The two trenches excavated this season are both continuations of work begun on the house complex to the west of the large administrative building, which is the other research focus of this excavation. Last season’s work was focused on the expansion and exploration of the room excavated in the 1997 season. The 1999 excavations exposed larger portions of this western room and revealed portions of a courtyard area to the east of the house wall originally exposed. This courtyard was identified as such by the presence of several stone cooking installations and a cook pot on one of these, still in situ. These rooms provided the basic framework for the research questions that remained to be answered by the work this season.

The original room to the west, which contained the majority of the intact vessels and other small finds still in their use context, was only partially excavated in the 1999 season. The boundaries of the room itself were never clearly defined and the limits of the intact Hellenistic floor were not reached. In addition, evidence of early Roman/late Hellenistic disturbances were evident in the NW corner of the SW quadrant, over the later wall (WB31008 & 31009) and spilling out onto the second century floor containing the whole pots. This raised a number of questions about the integrity (and date) of the floor deposit itself and certainly about the afterlife of the “house.”

The situation in the courtyard to the West was much the same. The intact cooking installations and number of mendable pots present certainly implied a similar date, but very different function from the room to the East. A physical boundary for the courtyard was also missing and needed in order to understand even the most basic form and dimensions of the house. Thus, work in the 2000 season was specifically geared towards finding the boundaries of the two areas and attempting to understand their phasing.

Phase I-Modern

Work was begun in the SE quadrant of CB 3.9 in the first session of the field school. This quadrant expanded on the courtyard area and it was hoped would produce a boundary or some structure articulating the relationship between this structure and the administrative building. Topsoil in this area was quite deep, as it has consistently been. It also contained extensive evidence for later occupation, including ash residue, stone fire circles, insubstantial architecture and many later artifacts.

Directly beneath topsoil, a grey/brown/yellow layer of transitional soil appeared throughout the 5x5 that was a mix of later material and organic dark loam and subsoil. This layer (CB39006) was dated to the Roman period, although it must in actuality be substantially later, given the presence of much later material beneath it. A deposit of rubble (WB39007) also appeared scattered throughout the 5x5, primarily over areas that would later prove to be the location of walls. This rubble had an LDM of modern material (Ras al-Fukra) suggesting that this rubble should be phased as part of the modern disturbance of the walls.

Phase II/III-Hellenistic (3rd/2nd BCE) and Late Hellenistic/Early Roman

The removal of this rubble revealed an E/W wall running in from WB 3.1. This wall (CB39001) crossed the entire trench and divided it into two areas—a triangular wedge of soil N and the remaining area S of the wall. CB39006 appeared on both the N and S sides of this wall.
The E/W wall is a continuation of the later wall from WB 3.1 and like that later wall it is
found on one course of stone that may be part of the original house wall. This later wall
(CB39001) is poorly constructed, so much so that it is canted severely to the South. The earlier
foundation of this wall continues only about 1.5 m from the W balk, suggesting that the original
house may have stopped there, and that this wall is part of a later re-working of this space.
Another wall (CB39008) also appeared running N/S of CB39001, intersecting it about 1 m from
the E balk. This poorly constructed wall intersected CB39001 and stretched from it to the N
balk South of CB39001, yet another small wall also appears in this phase, running S from
CB39001 (CB39002). It is a small, poorly constructed wall, preserved only to one course.
CB39001 has the interesting feature of having a very large hole robbed out of its center.
The south face of the wall is missing and the rubble core entirely gone. The north face of the
wall is still preserved to one course. The presence of a large pile of rubble (CB39004) directly
south of the hole in the wall implies that this is a deliberate removal of stone. This pile of stone
was originally thought to be an installation of some kind, but now is thought to be just debris
from a robbing episode. This robbed out debris sits on a paved floor (CB39003) which,
although predating the robbing of the wall, probably dates to the same time as the construction of
the later wall.

The date of this paved floor can also be tied to the small wall running N/S from
CB39001, CB 39002. The paved floor is laid directly along the face of both walls and was
clearly constructed after they were. This is supported by the fact that the robbed out debris from
CB39001 is lying on the floor. Thus the paved floor can be phased with the later wall and they
can all be understood as part of the same occupation. However, the sealed locus under the paved
floor (CB39003 1) does not provide support for this hypothesis, since the LDM is Persian and
the general potential for analysis of the ceramics was low.
The soil deposits associated with this phase include CB39011 and CB39012. CB39011 is
a brick yellow fill with some mudbrick inclusions that appears S of CB39001 and over the walls
and stone installation. Its LDM is Hellenistic and it contains enough mudbrick and mendable
vessels to suggest that this is floor debris. This soil locus sealed another soil type that also
contained enough mendable material and small finds to suggest floor deposits (CB39012).
However, the LDM for this lower floor deposit is a 4th century AD coin, presenting a problem for
which the excavator has no current explanation, although the robbing of CB39001 occurred that
late. If one does not tackle the coin problem, these may represent two phases of Hellenistic floor
deposits, one associated with the original courtyard and the other associated with the later walls
and paved floor.

Interestingly, the deposits in the area N of CB39001 are entirely different. The soil
layers, CB39009 and CB39010, are dated by ESA and P/S/Hell. cookware/Spatterware,
respectively. The soil deposits themselves are totally different from those in the South and their
potential can’t really be evaluated from such a small sample.

Phase IV-Early-Hellenistic (CB39013, CQ3914)
All the soil layers beneath the loci discussed above exhibited a marked drop in the
quantity and completeness of artifacts present, leading the excavator to believe that these are
below the late Hellenistic floor levels and probably not associated with the architecture present.
Their LDM’s, however, still place them in the Hellenistic period.
In summary, the excavation of this area adjacent to the courtyard raised more questions than it answered about the phasing of the Hellenistic occupation of this area. The boundaries of the "house" are now less clear due to the fact that later versions of the courtyard seem to have obscured the shape of the original house.

**WB 3.1**

The excavation in the SW quad of WB 3.1 was undertaken to complete the exploration of the room begun in 1997 and continued in 1999. It was expected that the remains of the deposit and the western wall of the room would be found in situ. Unfortunately, none of this occurred. The boundaries of the preserved portions of the Hellenistic deposits were indeed found, since the area was found to be disturbed in the Byzantine period to the entire depth of the Hellenistic floor and possibly below. All loci in this unit were found to have LDMs in the Byzantine period or later. The deepest soil deposits may have contained Umayyad materials as well.

The only architecture which was excavated as a possible portion of the original Hellenistic house was a fragmentary, poorly preserved and disjointed E/W wall which was robbed out to its bottom course (WB31037). This wall was covered and surrounded by a series of soil deposits containing the remains of what were certainly the Hellenistic floor and building debris (WB31028, WB31029 and WB31030). These were very disturbed and churned up to such a degree that it seems fair to say that the excavations this year, instead of defining the limits of the room, have found the limits of the preserved material from the second century occupation.

Later walls were also discovered in the SW corner of the trench (WB31025 and WB31026). These may prove to be important in understanding the Byzantine occupation of the tel.