CHAPTER 3

TELL JENIN SITE SETTINGS

In the previous chapter, some data were presented on the cultural landscape of the Jenin region in general. It shows that the possible settlement location is not a stable geographic spot. The population may choose a nearby spot to continue their occupation. This chapter focuses on archaeological data specific to Tell Jenin. I will briefly summarize the settlement environment -location, natural resources and the historical development- and then present in detail the EBI archaeological remains.

1 THE SITE ENVIRONMENT

It is often assumed that a settlement location is a significant factor of continuity and change. The location of Tell Jenin meets two conditions. The first is an easy access to the main road network leading from Nablus to Nazareth and Beisan. The second is the permanent plentiful water and fertile land resources available to the settlement inhabitants.

1.1 THE LOCATION

Tell Jenin is located at the eastern side of Wadi Bal'ama (Figure 3.1) and at the edge of the south-eastern angle of Marj Ibn 'Amir (Map Reference SWP Nl and Palestine Grid Map 1785/2075; UTM 32/ 28' North, 35/ 18' East). The elevation of the site is 147-152 metres above sea level. The elevation of Marj Ibn 'Amir is 75-100 metres above sea level.

Tell Jenin is also located at the northern edge of the Nablus Mountains. Most of the valleys within these mountains are directed from north to south. Three important wadis are formed near the Tell: Wadi Jenin, Wadi Burqin and Wadi Izz Eddin. Wadi Jenin is about six kilometres long. It is the only passage through the mountains used for transportation and water supply.

The settlement is located at an important road network connecting the East with the West and the North with the South. Based on the map of archaeological settlements during the early periods, the road networks did not change much through the ages (Chapter II). The modern roads passing Jenin appeared to be located where the same roads existed in the past. They connect Tell Jenin with neighbouring cities such as Tell el Mutassalim, Tell Ta'annak, Tell Duthan and Tell Beisan. Many travellers throughout the centuries noted these roads and appreciated the location of Jenin city as a non-avoidable station. It must have been a primary factor for the cultural continuity of the Tell Jenin zone.

Many attempts were made to reconstruct the ancient road systems of the Jenin region based on survey materials. The result of these analyses is burdened by the inaccuracy of the 1968 survey of Kochavi (1972). However, the attempt in the following section is to discuss eyewitness historical accounts of the road system in the region in order to highlight the complexity of Tell Jenin connections through time.

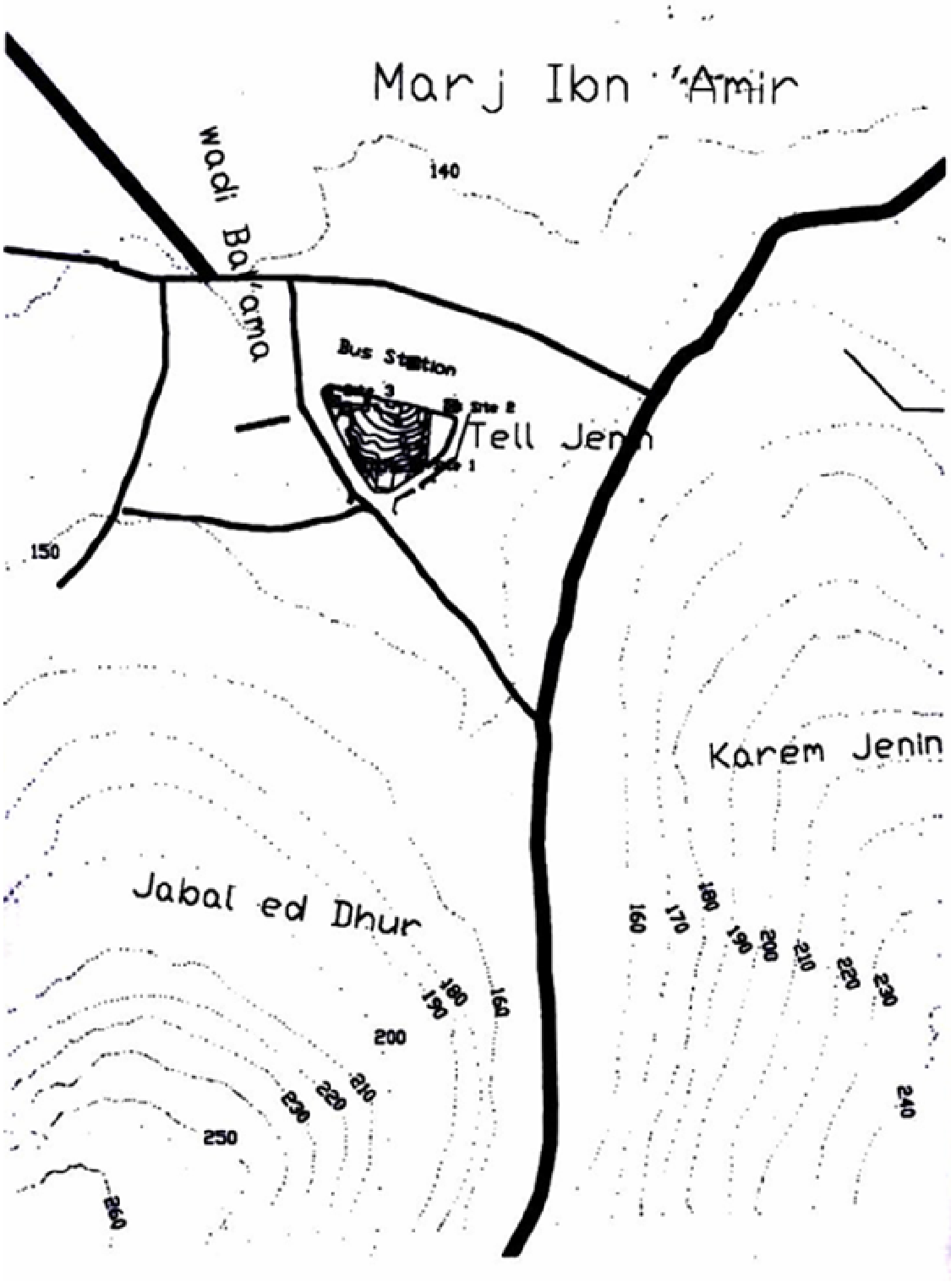
We learned from Josephus's records that the Roman pilgrimage road southward to the Nablus Mountains and then to Jerusalem passed Jenin (Josephus 1972: 46). The road remained as a secondary highway during the Byzantine time.

Arab travellers of the 9th to 12th centuries mention distances from Lajjun to other cities like Tiberias, Beisan or Ramla (Ibn Khardathbah ca 864: 76, Istakhri 934:49, Maqdisi- Bushari (985: 191-192). Jenin may not have been a major political centre. The roads from North (Nazareth) to South (Jerusalem) or from East

(Beisan) to West (Haifa) had to pass through the region. In many sources, the Eastern areas of the Jenin Region had been avoided because the roads were not safe (Maqdisi- Bushari 985: 191). Maqdisi noted that this road was once closed (Maqdisi-Bushari 985: 101). However, there is no other choice except to take it. On 1418 A.D., Qalqashindi pointed out two roads leading to Damascus. One passed from Jenin to There'in (Ziri'in) then to 'Ain Jalut to Beisan. Another went from Jenin to Safed then to Tabneen to Hettin (Qalqashindi 1418: 380). Later on, the North-South road coming from Marj Ibn 'Amir to Jenin through Wadi Bal'ama to Sanur was the one which was regularly used by travellers (Buckingham 1821: 495).

In their descriptions of the road networks of

Figure 3.1: Location Map of Tell Jenin



Jenin, the writers of the *Survey of Western Palestine* reported that Jenin is located on a route between Egypt and Damascus. The main road from Nablus passes the hills through Wadi Bal'ama then from Jenin to Lajjun and Haifa. From Jenin the road also goes to Nazareth (Conder and Kitchener 1861: 49). Dalman (1906: 27) noted that the route from Jenin to the coast passes Burqin. This was also a road crossed by travellers and traders when they wanted to avoid Jenin city.

The British mandate re-established most of the current road systems based on the ancient road map. The British established a railway coming from 'Afula passing wadi Ziri'in to Jenin and toward Masud. The road network runs in the same direction coming from Nablus, passing Sahel Arrabeh towards Jenin. From there it branches north towards 'Afula and Nazareth or West and then Northwest towards Haifa.

In addition, the settlement is located at a point of high strategic importance to forces who seek control over the villages surrounding Marj Ibn 'Amir. It was on the agenda of many conquering forces to control the roads and so take over the economic value of the most fertile agricultural lands of Marj Ibn 'Amir (Figure 1.2).

Hypothetically, Tell Jenin was affected by cultural contact because of the road networks. The settlement must have been the cultural centre fort passing travellers in the region during that time. Although there is a risk in crossing the region, the roads through Jenin cannot be avoided. Almost every traveller going to Nazareth, Beisan, Tiberias or Haifa by way of Nablus had to pass Jenin.

On the other hand, no evidence of occupation is found at the site before the 13th century. Other settlements such as Kh. Bal'ama developed as cities instead of Tell Jenin. These settlements however were not occupied before the Early Bonze Age II. The road network did not change much since Kh. Bal'ama is located along the same route as Tell Jenin. Both settlements are now located within the boundary of Jenin city, making them culturally united.

1.2 CLIMATE

Jenin is known for its warm climate. The annual temperature varies between 14 and 28 degrees Celsius (Heniti 1981: 18-19). Its humidity is high (65-75%). It has an average annual rainfall of 500 millimetres.

In spite of the modest annual rainfall, rain is an important source of water in Jenin. Jenin has about fifty rainy days. The rainy season extends from October to May. However, the people of Jenin used to rainwater in cisterns and reservoirs, keeping it until the summer. Floods are known during rainy seasons. Many wadis are turned to swamps, as for example, Marj Sanur became a swamp during the 1991 season. The swamps become a source of diseases during the 19th century.

1.3 WATER RESOURCES

Besides rain, there are three major springs located near Tell Jenin. 'Ain Jenin (also known as 'Ain el Basateen or 'Ain el Balad) is located one kilometre to the north of the Tell. In the early 1970, 421,000 cubic metres were pumbed from it annually (Ministry of Agriculture 1973: 4). Recently, this amount was reduced to an annual outflow of 119,800 cubic metres (Tamimi 1991: 72).

'Ain Nineh is at the mouth of Wadi Bal'ama about 1200 metres to the south. 'Ain el Sharif is located about 800 metres south of Tell Jenin at the east side of Wadi Nineh. The three springs together had a water flow of 930,000 cubic metres annually, which formed 12% of the West Bank water reservoir (ibid.).

To the north of Jenin is Naher el-Muqta'a that had its source from Jabal Faqqu'a' west of Jenin. It reaches toward the Mediterranean Sea in an area south of Haifa. These quite fair water resources were a primary factor in selecting the location of Tell Jenin and leading to space continuity. The settlements of Karem Jenin, Tell Jenin and Kh. Bal'ama shared the same natural water resources. Beside other factors, this may be another evidence of occupation continuity.

1.4 GEOLOGY

Tell Jenin is at a meeting point between the recent alluvial deposition of Marj Ibn 'Amir and the Cretaceous and Eocene formations. So most rocks are of limestone, chalk and marl formation. Some dolomite stone formation is also found. A source of volcanic rock formation is located 7 kilometres west of the Tell. Tell Jenin itself is at the edge of the chalky limestone.

Terra Rossa is the dominant soil (Figure 2.2.2). It is characterised by its depth, especially north of the town where it meets Marj Ibn 'Amir. The soil of the Marj itself is dark, heavy, and rich in organic materials due to swamps and severe erosion. This made it a very fertile soil, which has been manipulated throughout the ages.

2 HISTORICAL IDENTIFICATION OF TELL JENIN

As the environment and location of Tell Jenin contribute to our understanding of the cultural system, historical accounts are a good source of modelling the cultural continuity of the site. This section is a review of the historical records relevant to understand the cultural traditions of Tell Jenin in general and in specific the issue of abandonment following the various occupational strata.

2.1 THE PROBLEMS WITH HISTORICAL RECORDS

The historical record has been one of the critical sources in interpreting the cultural traditions of Palestine (Thompson 2001). Generally, six problems lay the foundation when dealing with ancient textual materials from Palestine. Lapp's (1969) detailed discussion of these problems is still valid today:

Historians' treatment of historical events is from a wide angle. While the ancient historian records the major events the daily life and its details, however significant, are not fully reported.

Historic Materials suffer uncertain provenance and disturbed stratigraphy. Many important documents were discovered by accident or sold on the black antiquity markets. Thus, they require an intensive effort to reconstruct the context of their origin.

Documents are poorly preserved. Documents written on organic material vanished through time, except those stored in a conserved environment or written on clay and stone materials. Many of them are fragmentary, and include missing texts.

Time of writing is obscure. Many documents were written several decades or centuries after the events took place. For example, the first written record, so far, of the Bible was found in the 1st century, although it records historical events several centuries before that time. Alterations in the original texts can occur through time.

Variability of linguistic versions and deciphering hamper understanding. Many texts were written in different languages, and so the original meanings may be lost during the translations and copying. Often, there is a disagreement when deciphering these texts. Ancient texts are often interpreted rather than literally translated

Added to these is the problem of identifying the names mentioned in the documents with archaeological localities (Franken 1976). Even if the text refers to a certain place, it remains hard to create a connection between the historical events and archaeological settlement.

Listing these problems explains the shortage of historical documents on Tell Jenin. One must be critical, therefore, when reviewing the written history of Tell Jenin. If found, historical accounts fall short in explaining the past daily life. They are very limited and general. There are discrepancies in written records for many periods. For example, nearby Tell Ta'annak produced a dozen clay tablets that represent the correspondence of ancient local governors (Glock 1983b). These tablets and many later records hardly mentioned Jenin. This case will lead us to follow ahistorical approach in analysing the cultural tradition of the settlement,

highlighting the importance of the archaeological data.

The following is an attempt to present a historical database of the Jenin region based on textual data. The textual data can be classified into four categories: the ancient texts, the travellers' accounts, the historians' accounts and official records. Each one of these categories is by no means covering all the periods under which the cultural landscape of Tell Jenin was shaped. It is rather a very broad account of the later periods, consisting by and large of short notices about the Jenin region. Nonetheless, the value of these historical records should be seen in identifying the continuity and abandonment of localities in the Jenin region. The following section will highlight this issue pointing out the causes leading to cultural continuity and abandonment of Tell Jenin.

2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF TELL JENIN IN THE ANCIENT HISTORICAL RECORDS

The earliest mention of Tell Jenin may be associated with the 'Amarna Tablets. A peasant woman originally discovered these Egyptian letters in 1887. Later excavations revealed 378 tablets dated to the mid-fourteen century BC (Campbell 1970: 62). About 349 tablets of them are letters of diplomatic correspondences of the Egyptian pharaohs Amenophis III and Amenophis I (Ibid. 56). The name of *Gi-na* in El-Amarna Letters (EA 250: 17, 22) has been identified with Tell Jenin. It was mentioned as a site near Shechem. The text states: -

the two son(s) of Labaja have called Ba'luursag to begin hostilities against the people of Gina, for they have killed our father. But if thou dost not begin hostilities we will become thy enemies." But I answered them: "May the god of the king, m[y] lor[d], preserve me in respect to the beginning of hostilities again the pe[op]le of [G]ina, servants of the king." (Mercer 1939: 653).

Gina is also probably the same *Qena* of Thutmose III reported on the Papyrus Anastasi I: 22, 27 (Ibid.). The translation of it as *Qena* in these letters (Pritchard 1955: 485) questions its identification. There is a disagreement about the exact location of *Qena*. Albright (1941:33) and Mazar (1947:47, Ahituv 1984: 103) suggested an identification with *Kana=Kunu* (Ras B'albek) of Ramesses III in the Lebanon. Kuschke located the site at Tell el- Jisr near Kafr Jubb Jenin in the Beqa' valley (Ahituv 1984: 103). However, it is more possible that *Qena* is to be identified with Tell Jenin (Glock 1979a: 111), which was under Egyptian rule in the 14th century.

Be that as it may, it is difficult to identify Tell Jenin with *Gena* or *Qena* in the light of the archaeological record. The archaeological records produced remains dated to the Late Bronze Age II. A house with a mud-brick destruction and abandonment of Tell Jenin towards the end may be a result of the instability at the end of 13^{th}-12^{th} century.

Other later sources may also have referred to Tell Jenin. The Bible as a text presents problems when identifying Tell Jenin. Attempts to identify Tell Jenin with Biblical *En Gannim* (Joshua 19: 17, 21; 21: 28-9) faces serious difficulties. Some (Negev 1980: 102) following Albright (1926: 22) had identified *En Gannim* with Khirbet Beit Jann. Guerin (1868: 329) identified Jenin with *En Gannim* and *Beth Haggan*. The passage in 2 Kings 9: 14-27 states that Ahaziah fled in the direction of *Beth Haggan*. "Ahaziah, caught up with him on the road to Samaria between Beth Haggan, ca. 7 miles south of Jezreel and Ibleam" (Glock: memo). This spot is where Tell Jenin is located.

However, *Ein Gannim* (Josh. 19:21, 21: 29) was within the later territory with *Jezreel* (Ziri'in). It was a city of the Levites.

The history of the settlement before the Roman times is difficult to trace on the absence of historical records mentioning it. Some sources (*Atlas of Ancient Israel*, *Oxford Bible Atlas*) continue to use *En Gannim* and *Beth Haggan* as the official name for the settlement during the Phoenician and Persian periods. The same name be used later on, but it may also changed.

Josephus's writings are the only source recording events in Jenin region (Josephus 1960/XX: 1, 1972: 46). During Roman times, Tell Jenin is to be identified with *Ginea*. He reported it as a village on the Great Plain (Marj Ibn 'Amir) that forms the northern boundary of Samaria (Josephus 1972: 46). Josephus wrote:

"*...the Gileans, when they came to the holy city at the festivals, to take their journeys through the country of the Samaritans; and at this time there lay, in the road they took, a village that was called Ginea, which was situated in the limits of Samaria and the great plain ...*".

One earliest attempt to identify existing towns of the 3rd century A.D. with the Bible was Eusebius (between the years 266-340 A.D.). Though Tell Jenin had extensive remains dated to the Byzantine period, Eusebius did not mention the site in his records. Nevertheless, it is more likely that the site retained its Roman name, until the Early Arab-Islamic period.

During the Arab Islamic periods, the travellers and historians identified Jenin with *Jeneen*. It was included in the district of *Jund el-Urdon*. Later, it was included in the district of Korat Beisan (Ibn Khardathbah 864: 78). Yaqut Hamawee described it as a pleasant town (Hamawee 1225/2: 202). We know from the records that the modern town, located at the summit of Karem Jenin, is the one that was referred to in the later sources. The archaeological evidence supported the possibility that part of the Early Arab Islamic Period town is to be located at the site itself. The settlement shifted later towards the current location.

According to Würzburg who travelled between 1160-1170 A.D., Jenin was known as *Genon*. The Crusaders called it also *Great Gallius* (Würzburg 1890: 6). It is located five miles from Jezreel. It is also known as *Ginue* (Theodurich 1172: 63). A castle was built then, which was destroyed by Salah Ed-Din's troop in 1187 A.D. (Maqrizi 1262(1/1): 84). No evidence of the castle exists today.

During the later centuries, the history of Jenin was recorded alongside the history of the Crusaders-Mamlukes's war. Since then, Jenin retained its current name. Maqrizi (1262) documented Salah ed-Din's campaign in detail. El-Qalqashindi (1418/4: 154) located Jenin to the north of Qaqun in the Marj Ibn 'Amir region. He described it as an old spacious town built on the shoulder of a pleasant valley with running water. His description more likely refers to the old village existing today at the Karem Jenin terraces.

A *khan* was built in 1280 A.D. and a water fountain (*sabil*) was constructed with a bath and shops selling souvenirs to travellers (Maqrizi 1262(2/2): 489). El Qalqashindi called it Khan Tajer el-Dawadar that was well built and was very helpful to travellers. It was more special and better fortified than anything else on the road (Qalqashindi 1418: 379). The *khan* is probably the same fortress described later by Eliya Tschelebi, which continued in use through the Ottoman period (Stephan 1938: 86-88). The Mamlukes built the castle and the Ottomans used it as a garrison for two hundred soldiers. It was a rectangular building with two gates, and many guest rooms.

Unfortunately, no clear archaeological evidence was found to indicate the exact location of the castle, although the inhabitants of Jenin today propose that the existing town encircled it. During the same time when the castle was built, Jenin was one of the twelve districts (*'Amils*) of Mamlaket Safed (Ansari-Dumshki 1300: 210-212, el- Dhahiree 1468: 44). Since then, it was the capital of Walayet Jenin. In 1347 A.D., the plague spread over all Bilad esh-Sham. In Jenin, people ran away from the village (Ibn Taghri 1011: 197).

Tschelebi also described the town of Jenin (Stephan 1938). Its *suq* consisted of one hundred shops built along a main arched road. The small town that flourished south of the fortress consisted of 100 houses. The town had a mosque and public bath. It is characterised by palm trees surrounding Weli Izz Eddin er Rif'a. Later on, the British forces destroyed many parts

of this town.

Many sources continued to mention Jenin as a major mailing station (of carrier pigeons). Pigeons travelled from Fahma to Jenin to Ziri'in to 'Ain Jalut and then to Beisan. It was also a station for camels carrying ice from Damascus (Qalqashindi 1418/14: 379-380). It was a light tower (*manwar*), which is a place lighted by fire during the night and with smoke during the day to give signs to Jabal Fahma and Ras 'Aqaba. Smoke and light signs were given from 'Ajloun, Jabal Taiba, Ibzeek, Jenin, Fahma and Qaqun (Qalqashindi 1418/1: 399).

In 1436 A.D., George Pfintzing mentioned a church in Jenin (Baldi 1935: 308). The church was located close to the Izz Eddin mosque, built at a much later date. In 1566 A.D., Fatima Khatun, the wife of Damascus governor, built the existing mosque, a *suq* and a water fountain. The *suq* included twenty shops and public baths. Jenin was under the rule of Tarabi family.

The descriptions of the travellers and historians did not agree with the official Ottoman records of the 16th century. Obviously, there is a problem when dealing with official records, like those of the Ottoman *Dafte*r. The *Dafter* records (Hüetteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 160) show that in 1596 A.D. Jenin was a small village with eight households (forty inhabitants). It was based on agricultural economy and animal husbandry.

One century later, Maundrell (1963: 721-727) described *Jeneen* as a "large town" on the farthest border of Samaria, which agrees with the description provided by previous records.

During the next century, Napoleon came to Jenin to help one of his officers surrounded by the Ottomans army. After his victory, he ordered the city to be burned and robbed. We know little about how much destruction occurred, but it seems that many houses remained. Seetzen (1854) stayed in Jenin in 1806 A.D. and described the city soon after Napoleon's invasion. He counted around 150 households; a few of them belonged to Greek Christians. The city had a large *bazaar* of the same size as that in Nazareth. He observed various stores and two coffee houses. The Khan was already in ruins and many houses were abandoned and destroyed, probably from Napolean's campaign.

Many Western travellers of the 19th century bypassed Jenin and were fascinated by its gardens. They describe a well-established large town inhabited mainly by peasants. Based on their description of a large market, Jenin was apparently a main trade centre.

Robinson (1857: 155-156) described Jenin as a town built of stone houses with gardens for fruit and palm trees. The town had around 2000 inhabitants; it included three or four Greek Christian families. Hussein Abed el-Hady built the fountain of Jenin together with a stone reservoir. Robinson also referred to 14th century A.D sources that identified Jenin with *Ein Gannim*.

During his travel in 1851-1852 A.D., van de Velde recorded the gardens of Jenin (1854: 361-362). He noticed caves dug into the limestone mountains used as stables and animal huts. An aqueduct connected to the nearby spring fed the pool with water.

Guerin (1868: 327-332) provided a thorough description of Jenin, and connected it to biblical and historical sources.

Conder (1878: 110) shows a picture of the aqueduct leading to the fountain at the river Muqta'a. He camped at Jenin and noted a picturesque town of three thousand inhabitants. It had a threshing floor covered by heaps of yellow grain, a *bazaar*, and a mosque surrounded by gardens. (Oral sources refer to the use of Tell Jenin as a threshing platform, which is the same activity mentioned by Conder).

Conder and Kitchener (1881: 44-45) described Jenin as the capital of the Jenin district of 3,000 inhabitants. It had a mosque, a water reservoir, fine gardens walled with cactus and containing palms, oranges, tamariks and vegetables, two mills connected to the fountains and a threshing floor.

Wilson (1880) visited Jenin and described it as a town of three thousand inhabitants with grey houses and a mosque surrounded by gardens. Streams carry water to irrigate the fields (Wilson 1880: 22-23). He also sketched pictures of the town. Probably one picture was drawn from the Tell itself, but it was not identified as an antiquity site. He also drew and reported on the fountain and the mosque.

Scholch (1986: 144) indicates that the 19th century Jenin had four shops, two mills, and one bakery. Thomson (1882: 172) described in Jenin the beauty, palms around a mosque, fruit trees, the gardens and water streams that "*burst out in a valley above*". He estimated a population of 2,500 persons living in the town. He also reported on Bedouin buying products from the town market.

The British destroyed part of Jenin. In 1938 A.D., the British forces destroyed the *suq* area along with 150 houses (Dabagh 1964).

Later, a naval record of Palestinian towns included information on Jenin (Naval Intelligence Division 1943). The record indicates that the town houses were connected to an electricity supply (Ibid: 322). In addition, there were two pumping stations supplying two reservoirs with water.

The British Census for the year 1922 estimated the town population as 2,627 inhabitants, which increased to 4,500 in 1947 (Government of Palestine 1946). Jenin then had a municipal council.

In 1948, many houses were destroyed during the known Jenin battle. In the 1952 Census, the population of the town increased to 12,663 due to a wave of refugees. The population of Jenin in 1967 exceeded 13,365. It increased to 21,442 in 1975 and 26,318 in 1987 (Benvenisti and Khayat 1988: 131).

2.3 CONCLUSION

The previous summary on the location, history and identification may clarify our understanding of the settlement pattern and shift during the occupational history of Tell Jenin. The location of Tell Jenin near plentiful water sources and at the crossroads on the valley summit creates perfect conditions for the development of village life starting demonstrably in the EBI period and continuing until today.

First, the road network eases the communication between the Jenin region and surrounding regions, so Jenin city could thrive. The road system found during the several periods is the same as that of today. Tell Jenin itself is located at an accessible spot, historically a crossroads for trade and pilgrimage.

Although there were risks in taking the roads passing through Jenin, the road was very essential to travellers and pilgrimages. Until now, it is a major trade route for all directions crossing Marj Ibn 'Amir. Although the major ancient trade highway from Egypt to Syria crossed the region west of Jenin (el Lajjun), the other secondary road contributes to the existing location of Tell Jenin in a similar way influencing the location of the previous periods. Travelling from sites such as Tell el Mutassalim, Beisan, Tell Balata, Tell el Fara'a, 'Afula, and Sabastia requires an easy passage passing through Tell Jenin.

Second, Tell Jenin did not occupy the same spot, but shifted from one place to another. The Tell is the earliest location to which historical records point in the continuous use of the site. This statement is also confirmed by archaeological data which attests to a similar situation continuing through the Mamluke period. The town shifted to the current location, east of the Tell at the western slope of Jabal Karem Jenin. This is a similar situation to that which existed after abandoning the site during the EBI. Karem Jenin is an EBII settlement which may represent a later phase in the cultural history of Tell Jenin.

The model that characterised the 16th century settlement pattern may contribute to the issue of abandonment and settlement shift of Tell Jenin during the various periods. Marj Ibn 'Amir was

not preferred as a permanent settlement because it was a hostile environment during the rainy seasons (Esse 1991: 20). The people of Jenin preferred the new location at the mountain terrain, which is a typical settlement pattern until today. The flood may be the main reason for abandoning Tell Jenin place and relocating new settlements in nearby places such the location of Karem Jenin and Kh. Bal'ama. All these sites are located within a kilometre from Tell Jenin. .

In addition, the later records on the site suggested that it had plentiful water and land resources. Jenin was full of gardens; a description affiliated to its name in the ancient literary sources. Thus, it is a main condition meeting the economic pattern of the village settlements at Tell Jenin. This was one main cause, among other causes such as the site location and road networks that created the site's zone as an occupational spot for extended periods of time.

Lacking direct historical records on Tell Jenin, only archaeological data is the means to reconstruct the cultural traditions of the site. The following is an attempt to present the cultural history of Tell Jenin based on the excavations of Birzeit University, but first a review of the previous excavation was made.

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TELL JENIN

This section is an attempt to reconstruct the stratigraphic history of Tell Jenin. A statement on the methods used in the excavations and the nature of the recording system is made to identify the excavation process and the difficulties with the data from salvage excavations. This statement was added to Appendix B.1.

The method of excavation is based on both horizontal and vertical excavations developed by Kenyon at Jericho. The excavations benefited from other techniques especially learned by the director in the field. The following section attempts to define the precise cultural contexts of the pottery and the stratigraphic sequence of Tell Jenin.

The excavation strategy aimed at building a model of combining salvage excavations with reconstructing the environmental and cultural history of the site. With such a model, the natural and human processes made equal contributions to the formation processes. To fulfil these aims micro and macro data were collected. Sifting and flotation techniques were used. Layers belonging to construction, fill, destruction and erosion were identified, as well as the processes involved in their formation. Therefore, the excavations were prolonged to long-term seasons, rather than quick soundings, which would erase the data from the archaeological record. Further details on the recording system are found in Appendix B.1.

The Archaeological Explorations of Tell Jenin

There is no mention of Tell Jenin as an archaeological site before the Survey of Western Palestine was conducted. The authors describe a site south of the village that may be Tell Jenin. They state:

On top of the hill, south of the village, is a plateau covered with cairns consisting of small stones, and each cairn about 50-80 feet in diameter; these occur within an oblong enclosure and it has been suggested that they represent the remains of a Roman encampment (Conder and Kitchener 1861: 116).

In 1878, Fr. Giovanni made a small excavation on behalf of the Franciscan order and found remains of a church close to the Izz Eddin Mosque (Bagatti 1971: 312). The excavated site is located less than one kilometre to the north of Tell Jenin.

However, the first one to identify Tell Jenin as an archaeological site was P.L.O. Guy in 1926 (Glock 1979a: 111, 1992: 678). He noted a Tell on the road to Haifa of the size of 100 metres. On top of the site, there was a cemetery and a threshing floor. Makhouly, the Inspector of the British Mandate Department of Antiquities, made an effort during the 1930s to stop transporting the soil of the Tell (Glock 1992: 678). Several holes were dug in the process. Avi-Yonah reported a

mosaic pavement from the town (Avi-Yonah 1933).

The British Mandate records described Jenin as an "*artificial mound, rock cutting, rock-cut tombs*" (Government of Palestine 1944: 1270). The northern half of the Tell was removed during the building of the bus station and the Latin Convent, without any archaeological excavations. The process continued in the 1970s; and in the 1990s new buildings were built against the north section.

In recent times, Tzori (1972: 136) claimed that he was the first to identify the existing Tell Jenin with *'Ein Gannim*. Many soundings took place in Jenin and in the Tell itself to allow building permits by the Department of Antiquities of the Israeli occupation (See *Hadashot Archaeologot* 1973 (45: 16); 1978 (65/66: 26-27); 1978 (67/68: 75). Rahmani published an incense burner that was found in 1962 in the storage of the Department of Antiquities among other objects (Rahmani 1980: 120).

Over a decade ago, Glock (1992) summarized the Birzeit University excavations at Tell Jenin in an introductory article. The excavations are the only systematic data collection that can be of use to reveal the cultural tradition of the settlement (See Salem 1999a, 1999c). Therefore, I was given the honour to work on the stratigraphy and the pottery from the site. The stratigraphic reconstruction was based on the field reports and excavation records as well as the advise and proof of the director. The following section is an attempt to reconstruct the stratigraphic history of Tell Jenin during the EBI. However, since the site was not occupied in this period only, other stratigraphic information is broadly presented, and so the illustrative materials. A full stratigraphic report, more illustrations, reference to the field methods and the excavation participants are expected in the final publications.

It should be noticed that certain behaviours following the EBI abandonment affected the Early Bronze Age strata, in particular pits digging. As suggested from the data above, we have very limited information on the site, which make the presentation of a detailed stratigraphy a very necessary step for the accuracy of the analysis of the pottery materials.

4 THE STRATIGRAPHY OF TELL JENIN (SEE APPENDIX B.2)

4.1 STRATUM I: THE PRE-OCCUPATION PHASE

Before any human occupation, the area that later became Tell Jenin was flooded with thick layers of natural debris. We excavated a deep probe in Site 4 to examine the flood deposits. The layers consisted of gravel, cobbles, pebbles and few boulders, accumulated on top of each other in a unique natural sorting (Figure 3.2, 3.3). Larger stones accumulated on top of smaller stones. Gregory Richard (1983) and Sharif (1987) noted that this sorting pattern is a typical example of a wadi fan. Water is the main erosion force that carried light particles first and heavier

Figure 3.2.: Natural Deposits (Site 4)

Figure 3.3: Top of Natural Deposits (Site 4)

particles afterwards. The new deposits were assigned to the first stratum following a debate on the validity of assigning a separate stratum to non-cultural sediments. It appeared to be logical to emphasise the history of stratigraphic deposition including the environment and natural habitat, before focusing on the history of architecture.

Bedrock identified the bottom of the natural sequence. It was not exposed during the excavation, but estimated by digging five holes, using a two metres long auger. Above the bedrock, white clay came through with similar texture to that of unit 4.002. In Site 2, the auger identified four layers, with similar nature to those excavated at Site 4. Above these sediments, three pebbly layers (units 4.003-4.005) marked the sorting pattern. Unit 3.001 was composed of sediments similar to those of the top soil layers. However, other sediments from upper units contaminated this unit.

No source of chronology was available to date these sediments, but as for relative sequence, they accumulated before the first occupational phase of Stratum II, and so they pre-date it.

4.2 STRATUM II: NEOLITHIC HABITAT

The first human occupation at Tell Jenin was recognised by the detritus of small installations recovered from Site 4 (Figure 3.4). Evidence of this stratum was limited to Site 4. The white gravel plaster (unit 4.011) is the best-preserved

Figure 3.4: Top Plan of Stratum II (Site 4)

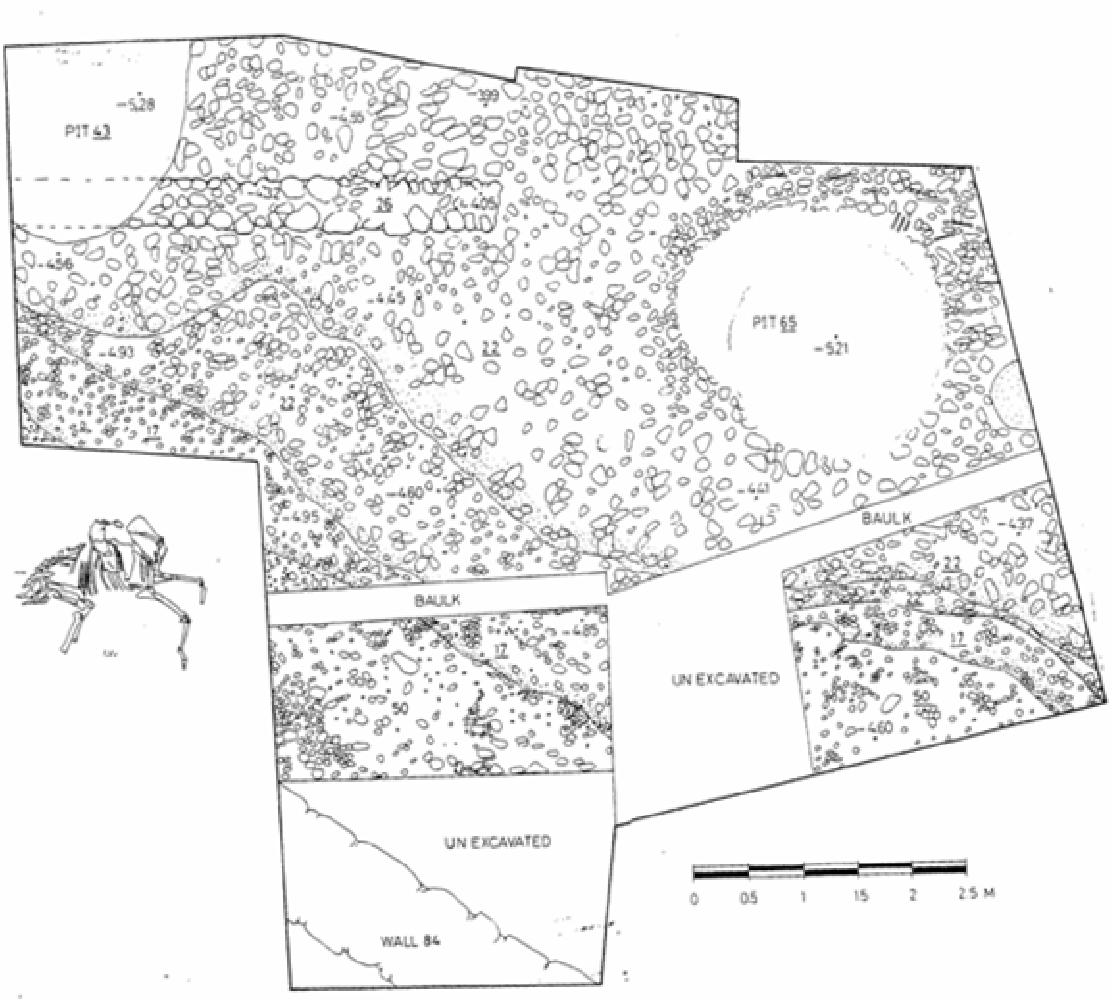
part of Stratum II. A fragment of this plaster was found in several spots located on top of a reddish and black soil. A small wall fragment was recovered above the same layer. The plaster surface lies against the wall. A group of flint *débitage*, complete arrowheads and fine blades were recovered. The finds were on both sides of the wall, against its bottom, and above the plastered surface. They were dated to the Pre Pottery Neolithic Period. If so, Tell Jenin becomes one of the earliest sites in the Marj Ibn 'Amir Region, with the advantage ofs water resources, and fertile lands. These two factors were the basic criteria for the early farming societies in Palestine.

However, this location at the edge of Wadi Bal'ama proved to be a poor choice. It was exposed to severe flooding and erosion. Flooding was among the reasons for the earliest abandonment of Tell Jenin. The stratigraphy indicates a layer of wadi pebbles and cobbles deposited on top of the first occupation phase. It illustrates the flooding of the area and the destruction of its major features. Unit 4.015 was formed simultaneously with the flood, covering this phase with gravel, pebbles and dark grey sediment.

No pottery was found within Stratum II contents. Most of the flint tools are dated to the Pre-pottery Neolithic (Sayej 1997).

Various remains from the Pottery Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods were found among the contexts of later strata. Neolithic pottery found in the contexts of Stratum III belonged to anr occupation phase that was not found in the excavated square, it is an evidence of an Pottery Neolithic phase in or around the Tell. .

Figure 3.5: Top Plan of Stratum III- Platform (Site 4)



In conclusion, apparently Tell Jenin is one of the oldest sites in the region. There are few sites in the region dated to the period. None of these sites is located on the Marj Area.

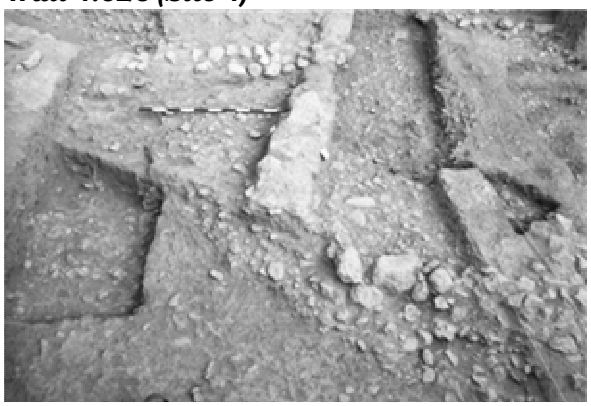
4.3 STRATUM III: THE LATE CHALCOLITHIC AND EARLY BRONZE AGE IA TOWN

Stratum III was composed of four phases dated to the Late Chalcolithic and EBI. Architectural evidence of this stratum was recovered from the western side of the Tell. Only scattered remains and natural deposits were found on the eastern side. The remains are of similar orientation to the Neolithic village. Unlike their precedents, Stratum III people recognised the danger associated with wadi flooding. This is most likely the outcome of a long experience in adapting to the area around the Tell. Although, survey results did not report any site in the neighbourhood with an earlier date, evidence of a post Neolithic period was found in Site 4. Many loci produced pottery dated to the Late Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic. Unfortunately, these materials were mixed with later deposits. We do not have any *in situ* installations in the Tell; its evidence is still hidden inside the non-excavated area. Stratum III is divided into 4 phases.

4.3.1 **Phase 1: Pre-Construction Phase of the Early Bronze Age I**

It seems that Tell Jenin flourished by the beginning of the EBI period. There are many activities related to this stage, but without any solid architecture. It represents an early experience with the current location of Tell Jenin that slowly developed into a prosperous settlement.

Figure 3.6. Remains of Platform 4.017 and Wall 4.026 (Site 4)



The connection between Site 4 and Site 3 is based on two major criteria. The first is the similar deposition history of each site. The sequence of layers and platforms is similar. Similar sediments were found on top of the courtyard, excavated in the northeast corner of Site 4. They were composed of silt, ash and charcoal.

Unit 4.017 eroded from a phase contemporary with the abandonment period of the Tell itself. A small fragment of a similar layer was also excavated in Site 3 (unit 3.003) on top of what we described as natural sediments. Its structure and composition are similar to the earlier deposits. However, it contains pottery sherds dated to Early Bronze I, Chalcolithic and Late Neolithic. Some Chalcolithic pottery was mendable. These data show that the site was occupied after the abandonment of Stratum II without any solid architecture. Evidently, unit 4.017 was a filling for an early phase related to the platform.

The major activity that took place was digging pits 4.016 and 4.019. Cutting and using the top of unit 4.017 as an occupational surface followed it. There was also a cut in this layer to bury skeleton 4.020.

Without any evidence proposing that the site was abandoned after this phase, it is safe to assume that the area continued in use. Many structures were built above the remains of this early phase. At the end, the two phases are contemporary. They are separated only because the cultural activities that took place at that time are not connected to any architecture or occupational surfaces. In such a case, it is safer to separate the phases rather than join them.

4.3.2 **Phase 1a**

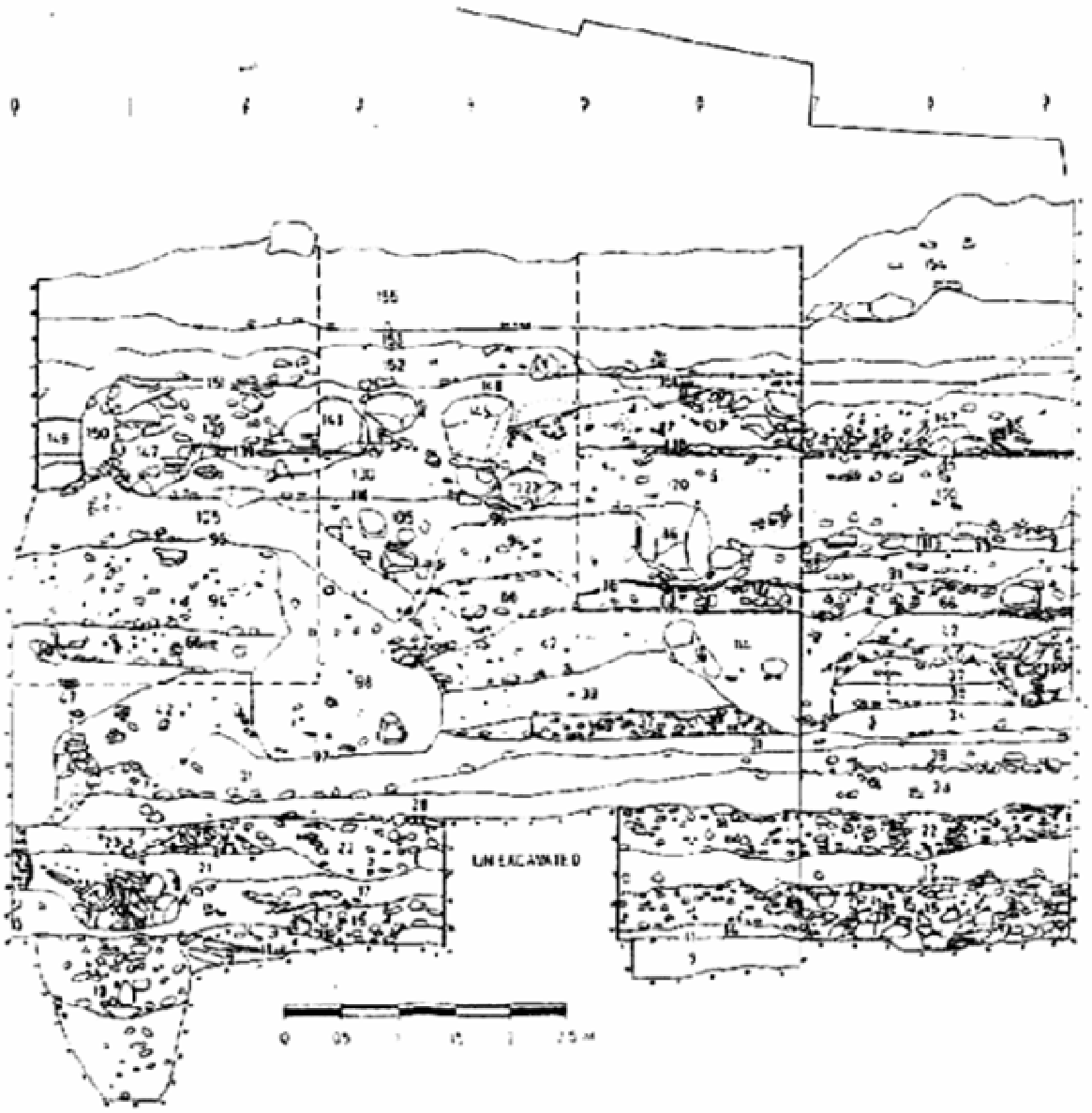
The occupation of Tell Jenin continued with the genuine idea of raising the occupation level to

avoid the flood. This activity was documented by building a huge stony platform (Figures 3.5-3.10). Scattered remains of walls were found on top of the platform. The function of the platform is to raise the occupational level above the wadi. The platform extended for at least 30 metres to the North. It consists of a huge fill of pebbles, on top of the gravel and silt layer 4.017. Part of this platform was excavated in Site 3 as unit 3.004. In addition, a small retaining wall (3.007) was built to protect the area from collapsing.

At first, the excavation of this platform was motivated by a hypothesis about whether it had a human or natural function. Comparing its nature to the wadi flood below solves this controversy. Unlike the flood below, the platform consists of fine gravel mixed with pebbles that came from the early destruction debris. The following observations support the idea that the stony layer is a human laid platform, which had been made to foothill the living area:

- The stones had a homogeneous size showing that they were well selected. Some of them had sharp edges showing that they were cut to size.
- The stones were lying mostly flat on their bottom suggesting that they were initially laid.
- The dirt was soft and loose. It included a mixture of small gravel and pebble stones as an indication that it was not sorted by

Figure 3.7: North Main Section of Site 4



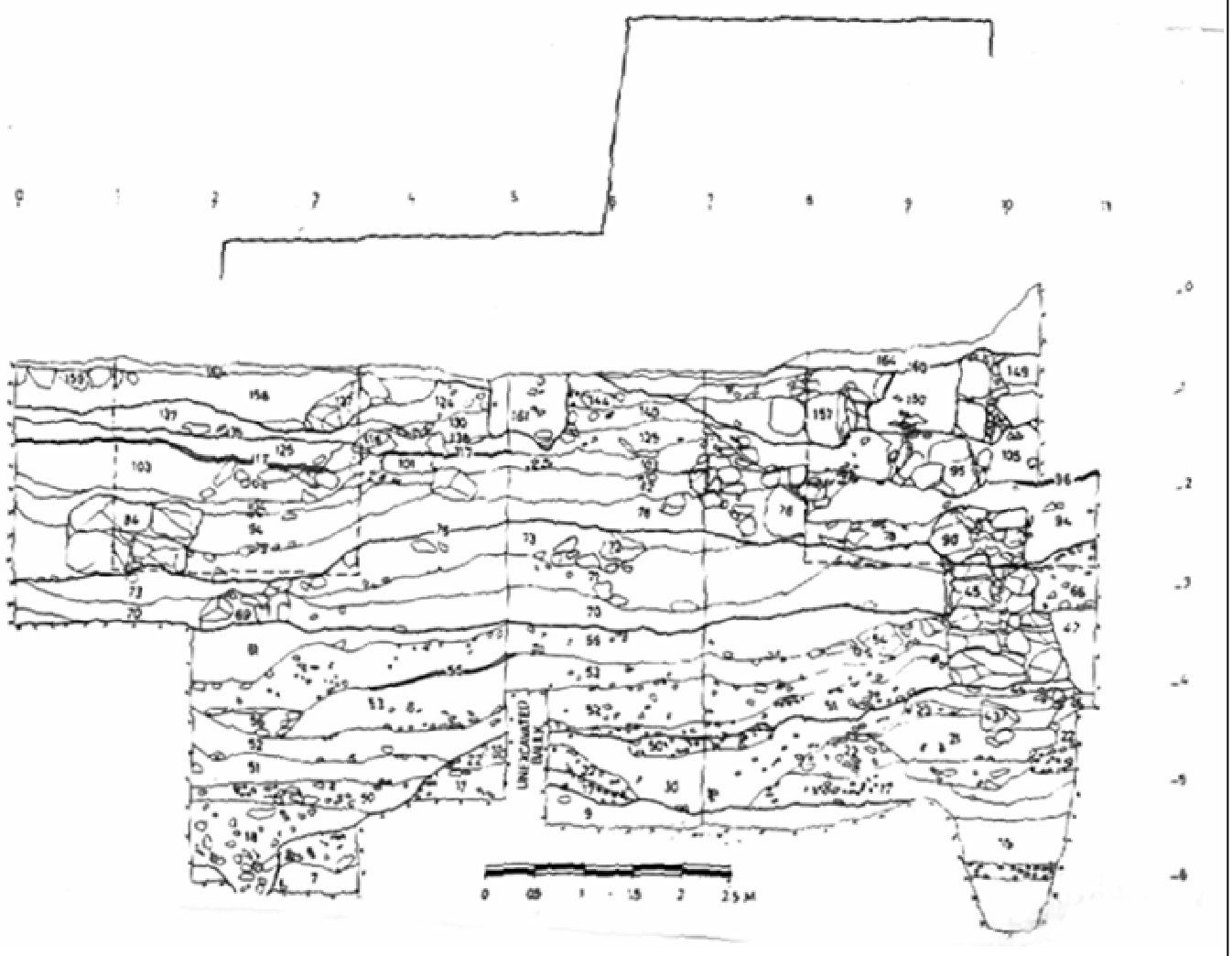
nature.

- It also includes an amount of potsherds, bone and other artifacts. Many bones were lying at the surface. Going in phase with this platform was skeleton 4.020, filling 4.021, walls 4.026, 3.007, 3.008, floor 3.006 and hearth 4.027 and skeleton 4.020 (Figure 3.11). All units inside Site 4 were sealed by unit 4.028, forming the basis for their phasing.

Wall 4.026 was built above the platform of well-selected medium size stones. It was oriented east to west. The western side of the wall deviated from its main course forming a round angle. This side was built by levelling the brick (unit 4.021). Our experience with the apsidal houses of Stratum I may support a proposition that this wall also belonged to an apsidal house phase. If so, Site 4 was used for domestic purposes, in which wall 4.026 served as a house wall and the top of the platform was an occupational surface, probably of a house courtyard. Since the site is at the edge of the settlement, other architectural remains may have eroded later.

The platform was cut to bury Skeletons 4.020 and 4.025. Skeleton 4.020 was of a donkey. During the excavation, the skeleton was found inside a pit, and so the whole area around it was excavated as a pit. The disturbance in the platform and the sediments below was a result of the process of digging the pit to place the skeleton. The skeleton was placed on pit 4.019 that intruded unit 4.017 and was filled later with

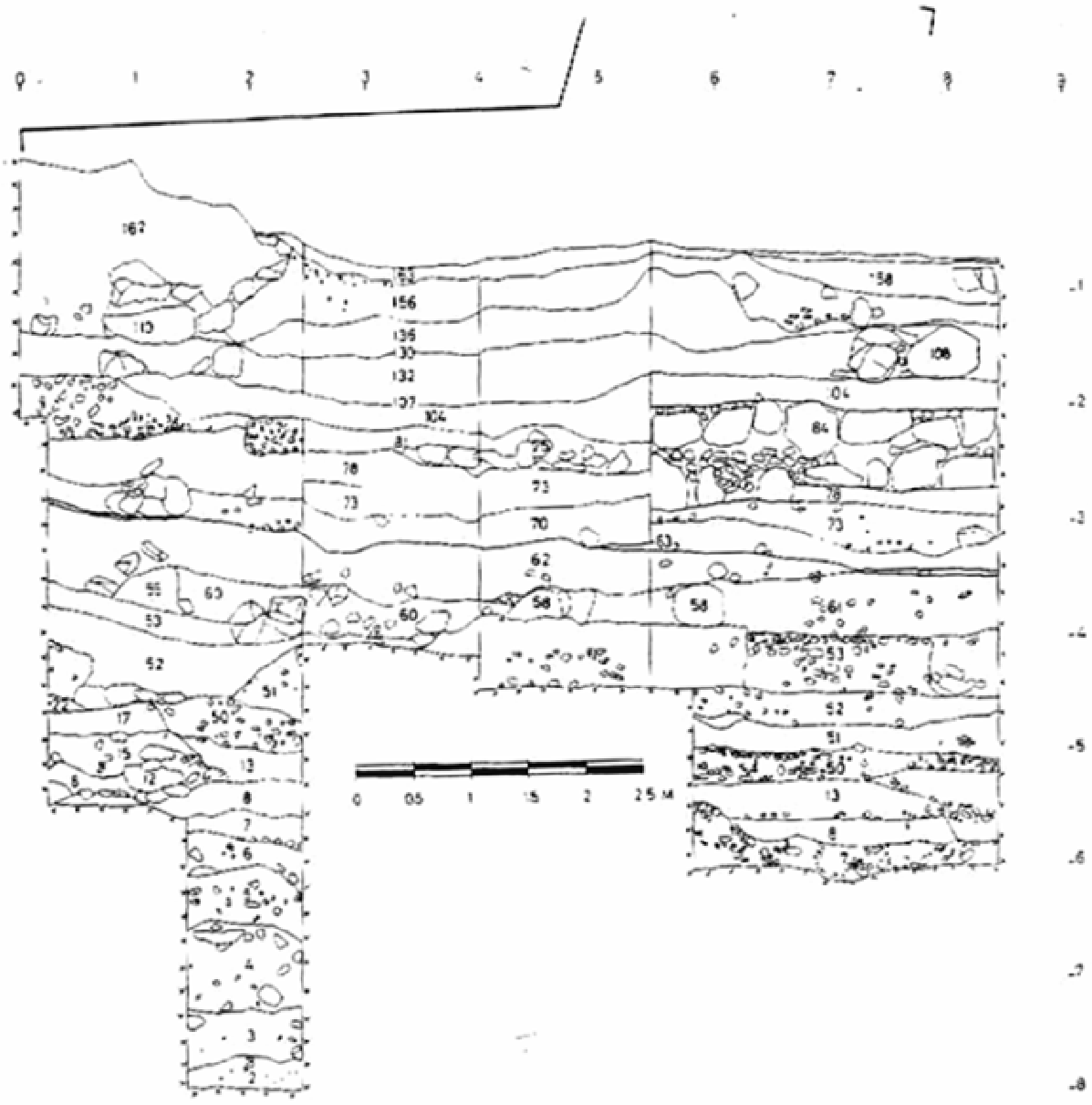
Figure 3.8: West Main Section of Site 4



cobbles and silt and clay-like texture (unit 4.021). In recent times, dead animals are buried or dumped far away, to bar the smell and source of diseases during their decay. The excavated skeleton may be of similar case. Skeleton 4.025 was buried on top of the hard small gravel pavement 4.024, after levelling unit 4.023 and adding the small gravel surface. Unlike the previous skeleton, this one was complete and gently placed. The pavement, the cutting of units 4.031 and 4.028, silt and clay-like texture surrounding the skeleton were among the clues suggesting another animal burial.

The notable amount of animal bones and the existence of the skeleton are other evidence for its cultural purposes. Often these also are used as evidence for explaining stony structures as "sacred places". To view the platform as a shrine, the animal bones as remains of offerings and the hearth as a place of burning is a very immature explanation, not being fully supported by other artifacts of cultic nature. Besides, these bones were totally disarticulated. They belong to

Figure 3.9: South Main Section of Site 4



more than one animal. It is more likely that the bone remains are in phase with the use (Phase 1) of this stratum.

In addition, the platform function became clearer when connected to the remains on Site 3. Remains were found to the eastern side of the Tell. A small probe in this area reached the bedrock. It was found that the layers of this phase were laid on top of the virgin soil. Units 3.015 and 3.016 covered the sediments in Site 3. This area was the basis for a new stratum because

Figure 3.10: East Main Section of Site 4

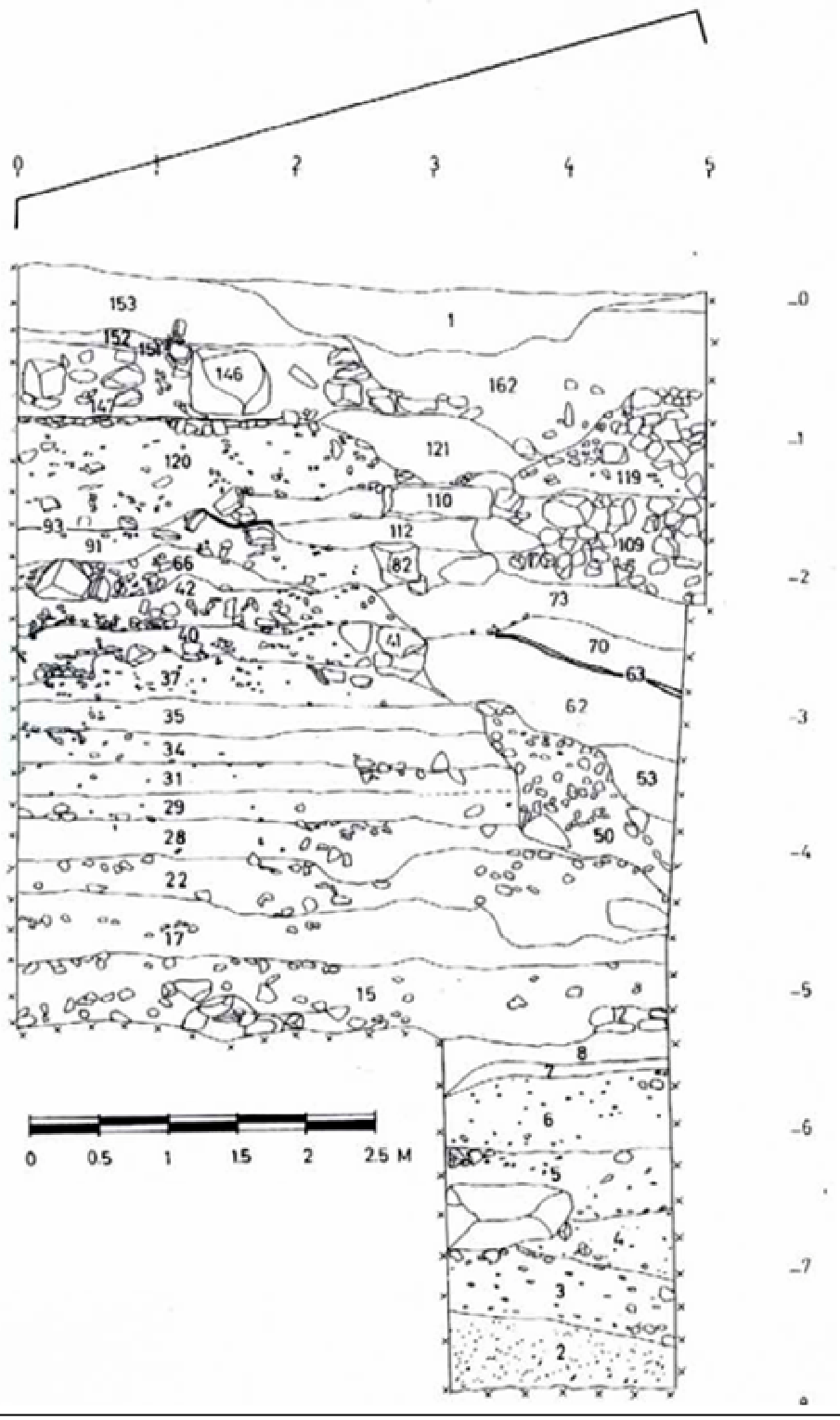


Figure 3.11: Remains of Skeleton (Site 4)

wall fragments were separated from the remains of the apsidal house by one-metre deep sediments. In addition, sediments that belonged to a short abandonment phase broke the relation between the architectural units of the two strata..

However, in Site 3 the platform was also connected to architectural remains. Walls 3.007 and 3.008 were connected by an earth surface (3.006). Only fragments of these remains were excavated. While wall 3.007 seems to be a terrace wall to raise the space, wall 3.008 seems to be a fragment of a house wall. Surface 3.006 is the inner floor of this house. The floor is built of hard-levelled earth gravel; on top of it was a stony pavement of pebbles. Remains of two mendable jars were recovered on top of it. The surface was covered by a thin brick layer that may be part of its construction or it could be also a brick fall from the house walls.

The construction phase of Stratum III is dated on the basis of potsherds. The latest pottery sherds recovered from unit 4.017- sealed by the platform- and wall 4.026 make-up are dated to Late Chalcolithic/EBI period. In addition, mendable sherds on top of Floor 3.006 are dated to the EBI. The use phase of the platform is also dated to the same period. All the pottery materials recovered from these contexts were *in situ*. Very few materials can be mended.

4.3.3 **Phase 1b**

On top of floor 3.006 lies another stone pavement and brick floor, which are contemporary with it. Remains of thin layers separate the two floors. These remains were formed during the levelling of the area to construct the upper floor.

Pavement 3.012 is built of well-selected round pebbles, which were filled closely to each other. The top of the platform was plastered with strong brick sediment (unit 3.013). The floor was above wall 3.007, and the shell layer and deposits 3.010 cut the relation between the two. This floor is well connected to wall 3.008 and seems to be one of its phases.

4.3.4 **Phase 2**

Evidence of this phase was found at both Sites 3 and 4. The remains represent a destruction and abandonment phase of the second occupational stratum in Tell Jenin. Usually a destruction stage preceded the abandonment stage, though in other cases the abandonment of a house preceded and may cause its destruction. Bearing in mind that the two processes are contemporary, the criteria to differentiate between the two are the nature of the texture, the morphology, the contents, and the sequence of accumulation. In Site 4, most of the sediments had horizontal tops and bottoms, fine textures including grey and ashy deposits within their contents. The sediments are around one meter thick. Their texture was finer than those that existed before them, though they include large stones. Generally, these layers contain grey fine gravels with plenty of ash and charcoal and some bricks. The bottom layers that belonged to the destruction phase were darker in colour and included fewer stones- almost clean sediment. They are *in situ* destruction debris. The thickness of these layers may suggest that other forces, for example fire, caused the destruction because plenty of ash and charcoal were included in the contents. However, if these deposits are a result of fire, it is more likely that fire happened after the site was abandoned. After the second excavation season, Site 4 was covered with natural plants that exceeded one meter high which in some locations were set on fire. The assumption that the ash and charcoal are caused by similar circumstance is valid. This assumption could be verified by analysing the flotation samples from the area.

The destruction and abandonment phases were distinguished by a sequence of horizontal sediments, units 4.028, 4.029, 3.015, 3.016 that covered the tops of the preceding phases. They are also located on top of Platforms 4.022 and 3.013 and below pavements 4.032 and 3.017.

This abandonment phase existed also in Site 3. A small shell layer (3.009) found against wall 3.007 and on top of floor 3.006. Whether the

Figure 3.12: Apsidal House Phases (Site 3)

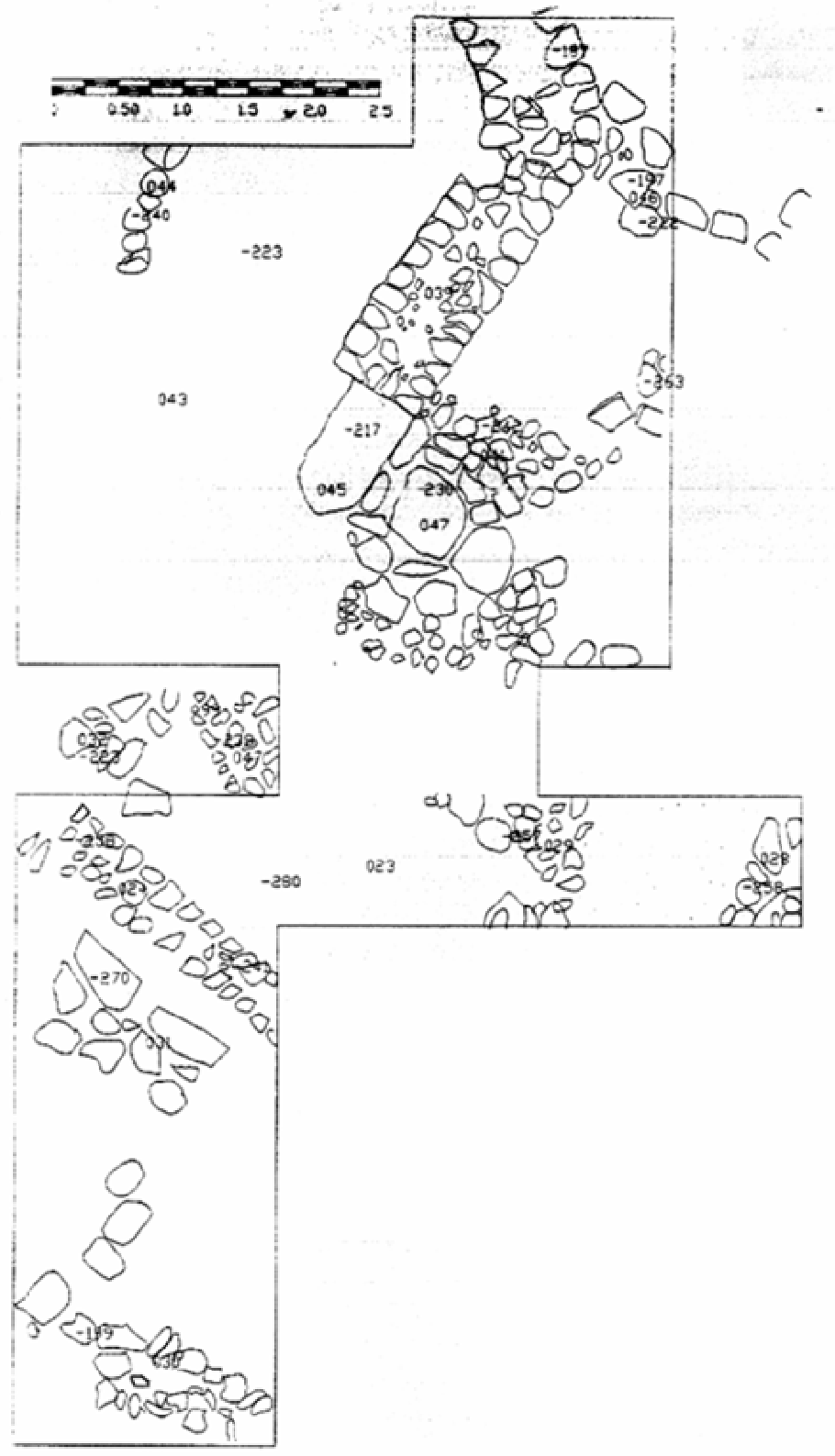


Figure 3.13: First Phase of Apsidal House (Site 3)

Figure 3.14: Upper Apsidal House Phase (Site 3)

shells had a cultural relation to the floor or were naturally lying there is a subject of a thorough investigation (Ezzughayar et al.). It is more likely that they belong to the abandonment phase. Other silt sediments were deposited on top of this shell layer and the surface (units 3.009, 3.011).

Unit 4.028 is a re-deposition and surface destruction on top of the pavement. It contains a large amount of bones, charcoal and brick. The bottom of unit 4.029 is a surface that may belong to the abandonment phase. It is found to be related to unit 3.016 that had a similar composition. It had many sherds lying flat.

4.3.5 **Phase 3**

The abandonment phase of Stratum III is evident by surface and fallen stone remains. Most of these sediments were lying flat. Stony layers 4.030 and 3.017 are probably a natural sorting of wadi stones. The stones were randomly placed. They may be also a re-deposition of a stony platform related to the abandonment phase, which is a more probable case because mendable pottery was found within their contents. If this is the case, then it is more likely that the Tell was not totally deserted during this period. Layer 4.030 is an erosion sediment that may have been eroded from an upper area of the Tell. Its composition is similar to platform 4.022.

On top these layers is a sequence of thin greyish deposits formed by fine gravel (unit 4.034, 4.035, 3.018, 3.019). In Site 3, these deposits were lighter in colour and larger in texture, though they are still darker than other later deposits. Many include charcoal and lines of ash within their contents.

In Site 1, remains of similar deposits were found. No surfaces or architectural remains are associated with them. The deposition history of this site was similar to that of Sites 3 and 4. This was one reason for phasing the bottom layers of this site with the latest phase of Stratum III. Most of the deposits that belonged to Phase 3 of Stratum III are natural filling or destruction debris. Units 1.001 to 1.004 were assigned to

this phase.

4.4 Stratum IV: The Early Bronze Age I-B Period

Two occupational phases during the EBI became obvious, one on top of the other. The limited exposure did not allow a detailed examination of these phases. In some cases, the connection between the baulks was broken because the excavation did not extend beyond the limits where the buildings had to be raised.

4.4.1 **Phase 1**

There is no strong evidence supporting the complete desertion of Tell Jenin. There is a short break in stratification after an abandonment phase. Stratum IV belongs to another stage of the EBI. It continues the earliest dates as suggested by the pottery.

Data for Stratum IV were excavated from Sites 1, 3 and 4. Few remains were also recovered from Site 2. No architecture was found in this site, but a sequence of clean dump and erosion layers was excavated above the natural soil. It may suggest that the edge of the Early Bronze village does not extend beyond the limits of Site 2. Clearly, part of Site 1 is inside the town. However, the exposed area of excavation on this site does not allow any thorough explanation of the scattered wall fragments belonging to this phase. In Site 1, wall fragments 1.009 and 1.010 appear in the baulk and only small pieces were excavated. They were built over the surface of the previous destruction.

In any case, providing that Site 1 is the limit of Stratum IV deposits, the settlement size will not be less than 140 hectares. There is no evidence to propose that the town was fortified. In Site 4, we had reached its edge, but no town wall was found there. Neither is there an indication that it existed inside the Tell.

The most extensive data for this stratum were excavated in Site 3. In this site, we have remains of apsidal houses, inner surface and a courtyard. Other than that, scattered remains were found in Sites 4 and 1.

The excavations uncovered two phases of apsidal houses (Figures 3.12-3.15). A single course double lined boulder wall represents the lower phase (unit 3.025). The western line of boulders is lower than the eastern line. It was built of smaller stones. It was oriented toward the southwest. The exposed area of the wall is 6.5 meters long and 50 centimetres thick. The northeast corner of the wall turns gently toward the southwest. Its later side is still hidden in the baulk. However, there are enough reasons to believe that it bends to form the southwest side of the house. Inside the house is plaster floor 3.026. It is coming against the wall upper course indicating that the house interior is located to the east. North is an open space.

Toward the southwest, the wall forms a corner with another wall that was oriented to the northeast (3.025). Only two meters of this wall were preserved; the rest is still hidden in the west and east baulks. A pavement was exposed 2.5 meters away south of the wall, constructed between it and another wall (3.030) with the same orientation. To the east, another one-meter long wall fragment was excavated, which was in the same orientation as the apsidal house wall (3.025). Both these walls were probably partition walls inside a courtyard.

By collecting all these pieces together, it seems that we are dealing with a fenced courtyard. Wall 3.034 is the eastern boundary; wall 3.023 is the southern boundary. Wall 3.032

Figure 3.15: Apse and Section through Apsidal House (Site 3)

is the western boundary. Both sides of the courtyard were paved.

However, the small probe in Site 3 revealed stone pavements and a plastered surface. A thick layer of stones (unit 3.020) is the remains of a pavement. It was located to the southeast of the apsidal house and toward the north-western side of wall 3.032. It belonged to the courtyard surface. Wall 3.030 probably belonged to another apsidal house.

In Site 4, this phase consisted of pavement 4.032, stones 4.033, skeleton 4.025 and ash lines within unit 4.034. Except for the skeleton, the other units were fragmentary and intruded by foundation trench 4.046 and pits 4.098 and 4.065.

4.4.2 **Phase 2**

Most of the deposits of this phase belong to the destruction debris including much ash and stones. The debris probably belonged to a roof fall since it was loose and falls directly on top of the surface (unit 3.035). However, the deposits were also used as a levelling for the upper occupation phases.

In Site 4, unit 4.035 is an eroded layer identified by its fine texture, and dark colour. The top of unit 4.035 is an ash line, separating the two phases.

In Site 4, unit 4.035 is an eroded layer identified by its fine texture, and dark colour. The top of unit 4.035 is an ash line, separating the two phases. This ash line was discontinuous and has been eroded down the slope during the abandonment phase.

The distinguishing grey colour could be a result of two processes. The first is the decay of organic material deposited within its contents. The second, it was located below an ash surface and due to its nature it absorbed the ash from this surface. The boundaries of this layer were disturbed by pit 4.114, to the west and south. Unit 4.035 could be easily distinguished by a rubble layer (4.053) deposited in a later phase. In addition, unit 4.047 is similar in its fine texture and colour to unit 4.035, but separated from it by a thick line of ash. In Site 1, Phase 2 is characterised by scattered remains belonging to destruction and abandonment deposits.

4.4.3 **Phase 3**

Phase 3 is another phase of the abandonment and destruction of Stratum IV. Its characteristic is the pockets of fallen bricks from the walls of the apsidal house (Figure 3.16). The brick fell outside the house and on top of the courtyard pavement (unit 3.051). Brick also fell inside the house. The fall above the house floor was mixed with ash (unit 3.053). The brick fall covered the major source for the EBI pottery found at Tell Jenin. Most of the pottery sherds were mendable. A few tools were also found.

In Site 4, the phase was covered by the destruction and abandonment units 4.039 and 4.040. They stand at the north-eastern side of the Tell, behind wall 4.045, and could be distinguished by a grey fine texture, which is not observed south of the wall. These latest sediments were of lighter and brownish colours. Coarser and hard texture distinguished them from the other sediments of the abandonment phase.

The lower phase enclosed medium size fine greyish gravel. The upper phase sediments contained a random deposition of large stones (within unit 4.040) which exemplified a natural destruction, probably by water force. The sorting is obvious through the accumulation of smaller stones below three larger stones. All these deposits form a separation between the bottom of Stratum V and the early abandonment phase of Stratum IV below.

In the case of a long abandonment with a nearby habitation, we should expect pottery sherds, which belonged to the periods between the EBI and the beginning of the 13th century BC. This was found to be the case with many buckets excavated from the abandonment phase.

4.4.4 **Phase 4**

This is an abandonment phase. It is

characterised by brick and stone erosion covering the walls of the apsidal house. Many of the bricks include red and black flecks (unit 3.055). Unit 3.054 includes larger stones. The top layer (unit 3.058) was levelled and cut by the occupants of the succeeding Stratum.

The stone cluster of unit 4.041 is the only remains that can be contemporary with this phase. It prevented the soil of the last remains from eroding down the slope. Many erosion layers were also found at this site.

4.4.5 The Apsidal House of Tell Jenin in the Wake of Curvilinear Architecture

The apsidal house, although half complete, is a well-built masonry example of apsidal houses among other similar architectures. The curvilinear house is part of the domestic architecture that dominates the Late Chalcolithic-EBI periods. The apsidal house type becomes a hallmark of the EBI period. The discussion of this type of house was summarised by Thempson 1969, Hanbury-Tenison (1985: 184 ff), Braun (1989a, 1996), and Bonn (1976). Until recently, all the curvilinear architectures were called apsidal houses. Now there is more than one type, namely the rounded, the oval and the apsidal. There is no clear function of the curves. But at Tell Meser, the apse was used as a storage place. This use is one reason for relating the curvilinear style to rural societies.

Figure 3.16: Destruction Phase of Strata III, IV (Site 3)

Kempinski (1978: 11) suggests that the apsidal house created a distinction between urban and rural settlements. The shape was abandoned because it became incompatible with urban planning. Rectilinear types replaced the urban norm.

Because of its regional and chronological limits, the apsidal house is clearly a tradition that can identify the EBI in Palestine. This house type is indigenous to the Near East since many similar houses were found on Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. It is assumed that the apsidal house continued since the Chalcolithic period and is therefore indigenous to EBI culture (Hanbury-Tenison 1985). However, one should consider Hennessy's point (1967: 45) that the use of brick in building the apsidal houses was introduced from Mesopotamia. It is therefore, acceptable that only the 'idea' of the apsidal house tradition was locally adopted in Palestine. There is no foreign influence apparent in the house construction (Ben-Tor 1992: 67).

However, the apsidal house tradition existed before many of the EBI cultures changed to cities. They were earlier found in many sites like Kh. Khalalidya (Yiftahel), Ein Shadud, which are dated few centuries before EBI. The apsidal houses were "purely of EBI" (Hanbury-Tenison 1985: 203).

5 PHASING SUMMARY AFTER THE EARLY BRONZE AGE I

The following sections summarise the stratigraphy of Tell Jenin following the EBI abandonment. Four major strata were found.

Figure 3.17: Stratum V Terrace Wall (Site 4)

5.1 STRATUM V (13TH-12TH CENTURY TRANSITION)

The Tell was abandoned for a long time before the re-use by this culture. Six major phases were recovered, which belonged to the 13th-12th transitional period.

Huge sediments of a hard brown bricky nature reflect the accumulation of debris over the long period of abandonment after the EBI. Most of the sediments were cut during the Early 13-12th century phase. The morphology of the previous Tell was characterized by deep steep sides and sharp edges, which slope towards the Southwest. The Stratum V people's first task was to level the site by building a retaining wall at the southwest corner. The wall was built of double cobble courses on top of a large stone base (Figure 3.17). The distance between this wall and the pre-existing tell was filled with the sediments cut from earlier phases. Three plastered basins, a circular pit and an earth surface with fragments of a clay installation is connected to this wall.

The north side of the Tell, Site 1, produced evidence of domestic architecture. Remains of a house and a courtyard were recovered (Figure 3.18). The superstructure of the house walls was built of mud brick. The house entrance had a slab stone. This entrance was blocked in a later phase. The courtyard was encircled by two walls and paved with flat cobbles.

Another noticeable piece of architecture was a series of pavements made from different stone sizes found at the Northeast corner. The function of these pavements is not known yet, since the exposure of the area was very limited and therefore no indications connecting them to other solid architecture.

Figure 3.18: Stratum V Remains of House (Site 3)

The destruction phase of this house is evident by a pile of fallen bricks lying against its corner. Many mendible pottery sherds were found within the destruction contexts. The most noticeable is a complete Cypriote milk bowl, a few base ring sherds, some complete jars and pithoi, bowls, lamps, cooking pots, a krater, a pilgrim flask and a Philistine tradition bowl. The sherd collection include carinated and round bowls, fragments of pithoi, a local pyxis. A few other artifacts were found, such as a bronze needle and basalt grinders.

A long abandonment phase in Site 4 was characterized by a series of sediments of mixed pebbles and gravel. They represent a sequence of erosion cycles that occurred after the excavated parts of the Tell was abandoned, more likely during the Iron Age through Roman periods.

Figure 3.19: Lower Phase of Byzantine Occupation.(Site 4)

Figure 3.20: Upper Phases of Byzantine Occupation (Site 4)

5.2 STRATUM VI AND VII (EARLY AND LATE BYZANTINE)

Following the long abandonment of Stratum VI, and at the top of the slope of the latest erosion cycles, the early Byzantines constructed their culture. The first task was levelling and filling the sloppy nature of the top 13th–12th century remains. A retaining wall was built to the south. The architectural remains for this culture were fragmentary, a result of its reuse by the latest cultures. Surfaces were cleaned, and few of them were preserved. The reuse of the early 13th–12th century retaining wall as a base for a new superstructure was evident. A complex was built which had a plastered surface. Outside the house, a paved courtyard was found. A second phase of this house was oriented in the same direction of the previous one. A *tabun* complex with its chamber was connected to the retaining wall (Figure 3.19, 3.20).

The destruction of the site was not fully clear from the cleaning process. Evidence of stone falls above the interpreted surfaces was noticed. The abandonment sediments were reused later as surfaces and wall make-ups.

It is more likely that the southwest corner of the Tell continues as a domestic quarter. The first activity was to level the area, which was done by cutting the previous dump and raising the occupational level by building a stony platform. At least two private houses, connected by a courtyard, could be identified. One house occurred with a plastered surface and paved courtyard.

Two pits, two *tabuns* and other small installations were also recovered. One pit was dug to acquire stones to build the walls.

The destruction phase was represented by wall falls above the plaster floors. Another brick layer belonging to the destruction phase was mixed with cobbles and boulders. The abandonment phase was short, due to the cleaning and re-use by upper phases.

Among the remains for the Byzantine period stratum is the typical black Beisan ribbed amphora and the straight open cooking pots.

5.3 STRATUM VIII (SEVENTH CENTURY A.D.)

This stratum is a continuity of the cultural reuse and re-construction of the Early Stratum

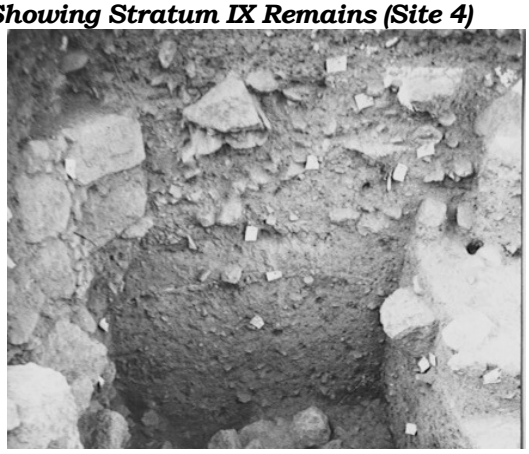
Figure 3.21: Stratum VIII Remains(Site 4)

VII. It was identified with a plaster floor, against a building wall in the west (Figure 3.21). Other evidence was destroyed by the modern street building and bulldozer digging. The abandonment phase was cleaned later, though evidence of Abbasid and Mamluke pottery was mixed with Ottoman suggesting that the Tell was occupied during these periods. The destruction of this stratum was well represented by bricky rubble sediment supra the plaster surface.

5.4 STRATUM IX (OTTOMAN ACTIVITIES)

Based on the Tell stratigraphy, the Late Ottoman existence at the Tell was not tremendous. Ottoman Jenin exists at the western slope of Karem Jenin. Beside plastered surfaces, the Ottomans' constructed walls, perhaps for garden fence, suggest that domestic activities may exist as well. Belonging to the abandonment phase of the period are grey soft thick deposits mixed with stones, reflecting erosion sediments after the destruction of the site.

Figure 3.22: A Look of North Section Showing Stratum IX Remains (Site 4)



5.5 STRATUM X (RECENT AND MODERN ACTIVITIES)

This stratum includes three phases. The latest phase is the occupation of the site by modern Jeninis, reflected in Site 4 by the bulldozer levelling, digging modern pits. The preceding phase is constructing a drainage cistern in the southeastern side of the Tell. The earliest phase is the construction of the street which caused damage to the earliest strata and is characterised by the street pavement and fill.

6 A SHORT NOTE IN CONCLUSION

Tell Jenin has a long history starting from the PPN through recent times. During the EBI, it was an unfortified farming settlement of similar cultural traditions to the contemporaneous villages surrounding Marj Ibn 'Amir. The apsidal house, the fauna and flora, the flint and stone artifacts are clear indications that farming was the basic living source for the area.

It uses the resources of Marj Ibn 'Amir in an efficient way, since both flora and fauna data produced evidence of local domestication (Preliminary analysis was done by A. Ziadeh). The evidence is clear from the early phases of the EBI occupation.

The EBI stratigraphy indicates that the site was abandoned shortly before the end of the EBI period. However, we learned from Chapter 2 that the Tell Jenin zone was not fully abandoned during the successive period. It is clear that the settlement system nucleus started at Tell Jenin and then settlement shifted to nearby spots continuing the occupations until the recent times.