

REPORT: JEBEL KHALID EXCAVATION CAMPAIGN 2000
THE DOMESTIC QUARTER 7th - 18th MAY.

Work continues on this housing insula, moving North. The insula is yielding much important information about both primary and secondary periods of occupation.

Work completed:

1. Trench 149/1 revealed a missing section of the west perimeter wall and some interesting primary structures on bedrock, under the covering secondary floor. At primary level, a small room off the perimeter wall was associated with a large oven. Interestingly, no external door was found in the perimeter wall, which is now proved to be 30 m long without external access to the street.
2. Trench 150/7 was completed. One section was taken down to a lower floor without structures being found. However, a deposit of almost-complete plates and other pottery items was excavated under the secondary floor.
3. Trench 150/5 was completed to a very good floor of crushed limestone. An interesting phenomenon here was the double wall to the North, with the more southern of the two walls cut away to what had obviously been a tertiary floor near the surface.
4. Trench 150/3 revealed the western boundary wall of the large 'salon' being further excavated to the north of the Rock-cut Basin. This wall had plaster 'in situ': red, black and yellow panels in solid colour. Many fragments of patterned plaster were also found and are now being washed and reconstructed in order to find the sequence of patterns. Patterns include a possible floral band, wave pattern, egg-and-dart and a simple geometric cross-cross design.

This trench also had a doorway (plastered over) leading into a corridor-like space.

5. Trench 150/9 was completed, giving the boundaries of ~~two~~ separate rooms at secondary level. One small section was excavated to a lower primary wall near bedrock, cutting the secondary room above it in half. This wall seems to have been deliberately cut down.
6. Trench 125/1, on the Eastern perimeter, found the East perimeter wall in good condition but without an external door which means that this stretch of perimeter wall is also without external access for a considerable length, although there is possibly a door in 151/3, now being excavated.
7. Trench 125/7 has been completed. Here too, there is a double wall East/West along the North, giving the Northern boundary of the large 'salon' with the painted walls. Plaster was found in situ on the more southern (and lower) wall which was under the secondary floor. Between this wall and its parallel to the North is a strange gap of only 40 cms, containing an oven which must have been associated with the secondary floor. The lower levels contained much fragmented plaster, including patterned pieces matching those from 150/3 (the same 'room').
8. Trench 125/4 was completed only yesterday, together with the removal of the small baulk between 125/4-7. The walls found in 125/7 were also found here, and plastered at skirting level on the southern face. A large circular pit was found in the floor. When excavated it was found to be only 10 cm deep and on bedrock which had been levelled for the floor of the 'salon'.

9. Trench 124/7 was completed very quickly. It yielded no structures and was close to bedrock (excavated in one section only). Interpretation of this as a courtyard is possible, although large amounts of pottery were excavated, which is more usually an indication of interior space.

Work in Progress

10. Trench 150/8, after many days of excavating only large rubble, has now reached an excellent floor with a stone quern, remains of an oven, a pot-hole, and some intriguing post holes.
11. Trench 150/6 has been opened to explore the extent of the corridor-like room excavated in 150/3. This room/space is seen to continue west but its boundary is not yet certain.
12. Trench 124/1 has been opened in order to clear the North-West corner of the large 'salon'. Unfortunately this area has already been robbed and damaged. To the west in this trench, a corner of a further room has been excavated to a floor, on which were found loomweights and a storage structure.
13. Trench 125/8, North of the 'salon' has been opened to ascertain the surviving depth of the double wall in 125/7. Further structures are already emerging.
14. Trench 125/6 was opened yesterday, in a level and perhaps empty space North of 125/8. This excavation (with 125/8) attempts to establish the existence of a separate house beyond the walls of the 'salon'.
15. Trench 151/3 is on the Eastern perimeter. We expect to find the Eastern perimeter wall and the dimensions of the Southern room in 125/1.

16. Trench 124/4 has just been opened. We expect to find the boundary of the possible courtyard in 124/7.

17. Clearing of 208/7 and 207/1

Three days were spent on this bank, which previous excavation seasons had left in place since 1988. It revealed, at bedrock, the remains of a primary wall defining the earliest layout of the South entrance room. This area has been much modified, so the existence of this wall helps to solve one of the problems of interpretation.

Although much work has been done on this important example of a Hellenistic block of houses, there is still much to do. In the next fortnight, any gaps between rooms will be excavated. If time allows, we will move further North. By next week, the full dimensions of the 'salon' with painted walls will be available.

Pottery from selected areas is being fully analysed so that a full picture emerges of some rooms/spaces and their pottery usage.

The excavators wish to thank Mr. Hikmet Awad for his hard work and his support.

Signed: HM Jackson

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