

## AREA C

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Of the 1971 work previously reported,<sup>1</sup> Squares 4, 5, and 6 were not excavated in 1973, but work in Squares 1, 2, and 3 was continued. So for the most part the excavations in Area C continued in portions begun in 1968.<sup>2</sup>

### *Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Period*

Square 1 had been dug to sub-Late Roman levels in 1971. Except for some later material from a small balk cutting, no remains for later periods were reported from this Square in the 1973 season.

In Square 2 most of the remains encountered were earlier than Ayyūbid/Mamlūk occupation. A few sherds of this period left from 1968 were found in Loci C.2:7 and 9, undifferentiated fill layers. A surprise in this square was that Wall C.2:10, dated in 1968 as Late Arabic, produced only Umayyad sherds but none from the later periods.

In Square 3 the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Soil Layers C.3:14 and 7 were difficult to separate distinctly from the overlying Layer C.3:5, the bottom remnant of a dark soil layer mostly removed in 1968. Locus C.3:11, a rocky black and brown soil layer, lying between Wall C.3:10 and the east balk, had Ayyūbid/Mamlūk sherds as the latest pottery. Locus C.3:15 was a pit or trench extending from the south balk 4.30 m. northward into the Square. Three pails of pottery from the abandonment fill included phases

<sup>1</sup> See H. O. Thompson, "Heshbon 1971: Area C," *AUSS* 11 (1973): 72-88.

<sup>2</sup> See Thompson, "Heshbon 1968: Area C," *AUSS* 7 (1969): 127-142.

of Ayyūbid/Mamlūk materials, and several iron nails, a bead, and a rubbing stone.

Wall C.3:18, surviving in 4 stones, 1 row wide and 1 course high, had appeared in 1968 to be a bottom-course extension of house Wall C.3:3. But it proved to be probably a wide lean-to or a courtyard wall of Ayyūbid/Mamlūk date attached to the house. Locus C.3:17, a dark, pebbly soil extending along the east balk from 1.25 to 4.30 m. from the south balk, about .50 m. maximum width, had pottery dating it to the same period, with some 'Abbāsīd and Umayyad material. An iron arrowhead and miscellaneous glass fragments were found here. This locus may have been part of a pit, or debris caught against the uphill side of the abandoned Umayyad Wall C.3:24. Wall C.3:18 relates chronologically to Wall C.3:3, which in 1971 was noted as the latest phase of Ayyūbid/Mamlūk in Area C. Loci C.3:15 and 17 related to the earlier phases, probably Phase 2 of the North Building reported in 1971. The faunal remains from the five C.3 loci described above included a conch-type seashell and a catfish bone which, like the 1971 Aqaba fishbones, were considered evidence of trade. Presumably local were the sheep/goat, cattle, horse, donkey, and domestic chicken bones.

### *'Abbāsīd Period*

In Square 2 'Abbāsīd material found in Loci 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 (all apparently fill layers, inter-season cleanup, or balk scrapings) supports the supposition that 'Abbāsīd glazed ware now stratigraphically identifiable was possibly present in 1968 loci but then yet undifferentiated from the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk glazes. These fill layers were presumably not *in situ* but brought in from elsewhere on the mound, yet they represent an 'Abbāsīd presence at *Tell Hesbân* not clearly distinguished before this year. Objects from these layers included a bone ornamental skewer, a polished ornamental bone, a slingstone, an inscribed roof tile, a fragment of a saddle quern, and a granite bowl rim. Faunal re-

mains from these layers included sheep/goat, cattle, camel, chicken, donkey, horse, cat, wild bird, turtle, snail, a human tooth, and several unidentified bone fragments.

In Square 3 the 'Abbāsīd presence is not so evident. A few sherds were present in Loci C.3:5, 8, and 17 (Ayyūbid/Mamlūk in date) noted above; in Locus C.3:14, a red soil layer in the south and west parts of the Square (dominantly Umayyad); and probably as intrusive in Loci C.3:16 (Byzantine) and C.3:21 (Umayyad). Objects from these loci included glass beads and nails.

### *Umayyad Period*

A study of the 1971 pottery<sup>3</sup> made possible a new demarcation between Byzantine and Umayyad pottery at *Heshbān*, making isolation of the latter forms a stronger possibility. In Square 1 this reassessment identified some Umayyad pottery in Loci C.1:32 and 35 in the southwest corner of the Square near Byzantine Wall C.1:8. This suggests that Wall C.1:8 was a terrace wall over which soil bearing Umayyad sherds spilled and slid down the slope westward over the top of Early Roman Wall C.1:40.

In Square 2, Umayyad sherds were present and sometimes dominant in Wall C.2:10 and Soil Layers C.2:18, 19, and 20, described above; also a few in Soil Layer C.2:21 lensing out from the south balk, and with the partial (40%) skeleton of a woman (Locus C.2:23) apparently dumped, disarticulated, along with the fill of Locus C.2:22, underlying Locus C.2:18. In Locus C.2:22 Umayyad pottery was the latest in 10 out of 25 pails. Sheep/goat, cattle, donkey, horse, chicken, and human remains were found in this Square.

In Square 3 a probe trench (Locus C.3:13) allowed identification of five soil layers (Loci C.3:7, 14, 15, 22, and 23). The first two yielded primarily Umayyad ware, as in Locus C.3:21 mentioned above (though the latter had a few 'Abbāsīd sherds, probably in-

<sup>3</sup> James A. Sauer, *Heshbon Pottery 1971* (AUM 7, 1973), pp. 39-49.

trusive). Layer C.3:22, under C.3:14, was Umayyad, while Locus C.3:23 below it was Byzantine. Wall C.3:24, a rough construction in the east balk, one row thick and six courses high, of field stones .10-.20 m. in diameter, was dated Umayyad by the pottery found in dismantling the wall. Layer C.3:7 yielded a fragment of a bronze figurine head. Another Umayyad deposit was Locus C.3:25, a .15 m. layer of hard packed soil covering about 2.00 sq. m. in the northeast corner of the excavated portion.

All these soil layers appeared to be natural or manmade fill or dump rather than occupation layers. Fauna included sheep/goat, cattle, chicken, donkey, bird, snail, reptile, catfish, conch shell, and several unidentifiable bone fragments.

Square 4 had yielded extensive Umayyad remains in 1971, concentrated around the cistern; it now appeared that Umayyad occupation did not extend westward down the slope except for the irregular wall in Square C.4:5, also noted in 1971.

### *Byzantine Period*

In Square 1 a small stub of Wall C.1:8 (apparently a retaining wall on the western slope of the *tell*) was removed from the south balk. The pottery under it confirmed its Byzantine date.

In Square 2, Soil Layer C.2:24, lying throughout the excavated portion down to and around Walls C.2:26, 36, and 38, was a Byzantine accumulation covering abandoned buildings. It contained several fragments of stone bowls and grinders.

In Square 3 Firepit C.3:16 was probably Byzantine with 'Abbāsīd intrusions, as mentioned above. Locus C.3:19, a scattered ash layer along the west balk, probably represented another Byzantine firepit. Locus C.3:20, a soil layer near the west balk, had Byzantine sherds but also Hellenistic and Iron Age deposits. Locus C.3:23 was a soil layer up to .15 m. thick over a considerable part of the excavated sector, similar to the 1971 Byzantine Loci C.4:41-53-54.

A small iron bird was found in Locus C.3:23. Byzantine intrusions were found in other loci. The faunal remains in Squares C.2 and C.3 were sheep/goat, cattle, and chicken.

With the exception of retaining Wall C.1:8 on the brink of the west slope of the *tell*, Byzantine evidence was primarily in layers accumulated during the abandonment of this portion of the *tell*, with occasional camp fires during the period.

### *Late Roman Period*

In Square C.1 the Late Roman evidence noted in 1971 comprised Wall C.1:12 (southeast corner) and Soil Layer C.1:20 (northwest corner).

In 1973 in Square C.2 the rocky Locus C.2:29 in the west balk, also Late Roman, was probably an extension of Wall C.1:12 (broken), appearing through the intervening balk. C.2:30, a soil layer .50 m. deep along the south balk, extended into the Square behind and level with, but not touching, the surviving top of Wall C.2:36, which was a major segment of a circle extending into the Square about 1.30 m. from the south balk. Layer C.2:30 and the underlying Layers C.2:42 and 43 were Late Roman fill thrown into the pit that had been lined by Wall C.2:36, which may also have been Late Roman but more likely, from ceramic evidence, Early Roman.

In Square C.3 only Locus C.3:31, a soil layer of unclear function in the southeast corner, can be reasonably dated to the Late Roman period.

Faunal remains from this period included sheep/goat and chicken.

In summary: The Late Roman occupation in Area C continued, as in 1968 and 1971, to be sparsely represented.

### *Early Roman Period*

In 1971 Early Roman remains in Area C were found only in Square C.1—two architectural phases and an intervening soil fill. In 1973 no layers datable to that period were found east (uphill)

of Square C.2, though some Early Roman sherds were mixed with later materials in C.3.

In Square C.1, in 1973, Early Roman Walls C.1:40, 63, and 30 were noted as comprising the earlier phase. Wall C.1:30, of unhewn field stones (.15-.50 m. diameter), surviving to a height of 1.50 m., made a butt joint with Wall C.1:63 but formed no part of it. Wall C.1:63 was found to be, with Wall C.1:40, part of a continuous structure, with a break (noted in 1971) where the upper part of Wall C.1:40 was falling downhill to the west. Wall C.1:40/63, of unhewn field stone (.25-.75 m. diameter) laid in rough courses solidly chinked, formed a corner with Wall C.1:49 running to the west. It was founded on bedrock or hard red virgin soil immediately over bedrock. These walls possibly represented the northeast corner of an Early Roman tower, possibly part of city fortifications on the western perimeter of the *tell*. (Pl. VI:A.)

This date for Wall C.1:40/63 was confirmed by Foundation Trench C.1:51, noted in 1971 as an Early Roman layer under Byzantine Wall C.1:8. The east edge of this deep (c. 3.60 m.) but narrow foundation trench followed bedrock contours from the south balk 1.50 m. north and thereafter cut through Iron Age layers. The trench fill yielded nothing later than Early Roman materials.

A small quantity of 1971 Layer C.1:18 remaining under the stub of Byzantine Wall C.1:8 was confirmed as Early Roman but later than Trench C.1:51, and similarly the small portion of Layer C.1:45 (1971) *in situ* under it. The latter had been almost a meter thick in the southeast corner of the square, but lensed out to a few centimeters where it seemed to cover Foundation Trench C.1:51, as shown in the south balk. Irregular soil (Loci C.1:84, 86, 88, and 93) overlay tumbled rock (c. .10-.25 m. diameter) lying 1.00-1.50 m. east of the western edge of bedrock. This suggested that Early Roman deposits lay in that area before the construction of Wall C.1:40/63 with its Foundation Trench C.1:51; this was

confirmed by evidence from Layers C.1:10 and 77, also cut by Trench C.1:51. There was insufficient evidence to diagnose the functions of these layers.

In Square C.2 the Early Roman period was indicated by pottery in Soil Layer C.2:27 between Wall C.2:26 (Iron Age) and the north balk; also in the two fill layers (Locus C.2:32 and Locus C.2:37 below it) of a pit or trench in the southwest corner of the Square, extending about 3.00 m. east of the west balk and apparently continuous with earth Layer C.1:45—similar in color, consistency, levels and alignment through the balk. The north edge of this Pit C.2:32/37 seemed to be in line with a vertical line in the east balk of C.1 that appeared between 1971 and 1973, presumably due to weathering. This suggested the presence of a pit or trench, or possibly an earthquake fault. The vertical line was traceable down along the north side of Wall C.2:90 (see below), between it and an earlier adjacent soil layer. The lower portion suggested a cut trench rather than an earthquake fault, but the evidence is ambiguous.

The Early Roman "Wall" C.2:36, noted above, seemed to form the lining, one stone thick, of a pit within the Pit C.2:32/37. As first excavated, the north edge of Pit C.2:32/37, running eastward 1.50 m. from the west balk, appeared to form a foundation trench, which was designated Locus C.2:35. The space between Wall C.2:36 and this north edge was filled with rocks (.10-.35 m. diameter) and soil. Pottery indicated that it was abandoned in Early Roman times. A clay game board (Object No. 1632) was found here. The unhewn boulders of "Wall" (Pit lining) C.2:36 ranged from .50-.85 m. in diameter. Two of them, apparently belonging to the top course, remained visible in the south balk. Smaller rocks (.15-.25 m. diameter) seemed to form a base or foundation (six courses high) under the westernmost rock of Locus C.2:36, and one only three courses high under the easternmost rock. A layer of earth, filled with sherds and stones, lay immediately under the boulders of Locus C.2:36. These configura-

tions suggested a stone-lined pit with "Wall" C.2:36 forming the upper part of the lining. Three irregularly placed stones, probably remains of the topmost preserved course of Wall C.2:36, were on the same level as the two boulders in the south balk but did not join them, and all lay on several centimeters of soil. The next course below, also of three stones, was more regular, as were the next two lower courses. The "fifth course" (?) down, of two rocks, was separated from the fourth by an earth layer .10 m. thick, which suggested that a connection was more likely with Wall C.2:52, laid on earth over bedrock (see below).

Wall C.2:38 seemed to be the eastern end of Walls C.1:14 and 37 (1971 Report). Only two stones (of each of the two surviving courses of Wall C.1:14) extended east of the west balk. Pottery in Locus C.2:33 (the foundation trench on the south face of Wall C.2:38) indicated an Early Roman construction date for the wall, which cut down into earlier layers on the south and east. Its function remained unclear at the end of the season.

Faunal remains from this period included sheep/goat, cattle, horse, donkey, pig, rodent, snail, and some indistinguishable material.

### *Hellenistic Period*

Although a few Hellenistic sherds were found in 1971, this was a new, extended range of evidence in Area C in 1973 in a number of loci. In C.1, Soil Layers C.1:85 and 87, in the southeast corner of the Square along the east balk, lensed out and were overlain by Loci C.1:84, 86, 88, 92, and 93, which were almost level layers, one above the other, in the southeast corner, the last over bedrock. Layer C.1:89 ran over the lowest course of Wall C.1:90. Each layer was cleared separately, but all were pottery-dated to the Hellenistic period and may have comprised an open hearth. Objects from these loci included a bronze earring, four bone knives or spatulas, a bronze pin, and a loom weight.



In Square C.2 was a rock tumble (Locus C.2:28), with gray soil around the stones, lying against the surviving north face of Wall C.2:26. Its latest pottery suggested a period of Hellenistic accumulation around an earlier abandoned construction. Pit C.2:39, under the west end of Locus C.2:28, was filled with Hellenistic deposit after abandonment. In the north balk it appeared contemporary with Locus C.2:28. Locus C.2:46 was a firepit under the east end of Locus C.2:28, with several thin alternating layers of ash, soil, and organic matter. Objects from these loci included a grinder fragment, a slingstone, a bone bead, and a stone scoop or shovel.

Faunal remains included sheep/goat, cattle, donkey, chicken, snail, and indistinguishable fragments. All evidences suggested sparse temporary habitation on this portion of the *tell* in this period.

#### *Late Iron II Period*

The Late Iron II Period (7th-6th centuries B.C.) was detected in Soil Layer C.1:60 in 1971. However, the 1973 excavation of the rest of that locus yielded Iron I pottery at the latest. C.1:101, an Early Roman earth layer (probably equivalent to the 1971 Locus C.1:62), overlay a series of soil layers sloping steeply down westward. The highest of these, Locus C.1:77, was probably also Early Roman, but Loci C.1:78, 79 and 80 were Late Iron II deposits. Loci C.1:77-80 were traced northward from a subsidiary balk cut on a line set down 3.30 m. from and parallel to the south balk. Wall C.1:90, of unhewn stones (.25-.50 m. diameter), extended westward from the east balk, with three courses preserved at the balk. Pottery from the wall interior indicated Late Iron II construction.

In Square C.2, a wall (C.2:26) of undressed stones (.25-.50 m. diameter) survived two courses high and two rows wide with a clearly defined north face, but an irregular south face, suggesting that it had been built against the soil of Locus C.2:25 to the

south. It may have been part of Wall C.3:26 (see below). Under Wall C.2:26 ran Locus C.2:31, a packed soil layer apparently identical to Locus C.2:34, which was traced eastward from the west balk. Locus C.2:40, of similar consistency, lay under C.2:34 and throughout most of the excavated sector. Layers C.2:41 and 44 were traceable only in the southeast corner of the Square. The latter was behind a small, irregular Terrace Wall C.2:49 (of stones .10-.25 m. in diameter). Pit C.2:45 cut through Locus C.2:40 as well as a *huwwar* surface (Locus C.2:47) under Locus C.2:40. The latter extended to and partly under Wall C.2:49, which was subsequently dismantled and dated to a Late Iron II construction. Excavation stopped here for the season for most of the Square.

Locus C.2:48, similar to Loci C.2:34 and 40, was partially excavated under Pit C.2:45; it appeared to continue under Surface C.2:47, presumably dating the soil fills immediately under C.2:47 as Late Iron II also. Loci C.2:31/34, 40, and 44 may have been identical to Loci C.3:37, 38, 40, and 41. Their fine grain suggested water-laid silt. Locus C.2:50, under Pit C.2:32/35/37, and Locus C.2:51, under Pit C.2:46, both lying on bedrock, were dated by pottery to Late Iron II. Bedrock was exposed also along the east balk under Locus C.2:44. Wall C.2:52, of undressed stones (.25-.50 m. diameter), probably identical to Wall C.1:90 though somewhat different in appearance, was dismantled at its surviving western end. Latest pottery inside the wall and in the soil under it, down to bedrock, was Late Iron II. Objects from these loci included a broken stone seal depicting a lion, a figurine fragment, a polished bone knife, two slingstones, and a basalt grinder.

In Square C.3, Loci C.3:37, 38, 40 and 41, similar to Loci C.2:31/34, 40, and 44, lay under Loci C.3:39, 36, 35, and 30. The lower layers appeared to be water laid, but the upper suggested rock tumble with soil washed or thrown around them. These layers ran up to Walls C.3:32 and 34 without being cut

by foundation trenches; their position and their pottery suggested Late Iron II or earlier construction of these walls. One slingstone came from this location.

Wall C.3:32 seemed to represent two construction phases: The east end (surviving two courses high) was built over rubble which lay on a shelf of bedrock. At the west end (where it survived to a height of 3.50 m. in 11 courses) it was battered (stepped?) and its base followed the contour of bedrock down to a lower shelf. It was built of undressed field stones (.40-.70 m. diameter). The north face was quite distinct, but the south face was irregular, suggesting a battered support laid up against Wall C.3:26. Dismantling the top two courses of Wall C.3:32 left the deep-founded north face and the stepped-down or battered west end, enclosing a rubble core. The latest pottery from inside this construction was Late Iron II, with no ceramic distinctions detectable between the contents of the two ends.<sup>4</sup>

Wall C.3:26 also consisted of two phases: the east end well constructed, but the west end built over rubble. The stones (.25-.85 m. diameter) were larger in the east end, where they were either partly dressed or carefully selected for their roughly rectangular shape. A portion of the west end was dismantled; its latest pottery was Late Iron II, with no discernible distinction from the materials of Wall C.3:32. A few Hellenistic sherds in two pails, possibly coming from the south balk, suggested a Hellenistic accumulation south of Wall C.3:26. This wall may have extended through the west balk and continued in Square 2 as Wall C.2:26. In C.3, Walls C.3:32 and 26 both formed a butt joint with north-south Wall C.3:34, which was built on a slightly higher bedrock shelf than that under the rubble of Wall C.3:32. In turn, the space between C.3:34 and a yet higher shelf eastward was leveled up with stone to form a platform (Surface

<sup>4</sup> Editor's note: The director ventured the hypothesis that Wall C.3:34/28 was part of the Iron Age II city wall, and Structure C.3:32/26 was one of the city wall's bastions or towers. Only future excavations of the adjacent areas will show whether this interpretation is correct.

C.3:28) with the still higher shelf in the southeast corner of the Square. Wall C.3:34, built of unhewn boulders (.50-.90 m. diameter) survived 1.00 m. high (two courses at the north end, one at the south). A probe through Wall C.3:34 produced four Iron Age sherds.

A summary of the phasing of the Late Iron Age II walls in Area C is made uncertain by the intervening balks and interrupted stratigraphic sequence. If C.2:26 was a westward extension of C.3:26, this wall was later than C.2:52. Though it is not impossible that the eastern end of C.3:26 was set in from above or from the south (cf. the Hellenistic presence noted above as intrusive), it seems more likely (because of C.2:28, Hellenistic soil *up to* the north face of C.2:26, which was set into or against Late Iron II C.3:25) that C.3:26 was earlier than C.3:32, which seemed to lie battered against it. The latter sequence was certain for the eastern ends of Walls C.3:32 and 26, since both butted against C.3:34, which would therefore seem to be still earlier, or contemporary with either. Stratigraphic factors raise other questions, however. Layers C.2:41, 44, 51, 31/34, 40, and 50, under Wall C.2:26, were similar in color and consistency with C.3 soil layers running up to C.3:32. This suggested that C.2:26 and C.3:26 were later than C.3:32, or that evidences of foundation trenches were missed in excavation.

Wall C.2:52 was constructed earlier than C.2:26, but whether it was built earlier than C.3:34, or even C.3:32, was uncertain. The relationship of C.2:52 and C.1:90 was also of interest. Apparently the Hellenistic occupation fill against Wall C.1:90 and running into the east balk of C.1 ended completely within the 1.00 m. thickness of the balk, for there was no evidence of it in the southwest corner of C.2. The pottery evidence suggested that Wall C.1:90 was built early in the Late Iron II period. The presence of abutting Hellenistic layers allowed a later date for the construction of Wall C.1:90, though our opinion was that the sector was cleaned by the later Hellenistic occupants.

In summary, it is suggested that C.1:90 and C.2:52 were parts of the same wall and are the earliest Iron Age walls in Area C, while the intervening soil fills are later, and that the Walls C.2:26 and C.3:32, 26, and 34 are the latest. The ambiguity of the evidence cited above prevents certainty at this stage of excavation.

Faunal remains included sheep/goat, cattle, donkey, chicken, and snail.

### *Iron I Period*

In the 1968 and 1971 seasons the known Iron I ceramic corpus was represented by a few sherds mixed in later loci. In 1973 this continued to be the case for Squares C.2 and C.3.

In Square C.1 the jump from Late Iron II to Iron I became evident in Locus C.1:80. The layers leveled a bit to a downward slope toward the west of about .25 degrees. Locus C.1:82 was not initially distinguished in the excavated portions between the east balk and Locus C.1:51 (the foundation trench on the east side of Wall C.1:40/63). In the portion of Locus C.1:82 that was beneath Locus C.1:80 the pottery reading was Iron I. Loci C.1:95, 97, 98, and 99 were soil layers over virgin soil (Locus C.1:100) and bedrock.

These layers (Loci C.1:82, 95, 97-99) formed a soil layer sequence on the south, perhaps having been cut to form a bank against which Wall C.1:90 was built. Though this soil-layer sequence seemed to follow through the east balk into Square C.2, no certain Iron I loci were detected in C.2. The slope of these loci suggested fill layers, natural or man-made, forming a westerly slope on the mound, rather than occupation debris. However, their presence may have related to the possible occupation evidence found in Area B.