

Dieter Vieweger (ed.)

Mount Zion

The Excavations of the DEI

Final Report

(2015–2025)

3 Volumes

Volume II

Areas I–VIII

Stratigraphy, Architecture, and Excavation Results

Dieter Vieweger, Jennifer Zimni-Gitler,
and Katja Soennecken

With contributions by Léa Estelle Thierry
and Michael Chernin



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PREFACE

These volumes present the archaeological exploration, assessment and evaluation of Mount Zion in Jerusalem, representing part of the diverse archaeological work performed by the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in the Holy Land (DEI).¹ The focus of the DEI is to research and publish articles and reports on the exploration of the Holy Land and in particular, the history of the city of Jerusalem.

On 31 October 1898, the Church of the Redeemer, located in the Old City of Jerusalem, was formally consecrated during a visit by Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Holy City for this occasion. During the festivities, the then Bavarian Chief Consistorial President Dr. Alexander von Schneider put forward the idea of establishing an institute in Jerusalem dedicated to the ‘cultivation of Protestant antiquity studies’. The institute was formally established at the 1900 German Protestant Church Conference in Eisenach, and the foundation was confirmed by an imperial act of sovereignty.

It is interesting to look back at the foundation charter, in which the purpose of the institute’s work is defined in the style of the time—the aim was:

*... to cultivate, revitalize and regulate relations between the sites of sacred history on the one hand and scholarly research and the interest of Christian piety in the Protestant church on the other in the field of biblical and ecclesiastical antiquity studies.*²

Despite deep crises during the two world wars, today the DEI has matured into an active archaeological institute with many scientific excavations, surveys, geophysical and other projects, as well as a commitment to continuous education and ongoing conservation projects. The DEI is supported by the Protestant Church in Germany, Hannover (EKD), and is also a research centre of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI). It maintains institutes in Jerusalem and Amman. As a German institution

and an independent research institute, it is therefore an important platform for archaeological, historical and theological work in Israel/Palestine and Jordan. The DEI works in all these areas and offers bridges of scientific exchange between politically and culturally different societies for joint research and exploration.

In 2005, the two parts of the DEI, located in Amman and Jerusalem, were merged back into one institute. The institutes in Jerusalem and Amman conduct joint research, promote archaeological projects, and act as one institute focused on international scientific research. The first major project was the archaeological exploration of Tall Zirā’a (North Jordan) and the implementation of the associated landscape archaeology project known as the “Gadara Region Project” (www.tallziraa.de).

Researching the history of the city of Jerusalem has been a central focus of the DEI since its foundation. Between 2009 and 2012, under the direction of Dieter Vieweger, the DEI excavated beneath the Church of the Redeemer and established an archaeological park to enable the public to understand the significance of this excavation site, which has been visited by thousands of people (www.durch-die-zeiten.info). The geophysical work in the Christian and Muslim quarters of the Old City in search of the Early Roman city wall (i.e., the so-called Second Wall) was also a milestone in Jerusalem archaeology. The partnership between the DEI and Jürgen Sachs, at the Technical University of Ilmenau, led to new insights into the city’s history, from the Early Roman period to the time of Herod the Great and Jesus of Nazareth, which added to the diverse Israeli and international research.

Mount Zion, just south of today’s Old City, is one of the most important excavation sites in Jerusalem, alongside the “City of David” and the area around the Temple Mount/Haram ash-Sharif. Due to international law, the only areas where the DEI is allowed to work are those identified as Israeli territory in 1948/9.

1 Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes.

2 Urkunde über Errichtung der Deutschen Evangelischen Stiftung für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes (Ar-

chive of the Church of the Redeemer, Folder “Institut Allgemein, Gemischtes, 1957–1988”).

In 2015, the DEI began excavating Area I in the Anglican-Prussian cemetery, under the direction of D. Vieweger. From there, the work spread across the “Greek Garden” to the gardens of the Dormition Abbey and finally to the Greek Orthodox cemetery at the top of Mount Zion. The excavations endeavoured to gain the best possible knowledge using the highest possible scientific standards. The excavation survey, documentation and processing of the finds were carried out entirely digitally.

Work on Mount Zion ended in 2026. By then, not only the excavations and this publication were completed, but also the securing, restoration and tourist development of Area I in the Anglican-Prussian cemetery area. The restoration and securing of the enormous double-miqveh complex in Area III were completed in 2022 by the “Aqhva international e. V.” team of restorers.

Even though Mount Zion lies outside the city walls today, it is still one of the early centres of the city’s history within the walled urban area. There-

fore, in its present unbuilt form, it offers a good opportunity to explore the past and to examine the traditional ideas and to think about the expansion of the city. However, even beyond all scholarly endeavours, a revaluation of this historically significant area is urgently needed, as a religious exaggeration of the Mount Zion traditions and political appropriation has intensified considerably in recent years.

The volumes of this publication series describe twelve years of archaeological work (2015–2026) in a total of eight different areas. The volumes are:

Volume I: Introduction. Project Aims, Methods, Site and Research History,

Volume II: Area I to VIII: Stratigraphy, Architecture and Excavation Results,

Volume III: Find Catalogues, Documentation and Analysis.

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‘There is no excess in the world so commendable as excessive gratitude.’

Jean de La Bruyère (1645–1696)

The many years of fruitful research, which has produced so much valuable knowledge, would not have been possible without many people’s untiring help and support. Hence, we would like to express our profound gratitude for their efforts in all excavations, technical projects and surveys:

We thank our local volunteers from Jerusalem and the volunteers from European Universities for their untiring, collaborative thinking and contributions. It would have been impossible to achieve such results without them.

We would like to express our warmest gratitude to the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), especially Eli Shukron, Yuval Baruch, Amit Re’em, Gideon Avni, Yehiel Zelinger and Jon Seligman for their constant support and their trustworthy and profitable cooperation. Michael Chernin, also from the IAA, worked on our excavation team from 2020 to 2023 and was an irreplaceable member of our team. We were delighted to cooperate with the National Park Authority.

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We are also deeply grateful for the long collaboration with our partner research institutions:

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Bergische Universität Wuppertal

Römisch-Germanische Kommission, Frankfurt/Main

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI)

Kirchliche Hochschule Neuendettelsau

Thomas Morus Akademie, Bensberg

Dormitio Abtei Jerusalem

Jerusalem University College

GeoFact, Bonn

Kampfmittelräumdienst Winkelmann, Berlin

Archäologische Wissenschaften, Universität Erlangen

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Protestantische Gemeinde deutscher Sprache, Jerusalem (Areas I and III)

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Jerusalem (Areas II and VI–VIII)

Greek Orthodox Priest Seminary on Mt. Zion (Areas II, VI and VIII)

Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church, Jerusalem (Areas II, VI and VIII)

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Dieter Vieweger, director of DEI and the excavation project
 Jennifer Zimni-Gitler, co-director and co-author
 Katja Soennecken, co-director and co-author

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the DEI Mount Zion project was initiated with D. Vieweger as the general head of the project. During the project, he was supported by co-directors (J. Zimni-Gitler and K. Soennecken) and area

supervisors.¹ Altogether, the project includes eight excavation areas (Areas I–VIII)² on Mount Zion's southern slope and its plateau (Fig. 0.0.1).



Fig. 0.0.1 Aerial view of Mount Zion with the areas excavated by the DEI © Courtesy of Y. Zelinger, IAA

1 They are named in the season descriptions below.

2 Areas IV–VI were excavated in cooperation with the Israel Antiquities Authority.



Fig. 0.0.2 DEI Areas I–III orthophotographs superimposed on a Google Earth image, looking north © Google Earth/BAI/DEI



Fig. 0.0.3 DEI Areas IV–VIII orthophotographs superimposed on a Google Earth image, looking north © Google Earth/BAI/DEI

1 AREA I: EXCAVATIONS EAST OF THE ANGLICAN-PRUSSIAN CEMETERY (2015–2025)

Area I is the largest area of the excavated fields in this project. Work here started in 2015 with the removal of the colluvium layers (Stratum 0) and continued until 2020. This work continued from 2024 to 2025. In summary, all periods from modern times back to the Iron Age were excavated in this area. However, for Stratum 7, the Iron Age period,

no architectural remains were found, but due to the relatively large amount of pottery and the research questions tackled, this stratum is still presented here separately.

The following Harris Matrix (Figs. 1.0.3–5) was subdivided into three parts as it was not possible to depict all the contexts in one matrix.



Fig. 1.0.1 Overview of the DEI excavation areas © BAI/DEI

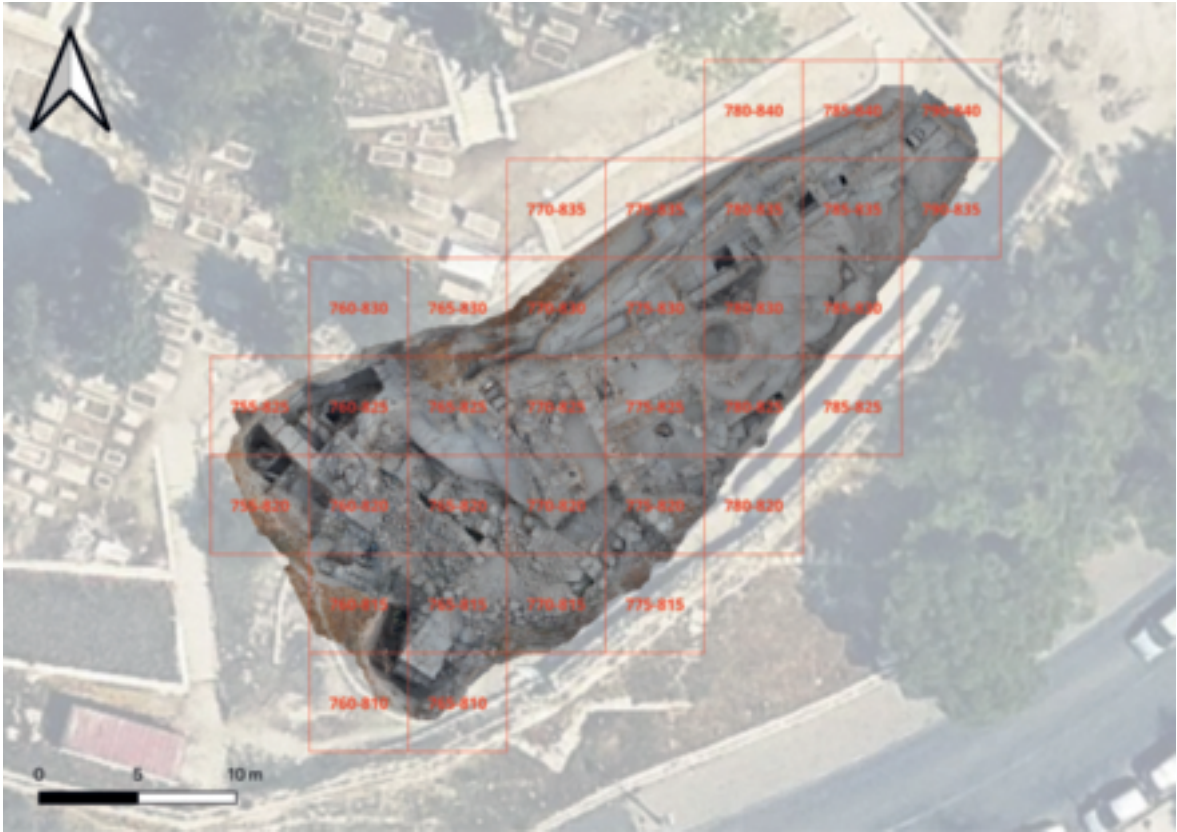


Fig. 1.0.2 Aerial view of Area I with grid squares © BAI/DEI

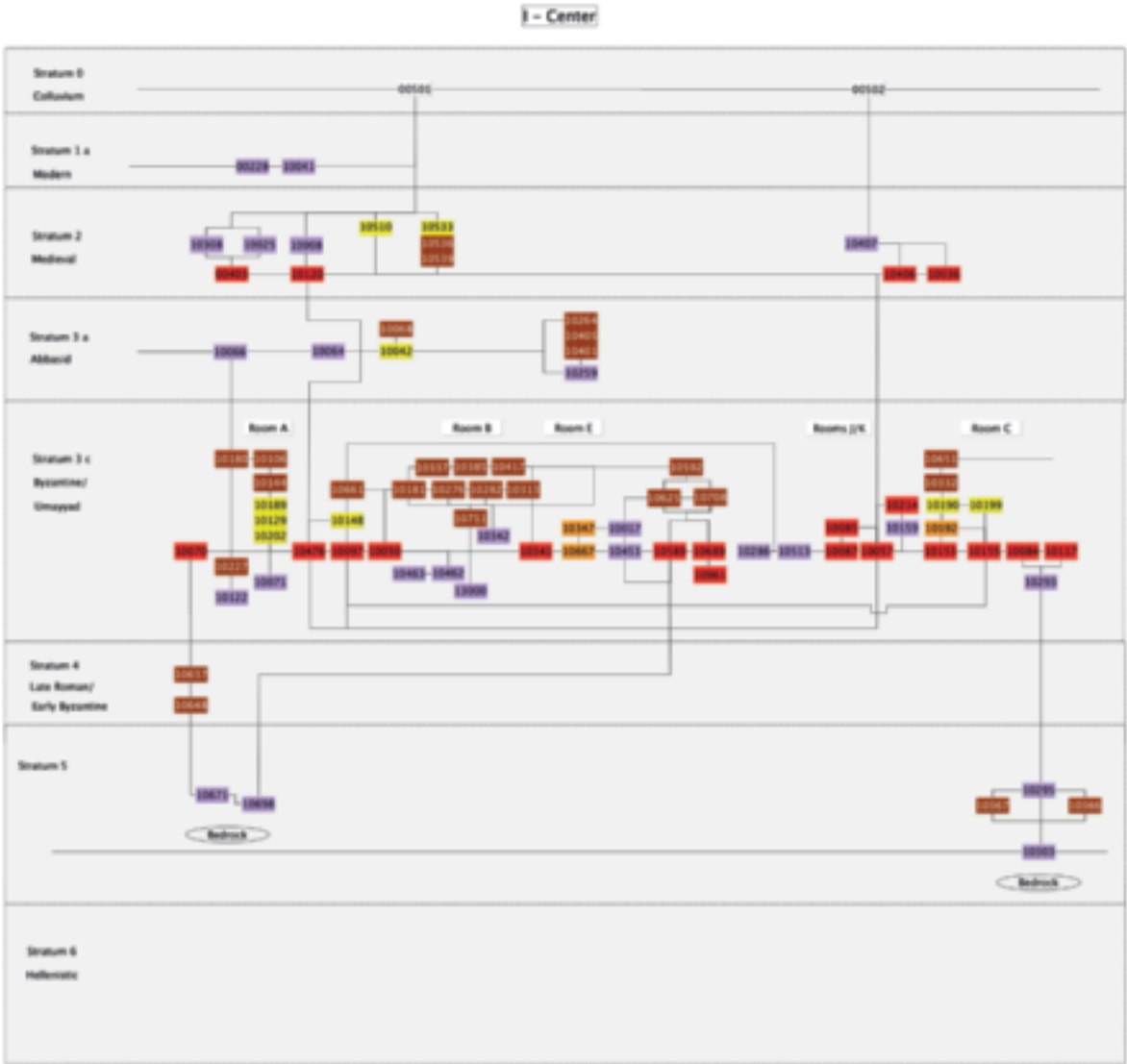


Fig. 1.0.4 Harris Matrix 1 of Area I © BAI/DEI

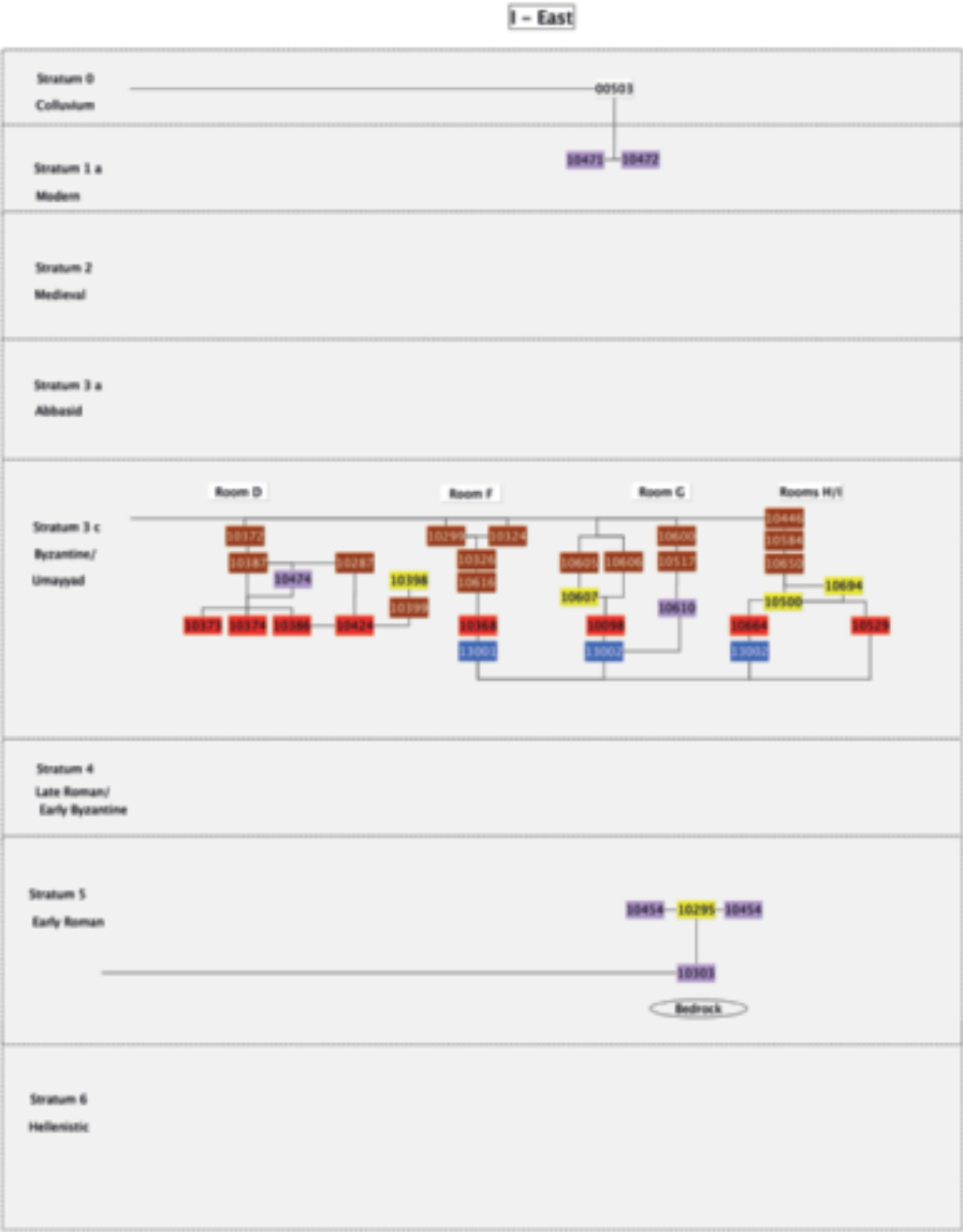


Fig. 1.0.5 Harris Matrix 1 of Area I © BAI/DEI

1.1 Stratum 1 a: Modern

The excavations in Area I revealed remains from the modern historical periods (19th century CE–20th century CE). These consisted of traces from earlier

excavators—tunnels dug by Bliss and Dickie—and remains from the 1948 war.



Fig. 1.1.1 Aerial photograph of Area I-1 showing the modern contexts © BAI/DEI

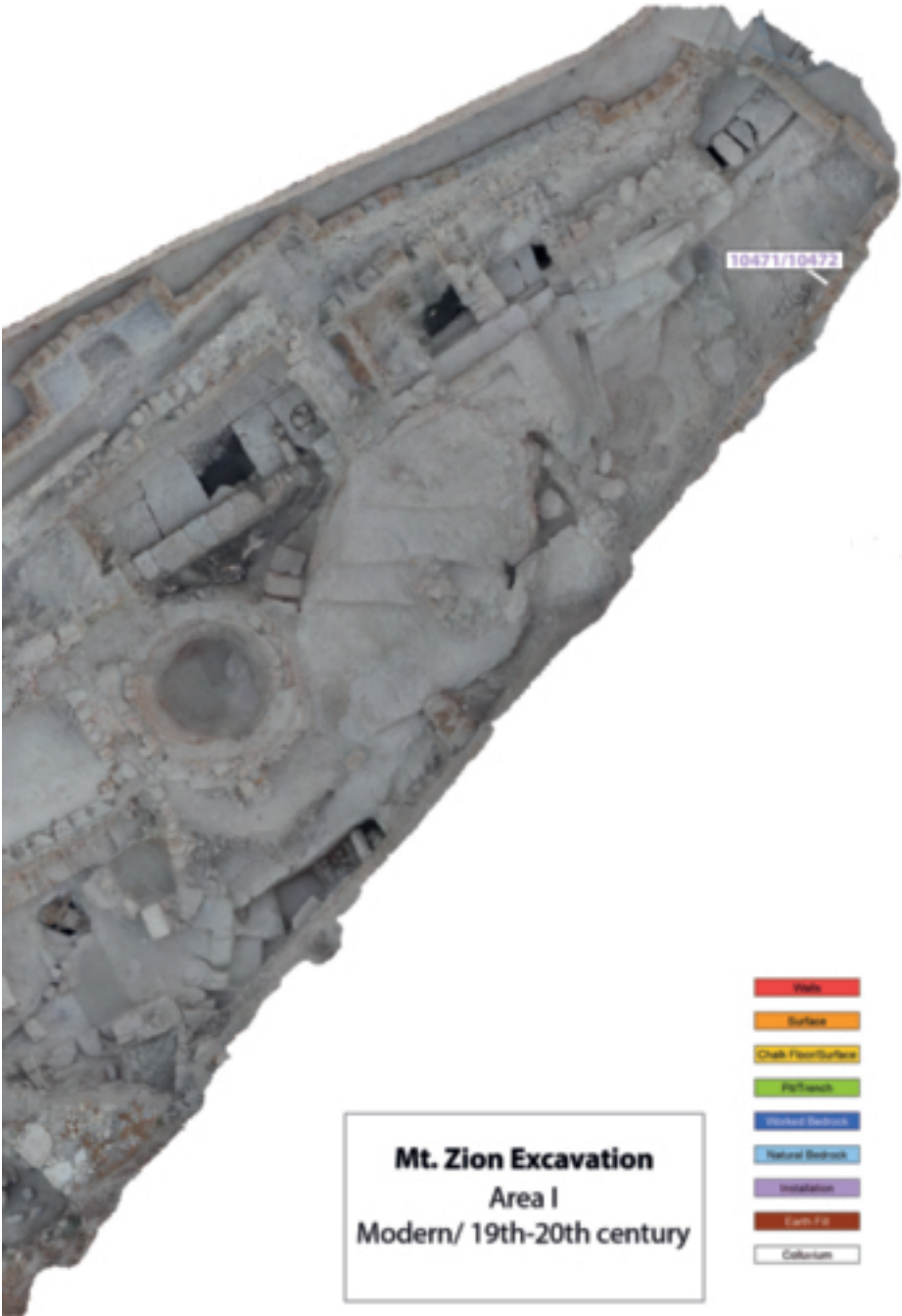


Fig. 1.1.2 Aerial photograph of Area I-3 showing the modern contexts © BAI/DEI

1.1.1 Tunnels dug by Bliss and Dickie

As described in Vol. I Ch. 4.1.1, during the 1890s Bliss and Dickie excavated parts of the area later designated as DEI Area I. A few of their traces are still visible today, such as Tunnels 00044 and 10041 (Figs. 1.1.3–5).

Tunnel 00044

Situated in the northwestern part of the site (Fig. 1.1.1), immediately east of the gate complex,

Tunnel 00044 extends on a north–south axis. Its course can be followed for approximately 8 m beneath the adjacent cemetery. Modern intrusions—including a discarded mattress—indicate that the passage remained accessible and was intermittently occupied until systematic archaeological control of the area was re-established.



Fig. 1.1.3 Entrance to Tunnel 00044 from the excavation area © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.1.4 Tunnel 00044 photographed from inside, looking towards the entry into DEI Area I (looking south) © BAI/DEI

Context	Wall/Installation		Upper elevation	Lower elevation	
00044	Installation	Tunnel	748.30 m ASL	747.12 m ASL	

Tunnel 10041

Tunnel 10041 (also documented as Context 00228) is situated slightly east of Tunnel 00044 (Fig. 1.1.1). It also runs from north to south. The entrance appears to have been deliberately sealed, or perhaps surfaced, with large stone slabs (Fig. 1.1.5). The

tunnel leads directly into the water channel system. Owing to safety considerations, further exploration was not attempted; however, Bliss and Dickie’s original notes suggest that both Tunnel 10041 and Tunnel 00044 probably continue beneath the present-day cemetery.



Fig. 1.1.5 Tunnel 10041 dug by Bliss and Dickie © BAI/DEI

Context	Wall/Installation		Upper elevation	Lower elevation	
00228	Installation	Tunnel	748.12 m ASL	747.07 m ASL	
10041	Installation	Tunnel	748.12 m ASL	747.07 m ASL	Same as 00028

1.1.2 Remains of the 1948 war

During the 1948 first Middle East War, Mount Zion was the scene of intense fighting and vestiges of these engagements emerged in the DEI excavations. A large pit (Context 09371/10472) in the southeastern square of the excavation (Fig. 1.1.2) represents a military trench/pit. The feature yielded a concentration of spent cartridges, all datable to 1948 (manufactured by Škoda in Prague or the Brünn weapons factory), confirming its association with the wartime phase.³



Fig. 1.1.6 Pit 10471/10472 © BAI/DEI

3 MZ 175164.

Context	Wall/Installation		Upper elevation	Lower elevation	
10471/10472	Installation	Pit	747.46 m ASL	746.7 m ASL	

1.2 Stratum 2: Medieval

For Stratum 2, corresponding to the Medieval period, only remains attributed to the Crusader and Ayyubid phases were identified in Area I. Mamluk-period ceramics were recovered exclusively from colluvial and modern layers, suggesting later post-depositional activity rather than *in-situ* occupation.⁴

During this period, the southern slope of Mount Zion appears to have been largely abandoned, with no evidence indicating domestic or residential use. The main architectural features uncovered from this phase were two terracing walls: an upper wall (Contexts 10120,10406) and a lower wall (Context 00403) (Figs. 1.2.2–3). These walls ran roughly parallel to one another on an east–west axis. Wall 10120 eventually collapsed, as indicated by its integration into debris layer Context 10008.

Both walls were flanked by chalk flooring. For the purposes of analysis, these surfaces were subdivided into upper chalk floors, associated with Wall 10120, and lower chalk floors, associated with Wall 00403. A significant portion of the Medieval contexts comprised fill layers, which yielded artifacts spanning all occupational periods represented at the site. As such, these deposits lacked a coherent stratigraphic sequence based on the material culture recovered.

The terracing structures were constructed with little regard for earlier architectural phases, cutting indiscriminately across the site and thereby destroying substantial portions of the underlying Byzantine remains (Figs. 1.2.4–5). Of these earlier features, only a limited number remain visible today.

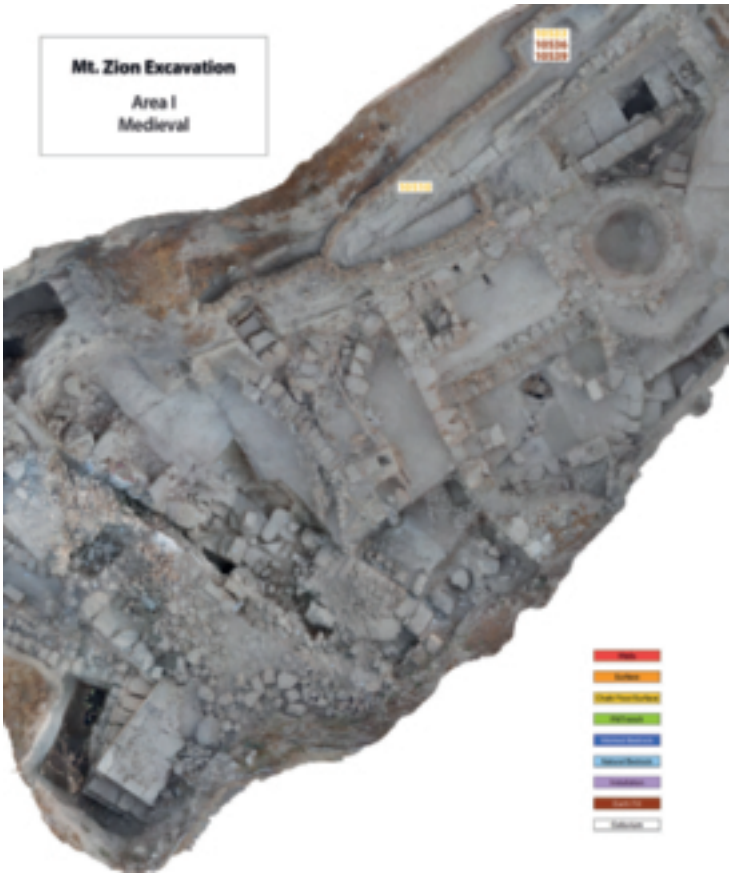


Fig. 1.2.2 Overview of Area I at the end of the 2016 season, looking southwest © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.2.3 Terracing Walls 10120 and 00403 crossing the excavation site; looking west © BAI/DEI



1.2.1 Terracing walls

Upper Terracing Wall (Contexts 10120, 10406) and Wall 10036

The upper terracing wall, designated as Wall 10120 (which incorporates Wall 10406), ran from the southwest to the northeast, traversing nearly the entire excavation area, with the exception of the vicinity surrounding the gate (Fig. 1.2.2). This wall cut Byzantine Room C, effectively obliterating its entire interior. Moreover, it caused significant destruction to the remains of other Byzantine rooms in the area (Figs. 1.2.4–5; 1.2.8).

Wall 10120 itself was composed of multiple courses and was associated with debris layer 10008 (Fig. 1.2.6). The earth layers adjacent to these

structural components exhibited differing characteristics—one being sandier in texture and the other more clay-rich—implying at least two distinct construction phases. These variations suggest that the wall was not erected in a single episode but was subject to later modification or extension.

The alignment of Wall 10120 closely followed the southern edge of the Early Roman road 10259, indicating that its builders were aware of the earlier infrastructure. However, the road appears to have served no functional purpose for them beyond providing a convenient linear reference for the wall's orientation. Furthermore, Wall 10120 made use of the northwestern wall of Byzantine Room A (Wall 10476; Ch. 1.3.2.6) as a retaining structure, incor-

porating it directly into its own course. The area immediately north of this segment remained unexcavated in order to avoid compromising the structural stability of the extant walls.

The upper course of Wall 10120 was preserved to a height of approximately 0.4 m and was constructed using dry masonry. It comprised a combination of small, medium and large-sized fieldstones, loosely stacked without the use of mortar. This upper course was associated with a collapse deposit (Context 10008) consisting of fieldstones of varying sizes. The nature of the collapse suggests that localized pressure exerted by the larger upper stones may have led to the destabilization and subsequent failure of the underlying, loosely placed stones.

The fill material within the collapse layer closely resembled the composition of the wall's

construction fill, indicating a shared depositional context. The ceramic assemblage recovered from within the debris included pottery ranging chronologically from the Hellenistic through the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods, as well as material from the Mamluk era.

The lower course of Wall 10120 was composed of larger, more finely worked stone blocks, which appear to have served as a foundational element for the entire structure. Some of these stones may be spolia, reused from earlier architectural phases, as they closely resembled the construction style and material of the Early Roman Wall 10071. Additionally, this lower course appeared to follow, at least in part, the alignment of Wall 10476, the northwestern wall of Byzantine Room A, suggesting a degree of continuity or adaptation from earlier structural layouts.



Fig. 1.2.4 Wall 10120 cutting Room C; looking southeast © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.2.5 Wall 10120 nearly dismantled; Byzantine Room C (plastered Wall 10057) in the background © BAI/DEI

Fig. 1.2.6 Wall 10120 with Debris 10008 in centre © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.2.7 Wall 10406 © BAI/DEI



In addition, another wall (Context 10406) located in the eastern part of Area I can be attributed to the Medieval period (Fig. 1.2.7) and was a continuation of Wall 10120. Oriented east–west, this wall was constructed of unworked fieldstones and included a reused architectural element—a column—set in a sandy layer as a fill of the wall (Context 10407). The construction of Wall 10406 appears to have obliterated the remains of an additional architectural unit, the traces of which were no longer discernible in the archaeological record.⁵

Several metres further north, along the trajectory of Wall 10120, a retaining wall (Context 10036) was uncovered (Fig. 1.2.8). This wall ran east–west, situated between Walls 10120 and 10057, and was constructed directly atop an earlier structure—Byzantine Wall 10214⁶—using it as a foundation. The ceramic assemblage surrounding

Wall 10036 suggests that it was built using original fill material from the interior of Byzantine Room C. The pottery dates from the Late Roman/Byzantine periods through to the Umayyad period. Particularly noteworthy is the high concentration of *Fine Byzantine Ware*, which probably originated from domestic fill layers associated with the former residential structures, implying a relatively affluent population during the Byzantine and Early Umayyad periods.

This wall served as a clear example of the destructive impact of the later medieval terracing installations, which significantly damaged or obliterated the interiors of earlier architectural units.

5 This destroyed room is mentioned in Ch. 1.3.2.

6 Ch. 1.3.2 Room C.



Fig. 1.2.8 Walls 10120 and 10036 cutting the interior of Byzantine Room C © BAI/DEI

Lower Terracing Wall (Context 00403)

A second, lower terracing wall (Context 00403) was constructed several metres southeast of Wall 10120 (Figs. 1.2.9–10). Running more or less parallel to Wall 10120, it extended from west to east, traversing nearly the entire excavation area. Wall 00403 was preserved to a height of approximately 1.8 to 2 m. In contrast to Wall 10120, there was no evidence of multiple construction phases; rather, the wall appeared to have been built in a single episode. It consisted of a single course of dry masonry, composed of fieldstones as well as reused, worked stones. No-

tably, Wall 00403 did not incorporate any additional retaining structures for stabilization.

As with Wall 10120, both Wall 00403 and its associated fill were constructed using material derived from the dismantled or abandoned domestic architecture in the vicinity. This was evidenced by the large quantity of small finds and the heterogeneous ceramic assemblage. The pottery was heavily worn and covered with thin chalk layers, suggesting repeated redeposition. The mixed nature of the assemblage, even including modern material, further indicated that the fill layers had been disturbed and reworked multiple times.



Fig. 1.2.9 Wall 00403 (western part) © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.2.10 Wall 00403 (eastern part) © BAI/DEI

Context	Wall/Installation		Upper elevation	Lower elevation	
00403	Wall				Dry construction
10036	Wall		748.9 m ASL	748.06 m ASL	Dry construction
10120	Wall				Dry construction
10406	Wall		748.79 m ASL	748.36 m ASL	Contains column
10407	Fill of the wall	Contains coin ⁷ and many tiles	748.62 m ASL		

1.2.2 Plastered floors

In addition to the terracing walls, a series of chalk or plaster floors were constructed to level the sloping terrain (Figs. 1.2.11–12). These surfaces did not represent a single, continuous floor; rather, they survived in fragmented segments, having been partially eroded or destroyed over time. The extant floor remains could be subdivided into upper and lower levels, corresponding respectively to the upper terracing wall (Context 10120) and the lower terracing wall (Context 00403).⁷ A particularly extensive section of floor directly abutted Wall 00403 (Fig. 1.2.12).

These surfaces were composed of multiple layers, presumably accumulated through successive episodes of repair or resurfacing. They were constructed from a chalk-like material interspersed with small pebbles, stones and occasional small finds. The layering suggests repeated maintenance, probably in response to erosion or shifting ground conditions.

The most coherent preserved section was the uppermost floor (Context 10533), located northwest of Wall 10120 (Fig. 1.2.11). This layer appeared to have disrupted an earlier Byzantine street, which probably extended north of Byzantine Room C. Beneath this floor, layers of earth (Contexts 10536 and 10539) served as a substructure. These brown-grey deposits, rich in small stones, provided the foundational support for the plaster floor. The same floor layer continued westward as Context 10510.

The lower plastered floors were excavated as Contexts 00308 and 10025 (Fig. 1.2.12).

⁷ MZ 175510; Illegible coin.

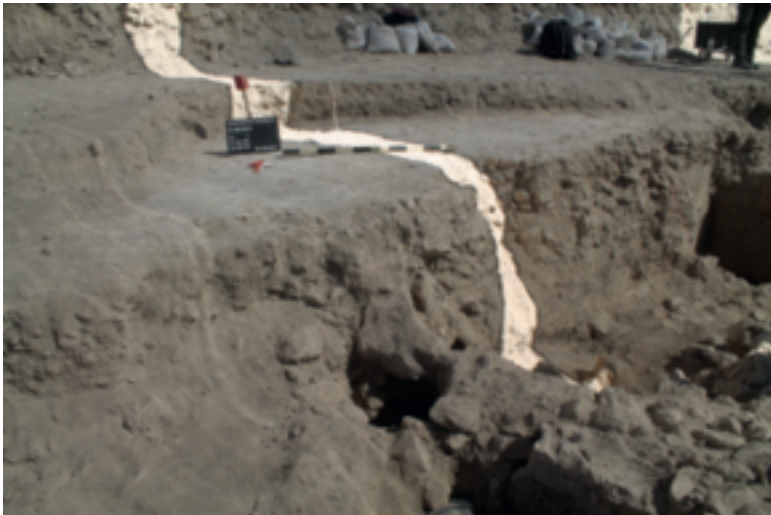


Fig. 1.2.11 Upper plaster floor level
© BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.2.12 Lower plaster floor abutting
Wall 00403 (left); looking
east © BAI/DEI

Context	Earth	Ceramics	Bones	Glass	Metal	
10536	Grey-brown	Byz/Uma			✓	
10539	Grey-brown					

Context	Wall/Installation		Upper elevation	Lower elevation	
00308	Installation	Plaster floor	748.42 m ASL		Contains mixed pottery
10025	Installation	Plaster floor	748.46 m ASL		
10533	Installation	Plaster floor	749.3 m ASL	749.19 m ASL	
10510	Installation	Plaster floor	749.22 m ASL	749.15 m ASL	

1.2.3 Fill layers

The terracing walls and associated chalk floors were embedded within a series of fill layers characterized by sandy to clayey, brownish-grey soils. These fills overlay and effectively buried earlier archaeological features, primarily the remains of the Byzantine domestic quarter (Figs. 1.2.13–14). The fills were largely homogeneous in appearance, lacking discernible stratification or any clear internal differentiation based on ceramic typology or chronological markers. As such, they could not be subdivided further through stratigraphic or typological means.

The find material recovered from these fills was very heterogeneous, spanning a broad chronological range from Iron Age II through to the Ottoman period. Many of the ceramic sherds retrieved from these layers exhibit traces of chalk accretion, consistent with the redepositional processes inferred for these contexts. In addition, numerous diagnostic finds from earlier periods—including a substantial quantity of colourful mosaic tesserae—were recovered from within these fills. This suggests that much of the material originated from the interiors of earlier domestic structures and was redeposited during their destruction and the subsequent construction of the medieval terracing system.

Fig. 1.2.13 Southern profile of Medieval fill layers adjoining Wall 10120 (right) © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.2.14 Southern profile of fill layers adjoining Wall 10120 showing stone Debris 10008 (right) covered by earth layers © BAI/DEI



1.3 Stratum 3: Byzantine and Early Islamic

The majority of the remains still visible today date to the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods. Within this broader timeframe, it is necessary to distinguish between the Byzantine and Umayyad phases, as well as the subsequent Abbasid period. The transition from the Byzantine to the Umayyad period marks a continuation of the site's occupation, although there were probably some functional and architectural modifications.

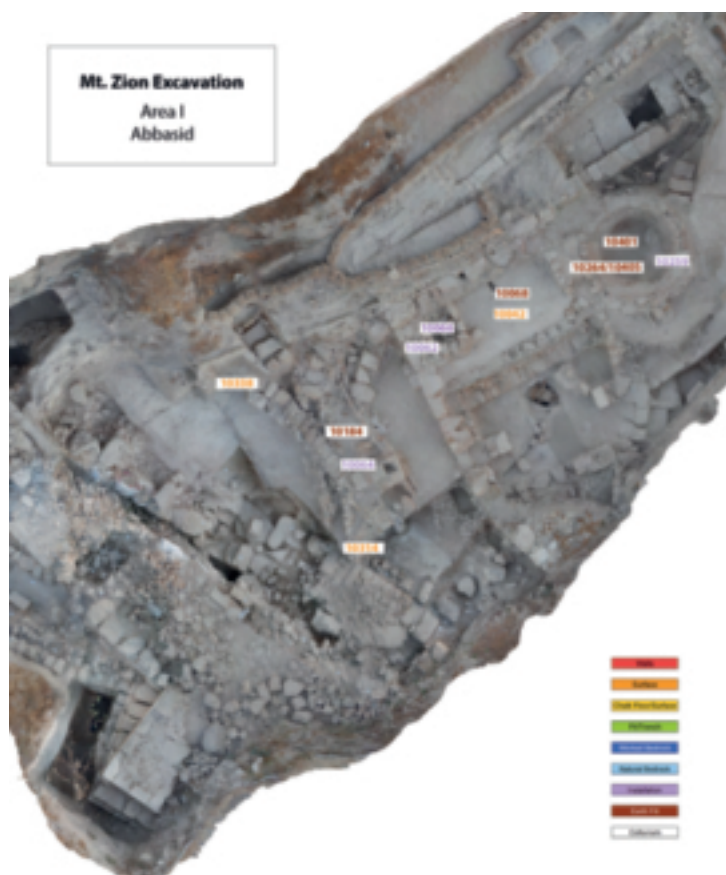
A major turning point occurred at the end of the Umayyad period, when the earthquakes of 747–

749 CE caused widespread destruction throughout the domestic quarter. In the aftermath of this event, during the Abbasid period, the area was not reconstructed as a residential zone. Instead, it underwent a functional transformation into an industrial space. The most prominent feature of this new phase was a limekiln, constructed in the midst of the former domestic rooms, signifying a shift in the site's use and character from private dwelling to industrial production.

1.3.1 Stratum 3 a: Abbasid

After the earthquakes of 747–749 CE⁸ destroyed the Byzantine/Umayyad domestic quarter, structural changes occurred at the site. The quarter was no longer inhabited, but it was used as an industrial area. A newly constructed limekiln led to the

destruction of earlier Byzantine domestic spaces, while a new water channel, built over pre-existing ones, and several architectural modifications to the domestic structures further altered the original layout.



8 A destruction layer excavated in Room B provided the dating information for this dramatic destructive event (Ch. 1.3.2.6 Room B).

Fig. 1.3.1 Aerial photograph of Area I-1 showing the Abbasid contexts © BAI/DEI

1.3.1.1 Channel 10064

The wastewater channel system that had been in use during the Byzantine and Umayyad periods was discontinued. In its place, a new channel (Context 10064; Fig. 1.3.2) was constructed directly on top of the earlier system. This channel ran in an east-west direction, with a steep slope descending westwards. It cut across and was built over all pre-existing channels, particularly Channels 10413 and 10415.

Channel 10064 was constructed from medium-sized fieldstones, and its cover consisted of roughly rectangular stone slabs measuring approximately 0.5×0.3 m. This channel was distinct from those previously described: in addition to its entirely different orientation, it was also built over the remains of the destroyed Room B. Channel 10064 was laid

on the room's destruction layer, and its course could only be partially traced (Fig. 1.3.3), making it impossible to determine its complete length.

It is highly probable that the channel was functionally associated with the contemporaneous limekiln (Context 10259), which was similarly built over earlier Byzantine structures and obliterated them. The ultimate destination of the wastewater remains unknown, as Channel 10064 did not appear to connect with Channel 10303.

In addition to the construction of Channel 10064, its immediate surroundings were also filled in. The space between the newly built Channel 10064 and the underlying Channels 10413, 10415, and 10464 was filled with a brown, sandy earth layer (Context 10184). This fill contained a significant quantity of pottery, predominantly dating to the Byzantine period, along with a few sherds attributable to Iron



Fig. 1.3.2 Channel 10064 © BAI/DEI

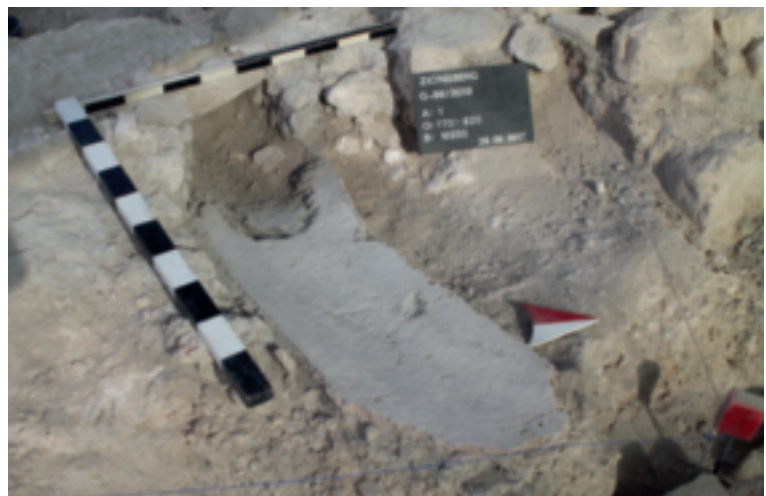


Fig. 1.3.3 Further remaining parts of Channel 10064 © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.3.4 Mould of a cross MZ 152035 © BAI/DEI

Age II. Numerous nails were also recovered from this context. A particularly noteworthy find within this layer was a mould in the shape of a cross (Fig. 1.3.4).⁹ Moreover, five intact oil lamps¹⁰ were discovered inside Channel 10064 itself. All of these lamps date to the Byzantine period, providing a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the channel.

To stabilize the area, additional layers of plaster (Contexts 10314 [Fig. 1.3.5] and 10338) were applied subsequently.



Fig. 1.3.5 Context 10314 © BAI/DEI

Context	Earth	Ceramics	Bones	Glass	Metal	
10184	Brown, loose, sandy	Byz	✓	✓	✓	Nails
10314	Hard, whitish brown	Rom to Byz	✓	✓	✓	
10338	Hard, whitish	Rom to Byz	✓	✓	✓	

Context	Wall/Installation		Upper elevation	Lower elevation	
10064	Installation	Channel	747.76 m ASL	747.54 m ASL	

9 MZ 152035-001.

10 From MZ 100129 to MZ 100133.

1.3.1.2 Room A and Cistern A

The earlier Byzantine domestic Room A, and in particular its cistern (Cistern A; Contexts 10122), underwent significant remodelling. While the cistern was still in use, its original mouth—located at the same level as the original floor—served as the point of access (Fig. 1.3.6). However, during the Abbasid period, this original opening was no longer used. Instead, it was filled with earth (Context 10066) up to the height of a stone slab (measuring 0.7×0.5 m) that had been integrated into Byzantine Wall 10070 (Fig. 1.3.7). This slab may have functioned as a door sill (Context 10062; Fig. 1.3.10), providing access into Room A during the Abbasid period.

The room itself was intentionally filled with pebbles and fieldstones in order to raise the floor

level (Context 10042). The latter was excavated as Context 10068. The fill consisted of grey, sandy earth that yielded numerous finds, including a stone bead (MZ 154002; Fig. 1.3.8) and a substantial quantity of cooking vessels—primarily dating to the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods—as well as a significant amount of glass.

Among the ceramic assemblage were diagnostic sherds (e.g., MZ 100204; MZ 100304) dating to the Umayyad period, suggesting that the cistern probably went out of use sometime after the Umayyad era. Additional finds within the fill included a nail (MZ 175073), various metal fragments (MZ 175049), and a coin (MZ 170008-006, cat. no. 180) datable to the Umayyad period. Furthermore, several fragments of wall plaster were recovered from the fill.

Fig. 1.3.6 Cistern A; original Byzantine mouth (dark green); Early Islamic modification (light green); looking east © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.3.7 Filled-up entrance of Cistern A (Context 10066); looking northwest © BAI/DEI



The fill within the room itself was rich in small finds. Among these were significant quantities of charcoal and a large number of iron nails, which may indicate the presence of a roof or wooden superstructure that was destroyed during a destructive event.¹¹ The pottery recovered from these layers predominantly dates to the Byzantine and Umayyad periods, providing a chronological framework for the use and eventual abandonment of the space.

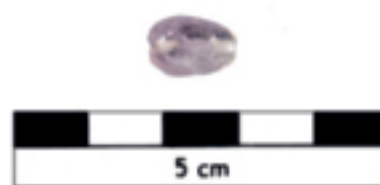


Fig. 1.3.8 Stone bead, MZ 154002 © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.3.9 Ash Layer in Room A, which was covered with a new walking level of plaster © BAI/DEI



Fig. 1.3.10 Room A with the Early Islamic floor/walking level in detail © BAI/DEI

11 Room B also shows a destruction layer. Its cause will be discussed in Ch. 1.3.2.6.

Context	Earth	Ceramics	Bones	Glass	Metal	
10066	Loose, sandy, grey-brown	Byz/Uma	✓	✓	✓	¹⁴ C sample, coin ¹²
10068	Sandy, brown-white	Rom to Byz	✓	✓	✓	Coin ¹³

Context	Wall/Installation		Upper elevation	Lower elevation	
10042	Installation	Floor	748.32 m ASL		Coin, ¹⁴ nail
10062	Installation		747.84 m ASL	747.66 m ASL	

1.3.1.3 Limekiln 10259

A limekiln (Context 10259; Fig. 1.3.11) was constructed in the centre of the Byzantine domestic complex, situated east of Room A and south of Room C, destroying Room J. The limekiln had a total diameter of approximately 2.2 m, though only its lower portion was preserved. Evidence suggests that the upper structure was composed of clay bricks, as indicated by surviving fragments (Fig. 1.3.12).

The walls of the kiln were built from rectangular stone blocks. To prevent the building material of the kiln from melting during operation, a separating layer between the kiln walls and the material to be calcined was required. The interior of the kiln contained multiple ash layers (Contexts 10264 and 10405), indicative of repeated firing events. Slag remains were found within these ash layers, as well as in the lowest fill (Context 10401), supporting the interpretation of industrial activity.

A radiocarbon sample taken from one of the ash layers (Sample KIA 54750) yielded a date in the 8th century CE, confirming that the limekiln was in use during the early Islamic period.

Two walls located on the northeastern and southern sides of the kiln can be interpreted as structural supports intended to stabilize the oven.

When the kiln was in operation and subjected to high temperatures, these walls probably functioned as retaining elements, preventing thermal expansion from compromising the kiln's integrity. It is also possible that Byzantine Wall 10097, the outer wall of Room A, served a similar purpose.

As only the lower portion of the kiln—the firing chamber—was preserved, the original form of the upper structure cannot be reconstructed with certainty. It is, however, plausible that the kiln featured a domed and corbelled ceiling. Structural elements such as a stoke hole¹⁵ and a ventilation opening, typically present in such installations, were now missing and were most likely destroyed when the kiln was no longer in use and terracing installations were subsequently constructed.

The destruction of the underlying Byzantine Room J¹⁶ provides a *terminus post quem* for the kiln's construction. The installation of such an industrial feature marked a significant transformation in the functional character of Area I. Given the high levels of smoke and heat generated during lime production, it is reasonable to conclude that the area was no longer used for domestic purposes by this time. Furthermore, it is likely that the raw material for lime production was sourced from the immediate vicinity, including the remains of earlier architectural structures.

12 MZ 17008-006; Vol. III Ch. 4, Cat. No. 180, Umayyad (post-reform), fulus, 697–750 CE.

13 MZ 17009-001; Vol. III Ch. 4, Cat. No. 61, AE Marcian, 450–457 CE.

14 MZ 17006-001; Vol. III Ch. 4, Cat. No. 65, AE Basiliscus, 475/6 CE.

15 See also Gibson 1984, 94, and Fig. 3.

16 Ch. 1.3.2.6 Room J.