

A50/08
Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon
Annual Report Submission
Excavation Season, June 2-July 11, 2008



1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The 2008 excavation season at Ashkelon continued the long-term goals outlined last year (as year two of the current five-year plan), with continuing work in Grid 38 as well as expansion into several new areas. The goals for each area will be briefly outlined below:

1) Continued excavation in Grid 38

Grid 38, on the northern scarp of the southern tell (*el-khadra*), has been a key excavation area of the Leon Levy Expedition since 1985. This area contains the only complete stratigraphic sequence through all of the periods of Ashkelon's occupation. In the 2000, 2004, and 2007 season, most of the earliest Iron I strata were excavated, revealing key evidence of the arrival of the sea peoples in Canaan at the beginning of the Iron I period. In 2004 and 2007, the immediately preceding stratum was discovered to be an unfinished Egyptian garrison, probably founded after the conquest of Ashkelon by Meremptah in the late 13th century BCE. In 2008, we hope to uncover the 13th century remains that were destroyed by Meremptah as well as excavating to the MBIIC/LBI remains in selected areas. Our goal in the next two seasons is to finish excavation in this area by completing the stratigraphic sequence, linking the excavations of the south tell at Ashkelon to the impressive fortifications uncovered on the northern margin of the site. When complete, this area will provide the core stratified sequence for Tel Ashkelon.

2) Continuing excavation in Grid 51

From 1985-2000, excavation along the western coast of the southern tell (Grid 50) sought to replicate the stratigraphic conclusions of W. Phythian-Adams through modern stratigraphic excavation. However, excavation in this area, while producing some extremely important results (Dog Cemetery, Iron Age Marketplace, Bronze Age Necropolis), did not provide a complete stratigraphic accumulation of the known phases at Ashkelon. The area was in some ways peripheral to the occupation of the city: a necropolis in the Bronze Age, a cemetery in the Persian Period, an open park in the Byzantine and Islamic city. In order to understand the results of the wide-scale excavation in Grid 50, a small excavation area was opened in Grid 51 (just to the east) with the goal of determining the bounds of the city. The hope is that Grid 51 might have a more complete sequence of the Iron and Bronze Age strata supporting the hypothesis that the Iron and Bronze Age sea wall lay between Grid 50 and 51, further refining our understanding of the city's size and organization.

3) New Excavation Areas to understand the Byzantine/Islamic City

As part of the five year plan for excavations submitted to the Antiquities Authority in 2007, work began to understand the layout of the city in the Byzantine and Islamic period. Ashkelon, the "pinnacle of Greater Syria" was famed for its city plan, and this plan was codified in a series of zoning laws by Julian of Ashkelon. These zoning laws served as the foundation for Byzantine planners throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

One of the key architectural relationships in Byzantine and Islamic cities is the relationship between the main thoroughfares and public architecture. In the case of Ashkelon, evidence from early mosaics in Jordan seems to indicate that Ashkelon's city plan involved a more complex arrangement of the *cardo* and *decumanus* than is typically found. A north-south *cardo* likely ran from a Jaffa gate in the north but terminated in the northern branch of a split *decumanus*. A second leg of the *cardo* may have continued south, originating slightly to the east off the southern branch of the *decumanus*. This arrangement of the roads, an arrangement which is also visible in late nineteenth and early twentieth century maps of the site, requires investigation. Further, it will be important to determine the paths of these roads with reference to the public architecture which most certainly surrounded them. Currently, the center of the park, the prime location for understanding these relationships, is covered in modern restaurants, playgrounds, and parking lots. For that reason we propose excavation in two areas which might help us

to better understand the city plan and public architecture in a less disruptive fashion.

Grid 24

In 1837, the Scottish painter David Roberts painted the ruins of Ashkelon. In the foreground, he drew a large platform, clearly an example of public architecture. The location of this platform has been lost. John Garstang argued that it was a poor rendering of the material that he excavated in the center of the park, even though Robert's building (East-West) is drawn with a different orientation than Garstang's basilica (North-South). Lawrence Stager has argued that steps leading from the northern edge of the South Tell likely led to this building, a building which probably extended eastward to touch the edge of Garstang's excavated basilica. A closer viewing of Robert's work in the spring of 2007 led the present team to hypothesize that the platform was located farther to the north, in Grid 24 of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. In the summer of 2007, Ground Penetrating Radar located a large platform in Grid 24. While the radar profile only caught a portion of a platform, it looks to be at least 35m long and 15m wide. The preserved platform, however, is not located at right angles to our best understanding of the Byzantine Cardo, indicating complexities in the city plan which we do not yet understand. Our goal in this area is wide-shallow excavation, guided by Ground Penetrating Radar and assisted by mechanical earth moving in order to uncover this large platform and to uncover the area to the east, pushing toward the location of the Cardo.

Grid 47 (originally labeled Grid 39/40)

In 1923, John Garstang undertook excavation in the center of Ashkelon, uncovering a major public building that he described as "Herod's Cloisters." This monumental building produced some of the most important Roman statuary east of Ephesus and represents the only excavation every undertaken in the city center of Ashkelon, called the "Severan Forum" by Stager. Yet this excavation is only visible to the public through a series of columns haphazardly erected in the center of the park. Garstang's impressive basilica is hidden. With the urging of the Parks Authority, we would like to reexcavate Garstang's basilica as the first step in a larger plan to excavate portions of the Severan forum. The goal for 2007 will be to relocate Garstang's excavation trenches while uncovering a portion of the basilica. Our intent would be to extend this probe to the north in order to meet up with the southern decumanus. In addition to revealing more about the relationship between public architecture and the city plan, this project will be a pilot project to demonstrate the importance of these remains for the cultural resource management of the Ashkelon National Park.

4) Excavation of the Philistine tower on the North Tell

Since 1998, the completed excavation of the Middle Bronze Age ramparts has been transformed into a centerpiece for visitors to the Ashkelon national park. However, just to the west of the restored Middle Bronze rampart, a wooden structure contains the important remains of an Iron Age tower. Unfortunately, this wooden structure is failing, allowing the Philistine tower to erode. Before it is completely gone, we would like to remove the scaffolding and excavate the Philistine tower. This should provide us further evidence for the date of these fortifications, and important chronological marker for the rise and fall of the Iron Age city.

5) Excavation of the Crusader Rampart (originally planned for spring 2008)

In 1993 and 1994, a portion of the middle Islamic fortifications of the city were uncovered and preserved. In 2007, remote sensing detected a further preserved portion of the rampart on the northeast corner of the tell. Using the remote sensing as a guide, we propose further excavation of this rampart using heavy equipment. The goal would be to demonstrate a further preserved portion of the fortification as well as to isolate some geographic anomalies between the portion of the rampart detected in 2007 and the portion uncovered in 1993.

2. RESULTS

Grid 38—see A. Aja, Grid 38 final report

The Late Bronze Age remains revealed last season continued to be explored, as the LBII building was fully exposed. New evidence revealed a period of MBIIC/LBI occupation below including domestic architecture, above a sandy, sterile soil. The relationship between the LBII building and the subsequent phase of Egyptian activity was more clearly defined. Finally, the plan of the early Iron I Philistine settlement in this area was expanded to the east.

Grid 51—see K. Birney, Grid 23 final report

The stratigraphy and architecture of this excavation area were clarified, and the absolute chronology of the phases are now clear: the remains extant at the beginning of the season and subsequently excavated dated to the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic periods. A single building, domestic in nature, was found to continue throughout these periods. A probe was dug indicating that 2m of Persian period material remain, consisting of two distinct phases; below this is a thick ash layer, probably associated with the 604 B.C. destruction of the city.

Grid 24—see T. Hoffman, Grid 24 final report

The anticipated monumental architecture in this area was not discovered. Instead, it was determined that from the Roman period onwards this part of the city was open land. This area was returned to its pre-excavation state.

Grid 47—see R. Boehm and R. Bar-Nathan, Grid 47 final report

The inaccuracy of Garstang's plan meant that only of the corner of Garstang's trench was located. A good sequence of later (post-Roman) phases, not apparent in Garstang's area was revealed. Below, a wall of the original apsidal building, which almost certainly connects with one of the main walls from Garstang's plan, was reached.

Grid 2 (Philistine Tower/North Tell)—see J. Walton, Grid 2 final report

The tower was excavated as much as precautions would allow. It was determined that the tower was founded on a sandy kurkar fill laid over the MB ramparts, suggesting that the MB rampart remained in use as a fortification system for the city. The date of construction for the tower was established as likely Iron IIA, as this appeared to be the latest pottery found within the bricks.

Grid 12 (Rampart)—see T. Hoffman, Grid 12 final report

There was no evidence of any kind for a medieval stone glacis in this area. Instead, the remote sensing from 2007 had located kurkar layers within four MBII earthen ramparts. This discovery confirmed Lawrence Stager's theory that the MBII ramparts, following the border of the modern National Park, had encircled the entire city (and that the settlement in this period was not confined to the North Tell). Meanwhile, the problem of the location of the medieval walls in this period requires further exploration.

Paleo-Environmental Reconstruction of the mounds of Ashkelon—see report on data collection (with summary by D.M. Master)

In the recently published *Ashkelon I*, Avner Raban argued that the current coastline of Ashkelon was quite different from the coastline of the Bronze and Iron Ages, and that the changes hid natural harbors that once dotted the coast. We tested this hypothesis by replicating Raban's cores in the southern hollow, south of the south tell. With a better understanding of Raban's method, it is now clear that he could not have penetrated the water table.

3. RECORDING TECHNIQUES

The new recording techniques introduced in 2007 – namely the use of the online database OCHRE <http://ochre.lib.uchicago.edu/>

– continued to be employed. As a result, once again we have included a series of digital reports covering each stratigraphic unit extant during the 2008 season (along with printouts of these reports to comply with current regulations concerning report submissions).

We are committed to the regular submission of *complete* data sets to the Antiquities Authority, and this new system makes that possible. If, however, these large digital reports are impractical for your use, please let us know. We are capable of formatting the data in any manner or in setting up an IAA login to the root database itself. It is important to us that our data be submitted in a manner that will best aid the IAA in its long term cultural resource management of the Ashkelon region.

4. CONTENTS

This printed report includes:

- the 2008 Grid 38 final report
- a final report for each square
- the 2008 Grid 47 final report
- the 2008 Grid 51 final report
- the 2008 Grid 24 final report
- the 2008 Grid 12 final report
- the 2008 Grid 2 final report
- the 2008 Geology survey summary
- a Conservation and Maintenance plan
- a complete set of phase plans and sections

Grid 38 Final Report 2008

Ashkelon Excavations, the Leon Levy Expedition

by Adam Aja



The 2008 Season of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, under the guidance of directors Lawrence E. Stager and Daniel Master, continued the excavation of Grid 38, which had been renewed last year following a hiatus in excavation of two years. The area had been extensively examined in the years 1985 through 2000, with an additional limited season in 2004. The excavation area for this season encompassed parts of eight contiguous 10 by 10 meters squares, all of which had been opened previously. The goals of the fieldwork for this season were multifold, but were primarily concerned with the full exposure of a large Late Bronze Age II building and the mapping of remaining Iron Age I Philistine architecture. In addition, limited probing in the south of the excavation area was utilized to investigate the possibility of earlier occupation underlying the LBII settlement.

The previous excavation of Grid 38 has successfully revealed the complex occupational history at Ashkelon, and this history was confirmed and supported by the work of this summer. New evidence revealed in the lowest areas of excavation indicates that there was a period of MBIIC/LBI occupation that includes domestic architecture, fire installations, and refuse and burial pits above a sandy, sterile soil. A large, LBII building was located atop the sandy fills that put this earlier construction out of use. This multi-roomed "Courtyard House" (hereafter **Building 1101**) was dismantled and covered by a phase of Egyptian occupation. During this relatively brief period the occupants cut several large pits, many of which ran through the earlier LBII Building 1101. The end of the Egyptian tenure at Ashkelon was dominated by the construction of a large garrison, which appears to have never been completed above the first few courses of mudbrick foundation. The Iron Age I Philistine settlement built up in relation to the disruptions of the prior Egyptian occupation. Their early domestic structures are well preserved, with several courses of brick still remaining above their foundations. All material dated to later periods was excavated in previous seasons and will not be addressed.¹

In this season traditional field excavation techniques were complimented by a networked computer system that required each area supervisor to enter all relevant data directly into a personal laptop using the OCHRE Internet database system (<http://ochre.lib.uchicago.edu/>). These entries were instantly backed up on servers in the United States. Field measurements and photographs were taken

digitally and daily plans printed using these data. Data from previous excavation seasons (1985-2000; 2004; 2007), including thousands of previously scanned photographs, drawings, and field notebooks were loaded onto each computer. The area supervisors, support staff, and administrators were thus able to quickly and easily access previous and current research data of all excavation areas from any computer terminal while in the field.

Previous excavation within the large area that encompasses Grid 38 has repeatedly indicated a complex and tightly stratified series of occupation layers that require a staff with a high level of competence and precision to excavate and interpret the remains. This year, we again were fortunate to secure a qualified and skilled field staff. Returning Ashkelon staff members Dana DePietro, Janling Fu, Eric Prins, Jonathan Wylie, and Philip Johnston operated as Area Supervisors and were ably assisted by Andrea Creel, Laura Wright, and Larry Largent, all of whom were trained at Ashkelon Grid 38 during the 2007 season. Their excellent work ensured the quality of the expedition results this season.

The following is a preliminary report intended to provide working summaries only for the major architectural features, significant finds, and tentative dating of the 2008 excavation season's discoveries. Several elements discovered and introduced during the 2007 and earlier seasons appear again here to provide context for room descriptions. This report is not intended as a comprehensive discussion of all excavated layers and features. Room and building designations are given for the purpose of facilitating discussion and should not be considered finalized labels for the architectural spaces. Readers are encouraged to examine the 2008 reports from individual areas of excavation to find additional details. The discoveries of previous seasons in Grid 38 have been variously discussed and summarized in earlier grid reports, as well as in Stager, "Ashkelon" in *NEAEHL vol. 1* (1993; new update in press), Master, "Iron I Chronology at Ashkelon" in *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating* (2005), and the newly published *Ashkelon I: Introduction and Overview (1985-2006)*. All of the following report is provisional, with the interpretation of the earliest, incompletely excavated phases being the most tentatively offered.

¹ The exception is the continued presence of some later period wells, which for reasons of safety cannot be excavated fully. In order to avoid contamination, these features are periodically excavated to maintain an elevation lower than the surrounding area.

Late Bronze Age Occupation: Canaanite Ashkelon

Phase 23 (MBIIc/LBI)

In 2007 we initiated the excavation of a probe measuring approximately 1.75 by 10.0 m in the southwest portion of the grid in order to better understand the nature of the pre-Phase 22 occupation, which appeared from our limited glimpse in the sections of deep pits and probes to be generally sparse or non-existent. In contrast to this perceived lack of occupation, continued excavation in the probe and elsewhere has revealed evidence for a significant architectural phase dated to the MBIIc/LBI on the basis of pottery. This occupational level represents the earliest settlement in the grid—a period contemporary with some of the massive defensive constructions revealed at the north end of the tel—and should be a major focus of future excavation. Phase 23, however, remains incompletely exposed and thus incompletely understood. Little may be stated with confidence about the character of the phase or architectural layout at present, although it demonstrates stone wall foundations, built installations, surfaces, and significant amounts of pitting. Numerous circular pits already revealed or partially exposed maintain a large diameter and may be classified as grain storage silos, although this identification must remain tentative while the features are unexcavated. The adult human burial excavated last season (73.629) from below the floor of the Phase 22 structure remains associated with this phase.²

The earliest architectural elements were found in the probe. A short segment of an E-W oriented stone foundation (84.1176) was revealed with a mudbrick bin (84.1201) built against its south face (see photo—taken to West). No contemporary floor can be clearly associated with the founding of both features, although occupational surfaces are located both north (84.1203-1205) and south of the wall. A small stone-lined pit (84.1206) of uncertain function cut one of the surfaces in the north. It is unclear at present if the wall represents the exterior wall of a structure or an interior dividing wall. Subsequent activity put the architecture out of use. A series of sandy fill layers (cf. 84.1177, 1200, 1181 etc.) covered the area, including the bin and stone foundation. A large pit (84.1198), possibly a grain storage silo, cut into the later fills, severing the east end of the wall 84.1176, further indicating that the structure was out of use. Additional

constructed features, including a bread oven (84.1190), were noted in the fills to the south of the wall 84.1176, but most were too poorly preserved to be understood properly.



The thick fills that were noted above these early architectural features also appear to occur to the north of the southwestern probe (cf. 74.1174; 63.928 etc), but generally have not yet been excavated. A series of phytolith surfaces (cf. 63.914) were noted in the north above a bricky fill (63.928, 922). These thin lamina built up and eventually covered an unexcavated brick feature (63.891=64.1121) and a stone (63.900, 905) installation of uncertain function. No architecture has yet been associated with these northern surfaces, although several burning installations and postholes were noted cutting the surfaces. It is possible that these surfaces represent the earliest Phase 22 occupation, but as yet appear to run below the closest Phase 22 architecture (Wall 73.581) and thus pre-date it. Further excavations should clarify this relationship.

Numerous deep, round pits were revealed at higher elevations. These large features occasionally had organic residue preserved at their bottoms and sides, indicating they functioned as grain storage silos. Several silos clearly cut into the later Phase 22 architecture (indicating Phase 21 activity), but a large number were discovered outside of the boundaries of the LBII building, cut from exterior fills. The character of exterior fill and the tight stratigraphy in Grid 38 create difficulty in separating some of these silos into specific phases. Regardless, it appears that the area encompassed by Grid 38 served as a location for the placement of numerous grain storage silos for an extended time in the Late Bronze Age. The practice began in the MBIIc/LBI period and continued through the LBII into the period of Egyptian occupation. A series of large, occasionally intersecting pits have been noted cutting the upper elevations of the Phase 23 fills. These features (74.1158, 1172, 1121=73.625; 63.926) clearly underlie the floors and surfaces of the succeeding Phase 22 architecture; thus their context with Phase 23 remains secure (see photo [below] of floor 74.1101 corner over Silo 74.1158—taken to the East).³ Another deep pit, Silo 74.1132, noted at a relatively higher elevation (approx. 17.69 m.) may belong to this phase, but appears better suited to Phase 22 (see Phase 22 discussion). At present,

² The skeleton has since been examined by Pat Smith, who has identified it as that of a 5 foot tall female, approximately 20 years of age. The cause of death could not be determined. The additional MBIIc/LBI burials excavated in the grid further to the north should also be included with Phase 23 (53.F169; 63.F116 cf. Brody "Late Bronze Age Intramural Tombs" In *Ashkelon Vol. I* [2008]).

³ The toilet pit (74.U1128) identified as Phase 22 last season must be re-phased as Phase 23 since it is cut by these pit/silos, which are now seen to be clearly below Phase 22 surfaces.

the deep silos remain a dominant characteristic of late



Phase 23, but none have yet been found in a surface contemporarily with the architecture found this season, and may thus represent slightly later activity. Indeed, as mentioned, Pit/Silo **84.1198** cut the

architecture Wall **84.1176** and many other silos were cut from higher elevations in the fill. Next season's expansion and excavation of the Phase 23 material below the Phase 22 architecture should determine if the silos belong to their own sub-phase of activity.

Phase 22 (LBII)

The overlying Phase 22 is characterized by the presence of a large, multi-roomed LB II Open Court style building (hereafter **Building 1101**), which was partially exposed last season. Exterior surfaces were noted to the north and south of the structure. The full east-west extent of the structure has not been exposed, but it already measures 14.0 by 11.0 meters. This large structure no doubt belonged to the Late Bronze Age Canaanite settlement of Ashkelon, which the Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah claims to have conquered at the end of the 13th c. B.C.E. The siege of the Canaanite settlement was inscribed on the walls of the temple of Karnak. There was no evidence in Grid 38 for a violent destruction of the Canaanite city; although evidence was discovered for a succeeding period of Egyptian occupation (see the Phase 21 discussion below).

The later disruption and heavy pitting that occurred in the grid have significantly devastated the footprint of **Building 1101**; however, the surviving walls and floors allow for a reasonable reconstruction of its layout—a large central room surrounded by numerous small rooms. The interior room floors step down progressively from west to east, with a change in elevation of approximately 0.50 m between the western- and eastern-most rooms. The large central room (**Room 1101**, lending its name to the entire structure), measured approximately 9.0 m. by 5.0 m. and possessed a thick white ash and crushed shell floor (**74.1101** = **64.1035** = **63.851** = **73.605**). Its northern and southern closing walls appear to have been entirely robbed away, but the fieldstone foundations of the western (**73.622**; **63.886**) and eastern closing walls (**74.1111**=**64.1082**) were partially preserved. Later

disturbances have completely removed all traces for what would have been the southwest corner of the structure. Few artifacts of note were discovered on any interior floor and most wall foundations were partially robbed, leaving the impression of a structure that was stripped of movable property and dismantled or mined for durable building material.

The two western rooms of **Building 1101** are poorly defined and incompletely exposed. Much of these rooms were excavated in previous seasons, although some lower laminations of the floors remained to be dealt with. The northwest **Room 877** (ca. 2.2 by 2.5 m preserved) was separated from the west-central **Room 618** (ca. 2.2 by 3.0 m. preserved), located to its south, by a substantial fieldstone foundation (**73. F581**). The lowest preserved floor lamination may proceed under Wall **73.581**, thus predating it, although further examination is necessary to test this relationship. The northern closing wall of **Room 877** and the southern closing wall of **Room 618** were robbed, while the western walls remain unexcavated below the west subsidiary balk. The eastern walls appear to be little more than insubstantial half-wall barriers (**63.886**; **73.598**; **73.622**) composed of a single line of fieldstone or mudbrick set on edge, or perhaps these features are all that remained following the robbing activity. Occupational debris and fills built up against the west face of the wall barrier as the residents continually used and renewed the floors of the raised western spaces. The white floor lamina/surface build-up was rather thick, measuring at least 10 cm in some areas (**63.877**; **63.893**; **73.590**; **73.591**; **73.605**; **73.616**; **73.618**). A round burning installation (**73.640**) was found in the Room 877 near the south wall. Several features of note appeared in **Room 618**, including a small semi-circle of stones (**73.614**) with ashy evidence of burning inside, a stone platform (**73.643**) and several small pits cut into the floor. The higher elevation of the western rooms appears to have negated the need for leveling fill when the space was prepared for later occupation (Phases 21 and 20). As a result, the floors of **Rooms 877** and **618** appear almost immediately below the occupation of Phase 20. Indeed, parts of these surfaces were excavated along with Phase 20 features during the 2004 season in the effort to remove the Iron Age architecture.

Stepping down into and crossing through the lower central **Room 1101**, residents could enter one of three small flanking rooms, **Rooms 1123**, **1157**, and **1167**. The floors of all three rooms were generally devoid of any artifacts aside from a few flat-lying sherds. These rooms (all measuring approximately 2.50 by 3.00 m) were bounded on the east by the remains of Wall **64.1098** (= **74.1145**) and the west by wall **64.1082** (= **74.1111**). The southern ends of these walls were robbed (robber trench **74.1160** for the east wall), but the presence of some stones along the east

side of the southern **Room 1167** and the discovery of plastered floors in **Room 1167** (74.1167/1164 and 74.1161) leave no doubt as to the presence of complete surrounding walls. The floors sloped up to meet the surviving remnants of walls to the east, north (74.1126), and south (74.1118). A gap at the east end of the wall 74.1126 may indicate a doorway between **Room 1167** and **1157** to its north. Central **Room 1157** was divided from the north **Room 1123** by an east-west Wall 74.1140, but no doorway was evidenced. Only a few random cobbles remained to represent the northern wall of **Room 1123**. All else was robbed (64.1127). A mudbrick Bench 64.1105 was partially preserved along the eastern wall in **Room 1123**. The beaten earth floors of the room sloped up to meet the bench and room's western Wall 64.1082. A doorway is suggested by an opening at the south end of the east wall, but this remains a tentative assertion. Substantial stone foundations of at least five courses were revealed for Walls 74.1140 and 74.1145 and it is possible that other walls of Building 1101 were of equal proportions prior to the ancient robbing activity. Compact brickly material was noted along the northern walls of all three rooms; however no clear constructed feature could be identified. This compact material appeared to extend only about 10 cm from the face of the wall. It may have represented a narrow brick bench or mudbrick wall facing.

East of Rooms 1123, 1157, and 1167 we revealed portions of three additional rooms of roughly equal size. The floor of the northeastern room has not yet been uncovered; and those of the southeast room were completely removed by an extremely large Phase 21 pit (73.1127—see below). The east-central **Room 1169**, however, remains nearly fully preserved. The uneven plastered floor sloped up to meet the room's west Wall 74.1145 and surviving portions of the north (74.1159) and south (74.1129) walls. A patch to flat stones appears embedded in the center of the room and a stone installation (74.1170) was constructed in the apparent northeast corner. Aside from a large perforated stone weight (MC58901) recovered in the fill above the floor, no artifact of note was discovered in the room. As noted above, the floor of the easternmost rooms appears to be approximately 0.50 m below those in the westernmost portions of Building 1101, giving a slightly terraced appearance to the structure. The northern wall of Room 1169 preserved the only clear example of mudbrick superstructure within the building. In contrast to the five courses of stone foundation preserved in Walls 74.1140 and 1145, Wall 74.1159 maintained only about two courses of stone. This wall clearly abutted the stones of Wall 74.1145 and indicates that the architects were inconsistent with their construction of Building 1101, combining substantial and less substantial walls within a single structure. The higher foundations may have been necessary to address an uneven building surface, which resulted in the apparent "terracing" noted above.

Residents exited the structure from the central **Room 1101** through a doorway in a southern closing wall. Although this wall was entirely robbed away, there are several indications for the presence of both the wall and doorway. **Room 1101** is characterized by its thick, white floor composed largely of crushed shell. This floor ends abruptly to the south, along a line that is parallel with the stones of 74.1118. This rubble thus corresponds to the southern closing wall of the entire structure, but was only exposed as part of Room 1167. There is no evidence for additional stones or a robber trench south of Room 1101. The tops of Phase 23 silos are visible extending into the line of the proposed southern closing wall, under the floor of Room 1101, leaving no depth for foundation stones. Wall fragment 74.1118 was bedded shallowly and so the southern wall of Room 1101 must have been as well. In addition, a shallow rectangular pit (74.L1104/ 74.F1105), centrally located along the line of the southern wall, but placed inside the room, contained eight complete vessels (excavated during the 2007 season). These vessels are consistent with the recognized lamp-and-bowl style foundation deposits, typically placed close to or under foundations, in room corners, or in thresholds—a Canaanite practice at the end of the Late Bronze Age that was possibly inspired by a similar Egyptian practice (cf. Bunimovitz and Zimhoni 2004). The location of this foundation deposit (centrally placed along a wall) and the large number of vessels (indicating importance) argue for its identification as the location for the building's threshold and main entrance/exit. The pit was capped with brickly soil, which would have provided a relatively durable threshold and also protected the vessels.

South and north of Building 1101 the residents would have encountered open areas. Several indistinct, overlapping fill and debris layers characterize the surfaces of these exterior spaces (to the south cf. 74.1122, 84.1157). Pits 84.1150 and 84.1196 (=83.627) found in the far south of the area were large enough to be grain storage silos. Additional silos may be revealed through future excavation. One silo located immediately south of **Room 1167**, Silo 74.1132, is perhaps better associated with Phase 22, although it is arguably earlier. The feature was noted at a relatively high elevation, but could not be fully defined until the surrounding fill was lowered by nearly 0.30 m. The deep feature was entirely filled with a soil packed with *kurkar* stone rubble and large pieces of crushed shell plaster. The plaster was entirely consistent with the composition of Floor 1101 and included curved corner fragments and pieces measuring over 3 cm thick. I suggest that this rubble fill was the destruction debris of the nearby wall and floor at the corner of **Room 1101**. The large open silo would have formed a convenient dump location for the destruction debris of the Phase 22 architecture. The top of the silo fill settled into a bowl-like depression, which was

filled with decidedly LBII pottery. Lower levels of the fill were dated to the MBIIC/LBI, however, introducing some debate into the association of the plaster debris with the destruction of the LBII building. North of the structure additional exterior fills were revealed, many of which were exposed in the 1990 season (cf. **64.228-230**, **63.875**, **895**), but also remain largely unexcavated.

A Brief Egyptian Interlude

Phase 21 (LBII/Iron I)

Merenptah's capture of Canaanite Ashkelon appears to have been followed by the systematic demolition of buildings and a re-use of the area encompassing Grid 38 for grain storage and other industrial activities. The region was heavily marred by pitting. There was no evidence for catastrophic destruction, as would be expected in a city subjected to siege. There were no charred roof beams, ash, or layers of fired mudbrick walls. The pre-existing building appears to have had the contents almost completely removed, and the foundations of several walls robbed. The pottery from Phase 21 is LBII, with very few imports and a considerable amount of Egyptian ware, including beer jars, kraters, flanged rim bowls, storage vessels, and cup and saucer bowls. Following the re-use of the area as an industrial park, the residents planned the construction of a major military structure (**84.1080=83.618**), possibly in reaction to an increased threat by the so-called "Sea Peoples" circa 1185 BCE." Phase 21 material was largely excavated and discussed in previous seasons (2004 and 2007). Only a few elements remained to be examined this year, primarily fills above the Phase 22 building, pits, and silos.

The brickly fill (cf. **74.1114**, **1117**, **1146**, **1151**, and **1165**) that lay above the destroyed Building 1101 bears evidence of exposure to the elements, as would be expected for a demolition site. Some areas appeared covered with thin layers of water-lain sand and silt, typical of debris washed in during the winter rains. Other areas bore signs of erosion. The debris was the likely remains of the original structure. Few finds were recovered from the debris, an indication that the structure was emptied before demolition and was not the result of catastrophe. A few samples of blue and yellow paint recovered in the fill above Room 1167 may indicate the remains of painted mudplaster or a painted object. A few disconnected wall fragments were found set upon the fills, scattered across the grid, but these were not part of any clear architectural plan. It is possible that they functioned as a limited-use feature in association with a grain storage silo. A large cache of over 100 flints (**MC57749**) were found in the fill next to one short wall stub (**74.1134**).

Several silos were opened or re-opened for excavation this season. These features, as with earlier examples (cf. **63.870**, **63.879=64.1047**, **64.1077=74.1108**, **63.892**, **73.627=83.638**, **73.630=74.1130**, **74.1090**, **84.1133**, **84.1122**, **84.1143**, **84.1141**, and **84.1162**), were generally round, deep, and straight sided. The dimensions varied between each feature, but all measured over 1.25 m in diameter and when excavated, were found to be cut to a depth of at least 1.00 m. Silo **84.1148**, which was excavated this season, measured 2.50 m in diameter. The pit fill



was varied, but included brick and pottery refuse in addition to three whole dogs, one of which was decapitated (see photo above—one complete dog pictured [facing East] along with the severed head [at right]). The body of the mutilated animal was found in the opposite side of the silo). Silo **74.1090**, which cut through the middle of the Phase 22 Building 1101, also measured over two meters in diameter. It produced miscellaneous refuse including Egyptian style pottery and two large horn cores. Both large silos had organic residue at the bottom attesting to their function as grain storage silos. The fill of Silo **83.638 (=73.627)**, included a ceramic mold for casting bronze



axes and an LBI bichrome sherd with an animal, possibly a hippo, depicted on it (see photo). Silo **84.1143** also had organic debris at the bottom and was of similar dimension (ca. 1.25 m diameter) to the nearby brick-lined Silo **84.1133** (excavated 2007).

The location of pit **73.630 (=74.1130)** along a balk prevented its full excavation, but may be revealed as another silo following additional excavation.

An Egyptian wall (**84.1080=83.618**), which was built in the style of the Egyptian garrisons of the XIX-XX Dynasties, was discovered in 2004 and further exposed during the 2007 season. Work this season revealed the construction techniques and brick layout. The wall was 2.00 m wide with a square tower exposed at the west end. The tower, which measured 2.85 m across, bore symmetrical buttress on the north and south sides of the wall (see photo below---view to the West). Buttresses would be expected only on the outside face of a wall, thus the Ashkelon tower is unusual. It is possible that the tower and wall were designed to be part of defenses *within* a

garrison, and the true exterior wall with exterior buttressing remains to be discovered.

Several details suggest that the Egyptian wall was constructed in haste. First, it does not appear that the wall was ever completed higher than four courses. A wall of such scale would have included massive quantities of



brick, which were never discovered either collapsed or decayed around the surviving portions of the structure. Indeed, the subsequent Phase 20 Philistine occupation layers appear to have been founded at nearly the same elevations as the garrison wall, indicating that the Egyptian wall never stood long enough for occupational material to build up around it before the Philistines moved in to lay their own foundations. Second, in 2007 it was revealed that the wall was founded partially on a layer of sand, as would be typical of Egyptian manufacture, but also partially on a layer of ashy debris (**84.1128**) that was filled with large LBII pottery vessel fragments. Rather than providing a stable base, this suggests that perhaps less care was taken to provide a smooth and solid foundation. Third, this season's dissection of the wall revealed that the bricks themselves included large quantities of LB II pottery, many fragments quite large in size. This indicates a poor quality "dirty-brick" (cf. Van Beek 2008), which would have been less durable than more finely levigated brick. An extremely large pit (**74.1127**) found to the north of the garrison wall may have been the source of the soil used for the bricks manufacture. The large pit (measuring over 10.00 m in diameter) cut into the bricky debris that covered the LBII Building 1101, removing some floors and foundations of the structure. It is possible that the Egyptians were racing to produce defenses to survive the on-coming waves of Sea People attacks. In their haste they could not take time to make quality brick, but formed their construction material out of the nearby debris of a collapsed building, thereby incorporating pottery from the debris. It appears that they also did not take the time to cleanly lay their foundations. Instead, they simply lay their bricks directly upon the littered ground. Regardless of this effort, it appears that they either chose to abandon their attempt or were interrupted before its completion.

Early Iron Age I Settlement : The Arrival of the Philistines

Phase 20 (early Iron I)⁴

The beginning of the Iron Age at Ashkelon witnessed the construction of new architecture across the grid and the appearance of a new pottery style indicating the presence of a new people, the Philistines. In many cases, new architectural elements were built directly above or abutting earlier LB II features without any intervening leveling fill; however, the appearance of only a couple Philistine Monochrome sherds was enough to clarify the phasing of the tightly superimposed stratigraphic features. In general, the Iron Age structures flanked a north-south oriented street or alley that divided the excavation area of Grid 38. The Phase 20 and later features were removed almost entirely from the westernmost squares in previous seasons, leaving only a few architectural elements to be excavated.⁵ The two easternmost squares (38.65 and 38.75) have seen fewer excavation seasons and thus have just begun to reveal elements of Phase 20. At present, it appears that many of the later Iron Age I buildings found on the east side of the street (hereafter the Eastern Building Complex) were constructed to match the footprint of the earliest, Phase 20 structures built there upon the arrival of the Philistines. A more complete architectural plan for the eastern buildings should be revealed by the close of next season.

The excavation of exposed features confirmed our previously proposed phasing of architectural elements. For example, the excavation of the foundation trench remnant **63.887** produced Philistine Monochrome pottery, firmly establishing that the large wall that stood above it (**64.985** [= **63.832**]) was constructed in the early Iron Age I. This and other Phase 20 stone foundations (cf. **64.1069**, **1071**, **1072**, **1100** and **75.440**) at the north and east of the excavation area were founded deeply in LBII material. This originally was the source of consternation, since the contemporary interior floors associated with the use of these walls appeared *lower* than exterior Late Bronze Age

⁴ The stratigraphic sequence has previously been broken into sub-phases to address relatively minor changes in construction.

Unless specifically noted, these sub-phases could not be applied to the discoveries of this season, which were primarily located in the Eastern Building Complex (see discussion below). As with the Southern Building Complex, there may be no visible change in the architectural layout of the rooms on the east side of the street in Phase 20, eliminating the need for sub-phasing in these structures.

⁵ Please consult previous reports and publications for a fuller discussion of Iron Age I material from the west portion of the grid.

fills; and our concerns were exacerbated by the dearth of good Iron Age I pottery from those floors. This season, however, has *definitively* shown that the Iron Age I floors, including those of Phase 20, were typically as low as the bottom course of stone in the foundation. This was revealed not only through the horizontal exposure of floors and walls, but in several vertical sections, and by the discovery of a whole Iron Age I cooking jug *in-situ* upon the low floor within a room (see discussion of **Room 507** below). This fact necessitates that the original Philistine builders not only dug a trench for laying their foundations, but also leveled the interior surfaces with those foundations as well. Such an effort may seem excessive, but was a process confirmed repeatedly by our work this season. In fact, the excavation may have been entirely necessary to secure building material for their new mudbrick structures. Furthermore, the bricky debris above the Late Bronze Age Building 1101 structure appeared to slope down and away from some of the preserved wall foundations, creating a mini-mound. Philistine builders cut into and placed their original structures around the edges of this mini-mound. The interior Phase 20 surfaces thus appear at a lower elevation than the LBII debris outside, which remained between the surrounding buildings.

Only one new Phase 20 installation was revealed in the western squares this season. Stones at the top of Pit **83.651** were noted last season and dated to Phase 21. Excavation of the pit, however, revealed Philistine Monochrome pottery. Further examination also revealed that it was



likely cut from an interior surface associated with the Phase 20b Room 606 of the Western Building Complex. The pit contained a stone shaft that stood above ground level and

was filled with a striated, greenish soil (see photo—view to West [in section]). The feature appears to have functioned as an interior cesspit-toilet. Another possible Phase 20 interior toilet (**84.1091**), constructed of an inverted storage jar with the bottom removed, was found during the 2004 season in the nearby Southern Building Complex. No additional interior toilets have been identified for any other Iron Age I structure in Grid 38, although a bathtub (**64.963**) was found in the Phase 19 Northern Building Complex, suggesting that an interior “water closet” was used. One can only speculate on the change in hygienic practices. Perhaps in later periods the interior restrooms were rebuilt in different, undiscovered locations; but equally possible that waste was simply dumped into outdoor courtyards and pits.

The excavation on the east side of the street has partially exposed several Phase 20 features. These appear to be part of at least one large structure, the Eastern Building Complex (EBC), although it is likely that portions of a second building stand to the north of this structure (EBC-North). These incompletely exposed buildings appear constructed of uniform grey mudbricks (0.54 x 0.43 x 0.22 m) set upon two courses of stone foundation. The walls match the color, construction, and brick dimensions of Phase 20b rooms exposed and excavated at the east side of the Northern Building Complex (cf. **Room 1088**—especially Walls **64.1071**, **1072**, and **1100**). The EBC at present is known to contain at least three rooms: Room 507 at the southwest, a room (unnamed) of similar size in the northwest, and a large room (unnamed—may be multiple smaller rooms) on the east side.

Room 507 forms a coherent, complete architectural unit at the southwest corner of the Eastern Building Complex (see photo below—view to West). The small space (ca. 2.5 x 2.70 m) was bounded by Walls **75.440**, **343**, **485**, and **403**. The southern wall (**75.343**) was interrupted at its east end,



likely the location of the threshold/doorway. The beaten earth floor (**75.507**) has a thin lamination of occupational debris (**75.482**) upon it. Several installations flanked the walls: bench (**75.495**) in the southwest corner, stone/brick bench (**75.503**) to the north, and a large mudbrick bin (**75.481**) in the northeast corner. Bin **75.481** stood approximately four bricks high. A possible mudbrick hearth (**75.504**) was found near the center of the room, although no ash was found on or near the feature. A

complete cooking jug (**PB3535**) was discovered *in-situ* upon the floor northwest of this amorphous bricky smear. To its east was the impression of a coiled fiber basket (**MC58920** see photo—volunteer excavator Chris Anderson cleans the debris from the basket impression. Note the cooking jug behind his left arm). As



noted above, the floor of the room was preserved at the elevation of the lower foundation stones, below the elevation of the contemporary exterior surfaces.

The floors of the remaining rooms of the EBC have not yet been reached. A room of similar dimension (ca. 2.70 x 3.00 m) to **Room 507** was located to its north. In the subsequent phase, this room functioned as the entrance/utility room of the structure that gave access to the street on its west. It is possible that it had a similar function in this earlier incarnation. The room is bounded by Wall **75.436** on the west, **75.403** on the south, and **75.460** to the north. The eastern wall, which divides it from the large east room, remains covered by a later wall that runs along the same line. The dimensions of the eastern room are not well understood at present, since much material of the overlying phase remains to be excavated. Similarly the layout of the EBC-North rooms remains obscured (divided from EBC-South by Wall **75.460**). Some grey brick (**75.437**, **454**, **492**), likely the incompletely revealed remains of the Phase 20 walls suggest the presence of two rooms, which remain to be exposed in the coming season.

Although only one room of the Eastern Building Complex has been fully exposed, the results are exciting. At the end of Phase 20 the room was filled in with over a half a meter of brickly soil, preserving at many as 10 courses of brick above the foundations.⁶ If such a demolition pattern is consistent between the remaining rooms of the structures, we should be able to reveal one of the largest (ca. 6.60 x 8.8 m exposed) and best preserved early Iron Age I Philistine buildings ever found at Ashkelon. Most of a painted hydria, with both horizontal handles and part of the vertical handle preserved, was located in the leveling fill that put the structure out of use. No other example of this type of vessel has been recovered at Ashkelon, and thus it represents an important addition to the repertoire of Philistine vessels at the site.

Iron Age I Settlement Phases (19-17): the Philistine Domestic Sphere

The settlement plan established during Phase 20, of northern and southern building complexes divided from eastern buildings by a north-south oriented street/alley that ran the length of the grid, became semi-fixed in succeeding phases, lasting into the Iron II period. Ceramically, Phase

19-17 occupation and construction correspond to the appearance, use, and decline of Philistine Bichrome pottery. Western buildings were previously excavated and reported upon, and thus will not appear here.

The structures from Phase 19-17 were decidedly domestic in character, with some industrial activity areas included within the buildings. Domestic architecture frequently appears to be constructed haphazardly. Buildings were altered to suit the needs of the current occupants. Rooms could be added or subtracted. This ancient practice creates persistent difficulties in defining a grid-wide phasing. Often changes in layout were localized to a single structure, and must be represented by sub-phasing. Given the lack of any direct architectural link between different structures, correspondence between sub-phases is particularly difficult, especially for structures located on opposite sides of a street.

At the close of the 2007 season, most of the exposed architecture found to the east of the street was assumed to belong only to Phase 18; and further, it was assumed that additional architecture related to Phase 19 would be revealed through subsequent excavation. Instead, unlike the structures previously excavated on the west side of the street, there were few architectural reasons to subdivide the features of the Eastern Building Complex into the distinct Phases of 19 and 18, or into any sub-phase. Contrary to expectation, there were no substantial changes in the EBC buildings found sandwiched between Phase 20 and Phase 17. The stratigraphic assessment of 2007 must now be adjusted to collectively assign all Phase 18 material of the EBC under the combined heading "Phase 19/18."⁷ This is not to deny the evidence for changes within the buildings. Indeed, numerous changes were apparent and noted in 2007 as possibly belonging to sub-phases of Phase 18. These changes, however, primarily amounted to the construction of a new installation, such as a bin, bench, or hearth, or to the accumulation/addition of new floor lamina. Given the lack of substantial architectural changes, and the similarity of pottery, such minimal changes are generally insufficient to be grouped with a specific phase. With that caveat, it may be convenient to consider and map the earlier installations and floor build-up along with the earlier Phase 19 plan.

⁶ The fill (**75.377**) has been assigned to the subsequent Phase 19/18, however, it must be noted that similar deep fill (**64.1053**) was found covering the floor (**64.1115**) of the southeastern room in the Phase 20b Northern Building Complex.

⁷ In addition, some material located at the far east side of the grid must be re-assigned to the later Phase 17 (see discussion below). All previously excavated features will not be addressed here. Readers are encouraged to read the 2007 Final Reports for details.

Phase 19/18 (Iron I)

Street layers, which were typically composed of domestic garbage tossed outside and environmentally deposited debris, accumulated at a faster rate than layers within interior spaces, which were typically cleaned out. Thus, over time, residents would be forced to step *down* into their homes. Ultimately, to avoid the influx of exterior debris or a rush of muddy water during rainstorms, they would raise the entrance to their home by leveling the interior with fill and rebuilding at a higher elevation.

The street (75.383; 65.164, 188) outside the Phase 19/18 structures was lowered through excavation. Two small areas of exterior cobbling were noted (75.409 and 75.418) adjacent to the buildings. The northern cobbling was surrounded by three postholes and placed before the opening/threshold of the EBC-North. This suggests that the opening was protected behind a fence. Further north, a series of five postholes were noted adjacent to the building. These postholes surrounded a small (ca. 1.00 x 2.50 m) area of yellow/green-stained soil (65.188). It is possible that all three areas represented small animal pens placed against the structure. The soil would have been stained by the animal's waste, and the cobbling would have provided stable footing in the wet soil. The pens certainly would have impeded traffic down the street, suggesting perhaps that the north-south oriented "street" operated more as an alley or walkway, rather than as a major thoroughfare.

As noted above, at the end of Phase 20, the rooms of the Eastern Building Complex were backfilled, new walls laid, and new floors established. The new walls were founded *directly* upon the line of the previous Phase 20 walls, suggesting a continuity of occupation. While the western walls bordering the street were founded upon stone foundations, the interior walls were constructed solely of mudbrick. The interior wall bricks of different phases could be distinguished by their different color and slight misalignment. The excavation of the western stone walls provided evidence for two different stages of construction, namely multiple courses of stone with a significant layer of fill between them, which may be associated with distinct Phase 19 and Phase 18 activity. Two distinct stages of construction were not, however, notable for the interior walls or for all floors within the structures.⁸ It may have

⁸ I suggested in my 2007 Final Report that "It may be fruitful to tentatively associate Floor 75.L365 in the Potter's House and Floors 75.L392, 347, and 358 in the Weaver's House with Phase 18b. The later floors and related installations should then be considered Phase 18a." It now appears that the earlier floors may have related to the initial construction in Phase 19 and that the later floors with their associated installations may be mapped as part of the Phase 18 use of the structure.

been necessary to rebuild only the western walls. The bricks of these walls would have been exposed to water erosion, especially after some significant increases in the street elevation due to rising debris layers. The interior walls would not have been subject to similar damage, thus were not founded upon stone, and were apparently not rebuilt.

The EBC-South⁹ structure contained three rooms, built according to the Phase 20 layout. The western wall's stone foundations (75.341 and 354) cut deeply into the Phase 20 mudbrick. Residents entered the building from the street/alley at the northwest corner by stepping across a stone threshold, which was augmented by an exterior mudbrick barrier (75.423/303, excavated in 2007). The entrance/utility room was filled with numerous features (most excavated or exposed in 2007), including a forelimb deposit, hearths, pits, benches, and bins. Three clear floors were noted in the room—a lower Floor 75.392, Floor 75.366, and upper Floor 75.336—each with their own related built features and installations. The multiple floors and installations were typical for dirty street-side utility rooms, however, may indicate here the extended use and reuse of the structure throughout Phase 19 and 18. The eastern wall (75.296) is important for its demonstration of a Philistine construction technique I have identified as "Integrated Vertical Brick" (Aja, *Forthcoming*). For this technique, builders combine both horizontal and vertical bricks to create their wall. The technique allowed for an economy of materials, while maintaining structural integrity and can be found elsewhere at Ashkelon (notably in the Phase 19 Room 850), and possibly at Ashdod Stratum XI (cf. Dothan and Ben-Shlomo, 2005, p 35). The northwest utility room gave access to the eastern "Main Room" across a stone and mudbrick threshold (75.475) in the northeast corner and to the southwest room through a gap at the east end of the southern rebuilt Wall 75.307. The southwest room bore two "clean" beaten earth floors—an original Floor 75.347 and a later Floor 75.370 (both excavated in 2007). The eastern wall of the room was rebuilt as Wall 75.296.

The so-called "Main Room" located on the east side of the structure requires a more detailed discussion. We were not successful in either the 2007 or 2008 season in fully exposing all contemporary Phase 19/18 features of this room. This appears to be due in part to the downward slope of the ancient surfaces, which drop at least 25 cm in elevation from west to east, and in part to the disruptions of the later Phase 17. The exposure of these features should be a major and early focus of excavation in the next season. At present, it appears that the Main Room

⁹ Identified as the "Weaver's House" in 2007 after the discovery of the discovery of a cache of over 20 unperforated loom-weights in one of the structure's three rooms.

measures approximately 5.00 by 3.33 m, bounded on the west, north, and south by Walls **75.296**, **146**, **483**. Mudbrick bins are typically located along a wall, thus, given the presence of Bin **75.445**, the eastern wall of the room likely resides along the present balk line. Mudbrick benches appear along the west and north walls (**75.374**, **446**). The currently exposed surface in the room (**75.444**) may represent the occupational build-up, not the original floor used with the built installations. Additional mudbrick fragments (**75.501**, **502**) may represent additional built features, such as bins, but as of yet remain poorly defined.



The surface is cut by several postholes and small pits. One pit in the southeast corner of the room (**75.488**) contained a bowl-lamp-bowl style foundation deposit (see photo—volunteer excavator Shona Glasgow).

Numerous examples of these Canaanite-style deposits have been recovered buried along the walls in nearly every Philistine structure at Ashkelon. This example included two

carinated bowls with concentric circles enclosing an unused white-slipped lamp (**RP10989**, **10988**, **10990**). A possible threshold (**75.517**) was found east of the foundation deposit, but the room it led to remains beneath the balk.

One additional small room (ca.2.00 x 3.00 m) was found immediately south of the “Main Room.” The entrance the room was not discovered. The east Wall **75.401** may have been a reused Phase 20 wall, but this remains to be seen. A bench (**75.434**) constructed of vertical bricks with a rubble fill was located along the northern wall. The associated floor has not been reached.

The Main Room appears to have been expanded by incorporating part of the room to its south. This expansion might relate to Phase 18. Most features of the Main Room and all currently exposed areas to its south were covered by a thin beaten earth floor **75.358**. Bin **75.445** was replaced by a new Bin **75.381** and a Bench **75.384**. A new southern wall was built to enclose a new area measuring 5.00 by 5.56 m. Although this proposed southern wall was not recovered, a trench (**75.400**) noted at the location may represent the closing wall, which was robbed in the subsequent phase of occupation. The trench is aligned with the southern wall of the southwest room, and was noted at the close of last season.

The EBC-North¹⁰ building remains incompletely excavated. Much of the area was not excavated since the 2000 season. It is presently understood as containing a large, pillared utility room (formerly Room 365), with portions of rooms preserved to its north and east. Residents entered the building from the street at the southwest corner of the utility room through a gap in the western wall **75.198** (= **65.135**=**65.200**). A northern closing wall (**65.180**) constructed of stone foundations with mudbrick superstructure divided this large space from another room to the north; although it appears that originally there may have been a threshold located at the west end of this wall to provide access to the northern room. Another mudbrick wall with fieldstone foundation (**75.146**), which served as the southern wall for the EBC-North, was shared with the EBC-South. The eastern wall was almost entirely removed by later Phase 17 activity; however a few foundation stones with traces of a mudbrick superstructure (**75.363**) were preserved.¹¹ Given the condition of the wall, it is uncertain if this wall would have cornered with the northern and southern walls, or possessed one or more doorways to provide access to eastern rooms. The stone foundations indicate the structural importance of these walls, distinguishing them from simple interior room-dividers. Stone foundations were often used only for exterior walls, however, the discovery of a stone drum pillarbase (**75.478**) at the center of the room ensures that the large space (approximately 5.0 by 6.0 meters) would have been roofed. A possible second pillarbase (**75.493**) was located to the west of the central support. Numerous overlapping and intersecting surface lamina typical of utility room floors were revealed. A sherd-covered hearth (**75.422**) was set upon the earliest floor (**75.474**) next to the central pillarbase. Numerous postholes and small installations of uncertain function were set upon, and covered by the rising surface build-up.

The room clearly continued to function as a major activity area throughout the phase. The possible doorway in the northern wall was blocked (**65.240**) with mudbrick. The uneven surface, which had sloped strongly down to the east, was eventually leveled (fill **75.424**=**426**) in preparation of a new floor (**75.365**; **75.335**=**65.118**). This new surface and its occupational build-up were similarly

¹⁰ The so-called “Potter’s House,” named for the potter’s wheel and burnishing tools found in the utility room in 2007.

¹¹ In 2007, this feature was interpreted as a bench set against Wall 75.260. Work this season has, however, revealed that Wall 75.260 is a later, Phase 17 feature cut into the earlier 75.363. Benches are rarely, if ever, constructed with stone foundations, and thus the feature is better identified as a wall. Moreover, an examination of the northern section reveals Phase 19/18 surfaces sloping up toward 75.363, as is typical at the intersection of walls and floors. Unfortunately, the floors and wall were cut through by later construction, a fact that is demonstrated in the northern section.

cut through by several postholes. A mudbrick bin (75.339) was placed along the southern Wall 75.146, but was eventually put out of use by the rising debris. In the later stages of the room's use, a caprid forelimb was found packed into the clay fill of a pit (75.405/406) that cut through the fill of Bin 75.339. Numerous examples of these deposits have been found throughout Grid 38 in previous seasons. A cobblestone installation (65.181), found with a stone carinated dome weight (MC57484), was located in the northwest corner of the room and a possible stone bin (65.151) was placed along the west wall. A round mudbrick hearth (75.362 excavated last season) likely replaced the earlier sherd hearth. It was placed at the location of the central drum pillarbase and thus clearly put it out of use; however, it is unclear where the new support would have been located. The hearth was itself put out of use by the rising debris. An infant jar burial (MC57399, 75.372—excavated 2007) was also discovered in a pit cut into the occupational build-up near the street entrance

As mentioned above, the northern room may have been accessed from the utility room by a doorway in the west end of Wall 65.180. The room remains largely unexcavated, and thus incompletely understood. The northern room wall remains below the balk, eastern wall may have been entirely robbed out in Phase 17, and the western closing wall remains uncertain. The space appears, however, to be of comparable size to that of the utility room to its south. The earliest exposed floor/occupational surface within this room is 65.237, a white plastered surface that slopes up to meet the mudbricks of feature 65.233. Feature 65.233 may be an interior room bench, or the exterior western wall. The partially exposed mudbricks (65.243) found to the west of 65.233 may be revealed as the actual western wall following further excavation. Surface 65.237 appears to trace below 65.240, a further indication for an original doorway for access to the utility room. The surface was covered by approximately 30 cm of fill, possibly in the transition to Phase 18. Although no floor was discovered on top of the fill, several pits were noted cut into its upper elevations. Given that the sloped area had been exposed for eight years, it is possible that the related floor was lost to erosion.¹² Pit 65.189 contained a caprid forelimb deposit packed in clean clay and sprinkled with red ochre. Pit 65.231 most certainly should be identified as a grain storage silo. It was deep, straight-sided, and lined with organic remains. Numerous Philistine Bichrome sherds were recovered from the silo fill, along with a storage handle inscribed with a Cypro-Minoan sign (#69--MC58888). A small stone bin (65.209) was set in the southwest corner of the room.

¹² Excavation records from the 2000 season report that occupational debris 65.173, along with 65.146 and an unnumbered surface were still extant in the room. No traces of this build-up or a floor could be adduced this season.

Only a small portion (ca. 3.00 x 1.60 m) of another room was located to the east of the utility room. Given the disruptions of the subsequent Phase 17, little of the architecture for the room was preserved. At present, it appears that a reused Phase 20 Wall 75.492 served as the southern wall, although this must be confirmed through further excavation. A possible floor surface 75.484 was noted sloping up to the northwest, possibly to the robbed west Wall 75.363, or through a doorway threshold (75.491) that would have provided access to the utility room. The northern extent of the room remains covered by later remains.

Finally, it must be reported that a Stamp Seal (84.799—) bearing three distinct signs was recovered during the stratigraphic excavation of a balk. The context of the artifact is securely phased to 18c.¹³ It would have been part of the fill in the northern utility room of the Southern Building Complex.

Phase 17 b/c (late-Iron I)

Few architectural features of Phase 17 remained to be excavated. Most remnants existed along the far eastern edges of our excavation area. The excavation of these features was extremely useful in understanding the proper stratigraphic sequence. At the close of the 2007 season, a few of the architectural elements were incorrectly ascribed to Phase 18. This interpretation was influenced by the apparent absence of Phase 18 architecture in these areas, and confused by the abundance and relatively extreme depth of the Phase 17 features, which had cut deeply into the earlier phases, removing some architectural elements. This incorrect interpretation was made *contra* the observations of the 2000 season; however new data from this season makes it apparent that the original interpretation of these features was correct. The bulk of the previous Phase 17 interpretation from 2007 and earlier stand. I will discuss here only those elements excavated this season, and those which require different phasing from that previously reported.

¹³ Phase 18c may in the future be relabeled as Phase 19a, given that it retains closer association with the architecture of Phase 19 than to that of Phase 18.

The late-Iron I architects dealt with the uneven slope left at the close of the Phase 18 occupation by dumping fill (cf. **75.360**) into the eastern rooms of the Eastern Building Complex, and leveling the area. Some of the earlier architectural features were robbed (cf. **75.400**; **75.363**). Among the first architectural features that they constructed were walls **65.79** and **65.153**. These were contemporarily with Wall **65.94** (removed in 2000) and formed a portion of a room at the north end of the Eastern Building Complex. Plaster found on the east face of Wall **65.79** clearly indicates that this face was exposed. The floor of this room was previously excavated, although a stone installation, possibly a bin (**65.148/176**), was preserved against the west face of Wall **65.79**.

Phase 17a (late-Iron I)

Subsequent construction included the addition of two Phase 17a rooms at the east of the Eastern Building Complex. A massive, double-wide mudbrick wall with stone foundation (**65.111=75.260**) extended approximately 9.00 m from north to south to form the western wall of both rooms. It was bonded to the east face of Wall **65.79** by a mud mortar (**65.177**). The foundations of the wall cut deeply into the Phase 19/18 strata. The southernmost room was bounded by Wall **75.309** at its south and Wall **65.223** divided it from a room to its north. The bulk of both rooms remain below the eastern balk. Two distinct Phase 17a floors were excavated from the southernmost room. Thick plaster **75.410** sloped up from the floor to cover the walls, including at the southwest corner. This thick plaster covered the foundation stones and was significantly lower than the upper course of the foundation (see photo below). This beautiful floor was covered by a leveling fill (**75.376**) before a mudbrick Bench (**75.308=65.220**) and new plastered floor (**75.310**—excavated last season) were laid against it.



A beaten earth floor (**65.225**) was noted in the northernmost room. It is possible that a lower, plastered floor will be revealed beneath the sub-floor fill that will match the quality of the one found to its south. Plaster was reportedly noted on its western wall; however, none was extant to be documented this season.

Conclusion

While the 2008 Season did not reveal an inordinate number of exceptional finds, it did produce a tremendous yield in terms of the details regarding the occupational history and architectural layout of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age settlements. We were successful in accomplishing the principle goals set out at the beginning of the season, namely the detailing of the LBII Building 1101, which was only partially revealed last season, and the reconciliation of phasing discrepancies between the early Iron Age architecture and the corresponding pottery dates. The later issue primarily concerned the presence of late Iron I (Phase 17) pottery appearing within eastern rooms that were phased to earlier periods, and the consistent presence of Phase 20 style pottery in the street adjacent to buildings with apparently deep-set Phase 18 floors. Having accomplished these goals, we are well situated for next season to tackle the exposed features with confidence.

The future goals and tasks are clear for the western portion of the grid. The rest of the Phase 21 Egyptian garrison must be removed in order to best excavate the exterior fills of Phase 22 (and 23). This should be an early focus of work for the next season. Work may also begin immediately to remove the floors and walls of the LBII building to seek the MBIIC/LBI architecture, which we have learned exists below the currently exposed structure. Tracing the extent of these earlier features should be a major focus of the coming season. Removing the intervening Phase 23 sandy fill layers, which are periodically interrupted by large pits, silos, and burials, to expose the lower architecture may be a slow process. If the full extent of the earlier structures can be traced by the end of the season, we would be well positioned for additional seasons to explore the domestic architecture related to the great walled city of MB Ashkelon.

In the eastern squares, work must immediately focus upon the removal of later (Phase 17) Iron Age features appearing on the lower ancient slope at the easternmost edges of the grid. These include the remnants of leveling fills and some walls in the northeast. With this accomplished, we must finish the exposure of the Phase 19/18 rooms, especially those in the area of the EBC-South's "Main Room." Several Phase 20 rooms are tantalizingly poised to be revealed. The thick fills found inside the rooms may be quickly removed to expose one of the largest and most complete early Philistine buildings yet found at Ashkelon. This goal should be possible by the close of next season.

The dedicated effort of the staff and volunteers, all of whom worked long hours to accomplish our goals, ensured the high quality of the results from the season. I am honored to have worked with them all. With luck we will

secure an equally skilled staff for the coming season, and fulfill the promise of even more exciting discoveries.

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Ashkelon 50/08

Grid 38

Phase 20b

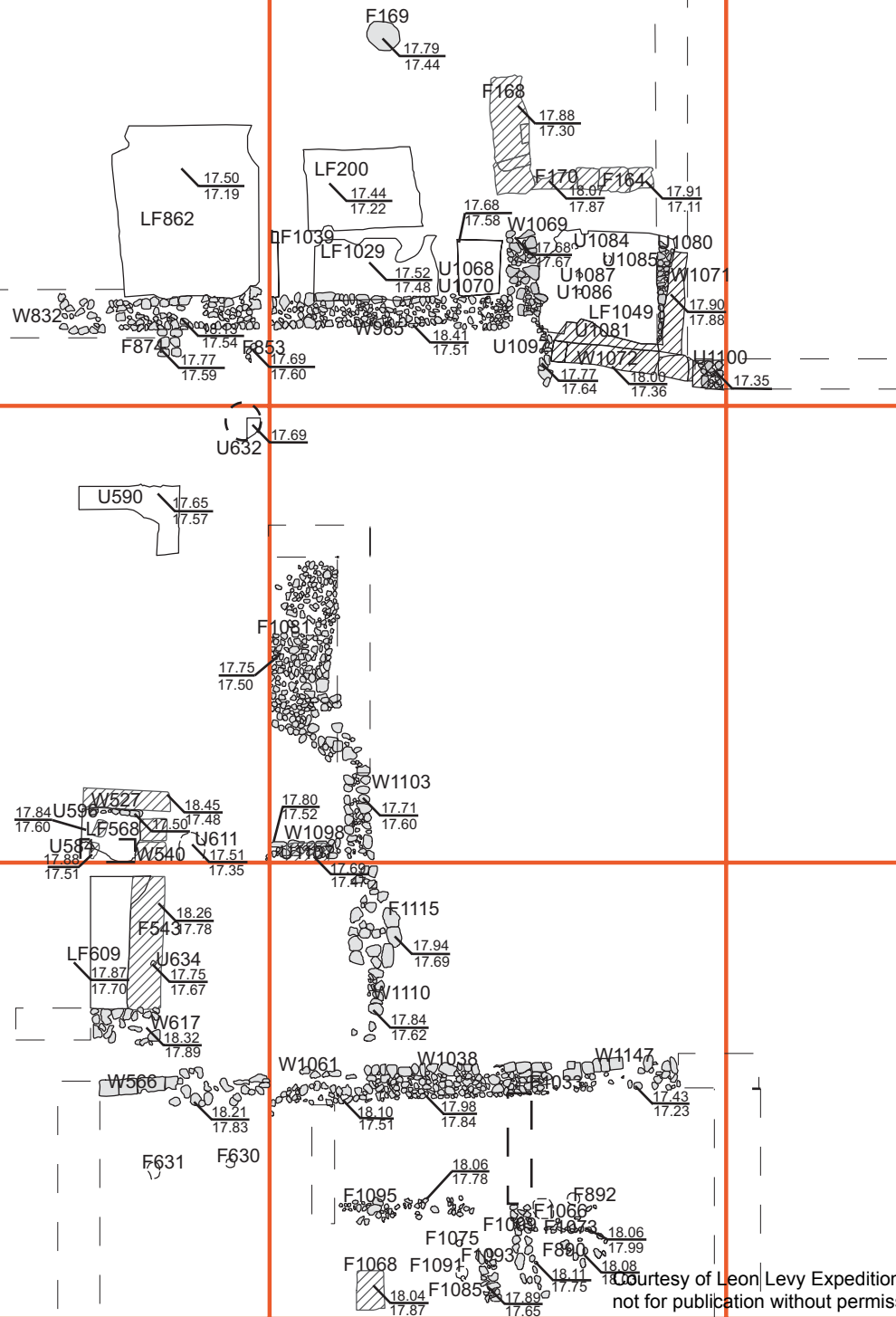
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Drawn by: DLW

July 17, 2008

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DwgID: 13220



Courtesy of Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon
not for publication without permission

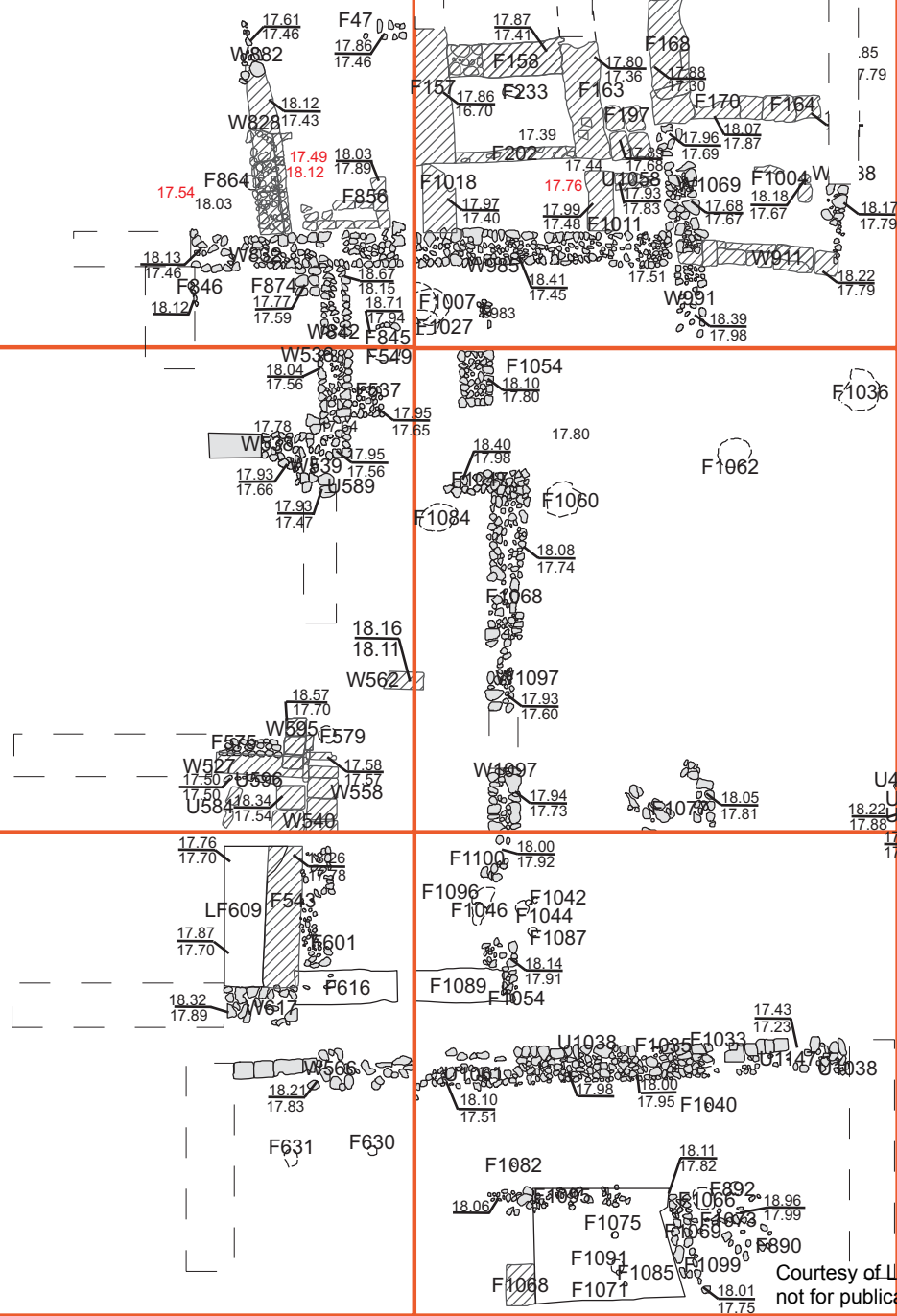
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Supervisor: AJA

Drawn by: DLW

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DwgID: 13219



Courtesy of Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon
not for publication without permission

complete section compiled by
CSA & ASA 2003; 2007 ADDITIONS;
2008 ADDITIONS

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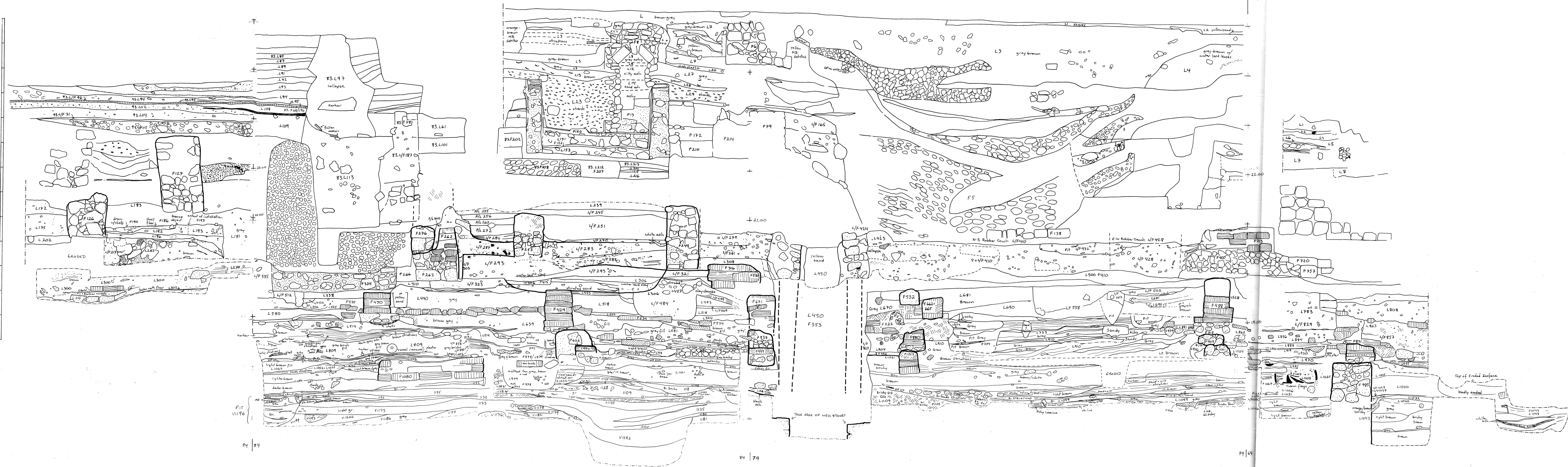
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94 | 84

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74 | 64



W/ASA CSA Oct 30 '07

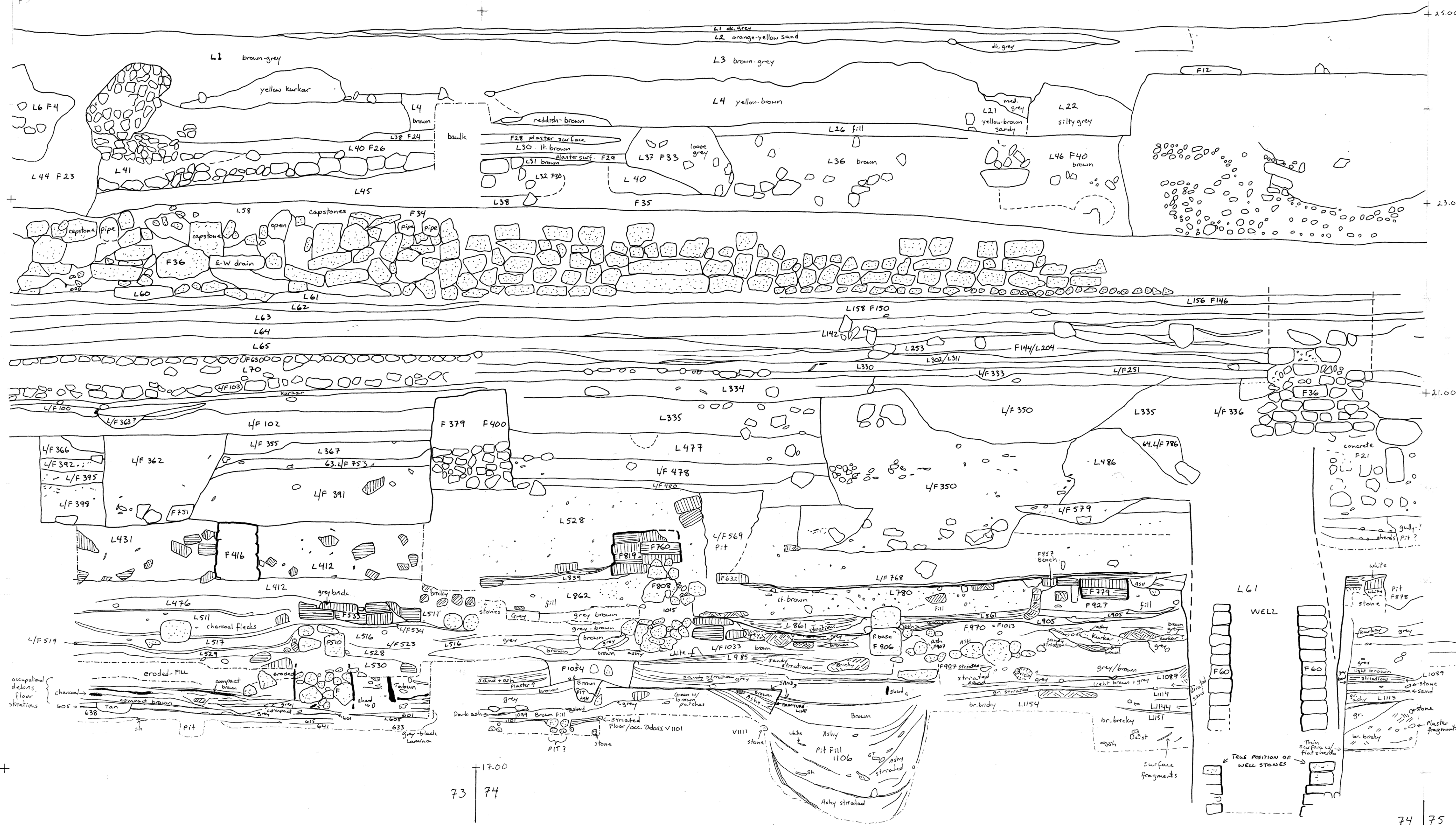
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Tel Ashkelon
Grid 38 Squares 73, 74, 75

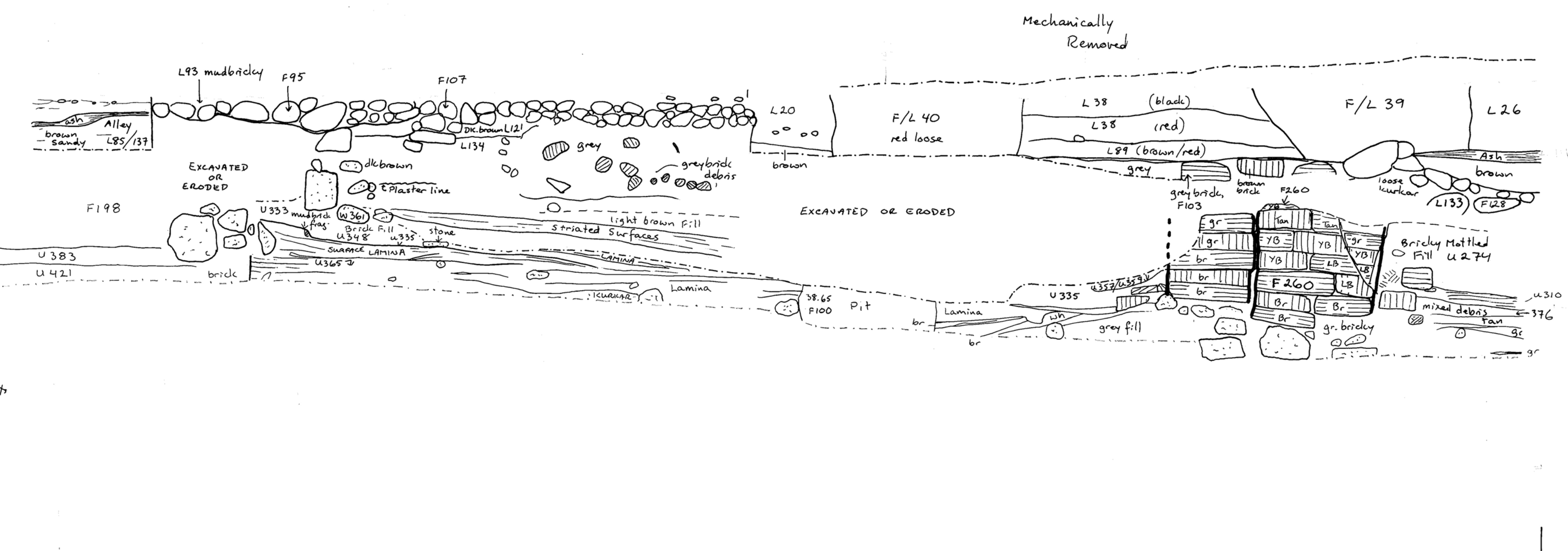
North Section
Scale 1:25
Complete Section compiled by CSA + ASA, 2003, 2007 additions; 2008 additions

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74 75



Need 2000 pencil
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CSA Nov '05



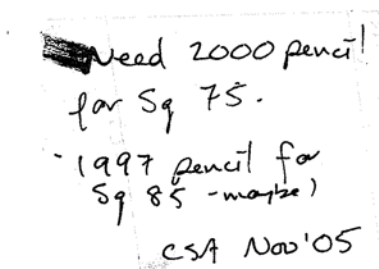
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73 74

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Complete section compiled by
C.S. Alexander & A. Aja. 2003; 2007 ADDITIONS; 2008 ADDITIONS
sh = Sheld
gr = gray
br = brown



Dwg ID: ~~4,357~~ 13,242

T&L ASHKELON

GRID 38

Squares 83 & 84

South Section

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Complete section compiled by
C.S. Alexander & A. Aja, in 2003;
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Dwg ID 13,238

TEL ASHIKELON

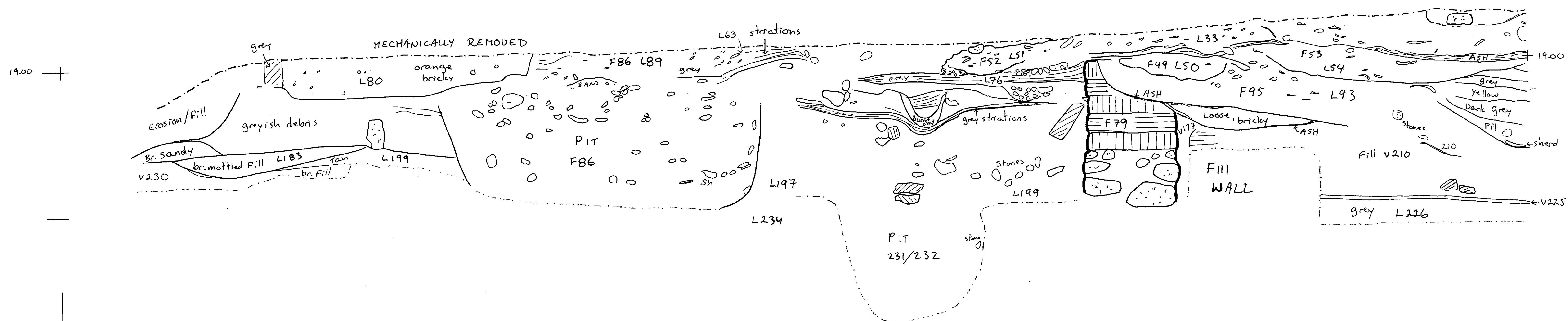
Grid 38 Square 65

NORTH SUBSIDIARY SECTION

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65 66



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(It was inked in
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that inking is -)

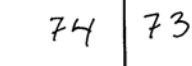
CSA
Oct 7 '08

complete Section compiled by
CSA & AJA 2003; 2007 ADDITION;
2008 ADDITION

Grid 38
sq. 75



75	74
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74	73
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Dwg D: ~~13, 247~~ 13, 247

TEL ASHKELON

Grid 38

Squares 93, 83, 73 & 63

West Subsidiary Section

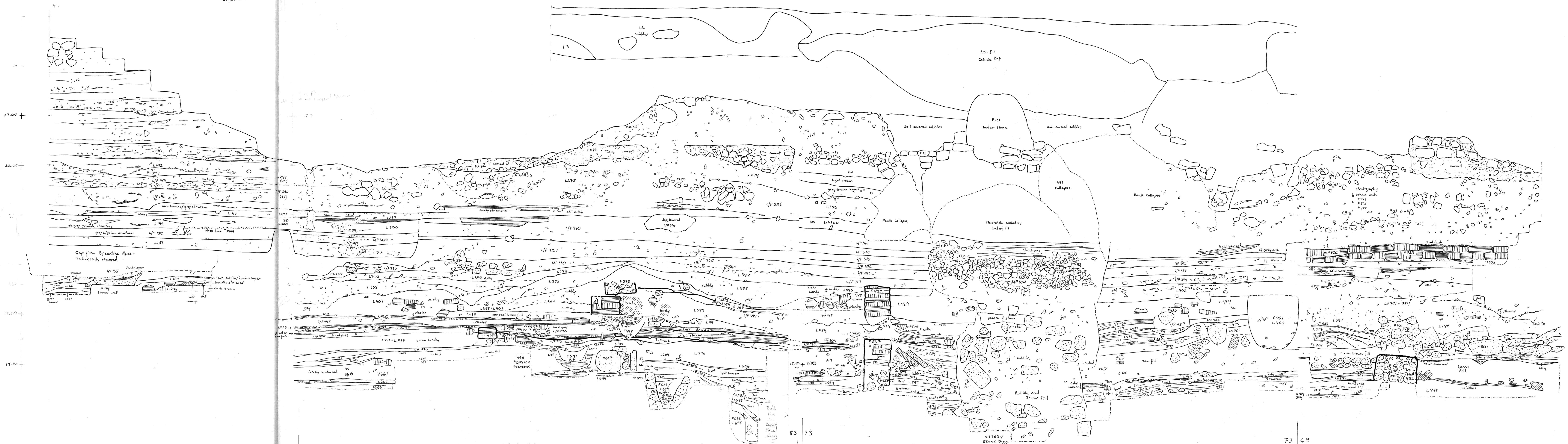
Complete section compiled by
C.S. Alexander & A.A., 2003; 2007 additions;
2008 additions

LHA - LAMICK
WH - WHITE
SH - SHALE
BL - BLACK
SP - SAND
TB - TUFFED BRICK

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83 73

73 63



93 83

83 73

73 63

Grid 38 Square 63 Final Report
Eric Prins and Andrea Creel

In the 2007 season, a line of brown mudbrick, **U891**, was revealed in Square 63, running E-W just north and roughly parallel to the previously existing **F832 (=64 F985)**, the main Philistine wall. This feature seemed as if it belonged to the pre-22 architecture in that it was at a lower elevation than the surfaces we encountered in the southern portion of Square 63, which are associated with the Phase 22 building. Thus, the major goal for the 2008 season was to determine the nature of this early architectural feature. Such a goal required the removal of a significant amount of material in the southern extent of the square, which had formed a plateau as the result of the excavation patterns of the previous seasons. However, a series of surfaces and features in this portion of the square significantly slowed this effort and so the goal was only partly met. The western extent of the feature was exposed, but as the end of the dig season arrived then, we still do not know much more about this feature. Nonetheless, it was determined that many of these surfaces and features dated to the previously unexcavated Phase 23. Square 63 required a careful and exacting excavation and for that we must recognize our volunteers Alex Callen, Sarah Fort and Alex Stewart.

Phase 23

In Phase 23, **U891** continued to the W, ending in the vague outlines of mudbrick feature **F932**. To the W and on the outside of **F932**, **L931**, either a gray fill or a surface, appeared at the same elevation as the top of **F932**. Meanwhile, silo **F926** and its fill **L925**, in the NW corner, cut into **L931**. To the S of **F932**, **L925**, gray fill with charcoal bits, also appeared. At the very end of the season, we observed that much of this gray material formed a semicircular shape, though whether this is a pit has yet to be determined.

Along the southern baulk, the focus of our efforts for most of the season, the earliest layer seen is the mudbrick fill **U928**, with pit **F929/L930** cut into it. Next, an even more mudbrick fill, **L922** overlay **U928** and pit **F923/L924** cut into **L922**. On this hard pack, the earliest phytolith surfaces and occupational debris appeared, stretching from the western to the eastern baulk. We removed this as **LF914**. A posthole and pit cut into **LF914**; a sandy posthole, **F919**, and an ashy pit **F920/L921**, in which we found a roughly cylindrical marble sculptural element, **MC 58831**.

Clearly preserved phytolith layers do not occur again in the southern most portion of the southern end of 63. Instead, the best preserved phytolith surfaces appear mostly in the middle, with preservation in the W, but only patches of phytolith in the E. For example, **L918**, the shallow fill above **LF914**, occurred in the middle and western parts of southern 63 and **L898**, the thick layer of fill in the E, did not demonstrate the same fine striations of alternating fills and surfaces. **F917**, another phytolith surface, also occurred in middle and west of southern 63. On it was laid a roughly square installation of mostly kurkar stones, **F900**, as well as another, smaller group of kurkar stones running into the S baulk, **F905**. Lastly, **F916**, a posthole, cut into **F917**. **L915**, a shallow fill, then covered over **F917**. This then was covered with another phytolith surface, **F908**, which was cut by pit **F912/L913**. Fill layer **L911** covered **F908**. It appears that **F900** continued in use through this successive layer and through the phytolith surface **F899** that overlay **L911**, though this may have been the latest surface through which the installation remained in use. **F899** was cut by several postholes surrounding **F900**; **F907** to its W, **F906** to its N, **F902** to the NE and **F901** to the SE. A pit also cut into **F899** and was labeled **F903/L904**. A second and later pit, **F909/L910**, cut into **F899** and **F903/L904**. **F899** is, perhaps, the latest surface(s) in this area that is not associated with the Phase 22 architecture in Square 73, directly

to the south.

Phase 22

The pattern of successive surfaces in the southern part of the square seemed to continue into Phase 22, as **F893**, a series of at least two close striations of phytolith surface and shallow fills, appeared over **F899**.

Once we moved to the NW part of the square we also remove fills from **L875** and **U895**. These fills though overlay Phase 23 features.

Phase 20

We seem to have no Phase 21 materials in the square, but we did begin removing a Phase 20 foundation trench, **F887**. This foundation trench belonged to the main Phase 20 wall, **F832 (=64 F985)**. In this endeavor, we recovered Iron Age I pottery, thus more securely dating the wall.

Conclusion

Though the nature of the mudbrick feature is still unknown, the excavation of Phase 23 surfaces and features in Square 63 provided a rich set of materials on which to understand a little known phase in the grid. The 2009 season should more fully reveal the mudbrick feature and its relationship to the surrounding area.

Grid 38 Square 64 2008 Final Report
Eric Prins and Andrea Creel

In 2008, the Leon Levy expedition returned to Grid 38 for another opportunity to excavate, interpret and understand the ancient remains of Ashkelon. As a continuation of the work done in the previous season, removing the last remnants of the Iron Age materials in Square 64 remained a major goal. Though it took the entire first half of the season, the earliest of the Philistine walls and their associated foundation trenches came tumbling down. Outside of this, Square 64 was also tasked to determine if there was evidence for the northern wall of the Phase 22 building, seen in Squares 73 and 74 and hinted at the end of the 2007 season in Square 64 by the arrangement of certain walls. Wall **U1098 (=74 U1145)** seemed to underlie the Phase 20 wall **W1072** and wall **U1082** appeared beneath Phase 21 architecture and material. Though the northern wall itself proved elusive, several factors did point to its approximate location. Rather unexpectedly, we also came upon glimpses of Phase 23 and introduced an entirely new phase into our matrix. Thus, the work done in Square 64 provided an important contribution to the excavation of Grid 38, but none of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Alex Callen, Sarah Fort, Alex Stewart and Josh Walton.

Phase 23

The surprise appearance of Phase 23 occurs in five units in Square 64. **U1127** is a layer underneath a robber trench of a Phase 22 wall. Further, there are indications that a surface may be under the fill of **U1127**. **U1124** is another possible surface with tabun fragments. **U1124** is also overlain by **U1121**, a mudbrick feature that slopes up the north, as if built in a trough. Finally, **U1120** is a layer of rough fill in the western part of Square 64 as we were looking for the northern wall. **U1121** might cut into this layer.

Phase 22

The greatest extent of excavation though was done in Phase 22, as was the expectation for the 2008 season. The N-S walls **U1082** and **U1098 (=74 U1145)** and the mudbrick bench **U1105** associated with **U1098 (=74 U1145)** formed the E and W walls of the Phase 22 building and featured a series of associated surfaces. **U1123** is a beaten earth surface that slopes up slightly to wall **U1082** in the W and to wall **U1098 (=74 U1145)** or the mudbrick bench **U1105** in the E. On the north side, a bench may be indicated by **U1118** and possibly **U1126**, but in the NE corner that does not contain mudbrick, the surface seems to slope up to robber trench **U1107**, which is thought to be the location of the northern wall of the Phase 22 building. **U1123** then is probably the lower surface of a floor, also marked by the upper surface **U1106**, and the thin layer of fill between them **U1122**. **U1082** also seems to be associated with surfaces on its western side. The earlier surface **U1113** is a patchy beaten earth surface that seems to run up to the stones of **U1082** and was covered by a layer of compact fill **U1109**. **U1109** was then covered by a layer of dark ash, **U1035**, which had been associated with **U1082** in 2007 and was removed this season. The removal of the Iron Age remains on the eastern edge of Square 64 exposed several units that are now tentatively dated to Phase 22. **U1117** is a possibly mudbrick wall or feature that may continue beneath **U1089**. The fill **U1125** on the north side of **U1117** lies underneath **U1116**, a possible surface that may be associated with **U1117**.

Phase 21

Phase 21 is a more elusive phase in Grid 38, but can be found to certain extent in Square 64. In the west, **LF1040** is a possible outdoor surface that also contains a partially excavated pit **U1092** and its fill **U1119**. Another partially excavated pit that can be associated with Phase 21 is **U1078** and its fill **U1077**, the very northern extent of which lies in Square 64 at the southern baulk. Several fill layers that appear to cover the Phase 22 building may also be related to Phase 21. **U1079** covered much of the room in the Phase 22 building and was removed, along with the seemingly associated fills to E, **U1051** and **U1095**. As mentioned previously, we also excavated a robber trench, **U1107**, which was formed by the removal of the northern wall and left a jumble of stone, fill and brick.

Phase 20

The season began with the final removal of Phase 20 and, most significantly, included the foundation trench, **U1094**, of the main Philistine wall from Phase 20, **F985**. Other walls that had been added on the this main wall were also completely and finally removed. **F1069** was a N-S extension of **F985**. **W1072** was a wall that extended eastward from the corner of **F985** and **W1069** and was joined to them by **U1097**. **W1071=W1080**, a N-S extension of **W1072**, was also removed. As was **U1100** which extended eastward from **W1072**, roughly along the same line into the E baulk. Their associated foundation trenches, **U1101**, **U1102**, **U1103**, respectively, also came out. **L1096**, the fill from below the surface associated with **W1069** and **F985**, was removed as well. One posthole from a surface associated with the eastern walls, **U1099**, was excavated. Other possible Phase 20 surfaces were removed this season, although they cannot be dated to the Iron Age by pottery. **U1110** and **U1115** were clayey surfaces that were so close together that they are probably the same floor. In section ,it slopes up to **U1100** to the S. Finally, **U1053**, a thick layer of fill above these surfaces that was laboriously excavated in the 2007 and the 2008 seasons, saw its last day of coherence.

Conclusion

The 2008 season in Square 64 both accomplished its stated goals and introduced new inquiries for future excavation. The removal of the Phase 20 architecture allowed for a fuller excavation of the Phase 22 building and thus a better understanding of its appearance in Square 64. Though negligible in Grid 38, Phase 21 could even be observed in Square 64 as was the earliest phase found in Square 64 so far, Phase 23. We have gained invaluable insight into the Late Bronze Age in Grid 38 and continued excavation should provide even more.

Grid 38 Square 65 Final Report

Jonathon Wylie

The 2008 objectives in 38.65 centered entirely on our quest to understand better the nature of the Iron I Philistine occupation of Ashkelon. That being the case, we had the following goals: 1) To restore the square to a respectable excavation area after it had been left unexcavated since 2000; 2) To explore the nature and function of the northern room; 3) To explore the nature and function of the room to the East of F111. 4) To lower the street from phase 18 to phase 19.

Indeed we were able to accomplish much of what we intended. Eight years of neglect took a tremendous toll on the square. When we arrived, the square had barely been touched since 2000, with the exception of some very light scraping and cleaning, and that only in isolated places. Winter wash was as thick as 15 cm in some places, and a number of the features in the square were badly eroded and deteriorated. After an extensive overhaul of the square we were indeed able to prepare it for further excavation. Regarding goals two and three, most of our efforts were localized in these two rooms, resulting in a much better understanding of them. Our excavation of the street gave us a good opportunity to trace the transition from phases 19 to 18 in a small area, and was helpful for our understanding of exterior areas during those phases. Lastly, while 65 remains in a state of transition between phases, and therefore has some layers and features of uncertain phasing, we have indeed been able to provide new information on stratigraphic relationships and to contribute suggestions and answers to a number of questions regarding phasing.

All of this is thanks to a number of contributors. First and foremost, for the hard work of our volunteers—Craig Boyer and Beth Snyder—along with Kathryn Hooze and Elizabeth LaVinge when their other responsibilities enabled them to join us, we are very grateful. Each of these individuals made important contributions to our productivity and brought a very pleasant dynamic to the square. Additionally, our work in the square was preceded by several Ethiopian workmen who had already made a large dent in the cleanup process before we even arrived in the square. Lastly, we had the privilege of being joined for two days by Shelby White and Tracy Hoffman. It was a pleasure to have each of them in the square.

Phase 19/18 Street

Our excavation of phases 19 and 18 took place primarily in the street and in the northern room of 65. We had initially hoped that a careful excavation of the street would provide us with a good place to study the transition between phases 20, 19 and 18. We revised our plan and did not go as low as phase twenty in the street. We expected that our excavation would yield a traceable change in Philistine pottery from monochrome to bichrome. Since we did not go as far as phase 20 and since we found no bichrome in L164 or L188 we did not learn as much as we had anticipated. The street now sits at L205, which is a phase 19 layer. Despite the fact that our exploration of the street did not teach us as much as we had hoped about the transition between these early Philistine phases, L188 did provide some interesting information about how this exterior area, which has long been called a street or alley, may have functioned. L188 was cut by five postholes: F184, F185, F186, F187 and F204. Additionally, the soil of L188 had a consistent yellow-green coloration. I suspect the area enclosed by these postholes may have been a pen for keeping livestock. The yellow-green color could be found in other layers and features in the immediate vicinity especially L207 and L208.

Immediately below L188 we opened L205. The reason for opening this new layer was that we could see a clear change in strata in 75's northern baulk. We did not excavate L205, and it will remain an extant layer on next year's top plan.

One of the issues we faced in our excavation of the street was how to handle the modern erosion cut. The size of the cut made it impossible for us to excavate the street as one feature. We were not

able to state with certainty whether L183 to the north of the cut was equal to L188 to the south of it. For this reason we excavated the street with layers to the north of the cut and layers to the south of it. Layers 188 and 205 were opened on the south side, and L183 was opened on the north side.

Another important feature of our exploration of phase 19 was the pit F242, which contained L229 as fill. There was much deliberation on what this feature actually was, but our current understanding of it is as a pit. L229 was a layer of shell and broken potsherds, which we initially deemed a surface. It was first discovered after we removed wall F152 and wall F153 (both phase 17). Initially, we thought this layer was a surface and we began an attempt to trace it into the room north of wall F180. We quickly learned that the surface did not continue into the interior of the room, and we turned our attention to the opposite direction. We found that L229 did continue into the street, cutting L205. Furthermore, it continued into the north, all the way around the north side of the erosional cut as far as the NW corner of the square. As we continued our exploration of L229 into the NW we noticed that it makes a gradual descent as it goes to the NW. Moreover, as it moved in that direction the fill between the sherds became much looser, with a lot of kurkar pebbles. With all this being the case, we began to think of other possibilities of what this layer of potsherds may be. The current consensus is that it is a pit. Thus F242, which we had initially designated as the sub-floor fill beneath what we thought was the surface L229, is actually the edge of the pit itself (i.e. the feature), and L229 is its fill.¹ F242/L229 remains extant for next year as a pit cut into L205. On the last day of excavation we began to see some mudbrick lines running parallel to F233, which I numbered 243. I expect these lines will continue to trace toward the south next year. If this turns out to be the case, then I suspect these mudbricks will be a phase 20 wall. The relevance for discussing this feature here is that it looks to me like pit F242/L229 cuts into this feature.

Northern Room

Our discussion of phase 19/18 moves slightly to the west into the northern room where there are a number of layers and features from that phase. During the last week of the season we came upon two N-S mudbrick features in the western part of the northern room. F243, which we did not have time to explore to the degree we would have liked, may well trace farther to the south. If this is the case, then it is likely the phase 19 wall separating the street from the northern room. Furthermore, if F243 does turn out to be a wall, then F233 must be an installation built against the wall, probably a bench.

Concerning F180, the E-W wall that separates the northern and southern rooms, my current hypothesis is that this wall was built in two phases. The eastern half of this wall has a stone foundation, whereas the western half does not (at least so far as we have been able to determine). A possible explanation for this is that the stones were laid in phase 19. This left a large doorway between the northern and southern rooms. Then, in phase 18, the new occupants decided to plug this doorway by laying a series of mudbricks in the doorway as a continuation of the wall. For this reason, I gave the mudbricks on the Western side of this wall a number of their own, namely F240. Having done so, I do believe that F240 and F180 are part of the same wall in phase 18. Early next season, F180 should be re-drawn on the top plan as a stone wall.

F79 may have been the phase 18 N-S wall along the eastern side of the northern room, but it is more likely a phase 17B/C wall. The reason for calling it phase 17 is that it was considered to be contemporary with F94 (which ran above F180) and F120. F94 and F120 are both phase 17B and A.

One of our central tasks this season was to uncover a phase 18 floor in the northern room. This proved to be much trickier than we anticipated. At the end of the 2000 season, the northern room had been left divided up into several layers (L173, L146, and one running along the north side of F180 that was left un-numbered). After we finished cleaning up the eight years of winter-wash debris we saw no reason whatsoever to keep all these areas separated from one another and we assigned all the fill in the

¹ One should consult the 2008 fieldnotes for further clarification on the excavation of this feature.

northern room a new number, L199. L199 was bound by F 180 in the south, F152 and F153 in the west, F86 and the north baulk in the north, and F79 in the west. We expected to come down on a floor just a few centimeters below L199, but we did not. Instead, we went through some 15 cm of fill. At that point the fill material changed considerably so we changed numbers to L234. Whereas L199 was fairly clean and a grayish silt, the L234 was much junkier, containing a number of cobble stones and broken mudbrick fragments. Because the season was quickly coming to an end, during the last week we decided to excavate a trench in L234 running parallel to F233. The purpose for doing so was that it would answer the primary question we had. Namely, could we find a floor that was contemporary with both F 180 and F233? Finally, at the bottom of L234 we came upon occupational debris. All tolled, we had to descend 30 cm from the top of L199, through L234 before we reached the occupational debris layer L237. L237 did slope up to F233, but it ran beneath the mudbricks of F180 (what I have numbered F240). This meant that F 240/F180 could not be contemporary with F233, and therefore that the surface and F233 are earlier than F240.

This presents a number of problems to be considered during further excavations. First, we found no trace of a phase 18 floor contemporary with F 180 in our excavation of the northern room. I see two explanations for this. It is possible that L155, a surface of shell, was the phase 18 surface in this room. According to the 2000 fieldnotes, L155 ran below and was immediately earlier than F94. This could mean that it ran up to and was contemporary with F 180. The problem with this, however, is that there is a strong possibility that L155 was a phase 17B/C surface. Again, the 2000 fieldnotes record that L155 was contemporary with L146 and L167, both of which are 17B layers.² This suggests that the precise phasing of L155 was not clear in 2000, and that it may belong either to phase 18 or to phase 17. I have elected to include it in phase 18 simply because putting it in 17 would mean that the northern room lacks a phase 18 surface. The other possibility is that at the end of the 2000 season the phase 18 floor was just a few cm below where the excavators had left off. This is a distinct possibility. When they finished their work in 2000, L173, an occupational debris layer, was still extant. This suggests that the floor at the end of 2000 was just a few cm below. Almost certainly this would have been a phase 18 floor. Unfortunately, if there was a floor just a few cm below, there is a strong chance that eight years of exposure would have eroded it away, or that it was removed during cleanup.

The point remains that we have no floor in the northern room that we can say for certain belongs in phase 18. What we can say is that L155 is of uncertain phasing, L199 and L234 are both phase 18, and the occupational debris L237 is phase 19.

Returning to Layers 199 and 234, there are a few points that should be made. L199 was cut into by seven pits: F189/L190, F191/L192, F193/L194, F195/196, F204/L205, and F214/L215. F189/L190 was by far the most interesting of them. It was contained a deposited forearm of a sheep or goat and was packed with mud. Moreover, there was a reddish tint found in the mud of the pit may have been the result of it having been sprinkled with ochre. Almost certainly this was a sacrificial offering.

The other pits were quite uneventful. They were all localized to the SE corner of the northern room, just west of F79 and just north of F180. Between these pits and F97 there was a blob of mudbrick, which we numbered F197. While we could clearly see a few lines of the mudbrick, there did not appear to be any coherence to them. We initially thought these features may be a hearth, but this theory now seems untenable. We did not find much ash or charcoal in these pits. F214/F215 was a larger pit that absorbed F195/L196, F193/L194 and F197. With the exception of a few carnelian and frit beads, these pits yielded very little. They each had a very silty-sandy fill with some water-washed shells. It seems that they were probably refuse pits.

One other pit that was very interesting was F231/L232. Undoubtedly this was a phase 18 feature, probably cut from a surface above L199, or from L199 itself. There were a number of white-slip bichrome sherds found in this pit, along with a clay loomweight. By far the most important item

2. 2000 fieldnotes also say that L155 was immediately earlier than L146, L167

we found in this pit was a Cypro-Minoan handle. Regarding the pit itself, we found that around the edges there was a white residue. Initially I thought this was plaster, but I now think this is phytolith, the residue left from grain. This indicates that this pit actually served as a domestic silo.

L234 was not cut by nearly as many pits as L199. It was consistently junky. There was one pit cut into it, F234/L236. This pit was very similar to the group of pits cut into L199. It had a sandy fill with a few water-smoothed shells. The interesting thing about this pit, however, is that there is plaster at the bottom of it. This plaster may be a point of inquiry for next season.

To the west of L199, we articulated a few stones, which we numbered F 209, and removed some of the fill around them, L207. As we worked around these stones we found a large number of shells, much more than we were finding in other areas. Then, when we removed the stones of F 209, we could clearly see that they were sitting on a pile of shell. This may be a remnant of the shell layer L155. None of the 2000 top plans record L155 extending so far to the west, however. If L155 is phase 17, then I believe this feature out to be as well.

Southern Room

The rest of our work in phase 19/18 centered primarily on cleanup in the square. We removed F200 (which I think is equal to F135) and its foundation trench F206. F200 was probably a phase 19/18 construction reused in 17. Related to our removal of that feature, we excavated the fill between F200 and F152, which we called L208. L208 was merely a small area of fill between these two walls. L241, which remains on the top plan, was also part of the fill between these walls. I think it is equal to L188. We also removed the phase 18 stone bench F151. We removed F148 and F176 in the northern room, but we were not able to make any more progress in our understanding of their function. The best we can say is that they were a bin. All of these features were floating.

We did minimal work in the southern room shared with 38.75 this season. Essentially all our work here was cleanup oriented. We did a light picking across the room to the south of F180 to remove winter-wash. We also did some articulating around some stones in the Western part of that room, which we called F 203. The fill around the stone installation we called L198. Lastly, we explored F181, the ring of stones noticed during the 2007. Initially I thought these stones would be above a pit, so I assigned L182 as the deliberate fill inside it. As it turned out, this pile of stones amounted to nothing more than just that. There was not pit below them, and L182 is null.

Phase 17 B/C

Our work in Phase 17 B/C this year was minimal. Essentially all we did in this phase was removal of floating architecture. Wall F152 was floating so we removed it, along with its foundation trench F158. Likewise, wall F153 was floating so we removed it along with its foundation trench F172. We also removed wall F79, after looking in vain for a foundation trench which the 2000 excavators thought they had seen.

There was some discussion on the phasing of wall F79 vis-a-vis wall F111. Initially we thought that F111 was the earlier wall because of the depth of its cut, which is considerably greater than that of F111. This sequence does not hold, however. We later found in the 2000 fieldnotes that F79 was coated with a lens of plaster on its eastern face. This being the case, we must say that the eastern face of that wall was exposed prior to the construction of F111. Thus F79 is of an earlier construction than F111. F79, then is, a 17B/C wall, and F111 and the fill L177 are 17A. F111 also had a plaster coating on its eastern face.³

Phase 17A

3 Cf. 2000 fieldnotes vol 1. pp. 5-6, 33; vol. 2 photos 13,1378 and 13,379.

With the exception of L177, a small bit of fill between F79 and F111, all our efforts in Phase 17A this year were on the east side of F111. I will make a few brief comments on L177, and then I will discuss what we accomplished in the rooms to the east of F111.

Before removing F79 we could see a layer of fill (L177) between F79 and F111. After we removed F79 we proceeded to remove L177. This fill may have been applied to the eastern side of F79 as a type of mortar for the builders of F111 to insert their bricks into.

Everything else we did in phase 17A was in the rooms to the east of 111. When we first began our work in this room things were in very bad repair. Of all the places in the square that had been damaged by weathering and exposure, this area was by far the worst. Thus, our first task in the eastern rooms was to clean up. This entailed removal of winter-wash, articulation of F111, and removing the remnant of F121. Once that was done we were able to move forward with excavation.

In the southwestern room we began excavating L157. In the process, we continued to look for an E-W wall separating the eastern room. The final top plan from 2000 showed a small protrusion toward the east extending from F111.⁴ Sure enough, as we continued to clean and scrape in that area we were able to find a wall that ran from F111 all the way into the eastern baulk, which separated the northeastern and southeastern rooms. We called this new E-W wall F223. Beneath L157 we opened L218, which was a fill probably equal to L157. We opened L218 because it our excavation area in this area was now bound by F223, whereas we had been excavating L157 above F233. We went through 30 cm of fill and then came upon L219, an occupation debris layer. A few cm below that we found F224. Running parallel to F111 in the southeastern room is F220, a mudbrick bench.

The two pits, the enormous Roman pit F121/L90 and F227/L228, the latter of which we discovered after we removed F121, presented a bit of a challenge for piecing together stratigraphic relationships in the northeastern room. On account of two pits, we had to excavate the northeastern room in layers to the north of the pits as distinct from the layers south of them. The northern limit of F227/L228 was the southern limit of the northern layers. The southern layers ran from that line to F223 in the south.

The top plan I inherited indicated that L156 was the extant layer in the northeastern corner of the square. After cleaning this area we were able to see a small pit cut into the fill in this area. Therefore, I gave the layer into which the pit was cut a new number, L210. The pit was F211/L212, and was fairly uneventful and bottomed out onto a very compact layer with an ashy film above it. After removing the pit we excavated L210 down to the compact layer at the bottom of the pit and found it to be an occupational debris layer, which we numbered L216. When we were excavating L210 we came upon a mudbrick protruding from the eastern baulk, which I numbered F217. This brick appears to have been sitting on the surface beneath L210, but since we were unable to relate it to any other architecture its nature remains somewhat ambiguous. It may have served as a bin or bench. It is also possible that this brick was merely part of the fill. In any case, beneath L216 was the floor LF225, and the subfloor fill beneath is L226. L226 remains extant for next year.

The southern part of the northern room was a little less straightforward. The area around pit F121/L90 was not labeled on the top plan I received, so I called it L221. L221 was a deliberate fill. Within L221 we found a number of very interesting mudbricks, which we called F213. A number of these bricks appeared to have some intentional order about them; others appeared to have been thrown into the fill ad hoc. We tentatively called these bricks a bench, but they may have been part of the fill L221.

Below L221 we uncovered occupational debris, which we called L222. Below L222 was surface LF238 and sub-floor fill L239.

As we tried to piece together the stratigraphy of the northern and southern halves of this room,

4 N.B. Not the protrusion extending to the E from F111 labeled F111. That protrusion was later re-numbered F213. More on it below.

which was a bit challenging because of the inability to see sections in the baulk because of the two pits, I initially proposed that L221 equaled L226. The issue with this theory was that L226 was below a floor, whereas L221 was not. I suggested that whatever floor that existed above L221 was cut away by the Roman pit. After further excavation, I no longer find this to be a tenable correlation of the stratigraphy in this room. Rather, it seems quite clear by looking at the eastern baulk that L210=L221, L216=L222, L225=L238, and L226=L239.

Since these are the first surfaces associated with these walls 111 and 223 we have to call them Phase 17A.

Concluding Remarks

All in all our season in square 65 was quite successful. The questions remaining for next year pertain primarily to the transition between phases 20 and 19/18. Specifically, this will involve exploration of the mudbricks we found on the last days of excavation (F243) to determine whether this will be a wall. Additionally, the phase 19 floor L237 should be completely exposed by excavating through L234. It will be important to see how that surface relates to architecture. Excavation in the southern room should be straightforward, given that 75 has paved the way for it. Lastly, future excavation should focus on getting the eastern rooms caught up to the rest of the square, that is to phase 19/18.

Grid 38 Square 73 Final Report
Larry Largent Jr.

It was with great pleasure that I returned to excavate at Ashkelon in 2008 under the benevolence of the Leon Levy Expedition and with even greater joy to have had the opportunity to investigate some of the questions left unanswered in the soil from the 2007 excavation in the same area I had previously dug. The most pressing of these questions focused on the relationships among the Phase 22 remains in the northern part of the square. The discovery of a Phase 23 burial (**L73.629**) just north of the cut of the Islamic Cistern (**F73.586**) in 2007 meant that many of these relationships were left undefined in order to remove such sensitive material by the end of the season. As a result, fitting the rich stratigraphic relationships of the post-burial material together became the most important puzzle for the square in the 2008 season. This also meant that the southern half of the square including the cistern was largely left unexcavated throughout the season. Though time in the field was short, significant strides were taken to find the fit of each piece of this stratigraphic puzzle. Indeed, the 2008 goal of identifying which features and layers were contemporary with the Phase 22 east/west wall (**F73.581**) that dominated the northern part of the square was largely attained; allowing these features and layers to be fit into the larger Phase 22 building plan that spanned the grid. Such puzzles would have never come together however without the astute mentorship of Grid Supervisor Adam Aja and Square Supervisor Dana DePietro, and, of course, the diligent work of the volunteers who joined me in this endeavor.

Phase 23

After excavations this season enough additional material was discovered in the grid to warrant the re-designation of Pre-22 phasing as Phase 23 material, denoting the MBIIc/LBI transition. As such **L73.624**, the burial **L73.629** (identified just this year as a young female roughly 5'4" in height), and **L73.623** have been re-designated as Phase 23 material. Unfortunately, time constraints this season meant that no more material than last season could be removed from this phase.

Phase 22

Square 73 has been characterized as having tight stratigraphy, particularly in the northern half of the square, and this year's round of excavations proved it to be no different. Indeed, like other phase transitions in the area, the transition between Phase 23 and Phase 22 seemed just as tight.

Immediately following the deposition of **L73.623** the occupants seemed to have cut a large pit **F73.645**, the fill of which, **L73.644**, was composed of largely coarse sand and identified as Phase 22 by the predominantly LBII pottery it contained. The purpose of this pit is unclear but may be related to the founding of a large stone structure **F73.622** intersecting its bounds to the east. Such relationships should become more clear with the removal of both features. What is clear is that **L73.618** puts **F645** out of use. This occupational layer seems to have extended as far south as the cistern, around the cuts of both **FL73.602/603** and **FL73.592/593** as far west as the baulk, as far east as **L73.619** with which it formed a continuous occupational layer into the eastern baulk, and seems, after excavations this year, to run north underneath the founding of **F581**. Excavation of this material showed **L618** to be more pitted than previously thought. In addition to the cut and deposition of **F73.614**, occupants of this area cut a shallow temporary burning pit **F73.646** which soon filled with the ashy striations of **L73.647**. Upon **L618**, occupants also constructed a stone installation **F73.643**, located against the western baulk, of unknown purpose. It should also be noted that the post hole **F73.621** which cut **L73.619** contemporaneously with the other pits of **L618**, extended beyond what was thought to be its original bounds and as such was re-designated as a shallow pit **F73.634** which was soon filled by the ash and potsherds of **L73.635**.

Along the northern baulk, and most likely contemporary with **L618**, the occupational debris of **L641** accumulated. This layer of gray-brown silt with ashy inclusions was soon cut by a pit **F73.640**

that was lined with a plaster ring at its topmost elevation. It is clear from its fill **L73.639** that **F640** was used as a burning installation characterized by heavy ash deposits and blackened sherds from LBII cooking vessels.

After the occupation of the area in association with **L618** and **L641** it seems that the area north of the cistern in square 73 entered a new era of Phase 22 occupation dominated by the construction of an east/west wall **F73.581**. All other surfaces and features in the area seem to relate to this wall in some way for the remainder of Phase 22. **F581** also divides the area nicely into two distinct occupations either north or south of its bounds. As noted by Dana DePietro during the 2007 excavation season a leveling platform was created south of the wall prior to the occupational debris of **L73.616**. Excavation this year showed that this leveling also included a leveling fill **L73.642** immediately later than **L618** running along the west baulk all the way south to the cut of the cistern (**F586**) and deposited against the construction of **F581**. This brickly fill is similar in character to **L73.617** identified in 2007 and the two should be equated.

North of **F581** there seems to be a short-lived surface **L73.615** characterized by a compacted phytolith layer which put **F640** out of use. This surface seemed to lip up to **F581** and is most likely the first surface occupied contemporaneously with **F581**. Regardless, it was soon put out of use by leveling fills, **L73.638** to the east and **L73.633** to the west, which created a new sub-floor for the occupational debris of **L73.605** to accumulate upon. These fills are likely contemporary with the leveling operation done on the south side of the wall. As noted during the 2007 season, **L605** continued to be characterized by gray-white laminations with significant ashy inclusions. It extended both east and north of **F581**, and as far south as **F622** indicating that the entirety of the area was occupied for the same purpose without a clear delineation by a north/south wall north of the east/west extent of **F581**. **L605** also seems to bring Phase 22 occupation of the northern area of square 73 to a close.

Perhaps the most compelling question still to be answered by Phase 22 material in the north of the square is the relationship between **L618**, identified south of the wall **F581** and **L641** north of the wall. The desire to leave the material of **F581** floating for the remainder of the season meant any conclusions about the relationships between the two were tentative at best. If these two layers, with the removal of **F581**, prove to be contemporary, and even equal to one another, it would mean that there was some time where the area was occupied in its entirety and into square 63. This occupation would largely be characterized by a number of temporary and shallow burning installations and pits immediately following the Phase 23 burial.

Phase 21

For 2008, Phase 21 in square 73 was best represented by the excavation of **F73.630** and its fill **L73.631**. First identified as a silo in 2007 this feature/layer turned out to be a largely unremarkable shallow pit characterized by brickly fill. Cut from **L73.601**, it is contemporary with a new pit, **FL73.636/637**, identified in the northern baulk during the removal of **L605**.

Phase 20

While large scale excavations of Phase 20 material were mostly complete in 2007, it fell to the 2008 season to reduce the eastern and northern baulks shared with squares 74 and 63 respectively. The earliest occupation of this phase identified this season in the eastern baulk seems to be a partial tabun ring (**F73.642**) contained within the northern extant of the eastern baulk. This tabun seems to be put out of use by the deposition of **L73.548**. It was clear from vertical sherds against this new tabun ring that **L548** was deposited after the tabun had already been established. In addition the majority of ash was located inside the tabun rather than as part of the composition of **L548**. We also confirmed that the east/west Phase 20

wall, **F73.537**, founded on **L548** ended within the baulk and did not continue into Square 74. Finally, we removed the remaining material from **L73.530** which put **F537** out of use.

In the northern baulk the earliest occupational material removed during excavation this year was the cobbles of the north/south Phase 20 wall, **F73.536**. Immediately adjacent to the east we removed the tabun, **F73.549**. The majority of ash could be found within the limits of the tabun ring itself. It should also be noted that there did not seem to be any type of lined bottom. Rather, a smattering of blackened flat-lying sherds simply filled the bottom of the of the burning area. Immediately adjacent to the west of **F536** we removed the remaining material of **L73.565**. On the bottom most lamination of this surface we found a partial yet finely decorated Mycenaean 3c Stirrup Jar (**RP 10901**)

Conclusions

For the most part we were able to piece together the most important puzzles facing this season's excavation of square 73. We identified the relationships between **F581** and the surfaces surrounding it and cleaned up some of questions left unanswered by the haste with which we made for the MB burial in 2007. Though I strove to avoid any and all mistakes during excavations this season, mistakes were made. First, **F621** should not have been given a new feature number (**F634**) but simply redefined. In addition, **L615** south of **L633** and against the eastern baulk would have been more appropriately identified **L619**. Finally **L642** failed to appear on any top plan. As such, it can be best located in the section drawing of the western baulk.

That being said, there are a number of things to look forward to in square 73 for seasons to come. Indeed, a number of intriguing questions regarding stratigraphic relationships and phase transitions can be answered in coming seasons with the removal of **F581**. What is the relationship between **F622** and **F645** for example? Immediate value will also be found in observations of the Phase 22 occupation prior to the construction of the building that dominates its features. Specifically, What did the more temporary settlement of phase 22 look like in the area? Is there any evidence of Phase 22 structures prior to **F581**? Perhaps even more exciting is the potential information that can be gained regarding the character of the MBIIc/LBI transition. Are there additional burials located nearby our unadorned female? As such, it should be a top priority of seasons to come to excavate the full extent of **L623**. Indeed, excavations of MB material in grid 38 will could well give us a rare glimpse into the period's domestic context at Ashkelon. In addition, a number of relationships between squares 63 and 73 are unclear at this time and can only be answered by further excavations. And finally, the southernmost area of the square, left untouched this season, may yet yield answers to questions regarding the Phase 22/Phase 21 transition. Specifically, do we have Phase 22 silos in the southernmost part of the square rather than Phase 21, as was shown to be the case in a number of instances in Square 74 this season?

Grid 38 Square 74 Final Report
Dana DePietro

2008 marks the first full season of renewed excavations by the Leon Levy expedition to Ashkelon. Last year's trial and successful incorporation of several new methods and technologies such as the shift from paper records to the entirely digital format of OCHRE continue to bear fruit, however our most valuable resource remains the exceptional skill of our volunteers. It is with that in mind that I would like to thank Larry Largent, Elise, Andrew, Mark, Jessica, and Elise and Charity for their diligence, hard work and good humor, without which we would not have been able to accomplish our goals this season.

One of our primary objectives for square 74 this season was to gain a better understanding of how several of the Phase 22 Canaanite features we uncovered last season including the large plastered floor L74.1101 and wall F74.1129 relate to one another and to the later phase 21 layers and features which date to the probable Egyptian occupation of Ashkelon. Since this later phase is characterized throughout grid 38 by extensive pitting, silo construction and deep leveling cuts like F74.1127, much of the phase 22 architecture we uncovered this season was fragmentary or robbed out altogether. That said however, enough remained for us to reconstruct the relationships between several walls and floors from what we now believe to be an LB II courtyard-style house. Not only were we able to shed light on these features and answer a number of last seasons questions, but we also revealed a number of very intriguing Phase 23 features which we will now turn our attention to.

Phase 23

The beginning of Phase 23, which we have defined as everything predating our phase 22 structure, came in the form of a stratigraphic surprise: We would normally interpret the discovery of 74.1158/1171, a pit or silo which clearly cuts exterior courtyard surfaces L74.1122 and L74.1123, as yet another phase 21 silo cutting phase 22 surfaces. We quickly realized however that $\frac{1}{4}$ of the feature lies directly under the well defined SE corner our *phase 22* crushed shell plaster floor L74.1101. This raised a number of stratigraphic questions: Do we re-phase our floor and its associated features, or accept that some of the pitting and silo construction in grid 38 took place prior to phase 21 and 22? The latter conclusion made the most sense, especially after the further realization that pit/silo 74.1132/1133, which we had originally thought to be a phase 21 feature cutting L74.1114 was found to run underneath phase 21 wall F74.1134 at a much lower elevation. The fact that the point at which the pit runs under the wall has the same elevation as our phase 23 pits/silos and a sharp shift in pottery from LBII to MCIIB/LBI from this point on seems to indicate that much of what we originally defined as part of the fill of F74.1132, including a spectacular cache of over 100 worked and unworked flint blades (MC 57749/B #2192), was actually the settling of the lower pit, causing a depression in the layers above it [*Aja note: the pit edge was noted at a higher elevation and the plaster fill might be from the LBII Building; all pottery from the upper elevations was LBII*]. That said, the blades, while categorized as being from the phase 23 fill of F74.1132, are most likely from the phase 21 fill L74.1127 [*Aja note: typo?, possibly 74.1137?*] that covered it. This pit is interesting not only for its stratigraphic relations, but also in its construction. Lined in the north with a thin fragmentary layer of burnt mudbrick, and cut in the SE by small sand pit F74.1150, the pit was filled with loamy soil filled with kurkar rubble and and a tremendous amount of white crushed shell plaster chunks, some over 3 centimeters thick. Many of the larger plaster chunks lay flat against the pit's sides leading us to think they may have served a functional purpose, however many of the chunks lie at odd angles and within the fill, so it seems more likely that the pit was filled with soil that included the remains of a broken plaster surface like

L74.1101 that was thrown in from elsewhere. In attempting to find the bottom we also noted F74.1132/1133 tapers somewhat outward in a “bell shape” like other pits/silos elsewhere in the grid, but so far its construction and contents are totally unique. While we did not have time to excavate pit/silo 74.1158/1171 this season, nor the second pit/silo L74.1172/1173 which it was found on the last day and is cut by it, the discovery of both of these features has lead us to realize our reason for separating L74.1122 and L74.1123 was incorrect. We initially split the two in order to account for a sharp line and change in soil consistency running from well F74.424 in the SW to the NE and under plaster floor L74.1101. It now appears that the line is actually the NW edge of F74.1172, so it seems clear both L74.1122 and L74.1123 are a single layer that was cut by multiple features. Since both are cut by phase 23 features, these equated layers must also belong to phase 23 (or earlier) including pit F74.1125/1128 which they cover, and most likely posthole F74.1124 and unexcavated pit F74.1120/1121 which cut into them. F74.1125/1128 presented an additional challenge in that it was clearly covered by L74.1122 and could not have been cut from it. Since this lower pit needed a floor to be cut from and out upperlayers needed equating, we opened L74.1174 this season to resolve both issues. Layer L74.1119, also cut by F74.1158/1171, has consequently been rephased to 23, as has L74.1168, which is cut by pit F74.1132/1133. This rephasing is supported not only by all of the aforementioned stratigraphy, but by the fact that MBIC/LBI pottery was found in increasing amounts the further down we went. In examining the sections of pit F74.1090 in the north as well as foundation trench F74.519 in the NE, there is reason to suspect that a thick grey ashy layer observed in both may relate to a phase 23 surface running beneath our phase 22 architecture that is contemporary with L74.1119, L74.1168 and L74.1174. (all of which may now warrant collapsing into a single unit) This is an interesting question and one we hope to address next season.

Phase 22

By the end of last season, we had uncovered a number of phase 22 features whose relations were unclear to say the least. Foremost among these was the aforementioned crushed shell plaster floor L74.1101 in the NW quarter of the square that had been cut by pit F74.1105/1104 which contained 3 bowl-lamp-bowl deposits, and was contemporary with brown fill L74.1109 to the south. The floor's surface, which becomes patchy to the east and clearly slopes up to its SE corner, lead us to wonder about the possible remnants of a E-W closing wall to the east which we designated F74.1118 and the existence of a N-S robber trench running along its eastern side which we eventually designated F74.1111. Stones in this trench, as well as others in F74.1126 and F74.1129 to the east seemed to relate to one another, however it was unclear how. It was with great pleasure then, that we were not only able to answer many of these questions this season, but uncover several other walls, floors and features that relate to what we now believe is part of a phase 22 Canaanite domestic structure. To begin, we now know F74.1126 is indeed the stone foundation of an E-W wall that connects to the stones in F74.1111, however to the east as the wall approaches F74.1129, the foundation drops 2 courses of stone becoming tremendously compact and brickly before connecting with a hitherto unknown N-S running wall we have designated F74.1145. This new wall is of similar fieldstone fixed in mud plaster construction, and forms a NE corner with another wall we discovered this season, F74.1140. While F74.1140 is cut to the west by phase 21 pit F74.1108/1106, it seems clear that along with F74.1145, robber trench F74.1111, and F74.1126, the four form the north, east, west and south walls of a room. What is more, even though most of the room has been destroyed by phase 21 pit F74.1090, we were able to see a contemporary beaten floor/surface in its section which we designated L74.1157 after tracing it to the walls. It is possible the stepped/mudbrickly section of F74.1126 is a doorway into this room, and it should be noted that we encountered a large amount of compact mudbrick wash built up against the inner corner formed by F74.1140 and F74.1145. For the moment we have left this as part of phase 21

layer 74.1152 which lies on top of L74.1157, but it may be the remnant of a bench or some kind of mudbrick facing built up against the stone wall foundations. Thanks to pit F74.1108, which cuts wall F74.1140 to the east, we can see this wall has been preserved up to a height of 5 stone courses, as is the case for wall F74.1145. In each case, the first 2-3 courses of stone are large and irregularly placed while the lower courses are composed of 4-5 rows of smaller, more regular stones. In the case of F74.1140 and F74.1145, it appears these upper courses may be from a later phase of wall construction while the lower are almost identical in construction and elevation to the remnant of wall F74.1129 and indeed continue into sq.64 as wall F64.1098. While only a robber trench in sq. 74, it should be noted that F74.1111 also continues on into sq.64 as F64.1082. To the immediate east of wall 74.1140 we discovered a very well defined mudbrick line running along the wall's eastern edge. In retrospect, this brickline was most likely the topmost extant course of mudbricks in wall F74.1159 which extends eastward, is cut by well F74.60, and continues on the other side. Two mudbricks and what we took to be a large in-situ socket stone (MC 58901) that was a functional part of F74.1159 were found on the walls SW side, however later excavation revealed it was actually a huge fully pierced stone weight floating in the phase 21 fill above (L74.1165). Wall F74.1159 consists of a single course and row of rectangular mudbricks laid lengthwise across a fieldstone foundation. The stone foundations are slightly lower than those of F64.1098, however in both cases the lower stone foundations run to the NE corner formed by wall F74.1140 and F74.1145 where it seems the upper mudbrick superstructures of the first two were built up against the second two in a series of consecutive sloping layers, again, perhaps an indication of a later phase of construction or the reuse of earlier foundations. In the far NE corner of the square, F74.1170, a partial wall or stone installation which consists of a single curving line of stones running south from the eastern half of wall F74.1159, was uncovered and seems to enclose a higher surface with F74.1159 to the north and the square's eastern baulk. While the nature of this feature remains unclear (bin?), a sloping, rather uneven plaster/phytolith surface we have designated L74.1169 not only slopes up to meet it, but similarly meets walls F74.1129, F74.1145 and F74.1159 to the south, east and north, forming a second room in our structure and contemporary surface. While F74.1129 was one of the lowest walls overall, it still had at least 3 preserved courses of stones which were built up against F74.1145. F74.1129 is cut to the east by phase 21 "great cut" F74.1127- the abrupt ending of surface L74.1169 and a few residual stones extending east along what would have been the wall's northern edge shows the wall did indeed continue to the east. Given how deep the stone foundations run in adjacent walls, it is possible some stones may still remain below. This may be further evidence that the rooms are slightly terraced downward from west to east, a hypothesis also supported by the much higher elevations of phase 22 features in sq.73. A third room from the phase 22 structure can be distinguished south of wall F74.1126; here we found a series of laminated plaster floors not dissimilar from contemporary floor L74.1101 to the west. L74.1167 was the first of these layers, which runs south as far as the stones of F74.1118 as seen in a portion of the floor we encountered in last years probe and left preserved for this very purpose. This surface had a number of flat lying sherds upon it all dating to the LBII and was covered with a thin layer of occupational fill we designated L74.1164. Atop this fill another plaster floor was built, upon which we found many flat lying sherds, pieces of carved basalt left in-situ, and a small silver colored frit bead. This surface, which we labeled L74.1161, was fine gridded and flotation samples were taken from each. All surfaces end abruptly to the east and west where we assume there were closing walls, the robber trenches of which are F74.1111 to the west and F74.1160 to the east. Again, here we found quite a bit of hardpacked brown mudbrick material along the southern face of wall F74.1126, perhaps the remains of a bench, or more mudbrick facing like we've seen elsewhere in the square. Aside from a few MBIIC/LBI sherds, the pottery from these contexts dated entirely to the LBII and a significant increase in cooking pot sherds from these layers and features compared to other phase 22 contexts in the grid supports the claim the structure was indeed domestic in nature.

Phase 21

In phase 21 it appears our structure went totally out of use and its stone foundations were heavily robbed- Robber trenches F74.1111, F74.1138, F74.1153 and F74.1160 correspond to what would have been the upper courses of the west, south, north and east walls of the central room relating to phase 22 surface L74.1161. Directly above this surface was a light brown layer that put it out of use which we came down on at the end of last season designated L74.1117. This layer not only contained quite a few special finds including a mold made frit bead in the shape of a rosette and a worked carnelian stone in the shape of an eye, but we also discovered bits of bright blue and gold paint (samples also sent in)that appear to be fragments of painting on a mudplaster surface. This seems to be evidence of wall painting that collapsed along with the rest of the structure when it went out of use. This layer also contained two nicely serrated pressure-flaked flint blades and a fragmentary stone door socket. Since the latter was broken in antiquity and found mixed in the fill above the surface, we must assume it was not discovered in-situ, however, it may have been a part of the doorway formed by walls F74.1145 and F74.1129. Whatever the case, it is an important architectural fragment relating to our LBII structure. L74.1117 appears to have been open to the elements for some time in antiquity- a thin layer of sand and shells seem to have swept in on top of it as well as a fair amount of erosion appears to have taken place. North of robber trench F74.1153, the same can be said of L74.1152 which is cut by pit F74.1155/56 and has the same characteristics as L74.1114 and similarly puts a phase 22 surface of out of use, in this case, L74.1157. To the south across the probe we dug last season, L74.1146 lay at the same elevation as the other two and exhibited the same evidence of ancient erosion. Pottery coming out of all three fill layers dates to the LBII, and it is likely then that the three layers were contemporary. To the NE, later material which built up against the northern edges of walls F74.1140 and F74.1159 were excavated as L74.1154 and L74.1166 respectively. These layers appear to be contemporary with phase 21 fill layer L74.1165 which puts phase 22 surface L74.1169 out of use and contained further domestic finds such as a very small pierced whetstone (MC 58819) and a carbonized olive pit. The latter two fills were then further covered by what seems to be a thick layer of mudbrick collapse which we designated L74.1151. While only a small amount of pottery was found in this layer, we did recover an imported cowrie shell that serves as a nice illustration of the scope and variety of trade relations maintained by Ashkelon in the LB II.

L74.1151 may very well be the collapsed upper layers of wall F74.1159, whose initial mudbricks we found at about the same elevation as the top of F74.1140 but did not recognize as an abutting wall until the bricklines became clearer farther down. In any event, L74.1152 and part of wall F74.1145 were covered with compact ashy grey layer 74.1144. This layer was by all accounts a phase 21 surface which was cut by burning pits F74.1141/1147 and 74.1142/1148, both of which were covered by mudbrick and stone installation F74.1141. This mudbrick installation was uncovered below phase 21 fill L74.1114 and consists of a long mudbrick platform with a fieldstone foundation in the south that runs along the eastern edge of phase 21 pits F74.1108/1106 and F74.1090 which cut it to the west. There was some debate as to whether this feature was actually from phase 22 since it is clearly cut by phase 21 pits, however we still believe it to be an earlier phase 21 feature and not linked to the phase 22 wall F74.1140. It should be noted however that the mud bricks of this feature were built directly above the wall and may indicate reuse of the wall in a later period. It should also be noted that since the mudbricks of this installation did not show evidence of substantial burning, it is probably later addition built after the aforementioned pits went out of use. In any event, the entire northern area was then covered in fill L74.1114 which we excavated extensively last season.

In the south of the square, lies what might be a contemporary Phase 21 feature: a very short wall that has no immediately apparent relations to architecture elsewhere in the grid. Designated F74.1134, this wall fragment extends some 1.2 meters north from the center of the southern baulk. The foundation

of the wall was composed of medium fieldstones about 20cm in diameter, and atop the wall were the remains of a single course and row of mudbrick superstructure. The nature of this wall (fragment?) is rather interesting as there is no indication of a continuation in either direction- neither in the section of L74.1119 nor the northern section of Sq. 84. While the nature and relations of the wall remains unclear, associated surface L74.1146 slopes up to meet it from the east and produced a number of very interesting finds. Among them, a small white faience scarab (MC 58032) that had been chipped in antiquity, but clearly depicts on the verso a kilted standing figure (head missing) following what appears to be a uraeus serpent and “nb” sign below them. This find which dates to Dynasty 19 helps to confirm the solid LB II reading of the layer, as does the discovery of a complete Cypriot white shaved dipper juglet in the same general vicinity. Three fills separated from one another for practical reasons were built up around wall F74.1134: L74.1137, L74.1136 and L74.1135 to the west, north and east respectively. While aforementioned robber/foundation trench F74.1138 was indistinct at best, we were able to detect a slight color change running along the northern edge of L74.1137 that matched another running along the southern edge of the stones in F74.1118. F74.1118 may have also cut F74.1139, a very indistinct feature which we took to be a wall consisting of several medium fieldstones lying in a row, the continuation of which could clearly be seen in the northern baulk of Sq.84. It is possible this wall may relate somehow to the mudbrick wall F74.1134 and L74.1138 forming an interior area, however all of the stone cobbles were found to be floating upon a layer of very sandy soil and the construction methods appear to be different. L74.1137 was further cut by pit F74.1149/1150 which contained a thin bronze pin(?) some 25cm long. All of this southern area was then covered by phase 21 fills L74.1114 and L74.1089, the vast majority of which were excavated at the end of last season.

The latest features of phase 21 appear to be the extensive pitting of the area: Our so called “Great Cut” F74.1127/1113 from last season was found to cut almost the entire eastern third of the square including L74.1089, L74.1114, L74.1117, L74.1135, L74.1147, L74.1151 and wall F74.1129. Finds in the pit remained consistent with those from last season including several Egyptian beer jars, a rough stone bead (MC 57728), and basalt scraper stone (MC 57755) and after much trial and error, we believe we have now removed the fill of the cut in its entirety. Other pits from last season include F74.1130/1131 which cuts floor L74.1101 and pit F74.1110/1112, neither of which were excavated this season. We did however take pit F74.1108 down to its true bottom however, finding a loomweight, spindle whorl and quite a bit of Egyptian style pottery in the process. The same is true of pit F74.1090: Halfway through the season we discovered the true edge of F74.1090 which increases the pit's size by approximately 1/5. Fragmentary mudbricks along the edge of the pit indicate this feature may have been a silo similar to others found throughout the grid. In addition to a tremendous amount of LB II pottery including several Egyptian beer jars and many local imitations of Cypriot pottery,, we also discovered the right half of a sheep's skull and two fabulous bull horn cores, each over 30 cm long. These horns were found together and are reminiscent of the Cypriot “Horns of Consecration” that feature so prominently in LB ritual activity on the island. We also found that the pit had a partial plaster lining that only covered about 1/3 of the bottom. The rest has apparently been cleanly cut away by another pit which cut the lower surface. Another possibility is that the original pit line was the edge of a later pit which cut both the surface the earlier silo and its plaster floor- the fact that both our expanded pitline and lower cut plaster surface match up along the eastern edge would support this hypothesis, but we will have to wait until next season to better define these relations.

Byzantine:

This season we took down three courses of stone in well F74.60/61 in order to expose the sections behind them. Well construction was identical to earlier levels, however we observed a shift in its contents from loose light brown soil filled with medium cobbles (5-10cm) to a more compact, very ashy soil matrix filled with pottery. After the courses were removed, we began to cut back foundation trench F74.519. In doing so we recovered quite a bit of Byzantine pottery and were able to confirm that not only is there a single lower course of stone which forms the foundation of F74.1159 (now most

certainly a wall), but the foundation and mudbrick superstructure were cut by the construction of well F74.60 and continue to the east. We were also able to observe a substantial dark grey ashy layer that may bear some relation to L74.1119 and warrants further investigation.

Closing remarks and directions for future research

All in all, the 2008 season of renewed excavations at Ashkelon was a tremendous success and the progress made in square 74 was no exception. Not only were we able to meet this season's goals of better understanding the fills and layers associated with phase 22, but we were able to exceed them through the discovery of a number of phase 23 features that warrant further investigation next season. Like most successes however, there are missteps along the way that should be accounted for. We did not allow enough time at the end of the season to properly finegrid phase 22 surfaces L74.1167 and L74.1169; this should be a top priority at the beginning of next season along with the finegridding and removal of floor L74.1101. In terms of burning questions left unanswered, most revolve around understanding the nature of phase 23 and the transition from the LB I/MB IIC into phase 22 and the construction of our LBII domestic structure. Along these lines, the proper phasing of pit F74.1133 remains questionable, and the extent of phase 23 surfaces L74.1119 and L74.1174 should be investigated. As seen in wall F74.1140, Lower courses of stones may still exist in robber trench F74.1111, as well as continue eastward from wall F74.1129. As observed last season, floor L74.1101 also appears to have localized burning at regular intervals- could these be associated with burnt posthole L73.621 which shares the same elevation in square 73? All of these questions remain to be answered in seasons to come. With luck, we will have the same success in doing so as we did this season.

Grid 38 Square 75 2008 Final Report

Janling Fu and Laura Wright

PURPOSE AND GOALS:

The purpose of this season's excavation in square 75 was to continue to investigate the stratigraphic sequence on the eastern side of the street separating squares 75 and 74, and generally to remove the latest phase still left from the previous season. Entering into the season, this was understood to be the removal of Phase 18 layers and features, and the continued uncovering of Phase 19. Several specific items extant from 2007 required particular attention, including that of the relation of the street to the buildings and their surfaces: that is, ceramic typology of the sherds from the street appeared to be from Phase 20, while material from within the rooms belonged to Phase 18. An additional complication was the appearance throughout last season of late pottery (Phase 16-17) along the eastern borders of the square at an elevation equal to that of the rooms to the west. In general, excavation and delineation of features and layers in their initial stage proceeded much more quickly due to the state of preservation from their extensive covering with sandbags from the previous season.

As usual the achievements and progress of this season would not have been possible without the dedicated group of volunteers whose enthusiasm and laughter were a hallmark of the square. Holly Cook, Saby Cordoba, Whitney Evans, Emily Frank, Shona Glasgow, Kate Price, Nathan Staudiger, Nicki Wheeler, and Tabitha Marshall undertook their tasks with admirable diligence. Thanks are also due to Chris Anderson, Paul Cho, Kathryn Hooze and Mike Resig, who contributed their expertise, the latter two with Deland Wing in the capacity of architects.

The following report will give a phase by phase summary and analysis of the stratigraphic relationships uncovered in the course of our season progressing from earliest to latest.

PHASE 21:

The earliest phase encountered this season was Phase 21, which was limited to a probe conducted at the southern extent of the street. Excavation down to the Phase 20 foundation stones showed in section the great cut of the Late Bronze Age (**U451=L1113 F1127**), whose grey surfaces were clearly seen cut by the foundation trench of **W461, U464**. The height of these stones 17.889 matched closely the height of the foundation stones uncovered in square 64, 17.90, thereby establishing their corresponding nature, as well as demonstrating their phasing as 20.

The presence of Phase 21 immediately below gives a foreshadowing of the depths we need to continue to in the following season in order to finish excavating Phase 20 architecture.

PHASE 20:

At this point, our ascriptions within square 75 designate Phase 20 generally, as most of our Phase 20 material, except for the southern room (**Room 507**), are only to what we understand as the

grey mudbrick walls of this phase, and as of yet we have no evidence of different architectural elements marking distinct subphasing.

To the west of the two buildings, northern and southern, came the “street”, the natural barrier between squares 75 and 74. As mentioned, in order to lay the foundations for the Phase 20 walls, the surfaces of the Late Bronze Age great cut, were cut by the foundations of the walls (**U464**). The stratigraphically excavated probe done north of the south balk showed above the Late Bronze layer **U451**, the cobbles of **U450**, and above this the hard brown clay packing of **U449** (**U417=U413=U421**), which extends northwards the length of the square.

Within the southern building, the southern room forms a complete architectural unit of Phase 20 as a room bounded by walls **W440** (= **W461=W436**), **W343**, **W485** and **W403**. **W461** (= **W442**) has foundation trench **U464**, which on its western side bordering what becomes the street is filled with a significant layer of large sherds. **W343** on the southern side running into the balk, is interrupted by what we consider to be a threshold, which was filled in the succeeding phase (**U443**). To the east runs **W485** which is assumed to extend to the north into the central courtyard room. Forming the boundary between the southern and northern rooms of this building is **W403**, discovered last year. Within this room sitting upon **Floor 507** is the dark brown beaten earth occ. deb. layer **U482**, and a number of associated installations: a possible hearth **U504**, a mudbrick bench or shelf with stones formed in a partial circle **U503**, bin **U506**, and a huge bin **U481** of orange mudbrick four courses high. Together up to the top of **W436** this amounts to the sum of 10 courses in all of mudbrick.

Several distinctives of this room bear further mentioning. The foundation stones of **W461** are found considerably higher than the occ. deb. and floor, especially when considering the cut for foundation trench **U464** (**A08_16812**). These in turn are set higher above the floor surface than the foundation stones of **W343**. AJA has considered this to be decay relative to the Late Bronze Age building, into which the Phase 20 foundations were cut, thus explaining the differences in height, particularly of the foundation stones in relation to the inner surfacing. Although until now the number of small finds overall have been minimal, several significant objects rested upon occ. deb. layer **482**. Lying in a row were a complete Aegean cooking jug (**B. 3535**), next to it, the concentric circles of the negative of a basket (**MC 58920**) to the east, and the socket of a potter's wheel to the west (**MC 58827**). This room then may have functioned as a clean room away from exterior courtyard surfaces, and entered from the south. Chemical analysis of the cooking jug and basket may reveal additional light on the exact nature of activities here.

The room to its north is defined by walls **W436** (west), **W403** (south), wall **W460** (north), which marks the division between northern and southern buildings in the east, and presumably underneath **W296** of Phase 19, an extension of **W485** to the east. The floor has not yet been found for this room, although we expect it to be at a similar elevation as that of the southern room.

W460, although interrupted by the late Roman pit **F30**, can be seen to extend east halfway to the balk, where it may be that it corners south to meet **W401**, discovered last year. The feature **U400** that had been thought to be contemporary with **W401**, is now seen to be a trench, likely of a robbed out wall whether of Phase 20 or 18-19.

Immediately to the north of **W460**, in the northeast of the square is the corner of what seems to be an additional building whose walls run into the eastern balk and stop before the balk separating squares 65 and 75. The east-west wall **W492** is composed of grey mudbrick and is abutted by north-south wall **W454**, whose bricks have been cut into by the Phase 18-19 wall **W363**. A threshold may have existed at **U491**, where distinct mudbrick was lacking. It is notable that as late as Phase 17A a gap was present here between N-S wall **W103** and the northern balk.

PHASE 20 CONCLUSIONS:

Phase 20 in our understanding is characterized by its uniform building in grey mudbrick of standard size (54 x 43 x 22 cm), whose walls when fully excavated have been preserved to remarkable depth (showing up to 10 courses from the preserved reuse of **W440** and the bricks seen in **W403**). These walls have mudbrick superstructure sitting upon two courses of stone foundation (where evidenced so far). The associated floor **F1507** sits below the level of the foundation stones, contra the expected practice, and showing considerable expenditure of effort that was involved in the founding of these buildings. Installations include a large bin (**U381**) a shelf (**U503**), and a possible hearth (**U504**). While not yet excavated, we should expect ashy pits next to the hearth and possibly a pillar base, although the dimensions of the southern room may not require structural reinforcement. The associated pottery of Aegean cooking jug and monochrome (Myc IIIC:Ib) further substantiate this as the earliest occupation of the Philistines within square 75.

PHASE 18-19:

We have tentatively revised our assessment of Phases 18 and 19. In the 2007 season, our operative assumption had been that the eastern side of the street would mirror the phasing on the western side, and so have phase and subphase distinctions (18A, B, C and 19), which were accordingly reflected in the matrix and final report from last year. Nevertheless, this year's excavation, while showing arguably enough floors for separate phases, lacks sufficient distinctions in architecture to warrant at present a division between Phase 18 and Phase 19. As a result, we have relabeled these phases together, although bearing in mind the possibility of a future split should more architecture be found. We will begin this section with developments in the "street", followed by the southern building complex, the northern building, and then the east.

In this phase, the area of the "street" showed a progression, as first upon the brown courtyard fill of Phase 20 were placed a number of installations. To the west of the southern room, **U409** was a localized area of cobbling, matched in the north, adjacent to the northern building, of a similar area of cobbles **U418**, in which was found a rare, residual Late Bronze II Cypriot figurine, of bichrome with beak-like nose and eye, **MC58895**. This latter area was surrounded by three postholes **U428**, **U429** and **U430**, which effectively enclosed this space and marked it as having a separate function. A further patch of cobbling with five postholes was seen in square 65 (**65.188** with postholes **65.184**, **185**, **186**, **187** and **204**), leading us to suspect that we may have simply missed seeing the postholes in the south. These three areas probably were used as pens, perhaps of sheep and goats. In any case, their presence demonstrates that at this period, this area was still not a street. Above this brown layer was seen the clear grey laminations of the street proper (**U383**), when these earlier installations were covered over. Here a small, white, faience Eye of Horus amulet was found west of the northern building (**MC57816**).

In the southern room of the southern building, in order to prepare for the Phase 18-19 building, first the threshold was filled in with jumbled bricks (**U443**). Next, the floor and occ. deb. of Phase 20 were covered over with over a half meter of leveling fill (**U377=U496** within bin **U481**). The impetus for this may have been initial decay, as orange bricks which surely belonged to the bin at one point were strewn about, and incomplete from the sides. Besides this, there was little evidence of collapse from the roof or a second story. The deep layer of fill, which otherwise held little pottery, was consistent, as evidenced by the finding of a large portion of a hydria with mustache decoration and teardrop, a vertical and two horizontal handles (**RP10958**, **RP10924**), scattered in the fill towards the west. A nearly intact monochrome bell-shaped bowl (**RP10940**) was also found, along with sherds of a feeding bottle (**RP10925**) and a piece of Trojan Grey Ware (**RP10957**).

At this point there may have been a slight pause in construction, as evidenced by a posthole seen within **W461**; however, no doubt this was only temporary in the course of preparing for the Ph 18-19 building. Next, stone foundations with mudbrick superstructure were laid into the Phase 20 walls. **W341** of kurkar stones (with foundation trench **U448**) was fit with what seem to be two stages of construction with a significant layer of fill between them, clearly cutting into the south side of stub **U440**. **W296** was laid over **W485** to the east, and similarly, **W307** covered **W403**, leaving a gap on the eastern edge for a threshold. Then successively the Phase 18-19 floors were laid, **Floor 347**, from which a bulla with Horus hawk was found during cleaning (**MC57583**), occ. deb. layer **U356**, and **Floor 370**.

The northern room of this building underwent a similar progression. Next to the street, the wall **W354** constructed of fieldstones was cut into **W436**. A threshold (**U423**) was then built offering entrance from the west. North of this was the major east-west wall **W146** constructed of mudbrick with stone foundation (with foundation trench **U459**), that stretched across the square and could be seen to cut into the previous wall, with a large saddle quern in reuse as a cornerstone and leaving a sliver of visible mudbrick. To the east, there may have been two stages of building **W296** as yellow mudbrick orthostats—mudbricks placed vertically on their narrow edge—were integrated into construction of the wall (or integrated vertical bricks). This paralleled a feature seen on the western side of the street in square 84, where **Room 850** also had such paneling. Threshold **U475**, of two courses of small stones above which was mudbrick, was placed to the north of **W296**, and created an entrance to the east.

Within the interior of this room, leveling fill **U462** was laid over the yet to be excavated Phase 20 floor. Upon this fill were a small number of features—constructed bin **U432**, a pit cut from **U462**, **U452/3**. A second layer of fill **U433** covered this, near the top of which were a second Eye of Horus, this one of blue faience (**MC58017**), along with a bronze arrowhead (**MC58004**). Into this fill, was cut posthole **U438** containing a matching set of Aegean loomweights (**MC58044**, **MC58046**). Over this was laid the earliest Phase 18-19 floor **U392**, along with its associated features, caprid forelimb burial (**U393/4**), hearth **U390**, installations **U402** and **U323**, and bin **U369**, as discussed last year. Upon this floor in the northeast corner, were found a faience Bes-type amulet (**MC57858**), an ivory spindle whorl (**MC57784**), and a possible Horus child amulet (**MC58191**).

The northern building shared the use of **W146** to its south. To the west, stone wall **W198** (=65.200) with foundation trench **U431** covered **W437**. Installation **U418** extended slightly eastwards into the building, so that this area was open to the courtyard without. The north of this

building extends to wall **65.180**. The eastern extent of the building runs to north-south wall **W363**, which last season this had been interpreted as a bench with stone foundations. The unusual construction with stone is obviated once it is seen that this is what remains of a robbed out north-south wall. Moreover, the northern section shows floors reaching up to a Phase 18-19 wall, cut by the later Phase 17 floors which extend further to the east. The earliest floor arrived at this season was **Floor 474=U515=U514** (although **U514** needs to be checked at the beginning of the coming season in light of the new information given by the section). Upon this floor was built hearth **U422**, which was sherd-covered toward its northeastern end, and pillar bases **U478/9** and **U493/4**. The hearth in its current state shows repeated reuse, is centrally located for this room and can be seen to angle sharply downwards at its eastern end, arguing for a significant slope within the room. The stone drums of the two pillar bases line up in an east-west line west of the hearth. Additional features included the building of installations **U416** (mudbrick) and **U473** (stone), that effectively separated usage of the western half of the room into north and south as seen in the occ. deb. layer **U463** composed of kurkar. The eastern end of **U473** was interrupted by a later Phase 17B/C pit **U297**. A number of pits and postholes were cut into this floor: **U468/9**, **U455/6**, **U490**, **U465/6**, **U457/8**, **U513** and **U447**. **U491** may have been an open area, possibly a threshold that was later filled in.

Above this floor was a thin grey ashy layer of fill (**U424=U426**) that grew thicker towards the east and was likely used to even out the slope of the room in preparation for **Floor U335 (=65.118)**. Cut into this fill were several postholes and pits: **U419**, **U439**, **U411/2**, along with shell layer **U399**. Upon this floor was found a green faience amulet of Sekhmet (**MC57966**) nearby wall **W363**. To the west, several pits and postholes were cut into **U424**, including another caprid forelimb burial in hard-packed clay (**U405/6** paralleled by **65.189/90**), pit **U414/5**, and postholes **U420**, **U425**, and **U441**. The caprid burial, in close relation to **W146**, was found directly under a header brick of **U339**, signaling its contemporaneous functioning with that feature. Above this, as discussed in 2007, was laid floor **U365** with associated infant burial **U372/3**, hearth **U362**, and bin **U339**. The greater build-up of surfaces on the western half of the building, along with the kurkar surfacing immediately north of **W146**, indicate more frequent activity in this area as is additionally supposed from its nearness to the street.

To the east, in the northeast of the square, lies another building of which only the southwest corner lies in the square. Given the overall slope of the square downwards to the east, where there exists a slope of some 25-30 cm, it is understandable that we have only now reached the first floor of Phase 18-19, **Floor 484**, which appears to reach towards a wall in the west, **U363**, as well as **W492**, reused in this period. **U491** probably functioned as a threshold between this building and the west, as no mudbricks are apparent there, although the impressions of two large headers (stone?) with a mortar line between, are seen. Given the usage of the other buildings in Phase 18-19, we should expect a multitude of pits and postholes to be found in the coming season, along with its extension into square 65.

We have not yet reached the subfloor fill in the eastern building complex of the southern building, although we do have a number of architectural features. The boundaries follow **W296** to the west supplanting **W485**, **W146** to the north built over **W492**, with an eastern wall just within the balk. This room appears to have been further subdivided, with yellow brick wall **W483** attached to the north of Phase 20 reused **W401**. Wall **W517**, although not discerned yet with certainty, was also added onto **W401**. At the northern edge of the junction between **W517**

and **W483** was found a Bowl-Lamp-Bowl of two carinated bowls with concentric circles, the top one placed upside down, with a white-slipped lamp pointed west, functioning as a foundation deposit (**U488/9**, **RP10989**, **RP10988**, **RP10990**). The nature of **U400** is currently unclear, although it is likely a robbed out wall, possibly of Phase 18-19. This area will require considerable attention in the coming year. The earliest floor found **Floor 444** was only uncovered at the end of the season and will be finegridded at the beginning of the coming season of excavation. Along the edges of this area benches **U374** and **U446** were built upon this floor—that the latter bench extended, along with **W460**, only partly towards the east before stopping before the balk, suggests that there may have been an extension of a north-south wall connecting to **W401**. In the interior space of the room formed by the junction of **W483** and **W401**, bench **U434** was also placed next to wall **W483** and sitting upon this surface, the construction of which was of vertical bricks at the southern end with rubble fill inside to the north. Additional features include bin **U445** adjacent to the eastern balk, bin **U501**, set against **W483**, and bin **U502** set in the northwest corner of the room. A number of pits and postholes were cut from surface **U444**: pits **U486/7**, **U497/8**, in which was found half a bichrome vessel with an unusual double-ridged handle (**RP10969**), and **U510/11**, which has the distinct greenish complexion of a pit used for waste; and postholes **U500**, **U509** and **U512**. One further feature, probably later in origin, is the discovery of an animal warren running west to east, stopping at a small posthole, and then north again.

Placed immediately above this was grey ashy floor **U358**, which had first been discerned last year. **U358** was laid over **W483** and **W517**, along with the remainder of the layers and features within the interior of the room, although it remained in association with **W401**, **U374** and **U446**. Bin **U381**, rebuilt in the vicinity of **U445**, and bench **U384**, which now can be seen to have three courses of brick in the eastern balk, were constructed on **U358**, and pit **U471/2** and posthole **U470** were cut into this floor.

PHASE 18-19 CONCLUSIONS:

In general, Phase 18-19 was characterized by leveling fills of great heights where these have been found (**U377**, **U433** and **U462**), that covered the Phase 20 architectural elements, with reuse of the Phase 20 walls as the foundation and blueprint for the new buildings, with the cutting in of mudbrick walls on stone foundations of **W341** and **W354**, or simple replacement with **W198**, **W146** and **W363**. The predominately long, grey bricks of Phase 20 were replaced with shorter, squarer yellow or tan bricks (i.e., **U483**, **U296**). Architectural features include hearths (**U422**, **U362**, **U390**), pillar bases with their associated pits (**U479/80**, **U493/4**), bins (**U445**, etc.), thresholds (**U491**, **U475**, **U423**), and benches (**U446**, **U374**, **U434**), with a further architectural technique infrequently used of so-called integrated vertical brick construction (**W296** and **U434**). The subdivision of space appears to be a preliminary feature of construction as shown with the division of **U473** and **U416**, along with new walls **W483** and **W517**, although, given the preservation of the basic lines of the buildings, this may simply be due to our not having excavated down to the next level of walls. Furthermore, burials of infants (from the previous season) as well as caprid forelimbs (**U405/6** and **U393/4**) appear to be a common practice in association with the foundation of walls, along with the use of bowl-lamp-bowl deposits (**U488/9**). Phase 18-19 was additionally characterized by the use of pits and postholes, and the use of outdoor courtyard space (**U418**, **U409**, etc.).

The 2008 season in square 75 revealed a plethora of small finds that imply a continuum of Egyptian influence at Ashkelon during Phase 18-19. This can be chiefly seen in the inordinate amount of amulets, along with the bulla, bearing Egyptian motifs, which were largely found in the northern building and the northern room of the southern building. The relative lack of finds in the southern room and of the eastern complex may be ascribed to the lack of depth achieved in the east given the sloping nature of the square, which explains the presence of late pottery, and in the southern room, through different usage, as indicated also by its relatively clean nature. This supposition is strengthened given the similarity of the features between the northern building and the northern room of the southern building, which share the commonalities of caprid burial, infant burial and hearth.

At the beginning of this summary, it was stated that in the absence of firm evidence supporting two separate phases between 17B/C and 20, we decided to conflate Phases 18 and 19. However, this is not to suggest that no evidence exists. Should additional architectural changes come to light in the coming season, the following considerations would require further thought:

1. An abundance of floors at present exist within the northern room, although fewer are present in the central and southern room.
2. Our excavation of **W341** we detected what appears to be a change in building construction between the upper courses of foundation stone, and the lower. The upper two courses were set slightly off the orientation of the stones below, so that the wall appears bowed. Their removal at a level discernible from the section of the wall, additionally showed an exceptionally flat stone surface on the east. Both of these factors would weigh in favor of a construction in two stages and thus, of an 18/19 distinction.
3. The northern room has a series of hearths **U362**, **U422**, with the latter also in its amorphous shape appearing to be a rebuild.
4. The eastern room's progression from **Floor 358** to **444**, if both are correctly phased as 18-19, shows the possible building or rebuilding of features in similar orientation and placement (i.e., **U381** and **U445**, **U467** and **U501**).
5. The progression from the integrated vertical brick (IVB) construction of the central courtyard room to the course above it in **W296** looked to be of a different stage (and presumably distinguished from what should be the walls of Phase 20 below **W485**).

It is to be expected that in the coming year, the remainder of Phase 18-19 will be removed, with attention placed upon the eastern and northeastern rooms, with their floors, at the beginning of the season.

PHASE 17:

Although we maintain distinctions between Phase 17A and 17B/C, in the following they are placed together due to the interlocking nature of what is being discussed.

Within square 75, it was believed that excavation of Phase 17 had finished, however a number of features showed themselves to continue to belong to this phase. In the northeastern corner, **W260** had been rephased in the previous season to 18A, and appeared demonstrably

earlier than the Phase 17A wall **W103**, which can be seen in section to rest against it. In making this switch, we had done so *contra* the observations of the original excavators in 2000, who felt that **W260** was a later buttressing feature. From further to the north in square 65 came clear evidence this year that **W65.79** (= **W103**) was earlier than **W65.111** (= **W260**) based on the plastering of its eastern side, and thus substantiating the claims made in 2000 for the relationship between **W103** and **W260**. Its restoration to 17B/C and forming a room with contemporary walls **W146** and **W82** and reused in 17A with **W116**, and buttressing wall **W103** is based on the presence of later Iron I pottery (Phase 17) and argued by the stone foundation for **U363**, which would be rare for a bin and thereby implies the existence of a robbed out N-S Phase 18 wall. Further evidence from the northern section with square 65 confirms this analysis, as two separate lenses can be detected, the second cutting the first in the east, which implies that the Phase 18 wall was further to the west of the 17B/C wall, which fits the stones of **U363**. Given this interpretation, then several units should be rephased in accordance with this, including firepit **U397/8** and shell surface **U399** (= **65.L155**). Pillar base **U382** also better belongs within Phase 17, as, if functional, it would stand within the center of this room, and additionally had been extant, though unlabeled, at least from the 2000 season as indicated in photos.

To its east, **W260** whose regular courses of cobble foundation is unusual in its higher quality construction, then likely formed a separate building as wall **W309** adjoined it, with foundation trenches **U477** and **U480**, respectively, placed with fill **U476**, which covered the entire extent. Reaching both walls was the beautifully white-plastered floor **410**, still discernible in section, and covered by subfloor fill **U376** and which clearly lay beneath bench **U308**. With the rephasing of **W260** this northeastern room is rephased to Phase 17A.

In the southeast area, **U360** had been defined as a brown, compact, beaten earth floor sitting above floor **U358**. However, excavation revealed several sherds of burnished ridge bowls (BRB) *in situ*, which primarily appear in Phase 16 at Ashkelon, but were plausibly assumed to continue into Phase 17. Thus, **U360** was reinterpreted as a 17B/C deep fill layer placed immediately above the Phase 18 floor in preparation for the construction of the Phase 17B/C walls **W292**, **W105**, **W138** and **W179** and ultimately, floors **F222** and **F223**. Over the course of the season, **U360** was considered to have been removed in its entirety, although several buckets were placed here (i.e., in the north) when what had been originally thought to be mudbrick was upon closer inspection found to have been partial mudbrick over fill. As this sits on the other side of units **U407** and **U408** (renumbered from **U378**), then these too should be preliminarily considered 17B/C along with posthole **U435** (a single Persian sherd was found in B. 3134 of **U407**, although given the proximity to the balk, easily explainable).

In the northern room, pit **U427** (= **65.99-100**), whose line had been noted the previous season, was excavated fully, and is phased as 17A following square 65.

PHASE 17 CONCLUSIONS:

Overall, we had considered all elements of Phase 17 to have been removed prior to this season. Nevertheless, the work done in square 75 in 2008 has made a significant contribution to our understanding of Philistine domestic architecture. Chief among these was the relationship between **U358** and **U360**, which we now understand to be Phase 17C fill placed over 18 floor.

Other than this characteristic of domestic building, other notable features are the presence of benches (**U308**), the plastering of floors (**U410**), the later addition of buttressing walls (**W260**), and at times the construction of wall foundations using several courses of a cobble bedding of roughly uniform stones (**W260**), leading to the interpretation of **Room 410** as being part of a more important, and thus perhaps administrative building. In general, the reuse of domestic space in square 75 in this phase, and throughout its existence in the Iron I, is a remarkable trait of the buildings on the eastern half of the street, where the lines of walls and the partitions of rooms and buildings follow upon one another in phase after phase.

PHASE 4-5:

Roman pit **F30** continued to remain in the center of the square providing an additional section when warranted, although was not excavated substantively, and was both undercut and overcut when done so, as shown after sweeping for final photos.

Grid 38 Square 83 Final Report

Jonathon Wylie

The 2008 activity in 38.83 revolved primarily around two points of interest: First, the Egyptian garrison wall F 618 and second, the area to the north of it. To be more specific, we began the season with specific questions regarding the extent of the Egyptian wall and its relationship to other architecture, namely the “revetment wall” F566. The area to the north of F 618 was another area of interest as we sought to understand better the exterior surface L 632 and the pits and silos cut into it. With the careful, diligent, and steady work of two excellent volunteers, Craig Boyer and Beth Snyder, we have successfully answered these two important questions and helped to bring new data to phases 22, 21, and 20.

Phase 22

We did minimal work in Phase 22 this season in 38.83. The only new units we added to this phase is L663, a surface on the south side of the Egyptian garrison wall F618. This surface runs below the wall, and therefore cannot be contemporary with it. Unfortunately, we cannot relate it to any other layers or architecture because everything was removed by the probe L629.

Phase 21

Phase 21 received the vast majority of our attention this year. As we move into phase 21, it seems that perhaps we ought to consider adopting two sub-phases of 21. After excavating the material immediately to the north of F 618 we found two pits (F658/L659 and F664/L665) partially covered by F618. This would indicate that these pits are earlier than F 618, and are therefore phase 22. There are, however, problems with this. If 632 and 644 are contemporary, then the pits are 21 because they are cut into these layers. Perhaps we should call the wall phase 21A and the pits phase 21B. The other option is to move them to phase 22, but that would mean we have no phase 21 layer for L618 to sit upon.

All the other units opened this year in 38.83, with the exception of F660 are phase 21, and most of them were opened in our efforts to understand better F618. To the south of the wall we opened and excavated L661 and 660 [*Aja note: typo? Possibly 662*], both fill layers. To the north of F618 in our attempt to learn about the relationship between F618 and the revetment wall F566 we opened L656 and L657. L656 was just a row of sloping mudbricks descending from the northern face of the tower of F618 down to L632. It was created simply for tighter control over the excavation, and amounted to nothing more than winter-wash and eroded bricks. I believe this decayed brick material may have been part of F566. The fact that the stone foundation of F566 did not run beneath this brick material may suggest otherwise. The other possibility is that this material was the accumulation of eroded bricks from F618. I find this explanation to be less likely because a) the square has been well-kept in recent years, and 20 cm of decay would seem excessive and b) the northern face of F618 is quite well preserved, which suggests there has been minimal erosional activity.

The other tasks we had in phase 21 were the excavation of a small pit, F653/L654, and the excavation of a silo, F638/L655=L643. The small pit F653/L654 was cut into L632 and contained the base of a jar. The silo F638/L655 was also cut into L632 and yielded a number of interesting artifacts, not the least of which were a ceramic mold for casting bronze blades and a number of LB bichrome potsherds. One other important point to note about this silo is that we over-cut it, and as a result exhumed a significant amount of MB II C/LB I pottery. This indicates that there was MB activity in this area.

Phase 20

We dealt with just two units from phase 20. F660 was a row of mudbricks on the south side of

F618 just above the phase 21 fills L661 and L662. It was only one course by one row. The important thing about this feature is that it was not part of F618. The bricks color of the bricks were different, and appeared to be Philistine. Moreover, the fact that there was only one course of bricks here reveals that they were laid upon L661, not L644 as the garrison wall was. This is clearly a later construction than the garrison wall.

The other phase 20 feature that earned our attention was the pit F651/L652. This pit had previously been considered a phase 21 feature, but a re-examination of it in the western baulk shows that it is definitely cut from a higher layer than L632, and that it is therefore phase 20. The pit itself turned out to be quite interesting. It had a pile of stones coming out of the southern side, and another pile extending from the northern side. The fill inside it was very sandy with kurkar pebbles and a yellow-green tint. We found minimal pottery or bone in this pit,¹ which suggested that it was not a garbage pit. In addition to these characteristics, a number of people noticed a distinct smell in the pit. All these clues led us to the clear conclusion that that F651/L652 was a toilet pit.

Concluding Remarks

The 2008 season in 38.83 was extremely successful. Perhaps our biggest success was that we were able to provide very helpful contributions to our understanding of the Egyptian garrison wall by revealing the limits of the northern and southern faces of the tower and by articulating its bricks. In addition to that, we made a contribution to the research of the LB silos so prevalent in grid 38. Lastly, we were able to make a small contribution to the study of Philistine sanitation in our excavation of F651/L652.

If 38.83 continues to be excavated in future seasons, the next tasks I would recommend would be first to remove the remainder of the un-excavated pits. I also believe more inquiry could be done to answer the question of the precise phasing sequence between phases 22 and 21. That is, should phase 21 be split into 21A and 21B? An answer to this question may require the removal of F618. After those tasks and questions are completed and answered, the next task I see would be to look for more LB or MB architecture to confirm whether there was or was not settlement in grid 38 during those periods.

1 The pottery we did find was Iron I, which supports our decision to put this pit in phase 20.

Grid 38 Square 84 Final Report
Philip Johnston

Our objective this season was to test the hypothesis that the phase 22 exterior fills and pits discovered in 2007 are the earliest occupational remains to be found in the square. In order to accomplish our goal we continued to excavate the 2x10 meter probe along the west baulk which was begun in 2007, with the intent of quickly dropping it to bedrock. As we moved past phase 22 in this probe, however, we were pleasantly surprised to find evidence of a phase of domestic occupation in 38.84 earlier than any other at our site, to date. We began to excavate it, and have preliminarily dated this Phase 23 occupation to the MBIIC/LBI. In addition to this probe, we also worked to expand our understanding of phase 21 by excavating two silos which had not been treated in 2007 (**F1143**, and **F1148**). I am naturally much indebted to the assistance of my dedicated volunteers, Paul Cho, Ben Boyle, and Elizabeth LaVigne, without whom this season's discoveries would simply not have been made.

Phase 23

The dimensions of the probe along the West baulk make it difficult to speak synthetically of the phase 23 occupation. So far we have only glimpses of domestic occupation and architecture which will require further exploration in future seasons. Nevertheless, what we did expose shows that 38.84 was probably used for outdoor grain processing as in later phases 22 and 21, and also for other activities whose precise nature has yet to be determined.

The earliest Phase 23 material consists of a single wall running East to West (**F1176**) with occupational material to the north and south of it. To the south of wall **F1176** an installation (**F1201**) was constructed, possibly on an outdoor fill/surface (**L1210**) although the relationship between **F1201** and **L1210** has not yet been confirmed through excavation. **L1210** was cut by the shallow pit **F1208/L1209**. To the north of **F1176** a layer composed of ash and debris (**L1205**) was laid down, possibly as sub-surface fill for several occupational strata (**L1183**, **L1182**) which built up against the north face of wall **F1176**. The relationship between **L1205** and **F1176** has not yet been explored. In the northernmost part of the probe, **L1205** was cut by a small stone lined pit (**F1206**, **L1207**) of unclear function and another much larger pit **F1141/L1142** which lies mostly within square 83. A compact beaten earth floor (**L1204**) was laid nearby, subsequently covered by a very hard and relatively clean layer of occupational debris (**L1203**).

After this initial occupation around **F1176**, activity in the area seems to have concentrated to the south for some time. Installation **F1201** collapsed, resulting in bricky layer **L1177**, and an ashy lamina (**L1186**) came to rest above this collapse layer, and to the south of it over parts of **L1210**. After the collapse of **F1201**, pit **F1198/L1199** was dug through **L1177**, **F1176** and **L1182**. As **L1210** went out of use, it was cut by shallow pit **F1208/L1209**. Soon afterwards the immediate area was converted into an installation consisting of rammed earth bin 'walls' **F1192** and **F1193**, and a posthole **F1195** at the corner of the installation. As the installation was used, **L1194** accumulated, occasionally calling for the reinforcement of **F1192** as **L1194** tended to spill over it. A tabun (**F1190/L1191**) was installed just north of this installation, which may have been used for grain processing, a conclusion buttressed by the fact that **L1194** seems to contain a considerable amount of floral material (this still needs to be confirmed by flotation results). Meanwhile pit **F1188/L1189** was cut into **L1177** and **L1210**, and **L1200** built up to the north of **F1193**. To the north, **L11203** and **L1204** seem to have been disturbed as a thick bricky fill **L1181** was laid down over **L1205** beneath a thin clayey surface **L1180**. A grey fill, **L1179**, was laid down to level the area between **L1177** and **L1181**. **L1180** did not see very much activity, or at least none which was evident in the archaeological record.

At the end of Phase 23 (or the beginning of Phase 22) the area was leveled to the height of **L1180** which apparently remained exposed until the end of Phase 22 and the deposition of **L1135**. In order to accomplish this leveling, **L1173** was deposited over the southern part of the probe, after installation **F1187** was constructed over **F1190**, **F1195** and **F1192**. **L1178** was laid between **L1181** and **L1173**.

Phase 22

Our understanding of Phase 22 in 38.84 did not change significantly this season, and the only remains from Phase 22 in our probe consisted of plaster-lined silo **F1150/L1151**, and adjoining pit **F1196/L1197**, cut into fill **L1173** and **F1187**. Only a fragment of pit **F1196** was excavated, since it was not distinguished from the fills it cut through until late in the season, and most of it lies to the West in square 83. Our work this season suggests that Phase 22 was relatively brief and saw activity similar to that of later Phase 21, but on a lesser scale, and with fewer efforts made to create a level, outdoor work space. Perhaps a precursor of the Phase 21 brick-lined silos such as **F1133** can be found in silo **F1150** together with feature **F1187**: **F1187** may have been constructed as a surface platform with the intent of cutting a silo into it – this brick surface would have safeguarded the silo's edges from erosion. Phase 22 was not excavated anywhere else in the square this season.

Phase 21

The main efforts in Phase 21 this season were excavation of courtyard fill **L1135** in the probe, and of silos **F1133/L1134**, **F1143/L1164**, and **F1148/L1149** in the northern half of the square.

At the beginning of phase 21, **L1135** was laid down to level the area in the western half of 38.84. In time silos **F1133/L1134** and **F1143/L1164** were cut into it. Clear phytolith layers at the bottom of both of these silos attests to their function as grain storage installations. At the end of Phase 21, the association of 38.84 with outdoor food processing seems to have been lost, and trash heap **L1128** was dumped just south of **F1133** and **F1143**, which were backfilled (by **L1134** and **L1164**, respectively). Directly above **L1128** the first three courses of a well planned but poorly constructed Egyptian fort wall were laid down, and for unknown reasons (although we may speculate as to a sudden arrival of the Philistines and the hasty departure of the Egyptians overseers) construction of the wall stopped.

Contemporary to **F1133** and **F1143**, silo **F1148/1149** further to the east also bears phytolith residue attesting to its original function. It's larger size relative to its western neighbors may have made it a tempting dumpster when the silos were backfilled, however, and consequently **F1148** was used as a recipient for a jumble of bricks, damaged pottery, and animal remains (including the pelvis of a small cow or sheep). Partial burning suggests that other trash of a more transient nature was also disposed of in the pit, which seems to have laid open a while yet as some wash accumulated in a northern corner between some of the bricks. After a while deposition of backfill **L1149** continued, however, and again the large pit was used to dispose of various unwanted things, including some kraters, cooking vessels, and three whole dogs, one of them decapitated when it was thrown into the erstwhile silo. After this, the pit was finally filled up completely and covered by bricky cap **F1162**, and then courtyard **L1094**, marking the end of Phase 21.

Conclusion

It is clear from this season's work that we have not yet finished with square 84. Whereas we began the season looking to confirm that further excavation in the area would be uninformative, we ended up stumbling upon the earliest domestic remains yet discovered at Ashkelon. While we were not able to extensively expose these Phase 23 remains, resulting in a present understanding which is somewhat fragmentary, what has been revealed thus far suggests that future seasons will be very informative indeed. In addition to our work in Phase 23, we also added to our knowledge of Phases 22 and 21 through the excavation of several silos from each phase, strengthening the idea that 38.84 was devoted to outdoor processing and grain storage for much of the LB2.

We should also note a discovery which occurred on the periphery of the square's main objectives for the season, but which promises to contribute much to the broader understanding of the site: A small seal inscribed with three characters (probably Cypro-Minoan) was found during excavation of the northern baulk on the second day of excavations, in L799.

Grid 47 Square 54 Final Report 2008

Ashkelon Excavations, The Leon Levy Expedition

by Ryan Boehm and Rachel Bar-Nathan

1 Season Objectives and Overview

We intended to advance several research goals by initiating new excavation in Grid 47. First, by opening a new square in the area of John Garstang's fairly extensive excavations from the 1920s, we hoped to clarify the sequence and dating of the later (post-Roman) phases in this area, which were largely undocumented during his excavations, and also to begin work that would ultimately clarify the plan, date, and function of the monumental building uncovered during his excavations. Excavation in this area will also serve the purpose of exposing some of the monumental architecture in this area for preservation alongside the remains in Garstang's open-air museum. In order to accomplish these goals, we opened a 10x10m square in an area adjacent to Garstang's open-air museum, plotting it in such a way that it would incorporate a section of Garstang's trench in a place where it was really a narrow probe east from his main area of excavation (see Garstang's plan in *PEF* 1924), as well as incorporating a significant amount of unexcavated material. This strategy would allow us to orient our excavation on his plan by excavating his backfill quickly, while also getting a clear section on the unexcavated area, and to clarify the sequence of the later phases sitting on top of the monumental structure excavated by Garstang.

Over the course of excavation we encountered several difficulties that prevented us from fully realizing our plan. First, the inaccuracy of Garstang's plan, meant that our square was not located precisely where we had intended, which meant that we only caught the very corner of his trench and could not dig his trench first. Second, the sheer volume of material from the area, both of pottery and material culture, significantly slowed progress and led us to decide to excavate only the area that was roughly the western half of the square after the second week. Nevertheless, our season has provided a good sequence of later phases not apparent in Garstang's area, while also reaching a wall of the original apsidal building that almost certainly connects with one of the main walls from Garstang's plan.

I would like to thank all the volunteers, whose hard work and diligence made a successful season possible: Leah Brown, Sarah Hoffmann, Erik Lindemann, Jessica Calhoun, Thomas Strobel, Alter [], Ben Felker, and David Zivnaska.

I would also like to thank the workmen from Grid 47, without whose tireless effort moving so much dirt would not have been possible.

What follows is a brief summary and analysis of the phases and main stratigraphic relations encountered over the course of the season intended to orient future researchers or excavators.

2 Phase 6

The earliest phase of our square is represented only by **U67**, a monumental curving wall exposed in the deepest area of our excavations. The wall appears to be the continuation of the inner apsidal wall visible in the area of Garstang's excavations, which is oriented along the same curve at precisely the same elevation. The construction of

these two walls, composed of good ashlar facing stones and a rubble core, also seems identical, although the limited exposure of our wall and the fact that most of the top of it is still covered with concrete makes this comparison somewhat tentative. **U59**, which was sandy with rubble, appears to be simply part of the wall where the cement has been broken and the rubble core is exposed. The wall is very closely abutted by a wall of a later phase (**U57**) to the north, and by the unexcavated material below wall **U33**, both of which appear to built along the same orientation as **U67**, and, at least in the case of **U57**, appear to have used **U67** as a guide for constructing another apsidal structure above the remains of the earlier phase of building. Phase 6 seems to represent the building of the Roman period; however, since we were only able to expose the top of the wall due to the closely abutting walls and the time constraints of the season, there is no real information available as to the date or function of this phase as yet.

3 Phase 5

As mentioned above, Phase 5 represents the next period of building from the Byzantine period, with large curving walls that appear to be oriented along the same or similar lines as the preceding phase. The principle features of this phase appear to be the large curving wall in the very south of the square **U15** and the large cement wall **U57**, **U65** and **U66**. **U15** is a large curving wall constructed of kurkar ashlar with cement between courses. This was one of the first things we encountered in the season, as the wall was preserved almost to the level of topsoil and is still not yet floating at elevation 20.97. This wall again appears to be the continuation of a much less-well preserved curving wall visible in the area of Garstang's excavations, which does not appear on his plans, and is only in a decent state of preservation in the W end of his trench, making it somewhat unclear whether this wall is on the same line as our **U15**. In our square, **U15** extends from the W baulk to the half-square mark where we stopped excavating. The eastern half of the wall is partially robbed-out by robber trenches **U7** and **U26**.

U57, **U65** and **U66** at this point all represent somewhat-differentiated areas of the same feature, which is a massive cement wall or platform of roughly the same elevation, but undulating and dipping and in places poorly preserved, so that much of it does not seem to represent a good surface, but rather compressed cement from collapse or robbing over what may be distinct walls or other features of some kind. **U57** on the southern side appears to be a wall abutting **U67**, with courses of drafted stone visible and covered over on the top with cement, forming a fairly level surface, but, moving to the north, even though the cement surface is unbroken, it becomes much less level and there are large lumps and a very large ashlar emerging from the surface. This area was below a large amount of rubble (**U45**) and due to its more poorly preserved surface, it was distinguished from **U57** and designated **U66**. At its northern extent, **U66** is cut by **U35**, a phase 4 wall, and **U14**, Garstang's trench. **U65**, Which is also connected to **U66** and **U57** forms an abrupt corner with the material of **U66** in the area of probe dug in the NE part of the square. Here there was a sandy fill surrounding the feature on all sides(**U50**), and just below that a very poorly-preserved shell surface that may be a floor (**U64**), which seems to reach **U66** on its eastern side. The interpretation of **U65** is at this point difficult due to its limited exposure (it continues into the section in the southern part of the probe and to the west dives into unexcavated material). **U65** does not appear to be the same wall as **U57**, and it also appears to be better defined as some kind of feature, as opposed to **U66**.

Overall, **U57** seems to follow clearly the orientation and curve of wall **U15**, suggesting that these are part of the same construction, with **U66** and **U65** somehow related.

U52, situated between wall **U57** wall **U33**, appears to be intact layer of occupation debris from the Byzantine period, probably contemporary with the use of the structure represented by the phase 5 walls. It was a dark, somewhat ashy, layer with many partially intact or restorable vessels, particularly Gaza wine jars. There was also a fair amount of rubble at the surface of this layer. **U47**, initially distinct from **U52** was later decided to equate to **U52**. Below this layer was a sandy yellow fill (**U62**) immediately on top of wall **U67**. These units were both cut by the foundation trench (**U60**) for wall **U33**, and possibly to the west they were also disturbed by the fill of **U44** and **U51**, fill associated with the preparation of wall **U33** and belonging to phase 4 construction.

South of wall, **U15** the phasing and stratigraphic relationship of the layers and features in this area is difficult to determine, due to the narrow profile of their exposure in the roughly .75 m wide trench between the wall and the southern baulk and due to the fact that the wall completely separates these units from any stratigraphic relationship to anything else. That said, these seem to be relatively intact layers meeting the wall, and undisturbed, unlike the other side of **U15**, where everything has been disturbed by later phases. In this S area, we excavated only as far on this side of the wall as was necessary to determine whether wall **U15** was founded more deeply than wall **U33**, which it in fact is. At the bottom of this, there was a small area of debris (**U61**), probably from the wall, with squared stones and concrete chunks. Immediately later is **U49**, a large fill with little material, and above that **U43**, a plaster area that appears to be cut by **U42**, a sloping layer of much ceramic material. Above this was **U41**, a relatively sterile fill below **U21**, which appears to be a plaster floor with a gravel subfloor material that may have reached wall **U15**, but was cut by the robber trench **U26** and **U7**, which also cuts most of the layers below. Further to the west, where the wall is better preserved and we excavated only about 50 cm below topsoil, **U21** continues but appears to be cut by **U3=U20**, which also cuts another portion of what appears to be a floor (**U19**), which may be part of the same floor as **U21**.

4 Phase 4

With phase 4 the sequence of deposits and the stratigraphic relationship between important layers and features becomes somewhat more ambiguous and subject to interpretation. The major feature, the large curving ashlar/concrete wall **U33** abutting **U15**, clearly belongs to phase 4, cutting the earlier material with its foundation trench (**U60**) and the fill of **U44** and **U51**, fill associated with the preparation of wall **U33**. **U51**, a sloping, striated fill of gravel clearly deposited from a high elevation and continuing down the top of wall **U67** and under wall **U33** appears to be one of the fills into which wall **U33** was cut, the stones laid, and the concrete casing poured. Wall **U33** is preserved almost to the height of wall **U15** in the W part of the square and in the E it is robbed out in the same way as **U15** by robber trenches **U7**, **U26** and **U27**. The NW portion of the wall has a small addition **U68**, which is overhanging and has the fill of **U51** below it. The function of this addition, which is also constructed kurkar blocks and cement, is not clear at all, though the start of an arch has been conjectured, there is no real evidence supporting this interpretation.

The other major feature connected with this phase of building, the wall in the N of the square **U35**, has no direct stratigraphic relationship with wall **U33** or any of its contiguous fills. Wall **U35** cuts the earlier phase 5 material (**U66**) placing it in a later phase, but the only link between this wall and wall **U33** is the similarity of their construction and the elevation of their preservation and the depth of their foundation.

The other significant material associated with phase 4 is a huge fill composed mostly of ceramic material with some gravel that covered most of the central part of the square and continued into the E section at the half-square mark. This same fill seems to encompass **U31**, **U36**, **U39**, **U53**, **U55** and **U63**. These fills yielded a huge amount of pottery, mostly late Byzantine, but with some early Islamic material as well, which we had to process with crates rather than buckets, and appeared to be a large leveling fill for the preparation of a building. It is not entirely clear whether this is the original leveling fill for the phase 4 building or later material that cuts phase 4 material. The most likely interpretation seems to be that it goes with phase 4 as part of a construction fill. Below this fill was comparatively a more sterile, sandier fill **U45** and **46**, that were above wall **U57** and **U66**. **U44**, a similar fill with more stones was contiguous with these and extended to wall **U33** and all the way to the top of wall **U67**. This again with **U45** and **46** may represent initial fills preparing the construction of the phase 4 building.

Finally, in the E part of the square, where we dug a probe on the E side of wall **U24**, fills **U25** and **U6** appear to be part of this phase.

5 Phase 3

Phase 3 has been interpreted as a later phase of construction, probably from the Islamic period, within the limits of the phase 4 building, which reused wall **U35** and possibly **U33** and **U68**, although again there is no direct stratigraphic connection. **U24**, a single-course, kurkar/concrete, N-S oriented wall was bonded by a coating of cement with **U35**, which we initially believed to be of similar dimensions and elevation as **U24** until we dug deeper and found it continued much deeper. A plaster floor (**U23**) with some marble tiles preserved *in situ* sloped up and reached wall **U24** on its W side and also the somewhat irregular corner formed by **U35** and **U24**. **U23** was preserved as only a narrow strip of floor but it equaled a better-preserved section of the same floor **U13** farther to the W, which also was composed of the same plaster and had some of the marble tiles preserved as well. The disturbance in between was excavated as **U22**. Beneath the plaster floor was a well-preserved flagstone sub-flooring (**U29**) and a contiguous, almost circular installation **U37** of unknown function bonded with the subflooring, as well as a narrow strip of plaster (**U54**) extending from **U37** and forming an edge at the S extent of the floor, also of unknown purpose.

Another large fill **U17**, N of wall **U33** appears to date to this phase or perhaps a later one. This fill is contiguous with **U33** and appears to cut the original fill for the construction of this wall, **U51**.

6 Phase 2

Phase 2 simply represents the late material in the area that it still pre-modern. Here we have several pits, **U32**, a large crusader pit cutting fill **U4**, **U38**, a small pit cut against wall **U33** into the fill of **U17**, and **U40** a possible pit cut again into the fill of **U17**. From this phase we also have **U11**, the concrete collapse that seals the units that

contain the building of phase 3 **U13, 23, 24, 29** and **35**, as well as the area of disturbance below, **U22**.

2 small pits, **U28** and **U10** cut into this material.

Finally the robber trenches **U26** and **U27** for walls **U15** and **U33** belong to this phase.

7 Phase 1

Finally, phase 1 encompasses all the units that appear to be of modern date or have not stratigraphic relationship to anything else and therefore must necessarily be of uncertain phasing. Here we have Garstang's trench **U9=U14**, the rubble of **U5, U12** and **U7**, possibly the remains of a modern terrace wall visible in photographs of the area in the early 20th C. Pit **U8**, a large pit or fill full of ceramic material and **U18** were not excavated completely enough to establish their relations. **U1** and **U2** represent surface cleaning and topsoil layers.

8 Conclusions and Further Objectives

The first priority for further investigation in this area should be to excavate the eastern half of the square down to the level of the western half to clarify the relations of some of the layers and see how the phase 5 walls continue and whether their orientation and plan can be established. The poorly preserved portions of **U66** might require further excavation, in order to see whether there is a good surface or wall below these areas of collapse. Otherwise, expansion north of our area is the next logical step towards seeing the relationship of wall **U67**, the phase 6 wall, with the rest of the structure and dating this phase with greater precision.

Ashkelon50/08

Grid 47

Phase: 6

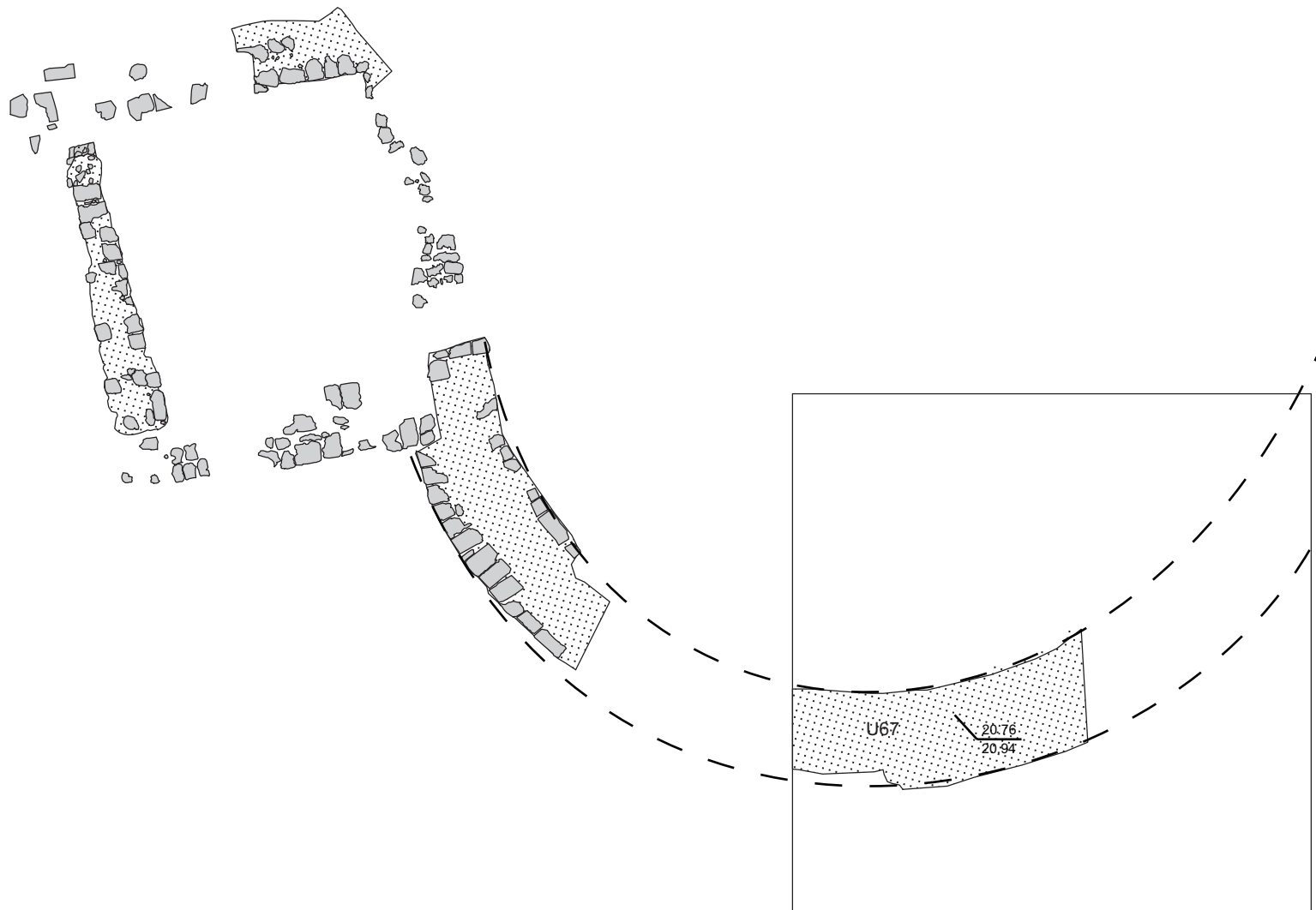
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July 17, 2008

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Ashkelon50/08

Grid 47

Phase: 5

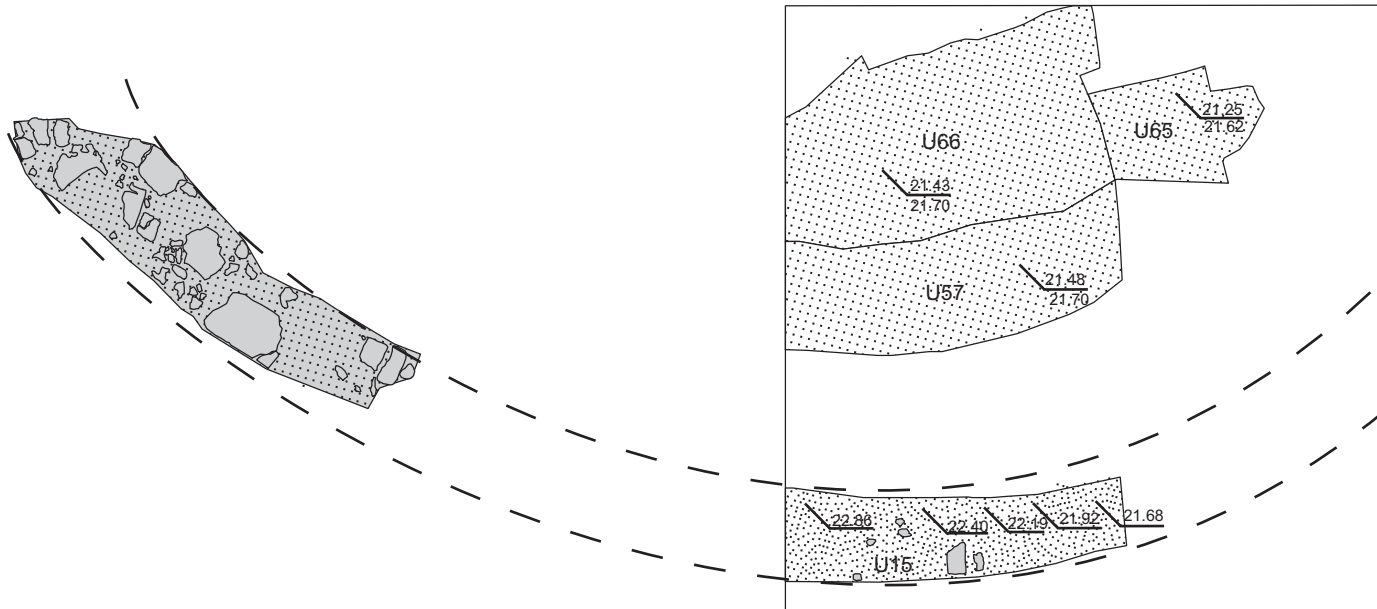
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Grid 47

Phase: 2

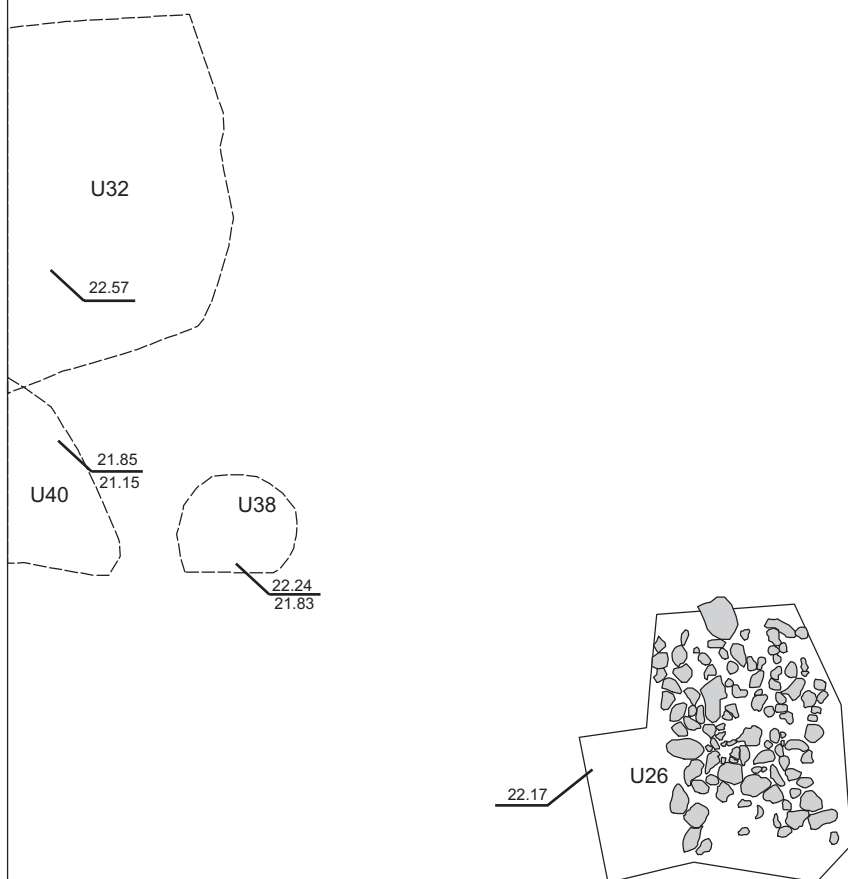
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Drawn by: DLW

July 17, 2008

1:50

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Ashkelon50/08

Grid 47

Phase: 1

Supervisors: RAB/ RBN

Drawn by: DLW

July 17, 2008

1:50

DwgID: 13228



U14
 $\frac{22.35}{21.6}$

U5
 $\frac{22.76}{22.44}$

U10
 $\frac{22.73}{22.33}$

U12
 $\frac{22.73}{22.46}$

U8
 $\frac{22.55}{21.97}$

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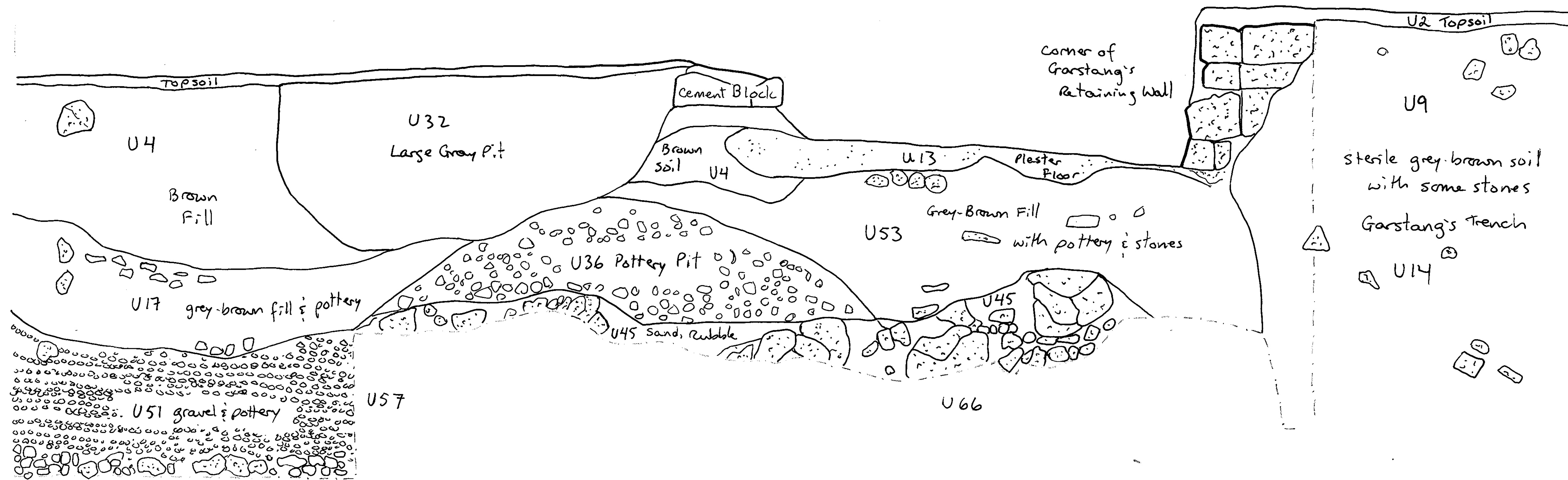
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RAB

1:25



← To check in 2009
The exact placement
of the level -
mark it clearly
on the graph paper
CSA Oct '08

Dwg ID 13,240

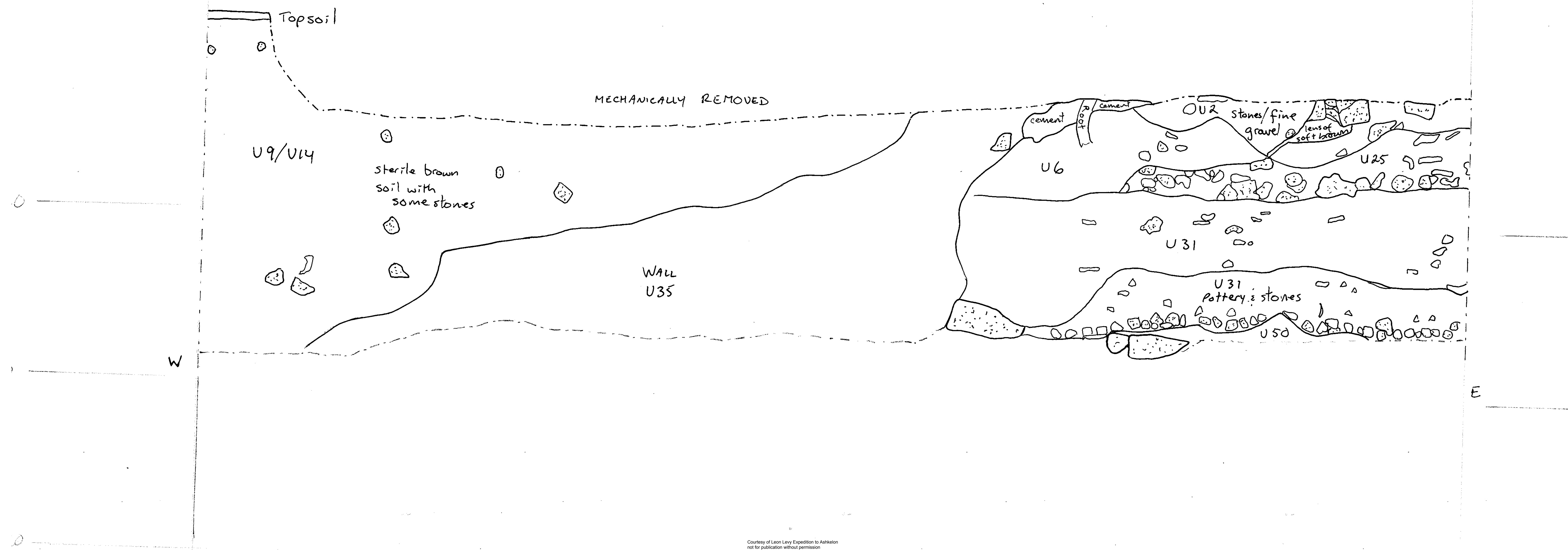
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North Section.

RAB 2008

scale 1:25



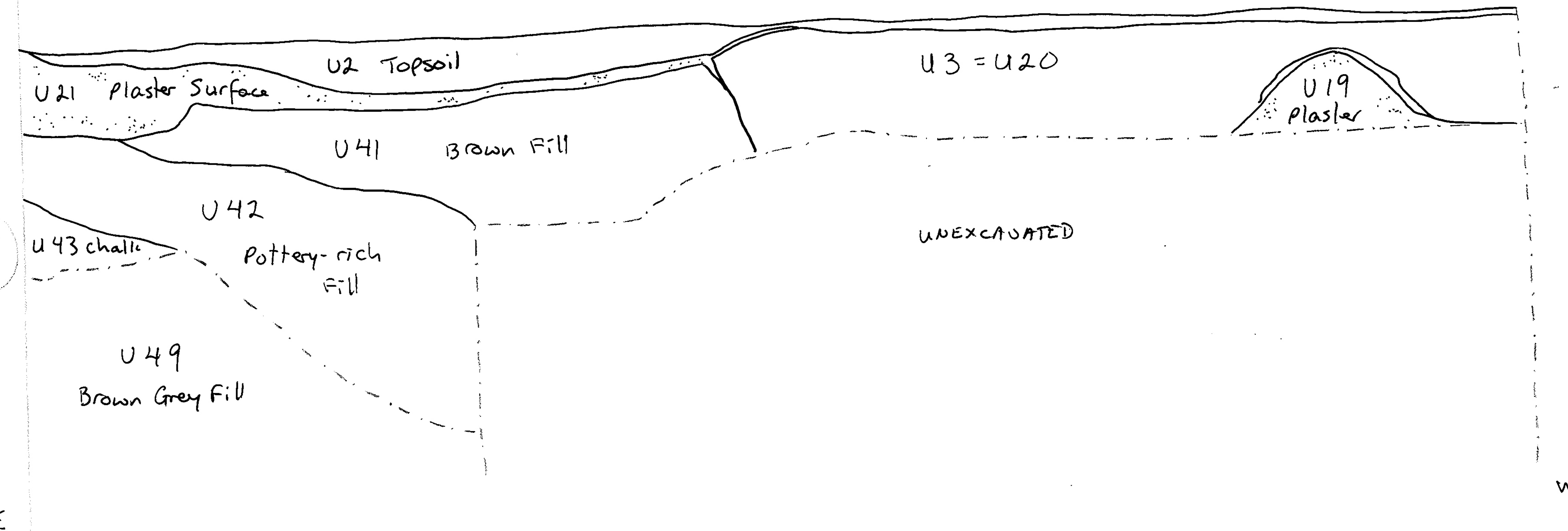
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TEL ASHKELON

47.54

SOUTH SECTION

RAB

1:25



Floating levels-!
to be checked
in 2009.

-CSA oct'08

Grid 51 Final Report 2008

Ashkelon Excavations, The Leon Levy Expedition

by Kate Birney

Grid 51, a small area consisting of two 5 x 10m half squares, was reopened after a hiatus of seven years. The toll resulting from seven years of exposure took some time to eradicate before excavation could safely be renewed. As such, we were able to devote only four and a half weeks of the season to full excavation, the remainder having been occupied by extensive cleaning efforts and the reestablishment of baulk lines. Nonetheless, the challenges of the area were well rewarded with a highly productive season in which we were able to restore the grid to its proper chronological (and geographic¹) setting, and to clarify a number of lingering questions from prior seasons.

Excavation Results

Reports from the 2000 season had suggested that at its current depth Grid 51 should be in the earliest phases of Persian occupation, with Iron Age soon to come. This conclusion was reached, however, in the absence of any pottery reading from the preceding three seasons of excavation (1998-2000). At the beginning of the 2008 season the pottery from some key areas excavated in 1999 and 2000 was re-examined, and it became immediately clear that the occupation within Grid 51 was still quite solidly in the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic horizon, and that most of what had been excavated in the previous seasons was entirely Hellenistic. This new understanding shifted our goals for the season: where before the intention was to remove all Persian phases and begin to expose Iron Age occupation, we focused instead on excavating the last of the purely Hellenistic remains, clarifying the nature of Persian period occupation in the Grid, and digging a probe to determine how much Persian remained to be excavated before the 604 B.C. destruction horizon might be reached. These objectives were achieved with the aid of 6 volunteers (Erin, Adam, Alex, Trisha, Kristen, Chris and Eric) who worked for all or part of the season, and a staff of 2, Elise Jakoby and myself.

The following report lays out the phases represented in the Grid in rough chronological order, moving from the earliest to the latest material. Our work this season focused almost exclusively on the Phases currently designated as “3D” and “3C”, which spanned the Persian and Hellenistic period. Although Phases 3B and 3A were excavated and discussed in earlier season reports (1998-2000), we are including brief treatments of these later phases here primarily in order to provide a general overview of the Grid throughout the Persian/Hellenistic period under a single umbrella, while also making some small adjustments to earlier reconstructions based on our new information.

¹ At the start of excavation in 1997, the two half squares of Grid 51 were initially assigned as 73 east and 74 west, based on the original surveyor’s data. Updated surveys of the tell employing GIS technology have now demonstrated that these half squares actually correspond to 51.62 (east) and 51.63 (west) on the larger Ashkelon Grid. This new nomenclature will be applied in the 2009 season when the grid expands.

I. The Iron Age Probe

The probe **74.L200**, based on an expansion of the well **51.74 F11**, was initiated with the intention of determining the extent of the remaining Persian period occupation in the area. While the probe itself was dug as a single layer (L200), pottery buckets were changed with every visible shift in soil and new surface. This allowed us to observe a progression as we descended from Late Persian, through Persian and into Iron Age.

At just over 2m depth from the surface we reached a layer of thick ash which seems likely to be associated with the 604 B.C. destruction of the city. Material collected from this lowest level, in and around the 15-20cm of thick ash, dated largely to the seventh century with a number of pieces clearly attributable to earlier in the Iron I.

Above this potential 604 level there appear to be two solid phases of Persian material, marked by clear surfaces, separated from one another by a half meter or so of brickly fill. The highest floor, at 16.47, had an Attic black glaze kylix sitting on it, suggesting a rough 5th century date; A north-south mudbrick wall (not yet named) is visible only in the west side section of the probe cut from **74.F11**. This wall seems to bisect the Center East room. The upper floor visible in the probe (noted above) with the 5th c. Attic black glaze kylix, appears from the section to have a relationship with this wall, and Persian period attribution of this room is supported also by the absence of any Hellenistic pottery from the buckets corresponding to these elevations within the L200 probe. However this clearly marks only a small sampling and only full excavation will be able to confirm the dating. The lower floor, at ~ 15.85, seems to have a large number of whole or near-complete vessels of mixed Iron II and Persian date sitting on a floor, a hint of rich occupational debris to come in future seasons.

II. Phase 3D: The Mudbrick Building

The earliest excavated phase in the Grid is a mudbrick building with mudbrick floors in at least two rooms. It is unclear whether this is a single building, spanning both half squares 73 east and 74 west, or simply two adjacent buildings, one in the west and one in the center/east. At this time we are simply presenting the rooms and their contents on a room-by-room basis, relegating questions of building pattern and use to the discussion section below. It should merely be noted that the arrangement of rooms visible in Phase 3d, whether one building or two, remained essentially consistent throughout the Persian and Hellenistic phases with only minor variations. Phase 3d is, however, the earliest point at which this building plan appears with purely mudbrick walls, as later phases appear to have employed either stone construction, or a mix of mudbrick and stone (often stone foundations with mudbrick superstructure).

The building is divided into nine rooms or spaces (three rows of three rooms, see Fig. 1 below). Of the visible excavated areas, the northernmost and southernmost rows have three rooms of roughly equivalent size (referred to hereafter as NorthEast (NE), North Center (NC), NorthWest (NW), Southeast (SE), South center (SC) and Southwest (SW). The center row is differently divided, with a single larger room on its east end (Center East – CE), an average sized room (Center row Center room (CC), and a room on its west end of which we have only a very small portion (Center West CW). This arrangement of rooms continued for the next three phases.

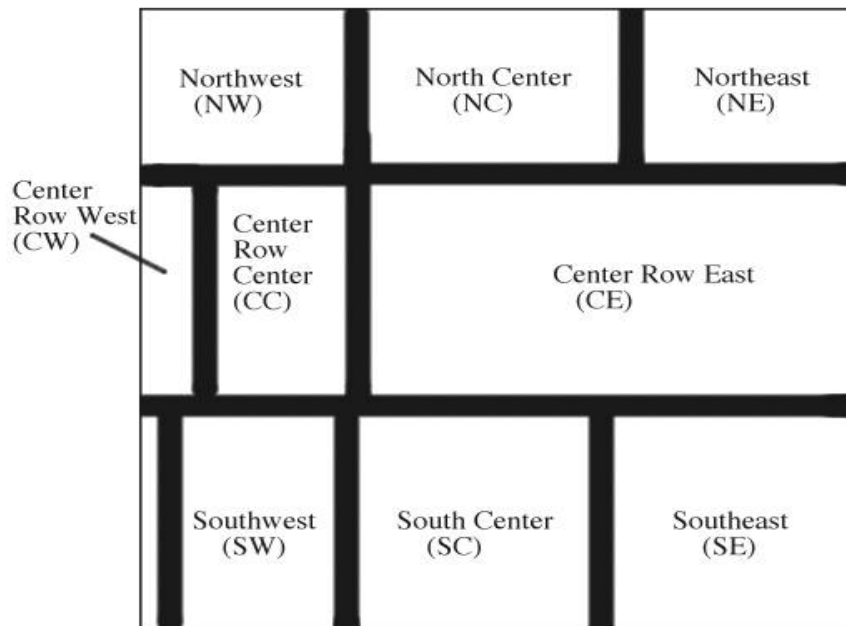


Fig. 1. Grid 51.73 (east) and 74 (west) room arrangement. For general reference only – see Phase Plans for scale drawings.

The original (presumably) mudbrick surfaces in the building have only been reached in two rooms, the Center East and South East rooms. The Center East room is the largest room in the building, some 6 x 3m in size, and was defined by the north-south brown mudbrick wall **73.F99** in the west and by the mudbrick wall **73.F134=74.F201** in the north. The southern closing wall was obliterated by the Phase 3c rebuild, but its existence is presumed on the basis of multiple later rebuilds which conformed to the same architectural arrangement, and by the fact that the mudbrick “flooring” (**73.F169=74.F198**) visible on the west side the central room does not continue south of this wall line but seems instead to have been cut by the trench for the Phase 3C wall. The eastern closing wall falls outside the currently excavated area.

The Center East room had mudbrick floors (**74.F173**, **73.F169=74.F198**), over which a thin layer of plaster had been set down². The flooring on the east side of this

² Not yet excavated. In the 2000 Grid 51 report, the excavators noted a tendency towards mudbrick “subfloors” in later 3C and 3B phases of the building. This differs (according to their description) from our mudbrick floors in that the arrangement of their mudbrick “subfloors” seem not to have been clearly laid bricks as in Phase 3D, but rather fills with large quantities of brick chunks; a practice which suggests not deliberate crafting of mudbrick floors but instead the leveling and rebuilding of nearby mudbrick walls prior to rebuilding them and laying a new floor. In 2008, excavation of the later

room, where it was well preserved, showed that the builders had alternated between brown and grey mudbricks, creating an attractive checkerboard pattern. The contents of the room were not excavated in the 2008 season apart from a small portion of the floor (**74.F173**) which was removed during excavation of the probe, from which a cache of four unbaked clay circular loomweights was recovered (**MC#s 58805, 58955-7**).

It seems likely that such a large indoor space would have required some sort of interior support, whether a subsidiary wall or pillar bases. This floor was not excavated in 2008, however, so the structural supports remain unknown at this time. We do know that in both earlier (3e) and later (3a) phases the room was subdivided by a N-S partition, so there may have been some sort of temporary supports functioning when those partition walls were not active. No postholes have yet been noted.

The SE room, defined by the N-S grayish mudbrick wall **74.F131** to its west and likely sharing its northern closing wall with the Center East room, had similar mudbrick flooring, **74.L190**. The SE mudbrick floor is better preserved than **74.L173** in the Center East: one can note not only color variation but also a deliberate effort to lay the bricks lengthwise in rows in a rough north-south arrangement. A buildup over this floor, characterized by brickly detritus, included two poorly preserved plastered/ashy surfaces (**74.L182** and **74.L184**) which sloped up to the south and west. Between these two surfaces, rather than laminated occupational debris, were instead chunks of brick detritus, possibly indicating a defunct bin put out of use by the upper floor, **74.F134**. The full extent of this room is unclear as the eastern and southern boundaries lie outside the excavated area.

If the rooms on the east side of the grid represent a single coherent building, then we have yet to reach the 3d surfaces in these spaces, although the 3d architecture is coming into focus.

The Center row Central room was defined in Phase 3d by the brown mudbrick walls **73.F121** to the north, **73.F118** to the west, **73.F99** to the east, and a now-absent closing wall in the south (obscured by the construction of the Phase 3c wall). A compact grey fill (**73.L181**) was set down in preparation for the floor **73.L179**, a deeply ashy surface which tipped significantly from the northeast to the southwest. (Hence the reluctance to call **73.L181** a “leveling” fill). This surface was used in conjunction with two grey mudbrick benches, **73.F167** and **73.F168**, set inside the eastern and western faces of the N-S walls **73.F118** and **73.F99**, respectively. The inside edge of the western bench/curbing **73.F167**, showed signs of burning on the brick edge near the center of the room. A few scattered stones suggest the possibility of an installation having been present, now destroyed, and may explain the large quantities of ash in the occupational buildup which generally slopes up and away from the burned area visible on the bench face. Within the occupational debris from this floor were several unbaked clay loomweights, a near-complete alabaster juglet, and a large number of bronze and iron nails.

phase 3C floor (**73.LF136**) in the far west room revealed just such a brickly subfloor (**73.U160**), which was indeed a layer of brickly fill with a few sizeable brick chunks and two coherent, but disconnected, mudbricks. The clear and contiguous nature of the Phase 3d mudbrick floors, in addition to their artful arrangement, suggests that these were clearly intended to be seen, a different pattern from that seen in later phases.

The tipline of the floor **73.LF179** suggests that this is probably not the earliest surface in the room, but reflects instead the continued use and buildup of an earlier floor, associated with the original construction of the two mudbrick benches **73.F167** and **73.F168**. The surface **73.L179** should therefore be dated to later in phase 3d, as with surfaces **74.L182** in the SE and **73.L152** in the SW.

The Center West room was defined in Phase 3d by the E-W wall **73.F121** to the north, the N-S wall **73.F118** to the east, and the E-W wall **73.F159** to the south. No Phase 3d surfaces have yet been reached in this room.

To the north of the central row lay a series of three rooms. The NC room is limited in the west by the north-south wall **73.F120**, and both the NE and NC rooms are limited on the south by the shared wall **73.F134=74.F201**, and share too the brown mudbrick wall **74.F169** between them. The northern and eastern closing walls of both rooms lay outside the excavated area; however, it seems likely that the northern closing wall lies just inside the north baulk, based on analogy with the adjacent NW room, the northern wall of which (**73.F138**), is visible running east to west in the north baulk. The appearance of a grey mudbrick bench (**73.F162**) - a feature known to line wall interiors in other rooms of this phase - in the north baulk of the NC room, in the same E-W line as **73.F138** also lends support to this notion. Phase 3d surfaces have not yet been reached in these rooms.

The NorthWest room was defined by the mudbrick walls **73.F121** to the south, **74.F120** to the east, and **73.F138** to the north, the western closing wall lying outside of the current excavation area. No Phase 3d surfaces have yet been reached in this room, and it was not excavated in 2008. This room was, however, connected, to the Center row Center room (CC) immediately to its south by a doorway between walls **73.121** and the southern edge of **73.F120**.

The SouthWest room was limited on the west by the N-S gray mudbrick wall **73.F137**, a twin to the parallel **74.F131** dividing the SC and SE rooms. Its northern and eastern closing walls were both obliterated by Phase 3C foundation trenches. The fact that the surfaces from this room did not continue to the west or the north indicates that barriers were in place during this time. However, a small hollowed stone - probably a door socket - was discovered in **73.L151** the fill above the Phase 3d floor, in the NW corner of the room (not *in situ*). Therefore there may have been some sort of doorway active between the CC and the SW room.

The earliest surface reached in the SW room was **73.LF152**, set down over leveling fill layer **L180**. Apart from the pit **F183/L184** cut into it, there are no indications of activity within the room itself, and the surface itself showed signs of exposure in the form of sand and clay striations - thicker towards the southern half of the room. There was little in the way of actual occupational debris. The sandy fill layer which accumulated above this surface, **73.L151**, was not laminated but had instead the character of a fill layer albeit containing large chunks of pottery including several near-complete vessels.

The South Center area during this phase showed no occupational surfaces, and contained only layers of rubbly brown fill, **73.L185=74.L185**, above which lay **73.L150-74.L181**. The character of this SC space was consistent through all subsequent phases, and it is possible that rather than being a functional room, this area was instead some sort

of alleyway or corridor between buildings.

A north-south wall of mudbrick (73.F155), the character of which was difficult to ascertain as it was cut into by a later foundation trench (73.F176). It likely belongs to a room or building to the west of the currently excavated area, and its precise relationships are unclear. Both its function and its phasing will have to await clarification upon the expansion of the grid.

Phase 3d Discussion

The rather elegantly laid mudbrick flooring in the Phase 3D CE and SE rooms have parallels both at Ashkelon (Grid 50 Phase 4, domestic building dating to the first half of the 4th century) and elsewhere. The trend seems more typical of Late Persian and Hellenistic architecture but continues well into the Roman period, as at Tell el-Mashkuta. (MacDonald 1980). The brick flooring of Grid 51 is composed of smaller bricks than described in the Grid 50 building, and the latter do not appear to have been arranged by color. Both buildings do architecturally approximate a design known as the Persian-style “courtyard house”, in that they show a series of rooms clustered around a larger central space. It should be noted that in Phase 3D – the earliest thus far excavated, likely dating to the Late Persian period – the central area (CE) is in fact interior, rather than exterior space, a fact which appears to undermine the “courtyard house” interpretation.

Indeed, we have yet to properly address the recurring question of whether the rooms in Grid 51 are to be treated as a single building or two (or three) immediately adjacent houses. The complicated nature of the stratigraphy in the Grid, coupled with the numerous rebuilds and repairs, renders such discernment difficult at times. Unlike subsequent phases where there is at least a distinction between western mudbrick and eastern stone construction, Phase 3d construction methods are more uniformly mudbrick. Moreover, we have not yet reached all the 3d surfaces and therefore do not yet have a complete picture of how space was used. For the present, we simply note with interest the possibility of the existence of two adjoining potentially outdoor spaces (SW and SC) which are separated by a dividing wall. It seems more reasonable that each house would have its own outdoor activity space, rather than for single house to have two adjacent courtyards. We await more evidence on this point from future seasons.

That near complete vessels were found in several rooms (CC, SW) but not in continued laminated occupational debris during this phase suggest that the period of occupation may have been fairly brief, and was followed by abandonment – with time enough to remove valuable objects but still leaving many larger vessels. In some areas of the building this may have included exposure, as roofs fell in and the outside elements made their way indoors.

III. Phase 3c: Reuse and Rebuilding

Phase 3c constituted the reuse of the mudbrick building, though far from being a “squatter phase”, the period was characterized by a significant shift to larger scale stone and mudbrick construction. Many of the Phase 3d walls were replaced by walls with large stone foundations and mudbrick superstructures in the eastern half of the grid, while mudbrick construction and repair continued in the western half. However, as many of

these structures - and the mudbrick superstructures in particular – were themselves essentially obliterated by a series of later Phase 3B and Phase 3A rebuilds, the exact lines were at times difficult to determine. The elaborate mudbrick floors of the preceding phase gave way to beaten earth and ash surfaces, with occasional traces of plaster.

In the northern half of the building, the Phase 3D E-W mudbrick wall which separated the northern and center rows in the eastern 2/3 of the grid was replaced by a large wall of stone foundations with mudbrick superstructure, **74.F199=74.F174**. A substantial western closing wall (**73.F178**, with foundation trench **73.F163**) was constructed for the NC room, abutting the mudbrick wall **73.F99**. **73.F178** was constructed with at least three courses of foundational fieldstones with mudbrick superstructure. In the east, a doorway was cut through the mudbrick wall **74.F169** connecting the NE and NC rooms.

In the south the building was reconstructed in similar fashion. A sizeable foundation trench (**73.F166=74.F195**) was cut for the new E-W backbone wall, and **74.F164**, a mudbrick wall with sizeable stone foundations (with stones of up to 45cm in diameter), was erected separating the center and southern rows. At the same time, trenches for two north-south walls, **73.F165** and **74.F196** (framing the SC room) were cut and the walls **73.F153** (lower)³ in the west and **74.F197** (in the east) constructed, the latter cutting into the now-defunct Phase 3d mudbrick wall **74.F131**.

In the NE room, a leveling fill **74.L 204** was set down in preparation for a lightly plastered beaten earth surface, **74.LF193**. A sherd of Attic black glaze ware was embedded in this floor, both the pattern and the glaze quality indicating a late 4th or potentially early 3rd century date. A small hearth, **74.F194**, constructed of mudbrick and chalk and showing signs of burning, was situated in the rough center of the room. (See Photo # A08 16779) Several pieces of a heavily burnt cooking pot were found set against the north face of the wall **74.F201**. The occupational debris above this lowest technical surface, **74.L192**, was marked by multiple large sherds of pottery (including a number of large vessel segments) and especially by very large chunks of black charcoal which spread through the doorway of **F169** into the adjoining NC room, then faded some way past this door. The equivalent layer of occupational debris in the North Center room, **73.L172=74.L203**, had the same soil coloration and consistency as **74.L192** - in addition to the large portions of pottery – but lacked the large chunks of charcoal presumably due to its distance from the hearth **74.F194** in the adjoining room. The lower surface in the North Center room has not yet been reached, but its existence is presumed on the basis of **74.F193** in the adjoining NE room.

As these northern rooms continued in use, a second beaten earth surface (**73.L171**

³ While we were able to distinguish between the original Phase 3C walls **F164/74.F197** and the Phase 3B rebuilds which used the same foundations (in most cases by clearing away most of the mudbrick), we did not distinguish during excavation between the later Phase 3B stone rebuild of **F153**, and the original Phase 3C construction of this wall. However, the parallel construction types, and the presence of eroded mudbrick debris at the join between **F164** and **F153**, some portions of which extended into the lower courses of the wall **F153**, makes clear that there was an original 3C version of **F153** in use here, which we after the fact can only distinguished as **73.F153** “lower” (the phase 3C wall) and **73.F153** “upper” (its 3B rebuild).

in the NC, and **74.L191** in the NE) was set down over **74.L192** and **73.L172**. These surfaces were considerably poorer, and particularly in the northeast room signs of exposure, marked by thin lamina of sand and clay, were apparent. There was no significant accumulation, however, and in the North Center room the floor **73.L171**, while showing some traces of sand accumulation, did have a few traceable lenses of plaster. This suggests that it was in use as an interior surface for a short while before being exposed. During this later subphase the hearth **74.F194** was no longer in use in the North East room, and it was the North Center Room which showed more signs of activity. Here, a grey mudbrick bench **74.F170**, built of a single row of grey mudbricks set end-to-end, was set down on a plastered lens of **73.L171**, just inside the western face of the N-S wall **74.F169**, stopping just at the line of the doorway into the NE room. A second grey mudbrick bench, **73.F162**, is visible in the north baulk at exactly the same elevation and may well have been set just inside the currently inaccessible northern closing wall of this room. At this stage too, a cobble threshold **74.F183** was constructed in and extending slightly west of the doorway in wall **F169**.⁴

In the southern half of the building, despite the substantial architecture, there were no clear occupational surfaces discernable. The SC contained a layer of brown fill with multiple small brick inclusions, **73.L125=74.L133**, the SE room only a light brown sandy silt, **74.L192**.

The most substantial area of Phase 3C occupation excavated this season was the Center Central room. Unlike elsewhere in the building, where the shift between Phase 3D and Phase 3C occupation was marked by some signs of exterior intrusion (i.e. the sandy layers **73.L151** in the SW and the sand and clay striations of **74.L182** in the SE, the transition in this room was somewhat cleaner. Here, the Phase 3D north-south mudbrick walls **73.F118** and **74.F99** continued in use, but the northern and southern closing walls were put out of use with the construction of the east-west brown mudbrick walls **73.F66** to the north, and **73.F157** to the south. A row of thin grey mudbricks set end-to-end were set inside the southern face of **F66**.

Within the room a brown rubbly and pottery-rich leveling fill **73.L170** was set down over the sloping 3d surface, covering both of the Phase 3D benches (**73.F167** and **73.F168**) and preparing an even surface for a plastered surface **F119**. In addition to four copper and iron nails, this leveling fill **73.L170** contained also a largely intact alabaster juglet (MC # **58589**). A thick series of occupational debris layers (**73.L105**) accumulated over the original plastered surface **F119**, yielding a variety of small finds of both an industrial and a private nature. In the former category, loomweights (MC# **56022**), copper and bronze nails and bits of iron slag were recovered. In the latter, a bronze pin (MC # **55850**), a gold earring (MC # **56009**, excavated 2000), and a zoomorphic horse figurehead (MC # **57714**) provide a somewhat more intimate glimpse. A single brown rubble-filled pit, **73.F143/73.L144**, and a possible mudbrick installation

⁴ This threshold **74.F183** aligns also with a visible break in the later Phase 3C east-west stone wall, **73.F135=74.F175**, (though this break might also have been caused by a later cut for the construction of the Phase 3B north-south wall **74.F112**). If the break between **73.F135=74.F175** was not due to a later cut by **74.F112**, then the gap probably reflects a 3C doorway connecting the North Center and CenterEast rooms, much like the doorway between these spaces in Phase 3A. Given the propensity of the later phases in this building to mirror earlier conventions, this later transition might mirror the placement of the threshold **74.F183** in this earlier phase.

73.F116 (noted in 2000)) of uncertain purpose were the only constructed features in this small room.

The connection between the CC and NW rooms established in the preceding phase continued, even with the new construction. The 3C wall **F66**, offset slightly to the south from its 3D predecessor, was built leaving a doorway between its eastern edge and the west edge of **74.F99**. As occupational debris **73.L105** continued to accumulate within the rooms, a stone and mudbrick threshold, **73.F175**, was constructed in the doorway, and plastered lenses of **L105** were visible on top of the threshold stones. (See Photo #s A08 16780, 16787)

Within the NW room, the remains of the Phase 3D eastern closing wall **73.F120** were covered over by a layer of soft brown fill, **73.L100**, and a new north-south wall (**73.F178**, with its foundation trench **73.F163**), was constructed just east of the original line of **73.F120**. The wall **73.F178** was constructed of at least 3 courses of large fieldstones and had a mudbrick superstructure, only tiny remnants of which remained between its uppermost courses and the lower stones of a later wall built immediately atop it in a subsequent phase. **73.F178** was constructed abutting the mudbricks of **73.F99**. There were no 3C surfaces noted in this room during its excavation in 2000, but the western section shows what might be a poorly preserved beaten earth surface sloping from south to north between ~17.68 and 17.88, a level which corresponds neatly to the elevations of the 3C floor in the CC (**73.F119** and its occupational debris **73.L105**.) At the end of the phase, however, the surface was covered over by a ~15cm thick deposit of compact clay (**73.L95**), suggesting prolonged exposure.

The CW room was defined in 3C by the walls **73.F157** to the south, and most likely by **73.F118** and **74.F66** to the east and north, respectively. The specific relationship of the CW surfaces with the southern wall **F157** was disturbed by the construction of the later Phase 3b wall **73.F39**. Within the room a grey rubbly fill layer **73.L161** and bricky subfloor **73.L160** were set down in preparation for the plastered ashy surface **73.LF136**. We have only a few indications of daily life. A single unbaked clay circular loomweight (**MC#58278**) was recovered from the subfloor **L161**, and a stone spindle whorl (**MC# 57811**) from the floor itself attest to weaving activities. A large pit, **73.F145/L146**, was cut into this floor before being covered by the continuing occupational debris **73.L77**. This pit yielded a number of finds, including zoomorphic figurines, and a complete Hellenistic lamp (**RP 10885**). In addition, both the bricky subfloor and the floor itself contained several copper nails and tacks (**MC #s 57936, 58257, 58923, 58928**).

The SW room was now defined on the north by **73.F157**, on the east by **73.F153** (lower), and by the continued use of **73.F137** in the west. Its southern lies outside the currently excavated area. There were no functional surfaces in the room, only a compact light brown fill layer **73.L147**.

The Center East during this phase became, for the first time, exterior space. A series of waterwashed courtyard layers (**73.L168, 73.L172** in the west, and **73.L97 = 75.L150, 74.L162 & 74.L164** in the east) accumulated. The CE area maintained its exterior nature for the remainder of the building's use.

Phase 3C Discussion

It is in this phase that we begin to see even clearer differences between the buildings, and signs of contemporary rebuilds. As noted above, the western rooms (NW, CW, CC and SW) largely maintained and repaired their Phase 3d walls, while the NC/NE and SC/SE rooms were now defined by substantial mudbrick walls with sizeable stone foundations. While the differences in construction/repair approaches between the western and eastern halves of the Grid might simply reflect different building times and availability of materials (we have no basis upon which to argue for contemporary reconstruction) it seems likely that they might reflect differences in ownership and means of the inhabitants. In addition, the changes in construction may also reflect some change in the function of the individual spaces, for example the first use of the large CE area as exterior courtyard space. It is curious too that the western mudbrick building was richer in occupational debris (small finds and intact pottery) than the more substantial stone building, a phenomenon that continues in subsequent phases as well.

Thus there is reason to consider the possibility that the western rooms may belong to a separate complex from those in the eastern half of the grid. We must also consider whether there is any relationship between the northern and southern stone-and-mudbrick complexes. The two are separated from each other by a large courtyard (CE), which might have been shared space or a dividing alleyway. The wall which connected the northern and southern halves (on the western side, **73.F99**) was a Phase 3e mudbrick wall which simply continued in use, instead of being rebuilt in the manner of the new ones. There are differences too between the northern and southern constructions. The foundation stones in the northern walls were not as sizeable as those in the south. The southern half included an additional substantial N-S wall dividing SC from SE, while the north retained its mudbrick wall **74.F169**. Though there is insufficient evidence to draw firm conclusions, we should consider that we may in fact be dealing with three separate buildings. If this turns out to be the case, then this is yet another reason to abandon the notion that we are dealing with the Hellenistic continuation of a Persian-style “courtyard house”.

IV. Phase 3B: The Shift to Stone

With the exception of a few lingering fill layers and reused walls, all of the Phase 3B and later remains were excavated in 1998-2000, and detailed discussions of the finds can be discovered in the reports from those seasons. We include here only a brief overview of the later subphases to illustrate some of the major architectural shifts. In many cases, the 1999-2000 excavations had difficulty tracing 3B and 3A surfaces directly to walls, a task which would have been difficult anyway given the nature of the later rebuilds and the Byzantine disturbance which disrupted the upper portions of the surfaces. We can, however, establish a logical sequence which will be further clarified as ceramic data can be brought to bear.⁵

In the northeastern portion of the grid, Phase 3B was marked by two waves of rebuilds (early and late), the latter showing a more significant architectural change than any of the rebuilds of preceding phases. In this portion of the grid, therefore, we speak of

⁵ We look in particular for ceramic evidence that might support the reclassification of the 3B Late structures as 3A.

Phase 3B “Early” and “Late”. Elsewhere in the grid the developments generally proceed as part of a single phase. Common practice throughout the Phase appears to have been to shave down the mudbrick superstructure of the existing walls (although in some cases they left a few bricks intact) and set the stone superstructure directly over the foundations, binding them with a thick mudbrick and clay mortar.

Early in Phase 3B, the 3C east-west wall separating the NC/NE and CE was replaced by a wall constructed entirely of fieldstones, with larger blocks set on the outside and smaller fieldstones in the center (**74.F144**). This likely cornered in the west with the north-south wall **73.F68**, a stone wall built directly on top of the stone foundations for **73.F178**, forming a new western boundary for the NC room. (The connection between the two was disrupted later in the phase by the foundation trench for a second fieldstone wall (**73.F135=74.F175**) which cut through the eastern half of this wall line during Phase 3B Late)

The eastern half of the wall **74.F144** was rebuilt or repaired at a later point using slightly larger stones, **74.F111**, of which only a single course was preserved. The north-south wall **73.F68** may likewise have been repaired, as the appearance of similarly larger stones within the wall’s profile at higher levels suggest.) Unfortunately the trenches for the E-W walls in this area were cut through by the construction of the later Islamic period kiln, so the precise date of construction is difficult to pinpoint.

The NC and NE spaces showed little activity during the early part of the phase. The NE held a brown bricky fill **74.L158** and the NC a tan sandy fill **73.L113=74.L154**, that latter also containing courtyard-like debris (including one animal skull) suggesting an exterior space or trash dump. It seems likely that there was a barrier separating the NC and NE spaces during 3B Early (perhaps a continuation of the 3C wall **74.F169**).

As in the north, the east-west Phase 3C wall separating CE from SC and SE was rebuilt as the stone wall **73.F126=74.F145**. Larger stones were set along the outside edges with smaller fieldstones in the interior. (Not quite a rubble core as they seem to have been placed in rows, but conceptually similar.) Here in the south the corner with the north-south wall **73.F57** (constructed over the wall **73.F153**) was preserved, and it is clear that the construction was intentionally integrated. The similarly designed north-south partition wall **74.F47**, built over **74.F187**, was likely constructed at the same time although this wall abutted.

The surfaces in the southern half of the building were excavated in 1998. Leveling fills **73.L123** and **74.L56** were laid down for beaten earth surfaces **73.F122=74.F54** and **74.LF55** (in the SC and SE rooms, respectively).

While elsewhere in the buildings the break between Phase 3C and Phase 3B Early was more significant, the CC room was continuously used, despite a series of rebuilds. In the CC room, the southern closing wall **73.F157** was rebuilt (or rather, repaired) with the construction of **F39** atop it. **F157**, of lighter gold mudbrick, was still standing at various heights at the time of the rebuild, and the residents seem to have in some places simply cleared off whatever of the mudbrick was too eroded (the uppermost surface bricks of **73.F157** underneath the “foundation trench” for **73.F39** showed signs of exposure), and in others cut into the standing wall, making a makeshift foundation trench **73.F156**. The new wall **F39** was of darker brown mudbrick. A similar repair may have occurred with the wall **F66**, although the line is difficult to trace. The mudbrick walls **73.F118** and **73.F99** continued in use as the respective eastern and western closing walls.

The connecting doorway between the CC and NW rooms was sealed up with rubbly fill (**73.L174**) and the threshold (**73.F175**), put out of use. A line of mudbrick and stone orthostats **73.F78** was cut into the occupational debris on the south face of the wall **F66**, where they rested on the 3C mudbrick curbing. The stone portion of this row was aligned where the doorway between CC and NW had been, perhaps to support the mudbricky sealing or prevent water seepage. Similar mudbrick orthostats **73.F62** were likewise cut into the floor and rested against the north face of the wall **73.F39**, although there is no clear indication that these were related to the sealing off of any doorway.

The occupational debris within the room was considerable, exceeding 30cm in depth. The transition between the Phase 3C surface **F119** and its occupational debris **L105**, and the 3B occupational laminae above it (**73.L110**) was smooth. It seems that the occupation in this room was simply continuous despite more significant changes elsewhere in the grid. However there is a clear marker for the beginning of Phase 3B in the construction of the curbing **73.F78**, which was cut into **73.L110**. Finds from **73.L110** include unbaked clay loomweights, a terracotta figurine, two worked astragali and a copper teardrop pendant (MC #s **55441** and **54694**, respectively). The dating of the floor materials appears to have been controversial: in the 2000 reports the two complete, diagnostic piriform jars and single lamp (Photo #s **131019**, **13088**) found within the occupational debris were dated to the 5th/4th centuries (2000 Grid Report) and to the 4th/3rd centuries (2000 Square Report).

In the NW room the northern face of the wall **73.F66** and the western face of the wall **73.F68** were coated with mudplaster (sealing the filled doorway on the north side), and a new floor (**73.LF93**, with occupational debris **73.L98**) was laid. These laminations contained large numbers of shells, some iron slag and a marble weight (MC# **53786**).

In the CW room, occupation continued unbroken from Phase 3C, although a new beaten earth and ash surface, **73.L77**, was set down. **73.L77** functioned together with the mudbrick wall **73.F118** to its east, and with **73.F39** to the south. A coin (MC # **57741**) and a spindle whorl of polished bone (MC # **57763**) were recovered from this floor.

The SW area, defined now by **73.F39** to the north and **73.F57** to the east, held two loose, sandy fill layers **73.L56** and **73.L35**.

Phase 3B "Late":

In Phase 3B Late, a foundation trench (**73.F148=74.F179**) for a new east-west wall (**73.F135=74.F175**) was cut through **74.F111**. This new wall ran slightly offline from the original **F111**, being aligned slightly more NE-SW, and was perhaps intended to corner on its eastern end with the new north-south wall **74.F113**, which extended south from this wall to bisect the CE room.⁶ On the northern side of **F111**, a foundation trench

⁶ While this may seem like a structural change, recall that we know that a wall did exist dividing the CE room in Phase "3e" as viewed in section from the well probe. The 1999-2000 excavations of the space, despite labeling the layers they encountered on the eastern and western half of the CE with different numbers, were still essentially consistent in their characterization of the area as outdoor space. Any distinction between the two sides that might have been the result of an architectural separation along the lines of **74.F113** and its later 3A rebuild, would have been difficult to discern as the eastern surfaces were disrupted and contaminated by later Byzantine and Islamic reuse.

74.F96 was cut just west of the line of the Phase 3D north-south wall **74.F169**, and a new stone wall **74.F112**, built in its place. Both **74.F112** and **74.F113** are similarly skewed NW to SE which would allow for a good perpendicular join with the slanted **73.F135=74.F755**. Both walls show signs of later rebuild and repair: **73.F135=74.F175** as **73.F109 = 73.F108 = 74.F124**, and **74.F112** “upper”⁷. The upper foundation stones of **F112** appear to might integrate with the southern row of stones from this wall **73.F109 etc.**; hence we are assuming contemporary construction.

The Byzantine and Islamic structures (Phases 2 and 1) largely disrupted the sequence in the eastern half of the CE area. To the west of the wall **74.F113**, a series of two outdoor laminations (**73.L84/94 = 74. 122/123**, **73.L76 = 74.L116**) accumulated. These were largely clay and compact silt. A late 4th or early 3rd c. Hellenistic coin hoard (**MC#53749, Photo # 12871**) recovered from this area was assigned to **74.L116**; however it is clear from the 2000 excavation notes that the materials removed were contaminated by a shelly fill layer (**74.L35**) above it, so it is unclear whether these coins can be treated as reliable indicators for the date of Phase 3B.

In the NE room, a grey leveling fill **74.L104** contained several rows of what appear to be mudbrick collapse **74.F115**. This may well have been the intentional leveling of the mudbrick superstructure of either **74.F144** or (if it lasted that long), the mudbrick Phase 3D wall **74.F169** which could have remained standing until this time. Contrary to expectation, however there were no surfaces noted in 2000 above this deliberate collapse.

The eastern and western mudbrick walls of the CC room (**F118** and **73.F99**, respectively) were leveled to the same elevation and rebuilt with fieldstone walls, stone simply overlaid on the existing mudbrick foundation. The western wall replacing **73.F118** was **73.F70**. The extant eastern wall **73.F71**, set over **73.F99**, is somewhat more problematic, in that it was constructed of drafted ashlar blocks, totally dissimilar in construction techniques to the stone walls built elsewhere in the building throughout Phase 3B, but very similar to the walls constructed in Phase 3A where ashlar were common. Yet the fact that both walls were leveled to identical elevations suggests that contemporary rebuilds occurred. It may be that there was a contemporary, Phase 3B rebuild of both mudbrick walls with stone walls (**F70** in the west and some now-absent fieldstone wall in the east); the eastern wall **73.F71** was rebuilt in 3A with ashlar construction.

⁷ The 2000 field notebooks noted the possibility that there was a second “foundation” trench for the wall **74.F112**, demonstrating that the wall was at some point either repaired or rebuilt. While we were unable to isolate this lower trench, there were some slight changes in construction pattern evident within the wall that could support this notion. A division between **74.112** early and **74.112** late would also resolve some of the difficulties in phasing the two superimposed walls which corner with it, **73.F135=74.F155** (the lower) and **73.F109=74.F124 etc.** Our excavation showed that the uppermost stones of the wall **74.F112** actually extended over the remaining upper cobbles of **73.F109=74.F124 etc.**, while the foundation trench appears to have cut through **73.F135=74.F155**. These anomalies are resolved if we accept **73.F135=74.F155** as contemporary with the original construction of **74.F112** (lower), and the later **73.F109=74.F124 etc.** with the later rebuild of **74.F112**.

V. Phase 3A

Phase 3A is rather complicated phase to reconstruct due to widespread disruption from Byzantine construction. In the west of the Grid, all occupation in the CC and CW rooms (in addition to the western half of CE) was obliterated by a massive Byzantine period pit, **73.F73**. Likewise the Phase 3A occupation in the south of the building was disrupted by the construction of the substantial Phase 2 Byzantine concrete walls **73.F9** and **74.F17**, for a building which appears to have been robbed out in a later phase. We therefore have no surfaces for these areas, and little concept of the overall Phase 3A organization or function of the space.

Elsewhere in the grid, reconstruction occurred making use of the same wall lines though with some slight shifts in angles, offset partially from the earlier versions. In general the phase is characterized by the reuse of hewn ashlar blocks in wall construction, clearly robbed from another more elaborate building. The south wall of the northern row of rooms, **74.F111**, was built over by the fieldstone and ashlar wall **74.F46=74.F70**. The NC room was now defined by **73.F26** (built atop wall **73.F 68**) in the west, and **74.F57** (atop **74.F112**) on its eastern edge. In the south, the E-W ashlar wall **73.F129=74.F21** was built over **73.F126=74.F145**).

In the CE room several changes occurred: the partition wall for the CE room, **74.F113**, was rebuilt in ashlar as **74.F10**. A new room, or possibly vestibule, was created through the construction of the east-west wall **74.F69** (running slightly to the north and parallel to the eastern half of **73.F129=74.F21**), and cornered on the east with a short north-south wall **74.F72**. It is unclear whether **74.F72** intersected with **73.F129=74.F21**, or whether this space formed a doorway. This new structure (in particular the interior space created by **F69/F10/F70** that was reused in the Islamic period, serving as the basis of a kiln, which obliterated the 3A surfaces associated with the original use of the room.

Within each of the ashlar built walls (and in their foundation trenches) were segments of plastered stucco painted with what were tentatively assigned Early Hellenistic patterns. (Discussed in the 2000 Grid Report, see **Photo #s 13287, 13310**) Both the ashlar and the *secco* fragments were clearly part of a more elaborate house (room) which was dismantled in order to build the 3A structures. It seems highly unlikely, however, that the building in question was placed anywhere within the grid but was more likely robbed out from elsewhere. If the stylistic dating of the *secco* fragments to Early Hellenistic is accurate, then Phase 3A must necessarily date to early-mid Hellenistic (*tpq*). This places the earlier buildings in early Hell or Late Persian. However the stylistic dating has not been confirmed by any outside experts, nor has the pottery assemblage from this building been at all examined, and much remains uncertain. It is our goal to go back through and read all of the neglected pottery from Grid 51 over the next season or two in order to fix firmly the chronology of these phases.

In the NW room a beaten earth surface **73.F95** and its occupational debris **73.F93** were set down.

The reconstruction of the CW room during this phase poses some difficulties. Certain things are clear: the Phase 3A black ash surface **73.L74** functioned during this phase with the large but poorly constructed mixed stone and mudbrick wall **73.F22** to its south, and also with the fieldstone wall **73.F71** to its east. A mudbrick wall stub, **73.F23**,

which cornered with a longer north-south partition wall **73.F44** was set on this surface. The arrangement is exceedingly awkward, however, as **F44** would have run along the interior western face of the closing wall for the room **73.F70**. (The southern half of **73.F70** was cut out by the Phase 2 Byzantine pit, so we can only infer the relationship). It may be that **F44** functioned as an interior curbing or bench for **F71**, much as we have seen in earlier phases (i.e. benches **73.F167** and **73.F168** during Phase 3D, benches **74.F170** and **74.F162** in Phase 3C). It appears therefore that the CW room was subdivided during Phase 3A by the construction of **73.F23**. Immediately to the north of the all stub **73.F23** was a second area of mudbrick only one or two courses deep **73.F32**, which might have been an installation or additional curbing, also associated with this floor. It may be that the black ash buildup on this floor reflects the use of a furnace or other industry which might have required insular curbing.

VI. *Conclusion and Future Goals*

Throughout all phases, the overall degree of architectural continuity was remarkable. The repetition of structural plans despite even several periods of abandonment and possible exposure suggests that these were brief interludes in what was otherwise a prolonged and continuous occupation. Throughout both the Persian and Hellenistic phases, the nature of the occupation appears to have been domestic (as indicated by the proliferation of cylinder loomweights), although the presence of slag suggests that small-scale industries may have been nearby. Nothing among the finds suggests that these were wealthy houses, however, and this perception is corroborated by the at-times awkward and shoddy reconstruction, particularly of the mudbrick structures which dominated the western half of the grid for several phases. It is only in Phase 3A that we begin to see architecture of any quality, in the form of drafted blocks, although even these seem likely to have been robbed out and reused from wealthier neighborhoods outside of Grid 51.

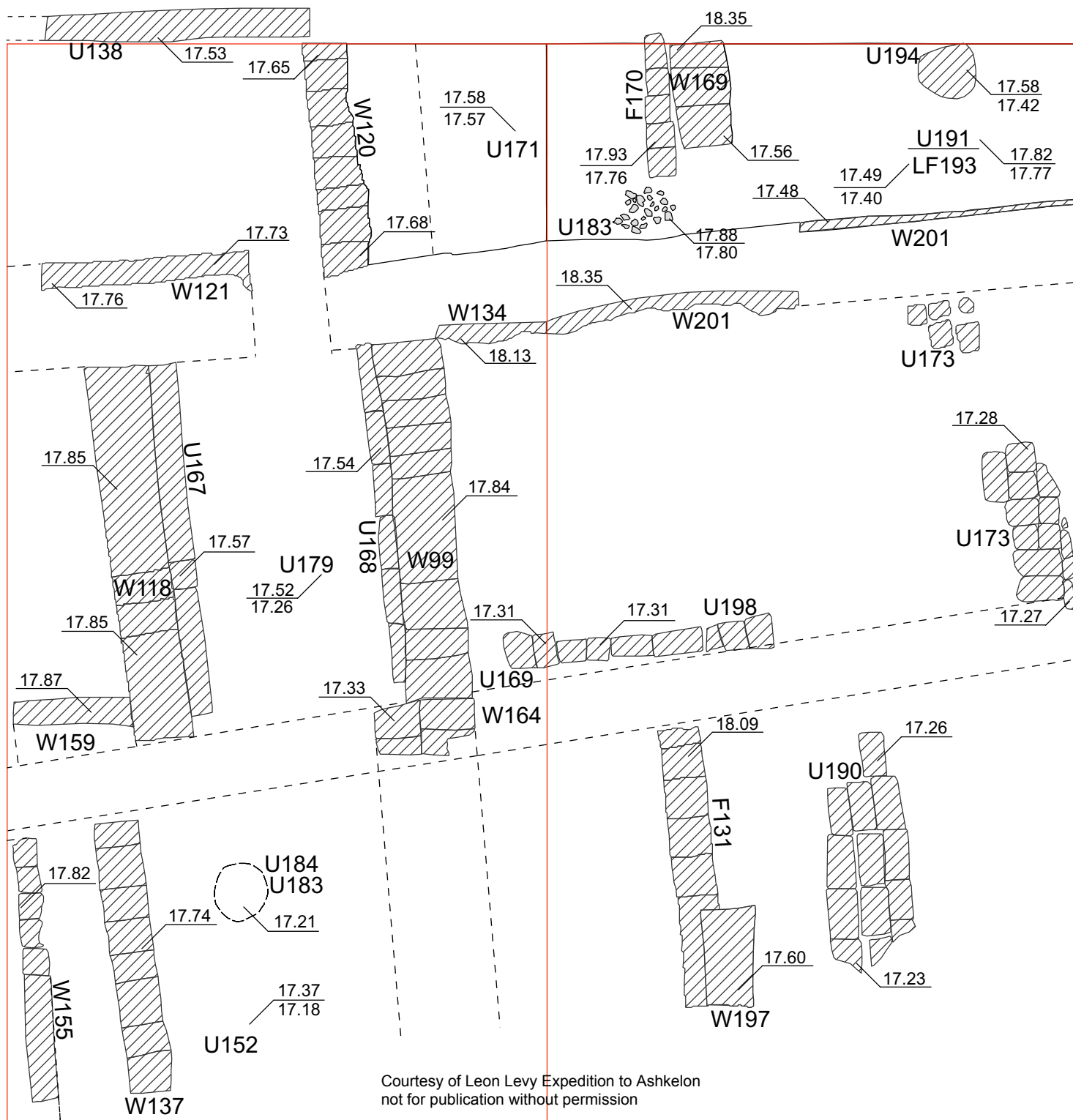
Overall, the 2008 season has allowed us to make significant inroads in reconstructing Persian and Hellenistic period occupation within the Grid, and to shed light on the Hellenistic phases excavated in prior seasons. We plan to return next season to pursue the following goals:

- Exposure of the earliest levels of Persian period occupation at the site within squares 62 east and 63 west
- Expansion of the grid and excavation of the Islamic and Hellenistic material within newly opened areas.
- Complete reading of all excavated ceramic materials from prior seasons (1998-present)

This last is particularly essential and may reshape our current phasing.

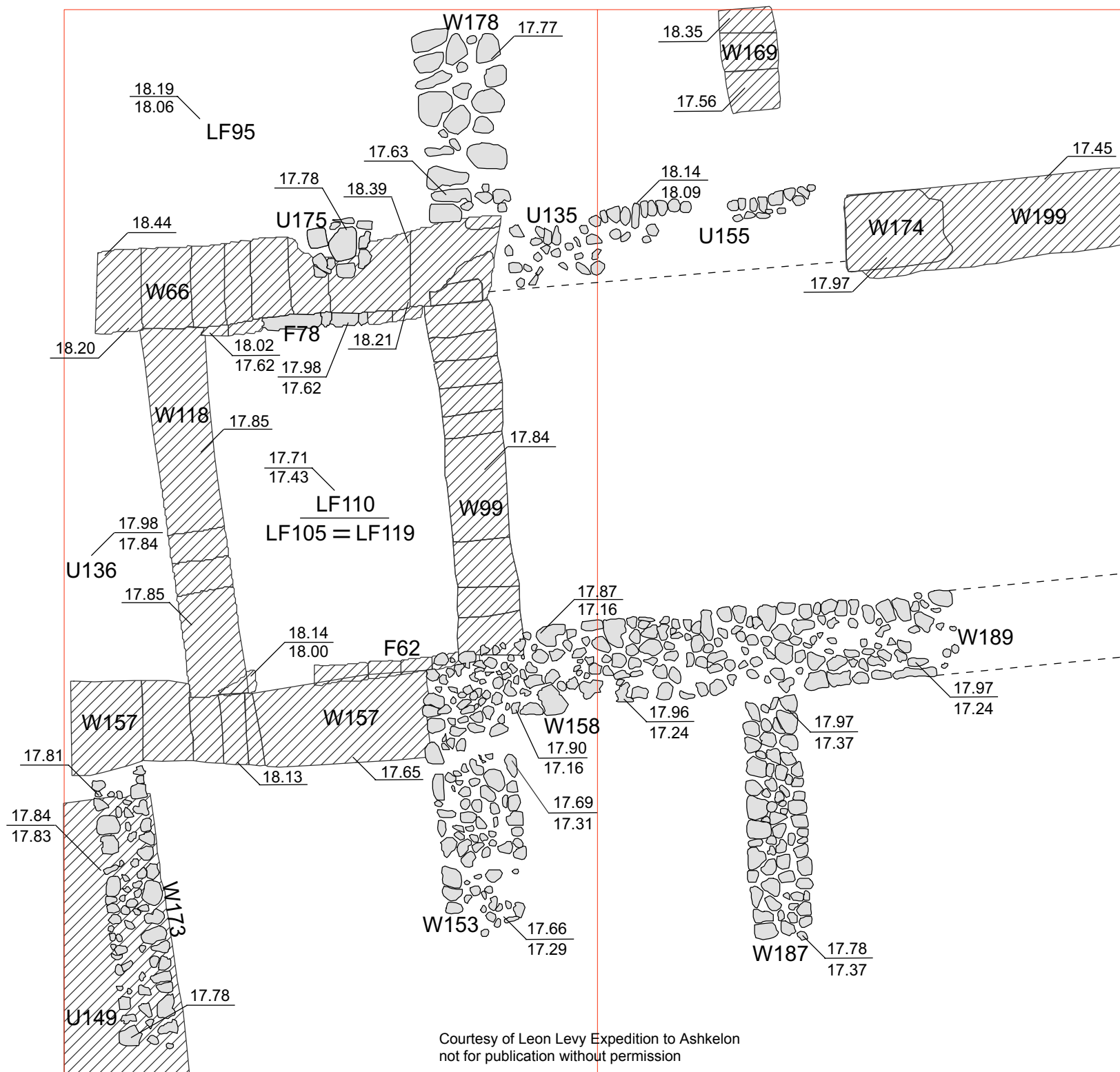
Thanks are due to directors Larry Stager and Daniel Master for the opportunity to participate in this exciting new phase of the Ashkelon Expedition, to Elise Jakoby for her hard work and partnership, and most especially to our energetic volunteers for their efforts and continued good humor.

Grid 51
Phase 3d

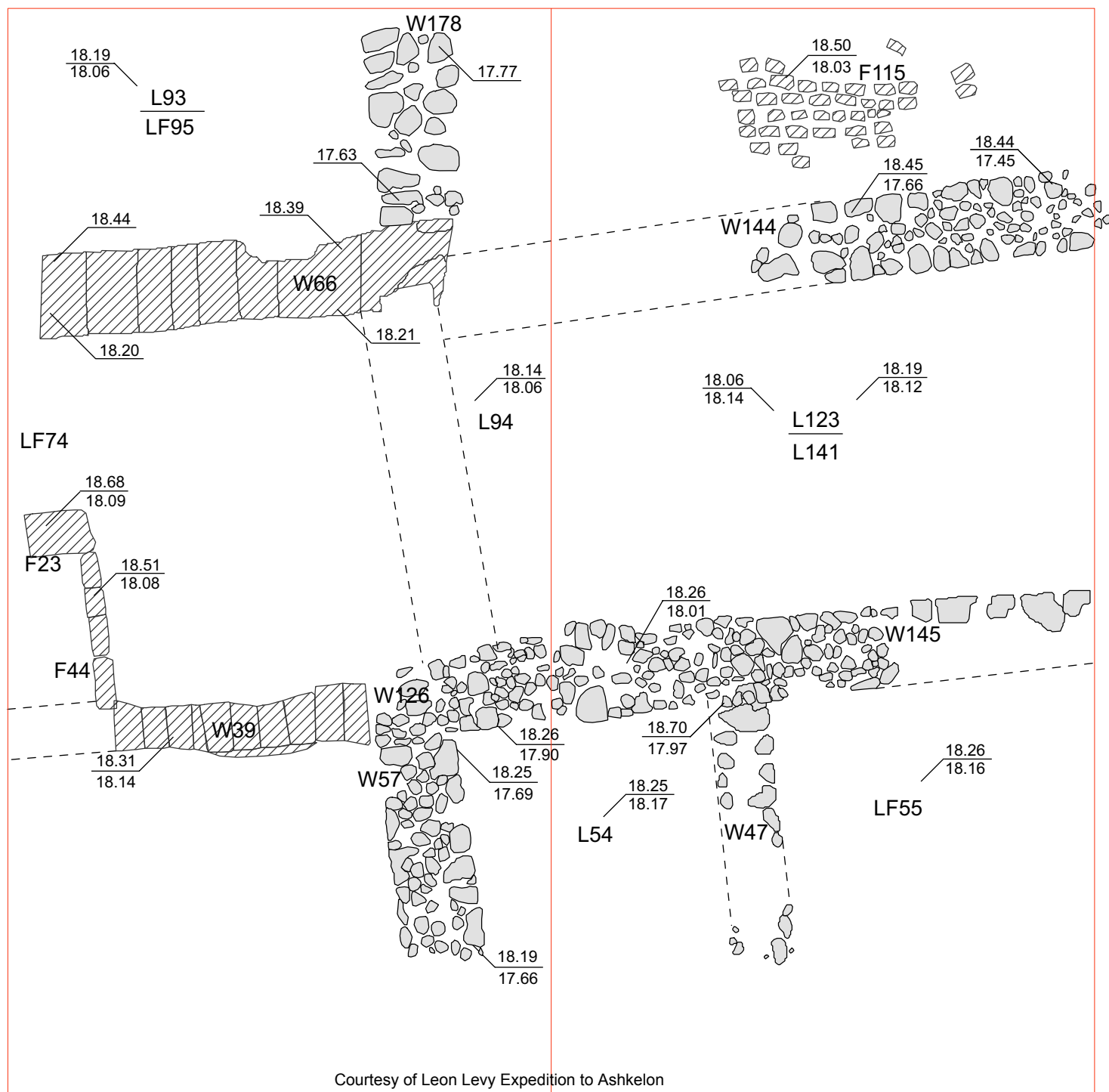


Courtesy of Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon
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Grid 51
Phase 3c



Grid 51
Phase 3b

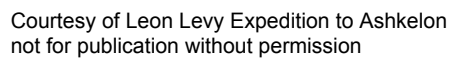


A hand-drawn sketch map of a site, likely a coastal or archaeological area. The map shows a long, narrow strip of land with various features and labels. At the top, there is a north arrow pointing upwards. The map is divided into several sections by dashed lines. Key features include:

- Top Section:** Labeled "74.F19" and "small, concrete wall". Below this, there is a label "(F17=F20)".
- Middle Section:** Labeled "F17" and "F20". It shows a "grey concrete" area and a "stone & concrete wall F20". A note on the right says "Bulk slabs 5 by 60 cm deep to corner in concrete wall (less 1.410 horizontal cm)".
- Bottom Section:** Labeled "F17", "F18", "F19", "F20", "F21", "F22", "F23", "F24", "F25", "F26", "F27", "F28", "F29", "F30", "F31", "F32", "F33", "F34", "F35", "F36", "F37", "F38", "F39", "F40", "F41", "F42", "F43", "F44", "F45", "F46", "F47", "F48", "F49", "F50", "F51", "F52", "F53", "F54", "F55", "F56", "F57", "F58", "F59", "F60", "F61", "F62", "F63", "F64", "F65", "F66", "F67", "F68", "F69", "F70", "F71", "F72", "F73", "F74", "F75", "F76", "F77", "F78", "F79", "F80", "F81", "F82", "F83", "F84", "F85", "F86", "F87", "F88", "F89", "F90", "F91", "F92", "F93", "F94", "F95", "F96", "F97", "F98", "F99", "F100".
- Other Labels:** "shell concrete wall", "small, concrete wall", "grey concrete", "stone & concrete wall F20", "Bulk slabs 5 by 60 cm deep to corner in concrete wall (less 1.410 horizontal cm)", "shell concrete patch", "crack", "brick", "brown sandstone", "pebbles", "light brown", "grey striations", "73.L125=74.L133", "73.L150=74.L181", "73.L185=74.L186", "74.L129", "74.L132", "74.L134", "74.L135", "74.L136", "74.L137", "74.L138", "74.L139", "74.L140", "74.L141", "74.L142", "74.L143", "74.L144", "74.L145", "74.L146", "74.L147", "74.L148", "74.L149", "74.L150", "74.L151", "74.L152", "74.L153", "74.L154", "74.L155", "74.L156", "74.L157", "74.L158", "74.L159", "74.L160", "74.L161", "74.L162", "74.L163", "74.L164", "74.L165", "74.L166", "74.L167", "74.L168", "74.L169", "74.L170", "74.L171", "74.L172", "74.L173", "74.L174", "74.L175", "74.L176", "74.L177", "74.L178", "74.L179", "74.L180", "74.L181", "74.L182", "74.L183", "74.L184", "74.L185", "74.L186", "74.L187", "74.L188", "74.L189", "74.L190", "74.L191", "74.L192", "74.L193", "74.L194", "74.L195", "74.L196", "74.L197", "74.L198", "74.L199", "74.L200".

GRID 51.63 (see 74)

1:25



Grid 24 Final Report 2008

Ashkelon Excavations, The Leon Levy Expedition

by Tracy Hoffman

Grid 24 was selected for excavation in the 2008 season based on promising results from GPR survey in the area during the summer of 2007. Survey was conducted in the area originally in an effort to search for the large platform depicted in David Robert's 19th century view of the ruins of Ashkelon. In addition, this area, near the cardo and ideally situated to take advantage of the sea breezes, seemed a likely location to uncover evidence of Ashkelon's history generally and during the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods more specifically.

Three full 10x10 meter squares, Squares 18, 28 and 27, were prepared for excavation at the beginning of the 2008 season. Work commenced with a team of volunteers working a 2 x 10 meter probe along the northern edge of Square 28. Unit I, the only layer excavated, was a mix of pure sand, kurkar, silt and rubble deposits clearly all placed in the area as part of a massive dumping operation the purpose of which could not be identified. The layer did produce pottery, bones, glass and a number of worked architectural fragments (primarily marble). The ceramics were mixed and included near modern, Islamic, Byzantine, Roman and earlier pieces of pottery.

After a day of excavation in Square 28, Unit 1 a second 2 x 10 meter probe was opened along the eastern edge of Square 18. Unit 1, the only layer excavated in this square, produced a similar mix of material as Unit 1 in Square 28 although there was considerably less rubble. After ascertaining that both Square 28 Unit 1 and Square 18 Unit 1 seemed to be part of the same fill Square 18 was shut down and work was concentrated in the Square 28 probe.

Further excavation revealed a consistency in the layer and a noticeable lack of the types of architectural features seemingly visible in the GPR results. Excavation was halted and a backhoe brought in to investigate the area. The entire area was dropped over a meter with subsequent drops of one and two meters in specific areas for a final depth of three meters in the southeastern corner of Square 28. The soil remained the same mix of sand, kurkar, silt and rubble, and there was no sign of any architecture. The only sign of possible occupation in the area came at the bottom of the 3 meter deep trench where there was a larger amount of burning, including burn shells.

In the absence of any architectural features the possible evidence for occupation at the depth of 3 meters was deemed insufficient cause to excavate in the area. The goal was to excavate monumental late period architecture but there was none to be found and the excavation resources from Grid 24 were shifted to other areas of excavation.

The date the fill was laid down in this area is uncertain. Ceramics collected during excavation consistently dated to period prior to the Crusader occupations of the city but there were a few later pieces such as an Ottoman Period pipe fragment and the handle of a 14th century handmade cooking pot. Whether the fill was part of modern activity, meaning 19th or 20th century, or a more ancient fill is undetermined.

In conclusion, while we did not find the anticipated monumental architecture in this area excavation did reveal something important; that during the late periods (the Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Crusader) this part of the city was open land, devoid of permanent stone architecture. What function it served within the city is undetermined and will perhaps only be understood if further excavation in surrounding areas offers clues to this part of the city.

Grid 12 Final Report 2008

Ashkelon Excavations, The Leon Levy Expedition

by Tracy Hoffman

In the 2007 season GPR survey on the slopes of ancient Ashkelon's city walls produced particularly strong results along the northeastern segment of the city wall. The interpretation of the GPR readings was that the presence of one, perhaps two ramparts belonging either to the Crusader or earlier periods was indicated in the survey area. It was determined, therefore, to excavate in order to find the Fatimid or Crusader period city wall which, it was believed, would consist of a stone talus (similar to the section of wall excavated on the North Tell) on which the remains of the still visible medieval architecture in Grid 12 would be standing.

After two days of work there was no sign of a stone talus but the section cut into the slope of the ancient city wall revealed four MBII ramparts directly under topsoil sloping from the west down towards the east. There was no evidence for a stone talus in Grid 12 and it now seems clear that in this part of the site the city's medieval fortifications were built directly on top of the earlier MBII glacis. This is almost certainly true of the earlier Roman and Byzantine period city walls but at present we do not have direct evidence for the city wall of those periods. Further work in Grid 12 or other areas of the city wall may clarify the exact sequence of Ashkelon's fortifications.

Unit 1 was a thin layer of topsoil which contained Byzantine period ceramics but no obviously later ceramics. This unit actually consisted of a thin layer of dark silt that peeled off a slightly darker more bricky layer that may have actually been an ancient rampart. That lower, bricky material had clearly functioned as topsoil for some time and was therefore not regarded as an intact rampart.

Directly below Unit 1 was Unit 2, the top most rampart. This rampart was composed primarily of sand although there was an area of more obviously bricky material at the western most end of the glacis as well as several grey lenses running through it in its eastern extent. This glacis did not contain any identifiable, intact mudbricks.

Unit 3 was directly below Unit 2 and appeared to be a more substantial construction that consisted of concentrated areas of kurkar and bricky material. At the high point of the rampart, the western edge, the kurkar appeared to run in almost horizontal bands into the bricky material. Further down this rampart (to the east) was another concentrated area of kurkar in which several mudbricks were visible. Pottery from this rampart indicated an MBII date.

Directly below Unit 3 was Unit 4 another sandy rampart similar in composition to Unit 2. This rampart appeared to follow a steeper incline and did not slope as far to the east as ramparts above it. Ceramics collected from this rampart were also dated MBII.

The final rampart, Unit 5, was a mudbrick rampart. This rampart was grey in appearance and was clearly the earliest rampart because it sat above a layer of clean kurkar. This rampart followed the same steep incline as Unit 4. Again the ceramics from this rampart were dated to the MBII period.

The discovery of the MBII earthen ramparts in this part of the site was important for a number of reasons. First, it confirmed Professor Larry Stager's theory that the MBII ramparts encircled the entire ancient city and that the modern national park is delineated by the location of the MBII ramparts. In other words, the MBII city was not confined to the North Tell. It was, in fact, a rather substantial settlement.

Secondly, there was no evidence of any kind that there had ever been a medieval stone talus (= glacis) in this area. During excavation not a single stone or piece of mortar was collected or even visible. It now seems clear that along this part of the city wall the medieval walls were built directly on

top of the MBII ramparts which were incorporated into the later system of fortifications. As noted, this raises a number of important questions in light of the stone talus visible on the North Tell. Only further survey or excavation directed towards understanding the medieval fortifications specifically will help to answer those questions raised by excavation in Grid 12.

2008 Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon
Grid 12 Section
June 11, 2008

1 Square = 1 Meter

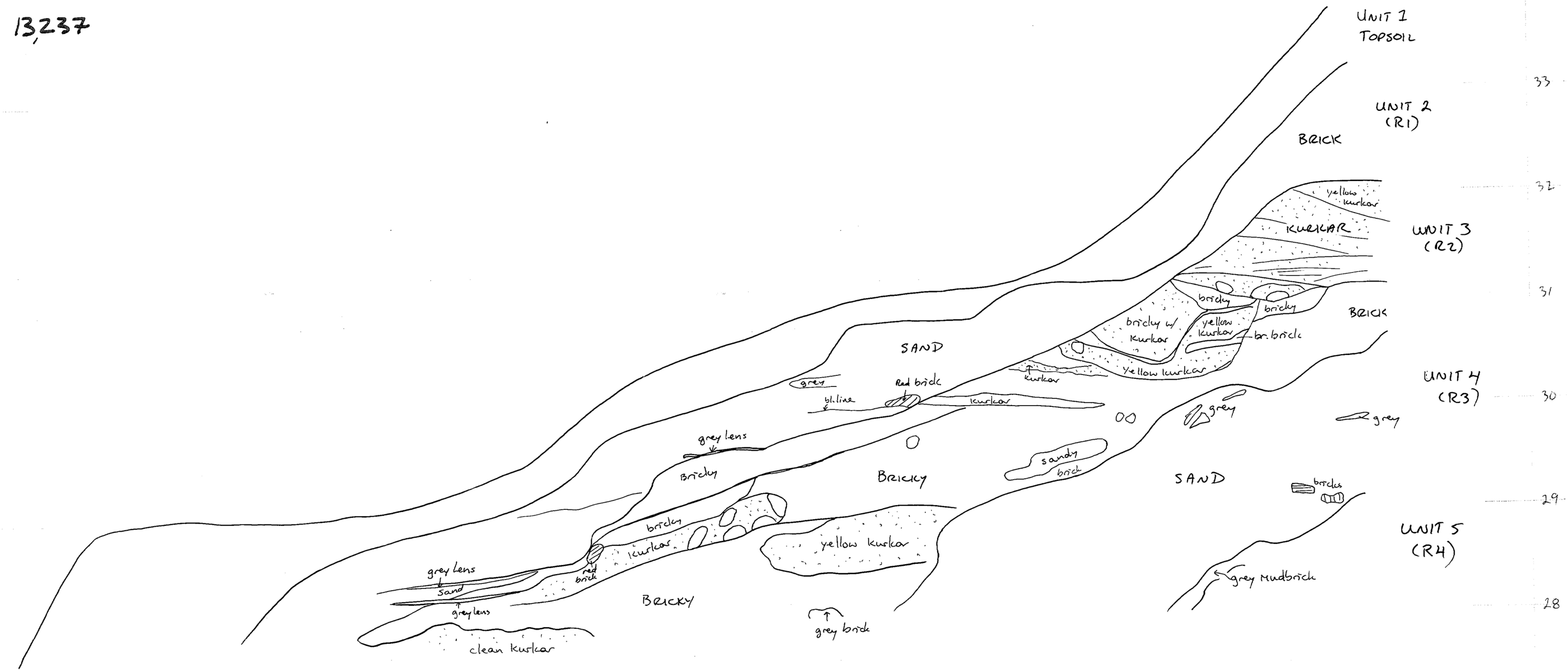
fill from terracing buried rampart section

buried rampart section

terrace fill covers rampart



TEL ASHKELON
GRID 12
SECTION
JUNE 11, 2008
1 Square = 1 Meter
Dwg ID 13237



Specimens for
Kurkar?
(see dung?)

CSA Oct '08

- speckled on back of mylar

Grid 2 Final Report 2008

Ashkelon Excavations, The Leon Levy Expedition

by Joshua Walton

During the Ashkelon 2008 excavation season the goal for excavation in grid 2 consisted of the excavation and removal of a mudbrick tower in squares 52/53, with the primary purpose of discovering a date for the tower's construction by analyzing the latest pottery found in the brick makeup. This tower was previously identified and a small probe was dug in the 1999 season in which the tower was numbered LF32. During the 2008 excavation season we completed our excavation of the tower using the same numbers. All of the paperwork and pottery from this season were attributed to square 52, because this was the square in which the majority of our excavation area existed. In OCHRE, a parallel LF32 exists in square 53 but no information was entered under it. For ease of reference when digging this feature north was referred to as the front of the tower facing up the coast, south the back, east the land side and west the sea side, although technically these are slightly off with true north which should be taken into account when dealing with this report. The excavation took place over the course of 8 days using a crew of hired workmen.

The goal for the season was to safely excavate the tower, collecting the pottery from within and immediately beneath the bricks so as to better understand and date the use of the tower. This process was very difficult due to the scarcity of pottery found during excavation. The entire tower was not excavated due to safety concerns. The northern and eastern edges were very unstable and had already begun eroding down the very steep slope of the rampart. For this reason approx. 1-2m of the tower was left on both of these edges which could not be safely excavated.

Construction: The tower (LF32) itself measures approx. 10m E-W and 7m N-S, with our excavation area covering approx. 8.5 m E-W and 4.5 N-S. LF32 is constructed entirely of mudbrick, varying in color, primarily dark brown, but also including lighter brown, tan, and an occasional grey brick, measuring 45x30x10cm. The preservation of the bricks varied depending on their placement in the tower. The bricks on the east side were much harder, probably due to increased exposure to the sun and water being channeled to run off to the west side by the roofing structure built to protect the tower. The west side bricks were very soft more extensively eroded.

The tower was built in a terraced manner to account for the slope. The northern rows (the northernmost 4m of the tower) were preserved to 14 courses, whereas the upper southern terrace (southernmost 3m) was built on a higher foundation and was only 3-4 courses in height. Within each course the bricks were laid in combinations of headers and stretchers, but with no set pattern discerned. A majority of the bricks were laid with the longer side oriented north-south.

The mudbricks were founded on a sandy kurkar fill (Unit 10), which was laid on top of the MB ramparts, which became visible beneath the fill of the upper terrace as we excavated the lowest course of the lower terraced step.

Pottery: the majority of the pottery found in the excavation of the tower dated to the MBIIC, with the latest sherds dating to the Iron IIA. Many of the MB sherds, as well as some LB sherds, came from the sandy fill (U10) on which the tower was founded, and seems to be a result of earlier material gathered indiscriminately and deposited to form the foundational fill, however some of the early sherds were also found in the bricks themselves. The latest sherds date the construction of the tower, however, to the Iron IIA, suggesting the continued use of the MB fortification system during this period. No Iron I pottery was found.

Conclusions: From our analysis of the pottery it seems that the date for the construction of the tower is the IrIIA, as this was the latest pottery found within the bricks. This suggests that the MB rampart remained in use as the city's fortification system through at least the IrIIA, where it underwent a series of modifications, highlighted by the construction of multiple towers (another tower was previously excavated, of similar construction E of the MB gate).

Paleo-Environmental Reconstruction of the mounds of Ashkelon

Supervising Geologist: Stephen Moshier

Report on data collection from 2008. Analysis of material collected in 2008 is ongoing.

This summary was written by Daniel M. Master

In the recently published *Ashkelon I*, Avner Raban argued that the current coastline of Ashkelon was quite different from the coastline of the Bronze and Iron Ages, and that the changes hid natural harbors that once dotted the coast. We tested this hypothesis by replicating Raban's cores in the southern hollow, south of the south tell.

Method:

Using an auger, samples were taken from 5 holes in the southern hollow (see map). The data recovered is described in the accompanying field notes.

Conclusions:

1) Critique of old methods: Using Raban's methods, basically an auger with the ability to take rough soil samples, it was impossible for him to answer the question that he set out to answer. The auger is unable to recover data from below the water table, and in this area it is high enough that it precludes any investigation below m.s.l.

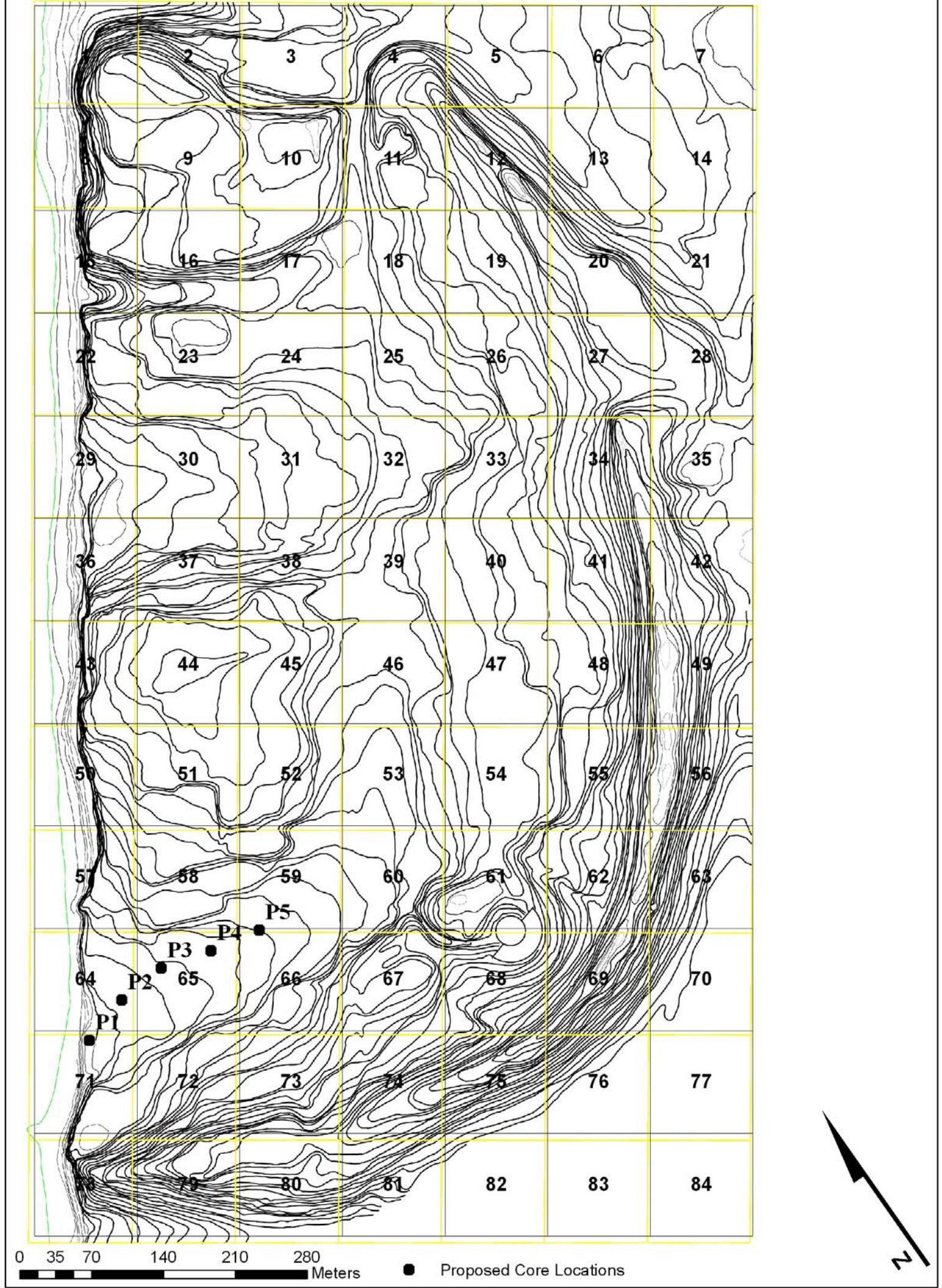
2) Critique of old results: Raban's sections in the south are hung incorrectly in Ashkelon 1. With a better understanding of Raban's method, it is now clear that he could not have penetrated the water table. The top elevations for his sections, based upon a detailed topographic survey in 1985, are not accurate. The surface elevation is much higher in the southern hollow than our plans had indicated. This critique is not a critique of Raban's actual core descriptions, which have actually held up quite well, but a critique of the way that work was interpreted (by Raban) and published (in Ashkelon 1).

3) New Results, Geological: One of the most interesting results, requiring further research, was the nature of the water table itself. In previous Ashkelon publications, we argued that the site sits atop an underground stream, buried since prehistoric times. However, the frequent forays into the water table seemed to indicate that the water was part of the coastal aquifer, typical of the coast. This requires further investigation.

4) New Results, Anthropogenic: In every core throughout the southern hollow, the earliest material belonged to the Persian Period, with only one possible exception. Given that this hollow is immediately to the north of a Middle Bronze Age rampart, this was an odd result. Further, the cores showed an accumulation of 3-4 meters of Persian/Hellenistic occupation. These results require further investigation as we attempt to trace the history of the Ashkelon National Park.

Supporting Documents:

- Map core locations
- Soil descriptions and pottery readings from each core
- Laboratory images of each soil sample
- Vertical reconstructions of each core



0 35 70 140 210 280 Meters

● Proposed Core Locations

Courtesy of Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon
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Geology Probe Sample Descriptions			
Probe # 1	Surface el. 8.78 m		
Depth m	Sediment Description	Photos	Pottery/Culture
0-0.30	no sample- road material	P1_30c m	
0.3-0.6	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loam, fine and medium sand, poorly sorted, pebble and cobble kurkar.		
0.6-1.10	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loam, fine and medium sand, poorly sorted, pebble and cobble kurkar and bivalve <i>Glycymeris</i> .		
1.1-1.6	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand, poorly sorted, with pottery.		Islamic (9th-10th)
1.6-2.0	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam, medium to very coarse sand, moderately poorly sorted, average medium sand.		Islamic (8th-9th)
2.0-2.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam (< 10% clay), medium to very coarse sand, moderately poorly sorted, average medium sand, 5-8 cm kurkar fragments.	P1_2.5	Byzantine
2.5-2.9	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loamy sand, fine to coarse sand, moderately sorted, larger kurkar fragments than above.		Byzantine
2.9-3.3	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), loamy sand, fine to very coarse sand, poorly sorted, abundant kurkar pebbles and cobbles.	P1_3.3	Roman
3.3-3.7	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), mix of loam and sandy loam, average medium sand, poorly sorted, abundant shell fragments, bone, lime inclusions, less kurkar than above, basalt grindstone.		Roman
3.7-4.1	brown to dark brown (10 YR 4/3), sandy clay loam, average fine sand, moderately well sorted, 1-2 mm shell fragments.		Hellenistic
4.1-4.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam, average fine sand, very coarse sand- and pebble-size kurkar fragments, charcoal fragments.		Hellenistic/early Roman
4.5-4.9	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam, average fine sand, slightly more clay than above, moderately well sorted, pebble kurkar fragments.		Persian/Hellenistic
4.9-5.3	Top 15 cm- dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam, average fine sand. Bottom 25 cm- brownish yellow (10 YR 6/6) sand, very fine to fine sand, well sorted. Pebble and cobble kurkar fragments.	P1_5.3	Persian/Hellenistic
5.3-5.7	brownish yellow (10 YR 6/6), sand, fine to medium sand, moderately well sorted, more kurkar pebbles than above.	P1_5.7	Undifferentiated pottery
5.7-6.0	Top 15 cm- brownish yellow (10 YR 6/6), sand, fine to medium sand, moderately well sorted, abundant kurkar pebbles. Bottom 15 cm- dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam, average fine sand, well		Persian/Hellenistic

7.6-8.0	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), loam to sandy loam, fine and medium sand, moderately well sorted. Likely water table.		Islamic (8th-9th), likely intrusive
8.0-8.3	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), loam, fine to medium, well sorted, very wet.		Undifferentiated pottery
8.3-8.35	As above, probably caving at total dept below water table.		

Geology Probe Sample Descriptions			
Probe # 2	Surface elevation 8.99 m		
Depth m	Sediment Description	Photos	Pottery/Culture
0-0.4	no sample - road material		
0.4-0.7	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), silt loam, average fine sand, silt to very coarse sand, very poorly sorted with road fill rock.		Roman/Byzantine
0.7-1.0	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), silt loam, average fine sand, silt to very coarse sand, very poorly sorted with <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Islamic (9th century)
1.0-1.3	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam (less clay than above), silt to very coarse, very poorly sorted, weathered coquina sandstone fragments.	P2_1.3	Byzantine-early Islamic
1.3-1.6	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), loamy sand (little clay), fine to very coarse sand, poorly sorted, very coarse sand size shell fragments, calcareous sandstone pebbles and cobbles.		Byzantine
1.6-1.9	brown to dark brown (10 YR 4/3), loamy sand, fine to very coarse sand, average medium sand, abundant pebble size shell fragments, limestone fragments.		Late Roman/Byzantine
1.9-2.2	brown (10 YR 5/3), loamy sand (slightly more clay than above), fine to very coarse sand, average medium sand, abundant pebble size shell fragments, brick fragments and red clay inclusions, kurkar sandstone fragments with mortar.		Undifferentiated pottery, tile and mortar
2.2-2.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam (more clay than above), fine to very coarse sand, average coarse sand, very poorly sorted, abundant sandstone (mortar?) rock fragments, tile fragment with attached mortar.		Roman/Byzantine
2.5-2.85	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4) sandy loam, fine to very coarse sand, average coarse sand, very poorly sorted, abundant very coarse sand size rock fragments and kurkar with mortar.		Roman/Byzantine
2.85-3.1	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/4), loamy sand, medium to very coarse sand, average medium sand, coarse sand size shell fragments, fewer very coarse sand size rock fragments and kurkar pebbles than above.		no pottery collected
3.1-3.5	mixed sediment: 1) dark brown (10 YR 3/3), silt loam, fine to very coarse sand, average medium sand, very poorly sorted, with scattered carbonaceous material; 2) very pale brown (10 YR 7/4) loamy sand, probably degraded kurkar fragments.		no pottery collected
3.5-3.9	dark brown (10 YR 3/3) loam, fine to very coarse sand, average medium sand, very poorly sorted, very coarse sand size and pebble		Undifferentiated pottery

4.6-4.9	dark brown (10 YR 3/3) loam to sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, scattered charcoal fragments, apparent sand and clay laminae in core, less charcoal than above.		Persian/Hellenistic
4.9-5.2	apparent transition from dark brown loam to sandy loam (above) to dark yellowish brown sandy loam to loamy sand (below).		Undifferentiated pottery
5.2-5.6	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/6) sandy loam to loamy sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, marble and sandstone cobbles.		Persian/Hellenistic
5.6-5.8	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) sandy loam, fine to medium sand with kurkar fragments.		Undifferentiated pottery
5.8-6.2	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, <i>Glycymeris</i> shells.		Undifferentiated pottery
6.2-6.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted.		Undifferentiated pottery
6.5-6.9	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/6) sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted.		Undifferentiated pottery
6.9-7.3	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted.		Persian
7.3-7.6	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted.	P2_7.6	no pottery collected
7.6-7.85	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted.		no pottery collected
7.85-8.3	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/6) loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, wet.		no pottery collected
8.3-9.0	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/6) loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, water saturated. Likely near water table.	P2_9.0	no pottery collected

Geology Probe Sample Descriptions			
Probe # 3	Sur. El. = 9.39 m, displaced 2 m south from shot point		
Depth m	Sediment Description	Photos	Pottery/Culture
0.4-0.8	road material? dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loam, fine to very coarse sand, average medium sand, very coarse sand size shell fragments.		
0.8-1.05	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loam, fine to very coarse sand, average medium sand, kurkar pebbles, poorly sorted.		Undifferentiated pottery
1.05-1.2	brown to dark brown (10 YR 4/3), , loam to sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium, coarse sand size shell fragments, abundant kurkar pebbles and cobbles, poorly sorted.	P3_1.2	Undifferentiated pottery
1.2-1.5	brown to dark brown (10 YR 4/3), loam to sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium, coarse sand size shell fragments, abundant kurkar pebbles and cobbles, poorly sorted.		Undifferentiated pottery
1.5-1.7	brown (10 YR 5/3), sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium, abundant kurkar coarse sand, very coarse sand, and pebbles, poorly sorted.		Undifferentiated pottery
1.7-1.9	brown (10 YR 5/3), loamy sand, very fine to coarse sand, average fine sand, moderately poorly sorted, abundant kurkar pebbles, cobbles (blocks), worked marble (cobble size).		no pottery collected
1.9-2.3	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam, very fine to medium sand, average fine sand, moderately well sorted, shell fragments and whole <i>Glycymeris</i> , plaster fragments?		Undifferentiated pottery
2.3-2.5	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/6), sandy loam to loam (slightly more clay than above), very fine to medium sand, average fine sand, moderately well sorted,		Undifferentiated pottery
2.5-2.7	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam to loam, very fine to coarse sand, average fine sand, moderately well sorted, kurkar pebbles common, limey powder (plaster?) mixed in sediment.		Undifferentiated pottery
2.75-3.1	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam to loam, very fine to coarse sand, average fine sand, moderately well sorted, abundant kurkar pebbles and whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Undifferentiated pottery
3.1-3.4	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam to loam, very fine to medium sand, average fine sand, well sorted, common kurkar pebbles and whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Persian
3.4-3.75	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam to loam, very fine to medium sand, average fine sand, well sorted, rare kurkar fragments.		Undifferentiated pottery
3.75-4.05	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam to loam, very fine to medium sand, average fine sand, well sorted, rare kurkar fragments.	P3_4.05	Persian
4.05-4.35	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam to loam, very fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, rare kurkar fragments,		Persian

5.0-5.3	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sand to loamy sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moderately well sorted, fragmented and whole <i>Glycymeris</i> , one small land snail.		Undifferentiated pottery (bag included material from 3.75-4.05 m)
5.3-5.65	brown to dark brown (10 YR 4/3), top 20 cm- sand to loamy sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moderately well sorted, bone fragment. Bottom 15 cm - sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moderately well sorted.		Persian/Hellenistic
5.65-6.0	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), top 10-15 cm- sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moderately well sorted. Bottom 20-25 cm- sand to sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moderately well sorted.		Persian
6.0-6.3	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam to loam, fine to medium sand, average fine sand, moderately well sorted, scattered calcareous kurkar pebbles, whole <i>Glycymeris</i> and bivalve Cardiidae possibly <i>Cerastoderma sp.</i>		Predominantly Persian, 1 Byzantine body (possibly intrusive)
6.3-6.6	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), top 20 cm- sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand, moderately well sorted. Bottom 10 cm appears cleaner, loamy sand, whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Persian/Hellenistic
6.6-6.9	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moderately well sorted, scattered shell fragments.	P3_6.9	Early Persian
6.9-7.3	top 30 cm- gray clay (5 YR 5/1) with thin, open root tubes or insect borrows. Bottom 10 cm- sand (dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4)), to sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand.		no pottery collected
7.3-7.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6)sand to loamy sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, no pottery. Appears mixed with pockets of clay loam.	P3_7.5	no pottery collected
7.5-7.8	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/6), sand to loamy sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, <i>Myerx sp.</i>		no pottery collected
7.8-8.2	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/6)sand to loamy sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, water table.		no pottery collected
8.2-8.5	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/8), sand to loamy sand, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, pebble size sand concretions (nodules), water saturated.		no pottery collected

Geology Probe Sample Descriptions			
Probe # 4	Sur. El. = 10.52		
Depth m	Sediment Description	Photos	Pottery/Culture
0.5-0.8	brown (10 YR 5/3), loamy sand, very fine to coarse sand, average coarse sand, abundant kurkar pebbles, whole <i>Glycymeris</i> common, worked marble fragment.		
0.8-1.2	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loamy sand, very fine to coarse sand, average coarse sand (coarse sand is mostly kurkar fragments), abundant rounded kurkar pebbles, abundant whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Undifferentiated pottery
1.2-1.5	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loamy sand, very fine to coarse sand, average coarse sand (coarse sand is mostly kurkar fragments), abundant rounded kurkar pebbles, common whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Byzantine
1.5-1.8	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand (coarse sand is mostly kurkar fragments), abundant rounded kurkar pebbles cobbles and boulder, common whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Roman/Byzantine
1.8-2.1	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand (coarse sand is mostly kurkar fragments), abundant rounded kurkar pebbles cobbles and boulder, common whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Abundant tesserae fragments, undifferentiated pottery
2.1-2.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam to loam (slightly more silt/clay than above), fine to coarse sand, average medium sand. Less kurkar sand and pebbles than above.		Abundant Roman pottery
2.5-2.8	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand, common whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Roman
2.8-3.05	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average fine sand, kurkar and white worked marble (or gypsum?) pebbles, charcoal inclusions.		Hellenistic/early Roman
3.05-3.4	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average fine sand, kurkar and white worked marble (or gypsum?) pebbles.		Persian
3.4-3.65	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average fine sand, kurkar, white worked marble (or alabaster gypsum?) and fine crystalline limestone (or dolostone) pebbles and cobbles, one whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Undifferentiated pottery

4.5-4.85	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand, kurkar pebbles, one whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Pesian
4.85-5.15	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand, clean sand pockets, mortar fragments.		Hellenistic/early Roman
5.15-5.4	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, several whole <i>Glycymeris</i> .		Undifferentiated pottery
5.4-5.75	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), loamy sand, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, grey clay pockets or layer at bottom of interval.		Middle Bronze II
5.75-6.05	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), loamy sand, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, grey clay pockets, kurkar pebbles.		Undifferentiated pottery
6.05-6.35	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), loamy sand, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, grey clay pockets.		Undifferentiated pottery
6.35-6.65	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average fine sand, common kurkar, shells and shell fragments	P4_6.65	Undifferentiated pottery
6.65-6.95	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average fine sand, common kurkar, abundant <i>Glycymeris</i> sp. shells and shell fragments		Undifferentiated pottery
6.95-7.2	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average fine sand.		Undifferentiated pottery and intrusive tesserae
7.2-7.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average fine sand, one whole <i>Glycymeris</i> , scattered black bone flakes?		Undifferentiated pottery and intrusive tesserae
7.5-7.75	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/6), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average fine sand.		Undifferentiated pottery
7.75-8.0	brownish yellow (10 YR 6/6), sand (clay <10 %, no silt), medium sand, cm scale sand concretions (nodules)		Undifferentiated pottery
8.0-8.25	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/6), sand (clay <10 %, no silt), medium sand, cm scale sand concretions (nodules), coquina fragment.		no pottery collected
8.25-8.55	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/8), sand (clay <10 %, no silt), medium sand, mm and cm scale sand concretions (nodules), whole <i>Glycymeris</i> sp.	P4_8.55	no pottery collected
8.55-8.80	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/8), sand (clay <5 %, no silt), medium sand, mm and cm scale sand concretions (nodules).		no pottery collected
8.80-9.00	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/8), sand (clay <5 %, no silt), medium sand, mm and cm scale sand concretions (nodules).		no pottery collected

Geology Probe Sample Descriptions			
Probe #: 5	Sur. El. = 12.74 displaced 2 m to east of shot point		
Depth m	Sediment Description	Photos	Pottery/Culture
0.55-0.85	dark brown (10 YR 3/3, sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand, average medium sand.		Undifferentiated pottery
0.85-1.0	dark brown (10 YR 3/3, sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand (coarse sand is kurkar fragments), average medium sand, <i>Glycymeris</i> sp and kurkar pebbles.		Undifferentiated pottery
1.0-1.5	dark brown (10 YR 3/3, sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand (coarse sand is kurkar fragments), average medium sand.		Undifferentiated pottery
1.5-1.7	brown (10 YR 5/3), sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand (coarse sand is kurkar fragments), average medium sand., abundant kurkar very coarse sand and pebbles and cobbles.		Persian/Byzantine
1.7-2.0	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/4), sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand (coarse sand is kurkar fragments), average medium sand., abundant kurkar very coarse sand, and pebbles, common <i>Glycymeris</i> sp.		Undifferentiated pottery
2.0-2.3	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/4), sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand (coarse sand is kurkar fragments), average medium sand., common kurkar very coarse sand and pebbles.		Undifferentiated pottery
2.3-2.5	brown (10 YR 5/3), sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand (coarse sand is kurkar fragments), average medium sand., common kurkar very coarse sand and pebbles.		Roman pottery, roof tile
2.5-2.85	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/4), sandy loam to silt loam, fine to coarse sand (coarse sand is kurkar fragments), average medium sand., common kurkar very coarse sand, pebbles, abundant <i>Glycymeris</i> sp., gypsum inclusions.		Roman pottery, green flat glass (2x2 cm)
2.85-3.1	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/4), sandy loam to silt loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand., abundant kurkar very coarse sand, pebbles, common <i>Glycymeris</i> sp., gypsum inclusions.		Undifferentiated pottery
3.1-3.4	yellowish brown (10 YR 5/4), sandy loam to silt loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand., common kurkar very coarse sand and pebbles, gypsum inclusions.		Early molded glass (1st century BC, flat, transparent, green triangular piece, 2x1x1), early Roman pottery

3.9-4.2	dark brown (10 YR 3/3), loam (silt rich), fine to medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, ashy pockets, <i>Glycymeris</i> sp.	P5_4.2	Roman pottery, lead cruxiform object
4.2-4.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, very coarse sand and pebble kurkar fragments, ashy pockets, gastropods <i>Murex</i> sp and Naticidae <i>Euspira</i> sp?, bivalve <i>Glycymeris</i> sp.,		Roman
4.5-4.7	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, very coarse sand and pebble kurkar fragments, scattered charcoal fragments, whole and fragmented <i>Glycymeris</i> sp.		Persian
4.7-4.95	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, very coarse sand and pebble kurkar fragments, charcoal fragments, clay pockets, whole and fragmented <i>Glycymeris</i> sp. and small whole unidentified gastropod (juvenile <i>Euspira</i> sp.?).		Undifferentiated pottery
4.95-5.25	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, rare shells and kurkar fragments.		Persian/Hellenistic
5.25-5.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), loamy sand, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, rare shells (including <i>Cerastoderma</i> sp.) and kurkar fragments.		Persian
5.5-5.8	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sand (trace clay, <10% silt), fine and medium sand, average medium sand, scatterd kurkar pebbles.	P5_5.8	Persian
5.8-6.0	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sand (trace clay, <10% silt), fine and medium sand, average medium sand, scatterd kurkar pebbles.		Persian
6.0-6.3	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sand (trace clay, <10% silt, but more silt than above), very fine and fine sand, average fine sand gypsum or liime inclusions, scatterd kurkar pebbles.		Undifferentiated pottery
6.3-6.5	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sand (trace clay, <10% silt), very fine and fine sand, average fine sand, <i>Glycymeris</i> sp., Horse(?) tooth, scatterd kurkar pebbles.		Undifferentiated pottery, horse tooth
6.5-6.8	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sand (trace clay, <10% silt), very fine and fine sand, average fine sand, scatterd kurkar pebbles, dark clay inclusions.		Iron IIr/Persian

7.6-7.8	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average, scattered kurkar pebbles, bivalves <i>Donax</i> sp and <i>Glycymeris</i> sp.		Persian
7.8-8.1	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, fine and medium sand, average medium sand, well sorted, dark brown clay inclusions or pockets		Persian
8.1-8.35	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, very fine to medium sand, average fine sand, dark brown clay inclusions.		Undifferentiated pottery
8.35-8.6	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), sandy loam, very fine to medium sand, average fine sand, dark brown clay inclusions, loamy sand inclusions or interbeds		Persian
8.6-8.85	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4) sandy clay loam, medium sand, gypsum veins.		Undifferentiated, rare sherds in sediment
8.85-9.15	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4) sandy clay loam, medium sand.		no pottery collected
9.15-9.4	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), loam to sandy clay loam, medium to coarse sand, average medium sand.		Persian
9.4-9.7	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), loam to sandy clay loam, medium to coarse sand, average medium sand.		Undifferentiated pottery
9.7-9.9	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/4), loam to sandy clay loam, medium to coarse sand, average medium sand.		no pottery collected
9.9-10.15	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), loam to sandy clay loam, medium to coarse sand, average medium sand.		no pottery collected
10.15-10.4	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, medium to coarse sand, average medium sand.		no pottery collected
10.4-10.6	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand.		Undifferentiated pottery
10.6-10.9	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moist.		Undifferentiated pottery
10.9-11.15	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, moist.		no pottery collected
11.15-11.4	dark yellowish brown (10 YR 4/4), sandy loam, fine to medium sand, average medium sand, scattered pebble concretions, saturated.		no pottery collected

Core 1



P1 1.1-1.6m

DSCN0012.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,832.83 Kb



P1 1.6-2.0m

DSCN0013.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,570.17 Kb



P1 2-2.5m

DSCN0014.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,878.88 Kb



P1 2.5-2.9m

DSCN0015.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,536.85 Kb



P1 2.9-3.3m

DSCN0016.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,581.70 Kb



P1 3.3-3.7m

DSCN0017.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,581.35 Kb



P1 3.7-4.1m

DSCN0018.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,563.79 Kb



P1 4.1-4.5m

DSCN0019.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,515.80 Kb



P1 4.5-4.9m

DSCN0020.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,407.79 Kb



P1 4.9-5.3m

DSCN0021.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,548.98 Kb



P1 5.3-5.7m

DSCN0022.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,827.84 Kb



P1 5.7-6.0m

DSCN0023.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,495.93 Kb



P1 6.0-6.4m

DSCN0024.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,504.88 Kb



P1 6.4-6.8

DSCN0025.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,574.38 Kb



P1 6.8-7.2m

DSCN0026.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,827.49 Kb



P1 7.2-7.6m

DSCN0027.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,597.38 Kb



P1 7.6-8.0m

DSCN0028.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,575.32 Kb



P1 8.0-8.3

DSCN0029.JPG
1920x2560 (24MP)
1,838.18 Kb

Core 2



P2 0.4-0.7

DISC0084.JPG
1920-2560-2430(B)
1,570.96 Kb



P2 1.6-2.9

DISC0085.JPG
1920-2560-2430(B)
1,585.67 Kb



P2 2.5-2.85

DISC0086.JPG
1920-2560-2430(B)
1,585.35 Kb



P2 3.9-4.2

DISC0087.JPG
1920-2560-2430(B)
1,690.75 Kb



P2 5.6-5.8m

DISC0088.JPG
1920-2560-2430(B)
1,491.57 Kb



P2 7.6-7.85

DISC0089.JPG
1920-2560-2430(B)
1,534.12 Kb



P2 7.6-7.85

DISC0090.JPG
1920-2560-2430(B)
1,525.05 Kb

Core 3



P3-4-B

DSCN0072.JPG
1920x2560 (24.708)
1,517.69 Kb



P3 1.2-1.5m

DSCN0073.JPG
1920x2560 (24.708)
1,492.21 Kb



P3 2.75-3.1

DSCN0074.JPG
1920x2560 (24.708)
1,511.49 Kb



P3 3.4-3.75

DSCN0075.JPG
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1,479.39 Kb



P3 5.3-5.65

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P3 6.3-6.6

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P3 7.5-7.8

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Core 4



Core 5



DISC0086.JPG
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DISC0093.JPG
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