Final Report
Tel Kedesh
5/26/99 – 7/14/99
CB4.7

Amanda Leins
The 1998 magnetometry survey revealed a large building occupying the majority of the southeastern portion of Tel Kedesh. Examination of the magnetometry showed the northwest corner contained a circular area that may have been associated with a tower or other structure. For this reason, trench CB4.7 was opened in order to determine whether there was a structure of this sort associated with the building and, if not, to reveal the exterior Northwest corner.

CB4.7 measures 10 x 10 meters and is 20 meters West of the center line. The topography is highest at the northeast corner and slopes down to the south and west, approximately one meter over the 10-meter space. The only topographical feature is a roughly rectangular pit that is located along the North balk 2.1 meters from the West balk and 3.3 meters from the East balk and is 2.4 meters wide. It averages 20 centimeters in depth and is most likely a shovel probe from an earlier test season.

CB4.7 was quadrated into 5 x 5-meter sections, and excavation began with the removal of the topsoil of the southwest quadrant. Topsoil CB47000 is a homogeneous dark blackish-brown and is a very hard, dry soil with abundant roots, insect burrows, and pupating insects. The latest datable material found in all the units comprising this locus was Arabic. Initially, CB47000 included only the topsoil from the southwest quadrant, but as excavation was expanded, any other excavated units of topsoil that shared these characteristics were grouped in locus CB47000.

Immediately below CB47000 is subsoil CB47008. Overall, it is a light yellow-brown soil that is generally of a medium compaction. It dates to the Arab period due to the ceramics found in the locus. A Turkish pipe was also found in this locus. On
average, the locus is approximately 20 cm deep. Distinct deposits and architectural features begin to surface below this layer.

In order to discuss the soil loci, it is necessary to outline the architectural features with which they are associated. Loci were assigned to four walls, a rubble fill associated with the eastern wall, a plaster floor and an installation within the floor. Six of these features make one large room that occupies the majority of the excavated area, and CB47004 comprises the southern wall for another room west of the large main room.

There are three walls for this first and largest room, western wall CB47001, eastern wall CB47002, and northern wall CB47003. Rubble fill CB47005 abuts wall CB47002 at its northern limit and appears to have the same north-south orientation. These walls were in place before the plaster floor CB47006 was laid, as a small plaster lip also covers the stones of the walls. Lastly, pit installation CB47007 lies within the floor itself, sharing the same plaster matrix as floor CB47006.

While it is probable that there is a southern wall for this large room, suggested by evidence of a large upright jar within the south balk, this area has not been excavated. It should be noted that the only architectural locus not directly associated with this room, CB47004, is a wall that is also visible in the south balk and which runs east to west. If the line of this wall is continued to the east, it is likely the unexcavated jar is placed against this wall.

All four walls utilize the same pier and rubble construction. The piers are approximately 60 cms wide and 25 cms deep. They are evenly spaced and the fill is composed of small to medium rubble. The large amount of decayed mudbrick throughout the excavated area suggests that the stone walls were the foundation for pise.
wells. The width of the room also supports the hypothesis that wooden beams were used as roofing materials.

Within the room, soil locus CB47009 is made up of various soil types that appear randomly deposited. These include areas of decayed mudbrick, dark and light ash deposits, a reddish brown soil mixed with the ash which includes abundant root growth, and some bright orange hard-packed soil and the largest soil type found is a brown to brownish-grey medium silt. The LDM for the mixed soils in the room is Early Roman: a KH4A rim was found at the lowest elevations of installation CB47007. Soil locus CB47009 also completely encompasses the in situ vessels within the room (CB47020, jars one through thirteen and a Phoenician semi-fine juglet, CB47 7081). The large vessels are positioned against walls CB47001 and CB47003. Because of their fabric and shape, they are datable to the third or second century BCE. All vessels contained a moderate amount of soil fill that also dated no later than 3-2 BCE. The soil is considered part of in-situ vessels locus CB47020.

In general, the walls are in good condition and remain intact with almost no decay. There are, however, robbing episodes that occur where walls CB47001 and CB47002 meet wall CB47003, disturbances CB47010 and CB47019 respectively. In the southwest and northeast corners, the stones have been removed down to an elevation roughly equal to the plaster floor CB47006. Below disturbance CB47010 at the northwest corner, though, the stones of wall CB47007 that continue below CB47010 are large and smooth, very unlike the pier and rubble construction. These stones seem to continue below floor CB47006, as larger stones are visible through the holes in the
plaster. While there is no concrete date for these architectural features, these stones most likely signify an earlier construction upon which these features were founded.

At the southern extent of wall CB47001, there is another potential robbing episode (CB47011) where the stones of the wall are absent and only exist at the level of the plaster floor. The placement of large jar #8 on the eastern side of the opening suggests that the installation of large flat stones does not represent a threshold.

Situated in the northwest corner of the room, jars #4 and #9 and the associated Rhodian amphora immediately to their south were cut through from east to west by robber trench CB47010, and restorable fragments of these vessels were present within the fill. Two conclusions can be drawn from this evidence: the robbing episodes occurred some time after the room had been filled with soil due to the clearly defined soil changes in the north balk, and the jars did not collapse because of the intrusion but were supported by soil CB47009. This implies that CB47009 had been in place before robber trench CB47010, making CB47010 postdate the LDM for the soil within the large room. The same is also true for robber trench CB47019 in the northwest of the large room.

Located in the approximate area of the southwest corner for the large room, locus CB47011 not only includes the possible robbing of wall CB47001 but also extends west into the next room. In general, this room may be separated into two rough areas, the mudbrick deposit in the north and the mixed ashy soil to the south. Both areas begin with disturbed loci immediately below the subsoil.

In the south, disturbance CB47011 stretches from the stones of wall CB47001 that it covers to approximately 2.75 m north, covering the mudbrick deposits. It is a hard-packed light yellow brown soil at the higher elevations that is mixed with ash and a
packed brown soil at lower elevations. It contains many articulated sherds, including an amorphous and most of a Rhodian amphora. Unlike the jars in situ, these sherds are oriented horizontally, which suggested that they were part of a trash heap. While the Rhodian amphora and amorphous date to the occupation period around the second century BCE, they were most likely redeposited at the earliest during the Early Roman period due to the presence of KJ44A within the ceramic assemblage. This makes locus CB47011 roughly contemporaneous with disturbances CB47010 and CB47019.

The leading northern edge of CB47011 partially covers CB47012, an area of disturbed pink mudbrick in the north of the west room. Where the two areas appear to merge, there is a softer brownish pink that may be decayed mudbrick or evidence of disturbance. There are large chunks of mudbrick that run throughout this locus as well as small rocks and some medium-sized rubble, perhaps from walls CB47001 and CB47003.

The LDM for CB47012 is 150-100 BCE due to the presence of ESA.

Immediately below this disturbed mudbrick are rubble layers CB47013 and CB47014. CB47013 is composed of small- to medium-sized rubble and stretches along nearly all of the entire north-south length, and sometimes stretches from wall CB47001 to the west wall, particularly in the south. CB47013 is immediately below disturbance CB47011. The LDM for CB47013 is Roman cookware, which raises the date of the disturbed pink mudbrick CB47012 as Roman also.

CB47014 is also made of small- to medium-sized rubble with the addition of small plaster fragments. It rests directly against the northwest face of wall CB47001 and is approximately 30 cms deep and 15 cms wide. CB47014 is Hellenistic and contains a
very fine base of an impressed BSP bowl. CB47013 initially covered CB47014 and thin brownish silt less than 1 cm thick separated them.

Beneath these layers of rubble lie the undisturbed soils that contain the amphoriskoi deposits CB47016 in the south and the bullae deposit CB47017 in the north. CB47016 begins at 465.34, 11 cms higher than CB47017. No floor for this room has been excavated as yet.

The amphoriskoi deposit CB47016 is a mixed brownish-grey and ash that becomes a dark greyish-brown with little change almost immediately. The deposit slopes from its highest point at the south balk to the north, where it covers CB47017 and CB47017.1. The soil consistency is coarse silt and feels mealy to the touch. The soil surface was between 3 and 8 cms deep before the actual amphoriskoi were uncovered. The deposit is at least two courses deep in the south while the northern limits are only one course. In the north of this deposit, the largest vessel measuring approximately 40 cms was uncovered. The ceramic assemblage also includes some imported Italian finewares. The LDM is no later than 2 BCE.

The bullae deposit CB47017 is most likely associated with the amphoriskos deposit as some seals are found within the ashy soil where the two loci meet. The soil matrix in general is a bright pink mudbrick at the highest elevation, which becomes a slightly sandy medium brown and then slightly ashy. The lowest elevations return to a more compacted medium-brown. CB47017 is no more than 21 cms deep at any point. It is covered by CB47016 at its southern edge and meets robber trench CB47010 at its northeast corner. It also abuts wall CB47001 and the west balk. The majority of the 1,832 seals are concentrated against the west balk approximately 2.4 m from the north
balk. They are found in limited quantities throughout the soil, with a small concentration at the northeast corner of the locus against the north balk. The seals from range in size from 50 cms to 2 cms in length and are made of unfired clay. Most have figural motifs and some have writing. While the impressions are largely Hellenistic motifs, some show Phoenician influence through the epigraphy and representations of the goddess Tanit.

A large assortment of imported ceramics was associated with deposit CB47017, including one rim of Roman cookware. This sherd was found in CB4 7.135, the removal of the arbitrary section unit created to keep the deposits of amphoriskoi and bullae separate. It is entirely possible that this Roman material is associated with the disturbances of CB47011, CB47013 or CB47012. No other late material has been found in these deposits. If the Roman cookware were to be disregarded, the LDM for both the amphoriskoi and bullae deposits would be 2 BCE. CB47017.1, the soil fill below the bullae deposit, had a ceramic assemblage like that of CB47017 that included a large number of restorable vessels and imported pieces where nothing was datable later than 2 BCE.

There are seven phases for the excavated areas of CB4.7. The latest phase dates to the modern and Archaic period represented by topsoil CB47006 and subsoil CB47008. Next, there is evidence of some Byzantine activity in the northeast based on several sherds in CB47018. These are physically close to wall CB47002 and disturbance CB47019, which may account for their presence. Because of their relatively small quantity, it is difficult to determine the extent of Byzantine activity on this site.

The third phase includes disturbed areas CB47011, CB47012, CB47019, and rubble area CB47005 and postdates the Early Roman period, which is the fourth phase.
After the large room was filled with soil (CB47009, LDM 50 BCE), these robber pits were dug into the room, cutting through the large jars #4 and #9 and the handle of Rhodian amphora #10 while leaving the jars themselves in place. Therefore, it is logical to believe that the robbing episodes of CB47011, CB47012, CB47019 and CB47005 occurred later than the Early Roman soil deposits CB47009, CB47012, CB47013 and CB47014.

Phase five encompasses the amphoriskoi deposit CB47016 and bullae deposit CB47017. The objects themselves were fabricated during the period of occupation. It seems likely that the amphoriskoi fell from their storage place above wall CB47004 and, while still whole, settled downwards after the abandonment or possible destruction. Since no floor for this room has been exposed, it may only be assumed that these fills postdate the occupation phase but predate the Early Roman phase immediately above them.

CB47020 comprises phase six, the occupation phase. Both the jars and the Rhodian amphorae date to 2 BCE, but the small Phoenician Semi-fine juglet dates to the second half of the second century BCE. This would place the date of the jars at approximately the last period of use around the date of the possible destruction.

The seventh and final phase is the construction of the architectural features. Because these features were not excavated, it is only possible to ascertain that they predate the occupation phase, although neither an exact date nor relative dating for the features may be determined at this time. It is logical to assume that the walls date to the same time because of similar pier and rubble construction technique. Likewise, plaster floor CB47006 and installation CB47007 share the same plaster matrix and were surfaced.
at the same time. Holes through the plaster floor reveal the presence of large stones. This implies that there is an earlier surface underneath. These stones are similar to the stones left under disturbance CB47010, which appear to continue beneath the plaster floor.

CB4-7 did not reveal the large tower that the magnetometry suggested nor did it reveal the exterior northwest corner of the large building. The corner is located in CB4-8, and North wall CB47003 appears to be oriented on the same line as the north wall in CB4-8. Two rooms were identified within CB4-7. The large room contained massive storage jars of a local fabric as well as imported Rhodian amphorae and the western room contained smaller vessels associated with the production of unguents as well as a great number of bullae. The presence of both imported and local materials together with the bullae does suggest that Kedesh was indeed a bureaucratic center during the Hellenistic period.