and the carbonized straw.

It seems very likely that what we found were the remains of a partly preserved room and its

courtyard. The find position of the pottery suggests that the inhabitants stored their food along Wall W583. The storage jars, the cooking pots and the mass of barley together with the grinding stone and the pestle indicate some kind of food preparation and storage in this area. The position of the pestle almost looks as if it was actually located right on top of the grinding stone, until the latter broke in two. The good state of the context might be explained by the topography of the walls in this area. If the collapsed material (roof and walls) started to slide from the top of the tall towards the north, the walls would have stopped it and so protected the objects north of it. This could also be an explanation for the fact that the Iron Age people left this spot untouched, whereas they removed the prior occupation layers in the rest of the area. The convenient terrace formed by the above-mentioned events would have been of use for later people building on the tall.

Conclusions

Our context represents a “primary context”, viz. all finds were *in situ* and not disturbed in later times. It should be ascribed to Phase V, the destruction of which is dated to the mid-15th century BC. (Fischer 2006: 374, table 70). The find circumstances point to the likelihood that the inhabitants left the site in haste and did not rebuild this specific area although Tall Abū al-Kharaz was occupied after the catastrophe. The function of the two spaces is clear: they were used to store food and prepare meals.

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