

were able to show a sequence of ceramic corpora much more fully representative than those available from the occupation surfaces and structures higher on the mound. This ceramic series obtained from D. 3 wash layers also extends further into the pre-Arab period than our digging had yet progressed in D. 1 and 2. Thus it should give us a key, when properly studied, to the ceramic horizons and periods of occupation to be met on the heights above.

THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST SEASON'S WORK

As the four Area reports indicate, the stratigraphic evidence was rich and varied, as were the finds, ceramic and architectural complexes. In attempting an overall correlation summary, the records currently indicate the most finely subdivided stratigraphic evidence for the Arabic (five subdivisions of three phases in Area D) and Byzantine (five subdivisions of three phases in Area A) periods. The review of the evidence will indicate, by periods, what the four Areas have produced in the first season's work.

Arabic. Evidence for this period occurred in all four Areas excavated. In Area B a few soil layers were found and one possible occupation surface (not associated with architecture), also a pit and a lime kiln. In Area C the evidence included the U-shaped "enclosure" wall partly visible at the start of the excavation, a small portion of a room at the south edge of the Area (the nature of the building remains undetermined), and the only partially excavated structure in the northeast corner of C. 4. A possible second phase of the period is suggested by the cistern fill in C. 4. In Area A, Phase A is limited to a serpentine alignment of stones and column sections which may have served as some sort of pen or enclosure wall. Phase B (considered Late Arabic) comprised the courtyard drainage system with its associated cisterns in A. 2 and possibly A. 3. Phase C includes the storage complex of A. 1 and possibly two fragmentary wall remnants in A. 3 and 4.

As indicated above, the most complex Arabic evidence occurred in Area D. Phase A comprised some sort of enclosure wall in D. 3 and a relatively poor rebuild of the outer east-west face of the acropolis architecture in D. 1 and a blocking of the gateway at the head of the southern access to the acropolis. Phase B incorporated the "vaulted room" of D. 1 with three living surfaces (one furnished with a plastered "bench" or shelf) with use of a major access route from the south which included a gateway or doorway into the acropolis perimeter architecture and at least two use surfaces continuing from D. 1 down the slope into D. 2. Outside the acropolis perimeter architecture (in which the vaulted room was incorporated) and east of the access route stood a walled open court indicating two exposed surfaces in the course of its use (D. 2). It had been cut into by a large pit at the south edge of the Square which was found at the north portion of D. 3 as well. The size and shape of the pit indicated that a robbing of walls had occurred. An earlier stage of this phase seems to have comprised a leveling operation most evident in the courtyard of D. 2. Phase C is indicated by the second gateway or doorway construction giving access to the acropolis perimeter architecture. It included a sequence of two hard plaster surfaces used in the access space. Beneath the vaulted room, a domestic complex was indicated by new wall alignments and a series of earth occupation surfaces. In D. 3 a pit took at least part of its fill during this stage of occupation. The earliest remains in Phase C may be a transitional stage from the next lowest stratum, but they are provisionally included in the Arabic material pending more detailed studies of the objects and ceramics. They comprised a fine flagstone paving with two walls indicating divisions of perimeter architecture and included a well-worked and larger edition of the gateway from the southern access. The access consisted of well constructed stone stairs in uneven tread widths and bordered on the east by a well-built border wall.

Tentatively, one may venture a correlation of Phase A in

Areas C, A and D on the grounds of the poor quality of workmanship and generally temporary nature of the constructions of enclosure walls and rebuilds. More refined distinctions will depend on the completion of numismatic identifications and refinement of ceramic distinctions. Beyond this, no clear basis is yet available for correlating the other Arabic phases with those of Area D. This may become available on stratigraphic grounds with the linking up of Areas A and D in a future season. Possibilities for placing Phase B in Area C into the relative chronological span of Area D seem slim, barring the yet-to-be-excavated structure in C. 4 and the dating evidence which may turn up there. It would seem that Area C's Phase B is at least later than Area A's Phase C if our reading of ceramic evidence is substantiated by the detailed analyses.

Byzantine. Uncertainties of dividing Byzantine from Roman pottery forms plague us here. Area B indicates in the thick accumulation of *murwar* and soil layers some possible Byzantine occupation. No fine subdivisions were possible. Area C provided evidence for the Byzantine period only in the ceramics and objects embedded in the wash layers disassociated from architectural remains. Area D may open up some Byzantine material in the course of the next season, but the Area supervisor's hesitance in identifying the pre-Arab Stratum II material is wise pending the completion of the inquiry into these layers next season. The Roman pottery indications may mean a gap on the perimeter of the acropolis during the period, as well as in the access route constructions.

From the first season's work, it is Area A which yields the greatest potential for refining our knowledge of the Byzantine period. Phase A comprises in its latest stage the most substantial mosaic floor fragment found to date, with the "inner" arc apsidal wall to which it was joined. The earlier subdivision of the phase comprised another surface, also interpreted as a floor. All of this evidence provides the stimulus for the interpretation of the building remains as part of a church.

Phase B comprised primarily the larger apsidal wall with two associated surfaces in A. 3, the flanking walls outside the apsidal remnant, and possibly one surface fragment in A. 4. The two subdivisions of Phase C are sequences of one and two surfaces associated with the larger apsidal wall in A. 3 and with the long east-west wall in A. 1 and 2. The present judgment places the column bases with Phase B, but indistinct evidence of the founding layer of the present position of these bases awaits further testing. That they are reused in their present locations is evident more from some dirt layered under them than the clearly classical lines of their design. Generally one must observe that Area A stratigraphy has been subject to frequent massive disturbance, and hopefully the linking of Area A and Area D in a future season might provide both specific connections with Area D's pre-Arab remains and clarify the interpretation so strongly suggested by the elements of surviving architecture uncovered to date. No surely Byzantine material is yet available from Area D. Possibly the partially investigated stage of the southern access to the acropolis will yield more certain conclusions with another season's work.

Roman. If the horizon of Arabic and Byzantine material can best be seen by "stacking" Area A under Area D, it is yet unclear where the most helpful Roman material will be evident. In the first season's work Area B produced some evidence of architecture possibly for the period or for the Hellenistic occupation which preceded it. This is in the form of the upper rebuild of the major wall that split the Square east to west and the fragment of a cross wall possibly contemporary with it. In Area C a rather complicated network of walls, possibly Roman, was just coming to light as the season ended. Further work will illumine their nature and importance. In Area A the evidence combines some unworked stone walls not yet fully traced in A. 3 and two better constructed early stages of wall construction in A. 1 and 2. That bedrock occurred so near the starting surface in A. 4 lends

caution to expectations of extensive Roman or pre-Roman remains on this sector of the site, but another two weeks of work in that Area would verify or disprove that suspicion. As indicated in discussion of the Byzantine period, whether Area D will show Roman material immediately beneath the Arab remains there is yet to be confirmed.

Iron III (Persian). The only substantial evidence for this period uncovered to date is the large, deliberately prepared foundation wall in Area B. The completion of investigation of its founding will be of major interest for the next season. Conjecture about the presumably associated architecture would have to be tested by an expansion of the Area.

Iron II, Iron I and Late Bronze. The evidence for these periods is limited to ceramic types known from west bank ceramic horizons as samples have survived into later layers. Indications of the volume of such identifiable material brook well for expecting substantial stratigraphic deposits on the site. The Areas on the shelf of the *tell* seem most likely to produce such evidence, from all present indications.

The Ceramic Evidence. An additional word is in order concerning the ceramic evidence. Detailed analyses may yield criteria sufficient to refine the Arabic ceramic corpus beyond present possibilities. Reference has already been made to samples of imitation Chinese porcelain (see *supra*, p. 134). There would seem to be a basis in the material of Area D for refining the appearance of paint types and glaze styles if such are typologically significant for dating an upper Moabite site. It is clear that certain Roman wares, including genuine and imitation *terra sigillata*, as well as Nabataean materials, were used on the site. Hellenistic forms most readily identified were inverted bowl rims and a few Attic black imported wares.

The most surprising new forms occurred in what we consider the Iron III (Persian) evidence. New forms included double disc bases (a disc within a disc), outset rims (the jog appearing on both the interior and exterior profile lines) and black ring burnishing. Customary red burnished wares and

characteristic cookpot-rim forms seemed to match Iron II styles as found on the west bank. All of this will need the usual detailed analysis for its full importance to be clarified.

In conclusion, the first season's results have demonstrated conclusively the richness of material representing several periods available on the site. They have also held out fascinating problems begging further inquiry. While certain cautions have arisen about the seriously disturbed state of evidence within the acropolis area, chief among them being the evidence of high contours of bedrock in that sector, it is clear that the explorations yet possible on the public land, particularly if integrated along the main north-south and east-west axes, should eventually provide a clear picture of the major stages in the site's occupation history. Numerous auxiliary projects also beckon. The detection of the Roman road in the vicinity, exploration of the necropolis, and planning and exploration of some of the more recent structures on the southwest ridge, are just a few suggestions.