

Plan 195: AK-AL-AM(-AN), 22-23-24- Overview

No remains of Stratum 5 could be discerned.

Stratum 4 is likely represented by many of the rock-cut installations which were found throughout the area. These were used for agricultural processing and storage.

Stratum 3C is attested only by fragments of single-stone walls, which roughly follow the presumed line of the Stratum 3 ringroad, and traces of the outer wall of the casemate-like wall, and probably a tomb. Some of the cisterns may have been cut at this time, and some of the rock-cut installations from Stratum 4 may have continued in use.

Stratum 3B is represented by a section of the offset-inset wall and four intramural storage bins. A few narrow intramural walls may also belong to this phase.

Parts of what seems to be a 3A building could be traced. Probably many of the scattered double-stone wall fragments belong to buildings of this phase.

Stratum 2 is attested by remains of a building which is stratigraphically later than the 3A building. A fragmentary room connected to the 4-Room building in Plan 194 is also of this period. Some double-stone wall fragments seem to belong here too. The offset-inset wall continued in use.

Stratum 1 is represented by a wall which cuts across the Stratum 2 building. A corner of a thick-walled building may also belong to this phase.

Two very late, possibly modern, installations were uncovered.

Evaluation -

The E part of this area, AL-AL-AM-AN24 was cleared in 1926, the W section in the first half of 1927. Recording techniques were most rudimentary in those years. There are no levels at all for the 1926 clearance. Bottom levels for rooms are common in 1927 and can often be found in the rock-cut installations. Top elevations for walls are few and bottom levels are non-existent. There are few photographs. Most of these are detail views of rock-cut installations. There are not nearly enough general views from different angles. Compounding the difficulties is the extremely fragmentary nature of the building remains. The complete plan of not even one building is preserved. Because of this the following discussion treats first the remains of the two best-preserved buildings, and then treats the remains on a square by square basis, with occasional summarizing statements. At the end is a section on the town wall.

Building 195.01 Rm 15, Rm 16, Rm 17, Rm 18 -

Only the back rooms of this structure survive intact, parts of the front do survive but are heavily damaged.

Rm 18 is the number assigned to the front of the structure. Its W wall can be traced for ca. 10.0 , but is cut in its center by a later wall. Only 2.0 m of the E wall survive. The W wall seems to be preserved to its end. Note that it forms a corner with a wall running off to the W. This suggests that the N wall of Building 195.01 may have run E from this corner. The E wall of Rm 18 seems to cut another wall just to the E; an extension of Rm 18's E wall to the N would cause it to cut across

the NW corner of Rm 31 and also the thick fragmentary wall W of Rm 29. These relations attest to four building phases in this area, and especially emphasizes the fragmentary remains in this area.

Rm 15, Rm 16 and Rm 17 are the back rooms. P 47 and P 58 show these rooms. They seem to be only foundations since there is no evidence for doorways connecting these rooms to each other, or to Rm 18. The E wall of Rm 17 and W wall of Rm 15 are continuations of the walls of Rm 18. Note that the N wall of Rm 17 is dovetailed into the E wall. The plan shows that the S wall of these rooms has upper and lower phases. This is also apparent in P 58, which may also show the lower phase extending below the N face of the upper wall as well. This is likely a fragment of the outer wall of the 3C casemate-like wall.

Dating of Building 195.01 -

It seems to be built over the 3C casemate-like wall and follows the general line of the Stratum 3 building to the NW. This suggests that it is a 3A construction. It is likewise cut by at least one later wall on the W, and almost certainly on the E too. If these walls belong to Stratum 2, and later, then the attribution to 3A seems more certain.

Function of Building 195.01 -

It is a fairly large building with substantial walls. Nothing survives to indicate any special use. No function can be assigned to this structure on the basis of its incomplete plan.

Building 195.02: Rm 29, Rm 30, Rm 31, Ci 92 -

This appears to be the W part of a moderate-sized building whose E

section has disappeared. Its walls are, in whole or in part, built over the mouths of nine rock-cut installations. As mentioned above, the W wall of this structure would cut the projected E wall of Building 195.01. The plan seems to show traces of a still later wall cutting Building 195.02's E wall.

The N wall of Rm 31 extends ca. 80 cm beyond the line of the E wall, indicating that the structure extended some distance in that direction.

A single-stone wall was built around the mouth of Ci 92 in Rm 29. P 83 shows the N end of Rm 30 and Rm 29. The outer walls of this building and its cross walls are preserved to about the same level, with the wall around Ci 92 slightly lower. Floor level could have been anywhere from the top of that wall, down to bedrock. If it was on bedrock several of the other rock-cut installations could have continued in use with this building, such as Si 89, Si 109 and Ci 110. Since no doorways are preserved in any of the walls it seems likely that the walls here are only foundations and that floor level was probably at the level of the top of the wall around Ci 92, which means that the other rock-cut installations pre-date the building and were not in use with it.

The S end of the building, Rm 30, is rather uncertain. On the W there is a thin single-stone wall which could be taken as a fragmentary extension of the line of the building's W wall, or the remnant of an earlier structure. This wall reaches a wall with an upper and lower phase. This is similar to the S wall of Rm 15 and Rm 16. The exposed lower section may be a fragment of the outer wall of the 3C casemate-like wall which would make the upper wall possibly 3A. The E wall of Rm 30 does not quite reach this possible 3A wall. The plan shows two

diagonal single-stone walls extending E-W across Rm 30, and crossing the mouth of Si 112. This could actually be a solid wall for which the stones between the two faces was not drawn. Unfortunately there is no photograph of this wall.

Dating of Building 195.02 -

It cuts rock-cut installations probably hewn in Stratum 4, and probably the line of the E wall of Building 195.01. In turn it is cut by a fragmentary later wall. It is essentially double-stone construction throughout. All this data suggests a probable assignment to Stratum 2.

Function of Building 195.02 -

There is no material on which to judge the building's function. Clearly Rm 29 was used for water storage, but nothing else can be suggested.

It may be that some of the wall fragments in the S part of AL24 could belong to this building. They were drawn by a different draftsman from the one who drew the walls to the W. This may be why the masonry does not look more like Building 195.02. The walls in the S part of AK24 probably are not associated with Building 195.02 as they are on a different orientation. These fragments might roughly follow the line of the Stratum 3 ringroad and so could conceivably belong to that stratum.

The Intramural Area -

P 58 shows the area S of Building 195.01 after it was cleared to bedrock. It clearly shows how the gradual slope of the bedrock increases dramatically near the inner face of the offset-inset wall. This space

contained three storage bins: Bn 10, Bn 72 and Bn 73. They ranged in width from ca. 1.0 to 1.5 m, averaging 1.3. Two bins on the NW were preserved to ca. 2.0 in depth. If all bins were originally at least that deep, then the bins in this area had an average capacity of 2.7 cubic meters, for a total of 8.1 cubic meters. These are part of the series of bins which ring the intramural area at the S end of the town. They were constructed in the fill poured between the casemate-like wall and the offset-inset wall, and so belong to Stratum 3B.

Several walls jut from the inner face of the offset-inset wall into the intramural area. Those in AM23-24, which mark off Rm 5 and Rm 6 apparently reached at least the outer face of the casemate-like wall, if not the Stratum 3A wall on top of it. Two others in AM23 may have reached that wall, but that whole area seems much disturbed. The two which mark off Rm 14, and Rm 13 to the E, apparently did not reach farther than just S of the bins. The purpose of these walls is unclear. Similar walls were found at the N end of the site in Plan 57 and Plan 58. Those in AM21-22 might represent walls of some kind of shed built against the town wall, but those to the E, if they are not steps, would block the passage around the circumference of the town. Perhaps they belong to a later period, after the bins had gone out of use, or are actually earlier features outside the 3C town which were cut during the construction of the offset-inset wall.

In AM 22 is an enigmatic circular stone heap. It was not numbered, and no explanation for it can be offered.

Tb 108 is cut into the bedrock in AM23, just below the slight bend in the inner face of the offset-inset wall. There is no plan for it, nor a description, only a few artifacts which might support an assignment to Stratum 3C, or earlier. It probably went out of use when the 3B offset-

inset wall was constructed.

Tb 107 is in AL22. It is an oval, slightly curving, cutting in the bedrock. No reason is given in any of the records for the designation of this feature as a tomb. No bones were found in it, but parts of two pyxides, a theriomorphic vessel and a cup were found in it, along with a cooking pot and two juglet fragments. Perhaps this somewhat non-standard assemblage of material suggested a tomb deposit to the excavators.

Rock-Cut Installations: Ci 11, Ci 23, Ci 24, Ci 29, Ci 41, Ci 78, Ci 80, Ci 90, Ci 92, Ci 93, Ci 95, Ci 110, Ci 132, Si 17, Si 18, Si 19, Si 21, Si 25, Si 26, Si 27, Si 44, Si 45, Si 46, Si 47, Si 48, Si 71, Si 76, Si 78, Si 79, Si 80, Si 81, Si 82, Si 83, Si 84, Si 85, Si 86, Si 87, Si 88, Si 89, Si 91, Si 94, Si 96, Si 99, Si 103, Si 104, Si 105, Si 109, Si 111, Si 112m Si 113, Si 114, Si 115, Si 116, Si 117, Si 133, Si 134, Si 135, Si 136, Si 137, Si 139, Si 140, Si 142, Si 162 -

Relatively little can be said concerning the sixty-five large numbered and ten unnumbered rock-cut installations. These are in many respects similar to those found below the Stratum 3 buildings at the N end of the town (see especially the discussion under Plan 74; P 127, P 128 and P 129 show typical groups of these installations). The area is so densely covered with them that if they were all in use at the same time it seems impossible that there was any substantial architecture here. It is likely that they were hewn in Stratum 4 and were connected with the processing and storage of agricultural produce. Some may have continued in use into Stratum 3, and perhaps some of the cisterns were cut then. Only those installations which are atypical in form, or in some special relation to an adjoining feature receive extended treatment here.

The following installations are joined by short tunnels: Si 25 with Si 26, Ci 41 with Si 48, and Si 84 with Si 85. Si 110 and an unnumbered installation seem to have mouths with special rims, possibly channels. If so they were perhaps used as presses. Ci 119 is fed by a channel lined with stone slabs, like Ci 363 to the N (see P 126; P 127 shows the cistern mouth sealed). The channel here also likely reached as far as the ringroad in order to carry in road run off. The 1947 report suggests that Ci 119 was bottle-shaped.⁹⁷⁴

Si 87, Si 88, Si 89, Si 91, Si 93, Si 94, Si 95, Si 109, Si 111 and Si 112 are cut, in whole or in part, by walls of Building 195.02. Si 29 and Si 47 are crossed by single-stone walls of what appears to be a bin, or possibly a grave. Si 48 and Ci 132 are cut by single-stone walls. Si 27, Si 91, Si 94, Si 103, Si 105, Si 116, Si 141 and Si 142 are cut by double-stone, and even triple-stone walls. The excavators put Si 94, Si 105, Si 116, Si 141 and Si 142 into the later phase of their Stratum II.⁹⁷⁵

Square AL23 contains two installations labeled "cement troughs" (one is shown in P 47); the W-most was built over Si 96. The "troughs" are very late, probably even modern features, if they are truly made of cement.

Ov 118 was built over Si 133 (see P 98). Ci 92's mouth was enclosed by a stone wall to prevent the surrounding debris from slumping in, and was in use with Building 195.02. Ci 11 is in the NW corner of an unnumbered thick-walled building in AK24. It seems that even if Ci 11 was not cut at the same time as the building was constructed, the

⁹⁷⁴I, 129 n. 1.

⁹⁷⁵I, 180 n. 8.

builders took it into account as they erected the structure.

The space marked Rm 27, and the surrounding rock cuttings and "cup-marks" were first interpreted by Badè as the "Rock of Sacrifice", associated with 4-Room building Building 194.01 which he believed was a temple.⁹⁷⁶ Over the years the secular nature of the building has been accepted, and the "Rock of Sacrifice" is to be understood as a series of rock-cut installations whose roofs have collapsed (see P 89). Certainly the "cup-marks" indicate that some agricultural processing took place here.

Since most houses in Stratum 3 likely had only one cistern, if they had any, it may be reasonable to suggest that Ci 78, Ci 80, Ci 90, Ci 92 and Ci 119 probably belonged to separate buildings, if they are contemporary. Ci 92's mouth was enclosed by roughly squared blocks laid in header fashion (P 85). The 1947 report suggests that Ci 78 is of the bottle-shaped variety.⁹⁷⁷ Probably Ci 80 cut into the existing Si 79 and Si 81.

Other Building Remains -

The discussion here will treat the remaining numbered and unnumbered architectural fragments. The order will be from E to W and N to S.

The E part of AK24 contains the NW corner and inner partition wall of a thick-walled building. In the corner is Ci 11. Possibly this set of

⁹⁷⁶The area just to the W was numbered Tb 107; nothing "tomb"-like was ever mentioned about this rock-cutting. It too is likely the remains of one, or more, collapsed roofs of rock-cut installations.

⁹⁷⁷I, 129 n. 1.

walls is connected to a wall fragment of similar thickness and orientation in AK25 to the E in Plan 196. Possibly these belong to Stratum 2. In the S part of the square are two double-stone walls and a single-stone wall. They are at a different orientation than any of the fragments in the vicinity. Their alignment, however, might fit the presumed path of the Stratum 3 ringroad.

Rm 11 and Rm 12 in AL24 are ill-defined spaces connected with a wall on the S which is probably a 3A rebuild along the line of the casemate-like wall. They may, at least in part, represent the back rooms of structures built against and with the rebuild. The wall fragment to the N seems too close to be part of the same building phase. It is not on the same orientation as the walls in AK24, but might match with Building 195.02 to the W.

AK23 contains fragments of three single-stone walls. The E and W sections are aligned in such a way that they might be following the curve of the Stratum 3 ringroad. The middle section is a puzzle.

AL23 contains several fragments which do not obviously have anything to do with each other. In the NW corner is a double-stone wall which might be a late Stratum 3 section along the ringroad. The section to the S and perpendicular to it does not seem to be oriented toward either Building 195.01 or Building 195.02. Possibly it is connected with the fragment to the N. To the E is the fragment of a thick wall which seems to cross over the W wall of Rm 29.

In AM23 is a double-stone fragment which seems to be cut by Building 195.01. On the S it ends at a point where the continuation of the 3A rebuild over the 3C casemate-like wall is expected. Perhaps this fragment belongs to the same phase.

AK22 is complex. The thick double-stones wall N and E of Ci 119 are not quite on the same orientation, but might be related. More promising might be a connection between the fragment on the E with the thick wall between Ci 132 and Si 133, which in turn forms a corner with a wall running off to the SW, which extends as far as AL21. This wall cuts the line of the ringroad, so if these walls are related they likely belong to Stratum 2 or 1. Note also that in AK21 there is another fragment which reaches this long wall from the NW. A single-stone wall cuts across Ci 132 and forms a corner with a similar wall which runs to the SE, which in turn connects with a single-stone which runs to the SW. The SW wall is cut by the double-stone wall on the line between AK22 and AL22. A continuation of this wall separates Rm 34 from Rm 35. Though it cuts across the presumed line of the ringroad it may not have been a barrier, but rather a step in the road. In the S part of the square is a corner formed by a single-stone wall with a double-stone wall. They seem like they might be following the ringroad, but their relations to walls E and W is not clear.

In AL22 are single-stone wall fragments which form the SW end of Rm 34. This room is cut by a corner formed by two triple-stone walls, which is rather uncommon at Tell en-Nasbeh. The section running NE-SW seems to reach the SE corner of Building 194.01. The wide wall running NW-SE turns a corner to the SW; its further extension in that direction is lost. These walls essentially enclose the space numbered Rm 28. Although it may well be contemporary with Building 194.01 it cannot be so proved. If it was, perhaps it was an extra storage space. This would place it in Stratum 2. There may also be a corner which turned to the NE, but this is quite uncertain. This line of single-stones might be a fragment of an early wall cut by the Stratum 2 wall. The wall on the line between AK22 and AL22 is connected with Building 195.01 which is likely of Stratum 3A. However, there is no clear trace of a building to

the W to which this wall might belong. Perhaps most of it was removed when Building 194.01 was constructed. Finally, in the NE corner is a single-stone wall fragment which may be oriented with the Stratum 3 ringroad.

The relations suggested above are all offered with the utmost caution. They should only be considered a preliminary effort to come to grips with the fragmentary remains in this area.

The Offset-Inset Wall -

The wall here contains parts of three offsets, one especially large offset (almost a tower), and two insets. It varies in thickness from ca. 4.4 to 5.3 m, except at the large offset where it reaches up to 7.8 m. There are no elevations on top of the wall, or along either face. A ca. 60 m trench was run up against the outer face, but no trace of a revetment/glacis or moat was found (see P 61).⁹⁷⁸ The trench did contain debris which either collapsed from the wall or was thrown over it.⁹⁷⁹ The photograph does show that the offset-inset wall was preserved for a considerable height. About 5.0 to 6.0 m of the outer face was plastered.

⁹⁷⁸W.F. Badè, Excavations at Tell en-Nasbeh, 1926 and 1927: A Preliminary Report, Palestine Institute Publications No. 1. (Berkeley, 1928), 17.

⁹⁷⁹Ibid.