

*Khirbet el-Maqatir, 1999**

The fourth season of excavations at Khirbet el-Maqatir (grid ref. 17378 14693) was conducted between 24 May and 17 June 1999. The excavations are sponsored by the Associates for Biblical Research, Frederick, MD, under the direction of Bryant G. Wood. Consortium institutions included Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies; Bryan College (Bryan, TN); Dallas Theological Seminary; The Master's College, IBEX (Israel Bible Extension); and Trinity College and Seminary Southwest Campus. Staff members were: T.A. Bolen (The Master's College, IBEX; square supervisor); P. Briggs (Trinity College and Seminary Southwest Campus; surveyor); G.A. Byers (Associates for Biblical Research; administrative director and square supervisor); G.A. Carnagey, Sr. (Austin Seminary of Biblical Languages; pottery typologist); R. Cloud (David Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN; square supervisor); O.E. Collins (Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies; square supervisor); S. Collins (Trinity College and Seminary Southwest Campus; square supervisor); R.K. Cook (The Master's College, IBEX; square supervisor); E.W. Fields (Ozark Christian College; square supervisor); D. Fouts (Bryan College; square supervisor); A.L. Fuller (Associates for Biblical Research; pottery processing); M.C. Luddeni (Associates for Biblical Research; photographer); D. Markham (University of Alabama; geologist); E.H. Merrill (Dallas Theological Seminary; square supervisor); L.P. Ritmeyer (Ritmeyer Archaeological

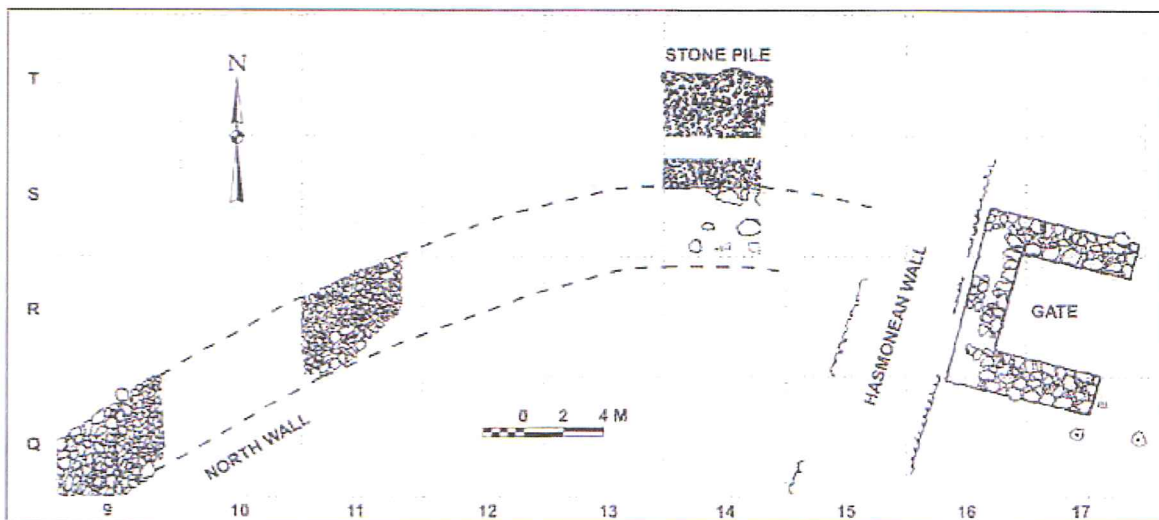


Fig. 1. Kh. el-Maqatir, 1999: plan of north-western wall and western half of gate of LB I fortress.

Design; architect); W. Schlegel (The Master's College, IBEX; square supervisor); S.L. Souza (Associates for Biblical Research; objects registrar); and D.B. Weirick (Associates for Biblical Research; pottery registrar). Labour was carried out by volunteers mainly from the U.S., but also from Australia, Canada and Israel.

The Excavations

The goals of the 1999 season were: 1) to clarify and date a major fortification wall to the west of the LB I gate; 2) to clarify and date a circular wall in Squares D14 and E14; 3) to complete a section through the north wall of the Hasmonaean fortress in Squares W18 and X18; and 4) to continue excavations in Area C to recover the plan of the Byzantine monastery.

The Late Bronze Age I

A small fortress, located on the south-eastern slope of the site in Areas A, D, E and G, is provisionally dated to the Late Bronze Age I, pending a detailed study of the pottery. It is in a poor state of preservation, due to extensive robbing, cultivation and exposure to the elements.

During the 1999 season, two segments of

the north-western wall were excavated in Squares Q9 and R11 (Fig. 1). The wall is 4.0 m. wide, curvilinear in plan, and constructed of fieldstones laid on bedrock (Fig. 2). The path of the northern face can be traced to Square S14, where the LB I wall was robbed out to build a Hasmonaean wall, 6 m. to the east. Left behind was a concentration of small stones, originally piled against the north face of the LB I wall, forming a rough vertical face, 40–60 cm. in height and oriented east–west. A few large boulders from the LB I wall were also found in Square S14, evidently too heavy for the Hasmonaean builders to move (Fig. 3).

In 1998, the northern edge of a wall was found on the southern side of Square D14, some 85 m. south of the gate. Further work this season in Square C14, to the south of D14, revealed that the wall is 3.0 m. wide and was constructed at the end of the Middle Bronze Age or the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. It is curvilinear, and may be part of a circular tower lying on the same axis as the gate.

The Iron Age I

In Square Q9, a poorly-made domestic structure, provisionally dated to the Iron



Fig. 2. Outer face of north-western wall of LB I fortress.



Fig. 3. Robbed-out section of north-western wall of LB I fortress. To left: large boulders left behind; to right: concentration of small stones piled against northern face of wall.



Fig. 4. Stone-lined pit in corner of Iron I structure, built into north-west wall of LB I fortress. To left: jug (see Fig. 5); in centre: mortar; to right: cylindrical limestone object (see Fig. 6).

Age I, was built into the ruins of the LB I wall. The structure, with one-stone-wide walls, consists of several small rooms. The plan of one room is complete: this room measures 1.5×2.0 m. A stone-lined pit (c. 0.7×1.0 m.) was built into the corner of a similar structure in Square R11 (Fig. 4). In it were a restorable jug (Fig. 5) and rim sherds of several Iron I cooking pots, as well as a broken mortar and a large cylindrical object, made of limestone (diameter: 22 cm.; length: 50 cm.; weight: c. 32 kg.; Fig. 6), whose function is unclear.

The Late Hellenistic/Early Roman (Hasmonaean) Period

A second fortress was built at Khirbet el-Maqatir during the Hasmonaean period. As presently understood, it overlaps the eastern side of the earlier fortress and extends to the north and east. In 1999, a section was completed through the fortress's northern wall, located c. 30 m. north of the LB I gate. The wall is 4.0 m. wide at its base, constructed of fieldstones

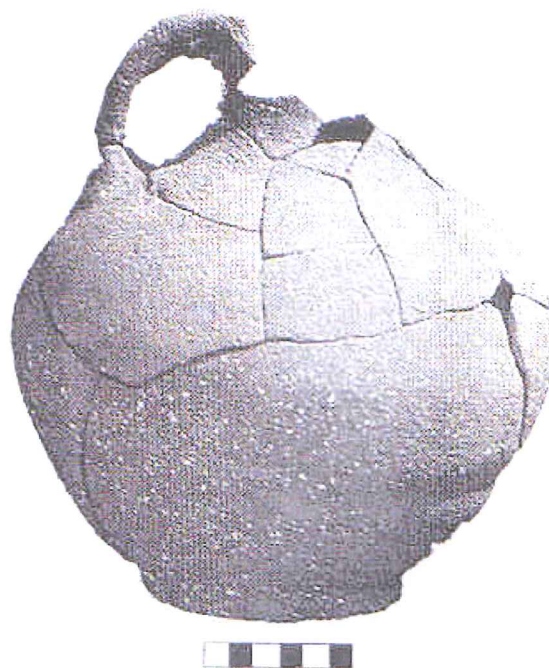


Fig. 5. Iron I jug from stone-lined pit, Square R11.

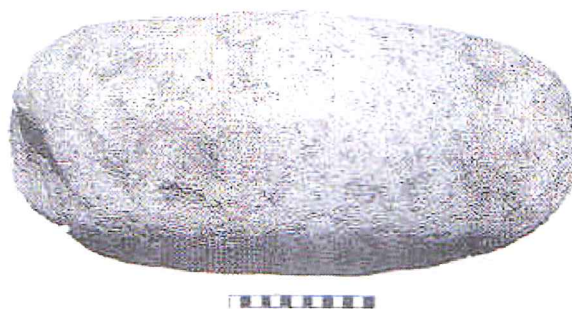


Fig. 6. Cylindrical limestone object from Iron I pit, Square R11.

in an earth matrix, and built on an earth fill over bedrock.

In Square C14, a circular structure was found built against the southern side of the 3.0 m. wide LB I wall (Fig. 7). The structure (external diameter: 4.0 m.; wall thickness: 0.9 m.) has a door in its eastern side (height: 1.0 m.). Hasmonaean pottery was found inside and around the structure, which appears to be a silo.

The Byzantine Period

Work continued on the southern side of the monastery complex, on the summit of the

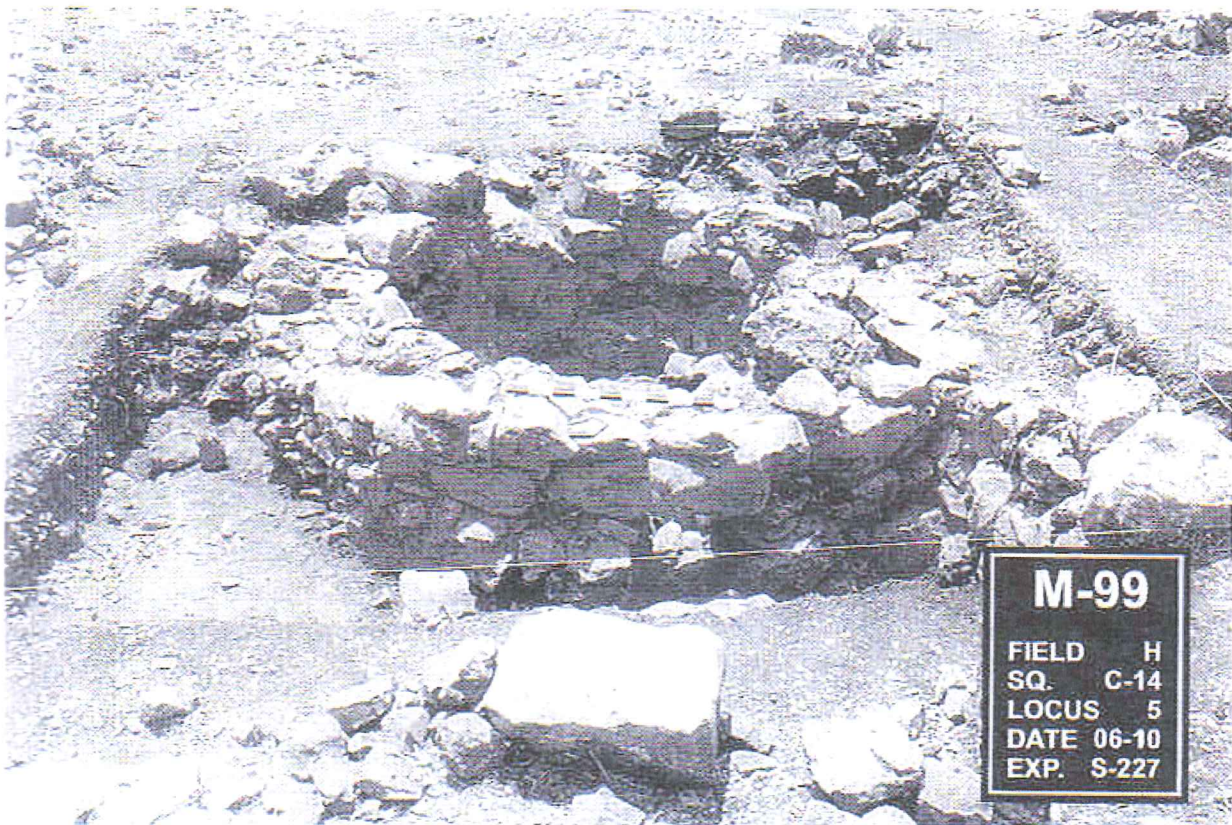


Fig. 7. Hasmonaean silo (centre) built against 3 m. wide LB I fortress wall (right). Small doorway visible in foreground.

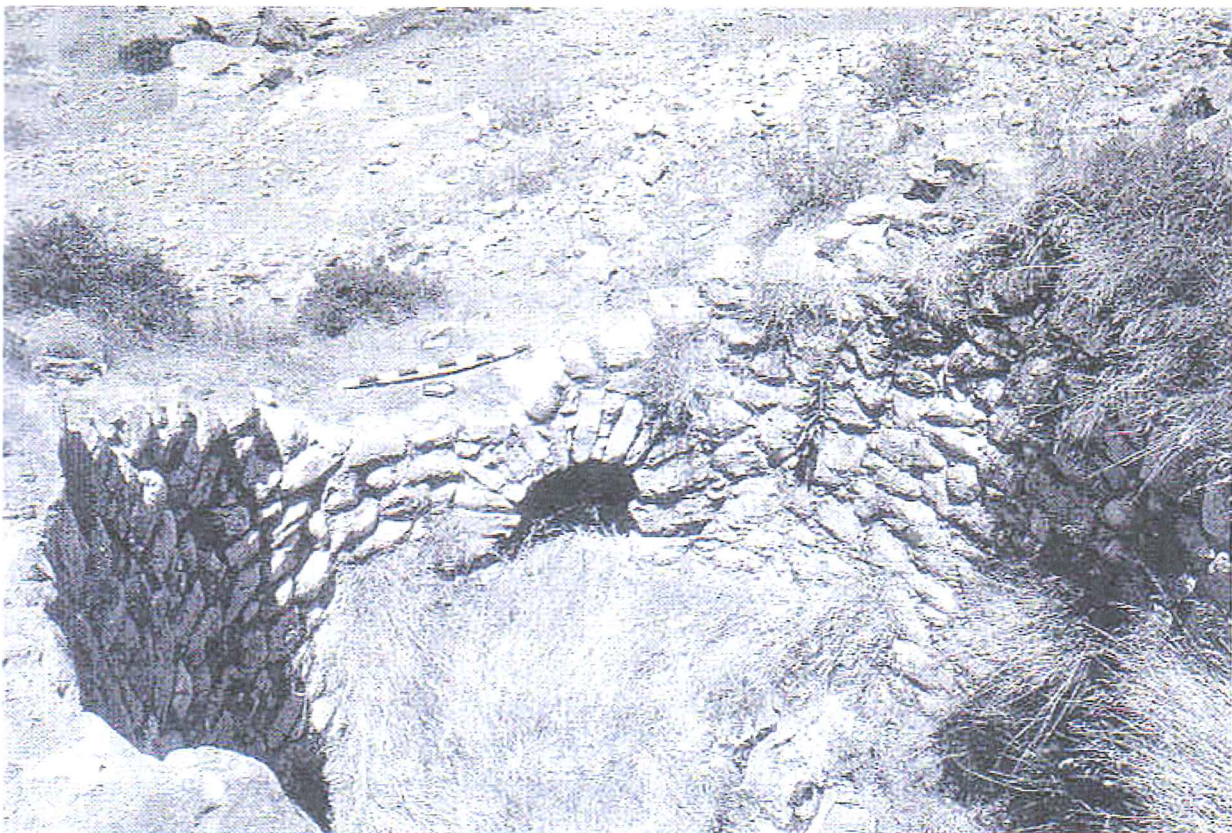


Fig. 8. Byzantine silo with small entryway on western side.

site. The southern side of the church's apse was located and partially exposed, and the threshold of the south-western door to the church was excavated. A large silo, c. 100 m. south-south-west of the monastery (Fig. 8), is a beehive-type structure, built of fieldstones and approximately 50% intact. The inside diameter is c. 4.0 m. at the base, and the wall is c. 1.35 m. wide at the maximum surviving height. A small arched doorway on the western side provided access to the interior.

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