

Plan 145: AA-AB-AC,25-26-27 - Overview

No remains assignable to Stratum 4 or Stratum 5 were discerned. Perhaps this area was beyond the limits of those settlements.

Material clearly assignable to Stratum 3C is scarce. Only a few wall fragments below buildings built over the inner gate may be that early.

Stratum 3B is well-represented by about two-thirds of the inner gate of the town's defenses, a 30 m stretch of the offset-inset wall with its associated revetment-glacis and moat, and remains of five storage bins. A fragment of a drain leading below the gate may also belong to this phase.

Stratum 3A is attested only by a segment of a wall which is a rebuild or repair of the early casemate-like wall of 3C which is on Plan 144.

Stratum 2 incorporates a 4-Room building similar to several others from this phase. There are also a series of walls built over the foundations of the inner gate which are certainly late. Since they seem to be built against, but not over, the 3B town wall, they are assigned to Stratum 2, though they could be later.

No clear remains attributable to Stratum 1 could be traced.

Evaluation -

This area was excavated over two seasons: AB-AC,25-26-27 primarily in 1929, and AA25-26-27 primarily in 1932, though there was some overlap

of areas and years. There are many elevations, but seldom are there top and bottom levels at the same point. This seems to have been one of Badè's favorite areas for it was photographed many times from many angles. About one third of the inner gate is on Plan 144, and a corner of the 4-Room building is on Plan 162. These two structures are also treated at some length in the 1947 report; these discussions are summarized below.

Building 145.01, The Inner Gate: Rm 230, Rm 316, Rm 317, Rm 323 -

The later walls and features built over and against the inner gate will be dealt with below. Here only the gate itself will be described.

Building 145.01, the inner gate, is a four-chambered gate (see P 908). Its overall exterior dimensions are ca. 14.0 m (E to W) by 12.0 m (N to S). The dimensions of the chambers are:

	West	East
North:	<u>Rm 323</u> 3.9 x 2.9	<u>Rm 316</u> 4.5 x 2.6
South:	<u>Rm 230</u> 3.9 x 2.9	<u>Rm 317</u> 4.5 x 2.9

The reason that Rm 323 is wider than Rm 316 opposite it on the E is that part of Rm 323's N wall was destroyed by the construction of Building 144.01, and so its original width was unmeasurable. The N wall of the gate is 2.2 m wide, the S wall is 2.1 m wide, the W wall is thinner at 1.4 m thick. The E wall of the gate is the offset-inset wall. The two piers which separate the N and S chambers are ca. 2.1 m thick. The E to W distance between these piers is ca. 4.3 m, while the passage through the S wall was apparently ca. 4.1 m. The excavators believed that the passage through the N wall was at its W end, and that the gate had a bent axis approach. There are several considerations against this.

First, the NW corner of the gate is the point where the wall connecting the inner tower of the outer gate would have joined the inner gate had the connecting wall not been removed when Building 144.01 was constructed. Second, only the lower courses of the foundations of the inner gate have survived (see P 899 for the number of courses preserved). Note that no trace of door sockets, or benches in the guard rooms were found because the gate survives only to its foundations. It is thus impossible to say with assurance exactly where this N entrance was located. On the basis of the comparanda cited by Herzog it would seem that all Iron Age four-chamber gates are direct access; it would be odd if Tell en-Nasbeh were the sole exception.<sup>839</sup> For the above reasons it seems reasonable to reconstruct it as a direct access gate.

The 1947 report discusses this gate, referred to as the "early" gate, in some detail.<sup>840</sup> In many respects the theories advanced there differ markedly from those advanced in this study. Two different theories regarding the dating and relations of this four chamber gate were set forth:

McCown believed that originally there was no N two-chamber (outer) gate. Instead, the wall which now ends as the W half of the N (outer) gate ran farther S and connected up with the "early" gate. Sections of this wall were found below Building 110.01 just inside the N gate, and farther S. This S section was not published on the 1:400 Survey Map, but only in text figure 57. In his view the section of wall extending N from the early gate to the E tower of the two-chamber (outer) gate is a later

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<sup>839</sup>Z. Herzog, Das Stadttor in Israel und in den Nachbarländern (Main am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1986), figs. 75, 83, 88 (= Tell en-Nasbeh), 92, 95-98 and table 9. For the gate at Tel Dor see, E. Stern, "Hazor, Dor and Megiddo in the Time of Ahab under Assyrian Rule," IEJ 40 (1990): fig. 1.

<sup>840</sup>I, 199-201.

addition, constructed to extend the wall up to the area of the N gate. In other words, the four chamber gate was the offset-inset wall's first gate; at some point it was destroyed and replaced by the two chamber gate. McCown suggested that the early gate was destroyed by Sennacherib, and that the two-chamber gate belonged to the 7th century. However, no evidence for the violent destruction of the 4-chamber gate was found.

Wampler's theory was that while the offset-inset wall was under construction different parts were built at different times. The four chamber gate and connecting wall were begun early, but in an area where such engineering was difficult. In the process of construction the flat bedrock area of the N gate was discovered and it was decided to suspend construction of the "early" gate in favor of locating the entrance to the town in an area where the construction would be easier. In other words the "early" gate was a false start and was never actually put into use.

It was realized that Building 144.01 blocked access to the gate from the N, which put the gate out of use as a gate. However, it was felt that the S entrance to the "early" gate remained open and that after the "early" gate went out of use as a gate it served as either a storehouse or a dwelling. It was believed that the thin walls built over the gate were postexilic. It also seems that the "early" gate and Building 145.02 were felt to be contemporary, though this is not explicitly stated. This means that the thin walls built over the gate were considered to be later than Building 145.02 as well.

McCown seems to have understood that both the inner gate Building 145.01 and 4-Room building Building 145.02 were found on material from

the 10th. century B.C. and earlier.<sup>841</sup> This led him to believe that they were contemporary. He also admitted the possibility that Bn 283 might mark an earlier phase below Building 145.02. However, he believed that this meant the bin had to be earlier than the 3B offset-inset wall, which he viewed as an impossibility because it would then have been outside the town wall of what in this study is Stratum 3C. His error was in associating the 4-Room building with the gate when there is no direct evidence that links their periods of use other than that they are both of the 9th century or later. Rather, it is Bn 283 which belongs with the gate, and Building 145.02 belongs with the structure built over the gate (and the buildings to the N too).

Because at the time when the 1947 report was being published the only sites with excavated inner-outer gate systems were Megiddo and Lachish McCown and Wampler did not consider the possibility that Tell en-Nasbeh might have such a system. The general nature of the defenses at Tell en-Nasbeh are treated in Chapter 5 of Volume I of this study. Here it will only be noted that virtually all of the difficulties faced by McCown and Wampler disappear if the two gates are treated as parts of one contemporary fortification system.

#### Dating of Building 145.01, the Inner Gate -

Many factors bear on the dating of this structure. First, it is built outside the line of the early casemate-like wall to the W and it cuts Rm 232 which seems in some way to be connected to the casemate-like wall. Thus it is subsequent to 3C. Second, Building 144.01 is built over its NW corner, and other later structures block the approach from the N. To the S, the back wall of Building 145.02, the 4-Room building, is only

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<sup>841</sup>See McCown, "The Long-Room House at Tell en-Nasbeh," BASOR 98 (1945):8, 10-12 for the best presentation of his views on this subject.

ca. 3.5 m from the S entrance to the gate, severely restricting access to it. Also, a whole series of walls, discussed below, cut across the top of the gate itself. Third, the gate is built against the 3B town wall and almost without a doubt was connected to the outer gate by a wall running N from its NW corner. All this evidence suggests a foundation in Stratum 3B, continuing through 3A, and going out of use in Stratum 2.

Function of Building 145.01, the Inner Gate -

This is almost the last line of defense for 3B-3A Tell en-Nasbeh. The major remaining question is what path those passing out of the inner gate then took to enter the town proper.

Building 145.02, the 4-Room building, is a later feature. It is too close to the gate to be contemporary. Also, it makes little sense to place a house in the face of would-be attackers. More likely the area of the back room of Building 145.02 was part of a small plaza just inside the gate. Bn 283 would be the first of a series of bins stretching far to the S which those entering the town would have seen. SW of the inner gate is the line of the casemate-like wall, which with rebuilds and modifications probably served throughout Stratum 3. There is no sign of a gap in any part of this wall line which would allow passage into the heart of the town. It does not seem likely that entrants were channeled S through the storage bins and past the back walls of a ring of houses. More likely the entrance to the old 3C town was to the NW or W of the inner gate. Probably the builders of the 3B defenses continued to use whatever gate or entrance structure survived from 3C as the means of traveling from the inner gate plaza into the core of the town.

As has been previously mentioned, there is a rock scarp which

begins in V21 to the N and extends as far S as Z23. The most sensible place for the builders of the casemate-like wall to construct their wall is along the top of this scarp; it is a natural defense. The height of the wall would be supplemented by that of the scarp. Unfortunately the area along the top of the scarp was either unexcavated, severely eroded, or built over by later features. The closest trace of the casemate-like wall in the N is in P20 of Plan 74, while the closest in the S is in AC24.

If, however, it is granted that the 3C casemate-like wall followed the course of the scarp, and that there is no evidence for a passage through it anywhere else in its preserved course, it is quite possible that such an entrance was located between P20 and AC24. Since the rock scarp decreases in height to almost nothing by Z-AA23, the most likely place for the 3C "gate" would be in AA-AB23. Those entering the town would have had to make two right turns around the inner gate, and possibly a left turn to go through the area of the 3C "gate". Rm 232 and Rm 315 are 3C features which would have been below the floor level of the 3B gate plaza. Unfortunately, if this gate did exist, it seems to have been destroyed by Stratum 2 building activities in the area.

Admittedly this reconstruction is speculative, but it does take into account all the data, architectural and topographic, relating to the 3C defenses.

Such an arrangement of walls and gates, though awkward in times of peace, would have added a last line of defense in war. Any enemies who forced their way through the inner gate could either charge S through the bins, harried by those on the walls above them, until they could find a break in the house walls, or they could make the two turns toward the old 3C "gate" while being attacked from the roofs of the inner gate

and near by houses. It is not surprising that Tell en-Nasbeh was never destroyed by foes in antiquity.

Rooms Built Over Building 145.01, the Inner Gate: Rm 222, Rm 223, Rm 228, Rm 229, Rm 231, Rm 319 -

Eventually the inner gate went out of use as a gate and was razed to within a few courses of its foundations. Then a series of rooms was built over the area, using at times the stumps of the gate walls as foundations, at others cutting across the guard chambers. No complete plan of a building can be offered because of the fragmentary state of preservation of the walls. The walls were left off the published Survey Map. There are no photographs which show all these walls together, and some walls do not appear in any photographs at all.

Rm 222 is built over the SE corner of the inner gate. Its S wall, of single-stone work, is built-up against the town wall; the town wall also serves as its E wall. The wall separating it from Rm 223 seems to have contained stone pillars alternating with sections of rubble masonry or rough stretchers. P A740 shows the S parts of both rooms and the pillar wall early in the excavation, and P 808 after completion of the clearance. There is no evidence for how far to the N this room extended.

Rm 223 is W of Rm 222. Its S and W walls are a mix of single- and double-stone construction, but both are fragmentary. Its true extent to the N is also uncertain. It seems likely that Rm 317 contained continuations of both Rm 222 and Rm 223, but that their walls are missing there.

Rm 228 is only a space formed where the W wall of Rm 223 meets the S wall of Rm 229. Was the entrance to this tangle of rooms here?



Rm 229 is also ill-defined. Its E, S and W walls are double-stone work. On the N it may have reused part of the W central pier of the inner gate. The pier seems to have been extended slightly to the E by the addition of a large stone. Its E wall is not perpendicular to its S wall, but slants slightly E.

Rm 319 is beyond Rm 229 on the N, and is also ill-defined. Its E wall is a continuation of that of Rm 229, but it comes to an end at the edge of a fragmentary bin. This unnumbered bin seems to go down ca. 4.0 m, if the elevations are correct (775.24 at the base vs. 779.44 at the top). Only the E part of the bin is preserved, its E half is lost. The bin is built against the inner face of the gate's N wall. The bin cannot pre-date the gate as it is built into the fill poured into the area between the casemate-like wall and the offset-inset wall to level up the area for subsequent construction, such as the gate itself. Its N wall may have been based on that of the old gate. Its W wall with Rm 323 is a narrow double stone wall. On the S there is no clear border with Rm 229.

Rm 316 is one of the original gate chambers. It was partitioned off by a narrow N-S single-stone wall. The W wall of Rm 321 seems to continue the line of this wall N beyond the inner gate, and on into Plan 128. If this room continued in use beyond the life of the gate as a gate it may have reused the gate walls on N, S and E. It is also possible that Rm 323 continued in use beyond the life of the gate, since it too is partitioned off. It too would have had to reuse walls of the earlier gate, on N, S and W.

Rm 231 is W of Rm 229. Its walls to N and S are narrow single-stone work, and its E wall is narrow double-stone. The N wall was probably founded on the W central pier of the old gate. The S wall reaches the inner gate's W wall, which suggests that this W wall may

have served at least as the foundation for Rm 231's W wall.

Dating of the Rooms Built Over Building 145.01, the Inner Gate -

These rooms are built over, and in some cases reuse the walls of the 3B inner gate. One wall is built-up to, but not over, the 3B offset-inset wall. This suggests a date in Stratum 2. Stratum 1 tends to be built over the offset-inset wall, so it is less likely that these rooms were constructed at that time, though it is possible. It is also possible, though less likely, that they were constructed in Stratum 2 and continued into 1.

Function of the Rooms Built Over Building 145.01, the Inner Gate -

Since these rooms are so fragmentary and haphazard in appearance it is difficult to suggest a role. It is important to emphasize that probably many walls which were built over the stumps of the inner gate's walls have not survived. This structure is at the same elevation as Building 145.02 the 4-Room building to the S. Perhaps these rooms form some sort of "out-building" connected with that building, providing additional service or stage space.

Building 145.02: Rm 220?, Rm 224, Rm 225, Rm 226, Rm 227 -

This is a typical 4-Room building. Although it has relatively few elevations it is documented very well photographically. No floors survived in this building, but one threshold did. Therefore most of the walls must be considered foundations. The dimensions of the building are slightly less regular than those of the other major 4-room buildings; e.g. it is ca. 10.2 m wide at the N and slightly over 9.0 m wide at the S. The construction technique used to build the walls is similar to that

used for Building 110.01, sections composed of mixed single- and double-stone work.

Rm 226 is the central long room; it is the widest of the three long rooms, and so may be a courtyard. It is also the most important room for understanding the building. In its S wall is a threshold. The upper elevation is 781.14, and there is one step down to 780.81. It is not clear if there was a second step down into the room, or not, but the bottom elevation of one of the stones in the step is 780.68. Thus the floor level of the building should vary around 780.70, at the lowest. This means that the top preserved stones of Bn 283 (780.27) were below the presumed floor of Rm 226 by ca. 43 cm (see also P 426). This bin is probably one of the N-most of the stone-lined storage units built into the debris poured between the casemate-like wall and the offset-inset wall to provide a level surface. There may have been others in the vicinity which were removed when Building 145.02 was constructed. The grouping of stones in the center of the room has an elevation of 780.76, so it could have been either imbedded in the floor (as a base for a post?) or below the floor. Only the stone mortar with a top at 780.81 is almost certainly above the level of the floor, though it may have been partially sunk into the floor since its base level is at 780.43.

Unfortunately no trace of doorway into any of the surrounding rooms survived. Therefore it is not possible to be certain of their floor levels, but if they were close to that of Rm 226, then the wall fragment at the S end of Rm 227 was also below floor level since it is at 780.56. Another indication that these are foundation course is that there are none of the expected stone pillars so common in buildings of this type (e.g. Building 110.01 and Building 125.01).

Rm 225 and Rm 227 are the E and W long rooms. Both are slightly

trapezoidal. No trace of doorways into back room Rm 224 or central long room Rm 226 were found. One, or both rooms may have had pillared walls with Rm 226. P 424 shows what may be two stages to the W wall of Rm 225. As mentioned above, Rm 227 contains a short wall fragment running diagonally through its S end. This is probably from an earlier feature in the area. There is also another short wall segment which connects the W wall of Rm 227 with a rebuild over and NE of the casemate-like wall in AC-AD25. This short wall apparently cuts an unnumbered bin which also seems to be cut by the rebuild of the casemate-like wall.

Rm 224 is the back broad room. No trace of any doorways leading into it was found. Its N wall is only ca. 3.5 m from the S wall of the inner gate, and only ca. 2.0 m from the S walls of Rm 222 and Rm 223 which are late rooms built over the gate.

Rm 220 is a space adjacent to Building 145.02 on the E formed by a continuation of the N wall of Rm 224 up to the offset-inset wall. This short segment is not bonded directly into the main building, but could be a later addition. It is difficult to decide the role of Rm 220. In the case of 4-Room buildings Building 110.01 and Building 125.01 it was noted that each had several extra rooms attached to their basic plans. Perhaps Rm 220 fills a similar role here; it could have been used as extra storage space.

Rm 233 is a space E of Building 145.02 which contains parts of five unnumbered bins, some of which are on Plan 144. These bins were constructed in the fill poured into the intramural space created by the casemate-like wall and the offset-inset wall, i.e. they belong to Stratum 3B. They are almost certainly of the same phase as Bn 283 in Rm 226. They pre-date Building 145.02. It is difficult to judge whether these bins continued in use along side the 4-Room building. The bins and

wall rebuild may have gone out of use so that a surface providing access to the front (S end) of Building 145.02 could be created. Note that the bins in AC25 on the Level I plan for Plan 144 are a mistake; they do not appear in any photograph.

This building was treated at some length in the 1947 report.<sup>842</sup> There it was noted that the building is not rectangular, but is a meter wider at the N than in the S. (This is probably because the builders were trying to squeeze in the structure between the line of the old casemate-like wall and the offset-inset wall.) The excavators thought that Bn 283 was contemporary with the building, rather than remains from an earlier stratum below the floor level of Building 145.02.<sup>843</sup> They identified three strata in the area. The lowest consisted of the drain and wall found in the deep trench in Rm 221, in the middle were the "early" gate and Building 145.02, and highest was the set of walls built over the "early" gate. This is at variance with the conclusions reached in this analysis which equates the "early" gate with the near by bins, and Building 145.02 with the walls built over the "early" gate.

Dating of Building 145.02 -

It is built over at least one of the Stratum 3B intramural storage bins, and also block easy access to the 3B inner gate. Both the bins and gate likely continued in use through 3A. This suggests a Stratum 2 construction date for the building. Since it is not cut by any later walls it could have continued into Stratum 1, though this seems less likely.

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<sup>842</sup>I, 209-211.

<sup>843</sup>McCown, "Long-Room," 8, admits that the bin might be earlier than the building, and even notes how it might block access to the W side of the building. His understanding of the stratigraphy is discussed in detail in the section covering the inner gate, Building 145.01, above.

Function of Building 145.02 -

Since only foundations survive there is little on which to base an evaluation. If any of the storage bins to the S continued in use into Stratum 2 it might be tempting to connect the placement of the house with these bins. It was probably a dwelling of an official, since it is a fairly large and well-constructed building.

Other Features -

Rm 221 is the space between Rm 224 of Building 145.02 and the S wall of the inner gate Building 145.01. Originally it was probably part of a small plaza in front of the inner gate which extended as far as Bn 283. Once Building 145.02 and the rooms over the inner gate were constructed it was reduced in size. Badè conducted a trial probe here, sinking a trench down to bedrock, 5.5 m from the top of the preserved part of the town wall to 775.75 m. This trench created sections below the gate and Building 145.02 which clearly show debris poured in to create a usable space between the inner and outer walls (see P 899 and P 819). In this fill were sunk the numerous bins along the S periphery of the town. It also showed that at this point the inner face of the offset-inset wall was built on debris, not bedrock. How much of the rest of the wall sits on debris is unknown because the revetment against the outer face was not removed. As long as the revetment was based primarily on bedrock it was not crucial that the wall itself be so founded. Finally, a short fragment of a drain channel was found between 776.84 and 776.04 (see P 819). This drain does not connect with any other feature, so its stratigraphic position cannot be fixed firmly, but since it is laid probably in the fill poured when the offset-inset wall was constructed, it may belong to Stratum 3B. Whether it connected with the drain channel N of the inner gate cannot be determined with certainty,

but since the floor of the drain in Z24 is at 777.44 and 777.84 a direct connection seems unlikely, unless there is an error in the elevation in the drain S of the inner gate. This is not impossible for evidently a systematic error of 1.0 m was made in many of the elevations on Plan 145. Though the elevations for the drain were not corrected upwards by that amount, it may be that they should be. A fragment of a wall is also mentioned in the 1947 report but it is not on the plan.<sup>844</sup>

Rm 318 was discussed in the chapter on Plan 144 in connection with Building 144.01.

Rm 321 is an ill-defined space just inside the 3B offset-inset wall in AA23. A short wall section may have enclosed it on the N. Its W wall is about the same width, and on roughly the same line as the W wall of Rm 316; possibly there was a connection, though this cannot be proven. This area is treated in more detail in Plan 128.

Bn 283, as mentioned above, is the N-most numbered bin on the E side of the town. The excavators seem to have believed that the bin was in use with Building 145.02, when it was really below floor level.<sup>845</sup> Note that the base of the stone mortar is at 780.43, which must be near floor level, while the highest preserved stone in Bn 283 is at 780.27.

The unnumbered bins in AC25 are discussed in Plan 144, above. It may be that the construction of Building 145.02 completely destroyed up to four additional bins; note how densely grouped the bins to the W and S are.

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<sup>844</sup>I, 21.

<sup>845</sup>I, 210.

The Offset-Inset Wall -

The 3B town wall varies from 4.1 to 4.3 m in width, except on the N where it widens to 6.4 m, which is the beginning of the tower described on Plan 128. The wall here contains two insets and one offset. There are no seams in the wall which would indicate different stages in construction. The slightly wider base of the foundation was traced in Rm 220 and Rm 221. As mentioned above, this foundation is based on debris, not bedrock, at least along its inner face.

The maximum preserved thickness of the revetment and glacis is ca. 6.0 m. A retaining wall ca. 1.3 m wide was built against the tower's portion of the revetment. This retaining wall was continued south, where it widens to 1.7 m, though the plan itself shows no evidence that the revetment-glacis ever reached that far E. The plan does, however, show what may be part of a moat in AA27, at least 1.3 m wide. Perhaps at some point it was felt that having a retaining wall here was more important than having a moat. It is also possible that the retaining wall is built along the inner face of the moat. The total width of wall, revetment-glacis and possible moat is roughly 14.0 m. One elevation at the bottom of the moat is 771.50, and the nearest elevation on the preserved top of the wall is 781.39. This is a climb of almost 10.0 m, and the town wall was originally much higher.