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In memory of
Professor Ephraim Stern (1934–2018), Director of the Tel Dor Excavations
1980–2000
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CHAPTER 5
THE “PITHOI ROOM”: AH–AI/33—PHASES 5–10
Allen Estes and Jeffrey R. Zorn

Excavated by:
AH/33  Richard Lindstrom (1988)
        Cheryl Bowden (1991)
        Stephanie Rose (1993)
        Margaret Streubel (1997)
        Nati Kranot (2000)
AI/33  Richard Lindstrom (1988)
       Cheryl Bowden (1991)
       Stephanie Rose (1993)
       Margaret Streubel (1997)
       Nati Kranot (2000)
AH/34  Richard Lindstrom (1988)
       Cheryl Bowden (1991)
       Stephanie Rose (1993)
       Margaret Streubel (1997)
       Nati Kranot (2000)

Supervised by:
Nati Kranot (2000)

Directed by:
Andrew Stewart on behalf of UC Berkeley
Jeffery R. Zorn on behalf of Cornell University
(1997–1999)

INTRODUCTION
This chapter deals with the unit denoted the “pithoi room”, west of “Cheryl’s room”, located primarily in the western half of AH/33, with elements continuing into AI/33, AI/34 and AH/34. One doorway was found through the southern wall, but the area south of that wall was never excavated. The four walls of this room were in continuous use, with rebuilds, throughout Phases 6–9. Excavation stopped at what seems to be the top of a Phase 10 wall (so thought because it would bisect the Phase 9 room into unusable small spaces), but before the base of the Phase 9 walls could be seen. All of these walls and associated floors will be analyzed together, since they present a coherent stratigraphic sequence.

Because the base of Phase 9 could not be identified with certainty and no connections to floor-wall sequences in adjoining rooms could be established, the sequence of stages and phases here is somewhat tentative. On the other hand, the discovery of what seems to be a destruction deposit on one floor that accords reasonably well with similar destruction floors in AI/31–32, and that sits atop the bisecting wall mentioned above, suggests that excavation did reach Phase 9 and that the proposed sequence of wall-floor stages presented below is tenable.

The Phase 9 destruction deposit is especially noteworthy because of the fragments of two huge Cypriot-style (but locally produced) pithoi that were recovered, among other material. Together, these vessels filled much of the room’s internal space. Also of note is the mudbrick platform, L9827, of stage viii/Phase 6b and the odd mix of materials found on top of it. Finally, this unit preserved a few scrappy walls belonging to the very fragmentary Phase 5.

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* pottery assemblage in Pls. 20.35–20.36
WALL AND FLOOR STAGES

Wall Descriptions

W9702 (top #15.47, base #15.09) is a short 45 cm-wide fieldstone wall, preserved three courses high, that runs north–south in AH/33 (Figs. 5.1–5.3). It was situated offset westwards alongside of the lower W9266 (Fig. 5.2). W9675 is a short, east–west 50 cm-wide fieldstone wall, preserved four courses high, that ran perpendicular to W9702 at the same level (top #15.82, base #15.32; Figs. 5.1–5.3). Although the walls W9675 ≡ (? W9702 do not actually meet, they could have made a corner (Fig. 5.3). The alternative scenario—that W9702 cuts W9675—would add a stratigraphic phase nowhere else encountered and still not explain why W9675 does not continue past W9702. W9675 did not reach W9684 to the west. The latter wall goes much deeper and so was definitely built earlier, but is preserved to #15.58 and so conceivably might have been in use with W9675. The problem with defining the relations of W9675 is that when discovered, it was covered by rubble; when the rubble was removed, portions of the wall may also have been removed. In as much as W9702 post-dates W9266, it is later than the Courtyard House and therefore, is provisionally assigned to Phase 5. Both W9702 and W9675 float above F9828 (#15.15), which is the last Phase 6 floor here.

The four walls that form the limits of the “pithoi room” continued from Phases 9 to 6 (see Figs. 5.6–5.7). Of these, the most prominent is north–south W9266, which defines the eastern side of the room (Figs. 5.4–5.5). It stands nearly two meters high (#15.45–13.48) and 45 cm wide, although the bottom of the wall had not been reached. Two construction stages were identified in this wall. The upper stage (W9266a) consists of roughly three courses of small- to medium-sized fieldstones (20–40 cm in height) and is approximately one meter high. These courses sit on top of at least three courses of large boulders (ca. #14.50, 70–80 cm; W9266b) (Figs. 5.4–5.5, 5.11). W9266a–b abuts W9211 = W9825. W9266a either abuts or dovetails with W9729a and W9266b either abuts or dovetails with W9729b; because W9729 was beneath a balk, the exact relationship is not clear. Because little of W9729c was excavated, its relationship to W9266 is also not clear.

The north–south wall that forms the western limit of the room is W9684, which, like W9266, was well preserved to over 2.5 m in height (#15.58–12.90; Figs. 5.6–5.10) and was ca. 50 cm wide. Like W9266, two construction stages were observed. The upper stage consists of four courses of small- to medium-sized fieldstones (W9684a). At about #14.40 (similar to the height in W9266), was the top of a lower stage made up of larger boulders (W9684b); W9684a abutted W9211 = W9825, and W9729a; W9684b abutted W9211 = W9825 and W9729b;
not enough of W9729c was excavated to clarify its relation to W9684b.

W9211 = W9825 marks the northern limit of the room (Figs. 5.8–5.9). It was preserved to a height of at least 1.3 m (top #14.44, lowest elevation reached: #13.11) and was at least 70 cm wide. It was constructed of small fieldstones that resemble the upper stages of W9266 and W9684. A large boulder with a hole, which might have been a weight for an olive press, was found in later debris above the wall (Fig. 5.9). Unlike the north–south walls, no lower phase of large boulders was encountered, although the bottom of this wall was not reached. In AI/33, W9211 was determined to have been constructed on top of W18516 (the latter being distinguished by a southwards offset). Because excavation in AH/33 did not go much below the floor of Phase 9, it is unknown whether W18516 also continued to the east of W9684. If the aforementioned offset did not exist east of W9684, it is also possible that the difference between the two construction stages was simply not noticed.
W9729 is the southern wall of the room (Figs. 5.10–5.11, 5.27, see Fig. 5.14 for a schematic cross-section of W9729 and its relation to floors in this room). It was exposed to a height of approximately 1.5 m (#15.02–13.49; see Fig. 5.21). Its total width could not be determined because it lay partially beneath unexcavated late W9096, but it was at least 45 cm wide. Three constructional stages were identified. The upper stage, W9729a (ca. #15.00–14.00), consisted of five courses of small- to medium-sized fieldstones. In this stage of the wall, a doorway was observed in the southwestern corner of the room. The lower stage, W9729b (ca. #14.00–13.40), was built of mudbricks which, although some mortar lines were visible, were not clearly defined. A section of fieldstones formed the eastern end of W9729b at the point where it abutted W9266 (Fig. 5.11). Below W9729b was another mudbrick stage, W9729c (ca. #13.40–13.06 when excavation ceased). W9729c extended north at least 50 cm beyond the face of W9729b. Because there was no excavation south of
W9729, it is unknown if W9729c was wider than W9729a-b, or if it was simply offset more to the north. The bottom of W9729c was not reached. W9729c seems to be on roughly the same line as Phase 10a W18514, west of W9684 and it might have originally been constructed in this phase. Note that in “Doreen’s room”, west of W9684, only one (stone) phase was observed for W9729 (Chapter 10; cf., Chapter 3). This probably corresponds to W9729a here. Beneath that was W9262, which had two occupation phases and four constructional sub-phases (W9262 a+b and W9262 c+d), each consisting of mudbrick on top of a rubble socle. These most likely correspond to W9729b and W9729c here, respectively.

W9845 was a one-meter-long wall built up against the western face of W9266 in Phase 6b that stopped just short of reaching W9729 (Fig. 5.12). It stood approximately 30 cm high (#14.25–13.93) and 30 cm wide, constructed of small- to medium-sized fieldstones. Since W9845 appeared to have no structural purpose, it might have been a bench; F9876 reached W9845.

The top of a fieldstone wall, W18577, encountered at the end of the 2000 excavation season at an elevation of #13.26–13.09, was at least 50 cm wide. It appeared to go below W9825 (Figs. 5.8, 5.13), although excavation was halted before this could be verified; it is attributed to Phase 10a. W18577 lies about midway between W9266 and W9684, which are Phase 9 and later constructions, and the spaces created by these walls with W18577 are too small to be functional. W18577 is also oriented the same as Phase 10a W18515 west of W9684, suggesting that they are contemporary.

Thus, the wall sequence in this unit can be reconstructed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wall</th>
<th>Correspondence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W9702 ≡ W9675</td>
<td>Y/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9845 ≡ (?)(W9266a ≡ W9729a ≡ W9684a)</td>
<td>Y/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9266b ≡ W9729b ≡ W9684b</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9729c</td>
<td>W9211 = 9825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W9266</td>
<td>W18577</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phasing of Floors in AH–AI/33

The uppermost floor inside the “pithoi room” was F9828 = F9687 (#15.17–15.02; stage vii) which can be assigned to Phase 6a (Fig. 5.14). It is most likely a resurfacing of F9693 (#14.96–14.86; stage viii). These floors belong to Phase 6a, the highest Iron Age floor inside this room (Table 5.1)

A gap of more than 80 cm separates the floor of stage viii and the next floor down, related to stage ix (F9817 = F9876 = F9827 at #14.02–13.97), which is the only floor associated with bench W9845 and mudbrick platform L9827. This floor also reached W9729a at the bottom of its upper fieldstone stage, and covered the top of the lower mudbrick stage of the wall. The floor is assigned to Phase 6b and it could correspond to “Cheryl’s floor” (F9657) east of W9266.

F9937 and F9994 of stage x are associated with W9729b and represent the raising of floor levels in Phase 7. F18552 of stage xi reached the base of W9729b and is the earliest Phase 7 floor. It appeared just at the top of the mudbricks of W9729c, whose face extends 50 cm north beyond W9729b.

F18563 of stage xii is Phase 8 in the “pithoi room”. This floor sealed the destruction layer of Phase 9 and was associated with W9729c.

F18570, the floor on which the destruction layer was sitting, represents stage xiii (= Phase 9). It too is associated with W9729c.

No floors were assigned to W18577 of stage xiv that represents the earliest construction in this space, attributed to Phase 10a.

DISCUSSION OF PHASES AND STAGES

Phase 5/6? (Stage vi)

stage vi W9702 ≡ W9675 ≡? W9684a ≡? W9266a (wall fragments)

See above for the detailed description of these walls. W9675 and W9702 are clearly late foundations, as their bases are above any Iron Age floors. The tops of W9684 and W9266 are preserved to about the same elevation as W9675 and W9702 and it is possible that they continued in use all the way through the end of the Iron Age (Phase 5). No floors related to
Phase 5 were identified. Various loci described as brown soil or the like were at about the same elevation as these walls and seem to be different from the looser, grayer debris of Phases 3 and later. These loci include L9298, L9631, L9638, L9665, L9666, L9674, L9700, L9711 and L9769.

Phase 6a (Stages vii–viii)

stage vii W9266a ≡ W9211 = W9825 ≡ W9684a ≡ W9729a ≡ F9828 = F9687 (resurfacing, uppermost Iron Age IIA floor)

F9828 (#15.17–15.13; Fig. 5.17) was a floor fragment that was covered by the later walls W9675 and W9702. The floor consisted of at least four resurfacings of beaten earth, ash and lime. A large quantity of pottery was recovered from above the floor, including a complete amphora embedded into the floor itself. Persian period pottery found in the locus may indicate that Phase 4 pit L9753, which apparently cut the floor on the north, contaminated L9828. F9828 reached the upper stages of W9266a and W9684a.

F9687 (#15.02) was a small floor fragment south of F9828, measuring about 30 cm across. Comparable elevations and makeup suggest that F9687 was a remnant of the southern extension of F9828. Like F9828, F9687 was a beaten-earth and ash surface and exhibited some possible contamination from disturbances associated with the numerous Persian pits in the area; one Attic sherd was found there.

stage viii W9266a ≡ W9211 = W9825 ≡ W9684a ≡ W9729a ≡ F9693 (resurfacing, uppermost Iron Age IIA floor)

F9693 (#14.96–14.86) was a fragmentary floor made of crushed kurkar, found below F9828 = F9687, which might have been a resurfacing of this earlier stage. No other relations were observed due to its fragmentary nature, but its elevation indicates that it would likely have reached W9266a, W9684a and W9729a.

Phase 6b (Stage ix)

stage ix W9266b ≡ W9211 = W9825 ≡ W9684b ≡ W9729a ≡ W9845 ≡ L9827 = F9876 = F9817 = F9827

F9876 = F9817 = F9827 (#14.02–13.97; Fig. 5.18) consisted of a layer of hard-packed ashy beaten earth together with crushed kurkar. F9817 reached W9266b and probably also W9684b, although the excavators had difficulty in assessing this relation. F9876 appears to have been the northern extension of F9817. It reached W9266b, W9211 = W9825 and W9684b. The entire floor was fragmentary and patchy, so that the floor makeup and fill (L9937) below F9876 = F9817 was unsealed. F9876 = F9817 apparently also reached bench W9845. It reached W9729a and so would have covered the top of the lower mudbrick stage of the wall (W9729b).

L9827 (#14.15–14.11) was a shallow platform constructed of two courses of mudbricks laid flat. At least 10 individual mudbricks were observed in situ, covered in part by a clayey ash layer as much as 5 cm thick. A pile of beach sand and shells was also found lying on the surface of the mudbricks, along with pottery, bone, charcoal and groundstones, among other materials. Sherds of restorable ceramic vessels were found in L9734 and L9759 above. The platform sits on F9827 (= F9817) below. The mudbrick platform had some sort of relationship with bench W9845, against which it was built.

Phase 7 (Stages ix–x)

stage ix W9266b ≡ W9211 = W9825 ≡ W9684b ≡ W9729b ≡ F9937 ≡ F9994 (Iron I resurfacings)

F9937 (#13.69–13.61; Fig. 5.20) was an undulating, fragmentary crushed-kurkar floor with a minimum of three resurfacings. Concentrations of pottery, bone and
oven fragments were found above the floor. Because of the fragmentary nature of the floor, it did not seal L9994 below. F9937 was found to clearly reach W9684b, but it probably also reached W9211 = W9825, W9266b and the earlier (mudbrick) stage of W9729b as well.

F9994 (#13.50; Fig. 5.21) is another fragmentary crushed-kurkar floor. Although L9937 was at a higher level than L9994, F9937 did not physically cover the patch of F9994, since it was located primarily in the northern and western portions of the room, while F9994 was located along the eastern edge of the room, adjacent to W9266. For these reasons, it is possible that F9937 = F9994, with F9937 being a later resurfacing of F9994. F9994 reached W9266b and W9729b.

F18552 (#13.48–13.32; Figs. 5.22–5.23) is a fragmentary white ashy floor consisting of a number of resurfacings that were noted throughout the locus usually as thin white ashy patches, some as much as 2–3 cm thick. F18552 reached W9266b, W9684b and W9729b. At the juncture of W9729b and F18552, there appeared to be a mudbrick step or low shelf, which extended out from the face of the mudbrick wall (Fig. 5.23). This is the top of stage c of W9729, which the floor appeared to reach and probably covered.

Phase 8 (Stage xii)

F18563 (#13.40–13.25; Fig. 5.25–5.26) is a white ashy floor laid over a layer of crushed kurkar; it was much better preserved than F18552 above it. F18563 reached W9211 = W9825 in the north and W9266b in the east. No certain
relations were observed between this floor and the other walls of the room, but it is at a lower elevation than the top of W9729c, suggesting that it probably reached it. F18563 sealed an orange-colored material, which may be the top of the Phase 9 destruction layer encountered in the units to the southwest of this room (AI/31–32).

**Phase 9 (Stage xii)**

\[ \text{stage xii: W9266b} \equiv \text{W9211} \equiv \text{W9825} \equiv \text{W9684b} \equiv \text{W9729c} \equiv \text{F18570 (destruction layer on floor)} \]

F18570 (#13.06; Figs. 5.13, 5.28) was a thin white ashy floor that was covered by a 20 cm-thick burnt layer, which was sealed by Phase 8 F18563. This deposit was characterized by orange-colored soils, ash and charcoal. When excavated, it was unclear whether this represented more of the Phase 9 destruction layer or was a large pit, since the dark gray ashy...
fragments for restoration (Pls. 20.35–20.36). The lower stage of W9729c was wider at this level, but the face of the wall was difficult to define, perhaps due to fire damage. While it could not be traced with certainty to any walls, F18570 most likely reached W9266b and W9684b. It might have reached W9211 = W9825, unless Phase 9 W18516, found below W9211 west of W9684, continued below W9211 = W9825 here as well; in that case, a relation to W18516 would be more likely. Its relations to W18577 and W9729c are also unclear. If the floor were relatively level, it would likely have reached these walls. If it was lower in the center and sloped up at either end, it would have covered these walls. Due to the similarity in alignment of W18577 and W9729c with Phase 10a walls to the west of W9684, it is more likely that F18570 covered these walls.

Phase 10a (Stage xiv)

stage xiv W18577 ≡ W9729c

See above for the description of these walls. No floors could be associated with them.
THE "PITHOI ROOM": AH–AI/33—PHASES 5–10

Fig. 5.29. Locus genealogy for AH–AI/33. (d09Z3-1279)