

Area F 2016 Field Report

Nava Panitz-Cohen

A small probe was excavated in Area F for 11 days during the 2016 season, with the goal of identifying secure loci that might date the large stone structure considered to be an MBII fortification. For this purpose, two areas abutting the northern wall of this structure (1327) were chosen for limited probes: one in Square R/5 and one in Square Q/5 (Photo 1). A secondary goal of the limited work in Area F this season was to expose the eastern continuation of the Stratum F1 Iron I building in Square S/5. Dean Rancourt was the supervisor and registrar, working with paid workers for a week and then with Lisa Marsio and Katie Hartland for another six days.

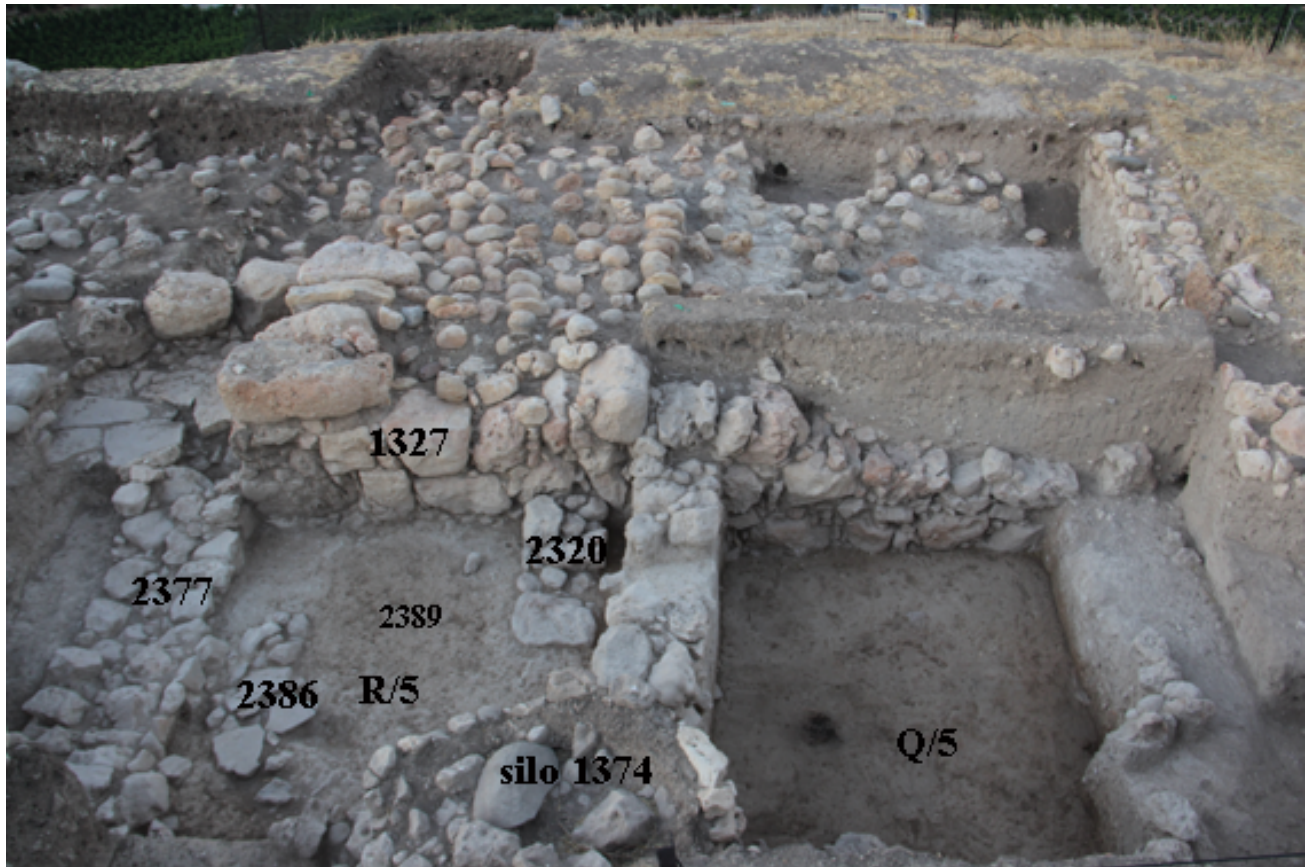


Photo 1. Squares R-Q/5, looking south; Square R/5 on the left (east) and Q/5 on the right (west).

Probe in Square R/5

The area excavated in Square R/5 was bordered by Wall 2377 (Stratum F5) on the east, Wall 2320 (Stratum F5?) on the west, Wall 1327 (Strata F6-F3) on the south and the balk of the square on the north, where Silo 1374 is located (Photo 1). Walls 2377 and 2320 abutted the northern face of Wall 1327, but did not bond with it, and thus were considered later, having been built against the latter wall which was in secondary use. Walls 2377 and 2320 were abutted by a debris layer, 2389, which was where we began excavating this season, at 363.18 m.

The locus opened this season, 4301, represents, in fact, the bottom of 2389 and was excavated to the floating level of Walls 2377 and 2320, and slightly below. In retrospect, after revealing the presence of a large Iron Age I pit here (4314, described in detail below), it seems that the top of the pit was already visible within the matrix of Locus 2389 and thus, in 4301. However, during the excavation of Locus 4301, this was not yet known and it is considered a general debris layer down to the following elements: sloping brown-fill and white chalky layer 4302/4310/4311 in the east and the top of Wall 4308 in the west.

Locus 4302/4310/4311

A layer sloping down from south to north, composed of brown fill (4302) on top of chalky whitish material (4310) that also was on top of brown fill (4311), was discerned emanating from the fourth course down from the top of Wall 1327, at its eastern end (Section 1). This layer ran underneath Wall 2377 and is considered to possibly be the same as the white chalky/plaster layer excavated to the east of Wall 2377 in 2013 – Loci 1369 and 1370. Some burnt material is found at the top of the sloping layer (in Locus 4302 above it). It is clear that this layer is cut on its western side, just about on line with the easternmost stone in Wall 1327. Our present understanding of this layer, together with the brownish earth below it (Locus 4311) is that it might be part of an inner-city rampart formation that sloped down from the stone structure. It continues to the east (1369, 1370) where it is seen to penetrate below the Late Bronze Age architecture there (Wall 1360). The Iron I pit in R/5 (4314, described below) apparently cut this layer on its west and that is just the spot that we excavated this season. On the north, the chalky white layer 4310 is cut(?) by stone structure 4313 (possibly a tomb, see description below).

Although it seems that Wall 4307 penetrated below this “inner rampart layer” (see Section 1), in fact, it is not yet certain, since this line of stones might have been, in fact, part of the inner rampart structure, but we exposed it as it appeared inside the later Iron Age I pit, when all the earlier layers had been removed.

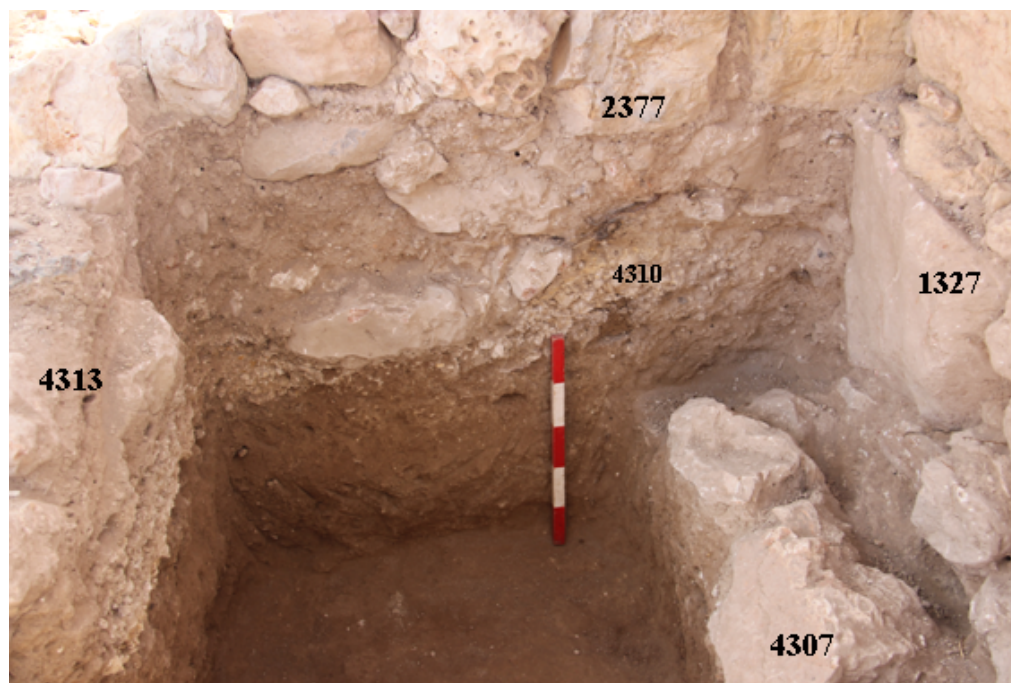
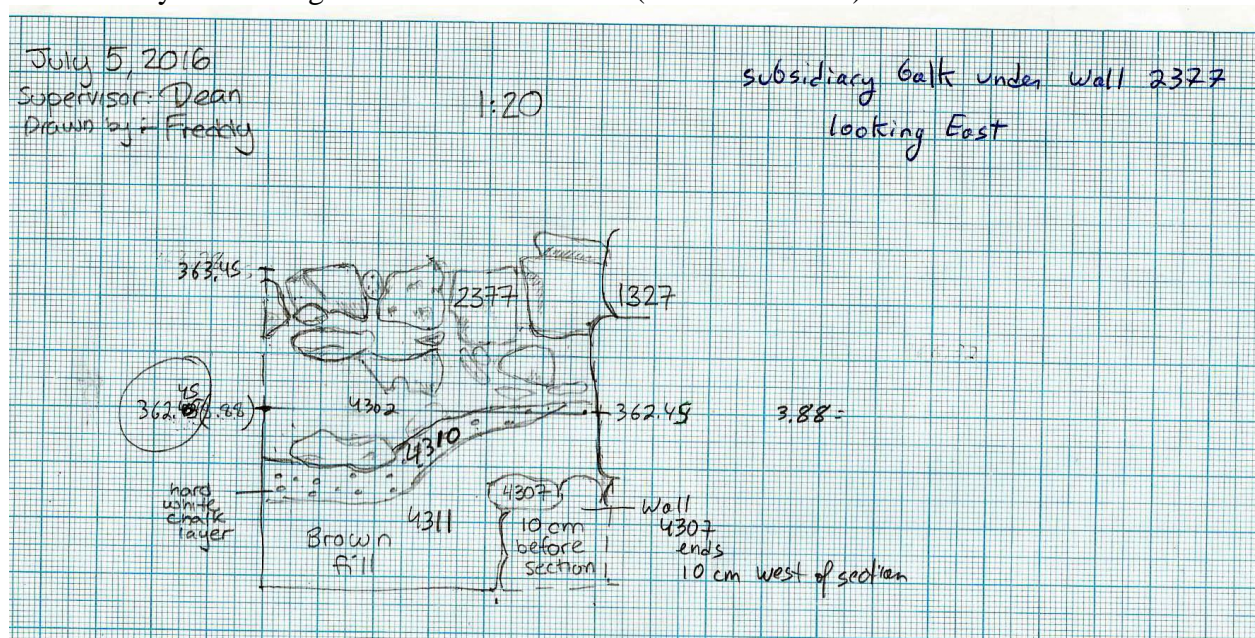


Photo 2. Subsidiary balk under Wall 2377, looking east. Sloping layer 4310 in balk, abutting Wall 1327. Note stones of Wall 4307, stopping just short of the balk. In left of photo, note the white chalky material against the stones of 4313 (see also Photo 2). See Section 1.



Section 1. Southern section of the subsidiary balk under Wall 2377, at corner with Wall 1327, looking east. See Photo 2.

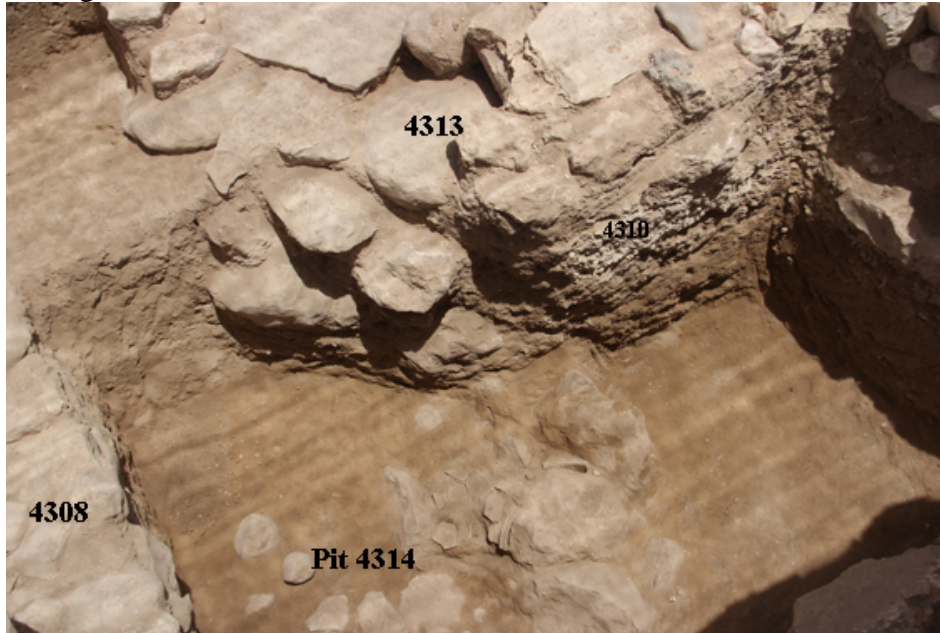


Photo 3. Square R/5, looking south at white chalky material of Locus 4310 against (cut by?) stone structure 4313 (see left side of Photo 2).

Walls 2320 and 4308

Wall 2320 is known from the 2014 season as a 1.2 m long and .70 m wide north-south patch of rather disorderly stones with one larger flat-topped stone on its northern end, abutting (but not bonded with) the northern face of Wall 1327. It was not clear whether it was an installation or an actual wall. It ran adjacent to the floating level of Wall 2306 just to its west. Excavation in the present season showed that Wall 2320 is an actual wall that has a 70 cm wide entrance, flanked on the north by a flat-topped stone similar to that in the northern end of the already known segment. The wall continues to the north underneath Silo 1374.

Locus 4301 was excavated down to the floating level of Wall 2320, where a north-south wall composed was revealed, denoted Wall 4308. Wall 4308 is comprised of small stones closely packed together, running directly below the entire (exposed) length of Wall 2320, including the entrance in this wall, where 4308 forms a threshold (Photos 4–5). Wall 4308 protrudes ca. 15 cm to the east of the face of Wall 2320 and is only one course high. It looks like 4308 was

deliberately built as a foundation for 2320 and was not a separate wall that was dismantled down to one course when Wall 2320 was built. The northern continuation of Wall 4308, like Wall 2320, continues under Silo 1374.

To the west of Walls 2320 and 4308, in Square Q/5, the layers on the level of these walls would be debris 2390 which rests on what appears to be a surface, 4315 (see below).

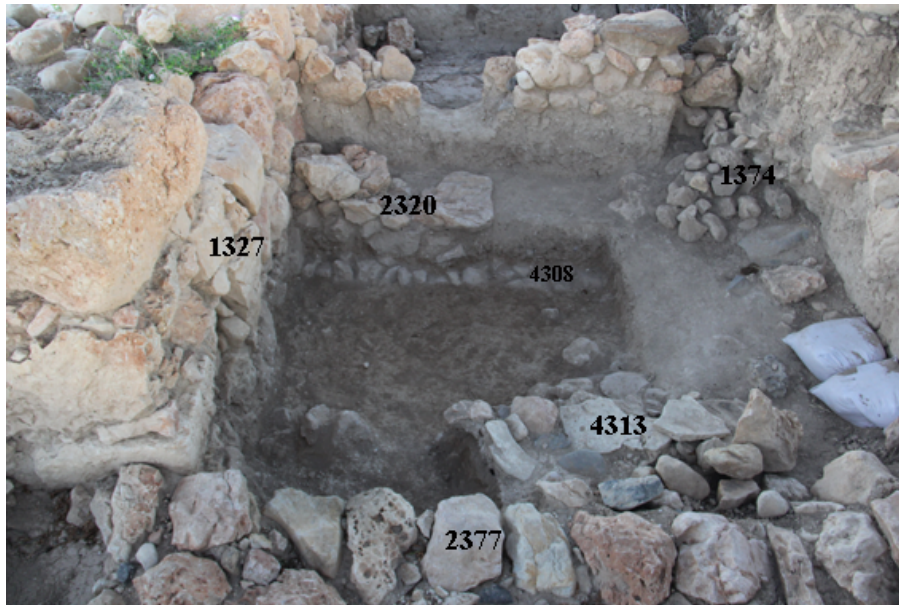


Photo 4. Square R/5, looking west. Top of Wall 4308 under Wall 2320 (southern part of this wall exposed), emerging as Locus 4301 was excavated. Northern part of Wall 2320 not yet exposed.

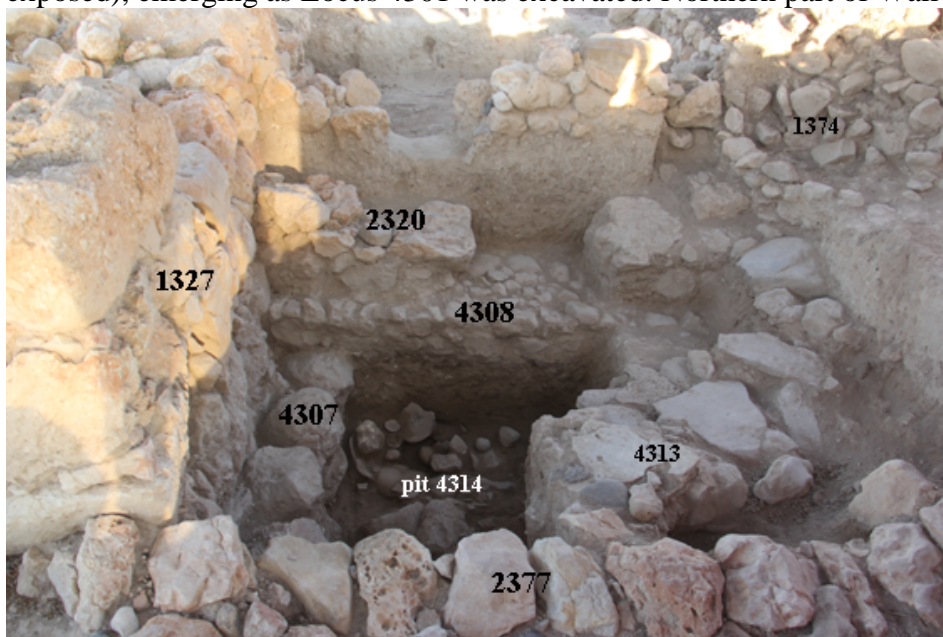


Photo 5. Same as Photo 4, after exposure of Wall 4308 as threshold in entranceway in Wall 2320.

Wall 4307

Excavating Locus 4303 (under 4301, opened when Wall 4308 was exposed), the stones of Wall 4307 were exposed. This is an east-west wall composed of medium sized boulder-like stones that runs almost flush against the northern face of Wall 1327 (Photos 5-8). On the east, it seems to stop just short of the white sloping layers of 4310 (see above) and on the west, the stones stop just under the floating level of Wall 4308; it is not clear whether 4307 continued to the west to penetrate under Wall 4308 or whether it terminated just here. Wall 4307 is composed of two courses so far (although more excavation is needed to see if it is floating), both of which line the Iron Age pit 4314. It is debated whether 4307 was built when this pit was cut, to serve as its southern border, or whether this is an earlier wall (contemporary with the construction of Wall 1327?) that was utilized in the pit. This is very difficult to determine at this point in light of the small size of the probe. As proposed above, one option to consider is that 4307 is an element that was incorporated into the inner rampart we postulate might have existed here. As such, it would have been in secondary use in the Iron Age Pit 4314. The other option to consider is that this wall was built when the pit was cut and served as its southern border. Although this makes less sense than the former option, it should be considered, since the position of Wall 4307, flush against Wall 1327, wouldn't have much architectural sense inside the "inner rampart".

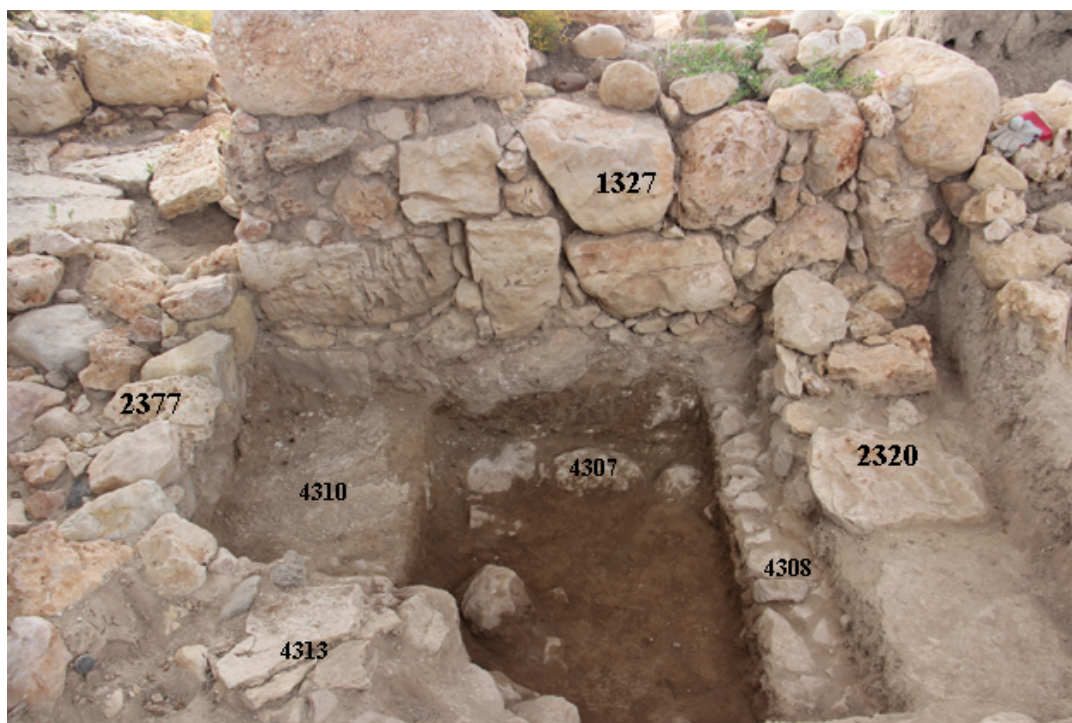


Photo 6. Square R/5, looking south. Top of Wall 4307. Note white chalky layer 4310 on left.

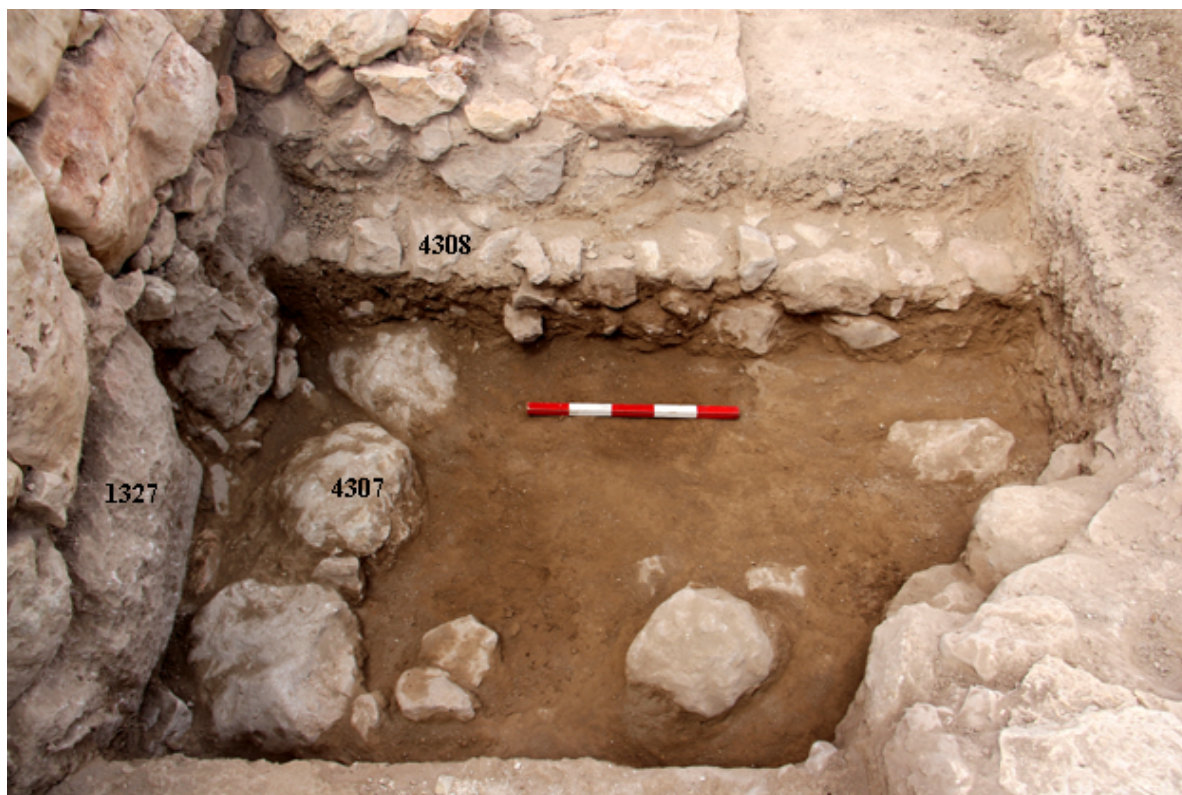


Photo 7. Square R/5, looking west. Relation between Walls 4307 and 4308.

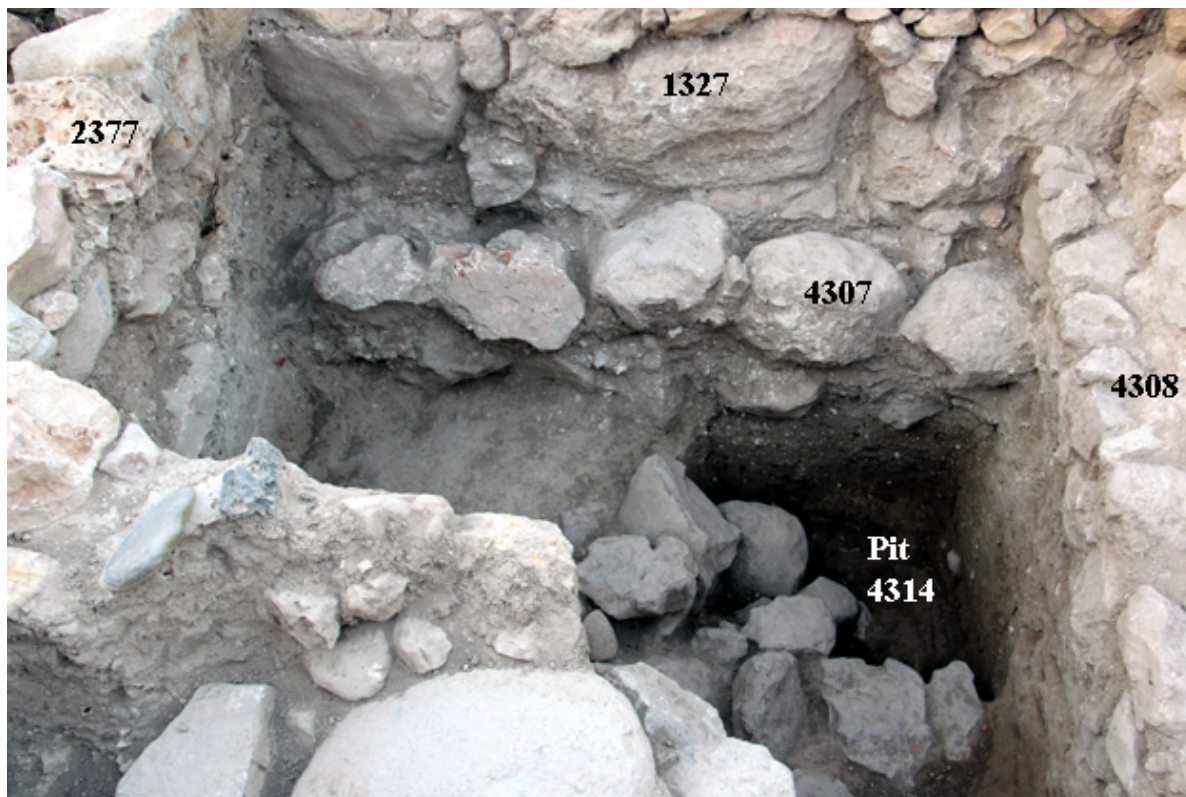


Photo 8. Square R/5, looking south. Wall 4307 seems to be floating near bottom of Pit 4314.

Pit 4314

On the level of first course of Wall 4307, it became apparent that there was an intrusion here, when the concentration of pottery sherds in the southwestern part of the excavated probe proved to contain Iron Age pottery types; the locus was changed to 4312. This, in fact, is the top layer of a large pit denoted 4314. It should be noted that at the end of the 2013 excavation season, the contour of a possible pit was noted here and denoted 1372 (Photos 9–10). The walls bordering the pit on the east (1346, 1362) sat on top of Wall 1371, which in turn, covered the western face of Wall 2377 (see Photos 1, 4-5). This pit was investigated at the beginning of the 2014 season, but seemed to end at a depth of no more than 5-8 cm and thus, excavation proceeded here as though the layers were “regular” horizontal occupation debris (Loci 2313, 2389). However, a close look at Photo 1 above, where the locus number 2389 is, shows the contours of a darker area which might be the uppermost traces of Pit 4314, excavated in 2016. See also Photo 10, where a darker softer material is seen that seems to cut the whitish matrix of surface(?) 2313 here and appears to be the top layer (together with Pit 1372) of Pit 4314.

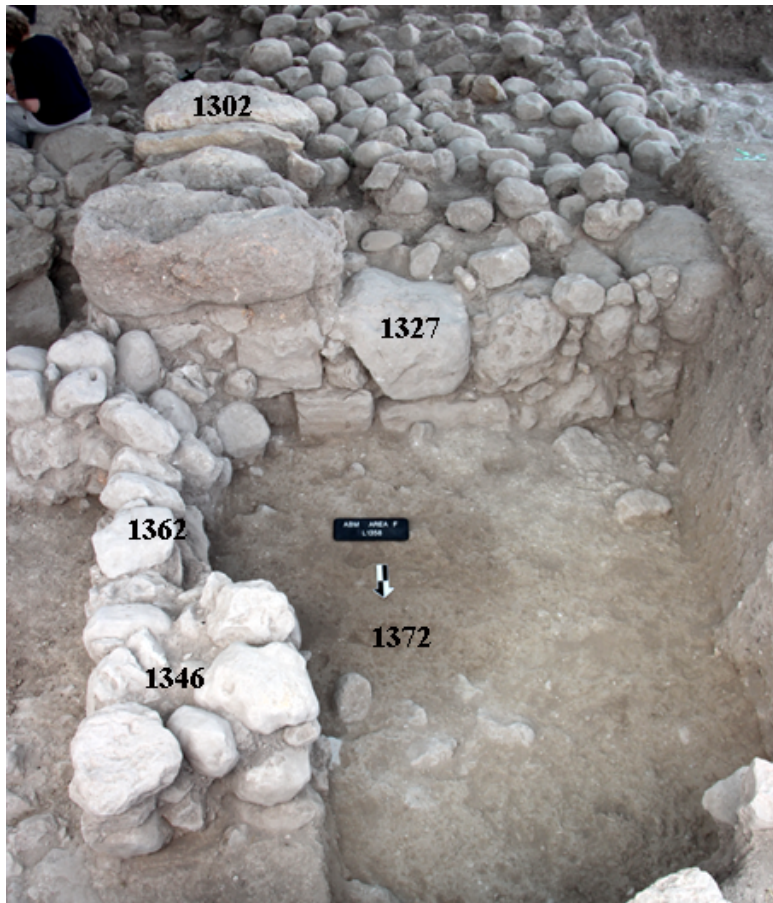


Photo 9. Square R/5, looking south. Contour of Pit 1372.



Photo 10. Square R/5, looking north, showing the level of surface(?) 2313; note darker area in lower center that seems to be related to the top layer of Pit 4314

Thus, it seems that we missed the very top of this large pit, or that there had been a later disturbance/pit cut here above the level of Pit 4314. It should be noted that there were no finds in Pit 1372 nor any concentration in the softer darker material in surface 2313 see in Photo 10.

The borders of Pit 4314 are: west: below Wall 4308 and white chalky layer 4310; south: Wall 4307 and below it (?), east: below Wall 2377 and stone structure 4313. The northern border is less clear and was traced mainly by the lack of pottery and stones in that part of the probe, as opposed to the concentration of these items in the southwestern part. It should be noted that Silo 1374 was only ca. 50 cm to the northwest of the pit.

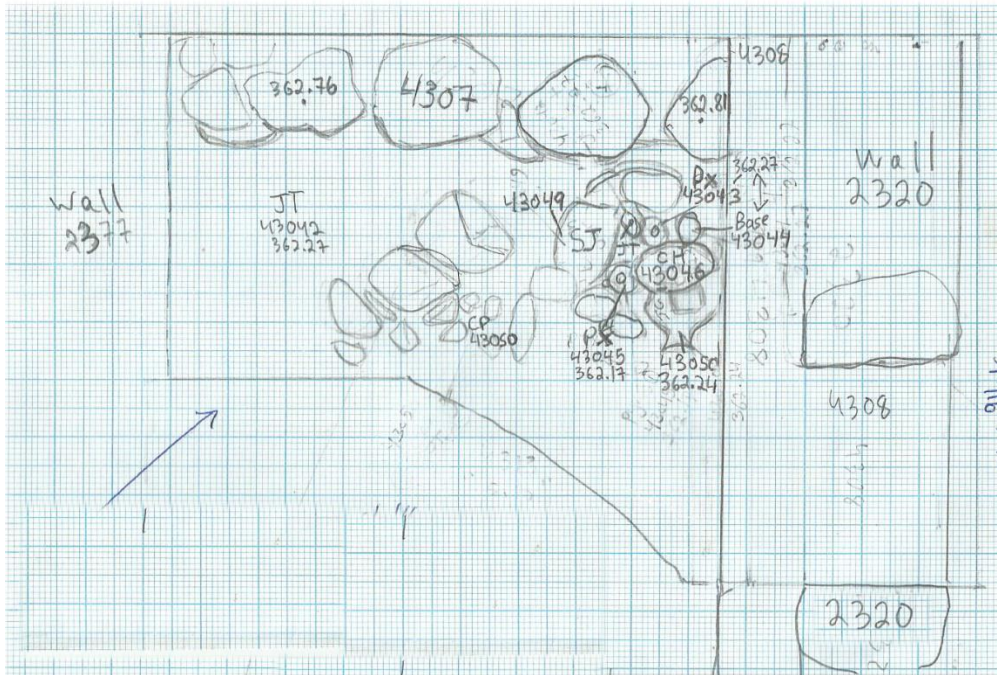
Pit 4314 was first discerned at ca. level 362.60 m when a concentration of sherds appeared mainly in the southwestern part of the probe. Among these sherds were Iron Age I or IIA cooking pot rims that were the first hint that this is an intrusive context. From this level down to 361.95 m was a concentration of sherds, vessels and stones arranged in three “layers”, although they were not neatly horizontally separated. Each of these layers seems to be narrower than the one above it, so that the shape of the pit was something like a reverse cone.

The uppermost layer (4312, 4314; ca. 362.60-263.30 m) contained sherds and relatively small stones that seemed haphazardly thrown into the pit (Plan 1; Photos 12–15). In this concentration were sherds of a storage jar (43049, 43051), a storage jar base (43044), a jug (43050), a juglet (43042), two pyxides (43043, 43045), a very large chalice with a (broken) fenestrated stand (43046) and a sherds of other restorable vessels, including cooking pot/s (43050).

Upon removal of these vessels, the lower level (from 362.20 m) was narrower and concentrated closer to the “corner” between Wall 4307 and under Wall 4308. In this level were many large and small stones among which were a bowl of a chalice (43055) and an intact chalice with a low stem and two small bar handles (43057) (Photos 16–18). Among the stones was a hammerstone (43063). It can be seen in Photo 18 how the stones around the chalices are arranged in an L-shaped arrangement.

Just below the two small chalices (at 362.10 m), the L-shaped arrangement of stones enclosed an even narrower area in the “corner” between Wall 4307 and under Wall 4308. In the niche formed by the L-shaped stones and the “corner” was the foot of a stand decorated with ridges (43061; 362.05 m) (Photos 19–20). Below this vessel, no further finds were noted and it seems that this is the bottom of the pit which is marked at 361.95 m (Photo 21).

Bones and a few stone objects were found in the pit as well. The cultic nature of the some of the vessels points to the possibility that this was a favissa, or at least the lower part of it was. The fact that the pit seems to have had several levels and layers suggests that its contents might have deposited over time and not in one episode alone.



Plan 1: Uppermost layer of vessels, sherds and stones in Pit 4314



Photo 12. Square R/5, looking south. Top of Pit 4314 (locus 4312); appearance of first layer of sherds, vessels and stones. See Photo 13 for further exposure of these vessels.



Photo 14. Square R/5, looking south at pit 4314 (uppermost layer-4312). 1=large chalice; 2=storage jar; 3=juglet; 4=pyxis.



Photo 15. Closeup of vessels, sherds and stones from Photo 14. Jug (2) exposed below large chalice with fenestrated stem (1).



Photo 16. Middle “layer” of Pit 4314, looking southwest. Chalice bowl (2) and intact chalice (1).
Plan 2. Middle layer, Pit 4314, chalices.



Photo 17. Detail of chalices in Photo 17.

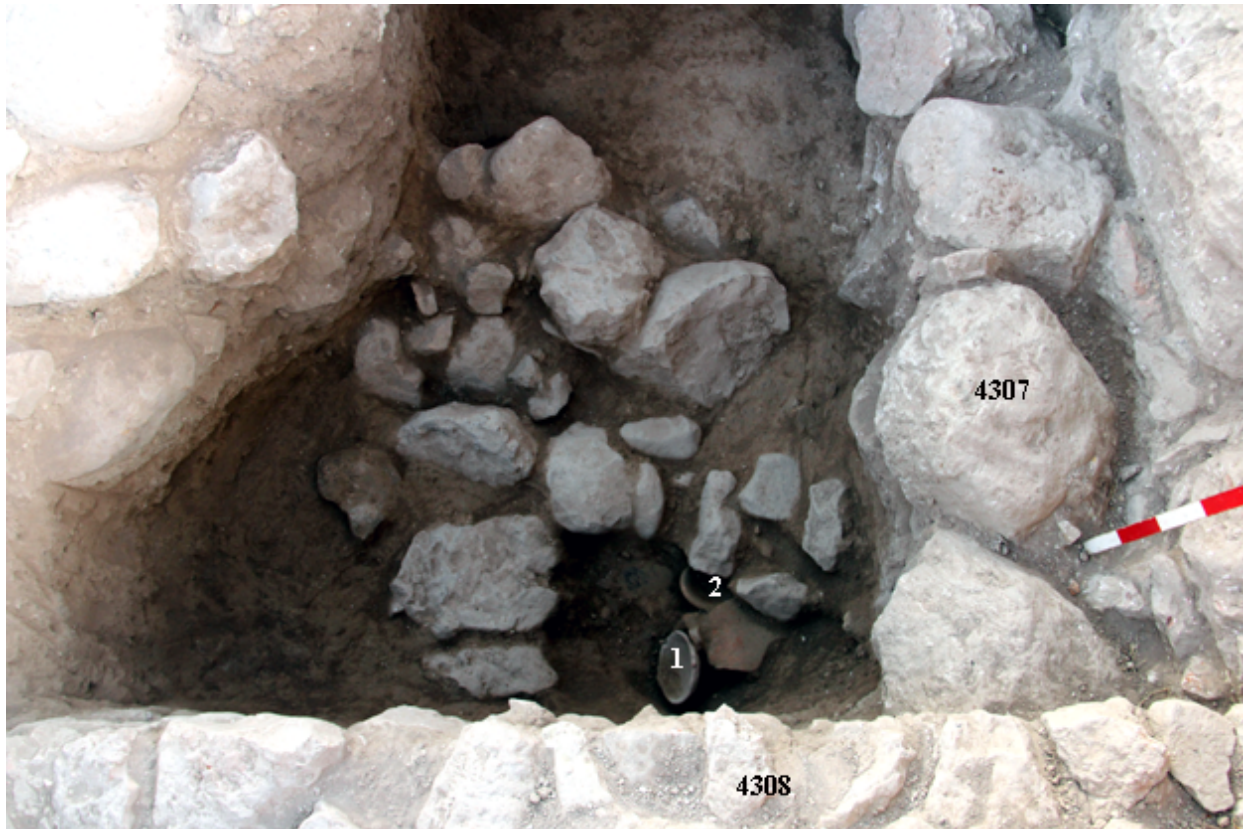


Photo 18. Square R/5, looking east. Middle “layer” of Pit 4314 with all stones in this layer exposed. Chalices (1, 2; see Photos 16–17). Note L-shaped stones in center of photo.



Photo 19. Lowest level in Pit 4314, chalice stem in niche. Looking southwest.



Photo 20. Same as Photo 19, looking east.

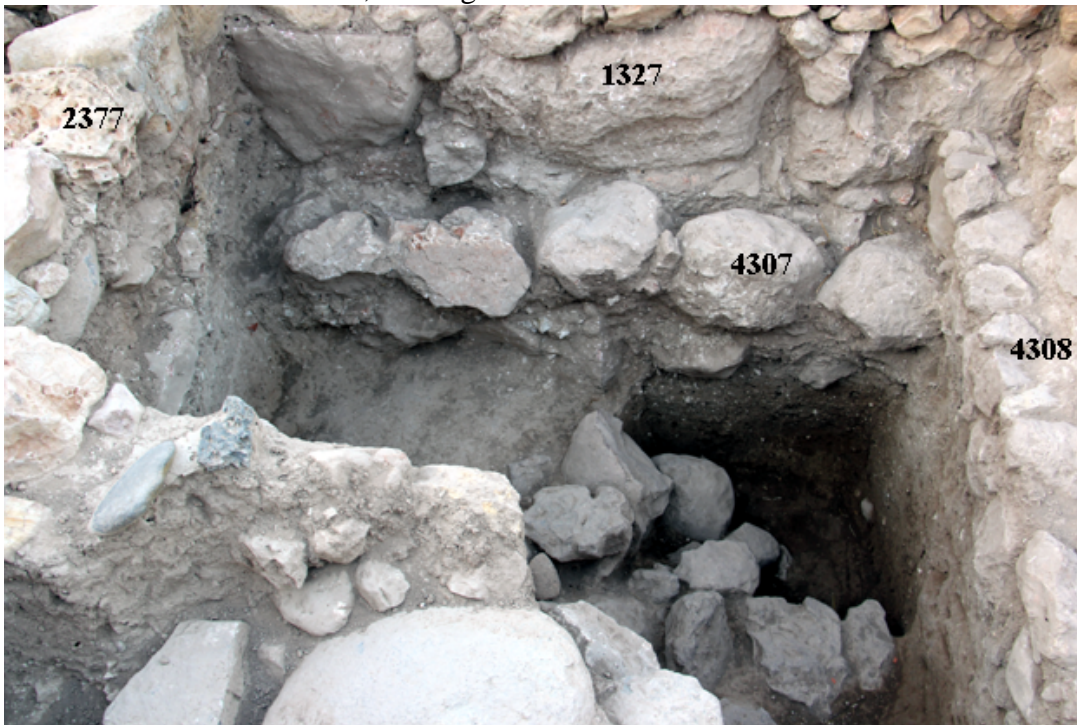


Photo 21. Square R/5, looking south. Lowest level excavated in Pit 4314 (below chalice stem seen in Photos 19–20). Wall 4307 appears to be floating.

Stone Structure 4313

At just about the center of Square R/5, a stone structure denoted 4313 was revealed. Its eastern part is on the level of Wall 2377, although at this stage of excavation it is difficult to determine if the two are related; the lower part of 4313 continues down past the floating level of this wall. It seems that 4313 cut the white chalky material that extended from the northern face of Wall 1327

towards the north (see above, 4302/4310/4311 and Photo 3). Pit 4314 cut into the area to the southwest and west of 4313. The area to the north of 4313 has not yet been excavated.

Excavation in 2014 in this square revealed a concentration of stones (2349) below Wall 1346 and below 2349, yet another concentration, denoted 2386 (Photos 22–23). Stones 2386 were arranged in a kind of semi-circle against the western face of Wall 1371 (which, in turn, sat on top of the western face of Wall 2377). The function and phasing of 2349/2386 were not understood at the time of excavation. Their location above the top of 4313 might relate them to this stone structure, although exactly how remains unknown. Perhaps they were some kind of marker. Photo 23 shows the exposure of stones 2386 at the end of 2014. After removal of the stones of 2386 and Wall 1371, the flat-topped stones that mark the top of 4313 were revealed at ca. 363.30-363.15 m (Photo 24). It thus seems that 2386 is indeed related to 4313 though it is not clear how.



Photo 22. Eastern part of Area F at end of 2014, looking southeast. Note stones 2386 against (or below) western face of Wall 1371.



Photo 23. Square R/5, looking east at stones 2386 against Wall 1371. Meter stick on Locus 2389.



Photo 24. Square R/5, looking east at Wall 2377 after removal of Wall 1371 and stones 2386 (at end of 2014). Below 2386 – the flat-topped stones of the top of 4313.

The top of 4313 is composed of flat-topped stones arranged roughly in an oval; the relation to Wall 2377 is not clear (Photo 25, Plan 2). It seems that the top of 4313 is on the level of the wall, and several loose stones above the flat ones (not seen in Photo 25) had abutted the western face of the wall. However, it is not certain whether they abut or whether 4313 is earlier. Since 4313 has not yet been entirely exposed, it is difficult to know its shape, although it might be rounded

(Photo 26). It has been exposed ca. one meter high (uppermost stone: 362.91 m and lowest course reached: 361.95 m). It is not yet clear whether the structure is floating, so it might have been taller.



Photo 25. Square R/5, looking south. Top stones of 4313 (after removal of 2386).

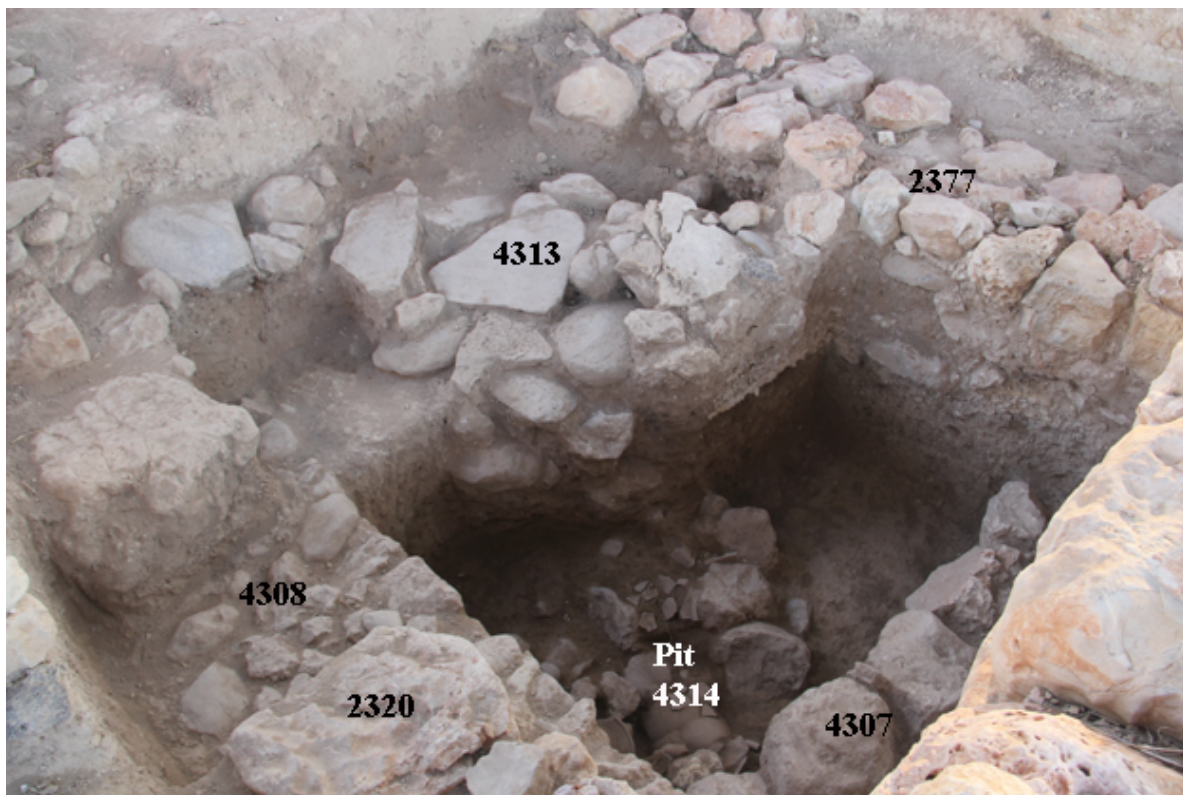


Photo 26. Square R/5, looking northeast. Stone structure 4313 in relation to Wall 2377, Pit 4314 and other elements



Photo 27. Square R/5, looking northwest. Stones 4313 in relation to other elements.



Plan 2. Square R/5, top stones of 4313-shaded in gray (below 2386).

The relationship of 4313 to the surrounding walls and its phasing are not clear. One option is that it is entirely intrusive, i.e., it should be phased like Pit 4314 and represents an Iron Age silo or stone-lined pit. Such density of silos and pits of Stratum F1 is found in other parts of the area, for example, Silo 1374 and Pit 1364 just to the northwest of 4313. Another option is that 4313 is a

built tomb that should be assigned to either Stratum F4 or F5 (Late Bronze Age). If this is valid, then the relationship of 4313 to the walls around it should be examined. Above, it is noted that the relationship to Wall 2377 on the east is not yet clear. Some of the stones seem to abut the lowest level of this wall, though the structure in its entirety continues down under the level of this wall. The relationship to Walls 2320 and 4308 on the west is interesting. They are at a level that would correlate with 4313: 4308 is floating at 362.85, a level where 4313 continues down. It is notable that the entrance in Wall 2320 is on line with 4313, almost as though it constitutes a kind of approach “gate” to this structure. If we assume that Wall 2377 is contemporary with Walls 2320/4308, it almost appears as though they form an enclosure or “room” in which 4313 is located. The northern border is not clear, but possibly an east-west wall had existed to close this “room” on the north. Only further excavation can clarify this point and the nature of 4313.

Floor 4315

Less than two days were devoted to excavating in Square Q/5 north of Wall 1327 with the goal of reaching a floor that might securely date it and the stone structure 1307. Excavation continued Locus 2390 from 2014 (at 363.00 m), a layer of hard red clay that contained some finds. At 362.89 m we reached a round installation in the southwestern part of the floor, ca. 40 cm north of Wall 1327 (its western end where it enters a subsidiary balk). The installation (4317) appears to have been an oven composed of a thick ring of reddish clay tabun material around a large cooking pot (Photo 28). Fragments of the cooking pot were removed, but the rest of it remains in situ. The pottery recovered from Floor 4315, as well as the type of cooking pot, point to a transitional MB-LB context.



Photo 28. Square Q/5, looking south. Floor 4315 and cooking installation 4317.

Silo 1374 (4305, 4306)

The outer stone lining of the southeastern part of Silo 1374 had collapsed, so it was decided to excavate the interior. The uppermost layer, which included a concentration of stones above and to the east of the silo's "rim", was designated 4305. In these stones was an intact Hellenistic lamp of local manufacture (Photo 29). The presence of this intrusive lamp in the top of the silo is apparently part of the same large late pit/disturbance (part of Locus 2366) that cut the western end of Stratum F1 Building FA. Below this level of large and medium stones was a layer with smaller stones and soil (4306) that yielded a few Iron I sherds and one LB cooking pot rim.

The fallen stones around the silo were removed, revealing its lower outer “ring” (Photo 30).



Photo 29. Square R/5, looking north at Silo 1374 after removal of top layer of stones. Circle around Hellenistic lamp; detail of lamp below





Photo 30. Northwestern corner of Square R/5, looking northwest. Silo 1374. Note it covers Wall 2320.

Locus 4316

A limited excavation in the eastern half of Square S/4 (Locus 4316) revealed the eastern continuation of Wall 2308 and possibly some stones of Wall 2324 as well. The pottery recovered was mixed and included Iron I and LB, as well as a few EB and MB sherds. Three red slipped and burnished sherds were found. The base and body sherds of a large storage jar were also found and kept for possible future restoration.



Area F at the end of 2016.