Final Report

CA9.6 and CB1.6

Kedesh 2000

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July 17, 2000
Introduction

During the 2000 season at Tel Kedesh in Israel, two adjoining trenches were excavated in order to find the gate or monumental entranceway to the large Hellenistic building that is situated on the southern tel. While the summer's excavation did not uncover the entranceway, the season did reveal a number of structures that may add insight into the various phases of occupation on the southern portion of the tel.

Trench CA9.6 and CB1.6 were excavated under the direction of Drew Wilburn, with Maggie Brimijoin as his assistant. Excavation was undertaken as part of a field school and the work of the supervisor and assistant was only possible with the aid of a number of volunteers during the two sessions of excavation.

Excavation was first undertaken in the southermost of the two trenches, CA9.6. We began to excavate in the southwestern quadrant, believing that the location of the gate would be near to the edge of the tel. While the gate was not forthcoming, the discovery of a drainage channel leading off of the tel prompted us to move northwards.

In the northwestern quadrant, we uncovered a number of features, including the exterior wall of the large building and a number of single course, subsidiary walls that all ran into the northern balk. In order to better understand these walls and their accompanying plaster floors, we again moved north, into trench CB1.6.

The excavation of the southwestern quadrant of CB1.6 revealed the small extent of the subsidiary walls, as well as two more east-west walls, all running parallel to the exterior wall of the large building. Excavation also revealed the continuation of the drain within the building and evidence for a number of different phases of occupation and periods of reuse for the large building. Although further excavation in this area is necessary to clarify the relationships between features, some explanation for the various phases of occupation can be provided.

Phases of Occupation

The excavated architecture can be divided into three main phases. Constructions during Phase I include the basin, CB16012 and north south wall CB16006, as well as the re-use of east-west wall CB16001. During Phase II, most of the other architectural features were in probably constructed, including walls CB16001 and its associated floors CB16003, CB16015, CB16016, CB16017 and CB16018, as well as walls CA96004/CB16004, CA96013/CB16013, CA96007, CA96008/CB16008, CA96006 and plaster floors CA96012, CA96010 and the sequence of floors CA96011 and CA96015. In Phase II wall CA96002 continued in use or was re-used, as did wall CA96005/CB16005 and wall CB16015 and the drain, CA96003/CA96009/CB16009/CB16010. The third phase of occupation was marked by the construction of walls CA96002, CA96005/CB16005, CB16015 and the plaster floor sequence CA96001-CA96014-CA96017-CA96018-CA96019. The soil phasing will be investigated in conjunction with the architectural phases.

In each trench, a topsoil locus overlies the soil fill that surrounds the architectural features. In CA9.6, CA96000 is a soil layer consisting of medium dark grayish brown coarse silt, with numerous modern inclusions, between 0.40 and 0.50 meters deep, that was deposited over CA96021, the subsoil locus. This soil is dated by the presence of modern porcelin and Ras al-Fukhra pottery, both of which provide a terminus post quem
in the modern period. A similar soil is found to the north, in trench CB1.6 as CB16000. In CB1.6, the topsoil extends for a depth of 0.40 meters, and comes down on subsoil CB16002. The two subsoil layers represent the fill that accumulated on top of the Phase I architectural features after they went out of use.

Phase I

The principal soil deposit of the first phase of occupation in trench CA9.6 is locus CA96021. This soil is medium yellowish brown coarse silt, and is located directly under the topsoil. The latest datable material in the locus is Crusader glazed pottery, represented by only two sherds. This paucity of material is deceptive, as there are numerous other units within the locus that are dated by Roman and Byzantine material. To the south of wall CA96002, outside of the building, the soil locus is deeper than that inside the building and represents the extent of later disturbance on the site. The soil penetrates deeply into locus CA96003, the exterior drain, suggesting that the drain was open and allowed to fill with soil by the Crusader period. This implies that the use period of the drain had ended by this time.

Within the building, the soil locus CA96021 is likely the same soil as CB16002. The latest datable material in locus CB16002 is Roman/Byzantine cookware. None of the units excavated inside the building that comprise this locus have material that dates after the Roman and Byzantine period, but they were locused with the material from outside wall CA96002 because of similarities in soil color and consistency. The soil inside the building is not as deep as that found outside of the building, and often ends near the levels of the adjacent plaster floors. This suggests that this soil accumulated on top of floors or on top of other earlier soils after the building had gone out of use. This hypothesis is most useful in understanding the two prominent features of this phase, the basin, CB16012, and the single course wall, CB16006.

Both of these features re-use wall CB16001 in their construction. Wall CB16006 extends from 3.63 meters north of the south balk, where it abuts wall CB16001, to 1.18 meters north of the south balk, where the wall runs into the west balk. At its northern end, the wall lies 0.23 meters from the west balk. The wall is constructed of roughly cut stones, faced on the two outer sides, two stones, or approximately 0.55 meters, wide. The material under the wall, soil locus CB16006.1, provides a terminus post quem of the late third or early second century based on the presence of local fineware. It seems probable, however, that the wall dates from a later period, as it is separated from plaster floor CB16003 by 20 centimeters of soil, suggesting that the builders of the wall may have constructed it on pre-existing fill or used Hellenistic fill from elsewhere on the tel to raise the level of the wall.

Basin CB16012 is located in the northwest corner of the southwest quadrant of CB1.6. The locus extends from the west balk eastwards 0.92 meters and from the north face of wall CB16001 into the north balk. The exact dimensions of the basin are not clearly known, as only the southern wall and floor of the feature are preserved. The southern wall reuses wall CB16001, and is appears that the second course of this wall may have been robbed out to install CB16012. The north face of the second course of the wall is lined with grayish white plaster with numerous pebble inclusions. This same plaster is also used in the floor of the basin. The purpose of the basin is unknown, and
further excavation is necessary in order to both date the feature and to clarify its relationship to other structures in the trench.

It seems probable that wall CB16001 was reused in both of these constructions. Wall CA96001 is an east west wall that is located 0.81 meters from the north balk along the line of the west balk and 1.2 meters from the north balk along the line of unexcavated soil 5.00 meters from the west balk. The exposed extent of the wall from east to west is 5.05 meters in length, and 0.68 meters in width, with some variation along the length of the wall. Analysis of the architecture of the wall suggests that the wall was once much wider in both courses than it is in its present state. The second course of the wall on the west side is significantly thinner, and only measures 0.42 meters across. This course is made of stones similar to the north facing stones of the first course. There is one large stone, measuring 0.83 meters east-west and 0.28 meters north-south that appears to surmount the first course. It seems possible that a larger, wider stone lay behind this thin stone, and that this stone was robbed out during the construction of basin CB16012. CB16012 utilizes the bottom course of the wall as foundation and the second course of CB16001 as a southern wall. Wall CB16001 also seems to have been reused in conjunction with wall CB16006, as the preserved course of wall CB16006 lies at an elevation close to the preserved top of wall CB16001 at the point where the two walls meet.

Phase II

Soil locus CA96022 lies adjacent to many of the features of CA9.6, including the eastern wall of the drain and the plaster floors CA96001-CA96014-CA96017-CA96018-CA96019 and the exterior face of wall CA96002. This soil locus also lies adjacent to many of the plaster floors in the northwest quadrant of the trench. The locus may represent soils that once lay under a larger plaster floor, but due to later disturbances and the destruction of those floors, the sealed soil has not mixed with some later material. Material from this soil locus is dated by the presence Hellenistic Sandy cookware to the Hellenistic period.

A similar soil locus is found in trench CB1.6, and it seems likely that soil locus CB16007 and CB16011 both represent the soils which originally lay under the plaster floors in the interior of the building. Both soils are moderately compacted medium yellowish brown coarse silt, with similar inclusions of small and medium sized rocks, bits of plaster and calcified rock, and a few scattered pieces of decayed mud brick. These two soil loci contain similar material that dates to the second century BCE, a delphiniform lamp and a sherd of Akko Casserole, respectively. The lower soil locus north of wall CB16001 also seems to belong to Phase II of occupation. This soil is medium dark reddish brown in color, and contains fragments of a Megarian bowl, which provides a terminus post quem of the second century BCE. This soil locus lies below the founding of wall CB16001 wall CB16015. Wall CB16015 is located in the unexcavated area of trench CB1.6, and only visible in the artificial balk between the southwest and northwest quadrants of the trench. Little interpretation of this wall can be made, as the northern face has not been revealed. The soil may, however, represent a disturbance related to the construction of wall CB16001.
The architectural features of Phase II of occupation all seem to represent later reuse of a large structure or building already existing on the tel. Most of the features make use of wall CA96002 to create various rooms that abutted this outer wall. Some of the features, such as the drain, were likely in use at this period, but were constructed prior to this phase. Almost all of the architecture is dated by sealed soil loci, and this material suggests a date near the end of the third or the beginning of the second century BCE.

Walls CA96004/CA16004-CA96013/CA16013, plaster floor CA96012, wall CA96005/CA16005 and wall CA96002 all seem to form a small room or corridor along the eastern side of the excavated area. Wall CA96004/CA16004 lies on top of wall CA96013/CA16013, and wall CA96004/CA16004 seems to have been founded on wall CA96013/CA16013. This suggests that the two walls may have been in use at the same time as a single wall, two courses deep.

The two north-south walls lie a short distance apart, but plaster floor CA96012, which touches wall CA96013/CA16013, may have originally acted to connect the two walls. Material from under wall CA96013/CA16013 and plaster floor CA96012 includes local fineware, which suggests a terminus post quem for both of these constructions.

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1 CA96004/CA16004 a single course wall that extends from 0.95 meters south of the north balk of CA9.6 to 0.90 meters north of the south balk of CB1.6. The wall is located 3.25 meters east of the west balk of each trench and varies between 0.25 and 0.30 meters wide, depending upon the individual stones. CA96004/CA16004 consists of approximately six stones, all faced only on the west.

Wall CA96013/CA16013's south end is positioned at 1.60 meters south of the north balk of CA9.6 and 3.08 meters from the west balk of CA9.6. Its north end is positioned at 1.21 meters north of the south balk of CB1.6 and 3.48 meters east of the west balk of CA1.6. Greatest width of wall at the north end is 0.39 meters. Greatest width of wall at south end is 0.39 meters. Wall stones towards the north end are faced on six sides, and a few of the southern stones are adjacent to second stones that provide an eastern face.

CA96012 is a plaster floor that touches wall CA96013/CA16013. Floor is located 0.44 meters from the north balk, extending to 0.91 meters north of the south balk and 3.78 meters west of the east balk, extending to 4.01 meters east of the west balk.

CA96005/CA16005 is a north-south wall that extends at a right angle from wall CA96002 and is the same wall as CB16005. Wall extends from 2.68 meters south of the north balk line of CA9.6 north to 2.38 meters north of the south balk line, where it runs into the unexcavated area to the east. Total preserved length of wall is 4.1 meters. At point where the wall abuts CA96002, CA96005/CA16005 is 0.85 meters wide. The western face of wall CA96005/CA16005 begins to run into the unexcavated soil to the east at 1.0 meters south of the north balk line of CA9.6. Wall is of rubble core construction, similar to wall CA96002. The exterior stones are faced on one side, and are between 0.20 and 0.30 meters in both length and width. These exterior stones face both the western and eastern sides of the wall. The interior stones of the wall are significantly smaller, and are often approximately 0.05 to 0.15 meters in length. The wall is preserved to a depth of four courses, visible at the point where the wall abuts CA96002.

Wall CA96002 is an east-west wall that runs into both the west balk and the artificial balk on the east. The wall is located 1.12 meters south of the north balk line on the west and 1.95 meters south of the north balk line on the east side. Average wall width is 0.77 cm with very slight variations according to the size of the stones used in the construction. The east-west visible length of the wall is 5.08 meters. Wall was built using rubble core construction, utilizing rough-cut stones to create both an exterior and an interior face. Exterior stones are significantly larger than those used in the core, averaging between 0.50 meters and 0.30 meters in greatest length or width. The interior stones that form the rubble core are smaller, with the average size approximately 0.10 to 0.15 meters in length. Wall CA96002 is preserved to at least four courses on both the north and south sides; the bottom of the wall was not excavated during this season.
the late third or early second century BCE. As will be shown, this is the same terminus post quem shared by almost all of the structures grouped together in Phase II.

CA96004/CB16004 and CA96013/CB16013 both abut wall CA96002, but are not bonded with it. It appears to be a later construction, since its foundation is significantly higher than CA96002, and it is only preserved to one course. The construction styles of wall CA96004/CB16004 and CA96013/CB16013 also differ from those of walls CA96002 and CA96005/CB16005. Both CA96002 and CA96005/CB16005 were built using rubble core construction, a construction style that can be noted in other parts of the exterior wall of the large building, notable the corner in CA9.3. The other two walls were built using rubble stones that were faced on the exterior sides, and do not appear to be very stable, as their foundations lie close to the floor level. This interpretation is consistent with the walls’ placement of the interior of the building, and may suggest that they were used for simple storage or for other mundane tasks, rather than actually serving as living spaces.

The same interpretation can be applied to the room created by CA96006, CA96007, CA96004/CB16004-CA96013/CB16013 and CA96002. Like the walls discussed above, all of these walls were single course constructions, and built in a similar fashion. This construction is in variance with that of the larger walls, including CA96002.

Wall CA96006 touches wall CA96004 on the east, and seems to form a very small room with walls CA96007 and CA96002. The southernmost stone of wall CA96004/CB16004 lies on top of the easternmost stone of wall CA96006, suggesting that wall CA96004/CB16004 is either contemporary with or postdates wall CA96006.

Wall CA96006 does not directly touch wall CA96007, but is separated from that wall by a distance of 0.67 meters. It seems that wall CA96006 may originally have been connected to wall CA96007, and founded on top of the drain, CA96009, a cover stone of which is visible directly to the west of the westernmost wall stone. The elevation of these two features suggests that the next stone of wall CA96006 may have been laid on top of the drain. Therefore, wall CA96006 was probably founded after the drain. The probable contemporaneity of wall CA96006 and the drain suggests as well, that this wall CA96006 postdates CA96002 and represents a later use of the latter. There is no preserved plaster floor in this room, so the exact relationship of the walls must be extrapolated from the location and relations between these features.

The soil beneath both walls CA96006 and CA96008 contains Local fineware, and provides a terminus post quem for the wall of the end of the third or beginning of the second centuries BCE. This suggests that the use of wall CA96002 as a southern wall for the proposed room may have been part of the episode of reuse for that wall, a hypothesis

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2 CA96006 is a single course wall laid in a slightly haphazard fashion and running parallel to exterior wall CA96002. The wall is located 2.08 meters from the west balk and extends eastwards 1.10 meters and made of stones that are faced only on the north side, with the southern side remains rough-cut. CA96006 is only one stone wide, and averages between 0.15 and 0.20 meters in width. CA96007 is a north south wall located 0.56 meters from the north balk and extending to 1.49 meters south of the north balk, and 0.97 meters from the west balk. Wall is 0.93 meters in length and an average of 0.43 meters wide, depending upon the width of the stones. Wall is comprised of a single course, although a single rubble stone lay beneath the northernmost stone of the wall. Wall is one stone wide, and the stones that comprise the wall are faced on their west side, but appear to be roughly cut.
west branch of the drain. The drain will be more fully discussed in the section on phase III. As well, none of the main structures south of the wall seem to date from Phase II, but these may have been in use at this time.

Based on datable material from features and the sealed soils associated with them, Phase II seems date to at least the middle Hellenistic period, after the third century BCE.

Phase III

Two soil loci seem to date to Phase III of occupation. Soil locus CA96023 lies above soil locus CA96024 to the west of drain CA96003. The previous soil contains material that dates it to the late Classical or early Hellenistic period, while the lower soil which is a rubble layer, is dated to the Persian period. The soil beneath the plaster floor sequence also has a terminus post quem of the Persian period. The soil that lies to the west of this structure was considered part of locus CA96022. This soil, however, contains very few sherds of Hellenistic material (0.56% of the total pottery weight. It seems possible that this small percentage of Hellenistic pottery may be a later intrusion into soil that was originally covered by the plaster floor sequence.

The architectural features which have been placed within this phase may further illuminate the occupation during this period. It seems likely that wall CA96002, wall CA96005/CB16005, drain CA96003/CA96009/CB16009/CB16010 and plaster floor sequence CA96001-CA96014-CA96017-CA96018-CA96019 were all constructed and in use during this period.

Wall CA96002 seems to date from the earlier phase of occupation, although the bottom of the wall was not reached in excavation and no soil was taken from under the wall. This interpretation is due to its relationship to drain CA96003/CA96009/CB16009/CB16010. It also may be possible to associate wall CA96002 with plaster floor CA96016. This plaster floor lies a significant distance below the level of plaster floor CA96015 and is not likely a direct predecessor to that floor. It is not attached any nearby walls, and in fact, the floor lies beneath the founding level of walls CA96007 and CA96008/CB16008. It seems most likely that the floor is related to wall CA96002, and it may also be related to drain CA96009. The elevation of the floor lies 0.10 meters below the top of the southernmost drain cover stone of CA96009. It may be possible that the floor once stretched between wall CA96002 and drain CA96009/CB16009. Soil beneath the floor, from locus CA96016.1 contains a jug foot in red-brown gritty fabric, and is not sufficiently datable to provide a terminus post quem for the construction of the floor.

Wall CA96005/CB16005 touches wall CA96002, but the two walls are not bonded. Based on similar styles of construction as well as significant depth to the courses, in comparison to other adjacent walls, it may be possible to suggest that the two features were constructed near in time to one another. Wall CA96002 seems to be an earlier construction, as its length continues to the south of wall CA96005/CB16005 unbroken by CA96005/CB16005. At the northernmost point of wall CA96005/CB16005, the wall abuts drain CB16009. It seems likely that wall CA96005/CB16005 once ran over drain CB16009, and has since experienced some post-depositional disturbance, as wall CA96002, which is contemporaneous with or predates CA96005/CB16005, is temporally associated with the drain.
The drain runs under wall CA96002 through a channel through that wall, and the southernmost two drain wall stones, one on either side, are built into wall CA96002. This suggests that the foundation of wall CA96002 and the construction of interior drain CA96009/CB16009/CB16010 and exterior drain CA96003 were all contemporaneous and date from the same period of occupation. Wall CA96005/CB16005 abuts the drain at the northernmost point of the wall, and the number of preserved courses suggests that this wall once ran over drain CA96009/CB16009. This would indicate that wall CA96005 postdates the drain, although the similarity in construction type between wall CA96002 and wall CA96005/CB16005 does suggest close temporal proximity between the two walls.

Wall CA96006 appears to have once continued over the cover stones of CA96009/CB16009. This suggests that wall CA96006 postdates the construction of the drain, although the relation between the use period of wall CA96006 and the drain remains uncertain. Although the drain was constructed prior to the wall, it is possible that the drain remained in use throughout the use period of wall CA96006 and its associated room.

On the interior of the building, soil locus CA96026 lies within the walls of the drain, and provides a terminus post quem through the presence of local fineware to the end of the third century or the beginning of the second. This soil lay under some rubble that was excavated as part of soil locus CA96021. The soil within the exterior of the drain has a terminus post quem of the Crusader period, based on the presence of glazed Crusader ware. This suggests that the drain was out of use by the Crusader period, and the soil within the drain on the interior of the building may represent either a later fill that lacks later pottery evidence or that the drain was out of use by some point after the end of the third or the beginning of the second century BCE. Further excavation of the sealed soil beneath the cover stones of the drain is necessary to adequately determine a period of use for this feature.

The plaster floor sequence mentioned above may also be related to drain CA96003. It is probably that the plaster floor may have covered the soil between the preserved portion and the eastern wall of drain CA96003. The elevation of the lowest level of the floor is within a few centimeters of the top of the drain wall, and the soil excavated between the two features contains a small amount of material that dates later than the Persian period (0.56 %) This plaster floor may have also been laid over top of the rubble layer to the west of the western wall of the drain, thereby effectively sealing the rubble and ensuring a terminus post quem of the Persian period.

Conclusion

Trenches CA9.6 and CB1.6 all demonstrate a remarkable level of activity in this area of the tel, all seemingly limited to a rather short space of time. Although Phase I of occupation cannot be dated precisely, it does seem likely that the structures of Phase I were constructed during the ancient period, as there is a general paucity of material that dates after the Roman or Byzantine periods in the subsoil in CB1.6.

The second phase of occupation seemed to reuse structures that had been built during a previous phase. This re-use, however, differs greatly from the re-appropriation of materials that seemed to occur in phase I. While walls and floors were added to the
which was also suggested by the style of architecture in which wall CA96006 and CA96007 were created. Like the room discussed above, the purpose of the small room formed by CA96007 and CA96006 was likely storage or non domestic in nature. A large number of saucers and fish plates were found in this room, possibly suggesting that this room was used for domestic storage or other domestic tasks.

CA96007 appears to have been in use in conjunction with both wall CA96006 and wall CA96008/CB16008. Wall CA96007 appears to have once made a corner with wall CA96008/CB16008, creating a room that lies adjacent to wall CA96002. The existence of this room is further confirmed by the presence of plaster floor CA96015, which touches walls CA96002, CA96008/CB16008 and CA96007. The soil locus directly below CA96007 contains local fineware, which provides a terminus post quem of the late second or early third centuries BCE. The soil locus below plaster floor CA96015 also contains local fineware, providing a similar terminus post quem for the floor. This suggests that the room created by the three walls and its associated floor were in use at some time after the third century BCE.

To the north of all of these structures lie another interior wall, CA96001, and a series of plaster floors, CB16003-CB16016-CB16017-CB16018 and sub plaster CB16019-CB16020. The plaster floor series touches wall CB16001, and seems to form a coherent occupational phase with it. This plaster floor, although badly decayed on the south and east, may have run over the remainder of the areas to the south of wall CB16001. This is implied by a small piece of plaster found on a rock lying adjacent to the eastern part of wall CB16001 and by the fact that the plaster ran over the threshold of wall CB16001. This plaster also covered the western extension of drain CB16010. This relationship implies that the plaster floor postdated the construction of the drain.

It also seems likely that wall CB16001 was constructed at this time and enjoyed its main period of occupation. This wall sits very close to wall CB16015, suggesting that the two walls may not have been in use contemporaneously. As well, the subplaster underneath the series of plaster floors revealed the bottom of wall CB16001. The foundations for this wall did not run very deeply, and certainly did not reach the depth below floor level of walls CA96002 and walls CA96005/CB16005.

The use of the drain at this period is uncertain. The drain touches almost all of the other features of the trench, and consists of three different loci: CA96003, which represents the exterior portion of the drain, south of wall CA96002, CA96009/CB16009, the main branch of the drain on the interior that curves to the east, and CB16010, the

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3 CA96008 runs from 1.04 meters east of the west balk into the west balk, and is 0.25 meters wide. It crosses the balk line between trenches CA9.6 and CB1.6, where 0.14 m of the wall along the west balk lies within CA1.6 and 0.11 meters of the wall lies in CA9.6. Wall consists of a line of three stones running approximately west-northwest to east-southeast. The westernmost stone angles slightly to the north prior to running into the west balk. One course of the wall is preserved, and the wall is made of rubble stones faced on the south, laid in a slightly haphazard line.

CA96015 is a plaster floor touching the west balk and running eastwards 1.07 meters, 0.24 meters south of the north balk, extending to 1.15 meters south of the north balk. The plaster that comprised the floor was light grayish white, without visible inclusions, and badly decayed.

4 Locus CB16003 is the latest layer of plaster floor south of wall CB16001. Floor is located abutting and running into the west balk and extending east at its greatest extent 1.65 meters. Floor touches wall CB16001 and extends south 1.70 meters, at its greatest extent. The shape of the plaster itself is very irregular, and shows signs of later decay and damage.
pre-existing structures, these alterations do not seem to have radically changed the general structure of the large building, at least in this part of the tel. This could be due in part to a short lapse of time between the second and third phases of occupation. When the second phase of occupation occurred, most of the structures built in phase III may have still been visible, and the occupants may have found it easier to incorporate their own living spaces into the earlier structures rather than robbing out those structures to build new walls. As most of the architecture from this phase seems to have a fairly limited range for a terminus post quem, it does seem reasonable to assume that many of the features dated to phase II were constructed in a relatively short span of time.

The earliest phase of occupation visible through this season's excavation seems to date to the end of the Persian period. Although this chronology is not completely secure, material evidence suggests construction somewhat earlier than phase III, but not utilizing radically different building methods or conceptions of space. The drain and the larger walls of the trenches do seem to pre-date many of the other structures, and it seems reasonable to place them within a single phase of construction.