Final Report
Tel Kedesh, Summer 1999
CA9.3

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The excavation of CA9.3, located in the southeastern portion of the southern half of the Tel, was undertaken in order to determine the existence, location and dating of the probable large building on the site. When the magnetometry team surveyed the site in 1998, the area occupied by CA9.3 was not tested, as it lay on the beginning of the slope and in the southeastern-most corner of the tel. The likely place for the corner of the large structure that appeared on the magnetometry readings lay in CA9.3, and so, excavation proceeded in this area.

CA9.3 was excavated for a period of 7 weeks, between May 25, 1999, and July 12, 1999. The terrain of the ten meter by ten meter area rose and fell in small hills, and elevations across the trench differed by as much as a meter. The trench had a gradual slope towards the southeast, with the Northwest corner of the trench 463.30 meters above sea level, while the Southeast corner of the trench was 461.76 meters above sea level. There were two significant points where the ground seemed to rise to form a mound, in contrast to the flatter parts of the trench. One such mound lay in the center of the northern half of the trench, while another was located in the southeastern portion of the trench, with its highest point located approximately 1.1 meters from the southern balk and 50 cm from the east balk. The southwest mound was cut by a small furrow, approximately 5 cm wide and curving in an arc 15 cm in length. The northwest corner of the trench did show a significantly higher elevation than the rest of the trench, but lacked the circular and rounded nature of the two “mounds”. Of these three topographical features, only the northwest corner was excavated, revealing a wall in the northern balk, although the connection between wall CA93001 and the topography seems largely circumstantial.

The trench was quadrated in order to clarify and understand the stratigraphy and areas were excavated down to different elevations based on their individual stratigraphic records. The Northeast Quadrant was not excavated. Only topsoil was removed in the Southeast Quadrant.
and in the eastern half of the Northwest Quadrant. The western half of the Northwest quadrant was excavated down to below the upper course of north-south wall CA93002. Topsoil and subsoil were excavated throughout the entirety of the Southwest quadrant, but no further excavation occurred in a 2.5m by 2m area in the southeast corner of this quadrant. The remainder of the Southwest quadrant was excavated down to approximately the same level, 461.75m above sea level or to the level of the structures preserved in this quadrant.

The most recent occupation of the area represented by the trench is from the modern period, and is stratigraphically evidenced by the topsoil locus CA93000. Soil is medium-dark grayish brown coarse silt of crumbly consistency. Units in the topsoil locus all contained Arab handware or other modern pottery and artifacts. This locus was either disturbed or deposited in the modern period and was not of different depths over the entirety of the trench.

Two subsoil loci lay under the topsoil, one in the north and another in the south. In the northern part of the trench, soil CA93007 is dated to the Byzantine period on the basis of African Red Slip and a number of other Byzantine and Late Roman sherd. This soil locus seems to indicate some Byzantine activity in this part of the trench that did not extend into the southern area.

The Byzantine soil locus was deposited over wall CA93001 in the North balk, an East-West structure preserved in four courses. The wall was dry laid and utilized medium-sized stones; the balk obscured further information about the construction technique. The visible preserved length of the wall was 0.97m. The wall seems to utilize wall CA93002 as a foundation and continue into the balk, suggesting that CA93001 postdates CA93002. The structure created by CA93001 remains uncertain, although it could represent a cross-wall for the building in trench CB24. Dating of this wall in also uncertain, given that it is mostly contained in the balk.
The second subsoil locus CA93008 dates to the Roman period on the basis of Kafar Hananya cookware. The soil is medium grayish brown coarse silt with small pebbles and some medium-sized rocks. Besides the modern disturbances in the topsoil, activity in this portion of the trench seems to be limited to the early Roman period. This soil locus lies over walls CA93003 and CA93004, as well as over soil loci CA93009, CA93013 and CA93017.

Beneath the subsoil locus CA93007 in the northern part of the trench is a rubble area CA93010. The locus is differentiated by other soil loci by the presence of large stones, deposited in a haphazard fashion. These stones may represent rubble from a wall not yet excavated or possibly discarded stones. The soil locus lies directly adjacent to CA93011, the robber’s trench, and is dated to approximately the same period, the late Hellenistic, on the basis of diagnostic fragments of Eastern Sigillata A. It seems possible that this locus may represent stones discarded from the robbing incident suggested by CA93011.

CA93009 is the soil fill of a robber’s trench probably cut to remove part of wall CA93003. The locus dates to the Late Hellenistic or Early Roman period on the basis of a diagnostic fragment of Hayes IV ESA. The preserved extent of wall CA93003 begins directly south of CA93011 and it is possible to suggest that the trench robbed out the northern portion of this wall. This robbing incident must postdate the use of the structure represented by CA93003 and CA93004, both of which may have been constructed in the early Hellenistic period. Spill from the robbing incident seems to fall on CA93002, suggesting that this wall was not robbed at this time, and that the robbing represented by the soil locus was solely concerned with the hypothetical extent of CA93003.

CA93013 is an area of rubble against the eastern face of wall CA93003 and CA93004. The soil in this locus was medium yellowish brown and contained stones of medium size. These
Fragment of Persian faience vessel found in the secure fill surrounding the Persian period wall. The material from this loca...
CA93005 is a pavement area directly south of and adjacent to wall CA93004. The pavement is approximately 2 meters by 1.2 meters, and demonstrates preservation in parts to at least two courses. A second, lower course can be noted beneath some of the smaller stones along the east face. The pavement is at a fairly uniform height of 462.13 meters above sea level, and appears to be made of a rubble core construction. The structure does not continue into the western balk. It is possible that the pavement represents the reuse of a wall constructed at an earlier date, but there is little evidence for this hypothesis beyond the type of construction and the possible second course. This structure directly abuts CA93004 and therefore is either contemporaneous with or postdates the construction of that wall.

Two different installations comprised CA93006 and suggest the existence of a pavement that extended over the eastern portion of the Southwest quadrant. These possible pavement areas occurred at the same elevation as CA93005, but touched neither one another nor CA93004. The first installation was located 0.20 m east of the east face of CA93005 and 3.0 m north of the South balk. The installation was comprised of two stones, one approximately 5 cm higher than the other. The stones were removed, but no datable material was found beneath them. The second installation lies 2.0 m from the south balk and 3.6 m from the west balk. This possible pavement area is comprised of 5 large stones and some smaller cobbles. No date can be suggested for either of these two pavement areas.

Directly to the east of the robber’s trench, and running into unexcavated soil is locus CA93012, a rubble pit comprised of cobble stones and soil. This locus is approximately one meter wide and was not excavated to its lowest depth. The deepest excavated point of CA93012 is located beside the east face of wall CA93002, but does not seem to touch either that wall or the soil locus representing the robber’s trench. It seems likely that it was dug into the soil adjacent to
the robbed portion of wall CA93003 prior to the robbing, and was contemporary with the use period of the wall. The material found in the test pit suggests that the pit need not be later than the Persian period.

Walls (CA93003) and (CA93004) meet to form a corner of a building of significant size. CA93003 runs north-south and utilizes CA93002 as a foundation. The wall is one meter wide and constructed using the rubble core technique, with an average stone width of 50 cm. CA93003 was robbed out in antiquity, and this episode is represented by soil locus CA93011. CA93004 is the east-west wall bonded to CA93003 and of similar construction and size.

CA93004, however, runs into the west balk, and the length of preservation remains uncertain. It may be founded in part on CA93002, but the full length of this wall does not seem to lie on a previous structure. The angle and proximity of the two walls suggests contemporaneous construction. The probable date of the robbing and the probable date of the construction and use of CA93002 can suggest a tentative date for the construction of these walls, as CA93003 and CA93004 were constructed prior to the robbing but after CA93002 went out of use. Therefore, a date of the early Hellenistic period can be suggested for these two structures. This corner may be associated with a corer of similar construction found in CB4.8, and may represent the corner of the large building predicted by the magnetometry.

CA93018 is the soil locus that may represent the primary robbing incident in the area excavated. The reuse of wall CA93002 as a foundation for CA93003 suggests that wall CA93002, probably in use during the Persian period, was robbed or dismantled. The stones from this wall may have then been reused to construct CA93003, a slightly thinner wall oriented approximately 5 degrees differently than CA93002. The soil locus located directly above and adjacent to the remaining stones of CA93003 may represent the robbing incident and the
subsequent construction of the later wall. Based on a sputterware lamp, the locus dates to the third or second century, and therefore fits into the rough chronology for the trench.

CA93009 represents a pottery filled pit in the northeast corner of the Southwest quadrant. The assemblage is predominantly Persian, although one sherd of Late Hellenistic or Early Roman Jar rim was found in the excavated area. This single sherd may represent contamination, and the pottery pit may have been established in the Persian period. This locus lies below the level of the possible pavement, CA93006, but the extent and existence of that pavement remains uncertain.

CA93019 is the soil locus formed by deposits against the Persian period wall CA93002. The pottery assemblage is uniformly Persian and earlier, suggesting that the wall need not be later than Persian. The soil excavated from this locus touched the wall, and did not lie beneath the founding level. The date provided by this material remains problematic, as the locus was not sealed.

Wall CA93002 is a north-south construction running approximately 7 meters, from the North Balk of the trench to 3 meters north of the South balk. The wall is partially obscured by unexcavated soil in the northeast, but appears to be a uniform 1.4 meters in width. The wall is of adobe core construction, and preserved to three courses in the north, but to fewer courses along the remainder of its length. The exact number of courses preserved is unknown, as the soil was not excavated to the founding level along the entire course of the wall. Based on the pottery from loci CA93019 and CA93020, the wall seems to have been constructed in the late Persian period. This hypothesis, however, comes from soil against the wall, and is therefore questionable. The wall was robbed out to construct CA93003. The date of the robbing incident remains uncertain,
though it may be tentatively placed in the early Hellenistic period, as CA93003 was subsequently robbed in the late Hellenistic period.

The soil excavated beside wall CA93002 but beneath the founding level of that wall comprises the soil locus CA93020. This pottery assemblage is predominantly preclassical, although a number of possibly Persian period diagnostics were also found in the locus. This suggests that wall CA93002 need not be later than the Persian period.

CA93021 is a locus comprised of rodent runs, animal burrows, root disturbances, cleaning paves and bulk trimmings. No significant pottery or artifacts were found in this locus.

The area of the Tel represented by the trench experienced approximately six phases of occupation. During the Persian period, wall CA93002 was constructed, and soil loci CA93019 and CA93020 were deposited. Pottery pit CA93009 may also have been deposited at this time.

During the early Hellenistic period, wall CA93002 was robbed out, as represented by CA93018, and walls CA93003 and CA93004 were constructed, as well as pavement CA93005. CA93006 may have been constructed at this time as well. Soil loci CA93014, CA93015 and CA93016 were deposited against the wall, CA93017 was deposited against the pavement, and pit CA93012 may have been constructed against CA93003.

During the late Hellenistic period or early Roman period, after the building represented by CA93003 and CA93004 went out of use, tumble CA93011 was deposited. The second robbing incident occurred when wall CA93003 was robbed, as represented by CA93011. Rocky tumble CA93010 may have also been deposited at this time. The construction of wall CA93001 may have also occurred during this phase of occupation, though such an assumption is very tentative.
The Roman period saw some activity in the Southern part of the trench, but no architectural or distinct stratigraphic features. Soil locus CA93008 was deposited. The Northern half of the trench experienced some later activity during the Byzantine period, but again, there was no architecture constructed. CA93007 was deposited.

The final phase of occupation was in the modern period, when soil locus CA93000 was deposited.