

TEL DOR - 2011 (G50/2011)

SVETA MATSKEVICH, ILAN SHARON, AYELET GILBOA

The thirtieth excavation season at Dor was held between June 28th–August 5th, 2011, on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Haifa, in collaboration with the University of Washington, Seattle (a group headed by Sarah Culpepper Stroup), and the University of St. Joseph, Philadelphia (a group headed by Elizabeth Bloch-Smith). The excavations were carried out under the auspices of the Israel Exploration Society, and funded by the Berman Center for Biblical Archaeology, the Zinman Institute of Archaeology at the University of Haifa, the University of Washington and anonymous donors. Additional activities at the site and analyses of finds were supported by the Yellin-Goldhirsh Foundation, and the Israel Science Foundation (Grants 570/9 and 797/10).

The excavation was directed by Ilan Sharon (the Hebrew University) and Ayelet Gilboa (the University of Haifa), with the following staff: Yiftah Shalev (senior field archaeologist); area supervisors: Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Susan Rebecca Martin (D2), Sarah Culpepper Stroup (D4), Hagar Ben-Basat and Bronwen Manning- Rozenblum (D5); unit supervisors: Henry Sheedy Burden, Kyle LeRoy Vormstrand, Warren Errig (D4); recorders: Gideon Wolf, Midori Intrator (D2), Millicent Haase (D4), Golan Shalvi, Elise Zevitz (D5); architectural drafting: Sveta Matskevich; photographer: Lang Gito; registration and finds processing: Yuli Gekht and Paula Waiman Barak; late pottery analysis: Barak Monnickendam-Givon; architectural conservation and pottery restoration: Ravit Linn and Roe Shafir; administration Eli Gerstein; artifact drawing: Vered Rosen and Haya Kaftori. The excavators were mostly overseas students and volunteers, and a group of students from the University of Haifa. The expedition was lodged at the Kfar Galim Youth Village and working facilities were extended by the CONRAD (Ha-Mizgaga) museum at Kibbuz Nahsholim.

Two field school programs were conducted during the season, in collaboration with the University of Washington and Haifa University International School.



Fig. 1 Plan of the southern part of the *tell*. Red - areas excavated in 2011; orange – excavated in previous seasons; purple - J. Garstang and A. Raban excavation areas

The excavation was carried out in three areas on the south-western side of the *tell*: D2, D4 and D5, and on a high-standing baulk, north and west of Area D2 (Fig.1). It uncovered remains spanning the Iron Age I, Iron Age II, Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods. The chronological terminology used below for the Iron Age is that employed in the Tel Dor publications.

Since the 2004 excavation season, these areas were deepened so extensively, that a 2.5 m wide baulk between Areas D2, D1 and D4 became dangerously high. Thus, for safety reasons, a decision was made to postpone the work in the deep parts of areas D2 and D4, and to lower down this L-shaped baulk (Fig. 1). For the purposes of logistics, documentation and post-excavation analysis the western baulk was assigned to Area D2, and the northern part to Area D4.

AREA D2

The northern and the western rows of squares, excavated during the last seasons (*HA-ESI* 118, 121, 122, **Dor 2010 in *HA-ESI***) were not dug this year (except of the southernmost square), because of the excavation of the baulk above them.

Iron Age–Persian Period

The excavation of the lower southern unit of D2 (squares AO/11-12), added some information about Persian-period and Late Iron Age features. In the lowest point the excavation reached a *kurkar* bedding of the Ir2a *late* pavement, found previously north of this unit. In all likelihood, this flooring is associated with the Phase D2/7 ashlar building (the so-called "Taphat's palace") excavated in previous seasons further to the north. A robber trench running north-south along the eastern edge of this surface (phase D2/7) may have robbed one of the walls associated with this floor, possibly the continuation of W10606. To the earliest Persian remains (Phase D2/5b) belong a pit and additional fragments of the red surfaces uncovered in previous seasons, found south of the façade wall of the northern *insula* here (W09D2-381).

The Hellenistic Period

The baulk between Areas D1 and D2 (sqs. AP/11-14) yielded four architectural stages of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Most of the features uncovered are extensions of features known from previous excavations on either or both sides of this wide baulk. Still, excavation of this area revealed important relations between the features of Phases 1–2 in Areas D1 and D2.

The Hellenistic remains (Phases D2/3-4, Fig. 2), reached in the western part of the southern unit, include a façade (W26119), built in *interlocked squares* method (Sharon 1987, *BASOR* 267: 21-41) and running along (north of) the east–west street here, and a series of north–south walls. The facade and W26246 perpendicular to it form the south-eastern corner of a room or a building that extends to Area D1 to the west. In the eastern corner of the unit there is another facade wall, W5207, and two north–south walls that possibly connect to it. W5207, which continues eastward along the above-mentioned street for ca. 15 m, is the southern wall of the *insula* excavated previously in Area D2. Since the Roman street pavement and facade walls were not removed this season, we do not know whether the Hellenistic facades were connected in the same zigzag manner as the Roman ones (see below), or if there was a passage between the western (D1) and the eastern (D2) buildings. The second option is the more favored at the moment, because W26246 and the two eastern walls are not parallel, thus more likely belong to two different structures.



Fig. 2 Baulk between Areas D1 and D2 and eastern squares of Area D1 looking south. Roman (orange) and Hellenistic (red) remains.

The only Hellenistic feature found in the northern part of the area is a segment of the east–west W26000 (the so-called "Big Mama" wall, W17562 in D2). This extremely wide compartment wall belongs to the eastern wing of the Monumental Hellenistic Complex (MHC), excavated earlier in Areas D1 and D2 (see Area D4).

The Roman Period

In the southern square, immediately under topsoil, we came down on the pavement (L11D2-632) of the Roman street running east-west along the southern slope of the *tell* (Street 2). At this spot, the facade of the Roman building north of the street, partly built on top of the Hellenistic facade, creates a zigzag and continues eastward. The street pavement was adjusted with a wedge-shaped segment to accommodate this strange corner (Fig. 3). Under the street was a stone-made drain, excavated previously in Areas D2 and D1 (L5104).



Fig. 3 Baulk between Areas D1 and D2: zigzag formed by W26119 to W11D2-631 and street pavement south of it. Sq. AO/10 looking south

The northern squares of the baulk were heavily disturbed, and our aim here was to remove the Roman remains and prepare the area for the excavation of clean Hellenistic deposits next season. The major features found here relate to the Industrial building (*HA-ESI* 118) and to its southwestern annex: a robber trench of the southern wall of the building (W17591) with a cement floor north of it, and remains of hypocaust tiles and a plaster basin south of the wall in the area of the “annex” to this industrial building.

AREA D4

Persian period

In the lower part of area D4, under the debris associated with the compartment walls of the MHC (see below), the excavation reached remains of the Persian period structures, namely a set of trenches that mark robbed-out walls, and a sequence of floors in the spaces created by these walls (Fig. 4). Fragments of mud-brick material found on these surfaces and the matrix of the fills right above them suggest intensive use of mud-bricks as building material, chiefly in wall superstructures, as opposed to the overlying Hellenistic architecture, composed only of stones.

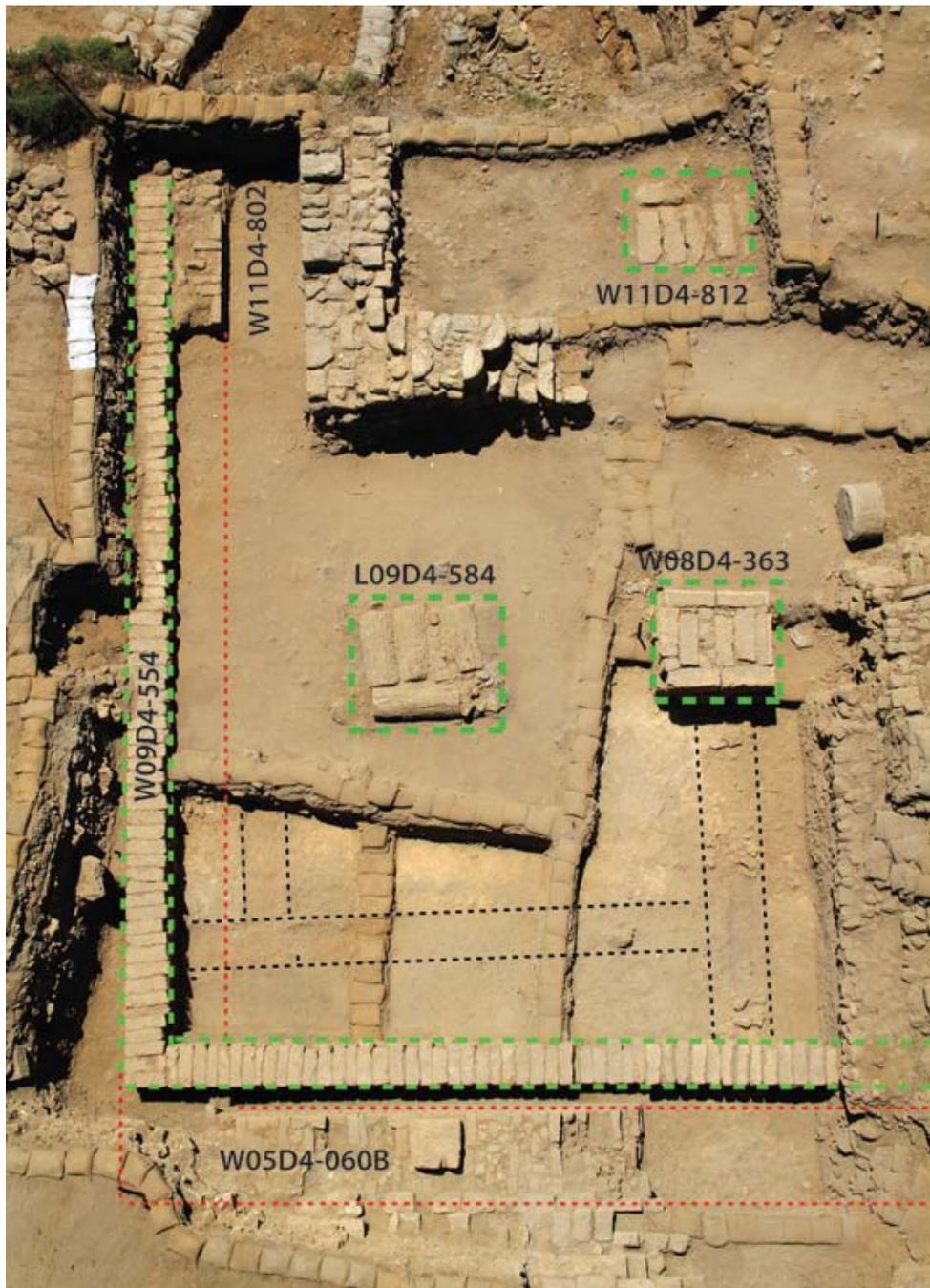


Fig. 4 Area D4 looking south. Wall outlines of Phase 3 (green), Phase 4 (red) and Phase 5 (black)

Hellenistic period

The project of removal the baulk-section between Areas D2 and D4 (Fig. 1) prevented us from digging in the southern part of Area D4. The baulk squares AO-AP/15, excavated as "D4-south" from the topsoil, revealed a stratigraphic sequence of Roman and Hellenistic deposits and architectural features.

Excavation in both the northern and the southern units revealed several features that proved to be crucial for our understanding of the stratigraphy of the Hellenistic remains (Phases D4/3 and D4/4) both in this specific area, and for the entire Hellenistic sequence on the southern slope of the tell (Areas D1, D2 and D4), especially the relation between the "Monumental Hellenistic Structure", constructed in the 'compartment' technique and the "Thin Headers Building" (*HA-ESI 122*).

An ashlar-constructed rectangular feature (W11D4-812) was uncovered in the southern unit (sq. AN-AO/17) under the foundation level of the phase D4/2 (Roman) walls. It is almost identical in size (2 x 1.5 m) and shape to two other features (W08D4-363 and L09D4-584), found in previous seasons in the central part of the area and identified as piers (*HA-ESI 123*). This similarity points out that all three belong to a set of four, or most probably, six piers, arranged in two rows within the central space of a building. Several scenarios of the relations between the piers and these two Hellenistic buildings were suggested in the past; currently the most probable one is that they were constructed together with the later set of the walls, those of the "Thin Headers building" (see further below).

The puzzling relations between the 'compartment' walls of the Monumental Hellenistic Structure and the thin header walls were clarified this season due to the following findings (Fig. 4). While deepening and cleaning a narrow space between the northern compartment and thin header walls, were found two stones dovetailed with the 'compartment wall'. These two ashlar belong to a north-south wall of the Monumental Hellenistic Structure, which was mostly robbed out by the builders of the "Thin Headers Building". The continuation of this compartment wall (W11D4-802) was uncovered in the southern unit, under the eastern thin header wall (W09D4-554). The superposition of these walls leaves no doubts regarding the order in which the two complexes were built: the thin header walls are later than the compartment walls.

Re-examination of the stratigraphic relations between the walls led us to a conclusion that the floor fragments found along the northern compartment and thin header walls were not cut by the header wall, but reached it both from within the building and in the space between the walls. Another fragment of a surface, approximately at the same level, was found reaching the north-western pier, while a Phase D4/2 wall was built directly on top of it. This evidence, although indirect, supports our suggestion that the piers were part of the thin headers building, i.e. belong to Phase D4/3. Another, even more circumstantial clue comes from the

fact that the southern pier was superimposed by the Phase D4/2 installation built of a secondary-used column drum. It seems likely that the Phase D4/2 builders used an existing feature of the preceding phase. Taking all the above into consideration, we assign the compartment building to Phase D4/4, which represents the early Hellenistic period in Area D (Fig. 5, Nitschke, Martin, Shalev, 2011, *NEA* 74(3): 132-154).

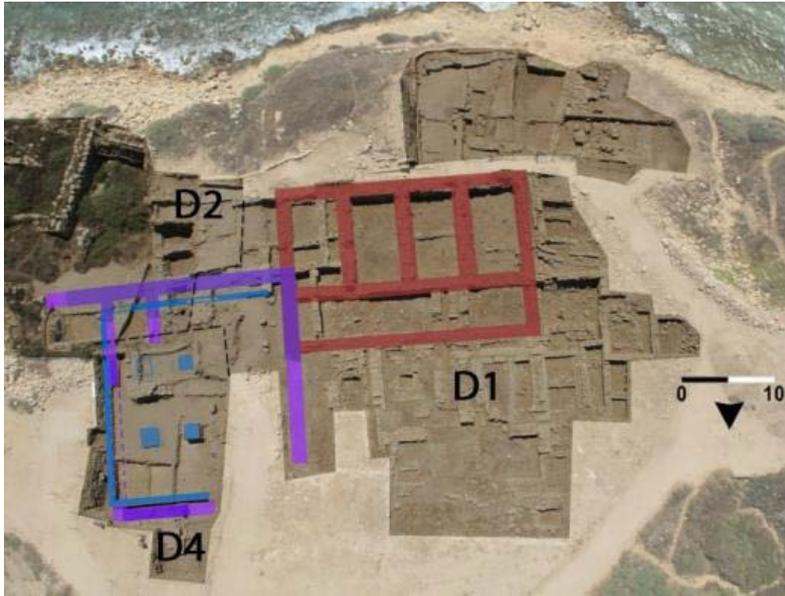


Fig. 5 Monumental Hellenistic Structure (purple and red) and the Thin Headers Wall structure (blue), looking south
The southern part of the Monumental Hellenistic Structure (the so-called "Big Mama" wall and walls perpendicular to it) were excavated in 1999-2000 seasons in the northern part of Area D2 (*HA-ESI* 121), where it belongs to Phase D2/4. A short section of that same wall was cleared this season in area D2 baulk excavation (see above). Several header walls, found in the same units, as well as in the baulk excavation this year, definitely continue the thin ashlar walls structure of Area D4/Phase 3. These two sets of walls clearly establish a correlation between the stratigraphical sequences in these two areas. The Monumental Hellenistic ("compartment") Structure continues further west, beyond the D1/D2 section baulk, where it is abutted by the eastern wall of another monumental structure (referred in early publications as "Persian Palace", see *HA-ESI* 111, 121, but clearly Hellenistic in date). The two buildings comprise the so-called *Monumental Hellenistic Complex* (MHC), the focal point in the southern part of the city (Nitschke, Martin, Shalev, 2011, *NEA* 74(3): 132-154).

Now that the question of the sequence of these structures is resolved, we are in a position to discuss their dating and interpretations. Unfortunately, the preserved floors, mentioned above, are very flimsy and neither produced any primary ceramic assemblage over them, nor sealed

debris that could date the construction of the later structure. According to preliminary pottery analysis, the assemblage associated with the later thin header-wall building is early Hellenistic and can be dated to the last quarter of the 3rd century BCE. Nothing definitive can be said about the date of the compartment building, as it has no preserved floors. Constructional fills within this structure go down to the Phase D4/5a floors and yielded Persian-period assemblages still mixed with some Hellenistic pieces. A *terminus post quem* for this structure in the second quarter of 3rd century BCE is provided by a coin of Ptolemy II (284-246 BCE) and a pottery assemblage found in a pit under the so-called "Big Mama" wall.

Among the questions to be answered by future research are: what were the height and the roofing materials (if there were any) of the buildings; why were different styles of masonry used; why are the floors in the MHC almost entirely missing; whether the Phase D4/3 building used some of the walls of its predecessor; why were these architectural programs initiated and whether they were ever finished; and of course, what were the functions of these buildings, obviously of public or palatial nature.

Roman period

Above the Hellenistic sequence was the continuation of the Phase D4/2 structure: massive ashlar walls built on standing foundations and supported by ca. 2 m thick construction debris (for description and excavation progress see *HA-ESI* 121, 122). A southern wall of this building (W11D4-797) was found in D4-south, above the Hellenistic thin header wall W09D4-554 (Phase D4/3).

The upper-most part of the revealed sequence comprised a series of cement floors with some traces of plain mosaic. These floors belong to a large Late Roman building of a public/industrial character, excavated in Area D4 during the 2004–2008 seasons (*HA-ESI* 118, 121, 122). Several food-processing installations and a drainage system, found in this structure, point out that employing cement, plaster and mosaic *tesserae* for the floors and, in some cases, wall makeup and coating, was functional rather than esthetic, and had a waterproofing function. In the southern part of the earliest floor was embedded a secondarily-used column drum that probably served as an installation, but its purpose is unclear. A southern wall of the room (or, possibly, of the whole building), W11D4-751, seems to be a zigzag continuation of W17624, excavated in Area D2 in the 1990s.

AREA D5

The Iron Age

Similarly to the previous season (Dor 2010 in *HA-ESI*), only the western and the eastern higher parts of the area were excavated, with the purpose of leveling them with the deep trench that was cut through the area in the 1980's and '90's. Both sub-areas revealed a continuation of the Ir2a "courtyard building" (Phase D5/9), whose central courtyard was uncovered in the D5-center in the 1990's and in recent seasons (*HA-ESI* 121 [2006], 122[2007-2008]). In both parts the excavated squares on the slope of the *tell* were extended further south towards the Iron Age city wall as the area deepened. During the last years, this segment of the slope is being cleaned in course of the excavation and was further exposed by the severe winter storms of the last three years, so that several lines of fortification walls became visible and traceable. An attempt to map these wall lines, made this year (Fig. 6), revealed three superimposed walls, separated by earthen deposits and slightly shifted one from another. The higher-most is the offset-inset city wall W05D1-548 of Phase D5/9 (Fig. 6, red; Ir2a), built mainly of ashlar, which encloses the courtyard building from the south. Three construction stages of this wall that correspond to the changes within the building were revealed during previous seasons (Dor 2010 in *HA-ESI*). As new parts of the courtyard building are being uncovered (see below), it is becoming clear that the relations between the building and the different phase of the ashlar city-wall are more complex than previously assumed, and we hope to clarify the situation in future seasons.

Running grosso modo below W05D1-548 at the foot of Area D5 is a rubble wall, W09D5-811 (Fig. 6, blue), which was temporarily attributed to Phase D5/12 (Ir1a, see *HA-ESI* 123). The wall has not yet been reached by excavation in D5, but is visible along the southern margin of the *tell*. Now, when the line of this wall has been mapped, it seems to be curving northward and therefore can be connected by a virtual line to the so-called Bastion Wall of Area D2 (*HA-ESI* 121) (Fig. 7), also constructed during Ir1a. Thus it is quite plausible that wall W09D5-811 and the Bastion Wall in Area D2 were built concurrently, and belong to one fortification system, constructed with the inception of the Iron Age town at Dor during the Ir1a horizon, between the late 12th and late 11th century BCE. Another option is that an Ir1a fortification wall extended from the Bastion wall westward along the ridge above the southern lagoon, south of the offset-inset wall W05D1-548 and wall W09D5-811, and was washed away by the surge (it is evident that indeed, many architectural remains on the

southern slope of the *tell* were damaged by the sea). In this case W09D5-811 is not a city wall at all. Future excavation of the acropolis in the vicinity of these walls and intensive cleaning of the south-western slope will hopefully enable us to verify or discard this theory.

The lowermost wall (Fig. 6, purple) is too unclear to be discussed in detail at this point, but it does indicate that W09D5-811 is not the earliest substantial construction in this part of the *tell*.

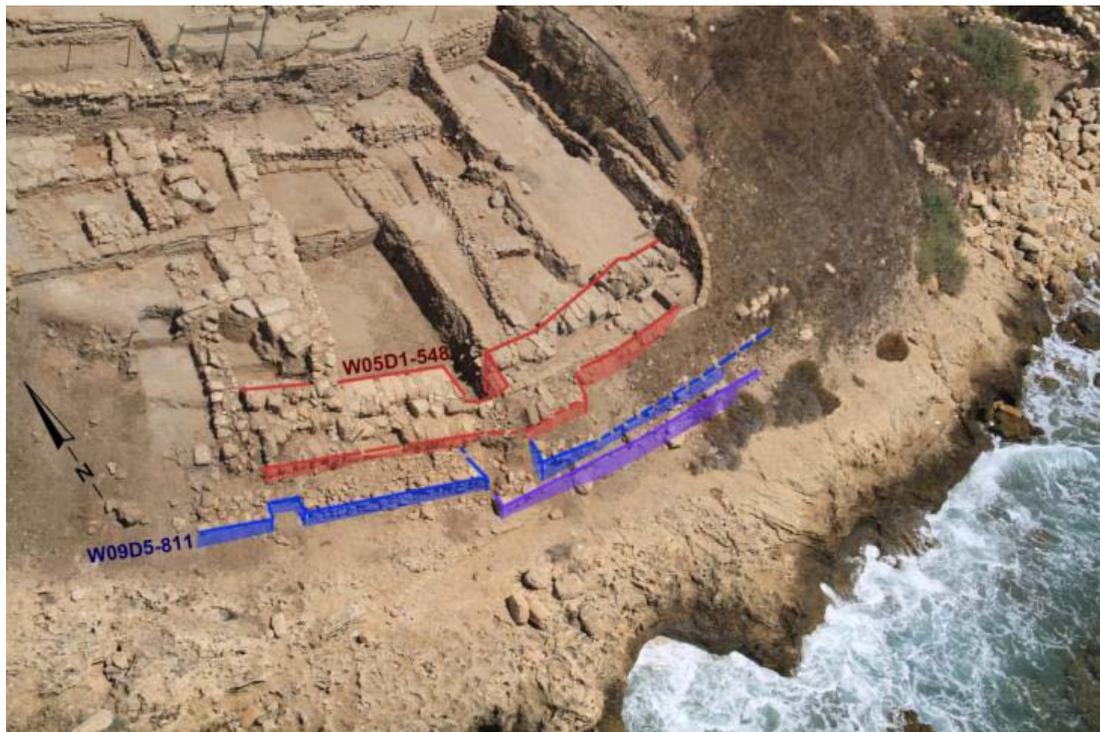


Fig. 6 Sequence of city-walls and potential city walls on the southern slope of the tell, below Area D5

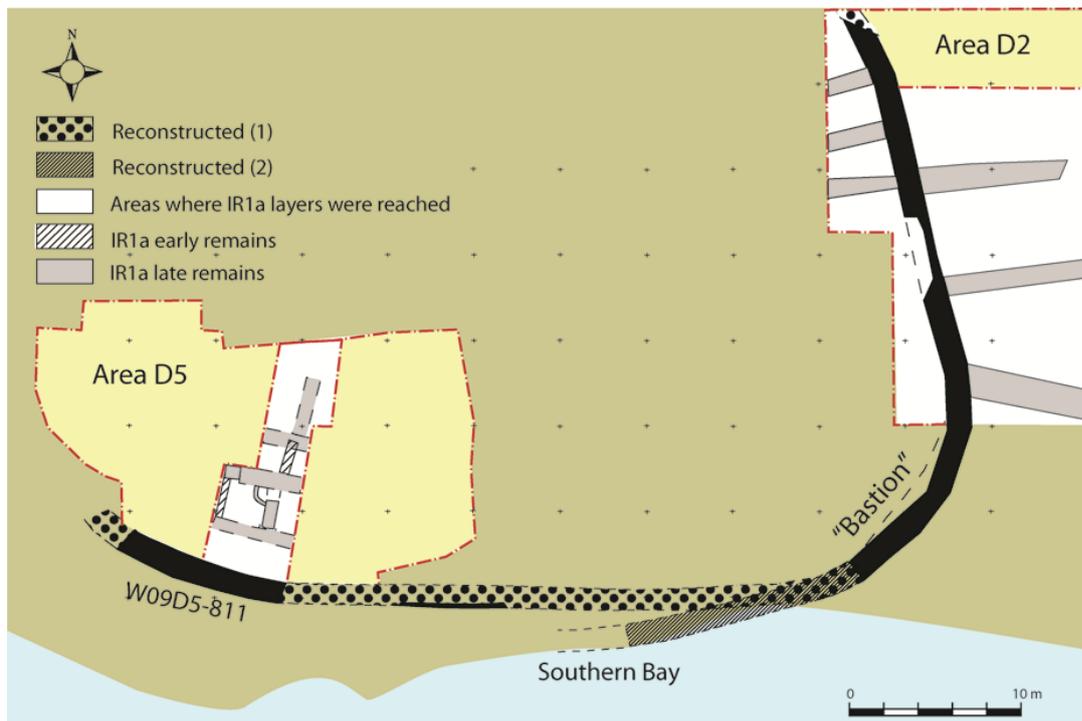


Fig. 7 Suggested reconstructions of IR1a city-wall: Bastion wall (Area D2, Phases 12 and 13) and the (possible) city-wall W09D5-811 (Area D5, Phase 12?)

Phase D5/10 remains were found this year on the lower terrace of the western part of D5. In several spots the excavators reached superimposed phytolith layers of Ir1|2 or Ir2a date, cut by the walls of the 'courtyard building'. Exactly the same situation was observed in the courtyard of the Phase D5/9 house in the central part of D5 (Dor 2010 in *HA-ESI*). These layers signify a period for which no construction is in evidence in Area D5.



Fig. 8 City wall W05D1-548 (yellow), Courtyard Building and related walls of Phase D5/9 (red) and Ashlar/Boulder Building of Phase D5/8 (purple), looking south

The so-called courtyard building, constructed in Ir2a and so far known to us mainly from its central large space (the 'courtyard'), 'developed' side rooms east and west of it, and possibly even an additional building to the west (Figs. 8, 9). For two seasons, a short segment of

rubble wall WD510-918 was the only visible extension of the building in the western part of the area, and even its relation to the courtyard building was doubtful. As the southern extension of this wall was found (W11D5-620=W11D5-640), it became clear that this is indeed a fragment of the long wall forming an elongated space (dubbed 'Room 1'). Room 1 is c. 2.5 m wide and 10 m long. It might have been divided into two halves (similarly to the eastern wing, see below), in which case a hypothetical dividing wall would be disturbed by or buried under the south-eastern corner of the D5/8 structure (discussed below). Further west, parallel to WD510-918, there are two more walls that belong to the same complex of D5/9: W11D5-665 and W11D5-666. These north-south walls, built exactly in the same manner as the 'courtyard walls', were found only in the northern part of the area (sq. AX/11), while their southern parts disappeared due to erosion on the south slope of the *tell*. Two additional spaces created by these walls ('Room 2' in the middle and 'Room 3' in the west) differ in their width: approximately 3 m and 1 m correspondingly. The western extension of the line of the northern courtyard wall (W10825) beyond the north-western corner of the courtyard, and its relations with the three long walls are currently unknown, but they are essential for our understanding of the plan of the building. One of the main questions is whether W10825 in the west is one continuous wall, or if there is a gap, which may mark an alley running between the building and a house west of it. Another option is that the long wall(s) meet W10825 and continue even further north; as we know from the central part of the area, the building has at least three more rooms north of the courtyard (Fig. 8). Currently, the western part of W10825 is under the boulder 'tower' (D5/8, see below) and most probably its upper courses were destroyed during the construction of the 'tower'. If the foundations of the Phase D5/9 building here are as deep as in the central part of the building, then we can hope to reach the lower courses that will clarify the picture. This building seems to be of more complex plan than hitherto assumed, and we are not sure anymore that it is of the "Canaanite courtyard" type, or indeed that it is a regular dwelling. It may be part of a public complex of some kind.

The relations of the western wing of the 'courtyard building' and the city wall in the south are not entirely clear either. W11D5-620 (the southern segment of W10D5-918) extends beyond the line of the city wall W05D1-518b as we know it west of W11D5-620. One possibility is that the courtyard house is cutting this stage of the city wall and the western part of the house extended further south. Another option is that the city wall turned here south, and the courtyard

line of stones in the north-eastern corner of the area will develop into another long wall parallel to the eastern wall of the courtyard (W5562).

Excavation of a baulk between the central and the eastern parts of D5 revealed a set of surfaces within the courtyard, reaching W5562 from the west. These are fragments of the upper courtyard floors (phase D5/9a) excavated in the 1990's and the scant pottery on them dates to Ir2a.

The southern city wall (W09D5-811=W5603) was traced in the easternmost square of the area (and called W11D5-400). The lower stage of this wall continues the same course of large elongated ashlar as Stage B of the wall in the central and western sub-areas. From the upper stage (W11D5-326) only a short fragment remained. These two stages are correlated with phases D5/9b and D5/9a respectively.

The boulder and large ashlar building in the western sub-area was further exposed this year (Phase D5/8). This square structure with a pier in the center was preserved only one (foundation) course high and has an ashlar facade in the north and the north-western corner. The southern and the western walls are partly robbed out and partly destroyed by the slope erosion. The structure had an extension southward, preserved in the eastern wall only. The plan of this building can be interpreted as a tower, facing north or north-west, with a staircase around the 'pier' in the center, though it may also be part of a larger structure extending to the north beyond the confines of Area D5. Ceramics from the kurkar surfaces associated with the boulder walls are dated to Ir2b-c. Scarce remains of a massive boulder structure, uncovered in D5-east are preliminary attributed to the same stage. In the central part of the area these buildings are correlated with thick white floors excavated in the 1990s.

Hellenistic and the Persian periods

In the higher parts of the area the main goal of the excavations this season was bringing all the units down to the same level, finishing the work on the Hellenistic and Persian-period deposits, and exposing large architectural complexes of Phases D5/8 and D5/9 to their maximal extent. Above the Iron Age layers, however, the correlating between architectural remains in the eastern and western part of the area is more difficult.

Numerous pits that mark the transitional Persian–Hellenistic layers (Phase D5/5 in the west and D5/5c-6a in the east) were excavated in both parts of the area. The stratigraphic relations

of the Persian features excavated in previous seasons (Phase D5/6) were sorted out, and a much clearer plan of the area during the earlier stages of Phase D5/6 was drawn.

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 Plan of the southern part of the *tell*. Red - areas excavated in 2011; orange – excavated in previous seasons; purple - J. Garstang and A. Raban excavation areas

Fig. 2 Baulk between Areas D1 and D2 and eastern squares of Area D1 looking south. Roman (orange) and Hellenistic (red) remains.

Fig. 3 Baulk between Areas D1 and D2: zigzag formed by W26119 to W11D2-631 and street pavement south of it. Sq. AO/10 looking south

Fig. 4 Area D4 looking south. Wall outlines of Phase 3 (green), Phase 4 (red) and Phase 5 (black)

Fig. 5 Monumental Hellenistic Structure (purple and red) and the Thin Headers Wall structure (blue), looking south

Fig. 6 Sequence of city-walls and potential city walls on the southern slope of the tell, below Area D5

Fig. 7 Suggested reconstructions of IR1a city-wall: Bastion wall (Area D2, Phases 12 and 13) and the (possible) city-wall W09D5-811 (Area D5, Phase 12?)

Fig. 8 City wall W05D1-548 (yellow), Courtyard Building and related walls of Phase D5/9 (red) and Ashlar/Boulder Building of Phase D5/8 (purple), looking south

Fig. 9 Area D5-west: Phase 8 Ashlar/Boulder Building (black); Phase 9 'Courtyard building' (yellow); City wall (blue)