

Tel Dor End of Season 2006 Area D1 East Area Supervisor's Report

Preliminary Information/Credits

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Locus Bank: L06D1-101 to L06D1-152; W10078, W16373, W16550, W16634, W17605, W17591, W26000, W26073, W26100, W26160, W26245, W26249, W04D1-110, W04D1-150, W04D1-175, W05D1-090

basket bank: 06D1-1001 to 06D1-1522

image bank: d06D1-4001 to d06D1-4071

photo bank: p06D1-9000 to p06D1-9900

Overview

The area excavated in 2006 consisted of units excavated from the 2000 season on, in squares AP-AR/13-16. This area was opened again in 2006 to clarify relations between previously excavated features, as well as to determine to what extent previously-observed features were preserved in the area. Although the area excavated covered over seven squares, most activity was centered around two phase 4 walls, W26000 ("Big Mother") and W26249 ("Big Auntie"), which make the southwestern corner of a large building. Both walls were initially uncovered in the 2000 season, and our main goal this season was to delineate and then excavate the large robbing trench for W26249 in squares AR/14-16, and to determine to what extent, if any, that wall was preserved. In addition, erosion over the winter of 2005-2006 revealed the northern face of a wall excavated in area D2, W17605, in the 1998 season, and in the process of uncovering the top and southern faces of this wall, we found the eastern continuation of W26000 in AP-AQ/13. In conjunction with these projects, we continued excavating along the western side of AQ/14-15, clarifying relations between the phase 2 features excavated there in 2004 and 2005.

The phase 1 "Big Building"/bathhouse complex excavated in 2004 and 2005 incorporated some of these earlier features into its construction. Excavation of fills on the east and west faces of W26073 as well as the excavation of the robbing trench for W17591 showed that both these walls cut into the triple-header wall of W26000. The robbing trench for W26073 (RT04D1-042) was continued this season as L06D1-131, and there is still no end of it in sight. The northern continuation of the robbing trench was excavated in AQ/15, first as sand pit L06D1-107 and robbing trench L06D1-115, and then as robbing trench L06D1-124.

The phase 2 walls, pavement and installation in AQ/15 remained intact, but the relations were clarified: the plaster/kurkar basin installation previously labelled F04D1-160 was renamed L06D1-133, since excavation of robbing trench L06D1-124 showed that it was a separate construction from the pavement. More of the phase 2 floor F04D1-088 was uncovered in AP-AQ/13.

The newest addition to the collection of phase 3 features in the area was the western continuation of W17605, first excavated in area D2 in 1996, which runs parallel to “Big Mother” wall W26000, and is cut by phase 1 wall W26073. In the western half of the area, relations between previously excavated phase 3 and 4 features were revised and clarified, particularly in the easternmost extent of the Persian Palace. W16634 was reassigned from phase 1 to phase 3-4. Additionally, although W16634 was initially determined to be one wide wall, this season it became apparent that it was in fact two thinner walls built up against each other. The single thickness of unmortared kurkar fieldstones along the north face of W16634 was designated W06D1-104, and also assigned to phase 3-4. Phase 3 wall W26160 was removed from the top of W26249. W26100 was also removed, and the fill underneath it and to the east of W16373 were found to be two overlapping Hellenistic pits, excavated primarily as L06D1-134 and L06D1-135. Significant fragments of bones from large animals, as well as beads and red-figure pottery were among the small finds from these pits. A strip of mud brick floor material, tentative phase 4 floor F06D1-123, was found to have been cut by pit L06D1-134 and by the robbing trench for W26249. This robbing trench, RT06D1-101, was traced through 3 units, AQ-AR/14, AR/15, and AR/16. Even though the northern half of this trench proved to be highly disturbed, the southern extent of RT06D1-101 yielded no pottery and artefacts that were later than the Hellenistic period.

The main features excavated this season that belong to phase 4 are two dovetailing walls, W26000 (“Big Mother”) and W26249 (“Big Auntie”). Insofar as the construction of W26000 could be observed, it appeared to be the same triple header-stretcher technique observed in area D2. W26249, on the other hand, was compartment-built. The eastern limit of both W10078 and W16634 may have been W26249; the pseudo-atelier construction of W10078 comes up against the western face of W26249. Associated with W26249 is mud brick material encountered in AR/14: partial floor F06D1-123, as well as mud brick material uncovered in the northern part of RT06D1-101 (L06D1-142 in AR/16 and L06D1-102 in AR/15). Likely also related to this are the patches of mud brick uncovered by the removal of L06D1-143 and L06D1-146 in AQ/14-15.

We encountered two phase 5 features: W06D1-111, which is off the axis of the Hellenistic and Roman grid of the city, and perhaps also the floor that reaches it at the west, F06D1-152.

The biggest departure from previous years’ understanding of the area concerns W16634; not only was it determined to be two walls (W16634 and W06D1-104), but its function as the easternmost continuation of the northern wall of the Persian Palace became apparent, as well as the fact that its appropriate phase designation was 3-4. The additions of W17605 and the continuations of W26000 and W26249 are also of note, while not altering our current stratigraphical understanding of the area.

Body

There were 5 phases evident in D1 East by the end of excavation.

Phase 1:

W17591, W26073, L06D1-131 and L06D1-124 (both continuations of RT04D1-042)

All of the phase 1 features were previously excavated in 2004 and 2005, and only continuations of already-known features were excavated in 2006. W17591, the south wall of the “Big Building”/bathhouse complex is in this group, as well as the continuation of the robbing trench, L06D1-131 and L06D1-124 (RT04D1-042) for the west wall, W26073 of this same building. Both of these phase 1 walls cut into “Big Mother” W26000, perhaps reusing some of the ashlar while following the footprint of the earlier wall (see p06D1-9674 and p06D1-9845). Excavation of RT041-042 as L06D1-131 in AQ/14-15 and L06D1-124 in AQ/15 provided no new significant data about the phase 1 walls in the area. The northern extent of this robbing trench was found to cut phase 2 features (W04D1-175 and basin installation L06D1-133) and phase 3 fills (see photo p06D1-9377 and p06D1-9428).

Excavation of the area to the south of W17591 also uncovered few new data. A few fragments of the colored Hellenistic mosaic were discovered, as well as several handfuls of the white tesserae from that same mosaic, but the relations between the features remain the same. The western wall of the southwestern addition to the bathhouse building was found to contain one half-column drum that still help plaster on its exterior face, but no other major artefacts were uncovered in this particular area. W26245 continued to exhibit the same shoddy rubble construction, while W04D1-110 and W04D1-150 exhibit the reused stone and concrete technique characteristic of phase 1 architecture (see p06D1-9830 and p06D1-9845).

Phase 2

F04D1-088, W05D1-090, W16550B, W04D1-175, L06D1-133; L06D1-102, L06D1-142 (=RT06D1-101)

The major addition to our body of knowledge about phase 2 concerns hypocaust floor F04D1-088 and the fills below it. Material immediately above, mostly tile debris, was removed from the floor as L06D1-112, and then the floor was removed as part of the operation of tracing the rest of W17605. Part of this operation involved cutting back the baulk in the northeastern corner of the excavated area of AP/13, and exposing more of F04D1-088, as well as the western face of a wall which was designated W06D1-144, which rested on the surface of F04D1-088, and which remains unexcavated (see p06D1-9559). The fill below the hypocaust floor was shown to be early Roman at the latest, reinforcing our belief that it is indeed a phase 2 floor that was reused in the phase 1 bathhouse, and cut by W17591. F04D1-088 reached W05D1-090 (see p06D1-9353 and p06D1-9359), which was also removed, and the material below this wall was found to be very similar to that of the fills below the hypocaust floor. The makeup of F04D1-088 and the fills below it were excavated as L06D1-120, L06D1-125, L06D1-130 and L06D1-147. At least one sample from these fills was wet-sieved.

The western extent of W04D1-175 was thoroughly robbed out by the northern continuation of RT04D1-042, but we did uncover the top of the surviving courses of this wall, allowing us to see its construction technique. The architectural fragments of the south face were backed by neatly-laid unmortared rubble, and the pavement of F04D1-149 and the kurkar/concrete of basin installation L06D1-133 were laid up against the north face of this rubble core (see photo p06D1-9428). Whatever lay to the west of this complex was destroyed by the robbing of W26073. Cleaning in the area immediately to the north of basin L06D1-133 also uncovered a large kurkar

ashlar whose relation to the pavement and the installation remained unclear. It may be part of some sub-flooring or foundation for this complex.

W16550B remains in phase 2 on account of its construction technique. Removal of W26160 showed that no dovetail between it and W16550 existed.

The northern extent of RT06D1-101 in AR/15 and AR/16 showed evidence of disturbance that was patently late (a sneaker and beer bottle were pulled from a particularly sandy section in AR/15, and the sandy pit in AR/16, L06D1-141 yielded Roman pottery); however, the robbing trench did bottom out on sloping mud brick material in L06D1-142, continuing into L06D1-102 (see p06D1-9733), and the fill that came down on this bizarre feature was Roman. One possible explanation for this is that once W26249 was robbed out, the mud brick floor material of F05D1-107 to the east and the mud brick of L05D1-100 were left exposed, and they eroded into the trench of the robbed-out wall, which was then filled with sand and other debris. Even though the southern portion of this robbing trench is clearly Hellenistic, some of the activity that resulted in the filling of this trench very likely happened in the Roman period, in both phase 1 and in phase 2. By the end of the 2000 season, it must be noted, the loci in the eastern half of AR/15 were pits, robbing trenches, and part of the “British” trench; material in the western half of the square was relatively undisturbed. The true nature of the disturbance was left for us to find in 2006, but evidence of the nature of this area was noted, in some fashion, in previous seasons.

Phase 3

W26100, W16373, W26160, W17605, W5680, L06D1-101, L06D1-138, L06D-149, L06D1-150
L06D1-134, L06D1-135

Given the widespread nature of phase 3 features in the area, this description will proceed from East to West.

The northern face of W17605 in AP-AQ/13 was exposed by erosion over the winter of 2005-2006; this wall was previously excavated in 1996 in area D2. As in D2, its was found to run parallel to W26000 (“Big Mother”), and it was also found to continue under F04D1-088, requiring the removal of some of the baulk in AP/13 (see p06D1-9353, p06D1-9555, p06D1-9674, p06D1-9846). No traces of any features related to this wall could be found in the area; these were probably obliterated first by the “Big Building”/bathhouse, and later by the disturbance evident in AQ/13 and AQ/14. W26073 cuts W17605, but since no evidence of the W17605 was found further west than this, W26073 likely represents the western limit of W17605 (see p06D1-9733). W17605 runs parallel to W26000, with a gap of approximately 50 cm between the two (see p06D1-9846). When W17605 was first uncovered in area D2 in the 1996 and 1998 seasons, it was speculated that W17605 was the southern limit of a Hellenistic insula; excavation of the disturbance in AQ/14 has not yet revealed any trace of such a building as yet.

The removal of W26120 in AQ-AR/13 afforded a clearer view of the corner made by phase 4 walls W26000 and W26249. W26160 was designated as phase 3 in 2000 because it was reached by floors that were assigned to phase 2; given that it rested on top of walls that are fairly securely identified as belonging to phase 4, it follows that W26160 is phase 3 at the very earliest. The

removal of W26160 also showed that it abutted phase 2 wall W16550B (see p06D1-9474 and p06D1-9749).

RT06D1-101 was excavated in AQ-AR/14 as L06D1-101, L06D1-138 and L06D1-149. The line of this robbing trench was evident from the first day of excavation. We observed a distinct soil difference that followed the line of cut walls W10078, W5680, W26100, W16634 and W06D1-104, and made that the western limit for the robbing trench (see p06D1-9474 and p06D1-9491). Excavation in AQ-AR/14 by the end of the 2005 season had gone through phase 2 floors, and was producing nearly clean Hellenistic pottery. From the start, the pottery of L06D1-101 was purely Hellenistic. L06D-101 was continued as L06D1-138, and excavation of L06D1-138 continued until the next preserved course of "Big Auntie" W26249 was found, with much celebration. The remainder of the robbing trench in AQ-AR/14 was excavated as L06D1-149; the pottery remained Hellenistic and Persian in date throughout. L06D1-150 was excavated as the continuation of the robbing trench in AR/14, and while the continuation of W26249 was not uncovered, the pottery from this locus was nearly entirely Hellenistic and earlier. The robbing of "Big Auntie" W26249 in this area, at least, clearly took place in phase 3. L06D1-138 was also wet-sieved, since it, like pits L06D1-134 and L06D1-135, was a good Hellenistic context. This robbing trench cut the phase 3 pits to the west, and it on the east it cut the remnants of last season's "floor sandwich, which appeared to contain traces of mud brick floor material: see the phase 4 discussion below.

W5680 and W10078 in AR/14 are cut along the same line, most likely by the robbing action that produced RT06D1-101. As with W10078 (see below), RT06D1-101 may represent the eastern limit of W5680, but since W5680 rests so high above the potential interface between W10078 and W26249, and since the disturbance in the area immediately east of W5680 was observed as early as 2005, the best conclusion that we can draw is that W5680 was cut by the robbing of W26249 (see p06D1-9682).

W26100 dovetailed with W16373 in AR/14 (see p06D1-9474); W26100 was reached by a phase 2 floor, which was excavated in 2005 as L05D1-094. The dismantling of W26100 this season showed that it covered a pottery-laden fill, L06D1-116, which produced nothing that was later than the Hellenistic era. The removal of W26100 initiated the excavation of a series of loci that were definitively Hellenistic in nature, and which eventually came to be regarded as a pair of intersecting pits (see next paragraph). The excavation of these fills and pits showed that the third course of W16373, the top of which was uncovered at the end of the 2005 season, was the lowest course of the wall, and by the end of this season the wall was floating at least 50 cm (see p06D1-9682). W16373 cuts W5680 and W10078 very neatly; hardly any gap between the rubbly section of W5680 immediately west of W16373 and the ashlar of W16373 itself can be discerned (see p06D1-9721).

L06D1-134 and L06D1-135 in AR/14 were treated as intersecting pits and were responsible for producing the best small finds from the area this season: three joining fragments of a red-figure vessel with a Dionysiac scene on it (06D1-1376); an agate bead (06D1-1280), a fragment of multicolored glass (06D1-1315); in addition, these two pits provided samples for wet sieving at least twice, since this context was definitively Hellenistic. L06D1-134 cut mud brick floor makeup L06D1-129 at the east (see d06D1-1035, d07D1-4034, and p06D1-9369; N.B. that

L06D1-123 is the locus immediately above L06D-134). The material of L06D-134 and L06D1-135 was very similar, and it appears to continue to the west under W16373; Al informed us that in previous seasons, excavation on the west side of W16373 resulted in the discovery of pits that were laden with small finds, so the existence of our pits with a few finds of interest was no major surprise, at least to him. The material of L06D1-134 also appears to continue under W16634. Pit L06D1-135 cuts L06D1-136 at the south; this is only worth noting in this report because L06D1-136 was initially classified as mud brick material, although its excavation showed that it was not very dissimilar to the makeup of L06D1-135. The sudden appearance of so much mud brick material in the area this season is perhaps the best indicator of our arrival in a new phase, after two seasons of excavating some serious disturbances.

Phase 3-4

W16634, W06D1-104

The shoddy construction of the feature originally called W16634 in AR/14 was a key factor in its initial assignment to phase 1. However, this season we were luck enough to have winter erosion reveal the lower courses of both W16634 and W06D1-104, showing that they both in fact were the easternmost extension of the northern wall of the Persian Palace. W16634 is made up of unmortared kurkar blocks and field stones, while W06D1-104 is composed of one thickness of unmortared field stones (see p06D1-9474 and p06D1-9682). Like W16634, W06D1-104 continues to the west, and was perhaps built as a reinforcement of the original relatively thin northern wall of the Persian Palace. This western continuation of W06D1-104 is sandwiched in between W16634 and W16650, and the complex nature of the wall relations in the southern portion of AS/15 make determining the precise function of each feature rather difficult. There is very little about the construction of both walls to make their assignment to either phase 3 or phase 4 certain. However, it should be noted that the mud brick floor material of L06D1-129 continues underneath W16634. Thanks to the excavation of pit L06D1-134 along the south face of W16634, and of robbing trench L06D1-101 and L06D1-138 along the east face of W16634 and W06D1-104, both walls were floating by the end of the season. RT06D1-101 may represent the eastern limit of both walls (see p06D1-9474): if the walls continued further east, any traces of them were obliterated by the massive disturbance found in AQ/14 in previous seasons.

Phase 4

W26000, W26249, W10078, F06D1-123, L06D1-129

W26000 and W26249 were first excavated in 2000, when it was discovered that they dovetailed and formed the southwest corner of a large Hellenistic building in AQ-AR/13. Excavation this season uncovered the eastern extent of W26000 in AP/13, where it continues eastward into the baulk, as well as the northern continuation of W26249 in AQ-AR/14, where it ends at the northern edge of AR/14. Prior to this season, the only portion of W26000 visible was a narrow strip between W26073 and W26160. Concomitant with excavation of W17605, the continuation of W26000 was uncovered in AP/13, where we found that construction of the “Big Building” phase 1 bathhouse appears to have eaten into it: both W26073 and W17591 clearly cut into W26000 (see p06D1-9674), in contrast to the construction of W16550 in AQ/13, which incorporated rather than destroyed the phase 4 wall. W26073 neatly bisects W26000, with the surviving header-stretcher blocks on either side barely knocked out of position. The construction

of W17591 did considerable damage to the remaining portion of W26000 in AP/13, with the second preserved course represented by only a few intact ashlar. The corner formed by W26000 and W26249 was obscured by phase 3 wall W26160, and its removal showed that the courses of the walls were levelled by a packing of mud-brick material and very small field stones (see p06D1-9497 and p06D1-9749).

W26249 was traced further north, through AQ-AR/13 to AR/14. The primary robbing of this wall appears to have been accomplished in phase 3, although the later disturbance observed in AR/15 may have also been responsible for some of the wall's deconstruction. W26249 may represent the eastern limit of W5680, W10078, W16634 and W06D1-104 (see p06D1-9749 and p06D1-9682); the exact relation between these Persian Palace walls and the western wall of the "Big Mother" building remains unclear. What is clear, however, is that W26249 extended far to the north. We did not find the next preserved course of W26249 with our excavation of L06D1-150 (see p06D1-9663), but the nature of that locus (loose, sandy soil with ashlar fragments and almost entirely Hellenistic pottery) was similar enough to that of L06D1-138 to encourage the belief that more of W26249 lay beneath the disturbance in AR/15.

We were lucky enough to find traces of mud brick floor material that may be remains of an interior floor for this phase 4 building. The best-preserved example is F05D1-107 in AR/16, which formed the eastern limit of RT06D1-101 in its northern reaches. Patches of this material were observed along the eastern limit of the robbing trench in AR/15 and in AQ-AR/14 during the excavation of L06D1-102 and L06D1-138, and the tops of these patches were uncovered with the excavation of L06D1-143 and L06D1-146. F06D1-123 and floor makeup L06D1-129 may also be part of this same mud brick deposition (see p06D1-9369), cut by phase 3 pit L06D1-134. The material of L06D1-129 continues underneath phase 3-4 wall W16634 at the north.

As stated above, the relations between W10078 and W26249 are not quite certain. The robbing of W26249 at its southern end cut W10078, but RT06D1-101 may have represented the original eastern limit of W10078. Excavation of L06D1-126 showed that the foundations of W10078 run quite deep (see p06D1-9682), and their bottom was not reached by the end of the season. The pseudo-atelier construction visible in the western reaches of W10078 appears to be continued to its eastern limit, as evidenced by the large block that nearly abuts, but does not quite reach, the western face of W26249. One of the kurkar field stones, part of the rubble element of the wall's construction, appears to have fallen out of place and onto the topmost surviving course of W26249 in AR/13. In their surviving states, these two walls do not abut each other, but it must be noted that the distance between the western face of W26249 and the ashlar element of W10078 is less than 10 cm. The relation between these two phase 4 walls and the buildings they represent must have been equally close, although we cannot yet say exactly what they were.

Phase 5

W06D1-111, F06D1-152

W06D1-111 in AR/15 has been assigned to phase 5 because its orientation does not conform to that of all of the surrounding features; its true phase cannot be determined at this point. Phantom floor F06D1-152 reaches W06D1-111, but since F06D1-152 reaches later walls W05D1-093 and W26204, the phasing of F06D1-152 should be reconsidered in future seasons (see p06D1-9749)

Key Loci

Phase 1

none found

special find:

06D1-1004: fragment of colored Hellenistic mosaic (L06D1-108)

Phase 2: F04D1-088, L06D1-120, L06D1-125, L06D1-130, L06D1-147 (hypocaust floor and fills below it).

special finds:

06D1-1202: coin (L06D1-120)

06D1-1203: glass/stone seals (L06D1-120)

06D1-1403: legible stamped amphora handle (L06D1-120)

06D1-1180, 06D1-1418 and 06D1-1469: joining fragments of barbotine ware bowl (L06D1-120 and L06D1-147)

Phase 3: L06D1-134, L06D1-135 (pits in AR/14); L06D1-101, L06D1-138, L06D1-149, L06D1-150 (RT06D1-101)

special finds:

06D1-1202: coin (L06D1-120)

06D1-1203: glass/stone seals (L06D1-120)

06D1-1403: legible stamped amphora handle (L06D1-120)

06D1-1180, 06D1-1418 and 06D1-1469: joining fragments of barbotine ware bowl (L06D1-120 and L06D1-147)

Phase 4: L06D1-129 and L06D1-145; N.B.: these are very small loci, but if the mud brick material of L06D1-129 is associated with a floor for the phase 4 “Big Mother” building, then this is the best context associated with the construction of that building in this area.