

Tel Dor Area D1 (West) Report 2006

Preliminary information/Credits

Area supervisor: John Yelding-Sloan (JY-S)

Square Supervisors: Dana DiPietro (DDD), Evan Elliot (EBE), Ian Milliken (IMM), and JY-S.

Units excavated: AT17 (JY-S) 03/07/06-01/08/06, AU17 (EBE) 03/07/06-18/07/06, AS16 (EBE) 19/07/06-01/08/06, AT16 (DDD) 03/06/06-01/08/06, AU16 (IMM) 03/07/06-03/08/06, AU15 (IMM) 18/07/06

Recorder: Nicole Child

Photographer: Howard Karesh

Locus bank: L06D1-001 – L06D1-095, W16127, W16150, W16850, W26260, W26262, W05D1-252, F05D1-278, W05D1-296,

Basket bank: 06D1-0001 - 06D1-0777

Overview

In 2006 the UC Berkeley team excavated in a total of six squares over the course of the season in Area D1 West: AU17, AT17, AU16, AT16, AS16, and AU15. Squares AU17, AT17, AU16, AU17, and AS16 had not been excavated before, while AU15 had originally been excavated by the Berkeley team in 2000. The goal of this season was to further determine the northern and eastern limits of the “Monument”, a Phase 3 building found in 1995 and excavated in 1998, 2000, and 2005, and to better understand the complex stratigraphy of this building.

It should be noted here that although 2006 was a productive season at Dor for the Berkeley team, it was also a difficult one. Shortly after we began excavating in early July, a cross border raid into Israel by Hezbollah militants to kidnap Israeli soldiers – killing several in the process – precipitated a war between Israel and Lebanon that lasted until the 14th of August, after the planned end of the excavation. Over a thousand people were killed and hundreds of thousands were displaced in both Lebanon and Israel. Although we at Dor were not in such immediate danger as our colleagues, friends, and in some cases family further to the north, the situation as such was sufficient to make more than several of our volunteers, from enthusiasts to graduate students, return to the States. The Berkeley staff unanimously decided to remain and excavate alongside our Israeli colleagues unless conditions worsened to the point that we would be required to evacuate from our residence at Nah-Sholim. Even though we were forced to continue with depleted numbers, under adverse conditions, and disconcertingly within earshot of the sound of katyushas falling daily on Haifa, the remaining members of the team managed to achieve our goal of uncovering the rest of the Monument during the last few days of the season. The fortitude and diligence of all those who stayed with our Israeli colleagues during the war is to be commended, especially that of the younger volunteers, many of whom had never before been outside of the United States and were away from the comforts of home for the first time in their lives. Their decision to remain based on a

mature and reasoned assessment of the situation, despite the fervent and serious adjurations of friends, family, and parents back home, enabled us to successfully complete a difficult season. For this we owe a profound debt of gratitude.

Prior to the commencement of proper excavation on 3 July, four squares (AS17, AT17, AS16, and AS17) were scraped by backhoe to a depth of 30-50cm below surface under close supervision by senior staff archaeologists. This was done to remove incredibly hard-packed material caused by the presence of a modern entry road to the former IDF radar station to the West that was ruefully encountered by the UCB team in the 2005 season. Of these four squares, only AT17 and AS17 were excavated. Squares AU17 and AU16 were excavated from topsoil as it was felt that there was a greater risk here of destroying architecture close to the surface.

We soon came down upon more (F06D1-004) of the cobble and plaster floor encountered in 2005 (F05D1-001, F05D1-250) in AU16 and in AU15 in 2000 (F16984). This floor extended to cover all of AS17 (F06D1-002) and AS16 (F06D1-06), and extended partially into AT17 (F06D1-001), although it existed in these squares only as subflooring – the cobbles being absent and probably scraped off by the backhoe. Previously this floor was thought to be Phase 1, but the discovery of a piece of marble – bifacially inscribed in Byzantine Greek – in a robber trench (L06D1-069) of W05D1-252 sealed by F06D1-004 provides a *terminus ante quem* for the floor, after the abandonment of the tel in the 3rd century C.E. Thus all elements of this floor are now termed Phase 0 and are probably some sort of forecourt or staging area for the Crusader fort (El Burj) on the western promontory of the site. F05D1-271 in AV17 was already assigned to Phase 0, but at the time in 2005 we thought Phase 0 represented modern 20th century activity. Although F05D1-271 has not yet been shown to connect with the other floors at this level, it is probably not modern and should be assigned to a “Crusader era” Phase 0 as well. The cobble Phase 0 floors found in D1 West are similar to the cobble floor found in Area H in 1996 by Richard Higgenbottom, upon which was found an assemblage of late Crusader pottery. At the time, since these cobbles were on the slope of the tel, Ilan thought that they might not be a floor, but rather scree. This is now less likely with the finding of a similar floor in age and construction in the level area of D1 West. Also, scree is not likely to occur in the anthropogenic environment of a tel to any appreciable extent. Another similar but unnumbered cobble surface can be seen through the weeds on the northeast corner of El Burj, on the slope above the west side of the cut of the Crusader moat.

Phases 1 and 2 can wait for a moment for description of the discoveries related directly to the Monument. These later phases after Phase 3 of the Monument can also be more clearly described in relation to the Monument rather than in the “last in, first out” order in which they were excavated.

Previously, the Monument was thought to be a large Phase 3 building of which we knew the western, northern, and southern limits. As it turns out, the Monument is actually two rectangular buildings built side by side, with one being earlier, slightly larger, and of more substantial construction than the other. The first building, termed

“Monument A” measuring 6m x 10m, is the southernmost of the two and is the Monument of the toichobate and plaster-covered stylobate. This season the northeast corner of Monument A, W06D1-092, was found on the last few days of excavation and is a north/south running wall of large kurkar header construction. Found at the same time was W06D1-093, the north wall of Monument A, of similar large header construction and abutting W06D1-092. Neither was found to be floating, as we had no time for further excavation. Thus, with W16020 to the south and W16850 to the west, we now have all four walls of this Phase 3 Hellenistic building.

Monument B measures 5m x 10m and is built up against the north wall of Monument A (W06D1-093) of a slightly poorer construction technique and therefore probably slightly later in date than Monument A, but still within Phase 3. Further to this point Monument B is also slightly higher at its lowest point, with the socle stones of Monument B floating at the level of the headers of Monument A’s foundation. Found in the last week of excavation, W06D1-084, the eastern wall of Monument B, is a socle of fieldstones set in a plaster mortar with an ashlar quoin that provides the northeast corner of the building. W05D1-296, the north wall of Monument B, was found to extend and abutt W06D1-084 at its lowest level. Although preserved to a higher course consisting of ashlar when discovered in 2005, W05D1-296 consists only of a single layer of small fieldstones at the lowest socle level to the east, where it is robbed of its upper courses of ashlar, as is W06D1-084. W05D1-252, the south wall of Monument B, built up against W06D1-093 (the north wall of Monument A), is a complicated wall. It would appear that this wall abutted W16850, the locus number given to both western walls of Monument A and B, just as northern wall W05D1-296 abutts W06D1-084. Originally W05D1-252 would have extended adjacent to and built up against the north wall of Monument A (W06D1-093) to make a corner with W06D1-084. This wall was then robbed out or taken down and reconstructed in Phase 1 in the same alignment out of smaller, rougher ashlar, to extend to the east and make a corner with W16127, where it is known as W06D1-020. This wall was then robbed by Crusaders completely down past the level of the Phase 3 stone socle, leaving us with the robber trench where the Byzantine inscription was found. So we have Phase 3 wall, still in use in Phase 2, then rebuilt in Phase 1 to be used in a different building.

Also intriguingly within Monument B we found a little north/south running wall (W06D1-090) of the same construction as the northern (W05D1-296) and eastern (W06D1-084) walls. Although robbed out at its northern and southern extents, this wall appears to be of the same Phase 3 or later Phase 3 construction as Monument B and may be the interior cella wall of Hellenistic tetrastyle prostyle temple.

Further evidence of the continuation of Monument B into Phase 2 was the discovery of more of the Phase 2 Roman road F05D1-278 and two associated drains, L06D1-040 and L06D1-045 built up against the northern wall (W05D1-296) of Monument B. W06D1-086 was a poorly constructed late phase 3 or phase 2 wall (and perhaps even Phase 1!) in AT17 abutting the northeast corner of Monument B at W06D1-084 and extending off to the east in alignment with the presumed southern edge of the Roman road. Also abutting Monument B to the East at the same level as W06D1-084

and below the level of the paving stones of the Roman road, we found W06D1-083, a broad foundation wall or platform of late Phase 3 or Phase 2, representing some sort of entrance associated with Monument B. Also at the northeast corner of Monument B we found a step (L06D1-094) and another wall (W06D1-085) similar in construction to Monument B wall W06D1-084 built up against the foundations on this monument. Since this step and wall, although in alignment with the road, are *below* the level of the paving stones of our Phase 2 Roman road, they help to place the Monument more firmly within Phase 3, even if it is a late Phase 3.

Within Monument A we found a new Phase 2 wall W06D1-050, cut by Phase 1 wall W26262, which made a corner with Phase 2 wall W26260. W06D1-050 is poorly preserved, but looks to be part of a later subdividing of the space of Monument A. A small Phase 2 crosswall to W26260, W06D1-052 (also cut by Phase 1 wall W26262), further attests to this later use of Monument A. Although the Phase 2 complex of W26260, W06D1-050, and W06D1-052 on Monument A may be contemporaneous with the construction of Phase 2 W05D1-252, this is difficult to determine because of the poor preservation of both walls.

Other discoveries not related to the Monuments included the continuation of the “British” robber trench from the 2005 season, which was found to continue in AU17 and AT17, although if it was a British trench it was almost certainly excavated by Brits almost a thousand years earlier than we had thought. Since this trench was not found to disturb F05D1-271 it is more likely that this was a Crusader robber trench after the stones of the center drain of the Phase 2 Roman (F05D1-278) in this area. The road (F05D1-278) was found to extend to the East at least as far as the eastern side of AT17, although it was mostly robbed out. Two side drains already mentioned at the southern extent of the road were uncovered in AU17, L06D1-040 and L06D1-045, which were found to abutt the lowest levels of the eastward continuation of Monument W05D1-296 after the removal of the baulk between AU17 and AU16.

Once AU17 was excavated to the level of the Roman street we closed AU17 and began excavation in AS16. Here we immediately came down on the Phase 0 floor (F06D1-061). This floor covered the northern extension of W16127. In 2005 we thought W16127 was a Phase 2 wall reused in Phase 1, but it now must be a Phase 1 wall reused in Phase 0, since it is in part covered by a Phase 0 floor, which reaches the upper course (the “beveled” ashlar) of the same wall. Also in AS16 we uncovered more of W16150, the Phase 2 “Nike” wall, and a small Phase 2 wall W06D1-058 with a threshold in it clearly cut by a Phase 1 wall W06D1-020, which made a corner with W16127. W06D1-058 was also found to cover the socle stones of W06D1-083, the phase 3 wall or platform that abutts the eastern wall of Monument B.

Some excavation was also carried out in the kiln installations in AT15 and AS 15 by members of the Weizmann Institute of Science to provide samples for analysis. In addition to collectiong samples, it was also found that the “kiln” installation in AS 15 had more than one layer of construction, with reinforcing material added (L06D1-027) after initial construction.

So to recap, we find that in the 2006 season, we turned our partially defined large Phase 3 building in to two well defined smaller ones, with the second built after the first. The second Phase 3 building was found to exist into Phase 2, by virtue of the Roman street being built up against it. We also dragged a large Phase 1 floor into the Phase 0 of the Crusaders with at least the upper course of a wall along with it.