KEDESH 2006
FINAL REPORT FOR CB 3.7 NW
Martin Wells

INTRODUCTION

During the 2006 excavation season at Tel Ke'desh, the northwest quadrant of CB 3.7 was opened in order to determine if the room lying just to the west (CB 3.8 NW, excavated during the 2000 season) was, in fact, the west end of a corridor running east-west through the north half of the Hellenistic Administrative Building. This turned out not to be the case as instead of a corridor we found a small room comparable in size to the previously excavated room to the west. This new room has added to our understanding of the function of the northwest corner of the HAB as a collection and storage area.

CB 3.7 was excavated under the direction of Martin Wells with the help of Nick Hudson and Will Murray. Three of the Druze workmen helped out for a few days in the middle of the season.

A note about the layout of the square: CB3.7 was not a complete 5m x 5m square. Only the southern ba'ulik was laid out for the full 5 x 5. The eastern ba'ulik was strung out for as much of the length as the erosion would allow—approx 4.8 meters. There were no ba'uliks on the north and west as these squares had previously been excavated.

As stated above, excavation of CB 3.7 revealed a small room with substantial, well-built walls on the north, west, and east. There was a later east-west wall found in the southern half of the trench. We encountered only one floor going with the large walls and no floor for the later wall. Additionally, the doorway in the north wall was blocked, something that is not uncommon in this part of the building. Excavation stopped when we were confident we were below Hellenistic levels.

PHASES OF OCCUPATION

There are three phases of occupation evident in the architecture of CB 3.7: Phase III, the earliest, is represented by a deeply founded wall (CB37002) which continued to remain in use in the following phases, a ring of burnt stones, interpreted as an oven or tabun (CB37013), and a pit. Phase II is represented by a dirt floor (CB37010) and associated walls (north wall-CB37004, east wall-CB37002, west wall-CB37001). This is the main occupation phase of the II-IV. Phase I, the latest phase, is represented by one late wall in the southern part of the square (CB37005) and a reuse of at least one Phase II wall, CB37001. Scatters between Phase II and Phase I, probably late in Phase I, the doorway in the north wall (CB37004) was blocked up with ashes (CB37003). Although the ashes and the later Phase I wall were founded at the same level, there is nothing to connect them architecturally.

Two loci and a unit from a third are located outside of the room in CB 3.7. Fill loci CB37014 and CB37015 and one unit from CB37018 were excavated on the west side of wall CB37001 and really belong to the occupation sequence of the room, excavated as CB 3.8 NE in 2000. This being the case, the lower elevations of that narrow strip of fill
were divided into two loci, CB37014 and CB37015, these levels being near the use level of the fill in that room (there was no floor found). These loci therefore have no relation to the loci excavated inside the room of CB3.7. The LDM for CB37014 is Early Roman and for CB37015, it is Persian. The unit from CB37008 that was excavated on the west side of the wall was high enough to be included in the fill locus from within the CB 3.7 room.

Phase III

Loci: Oven, CB37013 and its fill CB38013.8, Wall CB37002, and fill loci CB37012, CB37011, (CB37010). (Located in Phase II)

Phase III represents the earliest use horizon so far for CB 3.7. The oven or tabun (CB37013), a ring of cracked and flaking stones approx 80 cm in diameter set adjacent to a shallow pit approx. 1 m in diameter. The unexcavated soil (CB37012) around the oven and pit is very hard packed and almost has a clay-like consistency. A Berlin believes that this hard-packed fill was a floor, but there was no real surface to speak of. It is perhaps more likely that the floor level lies just below where we stopped excavating. No pottery was recovered from the inside of the oven (CB37013.8), but a sample was collected of the very fine red/orange silt soil (track # 893).

We never reached the bottom of wall CB37002, nor did we observe a foundation trench. There was no relation between the oven, the pit and this wall, but the hard packed material of CB37012 did reach it.

The nature of the pit is unclear. Having dug the lower half of the Phase II fill floor, we came down on a patch of rubble (CB37011) in the middle of the room. Further excavation showed this rubble to expand in a strip to the north and then shrink again so that the bottom of the rubble was in the pit, located just underneath the spot where the rubble patch first appeared. It is possible that the pit just happened to be the place where this rubble was thrown in and extended north under the later Hellenistic wall (CB37004) and tapered up at its southern extent. If this is the case, then the pit may have originally served some function associated with the oven.

Although the LDM of this phase gives a date of Early Roman (a small fragment of a cook pot body sherd in CB37060.1) this is surely the result of the tremendous amount of rodent activity visible not only in the fills themselves, but also most dramatically in the banks. Most of the pottery recovered from these fills was Persian and earlier pre-Hellenistic.

Phase IIb

Loci: Wall CB37001, Wall CB37002, Wall CB37004, the dirt floor make up CB37010, and fill loci CB37005.1, CB37005.1, CB37008

Phase IIb represents the main construction and use phase of the HAB. In this phase the Hellenistic walls (CB3700) and CB37004) were constructed, and the single floor we encountered in this square (CB37010) was in use with those walls. Wall CB37006 is the northern wall to this room and has a doorway leading into the Northwest Storeroom where the big jars were found against the walls. This wall was not robbed out at any spot.
along its length. Although the floor CB37010 did not reach it, the level of the floor (46.06 msl) was even with the level of the threshold blocks in the doorway, indicating their contemporary nature. The floor also did not reach the east wall, CB37002, nor the west wall, CB37001, but this was due to the fragile nature of the floor and the extensive rodent activity. However, the subfloor material that was below the solid floor patches was the same material that did reach the walls. The LDM of the floor (CB37010) is Hellenistic local fine and this, combined with the Persian material in the fill below the floor, provide a good Hellenistic date for the floor.

Wall CB37001 is a solid north-south wall running south from Wall CB37004, the southern wall of the Archive room and the Northwest Store-room. It is this wall, and the other north-south wall, CB37002, which killed the “Corridor” theory. However, we still have not found the southern wall to this room and this leaves open the possibility of a north-south corridor running along the west edge of the courtyard.

The fills above this floor (CB37008, CB37003, 1, CB37005.1) have an LDM of Early Roman but most of the material is Hellenistic local fine. Several complete or nearly complete vessels were recovered from CB37008 (K06P09, the Roman pan, and K06P090, a local fine juglet) as well as at least two sun-dried terra cotta loom weights and at least 7 iron nails. The nails were for the most part short, not like roofing nails, and it is possible that they were used to hold up shelves.

**Phase IIa**

Loci: CB37003

Phase IIa is represented by CB37003, the three standing ashlar s blocking the doorway in the north wall CB37004. This blocking occurred sometime after the function of this part of the building changed, though the new function is unknown as is the reason for blocking the doorway. The LDM for the 1 under the ashlar is Hellenistic cookware.

**Phase I**

Loci: Wall CB37001, Wall CB37007, Wall CB37005, possible wall CB37009, and fill locus CB37007

Phase I is architecturally represented by the small, poorly constructed wall in the south of the square (CB37005). This wall abuts CB37009, a rubble fill inside the southern robbed out section of wall CB37001. CB370009 could be considered a wall if we are to extend wall CB37005 west to abut the robbed out east end of wall CB38006 or perhaps there is more of it running south into the bulk along the robbed out southern stretch of CB37001 in C3.8 SE. This will have to wait for further excavation for the answer. The LDM for the 1 under the wall is a wheelmade lamp fragment but this fill is the same as the rest of the Phase IIb fill as there was no foundation trench observed. It is unclear if wall CB37009 was in use in this phase. It is robbed out to a level below that of wall CB37005 where the two are closest, but is preserved much higher to the north.

The fill in this phase, CB37007, is an extensive rubble fill which was present from just below topsoil to the bottom of wall CB37005. It covered all of the walls except for
the top course of CB37002 which was under the topsoil. The LDM of CB37007 are a few sherds of Byzantine storage jars, but the most prevalent material is Kiln Hananya and ESA.

Phase 0
Loc: Fill CB37006

Phase 0 is the topsoil layer covering the entire square. The LDM is Ras al-Faqha. There was no architecture here.

Conclusions

CB 3.7 provides a relatively undisturbed look at the occupational sequence of another room in the northwest part of the HAB. The main architectural elements are those that date to the Hellenistic period and we might tentatively suggest that the building took on its Hellenistic character in the late 4th or early 3rd centuries BCE, all the while keeping some of the Persian elements, as we can see in the deeper founded walls which are still in use in the Hellenistic period. The excavation of 3.7 also provides us with another example of the door blocking phenomenon, something seen in previous excavation seasons with the blocking of the archive room. Nothing was found this season to contradict the previous theory that it was those people who returned to Kadeh in the late 2nd century CE who were responsible for this most interesting development. The late wall CB37005 also provides further evidence for a later, much smaller reoccupation of the site sometime in the Roman period.