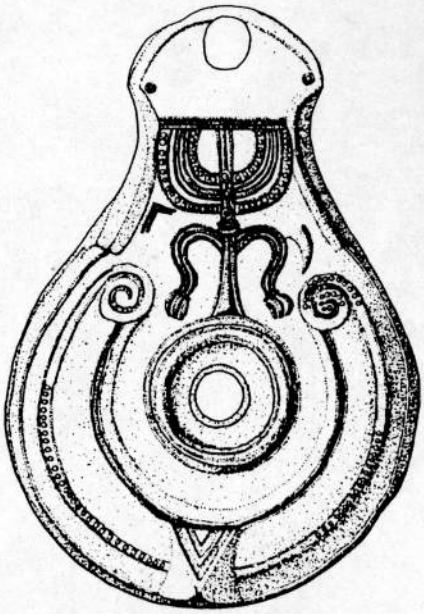

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TEL DOR — 1985

The sixth season of excavations at Tel Dor was carried out in July—August 1985 on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and the Israel Exploration Society (*ESI* 1:22—25; 2:25—27; 3:21—24; 4:21—24). The work was directed by E. Stern, in cooperation with H.P. Goldfried of the State University of California, Sacramento, D. Stronach of the University of California at Berkeley, H.N. Richardson of Boston University, Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom of the Gutenberg University at Mainz, D.L. Christensen of the Graduate Theological Union and T.R. Hobbs of McMaster University, Ontario. The staff included I. Sharon, A. Gilboa, D. Kaufman, A. Cohen, L. Banks (area supervisors), J. Berg, B. Laforee, M. Tern (architects), Bracha Guz-Silberstein (registrar), D. Eliyahu (pottery restorer), S. Dahan, K. Raveh and V. Shatzman (administrators), M. Hunt, S. Lumsden, D. Morandi, T. Singer, G. Bradley, A. Bennett and H. Thomas (assistant area supervisors). Some 150 students and volunteers participated in the work. The expedition was assisted by the Pardess Hanna Agricultural School and Kibbutz Nahsholim.

This season, excavations continued in Area B, the eastern gate area and some soundings were carried out in Area C, in which large-scale work was completed in 1984. Area D, opened last season above the southern harbor, was extended and a new area, E, was begun on the western side of the mound.

Area B2. The extension of the excavation area westward exposed more of the massive concrete foundations of the Roman public building, which is located at the junction of the main street leading from the city gate to the temple area and the first north—south street. Although an area of 17 × 15 m of the building has already been excavated, its western and southern limits have not been reached and its function could not be determined. A pile of limestone column drums and bases was found in the southwestern corner of the excavated area. Some evidence for a wide staircase leading from the street to the public building or an entrance portico was uncovered east of the building.

Under the public building, an ashlar-built residential *insula* was uncovered, which continued to exist until well into the Roman period, indicating that the monumental building could not have been erected before the end of the 1st century CE.

East of the building a fairly wide street was exposed, which leads to an open space at the city gate. The street, which runs directly over the line of the Hellenistic street, also covered the remains of the Hellenistic wall and gate. Initially, the street had a flagstone pavement, with a drain running along its middle. Later, it was repaved several times with crushed *kurkar* and cement.

On the other side of the street a system of pools came to light, which is apparently connected to the end section of the aqueduct previously excavated. The series of pools continues southwards from the gate to the end of the excavated area and may have formed part of the municipal water supply or served as public pools. Excavations under the pools, with the aim of finding the Hellenistic city wall, revealed structures, possibly dating from the late Hellenistic period. Directly under those a mass of boulders was revealed, probably part of the two-chambered gate of the Persian period or the stone wall connected with it. In all the excavation squares east of the assumed line of the city wall remains of the Persian period were found directly under the Roman buildings. It seems likely, therefore, that the Hellenistic wall was completely removed when the aqueduct was built, or alternatively, that there was a drastic change in its orientation south of the city gate.

Area C. The stratification of the later fortification systems in the eastern part of the city was clarified in 1984, but some problems remained unresolved. The first was the stratigraphic relation beteen the massive stone offset-inset wall and the thick mudbrick wall uncovered in 1982 in Area C1. Another problem concerned the relation of both the above elements to the additional mudbrick wall discovered accidentally last year when a tractor cut into the slope of the tell. The date of these three systems presented a third problem.

The key to all these problems can be found in understanding the relation of the above elements to a series of glacis surfaces which could be seen clearly in the tractor-made section. It became clear that the stone wall is associated with the glacis consisting of many thin whitewash surfaces, perhaps the result of repeated coatings with whitewash in order to prevent water from seeping under the wall. The material on and between the upper whitewashed surfaces contained some sherds of the Persian period, but the scant material from the lower surfaces dated entirely from the end of the Iron Age. Thus, the offset-inset wall was used in the Persian period, but was built earlier. Under the whitewashed surfaces is another glacis, covered by a thick plaster layer, which was cut by the stone wall. This glacis seals the mudbrick wall at the bottom of the slope of the tell. Presumably, the plastered glacis corresponds to the upper mudbrick wall, but further excavation is required to clarify the stratigraphic relation between the three city walls.

Area D. The work in Area D2 concentrated on exposing additional parts of the monumental Iron Age building whose corner was uncovered in Garstang's excavation in the 1920s and whose southern wall (Wall H) was revealed in Raban's soundings on the seaward side of the southern slope.

At first, the excavations uncovered additional parts of the Persian storehouse, whose southern side had collapsed into the sea. These included a series of rooms along a street or an open courtyard. The front of the building was constructed of ashlar piers and fieldstone inner partitions. A group of complete store jars was found in one of the rooms. Under this building two parallel walls about 1 m wide run east—west along the slope of the mound. The outer wall is earlier than the inner one, and dates from Iron II according to the sherds collected in the adjoining layer of ashes. No building associated with either of these walls has so far been excavated.

The building visible in the section and investigated by Raban lies under the above mentioned phases. In addition to Wall H, the western wall (Wall M) was uncovered and traced for about 10 m, as it runs perpendicular to Wall H into the mound to the edge of the excavated area. Another wall, parallel to Wall H, and about 5 m north of it, also runs up to the western wall of the building. All the walls are built of large limestone boulders and are nearly 2 m wide. A large pile of mudbricks and masonry testifies to the collapse of the superstructure which seems to have been built of mudbrick. The ceramic material on the floor dates the building to Iron Age IIA. However, the excavation has still to go down about 2 m to reach the base of the walls as seen in the section and it is possible that earlier floors will come to light.

In Area D1, separated from D2 by Garstang's trench made in the 1920s, the excavation was extended south of the Roman street which bisects Areas D1 and D2. The upper strata are badly preserved, and houses dating from the early Hellenistic or late Persian periods were uncovered near the surface.

Area B (the Iron Age gate). Soundings were carried out in the two rear chambers (the northwestern and the southwestern) of the four-chambered gatehouse. Most of the northwestern chamber

was found to have been disturbed by a large Persian pit containing numerous amphorae. The inner face of the back pilaster of the gate could be traced and it became clear that the outer northwestern corner of the gatehouse is missing; probably it was destroyed by the large pit whose clearance was begun in the 1982 season and completed this year. At the bottom of this pit, which cuts through the Iron II strata and penetrates into the Iron I strata, a stone of the kind used to build the gate was found. The pit contained ceramic material from the late Iron Age and a stone shekel weight, which furnish the lowest possible date for the four-chambered gate.

The southwestern chamber was partly excavated in 1983. This year some Persian walls were removed and the eastern half of the chamber was excavated. Work also continued south of the gate and again two floor levels could be distinguished inside the chamber: one reaches the top of the sleeper wall which separates the chamber from the gate passage, and the other reaches the base of the gate superstructure. Under the gate, a building was further exposed whose excavation was begun in 1983. Its walls are built of small fieldstones and the floors are paved with thick whitewashed mud plaster. In one of the rooms, the floor and part of the wall are decorated with a mosaic of seashells. The pottery in this house is tentatively dated to the 10th century BCE. Thus, according to the stratigraphic evidence, the gate had a lifespan from the 9th (or perhaps late 10th) century BCE to approximately the Assyrian conquest.

Area B1. After establishing the Iron Age stratigraphic sequence under the four-chambered gate and the associated mudbrick wall, the work this season focused on testing the hypothesis that the deep sand fill capped with a thick coating of mud plaster and containing Middle Bronze Age sherds discovered last season, was in fact the top of a rampart of that period. After tracing the coating over the entire excavation area, it was established that it sloped both inwards and outwards. The coating on the top of the sand rampart was whole, without any trace of fortifications. No Bronze Age buildings associated with the rampart were found and the material immediately above it dates exclusively from the Iron Age. (Considerable Late Bronze Age material has been uncovered elsewhere on the tell and the sherds recovered from inside the fill of the rampart apparently belong only to the Middle Bronze Age). Thus it seems that the Bronze Age town (and perhaps also the earliest Iron Age occupation) was situated inside the 'bowl' formed by the ramparts. This bowl filled up later, in Iron Age I, and houses began to be built on top of the ramparts. The ceramic material in both sub-phases in these houses is characterized by a relative scarcity of Israelite Settlement pottery and Philistine wares and the abundance of Cypriot imports. A piece of Mycenaean IIIC 'rough ware' (the so-called Sherdenu ware of Akko) was found below the lower of these two phases, directly on the coating of the rampart.

Area E is situated in the northwestern corner of the mound near its highest point, above the rock-cut installations which Raban identified as docks. Middle Bronze II strata were exposed by wave action on the slope above these installations.

A T-shaped trench was dug to investigate the summit of the mound as well as the two 'steps' observed on the slope at this point. The excavation on the summit of the mound revealed mainly Roman remains. Under a number of concrete floors belonging to buildings which have been washed away, the massive concrete foundations of a large public building came to light. Most of it lies to the east and to the north of the excavation area and its superstructure and floors were completely robbed. The foundations are reminiscent of those of the public building near the gate, in Area B2. West of this large building is a smaller one, in which a large

assemblage of Roman pottery was found. This building made use of the ashlar walls of the Hellenistic house under it. It remains unclear whether this Roman building is contemporaneous with the monumental concrete structure. If this is indeed the case, another parallel to Area B2 could be recognized — there too, an early Roman building phase made use of Hellenistic houses, and the area was rebuilt on a large scale only later.

Hellenistic remains were uncovered under the Roman floors. The walls are ashlar, built in a fashion familiar from Area C and elsewhere. In the southeastern corner of the excavation area the remains of a large building, which is constructed of ashlar headers of unusual size, were uncovered. If this is a public building of the Hellenistic period, it will represent an important addition to our knowledge of Hellenistic urban organization.

On the middle 'step' on the slope of the mound, the Hellenistic strata lay directly beneath the surface and under them fragmentary remains of the Persian period began to appear.

On the lowest 'step', under a thick layer of slope scree, remains from the Iron Age were found. The thick boulder walls with traces of mudbricks on top of them are similar to contemporaneous walls in Area D. The section in which Raban found Middle Bronze Age pottery was also cleaned. A thick layer of ashes was traced, which contained Late Bronze Age pottery covering the earlier phase.

(Communicated by E. Stern and I. Sharon)

'EN GEDI

Mişpe 'En Gedi and Rosh Ma'ale 'En Gedi

June 1985 two forts — Mişpe 'En Gedi and Rosh Ma'ale 'En Gedi — were excavated on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University in cooperation with the 'En Gedi Field School and with the assistance of the Tamar Regional Council. The work was directed by A. Ofer and Z. Meshel, with the assistance of A. Stern of the 'En Gedi Field School, young people from that Field School and from the Mevo'ot 'Iron Institute and volunteers. Yif'at Gabay, I. Moskovitz and Montana Billings (photographers) also participated. The initial identification of the coins was made by A. Kindler. These forts had been surveyed in the past by Aharoni and others. The aim of the present excavations was to determine their plans and establish their dates.

Mişpe 'En Gedi is situated on a hill on top of a cliff, about 600 m above the 'En Gedi oasis and Tel Goren. The fort (7.0 × 4.0 m), which is of the Israelite period, is enclosed by a fence with a diameter of 25 m. The walls of the fort and the fence are 0.9—1.2 m wide. The fort still stands about 1 m high and the fallen stones heaped up inside the structure indicate that the walls were originally at least 2 m high. Half the fort was excavated down to bedrock. On the floor a few sherds of the Israelite period were collected, indicating that the place was abandoned intentionally and that the walls collapsed afterwards. Clearance work in the courtyard, including the gateway, uncovered a living surface and a cooking pot *in situ*. The Israelite pottery, including the cooking pot, are contemporaneous with Stratum V at nearby Tel Goren (second half of 7th century BCE) and it seems likely therefore that the fort at the top of the cliff was erected when the settlement on Tel Goren at the foot of the cliff was founded.