



**BETHSAIDA EXCAVATIONS PROJECT
THE SEASON OF 2005
FIELD REPORT**

RAMI ARAV

The Expedition

The excavation season of 2005 extended over 9 weeks from May 22 to July 29. The following staff, faculty and students took part in the excavations: Director of Excavations Dr. Rami Arav (University of Nebraska at Omaha [UNO]), Project Director Dr. Richard Freund (Hartford University), Assistant Director Dr. Carl Savage (Drew University), Co-Director Dr. Elizabeth McNamer (Rocky Mountain College, Billings MT), Co-Director, Dr. Nicolae Roddy (Creighton University), Co-Director Prof. Dr. Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn and Dr. Regina Fanka (University of Munich), Archivist and Coordinator Stephen Reynolds (UNO), area supervisor Christian Haunton (University of Iowa), Photographer Christine Dalenta (University of Hartford), pottery reconstruction Charleen Green Savage, conservation Orna Cohen, anthropologist Issa Sarie (Hebrew University), Maha Darawsha (University of Connecticut), geologist Dr. Harry Jol (University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire), tomography Paul Bauman and Christine Nahas (Komex International Ltd, Calgary Canada), Numismatics Dr. Aryeh Kindler (Tel Aviv), consultant archaeologist, Eliot Braun (Israel Antiquities Authority), with participation of Prof. James Charlesworth (Princeton Seminary), Dr. Aaron Gale (West Virginia University), Dr. Boyd Seevers (Northwestern College), Fredrich Schipper of the University of Vienna sent a small number of Viennese students, Shai Schwartz field data recorder, and Judith Schwartz from Kibbutz Ginosar a long time volunteer. The Bethsaida expedition also hosted Prof. James Strange (University of South Florida) as a visiting archaeologist.

The expedition was accommodated, as in previous years, in Kibbutz Ginosar and we are very grateful for their warm and nice hospitality.

The Excavations

The 2005 excavation season was concentrated in three main areas, two locations in Area A, and one in Area C. The purpose of the excavations in Area A was to obtain further data on the Roman and Hellenistic levels south of the Roman temple. For this report, this area is called Area A West. This area surrounding the Roman temple is important in understanding the temple. The temple has been excavated in the previous

seasons and it is identified with the Roman Imperial cult, built by Philip, the son of Herod, in the year 30 CE.

Chamber 2 at the Inner City Gate was excavated in order to reveal the nature of Stratum 6 in this area. The third excavated place this season was the road leading to the outer city gate. This area yielded more segments of the paved road leading to the city.

Area C contains Roman and Hellenistic remains of a residential quarter. So far, a few buildings and two intersecting paved lanes have been discovered. The purpose of the excavation in this place was to obtain more data on the Hellenistic and early Roman private homes.

Summary of loci:

1. Area A, City Gate, loci numbers 1704 – 1734 (30 loci)
2. Area A west, South of the Roman temple, loci number: 2000-2006 (7 loci)
3. Area C loci numbers: 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569 (6 loci)

The mound is situated below sea level and therefore all elevation numbers are negative.



Area A, Aerial photograph showing the area of excavations in 2005. Chamber 2 is at the lower part of the picture. The excavation at wall W855 is at the upper part of the picture.

Area A, Strata 5 and 6

Sounding in Chamber 2 (Squares L,M / 55,56)

Locus 1710 – A sounding in Chamber 2 has already begun in the season of 2004. During that season a layer of stones, marked as W860, was discovered in the west side of the locus. At the onset of the current excavation season it became apparent that the layer

of stones is not a wall. The function of it is still unclear although it is possible that it was a fill, and served as the foundation for a floor. It is also apparent that it was built after the construction of the Southern Tower of the Stratum 5 city gate, since a foundation trench of the Southern Tower cuts through the layer assigned as W860. Next to W860 the excavations removed levels of gray and yellow fill until a floor was encountered. The floor, 1.35 m. below Stratum 5 and at an elevation of 170.35, was made of white crushed limestone mixed with carbonized wood. Another floor was discovered at the depth of 170.55. This floor is similar in construction to the one above. The material between the two floors was gray in color and contained Iron Age IIA finds. A pit (L. 1711) cut through the floors from a level that could not be discerned.

Loci 1707, 1715 – north of Locus 1710, is also located in Chamber 2. The picture obtained from these loci is similar to the picture of locus 1710. A one-meter-thick layer of reddish crumbly fill, full of mud brick debris constitutes the composition of the infrastructure layers of Stratum 5. Scattered stones were placed at the bottom of this fill.

Finds: The main bulk of the shards date from Iron Age IIA and these were also the latest among the finds. This means that the latest date for the infrastructure of Stratum 5 is no later than the mid 9th century BCE. However, there were many shards that date earlier. Among the interesting early finds there was a shard of Cypriot “Milk Bowl”, a Middle Bronze Age II shard (see below), and several Early Bronze Age II shards. These finds indicate that the fill for the infrastructure was brought in from various places that contain ruins dating from earlier periods. In addition to these finds there were many flint stones found in the fill, and two beads, one of Carnelian stone and the other of a faïence blue and yellow. Noteworthy is a small piece of a statue made of brown hard stone, nicely polished. It may have been an Egyptian import.

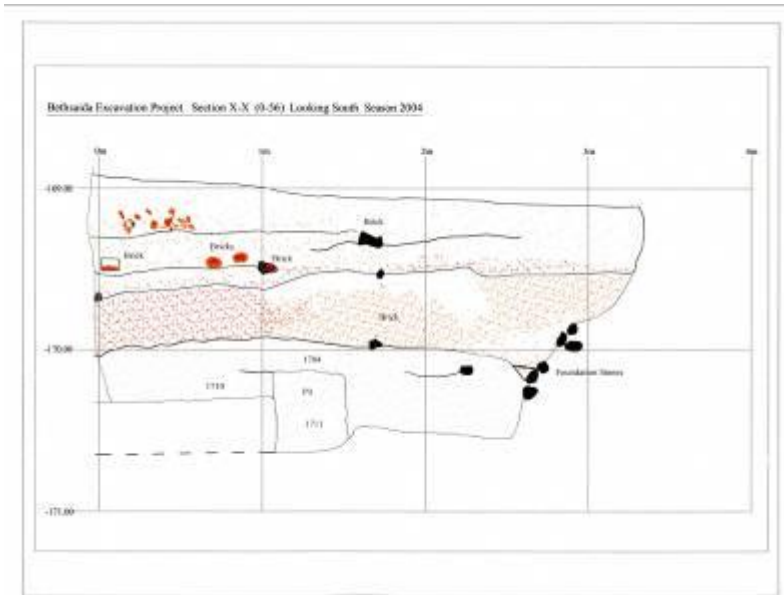
Locus 1721 – This locus contains the debris and fills material of Stratum 6. The finds of this locus clearly contained early Iron Age IIA material such as red slip and burnish shards, and shards with reed impression which are considered to be as early as Iron Age I.



Sounding in Chamber 2, Locus 1710. Notice the stone layers at left. There is no layer of stones under this one which means that it is not a wall but a fill for a purpose unknown. To the right of the stone layer notice the crushed lime floors and the layers of fill on top of the floor.



Section X-X in square O/56, south face of balk between loci 1707 – 1710.



Layers of light and dark gray material, ash mixed with burnt bricks, form a 70 cm fill over the two successive crushed limestone floors. The fill ends in an uneven line. The layers above this form the infrastructure of Stratum 5. This is a reddish thick layer of about one meter thick and consists of fill mixed with brick material. Some large pieces of bricks have been found in it. The fill was compressed into uneven layers. The compression lines were discerned in the dig and marked in the section. The finds in this fill vary from Early to Late Bronze Age shards, such as EBII combed ware and hole mouth jars. Late Bronze Age shards to Iron Age I shards decorated with reed impressions indicate that the fill which created the infrastructure for Stratum 5 was brought from different locations and contain shards from various periods. It suggests that various groups were busy in filling up the area to raise it to the desired elevation. The groups dismantled remains of earlier settlements, presumably not very far from the gate.



Area A, Locus 1707, basket 17543, Chamber 2, Stratum 5 infrastructure: Reed impression on a crater, this decoration is considered to be as early as Iron Age I. It was perhaps brought to the fill from somewhere on the mound.



Area A Locus 1707, Basket 17614, A Cypriot “Milk Bowl” dating from the Late Bronze Age II (14th century BCE). This shard was found in the infrastructure fill of Stratum 5 at Chamber 2 of the city gate.



Area A, Locus 1707, a Middle Bronze Age IIB shard was found among the fill which created the infrastructure of Stratum 6.



Clay bead with faience drops found in the fill of the infrastructure of Stratum 6 at Chamber 2.



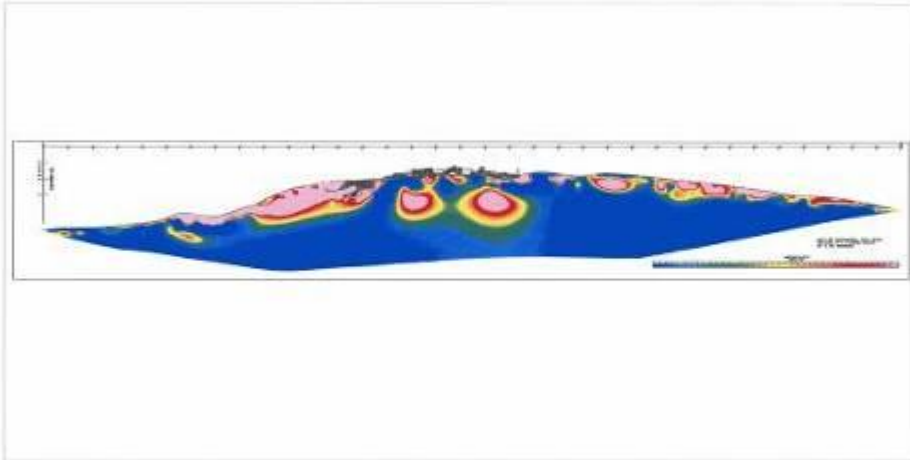
Carnelian stone bead found in the fill of the infrastructure of Stratum 6 at Chamber 2.



Area A, Locus 1707, basket 17626, a typical basket of this locus. The basket contained 272 shards, 32 flint tools and flax. Among the diagnostics there are one EBII combed ware, and 3 Iron Age IIA CP's (cooking pots).

Electrical Resistivity Tomography

A few lines of Electrical Resistivity Tomography were carried out through the passageway of the gate in an east-west section. The lines extended from the riverbed at the east to the top of the mound. The results show that the entire courtyard and wall W855 were constructed in a terrace fill.



Electrical Resistivity Tomography, the pink and red are clays and debris and the blue is basalt stone.

Sounding in Chamber 2 – Conclusion

Excavation in Chamber 2 was carried out in order to discover architectural features that would help to elucidate the nature of the Inner Gate in Stratum 6. Thus far only successive floors made of crushed limestone were discovered with no walls. It is still impossible to determine what the inner city gate looked like in this stratum. It should be noted, however, that there is a gap of about 2.5 meters between the lowest floor in Chamber 2 (170.53 m.) and the lowest floor at the gate courtyard near the Outer City Gate (172.77). The distance between the two floors is 12 meters. The question of how this gap was bridged has not yet been resolved. The Electrical Resistivity Tomography test carried out along the passageway of Stratum 5 show a steep slope of a stone formation, separating the floor at the courtyard and the floor in Chamber 2, which may be interpreted as a wall. Further excavations in this area are certainly needed to solve the problem.

It also became apparent that the Inner Four-Chamber city gate was built through a massive construction work. A large amount of dirt was brought to the area in order to fill it up and to create a solid foundation for the gate. The dirt contained residue from early ruined settlements that are as early as the Early Bronze Age. Noteworthy are shards dating from the Middle and Late Bronze ages. Remains of these settlements were never found in the vicinity of Bethsaida. The bulk of these shards dates from the Iron Age IIA and contains red slip and burnished pottery shards, cooking pots and jar shards. These are the latest shards found in the fill and they would provide a mid 9th century BCE *post quem* date to Stratum 5. This date is supported by C14 dating of grain in the burnt granary that ends Stratum 6, which has also recently been published. The destruction of Stratum 6 was therefore followed almost immediately with the construction of Stratum 5. The different layers that fill Stratum 6 suggest that different groups were engaged in the construction work of Stratum 5, they were most probably assigned to bring fill from different sites in the vicinity of the gate area.

The date of the construction of Stratum 6 is not yet fully determined but the middle of the tenth century BCE does not seem impossible.

Loci 1705, 1708, City Wall W855 (Squares O,P / 55,56)

These loci are located on the wall W855 which connects the Outer City Gate with the Bastion at the south (W405). The purpose of the excavation in this location was to determine the width of wall W855.

Before describing the finds it is important to review the state of preservation of the city gate. When the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser III destroyed the city gate in 732 BCE, he dumped the entire eastern part of the city gate complex into the ravine. The line of his destruction runs 8 meters east from the threshold of the Inner City Gate. Therefore the entire eastern part of the complex, including the eastern part of the courtyard pavement, the eastern city wall (the upper courses of W855), the Bastion and the eastern part of the Outer City Gate, lacks any remains of Stratum 5. The only remains found at the dig were those of Stratum 6, and directly above it lay the remains of Stratum 2. The picture received therefore was of Roman finds superimposed on remains dating to Iron Age IIA, with no Iron Age IIB architectural finds.

The Roman city wall (W856) runs at the eastern edge of what was left of the Iron Age IIB pavement of the courtyard. This wall was discovered in 2003 and reported on various occasions in the past. During the third century CE this Roman city wall (W856) collapsed into the ravine and covered the remains of a small Roman period cemetery which was built on the Iron Age IIA city wall W855. During this excavation season the one Roman burial, 1.2 m. long, oriented north-south (T250), was excavated and the remains of the Iron Age IIA city wall (W855). This wall was found to be 6 meters wide. It is noteworthy that this is a standard width of the Iron Age city wall in places where no buttresses were added.

Other finds in these loci included Roman Galilean bowls, coins, nails and several lead net weights, and a Rhodian amphora handle bearing a Greek inscription beginning with the letters LYSA[NIAS].



A Rhodian wine amphora handle with the seal impression LYSA[NIAS].



Area A, Locus 1708, basket 1762. A typical basket of finds in locus 1708. It is a mixture of Roman and Iron Age IIA finds. On the upper left side there is a Roman cooking pot, next to it shards of two casseroles. The first shard in the third row is a rim of a Galilean bowl, and next to it a Roman cooking pot handle. Near the two basalt sling stones (?) there is an Iron Age I shard decorated with reed impression.

Loci 1706, 1712, 1713, 1717, 1718, 1719, 1721, 1723, 1724, 1725, 1726, 1727, 1728, 1730, 1731, 1732, 1733, 1734, squares: 47, 48/ N,O,P The Paved Road and the Outer City Wall

The purpose of the dig in this area was to discover more segments of the paved road leading to the Outer City Gate and to follow the outer city wall. Although only two squares (10x5 meters) were added to the map, the amount of work invested in this was immense due to large boulders that collapsed from the outer city wall (W401) and covered the cobblestone road. In addition to this, tombs from the Roman period were scattered along the road and in the debris of the outer city wall which made the dig a time consuming effort.

The main features of this area are:

The cobble stone road – After a moderate slope toward the outer city gate, the road, at a distance of about 17 meters from the gate, slopes even more moderately and

turns almost even for about 5 meters. Remains of fire were discerned in one place on the cobbles. A nice patch of plaster with white wash was found still attached to one stone and testifies to the fact that the black basalt stones of the city wall were covered by plaster and white wash and were not seen at the outside. White patches of plaster were also found in other places of the gate. Shards of pottery and glass dating from the Roman period attest a very long use of the paved road. During the Roman period tombs were excavated into the road. Several burials were discovered in this area. The orientation of all the tombs are north - south with the heads at the north. The tombs were simple cist built into the pavement, covered with six to eight long basalt slabs. There were no finds in the tombs. Some burials were interred before the earthquake of the 3rd century CE destroyed the outer city wall and covered the pavement. However, some tombs were built into the ruins of the city wall and on top of the city wall itself, indicating that some burials were interred after the earthquake (earthquake victims?).

Among the outstanding finds on the road there are three basalt anchors. One was found in a secondary use in a tomb. It is 50 cm. high, 25 cm. wide and 32 cm. thick with a pierced hole of 7 cm. in diameter close to the top of the stone. Another anchor measures 45 x 25 x 30 cm with a hole of about 7 cm.

Other finds were a Roman pottery shard with palm decoration, Roman bronze earring, a Roman sandal nail and a coin.



Area A, City Gate, the area marked is the cobble road leading to the outer city gate.



*Area A, Locus 1731, basket 17708, from the paved road.
This is a typical basket of this road, it contains a few Iron Age shards and plenty of Hellenistic Roman shards, including a black glazed “Appulian Ware”.*



Area A, Locus 1729, basket 17703 – from the paved road. The remnants of a Roman jar contained small animal bones. Since large portions of this jar were discovered it is supposed that it was dropped there at the time of the earthquake.



*Area A, Locus 1731, basket 17713, the paved road
 A typical basket above the paved road, the basket contained 495 shards and 25 bones. The diagnostic finds include shards from the following periods: Umayyad period shard, Eastern Terra Sigilata, Galilean bowls, Rhodian wine amphora, Iron Age II jug, jar and plate, Early Bronze Age II combed ware.*



Area A, Locus 1706, basket 17522, basalt sling stone, Roman and Medieval shards.

The Outer City Wall (W401) – This wall connects to the western wing of the outer city gate but is not entwined with it. There is a clear seam between the two structures which suggests that the city wall was added after the Outer City Gate was built. Since the

outer city gate belongs to Stratum 5, the outer city wall dates from the same period. Thirty meters of this wall were excavated thus far and it seems that although the outer face of the wall was made of large basalt boulders, the inner face was rather poor and the width of it was not kept even all through this distance. Very similar features were discerned at the inner city wall, the outer face was built meticulously with large boulders, and the inner face was somewhat awkward. The width of the outer city wall averaged about 2 meters. A few tombs that were built into the wall suggest that they were built shortly after the city wall collapsed.

A patch of white plaster still attached to a stone indicates that the wall was plastered and covered with white wash.

Loci 1717, 1718, 1723, 1725, 1726, 1727, 1728, 1733, 1734, - The area between the Outer City Wall (W160) and the Inner City Wall (401)

Segments of pavement in the south part of the area, squares N/50,51, and in the north part, square N/44, suggest that the area between the Inner City Wall (W160) and the Outer City Wall (W401) was paved with cobbles in Stratum 5. However, some 30 meters of this pavement, the area between N/50 to N/44, suffered a major destruction in the mid 20th century due to Syrian military construction activities. As a result, the entire Stratum 6 was removed from this area (N/50 to N/44), including the outer face of the Inner City Wall (W160), a major segment of the core of this wall, the pavement between the walls, and the top of the outer city wall (W401). A military structure was built in this gap and was removed in the 1993 excavation season. This created a state where only two main features of Stratum 5 were preserved, the paved road leading to the gate of Stratum 5, and the lower courses of the Outer City Wall (W401). The excavation west of the Outer City Wall dates therefore to Stratum 6, while the wall and the pavement east of it, date from Stratum 5. However, Hellenistic and Roman pottery was washed to this area and found scattered all about the entire area.

Noteworthy is the fact that the Outer City Wall (W401) was not built quite parallel to the Inner City Wall (W160). A tower that was built in the Inner City Wall (W160) in squares N/46,47,48 was not echoed by a similar offset at the outer city wall (W401).

Stratum 6, in the area between the inner and outer city walls (W160, W401 respectfully), contained a rough pavement that was cut by the foundation trench of the Outer City Wall (W401). The purpose of this floor is unknown. Under this floor there was a large number of pottery shards, serving perhaps as part of the infrastructure of the floor. When this layer of pottery was removed a burial of an infant in a jar was discovered (Locus 1723). The top of the jar and its upper side were removed in antiquity, meaning that this burial was unknown to the construction worker of the Stratum 6 floor. A detailed anthropological report dealing with this burial will follow in the next few months. The burial also included in addition to the bones and the jar, a spindle whorl made of serpentine stone and a steatite coarse scarab with illegible pseudo hieroglyphs.



Area A, Locus 1723, basket 17677, a steatite scarab with illegible hieroglyphs, dating perhaps to Iron Age I.

Finds from this area:



Area A, Locus 1734, basket 17732, Stratum 6, this is a typical basket of this area. It contained 300 shards and 90 bones, flint, and Iron Age IIA monochrome shards, and a large shard of IA IIA CP.



Area A, Locus 1734, basket 17734, Stratum 6, the basket contained 211 shards of pottery. The diagnostic pottery indicate an Iron Age IIA repertoire. Among the shards are an Iron Age IIA cooking pot, and a shard with monochrome decoration.



Area A, Locus 1717, Basket 17678, fragment of a clay tool of unknown purpose.

Area A West Loci: 2000 - 2006

The excavation in this area was conducted during two weeks in July. The area supervisor was Dr. Carl Savage. This area is south of the Roman temple and contains the immediate finds associated with it. Thus far, only poor remains were discovered of the Roman – Hellenistic levels due to the approximate state of the strata near the surface of the mound. Owing to the limited area of excavations only segments of architecture were discovered and include a few walls of various sizes and a stone constructed pit. In order

to permit a further sounding, some late Roman walls have been removed (W904, W906, W903). At the west side of the area (Locus 2005) a plaster floor has been discovered and a wall (W910) superimposing an earlier wall (W906). A few pits of unknown purpose were dug in antiquity into the floor. East of W910 are remnants of a stone floor and another wall (W911) of unknown purpose were also discovered.

Among the special finds in this area were a group of eight Roman iron nails in locus 2001 above the stone floor. Among the pottery finds in this locus there are Roman casseroles, ETS shards, globular cooking pots with tall neck, and Spattered Washed Ware (SWW). These finds do not indicate a precise dating but a 2nd to 3rd centuries CE would not be precluded.

Coins: Four coins were discovered in this area and they include one large bronze coin of Caracalla, minted at Beth Guvrin (Eleuthropolis). Other coins were Roman and Hasmonean.



Area A West is located in the marked area.



Area A West, Bronze coin of Caracalla minted at Beth Guvrin (Eleuthropolis).



Area A West, Locus 2001, Basket 1801, among the shards and bones there are Rhodian wine amphora and Hellenistic bowl.



Area A West, Locus 2002, basket 18002, This basket included 633 shards of pottery. The diagnostic shards included, Galilean bowl, Hellenistic CP with tall neck, casseroles with everted rim, ETS, and Spattered Washed Ware (SWW).



Area A West, Locus 2003, Basket 18020. This basket included 832 pottery shards. Among the diagnostics are Hellenistic globular CP with short neck, Casserole with everted rim, Roman CP with triple ridge on rim, an Iron Age fragment of a figurine. Part of the face and a Hathor hair dress were preserved. A round basalt grinding stone is seen on the upper right part of the picture.



Area A, Locus 2002, Basket 18036. This basket contained 560 shards of pottery and 194 bones. The shards included Hellenistic decorated shards, Hellenistic globular CP with lid device, Rhodian wine amphora and Roman glass.

Area C, Loci 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569,

This season we spent only 11 days excavating this area. The area supervisors were Dr. Elizabeth McNamer and Dr. Nicolae Roddy. Excavations in this season continued the loci excavated last year. The pavement that was discovered in the past season was found to be another lane paved with cobbles. The two lanes meet in a 90 degree angle and creates a small plaza. This arrangement suggests some sort of settlement planning. Segments of two rooms were excavated thus far in the building north of the east-west lane. The finds include lead fishing net weights, three coins and Hellenistic Early Roman shards. Among the noteworthy shards are a shard with ivy leaf decoration, black Athenian shards and shards of Roman glass.



Area C, Locus 565, Basket: 16052, This basket contained 188 shards of pottery, among the diagnostics there are EB Platter, Iron Age II CP, bowl, jug and crater, Hellenistic bowl, a casserole with everted rim and medieval glazed shard and bones.



Area C, Locus 564, Basket 16056. This smooth and light shard has two grooves, on top which indicate a secondary use, with strings tied to it, and that the shard had been soaked in water. Several similar shards were discovered in the excavations during the years and it has been suggested that this type of shard served as a lure for fishing.



*Area C, Locus 567, Basket 16081, (the number on the card is incorrect).
The diagnostics contain a shard of a Hellenistic Cupid Style oil lamp, black Athenian shard, and Hellenistic CP.*



Area C, Locus 567, Basket 16093. The shards contain Hellenistic handles of two jars, and a cooking pot.

CONSERVATION

During 2005 the city gate has gone through a major process of conservation under the direction of Orna Cohen. The activities thus far included the following:

Excavating the tombs situated on the road leading to the gate. The following was communicated by Issa Sarie, the BEP physical anthropologist. Issa excavated the following tombs:

Tomb 250 (T-250):

A deep and long cist burial dug below the cobble-stone of the paved roadway leading to the gate of the Bethsaida village and uncovered by the team of Bethsaida Excavations in the summer of 2005. The cist was nicely built after digging in three course lines of stones of different shapes and size. The sizes of the cist are 2.20 x 0.80 m.

The cist contains a skeleton of one individual laid on the back in north – south orientation with the head at the north. Due to the bad state of preservation of the bones, the information was taken directly on spot as much as possible. The left hand is stretched straight beside the left hip, while the right one is placed over the chest. The pelvic and the sacrum are exposed and clarify that the burial is for an adult male. The post-cranial bones of the left femur and tibia as well as the shaft of the right femur are exposed and were measured on spot. Based on that, the stature of the individual during life can be estimated between 169-173 cm.

A bench of soil was carefully placed below the head and under the shoulders to have the head higher, indicating that the head was laying a bit higher than the body, and face straightward in the original disposal. As well, this taphonomic disposal of the shoulder and the back of the head create free space below the thoracic vertebral body. After it decayed, the vertebral body became free and fell down in the empty space, resulting in displacement of the original disposal. As the burial cist is located below the paved cobble-stones and in the slop of the road, water penetrated into the burial and pushed the vertebral body, the ribs and the clavicle. The soil under the shoulder and the skull slid down by the water and covered the vertebral body and moved the ribs and clavicle of the left side from their original disposal. The head as well slid down to the left and the face turned to become facing east. The skull is fragile and broken into pieces and mainly the left side is affected with water and deterioration. The right part of the mandible with the teeth is preserved. Eroded shards of Roman and Byzantine pottery were associated within the fine compact washed soil.

Tomb 260 (T-260)

A cist grave, and built with one line of big stones in the eastern side of the cist and two course lines of stones of smaller size in the western side of the grave, about 72 cm. high over the roadway leading to the Bethsaida village gate. The base of the grave

was dug to a depth of 30 cm below the cobble-stones of the road. The width of the cist is 53 cm from inside, while it reached 84 cm from the extreme exterior part of the stone wall. On the top, the cist was covered with various shapes of ashlar stone all along the 223 cm length of the burial. The bottom part of the cist was also paved with small stones. The elevation of the tomb was 172.19.

A young female, laid down on her back, and stretched from north to south. The length of the body is approximately 145 cm from the skull to the foot. The shoulders are squeezed and raised higher by putting soil below the shoulders during the original disposal. This might be a way to adjust with the narrow width of the cist, rather than being a custom. The left hand is semi-flexed; the arm is placed over the hips in the original disposal. The phalanges are found in the distal joint of the arm (Ulna and Radius), and within the hips. The right hand was flexed straight, as the radius and ulna (the arm) are placed on the right hip (Pelvic).

The vertebral body is mostly deteriorated. Natural forces after deterioration, rather than manipulation, caused the clavicles to fall down and slid towards the chest, and due to the high position level of the shoulders, the ribs fell down, for natural causes as well. The pelvic and the lower long bones are exposed and found to be placed according to the original disposal. But as they were very fragile, we spread consolidation glue several times and left it to dry from the water. Information regarding sex determination, deposition and measurements were taken on spot before moving the bones.

The skull is turned upside-down, the basion on the top and the frontal on the back. The mandible is not intact to the cranium, but still in place leaning towards the right side. This phenomenon of the skull placement is unusual and may be interpreted as a result of an earthquake.

The place of the mandible in place indicates that the original disposal of the skull was straight up and facing neither east nor west direction. The raising of the shoulders and squeezing create a free space in the neck area. It is up to natural forces stronger than water to shake the skull and turn it back to fill the only space existing in the neck area, as there is no free space on the sides, due to the shoulder height and pressure. This phenomenon might be related to the questions of the earthquake.

Tomb 256 (T-256)

A grave built in the shape of a cist into the Outer City Wall - W401. The eastern side of the grave is the wall and a line of big stones were built on the eastern side, forming the grave over a compact soil of more than 111 cm from the northern part and 123 cm from the southern part of the grave. The grave was open all along the 270 cm length, except for two ashlar stones covering the southern edge. After removing 45 cm of the dark brown soft soil, the top of the skull appeared in the northern edge of the grave.

A young female placed on the back with the skull on the northern edge and the feet on the south. The body was 165cm long. The left hand is totally flexed and placed beside the pelvis, while the right hand is semi-flexed; the arms are placed over the pelvis. The clavicle, scapula and the ribs are in the original disposal. The vertebral column attached the sacrum and the skull, although it was hardly moved due to the fragile condition. The pelvic and the sacrum were completely exposed and were able to

reconstruct the sex determination. The lower bone limbs are straight-flexed, as the original disposal. We exposed and sprayed several times with consolidation glue and then measured on spot before removing. The general conditions of the bones are fragile.

The skull and the mandible were also found on the original disposal, the face is looking up (straight). The mandible was complete and the teeth are in good condition. Part of the skull was deteriorated due to the quantity of rain water penetrating the grave.

The position of the burial, as well as the good findings in the grave, indicate that the disposal is original and not manipulated, although the covered ashlar stones were removed before. Three used basalt grinding stones were recovered in this tomb. The first one, which is the biggest, appeared on the top of the southern edge of the tomb. The second, recovered in the middle of the tomb, 10 cm below the first grinding stone, and 30cm below the cist wall edge. The third grinding stone was found on the top of the southern edge of the tomb, associated with a big faunal shaft bone placed vertically on a stone, and a large rim of a clay juglet at the feet. A basket of pottery shards was collected from this tomb.

Tomb 258 (T-258)

A long cist burial partially dug below the roads' cobble stones and partially built above it. This burial is in the same line and shape of burial T-260, but a little deeper in depth, approximately 75 cm-86 cm deep below the top cap stones. The tomb length is approximately 227cm from the exterior, 108 cm from the interior part of the cist. The width of the cist from inside is 60cm.

An adult male stretched from north to south was placed in this tomb. The bones are mostly deteriorated and the remains are in a very bad state of preservation. A complete left femur and tibia, portion of the hip bones and right femur were able to be recovered after spraying with consolidation glue, and indicates degenerative problems. The skull was smashed and mostly deteriorated.

Other activities for conservation included the following:

- All the walls were recorded and photographed and arranged in panoramic views.
- A conservation program was submitted and confirmed by IAA.
- The conservation works at the gate included:
 1. Filling pits in Chamber 4 and in the niche of the Southern Tower.
 2. Filling in missing stones from the walls and pavement.
 3. Removing dangerous stones at the top of the western wall of Chamber 4.
 4. Wood beams were reconstructed and inserted in the passageway. This work required cleaning the original location of the beams, and sometimes dismantling of the wall above the line of the wooden beams. Most of the stone courses under the line of the wooden beams in the northern tower were also restored.

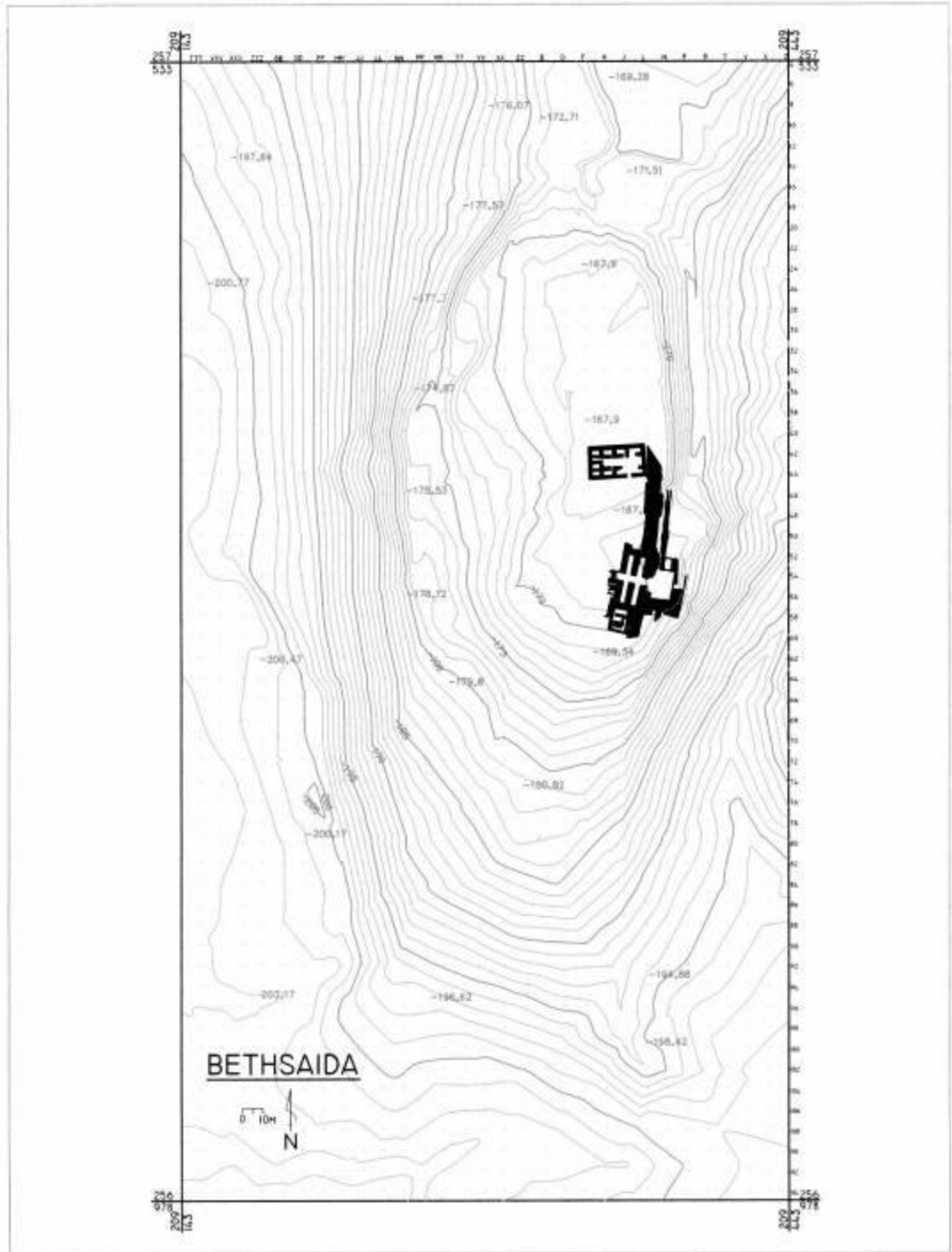
5. The courses of stones above the wooden beams were also restored. Most of these courses (particularly between chambers 3-4 and 1-2) were very fractured, and were replaced with new stones in order to secure a strong wall.
6. Treatments of coping, unnecessary stones were removed and other stones were secured by fill of clay and small stones.
7. The remaining walls were reinforced by clay and small stones. About 50% of the reinforcement was completed.
8. Reconstruction of wood in the threshold, the eastern part of the threshold was completed.
9. The column base at the Roman temple was reinforced as well.



The southern door jamb at the inner gate, notice the wooden beams on top of three courses of stone.

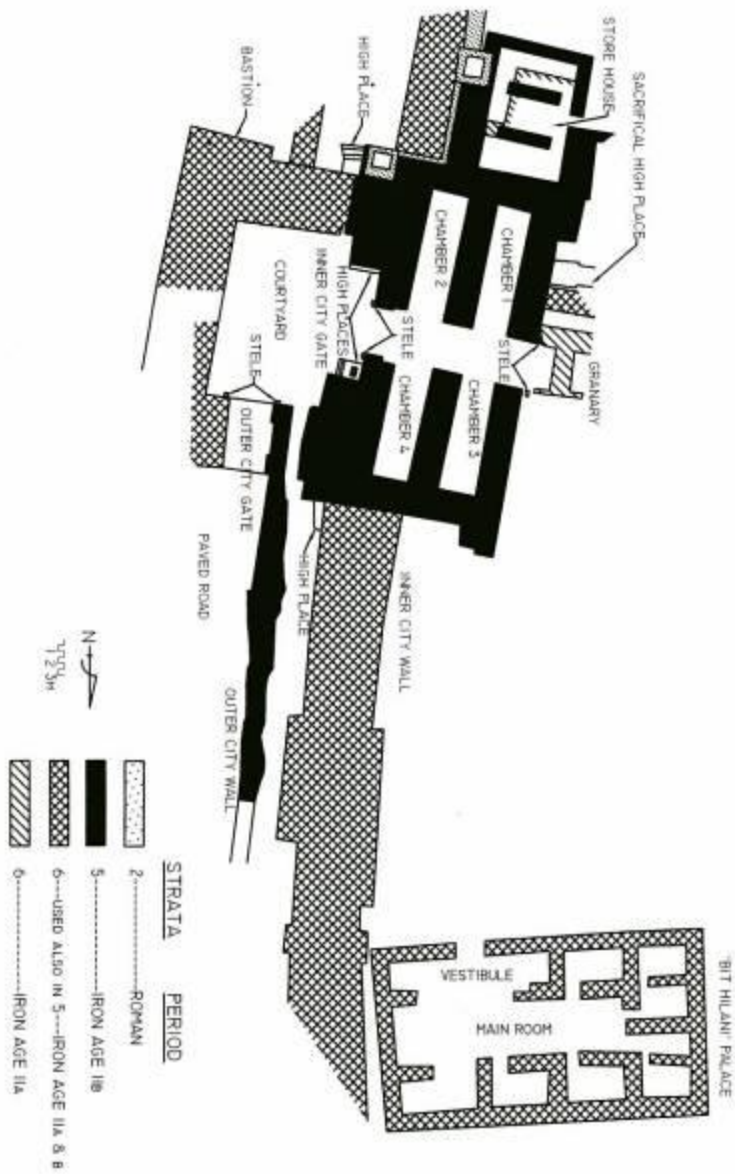


Bethsaida Area A, City Gate, Excavation Season of 2005

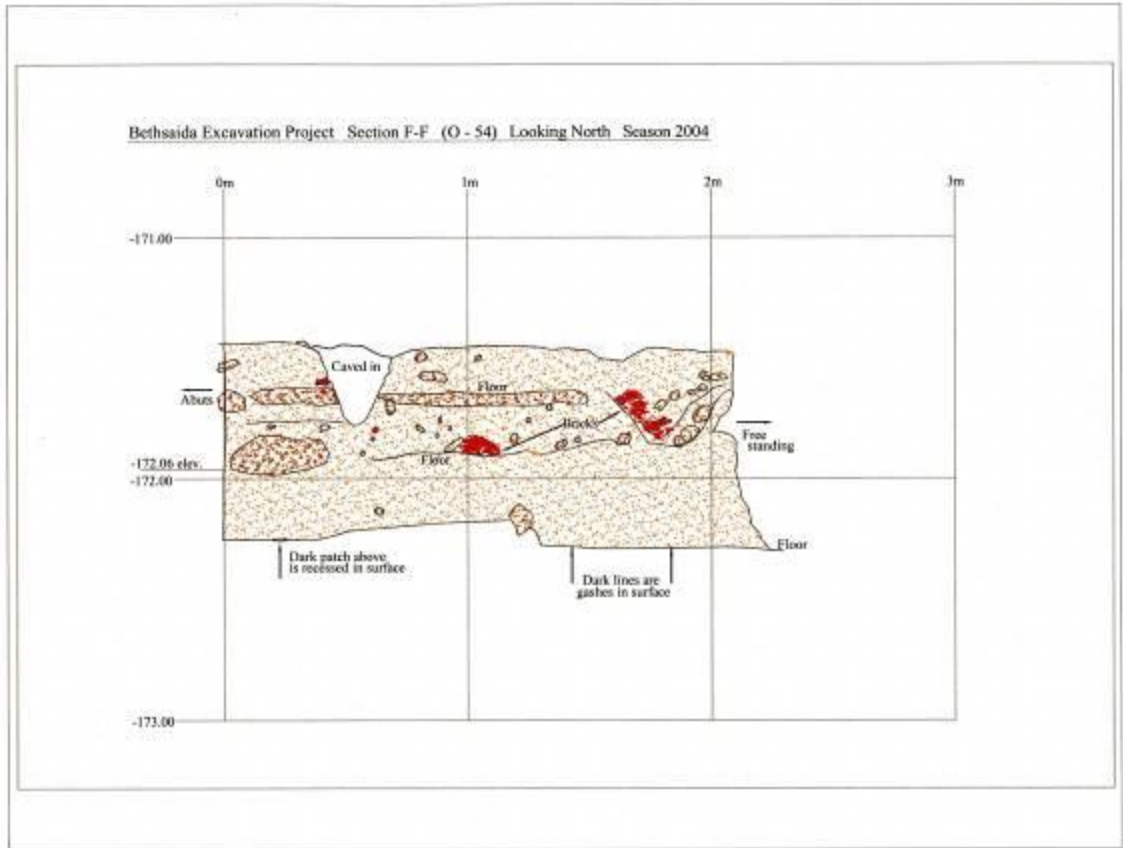


Bethsaida topographical map with the city gate and the Bit Hilani palace

BETHSAIDA

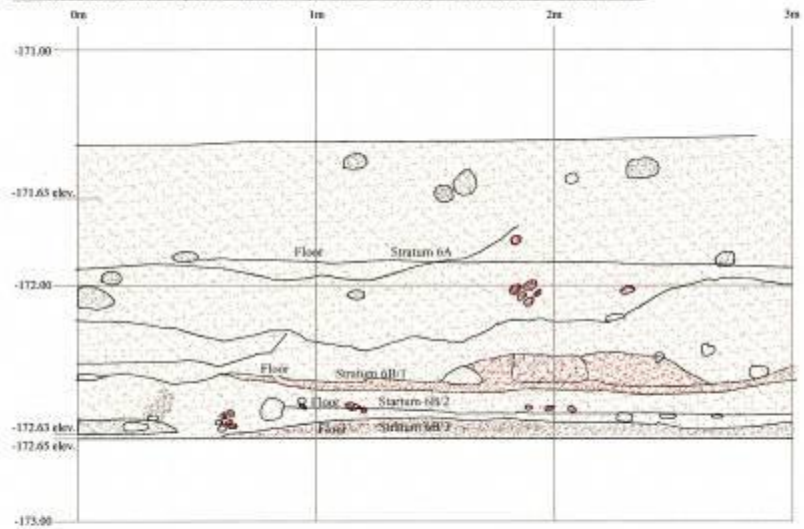


Area A, the city gate and the bit Hilani palace



Section F-F' in square O-54.

Bethsaida Excavation Project Section G-G' (O-54,53) Looking West Stratum 6 Season 2004



Section G-G' in squares O-54, 53, Stratum 6