

TELL ES-SWEYHAT

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Remainder of Area I Trenches

A study of the material remains from the area I trenches that have not previously been studied or made ready for final publication is now completed and a preliminary report on the major results of that analysis is presented here. A previous preliminary report on the archaeological remains from trenches IA1 and IA2 (see figs. 1–2 for position) was presented in the 1998/99 *Annual Report* and is not discussed in this report; also, the material from the deep sounding in trench IC and from the shallow excavations in trench IB are included in the forthcoming Oriental Institute Publications final report on Sweyhat and is not repeated here. See the table below for the final periods of occupation on the site (periods A to K) and the phases of occupation in the area I trenches.

Phases 1–6 in Trenches ID to IJ in Relation to Trenches IA1 to IC

<i>Tell es-Sweyhat</i> Periods	<i>Area I Trenches</i>										
	A1	A2	B	C	D	E	F	F/G	G	H	J
A (Post Roman–Islamic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
B–A (Gap in Occupation)											
B (Early and Late Roman) [AD 75–125 and 350–400]	2–4	2–4	2–4	10	1–2	6	6	6	6	2	2
C–B (Gap in Occupation)											
C (Early Hellenistic) [300–250 BC]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
D–C (Gap in Occupation)											
D (Middle Bronze I)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
E–D (Early–Middle Bronze)	—	—	—	9	—	5	5	5	5	1	1
E (Early Bronze IVb)	—	—	—	6–8	—	2–4	2–4	2–4	2–4	—	—
F (Early Bronze IVa)	—	—	—	5	—	1	1	—	1	—	—
G (Early Bronze III)	—	—	—	Gap	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
H (Early Bronze II)	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
I (Letter Unused)											
J (Early Bronze I)	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
K (Late Chalcolithic)	—	—	—	1–2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

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The 6.00 m deep sounding in trench IC revealed archaeological material dated to the Late Chalcolithic period, the Bronze Age, and the Roman period (see the 1999/2000 *Annual Report*, p. 71, fig. 2, for the position and depth of this trench on the southern slope of the central tell). The other area I trenches were excavated to varying depths of occupation, the phases of which are dated only to the later part of the Bronze Age and to the Roman period.

Trench ID. This “slit” trench, 1.00 × 5.00 m, was situated north-south at the northwestern corner of trench A1 (figs. 1–2) in order to investigate the remains of stone wall foundations protruding just above the surface of the mound in grid square J7. The remains of an east-west oriented stone wall with rubble was identified at the southern end of the trench in the upper phase 2 along with an irregular pattern of stones collapsed from this wall and other walls originally situated farther north (see plan, fig. 3). The remains of an earth floor that had traces of burning on it was discovered just below the stone rubble in the center of the trench, which was designated phase 1; excavation was not extended deeper. There were no artifacts associated with the lower phase 1 floor and phase 2 was mixed with both Bronze Age (fig. 25:1–3) and Roman period (fig. 28:14) pottery as well as a portion of a glass handle fragment from a bottle or jar (fig. 28:16).

Trench IE. This 2.00 × 5.00 m trench was situated north-south at the southwestern corner of trench IC with a 1.00 m baulk between it and trench IC (figs. 1–2) to further investigate the earlier Bronze Age occupation in area I that had been excavated in the small trench IC sounding. The trench was excavated to a depth of 2.20 m in the southern 2.00 m square portion of the trench (see photograph of the lowest phase 1, fig. 4, and the south section, fig. 5) and to a depth of only 1.00 m in its northern portion. The architectural remains in phase 1 consisted of a portion of a north-south mudbrick wall D and a libn oven near its western face (plan, fig. 6).

The phase 1 pottery assemblage (fig. 25:4–11) included small bowls and jars, larger bowls and storage-type jars, and cooking pots that correspond to phase 5 in trench IC, which is dated to Sweyhat period F (Early Bronze Age IVa, ca. 2300–2250 BC).

Phases 2–4 date to the Early Bronze Age IVb (ca. 2250–2100 BC). The phase 2 (plan, fig. 7) builders reutilized the mudbrick wall D and also constructed a stone working platform in the southwestern corner of the trench as well as a flagstone type of paving, laid with a circular edge, to the northwest of the platform. The pottery assemblage from phase 2 included small bowls and storage-type jars (fig. 24:12–14).

During phase 3 (plan, fig. 8) the eastern portion of the mudbrick wall D was reused for the last time; stone foundations for an east-west oriented wall were laid at the northern end of the mudbrick wall D and apparently formed the northeastern corner of a private dwelling or working room, which contained a ribbed collar-rim type of jar, a strainer bowl, and a lamp amongst its pottery assemblage (fig. 25:15–17).

Phase 4 contained no architectural remains although a pit (locus 1.9) partially cut into the phase 3 remains; the pit most likely dates to the very end of the Early Bronze IVb period which ushered in the destruction over much of the town and laid the transition from the Early Bronze Age into the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (Sweyhat period E–D, ca. 2100–1950 BC). The pottery assemblage included a small bowl, two storage-type jars, and a high pedestal-type base, which probably supported a deep bowl (fig. 25:18–21).

The latest two phases in trench IE, phases 5 and 6 (plan, fig. 9), consisted only of stone wall foundations for adjoining walls A and C in the northern end of the trench and wall B in the southern end of the trench. The Bronze Age pottery assemblages derived from the Roman building activities included small bowls, bowls, and jars in phase 5 (fig. 25:22–25) and small bowls, jars, and cooking pots in phase 6 (fig. 25:26–28); the Roman pottery from phase 5 consisted

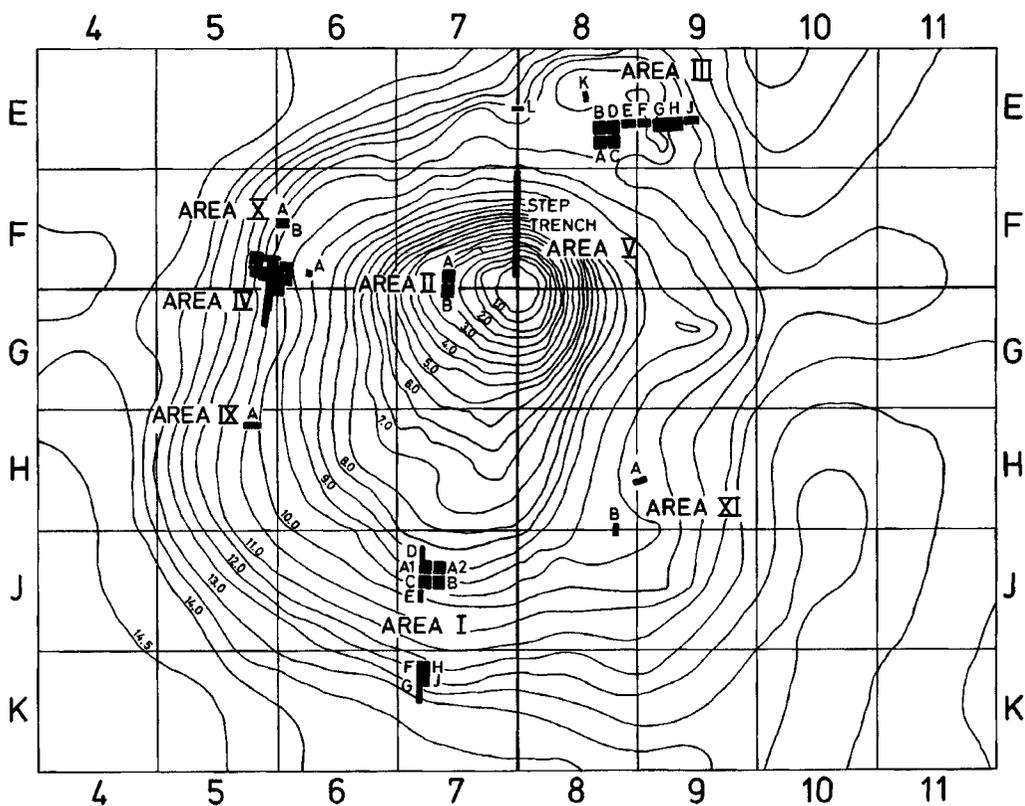


Figure 1. Contour plan of central mound, showing position of area I trenches (Grid squares, 50 m sq.). Tell es-Sweyhat

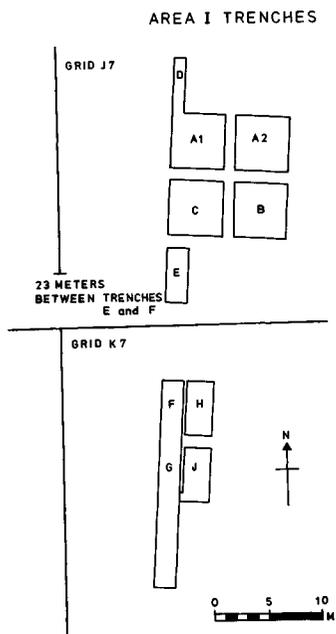


Figure 2. Enlarged plan of the area I trenches in grid squares J7 and K7. Tell es-Sweyhat

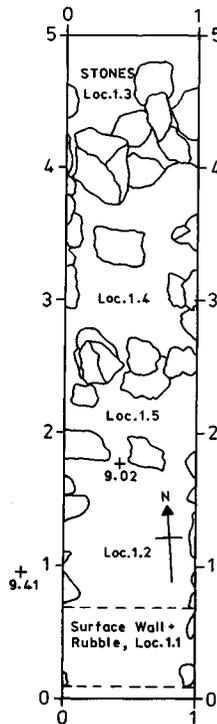


Figure 3. Plan of trench ID, phase 2. Tell es-Sweyhat



Figure 4. Trench IE, phase 1 (photographic view). Tell es-Sweyhat

primarily of bowls and holemouth jars (fig. 28:5, 10–11) while the Roman pottery assemblage from phase 6 included fragments of bowls, jars, jugs, and a red brittle ware cooking pot (not illustrated here).

Trench IF. This trench was situated 23.00 m south of trench IE near the lowest edge of the main tell in grid square K7 (fig. 1) to determine how far south the Bronze Age occupation of the inner town extended. The trench initially measured 2.00 × 5.00 m but was eventually joined up with the northern end of trench IG, located to its south (fig. 2). As large stone wall foundations were encountered both in the southern third of the trench area (wall B) and on the northwestern side of the trench (wall A), deeper excavation was confined to the northeastern quadrant of the trench, which reached a depth of 2.25 m (see the west section, fig. 13; plan, fig. 14; and photographic view of the lowest level reached in phase 1, fig. 10).

The architectural features found in the narrow confines of the excavated portion of phase 1 included a stone paved area in the northeastern corner of the trench, which was associated with a stone-lined area to its south that sloped downwards at a forty-five degree angle; the depressed area was lined with large stones and might have served as some kind of industrial pit as it was filled with ash as well as a number of Early Bronze Age IVa pottery vessel forms (fig. 26:1–6) that might have been discarded just prior to the construction of the phase 2 mudbrick walls G and H and floor 1.21 that was laid over the pit and associated with wall G (see photograph, fig. 11). Found with the small assemblage of pottery vessels from phase 2 was a globular-shaped jar with an upright, slightly ribbed rim (fig. 26:7), a wide-mouthed jar that had a rim with a concave inner ledge which served as a retaining ledge for a lid (fig. 26:8), and a large cooking pot with small triangular-shaped ledge-shaped handles attached to the rim; one grinding stone fragment also came from phase 2.

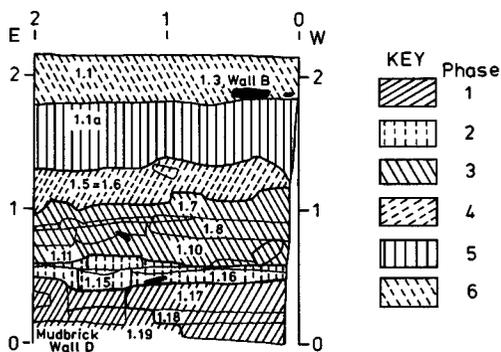


Figure 5. Trench IE, South section and Key to hatching of sections. Tell es-Sweyhat

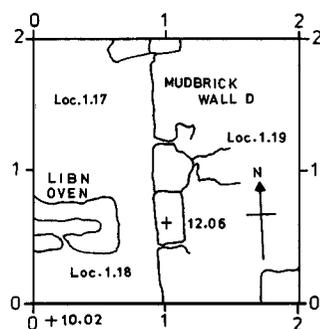


Figure 6. Trench IE, phase 1 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

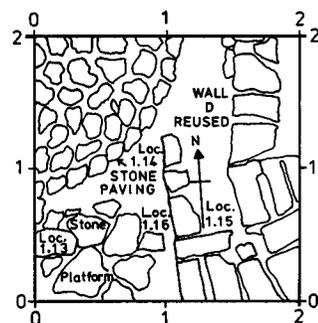


Figure 7. Trench IE, phase 2 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

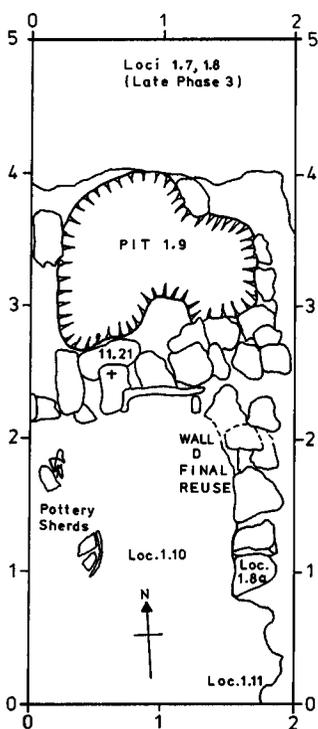


Figure 8. Trench IE, phases 3 and 4 (pit 1.9) (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

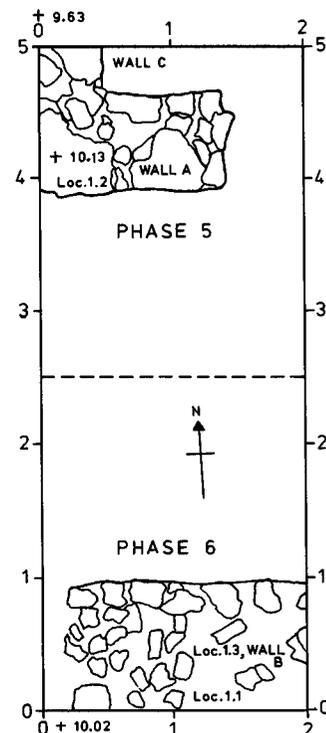


Figure 9. Trench IE, phases 5 and 6 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat



Figure 10. Trench IF, phase 1 (photographic view). Tell es-Sweyhat



Figure 11. Trench IF, phases 1-3 (photographic view). Tell es-Sweyhat

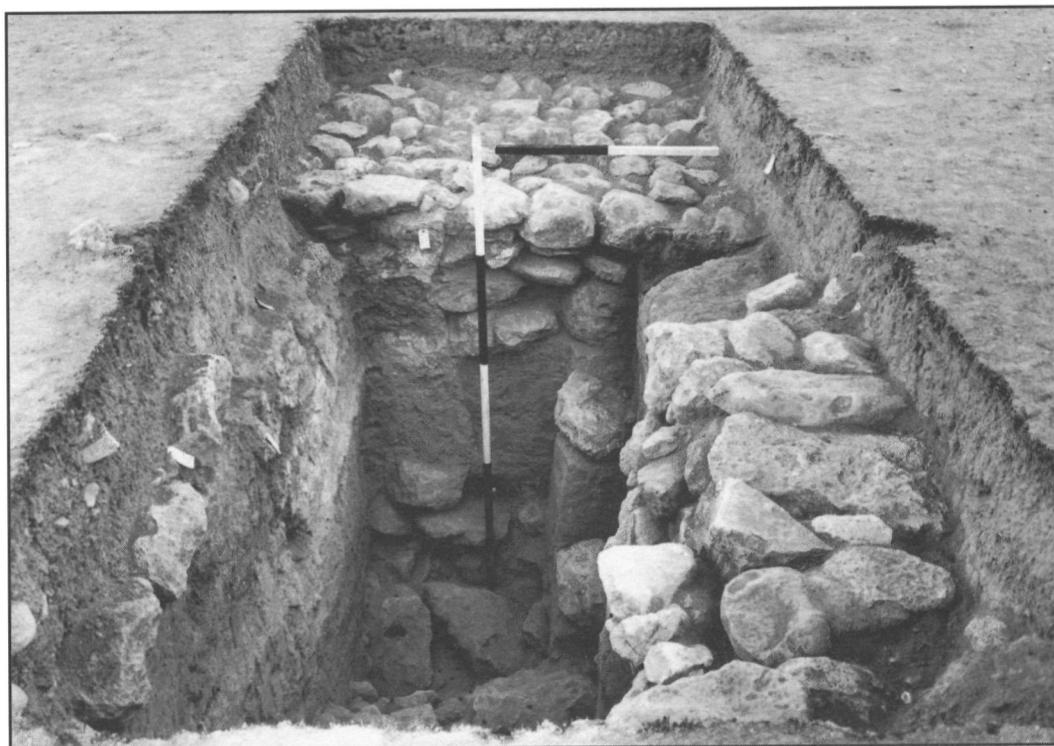


Figure 12. Trench IF, phases 1–6 (photographic view). Tell es-Sweyhat

The phase 3 architectural features (plan, fig. 15; photographic view, fig. 12) consisted of the wall A stone foundations, which reached a depth of 1.25 m between the phase 2 walls G and H (see section, fig. 13) in the northwestern area of the trench; the wall B stone foundations in the southern portion of the trench extended into the northern portion of trench G and measured 2.00 m wide and was oriented east-west; and the mudbrick wall C, which was situated between walls A and B. A good pottery assemblage was associated with these three walls and the floor, locus 1.17, that was common to all three walls; the pottery group was composed of a number of cups and bowls (fig. 26:10–13), storage-type jars (one example illustrated, fig. 26:14), and a fragment of a distinctive pottery lid with a knob-like handle (fig. 26:15).

During phase 4 (plan, fig. 16), the upper portion of wall A was still in use as it was surrounded on all sides by a floor (locus 1.7), but wall B went out of use as it was completely covered over by the same floor associated with the phase 4 wall A. The remains of two other stone wall foundations, walls E and F were partially excavated on the eastern edge of the trench opposite walls A and C (see photograph, fig. 12). At sometime soon after the laying of floor 1.7, a narrow mudbrick curtain-type wall (wall D), oriented east-west, was added to the southeastern corner of wall A and adjoined the north end of wall E, which in effect provided two working or living spaces or possibly external courtyards. Only three pottery fragments were found on floor 1.7 which were a small bowl and cooking pot rim (fig. 26:16–17) and one high-necked storage-type jar that will be published in the final report.

In phase 5, only the topmost course of stones of wall A was visible. The excavated area within trench IF at this level appears to have been deliberately leveled with a compacted soil, probably in preparation for the Roman building levels that succeeded phase 4 at a much later time period. A small Early Bronze–Middle Bronze Age (EB–MB) pottery assemblage was re-

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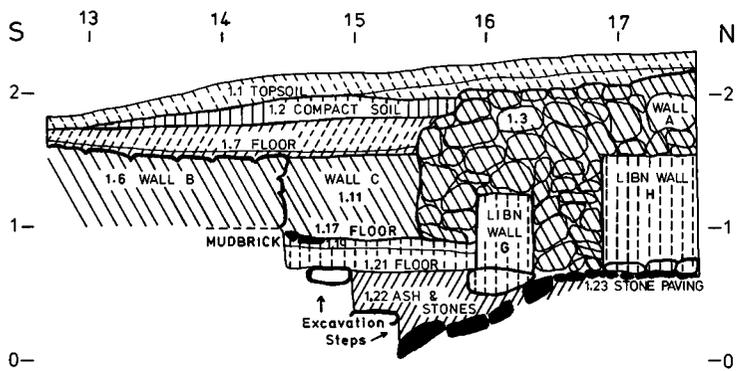


Figure 13. Trench IF, West section. Tell es-Sweyhat

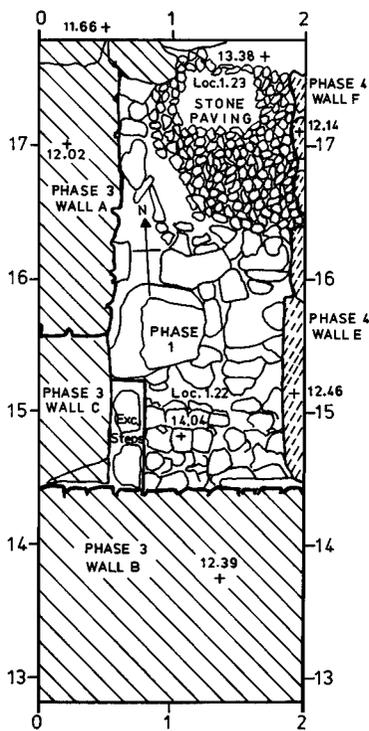


Figure 14. Trench IF, phases 1, 3, and 4 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

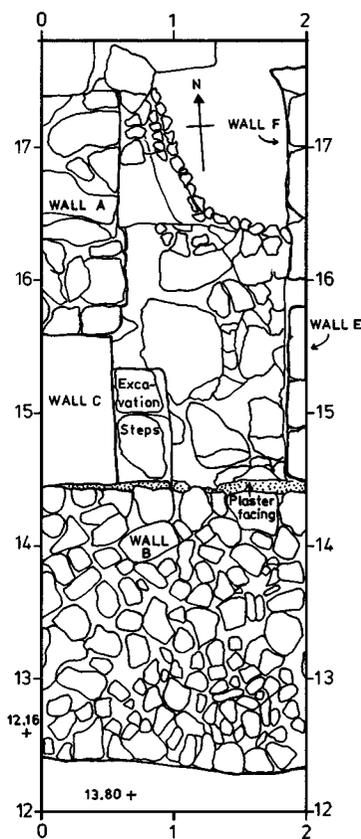


Figure 15. Trench IF, phase 3 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

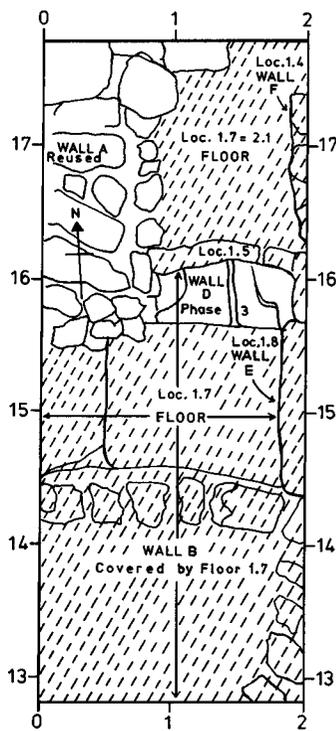


Figure 16. Trench IF, phase 4 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

covered from this area along with a thin pear-shaped stone palette made from black granite (fig. 26:19). Two storage-jar jars, a cooking pot rim and neck fragment (fig. 26:18), and a ring base from a small jar made up the pottery finds.

The uppermost topsoil layer, phase 6, contained no architectural features. The pottery assemblage from phase 6 contained both EB–MB vessels (e.g., fig. 26:20–21) and a fairly representative selection of Roman pottery forms such as wide bowls with splayed-out rims and internal ledges, one-handled jugs, and a red-slipped lamp spout fragment.

Baulk F/G. When the 1.00 m wide baulk between trenches F and G was removed, the southern face of the 2.00 m wide wall B was delineated (plan, fig. 15). A thick plaster facing was found on the northern face of wall B, but the southern face was unplastered; therefore, the area immediately to the south of wall B was external and might have served as a passageway or a courtyard.

A few pottery diagnostic sherds were recovered in the small space abutting the south face of wall B between about 12.25 m (east section, fig. 21) and 12.40 m (west section, fig. 19). One large storage-type jar was found in phase 2 beside the base of wall B (fig. 26:22) along with a smaller type of jar with a plain out-turned rim. Only one holemouth-type jar rim and upper shoulder fragment was found in phase 3. The upper three phases in baulk F/G were disturbed and ill-defined; the three pottery fragments from this area are therefore assigned to phases 4–6. Two of the three vessels from phases 4–6 were late third-millennium BC forms, but the third vessel was a high-necked storage-type jar that had a thick red slip outside and just over the inside of the lip of the rim, which is assigned to the Sweyhat Roman pottery assemblage, Type R.JR.C.I.c (fig. 28:7); this vessel certainly belongs to the uppermost phase 6 level in baulk F/G.

Trench G. This trench was initially laid out as a 2.00 × 5.00 m sounding to the south of trench F and the 1.00 m baulk F/G in grid square K7 (figs. 1–2), but was eventually extended by a further 7.00 m to the south (plan, fig. 20) with a final total length of 12.00 m (see photographs, figs. 17–18). The maximum depth of excavation was 1.50 m in the northern section of the trench between 8.00 m and 11.75 m (see sections, figs. 19, 21).

The only architectural features in trench G are two east-west mudbrick walls with rough stone foundations, designated walls 1 and 2. A large area abutting the south side of wall 2 was filled with large stones that appear tumbled, but they might have been deliberately placed there to support the mudbrick superstructure of the original wall 2 or even have been some type of defensive construction that might have been associated with what may be part of the main town wall, wall B, located at the north end of trench G in baulk F/G and trench F (see concluding discussion below).



Figure 17. Trench IG, phases 1–6 (north photographic view). Tell es-Sweyhat

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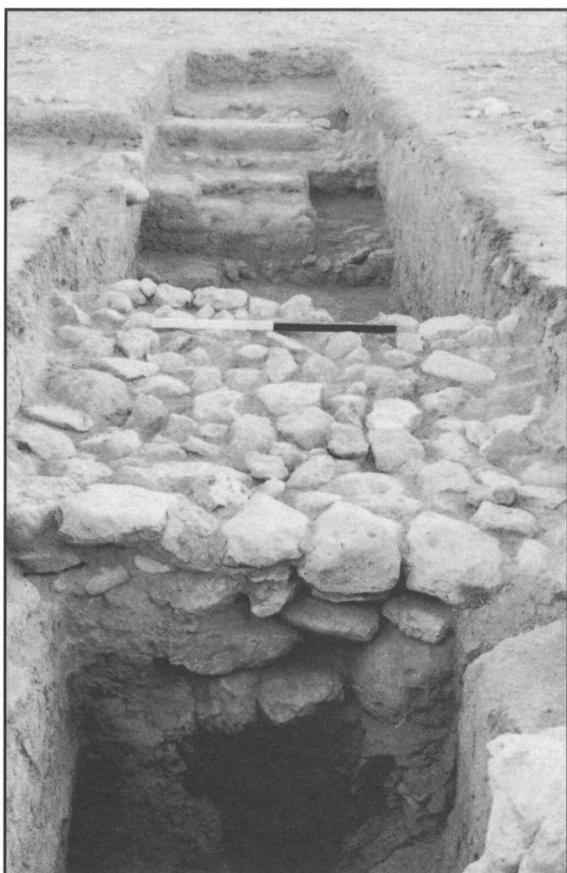


Figure 18. Trench IG, phases 1–6 (south photographic view). Tell es-Sweyhat

Five of the six phases in trench G contained good Bronze Age pottery assemblages (phases 1–4 and 6; no finds were found in the shallow destruction level, phase 5, associated with wall B, locus 1.2). The phase 4 level associated with the later use of wall B and the fairly deep and heavily eroded topsoil level, phase 6, also contained an extensive assemblage of Roman pottery vessels that were either deliberately discarded there from the Roman occupation remains in the northern portion of area I or were washed there when the Roman building remains went out of use.

The phase 1 locus 1.20 area immediately to the south of wall 2 (see the east section, fig. 21) contained a small bowl (fig. 27:1) that is associated with the construction of that wall. The occupation level to the north of and associated with wall 1 during phase 1 (see the east and west sections, figs. 19, 21) contained a fine ware small jar with a rolled-out rim (fig. 27:2) and another fine gray ware small jar with a slight ribbed rim (TS. 811, SJR. B.III.b), dated to the Akkadian period and which is reproduced in the forthcoming final report (pl. 225:17).

The phase 2 pottery assemblage came from locus 1.7, the decayed mudbrick area to the north of wall 1. Representative pottery forms

included a small bowl and two high-necked storage-type jars (fig. 27:3–5).

The phase 3 finds came from the gray wash level in trench G, loci 1.4–1.6 and 1.17, that is associated with the 2.00 m wide wall B in trench F and baulk F/G (see east and west sections, figs. 19, 21). The majority of the pottery forms were various types of storage jars (e.g. fig. 27:7–10) as well as one bowl type (fig. 26:6), all of which are dated to the Early Bronze Age IVb period.

The phase 4 pottery assemblage came from locus 1.3, a level that is associated with the later use of wall B in the north end of trench G. A variety of Bronze Age pottery forms were found in the phase 4 level (e.g. fig. 27:11–16). Amongst the Roman pottery assemblage were two distinctive plain ware vessels, one jar and one storage jar; the jar had a high neck with an out-turned thickened rim (fig. 28:6) and the storage jar was a holemouth type of jar with a shallow ledge on its upper shoulder (fig. 28:8).

The phase 6 topsoil level contained numerous Bronze Age and Roman pottery forms. A selection of the Bronze Age pottery vessels illustrated in figure 27:17–23 indicate that they may be dated as early as the Early Bronze Age I period (e.g., small jar with plain out-turned rim, fig. 27:21) and as late as the Early Bronze-Middle Bronze Age period (e.g., deep-walled bowl with thickened rolled ledge around the rim, fig. 27:20). The only archaeological explanation for the wide range of Bronze Age pottery forms in phase 6 is that they were most likely upturned from

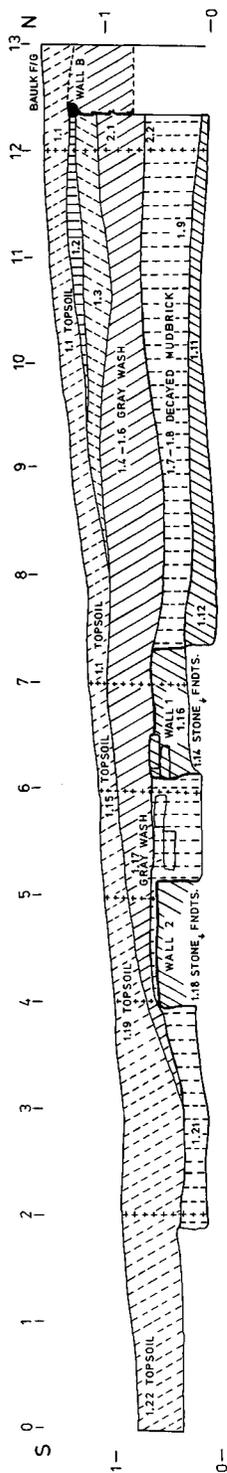


Figure 19. Trench IG, West section. Tell es-Sweyhat

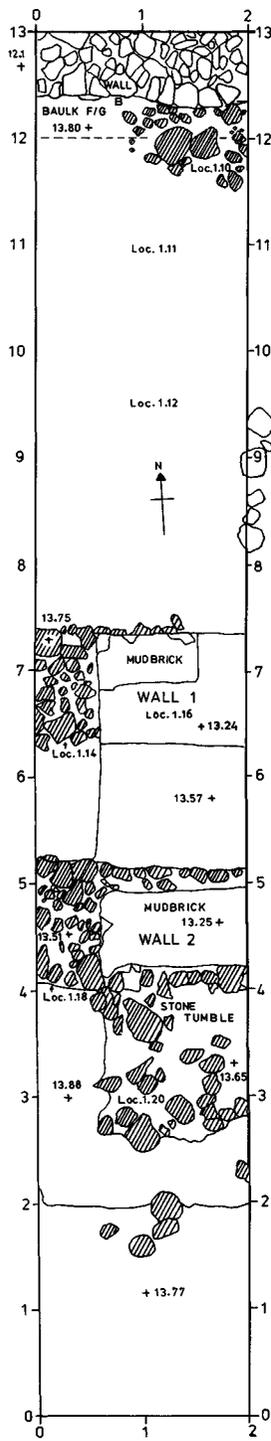


Figure 20. Trench IG, phases 1-6 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

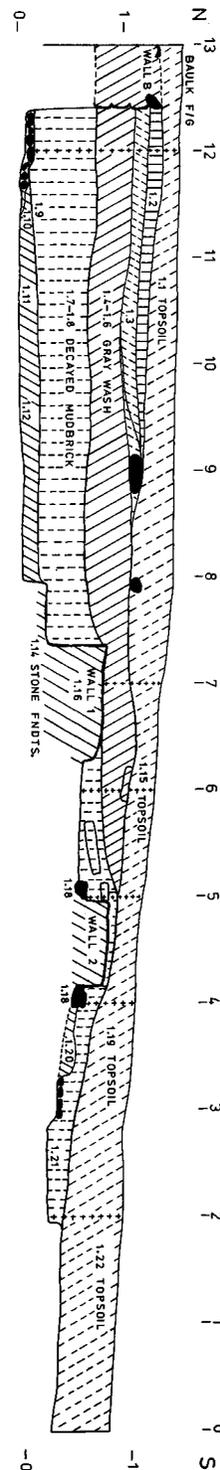


Figure 21. Trench IG, East section. Tell es-Sweyhat

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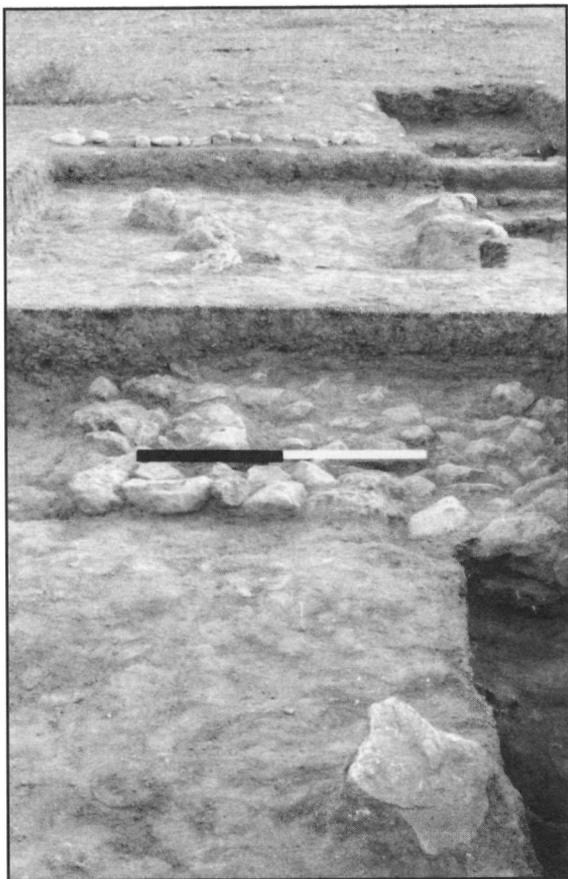


Figure 22. Trenches IH and IJ (south photographic view). Tell es-Sweyhat

their original contexts during the Roman period building activities in area I and were in the soil that was used to level the ground; extensive erosion after the final abandonment of the tell by the Romans has resulted in an approximate twenty-five degree slope of the inner town mound on its southern end. The Roman period vessels in the topsoil are not in their original contexts and are also there due to the effects of erosion. The Roman pottery assemblage from phase 6 included bowls (fig. 28:2–4), a narrow-necked, handled jug (fig. 28:9), a cooking pot with reddish-brown slip on its outer surface (fig. 28:13), and a drainage-type pipe with a deeply ridged outer wall (fig. 28:15).

Trench IH. This trench, 2.50 m × 5.00 m, was situated to the east of trench F with a 0.25 m baulk between IH and IF (see photograph, fig. 22; foreground and plan, fig. 23). The maximum depth of the excavated area was only 0.67 m in the middle portion of the western side of the trench, which was designated phase 1, along with the eastern extension of wall B (see below). The uppermost phase 2 contained the remains of stone foundations that belonged to adjoining walls A and C in the northern end of the trench and that slightly protruded above the existing surface level of the mound. The upper

portion of the 2.00 m wide wall B that was first exposed in trench F continued eastward into trench IH for a distance of 1.90 m; the space between the eastern end of this wall and the south-eastern edge of the trench, 1.10 m wide, was filled with a bricky “libn” fill — this space might have originally been a door or gateway into the room or courtyard on the northern side of wall B.

No pottery or small finds were recovered from phase 1 in trench IH, which supports the suggestion above that the area north of wall B might have been a courtyard and not a dwelling or working room. The uppermost phase 2 contained a small fragment of a dark gray vesicular basalt grinding stone and a mixture of Bronze Age and Roman pottery vessels. The two Bronze Age cup fragments (fig. 27:24–25) belong to the Early Bronze Age IV period. The small assemblage of four Roman pottery vessels included a wide shallow bowl with an upturned rounded rim (fig. 28:1).

Trench IJ. Trench IJ, 2.50 m × 5.00 m, was situated south of IH and beside the northern portion of trench IG, with a 1.00 m baulk between IH and IJ and a 0.25 m baulk between IJ and IG (see photograph, fig. 22; background and plan, fig. 24). The maximum depth of the excavated area was only 0.50 m over the entire area of the trench. The earliest excavated level, phase 1, only contained irregularly placed large stones down the middle portion of the trench, which may originally have been part of some kind of Roman industrial establishment. The topsoil level, phase 2, locus 1.1, contained fairly large assemblages of both Bronze Age and Roman pot-

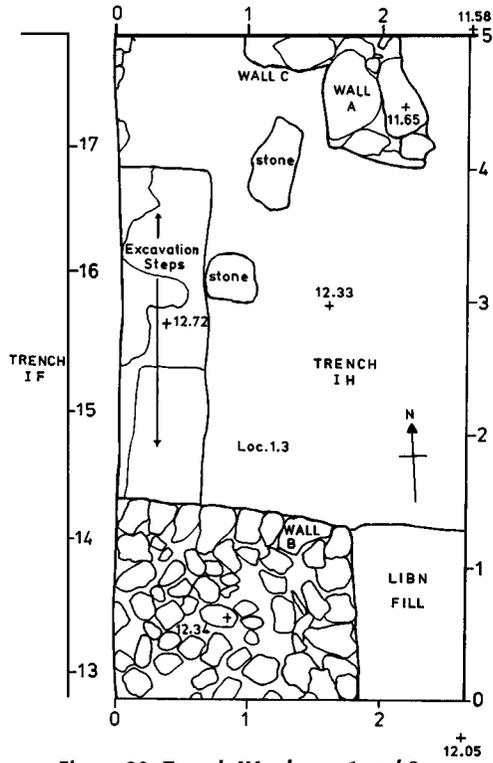


Figure 23. Trench IH, phases 1 and 2 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

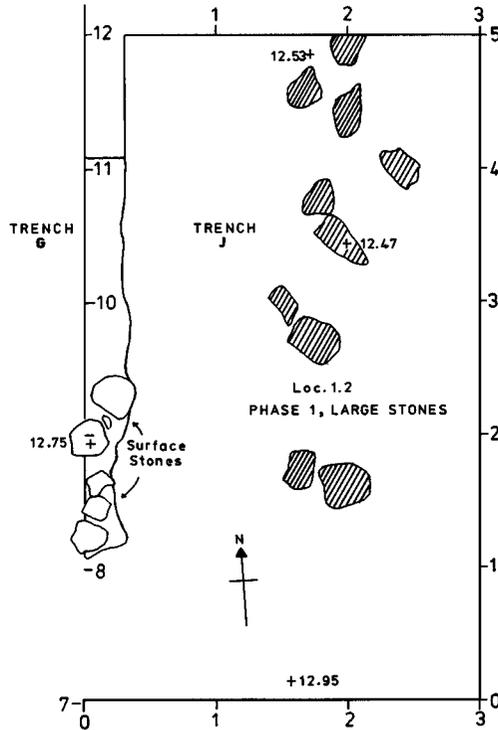


Figure 24. Trench IJ, phase 1 (plan). Tell es-Sweyhat

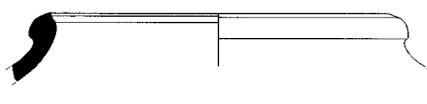
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Trench ID,
Phase 2

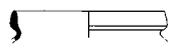
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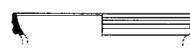
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Trench IE,
Phase 1

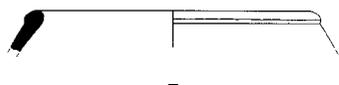
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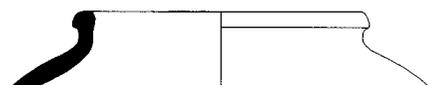
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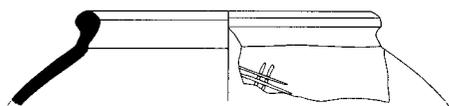
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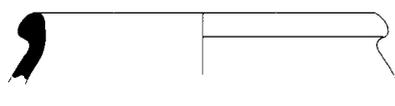
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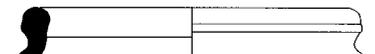
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Trench IE,
Phase 2

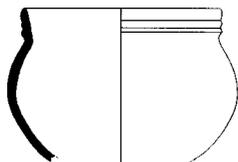
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Trench IE,
Phase 3

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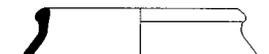
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Trench IE,
Phase 4

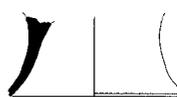
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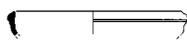
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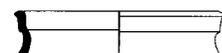
21

Trench IE,
Phase 5

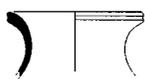
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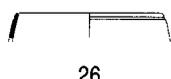
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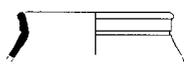
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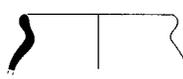
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26

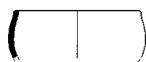


27

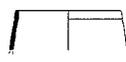


28

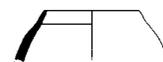
Figure 25. Trenches ID and IE, Bronze Age pottery vessels (1–3, Tr. ID; 4–28, Tr. IE). Scale 1:7. Tell es-Sweyhat

Trench IF,
Phase 1

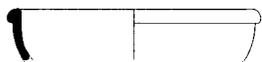
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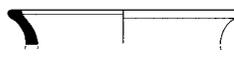
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3



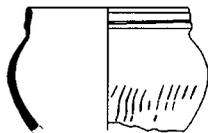
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5



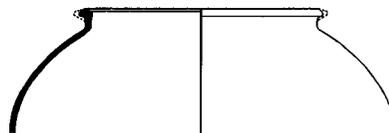
6

Trench IF,
Phase 2

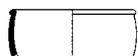
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8



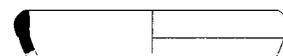
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Trench IF,
Phase 3

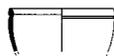
10



11



12



13



14



15

Trench IF,
Phase 4

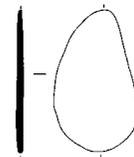
16



17

Trench IF,
Phase 5

18



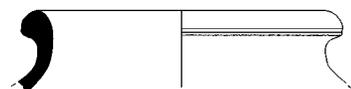
19

Trench IF,
Phase 6

20



21

Trench IF/G,
Phase 2

22

Figure 26. Trench IF, Bronze Age pottery vessels (1–16, 18–20) and stone palette (17). Scale 1:7. Tell es-Sweyhat

RESEARCH

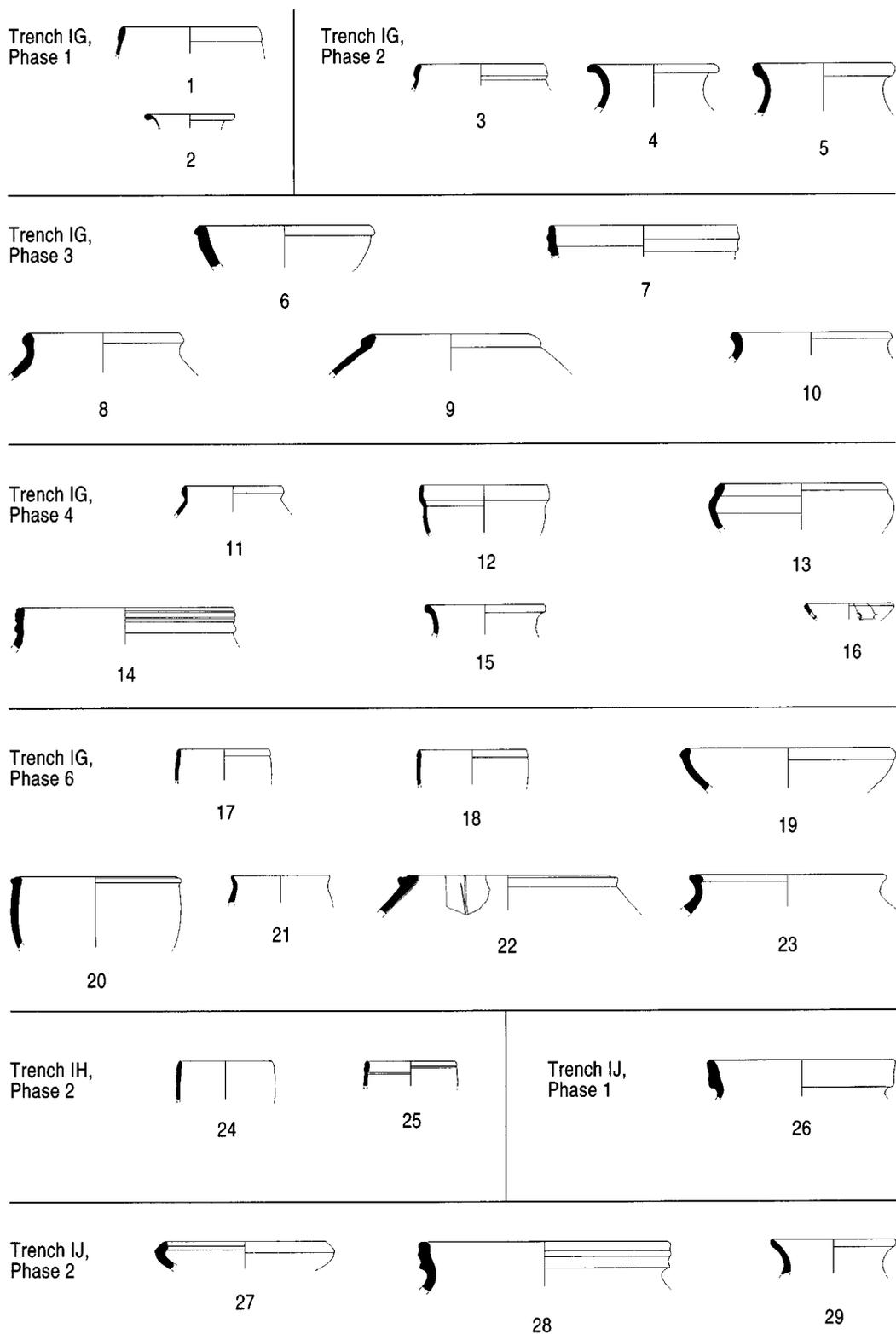


Figure 27. Trenches IG, IH, and IJ, Bronze Age pottery vessels (1–23, Tr. IG; 24–25, Tr. IH; 26–29, Tr. IJ). Scale 1:7. Tell es-Sweyhat

Area I - Roman Period Pottery and Glass

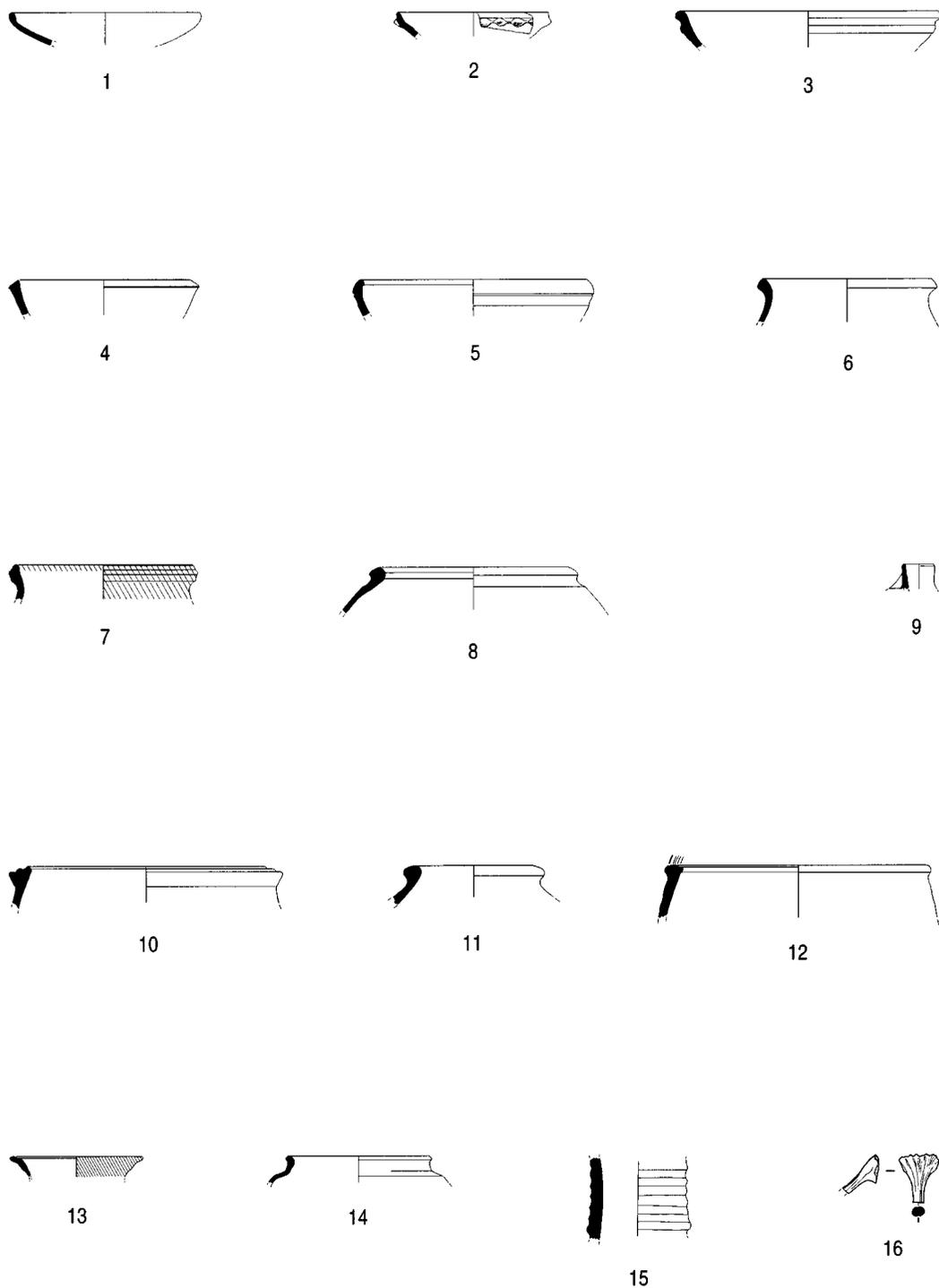


Figure 28. Trenches ID, E, F/G, G, and H, Roman period pottery vessels (1-15) and glass (16). Scales (1-15) 1:7 and (16) 1:4. Tell es-Sweyhat

RESEARCH

tery forms similar to those also found in the topsoil level in the southern end of trench G (see above).

The trench II phase 1 pottery assemblage consisted primarily of Early Bronze Age IV pottery forms (e.g., fig. 27:26). Phase 2 contained eighteen Bronze Age vessel types (e.g., fig. 27:27–29) and ten Roman vessel forms, one of which was a deep holemouth storage-type jar (fig. 28:12).

The excavation of the area I trenches revealed that the inner mid-to-late third-millennium BC town, which was defended by a 2.00 m wide mudbrick wall and an external tower in the western sector of the town in area IV (plan, fig. 1) along the 10.50 m contour line of the mound, extended to at least the same contour line on the southern slope of the mound in trench E (figs. 1, 4–7). The evidence from the southernmost trenches in area I, located 23.00 m south of trench E, suggests that the Bronze Age occupation in the inner town extended at least up to the inner face of the 2.00 m wide stone foundations of wall B that was excavated in trenches F, F/G, and H (figs. 14–16, 20, 23). If wall B is indeed a remaining portion of the town wall on the southern flank of the town, then the town wall did not completely follow the line of the present day contour lines of the tell; wall B is situated about 2.00 m beyond the 10.50 m line of the area IV wall to contour line 12.50 m in grid square K7. Further evidence in trench H also suggests that wall B may be a portion of the main town wall; an opening on the eastern edge of the wall that was filled with brickly debris may in fact be part of a gateway leading into the southern portion of the inner town (fig. 23). The presence of the stone paving area and stone-lined pit in trench F also suggests that at least a portion of this quarter of the inner town was devoted to either some kind of industrial processes or to an area of food processing.

Although no new Bronze Age pottery forms, other than those already published, occurred in the area I assemblages, the Roman period pottery assemblages contained some variations of previously known forms as well as a few new forms. The new Roman forms include the bowl with the piecrust-like molding just below and outside the rim of the vessel (fig. 28:2), an upright necked storage-type jar with red slip outside and just over the inside of the rim (fig. 28:7), two deep holemouth-type jars with channeled-rim tops (fig. 28:10, 12), one drainage-type pipe fragment (fig. 28:15), as well as a dark gray colored glass handle fragment most likely originally belonging to a jar (fig. 28:16).

The area I trenches discussed here supplement the main third–early-second-millennium sequence of occupation in the inner town that was first excavated in the deep 6.00 m sounding in area I, trench C, that was initially reported upon in *Levant* 8 (1976): 38 and that will be fully published in a forthcoming volume of the Oriental Institute Publications series.