

Dor End of Season 2008 Area D2 Supervisor's Report

Preliminary Information / Credits

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Locus bank: 08D2-200 to 08D2-292

Basket bank: 08D2-2000 to 08D2-2800

Image bank: d + v: 08D2-2500 to 08D2-2522; 08D2-2600 to 08D2-2620; 08D2-2700 to 08D2-2706. p: 08D2-9000 to 08D2-9042; 08D2-9500 to 08D2-9521; 08D2-9400 to 08D2-9416

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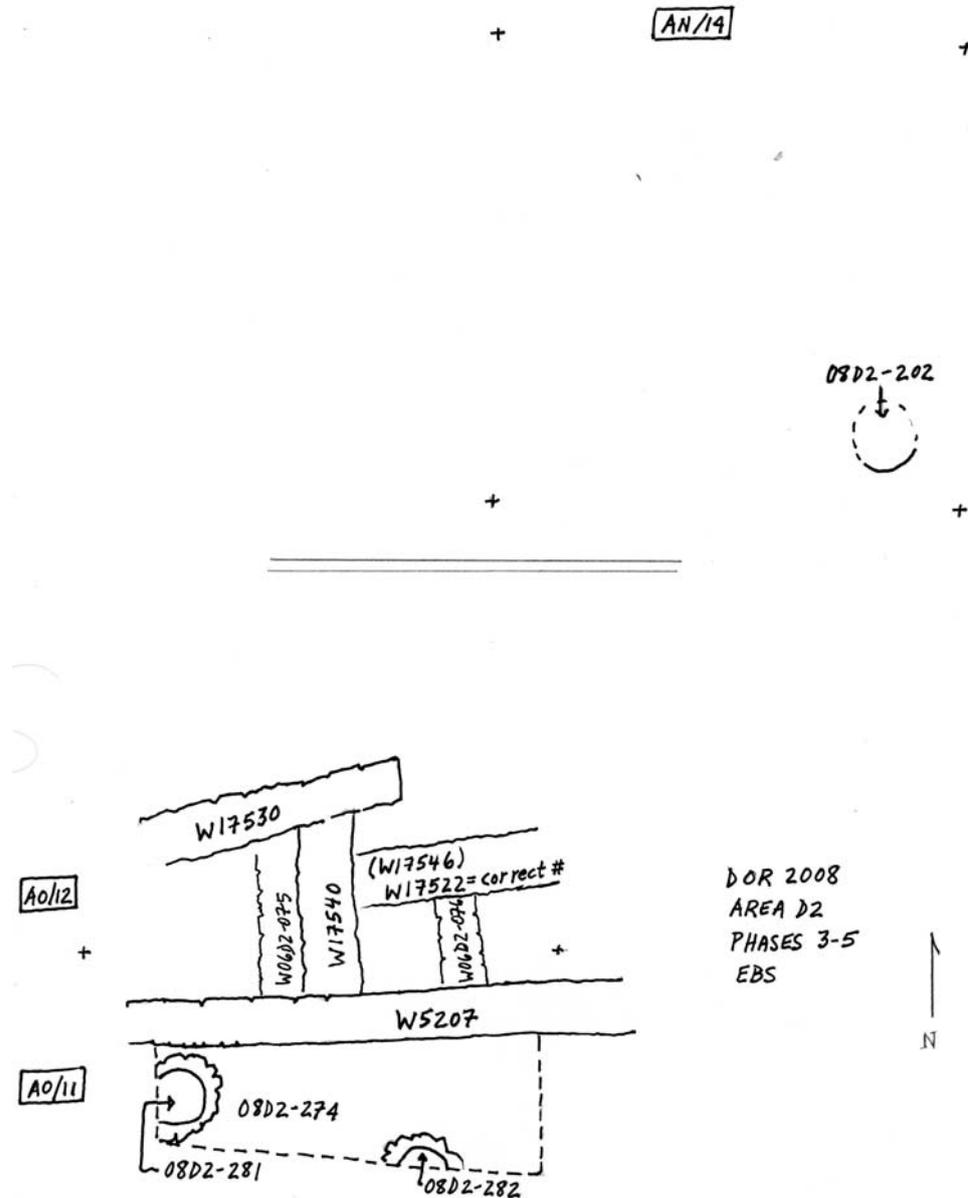
Dor 2008 Area D2 Aerial view

Overview

Excavation of Area D2 focused on exposing the continuation of the Iron Age “Benny’s Wall” now “Taphat’s Palace” (W10606, Phase 7) and the “Bastion Wall” (W08D2-290=W17269, Phase 8 and earlier). These two walls, in conjunction with the robbing of each, create the stratigraphic framework for this year’s excavation. An influx of volunteers late in the season also enabled renewed excavation of the Hellenistic-Persian “Penthouse” (Squares AO/12-11) last excavated in 2006.

We excavated 6 occupational phases in Area D2 this season. Walls and two sumps of the Hellenistic Phases 3-5 were dismantled in the “Penthouse” Squares AO/12-11 (W5207, W17530, W17540, W17546/17522 and sumps 08D2-281 and 08D2-282). The (foundations of the) two parallel, ashlar walls, W06D2-075 and W06D2-076, may have initiated Phase 5 construction in the squares. In the lower squares (D2 Mezzanine/Middle), Phase 6 (later Iron IIb-c) consists of all Iron Age II features that post-date the expansive, kurkar surfaces – the robber trench over “Taphath’s Palace” wall (08D2-223), a fieldstone wall constructed in that robber trench, W07D2-050, and multiple pits (“sheol” 08D2-205=08D2-208, the large, semi-circular pit 08D2-544, and the “Big/Assyrian Pit” 05D2-504). Phase 7 (IrIb?/IIa? to IrIIa) features the monumental ashlar wall W10606 (“Taphat’s Palace”) with its associated kurkar surfaces and W08D2-253, a fieldstone wall constructed during the course of the kurkar surfaces deposition. The robbing (08D2-206, 08D2-257) of the Bastion Wall W08D2-290=W17269, either by the builders of W10606 or their predecessors, and the subsequent fills pre-date the kurkar surfaces and so are also attributed to Pre-Phase 7. If W10606 with its kurkar surfaces was merely an anchoring wall within a massive levelling operation – in preparation for building Taphat’s Palace – then it too belongs in Phase Pre-7. Phase 8 or earlier (IrIb?/IIa?) includes the mudbrick constructions contemporary with the Bastion Wall – the “Cultic Hump” in AO/12, the mudbrick wall W08D2-253 surrounded by fallen mudbrick in AO/13, and the (outdoor?) ashy, occupational debris 08D2-237 in AO/14, all of the these to the west, or inside of, the Bastion Wall. In AN/14, the foundation trench of the monumental W10606 cut the surface F08D2-255. The underlying, unexcavated matrix, whose relationship to the Bastion Wall robber trench is obscured by a baulk, is likely contemporary with the Bastion Wall and so tentatively attributed to Phase 8 or earlier.

Phase 3-5 (5th - 2nd c.)



Area D2 Phase 3-5 Separation (AO/11-12, AN/14)

Due to an influx of volunteers at mid-season we were able to return to the “Penthouse” to dismantle Hellenistic walls. The bonded Late Hellenistic walls W17530 and W17540 were removed though lower courses of W17530 were left in place to form a physical barrier between the AO/12-11 “Penthouse” and AO/12 below. We also dismantled upper courses of the east-west W5207, a building façade that fronts the alley/street 06D2-005/08D2-274. The exposed lower course may

continue this wall or may be the top of a different wall built of fieldstones rather than ashlar and running slightly askew of the later, superimposed wall (p08D2-9041). A lower course of the east-west wall mislabeled W17546, actually W17522, though currently the latest wall in the unit remains in the field until its floating (p08D2-9041). Foundations of the two earliest Phase 5, parallel, north-south, ashlar walls W06D2-075 and W06D2-075 also remain in the field (p08D2-9041). In photo p08D2-9041, the westernmost of the two walls, W06D2-075, looks as though it might be a continuation of W17546/W17522 to the east.

The two Late Hellenistic sumps (05D2-031/08D2-281 and 05D2-032/08D2-282) continued to be dug down in conjunction with the now Persian street through which they were cut (08D2-274).

Down below in AN/14, the last of the Hellenistic pit (07D2-005=06D2-048=08D2-202) under “Big Mama” W17562 was excavated with the baulk.



p08D2-9041. AO/12-11 “Penthouse” at the end of the season

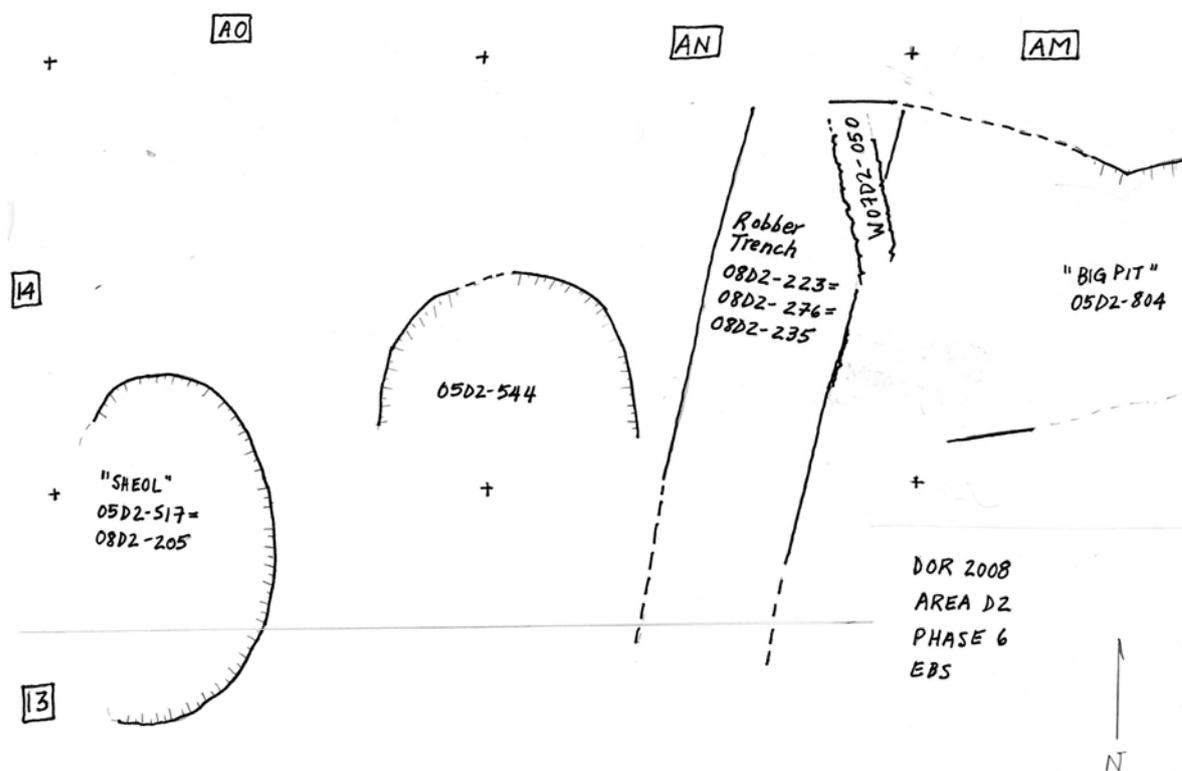
Key Loci: none

Phase 6 (later Iron IIB-C)

Phase 6 is defined as all Iron Age features that post-date the expansive, kurkar surfaces associated with “Taphat’s Palace” wall W10606. The pit “Sheol” (05D2-

517=08D2-205=08D2-208) and the semi-circular pit 05D2-544, both to the west of W10606, the robber trench 08D2-223=08D2-276=08D2-235 of W10606 along with W07D2-050 constructed in the trench (see p08D2-9019), and the “Big/Assyrian Pit” (05D2-804=08D2-217) to the east of W10606 all cut kurkar surfaces.

As for relative dating among these features, at its greatest expanse “Sheol” cut the semi-circular pit and so is relatively later but the relationship between these two pits and the robbing of W10606 cannot be determined stratigraphically. Clearly, W07D2-050, built in the trench and founded in part on cobbles left in the bottom of the trench, post-dates the robbing (p08D2-9019, wall visible in upper right hand corner of photo). This wall cuts kurkar surfaces but Assyrian pit deposits accumulated against and over it so W07D2-050 is later than the robbing of W10606 but earlier than the Assyrian pit.



Area D2 Phase 6 separation (AO-AM/14-13)

Pottery demonstrates that “Sheol” and the semi-circular pit to the west of W10606 also pre-date the Assyrian pit; the two smaller pit fills date to earlier in the 8th c. while the Assyrian pit pottery dates to the (later 8th and) 7th c. These features, in conjunction

with the dated fills between the uppermost kurkar surfaces (see the 2005 report), provide a later 8th c. *terminus ante quem*(??) for the kurkar surfaces.¹

There is a possibility that the kurkar surfaces were laid in succession over time, rather than as a single massive filling for a podium or plaza. While the earliest surfacing clearly reach the stones of W10606, the latest surfacing appear to *cover and so post-date* W10606 (see below, see p08D2-9023 and other photos of the AN/14 north baulk). Multiple stages of resurfacing over time are suggested by the progression of fills between kurkar surfaces that date from IrIb?/IIa? at the bottom to IrIIb?/c? at the top. While this interpretation of repeatedly renewed surfaces accounts for the passage of time suggested by the pottery in the intervening fills, it does not explain why the lower surfaces dip and bowl while the upper surfaces are relatively flat (unless we attribute the undulations to subsidence during the IrI- early IrII) (p08D2-9023, p08D2-9030).



¹ On dating the kurkar layers from the 2005 Area D2 Supervisor's report: While the kurkar layers did not yield dateable pottery, ceramics from the intervening constructional fills in AO/12-13 date to the Iron IIa (and IIa?) while fills from AO/14 date somewhat later, to Iron IIa?/b? (L05D2-512, L05D2-508) and Iron IIb?/c? .looks 8th c. (AG). Pottery above the uppermost preserved stone pavement (L04D2-066) to the south of W04D2-065 dated to Iron IIa (F04D2-057) and Iron IIb (F04D2-039), and above the kurkar surface F04D2-056 to the north of ashlar W04D2-065 to Iron IIb?/c? (L04D2-043). Given this sequence, kurkar floors appear to have been constructed throughout the period from Iron IIa through Iron IIb?/c?.

p08D2-9023. W10606, kurkar meets ashlar in AN/14 baulk – lower kurkar surfaces are bowed while upper kurkar is flat; additional W10606(?) ashlars visible in baulk

As excavated, kurkar surfaces F06D2-092 and F06D2-109 covered the line of W10606. If this is correct, then W10606 ceased to function by IrIIIb?/c?. However, at lower elevations within the robber trench 07D2-055 we found large chunks and bits of kurkar flooring that created the impression that kurkar surfaces continued over the line of the wall. Perhaps a comparable phenomenon occurred at a higher elevation before we were aware of the false impression created by jumbled kurkar in the robber trench. The particular patch of kurkar surfacing 08D2-273 clearly covered a stone of W10606 and continued to the west into what is likely the foundation trench for the wall (08D2-278)(p08D2-9019). Further north *within* the foundation trench (08D2-271) we found kurkar clearly in the foundation trench, at the elevation of the top of a wall stone, that also seemed to overlay the edges of the W10606 stones. Both these incidences may be cases of kurkar in the robber trench at the same elevation as kurkar in the foundation trench, or kurkar of the foundation trench that spilled over onto the wall and was preserved when the next course of stones was laid atop. Either of these circumstances would create the false impression of a kurkar surface that overlies the second (and third) course of stones of W10606.

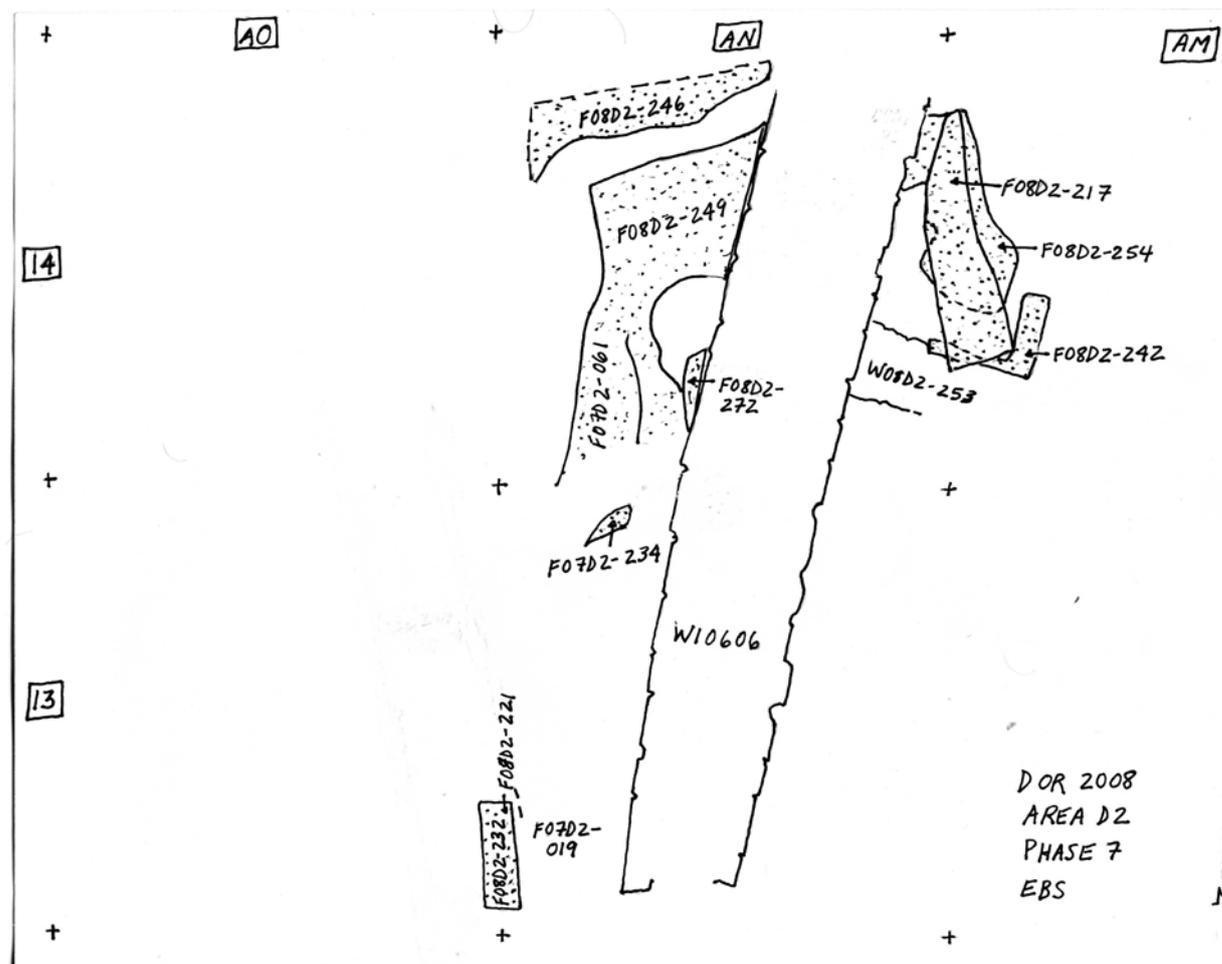


p08D2-9019, Kurkar surface 08D2-273 seemingly above W10606

Key Loci: none

Phase 7 (IrIb?/IIa? to IrIIa)

The monumental ashlar wall W10606 (formerly “Benny’s Wall” but now “Taphath’s Palace,” see 1Kings 4:11) with associated kurkar surfaces to the east and the west defines Phase 7. Three courses of ashlars have now been exposed in W10606, two courses along the 6.05m length and an ashlar of the third course in the northern baulk of AN/14 (p08D2-9019, p08D2-9023, p08D2-9030). Based on the exposed second



Area D2 Phase 7 Separation (AO-AM/14, AO-AN/13)

course and the visible eastern face of the wall, the ashlars are laid in two rows with cobbles filling the interstices. The largest ashlars measure 1.00 x .35m (length x width) and .95 x .60m and along both sides of the length of the wall the stones lie with a flat end forming a regular wall face. The wall currently tips down to the north and the east, presumably due to subsidence (p08D2-9030). Excavation of the W10606 foundation trench 08D2-078 thus far produced only a single basket of pottery dated

to IrIIa – the expected date based on excavations in D2 Lower (p08D2-9030, the foundation trench is visible to the west side of the wall).

Two additional stones, with partially dressed margins and not in line with all the other ashlar, are visible in the AN/14 northern baulk beside the ashlar of W10606. While they sit above the wall line, their unparalleled worked margins and out of kilter placement cast aspersions on their attribution to W10606 (p08D2-9023, p08D2-9030).



p08D2-9030. Bastion Wall W08D2-290 and “Taphat’s Palace” Wall W1060

Excavation this season clearly demonstrates that the kurkar surfaces extend to the east and the west of wall stones of W10606 or were cut by robber trench 08D2-223=08D2-276=08D2-235 along the line of the wall face (kurkar surfaces cut by the robber trench: F07D2-054, F08D2-221, F08D2-243). Kurkar surfaces to both directions prove that W10606 was not a closing or exterior wall delimiting the kurkar surfaces (yet it is unusually massive and well-built for an interior wall. See below for an alternative interpretation). Several kurkar surfaces came together at the western face of the uppermost ashlar engaged in the AN/14 north baulk and diverged into bowled configurations as they dipped down away from the wall (p08D2-9500, p08D2-9505, p08D2-9023, p08D2-9031). (A comparable coalescence and divergence of kurkar surfaces in relation to the corner stone of the Monumental Building situated

kitty-corner across D2 suggests the kurkar surfaces continued to the east at least as far as the Monumental Building.) Kurkar of F08D2-254 and F08D2-255 (make-up=08D2-272) exemplify the sloping kurkar surfaces from the west and the east respectively. In the southernmost extent of the wall, the kurkar surface F07D2-019 sloped *down* to reach the western face of the wall; all other kurkar surfaces sloped *up* to meet the wall. Pottery in the lowermost kurkar surfaces and fills, excavated this year, dated from IrIb?/IIa?, “IrIIa could be transitional” or IrIIa (08D2-221, 08D2-242, 08D2-251). Ilan Sharon suggests that the consistently early dates of the pottery do not date the construction period, rather the builders employed the dirt from the ruined settlement below to level the area in order to build “Taphat’s Palace.” This interpretation does not take into account the fact that later fills between kurkar surfaces contain IrIIa and IrIIB pottery (pushing this palace, like other monumental constructions in northern Israel, from the reign of Solomon to the Omrides).

Kurkar surfaces also met the proximate ashlar line W04D2-065 oriented perpendicular to W10606 and composed of ashlar similar in size, shape, and workmanship to those in W10606. The uppermost kurkar surface met the very top of the stones creating an initial impression that they were part of the kurkar surface rather than massive ashlar. Perhaps this wall segment of ashlar functioned as a foundation for an internal palace wall (so Ilan Sharon). Alternatively, if the ashlar of W04D2-065 were robbed from W10606 then the kurkar surfaces might indicate a secondary use of W10606 – when some stones had been reused to construct W04D2-065 and the remaining W10606 stones served to anchor the extensive, undulating, kurkar surfaces.

During the course of laying the kurkar surfaces, W07D2-253 was constructed against the east face of W10606. Builders of this fieldstone wall cut through the early kurkar surface F08D2-254 to construct a perpendicular wall abutting the W10606 ashlar. The Phase 6 Assyrian pit cut the eastern end of W08D2-253 enabling us to date the wall to after the initial kurkar surfaces were laid but before the big Assyrian Pit.

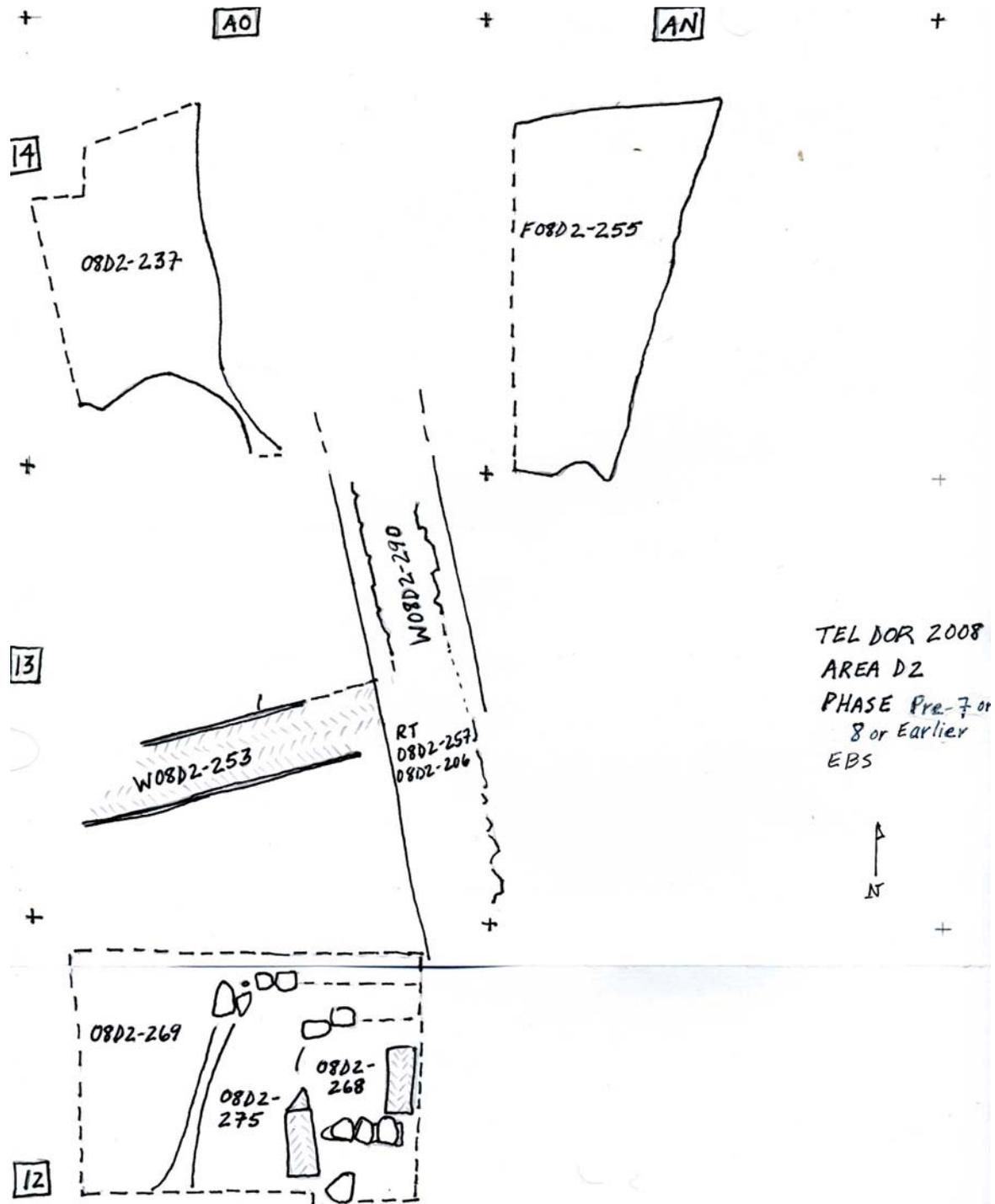


p08D2-9031. Vertical cut between trench fills and ashy surfaces 08D2-237 (AO/14 north baulk)

Phase Pre-7

If W10606 functioned as a wall of “Taphat’s Palace” then it belongs in Phase 7. If, however, it was a constructional wall in the leveling of the area to accommodate the palace then it belongs in Pre-7 (the constructional phase for the Phase 7 “palace”). The fact that kurkar surfaces seem to cover W10606 (to be re-examined) suggests the wall was part of the leveling operation rather than a free-standing wall in a structure.

Robbing (08D2-257) of the Bastion Wall (W08D2-290) occurred before the construction of W10606. Perhaps those who built W10606 also tore down, a likely scenario given that W10606 reaches the Bastion Wall at a point where stones have been robbed. So, the robbing took place either in Phase Pre-7 by those who constructed the monumental ashlar W10606 or sometime before that (Phase 8 or earlier). The robber trench runs the length of Squares AO/13-12 and probably continues into AO/14 if the sequence of deposits in AO/14 continues to parallel that of AO/13. Best illustrated in AO/13, the robbers dug down to remove desirable stones and left the undesirables either along the trench edge or tossed them aside (08D2-257, 08D2-206, IrIb?/IIa? or IrIIa at the latest) (p08D2-9030). Above and just beside the robbed wall line heaps of cobbles created piles (08D2-211=08D2-222, “IrIIa could be transitional”) with fills accumulating against them (07D2-070, 08D2-209, 08D2-213, IrIb?/IIa?) (p08D2-9000, p08D2-9030 preserved in north baulk of AO/12). Such is the reconstruction of events from the western face of the Bastion Wall as exposed in



Area D2 Phase Pre-7(?) and 8 or earlier

F07D2-019 with kurkar make-up 08D2-239) clearly demonstrate that the robbing preceded the kurkar surfacings.

AO/13. As for the eastern face in AN/13, a well-preserved face compared to its western counterpart, the area was riddled by moles and roots, used as a recorder's office for years, and subject to the subsidence and erosion caused by W10606. It is

precisely here that the foundation trench of W10606 (08D2-278) would meet the Bastion Wall but the relationship has been obscured by subsequent disturbances. The foundation trench 08D2-278 does contain the dark brown clayey matrix found in conjunction with the Bastion Wall stones (though also used for bricks in Phase 8) suggesting those who built Taphath's Palace either robbed the Bastion Wall or met or crossed the Bastion Wall line (p08D2-9030).

During and subsequent to the robbing of the Bastion Wall but before the kurkar surfacings, fills accumulated west of the Bastion Wall across AO/12-AO/14. Fills in AO/12 and AO/13 look similar (08D2-209, 08D2-248), they both slope down to the north and the west, and both contain discarded stones. While the AO/14 deposits also slope down off a mound of stones concentrated in the southeast corner of the square, they slope down to the north but not to the west (08D2-209, 08D20213, 08D2-231, 08D2-238, 08D2-265). This orientation might be explained by the wall making a corner and turning to the west (as was previously thought). However, in AO/14 the fills cut an earlier deposit of grey, ashy lenses (08D2-237) on a vertical, north-south line suggesting the fills are in a trench, perhaps a giant robber trench, roughly continuing the wall line (p08D2-9031). Further excavation will tell. Supporting the archaeological adage that significant interfaces occur in the baulk, the AO/AN/14 baulk obscures the relationship between these "trench" fills and the surface F08D2-255 to the east (the one cut by the foundation trench for W10606).

Fills following robbing of Bastion Wall (IrIb?/IIa? to IrIIa):

AO/12: 06D2-116 ("IrIIa could be transitional"), 08D2-207 and 08D2-248 (IrIb?/IIa?)

AO/13: 06D2-122, 07D2-010,011,012, 07D2-035, 07D2-041, 042, 07D2-049,051 (IrI?/II? to "IrIIa could be transitional")

AO/14: 08D2-209, 213, 231, 265 (IrIb?/IIa?; IrIIa?; IrIIa - later than AO/12 and 13, also intentional fill with vertical edge unlike AO/12-13)

Key Loci:

08D2-207 "Possible Key Locus" IrIb?/IIa? fill contemporary with the robbing of the Bastion Wall (AO/12)

08D2-231 IrIIa?/"IrIIa could be transitional" fill either contemporary with the robbing of the Bastion Wall or in the robber trench over the Bastion Wall (AO/14)

Phase 8 or earlier (IrIb?/IIa?)

At this stage of excavation, deposits considered contemporary with the Bastion Wall are disparate and do not create a coherent picture. The “cultic hump” in AO/12, a mudbrick wall and associated brick fall in AO/13, a build-up of ashy lenses with evidence of burning in AO/14, and perhaps the surface F08D2-255 into which the foundation trench for W10606 was cut in AN/14 are all assigned to Phase 8 or earlier.

The “cultic hump” produced a worked stone bowl with no signs of use (proclaimed “cultic” by a visiting stone tool expert) in conjunction with a horn core surrounded by small stones, and a collection of large, rounded, unusually-colored pebbles. This constellation in the general vicinity of a 2006 “cultic installation” with stones framing a horn core merited the vague designation “cultic hump” for this enigmatic installation. These allegedly cultic objects were found in and beside an approximately 1m wide compartment(?) between 2 parallel lines of bricks (western line is now 2 courses high, 08D2-268 [IrIb?]). A row of stones, 2 courses high, runs east-west across the southern end of the installation and an apparently emerging fieldstone wall (no number) runs east-west across the northern end. Brick detritus frames the western side (08D2-275 [IrI, “IrIIa? could be transitional”]) while the eastern side is cut by a robber trench over the Bastion Wall (08D2-206=08D2-284). A grey, ashy surface to the west (F08D2-248 [IrIb?/IIa?], ashy deposit not excavated), appears contemporary with the installation but requires further excavation (p08D2-9036). While the interpretation is doubtful, this is clearly an intentional, mudbrick construction that precedes the robbing of the Bastion Wall and so is either contemporary with the wall or subsequent to it but before the kurkar surfacings of Phase 7.



p08D2-9036. The “cultic hump”

In AO/13, the robbers trench over the Bastion Wall cut through a .60m wide mudbrick wall (W08D2-253) and associated brick fall to its north and south (south of W08D2-253: 08D2-262 [IR], 08D2-228 [IR], 08D2-229 [IrIb?]; north of W08D2-253: 08D2-256 [IrI, IrIb?]; 08D2-252 [IrIb]; 08D2-283 [IrI, IrIa]). Wall W08D2-253, running NE-SW and roughly perpendicular to the Bastion Wall, consists of light brown-grey, sandy mudbricks, not yet preserved in regular rows, faced with brown clay/mud and a plaster facing burned a pinkish color (p08D2-9030, p08D2-9039). To the south of the wall, brightly-colored fallen bricks (08D2-228, 08D2-229, 08D2-262) lay in a toppled configuration over what appears to be intensely fired bricks (hopefully a destruction layer). To the north of the wall, a deposit of brick fragments and mortar lines (in which a north-south wall was suspected, 08D2-256, 08D2-283) now displays the first hints of burning below.



p08D2-9039. Mudbrick wall W08D2-253, fallen bricks 08D2-262, Bastion Wall W08D2-290, and slid mudbricks 08D2-212 (visible in section)

In the northwest corner of square AO/14, pottery dates a nearly meter deep deposit of ashy lenses, perhaps outdoor courtyard deposits that slope and dive down from the west to the east (06D2-067 = 07D2-004 = 07D2-044 = 07D2-058 = 08D2-237) to IrI or IrIb?. A brown fill, in line with the emerging Bastion Wall, cuts this deposit on a straightish north-south line supplying stratigraphic evidence that the ashy deposits pre-date the robbing of the Bastion Wall and perhaps are contemporary with the wall (p08D2-9031).

The “cultic hump,” the mudbrick wall W08D2-253, and the ashy lenses 08D2-237 are all west of the projected line of the Bastion Wall. To the east of the supposed wall line, the foundation trench (08D2-271=08D2-278) for Taphath’s Palace wall W10606 cuts the phytolith-covered surface F08D2-255 (AN/14). Unfortunately, though not surprisingly, the interfaces between this surface, the Bastion Wall (AO-AN/13), and the fills over the Bastion Wall (in AO/14) all lie under baulks. While relations between this surface and the Bastion Wall remain uncertain, the surface does provide evidence of occupation to the east/outside of the Bastion Wall before the construction of W10606. Pottery from the kurkar surfaces and associated fill overlying this surface, 08D2-255, dated from IrIb?/IIa? to IrIIa providing a *terminus ante quem* for the phytolith surface.

The eastern face of the Bastion Wall (W08D2-290=W17269) emerged in AN/13 and the western face in AO/13. At least those boulders at the very top and the few left by robbers were bedded in a dark grayish-brown clay/mud that dries and crumbles into large chunks. This same clay/mud filled the robber trench as well (08D2-257). In the southeast corner of AO/13, mudbricks of VERY compact reddish material with lime inclusions (08D2-229, IrIb?) slid down beside the line of the Bastion Wall stones (p08D2-9026, p08D2-9031 visible in the baulk). Future excavation may show whether or not these bricks represent a constructional phase of the Bastion Wall superstructure from Phase 8 or earlier.

Area D2 Updated Loci

W10606 “Benny’s Wall”
 W5207b Hellenistic Wall (“Porch”)
 W17530 Hellenistic Wall (“Porch”)
 W17562 Hellenistic Wall (“Big Mama”)
 W17609 Roman Foundation (North baulk conservation)
 W17624 Hellenistic Wall (West baulk conservation)
 Roman sumps 05D2-030, 05D2-031
 06D2-013
 07D2-005
 07D2-006
 07D2-019
 07D2-021
 07D2-049

07D2-050
07D2-051
07D2-054
07D2-055
07D2-058
07D2-063
07D2-068
07D2-069
07D2-070
07D2-071
07D2-072
07D2-073
W07D2-075
W07D2-076