

A PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE 1990 SEASON
AT TEL GEZER: EXCAVATIONS OF THE "OUTER WALL"
AND THE "SOLOMONIC" GATEWAY
(JULY 2 TO AUGUST 10, 1990)

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During the summer of 1990, Andrews University, the University of Arizona, and Hebrew Union College cosponsored an archaeological excavation at Tel Gezer (see **Plates 1 and 2**).¹ The staff and work force of 39 archaeologists, students, and interested laypersons came from Andrews University and the University of Arizona (**Plate 3**).²

1. *Objectives and Methodology*

The major objectives of the 1990 season were to resolve the continuing controversy over the dates of the Outer Wall and the Solomonic Gate (**Plates 4 and 5**).³ Earlier excavators at Gezer assigned the former to the Late Bronze Age II (ca. 1400-1200 B.C.) and

¹The excavation was conducted in affiliation with the American Schools of Oriental Research and the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research. Financial support was provided by the sponsoring institutions, volunteer participation fees, and generous private donations—including the Endowment for Biblical Research.

²William G. Dever served as Senior Project Director; Randall W. Younker as Associate Director.

³See A. Kempinski, "Review of *Gezer I*," *IEJ* 22 (1972): 183-186; W. G. Dever, "The Gezer Fortifications and the 'High Place': An Illustration of Stratigraphic Methods and Problems," *PEQ* 105 (1973): 61-68; A. Kempinski, "Review of *Gezer II*," *IEJ* 23 (1973): 210-214; K. Kenyon, "Review of *Gezer II*," *PEQ* 109 (1977): 55-58; I. Finkelstein, "The Date of Gezer's Outer Wall," *Tel Aviv* (hereafter cited as *TA*) 8 (1981): 136-145; A. Zertal, "The Gates of Gezer," *Eretz Israel* 15 (1981): 222-228; W. G. Dever, "The Late Bronze, Iron Age, and Hellenistic Defenses at Gezer," *JJS* 33 (1982): 19-34; S. Bunimovitz, "Glacis 10014 and Gezer's Late Bronze Age Fortifications," *TA* 10 (1983): 61-70; W. G. Dever, "Gezer Revisited: New Excavations of the Solomonic and Assyrian Period Defenses," *BA* 47 (1984): 206-218; W. G. Dever, "Late Bronze Age and Solomonic Defenses at Gezer: New Evidence," *BASOR*, No. 262 (1986): 9-34; G. J.

the latter to the Iron IIA period (second half of the 10th century B.C.). Meanwhile, recent critics have argued that both features were more likely built *after* the time of Solomon—perhaps in the 9th century B.C. or even later. Accurate dating of these well-known architectural features is important because they, and their associated pottery, are generally used as chronological referents for dating similar architectural features and ceramics at other sites and for reconstructing vital periods in biblical history. A secondary objective was to check Macalister's date for the so-called "Egyptian Governor's Residency," generally presumed to have been built during the Late Bronze II period, although recent studies have proposed an earlier date in the Middle, or even Early, Bronze Age (Plate 6 and see below).⁴

In order to reach the objectives, it was decided to: (1) deepen the 1984 soundings⁵ in the Solomon Gate and the adjoining "Palace 10,000" (Field III) so as to penetrate into the preceding strata below their founding levels and thus determine their date and construction technique; (2) re-excavate and date Macalister's monumental "Egyptian Governor's Residency" (also described as a "Canaanite Castle"), and to see if it connected with the nearby Outer Wall along the northern perimeter of the tell; and (3) locate and excavate new sections of the Outer Wall in the hope of finding datable interior living surfaces. The latter two features were located in a newly opened field designated as Field XI.

Wightman, "The Myth of Solomon," *BASOR*, No. 277/278 (1990): 5-22; J. S. Holladay, "Red Slip, Burnish, and the Solomon Gate at Gezer," *BASOR*, No. 277/278 (1990): 23-70; D. Ussishkin, "Notes on Megiddo, Gezer, Ashdod, and Tel Batash in the Tenth to Ninth Centuries B.C.," *BASOR*, No. 277/278 (1990): 71-91; L. Stager, "Shemer's Estate," *BASOR*, No. 277/278 (1990): 93-107; I. Finkelstein, "On Archaeological Methods and Historical Considerations: Iron Age II Gezer and Samaria," *BASOR*, No. 277/278 (1990): 109-119; W. G. Dever, "Of Myths and Methods," *BASOR*, No. 277/278 (1990): 121-130.

⁴For the Late Bronze Age dating of the "Egyptian Governor's Residency" at Gezer, see R. A. S. Macalister, "Fourteenth Quarterly Report on the Excavation of Gezer," *PEFQS* (1907): 184-204; R. A. S. Macalister, *Gezer I* (London, 1912), pp. 206-208; I. Singer, "An Egyptian 'Governor's Residency' at Gezer?" *TA* 13 (1986): 26-31. For Middle and Early Bronze Age datings for this structure, see A. M. Maeir, "Remarks on a Supposed 'Egyptian Residency' at Gezer," *TA* 15-16 (1988-1989): 65-67; S. Bunimovitz, "An Egyptian 'Governor's Residency' at Gezer?—Another Suggestion," *TA* 15-16 (1988-1989): 68-76.

⁵See Dever, "Gezer Revisited" and Dever, "Late Bronze Age" for reports of the 1984 season.

2. *Results in Field III*⁶

The Solomonic Gate

Just west of the gate area in Field III a number of soundings were conducted along the line of north-south section *a-a'* (**Plate 5**). These soundings, which penetrated as much as 2.5 m. below the founding levels of the guard rooms of "Palace 10,000" and the lane west of the gate, showed that both the casemate wall and the gate had been constructed on "built-up foundations" as Ussishkin had proposed, rather than being trench-built as Yadin had maintained.⁷ The whole area had been levelled off, then raised as much as 1.5 m. with backfilled, fresh mudbrick destruction debris containing large chunks of charred beams and high quality wet-smoothed plaster (**Plate 7**). It is possible that this backfilled destruction debris could be from the Egyptian destruction mentioned in 1 Kgs 9:15-17. Terrace-like "core walls," similar to what was found below the street level in the outer gatehouse in 1984 (**Plate 8**), had been incorporated into the fill to stabilize it. The gate and casemate foundations were laid directly above the fill with large, roughly dressed boulders (**Plate 9**). Additional layers of fill were then added, burying the face of the wall by nearly a meter. The first use-surfaces were then laid down.

The pottery from these fills was carefully examined, and statistical records of all red-slipped and red hand-burnished wares were made; red slip was plentiful, but red hand-burnish was rare, and red wheel-burnished ware was totally absent. Following ceramic conventions that have been generally accepted until recently, the fills, and thus the initial construction of the upper gate and casemate wall, should be dated to the mid-10th century B.C.⁸

⁶William G. Dever was the Field Supervisor of Field III. Area Supervisors included Elliot Greenberg, Jimmy Hardin, Nick Kronwall, Lisa Marsio, and Hiroaki Watanabe. Volunteers included Kerry Adams, Andrea Smith, Crystal Green, Leontine Greenberg, Vicki Heisman, Howard Krug, Randal Jennings, Richard Lambeth, Peter Love, Sean McLachlan, Elaine Nailing, Vivian Oxman, Terry Reed, Yvonne Scott, and Thio Voilquin. The results of Field III, as presented in this article, are based on the field summary provided to the author by Dever.

⁷See D. Ussishkin, "Was the 'Solomonic' City Gate at Megiddo Built by King Solomon?," *BASOR*, No. 239 (1980): 1-18; Y. Yadin, "A Rejoinder," *BASOR*, No. 239 (1980): 19-23.

⁸The tendency on the part of some archaeologists to date red-slipped wares to the 9th century B.C. is largely the result of Kenyon's excavations at Samaria. She found red-slipped wares at Samaria in fills under the first buildings but dated them to the

“Palace 10,000”

The 1984 excavation of “Palace 10,000,” located just west of the Solomonic Gate, indicated that it was constructed in the mid-to-late 10th century B.C. (Plate 5). That date was derived from the combination of red-slipped and red hand-burnished vessels found on its floors. This season’s excavation established that “Palace 10,000” was actually secondary to the gate and casemate wall. It was founded above two earlier surfaces that were clearly related to the gate and casemate wall. That arrangement perfectly parallels the stratigraphic picture of the nearby two-entryway outer gatehouse, which 1984 excavations indicate was added to the upper gate at the third street level. The addition immediately preceded a major destruction that most likely should be attributed to Pharaoh Shishak (ca. 926 B.C.).

The Casemate Wall

The later history of Field III was elucidated by excavation inside the first casemate west of the upper gate (Plate 5). The bottom of the sounding revealed a thick layer of mudbrick destruction debris, with charcoal chunks and some restorable pottery overlying the original cobblestone and beaten earth floors. The date of this destruction is identical to that encountered in the upper gate and probably also should be attributed to Shishak.

9th century since she believed there was no occupation of the site prior to ca. 880 B.C., when Omri established his capital there. Stager, however, has convincingly shown that, contra Kenyon, there is clear evidence, both historical and archaeological (e.g., winepresses), for a considerable and lengthy occupation of Samaria prior to the commencement of Omri’s building project. It is logical to assume that the inhabitants of the site during this time (who were heavily engaged in an intensive wine production industry) would have left a considerable pottery record of their activities, and that is exactly what the pottery from Pottery Periods 1 and 2 (pre-Building) indicates.

An important point is that the pottery under the building floors at Samaria included hand- and wheel-burnished red-slipped wares. Holladay, however, has recently shown that *unburnished* red-slipped ware *precedes* hand- and wheel-burnished stratigraphically, showing that the former must be clearly dated earlier than the latter. Since the four-entryway gate at Gezer was founded on fills which contained unburnished red-slipped ware (and some hand-burnished), but no wheel-burnished, it is reasonable to conclude that the gate was initially constructed sometime prior to the founding of Samaria. A date in the latter part of the 10th century B.C., therefore, is not at all unreasonable. Historical considerations based on biblical and Egyptian sources make the time of Solomon the most logical period. See Stager, pp. 93-107, and Holladay, pp. 23-70, for full discussions.

Above this destruction level was a later layer of destruction debris nearly 2 m. thick. This layer already had been partially excavated in 1984, resulting in the recovery of over one hundred clay loom weights, more than a dozen restorable vessels of the late 8th century B.C., and two ostraca reading *yayin* and [*ba*]t. The finds in the 1990 season included additional loom weights, approximately a dozen restorable vessels of the 8th century B.C., and seven miniature baggy-shaped vessels with holes in their tops. The latter appear to lack any known parallels, but may possibly be inkwells (Plate 10). The destruction of this casemate should probably be attributed to the Assyrians during the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III (ca. 734 B.C.).

Outer Wall Evidence

A final result in Field III was derived from a probe below the stretch of possible Outer Wall found in 1984 just west of the outer gatehouse (see Plates 4 and 11). Not only was the line of the Outer Wall fully confirmed, preserved 3 to 4 courses high, but a *lower* phase of the wall was uncovered. It was on a somewhat different alignment and suggested an earlier tower (or even possibly a gateway). Thus the "gap" or "breach" in the Outer Wall, proposed by Macalister and accepted by most later commentators, has now been filled. Also, the Outer Wall west of the outer gate is now seen to have two phases, just as was the case to the east of the gate in 1984.

3. Results in Field XI⁹

The "Canaanite Castle"/"Egyptian Governor's Residency"

At the northern end of his trenches 14, 15, and 16, Macalister found a large structure which he dated to the 13th century B.C. and described as a "Canaanite Castle" (Plates 4 and 6).¹⁰ He suggested that it served as the residency of either the governor or king of Gezer

⁹Randall W. Younker was the Field Supervisor of Field XI. Area Supervisors included Penny Clifford, Carolyn Draper, Lorita Hubbard, Lisa Marsio, David Merling, Rozanna Pfeiffer, and Paul Ray. Volunteers included Kent Birmingham I, Kent Birmingham II, Isabelle Crépeau, Ronald du Preez, Stefanie Elkins, Jim Fisher, Leontine Greenberg, Jennifer Groves, Michael Hasel, Ralph Hendrix, Randal Jennings, Linda Johnston, Richard Lambeth, Steven Ortiz, Toni Stemple, Sid Schneider, and Koot van Wyk.

¹⁰See n. 4 above.

at that time. Macalister's plan of this building shows three walls running right up against the inner face of the Middle Bronze IIC Inner Wall. One of the latter structure's towers was also incorporated into the "Residency."

This building has recently attracted the attention of several Israeli scholars.¹¹ I. Singer, the first interpreter to refocus attention on this structure, basically accepted Macalister's dating of the building, but argued that several features—such as the squarish plan, the large solid walls (which could have supported an upper story), the corner entrance, and the narrow corridor at the entrance—resemble Egyptian governors' residencies that have been found throughout Canaan. As for the awkward incorporation of the MB IIC tower in the middle of the structure, Singer suggested that only its foundations were preserved in Late Bronze Age times and that these underlay a large room in the northeast corner of the residency—possibly the main room of the building.¹²

The results of this season's excavation tend to support Macalister's and Singer's interpretations. After clearing post-Macalister accumulation with a bulldozer, the "Residency" was easily located (**Plate 14**). Three soundings were then conducted within the "Residency"—one in the chamber immediately north of Macalister's room *b*, a second one in Macalister's room *d*, and a final one inside the Inner Wall tower (see **Plate 6**).

The square opened inside the Inner Wall tower showed that the "stairwell" indicated on Macalister's plan was actually filled with large stones, possibly from former upper courses of either the Inner Wall or the tower itself. These stones were laid in the stairwell so that they were level with the surviving upper course of the tower,

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Singer's proposal has been challenged by two other Israeli scholars, Maeir and Bunimovitz (see n. 4 for references). Maeir challenged both Singer's and Macalister's conclusion that the "Residency" post-dated the Inner Wall. Rather, Maeir argued, Macalister's plan indicates that part of the Inner Wall *covers* the northern wall of the "Residency." Thus the "Residency" must be *earlier* than the Inner Wall, not later. Since the latter has been securely dated to the MB IIC, the "Residency" must date to either earlier in that period or even as early as the Early Bronze Age.

Bunimovitz, likewise, argued that the "Residency" preceded the construction of the Inner Wall. Specifically, Bunimovitz suggested that the "Residency" was built sometime earlier in the Middle Bronze Age to serve as a "bastion" in the topographical "bay" on the northern side of the settlement. Later, in the MB IIC period, it was incorporated into the Inner Wall.

possibly creating a rough platform upon which the later "Residency" could have been constructed, similar to Singer's suggestion. Underneath the stones in the stairwell was an MB IIC fill, which, in turn, overlay a MB IIC floor that ran to the base of the tower wall. Thus the tower (and the Inner Wall) can be firmly dated to the MB IIC. The MB IIC floor was preceded by two EB II levels and a Chalcolithic level. The latter rested on bedrock.

The sounding in room *d* revealed that Macalister had trenched through the floors of the "Residency," making a dating of the building in this area impossible. There was some evidence for earlier Early Bronze Age and possibly Chalcolithic occupation well *under* the level of the "Residency" walls, corresponding to what was found below the MB IIC floor in the tower, as described above.

The sounding north of room *b* also revealed that Macalister had trenched below the floor level of the "Residency," thus making a conclusive dating impossible. However, it was clear that the "Residency" was founded on an almost sterile fill that was laid directly on a plaster surface which abutted the inner face of the Inner Wall, the latter being securely dated to the MB IIC both by previous excavations and by our own probe in the center of the tower (**Plate 13**). Thus the "Residency" clearly appears to be post-MB IIC, and there is no real reason to reject Macalister's original conclusions of an LB II date. This interpretation also harmonizes with that of Singer (noted above).

Macalister's Tower VII

According to Macalister, a number of ashlar towers had been inserted into the Late Bronze Age Outer Wall by Solomonic engineers.¹³ In order to test this claim it was decided to locate his "Tower VII" (situated immediately north of the "Egyptian Governor's Residency," according to Macalister's plan) and open two soundings—one against each of the inner and outer faces of the "tower"—in order to determine if indeed the "towers" were constructed in the manner and at the time Macalister claimed (see **Plates 4, 6, and 19**).

After clearing off the top of the Outer Wall, however, it was discovered that Macalister's "Tower VII" was not a tower at all, but rather an offset that was similar to what he found further west in his

¹³See Macalister, *Gezer I*, pp. 244-256.

trenches 22-29, a stretch of wall which he described as "rebuilt."¹⁴ Macalister had apparently found the same corner as our team and had simply drawn in the other three corners on his plan.

Excavation against the inner face of the "tower" reached bedrock in just over a meter (**Plate 14**). A foundation trench, which showed up clearly in the eastern balk, indicated that the offset was initially constructed in the 8th century B.C. Later, during the Hellenistic period, a second trench had been dug into the earlier one, suggesting that at least part of the wall was rebuilt during this period. Indeed, the ashlar in the upper two or three courses of the wall were poorly laid. They were uneven and not in the header-stretcher fashion. Thus they were probably reused from the earlier Iron Age construction.

The fact that the earliest architectural phase of the offset dated no earlier than the 8th century B.C. would seem to raise doubts about the claims of those who have argued for an earlier dating of the Outer Wall. However, excavation along the outer face of "Tower VII" revealed at least nine courses (ca. 5 m.) of excellent header-stretcher masonry.¹⁵ Although bedrock could not be reached in this sounding, the pottery from the lowest level of fills against the outer face consisted of red-slipped 10th century B.C. wares.

Above these 10th century fills (which were more than 2 m. thick) were at least two plastered surfaces which ran up against the wall

¹⁴Ussishkin has argued that Macalister's "rebuilt" section (see **Plate 4**) corresponds to or marks the position of a monumental building which used this rebuilt stretch as a "back wall." According to Ussishkin, that section was bonded to and ran between two of Macalister's towers, which presumably served as corner towers for this building ("Notes," p. 75). Excavations from the 1990 season indicate that Macalister's rebuilt section extends well to the east of this 30 m. stretch and that what Macalister called "towers" are not necessarily towers at all. Even Macalister admitted that many of the Outer Wall's towers appeared to be little more than "set-offs" and that those on the inner face did not always correspond to those on the outer face (see Macalister, *Gezer I*, p. 244). That is exactly what was found this season in Probes 9 and 18. Also, it appears that little, if anything, of the Late Bronze Age wall was left *in this section* of the Outer Wall (described as "rebuilt"). Thus Ussishkin's criticism that the Iron Age builders of this monumental building would have had to line it up to the stub of the Late Bronze Age wall and then remove it to build up the back wall of the monumental building does not hold. The Late Bronze Age wall was probably already *missing* in this section.

¹⁵The vast difference in the depth to bedrock between the inner and outer faces of the Outer Wall is due to the fact that the wall was built along an escarpment—a point noted by Macalister, *Gezer I*, p. 244.

face. The debris on these surfaces included fallen ashlar blocks in a brickly fill containing 8th century B.C. sherds. The debris layers may be evidence of both an earlier 8th century earthquake (see below) and a later 8th century B.C. Assyrian destruction (**Plate 15**). The latter was followed much later by a hasty repair and rebuild, probably during the Maccabean period (2d century B.C.).

Thus, based on the results of the excavation along the outer face of "Tower VII," it appears that the Outer Wall was originally constructed at least by the 10th century B.C., and probably earlier. The discoveries in Square 22 to the east (see below) even suggest the possibility of an initial construction in the LB II. Engineers of the Iron II and Hellenistic periods apparently found it necessary to repair isolated sections of the inner face (which rested on the top of an escarpment), thus leading to the discrepancy between the dates for the construction of the inner and outer faces of the Outer Wall.

Macalister's Tower VI

In the hope of finding a genuine Solomonic tower inserted into a Late Bronze Age wall, it was decided to move east and attempt to locate Macalister's "Tower VI." According to Macalister's top plan, Tower VI was located between 25 m. and 30 m. east of Tower VII (**Plate 19**). Using the bulldozer to clear away Macalister dump and post-Macalister debris accumulation (which included some 1947 Jordanian army trenches), it was not long before an ashlar block of what appeared to be the southwest corner of Macalister's Outer Wall Tower VI was uncovered.

Unfortunately, excavations indicated that this "tower" was also only an offset (**Plate 16**). However, the pottery from the foundation trench¹⁶ indicated that the earliest phase of *this stretch* of the Outer Wall was founded probably during the 10th century B.C. Two additional pieces of evidence also support a 10th century B.C. dating. First, a stone of the lowest course of the inner face of the Outer Wall is roughly bossed in a fashion typical of foundation ashlar blocks of the 10th century. Second, this lowest course is clearly cut by the later "tower" or offset, indicating that this stretch of the wall *preceded* the

¹⁶The sections of both the east and west balks of this probe showed that the Middle Bronze Age glacis, which has been found in all areas where the Outer Wall has been exposed, was cut clear to bedrock by a 10th century B.C. trench to make room for the founding of the wall.

construction of the "tower." Since the "inserted tower" dated to the 9th/8th century B.C. (see below), the wall must be dated earlier. While this second line of evidence is not sufficient by itself to provide a 10th century date, the bossed ashlar and the 10th century trench combine to make a 10th century B.C. date for this section of the wall most probable.

Sometime during the 9th/8th century B.C. the upper courses of the Outer Wall were remodelled with large ashlars to create an offset.¹⁷ The ashlar offset was "inserted" more than a meter into the 10th century B.C. wall line.¹⁸

The 9th/8th century ashlar inserts and wall appear to have been destroyed sometime during the 8th century B.C. Several lines of evidence suggest that the agent of destruction was an earthquake. For one thing, several sections of the Outer Wall had been clearly displaced from their foundations by as much as 10 to 40 cm. Furthermore, these wall sections were all severely tilted outward toward the north. That this tilting was not due to slow subsidence over a long period of time was evident from the fact that intact sections of upper courses of the inner face of the wall had fallen *backwards* into the city. Only a very rapid outward tilting of the wall, such as that caused by an earthquake, could cause these upper stones to roll off backwards, away from the tilt. If the wall's outward tilt had occurred slowly, the stones on the top of the wall should have fallen off toward the downward-sloping outer face of the wall.

¹⁷The dating for the ashlar insert and the upper courses of the inner face of the Outer Wall was determined by 9th/8th century pottery in their foundation trench (which was dug into the 10th century trench), as well as by the style of the ashlars, which are larger and more rough than the fine, well-hewn, 10th century ashlars found in other sections of the wall (e.g., see above on Macalister Tower VII). This foundation trench was clearly dug into the earlier 10th century trench described above.

¹⁸It was thought initially that this "insert" was the southwest corner of Macalister's Outer Wall Tower VI. However, clearing along the top of the wall to the east failed to produce the southeast corner of the tower. Ashlars were indeed found in the location where the corner was to be expected, but they were in the wall line and did not form a corner (see, e.g., Y. Shilo, *Proto-Aeolic Capital*, QEDEM series, vol. 11 [Jerusalem, 1979], p. 51). It therefore appears that the engineers who rebuilt the wall in the 9th/8th century modified the wall along this stretch by creating a series of offsets rather than by inserting a series of towers, as Macalister originally thought (he also dated the inserts to the 10th century B.C.). In fact, this stretch of offsets seems to continue the pattern of offsets that Macalister himself found for the Outer Wall further to the west between trenches 23 and 29 (see Macalister's plan, **Plate 4**).

The southwest corner of the ashlar insert had been similarly displaced from its foundational cornerstone, although to a lesser degree because of the greater stability of the ashlar construction. However, even the cornerstone had been split longitudinally because of the great pressure created by the lateral movement of the upper courses. This same tremendous pressure also created fissures in the ashlar stones that penetrated through several courses. The reason the foundation stones were not themselves dislodged to any significant degree is probably due to the fact that they were set into levelled-out depressions cut directly into the bedrock.

Evidence for an 8th century B.C. earthquake has been discovered at several other sites, such as Hazor.¹⁹ It is not impossible that the wall was destroyed by the well-known earthquake of Amos 1 and Zech 14:5 (ca. 760 B.C.).²⁰

The Outer Wall

Square 21 was opened approximately 10 m. east of Macalister's "Tower VI" along the inner face of the Outer Wall in an additional attempt to date the latter structure (**Plate 19**). It soon became clear that, as in other areas, the Outer Wall had been built into the Middle Bronze glaciis. Nevertheless, two distinct foundation trenches could be discerned in the western balk. These corresponded to two distinct architectural phases of the Outer Wall (**Plate 17**). The first trench contained little pottery, but none of it dated later than the 10th century B.C. The 10th century trench was, in turn, cut by another, later trench. This latter trench clearly served as a foundation trench for the uppermost section of the Outer Wall. The pottery in the trench indicated a 9th/8th century B.C. date for the construction of this uppermost section.

Thus the picture provided by Square 21, in terms of trenches, pottery chronology, and architectural phasing, is identical to that of Macalister's "Tower VI," which is immediately to the west. The earliest phase of the wall in this section dated to the 10th century,

¹⁹See Y. Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* (New York, 1975), pp. 149-154.

²⁰Recent geological studies indicate that the modern town of Ramla (near Gezer) has experienced numerous earthquakes. See E. J. Arieh, "Seismicity of Israel and Adjacent Areas," *Ministry of Development Geological Survey Bulletin No. 43* (1967): 1-14.

while a later phase could be dated to the 9th/8th century B.C. It appeared possible that lower courses could exist below the 10th century portion of the wall. It was obvious from the section in the western balk, however, that they would have been set directly into the Middle Bronze glaucis, thus making an accurate dating impossible. Therefore, excavation in this probe was discontinued.

In a final attempt to ascertain whether there was any stratigraphic evidence to substantiate the claim that the Outer Wall was initially constructed *prior* to the Iron Age, Square 22 was opened along the outer face of the Outer Wall just opposite (to the north of) Square 21 (Plate 4). After penetrating destruction debris from the Hellenistic period and the 8th century B.C., the top of the Outer Wall was reached. The same two construction phases that were revealed along the inner face of this section of the wall (in Square 21) could be detected in the outer face, although only a single course of four stones survived from the 8th century B.C. These rested upon six courses of the 10th century B.C. wall (dated by both the 10th century B.C. foundation trench in Square 21 and the 10th century fills running up to the base of the bottom course in Square 22).²¹

It was thought that the bottom of the 10th century B.C. wall was reached when a plastered surface was found running up against what initially appeared to be the bottom course. However, it was obvious that bedrock had not been reached, so excavation was continued in order to ascertain the nature of the footing of the wall.

It turned out that the 10th century B.C. wall was founded on a lower wall, of which at least seven courses have survived (Plate 18). This lower wall was offset from the 10th century B.C. wall by ca. 64 cm. At least two fills with 10th century B.C. pottery ran up and over the top of this lower wall, while another three 10th century fills ran up against its upper three courses. However, below these 10th century fills was a series of layers which contained *pure* LB IIB pottery (none later than 1200 B.C.). The total thickness of the LB IIB material (which appeared to be the result of *natural* accumulation rather than fill brought in from elsewhere) was over a meter and it ran down to the bottom course of the lower wall section. This material would seem to provide the most likely date for the initial construction of this lower wall. On bedrock were found, not surprisingly,

²¹The 10th century wall apparently continued in use until sometime in the 8th century (probably prior to the earthquake), because it had been replastered on its outer face sometime during the 9th/8th century B.C.

some mixed Early Bronze and Middle Bronze Age sherds (along with later material) from earlier periods of the tell's occupation.²²

Thus the history of the Outer Wall, as revealed in Squares 21 and 22, appears to be as follows. The lower wall was originally built in the LB IIB, sometime in the 13th century B.C. What caused this wall to go out of use is unclear from the data available in the probe, although a 10th century surface halfway up this wall indicates that it remained in use until the middle of that century.

²²Some visiting archaeologist colleagues suggested that the entire Outer Wall, as revealed in Square 22, was built as a single unit sometime in the early Iron II period. This seems unlikely for three reasons. First, there are three distinctive styles of masonry, which would suggest three distinct building phases. The lowest section is built of large boulders of fairly uniform size laid out in uniform courses (see **Plate 18**). The boulders of the middle section, on the other hand, are more irregular in size. The upper section is built of smaller boulders neatly and tightly laid together (see Square 21, **Plate 17**).

Second, visual analysis of the construction technique indicates that the top of the lower section does not appear to have been level when the courses of the middle section were laid. Rather, it appears that the builders of the middle section found the uneven stump of the lower section, the upper course of which had been partially dislodged, and decided to use it as a foundation without adequately leveling it. That this decision resulted in a poor footing for the middle section is confirmed by the fact that the middle section later bulged outward, while the lower section, founded directly on bedrock and mostly buried, was unaffected.

The third reason also relates to construction technique. That is, the middle section of the wall is clearly inset from the bottom section by ca. 64 cm. Those who would argue that both sections were constructed at the same time as one architectural unit have to explain why the ancient engineers would deliberately design a horizontal "shelf" along the outside of a city wall. It might be argued that this section was built this way and then immediately buried so that the shelf was not exposed. However, it seems strange that the ancient masons would have been more careful in constructing the foundation, which would by then be buried, than in building the upper section. Also, the stratigraphy on the outside of the wall indicates a gradual, natural accumulation of debris during LB II *below* the line of the shelf, rather than indicating fill brought in from elsewhere.

Thus it seems clear that the lower section of the wall was not built at the same time as the upper section. Rather, the lower wall was built prior to the upper section. The fact that the upper section can be clearly dated to the 10th century indicates that the lower wall must precede that period. The accumulation of LB IIB pottery over a long period of time along the outer face of the wall indicates that it was originally constructed no later than that period.

One other suggestion we received is that the lower wall was originally built as a retaining wall for the Middle Bronze Age glacis and wall which exist upslope. While this idea seems plausible from an architectural point of view, the occurrence of pure LB II pottery makes this suggestion unlikely.

During the latter part of the 10th century, engineers rebuilt this stretch of the Outer Wall along the stub of the LB IIB wall. This new wall was out of line with the earlier wall by ca. 64 cm., and not as well built. In order to cover up the awkward shelf along the outer face of the wall, the 10th century engineers brought in fill from earlier 13th-10th century levels. This wall continued in use until sometime in the 9th/8th century B.C., when the outer face was replastered. Finally, the upper section of the 10th century wall was rebuilt in the 8th century B.C.

4. *Summary and Conclusions*

The results of the 1990 season at Gezer indicate that the four-entryway gate in Field III can still be described as Solomonic. It, along with the casemate wall, was constructed on "built-up foundations." The fills of these foundations consisted of fresh mudbrick destruction debris and contained unburnished red-slipped ware, but no wheel-burnished red-slipped ware. Based on the studies of Stager, Holladay, and others, this material should be dated to the latter part of the 10th century B.C. The destruction debris, therefore, is probably from the Egyptian destruction of Gezer mentioned in 1 Kgs 9:15-17 (possibly by Pharaoh Siamun). After the destruction, the four-entryway gate was constructed, probably by King Solomon.

After undergoing three building phases, the gateway showed evidence of a destruction, probably by Pharaoh Shishak (ca. 926 B.C.). Excavations in the casemate wall showed evidence of a later destruction in the 8th century B.C., most likely by the Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser III (ca. 734/733 B.C.).

Evidence was also found for the existence of the Outer Wall to the south of (and below) the Solomonic gate, in the so-called "gap." Two architectural phases were discerned, the earlier of which may have included the corner of a pre-Solomonic tower or a gate.

In Field XI clear evidence was found to support Macalister's claim that the "Egyptian Governor's Residency" was built after the MB IIC Inner Wall. There is no reason to doubt his Late Bronze Age dating of the building.

The two "inserted" ashlar "towers" which were examined (Macalister's "Towers VI and VII") appear to be offsets rather than towers and appear to have been added to the wall during the 9th/8th century B.C. After destructions in the 8th century B.C. (an earlier one by an earthquake and a later one by the Assyrians), the wall was

remodelled during Hellenistic times. While no evidence was found to suggest that Macalister's "Towers VI and VII" were Solomonic "inserts," it is not impossible that such structures exist elsewhere. Only future excavations may be able to answer that question.

Several soundings along both the inner and outer faces of the Outer Wall suggest that it was built earlier than the offsets. Different sections indicate construction by at least the 10th century, and probably as early as the 13th century B.C.

The divergent dates for different sections of the Outer Wall are undoubtedly due to the fact that the wall had a long and complex history. While the line of the wall was maintained from the time of its original construction, it appears that various sections were destroyed and rebuilt at different times. The destruction in some cases may have been the result of attacks from foes; in other cases it was probably the result of a remodelling project. The wall at times was dismantled to bedrock; on other occasions only the upper courses were affected. The net result was a complex architectural history. This complexity has undoubtedly led to the difficulties scholars have had in interpreting a few isolated findings in their attempts to date the whole wall.

The results from this season would suggest that those scholars who have argued for an Iron Age date for the Outer Wall are partially right, as some sections were rebuilt from bedrock up at that time. It also appears, however, that other sections of the wall were built as early as the LB II. As with other architectural features, a true understanding of a structure's history may require more data than is generally available. Undoubtedly, future excavations of the Outer Wall will reveal additional chapters in its already complex history.

Plates 1-19

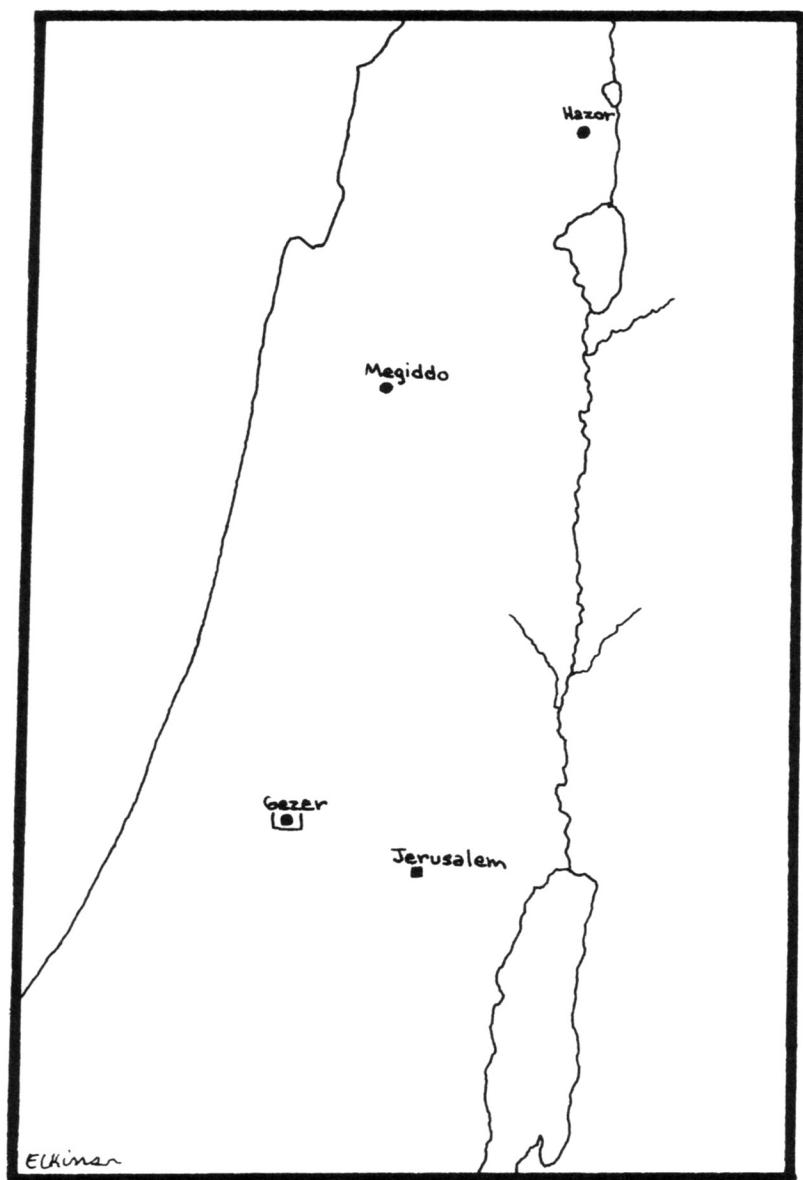


Plate 1. Map of Israel, showing location of Gezer.

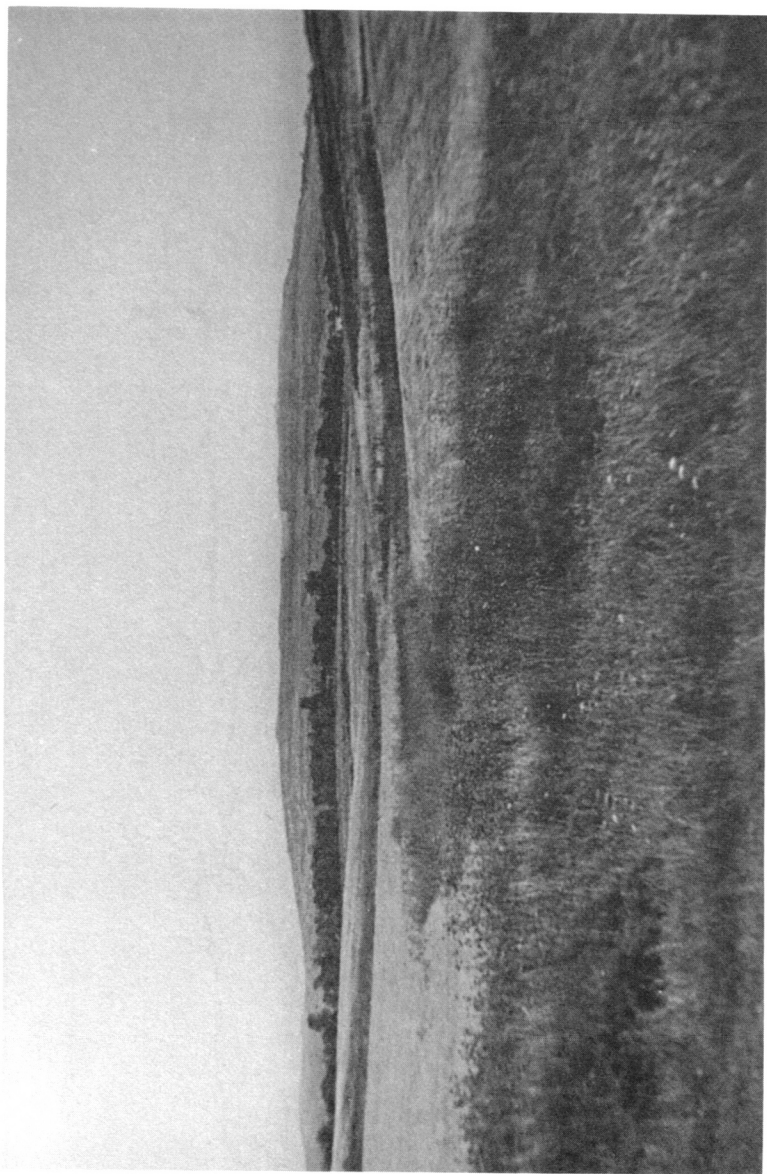


Plate 2. View of Tel Gezer from the North.

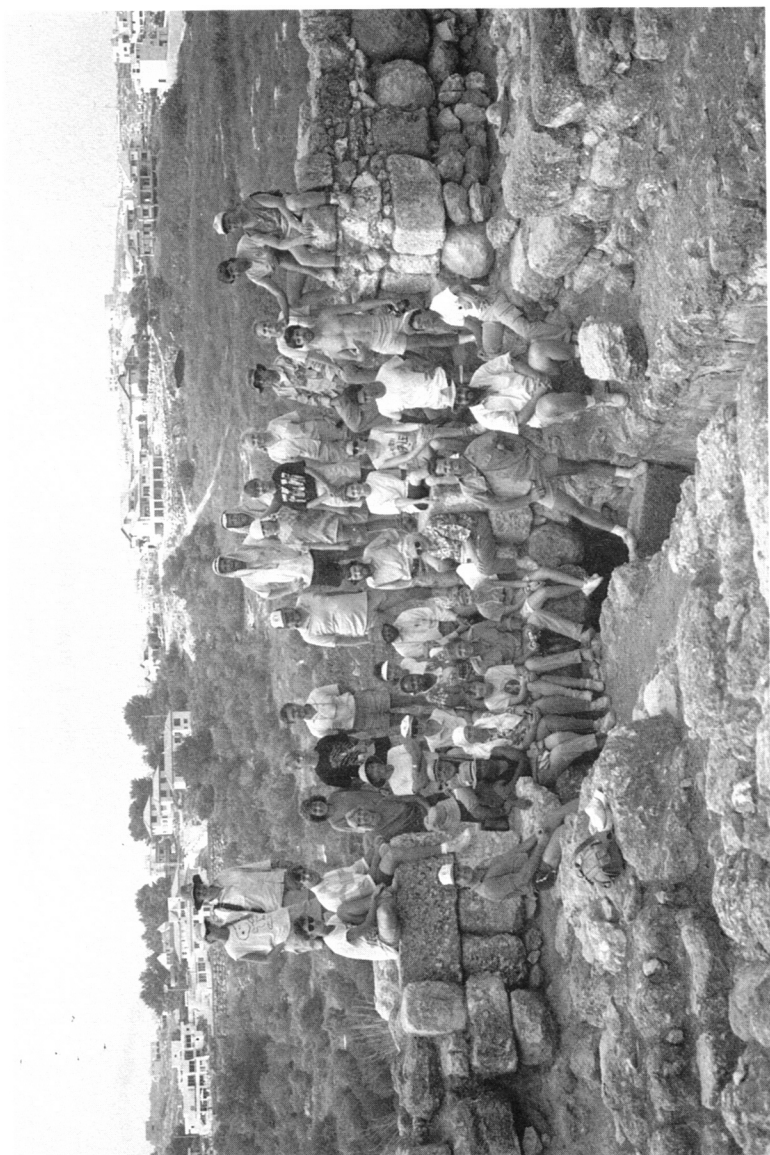


Plate 3. The Gezer 1990 Excavation Team.

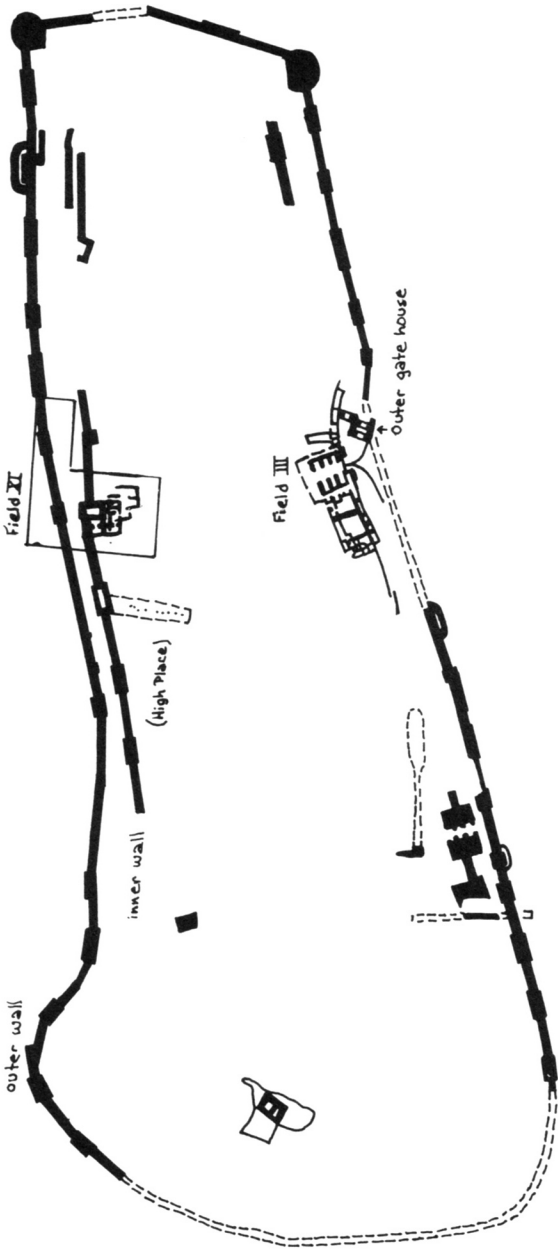


Plate 4. Plan of Tel Gezer.

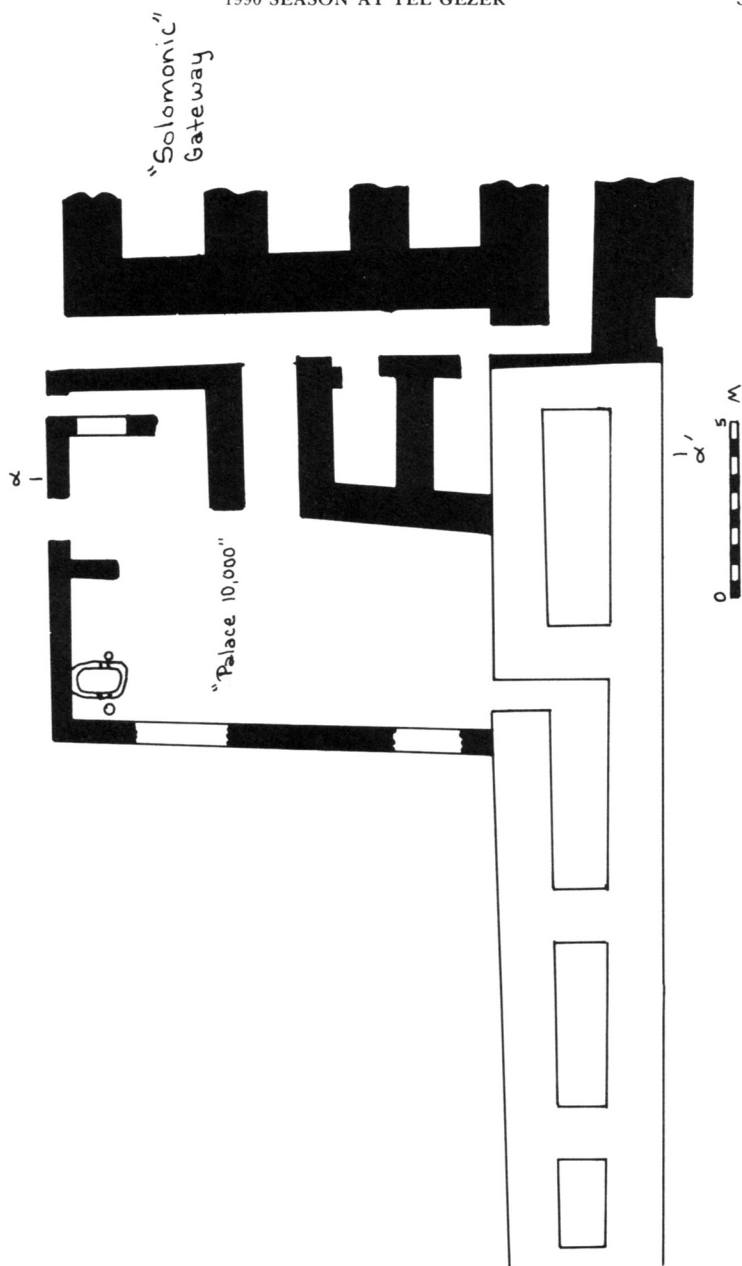


Plate 5. Plan of Field III—"Solomonic" Gateway and "Palace 10,000."

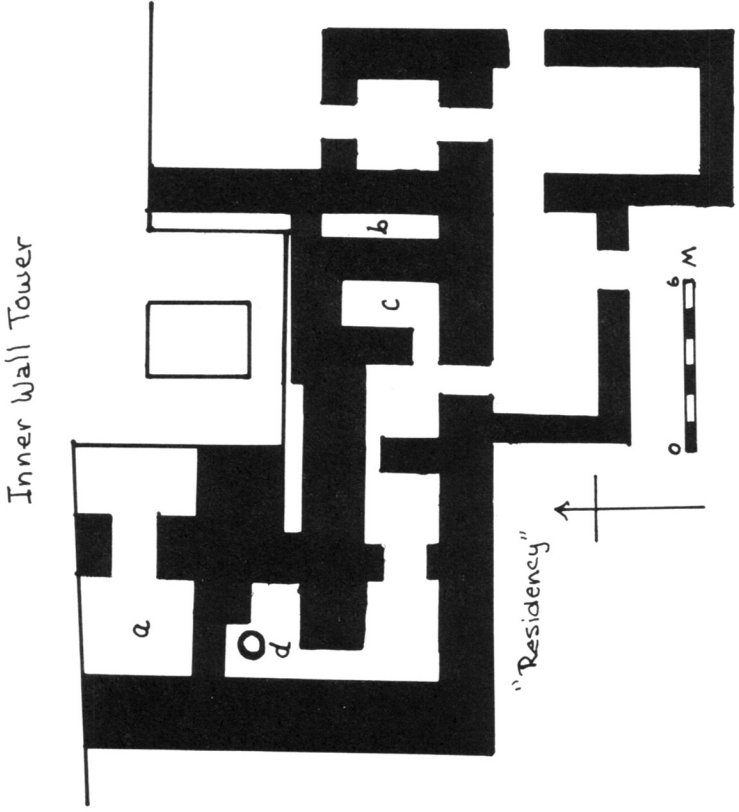


Plate 6. Plan of "Egyptian Governor's Residency" (Field XI).

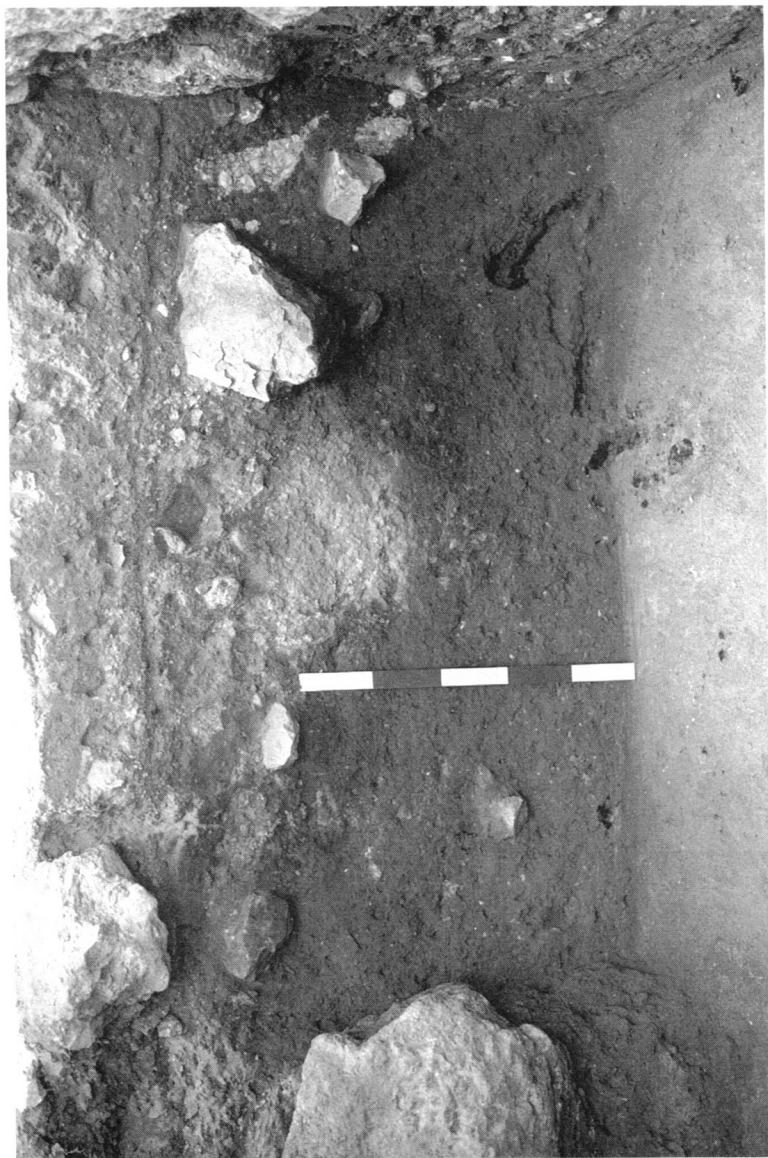


Plate 7. Backfilled destruction debris *below* the "Solomonic" Gateway foundation.

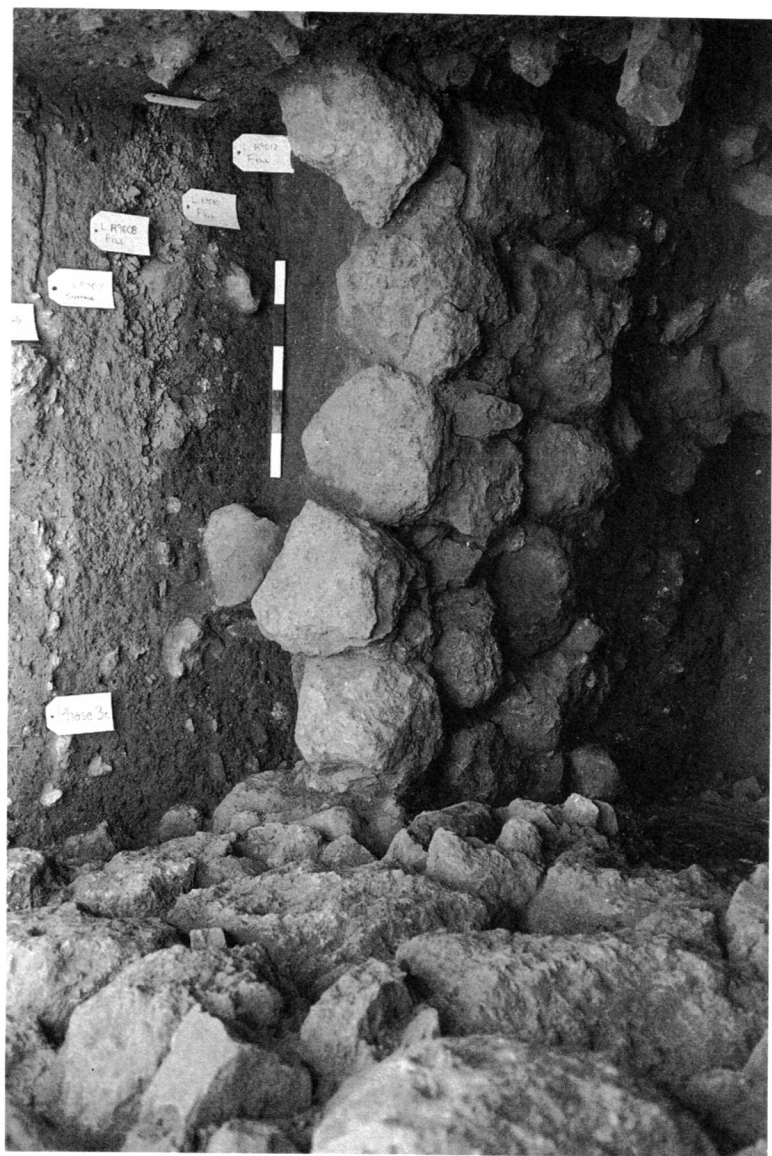


Plate 8. Pre-“Solomonic” fill and retaining wall (“core wall”).



Plate 9. Join of the gate complex (left) and casemate wall (right).

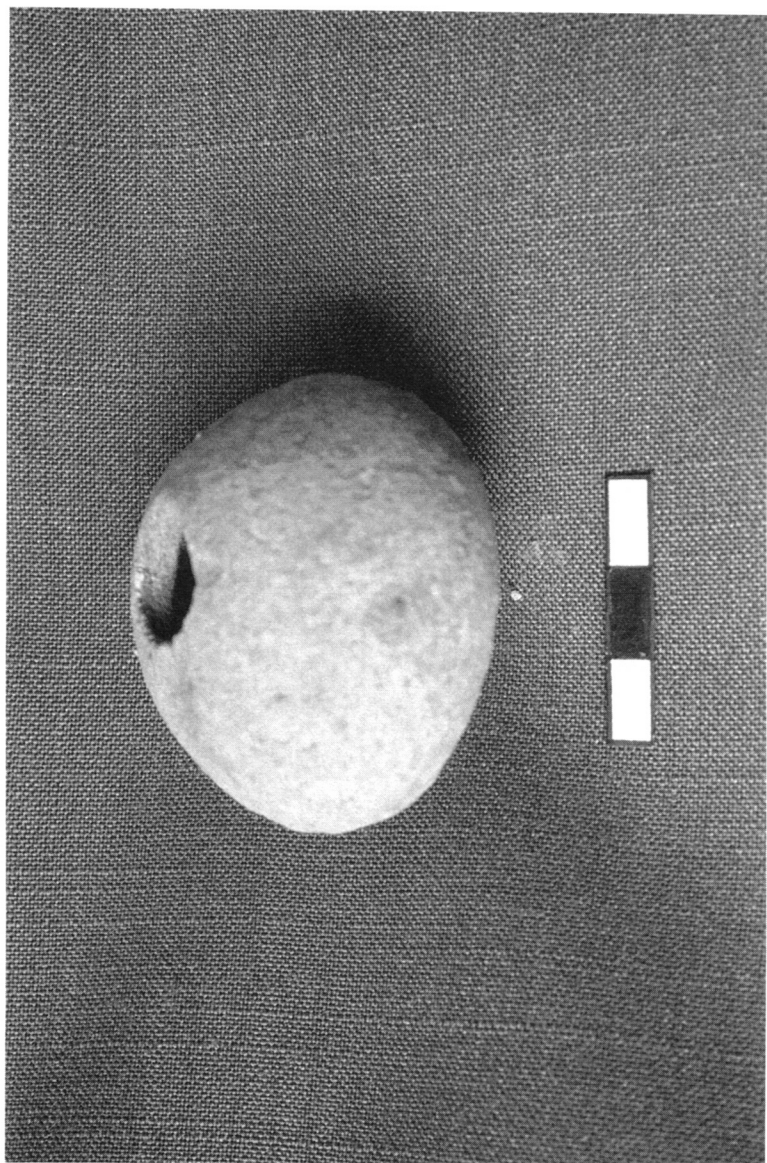


Plate 10. Possible inkwell from 8th cent. B.C. casemate wall.



Plate 11. Two phases of Outer Wall; meter stick rests on earlier phase.



Plate 12a. (See caption for Plate 12b.)

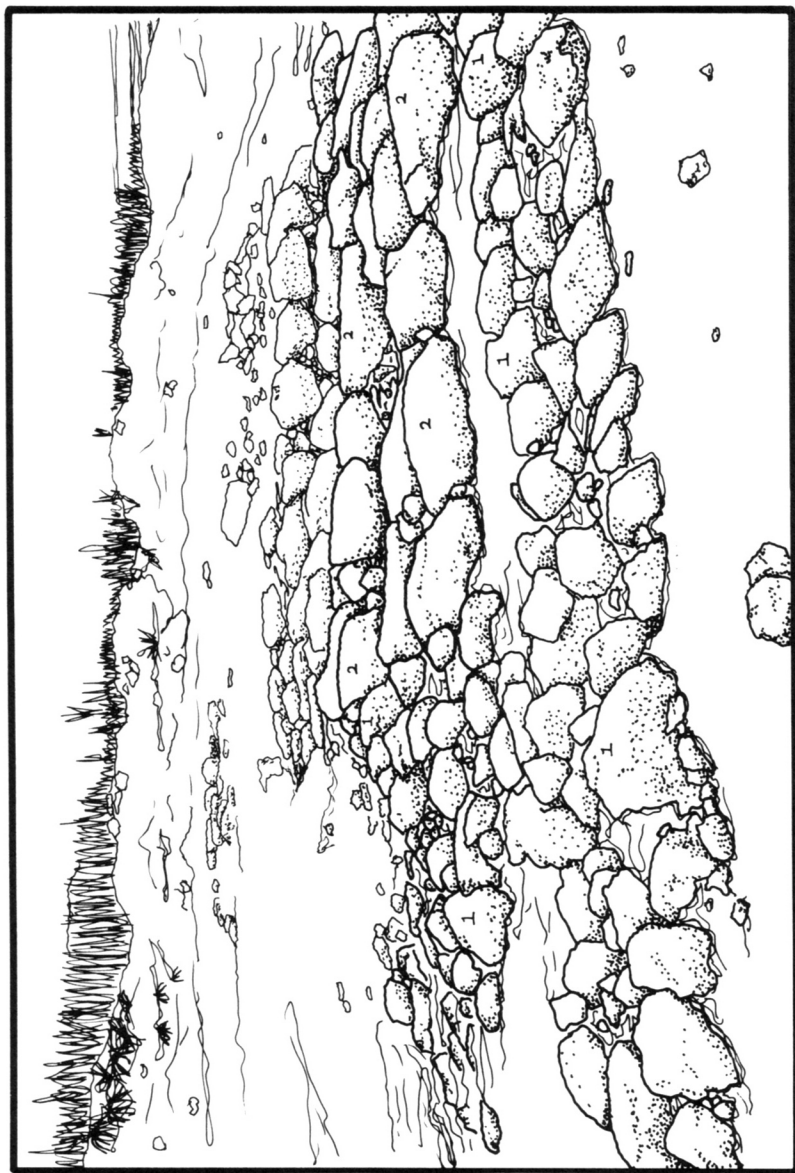


Plate 12b. (1) Late Bronze Age "Residency"; (2) Middle Bronze Inner Wall Tower.



Plate 13a. (See caption for Plate 13b.)

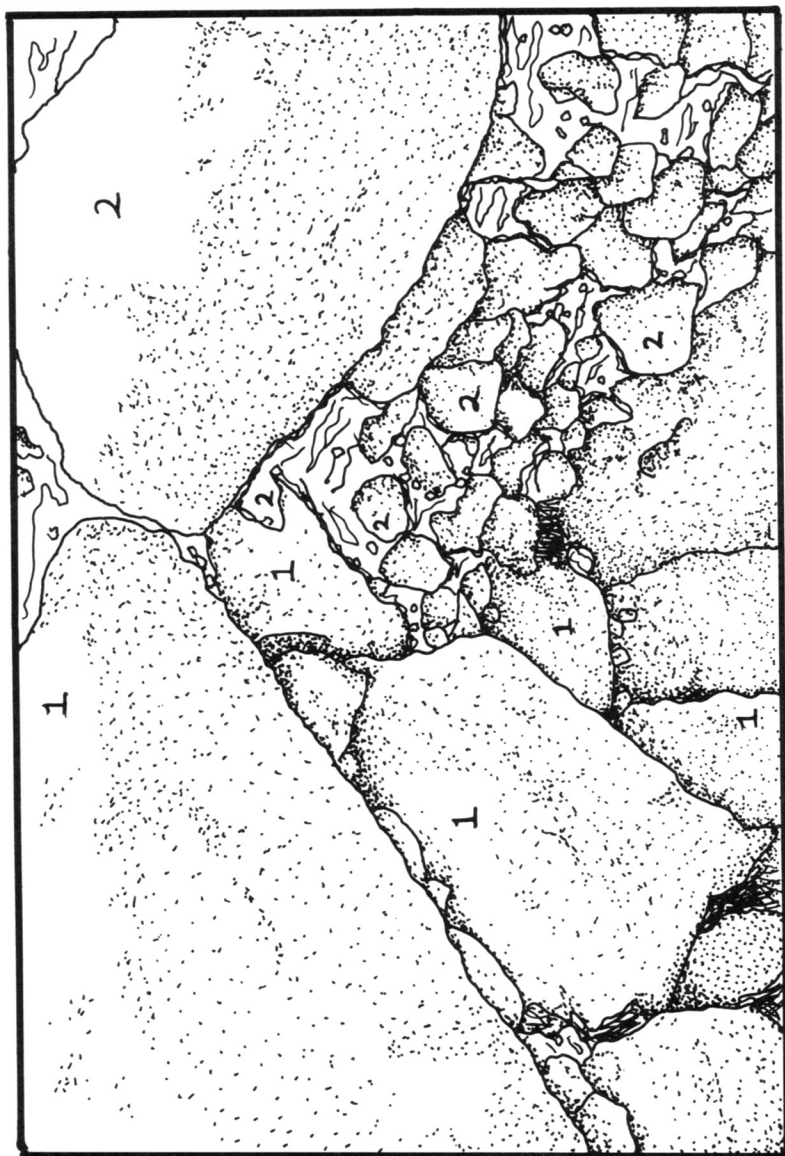


Plate 13b. (1) Middle Bronze IIC Inner Wall abutting (2) Late Bronze Age "Residency."



Plate 14a. (See caption for **Plate 14b.**)

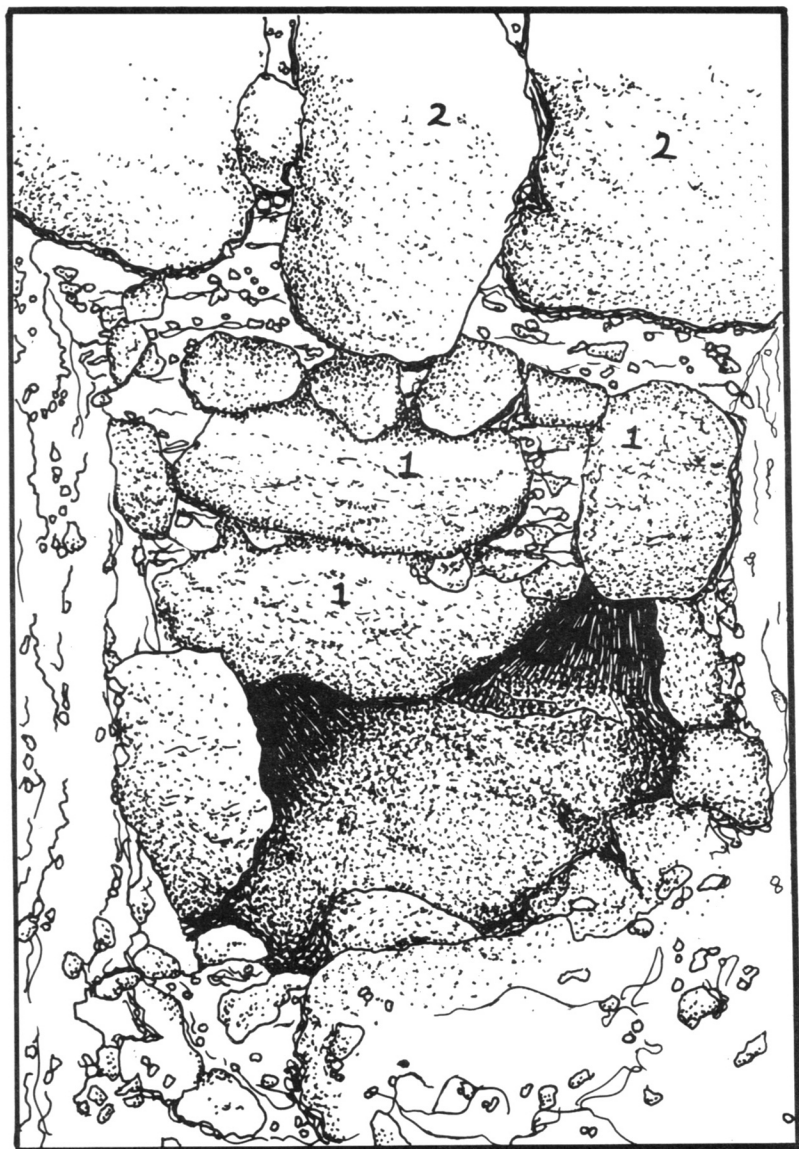


Plate 14b. (1) Inner face of Outer Wall founded in 8th cent. B.C.; (2) rebuilt in Hellenistic times.

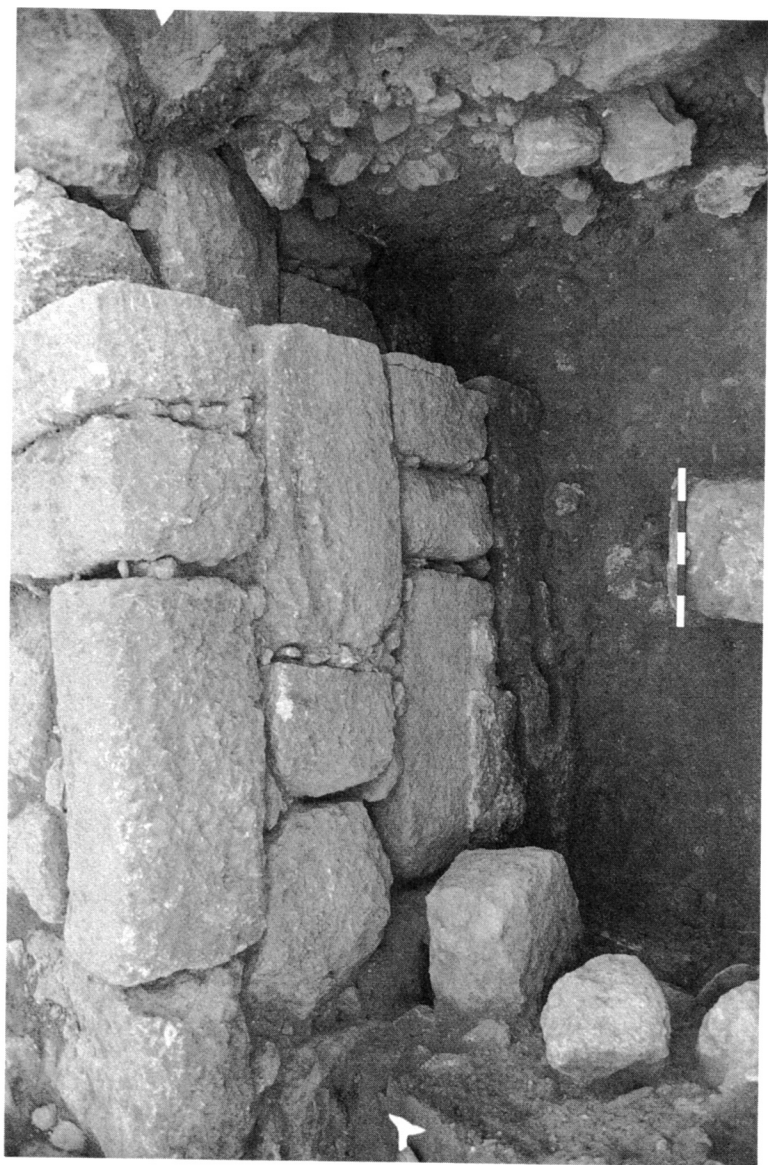


Plate 15a. (See caption for **Plate 15b.**)

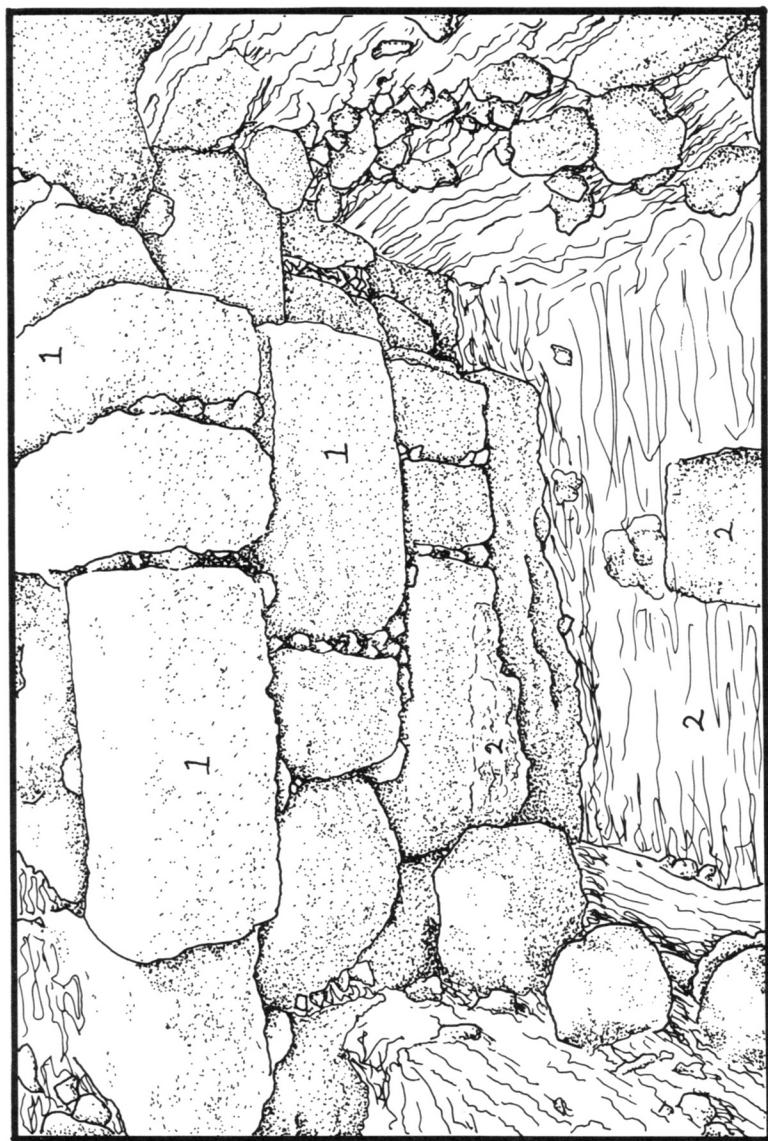


Plate 15b. (1) Outer face offset of Outer Wall built in 10th cent. B.C.; (2) 8th cent. B.C. destruction layer.

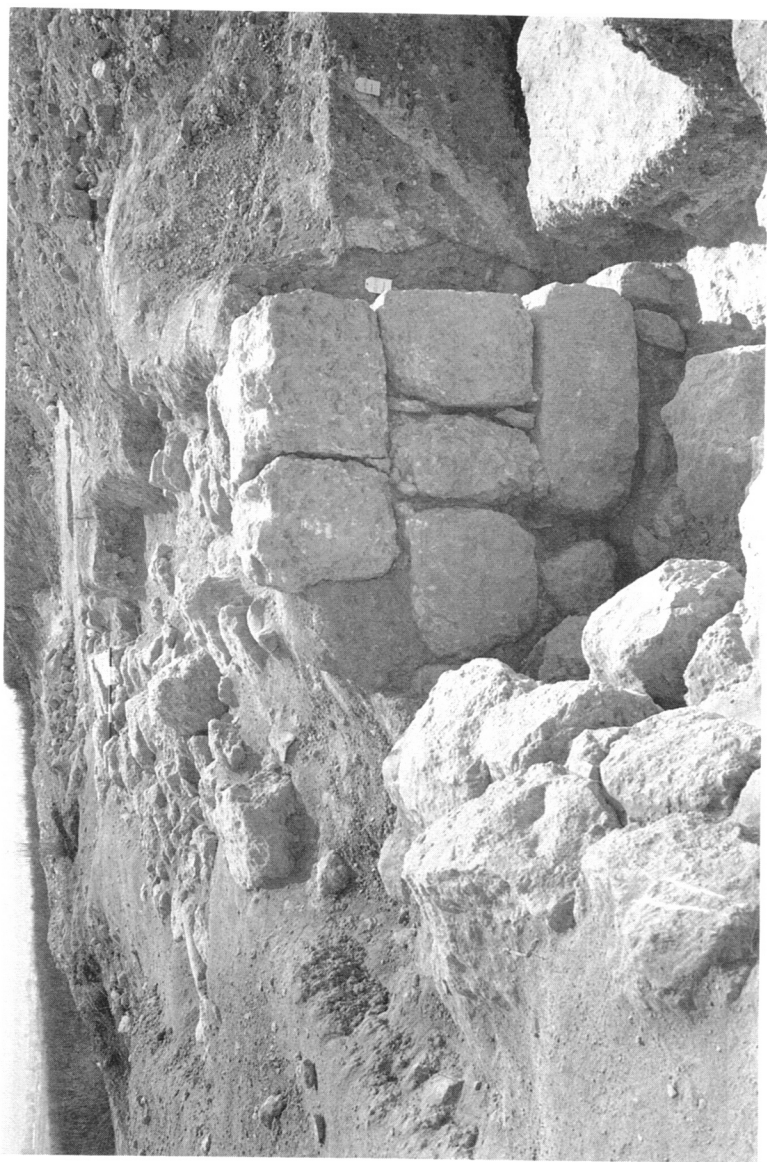


Plate 16a. (See caption for Plate 16b.)

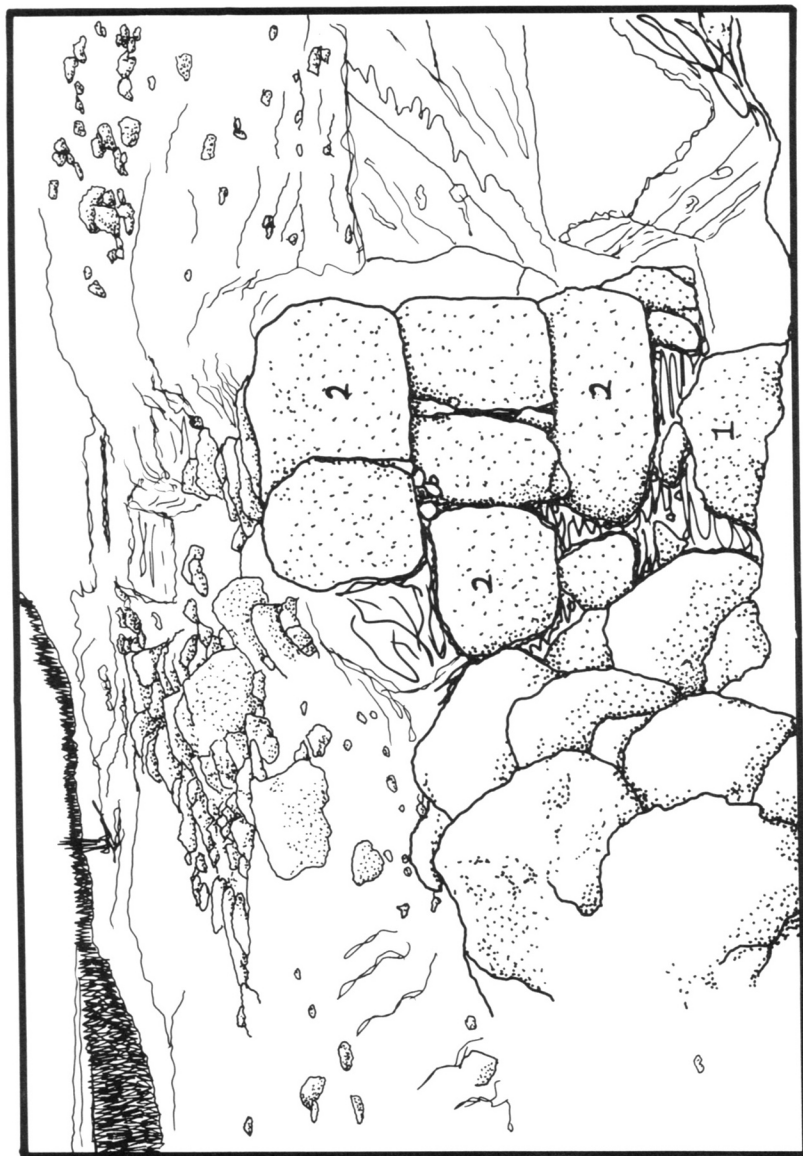


Plate 16b. (1) Inner face offset of Outer Wall (Macalister's "Tower VII") founded in 10th cent. B.C., (2) remodelled, and destroyed by earthquake in 8th cent. B.C.



Plate 17a. (See caption for Plate 17b.)

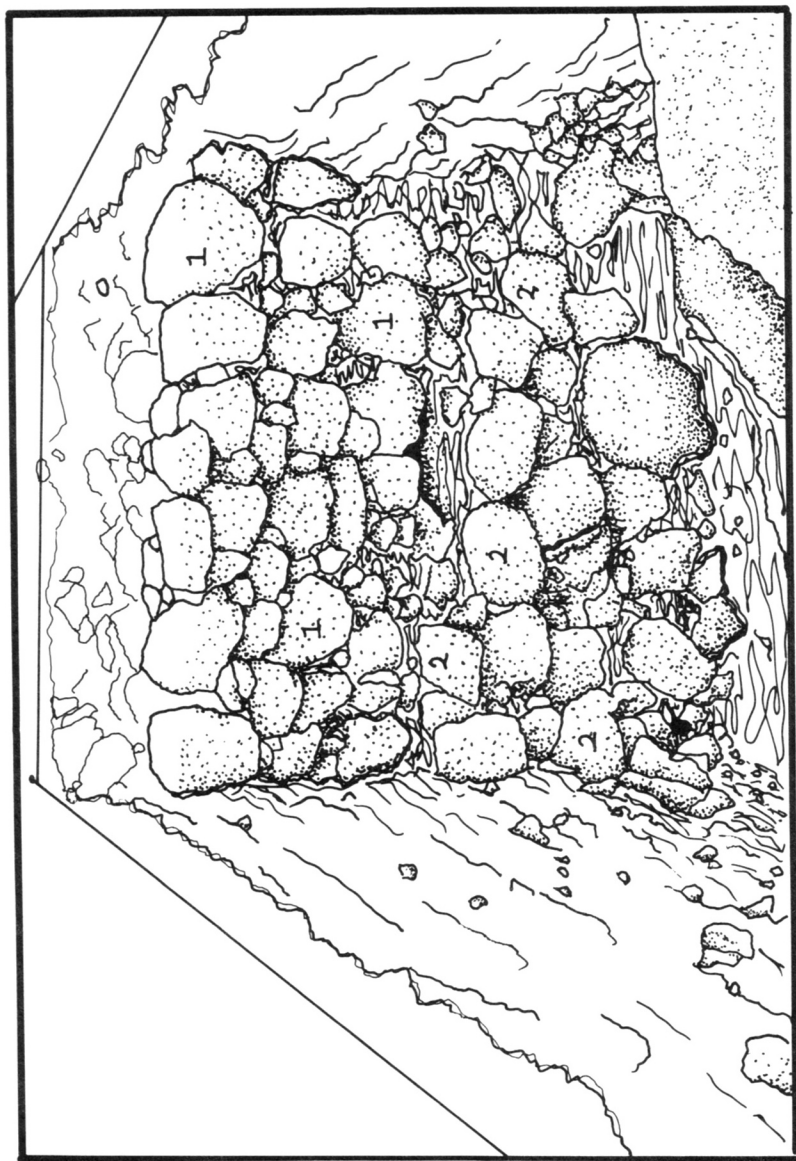


Plate 17b. Two phases of Outer Wall—(1) upper, 9th/8th cent. B.C.; (2) lower, 10th cent. B.C.



Plate 18a. (See caption for Plate 18b.)

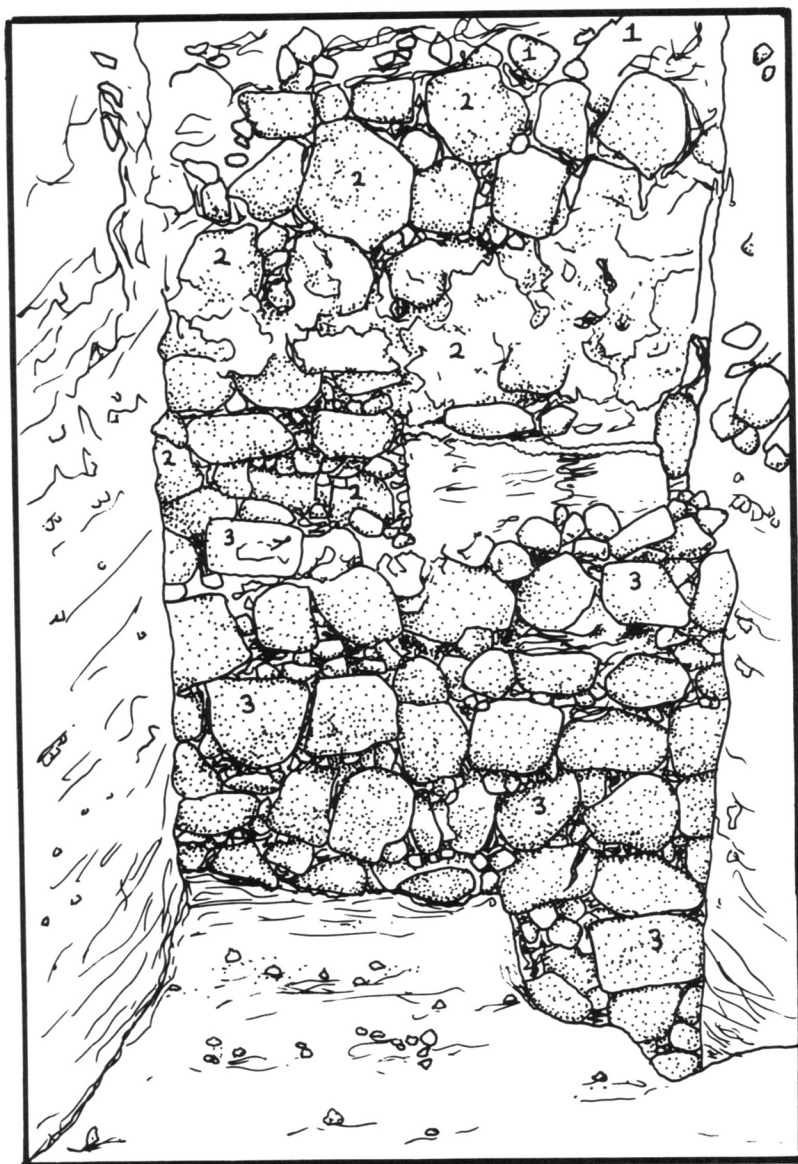


Plate 18b. Three phases of outer face of Outer Wall—(1) upper, 9th/8th cent. B.C.; (2) middle, 10th cent. B.C.; (3) lower, LB IIB.

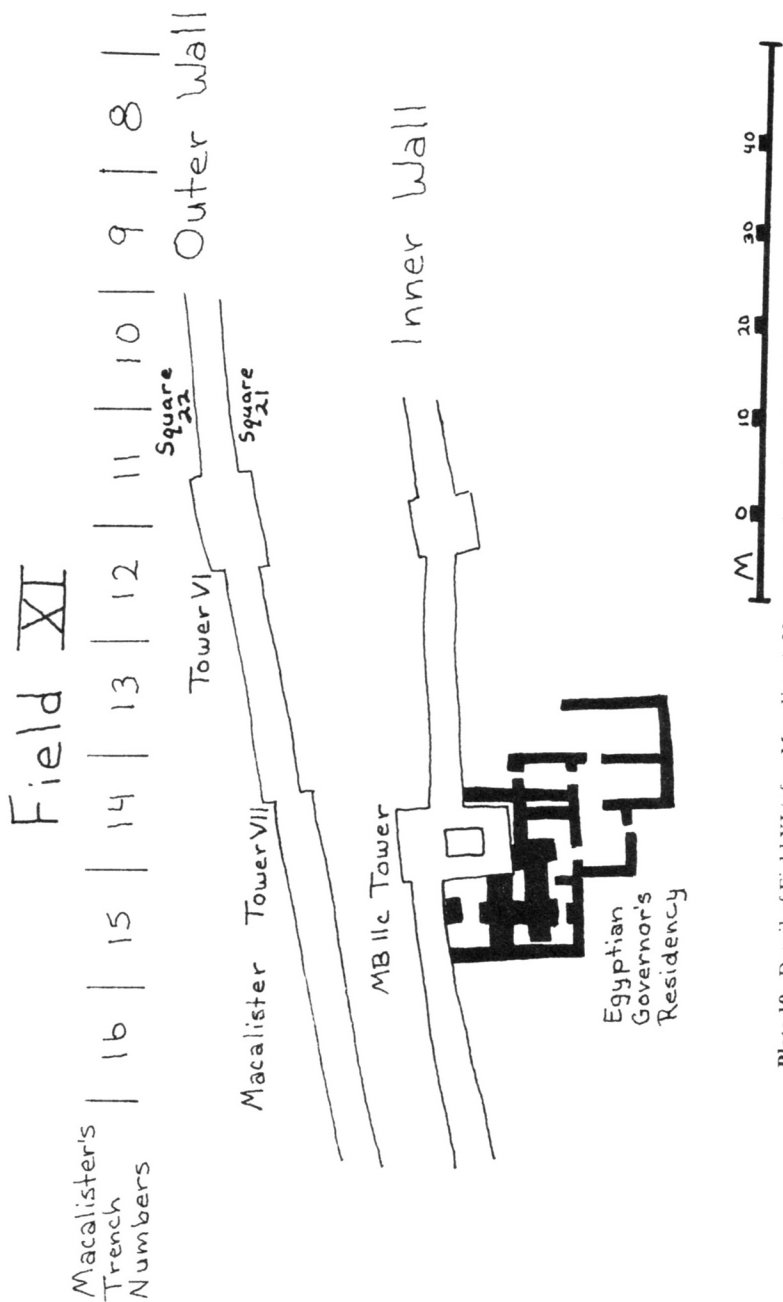


Plate 19. Detail of Field XI (after Macalister). Note approximate locations of Squares 21 and 22.