UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

THE CIVIC FORUM IN ANCIENT ISRAEL:
The Form, Function, and Symbolism of City Gates

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

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2012

The dissertation of Daniel Allan Frese is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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University of California, San Diego

2012

לאבי ואמי

לנעמי, ישעיהו, ירדן, ויואל

ובעיקר ללורי

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, D. N. Freedman, ed.
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
ANE	Ancient Near East(ern)
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament.* J. B. Pritchard, ed.
ANESS	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplements
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* 3rd ed., with supplement. J. B. Pritchard, ed.
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BCE	Before the Common Era
BCSMS	*Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Mesopotamian Studies*
BDB	*Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,* Brown, Driver, and Briggs
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 4th ed., Elliger and Rudolph, eds.
c.	century/centuries
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, J. M. Sasson, ed.
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CDA	*A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (2nd printing), Black, George and Postgate, eds.
CE	Common Era
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
COS	*Context of Scripture*, Hallo and Younger, 1997.
DJBA	*A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods*, M. Sokoloff.
DJPA	*A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzntine Period*, M. Sokoloff.
DNWSI	*Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling.
DOSA	*Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabaean Dialect*, J. Biella.
DULAT	*A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, G. del Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín.
EB	Early Bronze
fig(s).	figures(s)
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Koehler and Baumgartner, eds.

HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
Jastrow	*A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, M. Jastrow.
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JBR	*Journal of Bible and Religion*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series
LB	Late Bronze
LXX	Septuagint
MB	Middle Bronze
MT	Masoretic Text
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, E. Stern, ed.
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed.
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications, University of Chicago
OJA	*Oxford Journal of Archaeology*
Or	*Orientalia*
OTL	Old Testament Library
p(p).	page(s)
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
pl(s).	plate(s)
PRU	Le palais royale d'Ugarit, C. F. Schaeffer and J. Nougayrol, eds.
SL	*A Syriac Lexicon*, M. Sokoloff.
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
St.	Stratum/strata
s.v.	*sub verbo* "under the word"
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
v(v).	verse(s)
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTS	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift der deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to acknowledge – albeit briefly and inadequately – the many ways that others have helped me throughout my long period of graduate training. Pride of place must be given to my dissertation co-advisors, Bill Propp and Tom Levy. Bill is an astonishingly intelligent, unduly knowledgeable, and admirably circumspect scholar, and I consider myself privileged to have studied under him. He has been my primary guide throughout my doctoral studies, supervising the great bulk of my language coursework, exams, and a minor field. He has also been constantly available, and has given wise counsel and encouraging feedback on occasions too plentiful to list. Tom, a scholar who is productive and energetic beyond what reasonable people should hope to emulate, is due my gratitude for his guidance in anthropological archaeology and field excavation, both of which have profoundly shaped this dissertation and the direction I wish to take my future research. Tom has also kindly provided me with unpublished data from his ongoing excavations in the Feinan district of southern Jordan which were important for this research.

I am also grateful to David Goodblatt, who has been a friendly source of advice and feedback throughout my studies, and who has also taught me about Second Temple period Judaism and Aramaic. David is a model of patient and judicious scholarship, and somehow manages to carry this nuance into his lectures for undergraduates. I would also like to thank my remaining committee members, Guillermo Algaze and Ziony Zevit, for their willingness to help supervise this research. Though I have not worked directly with either of them, their expertise in Mesopotamian archaeology and all things ancient Israel

(respectively) is perfectly suited to my research, and their scrutiny of this dissertation has been an unexpected boon.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank a few former professors. David Noel Freedman (ז"ל) was a pillar in the field of Hebrew Bible, and his reputation played a large role in my coming to UCSD for graduate school. My most salient memories of Noel center around his kindness, his light-hearted erudition, and his frequent giggling during his Hebrew Bible Seminar. Richard Elliott Friedman has also moved on from UCSD, though he is fortunately still בארץ חיים. I have Dick to thank for his insistence on solid historical method and following the evidence, his convincing a skeptic (me) of the legitimacy of source-critical inquiry, and his modeling of superb classroom teaching. Finally, I wish to acknowledge a former professor at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Baruch Schwartz, who has made my entrance into the world of academia much more pleasant. Baruch was an excellent and patient teacher who tolerated more immature and argumentative behavior from me than I would have had our roles been reversed. Baruch has gone well beyond his formal duties in countless ways: writing lengthy emails to help me with problems both personal and academic, providing copious notes and suggestions for my draft papers, tirelessly writing recommendation letters on my behalf, catching up at SBL at every opportunity, and steadily providing encouragement and kindness. He is a mentor of the highest caliber, and I continue to appreciate him as a colleague and a friend.

Throughout my research for this project I have asked numerous senior scholars for their help, and I have been very impressed by the generosity with which my requests have been greeted. I must single out Ze'ev Herzog, who not only mailed me a copy of his

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"The Four Pillars of the Iron Age Low Chronology." In T. E. Levy (ed.) *Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future: The New Pragmatism*. London: Equinox, 2010. (With Thomas E. Levy)

"Samaria I as a Chronological Anchor of I. Finkelstein's Low Chronology: An Appraisal." Pages *36-*44 in *Eretz Israel* vol. 29 (Ephraim Stern volume). Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2009. (With David Noel Freedman)

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Civic Forum in Ancient Israel:
The Form, Function, and Symbolism of City Gates

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego 2012

Professor William H. C. Propp, Co-chair
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The gateway into a town of the southern Levant was more than a mere entrance; it was the civic forum, the heart of the city. The gate and its associated plazas served *inter alia* as a marketplace, a legal court, an execution chamber, a cultic center, a political stage, a social gathering place, a defensive military structure, and a three-dimensional piece of royal propaganda. Gates were also symbolic: of royalty and independence, of community well-being, of metaphysical boundaries, and of Israelite society itself. In short, the civic forum was an institution central to the social identity of ancient Israel. Fortunately, the available sources of information about ancient city gates are numerous

and robust: gates are referred to hundreds of times in the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern texts, and over 40 gatehouses have been unearthed in the excavations of the southern Levant during the past century. Numerous pictorial representations of gates have also survived from the Bronze and Iron Ages.

This dissertation is a wide-ranging treatment of Iron II period gate complexes in the southern Levant, covering their architecture and reconstruction, their various functions in Israelite society, and their conceptual significance in Israelite thought. I begin by discussing gate terminology in the Hebrew Bible, and then move on to the construction of a typical Iron II gate compound, giving special attention to the purpose of the gatehouse's well-known pier-and-chamber floor plan and the reconstruction of its superstructure. I then discuss the role of the gate complex in urban planning, and the gatehouse form's possible origins. The following chapters survey the numerous functions of the city gate complex, with reference to the Hebrew Bible, other ANE texts, and archaeological data where relevant. Finally, I turn to the idiomatic speech and symbolism related to gates in the Hebrew Bible, and conclude with an evaluation of the gate as a symbolic boundary and liminal space.

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction, Goals, and Sources

Within the gate complexes of ancient Israel, elders took counsel, bloody battles were fought, kings publicly presented themselves, prophets held forth, corpses were displayed, and justice was administered. People came and went, bought and sold, were tried and executed. Indeed, most of a town's civic life was centered on the town gate complex. References to gates abound in all ancient literature; the Hebrew Bible refers to a שער ("gate") some 375 times,[1] in addition to various synonyms for "gate." Gates were symbolic of royalty and independence, of community well-being, of metaphysical boundaries, and of Israelite society itself. Moreover, gatehouses constitute one of the most prominent examples of monumental architecture in the region, and dozens of gatehouses from the Iron II period have now been excavated.

Despite the prominence of gates, they have been somewhat neglected in the scholarly literature. The most comprehensive recent study is Ze'ev Herzog's seminal work *The City Gate in the Land of Israel and Her Neighbors*, published in Hebrew in 1976 and in a lightly revised form in German in 1986.[2] Herzog's work is a detailed survey of Levantine and Anatolian gates from the Chalcolithic through the Iron Age, which focuses primarily on the floor plans of the gatehouses. More recent studies tend to approach the topic of gates with a narrower focus. T. Blomquist's recent monograph

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[1] This total was found in Abraham Even-Shoshan, ed., *A New Concordance of the Bible*: *Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible, Hebrew and Aramaic, Roots, Words, Proper Names Phrases and Synonyms* (Jerusalem: The New Dictionary, 2000), 1195-7, and by a search for the lemma שער in BibleWorks 7.0, based on the Groves-Wheeler Westminster Morphology and Lemma Database (WTM), release 4.4 (2005).

[2] Ze'ev Herzog, *The City Gate in the Land of Israel and Her Neighbors* (Tel Aviv: The Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, 1976 [Hebrew]); *Das Stadttor in Israel und in den Nachbarländern* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1986).

Gates and Gods: Cults in the City Gates of Iron Age Palestine, for instance, is a valuable

contribution on the cultic centers found in gate complexes. Many other recent works

touch on gates to limited degrees in their discussions of architecture,[1] royal propaganda,[2]

and urbanism.[3] Works on the social history of Israel (both older and more recent) tend to

give the gate as a social institution only very brief and cursory treatment, if it is discussed

at all.[4] Meanwhile, hundreds of scattered excavation reports and articles describe

individual excavated gates or various details related to city gates. When the level of

research devoted to the civic forum is compared to similar topics – such as the attention

given to the architecture and functions of the "Israelite Four-Room House"[5] – the

necessity for a systematic treatment of the gate complex becomes apparent.

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[1] E.g., G. R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building in South Syria and Palestine* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985); Aharon Kempinski and Ronnie Reich, eds., *The Architecture of Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992).

[2] E.g., Keith W. Whitelam, "The Symbols of Power: Aspects of Royal Propaganda in the United Monarchy," *BA* 49 (1986): 166-73.

[3] E.g., in Ze'ev Herzog, *Archaeology of the City: Urban Planning in Ancient Israel and its Social Implications* (Monograph Series of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 13; Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Archaeology Press, 1997); Volkmar Fritz, "The Character of Urbanization in Palestine at the Beginning of the Iron Age," in *Nuove Fondazioni Nel Vicino Oriente Antico: Realta e Ideologia*, (ed. S. Mazzoni; Seminari Di Orientalistica; Pisa: Giardini, 1994), 231-252; Rami Arav, ed., *Cities through the Looking Glass: Essays on the History and Archaeology of Biblical Urbanism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), esp. 83-115.

[4] It is ignored, e.g., in Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (2nd ed.; 2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1959); Rainer Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999). It is discussed very briefly in Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 152-3, 233-4; Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250-587 BCE* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 122-3; Ferdinand E. Deist, *The Material Culture of the Bible: An Introduction* (ed. R. P. Carroll; The Biblical Seminar 70; London: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 201-3; Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 234-6; Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 47-8; Victor H. Matthews, *Manners and Customs in the Bible: An Illustrated Guide to Daily Life in Bible Times* (3rd ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 101-2.

[5] E.g., see Avraham Faust and Shlomo Bunimovitz, "The Four Room House: Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society," *NEA* 66/1-2 (2003): 22-31; and most recently Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow, eds., *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (CHANE 50; Leiden: Brill, 2011).

Goals of the Present Study

The goal of this study is to present a comprehensive survey of city gate complexes of the southern Levant during the Iron II period (ca. 980 to 586 BCE)[1] with respect to their architecture and reconstruction, their various functions in Israelite society, and their conceptual significance in Israelite thought.[2] This topic is extraordinarily broad, and the difficulty in managing it is both compounded and mitigated by the surprising fact that there are actually good data available for study. It has been necessary to restrict both the topics I cover and the depth in which I discuss them.

I have focused my treatment on what seem to be the most pressing issues that are not adequately understood or are lacking in the secondary literature, including the following:

1) An updated, comprehensive discussion of Iron II gate complexes based on the excavations carried out in the past 30-plus years

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[1] All dates given hereafter will be BCE unless otherwise noted. The precise chronology of the Iron Age has produced a lively debate for over a decade and a half at the time of writing. For a convenient overview, see Amihai Mazar, "The Debate over the Chronology of the Iron Age in the Southern Levant: Its History, the Current Situation, and a Suggested Resolution," in *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science* (ed. T. Levy and T. Higham; London: Equinox, 2005), 15-30; Daniel A. Frese and Thomas E. Levy, "The Four Pillars of the Iron Age Low Chronology," in *Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future: The New Pragmatism* (ed. T. E. Levy; London: Equinox, 2010), 187-202. I will follow Mazar's "Modified Conventional Chronology" for the periodization of Canaan in antiquity; see H. J. Bruins, J. van der Plicht, and A. Mazar, "^{14}C Dates from Tel Rehov: Iron-Age Chronology, Pharaohs, and Hebrew Kings," *Science* 300 (2003): 315-8.

[2] By conceptual significance I mean the meanings which Israelites consciously or unconsciously attached to the civic forum. This is similar to what Mark K. George calls "symbolic space": "Space is something that has social meanings, values, and significances bound up with it. Symbolic space involves the emotional, affective qualities of space, whether positively or negatively. It includes the range of ways whereby space comes to have social meanings and significance, whether by symbols, metaphors, theological meanings, allusions, or some other social mechanism that creates and assigns meaning to space" (*Israel's Tabernacle as Social Space* [Ancient Israel and Its Literature 2; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009], 18).

2) The specific purpose of the distinctive pier-and-chamber floor plan of Iron II gatehouses

3) How the superstructure of these gatehouses – particularly the doors and ceilings – should be reconstructed

4) The gatehouse plan's possible sources of origin

5) A systematic survey of the roles which gate complexes played in ancient Near Eastern societies, with reference to textual sources (the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern inscriptions) and archaeological data in support of such roles

6) An analysis of idiomatic and metaphorical speech related to gates in the Hebrew Bible, with an eye towards what this usage reveals to us about Israelite conceptions of their shared public space

7) The symbolism of the gate as a metaphysical boundary and as a liminal space

In the course of the above issues, I also attempt to give an ample survey of material that has been published piecemeal in order to present a well-rounded picture of the gate complex apropos of its architecture, how it was factored into urban planning, and so on.

Synchronic Analysis

Unless otherwise noted, what follows is a synchronic analysis of the Iron II period, which is roughly four centuries long. While it is true that synchronic analyses can downplay or even ignore real differences that accrue over time, it is also true that there is value in viewing the big picture, and that diachronic analyses should ultimately be

informed by synchronic analysis.[1] Moreover, it should be recalled that the ancient world

in general was rather stable with respect to technological and social innovations, and that

the Iron II period is a brief episode in the longer history of the city gate *qua* civic

institution in the ANE. Many traditional features of gates – including both their

construction and their uses – remained constant among ANE civilizations for millennia,

as we will see.[2] In fact, to illustrate many points below I make use of comparative literary

and archaeological evidence from cultures both spatially and temporally remote from

ancient Israel, because the customs represented in these materials are essentially identical

to those of Israel. For instance, the practice of fitting a bronze pivot-shoe to the bottom of

a gate's doorpost is attested in the Ur-III period in Mesopotamia (late third millennium),[3]

and in a late-5th century temple in Elephantine, Egypt.[4] The custom of conducting

juridical proceedings at the gate is found in 18th century Mesopotamia,[5] 17th-16th c. Old

Hittite Laws,[6] at LB Ugarit,[7] in Egypt ca. 1300,[8] at Neo-Assyrian Nineveh,[9] and in

Ptolemaic Egypt.[10] When we excavate a bronze door pivot in the Levant, then, or hear of

judicial procedures at the gate in the Hebrew Bible, we have little reason to be surprised.

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[1] See Kessler, *Social History*, 4-5.

[2] See Kessler, *Social History*, 8.

[3] Muayad S. B. Damerji, *The Development of the Architecture of Doors and Gates in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Tokyo: Institute for Cultural Studies of Ancient Iraq, Kokushikan University, 1987), 163 fig. 55.

[4] Mentioned in the "Request for Letter of Recommendation, First Draft," in relation to the Elephantine temple of Yahweh (*COS* 3.51).

[5] CH §126.

[6] *COS* 2.19 §§187-8, 199.

[7] Aqhat 5:3-9; see *COS* 1.103.

[8] G. P. F. van den Boorn, "*Wḏʿ-ryt* and Justice at the Gate," *JNES* 44 (1985): 8-9; see also Eckart Otto, "שער," *TDOT* 15:371; Hellmut Brunner, "Die Rolle von Tür und Tor im Alten Ägypten," *Symbolon* 6 (1982): 49.

[9] *CAD* A/1, 86a.

[10] Serge Sauneron, "La justice à la porte des temples (à propos du nom égyptien des propylées)," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 54 (1954): 117-27.

Since the customs being examined are so conservative by nature for such a long span of time, it is relatively safe to assume that they changed little during the four centuries under examination here.

The Hebrew Bible as a Historical Source

Since my primary focus is on Iron Age Israel, I will make extensive reference to the primary source of literary data for the period, the Hebrew Bible. There are, of course, well-known problems with using the Hebrew Bible as a historical source, and debate about the historical merits of the text have been a dominant theme in the field for decades.[1] Two very basic problems in using ancient texts as historical sources are highlighted by M. Liverani: 1) Texts can convey factually incorrect information to historians, who unwittingly pass it along. 2) More problematically, the aims and scope of the ancient author can vary dramatically from the interests of the modern historian, and it is often difficult to recognize precisely how and to what extent these two categories overlap.[2]

Happily, most of the Biblical details useful for my purposes are not narrative accounts of What Really Happened, which must be carefully evaluated as true or false. Rather, I am mostly interested in matters reflected in the background of the text, among the many social, religious, and political norms that form the author's construct of reality,

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[1] See most recently Hans M. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 61; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 1-45 and references there.

[2] Mario Liverani, "Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts," *Orientalia* 42/1-2 (1973): 179.

and the scaffolding for his narratives.[1] Most such details – like architectural particulars,

scene descriptions, and figures of speech – are only peripherally relevant to the narrative,

and are described unselfconsciously (or even unconsciously).[2] Because of this, we have

little reason to suppose that they are inaccurate or distorted by systematic biases, in the

same way that (for instance) a king's conquest account may be exaggerated beyond the

facts. The author, instead, is accidentally describing his own society from within.[3] As

Jacob Burckhardt, one of the founding fathers of cultural history, puts it:

> Cultural history by contrast [to narrated event-history] possesses a primary
> degree of certainty, as it consists for the most part of material conveyed in
> an unintentional, disinterested or even involuntary way by sources and
> monuments; they betray their secrets unconsciously and even
> paradoxically, through fictitious elaborations, quite apart from the material
> details they may set out to record and glorify, and are thus doubly
> instructive for the cultural historian.[4]

And similarly, M. Liverani:

> Let us on the other hand try to view the document as *a source for the
> knowledge of itself* – i.e., as a source of knowledge on the author of the
> document…In this type of approach our attention is no more centered on
> events, but on how they are narrated. […] The peculiarity of the narration
> is the element by which we may hope to gain some enlightenment on the
> historical environment of the author. [emphasis original][5]

In the quote above, Burckhardt hints at the idea that the "historicity" of a source –

if we take historicity to mean whether the events it describes actually happened – is not

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[1] See Kessler, *Social History*, 27-8; McNutt, *Reconstructing*, 3-7.
[2] See Ben-Zion Eshel, "The Semantics of Words for Human Habitation in Biblical Hebrew" (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1970), 1 (Hebrew).
[3] See K. R. Dark, *Theoretical Archaeology* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 57.
[4] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Greeks and Greek Civilization* (ed. O. Murray; trans. S. Stern; New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 5. Cf. also Kessler, who distinguishes between a history of *events* and social history, the latter of which deals with the form of the society itself (*Social History*, 2).
[5] Liverani, "Memorandum," 179.

necessarily related to the source's value for cultural history.[1] This is also the attitude with

which I approach the Hebrew Bible in this study. When I briefly describe the literary

context of a quoted Biblical source, then, this should be taken neither as an endorsement

nor as a denial of the historicity of the narrative plot, which is in most cases irrelevant to

the point I derive from the text. For example, an important datum for my purposes is that

an Israelite author believed that kings should publicly sit in the gate, and this fact is quite

independent of the historical or fictional nature of the narrative (e.g., David sitting in the

gate after Absalom is killed; 2 Sam 19:9) in which this belief happens to be embedded.

Moreover, as I stated above with respect to synchronic analysis, such details gleaned

from the scenery are often supported by such a wealth of substantiating parallels that their

reality in the author's own society cannot seriously be questioned.[2]

The discussion of the author's social milieu raises the question of the date the

Biblical texts were written, a knotty issue that will not detain us. It should suffice to note

that most texts referred to (as well as their source material) may be ascribed to the pre-

exilic period (i.e., the Iron II period), with some texts from an exilic or post-exilic

(Persian period) setting.[3] I will treat the Biblical materials synchronically as well,

including the later texts, for the same reasons cited above: the conservative nature of the

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[1] See Kessler, *Social History*, 24-9; King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 7; Avraham Faust, "Cities, Villages, and Farmsteads: The Landscape of Leviticus 25:29-31," in *Exploring the Longue Duree: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager* (ed. J. D. Schloen; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 103. In Kessler's analogy, "all the characters [in a Dostoevsky novel] may be invented, but we learn a great deal about social conditions in nineteenth-century Russia" (*Social History*, 27).

[2] I do not mean to imply that *all* data gathered from the textual background are necessarily accurate descriptions of the author's historical context. There are clear cases of anachronism in the Hebrew Bible, which in some instances unquestionably arose because an author imported his own cultural norms into his narrative about the distant past (see, e.g., Kessler, *Social History*, 27-9). Ultimately, each case must be judged on an individual basis for any potential anachronisms, and these will be noted if detected.

[3] For a mainstream view, see Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Summit, 1987).

customs in question, and the corroborative parallels in other ANE texts and the

archaeological record. In fact, no chronological development in gate construction or

usage is (to my eye) discernable between the pre- and post-exilic periods. And, since I

invoke Mesopotamian, Hittite, and Ugaritic texts from the second millennium for

comparative purposes, it seems evident that the more historically and geographically

immediate Persian-era texts should be included as well.

Archaeological Data

Interpreting the available archaeological data will also play a large part in my

discussion.[1] Unfortunately, the artifactual data from within gate complexes do not reveal

a coherent picture of gate activities. This is because, first of all, many of the gate

activities known from literary sources simply leave no trace in the archaeological record

– e.g., public gatherings, capital punishment, or political deliberations. Moreover, in

cases where artifacts were involved with gate activities, we should expect them to be

preserved only when they happened to be accidentally left in the gate *and* were sealed in

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[1] See Kessler, *Social History*, 20-21; McNutt, *Reconstructing*, 14. I note in passing that my theoretical orientation to archaeology is neither processual nor post-processual – at least in their extreme forms. The "new archaeologists" (or "processualists," represented, e.g., by L. Binford, G. R. Willey, and P. Phillips) were correct to emphasize that explaining societies is the point of archaeology (as opposed to describing artifacts), to insist that the explanation and inference processes should be methodologically rigorous, and to point out that the archaeology of human societies is a branch of anthropology. But I reject the extreme forms of positivism associated with the approach, its assumptions of objectivity, and its optimistic claims about predictable results. The post-processualist (or "interpretive archaeology") corrective to these tendencies (represented by, e.g., I. Hodder, D. Miller, and C. Tilley) rightly points out that archaeology is not a science, is (at least partially) subjective in nature, and that researchers can only see data in a biased fashion. I would not, however, push my skepticism about discovering the past to the extent that we cannot know *anything* of the past. For a recent and concise summary of these theoretical developments in the last half-century, see Matthew H. Johnson, "The Theoretical Scene, 1960-2000," in *The Oxford Handbook of Archaeology* (ed. B. Cunliffe, C. Gosden, and R. A. Joyce; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 71-88; Ian Hodder, *Theory and Practice in Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 1992); Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Theory, Methods, and Practice* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 34-7, 405-34.

place by falling debris or were otherwise not recovered later. Presumably, in the event of

a military attack (or site abandonment), valuables such as statues of deities, legal

documents, and merchants' wares and scales would have been taken away. Finally, even

in the best of cases (a sudden and complete destruction), artifacts found *in situ* represent

the very last stage – the last *moments* – of a space's use. It is not a surprise, then, that

military weaponry is one of the most common categories of artifacts found in well-

preserved gates. This means that our discussion of gate architecture will tend to draw

more on archaeological sources, and that our discussion of gate functions will be largely

informed by textual sources, with some occasional overlapping.

Pictorial Data from Assyrian Reliefs

A third category of data comes from pictorial reliefs of the Neo-Assyrian period

(9th-7th c.), which commonly depict cities of the Levant that the Assyrians conquered in

their westward campaigns. This is a potentially significant pool of data – provided, of

course, we have reason to believe that the reliefs accurately depict the architecture of the

cities in question.

The reliefs are clearly an aspect of monarchic propaganda, intended to highlight

(*inter alia*) the king's military accomplishments.[1] We might expect, in keeping with the

conventions of the times, that they would tend to exaggerate the king's accomplishments

– for example, by showing the cities as more heavily fortified, or the citizenry better

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[1] J. E. Reade, "Ideology and Propaganda in Assyrian Art," in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (ed. M. T. Larsen; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979), 331; A. Gunter, "Representations of Urartian and Western Iranian Fortress Architecture in the Assyrian Reliefs," *Iran* 20 (1982): 103.

equipped, than was actually the case.[1] Many researchers interpret these reliefs very cautiously, since they believe the depictions are standardized to some extent,[2] and that the artistic conventions used are not necessarily self-evident.[3]

And there clearly are many artistic conventions at play: scale is distorted according to an object's importance,[4] a span of time is compressed into a single frame,[5] fish and swimming men are shown hovering over the surface of water, and so on.[6] In one example, a siege ramp crosses a river, runs up the side of a tell, continues over the city wall (!) and up toward a structure on the mound's summit. "The impossibility of this scene was irrelevant to the artist, whose purpose was not to achieve technical accuracy, but to display the use of the ramp along with other important events characterizing this conquest."[7] Not considering such conventions can lead to erroneous reconstructions. For

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[1] I. J. Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," *Studies in Visual Communication* 7/2 (1981): 3. Similar bias can actually be confirmed in the case of the earlier LB Egyptian reliefs, because we have more (contradictory) archaeological evidence at hand. For instance, Ashkelon is shown on a relief at Karnak as a fortified city, but excavations have failed to reveal any fortifications during this period (Amihai Mazar, "The Fortification of Cities," *CANE* 1-2:1529; Aaron A. Burke, *"Walled Up to Heaven": The Evolution of Middle Bronze Age Fortification Strategies in the Levant* (SAHL 4; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 162.

[2] See Ruth Jacoby, "The Representation and Identification of Cities on Assyrian Reliefs," *IEJ* 41/1 (1991): 117, n14; Rudolf Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens von ihren Anfängen vis zum Ende der hethitischen Zeit* (Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 1971), 316-19; Israel Eph'al, *The City Besieged: Siege and its Manifestations in the Ancient Near East* (CHANE 36; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 25; Gunter, "Representations," 103. It seems that the LB Egyptian reliefs of Levantine towns were rather stereotyped, "reduced to a few typical features – walls, gates, towers, windows, battlements," even though the geographical setting of the town was also shown. See Paul Lampl, *Cities and Planning in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Braziller, 1968), 11; cf. Wright, *Ancient Building*, 196.

[3] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 175.

[4] J. E. Reade, "Space, Scale, and Significance in Assyrian Art," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 11 (1980): 71-2; Eph'al, *City Besieged*, 25 n. 53.

[5] Winter, "Royal Rhetoric"; Gunter, "Representations," 110.

[6] Reade, "Space, Scale, and Significance," 72. There are, of course, exceptions to almost all conventions within a corpus of art as large (and with as long a duration) as that of the Neo-Assyrians (Reade, "Space, Scale, and Significance," 72-3).

[7] Jacoby, "Representation," 126, and fig. 12.

example, D. Ussishkin reconstructed a siege ramp leading to the city gate of Lachish,

despite the lack of remains on the site, because it is so depicted on Sennacherib's relief.[1]

On the other hand, we know that scribes and sculptors accompanied the Assyrian

military campaigns,[2] and thus it is theoretically possible that in some cases the reliefs are

quite accurate.[3] In fact, in many respects it seems that accuracy was a priority: dates and

locations are sometimes carved onto the relief itself,[4] and cuneiform text is sometimes

used to describe and explain the picture.[5] Foreign captives are represented with

characteristic facial features, hairstyles, dress, and battle gear.[6] In many cases, depictions

of specific cities were clearly meant to be recognized.[7] They are identified either by

giving the city's name on the relief itself, or by showing specific topographical details

(rocky terrain, ocean, rivers, hills, plains), floral details (orchards, palm trees),

noteworthy battle tactics (such as crossing a river with animal-skin floats), or the

distinctive types of tribute brought.[8]

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[1] David Ussishkin, "The City Gate Complex," in *The Iron Age Stratigraphy and Architecture* (vol. 2 of *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish [1973-1994]*; ed. D. Ussishkin; Publications of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 22; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004), 517; cf. Jacoby, "Representation," 122-31. Compare also Samuel Rocca, *The Fortifications of Ancient Israel and Judah 1200-586 BC* (Illus. A. Hook; Oxford: Osprey, 2010), the cover illustration of which (and the illus. on p. 42) similarly depicts Lachish with an Assyrian siege ramp leading up to the gate.

[2] Gunter, "Representations," 104.

[3] Gunter, "Representations," 104; J. E. Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns of 720, 716, and 715 B.C.: Evidence from the Sculptures," *JNES* 35/2 (1976): 95.

[4] E.g., on the Balawat Gate bronzes (Gunter, "Representations," 104).

[5] E.g., on Tiglath-pileser's reliefs from the Central Palace at Nimrud (Gunter, "Representations," 105).

[6] Gunter, "Representations," 104; Reade, "Ideology," 334-5; J. E. Reade, "Assyrian Architectural Decoration: Techniques and Subject-Matter," *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 10 (1979): 31; Jacoby, "Representation," 113-6; Winter, "Royal Rhetoric," 15-17.

[7] Jacoby, "Representation," 122.

[8] Jacoby, "Representation," 113-6; Winter, "Royal Rhetoric," 15. Further, these details often correspond with annalistic accounts of the same campaigns (Winter, "Royal Rhetoric," 15).

These identifiable details, though, do not seem to include the fortifications of the city in question.[1] In some cases, the fortifications of a single town are depicted rather differently in separate reliefs,[2] and it is difficult to know if this reflects intention (e.g., different vantage points were used, or different stages of a battle are depicted) or indifference.[3]

At the same time, however, specific architectural details seem to depict *regional* differences among towns, even if they do not distinguish *particular* towns.[4] Jacoby points out, for instance, that shields mounted on the parapets of a city wall are used in Sennacherib's reliefs to indicate a western city,[5] and Gunter uses architectural specifics to distinguish between seven different locales, including Palestine.[6] Based on this, a city's defensive architecture in the reliefs seem to be an accurate generalization for the period and locale in question, and for this reason will be taken into account in our architectural reconstructions.

Corpus of Gates Under Discussion

I have limited the corpus of gates discussed here based on their geographical region, the period in which they were built, and their architectural form. The region in question is the southern Levant, which encompasses ancient Israel, Judah, Philistia, and the Transjordanian territories of Ammon, Moab, and Edom. The time period covered will

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[1] Jacoby, "Representation," 113, 116. Indeed, it is hard to know how they might, since most ancient cities probably looked very similar to one another (Jacoby, "Representation," 114 n. 7).

[2] Jacoby, "Representation," 118-22.

[3] See the discussion in Gunter, "Representations," 110-111.

[4] Jacoby, "Representation," 114 n. 7.

[5] Jacoby, "Representation," 125, 130-1.

[6] Gunter, "Representations"; see also Reade, "Sargon's Campaigns," 99-102.

be the Iron II, as defined above. Finally, I have limited the gates under discussion to those with "chambered" gatehouses, which are characterized by multiple, symmetric chambers open to the gate passage, divided by paired wall segments ("piers").

Ultimately, my definition of this corpus is unavoidably arbitrary in all three respects. Gates with a similar form (and functions) are found elsewhere and from different historical periods, as we will see below, and the definition of a "chambered" gatehouse depends on what one considers a "chamber," which is rather subjective.[1] On the other hand, it is a clear and noteworthy fact that chambered gatehouses appear suddenly and ubiquitously at the beginning of the Iron II period in the southern Levant, and are used consistently throughout the ca. 400 years of the period. Because of this continuous period of use and their consistent architectural form, and because this period coincides chronologically with the monarchical period of ancient Israel and Judah, I find it convenient to consider the gates as a group. The corpus also includes chambered gatehouses connected to citadels, palaces, and temples, because it is clear from excavated examples that such gatehouses are architecturally identical to city gates, and it is clear from textual sources that they shared many of the social functions of city gates.

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[1] For instance, many gatehouses have lateral "chambers" which are mere shallow niches separated by pilasters (such as most MB gates). How one should distinguish a shallow niche from a chamber (or pilaster from pier) is not self-evident. As a rule of thumb, I have considered spaces that are deeper than the width of the gate passage to be chambers.

Gates excluded from consideration thus include postern gates,[1] many fortress

gates of the hill country and the Negev highlands,[2] casemate gatehouses,[3] and structures

which (because of insufficient preservation or mis-identification) I am not convinced are

gates.[4] I have, however, taken the liberty of including any outstanding or relevant

artifacts associated with such gates (few though they be) in my discussion below. I

[1] A postern gate is a narrow, secret passage through the city wall meant for convenience, which was easily blocked and defended during times of war (perhaps called a מבוא in the Bible; see Judg 1:24). These did not carry anything near the amount of traffic or social functions of a primary gatehouse, and their construction is of course radically different. Posterns from the Iron Age are attested at the citadel of Ramat Rachel (Yohanan Aharoni, "Ramat Rahel," *IEJ* 9/4 [1959]: 273), 9th century Arad (Yohanan Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," *BA* 31/1 [1968]: 6), Lachish St. III and II (David Ussishkin, "Excavations at Tel Lachish - 1973–1977, Preliminary Report," *TA* 5 [1978]: 62; cf. Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 521-2), Hazor IX (Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* [New York: Random House, 1975], 175), Bet Shemesh (Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, "The Iron Age Fortifications of Tel Beth-Shemesh: A 1990-2000 Perspective," *IEJ* 51 [2001]: 128-130, and figs. 3-5, 7), and Tall Jawa IX (P. M. Michèle Daviau, *Excavations at Tall Jawa, Jordan, vol. I: The Iron Age Town* [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 55-63).
[2] See Amihai Mazar, "Iron Age Fortresses in the Judaean Hills," *PEQ* 114 (1982): 87-109; Yohanan Aharoni, "Forerunners of the Limes: Iron Age Fortresses in the Negev," *IEJ* 17/1 (1967): 1-17; Rudolph Cohen, "The Iron Age Fortresses in the Central Negev," *BASOR* 236 (1979): 61-79; and most recently Rudolph Cohen and Rebecca Cohen-Amin, *Ancient Settlement of the Negev Highlands, vol. 2: The Iron Age and the Persian Period* (IAA Reports 20; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004 [Hebrew]).
[3] For instance, at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, Ramat Rachel, and Tel Arad XI, a gap is left through the middle of a casemate, producing two equal-size chambers on either side of the gate passage. This is superficially similar to a two-chamber gatehouse, except that the latter was built as a separate architectural unit. In one sense this distinction is indeed splitting hairs, but it is a meaningful distinction since I am generalizing about the architecture of gates in my corpus, and the dimensions of the two types of gates varies considerably.
[4] These include Crowfoot's "Valley Gate" in Jerusalem (J.W. Crowfoot and G.M. Fitzgerald, *Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley, Jerusalem* [PEF Annual 5; London: Dawsons, 1929], 13-22; cf. David Ussishkin's similar assessment in "The Borders and *De Facto* Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* [ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 154-9), Avigad's "Israelite tower gate" in Jerusalem (Hillel Geva and Nahman Avigad, "Area W – Stratigraphy and Architecture," in *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem: Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969-1982, vol. I* [ed. H. Geva; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000], 131-197), Eilat Mazar's "Ophel Gate" in Jerusalem (Eilat Mazar, "Ophel Excavations, Jerusalem, 1986," *IEJ* 37.1 [1987]: 60-63; Eilat Mazar and Benjamin Mazar, *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount: The Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem* [Qedem 29; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1989], 14-28, 59-60; Eilat Mazar, "The Solomonic Wall in Jerusalem," in *"I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times": Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* [ed. A. Maeir and P. de Miroschedji; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 775-86; cf. the skeptical opinion of Anson Rainey in his review "Mazar and Mazar, *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount*," *JQR* 84.1 [1993]: 109-111), the city gate of Gezer VI (William G. Dever, et al., "Further Excavations at Gezer, 1967-1971," *BA* 34/4 [1971]: 118), and the acropolis gate of Beth Shean St. V (Frances James, *The Iron Age at Beth Shan: A Study of Levels VI-IV* [Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1966] 31, 40-43, and figs. 81.1-2).

should emphasize that the addition of this or that specific gate to the corpus would hardly affect my conclusions, at least with respect to gate usage and symbolism.

Below (Fig. 1.1) is a list of all gates considered in the present study, including their number of chambers and the period during which they were used; following is a site map of all gates (Fig. 1.2).

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Date of Construction	Used Until
Tel Arad X-VIII	2	late 10th/early 9th c.	late 8th c.
Ashdod Xa	4	end of 11th c.	first half of 10th c.
Ashdod IX-VII[1]	6	late 10th c.	ca. 600
Tel Batash III	6	8th c.	8th c.
Tel Batash II	4	7th c. (?)[2]	7th c.
Tel Beersheba V	4	early 10th c.	late 10th c.
Tel Beersheba III-II	4	mid 9th c.	end of 8th c.
Tell Beit Mirsim	2	early 9th c. (?)	8th c. (?)
Beth Shemesh	2 (?)	end 9th/beg. 8th	701
Bethsaida (et-Tell) V	4	9th c.	8th c.

Figure 1.1. Chambered Gates of the Iron II Period from the Southern Levant.

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[1] Note that the St. 9 gate was destroyed and rebuilt essentially the same in St. 8 (save the removal of the L-shaped wall 7129 and slightly thinner walls throughout); the interval between the destruction and rebuilding is unknown (Moshe Dothan and Yehoshua Porath, *Ashdod IV: Excavation of Area M* ['Atiqot 15; Jerusalem: HaMakor, 1982], 57). The two phases of the St. 7 gate were essentially the same plan as the St. 8 gate (Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 34).

[2] The point at which the gatehouse was renovated from a six chambers into four chambers is unknown. Mazar notes that "The lack of floors […] and the very small amount of pottery from reliable contexts rendered the analysis and dating of this gate a difficult task" (Amihai Mazar, *Timnah [Tel Batash] I – Stratigraphy and Architecture* [Qedem 37; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997], 118). Mazar prefers to lump the Stratum III and II gates together into the 8th-7th centuries (*Timnah I*, 111).

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Date of Construction	Used Until
Tel Dan (outer)	4	860-850[1]	733
Tel Dan (inner)	4	775-750	733
Tel Dor VII	4	after 925	733
Tel Dor V	2	late 8th c. (?)	4th c.
Ekron	6[2]	8th c.	7th c.
'En Haseva V	4	9th c.	8th c.
Tell el-Far'ah (N) VIIb (S gate)	2	10th c.	10th c.
Gezer VIII (inner)	6	mid 10th c.	ca. 918
Gezer VII[3]	6 (?)[4]	9th c.	733
Hazor X-IX[5]	6	10th c.	6th c.

Figure 1.1. Chambered Gates of the Iron II Period from the Southern Levant, continued.

[1] Dates given here (for both of Dan's gatehouses) are those of the excavator. For a recent revision which down-dates the relevant strata by about a century, see Eran Arie, "Reconsidering the Iron Age II Strata at Tel Dan: Archaeological and Historical Implications," *TA* 35/1 (2008): 6-64.

[2] The excavators call this a four-chamber gate (Seymour Gitin and Trude Dothan, "The Rise and Fall of Ekron of the Philistines: Recent Excavations at an Urban Border Site," *BA* 50/4 [1987]: 208), though the plan reveals that there is a chamber between the eastern tower at the gate's façade and the first pier on the eastern side. Cf. David Ussishkin, who also says the gate has six chambers ("The Fortifications of Philistine Ekron," *IEJ* 55.1 [2005]: 48, fig. 9).

[3] Remains of a third gate at Gezer were found, which the excavators though had two-chambers and dated to the late 7th-early 6th centuries (St. VI; see Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 118). However, only the tip of one pier was found, and the dimensions and nature of the gate remain largely unknown (John Holladay, personal communication, 9/16/10).

[4] The plans for this phase of the gatehouse (see Appendix B), generously shared in pre-publication form by John S. Holladay, show the first two chambers as one enters the gatehouse as abnormally large and asymmetric. The southwestern chamber is ca. 5m wide; the southeastern one is ca. 6.3m wide. The two remaining chambers are both ca. 2.5m wide. I am suspicious that this post-Shishak rebuild (St. VII) was essentially the same as the previous level (St. VIII) and that one set of piers was not preserved in the record. (A wall in the SW corner was also substantially thickened, narrowing the SW chamber.) In favor of reconstructing the missing piers (as I have done in the plan), note the structural implausibility of the very large and asymmetric chambers, and that extant benches in this level outline the missing set of piers on both sides (see plan).

[5] The six-chamber gate was still in place as late as Stratum 6, according to the site plans, but according to the excavators neither it nor the associated casemate wall were used defensively beginning in Stratum 8, when the town's fortifications were enlarged. Instead, the gatehouse functioned as a roadway, and the casemates of the wall were used for storage (Yigael Yadin, et al., *Hazor III-IV: An Account of Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavation, 1957-1958* [Text; ed. A. Ben-Tor; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989], 39).

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Date of Construction	Used Until
Tel 'Ira VII-VI	6	end of 8th/ beg. of 7th c.	ca. 600
Tall Jalul (inner and outer)[1]	(?)	(?)	9th c.
Tall Jawa VIIIb-VIIb	4	8th c.	8th c. (?)
Tel Jezreel	4[2]	9th c.	9th c.
Tell el-Kheleifeh III-II	4	8th c.	early 6th c.
Kinneret (Tel Kinrot) II	2	8th c.	734
Lachish IV-III	6	mid 9th c.	701
Lachish III (citadel gate)	6	mid 8th c.	701

Figure 1.1. Chambered Gates of the Iron II Period from the Southern Levant, continued.

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[1] The remains of this gate complex – which seems to consist of an inner and outer gatehouse and approach ramp, in multiple phases – are very poorly preserved; conclusions about the size and nature of the gate system must remain extremely tentative. No published plans of the excavation of the excavation are available; see Randall W. Younker, et al., "The Joint Madaba Plains Project: A Preliminary Report of the 1992 Season, Including the Regional Survey and Excavations at Tell Jalul, and Tell el-'Umeiri (June 16 to July 31, 1992)," *AUSS* 31 (1993): 216-7; Larry Herr, et al., "Madaba Plains Project 1994: Excavations at Tall al-'Umayri, Tall Jalul and Vicinity," *ADAJ* 40 (1996): 73; Randall W. Younker, et al., "Preliminary Report of the 1996 Season of the Madaba Plains Project: Regional Survey, Tall al-'Umayri and Tall Jalul Excavations (June 19 to July 31, 1996)," *AUSS* 35 (1997): 231; Larry Herr et al., "Madaba Plains Project 1996: Excavations at Tall al-'Umayri, Tall Jalul and Vicinity," *ADAJ* 41 (1997): 155.

[2] The excavators disagree on the number of chambers present in this gatehouse. Woodhead says the gate has four chambers; Ussishkin thinks it might have been a shorter 6-chamber type (David Ussishkin and John Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1994-1996: Third Preliminary Report," *TA* 24 [1997]: 20-3).

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Date of Construction	Used Until
Megiddo VA-IVB (city gate)[1]	6	10th c.	10th c.
Megiddo VA-IVB (Gate 1567)	4	10th c.	10th c.
Megiddo VA-IVB – III (outer gate)	2	9th c.	7th c.

Figure 1.1. Chambered Gates of the Iron II Period from the Southern Levant, continued.

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[1] The stratigraphy of Iron II Megiddo – and of the gate area in particular – is very problematic and has been debated for decades. The six-chamber gate (and thus its potential association with King Solomon) is usually assigned to stratum VA-IVB (e.g., Yigael Yadin, "Megiddo of the Kings of Israel," *BA* 33/3 [1970]: 84-89; Yigal Shiloh, "Solomon's Gate at Megiddo as Recorded by its Excavator, R. Lamon, Chicago," *Levant* 12 [1980]: 69-76; King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 235) or IVA (e.g., Yohanan Aharoni, "The Stratification of Israelite Megiddo," *JNES* 31 [1972]: 302-5; Herzog, *The City Gate*, 102-118; David Ussishkin "Was the 'Solomonic' City Gate at Megiddo Built by King Solomon?" *BASOR* 239 [1980]: 10-17). The stratigraphy hinges on whether the extant courses of ashlar masonry were the lowest courses of the gate's superstructure, or if they were the underground foundations for the (mudbrick) superstructure. Both solutions are plausible, and both have difficulties. I prefer to consider the ashlar walls as part of the superstructure of the initial phase of use for the following reasons: 1) There are two floor levels associated with the ashlar walls, and the lower floor abuts (and even curls up against the faces of) the lowest courses of the ashlars, showing that this cannot have been an earlier floor upon which the ashlar walls were built (Shiloh, "Solomon's Gate," 71, 74 and pl. XB; *pace* Ussishkin, "'Solomonic' City Gate," 10, 17). 2) The gatehouse foundations are much lower than those of the inset-offset city wall (325) (Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Head of All Those Kingdoms* [The Schweich Lectures, 1970; London: Oxford University, 1972], 161). 3) The gatehouse is not properly bonded to wall 325; rather, the gate merely abuts the wall, and 4) it only does so in the upper courses. 5) The rubble "sleeper walls" which close off the gate chambers from the main passage and which undergird the gatehouse's inner and outer thresholds are not bonded to the piers. 6) The "foundations" interpretation cannot explain the presence of the wooden ribbon course between the second and third courses of ashlars. Such layers of wood are thought to have a structural purpose (perhaps for stability during earthquakes; see Yigal Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital and Israelite Ashlar Masonry* [Qedem 11; Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1979], 61) which would surely be mitigated – if not cancelled completely – by burying the ribbon course in the foundation levels over a meter underground. Burying the ribbon course would also expose the wood to rot and insect infestation, thereby destabilizing the structure (Shiloh, "Solomon's Gate," 72). 7) Finally, the mason's marks found at Samaria were all in the superstructure; the similar marks found in the gate at Megiddo suggests that it, too, was part of the building's superstructure (Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* [3rd ed.; New York: Prager Publications, 1970], 250 n.1). All of these facts are explained with the tidy solution that the gatehouse was used in two phases: the lower floor functioned as the gate passage before the inset-offset city wall was added, at which time the floor was raised to the higher level and the rubble sleeper walls were added in the chamber entrances, etc. (Yadin, *Hazor: The Head*, 161). Thus the six-chambered gate in its earliest phase was used with a city wall that was either not located or identified in the excavations, or it was used without an independent city wall (A. Mazar, personal communication, March 2010) – Yadin's attempts to locate a casemate wall for the early gate notwithstanding. It is possible that in this period the line of buildings around the edge of the tell formed a de facto city wall (cf. Ussishkin, "'Solomonic' City Gate," 5).

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Date of Construction	Used Until
Megiddo IVA (city gate)[1]	4	9th c.	8th c.
Megiddo IVA (courtyard gate, Palace 338)	4	9th c.	8th c.
Megiddo III	2	late 8th c.	ca. 650
Kh. al-Mudaybi'	4	Iron II	Iron II
Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad	6	(?)	late 9th c. – early 8th c.
Kh. en-Nahas	4	early 10th c.	9th c.
Tell en-Nasbeh (inner)	4	9th c.[2]	586[3]
Tell en-Nasbeh (outer)	2	9th c.	586
Kh. Qeiyafa IV (West)	4	early 10th c.	10th c.
Kh. Qeiyafa IV (South)	4	early 10th c.	10th c.
Kh. el-Qom	2 (?)[4]	7th c.	7th c.

Figure 1.1. Chambered Gates of the Iron II Period from the Southern Levant, continued.

[1] This gate was assigned to stratum "IIIB" by the excavators; see R. S. Lamon and G. M. Shipton, *Megiddo I: Seasons of 1925-34, Strata I-V* [OIP 42, Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 1939], 74). According to Yadin, the excavators were forced to the conclusion that there were two superimposed gates (the present four-chamber gate and the later two-chamber gate of St. III) in the same stratum (their St. III). Because they were uncomfortable with this, they came up with the fiction that the four-chambered gate was begun and then, before it was finished, was redesigned into the 2 chamber gate (Yadin, *Hazor: The Head*, 159-160; Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 74). Since the four-chamber gate comes stratigraphically between the six-chamber gate and the two-chamber gate, it must logically be assigned to a later phase of St. IVA or an earlier phase of St. III.

[2] Because of the early date and the correspondingly crude methodology of excavation, it is impossible to be certain of the dating of much of the Iron Age remains at Tell en-Nasbeh. Our best estimates come from a recent re-evaluation of the site's stratigraphy by Jeffrey Zorn, and are based in part on the (well-founded) premise that Nasbeh should be identified with biblical Mizpah of Benjamin. See Jeffrey R. Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation of the Architecture and Stratigraphy of the Early Bronze Age, Iron Age and Later Periods" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993), xxviii.

[3] Zorn suggests that destruction by the Assyrians in 701 is the second-best candidate for the end of this gate ("Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 497).

[4] It is possible that this gate had more than two chambers, since the gate was poorly preserved and the excavations did not proceed to the north much further than the first two sets of piers (John S. Holladay, Jr., personal communication 11/1/10).

Figure 1.2. Site Map of Gates in Corpus (facing page)

1. Tel Dan
2. Hazor
3. Bethsaida (et-Tell)
4. Kinneret (Tel Kinrot)
5. Tel Dor
6. Megiddo
7. Tel Jezreel
8. Tell el-Far'ah (N)
9. Tall Jawa
10. Gezer
11. Tell en-Nasbeh
12. Ashdod
13. Ekron
14. Tel Batash
15. Beth Shemesh
16. Kh. Qeiyafa
17. Tall Jalul
18. Lachish
19. Kh. el-Qom
20. Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad
21. Tell Beit Mirsim
22. Tel 'Ira
23. Tel Beersheba
24. Tel Arad
25. Kh. al-Mudaybi'
26. 'En Haseva
27. Kh. en-Nahas
28. Tell el-Kheleifeh (not pictured)

50 km
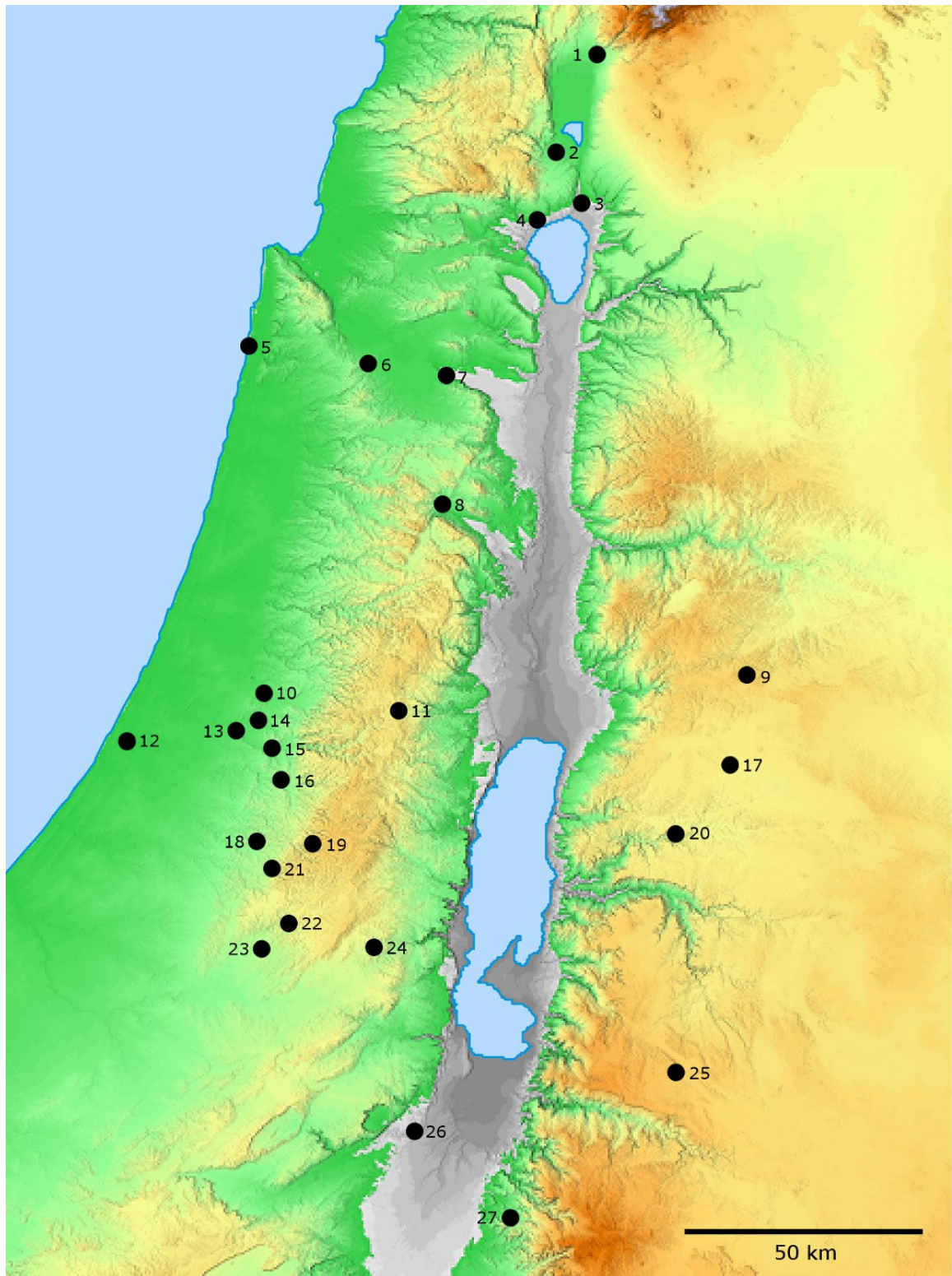
How Gates Relate to the Population of the Iron II Southern Levant

In my analysis below I approach gate complexes as a social institution which was central to life in ancient Israel. This raises the question of the extent to which an urban institution is relevant to the population on the whole – am I not, after all, limiting my analysis to sites large enough to have defensive fortifications, which covers only a subset of the population?

This question is all the more relevant given the agrarian economy of ancient Israel. It is *prima facie* plausible that much of the population lived scattered about the countryside in order to farm the land. And indeed, the Hebrew Bible provides plenty of indications that this was the case. The phrase "[city name] and her daughters" (בנות) is commonly used to denote a larger, named town and its surrounding settlements (and likely connotes dependence as well),[1] and the term חצר "settlement" seems to be used interchangeably with בנות in this respect.[2] The term פרז also denotes an open, unwalled place. Note, for example, Ezek 38:10-11 – "…You will plan an evil plan; you will say 'I will go up against the land of open villages (פרזות), I will come against the peaceful ones, those dwelling securely. All of them dwell in a place with no city wall; they have no or gate bar or double-doors!'"[3] Compare also 1 Sam 6:18 – ...מעיר מבצר ועד כפר הפרזי...

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[1] See Num 21:25; Josh 15:45, 47; Ezek 26:6, 8; Neh 11:25, 30; 1 Chr 2:23. See also Susan Fleiss Loewenstein, "The Urban Experiment in the Old Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1971), 13-4.

[2] See esp. Lev 25:31; Josh 13:23, 28; 15:32, 36, 41 (etc.); Neh 11:25-30; 12:28; 1 Chr 6:41; 9:16; and cf. Gen 25:16; Isa 42:11. Note, too, the legal distinction drawn in P – related to the jubilee and the right of redeeming property – between a dwelling house in a walled city and בתי החצרים "open settlement houses" which have no wall and are legally categorized along with the open field (Lev 25:29-34). Faust argues that these are solitary structures and should be called "farmsteads" as opposed to villages ("Cities, Villages, and Farmsteads"), which presumably means that בנות should be understood similarly.

[3] All verse references given in this study will refer to the Hebrew Bible, whose versification occasionally differs slightly from English translations. All translations of the text are my own unless otherwise noted.

"…from fortified city to unwalled village…."[1] All of this sounds like a description of a

hierarchical settlement organization, with urban centers spread throughout the land –

doubtless of varying size and administrative importance – each with its own daughter

villages and farmsteads in the surrounding countryside.[2]

The relative number of people living in the outlying settlements compared to

those in the larger, walled towns is unknown. The rural landscape has not been the focus

of much research until recently, and settlements are usually only discovered

accidentally.[3] However, the references to a town and its "daughters" or "settlements"

(always plural) gives some indication that, small though these settlements may have been,

they were more numerous than towns. Compare also Deut 3:4-5, which describes the

cities the Israelites took from Og in the Bashan: "All of these [sixty cities] were fortified

cities, with high walls, double doors, and gate bars; besides the rural settlements (ערי

הפרזי), of which there were very many (הרבה מאד)."[4] It seems safe to conclude, then, that

there were many rural settlements in addition to the walled cities, and that much –

perhaps even most – of the population lived in such settlements.[5]

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[1] See further Zech 2:8; Esth 9:19, and note the ערי השדה "towns of the field" in 1 Sam 27:5, and שדה
"field" in poetic parallel with כפרים "villages" in Song 7:12.

[2] Ze'ev Herzog categorizes towns into a four-fold division: Capital City, Major and Secondary
Administrative City, and Provincial Town ("Settlement and Fortification Planning in the Iron Age," in *The
Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* [ed. A. Kempinski and R.
Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992], 263-5). William Dever uses a three-tier hierarchy of a
few very large "central places," a larger number of middle-sized towns which function as "nodes," and an
even greater number of small villages, hamlets, and farmsteads ("Social Structure in Palestine in the Iron II
Period on the Eve of Destruction," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* [ed. T. E. Levy; New
York: Facts on File, 1995], 418). Faust similarly subdivides rural settlements into large villages, small
villages (or "hamlets"), and farmsteads ("Cities, Villages, and Farmsteads," 105-6).

[3] Faust, "Cities, Villages, and Farmsteads," 105.

[4] On the definition of an עיר, see below, p. 347.

[5] G. W. Ahlström, "Where Did the Israelites Live?," *JNES* 41 (1982): 136; Borowski, *Daily Life*, 13;
Ze'ev Herzog, "Israelite City Planning: Seen in the Light of the Beer-sheba and Arad Excavations,"
Expedition 20/4 (1978): 43; McNutt, *Reconstructing*, 12; Frank S. Frick, *The City in Ancient Israel*

The relationship between the rural and the urban elements of the population, we hasten to add, should be viewed as symbiotic rather than independent.[1] Indeed, some have argued rather convincingly that the dichotomy between rural and urban is superficial, since urbanites were by and large farmers and herders.[2] A city could not have survived without the agricultural productivity of its hinterlands,[3] and the city in turn would have been a hub for many activities of the rural residents, such as buying and selling goods and produce, assembling for military duties, and taking refuge when an enemy was attacking.[4] "The cities naturally would have become the cultural and commercial centers for the population of the countryside. They were the administrative centers where the villagers paid their taxes and where also, perhaps, they participated in the cultic festivals of the state religion. Thus, they were the countryside's link to the state."[5] This is known to have been the case at LB Ugarit, which controlled a large

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(Missoula, MT: Scholars, Society of Biblical Literature, 1977), 91-7. Faust, in contrast, claims that "almost all excavated Iron II villages were surrounded by a boundary wall" based on the few rural sites which have so far been excavated ("Cities, Villages, and Farmsteads," 106), but it is unclear if these walls served a defensive function or not. One issue to consider here is whether rural sites with "boundary walls" are a self-selecting sample of the rural environment, since they are presumably easier to detect than remains of unwalled settlements.

[1] Contra Edward Neufield, "The Emergence of a Royal-Urban Society in Ancient Israel," *HUCA* 31 (1960): 35-6.

[2] J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2; Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 101.

[3] Herzog, *Archaeology of the City*, 1-13; Frick, *The City*, 92-3; Dever, "Social Structure," 418; Schloen, *House of the Father*, 102. By Dever's calculation, a settlement in ancient Israel could grow to only ca. 2,000 residents before it needed to control the more remote hinterlands for food production, and thus became a "city" by definition ("Social Structure," 418). Compare Gen 41:48 - "the food from the fields of the city which were round about he put in the city."

[4] Taking refuge in a city is described in a text from Ras Shamra; see Frick, *The City*, 93; and see also Amos 3:6. Sennacherib's description of his siege of Judah seems to indicate that rural townspeople were drafted for military duty (Ahlström, "Where Did the Israelites Live?," 136).

[5] Ahlström, "Where Did the Israelites Live?," 136.

number of villages in the surrounding country – perhaps as many as 200 – which were responsible for contributing labor, taxes, and military service to the king.[1]

In addition, walled towns would have attracted travelers who were passing through (Gen 19:1-3; Judg 19:15-21) as well as nomadic peoples in the area. The latter are well known to depend on nearby settlements in order to buy goods or trade for items that they could not produce, such as cereals and vegetables.[2] Importantly, many of these activities which attracted outsiders to the walled towns were bound to have occurred precisely in the public arena of the gate complex, as we will see. To sum up, then, the civic forum represents more than a strictly urban institution; it was an institution of relevance to nearly all of ancient Israel.

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[1] See Michael Helzer, *The Rural Community in Ancient Ugarit* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1976); Schloen, *House of the Father*, 206-54.

[2] For a recent discussion with reference to the literature, see the essays in *On the Fringe of Society: Archaeological and Ethnoarchaeological Perspectives on Pastoral and Agricultural Societies* (ed. B. A. Saidel and E. J. van der Steen; BAR International Series 1657; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), and in particular the following: Øystein S. LaBianca and Kristen R. Witzel, "Nomads, Empires and Civilizations: Great and Little Traditions and the Historical Landscape of the Southern Levant" (pp. 63-74), and Emanuel Marx, "Nomads and Cities: Changing Conceptions" (pp. 75-78).

CHAPTER TWO
Gate Terminology in the Hebrew Bible

We will begin by defining our terms. The most common word for a gate in the

Hebrew Bible is שער. However, because this term has various semantic mappings which

sometimes overlap, it is not always possible to determine which meaning was intended in

a given instance.[1] From the information available the following definitions may be

distinguished:[2]

1) A Gatehouse

A gatehouse is a building through which the gate passage proceeds. This seems to

be the most common referent of שער. That the entire gatehouse building is in view – as

opposed to the door opening in particular or the gate area in general – may be deduced

from references such as פתח השער "opening/entrance of the gate" (e.g, Jdg 18:16, 7),

דלתות השער "doors of the gate" (1 Sam 21:14), גג השער "roof of the gate" (2 Sam 18:24),

עלית השער "upper room of the gate" (2 Sam 19:1), and תוך השער "interior/midst of the

gate" (1 Sam 9:18). In Neh 3:3, we read ואת שער הדגים בנו בני הסנאה המה קרוהו ויעמידו

דלתתיו מנעוליו ובריחיו "and the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams,

and installed its doors and its locks and its bolts."

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[1] For some examples of ambiguity, see below, "Other Figurative Uses of שער."

[2] My operation assumption in what follows is that a word's meaning is determined first and foremost by usage, though other data (e.g., cognate terminology, archaeological data, early translations of the Bible, etc.) can also prove helpful in establishing the meanings of *hapax legomena* and distinguishing between homonyms. See James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 158-60; Eshel, "Semantics," 8-13.

In addition to gatehouses located along the city's defensive walls, שער also refers to gatehouses connected to palaces,[1] temples,[2] and citadels.[3]

2) A Gate Complex

Many references to a שער describe actions or objects which are surely inappropriate to ascribe to the gatehouse proper, and thus for these references שער must include the areas surrounding the gatehouse.[4] Such larger gate complexes commonly include a secondary gatehouse, a plaza (רחוב) inside and/or outside the city, or a threshing floor (גורן). An example of this definition may be found in 2 Kgs 7:17, 20, where a man is stoned by the people בשער (see also Deut 17:5; 21:19; 22:24). The physical improbability of a mob of people stoning a man inside a gatehouse seems to indicate that a location just outside the gate is in mind.[5] Likewise, in 2 Sam 18-19, David is sitting בין שני השערים "between the two gates" (2 Sam 18:24), while in the same context he also sits בַּשַּׁעַר "in

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[1] A reference to the king's palace gate is found in 2 Chron 23:30 and perhaps in 2 Kings 9:31; three further references are to פתח בית המלך (2 Sam 11:9; 1 Kgs 14:27 [= 2 Chr 12:10]). Compare also the references to שער המלך in an ostensibly Persian setting in Esth 2:19, 21; 3:2, 3, etc. Such gates have been excavated in Israel; e.g., gate 1567 at Megiddo St. VA-IVB (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 13-5).

[2] For example, references in the Hebrew Bible to שערים at the Temple in Jerusalem include 2 Kgs 15:35; Jer 20:2; Ezek 40:3-38; 2 Chron 24:8.

[3] Judg 9:50-55 refers to a strong מגדל within a city (traditionally "tower," but perhaps an upper level of fortifications, such as a citadel), to which the residents fled when under attack. The attackers approach פתח המגדל in order to burn the doors with fire. Compare the six-chamber gate of Lachish's citadel; see David Ussishkin, "Area PAL: The Judean Palace-Fort," in *The Iron Age Stratigraphy and Architecture* (vol. 2 of *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. D. Ussishkin; Publications of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 22; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004), 805-839.

[4] J. A. Emerton, "'The High Places of the Gates' in 2 Kings Xxiii 8," *VT* 44 (1994): 464-5; cf. David J. A. Clines, "Squares and Streets: The Distinction of רחוב 'Square' and רחובות 'Streets,'" in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays, 1967-1998 vol. II* (JSOTSS 293; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 634; Avraham Faust, *Israelite Society in the Period of the Monarchy: An Archaeological Perspective* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2005), 113 (Hebrew); Josiah Derby, "Upon the Doorposts," *JBQ* 27 (1999): 43. These areas and terms will be discussed below.

[5] See Faust, *Israelite Society*, 121. Similarly, in 2 Sam 23:15-6, the water well (באר) at Bethlehem is said to be בשער, making the gatehouse proper an unlikely referent.

the gate" (2 Sam 19:9). Since there is evidently a compound gate at the site (thus the "two gates" in v. 24), the latter reference to "*the* gate" only makes sense if שער in the second instance is used inclusive of the whole gate complex.[1]

The above definitions cover almost all of the occurrences of the term שער in the Hebrew Bible. Two more definitions, both of which are slightly questionable, will be discussed below.

3) A Doorway (?)

It is possible that שער also refers to the opening in which the door leaves turn, or to the door leaves themselves (as "gate" may in modern English). Thus, for example, a שער is opened and closed (Josh 2:5, 7; Isa 45:1), is locked with בריחים "gate bars" (Ps 147:13), and may be burned with fire (Jdg 9:52; Jer 17:27; Neh 1:3; 2:3, 13). It should be admitted, however, that all such uses in the Hebrew Bible are ambiguous. Wooden gate doors may be the referent in the above verses, but on the other hand, the entire gatehouse may be opened and closed, has locking bars, and is built with wooden beams that may burn. The term שער in poetic parallel with דלת (e.g., Isa 45:1) likewise does not show that שער can mean doorway, since דלת may be a poetic restriction of the term שער – a common

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[1] Emerton, "High Places," 465. Alternatively, the references above may expose the the semantic range of the preposition -בְּ "in" more than the semantic range of שער. The term -בְּ can denote mere proximity ("at, by") as well as location strictly "in" a place, as it does in 1 Sam 29:1, Ezek 10:15, 20 (see *BDB*, s.v. -בְּ II.1). Thus, the gatehouse, since it is a prominent and well-known location, may attract nearby spatial references such that something *close* to the gate may be described with the phrase בשער. On the other hand, this use of the preposition -בְּ is relatively rare, and given the number of references to a שער that seem to refer to the broader gate area, the definition "gate complex" seems sound.

feature of Hebrew poetry.[1] Thus, the definition "doorway" – though possible – is not clearly established by usage in the Hebrew Bible.[2]

4) A City (?)

The term שער might sometimes stand for the entire city by metonymy or synecdoche,[3] as many scholars have suggested.[4] This may occur, for example, when שער is used in poetic parallel to עיר:[5]

Isa 14:31 – הילילי שער זעקי עיר "Wail, O gate! Cry out, O city!"

Isa 24:12 – נשאר בעיר שמה ושאיה יֻכַּת שער

"Destruction is left in the city; the gates are battered to ruins."[6]

This equation of terms, however, is slightly problematic. As I mentioned above regarding the terms שער and דלת in parallel, to say that שער carry the exact same meaning as עיר

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[1] See, e.g., James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 6.

[2] Two specific cases which might be invoked to establish the definition "doorway" – namely, the entrance to the Tabernacle courtyard and the Israelite's desert encampment "gate" – will be discussed below in Chapter 11.

[3] Metonymy is a figure of speech wherein a term stands in place of something to which it is related; e.g., "watch your mouth" (where mouth signifies speech). Synechdoche is a particular type of metonymy in which the substitution in terminology is the more comprehensive for the less comprehensive (or vice-versa), such as part-for-whole or genus-for-species; e.g., "counting heads" (where heads signify people).

[4] Suggested, e.g., by Herzog, *The City Gate*, 187; Frick, *The City*, 44; Wilma A. Bailey, "The Contributions of the Israelite City to the Shaping and Preserving of the Religion of Israel" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1995), 102; Cornelius H. J. de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel and in the Southern Levant* (Palaestina Antiqua 10; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 33; Avraham Faust, "The Gates of the City," *Eretz* 105 (2006): 30-1; Richard S. Hess "שער," *NIDOTTE* 4:209. Otto asserts that the term שער in conjunction with a particular city name (e.g., שער סדם in Gen 19:1) is synecdochic for the city itself, and lists fourteen examples of this construction ("שער," 15:371). Despite a few ambiguous examples (such as Mic 1:12 and Lam 4:12), none *must* be interpreted synecdochically, and many cannot be. E.g., Jer 17:19 reads הלך ועמדת בשער בני העם אשר יבאו בו מלכי יהודה ואשר יצאו בו "Go, and stand in the Sons of the People Gate through which the kings of Judah enter and through which they exit…."

[5] Hillers cites this verse as evidence that the term שער "is used as a kind of synonym for city"; see Delbert R. Hillers, *Micah* (Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 23.

[6] Compare also Isa 3:26 – "Her [the city's] gates will mourn and lament; empty, she [the city] will sit on the ground."

when placed in parallel would represent an overly simplistic view of Hebrew parallelism, since truly "synonymous" parallelism does not exist.[1] This equation of parallel terms may be illegitimately removing the very nuance intended by the poet.

Moreover, because of the semantic range of the term שער and the diverse functions associated with it, a number of potential instances of metonymy and/or synecdoche are ambiguous. For example:

Gen 22:17; 24:60 – ירש זרעך את שער איביו \ שנאיו

"Your offspring will possess the gate of his enemies/rivals."[2]

The most natural understanding of this blessing is that one would take control of one's enemies' cities, and not just the gates in particular. Thus שער here might be used metonymically or synecdochically; compare the translations in Targum Onkelos (קריה) and LXX (πόλις).[3] On the other hand, the gate is the focus of many battles and thus a natural command center for military operations, and also a place where rulers who had conquered a city might convene an ad hoc council (see Jer 39:3). Thus, the reference here might mean literally taking possession of one's enemies' gatehouse, as a way of expressing a wish for military victory.[4]

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[1] See, e.g., Kugel, *Biblical Poetry*, 1-23 and references there.

[2] This verse is referred to as an example of metonymy in TWOT, s.v. "שער."

[3] W. Propp suggests to me (personal communication) that since the verb ירש typically indicates possession of land, the entire city is likely in view here. This is true, but in many instances this verb carries connotations along the lines of "seize," "take control (of)," "occupy," etc., and especially in military contexts (see BDB s.v.; *HALOT*, s.v. qal 3). This (military) understanding of the term is plausible enough in the present verses that I find the referent ambiguous.

[4] A similar ambiguity is found in Jer 14:2, and in the Ugaritic text "Funerary Ritual in Poetic Form." In the concluding blessings of the Ugartic tablet, we find "Peace, peace to Ammurapi; And peace to his sons; Peace to his kinsmen, Peace to his house, Peace to Ugarit, Peace to its gates" (*šlm t̠ǵrh*). See Wayne T. Pitard, "The Ugaritic Funerary Text RS 34.126," *BASOR* 232 (1978): 66.

Many cases in which שער might refer metonymically or metaphorically to a town

will require a lengthier discussion (particularly the clustering of non-literal uses of שער in

D), and will be discussed below in Chapter 11.

Etymology

It is evident from the many cognate terms that the etymological origin of Hebrew

שער is the Semitic root *ṯ-ġ-r*. We may compare Ugaritic *ṯġr* "gate, gatekeeper";[1]

Canaanite *ša-aḫ-ru* "gate" (a cuneiform Amarna gloss to Akk. *abullu*);[2] Old South Arabic

ṯʿr "sluice (gate)";[3] Phoenician and Punic *šʿr* "gate";[4] Moabite שער "gate";[5] Biblical

Aramaic תְּרַע "gate" (Dan 2:49; 3:26) and תָּרָע "gatekeeper" (Ezr 7:24); and Syriac

tarʿaʾ "door, gate, court" (note the metathesis in the Aramaic/Syriac forms).[6]

Additionally, Egyptian *šʿr* and *šrʿ* (the latter with metathesis) are both attested as West

Semitic loanwords for gate.[7]

False Cognates to שער

A) שָׁעַר "to measure, estimate"

In addition to the above, there seems to be a homographic verbal root (II שער)

attested sporadically in the Hebrew Bible. It occurs only once as a verb:

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[1] Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (3 vols.; Analecta Orientalia 38; Roma: Editrice Pontifico Istituto Biblico, 1998), iii:505.

[2] EA 244:16; Note that the guttural *ġ* is represented by the Akkadian *ḫ*.

[3] *DOSA*, 548-9.

[4] *DNWSI*, 1179.

[5] Mesha Line 22; see John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions, vol. 1: Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 75.

[6] *SL*, 1671.

[7] Otto, "שער," 15:364-5.

Prov 23:7 - כְּמוֹ שָׁעַר בְּנַפְשׁוֹ כֶּן הוּא

"As one reckons in his heart, thus he is."

Assuming that the MT as we have it is correct,[1] the meaning "reckon, measure, estimate"

fits the context of this verse sufficiently, and aligns with later Midrashic Hebrew שָׁעַר II

"to divide, distribute" (as well as *pi'el* שִׁעֵר "to apportion, estimate, measure, calculate,"

and *hithpa'el* השתער "be estimated, measured").[2] Compare also Modern Hebrew שער

חליפין – "rate of (money) exchange."

B) שַׁעַר "a measure, rate"

This term is either the source of or derived from the previous entry. One fairly clear

attestation of this meaning comes from the patriarchal narratives:

Gen 26:12 – ויזרע יצחק בארץ ההיא וימצא בשנה ההיא מאה שערים

"Isaac sowed in that land, and he reached in that year one hundred measures."

Most translations correctly render מאה שערים as "a hundredfold" – i.e., Isaac sowed one

"measure" and reaped a hundred measures. This interpretation is supported by later

Hebrew cognates, including the verbals forms mentioned above and the nominal form

from the same root שַׁעַר (II), "estimation, proportion."[3]

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[1] For alternative renderings see *HALOT*, s.v. שער [I] and the commentaries.

[2] Jastrow, 1612. In addition, a number of related terms are morphologically Aramaic (both Palestinian and Babylonian in provenance), but etymologically Hebrew: שָׁעַר "to measure, calculate," I שְׁעָרָא "percent, interest," II שְׁעָרָא "market price," and שער "an estimate" (Jastrow, 1612-3; *DJBA*, 1236; *DJPA*, 562). These forms attest either to a Hebrew loanword into Aramaic, or simple root confusion.

[3] Jastrow, 1612. Compare also the phrase אלף שערין, which may mean "a thousand measures" in the Aramaic section of the Tell Fekheriye inscription - or, alternatively, a thousand (measures of) barley (Hebrew שְׂעֹרִים). See A. R. Millard, and P. Bordreuil, "A Statue from Syria with Assyrian and Aramaic Inscriptions," *BA* 45/3 (1982): 138.

Another nominal form of this root takes the slightly different meaning "market price" (as an extension of "measure, rate, estimation"), and occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible:

כעת מחר סאה סלת בשקל וסאתים שערים בשקל ב<u>שער</u> שמרון – 2 Kgs 7:1

"At this time tomorrow a *seah* of flour will be bought for a sheqel, and two *seahs* of barley for a sheqel, at the שער of Samaria."

Admittedly, שער is perfectly ambiguous in this context; the prices for the goods indicated might be predicted either "at Samaria's *gate*" or "at Samaria's *market price*" (with the latter rendering understood as apposition). Once again, evidence from cognate languages suggests that the definition "market price" is plausible. For example, compare Jewish Babylonian Aramaic תְּרַע "market price," and Midrashic Hebrew שַׁעַר I.2 "market, market price."[1]

Inscriptional evidence relevant to the root II שער seems to support the idea that an official measure was used in the Levant during the Iron II period – and perhaps specifically in the gateway. Recently, an Iron II jar fragment was found near the gate of Tel Kinrot with the inscription כד השער [ ] "jug of the gate."[2] In addition, from 8th century Deir 'Alla we have two Aramaic inscriptions: one incised on the shoulder of a jar that reads שרעא זי "that of the gate," and a stone measuring weight with the inscription אבן

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[1] *DJBA*, 1236; Jastrow, 1612. Whether the meaning "market price" in all of these cases should be grouped with II שער (as I contend, and with *DJPA*, 562) or as a secondary definition of I שער (as in Jastrow and DJBA) is debatable. It seems to me that the semantics (i.e., quantifying a certain amount) are close enough to fit "estimate" and "market price" under the same root meaning. The argument in favor of the latter is that the "market price" definition arose in the gate's marketplace (see below).

[2] Volkmar Fritz, "Kinneret: Excavations at Tell el-'Oreimeh (Tel Kinrot) 1982-1985 Seasons," *TA* 20 (1993): 209-11.

שרעא "stone [weight] of the gate."[1] Alternatively, however, we may interpret these inscriptions in accordance II שער "to measure, estimate." For example, the inscription כד השער might denote "*measuring* jar" (lit: "the jar of the measure") just as easily as "jar of the *gate* [used for measuring]."[2]

Either way, these inscriptions seem to point to the use of an official measure of quantity and weight, presumably for ensuring fair business transactions, which were used in the gate's marketplace.[3] In support of this we may compare the objects above to others with inscriptions such as חצי למלך "half of the king's [measure]" from Beersheba, בת למלך "the king's *bath*" from Lachish, and [ ] חצי "half of …" from Arad, etc.[4] Likewise, grain sold at Mari (in N. Mesopotamia) was measured "in the container (used in) the marketplace,"[5] and various expressions throughout the Old Babylonian, Old Assyrian, and Middle Assyrian periods refer to standardized civic measures and capacities (e.g., *aban bīt āli* "stone weight of the city house").[6] A legal document from Nuzi records the exchange of an orchard, which is to be measured by "the copper cubit [rod] which is in the gate of the City of the Gods."[7]

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[1] Other interpretive options have been suggested; for a survey see Israel Eph'al and Joseph Naveh, "The Jar of the Gate," *BASOR* 289 (1993): 59. Note that these forms are Aramaic as evidenced by the metathesis, the post-positive א-, and the article זי, yet they retain a ש for the first root letter, suggesting that the pronunciation may have still been closer to Proto-Semitic *t̠* (cf. Eph'al and Naveh, "Jar of the Gate," 59).

[2] This is the excavator's preferred interpretation (Fritz, "Kinneret," 211). It is also possible that the jug read [כד השער]ה "barley jug," or כד השֹער "jug of the gatekeeper," but both of these seem less likely (see Fritz, "Kinnereth," 209-11).

[3] Eph'al and Naveh, "Jar of the Gate," 59. Compare the many biblical injunctions regarding the use of "just" weights and measures: Lev 19:36; Deut 25:13; Prov 16:11; 20:10; 20:23; Mic 6:11.

[4] For these and others, see Yohanan Aharoni, "Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba: Preliminary Report of the Fifth and Sixth Seasons, 1973-1974," *TA* 2 (1975): 160-2 and fig 7.

[5] Morris Silver, *Economic Stuctures of Antiquity* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), 154-5.

[6] See A. Leo Oppenheim, "A New Look at the Structure of Mesopotamian Society," *JESHO* 10/1 (1967): 9 n.2, and references there.

[7] R. H. Pfeiffer and E. A. Speiser, *One Hundred New Selected Nuzi Texts* (AASOR 16; New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1936), 83.

The combination of the meanings "gate" and "measure" in one context raises a question about the etymology of the terms in question. Do the terms I have grouped under II שער "to estimate, measure" ultimately derive from I שער "gate" because of this association? This is a plausible suggestion, since it is clear that the city gate in ancient Israel was, among other things, a commercial center. The gate would thus have been home to various financial transactions on a daily basis, including calculating prices and quantities and interest. Therefore the association of such market activities with the שער may have given rise to the meaning "estimate, measure" for the term שער by metonymy. As Otto puts it, "'Gate' and 'market place' go together, since the price of merchandise is negotiated at the gate. Standard measures are posted at the gate."[1] There are many analogs to this process of forming metonymical meanings. With respect to gates, compare Akkadian *abullu*, which signifies both a gate and the tax collected at the gate.[2] Similarly, in more recent times, the government of the Ottoman sultan was referred to as "the Sublime Porte" because of the long association of governmental functions with a particular "porte" (i.e., gate).[3]

A Ugaritic cognate seems to clarify the etymological picture. We may compare the verbal and nominal forms above (i.e., "estimate, measure") with Ugaritic *ṯʿr* II

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[1] Otto, "שער," 15:366-7. Otto argues that it is possible to connect the two semantic spheres of שער discussed here based on the analogy of Akkadian *babtu* I "city ward, family association" and *babtu* II, "merchandise (to be delivered), loss, deficit" ("שער," 15:366), an analogy I find objectionable because there is no clear connection between these two meanings. Otto similarly notes that two Egyptian terms for gate (*śbȝ* and *rȝ*) can also take the meaning "property," and relates this to the gate's function as marketplace in Egypt ("Zivile Funktionen des Stadttores in Palastina und Mesopotamien," in *Meilensten: Festgabe für Herbert Donner zum 16. Februar 1995* (ed. Manfred Weippert and Stefan Timm; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 193-4.

[2] *CAD* A/1, 82.

[3] de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel*, 34.

"measure, arrange,"[1] which corresponds to a Hebrew root שער. If this Ugaritic root is cognate to our Hebrew terms for "estimate, measure" (which seems likely based on the semantic overlap), then the presence of ʿayin (and not ġayin) in the Ugaritic would prove that our terms for "estimate, measure" must indeed come from a separate root שער II (see Fig. 2.1).[2]

Proto-Semitic	*ṯġr "gate"	*ṯ ʿr "measure"
Ugaritic	ṯġr "gate"	(?) ṯ ʿr "measure, arrange"
Biblical Hebrew	שער "gate"	שער "measure" "market price"
Mid. Hebrew	שער "gate"	שער "estimate, divide, measure"
Aramaic	תרע "gate"	תרע "market price"

Figure 2.1. The two PS roots *ṯġr "gate" and *ṯ ʿr "measure"

פֶּתַח

The second term which commonly denotes a gate is פתח "opening." This term has a broad semantic range, referring to the opening of everything from tents (Gen 18:1) to caves (1 Kgs 19:13) to domiciles (Lev 14:38). In many cases, it is used in construct with שער; thus we have פתח השער[3] and פתח שער העיר.[4] Presumably these references specify that

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[1] Otto, "שער," 15:366; *HALOT*, s.v. I שער. Note that *DULAT* defines the verb "to prepare, arrange" (893).
[2] Ephʿal and Naveh, "Jar of the Gate," 60. Alternatively, we may compare the (more semantically remote [?]) Arabic saʿara II "to set a price" and siʿr "a price, tax" (Otto, "שער," 15:366; *HALOT*, s.v. I שער). This root would also be equivalent to Hebrew שער and yield the same conclusion; namely, that there are two separate roots שער which respectively mean "gate" and "measure."
[3] See Jdg 9:40; 18:16, 17; 2 Sam 10:8; 11:23; 2 Kgs 7:3; 2 Kgs 10:8; Ezek 11:1; 40:11, 40; 46:3.
[4] See Josh 8:29; 20:4; Jdg 9:35, 44; cf. 1 Kgs 22:10 (= 2 Chr 18:9); 2 Kgs 23:8; Jer 19:2; 26:10; 36:10; Ezek 8:3, 14; 10:19.

the location in question is the outer door opening of the gatehouse, as opposed to the broader definition of שער discussed above. In a few places, however, פתח is used where one would expect the term שער. For instance, Tamar waits in disguise at the פתח of the city of Enaim (Gen 34:18); Elijah approaches פתח העיר at Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:10), and the Ammonites draw up for battle at פתח העיר (1 Chr 19:9). As a symbol of judgment, gates (שערים) are sometimes said to lie desolate and sink into the ground (Lam 1:4; 2:9); in Isa 3:26, however, we read אנו ואבלו פתחיה ונקתה לארץ תשב "her gates will mourn and lament; she will sit on the ground [in mourning], empty of people."[1] The semantic overlap is further illustrated in 1 Chr 9:21, where a man is called the שֹׁעֵר ("gate keeper," a denominative participle from שער) who is stationed at פתח אהל מעד. These references, then, whether they are shorthand for the fuller expression פתח השער, or are simply referring to the "city's entrance" in a more generic sense, denote the city gate.

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[1] The term שערים is also used in poetic parallel to פתחים in Ps 24:7, 9.

CHAPTER THREE
The Gatehouse Floorplan

The main problem with analyzing gate construction in ancient Israel is that most

all excavated gatehouses are preserved only in their foundation levels or the lowest levels

of their superstructure. This leaves most elements of the gatehouse – the doors, the upper

parts of the walls and doorways, the ceilings and roofing, the upper rooms, towers, and

battlements – missing from the archaeological record. The scant direct evidence,

however, may be supplemented by a considerable amount of data from literary and

pictorial sources, and informed by the judicious use of comparative architecture. Below

we will survey the form, construction, and purpose of the Iron II gatehouse based on all

of these data.

Piers and Chambers

Gatehouses in the Iron II period in the Levant have a remarkably consistent floor

plan. The buildings are rectangular or square with a passage directly through the center,

and often have – depending on the size of the gatehouse – interior piers which extend

toward the central passage. The piers thus form chambers, which are called תאים in a few

places in the Hebrew Bible.[1] The entire gatehouse is usually situated along the city wall

such that most of the building is within the city's interior; typical configurations are six-,

four-, and two-chamber gates (see Fig 3.1). The nomenclature for such gatehouses can be

confusing, since different aspects of the floor plan are used to describe them. The same

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[1] See e.g. 1 Kgs 14:28 and Ezek 40:7-36; cf. Akk. *ta'um*.

gatehouse may be referred to as a "4-entry gate," a "6-chambered gate," or an "8-pier gate," among other variations.[1] This type of gatehouse fits into the larger category of flanked gates, which are characterized by a straight entrance passage flanked by walls or towers.[2]

Figure 3.1. Typical Levantine "chamber" gates of the Iron II period (not to scale). From left to right: a) Megiddo St. III; b) Bethsaida St. V; c) Hazor St. IXa.

The usable space on the ground floor is thus divided into the main passageway though which everyone walked, and the side chambers. The chambers themselves were usually open to the main passage, which likely indicates that the chambers were public. A few Cisjordanian gates, however, have short walls which narrow the opening into one or more of the chambers, including gates at Beersheba II,[3] both the outer and inner gate of

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[1] Compare Burke, who laments the terminological confusion regarding MB six pier gates, which are also called *tenaille* ("pincher") gates, three-entrance gates, four-chamber gates, Syrian gates, fort-gate gates, triple gates, or three-way gates (*Walled Up to Heaven*, 67).

[2] Lawrence H. Keeley, Marisa Fontana, and Russell Quick, "Baffles and Bastions: The Universal Features of Fortifications," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 15 (2007): 64.

[3] The gate of Beersheba St. II had short walls which blocked entrance to the chambers on the SW side, leaving only small doorways. See Yohanan Aharoni, ed., *Beer-Sheba I: Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba 1969-1971 Seasons* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1973), pls. 8, 84.
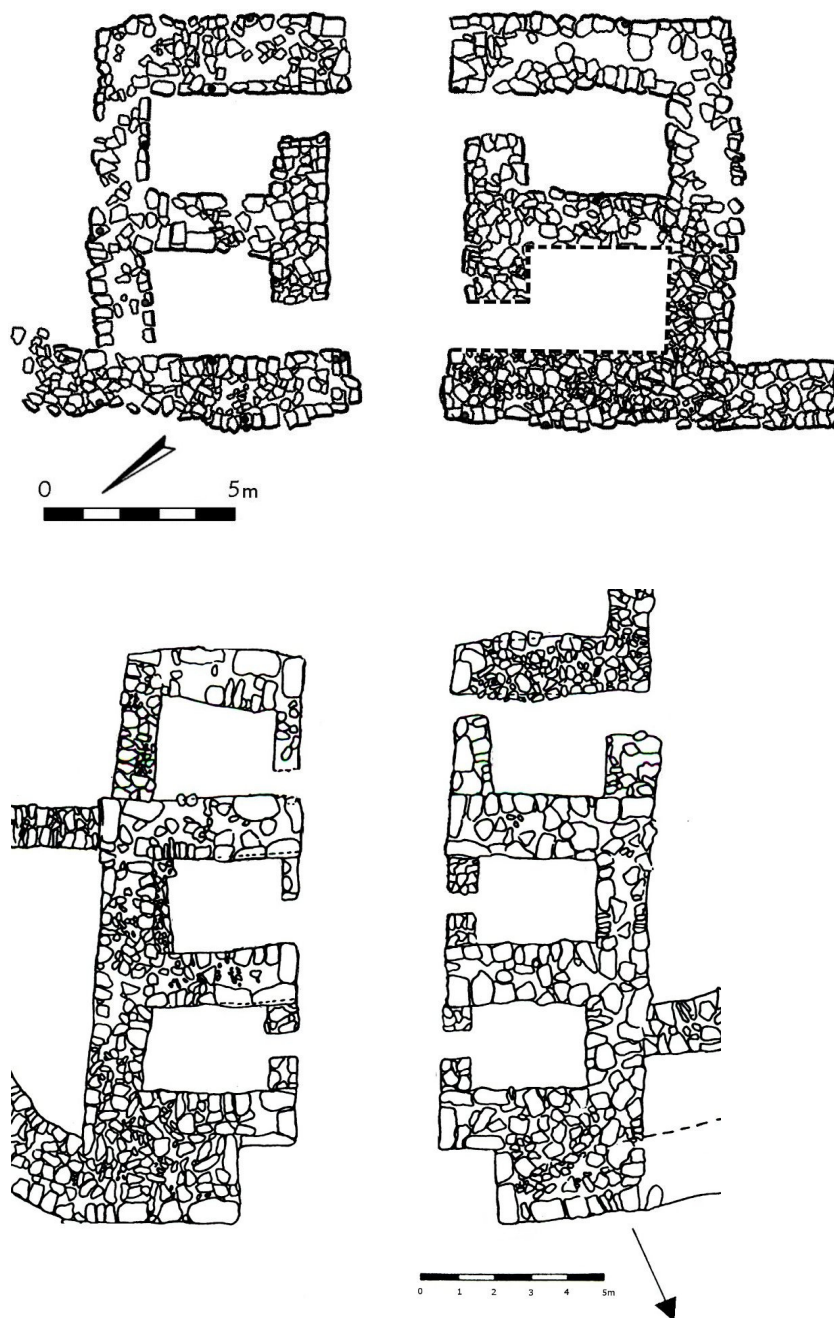
Figure 3.2. Two examples of gates with semi-private chambers. Above: Kh. En-Nahas, Jordan, Area A (note that one chamber was left unexcavated).[1] Below: Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad, Jordan.[2]

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[1] My thanks to Tom Levy for sharing an unpublished plan of Area A, from which this plan is adapted.

[2] Adapted from Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 259 fig. 2.

Tel Dan,[1] Kinneret II,[2] and Lachish III.[3]

This feature is more prominent in gates from Transjordan, and is attested at Tall

Jawa,[4] Kh. al-Muddaybi',[5] Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad,[6] and Kh, en-Nahas[7] (see Fig.

3.2). These four comprise all Transjordanian gates thus far excavated which have a

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[1] Both of these gates have short blocking walls at the first (outer) chambers. See Avraham Biran, *Biblical Dan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Hebrew Union College-Institute of Religion, 1994), 236, fig. 194.

[2] Fritz, "Kinneret," 197.

[3] Both of the east-most chambers (the two inner-most) were partially blocked by a partition wall of plastered mudbricks, leaving a small opening with two steps made of limestone blocks up into the chamber. See David Ussishkin, "Area GE: The Inner City-Gate," in *The Iron Age Stratigraphy and Architecture* (vol. 2 of *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. D. Ussishkin; Publications of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 22; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004), 640-1, 627 fig. 12.3; Ussishkin, "Lachish - 1973–1977," 60. Additionally, Ashdod St. 9 is a special case, in that the chambers seem to have been completely blocked from the central passage (Moshe Dothan, "Ashdod – Seven Seasons of Excavation," *Qadmoniot* 5 [1972]: 9 [Hebrew]). The southern chambers, the excavators note, were intentionally filled with courses of mudbrick, probably because the structure was built on unstable fill on the south. The following St. 8 gate, however, was open to the passage (Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 29). Since completely blocked chambers are a feature which is unattested elsewhere, it is possible that the St. 9 chamber walls and fill were foundational levels which were placed upon an earlier floor level. On this construction technique, see Ussishkin, "'Solomonic' City Gate," 10-12; and David Ussishkin, "Gate 1567 at Megiddo and the Seal of Shema, Servant of Jeroboam," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (ed. M. D. Coogan et al.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 410-428.

[4] Daviau, *Tall Jawa I*, 382-4.

[5] S. J. Andrews et al., "Karak Resources Project 1999: Excavations at Khirbat al-Mudaybi'," *ADAJ* 46 (2002): 134; S. H. Savage, K. Zamora, and D. R. Keller, "Archaeology in Jordan, 2001 Season," *AJA* 106/3 (2002): 439.

[6] Robert Chadwick, P. M. Michèle Daviau, and Margreet Steiner, "Four Seasons of Excavations at Khirbet al-Mudayna on Wadi ath-Thamad, 1996-1999," *ADAJ* 44 (2000): 258-60.

[7] Thomas E. Levy, "Kh. en-Nahas 2002 Area A Field Report," (unpub. prelim. report), 9. We should also mention Bethsaida St. V, where a mudbrick wall (as opposed to the stone chamber walls), preserved to ca. 1.3 m. high, was built across the front of the SE chamber, blocking entrance to the chamber entirely; see Rami Arav, "Final Report on Area A, Stratum V: The City Gate," in *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee* (ed. Rami Arav and Richard A. Freund; Bethsaida Excavations Project 4; Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2009), 37. Given the indications that this chamber was used for grain storage, the wall might have been built for the purpose of keeping the grain from spilling into the gate passage. The NW chamber of the same gate, for comparison, was found filled with a 1m layer of burned barley, the total weight of which was ca. one ton (Rami Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," *IEJ* 49 [1999]: 131).

discernable floorplan.[1] In a few cases, there is evidence that doors were installed at the entrance to a chamber, making it a private room.[2]

Some of these ground floor architectural elements may (or may not) be described in the Bible. Stern has suggested that the piers of these gatehouses might be the אילים of Ezekiel's eastern temple gate (40:1-16), which in form is unquestionably a six-chamber gate of the Iron Age II tradition.[3] While the term איל (III) must be related to doorways based on its few occurrences,[4] its precise meaning is hard to determine, especially in the difficult context of Ezekiel 40.[5] Also in Ezekiel's eastern temple gate, a one cubit (high

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[1] See T. E. Levy, et al., "Excavations at Khirbat en-Nahas 2002–2009: Unearthing an Iron Age Copper Production Center in the Lowlands of Edom (Southern Jordan)," in *New Perspectives on the Iron Age Archaeology of Edom, Southern Jordan* (ed. T. E. Levy; Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, under review).

[2] In the NW chamber of Bethsaida St. V, excavations revealed a pivot socket for a door immediately behind the threshold of the chamber (Rami Arav, "Bethsaida: The Season of 2007," n.p. [cited 22 Jan 2010]; online: http://www.unomaha.edu/bethsaida/reports/index.htm). In the St. III gate of Tel Batash, the middle right chamber contained one socket stone on each side of the chamber's entrance (Mazar, *Timnah I*, 112 fig. 28). In the SE most chamber (R103) of Kh. al-Mudayna, a thin wall (0.5-0.7 m) blocked most of the chamber from the gate passage; only a narrow doorway (about 1 m wide) on the N side was left, which was topped by a stone lintel (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 258).

[3] Ephraim Stern, "The Fortified City Gate and the Struggle for it Under the Monarchy," in *The Military History of the Land of Israel in Biblical Times* (ed. Jacob Liver; Jerusalem: Sivan, 1964), 401 (Hebrew).

[4] For example, there are אילים alongside the door into the Holy of Holies of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:31).

[5] The text of Ezek 40:1-16 describes the eastern gate of Ezekiel's visionary temple. This text is very difficult both syntactically and semantically (contra Corrine L. Patton, "Ezekiel's Blueprint for the Temple of Jerusalem" [Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1991], 157), and commentators have differed dramatically in their understanding of the structure described there. The description of the gate seems to have been subject to textual corruption, and was probably elliptical to begin with (see C. G. Howie, "The East Gate of Ezekiel's Temple Enclosure and the Solomonic Gateway of Megiddo," *BASOR* 117 [1950]: 15). The versions offer little help on the point, as they either have different errors or try in vain to correct the errors of their *Vorlagen*. A number of highly speculative textual (and architectural) reconstructions have been offered in the secondary literature. For instance, see Howie, "The East Gate"; H. J. Griffin and E. Reifler, *Ancient Hebrew and Solomonic Building Construction* (London: Mansell, 1984), 47-84; Eshel, "Semantics," 247-8. Even though Ezekiel's gate is clearly a six-chamber gate which would fit into the present corpus, I will not engage in a detailed discussion of it for the following reasons: 1) Any conclusions about the form of Ezekiel's gate would be very speculative, because of the difficult nature of the text. 2) The gate (as far as we know) was not real, and thus how much the gate's plan conforms to or deviates from a plausible Iron Age structure in its details is unclear. 3) Ezekiel's description only covers the ground floor of the gate, which we are already capable of reconstructing based on actual, excavated gates. I shall, therefore, refer to Ezekiel's gate only occasionally for general observations or terminology.

or wide?) גבול ("border") of some sort is in front of each of the six chambers (Ezek

40:12). Though the text is unclear and seems to have been corrupted,[1] the border may

depict a wall which partially blocked the chambers such as those described above, or

perhaps a tall curb which separated the chamber from the passageway.[2]

    The central passage through the gatehouse saw the highest amount of pedestrian

and vehicular traffic of any place in the city. The surface was thus ordinarily paved with

any of a wide variety of materials, including beaten earth,[3] clay,[4] crushed lime,[5] plaster,[6]

gravel,[7] pebbles,[8] cobbles,[9] or flagstones.[10] The gate passage was an average of 4.17m

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[1] The text reads וגבול לפני התאות אמה אחת ואמה-אחת גבול מפה "And there were borders in front of the chambers which were one cubit each; there was a border on one side." Presumably the remainder of the sentence (וגבול מפה; "and a border on the other side") was lost by haplography.

[2] Chamber thresholds are also well-attested. At Bethsaida V, for example, thresholds elevated above the level of the gate passage ca. 15 cm were found at the entrance to each chamber (Arav, "Final Report," 33). Gezer's six-chamber gate of St. VIII, likewise, had "sleeper walls" (underground foundation walls) which formed thresholds to the chambers (Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 115). Similarly, the later phase of the six-chamber gate of Megiddo VA-IVB had two or three very large ashlars as a threshold for each chamber, which in turn rested on top of rubble sleeper walls (Gordon Loud, *Megiddo II, Seasons of 1935-39* [2 vols; OIP 62; Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago Press, 1948], 49).

[3] Found at Kh. en-Nahas (Levy et al., "Excavations at Khirbet en-Nahas," 36), along with one small patch of stone paving (Levy, "Kh. en-Nahas 2002," 10).

[4] Found at the gate of Ashdod St. 8, which was paved with a layer of brownish-black clay ca. 2.5 cm thick (Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 29).

[5] Found at Hazor X-IX (Yadin, *Hazor: The Head*, 137).

[6] Found at Phase IB of Ekron's gate (Seymour Gitin, "Tel Miqne-Ekron: A Type-Site for the Inner Coastal Plain in the Iron Age II period," in *Recent Excavations in Israel: Studies in Iron Age Archaeology* [ed. S. Gitin and W. G. Dever; AASOR 49; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989], 28-30); Tall Jawa (Daviau, *Tall Jawa I*, 384-5); Lachish IV's inner gatehouse (Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511); Lachish III's citadel gatehouse (Ussishkin, "Area PAL," 820); the upper floor level of Megiddo VA-IVB (Loud, *Megiddo II*, 49); and Tel en-Nasbeh's outer gatehouse (Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 493).

[7] The gates at Ashdod's strata 10a and 9 were paved with "brick material covered with a stamped layer of kurkar mixed with potsherds," the latter of which was ca. 4cm thick (Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 15, 23). The gate of Dor VII had a crushed kurkar suface (Ephraim Stem, *Dor-Ruler of the Seas: Twelve Years of Excavations at the Israelite-Phoenician Harbor Town on the Carmel Coast* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994], 111).

[8] Found at Tel Batash St. III and II (Mazar, *Timnah I*, 108, 122).

[9] Found at Tel Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 235-7); Gezer's outer gatehouse (William G. Dever, "Late Bronze Age and Solomonic Defenses at Gezer: New Evidence," *BASOR* 262 [1986]: 19); and Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 263).

[10] Found at Bethsaida V (Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131); Dor V (which was paved with "well-worked ashlars"; Stern, *Dor*, 134); Tall Jawa (Daviau, *Tall Jawa I*, 384-5); Kinneret II (Fritz, "Kinneret," 197); Megiddo III (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79); Megiddo's VA-IVB-III outer gatehouse (Lamon

wide across all gate types (two-, four-, and six-chamber), and this dimension shows a

remarkable lack of variance among known gatehouses, with a standard deviation of only

0.4m.[1] This means that over 68% of all gate passages were between 3.77m and 4.57 m

wide, and over 95% of all gate passages were between 3.37 and 4.87m wide, easily

making this element the most rigidly defined dimension of all gatehouses. The

consistently broad passage is presumably explained by the desire for two-way traffic of

wheeled vehicles (ca. 1.5-1.75m wide) through the gatehouse.[2] If there was an Israelite

term for the central passage of the gatehouse, it is unknown.[3]

Towers

Towers associated with gatehouses are very well-attested throughout the ancient

Near East. They are depicted on the Iron Age Assyrian reliefs without exception, and

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and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 83); and Kh. al-Mudaybi' (G. L. Mattingly, et al., "Al-Karak Resources Project 1997: Excavations at Khirbat Al-Mudaybi'," *ADAJ* 43 [1999]: 135).

[1] See Appendix A for a chart of gatehouse dimensions.

[2] David A. Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Deborah O'Daniel Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel: Horses and Chariotry in Monarchic Israel (Ninth-Eighth Centuries B.C.E.)* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 102.

[3] Stern suggests that the central passage is the אולם of Ezekiel's temple gate ("The Fortified City Gate," 402), an identification which is questionable because of the location and size of the אולם. The text emphasizes that אולם השער of Ezekiel's eastern gate is on the *side* of the gatehouse toward the temple (Ezek 40:7-9); moreover, its measurements (8 cubits [wide?]; Ezek 40:9) do not seem to conform with the measurements of the interior of the gatehouse from the remainder of Ezekiel's description (vv. 1-16). The אולם, rather, seems to be an open (perhaps colonnaded) portico, such as the אולם which runs along the front of the temple building (1 Kgs 6:3) or Solomon's אולם העמודים (1 Kgs 7:6).

have been uncovered at nearly every city gate that has been excavated.[1] In the Bible,

towers are described as being built "on" or "next to" gates.[2]

Towers in Iron II gates are usually also bastions – that is, they project from the

main curtain wall. Towers flanking the gate entrance therefore produced a small

courtyard directly in front of the gatehouse doors (see Fig 3.1b and 3.1c). These small

courtyards – or rather the flanking bastions/towers that form them – were important

mostly for military reasons. In the event that attackers reached the gate doors and were

attempting to break through, the defenders – stationed atop the city wall and towers –

could fire on the attackers from the inner sides of the towers.[3] Without the ability to give

such flanking fire, the defenders on the city wall would be forced to lean precariously

over the wall to fire on those at the foot of the same wall, and thus expose themselves to

enemy fire or a fatal fall.

In the absence of towers, the same effect was achieved by recessing the entire

gatehouse relative to the city wall, such that the gap between the two ends of the city wall

formed the same small court immediately in front of the gate doors (see Fig. 3.1a).

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[1] One exception is the gatehouse of Beersheba St. III, from the 9th century, the façade of which is flush with the main city wall; see Z. Herzog, A. F. Rainey, and Sh. Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba and the Location of the Sanctuary," *BASOR* 225 (1977): 51, fig. 1. However, if the walled courtyard from the earlier Str. V-IV gate continued to be used in this period, then flanking fire would have been possible from the tops of the courtyard walls.

[2] See, e.g., 2 Chron 26:9: ויבן עזיהו מגדלים בירושלים על שער הפנה ועל שער הגיא "And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem on the Corner Gate and on the Valley Gate."

[3] See Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 67.

Building Materials

Gatehouse walls were built with stone and sun-dried mud bricks. The foundation

courses for the walls (i.e., the plinths) were almost invariably stone, and in some cases

stonework was also used for the lowest courses (or even the entirety) of ground floor's

walls.[1] Mud bricks were then laid in courses on top of the stones.

The stones used in wall and foundation construction vary from rough fieldstones

and boulders to ashlar masonry. A common construction method for stone walls is

boulder-and-chink masonry, where large boulders are set in place and stabilized by

placing small cobbles and stone chips ("chinks") in between them. Almost all gatehouses

in the Iron II southern Levant were built with some ashlar (or quasi-ashlar)[2] masonry.[3] It

is most common at the exterior corners of the building and at the tips of the inner piers

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[1] R. Reich, "Palaces and Residences in the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 212.

[2] There are varying degrees of quality for ashlar masonry, and there is no clear threshold of workmanship which qualifies a stone as an "ashlar." For structural reasons, even the humblest of gatehouses is usually built with larger, roughly worked stones at the building's exterior corners and at the tips of the piers.

[3] Ashlars and quasi-ashlars have been found in the gates of Ashdod 10a (Moshe Dothan, "Tel Ashdod," *IEJ* 22/2-3 [1972]: 166); Ashdod 9-7 (Dothan, "Ashdod – Seven Seasons," 9; Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, pls. III:1-2); Beersheba III-II (Yohanan Aharoni, "The Israelite City," in *Beer-Sheba I: Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba 1969-1971 Seasons* [ed. Y. Aharoni; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1973], 13); Beth Shemesh (Bunimovitz and Lederman, "Iron Age Fortifications," 133); Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 237-53); Dor VII and V (Stern, *Dor*, 114, 134); 'En Haseva (Rudolph Cohen and Yigal Yisrael, *On the Road to Edom: Discoveries from 'En Haseva* [Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1995], 20); Gezer VIII's outer and inner gates (R. A. S. Macalister, *The Excavations of Gezer, vol. I* [London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1912], 222; Yigael Yadin, "Solomon's City Wall and Gate at Gezer," *IEJ* 8 [1958]: 83-5; Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 19; Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 113); Jezreel (David Ussishkin and John Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1992-1993, Second Preliminary Report," *Levant* 26 [1994]: 19); Lachish IV-III (Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511); Megiddo VA-IVB (Loud, *Megiddo II*, 46); Megiddo VA-IVB Gate 1567 (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 13, and figs. 14, 15); Megiddo III (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, fig. 89); Mudaybiʿ (Andrews et al., "Karak Resources Project 1999," 134); Nasbeh's outer gate (Jeffrey R. Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh," *NEAEHL* 3:1100); Qeiyafa IV (West gate) (Yosi Garfinkel and Saar Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa Vol. 1: Excavation Report 2007-2008* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and The Institute of Archaeology of The Hebrew University, 2009], 87); and Kh. el-Qom (Ryan J. P. Defonzo, "Iron II Judah: An Intra-regional Study of Production and Distribution" [Ph.D. diss., The University of Toronto, 2005], 103).

(along the sides of the gate passage), where it is most advantageous structurally (see Fig.

3.3). The use of ashlar masonry in a building's superstructure was also undoubtedly a

show of prestige, and will be discussed further below under Gate Symbolism.

Sun-dried mud bricks are made with clay, sand, and straw, laid in the sun to dry, and then

set in courses with mud mortar. Such bricks were without question the most common

building material throughout the ancient Near East, for both public and domestic

architecture.[1] Because they are relatively easy to produce and have a very high

compression strength (i.e., they resist being crushed),[2] mud bricks have been used for

millennia in arid regions until this day.[3] Their chief weakness is that they are subject to

weathering and erosion, and must be constantly maintained with fresh coats of weather-

resistant plaster.[4] Mud brick is widely attested among excavated gates,[5] and remains of

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[1] David Oates, "Innovations in Mud-Brick: Decorative and Structural Techniques in Ancient Mesopotamia," *World Archaeology* 21/3 (1990): 388; Ronnie Reich, "Building Materials and Architectural Elements in Ancient Israel," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 5; G. R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building Technology Volume I: Historical Background* (Technology and Change in History 4; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 175. For a discussion of their manufacture and a summary of their use in the ANE, see Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 349-60.

[2] Oates, "Innovations in Mud-Brick," 388.

[3] Minke estimates (in 2006) that fully one-third of the world's population lives in earthen homes, and that this figure rises to over one half in developing countries. See Gernot Minke, *Building with Earth: Design and Technology of a Sustainable Architecture* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 11.

[4] Ehud Netzer, "Massive Structures: Processes in Construction and Deterioration," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 21. On the other hand, mud bricks could absorb the blows of a battering ram better than stone (Wright, *Ancient Building*, 175-6).

[5] Mudbrick is found at Ashdod 10a (including, unusually, in the foundation levels) (Dothan, "Tel Ashdod," 166); Ashdod 9-7 (Dothan, "Ashdod – Seven Seasons," 9); Batash III-II (Mazar, *Timnah I*, 123); Beersheba III-II (Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13); Bethsaida V (Rami Arav, "Bethsaida Excavations: Preliminary Report, 1994-1996," in *Bethsaida: A City Shore of the Sea of Galilee* [ed. R. Arav and R. A. Freund; Bethsaida Excavations Project 2; Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 1999], 28-9; Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131; Arav, "Final Report," 33, 67; Dan's outer and inner gates (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 237, 245, 253); Dor VII (Stern, *Dor*, 113); Kheleifeh III-II (Nelson Glueck, "The Second Campaign at Tell el-Kheleifeh (Ezion-Geber: Elath)," *BASOR* 75 [1939]: frontispiece and figs 1-3); Lachish IV-III (Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511); and Megiddo VA-IVB's Gate 1567 (Ussishkin, "Gate 1567," 419).

the walls' plaster coating are also commonly recovered – sometimes still adhering to

remains of the walls.[1]
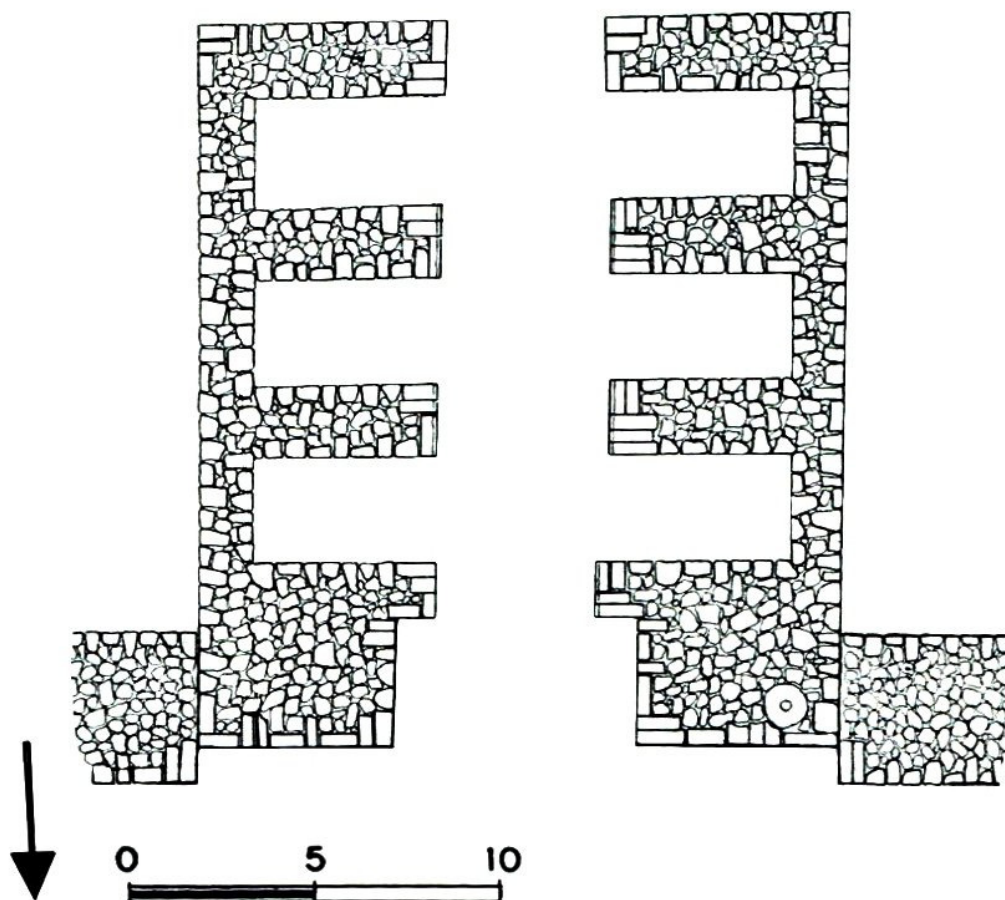
Figure 3.3. The gate of Megiddo St. VA-IVB. Note the rectangular ashlars, laid in headers and stretchers, and strategically placed in corners and along the façade for stability.[2]

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[1] Plaster has been found at the gates of Ashdod 9-7 (Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 24); Bethsaida V (Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131); Dan's outer gate (found intact on the walls and on fallen mudbricks from the superstructure; Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 237); Lachish IV-III (Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511); and Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 258-60).

[2] Adapted from Loud, *Megiddo II*, 48 fig. 105.

The Purpose of the Pier-and-Chamber Floor Plan

The distinctive pier-and-chamber plan of Iron II period gates – as well as this plan's extremely consistent use throughout the ca. 400-year period – raises a few obvious questions. We may begin with the reason that the buildings were constructed in this particular fashion. Were the gates designed for a specific purpose? This question has received surprisingly little attention in the secondary literature: "Despite their universal and long popularity, we have yet to discover a clear statement regarding the military or strictly defensive function of gate chambers by any ancient author. Modern authors also offer little explanation."[1] Below are a few of the suggestions which have been made in the secondary literature.

Three Sets of Doors

The most common assertion about the purpose of Iron II gate piers is that each set of piers functioned as a doorway, which was furnished with a pair of wooden door leaves.[2] A common term for chamber gates, in fact, is "multiple entry" gates or "two/three/four entry" gates, which seems to imply such an interpretation.[3]

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[1] Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 67.

[2] For example, see Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 76; Stern, *Dor*, 113; Glueck, "The Second Campaign," 14; Nelson Glueck, "Ezion-geber," *BA* 28/3 (1965): 84; Loud, *Megiddo II*, 47; Aharoni, "The Stratification," 303; S. Lloyd and H. W. Müller, *Ancient Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 57; Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Trans. Timothy J. Hallett; New York: Seabury, 1978), 121; Matthew, *Manners and Customs*, 102; cf. de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel*, 32.

[3] For example, see Dever, "Social Structure," 419; McNutt, *Reconstructing*, 148; Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin, "Tel Miqne, 1986," *IEJ* 37 (1987): 65. Wright ambiguously calls the "Solomonic Gates" "four portal" gates (*Ancient Building*, 197); likewise, Amihai Mazar says the "Solomonic" gateways "compris[e] six guard chambers and four gateways" (*Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 B.C.E.* [New York: Doubleday, 1990], 385).

The purpose of the multiple doors, according to this theory, would have been defensive: those attacking the city who managed to breach the first set of doors would then have to repeat the laborious process twice before they actually gained access to the city. Here, for example, is how Nelson Glueck describes the four-chamber gate of Tell el-Kheleifeh:

> There were three gates in this entrance way, built at intervals one behind the other, the first two of which opened respectively into separate sets of guard-rooms behind each gate, with one room on each side of the entrance-passage. Thus if the first gate were broken down, the enemy would enter a rectangular area formed by the two rectangular guard-rooms facing each other on opposite sides of the entrance passage; and the same if the second gate were broken down.[1]

Those who were defending the city, by this view, were presumably lying in wait in the chambers, ready to attack those who might burst through the doors and into the gatehouse.[2]

There are problems with this interpretation of the remains. First, it is debatable whether this multiple-gate system would confer much of a military advantage: once attackers had gained access to the interior of the gatehouse and dispatched the few soldiers inside, they could have broken through the remaining doors at their leisure, since the gatehouse itself would have protected them from enemy fire.[3] Moreover, this explanation fails to account for the presence of the chambers. If there were a military

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[1] Glueck, "The Second Campaign," 14.

[2] Cf. G. Ernest Wright, who says that "the typical gate erected between the 10th and 7th centuries consisted of two, three or four pairs of piers jutting out from the side-walls and forming deep recesses of side-chambers from which soldiers could defend the gate from attackers" (*Biblical Archaeology* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957], 185). See also Dale W. Manor, "Gates and Gods: High Places in the Gates," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 2/2 (1999): 253.

[3] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 67-8.

advantage to successive barriers, then a narrow corridor with many successive doors

(with soldiers waiting in between them) would serve the same purpose but would be far

smaller and simpler to build.

More importantly, there are no archaeological data that indicate multiple doors

were ever used in these gatehouses. The evidence we should expect for the additional

doors include stone pivots for the doorposts, or holes in the floor and/or in the ends of the

piers for the doors' locking mechanisms. Additionally, the wooden door leaves

themselves are attested in a few exceptional cases.[1] None of these elements, however,

have been found in the secondary, tertiary, or quaternary sets of piers. To state the point

positively: when pivot stones or locking mechanisms or remains of wooden door leaves

have turned up in excavated gates, they are found at the outer-most entry to the gatehouse

without exception. This is the present state of the evidence after dozens of Iron II city

gates have been excavated, many of which were very well-preserved. With this amount

of data, we are obliged to conclude that Iron II period gatehouses did not use secondary,

tertiary, or quaternary sets of doors.[2]

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[1] The gate doors of Kh. al-Mudayna, for instance, seem to have been preserved almost in their entirety
(on which, see below) (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262). At the inner gate of Lachish
III, fragments of bronze gate door hardware were recovered, some of which still adhered to carbonized
remains of the wooden gate doors (Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 61). Other instances of door
attestation are mere possibilities. At Bethsaida's inner gatehouse, for instance, carbonized wood was found
right next to the threshold and doorstop stone, as well as on the cobblestones of the gate passage (where the
doors may have been battered down), though this cannot be positively identified as the remains of the doors
leaves (Arav, "Final Report," 31-2, 65-6).

[2] Cf. Otto, "שער," 15:373. Some excavators who have noticed this lack of evidence have not been
dissuaded. For example, Lamon and Shipton, discussing Megiddo's two-chamber and four-chamber city
gates (in their Strata III and IIIB, respectively), admit that the gates were outfitted with doors only at the
outermost piers. Despite this, they still held that multiple sets of doors in the gatehouses were possible:
"But, as suggested by Woolley in connection with the south gate at Carchemish, it may have been possible
to close the other doorways with 'doors, not hinged, but made fast with slotted cross-beams'" (Lamon and
Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 76). This explanation is clearly an *ad hoc* solution to explain the lack of evidence.

Emergency Blockage

Similarly, others have proposed that each pair of gate piers might have been stopped up with stones or wood only in an emergency situation, in order to prevent the enemies from entering.[1] "In the land of Israel a few openings like this [between gate piers] were uncovered while they were blocked with built/framed wooden logs."[2] The problems with this theory are similar to those of the multiple-door theory: the military advantage of the system is dubious, and there are no firm data to support it. In fact, only one gate has been advanced as evidence in support of this theory – the north gate of Tell en-Nasbeh.[3]

Before looking at Nasbeh, we should note a logical problem. The fact that only one excavated gate shows signs of emergency blockage is problematic, given the number of gates now excavated. If the construction of the gate was specifically designed for such emergency blockage, then we may reasonable assume that when cities with such gates were besieged, the residents would have blocked up the gate as a matter of course. This

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[1] Suggested by Wright (*Ancient Building*, 196). Cf. also the following quote from the Virtual Kerak Resources Project website: "Ancient builders tended to build massive gate complexes to compensate for these potential [defensive] weaknesses. These complexes provided multiple doors and flanking towers. Between the doors on each side were chambers…Each pair of walls within the complex could be blocked in times of war to form three or four gate doors. Only the outer pair of walls had a door in times of peace, which usually pivoted in a socket and fit against a door jam" (Cited 14 Sep 2010; Online: http://www.vkrp.org/studies/historical/iron-age-military/info/gates.asp).

[2] Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 402. Stern, however, does not provide citations of any such excavations. Compare R. Reich and H. Katzenstein, who say that city gates throughout the Bronze and Iron ages were "usually provided with large doors *or other movable barriers*" (emphasis added); see "Glossary of Architectural Terms," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 313. Compare also de Vaux, who says that the point of the piers was to "strengthen the walls and to establish successive barriers" (*Ancient Israel*, 233-4).

[3] This was originally suggested by one of the excavators, William Badè (C. C. McCown, *Tell en-Naṣbeh I: Archaeological and Historical Results* [Berkeley and New Haven: Pacific Institute of Pacific School of Religion and American Schools of Oriental Research, 1947], 198). Badè's interpretation was originally accepted by Jeffrey Zorn (but see below).

means we should expect evidence of such blockage at almost all gates that were destroyed by a conflagration; that is to say, we should find remains of the blockage that was put in place for the very siege which ruined the gate. There is evidence of violent destruction at many city gates in the region: Ashdod,[1] Beersheba,[2] Bethsaida,[3] Dan,[4] Gezer,[5] Kinneret,[6] Lachish,[7] Megiddo VA-IVB Gate 1567,[8] Kh. al-Mudayna,[9] and perhaps Kh. Qeiyafa.[10] None of these gates show any signs of emergency blockage between the gate piers. Since only one gate has (purportedly) been found in this condition, we should probably conclude that it was an *ad hoc* solution for a single battle, and that it should not be invoked to explain the construction of all similar gates.

Moreover, the example from Stratum III of Tell en-Nasbeh turns out to be illusory under even a cursory inspection. First, the walls that blocked the gate were of fairly high quality, with larger facing stones and rubble interior, and the multiple walls were clearly installed in stages.[11] Neither of these facts fit with an emergency construction scenario.[12] Second, the walls do not even block the gate passage between the second of the two sets

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[1] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 25.

[2] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13.

[3] Arav, "Final Report," 33.

[4] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 245.

[5] Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 117.

[6] Fritz, "Kinneret," 213.

[7] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 61.

[8] Ussishkin, "Gate 1567," 419.

[9] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260-1.

[10] The excavators believe that the settlement probably ended in destruction, based on the large quantities of restorable vessels found on the floors and the presence of valuable stone and metallic artifacts that were recovered (Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 85; Y. Garfinkel, S. Ganor, and M. Hasel, "Khirbat [sic] Qeiyafa: Preliminary Report," *Hadashot Arkheologiot* 124 (2012): n.p. (Cited 16 May 2012; Online: http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.asp?id=1989). On the other hand, there is almost no sign of burning in the gate area.

[11] McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, 198; Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 493.

[12] Zorn's suggestion ("Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 494) that the walls represent the accumulated emergency blockage from two successive attacks of the city (the former blockage having been left in place) is ad hoc and unconvincing, given the other arguments against the blockage theory.

of piers. They do, however, block both of the side chambers, which makes little sense if the goal is to prevent penetration though the gate passage. In other words, the walls do not appear to have been built in order to block the gate (see Fig. 3.4).

Finally, there was no trace of destruction in the gatehouse itself, and the excavators suggest that the rooms in the newly renovated gatehouse continued to function as "enclosed and roofed" buildings after the gatehouse went out of use as such.[1] The simplest explanation for all of these data is that the walls were not built for a siege at all; rather, they represent later domestic building activity from a period when the gatehouse was no longer in use.[2]
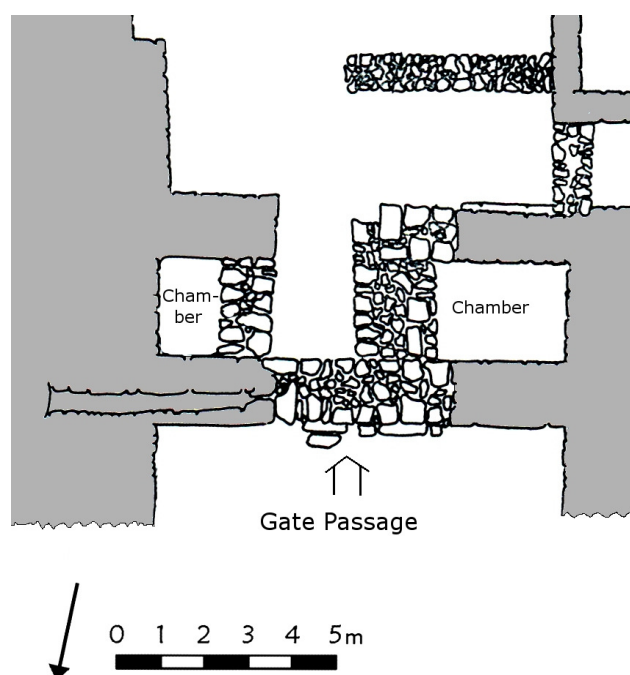
Figure 3.4. Tell en-Nasbeh's outer (N) gate, with supposed emergency blocking walls in place, as recorded by the excavators.[3]

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[1] Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 494, 497.

[2] J. Zorn has also changed his opinion on the issue, saying that the "blocking walls are not blocking for the gate during siege, but are foundations for something built over it once that gate had gone out of use" (private communication, 9/16/10).

[3] Adapted from McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, 203 fig. 49.

<u>Horse Hitching Stalls</u>

D. Cantrell has recently proposed a novel theory as to the nature of chambered

gates in her book *The Horsemen of Israel*. Cantrell suggests that it was quite difficult to

get horses to stand still while being harnessed to a chariot, and that this difficulty

precipitated the design and construction of chambered gates:

> These chambered gates appear to be the Iron Age architects' solution to
> one of the most vexing challenges of chariotry: how to hitch up numerous
> chariot horses simultaneously, quickly and efficiently…. Prior to the
> construction of chambered gates, hitching two horses to a chariot in an
> open space probably required at least six people…In a three-sided
> chamber, horses were more likely to be cooperative due to the confined
> space, thereby cutting the hitching time, and the requisite number of
> personnel, in half.[1]

This expediting of the hitching (and especially unhitching) process also allowed the

horses to be handed over to their grooms so that they could be cooled and rubbed down

right away, which is necessary for the horses' health.[2] Cantrell further suggests that

chambered gates were deliberately spaced throughout Israel, Judah, and Moab in order to

accommodate the practical limits of how far horses could pull a chariot before they

needed to be "changed out." This strategic gate placement produced a series of connected

chariot stations that allowed rapid transit from "Beersheva to Dan, and all points in

between, in less than a day's journey."[3]

Cantrell cites a number of points in support of her thesis. She emphasizes the

gatehouses' standardized design and their strategic placement, and also points out the fact

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[1] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 78-80.
[2] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 80.
[3] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 78.

that the dimensions of most gate chambers will accommodate two horses and a chariot.[1]
"It cannot be a coincidence that the uniform dimensions of the chambers at every location
perfectly match the measurements of two chariot horses and a chariot, with ample room
for the grooms to work."[2] She notes that the chambered gate design arose in the 10th-9th
centuries, when chariot warfare was the norm, and ceased to be built "not coincidentally"
in the seventh century, when cavalry replaced chariot warfare.[3] She also points to the
water basins found in some gates (for washing horses or cleaning their harnesses), and to
the presence of benches within chambers, which would have helped the grooms to reach
over the horses to secure the chariot harness.[4] Cantrell also says that "further evidence of
an equine presence at Bethsaida is suggested by the one ton of carbonized barley found in
chamber three and other indications of grain storage at the gate."[5] Finally, Cantrell points
to Isa 22:7, which reads ויהי מבחר עמקיך מלאו רכב והפרשים שת שתו השערה "Your choicest
valleys were full of chariots; they placed horses at the gate." Cantrell interprets this to
mean that "fresh horses were kept waiting at the gate to exchange with incoming ones."[6]

Cantrell's reconstruction, however, is fraught with difficulties, the first and most
obvious of which is that there is no clear positive evidence for the equine usage of
gatehouses. There are no tethering holes for tying up horses, very few if any cobbled
chamber floors,[7] and no horse paraphernalia in general in the archaeological record. This

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[1] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 82-3 and Fig. 4.2.
[2] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 85.
[3] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 77-8.
[4] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 82-3.
[5] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 82 n72.
[6] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 85.
[7] Cantrell says that the cobblestone paving in the flanking isles of tripartite buildings was beneficial for
the horses' hooves, but that lime plaster – the paving most often found inside gate chambers – would be

should be contrasted to the tripartite buildings of the Iron II period, which are considered

horse stables by some researchers based in part on finds which are interpreted as equine-

related.[1] The only potentially equine artifacts found on the ground floor of gatehouses are

stone basins, which have been unearthed in only three chambered gatehouses of the 42 in

the region.[2] Aside from the basins' scarcity, the many reasons that one might wish to

keep a supply of water on hand diminish the probability that these artifacts were indeed

used for horses. Likewise, simpler explanations account for much of the other data that

Cantrell cites. For instance, chamber benches and the barley from Bethsaida (we scarcely

need to point out) also have very plausible non-equine explanations.[3]

Cantrell is right to note that nearly all Iron II gatehouses were built with similar

plans, and is also correct that a single *raison d'être* is the most likely explanation for this

fact. However, the dimensions of gatehouses prove to be a liability to the horse-hitching

theory upon examination. We may reasonably presume that chariots and horses were

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"completely inappropriate" for horses, becoming slippery and soggy from urine and "creating an environment for hoof disease" (*The Horsemen of Israel*, 100-103).

[1] Cantrell, for example, discusses many elements of the tripartite buildings and nearby structures at Megiddo as being specifically designed for horses (*The Horsemen of Israel*, 87-113); compare Herzog's alternative interpretations of the mangers and tethering holes in "Administrative Structures in the Iron Age," 227.

[2] Two basins were found in the eastern chambers of Dor St. VII (Stern, *Dor*, 114); another was found in the six-chamber gate of Gezer (Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 116). A final basin, found at Mudayna, had various cut marks and incised graffiti, which led the excavators to suggest that it had an industrial use (P. M. Michèle Daviau, "Moab's Northern Border," *BA* 60/3 [1997]: 224). Cantrell mentions only the basin at Gezer and a basin from Bethsaida which was not found in the gatehouse (*The Horsemen of Israel*, 82-3).

[3] Aside from the implausibility that barley would be stored where horses urinate and defecate, I find it hard to imagine that Israelites would grow, reap, thresh, and winnow barley for their horses, considering the fact that most Israelites lived at a subsistence level and that horses can eat grass and other naturally-growing vegetation which humans cannot. (Compare Isa 30:24, where feeding oxen and donkeys threshed grain is described in the context of a utopic future that also involves such fantasies as flowing brooks of water on every hillside and the moon shining as brightly as the sun [vv. 25-6]). Cantrell's point about benches carries the additional difficulty that benches are not found in all – or even in most – gate chambers. Her explanation for this fact is as follows: "Why this bench feature was not commonly repeated at other locations [besides Gezer] is not known; it may be that the stalls with benches running around them were used for hitching the taller horses" (*The Horsemen of Israel*, 83).

fairly consistent in their size;[1] therefore, if gate chambers were specifically produced to hold pairs of horses with chariots, we should expect a degree of regularity in gate chamber dimensions. Instead, we find wildly varying chamber depths.[2] Kh. en-Nahas, for instance, has chambers ca. 2.6m wide and 3.2m long,[3] whereas Bethsaida's gatehouse chambers are ca. 3-3.6m in width and ca. 9.5-10.8m in length.[4] Cantrell points out this variance in chamber size, but does not seem to recognize that it negates her argument from the uniformity of gatehouse design; she explains the anomaly with the *ad hoc* suggestion that deep chambers "may have served dual functions as hitching stations and overnight corrals."[5] Cantrell's reading of Isa 22:7, meanwhile, misses the context of the verse. The passage in question is about Judah being attacked by her enemies (named Elam and Qir, v. 6); the horses at the gates are those of the enemy who is besieging the town, and do not illustrate the general practice of keeping fresh horses ready near the gate.

A few further difficulties make Cantrell's theory implausible. First, if the purpose of the gatehouse building were to keep horses in place in order to hitch them to a chariot, there would be no need for the upper story, the very thick walls (over 2m on average), or the monumental construction of the building (including the frequent use of ashlar masonry). A simpler and more economically expedient structure would suffice for this purpose, and a more convenient location – i.e., a place which is not the bottleneck of all

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[1] See Cantrell's discussion of typical Egyptian, Cypriot, Assyrian, and Canaanite chariots, whose axles vary maximally from 1.53-2.36m (*The Horsemen of Israel*, 83).

[2] The chamber widths are, in fact, rather consistent, which will be discussed below.

[3] Levy, "Kh. en-Nahas 2002," 9-10.

[4] As measured from the plan published in Arav, "Final Report," 7, fig. 1.2.

[5] Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel*, 82.

pedestrian passage into and out of the city – would likely have been found for it. Another difficulty is the fact that the entrances to many gate chambers are deliberately narrowed by blocking walls, as mentioned above. Since this construction is always found in the original build phases, it means that horses and chariots were never meant to enter the chambers. The gate doors themselves, when open, would have also blocked roughly two-thirds of the entrance into the first pair of chambers. Cantrell's point about the rise and fall of the chambered gatehouse coinciding with chariot warfare in the ANE is incorrect; chambered gates are attested in the third millennium in Mesopotamia, and survive in the southern Levant well into the Persian and Hellenistic periods.[1] Finally, we note that there are many diverse names given to specific gates in the Hebrew Bible (most of which refer to gates in Jerusalem): the Gate Behind the Guards, the Sur Gate (2 Kgs 11:6), the Gate of the Runners (2 Kgs 11:19), Joshua's Gate (2 Kgs 23:8), the Fish Gate (Neh 3:3), the Valley Gate (Neh 2:13), the Spring Gate (Neh 2:14), the Dung Gate (Neh 3:14), the Water Gate (Neh 3:26), etc. Among these are a few references to a "Horse Gate" (Jer 31:40; 2 Chr 23:15; Neh 3:28). It is implausible that this gate would be singled out for its association with horses (the precise association is unclear) if all such gates were in fact built and used specifically for horses.

To be sure, there is much to be said for the theory that horses and chariotry were an important aspect of monarchical Israel. However, the suggestion that chambered gates were used to harness chariot horses simply does not conform to the available data.

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[1] For early Mesopotamian (and other) parallels, see below, Chapter 7. Perisan and Hellenistic period chamber gates are found at the temple compound at Mt. Gerizim. See Yitzhak Magen, "The Temple of Yahweh on Mount Gerizim and in Jerusalem," *Eretz Israel* 29 (Ephraim Stern Volume; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and The Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), 281 fig. 6a.

Load-Bearing Walls

      In the ancient Levant, the overwhelming majority of buildings were constructed with trabeated roofing; that is, horizontal roof beams upheld by vertical posts or walls. This is true from the Neolithic through the pre-modern period.[1] Thus, the interpretation of any particular building in this time and region should start with the assumption that, if it was roofed, it was roofed by horizontal timber beams.[2] (The evidence to support this point will be adduced below under the heading Ceilings.)

      There are, however, practical limits to the distances that may be spanned by such beams. When the width of a room to be spanned increases, the stresses on a wooden ceiling beam[3] do not increase linearly, they increase exponentially.[4] To illustrate, let us say that the stress on a beam which spans a 2m wide room is 20 units. Tripling the span to 6m means that the stress would be nine times as great, or 180 units.[5] Thus spanning a very wide gap between walls would call for extraordinarily sturdy (i.e., thick) beams, and was likely avoided for this reason.

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[1] Netzer, "Massive Structures," 17; Wright, *Ancient Building*, 336, 364; Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 70.

[2] I am using the term "beam" in the architectural sense of a horizontal load-bearing member; I do not mean to imply that the wooden logs were cut to produce a rectangular or square cross section. The logs used in the Iron II southern Levant for monumental construction were probably used in their naturally round and tapered shape. Modern experimentation has shown that for small diameter beams, the use of naturally shaped (i.e., round and tapered) wood is much stronger than any cut beams which could be produced from the same wood, due to the surface continuity of wood fibers in the natural form (see R. Wolfe and J. Murphy, "Strength of Small-Diameter Round and Tapered Bending Members," *Forest Products Journal* 55/3 [2005]: 50-55).

[3] To be more specific: as a horizontal ceiling beam is stressed, it will bow down in the middle of the room, and (in cross-section) such a beam will be compressed at the top and under tension at the bottom.

[4] More specifically, they increase in a squared proportion (Netzer, "Massive Structures," 24-5).

[5] Netzer, "Massive Structures," 25.

Coupled with this limitation is a second: the availability of construction timber in the southern Levant.[1] Based on the limited data available, most of the structures in the region – especially domestic housing, but larger monumental structures as well, it seems[2] – employed wood from the local flora.[3] When local woods would not suffice or were unavailable, importing wood was possible, but not always economically feasible. There is extensive reference in the Hebrew Bible[4] and other ancient Near Eastern documents[5] to the import of and construction with ארזים (cedars) and ברושים (traditionally cypress, but probably a type of juniper),[6] both from Lebanon. These famed trees are usually mentioned in connection with monumental building projects – especially, in the Hebrew Bible, those of David and Solomon – and surely were the largest and most desirable construction timber available in the region.[7] However, even if such imported beams were

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[1] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 334.

[2] Homsky and Moshkovitz, e.g., have analyzed the wood species recovered in the excavations of the Israelite strata at Tel Beer-Sheba. They show that the overwhelming majority of wood samples in Strata III-II (9th-8th centuries) are of local species – especially tamarisk, acacia, and white broom. They also note that in the earlier gatehouse (St. V; 10th century) "the use of beams made of local woods from around Beer-sheba is consipicuous, while there is a complete absence of any traces of imported woods" (M. Homsky and Sh. Moshkovitz, "The Distribution of Different Wood Species of the Iron Age II at Tel Beer-sheba," *TA* 3/1 [1976]: 46). The roofing beams of the gatehouse at Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad were found to be olive wood, carob, and mulberry (Daviau, "Moab's Northern Border," 224).

[3] For example, see Homsky and Moshkovitz, "The Distribution," 42-8.

[4] See esp. 1 Kgs 5:20-4; 6:9-18; 7:2-12; 9:11.

[5] Ancient Near Eastern texts which mention building timber imported from Syro-Phoenicia are too numerous to list, but a few examples may be given: In the Ugaritic Ba'al Epic (LB period; ca. 13th century) Ba'al has a palace built: "[Hurriedly] they build his house,[hurriedly] they raise his palace. (Some workers) [go] to Lebanon and its trees, to Siryon (and) its choicest cedars" (*COS* 1.86.vi.16-17). In the Report of Wenamun, from the late 20th Egyptian dynasty (early 11th century BCE), the protagonist Wenamun is sent to the Phoenician city of Byblos to fetch timber (*COS* 1.41). In an Assyrian stele of Adad-nirari III (ca. 800 BCE), the king boasts "I climbed Mt. Lebanon; (and) I cut down timbers: 100 mature cedars, material needed for my palace and temples" (*COS* 2.114F). In the Sippar Cylinder of Nabonidus (mid 6th century BCE), Nabonidus records his rebuilding of the Ehulhul temple of Sin, saying "Beams of lofty cedar trees, a product of Lebanon, I set up above it [i.e., the temple, for roofing]" (*COS* 2.123A).

[6] On the identification of ברושים, see Reich, "Building Materials," 7-8 and references there.

[7] Note the high status they are accorded in the Hebrew Bible. Cedars are renowned for their strength and size (Pss 29:5; 92:12; Amos 2:9); they are the described as the noblest and proudest of trees (2 Kgs 19:23;

available, the size of Iron II gatehouses – which average 18.1m wide and 14.1m deep[1] –

would certainly have precluded the use of a single wooden beam to span the building

without interior supports.[2] Moreover, there would have been strong incentives to avoid

using the largest available beams: shorter beams combined with interior bearing walls

would have been less expensive, more convenient for transport and installation, and

ultimately would have produced a sturdier building.[3]

This point alone succeeds admirably in explaining the purpose of a gatehouse's

piers: their purpose was to shorten the distance that the heavy roofing beams needed to

span, allowing the use of shorter, more affordable, and more convenient beams (see Fig.

3.5).[4]

Isa 2:12-3; Ezek17; 31; Zech 11:2; Sol 5:15); and they are associated with royalty (Jer 22:15), wealth (1 Kgs 10:27), and posh living (2 Sam 7:2; Isa 9:9).

[1] For a chart of the dimensions of excavated gatehouses, see Appendix A.

[2] Wright states that beams up to 8m long at the maximum would have been available in wooded areas in the region (*Ancient Building*, 334). The load-bearing capacity of a beam this long, however, would be quite limited.

[3] On the transport of Lebanese timber in antiquity, see G. R. H. Wright, *Ancient Building Technology Volume II: Materials* (2 vols.; Technology and Change in History 7/1-2; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1:18-20.

[4] Ussishkin hints toward such an architectural solution: "The purpose and function of the gate chambers – in this [Lachish] as well as other gate of the same general type – is not clear. They may have served as guardrooms, but primarily they were the result of the builder's intention to build a large structure and long gate passage" (David Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* [Publications of the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University 6; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1982], 33). Wright notes that the use of internal supports was the most common method of accommodating timber deficiencies in producing wood-roofed building (*Ancient Construction I*, 460).
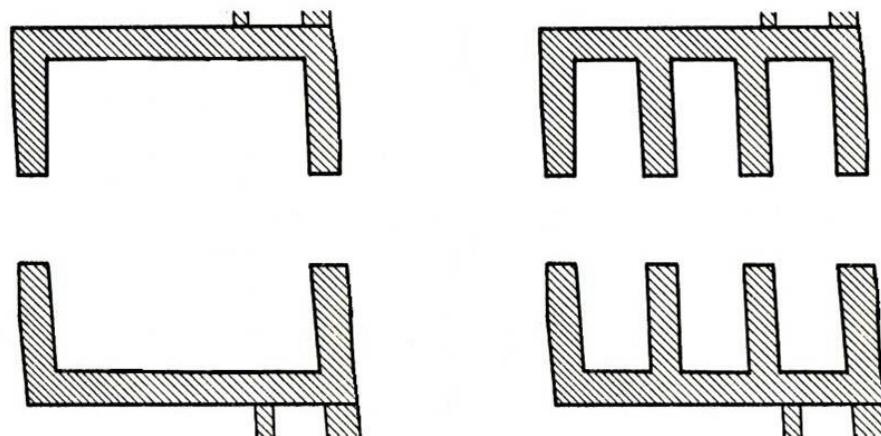
Figure 3.5. Left: The architectural goal: a large gatehouse building with a central passage. Right: The piers as a practical solution for shortening the length of required roofing beams.[1]

The architectural purpose of the piers advanced here is supported by comparison with contemporaneous Israelite and Judean architecture. I will cite here only two very obvious and prominent examples. Domestic architecture in the region is characterized by the so-called "Israelite four-room (or three-room) house." These units are rectangular buildings divided into three or four long, narrow rooms by walls or rows of pillars (see Fig. 3.6). Meanwhile, one of the most prominent examples of monumental architecture in the region is the "tripartite building," which is a large rectangular building divided by pillars or walls into three long halls (see Fig. 3.7).

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[1] Drawings are adapted from Herzog, *The City Gate*, pl. 81.
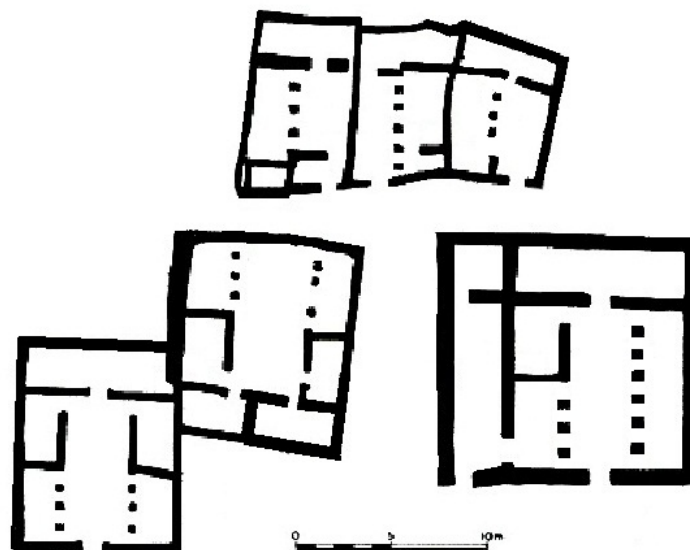
Figure 3.6. Typical "Israelite" three-, four-, and five-room houses.[1]
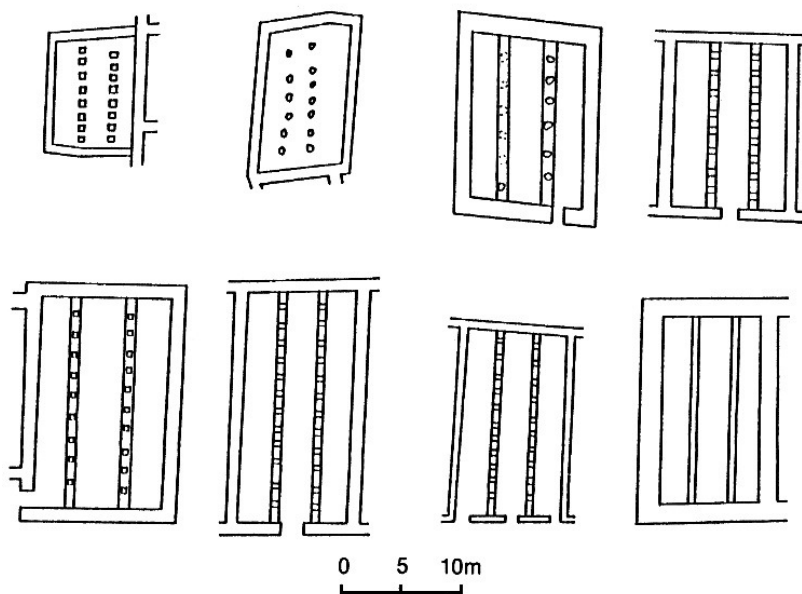
Figure 3.7. Tripartite buildings of the Iron Age.[2]

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[1] Adapted from John S. Holladay, Jr., "House, Israelite," *ABD* 3:311.

[2] Adapted from Larry G. Herr, "Tripartite Pillared Buildings and the Market Place in Iron Age Palestine," *BASOR* 272 (1988): 49 fig. 1.

The same principle can be seen in both types of buildings: since it was economically expedient to use shorter roofing beams, the builders divided the structures into narrow halls, such that beams could be laid over the short dimension of the rooms. Compare E. Netzer, discussing whether the central aisle of the four-room house was roofed or not: "The main consideration, which could have resulted in such oblong central spaces with a fixed width (especially in houses with such a well-defined plan) was the wish to cover these spaces with flat ceilings, based on the wooden beams used in the roofing technique common in the Land of Israel in the Iron Age."[1]

When it is understood that each pair of a gatehouse's piers would have been spanned by a lintel or an arch (to be discussed below), the parallel between the gatehouse to the above-mentioned structures becomes even more apparent (see Fig. 3.8). The most prominent difference between the gatehouse and these two other structures is the thick interior walls ("piers") of the gatehouse, compared with the pillars and thin interior walls of the other structures. The difference is explained by the enormous burden of weight from the gatehouse's upper story (see below), which was supported by the walls of the ground floor. Pillars (or thin walls) would not have been sufficiently stable under such a burden.

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[1] Ehud Netzer, "Domestic Architecture in the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 196.
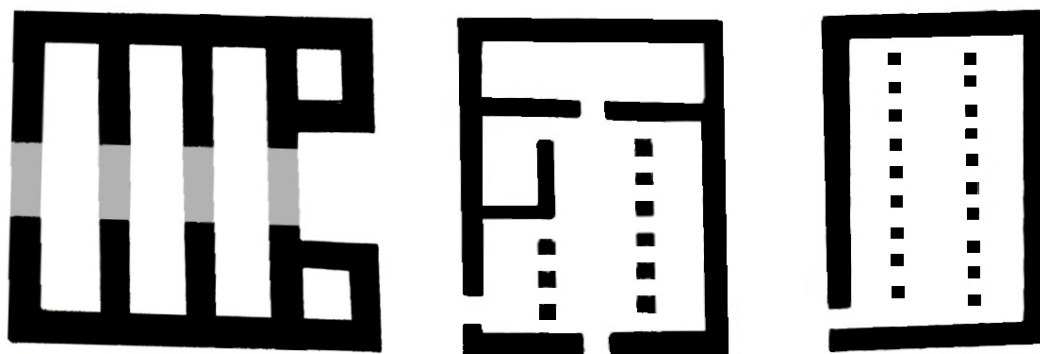
Figure 3.8. Comparison of an Iron II gatehouse, four-room house, and tripartite building. (Not to scale). The gray shading in the gate represents arches or lintels which would have joined each pair of piers. Note that all of the buildings are divided into long, narrow corridors.

This rather obvious principle – that roofing considerations will determine the shape of the floor plan – is not confined to the Iron Age. Examples of similarly narrow (or small) rooms are found in the floor plans of countless structures in the ancient southern Levant during the millennia in which trabeated structures predominated.[1] Discussions of ancient Near Eastern architecture, in fact, commonly categorize rooms into two groups: broad rooms (*Breitraum*) and long rooms (*Langraum*),[2] which are distinguished based on the rather superficial criterion of door placement. A door at the end of the building makes it a long room; a door on the side makes it a broad room. The

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[1] We may also describe roofed rooms negatively: what are called courtyards in excavated buildings are so identified largely because their size is so great that it is presumed impossible to have roofed them without any support pillars (Wright, *Ancient Building*, 133).

[2] For example, see Wright, *Ancient Building*, 129-130; *Ancient Building Technology II*, figs. 25-6; Gwendolyn Leick, *A Dictionary of Ancient Near Eastern Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1988); Keel, *Symbolism*, 151-3 and figs. 203-4.

more salient feature of these designs, however, is that they are both narrow in order to

accommodate short roofing beams.[1]

An additional support for the argument advance here comes from the measured

dimensions of excavated gates' chambers, as shown below (see Figs. 3.9, 3.10).

	Average Chamber Width (standard deviation)	Average Chamber Depth (standard deviation)
Two-chamber Gates (n=7)	3.3 (0.9)	5.7 (3.3)
Four-chamber Gates (n=20)	2.9 (0.6)	5.1 (2.1)
Six-chamber Gates (n=10)	2.8 (0.5)	5.1 (0.9)
All Gates (n=37)	3.0 (0.6)	5.2 (2.1)

Figure 3.9. Chart of chamber dimensions from all (measurable) gates in the present corpus; all measurements are given in meters. See Appendix A for further metrological data.

As these data show, the depth of the chambers is, on average, over 2 m more than the

width of the chambers. More to the point, however, is the variance among the sampled

gates: the standard deviation of the average chamber depth (2.1m) is over three times as

great as that of the chamber width (0.6m), resulting in the very broad distribution of

chamber depths illustrated in Fig. 3.10. The chamber widths, on the other hand, cluster

rather closely around 3m for gates of all sizes and configurations (two-, four-, and six-

chamber). It thus appears that the width of gate chambers is constrained for reasons that

do not apply to chamber depth. This would be curious – in fact, inexplicable – if the

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[1] Cf. Netzer, who says that the term "long-spaced houses" is "more suitable than three- or four-room houses" ("Domestic Architecture," 197).

gatehouses piers were built for multiple doors or emergency barriers, as discussed above. The best explanation for the confined dimensions of the chamber width, in my view, is the requirement of finding wooden beams sturdy enough to roof such a monumental structure. The builders had to negotiate a compromise between rooms wide enough to be functional, and the structural and logistical necessity of procuring wooden roofing beams, which tended to produce chambers about three meters wide.[1]
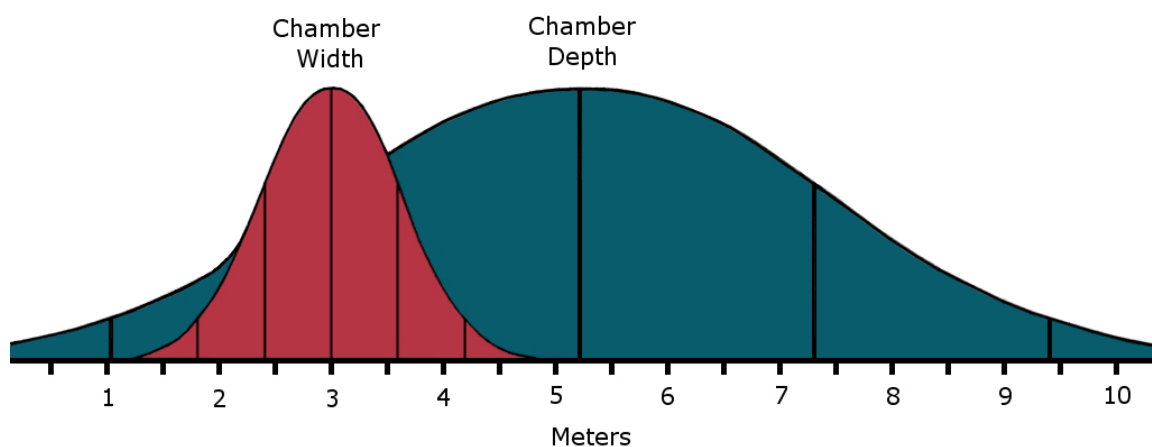
Figure 3.10. Graph showing the distributions of chamber dimensions for all gates in the corpus; vertical lines within the curves show mean and standard deviations.

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[1] Why the *specific* dimensions of any given gate were used is unknowable. Milson's reconstruction of the design process of the architects who planned the gates of Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer is based on the misplaced assumption that the designers used precise geometric calculations (including complicated ratios, equilateral triangles, and 3-4-5 triangles) to plan these buildings (David Melson, "The Design of the Royal Gates at Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer," *ZDPV* 102 [1986]: 87-92). There is no evidence in favor of this notion, and many irregularities and assymetries in the actual construction belie the imposition of such precise plans on these buildings.

Gate "Piers"?

As mentioned above, each pier was in all likelihood joined to its sister pier by a lintel or arch which spanned the gate passage. That is to say, what we have been calling pairs of symmetric piers were probably two halves of one continuous wall, which was built up above the arched or lintel-topped entryway until it reached the height of the ceiling.[1] This reconstruction is the most logical in terms of the building's structural integrity. If the piers were not joined together – that is, if the opening between each set of piers extended fully to the ceiling of the gatehouse's interior – then the lateral stability of each pier would be seriously compromised. It would be, in this case, stabilized only by the roof which rested upon it. If, on the other hand, each pair of piers in fact formed a contiguous wall, both halves of the gatehouse would be integrated into a single, stable unit.

Admittedly, because of the lack of preserved superstructures, there are few data to support this reconstruction. Our best evidence comes from the MB gate at Tel Dan, which is formally very different from a typical MB gate (see below), and almost identical to a four-chamber gate of the Iron II period (see Fig. 3.11). Incredibly (and fortunately, for our purposes), the MB gate at Dan was deliberately de-commissioned, filled with earth, and buried in a massive rampart, thus preserving the mud brick construction well above the first floor.[2] In this gate, the three transverse walls were each pierced through the center by the gate passage, and a massive mudbrick arch spanning the gate passage surmounted each of these openings (see Fig. 3.12). The mubrick walls of the gatehouse

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[1] Put differently, the top of each entryway was probably not as tall as the ceiling.
[2] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 84.
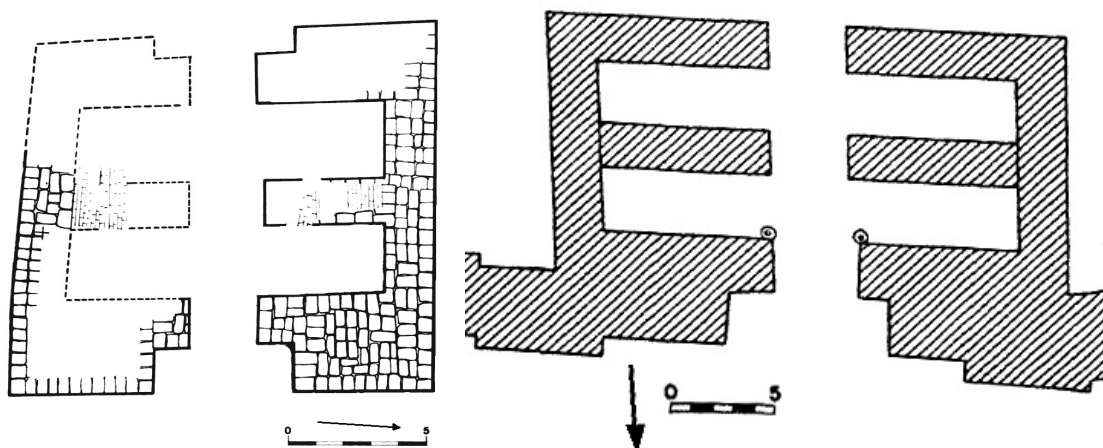
Figure 3.11. Dan's atypical MB gate (left),[1] and a typical four-chamber gate of the Iron II period; here, from Megiddo St. IVA.[2]

were preserved ca. 3m taller than the tops of the inner and outer entranceways (ca. 2m above the tops of the arches themselves), showing that each pair of "piers" was actually a single wall with a doorway through the center.[3] (No wooden roofing beams, incidentally, were recovered from this gatehouse; presumably they were removed for reuse before the gate was filled.)

Based on this understanding, the term "piers" as it has been applied to Iron II gates is rather misleading. It is a convenient (but biased) reference to only the visible, preserved gatehouse foundations and lower courses – where the transverse walls are

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[1] Adapted from Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 78 fig. 46.

[2] Adapted from Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 75 fig. 86.

[3] The central transverse wall, on the other hand, was preserved only to the top of the central arch (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 84-5). If this represents the full original height of the central wall (and is not an accident of preservation), then the this would mean that the two halves of the gate's central transverse wall (i.e., the middle set of piers) were connected to one another only by the mudbrick arch that spanned the entryway. Nonetheless, this arch is quite substantial: like the wall it pierced, it was 1.7m thick, and its three courses of radially-laid bricks made the top of arch itself ca. 1 m. tall (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 84 and figs. 46, 49, 53, 54). Thus, even if we assume the middle wall is preserved to its full height, the thick arch would have played an important structural role in binding the two halves of the wall together.

severed by the gate passage – and does not take into account how a reconstructed

gatehouse interior would actually appear.

Figure 3.12. The mudbrick arch (traced in the photo) on the façade of Tel Dan's MB gate, which spans the outermost set of piers.[1] (Note that the original entrance has been only partially cleared.)

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[1] Photo courtesy of Todd Bolen.

CHAPTER FOUR
The Gatehouse Entrance

Doors

The outermost entryway of gatehouses was sealed with a pair of doors leaves[1] made

of wooden planks that were glued or nailed together.[2] This double-door construction

seems to have been the norm for many cultures and many centuries in the ancient Near

East. For example, compare the boasts of the Assyrian king Tiglath Pilesar III (late 8th c.),

about his construction of a palace in Calah: "To exhibit the splendor of […] I fashioned

stones, expertly cut, and (thus) made the gate befitting (a royal palace). Double doors of

cedar and pine, which bestow (great) pleasure on those who enter them (and) whose

fragrance wafts into the heart, I overlaid with strips of a shining silver alloy and [gold

alloy] and set them up in the gateways."[3]

Since the average width of a gatehouse passage was ca. 4.2m, and pivot stones

(when recovered *in situ*) are located at both sides of the passage, we can conclude that

two door leaves were used to close the gate, with each door leaf being just over 2m

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[1] Double doors are depicted in the Assyrian reliefs (discussed below), and are evinced by the socket
stones occasionally found *in situ* at each side of gate entrances. The use of double doors is also implied by
the sheer width of the doorways (ca. 4m on average), as well as the common use of the plural דלתות or dual
דלתים in the Hebrew Bible when referring to a single gate (Deut 3:5; Judg 16:3; 1 Sam 3:15; 21:14; 23:7; 2
Kgs 18:16; Neh 3:3).
[2] Domestic doors and doors of monumental structures alike were built this way. The description of
Solomon's temple, for example, includes doors made of עצי שמן ("oil wood boards"; 1 Kgs 6:31-2) and עצי
ברושים ("juniper boards"; 1 Kgs 6:34). Monolithic stone doors are known from much later eras (Roman
through the medieval periods) in E. Syria, where timber is exceedingly scarce (Wright, *Ancient Building*,
447); cf. the early traveler's account in John L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: J.
Murray, 1822), pp. 58-9, 74, 90, etc. Such doors are unattested in the Iron Age; the reference in Isa 54:12
("I will make your gates of beryl stones") cannot be taken literally, as the following verses make clear.
[3] Calah Summary No. 7 reverse, lines 27'-28', ca. 729 BCE. Translation from Hayim Tadmor, *The
Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria: Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translation and
Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), 173-4.

wide.[1] Other than this inference, there are only a very few data concerning door leaf

dimensions. Our best evidence in the southern Levant comes from Kh. al-Mudayna ath-

Thamad in Jordan. When Mudayna's gate was destroyed, both of the gate doors fell back

onto the surface of the gatehouse's passage, and were preserved as layers of charcoal ash

beginning just inside the threshold. "In this charcoal were the remains of the planks and

beams used to make the door" – including many laths 2-5cm wide, and two vertical

beams (ca. 10-12cm thick, and up to 1.1m long) which were found at right angles to the

laths.[2] The western door, based on these remains, measured 0.15m thick, 2.0 m wide, and

ca. 2.5-3m tall.[3] Moreover, among the paving stones of the gate passage, two stones

carved with rectangular holes in their upper surfaces were located ca. 2m behind the

threshold and along the side walls of the gate passage; their function thus seems to have

been to receive a short peg which would stop the doors in the open position.[4] Since these

holes are located ca. 30cm from the face of the side wall, the excavators estimate the door

thickness as ca. 20-25cm.[5] A door pivot found at (earlier) LB Jaffa (St. IV) gives a

measurement comparable to this for a door leaf's thickness. The massive bronze foot has

a bracket by means of which it was fastened to the wooden door, and the gap to receive

the door leaf is ca. 20cm wide, (see Fig. 4.10, below).[6]

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[1] Exceptionally, the main gatehouse at Lachish measured 5.2m wide at the entrance (Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 59).

[2] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262-5.

[3] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262.

[4] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 265.

[5] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 265. Note that the 15cm thick charcoal deposit may indicate the true door thickness, or may be due to shrinkage when the wood was burned.

[6] Jacob Kaplan, "Jaffa," *IEJ* 6 (1956): 260; "The Archaeology and History of Tel-Aviv—Jaffa," *BA* 35 (1972): 81.

The height of a gate's door was likely more variable from gate to gate. Mudayna's gate, as mentioned, was probably between 2.5 and 3 m tall. For comparison, the MB gate at Tel Dan is ca. 3.1m high at its tallest point.[1] Mesopotamian gates, in contrast, seem to be about the same width but far taller. The Balawat gates, for instance, were 1.8m wide (for each door), and are reconstructed to an estimated 6.1m tall (see Fig. 4.1).[2]

Figure 4.1. A reconstruction of the Balawat Gates (9th century) in the British Museum.[3]

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[1] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 79.

[2] L. W. King, *Bronze Reliefs from the Gates of Shalmaneser King of Assyria B.C. 860-825* (London: British Museum, 1915), 10.

[3] Photo located at http://picasaweb.google.com/lh/photo/5qB1OY6QvaffRcj_7c7cLg. Cited 2 Feb 2011; used by permission.

These dimensions correspond fairly closely to a Neo-Assyrian text which describes the dimensions of a finished gate door as 6.5m tall and 2m wide.[1]

Mesopotamian door leaves were often covered with metal bands, fastened to the wooden planks by nails. We are fortunate to have good examples of such bronze bands, the most famous of which come from a palace in Imgur-Enlil (known today as Balawat) built by Shalmaneser III (mid 9th century).[2] The thirteen bands from the Balawat Gates match Neo-Assyrian literary descriptions of similar bands installed on other gates.[3]

The metal bands served multiple purposes. First, they structurally reinforced the doors.[4] The bands were held in place on the wooden doors with hundreds of nails; we may compare the Chronicler's note that "much iron" was gathered for making מסמרות "nails" for the gate doors of the Temple (1 Chron 22:3). In addition to reinforcing the face of each door leaf, the end of each bronze band from the Balawat gates – i.e., at the center of the double-doors – "was covered by a sheathing of thicker bronze, which bound the edge of each door from top to bottom."[5]

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[1] Simo Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West* (SAA 1; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1987), 203:1, p. 157.

[2] Seven of the bands were from one leaf of the double-door, and six from the other (King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 12). From other fragments, we can surmise that each door held at least 8 bands (King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 12). Fragments of similar bands from the reign of Shalmaneser III's father, Assurnasirpal, have also been found (King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 9-10, and plates LXXVIII-LXXX).

[3] Sennacherib, for instance, describes the engraved bronze gate bands he installed in his Akitu Temple; see A. K. Thomason, "From Sennacherib's Bronzes to Taharqa's Feet: Conceptions of the Material World at Nineveh," *Iraq* 66 (2004): 155-6. A text of Ashurnasirpal II (9th century BCE) reads as follows: "I mounted the cedarwood doors in copper sheathings and hung (them) in its (the palace's) doorways" (*CAD* B, 16b). For further references to Mesopotamian gate doors with various metal platings and decorations see *CAD* D, 54-5.

[4] Pace King, who says that the bands of the Balawat gates served no structural purpose, since they were "only" ca. 1/16 of an inch thick (*Bronze Reliefs*, 10). On the contrary, the cumulative binding effect of the bands – which numbered eight per door and were held in place by hundreds of nails – would have been significant.

[5] King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 10.

The bands would also act as a fire retardant, in the event an enemy attacker tried to burn the wooden door leaves.[1] Attempting to burn the gate doors down was in fact a well-known siege tactic; for example, compare the following Neo-Assyrian omen text: *nakru ana dalat KÁ.GAL.MU išāta inaddīma* "the enemy will set fire to the door of my city gate and (enter the town)" (see also Fig. 4.2).[2] Admittedly, this effect would be mitigated if the bands were spaced apart, leaving the wood partially exposed.[3]

Figure 4.2. Two Assyrian soldiers with flaming torches take cover under their shields while attempting to ignite the wooden door of a besieged town. From the reign of Sargon II; Khorsabad, late 8th century.[4]

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[1] Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 401.

[2] *CAD* A/1, 82-6; Pauline Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon, King of Assyria: Monumental Wall Reliefs at Dur-Sharrukin, From Original Drawings Made at the Time of Their Discovery in 1843-1844 by Botta and Flandin* (trans. Annie Caubet; Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1986), pl. 125.

[3] It is possible that some gates were entirely copper plated. The bands of the Balawat gates were evidently spaced along the height of the doors, leaving ca. 19 inches of exposed wood for every 11 inches of copper plating (King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 9-12).

[4] Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Study* (trans. M. Pearlman; 2 vols.; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 2:421.

Finally, the metal bands were decorative. The Balawat gate bands – each of which is ca. 2.4m long and 28cm tall – are divided by plain lines into two registers, and inscribed with dozens of scenes in relief.[1] The bands are also adorned with rows of small rosettes in between two parallel horizontal lines; three such rows are above, below, and between the registers, and are designed to decorate (or disguise) the heads of the nails used to fasten the bands to the doors.[2] The reliefs depict scenes of Shalmaneser's military campaigns and tribute being paid by those conquered (see Fig 4.3).[3]

Figure 4.3. A representative bronze band from the gate of Balawat (ancient Imgur-Enlil) showing a battle scene (lower right) and tribute-bearing processionals; from the reign of Shalmaneser III; 9th century.[4]

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[1] King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 11.
[2] King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 11.
[3] King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 11.
[4] King, *Bronze Reliefs*, pl. XX.

Biblical descriptions of monumental gates comport with these practices. For example, gates are described as having דלתות נחושה/נחשת "doors of copper" (Isa 45:2; Ps 107:16) or as being צפה נחשת "plated with copper" (2 Chr 4:9). Monumental doorways were also lavishly decorated, according to some Biblical traditions. The doors into the Temple's innermost sanctum, for example, are described as having carved royal iconography overlaid with gold (1 Kgs 6:31-2, 34-5 [cf. 2 Chron 3:7]; 2 Kgs 18:16; Ezek 41:25).

Archaeological attestation of metal gate bands in the region studied here is unfortunately – but understandably – lacking. Metals were expensive in antiquity and would have been recovered and re-used whenever possible. Still, in the southern Levant fragments of bronze fittings were found near the threshold of the burned gatehouse of Lachish Stratum III (late 8th century).[1] Some of the pieces had remnants of charred wood still attached to them – no doubt fragments of the doors themselves – which were found to be acacia, a hardwood not native to the region.[2] Nine or ten of the fragments were shaped like small flowers and seem to have been decorative (see Fig. 4.4).[3]

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[1] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 61.
[2] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 61.
[3] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 61. The flower decorations on the Balawat gate bronzes are in relief and thus not directly comparable to the in-the-round flowers of the Lachish gate.
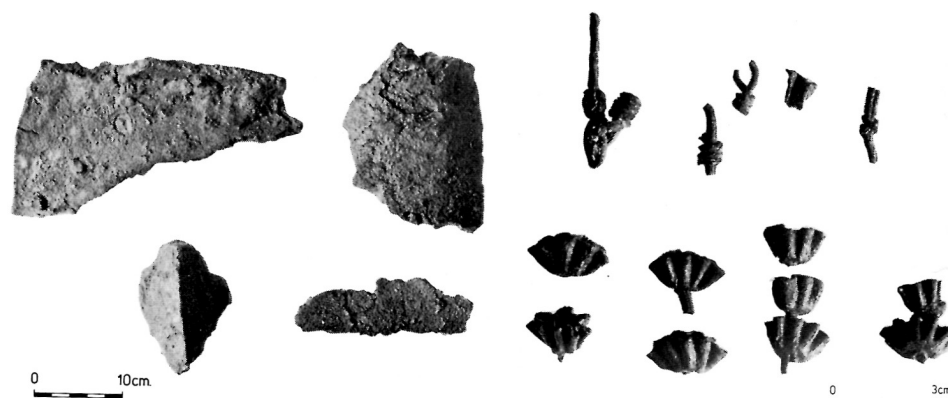
Figure 4.4. Fragments of bronze plating and decoration from the gate door of Lachish; late 8th century.[1]

It is possible – though unattested archaeologically – that the large wooden door leaves held smaller wicket gates, which could be opened for pedestrian traffic when the gate was closed (at night, for instance).[2] Such doors are common in surviving medieval gates (see Fig. 4.5). The wicket door is, in a sense, a microcosm of the gate itself: it represents a weak point in the larger defensive structure whose convenience is sufficient to justify its existence.

Posts and Pivots

Each gate leaf turned on a large vertical wooden post which was attached to the gate leaf's outer edge.[3] The posts – called מזוזות in the Hebrew Bible[4] – extended both

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[1] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," plate 20:2-3.

[2] Suggested by Wright, *Ancient Building*, 197.

[3] The posts are not ordinarily preserved, so their size relative to the thickness of the door itself is unknown. For comparison, it is estimated that the posts of the Balawat gates were ca. 46cm thick, based on the curvature of the bronze bands which wrapped around them (King, *Bronze Reliefs*, 10).

[4] E.g., Exod 12:7, 22; 21:6; Deut 6:9; 11:20; Judg 16:3, 1 Sam 1:9, 1 Kgs 6:31, etc.

above and below the door leaf. Doors were thus "made to stand" (הציב in Josh 6:26 and

העמיד in Neh 3:1; 6:1; 7:1) on this post when they were installed.

Figure 4.5. A small wicket door built into a gate leaf (here, in a medieval castle) for pedestrian traffic. Heidelberg Castle, Germany.[1]

The lower extension of the post on which the door pivoted (the ציר; see Prov

26:4)[2] rode in a stone bearing block with a concave hollow on its upper surface,[1] which

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[1] Photo by the author.

[2] The term ציר is a *hapax legomenon* in the Hebrew Bible, so its precise definition is somewhat questionable. It occurs only in Prov 26:14 – הדלת תסוב על צירה ועצל על מטתו "The door turns on its ציר, and the sluggard on his bed." Semitic cognates seem to confirm its identity as the door's pivot; i.e., the bottom tip of the doorpost. Compare Mishnaic Hebrew ציר and Judean Aramaic צִירָא "hinge, pivot" (Jastrow 1280-1; *DJPA* 464), Syriac *ṣāyartā* "hinge" (*HALOT* s.v. ציר I), and Akkadian *ṣerru* "door pivot," as in the following: "I brought back with me costly 'stone from Gašur' (quarried) in faraway mountains and set it up

was set at or below floor level.[2] In this way the stone sockets bore the weight of the entire

door leaf, and the doorjambs and lintel were nearly unstressed (see Fig. 4.6).[3] The door

sockets were usually made of a very durable type of rock, such as basalt or Mizzi Yahudi

limestone, which delayed their wearing out from the repeated grinding of the turning

doorpost.[4] The tip of the doorpost itself – since it was made of relatively soft wood – also

needed to be protected from grinding against the stone socket. One common solution was

to cover the doorpost pivot with a metal shoe;[5] bronze and iron shoes are

both attested.[6] Another solution, attested at the St. IA Temple of LB Hazor[7] and Iron Age

Dan, was to fit stone pivots to the tips of the doorposts (see Fig. 4.7).

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under the pivots of the door leaves of my palace's gates" (*CAD* Ṣ, 137). See also Eshel, "Semantics," 269-70.

[1] In later Mishnaic Hebrew and Judean Aramaic a door socket (in which the pivot turns) was called a צינור/צינורא (Jastrow 1291). However, the two occurrences of this term in Biblical Hebrew (Ps 42:8; 2 Sam 5:8) seem unrelated.

[2] A few socket stones with a slightly different style of construction have been excavated from the period of the Neo-Assyrian empire. These are attested at Gezer, Dor, and Megiddo St. III-II (Ronny Reich and Baruch Brandl, "Gezer Under Assyrian Rule," *PEQ* 117 [1985]: 41-54; Stern, *Dor*, 134, 140 fig 78; Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 72). For a discussion of this form, see Reich and Brandl, "Gezer."

[3] The attachment of the upper part of the doorpost (discussed below), however it was accomplished, would have transferred a relatively small lateral force toward the center of the entryway in order to hold the doorpost vertical.

[4] Reich, "Building Materials," 1; cf. Wright, *Ancient Building*, 447.

[5] Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 401.

[6] Iron scraps which fit into the cup of the socket stone were found at Megiddo's St. III gate (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79). Bronze pivots (ציריהם "their pivots" in context) are attested in an Aramaic papyrus letter which describes the destruction of the Temple of Yahweh at Elephantine during the Persian period (*COS* 3.51: 10-11).

[7] See Yadin, *Hazor: The Head*, 87-88; Yadin et al., *Hazor III-IV*, pl. CXXVI.
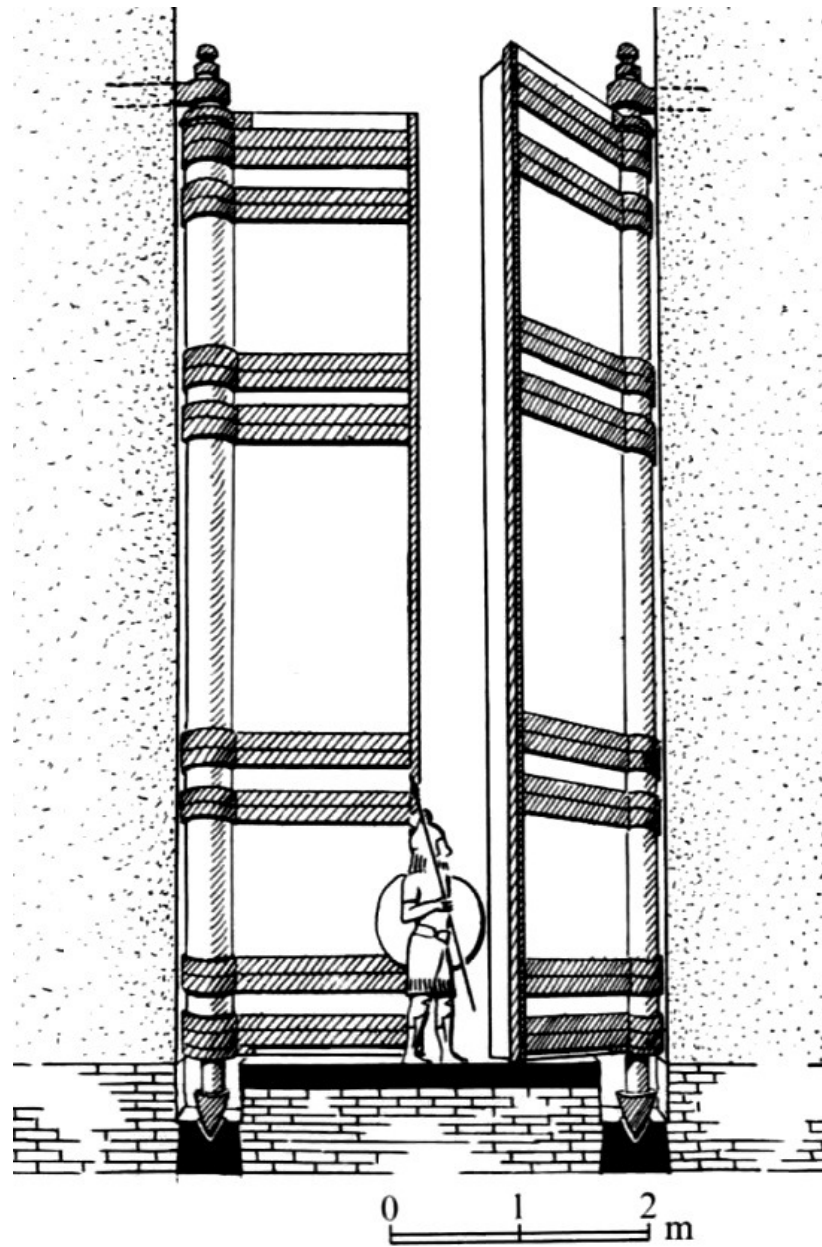
Figure 4.6. A reconstruction of the Balawat Gates. Notice the door pivots and socket stones, which are set below the paved surface of the street.[1]

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[1] K. Galling and H. Rösel, "Tür," in *Biblisches Reallexikon* (ed. K. Galling; 2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1977), 349, fig. 88.
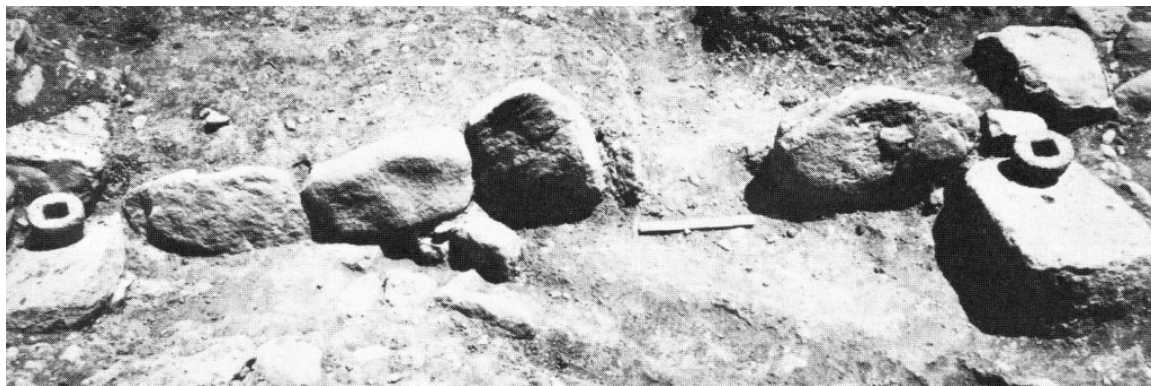
Figure 4.7. Two stone pivots found *in situ* with their sockets; recovered from an outer gate near the so-called "*ḥuṣṣot*" at Iron Age Tel Dan.[1] Note the square holes into which the prepared tips of the wooden doorposts would fit.

Unfortunately, gate socket stones are often absent in excavated gates. The reason for this is probably the stones' utility: they could be re-used in another gate, or re-appropriated as domestic grinding implements. The latter, used for food preparation, are also commonly made of hard stone such as basalt because of its durability. For this reason the stones are likely to have been robbed out of destroyed or abandoned gates.[2]

Nevertheless, a handful of socket stones have been excavated in southern Levantine gates.[3] One example comes from Megiddo St. III, where both sockets were found just inside the gate's doorjambs. They were made of basalt and measured just over half a

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[1] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 276, fig. 228. The nature of this gate and whether the stone pavement of the piazza extends further to the south are unknown (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 276).

[2] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 68.

[3] At Tel Dan, one socket was found *in situ* at the outer gate, and another was found in the gate passage of the inner gate (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 238). At the outermost (simple, not chambered) gate, two pivot holes were found bored into the basalt slabs which served as the doorjamb (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 241). Stone sockets were also found at Dor V (Stern, *Dor*, 134, cf. 140 fig 78); Ekron (Gitin and Dothan, "Rise and Fall," 208; Gitin, "Tel Miqne-Ekron," 29, figs 1.17, 2.3); Gezer VIII (Macalister, *Gezer I*, 218); Tall Jawa (Daviau, *Tall Jawa I*, 378 n. 6, 382, 446); Kinneret II (Fritz, "Kinneret," 197); Megiddo VA-IVB (Loud, *Megiddo II*, 46); Megiddo VA-IVB – III (outer gatehouse) (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 83); Megiddo III (see below); and Nasbeh's outer gate (McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, 196).

meter across apiece.[1] When the same gate was renovated and narrowed from ca. 4.5m

wide to ca. 3m wide, a smaller set of limestone door sockets was installed. These sockets

were also preserved, alongside the earlier basalt ones (see Fig. 4.8).[2] The smaller

limestone sockets had streaks of iron oxide on the bearing surface, attesting to the use of

iron pivot points on the doorposts.[3]

Figure 4.8. Two stone door sockets (from subsequent stages of use) at the
gatehouse of Megiddo, Stratum III.[4]

How the top of the doorpost was affixed to the gatehouse is unknown. If the doors

were surmounted by horizontal lintels, then we may presume that a hole – shod with

bronze in the case of a wooden lintel – would have been hollowed out to receive the

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[1] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79.
[2] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79-80.
[3] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79-80.
[4] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 80 fig. 91.

upper part of the doorpost.[1] If, on the other hand, the top of the entranceway was arcuated (i.e., built as an arch), then the doorpost might have been attached to the doorjamb or inner wall face with a metal or stone ring, as they were in Egypt.[2]

Though the bronze feet of doorposts are well attested for Mesopotamian gates (see Fig. 4.9) they are almost completely unattested in the Iron II southern Levant. Fragments of iron plating were found associated with the large pair of basalt socket stones from Megiddo III mentioned above, and are identified as pivot feet by the excavators: "several carved fragments of iron found near by fitted convincingly enough into the worn sockets, if we allow for corrosion."[3] One example of a bronze pivot (in this case, an entire bronze foot, not just bronze sheathing) was recovered from the LB gate of Jaffa Stratum IV. It was 32cm long and weighed ca. 30kg. The width of the pivot was fashioned to receive the corner of the door leaf, which was held in place by nails (see Fig. 4.10).[4]

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[1] Cf. Reich, "Building Materials," 13.
[2] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 447; Brunner, "Tür und Tor," 38.
[3] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79.
[4] Jacob Kaplan, *The Archaeology and History of Tel-Aviv—Jaffa* (Ramat Gan: Massada, 1959), 60-1; "Jaffa," 260; "Tel-Aviv—Jaffa," 81.
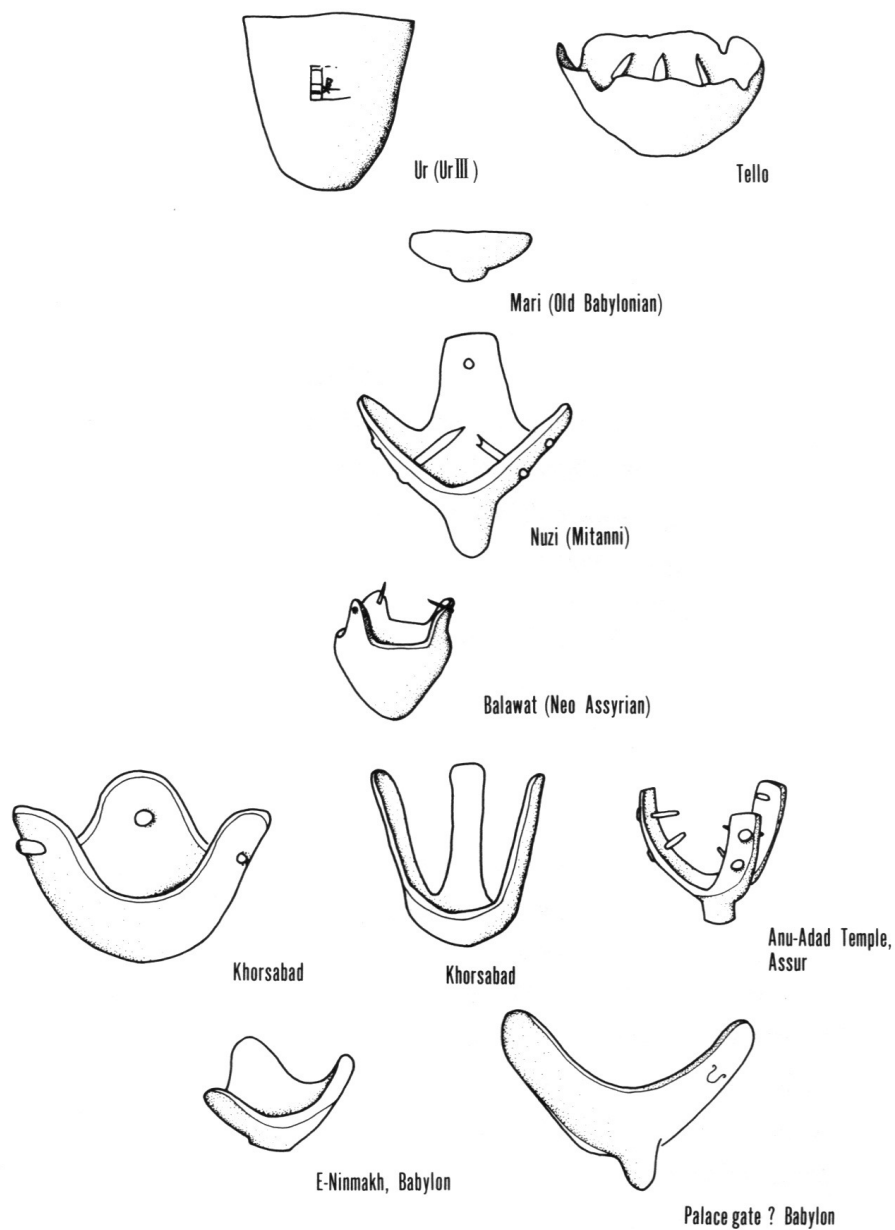
Figure 4.9. Conspectus of bronze doorpost feet from Mesopotamia, arranged chronologically from the top (Ur III period) to the bottom (Neo-Babylonian period).[1]

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[1] Adapted from Damerji, *The Development*, 163 fig. 55.
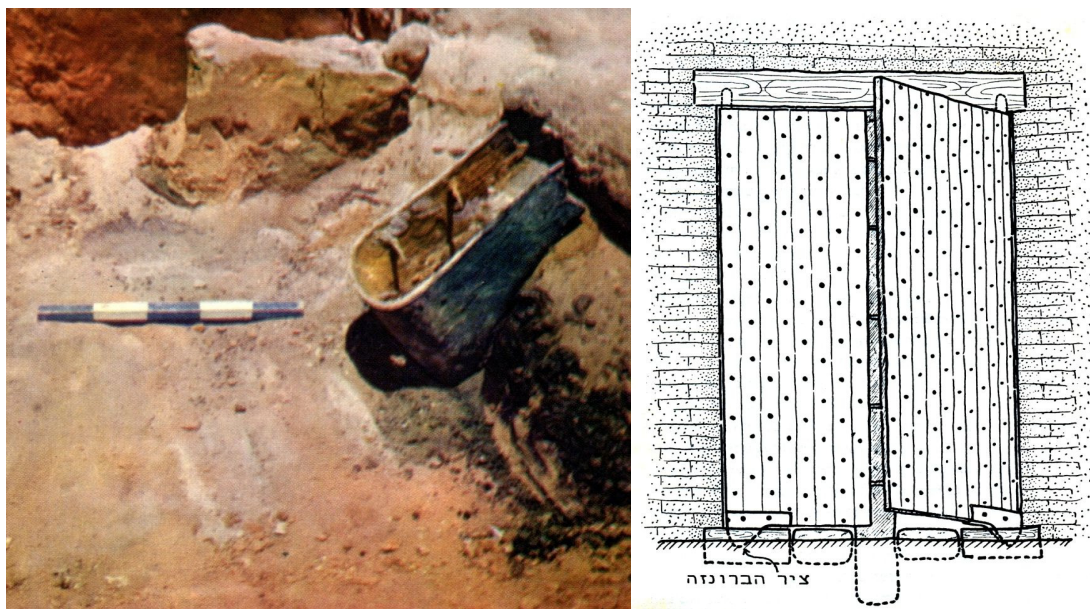
Figure 4.10. Late Bronze gate at Jaffa (Str. IV). Left: the bronze door pivot *in situ* – note the nails which held the wooden door leaf in place, and the carbonized remains (of the door leaf?); Right: reconstruction of the gate doors.[1]

Thresholds

A threshold (סף or מפתן)[2] was installed in the pavement of the floor directly under the bottom edges of the door leaves when closed. These thresholds, like the stone bearing blocks for the door pivots, were made of hard varieties of stone in order to limit wear.[3] In some cases, thresholds were built of ashlar masonry[4] or even massive monoliths,[5] but

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[1] Both figures are from Kaplan, *Tel Aviv-Jaffa*, 60-1 and fig. 20.

[2] Some maintain a distinction between the two terms; e.g., see Otto, "שער," 15:372; Wolfgang Zwickel, "סף II und מפתן," *BN* 70 (1993): 25-27.

[3] Reich, "Building Materials," 1.

[4] E.g., Bethsaida V (Arav, "Final Report," 25); Hazor X-IX, (Yadin, Hazor: *The Head*, 137); Tell en-Nasbeh III (Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 496).

[5] E.g., Gezer VIII (Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 113); Kh. Mudaybiʻ (Mattingly, et al., "Al-Karak 1997," 135; cf. Bruce Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004], 175); Kh. Qeiyafa IV (Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 87).

were most often composed of a few large stones set end-to-end.[1] Occasionally, a stone was installed directly in the middle of the threshold which protruded up from the surface of the gate passage.[2] These were for stopping the doors from swinging too far outward when being closed, and show that the gate doors opened to the inside (see Fig. 4.11). Raised lips on monolithic thresholds[3] or on the doors' pivot stones also served the same purpose (see Fig. 4.12).[4]

Figure 4.11. The threshold of Tel en-Nasbeh's outer gate, made of large ashlars, with a central doorstop stone.[5] Note the man standing on the left for scale.

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[1] Such thresholds are attested at Arad X (Ze'ev Herzog, "The Fortress Mount at Tel Arad: An Interim Report," *TA* 29/1 [2002]: 32); for multiple thresholds at Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 238, 241, and fig. 1.17); Kinneret II (Fritz, "Kinneret," 197); Lachish IV-III (Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 60; Ussishkin, "Area GE," 639); Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262).

[2] E.g., Bethsaida V (Arav, "Final Report," 25); Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 250, fig. 207); Kh. Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262); Tell en-Nasbeh III (Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 496).

[3] This is found in the western gate of Kh. Qeiyafa IV (Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 87).

[4] The only example of this practice comes from the St. IB gate passage at Ekron (Gitin, "Tel Miqne-Ekron," 29, figs 1.17, 2.3).

[5] Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh," 1100.
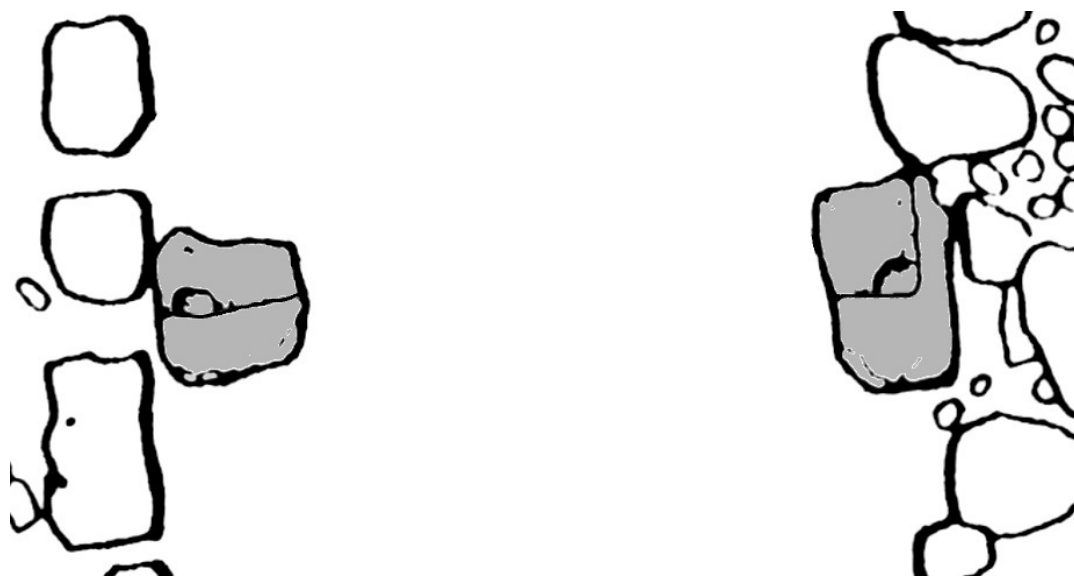
Figure 4.12. An elegant method to keep the doors from swinging outward, from Ekron St. IB: the socket stones (shaded in the plan above) were shaped with a protruding lip, so that no additional doorstop needed to be awkwardly placed in the center of the street.[1]

Arcuated or Trabeated doorways?

A final consideration concerning the doors is the architectural method of spanning the gap which they create through the walls of the gatehouse. Though it is true that trabeated ceilings are more common than arcuated ceilings, this preference does not necessarily extend to doorways. Here, again, we must resort to indirect evidence, because of a lack of preserved superstructures.

One reason arched doors are plausible is based on pictorial data from Iron Age Assyrian reliefs.[2] While Syrian and Phoenician towns are consistently shown with arched

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[1] Adapted from Gitin, "Tel Miqne-Ekron," 29, fig. 2.3.
[2] Cf. de Geus: "The ceilings [sic; he means doorways] of the gates could be arched or flat, as can be seen on depictions in Assyrian art" (*Towns in Ancient Israel*, 32).

gateways,[1] the few towns which are (or seem to be) located in the southern Levant have both trebeated and arched gate entrances, sometimes with both types appearing in a portrayal of a single town (see Fig. 4.13).[2]

Based on these data, Levantine gatehouses in the Iron II period may have had either arches or lintels over each entranceway along the gatehouse passage.[3] Mudbrick arches would have been far cheaper to produce, and are compatible with the large amount of evidence for trabeated, wooden-beamed ceilings. Once the "pier" walls are joined to one another by arches, the building would consist of long narrow rooms which could be roofed with wooden beams (compare Fig. 3.8, above), just as the four-chambered MB gate at Dan was constructed.[4] Similarly, chambered gates from the late 8th century at

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[1] The campaigns of Shalmaneser III in particular, which are depicted on the bronze bands of the Balawat Gates, contain a wealth of identified Syian and Phoenician towns which unfailingly have arched gateways. See King, *Bronze Reliefs*, pls. 8, 16, 20, 24-7, 30, 49-50, 53, 66, 69-70, 75, 77.

[2] Identification of specific towns remains difficult in many cases. Southern Levantine towns have been identified (tentatively, in some cases) in the reliefs of Tiglath-Pileasar III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib. These include the following: Astoreth of Gilead, which has one arched and one trabeated gate entrance (Jacob Liver, ed., *Miltary History of the Land of Israel in the Days of the Bible* [Jerusalem: Sivan, 1964], pl. 31, fig. 2 [Hebrew]); an unknown city in N. Israel or Phoenicia which has four arched gate entrances (R. D. Barnett and M. Falkner, *The Sculptures of Aššur-nasir-apli II (883-859 B.C.), Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.), Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.) from the Central and South-West Palaces at Nimrud* [London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1962], pls. 90-1); an unknown city (perhaps Raphiah) in southwest Palestine with one arched gate entrance (Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon*, pl. 94); an unknown city in N. Israel (?) which has three arched gate entrances (Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 2:410-11); Gaza (?), which has two arched and two trabeated gate entrances (Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon*, pl. 96); and Lachish, which has one trabeated gate entrance (A. H. Layard, *A Second Series of the Monuments of Nineveh: Including Bas-Reliefs from the Palace of Sennacherib and Bronzes from the Ruins of Nimroud* [London: John Murray, 1853], pl. XXI).

[3] Pace G. E. Wright, who asserted 50 years ago that "the principle of an arch for such an entrance [of a gatehouse] was probably not yet known in Palestine" in the monarchic period (*Biblical Archaeology*, 185). Evidence to the contrary is found in all of the MB gates of the region, which used arches and full barrel vaulting (discussed below).

[4] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 84-5.

Khorsabad in Assyria – very similar in their floor plans to southern Levantine gates –

were found with brick arches spanning the gaps between their piers.[1]
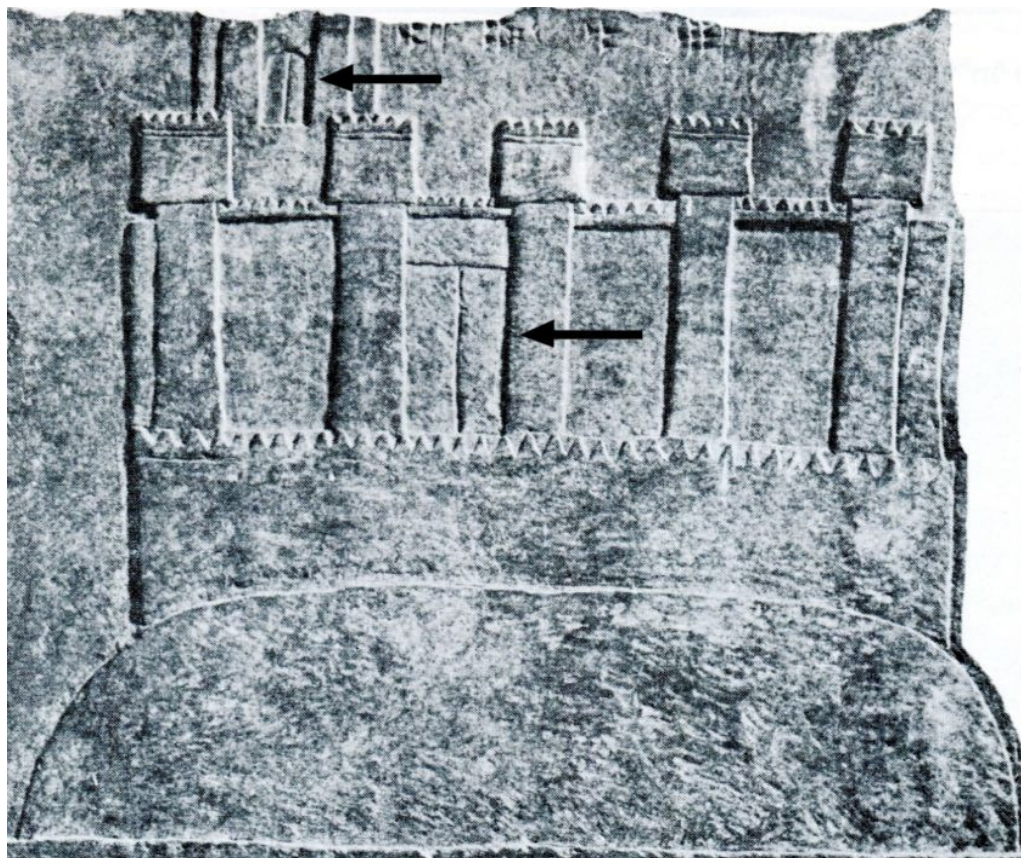
Figure 4.13. Astoreth (Biblical Ashtaroth) in Gilead, as shown in a relief of Tiglath-pileser III.[2] Note the two gates (indicated with arrows): a trabeated gate in the main defensive wall, which has two door leaves and is flanked by towers, and an arched gateway into the upper citadel (or palace?), also with two door leaves and flanked by towers.

In some cases arches would have been impractical if not impossible. For example,

at Tel Batash, the St. II four-chamber gate has a middle set of piers that are laterally

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[1] V. Danrey, "Winged Human-Headed Bulls of Nineveh: Genesis of an Iconographic Motif," *Iraq* 66/1 (2004): 133.

[2] Liver, *Miltary History*, pl. 31, fig. 2. Cf. the inaccurate drawing of the same relief in Cornelis de Geus, "The Profile of an Israelite City," *BA* 49 (1986): 225, which shows the top of the upper doorway with a triangular peak.

offset from one another by ca. 1.3m, which would have made spanning the gap between them with an arch quite awkward.[1] In general, however, arches might have been preferred to lintels. In addition to their cost advantage, they allow a much greater span than lintels,[2] and the ca. 4.2m-wide gate passage is the largest gap in the gatehouse which must be spanned by roofing material. The only potential direct evidence of an arched gateway in Iron II Israel is found in the outer gatehouse at Tel en-Nasbeh. The piers, which are preserved 2-3m above street level, appear to lean towards the center of the passage, suggesting that they were joined in an arch (see above, Fig. 4.11).

The Biblical literature bears scant witness to lintels; the relevant term משקוף appears only three times in the Bible, all of which come in the context of the Passover ritual which relates to domestic doorways (Exod 12:7, 22-3). If and where lintels were used for gates, we may safely conclude that they were not made of stone. A stone lintel with sufficient tensile strength to span a full-sized city gate with a passage width of ca. 4m would need to be extraordinarily – and prohibitively – large.[3] There is but one attested stone gate lintel in the region: a massive ca. 800 kg block of limestone from the fortress at Al-Lahun (Moab).[4] Tellingly, it was found associated with a very narrow (ca. 1.5m wide) entrance to a fortress. In any case, no remains of stone lintels for large city

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[1] See Mazar, *Timnah I*, 116 fig. 30. The offset would not have mattered if the primary ceiling joists lay over the tops of the chambers, allowing secondary ceiling beams to be laid over the gate passage.

[2] Leick, *Dictionary*, 82.

[3] Stone has very high compressive strength; that is, it resists being crushed. The forces acting on a lintel, however, are both compressive (along the top surface) and tensile (along the bottom surface, where it wants to tear), and stone's tensile strength is equal to only one tenth of its compressive strength (Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 334). Thus, a stone lintel would need to be extremely tall in profile in order not to fail under the tensile stresses and crack in half.

[4] Denyse Homès-Fredericq, "The Iron II Fortress of Al-Lahun (Moab)," in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honor of Michèle Daviau* (ed. Piotr Bienkowski; ANESS 29; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 171-5.

gates have yet been excavated. It is thus much more likely that, if and where lintels were used, they were constructed of multiple wooden beams laid side-by-side. Such lintel beams may have been recovered in an excavation in one instance. Large charred beams were uncovered near the threshold of the gate at Kh. al-Mudayna; the excavators note that "the pattern of their deposition suggests that they were the support for a roof over the entryway, between the two bastions."[1]

Finally, it is also possible that a relieving arch of bricks could have been used in conjunction with a wooden lintel.[2]

Locking the Gate

The gate doors were locked shut from the inside of the gatehouse. A few terms in the Hebrew Bible – primarily בריח and מנעול[3] – are related to the locking mechanisms. בריח is the most common term, which simply denotes a bar or pole of some sort; note the many references to the wooden בריחים used in the Tabernacle's construction.[4] Gate bars

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[1] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 261. The "bastions" in question are the two towers which flank the doors of the gatehouse. The excavators' reconstruction thus seems to be that this area in front of the gate doors was roofed, like a small patio. It would make little sense, though, to roof over the space directly in front of the door between the towers, since this would shelter any attackers who approached the door, and make it impossible to give flanking fire at the gate doors from the towers. A cluster of beams found in this area, then, is more likely to have fallen from between the two piers which formed the gate's doorway. Note that more wooden beams were also found at the rear (i.e., the city-side) threshold of the gatehouse (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 264).

[2] Netzer, "Massive Structures," 26. In at least one gate depicted in the Neo-Assyrian reliefs (that of Gaza), there is a trabeated gate with an arch above what would be the lintel (Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon*, pl. 96). It is impossible to know if this is a relieving arch or simply a decorative appliqué on the gatehouse's façade.

[3] A third term, מנעל, is a *hapax legomenon* found in Deut 33:25: ברזל ונחשת מנעליך וכימיך דבאך "May your מנעלים be iron and copper; and as your days, may your strength (?) be." The LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate translate מנעל as "sandal," which is plausible in this poetic context. There is no simple way to adjudicate this crux. In any case, the usefulness of the term מנעל for our purposes – even if it were demonstrably related to a gate's locking mechanism –would be limited to the fact that it is made of metal.

[4] See Exod 26:26-29; 35:11; 36:31-4; etc.

might have been made of wood, too, since they can be burned (Nah 3:13). On the other

hand, a few biblical references describe gate bars as made of נחשת "copper" (1Kgs 4:13)

or ברזל "iron" (Ps 107:16; Isa 45:2).[1] The most likely solution is that the bars were

ordinarily wood and were sometimes metal-plated.

More obscure is מנעול, a deverbal noun based on the root נע"ל, to lock or tie.[2] מנעול

is usually translated "bolt," and shows up only in Song 5:5 (in a domestic context) and in

Neh 3:3, 6, 13, 15. All of the latter refer to the construction of gates, and the phrasing is

precisely the same: people build a gate, and ויעמידו דלתתיו מנעוליו ובריחיו "they installed its

doors, its 'bolts,' and its bars." Since the "bolts" are associated with the doors and the

"bars," it is natural to assume that both objects together locked the doors.

The precise identification of these objects is difficult. It is usually assumed that a

bar was installed horizontally across the backs of both door leaves, with the ends of the

bar fixed to (or in) the doorjambs of the adjacent walls. Indeed, such an arrangement is

the most straightforward way to prevent the doors from being opened, and would allow

the use of a sturdy timber beam suitable for withstanding an assault from a battering ram.

Given that בריח means "bar," that the term is by far the most common used to describe a

gate locking mechanism, and that it is physically incorporated with the leaves and

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[1] The references from Isaiah and the Psalms are from poetic contexts, and it is possible that the references to metal gate bars are hyperbolic (if the bars were usually wood) or that burning a gate bar is hyperbolic (if they were usually metal). Even the prosaic passage in Kings comes in a context which boasts of Solomon's administrative districts, and in the larger context of a rather grandiose description of Solomon's reign (chapters 2-9), making its detailed accuracy questionable.

[2] Though the verb נעל later comes to mean "to bolt" (a door) in Mishnaic Hebrew (*HALOT* s.v. נעל), in the Bible it is used only with domestic doors as the object (Judg 3:23-4; 2 Sam 13:17-8). Gate doors, on the other hand, are closed and locked with the term אחז and הגיף (Neh 7:3) and, most commonly, simply with the verb סגר. See Josh 2:5, 7; Neh 13:19; Isa 45:1; 60:11; Ezek 46:1 (passive participle סגור), 2, 12.

doorposts of the gate when locked (Judg 16:3), it seems fair to assume that such a large,

horizontal bar is in fact what is meant by the term בריח.

Holes for such a (presumed) locking mechanism have been found in the Neo-

Hittite gates of Hattusha during the LB,[1] and in one case in the southern Levant. At Iron

II Tell en-Nasbeh, the outermost eastern pier of the outer gate had a long, hollow slot

built into the doorjamb and adjacent tower base (see Fig. 4.14).[2] This installation – ca.

5m long and nearly 0.5m wide – would have accommodated a massive wooden bar, long

enough to span both gate leaves (the gate was ca. 4.25m wide). The bar could thus be

pulled out of its slot and into place behind the doors in order to lock them shut, and

conveniently stowed in the slot when the gate doors were opened.[3] Additionally, a very

large, roughly rectangular stone (ca. 1.5m by 1m) was found in the area, which had a

deep hollow on its surface of ca. 30cm across. The excavator's reconstruction is that this

stone, originally part of the pier opposite the bar slot, received the tip of the bar when the

gate was locked shut.[4] Despite some uncertainty,[5] this is almost certainly the correct

reconstruction, and represents our best information on which to base reconstructions of

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[1] Kurt Bittel, *Hattusha: The Capital of the Hittites* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 50-51.
[2] McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, 196 (cf. pl. 71.5, reproduced below); Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 496.
[3] McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, 196.
[4] McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, 196.
[5] The bolt hole stone was found near the plaza on the inner side of the gatehouse (Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 496), and does not appear, based on the photographs and plans, to fit into the NE pier at the same height as the bar slot on the NW pier. It is possible that the bar was meant to be installed in the locking position at a point higher than the preserved walls (and the bar slot), but this is speculative. In any case, whatever we make of the "bolt-hole stone," understanding the slot in the NW pier as a housing for the locking bar is the most plausible interpretation.

other gate bars. Based on Biblical usage of the term בריח, it is possible that either one

multiple bars were used to lock a single gate.[1]

As for the מנעולים, it is possible that they were secondary latching mechanisms

used together with the gate bars – perhaps to attach the two door leaves to each other or

to the threshold when closed, as Stern suggests.[2] This explanation makes good sense from

a structural perspective, but has one significant drawback: thresholds are nearly always

preserved in excavated gatehouses, but holes to receive a locking bolt have been found in

only two cases: Dor Stratum V,[3] and Gezer Stratum VIII.[4] Another (and

more likely) option is based on reconstructed gate locking mechanisms from

Mesopotamia, where the primary locking beam (*aškuttu*; equivalent to the בריח) is

installed horizontally across both doors, and secondary bars of various configurations

(*sikkatu* or *uppu*) held the *aškuttu* in place.[5] The secondary bars were sometimes locked

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[1] Many בריחים in the Hebrew Bible are described in the singular for one gate, even when multiple door leaves (דלתים, dual) are mentioned (see Deut 3:5; Judg 16:3; 1 Sam 23:7; 1 Kgs 4:13; Am 1:5; Jer 49:31; Prov 18:9; Job 38:10; 2 Chr 8:5; Ezr 38:11). On the other hand, there are also many references to plural בריחים for a single gate, which confuses the picture (see Isa 45:2; Lam 2:9; 13-5; Ps 147:13; Nah 3:13; Neh 3:3, 6). The date of the texts in question does not seem to indicate that this was a chronological development in the use of gate bars. The most likely understanding of the data is that one or multiple bars were used depending on the needs and preferences of the town residents.

[2] Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 401.

[3] Stern, *Dor*, 134, 140 fig 78.

[4] Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 113. Niches for locks are also attested in the bottom of the doorjambs in domestic contexts. E.g., at Megiddo St. III, buildings 1369, 1052, and 490 all contained well-made doorways of squared stones, doorpost sockets found *in situ*, and niches in the doorjambs, always on the right side of the door (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 73).

[5] On Mesopotamian locks, see Karen Radner, "Gatekeepers and Lock Masters: The Control of Access in Assyrian Palaces," in *Your Praise is Sweet: A Memorial Volume for Jeremy Black from Students, Colleagues and Friends* (ed. H. D. Baker, E. Robson, and G. Zólyomi; London: British Institute for the Study of Iraq, 2010), 269-71; J. A. Scurlock, "How to Lock a Gate: A New Interpretation of CT 40 12," *Or* 57/4 (1988): 421-433; Frans van Koppen, "Sweeping the Court and Locking the Gate: The Palace of Sippir-Serim," in *Veenhof Anniversary Volume: Studies Presented to Klass R. Veenhof on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. W. H. van Soldt; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2001), 217-22. For Anatolia, see Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, 169-71.

Figure 4.14. Tell en-Nasbeh, outer gate. Foreground: the top of the NW pier with a slot presumably built to house the gate's locking bar when not in use. Background: the NE pier, with the bolt-hole stone sitting on the ground at its foot (moved from its original find spot). Note the meter stick, highlighted on top of the bolt-hole stone.[1]

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[1] McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, plate 71.5.

in place themselves with pins or the like, which required a key to remove.[1] This model

makes sense structurally and etymologically (since the מנעולים would bind [נע"ל] the gate

bar in place), and seems a reasonable reconstruction of the available data.

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[1] Note that there are a few Biblical references to keys (מפתח) and some type of door locking mechanisms, though their use in gates is questionable. Two references describe domestic doors (Song 5:4-6; Judg 3:12-30), and the third refers to the Levitical guards of the First Temple, concerning whom we read עליהם משמרת והם על המפתח ולבקר לבקר "they were responsible for guard duty; and they were in charge of opening (lit: 'they were on the key') each morning" (1 Chron 9:27). Whether this phrase (על המפתח) is idiomatic or refers to a literal key is questionable, but it at least shows that the use of a key was known at the time of writing in the Persian period. Compare also Isa 22:22, where a key slung over the shoulder is evidently an idiom for authority. On the use of keyed locks in ancient Israel, see Lawrence E. Stager, "Key Passages," in *Eretz-Israel* 27 (Hayim and Miriam Tadmor Volume; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2003), *240-*245; cf. Eshel, "Semantics," 274-5.

CHAPTER FIVE
The Upper Floor

The existence of at least one upper floor in a gatehouse is almost universally

accepted, based on a large body of indirect evidence. Neo-Assyrian reliefs depict gates

with windows over the gate doors and in the upper reaches of the gate's flanking towers,

and one biblical reference explicitly places an עליה "upper room" in the gate.[1]

Additionally, in excavated gatehouses, the existence of stairs,[2] downspouts for water

drainage,[3] and the thick walls (including the "piers") of the ground floor all strongly point

to the existence of an upper story. Specific incidents of preservation have also shown

evidence for upper floors, which will be mentioned below.

Ceilings

As I have argued above, the most plausible understanding of the gatehouse's

architecture is that it was built with a flat, wooden-beamed ceiling. This is due, first of

all, to the ubiquity of wooden-beamed ceiling construction in the Levant during a very

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[1] See 2 Sam 19:1. Neh 3:31-2 describes an upper room in the city wall, which was presumably in a tower (cf. Zeph 1:16).

[2] Stairs were found associated with the following gatehouses: Arad X-VIII (Herzog, "The Fortress Mound," 32); perhaps Beersheba III-II (Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 53-56; Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 14; Herzog, "Israelite City Planning," 41); at both the outer and inner gatehouses of Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 236, fig. 194; "Tel Dan: Five Years Later," *BA* 43/3 [1980]: 177); Ekron (Gitin, "Tel Miqne-Ekron," 30); perhaps Tall Jawa (Daviau, *Tall Jawa I*, 381); Tel el-Kheleifeh III-II (Garry Pratico, "Nelson Glueck's 1938-1940 Excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh: A Reappraisal," *BASOR* 259 [1985]: 14); perhaps Lachish IV-III (Ussishkin, "Area GE," 640); and Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick Daviau and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 259 fig. 2.). Compare Neh 12:37, which mentions steps associated with a city gate that lead up to the city walls (though, admittedly, the text is unclear), and Ezek 40:6, in which a gate is said to have מעלות "stairs."

[3] Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 116.

large temporal and geographic range.[1] The construction technique for such ceilings is well understood, and survives to modern times in the developing world. Wood-beamed ceilings are built by first laying large beams (ca. 20-35cm thick), which function as girders, across the rooms. Then joists (smaller beams or large sticks) are laid across the tops of and at a right angle to the girders. Finally, smaller sticks and grassy material such as reeds are laid down, followed by a layer of packed mud and/or plaster, which would seal the top of the ceiling. If covering the ground floor, this ceiling would also form the floor of the second story (see Fig. 5.1).

The Bible's descriptions of various monumental buildings made with cedar and juniper beams – including city gates,[2] citadel gates,[3] temple gates,[4] and other monumental buildings[5] – fit very comfortably in this milieu. Gates are also said to be "burned" or "consumed" by fire (as opposed to walls which are broken down),[6] which implies that the gates were built using wooden beams.[7]

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[1] Netzer, "Massive Structures," 17; Wright, *Ancient Building*, 336, 364; Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 70.

[2] See Neh 3:3, 6.

[3] See Neh 2:8.

[4] See 1 Kgs 6:6, 9.

[5] See, e.g., the common references to ארזים imported for building the temple and various other royal buildings in 1 Kgs 5-10.

[6] See, e.g., Neh 1:3 and Ps 80:12.

[7] See Neh 1:3; 2:3, 13, 17.

Figure 5.1. A traditional wood-beamed roof from a house in the Sahel, a transition zone along the southern edge of the Sahara desert in Africa.[1] The construction technique here is very similar to that of houses in the ancient Near East, including during the Iron II period. Note the load-bearing wall on the right, which shortens the required length of the main girders running left-right in the photo.

The most instructive biblical references relevant to gate roofing are three verses in Nehemiah that describe the building of gatehouses by the newly repatriated Judeans in Persian period Jerusalem. In two of the accounts (3:3, 6), those who build the gatehouses "lay timbers" (קרה, a denominative *pi'el* verb from קורה "a beam"),[2] and install its doors, bolts, and bars. In the third passage, however, the builders "roof over" (טל"ל, *pi'el*) the gate before installing its doors, bolts, and bars. Note the precise semantic parallel:

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[1] Image in the public domain; located online: http://archnet.org/library/images/one-image-large.jsp?location_id=17404&image_id=202111. Cited 22 Sept 2010.

[2] The term occurs only 5x in the Hebrew Bible; three times with reference to שערים (Neh 2:8; 3:3, 6), and once each to an עליה (Ps 104:3) and בתים (2 Chron 34:11).

המה <u>קרוהו</u> ויעמידו דלתתיו מנעוליו ובריחיו – 3:3

המה <u>קרוהו</u> ויעמידו דלתתיו ומנעוליו ובריחיו – 3:6

הוא יבננו <u>ויטללנו</u> ויעמידו[1] דלתתיו מנעוליו ובריחיו – 3:15

This exact parallelism between the multiple accounts, and the substitution of "roof over" for "lay beams" in 3:15, suggests that both verbs describe the same procedure, and that the ceilings were thus the specific parts of the gatehouse for which beams were used.[2]

Additional evidence for the use of wood beamed ceilings comes from the massive amounts of wood ash and burnt ceiling beams found in Iron II gates with destruction levels. Charred wood from the ceiling construction has been recovered in the gatehouse chambers and/or passages at Beersheba III-II,[3] Bethsaida V,[4] Dan,[5] Dor VII,[6] Megiddo VA-IVB (Gate 1567),[7] Kh. al-Mudaybi',[8] and Kh. al-Mudayna.[9]

The preservation in some instances is remarkable. At Bethsaida, for instance, the southeast gate chamber contained a 1m-thick layer of ash, along with large carbonized beams, two of which – made of oak – were as long as the width of the chamber. The obvious inference from their size is that the beams formed the roof of the chamber.[10] Moreover, chunks of the second-story floor were found at various angles within the same

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[1] The *ketib* is erroneously plural (likely showing the influence of the stereotypical account) but the *qere'* is singular (ויעמיד).

[2] Compare the Persian-era reference to gates with roofs (מטלל) of cedar in the Temple at Elephantine (*COS* 3.51:9-11).

[3] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13.

[4] Arav, "Bethsaida Excavations," 28-9; "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131; "Final Report," 37; Rami Arav and Richard A. Freund, eds., *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee* (Bethsaida Excavations Project 4; Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2009), xxii.

[5] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 245.

[6] Stern, *Dor*, 115.

[7] Ussishkin, "Gate 1567,"419.

[8] Andrews et al., "Karak Resources Project 1999," 134; Mattingly, et al., "Al-Karak 1997," 136.

[9] Daviau, "Moab's Northern Border," 224; Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260-62.

[10] Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131; Arav, "Final Report," 37.

chamber's debris, about 1m above the floor, and above these pieces of floor were broken pottery jars from the upper story.[1]

Similarly, at Kh. al-Mudayna, the gate passage and all of the gate chambers contained "substantial quantities" of fallen ceiling material, wall plaster, burned mudbrick, and charred beams.[2] Amid the debris which originated in the second floor were the remains of at least three limestone basins, numerous pithoi fragments, sherds from a red-slipped burnished bowl, and unfired clay loomweights.[3]

Evidence of the grassy plant material used in roof construction is also preserved in some cases. At Mudaybi''s gate, chunks of baked earth/clay bearing impressions of reeds were found along with the burned wooden beams.[4] Burned reeds and reed impressions 1-2 cm wide were also found among the collapsed roofing materials in Mudayna's gate.[5] The excavators at the latter site note that these impressions are similar to the Oleander stalks which grow in the nearby Wadi ath-Thamad, only 150m away from the site.[6] Reed impressions were also found among the mud bricks from Bethsaida's gate superstructure.[7]

Vaulted Ceilings?

Despite the significant evidence adduced above, it is worth considering that an alternative construction method – namely, a vaulted ceiling – was used in Iron Age II

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[1] Arav, "Final Report," 37.
[2] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260-2.
[3] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260, 266.
[4] Andrews et al., "Karak Resources Project 1999," 134.
[5] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262.
[6] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262.
[7] Arav, "Bethsaida Excavations," 28-9.

gatehouses. This is made plausible by the use of barrel-vaulted ceilings in gates of the Middle Bronze (MB) period (ca. 2000-1500).[1] The potential relevance of this point – and analysis of its explanatory power – requires a word about the periods of urbanization in the Levant, and a brief aside on MB gate construction.

The MB period was characterized throughout the Levant by fortified urban centers which included fortified gatehouses.[2] In the following Late Bronze (LB) period (ca. 1500-1200),[3] however, the urban character of the region declined sharply; indeed, there was an "almost total lack of fortifications."[4] By the Iron I period (ca. 1200-980), the southern Levant was characterized by open, rural settlements (especially in the highlands) which lacked public buildings entirely, including fortifications, palaces, and temples.[5] The Iron II period, in marked contrast, shows a dramatic renewal of urbanism and the establishment of fortified cities with large public structures.[6] Given the lack of original forms of fortification from the LB or Iron I periods,[7] it is reasonable to look to the MB period for the formal predecessors of Iron II gates. In fact, as mentioned above, many

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[1] David Ilan, "The Dawn of Internationalism: The Middle Bronze Age," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. T. E. Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995), 297.

[2] See Ilan, "Internationalism," 297 and references there.

[3] Shlomo Bunimovitz, "On the Edge of Empires: Late Bronze Age (1500-1200 BCE)," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. T. E. Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995), 320.

[4] Mazar, *Archaeology*, 243. See also Aharon Kempinski, "Middle and Late Bronze Age Fortifications," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 138; Cornelius H. J. de Geus, "The New City in Ancient Israel: Two Questions Concerning the Reurbanization of 'Eres Yisra'el in the Tenth Century BCE," in *"Wunschet Jerusalem Frieden": Collected Communications to the XIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Jerusalem 1986* (ed. M. Augustin and K.-D. Schunck; Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums 13; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), 105.

[5] Fritz, "The Character of Urbanization," 231-5.

[6] Gabriel Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* (ed. A. Ben-Tor; trans. R. Greenberg; New Haven: Yale University Press and The Open University of Israel, 1992), 304.

[7] E. Yeivin and Sh. Yeivin, "The Ancient Fortifications in the Land of Israel," in *The Military History of the Land of Israel in Biblical Times* (ed. J. Liver; Jerusalem: Sivan, 1964), 384 (Hebrew); Kempinski, "Middle and Late," 136; Wright, *Ancient Building*, 172.

researchers have claimed that there is a direct, evolutionary link between the monumental

gateways of the MB and those of the Iron II period. Aharoni, for instance, describes the

change this way:

> The gate of the Israelite period is a direct development from gates in
> vogue in Eretz-Israel and in Syria since Middle Canaanite [MB] II; the
> gate is a direct passage between two towers protected by three prominent
> piers on each side, with two doors attached to the inner and outer sets of
> piers. This plan was not altered essentially, but the space between the piers
> was deepened and converted to real rooms on both sides of the
> passageway.[1]

Gregori likewise describes the influence of MB gates:

> The importance of this achievement [i.e., the development of MB
> gates]…goes well beyond the confines of this period, as demonstrated
> both by the continuity of its use and the influence it exerted even on the
> new buildings up to the end of the second millennium B.C. and by the
> innovations in the Iron Age types which seem to find their starting point in
> it.[2]

Many other researchers likewise posit a similar evolutionary scheme or assert that Iron II

gates are directly comparable to those of the MB.[3] These claims will be evaluated below.

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[1] Yohanan Aharoni, *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel: From the Prehistoric Beginnings to the End of the First Temple Period* (ed. M. Aharoni; trans. A. Rainey; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 196.

[2] Barbara Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates of the Middle Bronze Age in Syria and Palestine," *Levant* 18 (1986): 98.

[3] See, e.g., William F. Albright, "The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim, vol. III: The Iron Age," *AASOR* 21–22 (1943), 17; deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, 233-234; Paul Zimansky, "Art and Architecture: Ancient Near Eastern Architecture," *ABD* 1:419; Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," 308; Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 176; Th. A. Busink, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem von Salomo bis Herodes – eine archäologisch-historische Studie unter Berücksichtigung des westsemitischen Tempelbaus* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 1:127-8; Tina H. Blomquist, *Gates and Gods: Cults in the City Gates of Iron Age Palestine: An Investigation of the Archaeological and Biblical Sources* (Coniectanea Biblica 46; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1999), 133; Frick, *The City*, 84; Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 191-4 (but see his reservations on pp. 197-200). Cf. also Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 68; Baruch Halpern, "Eli's Death and the Israelite Gate: A Philological-Architectural Correlation," in *Eretz Israel* 26 (Frank Moore Cross Volume; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1999), 54*; Dever, "Social Stucture," 423.

Aside: MB Gate Architecture

MB gates in the Levant are very consistent in their floor plans (see Fig. 5.2).[1] And it is true that these gates do, in fact, bear a superficial resemblance to Iron Age gates in a few important aspects: they consist of a narrow, somewhat long passageway[2] between two towers – or rather, between two halves of a large building. Moreover, and most strikingly similar to the later Iron Age gates, there are multiple pairs of symmetric "piers" which project into the central gate passage, narrowing the effective passage.[3]
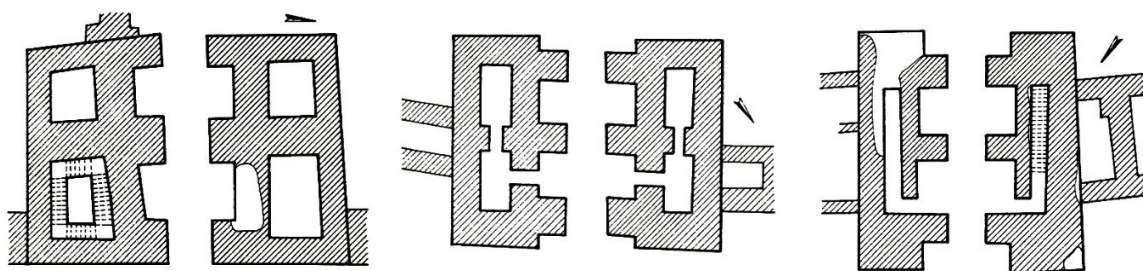
Figure 5.2. Three typical MB gates: Carchemish, Hazor, and Shechem.[4]

However, it is acknowledged that the purpose of these piers – and even the entire MB gatehouse – is not well understood.[5] The functions which have been proposed for the MB piers overlap the explanations mentioned above for piers of the Iron Age gates. Some

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[1] Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 68.

[2] The average width is ca. 6.2m, and the average length is 17.9m (based on Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 69, table 9).

[3] The average effective passage – i.e., between the piers – is ca. 2.9m (Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 69, table 9).

[4] Adapted from Herzog, *The City Gate*, figs. 49, 45, and 47, respectively.

[5] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 193; Herzog, *The City Gate*, xi-xii; Ze'ev Herzog, "Gate" in *Entsiqlopedia Miqra'it* (ed. B. Mazar; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1982), 238 (Hebrew); Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93.

have considered all three sets of piers as frames for the installation of additional doors,[1] or for emergency closure.[2] These theories suffer from the same weaknesses mentioned for the Iron II gates: there are no data to support the existence of three gate doors in a single gate, or to support the use of the "frames" for emergency military blockage. Moreover, as Herzog has pointed out, these interpretations fail to explain why in each case precisely three sets of piers were built.[3] If the purpose of the piers were defensive, we should expect that someone during this extensive period would have thought of adding a fourth or fifth set of piers to make their town more secure. Finally, the multiple-door and multiple-barrier theories are significantly undermined by the fact that in many MB gates, there is a stairway to the upper levels of the gatehouse that is accessible between the first and second sets of piers.[4] This means that those attacking the town would only need to breach the first set of doors before they had access to the upper stories and roof of the gatehouse, as well as the city wall's ramparts.[5] Any additional doors or barriers would thus have proved superfluous.

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[1] Lynn Harper Wood, "Archaeology and the Bible: The Evolution of Systems of Defense in Palestine," *JBR* 5/3 (1937): 130; Charles Leonard Woolley, *Alalakh: An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937-1949* (Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London XVIII; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 147, 150; Naumann, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, 289-90; Lampl, *Cities and Planning*, 36. Cf. Yadin, who cautiously says about MB gates "We do not know whether there was only one set of doors – which is most likely, between the twin pilasters nearest the external face of the wall – or additional doors between the other sets of pilasters" (*Art of Warfare*, 1:68).

[2] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 196; Wood, "Systems of Defense," 130.

[3] Herzog, "Gate," 238.

[4] Wright (*Ancient Building*, 195) points out examples from Alalakh and Shechem, and says that this seems to have been the norm for the period.

[5] Note Woolley's assessment of this problem for his theory: "It is a curious weakness in what is otherwise an admirable design that the entrance to the sentry-chamber is between the first and second piers of the gateway; whereas three gates secured the entry to the city an enemy had only to break through the outer gate to have to the whole gate-tower at his mercy" (*Alalakh*, 150). See also Herzog, *The City Gate*, 67; Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 85.

Some have proposed that the purpose of MB gate piers was simply to narrow the passage into the town for defensive purposes – that is, to restrict traffic and therefore slow attackers.[1] This theory, however, rests on two highly dubious assumptions. First, we must assume that gate builders in this region and time period consistently made the error of building their gate passages too wide for their defensive needs. Second, we must then assume that the same builders consistently narrowed their oversize gate passages by means of small projections along the length of the passage, set precisely in symmetric pairs. These assumptions are self-evidently absurd, and this solution should therefore be discarded.

Z. Herzog proposed the prevailing reconstruction of MB gates in his authoritative 1976 monograph, *The City Gate in the Land of Israel and Her Neighbors*.[2] Herzog proposes that there were two sets of doors in each gate; one in the first (outer) set of piers, and one in the innermost (city side) set of piers. The gatehouse could thus be barred from without and from within, allowing it to function as a separate fortress – an "independent military unit"[3] – which was defensible against attacks from outsiders and from the townspeople themselves.[4] Defenders within the gatehouse, meanwhile, would have access to the upper rooms and towers flanking the gate.[1]

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[1] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 196; Robert Chadwick, "Iron Age Gate Architecture in Jordan and Syria," *BCSMS* 36 (2001): 125-6 (but see Robert Chadwick, "Changing Forms of Gate Architecture in Bronze and Iron Age Transjordan," in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honor of Michèle Daviau* [ed. Piotr Bienkowski; ANESS 29; Leuven: Peeters, 2009], 194); Yeivin and Yeivin, "Ancient Fortifications," 384 (who note that this purpose continued into the LB).

[2] Herzog is followed, e.g., by Gregori ("'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93), Wright (*Ancient Building*, 197), Chadwick ("Iron Age Gate Architecture," 125), Kempinski ("Middle and Late Bronze Age Fortifications," 134), and Burke (*Walled Up to Heaven*, 68).

[3] Herzog, "Gate," 239.

[4] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 68; followed by Kempinski, "Middle and Late," 134. Herzog goes on to relate the wide diffusion of this gate type during the period to the then-current political situation, in which the

Herzog's reconstruction is reasonable, even if it is based on limited evidence.[2] At

Tel Mardikh's (Ebla's) main city gate from the MB period, both pivot stones for the outer

set of piers were found *in situ*, as was a single pivot stone at the gate's inner (city side)

set of piers.[3] Thus, two sets of doors seem to have been in use there. Additional support

for this reconstruction comes from the NE and SE gates of Tel Tuqan, where bored-

through basalt stones were built into the inner (city side) piers of each gate, and left

protruding from the interior (gatehouse side) surfaces of the piers. The round holes in the

basalt blocks were ca. 20cm in diameter, and presumably received a wooden locking bar

to secure the inner (city side) gate doors in the closed position.[4] Finally, the projections

(interpreted as towers) on the interior (city) side of MB gatehouses have been adduced as

evidence that the inner side of the gatehouse might also need to be defended.[5]

Assuming, then, that both the outer and inner sets of piers were used to frame sets

of door leaves, we still have the awkward presence of the middle (interior) set of piers for

which we must account.[6] Herzog proposes that the function of these "was to create two

sets of recesses for the gates [i.e., the door leaves] themselves, which pivoted inwards and

maryannu ruling elite would have needed protection both from those besieging the city and from potential uprisings among their own ruled population (*The City Gate*, 66-71).

[1] How those defending the tower would have prevented access from the ramparts of the city wall, which was presumably accessible from the roof of the gatehouse or one level of the towers, is not discussed by Herzog.

[2] It is possible, for example, that the evidence adduced below represents localized innovations, and not a widespread phenomenon which happened to have been preserved in only a couple of isolated cases. Nevertheless, we are compelled to follow the available data.

[3] Paolo Matthiae, *Ebla: An Empire Rediscovered* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 121 fig. 24.

[4] Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 94.

[5] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 194. Alternatively, the projections might be interpreted as buttresses which served strictly structural purposes.

[6] Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93.

folded back into these niches."[1] However, we note that with Herzog's reconstruction, the

middle piers still serve no useful purpose: the doors could have been folded flat against

the walls of the gatehouse interior without the central piers protruding between them.

Moreover, there is no clear correlation between the width of a door leaf (i.e., half the

width of the space between the piers) and the width of the recess into which it is

supposed to fit. Indeed, most of the recesses between piers are far wider – and all of them

are far deeper – than would be necessary for keeping a door leaf out of the way. It thus

does not seem, prima facie, that the piers were built for this purpose.

The architectural function of the middle piers – indeed, of all three sets of piers –

is a better explanation for their existence.[2] First, there is good evidence that arches

spanned each set of piers. In some MB gates, such as Alalakh VII and Mardikh IIIA, the

stone orthostats which are set at the ends of the piers were cut as trapezoids, such that

their surface which faces the gate passage is not vertical, but leans in toward the middle

of the passage.[3] In other words, the short "piers" are actually springs of arches (see Fig.

5.3). This interpretation is confirmed at other sites without orthostats, such as the MB

gate of Ashkelon, which preserves the mudbrick springs of an arch at either end of the

gate passage,[4] and the MB gate of Dan (mentioned above), which has three mud brick

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[1] Herzog, *The City Gate*, xii.
[2] Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93; Wright, *Ancient Building*, 196.
[3] Matthiae, *Ebla*, 122; Woolley, *Alalakh*, 147-8; cf. Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93 and Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 72.
[4] Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 238-40.

basket arches along the gate passage preserved in their entirety.[1] Based on this evidence, most have concluded that that arches spanned the three sets of piers in MB gates.[2]
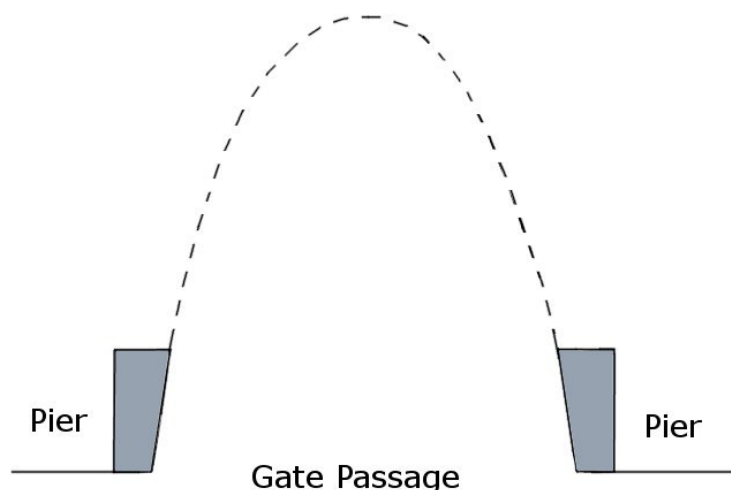
Figure 5.3. Trapezoidal orthostats (shaded), with reconstructed arch.

This conclusion, in turn, supports the notion that the gatehouse was roofed along the gate passage, and that the three sets of piers (i.e., the arches) were used to support the roofing material: "[The fact that] these middle piers which are built in some instances more massively than the others…is a clear indication of their precise and important structural role, undoubtedly as load-bearing elements."[3] This being the case, we may revise our above statements about the inner and outer sets of piers. While it is true that

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[1] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 84-5. I would distinguish between the MB gate at Dan and other, more typical MB gates of the region (on which, see above). The point here is that in every gate of the MB period which is preserved to a sufficient height, we find arches spanning the piers, and Dan's MB gate – by far the best preserved example available – is no exception.

[2] E.g., Wright, *Ancient Building*, 196; Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93. Evidence from gates of the LB period might also be adduced to support the same point. Compare, for example, the Lion Gate and King's Gate of the LB Hittite center Hattuša (modern Boğazköy, Turkey). These gates are – at least in their floor plans – close analogs to the four-pier type of MB gates, and their piers are massive monoliths that were cut to form an arch over the gate passage.

[3] Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93.

they held sets of wooden doors, the piers/arches were not built *in order* to house the doors. Rather, they were built to hold up the roof; the door placement within the inner- and outer-most arches was an *ex post facto* consideration.

Finally, there is evidence at multiple sites that barrel vaulting was used to roof over the gate passage. This is the case for gates at Mardikh (Ebla) Level IIIA[1] and Alalakh VII.[2] In the southern Levant, a sequence of four MB II gates at Ashkelon (Str. 22, Phases 14-13A) was built with vaulted roofing; first with "semi-dressed boulder[s]" and cobbles of sandstone with mud mortar (Ph. 14),[3] and then, in a later phase, with ashlar masonry.[4]

We should also note that vaulted ceilings – and barrel vaults in particular – are fairly well-attested in the ancient Near East well before the MB period.[5] This means that the few cases of MB gates whose remains happen to have been preserved sufficiently to indicate a barrel vaulted roof can be comfortably interpreted in this manner within the

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[1] Matthiae, *Ebla*, 126; cf. Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93.

[2] Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93; cf. Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 72 and n. 27.

[3] Ross J. Voss, "A Sequence of Four Middle Bronze Age Gates in Ashkelon," in *The Middle Bronze Age in the Levant: Proceedings of an International Conference on MB IIA Ceramic Material, Vienna, 24th-26th of January 2001* (ed. M. Bietak; Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002), 381. Voss suggests that "the undressed nature of the masonry would appear to preclude a true barrel vault," and suggests that the vaulting might have been corbelled ("A Sequence of Four," 381).

[4] Voss, "A Sequence of Four," 381.

[5] For numerous examples, as early as ca. 3,000 BCE in Egypt, and the late fourth millennium in Mesopotamia, see Gus W. Van Beek, "Arches and Vaults in the Ancient Near East," *Scientific American* 257 (1987): 96-102; cf. David Oates, "Early Vaulting in Mesopotamia," in *Archaeological Theory and Practice* (ed. D. E. Strong; London: Seminar, 1973), 183-91. Burke refers to vaulted structures at Selenkahiye and Beydar (both ca. 2,300 BCE), and to an 18m-long barrel vaulted passage through the rampart of Byblos stratum VI (also ca. 2,300 BCE) (*Walled Up to Heaven*, 69-70). For a discussion of the potential disparity between attested vaulting and the historical use of vaulting (as well as archaeologists' bias against reconstructing mudbrick vaults), see Roland Besenval, *Technologie de la voûte dans l'Orient ancien* (2 vols.; Paris: Éditions Recherche sure les Civilisations, 1984), 1:170-71.

ANE milieu. As Aaron Burke puts it, "the role of the load-bearing, barrel-vaulted arch is thought to have been integral to the construction of the six-pier [MB] gate."[1]

If we assume, then, that the MB gate passage was typically a barrel-vaulted tunnel through the gatehouse, then the vertical side walls of the tunnel would have born a massive burden of compressive force – both from the heavy vaulting itself and from the weight of the gate's superstructure above the passage. If we imagine for a moment that the piers discussed above were never used in these gates, then we would have a barrel vaulted tunnel with straight, (nearly) vertical walls on each side, running the length of the gate passage. The walls were supported on the outside by the massive towers of which they formed a part,[2] but unsupported on the inside, putting them at risk of structural failure under the forces described above. The walls would tend to collapse inward, buckling in onto the gate passage, which would likely result in the collapse of the entire gatehouse. The three sets of piers which we typically find in these gates – short, thick, and spaced evenly along the gate passage – solve this problem perfectly, and also considerably ease the construction process. In other words, the piers and the arches of which they formed a part acted as buttresses for the interior of the barrel vault, forming what is known in later architecture as a banded barrel vault (See Fig 5.4).[3]

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[1] Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 69-70; Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93; and Chadwick, "Changing Forms," 193. We note the appropriately cautious remarks of Gregori, who says that based on the lack of preservation and the presence of wood ash in some gate passages, trabeated ceilings in MB gates "cannot be ruled out" ("'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 93). Some MB gates could have easily been roofed with wooden beams because of their narrow width. Others, however, seem less plausible, such as the four-piered Eastern gate at MB Shechem whose passage is ca. 7.5m wide (Herzog, *The City Gate*, fig. 41).

[2] Or, as in the case of a few gates without towers, they would have been supported by the earthen ramparts in which they were at least partially buried.

[3] See John Fitchen, *The Construction of Gothic Cathedrals: A Study of Medieval Vault Erection* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 46-50. Cf. Chadwick, "Changing Forms," 194-5.
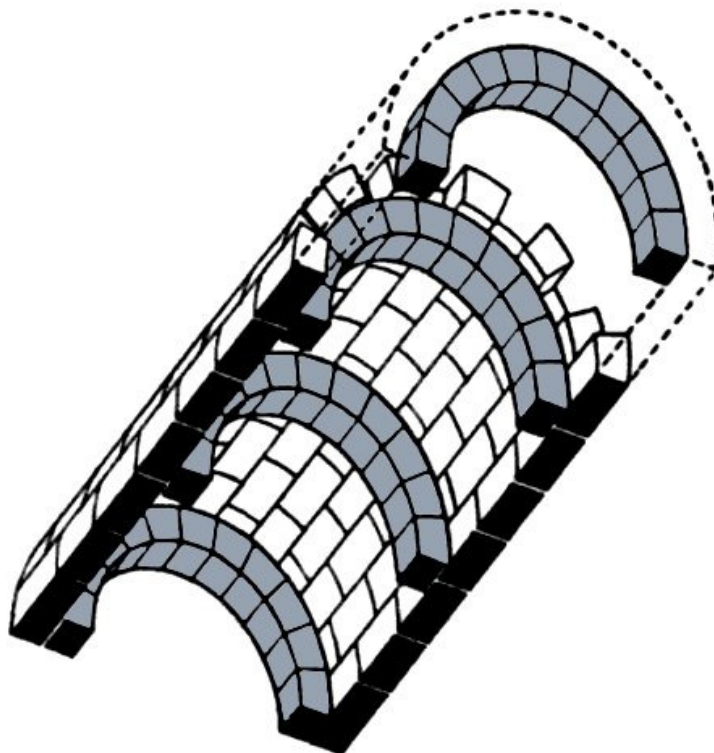
Figure 5.4. An example of a banded barrel vault in the process of construction, viewed from below. The smaller arches on the interior of the vault (shaded grey) serve as structural reinforcement for the vaulting.[1]

There is some anecdotal evidence to support this inference. In the sequence of

MBII gates of Ashkelon mentioned above (one of the earliest examples of a MB gate),

the earliest phase of the gate (Str. 22, Phase 14) has piers only at the entrance and exit to

the barrel vaulted passage. That is to say, there was no middle set of piers; there was only

a straight-walled tunnel as in our hypothetical gate above. In later phases of the gate,

however, we find the addition of ashlar masonry, built up in steps against the gate

passage's interior walls, as a form of ad hoc buttressing (see Fig. 5.5).[2] The walls in the

original configuration seem to have been unstable without buttressing along the walls – a

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[1] Adapted from Fitchen, *Gothic Cathedrals*, 46 fig. 17.
[2] Voss, "A Sequence of Four," 381-2; cf. Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 239-41.

problem which was solved in later gates with the addition of another set of piers, producing the classic six pier configuration.[1] Likewise, the northeast gate at Byblos (Str. VI; ca. 2300) had a similar barrel vaulted tunnel with straight walls and no internal buttressing. The inherent instability of this configuration is highlighted by the hollow spaces left in the walls and floors of the gate tunnel, which held wooden beams to support the vaulted ceiling.[2] It thus seems that, given a long enough barrel-vaulted tunnel, buttressing along the interior walls was a structural necessity.
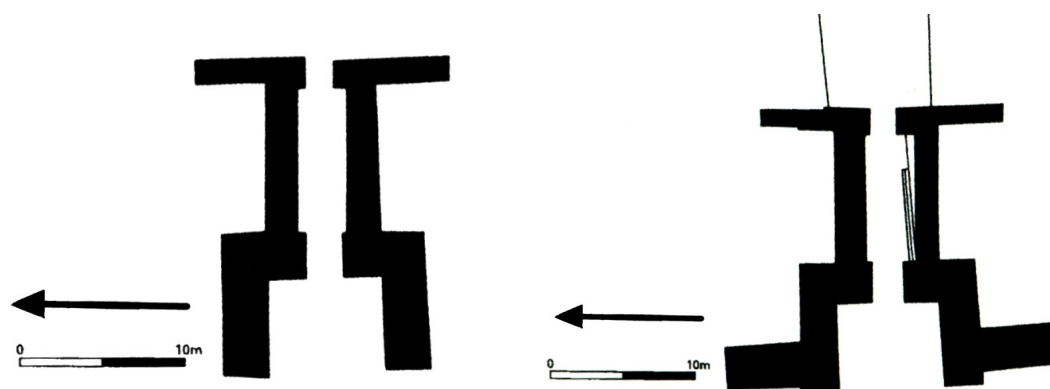
Figure 5.5. Ashkelon's MB Gate, Phase 14 (left), and the same gate in the later Phase 13C (right). Note the addition of the stepped ashlar buttressing along the gate passage.[3]

Comparison with Iron II Gates

We may now return to the comparison between Iron II gates and MB gates, though the distinction between the two should by now be obvious. Our original question was whether the ceilings of Iron II gates might have been vaulted, based on the precedent of and supposed evolution from MB gates. The answer is almost certainly negative, given

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[1] Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 70; Jacob Kaplan, "Further Aspects of the Middle Bronze Age II Fortifications in Palestine," *ZDPV* 91 (1975): 13.
[2] Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 70.
[3] Adapted from Voss, "A Sequence of Four," figs. 1-2.

the dramatically different floor plans of the two types of gates (see Fig. 5.6).[1] I have

argued that MB gate passages were essentially barrel-vaulted tunnels with arched

pilasters acting as internal buttresses. In Iron Age gatehouses, by contrast, the gate

passage and the side chambers form one contiguous open space on the ground floor. To

build a vaulted roof over both the gate passage and the chambers, one would need to use

a groin vault – that is, two barrel vaults intersecting at right angles.[2] Such groin vaults are

unknown until the Hellenistic period,[3] and it is therefore questionable whether Iron Age

architects had the technological capacity to build such complex vaults. To put this

differently, it is impossible to ascribe to the long Iron II gate piers the same function as

the short buttresses of MB gates.

To summarize: the piers of MB gates and those of Iron Age II gates served the

same function only in the abstract sense that they both supported the roof and second

floor of the gatehouse. MB pilasters supported a barrel-vaulted gate passage, while Iron II

gatehouse piers held the wooden ceiling beams of the ceiling/second story floor.

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[1] Additionally, the walls of the ground floor of MB gates are far thicker than those of the Iron II gates, likely due to a larger superstructure in the MB period (Wright, *Ancient Building*, 197).

[2] Other arrangements are possible, but unlikely. For instance, a barrel vault might have been used to roof the central corridor, with the openings into each chamber spanned by arches at a lower height than that of the main corridor. The roofs of the chambers could then have been covered with wooden beams or vaulted roofs. To put this differently, if the chambers' roofs were lower than the vaulted roof of the central passage, there would be no need for the vaulting arches to intersect and thus force the complicated groin vault. However, such scenarios, though technically possible, are both unnecessarily complicated and unsupported by any evidence.

[3] The earliest reference to a groin vault which I have found is from 3rd century Greece; see Thomas D. Boyd, "The Arch and the Vault in Greek Architecture," *AJA* 82/1 (1978): 94.
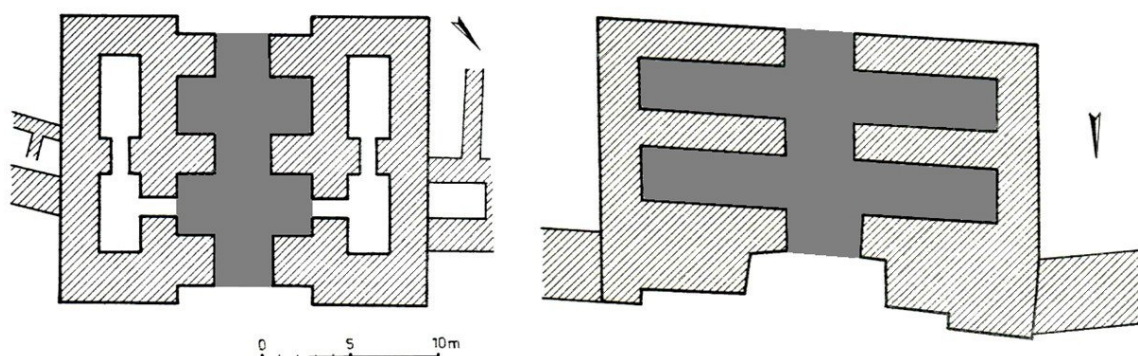
Figure 5.6. A typical MB gate (left; Hazor) compared with a typical Iron Age II gate (right; Megiddo IVA). Plans are drawn to the same scale.[1] Note the drastically different configurations of floor space (shaded gray) over which is a roof was needed.

Open Courtyard?

I should mention parenthetically the rather far-fetched possibility that, as is hypothesized of the four-room domestic house of the same period, Iron Age II gates were constructed with an open central courtyard. That is to say, perhaps the side chambers were roofed but the central gate passage was unroofed – a reconstruction which has also been suggested for MB gates.[2] On this reconstruction, if those attacking the town managed to break into the gatehouse, then those defending the town could fire on the attackers from an elevated position on the roofs of the gate chambers. This reconstruction is highly implausible for the following reasons: 1) That the attackers would be trapped in the gatehouse and at the mercy of the townspeople's fire seems to be based on the assumption that there were multiple doors or barricades in the gatehouse, which is

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[1] Adapted from Herzog, *The City Gate*, figs. 58 and 90, respectively.
[2] See, e.g., U. Müller, "Tor," in *Biblisches Reallexikon* (ed. K. Galling; 2nd ed.; Tubingen: Paul Siebeck, 1977), 346; Wright, *Ancient Building*, 195.

implausible (see above). 2) The deep chambers would provide refuge for attackers who have entered the gatehouse, negating the supposed military advantage of 1). 3) The reconstruction of a gatehouse as two parallel rows of rooms which are not joined over the gate passage is implausible from a structural standpoint, as discussed above with respect to arches and/or lintels. 4) The thick piers and exterior walls of a typical gatehouse imply a substantial superstructure. The existence of a second (or even a third) story above the chambers makes the structural problem in 3) even more acute. 5) Where gates have been destroyed by fire and well-preserved, charred wood beams and roofing materials are found *in the gate passage* as well as in the chambers (see the discussion of roofing, above).

The Second Floor

We have almost no information about the layout of the second floor of Levantine gatehouses. Presumably, it was built with the same floor plan as the ground floor – i.e., with piers and chambers – so that the weight of the second floor's walls and ceiling could be transferred onto the thick walls of the ground floor. This would leave the wooden-beamed floors (the weakest parts of the floor) responsible for supporting only the persons and equipment in the second story. It is possible that a third story was built in some cases, although there is no specific evidence to support this assertion. If we assume that there were only two floors, then the walls and piers of the upper floor would likely have been built thinner due to their lighter structural role.

The Gatehouse Roof

There is little question that the flat roof of such an expansive building would have been put to good use, as indeed the roofs of most buildings were.[1] The Bible depicts a wide range of activities on various rooftops,[2] and presumably these (and many others) also occurred on the roofs of gatehouses, especially given their choice location.

One area of the roof whose use is relatively certain is the section along the façade of the gatehouse. Here, the roof was probably contiguous with – or at least gave access to – the passage along city wall's ramparts. Note the implication of 2 Sam 18:24 to this effect:

...וילך הצפה אל-גג השער אל-החומה וישא את עיניו...

The asyndetic juxtaposition of the phrases אל-גג השער and אל-החומה implies their apposition: "and the watchman went to the roof of the gatehouse – *more specifically*, to the city wall – and he lifted up his eyes…" If this configuration was commonly used, then soldiers or watchmen likely patrolled on the gatehouse roof quite regularly, and the same area would of course have been supremely important for guarding the gate during a battle. In Sennacharib's reliefs of his assault on Lachish in the Judean Shephelah, the Judean soldiers are shown on the top of the gatehouse roof with bows and arrows and slingstones, defending the town (see Fig. 5.8, below).[3]

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[1] Cf. Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 459-60.

[2] These include: drying produce (Josh 2:6), sleeping (1 Sam 9:25), spectating (Judg 16:27; 2 Sam 11:2), having sex (2 Sam 16:22), giving cultic offerings (2 Kgs 23:12; Jer 19:13; 32:29; Zeph 1:5), building *sukkot* (Neh 8:16), living (!) (Prov 21:9), and mourning (Isa 15:3; Jer 48:38). Compare Deut 22:8, which commands the building of a railing around the roof of one's newly built house, lest someone fall and the owner be liable for the injuries.

[3] Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pl. XXI.

The *chemin de ronde* – the rampart passage atop the city wall – was typically

shielded by a crenellated parapet, and thus the top of the gatehouse façade would have

been adorned with the same crenellation. The town's defenders could take cover behind

the merlons (the projections in the crenellation), and fire their various projectiles through

the embrasures (the gaps between the merlons). What archaeological evidence there is on

this point strongly indicates that "crow-stepped" merlons – that is, stepped pyramids –

were preferred,[1] and a few examples of these have been excavated at Ramat Rachel,[2] Tel

Mevorakh,[3] Samaria,[4] and Megiddo (see Fig. 5.7).[5] The relative paucity of the merlons'

archaeological attestation (there should, after all, be hundreds if not thousands of merlons

atop each city's wall)[6] may be explained by positing that they were typically constructed

of mud bricks and thus did not survive.[7] Merlons of the crow-stepped

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[1] Lamon and Shipton report the discovery of multiple "horn-shaped" merlons at Megiddo, which were shaped like an octant of a sphere and were all found out of context in strata VA-IVB and IVA (*Megiddo I*, 24; followed by Wright, *Ancient Building*, 150). The difficulty with their identification is that these stones look exactly like the well-known "horns" of altars, albeit rather large ones – about half a meter along the radius (*Megiddo I*, 24). In a daring gambit of circular reasoning, Lamon and Shipton declare the stones merlons from the tops of towers on the grounds that horned altars were modeled after towers. But we do not know that altars looked like towers, because we are not certain what towers looked like in detail. Their suggestion is also weakened by the rather curious fact that they only turned up merlons appropriate for the corners of towers, and not a single medial merlon, which (assuming all merlons were made of the same material) is highly improbable statistically. Given the evidence adduced below in support of crow-stepped merlons, it seems more likely that Lamon and Shipton are describing large altar horns.

[2] Ephraim Stern, "The Phoenician Architectural Elements in Palestine during the Late Iron Age and the Persian Period," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 308.

[3] Ephraim Stern, "The Excavations at Tell Mevorach and the Late Phoenician Elements in the Architecture of Palestine," *BASOR* 225 (1977): 19; Cf. Stern, *Dor*, 45 fig. 18.

[4] See Stern, "Phoenician Architectural Elements," 308, and references there.

[5] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 29 and cf. fig. 36. On the battlements used in the ANE in general (including Egypt and Anatolia), see Edith Porada, "Battlements in the Military Architecture and in the Symbolism of the Ancient Near East," in *Essays in the History of Architecture Presented to Rudolf Wittkower* (ed. D. Fraser, H. Hibbard and M. J. Lewine; London: Phaidon, 1967), 1-12.

[6] Cf. the discussion of Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 29.

[7] Some merlons found at Assur were made of bricks; see G. Garbini, "The Stepped Pinnacle in the Ancient Near East," *East and West* 9 (1958): 85 and fig. 1.
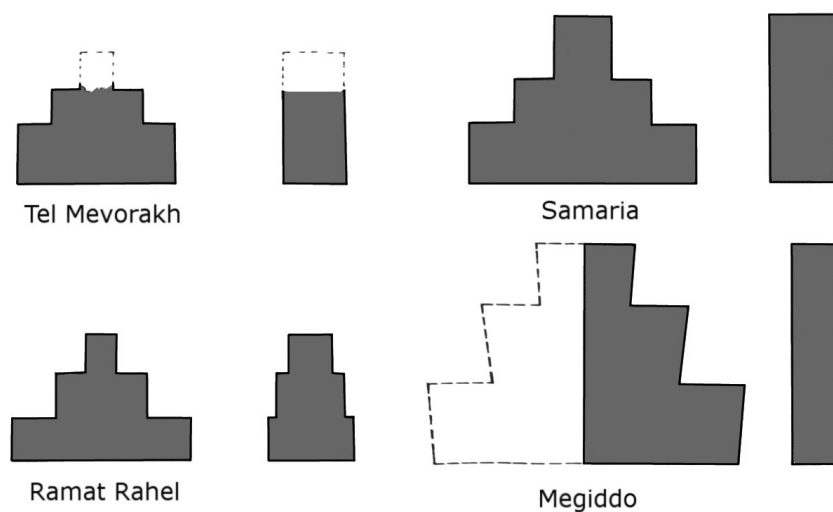
Figure 5.7. Four "crow-stepped" merlons from the southern Levant; to the right of each profile the section of each merlon is shown.[1]

variety are attested widely in the northern fertile crescent, and are depicted on Middle

Assyrian seals as early as the 13th century.[2] They are also depicted on Palestinian towns

in the Neo-Assyrian reliefs, though triangular merlons are much more common.[3] It has

been plausibly suggested that such triangular merlons are simply artistic shorthand for

representing the crow steps, or an approximation of how they looked from afar.[4] There is

at least one relief – that of Lachish – in which this is fairly clearly the case. The city gate

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[1] Adapted from Stern, "Tell Mevorach," 18 fig. 3.

[2] See Garbini, "Stepped Pinnacle," 85-91. Crowsteps were excavated, e.g., at Nineveh (Christopher Tagdell, *Antiquity: Origins, Classicism and the New Rome* [Architecture in Context 1; New York: Routledge, 2007], 200 fig. 1.107a), at Persepolis (Lloyd and Müller, *Ancient Architecture*, pls. VII, IX, and X), and depicted in bronze models of buildings found at Toprakkale (Lloyd and Müller, *Ancient Architecture*, 51-3 and figs. 95-6).

[3] In fact, when towns are shown without crenellations, it is to indicate that the town has already been conquered (Gunter, "Representations," 107). Some scenes show Assyrians soldiers standing atop the city towers swinging pick-axes, systematically dismantling the parapets while the town burns. E.g., see Ashurbanipal's conquest of Hamanu in R. D. Barnett and W. Forman, *Assyrian Palace Reliefs and Their Influence on the Sculptures of Babylonia and Persia* (London: Batchworth, 1960), pl. 132.

[4] Gunter, "Representations," 107; Garbini, "Stepped Pinnacle," 85; Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 29.

of Lachish, shown in the foreground of the scene, bears crow-stepped crenellation; whereas the wall and towers which are further up the embankment of the tel (and are therefore further away from the viewer) are shown with triangular merlons (see Fig. 5.8).
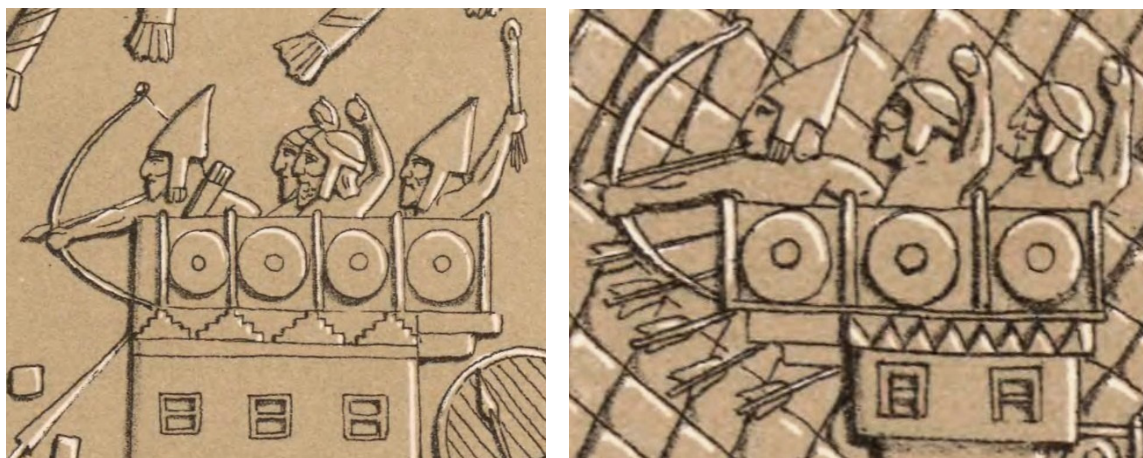
Figure 5.8. The crenellation on the walls of Lachish. Left: on top of the city gate, in the relief's foreground; Right: on top of the main city wall, in the background.[1]

Towers

The towers (מגדלים) which flanked the gatehouse doors protruded horizontally from the façade of the gatehouse as well as in the upper reaches of the wall, and

seem to have been built to a height taller than the city wall and gatehouse proper. We might assume as much based only on the use of the term מגדל (the etymological meaning of which is "big thing"; there would be little point in using the term if the towers were in fact the same height as the wall), but towers are also uniformly depicted thus in Assyrian reliefs (see Fig. 5.9). Because of uncertainties about the graphical conventions in such

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[1] Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pl. XXI.

reliefs, it would be inadvisable to speculate about *how much* taller the towers were than the city wall, but it is certain that they were taller.

The towers were used – along with the city wall's ramparts – for military defense of the gatehouse. The towers were built to project from the wall in order to provide flanking fire along the face of the wall, and especially towards the gate. This was a well-known principle in antiquity, first described explicitly by the Roman architect Vetruvius (1st century BCE): "Likewise, the towers should project toward the exterior [of the wall], so that if the enemy force wants to rush the wall, it may be wounded from the towers on either side, where its flanks are exposed."[1] It is no surprise, then, that soldiers are often depicted on the tops of towers in the midst of battle (see Fig. 5.8, above, and Fig 5.9, below).
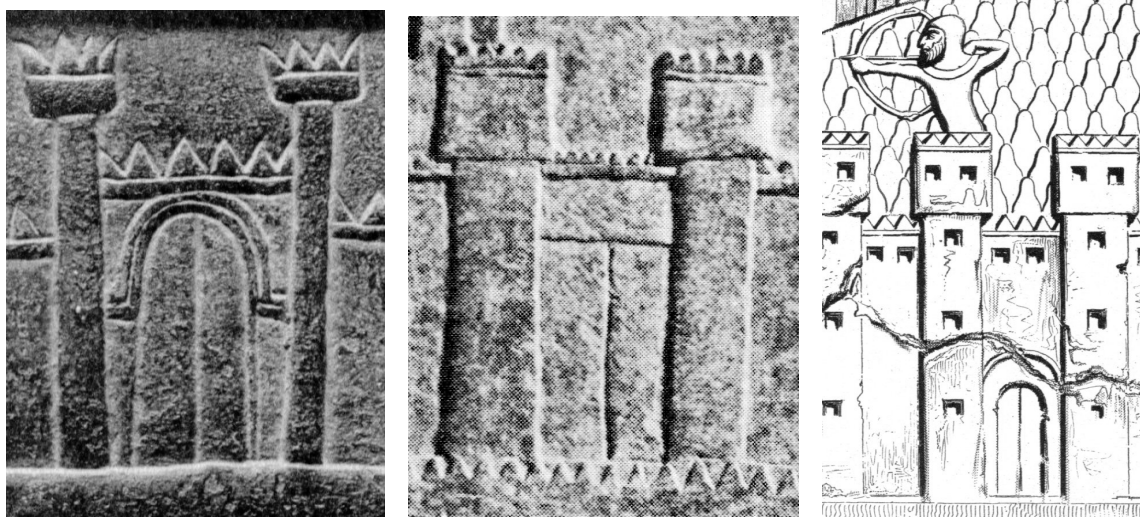
Figure 5.9. Examples of towers flanking the gate entrance in Neo-Assyrian reliefs. Left: A city in Syria on a relief of Shalmaneser III;[2] Middle: Ashtoreth, from a relief of Tiglath-Pilesar III;[3] Right: Gaza (?), from a relief of Sargon II.[1]

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[1] Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture* (trans. I. D. Rowland; comm. and illus. by T. N. Howe; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), I.5.2, p. 28.
[2] From King, *Bronze Reliefs*, pl. XXVI.
[3] From Liver, *Miltary History*, pl. 31, fig. 2.

Windows

We naturally know very little about windows in gatehouses, but a few bits of information may be gleaned from the evidence at hand. In the Neo-Assyrian reliefs, cities in the southern Levant are depicted with windows in various locations along their defensive façades, and especially on the towers.[2] They are most common at the top of the gate towers, where the towers flare in width,[3] but also appear lower down the face of the towers,[4] sometimes quite low to the ground.[5] The scenes in such reliefs are invariably towns being attacked by the Assyrians, and therefore show the embattled residents in combat gear, brandishing weapons, and attempting to withstand the Assyrian onslaught. However, soldiers are never depicted shooting arrows or slinging stones through the windows. This is likely because windows were meant to let in light and air – not provide views or serve as embrasures for the discharge of missiles – and were therefore located high on the interior walls.[6] The windows always appear small, and in a few cases are shown with what appears to be a wooden frame. In one instance – that of Lachish in Judah – the frame includes a horizontal bar running directly across the center of the window. This would have discouraged unwanted intruders from slipping in

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[1] From Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 2:423.

[2] Gunter, "Representations," 103-112.

[3] See Lachish and Gezer in Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pls. XXI, LXII, and a city in N. Israel (?) in Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 2:410-11.

[4] See the unknown city in Pauline Albenda, "A Syro-Palestinian (?) City on a Ninth Century B. C. Assyrian Relief," *BASOR* 206 (1972): 45 fig. 2; Lachish in Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pl. XXI; a city in N. Israel (?) in *Yadin, Art of Warfare*, 2:410-11; and Gezer in Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pl. LXII.

[5] See Ekron, a town in SW Palestine (perhaps Raphiah), and Gaza (?) in Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon*, pls. 98, 94, and 96 (respectively). The well-known "woman at the window" motif, familiar from the Hebrew Bible and quite a few excavated depictions of a presumably related scene appears to be related to domestic (nay, palatial) windows, as opposed to windows which serve at the front line of a city's defense. See Susan Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 155-162.

[6] Cf. B. S. J. Isserlin, *The Israelites* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2001), 135; contra Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 451.

through the window, but also would have left the windows an unlikely passage for most other things as well, including missiles.[1] Lachish's windows, incidentally, are strikingly similar to windows shown in an Egyptian relief of Ashkelon (which is geographically close to Lachish) during the LB period (see Fig. 5.10).[2]

Windows are also shown in the upper part of the city wall in a some reliefs,[3] and a few of these windows seem to open into the gatehouse's upper floor, based on their location (see Fig. 5.10). Note the Biblical reference to a window (חלון) in the city wall itself, which opened into an adjacent house (Josh 2:15). Presumably windows were also located on the side and rear walls of the gatehouse's second floor. Whether windows were used on the ground floor of gatehouses is unknown, but seems unlikely, since their presence would constitute a structural liability.[4] If there were windows, a plausible reconstruction is that small holes were left at the tops of the walls between the main roofing beams – just enough to let in a bit of light – as is sometimes thought to be the case for Israelite four-room houses.[5] It is quite possible, however, that the ground floor was illuminated only via the openings at both ends of the gate passage itself.

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[1] Two omens in the Standard Babylonian *Šumma ālu* text contain the phrase "if an owl makes a nest in the window of a city's gate…" (*CAD* B, 21a).

[2] These framed windows may be the referent of the term חלונות אטמות "framed/latticed (?) windows"; see Ezek 40:16; 41:16, 26; 1 Kgs 6:4.

[3] See Ekron in Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon*, pl. 98; Gaza (?) in Albenda, *The Palace of Sargon*, pl. 96; and Lachish in Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pl. XXI.

[4] Ezekiel's temple, incidentally, seems to put "latticed/framed windows" (חלנות אטמות) through the middle of the piers of the ground floor (Ezek 40:16), which makes no sense at all in terms of structural stability. Howie proposes that the verses should be emended ("The East Gate," 14, n. 2).

[5] See Netzer, "Domestic Architecture," 197.
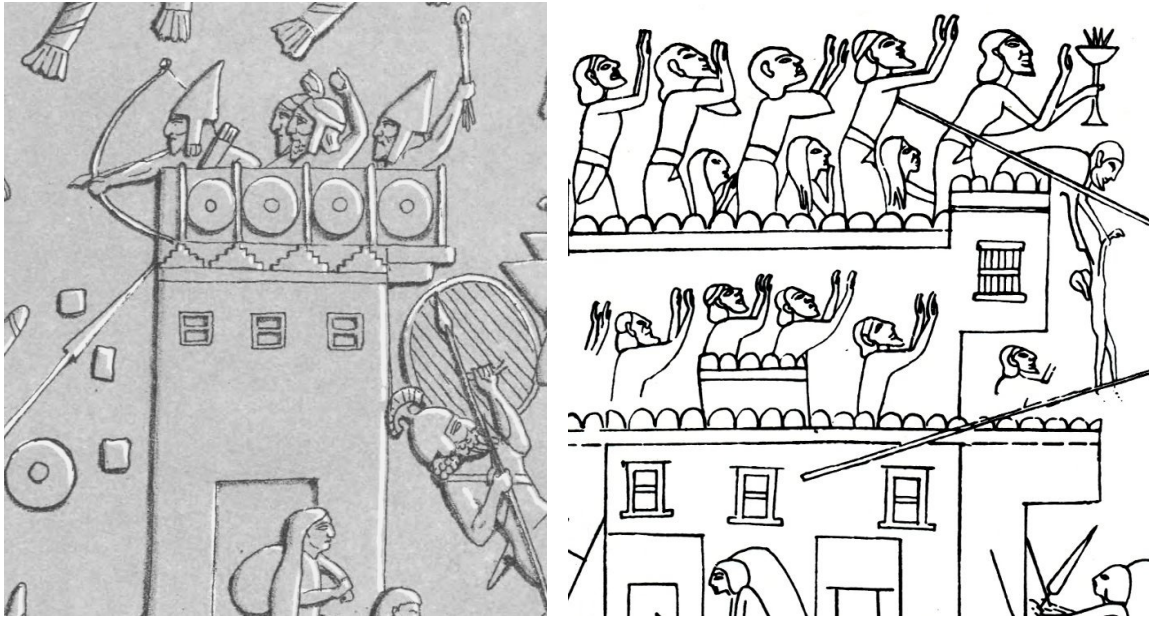
Figure 5.10. Left: Windows over the city gate in Sennacherib's relief of Lachish.[1] Right: Windows of LB Ashkelon's gate, as depicted in a relief of Ramses II; note the apparently shuttered window on the top right.[2]

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[1] Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pl. XXI.
[2] Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 1:228.

CHAPTER SIX
Gate Complexes and City Planning

The role of a gate is two-fold, and self-contradictory: it is used both to keep hostile attackers out of the city, and to allow civilians passage into the city.[1] A gate's design is typically a compromise between these two purposes: a narrow, easily-defendable gate designed primarily for military defense will be inconvenient for times of peace, and vice-versa.

Plazas

This compromise, however, was resolved in many towns of the Iron II southern Levant. The solution was the addition of various external bastions and even secondary gatehouses, which added much open space between the various walls and defensive outworks in the form of paved plazas (רחוב). The resultant plaza-studded gate complexes constitute what is perhaps one of the most characteristic hallmarks of Iron II gates.

There is a strong correlation in the Bible between the city gate and the city's רחוב.[2] Typically, plazas are described in the singular ("*the* plaza"), with a few notable exceptions bearing the plural רחובות.[3] The many uses to which the gate plazas were put in ancient Israel and the broader ancient Near East will be summarized below in Chapters 8-10.

As a brief aside, we should mention the theory of D. Clines, who has argued for a sharp distinction between the singular term רחוב "square" and the plural רחובות, which he

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[1] Herzog, "Gate," 237; Nauman, *Architektur Kleinasiens*, 266; Brunner, "Tür und Tor," 49.
[2] E.g., see 2 Chr 32:6; Neh 8:1, 3, 16; Esth 4:6; Job 29:7; Gen 19:1-2 (?); Isa 59:14 (?).
[3] E.g., see Gen 19:2; Deut 13:17; Judg 19:15, 17, 20; 2 Sam 21:12.

takes to mean "streets."[1] I do not see any good reason to follow Clines on this point.

Clines admits that there is not a single case where the meaning "streets" is required for

the plural רחובות,[2] and that most of the occurrences of רחובות are in reference to

Jerusalem, which is otherwise described as having multiple gates with associated plazas.[3]

The heart of Clines' argument for the interpretation "streets" is that, as he puts it, "it

would be strange if the activities mentioned as occurring in רחובות in the plural took place

only in 'squares' and not in 'streets.'"[4] The "clearest examples" of activities in רחובות

which Clines cites in support of his definition are mourning (Isa 15:3; cf. Jer 48:38),

dying in battle (Jer 49:26; 50:30), old men and women sitting, boys and girls playing

(Zech 8:4-5), and lions roaming about (in the imagination of the sluggard; Prov 22:13;

26:13).[5] Since these activities must have also happened in the streets, "the plural 'streets'

is a perfectly good meaning" for the plural רחובות in these verses and others.[6] While I

agree that these activities probably took place in the streets as well as in the squares, this

fact has no bearing on the semantic range of the term רחובות.

Returning to the city plaza's association with gates, we find that the

archaeological data bear out the correlation of the two areas found in the Bible. Paved

plazas have been discovered at 22 of the 29 sites included in the present corpus of gates,

and many of these sites have two or three separate plazas in use at a time – and this is in

addition to the spacious paved ramps that often lead up to the gate (the דרך השער; see 2

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[1] Clines, "Squares and Streets."
[2] Clines, "Squares and Streets," 634.
[3] E.g., see Neh 8:16. Multiple plazas are also quite plausible for the (plural) רחובות in the cities of Samaria (Amos 5:18) and Babylon (Jer 50:30).
[4] Clines, "Squares and Streets," 634.
[5] Clines, "Squares and Streets," 634-5.
[6] Clines, "Squares and Streets," 635.

Sam 15:2) and that can serve the same purposes. Thus we should probably interpret the

Biblical references to "the plaza" of a town as a collective, inclusive of all gate plazas.

Like the gatehouse passage, these plazas were paved with a range of materials that varied

in quality from packed clay to carefully-laid flagstones (see Figs. 6.1, 6.2).

Figure 6.1. The cobblestone-paved outer plaza at Tel Dan's Iron Age gate, leading to the outer (simple) gate.[1]

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[1] Photo courtesy of Todd Bolen.

Site	Relative location of plaza(s)[1]	Paving surface
Ashdod Xa[2]	interior	crushed kurkar
Ashdod IX[3]	interior (multiple phases) and exterior	crushed kurkar and small potsherds
Ashdod VIII[4]	interior and exterior	brownish-black clay
Tel Batash III[5]	central and interior (?)	lime
Tel Batash II[6]	central and interior	interior: stones and pebbles
Tel Beersheba V[7]	central	n/a
Tel Beersheba III-II[8]	central (?) and interior	n/a
Bethsaida (et-Tell) V[9]	central and interior	central: medium-sized basalt flagstones interior: crushed limestone
Tell Beit Mirsim[10]	interior	n/a
Beth Shemesh[11]	interior	plaster
Tel Dan[12]	exterior, multiple central, and interior	cobblestones
Tel Dor VII[13]	exterior	small stones

Figure 6.2. Chart of plazas associated with gates.

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[1] "Interior" will denote plazas within the city and adjacent to the gatehouse; "exterior" will denote unenclosed plazas outside the gatehouse; "central" will denote plazas which are enclosed between two gatehouses or between a gatehouse and other defensive outworks.

[2] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 15.

[3] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 23-4.

[4] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 29.

[5] A fragment of a lime floor found adjacent to the gatehouse may represent a plaza or a road (Mazar, *Timnah I*, 117).

[6] Mazar, *Timnah I*, 122; 125-6.

[7] See Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 51, fig. 1.

[8] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13; Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I*, pl. 84.

[9] Arav, "Bethsaida: The Season of 2007," n.p.; Arav, "Final Report," 9-12, 23-4.

[10] William F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible* (3rd. ed.; New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1935), 74; Albright, "Tell Beit Mirsim III," 48.

[11] Bunimovitz and Lederman, "Iron Age Fortifications," 134.

[12] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 235-46, 275 and figs 194, 200.

[13] Stern, *Dor*, 111.

Site	Relative location of plaza(s)	Paving surface
Tel Dor V[1]	exterior	large flagstones
'En Haseva[2]	exterior	n/a
Ekron[3]	interior	n/a
Tell el-Far'ah (N)[4]	central (?)[5] and interior	n/a
Gezer VIII[6]	exterior, central, and interior	central and exterior: cobblestones
Hazor X-IX[7]	exterior and interior	exterior: cobblestones
Tel Jezreel[8]	exterior and interior (?)[9]	interior (?): lime plaster
Tell el-Kheleifeh III-II[10]	interior	n/a
Kinneret (Tel Kinrot)	interior	lime and ash

Figure 6.2. Chart of plazas associated with gates, continued.

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[1] Stern, *Dor*, 134.

[2] Rudolph Cohen and Yigal Yisrael, "The Iron Age Fortresses at 'En Haseva," *BA* 58/4 (1995): 229; Rudolph Cohen, "The Fortresses at 'En Haseva," *BA* 57/4 (1994): 211.

[3] Dothan and Gitin, "Tel Miqne, 1986," 65.

[4] A. Chambon, *Tell el-Far'ah I: L'Age du Fer* (Paris: Éditions de Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1984), pl. 9.

[5] It is unknown if the hook-shaped bastion attached to the gatehouse was closed with a simple gate (thus making it a central courtyard) or if it was left open (see Chambon, *L'Age du Fer*, pl. 9).

[6] Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 116; Macalister, *Gezer I*, 214 fig. 102, 217 fig. 104.

[7] Yadin, *Hazor: The Head*, 137; Yadin et al., *Hazor III-IV*, 31.

[8] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Tel Jezreel 1992-1993," 14.

[9] The presence of an interior plaza is questionable; it is based only on the presence of a small strip of lime plaster flooring found inside the 4th (innermost) pier of the east side of the gatehouse, which is itself a highly questionable reconstruction. For a discussion of the reconstruction, see Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Tel Jezreel 1994-1996," 20-23.

[10] Glueck, "The Second Campaign," 14.

Site	Relative location of plaza(s)	Paving surface
Lachish IV-III[1]	exterior,[2] central, interior	central and inner: lime plaster[3]
Lachish III (citadel gate)[4]	interior	lime plaster
Megiddo VA-IVB[5]	exterior, central, and interior	cobblestones
Megiddo IVA	exterior, central, and interior	cobblestones
Megiddo III[6]	exterior, central, and interior	central: cobblestones and (then?) plaster[7] interior: lime plaster
Kh. al-Mudayna[8]	exterior and interior (multiple phases)	both: beaten earth and cobblestones
Tell en-Nasbeh[9]	exterior, central, and interior	exterior: stone
Kh. Qeiyafa (West)[10]	interior	n/a
Kh. Qeiyafa (South)[11]	interior	n/a

Figure 6.2. Chart of plazas associated with gates, continued.

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[1] David Ussishkin, "Area GW: The Outer City-Gate," in *The Iron Age Stratigraphy and Architecture* (vol. 2 of *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. D. Ussishkin; Publications of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 22; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004), 548-572; Ussishkin, "Area GE," 636.

[2] Lachish's massive approach ramp – ca. 20 m wide – certainly functioned as an exterior plaza. In St. III, a wall perpendicular to (and thus blocking most of) the ramp was added (Ussishkin, "Area GW," 548). This blocking wall thus divided the ramp into an outer ramp plaza and an inner ramp plaza before one even reached the outermost gate proper.

[3] In St. III's central plaza (within the bastion), one half of the floor was paved with a "rough pebble floor" while the other half had a lime plaster finish (Ussishkin, "Area GW," 572).

[4] Ussishkin, "Area PAL.," 839 fig. 14.74.

[5] Loud, *Megiddo II*, 48 fig. 105.

[6] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79.

[7] In the central plaza, a few patches of lime plaster were found on top of the cobblestones, leading the excavators to suggest that the cobbles may have served only as the foundation for the plastering, though it is also possible that the plaster was added at a later phase of use.

[8] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 263-4; P. M. Michèle Daviau, et al., "Excavation and Survey at Khirbat al-Mudayna and its Surroundings: Preliminary Report on the 2001, 2004 and 2005 Seasons," *ADAJ* 50 (2006): 250-3.

[9] McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, 196; Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 335, 494-8, 706.

[10] Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 95.

[11] Garfinkel, Ganor, and Hasel, "Khirbat [sic] Qeiyafa," n.p.

Some plazas were surprisingly large: Bethsaida's central plaza, for instance, was nearly 200 m[2], while its cobble-paved approach ramp covered at least another 300m[2].[1] Tel Batash Str. II, meanwhile, had a massive interior plaza paved with stones and pebbles which wrapped around south side of the gatehouse, covering perhaps 750 m[2] – or up to twice as much as this if it also continued to the north.[2] The spacious approach road to the gate of Lachish was a massive artificial slope built with thick revetment walls both upslope (to prevent erosion of the slope onto the path) and downslope (to prevent the road itself from eroding). The resultant flat ramp was paved with lime plaster and was over 70m long and anywhere from 10 to 20m wide, providing ample space for the various gate uses described below. This ramp, we should recall, was in service of a gate complex which also included a central and interior plaza.[3]

The usefulness of this open space for civic functions is highlighted by the presence of stone-built (and often plaster-coated) benches, which are commonly found along the along the edges of gate plazas,[4] within the chambers of the gatehouse,[5] and (only in Transjordanian gates) along the sides of gate passage within the gatehouse.[1]

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[1] Arav, "Final Report," 9-12, 24.

[2] Mazar, *Timnah I*, 122; 125-6.

[3] Ussishkin, "Area GW," 535-561; cf. Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 509 fig. 10.3.

[4] Plaza benches were found in multiple locations at at Bethsaida V (Arav, "Final Report," 25) and Tel Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 238, 248-50, figs. 206, 206a), as well as at Gezer (Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 116), Megiddo VA-IVB (Loud, *Megiddo II*, 42 fig. 97, 98), Kh. al-Mudaybi' (Mattingly, et al., "Al-Karak 1997," 134-5; cf. fig. 13), Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 264; cf. 259 fig. 2; Daviau et al., "Excavation and Survey," 253-4), and Tell en-Nasbeh (Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 494; McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, pl. 71.3-4).

[5] Chamber benches were found at Beersheba II (Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I*, pls. 8, 84), Tel Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 238), Tell el-Far'ah (N) (Chambon, *L'Age du Fer*, 26; cf. pl. 26a), Gezer (Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 115), Tel Kinneret (Fritz, "Kinneret," 197), Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 266), Tell en-Nasbeh (Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 493; cf. photo P952), and Kh. el-Qom (John S. Holladay, Jr., "Kom, Khirbet El-," *ABD* 4:97-99).

The effectiveness of a gate complex in solving the military-civilian compromise mentioned above is that the plazas were extraordinarily useful for the daily activities of the town's residents, even as they remained a menacing liability for would-be attackers – especially in the case of enclosed plazas. In order to penetrate a town with such a gate complex, attackers would be forced to advance up the town's approach ramp and/or through an exterior plaza that afforded no protection whatsoever. Meanwhile, the town's defenders, perched atop any nearby bastion, gatehouse, tower, or city wall rampart, could rain missiles down on the attackers as they attempted to approach and break through the gate doors. In the case of a town with a central plaza and a second gatehouse, any attacking force that managed to break through the outer gatehouse would also have to survive the same process a second time as they attacked the inner gate. The difference in the second gatehouse assault, however, is that the attackers would now find themselves surrounded by walls with hostile townspeople on all four sides. Such a gate complex, in effect, became a gauntlet through which any attackers must run.[2]

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[1] Passage benches were found at Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 263) and Kh. en-Nahas (Yoav Arbel, "Khirbet en-Nahas Excavations 2006, Final Report Area A" [unpub. prelim. report], 21-22).

[2] Whether such plazas were originally built for civilian utility or military defense is unknown, but the addition of outworks and secondary gatehouses clearly conferred an enormous defensive benefit to the town which adopted them.

In this context I should mention a few cryptic Biblical references to a "gate between the two walls" (Jer 39:4; 52:7; 2 Kgs 25:4). These references all seem to be referring to the same place at the south end of the City of David, which is associated with the king's garden. Additionally, Isa 22:11 says that Hezekiah put his famous water reservoir "between the two walls," which also presumably refers to the same place. However, the nature of the "two walls" (or "double wall") – and how a gate might be situated "between" them – is unclear. As Otto notes, "the preposition *bên* is awkward, since the gate is in the main wall, not between the walls" ("שער," 15:390). However, given that an entire gate system is sometimes referred to as a singular gate (see the discussion of שער with the meaning "gate complex" in Ch. 2), a plausible reconstruction is that there were two main defensive walls at the sound end of Jerusalem with a gate complex that exited through both of them. A second option is that the defensive walls of the town overlapped, with the gatehouse situated in between them and the gate passage parallel to the walls, as was

Some Iron Age towns took the concept to an extreme, constructing a virtual labrynth of passages through which one must walk in order to enter the town. Tel Dan's gate complex, constructed in two stages during the 9th and 8th centuries, is by far the most elaborate example of this.[1] At its largest, Dan's gate complex consisted of (in order of approach): a massive paved outer plaza, an outer simple gate, a paved and enclosed middle plaza, a large four-chamber gatehouse, a ca. 70m long passage which included no less than five right-angle turns and what appear to be two additional doorways, and finally, an inner four-chamber gatehouse (see Fig. 6.3).

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the case at Tel en-Nasbeh. Cf. an early attempt at understanding this phrase in Lewis B. Paton, "The Meaning of the Expression 'Between the Two Walls,'" *JBL* 25 (1906): 1-13.

[1] The precise dating of Dan's gate is somewhat questionable. For a recent revision of Biran's dating, see Arie, "Reconsidering the Iron Age II."
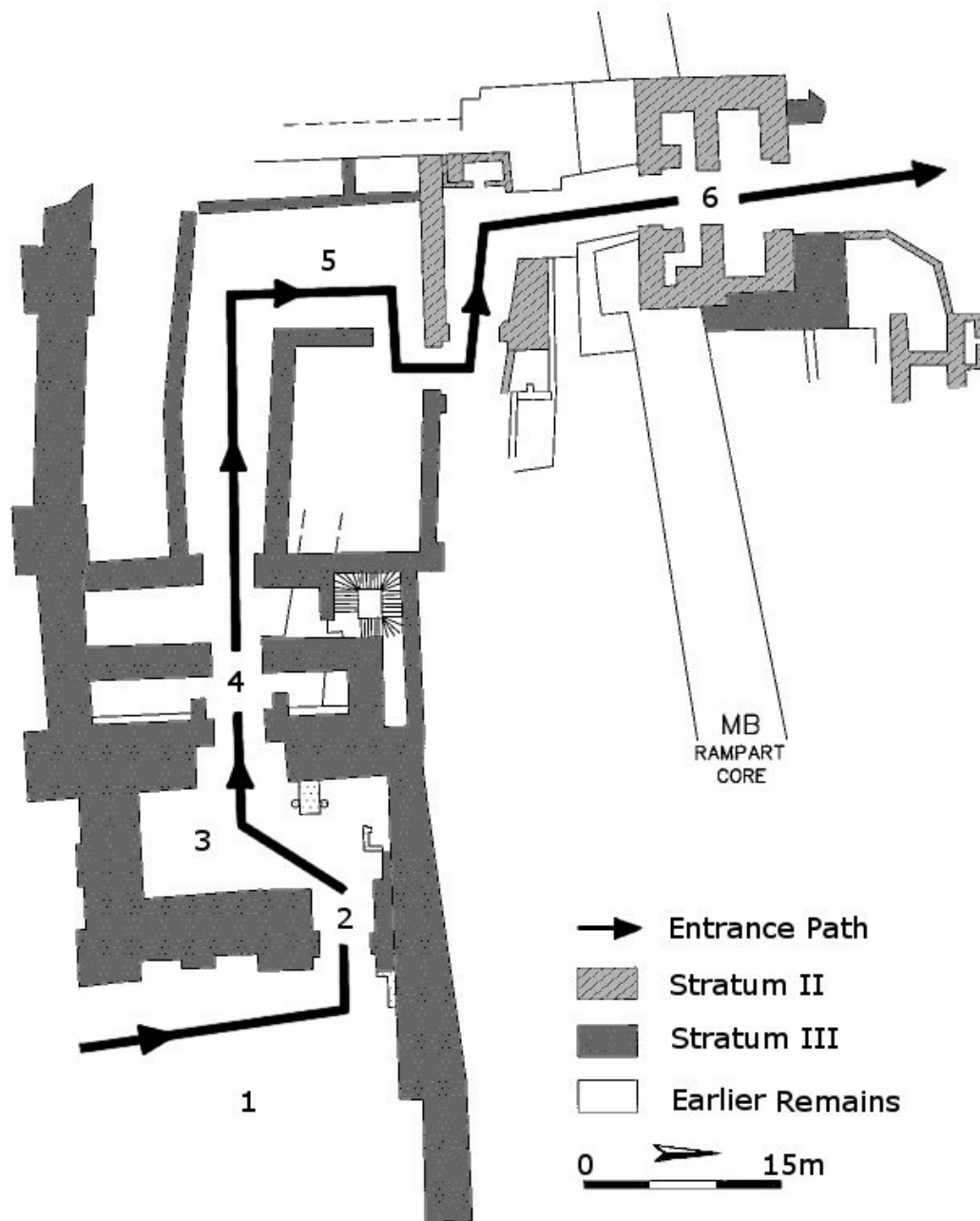
Figure 6.3. Tel Dan's Iron Age gate complex. The passage into the city weaves through 1) the outer plaza, 2) the outer simple gate, 3) the central plaza, 4) the outer gatehouse, 5) the inter-gatehouse passage, and 6) the inner gatehouse.[1]

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[1] Adapted from Arie, "Reconsidering the Iron Age II," 15 fig. 8.

It is sometimes asserted that the city gate was a perennial weak point in the city's defenses.[1] While this might be true as a generalization (doors are easier to break through than the city wall), in many cases it would not apply to Iron II gate complexes. By means of the fortification strategy discussed above, builders seem to have over-compensated for the gate's weakness, and made the gate at least as difficult to attack as other points along the city wall.

One example of the gate's deterrent effect comes from Lachish, where the Assyrians' own pictorial and narrative descriptions of their siege of Lachish and the archaeological remains uncovered at the site converge to give us a fairly good idea how the assault proceeded.[2] The Assyrians' attack methods involved wheeled siege machines with battering rams, which required sloped ramps in order to roll the machines up to the walls. As mentioned above, Lachish had an enormous, artificially-built approach ramp which led up the side of the tel to the outer gatehouse, which would have provided a perfect approach road for the Assyrians' siege engines. Despite this, however, the Assyrians constructed their own siege ramp at the southwest corner of the tell. The ramp was wide and fan-shaped, and is estimated to have been 55-60m wide at its bottom, about 16m tall, and built at a gradient of ca. 30 degrees.[3] It was built with hundreds of tons of boulders, and the top ca. 1m layer of stones was cemented together using a large quantity

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[1] Victor H. Matthews, "Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors: Legally Significant Sites in the Ancient Near East," *Fides et Historia* 19 (1987): 27; Gerald L. Mattingly, "Forts/Fortifications," in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. W. E. Mills; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1991), 307-8; Jacoby, "Representation," 127-130; de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel*, 27-8; Borowski, *Daily Life*, 47; Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 62.

[2] For a discussion of the archaeology, pictorial data, and the historic episode, see Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish.*

[3] Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish*, 51-2.

of lime plaster, forming a hard mantle.[1] Various indications of a fierce battle –

arrowheads, slingstones, and evidence of burning – were found associated with the siege

ramp and especially where the ramp met the city wall.[2] To summarize the point: the

greatest army the world had yet seen avoided a main assault on the city gate of a

relatively insignificant town, and this at a tremendous cost. The strategic reasons for this

are evident: Lachish's approach ramp and gate complex posed a formidable military

challenge. This is not to say that battles never occurred at gates; they clearly did. But

when pronouncing what the "weak points" in a town's defenses are, we should bear in

mind the real difficulty of seizing control of an Iron II gate complex.

The location of chambered gatehouses within complexes with multiples

gatehouses comes in a predicatble pattern. Invariably, the large chambered gatehouse is

the inner gate (i.e., past the central courtyard), and that the outer gates are either smaller

chambered gatehouses, or "simple" gates – i.e., a pair of doors blocking a gap in the

wall.[3] Why this pattern was so rigidly followed is not entirely clear, but it seems to me to

constitute another argument against the defensive function of a gatehouse's chambers (as

suggested by those who believe, e.g., that multiple doors or barricades were used between

the sets of piers, as discussed above). If this were the case, then we should expect that the

larger chambered gatehouses, as the strongest point of protection, would be placed at the

outermost line of defense in order to prevent any enemy penetration.

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[1] Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish*, 52-3.
[2] Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish*, 50-55.
[3] This is the case at Tel Batash, Beersheba V, Bethsaida, Tel Dan's outer gate complex, Tell el-Far'ah (N) VIIb, Gezer, Lachish IV-III, Megiddo VA-IVB, IVA, and III, and Tel en-Nasbeh (see plans of gate complexes in Appendix B).

Number and Location of Gates

Most Israelite and Judean towns seem to have had only one gate complex.[1] Gates of particular towns in the Hebrew Bible are usually referred to as "*the* gate of [the city/city name]," and do not have specific names; we may infer from these facts that there was no need to distinguish among multiple gates because there was only one.[2] The exception which proves the rule is the biblical town שַׁעֲרַיִם, which literally means "two gates."[3] The existence of a town with this name shows that the presence of two gates was sufficiently unusual to warrant the name choice; the name would be nonsensical if many towns had two gates. Another notable exception to this rule, according the Hebrew Bible, is Jerusalem, to which many gates are ascribed in both the pre- and post-exilic periods.[4]

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[1] Fritz, *The City*, 119, 138.

[2] For instance, see Gen 19:1; Deut 22:24; Jdg 9:35; 16:2; 2 Sam 23:15, etc.

[3] This site has been recently been identified as Khirbet Qeiyafa in the Judean Shephelah (Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor, "Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha'arayim [sic]," *JHS* 8 [2008]: n.p., Article 22). This identification is *prima facie* plausible, since two separate gatehouses from the same period have been excavated at different points along the circumvallation wall. The relevance of a site named "two gates," however, is distinct from the correctness of the identification.

[4] See above, p. 60. How (or whether) all of these gates can be reconstructed around the circumference of the town – especially the numerous gates of the Persian period – has taxed the imaginations of scholars. One of the primary difficulties in such reconstruction (for any period) is the possibility that the gates in question do not exit the city walls; they may instead refer to interior gates of the temple courtyard (cf. Pss 24:7, 9; 87:2; 122:2 [?]), or to gates of a citadel or palace (see 2 Kgs 11:6), or other intramural gates. Moreover, the size of Jerusalem in the Persian period – which of course determines where gates may be reconstructed – is also a matter of some dispute. Most researchers have supposed, based on the lack of occupational evidence in excavations on the Western Hill, that Jerusalem of the Persian period was confined to the Eastern Ridge (e.g., Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983], 62), though if the much larger Western Hill was also fortified this would better accommodate the many gates (on which, see Ussishkin, "The Borders"). The naming of Jerusalem's many gates seems to have been a straightforward affair: the names seem to be based on the gate's physical location (e.g., Corner Gate, Valley Gate, Spring Gate), or its association with an individual (e.g., Joshua's Gate, the King's Gate), or on activities which took place in the gate (e.g., selling sheep or fish at the Sheep Gate or Fish Gate). The names were presumably necessary to distinguish between the many gates in the city.

By contrast, the much larger towns in N. Syria, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia are commonly surrounded by multiple gates.[1]

Since most towns were built on an elevated tell or hill for defensive purposes, the gate's location along the defensive curtain wall necessarily placed it at the top edge of the slope. Gates were thus elevated relative to the surrounding terrain; notice the occasional reference in the Bible to "going up" to the gate (Deut 25:7; Ruth 4:1). This location also meant that when gate complexes were built, any plazas, outer gates, or approach ramps required rather a lot of engineering and heavy construction to produce sturdy walls and terracing on the steep slope of the hill.[2] Incidentally, this precarious slope-side location of gate complexes may translate into poor preservation of some outworks and thus under-representation in the archaeological record because of the many centuries of erosion.[3]

Where any specific town's gate complex was located on the tel or hill must have been a considered choice, but the criteria for this choice are not always clear. Gate placement does not seem to be related, for example, to convenient access to the main local roads or to defensive weak points along the site's periphery.[4]

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[1] For a description of the walls and gates at a number of N. Syrian and Anatolian sites, see Stefania Mazzoni, "The Gate and the City: Change and Continuity in Syro-Hittite Urban Ideology," in *Die Orientalische Stadt: Kontinuität, Wandel, Bruch* (ed. G. Wilhelm; 1 Internationales Kolloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 9.-10. Mai 1996 in Halle/Saale; Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1997), 309-10.

[2] Cf. Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 166.

[3] For example, there are indications that Beersheba III-II may have had an enclosed outer court as its predecessor, the St. V gate did (Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13; Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I*, pl. 84.), but no remains of this were found.

[4] Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 400. Stern cites the example of Tell en-Nasbeh (biblical Mizpeh), which constitutes the northern border of Judah, but whose gate nevertheless faces to the North ("The Fortified City Gate," 400). A few dissenting opinions should be noted. Chambon, e.g., says that the gate at Tell el Far'ah (N) was placed where it was in order to allow easy access to the local spring (*L'Age du Fer*, 25; cf. A. Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 67). While this may be true, it is also true that the gate location on the west side of the tell provides the gentlest ascent to the town (see Chambon, *L'Age du Fer*, pl. 4). Cf. also de Geus, who asserts that "if possible a gate would be built at a spot where the town wall had a corner.

There is evidence, as A. Faust has pointed out, that city gates tend to face the east (whether NE, E, or SE).[1] Indeed, if gate direction were truly random, we should expect that only 3 of every 8 gates (37.5%) would face eastward (since NE, E, and SE are three of the eight compass directions); instead we find that 18 of 29 gates (62%) face eastward.[2] The reasons for this preference are not clear, but may involve the prevailing wind direction (usually from the west) or sunlight direction, or even theological/cosmological considerations.[3]

Additionally, there is some evidence that gate location was determined by topographical criteria. Many gates are found in or at the top of small valleys or depressions on the side of the tel.[4] For example, each of Kh. Keiyafa's two gates are located at the tops of the two most conspicuous valleys which lead up to the summit. The gates of Gezer,[5] Tel Batash,[6] Megiddo,[7] Bethsaida,[1] Kinneret,[2] Tall Jawa,[3] and Tall Jalul[4]

In this way the gate could be defended from two sides" (*Towns in Ancient Israel*, 30). Since circumvallation walls are usually matched to the topography of the site, there are rarely "corners" where two walls meet at an angle; I have been unable to locate any examples which match de Geus' description.

[1] Avraham Faust, "Doorway Orientation, Settlement Planning and Cosmology in Iron Age Israel," *OJA* 20/2 (2001): 137-8. Faust attempts to factor in the direction of the gate's exit ramp in addition to the gatehouse façade, which seems to confuse the issue. My count of eastward-facing gates (below) only considers the gatehouse proper.

[2] Faust lists 17 gates, and finds only four exceptions to eastward orientation ("Doorway Orientation," 137-8). For unknown reasons, Faust does not include the gates of Arad St. X, 'En Haseva, Tell el-Far'ah (N), Jezreel, Tell el-Kheleifeh, or Kh. el-Qom in his analysis. Including these gates and those excavated since Faust's study, I count 29 gates (excluding rebuilt gates in the same location), 11 of which do not face NE, E, or SE; namely: Ekron, Tell el-Far 'ah (N), Tall Jawa, Tel Jezreel, Tell el-Kheleifeh, Lachish, Megiddo, Kh. en-Nahas, Tell en-Nasbeh, Kh. Qeiyafa (W), and Kh. el-Qom.

[3] See Faust, "Doorway Orientation," 139-42.

[4] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13; Reich, "Building Materials," 16; Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 62. There are some notable exceptions to this. For instance, the Iron Age gate at Tel Dan is located along a section with a relatively steep slope, even though a prominent valley cuts into the mound just 250 m to the west (see Biran, *Biblical Dan*, fig. 4).

[5] Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 96, fig. 2.

[6] Mazar, *Timnah I*, 95.

[7] Lamon and Shipton note: "Owing to the natural conformation of the mound there is only one place where the city gate could conveniently have been placed, and that is on the north side of the mound where there is a direct approach from the northeast terrace" (*Megiddo I*, 74).

Jalul[4] are similarly situated. We may also compare the Ottoman-era gates of the Old City

of Jerusalem, five of which are situated at the tops of small valleys, while only the two

modern additions (New Gate and Zion Gate) are not. When gates are situated in such a

small valley, it is therefore in a relatively low spot along the city wall; this may explain

the reference to people inside a city "going down" (ירד) to the city gate (Judg 5:11).[5]

Compare also Jer 19:2, in which it is said that the Ben Hinnom Valley was פתח שער

החרסית "at the opening of the Potsherd Gate."

This location for the gate serves two practical purposes. First, a valley on the side

of the hill – even a very slight one – is the easiest approach road up to the city from the

surrounding terrain, and is thus the most natural path to the city. Placing the gate at the

top of such a valley allows the residents to take advantage of this natural feature. Second

– and probably more important – this placement was necessary to allow for proper

drainage of the town during the rainy season.[6] The defensive wall encircling a city would

trap rainwater, which would pool inside the city if not properly drained. Since all towns

in the region were made substantially of mud bricks, standing water posed a serious risk

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[1] Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 128.

[2] Fritz, "Kinneret," 197.

[3] For a topographical map of the site and the gate's location in Field C-East, see P. M. Michèle Daviau, "Preliminary Report of the Third Season of Excavations at Tall Jawa, Jordan (1992)," *ADAJ* 37 (1993): 326 fig. 1.

[4] See Larry Herr, et al., "Madaba Plains Project: The 1992 Excavations at Tell el-'Umeiri, Tell Jalul, and Vicinity," *ADAJ* 38 (1994): 160 fig. 13.

[5] An exception to this is Tell en-Nasbeh, which is mostly surrounded by broad natural terraces, making approach to the city's defensive wall relatively easy. Tell en-Nasbeh's gate, however, was placed at the NE corner of the site, where the ground makes the steepest ascent to the city's defenses, and is thus the most defensible side of the tell. See Jeffrey R. Zorn, "An Inner and Outer Gate Complex at Tell en-Nasbeh," *BASOR* 307 (1997): 58; Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 498.

[6] Frtiz, *The City*, 140. Drains, of course, may also run under the city wall, but this would constitute of weak point in the defenses.

to the structural integrity of most buildings.[1] The gate – a gap in the wall – is where water could escape, so placing the gate in or atop a small ravine where the water naturally wants to drain is a tidy solution to this problem.

It would be inconvenient, of course, for seasonal rains to wash out the paving of the gatehouse on an annual basis, and thus stone- or plaster-lined drains – located under the pavement of the gate passage and covered on top with flagstones – are a very common feature of Iron II gate complexes. These would themselves require regular maintenance, but they preserved the gate passage from erosion.[2] The feature is best illustrated at Beersheba, where a rather extensive set of drains seem to have run along the city streets and fed into a main drainage channel, which in turn led out of the city gate and outer courtyard (see Figs. 6.4, 6.5).[3] (Compare Ezek 47:1-2, where water from the temple flows out under the eastern gate of the temple compound.)[4]

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[1] Herzog, "Israelite City Planning," 40.

[2] Compare the Hittite composition *bel madgalti* (aka "Instructions to Commanders of Border Garrisons"), which includes the following injunctions: "In the … which you build, let the coppersmith make a […] drain. Let the gates of the city-walls [be equipped with drains (?)] of stone inside and outside in the same way…The city drains must not become clogged; they must be cleared out every year" (*COS* 1.84 §§ 23-4).

[3] An intriguing suggestion made by de Geus is that just such a drain was the *tsinnor* through which David's forces conquered the Jebusite stronghold (*Towns in Ancient Israel*, 33; cf. 2 Sam 5:8).

[4] On water flowing from temple thresholds, see H. Clay Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant: Or the Beginning of Religious Rites* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 135.

1. Beersheba III-II[1]
2. Tel Beit Mirsim[2]
3. Bet Shemesh[3]
4. Gezer VIII[4]
5. Gezer VI[5]
6. Tel 'Ira VII-VI[6]
7. Lachish IV[7]
8. Lachish III[8]
9. Megiddo VA-IVB[9]
10. Megiddo IVA (Palace 338)[10]
11. Megiddo III[11]
12. Kh. al-Mudayna[12]
13. Tell en-Nasbeh[13]
14. Kh. Qeiyafa (West)[14]
15. Kh. Qeiyafa (South)[15]
16. Kh. el-Qom (two drains)[16]

Figure 6.4. Iron II gates with attested drains.

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[1] Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 56.

[2] Albright, *Archaeology*, 118.

[3] Bunimovitz and Lederman, "Iron Age Fortifications," 133-4.

[4] Dever, "Further Evidence," 35; Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 116; Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 19.

[5] Macalister, *Gezer I*, 217 fig. 104. Note the route of both the earlier drain (which ran under the outer gatehouse), and the renovated drain, which turns abruptly westward outside of the main gatehouse.

[6] Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, *Tel 'Ira: A Stronghold in the Biblical Negev* (Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 15; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1999), 72.

[7] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 62; Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 516.

[8] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 60; Ussishkin, "Area GE," 635; Ussishkin, "Area GW," 585-8.

[9] Loud, *Megiddo II*, 48 fig. 105; cf. Shiloh, "Solomon's Gate," 75 fig. 3.

[10] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, pp. 47-9; cf. fig. 49.

[11] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 80.

[12] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 262-4; cf. fig. 6.

[13] Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 494.

[14] Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 87.

[15] Y. Garfinkel, et al., "Khirbet Qeiyafa, 2009," *IEJ* 59/2 (2009): 218.

[16] Defonzo, "Iron II," 105.

Considerations Affecting Gate Size and Building Materials

An explanation should be given for the variations in size and build quality of the gatehouses and gate complexes of the region. Y. Yadin suggested in 1963 that the variation among six-, four-, and two-chamber gates could be explained in evolutionary terms. In his view, six-chamber gates came first in the tenth century, and were gradually reduced in sized to four- and then two-chamber designs.[1] The advantage of the fewer chambers, according to Yadin, was that they were architecturally studier and thus more resistant to the blows of the Neo-Assyrian battering ram. Yadin's explanation influenced the views of Stern,[2] Glueck,[3] and Dever,[4] among others.[5] This theory, however, has been decisively disproven by Z. Herzog, who points out the many examples which do not fit into this evolutionary explanation, including both early two- and four-chamber gates and late six-chamber gates.[6] At Ashdod, for example, a four-chamber gate from the late 11th century (Stratum 10a) preceded the 6 chamber gate of the following century (Stratum 9).[7] In fact, gates with two, four, and six chambers were all in use throughout the Iron II period.[8]

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[1] Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 2:323-4

[2] Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 408-9.

[3] Glueck, "Ezion-geber," 84.

[4] Dever, "Monumental Architecture," 289-90.

[5] E.g., Rocca, *Fortifications*, 16, 23. Cf. the milder version of gate evolution (from six to four to two chambers) described by A. Mazar (*Archaeology*, 469).

[6] Herzog, *The City Gate*, xviii; cf. Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 267. Despite this, Dever has repeated the evolutionary schema as recently as 1995 ("Social Structure," 422).

[7] Dothan, "Ashdod – Seven Seasons," 8-9; cf. Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 52.

[8] Fritz, *The City*, 138.
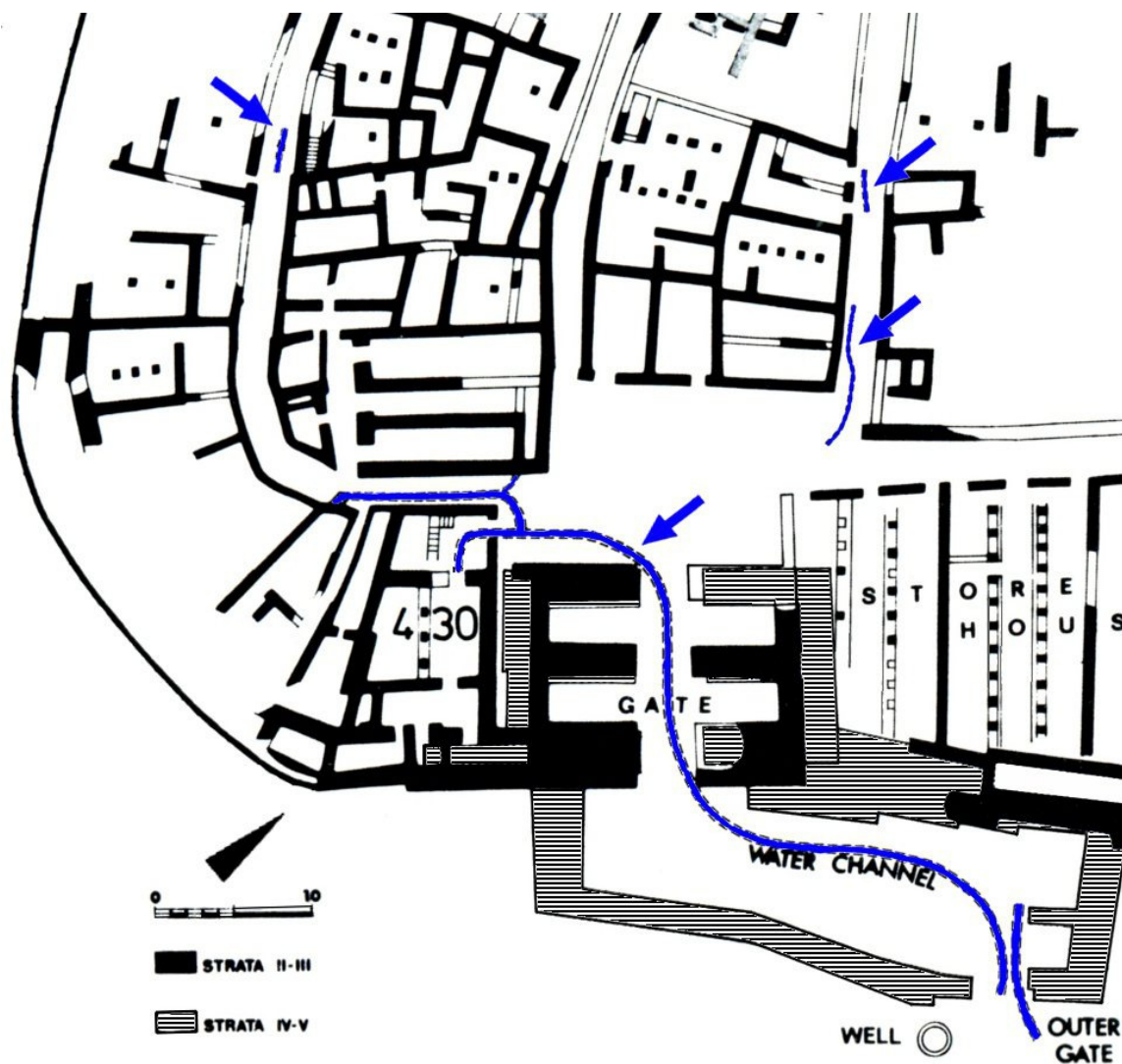
Figure 6.5. Beersheba's water drainage system. Water channels are highlighted
in blue and indicated with arrows.[1] Note the interior and enclosed exterior plazas.

Generally speaking, the construction of any particular gate should be explained in

terms of the needs and abilities of the state who built it. The role of a city within the

hierarchical structure of the chiefdom or state was surely a large consideration as to the

type of fortification used. Chief among such considerations was probably whether – and

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[1] Adapted from Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 51, fig. 1.

to what degree – the city was an administrative center, whether it was located on an international or local travel route, or if it guarded a border.[1] Larger and better-built gate complexes would afford better military protection, more public space for trade and other civic functions, and a better show of prestige for the ruler who controls the towns. For example, the familiar "Solomonic" city gates at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer furnish examples of larger, more impressively built gates, and it is probably not coincidental that all lie along an international trade route.[2]

Another factor was economic, since monumental fortifications are expensive in terms of materials and labor. The resources of the state and the locally available materials would presumably both be important considerations. For instance, the prevalence of clayey soil in the valleys and plains would make the use of mud bricks cheaper in those locales, just as towns in the hill country might find it more economical to build more of their walls (or even entire walls) out of stone.[3] Finally, the town's size would also determine how much public space was needed at the gate. As Herzog puts it,

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[1] For a four-fold hierarchical categorization of towns, see Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 263-5. Jeff A. Blakely has argued that the public tripartite buildings of the Iron Age associated with gates (see below) were strategically located along the major trade routes. See "Reconciling Two Maps: Archaeological Evidence for the Kingdoms of David and Solomon," *BASOR* 327 (2002): 49-54; "Davidic and Solomonic Bazaars, Barracks, Stables, Warehouses, Toll Stations, Tripartite Pillared Buildings, or Entrepôts ...Whatever: Beyond the Structures Themselves" (Cited 6 June 2011; Online: http://www.bibleinterp.com/ articles/Davidic_and_Solomonic.shtml).

[2] Both Megiddo and Gezer had large, well-built, multi-gate complexes with ashlar masonry in this period (see Appendix B). In contrast, the gate of Hazor, while a six-chamber gate, is preserved only in the rubble foundations of the main gatehouse, and is not as well understood. For a discussion of strategically fortified defensive cities in the 10th century, see Mordechai Gichon, "The Defences of the Salomonic [sic] Kingdom," *PEQ* 95 (1963): 113-126.

[3] Wright, *Ancient Building*, 176; Reich, "Building Materials," 1; Reich, "Palaces and Residencies," 211-2; cf. Ze'ev Herzog, "Fortifications (Levant)," *ABD* 2:844-52. A few courses of stone at the bottom of the superstructure would have the advantage of insulating the friable mud brick from ground moisture and incidental wear and tear from the traffic through the gate. The stone portion of Lachish IV-III's gate superstructure, e.g., rose 0.8-1m above the floors (Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511). In isolated cases stone walls have been preserved in the southern Levant up to heights of 10 m (see Wright, *Ancient Building*, 175, and references there).

"Apparently, in choosing the [size of the] city-gates, the planners were moved by consideration of the many and varied uses (civil and military) of the gate chambers."[1]

Other Public Works in the Area

Public buildings – i.e., buildings which are used by the populace as opposed to individually owned buildings[2] – are identified in the archaeological record based on their scale and construction quality, which together imply the controlled use of human labor.[3] That is to say, the amount of capital needed to build such structures precludes the possibility that an individual or family could have built them on their own.

It is relatively common to find public buildings in the immediate vicinity of the city gate.[4] Tripartite buildings are particularly conspicuous, and are found near the gates of Beersheba III-II,[5] 'En Haseva,[6] Hazor X-IX,[7] Kinneret II,[8] Lachish III (citadel gate),[9] and Megiddo IVA.[10] The specific function of these buildings has sparked a robust debate

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[1] Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 267.

[2] Reich and Katzenstein, "Glossary," 319.

[3] D. W. Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah: A Socio-Archaeological Approach* (JSOTSS 109; The Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 86.

[4] See Herr, "Tripartite," 47-9 and fig. 2.; Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 17; John D. Currid, "Rectangular Storehouse Construction during the Israelite Iron Age," *ZDPV* 108 (1992): 101; Faust, *Israelite Society*, 113; "Accessibility, Defense, and Town Planning in Iron Age Israel," *TA* 29 (2002): 306 and n.4.

[5] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 14; cf. Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I*, pl. 84.

[6] Cohen and Yisrael, "Iron Age Fortresses," 229; the structure here, strictly speaking, is a series of four long, narrow magazines.

[7] Amnon Ben-Tor, "Tel Hazor, 1993," *IEJ* 43 (1993): 253.

[8] Fritz, "Kinneret," 199; cf. Juha Pakkala, Stefan Münger, and Jürgen Zangenberg, "Kinneret Regional Project: Tel Kinrot Excavations. Tel Kinrot – Tell el-'Oreme – Kinneret" (Proceedings of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East; Vantaa, 2004; Cited 16 May 2012; online: http://www.kinneret-excavations.org/ download_files/Pak_Mue_Zang_2004.pdf), 24-5; Jürgen Zangenberg, Stefan Münger, and Juha Pakkala, "Excavations on the Sea of Galilee: The 2004 Season of the German-Finnish-Swiss Expedition to Tel Kinrot," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes* 9/10 (2005): 187.

[9] Ussishkin, "Area PAL.," 831.

[10] Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," fig. 16.

spanning decades; the most prominent theories as to their use include horse stables,[1] storage buildings,[2] or marketplaces.[3] Whichever explanations are correct, the fact that the buildings are public structures is agreed upon by all, and their placement near the central and convenient gateway would suit any of these purposes.[4]

In the Hebrew Bible there are a number of references to ערי מסכנות "storage cities,"[5] (בית) אסופים "storehouses,"[6] and אוצרות "treasuries."[7] It is difficult to identify confidently any of these terms with archaeological remains, though attempts to do so have of course been made.[8] In any case, the tripartite buildings and smaller storage rooms (discussed below) are good candidates for identification with these terms. In one text, Neh 12:25, there is a direct association of storehouses and the gate:[9]

Neh 12:25 – מתניה ובקבקיה עבדיה משלם טלמון עקוב שמרים שוערים משמר בַּאֲסֻפֵּי השערים

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[1] See John S. Holladay, Jr., "The Stables of Ancient Israel: Functional Determinants of Stable Reconstruction and the Interpretation of Pillared Building Remains of the Palestinian Iron Age," in *Archaeology of Jordan and Other Studies* (ed. L. T. Geraty and L. G. Herr; Berrion Springs: Andrews University Press, 1986), 103-65.

[2] E.g., see Ze'ev Herzog, "The Storehouses," in *Beer-Sheba I: Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba 1969-1971 Seasons* (ed. Y. Aharoni; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1973), 23-30; cf. Ze'ev Herzog, "Administrative Structures in the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 223-8.

[3] See Herr, "Tripartite."

[4] For recent surveys of the tripartite buildings, see Blakely, "Reconciling Two Maps" and "Davidic and Solomonic Bazaars"; Currid, "Rectangular Storehouse Construction"; Herr, "Tripartite"; Moshe Kochavi, "The Eleventh-Century BCE Tripartite Pillar Building at Tel Hadar," in *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition: Thirteenth to Early Tenth Centuries BCE* (ed. S. Gitin, A. Mazar, and E. Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 468-78.

[5] See Exod 1:11 (with reference to Egypt); 1 Kgs 9:19 (= 2 Chr 8:4, 6); 2 Chr 16:4; 17:12; 32:28.

[6] See 1 Chr 26:15, 17; Neh 12:25.

[7] E.g., see 2 Kgs 14:14; 20:13; Joel 1:17; Neh 13:12.

[8] Herzog, for instance, connects the tripartite buildings to the Biblical בית המסכנות which were used for storing foodstuffs, and distinguishes the אוצרות as non-public storehouses for keeping weapons and precious metals ("Administrative Structures," 227-9).

[9] Cf. also Deut 14:28 – "At the end of every three years, you will bring a tenth of all your produce for that year and store it within your gates." This reference, however, is probably better understood (along with most occurrences in Deut) as a metaphorical usage of שער; see Ch. 11.

"Mattanya, Baqbuqya, Ovadya, Meshullam, Talmon, and Aquv were guards – gatekeepers – charged with keeping watch over the storehouses of the gates."

To this we should compare a Neo-Babylonian text from the time of Nabonidus (6th century), which mentions that garments were stored *ina bīt qāti ša KÁ* "in the storehouse of the gate."[1]

In addition to tripartite buildings, a number of smaller storehouses have been found very near or even directly adjacent to the gatehouse:

Arad X. (Fig. 6.6) In the northeast corner of the fortress (and sharing a wall with the gatehouse) is a storeroom (ca. 10 x 12m) in the shape of a three-room "Israelite" house.[2]

Ashdod IX-VII. (Fig. 6.7) Storerooms which adjoined the north side of Ashdod's six-chamber gate included a hoard of iron tools and, tellingly, a pair of scales and a collection of stone and bronze weights which were likely used for weighing merchandise in the gate.[3]

Bethsaida V. (Fig. 6.8) A small building (ca. 10 x 7m), divided by walls into four rooms, adjoins the south side of the gatehouse. The building's contents – thousands of small potsherds, including seventeen buckets' worth in one small room alone – led the excavators to conclude that it was used as a storeroom.[4]

Tel 'Ira St. VII-VI. (Fig. 6.9) A semi-subterranean L-shaped building of ca. 30 m^2 was found only a few steps inside the gatehouse. The room suffered a violent

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[1] *CAD* B, 22a.
[2] Herzog, "The Fortress Mound," 33.
[3] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 25, 28; 91-96.
[4] Arav, "Final Report," 53.

destruction, as evidenced by the large amount of ash and broken, restorable vessels found inside. Found *in situ*, and partially buried in the floor, were a large circular mortar and the bottoms of 30 storage pithoi.[1]

Tell el-Kheleifeh. (Fig. 6.10) A block of four rooms – two small square rooms (ca. 1m^2 each) and two long narrow halls (ca. 1.2m wide and 4.7m long) were built adjoining the east side of the gatehouse and the interior of the city wall. The function of these rooms is unknown. The original excavators suggested that they may have been either granaries or secret passages so that the guards inside the gatehouse could retreat from the chambers in the event that one of the pairs of doors (sic) was breached by enemies (!).[2] Pratico suggests that the rooms may have been the foundations of a stairway.[3] While Pratico's suggestion is possible – perhaps even probable – the entire block of rooms (ca. 4.5 x 8m) surely would not have been needed for this purpose, and storage of some sort seems most likely given the long, narrow shape of the two larger rooms (see Fig.).

Lachish IV-III. (Fig. 6.11) Adjoining the north flank of the gatehouse was a very small room (4014), ca. 2.9 x 5.3m, built with walls only 0.5m thick.[4] Inside this unassuming structure were the remains of 46 restorable storage jars – evidently arranged on shelves – three of which bore lmlk stamp impressions.[5]

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[1] Beit-Arieh, *Tel 'Ira*, 83-7.
[2] Gary Pratico, *Nelson Glueck's 1938-1940 Excavations at Tell el-Kheleifah: A Reappraisal* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 27.
[3] Pratico, "Nelson Glueck's 1938-1940 Excavations," 14.
[4] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 56 fig. 15.
[5] Ussishkin, "Area GE," 644.

Megiddo VA-IVB. (Fig. 6.12) Along the inside western wall of the six-chamber gatehouse was a series of five small non-domestic rooms. These are scarcely mentioned in the excavation reports save two notable finds - a juglet and the head to a minature bone mallet.[1] The rooms are plausibly interpreted as a combination of a stairwell to the roof of the gatehouse, storerooms, or rooms of an otherwise utilitarian nature.

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[1] See Loud, *Megiddo II*, 163 and plates 91:3, 148:7, and 197:17.
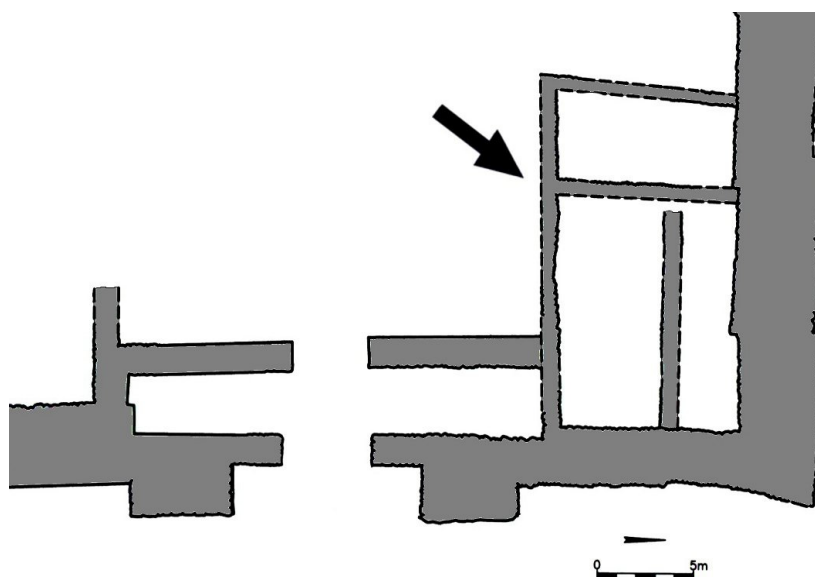
Figure 6.6. Storehouse adjoining the gatehouse at Arad X [1]
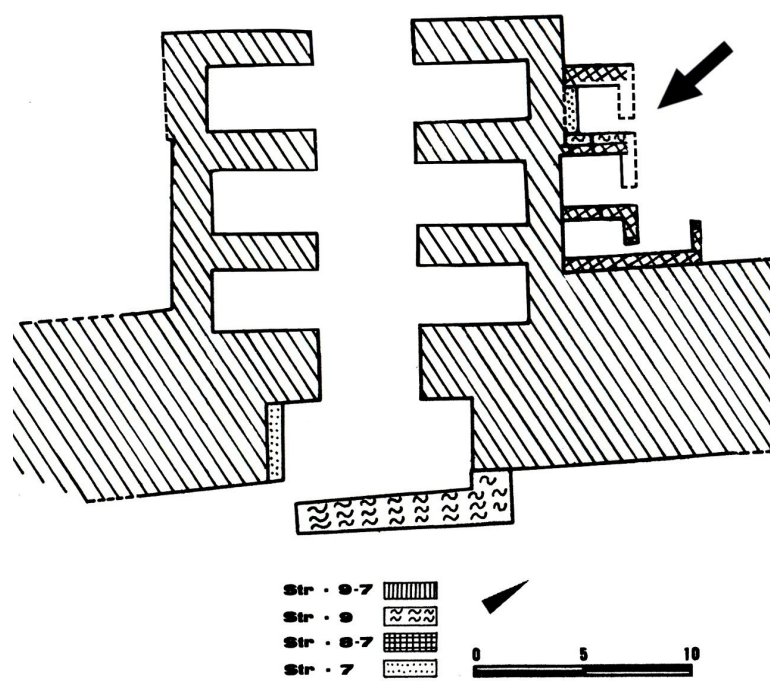
Figure 6.7. Storehouse adjoining the gatehouse at Ashdod 9-7. [2]

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[1] Adapted from Herzog, "The Fortress Mound," 29 fig. 12.
[2] Adapted from Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, plan 2.
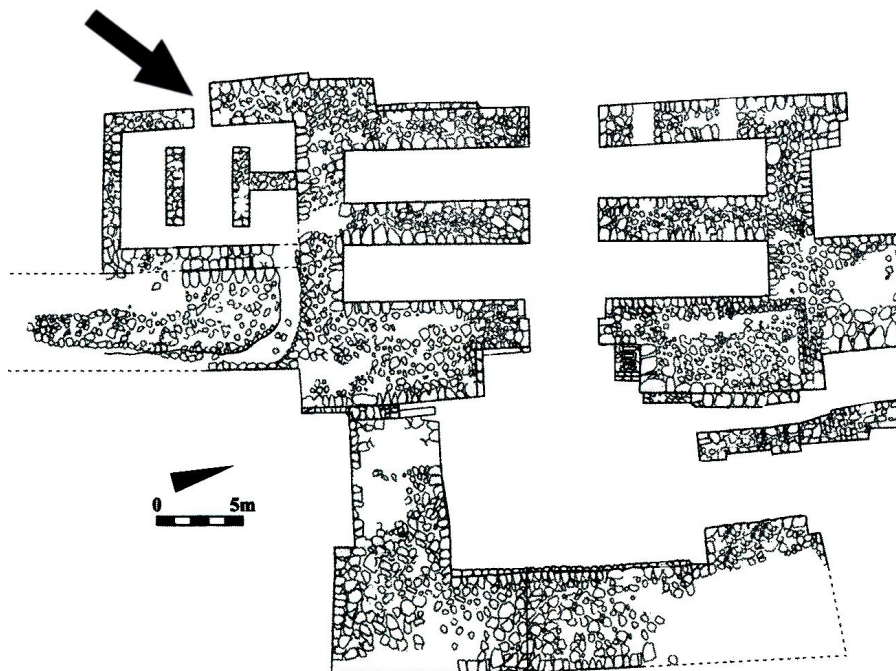
Figure 6.8. Storehouse adjoining the gatehouse of Bethsaida V.[1]
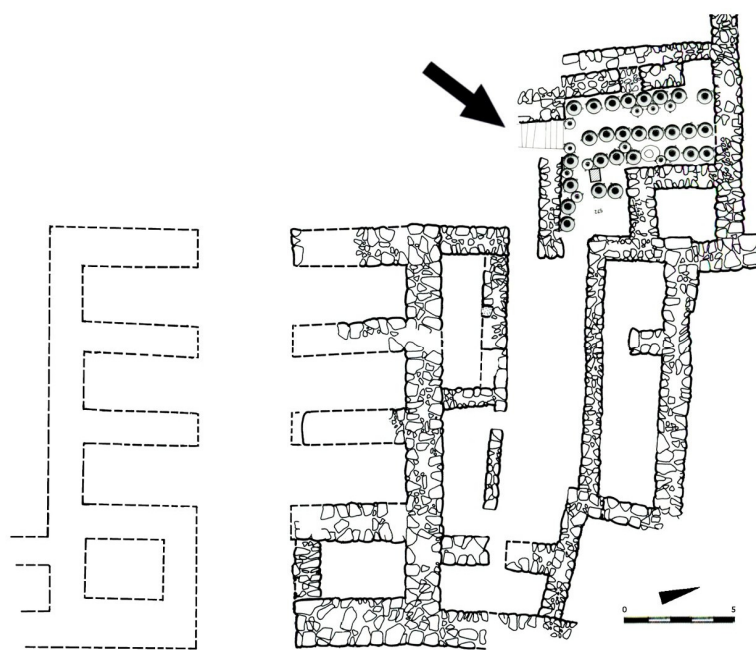
Figure 6.9. Storehouse near the gatehouse of Tel 'Ira, with pithoi reconstructed as found.[1]

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[1] Adapted from Arav, "Final Report," 7, fig. 1.2.
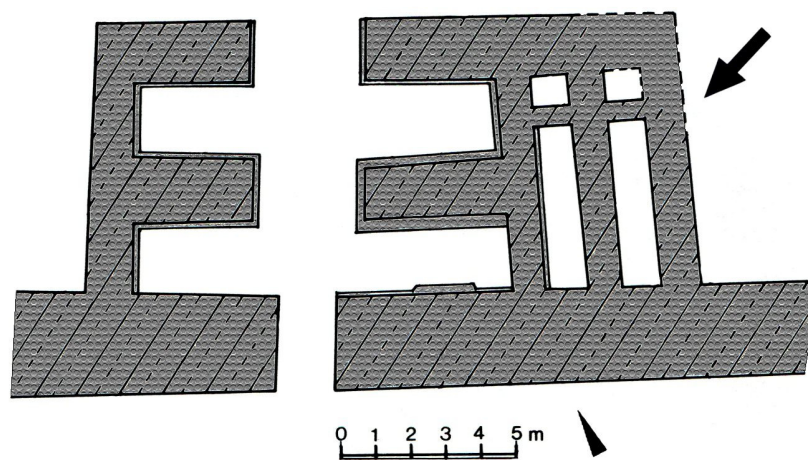
Figure 6.10. Storehouse (?) adjoining the gatehouse of Tell el-Kheleifeh[2]
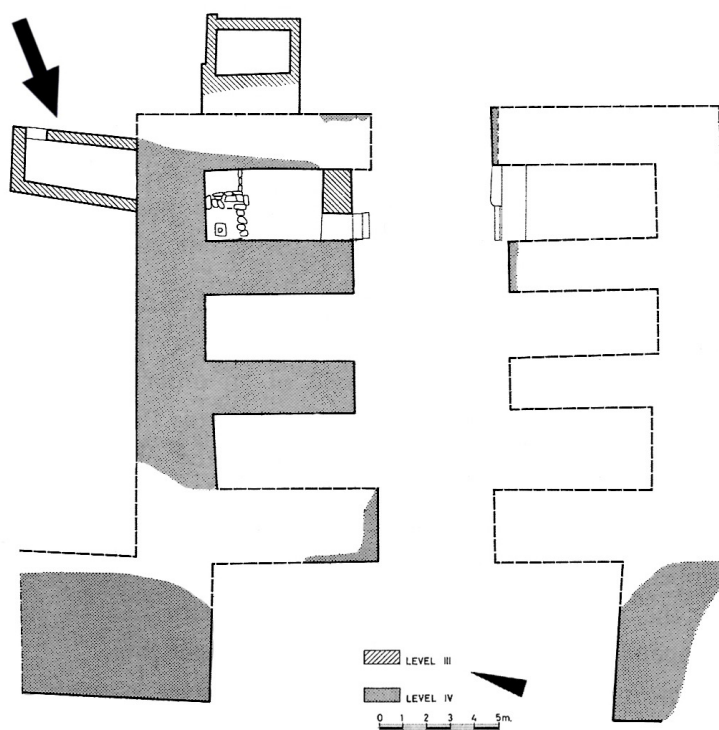
Figure 6.11. Storehouse adjoining the gatehouse of Lachish IV-III.[1]

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[1] Adapted from Beit-Arieh, *Tel 'Ira*, 68 fig. 3.56, and 87 fig. 3.81.
[2] Adapted from Pratico, *Nelson Glueck's 1938-1940 Excavations*, 177 pl. 8.
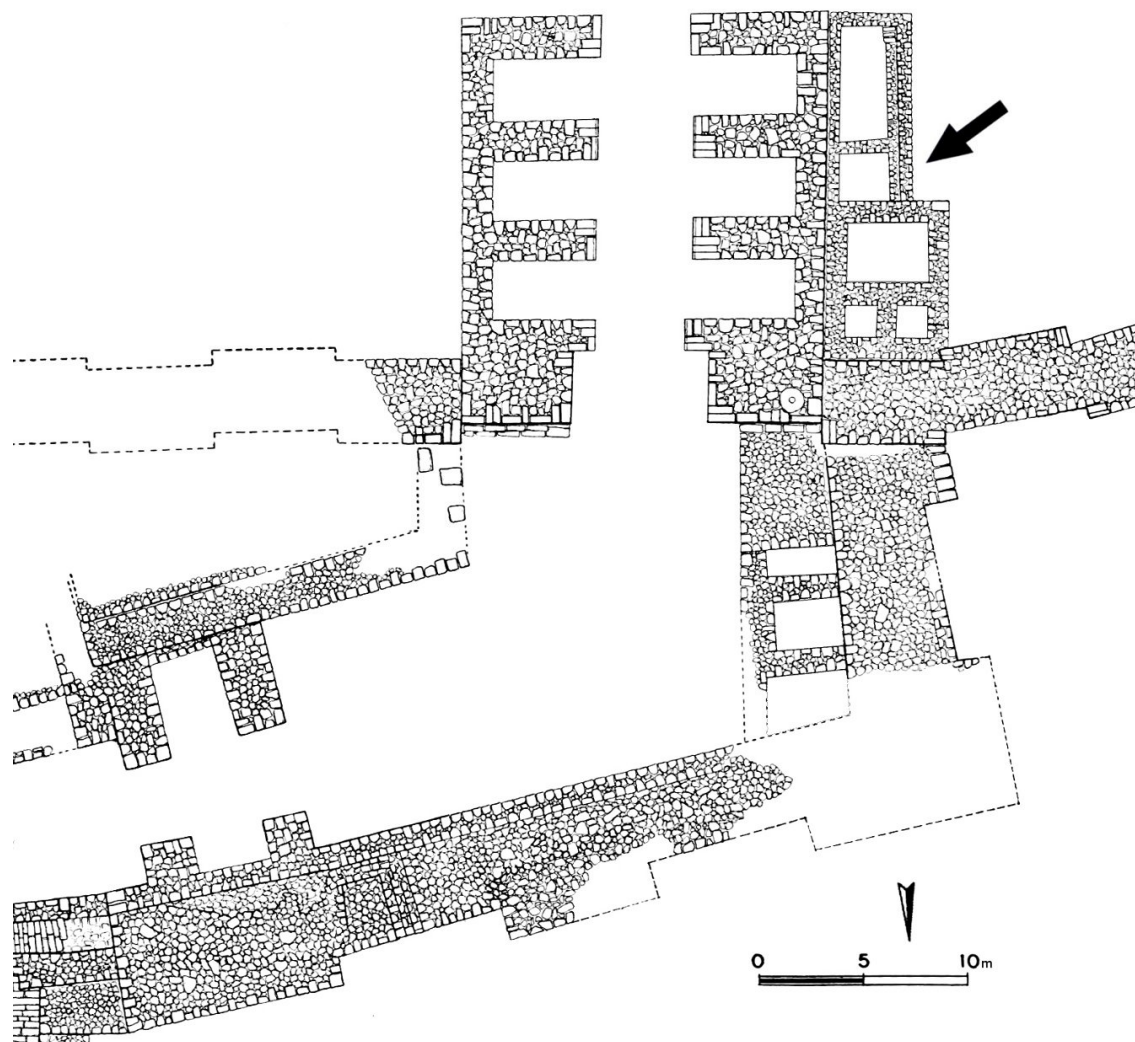
Figure 6.12. Storehouses (?) adjoining the gatehouse of Megiddo VA-IVB.[2]

[1] Adapted from Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 56 fig. 15.
[2] Adapted from Loud, *Megiddo II*, 48 fig. 105.

Additionally, a number of other public buildings have also been discovered very near a town's primary gatehouse; to wit:

Beersheba III-II. (Fig. 6.13) A large building (416) – "the largest and most beautiful building in Beer-sheba" – is called the governor's residence by the excavators.[1] This structure measures ca. 15 x 18m and includes three long halls (storerooms), living quarters, and perhaps evidence of a stairwell to an upper story. One of the storage magazines is built with ashlar masonry and has a "monumental façade."[2] The east end of the building forms the edge of the town's interior plaza, only a few steps from the gatehouse.

Tell el-Far'ah (N). In the level following the 9th century, there was a large building near the town gate, with a closed courtyard, evidence of an upper story, and a storeroom in the back with about 150 storage jars. The excavator, R. de Vaux, concluded that the dimensions, position, and contents of the building all point to the structure being a public building, and that it was probably used in an official capacity as the residence of the governor or as an administration center.[3]

Gezer VIII. (Fig. 6.14) A large public building with an open courtyard (Palace 10,000), was found just west of the 10th century six-chamber gate, and is thought to have been integrally related to the gatehouse. The masonry of the building is high quality ashlars: "massive, roughly-squared blocks."[4] The building was mostly empty, but a few smashed storage jars and bowls on the floor dated the destruction to the late-tenth

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[1] Herzog, "Israelite City Planning," 41; Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 14.

[2] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 14.

[3] Roland de Vaux, "The Excavations at Tell el-Far'ah and the Site of Ancient Tirzah," *PEQ* 88 (1956): 134.

[4] Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 26.

century.[1] Amidst the debris which covered the floors (to a depth of up to 1 m) were large quantities of plaster bits which carried a smooth finish; presumably these were from the interior walls of the building.[2] Dever tentatively identified the function of this building as a "combination administrative center-barracks."[3] Parts of the building were reused multiple times, into the late 8th century.[4]

Tel Jezreel. (Fig. 6.15) A large building (23 x 15m) was found adjoining the north side of the gatehouse and the interior of the casemate wall which surrounds the site. The building is divided into two wings and incorporates ashlar masonry and a thick white plaster floor. "The remains all belong to a single public structure, but its function is unknown."[5]

Megiddo VIA, VA-IVB, III. (Figs. 6.16-6.18) A series of rooms along the interior walls of the inter-gate plaza survived in various configurations for ca. 400 years. The rooms' location directly in the middle of the gate complex of each period precludes their being domestic, and points to their use in some public capacity, perhaps for tax collection or other commerce-related functions. The original excavators said the rooms (in their St. VIA configuration) may serve as "a guardroom or perhaps a customs post, whence careful survey could be made of everyone and everything entering the city."[6]

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[1] Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 26; cf. William G. Dever, "Further Evidence on the Date of the Outer Wall at Gezer," *BASOR* 289 (1993): 35.
[2] Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 26.
[3] Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 26.
[4] Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 26.
[5] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel," 26.
[6] Loud, *Megiddo II*, 45; cf. fig. 96.
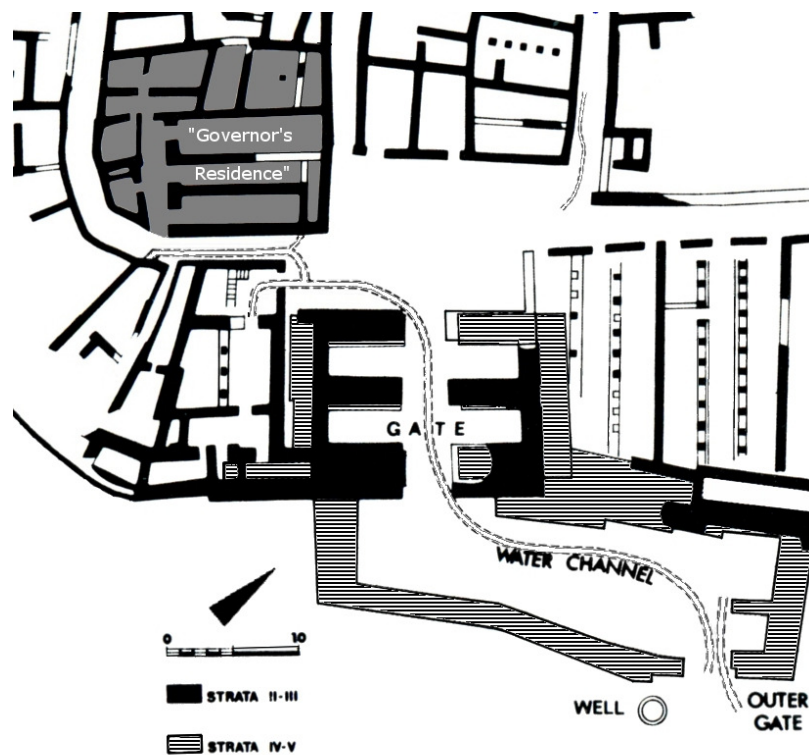
Figure 6.13. Public building near the gatehouse of Beersheba III-II (shaded).[1]
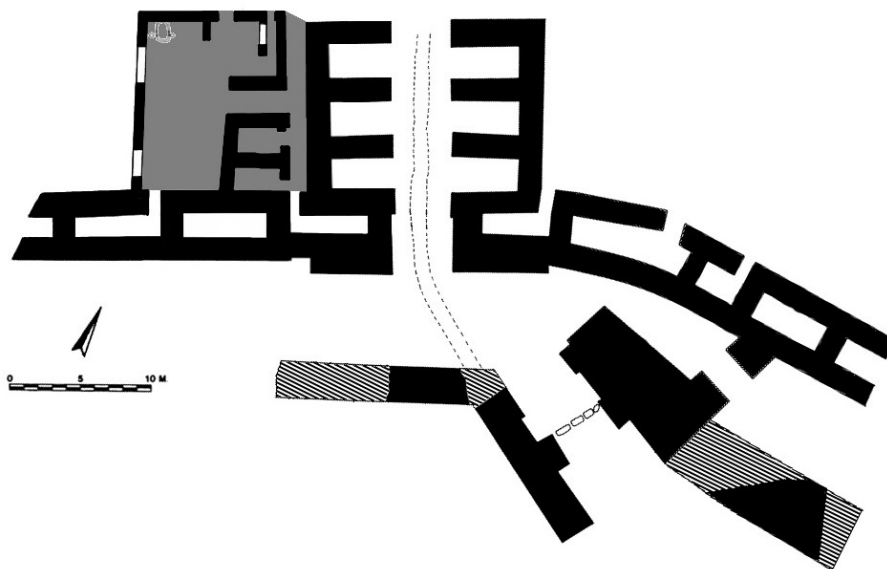
Figure 6.14. Public buildings near the gatehouse of Gezer (shaded).[2]

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[1] Adapted from Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 51, fig. 1.

[2] Adapted from Dever, "Further Evidence," 34, fig. 1, and Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 28 fig. 18.
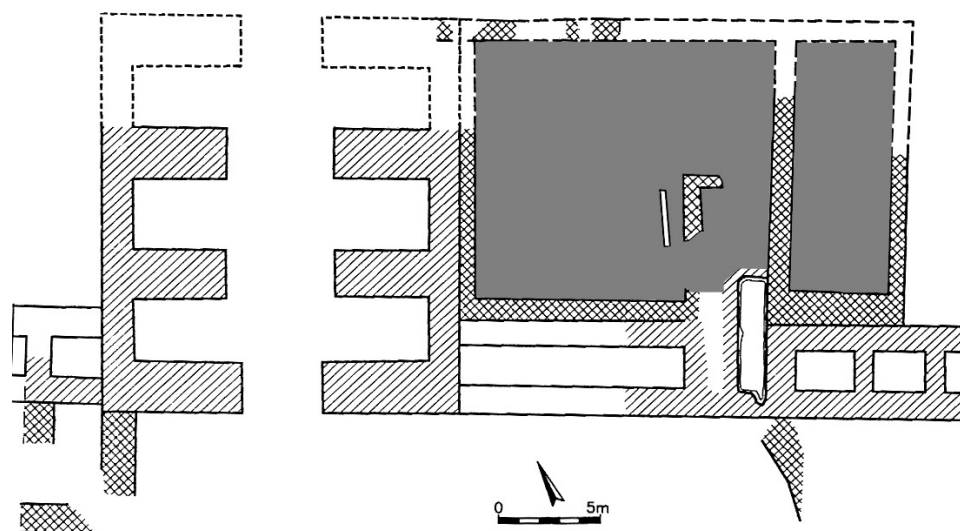
Figure 6.15. Public buildings near the gatehouse of Jezreel (shaded). [1]
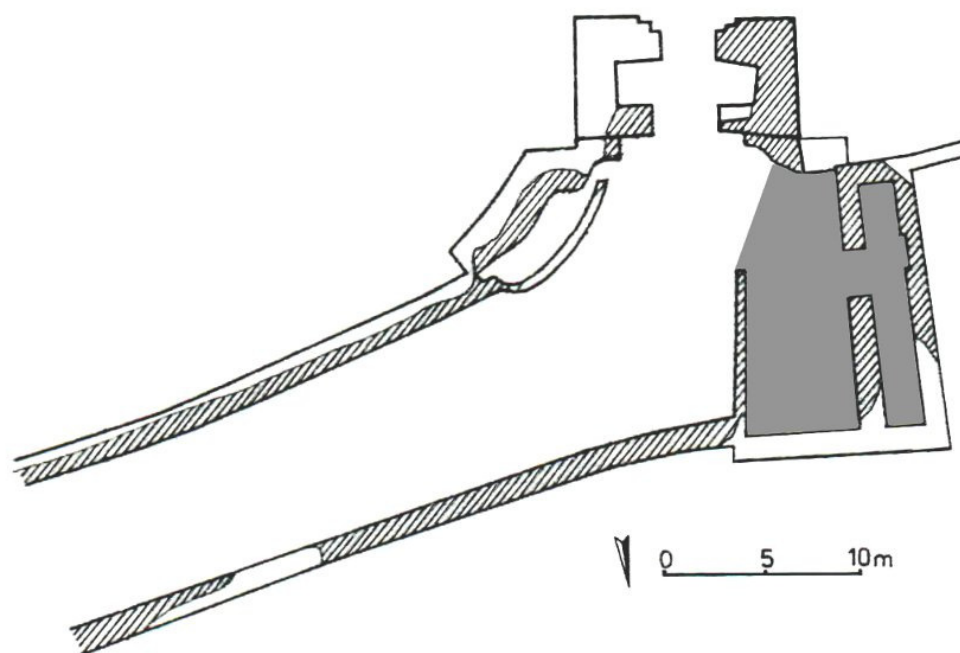
Figure 6.16. Public buildings near the gatehouse of Megiddo VIA (shaded). [2]

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[1] Adapted from Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Tel Jezreel 1994-1996," 12 fig. 5.
[2] Adapted from Herzog, *The City Gate*, fig. 76.
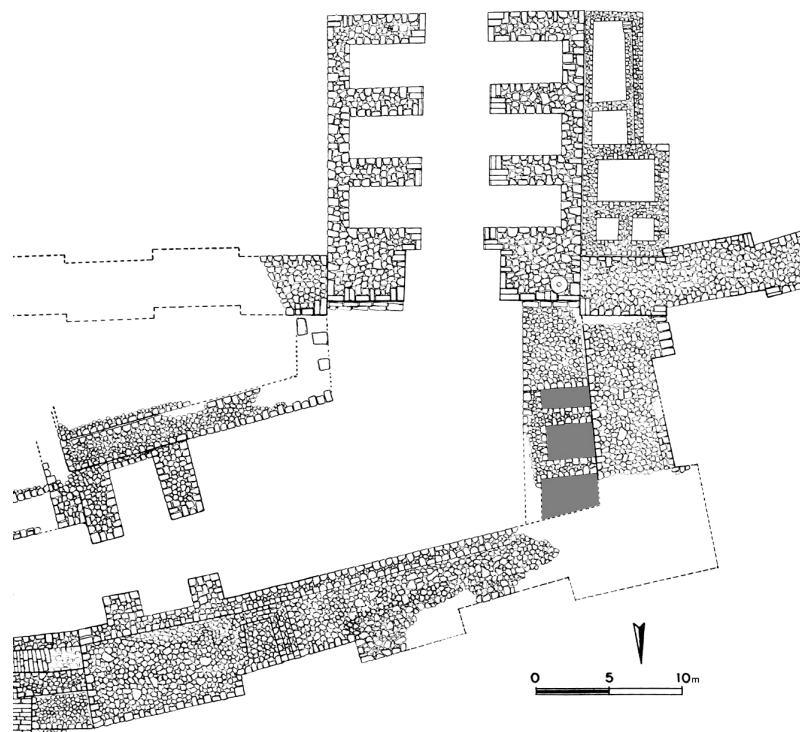
Figure 6.17. Public buildings near the gatehouse of Megiddo VA-IVB (shaded).[1]

Figure 6.18. Public building near the gatehouse of Megiddo III (shaded).[2]

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[1] Adapted from Loud, *Megiddo II*, 48 fig. 105.
[2] Adapted from Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, fig. 89.

Finally, there may have also been an association of springs or wells with gates. In the Biblical literature, a well is described near the gate of Bethlehem (2 Sam 23:15-6), and another is associated with the town of Beersheba (Gen 21:30-1). Excavations at the latter site have in fact revealed an enormously deep well just outside of the gate complex.[1] In Jerusalem, fortifications and a water collection system were found associated with the Gihon spring as early as the MB II period;[2] compare the Biblical references to a Spring Gate (Neh 3:15) and a Water Gate (3:26) in the Persian period, at least one of which may refer to the same area.[3] At Beth Shemesh, in the Judean Shephelah, an opening to the city's massive Iron Age cistern – capable of holding 7,500 cubit feet of water – was found in the middle of the plaza inside the gate, and a stairway down into the cistern was nearby.[4] Similarly, at Kh. al-Mudayna, what appears to be a water system (a 4 m wide depression) was found about 15 m south of the gatehouse in an open plaza.[5]

To summarize, the above data show that there was a tendency for public buildings to cluster near the city gate, producing a public commercial zone of the town and heightening the civic functionality of the gate area. It seems reasonable to assume, based

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[1] Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 56.

[2] Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, "The History of the Gihon Spring in Jerusalem," *Levant* 36 (2004): 212-3; "Jerusalem, City of David," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 115 (2003): 69-71.

[3] Cf. M. Burrows, "Nehemiah 3:1-32 as a Source for the Topography of Ancient Jerusalem," *AASOR* 14 (1933-34): 115-40.

[4] Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, "Beth-Shemesh: Culture Conflict on Judah's Frontier," *BAR* 23/1 (1997): 42-49, 75-77.

[5] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 263.

on the broader definition of שער described above, that functions associated with the gate

may have occurred in some of these related public buildings.[1]

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[1] Faust, *Israelite Society*, 115, 121.

CHAPTER SEVEN
On the Origins of the Iron II Chambered Gate

Given the very consistent typology of the pier-and-chamber design of Iron II gatehouses, their ubiquity in the southern Levant for a period of over 400 years, and their sudden appearance ca. 1000, another obvious question to ask is where this design originated. Below I will discuss possible points of origin, the difficulties involved in answering such a question, and whether (and to what degree) the typical features of an Iron II gatehouse are novel.

We should begin by pointing out the numerous and substantial difficulties which impede any inquiry as to the chambered gatehouse's origin. First, the fact that what survives of the gatehouses' architecture is rarely more than a meter or two of superstructure means that we are comparing floor plans and their hypothetical (and sometimes speculative) reconstructions. It is possible that there were changes in superstructure design in various times and/or regions of which we are completely unaware. Second, as discussed in the introduction, the definition of a "chambered gatehouse" is not clear, and any definition adopted is ultimately arbitrary. Changing our definition slightly might include or exclude some gates as formal predecessors.

Another important point to discuss here is the role of trans-cultural diffusion, a process which is likely to explain (at least in part) the ubiquity and uniformity of Iron II chambered gates among different people.[1] The spread of cultural traits among

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[1] See Henrika Kuklick, "Diffusionism," in *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (ed. A. Barnard and J. Spencer; 2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 2010), 198-9.

different peoples through various forms of contact is a well-attested phenomenon, and Levantine achaeologists commonly posit cultural – including architectural – sharing among the societies of the ancient Near East.[1] To cite but one example, the typical MB gate with six internal buttresses is said to have originated in N. Syria and spread throughout the Levant in the MB II period.[2]

A danger associated with this approach is the tendency to assign an original ethnicity to a particular item of material culture. In the case of the Iron II gates, for example, Y. Yadin famously suggested that a royal architect in Jerusalem drew up blueprints for the six-chamber gates of Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer,[3] which helped give rise to the belief that six-chamber gates were a uniquely Israelite phenomenon. Once such an identification is made, the ethnically labeled item can lead directly to questionable historical reconstructions. For instance, I. Finkelstein has recently argued that Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad in Moab was built by the Biblical King Omri, based in part on its construction similarities with 9th c. Cisjordanian urban centers, including a six-chamber gate at the site.[4] As we will see, the assignment of ethnicity to a particular feature of material culture is often quite difficult.

A second danger with invoking cultural diffusion is to fall into the unfortunately common error of inferring causation from mere correlation. To put this in concrete terms:

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[1] E.g., see Chadwick, "Changing Forms," 183.
[2] Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates"; Chadwick, "Changing Forms," 183.
[3] Yadin, "Solomon's City Wall"; *Art of Warfare*, 1:287-8.
[4] Israel Finkelstein, "Omride Architecture," *ZDPV* 116/2 (2000): 127-8. See my reservations about Finkestein's conclusions in Daniel A. Frese and David Noel Freedman, "Samaria I as a Chronological Anchor of Finkelstein's Low Chronology: An Appraisal," in *Eretz Israel* 29 (Ephraim Stern Volume; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and The Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), 39*.

even if we were to locate very similar gatehouses in an earlier time period (either in the southern Levant or elsewhere), it does not follow that the earlier gatehouses are the source and inspiration for our later Iron II gatehouses. Unless there is a plausible vehicle of transmission for the technology (temporal and geographic proximity at minimum), the connection between the two types must remain very tentative.[1]

Potential Middle Bronze Antecedents

As discussed above, it is a widely held belief that MB Levantine gatehouses (found in N. Syria and through the southern Levant) are the forebears of Iron II type gatehouses. I have concluded above that, due to the very different architectural nature of the two different gatehouse forms – the reconstructed roofing in particular – that this cannot be the case, and that the similarities between the two gatehouse types is only superficial. It is also worth noting that a period of at least 500 years separates the two gatehouse types, during which there were few fortified urban centers, and that very few (if any) of the earlier gatehouses survived until the Iron II period. Thus, even if the forms of MB and Iron II gatehouses were quite similar, how the technical knowledge for building such structures might have been passed down to the Iron II architects would be problematic.

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[1] Kuklick, "Diffusionism," 198-9.

Potential Egyptian Antecedents

Gates in Egypt furnish very little comparative material for our purposes here.[1] In Middle Kingdom (2106-1786)[2] monuments, gates were long narrow passages between massive towers which protruded from the curtain walls. There are no chambers, and the middle of the passage may not have been roofed (see Fig. 7.1).[3]

By the New Kingdom (1550-1069), the Egyptians had adopted new weapons and war tactics, and had erected a number of Canaanite-style fortresses (even called by the Semitic term migdol) along the eastern Delta and northern Sinai.[4] These fortresses are known to us from visual representations in Egyptian art of the period, and some have now been located and excavated.[5] Additionally – and remarkably – a gatehouse of the same period and style was preserved all the way up to its crenellated parapets in Ramesses III's mortuary temple, Medinet Habu.[6] The Medinet Habu gate (sometimes called the Migdol Gate or the Syrian Gate) has two massive towers which flank the progressively narrowing roadway which runs between it. There are rooms and windows in the second and third story of the gate's twin towers, but nothing which remotely resembles the open chambers of Levantine gatehouses, as can be seen from the plan below (Fig. 7.2).

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[1] For a helpful survey, see A. W. Lawrence, "Ancient Egyptian Fortifications," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 51 (1965): 69-94.

[2] Dates for Egyptian chronology are taken from Kenneth A. Kitchen, "The Chronology of Ancient Egypt," *World Archaeology* 23/2 (1991): 206.

[3] Lawrence, "Ancient Egyptian Fortifications," 85.

[4] Carola Vogel and Brian Delf, *The Fortifications of Ancient Egypt 3000-1780 BC* (Oxford: Osprey, 2010), 55-57.

[5] See James K. Hoffmeier, "'The Walls of the Ruler' in Egyptian Literature and the Archaeological Record: Investigating Egypt's Eastern Frontier in the Bronze Age," *BASOR* 343 (2006): 1-20 and references there.

[6] See Uvo Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu. Vol. I: General Plans and Views* (OIP 21; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 90.
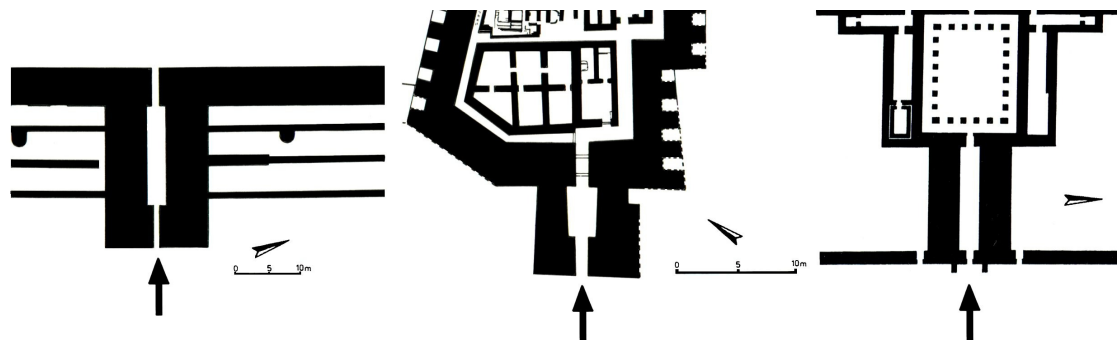
Figure 7.1. Three gates of the Middle Kingdom period. Fortress of Senusret III at Kuban (left);[1] Middle Kingdom fort at Shalfak (middle);[2] and Mortuary Temple of Senusret I (right).[3]
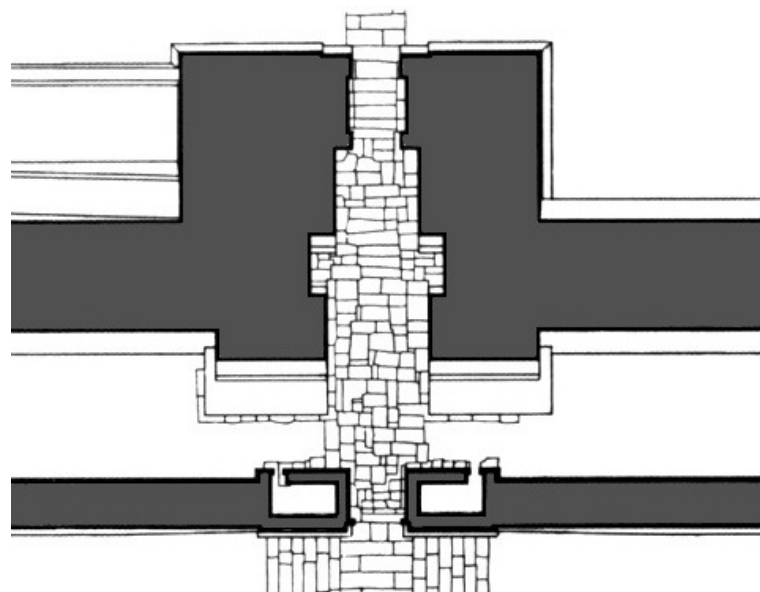
Figure 7.2. The "Syrian Gate" of Medinet Habu, built by Ramesses III (12th century); plan shows both outer wall (bottom) and main wall with gate.[4]

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[1] Adapted from Alexander Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture, Vol. 2: The First Intermediate Period, the Middle Kingdom, and the Second Intermediate Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 209 fig. 94.

[2] Adapted from Badawy, *Egyptian Architecture 2*, 223 fig. 104.

[3] Adapted from William S. Smith and W. K. Simpson, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (3rd ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 92 fig. 163; N.B.: scale unknown.

[4] Adapted from Hölscher, *Medinet Habu*, pl. 30.

Other monumental New Kingdom structures also lack chambered gates; temples, e.g., have a series of massive pylon façades with gates piercing each successive pylon. These are, similar to the Medinet Habu gate, simply narrow passages (see Fig. 7.3).
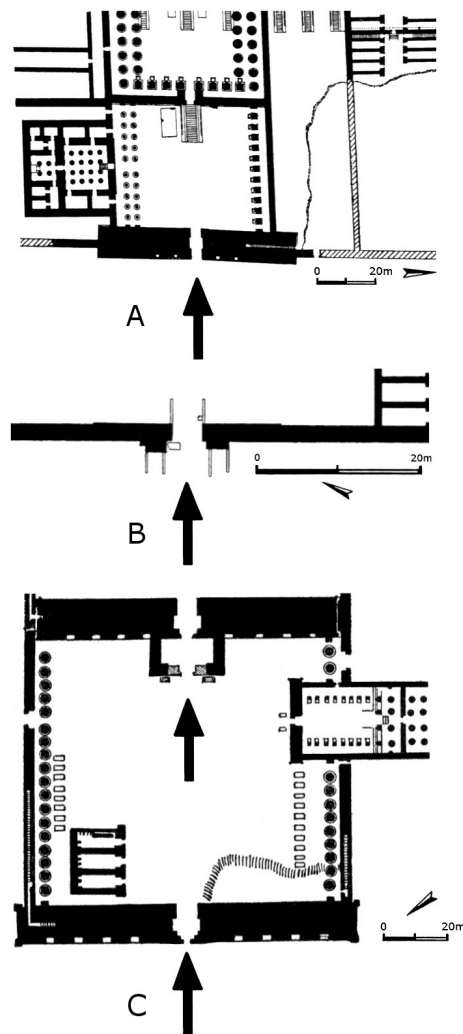
Figure 7.3. Three New Kingdom gate passages. A: Entrance to the Ramesseum, Thebes (13th c.);[1] B: Entrance to the North Palace at Amarna (14th c.);[2] C: The first two pylon gates of the precinct of Amon-Re at Karnak (ca. 13th c.).[3]

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[1] Smith and Simpson, *Art and Architecture*, 211 fig. 354.
[2] Smith and Simpson, *Art and Architecture*, 183 fig. 305.
[3] E. Baldwin Smith, *Egyptian Architecture as Cultural Expression* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1938), pl. 48.2.

Potential Syro-Hittite Antecedents

A number of researchers have posited that the architectural style of the early Israelite monarchy was influenced by the Syro-Hittites of the same period. [1] The reasons given for this assertion are as follows. First, David and Solomon are both described as having expanded their kingdoms well into northern Syria, up to and including the town of Hamath.[2] Thus it is plausible that David borrowed architecture from this region: "During this period there flourished in those kingdoms [in N. Syria] a well-developed culture of monumental architecture… So it is no wonder that David took from there his plans for royal building projects."[3] Moreover, there are explicit Biblical claims that Phoenician materials, architects and craftsmen were employed to build both the temple of Yahweh and royal palaces in Jerusalem.[4]

Second, similar monumental architecture has been excavated in both Israel and N. Syria from this time period, which seems to confirm the above point.[5] A particular style of palace known as a bit hilani (*bīt ḫilāni*) is commonly ascribed a N. Syrian origin, and a number of prominent palaces of the 10th century (Megiddo VA-IVB's palaces 1723 and 6000, as well as Solomon's palace in Jerusalem, based on the Biblical descriptions) are of that type.[6] Moreover, Solomon's "House of the Forest of Lebanon" is best paralleled by a

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[1] Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 408-9.

[2] See 2 Sam 8:9; 2 Chr 8:4.

[3] Yohanan Aharoni, "Building Activities of David and Solomon," *IEJ* 24 (1974): 15; cf. Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 212; Herzog, *The City Gate*, 173.

[4] 2 Sam 5:11; 1 Kgs 5; cf. Reich, "Palaces and Residencies," 202-3.

[5] See, e.g., Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich, "The Iron Age: Introduction," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 192.

[6] See David Ussishkin, "King Solomon's Palaces," *BA* 36/3 (1973): 78-105; Reich, "Palaces and Residencies."

Phoenician temple from Kition, Cyprus,[1] and the Solomonic Temple in Jerusalem is best paralleled by a temple at Tell Tayinat in N. Syria.[2]

Given this apparent dependence upon the material culture of the Phoenicians and Syro-Hittites – and specifically, customs related to monumental architecture – in exactly the period in which chambered gates arose, it is certainly reasonable to hypothesize that the form of Israelite gates was also based on northern influences. And, in fact, N. Syria provides very impressive parallels to the chambered gates of the southern Levant (see Fig. 7.4).
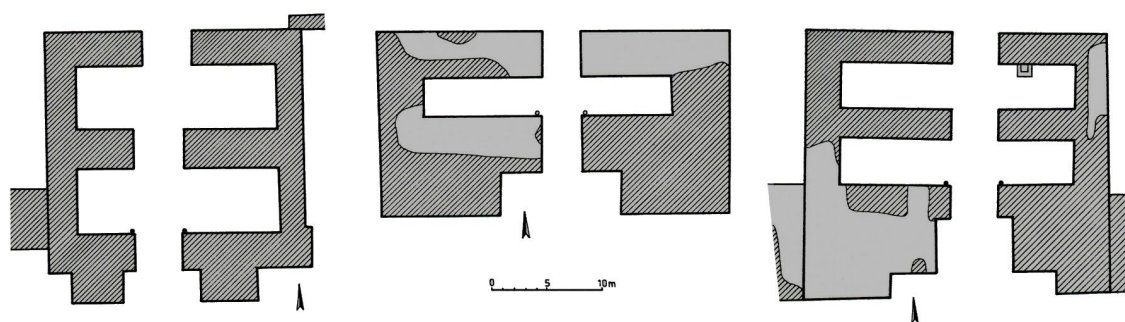
Figure 7.4. Three gates from N. Syria that are good parallels to the chambered gates of the southern Levant: Tel Halaf, southern citadel gate (left), Zincirli inner citadel gate (middle), and Carchemish south gate of the inner city (right).[3] These gates are dated variously to the 10th and 9th centuries, though scholarly opinion varies considerably.

However, there are difficulties with the proposed N. Syrian origin. The first (and most easily dismissed) is that not a single six-chamber gate has been found among the

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[1] Reich, "Palaces and Residencies," 202-3.
[2] Aharoni, "Building Activities," 15.
[3] Adapted from Herzog, *The City Gate*, figs. 109, 111, and 107, respectively.

numerous gates in Syria, whereas ten have now been found in the southern Levant.[1] To this, we might simply say (as Herzog does) that the four-chamber gate originated in N. Syria and was subsequently developed into a six-chamber form in Israel.[2] A more substantial problem is the early date of a number of gates in the southern Levant. The four-chamber gate of Ashdod St. X is the earliest, and dates to the last quarter of the 11th century.[3] Beersheba V, as well, is a four-chamber gate which dates to the early 10th century.[4] Three recently excavated gates can now be added to this list: the fortress gate of Kh. en-Nahas in Edom, and the two gates of Kh. Qeiyafa in Judah. These, as well, are four-chambered gates which are dated securely to the beginning of the tenth century.[5] If the early 10th c. date of origin for the chambered gate in N. Syria is correct, this means that at least four gates are contemporaneous with the earliest N. Syrian gates, and that the Ashdod gate is earlier than its purported source.

This of course brings up the final and most serious objection, which has to do with the firmness of our dating of the N. Syrian gates. To put it briefly, we are not very certain about their dates. Monumental buildings such as gates can be difficult to date in the best of circumstances, because they typically remain in use for a long time. In the case of the N. Syrian and Anatolian gates, this difficulty is compounded by the fact that

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[1] Namely: Ashdod, Tel Batash, Ekron, Gezer, Hazor, Tel 'Ira, Lachish (2), Megiddo, and Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad.

[2] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 173-4.

[3] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 53. This very early date has led some researchers to speculate that the six-chamber form might be a Philistine innovation which was adopted by the Israelites (Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 197; Herzog, *The City Gate*, 173).

[4] Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 53.

[5] Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 37; T. E. Levy, et al., "Lowland Edom and the High and Low Chronologies: Edomite State Formation, the Bible and Recent Archaeological Research in Southern Jordan," in *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text, and Science* (ed. T. E. Levy and T. Higham; London: Equinox, 2005), 139.

most of the relevant gates were excavated in the early 20th century, when archaeological

method was comparatively unsophisticated and excavators had little or no concern for

stratigraphical control.[1] In fact, dates have been (and still are!) assigned to many of these

gates based on the artistic style of the reliefs carved into their stone orthostats.[2] This is a

very crude method to date a monument, and the fact that the reliefs may have been added

after the initial construction or altered in the course of the centuries that followed make

such results all the more uncertain.

Herzog, for one, admits that the dating of these monuments should be approached

with the utmost caution. After reviewing the N. Syrian gates excavated before 1976, he

concludes that "all of the gates, from all types, appear in the 10th and 9th centuries,

without a clear distinction [between the centuries]."[3]

To augment the archaeological data, Herzog factors in two more considerations.

First, he notes that based on historical sources, we have good reason to believe city states

such as Carchemish and Malatya existed the 12th and 11th centuries, so it stands to reason

that there were fortified sites in the region during that time.[4] Second, Herzog points to

gate architecture. He claims that one can trace a progression in architectural style from

gates with four pilasters (which are "direct continuations" of Hittite gates from the 13th-

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[1] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 172.

[2] See David Ussishkin's seminal work on the topic, "The Neo-Hittite Monuments: Their Dating and Style" (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1965). Cf. also Herzog, *The City Gate*, 172; Albright, "Tell Beit Mirsim III," 17-18 and n. 4; Stefania Mazzoni, "Syria and the Chronology of the Iron Age," *Revista sobre Oriente Próximo y Egipto en la antigüedad* 3 (2000): 128, n. 58; J. D. Hawkins, "Karkamish and Karatepe: Neo-Hittite City-States in North Syria," in *CANE* 1-2:1299.

[3] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 172-3.

[4] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 173.

12th centuries),[1] to gates with two deep open chambers toward the back of the towers, and finally gates with four open chambers (see progression in Fig. 7.5).[2]
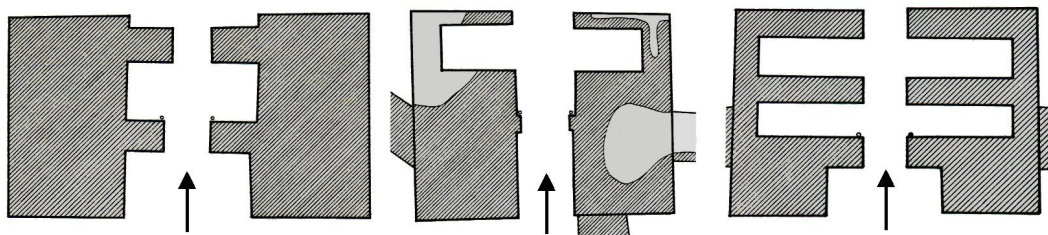
Figure 7.5. Gates which illustrate Z. Herzog's proposed progression of gatehouse types in N. Syria (all to same scale). From left to right: 1) Zincirli (citadel); 2) Karatepe (north gate); 3) Carchemish (western gate of outer city).[3]

Herzog also suggests that the adoption of the deep chamber design was in order to add civic functionality to the gatehouse, and perhaps to "enlarge the wall space [within the gatehouse] as much as possible in order to enable the multiplication of the reliefs on them."[4] Given the existence of fortified towns in the early Iron Age, and Herzog's proposed evolution in architecture which took place during the same period, his conclusion is that the four-chamber gatehouse originated (at some point) in Syria, and was adopted in the southern Levant during the first half of the 10th century.[5]

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[1] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 173. Naumann also argues that the Hittite gates of LB Anatolia directly influenced later gate architecture of N. Syria (*Architektur Kleinasiens*, 291). This proposed development is vulnerable to the same critique which I apply to the supposed evolution of MB to Iron II gates of the southern Levant; namely, that the very different floorplans would have necessitated dramatically different construction in the superstructure, to the extent that it is hard to claim any direct influence in the specifics of the construction.

[2] Herzog, *The City Gate*, xix.

[3] Adapted from Herzog, *The City Gate*, figs. 103, 105, 108.

[4] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 173.

[5] Herzog, *The City Gate*, 173-4.

The N. Syrian source of chambered gates is plausible – indeed, it may be the best hypothesis – but I am wary of Herzog's reconstruction. I am not convinced that we have a true progression in gate types which leads to chambered gates. In Fig. 7.5 above (which represents Herzog's own example of the transition),[1] we have gates from three different sites, each of which has an uncertain date. It is begging the question to place them in a typological sequence and then claim that they represent an evolutionary change.[2] Moreover, gates in the first two stages of Herzog's architectural progression (the citadel gate from Zincirli and both gates from Karatepe) Herzog himself dates to the 9th century, which obviously makes an early 10th century date for the third stage of the progression impossible.[3] In the end, whether or not there was an evolution in gate architecture as Herzog suggests, we are left with very little certainty about the absolute dates of the chambered N. Syrian gates. And this, ultimately, is the only criterion that matters, since the issue at hand is which gates appeared first.

To sum up: It is true that some N. Syrian and E. Anatolian gates are striking architectural parallels to the southern Levantine gates. It is also true that material culture such as architecture tends to move from an area of "higher" culture (such as N. Syria) to an area of "lower" culture (such as the peripheral states in the southern Levant) via

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[1] Herzog, *The City Gate*, xix.

[2] Moreover, it appears to me that the change from 1) Zincirli to 2) Karatepe is a rather dramatic innovation, not an evolutionary shift.

[3] The citadel gate at Zincirli is dated by Ussishkin to the middle of the 9th century (858-840), and Herzog follows Ussishkin on this point (*The City Gate*, 152-3). The gates of Karatepe as well are dated by Stern and Ussishkin to the ninth century (Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 407-8), though some scholars date them even later: Naumann (*Architektur Kleinasiens*, 300) and Stefania Mazzoni ("[Review of] Karatepe-Aslantas: Azatiwataya Die Bildwerke," *AJA* 112/4 [2008]: 4) both date the gates to the 8th century, while Irene J. Winter puts the north gate in the 9th c. and the south gate in the 8th c. ("On the Problems of Karatepe: The Reliefs and Their Context," *Anatolian Studies* 29 [1979]: 115-51). Herzog agrees with Stern and Ussishkin that the gates are from the 9th century (*The City Gate*, 163).

"hierarchical diffusion." Moreover, the first two points mentioned above – namely, the

demonstrable parallels in other examples of Israelite and N. Syrian monumental

architecture, and the Biblical testimony concerning David and Solomon's collaboration

with architects from the same region – make the case for a N. Syrian origin very strong

indeed. The only weakness in this theory – and it is a significant weakness – is that we

have no certainty of any N. Syrian chambered gates prior to the 10th century.

Potential Mesopotamian Antecedents

Monumental construction in ancient Mesopotamia is based on the use of many

parallel walls set out in a grid-like fashion, forming casemate-like rooms and open courts

(see Fig. 7.6). Such planning is ubiquitous: sprawling temples and palaces were set out

according to these principles for over a millennium and a half, both in the north and in the

south of the region, and by all of the various cultures which ruled from this area.

Because of this construction technique, the gate passages into such buildings will

commonly sever two or more parallel walls before terminating in an open courtyard

within the building.[1] The transverse rooms (i.e., "broad rooms") set between the parallel

walls, if split in the middle by the gate passage, are left open to form a pair of open

chambers on either side of the passage. If the gate passage proceed through the center of

multiple, "stacked" casemate broadrooms, the result will be multiple open chambers

along each side of the passage. Such gates bear a startling resemblance to southern

Levantine chambered gates (see, for example, Figs. 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.13, 7.16, 7.17 7.19).

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[1] Yasin Mahmoud al-Khalesi, "Mesopotamian Monumental Secular Architecture in the Second Millennium B.C." (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1975), 72.

In many other cases, however, the transverse rooms are stacked asymmetrically, and/or the doorways through them are staggered, producing a serpentine gate passage (see, for example, Figs. 7.11, 7.12, 7.14, 7.15, 7.18). Consequently, the gates with symmetric chambers that resemble the Iron II gatehouse design must be considered only a subset of the larger Mesopotamian gate tradition.[1] In addition to their transverse chambers, Mesopotamian gates are characterized by two towers that flank the main entrance and protrude from the gate's façade. This description of monumental Mesopotamian gates can be seen in dozens of cases, in buildings spanning some seventeen centuries (see Figs. below).

We should note that gate chambers were not an inevitable feature of Mesopotamian gates, even given the casemate construction of palaces and temples. The location of the gate might easily have been chosen such that the gate formed a narrow passage between closed casemate rooms, or (to put it differently) the punctured chambers might easily have been closed with additional walls, producing a hallway-like passage without open chambers. Given the consistent use of open broad rooms along the gate passage (or as a part of the passage, in the case of serpentine entrances), and the very long tradition of building such gate passages, we must conclude that this was a considered choice of the builders.

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[1] For a typology and conspectus of Assyrian palace gates ("reception suites"), see Geoffrey Turner, "The State Apartments of Late Assyrian Palaces," *Iraq* 32/2 (1970): 177-213, esp. pls. 38-41.
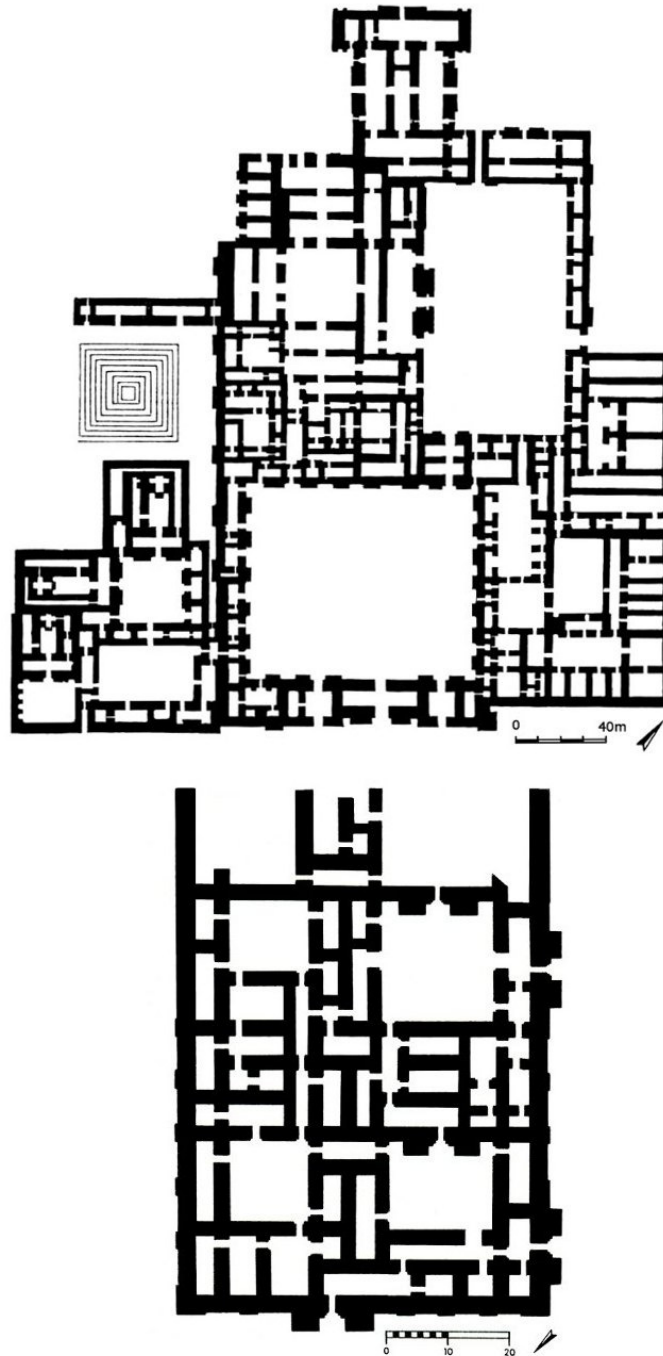
Figure 7.6. Two examples of monumental Mesopotamian architecture. Top: Khorsabad, Sargon's Palace (late 8th c.);[1] Bottom: Nippur, Temple of Inanna, Ur III Period (21st c.).[1]

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[1] Adapted from Lloyd and Müller, *Ancient Architecture*, 25 fig. 39.

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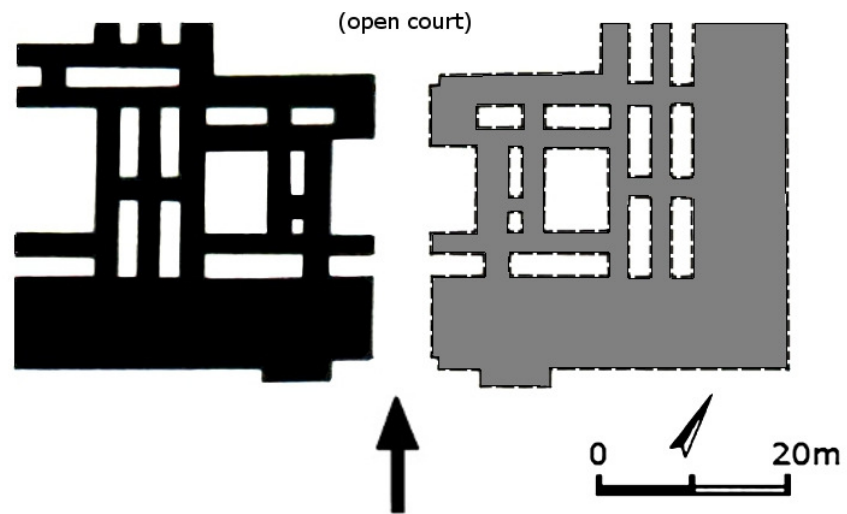
Figure 7.7. Tell Brak, Palace of Naram-Sin; 23rd c.[2]

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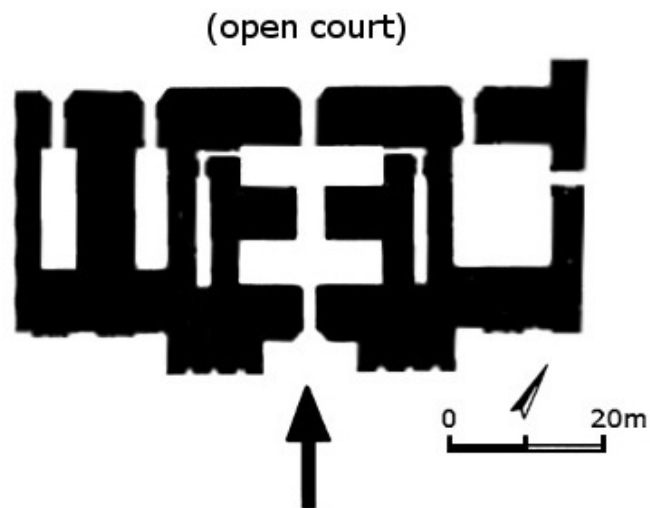
Figure 7.8. Ur, Court of Nannar, 3rd Dynasty; 21st c.[3]

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[1] Adapted from Richard L. Zettler, *The Ur III Temple of Inanna at Nippur: The Operation and Organization of Urban Religious Institutions in Mesopotamia in the Late Third Mellennium B.C.* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1992), 56, fig. 15.

[2] Adapted from Lloyd and Müller, *Ancient Architecture*, 20 fig. 33.

[3] Adapted from Kaplan, "Further Aspects," 15 fig. 18.

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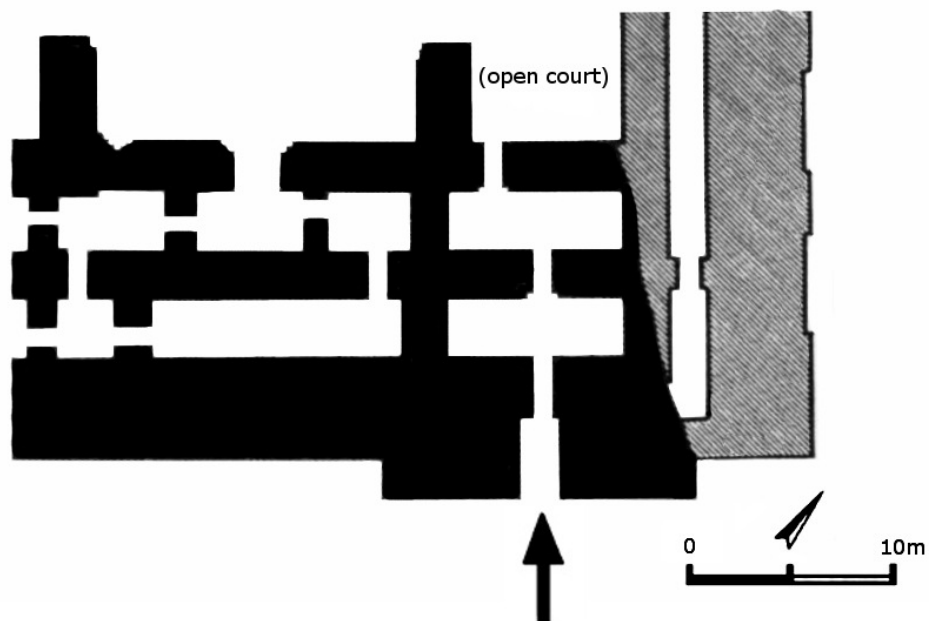
Figure 7.9. Ur, Giparu, Ur III and Isin-Larsa periods; ca. 21st-19th c.[1]

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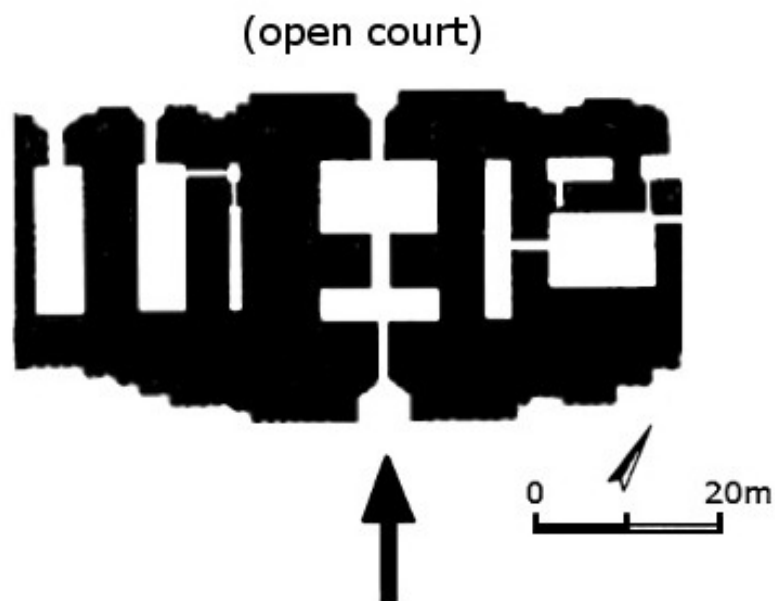
Figure 7.10. Ur, Court of Nannar, Isin-Larsin Period; 19th-18th c.[2]

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[1] Adapted from Penelope N. Weadock, "The Giparu at Ur," *Iraq* 37/2 (1975): pl. 26.
[2] Adapted from Kaplan, "Further Aspects," 15 fig. 18.
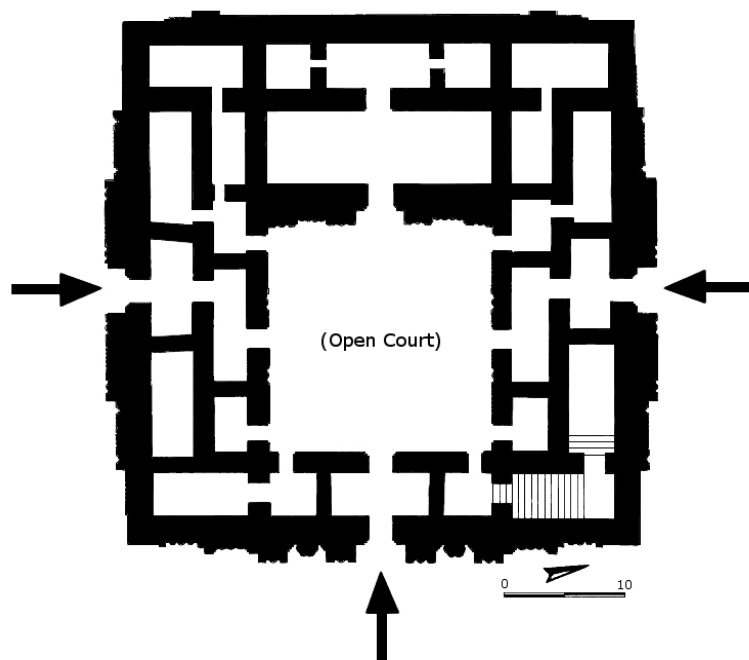
Figure 7.11. Tell al-Rimah, Temple, Old Babylonian Period; 18th c.[1]
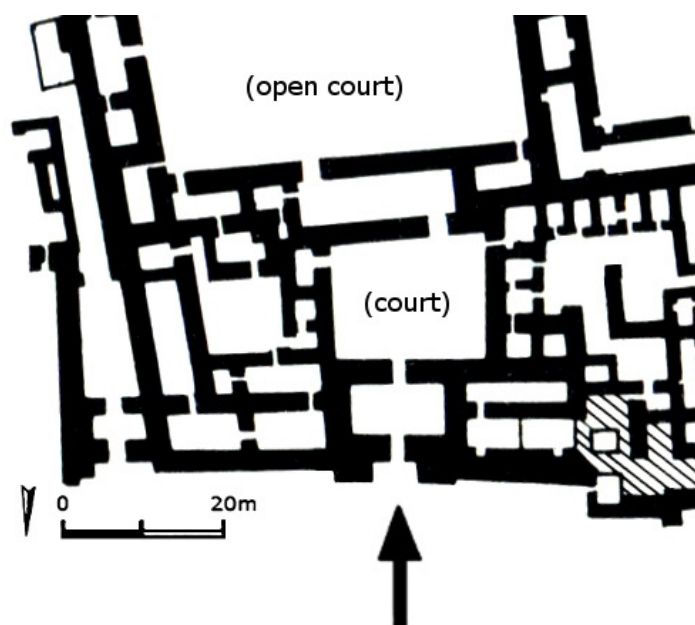
Figure 7.12. Mari, Palace of Zimri-Lim; 18th c.[2]

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[1] Adapted from David Oates, "The Excavations at Tell al Rimah, 1967," *Iraq* 30/2 (1968): pl. 28.
[2] Adapted from Lloyd and Müller, *Ancient Architecture*, 25 fig. 39.

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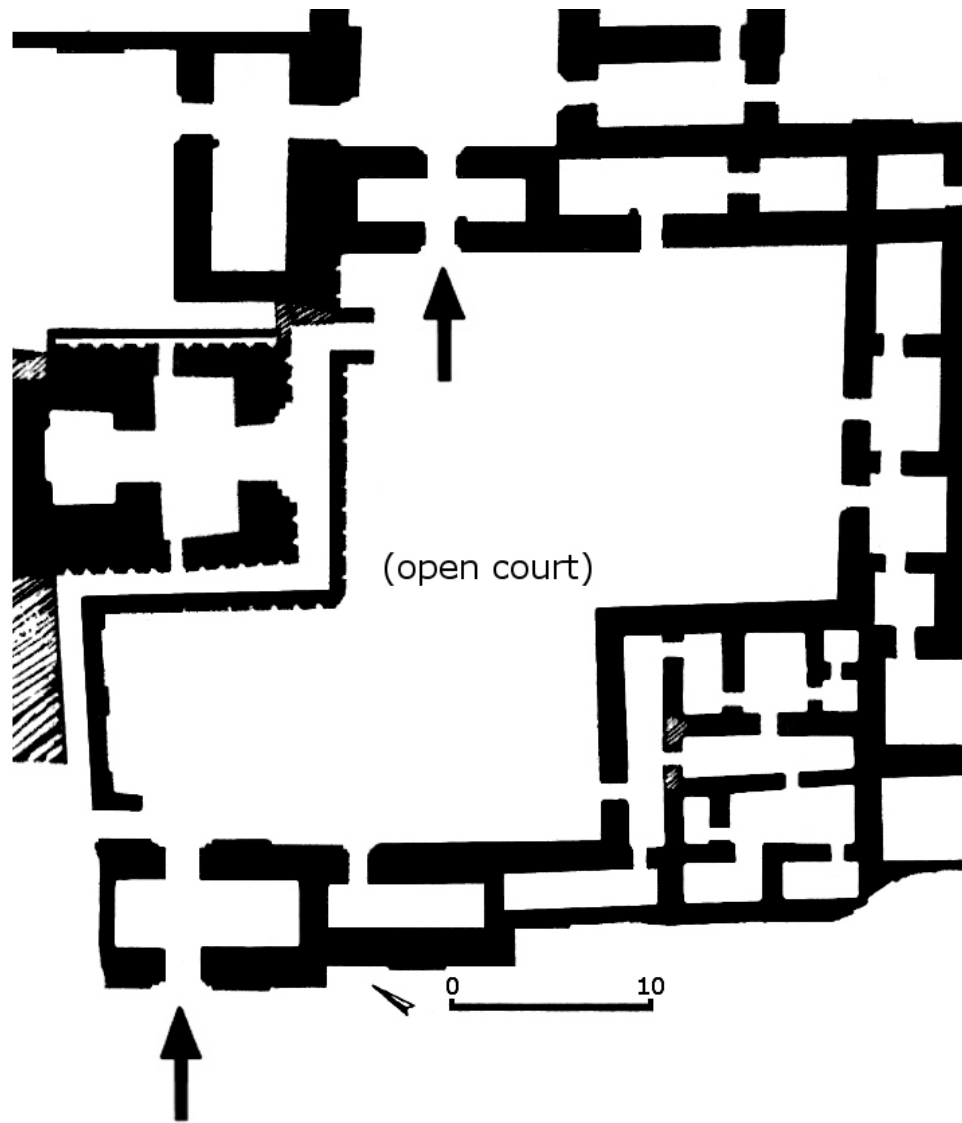
Figure 7.13. Ur, Edublalmah; 14th c.[1]

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[1] Adapted from Anton Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: The Classical Art of the Near East* (London and New York: Phaidon, 1969), 95 fig. 66.
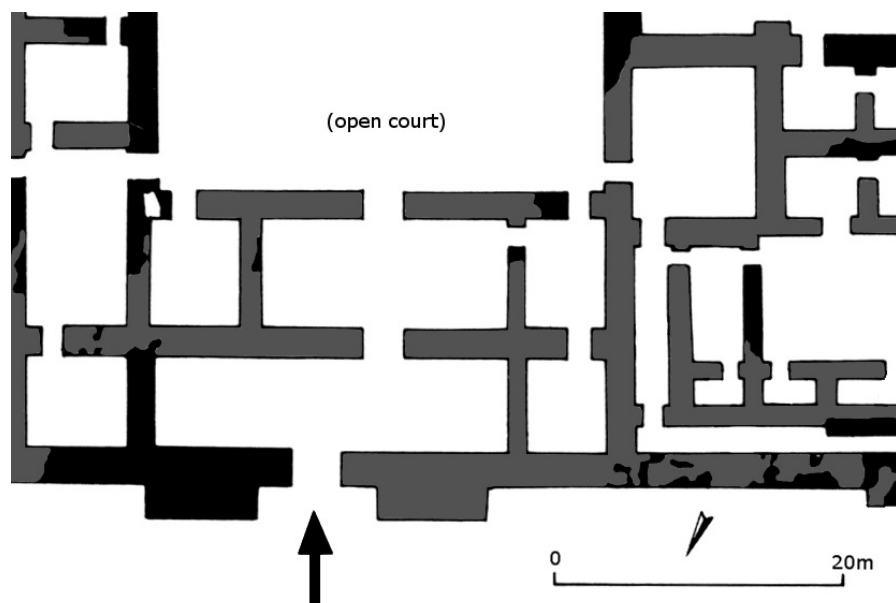
Figure 7.14. Assur, Middle Assyrian 'Old Palace'; 14th-13th c.[1]
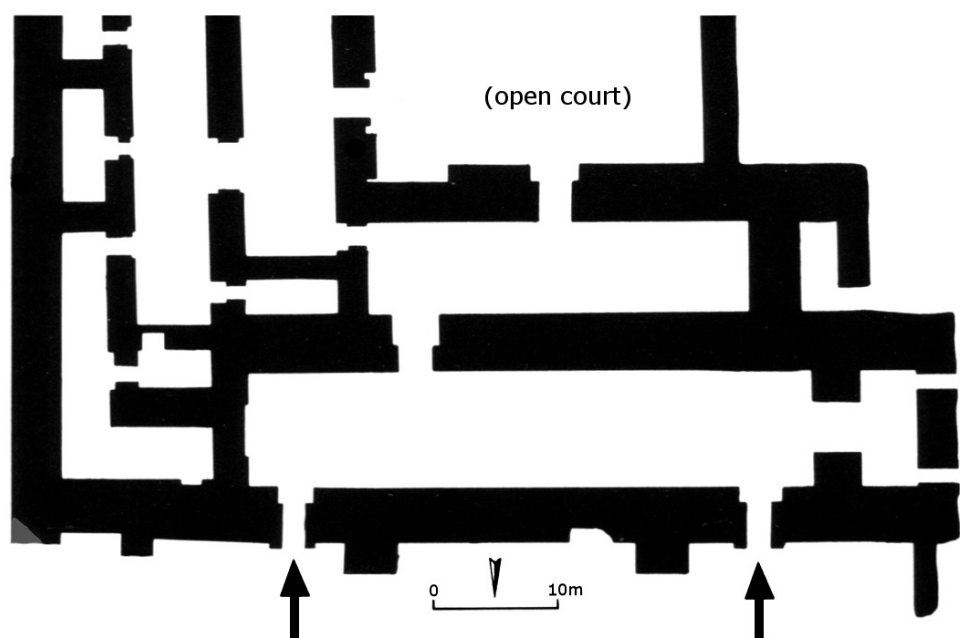
Figure 7.15. Nimrud, NW Palace; 9th c.[2]

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[1] Adapted from Damerji, *The Development*, plan 26.
[2] Adapted from Damerji, *The Development*, plan 101.

(open court)

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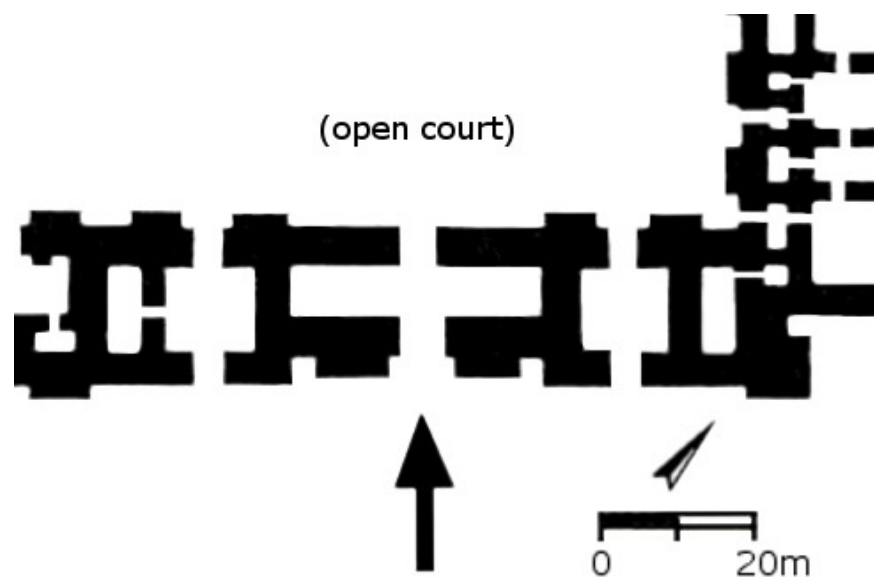
Figure 7.16. Khorsabad, main entrance to Sargon's Palace, end of 8th c.[1]

(open court)

(open court)

0   20m
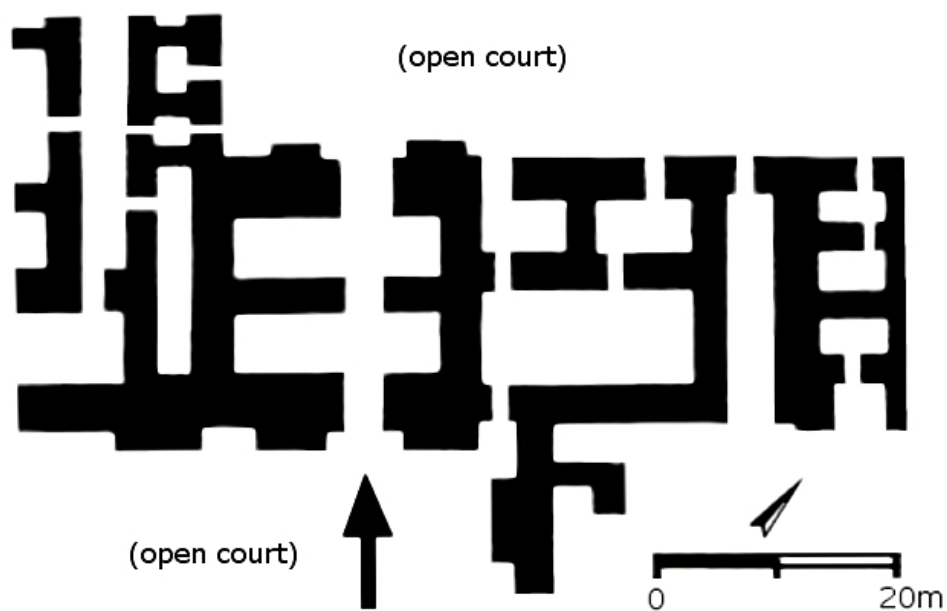
Figure 7.17. Khorsabad, Sargon's Palace, inter-court gateway; end of 8th c.[2]

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[1] Adapted from Edward Bell, *Early Architecture in Wetern Asia: Chaldaean, Hittite, Assyrian, Persian – An Historical Outline* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1924), 141.

[2] Adapted from Bell, *Early Architecture*, 141.

(open court)

0   30m
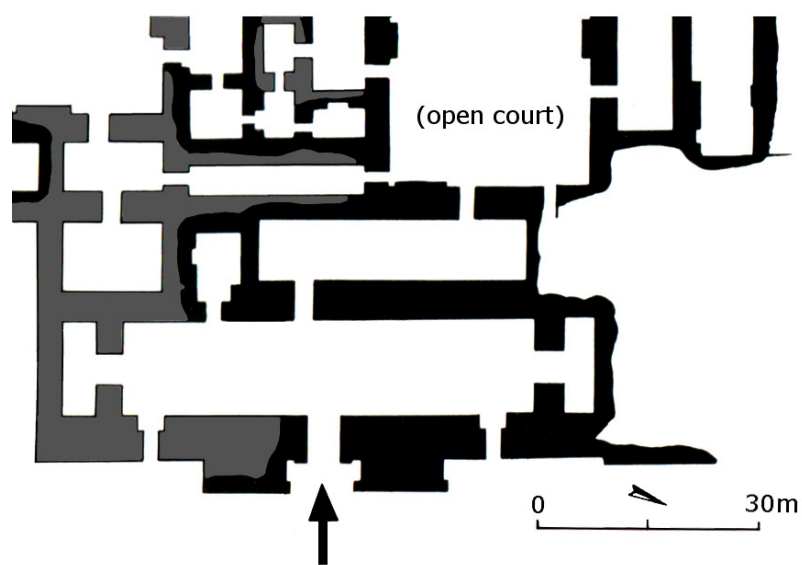
Figure 7.18. Nineveh, SW Palace, ca. 700.[1]

0   50m

Figure 7.19. Babylon, Southern Citadel, series of gates and open courtyards; 6th c.[2]

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[1] Adapted from Damerji, *The Development*, plan 103.
[2] Adapted from Damerji, *The Development*, plan 40.

At a level of abstraction, these Mesopotamian gates are remarkably similar to those in our Iron II corpus.[1] The gate consists of a monumental doorway set between two towers and a gate passage that proceeds through one or more stacked transverse rooms into an open-air courtyard. (The courtyard in the Levantine gates, of course, is the paved interior plaza.)

On the other hand, there are noteworthy differences as well, the most significant of which is that the Mesopotamian gates are not independent structures. The open chambers along the gate passage are integral to the larger temple or palace and are a relic of the casemate chambers through which the gate passage proceeds. The fortress gate of 'En Hazeva, which is embedded in a series of chambers formed by casemate walls, is the closest formal parallel to the Mesopotamian style gates in the southern Levant (see Fig. 7.20). Another significant difference is that there are no clear cases of Levantine gates with asymmetric chambers or a serpentine path through the gatehouse; the norm is symmetric broad rooms with a passage directly through the center.[2]

Are these gates from Mesopotamia related in any way to the later Iron II period chamber gates? It is difficult to be certain. The similarities could be coincidental, or explained on purely functional grounds. Most gates are given towers for defensive reasons, so their presence in any instance is not surprising. Gates passing through a room

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[1] Cf. Henri Frankfort, who says vaguely that "the north Syrian town gates resemble those of Assyria rather than Anatolia" (*The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* [4th ed.; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 289).

[2] There are a few examples of asymmetric chamber gates in N. Syria; notably, at Carchemish (south gate of the inner city), Tel Halaf (south gate of the citadel and the "Scorpion Gate"), and Tel Barsip. At Tel en-Nasbeh, McCown's original interpretation of the southern gatehouse was such that the main entrance was on the west side of the building, producing a serpentine path. Zorn has shown that this is an incorrect interpretation, since only foundation walls remain for the entire building, and that the gap in the structure where McCown placed the gate door was due to later building activity which had disturbed the foundational levels at that point (Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 702-3).
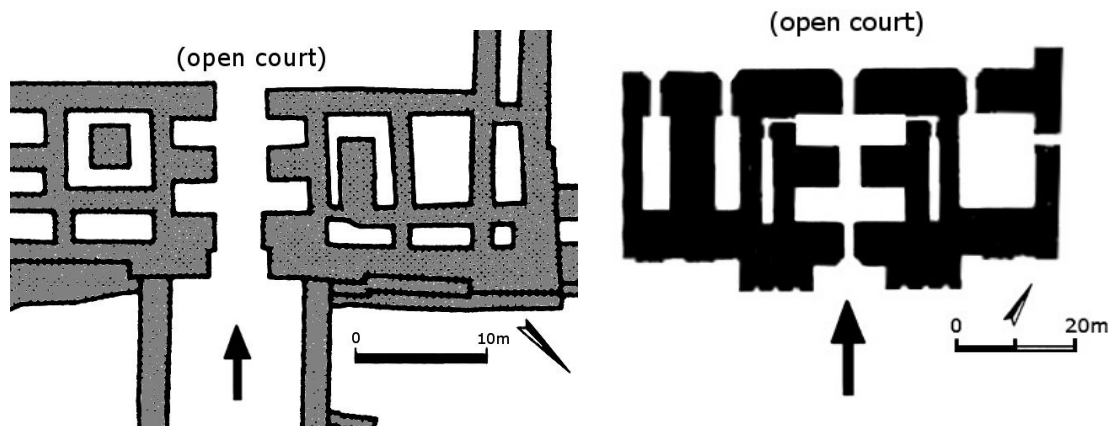
Figure 7.20. Left: 'En Hazeva St. V Fortress Gate, 9th c.; Right: Ur, Court of Nannar, 21st c.

(making a gatehouse) are widely attested, including examples as early as the fourth

millennium (discussed below), so a gatehouse itself is also not unusual. If the gatehouse

building is rectangular, which nearly all are, then the building can only be a "longroom,"

or a "broadroom" – so the broadroom shape of the gatehouse chambers is also not very

surprising.

On the other hand, the most conspicuous similarity between the two types of gates

– the presence of *multiple stacked* broad rooms – is hard to explain in terms of

functionality, and it is worth considering that there may be a direct relationship between

the two types of gates. In addition to the architectural parallels, there are following

considerations: 1) By the time chambered gates show up in the Levant ca. 1000, the

Mesopotamian palace and temple gateways described above had been in use for well over

a millennium. The latter unquestionably came first, and had a long time to affect

Mesopotamian culture as well as that of her neighbors. 2) To the extent that the various

activities associated with gates (see below) were conducted in the transverse rooms of Mesopotamian gate passages,[1] those rooms would have added significant practical functionality to the gate, and the design would have been desirable for this reason. 3) The monumental architecture of Mesopotamia reflected the tastes of the cultural elites of multiple empires. There is every reason to suppose it was viewed as prestigious, which would have made its adoption by those in the relatively poor city-states and kingdoms of the Levant more desirable.[2]

Taken together, these considerations make Mesopotamian gates a plausible source for Iron II gates.[3] The most important difficulty for this theory is the mechanism of diffusion, since the souther Levant and Mesopotamia are relatively far apart from one another, and there is no other evidence (of which I am aware) for cultural exchange between these two locales (literary or otherwise) at the beginning of the Iron II period.

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[1] Cf. A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Rev. ed. E. Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 128.

[2] If borrowing indeed occurred, the fact that the Levantine gatehouses were independent structures (unlike Mesopotamian gates) is explicable on the grounds that temples, palaces, and city walls in the Levant were not built with the grid of walls of which Mesopotamian gates were a part. Thus stacked broad rooms could only have been made as independent buildings, and the most economical way to do this would be to stack them up one behind the other in a single rectangular building. This explanation would also hold for the inspiration of the chambered Syrian gates if it were discovered that they preceded (and inspired) the southern Levantine gates.

[3] It might be objected that my interpretation of the pier and chamber floor plan above was purely functional – i.e., that it was the simplest way to build a large roofed building given the available roofing technology – and here I am invoking the possibility of a completely different motive for the same design. The two explanations, however, are not mutually exclusive. Even if we suppose that a large gatehouse was the only goal of Israelite architects (and thus that multiple narrow rooms were necessary to support it), it is still not clear why the specific arrangement we find was favored. The Mesopotamian gate tradition is a possible explanation for broad rooms stacked in sequence with a perpendicular gate passage through the center, as opposed to any other possible design.

Early Parallels

The gate complexes under discussion here also bear typological similarities to gates and other structures from various times and locales with respect to individual elements of their construction. In fact, as we will see below, there are few if any genuinely novel features found in Iron II gate complexes in the Levant. Below are a few representative examples.

Chambered Gatehouses

In addition to the many Mesopotamian examples noted above, a few further (and very early) examples should be noted. One of the earliest examples is the Chalcolithic gatehouse at Ein Gedi (Fig. 7.21). This gate is found in the Judean wilderness along a cultic compound's circumvallation wall. The gatehouse interior – ca. 7.5 by 4.5 m – was lined with benches and had a plastered floor; a pivot stone for the gate door was also found *in situ*.[1] Though the gatehouse appears to have been ceremonial and not defensive,[2] it is a very early example of a gatehouse in the region, predating even the advent of fortified settlements in the Early Bronze Age.[3] The gatehouse dates to the late Ghassulian period (the mid 4th millennium).[4]

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[1] David Ussishkin, "The 'Ghassulian' Temple in Ein Gedi and the Origin of the Hoard from Nahal Mishmar," *BA* 34/1 (1971): 28.

[2] Aharon Kempinski, "Fortifications, Public Buildings, and Town Planning in the Early Bronze Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 73.

[3] Kempinski, "Fortifications, Public Buildings," 68.

[4] Ussishkin, "The 'Ghassulian' Temple," 32.
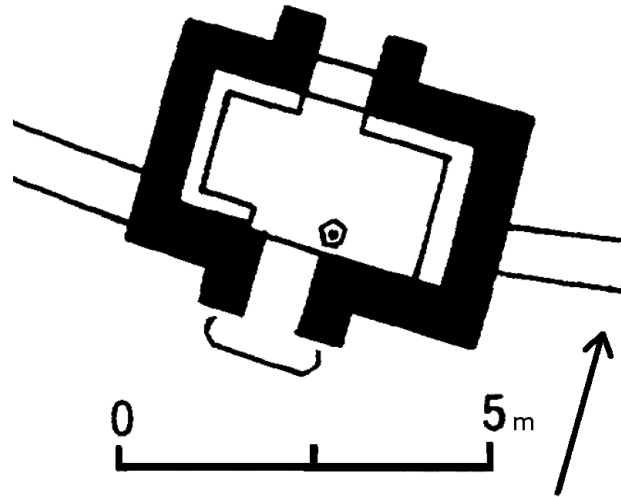
Figure 7.21. The Chalcolithic gatehouse of the Ein Gedi temenos.[1]

The Sumerian colony of Habuba Kabira (south), found next to the Euphrates river in N. Syria, is also noteworthy. This town is a very early example of a well-planned urban center with monumental buildings and public architecture. Its linear circumvallation walls are covered with regularly-spaced, rectangular bastions, and two excavated gates on the west wall each have outworks (forming external plazas) and chambered gatehouses flanked by bastion-towers (Fig. 7.22). The construction dates to the Late Uruk Period; ca. 3200 B.C.[2]

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[1] Ussishkin, "The 'Ghassulian' Temple," 26 fig. 12.

[2] Guillermo Algaze, *The Uruk World System: The Dynamics of Expansion of Early Mesopotamian Civilization* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 25.
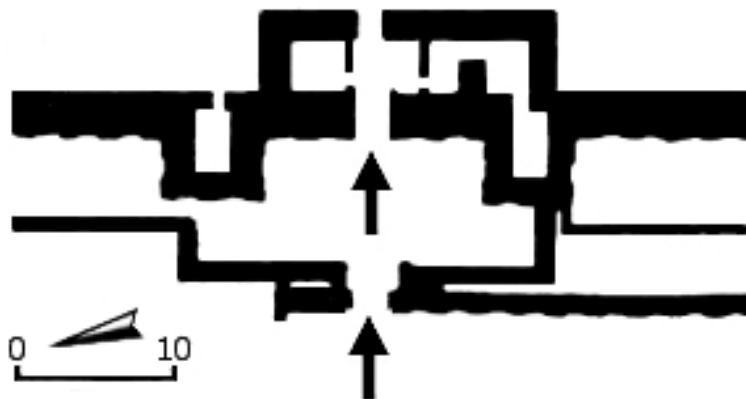
Figure 7.22. One of the gates at Habuba Kabira (south).[1] Note the courtyard formed between the outer (simple) gate and the main chambered gate. One of the chambers gives access to the adjacent tower along the wall.

A final example is the Chalcolithic settlement at Jawa in northeast Jordan. This settlement has an upper and lower town, each of which has a fortification wall. Both walls contain what may (debatably) be described as chambered gates.[2] The upper town had "at least five major gates of the chambered type, each with internal buttresses or jambs."[3] The gates of the lower town, while "much less substantial" than those of the upper town, number "at least eight: all chambered with either two or three sets of internal buttresses, all spaced about 100 m. apart."[4] The excavator compares the gates here – which date to the late 4th millennium – to those of MB and Iron Age Palestine (see Fig. 7.23).[5]

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[1] Algaze, *The Uruk World System*, 25.
[2] On my criteria for identifying "chambers," see the Introduction.
[3] S. W. Helms, "Jawa Excavations 1975: Third Preliminary Report," *Levant* 9 (1977): 29.
[4] Helms, "Jawa 1975," 29-30.
[5] Helms, "Jawa 1975," 29.

Figure 7.23. Two gates of Jawa: LT4 (left; from the lower town) and UT1 (right; from the upper town).[1]

Stacked Broad Rooms

Many of the Iron II gates in our corpus have two or more stacked transverse rooms with a passage through the center. These, too, are found in gates and other structures which antedate the Iron II period by many centuries. In addition to the Mesopotamian gates named above which have a direct passage through multiple transverse rooms (see above), perhaps the best example is the MB gate at Dan. This gate's form is nearly identical to a four-chamber gate of the Iron II Age, and it precedes the latter by about 800 years.

Another very early example, from northern Mesopotamia, is the citadel gate from Tell Taya VIII. This gate is quite distinct from the typical Mesopotamian gates discussed above (Fig. 7.25). Though it is only partially preserved due to erosion, the gate looks very

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[1] Adapted from S. W. Helms, *Jawa: Lost City of the Black Desert* (London: Mehuen, 1981), 107 fig. 42, and 102 fig. 38, respectively.

much like a typical chambered gate of the Iron II period if symmetry is assumed in the
restoration (with at least one chamber blocking wall), and dates to ca. 2300.[1]
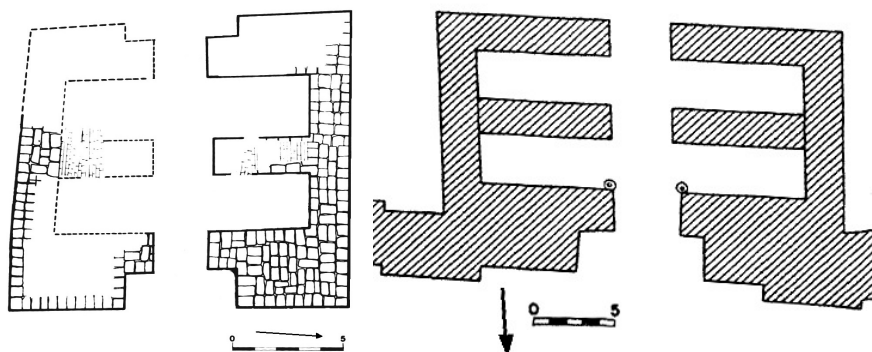
Figure 7.24. Dan's MB chamber gate (left),[2] and a typical four-chamber gate of
the Iron II period from Megiddo St. IVA.[3]
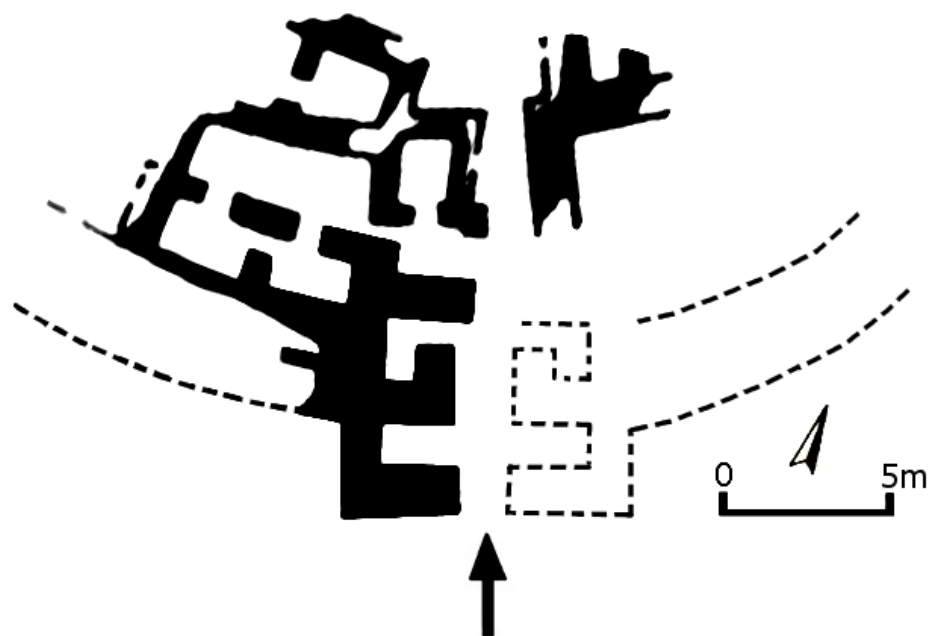
Figure 7.25. The citadel gate of Tell Taya, ca. 2,300.[4]

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[1] Cf. Gregori, who notes that "The Taya gate in fact is very similar to Iron Age examples from Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia" ("'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 97).

[2] Adapted from Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 78 fig. 46.

[3] Adapted from Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 75 fig. 86.

[4] Adapted from J. E. Reade, "Tell Taya (1972-73): Summary Report," *Iraq* 35/2 (1973): pl. LVIII.

Moreover, some domestic structures use have come to light which deserve mention here because of their strikingly similarity to Iron II period chambered gatehouses. A semi-subterranean building dubbed "The Treasury" at Megiddo (in which the famed Megiddo ivories were discovered) was appended to the palace in area AA in Str. VIIA, during the Late Bronze Age. The structure was built with a six-chamber plan arranged with a passage between three symmetric pairs of chambers – nearly identical to the floorplan of a six-chamber gatehouse (see Fig. 7.26).[1]
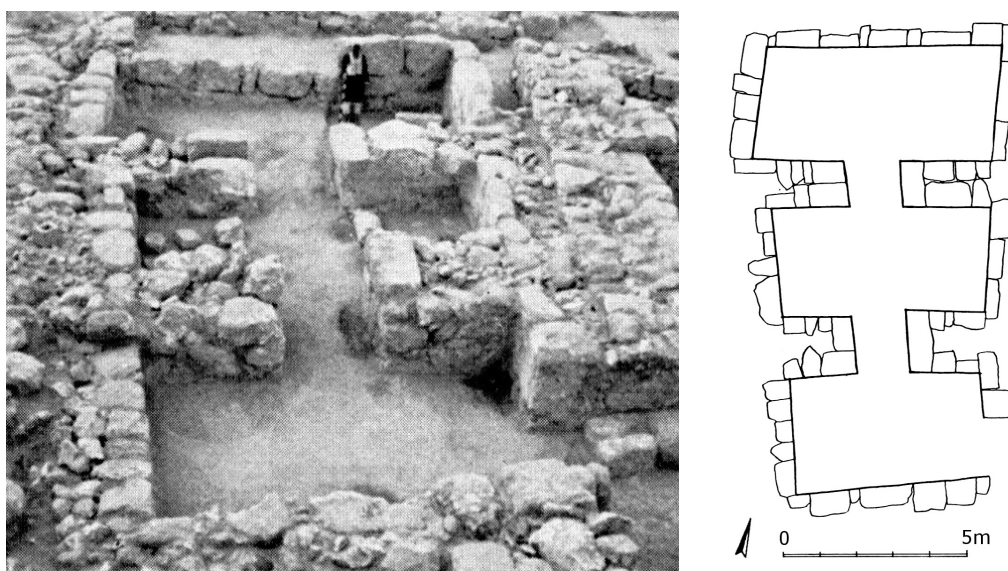
Figure 7.26. The LB "Treasury" of Megiddo VIIA. Photo (left) and plan (right).[2]

Similar to the above example is the domestic architecture of Beidha, Jordan. Many of the domestic units unearthed here are also semi-subterranean, and consist of a

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[1] Loud, *Megiddo II*, 29-35.
[2] From Loud, *Megiddo II*, figs. 76 and 75, respectively.

central walkway, along which were three symmetric pairs of chambers.[1] The construction

in this case, however, dates to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B; ca. 6,800 (see Fig. 7.27).[2]

The excavator's conclusion as to the function of the pier and chamber design is

precisely the explanation I have offered here for Iron II chambered gatehouses: "The

possible function of the dividing baulks between the rooms has also been discussed. […]

The heavily built buttresses obviously performed some major architectural function and

that of supporting a light upper storey appears to be the most satisfactory explanation."[3]
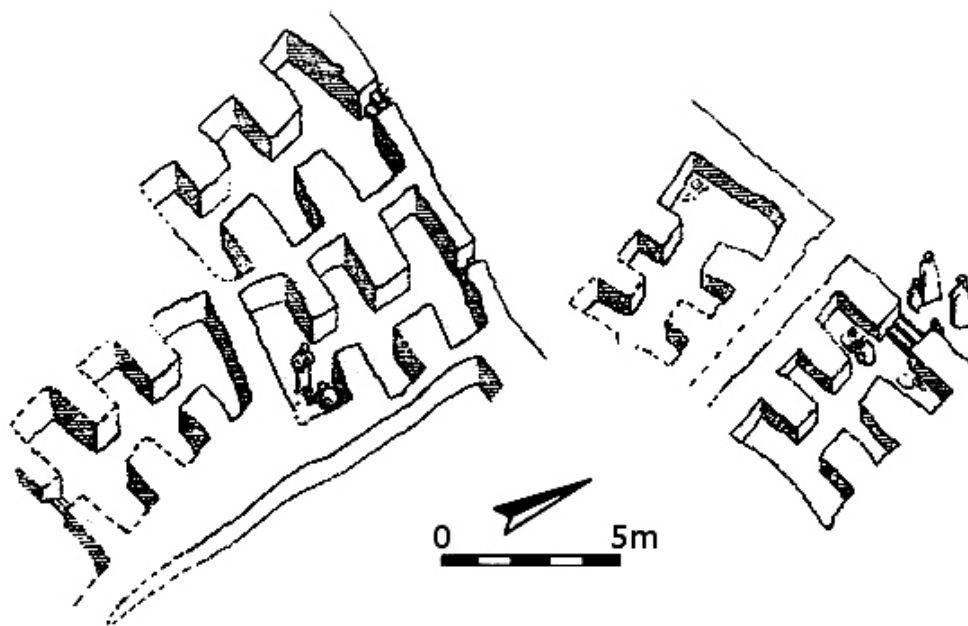
Figure 7.27. Isometric reconstruction of some of the domestic units from Beidha, Jordan, from ca. 6,800.[4]

Cultural diffusion is not necessary to explain the similarity of these structures and Iron II

gates; indeed, it would be foolish to suppose any such connection. Rather, the

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[1] See Diana Kirkbride, "Five Seasons at the Prepottery Neolithic Village of Beidha in Jordan," *PEQ* 98/1 (1966): 8-72.

[2] Kirkbride, "Five Seasons," 9.

[3] Kirkbride, "Five Seasons," 15.

[4] Adopted from Kirkbride, "Five Seasons," 12 fig. 2.

technologies (trabeated roofing) and raw materials (wood) available in the widely

separated times and locales led the different builders to the same architectural solution.

Finally, temples from various periods have a series of broad rooms with a central

passage; for example, the Temple of Enki in Ur from the Ur III period (21st-20th

century),[1] the St. IV temple from Alalakh in N. Syria (mid-late 2nd millennium), and a

temple, apparently in Canaanite style, at Tell el Dab'a St. E/3 during the Hyksos period,

ca. 1550 (see Fig. 7.28).[2]
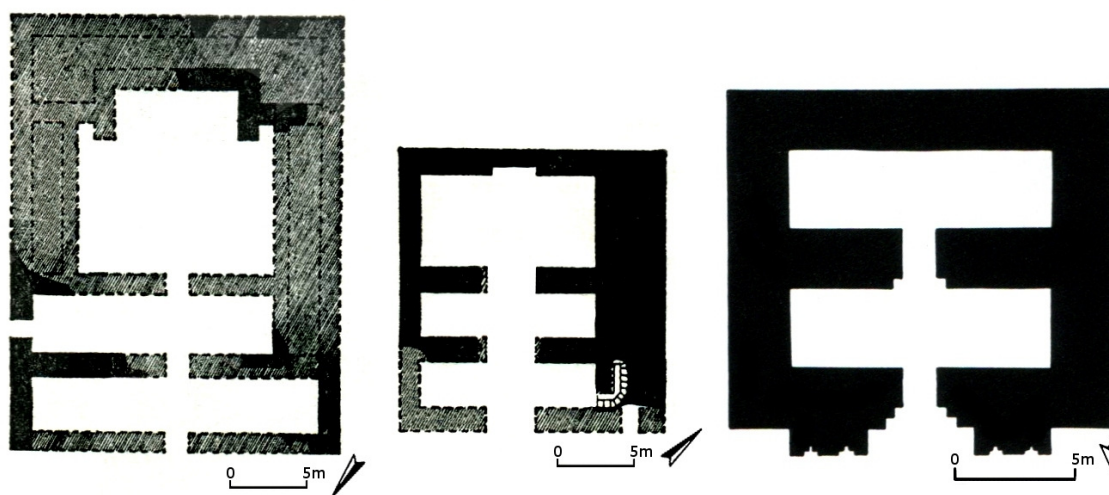
Figure 7.28. Three temples built with stacked broad rooms and a central passage. Tel el Dab'a St. E/3 Temple III (left); Alalakh St. IV Temple (middle);[3] Ur, inner core (cella and ante-cella) of the Temple of Enki (right).[4]

The sporadic attestation of stacked broad room construction throughout millennia

– and in various categories of buildings, from public to domestic – tends to support my

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[1] Damerji, *The Development*, 19.

[2] Cf. also the temple at Hazor area H St. II and the St. VII temple of Alalakh.

[3] Both figures from Manfred Bietak, *Avaris and Piramesse: Archaeological Exploration in the Eastern Nile Delta* (Mortimer Wheeler Archaeological Lectures, 1979; Proceedings of the British Academy, London, vol. 65, 1979; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 250 fig. 9.

[4] From Damerji, *The Development*, pl. 130.

assertion above that a fundamental reason for constructing a building with a pier/chamber design is architectural, and not based on its intended use.

Gate Complexes and Outworks

Defensive outworks – including external plazas, secondary gatehouses, walls that block direct entry to a gate, and external towers – proliferate in the Iron II period, but are also attested well before then.[1] Compare the late fourth millennium Sumerian colony of Habuba Kabira (south) (above, Fig. 7.22), which includes a secondary outer wall and a large forecourt in front of the main gate. The south gate at Alishar Hüyük, from the EB period, has two curtain walls flanking the approach to the gate and forcing a right-turn entrance into the gate (see Fig. 7.29).
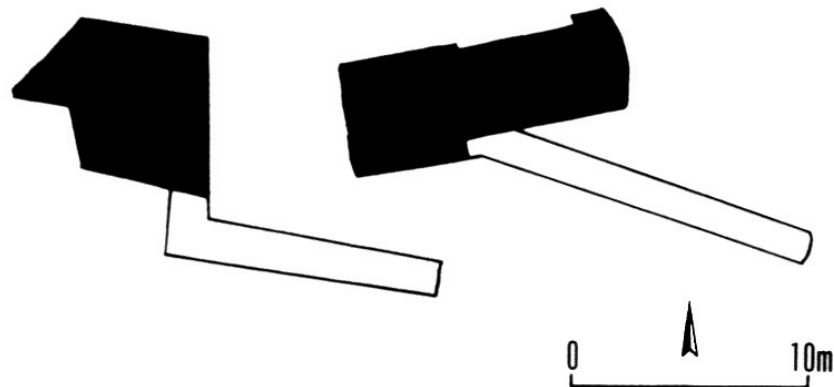
Figure 7.29. The south gate at Alishar Hüyük in Anatolia (EB period).

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[1] Cf. Wright, *Ancient Building*, 198.

Outworks are also found at some MB sites; for instance, the gates of Tell Mumbaqat[1] and Ebla Str. IIIA (Fig. 7.30), both in N. Syria. In the LB period (12th c.), the Royal Gate from the Hittite capital Ḫattuša includes a bent approach ramp and forecourt, guarded on both sides by towers and other structures (Fig. 7.31).
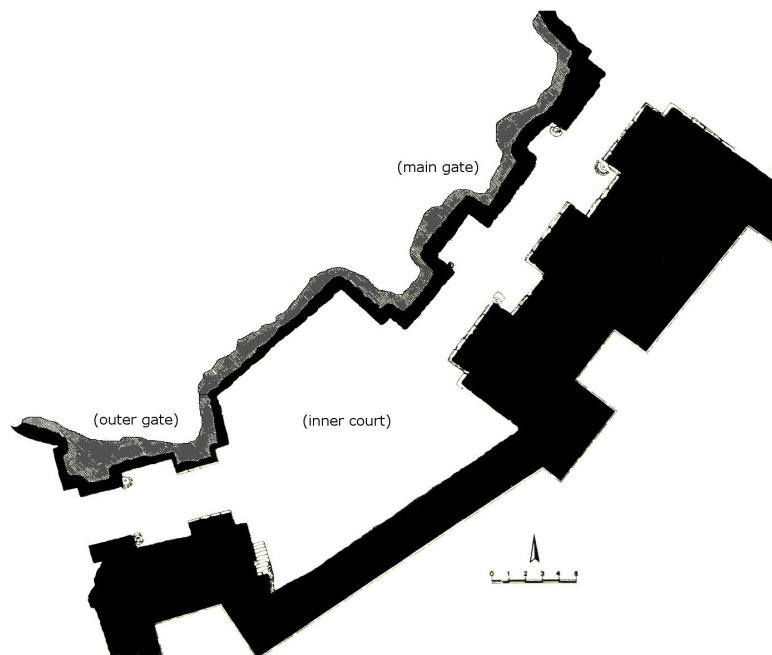
Figure 7.30. The SW city gate of Tell Mardikh (Ebla) St. IIIA, MB period.[2]

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[1] See Ashkelon's MB Gate in Phase 12 (similar to Ebla's SW gate) (Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 68). Tell Mumbaqat is a gate between parallel walls which extends beyond the gate to form a semi-enclosed forecourt (Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," fig. 16).

[2] Adopted from Matthiae, *Ebla*, 121 fig. 24.

(approach ramp)

0   10m
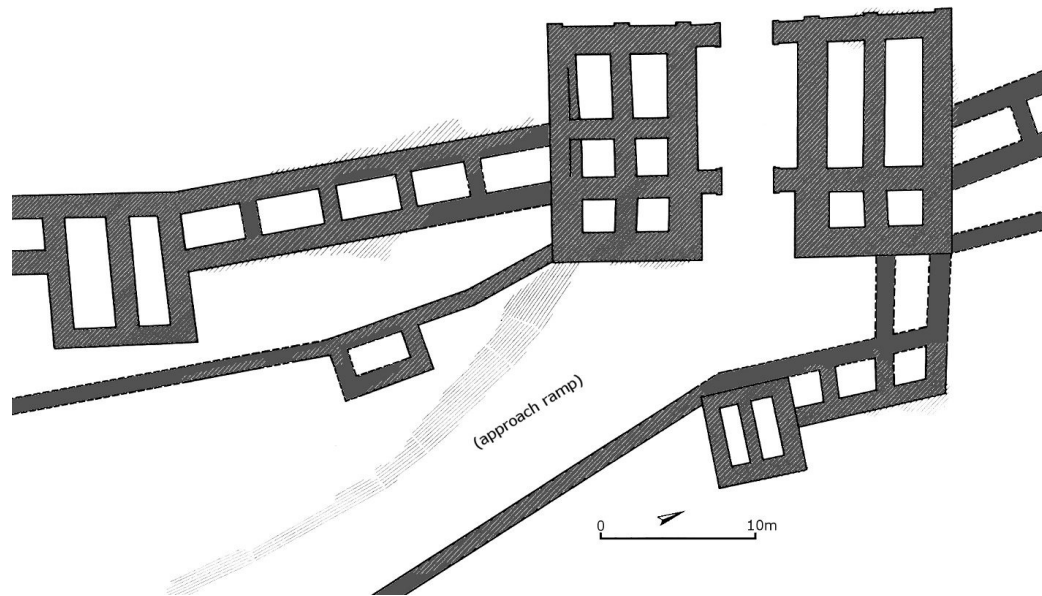
Figure 7.31. Ḫattuša, Royal Gate, 12th c.[1]

Gate Benches

Finally, benches associated with gates are also attested well before the Iron II period. For example, the Chalcolithic gatehouse at Ein Gedi (above, Fig. 7.21) had benches which at least partially lined all four of its interior walls. At Yavneh-Yam the MB IIb-c gate had benches on either side of the façade.[2] Another MB gate from Tall ar-Rukays, Jordan, was found with benches in both of its open chambers.[3]

Novelty in the Iron II Chamber gates

It might be said that the only novel feature of the southern Levantine chamber gates is the presence of gates with six chambers. It does not seem to me, however, that

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[1] Adopted from Bittel, *Hattusha*, 52 fig. 12.

[2] J. Kaplan, "Yavne-Yam." *IEJ* 19/2 (1969): 121.

[3] P. Bruce McLaren, "Unusual Features of Middle Bronze Age Military Architecture at Tall ar-Rukays, Jordan," in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (Amman: Department of Antiquities, 2004), 314 fig. 5.

the additional set of chambers is much of an innovation over against gates with four chambers. The extra depth of the gate did not increase its capacity for military defense, since the point of contact with the enemy was at the façade of the gatehouse and along the city's curtain wall. Moreover, since the extra chambers were not visible from the outside of the city, the deeper gatehouse was not more imposing or impressive, and so did not offer any payoff by way of increased military intimidation or monarchic pretension. The six-chamber gatehouse, it seems, did not change anything of the functional nature of two- and four-chamber gates; rather, it merely represents a slightly larger version of the same design.[1] Any novelty in our chambered gates, then, seems to reside chiefly in the consistent collection of the many features discussed above.

Conclusion on Origins

It is an interesting fact that the earliest gates in our corpus – those from Ashdod X, Beersheba V, Kh. Qeiyafa, and Kh. en-Nahas – come from three geographic regions typically associated with three different ethnic groups: Phillistines, Judahites, and Edomites, respectively. If some of the N. Syrian gates also came from the late 11th century/early 10th century, even more societies must be factored into the equation. The fact that these gates first appear nearly simultaneously (as far as we can presently tell) in so many different regions is a surprising fact which attests to the desirability of this particular design.

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[1] The nearly identical average chamber widths of two-, four-, and six-chamber gates (3.3m, 3.0m, and 2.8m, respectively), show that the additional set of chambers was more duplication than innovation.

At this point, however, there is no clear origin for the typical chambered gate of the Iron II period. Potential architectural antecedents from Mesopotamia and N. Syria (or Mesopotamia via N. Syria) are promising possibilities, but the Mesopotamian parallels are not as clear-cut as we might hope, and the dates of the N. Syrian gates are (as yet) unreliable. My suspicion is that continuing (and more sophisticated) excavations in N. Syria will reveal that the gates from that region are older than we can presently prove, and that we will ultimately describe the spread of chamber gates with the expected flow of cultural influence: from Mesopotamia to N. Syria, and from there to the southern Levant.

CHAPTER EIGHT
The Gate as a Public Space

As the following chapters will show, the city gate served as the civic forum of Iron Age urban centers, and was thus the "nerve center" of the city,[1] home to all manner of social activity. We will begin by explaining why this was the case. All of the various activities discussed below took place in the gate complex for two reasons. First, the gate was a bottleneck, which funneled all pedestrian traffic into and out from the city. This is seen repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible when individuals wait for others at the gate. The Philistines, for instance, believing that they have Samson trapped inside the walls of Gaza, decide to wait at the city gate for him to exit instead of hunting him down within the city (Judg 16:2). Saul similarly believes that the rogue David is as good as in the king's custody when David shuts himself in Keilah, a city "with doors and a gate bar" (1 Sam 23:7). When Boaz needs to find a specific relative of his and convene a group of ten witnesses for a legal transaction, he thinks the best way to gather these people is to sit at the gate and wait until the right people happen to walk past (Ruth 4:1-2).[2] And if one wishes to find Wisdom, she admonishes that one should "watch at my doors daily, stand guard at the doorposts of my portals" (Prov 8:34).

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[1] Frick, *The City*, 44.

[2] Cf. Geoffrey Evans, "Gates and Streets: Urban Institutions in Old Testament Times," *Journal of Religious History* 2 (1962): 3. Compare also the case of Tamar, who dresses like a prostitute and stations herself at the פתח of the city Einaim, waiting for the hapless Judah to come along (Gen 38:14-5). The irony in Tamar's actions is that she had been wronged by Judah, and might have utilized the gate to make a legal claim against him; instead she stands in the gate to deceive him. This story may be contrasted with Boaz's proper use of the gate council to enact a Levirate marriage (Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 174).

Nearly everyone who lived within a walled city must have passed through the town gate multiple times daily.[1] One reason for this is that the domesticated animals owned by urbanites were kept for safekeeping on the ground floor of the domiciles within the city's walls,[2] which would necessitate taking them in and out of town every day to find pasturage and water. Compare the following Old Babylonian letter: "I will go out (with) the cattle for watering, (but) I will not go out (through) the city gate for any other (reason)," and the Neo-Assyrian text which similarly says "I will take the sheep outside the city gate to pasture them."[3] Likewise, tending to one's plot of agriculture outside of the city walls and the transport of goods into the city for consumption would have necessitated frequent – probably daily – passage in and out of the town gate. Even those who lived outside of the urban centers in unwalled villages – as well as nearby semi-nomadic peoples – would likewise visit the nearby town gates to buy or sell goods or conduct business (see Introduction). Because of the volume of traffic in a gate, it necessarily follows that it was a convenient place for any activity that would benefit from high visibility.

A second reason for the concentration of activity of the gate relates to the urban planning of the period. The picture of Iron Age urban planning which has emerged from excavations thus far is one of fairly dense settlements which lack open spaces,[4] a fact

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[1] Cf. de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel*, 27.

[2] Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 13-15.

[3] Both texts cited in *CAD* A/1, 83-4.

[4] Mordechai Cogan, "Gate: (A) General," in vol. 8 of *Entsiqlopedia Miqra'it* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1982), 231 (Hebrew); Frick, *The City*, 84, 125. Beersheba, for example, shows a fairly close arrangement of domestic architecture. The situation was slightly different for capital or administrative cities, such as Samaria, Megiddo and Lachish, which incorporated open spaces in their urban planning (Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 248-9).

which the Bible seems to indicate, if obliquely.[1] This would make a gate plaza one of the few places that could have accommodated a large crowd.[2] Iron II gates seem to have been specifically designed to create open space, capitalizing on the natural utility of the location: "Civilian usage of the city gate may be seen most clearly in the change of design in the Iron Age, when the gatehouse … was converted in to a more open form, with deep chambers opening off the passageway... Thus the ancient defensive gateway was transformed during the Iron Age into the most important civilian town centre."[3] In other words, Iron II gate complexes represent the purposeful creation of public space.[4]

In what follows, I will attempt to summarize the various categories of activities that took place in the public space in or around the gatehouse. The evidence for these activities is mostly literary, due to the incomplete and biased nature of preservation in the archaeological record. A few caveats are in order beforehand:

First, I make no pretense of an exhaustive treatment; what follows will be illustrative. The volume of evidence that might be adduced to support some of the

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[1] For instance, the Hebrew Bible's laws about a betrothed woman being raped presume a relatively dense urban settlement. If the offense occured in the field, then the man who raped her is liable to receive the death penalty; if inside a town, the young woman is stoned as well. The reasoning behind this is that she could have cried out for help in the town – where it is presumed that people would have heard and helped her – and her silence implies her complicity (Deut 22:23-7). Compare also (the slightly cryptic) Ps 122:3, where Jerusalem is depicted as "built up, as a city bound together to itself" – or as some translations render it, "as a city that is compact together" (NASB).

[2] Matthews, *Manners and Customs*, 102.

[3] Herzog, *The City Gate*, xix-xx; cf. Herzog, "Gate," 232; Wright, *Ancient Building*, 198. This is not to say that such functions are limited to the appearance of Iron II gatehouses; they clearly were not, as the literary evidence shows (see below). Even the very limited spaces in the recesses of a MB style gate passage, for instance, have been found put to good use: for example, two taboons (ovens) were found in the inner, eastern space between the pilasters of the LB gate at Megiddo (David Ussishkin, "Area G: Soundings in the Late Bronze Age Gate," in *Megiddo III: The 1992-1996 Seasons, vol. 1* [ed. I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin, and B. Halpern; Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University, 2000], 111 fig. 5.11).

[4] Compare Herzog, *The City Gate*, xix-xx; Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 271-2.

categories of use precludes a comprehensive treatment.[1] In such cases I will confine myself to a few relevant examples, with an attempt to cover the array of activities within each category. It is also true that the literary evidence is uneven, and that some practices are only hinted at in the Hebrew Bible. To put this all differently: the following chapters represent a cross section of gate culture in the ancient Near East, and will refer to a broad swath of literature with a focus on the Hebrew Bible.

Second, the activities described below are not confined to the gate. A particularly good example of this fact is a legal transaction described in the book of Jeremiah, where Jeremiah buys a field from his cousin Hanamel (Jer 32:8-14). The transaction involves gathering witnesses, weighing silver for the purchase price of 17 sheqels, writing up a purchase deed with terms and conditions (המצוה והחוקים) in duplicate, signing the deeds, and sealing one deed for posterity. All of this is explicitly done in the sight of witnesses and "all the Judeans" who were "sitting" in the area at the time (v. 12). This is stereotypical legal language, but the setting is not the gate as we might presume; it is in חצר המטרה "the court of the guards" in the king's palace, in which Jeremiah was confined by King Zedekiah.[2] Thus, the point of this chapter is not that all of the activities described below *must* occur in the gate; it is that these activities tend to concentrate there.

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[1] For those interested in Mesopotamian gate usage in particular, a perusal of the *CAD* entries for *bābu* and *abullu* will provide dozens of additional examples.

[2] See Jer 32:2, 8, 12; 33:1; 37:21; 38:6, 13, 28; 39:14–15; cf. Neh 3:25. Note, similarly, the famous case of Naboth, whose vineyard was stolen by Queen Jezebel (1 Kgs 21). At Jezebel's direction, the elders and freemen (זקנים and חרים) who "dwell" (or perhaps "rule"; the term is ישבים) in Naboth's town orchestrate a public hearing and have a legal claim brought against Naboth. Naboth is directed to sit at the head of the people (בראש העם; v. 9), where his accusers also sit "opposite him" (נגדו; v. 10) and testify against him (העיד, v. 13) "before the people" (נגד העם; v. 13). After this, the people take Naboth out of the city and stone him to death (v. 13). Given the above description and the terminology used, it is likely (though not certain) that this episode is set in the city gate. Cf. Francis I. Andersen, "The Socio-Juridical Background of the Naboth Incident," *JBL* 85 (1966): 46-57.

Finally, the categorization of activities I have attempted below is certainly not as clear-cut as a list may make it appear. One type of activity might be placed into multiple categories; for example, capital punishment in the area of the gate might be described according to its judicial, religious, or public-notice function. Moreover, my categorization is a distinctly etic perspective; Israelites probably would not have differentiated so sharply between the categories which we find convenient today. As Evans puts it: "As we should expect in an age before political theory, no distinction seem to have been drawn between the elders acting as a court of law, and the same men as an advisory body upon matters of policy; nor between the citizens as witnesses of a sale, and when they were deciding on peace and war."[1]

Public Assembly

The civic forum might have been the only place in the city that could accommodate the masses – both deliberate public assembly as well as natural crowding at busy times.[2] The gate plaza could hold a very large gathering of a town's residents: "And all the people were gathered as one man to the plaza which is in front of the Water Gate" (Neh 8:1-3); it would also serve as a convenient mustering point and staging area for military operations: "And the sons of Ammon went out and they arranged themselves for battle at the opening of the gate" (2 Sam 10:8). And, if one wishes to canvass the residents of a town, a good way to do so is to look in the streets and the public plazas:

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[1] Evans, "Gates and Streets," 5.
[2] Otto, "Zivile Funktionen," 191-3.

"Go about in the streets of Jerusalem and look; search in her plazas and see if you will find a man – if there is even one who acts justly, and seeks faithfulness..." (Jer 5:1).[1]

Public Notice

The first and most obvious way to take advantage of pedestrian traffic through the gate is to advertise there to ensure high visibility. For example, David's son Absalom, discontent with waiting to inherit his father's throne, sets about fomenting public dissatisfaction and garnering public support for his own rule. His tactic is to stand near the gate and speak to people on their way to see the king. He flatters them, denigrates the king's competence, and wishes aloud that he could rule instead, promising justice for every man's case – with the result that he "stole the hearts of the people of Israel" (2 Sam 15:2-6). His choice of venue for this activity is also significant in that the gate functioned as a legal court (see below). The text specifies that Absalom targets those who wished for the king's legal judgment, and that he disparages his father's system of justice (vv. 2-4).

Similarly, David himself uses the gate to change the public's perception of him when he is on the run from King Saul and takes refuge with the Philistines. When he learns that Achish's servants suspect his loyalty to Israel, he avoids any serious charge of duplicity by acting like a madman in a conspicuous setting: he scribbles on the doors of the gate[2] and lets his saliva run down into his beard, leading King Achish to consider him safe to ignore (1 Sam 21:11-6).

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[1] Cf. also Exod 32:26; Ezek 46:3; Song 3:2.

[2] The term ויתיו in the MT might be corrupt here (cf. BHS), but the point of feigning madness in public remains unchanged even if this detail is emended.

In Hammurabi's Law Code §58, we learn that there was a distinct season during which shepherds were allowed to pasture their flocks in a town's nearby irrigated fields. Public notice that this season of free pasturage was over was given by winding the *kannu gamartim* – some type of fabric pennant – around the main city gate.[1]

In a Sumerian poem entitled "Man and His God" (the earliest manuscripts of which come from the OB period, ca. 18th-17th c.), the author says: "My god, … after you will have let my eyes recognize my sins, I shall recount at the city(?) gate those of them that have been forgotten, and those of them which are visible(?); I, the young man, shall publicly declare my sins before you!"[2]

Within the broad category of public notice, a few specific sub-categories may be distinguished:

Public Address

A large number of texts from the Hebrew Bible describe public discourse in the gate plaza. In the Book of Nehemiah, a convocation is called for all the people of the land. The people gather in the plaza outside of the Water Gate in Jerusalem, and Ezra the scribe stands on a specially-made wooden platform and reads from "the book of the Torah of Moses" from daybreak until the middle of the day (Neh 8:1-12).[3] Similarly, King Hezekiah gathers the people to himself in "the square of the city gate, and he spoke

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[1] See the Laws of Hammurabi §58, *COS* 2.131; cf. *CAD* K, 157.

[2] *COS* 1.179:106-115.

[3] Cf. Ezra 10:7-11, where all of the Judeans and Benjaminites "sat in the open square before God's temple" in Jerusalem (v. 9), and Ezra addressed their intermarriage with non-Israelites. Whether the "square" in which they sat was the temple courtyard itself or a plaza associated with one of the temple gates is unclear, but the most straightforward interpretation would favor the former.

encouragingly to them" in preparation for Sennacherib's invasion (lit: "he spoke to their

hearts"; 2 Chron 32:6).

The prophet Jeremiah repeatedly addresses his audience in the town's gates (often

directed by Yahweh to do so): in the gate of Yahweh's temple in order to address "all of

the Judeans" coming to worship (Jer 7:2); in the Gate of the Sons of the People (שער בני

העם; 17:19); in "all the gates of Jerusalem" (17:19); at the opening of the Potsherd Gate

(19:2); at the opening of the New Gate of Yahweh (at a legal hearing; 26:10-12); and –

through the proxy of a scroll – at the upper court, at the opening of the New Gate of

Yahweh's temple, "in the ears of all the people" (36:10). Similarly, prophets operating in

the city or temple gates are known from Mari, Babylon, Terqa, and Sagaratum.[1] A type of

professional prophet in Mari known as an *āpilum* is commonly described as speaking or

shouting in the gate.[2]

Thus, telling or calling out "in the gate" is tantamount to public declaration.

Wisdom, for example, "lifts her voice in the plazas" and "utters her words at the openings

of the gates of the city" (Prov 1:20-1); she "calls out next to the gates, at the mouth of the

town, at the entrance of the doorways" (Prov 8:3). A distressed supplicant begs for

Yahweh's help, "in order," he says, "that I might tell of your praises in the gates of the

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[1] Abraham Malamat, "The Secret Council and Prophetic Involvement in Mari and Israel," in *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel* (ed. R. Liwak and S. Wagner; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1991), 232. Malamat also suggests that the Biblical phrase "he who reproves in the gate" (Isa 29:21; Amo 5:10) should be understood as reference to prophets who rebuke the people ("The Secret Council," 232). This is possibly true, but another obvious interpretation is that the "reprover" is an opponent in a judicial dispute.

[2] Abraham Malamat, "Mari," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (ed. F. Skolnik; 2nd ed.; Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), 540.

daughter of Zion" (Ps 9:14-5). The deeds of a commendable woman will "praise her in the gates" (Prov 31:31).[1]

Public Display of Corpses or Body Parts

      The Hebrew Bible describes the practice of publicly displaying the corpses or severed heads of those who have been executed or killed in battle – on the part of both Israel and her neighbors.[2] Joshua and the Israelites, after defeating the residents of Ai, first display the king's corpse on a pole (תלה על העץ),[3] and then toss it in front of the city gate (Josh 8:29). Among the laws in Deuteronomy is the following injunction: "If a man commits a sin punishable by death and is put to death, and you hang him on a pole (ותלית אתו על עץ), his corpse shall not remain on the pole overnight…" (Deut 21:22-3). When the Philistines defeat the Israelites and kill King Saul, they send messengers throughout the land to publicize the good news, and hang Saul and his sons' corpses in the plaza of Beth Shean (1 Sam 31:10; 2 Sam 21:12). After his successful coup against Ahab, Jehu has

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[1] Alternatively, Prov 31:31 might be adduced to support the commercial function of the gate, if the "works" in question are the wares the woman produces and sells in the gate (note the parallel between מעשה and פרי ידיה); cf. Manor, "Gates and Gods," 251.

[2] Such practices survived for millennia, and are attested in late antiquity, the medieval period, and even in modern history, where leaving an executed person's corpse on display is a well-known practice called gibbeting. The practice was considered to have a deterrent effect; in some cases the corpses were left to decompose for weeks (or even years). See Daniel V. Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 18-28; V. A. C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 266-269; Negley K. Teeters and Jack H. Hedblom, *Hang by the Neck: The Legal Use of Scaffold and Noose, Gibbet, Stake, and Firing Squad from Colonial Times to the Present* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1967); A. Hartshorne, *Hanging In Chains* (New York: Cassel, 1893).

[3] The Hebrew תלה על העץ literally means "hung on a tree/piece of wood." Either interpretation of עץ is possible, but if the Assyrian practice is in view (see below), the corpse was skewered on a vertical pole which was then planted into the ground for display. See Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Conquest of Canaan' in the Book of Joshua and in History," in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel* (ed. I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 254-5.

Ahab's 70 sons killed and heaps their severed heads in two piles at the entrance of

Jezreel's city gate (2 Kgs 10:8).[1]

Similar practices are attested elsewhere in the ANE, and are particularly

associated with the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the context of military victory. For example,

the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (early 9th century), in an account of a military

expedition to the West, boasts that he "caught the survivors and impaled (them) on stakes

in front of their towns."[2] Ashurnasirpal elsewhere describes his treatment of victims thus:

"I built a pillar over against his city gate and I flayed all the chiefs who had revolted, and

I covered the pillar with their skin. Some I walled up within the pillar, some I impaled

upon the pillar on stakes, and others I bound to stakes round about the pillar … And I cut

the limbs of the officers, of the royal officers who had rebelled…";[3] and again, "I fixed

up a pile of corpses in front of the city's gate. I flayed the nobles, as many as had

rebelled, and spread their skins out on the piles … I flayed many within my land and

spread their skins out on the walls."[4] In Shalmaneser III's annals (mid 9th century), a

common refrain amidst his war campaign descriptions is the piling up of his enemies'

heads in front of the town, with the occasional impaling on stakes or hanging of severed

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[1] Cf. the story of David's defeat of Goliath, after which David removed the Philistine's head and took it back to Jerusalem (1 Sam 17:54). The problematic reference to Jerusalem aside (according to the Biblical chronology, Jerusalem was at this point a Canaanite city and would not be conquered by David for some years), the fact that David is toting a severed head as a token of his victory is noteworthy in light of the above practices.

[2] *ANET* 276; Cf. Sennacherib (late 8th-early 7th centuries BCE), who, during his assault of Judah, hung the bodies of the leaders of Eltekeh and Timnah on poles surrounding the cities (*ANET* 288).

[3] Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, vol. 1.* (New York: Greenwood, 1968), 443.

[4] H. W. F. Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984), 261-2.

heads in the town's gates.[1] Similarly, the earlier Babylonian king Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur (early 10th century), after killing an enemy king, states the following: "Having stripped off his skin like the skin of a sheep, I set (it) in front of the gate of *Āl-gabbāri-bānî*."[2]

Various Assyrian reliefs depict the practices that the annals describe: the impaling of enemy combatants, the piling up of heads, and making a "pillar" of heads by skewering a series of heads onto a pole and setting up the pole for display (Figs. 8.1-8.3).

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[1] For a narrative description of many of these campaigns, see A. T. Olmstead, "Shalmaneser III and the Establishment of the Assyrian Power," *JAOS* 41 (1921): 347-370.
[2] *COS* 2.115B.
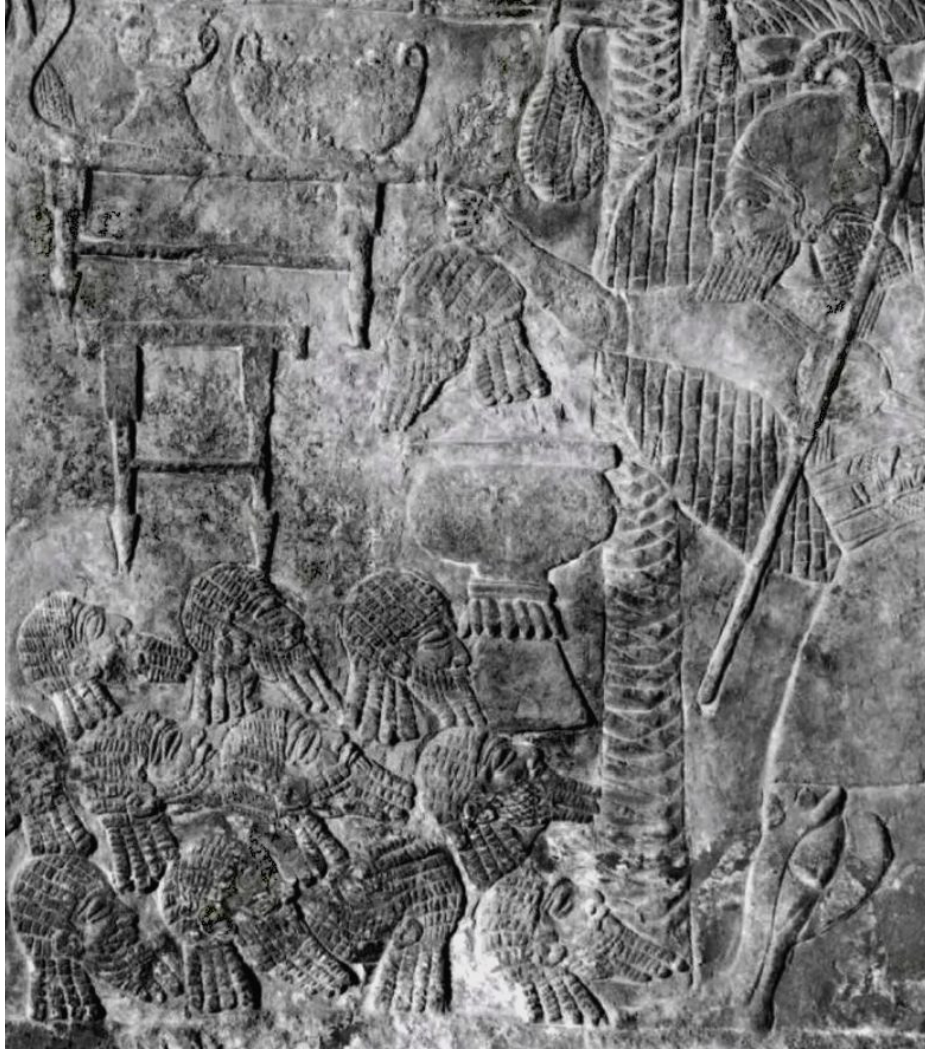
Figure 8.1. A pile of severed heads. Amidst the spoils of war, an Assyrian counts the heads of Babylonian combatants killed in a battle; from the Southwest palace of Nineveh.[1]

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[1] Gwynne Dyer, *War: The New Edition* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2005), 142.
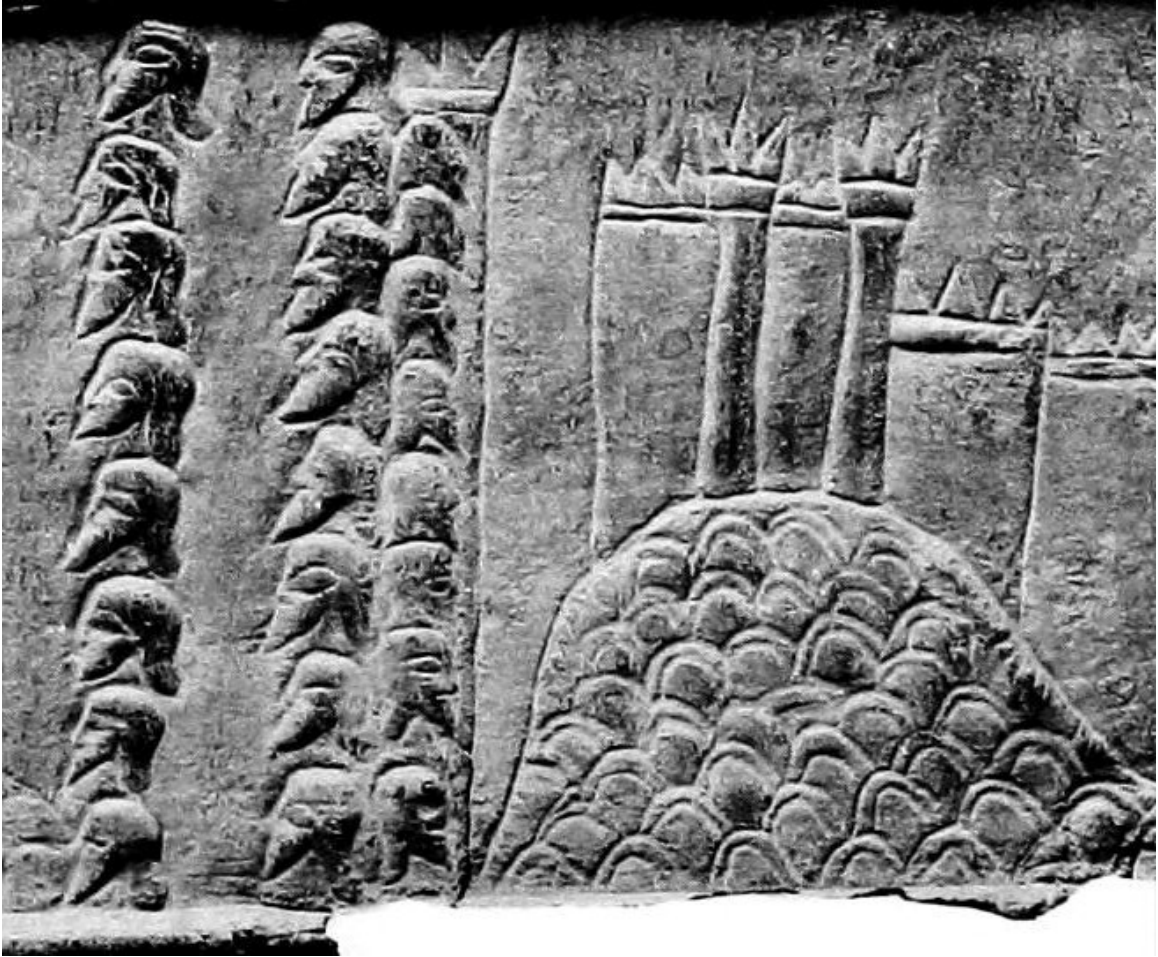
Figure 8.2. Severed heads displayed on poles outside of a besieged town (right); from a relief of Shalmaneser III (mid 9th century).[1] Note the twin towers which may indicate a gate.

The purpose of these gory displays is never explicitly stated, but the most obvious

function would be "making a public example and giving a warning by demonstrating

what happened to delinquent ringleaders."[2] During the course of a siege, they would also

serve as psychological warfare, intimidating the besieged in order to induce surrender.

Outside of a battle scenario, the corpses or heads may have also been

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[1] King, *Bronze Reliefs*, pl. 44.
[2] H. W. F. Saggs, "Assryian Warfare in the Sargonid Period," *Iraq* 25/2 (1963): 150.
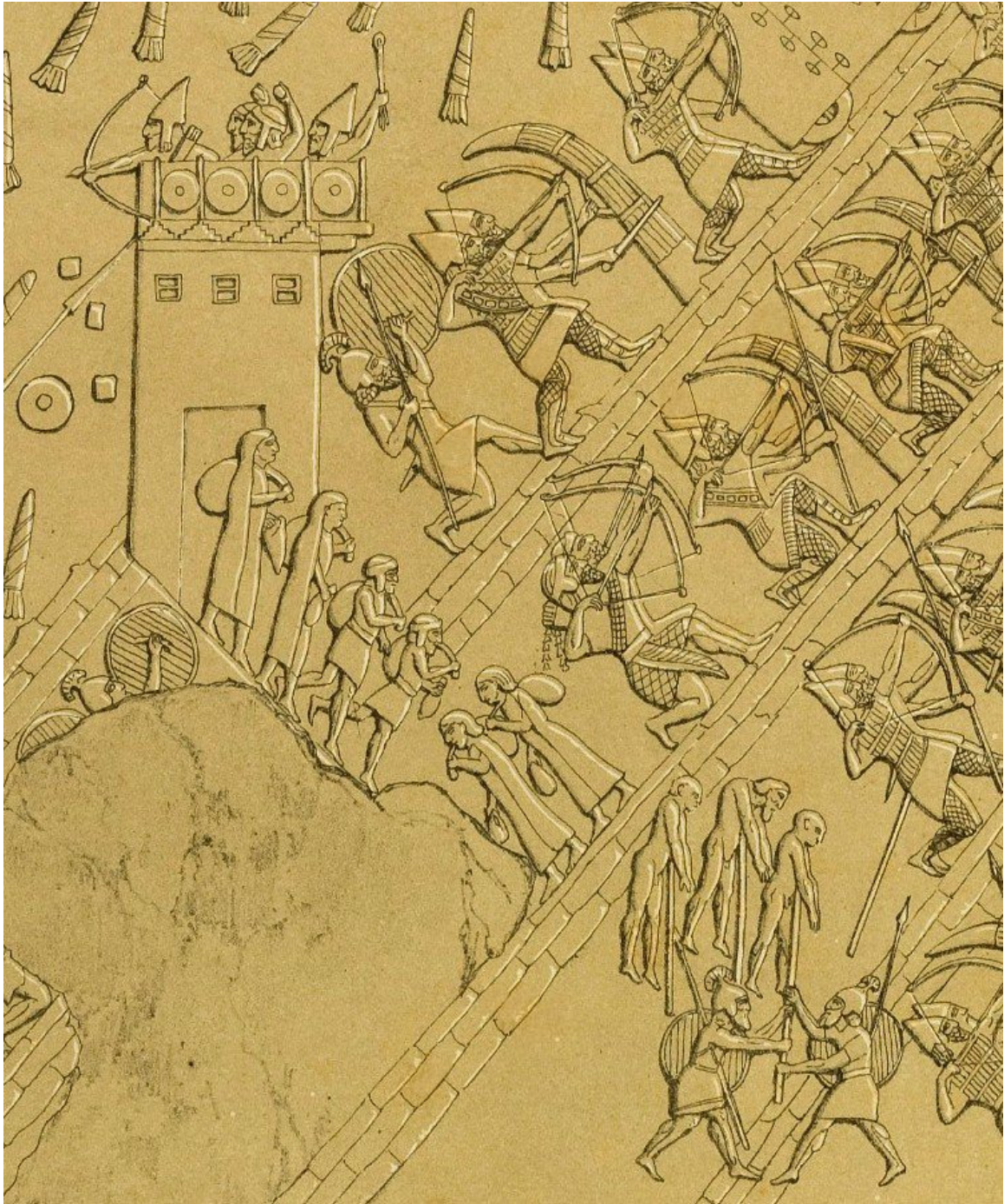
Figure 8.3. Judeans from Lachish are skewered and displayed (lower right)
outside the gate (upper left) of Lachish; relief of Sennacherib, late 8th century.[1]

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[1] Layard, *Monuments of Nineveh*, pl. XXI.

considered trophies of a successful war, especially if the body in question was royal or

otherwise noteworthy (c.f. David's keeping of Goliath's head, and the display of Saul and

his sons' bodies, mentioned above). All of these elements – deterrence, intimidation, and

showcasing one's victories – seem to be present in some cases. For example, in

Esarhaddon's description of a campaign to Syro-Palestine, he boasts that he cut off the

heads of a pair of rebel kings. He says: "I hung the heads of Sanduarri and of

Abdimilkutte around the necks of their nobles/chief officials to demonstrate to the

population the power of Ashur, my lord, and paraded them (thus) through the wide main

street of Nineveh with singers (playing on) *sammû*-harps."[1]

Public Humiliation

A practice not explicitly attested in the Hebrew Bible is the Neo-Assyrian custom

of publicly humiliating captured kings or ministers by tying them to the gate as if they

were animals, sometimes along with dogs and pigs for effect. In an inscription of Sargon

II, the king boasts that he has captured Lugalzaggisi, the king of Uruk, and "brought him

in a (dog) collar to the gate of Enlil."[2] Similarly, in his account of conquering Asuhili the

king of Arzani, Sargon describes the king's fate as following: "I cast [him] into fetters

and brought [him] to Assyria. Beside the gate inside the city of Nineveh [I kept him tied,

along with, …] dogs and swine.[3] When the captured king of Babylon was presented to

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[1] *ANET* 290-1.

[2] *ANET* 267.

[3] Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, vol. 2* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), 206.

Sennacherib, the latter "tied him up in the middle city-gate of Nineveh, like a pig."[1]

Esarhaddon, upon capturing an Arab rebel named Wahb along with his warriors, says "I put collars on them and bound them to the posts of my gate."[2] Assurbanipal says of a conquered rebel "I pierced his cheeks with the sharp-edged spear, my personal weapon…I put the ring to his jaw, placed a dog collar around his neck and made him guard the bar of the east gate of Nineveh."[3]

This practice also seems to be recalled in mythic terms in the Enuma Elish. Marduk, having defeated Tiamat and her eleven monsters, makes images of the latter and sets them up at the Gate of Apsu as a memorial of his conquest, saying "Lest ever after they be forgotten, let this be the sign."[4]

Against this background we should recall an episode in Jeremiah. In Jer 20:1-3 Pashhur, the chief officer of Yahweh's temple, beats Jeremiah on account of the latter's prophecies against Jerusalem, and then places him על המהפכת "in the stocks (?)" which are located in the Upper Benjamin Gate of the temple courtyard (v. 2). The precise meaning of the term here is unclear, but a plausible reconstruction is something like a dog's collar which forces one to remain on one's hands and knees.[5] This story is followed by a lament

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[1] Daniel D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 88.

[2] *ANET* 292.

[3] *ANET* 300.

[4] *COS* 1.111 V:73-76. Cf. Cogan, "Gate," 234. This custom continued as late as the Persian period. Darius I describes his treatment of a rebel named Phraortes as follows: "I cut off his nose and ears, and gouged out an eye; he was kept chained to the gate of the palace and all could see him there" (Pierre Briant, "Social and Legal Institutions in Achaeimenid Iran," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East vols. I-II* [ed. J. M. Sasson; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000], 525).

[5] Most commentator (rightly) define the term מהפכת – from the root הפ"כ, "to overturn, flip" – as some type of confinement device, based on the context here and its other occurrences in 2 Chron 16:10 (בית המהפכת) and Jer 29:26, where it is parallel to the term צנוק "collar" (?). Some translations and commentators suggest that the device forced people to bend over awkwardly, based on the semantic force of the term's

of Jeremiah, in which he complains "I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me" (v. 7).

<u>Propaganda</u>

Political and religious propaganda in the form of monumental inscriptions and statues are found in the gate area of many societies in the ancient Near East.[1] Even though the specifics of an inscription would be lost on most of the illiterate population, the mere presence of such stelae and statutes made the meaning – usually monarchic legitimation and political dominance – clear enough.[2]

Gateway stelae from ancient Israel are unfortunately lacking. At Tel Dan in N. Israel, a fragmentary 9th century stele was found (in secondary use) in the outer court of the city gate; it describes an Aramean king's conquest of both Israel and Judah.[3] Based on the historical and paleographic dating of the inscription, the dates of the gate's construction(s), and the find-spot, the stele's primary context was likely also in the gate.

Examples from the north are more numerous.[4] At Karatepe (Anatolia), a king named Azatiwada (late 8th/early 7th c.) had the same bi-lingual text inscribed in three

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root. This would certainly be accurate of something like a dog collar on a short leash, attached hip-high to a wall.

[1] See David Ussishkin, "The Erection of Royal Monuments in City-Gates," in *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç* (ed. K. Emre, et al.; Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), 485-496; B. N. Porter, "Assyrian Propaganda for the West: Esarhaddon's Stelae for Til Barsip and Sam'al," in *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age* (ed. G. Bunnens; ANESS 7; Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 143-176; Mazzoni, "The Gate and the City."

[2] Cf. Ussishkin, "The Erection of Royal Monuments," 485.

[3] See Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, "An Aramaic Stele Fragment From Tel Dan," *IEJ* 43 (1993): 81-98; "A New Fragment," *IEJ* 45 (1995): 1-18.

[4] In addition to the examples mentioned below, royal statues/stelae were found in or adjacent to the gates of Tell Mardikh (Ebla), Alaca Höyök, Carchemish, Malatya, Tell Ta'yinat, and perhaps at Boğazköy and Israelite Samaria. See Ussishkin, "The Erection of Royal Monuments," 485; Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 140-2; Mazzoni, "The Gate and the City," 330-2.

different locations at the site: on the stone orthostats of two different city gates, and on

the base of a statue found just inside one of the city gates.[1] The text, in typical Near

Eastern fashion, catalogs the mighty deeds of the local king Azatiwada, including

territorial expansion, the building of towns and fortifications, fidelity to his god Ba'al,

and the provision of abundant wealth and justice to his people.[2] At Til Barsip and Sam'al

(in N. Syria and E. Anatolia) the Assyrian king Esarhaddon left multiple stelae behind

after a successful military campaign in 671. He placed two stelae in the provincial capital

Til Barsip (one in the eastern city gate), and a third stele in the gate of Sam'al.[3] All of

these massive stelae range from 3.5 to nearly 4m in height – and more than a meter taller

still if one includes the height of the stone pedestals upon which they were installed. They

depict (to nearly their full height) Esarhaddon standing triumphantly, while the

diminutive kings whom he has just conquered give obeisance.[4]

Privacy in the Gate

        The references above should not be taken to mean that all activities in the context

of a gate were public; there were undoubtedly un-trafficked rooms and corners where a

private conversation could be had, or perhaps where the public was not allowed. A few

texts in the Hebrew Bible imply that some privacy could be found in the gate. Joab, for

instance, plotting to kill his rival Abner, "guided him into the midst of the gate, in order

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[1] See Roger T. O'Callaghan, "The Phoenician Inscription on the King's Statue at Karatepe," *CBQ* 11 (1949): 243; K. Lawson Younger, "The Phoenician Inscription of Azatiwada: An Integrated Reading," *JSS* 43/1 (1998): 11.
[2] Younger, "Phoenician Inscription," 13-21.
[3] Porter, "Assyrian Propaganda," 143-4; cf. figs. 2, 5, 15.
[4] Porter, "Assyrian Propaganda," 156-7.

to speak with him undisturbed, and he struck him there in the abdomen, and he died…"

(2 Sam 3:27). The reference may be to one of the chambers of the gate (if there was one

closed off by a door or blocking wall), or an upper room of the gatehouse or outworks.[1]

Likewise, David, upon hearing news that his son Absalom had been killed, was overcome

with grief and "went up to the upper room of the gate, and wept" (2 Sam 19:1).[2]

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[1] See pp. 40-3.

[2] Admittedly, this is not an unambiguously private affair, but it seems likely to have been. Note that both Joab and "all the people" only learn of David's weeping because they are told about it (2 Sam 19:2-3), not because they hear or see it themselves. The private weeping and wailing also seem to be set in contrast to David's public presentation of himself in the gate after he is sternly rebuked by Joab (19:6-9).

CHAPTER NINE
The City Council and its Functions in the Gate

Elders, Kings, and Honor in the Gate

One of the more important and well-known institutions connected to the city gate was the congregation of male "elders" which held court there.[1] This institution was integral to all societies in the ancient Near East, and has its roots in the strong patriarchalism and tribal organization common in the ANE.[2] The role of elders in society was broad, and included governing over legal, judicial, and political affairs (see below).[3]

The elders are often said to "sit" in the gate – especially when the circumstance is judicial. And, more broadly, the verb יש״ב "to sit" is strongly correlated with juridical functions.[4] Compare, for example, the following verses:

- "[Yahweh] will be a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment (יושב על המשפט)" (Isa 28:6)

- "And Moses sat (וישב) to judge the people" (Exod 18:13)

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[1] It may be the case that the office of elder bears only an etymological correlation to the age of the participant – the moniker, rather, denoting a position of authority – though in practice it is reasonable to assume that most of the elders were relatively senior (cf. Hanoch Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel: A Study of a Biblical Institution* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989], 7).

[2] Reviv, *The Elders*, 187. Compare the OB Legend of Atrahasis, where the hero gathers the elders to the gate in order to address them: "He assembled the elders at his gate; Atrahasis made ready to speak; And said to the elders…" (*COS* 1.130 ii:38-41). With reference to the tribal organization of the society, see Josh 7:14, where Israelite society is broken down into the following nested hierarchy: tribes (שבטים), clans (משפחות), households (בתים, probably to be equated with the בית אב, an extended family), and individual men (גברים).

[3] For treatments of the institution of elders in Israel, see esp. Reviv, *The Elders*, John L. McKenzie, "The Elders in the Old Testament," *Biblica* 40 (1959): 522-540; Donald A. McKenzie, "Judicial Procedure at the Town Gate" *VT* 14/1 (1964): 100-4; Andersen, "The Socio-Juridical Background."

[4] Cf. Zeev W. Falk, who notes that "justice generally, divine as well as human, was represented by sitting on a throne" ("Two Symbols of Justice," *VT* 10/1 [1960]: 73).

- "Let the nations…come up the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit (אשב) to judge the nations round about" (Joel 4:12)[1]

This should be contrasted with those acting as plaintiffs and defendants in judicial proceedings, who are consistently depicted as standing (Exod 18:13; 1 Kgs 3:16; Isa 3:13; Zech 3:1; Ps 82:1),[2] just as those in attendance at Yahweh's heavenly council meetings stand while Yahweh sits on a throne (1 Kgs 22:19; Isa 6:2; Dan 7:9-10).[3]

In fact, the term "sitting" in some contexts must be understood as "sitting in judgment," even when it is not associated with terminology related to judging in the immediate context. For example, in Exod 18:14 we read the following: "And Moses' father in law saw everything Moses was doing for the people, and he said 'What is this thing which you're doing for the people? Why do you sit [in judgment] alone and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?'" (see also v. 13). Likewise, in Jer 26:10, state officials of Judah (שרי יהודה) "sit" in the entrance to the New Gate of Yahweh's Temple, and the broader context establishes that they do so in order to conduct a legal hearing (vv. 11-19, 24).[4]

We should recall that benches are a common feature in Iron II gate complexes, found in gate plazas and sometimes within the gatehouse chambers (see pp. 126-7), so the

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[1] See also Pss 9:5, 8; 122:5; Mal 3:3 (?); Prov 20:8; Dan 7:9-10.

[2] Hans Jochen Boecker, *Law and the Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient East* (trans. J. Moiser; Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg, 1980), 33; cf. Falk, "Two Symbols of Justice," 73.

[3] Compare the discussion of Min S. Kee, "The Heavenly Council and its Type-scene," *JSOT* 31/3 (2007): 259-273.

[4] The phrase "sit in judgment" survives as an idiom in modern English – presumably due to the influence of Biblical terminology – where it means to preside as a judge or assume the position of a critic (OED, s.v. "judgment" 1b).

common references to sitting in the gate suit the archaeological evidence.[1] However,
since one of the primary functions of the elders in the gate is serving as judges, it is
possible that when elders "sit" in the gate, their doing so is an allusion to their role as
judges more than their physical position, and might be interpreted as "hold court" or the
like.

Elders are not the only public figures who frequently appear in the gate; also
included are prophets (discussed above) and kings. Before we turn to kings in the gate,
however, we should recall that the paradigmatic image of a king includes his sitting on
the royal throne.[2] Indeed, the idiomatic phrase "to sit on a throne" means to begin to
function as a king; e.g., ישב שלמה על כיסא המלוכה "Solomon sat on the throne of the
kingdom" (1 Kgs 1:46).[3] Yahweh, like human kings, sits on his heavenly throne (1 Kgs
22:19; Isa 6:2; Dan 7:9-10; Ps 9:8; Lam 5:19; cf. Ezek 28:2) and sits above his cherubim
(1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Ps 99:1), which are widely associated with thrones
in the ancient world.[4] This usage is so pervasive that the verb "to sit" when used of a
royal or divine person takes the meaning "to be enthroned," even without the specific

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[1] We may not be certain, of course, that benches found in the gate complex were necessarily those customarily used by the elders, but this seems probable.

[2] See William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19-40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 2A; New York: Doubleday, 2006), 516-7.

[3] See also Exod 11:5; 12:29 Deut 17:18; 1 Kgs 1:17, 20.

[4] Thrones are commonly depicted in ANE art with various composite כרוב-like creatures constituting their side-panels and feet (see Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 517, and references there); compare 2 Chr 9:17-9, where Solomon's throne has a standing lion at (or rather, as) each armrest. As always, the royal mimicked the divine – or rather, vice versa. Just as Yahweh was יושב הכרובים ("the cherub-sitter"; awkwardly lacking a preposition), so were kings. Cf. the silver drachm "Yehud" coin of 4th century Judah, which depicts a divine rider on a conflated chariot throne/winged creature: a winged chariot (itself a close parallel to contemporary Greek imagery; see Michael Shenkar, "The Coin of the 'God on the Winged Wheel,'" *BOREAS - Münstersche Beiträge zur Archäologie* 30-31 [2007-8] 13–23).

mention of a throne (e.g., Ps 61:8; Amos 1:5, 8; note in both of the latter cases the parallel of the participle יושב to תומך שבט "he who grasps the scepter").[1]

Returning to the gate complex, we see that kings, too, are depicted as sitting in the gate, sometimes explicitly on a throne.[2] For example, after Absalom is killed, David's inappropriate mourning for his rebellious son spoils the day of victory and causes his people to mourn along with him. David is confronted by his army commander Joab, who tells him that the people have been shamed by David's grief, and advises him to encourage his people before they abandon him (2 Sam 19:1-8). The text reports that David "arose and sat in the gate. And all the people said 'Look, the king is sitting in the gate!' And all the people came before the king" (2 Sam 19:9). Similarly, the kings of Israel and Judah together sit publicly in the gate: "Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting – each man on his throne, dressed in his (royal) apparel – at the threshing floor at the entrance to the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying before them" (1 Kgs 22:10 = 2 Chr 18:9). Jer 38:7 likewise mentions offhandedly "Now the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate."[3]

Kings sitting in the gate does not appear to be a uniquely Israelite phenomenon, though I have found only limited parallels in the broader ANE. In the Ugaritic text RS 15.117, we find a list of nicknames for King Niqmepa (ca. 1,300). The list includes the following: "the Master of Justice" (bʿl ṣdq), "the steward of the (royal) house" (skn.bt),

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[1] Similarly, when Yahweh "sits," we may safely presume that it is on his heavenly throne (Pss 2:4; 29:10; 55:20; 102:13).

[2] In addition to the following references, cf. also Eli, who sat on a throne/chair (the Hebrew כיסא can tolerate either meaning) next to the doorpost of the sanctuary (1 Sam 1:9).

[3] Compare Micah 5:5, which mentions those who will "shepherd" (i.e., rule) at the "entrances" (פתחים) of the land of Nimrod (i.e., Assyria), as well as 2 Sam 18:4, where David stands in the gate and commands his troops as they depart for battle.

and "the king of the gate" (*mlk.šǵr*).[1] In Egypt, too, the Pharaoh – as an emissary and

perhaps embodiment of a god – presents himself publicly in the gate.[2] A further potential

analog to the above is that the Pharaoh often sat (or stood) at the entrance of temple gates,

in the form of massive statues in his likeness.[3]

The purpose of a king sitting in the gate is not entirely clear, but this would allow

him to administer justice, and to address and be approached by his subjects (see 2 Chron

32:6). It also seems to be a conspicuously public display of kingship, which may indeed

be the primary purpose.[4] This is particularly poignant in the case of David, whose

competence to rule had been undermined by Absalom's rebellion; the people's excited

(and presumably happy) reaction to David's sitting in the gate was not merely on account

of his being in public, it was because he had resumed his reign.

This interpretation of the Biblical references is complemented by two slightly

obscure texts from Jeremiah. In both cases, foreign kings are described as conquering

Jerusalem and then setting up their thrones in front of the gates of the city, once as a

prophecy and once as a fulfillment: "For behold, I am calling to all the families of the

kingdoms of the north, declares Yahweh, and they will come, and each man will put his

throne at the entrance to the gates of Jerusalem…" (Jer 1:15).[5] And again, "And all the

officials of the King of Babylon came, and they sat in the Middle Gate…" (Jer 39:3)[1]

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[1] Charles Virolleaud, *Textes en cunéiformes alphabétiques des archives est, oust et centrales* (PRU II; Mission de Ras Shamra vol. VII; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1957), 7:4-6, p. 20. Alternatively, the term "gate" here may be taken as metonymic for the city.

[2] van den Boorn, "Justice at the Gate," 8-10.

[3] Keel, *Symbolism*, 127.

[4] van den Boorn, "Justice at the Gate," 8.

[5] The remainder of this verse and v. 16 describe Yahweh's judgment against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah, which might lead one to believe that the thrones in this case were those set in the camps of the besieging armies which would have surrounded the Judean towns. However, the function of the thrones in

A foreign king's (or his emissaries') sitting in the gate of a newly conquered city would have been to enact the city's formal "submission to the judicial acts of the victor" – as well as a poignant swapping of the town's leadership and an assertion of the new king's sovereignty.[2]

One particular piece of archaeological evidence from the southern Levant seems to coincide with the above data. In one of the gate plazas at Tel Dan, an ashlar-built platform – 2.5m deep and 1.1m wide – was found on the cobblestone plaza pavement immediately next to the entrance of the outer gatehouse (cf. "at the entrance to the gate" in 1 Kgs 22:10 and Jer 1:15, above). The front half of the structure is a broad, flat step; the rear half is a step higher still, and consists of a nearly square platform with a recess in the center. At the sides of the podium in the rear, two decorated, semi-circular stones were found outfitted with square holes, likely to receive wooden poles (see Fig. 9.1).

1:15 may be understood as the same as those in 39:3 (see below) if we assume that the text is not narrating events in strict chronological order; that is to say, the outcome of the besieging (thrones in the gate) is narrated before the besieging itself is mentioned (cf. Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 21A; New York: Doubleday, 1999], 243, and William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 40-1). I favor this interpretation in view of the obvious parallel between this passage and 39:2-3.

[1] This particular gate – שער התוך – is often equated with Avigad's fragmentary Iron Age "gate" (its identity as a gate is questionable) unearthed in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem's Old City (Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 50-60). It may be the case that a gate called "The Middle Gate" actually existed and was in view here, but the name might also be nothing but a confection of the author based on Jeremiah's oracle in 21:4 that Yahweh will bring the Babylonians אל תוך העיר "to the *middle* of the city."

[2] Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 41; cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 243.

Figure 9.1. The (throne?) pedestal at the entrance to the gate of Tel Dan. Note the ashlar bench along the wall in the upper right.

A similarly decorated "pumpkin-shaped" stone, set into the pavement next to the front of the platform, likewise had a recessed aperture at its top to receive a wooden pole. (Its twin on the opposite side was missing.) Presumably, then, some type of canopy covered the podium.[1] Complementing the podium on its right is a bench built along the

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[1] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 238-241.

wall which is 4.5 m long and built of large ashlars – a prime location for sitting dignitaries.[1]

We cannot be certain of the function of this podium. One likely interpretation is that it was a cultic installation – a "high place" in the gate (see 2 Kgs 23:8). This is a particularly attractive interpretation in view of the similar stepped podium found in the same location (relative to the gate door) at Bethsaida. The function of the installation at Bethsaida, however, is much clearer, since it was preserved along with clearly cultic paraphernalia, including a stone basin placed in front of a large iconic stele of a deity.[2] Additionally, the Bethsaida platform did not include installations for a canopy. A second probable interpretation is that the Tel Dan podium was a dais built for a king's throne, so that he could publicly present himself in the gate.[3] Some pictorial representations of colonnaded Assyrian royal canopies (e.g., see Figs. 9.2, 9.3) provide useful parallels to such an interpretation, and Blomquist suggests potential archaeological parallels to the podium from Iron I Tel Mevorakh and 8th-7th century Sarepta in Phoenicia.[4] On the strength of these parallels – as well as the dissimilarity of the finds associated with Tel Dan's structure relative to that of Bethsaida – the dais interpretation seems marginally more likely.[5]

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[1] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 238.

[2] Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131, 134; Arav, "Final Report," 40-50, 66. Biran seems to have later embraced this interpretation of the podium at Dan (see Manor, "Gates and Gods," 244).

[3] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 241.

[4] Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 59-60.

[5] See Monika Bernett and Othmar Keel, *Mond, Stier und Kult am Stadttor: Die Stele Von Betsaida (et-Tell)* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 161; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 66-68; Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 59 and references there. A third interpretation is that the hollow left by the ashlars of the podium originally held a stele, though it seems unusual that a stele would be covered by a pillared canopy (pace Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 64).

Figure 9.2. Shalmaneser III sits on his throne in an army encampment near Dabigu in N. Syria.[1] Note the colonnaded canopy to the left with the royal volute capitals (whether the king is meant to be depicted underneath the canopy or not is unclear); such canopies are found in nearly all depictions of the Assyrian war camps.

To sum up the above discussion, individuals who are honored and respected are commonly associated with gates, and particularly when they are depicted as "sitting" in the gate.[2] It is not surprising, then, that we find many prominent biblical characters and scenes depicted in the gate. Aside from those already mentioned, we should point out Lot (Gen 19:1); Ephron the Hittite, selling the cave at Machpellah to Abraham (Gen 23:10);

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[1] King, *Bronze Reliefs*, pl. XX.

[2] *Pace* Smith, who claims (against all the literary evidence) that "nobles" were not associated with gates on the grounds that "An open place in the gate was not the property of a social class, and the assembly of the elders was not held in a busy spot" (Sidney Smith, "On the Meaning of *Goren*," *Palestine PEQ* 85 [1953]: 44).

Hamor, the ruler of Shechem (Gen 34:20); Boaz (Ruth 4:1); Eli the priest (1 Sam 4:18);

Samuel the prophet (1 Sam 9:18); Mordechai (Esth 2:19, 21, etc.); the servants of the

Persian king (Esth 3:2-3); and Job (29:7).

Figure 9.3. A deity/king (?) sits under a canopy upheld by wooden poles and volute capitals; relief from 9th c. Sippar, Mesopotamia.[1]

Since the gate represents the public arena in ancient Israel, a position of honor

there is essentially a position of honor in the society. The gate was "the meeting place of

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[1] Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital*, fig. 67.

those who really matter";[1] it was "a primary public space for the constitution of masculine honor through peer acknowledgement."[2]

A number of Biblical texts make this point explicit. Haman, the villain of the book of Esther, is incensed that his enemy Mordechai is given a position of honor. As Haman puts it: "All of this [viz., Haman's great wealth, his many sons, the king's honoring him and promoting him above all of his servants, and a personal invitation to feast with the queen and king] means nothing to me, as long as I see Mordechai the Jew sitting in the King's Gate!" (Esth 5:13). Haman's indignation is surely prompted by more than Mordechai's physical location. Later in the book, the king wishes to commend Morchai publicly, and does so with the following treatment: "Give the [royal] robe and the [royal] horse to one of the king's noble officials, and let them dress the man whom the king wishes to honor, and let them lead him on the horse *in the plaza of the town*, and let them call out before him, 'Thus it will be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor!'" (Esth 6:9; emphasis added).

In Job's utopic recounting of his life before he was cursed, he recalls that God watched over him, that his children[3] surrounded him, that his steps were washed with butter, and that rocks poured out streams of oil for him (29:2-6). He also says the following about his status in society:

> When I went out to the gate of the town
> When in the plaza I prepared my seat

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[1] Ludwig Köhler, *Hebrew Man* (trans. P. R. Ackroyd; New York: Abingdon, 1956), 130.

[2] Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 173. Women, by contrast, are not often depicted in gates; they characteristically show up in narratives when they are fetching water from the well or spring (C. H. J. de Geus, "The City of Women: Women's Places in Ancient Israelite Cities," in *Congress Volume, Paris 1992* [ed. J. A. Emerton; VTS 61; Leiden: Brill, 1995], 77-9).

[3] The term here – נערים – may also refer to servants (Job 29:5).

> Young men saw me and hid
> The aged arose and stood
> Princes stopped speaking
> They put their hands to their mouths
> The voices of the nobles fled
> Their tongues stuck to their palates
> When the ear heard, it blessed me
> When the eye saw, it bore witness of me
> Because I would deliver the poor who cried for help
> As well as the orphan who had no one to help him
> The blessing of the one who was perishing would come upon me
> I caused the heart of the widow to rejoice
> I wore righteousness like clothing
> My judgments were like my robe and my turban
> I was eyes to the blind
> I was feet to the lame
> I was a father to the needy
> I investigated the dispute of those I did not know
> I broke the jaws of the wicked man
> And from his teeth I rescued his prey […]
> People listened to me, and waited
> They were silent, listening for my counsel
> After my words they did not speak again
> My words dripped upon them
> They waited for me as for the rain
> They opened their mouths as for the late rains […]
> I chose their course of action, and I sat as chief
> I dwelt as a king among warriors
> As one who comforts those who mourn (Job 29:7-17, 21-23, 25)

Job is depicted as the most respected – nay, venerated – man in town, who is known for his righteous and compassionate judgments as well as his sage and desperately-needed advice. Significantly, he dispenses his rulings and counsel when he goes out and takes his seat in the gate plaza. Note, as well, that he describes himself as "like a king" (כמלך; v. 25) and that he "sits as chief/head" (אשב ראש; v. 25). This passage summarizes much of what we have discussed above, and highlights – even if hyperbolically – the respect accorded to an elder statesman in the gate.

Conversely, the gate is a place where fools dare not speak: "Wisdom is too lofty for a fool; in the gate he will not (or: let him not) open his mouth" (Prov 24:7). The term "gate" here, based on the parallelism, should be understood metonymically for the institution of the ruling body of elders, since anyone can speak in the public gate complex. The point is that in the presence of the wise elders, fools should remain silent.[1]

A final text worth mentioning is Ps 69:13, which reads "Those who sit in the gate speak against me; (I am derided in) the songs of drunkards." Given the parallel between "those in the gate" and "drunkards," one might take this verse as evidence contrary to my argument, since here lowly drunkards are associated with gates. However, the two elements in the verse may also be understood as forming a merism. That is to say, the Psalmist's (overstated) point is that *everyone* has something against him – from the respectable who sit in the gate even down to the drunkards (both ends of the social spectrum). I prefer this interpretation because it is consistent with the portrayal of honor for those who sit in the gate in other texts, and because of the lack of any clear association between gates and the lowly anywhere else.

Municipal housing for the poor in the gate?

In contrast to the association of respected men and gates portrayed above, Avraham Faust has recently argued that "the gate was the place where the poor, strangers, and destitute of the city were concentrated."[2] His argument begins with some overlooked

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[1] In addition to these texts, cf. the man who is fortunate enough to marry the אשת חיל "woman of valor" of Proverbs 31. The man's position of honor is pointed out as well, in that he is "known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land" (v. 23).
[2] Faust, "The Gates," 30.

archaeological findings: many of the public buildings found near excavated gates (including tripartite buildings) contained domestic pottery assemblages. This fact, combined with Faust's interpretation of a number of Biblical passages, leads him to conclude that these public buildings may have functioned as municipal housing for the poor.

Faust makes the following points based on the Biblical literature: 1) Passages which condemn oppression of the helpless and needy people in the gate (e.g., Prov 22:22, Amos 5:12, Job 5:4) imply an association of poor and needy people with the gate.[1] 2) In Faust's words: the "lowest elements of society gathered around the gate: 'Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself; thou mayest give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it (Deut. 14:21)."[2] 3) Deut 14:28-9 refers to "needy people" who are given food from the tithe gathered at "the gate."[3] 4) In some texts, "gate" refers to a place where people are said to reside (Deut 23:16; 24:14), which Faust understands as the broader "gate quarter."

Leaving the function (and the archaeology) of the public structures aside, I contend that Faust is mistaken in his interpretation of the Biblical passages in question.[4] We should note, first of all, that passages in Deuteronomy inform nearly all of Faust's conclusions that associate poor people with gates. As I will argue in Chapter 11,

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[1] Faust, *Israelite Society*, 116. Faust notes that "most of the texts that mention justice at the gate do so in reference to the poor and needy. It can be assumed that only a small amount of the legal proceedings in the city dealt with the poor, and therefore one could have expected that most of the texts dealing with 'justice' would refer to other juridical cases" ("The Gates," 32).

[2] Faust, "The Gates," 30. Faust also mentions Exod 20:10 and Deut 31:12 with respect to the גר "foreign resident."

[3] Faust, "The Gates," 30-1.

[4] On the other hand, I find quite reasonable Faust's observations about the domestic nature of the artifacts found in public buildings near city gates.

however, these texts do not actually refer to literal gates. Rather, these are but a few of many instances in Deuteronomy where the term "gate" is a metaphorical reference to an Israelite community.[1] Further, the Biblical references to oppression of the poor in the gate (that is, in the judicial proceedings of the gate) should not be taken to mean that poor people in particular tended to congregate in the gate, or even that most juridical cases to do with poor people. Instead, the point is that many injustices were perpetrated against the דל "poor" and אביון "needy" (people such as foreigners, widows, and orphans) on account of their low status and thus the ease with which one could take advantage of them.[2] The Biblical condemnations of injustice are naturally not evenly distributed among all types of court cases; instead, they focus on the most egregious examples of oppression.

It is of course a fact that not all people who sit in the gate are thereby afforded a position of honor. Note Gen 38:14, Judg 19:15, and 2 Kgs 7:3, for example, where a prostitute, weary travelers, and four lepers (respectively) sit down in the gate or gate plaza. Poor and destitute people would be found in the gate, as would everyone else in the society. The gate is not a forum for those of high status *exclusively*, but there is a strong *association* of high status and being known as one who sits in the gate.

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[1] See Ch. 11. Additionally, in the case of Deut 14:21, eating the meat from a נבלה "carcass" makes Israelites unclean (Lev 17:15; 22:8; cf. Ezek 4:14). Therefore it is likely that the carcass' being given to a foreign resident has little to do with charity dispensed to the needy, and much to do with the applicability of purity laws to non-Israelites (cf. Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996], 140; Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* [NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1976], 232). This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that *selling* the meat to a foreigner (נכרי) – to whom purity laws also do not apply – is another option recommended in the same verse.

[2] Cf. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 12-3, 69.

Legal Transactions in the Gate

This category consists mostly of property transactions which were important enough to conduct in the presence of witnesses, and which were sometimes documented by the writing of an official contract.[1] Many such transactions are described in the Biblical literature. For instance, Abraham and Ephron the Hittite are in the gate as they negotiate and conduct the sale of a plot of land in Gen 23:3-18. This transaction involves the weighing of the purchase price in silver and the transfer of the land to Abraham "in the presence of the sons of Heth, among all who enter by the gate of his city" (v. 18).[2] Within the legal code in Deuteronomy, one of the regulations regarding Levirate marriage is the obligation of a man who will not marry his sister-in-law to publicly decline his responsibilities in front of the elders at the city gate, where he will receive a public shaming involving spittle, shoe removal, and name-calling (Deut 25:7-10). Ruth 4:1-13 depicts an enactment of the Levirate "redemption" law, with Boaz redeeming his deceased relative's field along with his in-law, Ruth.[3]

Many offhanded references in Assyrian and Babylonian texts refer to property transfers and other legal transactions in the gate. For example, a letter from the Old

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[1] While thousands of such documents have been recovered from various towns in Mesopotamia and N. Syria (see, e.g., *SAA* 6, 14), very few such receipts are attested from the southern Levant, and none (to my knowledge) specifically connected with gates. The closest relevant Biblical material is the land purchase deed mentioned in Jer 32, and a vague reference to a document written by a legal adversary (ספר כתב איש ריבי) in Job 31:35.

[2] Admittedly, even though the gate is mentioned twice in the passage (vv. 10, 18), the syntax is somewhat abnormal in both cases. This passage will be discussed more extensively below, pp. 295-7. For now, it will suffice to note that vv. 17-8 ("So the field … was transferred to Abraham as an acquisition, in the presence of the sons of Heth, among all who enter by the gate of his city") sound *prima facie* as if they describe a real estate transaction in the midst of the bustling city gate.

[3] For an extensive discussion of the institution of the גאל in the Hebrew Bible and the ANE – with an emphasis on Deut 25 and Ruth 4 – see Donald A. Leggett, *The Levirate and Goel Institutions in the Old Testament: With Special Attention to the Book of Ruth* (Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack Publishing, 1974).

Assyrian period (3rd millennium) says "there in the gate office, act as my representatives in the consigning of the merchandise."[1] In 15th-14th century Nuzi (in N. Mesopotamia), hundreds of economic tablets document business transactions including buying, selling, debt payments, and so on. Many of the tablets include an epilogue which includes the name of the scribe and the announcement "(this) tablet written after the edict in the great gate of the city of Nuzi" (or the like), showing that the tablet was a receipt made on the spot for a gate transaction.[2]

Judicial Proceedings in the Gate

This category (closely related to the above) is one of the best-attested functions of the civic forum in the ancient Near East, and includes adjudication of all kinds of legal disputes and criminal behavior.

To begin, gates are associated with disputes in general. Men "speak with their enemies in the gate" (Ps 127:5); evil people "hate him who reproves in the gate" (Amos 5:10); "[tyrants and scoffers] indict a man with a word, lay a trap for the one who reproves in the gate, and defraud the righteous man with trivial arguments" (Isa 29:21).

These references to disputes should be understood in relation to the broad association of gates with judicial arbitration. In the Hebrew Bible, for instance, we read "These are the things which you shall do: speak the truth, each man to his neighbor; give true and just judgments in your gates" (Zech 8:16; see also Job 29:7-17; Amos 5:15). In a

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[1] *CAD* A/1, 84.

[2] For many examples, see David I. Owen and Ernest R. Lacheman, eds., *General Studies and Excavations at Nuzi 9/3* (Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians 5; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 91-134.

text from LB Ugarit, we read "Then, on the seventh day, Dānīʾilu the man of Rapaʾu, the valiant Harnamite man, arose and sat the entrance to the (city-)gate, among the leaders (sitting) at the threshing floor. He judged the widow's case, (he) made decisions regarding the orphan" (Aqhat 5:3-9).[1] From Nineveh in the Neo-Assyrian period, we read "open the Šamaš Gate, let the judges sit there";[2] and from Erech in the Neo-Babylonian period: "I will send him (in fetters) with his adversary in court to the palace gate before the chief […]-official."[3] Temple gates in Mesopotamia sometimes contained the symbols of multiple gods (for the purpose of "swearing in" witnesses), and even the gate names suggest judicial functions.[4] Egyptian gates are also associated with the dispensing of justice.[5]

Further allusion to the fact that the gate is the place of legal judgment is seen in the condemnation of oppression and injustice in the gate. In the Hebrew Bible this is a common theme: "Do not steal from a poor person because he is poor; do not oppress a needy person in the gate. For Yahweh will argue their case…" (Prov 22:22-3); "Ruin is in [the city's] midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from her gate plaza" (Ps 55:12; see also Job 5:4; Amos 5:12; Isa 59:13-4). Likewise, an 8th century Assyrian tablet with a collection of popular sayings includes the following: "The sycophant stands in court at

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[1] *COS* 1.103.
[2] *CAD* A/1, 86a.
[3] *CAD* B, 17b.
[4] Patton, "Ezekiel's Blueprint," 157; Cogan, "Gate," 233.
[5] van den Boorn, "Justice at the Gate," 8-10; Otto, "שער," 15:371; Brunner, "Tür und Tor," 49. Brunner suggests that the judicial function of the gate arose from the function of gate personnel guarding against unauthorized passage ("Tür und Tor," 49).

the city gate; Right and left he hands out bribes; The warrior Šamaš knows his misdeeds."[1]

Some ancient law codes explicitly stipulate that an issue must be brought before the elders in the gate. In the Bible, such a stipulation applies to stubborn and rebellious sons: "his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town, to the gate of his place" (Deut 21:19-21), where they give a formal accusation of his wrongdoings to the elders. Similar obligations apply to a newly married woman accused of not being a virgin (Deut 22:13-21) and a manslayer who has fled to a city of refuge (Josh 20:4).

A number of the Old Hittite laws (17th-16th c.) similarly prescribe bringing the offender to the city or palace gate for judgment:

> If a man has sexual relations with a cow, it is an unpermitted sexual pairing: he will be put to death. They shall conduct him to the king's gate…If a man has sexual relations with a sheep, it is an unpermitted sexual pairing: he will be put to death. They will conduct him [to the] king's [gate]…If anyone has sexual relations with a pig (or) a dog, he shall die. He shall bring him to the palace gate.[2]

In one instance, a judicial appeal is attested in the expected archaeological context. A 7th century ostracon from Mesad Hashavyahu (in Philistia, but written in Hebrew) contains a juridical complaint from a man who claims that his garment was unjustly confiscated by a certain Hashaviahu, who seems to have been the local governor. The appeal for help in regaining his rightful property was found in the gatehouse of the fortress, which indicates either that a scribe in the gate wrote the ostracon as a draft (the

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[1] W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 218:8-10.
[2] *COS* 2.19 §§187-8, 199; cf. also The Proclamation of Telipinu, which contains a similar injuction (*COS* 1.76 §50).

hand is that of a practiced scribe) or that the case of the complaint was considered in the gate of the fortress.[1]

The association of gates and judicial procedure has also led to extended definitions of gate terminology. In the larger towns of Mesopotamia, an assembly of elders (*šībūtum*) was responsible for judicial hearings in each of the precincts into which the town was divided.[2] Each precinct was called either *bābu* – a term whose primary meaning is "gate" – or *babtu*, derived from the same term. In other words, each resident would go to his or her respective "gate" authorities to receive a judicial hearing.[3] In the same way, in the Hebrew Bible the term שער can be used in a non-literal fashion (viz., metonymically) to indicate the judicial function of the gate. For instance, the phrase "maintain justice in the gate" in Amos 5:15 is probably not a recommendation that people behave justly in the gate as opposed to other locations; rather, the verse is an admonition to "maintain justice in your *civic judicial proceedings*" (cf. the NIV translation "maintain justice in the courts").

To round out our discussion of judicial procedure in the gate, we will discuss a gate trial recounted in the Hebrew Bible. In Jeremiah 26, the prophet is preaching a message of Jerusalem's destruction in the courtyard of Yahweh's temple (vv. 1-6). The priests, prophets, and "all the people" (כל העם) present take hold of Jeremiah (ויתפשו אתו)

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[1] See Joseph Naveh, "A Hebrew Letter from the Seventh Century B.C.," *IEJ* 10/3 (1960): 129-139; Shmuel Ahituv, *HaKetav VeHaMiktav: Handbook of Ancient Inscriptions from the Land of Israel and the Kingdoms beyond the Jordan from the Period of the First Commonwealth* (The Biblical Encyclopaedia Library 21; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2005), 143-9 (Hebrew).

[2] Samuel Greengus, "Legal and Social Institutions of Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East vols. I-II* (ed. J. M. Sasson; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000), 469.

[3] *CAD* B 9-11, 14-23. Similarly, at Ebla the residential lower city was divided into four quarters, each of which was named after one of the four city gates (Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981], 44).

and tell him that he should die for his proclamations (vv. 7-9). Upon hearing of the

unrest, some government officials (שרי יהודה) come up from the royal palace, and take

their place in the gate in order to convene a court: וישבו בפתח שער-יהוה החדש "and they sat

at the entrance to the New Gate of Yahweh('s temple)" (v. 10).[1] The priests and prophets

then make their accusation before both the officials and all the people, saying that

Jeremiah deserves the death penalty on account of his treasonous prophesying against

Jerusalem, which many of those present had themselves heard (v. 11). Jeremiah then

responds, telling the officials and all the people that he is innocent because Yahweh sent

him to proclaim this specific message. He also warns them that killing him would only

bring innocent blood (דם נקי) upon them (vv. 12-5). Moreover, some of the elders of the

land (אנשים מזקני הארץ)[2] stand up and remind all present (כל קהל העם) about the case of the

prophet Micah, who similarly prophesied about the ruin of Jerusalem. Micah's

prophecies did not lead to a death sentence; rather, they caused the king (Hezekiah) to

entreat Yahweh, which in turn led to Yahweh's changing his mind about the impending

disaster, ultimately saving the city (vv. 17-19).[3] With this, "all the people" – who were

originally ready to kill Jeremiah – are apparently persuaded, as they and the Judean

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[1] As noted in the introduction, temple gates served many of the same functions as the city gates (*pace* Evans, "Gates and Streets," 4).

[2] It is not clear if these elders were associated with any of the groups present (הכהנים, שרי יהודה, כל העם, or הנביאים). I presume that כל העם is the most likely association, based on their stated opinion in favor of Jeremiah and because "elders of the land" usually does not carry any cultic or (official) governmental connotations.

[3] A second similar case – inserted parenthetically by the author or a later editor – is recounted in vv. 20-23. The brief anecdote is about an otherwise unknown prophet (Uriyahu the son of Shemayahu, from Kiryat Yearim), who had prophesied against Jerusalem just as Jeremiah did, and was hunted down, put to death, and given an ignoble burial by King Jehoiakim. The story, one assumes, was put here because of its relevance to Jeremiah's case, and perhaps to illustrate the real danger Jeremiah faced.

officials side with Jeremiah, confessing that the prophet was speaking in Yahweh's name (v. 16).[1]

To summarize, a situation which almost results in a lynching by an angry mob changes suddenly into an official-sounding courtroom scene. Judges are seated at the gate, a formal accusation is made, the witnesses present are appealed to, a sentencing is recommended, the accused responds, a relevantly similar case from the past is cited, and the formal verdict of the governmental officials is given. Interestingly, we note that in this case those with the responsibility to render a verdict seem to include both שרי יהודה "the officials of Judah" and כל העם "all the people," since testimony from both the plaintiffs and the defendant is explicitly directed at both groups in vv. 11-12, and both groups together pronounce Jeremiah's innocence in v. 16.

Returning to the larger issue at hand, the examples above show that judicial procedure at the city (and temple) gate was a social institution common to many societies in the ancient Near East for many hundreds – even thousands – of years. The practice is also attested in Ptolemaic Egypt,[2] and has survived in traditional societies until as recently as 19th century Morocco.[3]

Punishment in the Gate

Another activity which seems to occur with some regularity in the gate is punishment for those condemned judicially. First, we should recall the confinement of

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[1] Note that I am reading the story out of its canonical order (viz., v. 16 after vv. 17-19), since the final verdict of Jeremiah's innocence is presented in the text before the elders bring up the story of Micah's prophecy.

[2] Sauneron, "La justice à la porte," 117-27.

[3] Doulas Porch, *The Conquest of Morocco* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 115.

conquered leaders mentioned above under "public humiliation," which may certainly be categorized as "punishment."

In the Hebrew Bible, capital punishment in particular is associated with gates. A number of casuistic laws specifically state that the guilty person shall be stoned in the gate. For instance, the stubborn and rebellious son is to be brought to the elders at the gate, formally accused, and then "all of the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones" (Deut 21:19). The same rule applies to the religious apostate who worships other deities (Deut 17:5), a man who rapes a betrothed woman, and a man and a woman betrothed to someone else who have had consensual sex (Deut 22:23-4). We can safely assume that other instances of capital punishment in the Bible are intended to take place in the city gate, even if the text does not explicitly mention the gate.[1]

Whether such capital punishment was in fact carried out in the gate complex in ancient Israel is unknown, but we may at least say that this was held up as an ideal by some Biblical authors. One instance of capital punishment is recorded 2 Chr 23:15, where Athaliah the Queen mother is executed in a gate to the royal compound. Similarly, when Israel was in the wilderness, an offending Sabbath-breaker was taken "outside the camp" in order to stone him to death (Lev 24:14, 23; Num 15:35-6).

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[1] For instance, the case of a pair of adulterers (Deut 22:22) is sandwiched between two other similar cases: that of a woman accused of misrepresenting herself as a virgin when getting married (22:13-21) and that of a man who has sex with a woman betrothed to another (22:23-4). Both of these latter laws involve bringing the accused to the elders at the gate as well as public punishment or execution. For the case of the adulterers, however, we are told only that "both of them shall die: the man who lay with the woman, and the woman. Thus you shall purge the evil from Israel" (v. 22). It seems safe to assume, based on the larger context, that the adulterers were also tried and executed in the gate.

The punishments above might have been carried out in the gate (at least in part)[1] as a matter of convenience, since the judicial proceedings which condemned the guilty also took place there, and because a mob throwing stones would require a bit of space. It may also be that the Israelites considered public execution to have a deterrent effect. Throughout the Biblical law codes, there are occasionally motive clauses which offer justifications for the laws to which they are appended.[2] One such clause connected to public execution in the gate is the following: "all Israel will hear and will be afraid" (Deut 21:21).[3] This seems to indicate that the death penalty will motivate other Israelites to obey the law for fear of suffering a similar fate. If so, a deterrent effect could only be enhanced by the public nature of the executions in the gate.[4]

Governmental Functions in the Gate

Dignitaries such as kings and elders also discussed affairs of the state in the gate complex.[5] This is another traditional role of gates in the region which has survived even to modern times; as mentioned above, the long association of governmental function and

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[1] Below I will discuss another, more symbolic reason for the death penalty at the gates; see p. 353-4.

[2] See Rifat Sonsino, *Motive Clauses in Hebrew Law: Biblical Forms and Near Eastern Parallels*, (SBLDiss 45; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1980).

[3] The phrase is repeated in three other laws in Deuteronomy: inciting others to idolatry (13:12), ignoring the directives of a court (17:13), and punishing a false witness (19:20), and should be placed in the larger context of motive clauses that appeal to the fear of punishment (Sonsino, *Motive Clauses*, 113-5).

[4] The execution of convicted criminals has been held in public explicitly for a deterrent effect until recently. In colonial to modern America, for instance, executions were commonly held in public squares or commons, or behind the jail or the courthouse (Teeters and Hedblom, *Hang by the Neck*, 59).

[5] I will not here enter into the complex interplay of authority between the monarchy, elders, and cult. It will suffice to say that the issue is murky because of limited evidence. Note, e.g., 1 Kgs 20:1-9, where King Ahab consults the elders before deciding how to reply to a military threat, and 1 Kgs 22, where Ahab consults prophetic oracles before deciding to go to war. On monarchical judicial authority, see esp. Boeker, *Law and Justice*, 27-49, and Keith W. Whitelam, *The Just King: Monarchical Judicial Authority in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSS 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1979).

the gate led to the government of the Turkish sultan being called "the Sublime Porte [i.e., gate]."[1]

In the Biblical literature, we have at least two clear examples of this. In 1 Kgs 22, the kings of Israel and Judah (Ahab and Jehoshaphat, respectively) together sit in the gate of Samaria as they discuss whether or not they should go to war to reclaim the town of Ramoth-Gilead. And in Gen 34, Hamor – even though he is the "prince of the land" (נשיא הארץ) – must discuss with his fellow townsmen the terms of a proposed covenant with the Jacobite clan before he could agree: "So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city, and they spoke to the men of their city (אנשי עירם)…. And all who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to Shechem his son, and every male – all who went out of the gate of his town – was circumcised" (Gen 34:20-24).[2]

These examples help illuminate the passages above which depict the king sitting in the gateway; they also coincide with descriptions of rulers making decisions in the gate elsewhere in the ANE. For instance, at Late Bronze Ugarit, "the men who could represent Ugarit in international negotiations and who were empowered to take oaths in the name of their city were called *awīlū ša bābi*, 'the men of the gate.'"[3]

In addition to political negotiations, it was also common in the ANE for taxes of various sorts to be collected in the gates. For instance, here are three documents from the Old Babylonian, Middle Babylonian, and Neo-Babylonian period (respectively):

- "I paid (the hire for the donkeys), the gate tax and the exit tax."[4]

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[1] de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel*, 34.
[2] This passage will be discussed in more detail below, pp. 305-12.
[3] Anson Rainey, "The Social Stratification of Ugarit" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1962), 88.
[4] *CAD* A/1, 87.

- "as to the gate tax (consisting of) copper, hides and (one) two-year-old ewe…"[1]

- "A toll collector has been placed at the city-gate of Ṣupat…"[2]

There are only hints of taxation at the gate in the Bible.[3] Exod 30:11-16 describes a mandatory half-sheqel "offering" to be imposed on each male at the time of a census; the tax was purportedly for protecting those counted in the census from a plague, and for the service of the Tabernacle. 2 Kgs 12:5-12 describes taxation imposed by King Joash at the temple gate, which the Chronicler explains as an enactment of the above half-sheqel offering, explicitly appealing to the משאת משה עבד יהוה על ישראל במדבר "the tax of Moses, the servant of Yahweh, (which he imposed) on Israel in the wilderness" (2 Chron 24:9) for אהל העדות "the tent of the testimony" (2 Chron 24:6).[4] To collect the money, Joash places a chest outside of the temple gate, and commands all Judah and Jerusalem to come and deposit their money.[5]

A slightly more questionable reference to tax in the gate is found in Amos 5:11. This verse – sandwiched between two references to injustice and oppression of the poor,

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[1] *CAD* A/1, 87. The Akkadian term translated "gate tax" in these texts is *abullu* – a term whose primary meaning is "gate." Thus, one had to pay the "gate," which probably took its name from the place one paid it.

[2] Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II*, 179: r.7-8, p. 141.

[3] Taxation in general, of course, is fairly well established. Samuel's rant against royal prerogatives mentions taxation of various sorts (1 Sam 8:10-18), and Solomon is famous, *inter alia*, for his system of taxation (1 Kgs 4:7-19) and corvée labor (1 Kgs 5:13-17). A tithe paid at the "gate" in Deut 14:28-9 is sometimes mentioned in discussions of taxation (e.g., Faust, "The Gates," 30-1), but the שערים in these verses are better understood as communities (see below, Chapter 11).

[4] A fragmentary monumental inscription that surfaced on the antiquities market, known as the "Jehoash Inscription," is purportedly a royal inscription commemorating these very repairs. The inscription has been declared by many authorities to be a forgery on various grounds. See Frank Moore Cross, "Notes on the Forged Plaque Recording Repairs to the Temple," *IEJ* 53/1 (2003): 119-122; Israel Ephʿal, "The 'Jehoash Inscription': A Forgery," *IEJ* 53/1 (2003): 123-128.

[5] Tax collection boxes placed at the gate are also known in Mesopotamia; the *irbu* (lit: "entrance") was an offering "presented at the gate when entering a temple" (*CAD* I-J 175a, s.v. *irbu* 3b; cf. *CAD* B, 20b).

both in the gate (vv. 10, 12) – refers to a tax of grain (משאת בר) levied against the poor.[1]

Given the context, the tax in question may constitute the oppression which takes place in

the gate, but this is admittedly speculative.

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[1] Additionally, some scholars have suggested that the term בושסכם in the first colon of the verse – a *hapax legomenon* – may reflect a revocalized metathesis of the Akkadian *šabāšu/šabāsu*, which refers to the collecting of a grain tax. See Shalom M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (ed. F. M. Cross; Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1991), 172–73, and references there.

CHAPTER TEN
Other Gate Functions

Cultic Functions in the Gate

There are many indications from both textual and archaeological sources that the

gate complex in the ANE was home to cultic activity. The evidence from the southern

Levant has been treated fairly comprehensively in a recent monograph by T. H.

Blomquist, who surveys excavated Iron Age gates and the Biblical literature for evidence

of cultic activity.[1]

In the Biblical literature, the clearest (and most-discussed) reference to cultic

activity in the gate is found in 2 Kgs 23:8, where we read the following: "And he [Josiah]

brought all of the priests from the cities of Judah and he defiled the high places where the

priests offered incense, from Geba to Beersheba. And he broke down the high places of

the gates (במות השערים) which were at the entrance to the Gate of Joshua, commander of

the city, which is on one's left at the city gate."[2]

Likewise, the book of Ezekiel has much to say about (illicit) cultic practices

performed at gates. A somewhat vaguely-described "seat of the statue of jealousy which

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[1] Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*. In addition, M. Bernett and O. Keel's monograph *Mond, Stier, und Kult am Stadttor* discusses cultic activity at the gate and in the Biblical literature (pp. 45-86). Note that Blomquist's study was published before the Moabite sanctuary at Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad was excavated (on which, see below).

[2] On this verse in particular, see Emerton, "High Places"; Lisbeth S. Fried, "The High Places (*Bāmôt*) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: An Archaeological Investigation," *JAOS* 122/3 (2002): 437-65; Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 151-63; Bernett and Keel, *Mond, Stier und Kult am Stadttor*, 74-5; Ben Zion Luria, "Joshua, Officer of the City, and the High Places of the Gate," *Beth Miqra* 23 (1978): 136-8 (Hebrew). On high places, see esp. Patrick H. Vaughan, *The Meaning of 'bāmâ' in the Old Testament: A Study of Etymological, Textual and Archaeological Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). Many attempts have been made to identify specific archaeological finds with the phrase במות השערים; for example, Yadin thought the gate at Beersheba was "Joshua's gate," making the altar found there a high place at the gate; see Yigael Yadin, "Beer-sheba: The High Place Destroyed by King Josiah," *BASOR* 222 (1976): 5-17. See a (convincing) rebuttal to Yadin in Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba," 50.

makes jealous" is associated with the Israelites' performing תועבות גדלות "great

abominations," and is located at the opening of the northern gate of the inner court (8:3-

5). Presumably the statue (or "image"; the Hebrew is סמל) is a depiction of another deity

worshiped there.[1] Israelites women are depicted as ritually mourning the death of the

deity Tammuz – a practice well-attested elsewhere in the ANE[2] – at the entrance to the

northern gate of Yahweh's temple (8:14). The Israelites are also castigated for building

"mounds" (? – the difficult term is גב) and high places (רמה) in every plaza and at the

head of every street, in order to multiply their "whoring" (16:24-5). Given the prophetic

penchant for describing religious infidelity in terms of prostitution (in this passage see

esp. 16:17), the chastisement should be understood with reference to the Israelites'

worship of deities other than Yahweh in their plazas.[3] Ezekiel's Temple Vision includes a

description of the "outer Temple gate" that faces east, which has been so sanctified by

Yahweh's passage that it must remain closed and locked. Only the "prince" (נשיא) may sit

in it "to eat bread before Yahweh" (Ezek 44:1-3).[4] In a similar ritual in Ezekiel's temple,

the prince offers burnt offerings and peace offerings at the threshold of the eastern gate of

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[1] For discussion, see Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 163-174; Bernett and Keel, *Mond, Stier und Kult am Stadttor*, 75-8. Ziony Zevit suggests that the statue in question was a seated deity, based on the use of מושב which "can only refer to a place for sitting, even if used figuratively" (*The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* [London: Continuum, 2001], 558). This is possible, but מושב can also refer to a site or location, as in the phrase מושב העיר טוב "the site of the city is good" (2 Kgs 2:19; *pace* Eshel, "Semantics," 36).

[2] See John P. Peters, "The Worship of Tammuz," *JBL* 36 (1917): 100-111; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Tammuz and the Bible," *JBL* 84 (1965): 283-290. For an example of a Babylonian hymn to Tammuz involving ritual lamentation, see Frederick A. Vanderburgh, "Babylonian Tammuz Lamentations. BM Tablet 23702. Published in *CT* XV 28 and 29," *AJSLL* 27/4 (1911): 312-321.

[3] See Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 174-181.

[4] For a Mesopotamian parallel to this practice, see Baruch A. Levine and William W. Hallo, "Offerings to the Temple Gates at Ur," *HUCA* 38 (1967): 48-50.

the inner court; the "people of the land" are also to bow down at the entrance to the same

gate every Sabbath and New Moon festival (46:1-3).[1]

A final (and circumstantial) point may be made about the connection of cult and

gates in ancient Israel based on the Biblical material. There is a fairly clear overlap

between cult and practices such as the administration of justice and governmental

decision-making. This is seen in various phenomena attested in the Bible: the swearing of

judicial oaths before Yahweh (Exod 20:7; Num 5:16-21; 1 Kgs 8:31-2; 22:16 [?]),

consulting prophetic oracles for political decisions (1 Kgs 22:5-28), trial by ordeal (Num

5:11-31), divine punishment for offenses against the law (כרת; Lev 20:2-5, etc.), and so

on.[2] This being the case, the well-attested juridical and governmental functions at the gate

would inevitably have involved some cultic practices as well.

What is described in the Biblical passages – i.e., shrines of various deities

associated with gates – coincides with what we find in the archaeological record in the

southern Levant. Extensive and unambiguous evidence of cultic activity has been found

in the gate plazas of Dan, Bethsaida, and Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad – including iconic

and aniconic stelae, figurines, standing stones, stone basins (some with remains of fire),

incense altars, a burial pit for ritual artifacts, and cultic vessels of various sorts. These are

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[1] Blomquist cites these texts (save Ezek 8:14) and adds 1 Sam 9:12-25. She opines that the במה in question was "near the city entrance" on the grounds that Saul and Samuel meet in the gate and that "the only verbs of motion describing a transfer from their point of meeting to the lishkah in v 22 are 'go up' (*'lh*), 'take' (*lqḥ*) and 'bring' (*bw'*). There is no explicit indication of the crossing of a major distance, nor in fact of going outside the city" (*Gates and Gods*, 183). On the contrary, the characters' going up from the gate to the bamah (v. 19) and their coming down from the same to the city (וירדו מהבמה העיר; v. 25) make it fairly clear that the bamah is regarded as outside of the city (pace G. W. Ahlström, *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine* [SHANE 1; Leiden: Brill, 1982], 20). It is possible that the bamah was in an exterior plaza (thus Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 185-6), but there is no indication of this in the text.

[2] Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 189-207.

appropriate for libations, anointing, and the burning of incense and other small offerings.[1]

In addition, there is some archaeological evidence that may indicate cultic practices at the

following gates:[2]

    <u>Beersheba V</u>. A "well-dressed round incense altar" was found in the gate plaza.[3]

    <u>Kinneret II</u>. A fractured limestone incense burner was found on the floor of the

gate passage. Additionally, two figurines were associated with the St. II gate: the head of

a female figurine, and a seated male deity nearly a meter tall and cast in bronze

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[1] For Tel Dan, see Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 239-45; "Sacred Spaces of Standing Stones, High Places and Cult Objects at Tel Dan," *BAR* 24 (1998): 38-45; for Bethsaida, see Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131-134; Arav, "Final Report," 40-66; for Kh. al-Mudayna, see Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 268; P. M. Michèle Daviau, "A Moabite sanctuary at Khirbat al-Mudayna," *BASOR* 320 (2000): 1-21. For discussion of the finds at both Dan and Bethsaida, see Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 49-69.

[2] For discussion of the finds from most of these sites, see Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 70-108. Blomquist also discusses a number of sites not included in the present corpus (viz., Ḥorvat Radum, Kuntillet ʿAjrud, Ḥorvat ʿUza, Yotvata, and Timnaʿ Site 30), some of which (Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Ḥorvat ʿUza in particular) offer very compelling evidence of cultic activity at the gate (cf. Manor, "Gates and Gods," 244-7).

    A few additional gates, according to their excavators, have evidence of cultic functions; namely, Lachish IV-III, Megiddo VA, and Kh. Qeiyafa IV (west gate). At Lachish, a roughly square podium of very well-cut ashlars was found in the exterior gate plaza by the British expedition, with a field-stone foundation underneath. The British team and Ussishkin after them agree that the installation had some sort of cultic function (Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 515, cf. fig. 10.5). Megiddo VIA may have been a locus of cultic activity, according to Z. Herzog. The finds in question include broad room 2161 at the edge of the inter-gate plaza, which had a niche in the wall (discussed above as a public building; see fig. 6.16), a plaster-coated revetment/platform with built-in benches on the other side of the gate plaza, a stone basin which *may* be in the same stratum as (and possibly associated with) the aforementioned platform, and a cache of clearly cultic paraphernalia found ca. 50 m from the plaza (Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 251 and n. 60; Herzog, *Archaeology of the City*, 212). At Kh. Qeiyafa, a building adjacent to the north wall of the gatehouse included what the excavators view as a standing stone, roughly shaped of a non-local limestone. The stone was found upside down in part of the wall (in secondary use, according to the excavators), and may have originally been used in a high place in the gate (Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 95-8; 195-200). I find all of these interpretations too speculative to be considered evidence of cultic activity.

[3] Yohanan Aharoni, "Excavations at Tel Beer-sheba," *BA* 35/4 (1972): 119 and fig. 13. Additionally, two limestone incense altars were found in locus 442 of building 430 in St. III, located adjacent to the southwest interior wall of the gatehouse (Ephraim Stern, "Limstone Incense Altars," in *Beer-Sheba I: Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba 1969-1971 Seasons* [ed. Y. Aharoni; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1973], 52-3).

(originally coated in gold), with one hand raised (in blessing?) and the other originally holding a staff or another object.[1]

Tell el-Far'ah North, St. VIIb. A shrine, consisting of a stone basin and a pillar (both monolithic), was erected in the middle of the inner courtyard just inside the gatehouse. The installation was directly in the way of the gate passage, and would have forced vehicular traffic to circle around it. Since the basin is too small for utilitarian purposes, and because of its association with the pillar, the excavators interpret it as a libation basin and a cultic massebah, and compare it to the במות השערים "high places of the gates" of 2 Kgs 23:8.[2]

Moving further north for comparative purposes, the evidence for cultic activity in gates of N. Syria and Anatolia takes a markedly different character. A prominent feature of the gates in this region is their use of guardian animals; sphinxes or lions were carved into the orthostats or doorjambs that flank the gate opening (Fig. 10.1), both in Late Bronze Hittite cities and Syro-Hittite centers of the Iron Age.[3] The same practice is well-attested in Mesopotamia, where carvings of massive *lamassu* and *šēdu*[4] formed orthstats

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[1] Pakkala, Münger, and Zangenberg, "Kinneret Regional Project," 25.

[2] Chambon, *L'Age du Fer*, 25.

[3] Iron Age Syrian gates with such lion sculptures include Zincirli, Malatya, Carchemish, Arslan Tash, Tell Ḥalaf, Til Barsip, and 'Ain Dara' (Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 140; Arlette Roobaert, "The City Gate Lions," in *Tell Ahmar: 1988 Season* (ed. G. Bunnens; Abr Nahrain Supplement 2; Publications of the Melbourne University Expedition to Tell Ahmar 1; Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 126-135. Compare also the famous Lion Gate at Mycenae, which dates to the 13th century.

[4] There is some confusion about the correct terminology for such creatures, which might be related to the fact that a great number of composite-creature deities are known from Mesopotamian art – usually involving lions, bulls, eagles, and humans in various configurations. The terms *lamassu* and *šēdu* are both commonly used of these protective deities; a later (NA) term is *aladlammû*. See *CAD* A/1, 286-7; Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 128; Jeremy A. Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary* (illus. T. Rickards; London: British Museum, 1992), 47-51, 99-101, 118-122; cf. fig. 53.

flanking the gate entrances of cities, palaces, and temples.[1] These deities were hybrid

creatures – typically a winged, human-headed bull or winged, human-headed lion (Fig.

10.2) – and are attested extensively from the Middle Assyrian period (late 12th century)

through the end of the reign of Ashurbanipal (mid 7th century).[2] They also reappear in

Persian art and architecture (mimicking the Assyrian style) as late as the reign of Xerxes I

(early 5th century).[3] These figures (in all locales) were thought to have an apotropaic

function; they prevented evil from entering the city, palace, or temple which was

effectively brought under their protection.[4]

It should be noted that the apotropaic function of such statues is not merely an

inference based on their mythological form and physical placement; many texts discuss

placing statues of deities at the gate specifically for protection. For example, a text from

the reign of Sennacherib (late 8th c.) reads "They hewed *šedu*-figures out of white

limestone to (be) guardians of their doorways";[5] and likewise, from the reign of

Ashurbanipal (mid 7th century): "I took 32 statues of kings from Susa to Assyria and the

šēdu and *lamassu* colossi, the guardians of the temple."[6] The gate lions found at Til

Barsip in N. Syria were (according to their inscriptions) given the names "The lion who

[…], fierce *ūmu*-demon, unrivalled attack, who overwhelms the insubmissive, who

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[1] See Danrey, "Winged Human-Headed Bulls," 133.

[2] Danrey, "Winged Human-Headed Bulls," 133, 138. Human-headed bulls appear as early as the first half of the third millennium on cylinder seals. See Amir Harrak, "Guardians of the Gate: The Assyrian Winged Colossi," *BCSMS* 34 (1999): 27.

[3] Danrey, "Winged Human-Headed Bulls," 138.

[4] Danrey, "Winged Human-Headed Bulls," 133; E. Douglas van Buren, "The Guardians of the Gate in the Akkadian Period," *Or* 16 (1947): 312-32; Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 139; Radner, "Gatekeepers and Lock Masters," 271; Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*, 239; Mazzoni, "The Gate and the City," 315; Harrak, "Guardians of the Gate," 33-35; Arvid S. Kapelrud, "The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise," *JAOS* 70/3 (1950): 151-6.

[5] *CAD* B, 17.

[6] *CAD* Š vol. 2, 259.

obtains what his heart desires," and "He who gores through resistance, who levels the enemy country, who casts out evildoers, who brings in good people."[1]

Moreover, small ceramic and metal figurines with apotropaic functions have been found ritually buried in gateways, and are particularly associated with the thresholds of temples and palaces.[2]

Even though the Bible describes cherubim that function as guardians,[3] physical representations of such composite creatures are completely absent in gates of the southern Levant during the Iron II period;[4] only from a Late Bronze (Canaanite) temple at Hazor do we find lion orthostats.[5]

In addition to apotropaic gate guardians, there is varied evidence that associates specific deities or cultic and magical rituals with northern Levantine and Mesopotamian gates. Libations and other rituals, for instance, were performed at the gates to invoke the protection of the guardian deities,[6] while some offerings and prayers were directed at

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[1] *COS* 2.115A:19-24.

[2] Radner, "Gatekeepers, and Lock Masters," 271. For example, five lion figurines were found ritually buried between the outer and inner gates of Zincirli (Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 139). This should be compared to a (roughly contemporary) Neo-Assyrian letter which reads "Concerning the prophylactic figurines about which the king, my lord, wrote to me, 'Where will they be buried?' — it is said in the (ritual) tablet as follows: 'You bury them at the outer gate' (Simo Parpola, ed., *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* [SAA 10; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993], 263:5-10, p. 207).

[3] See Gen 3:24; cf. the use of סכ"כ "to shelter" in 1 Kgs 8:7; Ezek 28:14, 16.

[4] The potential apotropaic function of *mezuzot* hung on gates and doors (Deut 6:9; 11:20) will be discussed below in the section on symbolism.

[5] See Yigael Yadin, "Excavations at Hazor," *BA* 19/1 (1956): 10 and fig. 1. In addition, a gate at LB Beth Shean – during a time of Egyptian hegemony – had a basalt orthostat depicting in low relief a lion and a dog attacking a lion (Kempinski, "Middle and Late," 140).

[6] At the LB Lion's Gate of Hattusa (Fig. 10.1) cup marks were cut into the flat pedestal bases on which the lion's paws rested; Ussishkin says the cup marks are for receiving libations, and interprets the flat pedestals as offering tables (David Ussishkin, "Hollows, 'Cup-Marks,' and Hittite Stone Monuments," *Anatolian Studies* 25 [1975]: 91-5, 101). At Carchemish, a stone slab for libations connected with the gate guardians has been identified, and limestone incense altar was found in the south gate (Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 134-5, 139). See also van Buren, "The Guardians of the Gate"; Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria*, 158; Dessa Rittig, *Assyrisch-babylonische Kleinplastik magischer Bedeutung vom 13.-6. Jh. v. Chr.* (München: Verlag Uni-Druck, 1977), 98-113, 116-20, 128-9; F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian*

Figure 10.1. The Lion Gate of Hattusa, the Hittite Capital (LB period).[1]

the bolts of a temple's gate doors themselves.[2] Gates in Mesopotamia and N. Syria are

also commonly named after specific deities.[3] At Ebla, for instance, the four main city

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Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts (Cuneiform Monographs 1; Groningen: STYX&PP Publications, 1992); Dieter Kolbe, *Die Reliefprogramme religiös-mythologischen Charakters in neuassyrischen Palästen: Die Figurentypen, ihre Benennung und Bedeutung* (Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe 38, Bd. 3; Frankfurt am Main: Peter D. Lang, 1981); Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (trans. W. R. Trask; N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), 25. For Neo-Babylonian offerings in the gate, see *CAD* B, 20 and references there.

[1] Photo is from Wikimedia Commons (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hattusa.liongate.jpg) and is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license. Cited 9 Feb 2012.

[2] See Levine and Hallo, "Offerings to the Temple Gates at Ur." Compare also the following lines from *ludlul bēl nēmeqi* ("The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer"): "[To the threshold, the bolt] socket, the bolt, the doors [I offered] oil, butterfat, and choicest grain" (*COS* 1.153, frag. B).

[3] Cogan, "Gate," 233. This was also true for gates of Roman towns; see Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 136-7.

gates were named after the city's four chief deities: Dagan, Baal, Resheph, and Sipiš.[1]

Finally, scenes carved in relief on the gates of Northern Levantine towns depict cultic

rituals,[2] and some magical procedures in Mesopotamia involved dust from the gate or

threshold of temples.[3]

In general, then, gates were singled out as an important locus of divine or magical

activity, though this tendency seems much more pronounced and explicit in N. Syria and

(especially) Mesopotamia.[4]

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[1] Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla*, 44; Joan G. Westenholz, "Babylon—Place of Creation of the Great Gods," in *Royal Cities of the Biblical World* (ed. J. G. Westenholz; Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 1996), 207.

[2] Compare Mazzoni, who says that "the entrance to the city comes under the care of the gods and is visually celebrated [in the reliefs] by means of rituals performed by the king and his family and attendants for the care of the city" ("The Gate and the City," 315).

[3] Jack M. Sasson, "Utopian and Dystopian Images in Mari Prophetic Texts," in *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* (ed. E. Ben-Zvi; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 92; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2006), 37; *CAD* A/1, 86a; *CAD* B, 15b, 16a, 18b. Compare Num 5:17 for a similar incantation involving dust from the floor of the Tabernacle.

[4] The delineation between religious/cultic practices and superstitious or magical practices has proved difficult. Early anthropological attempts, such as those of James G. Frazer (*The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* [13 vols.; 3rd ed.; London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's, 1966], i: 222-3) and Bronislaw Malinowski (*Magic, Science, and Religion and Other Essays* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954], 87-90) have not been upheld by later scholars. E.g., see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1996), 59-73. For discussion and recent bibliography of magic and religion vis-à-vis Biblical studies, see Shawna Dolansky, *Now You See It, Now You Don't: Biblical Perspectives on the Relationship between Magic and Religion* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 4-16.

Figure 10.2. A massive (4.4m tall, 16-ton) Neo-Assyrian *lamassu* orthostat from Khorsabad (late 8th century), now housed in the Louvre.[1]

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[1] Photo is from Wikimedia Commons (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Khorsabad2.jpg) and is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. Cited 9 Feb 2012.

Commercial Use of the Gate

Examples of the commercial functions of the gate have already been adduced

above: most importantly, the examples of gate transactions involving property transfer

and the writing of receipts. A few additional points will be added here.[1]

First, however, we should clarify that gates were not the only places where

marketplace activities occurred. Markets in ANE towns are widely associated with

streets, from as early as the third millennium. Cuneiform sources from the Sargonic

period, for instance, describe goods being "on the street," with the meaning on the market

for purchase.[2] Similarly, in the Iron Age milieu of the Hebrew Bible, the Aramean king

Ben Hadad gives Ahab the right to set up חוצות – literally "streets," but usually

understood as "street markets" – in Damascus, just as Ben Hadad's father set up חוצות in

Samaria (1 Kgs 20:34).[3] Moreover, specific streets tended to concentrate on selling

particular goods or services. In Sippar we find a street with multiple goldsmiths; in Nuzi,

a "street of fowlers;"[4] in Jerusalem, a "bakers' street" (חוץ האפים, Jer 37:21). Similarly,

the names of some gates seems to indicate which specific wares were customarily sold

there. For instance, in Jerusalem we find the Fish Gate (2 Chron 33:14; Neh 3:3; 12:39;

Zeph 1:10), the Sheep Gate (Neh 3:1, 32; 12:39),[5] the Horse Gate (Neh 3:28; Jer 31:40; 2

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[1] See also *CAD* A/1, 84 for many references to the gate as a place of commercial activity.

[2] Benjamin R. Foster, "Commercial Activity in Sargonic Mesopotamia," *Iraq* 39 (1977): 40.

[3] The term חוץ means "street" or "outside"; its usage here (and in Jer 37:21) is understood by most translations to connote "street markets." See *HALOT*, s.v. חוץ.

[4] Silver, *Economic Structures*, 154.

[5] Compare the following Neo-Assryian letter: "From the beginning of the month until now the shepherd responsible for the cultic meals has refused to go for his tax collection. I myself am buying sheep from the city gate and fattening them" (Steven W. Cole and Peter Machinist, *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal* [SAA 13. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1998], 19:6, pp. 20-1).

Kgs 11:16; 2 Chr 23:15), and the Pottery Gate (Jer 19:1-2);[1] similar gate names are also attested in ancient Mesopotamia.[2] There is also one reference which may describe buying staple food items (namely, wheat and barley flour) in the gate of Samaria (2 Kgs 7:1; see above, pp. 31-2).

Aside from the inscribed vessels which imply a standardized measure at the gates (and the corresponding textual evidence from Mesopotamia, discussed in Chapter 2), very few hints of marketplace activity in gates have been detected in excavations. The most salient example is perhaps Ashdod St. 9-7, where a set of storerooms adjoining the north side of gatehouse included a pair of scales, a group of stone weights, and two bronze weights (one of which was shaped like a fish);[3] an additional *pym*-weight was also found in the vicinity.[4] Ceramic scoops – which are thought to have been used for apportioning dry grains and other foodstuffs – were also found at Kh. Qeiyafa, Hazor, Beth Shemesh, and "in relative abundance" at Gezer in the gate area.[5] All of these might have been utilized in a gate's marketplace.

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[1] Avraham Biran has recently suggested that he has identified חוצות in the outer plaza of the Iron Age gate at Dan; see "Two Bronze Plaques and the *Ḥuṣṣot* of Dan," *IEJ* 49 (1999): 43-54. While the specific structures unearthed there (three superimposed buildings with relatively sparse domestic pottery assemblages) may have been used in a commercial capacity, his identification of the remains with the Biblical term has little to recommend it; Biran's case seems to be based mainly on the etymological meaning of the term חוץ "outside" (Biran, "Two Bronze Plaques," 50-2).

[2] Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 128-9; Silver, *Economic Structures*, 154-5. Silver notes that a "gate of potters" is mentioned in an Egyptian text of the mid third millennium (*Economic Structures*, 155). Of course not every gate would function as a market; Akkadian texts from the Old Assyrian period, e.g., refer to a *bāb maḫīri* "Market Gate," which indicates that other gates were not market gates (*CAD* B, 22a).

[3] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 25, 28; 91-96.

[4] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 57.

[5] Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 94.

Agricultural Functions in the Gate

A number of ANE texts correlate a city's gate (or the gate plaza) with the גרן "threshing floor" – the place where harvested grain stalks were threshed and winnowed to separate the grain seeds from the stalks and chaff. In the Ugaritic tale of Aqhat, for instance, Dan'el sits "before the gate, beneath a mighty tree, on the threshing floor,"[1] and a document from 18th-century Mari similarly places a threshing floor at the city gate.[2] 1 Kgs 22:10 has Ahab and Jehoshaphat בגרן פתח שער שמרון "on the threshing floor at the opening of the gate of Samaria." Since a broad, flat area was used for threshing and winnowing, it is tempting to identify the gate's רחוב "plaza" with the term גרן in these instances, which would mean that the gate plaza functioned as a communal space for processing a large amount of agricultural produce.

However, the association is somewhat problematic. First, threshing floors were typically on top of (or near the top of) a hill, to ensure adequate wind to drive the dust and chaff away while winnowing. This necessary wind would be greatly reduced in a plaza next to (or surrounded by) walls. Second, the large amount of dust and chaff from this process would be a considerable inconvenience to the other civic activities that occurred in the area. These points have led some commentators to reject the notion of a threshing floor at the city gate[3] – and may also be behind the LXX translation of 1 Kgs 22:10, which omits the phrase "at the threshing floor" entirely.[4]

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[1] *ANET* 151.
[2] M. Anbar, "'L'aire à l'entrée de la porte de Samarie' (1 R. XXII 10)," *VT* 50 (2000): 122-123.
[3] Smith, "On the Meaning of Goren," 42.
[4] Cf. Anbar, "L'aire à l'entrée," 121.

On the other hand, threshing floors are associated with a wide range of activities – including cultic,[1] civic, legal and various others – that overlap the roles of gate plazas extensively, making the connection between threshing floor and gate plaza plausible.[2] Aranov concludes that the public city plaza "carried forward the concept of communal center which had originated with the rural threshing place."[3] Matthews makes the additional suggestion that the terms גרן and רחוב, because of their common functions, eventually became interchangeable.[4] The primary question, then, is whether urban gate plazas were actually used as threshing floors during the Iron II period, or if the association of terminology is a linguistic vestige based on common functionality.[5]

On this point, we have very little evidence. Of course, placing the threshing floor near the city gate would have some benefits – such as allowing the guards of the town to help protect the vulnerable heaps of grain[6] – but this fact does nothing to establish whether or not this was actually done. In the Biblical literature, the association of the term גרן with רחוב or שער never comes with a clear description of actual threshing or winnowing – a fact which might be accidental (given the few such associations) or might be meaningful. The closest we come is Jer 15:7, which refers to Yahweh's "winnowing" of those who have abandoned him: ואזרם במזרה בשערי הארץ "I have winnowed them with a

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[1] *Pace* G. Münderlein, who doubts that a goren was ever a cultic area ("גרן," *TDOT* 3:64).

[2] Maurice M. Aranov, "The Biblical Threshing-Floor in the Light of the Ancient Near Eastern Evidence: Evolution of an Institution" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977), 31-195.

[3] Aranov, "The Biblical Threshing Floor," 296.

[4] Matthews, "Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors," 30. For additional discussion of these issues, see also Smith "On the meaning of Goren"; "The Threshing Floor at the City Gate," *PEQ* 78 (1946): 5-14; Ingrid M. Haase, "Uzzah's Rebellion," *JHS* 5 (2004): Article 3, n.p.; Münderlein "גרן," 3:62-5.

[5] The term גרן continues to connote a place of judgment as late as the Rabbinic literature, where it describes the meeting place of the Sanhedrin (Haase, "Uzzah's Rebellion," n.p.).

[6] Smith, "The Threshing Floor," 12. Note 1 Sam 23:1, where the Philistines plunder Israelite threshing floors; Ruth 3:2, 7, where Boaz sleeps on the threshing floor near his grain, and Judg 6:11, where Gideon threshes his wheat in a winepress in order to hide his produce from the Midianites.

winnowing fork in the gates of the land." This text, of course, describes *metaphorical* winnowing, with the sense of "punishment" (see vv. 6-9; Isa 21:10; Amos 1:3; Mic 4:11-3; Hab 3:12). Nevertheless, if we understand the שערים in this verse as literal gates, and if the vehicle of the metaphor (i.e., the metaphorical speech) extends through the phrase בשערי הארץ, then threshing places are located at the gates of the land. Alternatively, whether or not the vehicle stops after "winnowing fork," the שערים may be a synecdochic reference to towns in Israel, in which case there is no connection here between winnowing and the gate.[1] I consider either interpretation plausible, and because of this ambiguity, the verse makes a flimsy basis of support for agricultural activity at the city gate. Ultimately, the use of the city gate as a threshing floor is grounded on the few texts (above) which associate רחוב with גרן, but the precise relationship between these two spaces is questionable.

Military Functions of the Gate

This category is perhaps the most obvious use of the gate, and literary references to its military use are abundant.[2] Since the gate was an opening in the town's defensive curtain, it was a defensive liability which required protection to keep one's enemies out (Lam 4:12). Thus, the daily functions of a gate – opening and closing the gate doors, and posting guards – were essentially military in nature.[3] Gates were closed at night (Josh

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[1] A similar interpretation will be defended for many occurrences of שער in D (see Ch. 11).

[2] For additional Mesopotamian texts, see *CAD* A/1, 84.

[3] Compare the following letters from Mari: "(with regard to) the soldiers for the city gates, ten soldiers who guard the city gates – this is not much" (*CAD* A/1, 84b); "I shall give strict instructions to the 3 hundred [garrison] troops and their guide, reliable (men), whom my lord assigned to guard the city, the palace, and the city gate" (Mari 26:411; Wolfgang Heimpel, *Letters to the King of Mari: A New*

2:5; 6:1; Neh 7:3), presumably because the sleeping population was more vulnerable to attack. During the daytime, as well, gates constituted a convenient post from which one could keep an eye on the surrounding roads (1 Sam 4:13-18; 2 Sam 18:24-27) and those passing in and out of town.

When a battle was conducted at a city's gate (Josh 7:5; Judg 5:8; Isa 28:6), it would often have been in the course of a siege, where the attackers surrounded the city.[1] During a siege, life in the civic forum ground to a halt, and the residents were trapped inside the town (Lam 4:18 [?]), without access to additional food and (sometimes) water (2 Kgs 18:27; Isa 36:12). This is illustrated in an Amarna letter from one Biridiya to the Pharaoh (14th century): "May the king, my lord, know that since the return (to Egypt) of the archers, Lab'ayu has waged war against me . . . We are thus unable to go out of the city gate because of Labayu."[2]

The gate was also a place of frenzied battle (Nah 2:4-5), where many soldiers were killed (Jer 9:20; 49:26; 50:30).[3] Attackers used battering rams (Ezek 21:22) and fire (Judges 9:39; 9:52; cf. 2 Macc 14:41) against the wooden door leaves of a gate, and the defenders of the town shot arrows and swung or dropped large stones from the ramparts

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Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 352).

[1] Compare the Ugaritic text RS 24.2661: "When a strong (foe) attacks your gate, a warrior your walls, You shall lift your eyes to Baʻlu (and say): O Baʻlu, if you drive the strong one from our gate, the warrior from our walls / A bull, (O) Baʻlu, we shall fulfill; a firstborn, (O) Baʻlu, we shall sanctify…" ("Ugaritic Prayer for A City Under Siege"; *COS* 1.88).

[2] EA 244:8-17; William L. Moran, ed., *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 298. Compare also the following texts, from the OB and Neo-Assyrian period (respectively): "As you keep hearing, there is a state of war; nobody goes outside the city gate" (*CAD* B, 20b); "If on the 15th day [the moon and sun are seen] together: a strong enemy [will raise] his weapons against the land; the enemy will block my city gate" (Hermann Hunger, ed., *Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings* [SAA 8; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1992], 528:3-5, p. 291).

[3] Compare the following 8th century text of Sargon II: "his soldiers I slew like lambs in front of his city gate" (*CAD* A/1, 84b).

and towers (2 Sam 11:23-24; Judg 9:51-3).[1] The gate also functioned as something of a command center during a battle, used for mustering troops (2 Sam 10:8; 18:1-4) and sending dispatches.

The Lachish Letters furnish outstanding examples of military dispatches. This collection of eighteen Hebrew ostraca was found in the outer gate of Lachish amidst the ashes of the Babylonian destruction, and consists of military communiqués from a certain Hoshiah to Yaosh (the commander of Lachish) that date to the final days of Judah.[2] A recently-discovered ostracon from a building next to the west gate of Kh. Qeiyafa also appears to be a letter – which may include judicial and/or governmental terminology – but has not yet yielded a satisfactory translation.[3]

On the other hand, the gate represents the place of refuge for those being pursued (Judg 9:40; 1 Sam 17:52; 2 Sam 11:23), and it could be blocked by attackers in order to keep the residents from the safety of the city (Judg 9:44). The safety afforded by one's home gate would not have necessitated the closing of the gate doors, if the city was still under friendly control and armed soldiers could provide covering fire from the ramparts and towers.

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[1] Such stones were found at Lachish; see below.

[2] See Raymond S. Haupert, "The Lachish Letters," *BA* 1/4 (1938): 30-32; Harry Torczyner, *Lachish I: The Lachish Letters* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1938).

[3] See H. Misgav, Y. Garfinkel, and S. Ganor, "The Ostracon," in *Khirbet Qeiyafa, Vol. 1: Excavation Report 2007–2008* (ed. Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), 243–257; Ada Yardeni, "Further Observations on the Ostracon," in *Khirbet Qeiyafa, Vol. 1: Excavation Report 2007–2008* (ed. Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), 259-60; Christopher Rollston, "The Khirbet Qeiyafa Ostracon: Methodological Musings and Caveats," *TA* 38 (2011): 67-82.

The many instances of gates preserved with massive layers of destruction debris tend to bear out the above literary data,[1] and a number of these sites have also preserved weaponry from the battles that caused their demise. At Bethsaida, for instance, a "large number" of heavy iron arrowheads, spearheads, lance heads, and variously sized sling stones were found throughout the gate area.[2] Similarly, over 30 arrowheads were found in the gate of Kh. al-Mudayna.[3] At Lachish St. III, four large perforated stones were found in the roadway and gate courtyard, and some of the holes through the stones contained the carbonized remains of rope. Evidently the stones were used as weapons, swung down from the ramparts by the town's defenders.[4] Additionally, the outer and inner gate contained a combined total of 15 iron armor scales, over 30 slingstones, an iron dagger, three iron knives, two iron spearheads, and 108 arrowheads, all of which were buried in a massive destruction level.[5]

Indirect Entry Gates

One issue which should be addressed is the physical layout of many gate complexes in the southern Levant. Most towns, because they were built on elevated tells or hills, had earthen ramps leading up to the gateway from the surrounding terrain. Such ramps ordinarily run parallel to the city's circumvallation wall and then, when they are directly below and in front of the gatehouse, make a 90-degree turn to approach the gatehouse façade. It has been suggested that the architects of such ramps purposely

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[1] For a list of gates with destruction levels, see pp. 53-4.
[2] Arav, "Final Report," 66.
[3] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 266.
[4] Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 518.
[5] Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 518-9.

incorporated this 90-degree turn as a defensive measure and, moreover, that they specifically made their ramps turn to the right as one approaches the gate (Fig. 10.3). The reasoning for this is as follows: since most people are right-handed, soldiers will carry their shields in the left hand and their spear or other weapon in their right hand. Thus, when attackers are on their way up the ramp to the gate, they "have to expose their unshielded right sides to the defenders on the wall."[1]

In fact, this view of the bent-axis gate was already propounded by the Roman architect Vitruvius, in his *Ten Books on Architecture*:

> Special care should be taken to ensure that there be no easy approach to the wall for an attacker; rather the rampart should encircle precipitous heights and be so planned that the approaches to the gates are not straight but on the left. For if the wall is made in this manner, then the right flank of those entering the gates, the side which will not be covered by a shield, will be closest to the wall.[2]

Whether this view became popular among modern researchers because of Vetruvius' testimony or otherwise, it has found a firmly-ensconced place in the scholarly literature, and is repeated by a great number of modern authors.[3] But the irrationality of this idea is apparent given a moment's thought. The right-turn layout could only yield this purported advantage until the very first arrow was fired, whereupon the attackers would take cover behind their shields (if they were not already doing so!). To say that the

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[1] de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel*, 28.

[2] Vitruvius, *Ten Books*, I.5.2, p. 28.

[3] For example, see Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 1:21; A. Mazar, "The Fortifications of Cities," 1532; Halpern, "Eli's Death," 57*-59*; Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 242; Gregori, "'Three-Entrance City-Gates," 90; Wood, "Systems of Defense," 130; Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture*, 285-6; Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, "Gate," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (ed. L. Ryken, J. C. Wilhoit, and T. Longman, III; Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1998), 321; Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 64, and references there. Cf. also Stern, "The Fortified City Gate," 400; James C. Moyer, "Gate," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. D. N. Freedman; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 483.

design *forced* attackers to expose their right sides is to say that the attackers were unable to turn towards the city wall, protect themselves with their shields, and shuffle sideways up the ramp – which is something any able-bodied person could do.
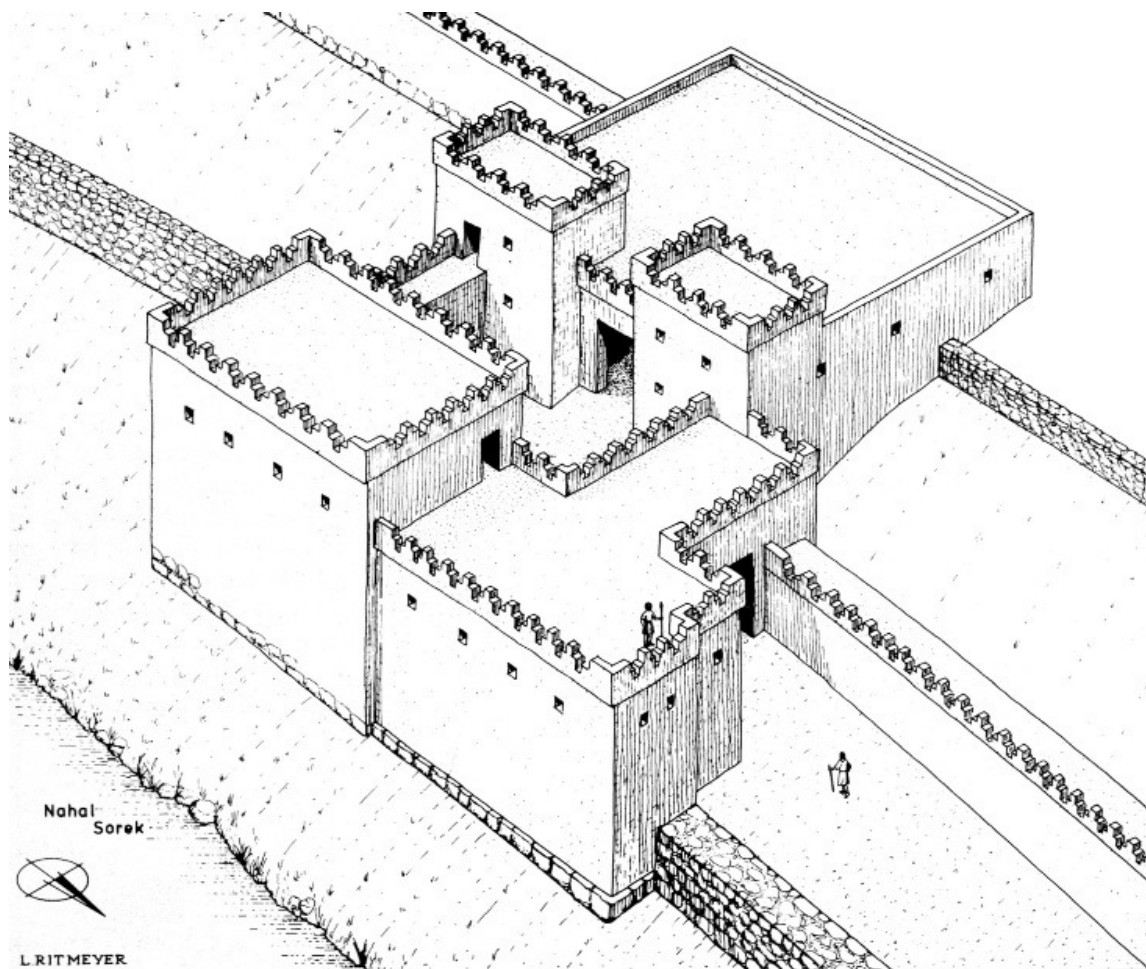
Figure 10.3. Artistic reconstruction of Tel Batash's approach ramp and gate complex.

Moreover, the deliberate right-turn notion is undermined by large-scale surveys of gate construction which have found that left-turning gates are almost as common as right-

turning gates, implying that there was no strategic preference as described above.[1] Even

if we confine our set of gates to the Levant and Anatolia, we find numerous examples of

left-turning gate approaches, including Ashdod St. 9,[2] Megiddo XIII – III (used for

centuries in a left-turn configuration),[3] Kuntillet ʿAjrud,[4] Tel Dan,[5] Tell en-Nasbeh,[6]

Early Bronze Ai,[7] the Royal Gate of Ḫattuša,[8] Bogazköy (Gate IIIB and the King's

Gate),[9] and both the north and south gates of Karatepe.[10]

The actual military advantage of these approach roads is the fact that they bring

the attackers within range of the city's defenses – i.e., just below and parallel to the city

wall, from which the city's defenders may launch their missiles – for a longer period than

if the gate approach were straight-on.[11] This, however, we take as an incidental

advantage. The reason bent-axis ramps were built becomes fairly obvious when the

alternative (a straight ramp, directly up the side of the tell) is considered. Given the rather

steep pitch of the tell or hill upon which many cities stood (and especially those which

had been fortified with ramparts during the MB period of urbanization), a direct-approach

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[1] Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 64.

[2] Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, plan 2.

[3] See above, figs. 6.16-18; Herzog, *The City Gate*, ill. 36. Note that the disconfirming evidence from Megiddo's gate did not dissuade Loud from espousing the right-turn-advantage theory: "From the standpoint of defense [the approach with a left turn] was a weakness, if we assume that the ancient held their weapons in their right hands" (Loud, *Megiddo II*, 57).

[4] Zeʾev Meshel, "Kuntillet ʿAjrud – An Israelite Religious Center in Northern Sinai," *Expedition* 20/4 (1978): fig. 5.

[5] See above, fig. 6.3.

[6] See plan in Appendix B, p. 405. Note that there are no external approach ramps per se at Tel Dan or Tell en-Nasbeh; nevertheless, in both cases one must to the left from the outer plaza in order to enter the gate.

[7] Herzog, *The City Gate*, ill. 17.

[8] See above, fig. 7.31.

[9] Herzog, *The City Gate*, ills. 62, 68.

[10] Herzog, *The City Gate*, ills. 105-6.

[11] Cf. Volkmar Fritz, *The City in Ancient Israel* (The Biblical Seminar 29; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 140.

ramp to the city gate was too steep to be feasible. In order to make the approach gradient more gentle, the ramp to the gate was made to traverse gently up the side of the slope until it was in front of the gate.[1]

Social Functions of the Gate

The fact that people gathered socially in the gate is not very well-attested in the literary sources, but may be safely inferred from the above discussion. The ability to congregate, the volume of traffic, and the many civic functions which occurred there would naturally have led to its being a place of casual social interaction.[2] Zech 8:4-5 describes young boys and girls playing in the plaza, and old men and women sitting there; Ps 69:12 may be taken to indicate that the gate was a place of gossip. Travelers and rural or nomadic neighbors would have been received at the gate; they slept in the plaza unless invited into someone's home (Gen 19:1-3; Judg 19:15-21; Job 31:32),[3] and from them news was learned of the outside world.[4] de Geus calls the gate the "meeting place *par excellence*," and it would be difficult to disagree with this assessment.[5]

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[1] Cf. Wright: "[A bent-axis approach] was almost inevitable when the gate was raised high above the surrounding terrain both for military reasons and to secure a practical gradient" (*Ancient Building*, 198); cf. also Burke, *Walled Up to Heaven*, 69; Gregori, "'Three-Entrance' City-Gates," 90; Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 1:21, 69; Chadwick, "Iron Age Gate Architecture," 127; Chadwick, "Changing Forms," 187-9.

[2] Compare the following lines from the early Sumerian composition "Lamentation Over the Destruction of Ur": "On that day, the storm was removed from the land, and that city was in ruins! Its people like potsherds littered its sides…*In its high gates where they were wont to promenade*, corpses were piled" (*COS* 1.166:210-3; emphasis added).

[3] Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 173.

[4] Boecker, *Law and the Administration of Justice*, 31.

[5] de Geus, "The City of Women," 77 n.6. An additional suggestion for a typical gate function which I have not included here is that it is a place of lamentation (Daegyu J. Jang, "The Iron Age II City Gates in Palestine: The Textual and Archaeological Evidence," [Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006], 77). The Biblical support for such an association includes a single anecdote (2 Sam 19:1, where David weeps for Absalom in the gate), and a number of verses which describe lamentation in the plazas, the streets, and the rooftops of a town (Isa 15:3; Jer 48:38; Amos 5:16).

The Use of the Gatehouse

The gatehouse, including the ground floor, upper floor, and roof, surely comprised some of the most valuable real estate in town, and scholars have wondered if these buildings were used for any specific purpose. It is commonly claimed that the chambers on the ground floor – by-products of the transverse walls which held up the roof[1] – were used by the guards who were posted at the gate.[2] Indeed, the common reference to the "guard chambers" or "guard rooms" of the gatehouse reveals that many authors assume such a function.[3] This is not unreasonable. The Hebrew Bible abounds with references to guards of various sorts who were posted at the gates of cities, palaces, and temples, including שמרים "guards,"[4] שוערים "gatekeepers,"[5] שמרי הסף "threshold guards,"[6] and רצים "attendants" (lit: "runners")[7]; similar references are found in other ANE texts.[8] The reasons one might wish to post guards at a gate are obvious; guards control passage in and out of the gate, and can also police nearby plazas or the approach roads to the city.

However, as we established above, the term "gate" does not always refer to the gatehouse specifically, so guards being posted at the gate does not necessarily entail their

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[1] See above, Chapter 3.

[2] E.g., Aharoni, *Archaeology*, 196; Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish*, 33; Isserlin, *The Israelites*, 134-7; Matthews, *Manners and Customs*, 102; Borowski, *Daily Life*, 47.

[3] E.g., see Frick, *The City*, 84; Rocca, *Fortifications*, 23; Moyer, "Gate," 483; Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 64 fig. 3b; 66 fig. 5b.

[4] Neh 3:29; cf. Isa 62:6; Prov 8:34.

[5] 2 Sam 18:26; 2 Kgs 7:10; Ezr 2:42, 70, etc. On the role of this office, see John W. Wright, "Guarding the Gates: 1 Chronicles 26.1-19 and the Roles of Gatekeepers in Chronicles," *JSOT* 48 (1990): 69-81.

[6] 2 Kgs 12:10; 25:18; Jer 35:4. Compare the related expressions שוערים בספים / שוערי הספים "gatekeepers of/at the threshold" (1 Chr 9:22; 2 Chr 23:4).

[7] 1 Kgs 14:27; 2 Kgs 11:6 (?).

[8] Compare Akkadian *mār abulli* (OB and MA for "gatekeeper"), *ša abulli* (OB "gatekeeper"); *rabi abulli* (NA for "gate official"; *CAD* A/1, 88). Compare also the Hittite text "Instructions to the Royal Guards," which includes detailed rules for guards and gatekeepers (*COS* 1.85).

use of the gatehouse chambers. The closest the Hebrew Bible comes to associating guards

with gate chambers is in 1 Kgs 14:26-7, where the רצים השמרים פתח בית המלך "attendants

who guard the entrance to the king's palace" used copper shields to accompany the king

to the temple, and thereafter returned the shields to תא הרצים "the chamber of the

attendants." Since the king's palace was presumably guarded by a gate (see 2 Kgs 11:19,

which mentions a שער הרצים "gate of the attendants" leading to the king's palace),[1] and

since the term תא "cell, room" is elsewhere used to describe gate chambers (see Ezek

40:7, 10, 12, etc.), we might thus conclude that the shields were kept in the gate chamber

where the guards were posted.[2] But this is all rather speculative; the chamber in question

might have been any nearby room set aside for the attendants.

Moreover, even if guards were associated with gate chambers, this would not be

grounds to conclude that they alone used the chambers.[3] With respect to the multi-

chambered design of the gates under discussion here, I must agree with Keeley, Fontana,

and Quick that "it is difficult to imagine what regulatory purpose would be served by

placing four to eight police/toll stations *in succession* on both sides of a gate passage"

(emphasis original).[4] Therefore, despite the likelihood that guards used the gate chambers

at least occasionally, it seems to me that the expression "guard rooms" (or the like) is not

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[1] As an example of a palace with a chambered gate, see Palace 1723 at Megiddo, with its own enclosed courtyard with a four-chamber gatehouse (Appendix B, p. 399).

[2] Compare also the single (and vague) reference to the שער המטרה "Gate of the Guard" in Jerusalem during the post-exilic period (Neh 12:39).

[3] Guard duty, based on practical necessity, would likely have been split between ground level locations to police the traffic through the gate, and the upper room(s) and towers/roof to view the plaza and watch the surrounding approach road (cf. 2 Sam 18:24; 2 Kgs 9:17-20). At night, when the gates were closed and locked, the guards would likely have been confined to the upper parts of the gatehouse for their guard duty, since sitting inside a locked room clearly serves no defensive purpose, and we have no reason to believe guards were housed there (*pace* Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 272).

[4] Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 67.

an appropriate term for gatehouse chambers, since it implies that the chambers were primarily (or exclusively) used by guards, a conclusion not permitted either by logic or by the available data.

The general layout and furnishing of the gate chambers allow us to make some limited observations about usage. The chamber floors were regularly paved with a variety of materials,[1] and their walls were also sometimes coated with plaster,[2] both of which suggest that the chambers were heavily trafficked. We have already discussed benches within chambers or along the sides of the gate passage,[3] and chamber doors and walls that (at least partially) blocked the chamber entrances.[4] Stairs to an upper level are also found within the chambers themselves, which would have made a chamber function (to some extent) as a passageway to the upper level and the roof.[5]

In addition, the fact that the gate chambers were formed by massive walls of stone and brick and were covered by a second story meant that they would have been relatively well-insulated – warm in the winter and cool in the summer. This would have made them

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[1] The most common flooring material is lime plaster, which has been found in the gate chambers at Beersheba III-II (Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13), Tall Jawa (Daviau, *Tall Jawa I*, 384), Lachish (Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511), Megiddo VA-IVB (Loud, *Megiddo II*, 49) Megiddo IV and III (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 79), and Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260). Other flooring materials include stone (found at Lachish IV-III [Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511] and Tell en-Nasbeh [Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 493]), crushed kurkar (found at Ashdod 9; Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, 29), crushed limestone (found at Bethsaida V; Arav, "Final Report," 37), and packed earth with ash (found at Kh. en-Nahas; Levy, "Kh. en-Nahas 2002," 10).

[2] Remnants of plaster coating the chamber walls was found at Dan (Biran, "Dan," 329), Bethsaida V (Arav, "Final Report," 39), and Kh. al-Mudayna (Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260).

[3] See pp. 134-5.

[4] See pp. 40-3.

[5] Stairs inside gate chambers were found at Arad X-VIII (Herzog, "The Fortress Mound," 32), both the outer and inner gatehouses of Tel Dan (Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 236, fig. 194; Biran, "Tel Dan: Five Years Later," 177), and perhaps at Lachish IV-III (Ussishkin, "Area GE," 640). For stairs otherwise associated with gatehouses, see p. 100 n2.

a welcome place of respite from the Mediterranean climate, whether for human use or storage for sensitive materials such as food.

One design feature which may have *hindered* chamber function was the placement of the main gate doors. Given the location of pivot stones found *in situ* and the width of reconstructed door leaves, we can determine that when the doors were open – which would likely have been all day, during the busiest period of use – the doors would have blocked about two-thirds of the opening into each of the first pair of chambers. This would have impeded (but not prevented) access, leaving a ca. 1m opening. It also would have blocked a great deal of light from entering the chamber. Given the existence of deliberately-built chamber blocking walls and chamber doors, this need not be thought of as a design liability, but the gate doors certainly limited the types of activities for which the first (i.e., outer) pair of chambers could be used.

Finally, the limited finds we have from within gatehouse chambers attest to these rooms' multifunctional nature, at least in their final moments of use:

Arad X-VIII. An oven was found in south chamber of the gate.[1]

Beersheba III-II. Fragments of large pithoi (storage jars), including one with a stamped *lmlk* handle, were found in the E chamber (311) in a burn layer.[2]

Bethsaida V. This is a very well-preserved gatehouse, destroyed in a conflagration, and there are many indications that one of its primary functions was to store grain. In the NW chamber, one ton of burned barley was found. Layers of barley were also found in a probe underneath the floor of the same chamber, indicating that the

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[1] Herzog, "The Fortress Mound," 32.
[2] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13.

chamber had been used as a granary for a long time.[1] Likewise, in the SW chamber, a

probe beneath the floor revealed two superimposed layers of grain, separated by ca. 10

cm. of dirt and ash.[2] The floor of the chamber was almost completely devoid of pottery,

which also supports its use as a granary.[3] In the SE chamber, grain impressions were

found on the surface of the crushed limestone floor,[4] and a mud brick wall, preserved to

ca. 1.3 m. high, was built across the front of the chamber's entrance from the gate

passage.[5] Presumably this wall's function was to keep the grain from spilling into the

gatehouse passage. In the NE chamber (which shared a wall with the stepped high place

at the façade of the gate), thousands of pottery sherds, including three-legged "incense"

cups and a jug with an inscription to the moon god, were found among the layers of

ashes; this led the excavators to suggest that the room served a cultic function.[6] Also

found was a small amount of carbonized grain.[7]

Gezer VIII. A large stone basin was found at the back end of the first chamber on

the right as one enters.[8]

Lachish IV-III. The back of the rear left (NE) chamber contained a "plastered

installation…evidently used to hold water" whose "exact function is not clear."[9] A large

pithos found in the chamber may have had something to do with this installation.[10] In the

same chamber was a heap of limestone slabs which the excavators interpret as displaced

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[1] Arav, "Final Report," 37.
[2] Arav, "Final Report," 35.
[3] Arav, "Final Report," 35.
[4] Arav, "Final Report," 37.
[5] Arav, "Final Report," 37.
[6] Arav, "Final Report," 39.
[7] Arav, "Bethsaida 1996-1998," 131; Arav, "Final Report," 39-40.
[8] Dever et al., "Further Excavations," 116.
[9] Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 61.
[10] Ussishkin, "Area GE," 641.

steps. One of the blocks had an Egyptian senet game incised on its surface.[1] Other finds

inside the gatehouse included "royal storage jars" including a *lmlk* stamped example from

the middle N chamber, and a "large number" of asymmetric bowls in both the gate

passage and the chambers.[2]

      Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad. This gatehouse was also preserved remarkably well,

and contained many outstanding artifacts. In the innermost chamber of the E side (103)

were the remains of a very interesting limestone basin, which seems to have fallen from

the second story based on the wooden ceiling beams both above and below it. "Numerous

cut marks were etched on the upper surface of its rim, suggesting industrial use, while

graffiti decorated both interior and exterior surfaces. Several of these incised drawings

seem to represent a loom. The group also includes a carefully incised palm tree, a

checker-board, and a donkey."[3] In the NW chamber (151), another limestone basin (1.26

m long, 1.0 m wide and 0.45-0.58 m deep) was found in the upper story collapse, along

with unfired loom weights.[4] In the most SW chamber (152), charred remains of a woven

mat were found on the floor, with concentrations along the base of the wall and in corners

– leading the excavators to believe that the mat had been custom-made for the chamber

floor.[5] In the NE corner chamber (101) were remains of a third limestone basin from the

second storey and "numerous" pithos sherds.[6] In the middle E chamber (102) was "a

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[1] Ussishkin, "Area GE," 640.
[2] Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 511; Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 61.
[3] Daviau, "Moab's Northern Border," 224.
[4] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260.
[5] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 260.
[6] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 266.

large quantity" of animal bones and several large pithoi smashed in place.[1] In the SW

chamber (153), there were two superimposed ovens built into the floor on the S side of

the chamber, and one large oven (45 cm in diameter) was found along the N wall.[2]

Cooking pot sherds, as well as a bowl and a jug, were also found here.[3] This chamber had

a unique configuration, with one narrow doorway (less than 1m) leading in from the gate

passage on the E, and another door on the W of the chamber leading out of the side of the

gatehouse.[4] Finally, the surface of a stone slab which formed part of the bench along the

length of the gate passage had three "gaming designs which may be associated with the

dozens of limestone discs, probably gaming pieces, which were recovered in adjoining

loci."[5] The excavators estimate that "textile tools constitute well over 25% of the artefacts

recovered during excavation" in the gatehouse.[6]

Based on these data, it is hard to generalize about the functions that the gatehouse

served. They could evidently serve as granaries, were used for storage of pithoi, served

domestic functions such as cooking, and (perhaps) served cultic functions. The evidence

for gaming indicates a social function, if only by guards who needed to pass the time. The

remains from Kh. al-Mudayna – which has the best evidence for the function of the

second story chambers of the gatehouse – indicate that industrial activities (viz., textile

production) were carried out there. Of course, no material remains found in a gatehouse

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[1] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 266.
[2] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 261.
[3] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 261.
[4] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 261.
[5] Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 263.
[6] P. M. Michèle Daviau and Robert Chadwick, "Shepherds and Weavers in a Global Economy: Moab in Late Iron II – Wadi ath-Thamad Project (Khirbat al-Mudayna)," in *Crossing Jordan: North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan* (ed. T. E. Levy, et al.; London: Equinox, 2007), 310.

can account for activities that would leave no physical traces, such as a judicial trial. We must conclude, therefore, that the gate chambers were used for a broad array of purposes, dictated by the needs and whims of the local civic authorities.[1]

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[1] Cf. Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 67.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
Figures of Speech and Non-literal Gate Terminology

"Gates" in Deuteronomy

A noticeable feature of Deuteronomy – or, to be more precise, the D source which underlies it – is the repetitive use of stock terms and phrases.[1] The term שעריך "your gates" occurs 27 times in D with an idiosyncratic meaning,[2] while שער with the same meaning occurs only a few places (and debatably so) elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (see below). Most occurrences in D are scattered throughout the law code in chapters 12-26. For example, "you shall not eat any carcass; you shall give it to the resident alien who is within your gates (בשעריך)…" (14:21), and "you shall not sacrifice the Passover in one of your gates (באחד שעריך)" (16:5).

The precise meaning of שעריך as it is used in D has not received adequate scholarly attention, though a few different meanings have been suggested or implied.

"Gates" as Towns

The first and most common suggestion is that שער in D often refers to an entire town by synecdoche or metonymy.[3] There is much to be said in favor of this

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[1] For a catalog of such terms, see Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 320-59; S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), lxxviii-lxxxiv.

[2] See Deut 5:14; 12:12 (שעריכם), 15, 17, 18, 21; 14:21, 27, 28, 29; 15:7, 22; 16:5, 11, 14, 18; 17:2, 8; 18:6; 23:17; 24:14; 26:12; 28:52 (twice), 55, 57; 31:12.

[3] E.g., Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 130-2; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, lxxix, 144; Cornelius Houtman, *Exodus, vol. 3: Chapters 20-40* (trans. S. Woudstra; Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 49; Faust, *Israelite Society*, 116 n.273; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 695; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 429.

conclusion. In a number of verses with שעריך, variations in the phraseology and

appositional additions clarify the meaning of the term. Note the following cases:

15:7 – באחד שעריך בארצך
"in one of your gates in your land"

16:1 – ושמחת לפני יהוה אלהיך אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך והלוי אשר בשעריך והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בקרבך
"And you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God; you and your son and your daughter and your servant and your maidservant and the Levite who is in your gates and the foreign resident and the orphan and the widow who are among you."

17:2 – בקרבך באחד שעריך
"among you, in one of your gates"

18:6 – מאחד שעריך מכל-ישראל אשר-הוא (הלוי) גר שם
"from one of your gates among all the land of Israel in which he (the Levite) lives"

23:17 – עמך ישב בקרבך במקום אשר-יבחר באחד שעריך
"with you he will live, among you, in the place he will choose, in one of your gates"

24:14 – אשר בארצך בשעריך
"who is in your land, in your gates"

28:52 – בכל שעריך בכל ארצך
"in all of your gates in all your land"

We may infer from these verses that there are many שערים in the land of Israel

(15:7; 18:6; 24:14; 28:52), in which people (including Israelites) live (18:6; 23:17).

Additionally, in three verses we find that בשעריך is roughly equivalent to בקרבך "among

you" (16:1; 17:2; 23:17).[1]

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[1] My use of 16:1 to support this point is based on the Levite being in the gate, and the foreign resident, orphan, and widow being בקרבך "among you," since the latter are elsewhere widely associated with gates (see below) and since all four are widely associated with one another (e.g., see Deut 24:19, 20, 21; 26:11, 12, 13; 27:19, etc.).

In addition, we can learn much about the referent of שעריך in D based on the context of each occurrence, and what types of things happen and do not happen in the שעריך. The usage of the term breaks down into two groups. The first group consists of regulations that apply to various categories of poor people who are found "in your gates": namely, the Levite, the גר "foreign resident," the אלמנה "widow," the יתום "orphan," and the אביון "poor person."[1] Thus these references tell us a few types of people who are found in the "gates."[2] The second group of occurrences simply notes things that should (or should not) happen in "your gates." According to these verses, the "gate" is the place:

- where non-sacrificial meat may be eaten (12:15, 21)
- where one-tenth offerings of grain and firstlings of the flocks may not be eaten (12:17)
- where one-tenth offerings are gathered every three years (14:28)
- where lame animals should be eaten (15:22)
- where the Passover should not be eaten (16:5)
- where judges and officials will be appointed (16:18)
- where a man or woman might transgress the covenant by worshiping other deities (17:2)
- where a judicial case may prove too difficult, forcing one to go to Jerusalem (17:8)[3]

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[1] Found in Deut 5:14; 12:12, 18; 14:21, 27, 29; 15:7; 16:11, 14; 18:6; 24:14; 26:12; 31:12. These individuals are all singled out for their neediness or vulnerability. The Levite, for instance, needs help because he does not have a (land) inheritance among the Israelites, and thus has no livelihood (12:12; 14:27, 29; cf. the poor and needy גר who is not to be oppressed in 24:14)

[2] The point in many of these verses is that the foreign resident or Levite (etc.) must follow a particular regulation in just the same way that the Israelite must. The regulations which are applied to these individuals include the following: keeping the Shabbat (5:14); rejoicing before Yahweh (in Jerusalem) when making a sacrifice (12:12); eating the one-tenth sacrifice and the firstlings of the flock before Yahweh (12:18); receiving an animal carcass from an Israelite in order to eat it (14:21); partaking in the sacrificial feast before Yahweh (14:27; cf. vv. 24-6); eating the one-tenth offering which was gathered every three years (14:29; 26:12); receiving a loan from fellow Israelites (for a poor Israelite; 15:7); celebrating the Festival of Shavuot before Yahweh (16:11); celebrating the Festival of Sukkot (16:14);) receiving wages equal to the other Levites who serve to the Temple (for a Levite who moves there; 18:6-8); not being oppressed when working as a hired laborer (24:14); and gathering in order to hear and learn and fear Yahweh (31:12).

[3] This particular example is ambiguous, since the gate may be taken literally as the place where judges are appointed. On the other hand, almost all of the occurrences of the term שעריך in Deuteronomy do not seem to refer to literal gates (the only exception being 17:5, where people are stoned to death), so I prefer to take the present example in the same way.

- from which a Levite might move to Jerusalem (18:6)
- where a runaway slave must be permitted to live (23:17)
- where enemies might besiege you and tear down your tall and fortified city walls in all your land (28:52)
- where your enemies may attack you (28:55, 57)

A prominent feature of these regulations is the contrast between the "gates" and המקום אשר יבחר יהוה "the place which Yahweh will choose" – i.e., Jerusalem. Eating meat is allowed in "all of your gates," whereas ritual sacrifices (such as the Passover) are allowed only in Jerusalem. Likewise, a Levite might move from "one of your gates" to Jerusalem (18:6). The fact that the "gates" are set in contrast to the city of Jerusalem suggests that the "gates" are also cities. Deut 28:52 is particularly instructive – if you transgress the covenant, your enemies will besiege you בכל שעריך "in all your gates" and tear down your tall and fortified city walls "in which you trusted [for your defense]" in all your land. Since city walls surround cities, "in your gates" must mean "in your cities."

All of this evidence supports the preliminary suggestion that שעריך means "your towns." This is in fact a common rendering into English,[1] and was favored by the ancient translations as well. The LXX commonly translates בכל שעריך with ἐν ταῖς πόλεσίν σου "in all your cities" or the like;[2] the Targumim translate שער with קריה "town." Given the above data, and given D's penchant for stock phrases and repetition, it seems a fair working hypothesis that all occurrences of שעריך in D are approximately equivalent to "in your towns" unless we find evidence to the contrary.

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[1] The translations "settlements," "communities," and "towns" are used (with varying consistency) by, e.g., the JPS Tanakh, ESV, NIV, and NAB.

[2] See Deut 12:17, 18, 21; 14:21, 27, 28, 29; 15:7, 22; 16:5, etc.

<u>Literal Gates</u>

The second interpretation we will discuss is that the term שעריך should be taken literally, at least in some instances. To be clear, שער can take a literal meaning in D, and I believe that it does in five instances.[1] In all of these, the physical gate is the referent. For instance, the stubborn and rebellious son should be brought אל שער מקמו "to the gate of his place" for trial (21:19); if a widow's brother-in-law will not marry her, she should go השערה אל הזקנים "to the gate, to the elders" and make a formal complaint (25:7). These occurrences, however, should be contrasted with the formulaic and repetitive usage of the construction שעריך in particular, which takes a non-literal sense in all of its occurrences save one.[2]

Some authors, however, have either unthinkingly read שעריך literally, or have actively argued for the term's literal use. For example, W. Bailey claims that tithes and charity were brought to and dispensed from the city gate, based on Deut 14:28-9, 15:7-8, and 26:12.[3] With reference to Deut 16:5, J. Wagenaar says that "in the pre-centralisation days Pesach was obviously celebrated in the city-gates."[4] And, as mentioned above (pp. 221-3), Avraham Faust has built a rather wide-ranging theory about municipal housing for the poor at the city gate, based on his literal interpretation of widows and orphans living בשעריך "in your gates" in D. The question, in light of the discussion above, is

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[1] Deut 17:5; 21:19; 22:15, 24; 25:7.

[2] Deut 17:5 enjoins bringing an apostate to שעריך "your gates" in order to stone her or him, which is similar to other verses which describe the stoning of miscreants at the city gate (Deut 21:19; 22:23-4; 2 Chr 23:15; cf. Exod 15:32-6). The two verses which command writing Moses' words on "your gates" (6:9 and 11:20) are usually interpreted as physical gates, but I understand them differently (see below).

[3] Bailey, *The Contributions*, 105.

[4] Jan A. Wagenaar, *Origin and Transformation of the Ancient Israelite Festival Calendar* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte 6; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 48.

whether we have grounds for taking שעריך literally in these cases, against what seems to be the normal pattern of figurative use in D. Since Faust is the only author I have found who argues in favor of his literal interpretation, we will briefly discuss his reasoning.

Faust admits that sometimes "the gate perhaps symbolizes the whole city" (with reference to Deut 15:7, 17:2, and 28:52)[1] but claims that "there are verses in which it is difficult to interpret השער as a symbol for the city, and we must interpret it literally."[2] His examples of the latter are the following:

- Deut 23:17 - A runaway slave should not be returned to his master, but rather עמך ישב בקרבך במקום אשר יבחר באחד שעריך בטוב לו לֹא תוננו "with you he will dwell, among you, in the place he chooses, in one of your gates, wherever he likes; you shall not oppress him." "The slave fled to a particular city," reasons Faust, "and therefore 'one of your gates' is not 'one of your cities.'"[3]

- Deut 24:14 – "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy (עני ואביון), whether he is one of your brothers [i.e., an Israelite], or one of your foreign residents who is in your land, in your gates (בארצך בשעריך)."[4]

- Deut 26:12 – "When you have finished tithing all of the tenth of your produce in the third year, the year of the tenth, you shall give (it) to the Levite, the foreign resident, the orphan, and the widow, that they may eat in your gates (בשעריך) and be satisfied." Faust says that for this verse, "the interpretation

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[1] Faust, "The City Gates," 30; Faust, *Israelite Society*, 116 and n273. Faust also refers to Deut 5:16 (ibid. 116 n273), but this verse does not include the term שער.
[2] Faust, *Israelite Society*, 116.
[3] Faust, *Israelite Society*, 116.
[4] Faust gives no explanatory comment for his inclusion of this verse (*Israelite Society*, 116).

‘they will eat in your cities and be satisfied’ sterilizes the verse of its

meaning.”[1]

In the first verse above (23:17), the author uses a string of appositional phrases to

emphasize that the runaway slave may stay wherever he wishes – including any town

(שער) he wishes – and that he should not be compelled by anyone to do otherwise. There

is no reason to think (with Faust) that the slave has already chosen a city in which to live,

and then afterwards must choose a specific gate. The second verse (24:14) is another

rather straightforward case of apposition; the author adjoins בשעריך to add specificity to

the more all-encompassing בארצך: “in your land, *that is*, in your towns.” In the third verse

(26:12), I do not understand Faust’s point about the difficulty in understanding שעריך

figuratively. This verse – and indeed, all of these verses – are perfectly compatible with

understanding שער as a town: the runaway slave may stay in any town he likes; poor and

needy people should not be oppressed, whether they are Israelites or foreign residents

who live in your towns; the tithe is for the poor and needy in your towns.

In fact, interpreting these verses literally raises a problem: the regulations which

they enjoin cannot possibly be applicable only in the city gate. For instance, on the

literal(istic) interpretation, Deut 24:14 would mean that one may not oppress the foreign

resident *who lives in the city gate quarter* in particular – as if foreign residents who live

elsewhere in town are perfectly legitimate targets of oppression.[2] In sum, I do not find

any good reason to read שעריך literally in the cases above, and find it less problematic

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[1] Faust, *Israelite Society*, 116

[2] One might object here that the same critique can be leveled against the translation “towns.” That is, it does not stand to reason that the author of D discouraged the mistreatment of foreign residents who lived in a town, but allowed the oppression of *rural* foreign residents. I would agree that this is not the point, and below I will nuance my evaluation of the term בשעריך to take this into account.

philologically and historically to take these gates as figurative references to towns, along with the rest of the occurrences discussed above.[1]

Gates as Towns Other Than Jerusalem

As mentioned above, many of the activities proscribed or prescribed in "gates" are in direct contrast to what one can or must do in Jerusalem, especially with regard to the sacrificial laws (see 12:13-27 in particular; cf. 17:8, 18:6). This has led to the suggestion that D uses the term שעריך to mean not just "towns" in a generic sense, but rather all Israelite towns *as opposed to* Jerusalem.[2] This approach is vulnerable to the same criticism as taking gates literally: some of the specific laws in question apply to everyone and have no special significance for the outlying towns over against the central sanctuary. For example, worshiping other deities is presumably forbidden in Jerusalem, and not just in outlying towns (17:2), runaway slaves can live wherever they want, which presumably includes Jerusalem (23:17), and enemies would of course attack Jerusalem (the capital) along with the smaller surrounding towns (28:52, 55, 57). Thus the distinction between Jerusalem and other Israelite towns cannot be consistently applied. If, on the other hand, we maintain the meaning "towns" for שערים, all uses under discussion make sense, and the distinction between Jerusalem and other towns is maintained rhetorically (not semantically) in a subset of these uses.

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[1] Historically, Faust's theory of municipal housing also suffers from a lack of any *clear* literary evidence, which one might expect to find if such a large-scale governmental welfare program were in fact in place.

[2] Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics*, 130-1; Otto, "שער," 15:377-8; Jang, *The Iron Age II*, 66; Bailey, *The Contributions*, 104.

שער vs. עיר in D

D also uses the term עיר "city/town" 57 times, which shows that the author does not simply have an idiosyncratic term which is mechanically substituted for עיר in every case. The question this raises is whether the figurative usage of שער compared with עיר is haphazard or if there is a pattern which reveals additional nuance in the former.

C. Carmichael, in his book *The Laws of Deuteronomy*, makes a few observations along these lines, distinguishing between D's use of שער and עיר in a brief appendix called "The Gates (שערים) and Cities (עירים) [sic!] in Deuteronomy."[1] He says "Driver takes the two terms to be synonymous, and in a physical sense they must be. However, there is more to the matter. The solution is that the 'gates' refer to the city seen from within, while the term 'city' or 'cities' is used when it is a question of the city seen from the outside."[2] That is to say, when the legal issue under discussion in D is a local, intra-city issue, the term שעריך is used. But if the matter is something between towns or among multiple towns with which all of Israel must deal, the cities are viewed from the outside and thus the term עיר is used. In support of this, Carmichael compares Deut 13:13-19 with 17:2-7, both laws about idolatry. In ch. 13, we read "If you hear in one of your cities…" but in ch. 17, we read "If there is found…in one of your gates…." The idolatry in Deut 17, according to Carmichael, allegedly occurs within the "gates," but the case in ch. 13 is different since an individual in Israel only *hears* a report of instigation to idolatry in an Israelite city. Since the idolatry is outside the town of the one who hears of it, the city is

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[1] Calum M. Carmichael, *The Laws of Deuteronomy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974), 261-2.

[2] Carmichael, *Laws of Deuteronomy*, 261.

seen by him from the outside, and thus the term עיר is used, not שער.[1] Carmichael similarly explains the use of עיר in the laws concerning the cities of refuge (19:2, 5, 7, 9, 11) and the untraced murder law (21:1-9), both of which are more clearly beyond the purview of a single town.

Carmichael's distinction does hold up for a great deal of the use of עיר in D. For instance, the term ערים is widely used to refer to the non-Israelite settlements that the Israelites were supposed to conquer (or refrain from conquering).[2] On the other hand, his distinction cannot be maintained in a number of cases. Both the stubborn and rebellious son and the man who accuses his new wife of not being a virgin are tried (and sometimes punished) by זקני עירו "the elders of his city" and אנשי עירו "the men of his city" (21:19-21; 22:15, 17-18, 21), not אנשי שערו "the men of his gate" or the like. The man who refuses to marry his sister-in-law also must speak with זקני עירו "the elders of his city" (25:8). Transjordanian cities that were *already conquered* – and in which Israelite women, children, and livestock are to live while the men go help their fellow Israelites conquer the Cisjordan – are called ערים "cities" not שערים (3:19). It would be difficult to argue that all of these cases involve a perspective from the outside looking into the city.

The one distinction which is in fact discernable between the two terms is that שער is more restrictive than עיר, in that שער is never used figuratively to refer to a non-Israelite town. We know that the towns in question are Israelite, of course, because the phrase is always בשעריך "in *your* gates." The author(s) of D could easily have extended the use of this figurative speech to describe non-Israelite towns – for instance in one of

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[1] Carmichael, *Laws of Deuteronomy*, 262.
[2] See 1:22, 28; 2:34, 35-7; 3:4-7, 10, 12; 6:10; 9:1; 13:17; 19:1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11; 20:10, 14-16, 19-20.

the many references to the Canaanite cities which were to be (or already were) conquered – but it is not so used even once.

"Gates" as Israelite Communities

Two additional points may be added to those above. Based on the laws to which the term שעריך is commonly attached, we may also discard the notion that שעריך must be taken as a reference to towns in a *strictly* synecdochic, part-for-whole fashion.[1] That is to say, שעריך probably does not refer to urban centers with gates as opposed to villages or farmsteads that have no gates. Since there were probably more rural farmers than urbanites in ancient Israel,[2] understanding שעריך in this way would exclude a large part of the population from the regulations in question, allowing rural Israelite farmers to perform the Passover rite in their homes, to not keep the Sabbath, to oppress their foreign workers, and so on.[3] It is implausible that the applicability of these laws has to do with the nature of the settlement one happens to live in. It follows from this that within D, שעריך refers to all settlements, regardless of the presence or absence of a town gate.[4]

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[1] It might be argued that שער may not legitimately be used synecdochically to refer to settlements without gates, since synecdoche is a part-for-whole (or whole-for-part) substitution (though I have not seen this position anywhere in the literature). The use of שער in D is sometimes called metonymy, which is the use of the name of one object or concept for another *to which it is related* (e.g., Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics*, 130-2). This is also a questionable label for this usage, since physical gates are not clearly "related to" ungated settlements in any meaningful way.

[2] On the distinction between such settlement types, see Faust, "Cities, Villages, and Farmsteads," and above, pp. 21-4.

[3] Cf. Faust, who notes that עיר refers to any settlement (not just a "city"), and that laws concerning ערים also apply to villages; see Avraham Faust, "The Rural Community in Ancient Israel During Iron Age II," *BASOR* 317 (2000): 31.

[4] This conclusion is somewhat speculative, since I am deriving the meaning of the term from its usage within only one corpus. There is always the danger of inadvertently drawing illegitimate conclusions about an expression's semantic force (as opposed to its rhetorical force or its implications) from the context. For instance, the term שער may be metonymic or synecdochic for a town, and the application of laws that mention a שער to smaller (and ungated) settlements could be implied, in the same way that (e.g.) the

A final consideration comes a different repetitive phrase in D: אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך

(נחלה/לרשתה) "which Yahweh your God is giving you (as an inheritance/to inherit it)."

This phrase, and variations of it, occurs over forty times in D, and is preceded by a

variety of items that Yahweh has given the Israelites.[1] On five occasions, שעריך are

singled out as gifts of Yahweh (15:7; 16:5, 18; 17:2; 28:52), and it is instructive to

compare the other gifts that are described with the same phrase. The most common term

by far is הארץ/ארצך "the land/your land," which occurs 25 times.[2] Other terms include

אדמה "the land/ground" (5 times),[3] נחלה "property inheritance" (12:9), ערים "cities"

(13:13), הר האמרי "the hill country of the Amorites" (1:20), ערי העמים האלה "the cities of

these peoples" (20:16), כל העמים "all the peoples" (7:16), and הגוים "the nations" (19:1).[4]

In other words, there is an enormous emphasis in D on the divine gift of the land and the

cities in Canaan which the Israelites were to seize from the local inhabitants; שערים was

but one way to describe this gift.

Space prohibits a full accounting for this prominent element in D's theological

perspective, but it will suffice to note that the land of Canaan in D was given to the

Israelites in the context of a covenant – a provisional land grant – modeled after similar

grants known elsewhere in the ANE.[5] The land of Canaan itself was praised as a good

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commandment לא תרצח "You shall not murder" presumably applies to females even though the verbal form is masculine singular.

[1] For further expressions in D that relate to the theme of inheritance of the land, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 341-3.

[2] See 1:25; 2:29; 3:20; 4:1, 21; 11:17, 31; 12:10; 15:4, 7; 16:20; 17:14; 18:9; 19:2, 10, 14; 24:4; 25:19; 26:1, 2; 27:2, 3; 28:8 (cf. 8:10, 9:6).

[3] See 4:40; 5:16; 21:1, 23; 25:15.

[4] Compare similar constructions that note Yahweh's gift of blessing (12:15), all the good (26:11), and the fruit of your womb (28:53).

[5] See Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90/2 (1970): 184-203.

land, abundant in sources of water (!) and edible produce (8:7-9), but it needed to be kept

pure by the Israelites (19:9-10; 21:1-9), and it needed Yahweh's continual care, which

was based on the Israelites' upholding of the relevant covenant stipulations (11:10-21).[1]

The use of שעריך in D, therefore, may carry the additional theological connotations (i.e.,

"towns that Yahweh is giving you") which this larger covenantal context gives it.[2]

Based on all of the preceeding, my conclusion is that the figurative sense of שערים

in D is any type of Israelite settlement within the covenant land, or, more abstractly, any

instantiation of Israelite society. In one stroke, the metaphorical שער denotes "among you,

in your settlements, within the land Yahweh gave to you."[3] More succinctly, we may

translate שערים as "communities."[4]

Why would שער be an appropriate metaphor for Israelite society? The point of

contact between the two conceptual domains (viz., a gate and Israelite society) is easy to

see based on the previous chapters. There was no other locus of activity in ancient Israel

that represented a cross-section of Israelite life more accurately or comprehensively as

the civic forum. The conception of a city gate – with its connotations of social interaction

among all of the population, both urban and rural – is a useful symbol to describe the

abstract concept of Israelite society.[5]

This metaphor is more than an interesting term. Metaphors and idioms, according

to modern cognitive linguistics, are formed at the conceptual level, as an inevitable by-

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[1] On the land's place in D's theology, see Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 57-60.

[2] Or it may not. See p. 289 n4.

[3] This usage of שער is technically metaphorical, since one source domain ("gate") is used to refer to a different target domain ("community").

[4] Compare Tigay's translation "in your settlements" (Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 69).

[5] Cf. Bailey, *The Contributions*, 105.

product of human reasoning. In other words, they are based on the way we perceive

reality, and are linguistic phenomena only in their manifestations.[1] They can thus reveal

the cognitive models in the minds of those who use them.[2] This means that the usage of

שער above may give us insight into the perceptual framework of the ancient Israelite

author; or, to put it differently, it may give us an emic view of this Israelite social

institution.[3]

It is suggestive, in this light, to return to the Akkadian term *bābu* "gate, entrance

(to a city, temple, palace, district)," which also takes the extended meaning of a "local

district within a city, associated with a gate, as well as the persons who live in that

district; cf. *ina pān bīti u bābi*, 'before household and community.'"[4] The derivative term

bābtu also denotes an urban ward or neighborhood, or the association of people who were

responsible for the administration of that neighborhood, which takes place at the gate of

the ward.[5] Compare the Code of Hammurabi: [*šumma*] *bābta-šu ubar-šu-ma…ana bābti-*

šu inaddin "[if] his neighborhood ward convicts him… he shall pay his neighborhood

ward."[6] There is no evidence to suggest that the Israelites or Judeans subdivided their

cities, or had any corresponding legal bodies responsible for such subdivisions. But

perhaps, on the other hand, there was no need for such subdivision. Most Israelite towns

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[1] Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4-9, 199-206.

[2] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3-4.

[3] Alexander R. Thomas, framing the issue differently, calls the gate an "attractor point": "Points of intense social activity [in a city] focus attention on certain precincts of the city and on the city itself, acting as attractor points as discussed in Chaos Theory…An attractor point will often be a symbol for the city" (*The Evolution of the Ancient City: Urban Theory and the Archaeology of the Fertile Crescent* [Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010], 185).

[4] *CAD* B, 14; Otto, "שער," 15:367.

[5] *CAD* B, 9; Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 115-6.

[6] CH §126; cf. Otto's discussion of this and other similar texts, "שער," 15:367-8.

were relatively small compared to cities in Syria and Mesopotamia[1] – only 5 to 10 acres –

and had a single gate whose council governed the town. It is plausible, then, that the

judicial and other legislative functions at Israelite gates may have given rise to the use of

שער as a term for the community under the gate's jurisdiction, similar to the semantic

extensions of *bābu* and *bābtu*.[2] In other words – to be more specific about the source

domain of שער as a metaphor – our author's cognitive model of a "gate" may have

included the community of Israelites under the legal authority of the gate.[3] It is a short

step from here to assume that the meaning was extended to include all Israelite

communities, as the term is used in D.

    An additional point about the use of שער in D is that this term (along with many

other lines of evidence) betrays the fictional Mosaic authorship of D, and gives away the

time and social setting of the author. Moses, depicted in the Bible as leading a group of

desert-wandering refugee slaves in the Late Bronze Age, would have had little reason to

offhandedly depict Israelite communities with reference to their gates, since of course

they would not have had any gates. By the time D was written late in the monarchic

period, however, the Israelites had been steeped in an urban culture with civic centers in

their gates for centuries, and the association would have been quite natural to both the

author and his audience.

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[1] Dever, "Social Structure," 418.
[2] Cf. Frick, *The City*, 44.
[3] Or, alternatively, a separate domain of activity (commercial transactions, for instance) functioned in the same manner.

Other Figurative Uses of שער

A scattering of non-literal meanings for the term שער are found outside of the D

corpus, and we will briefly look at a number of these passages below.[1] In each case, the

difficulty of the term is resolved if it is understood as a metaphor for a community, as the

term functions in D.

Exod 20:10

אתה ובנך-ובתך עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך וגרך אשר בשעריך
"[You shall keep the Shabbat]…you and your son and your daughter, your servant
and your maidservant, and your resident alien who is in your gates."

This is an almost word-for-word duplication of Deut 5:14, and the phrase is thus

used with an identical meaning to those in D discussed above. Note that another phrase

common to D – אשר-יהוה אלהיך נתן לך "which Yahweh your God is giving you" – is,

suspiciously, found two verses later in Exod 20:12. Since it is fairly clear on other

grounds that the author of D relies on the laws of Exodus and adapts them to his own

theology,[2] the clustering of characteristic D terminology here in Exodus is unexpected

(since the influence seems to be moving in the wrong direction), and suggests that a later

redactor of the Pentateuch may have back-copied parts of the Deuteronomic Decalogue

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[1] Compare also Jer 15:7, an ambiguous case which is discussed above, pp. 247-8.

[2] See Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics*; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 19-24; Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, (OTL; Louisville, Tenn.: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 4. Note that the two commandments under discussion are the only ones in the D version whose motivations are different from those in Exod 20, and the only ones which include the phrase "as Yahweh commanded," which seems to indicate that the commands in D are a repetition of previously known laws (Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 82-3).

into E.[1] In any event, since this appears to be direct literary borrowing, Exod 20:10

probably does not represent an independent use of the term בשעריך.

1 Kgs 8:37 (= 2 Chron 6:28)

> כי יצר לו איבו בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁעָרָיו
> "if his enemy besieges him in the land of his gates."

As vocalized, the indefinite בארץ requires that the phrase be understood as a

construct "land of his gates."[2] A "land of (literal) gates" is an awkward expression, but a

land of "towns" or "communities" is perfectly understandable.[3] The phrase should be

compared to באחד שעריך "in one of your communities" (Deut 15:7), בארצך בשעריך "in your

land, in your communities" (24:14), and especially to והצר לך בכל-שעריך בכל-ארצך "They

will besiege you in all your communities in all your land" (28:52).

Ruth 3:11

> כי יודע כל-שער עמי כי אשת חיל אֵתּ
> "for the whole (or: every) gate of my people knows that you are a woman of
> valor."

Since it is impossible for a physical gate to "know" something, we may be certain

that this is figurative speech.[4] The same expression occurs in Obad 1:13 and Mic 1:9

(treated below). In Ruth 3:11, the phrase is typically understood in one of two ways.

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[1] Suggested to me by Baruch Schwartz (personal communication); see also Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 145-6.
[2] That is, we cannot translate "in the land, *at* his gates," or the like.
[3] Compare John Gray, who says the term is synecdochic for a town (*I & II Kings: A Commentary* [2nd ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970], 224-5).
[4] Otto, "שער," 15:373-4.

First, שער may refer to the council of elders at the gate by metonymy.[1] Compare the

Targum's translation with its explanatory additions: כל דיתבי תרע סנהדרין רבא דעמי "all

those who sit in the gate, the great Sanhedrin [a legal council] of my people…."

Alternatively, שער may be understood metaphorically to mean all of the people in town,

the community: "the whole community of my people knows…."[2] Rhetorically, Boaz's

point is either that the whole city council or the whole community knows that Ruth is a

virtuous woman. The rendering "community" is preferable for reasons explained below.

Ruth 4:10

> ולא-יכרת שם-המת מעם אחיו ומשער מקומו
> "so that the name of the dead man will not be 'cut off' from among his brothers or from the gate of his place."

The same expression occurs in Deut 21:19 ("[they] shall bring him out to the

elders of his town and to the gate of his place"), though in a literal sense. Here in Ruth, it

cannot be taken literally, since names (as far as we know) were not on or in physical

gates such that they could be eradicated (יִכָּרֵת, lit: "cut off") from them. The phrase "his

place" (מקומו) must mean "his hometown,"[3] so שער cannot be synecdochic for "town,"

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[1] Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth* (NAC 6; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 721; Ephraim A. Speiser, "'Coming' and 'Going' at the City Gate," *BASOR* 144 (1956): 20-21; Kirsten Nielsen, *Ruth: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 77; Edward F. Campbell, Jr., *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 124; cf. Evans, "Gates and Streets," 3. Campbell says "Undeniably, ['all the gate of my people'] means something like, 'the legally responsible body of this town,'" and refers to this meaning's frequent occurrence in Deut (*Ruth*, 124).

[2] Robert L. Hubbard, *The Book of Ruth* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988), 216; Hillers, *Micah*, 23. Cf. the ESV and NIV translations "all my fellow townsmen." Note that Hubbard also asserts that שער מקומו in Ruth 4:10 refers to the body of elders (*The Book of Ruth*, 257), evidently taking these as two distinct figures of speech.

[3] That is, the place he belongs; cf. BDB s.v. מקום 2.

since this would yield the nonsensical "from the town of his town." The two most obvious potential referents of שער are (as with Ruth 3:11) the townspeople in general, or the members of the gate council in particular.[1]

Most commentators agree that the legal procedure in Ruth 4 is modeled on something akin to the custom of Levirate marriage,[2] where a man marries his dead brother's wife in order to produce a son on his brother's behalf. In the laws that describe a Levirate marriage (Deut 25:5-10), the process is done for a very clear reason: והיה הבכור אשר תלד יקום על-שם אחיו המת ולא ימחה שמו מישראל "And the firstborn son which she [the sister-in-law] will bear will carry on the name of the dead brother, *so that his name will not be eradicated from Israel*" (v. 6; emphasis added). This is a very close parallel to the phrase in the present verse: the concern is for preserving the שם "name" of the deceased man. In the passage in Deut, the man's name must be preserved in ישראל "Israel," and in Ruth it must be preserved among אחיו "his brothers" and שער מקומו "the gate of his place." Since the phrase "his brothers" – that is, his countrymen – means essentially the same as "Israel" in Deut, we have a good indication that the concern of the "redemption" custom is to preserve the dead man's name in Israelite society, and not among those in the gate council in particular.[3] On this basis, it is preferable to understand שער מקומו with reference to the community in Bethlehem. (Compare also the LXX of Ruth 3:11: γὰρ πᾶσα φυλὴ λαοῦ μου "for all the tribe of my people….")

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[1] E.g., Hubbard, *The Book of Ruth*, 257; Campbell, *Ruth*, 124.

[2] Nielsen, *Ruth*, 85.

[3] One might argue that the phrase "his brothers" refers to his fellow Israelites, while the appositional phrase שער מקומו "gate of his place" specifies the gate council. This is possible at the level of syntax, but there is no reason to suppose that preserving one's name in the gate council is in view here.

Moreover, since this phrase is one of two figurative expressions with שער in Ruth, it is preferable, based on the principle of parsimony, to explain them both in the same way if possible.[1] Thus "communities" should be the preferred understanding for both uses of שער above.

Jer 14:2

אבלה יהודה ושעריה אמללו
"Judah dries up, and her gates wither away."

The verbal root אבל often means "to mourn," as nearly all English translations for this verse (and the LXX) render it. This interpretation might also be suggested by verb קדר "to be dark, mourn" in the following poetic couplet.[2] But אבל should be understood here as II אבל "to dry up," attested in at least 8 places in the Bible, often parallel to יבש "to be dry" or אמלל "to dry out, wither."[3] The parallel with אמלל and the fact that this passage is explicitly describing a drought (see vv. 1, 3-6) confirm this reading.[4]

Physical gates do not dry out or wither, so the שערים must refer to something else. Our best clue comes from the parallel term "Judah," which is both a territory and the people group in it. Rendering שעריה as "her [Judah's] communities" captures both of these elements. The communities are literally "drying up" because of the drought: "their

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[1] Note that the LXX translates שער in both 3:11 and 4:10 with φυλὴ "tribe, nation," whereas other occurrences of שער are rendered with πύλη "gate" (e.g., 4:1, 4:11).

[2] The term קדר comes in the phrase קדרו לארץ וצוחת ירושלם עלתה "they mourn on the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem goes up" (v. 2b). Mourning is a logical consequence of the drought, but this is the extent of the connection between the two couplets; קדר is not a parallel to אבל.

[3] See *HALOT*, s.v.

[4] Cf. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 429.

nobles sent their servants for water; they came to the cisterns and found no water; they

return, their vessels empty…there is no rain in the land" (vv. 3-4).

Mic 1:9

כי אנושה מכותיה כי-באה עד-יהודה נגע עד-שער עמי עד-ירושלם

"For her [Samaria's] wounds are incurable, and have come as far as Judah; they

have reached as far as the gate of my people, as far as Jerusalem."[1]

The calamities approaching are the result of Yahweh's anger, which will have

already turned Samaria into a heap of rubble (v. 6). Now the "wounds" (or "blows")

approach Jerusalem, which is set in apposition to the difficult phrase "the gate of my

people."[2] In addition to the questionable identity of "my people" (the residents of

Jerusalem? all of Judah?), the "gate" in this verse permits multiple interpretations. It may

refer metaphorically to the border of Judah (or Jerusalem), used threateningly: the

calamity has not yet reached Judah, but it is standing at the doorstep.[3] Or, the "gate" may

be a metaphorical reference to the community of Jerusalem (as in D), or a metonymical

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[1] The MT has numerous grammatical difficulties which I have smoothed over in the translation. The plural מכותיה "her wounds" does not agree with its sing. fem. adj. אנושה "incurable," the following sing. fem. verb באה "come," or the sing. masc. verb נגע "reach." See Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24E; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 196-99. These issues, however, form the least of the interpretive problems.

[2] The same phrase is found in Obadiah, though in a more prosaic context. Obad 1:13 reads אל-תבוא בשער- עמי ביום אידם...ואל-תשלחנה בחילו ביום אידו "Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity…do not lay your hands on his wealth in the day of his calamity." This is in reference to the Edomites, who are said to have participated in Judah's destruction and despoiling along with the foreign army who conquered them (1:11). The reference to *entering* the gate and plundering the Judahites' goods points strongly toward a literal understanding of שער. Though the broader context indicates that the city in question is Jerusalem, the phrase "gate of my people" cannot on this basis be understood as an idiomatic reference to Jerusalem, which can then be used to interpret Mic 1:9, 12.

[3] If Judah is taken as the referent with this reading, then "as far as Jerusalem" might be seen as an advance of the enemy, after having reached Judah's "gate."

reference to the court of elders in Jerusalem.[1] More speculatively, the "gate of my people" might be understood as a poetic embodiment of "my people," in the same way that בת ציון "daughter of Zion" commonly means "Zion" (Isa 1:8; 10:32; Mic 4:8; Zeph 3:14; Lam 2:8, 10), yielding "the calamity has reached my people, has reached Jerusalem."

Mic 1:12 adds ירד רע מאת יהוה לשער ירושלים "disaster has come down from Yahweh to the gate of Jerusalem," which sounds like a restatement and conflation of the two phrases placed in apposition at the end of v. 9. Unfortunately, this verse merely repeats the ambiguous use of "gate." I do not see any clear solutions for this ambiguity on the basis of the text of Micah alone.

Ps 87:2

אהב יהוה שערי ציון מכל משכנות יעקב
"Yahweh loves the gates of Zion more than all of the dwelling places of Jacob."

Since the "gates of Zion" are collectively categorized among the other dwelling places (i.e., settlements) of Jacob (i.e., Israel), the phrase must refer to some type of settlement(s). Clearly this settlement must be Jerusalem, where Yahweh (in D's idiom) "caused his name to dwell."[2] How are the "gates of Zion" equivalent to Zion? There are at least three interpretive options. First, the gates may indicate the multiple city gates of Jerusalem, which define the border of the city. Yahweh's love for these "gates" would

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[1] Thus James Luther Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 55.
[2] Pace Kraus, who wants "gates of Zion" to refer to the Temple and thus interprets "dwelling places of Jacob" as "all the other temples in Israel." See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (trans. H. C. Oswald; Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg, 1989), 186.

then refer to Jerusalem by synecdoche. Alternatively, the "gates" may be understood as the Israelite communities including Jerusalem and her outlying villages that collectively constitute the city. This usage can be compared to the common expression "[city name] and her daughters," where "daughters" refers to the outlying settlements (Josh 15:45, 47; 17:11; Neh 11:25-31; etc.).[1] Finally, we might again see שערי ציון "gates of Zion" as a poetic reference to Zion itself, analogous to "daughter of Zion" (see above).

Conclusion

As I have noted, the fact that my translation "communities" makes sense of שער in the above texts does not mean that it is the only possible way to understand the term. For instance, שער may in some cases be a straightforward example of synecdoche in reference to a town; the verses above from Jer, Ps 87, and 1 Kgs work quite well with this solution. The interpretive difficulty we face is that the occurrences of שער above are infrequent and are spread among various authors, so we cannot determine their meaning(s) based on their usage in various contexts, as we did for שעריך in D. There are sometimes few reasons to justify one particular rendering over against others.

On the other hand, it is possible that שער was a more broadly-known expression for an Israelite community in Biblical times, which was accidentally preserved infrequently in the Hebrew Bible save the cluster of uses in D. An argument (perhaps the only one) in favor of this proposition is the economy of positing a single figurative

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[1] This is evidently unrelated to the phrase "daughter of [city name]," which is a poetic reference to the city in question. This is seen most clearly in Lam 2:8: חומת בת ציון "the city wall of the daughter of Zion" and Lam 2:10: זקני בת ציון "the elders of the daughter of Zion" (cf. Isa 1:8; 10:32; Mic 4:8; Zeph 3:14).

expression which neatly explains all of the occurrences above, despite their different authors and varied contexts.

The Entrance to the Tabernacle Courtyard

Curiously, the term שער is used to refer to the opening of the Tabernacle's courtyard; in fact it is the only term used for this opening.[1] In this case, a gatehouse – or even a simple stone or mudbrick doorway with wooden doors – cannot be in view.[2] The "gate" to the Tabernacle courtyard is described as a fabric screen or curtain (מסך) mounted on poles (Exod 27:16). This odd usage might be explained by saying that the semantic range of שער is broad enough to include "doorway." However, we note that this usage is restricted to the context of the Tabernacle courtyard, every occurrence of which is in P.[3] Thus the usage is idiosyncratic, and should not be used to broaden the meaning of שער more generally. Moreover, elsewhere in P the term פתח is used dozens of times to describe doors and entrances – showing that the author of P is deliberately choosing the term שער for the Tabernacle courtyard in particular.[4] Such an unusual clustering of what seems an inappropriate term begs for an explanation.

My conclusions on the point are twofold. First, as with שער in D, the use of שער in P for the Tabernacle courtyard's opening betrays the late and urbanized – not desert-

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[1] In one instance the more generic פתח החצר is used (Num 3:26 [P]). However, here the term פתח might mean gate by metonymy (as, e.g., in Gen 38:14), or more likely in this context, פתח may be a shorter form of the expression פתח שער החצר, found in Num 4:26. In any case, every non-literal occurrence of שער within P refers to this courtyard's opening.

[2] Pace Houtman, *Exodus*, 49.

[3] See Exod 27:16; 35:17; 38:15, 18, 31; 39:40; 40:8, 33; and Num 4:26.

[4] The term פתח is used, for example, in Exod 29:4, 11, 32, 42; 38:8, 30; 39:38; 40:6, 12, 29, and many dozens of times in Lev and Num with reference to the אהל מועד (note esp. Lev 14:38, which uses פתח for a domestic house's entrance). The term דלת does not occur in P.

wandering – context of the writer(s) of P. Second, and more speculatively, the term שער

in these contexts does not bear the connotation of the stone, brick, and wood form of the

later Israelite gates as much as it bears the symbolism of the later gates – and specifically

the gates to the temple courtyard in Jerusalem.[1] As I will discuss below, the temple gates

represented an important religious boundary for pious Israelites, such that passage into

the temple courtyard through the gates moved the worshipper from the realm of the

profane to the realm of the sacred, a significant shift closer to the presence of Yahweh

himself. For a priestly writer discussing the portable temple prototype, it would be natural

to (anachronistically) import the terminology from the temple of his own day – which had

bona fide gatehouses – in his attempt to give the same symbolic value to the Tabernacle's

courtyard entrance, since it served precisely the same function.[2]

The Desert Encampment "Gate"

A similar use of שער occurs twice in reference to the Israelite's desert

encampment in Exod 32:26-7.[3] Here, too, it seems quite unlikely that a tent camp would

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[1] Cf. Otto, who suggests that the use of the term שער reflects a later addition to P ("שער," 15:369).

[2] In support of my assertion that the Tabernacle was conceived of in terms of the Temple (and vice versa), we may point to more Temple-Tabernacle terminological blending in a different context. The post-exilic author of Chronicles, for example, describes the Temple with Tabernacle terminology. In 1 Chr 9:21, a Levite from the time of David is called a שֹׁעֵר "gate keeper," but is stationed at the opening (פתח) of the אהל מועד "tent of meeting," which did not have a "gate." Moreover, "the tent" in the same context has ספים "thresholds" (vv. 19, 22), which is an absurdity if taken literally. These references only make sense when we see that the tent in question is explicitly conflated with the Temple: -והם ובניהם על-השערים לבית יהוה לבית האהל למשמרות "they and their sons were responsible for the gates of the House of Yahweh, the House of the Tent, as guards" (v. 23). Thus, the Chronicler is deliberately combining the terminology of the Tabernacle and Temple, just as I assert the author of P is doing (albeit in the opposite direction). For more on the exchange of terminology for portable and permanent domiciles, see Michael M. Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel!: The Terminology, Function, Form, and Symbolism of Tents in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 7-27; Eshel, "Semantics," 151-63.

[3] It is unclear to which source these verses should be attributed. Richard Elliott Friedman, for example, says they belong to E (*The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View Into the Five Books of Moses* [San

have a brick or stone gateway, especially since no circumvallation wall is described for the camp. Without a wall, a שער makes little sense, even if we allow the more generic meaning "entrance."[1]

Perhaps these occurrences, too, are not meant to denote a literal gate, but instead refer to the gate's function or conceptual significance. Since the gateway is the center of judicial inquiry in ancient Israel, Moses' standing in the "gate" may be seen as a metonymic reference to what he *does* in the gate: pronounce judgment against those who worshiped the golden calf, and call for their punishment. That is, the point of the "gate" is Moses' juridical function more than his physical location. Likewise, since the gate was often the site of capital punishment for the condemned, the Levites' passing "to and fro throughout the camp, from gate to gate" (32:27), rather than being a spatial reference, may highlight their role as executioners.[2]

We may take this line of reasoning a step further. If the above analysis is correct, the author of these verses in Exodus may be depicting the Israelite encampment in terms of an Israelite city,[3] just as the author of P seems to conflate the spatial significance and terminology of the Tabernacle and the Temple compound. It is easy to see the analogy to Iron Age Jerusalem: the Tabernacle is equivalent to the Temple (both with their enclosed courts), and the entire desert encampment is equivalent to the city. And, since Jerusalem

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Francisco: Harper, 2003], 174), Martin Noth says J (*A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* [trans. with an introd. by B. W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972], 271), and Propp more circumspectly labels the pericope "JE" (*Exodus 19-40*, 153). In any case, these verses come from a different source than the usage in D and P discussed above.

[1] Cf. Michele L. Voeltz, "I Will make Your Battlements of Rubies, and Your Gates of Crystal": The Role of the Iron Age City Gate in Community and Metaphor" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 2002), 31.

[2] Cf. Matthews, "Entrance Ways," 27.

[3] Cf. Houtman: "Apparently the camp resembled a city" (*Exodus*, 49).

of the author's own day was surrounded by gates which carried both juridical and

punitive functions, the desert encampment is depicted similarly.[1]

Entering and Exiting at the City Gate

Gen 34:24

> וישמעו אל-חמור ואל בנו כל-יצאי שער עירו וימלו כל-זכר כל-יצאי שער עירו

> "And all those going out of the gate of their city listened to Hamor and to
> Shechem his son, and every male was circumcised, all those going out of the gate
> of their city."

Two similar phrases related to going in and out of gates are found in Genesis

23:10, 18 and Gen 34:24, and a number of commentators take them to be idiomadic. E.

Speiser, who brought the phrases to scholarly attention in 1956, says that going in and out

of a gate is not a noteworthy activity, since everyone does it. Thus it is odd that each text

(in Speiser's view) "singles out a specific segment of the population" by use of this

phrase.[2] Speiser also points out the fact that Gen 34 uses the term "going out" and Gen 23

uses "going in," which he thinks is meaningful since the two are "surely not

exchangeable."[3] Speiser thus posits two separate idioms – one for each phrase – which

we will discuss in turn.

In Gen 34 (above), Jacob's family has duplicitously offered the Shechemites a

covenant, which would allow the groups to intermarry. In the verse above, Hamor (the

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[1] The multiple gates may be taken as a hint that Jersuaelm in particular was in mind, since Jerusalem is described with multiple gates, unlike most all other Israelite towns.

[2] Speiser, "Coming and Going," 21-2.

[3] Speiser, "Coming and Going," 21.

local ruler) and his son Shechem persuade their fellow townsmen to agree to be circumcised, which was a stipulation of the agreement.

Speiser argues that the phrase "to go out of the gate of one's city" here means to represent one's community in battle.[1] His reasoning is based on the following three points: 1) The term שער can also mean "assembly, community," as he understands it in Ruth 3:11.[2] 2) The verb יצא can mean, on its own, to go out to battle (he refers to Amos 5:3 and 1 Chr 20:1).[3] The combination of these two points yields "going out to battle for one's community," and the third point supports this: 3) In 34:24, the males of the town are linked explicitly to the "going out" phrase, and in particular, the males who are circumcised and thus incapable of later defending themselves from the Jacobites. "This is the main point of the story, and the author makes it by stating twice that the victims were 'all those who went out by the gate of his city.' It follows that this phrase must signify 'those capable of bearing arms.'"[4]

A number of points can be made in response to Speiser's argument, which I have here abbreviated to its bare minimum. First, the awkward repetition of the phrase כל יצאי

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[1] Others understand this phrase similarly (e.g., Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* [trans. M. E. Biddle; Foreword by E. W. Nicholson; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997], 365; Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 237; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18-50* [NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995], 367) or at least concede that Speiser's view is possible (Geoffrey Evans, "'Coming' and 'Going' at the City Gate: A Discussion of Professor Speiser's Paper," *BASOR* [1958]: 33). It should be noted that Gunkel and Speiser both follow Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel: Textkritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches* (vol. 1, Genesis and Exodus; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1908), 174-5. Westermann understands כל יצאי שער עירו to mean "the whole citizen assembly…who have access to the negotiations at the gate" (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36* [trans. J. J. Scullion; CC; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1995], 374). Cf. also the translations of the Holman Christian Standard Bible and the NAB: "All the able-bodied men."

[2] Speiser, "Coming and Going," 20-1. The term שער in Ruth 3:11 may take this meaning, but this is by no means certain, and I believe there are good reasons to understand it otherwise (see above).

[3] Speiser, "Coming and Going," 22.

[4] Speiser, "Coming and Going," 22; cf. Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1964), 265.

שער עירו "those going out of the gate of their city" in a single verse calls its originality

into question. It looks like an example of dittography, a common scribal accident.

Westermann, for instance, says the repetition "is certainly a scribal error,"[1] and notes that

in place of the second phrase, the LXX has καὶ περιετέμοντο τὴν σάρκα τῆς ἀκροβυστίας

αὐτῶν πᾶς ἄρσην "and every male was circumcised *in the flesh of his foreskin*."[2]

Whether the "going out" phrase should be repeated in this verse makes a

significant interpretive difference: if the repetition is original, then an idiomatic rendering

of כל יצאי שער עירו is preferable. This is because 1) both occurrences of the phrase should

be interpreted in the same way based on the principle of parsimony, and 2) since the

second instance of the phrase can only be idiomatic.[3] If the second occurrence of the

phrase is excised as a scribal error, however, the phrase in its single occurrence is easier

to explain without an idiomatic rendering, as we will discuss below.

The MT's repetition clearly represents the *lectio difficilior*, but this informal rule

of thumb is not decisive and must be weighed against other considerations – such as the

reading's logical coherence.[4] In favor of the phrase being original only in the first

instance is the following argument: The pericope heavily emphasizes the fact that every

male (כל זכר) in the town of Shechem was circumcised and then killed. This is noted in

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[1] Westerman, *Genesis 12-36*, 542; see also Gunkel, *Genesis*, 365. Schmutzer, by contrast, defends the originality of the repetition on the grounds of the verse's literary structure (i.e., parallelism) which gives "emphasis and dramatic irony" (Andrew J. Schmutzer, "'All Those Going Out of the Gate of His City': Have the Translations Got it Yet?," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 17/1 (2007): 49-50).

[2] Cf. Gen 17:14, 23 for parallel phrases.

[3] That is to say, it is difficult to take the second instance literally, since this would mean that only the men exiting the gate were circumcised, and not כל זכר "every male" as the rest of the passage emphasizes (see below).

[4] Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1992), 302-5; cf. Propp: "critics generally favor…the more difficult reading (*lectio difficilior*) over the expected – provided that the short or difficult reading also makes sense" (*Exodus 1-18*, 46-7).

the request of Simeon and Levi (v. 15), in Hamor and Shechem's discussion with the men at the city gate (vv. 20-22), in the narrative summary of the circumcision (v. 24) and in the description of the men being killed (v. 25). But if the second instance of כל יצאי שער עירו is original, its apposition to the phrase כל זכר "every male" (v. 24b) as the identity of those circumcised becomes problematic.

There are only two possible ways to understand the apposition: 1) The two phrases are approximately synonymous, so that כל יצאי שער עירו would be another way to express "all the males of the town."[1] But this would be unnecessary to repeat, since all of the males in town are clearly already in view – both throughout the passage and even within the same sentence in v. 24b. Moreover, this rendering would need to be applied back to the first occurrence of the phrase, which would yield a scene in which "every male" in town was gathered at the city gate. This seems a rather unlikely scenario. 2) Alternatively, the phrase כל יצאי שער עירו – whatever its meaning – denotes a subset of כל זכר, further specifying those who were circumcised.[2] But this would undermine the text's repeated emphasis on כל זכר "every male" being circumcised and slaughtered, including in the very next verse.

To summarize, the second occurrence of the phrase "those going out of the gate of their city" creates logical tensions within the text: it is either a superfluous repetition that creates a dubious understanding of v. 24a, or it causes an internal contradiction about

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[1] On apposition (including synonymous apposition) in Biblical Hebrew, see B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 226-34; GKC §131.

[2] Cf. the examples of such apposition in Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §12.3.b. (p. 230). A third possibility – that כל זכר is a subset of כל יצאי שער עירו – would require a type of apposition which is virtually unknown in the Bible (cf. GKC §131 a1, g), and more to the point, seems impossible semantically.

who was circumcised and killed. Given this, along with the identical nature of the phrase's repetition, it seems more likely to be a scribal error.

Returning to Speiser's argument for an idiomatic rendering, we note that his use of the verb יצא with the meaning "go out to battle" is also problematic. The verbal root יצא is used well over 1,000 times in the Bible, and its connotations are greatly varied. Speiser is of course correct that the verb can be used to mean "go out to war," but *only when the context indicates* that a military operation is in mind; this connotation cannot be applied indiscriminately. Since the issue at hand is whether the phrase "to go out of one's city gate" has any military connotations or not, Speiser is begging the question by assuming that יצא means "go out militarily" without having first shown the military connotation in this context (and see below).[1] The phrase may have nothing at all to do with military actions, just as hundreds of other occurrences of יצא do not.

Speiser's final point is that the phrase "one who goes out of his city gate" describes the circumcised and killed male Shechemites, and this is true if one accepts the second occurrence of כל יצאי שער עירו as original. Assuming for the moment that it is, however, Speiser's conclusion that "one who goes out of his city gate" must therefore mean the fighting men of the town does not follow. This point (as well as Speiser's argument about the verb יצא above) rests on the unspoken assumption that the group of circumcised and killed Shechemites must be equivalent to the fighting men of the town. But there is no reason to accept this assumption. As I pointed out, the text is at pains to

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[1] Compare Schmutzer, who follows and elaborates Speiser's point by listing many instances of the verb יצא in military contexts, from the Bible, Phoenicia, and Qumran. He concludes that "the lexical and semantic evidence [i.e., the examples he has given] can support a military idiom" ("All Those Going Out," 41). No one would dispute that the verb *can* take this meaning, but the question is whether we have reason to so understand it in this particular instance.

emphasize that כל זכר "every male" in the city was circumcised and killed, and "every male" is a group which is certainly not the same as the town's fighting men.[1]

Moreover, it should be recalled that this was not a typical military battle. Rather, it was a revenge killing, based on Shechem's purported "defilement" (טמא, v. 27) of Simeon and Levi's sister, Dinah. In the brothers' own words: "Should he have treated our sister like a whore?" (v. 31). After tricking the males into a debilitating circumcision, the two brothers sneak into town unexpectedly (ויבאו על-העיר בֶּטַח), slaughter "every male," and retrieve their sister (vv. 25-6). They then return with their brothers and plunder "all of [the] wealth" of the Shechemites, including their women, infants, flocks, herds, donkeys, everything in their houses, and everything "in the town and in the field" (vv. 27-9). There is no question that this was considered a grossly distasteful act (cf. their father Jacob's reaction in v. 30). To suppose, then, that Simeon and Levi were only concerned with killing the fighting men of the town – as if this were a respectable battle – is to misconstrue one of the main points of this narrative.

Speiser's understanding, to conclude, is highly speculative and problematic.[2] So what does the phrase under discussion mean? Since the second occurrence of כל יצאי שער עירו seems to be a scribal accident, this leaves us with the phrase only in v. 24a, which requires no special idiomatic rendering. Recall that Hamor and Shechem are in the city

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[1] The term זכר means a male of any age. It is used in the Book of Numbers, for instance, with reference to boys one month of age and older (Num 3:28, 34, 39; 26:62), and in Gen 17:12 with reference to eight-day-old boys. The author in Gen 34 is clearly using hyperbole when he says that Simeon and Levi killed *every* male; this is apparent given the fact that they took the טף "young children" of Shechem as plunder (Gen 34:29; note that Num 31:17 includes זכר as a subset of טף). But hyperbolic usage does not affect the semantic range of the term itself.

[2] An additional difficulty is that Speiser is essentially assigning specialized meanings to two key terms (שער and יצא) and then simply combining them to arrive at his understanding of the idiomatic phrase. But idioms are by definition incomprehensible in terms of their constituent words (Zoltán Kövecses and Péter Szabó, "Idioms: A View from Cognitive Semantics," *Applied Linguistics* 17/3 [1996]: 326; cf OED s.v. 3).

gate, speaking with אנשי העיר "the men of the city" and trying to persuade them to be circumcised (v. 20). As they make their case (vv. 21-3), we read וישמעו אל-חמור ואל בנו כל- יצאי שער עירו "And all those going out of the gate of their city listened to Hamor and Shechem…" (v. 24).[1] In other words, "those going out of the gate" *were* אנשי העיר "the men of the city" with whom Hamor and Shechem were speaking. The group constituted an ad hoc council of townsmen at the gate, both elders and residents alike, which grew as more townsmen came out and took part.[2]

This reconstruction, in fact, coincides precisely with one of our best descriptions of a town's gate council in the Bible, from Ruth 4. In the latter passage, Boaz similarly needs to gather an assembly of men (including a particular relative of his, the "redeemer") to conduct a business transaction. His procedure for convening a council is described as follows: "Now Boaz went up to the gate and he sat down there. And look, the redeemer – of whom Boaz had spoken – passed by. So Boaz said, 'Turn aside; sit here, so-and-so.' And he turned aside, and sat down. Then Boaz took ten men from among the elders of the city, and he said 'Sit here,' and they sat" (Ruth 4:1-2).[3] Thus

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[1] The phrase כל יצאים ("all those going out") is often rendered in English with a relative clause: "all (those) *who went out*…" (cf. ESV, NAS, NIV, KJV, etc.). This is perhaps because the pronominal suffix on עירו "*his* city" makes it awkward to translate the phrase otherwise: "*those* going out…*his* city." The relative clause solves this translation problem, but might also imply to English readers that those exiting are a special category of people; namely, ones to whom the label "who goes out of the gate of his city" applies. But the Hebrew text does not include a relative clause; rather, the nominal phrase כל יצאי שער עירו "all those going out of the gate of their city" is simply the subject of the verb וישמעו "and they listened." I have smoothed over this difficulty in the English by replacing "his city" with "their city."

[2] Hanoch Reviv likewise takes אנשי העיר to mean the "popular assembly" of the city, and compares this to the "sons of the city" or "people of the city" who serve in the same capacity at Ugarit and el-Amarna ("Early Elements and Late Terminology in the Descriptions of Non-Israelite Cities in the Bible," *IEJ* 27/4 [1977]: 192). Cf. also the town officials from Ugarit known as *awīlū ša bābi* "the men of the gate," mentioned above (Rainey, *Social Stratification*, 88).

[3] Incidentally, elders were not the only witnesses to the transaction. Verse 4 indicates that a group called הישבים were there (to be understood either as "the inhabitants [of the city]" or "those sitting [in the gate]"). These ישבים are likely the same people referred to as כל העם "all of the people" in 4:9 and as כל העם אשר-

townsmen forming a council by literally "coming out of the gate" seems entirely plausible, and there is no reason to suppose that the phrase in question is idiomatic.[1]

Gen 23:10, 18

ועפרון ישב בתוך בני-חת ויען עפרון החתי את-אברהם באזני בני חת לכל באי שער-עירו לאמר ...

"Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, to all those entering the gate of their city, saying:…"

[ויקם שדה עפרון...] לאברהם למקנה לעיני בני-חת בכל באי שער עירו

"[And the field of Ephron passed over…] to Abraham as a possession, in the sight of the Hittites, to all those entering the gate of their city."

The narrative context of these verses is the story of Abraham's purchase of a plot of land to bury his deceased wife. Speiser takes the phrase "all those entering the gate of his city" to mean "all who have a voice in the affairs of the community."[2] Many other interpreters have similarly taken the phrase to idiomatically denote the members of the gate council, including but not limited to the elders.[3]

בשער "all of the people in the gate" in 4:11. Presumably, these people were asked to join the committee (or voluntarily did so) when they, too, walked past the gate. The people and the elders then together act as witnesses to Boaz's purchase of a field and of Ruth the Moabitess (4:4, 9, 11). Note that Jer 26 (see pp. 241-3) and 1 Kgs 20:8 also depict councils in which the elders and "all of the people" jointly make decisions.

[1] Pace Schmutzer, who calls the phrase in Gen 34:24 "cryptic" ("All Those Going Out," 37).

[2] Speiser, "Coming and Going," 23. Compare Otto, who says the phrase is used "zur Bezeichnung des Bürgers der Stadt" ("Zivile Funktionen," 191).

[3] Following are a few commentators' definitions of the phrase באי שער עירו: "all the citizens who were in the gateway, and not merely the elders" (Evans, "'Coming' and 'Going,'" 32); "the body of citizens and their gathering place" (Reviv, "Early Elements," 190); "his fellow-citizens, with the right of sitting in the public assembly at the gate" (John Skinner, *Genesis* [ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910], 337); "anybody – including the city fathers – who enter the city in their daily business" (Hamilton, *Genesis*, 134); "the whole citizen assembly … who have access to the negotiations at the gate" [which is equivalent to כל יצאי שער עירו in Gen 34] (Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 374); "a citizen with voting rights" [just as in 34:24] (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 271); "all who had free access to the town, that is, the body of free citizens. It

Again, however, it should be asked if we have any reason to suspect that we have an idiom before us. The scene is the gate council, and in both cases the phrase כל באי שער עירו comes in apposition; in one instance to באזני בני-חת "in the hearing of the sons of Heth" (23:10), and in the other to לעיני בני-חת "in the sight of the sons of Heth" (v. 18). In other words, the people in question were acting as formal witnesses to the transaction. Thus, it is clear that the members of the gate council are in mind given the juridical context. But the precise relationship of "all those entering the gate of their city" to the gate council has not been clarified.

A practical point should be introduced here; namely, that any legal transaction in an ANE gate surely did not require the presence of every single local male citizen of social standing. We should assume, rather, that in every instance a subset of this possible body of witnesses – a quorum – was present. Boaz's council, for instance, included ten men "*from among* the elders of the town" (מזקני העיר; Ruth 4:2). Similarly, legal documents from all locales in the ANE rarely list more than 6-7 witnesses for a given transaction. Further, it is reasonable to assume that such a quorum would often be formed in an ad hoc fashion, according to the needs of any citizens requiring a council, as in Ruth 4 (see above).

Returning to Gen 23 with this in mind, we see that neither occurrence of כל באי שער עירו requires a special, idiomatic sense. The witnesses to Abraham's purchase of land are described twice as the "sons of Heth, *that is*, כל באי שער עירו." This may be understood

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could also be an ancient term for the town council" (Sarna, *Genesis*, 159). Only Cogan, so far as I am aware, follows Speiser in differentiating between those who *enter* the gate (the elders) and those who *exit* (which included other town citizens) ("Gate," 232).

in two different ways. First, we could render "all those *entering* the gate of their city,"[1] and interpret it as we did the phrase in Gen 34:24 – those who happened to be passing by formed the gate council. Alternatively, the verb בא also allows us to translate "all those *arriving at* the gate of their city."[2] In other words, those in question have taken their place in the gate to form the council. Either way, the באי שער עירו denotes those particular sons of Heth who happened to participate in the gate council at the time of the transaction with Abraham.[3]

The notice "all those entering the gate of their city" is given in both instances to clarify that "in the presence/hearing of the sons of Heth" does not merely refer to some locals who overheard the conversation between Abraham and Ephron. This transaction, rather, was legitimately conducted in front of a quorum in the gate. The notices should be considered within the larger pattern of legal language in the passage, including the ultra-polite negotiations, settling on the כסף מלא "full price," the weighing out of silver at the current rate, and a transfer clause (v. 10-20).[4]

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[1] Cf. my discussion of the phrase כל יצאים above (p. 311 n1).

[2] The primary meanings of the verbal root בוא in the Qal are *to enter* and *to come/arrive* (e.g., see BDB s.v. 1-2; *HALOT* s.v. 1-2).

[3] Compare the NIV translation: "in the hearing/presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city" (vv. 10, 18). Hamilton also notes that "the number of witnesses [in the gate council] is swelled by the addition of these passersby" (*Genesis*, 134).

[4] See Gene M. Tucker, "The Legal Background of Genesis 23," *JBL* 85/1 (1966): 77-84; Manfred R. Lehmann, "Abraham's Purchase of Machpelah and Hittite Law," *BASOR* 129 (1953): 15-18.

CHAPTER TWELVE
The Symbolism of City Gates

Artifacts, including architecture, are given meaning and connotations by their different uses and by how they are perceived in a society,[1] and these meanings collectively form a society's distinctive culture.[2] This chapter will continue to explore Israelite culture by examining the meanings and symbolism that gates accumulated in ancient Israel. By "symbolism" I am referring to the immaterial concepts represented by physical objects. As we will see, gate complexes are implicitly symbolic of various non-gate concepts. The symbolism of gates will be discussed below in three respects: the symbolism apparent in gate architecture, the symbolism of gates in utopic and dystopic visions of Israelite society in the Hebrew Bible, and their symbolism in the content and location of prophetic rebuke.

The Gate as a Symbolic Projection of Power

Until this point we have been speaking of the gate complex as an urban phenomenon, and I have not emphasized an important historical corollary: the return of urbanism to the southern Levant during the Iron II period is correlated with the rise of local states. And it is the concentration of resources in the office of a king that makes monumental architecture (temples, palaces, and so on) possible.

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[1] Hodder, *Theory and Practice*, 84; cf. pp. 12-23, 201-212.
[2] Bruce G. Trigger, "Monumental Architecture: A Thermodynamic Explanation of Symbolic Behaviour," *World Archaeology* 22/2 (1990): 129; Mary LeCron Foster, "Symbolism: The Foundation of Culture," in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (ed. T. Ingold; London: Routledge, 2007), 366. An alternative way to frame this (at least partially applicable here) is to say that the civic forum's conceptual significance is its symbolic space, in that it has "social meanings, values, and significations bound up with it," based on the people's use of the physical space (George, *The Tabernacle as a Social Space*, 18, 144).

The city gate was and is one of the most conspicuous examples of monumental public architecture in the ancient Near East. A city gate's prominent physical position, its inherent assertion of defensible territory, and the fact that it could only be built by persons with considerable resources at their disposal all combined to make the city gate a mark of sovereignty. In a world of monarchs, gates were the "public face of kingship."[1]

Conquering and Building as Royal Prerogatives

The construction of gates was but one element in the broader scheme of monarchic ambitions. Kings in the ANE, if we judge them by their annals and royal inscriptions, were concerned primarily with their own fame and glory.[2] This is true for both the rulers of empires (e.g., the Neo-Assyrian kings) and for kings of small city-states or local kingdoms (such as the states in the southern Levant).[3] Two of the activities most commonly used in the service of kingly self-aggrandizement were territory-expanding conquests and large-scale building projects such as fortified towns, palaces, temples, and fortresses.[4]

Conquests and building projects were understood as monuments to the king's greatness, and were meant (in the case of buildings) to stand for generations. For

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[1] Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 173.

[2] Douglas J. Green, *"I Undertook Great Works": The Ideology of Domestic Achievements in West Semitic Royal Inscriptions* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament II/41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 286-8.

[3] Green, *I Undertook Great Works*, 309.

[4] See Ahlström, *Royal Administration*, 1-25; Green, *I Undertook Great Works*, 308; John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (2nd ed.; Library of Biblical Interpretation; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1989), 112.

instance, the Azatiwada inscription, a bilingual text inscribed on two separate gates of

Iron Age Karatepe, describes his achievements at length, and ends with the following:

> And I built this city, and I gave it the name Azatiwadaya…Now if a king
> among kings or a prince among princes, if a man who is a man of renown,
> who shall erase the name of Azatiwada from this gate, and shall place (his)
> name (on it); if indeed he shall covet this city, and shall tear away this
> gate, which Azatiwada has made, or shall make for himself a different
> gate, and place (his) name on it; if from covetousness he shall tear (it)
> away; if from hate or from evil he shall tear away this gate; then shall
> Ba'al Shamem and El, creator of the earth, and Shemesh, the eternal, and
> the whole group of the children of the gods erase that kingdom, and that
> king, and and that man who is a man of renown. Only may the name of
> Azatiwada be forever like the name of the sun and the moon![1]

In the southern Levant, Mesha, the king of Moab, similarly boasts of his building of a

city, including its citadel, gates, towers, palace, reservoir, and moat, along with

rebuilding multiple cities that were in ruins.[2]

Though Israelite royal inscriptions have come to us so far as only tantalizing

fragments,[3] the Biblical literature paints a very similar picture: there is a strong

correlation between a king's military conquests and building projects, and that king's

greatness. For instance:[4]

> And Jehoshaphat grew steadily greater. He built in Judah fortresses and
> store cities, and he had many supplies/projects in the cities of Judah. He
> had soldiers, mighty men of valor, in Jerusalem. (2 Chr 17:12-13)

> The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread even to the
> border of Egypt, for he became very strong. Moreover, Uzziah built

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[1] Younger, "The Phoenician Inscription of Azatiwada," 19-22.

[2] *COS* 2.23:21-5.

[3] Two small fragments of what appear to be royal inscriptions have been found in Iron II Jerusalem, and a third is from Iron II Samaria (Ahituv, *HaKetav VeHaMiktav*, 20-23, 245; see also p. 247 n4 above). The mere existence of these fragments is far more important that what may be learned from their contents.

[4] Cf. also 2 Chr 26:6; 27:1-6

> towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the Angle, and fortified them. (2 Chr 26:8-9)

Within the DtrH, even the very brief and formulaic summary of each king's reign includes frequent references to kings' building accomplishments:[1]

> Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (1 Kgs 15:23)

> Now the rest of the acts of Ahab and all that he did, and the Ivory House that he built and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (1 Kgs 22:39)

Solomon, of course, is remembered as the greatest king of Israel, and is accorded the status of builder *par excellence*. He builds many works in his capital Jerusalem, including the Temple of Yahweh and his own magnificent palace, the latter of which is a pretentious thirteen-year project. He also (re)builds or fortifies a great number of additional cities, and "anything else [he] desired to build, in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and in all of the land of his dominion" (1 Kgs 9:15-19; 2 Chr 8:2-5). Solomon's building style is so magnificent that when the Queen of Sheba visits him in Jerusalem, one of the things that "took her breath away" was "the house that he had built" (1 Kgs 10:4-5). It is clear, then, that a king with an impressive building résumé is an impressive king. Building extraordinary and costly gates is therefore a likely aspiration of any ambitious monarch, especially given the high visibility and accessibility of gates to outsiders.[2]

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[1] Cf. also 2 Kgs 20:20.

[2] Foreign visitors and other outsiders had access to gates to a much greater degree than, for instance, temples or royal palaces.

Gates as Physically Imposing

Cities in the Levant were highly visible in the context of the surrounding terrain. As de Geus points out, cities would have a multi-tiered appearance from afar, with revetment walls along the sides of the tel, the main defensive wall around the city, the housetops (if visible), and a public building or a temple crowning the top, such as at Lachish and Samaria. All of this was set on top of a tell or natural hill.[1] The largest single structure in any town would have been the main defensive wall, and the most imposing part of the wall would have been the gate complex, with its cluster of towers and battlements (Fig. 12.1). The height of such structures would have been especially impressive when approaching the foot of the tell or hill upon which the town was built, since the angle of observation would exaggerate the height of the towers and crenellated parapets.

Another visual aspect should be mentioned. Since the superstructures of walls and gate complexes were built substantially of mudbrick, lime plaster coating would have been necessary to protect the structures from moisture. And indeed, remains of plaster have been found in many gates – sometimes still adhering to mudbricks from the walls – as mentioned above. This lime coating would have given a bright white color to the walls, towers, and gate façade – an alien and eye-catching color in a semi-arid region dominated by earth-tones. This coloring would have dramatically increased the visual impact of a town's defenses and city gate.

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[1] de Geus, "The Profile," 225.

The height and visually impressive characteristics of these structures served the purposes of a king in multiple ways. Most obviously, they created a defensible barrier. In addition, a massive and impressively built fortification system is psychologically intimidating for any would-be attacker, lending the city a "deterrence effect" and more
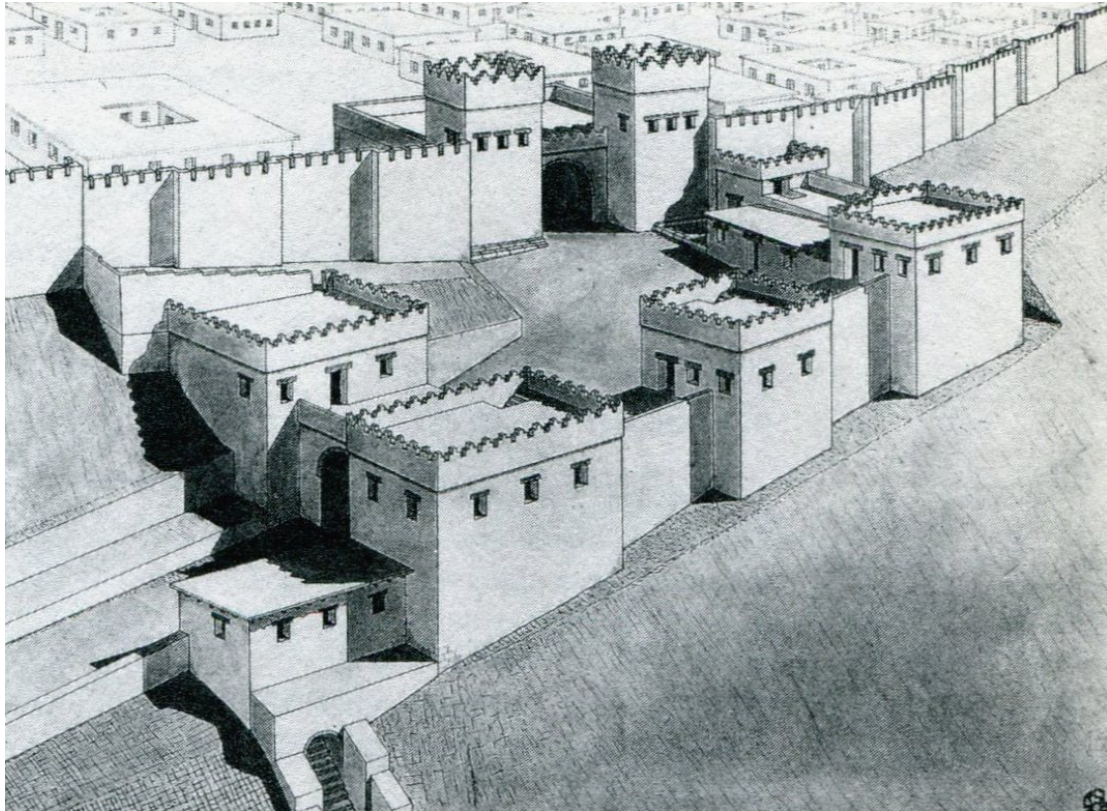

Figure 12.1. Reconstruction of the gate complex of VA-IVB Megiddo.

diplomatic bargaining power. This is an aspect of military strategy known for millennia: the larger and more impressive your tools for warfare, the less likely it is that you will need to use them.[1]

A second psychological effect is that a town's fortifications bespoke the wealth and greatness of the town – and especially of its ruler – to those who visited.

> The walls of the cities in the ancient Near East were, in fact, more than a demarcation line between the city and the open fields, more than a prepared line of defence. They were the dominant feature of urban architecture. Their size and arrangement proclaimed the importance and might of the city, their gateways displayed its wealth with a monumentality intended to impress the visitor and ward off the enemy.[2]

To be sure, a gate's impressiveness is at least partially dependent on its ability to defend the town; "fortifications are most symbolically useful when they are militarily functional."[3] But gates did not need to be as large and impressive as they actually were.[4] Moreover, a number of features found in gate complexes seem to have been purposely designed to enhance their visual appearance and grandeur.

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[1] Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 81.

[2] Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 128.

[3] Keeley, Fontana, and Quick, "Baffles and Bastions," 81.

[4] Cf. Trigger, "Monumental Architecture," 121-2. I note parenthetically that the military threat of the major powers in the beginning of the Iron II period was minimal. In fact, the collapse of many civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the Late Bronze Age – including both Egypt and Mesopotamia – was likely the primary reason that local states were able to arise in the Iron II Levant to begin with. Until the westward expansion of the Neo-Assyrian empire really began to affect Syro-Palestine in the 8th century, the primary military threats in the minds of the local Levantine rulers were from neighboring chiefdoms and states. This fact is reflected in all of the known inscriptions from the 9th and first half of the 8th century, as well as in the Biblical literature (N. Wazana and D. Ben-Ami, "Enemy at the Gates" [paper presented at the 15th World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, Israel, Aug. 2009], 3-6; My thanks to Dr. Wazana for sharing a pre-publication version of this paper with me).

<u>Designed to Impress</u>

The gates of N. Syria, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia were heavily decorated with reliefs, sculptures, and in some instances glazed brickwork.[1] Why the gates of the southern Levant were so plain relative to their northern neighbors is unknown, but presumably the lack of wealth to execute such decorations was a primary reason.[2] Nevertheless, a few features of southern Levantine gates go beyond the mere utilitarian: ashlar masonry, "Proto-Aeolic" volute capitals, decorative shields, and perhaps even the architectural form of the gatehouse itself.

The hewn ashlar masonry (blocks of stone carefully shaped by chiseling) found in gate structures is a mark of workmanship that is relatively uncommon in the region.[3] Israelites evidently considered ashlar masonry (גזית) a luxurious – perhaps even ostentatious – commodity. In Isa 9:9, for example, the Ephraimites arrogantly boast לבנים נפלו וגזית נבנה שקמים גדעו וארזים נחליף "Bricks have fallen, but we will (re)build with hewn stone; Sycamores were felled, but we will exchange them for cedars." Amos 5:11 woefully predicts of the Israelites: בתי גזית בניתם ולא־תשבו בם כרמי־חמד נטעתם ולא תשתו את־יינם "Though you have built houses of hewn stone, you will not dwell in them; though you planted pleasant vineyards, you will not drink of their wine."[4] We are also told that in

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[1] Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, 279-312; Mazzoni, "The Gate and the City," 308; Leick, *Dictionary*, 82; *ANET*, 558-9. For Carchemish and Zincirli in particular, see Alessandra Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance: The Stone Reliefs at Carchemish and Zincirli in the Earlier First Millennium BCE* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011). Compare also E. R. Leach, who discusses the decoration of Hindu temple gates in particular and generalizes to explain why gates were so decorated; see Edmund R. Leach, "The Gatekeepers of Heaven: Anthropological Aspects of Grandiose Architecture," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39 (1983): 243-64.

[2] Another potential explanation – the aniconic tendencies of the Israelites – would not explain the similar lack of decoration among Philistine, Edomite, and Moabite gates in the present corpus.

[3] Reich, "Palaces and Residencies," 211.

[4] Note that the parallelism of כרמי־חמד with בתי גזית shows that the items in question are desirable.

Solomon's aforementioned palace "costly" masonry (אבנים יקרות) and cedar beams were

used for most (if not all) of the superstructure (1 Kgs 7:11).

It is true that shaped blocks of stone were structurally superior to field stones,

dramatically increasing a building's stability. However, the amount of care given to the

appearance of such stones at many sites goes beyond the mere functional. Specifically,

many sites in the monarchic period make use of ashlars with smooth faces – as opposed

to those with neatly trimmed margins but rough, protruding central bosses. Making a

functional ashlar requires only that a flat margin be chiseled around the edge of the

stone's face (i.e., its visible side once installed), in order to square the corners. Removing

the protruding central boss and smoothing the stone's face (or, similarly, carefully

smoothing the surface of the protruding boss) is therefore a superfluous, labor-intensive

task which serves no purpose but ornamentation (Fig. 12.2).[1] Such ashlars are attested –

with varying degrees of workmanship – at the gates of Ashdod 10a,[2] Ashdod 9-7,[3]

Beersheba III-II,[4] Tel Dan,[5] 'En Haseva,[6] Megiddo VA-IVB city gate[7] (see Figs. 3.3,

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[1] Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital*, 61-2.

[2] Dothan, "Tel Ashdod," 166.

[3] Dothan, "Ashdod – Seven Seasons," 9, cf. Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, pl. III:1-2. Note that in both of the gates at Ashdod the ashlars were incorporated with mudbrick construction, and were thus likely coated in plaster.

[4] Aharoni, "The Israelite City," 13.

[5] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 253.

[6] Cohen and Yisrael, *On the Road to Edom*, 20.

[7] Loud, *Megiddo II*, figs. 94-95

12.2) and palace gate 1567,[1] Megiddo IVA,[2] Gezer's inner[3] and outer gates,[4] Tel en-

Nasbeh's outer gate,[5] and Kh. el-Qom.[6]

Figure 12.2. Megiddo St. VA-IVB city gate with ashlar construction in the piers.[7]

The paired volute motif (a stylized palm frond) functioned as a mark of royalty

and divinity in the ANE for many centuries and in many different cultures. It represents

"a central religious symbol in the Mesopotamian-Syrian-Palestinian cultural sphere from

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[1] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, figs 14-15.

[2] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, fig. 88.

[3] Macalister, *Gezer 1*, fig. 105; Yadin, "Solomon's City Wall," 83-5.

[4] Dever, "Late Bronze Age," 19.

[5] McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, pls. 70-72.

[6] The construction of this gate is described as limestone blocks set in headers and stretchers (Defonzo, "Iron II," 103.).

[7] Yigal Shiloh and Aharon Horowitz, "Ashlar Quarries of the Iron Age in the Hill Country of Israel," *BASOR* 217 (1975): pl. III.

the third millennium down to the end of the first millennium BCE."[1] The motif's

religious and royal symbolic currency means that it is associated almost exclusively with

structures and goods related to kings and gods: temples, orthostats, pillar/pilaster capitals,

stelae, window balustrades, wall-reliefs, ivory furniture inlays, incense spoons, and other

luxury goods.[2]

In the southern Levant, the so-called "Proto-Aeolic" volute capitals are but one

example of this motif, and are commonly associated with monumental buildings

including gateways.[3] At Tel Dan, for instance, multiple Proto-Aeolic capitals were found

on the outer paved gate plaza,[4] and remains of another broken one were found associated

with the upper gatehouse.[5] Four Proto-Aeolic capitals (and a fragment of a fifth) were

found at Megiddo in the vicinity of the "Governor's house" (building 338; St. IVA). The

excavators supposed that they belonged to this building on the grounds that they seemed

to serve a structural purpose and "the only large structure in the vicinity of their find-

spots was [Building] 338."[6] More precise information about these capitals' find-spots is

unfortunately lacking, but I suggest that they may also have come from the four-

chambered gatehouse which leads into the same building's courtyard (Fig. 12.3).[7] An

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[1] Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital*, 26-7. On the motifs origins, see also Philip P. Betancourt, *The Aeolic Style in Architecture: A Survey of Its Development in Palestine, the Halikarnassos Peninsula, and Greece, 1000-500 B.C.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 17-23.

[2] Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital*, vii, 26-46.

[3] Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital*, 14-25; Betancourt, *The Aeolic Style*, 27-49.

[4] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 241-2, fig. 201.

[5] Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 253.

[6] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 55-6.

[7] See Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, fig. 49. Incidentally, the only scholar who identifies this structure as a gatehouse (of whom I am aware) is Shiloh (*The Proto-Aeolic Capital*, 52). The structure has "typical Solomonic ashlar piers" (Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 47-49) and leads into the courtyard of the "Governor's House" 338. It also is constructed in the typical pier-and-chamber fashion of an Iron II

additional two Proto-Aeolic capitals were found at Megiddo St. VA-IVB at Gate 1567, which leads into the courtyard of Palace 1723. The width of each capital was "almost exactly the same" as the width of each of the two piers that formed the gate entrance, suggesting that the capitals may have rested on top of the piers, with the carved portion visible to those in the gate passage.[1] This reconstruction seems to be supported by the gatehouse at Kh. al-Mudaybi' in Jordan, where three full and two fragmentary

Figure 12.3. An example of a Proto-Aeolic capital, associated with Building 338 of Megiddo St. IVA (9th-8th centuries).[2]

capitals have been uncovered.[1] The three complete capitals were found in the gate complex and were each 1.65m wide, matching exactly the width of the gate piers. One of

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gatehouse, has a similar layout (protruding from the courtyard) to that of the nearby gate 1567, and has a covered drain (355) which runs directly through the central passage.

[1] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 15, and fig. 17. On the reconstructed locations of such capitals, cf. Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital*, 21-4. Ussishkin, we note, prefers to associate the capitals with Palace 1723 (ca. 40 m away) instead (David Ussishkin, "On the Original Position of Two Proto-Ionic Capitals at Megiddo," *IEJ* 20 [1970]: 213-15; cf. Ussishkin, "Gate 1567," 411).

[2] Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, fig. 67.

the capitals was found face down in the gate passage, directly in front of one of the piers, suggesting that it fell from above.[2]

Gates also seem to have been decorated with shields of bronze and gold. Our evidence on this point is limited, but two Biblical passages describe hanging the shields and helmets of warriors (on a tower in one instance), and in both cases this is praised as an act of beautification (Song 4:4; Ezek 27:10-11). Other passages describe copper shields that *may* have been kept in a gate (14:26-8; 2 Kgs 11:19, and see above), shields taken as war plunder (2 Sam 8:7), and 500 gold shields that Solomon placed – presumably on display – in his "House of the Forest of Lebanon" (1 Kgs 10:16-7). Finally, note Isa 54:12, which associates שמשות with gates (presumably round shields, based on the root שמש "sun").[3]

Figure 12.4. Scenes from Sennacherib's depiction of Lachish during the Assyrian siege in the late 8th century. Note the shields hung along the balconies.[4]

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[1] J. Drinkard, "New Volute Capital Discovered," *BA* 60/4 (1997): 249; cf. Ivan Negueruela, "The Proto-Aeolic Capitals from Mudeibiʻa, in Moab," *ADAJ* 26 (1982): 395-401.

[2] Drinkard, "New Volute Capital," 249.

[3] See, e.g., *HALOT*, s.v. 6.

[4] David Ussishkin, "Area R and the Assyrian Siege," in *The Iron Age Stratigraphy and Architecture* (vol. 2 of *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)*, ed. D. Ussishkin; Publications of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology 22; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004), 767 fig. 13.59.

External evidence seems to confirm the display of shields as a real historical phenomenon: at least two Assyrian depictions of Levantine cities show shields installed on wooden balconies along the top of the city wall (Fig. 12.4),[1] and a relief of Ashurnasirpal's shows the walls of the Assyrian siege camp similarly lined with round shields.[2] A relief of Sargon II also shows shields hanging on the walls of a temple in the Urartian city Musasir, and the text describing this expedition says that "six shields of gold that hung to the right and left in his temple" were among the plundered items (Fig. 12.5).[3] Shields thus hung along the parapets of the city wall and above the gate would have served both as ornamentation and as a not-too-subtle reminder of the military capacity of the city.[4]

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[1] See also the depiction of an unknown city on the Mediterranean coast with Phoenician ships in the water, which shows shields on the city's parapets as well as on the ships (Pauline Albenda, "Syrian-Palestinian Cities on Stone," *BA* 43 [1980]: 228).

[2] Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 2:293.

[3] *ANEP*, 370; Alan R. Millard, "Does the Bible Exaggerate King Solomon's Golden Wealth?," *BAR* 15/3 (1989): 26-7.

[4] On the display of shields see Yadin, *Art of Warfare*, 1:20; Albenda, "Syrian-Palestinian Cities on Stone," 227; Halpern, "Eli's Death," 54*.
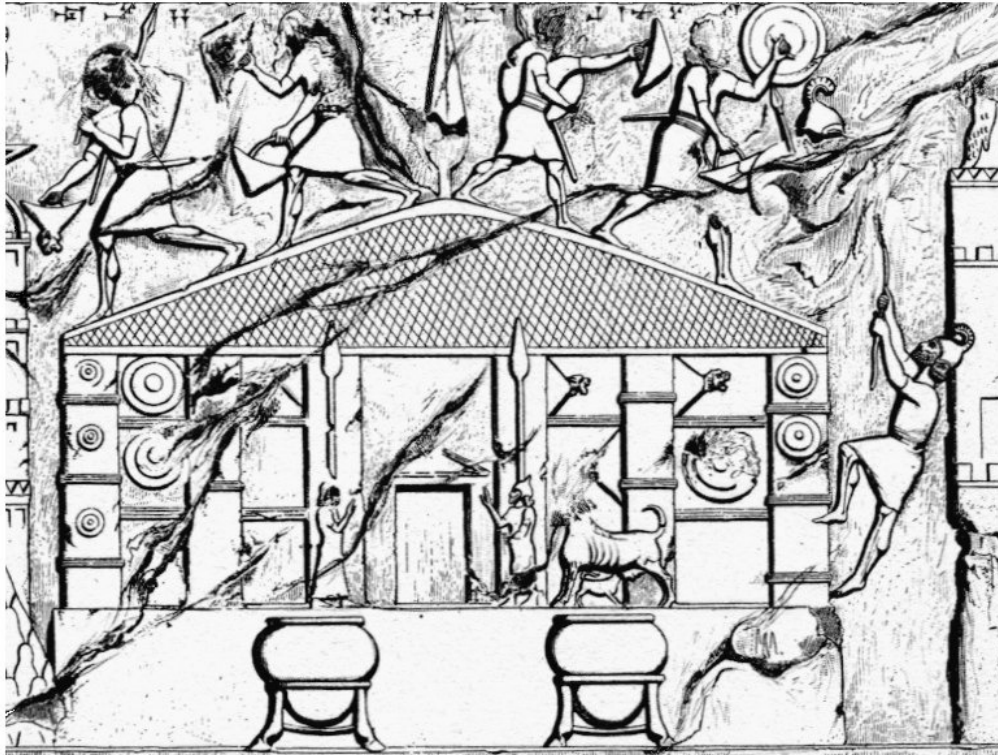
Figure 12.5. Gold shields hung on the Temple of Musasir in Urartu. The shields are shown viewed from the front and in profile, the latter revealing a lion's head in the center. Compare the soldiers on the roof who are carrying away multiple shields, and especially the soldier at the top left who is carrying off one of the lion shields. Relief of Sargon II (late 8th c.).[1]

Finally, the specific pier-and-chamber form of the gatehouse itself may have served a propagandistic role. It can hardly be a coincidence that during the Iron II period, kings and rulers from Anatolia to Ashkelon employed precisely the same form of building for their most visible public edifices. This may be explained in part by supposing that the specific architectural form of the gatehouse gained inter-cultural currency as a mark of royalty, in much the same way that other well-known symbols of

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[1] *ANEP*, 370.

royalty functioned in the ANE.[1] If this is true, then a ruler's use of chambered gatehouses would represent an attempt to portray himself as a member of the monarchical elite.

Gates as Royal Conspicuous Consumption

The reason a king would want to invest so much capital in a large public edifice goes beyond personal vanity, and should be understood given the historical context in which these buildings arose. The transition to monarchy in the Iron II necessarily involved the legitimation of rulers among the population.[2] One effective and non-violent way for aspiring rulers to do this is deliberate posturing: acting in such a manner that one is perceived as powerful, wealthy, and kingly. Symbolic visual propaganda can play an important role in this. "In the ancient Near East … various media were used [to legitimate rulers], including coins, seals, steles, and monumental architecture such as palaces and temples."[3] Building enormous gate complexes is another obvious way to accomplish

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[1] Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 176. Other examples of royal symbols include mythical composite creatures (cherubim, sphinxes, griffins, *lamassu*, etc.) and lotus or palm volutes (such as the Proto-Aeolic capital discussed above), both of which were used in many ANE cultures as symbols of royalty/divinity. Note, as well, the clearly Egyptian iconography (scarab beetles and winged sun disks) on the royal Judean *lmlk* stamped jar handles of the late 8th century.

[2] Keith W. Whitelam, "The Symbols of Power: Aspects of Royal Propaganda in the United Monarchy," *BA* 49 (1986): 166. On the rise of the Israelite state, see Daniel M. Master, "State Formation Theory and the Kingdom of Ancient Israel," *JNES* 60/2 (2001): 117-31; Alexander H. Joffe, "The Rise of Secondary States in the Iron Age Levant," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45/4 (2002): 425-467, and references there.

[3] Whitelam, "Symbols of Power," 168; cf. Ilan Sharon and Anabel Zarzecki-Peleg, "Podium Structures with Lateral Access: Authority Ploys in Royal Architecture in the Iron Age Levant," in *Confronting the Past: Arcrhaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (ed. S. Gitin, J. E. Wright, and J. P. Dessel; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 160-64; I. Finkelstein, "Omride Architecture," 132-3.

this.[1] Their monumentality, unnecessary visual grandeur, and allusions to royalty discussed above can be explained as royal posturing.

This phenomenon (spending more than necessary; or in other words, wasting resources) is known to sociologists and anthropologists as conspicuous consumption. The spending of an inordinate amount of time or wealth in many cultures signals one's wealth or desired status to others in their "reference group" (peers), and the over-consumer thereby gains social or political status.[2] Thorstein Veblen, the originator of the concept, explains (with reference to modern society):

> The quasi-peaceable gentleman of leisure, then, not only consumes of the stuff of life beyond the minimum required for subsistence and physical efficiency, but his consumption also undergoes a specialization as regards the quality of the goods consumed. He consumes freely and of the best, in food, drink, narcotics, shelter, [etc.]. … Since the consumption of these more excellent goods is an evidence of wealth, it becomes honorific.[3]

Works of monumental architecture fit this paradigm perfectly; they

> …become symbols of power because they are seen as embodiments of large amounts of human energy and hence symbolize the ability of those for whom they were made to control such energy to an unusual degree. Furthermore, by participating in erecting monuments that glorify the power of the upper classes, peasant labourers are made to acknowledge their subordinate status and their sense of their own inferiority is reinforced.[4]

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[1] Trigger, "Monumental Architecture," 124-5. The use of grandiose architecture for this purpose is not a novelty in Iron II Canaan. For the theory that MB ramparts fulfilled this role in the Bronze Age, see Shlomo Bunimovitz, "The Middle Bronze Age Fortifications in Palestine as a Social Phenomenon," *TA* 19 (1992): 221-34.

[2] See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (3rd ed.; New York: The Modern Library, 1934). For a recent description and defense of the theory, see Andrew B. Trigg, "Veblen, Bourdieu, and Conspicuous Consumption," *Journal of Economic Issues* 35/1 (2001): 99-115. The comparison of one's self to one's peers is seen in memorial inscriptions from both Assyria and the Levant, which "define the greatness of a king in the context of his relationships…with his contemporaries" (Green, *I Undertook Great Works*, 287).

[3] Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 71-2.

[4] Trigger, "Monumental Architecture," 125.

Recent research into the phenomenon of conspicuous consumption has shown that the practice is more pronounced if one comes from a relatively poor social group. In poorer groups, individuals have more to gain by a show of prestige – that is, more potential social mobility – and they have more to prove.[1] This has implications for Iron Age states in the Levant, who had nothing of the rich cultural traditions of the river-based economies in Egypt and Mesopotamia, relative to whom they were very poor indeed. This relative poverty of Levantine rulers – if they were aware of it – means that they would have been all the more eager to use conspicuous consumption as a means to bring about the public perception that they were elite monarchs.

The King as Benefactor

A final point to be noted is the enormous practical benefit a gate complex would afford the residents of a town. The king, in that he was the provider of this public arena, thus took the role of generous benefactor who was providing for his subjects, who would in turn provide the king with more esteem and loyalty.[2] The citizens themselves would likely have taken pride in their well-built fortifications.

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[1] Kerwin K. Charles, Erik Hurst, and Nikolai Roussanov, "Conspicuous Consumption and Race," *Quarterly Jounal of Economics* 124/2 (2009): 425-67.

[2] George L. Cowgill, "Origins and Development of Urbanism: Archaeological Perspectives," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 537.

The Gate as Royal Propaganda

Fortified city gate complexes, then, were symbols of royal authority.[1] They acted as signposts – both of symbolic royal strength and actual military strength – which marked the extent of the kingdom both figuratively and literally.[2] They also seem to have been consciously deployed to influence the opinions of others toward a specific political objective, which makes gates a form of propaganda.

Embellished monumental architecture is a good medium of propaganda for an illiterate society, since it conveys its message in a glance. Moreover, the fact that the gate was the center of civic life means that daily commerce, socializing, legal matters, etc. were all conducted in the literal shadow of the towering gate complex. Public address and the discourse of civic leaders lent the gates "acquired symbolic authority as seats of power."[3] Yet, even the gathering of elders and male citizens who governed in the civic council – and who thereby possessed a fair amount of authority in their own right – assembled in the gate complex, swallowed up by the monarch's architectural projection of authority. Moreover, the gate's function as a royal and civic symbol, and the daily social functions it served, would likely have made the gate complex a space in which

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[1] Arav, "Final Report," 70; Voeltz, "Battlements of Rubies," 33.

[2] The placement of objects helps to define a space (Victor H. Matthews, "Physical Space, Imagined Space, and 'Lived Space' in Ancient Israel," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 33 [2003]: 16), and the Israelites in the Iron II define the land by their urbanization of it. Compare the territorial squabbling on the Central Benjamin Plateau between Asa, King of Judah, and Baasha, King of Israel. Asa thwarts Baasha's attempt to fortify Ramah, steals the cut stones and timber from Baasha's work in progress, and with them fortifies Geba and Mizpeh – the latter of which is further north into Israelite territory (1 Kgs 15:16-22). Compare also the 10th century fortification of the relatively remote sites in the Northern Negev desert: "What do these fortify, unless the borders of a self-conscious, independent state?" (William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Urbanism, and the Rise of the Israelite State," in *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997], 184).

[3] Matthews, "Entranceways and Threshing Floors," 26. Compare G. van der Leeuw: "Sacred space may also be defined as that locality that becomes a position by the effects of power repeating themselves there, or being repeated by man" (*Religion in Essence and Manifestation* [trans. J. E. Turner; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986], 393).

group identity and a common political consciousness was forged.[1] To the extent that this was the case, group solidarity and identification with the city gate as a symbol would have furthered any propagandistic aims of the monarch who built the gate.

These symbolic aspects of city gates throw into sharper contrast our discussion above about kings sitting publicly in the gateway, and rulers who assert their new sovereignty by sitting in the gate after having conquered the city (see pp. 209-14). Moreover, it brings an added poignancy to the act of physically demolishing the gate of a conquered city. At Bethsaida, for instance, when the city was captured by Tiglath-pileser III in 732, the Assyrian king and his troops left the town's palace unharmed, but burned down the gatehouse and systematically dismantled major elements of the gate complex, pushing the building stones down into the adjacent ravine.[2] (Compare Mic 1:6 – "For I will make Samaria a ruin of the field…and I will hurl her stones into the valley and uncover her foundations.") This was done, no doubt, because a lack of intact fortifications would discourage the residents of Bethsaida from rebelling again. But the Assyrians' destruction of the gate would also deal a psychological blow by destroying the symbols of Bethsaida's independence and self-rule.[3]

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[1] Winter, "Royal Rhetoric," 30; Ahlström, "Where Did the Israelites Live?," 135; cf. Thomas, *The Evolution of the Ancient City*, 182. Wright has pointed out that the gate was likely a point of civic pride (*Ancient Building*, 198), and has even compared city gates to the pyramids of Egypt and the ziggurat temples of Mesopotamia (Wright, *Ancient Building Technology I*, 69-70).

[2] Arav, "Final Report," 68-70.

[3] Arav, "Final Report," 70.

The Gate as a Symbol of Community Well-Being

A recurring theme in the Hebrew Bible is the notion of the utopically prosperous Israelite society, blessed by Yahweh, as well as its opposite, the dystopic society. The utopic and dystopic Israelite societies are the same as the historical Israelite society in terms of their structure and institutions (monarchy, agrarianism, pastoralism, etc.); the difference is that within the utopic framework, any good and proper elements of society are amplified, while any negative aspects are removed,[1] sometimes to the point of absurdity.[2] For instance, since peace and righteousness are desirable, they are boundless in the utopian vision: the people live in peace, and they will not fear oppression or corruption (Isa 54:13-4). Likewise, undesirable elements – such as a wolf stealing a shepherd's sheep – are not just eliminated; their very possibility is eliminated. In fact, wolves and lambs will happily live together (Isa 11:6). Thus these depictions of Israelite society operate within the limits of the best and worst possible versions of their own social institutions.[3]

In the Hebrew Bible, both utopic and dystopic visions of Israelite society often show up in blessings and curses of Yahweh (see Deut 28 in particular),[4] and the prophetic

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[1] Steven James Schweitzer, "Utopia and Utopian Literary Theory: Some Preliminary Observations," *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* (ed. E. Ben-Zvi; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 92; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2006), 16.

[2] Green, *I Undertook Great Works*, 316.

[3] There are no science-fiction-like utopias or dystopias, for instance, in which fantastic realities are dreamt up. Even the absurdities of Israelite curses and blessings are simply logical extensions of their own society to an impossible degree. Cf. Schweizer: "Utopian literary theory also argues that this critique of society is articulated in terms dependent on the social location of the author(s)" ("Utopia and Utopian Literary Theory," 23).

[4] Sasson, "Utopian and Dystopian Images," 31-4.

writings contain many promises of a utopic future.[1] Similarly, the literature of the exilic and post-exilic period provides a thorough exploration of the dystopic state which was at least partially descriptive, even if poetically embellished.[2] The ideology apparent in the utopias and dystopias of the Hebrew Bible is mirrored exactly in the ideology of royal inscriptions from Assyria and the Levant during the Iron Age. Green provides a concise summary of the latter: "[Dis]order, or more simply, that which is 'bad' (r^c), has a multi-faceted definition. It is dilapidation and ruin, desolation…, economic hardship, fear and insecurity, social instability and chaos. Order, or again, more simply, that which is 'good' ($ṭwb$, n^cm), answers this disorder. It is '(re)constructed space,' a fertile and agriculturally productive land…economic prosperity, a sense of security and peace, and harmony and peace within society."[3]

An important addition to the above is that the specific details included in any such utopic or dystopic description should not to be understood as a comprehensive list of what is working well or poorly in the society. Rather, each detail is only representative, chosen to highlight the difference between the author's present society and the utopic/dystopic society. In other words, a perfectly righteous king is not *only* a perfectly righteous king; he is a representation of an entire alternate society which *includes* a perfectly righteous king. In this way, items described in utopic/dystopic visions are symbolic or representative of an ideally "good society" or "bad society." Starting from these descriptions of the maximally good or bad and working backwards, we can learn a

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[1] See most recently E. Ben-Zvi, ed., *Utopia and Dystopia in Prophetic Literature* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2006).
[2] Sasson, "Utopian and Dystopian Images," 30.
[3] Green, *I Undertook Great Works*, 316.

great deal about the social institutions in the author's own (historical) Israelite society,

the norm against which the utopic and dystopic visions are contrasted.

Military Security

      Part of an ideal society is that it is free of military threat, and such security shows

up in discourse about Yahweh's treatment of a town's gates. Yahweh's curse against a

land involves burning down the city's gate (Jer 51:58), or causing it to physically sink

into the ground (Lam 2:9), or breaking the gate bar (בריח): "For [Yahweh] shatters the

doors of bronze, and severs gate bars of iron" (Ps 107:16; see also Isa 45:2; Jer 51:29-30;

Amos 1:4-5; Lam 2:9). If a gate is said to be breached, or its bars broken, this is a

shorthand way to say that the city has been conquered (Ezek 26:10; Nah 3:13; Isa 45:1)

and that the residents are defenseless. Alternatively, open gate doors can indicate

surrender[1] or a complete absence of military threat – such that inhabitants of unwalled

settlements can be described as "dwelling in security" (יושב לבטח; Jer 49:31; Ezek 38:11;

cf. Isa 60:11).[2]

      Conversely, Yahweh's blessing includes strengthening a town's gates to ensure

the safety of the residents.[3] In Ps 147:13, for example, we read כי חזק בריחי שעריך ברך בניך

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[1] Compare this to the 8th c. Egyptian victory stela of King Piye: "He has conquered the entire West from the coastal marshes to Itj-tawy, sailing south with a numerous army, with the Two Lands united behind him, and the counts and rulers of domains are as dogs at his feet. No stronghold has closed [its gates in] the nomes of Upper Egypt. Mer-Atum, Per-Sekhem-kheperre, Hut-Sobk, Permedjed, Tjeknesh, all towns of the West have opened the gates for fear of him. When he turned around to the nomes of the East they opened to him also: Hut-benu, Teudjoi, Hut-nesut, Per-nebtepih" (*COS* 2.7).

[2] On the symbolism of gate bars, cf. Eshel, "Semantics," 272-3; on that of battlements, see Porada, "Battlements in the Military Architecture."

[3] Loewenstein, "The Urban Experiment," 76.

בקרבך "For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children among you" (see also Ps 31:22; 48:13-15; Jer 1:18).

The Gate as a Social Institution

The elements that are amplified or diminished in blessings, curses, and lamentations include a broad array of activities, often of a rather typical, day-to-day character: eating and drinking from one's own produce, wearing clothes, owning property, etc. Among these are the gate's role as a social institution – that is, as the civic forum. The welfare of a town's gate, including its social functions, indicates a well-functioning society. We will begin with the negative depictions of the gate, including a bit of literary context for each passage.

Isa 24. Yahweh says he will utterly ruin and curse the land (vv. 1-6), that there will be no wine or beer (vv. 7, 9, 11), and that the joy of the tambourine and lyre is stopped, along with the noise of those who rejoice (v. 8, 11). Additionally, the city is broken and deserted, the houses are closed up (vv. 10, 12), and "*the gate is crushed into ruin/desolation*" (v. 12).

Lam 1. Judah has gone into exile among the nations, and Jerusalem, meanwhile, is left in a sorry state: "How lonely sits the city which was once full of people!...She who was a princess among the districts has become a slave. […] The roads to Zion mourn, because no one comes to the festivals; *all her gates are deserted* (שעריה שוממין). Her priests groan, her virgins grieve, and she herself is bitter" (vv. 1, 4).

Lam 2. The Lord has cast down the splendor of Israel, (vv. 1-2). He has killed all the delightful in Zion, poured out his fury, ruined the palaces and strongholds, and

multiplied mourning in Judah (vv. 3-5). He has made Zion forget her festivals and the

Sabbath, and has discarded king and priest, altar and temple (vv. 6-7). He also decided to

lay to ruins the city wall and rampart, which mourn and wither away (אבל אמלל).[1] "*Her*

gates have sunk into the ground; he ruined and broke her gate bars" (v. 9). There is no

instruction, the prophets have no visions, and the elders sit on the ground in silence with

dust on their heads. Babies and infants faint in the street for lack of bread and wine (!)

(vv. 10-12).

Lam 5. The people complain that they are disgraced, that they have lost their

property, that they must get food and water with difficulty, that they are weary and have

no rest, and that slaves rule over them (vv. 1-8). Women and young women are raped in

all the towns of Judah, princes are hung up by their hands, elders are shown no respect,

young men are made to grind at the mill, boys carry wood, *the elders are absent in the*

city gate, and young men have ceased their music (vv. 9-14).

Neh 1:3. "They said to me, 'The remnant in the province who remain from the

captivity suffer great calamity and shame (רעה גדלה וחרפה). The wall of Jerusalem is

broken down and *its gates are burned with fire*.' When I heard these words, I sat down

and wept, and I mourned for days. I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven."

(compare 2:3)

Lam 1:4 and 5:14 are particularly poignant. The issue in these texts is not that the

people are at risk of harm because their gates are burned down or because their gate bar

has been broken. The issue is specifically that there are no people in the city gate, and

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[1] Compare Isa 3:26, where a city's gates (פתחיה) lament and mourn (אבל, אנה).

that the elders are not sitting in council. In other words, society *as it should be* has been disrupted in a fundamental way. These two clear cases help inform my interpretation of the remaining passages above. Note, similarly, that ruined walls and gates are not only a great evil/calamity (רעה) for the people; rather, this constitutes a deep disgrace (Neh 1:3).

Analogous to these Biblical passages is a 47-tablet text lamenting the destruction of Sumer and Ur in the late third millennium. This lamentation similarly describes the overturning of the daily order of society, listing the disruption of such things as livestock breeding, a clean water supply, familial love, the lullabies of wet nurses, the rule of kings, and many details of agricultural and domestic work. It also describes the disruption of civic judicial function, and directs a lot of attention to the destruction of an ornate temple gate, and the gate's locking bolt in particular.[1]

In contrast to the above, gates in the Hebrew Bible are described in utopian contexts in only two instances. Isa 54:11-12 reads "O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted! Look, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your shield-battlements of rubies, your gates of beryl stones, and all of your wall with desirable stones." The sentiment seems to be that if a built-up and decorated gate is good, then a gate made entirely of precious stones is even better. Note that the context (great peace and righteousness, lack of oppression, fear, and strife, etc.; vv. 13-15) is clearly hyperbolic and utopian language, which makes the odd notion of precious stones used for heavy construction more understandable. In Isa 60:18, we read וקראת ישועה חומתיך ושעריך תהלה "you shall call your walls salvation and your gates praise."

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[1] Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 37-57, 61, 63.

The meaning of this phrase is somewhat opaque, but given the exchange of materials described in the previous verse ("I will bring gold instead of copper, silver instead of iron, copper instead of wood, iron instead of stones," v. 17), perhaps the notion is of ennobled gates and walls built of precious materials, similar to Isa 54.[1]

To summarize: the gates of a town depicted by utopian and dystopian descriptions reveal that the gate was a social institution necessary to a healthy society, used for social gathering, the town council, and military defense.

Gates and Prophetic Discourse

The conceptual significances of the civic forum to an ancient Israelite, informed by the many functions it served, were both used and manipulated by the Israelite prophets in their discourses. For instance, one of the most prominent themes in the writing prophets is denunciation of the injustice in society.[2] Significantly, the prophets likely proclaimed this message while standing in the gate, the seat of justice.[3] The prophet, in other words, stands in the town's courtroom and decries the injustice of the court. Moreover, another common rhetorical technique in the prophetic literature is what is known as the ריב ("dispute") or prophetic lawsuit, which takes the form of a legal complaint, laden with juridical terminology.[4] That is, the prophet's social critique is

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[1] On this text as a utopian vision, see Roy D. Wells, "'They All Gather, They Come to You': History, Utopia, and the Reading of Isaiah 49:18-26 and 60:4-16," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. A. J. Everson and H. C. P. Kim; Ancient Israel and Its Literature; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 197-216.

[2] See, e.g., J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962), 347-51.

[3] Cf. Voeltz, "Battlements of Rubies," 41; R. Bartelmus, "רחב," *TDOT* 13:434.

[4] See, e.g., Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *JBL* 78/4 (1959): 285-295; James Limberg, "The Root ריב and the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *JBL* 88/3 (1969): 291-304; Marvin A.

ironically leveled by acting as if he himself is Yahweh's attorney, lodging a legal complaint.

Another main theme of classical prophecy is the people's unfaithfulness to Yahweh due to their idol worship (which also may take the form of a legal complaint; see e.g. Isa 41: 21-24; 43:9-12).[1] Since the gate was a place of worship and often home to various cultic high places, the prophet's rebuke would be given a measure of immediacy when it was delivered in the gate itself, perhaps even within earshot of the very shrines the prophet was denouncing.

Moreover, the gate's role apropos of peace and war may be played upon by the prophets. A large gate complex was a symbol of a city's security, and would likely have lent a sense of safety to the inhabitants.[2] However, the prophets' repeated threats of Yahweh's impending punishments – often in the form of military defeat[3] – would foreground another aspect of the gate complex: it was bound to be a stage for the bloody realities of warfare.[4]

Finally, in one prophetic text the military and judicial functions of the gate are pitted against one another in a stunning play on the conceptual sensibilities of the society. The context of the passage includes a collective, first-person confession of the people's sinful turning away from Yahweh and their total corruption (Isa 59: 9-13), followed by this verse: "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has

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Sweeney, *The Prophetic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 40-41; Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. H. C. White; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 199-201.

[1] Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel*, 347-51.
[2] See Porada, "Battlements in the Military Architecture."
[3] Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, 169-98; Sweeney, *Prophetic Literature*, 38-9.
[4] Voeltz, "Battlements of Rubies," 40.

stumbled (or: is overthrown) in the plaza, and uprightness cannot enter" (v. 14). In this metaphor, justice and righteousness are attacking the town, trying to penetrate into the city.[1] But they stumble, and are repelled, and must stand far off – out of reach of the archers. The townspeople, it is implied, are using the defensive capacity of the gate to actively (and successfully) defend their society from any justice or upright behavior!

In all of these examples, the gate's symbolism – its shared social meanings and conceptual significance as the place of justice, defense, and cultic ritual – is skillfully manipulated by the prophet for his denunciations and threats.

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[1] Cf. John N. Oswalt, who says that truth and righteousness "are on the periphery and cannot get in. Justice knocks at the gate and is turned away" (*The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66* [NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998], 524).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
Gates as Symbolic Boundaries

Gates and Liminality

The concept of liminality was first introduced in the context of ritual by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep. van Gennep described rites of passage as having three stages: separation, *limen* ("threshold" in Latin), and aggregation.[1] Those who undergo such a rite are removed from society and taken to a place of seclusion (separation) where they carry out a series of ritual ordeals, and then are reincorporated into their society with a new status (aggregation). The middle, liminal stage is thus a transitional period between the two others.[2] V. Turner expanded upon the idea of liminality, describing the period as a fundamentally "ambiguous" state, "betwixt and between" customary behavior and social structures.[3] During a liminal state, the status quo is upended: one is required to do things ordinarily considered taboo, and social status among the initiates is negated.[4] It was also "a period of special and dangerous power, which had to be constrained and channeled to protect the social order."[5] In many rites

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[1] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (trans. M. V. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 74-86.

[2] Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), 102.

[3] Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, 96-97.

[4] A. Barnard and J. Spencer, "Rites of Passage," in *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (ed. A. Barnard and J. Spencer; 2nd ed.; Florence, KY: Routledge, 2009), 616. Further, the initiates have no status, their behavior is marked by passive submission, and they must obey those who initiate them, who represent the authority of tradition. In this state, they are a *tabula rasa*, "on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new group status" (Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* [The Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures; New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995], 103). The ordeal foster *communitas* – a homogeneity and comraderie – among the initiates (Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, 99-100; *Ritual Process*, 95-7), which is paradoxically necessary to maintain social structure (Turner, *Ritual Process*, 97).

[5] Charles Lindholm, "Liminality," in *The Dictionary of Anthropology* (ed. T. Barfield; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 288.

of passage, initiates are thought to be shaped by deities or other higher powers in

preparation for their new status,[1] and the period in general is characterized by magico-

religious properties, dangerous or polluting for those involved.[2]

> Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one
> state nor the next, it is undefinable. The person who must pass from one to
> another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others. The danger is
> controlled by ritual which precisely separates him from his old status,
> segregates him for a time and then publicly declares his entry to his new
> status.[3]

Liminality is a property of space as much as of time;[4] a liminal space is thus a location

between two spheres of being which carries the same connotations of a liminal period

described above.

Since Turner's influential treatment of liminality in 1967, the concept has been

borrowed from the anthropology of ritual and reappropriated in many diverse fields –

applied to everything from ocean beaches to management consulting to teacher

preparation.[5] This is to be expected, since virtually any object, time, or space may be

understood as transitional between two other objects, times, or spaces.[6] The more

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[1] Turner, *Ritual Process*, 106.

[2] Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, 97; *Ritual Process*, 108-9; Lindholm, "Liminality," 288.

[3] Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 97.

[4] Bjørn Thomassen, "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality," *International Journal of Anthropology* 2/1 (2009): 15-6.

[5] See (respectively) Robert Preston-Whyte, "The Beach as a Liminal Space," in *A Companion to Tourism* (ed. A. A. Lew, C. M. Hall, and A. M. Williams; Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 349-59; Barbara Czarniawska and Carmelo Mazza, "Consulting as a Liminal Space," *Human Relations* 56 (2003): 267-90; Alison Cook-Sather, "Newly Betwixt and Between: Revising Liminality in the Context of a Teacher Preparation Program," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 37/2 (2006): 110-127. Compare also Thomassen, "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality," 18-9.

[6] As Thomassen puts it: "In Turner's own words, liminality refers to any "betwixt and between" situation or object. It is evident that this understanding opens up space for possible uses of the concept far beyond that which Turner himself had suggested. Speaking very broadly, liminality is applicable to both space and time. Single moments, longer periods, or even whole epochs can be liminal. Liminal places can be specific thresholds; they can also be more extended areas, like "borderlands" or, arguably, whole countries, placed

extended applications, however, usually involve something far milder than van Gennepian liminality, often implying little more than a transition of some sort between two phases.[1]

The gate suggests itself as a liminal space, since it is an obvious boundary and transition point between two domains of space, and is focused upon as such (along with thresholds in particular) in the literature. For example: "Thresholds, whether spatial or temporal (such as rites of passage), are liminal zones, 'betwixt and between', or transitions where danger lies. As people pass from one state…to another so they encounter danger which must be controlled through rituals that protect against pollution."[2]

Below we will discuss the role of a gate as a literal and symbolic boundary, and then return to the question of whether (or in what sense) it may be called a liminal space.

The Gate as a Literal and Symbolic Boundary

Clearly, the gate and city walls function as a physical boundary which form the limits of both the city and the extramural space. It is probably for this reason that they are

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in important in-between positions between larger civilizations. Liminality can also be applied to both single individuals and to larger groups (cohorts or villages), or whole societies, or maybe even civilizations" ("The Uses and Meanings of Liminality," 15-6). Compare Lindholm, who says "one problem with liminality was deciding when a state was indeed liminal – the term, like the situation it described, tended to spread beyond definitional boundaries" ("Liminality," 288).

[1] Bjørn Thomassen, "Liminality," in *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory* (ed. A. Harrington, B. L. Marshall, and H.-P. Müller; London: Routledge, 2006), 322-3; "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality," 15. Beaches, for instance, are transitional because they are neither land nor sea, and they are "uncertain" in that they may be calm or unruly (Preston-Whyte, "The Beach," 349).

[2] Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards, "Ordering the World: Perceptions of Architecture, Space, and Time," in *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space* (ed. M. P. Pearson and C. Richards; London: Routledge, 1994), 25; cf. Faust, "The Gates," 32.

used as a legal boundary in Mesopotamian law codes[1] as well as in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Deut 22:23-7).

It is also clear that the division the city walls (or temple precinct walls) make between the two domains forms an important *conceptual* – and not just practical – distinction.[2] One of the functions of architecture, as others have pointed out, is that is shapes people's perceptions of space: "we shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."[3] Evidence from the Hebrew Bible indicates that the Israelites drew a clear conceptual distinction between the inside and outside of a town.

To begin with, note the programmatic division revealed in the common word pair שדה/עיר "field/town" (Gen 34:28; Lev 14:53; Judg 9:32-3; 1 Kgs 14:11; 21:24; 2 Kgs 7:12; Mic 4:10). Jer 14:10, another example, reads as follows: "If I go out into the field (השדה), behold, those slain by the sword; and if I enter the town (העיר), behold, those dying of hunger!" We should clarify that the English terms "town" or "city" are misleading translations for עיר, which properly denotes any type of permanent human settlement, not just urban forms.[4] It is also clear from usage in the Hebrew Bible that שדה is much broader semantically than English "field"; it refers to any land, cultivated or not,

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[1] See Eshnunna §§51-52 (*COS* 2.130), Code of Hammurabi §§15, 227 (*COS* 2.131). Matthews, "Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors," 26, 32.

[2] To be sure, the symbolic aspects of demarcation between in/out are "intertwined" with the functional aspects, since the physical barrier gives rise to the conceptual difference (Pearson and Richards, "Ordering the World," 24). Nevertheless, the distinction between the inside and outside of a city and cultic compound are clearly viewed as more significant than other such boundaries. Where cultivated land meets uncultivated land, for instance, there is also a boundary, but we do not see terms for each such zones used in binary opposition, or hear of any religious or magical rites associated with these boundaries (see below).

[3] Winston Churchill, quoted in Faust and Bunimovitz, "The Four Room House," 27 (and see references there).

[4] See Num 13:19, for example, where ערים include מחנים "camps," and cf. Deut 3:5; 2 Kgs 17:9; 18:8. See also Faust, "Cities, Villages, and Farmsteads," 105; Loewenstein, "The Urban Experiment," 13-7.

which is the antithesis of human habitation.[1] Thus עיר and שדה together form a merism which encompasses everywhere: both inside and outside of a settlement. Compare Deut 28:3 "Blessed shall you be in the town (עיר), and blessed shall you be in the field (שדה)" (see 28:16 for the corresponding curse).

This inside/outside differentiation is also reflected in many laws about the Israelites' desert encampment described in the Pentateuch, which seems to be depicted in terms of a city surrounded by gates (Exod 32:26-7).[2] The narratives reveal a great deal of concern with keeping sources of impurity outside of the camp; things which must be removed from the camp include the following: those who are rendered impure because of a skin disease (Lev 13:46; Num 5:3; 12:14-15; cf. the four lepers in 2 Kgs 7:3), those with a discharge or who have become ritually unclean by touching a corpse (Num 5:2; 31:19; Deut 23:11); the carcass of the sin-offering bull (Exod 29:14; Lev 4:12, 41; 8:17, 9:11; 16:27; cf. Num 19:9), the ashes of the whole burnt offering (Lev 6:2-4), dead bodies (Lev 10:4-5), and the scapegoat, laden with the sins of all Israel (Lev 16:21; cf. Lev 14:49-53).[3] Moreover, Israelites must defecate outside of their camp, since the space within is sanctified by the divine presence (Deut 23:13-5).

Pointedly, people who are both alive and ritually clean are kept out of the camp in only two cases: the non-Israelite Rahab and her family, who were saved from Jericho and

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[1] For instance, see Gen 39:5b – "And the blessing of Yahweh was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field (בבית ובשדה)." Compare 2 Sam 11:11 – "And Uriah said to David, 'The Ark and Israel and Judah dwell in shelters (סכות), but my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping on the face of the field (על פני השדה).'" See also Gen 25:29; 27:3; 30:16; etc, and cf. William H. Propp, "On Hebrew śāde(h), 'Highland,'" *VT* 37/2 (1987): 230-6.

[2] See pp. 303-5.

[3] Additionally, throughout the Iron II period the dead are buried outside of the city (Borowski, *Daily Life*, 84); cf. Jer 22:19.

placed outside of the Israelite encampment (Josh 6:23), and people whom the congregation of Israelites are about to stone to death for their transgressions (Lev 24:14, 23; Num 15:35-6). Rahab and her family are Canaanites, and are of course not considered part of the Israelite community; those who are to be stoned are being removed from the community.

In another passage pregnant with symbolism, the post-exilic community in Judah consecrates itself along with the city of Jerusalem: ויטהרו הכהנים והלוים ויטהרו את-העם ואת-השערים ואת-החומה "The priests and the Levites ritually purified themselves, and then they purified the people, and the gates, and the city wall" (Neh 12:30; compare חנכת חומת ירושלם "the consecration of the wall of Jerusalem" in v. 27).[1] The precise ritual undertaken is unclear, but the fact that the community and the community's borders are consecrated and purified together implies their symbolic identity with one another.[2] The people are dedicating not only themselves, but their very city – architecture included – to the ideals of Yahwistic fidelity. Further, this ceremony is associated in its literary context with a period of religious reform, in which the Judahites publicly confess and repent for their wickedness, enact dramatic purification laws (viz., the expulsion of non-Jewish spouses), and formally re-establish their covenant with Yahweh. The chronology of this period is highly questionable,[3] but if the association of religious reform with the

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[1] Compare also Neh 3:1, where a group of men build the Sheep Gate and קדשוהו "sanctify it."

[2] Similarly, temple gates are often iconographic symbols for the entire temple (Kapelrud, "Gates of Hell," 152; Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 102; Bernard Goldman, *The Sacred Portal: A Primary Symbol in Ancient Judaic Art* [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966], 73), or indeed for the deity itself (Goldman, The Sacred Portal, 74).

[3] The chronology of the content of Ezra and Nehemiah (and therefore whether the religious reforms and public repentance precede the sanctification ceremony or not) is a very complicated debate to which I cannot do justice here. For a concise discussion and references to the literature, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 139-144.

purification/consecration of the walls and gates is historical, this would sharpen my point: the ritual marks socio-religious solidarity with and within Jerusalem. In any event, the use of religious terminology (חנכה, טהר) and the fact that the priests and Levites were officiating gives the consecration ceremony clearly religious overtones.

City walls, then, seem to define and delimit a community both physically and metaphysically. The wall is "the borderline between the inner and the outer world";[1] it separates those within the community, the in-group, from the "other" – the out-group, those who have no part in the society.[2]

The distinction is equally (if not more) significant when the walls and gates of a temple compound are in view, since they separate the mundane and worldly outside from the sanctified realm of the deity on the inside. As with the Tabernacle, in which "concentric zones of graduated holiness" (camp, courtyard, Tabernacle, holy of holies) act as a series of buffers insulating the sacred from the profane, so entering the gate of the temple precincts in Jerusalem brings one to a holier realm – one stage closer to the divine presence in the Temple.[3] The gate, and the threshold in particular, "is the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds – and at the same time the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible […] [where] communication with the gods is made

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[1] de Geus, *Towns in Ancient Israel*, 27.
[2] Pearson and Richards, "Ordering the World," 24-5; cf. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestations*, 399; Avraham Faust, "The Canaanite Village: Social Structure of Middle Bronze Age Rural Communities," *Levant* 37 (2005): 119.
[3] Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 527-8; cf. Keel, *Symbolism*, 123-7. Compare the boundary which Moses needed to place around Sinai to keep the people away on pain of death (Exod 19:12).

possible."[1] The significance of passage into the divinity's abode (both for humans and the deity himself) is noted in a number of texts in the Hebrew Bible, and is usually accompanied by rejoicing and praise.[2] For instance:

> Open for me the gates of righteousness, and I will enter by them; I will give thanks to Yah; This is Yahweh's gate; the righteous will enter by it. (Ps 118:19-20)[3]

> Come before him with rejoicing!...Enter his gates with thanksgiving; his courts with praise! (Ps 100:2, 4)

> Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! (Ps 122:2)[4]

> Rejoice, O gates![5] Exult, O ancient doors! For the king of glory is entering. Who is this king of glory? Yahweh, strong and heroic! Yahweh, heroic in battle!

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[1] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 25-6; cf. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, 396; Leach, "Gatekeepers of Heaven," 251; Kapelrud, "Gates of Hell," 152; Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 165-6.

[2] Cf. the deity's crossing of the threshold when leaving the temple in Ezek 10:18-19.

[3] The temple gates are gates of righteousness because they lead to the domain of a righteous (or "just") deity. Thus it is fitting that only righteous people should enter. Compare Ps 24:3-4 – "Who shall ascend the hill of Yahweh? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not vowed for a falsehood by his life, who has not sworn fraudulently."

[4] The gates in view here may admittedly be the city gates (cf. Robert Altar, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* [New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007], 439), though v. 1 ("Let us go to the Temple of Yahweh!") seems to indicate that they are the gates into the temple courts.

[5] Literally "lift up your heads, O gates." This expression (נשא ראש) means (among other things) to rejoice, to feel prideful (in a positive sense) and emboldened; see Judg 8:28; Ps 83:3; Job 10:15-16; Zech 2:4. Compare also Pss 3:4; 27:6 (רו"ם ראש, in both Qal and Hiph'il) which give the same sense. Cognate expressions in both Ugaritic and Akkadian can also carry the same meaning (Otto, "שער," 15:369; A. Leo Oppenheim, "Idiomatic Accadian (Lexicographical Researches)," *JAOS* 61/4 [1941]: 252-3; Mayer I. Gruber, *Aspects of Non-Verbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* [Studia Pohl - dissertationes scientificae de rebus Orientis Antiqui 12; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1980], 598-600; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 1-50* (AB 16; New York: Doubleday, 1965], 152; cf. Paul-Richard Berger, "Zu Ps 24, 7 und 9," *UF* 2 [1970]: 335-36). Attempts to take this figure of speech more literally are forced and unconvincing. Gruber, for instance, says that the expression indicates a posture of joy and notes the linguistic parallels, but then concludes unexpectedly that the "heads" in question here are the tops of the watch-towers which flank the gate entrance (*Non-Verbal Communication*, 600). Samuel Terrien similarly says that the gates "have to increase the height of their lintels" to let Yahweh in (*The Psalms: Strophic Stucture and Theological Commentary* [Eerdman's Critical Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003], 249). Frank Moore Cross understands the phrase to indicate the "full personification of the circle of gate towers which like a council of elders sat waiting the return of the army and its Great Warrior gone to battle, and which sat bowed and anxious" (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973], 98). For support, Cross cites a Ugaritic passage in which Ba'al enjoins the gods of the council not to be cowed by their enemies, but rather to "raise their heads." Cross then oddly applies the contextual usage in the Ugaritic passage (the gods in the council

Rejoice, O gates! Exult, O ancient doors! For the king of glory is entering. Who is this king of glory? Yahweh of hosts – he is the king of glory! (Ps 24:7-9)[1]

As these texts show, it follows logically from the above inside-outside distinction that the gate should also be conceptually significant, since it is the mediator which allows passage between the two realms. And indeed, we find that the gate in the Biblical literature is laden with symbolism as a monumental boundary. Gates commonly represent a metaphysical portal, whether between earth and heaven (Gen 28:17),[2] or as the entrance to מות "death" (Pss 9:14; 107:18; Job 38:17), שאול "the underworld" (Isa 38:10), or צלמות "darkness" (Job 38:17).[3] Gate bars (בריחים) are similarly used symbolically, as boundaries which Yahweh set for the sea (Job 38:10; with דלתים "gate doors"),[4] and with reference to the land (of death) "whose bars close me in forever" (Jonah 2:7).[5] In all cases, these are

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raising their heads) to the present verse about gates, even though he acknowledges the Hebrew idiom (*Canaanite Myth*, 98 and n29). For a history of interpretation of this Psalm, see Alan Cooper, "Ps 24:7-10: Mythology and Exegesis," *JBL* 102/1 (1983): 37-60.

[1] Compare the following Neo-Babylonian texts, from the reign of Nabonidus (mid 6th c.): "When you, Šamaš, enter [the new temple], let the gateways, entrances, shrines, and cult socles rejoice over you" (*CAD* B, 18); "Its [the temple's] gates are wide open for my lord Šamaš to enter" (*CAD* B, 15).

[2] On the door as a common motif as a portal to heaven in ANE art, see Goldman, *The Sacred Portal*, 69-100.

[3] Cf. Sir 51:9; Wis 16:13. Some interpret these references to gates as if the underworld is conceived in terms of a city, as it seems to be in the Ugaritic literature (e.g., Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and Netherworld in the Old Testament* [Biblica et Orientalia 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969], 152-4). Mesopotamian literature also contains references to gates of heaven and death; e.g., see Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies* (SAA 9; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), 3.ii:14-17 (p. 24); Alasdair Livingstone, ed., *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA 3; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), 12: r 9-10 (p. 32); Alan R. Millard, "Celestial Ladder and the Gate of Heaven," *Expository Times* 78 (1966): 86-7; Wolfgang Heimpel, "The Sun at Night and the Doors of Heaven in Babylonian Texts," *JCS* 38/2 (1986): 127-151.

[4] Likewise, in the Enuma Elish, Marduk splits the body of Tiamat (the ocean deity) in half, and then to keep her waters apart, he "pulled down the bar and posted guards" – a clear reference to locking a gate (*ANET*, 332-4). Compare, however, B. R. Foster's translation: "He stretched out the hide and assigned watchmen" (*COS* 1.111 iv:139).

[5] A third text rather vaguely states that "A betrayed brother is more than a strong city; and quarrels are like a palace's gate bar" (Prov 18:19). The missing adjective in the first couplet seems to be "[more] difficult to overcome" or the like.

substantial barriers which one may not cross (or re-cross).[1] We find the same usage in

Babylonian, Egyptian, and Hittite literature.[2] Compare Ishtar's arrival at the gate of "the

land of no return,"[3] for instance, or the Babylonian incantation text which reads "the dead

cannot pass through the gate of life" (i.e., cannot come back to life).[4]

Gate symbolism in the Hebrew Bible extends beyond this. In a number of

instances, people are symbolically removed from or added to the community with

procedures involving gates (and doors). As discussed above, the gate is a place where

capital punishment is prescribed. For example: "and his father and his mother shall take

hold of him, and bring him out to the elders of his town, to the gate of his place…and all

the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones" (Deut 21:19, 21; see also Deut

17:5; 22:23-4). And, as noted, those in Israel's desert encampment who are to be stoned

to death are first physically removed from the camp (Lev 24:14, 23; Num 15:35-6).

Similarly, Adam and Eve are given the punishment of "death" and are removed from the

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[1] Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions*, 153.

[2] J. A. MacCulloch, "Door," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (ed. J. Hastings; New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1924), 4:851-2. E.g., compare the many gates into the realm of the underworld in the tale of Nergal and Ereshkigal (*COS* 1.109), the gates of heaven in Hittite literature (Goldman, *The Sacred Portal*, 82-3), and the lion/sphinx/humanoid figures who guard the gate of the Hittite underworld (Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, 139-140). In Egypt, there are many gates associated with the underworld in the New Kingdom Book of Gates, and in the various funerary compositions known collectively as the Book of the Dead. See Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Heaven and Hell: Being the Book of Am-tuat, the Shorter Form of the Book of Am-tuat, the Book of the Gates and the Contents of the Books of the Other World Described and Compared* (repr. 3 vols. in 1; London: M. Hopkinson, 1925); Eva Von Dassow, ed., *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day* (transl. R. O. Faulkner and O. Goelet; 2nd ed.; San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998). One Old Kingdom reference places "locked wooden gates at the entrance of heaven" (Mary Wright, "Contacts Between Egypt and Syro-Palestine During the Old Kingdom," *BA* 48 [1985] 151-2). For a discussion of gates in and to the underworld in both Mesopotamia and Egypt, see Cooper, "Ps 24:7-10," 37-60. Compare also the late Iron Age grave stelae found in Lydia which depict embellished doors on their surfaces (Christopher H. Roosevelt, "Symbolic Door Stelae and Graveside Monuments in Western Anatolia," *AJA* 110/1 [2006] 65-91).

[3] *COS* 1.108.

[4] *CAD* B, 25b.

Garden of Eden, their path back to the Tree of Life blocked by protective cherubim (Gen 3; cf. the composite Mesopotamian gate guardians).[1]

In the texts describing judicial execution, the community takes part in the stoning,[2] and the offender is brought out of the town proper before this is done. It is of course not physically necessary to remove a person from town in order to kill them, which suggests that removing these individuals is a symbolic way to show the community's repudiation of them.[3] Some of the motive clauses found among the Biblical laws seem to point in the same direction. Seven times the phrase ובערת את הרע מקרבך\מישראל "so you shall purge the evil (one?) from among you/from Israel" is appended to the threat of the death penalty (Deut 13:6; 17:7, 12; 21:21, 22:22; 22:24; 24:7).[4] The same verb (בע"ר, "to sweep away, consume, remove") is also used to describe purging the "innocent blood" (דם הנקי) from Israel, which applies to killing a murderer (Deut 19:13) and killing a heifer in place of an unknown murderer (21:9). Lev 20:14 similarly justifies the death penalty by saying "in order that there may be no immorality among you (זימה בתוככם)." The ideal is that the community will remain untainted by a process of self-purification, and the physical removal of transgressors accomplishes symbolically what their death accomplishes literally.

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[1] My thanks to W. Propp for pointing out the Garden of Eden parallel to me (personal communication).

[2] Matthews, "Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors," 32-3.

[3] Cf. Matthews and Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel*, 123.

[4] Compare the incident which precipitates the Israelite civil war, in which Israelite men call for the lives of the offending Benjaminites: "Now, give over the men, those sons of worthlessness, who are in Gibeah, and we will kill them, and (thus) we will purge (נבערה) the evil from Israel" (Judg 20:13). 2 Sam 4:11 also uses the same verb to denote killing someone; literally "sweep you off of the earth." Cf. also 1 Kgs 21:21; 22:47.

Analogous to the above is a law in Deuteronomy about a young woman accused

of lying about her virginity when she is married. If it is determined that she in fact

misrepresented herself, then "they shall bring out the young woman to the door (פתח) of

her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because

she has done an outrageous thing in Israel by whoring in her father's house. So you shall

purge the evil from among you" (Deut 22:20-1).[1] This case shows, first of all, that

stoning a person outside of town was not necessary. But more to the point, note that the

young woman's offense is against her father's house; "she is executed at her father's

house because her offense shames her extended family, the *bêt-ʾāb*. She engaged in sex

before marriage while still under her father's authority, while resident 'in' the building

that localizes the family unit."[2] The analogy to stoning outside of the gate is striking: the

offended parties (community, father) physically remove the offender from the limit of

their domain before stoning them, as if to highlight the fact that the offenders have

violated the socio-religious norms of that realm, and that they are therefore being

removed.[3]

The converse of the above may be seen in Exodus 21:5-6, where we read the

following apropos of a slave who has the option of going free from his master: "But if the

slave says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his

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[1] This ruling is difficult to reconcile with similar Biblical and ANE law codes, with which it seems to stand in direct contradiction. See, e.g., Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 269-71; Alexander Rofé, *Deuteronomy: Issues and Interpretation* (Old Testament Studies; London: T&T Clark, 2002), 173-181.

[2] Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 271. Cf. Driver: "she is to pay the penalty of her sin openly, in front of the house which she has disgraced" (*Deuteronomy*, 256).

[3] Contra Matthews, who says "This is done to pinpoint the blame for the crime committed against the husband squarely at the father's door (a place as legally significant for the father in this case as the gate is for the citizens of the town). The father has been proven guilty of fraud, having received the bride price under false pretenses" (Matthews, "Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors," 32).

master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever."

The first point we must clarify here is the phrase "bring him to God," which must mean "bring him to the judicial authorities."[1] Given the fact that this procedure is essentially a property transaction, some type of legal process would surely have been required, and is therefore *prima facie* likely to be described in this passage. Other passages bear out this usage of the phrase; compare Exod 22:6-7 – "If a man gives silver or vessels to his neighbor…and they are stolen…If the thief is not found, the owner of the house shall come near to God (נקרב אל אלהים) to swear that he has not put his hand on his neighbor's property." Deut 19:17 sharpens the point: "Then the two men who have a dispute shall stand before Yahweh, that is, before the priests and the judges (לפני יהוה לפני הכהנים והשפטים) who will serve in those days."[2] This latter verse also clarifies that the term אלהים in Exod 22:6-7 does not directly refer to the magistrates. Rather, "to appear before God/Yahweh" is idiomatic in these passages, and may have arisen due to the legal oaths the parties must swear before the deity, or by a metonymic association of God with the dispensing of justice (see Deut 1:17; 2 Chron 19:6). Or, more likely still: the most natural understanding of "approaching the deity" is approaching the deity's temple. If the civic judges *at the temple gate* are in view, this would explain both the terminology and the usage above.[3] In any event, the slave must make a legal declaration before the proper

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[1] Pace Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 192-3.

[2] Note also the LXX translation πρὸς τὸ κριτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ "to the law court of God" which is similar to the Targums, Syriac, and Rashi (Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 192).

[3] Cf. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics*, 111-2 and n. 37.

authorities that he is willingly giving up his freedom in order to remain in his master's house.

The next step in this procedure is that the slave holds his ear against the wood of the door or doorpost and his master pierces it with an awl. By this legal and symbolic act, the slave becomes the master's permanent property.[1] Admittedly, it is unclear whether the legal deposition and the doorpost ceremony are both done in the same location (presumably the temple gate, or perhaps the city gate), or if the parties return to the master's house for the latter; both are plausible at the level of syntax. The parallel passage in Deut 15:16-7 reads ...ולקחת את-המרצע ונתתה באזנו ובדלת...והיה כי יאמר אליך לא אצא "But if he says to you 'I will not go out,'…then you shall take an awl, and you shall put it in his ear and in the door…." This seems to have the master's domestic door in view by default, since the clause about bringing the slave before God is omitted – though admittedly this could represent D's adaptation of the law in Exod.[2]

In my view, the issue of which door the ceremony involves is ultimately (if narrowly) decided based on the following considerations: First, the piercing action is clearly symbolic. Second, the relationship between the symbolic action and what it symbolizes must then be one of the following two options:

1) Becoming a permanent slave to one's master is symbolized by being identified in some sense with the temple or city gate

2) Becoming a permanent slave to one's master is symbolized by being identified in some sense with one's master's house

[1] Compare Job 40:24, 26 where God pierces Leviathan, thereby making him an "eternal slave" (Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 195).
[2] Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 193.

The first option is rather opaque, whereas the second makes good sense, making the master's domestic door the most parsimonious explanation. If this is correct, then once again we see the door, as the border of the sphere of the household, being symbolically identified with the household. In identifying with the door, the slave "is henceforth to be a symbolic component of the house, 'nailed in place.'"[1]

In addition to these aspects of symbolism, there are many magic or religious rituals associated with the threshold or doorposts of gates, which will be discussed momentarily. To summarize our discussion thus far, the data indicate that the Israelites held a clear conceptual distinction between the inside and outside of a town in their mental map of the world. Inside the town is the realm of humans, the community, culture, and order. Outside of the town is the field: the realm of the "other," those excluded from the society, wild animals, nature, chaos, death, excrement and impurity. The city walls and the gate delimited and defined both urban space and extramural land both physically and symbolically.

Magic and Ritual at the Gate

There is a very strong association of magical or ritual practices and gates, doorways, and thresholds, as we have already seen with respect to Mesopotamian gateways.[2] This is not only true in the ancient world, but is documented in societies the world over up to the present day. James G. Frazer, for instance, has catalogued dozens of

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[1] Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 194. Compare the many cases of sacrificial blood put on a house's threshold in order to welcome an honored guest inside, as if to ratify a covenant with the guest (Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 3-10). Since the promise of eternal servitude is essentially a covenant, the point of the piercing may be to let a small amount of the slave's blood stain the doorpost.

[2] Otto, "שער," 15:377; Pearson and Richards, "Ordering the World," 25; cf. Faust, "The Gates," 32.

"curious superstitions" attached to thresholds, and H. C. Trumbull adds many dozens

more.[1] These customs, found in cultures from China to Scotland, include various ways of

showing reverence for the threshold (especially avoiding touching it); many are

associated with the nuptial crossing of the threshold or having a visitor in one's home.[2]

The attribution of deities or spirits (human or other) to the threshold is fairly common,

and gives rise to many such superstitions.[3] Attested rituals associated with the gate and/or

threshold range from the fairly innocuous (e.g., incantations, or gates being opened and

closed as a charm for ensuring rain or sunshine), to the extreme: human sacrifice, many

examples of smearing or splattering sacrificial blood on the doorposts and threshold, and

the burial of dead infants (human and animal) underneath the threshold.[4] Blood rites at

the doorway are performed to repel malevolent spirits or sanctify the portal (or both);[5]

amulets, sacred symbols, statues of deities, and sacred texts are commonly attached to a

doorway for the same purposes.[6] Similarly, showing a special reverence for the threshold

is based on a belief that failure to do so would result in some (unstated) misfortune.[7]

[1] James George Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion Legend and Law* (3 vols.; London: MacMillan, 1918), 3:1-18; Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 3-98. Cf. also MacCulloch, "Door," 846-52; Bernett and Keel, *Mond, Stier und Kult am Stadttor*, 80-2.

[2] Frazer, *Folk-Lore*, 3:2-11; Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 3-10; cf. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 25; Edward Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1926), 1:295, 373-4.

[3] E.g., see B. Goldman, *The Sacred Portal*, 73-4; MacCulloch, "Door," 847-9; Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief*, 1:307; Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, 139.

[4] Frazer, *Folk-Lore*, 3:11-14, 16-17; Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 1:298; 3:98; 4:176; Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 3-98; MacCulloch, "Door," 846-7; Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, 143.

[5] William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 434-7; Manor, "Gates and Gods," 240; MacCulloch, "Door," 847.

[6] MacCulloch, "Door," 849-50.

[7] Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, 3:11.

Trumbull postulates that many of the superstitions surrounding the domestic threshold derive from the fact that it was originally the family's sacrificial altar.[1]

One particularly well-known doorway ritual is the Muslim *fidya* sacrifice, which is a close parallel to the Paschal sacrifice (on which, see below). The *fidya* involves placing blood from a sacrificed animal on one's doorway, and while it can be performed at various significant points in one's life, the basic purpose of the ritual is to save a man and his family and possessions from "some imminent misfortune."[2] The name *fidya* "redemption" implies that the sacrificial animal is dying in someone's place,[3] which in turn suggests that those who practiced the sacrifice believed that someone's life was owed to (or at least at risk of being taken by) a demon or deity. The imminent misfortune, in other words, was averted by appeasing the deity with the life of a substitute.

To generalize: the portal is a dangerous place, and certain ritual actions are necessary if one wishes to avoid harm. "Crossing the threshold in either direction can be dangerous: one leaves the safety of home, or one risks importing the alien."[4]

Were Gateways in Ancient Israel Considered Dangerous?

The above evidence about magic and ritual is irrelevant to our question of liminality in Israelite gates – unless, of course, we find evidence that gateways in ancient Israel were associated with some type of danger that must be controlled. Some authors

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[1] Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 10-25, and see below.
[2] J. Chelhod, "Fidya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (ed. P. Bearman, et al.; 2nd ed.; Brill Online, 2012), n.p. Cited 10 April 2012. Online: http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/fidya-SIM_2359. Cf. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 434-5.
[3] Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 435.
[4] Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 441.

suggest that this was the case: "The city gate is thus a transition from the sheltered space of the walled city to the outside world, a transition that must be made safe by architectural and magical means."[1]

If we turn to the archaeological evidence reviewed above, we find that cultic practices at the gates in the southern Levant do not have any clear apotropaic functions, except for what we might infer from their location in the gate. But their location alone is rather flimsy evidence for their protective function, especially given the nature of the finds themselves (standing stones, libation vessels, incense stands, etc.). These do not look anything like the doorway guardians and buried talismans of N. Syria and Mesopotamia, which are unambiguously apotropaic based on the textual sources.[2]

On the other hand, a number of texts in the Hebrew Bible furnish examples of doorways, thresholds, and gates that are given a hard-to-define superstitious and/or cultic significance. We will begin with a few miscellaneous verses: As mentioned above, Nehemiah 12:30 describes a vaguely defined religious purification ceremony which includes the walls and gates of Jerusalem. In Gen 4:7, sin is said to רבץ "lie down" at the doorway – or according to Speiser's interpretation, sin is a "demon" (רבץ) at the doorway – which one must keep out.[3] Both the Israelites and the Philistines are said to hop over thresholds (Zeph 1:9; 1 Sam 5:4-5). This action was condemnable for the Israelites for unknown reasons, but given the Philistine parallel at the threshold of Dagan's temple, and the literary context of Zeph 1 (a denunciation of idolatry), it seems a safe inference that not stepping on the threshold was considered unorthodox to Yahwistic monotheism. In

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[1] Otto, "שער," 15:377. Compare Blomquist, *Gates and Gods*, 16; Faust, *Israelite Society*, 120.
[2] For further examples see Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 441.
[3] Speiser, *Genesis*, 32-3; cf. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 441.

Isa 57:8, we read of another illicit (presumably religious) practice of the Israelites:

placing a "memorial" (זכרון) behind their doors and doorposts. There is unfortunately no

further information about this practice.

The most obvious doorway rite in the Bible is the ritual of the Paschal lamb,

whose blood is smeared on the lintel and doorposts of the sacrificer's domestic door,

purportedly in commemoration of the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt (Exod

12:1-13:16). Significantly, the purpose of the ritual – at least in its literary context in

Exodus – is stated explicitly: the Israelites must do this to guard the inhabitants of the

house from a malevolent spirit, who will kill the firstborn child of every household

without the bloodied doorway (Exod 12:23). The lamb itself may have been killed at the

threshold of the door in question, even though the text does not specify the location. Note

that the blood to be put on the lintel and doorposts is taken from the סף – a word which

can mean either "basin" or "threshold" – and that the latter may imply killing the animal

on the spot.[1] Even if we judge the original Passover story to be an etiological tale

explaining the sacrificial custom, this gives us at least one clear reference to an

apotropaic doorway rite, meant to protect a house's inhabitants from supernatural evil.

As an aside, the sacrificial altar of the Tabernacle – and presumably at the

Jerusalem Temple by extension – is described as standing before the door of (לפני פתח

Exod 40:6) or even *at* the door of the tent of meeting (המזבח...אשר-פתח אהל מעד Lev 1:5).

All sacrifices must be brought אל פתח אהל מעד "to the door of the tent of meeting" (Lev

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[1] Note the LXX and Vulgate translate סף as "threshold"; see Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 408; cf. Manor, "Gates and Gods," 240. Speculatively, the term סף may indicate both a cup and the threshold, if the door were removed for this rite and the indented door-pivot on the threshold was used to catch some of the blood (cf. Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 206-9). Cf. also Eshel, who asserts (without much argumentation) that סף can also take the meanings "doorpost" and "entrance" ("Semantics," 246-7).

1:3; 3:2), and those which are not brought to the doorway are prohibited (Lev 17:2-4).[1]

Thus all sacrifices on the altar might be interpreted as doorway sacrifices.[2] If this is

correct, the communication via the Tabernacle door would function differently, in that

sacrifices at the Tabernacle's door do not guard the tent from supernatural intruders with

evil intentions; rather, the gifts brought to Yahweh are offered to him as close as one may

legitimately come to his presence – laid at his doorstep, as it were. Nevertheless, it is

tempting to see in the altar's location a resonance of the tendency to observe cultic rites

in general at doors, and blood sacrifice in particular.

  Finally, we have the Jewish custom of *mezuzot*, which in modern times consists of

fastening to a doorframe small containers that hold parchment on which Deut 6:4-9 and

11:13-21 are written.[3] The Biblical origin of the custom is D, where we find the

following instructions regarding "these words which I [Moses] command you today":

וכתבתם על-מזוזת ביתך ובשעריך "you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on

your gates" (Deut 6:9; 11:20). The practice of writing sections of venerated scripture on

one's doorposts and gates sounds prima facie as if it may serve as an apotropaic charm

meant to ward off evil.[4] In fact, it has been customary since the Geonic era (ca. 8th-11th c.

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[1] Manor, "Gates and Gods," 240-1.

[2] Cf. Trumbull, who says "Often the door, or the gate, stood for the temple, and frequently the threshold was an altar, or an alter was at the threshold. There are, indeed, reasons for supposing that the very earliest form of a primitive temple, or sanctuary, or place of worship, was a rude doorway" (*The Threshold Covenant*, 102).

[3] The container and inscribed parchment are but two of many clearly secondary customs which have accreted to the use of a *mezuzah*. Others include writing the verses in question in 22 lines, fastening the *mezuzah* such that it tilts inward toward the house, placing it on the right side as one enters, kissing one's fingers after touching the container when passing through the door, etc. See Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, "Mezuzah," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (ed. M. Berenbaum and F. Skolnik; 2nd ed.; Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2007), 14:156; Eva-Maria Jansson, *The Message of a Mitsvah: The Mezuzah in Rabbinic Literature* (Lund: Sällskapet för Judaistisk Forskning, 1999), 30.

[4] Cf. Pearson and Richards, "Ordering the World," 25.

C.E.) to write on the back of the *mezuzah* parchment the term שדי, which is both a title of

Yahweh (traditionally "Almighty"; see Gen 17:1; 28:3; etc.) and understood as an

acronym for שומר דלתות ישראל "Guardian of the doors of Israel."[1] For our purposes in the

Iron II period, however, the use and meaning of *mezuzot* (or rather, their predecessors) is

fairly complicated.

It should be noted, first of all, that gates may not be in view at all. It is slightly

curious that both of the commands enjoin writing the words of Moses על-מזוזת ביתך "*on*

the doorposts of your houses" but בשעריך "*in* your gates" (Deut 6:9; 11:20). It is true that

the preposition -ב can occasionally mean "at, by, on," but such usage is uncommon. The

primary definition of -ב, and its most common meaning by far, is "in, among, within."[2]

The mis-matched prepositions (ignored by all translations) are all the more suspicious

when we recall that the D source uses the very term בשעריך to mean "in your

communities" nearly thirty times. The verses, in other words, seem to command writing

the words in question on domestic doorposts and in the town in general,[3] even though the

verses were later interpreted to mean writing the words on the city gate.

More importantly, this command does not seem to be meant to be followed

literally. The same words which one should write on the doorpost and gate are also

supposed to be tied to one's hand and forehead (6:8; 11:18), kept on one's heart (6:6;

11:18), taught to one's children, and spoken about continually (6:7; 11:19). The

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[1] Jansson, *The Message of a Mitsvah*, 29; Rabinowitz, "Mezuzah," 156.
[2] See BDB. s.v. I-II.
[3] Alternatively, we might posit that the copula in ובשעריך is a copyist's error, and that the original read על-מזוזת ביתך בשעריך "on the doorposts of your houses in your communities." Derby suggests that writing the words בשעריך refers to doing so in the gate complex; i.e., inscribing the words on a stela to be publicly displayed, as the law code of Hammurabi ("Upon the Doorposts, 43). This makes better sense of the preposition, but also misses the broader pattern of the use of בשעריך in D.

imperative to have the words on one's heart and to speak of them continually would be impossible if taken literally. The sense of all the commands taken together seems to be that the people should be continually mindful of the words in question; that the covenant should be the defining characteristic of their lives. Thus, even if the specific command to write the words on the doorpost were taken literally, the location may be simply to remind the people of them every time they passed by. Jewish sources as early as the 2nd century B.C.E., in fact, show that one interpretation of the *mezuzah* was "to be a reminder of God."[1] Alternatively, and in accord with the symbolism described above, placing the words on the doors and gates could be a symbolic gesture. Since the door is both the boundary and symbol of the family unit, this is an appropriate place to inscribe the words of the covenant by which the family self-identifies.

On the other hand, and despite the difficulties raised above, it is possible that these passages gave rise to the use of sacred text as a talisman to keep evil at bay. The use of a sacred text for this purpose is fairly well-attested,[2] and this interpretation of the *mezuzah* also has a long history. There are many statements in the Talmud about the efficacy of the *mezuzah* in guarding a person from evil, and this tendency becomes even stronger during the Geonic and early Medieval (11th-13th c.) periods, with explicit talk of *mezuzot* repelling demons from the house.[3] These notions are present among religious

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[1] Jansson, *The Message of a Mitsvah*, 34-5; Derby, "Upon the Doorposts," 40.

[2] Most saliently, the Ketef Hinnom scrolls, found in an Iron Age II tomb outside of Jerusalem, are silver amulets which bore variations of the Priestly Blessing in Num 6:24-26. The amulets were formed of narrow strips of silver, and were found rolled up – presumably for hanging on a necklace (Gabriel Barkay, "The Priestly Benediction on Silver Plaques from Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem," *TA* 9 [1992]: 139-92). For this and other parallels, see Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 424 and references there.

[3] Jansson, *The Message of a Mitsvah*, 38, 45-53, 66-75, 87-100; Rabinowitz, "Mezuzah," 157; Derby, "Upon the Doorposts," 41. Compare Martin L. Gordon, "Mezuzah: Protective Amulet or Religious Symbol?," *Tradition* 16/4 (1977): 7-40. The natural (but un-Biblical) association of *mezuzot* with the

Jews to this day.[1] Thus it is very plausible that writing on a gate or doorpost was thought to be apotropaically effective; the only question is whether this belief was present as early as the Iron II period.

There are Iron Age examples of this phenomenon from more northern locales. An inscribed iconic plaque from 7th c. Arslan Tash in N. Syria, for instance, adjures several demons and deities of the night-time to keep out of the house and stay away from the doorposts.[2] The size and contents of the plaque – and the hole drilled through its top – suggests that it was hung near the door of a house.[3] Similar plaques with explicitly apotropaic requests of various deities are known from Mesopotamia,[4] and vaguely similar doorway inscriptions are also found in Egypt.[5] Again, however, when we come to the southern Levant the evidence is more sparse and less helpful. A few doorway inscriptions have been found, such as those at Samaria and among the caves in the Judean desert, above entrances to rock-cut tombs in Jerusalem, and at the entrance to the fortress of Kuntillet ʻAjrud.[6] The Kuntillet ʻAjrud inscriptions, though fragmentary, are the closest analogs for our purposes since they seem religious in nature, including phrases such as "blessed be their day…," "God favored…," and "blessed be Baʻal in the day of…."[7] Ultimately, to say that doorpost inscriptions in the Iron II southern Levant were used

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Passover rite would lead directly to this interpretation; cf. Shmuel Yeivin, "Mezuzah," in *Entsiqlopedia Miqra'it* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1962), 4:782 [Hebrew]).

[1] See Gordon, "Protective Amulet?"

[2] See Frank Moore Cross and Richard J. Saley, "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century B.C. from Arslan Tash in upper Syria," *BASOR* 197 (1970): 42-49.

[3] Cross and Saley, "Phoenician Incantations," 48.

[4] Erica Reiner, "Plaque Amulets and House Blessings," *JNES* 19/2 (1960): 148-155.

[5] Manor, "Gates and Gods," 241; Yeivin, "Mezuzah," 780-1.

[6] Manor, "Gates and Gods," 241.

[7] Zeev Meshel, *Kuntillet ʻAjrud: A Religious Centre from the Time of the Judaean Monarchy on the Border of Sinai* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1978), n.p.

specifically for apotropaic purposes is plausible, but very speculative based on the available evidence.

To conclude, then, there is little reason to believe that city gates were thought of as dangerous in ancient Israel, or were particularly associated with apotropaic practices. From the Biblical materials, we have only a few whispers of threshold superstitions, and only one clear apotropaic rite (the Passover) that applies to a domestic door. Any similar rites associated with gates would be purely hypothetical and based on analogy to the above.

Evaluation of Liminality

From the above discussion it is clear that gates and doors were metaphysically significant to the Israelite authors of the Hebrew Bible. Should gates also be described as liminal spaces?

The answer depends on one's definition of liminal. At a very basic level, it is clear that gates were liminal spaces. The very definition of liminality, we should recall, is based on the Latin *limen* "threshold." Gatehouses (and gate complexes) have literal thresholds, and also constitute metaphorical thresholds – transition zones, or buffers – between two other conceptually significant spheres: the inside and the outside of town, or the inside and outside of a cultic compound. Note that travelers in the Hebrew Bible slept in the gate plaza unless they were invited to say in someone's home as a guest (Gen 19:1-

3; Judg 19:15-21; cf. Job 31:32);[1] in this state they were neither outside (in the שדה), nor accepted into the town.

On the other hand, there are radical differences between van Gennepian liminal space and the sphere of the gate. The liminal space of a rite of passage is marked, first of all, by a separation from society, and a radical break with social norms and daily routine. This could hardly be further from the circumstances of the gate complex, which was the quintessential representation of normal Israelite society. To enter the gate complex was to enter the realm of normal social activity, and was itself a routine action.[2] Moreover, the person who walks through a gate complex does not undergo a change in their social status; they do not automatically become a member of the community upon entering the city, or leave their membership behind upon exiting.[3] Finally, Turner's notion of *communitas* and egalitarianism during a liminal phase are also not applicable to the gate. Egalitarianism is completely foreign to the ancient world, and thus foreign to the public spaces in ancient towns. The gate was the public stage, and was a venue for the creation and display of social status, as we saw in the case of elders and kings. To conclude, gates may be called liminal only in a restricted sense of the term.

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[1] Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 173; cf. Matthews and Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel*, 82-7.

[2] Note that B. Thomassen advocates a sliding scale of liminal *intensity*, which is weighed against the degree of change from normal structure. "Liminal experiences can (and most often do) take place within a society where much of what goes on stays 'normal'" (Thomassen, "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality," 18).

[3] Similarly, according to the Greek historian Plutarch (ca. 100 CE) the walls of Roman towns were considered sacred, but the gates were not, on the grounds that corpses and daily necessities had to be carried through them (Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town*, 135-6).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
Conclusion and Summary

The civic forum in ancient Israel affected the culture profoundly. Gate complexes shaped how people interacted with their neighbors, how they went to war, how they governed themselves, and how they perceived themselves. The pervasive influence of gates is clearly visible in the hundreds of references to them in the Hebrew Bible.

We began this study by looking at the physical shape of gates in the southern Levant, clarifying many details about their architectural form as well as this form's potential sources of origin. We saw that both gatehouses and gate complexes were purposely designed to create public space, while maintaining a high degree of defensibility. We also surveyed the most common ways in which this public space was put to use: for public notice and assembly, legal transactions and judicial proceedings, civic council meetings, cultic practices, and so on.

These diverse functions of the forum led to the gate's conceptual significance and its symbolism in ancient Israel. The term "gate" can refer by metonymy to the city council, the place of judgment, and the place of execution; it can refer metaphorically to an Israelite community. Gates are symbolic of kingly assertions of power, and of community well-being. And gates are symbolic of many conceptual boundaries: between the realms of the profane and the sacred, between Israelite society and outsiders, between earth and heaven, between life and death.

APPENDIX A

Chart of Gatehouse Dimensions[1]

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Overall Gatehouse Width	Depth	Passage Width	Chamber Width	Depth
Tel Arad X-VIII	2	24.5	10.0	4.5	3.3*	8.0-9.0
Ashdod Xa	4	16.5	13.8	4.2	2.5	3.8
Ashdod IX-VII	6	18.4	20.9	4.8	2.8*	5.0*
Tel Batash III	6	17.3	16.3	4.0[2]	2.5*	4.7
Tel Batash II	4	17.3	16.3[3]	4.0[4]	2.0-2.6	5.0
Tel Beersheba V	4	21.0	13.0-16.0	4.0	2.5	6.0
Tel Beersheba III-II	4	17.0	14.0	3.5	2.7*	5.6*
Tell Beit Mirsim	2	13.5	5.7[5]	4.1	2.2*	2.6-3.7
Beth Shemesh V	2 (?)	16.8	6.8 (?)	4.8	3	4.1*
Bethsaida (et-Tell) V	4	30.0	17.0	4.0	3.3*	9.5-10.8
Tel Dan (outer)	4	29.5	17.8	4.0	3.4-4.5	9.3

---

[1] Measurements are given in meters, and should be considered estimates in all cases, due to the imprecise and asymmetric nature of ancient structures. When a given dimension varies slightly, we will report the average value (indicated by an asterisk); when it varies substantially, we will report a range of values. When published dimensions were available, we have used them; otherwise, we have measured from published plans. Gatehouse "width" and "depth" are from the perspective of one standing outside of the gatehouse and facing the building's façade. Towers on the façade will be included in the gatehouse's dimensions; other buildings or walls which are appended to the back or sides of the gatehouse are not included. Chamber width and depth are given from the perspective of one standing in the doorway of the chamber looking in; note that this is different than the perspective taken for overall gatehouse measurements.

[2] The passage narrows to ca. 3.5m between the irregularly shaped first set of piers/towers.

[3] The depth dimension of the gatehouse is uncertain for this stratum because the façade of the gatehouse was not well preserved.

[4] The passage narrows to ca. 3.5m between the irregularly shaped first set of piers/towers.

[5] Overall gatehouse dimensions do not include the towers, since they are not integral to the gatehouse proper. The maximum dimensions including the towers are 18.8 m wide and 12 m deep.

Chart of Gate Dimensions, Continued

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Overall Width	Gatehouse Depth	Passage Width	Chamber Width	Chamber Depth
Tel Dan (inner)	4	17.5	11.5	4.0	2.6-3.3	4.5
Tel Dor VII	4	20.0	16.5*	4.5	3.5	6.0[1]
Tel Dor V	2	28.6	7.6	4.6	4.3	10.5-11
Ekron	6	16[2]	22.5	4.0	2.7*	3.2-4.6
'En Haseva V	4	15.0	12.8	4.0	2.5	3.3
Tell el-Far'ah (N), VIIb (S gate)	2	8.5	6.5	2.5-3	2.3	1.8*
Gezer VIII	6	17.0	16.8*	4.1	2.4	4.7
Gezer VII	4	17.0	16.8*	4.1	(?)[3]	4.7
Hazor X-IX	6	18.2	20.5	4.2	3.2	5.6*
Tel 'Ira VII-VI	6	16.7[4]	18	(?)	2.5*	4.9
Tall Jalul (inner and outer)	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)
Tall Jawa VIIIb-VIIb	4	15.5[5]	16.0	4.5	2.4-5.7[6]	2.5*
Tel Jezreel	4	14.5	17.5	4.0	3.3*	4.7*

---

[1] Stern says that the foundations of the gate measure 21 m. x 20.5 m (Stern, *Dor*, 113), but these dimensions do not seem to correspond to his published plans (Stern, *Dor*, 112, fig. 55 and 114, fig. 57). We have followed the dimensions of the gate in the plans here.

[2] The gatehouse was only excavated on the east side; the overall width reported here is based on the assumption of symmetry and an average passage width of 4m.

[3] The southwestern chamber is ca. 5m wide; the southeastern one is ca. 6.3m wide. The two remaining chambers are both ca. 2.5m wide. On my understanding of this gatehouse, see the chart of gates in the Introduction.

[4] Only one half of the gatehouse was preserved. What remained of the gate threshold was 3.5 m wide, which should be considered the minimum gate passage width (Beit-Arieh, *Tel 'Ira*, 72). The estimate of 16.7m is based on the assumption of symmetry and a gate passage of average width (4.1m).

[5] This estimate is based on the uncovered remains in the E half of the structure.

[6] The three excavated chambers of this gatehouse vary dramatically in their size. While all three have similar widths, the SW chamber is 5.7m wide, the NW chamber is 2.4m wide, and the NE chamber is 3.5m wide. Another unusual feature of this gatehouse is that the larger chambers lie along the same axis as the passage, as opposed to most gate chambers which are perpendicular to the gate passage.

Chart of Gate Dimensions, Continued

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Overall Width	Gatehouse Depth	Passage Width	Chamber Width	Chamber Depth
Tell el-Kheleifeh III-II	4	12.8*	10.5	1.7[1]	2.2*	3.9*
Kinneret (Tel Kinrot) II	2	(?)[2]	7.8	(?)	3.3	3.9
Lachish IV-III	6	24.5[3]	24.5	5.2[4]	3.0*	6.3*
Lachish III (citadel gate)	6	22	23.5 (?)[5]	4.0[6]	3.9	5.5-7.5
Megiddo VA-IVB (city gate)	6	17.5	19.7	4.3	2.9	4.9
Megiddo VA-IVB (Gate 1567)	4	15.0	10.0	5.0	3.0*	4.2*
Megiddo VA-IVB – III	2	11*	8.1	4.1*	3.4*	1.9-4.5
Megiddo IVA (city gate)	4	24.6	16.3	4.2	3.0	8.0
Megiddo IVA (Courtyard Gate Palace 338)	4	10.1	8.0	3.1	2.4*	3.0*

---

[1] This gate is unusual in its construction; the 1.7m wide passage is only in reference to the outermost pair of piers (i.e., at the gate's façade). The passage between the gate's middle piers widens to 3.2m, and the passage between the inner set of piers is 3.3m (Pratico, "Nelson Glueck's 1938-1940 Excavations," 14).

[2] The gate was only excavated on its western side; its overall width and passage width are therefore unknown.

[3] Most of the south side of the gatehouse was left unexcavated aside from the tips of the two easternmost piers; overall width measurement assumes symmetry.

[4] This measurement represents only the innermost and outermost (façade) openings; the passage width between the two interior sets of piers was ca. 6.5m (Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 59).

[5] This measurement is based on the excavator's reconstruction of the front of the gatehouse, which was not preserved.

[6] This measurement, between the innermost pair of piers, is narrower than the passage between the middle two sets of piers which was 6.8m wide (similar in design to the city gate during this period); presumably, the outermost entrance to the gatehouse was built similarly (Ussishkin, "Area PAL.," 820).

Chart of Gate Dimensions, Continued

Site/Stratum	No. of Chambers	Overall Width	Gatehouse Depth	Passage Width	Chamber Width	Chamber Depth
Megiddo III	2	24.5	12.8	4.2	4.6	7.5-8.2
Kh. al-Mudaybi'	4	19.7[1]	14.6	4.1	3.5	6.4
Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad	6	15*	15.8	4.1	2.5*	4.0*
Kh. en-Nahas	4	16.8	10.6	3.6	2.6	3.4*
Tell en-Nasbeh (inner)	4	14.0	12.0	4.1[2]	2.7*	4.2*
Tell en-Nasbeh (outer)	2	9.3	5.2	4.25	2.3	2.5
Kh. Qeiyafa IV (West)	4	13.0	10.5	3.9	2.4	3.2*
Kh. Qeiyafa IV(South)	4	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)
Kh. el-Qom	2 (?)	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)	(?)

---

[1] The dimensions given here are an extrapolation based on partial excavation of the structure and the assumption of symmetry.

[2] This is the width of the south wall's passage; the passage between the middle sets of piers was ca. 4.3m, and the passage through the northern wall (misidentified by the excavator as an off-center gap of poorly preserved foundation walls) was not clearly discernable (see Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-Evaluation," 702-3).

APPENDIX B

Chart of Average Gatehouse Dimensions

All measurements in meters	**Average Gatehouse Width** (standard deviation)	**Average Gatehouse Depth** (standard deviation)	**Average Passage Width** (standard deviation)	**Average Chamber Width** (standard deviation)	**Average Chamber Depth** (standard deviation)
Two-Chambered Gates (n=7)	18.6 (8.2)	8.2 (2.6)	4.4 (0.3)	3.3 (0.9)	5.7 (3.3)
Four-Chambered Gates (n=20)	17.8 (5.2)	13.9 (2.9)	4.0 (0.4)	2.9 (0.6)	5.1 (2.1)
Six-Chambered Gates (n=10)	18.5 (2.9)	19.4 (3.0)	4.3 (0.4)	2.8 (0.5)	5.1 (0.9)
All Gates (n=37)	18.1 (5.2)	14.1 (4.7)	4.2 (0.4)	3.0 (0.6)	5.2 (2.1)

APPENDIX C

Plans of Gates in Corpus
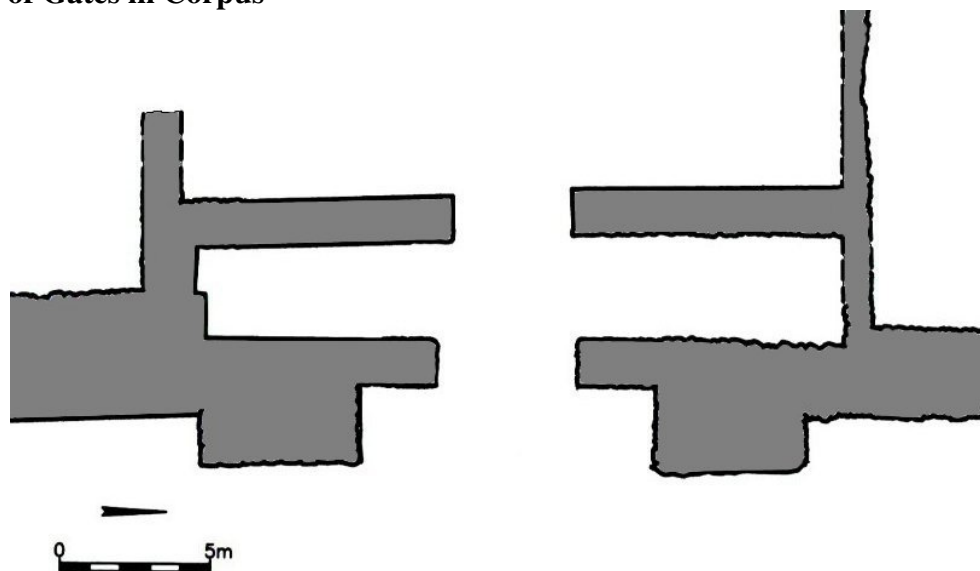
Tel Arad X-VIII[1]
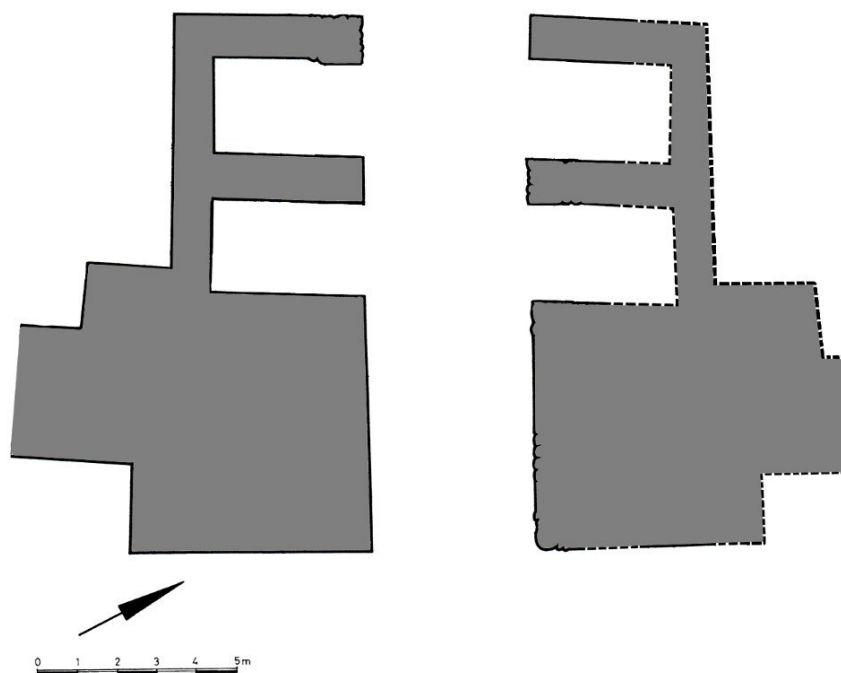
Ashdod Xa[2]

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[1] Adapted from Herzog, "The Fortress Mound," 29 fig. 12.
[2] Adapted from Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, pl. 5.

St. 9-7
St. 9
St. 8-7
St. 7
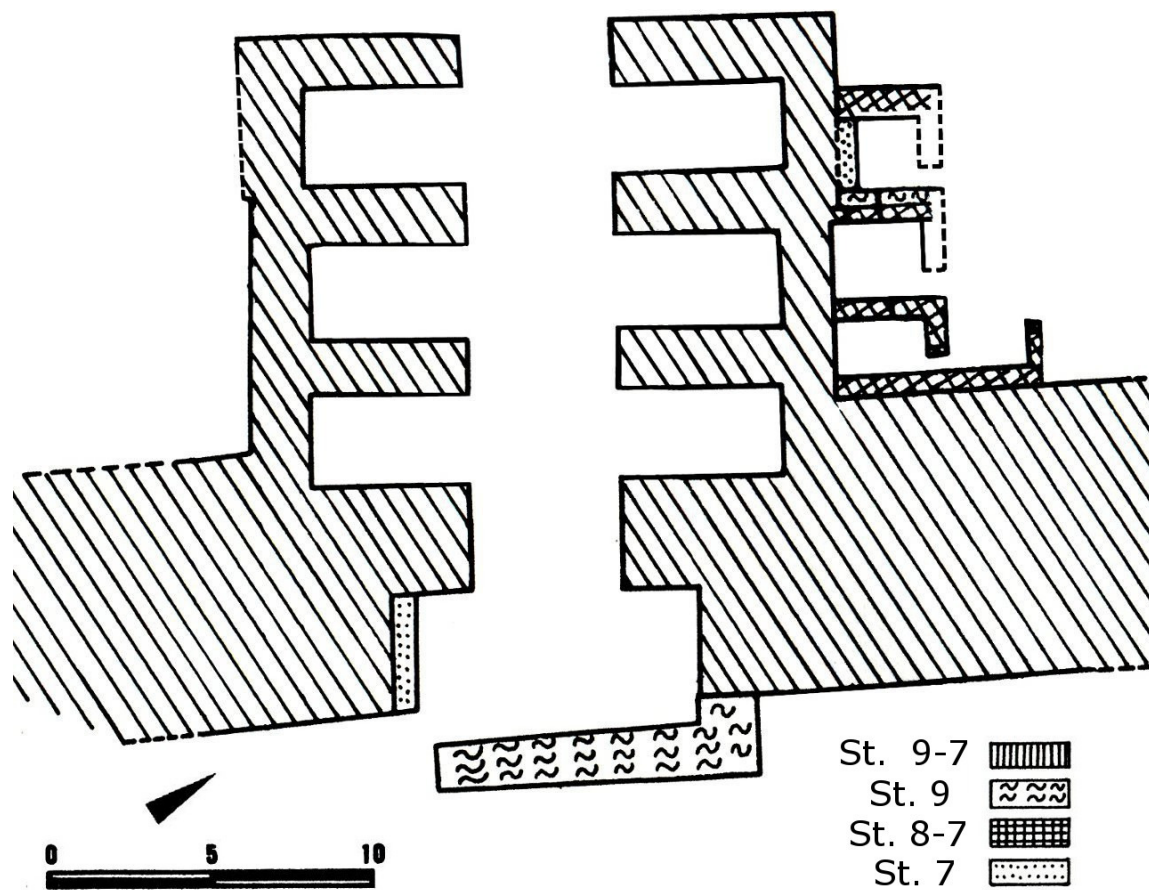
Ashdod IX-VII[1]

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[1] Adapted from Dothan and Porath, *Ashdod IV*, pl. 2.
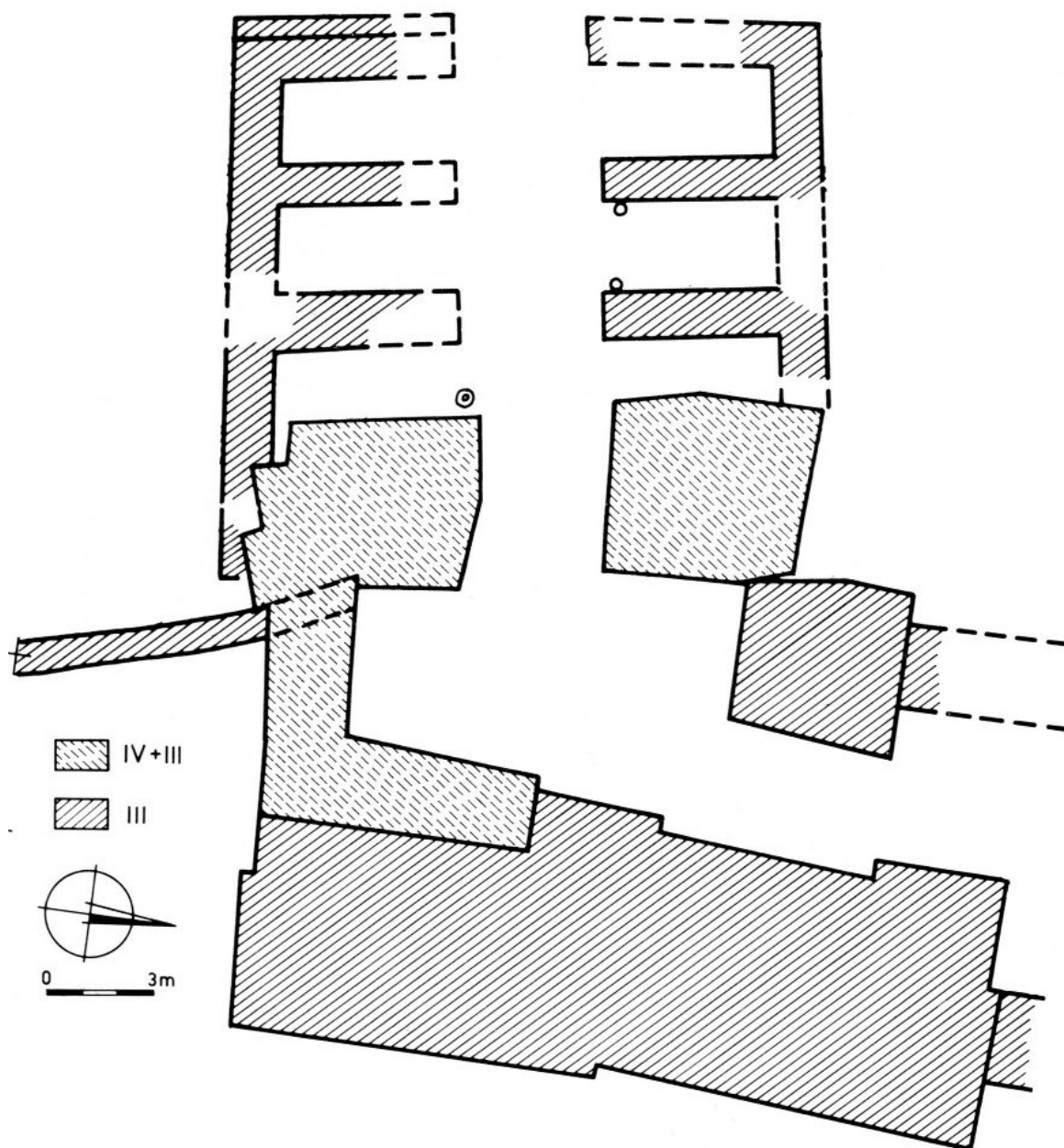
Tel Batash III[1]

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[1] Adapted from Mazar, *Tel Batash I*, 112 fig. 28.
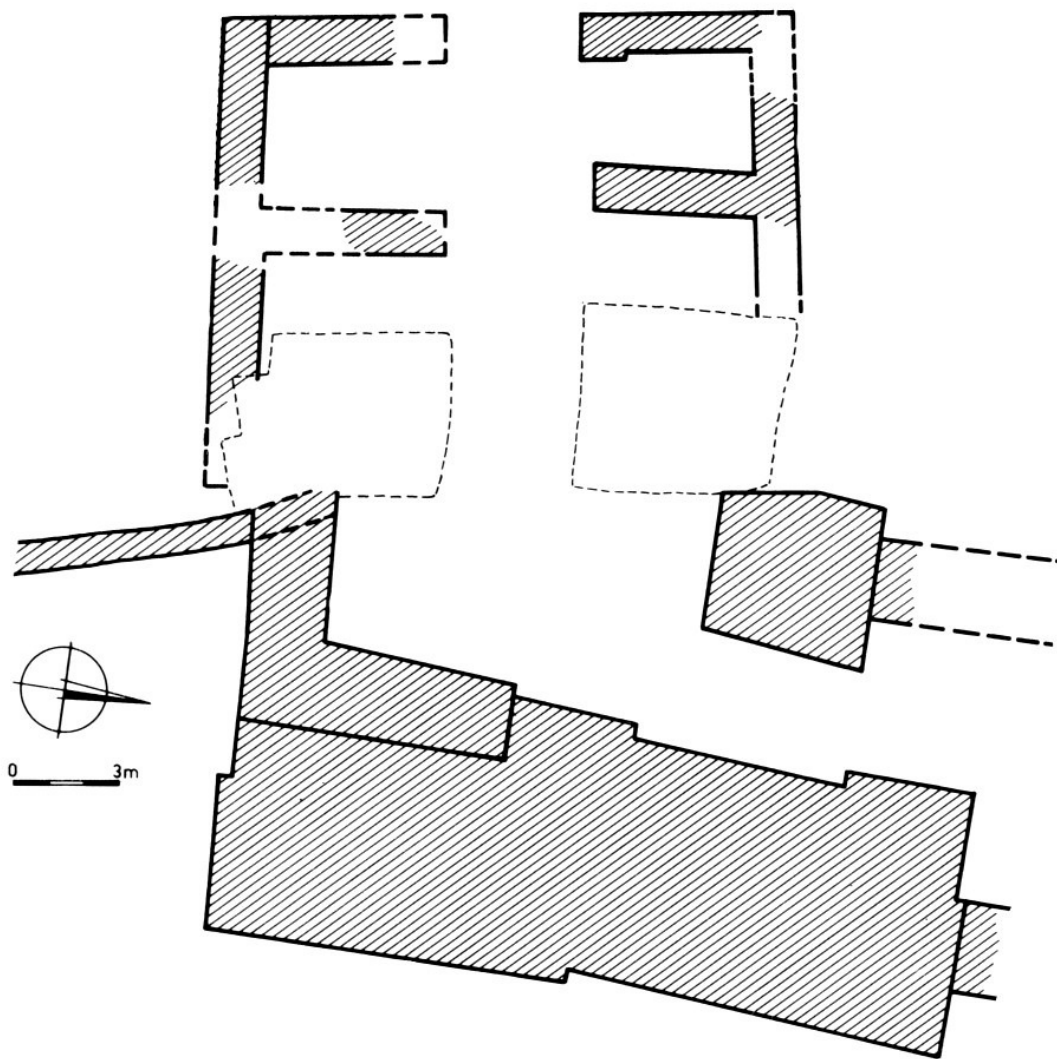
Tel Batash II[1]

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[1] Adapted from Mazar, *Tel Batash I*, 116 fig. 30.
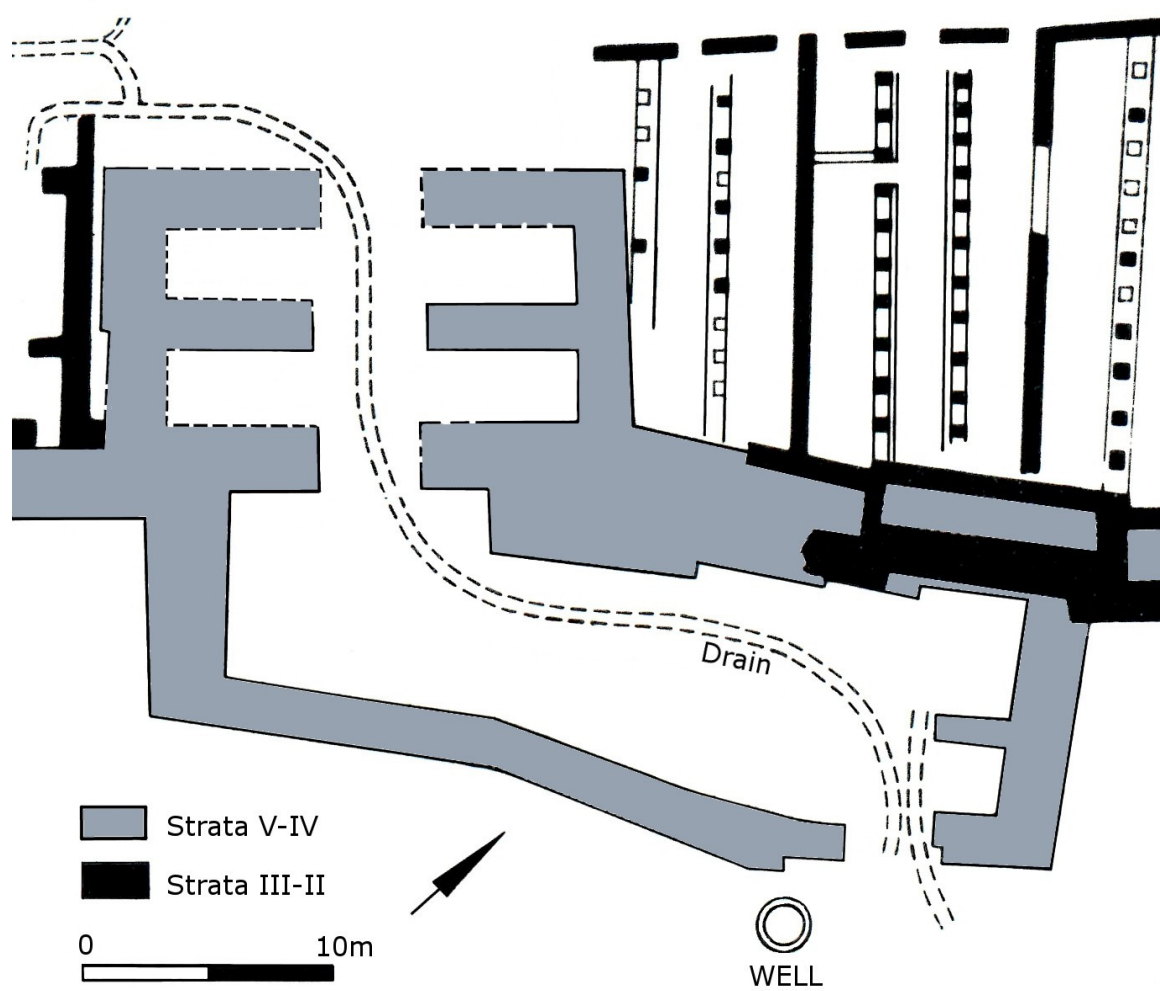
Tel Beersheba V-IV[1]

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[1] Adapted from Herzog, Rainey, and Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy of Beer-sheba," 51, fig. 1.
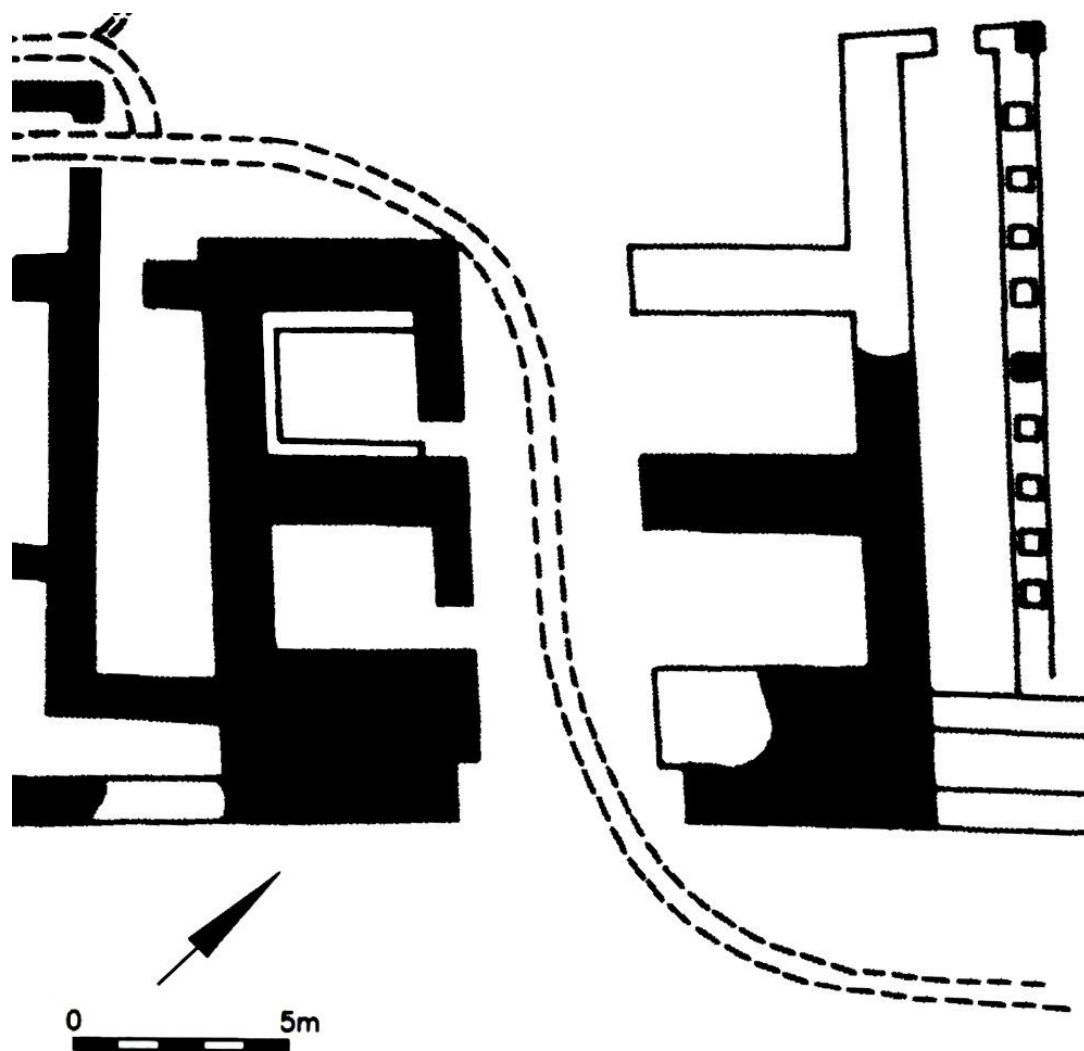
Tel Beersheba III-II[1]

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[1] Adapted from Aharoni, "Tel Beersheba," 120-1, fig. 14.
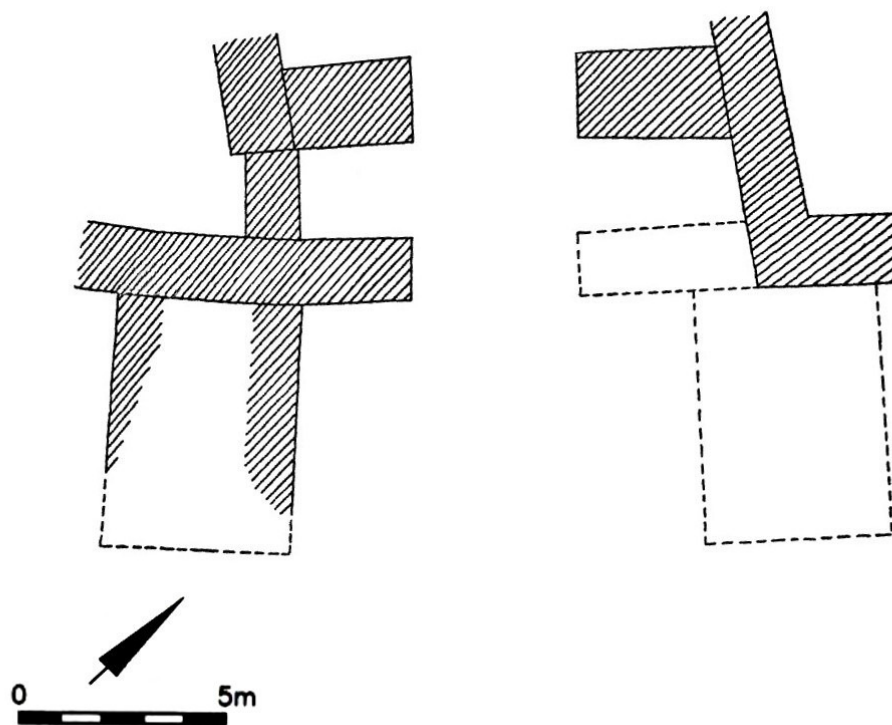
Tell Beit Mirsim (E gate, St. A)[1]

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[1] Albright, *Tell Beit Mirsim III*, 16, fig. 1.

Drain

Beth Shemesh[1]

0   5

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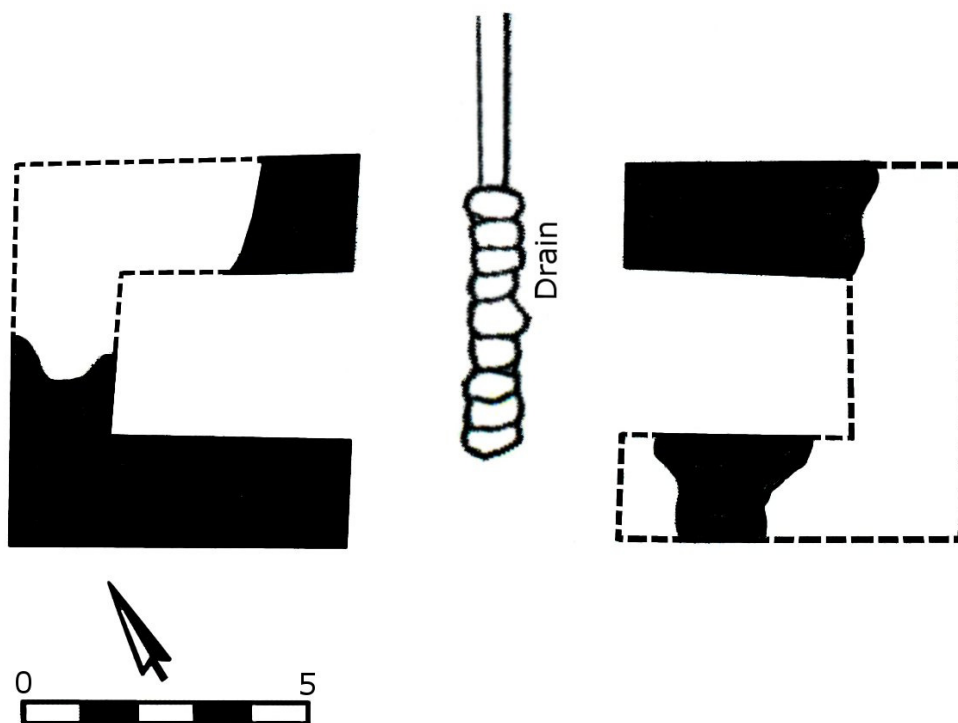
[1] Adapted from Bunimovitz and Lederman, "Iron Age Fortifications," 128, fig. 3.
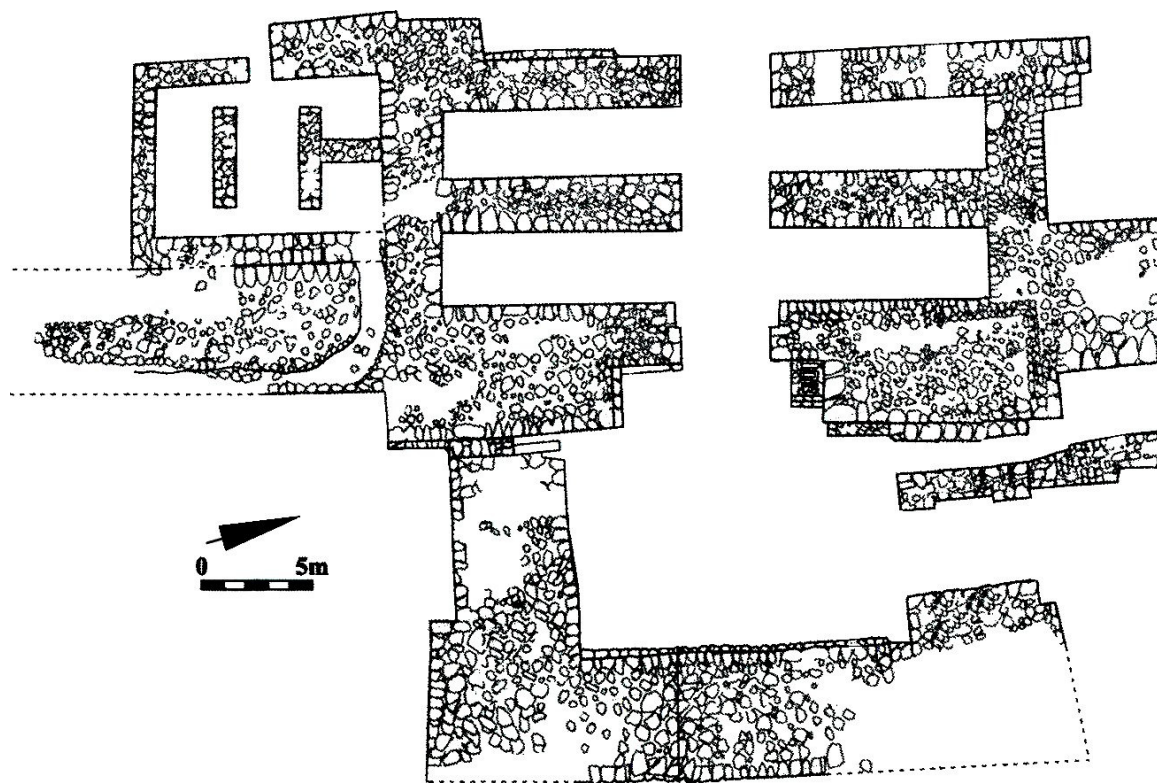
Bethsaida (et-Tell) V[1]

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[1] Adapted from Arav, "Final Report," 7, fig. 1.2.

MB
RAMPART
CORE

Stratum II

Stratum III

Earlier Remains

0   15m
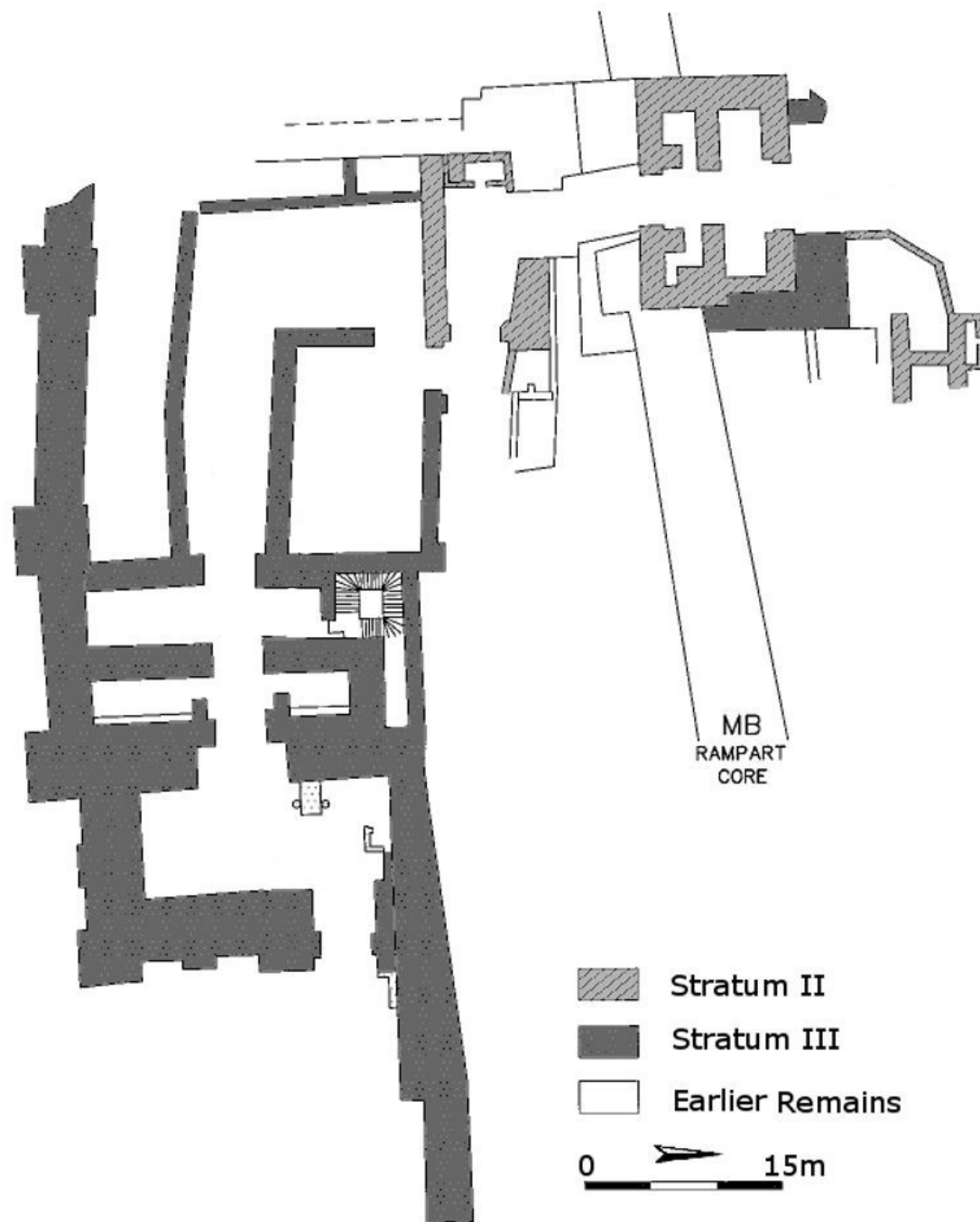
Tel Dan Gate Complex[1]

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[1] Adapted from Arie, "Reconsidering," 15, fig. 8.
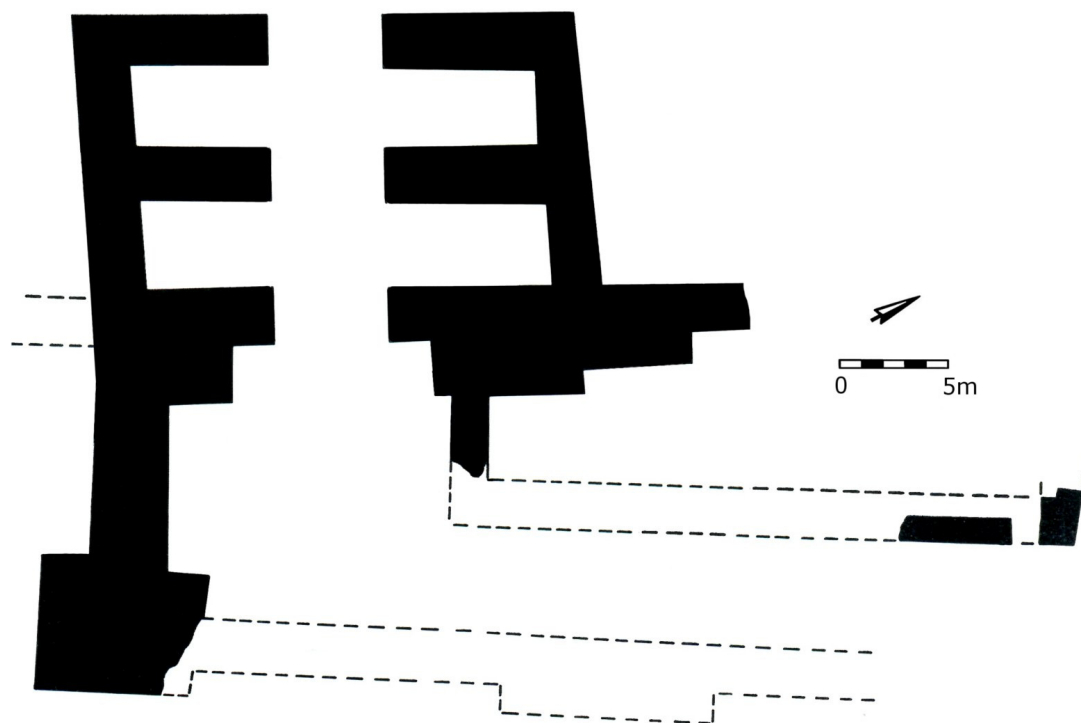
Tel Dor VII[1]

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[1] Adapted from Stern, *Dor*, 114, fig. 57.
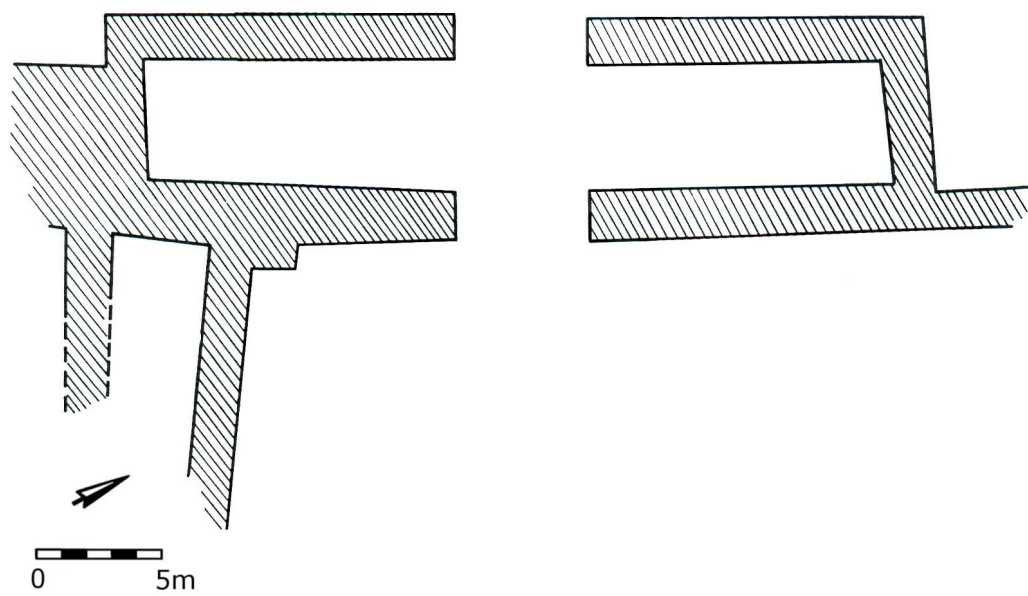
Tel Dor V[1]

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[1] Adapted from Stern, *Dor*, 114, fig. 57.
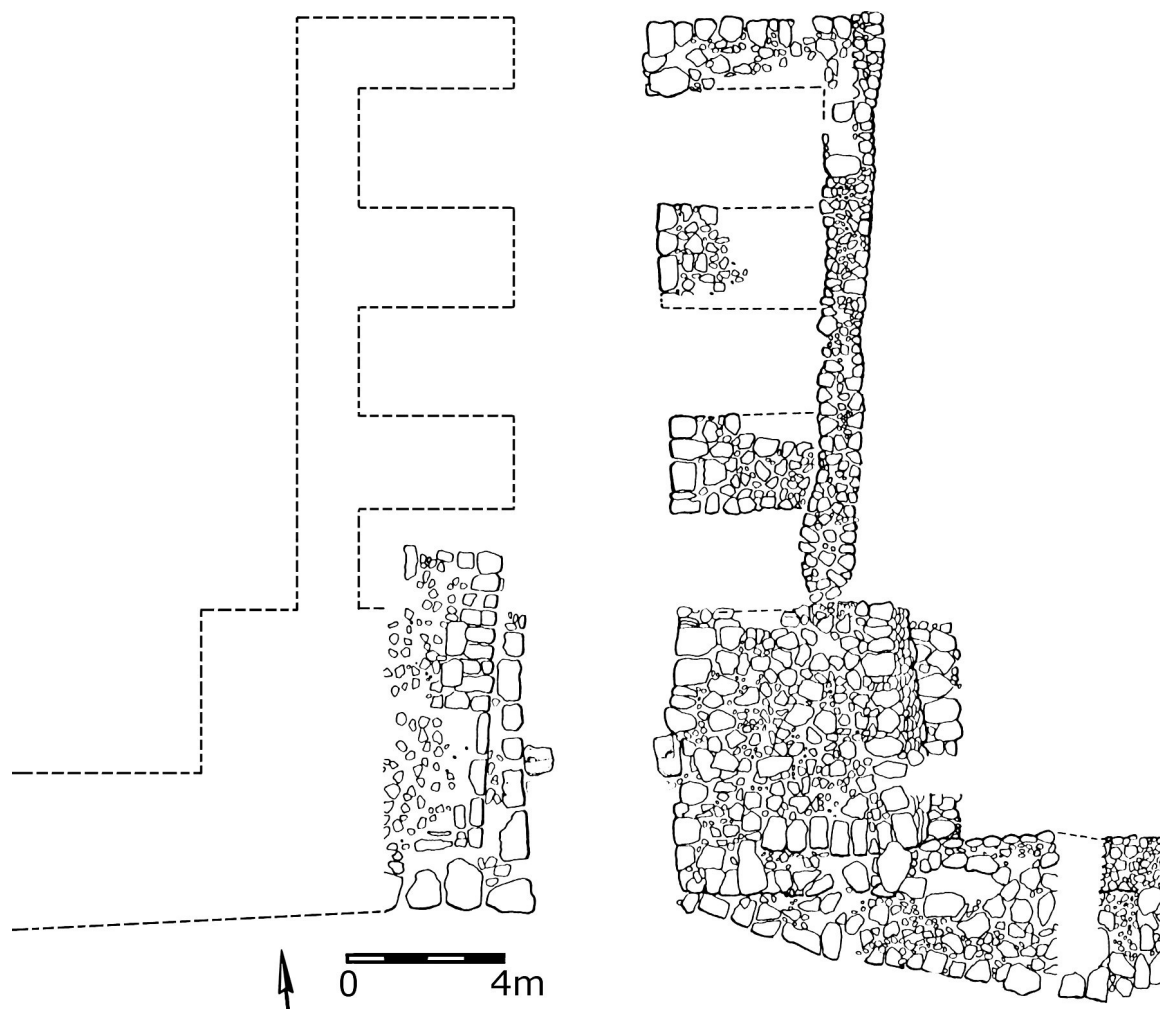
Ekron[1]

[1] Adapted from Gitin, "Tel Miqne-Ekron," 29, fig. 2.3.
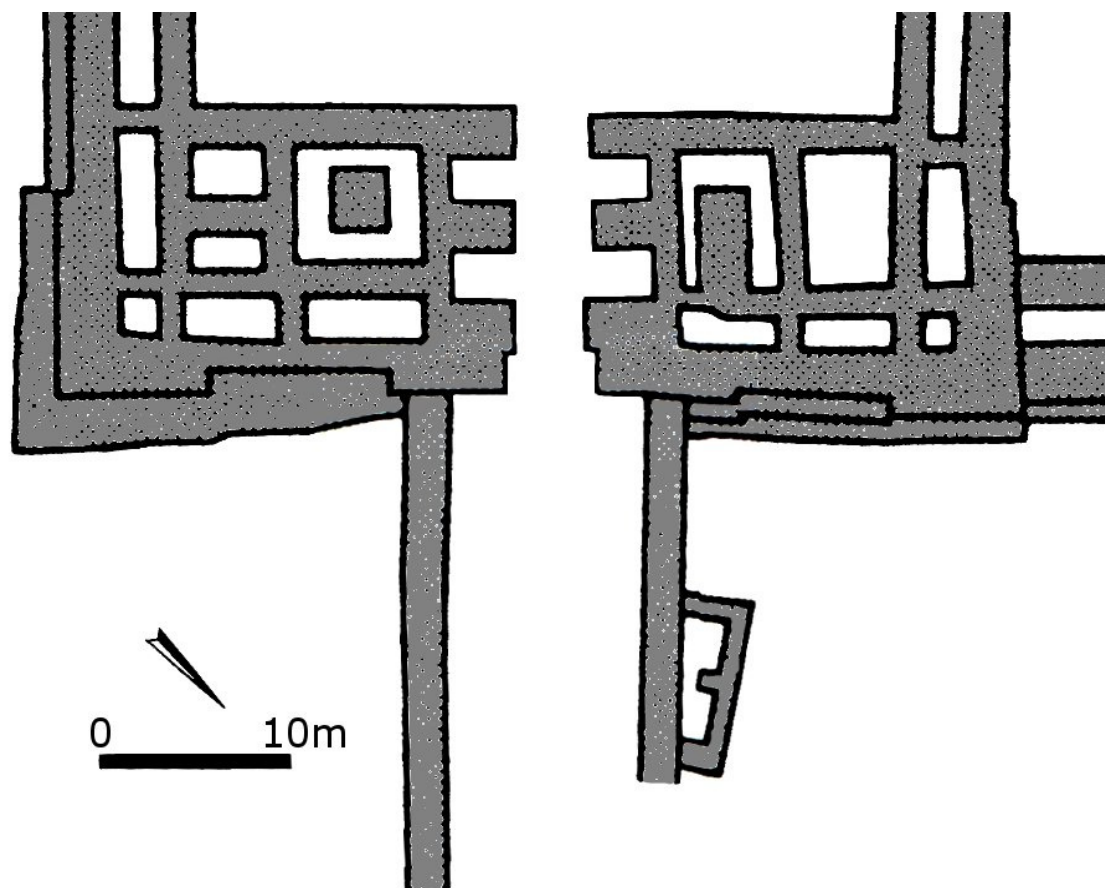
'En Haseva V[1]

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[1] Adapted from Cohen and Yisrael, "The Excavations at 'En Hazeva," 79.
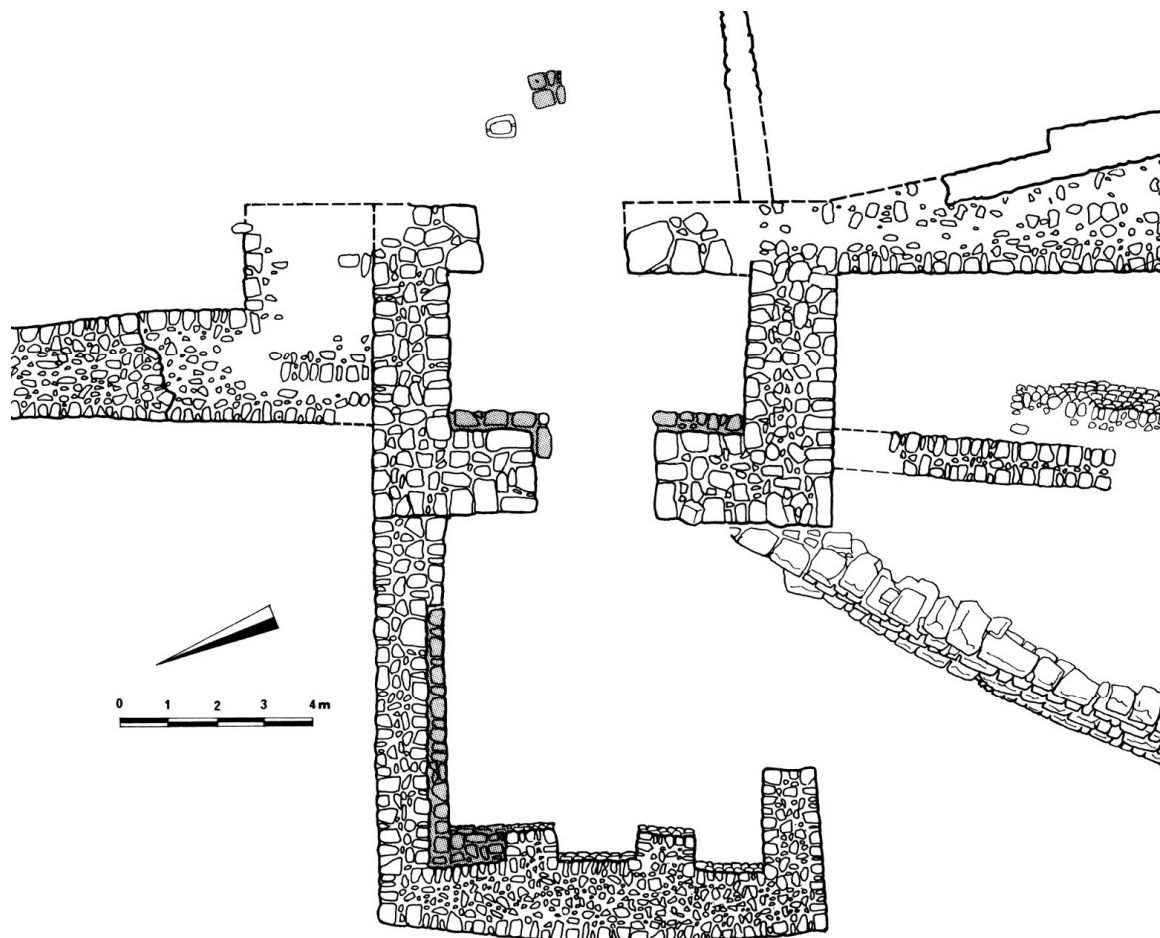
Tell el-Far'ah (N) VIIb (S gate)[1]

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[1] Adapted from Chambon, *L'Âge du Fer*, 156, pl. 9.
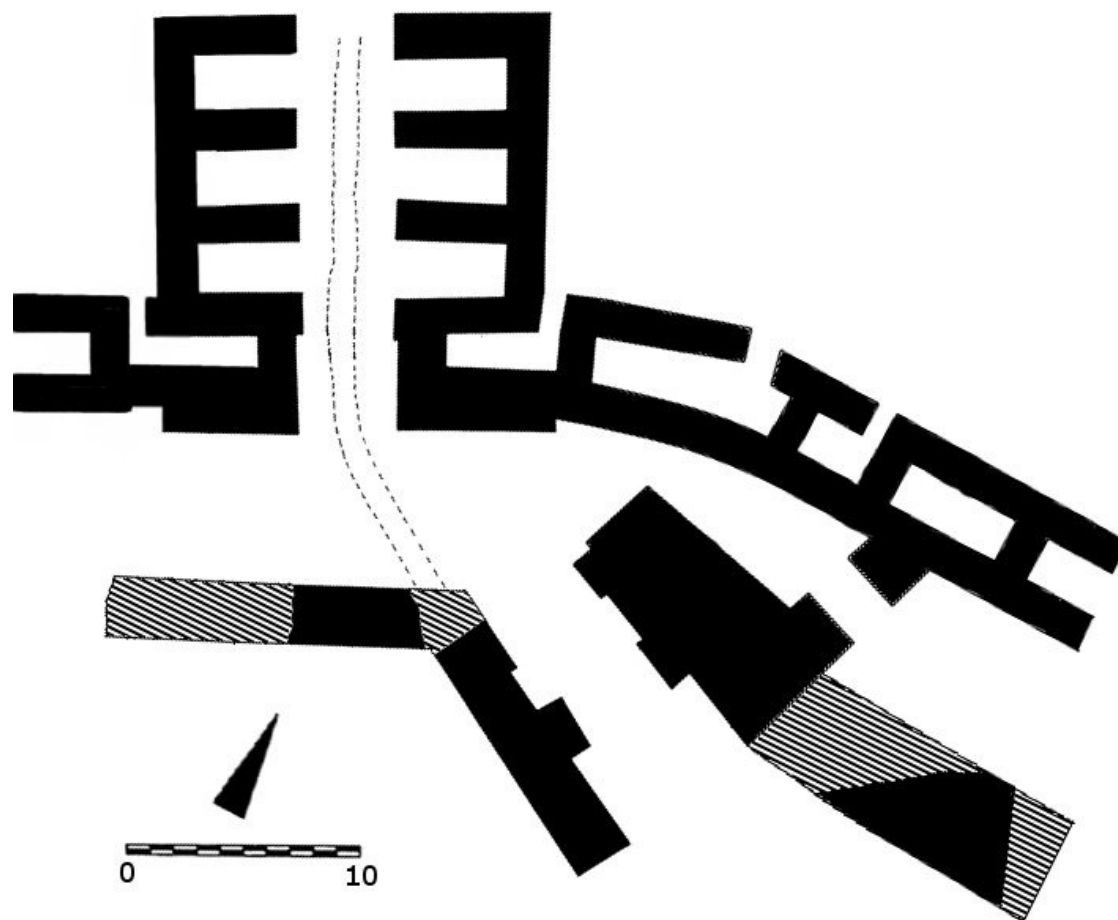
Gezer VIII[1]

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[1] Adapted from Dever, "Further Evidence," 34, fig. 1.
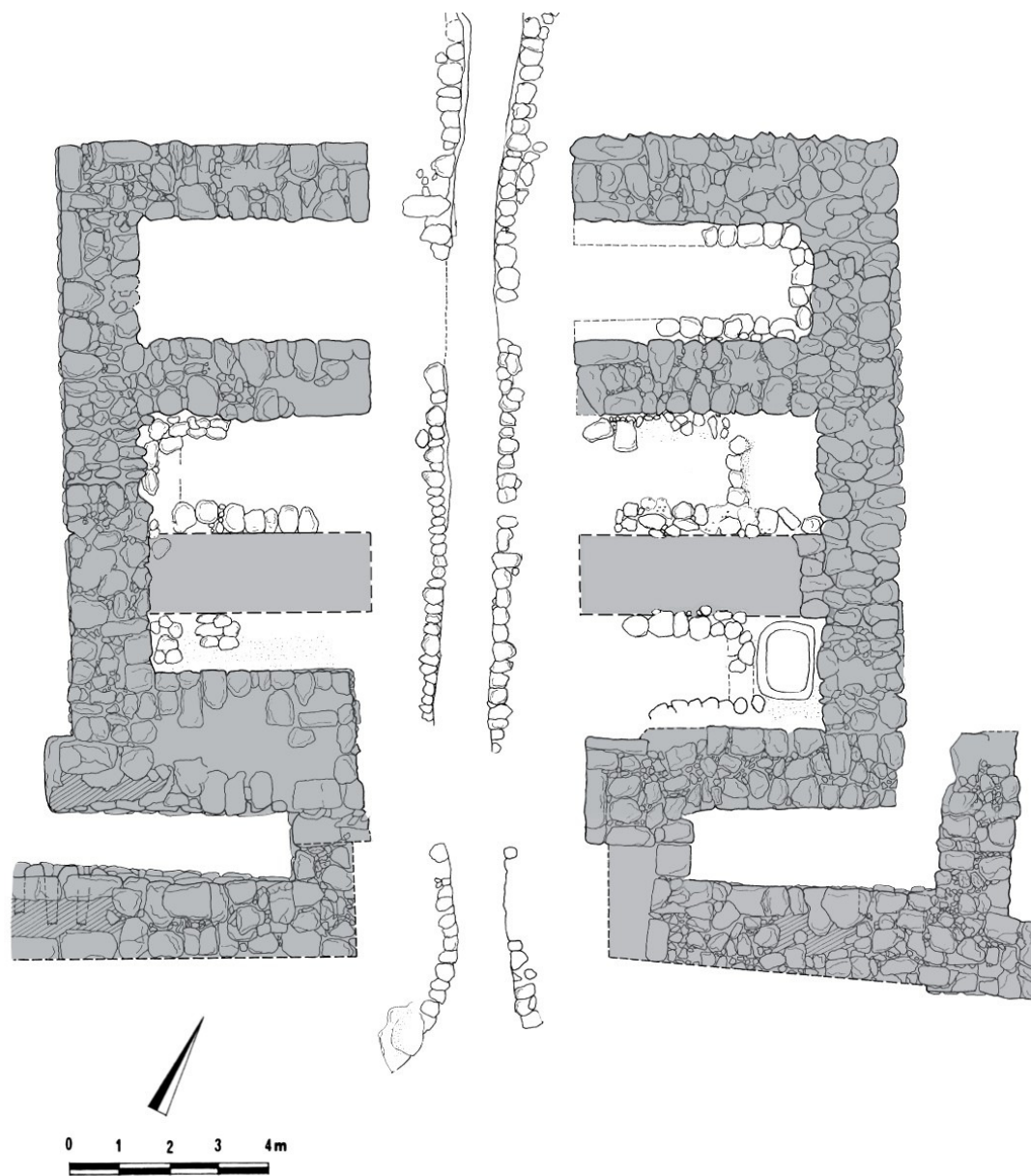
Gezer VII[1]
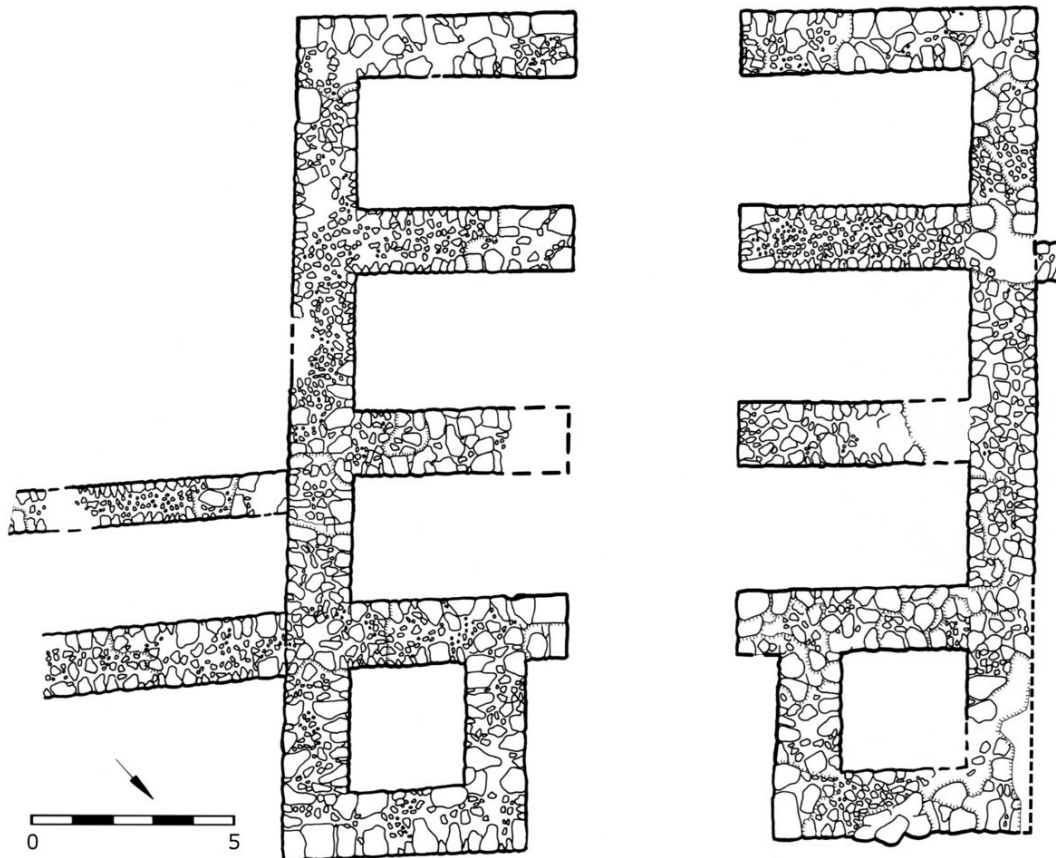
Hazor X-IX[1]

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[1] Adapted from Yadin et al., *Hazor III-IV*, plan VIII.
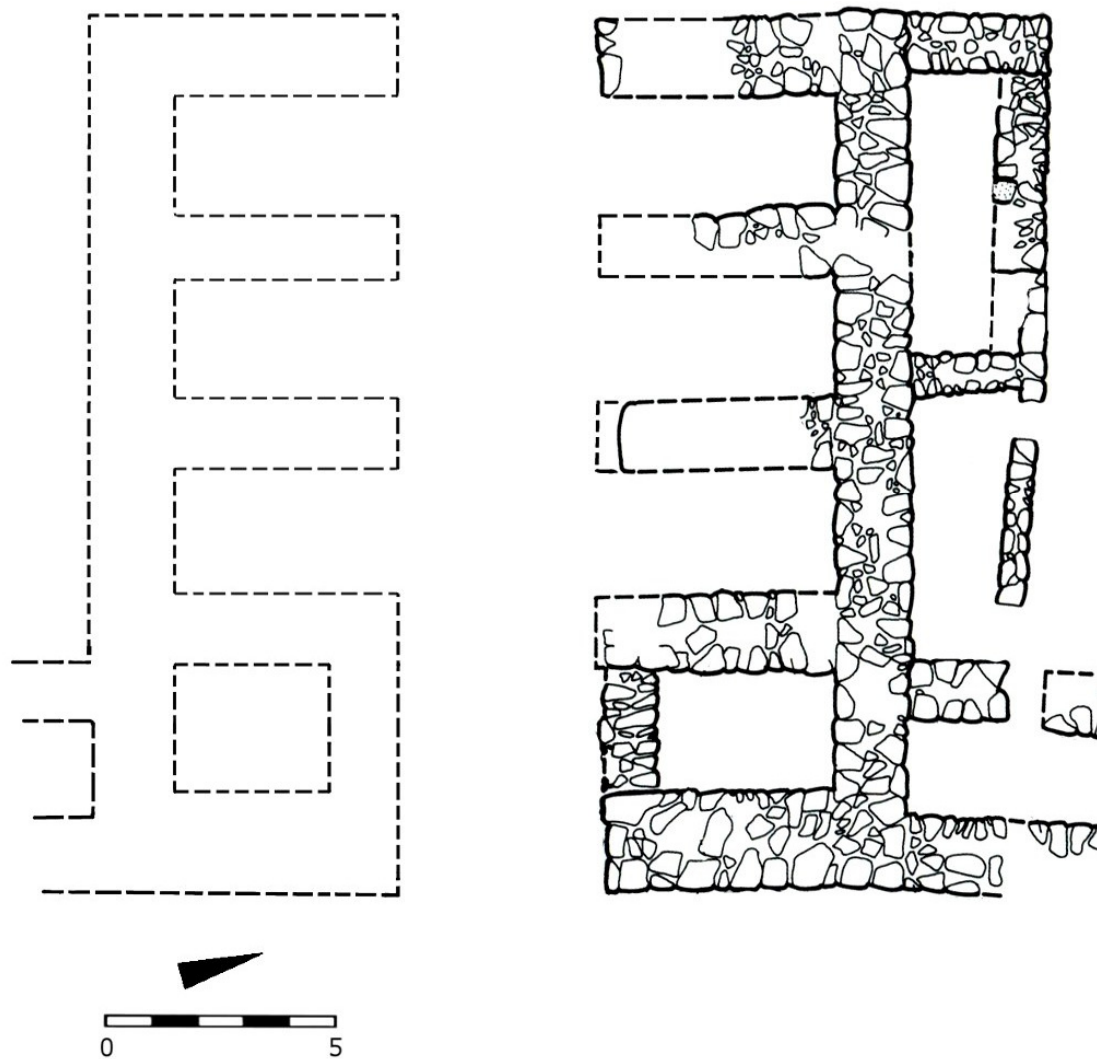
Tel 'Ira VII-VI[1]

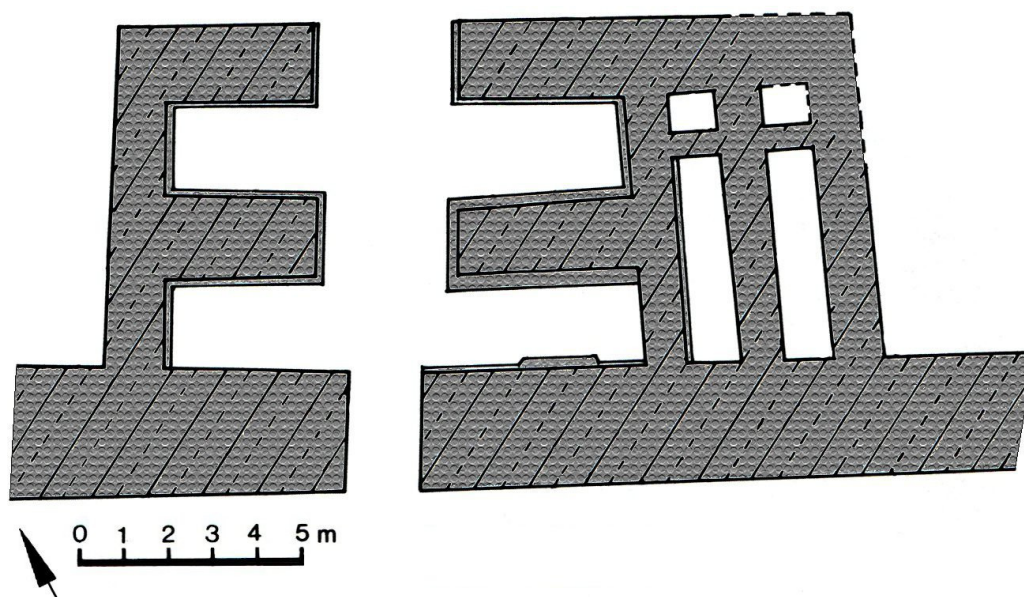[1] Adapted from Beit-Arieh, *Tel 'Ira*, 68 fig. 3.56.
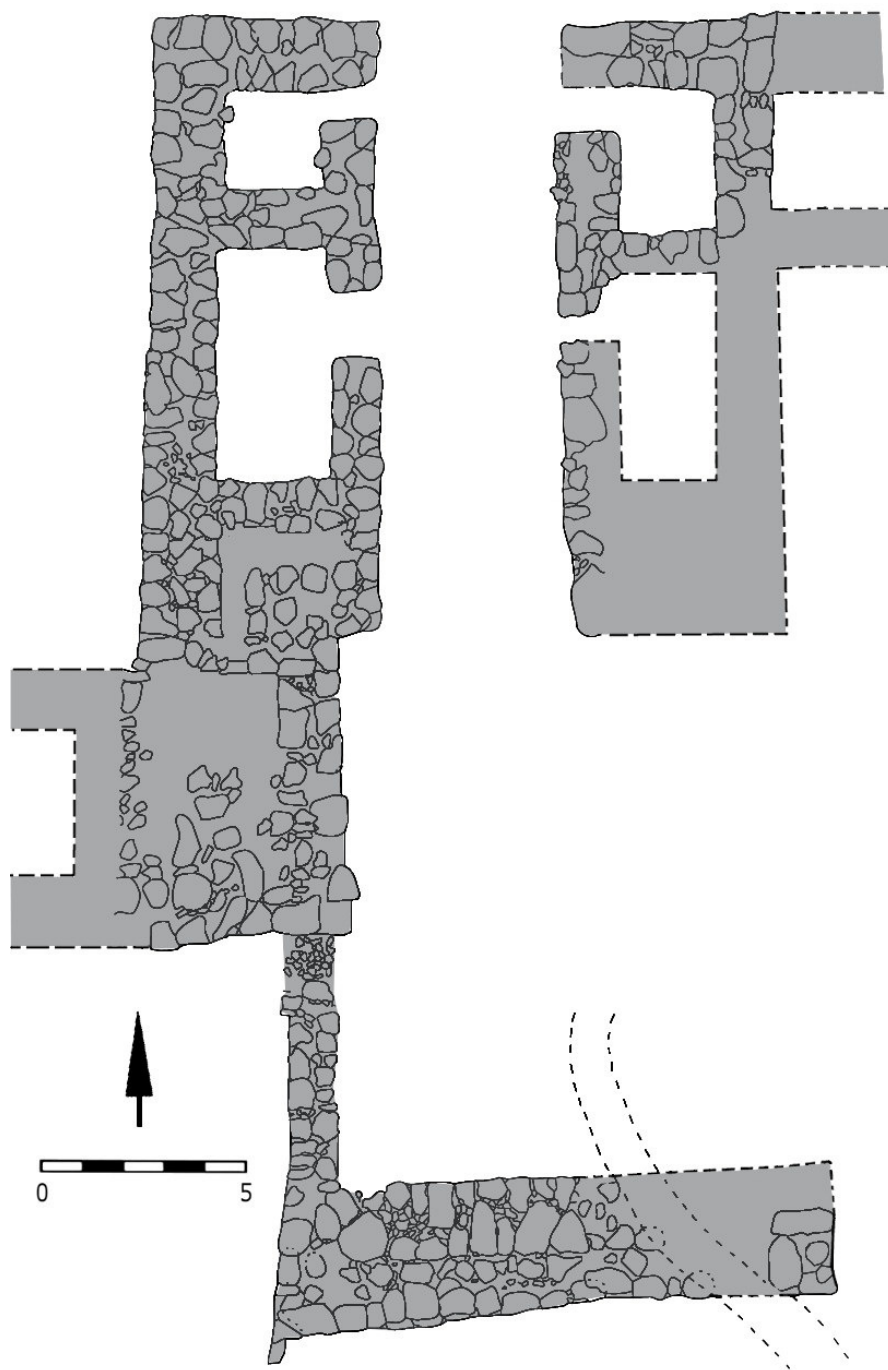
Tall Jawa VIIIb-VIIb[1]

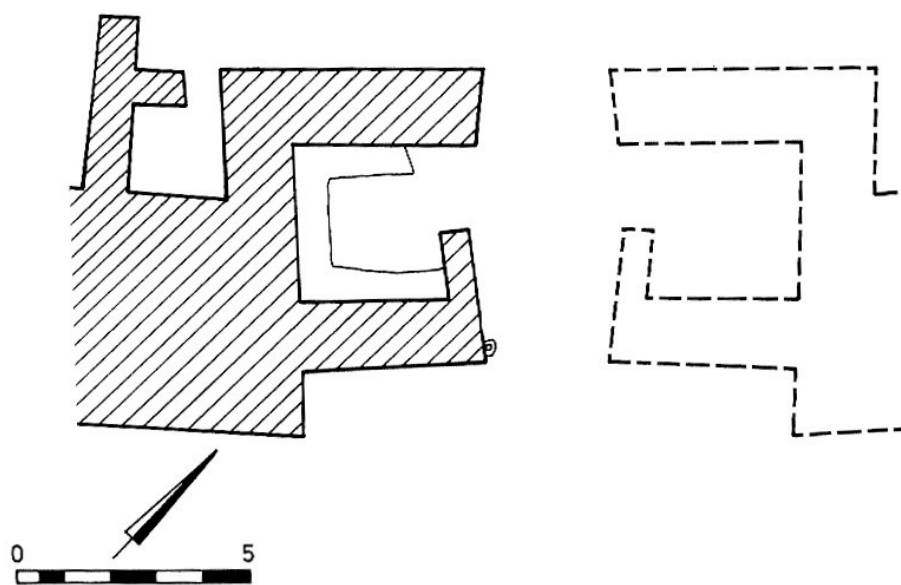[1] Adapted from Daviau, *Tall Jawa I*, 383, fig. 9.4.
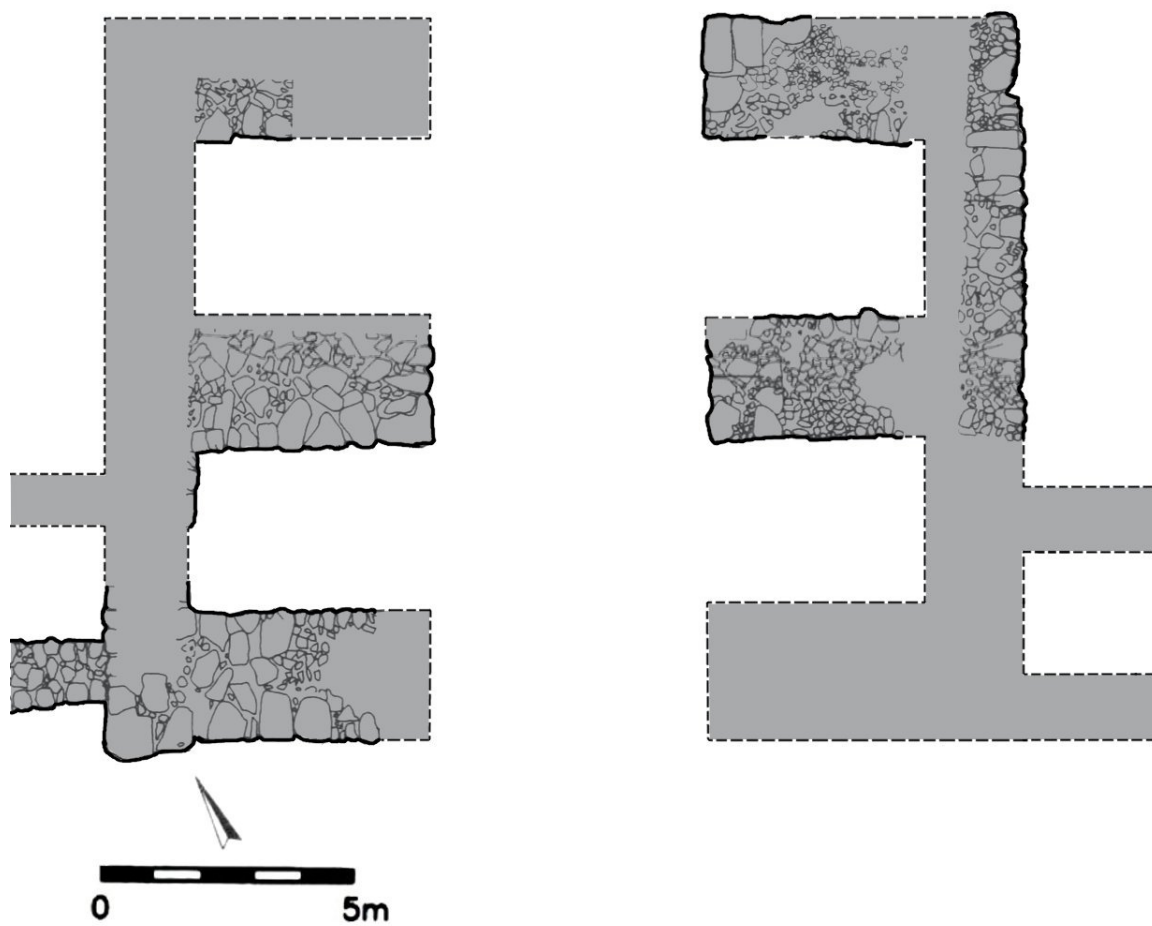
Tel Jezreel[1]

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[1] Adapted from Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1994-1996," 19, fig. 12.
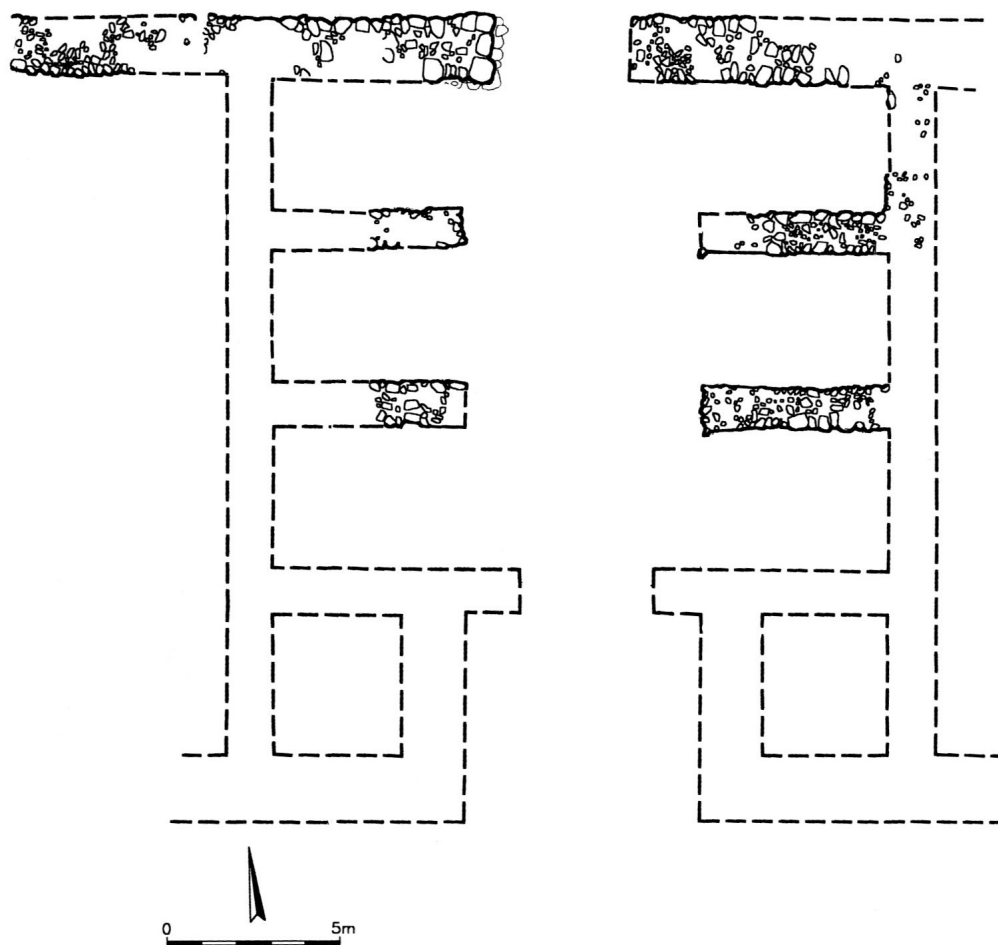
Tell el-Kheleifeh II[1]

Kinneret (Tel Kinrot) II[2]

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[1] Adapted from Pratico, *Nelson Glueck's 1938-1940 Excavations*, 177, pl. 8.
[2] Adapted from Fritz, "Kinneret," 199 fig. 6.

St. IV
St. III
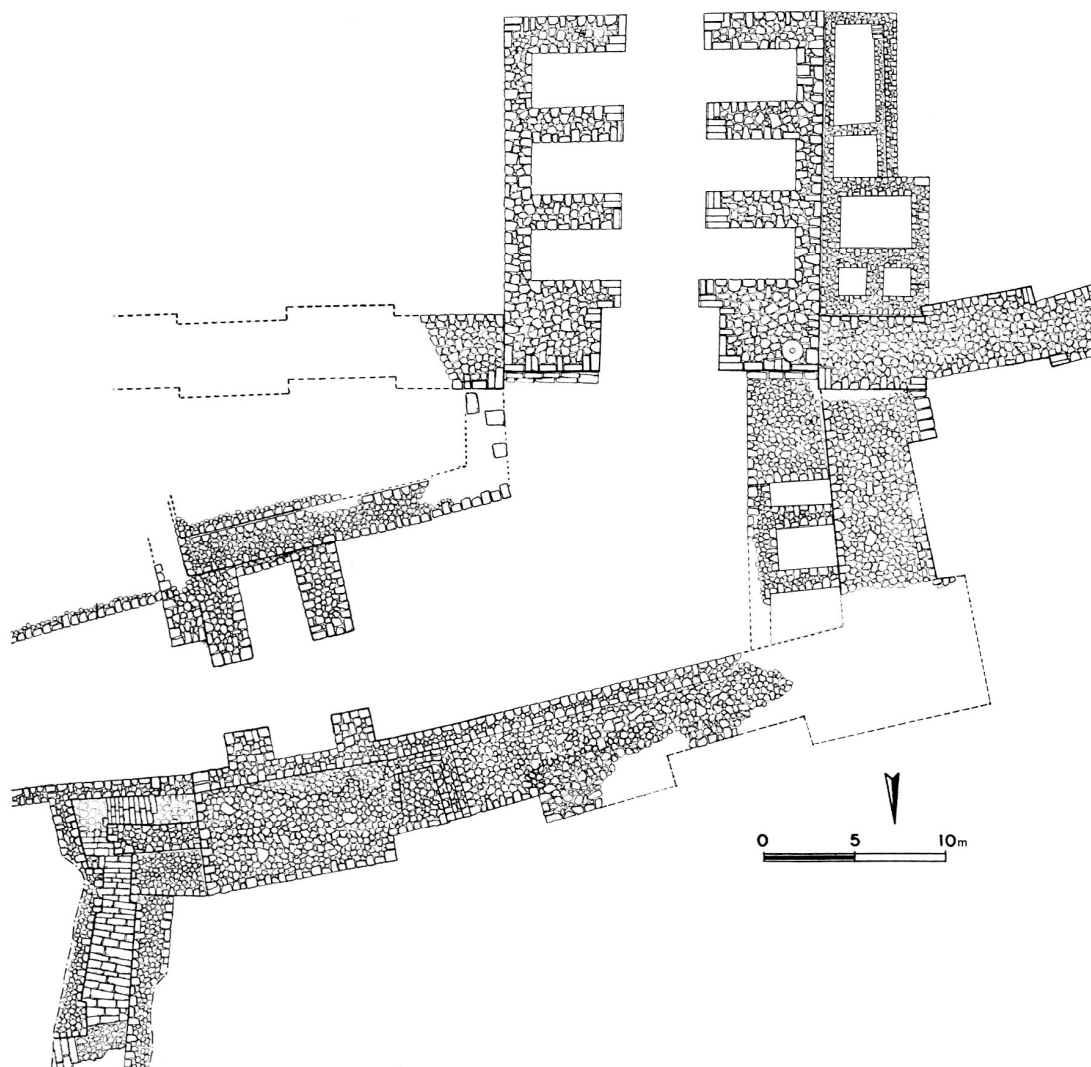Reconstr.

0   10m

Lachish IV-III complex[1]

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[1] Adapted from Ussishkin, "Tel Lachish - 1973–1977," 56, fig. 15, and Ussishkin, "The City Gate," 509, fig. 10.3.

Lachish III (citadel gate)[1]

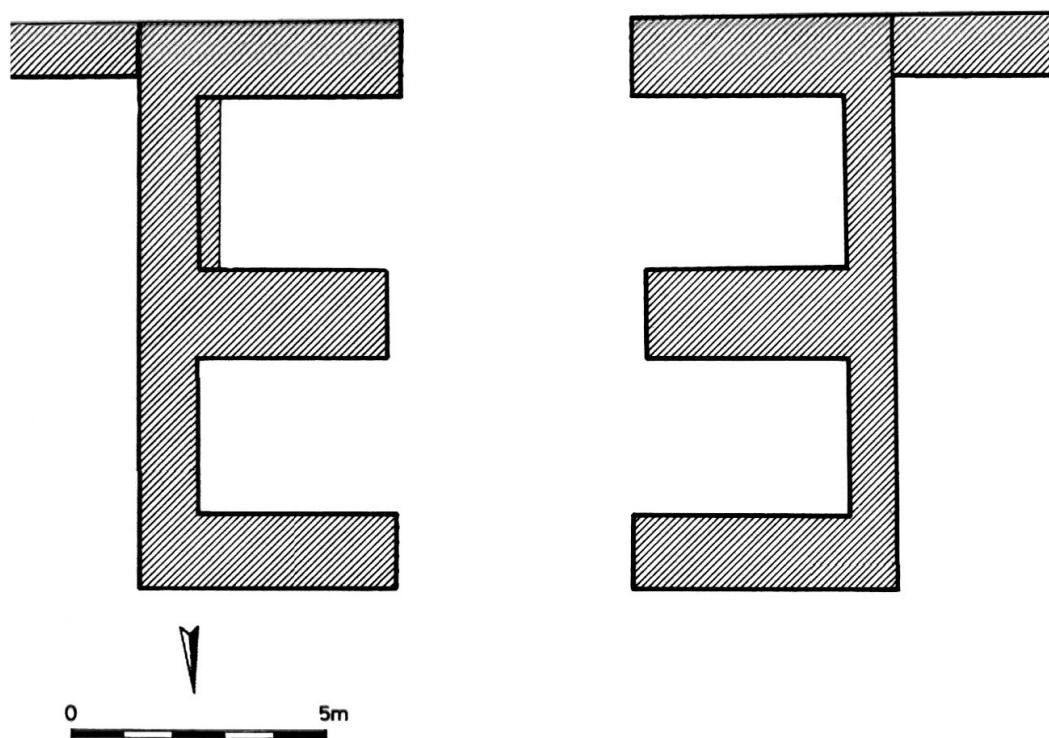---

[1] Adapted from Ussishkin, "Area PAL," 818, fig. 14.53.

Megiddo VA-IVB (city gate)[1]

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[1] Adapted from Loud, *Megiddo II*, fig. 105

Megiddo VA-IVB (Gate 1567)[1]

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[1] Adapted from Ussishkin, "Gate 1567," 416, fig. 24.3.
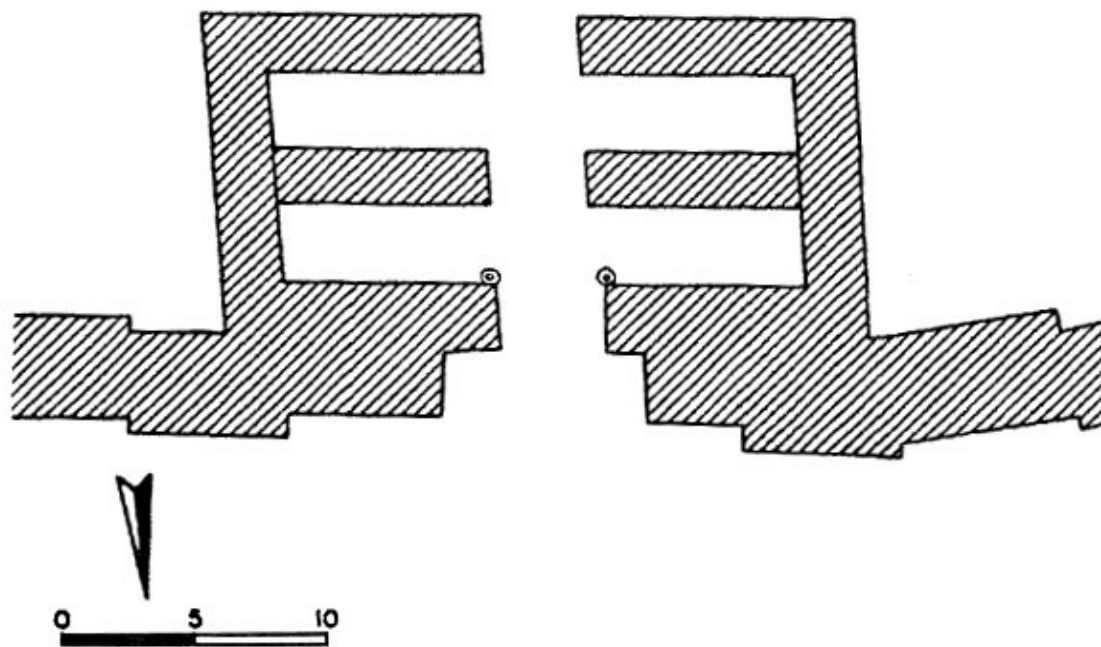
Megiddo IVA (city gate)[1]

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[1] Adapted from Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 75, fig. 86.
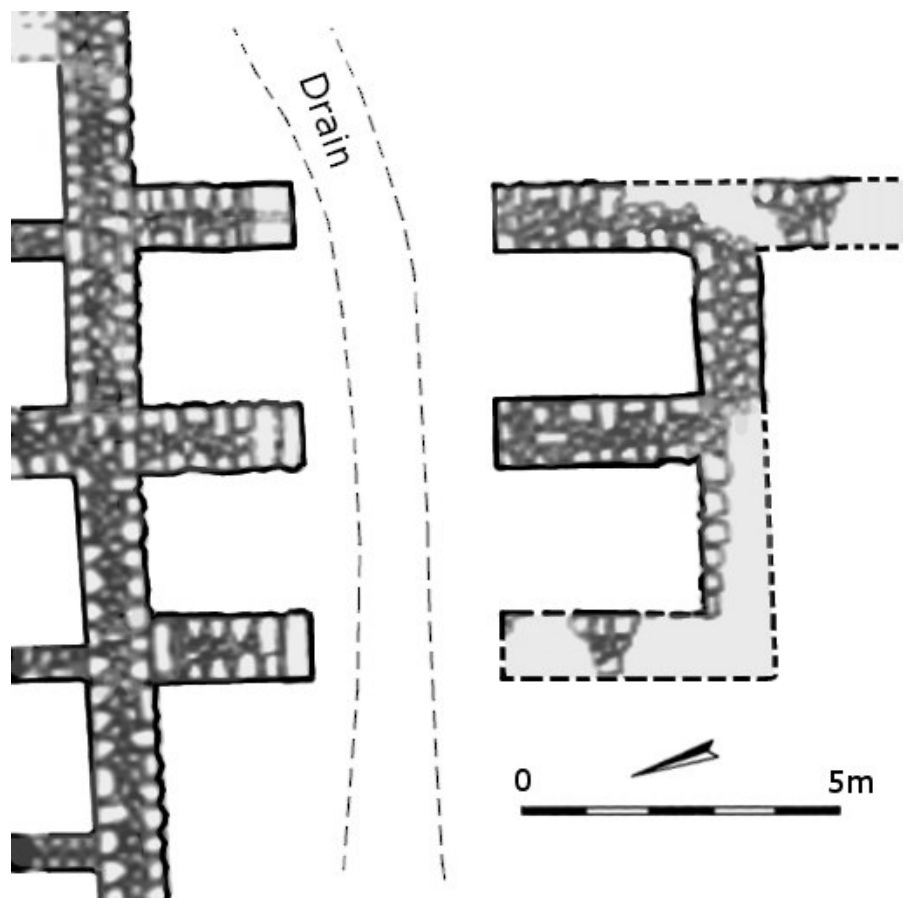
Megiddo IVA (courtyard gate, Palace 338)[1]

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[1] Adapted from Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, fig. 49.
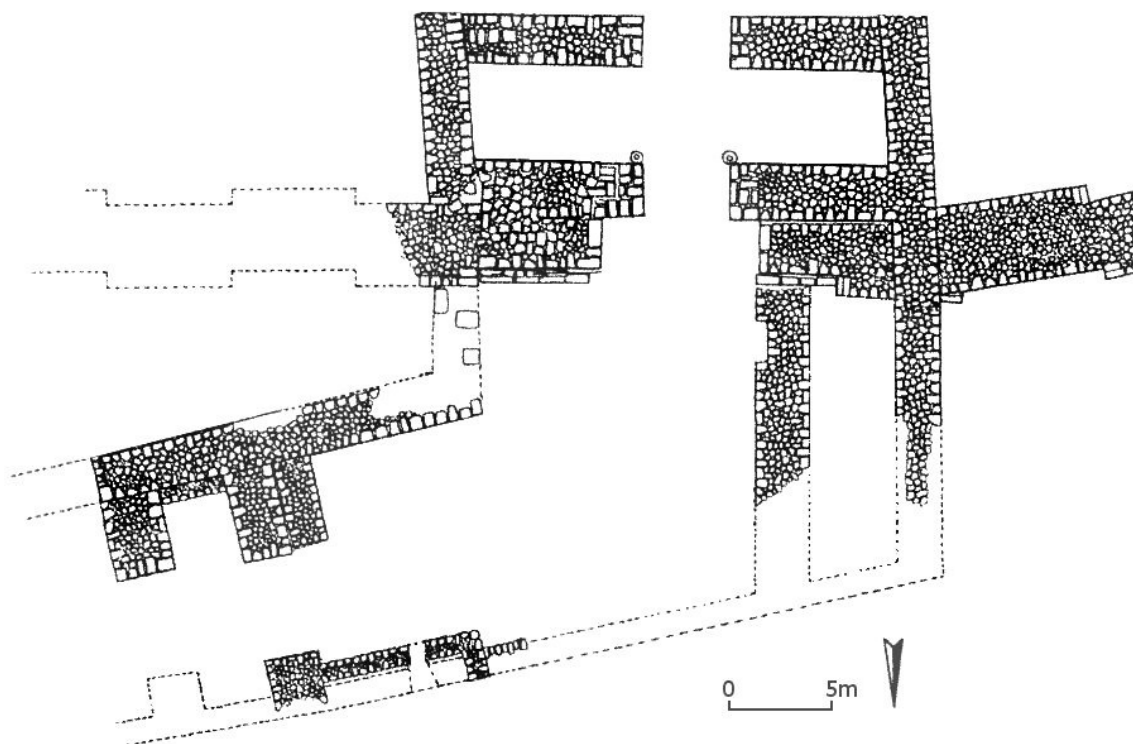
Megiddo III[1]
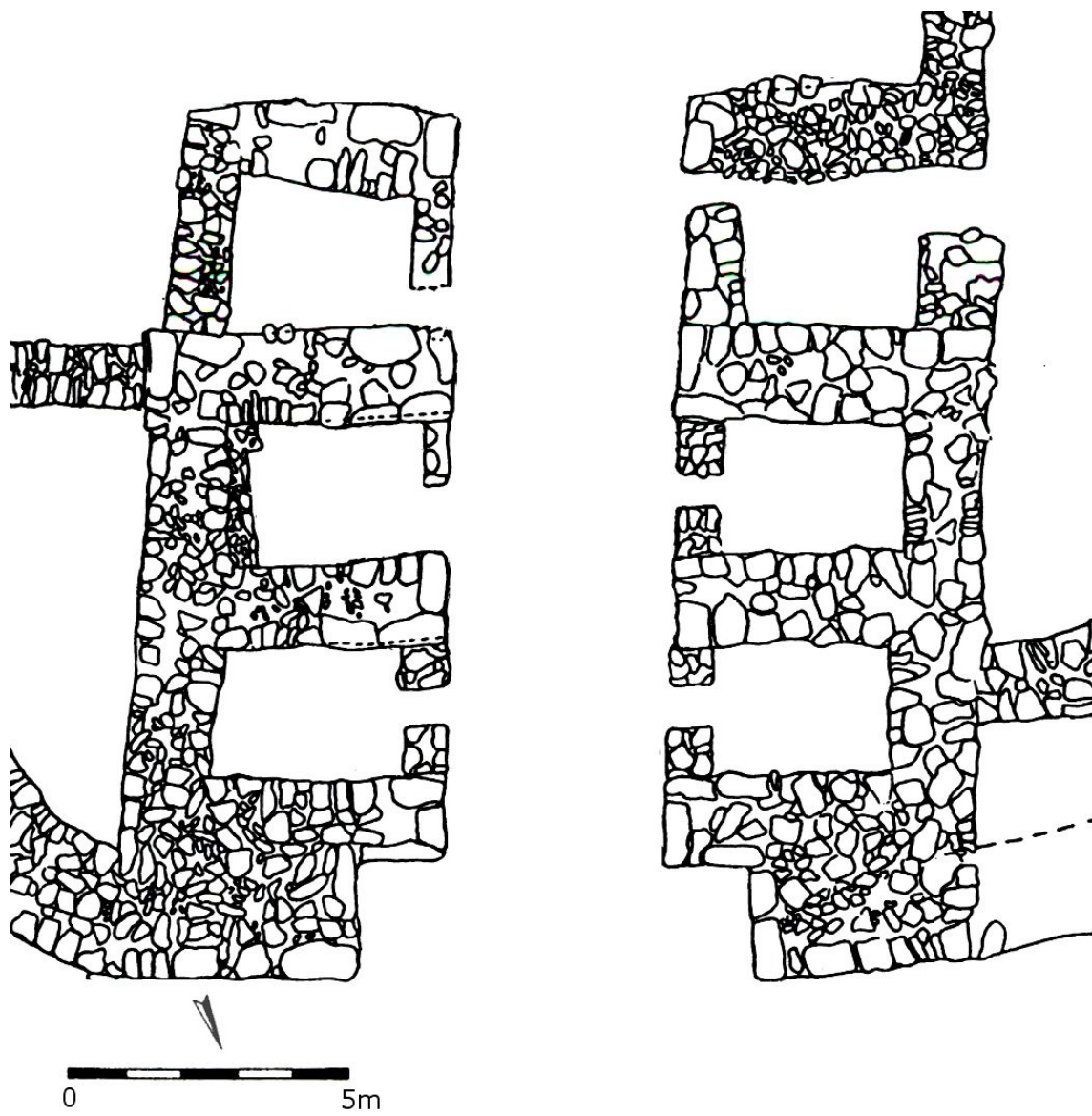
Kh. al-Mudayna ath-Thamad[1]

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[1] Adapted from Chadwick, Daviau, and Steiner, "Four Seasons," 259, fig. 2.
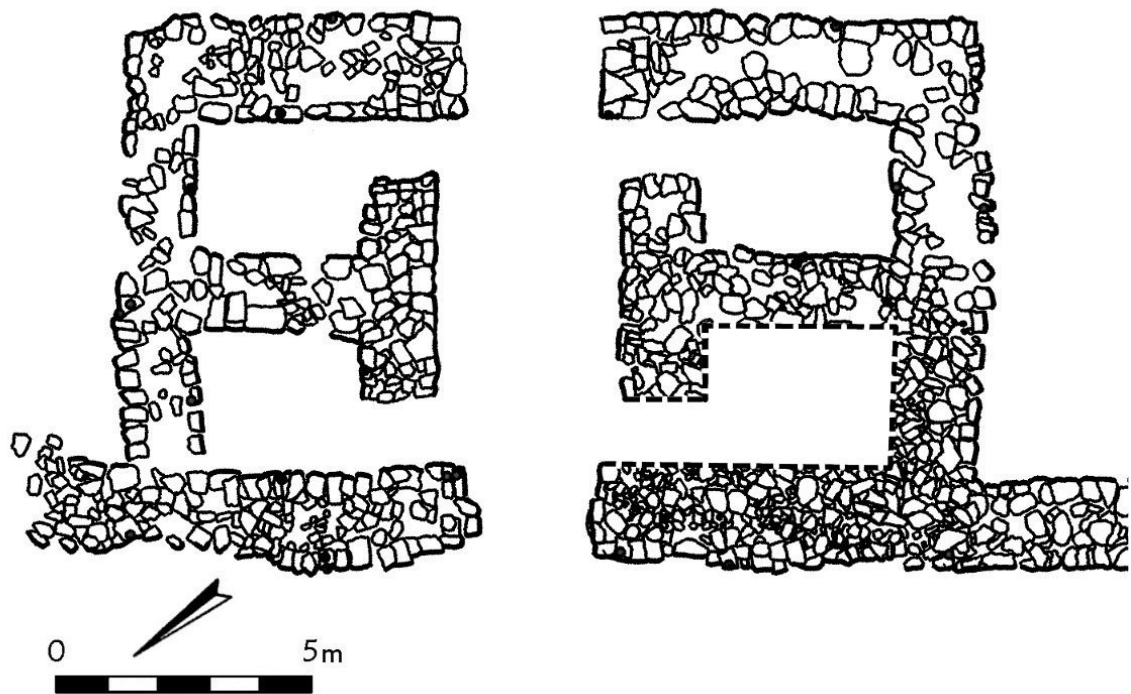
Kh. en-Nahas[1]

0   5m
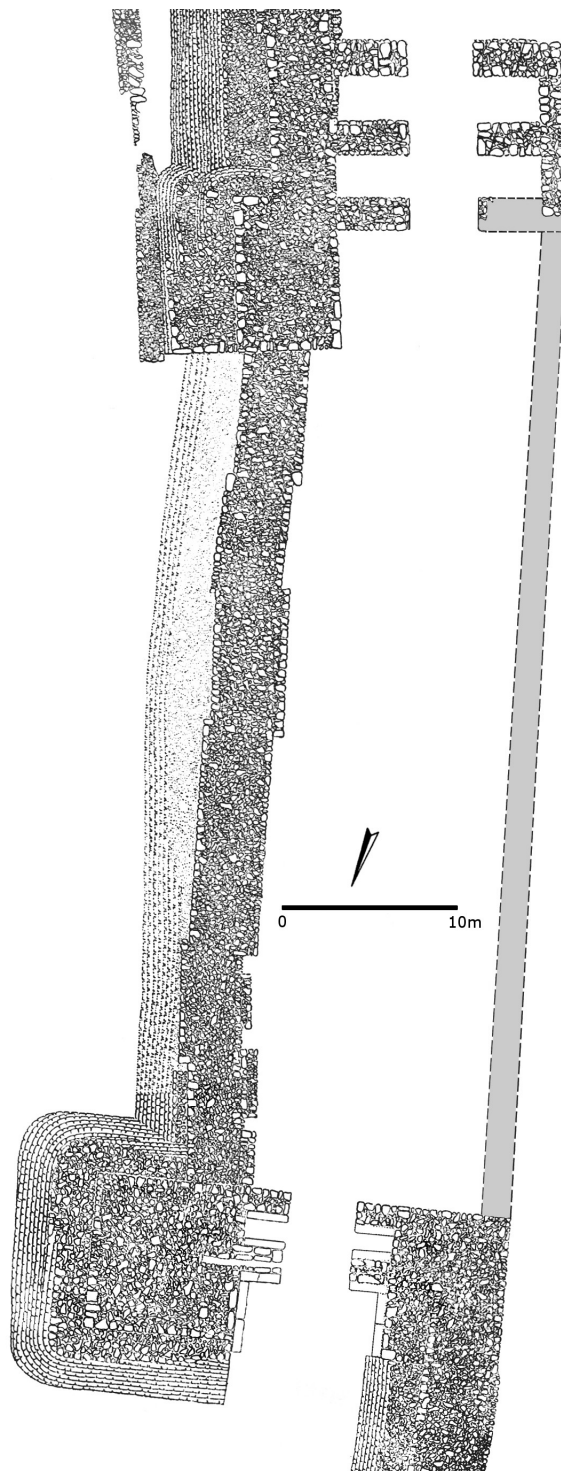
Tell en-Nasbeh complex[1]

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[1] Adapted from McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I*, Survey Map (fold out map in back pocket of book).
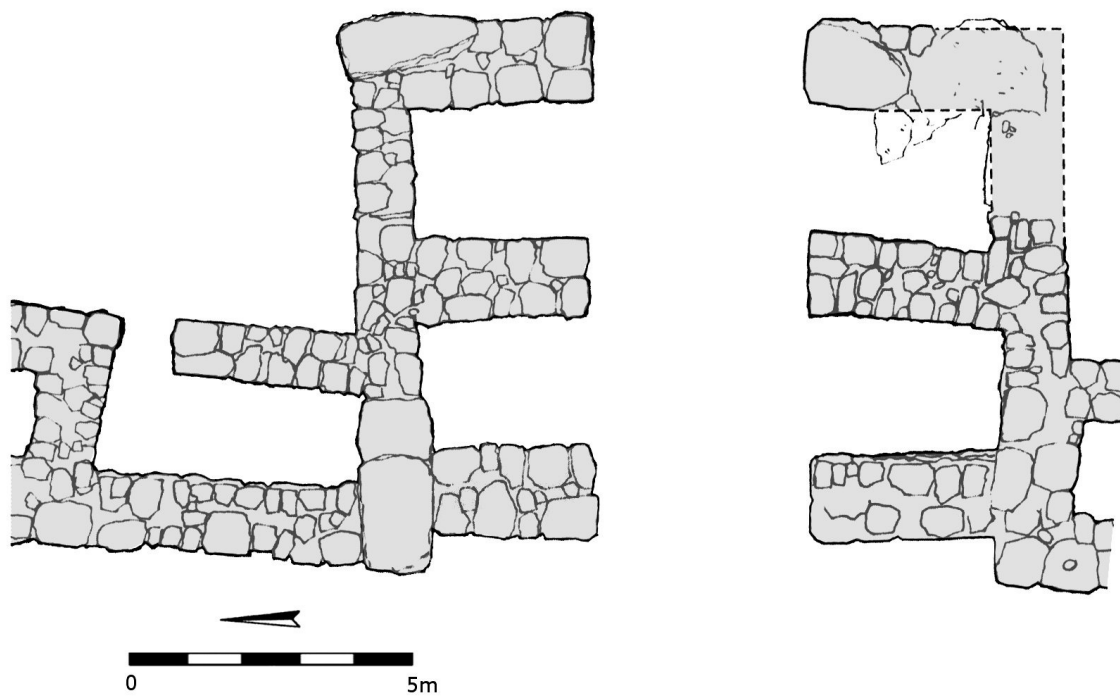
Kh. Qeiyafa IV (West)[1]

0   5m

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[1] Adapted from Garfinkel and Ganor, *Khirbet Qeiyafa I*, 85, fig. 5.41.

Kh. Qeiyafa IV (South)[1]

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[1] Adapted from Garfinkel, Ganor, and Hasel, "Khirbat [sic] Qeiyafa: Preliminary Report," fig. 6.

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