The excavations conducted by Avraham Biran at Tel Dan between 1966 and 1999 exposed extensive Early Iron Age levels with a total expanse of circa 1200 m², making it one of the largest exposures from this period in the southern Levant (Biran 1994; Ilan 1999). The size of this exposure, the existence of three successive strata (VI, V, and IVB) and the wealth of the material culture—prosaic as it is—destroyed in successive destructions, makes the Iron I strata of Tel Dan amenable to straightforward spatial and quantitative analysis. This paper summarizes some of the results of this analysis, particularly those conclusions that impact on the subjects of family organization, economic behavior, and political structure at Early Iron Age Tel Dan. The patterns discerned at Early Iron Age Tel Dan and the interpretation of these patterns may provide useful guidelines for the interpretation of other domestic assemblages.

I shall refrain from an extensive recounting of the theoretical background that informs the interpretations offered here, and simply remark that several key sources provide this background: Wilk and Rathje’s seminal framework for the parameters of household archaeology (e.g., 1982); Bourdieu’s concept of habitus (e.g., 1977); and Gidden’s concept of “structuration” (e.g., 1979). These (and others) will be referenced further in the conclusions where relevant. Needless to say, these programmatic works have influenced most serious research in the sub-discipline of household archaeology; I do not claim to be breaking ground in this respect. Rather, the emphasis here is placed on some specifics encountered in the archaeological record at Tel Dan that may be of use to future researchers. I begin with a contextual description of the material and follow with a series of generalizing observations.

The Iron I Levels of Tel Dan: Stratigraphic and Chronological Background

Each of the Iron I strata (VI, V, IVB) shows a general homogeneity in architecture and material culture, though there are some processual
differences (expressed schematically in Ilan 1999: Table 3.1). Though Iron I remains were recovered in all the excavated fields (Fig. 1), only Areas B, M, and Y were excavated to the extent that warrants detailed discussion (the fragmentary remains of Areas A, H, and T are described only briefly in Ilan 1999). The total exposure in these areas is 945 m² in Stratum VI, 1105 m² in Stratum V, and 1210 m² in Stratum IVB. Area B has by far the largest exposure: 825 m² in Stratum VI, 950 m² in Stratum V, and 1025 m² in Stratum IVB. The following is a distilled description of the remains by stratum.

**Stratum VIIA**

This level comprises the ephemeral remains of what might be called the transition between the Late Bronze and Iron I Ages. Its remains are cut by the Stratum VI pits and disturbed by Stratum V floors and buildings (Fig. 2). This means that there are no undeniably “clean” contexts. In general, the associated pottery appears to be largely made up of LB forms with some foreshadowing of Iron I types, but since there are no complete pottery vessels that can be attributed to it with certainty, we are never sure whether the horizon is a mixture of assemblages from two sequential occupations or a single independent one. Hence, though it exists for certain, little can be said about it.

**Stratum VI (Fig. 3)**

The dominant features of this stratum are its pits, 45 of which have been counted (not including Area T). Based on the literature, and some hints from the Tel Dan remains, I have accepted the thesis that they are mainly grain pits (Ilan 2008), though some would suggest that many are compost pits (Schloen 2001: 340–342). Some of the old LB architecture was reused and some of the newly constructed buildings in Areas B and Y appear to date to this stratum. Most of Area B-west is a field of grain pits, with an extent of perhaps 500 m², which lies between widely spaced buildings. In Area B-east, where much of the area’s architecture was located, only four pits were discerned. One of these (Pit 336) appears to have contained carbonized grain, which together with Pit 3004 in Area Y, are the only examples of Iron I pits