

# Tel Abel Beth Maacah Area A Field Report 2019

**Fredrika Loew**

The seventh season of excavation in Area A ran from June 24 to July 19, 2019. Fredrika Loew was the area supervisor, assisted by Carroll Kobs, Jeff Kobs, Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, Cale Staley, and Kenton Williams. Christin Johnson and Stacie Lee were registrars.

Area A is composed of two parts—the eastern and lower portion (“downtown”) and the western and higher portion (“uptown”). In the eastern portion, excavation continued in squares A/12, A/13 and B/13, A/14 and T/14, and A/15. The western portion was expanded to the west with the opening of squares O/11 and O/12; to the south with the opening of P/13, Q/13, Q/14, R/13, R/14; and to the north with the opening of P/10, Q/10, and R/10. Excavation in the already excavated uptown portion continued in squares P/11, P/12, Q/11, Q/13, and R/13.

The main goals of this season were: 1) reach the A-4 strata in square A/15; 2) excavate and clarify the A-6 strata in squares A/13 and B/13 and to reach the Late Bronze Age; 3) expand the A2 cultic room to the north in square R/10, and to the west in squares Q/11 and Q/10; 4) reach the level of the A2 destruction in squares P/12 and O/12; 5) expand the A-1 complex to the south in squares P/13, Q/13, and R/13, and to the west in squares O/11 and O/12.

Field photos in this report – by Robert Mullins and Kent Williams.

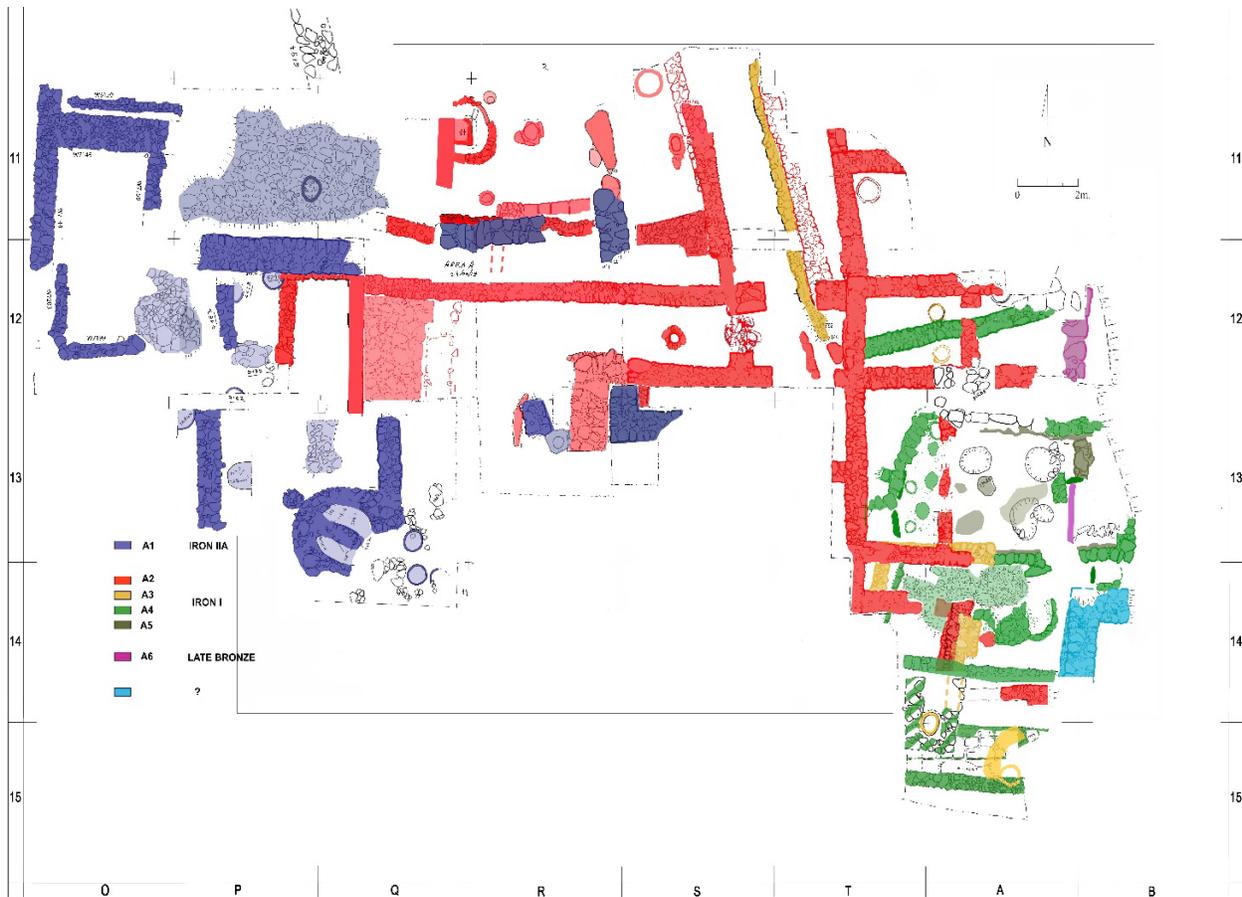
Strata	General description	Major loci (2018-2019)	Walls (2018-2019)
A1	Remains of this stratum are found only in the “uptown” portion of the area. Walls of well-constructed buildings. Up to four sub-phases in some squares. More preservation the farther west we excavate. Relatively good preservation in the southwest as well, less well preserved in the south east	Stone “pavement/ platforms” 6147, 6243, 6165, 6186. <i>Square R/13:</i> Stone installation 6166 <i>Square Q/13-14:</i> installation 7122. <i>Tabuns 7160, 7215, 7216.</i> <i>Square O/12:</i> locus 7201, tabun 7169 <i>Square P/13:</i> tabuns 7167, 7168	<i>Square R-S/13:</i> 6188, 6189, 7182 <i>Square Q/13:</i> 6118, 7183 <i>Square O/11:</i> 7174, 7145, 7159, 6159. <i>Square O/12:</i> 7199, 7200 <i>Square P/13:</i> 7170 <i>Square Q-R/10:</i> 6197

A2	Remains of this stratum were excavated only in the upper portion of the area this season, aside from dismantling a few A2 elements in the lower portion. Two main foci were excavated in the well-constructed building complex of this stratum (the western part): expanding the cultic space in R/11 to the north (R/10) up to the olive tree and completing the excavation of the room in the western end of P/12 (with the very burnt destruction debris). Another context belonging to this stratum that was excavated was in the lowest level in R/13, reaching Wall 6270 and a layer abutting it on the south.	<i>Square Q/11: 7137-7154 destruction debris</i> <i>Square P/12: destruction debris 6267</i>	<i>Square Q-R/11: 6115, 5115</i> <i>Square P/12: 6268, 6269, 7205</i>
A3	Open area with cooking activity, some architecture mainly in the southeast of the area; sealed A4 and sealed by A2; no continuity from A4. Only excavated in “downtown” so far, although the lowest eastern wall in the entrance passageway might belong to this stratum. Most remaining A3 elements removed this season in A/15.	<i>Square A/15: tabun 6173, installation 5152</i>	<i>Square A/15: 5166</i>
A4	Continuation of the building in the south contains large amounts of mudbrick, as well as possible sub-phases: A-4b is the cultic building, A-4a represents the addition of partition walls and an oven, mainly in the southern room in A/15. The area to the south of “wall” 6903 was excavated this season.	<i>Square A/15: Mudbrick installation 7915 and surrounding mudbrick debris 7916.</i> Possible cobble surface 6930	<i>Square A-15: 5166, 6911, 2163, 7907</i>
A5	Excavated this season in only A/13, removing floor 3181 and reaching a possible lower surface (7901) down to the floating level of the large round stone in the center of the square floated. This is possibly a lower phase of the A4 cult building.	<i>Square A/13: 7901, Floor 7914/7917? (or A6)</i>	<i>Square A-12: 3120, 3150</i> <i>Square A-B/12: 7938</i>
A6	Earliest Iron I phase, pits dug into this phase, two pits cutting brick wall 6931	<i>Square A/13: surface 7922, 7935, pits 7921, 7925, 7937</i>	<i>Square A/13: possibly some of the mudbrick walls and features assigned to A7. 6931, 7939</i>

A7	Tentatively our Late Bronze phase consisting of a large mudbrick wall and a large stone wall, as well as a stone feature that might be a tomb. Some of these contexts might possibly be Middle Bronze II based on finds from Square A-B/12 – juglet and scarab, and sherds scattered from the porcupine lair.	<i>Square A/12:</i> 7911, 7933, 7936	<i>Square A-B/12:</i> 7938 <i>Square A/13:</i> 7940, 6931
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**Area A, aerial photo – end of 2019 season**



**Area A, superposition plan – end of 2019 season**

## **Stratum A7**

This year, we discovered another early Iron I stratum, which became our new A-6. What was our A-6 last season is now A7, our earliest exposed stratum. It was not excavated in squares B/12 or B/13 this season. Excavation of A7 was limited to small exposure in squares A/12 and less so, A/13. At present, we are unable to securely date this stratum, nor to be certain which of the elements that predate A6 belong to the Late Bronze Age, or, possibly the Middle Bronze Age II. These are the earliest remains in Area A and they were revealed in the lower, ‘downtown’ eastern part of the area.

### ***Square A/12***

This season, the northern section of A/12 was trimmed back, after the dismantling of the eastern portion of wall 2145. Below 2145, the remains of A5 wall 4105 were documented and dismantled. Wall 4105 sealed locus 7936, which showed traces of burning and ash, concentrated mainly in the north. On the northern end of 7936 was a small scarab and a complete painted MBII juglet; sherds of an unexcavated jar

might be a burial that the scarab (79289) and juglet (79290) were related to. 7936 was brought to the level of the rest of the square (Locus 7911 – 374.45), and excavation stopped for the season.

The porcupine living in the northwest corner of the square continued its own excavation, and not only exposed a large west-east wall, 7938, in the north of A/12, but also removed several buckets of pottery from its den. We exposed the southern face of wall 7938, which is currently phased as A-5, even though it was, in fact, below A5 Wall 4105 and thus potentially might be A6. However, further excavation ‘behind’ (north of) the debris 7936 might reveal that the wall has lower courses, which is suggested by the western continuation of its line where stones do continue further down (inside the porcupine lair). The relationship of 7938 to the large north-south stone wall 3180 that runs along the eastern edge of the square (eroded) is not clear. Wall 7938 appears to be floating just above it, and is thus phased as A5 (see below) but the eroded nature of this ‘corner’ makes this uncertain so far. It might be that we need to rephase 3180 to a later phase.



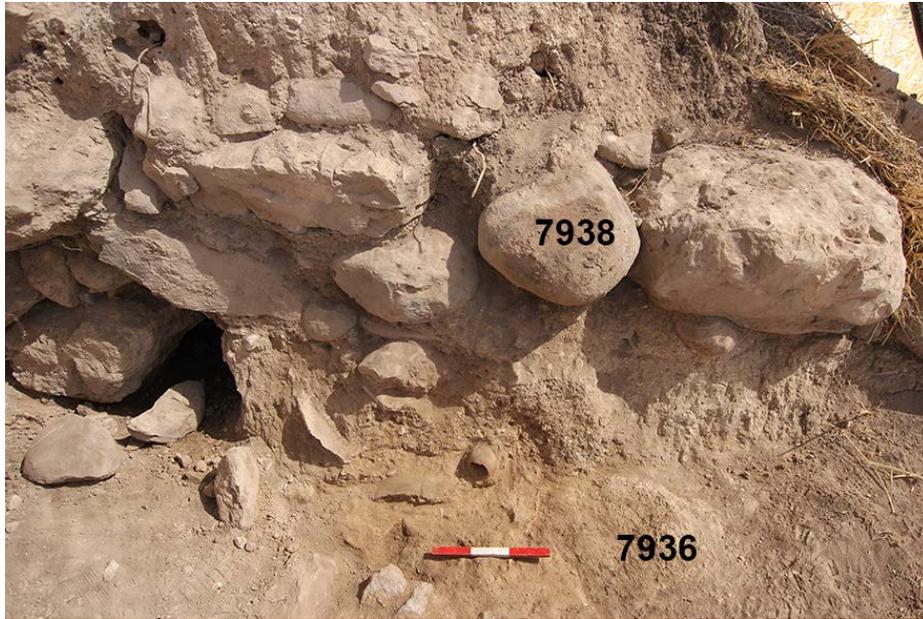
**Kent19-264. Square A/12, looking north;  
northern end of A5 Wall 4105 before removal.  
Large stones on top – Wall 7938; opening of  
porcupine lair on left**



**ABM19-A-329, Square A/13, looking northwest; Walls 7938 and 3180, with ashy layer 7936 in foreground; note large stones in porcupine lair opening**



**ABM19-A-325, Square A/12, looking north; Walls 7938 and 3180, with ashy layer 7936 in foreground; note porcupine lair opening in stones west of Wall 7938**



**ABM19-A-317. Square A/12, looking north; layer 7936 ‘under’ (or against?) Wall 7938 with scarab and juglet; note large sherds nearby of a possible burial jar**

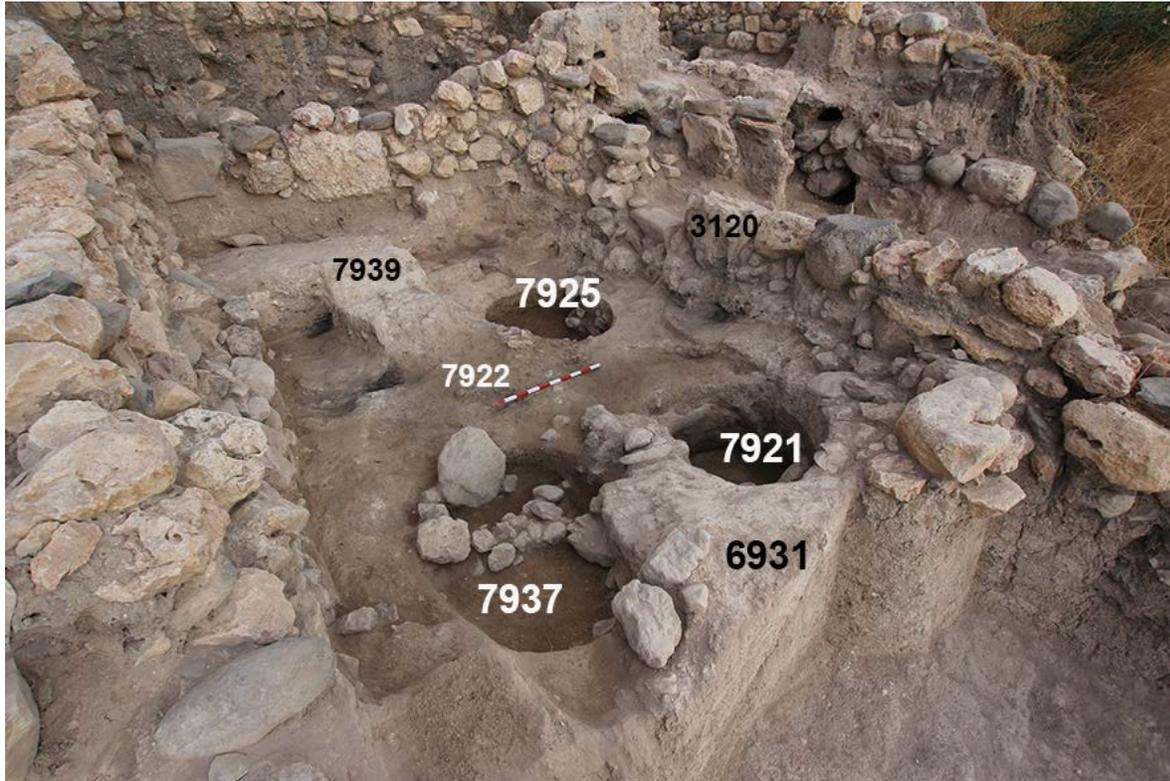


*The juglet and scarab in 7936 (photo: Tal Rogovski)*

The relationship of Wall 7938 (A5?) and 3180 (A6 or A7?) to each other should be considered also in relation to Wall 6931 in A/13. 6931 is a very wide brick wall running north-south and was originally considered to belong to the Late Bronze Age, similar to 3180 and is thus attributed to Stratum A7 (for now). Excavation in 7936 that revealed two typically MBII items – a scarab and a juglet – as well as a possible jar burial typical of that period – raising the question whether 6931 is indeed a Late Bronze Age wall or whether it might belong to the Middle Bronze Age. In such a case, the LB would be “missing” here. At the end of 2019, we tend to phase these together as A7, although more excavation is needed to clarify the phasing of these walls, 7938, 3180 and 6831, as well as their chronology.

### ***Square A/13***

Excavation continued down to the top of wide brick Wall 6931, where it was found that one (7921) of the several A6 pits (see below) cut into its western part on the north. Yet another pit (7937) appears to cut into the southern part of 6931 in this square, although the bricks are not visible inside the pit as they are inside Pit 7921.



**ABM19-A.350. Square A/13, looking northwest; Stratum A6 pits. A5 Wall 3120 in north; A7 Wall 6931 in foreground.**



**Kent 139. View of cut bricks of Wall 6931 inside Pit 7921, looking north**



**Kent19-20. Pit 7921 cutting Wall 6931, looking north; note stones lining north rim of the pit**



**ABM19-A-378. Square B/13, looking west at cut Wall 6831; above meter stick is A6 Pit 7937. A4 Wall 3154 in background.**

In the north and northwest of the square is a poorly defined east-west mudbrick wall, 7940, that appears to run below A5 wall 3120 (the northern wall of the A5 room, composed of large boulders) or is at least built up against its lower course. Its upper elevation is ca. 374.50. This mudbrick feature could

corner with wall 6931 and thus would belong to the A-7 phase, yet Pits 7921 and 7925 obscure this relationship. It seems that Pit 7925 might cut into the southern face of 7940, but this is not entirely clear. It is also possible that 7940 is an A6 wall, since it runs underneath A5 Wall 3120 (although the latter might have been used in A6). 7940 may also possibly be phased with the mudbrick wall 4134 in the southeastern corner of square A/12. Any relationship between these three mudbrick walls/features (7940, 4134 and 6931) should become apparent when wall 3120 is dismantled. The debris against 7940 contains ash and charcoal, and above its bricks (although this is not certain and they might be up against the bricks) are sherds of what look like restorable vessels. If these sherds are above the bricks, then they would be phased with the A6 layer here – 7917 and 7922 (see further below about 7922). This area needs further clarification.

A final west-east mudbrick feature, 7939, appears in the western portion of the square, but is preserved at a higher elevation (374.57) than the extant top of Wall 6931 (374.08) (although its top is about the same as 7940) and does not continue east across the square. It was closely covered by the lower part of the A5 surface here (7914). See photo below (with A6 pits).



**Kent 19-209. Square A/13, looking north at bricks of 7940 (note ash and charcoal) below A5 Wall 3120 with restorable pottery concentration(?) them.**

## **Stratum A-6**

Stratum A-6 was excavated only in Square A/13 this season. As noted above, this designation is now used for the layer with the pits, although in the previous seasons it denoted elements that were below

A5, including brick wall 6931 and stone wall 3180, and were postulated to be Late Bronze Age, before we realized there is yet an earlier Iron I phase – now termed A6.

Below a layer with much pottery (7914) that we consider an earlier A5 floor was yet another layer, 7917. This layer is presently phased with A5, as it abuts the lower course below A4 Wall 2107 that we attribute to A5, probably the western continuation of Wall 3182 from Square B/13 (see photos below). A large amount of pottery, possibly restorable, was found in 7914, suggesting that it might be a debris layer on the surface below it, 7922, which is attributed to A6. However, the pits that we associate with 7922 are not visible in 7917, and thus it seems that this layer seals the pits. Yet, the upper levels of the pits, especially 7921 and 7925 on the north, are just about the same as the bottom level of 7914, so it is possible that they do go together and that 7917 should be phased as A6. This remains ambivalent. In the northwest corner of layer 7917 was a concentration of pottery within a layer of ash and brick debris, containing a pithos sherd with an incised mark (letter?) (79178), at 374.33. This was found just to the west of the contour of Pit 7925 and might be related. Another find in 7917 is a complete intact jug found in the southeastern quadrant (79158).

### **Locus 7922**

An unresolved issue this season is locus 7922, the lowest layer reached in A/13 (374.32–374.23). It was excavated below 7914 and opened when the extant top of brick Wall 6931 was reached (in the east). Its matrix is not very different than 7914 which covered it, although it has less pottery and contains several pits (see further below). Two alternatives exist for this layer: 1) it is an A6 surface covered by debris 7917 and from which the three A6 pits (7921, 7925, 7937) were dug, or 2) it is an A7 surface and the A6 pits were dug (from 7917?) into it, cutting the surface/layer. Supporting the definition of 7922 as a surface is a nice mortar and pottery found on it; however, it remains to be clarified whether it should be phased with the pits or before them. The tricky part is that although 7922 seems to phase with the pits and to cover part of Wall 6931, and thus should be considered A6, it also runs up to the southern ‘face’ of the bricks of 7940, which is considered an A7 wall, as described above. The concentration of pottery just above the bricks of 7940 (and below the stones of A5 Wall 3120) (see photo above) should most likely be phased with the A6 activity here (with 7922 and pits). Perhaps the top of the A7 brick wall (7940) protruded here and surface 7922 was laid against this extant top. The question remains as to what is the phasing of the charcoal and ash found against and above the bricks of 7940. In order to answer this question, the balk under the sandbags that runs along the eastern part of 7940 needs to be excavated back to uncover the bricks, and A5 Wall 3120 needs to be dismantled. At this point, we tend to phase 7922 with A6.



ABM19-A-253. Square A/13, looking east; surface 7922 with pits; brick feature 7939 in center; note course of irregular stones below A4 Wall 2107 (right), apparently comprising the A5 phase of this wall (unnumbered, =Wall 3120 on the north). A7 Wall 7940 on the left (north)



ABM19-A-141. Square A/13, looking south; brick feature 7939 in center, with A6 pits; floating A5 stone in center; note course of irregular stones below A4 Wall 2107, apparently comprising the A5 phase of this wall (continuation of Wall 3182 to the west). 7922 runs below these stones. A7 brick wall 6931 on the left, cut by Pits 7921 and 7937

### **Pits 7921, 7925 and 7937**

Three round pits were found associated with surface 7922; it seems they did not cut into this surface but rather were dug from it.



**Drone photo 0161; A6 pits in Square A/13, looking west.**



**ABM19-A-385. Square A/13, looking northwest; A6 pits in center; A5 and A4 walls around; A7 Wall 6931 in center right.**

**7921** (0.9 x 1.1 m; 374.34-373.78): Roundish-oval pit, dug from 7922, cutting into bricks of Wall 6931, in northeast of square; stones around its northeastern rim; some sherds, few bones and stones inside; flotation sample.

**7925** (0.9 x 1.3 m; 374.23-373.79): Roundish-oval pit; dug from 7922, northern rim abutting? or cutting? Wall 7940; few pottery sherds and an upside down storage jar base, stone object, possible stone weight; flotation sample. On the western edge of the pit a layer with ash was excavated (7932); large pithos sherds, one incised with a sign before firing, were found in this layer. The outline of 7925 was not clearly defined at its upper elevation, and the sherds may have been part of the pit back-fill.

**7937** (1.2 x 1.5 m; 374.20-373.95): Large, oval-shaped pit; dug from 7922, butting into bricks of Wall 6931; complete intact jug just to the west of the top layer of the pit; standing stone (masebah) against western rim of the pit, fronted on the east by a north-south row of stones – bench? Offering table?; some pottery, few bones; flotation sample.



**Jug in top layer of Pit 7937**



**“Massebah” and stone “bench” inside Pit 7937, looking west (photo taken during visit in winter 2019)**

## **Stratum A-5**

This season, stratum A-5 was excavated in Squares A/12, A/13, and A-T/13.

### ***Square A/12***

Excavation of the A-5 strata in this square was limited to a small project: dismantling a small segment wall 4105 and its associated loci. We were able to find the northern continuation of stones 4109 (equivalent to 7930 this season), which was covered by a thin layer of ash (locus 7929.) We excavated both sides of the wall separately and stratigraphically, though the area is quite small (the length of exposed 4105 was about 40 cm). It seems that wall 4105 abutted wall 7938 in the north (see photo above); The floating level of 4105 in the north (where it ‘meets’ Wall 7938) is 374.65. The upper level of 7938 in the east is 375.29; 105? Wall 7938 seems to be floating in the east but 1- scraping back the section below it might reveal more stones since 2 – in the west, it appears to continue down (seen inside the porcupine hole – if this is one and the same wall with 7938). It is thus uncertain at this point whether 7938 should be phased with 4105 (and with 3120 further to the south) as A5 or whether it might be earlier – A6 or even A7 (see above for a discussion of the relationship with Wall 3180).

### ***Square A/13***

Excavation in A/13 stopped in previous seasons on the level of what appeared to be a surface with various stone installations – 3171 in the center and east and 6910 in the west (on a level below A4 Wall 3154). This season, a higher step was left in the west, along the western balk line on the square (A-T/13), and excavation proceeded down below 3171 in the rest of the room. The installations related to 3171 were dismantled this season: 4170 (upper elevation 375.07) and 3181 (upper elevation 375.12). 3181 also contained a patch of jagged pebbles. The pillar bases and some tumble in the west were also removed.

Locus 7901 comprised the excavation of the floor makeup of 3171, including removing the plaster and stone installations set into this layer; it was excavated down to 374.625, the floating level of the large round stone in the center associated with the A5 surface 3171 (its top level was 374.85 and it floated at 374.67). Soil from 7901 was sifted, and baskets of pottery from concentrations in the eastern portion of the square were marked for restoration.



**Kent-19-085. Square A/13, looking east; Locus 7901 with pottery concentration.**

After the removal of the surface, Locus 7914 was opened and seemed to represent an earlier floor, still attributed to A5 (7935 is the debris sealed below the large round stone that = 7914). This locus also had a pebble patch in the southwest (like in 3171 above), on and within it (7912, elevation 374.61). This pebble patch lay almost directly below the previous pebble patch, 3181, but with 20 centimeters of soil between the two. A problem exists concerning the level of 7914 as a surface of A5: the top of 7914 is the same as the bottom level of A5 Wall 3120 (374.65) but it continues down to 374.50, which suggests that it is earlier. Yet, on the south, it seems to abut the stones under 2107 that are considered the A5 phase of this wall (the western continuation of Wall 3182 from Square B/13). It is possible that we excavated into a subfloor fill and thus were lower than the floating level of Wall 3120. We thus are attributing 7914 to A5, although this is not certain, nor is it entirely certain that it is indeed a surface.

Floor 7914 was very patchy and problematic. Even when we thought we had removed the floor makeup, we were finding patches of the floor down into the matrix below, 7917. It is hard to confidently

state that 7914 was the floor, and that 7917 was debris below the floor. It is difficult to pinpoint an exact elevation for the A-5 floor. Because of the pits (described in more detail below), it is possible that both 7914 and 7917 contained portions of the very disturbed floor. Both of these loci contained restorable pottery. 7914 was opened at 374.62 and closed at 374.50. Locus 7917 closed at an elevation of 374.32.



**Kent-19-137. Square A/13, looking east; layer 7917 (debris below floor? 7914). A6 pits not yet seen A5 stone floating.**

Wall 2107, attributed to A-4, seems to be sitting on an earlier wall, clearly seen as one or two courses of irregular large stones, some of which look like they are in secondary use, including a large, flat stone that looks like it might have been a threshold and larger stones below it at a slightly different angle (see photos above). This recalls the method of construction of Wall 3120, the closing A5 wall of this room on the north. These stones under Wall 2107 are most likely the western continuation of Wall 3182, which is clearly visible below the eastern end of Wall 2107 in Square B/13. As noted above, Floor 7914, suggested to be an earlier A5 floor, abuts these stones, although it abuts the very bottom of Wall 3120 on the north and continues somewhat down from there.



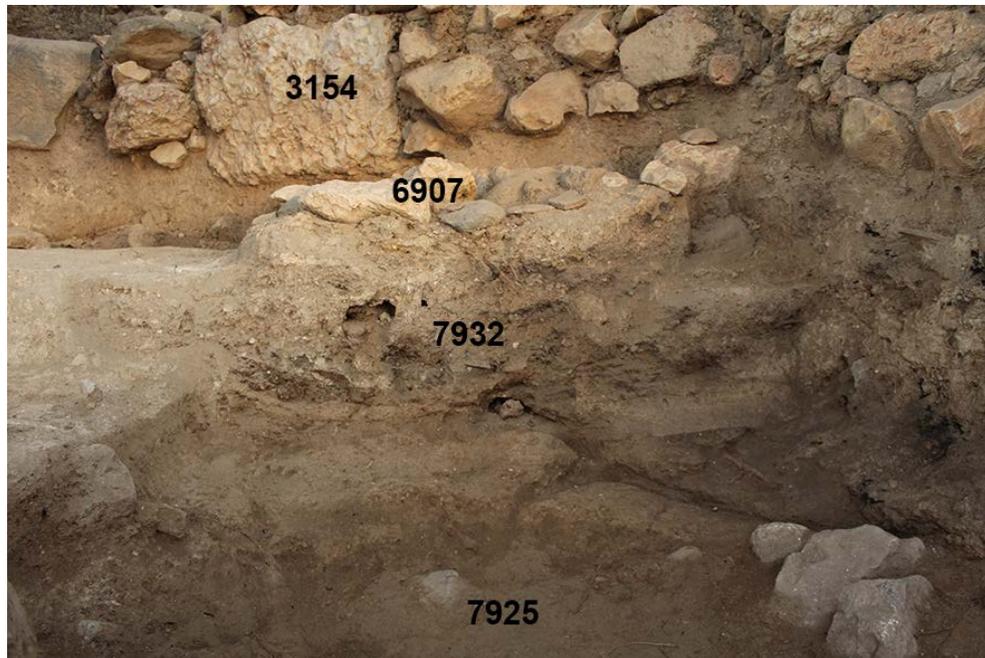
**ABM19-A-395. Square A/13, looking south at A4 Wall 2107 above the western continuation of A5 Wall 3182. A6 pits in center**

In the north, the upper course of 3120 was removed. The eastern part of the wall, just to the north of A6 Pit 7921, has not yet been revealed down to floating level. Below the floating level on the west, large pithos sherds were seen in the section, above the bricks of 7940 (A-7), as described above.

The large round stone set in the center of Floor 3171 was removed this season; it floated well above 7914 and thus was apparently set in place in the upper phase of A5. The debris sealed by the stone was excavated as 7935, which in fact equaled 7914.

### ***Square A-T/13***

The area to the west of the re-established balk line between A and T/13 contained several loci below and to the south of A5 stone installation 6907, of which a few stones were left that mark the A5 layer here. Ashy layers sealed by this installation – 7932 – might represent some activity related to Pit 7925; note the large pithos sherds from this area, one with a sign incised before firing. It seems that these ashy layers are related to the burnt debris visible above the bricks of 7940 (described above), that is currently phased with A6 as it is covered by A5 Wall 3120. This area needs to be excavated in order to clarify the relationship between this matrix, Pit 7925, and bricks 7940.



**Kent 19-220. Square A/13, looking west; ashy layers 7932 bordering Pit 7925 on the west. Covered by A5 stone installation 6907**

### ***Summary of A5***

It can be summarized that the A5 room under the A4 northern cult room was bordered by Wall 3120 on the north and Wall 3182 on the south; the western border lays beyond the present section below A4 Wall 3154 and the eastern end is eroded away. It seems that this room had two floors – 3171/7901 and 7914, although the latter seems to go down somewhat lower than Wall 3120 on the north. Although we considered the possibility that 3171 could have been an earlier A4 floor, it seems more likely that it should be phased as the upper A5 floor. Notably, the stratigraphy here is very close between A4 and A5, although the change of architecture from A4 to A5 is clear.

## **Stratum A-4**

Stratum A-4 was excavated in Squares A/13 and A/15. This season, we expanded the A-4 cultic complex farther to the south and worked to clarify the phasing in the southwestern part of Square A/14, where two clear phases of the room were identified.

### ***Square A/15***

This season we continued in the southern half of Square A/15, with the goal of reaching the floor level of the A-4 cultic room and exposing a southern closing wall, assuming that the burnt brick line 6903 was not the border of the building but rather some built feature. It became clear in this square that there are two

phases in Stratum A-4 in this part of the building. After the removal of the remaining A-3 elements (tabun 6178 and stone installation 5152) and the intrusive burial 7902, excavation began with the A-4 destruction. Some stones showing at the end of last season proved to be a west-east, well constructed wall, 7907, belonging to the earlier phase, A-4b. This wall is the A-4 closing wall and runs parallel to wall 2169. It runs a full 3.5 meters across the square and into the western and eastern balks. It also forms a passageway in the eastern portion of the square with wall 5166.

Wall 5166, which was previously thought to be only A-3 and whose upper course was dismantled in season six, is now also assigned to at least the A-4a phase, and likely also A-4b. It is currently not floating, and built in the same construction as 7907. It would have been visible to the occupants of the A-3 structure, and was abutted by A-3 surface 6191 (upper elevation 376.43, lower elevation 376.25). It forms a corner with wall 6911, and tabun 6225 is built up against it.

After exposing the top of wall 7907 (elevation 376.40 in the west, and 376.18 in the east), we began to excavate the A-4 destruction, which had been seen clearly across square A/14 and is still clearly visible in the western section. This destruction abutted wall 7907. It became clear that there was a built component to the large piles of mudbrick; what we had called wall 6903 merged into a built mudbrick installation, 2-3 mudbricks wide (locus 7915, upper elevation 375.81). Mortar lines were clearly seen on the surface. 6903, which runs east-west, parallel to wall/bench 2169 to its north (circa 1.5 meters away) contains brick material identical to the brick of 7915 and the mudbrick collapse in the east of 7916 (see description below.) As seen last season, 6903 does not appear to reach the eastern balk; it seems to curve towards the south ca. 30 cm before the balk. The clearly built mudbricks of 7915 also stop at this point. The two loci have not been merged. It is possible that the stones of 6903 lined the top of the northern face of mudbrick installation 7915. The mudbricks of 7915 seem to abut the corner of 5166 and 6911. Interestingly, they don't seem to clearly continue to the south of 5166 (in the passageway formed between 7907 and 5166.) and 7915 does not abut wall 7907. One theory is that 7915 belongs to the A-4a phase, with wall 5166 and tabun 6225. It was built later than 7907, but more excavation is needed to determine its relationship to 7907 and its potential function.

Separating mudbrick installation 7915 and wall 7907 was locus 7916, which also ran to the east of 7915. This locus contained large, burnt chunks of mudbrick. This mudbrick debris appeared mostly in the eastern and central part of the locus; the western portion, between 5166 and 7907, had no mudbrick chunks and was instead a compact, smoother debris. Samples of this mudbrick collapse were taken, and the locus was fully excavated to define the outlines of 7915. Below 7916 was locus 7923, a thin ash layer above what may be a surface, locus 7924. Some flat lying pottery was found on this locus, and the matrix changed to a smoother consistency, similar to what was seen in 7916 in the west. Excavation stopped this season on this possible surface layer and at the upper height of mudbricks 7915.

It is difficult to say, without further excavation, what the function is of this A-4 room in square A/15. We have the southern closing wall 7907, which is built similarly to wall 2169. 2169 was previously thought to be a bench or a low partition wall. The northern closing wall, 2107, is a much different construction. It is possible that the northern closing wall for this room is 2169. The function of mudbricks 7915 is also unclear. It may be a mudbrick wall, continuing east of wall 5166, but would be a very wide wall (almost 1.5 meters) and only leave a narrow space between its southern face and the northern face of wall 7907. In future seasons, excavation can focus on clarifying the northern and southern faces of this mudbrick installation.

In the western portion of the square we excavated the small strip we had left undisturbed last season; our goal this year was to reach the level of the large pithos sherds seen in the section, and clarify the western edge of tabun 6225. In the season six report we phased this tabun as A-3b, but now assign it to the A-4a phase. We removed stones 7910, which were related to but not the same as slabs 4172 to their north. There was a gap between the two, and an intrusive burial (6137). Slabs 4172 were nicely hewn basalt, whereas stones 7910 were a single layer of round/oval flat stones, with large gaps between. Where 4172 sat above the A-4 destruction, stones 7910 (which were visible but un-numbered last season) sat above a hard, compact, white material that abuts tabun 6225. This hard material, locus 7920, was left in situ in the south. In the north of this small strip, the matrix contained some chunks of this white material but seemed more consistent with the destruction debris encountered throughout the rest of the square. This destruction debris, 7919, continued down to the level of 2169, when we switched loci to 6920 (last season's locus for the small strip south of 2169, which contained the restorable pithos sherds). The remaining pithos sherds were removed. The western section clearly showed mudbrick collapse and debris, and we left a small step in this section at the level of a surface. This surface abuts tabun 6225, possibly even running beneath it.

The phasing of this small room with tabun 6225 was further complicated this year. It seems to belong to the A-4a phase, and not to the A-3. The only clear surface was heavily disturbed by intrusive burial 6904. The builders of tabun 6225 would have clearly seen the upper courses (now dismantled) of wall 5166, and some of the stones of wall 6911 seem to intentionally hug the curves of the tabun. This season wall 6911 is definitively phased to A-4. It is well-built in the south, preserved 5 courses high and reaching the A-4b floor 6930. The northern part, abutting 2169 and preserved 30 cm lower on top, is composed of boulders that might represent a blockage which was previously ascribed to the A-3b phase but would now be A-4a.

A portion of the southern face of wall 2107 in Square A14 collapsed during the off-season, and the stones were removed.



**ABM19-A-373. Squares A-B/ 14-15, looking east; southern part of A4 cultic building.**



**ABM19-A-382. Squares A-B/ 14-15, southern part of A4 cultic building, looking west.**



**Kent-19-048**



**Kent-19-095. Square A/14, looking north; brick feature 7915.**



**Kent-19-106. Square A/14, looking west at balk in northern part of the square; burnt debris between Wall 7907 on the south and Wall 5166 on the north; complete flask in debris.**

### **Stratum A-3**

Remains attributed to stratum A-3 this season were limited to small projects in squares A-T/12 and square A/15

#### *Square A-T/12*

This season, excavation in this area consisted largely of clean-up. The porcupine had caused quite a bit of collapse. We began removing stones that seemed like tumble, but noticed after removing one layer that the stones below it seemed built. The collapse of the excavation area immediately north of wall 2143 complicates the interpretation of this small wall, but it seems that there was a wall, 7905, that abutted the upper courses of wall 2143. It may have extended north and also abutted wall 2145. It is likely an A-3 wall. (northern elevations: 375.88, floating level 375.55).

#### *Square A/15*

Excavation began in this square by removing the A-3 strata installations, including the well preserved tabun 6173 and the remaining portion of stone installation 5152, which sat directly above the A-4 strata. No surfaces were associated with these installations this season. Last season, we hypothesized that stones 6182 were the capstones to an intrusive burial. Indeed, these stones covered burial 7902. Because of its east-west orientation and construction and similar elevation, we phased this burial with the other Islamic burials 6137, 5132 and 3177 (note that the latter was C14 dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE and we assume the other burials might date to this period as well). The elevations of each burial are within 40 cm of each other; 3112, which covered burial 3177, averaged 376.40. 4159, which covered 5132, was measured at 376.03. The average height of 6182, which covered 7902, was 376.43.



**Kent-19-003. Stratum A-4 Tabun 6173, looking southeast**

## **Stratum A-2**

This season, Stratum A-2 was excavated in the north in squares R/10, Q/10, and Q/11, and in the west in square P/12. Several squares were not excavated this season but contain A-2 remains, particularly R-S/11 and Q/12. The lowest level reached in Square R/14 appears to be an A-2 layer, and excavation also took place on this level in the northern part of Square Q.13. A small project was conducted in square A/15 in the eastern, lower part of Area A. A-2 is the latest Iron I phase, with its destruction C14 dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

### **EASTERN AREA A (“DOWNTOWN”)**

#### *Square A/15*

This season, we removed the last remnants of A-2 in this square: stones 5128. Though given a wall number, these few and rather haphazard stones seem more like paving stones than a wall. They were drawn, elevations were taken (upper elevation 377.23, lower elevation 376.93), and they were removed. A-3 debris began below the stones.

### **WESTERN AREA A (“UPTOWN”)**

This season, we began to re-evaluate the two sub-phases, A-2a and A-2b. Our A-2a sub-phase is quite ephemeral. This report presents all of the new material as A2. This stratum was excavated in squares Q/10, Q/11, R/10, R/11, and S/11.



**ABM19-Drone photo 216. Eastern half of Area A, end of 2019, looking west; Squares P–R/10–12. Stratum A-2 walls.**

### *Square Q/10*

Excavation expanded north this season into the southern half of square Q/10. We hoped to catch the end of wall 6115 and any related walls. We also wanted to reach the level of the A-2b destruction on the west of wall 6115. Note that the olive tree roots disrupted excavation in the northeast corner of the opened area.

We removed a layer of topsoil and began excavating below in locus 7113 until we reached the northern continuation of wall 6197. Only a small portion, 50cm or so, of this wall was excavated in season 6, and it was removed. This season we excavated a further two meters to the north. The wall is one to two courses high, and about one meter wide. Its upper elevation is 378.81, and floats at 378.52. The southernmost stones were removed after documentation, both for safety concerns and to unearth more of wall 6115. Wall 6197 seemed to corner with 5114 (dismantled last season). This wall likely continues north into the section currently covered by the olive tree roots.



**ABM19-A-40. Square Q/10, looking east; A-1 Wall 6197.**

When we reached the level of stone surface 7147, we sub-sectioned the square and began excavating the eastern half. Stones 7147 seem to run below wall 6197, or abut the lowest part of the wall, and are seen in square R/10 as locus 7140. Excavation continued to the west of wall 6197. A section of 7147 is preserved in the west, and likely continues into at least the eastern portion of square P/10. Stones 7147, at an elevation of 378.62, is the northern continuation of the stones seen in the previous season across part of Q/11 (locus 6149, elevation 378.66). Though there is a gap of about a meter between 7147 and stone podium 6243, these two elements are both clearly A-1.

20 cm below the 7147, we began excavating mudbrick debris belonging to the A-2a stratum, locus 7176, and stopped when we reached a level with stones. Further excavation is needed to clarify this locus, 7208 (elevation 377.65), which belongs to the A-2a surface or is directly below. In square Q-11, the surface was thought of as 6175.

#### *Square R/10-11*

We began excavation this year by stringing off a section to the south and east of the olive tree, hoping to catch a closing wall for the A-2b room (in R/11) and fully expose the clay “basin” 6253. After removing the topsoil, we encountered a stone-filled debris, possibly even a poorly constructed cobble surface, at an elevation of 378.54 (equivalent to 7147 in square Q/10). This surface seems to relate to stones 6243 and is phased with the A-1 stratum. They were not seen in any order in square R/11.

Below stones 7140 was a chalky layer, 7165. No clear A-2a surface was seen, though not surprisingly as the northern section of R/11 never clearly showed the A-2a surface that we saw in other

areas of the room. A layer of loose soil was excavated (7184) before we entered the A2b destruction, 7202 at 377.20. This locus continued until we reached the continuation of stones 5180, which circle around installation 6153 to the north and bond with wall 6115. Like we had seen in season five, there was a layer of ash between stones 5180 and 6153 (locus 7210). The gap between 6253 and 5180 remains about 30cm. In the portion excavated last year (locus 6254), we discovered an almost complete pyxis and other sherds. Only a few sherds were found in this northern area. Soil samples were taken of this dark, ashy material. The stones of 5180 stands about half a meter high. As seen last season and clarified this season, a few stones were missing from the eastern side, where one would 'enter' to use the installation. This opening is exactly on line with the offering table, 6287, as well as with the large 'masebah' or lying stone, 6282, to the east.

To the north of the stones, in the remainder of the excavated portion of R/10, we reached a layer of ash above floor 5141, locus 7211. Right along the southern square line of R/10 was a patch of clay, preserved at a higher level than the surface-like material throughout the A-2b cultic room. This clay "bench" was numbered 7212, did not reach stones 5180, and was preserved at an elevation of 376.64.

We were able to completely expose the clay installation 6253 this season. As described in last season's report, 6253 is a rectangular clay feature fused to the plaster of wall 6115. It was constructed with the wall, as the wall plaster adhered seamlessly to it and one entity. The top of 6253 has two plaster-lined depressions, separated in the center by an upright stone that was partially plastered lending it the look of a double basin on top. In the back of the northern "sink" (where the plaster is somewhat damaged) is a plastered drainage hole. This season, a hole of about 15cm was found on the northern face of the installation. Soil samples were collected from the interior. It seems that this hole links with the hole in the top, and no further exits are found anywhere else on the bin or on the western side of wall 6115. The matrix of the feature remained the same on the north: the exterior seems to be covered with a thick mud plaster. 6253 measures 60 cm from wall 6115 to the east; it stands one meter high; the depth of the 'sinks' is around eight centimeters.

### *Square Q/11*

Excavation in this square began immediately below what we previously thought was a packed earth surface 6151 (elevation: 377.70.) It is possible that what we thought was a surface is the collapse of a second story. It is clearly pre-A-1, but remains difficult to trace in Q/10, Q/11, R/10, and R/11, and appear in patches at differing levels.

Wall 6115 is a well-built north-south stone wall running in the balk between R and Q/11 and continuing to the north into the balk. On its southern end is an entranceway, bordered on the south by east-west wall 5155 (described below). This season, the northern end was excavated about a meter

further, but no closing wall was found. It is also preserved suddenly much lower in this northern segment; some of the plaster still stands where there are no stones, possibly indicating that a portion of the stones were robbed at a later date. A tree root from the olive tree disrupted the wall, but not enough to account for missing stones (there was no clear collapse to the east or west in the portions excavated this season. Wall 6115 is preserved ca. 1.75 m high above the presently excavated floor level and thus can possibly be considered completely preserved. The presence of this wall might indicate that the room to its east (5141) was a roofed area, although this will become clearer when the northern closing wall is discovered and we can see how wide this space was. As of now, it measures ca. 7.5 m from Wall 6115 to Wall 4145/4193 in the east.



**ABM19-A-159. Installation 6253 after revealing its northern side; note outlet of drainage hole in wall and closure of stone parapet around it. Plaster on Wall 6115 in back.**



**ABM19-A-450. Square Q/11, looking west at installation 6253 and plastered wall 6115 with 'new' mortar found on its northern side. Mortar on the left –from previous season.**

The eastern face of Wall 6115 is lined with a fine hard white plaster, which was sampled for analysis. Traces of a similar layer of plaster can be seen along the eastern face of the wall, in the balk of the entranceway. No plaster was seen along the western face of the wall, and no closing wall has been found for either the north or west in the Q/11 room.

We began excavation immediately below the A-2a floor in locus 7118, and at a level of 377.44 began excavating the A-2b destruction. All pottery was marked for restoration. This locus continued until we reached the upper level of wall 5155, and then a technical switch was made to locus 7154, though the matrix remained the same. This locus continued for the rest of the season. The entirety of this destruction measures over a meter thick: locus 7154 ended at an elevation of 376.28. Towards the bottom of this level we removed several baskets of large pithoi sherds.

Wall 5155 encloses the Q/11 and R/11 room in the south. The western end continues into the balk and the center of the wall is covered by the remainder of wall 5108 (the 'drain' portion of 5108 is still in-situ.) The western half of 5155 is in much better condition than the eastern: the west is much straighter with no sign of the tilt seen in the east. It is preserved over a meter high in the west and runs down to the A-2b floor (upper elevation 377.49). The top course is very neat and clear, unlike the east where the construction is haphazard. Wall 5155 forms an entranceway with wall 4185 in the east, and a 60 cm entrance with wall 6115.



**ABM19-A-25. Square A/11, looking north. Top of A-2 destruction debris west of Wall 6115. A-1 pavement 6243 on top left.**



**ABM19-A-68. Same as previous photo, looking east, lower level excavated in destruction debris. Cultic room seen beyond (east) of Wall 6115.**

*Square P-Q/12*

We began excavating the western strip of P/12 this year with the goal of reaching the level of the A-2 floor in the eastern half. Excavation into the A-2 stratum began with clear mudbrick destruction debris at 377.84 (close to the upper elevation of northern closing wall 6269, at 377.99). This locus, 7191, is equivalent to the season six locus 6260.

At the same elevation as mudbrick wall 6268, we uncovered a north-south stone wall, 7205, in this western strip (elevation of 6268: 377.46. Southern height of 7205: 377.47.) 7205 is a well-built stone wall, two stones wide (about 40 cm), and 50 cm high. It stops in the south about a meter from the southern balk, forming an entrance. No southern closing wall has been excavated so far. 7205 abuts wall 6269 in the north. It is unclear if 6269 continues west or stops at this corner; further excavation and removal of tabun 6241 is needed.

The east side of wall 7205 contains heavy destruction debris, 6267, seen last season and reopened for the remainder of the room this season (it was reopened with the appearance of wall 7205 and at the height of 6268). Large pithoi sherds were found pressed up against the face of the wall and were marked for restoration. The southern portion of the room, which contained burnt mudbricks left in-situ last season, was also excavated. Samples of the mudbricks were taken before removal. Unlike the mudbrick chunks found elsewhere in Area A, these mudbricks were extremely hard and cement-like. They were fused into one giant burnt block which was very difficult to break. Some bones were seen burnt into the bricks. Beneath the mudbricks the soil matrix immediately changed to a soft consistency

(locus 6285), which spread throughout the room and is directly above the earth floor. A small burnt ivory seal, depicting a head, was found beneath these mudbricks near the southern balk.

Only a small amount of material was excavated to the west of 7205, in the strip between the wall and the section, in order to clarify the western face of the wall. The soil matrix for this locus, 7204, was much softer and consistent, lacking the mudbrick chunks seen to the east of the wall.

### *Square R/13*

After removing large amounts of A-1 debris (which contained no architecture, save a one-course line of stones in the southern balk, 7120), we reached the level of wall 6270, the closing wall for the A-2b pavement 4141. We excavated to clarify the southern face of the mudbrick wall, then closed for the season. Some clarification was done in the northern part of the square, particularly in the northwest, where we excavated the destruction debris to see the stone foundation of 6270. The western part of the wall does not have well preserved mudbrick, but the stone foundation seen clearly in the east clearly continues. This wall is similar in construction to wall 6268: a couple courses of small stones supporting a mudbrick wall. The two are phased together, and may possibly corner somewhere in square Q/13 (more excavation is needed).

## **Stratum A1**

Stratum A-1 was our most excavated stratum this year as we expanded north, west, and south in the western “uptown” section of Area A. Squares O/10, O/11, P/10, P/11, P/12, P/13, Q/10, Q/13-14, R/10, and R/13 show clear signs of the A-1 strata. Where we previously thought we had two sub-phases, we now may have at least three, though not all sub-phases are seen in each square. The remains will be presented here together and when we can discern the difference between the subphases, they will be noted.



ABM19-A-189. Stratum A-1 remains, in Squares P-R/10–14, end of 2019. North on top.



ABM19-A-2016. Stratum A-1 remains in Squares P-R/10–14, end of 2019, looking south.

### **Southern Part of Area A**

covered with a layer of stone-filled debris, possibly collapse (7131, elevation 378.31). 7215 and 7216 are constructed next to each other immediately south of 7160, both at an elevation of 378.20. (Note that tabun 7216 is slightly within the eastern balk). These tabuns were sealed by locus 7213, which contained some mudbrick debris but not the stones seen to the west or above 7160.

A concentration of bone was found to the east of the tabuns, immediately south of the end of wall 6118, in locus 7132. A possible surface has not yet been reached, though an A-1 surface was seen on each side of wall 6118: 6215 on the west at 378.18, and 6204 on the east, at 378.10. Excavation stopped this season at 378.16.

Because of the elevations of this installation and associated features, it is a later A-1 phase than the large conglomerate installation and "basin" 6166 in R/13. 6166 is at an elevation of 377.90.

In order to expand the A-2 structure, the northern 1.5 meters of wall 6118 was dismantled. Locus 7206 was opened as the debris below 6118, and the north half of the square was brought level for next season.

### *Square O/11*

Excavation began in the eastern half of O/11 in order to expand the A-1 structure and understand pavement 6243. Shortly after removing the topsoil, the top of west-east wall 7145 emerged, and loci were split north and south. The western half of the square was opened to follow this new wall.

7145 is bonded to wall 7174 in the west, and 7159 in the east. It is a well constructed wall, resembling 6118, 6188, and 6189. It is a meter wide and 4.5 meters long, and approximately 4 courses high so far. Its upper courses were disturbed in the west by the remnants of a tabun, 7164 (elevation 379.64). This tabun was poorly preserved, with some of its stones seen before excavation began, and only a few pieces of clay and a circle of stones remained. This A-0 tabun was removed, and wall 7145 was clarified.

Wall 7174 runs north-south to the west of 7145 (note that 7181 was merged with 7174 when the balk between O/11 and P/11 was trimmed). It is one to two courses, 80 cm wide, and 5 meters long. It is constructed of larger stones than 7145, and floats at a level of 379.25 (upper elevations are 379.67 in the north, and 379.69 in the south.) There were no clear surfaces associated with this wall. It does not continue straight into the northern balk, and stops just over the square line in O/12. Possibly, the wall turns west at both the north and the south.

Wall 7159 runs north-south to the east of 7145. It forms a corner with 7145, and continues for just 1.3 meters to the south before it ends; it was clearly robbed out at some point. The entire eastern half and southern portion of the wall is preserved at a lower level (378.98 in the south, versus 379.38 in the north).

It is about 90 cm wide, with larger stones making up the lower courses. Its relationship to stones 6243 is unclear. Some clarification was done this season, and it seems that 6243 narrows to what looks almost like a wall in the west, and runs below (or with the lowest course) of 7159 in the south.

To the north of wall 7145, excavation stopped with the appearance of wall 6159. This wall, seen and dismantled last season in P/11 and, is one course and one row wide. It had been thought to be contemporary with the upper phase of wall 5157, which were both preserved at the same level (379.35) and thought to be A-1a. It is clear that wall 6159 and the newly discovered walls in O/11 are not from the same phase. 6159 does not abut 7174 in the west: there is a clear gap between the two, and it seems that 7174 cut wall 6159. The strip between 7145 and 6159 is maybe half a meter at most. The area was so tight that excavation stopped here for the season.

South of wall 7145, excavation continued in a compact debris, 7142, until the floating level of 7174, when the locus switched to 7194. The corner of 7145 and 7159 was filled with collapse, which was removed. The only potential surface seen in this square is 7214, which is a poorly preserved cobble surface appearing in patches along the southern half of the square (elevation 379.03, 20 centimeters below the floating level of 7174 and only 14 centimeters above the eastern height of stones 6243.)

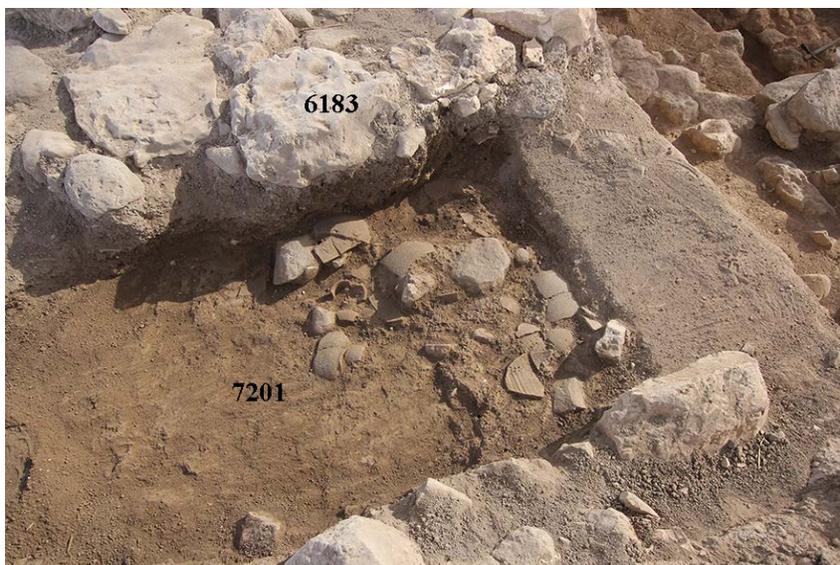
Currently, there is no western continuation of wall 5157 seen in square O/10 or O/11, though it does run on line with a 50cm balk.

### *Square O/12*

This season, the entire square O/12 was opened, with no balk between it and P/12. In the west, we immediately found the southern continuation of wall 7174. To its east, we found two walls: 7199, running north-south, and 7200, running west-east and forming a corner with 7199. Both walls are poorly constructed. They are one to two rows and only one course, except the northern portion of 7199 which is preserved two courses high (elevation 379.29.) 7199 does not continue into square O/11. 7200 runs up to stones 6186, which cover about half the square (average height of 6186 is 379.24.) West of wall 7199 and below wall 7174 is a tabun, 7189, at an elevation of 379.18. Note that the A-1 tabun in square P/12, 6178, was preserved at the exact same elevation.

Another poorly constructed wall, 7120, is within the southern balk. It is currently one row wide, but further excavation may reveal more rows (western elevation: 379.32. Eastern elevation: 379.20.)

Locus 7201 (378.94), bounded by wall 7200 in the north and the section below wall 7120 in the south, belongs to an earlier phase than stones 6186. It is equivalent to the pottery-laden locus 6187 in square P/12. In-situ sherds run below the stones comprising 6186, and may run beneath wall 7200, though more excavation is needed. This would tentatively be our A-1c phase, with 6186 being A-1b and wall 7174 being A-1a.



**ABM19-A.193. Square O/12, looking northeast; cache of restorable pottery – Locus 7201 – below floating level of stone pavement 6183q/**

*Square P/12*

Excavation continued in P/12 this season, focused largely on bringing the western half to the level of the A-2 destruction. Stones 6186 were left in-situ, and the western balk began immediately to the east of the stones. We began excavation by removing the remnants of tabun 6178 (height 379.18), which consisted of a circle of stones. The lower stones of the tabun installation were quite large, and in turn sat on stones 7163 (378.72). Around the tabun, locus 7136 was opened below possible surface 6187 and below the floating height of stones 6186. This locus had many buckets of pottery, though it did not seem restorable. It is equivalent to locus 6177 in O/12. This locus was closed at the lower level of tabun 6178, and 7146 was opened (upper elevation 378.71). Soon, tabun 7162 was exposed in the south and we reached the height of wall 5179.

Wall 5179 does not continue into the western section, and seems to naturally end about a meter from the western balk. A second tabun, 7179, was found pressed up against the stones between 7163 and 5179 (a group of stones runs between the two features; the stones do not appear to be built, and may have squashed tabun 7179). The tabun is not well preserved, but consists of tabun material in a rectangular shape. It's upper elevation is quite a bit lower than tabun 7146, opening at 378.13. Locus 7180 was opened around this tabun. The tabun was left in situ, and excavation continued down around it into the A-2 debris.

No obvious surfaces were seen in the western portion of the square excavated this season. In the previous season, a cobble surface, 6208, was discovered in the far eastern portion of the square at an elevation of 378.35 (this surface was phased with 5179). An earth surface (6228, elevation 378.10) was

uncovered to the west of the cobbles at a lower elevation and with a mortar found in situ, as well as a poorly preserved oven (6241 at an elevation of 378.04) against wall 5157. It is possible that the new tabun 7179 is contemporary with the earth floor 6228.

All tabuns in square P/12 □ 7179, 7162, and 6241 □ were all left in-situ.

### *Square P/13*

Square P/13 was excavated in portions this season, with the goal of finding the closing wall for the A-2 destruction room in P-Q/12. Shortly after removing topsoil, we encountered wall 7111, which belongs to our A-0 stratum (described in more detail below.)

In the east, below stones 7111, we encountered stones 7125 and installation 7122. The southern portion of the square was a softer, darker soil, and the north was separated and consisted of a firmer debris with chunks of ash, chalk, and mudbrick. The south, 7139, yielded a zoomorphic ceramic object. No further architecture was found in the east, save for a cluster of stones running into the western section. These stones may be collapse, but were left in situ. We stopped for the season and closed locus 7143 in the north when a floor-like material began to appear in patches.

In the western half of the square, stones 7111 were removed and a small amount of soil was excavated before the top of wall 7170 appeared. 7170 is a north-south running wall, 80 cm wide and currently 4.5 meters long. It runs into the north and south balks, though square P/12 shows no sign of the wall continuing. In fact, tabun 7162 is almost directly north of wall 7170, at a height of 378.38, while 7170 is at a height of 378.64. Like other walls in this strip (6118, 6148, and 6189), wall 7170 seems to end directly on our balk line, but is over 30 cm lower. Only one course of 7170 remains.

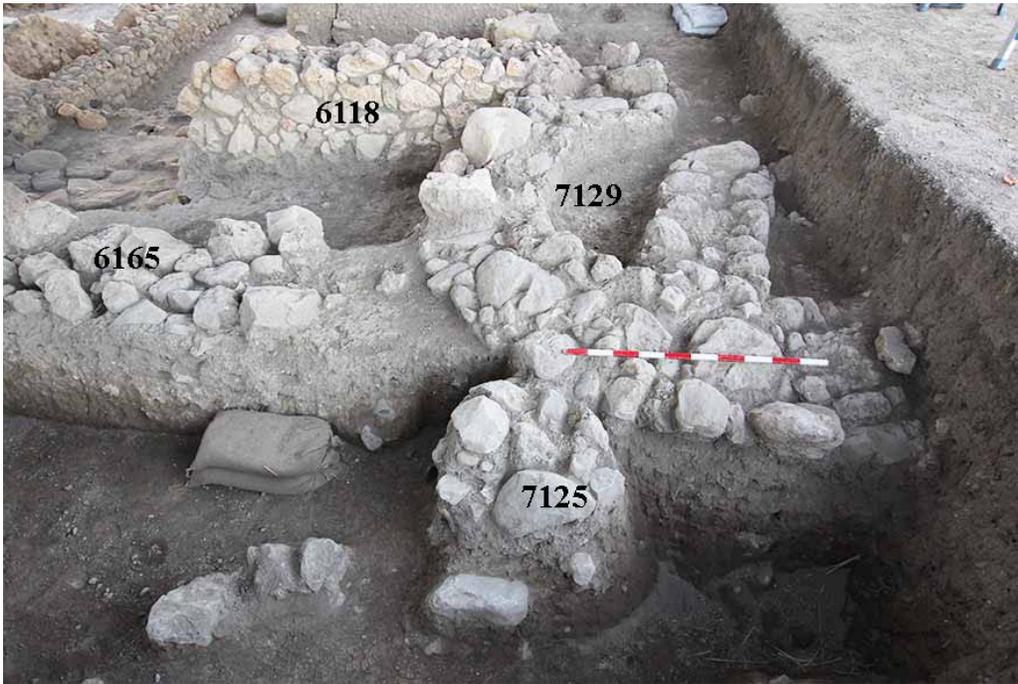
Two tabuns are associated with wall 7170: 7169 in the northwest (elevation 378.54) and 7168 in the center and east of wall 7170 (elevation 378.50). Note that these tabuns are 30 cm higher than the tabuns in Q/13. Both 7168 and 7169 were left in-situ with minor clarification. Near 7168 was a large concentration of bones, which included a large jaw bone.

Currently, the stone features and tabuns in P/13 can be assigned to the A-1 stratum, but the sub-phasing is unclear.

### *Square Q/13-14*

This season, we opened the southern remainder of square Q/13 with the goal of tracing wall 6118. We removed a layer of topsoil and began excavating A-1 debris. About 20 cm below the surface, the upper stones of installation 7122 were showing. Excavation continued until this installation was exposed, and we opened a small strip of square Q/14 to complete the installation. The balk between Q/13 and P/13 was dismantled down to the tops of 7122 and the remainder of stones 6165.

7122 is a large, almost complete ring of stones. It is well constructed and, at least in the northern section, 2-3 courses high. The circle has an opening in the east, which faces ovens 7160, 7215, and 7216 (described below). A partition “wall”, 7129 (elevation 378.54), is bonded with the western section of the circle and runs across the diameter of the installation, and stopping a little past the middle (eastern elevation 378.54). The sides of 7129 are clearly lined with plaster, also seen lining the inside along the north.



ABM19-A-156, Square Q/13, looking east; northern part of silo revealed



ABM19-A-129, Square Q/13, looking east; oven 7160, to east of ‘silo’ 7122

It is difficult to say if installation 7122 cuts into wall 6118, or is built with it. When looking at the northern section, it seems that the two are nicely bonded. The relationship is less clear when looking at the top of wall 6118. It is clear that the two features do at least abut each other; the inhabitants using installation 7122 would have been well aware of wall 6118.

The southern section of the ring of 7122 within Q/14 is less clear. The entire square is filled with stones, with a vague outline of a circle seen within. Some of these stones may be tumble, which we saw in the eastern half of the square (locus 7131) and removed. Further clarification is needed. But while the exterior of the ring is difficult to trace, the interior is quite clear, though the plaster along the southern edge appears as chunks within the debris.

To the northwest of the installation (in square P/13) is a cluster of stones, 7125, which abuts 7122. 7125 is one course high, and may be collapse.

Three ovens were found in very close proximity to 7122: 7160, 7215, and 7216. 7160 lies immediately south of a short, single line of stones, wall 7183 (elevation 378.25). It is a complete tabun, with only the first several centimeters excavated from its interior this year. 7160 was

### *Square R/13*

The southern third of the square was opened this season to reveal more of the A-1 structure, particularly the stone installation 6166 and its accompanying 'wall' 6148, as well as stones 6147. This southern section offered no continuation of stone architecture at all. After removing topsoil, we excavated through general debris, then reached a layer of concentrated chalk, locus 7123, which had a higher concentration of chalk in the west and sloped down in the east (the square was split into two loci, 7123 and 7124, and then it was discovered that 7123 was heavily sloped and continued below 7124.) Below this layer of chalk (which is seen in some capacity across the entirety of Area A), was debris layer 7144. This layer had a clay patch, 7177, and a stone wall 7182, a one course line of stones within the southern balk. Debris 7144 continued until the level of A-2 wall 6270.

## **Stratum A-0**

Stratum 0 contains what once was A1 and was renamed A-0 when Iron IIA elements were clearly revealed last season. It includes the modern terrace walls and the burials. Dating these elements is problematic. The terrace walls appear to be Ottoman, while the burials (6904, 6182) might be early Islamic, based on C14 dating of a similar burial excavated in previous season.

### *Square P/13*

Shortly after removing topsoil, we encountered wall 7111. This wall fanned out to the west; it began only about a half meter wide in the east, and by the end of square P/13 it was over 4 meters wide. It consisted of small to medium fieldstones, usually one course but occasionally two, built in a haphazard way with no clearly constructed areas. Likely, 7111 is the continuation of the small wall, 6107, seen in square Q/13 and abutting 6118. 6107 was a single line of stones, but in the same orientation and at the same general level as 7111. 6107, and now 7111, seem to belong to our A-0 phase.



ABM19-A-006. Late Burial 6182 in Square A/15, after removal of capstones, looking west.



ABM19-A-015. Square P/13, looking north; stones of 'Wall' 7111, possibly a late period terrace wall.