

IMTO- Italian Mission to Oman
University of Pisa

Salut

PRELIMINARY REPORT (NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2013)



The second field season of 2013 on the site of Salut took place from November 7th to December 7th. Works focused on the inferior part of the site (Area 4) , with the aim to expose the original foundation level of the north side of Area 4 and to continue the excavation of the east side of the Area 4 that remained open from 2012A campaign.

The excavation on the North side of Area 4

In order to gain a better idea of the Late Iron Age building phase in Salut and simultaneously expose more of the Early Iron Age phase, several trenches were opened on the north side of Area 4.

On the western side of the external wall the previous excavations showed that the building technique used during the Late Iron Age phase consisted of a series of yellow-greenish stone chips filling the space between the outer Early Iron Age wall, made of mudbrick on stone foundations, and the outer Late Iron Age containment wall that comprises a vertical outer stone face. On the inner side the Late Iron Age wall covers the stone chips filling. The last of the fillings (US664) rests on a mud deposit (US666); the removal of the last layer of filling has allowed us to date the construction of the later wall due to the presence of Burnished Maroon Slipped Ware (*BMSW*). A small trench opened near the wall to reach the foundations shows another mud filling (US690), which needs to be further investigated.

The excavation continued with the enlargement of the trench located along the northern side of M232 trying to reveal the facade of the Early Iron Age wall and to better understand the relations with M100. Moving eastward and following this wall, a collapse of mud-bricks was removed (US693) revealing US666, which is formed from the erosion of the mud-brick walls by water percolation and subsequently covered by US664.

The cleaning of the area allowed us to identify clearly two mud-brick walls, M237 and M239. The first one was built against M100 and is perpendicular to it; the second one is tied to M237 at a right angle to it.

Two trenches were dug in the area, one starting from the northern side of wall M239, almost oriented NE, and the other one near the corner formed between walls M100 and M237, in order to reveal the underlying stratigraphy. The first trench revealed the stone foundation of wall M239 and another mud-brick wall with stone foundation, which runs northwards and is covered by US664 and US698.

The excavation of the second trench enclosed by the walls M237 and M121 shows that also M237 has a stone foundations covered by the same layers of the first one. The badly state of preservation due to the exposition to the rain and to water percolation heavily damaged the face of wall M121, which at this moment doesn't shows a recognizable face in the section of the trench.

Extending the area of excavation in an easterly direction, more of the green yellowish stone chips filling was removed, which covered two eroded walls related to the Early Iron Age phase and an intentional mud filling enclosed in a squared mud-brick compartment (M120-121) which was exposed in the upper part during 2009A campaign.

The east side of Area 4

The work in this area included the excavation of two trenches located on the east and south-east side of the Islamic structures (Str. 37-38) investigated during the campaign of 2012A.

In the first trench (1,86cm deep), after removal of the layers composed of yellowish-green stone chips (US683-US685), two walls were revealed: the first one, wall M236, made by four rows of stones, located on the east side and oriented N-S. It is probably dated to the Late Iron Age; the second, M244, is a mud-brick wall, oriented SW-SE. It seems to rest on the layer US 688, maybe the foundation of the wall. Furthermore this layer covers wall M 245, oriented N-S, which requires further investigation.

After removal of the Islamic structure (Str. 37) that cuts layer US 683, which is presents in all the area (covered by superficial layer US 1), the stone wall M 238 (that lay above wall M151) irregularly and badly deposited, and possibly related to the Late Iron Age period, was removed.

These removals have highlighted on the east side the mud-brick wall M 240 (140cm width), not so well preserved: the external face maybe is collapsed.

The excavation of the second trench here has been necessary to see the foundation of this wall and any relations between this and wall M 236 that seems to continue.

After removal of the fillings of the trench US 696 (soil with stones and chips) and US 697 (yellowish-green chips), the foundation of M240 has been exposed: it is a mud layer (US 700), that covers the stone wall under M 240.

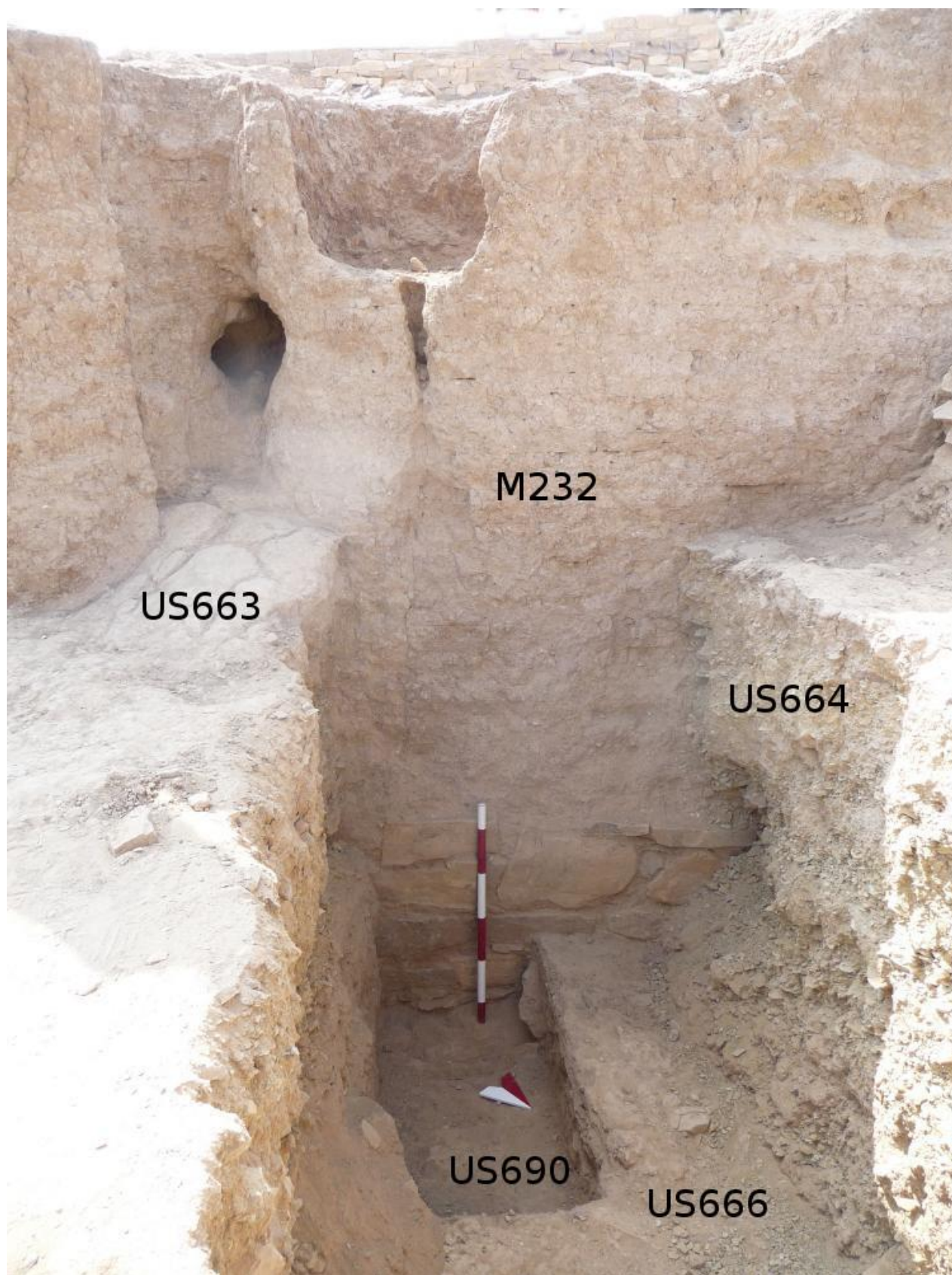
About the relations between the two walls, the situation is not so clear because M236 seems to be disturbed by an Islamic rebuilding phase; M 241 and its related layer US 699 that cuts US 696 on its S-E side.



Nort side of Area 4 at the end of 2013A campaign.



The same area at the end of excavation



Foundation level of the massive wall M232.

To note the fill US664 made by the yellowish-greenish stone chips



The view from North: after the excavation



The mudbrick wall M239 with the stone foundations



The stone wall M242 covered by the massive filling US664



The US708 in the second trench enclosed by the wall M237 and M121



Area 4 (east side before the excavation)



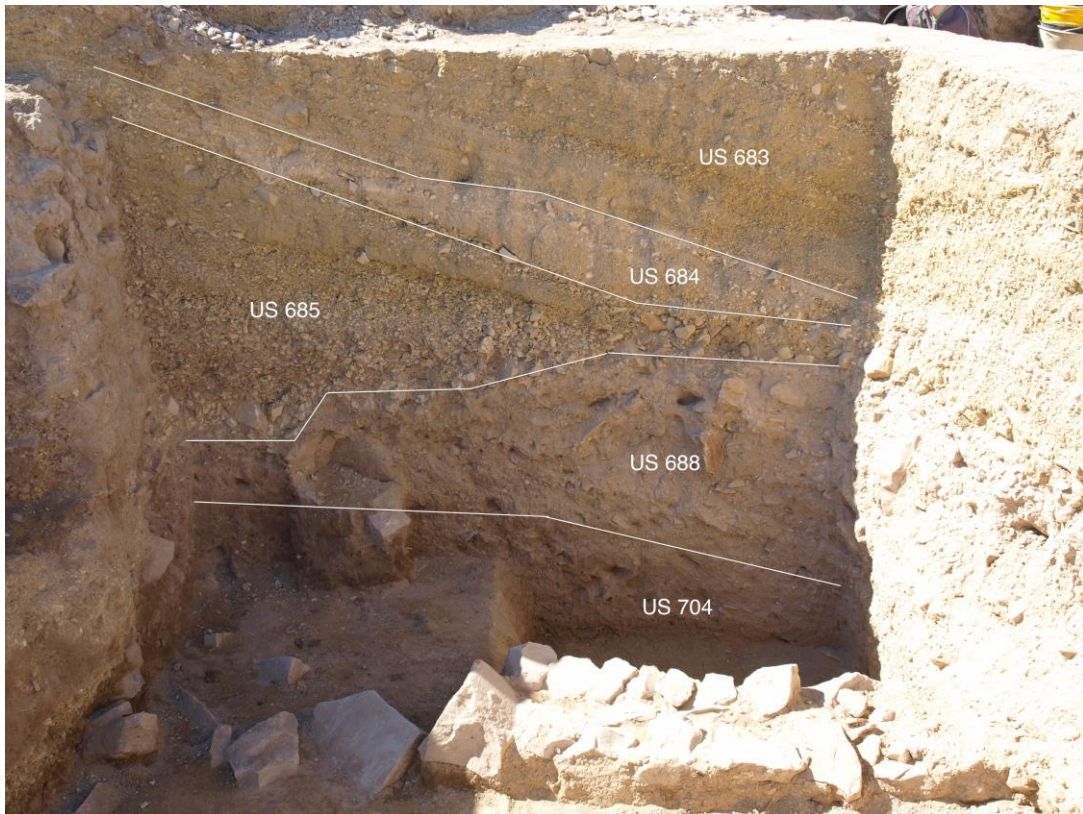
During the excavation: stone wall M236 and the different internal fillings



East side of Area 4 before the excavation



The mudbricks wall and the stone wall inside the trench



West section of the trench



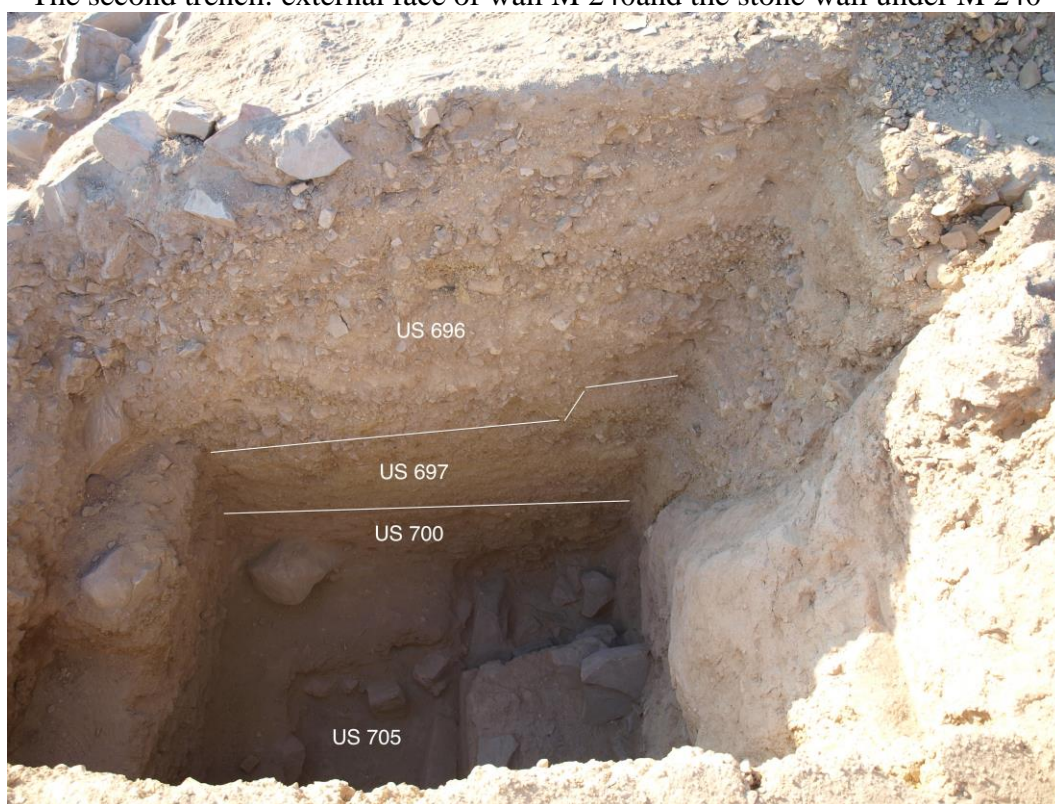
The Islamic structure (Str 37)



General view after removals of str. 37 and M 238, and mud-bricks wall M 240



The second trench: external face of wall M 240 and the stone wall under M 240



The S-E section