

## AREA C

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Of the 1968 work reported previously,<sup>1</sup> Squares C.2 and C.3 were not continued except for a small probe trench in the southwest corner of C.2. Squares C.1 and C.4 were continued. Two additional Squares were opened this season: C.5, opened at the end of the 2d week, was down the steep slope west of C.1; C.6, opened at the end of the 6th week, was uphill (to the east) of C.4. Square C.5 was opened to continue the tracing of walls in C.1, and to search for the city's defense system. Square C.6 was part of a general plan to extend the east-west sector of the *tell* from Area C to Area A. All Squares lay along the east-west axis plotted for the site.

### *Ayyūbid/Mamlūk*

Surface soil Layers C.5:1 and C.6:1 were dark gray and root-filled, with an average depth of .20 m., as were similarly encountered in C.1-4 in 1968. The finds included painted and glazed pottery of the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk horizon familiar from the 1968 season, along with a few earlier sherds and the usual range of objects.

Beneath the C.5 surface soil (C.5:1) was the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk fill expected from the 4.00 m. depth known along the west balk of C.1. In C.5 this fill (C.5:2-5) followed the slope down to the west, but began to level out, ranging from 3.00-4.00 m. deep along the east balk, to 3.00 m. along the west balk. As in C.1, there were a large number of tip lines flowing from southeast to northwest, lensing in and out. Although our excavation did not try to follow individual lines, an attempt was made to follow the slopes of the fill layers.

<sup>1</sup> See H. O. Thompson, "Heshbon 1968: Area C," *AUSS*, 7 (1969), 127-142.

In harmony with the C.1-3 fill layers, the C.5:2-5 fill contained few stones but was rich in pottery and objects. Several bronze objects were of interest, such as a Christian cross, a bell, a coin of Al-'Azīz Muhammad (1216-1236), and two other Mamlūk coins (Nos. 74, 196, 203).<sup>2</sup> A coral fragment may possibly be considered indicative of trade with Aqaba. Fish bones were found in association with 12 of the 48 pottery pails saved from this accumulation.<sup>3</sup>

This heavy fill accumulation in C.1-3 and C.5 (in contrast to the 1968 evaluation) now appears to have been man-made rather than natural weather wash. The fill layers may have served as makeup for the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Building C.2:10-C.3:3 (1968) founded in it, and for the related courtyard Wall C.1:2, 3, *et al.* However, the frustrating lensing tip lines, of which few persisted for any length, could not be easily followed stratigraphically. For this reason, all statements about the deep fill are of only a preliminary nature.

The exact relationship of the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk soil fills of C.4 (C.4:3, 5, 19, 17) and C.6 (C.6:5) with this deep fill of C.1-3 and C.5 remains problematic. It would seem that, as the immediately sub-surface soil fills, soil Layers C.4:3 and C.6:5 should be contemporary with the deep fill. If the contemporaneity of the fill and these two loci were accepted, then Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Building C.2:10-C.3:3 and the associated courtyard (Walls C.1:2, 3, *et al.*) would be the last of the surviving structures in Area C, because the "north building" of C.4 and C.6 and the other structures of C.6—of which foundation trenches have not thus far been detected—(cf. below) all appear to have been founded in soil layers below Layers C.4:3 and C.6:5.

In contrast to surface soil Layer C.5:1, soil Layer C.6:1 contained heavy rock fall or tumble, presumably from the numerous walls submerged in or slightly protruding from it. Wall C.6:2 continued as part of the north building first discerned in C.4 in 1968. As such, it included two wall faces, a north (inner) one

<sup>2</sup> All coin numbers are taken from A. Terian's forthcoming article "Coins from the 1971 Excavations at Heshbon."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. below. Ø. Labianca, "The Zooarchaeological Remains from *Tell Heshbān* (Heshbon)," pp. 133-144.

and a south (outer) one, with rubble and dirt fill between them. However, the wall itself was not dismantled in C.6, although its two faces were exposed to a depth of three courses. It averaged ca. 1.00 m. in width and extended eastward from the west balk for 3.90 m. As with its extension, Wall C.4:9, several of the top stones of the north face tilted to the north, probably as the beginning of a vaulted roof. The east end of Wall C.6:2 formed a corner turning south, and perhaps comprised the north jamb of a doorway in the east end of the building.

The south face of (north building) Wall C.4:2, of which excavation began in 1968, extended 4.75 m. westward from the east balk with five complete courses preserved. Two higher courses were preserved on the west and east ends, with a third course higher in the east balk. The first fully preserved course, and those above it, were similar in construction to Wall C.4:8. When dismantled, this wall yielded 14 pails of pottery, four of which were Umayyad. Objects included a coin (No. 64) of Justinian I (527-565). Wall C.4:9 (=C.6:2) was the inner face of Wall C.4:2. The remains formed eight courses of dressed and undressed field stones. Paralleling the line of Wall C.4:2, Wall C.4:9 emerged from the east balk 2.50 m. south of the north balk, and extended 3.00 m. westward into the Square. It was ca. .30-.50 m. thick, and yielded, upon dismantling, seven pails of pottery of which four were Umayyad and three had only a few Ayyūbid/Mamlūk sherds. A doorway was built through the lower six courses at the eastern edge of the Square. About half of the doorway remained in the east balk. The doorway was quite clear in outline in Wall C.4:9, but remained somewhat indistinct in Wall C.4:2. It was blocked in two stages (Loci C.4:60 and 61) to be discussed below.

A preliminary description of (north building) Wall C.4:8 was given in 1968. It extended southward into C.4 for 2.70 m. and had a preserved height of seven courses. One course was bonded to east-west Wall C.4:2. Dismantling of Wall C.4:8 produced Ayyūbid/Mamlūk pottery. Wall C.4:70 was distinguished as the inner (east) face of Wall C.4:8. It entered the north balk 2.70 m. west of the east balk and extended southward 1.70 m. into the Square, standing preserved to a height of eight courses. When

dismantled, it yielded five pails of pottery, three of which were Umayyad in date. Walls C.4:8 and 70 formed the western side of the north building. Its south side consisted of Walls C.4:2 and 9 (=C.6:2).

Wall C.4:10 was set perpendicular to Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Wall C.4:8 and ran into the north balk of the Square, as noted in the 1968 report. Walls C.4:8 and 10 appeared to have been contemporary from their corresponding levels and their masonry construction. However, they were not bonded, so Wall C.4:10 could have been later.

Wall C.4:15 was also first observed in 1968. It butted up against Wall C.4:2 and extended southwestward for 2.50 m. Its preserved length stood 1.25 m. wide and .70 m. high. It was two courses high and two courses wide as found. The ceramic evidence indicated that it may be dated to the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk period.

Wall C.6:8 was preserved in two parallel rows of crudely dressed stones, standing three courses high in the northeast corner of the Square. It ran into the east balk and appeared to be continuous with an east-west wall projecting from ground surface to the east of C.6. The portion in C.6 formed a large door or small gate (1.50 m. wide). It had a clear threshold with a small portion of a *huwwar* surface preserved over it which extended into the north balk.

In the remainder of C.6 were found several disconnected wall stumps. One stone found had a cross carved on one end. This may have fallen downhill from the church. The cross had holes at the ends of three of the cross arms plus other holes in a corner. However, if the "cross" stone was related to the building fragments uncovered in that vicinity, it raises the possibility of sacral use for some of these structures.

The dating of the north building (Walls C.6:2; C.4:2, 9, 8, 70), probably a house, must be relative. If, as suggested above, soil Layers C.4:3 and C.6:5, located directly under surface soil, should be considered contemporary with the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk fill layers of C.1-3 and C.5 (cf. above), the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk walls of the north building would have been built prior to the fill accumulation as they were founded beneath Layers C.4:3

and C.6:5. However, since our Ayyūbid/Mamlūk pottery chronology has not been refined to any great degree, it cannot now be said whether the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk use of the north building would have been months or years earlier than the C.1-3 and C.5 fill layers.

The same uncertainty must also hold for dating other elements in C.4 in relation to the north building. Beneath sub-surface soil Layer C.4:3 were Ayyūbid/Mamlūk fill Layers C.4:5, 19, and 17 (cf. above). Soil Layer C.4:5 (in which were coins from the 3d cent. A.D. and the Mamlūk period; Nos. 9 and 38) sealed over Cistern C.4:7. This would suggest that the last Ayyūbid/Mamlūk use of the cistern took place prior to the accumulation of the deep C.1-3 and C.5 fill. Ayyūbid/Mamlūk soil Layer C.4:19 lay against a rebuild of the cistern mouth. Soil Layer C.4:17, continuous with Layer C.4:19, lay over *huwwar* Surface C.4:28 and its associated *Tabun* C.4:36. Surface C.4:28 abutted Walls C.4:13 (Umayyad) and 15, both of which abutted Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Wall C.4:2.

Locus C.4:11, under surface soil inside the north building, comprised the final tumble of the vaulted roof and produced a Mamlūk coin (No. 193). Loci C.4:21 and 24, soil layers mixed with rock tumble and *huwwar* pieces, also appeared inside the building. A coin (No. 83) of Al-Aṣḥraf Sha'bān (1363-1377) came from Layer C.4:24. Beneath C.4:24 was *huwwar* Surface C.4:26, probably the first layer to be considered an occupation layer.

If the three soil and rock tumble loci (C.4:11, 21, 24) could be related to the upper soil fill Layers C.4:3 and 5 outside the building, the people using Surface C.4:26 would have been the last to have used Cistern C.4:7. However, if soil Layers C.4:11 were contemporary with Layer C.4:3, C.4:21 with C.4:5, and C.4:24 with C.4:19 and 17, it could be concluded that C.4:24 was the occupation layer related to the last use of Cistern C.4:7. Or, Layer C.4:24 could be considered to have been gradual destruction debris, the occupants of Surface C.4:26 to have used the cistern at an earlier time, and its last users to have come from another sector of the site. This writer would relate the occupation of Surface C.4:26 with the last use of Cistern C.4:7.

There were four Ayyūbid/Mamlūk layers under Surface

C.4:26. All four (C.4:30, 34, 37, 43) may have been only uneven dirt surfaces. A bench, C.4:38 (cf. Pl. VI:A), was set on the lowest of these layers, C.4:43. Under one end of a column drum laid horizontally and used as part of the bench was a broken Ayyūbid/Mamlūk lamp containing 66 Mamlūk coins (Nos. 96-161 primarily dated 1260-1277) made of bronze cores coated with silver (Pl. XIV:A). The bench was plastered on top,<sup>4</sup> with the plaster continuing up the sides of Walls C.4:9 and 70. Soil Layer C.4:37 probably represents the continued use of the bench (the coin cache was found in connection with this layer), while the higher Layer C.4:34 nearly covered it, and Layer C.4:30 did so completely. All four layers are considered to have been contemporary with soil Layers C.4:19 and 17 outside the building, and all occupation groups accumulating Loci C.4:30, 34, 37, 38, and 43 could have used Cistern C.4:7.

During the time of the bench users, the doorway in Walls C.4:9 and 2 was probably already partially filled with dirt (C.4:61) and the upper part (C.4:60) was filled with stones (cf. Pl. VII:A). The outside of the doorway was then blocked by a huge boulder and by two more courses of stone, and against this outside blocking, Wall C.4:15 was built. *Huwwar* Surface C.4:28, associated with *Ṭabun* C.4:36, was founded on Early Byzantine soil Layer C.4:41 and ran up to Wall C.4:15. It is possible that Surface C.4:28 and Wall C.4:15 were founded by the people who accumulated Layers C.4:30, 34, or 37 inside the north building.

In summary, Ayyūbid/Mamlūk occupation in Area C appears to have had at least three major phases: (A) The building comprised of Loci C.2:10-C.3:3 and the associated deep fill; (B) the latest use of the north building including *huwwar* Surface C.4:26 and possibly soil Locus C.4:24; and (C) the north building bench (C.4:38), possibly including C.4:30, 34, and 37.

### *Umayyad*

Any Umayyad material in C.2, C.3, and C.6 is as yet unexca-

<sup>4</sup>A vaulted room in Square D.I, excavated in 1968 and of the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk period, had a plastered bench or shelf. Cf. P. Bird, "Heshbon 1968: Area D," *AUSS*, 7 (1969), 218.

vated. Umayyad evidence in C.4 was considerably more complicated than in C.1 and C.5. Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Wall C.4:8 of the north building was built over Umayyad Walls C.4:12 and 50, and it rested on Umayyad soil Layer C.4:51. The lower courses of Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Wall C.4:70, also of the north building, seemed to have been cut into Layer C.4:51 which was held to the east by Wall C.4:50. Umayyad Layer C.4:35 ran against the southern portion of Wall C.4:13, and, partially covering the C.4:68 water channels, ran to the C.4:7 cistern and was continuous with soil Layer C.4:27 and the lower portion of soil in a probe (C.4:18) along the south balk. These Umayyad loci suggest that there was an Umayyad use or reuse of the cistern. The southern end of Wall C.4:13 (Umayyad) also covered a portion of the C.4:68 water channels, and incorporated some reused slabs which had been set on edge, apparently to protect the water channels in bedrock. This southern end lay directly on Early Byzantine soil Layer C.4:67, which lay over Late Roman soil Layer C.4:75 and Late Roman water Channel C.4:68. The northern end of Wall C.4:13, which abutted Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Wall C.4:2, was of quite different construction on the east (smaller, undressed stones). This northern end also had a foundation trench (C.4:56 and 65) on the east side which cut into the Early Byzantine layer below (C.4:41). Wall C.4:13 incorporated (by being built over the top of) Wall C.4:45, which was apparently a Late Roman wall reused in Umayyad times (cf. below).

Wall C.4:12 was a north-south wall noted in 1968. It stood preserved two courses high and three stones long, and it may have been a rebuild of Wall C.4:50. Wall C.4:50 was built of field stones and stood preserved three courses high, one course wide, and 1.90 m. long. Wall C.4:13, also noted in 1968, was two courses wide and varied from three to four courses in preserved height. It was 5.00 m. long and ran from Wall C.4:2 into the south balk. It may have served a defensive function for the western perimeter of the city, or at least for the cistern sector, since it seemingly was too heavy a wall for a simple courtyard. A 661-750 (Umayyad) coin (No. 65) came from soil Layer C.4:23 which ran over the southern end of Wall C.4:13.

Wall C.4:45 ran northeasterly to the north of Cistern C.4:7. Its south face touched the west balk 5.00 m. north of the south balk, and stood 2.00 m. high at that point. From there it extended east-southeast for 3.50 m. where it turned east-northeast for another 2.40 m. The upper corner of its last stone almost touched the bottom corner of the lowest preserved stone of Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Wall C.4:15. The wall may have served as a retaining wall around the northeast side of Cistern C.4:7, since it kept clear the water channels cut in the bedrock. The east end and the upper courses of the west end were removed, and they produced Umayyad pottery. Both ends rested on bedrock, but it appears that Late Roman soil Layer C.4:74 ran against the huge boulders which composed the lower courses, so this portion of Wall C.4:45 could be Late Roman.

Wall C.1:7, which first appeared in C.2 (1968) as Wall C.2:11, formed the Umayyad structural evidence in C.1. This 8.00 m. long (in C.1) wall seemed in 1968 to have been reused as part of a retaining barrier for the deep fill of Ayyūbid/Mamlūk times (cf. above). It is now clear from the excavation of C.5 that Wall C.1:7 was only *part* of a retaining barrier, since in C.5 the deep fill continued to flow down the steep westerly slope of the *tell*.

It now appears that C.1:10 was a *huwwar* and stone layer against Wall C.1:7, and Surface C.1:11 and its makeup ran under that wall. The C.1:11 surface, which produced Umayyad pottery, was accumulated when the Early Byzantine water Channel C.1:15 (cf. above) was closed. Surface C.1:11 could have been simply natural accumulation during a time of abandonment, before the construction of Wall C.1:7; or it could have been fill for that wall. It seems likely that Surface C.1:11 equaled soil Layer C.1:33 to the north which produced a coin (No. 63) of Honorius (395-423).

Part of the purpose of C.5 was to locate and continue the excavation of Early Byzantine Wall C.1:8. Instead, Umayyad Wall C.5:7 was found. While it extended northwestward from the east balk in the general sector where one would have expected Wall C.1:8 to continue, it was off the expected line horizontally over .50 m. and was almost .50 m. lower. Moreover, it stood a single course high, two courses wide, and was composed of



an odd assortment of stones ranging from head-size to long stones set on end. In addition, pottery there was Umayyad while that of Wall C.1:8 was Early Byzantine. Wall C.5:7 provided a distinct separation between the deep Ayyūbid/Mamlūk (C.5:2-5) fill to its southwest and soil Layer C.5:6 to the northeast. Layer C.5:6 produced seven pails of pottery of which four were Umayyad. Wall C.5:7 was removed to expose beneath it a sandy layer (C.5:10) which was Early Byzantine in date.

### *Early Byzantine*

Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Walls C.4:2, 9, and 70, all of the north building, rested on Early Byzantine Layers C.4:41=54=53. The northern end of (Umayyad) Wall C.4:13 cut into Layer C.4:41, while the southern end of that wall rested on C.4:67, an Early Byzantine layer under Umayyad Layers C.4:35ff. and over Late Roman Layer C.4:74. Layer C.4:41, in which was a Roman *aes* IV type coin (No. 178, probably 4th-5th cent.), was continuous under the walls of the north building and to the south under Ayyūbid/Mamlūk *Tabun* C.4:36 and its associated Surface C.4:28.

Soil Layer C.4:41=54=53 was compact, red, and flecked with *huwwar*. In C.4:53 was an articulated skeleton of an infant so small that medical opinion judged that it was either premature or still-born (cf. Pl. VI:B). A bronze buckle, with some corroded iron still attached, lay at the infant's right shoulder. That it was probably a clasp for clothing seems apparent as impressions of cloth fibers were clearly recognizable on the buckle. A large number of tiny beads at the waist may have been decoration on the cloth. The skeleton was partly under the large sherd of a storage jar.

Work this season showed the irregularly aligned (1968) Wall C.1:15 to have been capstones over a water channel built of two rows of semi-flat field stones set on edge to form a trough leading from Early Roman Wall C.1:14, under the preserved edge of Umayyad Surface C.1:11, to Wall C.1:8 through which it drained. The north end of the channel had been formed by removing a stone from Wall C.1:14. The channel was 3.50 m.

long and ca. .80 m. wide (cf. Pl. VII:B), and produced Early Byzantine pottery.

Wall C.1:8, first exposed in 1968, was 5.25 m. long and ran southeast to northwest across the southwest corner of the Square. It was a single course wide and had a clear foundation trench (C.1:28) cut into Early Roman fill on the northeast side. From this foundation trench came Early Byzantine pottery. In the lowest course of the two to three course high preserved wall was a curious "blank" filled with Early Roman debris (C.1:51). The only object in this debris was a small glass vase under one of the huge boulders, separated from it by only a few centimeters of dirt. It was the only complete glass vessel found to date on the *tell* proper (cf. Pl. XIII:A).

In C.5, sandy Layer C.5:10 (beneath Umayyad Wall C.5:7) was not completely removed, but in addition to two pails of pottery, parts of a human skeleton (C.5:9) were found in it. The remains included a bit of skull and arm, but very little from above the legs except the sacrum. The long bones and feet were articulated, but the torso remains may have been washed downhill.

### *Late Roman*

Late Roman remains in Area C are so far confined to C.4 and C.1. The cistern and water system in C.4 have been referred to above. The pottery contents of the latest use and abandonment of Cistern C.4:7, opened in 1968, were Ayyūbid/Mamlūk. A lip construction three courses high stood above the collar stone. The topmost course had an Ayyūbid/Mamlūk soil layer against it (C.4:19=17), while some Umayyad ceramics were found in soil which lay against the lower courses, the collar stone, and all the way down to bedrock (C.4:35ff.). This might suggest that the cistern was Umayyad in origin but that it was cleaned out and reused in the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk period. The dating, however, is complicated both toward later and earlier usages. Ayyūbid/Mamlūk sherds were found in the bedrock-cut basin (C.4:71) which lay in the south balk to the west of and connected to Cistern C.4:7 by water Channels C.4:68 (cf. Pl. VIII:A). And, as Ayyūbid/Mamlūk sherds were also found in

the cistern, one could posit that this water system was reused in the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk period. Water Channels C.4:68 included a channel cut into bedrock and a limestone slab *in situ* with a groove cut into its top. The channel sloped gently to the west to some point in or beyond the west balk. The eastern end rested on bedrock at the west edge of the other bedrock-cut channel which ran into Cistern C.4:7. However, the eastern end of the limestone channel was blocked with plaster.<sup>5</sup> Late Roman soil Layer C.4:75 (under Early Byzantine Layer C.4:67) ran to and under the limestone slab. An additional limestone slab was turned upside down and covered a portion of the bedrock-cut channel. Removal of this slab produced five sherds, with the latest dating Late Roman. Two more such slabs were set on edge and incorporated into Umayyad Wall C.4:13 where it entered the south balk, over, and presumably protecting the water channel. While not conclusive, the limestone slab evidence could point to a Late Roman date for the cistern and the channel system, or at least part of it since the whole system has not yet been completely excavated.

Roman and Late Iron II ceramic evidence appeared in increasing numbers in the lower soil layers of C.4, with occasional pails being dominantly pre-Early Byzantine. This phenomenon was true beneath C.4:67, the Early Byzantine soil layer over the limestone slab channel. This Early Byzantine soil Layer C.4:67 also lay over Late Roman Loci C.4:74 and 75, the latter resting on bedrock.

Bedrock showed a steep downward slope to the west from the northwest corner of the cistern, and in a pocket under soil Layer C.4:52 (Early Byzantine) in the northeast corner of the Square.

The Late Roman period in C.1 was represented in the southeast corner of the Square by Wall C.1:12, whose date postulated in 1968 was refined in 1971. The surviving top had a cobblestone

<sup>5</sup> N. Glueck described a cistern at Sela, west-northwest of Buseirah. Water was led to a cistern through a rock-cut channel via a settling basin. "When the cistern was full, the channel could be blocked off, and the water diverted through an aperture in the south wall to a reservoir" (*The Other Side of the Jordan* [2d ed.; Cambridge, Mass., 1970], p. 204).

appearance except at the north end, which had two roughly squared field stones in line with somewhat larger stones along the west edge. These formed the top of two courses of rough field stones. At the north end, it formed a corner turning east. Foundation Trenches C.1:31 (west face, north end only) and C.1:44 (east face) gave a pottery reading of Late Roman. *Huwwar* Layer C.1:45, beneath foundation Trench C.1:31, yielded a coin (No. 47) of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76). Wall C.1:12 extended into the east balk. To check its possible appearance in C.2, a probe trench was excavated. No clear wall evidences were found, but several tumbled stones lay in a line with the north end of Wall C.1:12. The tumble appeared in soil Layer C.2:14 and continued down into the Early Roman soil Layer C.2:15.

In the corner formed by Walls C.1:30 (north-south) and 49 (east-west) (cf. below), soil Layer C.1:20 produced Late and Early Roman pottery. The layer appeared to have been cut by a possible foundation trench (C.1:48) in the corner of those walls, and the pottery from that trench dated Late Roman. What was thought to have been a foundation trench for Wall C.1:49, Locus C.1:72, produced Early Roman pottery and one Late Roman sherd, presumed to have been contamination. Along the west face of Wall C.1:30, a foundation trench (C.1:71) gave sherds reading late Iron II. Beneath Layer C.1:20, but over foundation Trench C.1:71, ceramically dated Early Roman Surface C.1:25 touched both Walls C.1:30 and 49. A possible interpretation of this evidence is that foundation Trench C.1:48 represents a Late Roman rebuild of Early Roman Wall C.1:49 and Late Iron II Wall C.1:30 (cf. below, Early Roman and Iron II).

At the moment, there appears to have been only one Late Roman phase in isolated sectors of Area C.

### *Early Roman*

The Early Roman horizon in Area C is presently limited to C.1. Structurally there appeared to be at least two phases with an intervening stage of thick soil layers.

Walls C.1:14, 37, and 13—with their foundation Trenches C.1:42 and 59, 43 and 52, and 70 and 53, respectively—were all Early Roman.

The top preserved course of Wall C.1:14 (1968) was of well-cut limestone blocks, while the second course down was of larger, rougher blocks of limestone. It ran west from the east balk 4.45 m., with the westernmost stone of the lower course almost touching and in line with the highest preserved stone of Wall C.1:40 at its northern end.

Wall C.1:37 was also of limestone blocks, roughly shaped as was the lower course of Wall C.1:14. It ran perpendicular to and past the southern end of Wall C.1:13 (cf. below), but lay at a slight angle to Wall C.1:14—the north face was 6.40-5.90 m. from the north balk.

Wall C.1:13, initially exposed in 1968, was of crude construction with rocks varying in thickness from .10-.60 m. It ran in a north-northeast line, set 1.30 m. west of the east balk where it abutted Wall C.1:37. At a point .35 m. from the east balk where only the lower course was preserved, it ran under our C.1 stairs at the north balk. Its length was 5.65 m. and the width ranged from .55-.90 m. Its preserved two courses stood ca. .75 m. high. Compared to Walls C.1:37 and 14, the deeper founding of Wall C.1:13 could indicate its earlier construction. In soil Layer C.1:41, over Wall C.1:13 and under *huwwar* Surface C.1:39, was found a coin (No. 49) of Aretas IV (9 B.C.-A.D. 40).

A *huwwar* surface (C.1:36 and 39), traced primarily in the east balk, abutted Wall C.1:14. This wall was possibly the latest Early Roman structure in C.1 (and thus far known in Area C), with Walls C.1:13 and 37 preceding it, if not in an earlier structural phase, at least in an earlier stage of use.

Presumably all three walls would have been of domestic building use, probably with Wall C.1:37 related to Wall C.1:13, while Wall C.1:14 would have formed part of another building. Wall C.1:14 may have been related to Wall C.1:40 (cf. below) or a rebuild of it, since that wall (C.1:40) was of quite different construction and much deeper founding than were Walls C.1:37 and 13.

A thick soil layer (C.1:54, 61, 62), from .75 to over 2.00 m.

(south balk) deep in excavated portions, lay under the three walls mentioned above, and partially against Walls C.1:40, 63, and perhaps 30, with possible foundation trenches (C.1:71, 73, 57, respectively) cut in it for Walls C.1:30, 63, and part of 40.

Wall C.1:40 consisted of a line of large, irregularly placed rocks (though with a clear line forming a face to the east), 4.25 m. long running north from the south balk to Wall C.1:63. The width of the wall was 1.40 m., but the tumbled rocks between this line and the west balk would suggest that we have only the inner face, while the outer face has fallen downhill. At the north end of Wall C.1:40, traces of two more courses, each comprising just a single stone, were preserved. Two stones, one of which was half of a cistern collar stone, were removed from part of Early Byzantine Wall C.1:8 before it was realized that these were part of a continued wall; i.e., Early Byzantine Wall C.1:8 was built over and utilized part of Early Roman Wall C.1:40 (cf. above). Soil Locus C.1:35, which extended to Wall C.1:8 but was over Wall C.1:40, contained an Imperial Roman coin (No. 164).

Soil Layer C.1:57 was thought possibly to be a foundation trench along the west face of Wall C.1:40. It produced some sherds dated Early Roman, but with Late Iron II sherds dominant. However, this locus now appears to have been the loose soil interior of a wall (C.1:40) two courses wide, with the west (outer) course largely tumbled downhill. Locus C.1:38 was an Early Roman soil layer against Wall C.1:40 on the east face, at the south balk. As this was traced along Wall C.1:40, what seemed to have been a foundation trench appeared in Locus C.1:38, 1.50 m. north of the south balk. This trench (C.1:66) also gave sherds read as Early Roman.

Wall C.1:63 was first thought to have been part of Wall C.1:30 (cf. below), but a review of the evidence by the architects revealed that a slight offset in the line of the east face indicated a different construction. It stood preserved .90 m. wide and 1.65 m. long. A soil Layer (C.1:73), noted as a possible foundation trench along the east face of Wall C.1:63, gave sherds read as Early Roman. The removal of the small stones on top of Wall C.1:63 also yielded sherds read as Early Roman.

Seemingly bonded into Wall C.1:63 was Wall C.1:49 of rectangular, medium-sized stones set in an east-west line. It was .55 m. wide and .90 m. long, and ran from the west balk to Wall C.1:63.

Thus, Walls C.1:40, 63, and 49 appear to have been Early Roman, but this judgment will need further clarification from the work in the next season.

The relationship of the thick Early Roman layer (C.1:54, 61, 62) to Wall C.1:30 was stratigraphically unclear. This was part of our path to the C.1 stairs, and the foundation trench east of Wall C.1:30 could not be isolated. The foundation trench (C.1:71) west of the wall, however, produced Late Iron II pottery, and above this trench the Early Roman Surface C.1:25 ran against the wall. This relationship of Surface C.1:25 to Wall C.1:30 and to foundation Trench C.1:71 could indicate that there was an Early Roman reuse or rebuild of that Late Iron II wall (cf. above, Late Roman; below, Iron II). This theory is supported by a closely set row of chink stones below the first fully preserved course of the wall. The row, as well as the course below it, was set just .10 m. further west than was the highest preserved course.

The size of Wall C.1:40 and the general (north-south) alignment of Walls C.1:40, 63, and 30 would suggest a defensive line along the brow of the hill on this western slope. This remains a possible interpretation. The chief argument against it is that Wall C.1:49, which extended westward from Wall C.1:63, was bonded into it, and hence may have formed a room either to the north or to the south (with Surface C.1:25 as the floor and Wall C.1:30 as another wall).

One could thus divide the Early Roman period as follows: (A) One phase comprising Wall C.1:14 and *huwwar* Surface C.1:36 and 39, along with Walls C.1:37 and 13; (B) an intervening heavy soil layering; and (C) an earlier phase comprising Walls C.1:40, 63, and 49, along with reused Late Iron II Wall C.1:30.

#### *Late Hellenistic*

Throughout Area C a few Late Hellenistic sherds appeared in a

few pails, particularly in Early Roman fills, but no clearly Late Hellenistic layers or structures were identified.

### *Iron II*

Attempts to follow the Early Roman soil layers proved to be as difficult and frustrating as following the tip lines in the deep Ayyūbid/Mamlūk fill. Several were traced and the tops of others were located. In the process, soil Layer C.1:55 was noted ca. .75 m. below Early Roman Wall C.1:14 at a level of 875.99 m. Its exposed dimensions were ca. .40 m. wide x .80 m. long, with a semicircular appearance. Pottery readings in two attempts to isolate the layer gave a few Early Roman sherds and mostly sherds dated Late Iron II.

Layer C.1:55 lay contiguous to Locus C.1:60 to the east. Also semicircular in appearance, C.1:60 lay between C.1:55 and the east balk, and measured .50 x .75 m. in width and length. An attempt to isolate its date produced some Late Iron II pottery and one possible Iron I sherd.

Layer C.1:67, beneath Early Roman Surface C.1:25 makeup, produced a few Early Roman sherds, but was dominantly Late Iron II in date.

While a conclusion based on limited samples remains doubtful, these layers would suggest that the excavation of C.1 had reached Late Iron II evidence.

Foundation Trench C.1:71 on the west side of Wall C.1:30 indicated that the wall was Late Iron II in its original founding, although Surface C.1:25 showed that it had been reused in the Early Roman period. It was built of large head-sized stones, roughly dressed into rectangular blocks. An extra course stood preserved where it abutted Wall C.1:63, from which point it extended 4.50 m. to the north balk at the stairs. The width of the wall varied from .75-1.25 m. Wall C.1:30 was, then, the latest of an unknown number of Late Iron II structural elements in C.1.

### *Summary*

After two seasons of excavation, Area C has been seen to contain a broad spectrum of the occupational and ceramic evidence at *Tell Ḥesbān*, from Ayyūbid/Mamlūk to Late Iron II. Most of



these had one or more structural elements with related layering. The major exception was the Late Hellenistic period. Thus far, only two loci of homogeneous Late Hellenistic pottery have been found on the *tell*, so the Late Hellenistic sherds in Area C are simply part of the sparse occupation picture for that period at *Ḥesbān*. However, Area C contributed a great deal of Umayyad evidence, which was otherwise quite weakly attested in the other Areas.