The Shephelah during the Iron Age
Recent Archaeological Studies

“. . . as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the Shephelah”
(1 Kings 10:27, 2 Chronicles 1:15)

edited by
ODED LIPSCITCH and AREN M. MAEIR

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Tel Gezer Excavations 2006–2015: The Transformation of a Border City

Steven M. Ortiz and Samuel R. Wolff

Introduction

The Tel Gezer Excavation project is a long-term joint project addressing chronological reevaluations, ethnic and social boundaries, and state formation in the southern Levant. As of 2015, the project has conducted eight summer field seasons.¹ The excavations are directed by Steven M. Ortiz of the Tandy Institute for Archaeology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Samuel Wolff of the Israel Antiquities Authority. The excavations are sponsored by the Tandy Institute for Archaeology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.² The excavations are carried out within the Tel Gezer National Park and benefit from the cooperation of the National Parks Authority. The excavation project has an excellent relation with the local communities: Kibbutz Gezer and the Karmei Yosef Community Association. The Project is affiliated with the American Schools of Oriental Research.

Research Goals/Objectives

The purpose of the project is to investigate state formation and regional boundaries in the northern Shephelah by investigating the Iron Age cultural horizon at Tel Gezer. These broad research trends in Iron Age archaeology are being addressed

¹ Gezer Survey: A survey project under the direction of Eric Mitchell was initiated the second season of the main project (2007). The goal of the survey is to survey comprehensively and systematically the region surrounding Tel Gezer and to locate and publish all archaeological features therein. The survey will complement the low intensity survey of the Aijalon Valley conducted by A. Shavit (2000). Gezer Water System: As part of the cultural heritage plan of the NPA and the hydrological research of Tsvika Tsuk, a joint project between the NPA and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary was initiated in 2010. Both of these two new projects are independent from the main excavations, although all three projects have a symbiotic working relationship and research designs.

² The project also received financial support from a consortium of institutions: Ashland Theological Seminary, College of the Ozarks, Emmaus Bible College, Lycoming College, Marian Eakins Archaeological Museum, and Lancaster Bible College and Graduate School. Other consortium members include Andrews University (2013), Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (2006–2013).
by current research projects in the Shephelah and Southern Coastal Plain—specifically, ethnic and political boundaries in the Judean Hills and the Philistine coastal plain. Tel Gezer is an ideal site to address the regional geopolitical dynamic between Judah and Philistia during the Iron Age. Gezer was an important site in the history of ancient Palestine. It is located on one of the most important crossroads, and the ancient city is mentioned in several historical texts. Although previous excavations have revealed much of Gezer’s history, many questions that are key to the reconstruction of ancient Palestine remain unresolved.

Major Results

Major results to date include (1) verification of the extension of the Middle Bronze glacis on the eastern slope of the western hill; (2) partial exposure of a Late Bronze Age building that was destroyed at the end of LB IIA (14th c. BCE); (3) discovery of an Iron Age I city wall, with a complex of several structures built up against the wall (11–10th c. BCE); (4) excavation of an Iron Age II Palace or Administrative Central Courtyard Building Complex; (5) several 9th-century domestic units, destroyed in a violent conflagration tentatively associated with the campaigns of Hazael, built up against the reused casemate city wall; (6) an 8th-century administrative quarter that includes three large administrative and industrial public buildings; (7) a large four-room house (elite) destroyed by Tiglath-Pileser (734 BCE); and (8) additional units of a Hellenistic building complex that extends the Hellenistic exposure previously excavated by the Hebrew Union College Expedition.

This article will focus on the Iron Age occupation levels. The complete stratigraphic profile and horizontal plans were only completed in the 2015 summer excavation season. Hence, this essay is a newer analysis of the excavations than the material presented at the 2014 World Jewish Congress. Because the ceramic reconstruction is currently being done in our lab, most of the discussion will focus on the stratigraphy and architecture.

History of Gezer Excavations

The first intensive exploration of Tel Gezer was conducted by R. A. S. Macalister during the years 1902–1905 and 1907–1909, under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF).4 The results of these early excavations were published in three volumes (The Excavation of Gezer, 1912).5 Macalister excavated nearly 60% of the tel. Unfortunately, the methods of excavation were very primitive: Macalister dug the site in strips and backfilled each trench. He distinguished eight levels of

3. This building was partially exposed by the 1984 HUC excavations and called “Palace 10000” (Dever 1985).
There were two smaller projects by Raymond Weill (1912–14, 1923–24) and Alan Rowe (1934).

The American Gezer Project began in 1964 under the auspices of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion and the Harvard Semitic Museum, with Nelson Glueck and G. Ernest Wright as advisers. William Dever led the Phase I excavations (1964–1971), while Phase II was led by Joe D. Seger (1972–1974). These excavations distinguished 26 stratigraphic levels, from the Late Chalcolithic to the Roman period. The renewed project is not associated with the previous HUC excavations. Nevertheless, the project is cooperating and is developing a working...
relationship with the publication phase of the HUC excavations currently under the direction of Joe Seger of the Cobb Institute of Archaeology.

Two smaller projects were conducted by Dever during 1984 and 1990 (Dever 1984, 1986, 1993) to address criticisms of various conclusions of the Hebrew Union College excavations, notably the dating of the outer wall. During the summer of 2005, the project co-directors met with Dever and examined the excavation notes and material culture remains located in the storerooms of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology of Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem. This initial review of the 1984 and 1990 excavation results provided the framework for the development of the research design.

Field Strategy

The excavations are located on the south within the saddle between the western and eastern hills, west of the so-called “Solomonic” or six-chambered gate (McCalister’s “Maccabean Castle,” Hebrew Union College’s Field III) and east of HUC’s Fields VII and X. The excavations are designed to unite the Iron Age architectural elements and cultural horizons of Field VII and Field III of the HUC excavations with our renewed excavations, thus allowing for optimal reconstruction of the

Fig. 2. Overview of Excavation Fields (2014).
growth and expansion of the Iron Age city as well as clear understanding of artifact distribution patterns.

Field E

Field E encompasses an area west of the Iron Age Gate Complex (Field III of the HUC excavations). The goals of this area are to investigate the urbanization process of the Iron Age City. This field was our Field A from 2006–2009. The goal in this area is to investigate the urbanization process of the Iron Age City. This field includes an east–west section of squares from the Iron Age gate to the west exposing the city fortification system and its relation to building activity built up against the city wall and an area north of the fortification wall, where a series of large public buildings are located. In 2011, we excavated several squares containing the 8th-century Administrative Buildings (A–C). Beneath the buildings we excavated a complete 9th-century domestic unit as well as a large administrative building of the Late Iron Age IIA.

Field W

Field W is located east of HUC Field VII and continues downslope to the south (our sondage). The goals of this area were to define the domestic area and provide a stratigraphic overview from the HUC Field VII domestic quarter to the southern slope encompassing the fortifications and line of the city wall. Indirectly, one goal also was to investigate the fortification line west of the Iron Age six-chambered gate. Field W evolved as a combination of Field B and the Fortification line of Field A. Field B was opened during the second season in 2007. In 2009, the field expanded south and connected with the casemate wall line of Field A. In 2010, Field B and the Field A Sondage became united as Field W. Work on the sondage has stopped because we have already established a sequence of fortifications from the Middle Bronze Age to the Iron Age IIB.

Excavation Results

Middle Bronze Age

The project design is focused on the Iron Age strata; nevertheless, in the process of determining the nature of the fortifications and the investigation of the “outer wall,” part of the Middle Bronze Age fortifications were excavated in the sondage. The Middle Bronze Age is well defined by the HUC excavations.  

The contributions of the Tandy Gezer Excavations are: (1) adding to our knowledge of the MB fortification line on the southern slope of the tell; (2) determining that the Late Bronze Age buildings were built over the MB fortifications; (3) and, discovering that the builders of the Iron Age fortifications were aware of the MB glacis and incorporated their glacis and fortification system into the existing MB fortifications.

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**Preliminary Excavations**

**6A**

This phase represents minor building/construction modifications

**VI**

**6B**

IA IIB 9th-8th

Public: Administrative Buildings A–B; Large building: wall & plaster floor (A5/B5); Rebuilt fortification walls, **HUC**: 4-chambered gate

Enlarging south wall of Four Room House
Rebuild Industrial Building C

**VI**

**7** IA IIB (9th)

Domestic: Units A–C; Dog burials

Unit D (rebuilt of Building 52136, enlarged and strengthened)

**VII**

**8**

IA IIA Late 10th

**HUC**: Rebuild of drain in 6-chambered Gate; Casemate 12 door filled in

Rebuild/Strength city plan and repair of City Wall — buttressing interior

**VIII** (Note: Fields VII [7a & B] and III [5 & 6] each had 2 phases)

IA IIA Mid-10th

Public: Central Courtyard Building Fortifications: Casemate city wall **HUC**: 6-chambered Gate (Field III)

Buildings 52136, 52057: larger walls plus a cobble floor and a tabun; Fortifications: Single-line City-wall and rebuild glacis 11163

**9** IA Ic 11th/10th

Unexcavated

Tabun 62067 Rectangular Building, Courtyard with Tabun 82007

**X–IX** (late 11th/early 10th Siamun Des.)

**X**–**IX** (late 11th/early 10th Siamun Des.)

**10A** IA Ia.b 12th / 11th

Isolated walls beneath casemate

Complex of building units, City wall (62005/21097/11133/11157) Glacis and curb

X–IX (late 11th/early 10th Siamun Des.)

**10B**

Complex of building units, city wall

**XI** (Phil)

**11** IA Ia/b (12th)

Complex of building units, city wall

**XIII–XII**

**12** LB IIA

Wall 11097 in D9 Ceramic

Patrician House

**XVI**

**13** MB IIC

Walls and Glacis

**XVIII**
**MB II Rampart and Glacis.** A stone glacis was uncovered at the lowest excavated levels of the slope of the tel (fig. 3). This stone mantle consists of small boulder-sized stones and covers a rampart that extends south from the outer line of the Iron II fortification walls. These stones were exposed for a length of 10 m from east to west and may continue to the east and west of our excavation area. The glacis continues 9 m downslope from its upper limit to the lowest exposed levels. The glacis slopes at ca. 15 degrees but is steeper toward the east. Near the highest part of the glacis and integrated into its steepest portion is a section of a wall more than 6 m long, extending eastward into the balk. This wall is preserved to a height of three courses of boulders and cobble-sized stones; its width remains undetermined.
because it extends into the northern balk. The function of this wall is uncertain; it may have stabilized the glacis or served as the base for a tower that was contemporaneous with the glacis.

The stone glacis was founded on a rampart composed of dike and fill layers of alternating plaster and soil (fig. 4). Only the uppermost two layers in this sequence were excavated. This type of rampart construction has already been discerned at Gezer, although no others had a stone glacis. The southern edge of the top plaster layer in the sequence (15–20 cm thick) meets the top stones of the glacis. The plaster extends east–west for at least 15 m, although its traces are more patchy toward the east, and then continues northward from the glacis for at least 3 m as a flat plaster “cap” to this fortification system. A short wall section built of two courses and three rows of small unhewn boulders, was uncovered above this plaster cap. Its function remains enigmatic. A small probe (1 × 1 m) into the sealed locus below the plastered cap yielded only MB II pottery, thus dating the entire structure to that period.

Late Bronze Age

The exposure of the Late Bronze Age levels occurred in the course of several seasons, mostly as the excavators were studying and excavating the Iron Age
fortifications. In the first season (2006), shallow fills with Late Bronze Age pottery were found on the slope beneath the line of the Iron Age II casemate wall. In a following season, a large pillar base was found in a probe conducted to determine the foundation level of the city wall. The debris associated with the pillar base had Late Bronze Age pottery. We tentatively proposed that these materials were the remnants of a square-pillared building and associated it with Stratum XIV of the HUC excavations solely because the stratum above it was Iron Age I. We postulated that this might have been associated with Merneptah’s destruction of Gezer (Ortiz and Wolff 2012: 12). The Late Bronze Stratum became clearer with the chance exposure of this Late Bronze Age occupation during the 2013 season. While excavating the Iron Age I wall and removing the stones of the Iron Age glacis, a small exposure of the Late Bronze stratum was excavated. This is isolated on the southern edge of Field W (fig. 5). This chance exposure has revealed more components of the pillared building. The plan of the building is difficult to discern, because the southern part of the building eroded down the slope and an Iron Age I city wall and complex of buildings are built directly on top of this building (see fig. 5 above).

The building complex (fig. 6) consists of north–south walls (52131, 62014, 62079) as well as east–west walls (62006, 52128, 11166, 72038). There is a single pillar base (31071), less than a meter in diameter, which probably is evidence of a

8 In our previous excavation report (Ortiz and Wolff 2012), our stratigraphic chart contained a misprint: the LB stratum should refer to HUC Stratum XV, not Stratum XII.
Fig. 6. Late Bronze Age building (Stratum 12).

Fig. 7. Tentative plan of Late Bronze Age remains.
courtyard or central room. All the walls are 1 m thick and constructed of two rows of unhewn stones, with chinking stones. Evidence of a mud-brick superstructure was found above Wall 62014. Just south of the pillar base and proposed courtyard/central room was Platform 62022. This could also be the remnants of a wall with cobbles. It looks like the remnants of a rectangular, single-course structure. This building contained Installation 82047—a limestone basin with a sump. The stone installation broke in half in antiquity, and the northern half has fallen over (see fig. 8). This installation would have been in the northeastern room of the Late Bronze Age building.

Evidence of destruction was found south of Wall 52128, around the pillar base, on top of Surface 62008, and around stone Installation 82047. Most of this was a heavy layer of ash and fired mud-brick detritus. One complete storage jar was found above beaten earth Surface 52130. Most of the pottery and finds were found on Surface 62008 between Walls 52131, 62014, and 62006. Some of the finds included a roof roller and large grinders. Several vessels (cooking pot, krater, storage jars) were found in the destruction on this surface, as well as a scarab of Amenhotep III and three cylinder seals. Several fragments of Cypriote and Mycenaean pottery were found, all of which date to the 14th century BCE. This 14th-century BCE destruction matches other LB IIA destructions in the region (e.g., Beth Shemesh, Timnah-Batash, and Jaffa). Based on these finds, the original proposal that this Late Bronze Age stratum equates HUC Stratum XIV was incorrect.

It appears that the LB building is a square-shaped building, ca. 12 × 10 m. It is unclear if this is a public or private building. Based on the size and finds, it is probable that it is a typical Canaanite patrician courtyard house (like Tel Batash Building 475; Gilboa, Sharon, and Zorn 2014, see especially LB plans on p. 52, fig. 8). The question is whether the northern wall W52128 and eastern wall W62079...
are exterior walls or are interior walls surrounding a central courtyard containing a pillar base and installation. If the latter is the case, then this building is perhaps a larger residence (see Shai et al. 2011 for discussion of the differentiation between public and private LB buildings).

Previous publications and papers have noted that the Late Bronze Age stratum is found on the edge of the slope, with the southern extent eroded down the slope. It was built directly on the Middle Bronze Age glacis. Based on this data, we proposed that there was no LB city wall (at least in this area) and that the MB fortifications were not reused in the LB. Sometime in the Iron Age I, a city wall was built directly over the Late Bronze Age destruction and occupation. An Iron Age II glacis was built over the Iron Age I wall and provides evidence for the extent of the slope during this period. While our investigations into the Late Bronze Age remains are still in their initial stages, perhaps this destruction is indicative of the unrest between the Canaanite city-states as reflected in the el-Amarna correspondence.

There is no evidence in our Field W of any stratum that is contemporary with the HUC Stratum XIV/XV associated with the Merneptah destruction. Perhaps the Late Bronze Age II occupation extended down the eastern slope of the western hill and, after the destruction, the city contracted to the top of the western hill.

One of the auxiliary goals of the 2015 season was to connect the line of fortifications found in our excavations with the architectural features in HUC’s Field X. Excavation consisted mostly of removing dumps from previous excavations (including the Tandy, HUC, Macalister digs). While the results are tentative, it is clear that the original date given to W1003 as part of the Iron Age II casemate system is incorrect. This wall (removed by HUC; see fig. 10 and red outline in fig. 9) does not line up with the Iron II city wall line (blue in fig. 9) but does line up with the stones of the Iron I “curb and glacis” (62049 and 62048; fig. 9, light orange). Additionally, W1003 is lower in elevation than the Iron II system, and it rested on top of W1020 (fig 9, yellow), which runs beneath the Iron I city wall materials (orange in fig. 9). W1020 is thus tentatively dated to the Late Bronze Age and likely forms the southern wall of an LB building west of the one/s in Z9–W9. These conclusions are tentative, because we have only started to remove the surface soil and have not yet fully defined the relationships between these walls.

Iron Age I: Stratum 10

Perhaps one of the main results of our excavations is the discovery that the Iron Age I city of Gezer was a walled city and that it extended from the acropolis (western hill) to the center of the southern edge of the tel. More than 20 m of this city wall has been excavated. The city wall is constructed of large unhewn stones, in two courses, with chinking stones between these courses and is preserved in some places for a meter and a half in height. The Iron Age II city wall was built directly on top of this wall, and in some places it appeared to be integrated with this wall. Because of this integration, we originally interpreted this earlier wall as a retention
system of support walls for the Iron Age II wall (Ortiz and Wolff 2012). Once the Iron Age II wall was dismantled, it became clear that these were two separate city walls. In fig. 11, the cutaway of the Iron Age II wall (shown in blue) and the Iron Age I wall are visible.

Built up against the north face of the city wall is more than 150 m² of a complex of buildings integrated into the city wall (fig. 12). The project has tentatively isolated nine building units. In almost all units, evidence of destruction was found (Units A, B, C, and 3 in fig. 12).
Along the north face of the city wall were several units that were built as integral units with the wall, perhaps an earlier form of casemate fortification. We have defined five of these units. Each unit is basically a single room that probably served as storage. These units were built directly on the Late Bronze Age materials and remained unchanged throughout Iron Age I (Strata 11–10). Unit 1 is undefined. While we were expanding the excavations of the western end of the Iron Age I wall, a complete storage jar abutting the city wall was found in destruction debris. It is possible that this unit connects with Unit 2 to the east of it, but the debris is at a higher level than the surface level of Unit 2. Unit 2 is 5 × 2 m with a north–south divider wall (W52134). The unit had beaten earth surfaces and a bin in the corner of the western room (L52107). Units 3 and 4 are built directly on the Late Bronze Age destruction, with north–south walls preserved for ca. 2 m in several courses. Unit 3, 3 × 5 m, had extensive Iron Age I destruction debris: ash and burned mud brick on a floor (Surface 52116), where we found two storage jars, a multi-handled krater, and several mushroom-shaped clay stoppers. One of these stoppers had a stamp seal common to the Egyptian 21st Dynasty. Unit 3 appears to be a basement or lower storage area and also served as a support or leveling for Units A and C just north of this room. The founding levels of the walls of Unit 3 as well as the Iron Age destruction debris were directly on the Late Bronze Age occupation. Unit 4 was also built directly on top of the Late Bronze destruction, so much so that the builders were aware of the Late Bronze building and built their walls directly to the north and east to avoid the large vat of the LB building. Much of the Late Bronze debris

![Fig. 10. Plan of Iron Age I wall (Tandy) and Wall 1003 (HUC) [plan: G. Arbino].](image-url)
was used as backfill. The surface level of Unit 4 was not found, probably destroyed by the construction of the Iron Age II city wall, which was built on top of these units. Unit 5 was also heavily damaged by the construction of the Iron Age II city wall. Based on wall remnants, this room was 6 × 4 m. An almost complete storage jar was found against the southern wall (wall 11136) of the room, and remnants of a cobble surface (62080) provide a hint of the location of the surface level. On the other hand, Units 3 and 4 had to have deep foundations because of the slopes (west–east and north–south) at this point on the western hill.

Each of these five units built up against the city wall follow the slope of the defensive wall, dropping more than a meter in height. For instance, the surface of
Fig. 12. Iron Age I Building Complex.
Unit 5 is a meter below the surface of Unit 2, even though these two contemporary surfaces are only ca. 10 m apart.

There are four units to the north. Unit B is a large unit about 6 × 3 m. The entrance to this unit was from the west (see fig. 12). There is a threshold that is flanked by two pillars. This unit contained a plaster surface that ran up to the threshold. Against the eastern wall was a bin (Installation 82036), where two restorable storage jars were found. In addition, a bronze needle and a scarab were also found near the southern wall (WS2133).

The main unit of this group is a Pillared Building: Unit A, which contains three pillars in an east–west line. This large pillared room, ca. 8 × 4 m, was floored with a beaten earth surface (Surface 82015). The entrance to this room was from the north, between wall 82030 and wall 82067. The walls were destroyed at the entrance, but we could estimate that there was probably a 3-m-wide entrance into the pillared room. In the western corner of the room, between the western Pillar 82023 and Wall, we found three complete storage jars covered by a destruction of fired mud brick and stone tumble. In the south of this unit is a room-niche, ca. 2 × 2 m. The function of this niche is unknown; it faces Unit 3, where we had a lower basement room and we found storage jars and several clay stoppers. In addition to the restorable vessels, within the destruction we found several cult items, such as a miniature rattle, fragment of a six-toed zoomorphic vessel, a fragment of a vessel with a possible phallic symbol, as well as a bronze spearhead. Unit A opens to Unit C to the east separated by a wall (82016). Unit C is partially excavated (walls and architectural features of Stratum 9 still remain unexcavated in the area). It is about 7 m in length. Destruction debris in this room contained restorable vessels.

Unit D is a small, 2 × 3-m room with a cobble surface that had a chalk overly in the south. It was also entered from the north. Foundations of the walls are above the surface levels of the rooms (from 3 cm to 8 cm). We are tentatively concluding that Unit D was a later addition, because the walls (52012 and 52043) were raised above the surface levels of Units A and B.

One of the unique features of the Pillared Building (Unit A) and Unit D is that the walls are constructed of larger stones than the other units. They are large boulder-size stones that require two or three men to move or lift. The other walls of the Iron Age I units are constructed of stones that an average-sized person can carry. All the walls are constructed of a single row of stones.

The HUC excavations uncovered two Iron Age I courtyard houses on the acropolis (Field VI). When the Field W Iron Age domestic units are compared to the two on the acropolis, it is clear that these are of a poorer quality. It is possible that the Iron Age Courtyard houses on the acropolis were elite compared to this quarter, found next to the southern city wall. The Iron Age I destruction and city wall were a surprise. Although we knew that the HUC excavations revealed Iron Age I

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9. From east to west: Pillars 82021, 82022, and 82023.
occupation, it was only found in Field VI on the acropolis, with minor ceramic evidence on the southern end of the tel. We now have evidence for at least two domestic quarters of the Iron Age City. Unlike the courtyard houses on the acropolis, we found minimal Philistine Bichrome pottery in the fills and debris of the Iron Age I.

IA I/IIA: Stratum 9

This phase was known but undiscerned in our 2014 season report. It was placed in our general Iron Age I Strata (9 and 10). It is now clear that what we originally thought was a unit/room of the Iron Age I building complexes is actually a later phase. This is a unique phase, because it is tentatively dated to the initial construction of the 10th-century stratum (Stratum 8), yet the builders are aware of the destroyed Stratum 10 phase. One wall (Wall 72028) reuses a pillar (Pillar 82031) of the Stratum 10 pillared building in its line, and a north–south wall (W31025) abuts this pillar. In addition, other walls are built directly on top of or integrate walls of Stratum 10 (e.g., W82046 is built on top of Stratum 10 W52145 and integrates W52144). The excavation of a balk (between Y7 and Z7) revealed several architectural elements that helped define this stratum: (1) a Tabun 82007; (2) cobble surface 82028; and (3) the continuation of W72028 (W82009), which abuts W31025. While the question remains if this stratum is contemporary with the Iron Age IIA city wall (e.g., it was rebuilt later and we do not have the original wall), there was a small rebuild of a domestic structure. Our new understanding of Stratum 9 is that it was an intermediate phase between the Iron Age I buildings of Stratum 10 and the major fortifications of Stratum 8.

The HUC excavations also found several phases dating to the Iron Age I and II. No surfaces or debris layers can be associated with the several architectural units that are remnants of these phases. Most were destroyed by the robust foundation and buildings of the Hellenistic Period in Field W. These were domestic units. None of these units, with the exception of Unit E, were the typical courtyard house (Gilboa, Sharon, and Zorn 2014).

Iron Age II: Stratum 8 (10th Century BCE)

Casemate Fortification City Wall

The Iron Age casemate wall was previous excavated by the HUC and the 1984 University of Arizona Excavations. The wall was also previous known from the Macalister excavations. The Tandy excavations have explored the western extent of the line of the Iron Age city wall. The Iron Age fortification system has been well described in our previous report (Ortiz and Wolff 2012). One of the proposals in our 2012 report was that there was a subterranean wall system built beneath the casemate city wall. During the 2012 season, nearly 15 meters of the Iron Age II city wall was removed to: (1) investigate the fortification system; and (2) expand Field W to the south. The removal of this wall was fortunate: it clarified our understanding of the Iron Age fortification system. We now know (see above) that what we thought
The casemate wall system consists of two parallel wall lines that extend 30 m to the west from the gate; the portion known to exist to the east of the gate was not...
excavated by our team. The casemate is constructed of two rows of large unhewn stones, with a central row of smaller chinking/fill stones. The northern line continues as a single wall for more than 17 m, whereas the southern wall line ceases.\(^\text{10}\) The northern wall line was adapted into a latter 8th-century BCE rebuild that consists of a single row of stones.\(^\text{11}\) It contains a reused vat. After the first field season, it became clear that Macalister had previously excavated this area and freely altered the plans. It is interesting to point out that there were no entrances into the casemates, as there were at other sites such as Kh. Qeiyafa (Garfinkel and Ganor 2009).

**Wall Retention System**

We previously proposed (Ortiz and Wolff 2012) that there was a series of seven single-row walls abutting the southern face of the fortification wall. We also assumed that these retention walls were built on top of or were integrated into the Iron Age I city wall and the destruction debris from that wall. This retaining wall system is contemporary with the main casemate system. The narrowness of the socle system indicates that the large, three-row, double-wall casemate system did not continue west beyond our field of excavation. With the removal of part of the Iron II wall, it was discovered that some of what we thought were socle support walls were actually north–south walls of the Iron Age I city that are abutting the Iron Age I city wall. The Iron Age II builders found an already existing Iron Age I

\(^\text{10}\) It is possible that the rebuild reflects the original design of the city wall (i.e., a double parallel wall [casemate] from the gate that becomes a single wall line); excavation of earlier strata will determine the history of use.

\(^\text{11}\) According to Macalister’s plan, he found only a single wall line.
city wall with domestic units incorporated into the wall. They added some additional retaining walls, a leveling fill, and then built a new city wall on top of the earlier stratum.

Iron IIA Glacis

The Iron Age stone glacis was founded directly atop Late Bronze/Early Iron I destruction debris. It extends from the western edge of excavations eastward almost 15 m and southward ca. 10 m, with a 1.3 m drop in slope. At the southern edge of this glacis, the stones ended in an uneven and erratic edge, which dropped off vertically 1.6 m to the level of the MB II glacis below, indicating that it was robbed out either in antiquity or by modern excavations (Macalister). The stones of this glacis were smaller than those of the MB II glacis.

A stepped sloping revetment construction (glacis) was built up against the Iron Age city wall and incorporated into the Iron Age I city wall and socle wall retention system. This structure is built of cobble- to boulder-size unhewn stones in a series of layers or steps from the south up to the outside face of the city wall. It was exposed nearly 15 m from east to west and ca. 15 m in width. The extent of this stone
revetment is unknown because it is only revealed in a probe in the sondage. From the bottom of the revetment to the top of the fortification wall is a height of nearly 7 m. There is a 2½ m east–west slope from the surface levels north of the fortification wall and revetment to the threshold of the Iron Age II gate.

The Iron Age fortification system constructed during the 10th century BCE was designed for optimal defense. The six-chambered gate was built in the saddle with the “built-up foundation technique,” 12 and the western fortification wall to the west followed the slope up the western hill. At the point of the western end of the saddle, remnants of the Iron Age I city wall with an additional stone revetment system was constructed. At a later period in the Iron Age, an outer gatehouse was constructed, along with an outer wall—typical of other Iron Age sites. 13

Administrative Quarter (Field E)

In Field E, the area to the west of the six-chambered gate was an administrative quarter. This season, with the removal of all balks and the connection between the Tandy excavations and the previous HUC (1970s) and Arizona (1984) excavations, we now have a complete plan of a large administrative building (see fig. 17). This

building is the typical bit hilani-type palace found mostly in the northern Levant (Syria). This building type has come under reevaluation: several scholars now question whether the term bit hilani is an appropriate label. Sharon and Zarzecki-Peleg posit that these buildings should be called Lateral-Access Podium (LAP) structures, while Lehmann and Killebrew prefer the term Iron Age Central Hall Tetra-Partite residencies.\textsuperscript{14} Our Administrative Central Hall Building (ca. 20 m × 25 m) has features of these types of large central buildings. It is clear that our building, the first that has been found and completely excavated at Gezer, fits this Iron Age tradition of large administrative buildings (compare Megiddo Palace 10,000).\textsuperscript{15}

This administrative central hall building was built mostly with large, rough field-stones. What is unique is that the corners of the buildings have ashlar stones. In addition, there is a major wall built mostly of ashlar blocks that separates the two

\textsuperscript{14} Sharon and Zarzecki-Peleg 2006; Lehmann and Killebrew 2010; See also Ben-Ami and Wazana 2013; Osborne 2012.

\textsuperscript{15} Note that Dever (1984) found parts of this building, which he identified as Palace 10000. He recognized that this was a large administrative/elite building, based on the construction (ashlar masonry) and partial plan; he did not recognize it as a typical bit hilani-type structure.
central halls (i.e., Room 6 and Rooms 7–9). These blocks were tipped over from the east to the west (see fig. 17). Dever described this wall (the “west wall” of his Palace 10000) as built of “massive, roughly squared blocks . . . [which] had tumbled over in disarray and remained where they fell.”

The eastern part of the administrative central hall building and limited areas elsewhere within the building were previously excavated by HUC as part of HUC’s Palace 10,000. Most of these areas have remained exposed to the elements in the decades since their excavation and, although we have revisited some of these areas, they offer little new information apart from aiding in our understanding of the architecture of the larger structure. The central hall building appears to have two entrances. Area 13 is an entry corridor providing access to the building from the alley separating the public structure from the city gate. This same alley gave access to Areas 14 and 15, neither of which could be entered from inside the building, as well as the initial casemate. The walls in this area of the building are notably distinct in construction from the rest of the building. They are constructed two-to-three rows wide, with roughly dressed field-stones that are somewhat smaller in size than those utilized in the rest of the building. As is the case elsewhere in the public structure, these walls incorporate the occasional ashlar block. While this southeastern corner of the structure does appear to be part of the public structure, the thickness of the walls and the seemingly exterior entry to the rooms suggest a different use for this portion of the building. Perhaps this area was part of a defensive tower associated with the gate but incorporated into a larger support structure.

Entering the central hall building via the entry corridor (Area 13) was by means of a bent-axis entrance. This entrance vestibule was paved with a cobbled surface (S81045). Interestingly, this was the only stone-paved surface; all other surfaces in the central courtyard building were plastered. The stone-lining was likely due to the increased amount of wear due to foot traffic in the eastern entrance (Area 10). Alternatively, the placement of the cobbles in the east entrance may have been due to factors related to the runoff of rain water from the plastered courtyard (area 6). In the absence of any drainage system in the courtyard (for which no evidence was found), it is possible that water may have drained to the area of the entry and that the cobbles were intended to ease movement of water through the entryway under such conditions.

To the south of the east entrance are two small rooms that may have served as small storage spaces. The first room (Area 11) is separated from the entrance (Area 10) by a small partition wall (W81044). This partition is built of two rows of rough field-stones laid out in a square approximately 1 m × 1 m, abutting the east face of

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17. Areas 4, 13, 14, and 15 in fig. 17.
18. Within areas 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11 in fig. 17.
20. All unit and room numbers in this section refer to the designations in fig. 17.
wall W31066. The passage into this room (Area 11) is 0.65 m wide, while the room itself is about 1.4 m × 1.7 m. On the south side of the room is a nearly identical passage created by a partition wall (W81043) that leads into another room (Area 12). This room is of similar design to the previous but slightly larger at about 1.5 m × 2 m. The ceramic material recovered from these rooms primarily represents storage jars, strengthening the suggestion that these small rooms were utilized as storage spaces.

To the west of these rooms were two elongated halls and/or courtyards. Entering through the bent axis of the entrance (Area 10) leads to a large central courtyard that was subdivided into various spaces (Areas 6–9). The northern end of the eastern courtyard (Areas 7 and 8) is divided by a short protrusion from a north–south wall W31066 that may be the sole remaining evidence of an originally more substantial divider. Just south of this area is Area 9. This area is bounded by the casemate wall W11081 on the south, vat L71084 and abutting wall stub W71076 on the west, wall W31066 on the east, and wall W81046 on the north. Entry into this approximately 4 m × 2 m space was via the northwest corner, next to vat L71084. It is unclear whether this area was open to the rest of the courtyard, perhaps with wall W81046 serving as a short partition wall, or was an enclosed room. The tops of the remaining stones of wall W81046 are at about the floor level of the courtyard, while most of the walls of the public structure are preserved much higher. Activities carried out in the area may have been related to the use of vat L71084, given its proximity, but there were no other finds within the area that might help to discern the use of the space.21

The second elongated room (Area 6) provides the clearest evidence that this space was an open courtyard. A well-preserved plastered surface (S71080) was excavated in the course of the 2014 and 2015 seasons and was found to extend from the casemate wall (W11081) in the south to the entrance of room 2 in the north, a length of approximately 9 m. Constructed on this surface were three tabuns: L71055 in the south, against vat L71084; L81021 in the north, along the south face of wall W61064; and L81028 in the west, still partially obstructed by the west balk of E7. Also found in the courtyard during the 2014 season was a small concave stone feature (L71079) set into the plaster and surrounded by a ring of small cobbles. This stone feature may have been a grinding installation or perhaps a post-hole for some sort of temporary covering. Evidence of destruction was found on the surface, where remnants of charred wooden beams were encountered. Small finds from the courtyard found in proximity to this installation include an Egyptian-style faience Bastet bead and fragments of a bull figurine with a unique circular appliqué on the forehead.

21. The vat might have been in secondary use as part of the wall line. It is not clear at this point if this represents its original use in the central courtyard building or if it was put out of use at a later time. One of the problems is that the stratigraphic relationship is lost due to the intrusion of a later stone pit (remnants are visible in fig. 17).
Separating Area 6 from Area 7 is an ashlar wall (W51088) that runs 2.60 m in a north–south orientation. As can be observed in the plan, this ashlar wall is in line with walls W71076 and W61065 but does not connect with either. There are two courses of ashlars preserved, and a number of other ashlars and large rough stones were found tumbled to the west of the wall, having clearly been part of the wall prior to its destruction. It appears that this wall acted as a partition between Areas 6 and 7, though its size may suggest an additional structural purpose that is not yet clear.

The area immediately to the west of the central courtyard (Area 5) remains partially obscured by unexcavated balks and squares above the level of the courtyard. What is clear at this point is that Area 5 is separated from the central courtyard by north–south wall W51063. This wall abuts the casemate wall W11081 on the south, but its northern extent remains concealed within the unexcavated balk. Given that tabuns L81021 and L71055 were constructed immediately next to walls, it seems reasonable to expect the same to hold true for tabun L81028, which is also partially concealed by an unexcavated balk, just east of the expected continuation of wall W51063. Future excavations may show wall W51063 to continue north almost as far as east–west wall W71039, stopping just short of the wall to create a passage between Areas 5 and 6. Such a reconstruction would render Area 5 as a broad room, approximately 9 m × 2.5 m. The western wall of the room, also the westernmost wall of the public structure, appears to have had a second entrance to the public structure at its center. The approximately 3-m gap created by the entrance divides the western wall into wall W81049 (between the gap and the casemate wall W11081) and wall W61071 (between the gap and the northwest corner of the public structure). Although most of Area 5 remains to be excavated, the level of its plastered floor (S81048) was reached during the 2011 season in part of the area.

Rooms 1 and 2 were mostly excavated during the 2014 season. Work in these areas during the 2015 season uncovered a plastered surface in each. Room one has a well-preserved plaster surface (S81005) that laps against walls W71039 (south), W61071 (west), and W61059 (north). Room 2 also yielded a plastered surface (S81006), though it was not as well preserved as that of Room 1.

Room 3 was originally excavated by the HUC project (fig. 19) and revisited in the 2015 season by our team. The area is similar in size and layout to Rooms 1 and 2, with the exception that its enclosing wall is incomplete. Wall W81035 belongs to a later stratum and is founded on the tumbled debris of the public structure, but we lacked the time this season to remove this wall and it remains in situ, obscuring our view of the remains of any southern enclosing wall that may have existed for Area 3. Also remaining in situ in this area is the large vat L81050, previously exposed by the HUC team. The outer dimensions of this vat are 1.46 m × 0.96 m, with a depth of 0.60 m. Dever correctly identifies the vat as an olive oil installation.22

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Fig. 19. Stone basin in Room 3.

Separating Area 3 from Room 4 is partition wall W81051. We worked this season only in the small area west of Stratum 6 wall W81052, revealing a small patch of poorly preserved plastered surface S81047. Dever’s reconstructed plan of his Palace 10,000 (Dever 1985: 221) placed an entrance in Area 4, but it seems more likely that the gap in the line of wall W61059 that he interpreted as an entrance was caused by the extraction of the stones during a later period of the site’s history.

As mentioned above, our work this season has enabled us to note certain adjustments required in Dever’s plan of the public structure (his Palace 10,000) based on the HUC finds. In addition to the absence of the western half of the public structure, the plan is missing all of the interior walls that divide Areas 7–12. Thus, the area Dever interpreted as an open “parade ground” was actually six distinct spaces, changing the character of the structure substantially.

The HUC team based their date of the mid-tenth century BCE for the public structure on ceramic finds from within the construction fills associated with the structure, which they found to continue to a depth of up to 2.50 m beneath the floor level. Our excavations have found that the public structure was mostly

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23. Though Dever himself (1985: 221) expected the structure to continue to the west.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Younker (1991: 21) states that soundings taken from our Areas 4, 13, 14, and 15 revealed the public structure to have been built upon “built-up foundations.” The area was
empty at the time of its destruction, but the initial pottery calls on those ceramics that were recovered from within the destruction debris and on top of the floors do support a 10th-century BCE date for the use and destruction of the building.

The central courtyard building was destroyed in a significant and violent event. The destruction debris from the building buried the floors and walls in up to 1.50 m of debris. This debris was mostly deteriorated mud brick, but certain areas within the structure, typically to the immediate west of a wall, contained high concentrations of large boulders. This was the case in Room 1, to the west of wall W71021; Room 2, to the west of wall W61065; Area 6, just south of wall W61064 and west of wall W51088, as well as along the north face of the casemate wall W11081; Area 3, where much of this debris remains in situ beneath later wall W81035; Area 4, north of wall W81053; Area 7; Area 8, west of wall W31066; and Rooms 11 and 12. From the distribution of these boulders, it seems that when the central courtyard building was destroyed, most of the walls fell toward the west. Perhaps this represents a destructive force moving westward from the area of the city gate.

The source of this destructive force appears to have not caught the occupants of the public structure by surprise. The building was for the most part cleaned out prior to its destruction, suggesting that its contents were taken when the occupants first leveled and raised by up to 1.50 m with a construction fill. Then, foundation walls were built up from this level, before being buried by nearly a meter in a second construction fill. The floors of the public structure, per Younker, rested atop this second construction fill.
fled the coming violence. Little was left behind. A complete cooking pot was recovered from the northeastern corner of Room 2. That room also yielded a complete rattle, a bronze bracelet, a bronze ring, and a unique stone object.

Discovered in Room 1 was an incised ivory game board and a handful of unworked astragali (fig. 21). This game board features the standard layout of the Game of Twenty Squares. It features three parallel rows of squares, laid out in groups of four, twelve, and four, with rosettes marking five of the twenty squares. A very close parallel to this board was found in Tomb 58 at Enkomi (Kiely 2014). The quality of the game board suggests that it was a prestige object, and this in turn may indicate an elite usage of Room 1. Room 2 contained olive pits, pounding stones, gaming pieces (3), a spindle whorl, sling stones, and projectile points. A number of large bones were recovered, including a well-preserved (sheep?) horn, and bovine mandible from two different animals. A rattle and cooking pot were the only complete ceramic artifacts found.

Stratum 8 (Field West)

Not much has been exposed of the Iron Age IIA occupation (10th c. BCE) in Field W. Most of the Iron Age was poorly preserved due to later Hellenistic building activity and the early 20th-century excavations by Macalister. Remnants of buildings were uncovered that are tentatively dated to Stratum 8 (see fig. 22). Two building complexes were discerned: only the remnants of a cobbled surface and the outlines of buildings were left by the north face of the casemate wall (Building 52136), and a second building to its north (Building 52057). Building 52136 consists of a main room with two other rooms that abutted the casemate wall. The main room, 5 × 5 m, contained a cobbled surface with a sump/silo that had an entrance from the east. The western part of this building is unknown; it continues into an unexcavated area. Building 52057 is north of Building 52136 and contained an installation. Unfortunately no surfaces were preserved.
Iron Age II: Stratum 7 (9th Century BCE)

Previous excavations by HUC, as well as Dever’s excavations in 1984 and 1990, found limited occupation of their Stratum VII (9th century) and therefore were not anticipating a major stratum dating to the 9th century. Surprisingly, the Tandy excavations have revealed a robust 9th century BCE stratum. This stratum was found mostly in Field E, east of the Iron Age city gate. Built directly on top of the Stratum 8 administrative courtyard building and partially incorporating some of its walls, was a domestic building (see fig. 24). This building was destroyed, as evidenced by a rich layer of destruction debris found in the building.

27. We are tentatively dating this to the 9th century BCE by default. This stratum (7) is above our Stratum 8 destruction (Iron Age II A, ca. 925 BCE) and beneath our Stratum 6 (8th century BCE, ca. 733/732 BCE). Work on ceramic seriation as well as 14C samples will hopefully confirm the tentative dating.
Several other buildings (that is, walls) are associated with this stratum, although they lack associated destruction debris and surfaces (see fig. 23). What is apparent is that the nature of this administrative quarter drastically shifted from large administrative buildings to small domestic structures. There appear to be three domestic complexes (fig. 23). Each complex averaged about $10 \times 10$ m in area. Most of the walls were constructed of a single row of stones. Only the southern parts of these units were excavated. It is clear that they continue to the north under the 8th-century occupation. Each of these units is built up against the north face of the casemate city wall. The plan for only one of the three complexes has been drawn.

**Stratum 7 Domestic Building**

In 2014, a major destruction was found inside a pillared domestic structure, and this enabled the project to define the nature of one of these three complexes (fig. 24). This building measures about $12 \times 8$ m. It consists of a main pillared room, with a storage room to its north. Flanking this room to the east were cobbled steps that led up to an elevated tabun (Area 1, fig. 24). To the south of this pillared building was a courtyard with a separate area also containing a tabun (Room 6, fig. 24). Farther south were two rooms (Rooms 8 and 7) built up against the casemate wall. Entrance to these two rooms was from the courtyard area (Area 5). This building unit is unique and not a typical four-room house. The tabuns, material culture, and construction all point to the fact that this is a domestic unit. It is built on top of the destroyed Stratum 8 and reused some of the Stratum 8 walls (W51063, W71070, W61071). The surfaces are beaten earth, with some cobble and flagstone areas.
Entrance to the domestic unit was from the east (Area 4) or the northeast end (Area 1). The eastern end of the structure is too poorly preserved to identify or rule out the presence of an entry on that side. Area 1 is the only other possible entrance with an opening to the north. One difficulty with this, however, is the presence of tabun L61070, which was found in Area 1 against the west face of wall W61071. While this tabun would have made passage through Area 1 more difficult, it was not so large as to completely impede foot traffic and rule out Area 1 as an entrance. It is also possible that the tabun is from a later squatter phase.

Area 1 has a rough cobbled pavement (S71052) that appears to form two steps leading down into the pillared building from the north. These steps lead to Room 2, which is approximately 2 m × 4 m and features a small stone-lined bin L81016.
set into the floor against the east wall W71070. Room 2 is separated from Room 3 by two pillars (L71050, L71051) of similar size. Each of these is 0.50 m × 0.50 m and 0.80–0.90 m in height. The pillars stand in the center of the space created by Rooms 2 and 3, so that the two rooms mirror each other in size and shape. Ceramic finds indicate that Room 3 was used for storage, particularly in its southern half, while Room 2 housed fewer vessels, likely due to its status as a passageway connecting the northern half of the building with rooms further to the south.

Just north of this pillared space is an enclosed room (Room 10) for which we were unable to discern an entrance. The north wall (W61053) of this room runs at a somewhat different angle from all the other east–west walls in the pillared building and is built of marginally larger boulders than those used elsewhere in the structure. It may be that this room was added to the exterior of the pillared building subsequent to the initial construction of the structure. This may help to explain the apparent lack of a clearly defined entrance into the room. Also of note is that, while most of the pillared building was rich in ceramic and other small finds, Room 10 was by comparison nearly devoid of objects.

South of, and accessed directly from, Room 2 is Room 5. This room acted as a hub of sorts for the pillared building; from it one could access Room 6 to the west, Area 4 to the east, or Rooms 7 and 8 to the south. This room featured a plastered installation consisting of three basins. One basin was a shallow, elongated depression...
that was well plastered and lined with cobbles. The precise use of this feature is unclear, but it was well constructed. Just to the southeast of this plaster-and-cobble basin, we uncovered the remains of a plastered installation and another one to the southwest, plastered bin L81042. Both of these plaster-lined bins had been sunk into the floor. A number of storage jars and other vessels were found in this area (Area 5). Thus, Room 5 seems to have been utilized both as a work space and a storage area.

Room 6 was entered from the west side of Room 5 and may constitute a small, open courtyard. This space is approximately 1.50 m × 2.50 m and features a tabun (L81034) in its southwest corner. From this tabun we recovered numerous (100+) olive pits for potential carbon-14 dating. Room 7 was entered via Room 5 and in turn gave access to Room 8. Both of these rooms abut the casemate wall W11081. Numerous objects were recovered in Room 8 during the 2011 season, including several vessels and two stone game boards. Room 7, by contrast, was mostly empty. Two storage jars were discovered against a stone bench (L81014) built against the casemate wall, one of which contained three pieces of a long metal object.

Summary, Stratum 7

During Stratum 7, the administrative quarter of Stratum 8 changed to a domestic quarter. It is clear that Stratum 7 reused the earlier fortifications and casemate wall line. The 10th-century-BCE monumental architecture (e.g., pillars, walls) is missing from this stratum. Although only one unit has been fully excavated, there is evidence for other units. All walls are constructed of a single course of unhewn stones, with several remnants of tabuns found in the units. All of these walls were stratigraphically below our Stratum 6 administrative buildings. One of the difficulties
of establishing plans of these units is that this area was previously excavated by Macalister, who removed a lot of the stratigraphic connections between the various wall fragments. In addition, this area was heavily damaged by the activity of the Hellenistic period. The pottery found in the destruction of the pillared building has not been restored. Most of the restoration of Stratum 7 pottery is from Room 8 (excavated in the 2011 season). Typical ceramic forms are store-jars, cooking pots, and cooking jugs (see fig. 27). We tentatively date this destruction as contemporary with the destructions of Gath, Tel Zayit, and Tel Goded (Maeir 2004b; 2012: 38, 43–49; Tappy 2008; Tappy et al. 2006: 9–16, Gibson 1994: 230–31). Most scholars associate this destruction with the campaign of Hazael, King of Aram-Damascus, in the second half of the 9th century BCE (2 Kgs 12:18; Maeir 2004a; 2012; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2007; 2009).

Iron Age II: Stratum 6 (8th Century BCE)

Our Stratum 6 has already been discussed in previous publications (Ortiz and Wolff 2012) and will be briefly summarized here. Stratum 6 consists of a major phase, with some minor rebuilds. In addition to the rebuilding of the gate into a four-chambered gate, the Stratum 7 city was drastically changed. A series of public buildings was constructed just west of the gate. These buildings were built up against the north face of the casemate wall. The domestic structures abutting the

line of the casemate wall went out of use, and three major administrative buildings were built, changing the area west of the gate back into an administrative quarter. The domestic quarter was relocated to the northwest. Most of the archaeological data was removed by Macalister; all that remained were the remnants of the foundation of the wall lines. All the pottery was mixed, with Iron Age and Hellenistic sherds intermingled. Only one surface in the three administrative buildings was preserved (cobble surface 21071 in Building C), where an Iron Age juglet was found. To the north of this building, the project was fortunate that Hellenistic buildings prevented Macalister from penetrating to the Iron Age levels, and in them we found a large four-room house with more than a meter of destruction debris.

**Iron Age Four-Room House**

To the northwest of these administrative buildings was a domestic quarter where we excavated a four-room house. The four-room house consisted of the southern...
wing, which had (1) a plaster-floored room to the west and a cobble-surfaced room to the east; (2) a central room, which contained pottery vessels (mainly storage jars, grinding stones, and loomweights; a few tabuns were also identified here; (3) a northern room, which remains largely unexcavated; and (4) a broadroom subdivided into two rooms to the west. The latter was filled mostly with broken storage jars.

The four-room house consists of three long rooms (a central room flanked by parallel northern and southern rooms), separated by large limestone pillars (average dimensions 0.50 × 0.50 × 1.00 m), with a broadroom to the west, which was subdivided into two smaller rooms by a transverse wall. The eastern and northern borders of the house remain unexcavated. The area of the house as a whole is estimated at 135 m², considerably larger than typical four-room houses found previously at Gezer and at other urban sites. The building and its contents were sealed by burnt mud-brick destruction debris, testimony to a considerable conflagration.

The portable finds from the building included basalt grinding stones, loom weights, and a sizable ceramic assemblage, consisting primarily of restorable storage jars, with lesser numbers of bowls and kraters (no cooking pots or jugs). The four-room house contained more than 30 whole vessels. The vast majority were store-jars. Notably, only 1 cooking pot was found The juxtaposition in the same

Fig. 29. Aerial photo with plan of the four-room house (Field W).
room (southern broadroom) of lamalek storage jars (without the typical stamps), typical of Iron IIB Judean sites and Phoenician torpedo-shaped storage jars, characteristic of coastal assemblages, clearly illustrates that Gezer straddled the geopolitical boundary between these two zones. The ceramic assemblage and small glyptic finds date to the eighth century BCE and are tentatively associated with the destruction of the site by Tiglath-Pileser III in 734 BCE. Evidence of a similarly dated destruction was found in the excavations in nearby Field VII. To the south of the four-room house, remains of a cobbled surface (ca. 6.5 m long and 3 m wide, exposed thus far) was uncovered, perhaps representing a portion of a street leading uphill from the Iron Age gateway toward the west. One weight from an olive press installation, like that found in nearby Field VII, was found on this surface. The ridged holemouth jar, the only one found in the assemblage, is a late-8th and 7th-century type. Its presence here, in what is apparently a 734 BCE context, provides us with a terminus post quem for this type. Note that the cooking pot is not the typical Judean form but rather a coastal type.

When viewed in conjunction with the contemporary remains in Field VII, it seems that this area was domestic in function. Nonetheless, the architecture revealed in our excavation seems more massive and more robust than that revealed in Field VII. Note that the pillars, for example, are smaller in size and are situated closer together in Field VII. Our building measures some 140 m², much larger than most examples found in urban settings.

The building was destroyed in a massive conflagration. The four-room house was located immediately north of what appears to have been an area devoted to the production of olive oil. Note that there several installations and a weight were found here, which lead us to this conclusion. In Field W, as we removed the stones from Building C, the pillar base was discovered to be an upturned olive oil vat. This vat has a rectangular shape and was probably in use in Phase 1 of Building C. It went out of use with the olive oil installation. In addition, it was determined that a large circular installation excavated by Macalister dates to Stratum 6a. The pottery
and the glyptics all seem to point to Tiglath-Pileser III’s ca. 733 BCE campaign as the occasion of the building’s destruction. We do not know precisely when the building was constructed. Evidence in the southern end points toward two phases of occupation, with the cobble-surfaced and plaster-surfaced rooms perhaps being later in date than the rest.

Overview of Results

Although the project has completed eight seasons of excavation, most of the results have appeared in the past two seasons of excavation. This was anticipated, because Gezer has been extensively excavated. Unfortunately, while the Macalister excavations revealed that Gezer was an important city during the second and first millennium BCE, it is difficult to distinguish the various historical periods based on those excavations. The stratigraphic picture was clarified with the HUC excavations of the 1960s and 1970s. A majority of these excavations focused on the Middle Bronze Age. Although the Phase Two project shifted focus to the Iron Age, many questions were still left unanswered. The renewed Tandy Excavations, while still emphasizing the stratigraphic foundation of the HUC excavations, has intentionally accomplished this task by incorporating broad architectural overviews. The emphasis was placed on an area where a picture of shifts in the process of urbanization would be most likely. Though the results are tentative, a picture of this process is starting to be become clear.

First, the 2nd-millennium-BCE ancient city of Gezer extended its occupation to the east slope of the western hill. While evidence of the MB glacis has been found encompassing both the western and eastern hills, there is now evidence of an LB IIB patrician house in this area. Scholars have attempted to understand the Amarna Period city of Gezer by attempting to find elite buildings in Macalister’s plans. We now have a partial plan of an elite building dating to the 14th century BCE. In a few more seasons, as the excavations of the Iron Age I strata proceed, the project should develop a complete plan of this LB building. The results of the Tandy excavation have shown that Gezer was an unwalled city during the Late Bronze period. Even though the well-known debate about whether Gezer was a walled city during the Late Bronze has now been settled, ironically, we have determined that Gezer during the Iron Age I was also a walled city.

It is clear that Gezer experienced growth and contraction in its urbanization. The Iron Age I Canaanite city was destroyed and the city in this area experienced

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29. The Phase Two excavations were directed by J. Seger. The Iron Age occupation strata was limited to the Iron Age I buildings on the acropolis, the reexcavation of the Iron Age gate, and the domestic units in Field VII.
30. See Ortiz and Wolff (forthcoming) on the history of debates about the character of Late Bronze Age Gezer.
a drastic shift to public buildings, particularly a large administrative central courtyard building adjacent to a gate complex and fortification system. This shift is associated with the rise of the United Monarchy. That Gezer was an administrative city is attested in the biblical memory of Solomon’s building projects (1 Kgs 9:15). This new urban center and central authority was short-lived, because Gezer (Stratum 8) was destroyed by Shishak. The character of the public quarter shifted into domestic units. These units continued to use the Stratum 8 casemate wall and gate system, although the central courtyard building went out of use. The domestic units were not the typical four-room house associated with the Israelites but probably represent a local Canaanite household tradition. These units were destroyed in the 9th century BCE, and a new city was rebuilt. At that time, the quarter reverted back to public buildings, and the domestic quarter moved to the northwest, where we excavated a large four-room house adjacent to the four-room houses excavated by HUC (Gitin 1990). During Stratum 6, evidence of Judean influence is seen in the form of several fragments of baking trays and lmlk handles.

One of the research questions that the project is addressing is the shifting ethnic and political boundaries of Gezer in the context of its location in the Aijalon Valley, between the Israelite and Judahite highlanders and the Philistine coast. More recently, scholars are realizing that ethnic and political boundaries are more complex than the simplistic juxtaposition of Israelites vs. Philistines. Because scholars now are considering the complex ethnic and political groups in the Yarkon basin and the northern Shephelah (Gadot 2011; Mazar 2009), Tel Gezer is an ideal site to address these developments. Gezer sits on a border (between the Judean Hills, the Philistine Coastal Plain, and the north [that is, Israel]). In addition, it also has a history of shifting borders (during the Iron Age I, when it was Canaanite, compared with during the early Iron Age II, when it was Israelite, and during the later Iron Age, when it was Judahite). We will start to see this picture clearly only when we put all the artifacts together according to their stratigraphic context.

32. Gilboa, Sharon, and Zorn 2014.
33. Bunimovitz and Lederman (2008) and (Faust (2012)).

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