

Tel Dor, 1987

Preliminary Report

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THE eighth season of excavations at Tel Dor lasted five weeks in July and August, 1987.¹ Excavation was resumed in the same areas investigated last season: Areas B1, B2, C1 on the eastern slopes, Areas D1 and D2 on the southern slopes, Areas E and F to the west and Area G at the centre of the mound.

AREA C1

The Iron Age fortifications

The main aim in this area was to investigate and clarify the stratigraphy and chronology of the Iron Age fortifications here. Last season it was established that what had previously been termed 'the Late Iron Age/Persian stone offset/inset wall' and 'the upper mud-brick wall' are part of the same wall.² Only two Iron Age walls thus exist in this area, namely the upper composite (stone and brick) wall, and the lower mud-brick wall.

¹ The Tel Dor project is directed by E. Stern on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University and the Israel Exploration Society. The teams participating this season in the expedition were from the California State University in Sacramento (directed by H.P. Goldfried), the University of California in Berkeley (directed by A. Stewart), McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario (directed by T.R. Hobbs), Saskatchewan University, Canada (directed by C. Foley), the Southern California College (directed by Nancy Hiderbrecht) and an independent group directed by H.N. Richardson. About 230 people participated in the excavations, including volunteers from England, the U.S. and Israel, as well as archaeology students from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The excavation staff included: Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom; I. Sharon — assistant to the director; Bracha Guz-Zilberstein, Idit Saragosti — registrars; J. Berg — chief architect; Wanda Maestro, W. Brainard, R. Saunders — architects; Lynn Banks, Gilah Gross, Ann Kopczyk, Ayelet Gilboa, S. Lumsden, J. Zorn, Ann Stuart, A. De Groot — area supervisors; A. Boaz, Rony Malik, P. Koelner, Maxine Beach, Julie Linde, Shahira Ashkar, Traci O'Brien, M. Shelton, Karen Walker — assistants to area supervisors; L. Lanigan — photographer; Delilah Eliyahu — restoration; Florence Salomon, Deborah Avni, Sara Halbreich — artefact draftsmen; S. Dahan, K. Raveh, Eran Stern — administration; as well as fifteen unit and square supervisors. The expedition was lodged at the Pardes Hanna Agricultural School and was assisted by I. Hirshberg and Hava Mager of the Konrad Centre for Regional and Nautical Archaeology in Kibbutz Nahsholim. A recent review of the results of the first seasons may be found in E. Stern: Five Seasons of Excavations at Tel Dor, in E. Lipiński (ed.): *The Land of Israel — Crossroad of Civilizations*, Leuven, 1985, pp. 169–192. For the results of the 1986 season, see E. Stern and I. Sharon: Tel Dor, 1986 — Preliminary Report, *IEJ* 37 (1987), pp. 201–211 (hereafter *Dor 1986*).

² *Dor 1986*, pp. 205–206.

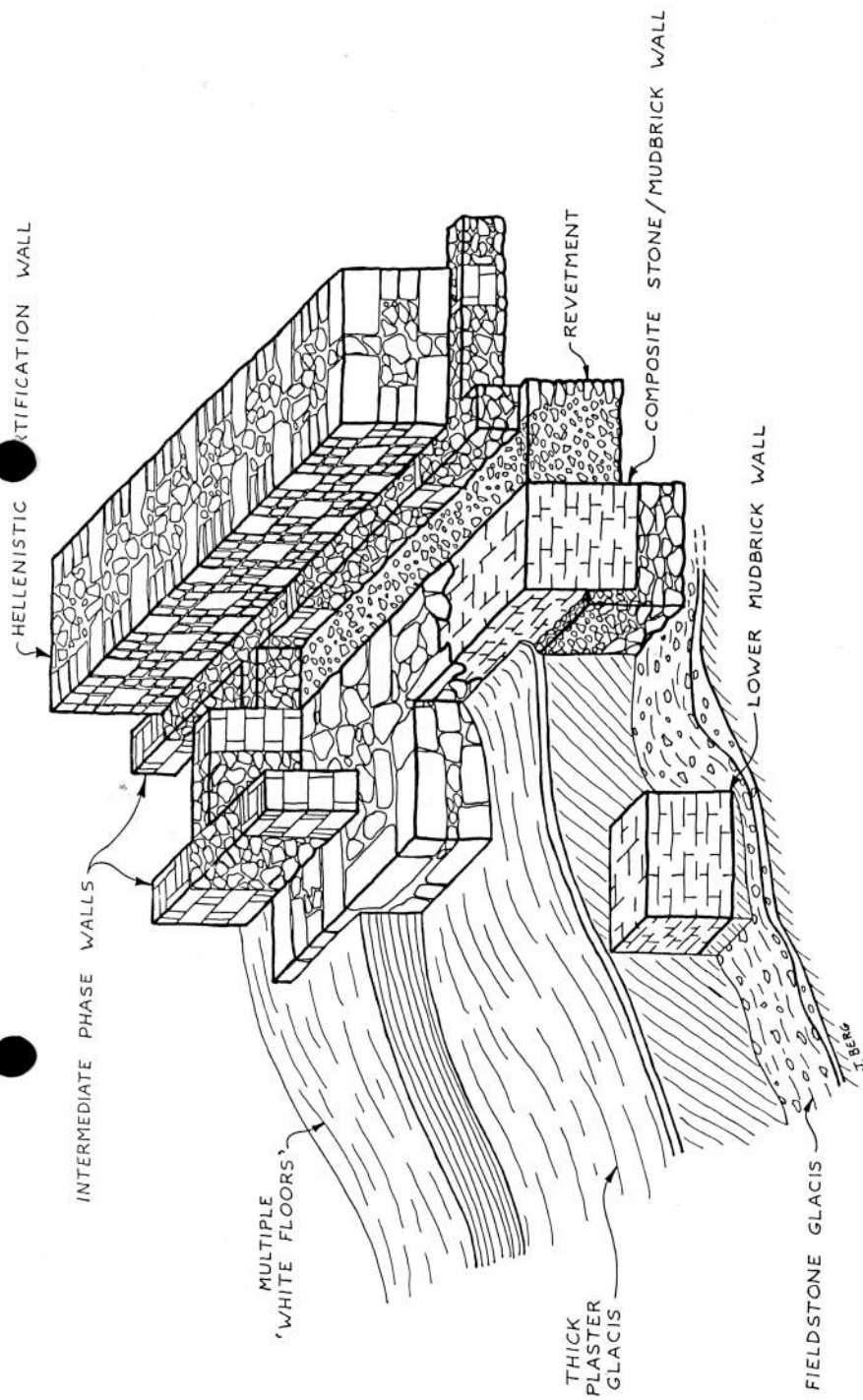


Fig. 1. Dor, Area C1: section across fortifications.

Work was resumed in the east-west section excavated here previously, in order to investigate the deposits adjacent to both walls. The section was extended further southwards to reveal the join between the mud-brick and stone segments of the upper wall, and to excavate the deposits adjacent to it.

The stratigraphic sequence, starting from the earliest elements, is as follows (Fig. 1):

1. A sloping surface, consisting of plaster and a coating of small field stones, which clearly passes under both the walls mentioned above and extends further eastwards (downslope). The pottery sealed under this surface is mainly of Iron Age I date, no earlier than the eleventh century B.C.E., and includes early Cypro-Geometric White-Painted, Bichrome and Black Slip (Bucchero) wares. A few earlier sherds (Chalcolithic, EB I, MB and LB) were also found.
2. The lower (mud-brick) wall was founded on top of this surface. No clear floor levels associated with this wall were uncovered, although a marked change of colour in the debris along the inner face of the wall may indicate the former existence of such a floor.
3. The composite stone and mud-brick wall was built further up the slope. This year it was definitely established that not only are those two segments parts of one wall line, but that they are dovetailed into each other. This phenomenon renders any repair hypothesis very hard to substantiate.³ Composite (stone and mud-brick) walls are moreover not an unknown phenomenon in Iron Age Syria and Israel.⁴ The mud-brick segment of the composite wall is abutted at the very bottom of its superstructure by the 'thick plaster glacis' uncovered in previous seasons, which covers the top of the lower mud-brick wall. This season it was clearly shown that the glacis abuts only the mud-brick segment of the composite wall, stopping 30 cm. short of the stone segment. The pottery sealed under the plaster glacis provides a *terminus post quem* early in the tenth century B.C.E.
4. At a higher level, the composite wall is abutted on its outer side by the series of 'white floors' uncovered in previous seasons. These white lime surfaces abut both the mud-brick and the stone segments of the wall.⁵ The material sealed in and under

³ Dor 1986, p. 206.

⁴ E.g. two walls at Lachish. The Strata IV–III 'stone and brick revetment' uncovered in the British excavations at the site (an offset-inset wall which was the outer city-wall) is also formed of stone and mud-brick sections, in one case at least. Both sections were founded on a massive stone foundation (O. Tufnell: *Lachish*, III, Oxford, 1953, p. 89, Fig. 7 and Pl. 12:6). The earlier Stratum IV enclosure wall is built in a similar manner, of stone (W. 70) and mud-brick (W. 27) segments that are bonded into each other. Both had stone foundations. See D. Ussishkin: *Excavations at Tel Lachish 1973–1977*, Preliminary Report, *Tel Aviv* 5 (1978), pp. 46–47.

⁵ At Lachish as well, the 'stone and brick revetment' was abutted on its outer face by a white lime surface (Tufnell [above, n. 4], p. 89).

these surfaces is of Iron Age II date (eighth century B.C.E. or later). Both segments are supported on the east by a fieldstone revetment, apparently built later than the wall, as it covers a floor with *in situ* pottery that abuts it. The composite wall continued to be used in the Persian period.

It remains to be established whether the two walls discussed above (i.e. the lower, mud-brick wall and the upper, composite wall) are indeed two separate city-walls, or whether both are part of a single fortification system. This would account for the apparent lack of floors abutting this wall. Another explanation could be that the builders of the later wall, when preparing their foundation fill, undermined these floors or even razed the wall itself to below floor level.⁶

Roman remains

At the lower, eastern edge of the section, just below the mound, we continued excavating the large Late Roman building uncovered in previous seasons. Two different building phases were distinguished. In the upper stage the superstructure was of ashlar header and stretcher construction. This building probably corresponds in date to the last urban (Late Roman) level on the tell. Among the finds from the fills in this building was a Roman drinking cup in the shape of a dog (Pl. 5:A).

AREA B1

The excavations in this area concentrated on three main objectives: the stratigraphy of the Iron Age I levels north of the city-gate; the stratigraphy of the four-chambered Iron Age gate; and the nature of the intermediate Persian/Hellenistic stratum.

Iron Age I levels

Two narrow probes were dug in the western part of the deep pit where several Iron I-II levels were reached in previous years. In the eastern part of the area, an Iron Age I level (probably from the middle of the eleventh century B.C.E.) rested directly on top of a thick plaster coating — possibly from an MB glacis. This plaster surface slopes steeply westwards and has not yet been reached in the deep probes dug this year. On the other hand, in the western part of the area, two or three more mud-brick building phases of the Iron Age were uncovered under this mid-eleventh century level. The lowest phase, comprising a massive fieldstone (retaining?) wall, was sealed by destruction debris consisting of ash and burnt brick. The pottery sealed under this debris was very scanty, but seems to belong to the Iron Age I. Thus at the moment the Iron Age I stratigraphy here consists of four phases — the lowest one (the exact date of which cannot yet be determined) being burnt, and the top one dating to the

⁶ On the relations of the city-walls in this area to the different fortification elements and city-gates in Areas B1 and B2, see *Dor 1986*, p. 206.

very end of the period, ending in the early tenth century B.C.E. It is possible that the Iron Age I structures in the west cut through the MB glacis, if the sand fill and mud coating uncovered here in previous seasons are indeed parts of such a glacis.

The four-chambered gate

Excavation west of the gate revealed for the first time a firm stratigraphic link between the gate and the habitation levels to its north and west. One of the main floors of the area, tentatively dated to about the end of the tenth century B.C.E., was cut by the gate. It is not yet clear whether the next floor, abutting the gate, should be dated to the very late tenth or the ninth century B.C.E.

Excavation in the north-eastern gate chamber revealed a floor level that reached the very top of the preserved walls, apparently still belonging to the gate. Under it we uncovered the same sandy fill that was found in the south-western and south-eastern chambers. The floor clearly does not belong to any of the elements built above the gate.

North of this gate chamber a wide (1.30 m.) fieldstone wall, bonded into the gate structures, extends northwards. This wall alone, however, is not thick enough to be considered a fortification element. In the inner corner, adjoining this wall and the gate chamber, a large surface (at least 20 sq. m. in area) built of mudbricks was found. Only one course of mudbricks is preserved; it is not yet clear whether this is a remnant of a floor or of a more substantial structure.

The Persian/Hellenistic intermediate phase

Excavation on the eastern slope of the mound, north of the gate area, revealed more walls belonging to this phase. Among these were some fairly wide walls (mostly built of headers), indicating the existence of massive peripheral structures in this phase. Up to this season, the phase had been characterized by private dwellings only. The intermediate phase structures extend here far to the east of both the earlier (composite) and later (Hellenistic) solid city-walls, but their exact extent has not been determined yet.

AREA B2

Iron Age II — the four-chambered gate

Excavation was resumed inside the south-eastern chamber of the gate and in the area to its south. Inside the gate chamber, a thin layer including remnants of some charred wooden beams reaches the very top of the preserved chamber walls. Under this layer, the top of a sandy fill was reached (as in the rest of the excavated gate chambers). A surface of mudbricks (at least 25 sq. m. in area) abuts the outer, southern wall of the chamber (cf. the description of Area B1 above). Its significance is still unclear.

The Persian period

Excavation inside the southern chamber of the two-chambered gate revealed a rounded stone basin. A similar square basin was found in the northern chamber.

East of the gate area, a cache of about fifty ballista stones was uncovered, in a fill containing late Persian pottery. Stratigraphically, however, it is not clear whether these belong to the intermediate Persian/Hellenistic level or to a later intrusive pit.

Roman remains

These were excavated in two areas: the continuation of the main east-west street, leading westwards from the entrance to the city, and along the large north-south street leading southwards from it. Excavation here was intended to clarify the layout of the public buildings in the vicinity of the gate piazza (Fig. 2).

Excavation of the east-west street revealed the continuation of the northern wall of the colonnaded building occupying the south-western corner of the piazza.⁷ This wall was traced for 35 m.; its western end has not yet been reached. On the other hand, we may have located the south-eastern corner of this building. At the southern end of the excavated area, the pavement of the north-south road was found to extend westwards, and it is possible that this was part of an intersection with an east-west street or some kind of courtyard. The building itself was separated from this street by a sort of vestibule.

This building had two major constructional phases. The transition between them involved a change in the layout of the secondary alleys in this area, indicating that at least two major urban Roman phases exist here, contrary to what was previously thought.

In the later phase, a large building was constructed; its corner covered the street or courtyard pavement of the earlier phase. The street itself was shifted northwards and plastered, thus covering the 'vestibule' that had formerly separated the colonnaded building from the east-west street.

Excavation was also resumed in the rooms to the east of the north-south street (previously described as 'a row of rooms or shops'). It is now clear that this row of rooms forms part of another large building with a courtyard: the rooms form its western façade and open into the courtyard. It is not yet known how many sides of this courtyard were surrounded by rooms. One of the excavated rooms had an opening leading to the street, and served as an entrance to the courtyard; it was wide enough to allow chariots or carts to pass through it. The room had moulded door jambs and its stone pavement preserved the door socket and clear traces of cart-tracks, which continued on the street paving as well. The function of this building is unclear at the moment, though it seems to have been in the nature of a warehouse, barracks or caravanserai (Pl. 4:B).

⁷ Dor 1986, p. 209.

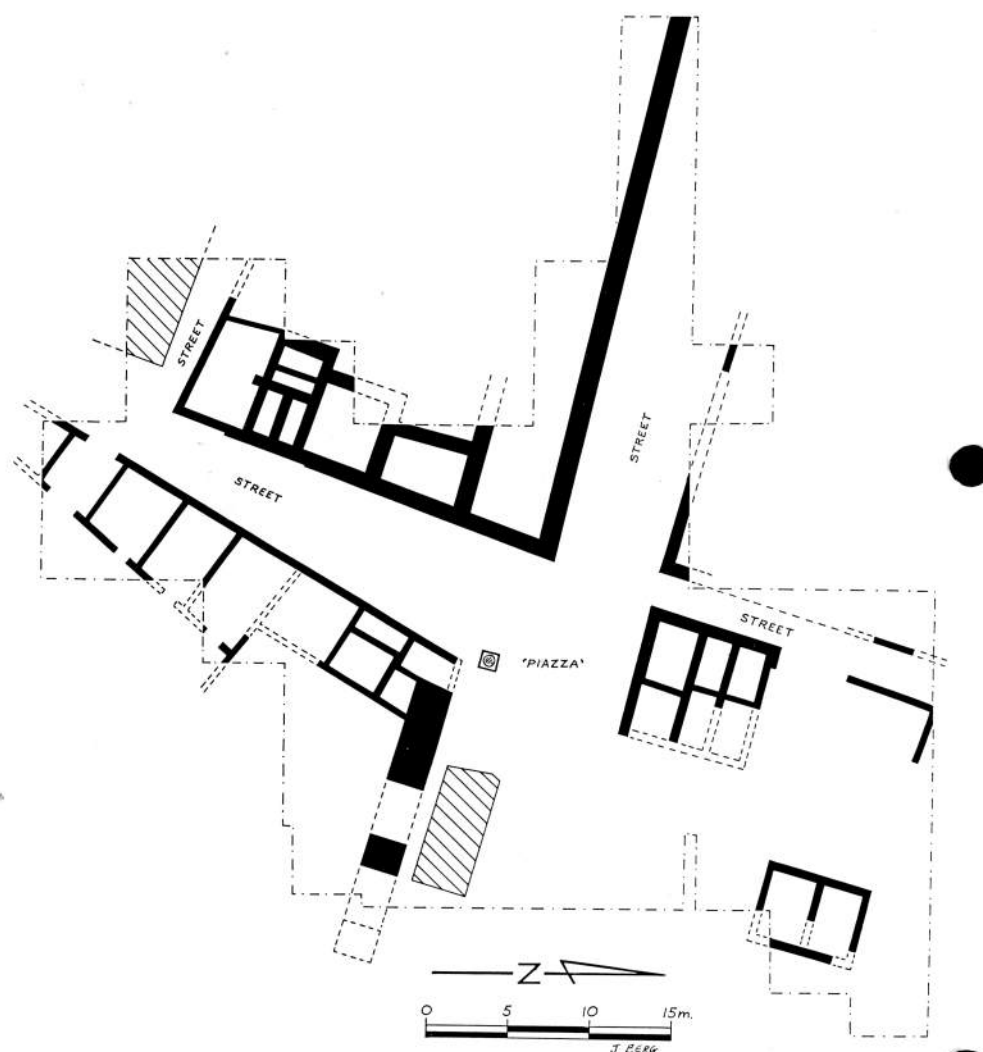


Fig. 2: Dor, Area B2: plan of Roman stratum.

AREA D1

This season's excavation of this area had three main goals: a) to investigate the nature of the transition between the Iron Age and Persian levels; b) to excavate more of the Persian purple dye installation uncovered last year; and c) to enlarge the area to the north and east, in order to trace the continuation of the massive Persian building excavated here in previous years.

Excavation was resumed in the southernmost squares, where early Persian levels were previously revealed. The nature of the transition between Iron Age and Persian

levels, however, is still unclear. What seems to be the lower Persian level here consists mainly of isolated *kurkar* patches and a series of pits, apparently scattered in an open area. No architectural remains relating to these pits were uncovered. The area was heavily disturbed by the pits, and the fill underneath produced mixed Iron Age and Persian pottery. No clean Iron Age contexts have been reached yet.

The lime channel of the purple dye installation uncovered last year was found to lead to a pit, full of ash and dye residue. No container of any sort was found in the pit, nor was it lined by stones or any other material. Two semi-circular stone-lined pits were uncovered north of the installation, at a higher level, though it is not clear whether they are stratigraphically and functionally connected to the installation.

The large Persian structure uncovered previously in the northern part of the area was found to extend further to the north and east.

Hellenistic and Roman remains

In the newly-opened northern squares, a series of consecutive oblong rooms was found. Some of their walls were built solely of fieldstones, and others of fieldstones between which fairly short, upright, roughly-hewn monoliths were incorporated.⁸ These rooms consist of at least two phases: they were used in the Roman period, but it is highly probable that at least their lower phase was originally built in the Hellenistic period, while some walls are built on top of and in line with the massive Persian walls. At least the lower phase of these rooms is earlier than the north-south (Roman) street running across the area (uncovered in previous seasons), as one of its walls is cut by the sewer running under the street. The relation of the upper phase to this street is unclear at present.

The most important detail of the Roman town-planning revealed here is that the above-mentioned north-south Roman street, which was previously assumed to continue straight on northwards towards the temple (Area F), curves sharply westwards here, towards the high south-western promontory of the tell (and towards a gate?). It seems that this was the original street plan of the Roman period in this area and not a secondary version.

AREA D2

The main aim in this area was to expose the continuation of the massive Iron Age I-II building uncovered here in 1985. To achieve this, six more squares were opened

⁸ As is the case in the walls of the massive Persian/Hellenistic structure in this area, the monoliths are staggered. They are, moreover, much smaller and only roughly hewn. Concerning the possible relation of this method of construction to the *a telaio* ('framework') technique common in the western Phoenician colonies, see Dor 1986, p. 208. For a full discussion of Phoenician construction methods at Dor, see I. Sharon: Phoenician and Greek Ashlar Construction Techniques at Tel Dor — Israel, *BASOR* 267 (1987), pp. 21–41.

north of the Persian/Hellenistic/Roman street line, in continuation of the two squares excavated here last season. (The rest of the area was not excavated.) This season's work revealed the Roman remains in these squares and reached the top of the Hellenistic structures.

Hellenistic remains

Only a few well-preserved walls were uncovered, built of ashlar pier construction. These belong to a series of fairly large rooms north of the east-west street. No definite floors were found associated with these walls, and for the moment it is impossible to determine the function of the rooms.

Roman remains

At least two distinct Roman phases were uncovered, corresponding to the two phases found in the two squares dug last year. In the lower Roman phase, some more of the large building excavated last year was uncovered, consisting of an ashlar-paved courtyard, with rooms on three or four sides of it. Part of a stone staircase was uncovered in the courtyard, indicating the existence of a second storey. The southern façade of the building bordered on the east-west street and at least one entrance led from one of the southern rooms of the building into the street. The walls were built of typical oblong ashlar, many of them re-using the remains of the Hellenistic walls. The function of this building is still unclear — it seems to have been either a public building or a spacious mansion.

The late Roman phase consisted of one large, seemingly isolated building built of very large ashlar (of which only a few have survived), on very wide and deep cement foundations. Its southern wall is built over the earlier southern façade — thus still preserving the older street line. The western wall of the building is missing, but although the area is heavily disturbed, this does not seem to account for it. It is possible that one of the earlier Roman walls was used as the western façade of the building. Part of a stone pavement uncovered in the structure's south-eastern corner may indicate the existence of a courtyard there. This large building is clearly a public structure. No remains connected to this phase were uncovered south of the east-west street in the area excavated in 1985–86, and it does not seem to have any stratigraphic counterpart in the adjacent Area D1.

In the north-eastern part of the area, a few rooms built of small fieldstones were uncovered. The stratigraphic connection of these to either of the Roman phases is still unclear.

AREA E

Pre-Roman remains

Hellenistic, Persian and Iron Age II remains were excavated, but they still do not form a coherent plan.

Roman remains

Two main Roman structures were uncovered:

- a) A large, apparently public, bath was uncovered overlooking the central bay. Its northern part has been eroded away. Part of two adjoining rooms was uncovered; both were provided with hypocaust columns constructed of clay tiles. The central ones are rounded, while those adjacent to the walls are square (Pl. 4:C). In the larger room the *suspensura* was further supported by low partition walls built of clay tiles. It is possible that both rooms were part of the *caldarium* or possibly of the *tepidarium* as well.
- b) In the southern part of the area the façade of a vaulted structure was uncovered. In front of the vault, a small ashlar-paved courtyard was built, with a cylindrical plastered basin in one of its corners. A drainage channel found under the courtyard leads westwards (downslope).

AREA F

The Iron Age

When excavating a deep probe along the Roman temenos wall, a thick conflagration layer was reached, containing Iron Age I pottery tentatively dated to the second half of the eleventh century B.C.E. (i.e. later than the burnt layer in Area B1). Above this layer Iron Age II pottery was uncovered (probably of the seventh century B.C.E.), including Assyrian ware. No clear architectural features were discovered with this pottery.

The Roman period

The excavations in this area were aimed at further clarifying the date of the temples excavated by Garstang. Our efforts were concentrated in the strip between the Early Roman street and the temenos wall.⁹

At the end of the 1986 season, it was suggested that the temenos excavated by Garstang should be dated to the Late Roman period, since its orientation matches that of the Late Roman terrace walls, rather than to the Hellenistic period as suggested by Garstang. Further support for this dating was provided this year during excavation along the eastern face of the temenos wall, where a few Roman sherds, apparently belonging to the foundation trench of the wall, were uncovered. These consisted mainly of body sherds of storage-jars, but also included a fragment of a Roman imperial oil lamp.

A row of Hellenistic rooms was uncovered west of the Early Roman street, some of them cut by it. These rooms have the same orientation as that of the Early Roman

⁹ Dor 1986, Fig. 4.

street, which is different from that of the temenos — a further indication against assigning the temples to the Hellenistic period.

This year we cleared the upper part of the stairway leading down from the Late Roman street to the temenos, which was originally excavated by Garstang. On the north, the stairs end at a square landing, from which those ascending would have turned southwards along an alley adjacent to the Late Roman terrace wall.

AREA G

Iron Age and Persian remains

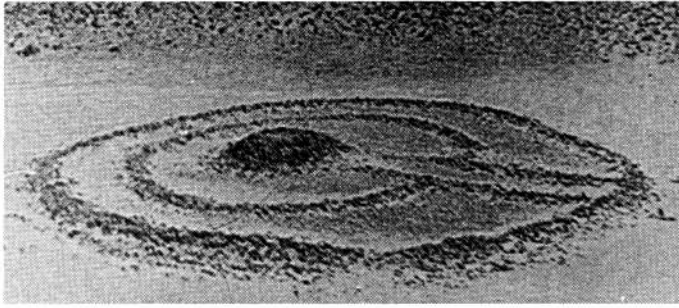
At the lowest level reached this year, part of an oblong room built of fieldstones was uncovered. Some vessels were uncovered *in situ* on its floor, apparently of early Iron Age II date. Above this room further Iron Age II deposits were uncovered, as well as some late Iron Age pottery, but the area is heavily disturbed and the Iron Age stratigraphy here is still unclear.

Large quantities of Persian pottery (including the upper part of a clay *thymiaterion*) were uncovered, some from the large pit excavated here last year. A fairly wide Persian wall uncovered in the western part of the area (of double header construction) may indicate the existence of a substantial Persian building in this area.

Roman remains

This year we continued excavating the north-south Roman street and the drain underneath it. The only remains from this street are remnants of two parallel massive foundation walls, built running from east to west, and north of the excavated part of the street. The walls do not cross the line of the street itself and the drain continues beyond them. Secondary channels built along the walls join the main drain. It is possible that the walls uncovered are part of a stylobate which supported a portico enclosing an open space (forum?); the area excavated could be interpreted as the point where the north-south street joins it. This possibility will have to be more thoroughly examined in the future.

PLATE 4

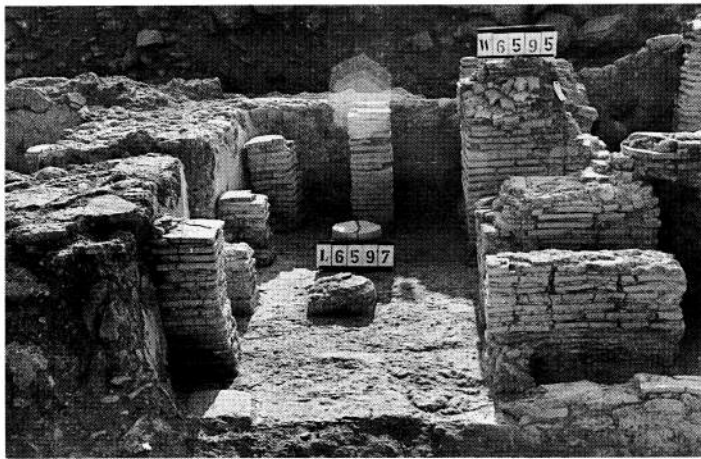


A: *A tombe en trou de serrure* near Djanet, Algeria.

ROGEM HIRI



B: Tel Dor: Area B2, entrance to the 'caravanserai/barracks' building, looking east.



C: Tel Dor: Area E, hypocaust of Roman bath, looking south.

PLATE 5

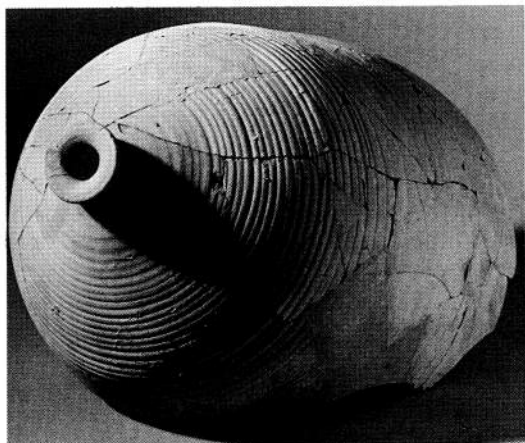
A: Tel Dor: Area C1, Roman cup in the shape of a dog.



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B: Thin-walled carinated bowl (Iron II Age).



D: Storage-jar (?) (Herodian period).

C: Herodian lamp.



A JUGLET OF BALSAM OIL(?)