Plan 140: AA-AB-AC,10-11-12 - Overview

No remains which could be assigned to Stratum 5 or 4 were uncovered. This area may have been outside the settlements of those periods.

Stratum 3C is the earliest phase, represented by the SW corner of one of the two intramural towers found on the W side of the town.

Stratum 3B is attested by a section of the solid offset-inset wall. The wall seems to have been thickened at this point, where it bends more directly N, by two low piers. However, the uppermost section of the wall is 1.0 to 2.0 m thinner than its base (not foundation courses).

No remains attributable to Strata 3A, 2 or 1 were discerned, except that the offset-inset wall continued in use through Stratum 2.

Evaluation:

This area was excavated in 1932. The outer SW corner of one of the two intramural towers appears on this plan. This tower, Building 123.01 was treated in Plan 123. The discussion in this chapter will be devoted to the great offset-inset wall. Elevations are very sparse on this plan, and no photograph shows closeups of the wall, only details of the tower. A photograph of the outer face of the wall would have been of considerable value.

The Offset-Inset Wall:

The wall at this point displays several stages of construction.

Its maximum overall width is 8.4 m, and the minimum is 5.5 m. The wall contains one offset. The plan shows four constructional units. Two seem like external buttresses; these are in AA11 and AB11. The maximum width of the unit in AB11 is 2.7 m, with an elevation of 773.74, and that in AA11 is 2.4 m wide, with an elevation of 774.57. Between these two units and the main part of the wall is a strip of masonry ca. 1.0 to 2.0 m wide. At the N it is 775.52 and in the S it is at 774.46. The main part of the wall is from 2.8 to 5.2 m wide, with elevations ranging from 776.13 in the N to 775.18 in the S. The inside face of the wall rests on bedrock at ca. 770.45; no bottom elevation is given for the outer face.

The interpretation of these features is difficult. The plan is not drawn in such a way as to show any of these wall units cutting across stones of the wall sections below them. This could, however, just be part of a convention used in drawing the stone filling of the walls; usually only the outer facing stones are accurately drawn in, most interior stones are a "pattern fill".

There are two solutions. The first is that these features overlap each other, that the units lower in elevation serve in part as foundations for those higher up and farther E. The lower two units would provide additional strength at the point where the wall turns from a NW course to one running more directly N. The next upper course would be the base of the wall, and the highest section would be a slightly thinner superstructure. Perhaps it was felt that, given the thickness of the three lower sections, the upper-most did not have to be so massively constructed.

The alternate solution would be that the highest unit of the wall actually extends to bedrock on both its inner and outer faces, and that the lower three units of masonry are in fact built as a series of

retaining walls/buttresses against its outer face. This was the case to the SE where extra masonry was added to the wall and was founded in part of the revetment for the tower in AJ-AK18.

Unfortunately the evidence necessary to decide the issue, one or two good photographs of the outer face(s) of the wall, is not available. This report favors the first solution. The second highest unit, the long thin band of masonry, does not look thick enough to have served as an effective retaining wall.

Another point, mentioned already in Plan 123, is that the bedrock slopes sharply here. Over a distance of ca. 6.0 m it descends from 773.56 to 770.45; this is a drop of over 3.0 m.

A last point is also one mentioned before. The published Survey Map shows a revetment/glacis extending along most of the W side of the offset-inset wall. However, only in S11 to the N, and AH17-AJ18 in the south, does it appear that excavation actually reached low enough to detect these features. It may be that the draftsman used a heavy line to render these, when instead he should have used a lighter, finer line such as was used to indicate the presumed course of similar construction on the E side of the town.