General

The second season of excavation in Area A was carried out from June 24 to July 18, 2014, under the supervision of Ido Wachtel, assisted by Carroll Kobs, Jeff Kobs, Kenton Williams, and Kevin Crow. Fredrika Loew was the registrar. Seventeen volunteers participated during the first two weeks and ten during the last two weeks.

Area A is located at the eastern edge of the tell in the saddle that links the upper and lower mounds. Five squares were opened in the 2013 season, located within the topographic grid of Squares 506 and 507 (see 2013 report, Fig. 1, left). The squares from south to north are A/14, A/13, A/12 on the east and T/13 and T/12 on the west. A total of four main stratigraphic phases were identified: Strata A-1 to A-4 (see 2013 report, Table 1; Photo 5). The uppermost phase A-1 consisted of late (Ottoman?) terrace walls built directly on top of phase A-2 walls from the Iron Age. Strata A-2 to A-4 are attributed to the Iron Age I.

During the 2014 season, excavations in Squares A/14, A/13, A/12 and T/12 continued, while a new square was opened in the NW corner of the area – S/12. In addition, a small part (2.0 x 2.5 m) of Square T/14 was excavated. The main goals of the 2014 season were to 1) clarify the nature and date of Phase A-4, which had been reached at the end of 2013 in Squares A/14, A/13, A/12; 2) better understand the plan of the large A-2 building and to see if it continued to the west (Square S/12); 3) better understand the relationship between A-2 and A-3 (Squares T/14, T/12 and S/12). The entire accumulation removed this season reached a depth of 1.9 m. in Square S/12 (with the first 0.4 m. removed by mechanical equipment), 1.55 m. in Square T/14, 1.10 m in Square A/14, 0.6 m in Square A/13, and 0.55 m. in Square A/12.

It is important to note that all three Iron Age strata exposed to date (A-2–A-4) have the same general orientation, and in fact, a number of walls of later phases were built directly on top of the earlier walls. The greatest degree of continuity is between Strata A-3 and A-2, but Stratum A-4 also follows the same general lines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local phase</th>
<th>General description</th>
<th>Height Range</th>
<th>Loci (2014)</th>
<th>Walls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A1/Topsoil  | Late (Ottoman?) terrace walls and soft debris below agricultural topsoil (removed partially by JCB) built directly on Iron Age walls of A2. Burial/skeletal remains? (Square A/14) | 378.43–377.52 | *Square S/12*: 2104, 2110 (tabun), 2111, 2122  
*Square T/12*: 1106, 2109? (pit), 2117?  
*Square T/14*: 2101 | *Square T/12*: 1108, 1133 (Removed) |
| A2          | Walls of a well-constructed building oriented NS-EW with related floor of hard-packed clay from Iron I (or early Iron IIA); two sub-phases containing floor raising and minor changes in the general plan; re-use of walls from Phase A-3. | 377.60–376.78 | *Square S/12*: 2124, 2125, 2149, 2156  
*Square T/12*: 2109? (pit), 2119, 2114, 2133, 2139, 1123  
*Square T/14*: 2108, 2132 | *Square S/12*: 2126, 2128, 2138, 2144  
*Square T/12*: 1114, 1120, 1136, 2118, 2136, [2137?]  
*Square T/14*: 2130, 2130 |
| A3          | Walls segments oriented NS-EW; related debris layer with scattered stones (possibly fill laid above A-4 destruction debris). | 377.05–376.48 | *Square T/12*: 2135 | *Square T/12*: 2137?, 2151? |
| A4          | Three oriented NS and one wall oriented NE/SW; related destruction layer and floors in Squares A/14 and A/13. Two walls possibly re-used from A-5 | 376.40–375.22 | *Square A/12*: 2147, 2152, 2163  
*Square A/13*: 1150, 2115, 2116, 2141, 2142, 2159, 2162, 2164  
*Square A/14*: 2113, 2129, 2127, 1163 | *Square A-T/12*: 2145  
*Square A/13*: 2143  
*Square A/14*: 1162, 1146 |
The earliest remains in Area A were exposed in the three eastern squares, A/14-13-12. In 2013 we reached the top of this phase, and in 2014 we excavated three clear rooms of a building near the eastern slope (Figs. 2-3). The plan of this building remains unknown, as it continues to the north and south beyond the border of the excavation. I
was also damaged by erosion on the slope to the east. On the west, it continues below the subsidiary balk in Squares A/13-14, although one of the walls was traced to the west in Square A/12. This building suffered a violent destruction and was covered by floors and walls of Stratum A-3. All of the pottery recovered from the Stratum A-4 loci dates to Iron Age I.

Fig. 3. Eastern rooms of A-4 building, looking north.

The Stratum A-4 rooms will be described from south to north.

Room 2129
The southern room (2129) is bounded on the north by Wall 2107; its boundaries on the other three sides are not known or are uncertain (Fig. 4).
On the west, the subsidiary balk that runs through the square shows one (or two) clear lines of burnt reddish bricks (Fig. 5). This may be a remnant of the closing wall on the west, or perhaps its collapse.

On the south, an east-west wall composed of two rows of stones (2169) was revealed at the very end of the season (Figs. 6–7). However, it is not certain that this was the southern closing wall of the room for two reasons: 1) the destruction debris in the room seems to cover the wall (Fig. 6), and 2) it is constructed differently than the northern wall. It was perhaps the top of an A-5 wall used as a bench or work surface.
in the A-4 room. Wall 2169 seems to have been cut on the east by Wall 1162 (Fig. 7). If Wall 1162 was the eastern closing wall of Room 2129 then this would prove the attribution of Wall 2169 to A-5. However, as detailed below, it is possible that Wall 1162 belongs to A-3. If so, then we are left with the uncertainty of the role of Wall 2169 in this room.

Fig. 6. Southern section of Square A/14; A-2 Wall 1124 above fill and white floor of A-3 (1167) covering A-4 destruction debris. Top of Wall 2169 emerging (see Fig. 7).

On the eastern end of Room 2129 a sturdy, well-built wall (1162) 0.95 m wide by 1.0 m (7 courses) high makes a nice corner with a segment of a north-south wall (2146) (Figs. 3–4, 7). This corner is nicely seen on the interior, while the exterior appears to have been damaged (possibly by a pit) and is missing. Wall 1162 runs for 3.3 m before continuing into the southern balk. The upper course of the southern end of this wall contained small, loosely laid field stones similar to the Stratum A-1 late terrace walls (in Squares T/12-13), and it appears that this was an addition on top of the well-built earlier wall (Fig. 7a). Thus, Wall 1162 might have two phases, both horizontally (an A-3-4 wall with small stones of a later wall on top) and vertically (note a kind of seam between the southern and northern parts of the wall in Fig. 7a). This needs to be clarified further when the floating level of the wall is reached. Wall 2146 is built as nicely as Wall 1162 (1.0 m wide and running 1.9 m before its erosion on the eastern slope); so far it is preserved to a height of two courses (Fig. 4).

Two alternatives for the phasing of Walls 1162 and 2146 are being considered: 1) that the walls were built in Stratum A-4 (or even in A-5) and were subsequently reused (perhaps as a bench or work surface) in Stratum A-3, since the floor of that
phase (1167 at 376.30 m) abuts its preserved top; 2) that they were built in Stratum A-3 and cut into the destruction debris in Room 2129 from A-4. Although the destruction debris in the room appeared to have abutted Wall 1162 (Fig. 7a) there are possible traces of a foundation trench vaguely visible in the southern balk of the square (Fig. 6), but this will require further clarification. Support for Option 2 is that the northern wall of the room (2107) is only ca. 1.0 m to the north of Wall 2146, which would not make much architectural sense, unless this was a kind of entrance corridor. At this point in the excavation, it appears that the southern end of the wall continues down, while the northern part floats on the level of A-4 Floor 2129. However, further excavation is needed to clarify this point.

Fig. 7. Stratum A-4 Room 2129 looking east at Wall 1162; note Wall 2169 on the floor level of the room.

Fig. 7a. Wall 1162, looking east; note small stones in top course and on the north; in the foreground is destruction debris 2113.
The northern wall (2107) was oriented east-west and ran for a length of 4.5 m along the line of the balk between Squares A/13-14; on the west, it continued into the subsidiary balk, and on the east where it is eroded. Its width is 0.4 m, made of one line of medium-size field stones (Figs. 3-4). The stones in the upper preserved courses are set on a diagonal, similar to the construction of Wall 2143, which runs parallel to it to the south (see below). It is not clear whether this method of placing the stones was intentional, or the result of later damage to the wall, perhaps seismic, although the former option seems more tenable. The eastern edge of this wall was seen in the east section of the tell in the survey conducted in May 2012 and termed A3/5 (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8. Section in eastern slope under Area A, looking west; Wall A3/5=Wall 2107. Floor A3/4=Floor 2129 of Stratum A-4.

The top of Wall 2107 (376.39 in the east and 376.09 in the west) was covered by orange brick debris (2102, equivalent to 1150 to the north and 2113 to the south). It was preserved to a minimum height of 0.98 m and four courses. While it is not yet floating, judging by the part of the wall exposed in the slope (Fig. 8), it does not continue down much further. There was a gap in the center of W2107, possibly an entrance to the room on the north (Room 2162), described below.

The space between Walls 2107 and 1162 contained a thick destruction layer (2129) with complete vessels and massive bricks and roof collapse, ash and charcoal, as well as decayed brick debris around them (Figs. 4, 9–10). The upper part of the destruction (2113) was composed of hard orangey bricks and brick debris with black
ashy patches. Within this debris was a large amount of collapsed stones (2120) which continued down to the floor level. Among these stones were found large sherds of a collared-rim pithos. When the vessels began to appear, the locus was denoted 2129, which continued down to the floor. Just above the floor was softer and ashier debris. By the end of the 2014 season almost all of the floor was reached, though some pockets still need to be excavated. In the middle of Locus 2129 was a pithos set into a circle of stones (2127) and the pithos base sunk into the earthen floor (Fig. 10). Surrounding this installation were some seven complete vessel in situ, including a cooking pot, an amphora, a jug, parts of a pithos, and a juglet; unwashed sherds from those vessels were kept for residue analysis. Grinding stones, a pestle, beads and flint blades were also found. All of the soil was sifted. Soil samples and charcoal samples were taken, as well as samples from the burnt material in the western balk for micro-archaeological analysis. Both 2113 and 2129 were sealed by phase A-3 white plaster floor 1167 (376.32 m) (Fig. 6). Note that previously (see 2013 report), this floor had been tentatively associated with Stratum A-4, but excavation this season showed that it should be related to the later phase instead.

Fig. 9. Detail of destruction debris 2113 and stone collapse 2120 above Floor 2129; looking west.
A narrow (1.0 m wide) space between Wall 2146 on the south and Wall 2107 on the north contained a layer of debris (2160) that was less burnt than that found in the room itself to the west, although this area would have been part of the room as well. At the end of the excavation, a rather hard whitish layer was reached, although it was higher than the floor level in the room (Fig. 7). A notable feature here was a smooth rounded stone that protruded some 0.15 m above the white layer. This is apparently similar to Installation 2164 in Square A/13/Room 2162 to the north (see below), although here the stone is oriented differently, and it was not excavated down to its base this season to see if it too has an attached wall/bench.

**Room 2162**

The central room among the three revealed this season in Stratum A-4 is Room 2162, bordered on the south by Wall 2107 (the northern wall of Room 2129) and on the north by Wall 2143 (Figs. 3–4). The western border is beyond the subsidiary balk running through the square. A possible fragment of the eastern wall of this room might be a short wall segment that was revealed in the section in the eastern slope during the 2012 survey, designated A3/11 (Fig. 8). This wall made a corner with Wall 2107 (=A3/5) in Square A\13 and was re-numbered this season as Wall 2173. This
The northern wall of Room 2162 (Wall 2143) was similar to Wall 2107 in its construction and size. It was 0.4 m wide and ran for a length of 5.0 m until it was cut by erosion on the east where the slope is. It too ran inside a balk (between Squares A/12-13). The wall was one row wide and made of medium-sized field stones set at a diagonal in a kind of herringbone pattern (Fig. 11). The wall was preserved four courses high (down to the floor level of the room, as it is not yet floating), ca. 0.5 m high; its top was at 376.29 m in the east and 376.17 m in the west. Wall 2143 ran underneath Stratum A-3-2 Wall 1118, separated by a layer of fill, 0.3-0.4 m deep (2140). The continuation of Wall 2143 to the west in Square T\13 might be Wall 1168, found in 2013 and located on the same level (Fig. 11a).

Fig. 11. Wall 2143 (northern wall of Room 2162), looking north; note line of small stones (2148) along its southern face; in the background is Room 2147

Fig. 11a. Squares TA/13, looking east; Wall 1168 on lower level than Wall 1118.
The entrance in Wall 2107 connected this room to Room 2129 to the south, so it is certain they were contemporary and part of the same unit. This room, however, was devoid of finds and may have had two sub-phases. Below the stone and debris fill (?) ascribed to Stratum A-3 here (1150) was a layer of burnt destruction debris (2116) composed of the same material as the other rooms – burnt orangey bricks, stones, charcoal, and ash. The destruction debris contained a great deal of pottery, although it was not restorable or composed of complete vessels, as was the cae in the room to the south. Other finds in this debris included a bronze pin (375.63 m), a grinding stone (375.45 m), flint blades, and the fragment of a small clay bull figurine (375.33 m). This burnt debris rested on a thin white hard-packed layer (2159) that appears to have been the floor. Two pits of soft gray material (2141, 2142; Fig. 14) were visible in the debris (2116) above the floor. They were very shallow and were devoid of finds, so they may be nothing more than animal burrows. In the floor makeup of 2159, the top of a smoothed rounded basalt stone was revealed at 375.35 m. This stone (2164) was abutted on the west by a short stone wall with traces of brick on it, indicating that it might have been a bench (2165). Both features rested on a lower layer (2162, 375.17 m) that we identified as a lower floor or perhaps a sub-floor fill below 2159 (Figs. 12–13). The nature of this installation is unknown, but it may have served a cultic function. Only a few bones and sherds were in association with it. Notably, the top of a similar stone emerged in Locus 2160, a debris layer between Walls 2146 and 2107 in Square A/14, apparently part of Room 2129 (described above). This stone was oriented north-south, as opposed to the east-west orientation of stone 2164 in Room 2162. Note that this installation is in the center of the room and in line with the entrance in Wall 2107 to the south, making it the focus of this room.
In addition to the above sequence were traces of activity in the southwestern part of the room along Wall 2107, and in the northern part of the room along Wall 2143. It is not clear whether this represents a localized later sub-phase or whether this area had been elevated within the room. Just below the A-3 fill (1150) was a concentration of small stones (2121) laid against the northern face of the wall where it entered the western subsidiary balk [Fig. 14]. This could represent a collapse or a reinforcement of this part of the wall. The stones rested on a thin hard white layer (2115) visible only in the southwestern corner of the room at 375.62 m. On the eastern end of 2115 was a pit, partially lined with stones, and found full of animal bones (2112). This pit was 0.3 m deep, although it might have been deeper, since its lower part, which lacked the numerous bones of the upper part, was very soft (Fig. 15). It should be noted that a large amount of bones was found in this general area in the A-3 debris above (1150), but no contour of a pit was evident until the exposure of
2112. An additional element related to this possible later phase is a concentration of stones similar to 2121 along the southern face of Wall 2143 (Fig. 11). These stones (2148) were smaller than those in the wall, so it does not look like they were collapsed from it. It is possible that they were related to Pit 2142, although this could not be substantiated.

Fig. 14. Room 2162, looking south white floor(?) 2115, stones 2121, Pits 2141 and 2142 in southwestern part of Room 2162; note top of Pit 2112 in upper left.

Fig. 15. Pit 2112 with animal bones, looking east (left) and detail, looking south (right).

Room 2147

The northern room, 2147, was less well preserved than the others due to the close eastern slope that eroded that part of the room. The southern border of the room was Wall 2143 (the northern wall of Room 2162). No entrance was found in this wall that
would have joined the two rooms, but it might have existed to the east, beyond the erosion line, or to the west, in the subsidiary balk.

The northern wall of this room (1173/2145) is something of an enigma, as it runs on a different orientation than the other walls in the building, i.e., northeast-southwest, instead of east-west (Fig. 16). It was also constructed differently than the two other cross-walls, 2107 and 2143, comprising two rows of medium sized stones. The western part of the wall in Square T/12 was excavated in 2013 as Wall 1173 and its eastern end designated Wall 2145. The western part was well built of two rows of medium-sized basalt stones with a fill of small stones between them and preserved to three courses, while the part of the wall underneath the entranceway in Building A-2 was quite damaged and its eastern end cut by erosion of the slope. Its upper level is 376.51 m (W) and 376.29 (E) and it is not yet floating. An interesting feature of the western part of this wall (1173) is that it served as a sleeper wall in a Stratum A-3 surface that contained a tabun (1173) and pithos installation (1164). The wall ran between them, and perhaps served as a bench or work surface. This demonstrates the close proximity of the strata in this area. The different orientation of Wall 1173/2145 is hard to explain. One possible explanation is that it was a Stratum A-5 wall reused in the Stratum A-4 building. This may be proven only when excavation proceeds down below the floors of A-4.

Fig. 16. A-4 Wall 1173/2145 with different orientation; looking southeast.
Locus 2147 between Walls 2145 and 2143 contained material similar to the contents of the other two rooms (2116 in A\13 and 2113-2129 in A\14) – burnt orange brick debris with patches of black ashy soil and large quantities of pottery and animal bones. Excavation ended at 375.60 m, which is about 0.40 m higher than the floor level in the other rooms. In this destruction debris, two articulated skeletons were found (Fig. 17). Both were resting on their right side and facing south: 2163 against the northern face of Wall 2145 (levels: 375.83-375.64), and 2152 against the southern face of Wall 2143 (levels: 375.98-375.72). Skeleton 2152 was a female around 17 years old. Skeleton 2163 was a male around 45 years old with a hole through his skull that might indicate a violent death (Fig. 18). These articulated skeletons are associated with the destruction event, although the rather orderly way in which they were placed suggests a burial more than a sudden death. It is possible that they had been killed in the destruction and were subsequently placed near the walls. This interpretation might be supported by the perforated skull of the male, alluding to a violent death. Another possibility is that there was an earthquake and these two people laid down by the walls as protection, meeting their deaths when the walls collapsed and fire broke out. It is not possible to verify either of these scenarios at this point.

Fig. 17. Skeletons 2152 (right, south) and 2163 (left, north) in Room 2147, looking east.
Yet another feature revealed in the destruction debris 2147 was an installation (2171) against the northern face of Wall 2145 at its eastern end (Fig. 19) comprised of large standing pithos sherds. Though part of the same vessel, the sherds did not seem to be the result of a pithos breaking in situ, but sherds deliberately placed standing up together. Inside the ring formed by these sherds was an intact jug (375.73 m) whose neck had been deliberately removed (Fig. 20). These sherds and the jug were removed at the end of the season, even though we did not yet reach the floor here, as a precaution against looting. Pithos Installation 2171 was located about 0.50 m east of the feet of Skeleton 2152. All of the soil from 2147 and 2171 was sifted, and soil samples were taken for micro-archaeological analysis.
One more element that may possibly be attributed to Stratum A-4 is Wall 2170 in Square T/12 (Fig. 21). This is the segment of a one-stone wide wall whose top was revealed at 376.88 m below elements attributed here to Stratum A-3 (Collapse 2168 and Wall 2151, see below). It is possible that this wall had made a corner with Wall 1168, although this would not explain its relationship to Wall 1173/2415.

**Summary of Phase A-4**

Remains of Stratum A-4 were uncovered in the three easternmost squares (A\12-14), extending 15 m from north to south and 4–5 m from east to west, as well as wall extensions to the west in Square T/12 (1173), and possibly, T/13 (1168). Three rooms or spaces bounded by four walls were excavated. This building had been violently
destroyed, leaving a distinct burnt orange brick debris with brick and stone collapse in
which large amounts of pottery and bones, as well as a few other finds, were found.
The southernmost room (2129) was the richest in finds, and the northernmost room
contained two articulated skeletons in the debris. The nature of the middle room
(2162) was different. It did not contain complete vessels, but did have a pit (2112)
replete with many large bones and a standing-stone installation with a bench (2164),
which might be interpreted as a cultic niche. The bones might somehow be related to
this function of the room and installation.

It is not possible to determine the function of this building. The complete
vessels found in Room 2129 include at least two pithoi, as well as a cooking pot, a jug
and a krater, so that no clear function can be suggested. The cultic niche in the central
room might allude to its function. The articulated skeletons suggest that this building
had been destroyed suddenly by some sort of a dramatic event, whether a conquest or
an earthquake, that caught the people unable to escape.

It is possible that two of the walls (1173/2145 and 2169) originated in an
earlier level (A-5) and were re-used in A-4, although only further excavation will be
able to prove this.
Excavation of remains attributed to Stratum A-3 was limited this season, as the focus was directed at exposing Strata A-4 and A-2. Several elements that had been previously ascribed to Stratum A-4 are now understood as belonging to A-3, as will be detailed below. This phase is characterized by rather fragmentary architectural remains found mainly in Squares A/13–14, with some elements revealed (possibly) in Square T/12 in 2014. The fragmentary nature is probably due to the fact that many of the walls were re-used (or dismantled) when the large A-2 building was built. Erosion on the eastern slope also caused some of this fragmentation.

What follows is a summary of the remains of Stratum A-3 from the 2013 report supplemented by the few insights gained during the 2014 season. For photos, please refer to the 2013 report.

The general plan contains parts of two rooms that appear to be surrounded by what might be described as open areas to the north and south. In several places, the floors associated with this stratum were made of distinct white lime, such as 1140 and 1167 (see Fig. 8).

The eastern ‘room’ is bordered by Wall 1142(=1158, see below) on the south (its eastern part is missing) and by Wall 1118 on the north. The latter wall was built above A-4 Wall 2143 and contained a fill (2140) between them. Wall 1126 in Square A/13 consists of three short segments that create two entrances to the western space; it is not clear whether this was intentional or if stones were removed at some point, perhaps to create these accesses at a later stage. This eastern room has a white floor (1140 at 376.41 m). To the west of Wall 1126 the room is bordered on the south by Wall 1158, which is a direct continuation of Wall 1142. The assumed western continuation of Wall 1118 is missing, possibly having been dismantled when the A-2 building was constructed. This assumption is based on the presence of Wall 1168, which runs on the same line as Wall 1118, but at a lower level, just as A-4 Wall 2143 runs underneath 1118 in Square A/13 to the east. In this area was a layer of debris (1141), but no clear floor. To the north of Wall 1118 was an open area with a tabun (1164) and a pithos installation (1166) that flanked the top of A-4 Wall 1173/2145. Debris to the east of this activity (1146) covered the A-4 destruction and the wall (the continuation of 1173 to the east, denoted as 2145).

The few elements that were added to what we know about Stratum A-3 in the 2014 season include the full exposure of Wall 1158 (Square T/13) (which had only been seen previously in the southern balk of T/12 in 2013), a short segment of a wall
(2151, T/12) and a stone collapse (2168, T/12) that might belong to this stratum (both covered by A-2 debris layer 2133), and the attribution of Loci 1152, 1153 and 1167 to A-3 instead of to A-4. It seems that Wall 1162, as well, might belong to this stratum.

Wall 1158 is the direct continuation of Wall 1142 to the west, although its top is preserved somewhat lower (376.67 m as opposed to 376.98 m). It is covered by A-2 Floor 2132, although the eastern part of the wall (1142) is preserved so that its top protrudes into that same floor. The relationship of Wall 1158/1142 to A-2 Wall 1147 is complex in light of two factors: 1) different elevations, but on the same line, and 2) Wall 1142 continued to be used in A-2, but 1158 did not. Concerning elevations, Wall 1158 directly continues the line of Wall 1147, although its preserved top (376.67 m) is at the floating level of that wall (Fig. 23). It is possible that Wall 1142 and 1158 together composed the original A-3 wall. Then, in A-2, short Wall 1147 was built (along with Walls 2130 and 2131) and the top part of 1158 dismantled, but Wall 1142 continued to be in use (see below for the explanation of the re-use of 1142). This would have made an entranceway into the narrow space on the south created by Walls 2130, 2131 and 1130 (see further below).

Wall 2151 is a north-south wall segment in Square T/12 running 1.4 m from the floating level of A-2 Pedestal 2114 towards the north and into the northern balk of the square (Figs. 24–25, 33). It is preserved four courses high and is not yet floating. Its relative position under an A-2 element suggests that it belongs to A-3; its top

---

**Fig. 23.** Square A/13, looking south at the relationship between A-2 Wall 1147 and A-3 Wall 1158.

Wall 2151 is a north-south wall segment in Square T/12 running 1.4 m from the floating level of A-2 Pedestal 2114 towards the north and into the northern balk of the square (Figs. 24–25, 33). It is preserved four courses high and is not yet floating. Its relative position under an A-2 element suggests that it belongs to A-3; its top
elevations (376.90-377.11 m) may confirm this. It is not clear what happened to its southern part. It was either cut when large A-2 Wall 1114 and Pedestal 2118 were built or the stone collapse (2168) to its south might represent its dismantling. If it belongs to A-3 the wall might have made a corner on the south with Wall 1118, although it is of somewhat different construction. Only further excavation can solve this question. An alternative to the attribution of Wall 2151 to A-3 would be to ascribe it to A-4, based only on its apparent affinity in construction method and orientation to Wall 1173 to its south.

Fig. 24. Square T/12, looking east; A-3(?) Wall 2151 cut by A-2 Pedestal 2118.

Fig. 25. General view of Squares T–A/12 looking south; Wall 2151 is cut by A-2 Pedestal 2118 in lower right (see Fig. 23).

The rather haphazard stone collapse (2168) (Fig. 26) abutted the floating level of A-2 Wall 1114 and thus, might belong to Stratum A-3, as it partially covered Wall
2170, attributed to A-4. However, these conclusions are tentative, as this was a narrow and deep area to excavate, precluding the certainty of various relationships.

Fig. 26. Square T/12, looking north; stone collapse 2168 south of A-2 Pedestal 2118.

In Square A/14, Wall 1130 had been attributed to Stratum A-3, although it was detached from other elements in this phase and its elevation was rather high (it floated 0.35 m above Floor 1167) (Fig. 27). In 2014 it became clear that Wall 1130 belonged to Stratum A-2 (see description below); thus, the loci below it (1152, 1153 and 1167) that had been ascribed to A-4 are now understood to belong to A-3. Floor 1167 abutted the upper courses of Wall 1162 that bordered it on the east at 376.30 m, so it seems that this wall must also be attributed to A-3. However, the question remains, as noted above, whether this wall was first constructed in A-3, or was built in A-4 and then re-used in A-3.

Fig. 27. Square A/14, looking north at Wall 1130 is now attributed to A-2, above A-3 Floor 1167.
Important information has been added to what we now know about the large Stratum A-2 building revealed just under topsoil (see report, 2013). Two new parts of the area were excavated this season: Square S/12 and the western half of Square T/12 in the northwestern corner of Area A, and the northwestern part of Square T/14 in the southwestern corner of the area. The goal of excavation in S–T/12 was to see if the building extended further to the west, while the goal of our work in T/14 was to clarify stratigraphic issues relating to Strata A2 and A3; namely, to see if A-3 Walls 1126 and 1142 continued into Stratum A-2 as well, and to clarify the southern part of the building. For information concerning the part of the building excavated in 2013, see the 2013 report; however, some basic details will be repeated here along with the additions in 2014.

**Square T/12**

Directly underneath the Stratum A-1 terrace walls (1108 and 1133), we revealed the northern continuation of Wall 1114, along with the corner it made with
Wall 1136 on the north (Fig. 29). W1114 is the longest wall of the building, oriented N-S and running a length of 12.5 m from Square T\12 to T\14 (Fig. 30). This wall is well-built, and preserved to a height of 0.68 m in the south (377.36-376.68 m) and 1.03 m in the north (377.64-376.61 m). Three large and roughly worked stones were revealed on its preserved top at the northern end, just where Pedestal 2118 adjoins it (see below); in the corner, the large stone is round (Figs. 29–30). These stones were probably meant to reinforce the corner, since they would not have been visible, either being under a brick superstructure (that did not survive) or additional stone courses of this wall. The exposure of this corner indicates that the northwestern room of the building (1123) measured 3.2 x 2.2 m. As known from 2013, the room was entered from the east, from yet another room (1122), whose eastern end was eroded on the slope. Wall 1136 is a well-built wall, composed of medium and large unworked limestone filled in with smaller stones, 0.7 m wide, and running a length of 5 m until cut by erosion on the east (Fig. 31). It was excavated to floating level in the west, but not yet in the east. The lower courses of Wall 1136 are comprised of very large stones (Fig. 32), which may be a constructional feature or perhaps remnants of an earlier wall on which the later A-2 wall was built. Parallel to Wall 1136 is Wall 1120 to the south; it ran for 6 m until the erosion line in the east. It is 0.7 m wide and built of two rows of stones preserved to a height of 0.57 m in the west (377.33-376.76) and 0.7 m in the east (376.53-375.91). It is clearly sloping down from west to east.

Fig. 29. Square T/12, looking south; corner of Walls 1114 and 1136 in foreground, and Walls 1114 and 1120 in center left. Note large stones in northern end of Wall 1114.
A layer of debris left in the western half of Room 1123 (Fig. 31) was removed down to the floor of this room (2135), revealing the western end of Wall 1173/2145, just below the floor (although there was, in fact, no clearly detected floor in 1123). An
accumulation of pottery was found, including one apparently restorable vessel; a stone weight was found as well (21222). Within this debris was a wall (2137) that extended from the eastern face of Wall 1114, located 0.4 m from Wall 1136 on the north (Fig. 32). It closely abuts Wall 1114, but is not bonded with it. Wall 2137, one stone wide (0.65 m) runs for 0.9 m before it terminates abruptly. There is a gap of ca. 0.4 m from Wall 1136 on its north, forming a kind of channel between the two walls. Three to four courses of Wall 2137 were preserved to a height of 0.55 m (377.05–376.48 m); its top was 0.2 m above the floor, and it continued down some 0.35 m below the floor level (although the floor here, 1123, was not well-identified), suggesting that it had been partially subterranean. For this reason, we considered the possibility that this was a drain, although it is not clear what it drained – and how. At the point where the open channel joined Wall 1114 there are several large stones, which might possibly be the blockage of an opening made at some later date. If so, then this would have led from the building to the area west of it; if so, then the substance being drained would have flowed from inside to outside the building (although there does not seem to be much of a slope here, if at all). The bottom of 2137 (376.48 m) is slightly above the level of the A-3 activity here (oven, pithos installation, and the top of Wall 1173 – 376.40–46 m) and is therefore attributed to A-2.

![Fig. 32. Square T/12, looking west at A-2 Wall 1114 and unexcavated debris in western part of Room 1123. Drain 2137 on the right.](image)

To the west of Wall 1114 the situation was somewhat unclear. It seems that the building does not continue to the west and that the elements revealed in Square S/12 (described below) comprise a separate building. However, the possibility exists that there had been a connection between the two buildings and that this area is
An interesting element here is Pedestal 2118, a 0.7 sq m stone structure whose top is preserved at the same level as Wall 1114. It is built of medium and large roughly worked stones and preserved seven courses high (almost 0.9 m). Pedestal 2118 is built against the northern end of Wall 1114 – abutting but not bonding with it (Figs. 29–31, 33–34). The meaning and function of this construction is unclear. While it is possible that it had continued to the west (it is more or less on line with Wall 2128 in Square S/12, see below), it seems more likely that it was originally built as found – its western face orderly and nicely finished. Its purpose, then, might have been decorative; perhaps as an ante that flanked an entrance into the building from the north, in which case we would expect to find another pedestal inside the western balk. Support for the ornamental element thesis is Wall 2136 almost 2 m to its south. This is the stub of a wall that extends from Wall 1114, and might have been another such pedestal or ante. The preservation of Wall 2136 is comparably poor (Figs. 30, 35), but it is almost the same size (0.7 m long by 0.6 m wide; though its southern face is partially inside the balk and might have originally been 0.7 m like 2118). Just as 2118 continues the line of Wall 1136, 2136 continues the line of Wall 1120. On the other hand, it is floating higher than 2136 (377.22 as opposed to 376.90) and its western face is not nicely finished; however, this might have been the result of damage caused by a later pit, 2109. To the south is Wall 1117 at the same distance as 2126 is from 2118 (almost 2 m). It was understood as a wall separating two rooms (1128 and 1129) of which only a narrow sliver was preserved due to the western balk. While conjectural, this too might be another ante, although it does not have a corresponding wall continuing to the east.
Fig. 33. Square T/12, Pedestal 2118 built against Wall 1114, looking northeast; A-3 Wall 2151 extending from under 2118 towards the north. Note that A-3/4 Wall 1173/2145 extends to the northeast beyond Wall 1114.

Fig. 34. Square T/12, Pedestal 2118, looking south.
Between Pedestal 2118, Wall 1114, Pedestal (?) 2136 and the western balk of Square T/12 was a layer of debris with collapsed stones (2133) that was excavated down to the floating level of the surrounding walls, although no clear floor was reached here. Below this was a debris and stone collapse layer (2150, 2168) attributed to Stratum A-3, as described above. The debris and stones of 2133 were topped and cut by what seems to be a pit (2109; Fig. 45). Dark soft organic soil and some stones filled this pit and probably caused the damage to Wall 2136. The pottery recovered from 2109 was all Iron Age, so it is attributed to Stratum A-2, although it seems to represent a phase that post-dates the building. Excavation of the balk between Squares T-S/12 will help to clarify the phasing of this disturbance.

**Square S/12**

Expansion of the excavation to the west in Square S/12 this season revealed what appears to be yet another building, or part of the same building but separated from it by an entranceway (or street?) from the north.

Under a thick (ca. 0.6 m) layer of topsoil (2104) and brick debris (2111, 2122) a series four walls were exposed (Figs. 36–37): east–west Walls 2126 and 2128 (which continue the line of Walls 1120 and 1136 respectively; but as noted above, with a possible gap (entranceway?) between them in Square T/12), and north–south Walls 2138 and 2144. These walls were abutted by layers of occupation debris resting on beaten-earth floors, as described below.
Fig. 36. Looking southeast at Squares S-T/12.

Fig. 36a. Balk between Squares S-T/12, looking north.

Fig. 37. Looking east at Squares S-T/12.
Wall 2126 runs along the southern edge of Square S/12. It is 4.5 m long and 0.65 wide; its southern face is inside the balk and the wall continues into the western balk beyond the border of the excavation. On the east, it is not clear whether the wall terminates at its corner with Wall 2136 (see below) or continues into the eastern balk where it either terminates with or joins with Wall 2136; however, the join is damaged by Pit 2109 (see above). Wall 2126 continues the line of Wall 1120 in Square T/12. It was made of two rows of field stones, and preserved to a height of 0.78 m (377.56 to 376.58 m, not yet floating). An interesting feature is its preserved top, which is composed of densely laid small and medium stones and was initially thought to be a pavement (Fig. 38); however, its northern face clearly shows that it is a nicely built wall. This construction is somewhat different than Wall 2128 to its north, which is clearly a wall in the same room (see below).

Wall 2126 makes a corner with east–west Wall 2138, which runs for one meter and is preserved to a height of 0.51 m in the north (377.3-376.69, not floating) to 0.45 in the south (377.52-377.07, floating) (Figs. 36–37). The nature of this wall is not clear and it seems that its northern end is either collapsed or an intentional blockage in the possible entrance to this room from the east. Just to the east of the place where Wall 2138 meets Wall 2128 there is a large oblong basalt stone (0.8 x 0.4 m), apparently worked, possibly cut on its south, and laid on an east–west axis (Figs. 36–37). This stone might have been standing in this possible entranceway and fell to the east. Alternatively, it might have been a threshold leading into a room to the north.

Fig. 38. Square S/12, A-2 Wall 2126, looking south; debris with pottery abutting the wall in Locus 2124.

Wall 2126 makes a corner with east–west Wall 2138, which runs for one meter and is preserved to a height of 0.51 m in the north (377.3-376.69, not floating) to 0.45 in the south (377.52-377.07, floating) (Figs. 36–37). The nature of this wall is not clear and it seems that its northern end is either collapsed or an intentional blockage in the possible entrance to this room from the east. Just to the east of the place where Wall 2138 meets Wall 2128 there is a large oblong basalt stone (0.8 x 0.4 m), apparently worked, possibly cut on its south, and laid on an east–west axis (Figs. 36–37). This stone might have been standing in this possible entranceway and fell to the east. Alternatively, it might have been a threshold leading into a room to the north.
Locus 2149, see below). Removal of the balk between Squares T/12 and S/12 will provide the necessary information to solve this question (Fig. 36a).

Wall 2128 runs 1.8 m to the north of Wall 2126; it is 3 meters long by 0.5 m wide and preserved to a height of 0.7 m (top: 377.48, bottom: 376.78, not yet floating). The preserved top of this wall shows two rows of stones, but the face of the wall shows a rather haphazard construction, where the (six?) courses are not well defined (Fig. 39). Wall 2128 continues into the western balk; its eastern end is partially cut by Pit 2127 (see below), where it would have made a corner with Wall 2138. This wall is on line with Wall 1136 and Pedestal 2118 in Square T/12. As mentioned above, this corner is not clear due to the nature of the northern end of 2138. Wall 2128 made a corner on the east with Wall 2144, enclosing a room (2158), part of which was excavated in the northwestern corner of the square (see below). It is notable that the construction of Walls 2126 and 2128 is different, although they are parallel and clearly bound the same room.

Wall 2144 is a north–south wall that makes a corner with the southern end of Wall 2128 and then continues north into the balk beyond the limits of the present excavation (Fig. 39). It is 0.5 m wide, runs a length of 1.5 m, and is preserved two courses high and one row wide. It continues the line of Wall 2138 to its south (see above) and encloses Room 2158 to the west and Room 2149 to the east.

Fig. 39. Square S/12, looking north at Wall 2128. Note basalt slab and disturbed northern end of Wall 2138 on the right. Meter stick standing on Floor 2158.
Between the system of walls just described were found occupation debris layers resting on beaten-earth floors. During the 2014 season, one floor level was reached, but it is possible that an earlier floor existed in these rooms, similar to that in the building to the east where two floors were also found (see below, Square T/14).

Debris 2124 rested on Floor 2153 (at 377.11 m) between Walls 2126 and 2128. Pottery, bones, shell, and olive pits were found in this debris (Figs. 38–39). Debris 2125 rested on Floor 2158 (at 377.10 m) between Walls 2128 and 2144. Pottery, bones, flint, shell, charcoal, a grindstone, and a bead were recovered from this debris (Fig. 39). All the soil in these loci was sifted, soil samples were taken, and the pottery marked for restoration.

2156 and 2149 comprise two more small spaces: 2149 is a narrow area (1.1 x 2.8 m) east of Wall 2144 in the northeastern corner of the square that was cut by Pit 2127. Although excavation proceeded down to 377.00 m, lower than the floors in the adjacent rooms, no clear floor was identified here. A bronze earring (21364) was found at the lowest level of this locus. 2156 is a small space between Wall 2138 and the eastern balk, and may have been an entrance into Room 2153 as earlier noted.

Although some restorable pottery, as well as brick collapse and charcoal were found on the floors, it doesn’t necessarily seem that there had been a violent destruction here; see western section in Square S/12 (Fig. 40).

Floors 2153 and 2158 are equivalent in elevation to Floor 2108 in Square T/14 and are 25 cm higher than the other floors of Stratum A-2. Since there were two floors in some places in the A-2 building to the east and south (2108 and 2132 in T/14, see below), it is possible that there were two floors in Square S/12. One hint to this possibility was the layer below the makeup of Floor 2153. 2161 comprised reddish
soil and 2167 consisted of an ashy layer at 376.87 m and contained pottery, bones, a possible spindle whorl (21464), and olive pits. It is possible that this is an earlier floor still relating to Stratum A-2 Walls 2126 and 2128. However, further excavation is needed to confirm this.

**Square T/14**

A limited probe in the northwest corner of Square T/14 exposed the southern continuation of Wall 1114. At the present time it is not clear whether this wall continues into the southern balk or terminates here. The continuation of Wall 1114 beyond its corner with Wall 1147 was labeled separately as Wall 2131 (377.50–376.83 m), because it had a slightly different orientation and due to the nature of its construction (smaller stones) compared to 1114. Wall 2131 runs for one meter and makes a corner with east–west wall 2130 (377.42-377.04 m), which is the western continuation of Wall 1130 in Square A/14 (Fig. 41).

![Fig. 41. Square T/14, looking east; A-2 (upper phase) Wall 2130 and its continuation 1130 on the east](image)

An important result of this probe was confirmation of two phases in A-2. The lower phase consisted of Wall 2131 and Floor 2132, while the upper phase consisted of Walls 2130 and 2131 and Floor 2108.
Lower Phase of A-2

Floor 2132 (376.90 m) was composed of hard-packed earth and pebbles and abutted Wall 2131. It penetrated below Wall 2130 on the south, which floated at 377.04 m (Fig. 42). Thus, the southern border of the building or the courtyard in this earlier phase is not known. Floor 2132 is the southern continuation of Floor 1113 in Square T/13 (found at 376.86 m). This is the same level as the other floors identified in the A-2 building in 2013 – 1113 in T/13, 1111 in Square A/14, 1119 in A/13 and 1123 in T/12. This floor was characterized by a very hard clay surface with large pottery sherds, a few complete vessels, and bones scattered on it. On Floor 2132 were found several large sherds of a pithos, apparently of the wavy-band type.

Another part of this floor was apparently found in a small probe at the southern edge of the balk between T–A/13 (Locus 2103) (Fig. 43). A complete smashed jug was found abutting the western face of Wall 1126 at level 376.88-376.78 m (Fig. 44). Although no clear floor was found, it seems that this jug was indeed resting on a floor that was the continuation of Floors 1113/2132, despite its slightly lower level (8 cm lower). If indeed Locus 2103 with the jug belongs to A-2, it shows that Wall 1126, an A-3 wall, continued to be used in Stratum A-2. Alternatively, if the jug is related to the A-3 debris below the A-2 floor (in light of its slightly lower level), then Wall 1126 would have been used only in A-3 and not have continued into A-2. The former possibility seems more plausible, since no complete vessels have been

Fig. 42. Square T/14, looking west; Floor 2132 of lower phase of A-2; Wall 2130 floating above the floor; A-3 Wall 1158 below the floor.
found in A-3 to date, and the level of the jug is higher than that of Wall 1158 to the south, which is attributed only to Stratum A-3.

Below 2132 is a thin layer of fill (2166) that covered A-3 Wall 1158.

![Image](image1.png)

**Fig. 43. Square T/13, looking east; probe in balk to Floor 2103 against Wall 1126 (after removal of the jug – see Fig. 44)**

![Image](image2.png)

**Fig. 44. Detail of jug on Floor 2103, abutting Wall 1126 (see Fig. 43)**

**Upper Phase of A-2**

Wall 2131 continued in use in the upper phase when it made a corner with Wall 2130 (Fig. 42), now constituting the southern border of the building, or at least of its central room/courtyard. As mentioned above, Wall 1130 in Square A/14 is the eastern continuation of 2130 (Fig. 41). This wall runs a length of 6.6 m (together with 1130). It is 0.6 wide, made of two rows of stones, preserved to a height of 0.38 m in the west, (377.42-377.04) and slopes down towards the east (the eastern top is 376.62). Its northern face (especially near Wall 1130) is partially missing, probably cut by a later pit (2157). It is important to note that in the west, Wall 2130 is clearly floating 20 cm
above lower A-2 floor 2132. Walls 2131 and 2130 are abutted by Floor 2108 at 377.11 m. This floor is only 25 cm above Floor 2132. Large pithos sherds and a complete jug lay on Floor 2108 in the corner between Walls 2130 and 1147 (Fig. 44).

Fig. 44. Square T/14, looking east; debris above Floor 2108, upper phase of A-2; note jug in corner of Walls 2131 and 1147.

The later phase of A-2 is also known in Square A/12 where there is a later blockage of the entrance in Wall 1121, although no clear floor goes with this.

In conclusion, Square T/14 is so far the only clear example of both walls and floors belonging to two separate sub-phases within A-2. It should be noted that in the earlier phase, Walls 1126 and 1142 of Stratum A-3 appear to have been re-used. In the later phase, floor 2108 completely covered these walls and Wall 1158, and also abutted Wall 1114/2131 and a new wall, 2130.

Stratum A1
Terrace walls 1108 and 1133 in Square T/12 were dismantled this season in order to expose the A-2 walls immediately below them. In the western side of Square T/12 was a circular stone installation 2117 (377.52–377.47 m) just below topsoil (Fig. 45). It somewhat recalls the stone silos/pits uncovered in Area F and dated to Iron I, but its preservation was not sufficient enough to be sure. The few sherds recovered from inside this installation were solely Iron Age, but its elevation was higher than the A-2 elements.

An area of soft dark organic-filled earth with stones, designated 2109, is understood as a pit or another kind of disturbance that damaged the area to the west of
the A-2 building in Square T/12 (Fig. 45). It is possible that the western part of this pit also damaged Wall 2138 and 2144 in Square S/12 to the west, although only after the balk between the square is removed can this be confirmed.

Another element higher than the A-2 remains is Tabun 2110, which was found just below topsoil in Square S/12 near the southern balk at 378.17 m to 377.36 m. The top of A-2 Wall 2126 emerged 0.4 m below it. There were no sherds found in clear association with this poorly preserved oven (Fig. 46), so no date can be offered.
It is not possible to phase these features other than to say they post-date Stratum A-2. It is also not certain that they are contemporary. They are presently attributed to Stratum A-1 due to their position below topsoil but above A-2, but they do not appear to be contemporary with the Ottoman period terrace walls. Further excavation might clarify the stratigraphy of these features.

**Summary**

Area A consists of a dense sequence of at least three Iron Age I strata: Strata A-4 to A-2. The dating is based on the similarity of the pottery, although further examination will possibly produce a more refined sequence. The earliest level, A-4, appears to be contemporary with Dan Stratum V, which also suffered a violent destruction and contained similar pottery. The latest level, A-2, might be dated to the transition to Iron IIA, a period which apparently is lacking in this area, at least in the excavated squares.

The tight stratigraphy and close relation between the strata show that they are proximate in time. It seems that the A-3 walls were in partial use in A-2, and that the orientation of the A-4 building was similar to that of the later building as well. The plan of the A-4 building is only partially known, but it seems to contain a row of rooms on a north-south axis, with the possibility that some of its walls were re-used from an earlier stratum (A-5).

The plan of the A-2 building seems to be a courtyard surrounded by rooms, which are clear on the north. The eastern side is eroded due to the slope, and the south remains unexcavated or partially excavated. To the west of this building (at the northern end of the area), it seems that there may have been another building, with a possible street, passageway, or even a gateway between them. The western façade of the large A-2 building might have been ornamented with antes, creating a monumental-like access to this complex. The urban nature of the area is clear and it seems that these were public buildings. To the north, just beyond the access road to the tell, are several large walls visible among the weeds. It is possible that there had been a gate at this point, which provided relatively easy access to the mound from the east, with our building representing some sort of a public edifice inside the gate.
Area A, end of 2104 season, looking southeast; Square S/12 not included in photo.