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AREA D

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Excavations of Area D, on the south slope of the acropolis of *Tell Ḥesbân,* were begun (in 1968) as three Squares (a fourth was laid out but not dug) to investigate the apparent southern access to the acropolis from the lower city.[1] In 1971, Squares D.5 and D.6 were added north of Square D.1, to link the structures on the edge of the acropolis with those in Squares A.3/4 at the center of the acropolis. But in 1971 Area D was excavated only north of Wall D.1:4.[2] In 1973 Area D was expanded south of Square D.3 by opening Square D.4 to link the acropolis access route with the proposed roadway in Area B.

Reported here are the results of the 1973 excavations in all squares of Area D except the new Square D.4 (assigned to the Area B supervisor[3] because it was presumably more clearly associated stratigraphically with Area B than with Area D). For lack of space the present report, summarizing a 37-page unpublished report, gives principally the most important 1973 data. In the context of the previous seasons' results it offers a comprehensive interpretation of Area D through at least 12 strata (several subdivided).[4] The only constant architectural

[1] On the results of the 1968 season, see *AUSS,* 7 (1969): 97-222 (henceforth referred to as "Heshbon 1968"). For Area D specifically, see P. A. Bird, "Heshbon 1968: Area D," pp. 165-217.

[2] On the results of the 1971 season, see *AUSS,* 11 (1973): 1-144 (henceforth referred to as "Heshbon 1971"). For Area D specifically, see L. T. Geraty, "Heshbon 1971: Area D," pp. 89-112.

[3] For J. A. Sauer's report, see pp. 133-167.

[4] The dates given for each stratum are approximate. In addition to stratigraphic and other evidence from Area D, they are derived from literary and site-wide numismatic and ceramic evidence as cited by Sauer in *Heshbon Pottery 1971* (AUM 7; Berrien Springs, Mich., 1973).

feature in Area D (in at least 10 strata) was Wall D.1:4,[5] the acropolis perimeter wall. It effectively divided the horizontal northern sector, a part of the acropolis proper, from the sloping southern sector, part of an approach to the acropolis.

Stratum 1: Modern (A.D. *1917-1968*)

A few fence walls on topsoil and some small objects, but no major architecture, were attributed to the Modern resettlement of *Ḥesbân*.[6] Ceramic and numismatic evidence indicated a stratigraphic gap between Strata 1 and 2. The latest attested pottery was Ayyūbid/Mamlūk, and the latest coins came from the rule of Aẓ-Ẓāhir Barḳūḳ, A.D. 1382-1399.[7]

Stratum 2: Mamlūk (14th/15th Centuries A.D.*)*

Area D's second stratum represented a period of decay. The gateway through Wall D.1:4a, the southern entrance to the acropolis for at least 1,000 years, was blocked by Wall D.1:9. The vaulted room in Squares D.1 and 6, built in Stratum 3, fell into ruin, and on the eastern slope of this ruin small terraces[8] were built, perhaps for horticultural purposes. If so, water was probably (on numismatic evidence) still drawn from Cistern D.5:5.[9] Either the sector south of Wall D.1:4 was then unoccupied or all traces of it eroded away during the long post-Stratum 2 gap.

Stratum 3: Mamlūk (14th Century A.D.*)*

Structures and soil layers in Stratum 3 reflect the last main occupation period in Area D (cf. Fig 6). Wall D.1:4 was rebuilt (Phase B) with a new double gateway[10] leading, on the north, to an earth courtyard (D.1:39=D.5:7), in which Cistern D.5:5 saw

[5] Although Cisterns D.5:5 and D.6:33 were probably used during the time of most strata, their mouths underwent changing construction.

[6] See Sauer, "Heshbon 1971," p. 35, and references there.

[7] A. Terian, "Heshbon 1971 Coins," *AUSS*, 12 (1974): 40, 41. This statement is accurate if Coin No. 215 is taken as Seljuk of Rum rather than early Ottoman.

[8] Fully described in Geraty, "Heshbon 1971," pp. 104, 105.

[9] For plan, sections, and photograph, see "Heshbon 1971," Fig. 5 (p. 96), and Pl. IX:B.

[10] See Bird, "Heshbon 1968," pp. 197, 202, 203, and Pl. XX:A.

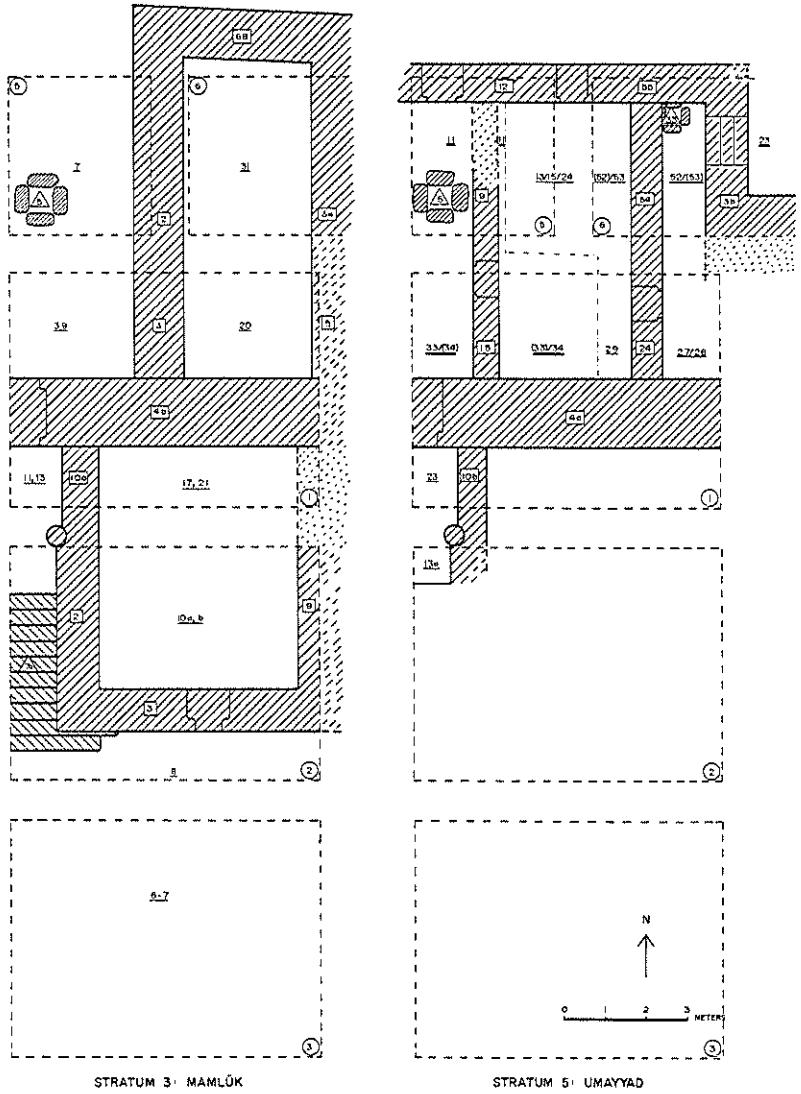

Fig. 6. Schematic plans of Area D showing relationship of principal loci in the Mamlūk and Umayyad strata. Key: Circled numerals refer to Square designations, boxed numerals to walls, underlined numerals to surfaces, while numerals enclosed in triangles are either cisterns or stairways.

continued use. Immediately to the east, deep foundations were dug for three walls (west, D.1:3=D.5:2; north, D.6:68; east, D.1:5=D.6:3a) of a 6.00 x 9.00 m. vaulted room ca. 2.00 m. high, butted up against Wall D.1:4b. The room, excavated in 1968[11] and 1971,[12] had a probable south window[13] and a series of matching Ayyūbid/Mamlūk earth (occupational) and plaster layers; it could be dated to ca. A.D. 1380 at the latest by coins in Cistern D.6:33[14] sealed by the original floor (D.1:20=D.6:31).[15] Of its northern wall (D.6:68), excavated in 1973, only the bottom two courses remained, with no certain evidence of a doorway. The room could have been open to the north—with no doorway as such—if it belonged to a caravanserai-type complex around a courtyard within the acropolis, in Area A. In any case, it contained evidence for domestic usage.

The new gateway through Wall D.1:4b (partly in the west balk) mentioned above, went through two phases, perhaps corresponding to the two phases (D.1:11, 13) of a plaster-floored porch adjoining it to the south. This porch and Stairway D.2:7a leading up to it from the south were flanked on the east by a retaining wall (D.1:10a=D.2:12)[16] separating them from the 5.00 x 6.00 m. courtyard lying at the level from which Stair D.2:7a rose (on exterior Surface D.2:8=D.3:6/7). This southern approach to the acropolis—stairs, porch, and gateway—was but the last rebuilding of a basic structure originating no later than the Early Byzantine period (Stratum 7). This courtyard was bounded on the west by retaining Wall D.1:10a=D.2:2, on the north by Wall D.1:4, on the east by Wall D.2:9, and on the south by Wall

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 197-202.

[12] Geraty, "Heshbon 1971," pp. 99-101.

[13] Bird, "Heshbon 1968," pp. 201, 202.

[14] See Terian, "Heshbon 1971 Coins," p. 40; discussed also in Sauer, *Heshbon Pottery 1971*, pp. 57, 58.

[15] For a north section drawing through this room, see Geraty, "Heshbon 1971," Fig. 4 (p. 90).

[16] "Heshbon 1968," Pl. XX:B.

D.2:3, which had a two-phase threshold corresponding to the original level (D.1:21=D.2:10b) and resurfacing (D.1:17=D.2:10a) of the courtyard (so called for lack of evidence of roofing, though some evidence of domestic activity was found in 1968). Despite the good condition of the floor, its suggested use as a parking place for horses outside the acropolis became reasonable after two crescent-shaped iron horseshoes were found on Surface D.1:17.[17] In any case, Stratum 3 appeared to be the innovative one within the period of the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk occupation of Area D.[18]

Stratum 4: Ayyūbid/Mamlūk (13/14th Centuries A.D.)

Apparently no significant Ayyūbid/Mamlūk construction took place in Area D prior to Stratum 3. Wall D.1:4c of Stratum 4 was in disrepair, though its old gateway (probably partly buried) opened on the acropolis, where Cisterns D.5:5 and D.6:33 were in use.[19] The latter was accessible also from the east through Threshold 1 of Wall D.6:3b, the Byzantine wall underlying the eastern wall of the vaulted room of Stratum 3. Surrounding these cistern mouths, north of Wall D.1:4, were soil surfaces (D.1:12 and 22, D.5:8, and D.6:49) accumulated during the long post-Stratum 5 gap. Contemporary soil layers south of Wall D.1:4 were not found, because of erosion or the extensive pits dug in Squares D.2 and 3 prior to the courtyard construction of Stratum 3. Thus Stratum 4 was chiefly what the earliest Ayyūbid/Mamlūk settlers found in Area D and used without significant structural changes.

The absence of stratification, pottery, or coins from the 450 years between Strata 4 and 5 in Area D, confirmed by sitewide negative evidence, points to a long abandonment of *Tell Ḥesbân.*

[17] Bird, "Heshbon 1968," pp. 208, 209.

[18] A stone-for-stone plan of Squares D.1 and 2 in Stratum 3 appeared in "Heshbon 1968," Fig. 10 (opposite p. 176).

[19] For the coin evidence, cf. footnote 14.

Stratum 5: Umayyad (A.D. *640-750*)

Stratum 5 was essentially a continuation of Late Byzantine Stratum 6, but with a major new adaptation of the floor space north of Wall D.1:4 (see Fig. 6).[20] Already present between that wall and Wall D.5:12=D.6:55 to the north (the southern exterior Byzantine church wall), was the fine flagstone floor of Courtyard D.1:33/34=D.5:11 of Stratum 6. This floor had undoubtedly extended eastward to boundary Wall D.6:56a until its northeast quadrant had been robbed out in the Byzantine or the Early Umayyad period. Perhaps at this time the huge architraves had fallen on contemporary surfaces before the entrances through Walls D.1:4c and D.6:56a, as well as other large and small architectural fragments—many of which were incorporated in the building of Stratum 5. These Umayyad builders, since they used *in situ* the remains of Stratum 6, were likely not responsible for the preceding destruction. More probably it was the Persians who are known to have destroyed many Palestinian Christian churches in A.D. 614. If so, the Umayyad builders would then have patched up Floor D.1:33/34=D.5:11 (burying numerous Byzantine glass fragments in the process). For lack of pavers (as in the northeast quadrant) they would have leveled up the courtyard with Soil Layer D.5:13/15/24=D.6:52/53=D.1:27/28/29.[21] On this flagstone/packed-earth courtyard, between Cisterns D.5:5 and D.6:33, and butting up against the acropolis perimeter wall on the south and the south wall of the church on the north, they built Walls D.1:15=D.5:9 (west) and D.1:24=D.6:54 (east), forming a 3.50 x 7.00 m. room with a north entrance and west and east exits to the cisterns. Fragments of marble slabs (screens?) in both new walls may have come from the Area A church. The room's function was unknown, though evidence for domestic use was

[20] See also "Heshbon 1968," Fig. 9 (p. 171), a stone-for-stone plan of Stratum 5 in Square D.1 (except for the Strata 6/7 threshold).

[21] For a photograph of how the courtyard may have looked after the floor patching job but before the leveling up process, see "Heshbon 1971," Pl. IX:A (disregard later Stratum 3 wall at upper left).

found on exterior Surface D.1:27/28, which gave access both to Cistern D.6:33 and (through Wall D.6:3b's narrow doorway) to reused tessellated Floor D.6:23.

Wall D.1:4c's gateway was provided with a new threshold, raised probably to match the resurfaced Porch D.1:23=D.2:13a on the south. This porch, with Wall D.1:10b on the east, may have had its own stairs (not preserved), but was more likely associated with use of the series of Early Byzantine stairs of Stratum 7. All further traces of Stratum 5 south of Wall D.1:4 were apparently eroded during the post-Stratum 5 gap.

Stratum 6: Late Byzantine (A.D. *491-640*)

Stratum 6 was closely related architecturally to Strata 5 and 7 (see Fig. 7). It was apparently a transition between the original construction of the Christian church in Area A and its final alteration. In Stratum 7 the space between Walls D.1:4 on the south and D.5:12=D.6:55 on the north had been divided into three sectors, each with its own surface. The builders of Stratum 6 decided to divide this space into only two and to pave with flagstones the western sector lying between the two doorways in Walls D.1:4 and D.5:12=D.6.55; but at least three preliminary changes were needed: First, east-west Wall D.5:27=D.6:70, about midway between Walls D.1:4 and D.5:12=D.6:55, had to be dismantled before paving the courtyard (unless it was only one course high and served as a mosaic border, like similar Wall D.6:3c). Second, for the courtyard's eastern border, Wall D.6:56a had to be built over Wall D.6:56b in the north and extended south to Wall D.1:4 over limestone-tiled Floor D.1:41. Third, from an existing downspout emptying into Catch Basin D.5:31 at the western juncture of Walls D.5:12=D.6:55 and D.6:56, a new water channel (D.6:63) replacing one (D.5:20) formerly leading to Cistern D.5:5, was built in a reverse S curve eastward into Cistern D.6:63 (cf. Pl. VI:B). The old Channel D.5:20 possibly belonged to an earlier phase of Stratum 6, but more probably

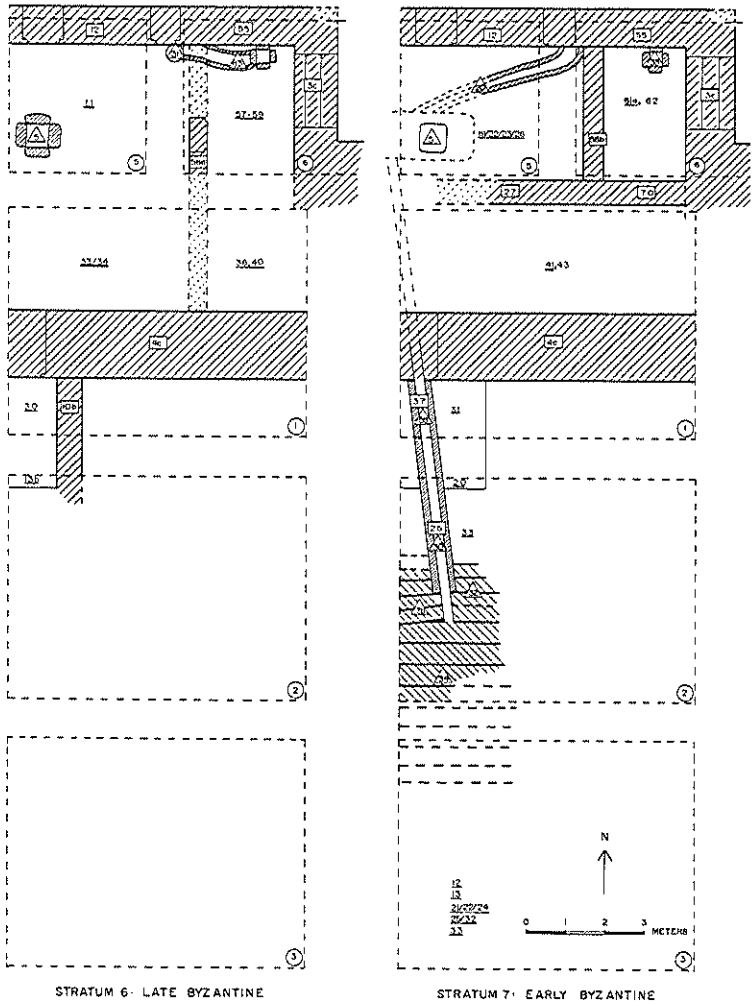

Fig. 7. Schematic plans of Area D showing relationship of principal loci in the Late and Early Byzantine strata. Key: Circled numerals refer to Square designations, boxed numerals to walls, underlined numerals to surfaces, numerals with a double underlining refer to pavements or floors, while numerals enclosed in triangles are either cisterns or stairways.

to Stratum 7. The above three changes enabled Stratum 6 builders to pave with giant flagstones (many 1.00 x .50 m.) the entire Courtyard D.1:33/34=D.5:11 between Walls D.1:4, D.5:12=D.6:55, and D.6:56a. This last wall provided an exit leading to Cistern D.6:33 and to associated soil Surfaces D.6:57-59=D.1:36, 40, probably an occupational build-up on Surface D.6:51a=D.1:41. Thence a flight of 2.00-m.-long steps led through Wall D.6:3c to reach tessellated Floor D.6:23, undoubtedly reused from Stratum 7.

The Stratum 7 gateway in Wall D.1:4c continued in use apparently unaltered. Outside its threshold, the porch at the head of the Stratum 7 stair was resurfaced (D.1:30=D.2:13b) and narrowed by a new boundary/retaining wall (D.1:10b). Since no other stairs were found, Stratum 6 seemed to have reused the Stratum 7 stairway(s). No Stratum 6 structures or soil layers were found south of Wall D.1:4c and east of the D.2 stairway complex; they must have been lost by pitting or erosion during the post-Stratum 5 gap. The Stratum 6 finds in Area D most likely came from a major remodeling of the church and its related structures.

Stratum 7: Early Byzantine (A.D. *324-491*)

Stratum 7 represented a radical alteration of the acropolis and its southern approach in Area D (see Fig. 7), especially north of Wall D.1:4. The natural (?) entrance to Cistern D.5:5 may have been vaulted at this time,[22] while the neck of Cistern D.6:33 was enclosed by four rectangular stones placed stretcher-style around the mouth (instead of the header-style eight-stone arrangement of the earlier strata). The changes seemed to be connected with the building of a basilica-type Christian church on the acropolis. All excavated parts of this church lay in Area A, however, except its southern exterior Wall D.5:12=D.6:55 and related features. The 8.00 m. length of this wall excavated in Area D, six courses

[22] See "Heshbon 1971," Pl. IX:B.

high and two rows thick, appeared in three structural phases: Phase C, the bottom two courses, of large, rough field stones set on bedrock, probably foundational, conceivably the remnant of an earlier wall; Phase B, the first well-dressed course; then Phase A, the top three preserved courses, of slightly narrower stones. In the balk between Squares D.5 and 6, the lowest course of the upper phase served as a threshold, perhaps for a minor entrance to the south aisle of the church (as opposed to the wider entrance ca. 2.50 m. west). Where Wall D.6:55 crossed over Cistern D.6:33, next to the cistern neck, it contained a blocked-in structural arch 1.75 m. high, spanning 2.75 m. at its base. The arch undoubtedly served to spread the weight of the church's structure rather than rest it on the cistern ceiling. Wall D.5:12=D.6:55 was not dismantled but the adjoining soil layers, including Foundation Trench D.6:76, all the way to its bedrock base were Early Byzantine.

Probably bonded to Wall D.6:55 at its eastern end was Wall D.6:3c, running south 2.50 m. to abut Wall D.6:19c, which ran east and out of Square D.6. Accommodated to these latter two walls (also to an unexcavated wall ca. .75 m. east of the east balk) was tessellated Floor D.6:23; apparently this was a vestry just south of the apse.[23] Wall D.6:3c contained a flight of 2.00-m.-long steps leading up to the location of Cistern D.6:33. At this level the Stratum 7 builders divided the space between the acropolis perimeter wall and the southern exterior church wall into three sectors by constructing two new walls in or close to the balks of Squares D.1, 5, and 6. Wall D.6:70=D.5:27, one course high, one row thick, of well-dressed, tightly-fitting stones all set as headers, was founded on the Late Roman Surface D.1:44=D.6:69 of Stratum 8 and ran east-west in the balk separating Square D.1 from Squares D.5 and 6; though its purpose was unclear, it separated contemporary and similar Floor D.6:61a to the northeast and Floor D.1:41 to the south. Running from

[23] For a fuller description and photographs, see Geraty, "Heshbon 1971," pp. 105, 106, and Pl. X:A, B.

this wall to the church's south wall (D.5:12=D.6:55) just east of the west balk of Square D.6, was Wall D.6:56b, two rows thick but one course high, obviously a different and earlier phase of Wall D.6:56a. Both these new walls were bonded with rough, clayey red soil that adhered to the sides of the stones. As mentioned, Surface D.6:61a was the floor for this northeast sector; yellowish, clayey, and extremely hard in places, it lay over D.6:62, a crumbly, rust-colored layer. This floor and its make-up corresponded in texture and level to D.1:41, the well preserved dolomitic limestone tile floor with its reddish mortar base (D.1:43) south of Wall D.6:70=D.5:27.[24]

The third sector created by the two new walls (D.6:70=D.5:27 and D.6:56b) corresponded to the space of our Square D.5 and its east balk. In Stratum 6 the western half of this sector was covered by Flagstone Floor D.5:11 which, on the request of the national Department of Antiquities, was not dismantled; here the underlying earlier strata were not excavated. Yet certain features can be described: The downspout and predecessor of Catch Basin D.5:31 mentioned above (Stratum 6), evidently part of the church's original construction in Stratum 7, emptied into .40-m.-deep Channel D.5:20, stone lined and carefully cemented, which would have carried rain water to Cistern D.5:5 (see Pl. VI:B). Whether it was built covered or open was not learned. Adjoining both channel walls and covering the rest of the sector was a yellowish-green, clayey surface (D.5:19/22/23/26)—very similar in texture and certainly contemporary with

[24] See the fuller description in Geraty, "Heshbon 1971," pp. 92, 93. In 1971, Coin No. 168, a Roman *aes* IV type of the 4th-5th centuries A.D., was found in Floor D.1:41, agreeing well with its attribution to Stratum 7 (Terian, "Heshbon 1971 Coins," p. 35, n. 3). In 1973, Coin (Object Registry) No. 1643, dated to the reign of Justinian I (A.D. 527-565), was recorded as found in mint condition in D.1:43 next to wall D.6:70 (Terian, "Heshbon 1973 Coins," *AUSS*, forthcoming). Obviously this presented a problem; on stratigraphic and ceramic grounds, these walls and associated soil layers could not be attributed to Stratum 6 as required by the Justinian coin. It was therefore interpreted as intrusive, especially since it came from balk removal directly under the projected course of Stratum 6 Wall D.6:56a.

floor Surfaces D.6:61a and D.1:41 already described. Before the laying of this floor the mouth of Cistern D.5:5, probably an enlarged and deepened natural cave (entered laterally from the east), was altered. Probably the Stratum 7 builders walled up the natural cave entrance with Wall D.6:56c which was set further to the west than Walls D.6:56a and b, then covering the entire mouth with a vaulted ceiling of cut stones, left only the vertical entrance at the top.[25] Where probed, all these features were dated Early Byzantine.

In Stratum 7, two (preserved) courses of finely cut and fitted limestone blocks were added to the giant field stones of Wall D.1:4d.[26] The gateway of this new phase (Wall D.1:4c), a fine example of the mason's skill, was maintained, reused and rebuilt through all later strata.[27] To the south, outside the gate, plastered Surface D.1:31=D.2:20 formed a kind of porch at the head of a stairway, or a series of stairways, running down further to the south—presumably (though the robbed-out lower stairs had to be projected) until they met a series of superimposed plaster and soil layers in the southwestern quadrant of Square D.3 which could clearly be related to similar soil layers in Square B.3 described in 1971.[28] There the layers were interpreted as resurfacings of an Early Roman-Early Byzantine roadway that approached the *tell* from either west or south. Though Layer D.3:12 could be identified with Layer B.3:2 (Area B, Stratum 5), and Layer D.3:13 with Layer B.3:3 (Area B, Stratum 6), the underlying layers of Square D.3 were not as readily identifiable with those of Square B.3. In a general way, however, the following loci could be correlated: Layer D.3:21/22/24[29] with Layers B.3:5-

[25] See "Heshbon 1971," Pl. IX:B.

[26] More fully described in Bird, "Heshbon 1968," pp. 170, 175, 176, and Fig. 9, p. 171 (Wall D.1:4c only; construction to the left belongs to later strata).

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[28] Sauer, "Heshbon 1971," pp. 48-57.

[29] Locus D.3:24 contained Coin (Object Registry) No. 1525, dated to the reign of Valentinian II (A.D. 375-392) by Terian, "Heshbon 1973 Coins," *AUSS*, forthcoming.

21 (Area B, Stratum 7); Layer D.3:25/32 with Layers B.3:22-23 (Area B, Stratum 8); and Layer D.3:33 (an extensive Early Byzantine yellowish *huwwar* layer with many plaster fragments) with Layers B.3:24-25 (Area B, Stratum 9). The contemporary surfaces east of the stairway/roadway sector in Squares D.2 and 3 were not recovered, probably because of erosion or pitting.

Details of stairway reconstruction in Square D.2 were difficult to recover, primarily because the stratigraphy was so complex; but after meticulous work the following interpretation became clear: South of Wall D.1:4c, under Porch D.1:31=D.2:20, lay "Wall" D.1:37=D.2:25 (first designated D.2:2b in 1968). Its exposed 5.80 m. length, one course high, one row wide, when traced diagonally from just below the D.1:4c gateway to the center of the Square D.2 stairway complex, proved to be rather the covering stones for well-constructed Water Channel D.1:58=D.2:30 (cf. Pl. VIII:A for a view of this and other features discussed below). The channel was narrower in the north as it passed through Wall D.1:4, under the threshold, probably leading from Cistern D.5:5; on stratigraphic evidence the channel formed part of the Stratum 7 D.1:4c gateway. Further, its central portion, founded on plaster Surface D.2:33 (overlying Late Roman loci), cut Late Roman Stairway D.2:32, and its southern end passed off the highest visible course of stone Stair D.2:34 (Early Byzantine, see below).

Already in 1968 at least three phases in this stairway complex were noted, the latest (D.2:7a) dated Ayyūbid/Mamlūk.[30] In 1973 three further stairs (besides D.2:7a) were identified, dismantled, and dated. The latest was Stair D.2:7b whose steps were accommodated and even bonded to the western side of the central portion of Channel D.1:58=D.2:30 and aligned to its angle, and thus contemporary with it. The second stair identified was D.2:34 (noted merely as "sub-7" in 1968), the lowest of all of them. Its steps were of rectangular stones laid end to end

[30] Bird, "Heshbon 1968," pp. 209, 210.

lengthwise in three staggered rows. It obviously superseded, and perhaps repaired, the third stairway, Late Roman Stair D.2:32 (of Stratum 8; see below)—at least on the south end. Stratigraphically and ceramically dated Early Byzantine Stair D.2:34 could have come from an earlier phase in Stratum 7 than Channel D.1:58=D.2:30, for instance.

Stratum 8: Late Roman (A.D. *193?-324*) [31]

Stratum 8 represented another radical change in the acropolis and its southern access route in Area D, second only to what followed in Stratum 7 (see Fig. 8). Indicative of major building north of Wall D.1:4d was a 1.25 m. deep rubble fill with rocks, gravel, loose dirt, air pockets, and 32 pails of sherds from a 3.00 x 3.00 m. sector alone. A similar fill, also ceramically dated Late Roman, was found north of Wall D.6:19d to the northeast of Square D.1. Was this rubble fill to level the sector over the newly constructed vaulted ceiling over Cistern D.5:5 as was suggested in 1971,[32] or was it (as now seems more likely) a part of a larger operation turning the acropolis summit into a platform for an important public building? Beaten Surface D.1:44=D.6:69 covered this fill and surrounded the neck of Cistern D.6:33 (with its header, or petal, arrangement of curb stones probably built in Stratum 10). Features of Stratum 8 along the west balks of Squares D.1 and 5, including the mouth of Cistern D.5:5, were not uncovered since they lay below the unexcavated Stratum 6 flagstone floor.

Wall D.1:4d, the bottom four (irregular) courses of rough field boulders chinked with smaller stones that underlay the Stratum 7 rebuild, must date from Stratum 10 at the latest; their use in Stratum 8 was not clear since any higher courses were apparently destroyed in the Early Byzantine rebuild. Only south of Early Roman Wall D.2:21/26 were Stratum 8 loci again

[31] This chronological division at A.D. 193 for the two Late Roman strata in Area D rests on Sauer's suggestion for contemporary Stratum 10 in Area B; see his *Heshbon Pottery 1971*, p. 29.

[32] Geraty, "Heshbon 1971," p. 111.

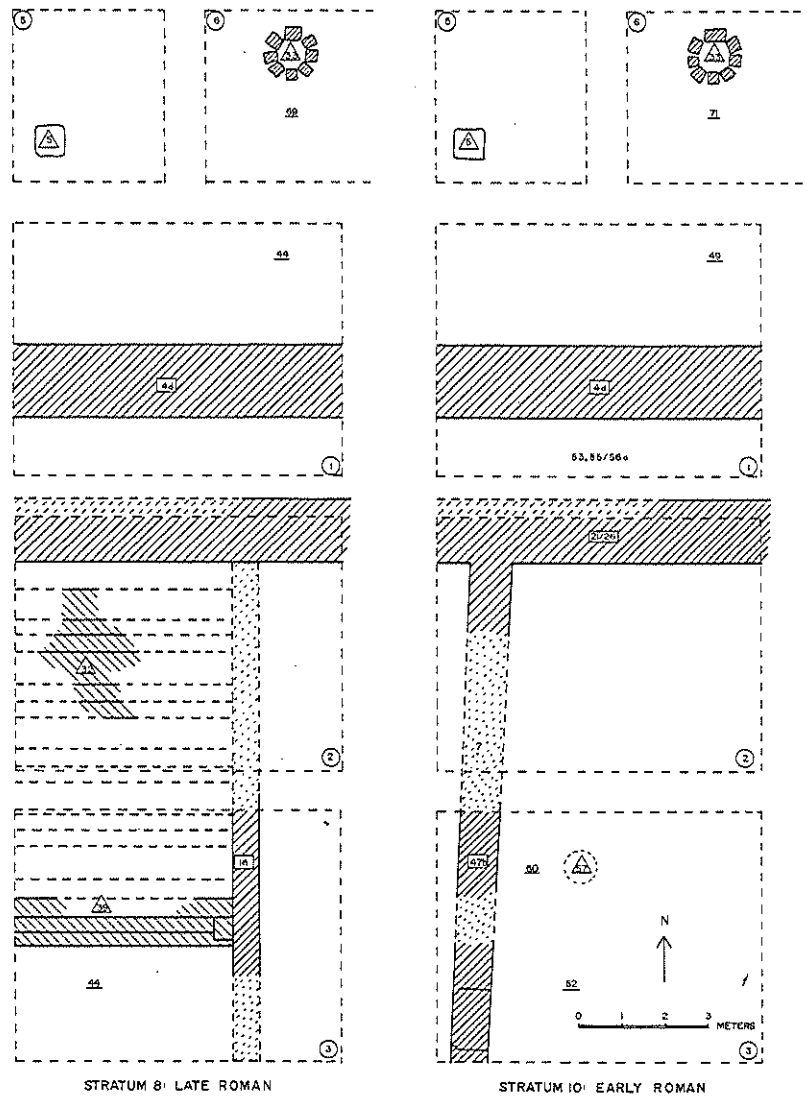

Fig. 8. Schematic plans of Area D showing relationship of principal loci in the Late and Early Roman strata. Key: Circled numerals refer to Square designations, boxed numerals to walls, underlined numerals to surfaces, while numerals enclosed in triangles are either cisterns or stairways.

found, associated with the remnants of Stairway D.2:32 (mentioned above). This stair had a central level strip of stone paving/terracing, visible even before the removal of Stair D.2:34, with three low shallow steps to the north (cf. Pl. VIII:A) and two more steps to the south. The stones were laid crosswise, their long sides together, with a consistent tread of .20 m. Stairway D.2:32 was clearly more extensive than the six preserved courses since it had certainly been robbed away to the north, east, and south. The extensive make-up (nearly 2.00 m. deep) for D.2:32 (D.2:35, 36, 40 and 43) was filled with characteristic architectural fragments and many Late Roman sherds.[33] This whole build-up for the Stratum 8 stairway complex was laid up against Wall D.2:21/26 to the north and presumably originally went on over it to Wall D.1:4d. The southward extension of D.2:32 had been robbed away; but in the center of Square D.3, ca. 4 m. to the south, were found three preserved courses of Stairway D.3:39, of identical construction; its profile, when computed from the tread and depth and projected upward, matched and would have met (if the intervening steps had not been robbed away) this Stairway D.2:32. The three steps of the broad Stair D.3:39 extended east out of the west balk ca. 5.20 m. to north-south Wall D.3:16, its eastern boundary (cf. Pl. VII:A)—a large, apparently one-row wide wall founded on bedrock, probably into both north and south balks, but badly destroyed in its upper courses (perhaps originally faced with finished slabs covering its boulder-and-chinkstone construction). Where the bottom step met Wall D.3:16, it was surmounted by a beveled cornerstone. In the debris just above it another unique architectural member was found, of the dimensions and cut of an ideal corresponding capital for a balustrade beginning at the beveled cornerstone and running north up the steps along Wall D.3:16 (Pl. VII:B). Under and

[33] This make-up included Coin (Object Registry) No. 1647, dated to the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117), according to Terian, "Heshbon 1973 Coins," *AUSS*, forthcoming; it was obviously earlier than the dominant Late Roman pottery found there.

north of Stair D.3:39 was an extensive 2.00 m. deep Late Roman fill containing characteristic architectural fragments similar to those in the make-up for Stairway D.2:32. Thus a number of facts argue that Stairs D.2:32 and D.2:39 were one. Built with such grand proportions, it must have led to an important public building on the acropolis—possibly the predecessor(s) of the Byzantine Church in Area A. This stairway was approached from the south by a series of superimposed hard *huwwar*-surfaced layers, the original probably being Surface D.3:44. Further excavation may connect these with the Area B roadway series. Square D.3 remained unexcavated east of Wall D.3:16.

Stratum 9: Late Roman (A.D. 135-193?)[34]

The only good evidence for a pre-Stratum 8 Late Roman stratum was found in Square D.3. Immediately under Stair D.3:39 and its associated surfaces, and running the full 6.00 m. along the west balk, were found three courses of Wall D.3:47 (cf. Pl. VII:A). The upper preserved courses (D.3:47a) included a threshold and doorway in the south portion, opening in to the east, and part of a doorway near the north balk. Associated with this phase of the wall (only south of Steps D.3:39) was a hard brown earth Surface D.3:49, laid up to the level of the threshold stone itself and thus presumably the floor of a Late Roman building that was destroyed by the builders of Stratum 8.

Stratum 10: Early Roman (63 B.C.-A.D. 135)

The evidence from 1973 indicated that Stratum 10, too, was an innovative one, but until further excavation takes place, particularly in Squares D.2 and 3, conclusions must remain tentative (see Fig. 8.). North of Wall D.1:4d the picture was very similar to Stratum 8: Early Roman Surface D.1:49=D.6:44=D.6:71, just above bedrock, seemed to be associated with the new header-type construction around the mouth of

[34] For A.D. 193 see Sauer, *Heshbon Pottery 1971*, p. 29.

Cistern D.6:33. The latter was connected by a subterranean channel to interconnected Cisterns D.6:47 and 48 (last used in Stratum 10) in a manner already described in 1971.[35]

The construction date of Wall D.1:4d was an interesting puzzle. In 1971, since the earliest soil layers on bedrock north of it were Early Roman, it was then thought to be Early Roman also.[36] But in 1973, below clear Early Roman Soil Layers D.1:53, 55/56a (up against the south face of Wall D.1:4d), a series of soil layers 1.50 m. deep to bedrock (D.1:56 Hell., 59, and 60) produced 37 (mostly full) pails of only Late Hellenistic and Iron II sherds! There were only two alternatives: either (a) D.1:4d was a Roman wall, with Roman surfaces north of it and a Roman fill of Hellenistic material south of it, *or* (b) it was a Hellenistic wall with Hellenistic build-up on both faces originally, with the Hellenistic remains to the north cleared away to bedrock when the wall was rebuilt by the Romans during their restructuring of the acropolis. Against hypothesis (a): There were no tip lines or other evidence that the Hellenistic layers were a Roman fill (unless the many scattered *ṭabun* fragments are so considered), nor any tell-tale Roman sherds; further, why would fill be dumped *outside* a perimeter wall? Only if used in building a casemate-type fortification using Wall D.2:21/26 as the outside or retaining wall. In favor of (a): This latter wall, running the full length of, and partially in, D.2's north balk was three rows thick, slanting to the north as it rose from a lower bedrock shelf than that on which Wall D.1:4d stood. Its inner, northern face was battered against the Early Roman and Hellenistic layers just described (cf. Pl. VIII: B); the outer, southern face, built of smaller stones with traces of cement, was laid against the central row as though to strengthen it. The dismantled portion of each row dated Early Roman. Whether contemporary with or later than Wall D.1:4d, this Stratum 10 wall was clearly a retaining wall outside the huge acropolis perimeter wall. Its upper courses were apparently

[35] Geraty, "Heshbon 1971," pp. 107, 108, and Fig. 6 (p. 102).
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

cut away on the west for Channel D.2:30=D.1:58 of Stratum 7 and were robbed away on the east by a huge Ayyūbid/Mamlūk pit. Near the west balk and bonded to the south face of Wall D.2:21 was a wall two rows thick, five courses high, running south ca. 2.00 m., then robbed away. Only future excavation will show whether it continued south to Stratum 10 Wall D.3:47b, the lower phase of Stratum 9 Wall D.3:47a. Associated with the former was the earliest surface (D.3:52/60) extending throughout the excavated portions of Square D.3. In the southwest quadrant, Surface D.3:52 covered huge chunks of bedrock (some of which may once have covered caves but were) now tipped at various angles, perhaps by an earthquake during the Early Roman period;[37] and in the northwest quadrant, Surface D.3:60 covered a stone slab wall (D.3:63) that protected the mouth of unexcavated Cistern D.3:57. Any Stratum 10 remains in the eastern parts of Squares D.2 and 3 await further excavation.

Stratum 11: Late Hellenistic (198-63 B.C.)

Only bits and pieces of a Hellenistic stratum could be put together—because of both ancient destruction and our unfinished excavation. North of Wall D.1:4 most of the cisterns probably either existed or were constructed during the period of Stratum 11. In Square D.6, one surface (D.6:72) and one possible wall (D.6:75) were found. The possible Hellenistic data for Wall D.1:4d has been discussed above. On the narrow bedrock shelf south of Wall D.1:4d, a giant boulder resting on a one-row thick wall at first blocked the entrance to Cave D.1:63 which was later found to have been carved out of bedrock and plastered. Sherds in its first soil layer were Hellenistic; discovery of its full extent and function awaits futher excavation.

Stratum 12: Iron Age

No pre-Hellenistic architectural evidence was found in Area D,

[37] See Sauer, "Heshbon 1971," p. 50.

though abundant Iron Age sherds (primarily 7th/6th centuries B.C.) in mixed loci attested an occupation in the vicinity.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that from the Ayyūbid/Mamlūk Stratum 1 back to at least the Early Byzantine Stratum 7, most of our evidence lay north of Wall D.1:4, perhaps because the acropolis approach was less important in those periods, but more likely because a slope suffers erosion of its top layers, since from Early Byzantine Stratum 7 back at least to Early Roman Stratum 10 we found more extensive remains south of Wall D.1:4.