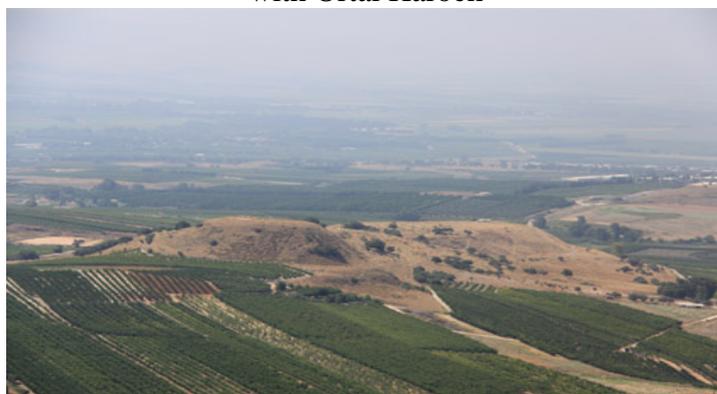


Tel Abel Beth Maacah – 2013 Excavation Report-Area F

Nava Panitz-Cohen, Robert Mullins and Ruhama Bonfil
with Ortal Haroch



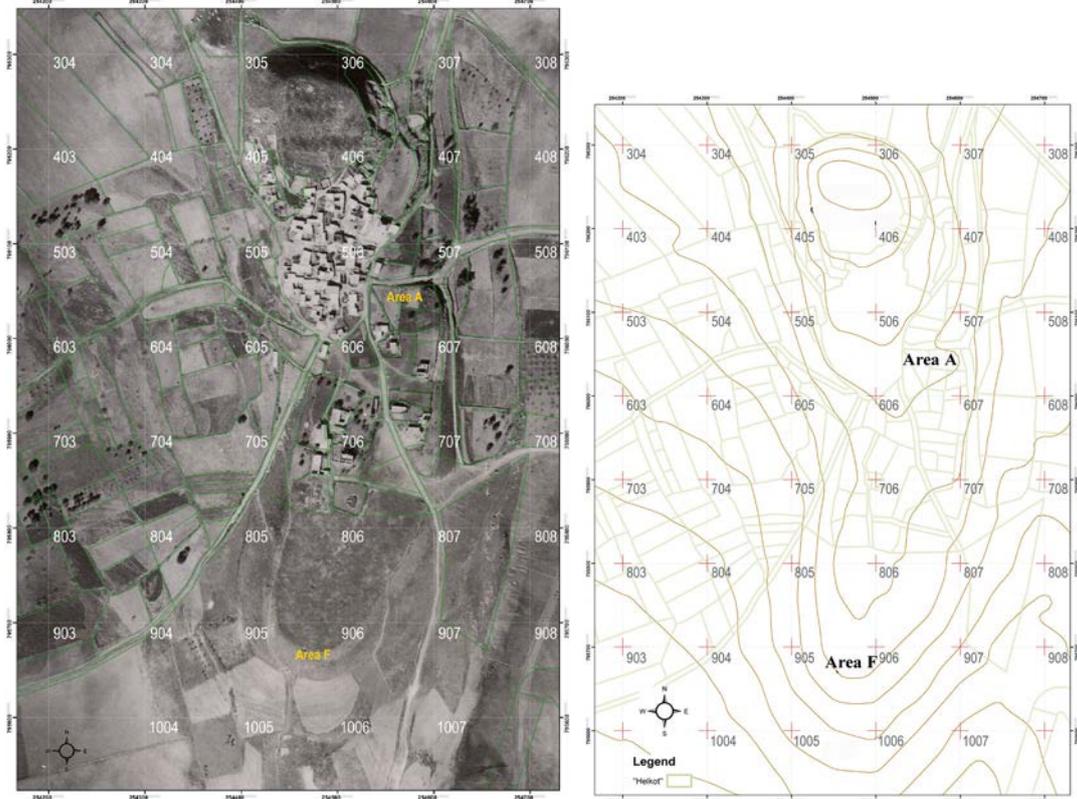
General

The first season of excavation at Tel Abil el-Qameh, site of biblical Avel Bet-Ma'akha (henceforth, Tel Abel Beth Maacah), was carried out from June 23 to July 19, 2013. The excavation was co-directed by Robert Mullins of Azusa Pacific University and Nava Panitz-Cohen of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Ruhama Bonfil of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was the surveyor and stratigraphic advisor. Funding for the excavation came from the generous support of Azusa Pacific University, with additional support by Cornell University (the Institute for the Social Sciences, the President's Council of Cornell Women, and the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, initiated by Professors Lauren and Chris Monroe). Graduate students led by Prof. John Monson of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School made a major contribution to the success of the first excavation season, as did the participation of some 35 volunteer team members. For more information see:

www.abel.beth.maacah.org and www.facebook.com/AbelBethMaacah

Two areas were chosen for excavation this first season: Area A at the eastern edge of the tell in the center of the saddle linking the upper and lower mounds, and Area F at the southern end of the lower mound (Fig. 1). This choice was made in the wake of a survey conducted in May 2012, when finds dating to the Iron Age were uncovered in these two areas below topsoil (<http://www.abel.beth-maacah.prg/index/php/2012/survey>).

An additional consideration was the lack of building remains of the village, Abil el-Qameh, in these two areas.



Left: topographic map showing the survey and excavation areas; Right: excavation Areas A and F marked on aerial photo (1945) of the village, Abil el-Qameh.

The following report is a preliminary summary of the finds in **Area F** and the tentative stratigraphic assessment, pending further study.

AREA F



Area F, located at the southeastern edge of the lower mound (Photo 1), was opened in due to the exposure of three large stones on the surface in the 2012 survey (Panitz-Cohen, Bonfil and Mullins 2012:28–30). Four 5x5 m squares were opened on the grid, with 0.5 m balks left between them, creating squares with net internal measurements of 4.5x4.5 m (20.25 sq m): Q/5 (northwest), R/5 (northeast), Q/6 (southwest) and R/6 (southeast). In addition to these four squares, a probe of 2.4 x 2 m was excavated in the southeastern corner (Square R/7), near the perimeter of the tell), so that a total of 85.80 sq m was excavated this season in Area F (Photo 2). The large stones identified in the survey were located in Square R/6 and the balk between R/6 and R/5 to the north (Photo 3).

Five main local phases (F1–F5) were discerned, with the architectural elements revealed directly below shallow topsoil. The level of topsoil in the north is higher than in the south by c. 0.45 m: 365.89 m in the north and 364.45 m in the south. The main element revealed in this area is what appears to be a large stone structure that continues to the south and east beyond the limits of the excavation, possibly a fortification system that ran along the perimeter of the tell. The stratigraphy of all the other elements are related to this structure in a complex series of sub-phases, most of which belong to activity that post-date the original construction of the large stone structure, as described below (Table 1).

The supervisor of the area was Ortal Haroch, assisted by Dianne Benton, Leann Canady and Itamar Weissbein; Adva Danon was the registrar. All photos are by Robert Mullins, unless otherwise noted.



Photo 1. Area F, beginning of 2013 season, looking south



Photo 2. Excavation from topsoil, looking northwest



Photo 3. Stones in topsoil, looking south, beginning of excavation.

Table 1. Summary of stratigraphic phases, Area F

Local Phase	General description	Loci and Walls
Topsoil	Loose soil and stones	1301, 1302, 1304, 1305, 1341
F1	Walls and debris, disturbance/refuse pit	<i>Square R/5</i> Loci: 1303, 1308 Walls: 1309 <i>Square Q/5</i> Loci: 1311, 1374? <i>Square Q/6</i> Loci: 1306 Walls: 1323, 1324(1a)?, 1372
F2	Pits dug into Building 1307 and installations to its north	<i>Square R/5</i> Loci: 1315, 1320, 1322, 1330, 1337, 1348 <i>Square R/6</i> Loci: 1310, 1316, 1363 <i>Square R/7</i> 1359 <i>Square Q/5</i> Loci: 1333 <i>Square Q/6</i> Loci: 1313, 1321, 1365
F3	Walls, debris, pits and installations	<i>Square R/5</i> Loci: 1339/1372, 1344 Walls: 1335, 1346, 1360, 1362 <i>Square R/6</i> Walls: 1332 <i>Square Q/5</i> Loci: 1329, 1364 <i>Square Q/6</i> 1367?
F4	Walls, debris and floors relating to the northern and northeastern walls of F5 Building 1307	<i>Squares R/5</i> Loci: 1358, 1369, 1370, 1375 Walls: 1332, 1360, 1371 <i>Square Q/5</i> Loci: 1342, 1355 Walls: 1327
F5	Large stone structure (Building 1307)	<i>Square R/6</i> Loci: 1307, 1317, 1334 Walls: 1302, 1318, 1327 <i>Square R/7</i> Loci: 1343, 1347 <i>Square Q/6</i> Loci: 1313, 1325, 1338, 1357, 1366



Photo 4. Building 1307, looking southwest; probe in Square R/7 on far left, near edge of tell. Note large stones in northeastern corner.



Photo 5. Square R/5, northeastern corner of Building 1307, looking southwest. Phase F4 and F3 elements abutting the building on the northeast.

The most outstanding feature of Building 1307 is its northeastern corner, composed of very large roughly worked stones (Photos 4–5). The north–south wall, 1302, is composed of an upper course with four large stones (the tops of three were revealed in the 2012 survey, as noted above). These stones, roughly worked into rectangles, measure c. 1.0 x 0.50 x 0.35 m, aside from the third from the north, which is narrower (0.30 m); upper level: 384.63 m on the northern cornerstone, 364.49 on the southernmost stone. The top of the northernmost stone, the cornerstone of

Building 1307, is sunken; it is not clear whether this is erosion or a deliberate feature. Two more courses were revealed below, so that the wall was exposed to a height of 1.0 m and apparently continues down. Wall 1302 makes a corner with Wall 1327, which runs slightly askew (northeast–southwest) in relation to the due north–south line of Wall 1302. The three easternmost stones of Wall 1327 (in Square R/5) are large, measuring c. 0.60 x 0.60 x 0.40 m, with smaller stones interspersed between them. The wall is preserved to two courses in Square Q/5, continuing down (Photo 6).

The northernmost stone of Wall 1302 is the cornerstone and is set above the top of the easternmost stone of Wall 1327, with a difference of c. 0.50 m between them. It seems that this discrepancy points to the upper course of stones in Wall 1327 having been deliberately removed, a suggestion that is supported by the western part of this wall, whose top was revealed on a lower level (Photo 6). Wall 1327 descends towards the west from 364.16 m (the top of the stone just under the western end of the cornerstone) to 363.64 m on the westernmost stone in Square Q/5. This descent may be the result of the topography or post-depositional processes.



Photo 6. Square Q/5, Wall 1327, looking south.

The sturdy northeast corner and northern wall form a kind of frame around a complex concentration of field stones to their south and east (1307 in Square R/6 and 1366, 1325, and 1357 in Square Q/6). The border of this stone ‘blanket’ on the east is not clear and it appears to continue beyond the border of excavation in Square R/6; it is difficult to determine whether these stones are built or fallen. The stones continue to the south in the probe in Square R/7, c. 0.5 m from the cusp of the tell. The western

border is difficult to determine, as many later disturbances took place here. The western end of Wall 1327 in Square Q/5 is more or less on line with the western end of the stones in Square Q/6 (Photo 7), but it is not clear whether this is the original western border of the large stone structure or whether it is the result of the intensive later activity that seems to have cut them here. If indeed, the western end of the stone structure ran along this line, one would expect a wall similar to 1302 and 1327 to contain it. No traces of such a wall were found, although it is possible that it will emerge below the later disturbance found here.



Photo 7. Building 1307, looking east; note straight end of stones 1366, on line with western end of Wall 1327, possibly indicating the western border of Building 1307 (robbed away or cut by later elements)



Photo 8. Squares R–Q/6, looking east at stones and chalk layers of Building 1307. F1 Wall 1323 in foreground.

The stone construction is composed of layers of limestone fieldstones, with layers of hard white chalk chips set in brown soil between them. The stone layers are c. 0.30–0.40 m thick, while the chalky layers that could be examined (mostly on the west) range from c. 0.20–0.40 m thick (Photos 9–10).

Three layers of stones and two of the chalky material were identified, mainly in the western part (Square Q/6), due to the cut of later activity on the west which provided a section into the stone construction (Photos 7–8). It should be noted, however, that these layers are not neatly superimposed, as the nature of construction had the stones set into the chalky matrix and not horizontally layered. Thus, the differentiation between the chalky material and the stones, especially in the upper layers, is not clear-cut. Future excavation that will cut a section into the stone structure will clarify the exact nature of this unique construction.



Photo 9. Squares Q–R/6, looking east at stone and chalk layers in Building 1307; chalk layer (1338) in western part of the building in foreground.



Photo 10. Close up of chalky matrix 1338, Square Q/6, looking east; row of stones on top–‘Wall’ 1318.

The uppermost layer of stones, revealed just under topsoil in Square R/6, was comprised of a rather haphazard scatter of small and medium stones, suggesting that they were mostly fallen and not as well-preserved as the lower part of the construction. Upon removal of these (mostly) fallen stones, a better-constructed layer was revealed, whose stones quite regularly placed, although widely spaced; it seems that these stones had been minimally worked to achieve a roughly rounded contour and most were of the same size.

In the middle of the stone construction of Building 1307, running in the balk between Square R/6 and R/5, is a north–south row of stones, similar in size and shape to the other stones, but more regularly placed so as to recall a wall. These stones, designated Wall 1318, appear to be an integral part of the stone structure, but it is not clear if it is a wall or just the way the stones were laid here (Photos 7–10).

The effect of the arrangement described above appears to be that of strong walls enveloping a fill, comprised of stones and hard white chalky ‘cement’ between them. This ‘fill’ is not haphazardly thrown in, but rather was systematically laid, although on somewhat different orientations: roughly north–south in the east (Square R/6) and roughly northeast–southwest in the west (Square Q/6).

Very few finds are associated with the stone and chalk-layer construction of Building 1307, mostly because it is found just below topsoil and because no secure floor levels have been found associated with it. The lower parts of the construction in Square Q/6 yielded some pottery and bones; samples of the chalky material that filled between the stones were taken for geological analysis.

PHASES F4–F2

To the north, west and east of Phase F4 Building 1307 were remains of intense activity, which were composed of several occupation phases that were very difficult to define and separate in some cases, partly due to the limited exposure this season and to the fact that much of the remains were collapsed stones and debris under topsoil. These remains are treated here stratigraphically independent of Building 1307, although it is certain that at least Phase F4 and possibly F3 utilized the outer walls of the building. However, since it is not yet known whether the activity assigned to F4 (the lowest of these remains) constitutes the original occupation related to this building, or whether it is a secondary phase outside it, the remains will be described

separately as a post-Building 1307 phase. Future excavation will confirm and refine the exact stratigraphic position of these elements. Phases F3 and F2 are defined based on their relationship to the F4 remains, although it is difficult to ascertain whether elements ascribed to a certain phase in different squares are indeed contemporary.

Phase F4

Phase F4 remains were exposed mainly in Squares Q–R/5 (Fig. 2).

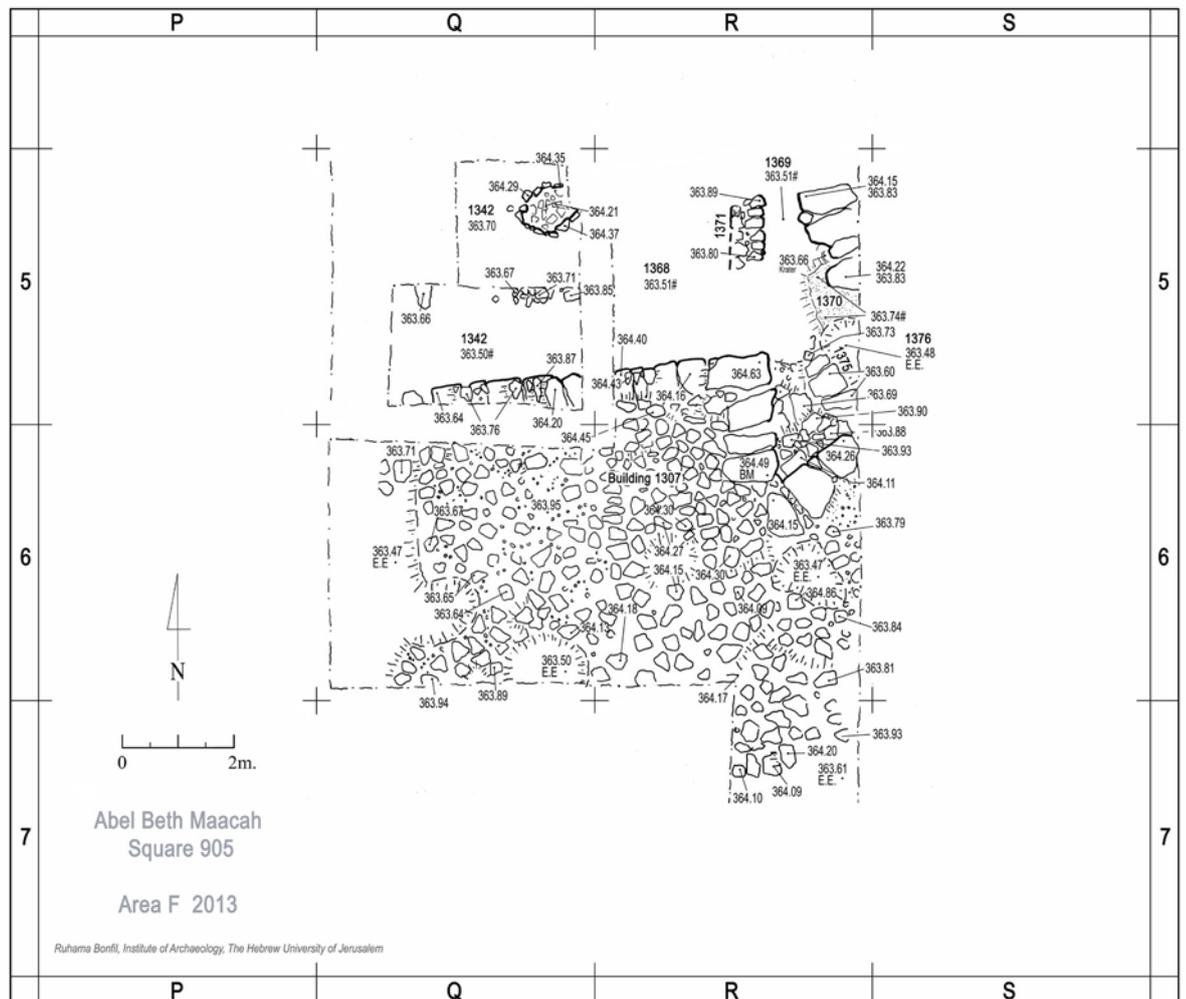


Fig. 2. Plan of Phase F4

In the eastern end of the balk between Squares R/5 and R/6, excavation took place in a very small area bordered on the east by the balk, on the west by Wall 1302 of F5 Building 1307 and on the south by the diagonal line of F3 Wall 1332 and adjoining stones and debris. The lowest level reached this season contained a patch of

flat-lying stones (1375), covered on the south by stones and debris of F2 Locus 1337 and Pit 1340, and running north under F3 Wall 1335. The top of the stones of 1375 was reached at 363.60 m; they were arranged around a gap, c. 0.50 m from end to end, that was filled with debris and small stones (Photos 11–12). This gap/pit appears to be a deliberate part of the construction of 1375 and not a later intrusion, although curiously, the stones of F2 Pit 1340 were placed just at this spot, floating c. 0.30 m above 1375. Stones 1375 terminate on line with the northern end of Wall 1302. The nature of the flat-topped stones suggests that they may possibly be a pavement; they, and the pit in them, abut the top of the third course down that is visible in the eastern face of Wall 1302. However, the dense concentration of features in this limited exposure makes it very difficult to be certain about their function or phasing, and further excavation is necessary.



Photo 11. Squares R/5–6, corner between Walls 1302 and 1332; stones of 1375.



Photo 12. Squares R/5–6; remains east of corner of Walls 1302 and 1327, looking west. Stones 1375 at bottom

In Square R/5, a short segment of a north–south wall (1371), c. 1.6 m north of the northeastern corner of Building 1307 and Stones 1375, is attributed to Phase F4, as its western face is covered by Wall 1346 (Photos 13, 21). The wall is abutted on the east by a layer of brown debris with some white chalky inclusions (1369) that runs underneath F3 Wall 1360 to the east. On the southeastern end of Locus 1369 was a patch of white compact material (plaster?) (1370), c. 0.50 m wide and long. On the northern end of the plaster patch, part of a vessel was revealed, covered directly by the stones of F3 Wall 1360 (Photos 14, 22).



Photo 13. Square R/5, looking west; F3 Wall 1371 below Wall 1346. Debris 1369 in center; note plaster patch 1370 in left foreground, below F3 Walls 1335 and 1360.



Photo 14. Square R/5, looking east at F3 Wall 1360 above Locus 1369 with white plaster patch 1370; note vessel embedded on northern end of the plaster.

A layer (1358) excavated in the southwest of Square R/5 abuts the second course down of F5 Wall 1327 (Photo 17); it might represent a floor. Locus 1358, apparently the continuation of Locus 1369 to the east and possibly the continuation of Locus 1342 (or 1355) in Square Q/5 to the west, is disturbed by F3 Pit 1372.

The elements excavated in Square Q/5 this season that are attributed to Phase F4 are based mainly on absolute heights in relation to parallel layers in Square R/5 to its east, as well as on the relative sequence: this is the earliest level excavated north of Building 1307, like the remains in Square R/5. A surface (1355) abutted the northern face of Wall 1327 in the southern half of Square Q/5 (Photos 17–19, 23). A layer of brown debris with white chalky inclusions (1342), c. 0.20 m above the surface and beginning on the level of the top stone of Wall 1327 in this square, seems to be accumulation on this floor. At the bottom of this accumulation was an intact jug (neck missing; 363.70 m) laid against the stones of Wall 1327 (Photo 15). This jug was found to contain a small silver hoard (Photo 16). A number of objects were found on the floor level of 1355, including flat-lying pottery fragments and two basalt ring weights lying in a row oriented northwest–southeast, c. 2 m north of Wall 1327 (Photos 17–18). At the end of the season, an east–west row of stones was revealed in the center of the square on the lowest level of Locus 1355.



Photo 15. Square Q/5; Square supervisor Dianne Benton exposing the jug with the silver hoard, against the northern face of Wall 1327, looking east.

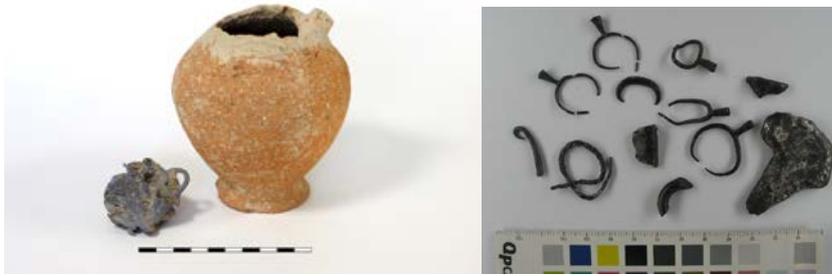


Photo 16. Silver hoard extracted from jug (left; Photo by Gabi Laron) and contents after cleaning (right; photo by Miriam Lavi, conservator, Hebrew University).



Photo 17. Looking south at remains in Square Q/5 (right) north of Wall 1327 of Building 1307; finds on Floor 1355. On the left: Square R/5.



Photo 18. Square Q/5, closeup of finds on Floor 1355, looking south.



Photo 19. Square Q/5, F4 Floor 1355 after removal of finds, looking east. Note stone silo (1374) in the northeastern corner of the square.

Phase F3

Elements attributed to Phase F3 are based mainly on their superimposing Phase F4 features, and partially so on absolute heights and later elements that cut into them.

The remains do not form a coherent plan, mainly due to the limited exposure and to later elements that disturbed them (Fig. 3).

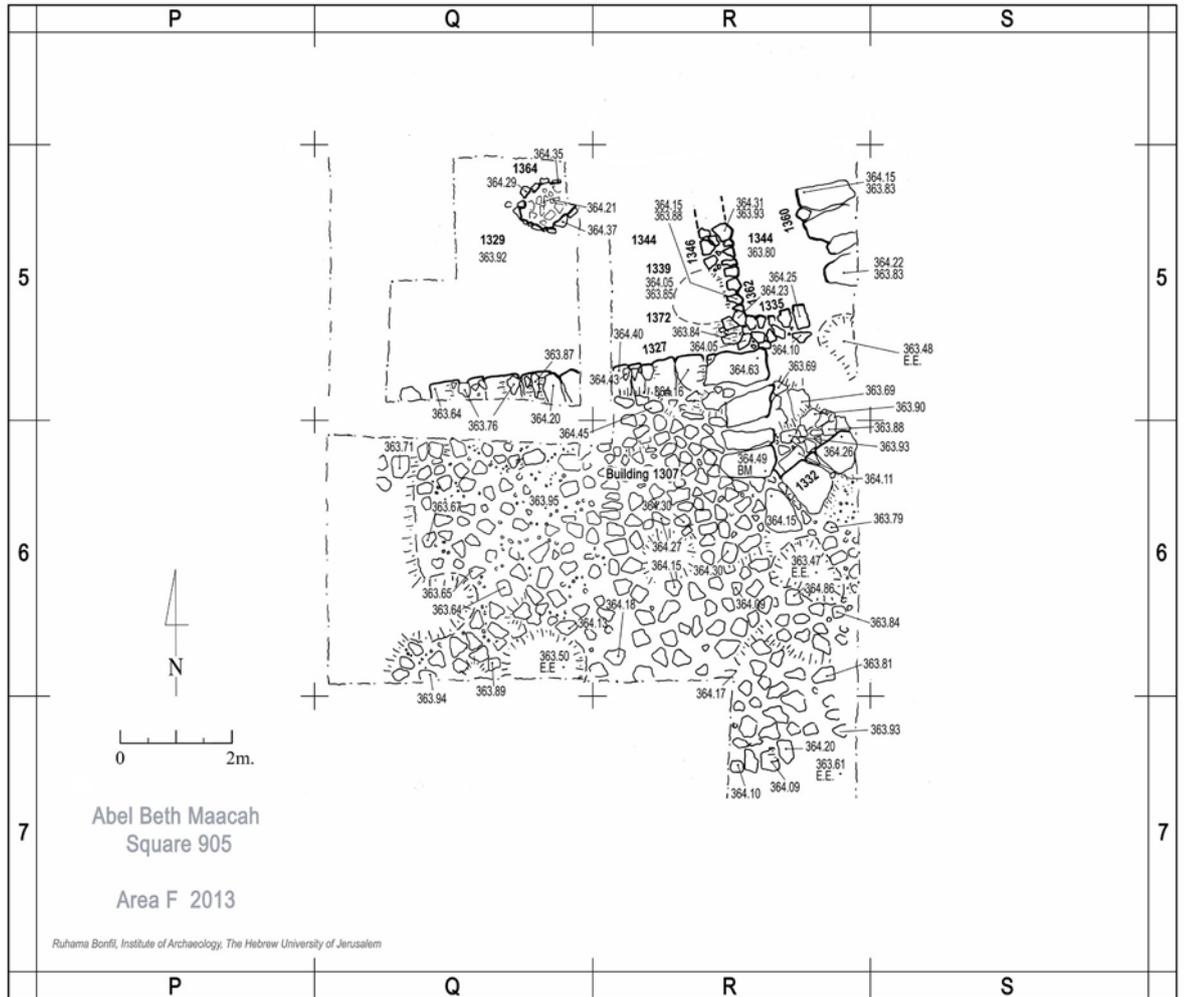


Fig. 3. Plan of Phase F3

In the northeastern corner of Square R/6 is a wall (1332) running northeast–southwest, composed of three roughly worked large stones, reminiscent of those in Wall 1302 (F5 Building 1307). Only the top course of Wall 1332 has been revealed and its relationship to Building 1307 remains ambiguous. It is possible that Wall 1332 is built of stones removed from Wall 1302 of Building 1307, although this cannot be proven at this point.

Each of the three stones of Wall 1332 so far exposed are a somewhat different size, all large and roughly worked (Photo 20). The southwestern stone ends c. 0.20 m before its contact with the southern stone of Wall 1302; the preserved top of Wall 1332 is 0.35–0.40 m lower than the top of the latter wall. Wall 1332 runs at an obtuse angle to Wall 1302 and continued into the eastern balk (Photos 4, 20). Later elements (Phase F2 Pit 1310 and related debris 1316 found to the south of Wall 1332) disturbed the connection between this wall and the white chalky and stone material of Building

1307. Debris and stones (1337) that were piled against the northern face of Wall 1332, as well as a later pit (1340), further obscure the stratigraphic attribution of Wall 1332. The flat-topped stones (1375) attributed to Phase F4 are on a level c. 0.50 m lower than the top of Wall 1332, but it is unknown at this point whether they penetrate below this wall or not. The density of finds in such a limited exposure makes phasing extremely difficult at this point.



Photo 20. Squares R/5–6; Wall 1332 against Building 1307, looking northwest; unexcavated eastern end of balk between the squares to the north of Wall 1332.

Remains in Square R/5 are attributed to Phase F3 based on two considerations: absolute heights and their superimposing features ascribed to F4. A linchpin in this stratigraphic relationship of the elements in Squares R/6 and R/5 is Wall 1360 in Square R/5. The elements described below appear to have been contemporary with Wall 1360, thus relating all to the same phase.

Wall 1360 is found in the northeastern corner of the square, running northwest–southeast, its southern end running into the eastern balk. The wall is composed of large roughly worked boulders (Photos 13–14, 22). The nature of the stones and the orientation of the wall closely recall that of Wall 1332 and it is possible that these walls formed a corner in the unexcavated area to the east. Wall 1360 floated at 383.83 m, while the floating level of Wall 1332 remains unknown due to the stones and later elements abutting it on both faces. As noted for Wall 1332, it is possible that the stones of Wall 1360 were taken from walls of Building 1307, due to their similarity.

Some 1.4 m to the west of Wall 1360 is the corner of two walls (1346 and 1335) and associated layers that are higher than the remains attributed to Phase F4.

Although their construction technique is different than Wall 1360, based on the founding heights, they appear to be contemporary. These fragmentary remains had been disturbed by later activity (Phase F2), so that they do not form a coherent plan. The proximity of the walls to the northeastern corner of Building 1307 suggests that they had made secondary use of these still-standing walls, or at least had been acquainted with them. The stone collapse, debris and installations attributed to Phase F2 cut and covered these walls.

This corner was composed of a segment of a north–south wall (1346) and an east–west wall (1335) whose preserved western end abutted the large northeastern corner stone of Building 1307 (Photos 21–22). Wall 1335, composed of two rows of stones 0.60 m wide, is preserved for 1.6 m; its eastern end terminates quite neatly and no clear later element seems to have cut it, although it is possible that a later pit (1322) had damaged this end. On the west, it seems that F2 Installation 1348 cut the continuation of Wall 1335. Wall 1346 is also composed of two rows and is 0.60 m wide; however, 0.70 m from its northern end, the wall seems to terminate and its continuation is a single row of stones (1362) that run up to Wall 1335 (Photos 22–23). There are two possible explanations for this: one is that this represents a blockage in an entranceway between Walls 1346 and 1335 and the other is that later activity cut the wall back to one row. Due to the intense later activity, it was difficult to isolate a debris layer or floor that could be clearly related to Walls 1346 and 1335. A large amount of pottery sherds and bones and some flint were found in Locus 1344, as well as two ceramic stoppers and a flint tool.



Photo 21. Looking west; Phase F3 Walls 1335 and 1346 in lower right (Square R/5). Note relation of these walls to the northeastern corner of F5 Building 1307.

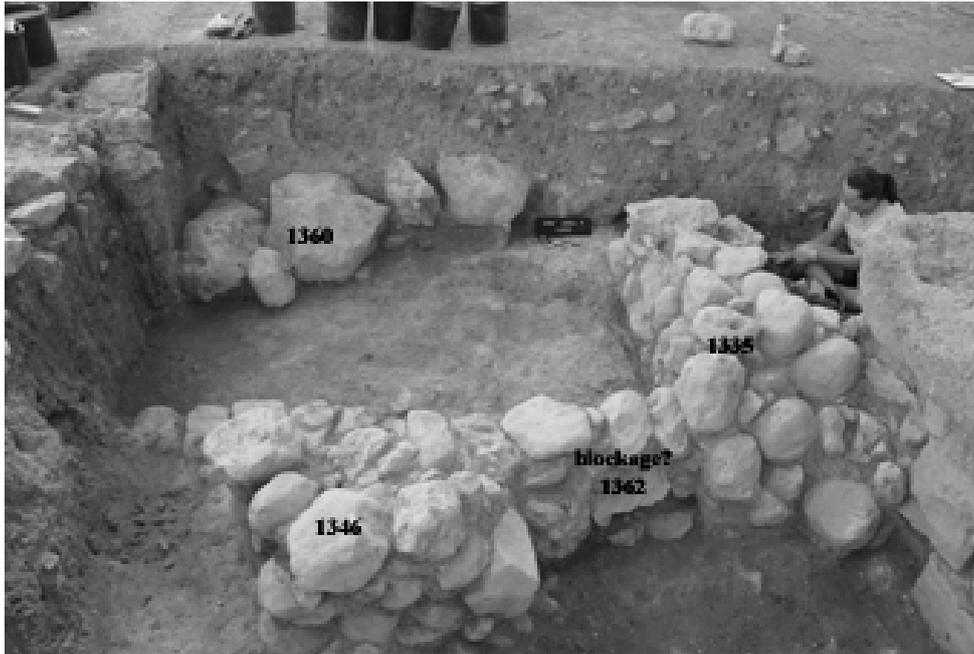


Photo 22. Square R/5; F3 Walls 1335 and 1346 with possible blockage between them, looking east. Wall 1335 adjoins northeastern corner of Building 1307 on right; F3 Wall 1360 in background in eastern balk.

A feature that is attributed to Phase F3 in this square is Pit 1372, a large round circle (c. 1.5 m diameter) filled with soft dark brown soil and a few small stones (Photos 17, 23). The top layer of the pit, designated 1339, contained a concentration of finds, including fragments of a collared-rim pithos and a chalice (Photo 24). As seen in Photo 24, Locus 1339 was very close to the bottom of the stones of Installation 1348, attributed to Phase F2, but it seems that the vessels are earlier than the installation, which was built right on top of their northern end. The vessels were first exposed at 364.10 m, while the contour of Pit 1372 became clear at c. 363.85 m (Photos 17, 23), after F2 Installation 1348 and the finds in 1339 were removed. Pit 1372 was dug into F4 debris/surface 1358.

The nature of Locus 1339/Pit 1372 and their relationship to the stones of 1348 recalls the relationship of Pit 1364 to Silo 1374 in Square Q/5 to the west. The elevations are similar as well: 1364: 364.12 m on top; 1339; 364.15 m on top. Both pits contained sherds of collared-rim pithoi and cut into F4 debris layers. The relationship between Pit 1372 and Walls 1335 and 1346/1362 remains to be further examined; as mentioned above, it is possible that the pit damaged the western face of Wall 1346, suggesting minor sub-phasing within the range of Phase F3.



Photo 23. Square R/5, looking southeast; F3 Pit 1372 in center



Photo 24. F2 Stones 1348 just above concentration of stones and pottery (1339) in top of Pit 1372; looking northeast.

In the northeastern corner of Square Q/5 was a large round pit (Pit 1364; diameter c. 1.5 m, but not completely exposed), revealed directly below Phase F2 Installation 1333; in fact, some of the sherds found in the pit were incorporated into the bottom of that installation (Photos 25–26). The pottery in this pit included fragments of a collared-rim pithos and an intact jug at 363.86 m, the lowest level excavated here this season. Adjoining the jug was a basalt pounding stone and yet

another one to the southeast (Photo 27). This jug was found on a level c. 0.20 m higher than that of the jug with the silver hoard to the south, attributed to Phase F4; it seems that the pit cut into the debris (1342) that rested on the F4 surface (1355). Just to the northeast of Pit 1364 is stone silo/pit 1374, situated in the northern end of the balk between Squares Q–R/5 (Photos 19, 27, 28). The relationship of Pit 1364 to Silo 1374 remains unclear; the lowest stones of the silo are resting on the exposed top of the pit, but only further excavation can determine whether they are contemporary or whether the silo cut the pit. It seems that the latter possibility is more likely, and thus the silo is tentatively attributed to Phase F2 (see below).



Photo 25. Square Q/5, looking east at smashed pottery in Pit 1364, superimposed by F2 Pit 1333; stones of Silo 1374 in background, cut into by stones of Pit 1333; note jug 13460 in center of pile.



Photo 26. Square Q/5, smashed pottery in Pit 1364, under Pit 1333, looking north.



Photo 27. Jug 13460 in Locus 1364, with basalt pounding stones, after removal of the smashed pithos sherd (see Photos 25–26); note contour of pit and stones of Silo 1374; looking east.



Photo 28. Square Q/5, looking east; Phase F4 Floor 1355 against Wall 1327; higher step (Locus 1342) in northeast quadrant of square, with Pit 1364 in front of Silo 1374, on the level of F4 debris 1342.

Most of Square Q/6 was occupied by the stones of Building 1307, aside from a narrow strip on the west, bordered by the extant edge of Building 1307 on the east and the balk formed under the floating level of F1 Wall 1323 on the west. This area (1367) was exposed at the end of the season and its stratigraphic attribution remains enigmatic at this point. On one hand, it seems to have cut into the stones of Building 1307 on a relatively straight angle (see Photos 7 and 8), which would attribute it to Phase F3. However, the elements that are attributed to this phase in other squares, especially R/5, do not cut Building 1307, but rather abut it. In the southern end of the

soft dark brown and ashy debris of Locus 1367 were fragments of a broken oven (Photos 29; 7 and 8). It is not clear whether these were just thrown into the debris, suggesting it might be a fill, or whether they represent an oven that was *in situ*, but was smashed at one point.



Photo 29. Square Q/6, Locus 1367 with smashed tabun fragments; stones and white chalky material of Building 1307 on the right

Phase F2

The clearest remains that are attributed to Phase F2 were found in Squares Q–R/5, since they were built on top of or cut into Phase F3 elements, especially in Square R/5. The assignment of elements in Squares Q–R/6 to Phase F2 was more equivocal, as they were not found above features that could be clearly attributed to F3. Thus, the F2 elements in these squares are so defined since they cut into Building 1307 (as opposed to F3 elements which abut it). However, it must be kept in mind that the features and layers do not comprise a coherent occupation phase at this stage of the excavation and more subtle sub-phasing is possible (Fig. 4).

The main feature characteristic of this phase is a series of pits and installations, many of them cut into F-5 Building 1307. Very few items were found in these pits. No architecture is assigned to Phase F2.

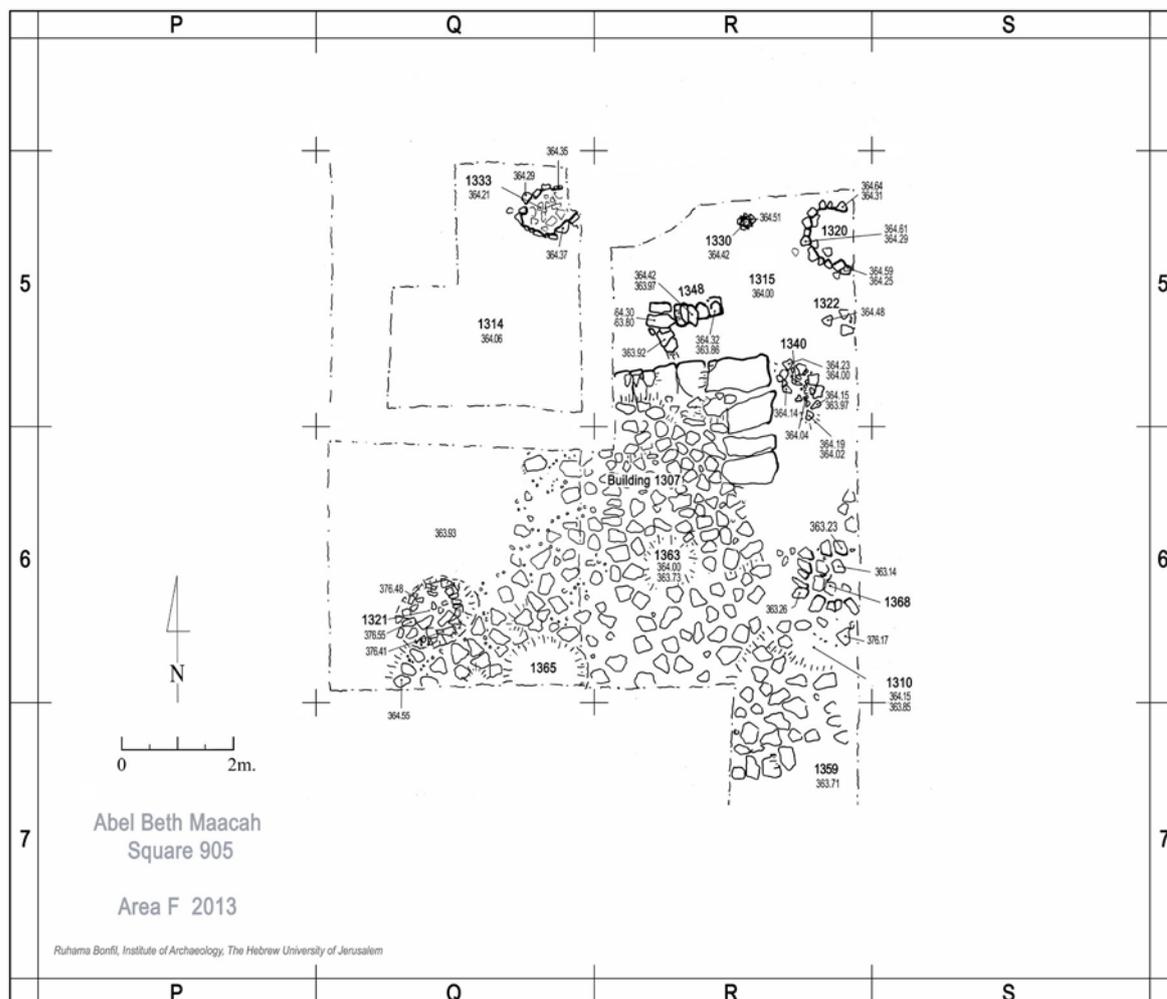


Fig. 4. Plan of Phase F2

The area northeast of Building 1307 (Square R/5) contained a dense concentration of collapsed stones under topsoil (Photo 27), possibly from buildings beyond the border of the excavation, and/or from Building 1307. The installations attributed to Phase F2 were discerned as the fallen stones were systematically removed and their preservation is poor due to the stone collapse and the proximity to topsoil. Five such features were identified in Square R/5 as belonging to Phase F2: Pits: 1320, 1322, 1340 and Installations: 1330, 1348.

Pit 1320 is a large circle of stones, preserved c. 0.40 m high, 1.0–1.1 m in diameter; its eastern end runs into the eastern balk (Photos 30–31). The soil inside the circle of stones is similar to the matrix outside and very few pottery sherds and bones were found in it. The flimsy walls were composed of two ‘courses’ of small

unworked stones, with a thin layer of soil between them. This pit was covered and abutted by a layer of soft debris with small stones: 1308. Installation 1320 was set almost directly on the stones of F3 Wall 1360 (see Photo 22, eastern balk above Wall 1360).



Photo 30. Squares R/5–6, looking south. Fallen stones, pits and installations northeast of Building 1307 in Square R/5.



Photo 31. Square R/5, northeastern corner; Pit 1320 and debris 1308 around it; Stones 1309 to the left (north)



Photo 32. Installation 1320 (upper course of stones)

Installation 1322 is yet another rounded stone-bordered pit, found in the southeastern corner of Square R/5, its eastern end in the balk. It was poorly preserved to only c. 0.15 m high and c. 0.70 m in diameter (Photo 33). No finds were associated with this pit. The location of Pit 1322 is just to the south of the plaster patch (1370) attributed to Phase F4 (see above); at this spot, the plaster suddenly terminates. However, it does not seem that there was a relationship between the two phenomenon, as the bottom of Pit 1322 is 0.35 m higher than the plaster patch. Pit 1322 is abutted by Debris 1315 on the north and Pit 1340 is c. 0.10 m to its south.



Photo 33. Square R/5, Pit 1322, looking down, towards the south.

To the west and southwest of Pit 1322, in the area of the eastern end of the balk between Squares R/5–6 and east of the northern stone of Wall 1302, is yet another circular pit (1340), marked by a rounded concentration of small stones. A small amount of pottery, bones and flint was found in and around Pit 1340, including a bronze Scythian arrowhead at 364.10 m (13230). Around 1340 was a layer of debris and stones of varying heights (1337) that abutted the northern face of F3 Wall 1332, but is attributed to F2 due to its relationship to Pit 1340; it seems to be secondary to Wall 1332. Finds in the debris of 1337 included mostly bones, with a small amount of pottery and flint; other finds include a bronze, a spindle whorl, a ceramic stopper and an iron arrowhead; it is possible that some of these, such as the arrowhead, should be associated with the pit.

Installation 1330 is located just about in the center of the square, revealed just under the stone collapse (1308) that covered the northern part of the square (Photo 30). This was a small (0.40 m diameter) flat round stone surrounded by small

unworked stones, making the entire installation some 0.50 m in diameter (Photo 34). A number of grindstones were found nearby, as well as a concentration of sherds to the west that might be restorable. Although the nature of this small installation, perhaps used to grind or pound small amounts of grain, suggests that it sat on a floor, no such element could be defined within the soft debris of Locus 1315 that surrounded it.



Photo 34. Square R/5, looking west; Installation 1330 in the center; Debris 1315 around it and F1 stones 1309 to the right (north).

Installation 1348 is a unique configuration of stones and related finds located in the southwestern quadrant of the square. The top of the stones emerged in the layer of fallen stones under topsoil (Photo 35). The stones were placed on an east–west line, running for almost 1.0 m. Some of the stones are shaped like smoothed flattened ovals; these are basalt, while the others, roughly worked to oval shaped, are hard limestone. There are three courses to this ‘wall’, with the stones set in a graduated or stepped manner on the western end, with a difference of c. 0.40 m between the higher and lower ones (Photo 24). Abutting the bottom of the southern face of these stones are the vessels and stones in Locus 1339, attributed to F3. Although proximate, the finds were attributed to a phase earlier than the stones of 1348. The function of 1348 remains enigmatic; the naturally oval shape of most of the stones chosen to build this element were apparently intentional, as no other such stones were found in other installations or walls in this area. Installation 1348 was abutted by a layer of soft

debris with fallen stones (1315); on the west, a short north-south line of stones might have been collapse or a built element that was hard to define.



Photo 35. Square R/5, looking west; stones of Installation 1348, visible in layer of debris and fallen stones.

Features identified as belonging to Phase F-2 in Squares R/6–7 and the probe to the south are pits that were cut into the stones in Building 1307: Pits 1310, 1368, 1363 and 1359.

Pit 1310 was revealed just under topsoil 1304 in the middle of the eastern balk of Square R/6. It is a rather haphazard circle of small stones, c. 1.1 m in diameter (Photos 36) that was dug into the stones of Building 1307. Finds in Pit 1310 included some pottery, bones, flint and a spindle whorl. Debris 1316 abutted the pit on the north, going down to the stones of F3 Wall 1332. Some 0.35 m below the bottom of Pit 1310 was yet another circle that appears to have cut the stones and white chalky layer of Building 1307



Photo 36. Square R/6, looking west; Pit 1310; detail of finds in pit on right.

In the middle of the Stones 1307 was a round pit (1363), 1.0 m in diameter (Photo 37). It was c. 0.25 m deep and upon reaching its bottom, the stones of 1317 (the layer of stones and white chalk below 1307) was revealed, showing that the pit cut only into the upper layer of stones of Building 1307. This pit was empty of finds and at its bottom, a layer of stones belonging to 1307 was revealed. Yet another pit in Square R/6 is 1368, just to the west of Pit 1310; it was empty of finds.



Photo 37. Squares R–Q/6, looking west; Pits 1310, 1363 and 1368 cut into 1307.

Another such pit (1333) was found in Square Q/5, built directly above Pit 1364 in the northeastern corner of the square, whose top appeared in the debris under topsoil (1314) in the eastern half of this square (Photo 38); part of Locus 1314 is apparently a disturbance/pit dug into a large part of this square, as described below (Phase F1). The walls of Pit 1333 are abutted by Debris 1329. Pit 1333 seems to have been built into the western face of Silo 1374, suggesting that it is later than that silo. As noted above, this poses a stratigraphic uncertainty, since it is surmised that Silo 1374 post-dates F3 Pit 1364, thus ascribing it to F2. But if Pit 1333 is F2 and it cuts the silo, then the silo must be earlier, probably F3. If so, the relationship between the silo and Pit 1364 needs to be redefined. Further excavation will clarify this point.



Photo 38. Square Q/5, looking east; top of Pit 1333 emerging in Debris 1314; note stones of top of Silo 1374 behind the pit.

Pit 1333 (c. 0.85 m diameter) was comprised of a ring of small field stones and small flat stone fragments; the interior was lined with similar thin flat stone fragments or slabs that looked as though they were fragments of some construction (Photo 39). Underneath the slab layer was a layer composed of stones and packed earth, possibly a foundation laid above the vessels in F3 Pit 1364. The function of the shallow stone-lined Pit 1333 is not clear, as virtually no finds were recovered inside it, but it was more carefully built than the other pits in this phase. Most of the area to its west was disturbed by what seems to be a large refuse dump (Phase F1), so no floor was found associated with it. On the same level in the square to the east (R/5) was Locus 1344, a layer of loose debris with chalk inclusions, but not a clear floor surface.



Photo 39. Square Q/5, Pit 1333, looking east; note small flat stone slabs in bottom and in lining.

Although not certain of its stratigraphic attribution, Silo 1374 is described here, with the F2 elements. It is a somewhat conical-shaped dense concentration of

small roughly rounded field stones, whose western face is exposed in the northern end of the balk between Squares R–Q/5 (Photo 28). Although its diameter remains unknown, the extant remains suggest that it had been c. 1 m. The top of this feature is covered by several large stones; as discussed below, they might be capping stones of the silo. Excavation of this structure will provide information necessary to fully understand its nature, function and relationship to other elements.

Remains attributed to Phase F-2 in Square Q/6 include two pits: 1321 and 1365. Pit 1321 is a circle of small stones, c. 1.0 m in diameter, reminiscent of Pit 1340 and 1310 in Squares R/5–6 (Photos 40–42). Like Pit 1333, it contained two layers of stones in its bottom, with several sherds of a storage jar and other vessels incorporated in the lowest layer, as well as a grindstone fragment. Locus 1313, a layer of debris that covered the stones of Building 1307 on the east, abutted Pit 1321; division of this layers during excavation was difficult due to many fallen stones in this area. Some 0.30 m below the bottom of Pit 1321 is an area of soft dark debris, Locus 1367, that is attributed to Phase F3 (see above); in this debris and under Pit 1321 is yet another rounded area cut into the stones of Building 1307 that might be an early phase of this same pit, although this is not certain (Photos 7 and 8 above).



Photo 40. Square Q/6, looking east; F1 Walls 1323 and 1324 in foreground; F2 Pit 1321 above emerging stones of Building 1307.



Photo 41. Square Q/6, looking north; F2 Pit 1321 in center, above stones 1325 of Building 1307 on the right (east); F1 Wall 1323 on the left (west)



Photo 42. Square Q/6, looking west; note relationship between Pit 1321 and stones of Building 1307 (1325) in foreground. F-1 Wall 1323 in background.

Pit 1365 is found in the southeastern corner of Square Q/6, cutting into the stones of Building 1307 (Photos 7 and 8 above). The pit is c. 1.3 m diameter, making it one of the largest in Phase F-2. Very little pottery and bones were found in this pit.

Phase F1

The elements attributed to Phase F1 do not form a coherent plan (Fig. 5) and they are so ascribed mainly since they are later than the pits and other elements of Phase F-2.

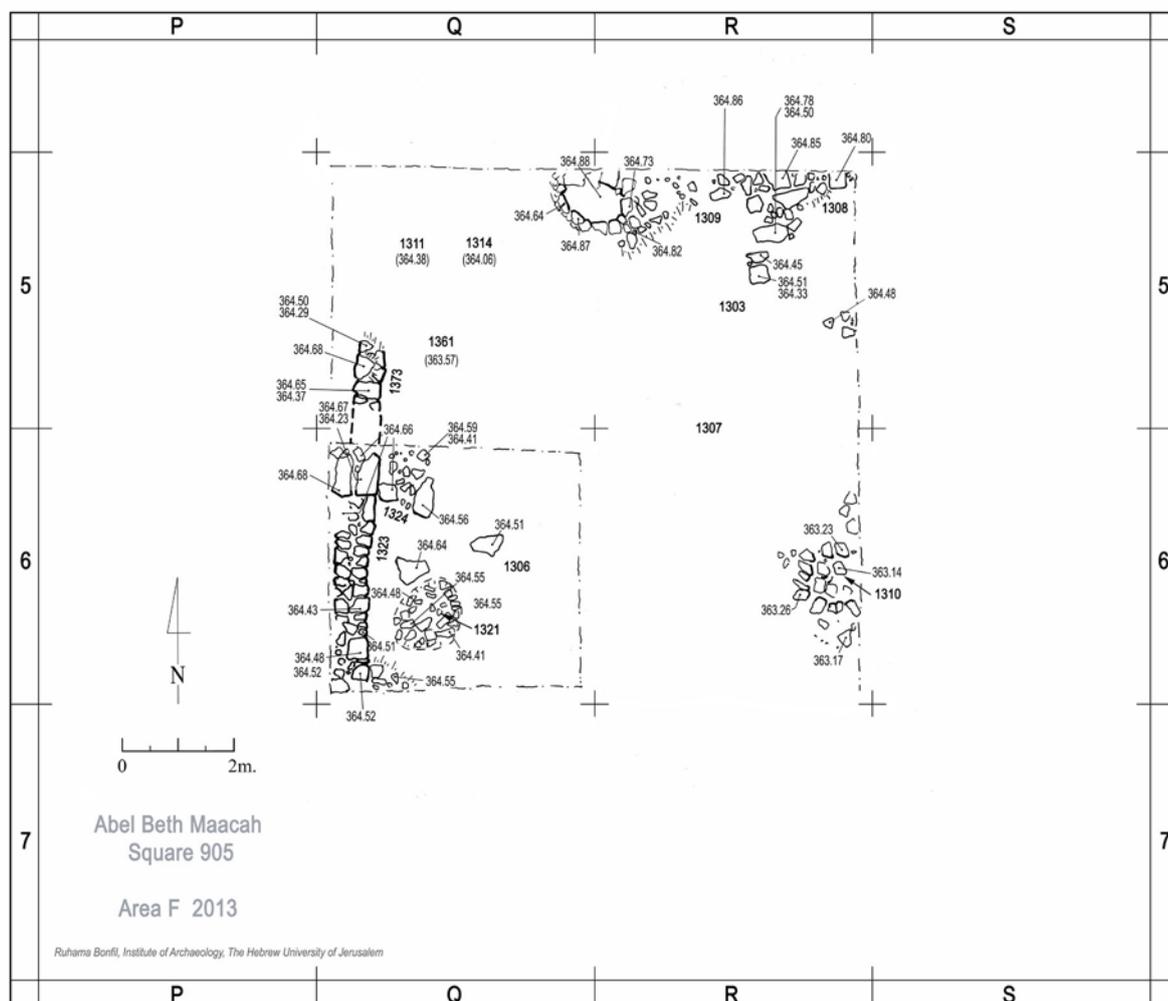


Fig. 5. Plan of Phase F1.

Just under a thin layer of topsoil in Square R/6, a concentration of fallen stones and debris was identified (1303, 1308) (Photo 30). It was difficult to separate these various elements and to attribute them securely to F-1 or F-2. The stones running along the northern balk of the square (1309) are floating above the level of the installations attributed to F-2; it is difficult to determine whether they represent a damaged wall or just fallen stones that form a line due to excavation processes (Photo 43).

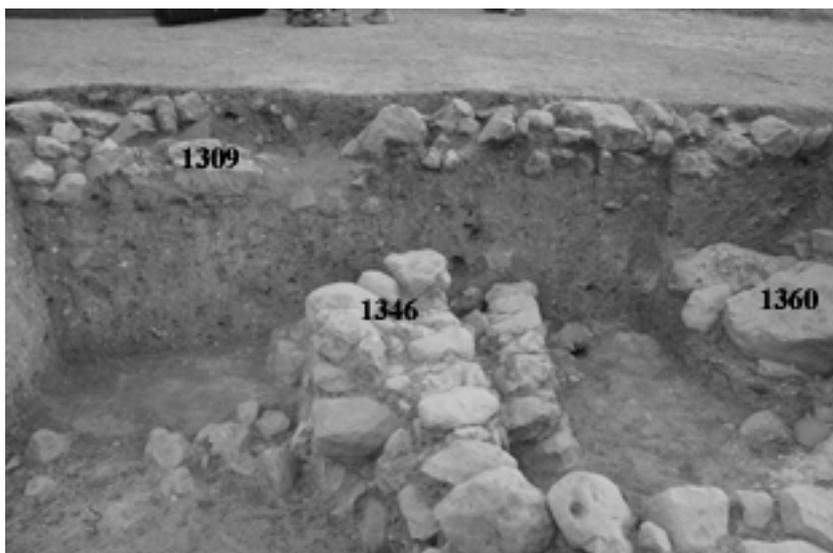


Photo 43. Square R/5, looking north; note cut end of F3 Wall 1346 and floating stones of 1309 (F1) to the north.

In the balk between Squares R–Q/5 are several large stones in topsoil (364.75 m) (Photo 28). These stones lie to the west of the stones of 1309 and also just above the top of Silo 1374. However, at this point, it is difficult to determine whether they belong to the silo (capping stones?) or to F-1 Wall 1309. The former possibility seems more likely, but further excavation is necessary.

It seems that the northwest part Square Q/5 contained a disturbance in the form of a large refuse pit or dump (Loci 1314 in the east and 1336 in the west; Locus 1361, on the western end of F4 Floor 1355, might represent the lowest part of this dump, as it differed from the whitish makeup of the floor). This dump contained a very large amount of pottery sherds, bones, stones and flint in a matrix of loose brown soil with some white chunks. It is difficult to discern the borders of this dump; see Photos 17 and 19 above for a possible trace of this in the eastern and southern balks of the square, respectively. The pottery recovered from this context is mixed, but it seems that none is later than Iron Age II.

In the southwestern corner of the square, a short section of a wall was revealed (1373) (Photo 44). It was thought to be the continuation of Wall 1323 from Square Q/6 to the south, but there was a gap between them in the balk between the squares. It is possible that the stones of Wall 1324 damaged this part of the wall.



Photo 44. Squares Q/5–6, looking southwest. F-1 Walls 1373 and 1323, with stones of Wall 1324 on top.

A north–south wall, 1323, running along the western balk of the square, is attributed to Phase F-1 as it is floating above all other features (Photos 40, 42, 44). This wall runs 3.5 m and is 0.50 m wide, nicely built of two rows of field stones. The northern end of the wall was capped by several large stones (1324) that floated above Wall 1323 (Photo 40); it is difficult to discern whether they were fallen, like a number of other large stones found in the upper layer of debris in this square (Photo 42) or whether they represent a built element.



Photo 42. Square Q/6, looking west; floating F-1 Wall 1323 in balk; stones of Building 1307 in foreground.

