

TEL GEZER EXCAVATIONS 2011
FIELD E SEASON REPORT

Field archaeologist: Bob Mullins

Square supervisors: Steve Andrews, Robin Knauth, Lesley Haines, Steve Wyrick,
Cameron Coyle, Trey Thomas, Alli Davis, Byron Longino

Assistant supervisors: Matt Martin, Ryan Larimore

INTRODUCTION

There are three main phases in Area E which correspond to those excavated by Dever in 1984: Phase 3 (10th century), Phase 2 (9th century) and Phase 1 (8th century).¹ But due to the occurrence of Hellenistic layers in Area W the general stratigraphy for SWBTS is: Stratum 4 (10th century), Stratum 3 (9th century), Stratum 2 (8th century), and Stratum 1 (Hellenistic). The discussion below has been organized according to stratigraphic phase, architectural unit, and square.

Stratum 4: TENTH CENTURY BCE

Dever identified two phases west of the six-chambered gate in what is now Area E: A 10th century phase contemporary with the construction of the six-chambered gate (Phase 3 – Palace 10000 – presumably destroyed by Shishak in 925 BCE) and an 8th century phase (Phase 1 – Palace 8000 – presumably destroyed by Tiglath-pileser III in 733/2 BCE). Phase 2 in between, which Dever dated to the 9th century, was primarily attested by raised floor levels in the “guardrooms”.

Palace 10000

Dever dated ‘Palace 10000’ to the mid-late 10th century BCE (Dever 1985: 221). This is an assumption that we must test, since this date was largely assigned on the basis of 1 Kings 9:15. As Finkelstein has already noted, this is circular reasoning and should not be accepted *prima facie*. Similarly, Dever also tied the end of Phase 3 to Shishak’s campaign in 925 BCE. The exposed area of 11 x 17 m was roughly equivalent to our Squares A-B/6-8, though his work was largely limited to exploratory probes. Relevant to this discussion is what he identified as a “parade-ground” (Courtyard 7) and a “guardroom complex” (Rooms 8 and 9).

Courtyard 7 (Sq. F/6-8)

Dever (1985: 221) says that Palace 10000 was entered from two points: an opening on the north leading into Room 5 and a corridor leading from Rooms 8 and 9 into Courtyard 7. Dever notes that Courtyard 7 measured 6 x 12 m and was cobbled in places. So far we have found no evidence of this cobbling. Dever missed a north-south wall in the eastern side of Courtyard 7 (W51006), even though one of his probes intersected its northern end. This line extends from his “curtain-wall” in Sq. F/6 between Rooms 4 and 5

¹ William G. Dever, Solomonid and Assyrian Period ‘Palaces’ at Gezer. *IEJ* 35/4 (1985): 217-30; see especially Fig. 3 on p. 221 (Palace 10000 from the 10th century BCE) and Fig. 4 on p. 223 (Palace 8000 from the 8th century BCE). Less relevant to this discussion is, Late Bronze Age and Solomonid Defenses at Gezer: New Evidence. *BASOR* 262 (1986): 9-34.

(W51085) to the south by way of Wall 51006 (Sq. F/7) to abut the inner face of Casemate Wall 11081 as Wall 31066 (Sq. F/7-8). The western side of Courtyard 7 can be accounted for in Dever's plan (1985: 221, Fig. 3). This wall line begins in Sq. F/6 west of the olive oil installation and extends southwards by way of Wall 51088 (Sq. F/7) to abut the casemate wall as Wall 31067 (Sq. F/8). This narrows Dever's so-called "parade-ground" by about one meter, making the current area about 5 m wide from east to west.

The eastern face of W51088 is still largely embedded in the E-F/7-8 balk; however, we were able to see two large ashlar sitting side-by-side on top of earlier ashlar in the western section of Sq. F/7 (see Section **). It is worth noting that these ashlar largely resemble hewn stones used in the construction of the six-chambered gate and casemate wall. One of these ashlar fell into Sq. E/7. Dever (1985: 222) mentions these stones, and suggests that some had been robbed and reused as pillar stones in the 8th century tripartite pillared building (his Palace 8000). One ashlar measured ca. 1 m long x 0.40 m high. This same stone appears in Dever 1985, Pl. 26:B with a meter stick on it. It remains to be proven that this is a wall, since stones in section to the south of these ashlar look fallen, but this may have been due to robbing, or perhaps a passage at this point, explaining the break between Walls 51088 and 31067 as shown on Dever's plan (1985: 221, Fig. 3).

Dever attributes the mass of fallen stones on either side of Wall 51088, and the accompanying ca. 1 m thick fallen brick and plaster debris to the handiwork of Shishak. A 10th century destruction is plausible, since the sloping beaten earth surface on which these stones rest in Sq. E/7 is a mere 0.35 m above the bottom of the olive oil installation in Room 4. Even so, we cannot yet rule out the possibility that these stones belong to a 9th century phase (see further discussion on pp. 3-4). Only continued excavation will provide a final answer.

Guardrooms 8 and 9

Adjoining Courtyard 7 on the east were Rooms 8 and 9, which Dever interpreted as small guardrooms for the western gate tower (Dever 1985: 222). These two rooms were not fully cleared, since Dever left a half meter of debris in back to serve as a section. Fig 5 (Dever 1985: 224-25) is a schematic north-south section of this debris from the casemate wall through the two guardrooms, across the passageway into Courtyard 7, and ending with Room 6. The true backsides of Rooms 8 and 9 are visible from the top of Wall 51086.² Two stones shown on Jay's plan at the back of Room 9 belong to a later phase (Hellenistic?) or are due to collapse. In the future, these sections should be cut back and restudied, and the rooms re-cleared down to the original floor levels, since these two guardrooms (built of ashlar masonry like that found in the six-chambered gate) were reused in the 9th and 8th centuries BCE.³ Dever notes how the thick plaster of a lane that passed between the guard rooms and six-chambered gate extended through the thresholds into Rooms 8 and 9, contiguous with their partly cobbled surfaces (1985: 222). It is imperative that we try to identify these plaster floors and cobbled surfaces, since we might be able to

² Dever's drawing of the backside of Rooms 8 and 9 (Figs. 3 and 4) with a slightly diagonal wall is inaccurate. Jay's redrawing of this area shows that W51086 is perpendicular to casemate wall 11081. Only the back wall of Room 6 from the 8th century BCE was built on a slightly diagonal line.

³ Dever's original section drawing is available to us since Steve or Sam took a digital picture of it. The photo appears in Steve's PowerPoint presentation.

match Dever's three phases in the guardrooms with our floors in the west.⁴ For example, there is only a 0.01 m difference in elevation between the top of the threshold in Room 8 and the top of the threshold between Hallway 51041 and Locus 51068 (Sq. F/8). The side walls of Rooms 8 and 9 are integrated into Wall 51086, whose southern end *abuts* the northern face of Casemate Wall 11081. This means that the guardroom complex was built contemporary with the casemate wall or subsequent to it. In its 8th century phase, Dever (1985: 223, Fig. 4) remarks how the front entrance to Room 8 was blocked and a separate opening made higher up in the north. We are unable to find this opening.

Passageway

Levels were taken of two possible floors in the west section of the passageway between Sq. F/7 and the guardrooms alley. A dipping pebble surface midway had a height of 213.10 m. Another questionable surface below this had an elevation of 212.28 m. At present we are unable to link these heights with known levels of floors in Area East.

Casemate wall (Sq. E/9)

A doorway was identified by Dever in Casemate 13 (Dever 1985); however, in his plan, Dever put this passage at the eastern end of the casemate room when visual inspection locates it at the western end. This doorway appears to have been used in Phases 4-3. It was not used in Phase 2 (contra Dever, Fig. 4, his Phase 1) since the foundations of the tripartite pillared building (Building A) would have blocked the upper part of the casemate doorway.

Beaten earth surface 51108 (Sq. E/7)

Stone collapse from Wall 51088 fell onto a clearly defined beaten earth surface at 212.83 m. Much of this surface to date has been exposed at the southern end of the square where most of the collapse was removed. At the northern end of the square, however, this floor is still covered by brick debris on which more fallen stones are sitting. In 2012, these stone should be removed and the debris below carefully removed to reveal the floor's continuation. So far, this surface or its equivalent has not been found in Sq. F/7 to the east, but attempts should be made to expose it, since it would help us verify whether this phase belongs to the 10th or 9th centuries.

I am presently attributing this surface to the 10th century (Stratum 4), based on the presence of 9th century Stone Pavement 51032 above, and the close proximity of surface 51108 to the bottom of the olive oil installation in Room 4 at 212.50 m. Given the sloping and uneven character of surface 51108, a 0.30-0.40 m difference in elevation may be insignificant. It is also instructive that Section ** of Sq. E/7 looking south shows a sloping disturbance running towards the western face of Wall 51088 covered by Stratum 3 Stone Pavement 51032. If this disturbance is a robber's trench, this would mean that ashlar from Wall 51088 were robbed in the 9th century (contra Dever who suggested the 8th century), since the disturbance is covered by a 9th century cobbled floor. But it is also true that we did not find any evidence of reused ashlar in Stratum 3. The next level where we see similar ashlar is in the pillared building of

⁴ Dever (1985: 223) notes raised Phase 2 and Phase 1 floor levels in his section drawing on Fig. 5. He also supplies a photo in Pl. 26:1. It is quite probable that the guardroom complex existed in all three Iron Age phases.

Stratum 2 as observed by Dever. Even so, the possibility that this floor belongs to the 9th century (Stratum 2) cannot yet be ruled out. But assuming in the meantime that this beaten earth surface is Stratum 4 and contemporary with wall 51088, then it is possible that (1) the gap between walls 51088 and 31067 was due to the later robbing of stones for Stratum 3; (2) later robbing of stones for the Stratum 2 tripartite pillared building, though this seems less likely; (3) or perhaps a passageway at this point, allowing one to go between Courtyard 7 and Surface 51108 to the west.

Loci 51103a and 51105 (Sq. E/8)

These loci were filled with stone rubble, presumably from the destruction of Stratum 4. Based on its location in Casemate Wall 11081, one would have entered into Dever's Casemate 13 from a doorway in Locus 51105.

Pit 51064 (Sq. D/7-8)

An unlined pit was identified in Squares D/7-8. A Hellenistic coin, Hellenistic pottery and two Roman-Byzantine cooking pots sherds were found inside. The bottom has not yet been reached. This pit cut through the 8th and 9th century layers, and probably intruded into the 10th century as well; however, this can only be clarified in 2012 when we fully reach Stratum 3 in this area.

Loci 51017 and 51115 (Sq. A/7)

Very little is known about the character of these loci, since architecture from Stratum 3 is still *in situ*. However, pottery from these loci is consistent with a 10th century date. Part of the western edge of Locus 51115 was cut by Stratum 2 Pits 51008 and 51013. It is important to note that Stratum 3 Wall 51010 had been set directly on large fragments of a broken jar projecting out of the debris of Locus 51012, meaning that the no longer preserved floor levels to these two rooms were higher (see further discussion below). Other broken vessels from this phase included a RSB krater, most of which was found in the western part of the square.

Stratum 3: NINTH CENTURY BCE

At the beginning of the season we encountered a ca. ****** m accumulation of rock rubble below the foundations of Buildings A and B (Phase 1, 8th century BCE). We initially thought this was Macalister's handiwork, but it is now clear that this rubble came from the destruction of Stratum 3. All the pottery found in Stratum 3 layers was homogeneous Iron Age IIA, and read consistently as 10th-9th centuries. It is unclear if this stone rubble in Stratum 3 is incidental (e.g. an earthquake as suggested by the tilting of wall 51062 in Sq. C/7 and a few other walls) or intentional (e.g. as part of a razing of the city by an enemy, possibly Hazael, who campaigned in the region during the mid-9th century).

Based on the plan, architecture and pottery assemblage, the 9th century settlement in this area was domestic. By all appearances, units on the south abutted the pre-existing casemate wall. This is certain in the case of Wall 51111 in Sq. B/8, but so far, only assumed with the remaining walls to the east, since the southern wall of the Stratum 2 tripartite Building A is still *in situ* and blocking our ability to see what happens to the Stratum 3 walls in the debris below it. In a future season, it is imperative that we remove

the southern side of Building A in order to trace the Stratum 3 below it up to the casemate wall, and determine whether these walls existed with the casemate wall or were cut by them.

The layout of the Stratum 3 settlement appears to comprise three architectural complexes: Complex A is in Sq. A-B as far as north-south Wall 51100. Complex B is in Sq. C-D between Wall 51100 and Walls 51063 and 31030. Complex C is in Sq. E-F between the latter wall line and Dever's "guardrooms" (Rooms 8 and 9). The discussion below will proceed according to these three complexes.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX A

Units 51119 and 51015 (Square A/7)

In Sq. A/7 below the winter wash (51001) we encountered the same stone rubble (51004) found in other squares from this phase. An east-west wall (51010) and two perpendicular walls (51009 and 51011) appeared at 214.30 m, so we closed Locus 51004 and opened two new loci: 51012 to the north of Wall 51010 and 51055 to the south. Further excavation into Debris 51012 north of Wall 51010 revealed two units: 51119 and 51015.

Unit 51119

Unit 51119 is demarcated by Wall 51009 in the west (0.5 m long) and Wall 51011 in the east (1 m long). Wall 51010 abuts Wall 51009 on the west and Wall 51117 on the east. Since the perpendicular walls (51009 and 51011) did not continue further north, we tentatively interpreted Unit 51119 as a niche rather than as a true room or enclosed unit. This may still be the case, since there is no apparent closing wall on the north. One possibility we considered as a northern closing wall was east-west Wall 31029 in Sq. B/7; however, further excavation demonstrated that this wall does not continue further west, nor was there any evidence that the wall had been cut. A 1 m wide doorway in the southeastern corner, currently blocked by Wall 51117, would have allowed one to pass between Unit 51119 and Courtyard 51055 to the south. The blockage by Wall 51117 must have taken place during a later stage of use.

A floor was not found during excavation, but a 0.08 m thick beaten earth surface (51119) was seen in the northern balk of Sq. A/7. Its elevations between 214.02-214.10 m would fit the walls of this unit, as well as the partially exposed stone pavement west of Wall 51009 at 214.05 m. Floor 51119 was also observed sloping up and abutting the western face of a north-south mudbrick wall on stone foundations (51120). The southern end of this wall was seen only in the balk and did not protrude into the square itself. Had it done so, we would have encountered its stone foundations, so the wall seems to have ended in the balk. The precise relationship of Wall 51120 to other extant walls is unclear; only further excavation in Sq. A/6 to the north can answer this question.

A final note of stratigraphic importance: Since we did not detect Surface 51119 during excavation, we dug Locus 51012 down to the base of Wall 51010 before closing it and opening Locus 51017 from Stratum 4. This means that Locus 51012 contains a mixture of 10th and 9th century pottery.

Unit 51015

Unit 51015 was defined by Wall 51011 in the west, Wall 51118 in the south, Wall 31028 in the east, and the short protrusion of Wall 31029 in the northeast. The western end of Wall 51118 abuts Wall 51011. The northern side of this unit is also unclear. Since Wall 31029 did not continue further to the west, it could not have made a corner with Wall 51120. More likely there was an opening to the north between the western end of Wall 31029 and the eastern face of Wall 51120. A passage at the eastern end of Unit 51015 allowed one to pass into Courtyard 51055 in the south. Although a floor was not found, we noted flat lying pottery at ** m and ** m near the western face of Wall 31028 in Sq. B/7.

Courtyard 51055 (Sq. A/7-8)

Locus 51055 appears to be part of a larger open area that may have continued around to the western side of Wall 51009 where a flagstone pavement was found at 214.05 m. As already noted, the upper level of this pavement corresponded to Surface 51119. Four stones, including two ashlar, were found in the courtyard at 214.21 m (Locus 51116). Their purpose is unknown. A single layer of cobbles (Locus 51014) at the western side of the square, probably a cobbled surface or some other feature, ran up to and abutted the topmost courses of Walls 51010 and 51009 in the southwest. Two Phase 2 pits (51008 and 51014) containing 8th century pottery cut the southwest quadrant of the square, and in so doing, also cut the southern edge of Locus 51014. At eastern end of Courtyard 51055, Wall 31028 of Unit 51015 broadens out to a small square platform (51084) of unknown function. This platform or podium could also be approached from Unit 51015. The debris from the courtyard (Locus 51055) produced a conical stamp seal (MC51203) ca. 0.5 m south of Wall 51010. Fragments of Ashdod ware and a large Iron II krater were also found.

Courtyard 51124 (Sq. A/8 west)

Locus 51124 appears to be an extension of Courtyard 51055. Below the presumed level of Phase 2 Stone Floor 51074 we changed the locus to 51076 and merged it with 51075 after the removal of Phase 2 Wall 11158. The soil of Locus 51075 below consists of a loose, grayish brown earth containing a few fist-sized cobbles. A beer jug spout (MC51375) was found in the northeastern corner of the room at ***.** m. At ***.** m excavators encountered a layer of ash at which point the locus was changed to 51078. This is clearly destruction debris. We attempted to reach the floor, but due to a lack of time at the end of the season, we closed work in this area at ***.** m. In 2012, excavations can resume with this locus number down to the presumed 9th century floor level.

Room 51122 (Square A/8 east)

Room 51122 is defined by Wall 51121 in the north and 51112 in the east. No wall is known at present to have closed the western side of this room, since Stratum 2 Wall 11044 is still *in situ*, but we propose a closing wall shown by dashed lines on the provisional top plan for Stratum 3. Most likely, the Stratum 2 wall above is obscuring our ability to see the Stratum 3 line. Otherwise, it is possible that Room 51122 was open to the west. The southern wall for this room is unknown, since Casemate Wall 11081 does not continue beyond Sq. B/8. Tabun 51077 sits on Clay Floor 51122 at 213.95 m in the southeastern part of

the room. The tabun measured 0.** m in diameter and was preserved to a height of 0.16 m. A thick ash accumulation was found on the floor behind the tabun. A small patch of Clay Floor 51121 was also found in the northwestern corner of the room attached to Wall 51121 at an elevation of 214.04 m. The eastern end of Wall 51121 clearly bonded with Wall 51112. A 0.** m thick layer of decayed brick debris between the bottom of Stratum 2 Wall 11046 and the top of Stratum 3 Wall 51121 clearly distinguishes between the two phases of walls.

Clay Floor 51122 was observed passing ca. 0.35 m below the foundations of Stratum 2 Wall 11083 to the south. This proves that the clay floor and tabun predate the 8th century. Wall 11083 also bonds with Stratum 2 Wall 11085 which currently stands over the assumed southward continuation of Stratum 3 Wall 51112. Only after the later 8th century wall (11085) is removed will we be able to positively identify the continuation of Wall 51112; however, since Clay Floor 51122 clearly abuts the foundations of an earlier wall line, the chances are good that Wall 51112 continues as shown by the dashed lines on the provisional top plan.

After we removed Clay Floor 51122 and changed the locus to 51123, we did not continue further down, since we encountered a stone fill that may belong to a Stratum 4 destruction. In the 2013 season, it will be possible to continue digging into this layer using the same locus number from 2011.

&Courtyard 51082 and Tabun 51049 (Square B/7)

Courtyard 51082 is defined by W31028 on the west, W51*** on the south, a possible wall line in the east which has not yet been given a locus number, and W51080 on the north. The northern tip of W31028 made a corner with W31029 to run into Sq. A/7 to the west; however, we were unable to trace its continuation; its southern end meets a locus 51084, which appears to be some sort of a platform. A slightly ovoid, poorly-preserved tabun (51***) stood in the southwest corner of the square against Wall 31028; only the southern half of the tabun was still intact. The base of the tabun was set on fist-sized cobbles. The sides of the tabun had two layers, indicating a later repair of the tabun by placing an outer layer of tabun material over the original. No surface was preserved for the tabun, apart from a possible patch near its northern side. We tentatively regard this as the surface level of the courtyard. After removing the tabun we switched loci and continued to deepen along the eastern face of W31028, whose foundations continued below the bottom of the tabun to meet the western end of W51080. The eastern end of this wall continues almost all the way to W51100 on the east, but stops ca. ** cm short of the wall. Either the wall did not continue beyond this point, or there was an opening here. We did note a possible passage through wall 51080 at its northern end. W51080 is 0.35 m wide and is preserved at least three courses high, where the uppermost course bonds with the bottom of W31028. The third course is still largely in the ground. The wall is not yet floating.

&Walls 11081 and 51111 (Square B/8)

Casemate wall 11081 ends at the western end of Sq. B/8 where a stone basin sits on the wall. At this point the 8th century rebuild (W11083) begins. The southern end of W51111 stops short of casemate wall 11081 by a few centimeters, but it probably abutted. Since it is covered by Phase 1 W11085, it is difficult to check this. There is no question that Phase 1 W11085 abuts W11081. The northern end of

W51111 runs north towards Sq. B/7. The wall is ca. 40-50 cm wide. W51111 is at least three courses high (we have not yet seen the bottom course). There is only one stone on the topmost course. Most of what was visible at the end of the season was the second course. The third course is still going down. The eastern end of wall 11083 was attached directly onto the western end of casemate wall 11083. The casemate wall must have ended here, so the builders attached the rebuild directly onto it. The rebuild continues westward across the rest of the area into Area W. From the preserved top of W11083 to the point where its foundations rest on the topmost course of W51111 is 1.45 m. The wall foundations are floating below this point.

Wall 51113 is a 100 x 60 cm wide wall that bonds with the lower course of W11086. This appears to be a C9 wall. It is lower than E-W wall 11170 but ends after 100 cm. C8 wall 11170 appears to have been higher, but will check bottom heights. It is possible that the foundations of W51113 are just deeper continuation of W11170. The C9 phase of W11086 may in fact make a 90 degree corner with W51113. The top of this wall is below C8 W11083. Clear that C8 segment of W11086 is floating above C9 level. It bonds at C8 level with wall 11083.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX B

Square C/7-8

Wall 51097 and Installation 51098

Wall 21200 in Sq. C/7 sits on top of W51097 close to its western end, as well as by a thick fill of pottery on either side. The pottery fill was dumped into the 9th century rooms and appears to have been a leveling fill for the construction of W21200. This fill included a complete grinding stone. At first it was thought that this pottery fill was limited only to the foundation trench of W21200, but it is now clear that this pottery is part of a larger leveling fill. Wall 51097 is at least two courses high. The uppermost course is a single stone directly under W21200. Below this is the second course. Wall is not yet floating. The wall is shifted slightly to the east off its foundations and leans slightly to the left. On the eastern side of W51097 is a semicircle formed by six cobbles with the open part facing west towards the wall. The purpose of this installation is unknown.

*Bin 51****

In the northeastern corner of the square, a smashed storage jar (PB*****) was found in the midst of several fallen stones. East-west W51062 sits off its lower foundations to the north and leans fairly sharply to the north. Could this have been caused by an earthquake? Therefore, like W51097, this wall also appears to have been shifted off its foundations.

Wall 11144

W11144 as shown on the plan was the 8th century phase. In removing stones along the western and eastern sides, it was discovered that W11144 was only one course deep. This single course was traced into Sq. C/8 where W51___ abutted it and where W11144 continued to rise slightly to abut casemate

wall 11081. These stones were removed, which exposed the inner core of the wall which still goes down. This must be the 9th century phase and the wall to which Steve Wyrick's back room related on the west.

A north-south wall runs below the foundations of W21099; in fact, W21099 is sitting directly on top of this wall. Its southern tip makes a T with an east-west wall in Sq. C/8. Contemporary with the latter further to the south in Sq. C/8 is a floor (?) carrying an assemblage of pottery that includes juglets, a black juglet and a limestone slate with an incised checkerboard pattern. This area is closed on the east by a parallel north-south wall in Sq. D/8. The latter also runs below W21099 in D/8.

Square D/7

Beaten earth floor 51023 is cut by the northern end of W21200. A ca. 20-25 cm wide foundation trench is visible.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPLEX C

Square E/7-8

About 0.** m below Phase 1b cobble floor 31050 we encountered stone pavement 51032 at 213.57 m. The stones are somewhat larger than the smaller-sized cobbles of the upper floor. Floor 51032 does not connect with surrounding architecture, but in terms of heights, must go with W51063 on the west (whose upper height of 214.11 m in the south and 213.04 in the north) fit with the height of the stone floor, and to the east W31067, which Dever had originally identified in a wall line that he attributed to the 10th century (Palace 10000). It may have begun in the 10th century phase (this will be checked further down), but it was still use in the 9th century. The upper height on W31067 at 213.73 m would correspond with the height of cobble floor 31050 at 213.57 m.

Square F-7

Locus 51042

This debris is below the foundations of Phase 1b wall 51006. We are attributing it to Phase 2. A broken chalice was found in this debris.

Stratum 2: EIGHTH CENTURY BCE

Dever's Palace 8000 will be discussed below as a Phase 1 entity; however, there appears to be two phases of the eighth century: an earlier construction in Phase 1b, preserved only in Sq. E/7-8, and the more extensive Phase 1a to which Dever's Palace 8000 belongs. We have separated his "palace" into two separate structures: Building A (the tripartite pillared building) and Building B (a poorly preserved structure abutting Building A on the west).

Palace 8000

The eastern part of the Palace 8000 complex, including the guardrooms and courtyard 7, continued to be used according to Dever in the 9th and 8th centuries (1985: 225, see also Fig. 4). The western portion of Palace 8000 is described as a building that resembles a four-room house (our Buildings A and B).

Guardrooms 8 and 9

Dever writes that in Phase 1 the floor levels of both guardrooms were raised ca. 0.75-0.90 m above the Phase 3 levels (Dever 1985: 224, see also section drawing in Fig. 5). He also notes that the eastern end of Room 8 was blocked up and a new entrance opened higher up in the northern wall (Dever 1985: 223, Fig. 4). It would be important to check the heights here and see how they compares with our possible 8th century surface in Sq. F/8 (S51040 at 213.42/213.26 m).

Room 6

Room 6 (Dever 1985: 223, Fig. 4) at the eastern end of Palace 8000 (8th century) is clearly later than the 10th century phase of this room, since the plan is different and its foundations float above its original construction (Dever 1985: 221, Fig. 3). He describes this room as “a rebuilt tower?” (1985: 223). The south wall of Room 6 (Fig. 4) abuts the northern side of the passageway into Courtyard 7 from the guardrooms complex (Fig. 3). No stones are below the western side of this room, which sits on an angle. According to Dever’s text (1985: 223-24) and his plan (Fig. 4), Room 6 was built at an angle to match the orientation of Rooms 8 and 9 and to “conform to a new traffic pattern more in keeping with the smaller, three entry-way (or two-entryway) gate.” The orientation of Rooms 8 and 9 should be checked by Jay, since they do not appear to share the same orientation as Room 6 in the field. We also need to check whether Jay incorporated the large, elongated stones that face off the projecting walls of Rooms 8 and 9, since they are clearly visible in the field.

Courtyard 7

For Phase 1, Dever shows 10th century Rooms 4 and 5 out of use. This is questionable, since the western side of Room 4 in the 10th century with the olive oil installation and the continuation of this wall line along the western side of Courtyard 7 is quite high. Our impression in the field was that this line existed in all three phases of the Iron Age. The top height of the western side of Room 4 is 213.80 m and the top height of wall 31067 abutting the casemate wall in the south is 213.70 m. One way of proving the cancellation of at least the middle segment of this wall line in the 8th century is to re-expose the wall line that Dever shows on his plan and see if the builders of Phase 1 did indeed rob stones to use in the tripartite pillared building as Dever argues. It also appears that the eastern wall line of walls 51085, 51006 and 31066 continued to be used into the 8th century. Indeed, a possible floor (S51040) was found between walls 51086 and 31066 at 213.26 m.

Casemate wall 11081 and the City Gate

Dever (1985: 224) describes how the original 10th century casemate wall was built up in the 8th century with several additional courses of inferior masonry, rather off alignment (see his Fig. 5 section drawing and photo on Pl. 26:A). These phases should be confirmed by us in the field. Dever also indicates (1985:

224, n. 9) that the six-chambered gate of the 10th century was rebuilt twice later on (these gates largely removed by Macalister). These were two chamber/three entryway and a single chamber/two entryway rebuilds. On Fig. 4, Dever has related Palace 8000 approximately to the two chamber/three entryway gate of the 8th century, supported in part by the virtually identical three-entryway plan at Megiddo IVA.

Buildings A and B

Dever (1985: 224) describes western part of Palace 8000, which includes our Buildings A and B, as measuring at least 18 x 36 m in size. Only our Building A is decently preserved. Building B was largely garfed out by Macalister, explaining the lack of 8th century walls here. Dever's plan of Buildings A and B appears in Fig. 4. He notes that his redrawing of these walls makes more sense than Macalister's plan, but that his reconstruction must remain somewhat conjectural. According to Dever (1985: 225), access into Building A was through a doorway on the north, in what would now be Sq. D/7. There is a break in the wall here, but we should check this in the field. For comparison, the pillared building from Hazor Str. VIII has a corner side entrance. Another logical place for doors would be on the west and/or the east. The length of wall 11086 in Sq. C/7-8 would allow a western doorway, since the longer wall that Dever shows in Fig. 4 may belong to the 9th century phase (W11144). This also needs to be checked, since W11086 may be a later rebuild of W11144. On the eastern side of the building the preserved lengths of walls 11146 and 21055 would also allow for a passageway.

Dever describes walls 21200 and 21099 as preserved only one course high (1985: 225). This may be true with wall 21200 to the north, but wall 21099 does down at least ** courses, at which point it sits on earlier walls of the 9th century in Sq. C/7-8. Dever concludes that at least one of the monolithic pillars was reused from the earlier Palace 10000 (1985: 225 and photo on Pl. 25:A). I'm not sure that he can conclude this with certainty, but his assumption does seem supported by at least three fallen pillars in the one meter wide Sq. E-F/7 balk. Dever notes a foundation trench that he could see in section. Based on his text and what we can see in the field, Dever apparently cut a long east-west probe through the northern end of Sq. E-F/7, abutting the northern balk line of these squares.

The plan of Dever's Room 4 (equivalent to Building B in Sq. A-B/6-8) measured 8 m square and was largely empty as a result of Macalister's trenching activity (Dever 1985: 223, Fig. 4). There is no reason to conclude Room 4 as the end room of a large four room house, which is the plan that Dever assumes our Buildings A and B was modeled. Dever also writes that our walls 11086 (Sq. C/7) and 11100 (Sq. A-B/7-8) abuts the casemate wall, but he does not mention of walls 11044 and 11085 which were clearly visible when he excavated. Could it be that he confused these rooms with the casemate wall?

PHASE 2b: NINTH/EIGHTH CENTURY BCE?

(Square E-F/7-8)

Most of Building A belongs to Phase 1a, which is the later of two eighth century phases. Phase 1b, which is earlier, was detected in Square E/7, but possibly also in Squares F/7-8 (see below).

Square E/7

W31067

Consider that W31067, which is part of the western closing wall to Dever's "parade ground" or Courtyard 7 from the 10th century survived as late as Phase 1b to go with cobbled floor 31050 and wall 31065, as well as walls 51085, 51006 and 31066 to the east.

Cobbled Floor 31050 and Wall 31065

This phase was only discerned in Sq. E/7 below the foundations of Ph. 1a wall 11146. North-south wall 31065 is abutted on its northern face by a patch of cobble floor 31050 (ca. 2.0 x 1.5-2.5 m) at a height of 213.91 m. These cobbles abutted the bottommost course of W31065, which stood 2-3 courses high. The cobbles were covered by a ca. 0.05 m thick bedding of decayed mudbrick debris (*****), and on top of this, a 0.02 m thick white plaster surface (51031). It is unclear whether this higher plaster floor belongs to the same phase as the cobbles or a later phase. The nature of the structure here is unclear, since no obvious architecture related to it. It is too high to relate to the Ph. 4 "Soldier's Barracks" to the east and too low to relate to Building A in Ph. 1a. It may relate to the line of wall at the eastern end of Sq. F/7-8.

W51***

A poorly built wall runs NE to SW through Sq. E/7. The dating of this wall is problematic, as is its orientation, which doesn't seem to fit any of the other walls in the area. For the time being we are considering this to be a terrace wall.

Squares F-G/7-8

*Walls 51085, 51006, 51***, and 31066*

Along the eastern side of Sq. F/7-8 is a single wall line in three segments: W51085 in Sq. F/6, W51006 in Sq. F/7 and W31066 in Sq. F/8. Going out from W51006 on the western face is W51***. It appears to have been truncated. It currently measures 1 m long by 0.8 m wide. The gaps between these segments were probably due to passageways. This is suggested by the southern tip of W51085 in Sq. F/6 and the northern tip of W31066 in Sq. F/8 which are squared off in a fashion that suggests there were passages here. It would seem that W51006 was a screen wall at the western end of the Soldier's Barracks passageway. Here one would turn left or right to enter into the structure. To the north of W31066 was found a threshold at ***.*** m.

W51085 in Sq. F/6 was founded in the 10th century and survived into the 8th century. Dever show this wall on his Palace 10000 plan. The two wall segments south of this only existed in the 8th century, since their foundations float higher than the bottom of W51085. The middle segment (W51006) tilts slightly to the west, which may have caused the upper courses to fall down and create the line of fallen stones to the west. The southern end of W31066 abuts the northern face of the casemate wall 11081. Dever apparently never saw W51066 or W31066, or he thought they were part of a collapse. See plan in the IEJ article and the 1984 season preliminary report in BASOR 262 (1986), pp. 9-34, "Late Bronze Age and Solomonic Defenses at Gezer: New Evidence."

Wall 51086 (the back wall of the Soldier's Barracks) served the 10th through 8th century phases. The later phase goes with parallel W31066 in the southeastern corner of Sq. F/8. Both W51086 and W31066 abut against casemate wall 11081. In between W51086 and W31067 was cobble floor 51040 at 213.26 m. The continuation of this wall to the north is W51066. Someone may have trenched along the western side of this wall line, or it may be due to a collapse of W51006 which leans to the west. In this collapse was found an Iron Age stamp seal depicting a horned animal (gazelle or ibex) and a man in front with his hands raised.

While there are no secure stratigraphic relationships, it seems that cobble floor 31050 abutting wall 31065 in Sq. E/7-8 relates to this north-south wall line of 51085, 51006 and 31066. By all appearances, these features are earlier than Building A.

Stratum 2a: EIGHTH CENTURY BCE

Building A

(Squares C-F/7-8)

Introduction: Building A is a tripartite pillared structure measuring ca. ** m long (east-west) by ** m wide (north-south). The building is defined in the east by walls 11146 (Sq. E/7) and 21055 (Sq. E/6), in the south by W11082 built along the northern face of casemate wall *****, in the west by W11086 (Sq. C/8), and in the north by walls 21083/21091/21092 and walls 21057/21058. The interior was partitioned into three long halls by two east-west wall lines: wall 11142/21099 in the south and wall 31062/21200 in the north. Wall 11142/21099 was originally represented as a broken wall in the middle. However, a pillar base was found in the break, indicating that it was a complete wall, but that the pillar which stood on the base was robbed at a later time in history.

(Squares C-D/7)

Pillared wall 21099

This is a ** m long by ** m wide piers and quoins type wall. Two monolithic limestone pillars stand on monolithic foundations (from an earlier phase?) at either end of the wall. A third monolithic limestone pillar in the center was robbed; only its monolithic foundation still existed. The space between these pillars was built from fieldstones. This wall rests on earlier 9th century BCE foundations.

Squares C/7-8

At the western end of Sq. C/8, wall 11082 made a corner with wall 11086 and ran northward. This wall measures approximately 0.** m thick (approximately the same thickness as W11082). However, this wall appears to end at the northern end of Sq. C/8. Its continuation as W11144 apparently belongs to an earlier phase. The line of this wall is unclear. Many stones appear to be fallen. While the plan shows W11144 running due north, the eastern face of this wall in Sq. C/7 is marked by an extensive stone collapse that goes below the foundations of Building A wall 21099.

Squares E/7-8

Wall 11146

Wall 11146 was the eastern closing wall of Building A. The southern end of this wall once made a corner (now destroyed) with 8th century wall 11082. No floor or other associated architecture was found. Below the foundations of wall 11146 was a ca. 0.1 m thick layer of sherds; not the small, well-worn sherds found in street buildup, but larger fragments that were apparently laid in the foundation trench as bedding with the foundation of W11146 laid on top of the broken pottery.

Building B (Squares A-B/7-8)

Introduction: This building is not clear. It is represented on the Gezer plan by two narrow north-south walls highlighted in blue: W11044 in the west and W11085 in the east. However, this plan does not indicate the two perpendicular east-west walls that bond with W11044 in Sq. A/8: W11158 and 11046, and W11170 bond with W11085 in Sq. B/8. An important correction: W11085 is not the thick wall shown on the plan at the start of the 2011 season. These stones were floating high and thus removed. Only the westernmost line of stones continued down to be abutted by cobbled floor *****. The newly defined line of W11085 measured 0.* m wide and ** m long, and ended where it met W11170, which is a ** m long wall. W11085 leans slightly to the east. It appears to have had a ** m wide entrance into the back room. This entrance was later blocked to restrict entrance at the end of the wall, leaving a ** m wide gap to enter into the room.

Square A/8

There are two rooms (51057 and 51074) built up against the northern face of W11083, which is an 8th century extension onto the western end of the casemate wall (W*****), which ends in the middle of Sq. B/8.) North-south walls 11044 and 11085 both bond with W11083, therefore they must have been built at the same time as the 8th century rebuild.

Room 51057

The debris (51054) inside Room 51057 abuts a balk in the west, and walls 11158, 11144 and 11083 on the north, east and south respectively. A line of stones (51057) found at ca. 214.48 m may have been vestiges of a floor, though below this a large flagstone was found at ***.** m and may be what survives of a floor. Debris 51054 consisted of loose light gray earth. A pot base was found in this debris at 214.37 m south of surface (?) 51057. A grinding stone (MC51209) was found in the debris at ***.** m.

Room 51074

Room 51074 to the east is defined by walls on all four sides: 11046, 11044, 11085, and 11083 on the north, west, east, and south respectively. This room contained the same loose light gray earth found in Room 51047 to the west. In the southern half of the room, a group of level cobbles formed what may have been a floor at ca. 214.48 m. This is virtually the same elevation as possible stone floor 51057 in Room 51057, but again, it is difficult to know for sure if this was a floor or a group of fallen cobbles. With the dismantling of W11046 was found a broken saddle quern (MC 51376) in secondary use at 214.51 m.

(Square A/7)

Pit 51008

In the southwestern corner of the square, pit 51008 (ca. 1.5 x 1.5 m in size and 0.5 m deep) cut into the Phase 3 deposits. Inside this pit lay a stack of three bowls, one inside the other, and fallen on their faces. Each bowl had a single hole drilled through the base. The topmost vessel (214.35 m) was an 8th century plate with orange slip and wheel burnish similar to bowls from Lachish III (Steve Ortiz, personal communication). Beneath was a second bowl with a ring base (214.21 m). And below this was a third bowl (1.5 x 1.5 m). Also attributed to this pit was a basalt rubbing stone (MC51136) with squared-off sides at 214.21 m and a 0.06 m long fragment of an iron peg (MC51139) at 214.35 m.