



Fig. 35. Dolmen 535 from the North. In front of the dolmen is the earth beaten floor (L. 1007) and the circular installation (I. 1006) are visible.

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The fifth Spanish-Italian archaeological campaign to Jabal al-Mutawwaq was accomplished in May 2016, continuing the excavations of the Early Bronze Age I village and megalithic necropolis. Investigations focused on the Great Enclosure, a large semi-circular structure located in the eastern sector of the village (Area C), an area located in the northern part of the village (Area D) severely affected by modern agricultural works, and Dolmen 535, located on the mountain's southern cliff.

In Area D, two trenches of 2 x 5 m and 3 x 5 m were excavated, identifying a wall (W.161), oriented northeast-southwest, preserved up to 50 cm in width and built with a single row of stones. A hearth was discovered, built directly against the wall. This is similar to those found in the houses of the Early Bronze IA village. The pottery related to the structure is comparable to EB IA pottery discovered in prior campaigns in the village. One loom weight and a basalt vessel have also been recovered. The findings, together with the building technique of the wall and the presence of the hearth, suggest that the structures in the area are the remains of a dwelling dated to the EB IA.

Dolmen 535 was investigated after opening a trench of 10 x 5 m (Fig. 35). The dolmen appears to be one of the largest megalithic structures yet excavated at the site. Unfortunately, it was clear that the inner chamber of the structure has been already looted. The burial chamber (2.8 m long, 0.8 m wide and 2.27 m high) was composed of two lateral slabs, a floor slab and a capstone in limestone. The lateral slabs have two parallel lines carved at the mid-point of their height, suggesting an inner division of the chamber (Fig. 36). The dolmen was surrounded by an apsidal structure, circular at the back with two lateral straight sides. The

frontal side of the dolmen has two stone steps leading into the chamber, which is similar to several dolmens excavated in the 2012 to 2015 campaigns. In front of the entrance, a beaten earth floor (L. 1007) was discovered, apparently of the same phase as the use of the dolmen. In relationship with this floor a circular installation has been discovered to the south, denominated as I. 1006. The installation was filled with layer of sandy earth with a few animal bones collected on the top of it. The pottery coming from the installation and the associated floor can be dated to the EB IB–IIA and consists of few sherds, including from a fragmentary small hemispherical bowl with disk base and a red burnished carinated platter with inturned rim. The excavation stopped at the front of the dolmen in relation to these features, with the aim of continuing investigations in the area during future campaigns.

In Area C East, the Great Enclosure has been investigated along its northern limit with a trench of 15 x 15 m, reaching its northeastern corner against the delimitation wall of the stone structure (W.101), which in some parts is preserved up to three courses in height. The excavation along W.101 clarified its method of construction. It was built with large squared stone blocks laying directly on the bedrock, leveled in some points with layers of rubble and small stones. A few diagnostic sherds, such as flat bases of large hand-made storage jars (orange paste), were recovered in the foundation of wall W. 101, allowing us to date the construction of the Great Enclosure to the EB IA, the main period of use at the Jabal al-Mutawwaq village.

REFERENCE:

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Fig. 36. The inner chamber of Dolmen 535 from the South. On the lateral slabs the parallel carved lines are clearly visible.