

Plan 57: K-L-M,16-17-18 - Overview

No remains of Strata 5, 4 or 3C were uncovered here. This area appears to have been outside the limits of settlement in those periods.

Stratum 3B is attested by a section of the offset-inset wall, and probably by a drain channel through the wall.

Stratum 3A is represented by a small room built against the offset-inset wall. Remains of what may be a flimsy enclosure wall were also found.

Nothing certainly founded in stratum 2 was uncovered, though possibly the features assigned to stratum 3A belong here. Also, the offset-inset wall continued in use.

Stratum 1 is attested by a section of wall built over the stump of the 3B town wall. Possibly the drain is to be assigned to this period.

Evaluation -

This area was excavated in the middle of the 1929 season. Approximately half the area of the plan lies outside the town wall and was left unexcavated. Only a few photographs are available: one of the drain, and several general views. Elevations are sparse; at only a couple points are there top and bottom levels for walls. A strange convention was used to mark a late rebuild over the stump of the offset-inset wall. Instead of producing a stone by stone drawing, only diagonal hatching was used to show the limits of the wall. Since this wall does not appear in any of the photographs its analysis becomes almost impossible. No complete plans of any buildings were recovered because

only a narrow area inside the town wall was cleared.

Features -

Rm 185 is a small room formed by double-stone walls on three sides, and the offset-inset town wall on the N. The external SE corner of the room is thicker, forming an almost square protuberance to the S. There is no sign of a doorway in any of the walls. Its E and W walls appear to reach, but not cross over, the offset-inset wall. It is built in the intramural area between the line of the casemate-like wall to the S and the offset-inset wall to the N. These data suggest that the room is probably Stratum 3A. No artifacts were recorded from this feature, but its small size and placement indicate that it was not a dwelling but perhaps a storage or service area.

The Drain -

The drain in M18 is one of the seven or eight drains found along the N and W sides of the town in the intramural area. Its walls range from ca. 60 to 90 cm thick. The inner channel walls are made of large, rough ashlar blocks set stretcher fashion. These are up to ca. 1.3 m long and 35 cm wide. The external part of the drain walls is composed of smaller cobbles.

About 2.0 m from its S end were found two large stones apparently set so as to form part of the drain floor. P 693 shows that no such stones were found in the N part of the drain. None seem to have been found to the S, but the photograph does not show if excavation reached the depth of the stone flooring in this area. It is also unusual that where these stones are found, the walls of the drain are missing. This might be taken as evidence that the stones represent a feature cutting

the drain, but there is no other indication of this. Perhaps this marks the place where a secondary channel fed into the drain. But again, there is no other evidence of such a drain. The stones must remain a puzzle.

The plan and P 693 both show the drain running into, and continuing through the offset-inset wall. At the point where the drain reaches the wall, there is on the W a double-stone wall built partially on fill over the drain, and partially over the stump of the town wall. This wall seems to follow the curve of the inner face of the town wall to the W where it almost reaches Rm 185. The hatching on the plan seems to indicate that remains of the "late" wall cover the drain on the N, and flank it to E and W. Unfortunately the drain simply ends just S of the middle of M18. There is no evidence on how much farther to the S it extended, or how water fed into it.

The stratigraphic position of the drain is difficult to establish. It is built on and in fill deposited against the inside of the offset-inset wall. This means that the drain is contemporary with, or later than the 3B town wall. On the other hand, it is also below the "late" walls built over the 3B wall. If, Stratum 2 continued to use the 3B defenses, which only went out of use in Stratum 1, then the "late" walls here belong to Stratum 1. Unfortunately no material was recorded from inside the drain itself. There are two possibilities. The first is that the drain was constructed along with the 3B wall and continued in use perhaps as late as Stratum 1. The other is that it was installed after the 3B wall had gone out of use, i.e. in Stratum 1, and served some structures from that period which have survived only as fragments. In Volume I of this study it is argued that the drains found along the W and N sides of the town represent a preplanned effort by the builders of the 3B wall to channel off excess water that collected in that area. McCown noted that the drain could have been preexilic, but he regarded

it as postexilic because of "the nature of its construction". Unfortunately he does not explain what in the construction technique of the drain led him to believe it was postexilic.⁶⁵⁴

The Offset-Inset Wall -

The wall in this area consistently averages ca. 4.1 m wide. It contains parts of one offset and one inset. The 1947 report, citing Badè's earlier report, describes how a trench was dug up to the N wall, but without giving the square's coordinates, which are given for the two other extramural test trenches.⁶⁵⁵ However, the map of the excavated areas of Tell en-Nasbeh shows that this anonymous trench was cut approximately N to S in K-L18.⁶⁵⁶ A second trench was dug up to the offset-inset wall in N14 of Plan 73. In the treatments of the N trenches there seems to have been some confusion. The map in the 1947 report cited above shows a trench reaching the wall in K-L18, but the descriptions in the text seem to describe the N14 trench. The published plans do not show a trench in N14, but what appears to be a retaining wall is found just N of the wall on the 1:100 Plan 73. Photographs exist of the N14 trench (e.g. P 381), as they also do for the K-L18 trench (e.g. P A512), though these latter are not labeled and were identified on the basis of the topography depicted. These photographs also seem to show that the trench in K-L18 is actually 2 trenches less than 10 m apart.

Badè describes the wall in some detail. The description seems to relate specifically to the wall in N14, but likely applies here as well.

⁶⁵⁴I, 202.

⁶⁵⁵I, 191.

⁶⁵⁶I, fig. 1.

The builders cut a foundation trench to bedrock, then filled it to a height of ca. 2.0 m with cobble-size stones, instead of the substantial masonry which is usually required for massive constructions. Larger stones in clay mortar were laid on this foundation. However, the pressure of the debris inside the wall gradually caused it to buckle and lean out to the N. In N14 a retaining wall was added, but in K-L18, this was not done; perhaps the wall was sturdier here. The builders may not have erected a revetment/glacis in this area because the ascent outside the wall here is steeper than at any point around the site and they did not feel that such an extra defense justified the expense.

It seems from the 1947 report that a cut was made through the wall at this point.⁶⁵⁷ The pottery recovered from this, and other sections at other points around the wall, yielded pottery of the Iron Age, evidently from the 10th century B.C.

As mentioned above, the diagonal hatching over the offset-inset wall indicate a large feature belonging to Stratum 1, but without pictures or a detailed plan nothing can be noted for this feature except its date.

Other Remains -

A corner of installation Building 74.06, discussed in Plan 74, appears in the SW corner of M17. More enigmatic is the mass of stone, also in the S part of M17, which in width is similar to remains found in Plan 73 and Plan 75. It appears in P 379, where it looks much like a wall, though not with the thickness shown in plan 57. Perhaps what the plan shows is the stump of a wall obscured by stone tumble falling away

⁶⁵⁷I, 195.

from it to the S. The tumble would not show in the photograph because it would be somewhat lower than the top of the wall and was not visible when the photograph was taken. This photograph also shows something else not on the plan, a possible continuation of the wall just discussed around the N of installation Building 74.06 and continuing to the W. The function and stratigraphic position of this wall are unclear. It is N of the presumed line of the casemate-like wall, and so in the intramural area. Since it seems to have extended around installation Building 74.06 perhaps it should be considered part of an irregular enclosure around that installation. It is not connected to the 3B town wall, so it should most likely be placed in Stratum 3A, or later.