

TEL GEZER EXCAVATIONS 2006

Directors: Dr. Steven M. Ortiz and Dr. Samuel Wolff

FIELD A: PRELIMINARY FIELD REPORT

By Dr. Gary P. Arbino, Field Archaeologist

General Introduction

The renewed excavations of Tel Gezer were conducted from June 4, 2006 to July 6, 2006. The team was under the direction of Co-Directors Dr. Samuel Wolff of the Israel Antiquities Authority and Dr. Steven M. Ortiz of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. An area west of the “Solomonic Gate” along the casemate (Field A) was excavated under the direct supervision of Dr. Gary Arbino (Marian Eakins Archaeological Museum) as Field Archaeologist.

In addition to excavation, the Tel Gezer Excavation team participated with the National Parks Authority in several Conservation efforts. The team cleaned both the “Solomonic” and Middle Bronze Gate complexes from vegetal overgrowth and assisted with trail construction and restoration. Appreciation was expressed by the National Parks Authority. As a part of the overall conservation of the site, sandbags were positioned to shore up the south face of walls (to their founding levels) excavated in the 2006 season. These sandbags were placed in Squares A9, B9, C9, D9, and E9. A fence was constructed around Squares Y8 and Z8.

Several “trenches” from previous excavations in the “Solomonic” Gate area were filled in to a depth which allowed for more safe access to the site. These are marked on the plan of the excavation area and levels were taken for future information (Guardroom 9: 211.16; Guardroom 8: 212.68; Casemate 12: 212.16). Modern items were placed at the bottom of these trenches to assist future excavators.

Previous excavations left their marks on this area of the Tel. The current excavators located and marked on the plans the trenches left by the HUC excavations of 1984 and 1990 which are still visible. The two closest to the current excavation square E8 have been backfilled. In addition, a recent bulldozer cut along the south extant of the current excavation grid was also plotted.



Figure 1: Aerial Photo (PICT0040) showing previous HUC excavation trenching north of current excavation squares.

In the initial week of excavation a total of eleven squares of 5x5 meters were opened. These were, from east to west: E8 and E9, supervised by Dr. Robin Knauth, D8 and D9, supervised by Dr. Eric Mitchell, C8 and C9, supervised by Dr. Steven Andrews, B8 and B9, supervised by Madeline Pruitt, A8, supervised by Stephen Rives, and Z8 and Y8, supervised by Daniel Warner. Throughout the season three addition squares were opened (Y9, Z9, A9); bringing the total to 14.

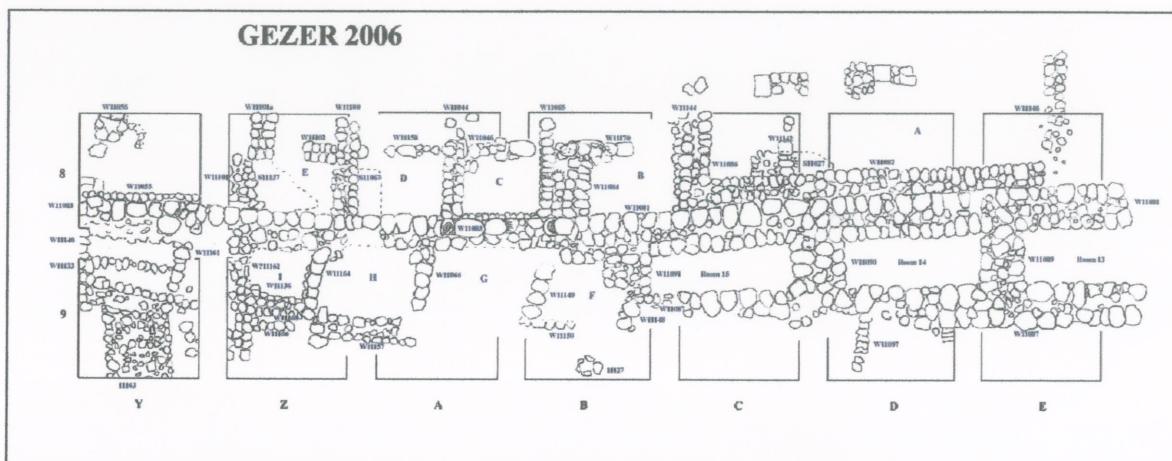


Figure 2: Plan of Gezer 2006 excavation squares and architectural features.

Owing to the unique situation of the research goals, the topography of the field and the lack of precise information regarding previous excavations and their dumps, much of the first part of the season was spent in cleanup. The methodology employed by the Gezer excavation, was modified from the Rehov and Madaba Plains methods that called for supervisors to work in squares with an awareness and intentional connection to the material around them. Thus, loci were at times shared by more than one supervisor (with a single number) and architectural units were usually dug by only one supervisor even when the unit extended into another square.

A total of 13 phases were uncovered. These are discussed in order below.

PHASE 1: TOPSOIL

Loci: 11001; 11002; 11003; 11004; 11005; 11006; 11007; 11008; 11010; 11012 = 11013; 11014; 11019; 11048; 11051; 11053; 11058; 11059; 11064; 11093; 11110

All squares cleared the uppermost topsoil and weed debris (L 11001: Cleanup) and articulated around the stones of the wall which were already visible. After this initial cleaning, supervisors changed loci to "fill" and continued to articulate around the walls which were visible. This proved somewhat difficult because the north-south slope caused by the difference between the two sides of the casemate wall system. The pottery, as expected, was largely mixed. These "topsoil" and "cleanup" fills graded into the material of Phase 2 and were often indistinguishable from the earlier material.

PHASE 2: MODERN

General, mixed loci:
 11015; 11021; 11022; 11023; 11024; 11025; 11031; 11032; 11033; 11034; 11035; 11036;
 11037; 11038=11061; 11039; 11040; 11041; 11042; 11043; 11060; 11062; 11071= 11092;
 11107; 11121; 11126; 11141; 11145; 11151; 11153; 11154; W?11162 (possibly phase 3)

Loci clearly related to MacAlister: 11072; 11075

Loci comprising the modern backfill into the casemate rooms: 11009; 11016; 11028; 11122

Loci clearly related to HUC: 11049; 11050; 11052; 11054; 11065; 11068; 11074; 11104; 11105

During the 20th Century four major excavations of Tel Gezer were undertaken: MacAlister (1902-1909); HUC (1964-1974); and Dever (1984, 1990). The evidence for these was clearly uncovered by the 2006 excavation. Almost 70% of non-architectural loci opened in 2006 were attributed to earlier excavations.

In squares Y9, Z9, and A9 several loci contained obvious material culture from both the MacAlister and HUC/Dever excavations including a square nail, plastic, finish nails, tin can pieces and a modern belt in the balk of Y9, 2+ meters below the present surface. The west sections of Y9 and Z9 and the east section of Y9 clearly show that the 1964-74 excavations used this area as their dump. Area VII was to the Northwest of the current excavation grid. The pottery was consistently a mix of Iron Age, Persian, and Hellenistic wares. The dump strata grow thicker to the west indicating what was visible to those excavators: Hellenistic wall W11055 (Y8) was apparently just below the surface, as the excavators seemed to have run their wheelbarrows just over the top of it to dump into the slope below. This slope was formed by the rock tumble (11107, 11131, 11134, W?11162) and walls (11140, 11161, 11164) to the South of W11055 (and W11083). The material excavated within and below the rock tumble in Squares Y9 and Z9 was without modern materials and was not mixed. Further east in Square A9, the rock tumble appears to have been part of a backfill operation between walls W11164 and W11166, since modern materials (blue nylon, tin can pieces) were found below the rocks and the pottery calls were mixed. This indicates that this area was exposed to the HUC excavation. If this is true, then the question remains regarding to what extent the main east/west wall (W11083) was exposed to this excavation, since the HUC crew would have had to move over it to dump on the south side. A careful examination of the MacAlister plan (Vol III Plan VI) shows that indeed, MacAlister exposed the south face of the east/west wall system (W11081, W11083, W11087) west as far as wall W11161. His plan indicates every wall uncovered by the 2006 excavation. There is no evidence from his plan that went further west than wall W11161. In fact, he does not show “stone surface/platform” 11163 on his plan. Thus, the 2006 excavations’ findings of mixed pottery readings for this area are entirely consistent with MacAlister’s plans.

Squares D9 and E9 show probable evidence of MacAlister’s trenching along the south face of the main casemate wall below the founding level of W 11087 (11145; East Sec of D9 and East Sec of E9). However this area was too disturbed by later vegetal, insect and rodent activity to provide conclusive discussion (note the “backward” trench line in the East Sec of D9, Fig. 3).



Figure 3: Square D9 looking at east balk, showing “reverse” foundation trench, actually evidence of trenching by earlier excavations (photo 0706_1822).



Figure 4: Square E9 showing foundation trench which corresponds to the “reverse” trench in D9 (Fig. 3)

What does seem to be certain is that following the trenching, a section of the wall gave way and slumped into the open trench creating the appearance of a “tower” or “buttress” (11015). As there was no LB pottery in the collapse while the surrounding loci (11017, 11018) were Iron I/LB calls, and given the disheveled nature of the proposed tower and that the trench was later found, the above conclusion (slumping) seems most probable.

Along the north side of the main east/west wall system (W11083, W11081, W11087, W11082) it was obvious that earlier excavators were active. Each of the rooms (A-E) along the north side had been unearthed by the earlier excavations. Again, when examining MacAlister’s plan (Figure 5), it can be seen that he uncovered all of the walls re-excavated by Gezer 2006 with the curious exception of W11101 and W11056. W11101 is at an extant elevation that would have permitted MacAlister easy access, and the room formed by it and W11083 and W11000 (Room E) was backfilled (according to Gezer 2006 pottery calls and stratigraphy), but of all the rooms along the north side, this room alone was shown to have been excavated to a very shallow level. W11056 clearly was excavated previously (North and West Secs Y8) and does not appear to have been exposed during the HUC excavations (see discussion above).

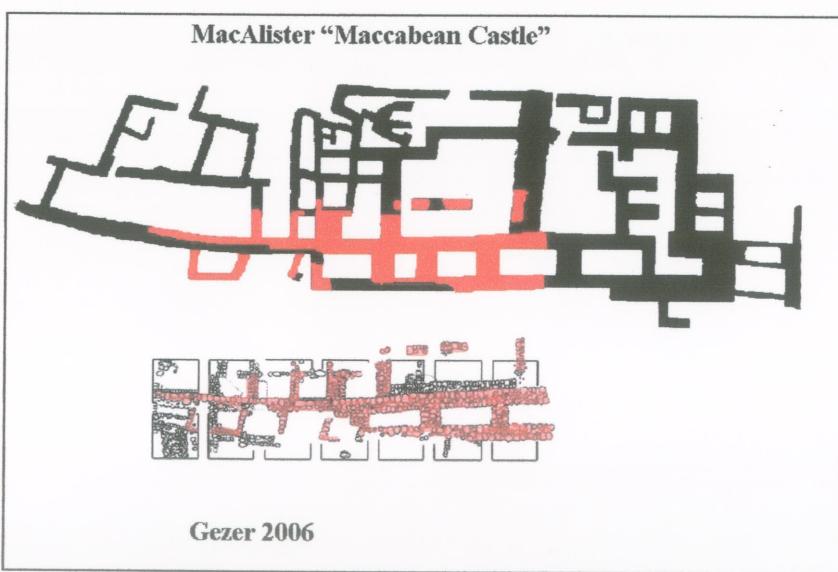


Figure 5: MacAlister’s plan compared to Gezer 2006

When the current excavation dug below the founding levels of these walls it could be clearly seen that they had been previously excavated straight down along the face of the walls, to levels below the founding levels, and then backfilled (North Section E8; East Section D8; W Section D8; East Section C8; West Section C8; East Section Y8; under wall W 11084). The pottery from these backfilled spaces was predictably mixed from Hellenistic to Iron Age. In one Square (E8) the activity of both excavations could be distinguished. MacAlister uncovered wall W11146 and W11082 (see MacAlister plan) and robbed out the connecting corner between them. Some of the stones of the wall were then thrown back into the trench (11075) along with assorted pottery and rubble. The "yellow" matrix belonging to the construction phase of these walls (discussed below, Phase 4) is clearly visible in the East and West Sections and mixed in the material within the trench (11075). West of this trench, another trench (11074) was cut which went up to 11075 and stopped at W11146 (North Sec of E8). This trench extended west into Square D8 and went south as far as W11082 (East and North Sections of D8 and West and North Sections of E8). Dever's 1990 plan indicates that he created this trench in that he shows W11082 and W11146 with the corner missing. An additional trench with similar fill to 11074, (fill 11071=11092) was seen in Square C8. This trench (11023, 11025) comprised the whole of Square C8 north of W11082, with the exception of a portion of a flagstone surface (S11027; discussed below in Phase 4) in the eastern portion. The similarity in digging techniques and fill matrices indicate that this trench should also be assigned to Dever.

Thus, while in most areas north of the main wall system, the evidence points to MacAlister activity, later excavation may also be reasonably postulated. The difficulty arising from excavating areas previously excavated (twice) can not be understated. The remaining evidence in these areas is scant. Fortunately, enough was left that reasonable hypotheses may be proffered.

In addition, each of the casemates not excavated by Dever/HUC (Dever numbers 13, 14, 15) were found to have been previously excavated and backfilled (Fills 11009, 11016, 11028, 11122). Casemates 14 and 15 were excavated to the founding levels of the walls, while Casemate 13 was only excavated in the western half to a level some 30cm above founding levels. Interestingly, it appears that MacAlister only excavated rooms 13, 14 and 15, since Dever reports that Room 12 had not been previously excavated.

The Gezer 2006 excavations uncovered no evidence, either architectural or ceramic for occupation prior to the Hellenistic period, with the exception of a Turkish musketball (Obj # 110), and a very few pottery calls denoting "later forms".

PHASE 3: HELLENISTIC

Loci:

Walls: W11055; W11046a; W11084a; W11170a; W11101; Perhaps part of W11056
Surface? S11067 (Bench?)
11057; 11108; 11129

The architectural remains of Phase 3 show that this period was one of extensive rebuilding and shoring up of existing wall systems (especially the main system W11081-W11083).

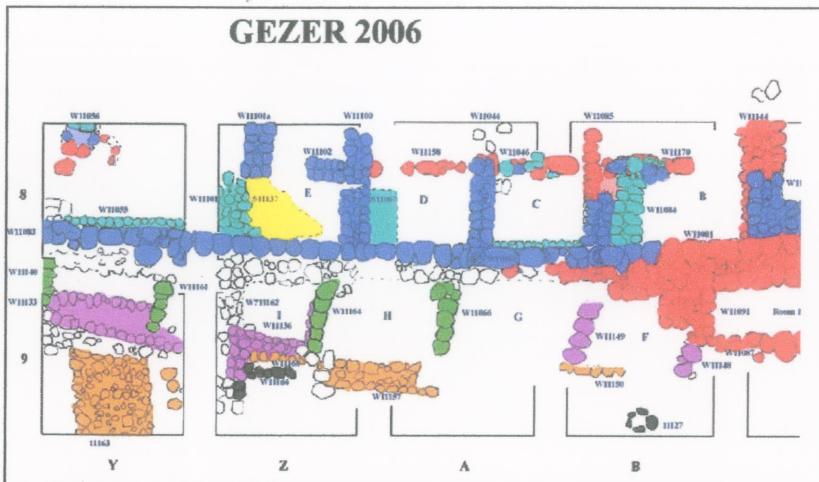


Figure 6: Plan of west squares: Hellenistic Phase 3 (light blue), Phase 5a (dark blue), Phase 5b (yellow) and Phase 6 (red).

Perhaps the clearest architectural evidence for the Hellenistic occupation of this area was the remains of a poorly constructed wall (W11055) uncovered in Square Y8 (Fig. 6; and photos 0612_0231; 0612_0228; 0614_0333). The fill under this wall (11057) was predominately Hellenistic and was placed directly over the earlier east west wall W11083. No evidence of a room was discovered and no additional walls could be associated with it in immediate context; it was only within Y8. Not enough of W11056 was uncovered to posit a firm relationship to other features in Y8; it may be that this wall was rebuilt several times (as indicated in Fig. 6); this wall has been placed in Phase 5. Wall 11055 was preserved as only one course and one row and its crude construction aids in dating other posited Hellenistic features on the North side of the main east/west wall system (W11083, W11081, W11087). Most probably this was part of larger scale Hellenistic rebuilding activities that extended as far east as the “Solomonic Gate” (Discussed in *BA* XXXIV, 1971). The wall appears to have collapsed to the north and also down slope south (Photo 0623_0910; L. 11008). Extending eastward from W11055 is W11101 which at first appeared to be part of a north-south wall abutting W11083, but was later seen as a blocking wall or perhaps simply a blockage between the W11083 and Phase 5 wall W11101a.

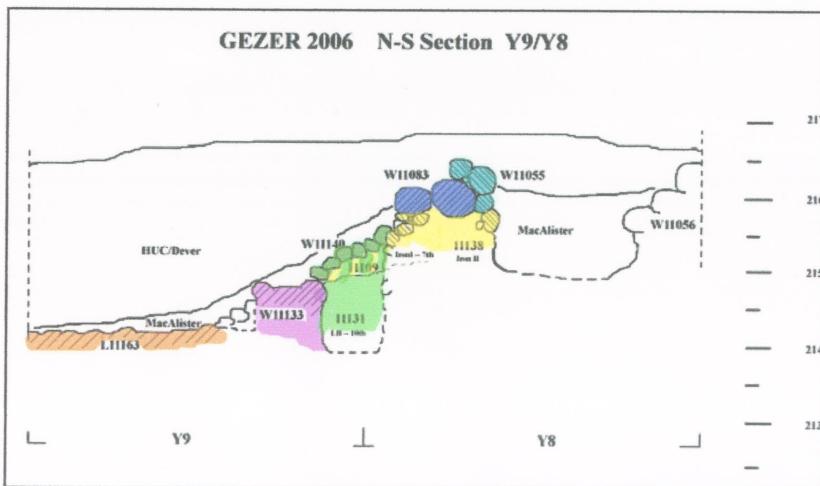


Figure 7: Hellenistic wall 11055 (light blue) related to earlier remains

Three other walls show evidence of Hellenistic rebuilding: W11085/W11084/11084a, W11070/11070a, (in Square B8) and W11083 (in Square A8). All three of these are found in close proximity to an area of W11083 which seems to have undergone some extensive damage. Just west of the SE corner of A8 and continuing into the east bank of A8, a three-course two-row section of W11083 can be seen to slump (Photo 0704 1550). Two of the wall boulders

are cracked in the same direction (Photo 0704_1550). This damage is possibly due to geomorphic activity. Alternately, this section may have been the location of a military breach in W11083. In either event, the area needed repair to both the main wall (W11083) and the nearby walls (W11085/W11084, W11070).

W11084a was a rebuilding phase of W11085/W11084 and formed the west wall of Room B, abutting W11083 to the south. The other walls of this room were W11086/W11144 to the east and W11170/W11170a to the north. The Hellenistic surface level might be indicated by the level at which W11084a was founded (215.14m), but no remains of this surface are extant owing to earlier excavations. The pottery within and below W11084a (L11129, baskets 11422, 11423, 11425) also indicates a Hellenistic dating ("Iron II Predom, Hellenistic"). The pottery from wall W11084 was Iron Age and its construction was more solid than that of W11084a, thus two rebuilds of wall W11084 are posited (Phase 3 and Phase 5, discussed below).

MacAlister found the rebuilds of wall W11085 but did not understand them. This is evidenced from his plan, which indicates a thicker (four-row wall, 11085 + 11084/a) with a thinner one-row wall (11085) extending to the north (Fig. 8).

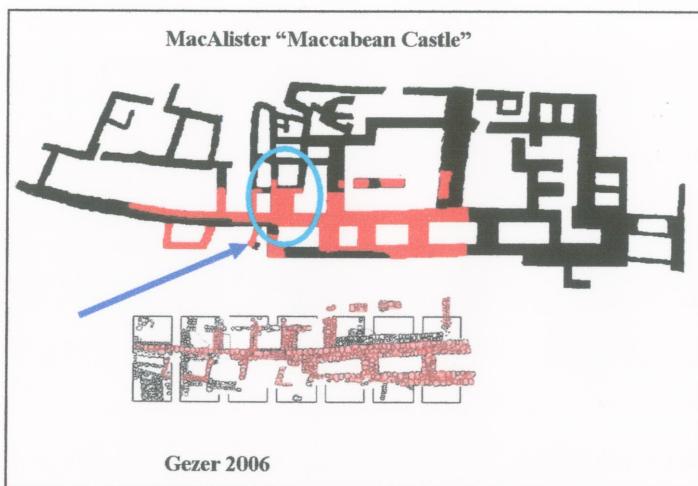


Figure 8: MacAlister's plan showing W11085

A similar repair can be seen in the more crude upper construction of W11046a, an east/west wall extending between W11085 and W11044 opposite W11083 (forming Room C in Squares A8/B8). Within in the construction of W11046a a reused quern was found. At 214.80-90m, wall W11046a could well have been just at or below the Hellenistic floor surface forming a threshold. It is unlikely that at its current height it was an earlier wall, given that it would have blocked the entrance to Room C, assuming the earlier floors were at a lower level. It does however fall in line with earlier wall W11158 of Phase 6.

A Hellenistic repair to W11083 in Room C (Squares A8/B8) was not excavated as a wall rebuild because of the poor construction technique, which made it look like rubble fill. But this construction, seen in Photo 0614_0315, extending two plus meters from W11085 along the north face of W11083 is very similar to the wall construction of W11084a and thus should be considered as a Hellenistic repair of W11083. Since the pottery from the inside of Room C, was mixed backfill, it is impossible to determine dating from the pottery (although a Hellenistic lead weight, Obj. 163, was found in the upper fill of this room). This repair stands on the north side of the area where the "slump" in W11083 can be seen from the south.



Figure 9: Room C; Hellenistic rebuild along W11081/3, Squares B8/A8. Construction similar to the W11084 rebuild in B8 (left in photo above) (Photo 0614_0315).

Only one other Hellenistic feature was excavated in 2006. In the southwest corner of Room D (bounded on the south by W11083, on the west by W11100, on the east by W11044, and on the north by W11046a; see Fig. 6), a “bench” was left by previous excavations (S?11067). It is unclear exactly what this was (possibly a floor surface), but the pottery and level indicates that it should be dated to the Hellenistic phase. The level of this bench corresponds roughly to the level posited for the Hellenistic surface of Room B.

Combining the HUC data (*BA*, 1971) with that from Gezer 2006, it seems that in the Hellenistic period the entire stretch of walls from the gate complex to Gezer 2006’s Y squares were in use. This gives light to MacAlister’s misdating of the entire structure as Hellenistic. The reuse and rebuilding appear to have been on basically the same plan as the Iron II (and Persian??) wall systems (see below for details). The floor surfaces were up to 60cm above those of the earlier periods.

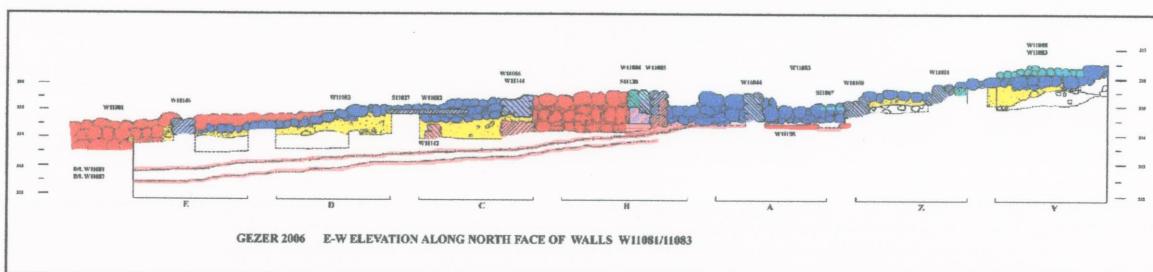


Figure 10: Elevation looking south along W11081/W11083 showing relationship of Hellenistic Phase 3 remains (light blue) to other strata: Phase 5a (dark blue), Phase 5b (yellow) and Phase 6 (red). Red lines below in Squares E, D, C and B indicate Bottom Levels for Wall W11081 and W11087 determined from excavation within the casemates.

PHASE 4: BABYLONIAN/PERSIAN

The only evidence for this phase is ceramic. Numerous pottery calls from the fills dated partially to Persian.

PHASE 5: POST CASEMATE REBUILD

Phase 5b: Construction phase for 5a

11138; 11030; 11029; 11020; 11094; 11073; and material under W11146 and east bank of E8 (unexcavated).

Phase 5a

Walls: W11081, W11087, W11091, W11090, W11089 still in use and rebuilt where necessary. New: W11083 = W11045=W11047; W11082; W11086; W11146; W11084 (=Rebuild of 11085); W11170b; W11044; W11046b; W11100; W11101a; W11102; possibly parts of W11056.

Surfaces: S11027; S11137.
11109; 11107; 11139; 11129a.

The most extensive rebuild and reuse of the walls west of the gate complex occur in this period. A series of five (or six) rooms was constructed in Phase 5. These rooms are connected to the inner (northern) face of walls W11081 and W11083 (these walls are discussed below). At times the walls of these rooms are built over and reuse walls from Phase 6, while at other times they appear to be new constructions. The surface levels for all but Room A (see below) were removed by previous excavations, but can be posited from the founding levels of the walls.

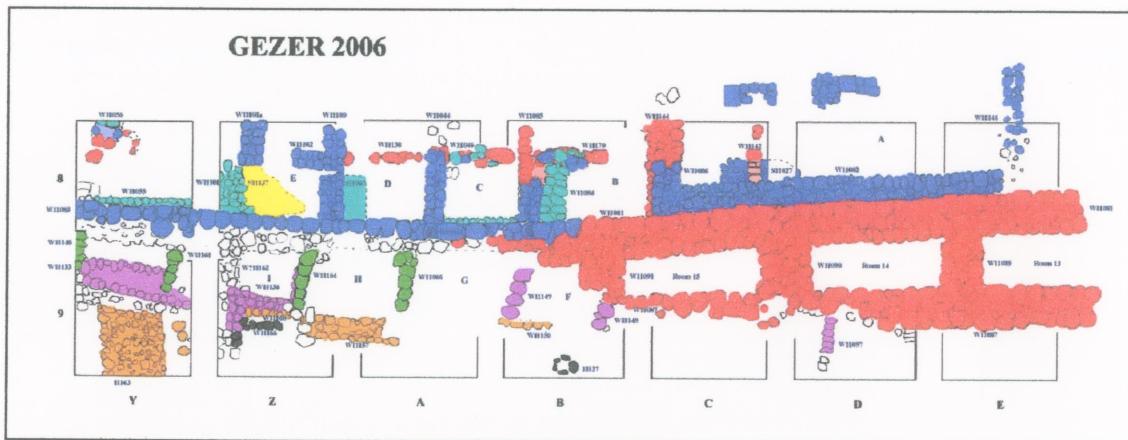


Figure 11: Field Plan showing relationship of Phase 5a (dark blue) and Phase 5b (yellow) to other strata: Phase 3 (light blue); Phase 6a (dark red); Phase 8 (dark green); Phase 10 (dark purple); Phase 12 (brown); and Phase 13 (grey).

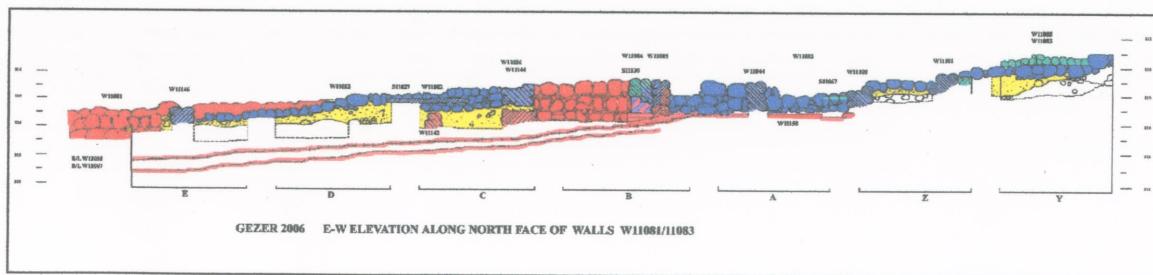


Figure 12: Elevation illustrating the vertical rise along the length of the excavated walls facing south (Phase 5a in dark blue, Phase 5b in yellow).

Phase 5b

This rebuilding was confined to the north side of the original casemate system and founded on Phase 5a. This is a "yellow" chalky construction fill (11138, 11137, 11029, 11020, 11094, 11139) found in Squares E8, D8, C8, Z8 and Y8) which underlies the new walls (up to a level which covers the first course of the walls) and floors of this period

(Fig. 12, Photo 0704_1563; see also Photos 0706_1800 [C8] and 0706_1797 [E8]). Since the founding level of wall W11144 in C8 is still below the level of excavations, it is not possible to determine if the material underlays this wall, but a reasonable assumption is that it does. Pottery from excavated sections of this material (11029, 11094, 11020) indicate an Iron II context for this material. Additional 5b material was uncovered in E8 (11073).



Figure 13: West balk of Square D8 illustrating the Phase 5b “yellow” construction fill (below later trenching) (Photo 0704_1563).

Phase 5a: North Rooms

Room A: Parallel to and abutting the original casemate north wall (W11081) a new wall (W11082) was laid. This wall was two rows wide and constructed of boulders averaging 40-50cm in diameter with minimal use of chinking stones. It extended some 12 meters, from W11144/11086 in the west (C8) to at least a point which would connect it with wall W11146 in the east. Yet the evidence of the “yellow” fill beyond this point and MacAlister’s plan indicates it may have originally extended further, yet no real evidence can be found for this. These three walls (all of similar construction) W11082, W11144/W11086 and W11146 together with two pillar bases and associated structures north of C8 and D8, and another wall further north of the current excavation grid comprise Room A (previously known as “Palace 8000”). Wall W11146, within Square E8, along with the connecting section of W11082 were previously robbed out, most probably by MacAlister. All of these walls are preserved to a height of 2 courses. Wall W11086 is a rebuild of an earlier wall (W11144) as evidenced by the founding levels of the stones as well as the layer of construction fill between the courses (see photo). This 3-course wall, 2 outer courses of large cobles with smaller stones in-between, is bonded to W11082 and forms a solid corner for Room A.

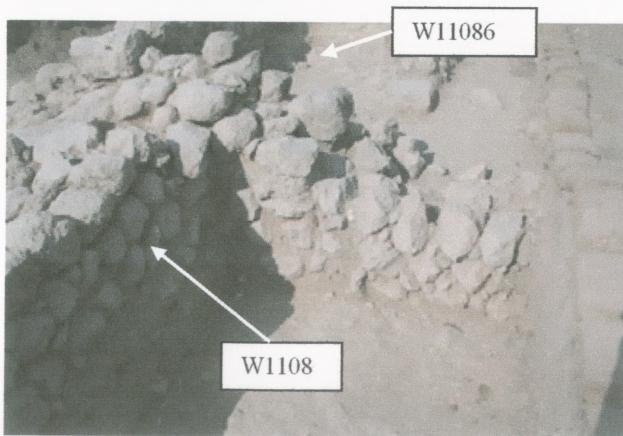


Figure 14: Square C8 showing W11086 bonded to W11082 and built over W11144 (Photo 0706_1799).

One additional section of this fill was left unexcavated by both MacAlister and HUC/Dever. A small extant section of a cobblestone surface (S11027) in Square C8 (214.95m) was also founded upon this yellow construction fill. The fill was almost 75cm deep at this point, showing that the Phase 5 builders intentionally raised the level from the earlier phase (Fig. 15). These uneven cobblestones (ca 20cm dia) were found abutting wall W11082 (at a level one course of stones from founding level), 80cm northward and stretching 160cm from the east balk. They continued into that balk and at least two stones can be seen in the west balk of D8. The surface in D8 was robbed out by archaeological trenching. The surface level (ca 214.95) of S11027 fits well with the cobbles surrounding the two pillar bases just to the north of C8 and D8 (not in Gezer 2006's excavation area, but plotted). This indicates that this surface possibly went across much of Room A/"Palace 8000."



Figure 15: Illustrating the level difference in Room A (C8) between the Phase 5 surface and the Phase 6 walls (Photo # 0627_1280).

Room B was a 2.75mx2m room bounded on the west by W11084, a rebuild of Phase 6 wall W11085 (rebuilt again in the Hellenistic Period –Phase 2-- W11084a, see above), while existing wall/threshold W11070 to the north was rebuilt (W11170b) in this phase and W11444 plus its Phase 5 upper addition wall W11086 (see Room A) to the east enclosed the space.

It is possible that the “yellow” fill also formed a Phase 5 surface for Room B. Previously unexcavated material (Surf?11130, L11129a – the lowest material in this locus, probably to be seen as later) was found some 60cm under rebuilt wall W11084 at 214.60m (Sq B8, photo 0703_1482). The pottery from this surface/fill (baskets 11424, 11426, 11427, 11429, 11430, 11471, 11472, 11477) dated consistently to the 11th/10th. Basket 11428, Surf11130 was contaminated, but baskets 11473 (S11130) and 11474 (11130.1) both gave 11th/10th readings. The color and composition (as seen in Fig. 16) however provides a strong link to the construction fill of Phase 5b. The level of the surface at 214.60m, placing it actually lower and yet upslope from the cobble surface of Room A/"Palace 8000" (214.95m), mitigates against this interpretation. These should probably be dated to Phase 6a (below).

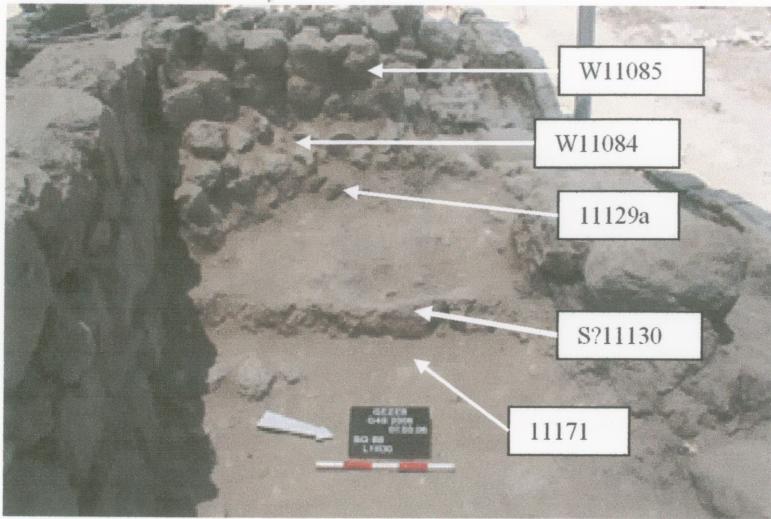


Figure 16: Room B showing locus 11130 which may be part of the “yellow” construction material of Phase 5b.

Room C was a 2.75m x 2m room bounded to the east by rebuilt wall W11085/W11084, on the south by W11083, on the west by wall W11044 probably in its first phase of use (apparently not founded on an earlier wall, but built over Phase 6 W11046 at its northern end; and floating at a level similar to the level of the cobble surface (S11027) in Room A) and on the north by W11046b, the rebuild phase of wall/threshold W11146. The Phase 5 interior and surface were previously excavated.

Room D was a 2.75m x 2m room formed in the east by wall W11044 (apparently not founded on an earlier wall but built over W11046 at the north end); the south by W11083; and in the west by W11100, apparently a new construction. It is possible that there was an east-west wall in the same line as W11170b-W11046b and built over Phase 6 Wall W11158, but nothing was found and this section of the square was too disturbed being close to topsoil. Unless the “bench/surface” (11067) belongs to this period (highly unlikely), all interior material from Phase 5 was previously excavated.

Room E was a 2.75?m x 2m room formed by wall W 11100 on the east, which had a short cross wall of two rows one meter long (W11102) extending to the west north west at a 90 degree angle from W11100 and is in line with the W11158-W111046-W111170 wall system. This formed an entryway and a small “anteroom” to the north of Room E. On the west, wall W11101a extends at least from a line across from W11102 to the north (some evidence of its continuation outside of the Gezer 2006 Field may be seen on the surface). This 3 row wall may connect to the south with wall W11083, but without further excavation this connection is dubious (W11101 is discussed in Phase 2 above). Thus, Room E may have originally extended along wall W11083 to the west.

The room, as excavated, and the “anteroom”, both had a plaster “surface” (S11137) which lipped up to wall W11083. This surface contained pottery dated to the Iron Age II (10th) while the fill below the surface was also predominately Iron II (and contained 11th/10th sherds). This “surface” may actually be a weathered section of the “yellow” Phase 5 construction fill (exposed by MacAlister), since it laps up to the founding course of W11083, presumably too deep for “surface” level for the room.

It is possible that another room was formed by W11101a, W11083, and W11056 in Z8 and Y8 but this last wall (W11056) could not be phased with any certainty owing to previous excavations.

Phase 5a: The Wall System: Architectural Relationship of W11083 to W11081 Casemate System

During Phase 5 significant rebuilding activities were conducted west of Room A/“Palace 8000” along the line of the northern wall of the original (Phase 6) casemate system (W11081, W11087 W11091, W11090, W11089). It seems clear that the west section of wall, labeled W11083 to differentiate it from the more solid northern casemate wall

W11081, is a rebuild of an earlier wall which was destroyed prior to Phase 5. The extant wall west of W11081 (W11083) is only one to two rows wide while W11081 is three rows wide. Therefore, we must assume that Wall W11083 was originally 3 rows wide and that the outer row/s has eroded downslope. A collapse tumble (11107, in Z9), probably associated with the earlier wall (pre-W11083) has pottery dated to the Iron IA and LB. It is also possible, though far less likely, that W11083 was an original construction of Phase 5. Since the wall itself has not and will not be excavated, conclusions must remain tentative unless further evidence is adduced.

Given that W11085 (in B8) is contemporary to the Casemate system (W11081, Phase 6) then it is improbable that all of wall W11081 was destroyed down to destruction 11156/11159 (A9) with W11085 being left standing and also remaining intact during such a massive rebuild as W11083. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that W11081 continues westward, at its lowest construction course, into the balk between A9 and B9. W11083 may be safely posited to comprise only the upper extant courses in B9.

Although the lower courses may be part of the original W11081 system, the main wall system changes both orientation and construction at a place approximately 1 meter east of the west balk of B8. Here the construction shifts from large well built boulders 3 rows wide and 3 to 4 courses deep (extant) to a more patchwork construction of smaller boulders 1–2 rows wide and 1–3 courses deep (extant). This section (extending from B8 through Y8) is also marked by reuse of large stone vessels (e.g. vat L. 11147). In addition while the whole of the wall system continues upslope, as discussed above there is a slump in Square A8 (probably occurring post-Phase 5) and the orientation of the wall bends to the north.

Several unanswered questions remain regarding the rebuilding of this wall system. A major issue deals with the eastward extent of the casemate system itself. MacAlister plotted Casemate Rooms 13, 14 and 15 (Fig. 17, note that they are improperly sized by MacAlister) and then saw another room westward bounded on the east by a much more narrow wall than the other casemate room dividers.

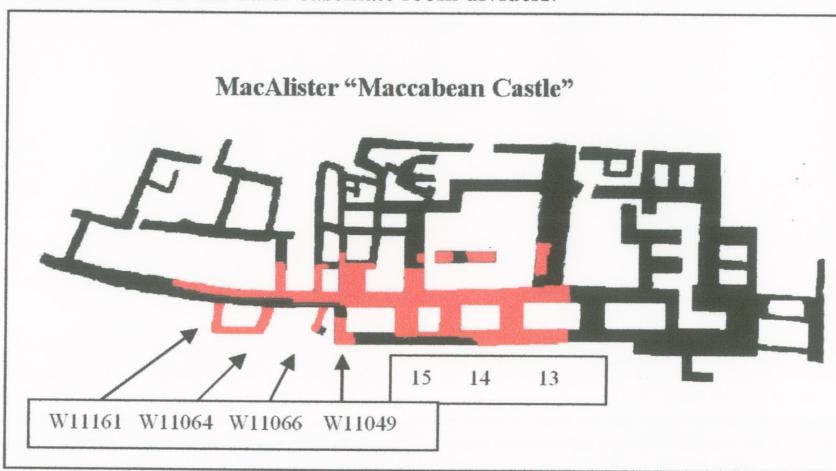


Figure 17: MacAlister’s plan showing his plan of the eastward extension of the casemate system compared to Gezer 2006’s finds.

Given the walls found by Gezer 2006, it seems very likely that MacAlister did not find another casemate room. What is certain is that MacAlister’s casemate system ended and the wall became a single line with more narrow walls extending southwestward from it. This comports well with the Gezer 2006 finds. In addition the HUC excavation also found only one wall of the supposed casemate system even further west (Wall 1001 in Field II Area 1, *Gezer I*). Figure 18 illustrates a possible casemate system section (W11081, W11087) superimposed over the extant W11083 in Squares Y9 and Y8. This shows that the elevation of the founding levels of any casemate system would require that a great deal of the tel had been eroded prior to MacAlister’s digging. Since there is an earlier “platform” (11163) below where the outer casemate would have been it seems unlikely that that much erosion would have occurred naturally. Some question must therefore be raised regarding the extent of the casemate system and its relationship to MacAlister’s “Outer Wall” on the south side of the Tel. It is possible that this section of wall (W11083, extending to W1001, HUC Field II?) was protected by the “outer wall” and thus was not a casemate. This

might help to explain the very small projecting walls (W11140, W11161, W11164, W11166) which clearly were not part of a defensive system and would not have been exposed as such (see below).

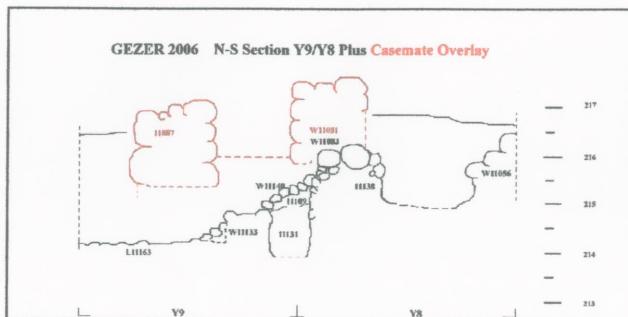


Figure 18: Section overlay of casemate system (red) consistent with the casemate system in Squares D and E upon actual wall remains of Square Y (black).

Stratigraphic Relationship of W11083 to W11081

A second issue regarding the rebuilding of the casemate system concerns dating of W11083. Because of the disruption caused by earlier excavations and that Gezer 2006 has not been able excavate below the walls, precise dating of this wall is difficult.

At the western most extent of excavated W11083 (Y8, Z8), the wall is founded on the “yellow” Phase 5b construction material from the Iron II, thereby placing this section in Phase 5a. Material which would have been immediately under the southern second and third rows of W11083 (now eroded away) in Sq Y8 (11109) dates from the Iron II (basket 11332: 10th/9th, 8th/7th) and the basket below that (basket 11333) is a mix of Iron I (with painted ware, RSB) and Iron II (10th/9th). On the northern side of the wall in Y8, the Phase 5 chalky “yellow” construction fill from Room A can be seen (11138, Fig. 19). Just east, in Z8 the material from the surface (S11137) also appears to be the same material (see above, Room E).

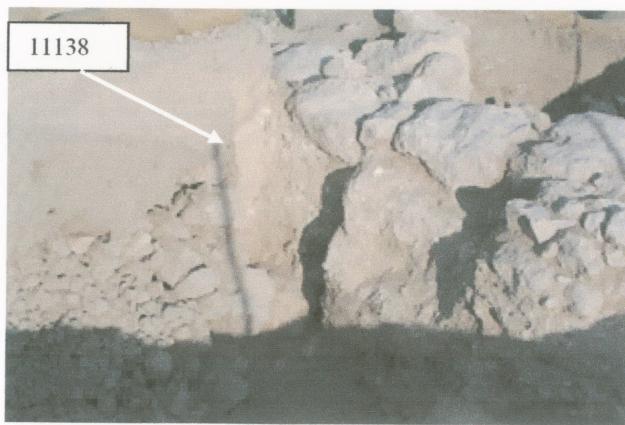


Figure 19: Square Y8 looking east showing the construction “yellow” (11138) under W11083 in section and in Y8’s east balk (Photo 0707_1875).

It also seems that some of the debris in Y9 (11109) should be dated to this phase. This debris is between walls W11140 and W11161 and may indicate that W11140 should not be seen as part of the Phase 8 “diagonal” wall system (W11140, W11161, W11164, W11066). The pottery readings from this material graded from the upper basket (11332) at Iron II (10th/9th, 8th/7th) to the lower basket (11333) at Iron I (painted ware RSB), Iron II (10th/9th).

This may indicate an indistinguishable locus change, but in any event it shows that at least some of 11109 should be considered as Phase 5.

In squares A and B the material becomes more complex. The central issue is the dating and nature of destruction 11156/11159/11070 in A9/B9. This discussion will be dealt with in the explanation of Phase 7. Enough has been said here to maintain that the Phase 5 wall W11083 is a rebuild, at places a complete rebuild, of W11081.

PHASE 6: CASEMATE PHASE

Loci:

Phase 6b; Construction phase: 11095; 11152; 11069; 11096; 11171.

Phase 6a: Walls: W11081, W11087, W11091, W11090, W11089; W11158; W11044; W11046; W11085; W11170; W11144; W11142; W11056

Surface? S11130, 11130.1

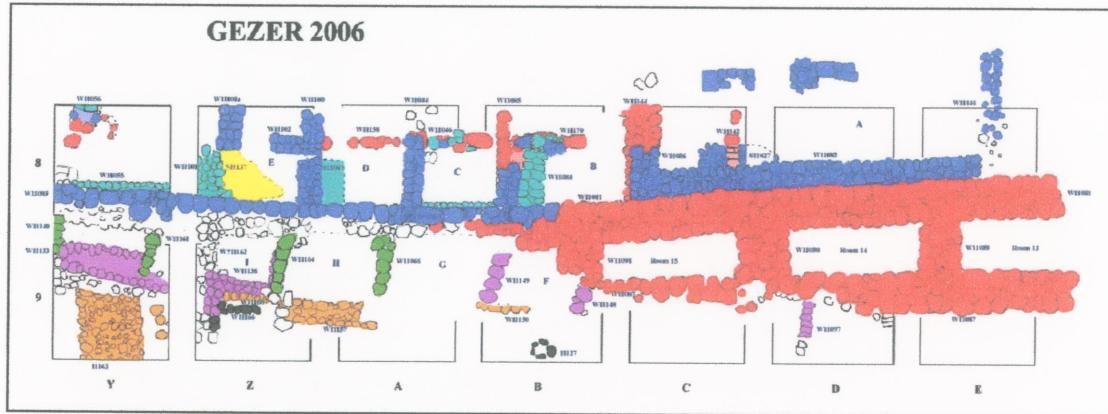


Figure 20: Plan showing Phase 6 architecture in red.

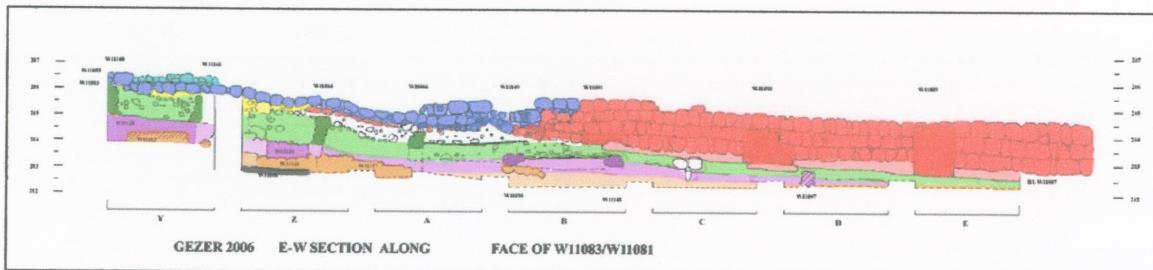


Figure 21: Elevation facing north along face of W11083/W11081. Phase 3 (light blue), Phase 5a (yellow), Phase 5b (dark blue), Phase 6a (dark red), Phase 6b (light red), Phase 7 (white), Phase 8 (dark green), Phase 9 (light green), Phase 10 (dark purple), Phase 11 (light purple), Phase 12 (brown), Phase 13 (grey).

Phase 6b: Construction Fill

On the south face of wall W11087 in Squares E9 and D9, below the founding levels, a leveling fill was uncovered. Since this had already been trenched out previously, the only evidence was in "section" and thus no pottery could be collected that was not contaminated or whose excavation endangered the stability of the wall itself. Further west in D9 and C9 the stones of W11087 were placed on mudbrick detritus and a "slab" of mudbrick in the balk between D9

and C9. Neither of these were excavated, although it was assigned locus number 11095 in D9. Nor was excavated the fill (mudbrick detritus) under W11087 in C9. Since this is the extent of W11087, no ceramic evidence is available for the dating of the founding of this wall. The casemate rooms were excavated (see above for details) but they offered nothing but backfill to the level excavated in 2006.

The Casemate System

Phase 6 is marked by the main construction of the area: the casemate wall system extending west from the gate complex.

The walls are the main feature of this Phase. The northern (inner) casemate wall (W11081) is solidly built of large boulders 3 rows wide and 3-4 courses deep (extant). It extends from the gate complex through Squares E8, D8, and C8 to just east of the west balk of Square B8 (see discussion above). Parallel to this wall is the southern (outer) casemate wall (W11087). It is built similarly to W11081, but is only preserved to 2 courses. As discussed above, a section of this wall in D8 has slumped away. This wall extends from the gate complex westward through Squares E8, D8 and C8 but is lost at the western end of C8. Only a few probable smaller stones remain of this wall in B8. This comports well with the plan provided by MacAlister, who shows the outer wall ending at precisely this spot. Connecting these parallel walls are three "room dividers", spacing the walls between 150cm and 175cm apart. Two and one half meters from the east balk of E8 is the first divider (W11089); a 150cm wide wall composed of 75cm boulders and chinking stones. It creates casemate room 13 to the east and begins casemate room 14 to the west (Dever numbering). Casemate 14 is 4.5 meters long and is broken by room divider W11090, which is similarly constructed to W11089 and 175cm wide. Casemate room 15 follows to the west and extends 4.75m until the remains of room divider W11091. What remains of this wall is a platform 1m long by 1.5m wide. The westernmost meter+ of this room is open, owing to the loss of wall W11087 at this point. Again this is precisely what MacAlister depicts.

Rooms to the North of the Casemate

On the north, the foundations of W11081 were covered over by W11082 (Phase 5) in all but Room B, but excavations did not reach the founding levels of W11081 in this room. However those casemate rooms excavated to the founding levels provided the necessary information. Clearly the casemate system followed the natural slope of the hill upward to the west in a smooth line. The actual foundation materials for W11081 are difficult to posit. Similarly, the extent or construction of the earlier wall upon which rebuild wall W11083 is based cannot be determined with certainty from present evidence (see discussion above). As to associated architecture; from the levels of several walls uncovered to the north of W11081, it is possible to posit their temporal connection to the Phase 6 wall system.

At the west balk of Square B8, wall W11144 seems to have its founding at or near the level of W11081. This is a large and supportive wall of 4 rows of 30cm stones and it extends from W11081 northward beyond the Gezer 2006 excavation field. W11144 formed the western end of the so-called "Palace 10000." Another wall, presumed to be from this phase was uncovered 2.8m to the east of W11144. This wall (W11142) was excavated below the "yellow" construction fill of Phase 5, and was not excavated to its founding level. The wall consists of a single row of stones, one of which was hewn to a flattened rounded rectangle (see Fig 15). The wall appears to continue under Phase 5 wall (W11082) and probably connects to W11081. If this is so, then there would be a small room at the southwestern end of "Palace 10000"; this "room" has not yet been given a number in current excavations as excavations are inconclusive to date.

About 4.5 meters west of W11144 stood wall W11185. This wall is somewhat of a puzzlement in that it is preserved as a one row wall of 25 cm stones, yet is preserved at least 7 courses. Structurally, this is unsound. It may be that a "pile" of stones to the west of this wall actually formed another row, yet the lowest course (in the north of B8) indicates this is not entirely the case (see Fig 22). This wall underwent at least 2 rebuilds (W111084/a, see above). As noted above, material previously unexcavated was found under the rebuilds of W11085. This material, tentatively called surface S11130, was dated by the pottery to 11th/10th, as was its point 1 (11130.1). The

material under the Point 1(11171) was also dated to 11th/10th. Thus it is plausible that this material did form part of the Phase 6 surface.



Figure 22: Room C showing the fallen stones that may have been another row of W11085 (Photo # 0621_0896).

East-West Wall System North of W11081

The line of east/west walls north of W11083 (W11158, W11046 and W11170) can be dated to this phase based on levels. This line forms a divider approximately 1.75-2.25 meters from the north face of W11083 (which is presumed to be the rebuild of the original continuation of W11081). The westernmost extent of this divider disappears under Phase 3 wall W11100 and has not been excavated further. The stones range in size from a very large boulder in Room C (Fig. 9 and 22) to almost cobble sized and were laid somewhat roughly. There may have been some mortar used but the poor condition of this wall system stemming from its rebuilds and the previous excavations makes analysis difficult.

Other Possible Phase 6 Walls

The Diagonal Wall System South of the Casemate

There are seven walls extending southwest from near the south face of walls W11083 and W11087. Although initially considered part of the Casemate phase, these are best seen as belonging to Phase 8. A full discussion of the difficulties with this dating will be found in Phase 8.

East-West Walls in Y9-A9

Additionally one may argue that some or all of the east/west walls uncovered down slope from W11083 in Y9, Z9 and A9 (W11133, W11168, W11136, W11157) are foundations for a presumed continuation of W11087, but the construction extant is far inferior to that of W11087, and certainly would not be suitable for a continuation of that wall (see above for discussion of the relative levels of the north and south casemate walls). Clearly these are walls, and they may even have been perimeter walls but not associated with the monumental architecture of the gate complex and casemate system. The pottery associated with these walls, although at places contaminated by earlier excavations and dumps, is earlier than Phase 6. Thus on the basis of stratigraphy, pottery and logic these should be dated earlier than the casemate system and will be discussed below in Phases 9, 10 and 11.

Non-Architectural Loci of Phase 6

While almost all of the loci attributed to this phase are wall loci, one area in A8 might provide a window into the fills of Phase 6. Outside to the north of Rooms C and D, and separated from the material outside of Room B by wall W11085 which continues north at a lower level, are fills 11152 and 11069. As expected the pottery was mixed. In Square A, this material yielded a 10th/9th pottery cache, and some seemingly clean pottery from the 11th/10th centuries (including some Iron I chalice fragments) and a metal ring (Obj # 71). Additionally, fill material (11096) from below the modern trench in D8 also provided clean pottery from the 10th century (including chalice fragments, see photo on the cover of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Jan-Feb 2007). The pottery calls from two Phase 8 loci (11131 in Y9 and 11132 in Z9) indicate that these may have continued into Phase 6, or that some contamination may have taken place. These loci are both dated to Phase 8 but perhaps should have been excavated differently; however no evidence to split these loci was seen in the field and cannot be seen in photographs.

PHASE 7: Destruction debris from Phase 8

Loci: 11159; 11156

In Square A9 a destruction layer (excavated as 11170/11156/11159) can be clearly seen in section and photos. A small ledge of this destruction was somehow missed by earlier excavators (Figs. 23, 24). This destruction is made up of burned mudbrick and ash along with chalk chips and other detritus (ca 30cm deep). Because of the slope and the earlier excavations, this area was difficult to excavate. That said the relationship of this material to architectural elements is key to understanding the stratigraphy and phasing of the area.



Figure 23: The “ledge” of destruction material in A9 left by previous excavations (Photo # 0627_1298).



Figure 24: Closer image illustrating the relationship of W11066 to the destruction material (Photo 0627_1293)



Figure 25: The destruction surface 11056 and associated loci (11159 above and 11070 below) in squares A9 and B9 (Photo # 0704_1550)

Much of the issue hangs on the relationship of the casemate system (W11081) to the destruction material in 11159/11156 in A9 and 11131 Y9.

There is clearly a surface (11156/11070) upon which the destruction debris fell. Because of the nature of the excavation very little of this material was available for excavation in 2006. All indications, however, point to this "surface" running under the wall system (W11081), it clearly runs under the point at which the third row of stones in the original "casemate" would have been. Given that the pottery above this "surface" is LB/11th/10th, and the pottery below this (although somewhat mixed) is LB/Iron I, this surface should be dated to the Iron I or early Iron II. This leaves three possibilities:

Possibility 1

If one dates the surface to the same phase as the casemate system, then one must posit a gap in the wall at this point; something which may be possible if the system did not continue westward from B9 as some have argued. The level

of the surface would also be appropriate to this as it is similar to the founding level of W11081 just to the east (compensating for the slope up the tel). In this case the destruction is contemporary with the destruction of the casemate system. The problem with the argument is that there does not seem to be sufficient space for a “corner” of the casemate system given the location of casemate dividing wall W11091 (B9) and assuming that W11085 is also contemporary. It is also possible that the surface represents the “floor” of the next casemate room west after Room 15, however it extends too far westward and ends in a small diagonal wall (W11066) which could have been neither a room divider nor a corner.

Possibility 2

If one dates the surface after the casemate system then one must posit a complete removal of any wall in the area followed by the destruction debris. This does not seem reasonable.

Possibility 3

If one dates the “surface” to prior to the establishment of the casemate system, then the destruction layer (11156/11059) upon which W11081 is founded in A9 and B9 is pre-Phase 6. The debris material then belongs to a destruction also prior to the construction phase of the casemate (or perhaps part of the construction phase itself). This also explains why the surface seems to be cut or is disrupted at its east end (B9) by the upswing of the founding of W11081; the builders chose to allow the founding levels to slope up. The pottery calls from 11156 were LB and 11th/10th. Cross wall W11066 is founded on the destruction debris “surface” (11156/11070) and is surrounded by the debris (11156/11159) (thus earlier than the destruction and contemporary with the “surface”; discussed below). Thus the local (A8/9) sequence seems clear: Debris 11070, then the building of W11066, followed by destruction 11056 with debris 11059, (see Fig. 26).

An issue of difficulty concerns the relative dating of this sequence to W11081 and W11083. As Figure 26 indicates the level of W11066 is similar to that of the lowest construction course of W11081 and thus it is difficult to see the building of W11081 without the destruction of W11066. This difficulty cannot at present be resolved, given that W11066 is founded on the destruction “surface”: which must be prior to the construction of W11081. The “diagonal” walls of which W11066 is a part are discussed in Phase 8.

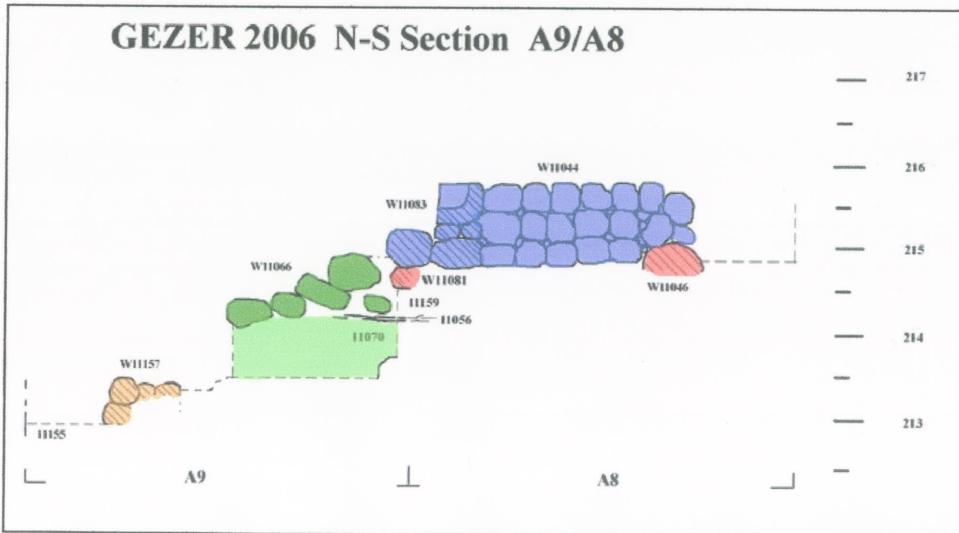


Figure 26: Section in A9/A8 along east face of walls, showing relative locations of loci. Phase 5 (dark blue), Phase 6 (red), Phase 7 (white: 11159, 11156), Phase 8 (dark green), Phase 9 (light green), Phase 12 (brown).

The problem comes when one attempts to follow the debris layer to the west. In Y9, there seems to be a single debris/fill layer (11131) comprised of the material immediately below W11108 and its Phase 5 foundation (11109) to the bottom level of the excavations. This locus (11131) is dated by pottery to the LB/10th and contained a jar

stopper with a stamp dated to the reign of Pharaoh Siamun (Obj # 78?). If this fill (11131) is the same as 11156 then one must posit a fairly level original surface for this area of the tel rather than the slope which now exists and which may be seen in the earlier architecture (W11133, W11157). This does not seem consistent. It seems more reasonable to conclude that 11131 is a different stratum than 11156.

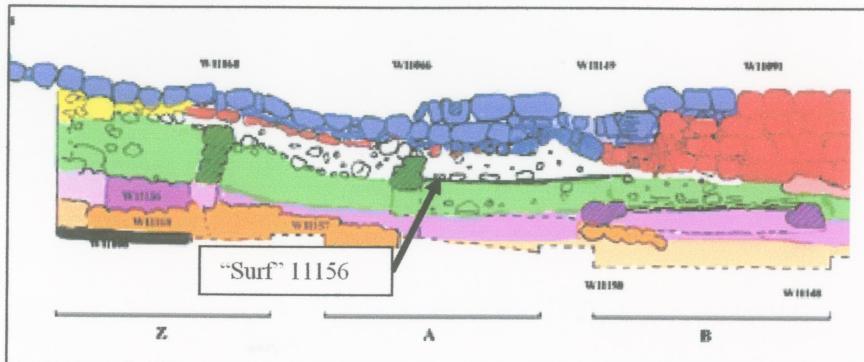


Figure 27: Elevation of the south face of W11083/81 in Z9, A9 and B9 showing Walls W11066 and W11064 and their relation to the Phase 8 walls (dark green: W11066 and W11164), the Phase 9 (light green) “surface” (11070/11156) upon which the Phase 7 debris (white) fell and the “yellow” Phase 5b construction fill (yellow).

PHASE 8: Wall System

Loci: Diagonal Walls: W11140; W11161; W11164; W11066; “Surface” 11156

The Diagonal Wall System

There are 7 single-row, one to two-course walls extending diagonally southwest from the W11081/W11083/11087 line in squares A9 through Y9: W11097, W11148, W11149, W11066, W11164, W11161 and W11140. The stones range in size from large boulders to moderate boulders. MacAlister uncovered many of these and created small, unconnected rooms on his plan. This explains the paucity of clean stratigraphy in the current excavation. W11162, thought to be one of these walls initially, is best seen as later debris. Room numbers (F, G, H, I) have been assigned to these by Gezer 2006, although whether or not these actually comprise “rooms” is questionable.

Several of these walls seem to have the same orientation; the question is whether they all belong to the same phase. Upon closer examination, the eastern 3 walls (W11149, W11148, W11097) are not only lower in elevation, even accounting for the slope of the tel, they are also at a different angle than the western four. They are part of an earlier phase and will be discussed in Phase 9.

The western four (W11140, W11161, W11164, W11066) slope downward at the same angle and orientation from a level similar to the founding level of W11081/3 and may be posited as a foundation or terracing for a Phase 6 casemate system which extended west of its extant end in B9. In order for this to be feasible one would have to posit an extension of W11087 (the southern casemate wall) at a significantly lower level/elevation than the northern wall (W11081/3); a continuation of the casemate system, founded upon and integrated with these walls. This difference in elevation is difficult to envision in a standard casemate system. Currently there is no extant evidence to support such a system, and there is none from the MacAlister plans, or the HUC excavations, although one may hypothesize a continued casemate based on architectural analogies from other Israelite sites (Hazor, Megiddo, Samaria).

Another possibility is that these walls form an external buttresses for the wall (W11081/3) along the natural slope of the hill. This however seems strategically unsound; placing the structural support for the defensive wall on the

exterior face of the wall. This may be possible if these were not actually exterior but rather were enclosed by MacAlister's "outer wall" (discussed above in Phase 5a). Even still, given all currently available evidence, a Phase 6 founding of these is not a likely possibility, although these could have been re-used in Phase 6. Finally, it is also possible that they are slightly later than the casemate phase and represent some extramural building activity between the western extension of W11081 and MacAlister's "outer wall," but there is no evidence to support this.

W11140 is partially in the west balk of Y9 and has not been fully excavated; yet it seems that it has Phase 5b material associated with it. This may be due to contamination from earlier excavations and dumping. In any event, its exact relationship to the system is in question, but it seems at least reasonable that it is one of the system. The western three (W11140, W11161, W11164) have their uppermost extant course below the founding level of W11083. However, the highest extant stone of W11066 is at a level equal to the foundations of W11081/3 (see Fig. 26). This is a problem as regards dating that cannot currently be explained; it would appear to indicate a phasing contemporary with the casemate system (Phase 6) or even perhaps the rebuild (Phase 5), but other factors (see above) mitigate against these conclusions at present.

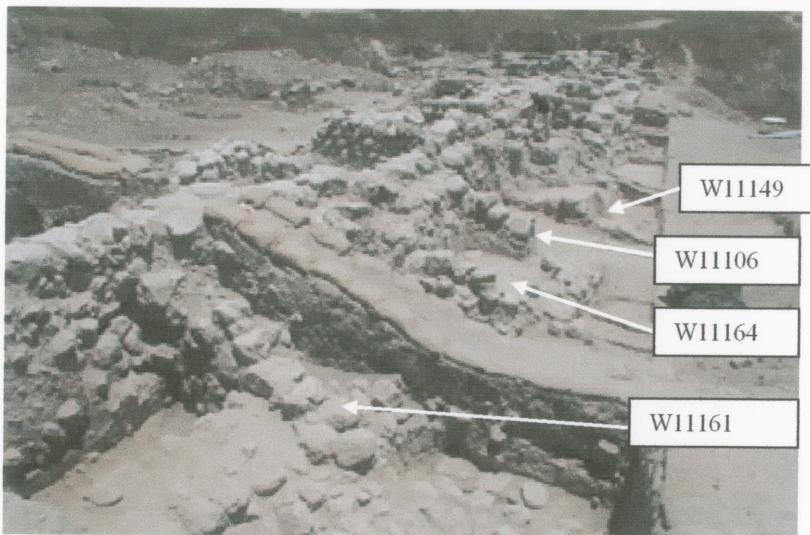


Figure 28: Looking east across the diagonal walls illustrating their slope angle and relation to W11081/3 (Photo 0703_1492).



Figure 29: Same as Figure 28 with walls colored to illustrate relationships. Note the difference in elevation between the green walls (Phase 8) and the purple wall, W11149 (Phase 10).

The lowest and southern most stones of these walls appear to either rest on or are very close to the stones of earlier walls. Directly beneath W11164 there appears an earlier course of stones separated by a thin layer of soil; it seems to be connected to W11136 (Phase 9), but the this cannot be determined precisely at present until W11164 is removed. This wall was not seen as distinct in the field and was not assigned a separate number. Walls 11140 and 11161 in Y9 end in close proximity to east west Phase 9 wall 11133. While a relationship cannot be yet conclusively determined it seems likely that the diagonal walls were aware of the earlier walls and built upon them.

From all the available evidence, it seems most likely that these 4 diagonal walls were founded in Phase 8, prior to the destruction (Phase 7) upon which the casemate system (Phase 6) was founded.

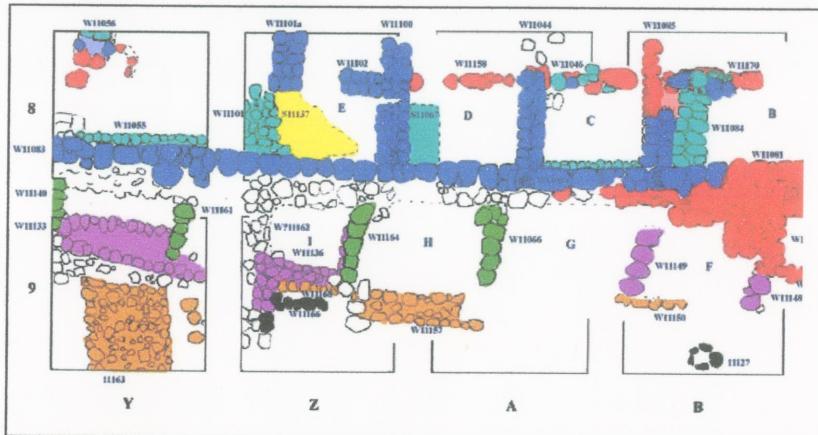


Figure 30: Plan of Squares Y-B illustrating the construction and orientation of the Phase 8 “diagonal” wall system (dark green), notice the difference in orientation of the two Phase 10 “diagonal” walls (purple).

PHASE 9: Destruction Debris of Phase 10

Loci: 11070; 11131; 11143; 11123; 11128

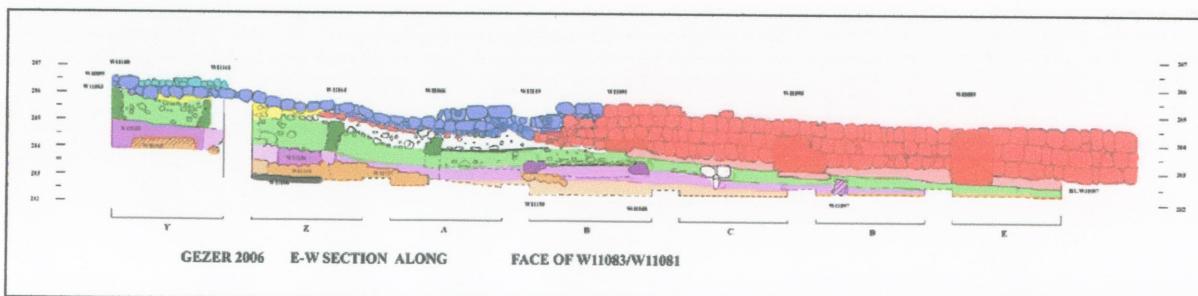


Figure 31: Elevation facing north along face of W11083/W11081. Phase 3 (light blue), Phase 5a (yellow), Phase 5b (dark blue), Phase 6a (dark red), Phase 6b (light red), Phase 7 (white), Phase 8 (dark green), Phase 9 (light green), Phase 10 (light purple), Phase 11 (dark purple), Phase 12 (brown), Phase 13 (grey).

Phase 8 contains a thick destruction debris with a wall system built upon it.

Destruction Material

Stratigraphically, the material under the 11156/11159 debris in A9 (11070) belongs to this phase. This material contains destruction debris but is more consistent in matrix; more mudbrick detritus. Moving to the east in Square B9 the material (11123) shows similar signs of a destruction event within mudbrick detritus; this included small and ephemeral lenses of ash and chalk. These lenses (5cm to 2 cm thick) continued into C9 (11143 – not excavated) in the section beneath the construction buildup for W11087. In 11143 were two large round flat stones (ca .75m) set upon their ends directly beneath W11087. The function of these stones is unknown; perhaps they were the last vestiges of a lined silo, but that is entirely conjecture. These stones are above a sunken store jar (11026) which may be tentatively dated to this phase since it is sunken into Phase 9. However, since the top of the jar was missing any certainty is not possible.



Figure 32: C9 showing the sunken store jar (11026) and the two round stones both in 11143 beneath the founding levels of W11087 (Photo 0612_1221)

Further east in D9 and E9 loci 11017, 11018, 11145 may belong to this phase. Stratigraphically they are in the correct place but the pottery calls were mixed (LB to Iron II) because of earlier trenching along the face of the casemate. The matrix was a burned yellow mudbrick debris, different from that of this phase further west. The possibility exists that these loci were dug by MacAlister and backfilled (see above). However there were four baskets (11153, 11159, 11098, 11156) which produced clean early wares (LB/Iron I).

West of A9 and locus 11070 is material which can best be phased stratigraphically. The material in A9 and Z9 was backfilled with large boulders and a thin soil matrix. The composition of this backfill coupled with earlier erosion of W11083 made it unsafe to trim close to W11083. Locus 11107a, from the lower excavated levels “inside” of Room I (Z9) contained pottery almost exclusively from the LB. However, because of the structure of the “room”, it is difficult to phase this level and it should probably best be seen with Phase 11.

In Y9 this stratigraphic phase is evidenced in 11131. The pottery from this locus shows an interesting “grading” from top to bottom. In the locus immediately above (11109), the pottery dated from the Iron I to 7th. The upper parts of 11131 continue this. The first bucket excavated (11337) read Iron 1 thru Iron II. The second basket (11393) contained LB sherds. Basket 11400 was LB/11th/10th, while 11413 was an Iron I call. Thus it may be that these two loci are actually part of the same larger locus or perhaps there should be more loci subdivided from these two (but see Figures 33 and 34: there is no visible distinction from top to bottom in these loci). Within this destruction debris were burned pieces of wood (sent to the lab for carbon 14 analysis: Obj #s 103-107) and 3 mud jar lids (“stoppers”: Object #s 80, 82, 83). One of these stoppers was later found to have a seal dated to Pharaoh Siamun stamped into it. This places 11131 firmly in the Iron Ib period or very shortly after. Two additional mud jar lids (Obj #s 79, 81) were found in locus 11109. This may relate 11109 to 11131 and show a firm connection between these two.

The historical difficulty with placing the material containing the Siamun seal in a phase before the destruction phase which precedes the Casemate phase is obvious. This calls for an additional destruction between the giving of the city to Solomon and his construction of the casemate system. At present, this author cannot resolve this issue. It is possible that between W11164(Z9) and W11161 (Y9) the level of stratum levels off and that there should be two strata represented in 11131; a later one associated with W11161 and W11140 in Y9 and contemporary with Phase 7, and an earlier one lower and contemporary with Phase 8. Without excavating the connections between Y9 and Z9 this is impossible to conclude.



Figure 33: Square Y9 showing loci 11109 and 11131 (Photo 0704_1536)

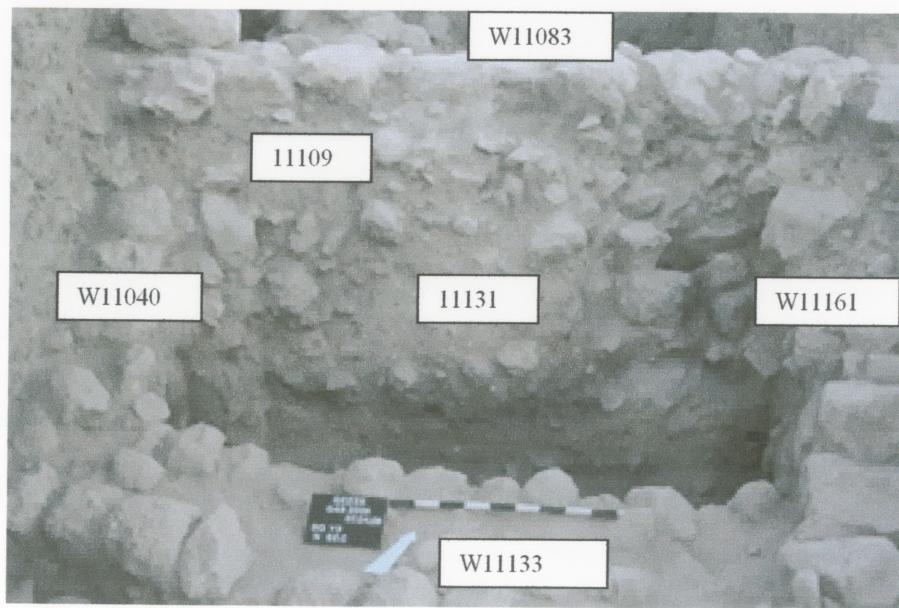


Figure 34: Same as above; labeled for clarity.

PHASE 10: Wall System

Loci: W11133; W11136; W11149; W11148; W11097; Jar 11026 in C9; (11124)

The three eastern 3 diagonal walls (W11149, W11148; W11097) mentioned above belong to this phase. Two of them (W11149, W11148) are similar in composition and orientation. These are single row and (extant) single course walls which are not in the same orientation as the western four diagonal walls discussed above. These walls are at a much lower level (being founded below W11087) and are not angled as steeply as the western ones. The function of these walls may be similar to that discussed above, except that these are not related to the casemate system. W11149 is founded on the mudbrick detritus (11160) of Phase 11.

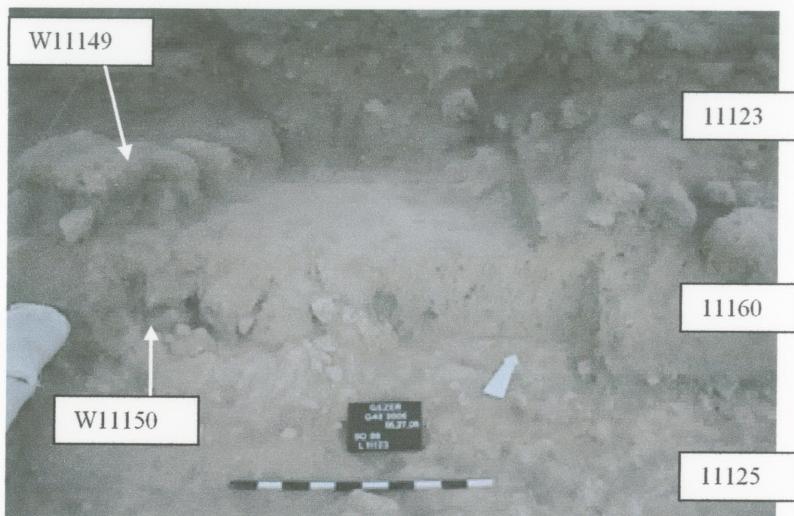


Figure 35: Square B9 illustrating the pre-phase 6 strata, especially the founding of W11149 on 11160. (Photo 0627_1273)

The third of the diagonal walls (W11097) can really only be related to this phase on the basis of stratigraphy. This wall is made of a single row of stones that are smaller than those of the other two walls, but is similar in orientation. The construction seems very haphazard and these may actually not be a wall, but only a line of stones, created by archaeologists during excavation. Only the tops of these stones have been uncovered. The location of these stones in 11017 of E9 amongst the debris from a portion of wall (11087) collapse, which probably occurred as a result of modern archaeological trenching, leave room for question.

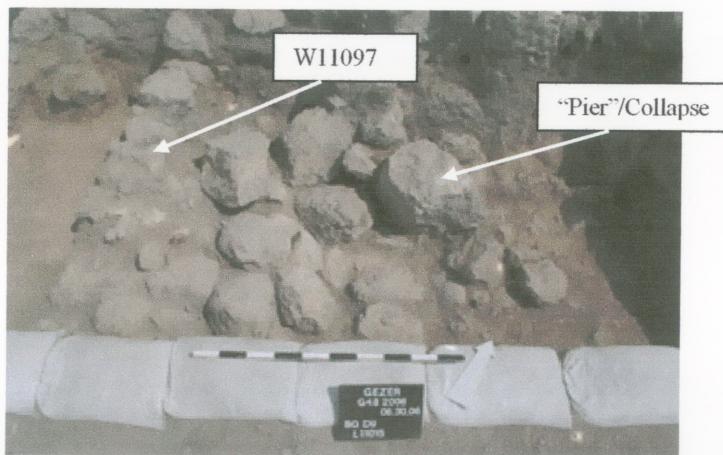


Figure 36: Square D9 showing the collapse of Phase 6 W11087 and Phase 9 wall W11097 (Photo 0630_1542).

In Square Y9 the east-west wall W11133 was uncovered. On its north face was debris 11131. This wall spanned the length of the square and most likely goes into both balks. It ranges in width from about 1 meter in the west to 1.7 meters in the east. The founding levels were not reached, but are at least .75m below the present top course. It is constructed as parallel walls of small boulders and large cobbles which is filled in by smaller stones and soil. It slopes down slightly to the east along the slope of the hill. The extant top level ca. 214.80 appears to have been exposed in antiquity. Either this was the total height of this wall or it was shaved off prior to the construction of diagonal walls W11140 and W11161. As noted above, walls W11040 and W11161 seem to be founded on this wall. To the south of this wall (W11133) is a sloping fill made up of small stones which is founded on a large platform (11163) dated to Phase 12.

In Z9 the walls are somewhat more complex. It does seem that there are three distinct phases to the east-west system. The uppermost of these (W11136) is contemporary with W11133 in Y9, based on elevations and orientation. However, the construction is not similar. W11136 is a two-row wall constructed of small boulders. It seems to be connected to a small wall which runs under W11164 (see above). In addition, there is a segment which can be plausibly connected which runs perpendicular to the western end of W11136 (see plan, Fig 37).

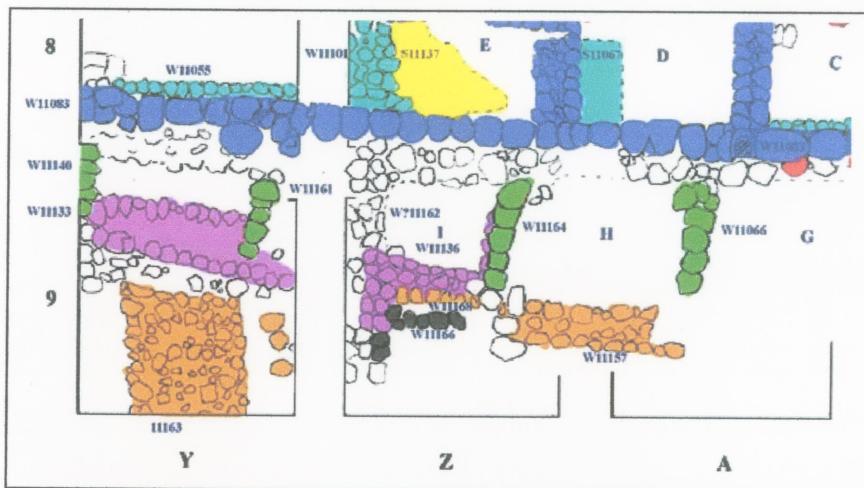


Figure 37: Plan showing east-west Phase 10 walls (purple) in Y9 and Z9 and Phase 12 walls in brown. See Fig. 22 for the remaining three Phase 10 (diagonal) walls.

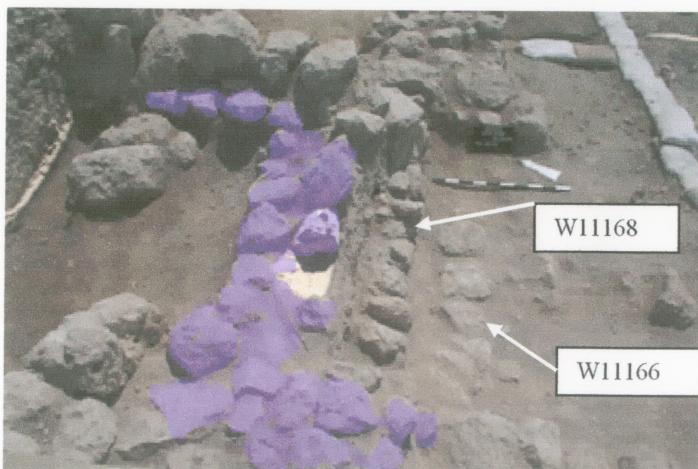


Figure 38: Square Z9 showing W11136 (in purple) and the lower walls (W11168; Phase 10 and W11166; Phase 11). Photo 0629_1428

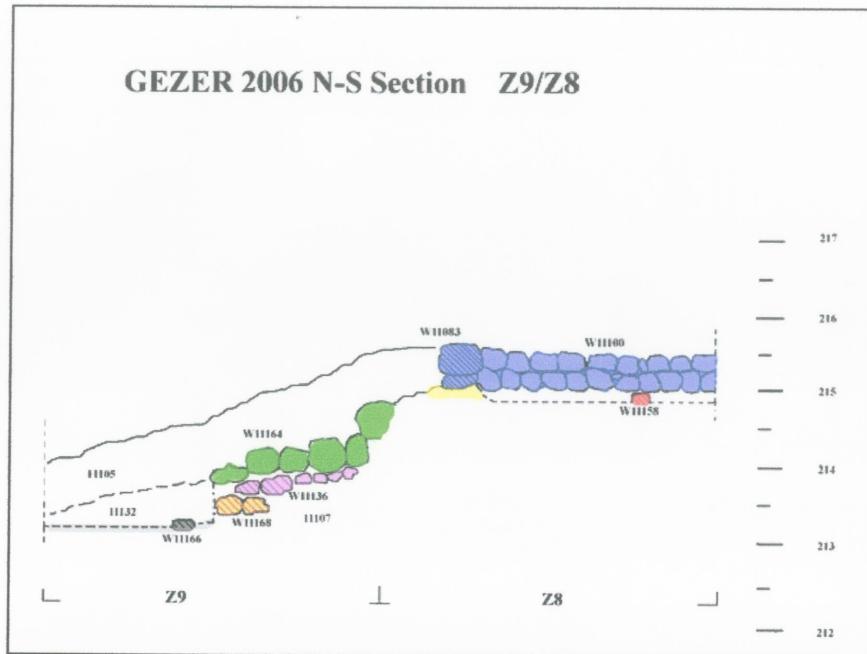


Figure 39: Elevation along walls W11164 and W11100 showing the relationship of the walls of Phase 5 (dark blue), Phase 6 (red), Phase 8 (dark green), and the earlier phases: W11136 (Phase 10 – purple), W11168 (Phase 12 – brown), and W11166 (Phase 13 – grey).

PHASE 11: Destruction of Phase 12

Loci: 11018; 11017; 11107; 11134; 11135; 11063; 11160; 11155; Perhaps the lowest parts of 11131

Fill/debris loci 11017 and 11018 (E9) surround the collapse of W11087. Early in the season this collapse was seen as a Late Bronze pier for W11087, but this was rejected in favor of the wall collapse explanation. These debris loci were discussed above and most likely belong in Phase 8.

In Square C9 this phase is represented by 11063. This locus ran across the square from east to west under W11087. The pottery (baskets 11347, 11349) was LB (Myc, Cypriot) and LB/Iron I. This is the material into which the store jar (11026) was sunk.

Fills in this phase may also encompass lowest levels of 11131 (Y9) but this would require a split of that locus (see above). Certainly, 11107b belongs to this phase as W11136 is founded on it.

Fill 11155 in the southern part of A9 also belongs to this phase, is post Phase 12 wall W11157 stratigraphically, but the pottery was indeterminate.

At the sides of Phase 12 platform (11163) and against W11133 are two fills (11134 in the west and 11135 in the east). The pottery from these is contaminated by their close proximity to the HUC backfill, but stratigraphically are linked to this phase, since they surround the platform of the earlier phase and are associated with W11133.

PHASE 12: Platform and Wall System

Loci:

Platform 11163; W11168; W11157; W11150
11125; 11132; 11167 (unexcavated)

This phase is marked by the construction of a large (ca 2m. x 2m.) platform or surface in the southern part of Y9. It is composed of stones ranging from small cobbles to This was not excavated to its foundation and it extends into the south balk. Its surface, at 214.29, is about .5m below that of the extant top of W11131 (Phase 9) but the exact connection between the two was not excavated. Thus, on purely stratigraphic grounds this platform is dated to an earlier phase than W11131, but may actually be contemporary to it. Between 11163 and the east balk is a row of three large cobles at 213.19m, about 20cm below the surface of the platform. These seem to form a north-south line, but were not excavated and thus were not given a locus designation. They may be an additional wall and may then be placed in Phase 10 or Phase 11.

In the southern part of Square Z9 the middle of the three wall units (W11168) belongs to this phase. This 2-row stone wall was not excavated to its founding level and only one course is exposed. The wall runs under the foundation fill for W11164 and continues to the east. Because W11164 was not removed, a connection east could not be determined with certainty so the continuation of the wall was given its own locus (W11157). It seems clear that these are the same wall. W11157 is also a 2-row stone wall whose founding levels have not been reached. This wall however is preserved to 4 courses at its eastern end and what can be seen of its lower courses indicates it follows the natural slope of the hill downward to the east. The entire system (W11168/W11157) is preserved to a length of almost 6 meters. Stratigraphically the current western top level of W11168/W11157 (213.32) fits well with the presumed slope of the hill, and should be connected to platform 11163, but this connection is far from certain. To the south of W11168 in Z9 was fill 11132 which is dated to this phase (MB/LB).



Figure 40: Square Z9, Room I showing W11168 as it runs below the foundation fill for W11164. (Photo 0704_1542)



Figure 41: View of Squares Z9 and A9 showing wall system W11168/W11157 (Photo 0705_1735).

A small 1-row, 1-course stone wall (W11150) extending east from under the southern extent of W11149 in B9 most likely belongs to this period as well. Its basic orientation is the same as wall system W11168/W11157. It was not excavated and its ephemeral nature caused continuing questions in the field as to its actual existence as a wall. It is founded on fill 11125, which contained solid LB pottery, including two milk bowl fragments (see Fig. 35). This fill also belongs to this phase.

PHASE 13

Loci: W11166; Installation 11127

The final phase uncovered in the 2006 season was represented by a wall in Z9 (W11166). This phasing is based on stratigraphic relationships between W11166 and the walls above it. The wall itself was a single row and ran east to west and was made up of 5 to 7 small boulders. Only the tops of these have been excavated. At the west end of this wall are a few similar stones running perpendicular to W11166; these may be connected to W11166. At least stratigraphically these seem to belong to Phase 11.

It is possible that the circular stone installation (I11127) in B9 should also be phased to Phase 11, but there was not enough excavation of this area for certainty.

GEZER 2006 Phasing

	Y8	Z8	A8	B8	C8	D8	E8	Y9	Z9	A9	B9	C9	D9	E9
Phase 1	11058 11059	11051 11053	11001	11001	11001 11012	11001 11002	11001 11002	11101 (11001)	11001 (11001)	11001 11048	11001 11064	11001 11001	11001 11012	11001 11003
	11110								11005 11013	11005 11014			11001 11013	11001 11004
									11006 11019	11006 11019			11001 11010	11001 11010
Phase 2	11054 11060	11052 1107	11041 11042	11031 11032	11021 11023	11092 11074	11071 11074	11104 11075	11105 11075	11049 11050	11033 11122	11022 11024	11016 11015	11009 11145
									11062 11063	11062 11036		11054 11126	11028 11141	
									11151 11153	11151 11037		11065 11068		
									11154	11154				
Phase 3	W11055 W11056?	W711101 11057	W11046a S711067	W11084 W11170a	-- 11129	-- 11129	-- 11108	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --
Phase 5a	W11083 W11056?	W11083 W11083=	W11083=	W11082 W11082	W11082 W11082	W11082 W11146	W11083 W1109	W11083 W711162	W11083 W11083	W11083 W11083	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --
	W11100 W11101a	W11045=	W11084 W11170b	W11086 S11027										
	W11102 S11137	W11044 W11046b	W11129a 11139											
Phase 5b	11138 11165??	-- --	-- --	11029 11030	11020 11073	11094 11073	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --	-- --
Phase 6a	W11056?	--	W11100 W11085 W11158 W11046	W11081 W11085 W11086 W11144	W11081 W11142 W11170 S11130	W11081 W11081 W11089	(11131a???)	11132a	W11081 W11091 W11087	W11081 W11090 W11087	W11090 W11087 W11087	W11089 W11087 W11087	W11087 W11087 W11087	W11087 W11087 W11087
Phase 5b	--	--	11152	11171	--	11096	--	--	--	11069	--	11095	--	--
Phase 7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11159 11156	--	--	--	--	--
Phase 8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	W11140 W11161	W11164 W11066	--	--	--	--
Phase 9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11131	--	11156 11070	11123 11143	--	11072
Phase 10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	W11133	W11136	--	W11148 W11149	Jar11026	W11097	--
Phase 11	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	(11124)	--	--	--	--
Phase 12	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	11134 11135	11107 Platfrm1163	11155 W11168	11160 W11157	11063 W11150	11017 11018
Phase 13	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
									11167	11132	11125	Ins1127	--	--
									W11166	--	--	--	--	--