

Plan 110: V-W,22-23-24 - Overview

No remains belonging to Strata 5 or 4 were found. This area was probably outside the limits of the settlements of those periods.

Clear remains of Stratum 3C are also lacking. Two walls might belong to this period, but their stratigraphic context is not certain.

Material from 3B includes the great town wall along the E edge of the plan, and traces of the wall which linked the inner and outer gates visible below Rm 378 and in W23. The drain in W24 likely belongs to 3B.

There are no certain remains from 3A in this area except the town wall erected in 3B which continued in use.

A large 4-Room building complex, Building 110.01, belongs to Stratum 2; it is clearly built over part of the Stratum 3B-A town wall. How late this building continued in use is uncertain. Ceramic evidence suggests possible use in to the early part of the Persian period. Its main importance is its orientation to the outer gate. The builders took the gate into account when they constructed this complex, indicating that the outer gate still functioned in Stratum 2. The offset-inset wall along the E part of the area continued in use.

To the N and S of Plan 110 are walls and other features of Stratum 1, however no clear remains from this stratum could be defined in this area.

Evaluation:

This area was excavated as a test trench in the early days of the

1927 season and in two parts of the 1932 season. The methods of excavation and recording improved much between these campaigns. The 1927 trench was cut roughly from the SW of W22 to the NE of W25. The sections of the trench were not cut in a straight line or vertically. None of the features excavated in 1927 received numbers, no artifacts were recorded, and only three poor photographs were taken. There are, however, a good number of elevations; there are even bottom levels for some walls, which is rare. Also, a rough section drawing was made through the trench. Unfortunately subsequent excavations to the N and S did not establish direct links between this trench and other excavated areas.

The NW corner of V22 was excavated early in the 1932 season, in the same period as the excavation of the town gate. The rest of V22 and V23-24 were cleared in the last part of the season. The structure uncovered here is important as it contained two rooms with in situ pottery. Its plan is clear, as is its stratigraphic position. There are levels for floors and the tops of walls, but none for the base of the walls. There are many photographs of the entire building, and others showing various rooms.

Building 110.01: Rm 376, Rm 378, Rm 379, Rm 380a, Rm 380b, Rm 375, Rm 266b, Rm 267, Rm 268, Rm 269, Rm 400, Ci 326 -

This is the dominant feature of Plan 110. The plan for this 4-Room house complex is clear and photographic coverage is extensive. The core rooms will be examined first (Rm 376, Rm 378, Rm 379, Rm 380a and Rm 380b), then the annex to the W.

The walls of the 4-Room house are well-preserved. From six to eight courses usually survive above floor level, ca. 1.0 m high. Doorways to most of the rooms are usually clear. Approximate floor level

could be determined for the rooms on the basis of surviving floors, thresholds and pillar bases.

Rm 376 is the E long room. Its entire cobble floor was preserved, and with it many in situ vessels (P 959). Its N wall is single-stone work in header fashion; the S and E walls, which are outer walls, are double-stone. Its W wall is the only one which calls for special comment. Six monolithic stone pillars, separated by low sections of masonry, were uncovered there. The pillars stand ca. 1.7 m tall. How high the connecting masonry walls originally stood is unclear; one must have been low enough for passage to the central court. This may be the area between the N-most pillar and its neighbor to the S.

It seems that the front part of the building was constructed first, and that the back room, Rm 378, was begun later and only joined to the front at an advanced stage in the work. This is demonstrated by P 919 which shows a vertical seam in the house wall where Rm 378 connects with Rm 376. A long stretcher in the top preserved course bridges the two walls, "locking" them together. The opposite corner where Rm 378 meets Rm 380a was not photographed, but the plan seems to indicate a similar seam there.

Rm 378, the back room, was entered from the central court, Rm 379, through a door just to the W of the center of its S wall. P A1191 and P 928 show remains of what may be a blocked doorway to the E in the same section of wall, and separated from the W doorway by a short section of masonry. A short partition wall bisects Rm 378 from N to S. It meets the S wall in the middle of the masonry section which separates the two doorways. Perhaps Rm 378 was originally two smaller chambers, each with their own entrance to the central court; later the partition wall was removed and covered with a floor and one doorway was blocked. Its N, W

and E walls are mainly double-stone work, while its S inner wall is single-stone work. Remains of the town wall are visible in the E part of this room and are clearly a continuation of the wall described in Rm 377 above.

Rm 380 is the E long room and was divided into two roughly equal parts by a narrow single-stone wall running E-W. P A1212 seems to show this wall resting on top of a patch of stone cobble floor in Rm 380a (the N chamber). How late this addition is cannot be determined. It is on, or in the vicinity of, this floor that several storage jars were found. Since the floor was not entirely preserved it is impossible to describe them as in situ, but that they were found essentially complete suggests that this is a primary deposit. The entrance to Rm 380a was in its NE corner, near the entrance to Rm 378. Its N and E inner walls are single-stone work, while its W wall is double-stone construction. Rm 380b's E wall has three monolithic stone pillars separated by sections of masonry. The lowest preserved masonry section is between the north pillar and the wall dividing Rm 378 in two; perhaps the entrance to Rm 380b should be located here. Its W wall is mainly double-stone work, while its S wall is composed of large single stones.

Rm 379 is the central court, and may have been open to the sky. The entrance to Building 110.01 was through a doorway in the center of the S wall of this room. The E and W walls of this court, and the court itself, appear to be built over the stump of the 3B town wall. Badè did not attempt to excavate below the floor level of this building. Excavations in W23 to the S and Rm 377 to the N uncovered other extensions of the town wall which connected the two gates. Dotted lines on Plan 110 indicate that the excavators had no doubt that this wall ran underneath this 4-Room house.

The W annex of Building 110.01 is more problematic. P 917, P 936 and P A1068 show that the bottom courses of these W walls are at a level above that of the floors of the core chambers of the 4-Room house. These are usually preserved only one or two courses high, and must also in part be foundations. Elevations across this area are spotty. The floor of Rm 379 seems to range between ca. 776.00 and 776.30. Rm 267's floors seems to be between 776.22 and 776.43. The base of the stairway in Rm 400 is ca. 776.90. From the arrangement of the walls of the W annex it is clear that they are an integral part of the building complex. The difference in elevation from E to W probably has more to do with the natural slope of the bedrock than anything else. From the top of the rock scarp in W22 to the base of the town wall in W25 the bedrock descends from 781.00 to below 772.00, a drop of 9 m over a distance of 30 m. The slope below Building 110.01 is probably similar. It is thus quite possible that this complex was a terraced structure, with a second story over part of its area.

Rm 267 shares its east wall with the core 4-Room house. Photographs for this area are not plentiful or very helpful. P A1068 and P 936 show a gap in the wall between Rm 380a and Rm 267, McCown suggested that there might have been a doorway in this area, though there is no proof of this. The plan does indicate a doorway in the S wall, a little east of center. This may mean that this room's function was not tied up directly with activities in the core rooms to the E. Portions of the W wall visible in the photographs show the base of this wall to be above the floor levels in the core part of the house. If this is true, and not just a product of a poorly cleaned wall in a photograph, then the floor was probably higher than to the E. P A1191 may show portions of a cobble floor in this room, though no mention is made of this in McCown's report. Ci 326 is in approximately the center

of this room and may have been bottle-shaped.⁷³⁷ It was fed by a short channel which runs up to the W wall of the room; there is no indication of how water reached the channel. Did it run down the inner wall of this room? Similar channels were found associated with Ci 119 and Ci 363.

Rm 400 and Rm 266 are spaces up against the steepest part of the E-W slope. The flimsy W wall of this area is really a facing against the almost vertical rock surface. The back wall of this area is also floating higher than the floor of the core 4-Room house, indicating a higher floor level in this area. A stairway is built along the S half of the E wall. The distance between the E and W walls is over 4 m. Given this expanse, and the flimsy character of the W wall, this space should be conceived of as an open area, with Rm 266 functioning as a large bin.

The back chambers of the W annex are formed by Rm 375, Rm 268, and Rm 269. Photographs of this area are not very clear. P A1068 gives the impression that the back wall of these chambers is preserved three to four courses high, and that its base is below the bases of the walls which partition the annex into its various chambers. There are two possibilities here: The first is that the walls of the annex, with the exception of the back wall, may be late additions used to partition a large space in to smaller units. The second is that the builders may have needed a deeper, stronger wall across the back of the annex to retain the debris to the N, while the walls within the annex did not need to be built so sturdily. The latter seems the simpler solution.

Rm 375 is immediately W of Rm 378, and shares a wall with it. This wall seems to be preserved at least three to four courses high. The W wall, which separates it from Rm 268 is a ragged little affair of small

⁷³⁷I, 129 n. 1.

stones preserved only one course high. The wall between Rm 268 and Rm 269 is of similar construction. This, and the fact that no thresholds survive to indicate where doorways were, suggests that the floors of these back chambers were higher than those to the S. Rm 269 is an odd space. Its back wall is not on an alignment with the rest of the Building 110.01 complex, and only a handful of stones less than a meter in length mark what might be the remains of its W wall. Rm 269 has all the appearance of an ill-executed addition or modification to the basic plan of the complex. As in Rm 400 the bedrock rises quite high here, as seen in P 936. Above it was noted that the W wall of Rm 400 was more of a facing against the sloping bedrock than a true wall. The same analysis likely applies to the W part of Rm 269 too.

This building is discussed in the 1947 report.⁷³⁸ The conclusions reached here are essentially in agreement with those reached in the earlier study. McCown noted that the stairs were not built as part of the wall of Rm 267. He seems to have questioned whether the entire W annex was built during the same construction period as the core of the 4-Room building.⁷³⁹ The uniformity of construction suggests that the whole complex was erected at one time. McClellan does not discuss this building directly but recognizes that it, and two other 4-Room buildings, post-date the 3C casemate-like wall.⁷⁴⁰

Dating of Building 110.01 -

The in situ pottery from Rm 376 and the primary material from Rm 380a are of the highest importance for the dating of this building

⁷³⁸I, 209.

⁷³⁹Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰T.L. McClellan, "Town Planning at Tell en-Nasbeh." ZDPV 100 (1984):54.

complex, and by extension the rest of Stratum 2. Since all the pottery found within the walls of a room were treated together by the excavators it is not possible to determine which pots were actually found on the floor and which not, though photos are of some help. The material from Rm 376 and Rm 380a are, for the most part, forms common to the end of the Iron Age into the first part of the Persian Period. There are some earlier and later forms, but the bulk falls into this fairly short range.

Its stratigraphic position over the remains of a massive 3B wall which once connected the outer and inner gates on the W is also clear. The structure was built at a time when such defenses were no longer necessary. However, it was built at a level equal to the threshold of the outer gate, showing that this outer defense was still important. The building is similar to as many as five other 4-Room buildings which are also built over remains of Stratum 3.

The evidence of local stratigraphy and similarity to other post-Stratum 3 buildings strongly suggests a date in Stratum 2. Since the nearby outer gate was blocked at the end of Stratum 2, Building 110.01 likely went out of use at that time as well.

Function of Building 110.01 -

Clearly the core part of this complex is the basic 4-Room building. Here there are three rooms surrounding a central court, and it is only through the central court that access to the flanking rooms is gained. Rm 376 and Rm 380a each contained complete storage jars, suggesting that they served, at least in part, for storing some material. Probably living quarters were in the core area, with some activities going on in a second story. There is no doorway to the W

annex. The only room of the annex which has a preserved door, Rm 267, has it in its S wall. Rm 400 apparently did not require a door, but opened on to whatever space was to the S. Perhaps the annex served as further storage capacity and as a work/service area. That this structure was built adjacent to the gate, over part of the original town wall, and belongs to Stratum 2 may indicate that whoever lived there may have had some connection with activities customary to gate areas. Its size and complexity suggest that it was the home of an important individual, probably an official connected with the Babylonian appointed government.

Other Features -

Rm 283 is a small chamber built against the inner W face of the town wall in V24. The plan does not give any elevations for its walls, and there are no photographs of it. It encloses a niche along the town wall formed by two short sections of masonry. The N piece appears to be part of the original construction of the 3B town wall and probably went as late as Stratum 2. A niche with an enclosing wall was also found in Plan 162. The wall there was thicker and enclosed the mouth of Ci 231. Could Rm 283 have served a similar function? Apparently excavation did not reach bedrock here, so this question cannot be answered.

Remains S of Building 110.01: the 1927 Test Trench -

In the early part of the 1927 season Badè had a test trench dug from the top of the rock scarp in W19 to the outer face of the great town wall in W25. Near the end of the 1927 season the rooms numbered Rm 97 to Rm 112 to the S, in Plan 127, were also cleared (these are discussed in detail under Plan 127 below). Building 110.01 was cleared in 1932. For some reason Badè did not link this test trench with either of these subsequently excavated areas. The published general Survey Map

does not show the limits of this test trench, nor the excavational gaps which separate it from the buildings to N and S, nor are all the building remains from this test trench on the general plan; only figure 57 in the report shows all the excavated features, and also a section down the length of the W22-25 trench! A discussion of the remains which may be linked with Building 127.01 will be found below under Plan 127. All the other remains will be dealt with here. This treatment, however, is made more cumbersome because Badè did not assign feature numbers to any of the remains from the test trench. The discussion will proceed from W to E.

Two scrappy walls, apparently continuations of the W wall of Rm 400, serve as a facing for the steep rock scarp in W22. This suggests that other structures which can be associated in time with Building 110.01 probably stood in this area, or at the least that this space was used by the inhabitants of that complex. The thicker wall running across these walls on the S is either built over them or cuts them; in any case it is a later construction, likely of Stratum 1.

Further E are two walls which meet at a right angle; one is composed of many small stones, the other is formed of a single line of larger stones. Presumably it continued to the S, but there is no clear sign of it in Plan 127, only two walls running in roughly the same direction in X22 might have any connection with it.

Next down the slope is the stump of the 3B town wall which connected the inner and outer gates. It may be seen on P 160 and P A371. It was preserved to a height of about 1 m and was 4.3 m wide, as wide as the town wall in W22. Built over it are remains of Building 127.01 discussed below. Here it will only be noted that a wall running perpendicular from the N wall of this building may have been connected

with a similar wall running S from Building 110.01, forming perhaps a small court between the two structures.

Next is a drain channel which still had two cap stones in place. It is almost certainly a continuation of the drain leading from the outer gate in R-S23 to the N and that in Y-Z24 to the S. The drain is built partially over one of a pair of almost parallel walls, both of which were founded on bedrock. There is no trace of features N or S with which they might be connected.

Finally, there is a short section of a 1 to 1.5 meter wide wall built over the stump of the outer town wall in W24, and preserved eight or nine courses high. P A370 shows that this wall is made of courses of thin ashlar laid stretcher fashion alternating with roughly squared field stones packed with small chinking stones. Parallel and adjacent to this wall on the W was a fragment of a wall only two courses high.

Interpreting these remains is difficult. If the drain channel is part of the same building operation as the great wall and gates of 3B, then the walls below must be of the same phase, or earlier. Could they be remains of structures outside the 3C town wall, or could they be part of some retaining construction for the fill in the 3B gate area? The N edge of Building 127.01 is built over both the drain and the stump of the town wall. In many points of construction it is similar to Building 110.01; it should be assigned to Stratum 2. The corner of the room in W22 is roughly at the same level as these two buildings and is perhaps some storage or service facility connected with either (or both?) of them. The walls parallel to the rock scarp are also Stratum 2, while the wall cutting across them is Stratum 1. Specific problems relating to this drain and its possible continuation in Plan 127, especially its dating, are discussed in Plan 127 below.

The Offset-Inset Wall -

The wall here varies in width between 3.8 and 4.3 m. As mentioned above, there are several later walls built over or at a higher level than the stump of the town wall, and also that Rm 283 is built against it. The Survey Map reconstructs a revetment against the outer face of the wall. Excavation there evidently did not reach low enough against the outer face of the wall to prove the revetment's existence. Since the beginning of such a revetment was found extending S from the E tower of the outer gate, this seems a not unreasonable reconstruction.