

## A RESIDENTIAL AREA BY THE SOUTH DECUMANUS

by

Michael Gawlikowski

### Introduction

The Polish participation in the Jerash Project included the excavation of a sector immediately to the North of the street known as the South Decumanus, 115 m West of the *Cardo* and 40 m from the church of St. Theodore farther North (Pl. I,A,B, Fig. 1). The excavated surface stretches for 45 m from the street, being for the most part up to 25 m wide. The uncovered structures are well preserved, some walls still standing as high as 4-4.5 m. Accordingly, it was decided that the most important building in the area, the Umayyad House, should be restored. This undertaking is by now completed.

The excavations started in late September 1982 and were closed in mid-December 1983. The staff included, in addition to the present writer, Dr. Antoni Ostrasz (architect), Mr Tomasz Scholl (archaeologist) and Mrs. Krystyna Gawlikowska (registrar). Abundant archaeological material was recovered, including a pottery series from the Hellenistic through Abbassid periods, a large collection of lamps, mostly dated from the sixth to ninth centuries and studied by T. Scholl, Umayyad glass (K. Gawlikowska) and several hundred coins catalogued obligingly by J. Bowsher (Roman and Byzantine) and Mrs. Aida Naghaway (Islamic). All these will be published at a later date after a proper comparative study.

Looking back at these fifteen months of continuous excavation, it becomes clear that the Jerash Project provided a unique opportunity for a large-scale investigation and comprehensive study of the ancient city it is concerned with. We are grateful to the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and, personally, to its Director General Dr. Adnan Hadidi, for the excellent conditions of work that were offered to us, for the efficient and well-advised management

of the Project, for the responsive attitude shown on every occasion. In Jerash, the generous policy of the Department was skillfully implemented by Mrs. Aida Naghaway and her collaborators, who have spared no trouble offering their friendly assistance. We have enjoyed, throughout our stay in this country, the daily contact with our Jordanian colleagues in common work and common concern for the task that was set before us. We shall not lose this concern in our future work back home.

While the Umayyad remains under the modern surface sloping down to the Roman street allow a coherent description, only fragmented traces of earlier periods are found below. There are, however, two Roman buildings on higher ground further North; unfortunately, they could not be excavated completely.

The columns of the South Decumanus, as restored ten years ago, stand on a stylobate reaching, in our sector, the height of 5.81m above sea level. North from it, solid rock stretches for about 40 m on a practically horizontal level to a vertical rock face rising to a terrace about 4 m higher (Fig. 4). The rock surface is artificially levelled throughout, but it presents several cavities cut to accommodate cisterns, cellars or storage pits, usually filled with deposits Roman or Byzantine in date. The outdoor pavements of the Umayyad House lie at the stylobate level by the colonnade and rise gradually to a point 1.5 m higher, recovering earlier remains, while floors in rooms are usually lower, often immediately above the cleared rock surface. The upper terrace and its buildings were in the meantime covered with massive debris upon which the staircase leading down to the Umayyad House was laid.

### The Roman Buildings

While some Hellenistic objects were recovered from the lowermost levels, no



Figure 1. South Decumanus Area, general plan  
 1. Early Roman.  
 2. Middle and Late Roman.  
 3. Umayyad on Roman foundations.  
 4. Umayyad.

- 5. Early Abbasid.
- 6. Blocked doors.
- 7. Caves.
- 8. Rock cuts.
- 9. Limits of excavation.

undisturbed layer can be dated so early. Firm evidence for the occupation of the area begins with the first two centuries A.D. and consists mainly of several cisterns anterior to the layout of the street in the late Antonine period.

Three of them stood actually in the path of the Decumanus and were filled in the process of its building. A circular well led down to a large rock-hewn reservoir 4.25 m deep (loc. 15); a part of it was cut off by the foundation of the stylobate, elsewhere laid on the rock surface but here extending all the way down to the bottom of the hollow below. The subsequent fill contains a large amount of Roman pottery including many complete vessels, especially at the bottom level which, unfortunately, could be reached only in a small sounding, as it is covered by a uniform layer 3 m in depth.

Both East and West of loc. 15 there were rectangular cisterns once covered with beams. One of them (loc. 43) had a flight of steps along one of the carefully plastered walls and at least one arch to support the ceiling (Pl. II). A huge jar was embedded in the floor to facilitate cleaning of the cistern when it was being emptied. This cistern, too, was cut by a transverse wall, though not directly under the stylobate line, and further North by the much poorer foundation of the shops along the sidewalk of the street. The fill is therefore contemporary with the colonnade and the shops beside it. It included the same pottery as loc. 15 and also thirteen coins of which the latest identifiable pieces belong to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, one being exactly dated to 164/165 A. D. Both cisterns were taken out of service shortly afterwards. The South Decumanus is thus dated about 170 A. D.

To the East, the cistern loc. 28 was found likewise blocked at both ends by the foundations of the stylobate and of the shop façade behind it. At surface level, the rock is cut to accommodate transverse beams for a cover. This cistern was linked at the bottom with the neighbouring loc. 15, but the fill seems to have been dis-

turbed as late as fourth century.

Yet another cistern (loc. 29) remained longer in use, as it could be fitted into the line of shops. It has two arches, one supporting a lateral cavity in the rock; the other, at a short distance from the front wall and parallel to it, seems to have carried stone slabs at the entrance. The fill contained, around a central outcrop of rock, very few sherds and two late third century coins at the top level of the arches. At the bottom, on the other hand, two complete Hellenistic lamps may indicate a fairly early date for the original building, especially as there are Hellenistic and Early Roman deposits behind its North wall (in loc. 22).

All these cisterns seem to have been a part of an elaborate system of public water supply for the neighbourhood. Behind them, there are several walls forming an orthogonal system at variance with the orientation of the colonnaded street. The contents of the foundation trenches date the corresponding buildings to the first or second centuries A. D., but the higher courses of the walls are mostly Umayyad. Thus, Rooms 24 and 25 of the Umayyad House have inherited their western and southern limits from the Early Roman period; a huge monolithic threshold on the South side suggests an occupation level very close to the Umayyad one (Pl. III). Of an independent building to the West, only the foundation of Room 17 still subsist, laid on bedrock with the same early pottery preserved in the trench outside; a Hellenistic lamp and a Ptolemaic coin were found close to this foundation in a disturbed context.

The tracing of the Decumanus street should have induced new development in the area, but very few remains of later Roman times survive along the colonnade. The rock face to the North is cut into several sections differing in depth but parallel to the Decumanus, so as to accommodate housing in front of it. However, we have found only one wall running South from the rock and under Room 7, associated with late fourth cen-

tury coins. There is further a sewage drain leading from the North into the collector under the Decumanus, and still another cistern (loc. 41) right behind the row of shops; it was filled only in the Byzantine period. A stretch of wall standing above it to the West is certainly Roman and some other walls perpendicular to the street may be contemporary, at least in part. Otherwise everything was cleared flat prior to the construction of the Umayyad House. The clearing was thorough, perhaps repeated, following one or several earthquakes.

The later Roman period is better represented on the upper terrace. In the rock, there is a cave hollowed from the lower level and dimly lit by two light-wells (loc. 35). Directly above, a square cut in the rock surface, 3 m wide and 0.5 m deep, contains rows of round cavities along three of its sides; this represents the floor of a storage room used in the same time as the cave beneath.

A fissure in the rock goes along the edge of the terrace from one end of the excavated sector to the other. It must have endangered the further use of the cave and apparently caused its abandonment; on the other hand, the preserved buildings on the terrace are posterior to the formation of this cleft. While the fill of the cave and of the storage facility above contained late fourth century sherds and coins, the ceramic material associated with the later buildings indicates roughly the same period. The restoration must have closely followed the tremor which occurred, on this evidence, about the end of the fourth or in the early fifth century.

After the levelling of *débris*, a large building was erected at the eastern end of the excavated area. Its ashlar masonry forms a corner, still standing 4 m high, founded on the rock without a foundation trench. The South wall can be followed for some 16 m; its four higher courses were rebuilt in the seventh century, as shown by the contents of the corresponding trench. Inside, late walls formed a small compartment in the corner, its floor, marked by

a storage jar, being about 2 m above bedrock. The original level of occupation is about 0.70 m above the rock, on an earth and rubble layer having filled and covered the seismic fissure. Outside, against the western wall of the building, there existed a room (loc. 2) with a door opening into the space above the former storage facility to the West. Another door, found carefully blocked, led northwards through a wall bonded to the foundations of the NE building. The floor level was about 0.5 m above the bedrock with a light-well into the disused cave beneath. The fill, here and inside the NE building, dates in the late fourth or early fifth century.

From the lower courses of the NE building there springs another wall heading South, bonded to the main wall above the brink of the terrace about 3 m from the corner. Against it, there is an extensive tumble of huge, roughly hewn stones which pile up from the lower level and obviously represent the remains of buildings destroyed by the earthquake and cleared away. The tumble has covered the entrance to the cave and was topped, in its turn, by Late Byzantine deposits and, partly, by the steps leading down to the Umayyad House.

Another house was built upon the same terrace further West (Pl. IVB). It is located for the most part beyond the excavated area, which includes only three rooms (loc. 31, 32, 34). The walls stand directly on bedrock, with the exception of the SE corner of Room 32, which has a foundation laid around the rock edge, undercut in this place. Between the bedrock and the foundation, there was a sealed deposit containing third or fourth century sherds. The masonry of the walls is definitely poor, consisting of irregular stones assembled without mortar; while the house must be roughly contemporary with the NE building, it is possible that at least the upper courses are actually later. At any case, the NW house is posterior to the tumbling of stones below the terrace. Indeed, a door, later blocked, opened above it to the East.

There is a passage between this door and an unexcavated space to the West, presumably a courtyard. The passage provided the only entrance to Room 32, while Room 34 was accessible directly from the courtyard and opened at its other end into a small room (loc. 31) added later in an angle formed by further, as yet unexplored rooms to the North. Room 31 was blocked and filled rather early, while the two other remained in use until the early seventh century, as can be seen from their fill: it included the so-called Jerash bowls, animal-head lamps and red-slip stamped plates. A coin of Justinian found on bedrock in Room 34 corroborates this dating.

### **The Umayyad House (Fig. 2)**

The South foundation of Room 32 was used, after the abandonment of the NW house, by the builders of the Umayyad period. Their activity occasioned a new arrangement of the whole area. A staircase was laid upon the stone tumble, leading North to a level 2.4 m above bedrock (Pl. V A). The eastern side of the steps is retained by a wall built to keep in place a large terrace which also leans against the North wall of the house. It was filled with practically sterile soil up to the topmost level of the steps. At bottom level, we have found a coin of Constans II (641-668 A. D.) and contemporary pottery, also in the fabric of the retaining wall.

The steps, separated in two flights by a landing, ended at a door opening onto a platform around the corner of the NE building above the Byzantine fill, delimited by walls parallel to both sides of it. To the West, the upper flight of steps was also bordered by a retaining wall of another terrace above Room 31.

The stairs were found covered with eighth century deposits which also extended to the West (Pl. IVA). Even before these had accumulated, the Umayyad House was already below ground level on the North and West. A foundation trench with the early seventh century fill on the northern side reaches only to the upper

courses of the preserved wall, the lower parts of it having been built, after clearing, against the rubble left outside. All the evidence recovered points to the middle of the seventh century as the date of the construction.

While only a few walls were retained on the lower ground level near the Decumanus, the layers immediately below the floors of the house provide consistent evidence. Byzantine sherds and coins, mostly of the sixth century, were found under Rooms 10, 21, 22 and 24, as well as under the courtyard pavement (loc. 16 and 23). A coin of Constans II already mentioned dates the filling of the terrace East of the staircase. Other coins of the same emperor are the latest in the rubble of the NW house. Below the level of Room 7 and above the Roman wall buried about 400 A.D. there were found, in two clusters, eight coins known as Arab-Byzantine, in this case imitations of the folles of Justin II minted in Scythopolis (Beisan) and, in one instance, in Jerash itself (Pl. XV AB). The period of their issue is not exactly known, but it is reasonable to assume that they were gradually replacing Byzantine currency in the first decades of the Islamic government. It is probably not by chance that the original issues of Justin II (565-578 A.D.) are most numerous among the Byzantine coins found; their large circulation induced the Islamic mints to imitate in the first place these, rather than any other types. The latest genuine Byzantine issues are very poor, usually clipped coins of Constans II; we may conclude that the imitation coins are to be dated roughly in the same time, about the middle of the seventh century. Accordingly, the house was built at the beginning of the Umayyad period, about 660 A. D. or slightly later. As its construction is likely to have followed an earthquake, it is tempting to link it with the tremor of June 658 A. D., which caused extensive destruction in Palestine and Syria.

The colonnaded street apparently remained in use since Roman times. The sidewalk does not seem to have been built



Figure 2. The Umayyad Period.  
 1. The Umayyad House.  
 2. Other structures.

over in the Early Umayyad period, serving its original purpose along the line of shops. However, the shops themselves were entirely restored, including the upper foundation courses in the fill of the cistern loc. 43, yet without any major change in plan (Pl. V B).

The Umayyad House extends northwards behind four of these shops for 23 m. Although utilizing some earlier foundation as indicated above, it is an entirely new building. It is laid around a courtyard with the main entrance through a passage from the street between shops loc. 29 and 13 (Pl. VI A); another door opened on the opposite end into the staircase. An earlier sewage drain winds its way from the far end of the courtyard and beneath the entrance.

The irregular form of the courtyard (loc. 18, 16, 23, 9) is determined by the position of foundations, inherited from the Roman period, under Rooms 17, 24 and 25. There is a pavement rising gradually northwards, employed for a lengthy span of time at the same level.

The rooms are arranged in two wings, West and East of the courtyard. The western one consists of a row of rooms sharing a straight rear wall with no openings, its outside face being buried in the early seventh century fill, the same that extends in and over the NW house. Some parts of this wall may have been borrowed from older buildings, while the northern wall, though built against the still earlier rubble, is certainly contemporary with the house.

The rooms of the West wing differ in depth as a result of adjustments to the situation the builders found in the area. Thus, the northernmost Room 7 (Pl. VII B) is longer than others, so as to allow an entrance from the courtyard, in line with the door of the staircase. The room is 9.5 m long and only 2.9 m wide. It was below ground level on two sides and lit, as far as we know, by a single window opening above the steps, opposite the terrace to the East and its retaining wall. Allowing for the usual proportions of the window,

the ceiling could not be lower than about 3.5 m above the floor, and this is further substantiated by the NW corner of the room, still standing to a height of 4.2 m above the floor level. However, an arch springing from two piers set against the long walls of the room was only about 3 m high and must have carried a partition wall at that level; it was clearly irrelevant as a support for transverse beams, but there are no other hints of a storey above.

The floor of the room, level with the courtyard in front of it, was once covered with a mosaic of which only displaced fragments and a large amount of single cubes have been recovered from the corresponding layer. At far end, there was a stone bench against the wall.

The main room of the house extends to the South of Room 7. It is shorter but much wider (7 m by 7.6 m) and divided in the middle by an arch spanning an opening 4 m wide from East to West (Pl. VIII). Both halves of the room (loc. 10 and 20) were covered separately using this support, with a minimum height of about 3 m above the floor, but actually probably higher. An upper storey is again possible, if its entrance was from the higher ground level outside to the West, but no proof of it has survived.

The floor is sunk about 0.7 m below the level of the courtyard; four steps inside the room lead down from the entrance which opens against the arched partition into loc. 10. To the right and left, there are windows only 0.4 m wide, 1.2 m above the courtyard pavement, each one illuminating half of the room.

The earthen floor is formed by a compact red soil layer 0.5 m thick, covering bedrock in which a pit in loc. 10 contained a large amount of late Byzantine pottery. The fill below the floor also yielded some typical seventh century forms, such as animal-head lamps, white-painted jugs and black-ware basins. An Abbassid dinar dated to 770/771 A.D. (Pl. XV C) proves that the room was used at the same general level at least as late.

Further South, Room 17 intruded into the courtyard space. It was doubled in the Umayyad period by Room 19 behind, in line with the common western wall of the house. The partition between Room 19 and 20 extends along the earlier Room 17, being built against its northern wall. As a result, Rooms 17 and 19 are not on the same axis.

Room 17 was cleared in the Umayyad period down to bedrock, laying bare the earlier foundations. There are, however, traces of a pavement some 0.2 m above the uneven rock. Some Byzantine sherds, but also much earlier finds, e.g. a Ptolemaic coin and another of Agrippa (42/43 A.D.), come from below that level, while on the other hand a pit in the bedrock contained a typical Umayyad storage basin.

There are two steps down from the courtyard and a window, once secured with iron bars, which opens 0.8 m above the floor but level with the exterior pavement to the South. Room 19 has roughly the same floor level, in places at the very base of the walls; beneath, there were some early seventh century deposits within the cavities of the rock. The room had apparently no window, the door to Room 17 being the only opening in its walls preserved up to 3 m above the floor.

Further South, Room 22 opened from the passage leading to the street and had an earthen floor above Byzantine and Roman layers into which its foundations are set.

The opposite, eastern wing of the house is not symmetrical. In its northern part, it consists of four rooms facing the large Room 10/20 across the courtyard. The walls are for a considerable part Roman, cut to the North by the retaining wall of the described terrace; coins dated about 600 A. D. were found beneath this wall and the pavement of the rooms.

Room 25 was entered from the West and Room 24 from the South through an inherited Roman doorway. The former has a stone bench with a retaining border along its northern wall, used probably for storing household belongings. From each room

there was access to another room behind (loc. 36 and 37), the latter with a completely preserved arch in the middle.

The larger part of the courtyard (loc. 16) opposite Room 17 extended further East, ending in line with the rooms of the eastern wing. A small sunken space (loc. 26), reached by several steps (Pl. VI B), led to a cellar (loc. 27) and an open recess at the same level, above the filled cistern loc. 41, from which other steps led down to an artificial cave dug out in the rock beneath the shop loc. 42. This storage complex was delimited from the courtyard by a stone fence.

The walls of the house, with the exception of fragments inherited from earlier times, are built of reused stones varying in size but roughly arranged in courses, with stone chips and mud between them. There is usually no core fill between the faces and no bonding stones. The walls were probably mud-plastered, the roofs certainly made of wooden beams. The presence of a second storey, while not excluded, could not be ascertained.

It seems that grouping of rooms in pairs was a constant habit in relation to the pattern of family life in the Umayyad period. There are three sets of two-room suits (loc. 17-19, 25-36 and 24-37), with the room behind apparently windowless. These could have served as living quarters for subdivisions of the family, the front room being in each case devoted to daily activities and the other, darker one, for sleeping. Room 10/20 and 7 apparently served the whole household for common meals, receptions and the like.

It is remarkable that no kitchen could be identified in this otherwise well preserved house (all the ovens found belong to a later phase); these installations must have been quite rudimentary. The only sanitary facility is the covered sewage channel in the courtyard.

### **The Abbassid Survival**

One of the results of this excavation to merit attention is the established fact that the life of Jerash as a city did not stop at



the end of the Umayyad period. There is no evidence for the earthquake of 746/747 A.D. that destroyed Pella and which supposedly marked the end of Jerash as well. On the contrary, the Umayyad House remained in use for quite a while after this date.

A convenient criterion of chronology is the appearance of red-painted pottery, known at Pella from the last years of occupation there, but obviously predominant for a lengthy span of time as far as the house in Jerash is concerned. Besides, there is the clear evidence of lamps dated in the second half of the eighth century, quite common among our finds.

One of the mid-eighth century lamps was actually found in the wall of the small room (loc. 21) built in a corner between Rooms 17 and 10/20. While the walls of this room lay directly on a Byzantine level forming the floor, this is about 0.5 m lower than the pavement in the adjacent courtyard and is covered without transition with an eighth century fill. It thus seems clear that the pavement was removed in this place when Room 21 was built.

Soon after, more important changes took place. The Umayyad House was divided into three separate dwellings. This was done by means of erecting a few partition walls and blocking several doors (Fig. 3).

The South wall of Room 24 was rebuilt at this time above the threshold and extended West to join the corner of Room 21 (Pl. III A). The living unit thus created included the main rooms of the Umayyad House (loc. 10/20 and 7). The courtyard (loc. 9, 23) was accessible only through the stairs from the North (Pl. VII A). The floor level remained unchanged, except for Room 24 which went out of use, at least at the preserved level. Its two extant doors were blocked above some early deposits on the original pavement, while later layers were disturbed by the kilns of the terminal phase. Rooms 25, 36 and 37 yielded, on the contrary, late eighth century potsherds at the floor level. The access to Room 37 at this stage is not yet

clear, pending additional work still needed in this part of the house.

The part of the Umayyad House around the courtyard loc. 16 became a separate dwelling which included Rooms 17, 19 and 22. The passage to the street was closed above the sewage drain and the courtyard could then be approached from the East, through a doorway in the wall crossing the filled cistern loc. 41.

The blocking of the original way of access to the house resulted in the creation of a recess (loc. 18) leading to Room 22; it was approached through the former window of Room 17, now level with the floors on both sides, for that of Room 17 rose for about 0.5 m, preserving traces of a hearth and many smoked cooking pots.

The SW corner of the courtyard loc. 16 received a rectangular raised border above a well linked with the sewage drain; this was used for refuse disposal and precluded any direct communication with loc. 18 behind. The drain remained viable down to the Decumanus, but was blocked uphill from the well.

The former shops along the street were in the meantime developed into yet another house. A wall was built through the space formerly occupied by one of them (loc. 28/42), thus making the neighbouring Room 13 considerably larger. Behind, another room was added above the former cellar (loc. 27) and a part of the passage above the sewer (loc. 14); the resulting room had its living floor level with the top of the preserved partition between the two, the cellar having been filled with soil containing eighth century lamps and sherds. The same fill occurs in Room 13 above the Umayyad level. There is a corresponding threshold between this and the back room (loc. 14/27), which had also another entrance from the former passage between the courtyard and the street, now closed at the far end (loc. 12).

This three-room unit opened into a part of the colonnade, by then enclosed to serve as a courtyard. Only the side walls of the enclosure remain, any blocking between

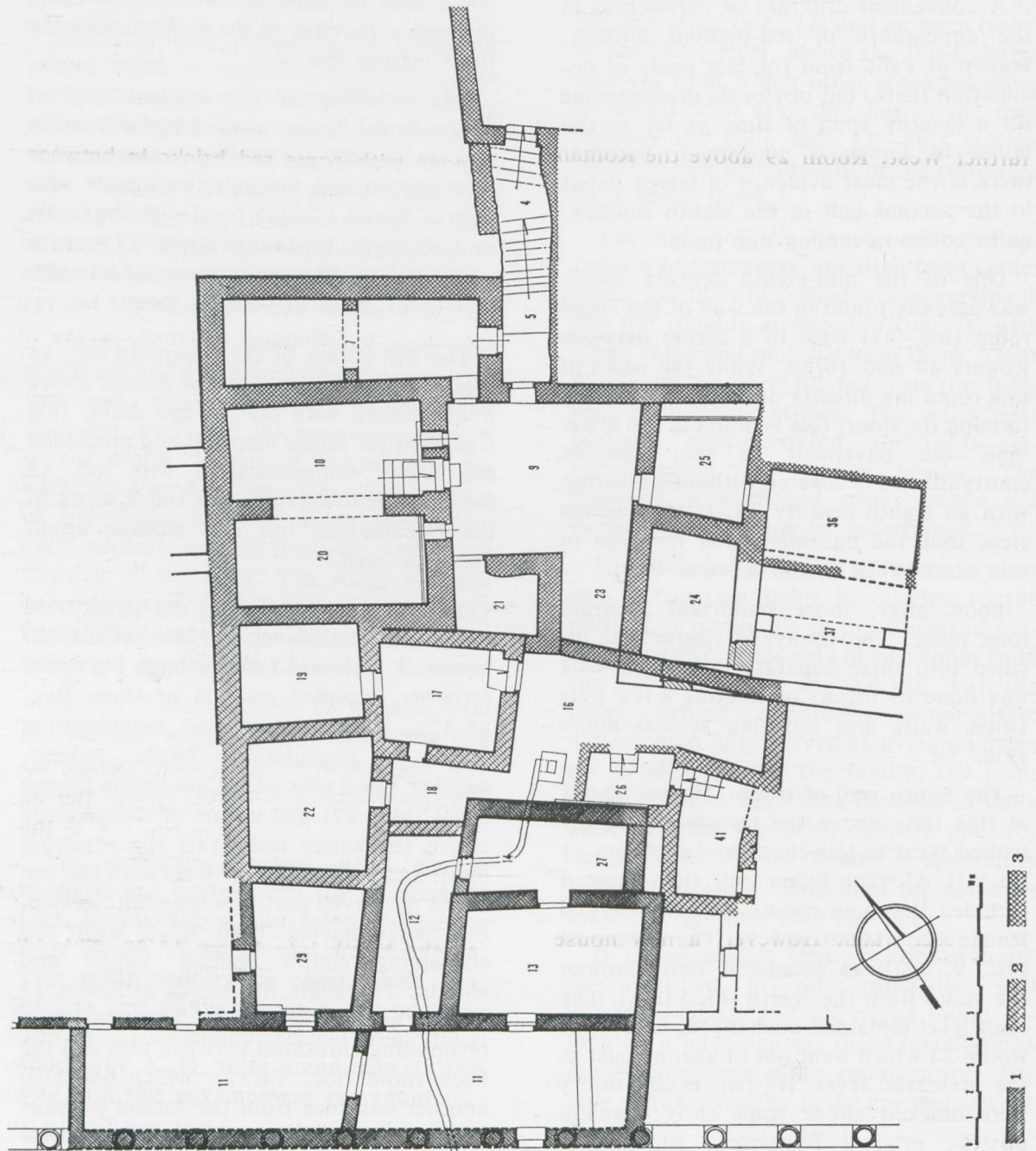


Figure 3. The Early Abbasid Period.  
 1. South House.

2. Middle House.  
 3. North House.

the columns that might have been preserved having been removed during the restoration work in the early seventies. However, there remains a threshold cut in the stylobate in front of the entrance to Room 13.

There is also another threshold in the West cross-wall of this courtyard, suggesting that what lies behind belonged to the same house. Another stretch of the enclosed colonnade opens there into Room 29 and two other unexcavated rooms further West. Room 29 above the Roman cistern had two late levels, the higher one being associated with a pavement in front of it and a door leading West to the next room.

The sherds in the fill of all three late houses include, beside red-painted pottery, the so-called cut-ware bowls and lamps decorated with a vinescroll, typical of the later half of the eighth century. While the Abbassid coins are very rare, one of them proves, as we have seen, that Room 10/20 was used roughly at its original level as late as 770 A.D.

### **The Ruin and Abandonment**

The latest use of the area is connected with the installation of pottery kilns (Pl. IX), after the housing had been at least partially abandoned, apparently as a result of another earthquake indicated by the massive stone tumble in several rooms. Most doors were blocked at this occasion, and the rooms later used, if at all, at a much higher level, as shown by the careless, often overhanging upper courses of several walls. However, a new house was built at the North end of the excavated sector. We have cleared only one room (loc. 1), right under the modern surface. Its floor is about 1 m above the top level of the staircase of the Umayyad House, by that time covered with eighth century deposits.

Three of the kilns were installed in the northern part of the Umayyad House. The biggest, kiln 1, stood practically on pavement level of the courtyard, while smaller kilns 2 and 3 were built over the

fill of Room 24, their openings cut through its western wall. All three kilns were surrounded by fill and opened into a small area (loc. 23), a part of the former courtyard by now enclosed and provided with a door from the remaining part of it (loc. 9). The staircase door was blocked and the only access to the kilns must have been through the then filled Room 10/20, divided by a wall on the line of the collapsed arch.

Kilns 1 and 3 were built mostly of stones with some red bricks in between, while kiln 2 was exclusively in brick. They had well preserved fire chambers with the intermediate floors supported by piers of round bricks and, in the big kiln 1, by a reused basalt mortar set in the middle. The domed upper chambers were preserved to a considerable height and the arched openings complete.

The fill inside the kilns and at corresponding higher levels outside contained several complete cooking pots apparently produced there, and also Abbassid lamps, cut-ware bowls and red-painted bowls. The working level was further marked by the presence of some typical buff-ware barbotino fragments and green-glazed sherds which cannot date earlier than the ninth century.

It appears from finds of the same type that the courtyard (loc. 16) and the adjoining Room 17 were still in use at that time, but the house along the colonnade was already buried up. In the front enclosure, another kiln was found, opening to the North into Room 13/28. This kiln was again well preserved, with piers of brick around the fire-chamber and a mortar in the middle, an arched entrance in brick and brick walls strengthened with stones and soil from outside. The fill has shown that the red-painted bowls were the specific product of kiln 4, certainly contemporary with the other three.

No sign of occupation later than the ninth century could be identified in the excavated area.

## The Pottery

The study of finds such as pottery, glass, coins, etc. will still require time. However, some general conclusions may already be advanced, especially those relative to chronology.

The pottery of Jerash shares the forms common to Palestinian ceramics of the Roman and Byzantine Periods. It grows increasingly local from the end of the sixth century onwards, developing some forms that are hardly to be found elsewhere. There is no change to be observed with the advent of the Islamic government nor later with the rise of the Abbassids, the development of ceramic production being, as it should be expected, independent of political events of the time.

One of the most interesting types is the so-called Jerash bowl. These are plates and platters similar to red-slipped and stamped Byzantine forms, but distinct from them by their painted decoration. This is done in deep red contours often filled with white paint, while some earlier examples are painted on a uniform white wash. The motives include highly stylized vinescrolls and animal figures such as birds, fish, horses, lions, occasionally also human representations. One of the most common patterns consists of a Greek cross. The evidence available points to the appearance of these vessels in the sixth century and their continuous use through at least the first half of the seventh.

The development of the peculiar Jerash lamps, with handles in form of an animal head, is roughly parallel, but they had a longer life, becoming exclusive throughout the Umayyad period.

The pottery of the seventh century in general is easily recognizable by the presence of typical jars and jugs in red ware, painted in white with wavy lines or loops and of very common black-ware basins decorated with combed lines, rouletted wedges and incisions. Both types begin before the appearance of Islamic coins and continue into the eighth century (Pl. X-XI, XIII A).

The ceramic production of the later Umayyad period develops new types, in particular the red-painted buff jars and shallow black hand-made bowls with elaborate cut-out ornaments. Both wares remain in use until the end of the eighth century and maybe later, while in the second half of the century appear lamps of a new type and high bowls with nearly vertical sides, painted in red with festoons and stylized floral motives (Pl. XII, XIII B). Glaze is found only incidentally in contexts related to the latest occupation about the beginning of the ninth century.

## The lamps (T. Scholl)

In the course of this excavation several hundred of lamps and lamp fragments were found and recorded. Most belong to late types, starting with the end of the sixth century; the series stops in the early ninth century.

The late lamps have been classified in six main groups (see a separate report hereafter), beginning with the late Byzantine form popular throughout Palestine and known commonly as the «candlestick lamp». Some of them bear extremely corrupt Greek inscriptions of religious content. As seen from our evidence, they do not continue beyond the middle of the seventh century, coming mainly from the fill of the NW house, while some were found in levels related to the building of the Umayyad House, under its North wall and in the outside fill in loc. 33, together with late sixth century Byzantine coins and numerous fragments of Jerash bowls.

Roughly contemporary are lamps of similar shape and decoration but provided with a raised, curved handle, often with a cross beneath. A development particular to Jerash is the modelling of the handle in form of an animal head (Pl. XIV A). This was done with two pinches on a lamp fresh from the mould. While any attempt to identify the animal intended seems hopeless, other variants of decoration are not very significant except for the cross which appears on most of these lamps. The animal-head lamps are contemporary



with the Umayyad House and do not occur in earlier layers, while remaining in use until the middle of the eighth century.

About that time appear lamps of a transitional type, which have a channel between the filling-hole and the nozzle, but retain the same handle shaped in the form of a head. Some still have a ring-base, while others introduce a flat, almond-shaped base that is to become common later (Pl. XIII, C). The lamps of this group often bear Arabic inscriptions, some of them with a date. When this is the case, the dates always refer to the short period 740-750 A. D.

Finally, the latest lamps mark a definite change of style. The handle is no longer figurative, the decoration around the channel consists most often of a vine-scroll, while there are sometimes engravings of animals, amphorae and even human figures on both the discus and the base (Pl. XIII D, XIV B). These lamps can be assigned to the second half of the eighth century and later.

#### **The Glass** (K. Gawlikowska)

A large number of glass fragments were recovered, of which about two hundred pieces were selected for recording. Only a few, quite distinct in form, come from Roman and Byzantine layers, while the major part was found in the fill of the Umayyad House and should be accordingly assigned to the eighth and the early ninth century. However, the seventh century fragments found in dated deposits in the Umayyad House and in a house by the South Tetrapylon do not differ from them in any way; the evolution of glass seems, then, to have been slower than in the case of pottery.

Our material is virtually identical, if richer, when compared with the collection published by P.V.C. Baur fifty years ago and dated to the fourth and fifth centuries. We are convinced, however, that this is much too early, just as in the case of pottery found in the same locations by the Yale team. It seems, indeed, that much of the Near Eastern glass labelled in different collections as Byzantine should be in fact

dated to the seventh and eighth centuries.

All the glass vessels found were blown, some of them on moulds but most often free-blown. The predominant colours are pale blue and green. The most common forms include bottles, wine-glasses, plates and tumblers. Glass lamps, used mainly in churches, occur much more sparingly.

The bottle fragments present two main variants: a rather thick flattened rim on a short neck and a large flaring neck with a thread decoration. The wine-glasses have a flat or ring foot and a short stem supporting the bowl. The plates usually have a convex base and an inverted rim. All these vessels seem to have fulfilled their specific roles exclusively, as the contemporary pottery, well known from the same levels, does not include similar forms.

#### **Conclusions**

The constant though locally intermittent occupation of the sector from the Early Roman to the Abbassid period was marked by at least three massive destructions of seismic origin. The first of them must have occurred before the construction of the NE house and is dated, on our evidence, to the late fourth or early fifth century A. D. The next one destroyed the NW house on the upper terrace, left abandoned, and those beneath, that were cleared. This happened in the mid-seventh century, possibly in 658 A. D. Finally, the destruction of the Umayyad House is to be placed in the late eighth century.

The remains of earlier buildings are either utterly destroyed, as on the lower level, or lie for the most part beyond the excavated area. On the contrary, the Umayyad House is uncovered entirely, being one of the rare examples of domestic urban architecture of this period known so far.

The general impression provided by our Umayyad evidence is one of continuity of the Byzantine tradition. The building technique did not change, as it appears from a comparison with the NW house. The evolution of pottery types is gradual,

showing a clear tendency to local forms: the line of red slip wares develops in Jerash its last blossom of painted plates, from the end of the sixth to at least the middle of the seventh century. The Jerash lamps appear about the same time and continue until the mid-eighth century. The white painted pottery seems to have started in the early seventh, just as the black-ware storage jars and basins, both developing from Byzantine antecedents.

Christian symbols on lamps are common throughout the Umayyad period, proving the continuing existence of a sizeable community. At least some of the churches in Jerash were still in use, though the evidence from early excavations is at best scanty in this respect. However, the recently discovered church of Bishop Marianos by the hippodrome was certainly functional in the course of the eighth century.

While the potters who used Greek in-

scriptions on seventh century 'candlestick' lamps were clearly illiterate, this has no necessary bearing on the general level of education. On the other hand, if the Arabic inscriptions prove the knowledge of this script among the members of the same profession in mid-eighth century, it could actually have been widespread earlier, as writing on lamps was only a passing phenomenon.

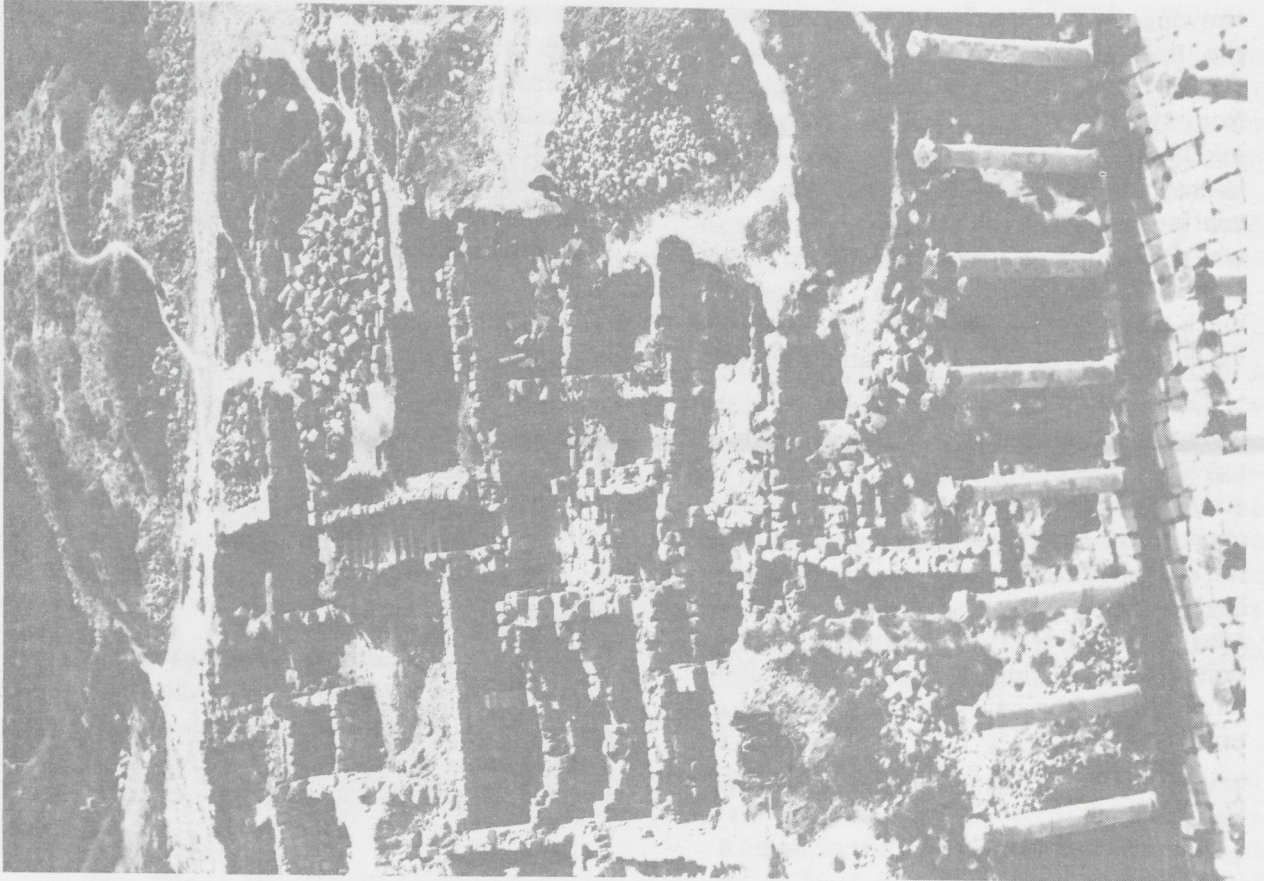
Umayyad Jerash appears to have been a sub-Byzantine community gradually assimilating Islamic civilisation. This process took approximately a century.

Michael Gawlikowski  
Warsaw University

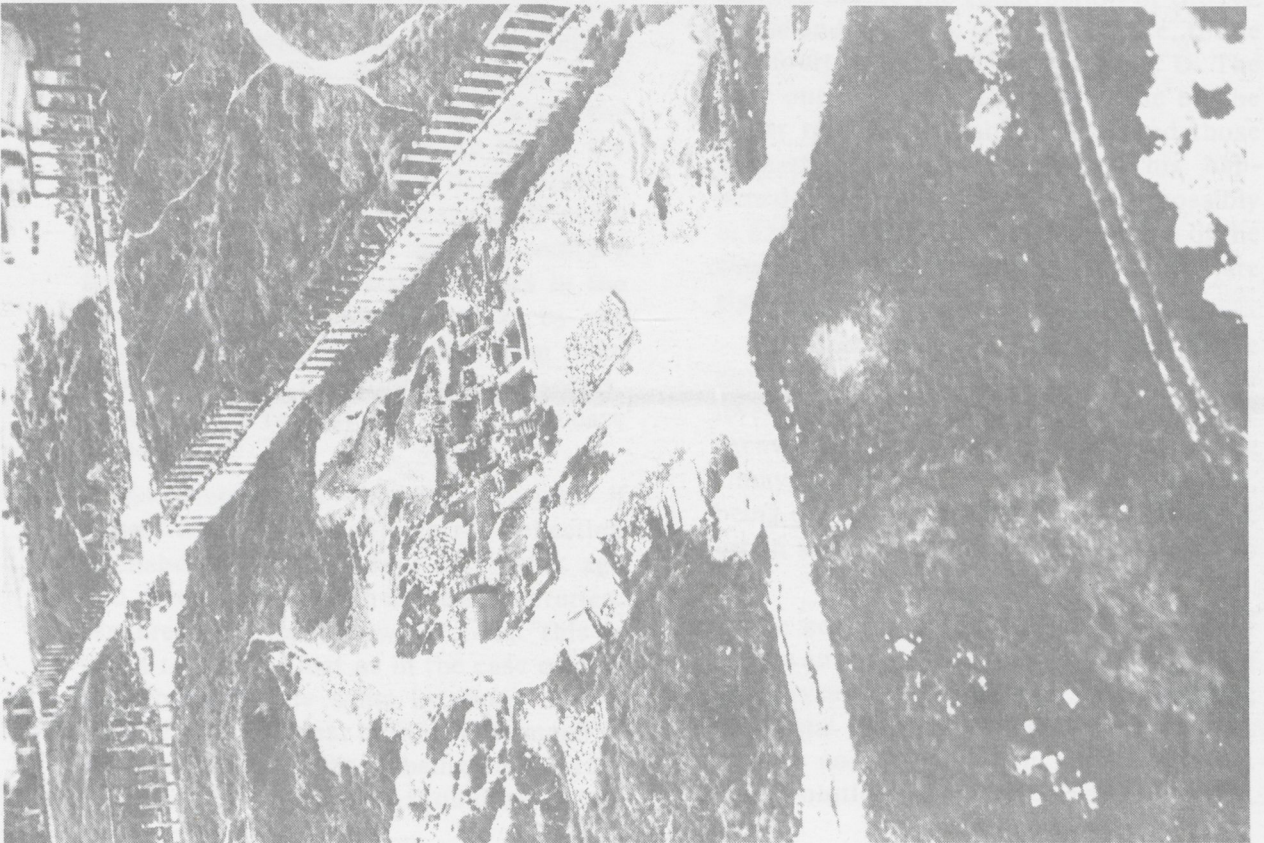
#### **Acknowledgements**

The plans are due to Dr. Antoni Ostrasz. Photographs by H. Cowherd (Pl. I, XIII CD, XV), K. Gawlikowska (Pl. II-IX) and S. Lebdjian (Pl. XIII AB, XIV). Pl. X-XII were redrawn by N. Assinder.

M. Gawlikowski



B. Aerial view of the area to the North.

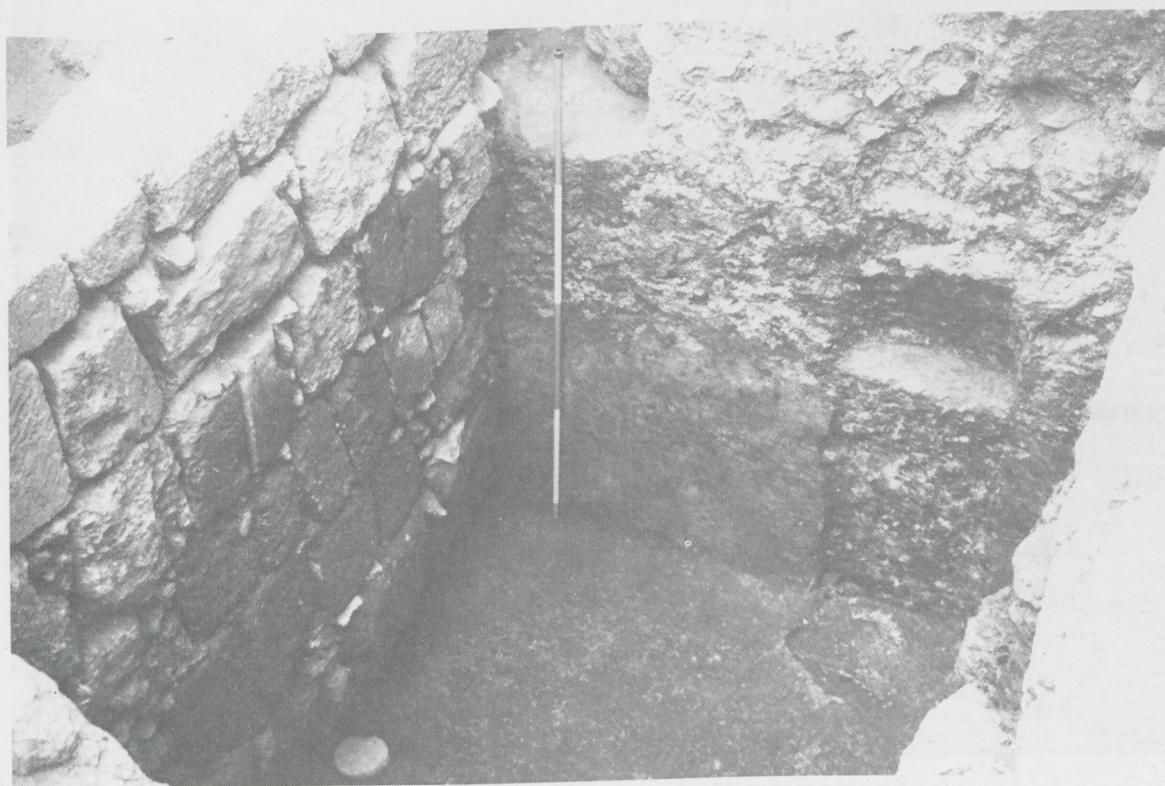


A. Aerial view of the South Decumanus Area toward the East.





A. The cistern loc. 43, SE corner; to the right, the stylobate foundation.



B. The same cistern as seen from the East.

Plate III.



A. Northern part of the Umayyad House; behind the wall, loci 21, 23 and 25.



B. Same area after removing of the partition wall. To the right, Roman foundation.



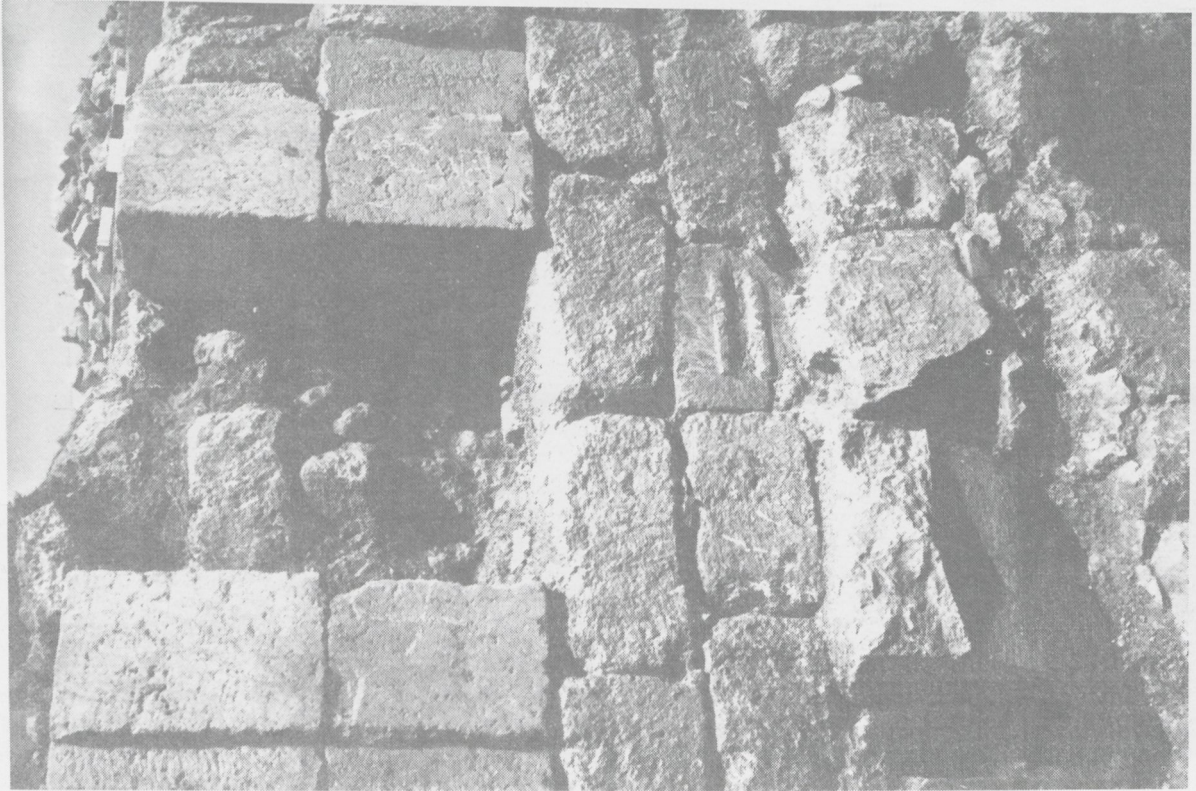
A. After the first days of excavation: stone tumble under the surface.



B. The NW House, with the Umayyad House in the foreground.



A. The staircase of the Umayyad House.



B. Entrance to a shop above cistern loc. 43, on Umayyad foundations.



A. Entrance to the Umayyad House, above the sewer (loc. 12).



B. The underground room 26 seen from the East.



A. The courtyard loc. 9/23 from the East.



B. Room 7 as seen from its window-sill.



A. Room 10/20 looking from inside the door.



B. Loc. 20 from the West; to the left, the late wall between the arch piers.

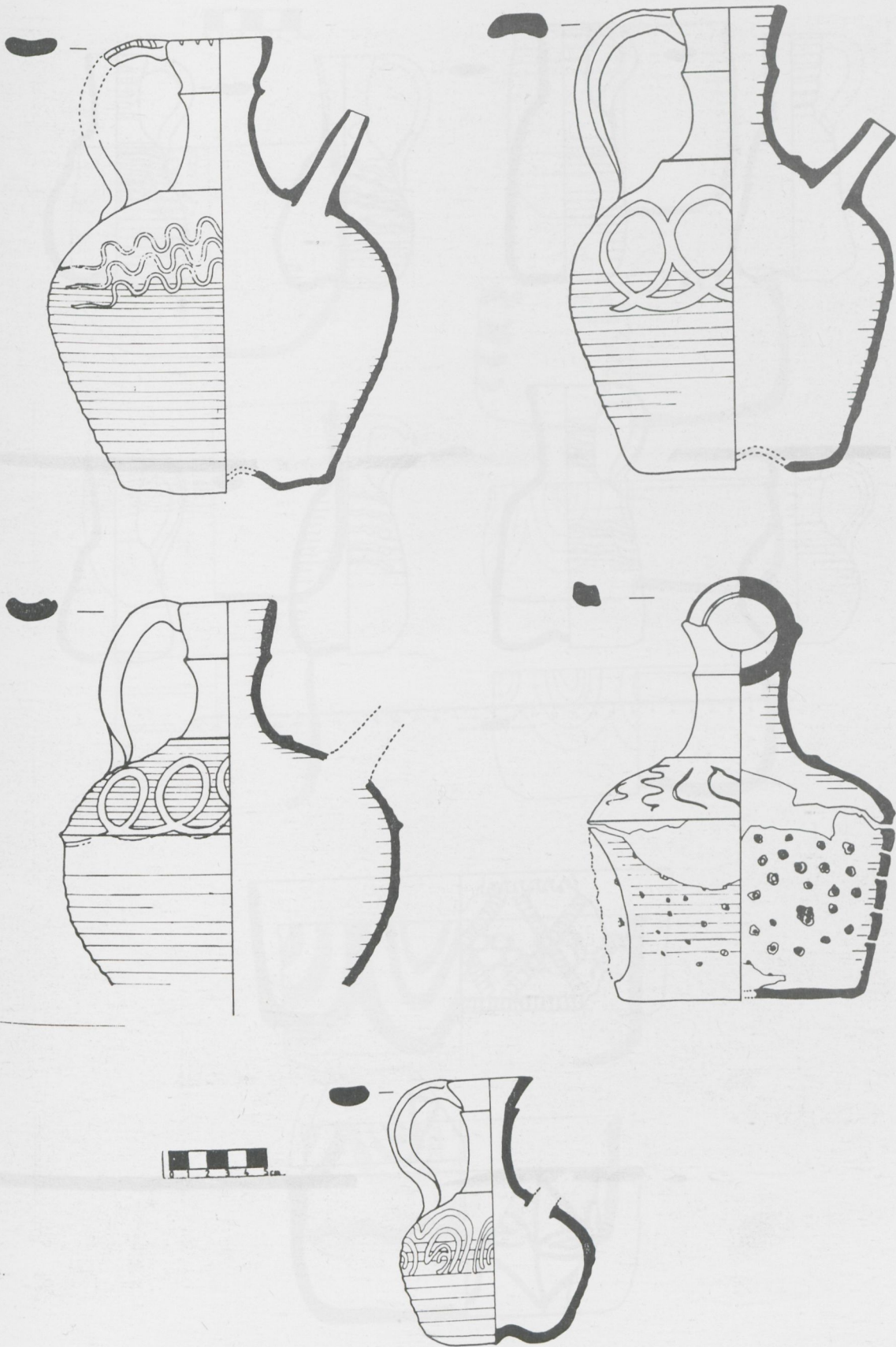


A. Kiln 4 after clearing.

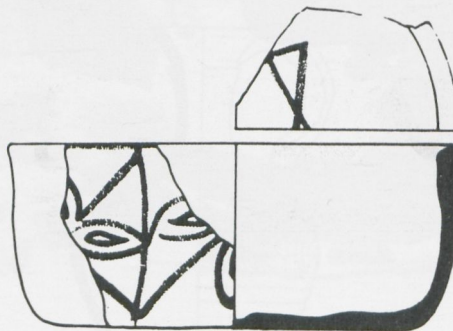
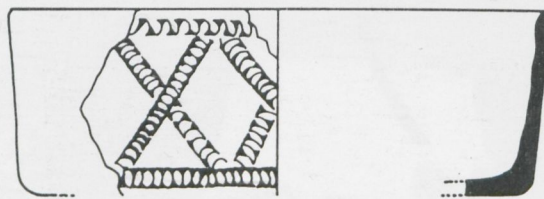
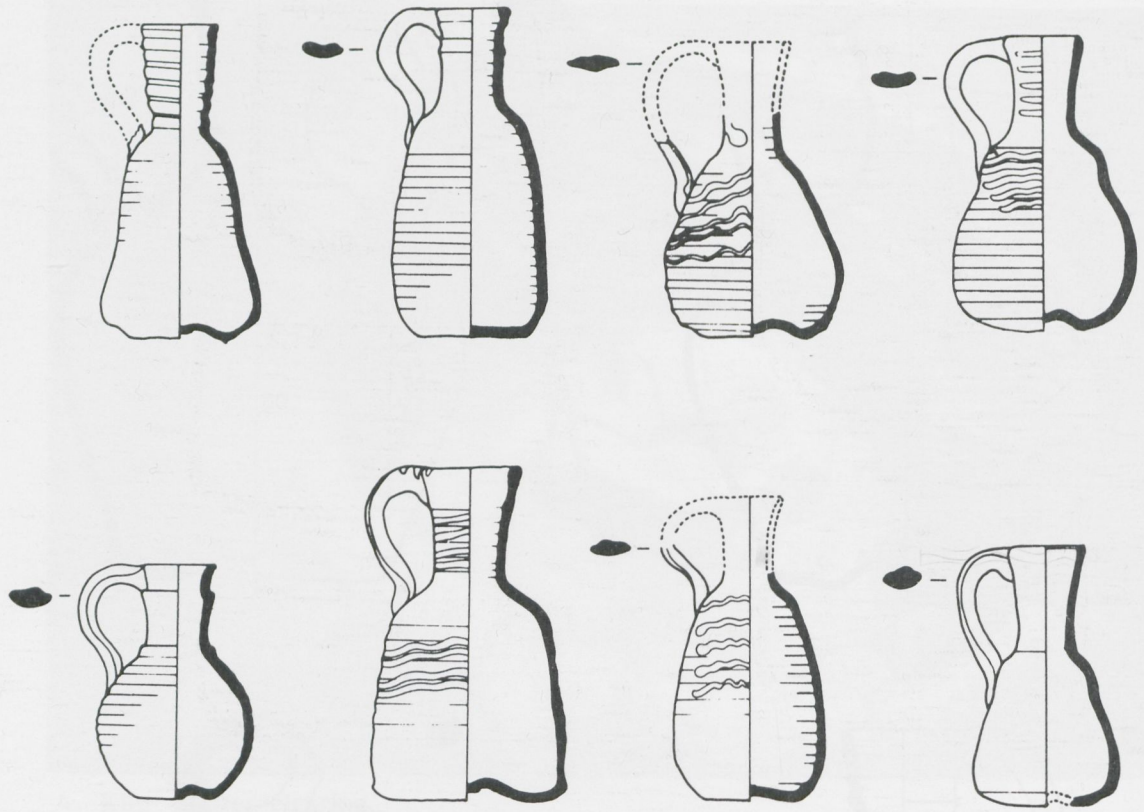


B. The entrance to kiln 4 from inside.

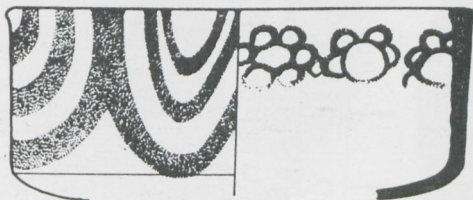
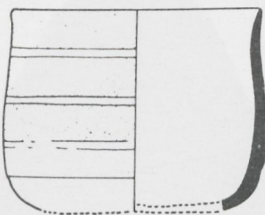
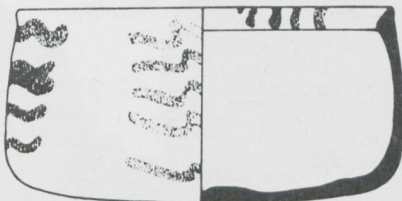
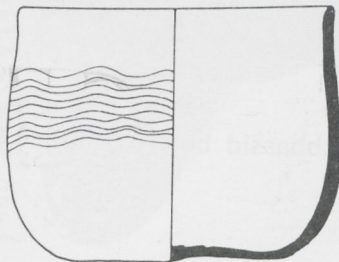
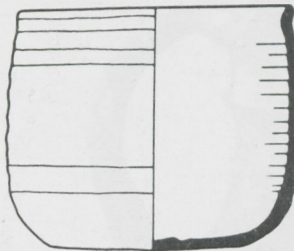
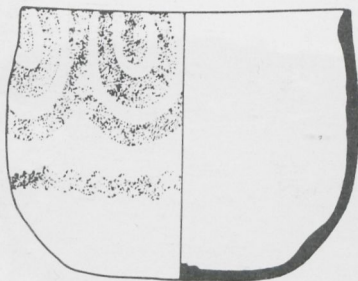
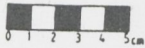




Umayyad decanters and a lantern.



Umayyad juglets and some later bowls.



Late Umayyad and Abbassid bowls, mostly painted in white or red.



A. An Umayyad decanter (cf. pl. 10).



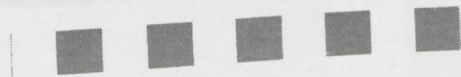
B. An Abbassid bowl (cf. pl. 12).



C-D. Two 8th century lamps.



A. Umayyad lamps (Group III).



B. Abbasid lamps (Group VI).

