CB 1.7 NE – a.k.a. "Velma"
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INTRODUCTION
Excavation was begun in CB 1.7 NE at the beginning of the 2006 season with the goal of figuring out what was going on in the south portion of the building. There are seven phases of activity:

Phase I - Persian founding
Phase II - Tabun/tanour phase
Phase III - Hellenistic administrative building phase
Phase IV - Wall robbing and subsequent fill
Phase V - Islamic burial
Phase VI - Post-burial activity (Islamic)
Phase VII - Modern deposition

As a point of orientation for somebody reading this report without a final top plan, the main features in the square are as follows (there is a locus list at the end of this document): At the four edges of the square there are four walls, north (CB17003), east (CB17006), south (CB17005), and west (CB17001). Inside the walls we found a grave (CB17002), situated against the north wall, slightly east of center, and two floor layers. The upper floor was a plaster-and-sherd floor (CB17004); the lower was a patchy plaster or crushed limestone floor (CB17008). Associated with this floor were two tabuns/tanours, one in the east (CB17012) and one in the northwest corner (CB17024). The area of the floors was dug in three phases: initially just a section against the south wall, down to elevation 464.04 m, followed by another section north of this section, down to 464.06, followed by the final section (in the northwest corner of the room) down to elevation 464.02. (This last section, in the northwest corner of the square, was dug by a different team.)

PHASE I – PERSIAN FOUNDRING
The four walls of CB 1.7 NE (north: CB17003, east: CB17006, south: CB17005, and west: CB17001) appear to have been founded in the Persian period. They are each ca. 80 cm wide, are all bonded with one another (with the possible exception of the north and east walls, which were deeply robbed), and appear to be founded very deeply. The north wall was founded at 464.02 m, the south wall at 463.95 m, and the west wall at 461.99 m. We did not reach the bottom of the east wall. All of these walls have been robbed to one degree or another, but to give an idea of the impressive depth of these walls, the highest extant point on each of the four walls is: 465.26 (north); 465.21 (in the southeast corner – the highest point for the south and east walls); and 465.37 (west) and the elevation of the latest floor that used these walls (CB17004) is 464.99 m – 464.64 m. The pottery LDMs in the soil associated with the founding levels of the north, south, and west walls were Persian or earlier.
PHASE II – TABUN/TANOOR PHASE

Of the two floors found in CB 1.7, the lower of the two (CB 17008) is associated with two tabuns, one in the east (CB 17012) and one in the northwest corner (CB 17024). In the south section (from the south wall to ca. 40 cm north of the south wall) there was no floor extant. In the next section to the north (from ca. 80 cm north of the south wall to the southern edge of the grave foundation trench (i.e., to ca. 1.2 m south of the north wall – see below) the floor was found as 6 small patchy sections of crushed limestone surface and one ca. 70 cm x 60 cm surface of orange tabun-like material with a whitewash on top of it. Below this tabun-like surface was a grey mortar-like surface with bits of charcoal and deflated pottery in it. In the far north section (bounded by the west wall (CB 17001) on the west side, by the north wall (CB 17003) on the north side, by the grave and foundation trench (CB 17002 and CB 17017) on the east side, and by the previously-dug section on the south side) the floor appeared as a still “somewhat ephemeral” floor. In this northwest corner of the room a tabun (CB 17024) was found. The tabun wall was ringed with stones and the fragmentary plaster floor ran up against it in places. The floor of the tabun was ca. 15 cm below the surface of the floor. Another partial section of a tabun (CB 17012) was found on the east side of the square, ca. 25 cm to ca. 85 cm west of the east wall. Most of this tabun had been destroyed with the creation of the Islamic grave, to the north (see below). However, there was a section of crushed limestone floor of the same elevation as the floor to the west that ran up against the wall of this tabun. Fragments of tabun were also found in the fill between this phase and the next phase above.

This floor (CB 17008) is dated to the 3rd century BCE on the basis of 7 small local fine red-slip vessels (K06P056, K06P057, K06P058, K06P059, K06P060, K06P061, K06P062), a local fine incarved-rim bowl (K06P064), an ingestaarium rim and neck K06P057, and a casserole and cookingware lid of Acco (tawdy) cook fabric (K06P055, K06P063). The one tiny Early Roman cookware body sherd found in the south of this section can be attributed to rodent activity as evidenced by a visible rodent hole winding its way through this locus.

PHASE III – HELLENISTIC ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING PHASE

In the period of the Hellenistic administrative building this room was almost entirely covered with a plaster-and-sherd floor (CB 17004), the plaster of which ran up the face of the north, west, and south walls (CB 17003, CB 17001, and CB 17002). When we uncovered the floor it sloped from its northwest corner (464.99 m) to the southeast corner (464.64 m). The only section not covered with a plaster-and-sherd floor was in the southeast corner of the room, where no floor was found but where we found a small section of a crushed limestone surface (“the mushroom” – CB 17013) against the east wall in the area where the east wall had not been robbed. This surface was at the same level as the plaster-and-sherd floor and had a Hellenistic LDM below it (CB 17013.1 = unit CB 1.7, 103). It is possible that the plaster-and-sherd floor existed in the southeast corner of the room and was destroyed by later activity, but no plaster-coated pottery was found anywhere in the square except in the floor itself and in the soil immediately on top of the plaster-and-sherd floor. In addition, there was no visible plaster on the faces of the walls

K06 CB 1.7 NE (2)
in this area. It is therefore proposed that the eastern/southeastern portion of this room had a crushed limestone floor. No dividing wall was found between the crushed limestone floor area and the plaster-and-sherd floor area.

The plaster-and-sherd floor was a solid floor laid down on top of a cobble subfloor. The nature of the floor (a plaster floor with a pottery sherd matrix) is, to our knowledge, unknown in this period. A quick skim of Tel Dor volume IA also revealed no mention of such a type of floor, though it has been hypothesized that such a floor may have been found in the excavations of the site at Tel Kadesh.

It is dated to the Seleucid period on the basis of a coin minted in the reign of Antiochus III or Antiochus IV (K06C091) that was found bound by soil to the bottom of one of the subfloor cobbles, and a ceramic sprocket of Acco fabric (K06P29) found in the 0.1 m level of the floor in the southern portion. The units at the 10 cm above the entirety of the plaster-and-sherd floor all had Hellenistic LDMs and were thus given their own locus (CB17019) as evidence of last-use deposition.

On the east side of the east wall, in the southern corner of our square, we found another plaster floor surface (CB17023) which ran up the east side of the east wall. One unit was dug down to the top of this floor surface that was below the Islamic rubble (CB17022 – unit CB 1.7.017). See this season's final report for CB 1.6 for the dating of this floor.

Dating to this same period are two small patches of crushed limestone floor to the north of the north wall of CB 1.7, on top of the courtyard floor. The upper surface (CB17010) set at elevation 464.92 m, while the lower surface (CB17015), at elevation 464.79 m, sits directly on top of the courtyard floor.

**PHASE IV – WALL ROBBING ACTIVITY AND SUBSEQUENT FILL**

As was mentioned above, all four walls were robbed at part, the east wall being robbed to and the plaster-and-sherd floor area. There was a small section of crushed limestone surface on top of the robbed-out east wall (CB17007) below which there was unfortunately no yield of any datable pottery. It is possible that this robbing occurred in the Early Roman period, as much robbing activity occurred in the building during this period. However, the fill on top of the east wall was a rubble layer that had Byzantine and Early Roman LDMs down to a fairly deep level (464.36 m). The fill above the robbed south wall was also a rubble layer with Early Roman, Middle/Late Roman, and Byzantine LDMs, and also at a deep level: one of the Byzantine LDMs came from the unit directly on top of the robbed-out section of the south wall at elevation 464.71 m. The date of the robbing is therefore not be ascertained with any degree of certainty. The excellent construction of these walls (i.e., the quality of stone), the fact of the robbing of the west, south, and especially east walls to the level that they were robbed (i.e., the amount of stone), and the evidence of Early Roman robbing elsewhere in the building would suggest that the robbing occurred in this period. However, this interpretation would require there to have been deep holes left unfilled for hundreds of years to at least the Byzantine period. Perhaps, then, the walls were robbed in the Early Roman period, filled, and then dug again in the Byzantine period when people were digging for the tops of robbed walls that would make good grave floors. In CB 1.6 SW (cf. the final report from this year) we

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uncovered an infant burial in which the grave constructed directly on top of a wall, and in CB 2.6 NE there was an infant buried in a grave just south of but parallel to the line of that wall. Both of these graves appear to have been dug (as opposed to having been built above ground), and in the case of the CB 3.6 SW grave the grave builders seem to have intentionally built the grave on top of a robbed wall. Or perhaps these walls in CB 1.7 were robbed in the Byzantine period or later. The only thing that is certain is that it is unlikely that the walls were robbed in the building of the south wall of the Islamic grave (CB17002 - see below) because the stones for that wall were much bigger (at least 3-5 times bigger) than any visible stones in the extant walls. In any case, the fill on top of the robbed sections of the walls here dates to the Byzantine period or later.

**PHASE V - ISLAMIC BURIAL**

Against the north wall of the room we uncovered a grave (CB17002) which was dated to the early Islamic period or later on the basis of three glazed Islamic sherds in the fill above the skeleton. The grave and a foundation trench (CB17017) for the south wall of the grave (CB17018) had been cut through the plaster-and-sherd floor (CB17004), and the south wall was built of very large (ca. 50-100 lbs.) stones one course wide and four courses deep (1.05 meters: 465.10 m - 464.85 m). The grave was capped with four very large stones, the three largest of which probably weighed more than 200 lbs each. (Their dimensions were [from west to east]: ca. 83 x 43 x 26 cm; ca. 92 x 60-40 x 20 cm; ca. 78 x 50 x 14 cm.) The capstones sat on top of the south grave wall and on stones of the north wall of the room. The fill between the bottom of the capstones and the top of the skeleton (the highest point of which was the crown of the skull, 73 cm below the capstones) was composed of extremely loose soil. A coin (K96C007), two metal hooks, a lead weight, and a metal object that looks like the curled end of a safety pin (tracking no. 327) were the only things other than bone and pottery found in the fill. The soil from the foundation trench and underneath the south wall of the grave did not yield a better LDM than that of the soil of the grave fill.

The skeleton (affectionately known as "Shlomo") was found more than 73 cm below the capstones lying on its back with head to the west and feet to the east. The head was turned so that the eyes looked south. Legs were straight, with the right leg turned outward (probably after burial, as a result of decomposition of skin, tendons, ligaments, and the pubic symphysis). Arms were straight along the length of the body but the left hand had been curiously turned inward at a 90-degree angle and was underneath the left pelvis/upper femur of the skeleton.

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1 The stone furthest east was at a ca. 30-45 degree angle, was much smaller, and was removed as part of a rubble field before the tops of the other three much larger stones were found.

2 Nevertheless, the extensive discussion of varieties of arm, leg, and body-arm positions in chapter 9 of Tell el-Hesi, it seems most logical to attribute most aspects of body position in general (and here as well) to one or more of three factors: (1) rigor mortis or lack of rigor mortis at the time of wrapping/burial (many Muslim groups buried their dead within 24-48 hours of death, and if memory serves, rigor usually sets in 3-4 hours after death, is in full effect 12 hours after death, begins to subside 24 hours after death, and is gone by 36 hours after death. Exact times depend on variables like temperature); (2) Body position and movement inside a shroud, if one is used - visualize what knots will do when wrapped and then the body is lifted down into a grave, either by holding onto the shroud or by supporting the body itself. Arms tend to be pulled inward, hands end up toward the center of the body and over the pelvic area, etc.; and (3) movement after burial and decomposition of skin, muscles, ligaments, tendons, vertebral discs, etc. There...
Parallels to the sort of burial that we have here can be found in the Muslim Cemetery at Tell el-Hesi (Fields I, V, and VI-X, Stratum II). The Tell el-Hesi cemetery is dated to ca. 1450 (or 1550) – 1800 CE and includes five different types of burials, of which ours corresponds to Type III (stone walls on the long sides of the body and capstones on top). As with our grave, the team at Tell el-Hesi found nearly all of the graves to be oriented more or less east-west, with the head of the body at the west end of the grave. Body position did not seem to be of importance (some were on their backs, some on their sides, some in flexion, and with a variety of arm and leg positions), but up to 91% of the bodies had eyes turned to the southeast or south (toward Mecca). As with our grave, the grave shape accommodated the shape of the body (both in terms of length and in terms of tapering toward the feet); no evidence of a wood coffin or nails was found (as is also suggested by the grave shape accommodating the shape of the body); and evidence for a shroud wrapping was found. In our grave the only potential evidence for a shroud wrapping is the curled portion of a “safety pin” (tracking no. 327) that was found in the same unit as the excavation of the skeleton. At Tell el-Hesi, as here, the bottom of the graves were never stone covered; all of the Type III graves were built with extreme care, and the graves rarely included grave goods. The grave depths at Tell el-Hesi varied from 0.40 m – 1.40 m and the excavators suggested that there was generally a 7:10 grave depth:skeleton height ratio.

Unlike our grave, the Type III graves at Tell el-Hesi had corner-like capstones with stone chinking of the joints in between.

We unfortunately have no further information at this time about our skeleton.

There was some debate among the bone specialists as to whether or not this was a male or a female skeleton, and an osteometric analysis of the femurs and humerus has not been performed. Given the parallels to Tell el-Hesi (and the lack of good information from the Christian cemetery at Tel Jezreel – see footnote 4), it is suggested that this is an Early Islamic-Crusader Muslim burial.

It should be noted here that locus CB17014, which is comprised of three units of soil coming down on the courtyard floor to the north of our square, is attributed to this phase as well, as we had an Islamic LDM in the unit directly on top of the courtyard floor. As the northern wall of the room is the same height or lower than the tops of the capstones, I assume that this soil was deposited in conjunction with the burial.

were multiple little holes and areas of no soil around our skeleton, presumably from the decomposition of the tissue.


5 Toombs cites some interesting modern anthropological parallels from nomadic and semi-nomadic groups in Trans-Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Northern Palestine (this is more of interest than of import). Of those cited, our burial fits best with those of Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabia. The Bedouins of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had the most interesting explanation for varying depths of graves (and for very deep graves – the graves of the semi-nomads of Northern Palestine are apparently always 0.50 m), which was that women should be buried deep enough so that their breasts would be covered if they were standing/placed upright in the grave, but that a man only needed to be buried deep enough so that he would be waist-deep if standing/placed upright in the grave. Unfortunately we don’t know at this time whether our skeleton was male or female.
PHASE VI – POST-BURIAL ACTIVITY

The rubble above the level of the courtyard floor is relatively homogeneous all the way to topsoil. However, I have divided that rubble between this phase and the next phase (Phase VII – modern deposition) on the logic that the burial was placed where it was because the existence of the north wall (CB17003) provided a ready-made north wall for the grave and was therefore known (and visible) to the grave builders. Thus all of the rubble from the level of - the bottom of the grave capstones up to the level of the current high point of the north wall has been designated as post-burial activity and all of the material above the level of the north wall has been designated as modern deposition. This phase yielded stoppers, lamp fragments, a bone tool, portions of 3 semi-flue jetlets (K06P032; K06P033), a nearly complete amphoriskos, and the first obsidian flake to be found at Tel Kedesh.

PHASE VII – MODERN DEPOSITION

This phase is typical topsoil – completely boring, save for the shotgun shell, the bullet casings, and the 1937 10-nit British Mandate coin that were found.

Locus List
CB17000 – Topsoil
CB17001 – West wall
CB17002 – Islamic grave
CB17003 – North wall
CB17004 – Plaster-and-sherd floor and cobble subfloor
CB17004.1 – 0.1 under plaster-and-sherd floor and cobble subfloor
CB17005 – South wall
CB17006 – East wall
CB17007 – Surface on top of robbed east wall
CB17008 – Earlier floor under plaster-and-sherd floor
CB17009 – Fill below CB17008
CB17010 – Hellenistic floor above courtyard floor at 464.92
CB17010.1 – 0.1 under CB17017 (=unit 070)
CB17011 – Fill above robbed south wall (Byzantine or later)
CB17012 – Tabun/tanur in the east
CB17012.0 – 0.0 in tabun (=unit 095)
CB17012.1 – 0.1 in tabun (=unit 096)
CB17013 – "The mushroom" – surface against southern (non-robbed) portion of east wall
CB17014 – Islamic disturbance north of the north wall
CB17015 – Plaster/crushed limestone surface north of the north wall
CB17016 – Activity after the burial
CB17017 – Foundation trench for the grave
CB17018 – South wall of the grave
CB17019 – Soil directly on top of the plaster-and-sherd floor
CB17020 – Area of missing plaster-and-sherd floor in the southeast
CB17021 – Fill over the robbed-out east wall (Byzantine or later)
CB17022 – Unit on top of the floor in the corner of CB 1.6 NW (=unit 017; this area is in the extreme southeast of our square and the extreme southwest corner of CB 1.6 NW)
CB17023 – Plaster floor on east side of east wall (floor from CB 1.6)
CB17024 – Tabun/tannur discovered under the plaster-and-sherd floor immediately west of the grave
CB17024.0 – 0.0 in tabun
CB17024.1 – 0.1 under tabun