

ascertained, each showing evidence of alterations. In Level I, the latest and most extensively preserved, there was a large, well-built broad-room, measuring about 3×10 m.; because of the extensive warping effect, measurements can only be approximated. The entrance was clearly marked and part of the sill was found *in situ*. Three large flat stones (a fourth seems to be indicated but was not found), arranged at regular intervals along the longitudinal axis, were apparently bases for wooden pillars which supported the roof. A quantity of flint tools and large amounts of sherds were found on the earthen floor. Other fragments of buildings were not preserved well enough to more than hint at architectural styles. In every case, the walls of this level were oriented either NW-SE or NE-SW; together they form a coherent plan. One recurring feature is rounded corners.

Level II buildings were much less well preserved; they were damaged by the constructions of Level I which were generally built directly over the earlier walls and on the same axes. Of particular interest is a large broad-room with an outside step leading down to a well-preserved doorway with sill. Remains of what appears to have been a bench were found inside this building along its one remaining short wall. All the floors of this level consisted of small stones and pebbles packed closely together in an earthen surface.

Area B, some 40 m. west of Area A, had been bulldozed to the elevation of the base of the artificial hump (Area A). Several wall fragments could be seen on the surface, and excavation produced what seems to be the same general stratigraphy, although this is not quite certain.

Level I was characterized by a rectangular room, measuring approximately 2×6 m., with two entrances, one in a long wall and another in a short wall. This room seems to have been part of a large complex, of uncertain shape and size, which was largely razed and covered by blacktop. Unlike in Area A, the walls of the earlier buildings were in part used by the builders of Level II. Here, too, evidence of a complex of buildings, including a rectangular room with three stone pillar bases, was uncovered.

Pottery and flints from Levels I and II in both

areas are indistinguishable and may be dated to EB I on the basis of good parallels from such sites as Beth Shean, 'Afula, Megiddo and Tell el-Far'ah (N). Quantities of Grey Burnished ware, found in both levels, indicate that the site should be assigned to the early part of the EB I period. Among the small finds of particular interest are a cylinder seal and a sherd with a cylinder-seal impression.

(Communicated by Eliot Braun)

Dor, Byzantine Church

The first season of excavation was conducted from 17 June to 25 July 1979 on the site of an episcopal basilica (map ref. 14265 22465) on the north-eastern slope of Tel Dor, within the grounds of Kibbutz Nahsholim. It was first discovered in February 1952 by J. Leibovitch, excavating on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities (*Christian News in Israel* 5 [1953], pp. 22-23). Since then, the planting of palm trees and shrubbery in the nave and central apse of the church rendered a rescue excavation urgent. This excavation was directed by C. Dauphin on behalf of the Department. She was assisted by Kurt Raveh, underwater archaeologist and member of Kibbutz Nahsholim, and students from the Universities of Edinburgh, St. Andrews and Nottingham, as well as by volunteers from various Zionist Youth movements. Two periods of occupation have been identified.

Period I: Byzantine, fourth-sixth centuries C.E. The church complex covered an area of at least 1000 m.^2 (1 dunam). The core of the structure seems to have consisted of a three-aisled basilica, 25 m. long and 14.5 m. wide. The central nave, 7 m. wide, terminating in the east in a semi-circular apse, 3.2 m. in external radius, was flanked by side aisles, each 3.25 m. wide.

The walls, 60 cm. thick, were built of ashlar, 35 cm. to 1 m. in length, that were occasionally laid as headers and stretchers. The height of the courses varied from 20 to 28 cm. The walls were internally plastered with a coating 1 cm. thick. In some places, plaster survived on the upper faces

of the foundation course, suggesting that the courses were plastered together.

The aims of this first season were mainly exploratory; the northern and southern extremities of the structure were located and examined, leaving the nave and the western end for future campaigns. Both the nave and the side aisles were paved with mosaics, of which only small patches have so far been found. The 1.1×1.1 cm. tesserae were laid at a density of 85 tesserae per dm.²

Outside each side aisle, there was an 'external aisle', 4.75 m. wide, along the entire length of the building. The external northern aisle was laterally subdivided into four zones. These are, from west to east, a narthex 5 m. long and 3.5 m. wide, with a plastered floor that gave access to a shallow, plaster-lined, rectangular basin or *piscina*, 3.5 m. long and 2.5 m. wide, followed by two mosaic-paved rooms (Pl. 29:B). Room 1 (R. 1) measured 6 m. east-west by 4.97 m. north-south. Its geometric mosaic featured 60 red-ochre rose buds, each enclosed in a dark grey calyx, spread out in six north-south rows of ten buds each on a white ground. At the eastern end, a fragmentary *tabula ansata* marked the central axis of the field. The geometric pavement of Room 2 (R. 2; Pl. 29:C), 4.6 m. wide and at least 5.75 m. long, had a pattern of irregular red-ochre octagons on a white ground, each containing one grey/black, yellow-ochre and red-ochre square and four stepped lozenges in the same colours. To the east, a stone step encased by marble screens probably once gave access to an elevated area — a chancel or altar. The mosaic floor on either side of the stone step bore a red-ochre circle, 1 m. in diameter, enclosing five interlocking red-ochre circles with five black petals in the centre.

The external southern aisle, with a similar mosaic, was almost entirely destroyed during the construction of kibbutz houses. The church appears to have been surrounded by an atrium, for stone slabs were found west of the narthex and north of the external northern aisle.

The plan of the basilica is unique in Israel; the only parallels are the church outside the city walls of el-Hosn and the Church of St. Sergius of Dar Qita, both in Syria. Two architectural features are particularly interesting: the *piscina*, or baptistery, next to the atrium; and the porticos flanking the

central nucleus of the church, where the sick who came for healing underwent a period of *incubatio* — prayer, fasting and deprivation of sleep — close to the remains of the unnamed saint whose tomb was found in the eastern end of the southern aisle (Pl. 29:A). In its covering, a hole lined with a pottery pipe permitted oil to be poured into the tomb for sanctification by contact with the remains of the saint; after draining into a plaster-lined basin beside the tomb, the oil would have been used for medical purposes.

Numismatic evidence points to a construction date during the fourth or early fifth century. To this first phase belonged a mosaic pavement detected in patches 35 cm. below the mosaics described above. The tesserae measured 1.1×1.2 cm.; their density was 70 per dm.² A lower plaster floor of the *piscina* and the plaster floor of the southern aisle probably also belonged to this phase. A higher mosaic pavement was subsequently laid in the external side aisles, and a mosaic introduced in the aisles and the nave. The plaster floor of the *piscina* was raised by 20 cm. Evidence for destruction by fire was an ashy layer, 6 cm. thick, which was covered by collapse containing chunks of plaster from walls, tiles, many fragments of large storage jars, iron nails, parts of door latches, glass window panes, *polycandela* and tesserae.

Period II: Arab, eighth–fourteenth centuries.

Following the destruction of the church, the site was used as a cemetery by the Arab population. Thirty-four tombs, dated by grave-goods to the eighth–fourteenth centuries, were dug into the upper mosaic pavement of the external northern aisle at its eastern end (Pl. 29:B–C).

(Communicated by Claudine M. Dauphin)

The Regional Project in 'Emeq Hefer, 1979

During the summer of 1979, the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY/AB) conducted its first season of survey and excavation in 'Emeq Hefer. The project was supported by the University's Council of International Studies in cooperation with the Departments of Classics, Anthropology and Geography, the Judaic Studies