Final Report
CB1.6
Tel Kedesh 2006

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Introduction

During the 2006 season at Tel Kedesh in Israel, a trench CB1.6 was opened on the southern tel in order to expose the southeast corner of the courtyard and to clarify the extensive drainage system in trenches CA9.6 and CB1.6 that had been excavated by Drew Wilbur in 2000. The trench CB1.6 was situated in the northwest quadrant of the CB1.6 square. Its excavation uncovered a palimpsest of multiple periods ranging from Late Roman to Persian. The prevalent features were represented by two rooms with plastered floors that contained a number of enigmatic enclosures.

Trench CB1.6 was excavated under the direction of Adela Sobotkova, Shawn Ross with Petra Janouchova as an assistant, and a number of assistant Druze workers as the main labor force.

Excavation was started on a 5 by 5 m grid on the south side plotted by the dig architects (Sarah and Jake) and cleaned by the workers. As soon as the topsoil was removed remains of three plastered enclosures surfaced in the centre of the trench; further excavation revealed a fourth enclosure and showed that all of them were seated on solidly constructed plaster floors and were originally bonded with sizeable ashlar walls.

The walls ran east-west and north-south, crossed one another in the northeastern quadrant and merged into the baulk. Only a few ashars remained of the western wall as it had been robbed in antiquity. The remains in trench CB1.6 represented an extension of south courtyard wall of which there were more substantial remains in the adjacent trench CB1.7. In CB1.6 its function as a courtyard wall was obscured by presence of later wall and plaster floor protruding from the north baulk whose construction obliterated part of the wall and courtyard cobbled floor, present in surrounding trenches. The east-west wall, however, clearly functioned as an exterior wall of a plastered room that housed the mysterious enclosures and was used as a support for two of them.

The north-south wall probably formed the eastern wall of the courtyard. Its remains were preserved above the level of plaster floor and ended abruptly at the southern edge of the trench, above the drainage. Construction of the ashars suggested that these walls were made of reused material. Excavation under the floor along one of the walls failed to reach the bottom of its foundation and confirmed the prolonged earlier existence of the wall.

Attached to the walls were later subsidiary east-west partition walls: one lined the south boundary of the trench CB1.6, the other fitted the north east corner of trench, running next to east-west wall and touching the north-south one.

The floors were built of multilayered plaster on substantial seating of stones and mortar in the southwest quadrant; in southeast quadrant the plaster sat on cobbled floor and was generally thinner. Both floors were connected via threshold in the north-south wall. The fill beneath both floors comprised large amounts of pottery and bones.

No connection between trench CB1.6 and its southern neighbors was established. No explanation for the drains found during this excavation season. As for the function of the plastered enclosures, their excavation yielded very little material. Absence of drainage, both in enclosures, on or under the floors rules out running water installations, yet, does not provide any other explanation.

K.B. (CB1.6)
Phases of occupation

The excavated architecture can be divided into three main phases (Persian, Hellenistic (2 phases distinguishable), Late Roman/Byzantine).

Phase I (earliest as of yet detected occupation period in the trench CB1.6) consists of two ashlar walls running north-south and east-west across the trench, CB16030 and CB16034 respectively, and of southern wall CB16094, which runs at the southern edge of the trench CB1.6 under the robbed “drainage” area.

The foundations of walls CB16030 and CB16034 run deep (lowest level reached is 463.89 msl) and their composition suggests that they belong to an earlier, probably Persian period when they formed two interlocking courtyard walls, that continue as interior walls of adjacent buildings. The bottoms of the walls’ foundations, or any floors associated with them have not been reached during 2006 season; therefore, the elevation of the Persian level in trench CB1.6 could not be established. In the building sequence the Persian phase of the wall CB16030 predates the wall CB16034. The order of wall construction shows in the crossing of in NE quadrant, where the eastern extension of wall CB16030 abuts the wall CB16030 (east wall of courtyard). The eastern extension of CB16034 has later been incorporated into the substructure of floor CB16031, which sets it into pre-Selucid era.

Phase II represents the period when most preserved architectural features were constructed. It could probably be divided into two subphases, but those are clarified later under the Phase discussion.

During Phase II of the ashlar walls CB16030 and CB16034 were reused/reassembled (?) to create a southeast corner of the central courtyard and exterior and dividing walls of SE and SW rooms. In the rooms the walls were plastered, equipped with plaster floors CB16032 and CB16031, and plastered enclosures CB16026, CB16025, CB16027, and CB16028. Their exterior enclosed the courtyard floor, of which only a little remnant CB16024 was protruding from the bulk north of wall CB16034. Upper level of “southern” wall CB16044 was partially removed and robbed (CB16043). The lower level of its western tract was used as foundation for a plaster floor extension CB16042, while its northern face was substituted with partition walls CB16029 and CB16033 associated with floors CB16032 and CB16031 respectively.

During Phase III the rooms probably fell into abandonment (lack of modifications of significant later deposits) as only the northern area of the trench shows signs of later occupational activity (late pottery LDMs and architectural modifications). “Transverse” wall CB16023 constricted cutting into the courtyard floor CB16024 and abutting the east-west wall CB16034 from an acute angle.

Later in the phase III the wall CB16034 was robbed and a subsidiary wall CB16035 constricted abutting the east face of wall CB16034 in the very northeast corner of trench. The relative date of these two latest events and their relation to the other structures in trench CB1.6, however, could not be securely established on basis of information from 2006 excavation and need further investigation.

All phases are covered with layer of fertile topsoil CB16036 of dark brown color and silty
consistency with numerous modern inclusions, among them Ras al-Fuqra pottery, Turkish pipe fragments and recent metals. This layer is 20-50cm deep (463.55-463.80) and extends from northwest to southeast, and represents the latest deposited level. The subsequent layer beneath - subsoil CB16037 - consists of light grey-brown soil with lots of rubble and overlaps the architectural structures below. It varies in thickness from 40cm above the next soil locus CB16040 to a couple cms above the architectural features. This locus contained a modest collection of late Roman/Byzantine pottery from the 5th-9th AD, as well as fragments of Islamic Glazed ware, which indicate that the fill has accumulated over a period of time after the abandonment of the architectural features of the latest phase. Within the subsoil layer CB16037 two more distinct soil loci were recognized. Locus CB16038 was represented by a very compact thick (52cm) rubble layer encircling the Square and Quarter circle enclosure (CB16026 and CB16025 respectively), which contained head-sized stones, sizeable chunks of mortar, decayed limestone and large pieces of wall plaster, presumably fallen from either the wall CB16034 or enclosure wall CB16025 during a robbing event. The other locus CB16039 comprised a pile of large boulder stones (baseball size), a couple pieces of worked ashlars (one small aslar with a circular depression reminding of door installation) that were collapsed in southeast corner of the trench under the first subsoil layer. Both locuses seem to represent independent events that accompanied destruction and abandonment of the site during or after the last (latest) phase of architectural features, not necessarily occurring simultaneously.

Phase I
Phase One (Earliest phase) is represented by lower levels of aslar walls CB16030 and CB16034 that run across the trench CB1.6 in perpendicular directions, the latter abutting the former one. Of Persian date may be wall CB16044, of which a remnant was found in the "drain" running up from east to west along the southern edge of the trench, in parallel direction with the wall CB16034. Wall CB16044 was at certain point in time abutted by southern edge of CB16030, as indicated by the currently free-standing face of aslar at the end of it. Later it was torn down and turned into drain, yet the chronology of these events has not been firmly established. Nevertheless, walls CB16030, CB16034 and CB16044 seem to have formed part of an early structure on the tel: eastern courtyard, exterior and interior walls of buildings/rooms adjacent to it. These walls run along the entire extent of the trench (5.5m) in parallel or perpendicular directions and their extensions and continuations can be found in most trenches on the tel. Their width within the trench CB16.4 varies from 0.8 to slightly over 1m. The deepest level of walls reached ad hoc is 463.89m SL under the floor CB16031, ca 1.21m from the highest point on top of wall CB16030 (which, however, postdates the Persian period) and 0.5m below the line of Jutty lying floor ashlars (464.35m). The exposed lower part of the wall CB16030 and eastern extension of CB16034 consists of 4 courses of unworked boulder stones (grapefruit to football sized), above which sits a leveled layer of large ashlars, one aligned next to another. The southern wall CB16044 is the least preserved one, due to later reuse, and shows only the first course of boulder stoned faces. Yet, it seems deeply founded - the boulders merge into the ground in southeast corner of trench and have not been exposed - its width reaches 1.04 m in its maximum extent and was undeniably reused during the first part of Phase II as the south wall of room, and, therefore, its original date likely predates the vigorous construction of architectural
features and rooms of Hellenistic period. Deep foundations, similar masonry and presence of large ashlar suggest that the walls CB16030, CB16034, and CB16044 originally belonged in the Persian period. In none of the fills under the Hellenistic floors CB16031.1 and CB1032.1 a Persian level was reached, yet fragments of Persian vessels comprised a significant proportion (prevailant majority) of their pottery assemblages, thus indicating a strong Persian presence.

It is difficult to separate the Persian phase of wall construction from the Hellenistic one. Both walls were reused during Hellenistic period and CB16034 fell victim to a later robbing event; therefore, possible interpretations are multiple. One alternative is that the Persian walls underwent a partial, eventually complete rearrangement by later occupants, during which the ashlars were pulled out of original walls and arranged neatly on top of the boulder wall in level desired for floor construction. Floor spaces were leveled with fill, enclosed with new walls and plastered. In this case it remains hard to determine precisely the separation line between the Persian and later phases of the walls, the boulder and ashlars taking place as one possibility. Second alternative is that the original Persian walls were constructed with ashlars already neatly arranged in a row (for reasons unknown to us) and later occupants took advantage of them and reused them as they sat in situ, eventually denuded them upon the leveled ashlars, which served as floor supports. In this case the line of ashlars could be counted as the topmost layer in the Persian phase of wall CB16030 construction.

**Phase II (Hellenistic phase)**

During this phase the majority of architectural structures were constructed and in use. The excavation of the remains of walls CB16030 and CB16034 demonstrated they enclosed two rooms, one in southwest, and another one in southeast quadrant, both of which are covered with a solid plaster floor and support plastered enclosures, eventually smaller walls. These floors were probably delineated with two other walls, CB16044 along the south and CB16035 along of southeast floor. At one point the rooms communicated through the CB16030 wall and the plaster floors CB16031 and CB16032 were connected as is suggested by the remnant of plaster visible on the doorway of ashlars in southern part of wall CB16030. The principal soil locuses for this phase are the subfloor locuses CB16031.1, CB16032.1, and CB16042.1.

Plaster floor CB16032 in southwest quadrant was bonded with west face of walls CB16030 and CB16034 to east and north and with the remainder of wall (CB17006) in the west. Part of the southern boundary of the floor forms a thin rubble and mortar partition wall (CB16029) that separates the room from “drainage” canal to the south of it; in its southwest corner CB16032 opens to a plaster floor extension CB16042 that sits slightly elevated on a platform of stones in southwest corner formed by west wall (CB17006) and south wall (CB16001). The floor CB16032 supports three plastered enclosures CB16026 (Square), CB16027 (Rectangular) and CB16028 (Semicircle), which are attached to the three major walls CB17006, CB16034, and CB16030 and small partition CB16029.

The surface of floor CB16032 consists of well preserved two-layered plaster (lower bleuish-grey, and upper bright white plaster with colored inclusions; each layer up to 3cm thick), smooth and intact across the floor except the transition to southwest extension CB16042, where a crack opens up as a result of different substraction and floor
sinking over time. The floor CB16032 slopes down from east to west in a difference of 24 cm.

The principal deposit of this phase is an extensive sealed soil locus CB16032.1 under the floor CB16032, which comprised thick (30-35cm) and compact layer of stones (head sized), firmly anchored in hard mortar. Beneath this tight and solid layer, a layer of dirt and stones succeeded. The soil was soft and sandy, had a rich chocolate state-brown color, and contained a lot of large bones (2.4kg) and a bountiful amount of pottery (total 92,78kg). Persian period fragments dominated but the latest datable shards belonged to Hellenistic period, precisely third century BC - unguentarium rim with analogy in Tel Dor. This soil locus forms a horizon that extends under the partition wall CB16029, and represents a period when the floor space was filled with dirt and leveled in preparation for the construction of plaster floor and plaster enclosures.

In the SW corner of trench CB1.6 a heavily weathered rectangular plaster floor CB16042 was excavated on a platform southwest of the floor CB16032. Eastern edge of this floor was uncovered during 2006 season and hinted at possible continuation of the floor CB16032 albeit sloping up and divided by a crack in the floor CB16045. The excavation revealed the plaster floor extension in its entirety (193/165 x 96/70cm) covered by 30cm of topsoil CB16036 and 25 cm of subsoil CB16037, and enclosed in a corner by walls CB17081 and CB17086. In the corner (SW) most protected by the backfill sat a decayed remnant of plaster (thickness 3 cm, 30 x 25cm) on top of the rectangular plaster floor, suggesting a later phase (repair?) to the plaster floor extension CB16042. Absence of finds from the small area of this later plaster hindered other interpretation than the one based on superposition. The plaster floor CB16042 itself was of worse quality than the southwest floor CB16032 of which it presumably was an extension. A web of lines and cracks ran across the entire surface, a result of sinking of the floor with time over the wall CB16044 it was seated on; the fabric was crumblier, more fragile and far less compact than on the floor CB16032. It did consist of two layers of plaster, but less clear and discernable than CB16032. Immediately beneath the plaster was a layer of cobbles/rubble CB16042.1, set in mortar and dirt, but more loosely than CB16032. A Seleucid coin from the cobbled/rubble level CB16042.1 provided a post quem date for the plaster floor extension starting in the first(?)/half of second century BC. Beneath the cobbled/rubble layer was a layer of stones (head sized) set in dirt, which represented another level of the subfloor and sat on a wall baseball size stones and boulders CB16044 that sloped down and extended east beyond the plaster floor. This layer of stones was aligned with the south wall of adjacent trench CB1.7 and was likely a lower section of its eastern extension. The alignment and similarity of construction suggests that it had once been an exterior wall CB16044 of the two adjacent rooms.

The southwest floor extension CB16042 seems to have been added to the plaster floor CB16032 later on the basis of a combined evidence from finds, pottery assemblage and architecture: 1) a discreetly later post quem date was provided by the coin in the rubble level under the plaster floor as well as a fragment of mould made bowl yielded by layer CB16042.1 both of which extended the LM7 to late Hellenistic period. The 60 kg of pottery from the fill CB16032.1 under the floor CB16032 contained besides a majority of Persian fragments only a couple of shards dating no later than third century BC. 2) The deteriorated preservation of the floor CB16042 and its attitudinal division from the floor CB16042 are caused by the different matrix and substructure of the former floor.
CB16042 conformed to the former wall it was seated on and despite partial sinking over the stones of the wall it remained higher than CB16032, because the former wall CB16044 provided it with a thicker stone foundation. Floor CB16032 sat on a layer of dirt, mortar and stone, and sank deeper than CB16042, which resulted in a crack opening up between these two floors. These facts, however, do not necessarily demonstrate later construction of CB16042. It is the clear cut off line in the well preserved wall plaster on west wall CB17008 that lends support to a separate construction phase of floor extension CB16042. The fine wall plaster (on west wall CB17006), which was bonded with the plaster floor CB16032 abruptly ends at the point where the floor CB16032 ends and CB16042 begins. The wall plaster associated with floor CB16042 in the SW corner is very patchy, low quality and crumbling, nothing like its hard and well preserved counterpart associated with CB16032. The cut off line in wall plaster suggests that it may have been originally bonded or attached to the wall CB16044, which had formed the southern wall to the two adjacent rooms in CB1.6 and CB1.7. In subsequent phase, possibly in second century BC, the wall CB16044 was probably removed and its remains used as substructure for plaster floor extension CB16042, which was attached to CB16032.

Associated with the period of floor extension CB16042 construction is the thin partition wall CB16029 (1.5m long, 15-20cm wide, 40cm tall), which was erected above the line of boulder stones belonging to the wall CB16044, and bonded with the floor CB16032 and the enclosure CB16028. It could represent a later phase of wall CB16044, or rather, a partition wall that was erected after the wall CB16044 was removed in order to divide the space of the floor CB16032 from the drainage area south of it. The pottery acquired from the partition wall CB16029 gives an LDM of mould made lamp nozzle dating to second century BC which makes it contemporary with construction of the floor extension CB16042.

Southeast plaster floor CB16031 extends from the south face of wall CB16035, over the eastern extension of wall CB16034 and along the eastern face of ashlars wall CB16030 down to the northern face of southern partition wall CB16033. It is bonded with the last two walls, which were originally plastered as was demonstrated by plaster fragments on the eastern face of CB16030 and remains of plaster on CB16031 in the far southeast corner where it was protected by the build. The floor CB16031 forms a narrow stripe (width 1.4-1.2m x length 2.5m) as its eastern continuation merges into the build. A Quarter circle enclosure CB16025 (diam. 5.56-70m) was installed on the floor CB16031 and attached to the eastern face of CB16030. The plaster surface of the wall was well preserved in the southeastern quadrant, it sloped gently from north to south and sank and broke in front of the south partition wall as a result of wear with time. In the north... beyond the Quarter circle enclosure CB16025, however, the plaster surface CB16033 was preserved only in a 60 by 50 cm rectangle, while the rest of pavement deteriorated and remained visible only in the build.

The plaster floor CB16031 consisted of two layered plaster of same composition but mostly lesser thickness than floor CB16032 in neighboring room (2 layered, bluish lower, bright white upper layer, thickness ranges from 8cm under the enclosure CB16025 to 5cm along the build). Beneath the plaster in CB16031 lay a subfloor of neatly arranged cobbles, which were well packed and seated in hard mortar. This cobbled layer was thinner than the analogical layer in floor CB16032 (7cm); it was made of smaller stones.
(fist-sized) that were aligned with great care and attention. It was not massive yet formed a deliberately solid substructure to support a finer plastered floor and Quarter circle enclosure CB16025.

Beneath the cobbles lay the soil locus CB16031.1 of rich chocolate-brown colored coarse silt, moist in the middle and towards the bank, drier along the wall CB16030 and CB16034. It was getting darker brown the more it was excavated. It contained occasional fist-sized rocks and a couple of decayed large limestone (east of threshold in CB16030, possibly fallen when the wall was being reused and incorporated into the floor fill). In the assemblage of pottery from the locus CB16031 (29kg) dominated pre-Hellenistic wares, mainly Persian bowls and jars, a second century pottery date for the construction of the floor was provided by a fragment of second century BC moulded bowl. The matrix of the soil locus CB16031.1 remained throughout its 0.8m of depth relatively uniform deep and resembled closely the fill of floor CB16032 in both structure and high amount of pottery and its fragmented and worn quality. This similarity suggests that these two loci were accumulated over the same period of time and represent one occupational horizon, which preceded the construction of both floors. The Latest datable material from the CB16031, however, suggests that the construction of southeast floor postdated the construction of floor CB16032. It can thus be postulated that the Phase II could be broken up in two subsequent periods: first one marking the construction of the southwest floor CB16032 with installment of all its enclosures, a second one during which the southwest extension CB16042 was added to the southwest floor CB16032 and southeast floor CB16031 with Quarter circle enclosure CB16025 was built.

Enclosures

During Phase II all of the plaster enclosures in southwest and southeast room were constructed contemporaneously with the floors CB16031, CB16032 and partition walls CB16029, CB16033, and CB16035. Excavation of two of them (CB16025, CB16028) and of the subfloor loci CB16031.1, CB16032.1 demonstrated that there may be two phases to their construction.

The two plaster enclosures CB16026 (Square) and CB16027 (Rectangular) sitting on the floor CB16032 were built of rubble and mortar walls and had both interior and exterior walls plastered with well finished surface. Both of them were bonded with the floor and at least two of the walls, which provides them with a post quem date slightly but not much later than the construction of floor CB16032. It seems that the two enclosures were installed while the southern wall CB16044 was still in place if indeed they were constructed close after the installation of the floor CB16032. Questionable is the dating of hip-shaped enclosure CB16032, which sits on the floor CB16032, attached to the west face wall CB16030, and is bonded with partition wall CB16029. Material from excavation of the enclosure CB16028 did not yield any usable data, while partition wall CB16029 contained shards of Hellenistic cookware. This wall seems to postdate the floor CB16032, and could represent a substitute of southern wall CB16044 after that was removed. If the semicircle enclosure CB16028 was in place while the wall CB16044 still stood, part of the wall CB16029 could have formed part of the wall finish originally and was patched and strengthened after the wall’s CB16044 removal. In this case the post quem for the enclosure CB16028 would be the construction of floor CB16032. Other alternative is that the enclosure CB16028 was constructed and supported by newly added partition CB16029 after the removal of CB16044, which would move its date closer to
construction of southwest floor extension CB16042 and construction of floor CB16031 in southeast room, representing the later Hellenistic subphase (second century BC) of Phase II occupation and construction.

Given the post quem date of floor CB16031, the Quarter circle enclosure CB16025, attached to west face of CB16030, must date to second century BC as it is too, bonded with the floor CB16031. In favor of the later addition of Quarter circle and Semicircle enclosures CB16025, CB16026 could speak their round shape – standing in contrast to earlier angular enclosures, and their more fragile structure – north wall of CB16025 lacked solid rubble and mortar wall, and both enclosure CB16025, CB16026 were in much worse state of preservation than CB16026 and CB16027. Later additions of floors CB16042 and CB16031 and enclosures CB16025 and CB16028 to the southwest and southeast rooms could signify expanded activity in this area of the tel, and need for more space and enclosures.

The good finish of the enclosures, their variegated shapes and total absence of drains both in the enclosures themselves, in or under the floor CB16032 or CB16031 open the puzzling question of their function. Given the lack of drainage it is not likely that they served washing or bathing purposes for practical or ritual reasons. Another alternative is storage, suggested by well protected environment of both the enclosed room and carefully sealed sides as well as an oven recovered in the neighboring room to trench CB1.7 at the same level, yet again there is no direct evidence as to the stored material, nor does this explanation shed light on the different shapes of the enclosures. Excavation of the two enclosures did not yield any further information as to the purpose of them, nor could their contents inform us of their function as they provided merely an antecedent of their usage. The structures thus remain unparalleled in their structure, shape and aggregation in the two rooms.

Phase III (Hellenistic abandonment and later occupation)

The principal soil locus in the phase of Hellenistic abandonment of the rooms in trench CB1.6 is CB16040 lying under the subsoil CB16037, CB16038, CB16039 in southern half of the trench, extending partially northeast along the floor CB16031. This soil locus sits above the plaster floors and their equivalents (floor leveled ashlars in northern part of CB16035 as well as western part of CB16034), and comprises light grey brown coarse silt that contains fist sized rocks, small amount of bones and metal, and a high number of well preserved pottery. The accumulation of mendable, occasionally intact pieces is concentrated in the southwest corner of floor CB16032, on northeast floor CB16031 and in the mortar of collapsed wall of Rectangular enclosure CB16027. Artifact rich deposit, however, was found also outside the rooms, mainly in the northwest corner, which had once been part of the courtyard albeit the floor has decayed away. Large pieces of amphora, including a stamped handle, and an almost complete store tub were found accumulated in the level of courtyard floor, which was damaged by a later insertion of “transverse” wall CB16029 (commented on below). Among the finds featured also 5 coins found on top of the floors CB16032 and CB16031; in vicinity of the Rectangular and Quarter circle enclosures CB16027 and CB16025, respectively. Three of the coins were minted in second century BC and, although they do not come from a sealed deposit, they provide an orientation departure point for the deposit.

The latest datable material in locus CB16040 is Islamic, represented by a shard of
Islamic Glazed ware and one of Byzantine (or later) cookware. This contamination is due to the pollution from above, as this locus lies right under the subsoil without any protection. In addition, the southern part of the trench “drainage area” was disturbed by robbers, while northern area saw later construction of “transverse” wall CB16023, and subsequent robbing of wall CB16034. Furthermore, it can be ascribed to contamination from the baulk, along which the most pottery in southwest corner of CB16032 was deposited. Besides these two later fragments, the majority of wares consistently fall within the late Hellenistic period (mendable BG bowls, wheel ridged cookware, semifine table amphorae, mouldmade bowls etc.) and mark the brief, but vibrant period of late Hellenistic occupation and abandonment of the area. To this locus we can add the contents of enclosure CB16025.0, which contains an almost complete storage jar, deliberately dumped in the enclosure together with large pieces of incised and relieved plaster torn from the walls, Locus CB16025.0 illuminates better the dramatic events of the destruction and Hellenistic abandonment of the southern area of the tel.

The horizon represented by pottery-rich soil locus CB16040 in the northern half of trench CB1.6 was disturbed by later construction of “transverse” wall CB16023, which protruded from the northern baulk at 1m from the east, and extended for 0.72m towards the centre of the trench at an acute angle. The wall cut through the original plaster floor of the courtyard, of which a arc shaped remnant CB16024 was excavated to the east of it, protruding from the north baulk. The wall and floor were bonded, yet the material of the floor was decidedly earlier (Hellenistic) than of the wall (early Roman LDMs), which suggests that the bonding was either of later date, a patching of the wall and floor or an accidental result of post-depositional processes and weathering. The wall CB16023 dissipated into rubble shortly after its entry from the baulk, roughly at the point where wall CB16034 originally stood which suggests that it may have been constructed while the wall CB16034 was still in place. If CB16023 abutted ashlar wall CB16034, subsequent robbing of the latter would explain bad preservation of the transverse wall CB16023, as well as of the plaster floor CB16024.

The robbing of wall CB16034 forms another late deposited soil locus CB16041, which is directly on the remnants of the wall CB16034, south of plaster floor CB16024 and transverse wall CB16023. This “wall robbing horizon” CB16041 sat under the compact rubbly subsoil locus CB16038, peculiar for its high concentration of decayed limestone, plaster and mortar fragments and large stones. It extended for 20-30cm and contained brown-grey silty soil with occasionally darker patches and fifteenth century jug fragments, providing the post quem date for its deposition. This horizon marks the robbing of the large ashlar wall CB16034 down to the floor level (and possibly of the northern 1.2 m of wall CB160307), damage to Rectangular and Square enclosures CB16027 and CB16027 (plaster of the northern sides), partial destruction to transverse wall CB16024 and courtyard floor CB16024. This horizon bears no signs of occupational period, except for damage caused by robbing, no new architectural features have been erected, nor does the horizon contain enough late material to suggest continued occupation. If this part of tel was occupied, the settlement was merely temporary, or transient of pastoral communities or so. Locus CB16041 could probably put chronologically side by side with loci CB16038 and CB16039 consisting of compact rubbly subsoil and ashlar collapse respectively, both of which mark the collapse of architectural structures that comprised the rooms in trench CB1.6. The three soil loci CB16041, CB16038 and CB16039 very likely form three events of a single horizon.
which marks the end of permanent occupation of this area on the ac connected with the exploitation of its earlier structures for building material.

Conclusion
Trench CB1.6 revealed a vibrant phase of architectural development and activity in the southern area of the tel, its apex spanning from Persian to Hellenistic period, with only minor later reverberations. Phase I of occupation could not be dated with precision as the Persian floor levels were not reached during this season, yet the general preponderance of Persian material under the Hellenistic floors, the massive and deep construction of the three major walls in trench CB1.6 indicate a long lasting Persian occupation.

Second phase marks the heyday of life in this area, as the earlier wall structures get reused and incorporated into the new floorplan. All these events happen in a short lapse of time: the walls are embellished with plaster and furnished with solid plaster floor, enclosures of unknown, yet decidedly important purpose are installed and used. During a later subphase of Phase II southern wall of the southwest room gets eliminated and the room receives an floor extension. Its neighbor room to southeast gets furnished with plaster floor and one more newly constructed plaster enclosure, both events marking an intensive perusal of existing structures, growing need for larger space and its incorporation in the life of the administrative center on the tel. Although the purpose for which these rooms were constructed remains unclear, their significance is undeniable given the time and labor invested in their furnishings. Interestingly enough, the area of the rooms was never modified after the Phase II subphase additions and abandonment, and survived in almost intact condition the robnings of the drain and wall in the northern half of trench.

Later occupation during phase III can be demonstrated through architectural features only in the northern part of the trench, where a new wall is built and a subsequent robbing horizon is encountered. The area of plastered rooms remains untouched by later events (probably unoccupied) and the general paucity of later material shows that after the heyday of second century the Byzantine period settlement never reached the extent of the Hellenistic and its affect on the site remained largely limited. Subsequent occupancy in later Islamic periods was sporadic and transient.