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FINAL REPORTS  
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TO  
ASHKELON

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by Tracy Hoffman

THE LEON LEVY EXPEDITION TO ASHKELON

# ASHKELON 8

*The Islamic and Crusader Periods*

by

Tracy Hoffman

With contributions by

Denys Pringle, Hannah Buckingham, Frances Healy, Tasha Vorderstrasse,  
Christopher Bronk Ramsey, Robert Kool, Robyn Le Blanc, Kathleen  
M. Forste, John M. Marston, Paula Hesse, and Deirdre N. Fulton

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Ashkelon 8:  
The Islamic and Crusader Periods

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## 19. THE SURVEY OF THE WALLS OF ASHKELON

by Denys Pringle

The series of Middle Bronze Age to Iron Age ramparts of earth, mudbrick and stone, which enclose the landward side of ancient Ashkelon in a vast arc almost 2 km in length, rank among the most impressive pre-Classical works of fortification to have survived in the Near East. By the mid-twelfth century A.D., however, their remains had acquired the appearance of a huge artificial earthwork, on top of which the citizens of medieval Ashkelon (or 'Asqalan if they spoke Arabic, Ascalon if they spoke French, Latin, or Greek) had chosen to erect their city walls of lime-mortared concrete and stone.<sup>1</sup> Before the excavations carried out by the Leon Levy Expedition in the 1980s and 1990s, the complexity of the pre-Classical fortifications could hardly have been imagined; but while archaeological excavation proved to be invaluable in elucidating the character and dating of those works, it was less adept in disentangling the phasing of the later walls, which, in addition to the natural ravages of earthquakes and the passage of time, had also suffered periodically from deliberate campaigns of destruction, most notably in 1153, 1187, 1191, 1192, 1198 (?), 1247, 1270, and 1832. As a result, their remains exist today as a series of disarticulated lumps of masonry of differing shapes and sizes, many of them quite plainly not in their original positions and affording few opportunities for below-ground archaeological investigation.

Although Ashkelon's later walls are often referred to as the work of the Crusaders—one usually reliable guidebook even crediting them to King Baldwin II (1118–31), who had already been dead for over two decades before the city fell into Crusader hands (Guide Bleu 1981:444–45; cf. Bagatti 1983:147; Langè 1965:68–70, 178)—a sample of burnt organic material taken from the mortar of a section of the eastern part of the enceinte has given an uncalibrated radiocarbon date of 1630±50 BP (GrA-7897) (Kedar and Mook 1978; cf. Kedar and Kaufman 1975), equivalent when calibrated to a range in calendar years of A.D. 260–550 at 2σ or A.D. 380–530 at 1σ. Since the sample may have included mature wood, already old when burned, the measurement can only provide a *terminus post quem*

for the construction.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, a preliminary study of the surviving masonry elements in 1981–83 indicated that they were the result of a complex structural history extending over several centuries (Pringle 1984; cf. Pringle 1995:84–85; 1997a:21).

As part of the investigation of the northern rampart in 1993, the Leon Levy Expedition exposed the lower parts of the massive medieval masonry talus that was already visible above ground, fronting the earlier pre-Classical rampart (Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008:244–45). The talus was subsequently dated to the Fatimid period, largely on the basis of the discovery in the fill in front of it of an Arabic inscription recording the construction of a tower in A.H. 544 /A.D. 1150. Before the marble panel that bore the inscription fell or was thrown into the fill, however, it had been reused to display the armorial bearings of Sir Hugh Wake, an English knight who accompanied Simon de Montfort on Richard Earl of Cornwall's crusade in 1240–41 (Sharon 1994; 1995; 1997:1.178–83) and who, we may thus assume, was also involved in building the castle there, which is described by Richard himself in a surviving letter.<sup>3</sup> These discoveries underlined the need for a comprehensive reappraisal of the postclassical fortifications of Ashkelon.

Following discussions between Professor Daniel Master, director of the Ashkelon excavations, Dr. Tracy Hoffman, and Denys Pringle in June 2008, it was agreed in principle that before any further intrusive investigations took place on the medieval defenses, an archaeological and historical assessment should be undertaken in order to define a clear research strategy for them. The resulting project, which represents a collaboration between the Leon Levy Expedition and Cardiff University, has had three principal objectives:

1. to complete the topographical survey of the walls, which had already been started by the Expedition's surveyor, Peter Chomowitz;
2. to complete the detailed examination of all of the surviving visible pieces of masonry, begun by Denys

<sup>1</sup> William of Tyre 17.22, in *CCCM* 63:791; trans. Babcock and Krey 2.219. V. Guérin in 1854 (1857:83–84) and E. G. Rey in 1859 (1871:206), however, considered the earthworks to be partly natural.

<sup>2</sup> Calibration by the maximum intercept method (Stuiver and Reimer 1986), using OxCal 4.1 (Bronk Ramsey 2009) and the IntCal09 dataset (Reimer et al. 2009). I am grateful to Frances Healy for this calculation and observation.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, in *RS* 57.4:143–44 (translated below).

Pringle in 1981–83, with the purpose of attempting to define a relative phasing scheme for them; and

3. to undertake a detailed survey of all the relevant historical sources relating to the construction and demolition of elements of Ashkelon's defenses from the Byzantine period onward.

The topographical survey was subsequently continued by Peter Chomowitz, assisted by Joshua Walton, in April 2009 and was completed in July 2012. In April 2009, Denys Pringle and Deborah Gammill also continued the survey of the masonry elements that Pringle had started in the 1980s; this was concluded by Pringle during the summer excavation seasons in July 2011 and July 2012. In tandem with the architectural examination of what remained of the town walls, single-entity short-life samples of charcoal embedded in the mortar from different phases were also collected during the 2012 and 2014 seasons in connection with a parallel radiocarbon dating and chronological modeling project. This is reported on elsewhere in this volume by Denys Pringle, Dr. Frances Healy, and Professor Christopher Bronk Ramsey (see Chapter 20, this volume), and its main conclusions are also incorporated into the present chapter. Similarly, this chapter also includes relevant information from the excavations supervised by Dr. Katia Cytryn-Silverman (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Philip Johnston (Harvard University) on the northern rampart (Grid 10) and at the Jerusalem Gate (Grid 35) in July 2011 and those by Hannah Buckingham and Denys Pringle (Grid 20) in June 2014, which are also all reported on in fuller detail elsewhere in this volume.<sup>4</sup>

#### *The Historical Sources*

Historical sources, and the excavated remains of walls and a tower on the northern rampart, indicate that Ashkelon was already enclosed by masonry fortifications of some kind by the late second century B.C., during the Hasmonean period.<sup>5</sup> During the Roman period it seems that these walls were no longer kept in repair; but by the time of the Muslim conquest in the early seventh century a new circuit of city walls, towers,

<sup>4</sup> See Chapters 16–18, this volume. Interim reports on the Walls of Medieval Ascalon Project include: Pringle 2013b; 2013c; 2014:355–67, figs. 8–11; 2017; Pringle and Buckingham 2016.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Macc 10:86, 11:60, 12:33–38; Josephus, *Ant* 12.4 (181–82); 13.4 (101); 13.10–11 (180–83); *Loeb* 7.94, 274, 314–18; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.7.11, LCL 1.50; Stager 1993:106; Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008:240, figs. 14.36–37.



Figure 19.1. Ashkelon (Askalon) as illustrated on the Madaba mosaic map, Jordan (ca. 557) (photo Denys Pringle 2016)

and gates had evidently been constructed. Although explicit historical references to their construction are lacking, it seems likely that they would have been built in the Byzantine period, during the fifth or sixth century A.D., at a time when other cities in the region were also being fortified.

Depictions of Ashkelon's Byzantine walls are found in two mosaics of the late Byzantine and early Islamic periods. Ashkelon (Askalon) is shown only in a fragmentary form on what survives of the Madaba Mosaic Map (figure 19.1), a work now dated to around 557.<sup>6</sup> This illustrates part of the city enclosed by a wall with an arched gateway flanked by rectangular towers apparently facing east and a mural tower to the north of it. The caption also indicates the existence of a shrine of the "Egyptians." The way in which the colonnaded streets are shown also suggests that, as in the case of Jerusalem on the same mosaic, the representation of Ashkelon is based on actuality, rather than being simply a standard representation of a late classical walled city (Palmer and Guthe 1906; Donner 1992:64–66; Piccirillo 1993:figs. 60, 77; Alliata 1999:86 (nos. 102–103); cf. Hoffman 2004:25–26, fig. 2.2). Ashkelon is

<sup>6</sup> The dating has recently been discussed by Madden 2012.



Figure 19.2. Vignette showing the fortified city of Ashkelon (Askalon) in a mosaic in the church of St. Stephen at Umm al-Rasas, Jordan (A.D. 718) (photo Denys Pringle 2001)

also shown on a mosaic, dated by an inscription to A.D. 718 (or possibly 785), in the church of St. Stephen at Umm al-Rasas, also in Jordan, which depicts a number of the metropolitan cities of the region as a series of stylized vignettes (Piccirillo 1994:244–46, 255, 269, 343; Duval 1994:167–86). Here the city is shown surrounded by a crenellated wall, with six mural towers three to four stories high and a gate in the foreground also flanked by rectangular towers (figure 19.2). The wall encloses a rotunda with a pitched roof (Piccirillo 1993:figs. 345, 352; Duval 1994:184–85, pl. XV; Stager 1991b:39); if it is not the cathedral this may possibly be identified as the “Well of Peace,” a monument described by the Piacenza Pilgrim ca. 570 as “built like a theatre, in which one goes down by steps to the water” and which contained the tombs of the Three Egyptian Martyrs, though the Madaba Map appears to locate this northeast of the city.<sup>7</sup>

Byzantine Ashkelon seems likely to have fallen to ‘Amr ibn al-‘As soon after the Muslims took Gaza in 637; but according to al-Baladhuri (writing ca. 869) the town was retaken by the Byzantines and had to

<sup>7</sup> Piacenza Pilgrim 33, in *CCSL* 175, 145; trans. Wilkinson 1977:85; Donner 1992:65–66.

be captured for a second time by the Muslims under Mu‘awiya, the provincial governor. This second capture may have happened at the time of the fall of the provincial capital, Caesarea,<sup>8</sup> after which Muslim attention turned to Egypt. Mu‘awiya subsequently transformed Ashkelon into a fortified maritime post, or *ribat*, one of a number of such stations established along the Palestinian coast as a defense against Byzantine raiding.<sup>9</sup> Despite experiencing a strong earthquake in 672 (Amiran, Arieih, and Turcotte 1994:266), Ashkelon was described by the Christian writer Epiphanius around 675 as a “fortress” containing the burial place of St. Cosmas and St. Damian.<sup>10</sup> Al-Baladhuri also tells us that the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (A.D. 685–705) rebuilt the city and its mosque and refortified and repopulated it, after it had been raided and emptied of its population by the Byzantines during the period when Umayyad authority was being contested by ‘Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr (A.D. 683–93).<sup>11</sup> The date for the start of such a rebuilding may therefore be placed after 685/93 and it may have continued at least until ‘Abd al-Malik’s death in 705. Ashkelon was also singled out among the coastal cities in the *fada’il* (‘praise’) literature of this period as an ideal place for Muslims to settle, on account of its sanctity and fertility.<sup>12</sup>

Ashkelon is unlikely to have been immune to the effects of the massive earthquake and tsunami which hit Syria and Palestine on 18 January 749 (Amiran, Arieih, and Turcotte 1994:266–67), though the only written evidence for building work in the early Abbasid period is an inscription recording the construction of a mosque and minaret in Muharram A.H. 155 (13 December A.D. 771–11 January 772). This credits the building work to the *‘amir al-mu‘minin*, al-Mahdi, who, as Sharon argues, seems more likely in this instance to have been the reigning caliph, al-Mansur (754–75), than his son al-Mahdi (775–85), who only succeeded him in October 775 (*RCEA* 1:32–33, no. 42; Le Strange 1890:401; El‘ad 1982:164 n. 40; Gil 1992:193; Sharon 1997:1.132, 144–47 (no. 1), fig. 55;

<sup>8</sup> Eutychius (Sa‘id ibn Bitriq) dates Mu‘awiya’s capture of Caesarea and Ashkelon to the seventh year of the caliphate of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (640/1); trans. Pirone, 339; *PG* 111, 1102.

<sup>9</sup> al-Baladhuri, trans. Hitti, 219; Gil 1992:60, 107; cf. Kaegi 1992:67, 97, 146, 276; Sharon 1995:64; 1997:1.131; El‘ad 1982:147.

<sup>10</sup> Donner 1971; trans. Wilkinson 1977:119, cf. 150.

<sup>11</sup> al-Baladhuri (A.D. 869), trans. Hitti, 219, 221–22; Le Strange 1890:400–401; Marmardji 1951:140; El‘ad 1982:150–51; Gil 1992:80–81; Sharon 1995:64–65; 1997:1.131–32; cf. Kennedy 1986:89–100.

<sup>12</sup> El‘ad 1982:151, 163 nn. 30–31; cf. al-Harawi, trans. Sourdell-Thomine, 75.



cf. Kennedy 1986:137). Ashkelon is again mentioned as having been devastated, along with Eleutheropolis (Bayt Jibrin), Gaza, and Sariphaea (Sarafand), during the insurrection of Yahya ibn Irmiya in 788;<sup>13</sup> and in A.H. 237 (A.D. 851–52), a catastrophic fire burned some houses and the surrounding plantations (Gil 1992:193). Whether any of these events affected the town's defenses is unknown, though it seems that despite the transfer of the caliphal capital to Baghdad in 763, the Abbasids continued to maintain the coastal cities in a state of defense (El'ad 1982:151–52). From 854, when the caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–61) first constructed a fleet of warships in Egypt, the Palestinian and Syrian coastal cities assumed a more active military role as springboards for naval raids against Byzantium, a role which they continued to play under the Tulunids (878–905) and Ikhshidids (935–69).<sup>14</sup> Another Byzantine raid on Ashkelon is recorded in the 880s (or possibly as late as 900 or 912–13) (El'ad 1982:163–64 n. 39), but otherwise the only evidence from this period concerning the city's built fabric relates to the Muslims' destruction of the churches of the Malkites between 16 September and 14 October 923 (Jumada II A.H. 311)<sup>15</sup> and the demolition of the church of St. Mary of the Green and the exiling of the Malkite bishop to Ramla in 939–40.<sup>16</sup>

In 969, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria were conquered by the general Jawhar al-Siqqili on behalf of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz (953–75); but, although the Fatimids quickly consolidated their control over Egypt, their hold on Palestine remained tenuous in the face of challenges to their authority from the local Bedouin tribes, the Shi'ite Qarmati to the south, and the Turks to the north (Gil 1992:335–59; Sharon 1969:216–17).

<sup>13</sup> Stephen of Mar Saba, *Acta Martyri* 1.4, in *AA SS*, March 3, 167; cf. Gil 1992:283, 474; Wilkinson 1977:150.

<sup>14</sup> El'ad 1982:152–53; Sharon 1997:1.133. The completion of the harbor defenses in Acre under Ahmad ibn Tulun (878–83), using masonry bonded with through-columns every five courses and built on timber rafts which were sunk into place, is recorded in the celebrated description given by al-Muqaddasi on the basis of what the engineer, his grandfather Abu Bakr, had told him (Le Strange 1890:328–29). An inscription recovered from the sea near the Roman theater of Caesarea also indicates that Ahmad ibn Tulun was responsible for the construction of a military work of some kind (*burj* or *thaghr*), which could relate either to the late Byzantine (or Persian) coastal fort enclosing the theater or, more likely, the new town walls (Sharon 1997:2.275–76, fig. 79; Mesqui 2014:79, fig. 88).

<sup>15</sup> Euty chius, *Annales*, in *PG* 111, 1151; trans. Pirone, 431; cf. Fiey 1980:132.

<sup>16</sup> Yahya Ibn Sa'id al-Antaki, *Histoire*, in *PO* 18, 719; cf. Marmardji 1951:140; Gil 1992:193, 324–25, 475–76; Pringle 1993:1.63–64 (no. 15); Fiey 1980:140–41.

In these circumstances, the fortified base at Ashkelon proved to be of considerable strategic importance to them (see Sharon 1997:1.134). In March 977, when the Qarmati took Ramla from the Fatimids, Jawhar withdrew to Ashkelon and fortified himself there. The combined forces of the Qarmati, Alptakin's Turks, and the Arabs of Palestine then proceeded to besiege the city for a year and three months, during which time most of the Fatimid garrison died of starvation. Finally, in April 978, Jawhar surrendered after agreeing that Alptakin would have all Palestine, including Ashkelon, to govern on behalf of the caliph al-'Aziz (975–96), while the Fatimids would have direct control from Gaza southward. The following year, however, the Fatimids reestablished control over the whole of Palestine.<sup>17</sup>

In 985, al-Muqaddasi described Ashkelon as a fine, strongly garrisoned city on the sea.

Fruit is abundant here, especially that of the sycamore tree.<sup>18</sup> Its mosque stands in the Market of the Clothmerchants, and is paved with marble. It is a delightful, favoured, excellent, and well-fortified town. Its silk is renowned, its products are plentiful, and life there is delightful. Its markets are attractive, and the guardhouses are excellent. Yet, its harbour is unsafe, its waters of middling quality, and its *dalam* (sand tick) noxious.<sup>19</sup>

Al-Muqaddasi also includes Ashkelon ('Asqalan) along with Gaza, Mimas (Maiumas of Gaza), Mahuz Azdud, Mahuz Yubna, Jaffa, and Arsuf, as one of the *ribatat*, where troops were stationed to fight the Greeks and where the latter came to ransom prisoners, news of the approach of Byzantine ships being relayed to the surrounding area and to the capital, Ramla, by means of fire signals.<sup>20</sup> A Persian geographer of the same period lists the coastal frontier towns (*thughur al-jazira*) from north to south as Iskandarun, Subha, Latakia, Tartus, Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Acre, Caesarea, Jaffa, and Ashkelon ('Asqalan).<sup>21</sup>

Following the death of Caliph al-'Aziz on 14 October 996 and the succession of al-Hakim (996–1021), a

<sup>17</sup> Yahya Ibn Sa'id al-Antaki, in *PO* 23, 389–92; Gil 1992:348–52; El'ad 1982:153, 164 n. 45; Bianquis 1986:1.107–109, 114.

<sup>18</sup> The sycamore fig (*Ficus sycomorus*, Arabic *jummayz*), mentioned in the Bible (Amos 7:14, Luke 19:4), which produces an edible fruit.

<sup>19</sup> al-Muqaddasi, trans. Collins, 146; cf. Le Strange 1890:401; Marmardji 1951:140.

<sup>20</sup> al-Muqaddasi, trans. Collins, 148–49; Le Strange 1890:23–24; El'ad 1982:155–57.

<sup>21</sup> *Hudud al-'Alam*, trans. Minorsky, 149.

dispute between the North African Kitami and Turkish troops in the Fatimid army led to a confrontation between them in Ashkelon in April 997, from which the Kitami emerged victorious. There ensued a purge of Turkish officials in Palestine, and in May 998 the governor of Gaza and Ashkelon was replaced by the eunuch Abu Sa'ada Yumn (Gil 1992:366–69; Bianquis 1986:1.237, 250).

The city was again attacked in August 1024, during a revolt of the Palestinian Bedouin under al-Hassan against the Fatimid governor, the Turk Anush Takin al-Dizbiri. Al-Hassan threatened to destroy the city if the inhabitants failed to hand over two of his men whom al-Dizbiri had imprisoned there. They promptly released the men; but in November, a battle was fought near the city in which the Fatimids were worsted. At the end of February 1025, al-Hassan again seized Ramla and al-Dizbiri withdrew to Ashkelon; but in the spring, al-Hassan fled to the Byzantines (Gil 1992:388–91; Bianquis 1986:2.428–48, 462).

On 6 March 1032, Ashkelon and Gaza were subjected to an earthquake and tsunami. These were followed by another massive earthquake, which struck the whole of Palestine during the night of 5–6 December 1033, causing the minaret of the great mosque in Ashkelon to collapse (Amiran, Arie, and Turcotte 1994:268; Gil 1992:399–400). Nonetheless, in 1047, the Persian traveler Nasir-i Khusraw records:

Passing through Ramla, I came to a town on the edge of the sea called Ascalon, which had a fine market and congregational mosque. I saw an old arch said to have been a mosque at one time. It was of stone and so huge that it would have cost a great deal to pull it down. (trans. Thackston, 48–49)

From Ashkelon Nasir-i Khusraw took ship to Tinnis in the Nile Delta.<sup>22</sup>

During the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir (1035–94), the civil and military administration of Palestine was overhauled and city governors were appointed from Egypt to take control of the economic and military affairs in their respective territories. According to William of Tyre, writing a century later, the caliph “ordered the citizens of each place to rebuild the walls of their city and erect strong towers about them.”<sup>23</sup> The thirteenth-century writer Ibn Shaddad lists the border cities (*al-thughur*) in which governors and garrisons were stationed as Jubayl,

Sidon, Tripoli, Tyre, Acre, Ashkelon, and possibly Beirut (El'ad 1982:155, 165 n. 49).

Evidence for building work being undertaken on the walls of Ashkelon during the reign of al-Mustansir is suggested by inscriptions. The first was carved on a stone found in the later nineteenth century in the village of Sarafand al-Kharab, between Jaffa and Ramla, and subsequently acquired by Baron Ustinow, Russian consul in Jaffa. Although fragmentary, enough survived to read:

. . . the] slave of 'amir al-mu`minin may, Allah bless him and his pure ancestors, and his noble descendants. And he was then in charge of *mutaw[alli al-hukm]* in the border stronghold [*thaghr*] of 'Asqalan in the month(?) of Rabi' II of the year 440.<sup>24</sup>

The date for this text would be between 13 September and 11 October 1048, in the reign of al-Mustansir. Moshe Sharon has suggested that it may have come originally from Ashkelon and have related to the construction of fortifications there by the chief judge (*qadi* or *mutawalli al-hukm*), under the aegis of the governor (*wali*), whom he identifies as Badr al-Jamali (Sharon 1995:81; 1997:1.134, 151). It is uncertain, however, whether Badr al-Jamali was involved with Ashkelon at so early a date, and the possibility also remains that the inscription came from elsewhere in the governor of Ashkelon's circumscription and related to some other kind of building works.

The second inscription has not survived, but was recorded at the time of the destruction of the Tower of Blood, or Tower of the Templars, by Saladin in September 1191. The fourteenth-century historian al-Maqrizi writes:

The Ḥāfiz 'Abd-al-'Azīm al-Mundhirī in his book *al-Mu'jam al-Mutarjam* says: “I heard the illustrious Emir Iyāz ibn-'Abdullah—that is, Abū-'l-Manṣūr al-Bānyāsī al-Nāṣirī—saying: ‘When we razed Ascalon I was given the Tower of the Templars [*burj al-Dāwiyya*]. Khuṭluj demolished a tower on which we found inscribed “Built by the hand of Khuṭluj” which was a most strange coincidence.’ Likewise the illustrious Qāḍi Abū-'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn-Yahyā al-Kātib related to me: ‘I saw at Ascalon the Tower of the Blood [*burj al-Dam*] while Khuṭluj al-Mu'izzī was demolishing it in the month of Sha'bān. And on it I saw this inscription:

<sup>22</sup> Trans. Thackston, 49; cf. Le Strange 1890:401; Marmardji 1951:140; Bianquis 1986:2.539–40.

<sup>23</sup> William of Tyre 9.17, in *CCCM* 63, 442; cf. trans. Babcock and Krey, 1.405.

<sup>24</sup> Translation adapted from Sharon 1997:151–53 (no. 5), fig. 59. For earlier readings (which gave the date as A.H. 441–49 /A.D. 1049–57) and discussion, see also Van Berchem 1891:494; *RCEA* 7.122, no. 2589; Sharon 1995:80–81.

“The construction of this tower was ordered by our illustrious master, the Emir of the Armies [*‘amīr al-juyūsh*]—that is, Badr al-Jamālī—and executed by his servant and lieutenant Khuṭluj in Sha‘bān.” I marvel at the coincidence, that it should be built in Sha‘bān by a Khuṭluj and destroyed in Sha‘bān by a Khuṭluj.<sup>25</sup>

A third inscription, recording the construction of a building of some kind by the same Abu‘l-Najm Badr al-Mustansiri [al-Jamali] in Muharram 486 (1 February–2 March 1093), may also possibly relate to a work of fortification (Sharon 1997:1.161 (no. 10), fig. 63; cf. *RCEA* 8.2, no. 2803).

Badr al-Jamali (ca. 1015–94) was an Armenian convert to Islam, a former *mamluk* of the Syrian *‘amir*, Jamal al-Dawla ibn ‘Ammar of Tripoli, who later served as governor of Damascus and from 1068 was governing Acre for the Fatimids (Brett 2005:63–65). In 1073, he resolved a crisis facing al-Mustansir in Cairo by having the Turkish *‘amirs* who opposed the caliph disposed of in a single night and was subsequently appointed commander-in-chief (*‘amir al-juyush*). With an army composed principally of Armenians, he restored the caliph’s control in Egypt; but in 1076 the Saljuqs took Damascus and in the years following they began to make incursions as far as Cairo itself. In response to this threat, Badr al-Jamali enclosed the city with new defenses, including three new gates: Bab al-Futuh (1087), Bab al-Nasr (1087), and Bab Zuwayla (1092).<sup>26</sup> The Tower of Blood in Ashkelon would therefore have been constructed while Badr al-Jamali was *wazir*, between 1073 and his death in January/February 1095 (Muharram A.H. 488),<sup>27</sup> and would have been contemporary with these Cairene defenses.

On 18 March 1068, Ramla was devastated by an earthquake, which was also reported to have caused damage to Yubna and Azdud and a tsunami on the coast (Amiran, Arie, and Turcotte 1994:269; Gil 1992:408; Bianquis 1986:2.636–37). During the time

<sup>25</sup> al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 93–94; cf. Sharon 1995:77; 1997:1.151, 171.

<sup>26</sup> Creswell 1952a:1.161–219; cf. Gil 1992:413–14; Dédéyan 2003:1.263–66; Praver 1975:1.115–17; Bianquis 1986:2.629–48; Walker 2006. Recent archaeological research, however, confirms the information provided by al-Maqrizi, that while the north wall was built entirely of ashlar masonry, the east wall was of mudbrick, with only the principal gate, Bab al-Tawfiq (or Bab al-Barqiyya), being of stone (Pradines and den Heijer 2008; cf. Warner 1999; Pradines et al. 2009). For further discussion of the Cairo walls, see below.

<sup>27</sup> *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 2.3.388–89, 393.

of the invasion of Palestine by the Turcomans, or Saljuq Turks, from 1067 onward, Ashkelon appears to have remained under Fatimid control, despite Saljuq massacres of the populations of Gaza and al-‘Arish in 1077 (Gil 1992:409–20; Bianquis 1986:2.637, 643). In 1085, the Saljuqs made an unsuccessful attempt to take Ashkelon, which a letter from the Cairo Geniza refers to in the 1090s as being more strongly fortified and offering better protection than Caesarea (Hasor) (Mann 1920:1.169–70; 2.199–200; Gil 1992:413 n. 64, 414). One important building to have been erected outside the walls of Ashkelon during this period was a mosque (*mashhad*) to contain the recently rediscovered head of al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali Talib, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. This was apparently begun by Badr al-Jamali, who in 1091 ordered the construction of the minbar for it which still survives in Hebron (Van Berchem 1915; *RCEA* 7.259–60, no. 2790; Sharon 1997:1.141–42, 154–61; Gil 1992:194; Bloom 2008:134–36, fig. 101; 2009:137, pl. 7.10); the mosque was completed after his death by his son, al-‘Afdal Shahanshah, following the latter’s capture of Jerusalem from the Saljuqs in July 1098.<sup>28</sup>

A year later, on 15 July 1099, Jerusalem was taken in turn by the army of the First Crusade and al-‘Afdal retreated with his forces to Ashkelon. On 4 August, he pitched his camp in the gardens outside the city, through which supplies reached him by sea from Egypt. After some abortive diplomatic exchanges, the Franks under Duke Godfrey of Bouillon fell on the Muslim army on 12 August and routed it, capturing the *‘amir*’s tent and sending the survivors scrambling back inside the city walls—events that were depicted a half-century later in two of the roundels of the Crusading window in the abbey church of St.-Denis, near Paris (figure 19.3).<sup>29</sup> While the Franks proceeded to besiege the city, al-‘Afdal sailed to Egypt, leaving the inhabitants to negotiate a surrender, which Muslim sources report included payment of a ransom of 20,000 dinars. Godfrey, however, promptly fell out with the Frankish negotiator of these terms, Raymond of Saint-Gilles, count of Toulouse, over which of them would take control of Ashkelon when it surrendered.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Muyassar, in *RHC Or* 3.462–63; cf. Mujir al-Din, trans. Sauvaire, 214; Gil 1992:193–94; Sharon 1997:1.141–42, 154–61 (nos. 7–9); Talmon-Heller, Kedar, and Reiter 2016.

<sup>29</sup> The window, destroyed at the time of the French Revolution but known from illustrations made for and published by Dom Bernard de Montfaucon (1729:1.396–97, pls. LII–LIV), was installed either in 1146–48 under Abbot Suger or, more likely, at the time of his successor, Abbot Odo of Deuil, around 1158 (Brown and Cothren 1986).

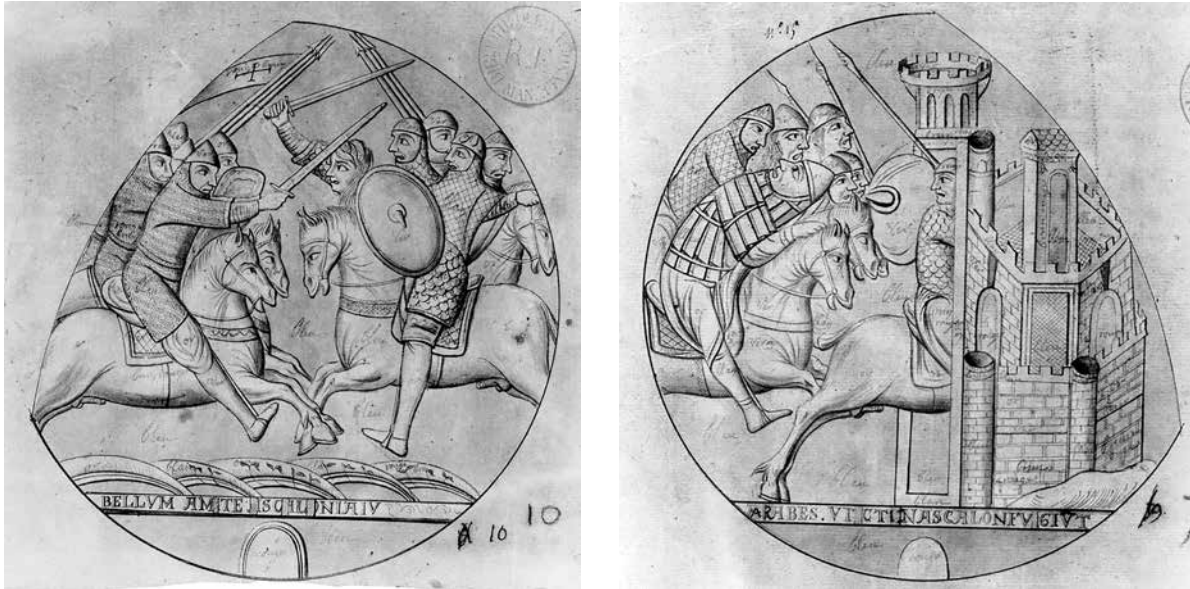


Figure 19.3. A pair of windows installed in the abbey of St.-Denis ca. 1158, celebrating the battle of Ashkelon (1099), as recorded in drawings made by or for Dom Bernaud de Montfaucon in the early eighteenth century: (a) *Bellum ante Ascaloniam*; (b) *Arabes victi in Ascalon fugiunt* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 15634, fols. 151 and 164)

As a result, Raymond withdrew his troops to attack Arsuf, leaving Godfrey unable to take Ashkelon on his own and the city still in Muslim hands.<sup>30</sup>

After the Franks' failure to take it in August 1099, Ashkelon was to remain an Egyptian thorn in the side of the evolving Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem for over half a century. In the first six years after the conquest of Jerusalem, the Fatimids fought three major battles with the Franks in the area around Ramla. In July 1101, al-'Afdal's general, Sa'd al-Dawla al-Qawwasi, used Ashkelon as a base for an incursion into Frankish territory, which, after a battle in which the commander himself was killed, penetrated as far as Jaffa.<sup>31</sup> In May 1102, Ashkelon was also used as a base

by an army commanded by al-'Afdal's son, Sharaf al-Ma'ali, who defeated Baldwin I, near Ramla and occupied the town. Subsequently the Franks laid siege to Ashkelon, but without success.<sup>32</sup> Sharaf al-Ma'ali was replaced as commander in Ashkelon later the same year by Taj al-'Ajam, and afterward by Jamal al-Mulk.<sup>33</sup> In July 1103, Baldwin I was attacked by forces from Ashkelon while hunting near Caesarea, and received a wound in the back from which he eventually died a decade later. The Ashkelonites proceeded to besiege Jaffa until October.<sup>34</sup> In August 1105, an army from Egypt, again commanded by Sharaf al-Ma'ali,<sup>35</sup> was joined below the walls of Ashkelon by Turkish forces from Damascus, but was defeated by the Franks

<sup>30</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 1.21, 22, in *RHC Or* 1.202; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 48–49; Ibn Muyassar, in *RHC Or* 3.463–64; Sibit Ibn al-Jawsi, in *RHC Or* 3.519, 520; al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 55, 57; Albert of Aachen 6.41–51, ed. and trans. Edgington, 454–73; Baldric of Dol 22 (addition in Ms. G), in *RHC Occ* 4.110–11 n.; *Gesta Francorum* 10.39, ed. and trans. Hill, 93–100; Ralph of Caen 138, in *RHC Occ* 3.703, trans. Bachrach and Bachrach, 154–55; Raymond of Aguilers 21, in *RHC Occ* 3.302–307, trans. Hill and Hill, 132–35; Fulcher of Chartres 1.31, in *RHC Occ* 3.362–63, trans. Ryan, 125–28; Tudebodius, ed. Hill and Hill, 143–49, trans. 121–27; Runciman 1951:1.295–97; Prawer 1975:1.252–53; Brett 1995:22–23, 31–36; Barber 2012:51.

<sup>31</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 1.73; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 53–54; Ibn Muyassar, *RHC Or* 3.464;

Albert of Aachen 7.64–70, ed. and trans. Edgington, 576–85; Runciman 1951:2.74–75; Prawer 1975:1.268; Brett 1995:31–36; Barber 2012:69–70.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 1.61, 73, 93; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 55–56; Ibn Muyassar, *RHC Or* 3.465; Sibit Ibn al-Jawsi, *RHC Or* 3.525; Albert of Aachen 9.2–15, ed. and trans. Edgington, 639–57; Runciman 1951:2.76–80; Prawer 1975:1.268–69; Brett 1995:31–37.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 1.73–74.

<sup>34</sup> Albert of Aachen 9.21–25, ed. and trans. Edgington, 662–71; Barber 2012:117.

<sup>35</sup> Or, according to Ibn al-Athir (*al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 1.93), by his brother Sana' al-Mulk Husayn, accompanied by Jamal al-Mulk, the governor of Ashkelon.

between Ashkelon and Jaffa in a battle in which the governor of Ashkelon was killed.<sup>36</sup>

The continuing importance of the role played by Armenians in the military affairs of Fatimid Ashkelon is illustrated by an episode which occurred in 1111. According to Muslim sources, in the spring of that year, the governor of Ashkelon, Shams al-Khilafa, an Armenian convert to Islam, made contact with Baldwin I and arranged a truce with him in return for payment of a tribute. This alarmed al-ʿAfdal, who, on the pretext of preparing another attack on the Franks, sent a force to Ashkelon under a general with instructions to arrest Shams al-Khilafa and take his place. Shams al-Khilafa, however, evaded him and declared open revolt. Fearing that he might hand Ashkelon over to the Franks, the caliph, al-Amir, then sought a reconciliation and reconfirmed Shams al-Khilafa in his office and his Egyptian lands. Shams al-Khilafa, however, suspicious of the people of Ashkelon, surrounded himself with a body of Armenian troops; but in June or July 1111, some notables of the city attacked him while he was out riding, wounded him, and pursued him home, where they killed him. Thus the Fatimids avoided disaster and a new governor was duly sent from Cairo.<sup>37</sup> Albert of Aachen seems to have been unaware of the earlier contact between Shams al-Khilafa and Baldwin (Edgington 2016:159–60) and describes the initial agreement as having been negotiated by the king with envoys sent from Ashkelon to him in Jerusalem after Easter 1111. The king then sent “three hundred of his military and warlike men” to take control of the city’s walls and towers (*menia et turres*) and subject the citizens to the king’s authority. These troops, stationed along the walls, were all put to the sword after the murder of Shams al-Khilafa, when one of al-ʿAfdal’s sons retook the town for the Fatimids.<sup>38</sup> Although Albert does not identify the nationality of the troops sent by Baldwin to Ashkelon, it seems plausible enough

to identify them as the Armenians with whom Shams al-Khilafa surrounded himself.<sup>39</sup>

After the third battle of Ramla, Ashkelon continued to be a launching point for Egyptian raids into Frankish-controlled Palestine, both by land and by sea. William of Tyre tells us that the Egyptians were accustomed to replenish the city garrison four times each year, in order to maintain the readiness of the troops.<sup>40</sup> In October 1106, raids were made north of Jaffa and against Ramla and the castle of Yalu on the road to Jerusalem.<sup>41</sup> In 1107 raids penetrated to Ramla, Jaffa, Hebron, and Jerusalem itself.<sup>42</sup> After Easter 1119, a party of pilgrims on their way to the Jordan were attacked near Choziba (*castellum de Cuscheth/Cusebeth et de Burgeuins*) on the Jericho road by Muslims, whom Albert of Aachen claims came from Tyre and Ashkelon.<sup>43</sup> In May 1123, a combined Egyptian land and sea attack on Jaffa was driven off and the sea cleared of Egyptian vessels as far south as al-Arish by the Venetians.<sup>44</sup> The area around Jerusalem itself as far as al-Bira was raided in 1124, while the Franks were engaged in besieging Tyre;<sup>45</sup> and the following year Baldwin II defeated a newly arrived Egyptian army below the walls of Ashkelon and almost succeeded in taking the city itself.<sup>46</sup> In 1132, the territory of Jaffa as far north as Arsuf was raided at the time of the rebellion of Hugh, Count of Jaffa.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>39</sup> On this incident, see also the account in “Un épisode de la lutte entre Baudouin I<sup>er</sup> et les habitants d’Ascalon,” ed. Huygens, *CCCM* 127a.355–60, and the translation and discussion of it in Edgington 2016.

<sup>40</sup> William of Tyre 13.17, 17.22, in *CCCM* 63.607, 791–92, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.26, 219–20.

<sup>41</sup> Albert of Aachen 10.9–17, ed. and trans. Edgington, 726–35; Fulcher of Chartres 2.37.2–5, in *RHC Occ* 3.417, trans. Ryan, 193–48; Runciman 1951:2.90–91.

<sup>42</sup> Albert of Aachen 10.31–35, ed. and trans. Edgington, 748–51.

<sup>43</sup> Albert of Aachen, 12.33, ed. and trans. Edgington, 880–81. *Burgeuins* might possibly be the Crusader tower (*burj*) at Bayt Jubr al-Tahtani, between the monastery of Choziba and Jericho, or the former monastery site of ʿAyn (?Burj) Yunis closer to the Jordan.

<sup>44</sup> Fulcher of Chartres 3.17–20, in *RHC Occ* 3.450–53, trans. Ryan, 240–45; William of Tyre 12.21–23, in *CCCM* 63.571–75, trans. Babcock and Krey 1.545–50; Barber 2012:139.

<sup>45</sup> Fulcher of Chartres 3.33.1–2, in *RHC Occ* 3.464–65, trans. Ryan, 265–66; William of Tyre 13.12, in *CCCM* 63.599–600, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.17–18; Runciman 1951:2.169–70.

<sup>46</sup> William of Tyre 13.17, in *CCCM* 63.606–608, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.26–27.

<sup>47</sup> William of Tyre 14.16, in *CCCM* 63.653, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.73; Runciman 1951:2.192; Barber 2012:165–66.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 1.93; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 70–71; Ibn Muyassar, *RHC Or* 3.465; al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 65–66; Albert of Aachen 9.48–51, ed. and trans. Edgington, 704–13; Fulcher of Chartres 2.31.1–33.3, in *RHC Occ* 3.411–15, trans. Ryan, 182–88; Runciman 1951:2.89–91; Praver 1975:1.271–72; Brett 1995:31–37; Barber 2012:71.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 1.152–53, *RHC Or* 1.276–77; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 108–10; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawsi, *RHC Or* 3.541; al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 72–73; cf. Runciman 1951:2.94–95; Dédéyan 2003:1.270, 271; 2.873, 888.

<sup>38</sup> Albert of Aachen, 11.25–27, ed. and trans. Edgington, 808–11.

From the 1130s onward, the Franks began to implement a policy of containing Ashkelon by encircling it with a series of castles. These served not only as bases from which mounted troops could intercept Muslim incursions and launch preemptive strikes, but also as centers of Christian colonization.<sup>48</sup> These castles included Yalu (Castrum Arnaldi, 1132),<sup>49</sup> Bayt Jibrin (1136),<sup>50</sup> Latrun (1137–41),<sup>51</sup> Yubna (Ibelin, 1141),<sup>52</sup> Blanchegarde (Tall al-Safi, 1142),<sup>53</sup> and Gaza (1149–50) (figures 19.4–5).<sup>54</sup>

Following the humiliating debacle of the Second Crusade before Damascus in July 1148, a proposal was made to use the military resources that had been gathered from Europe and the Latin states for a campaign against Ashkelon instead. The German emperor, Conrad III, even reported to Abbot Wibald of Corvey that a time and a place for mustering the siege army was agreed, but after waiting fruitlessly for a week at the rendezvous, which was apparently Jaffa, he sailed home in disgust from Acre on 8 September.<sup>55</sup>

Although the military significance of the Frankish castles around Ashkelon has recently been questioned (Ellenblum 1998:15–18; 2007:113–15, 155–57, 174–75), the memoirs of Usama ibn Munqidh covering the years between 1149 and 1152 show them playing precisely the role for which William of Tyre, among others, says they were intended. Around 1150, Ibn al-Sallar, *wazir* to the Fatimid caliph al-Zafir (1149–54), sent Usama to Nur al-Din, ruler of Aleppo, to urge him to besiege Tiberias in order to keep the Franks busy while he attacked Gaza; this the Franks had just started to rebuild with the intention of blockading Ashkelon. Usama found Nur al-Din at Busra, engaged in a campaign against Damascus. The latter declined to attack Tiberias, but allowed Usama to recruit 860 horsemen,



Figure 19.4. View over the coastal plain toward Ashkelon from the ruined citadel of the Frankish castle of Blanchegarde (Tall al-Safi) (photo Denys Pringle 2016)



Figure 19.5. The Frankish castle of Latrun (Toron de los Caballeros), built in 1137–41 to protect the Jerusalem road against raiding by the Fatimids from Ashkelon (photo Denys Pringle 1982)

<sup>48</sup> William of Tyre 14.22, in *CCCM* 63.659–61, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.80–81; Smail 1956:211–14; Prawer 1980a:105–109; Hoch 1992; Barber 2012:162–63.

<sup>49</sup> William of Tyre 14.8, in *CCCM* 63.639–40, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.58; Pringle 1998:103–108.

<sup>50</sup> William of Tyre 14.22, in *CCCM* 63.659–61, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.80–82.

<sup>51</sup> *Chronica Aldefonsi imperatoris* 1.48, in *CCCM* 71.172; Pringle 1998:94–102, 108–109.

<sup>52</sup> William of Tyre 15.24, in *CCCM* 63.706–707, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.130–31.

<sup>53</sup> William of Tyre 15.25, in *CCCM* 63.707–709, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.131–32.

<sup>54</sup> William of Tyre 17.12, in *CCCM* 63.775–77, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.202–203.

<sup>55</sup> Hausman 1969:356–57, no. 197; *Cont. Praemon.*, 454; William of Tyre 17.7, in *CCCM* 63.769, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.195; Berry 1969:510; Hoch 1992:123–24; Barber 2012:192.

with whom he set out through Frankish territory, accompanied by Nur al-Din's *'amir*, 'Ayn al-Dawla al-Yaruqi, and another thirty men. In Ashkelon they were met by the governor, Nasir al-Dawla Yaqut, and the Franks who had been shadowing them withdrew, only to return soon afterward in greater numbers. In the subsequent skirmish, the infantry from the city garrison had to be rescued by the newly arrived cavalry. After this Usama spent four months in Ashkelon fighting the Franks. In a raid on the Hospitaller castle and settlement of Bayt Jibrin, in which the Ashkelonites burned the piles of harvested grain, they were opposed by Franks who had come together from adjacent fortresses. "These," Usama tells us, "are close to one another and house large numbers of cavalry so that the Franks can attack Ascalon day or night." Usama also took part in a raid on Yubna (Ibelin), in which about a hundred Franks were killed and others taken prisoner.

After his return to Egypt, his brother, 'Izz al-Dawla 'Ali, was killed in another raid on Gaza.<sup>56</sup>

That the defenses of Ashkelon were still being improved at the time when Usama was in Ashkelon is demonstrated by a marble inscription found *ex situ* in the fill in front of the talus on the north wall of the city. This records the construction of a new tower in Dhu'l-Qa'da A.H. 544 (2 March–1 April A.D. 1150) during the reign of the caliph al-Zafir. According to the text, the building work was entrusted by the *wazir*, Ibn al-Sallar, to his *mamluk*, Nasir al-Dawla Abu Mansur Yaqut, the governor of Ashkelon, and was supervised by the *qadi* of Ashkelon, 'Ali ibn Hasan (Sharon 1994; 1995; 1997:1.164–78; 2008; cf. Walker 2002:103). Another text, albeit fragmentary and undated, may also relate to the feverish building activity in Ashkelon in this period (Sharon 1997:1.183–84 (no. 14), fig. 67).

Ibn al-Sallar was murdered on 3 April 1153, just after holding a council meeting in Cairo

to determine the expenditure on the manning of the fleet, in order to equip it for sailing to Ascalon with provisions to strengthen its garrison with money, men, and foodstuffs against the Franks who were encamped before it and blockading it with a vast assembly and mighty host.<sup>57</sup>

Although he was immediately succeeded as *wazir* by his assassin, the 'amir al-'Abbas, the unsettled political situation in Egypt may well have contributed to the loss of Ashkelon, as some Muslim sources contend.<sup>58</sup>

The Frankish siege of Ashkelon, which had initially been planned as no more than a raid on its orchards, had formally begun on 25 January 1153 under the leadership of King Baldwin III.<sup>59</sup> The fullest account of it is that provided by William of Tyre, who also describes in detail the city's Fatimid defenses:

Ascalon is one of the five cities of the Philistines. It is sited on the sea coast, having the form of a semi-circle, the chord or diameter of which lies along the

shore, while the circumference or arc lies on the land facing east. The whole city sits, as it were, in a depression, sloping towards the sea and enclosed on all sides by artificial banks [*aggeribus . . . manufactis*], on which stand the city walls with towers at regular intervals [*menia . . . cum turribus frequentibus*]. These are of solid masonry, the cement that binds them surpassing the hardness of stone, their walls being broad, of appropriate thickness, and high in suitable proportion. Even so, the city is additionally encompassed round about by outworks [*antemuralibus*] built with the same solidity and is most carefully fortified on all sides. The city has no springs either within the circuit of the walls or nearby, but it abounds in wells, both outside and inside, which provide good-tasting waters suitable for drinking. As a further precaution, inside the walls the citizens had constructed some cisterns to receive rainwater.

In the circuit of the walls there were four gates, very carefully fortified with tall solid towers. The first of these, which faces east, is called the Great Gate, and is also known as the Jerusalem Gate, because it faces towards the Holy City. It has about it two very tall towers, which appear to dominate the city below like a strong point and citadel [*quasi robur et praesidium*]. The gate has three or four lesser gates in the outworks [*antemuralibus*] in front of it, through which one reaches it by certain tortuous routes. The second is the gate that faces west. It is called the Sea Gate, because through it lies the citizens' way out to the sea. The third gate on the south faces the city of Gaza, . . . from which it also takes its name. The fourth, facing north, is called the Jaffa Gate after the neighboring city located on the same coast.

Because its location on the sea is unfavorable, this city does not have—nor ever has had—a harbor or safe anchorage for ships; indeed, the shore is so sandy and near it the sea becomes so rough when strong winds arise, that except when there is a great stillness on the sea it is treated with extreme caution.<sup>60</sup>

William, of course, may be suspected of emphasizing the strength of Ashkelon's defenses in order to heighten the Franks' achievement in eventually taking it. Indeed, in the following chapter he not only underlines yet again the strength of its walls, barbicans, towers, and earthworks (*muris et antemuralibus, turribus et aggere*), its supplies of arms and equipment, and

<sup>56</sup> Usama ibn Munqidh, trans. Cobb, 18–26. News of the Ashkelonites' victory over the Franks at Gaza was heard in Damascus on 10 Muharram 547/17 April 1152 (Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 312; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 4.76).

<sup>57</sup> Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 314; cf. Usama ibn Munqidh, trans. Cobb, 26–27.

<sup>58</sup> Abu'l-Fida', in *RHC Or* 1.30; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 2.64–65, in *RHC Or* 1.490–91; cf. Lev 1999:53. According to al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 119, there was also division within Ashkelon's garrison.

<sup>59</sup> William of Tyre 17.21, in *CCCM* 63.789–90, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.217–18.

<sup>60</sup> William of Tyre 17.22, in *CCCM* 63.790–91 (trans. De-nys Pringle); cf. trans. Babcock and Krey 2.219–20.

the quality of its fighting troops, but also asserts that throughout the siege the besieged outnumbered the besiegers by two to one.<sup>61</sup>

The Franks initially blockaded the city by land and stationed a fleet of fifteen ships under Gerard of Sidon offshore to attempt to close off its communications by sea. William relates that the defenders took especial care at night, placing glass oil lamps with transparent covers to protect the flame “both on the circuit of the walls and on the battlements of the towers” (*et in circuitu murorum et turrium in propugnaculis*), making it as bright as day for the guards patrolling the walls.<sup>62</sup> Around Easter, when the *passagium* of ships carrying pilgrims and merchandise arrived from Europe, the king conscripted sailors and pilgrims into the army with offers of pay and purchased the timber of some of the ships with which to make a tall siege tower (*castrum*) and a series of stone-hurling engines, or trebuchets (*machinas . . . iaculatorias*). With the aid of movable sheds (*scrophas*) made from the same timber, the Franks managed to level the outer banks and move the tower forward, in the face of bow and ballista fire from the defenders on the walls and banks. Once positioned against the wall, those inside the tower were able to see over the entire interior of the city and engage the defenders in the adjacent towers in hand-to-hand fighting.<sup>63</sup>

In the fifth month of the siege, an Egyptian fleet of 70 galleys accompanied by transports laden with men and supplies was able to reach the city. The Franks meanwhile kept up their attacks, particularly around the Great or Jerusalem Gate, where the towers and walls (*turres et menia*) were weakened by the trebuchets (*tormentis . . . iaculatoriis*), which also pounded the houses inside the city. The men posted inside the wooden tower, which appears to have been located in this sector, also wrought great carnage with bows and arrows on those defending the walls and towers and others moving about inside the city. That the Muslims responded to the Frankish stone-throwing machines with their own trebuchets is eloquently attested to by the epitaph in rhyming verse of the Templar marshal, Hugh de Quiliugo, who was “laid out by the blow of a mangonel stone.”<sup>64</sup> The Muslims also attempted to

burn the Frankish tower by piling brushwood between it and the wall and setting light to it. Overnight, however, a gale drove the fire against the wall itself and the next morning, already weakened by undermining,<sup>65</sup> a section of it between two towers collapsed with a loud crash, damaging the tower as it did so. Roused by the noise, the Templars, under their master, Bernard of Tremlay, secured the breach and forced an entry. According to William of Tyre, however, because of their greed for booty they only allowed men of their own order to enter, with the result that the Muslims were able to drive them back, killing those forty or so who had managed to get inside.<sup>66</sup> They then closed up the wall again with timber, repaired the adjacent towers, and, to dishearten the Franks, suspended the bodies of the dead Templars on the battlements on top of the walls (*super murum in propugnaculis*). After such a failure, the Franks argued amongst themselves whether or not to continue the siege. Three days later, however, they made a sustained attack, following which the townsfolk sued for peace. The city surrendered on 19 August 1153 (figure 19.6), and the population was escorted as far as al-‘Arish on the road to Egypt.<sup>67</sup>

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*dit(ur) hoc tumulo* (Hugh of Quiliugo, marshal of the knighthood of the Temple of Solomon, an exceptionally prudent knight and warrior and a strong footsoldier and assailant, terrible to his enemies yet humble to his comrades, having been laid out by the blow of a mangonel stone and buried, is preserved in this tomb, as one reads in this inscription): Clermont-Ganneau 1884:462–63 (no. 7), pl. IIIa; 1900:111, 120–22; de Sandoli 1974:256–57, no. 346.

<sup>65</sup> *Auctarium Aquiciense*, in *MGH SS* 6.396.

<sup>66</sup> Other sources indicate simply that the rest were slow in following the Templars’ lead: Nicholson 1998:112–14; Barber 2012:202–203, 405 n. 8.

<sup>67</sup> William of Tyre 17.25–30, in *CCCM* 63.794–805, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.223–34; cf. Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 314–17; Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 4.77–78; Baha’ al-Din, trans. Richards, 77; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 2.64–65, in *RHC Or* 1.490–91; Ibn al-Athir, *Tarikh*, in *RHC Or* 2.2.188–92; Runciman 1951:2.338–40. It was also at this time that the head of al-Husayn was taken from Ashkelon to Cairo and interred in the Fatimid palace, where a new mosque and shrine containing a carved timber cenotaph were erected to commemorate it: see al-Harawi, trans. Sourdel-Thomine, 75–76; Creswell 1952a:1.271–73; Bloom 2008:69, 154–55, 166–67, fig. 136; Williams 2008:144, 217–18; Lev 1999:121–22. Among the refugees from Ashkelon were the family of the poet, historian, and letter-writer ‘Abd al-Rahim ibn ‘Ali al-Baysani, known as Qadi al-Fadil (1135–1200), who later served in Saladin’s administration. He was born and educated in Ashkelon, where according to one source his father (d. 1149/50) had been *qadi* and controller (*nazir*). Al-Yaqut al-Hamawi, however, states that among al-Fadil’s father’s duties as *qadi* in Ashkelon was that

<sup>61</sup> William of Tyre 17.23, in *CCCM* 63.792, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.220.

<sup>62</sup> William of Tyre 17.23, in *CCCM* 63.793; cf. trans. Babcock and Krey 2.221.

<sup>63</sup> William of Tyre 17.24, in *CCCM* 63.793–94, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.221–23.

<sup>64</sup> *Mareschaud(us) Hugo Salomonis de Quiliugo / Templi Milicie, p(ro)vid(us) eximie, / miles, bellator, fortis, pedes, assiliator, / hostibus horibilis, cum sociis humilis, / tormenti strat(us) ictu lapidis, tumulatus, / ut legit(ur) titulo, co(n)*





Figure 19.6. The Fall of Ashkelon to Baldwin III, as imagined in a painting by Sebastien-Melchin Cornu (1841) installed for King Louis Philippe in the Salles des Croisades in the Palace of Versailles (drawn by L. Massard and published by Charles Gavard in *Supplément aux "Galeries historiques de Versailles,"* 4 vols. (1843–46), 2, pl. 36). The view of the city walls may well have been inspired by contemporary early nineteenth-century engravings (image © Denys Pringle)

After Ashkelon's surrender to the Franks, Baldwin III combined it with Jaffa to form a single county, which he granted to his younger brother, Amalric (see Mayer 1985). The principal mosque was converted into a cathedral church, though the patriarch's appointment of one of his own canons to the see was subsequently overturned by Pope Alexander III, who instead upheld the prior claim of the bishop of Bethlehem to the diocese.<sup>68</sup> A year after its fall, Muhammad al-Idrisi, writing in Norman Sicily, described Ashkelon as "a fine town, with a double wall" and markets, then in Frankish hands.<sup>69</sup>

Ashkelon remained nevertheless a frontier city, which the Egyptians were keen to recover. In the summer of 1156, the *wazir* Salih ibn Russik sent two expeditions against the Franks, one to Gaza and the other to Ashkelon, where a number of prisoners and a considerable quantity of booty were taken.<sup>70</sup> News

of spying on the other officials there and that his failure to report one particular alleged misdeed by the governor resulted in him being recalled in disgrace to Cairo, where he died. Al-Fadil was also forced to abandon Ashkelon to continue his administrative training in Alexandria, leaving behind his sister and brother, who joined him in Egypt when Ashkelon fell to the Franks in 1153 (Lev 1999:14–15, 19–20).

<sup>68</sup> William of Tyre 17.30, in *CCCM* 63.804–805, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.233–4; Mayer 1977:112–71; Hamilton 1980:59–60; Pringle 1993:1.62–63.

<sup>69</sup> Trans. Le Strange 1890:401–402; cf. Marmardji 1951:140.

<sup>70</sup> Ibn Muyassar, in *RHC Or* 3.471.

of a similar raid—or possibly the same one—also reached Damascus in April 1158 (Rabi' II 553).<sup>71</sup> After Count Amalric's accession to the throne in 1162, however, Ashkelon also came to be used as a forward base for a series of Frankish expeditions into Egypt itself, culminating in 1169 in an abortive Frankish and Byzantine attack on Damietta in the Nile Delta (Runciman 1951:2.362–88; Prawer 1975:1.427–45; Barber 2012:237–55).

The Frankish military establishment at Ashkelon, including command of its garrison and maintenance of its fortifications, would have been in the hands of a castellan, responsible to the count and ultimately to the king.<sup>72</sup> In a document of ca. 1185–86, which was later incorporated into John of Ibelin's legal treatise (ca. 1260), Ashkelon is listed as the muster point for 25 knights and 150 sergeants.<sup>73</sup> A castellan named Guy (Guido) is mentioned along with the viscount, Gilbert (or Girbert), as witness to a charter of 11 February 1155 by which Count Amalric granted the brothers of St. Lazarus the village of Meiesie and a house in Ashkelon.<sup>74</sup> A later castellan, Joscelin of Samosach, witnessed a charter of Amalric's daughter, Sibylla, countess of Jaffa-Ascalon, in September–December 1177.<sup>75</sup> He is mentioned again in documents of October–April 1177,<sup>76</sup> 6 February 1182,<sup>77</sup> and December 1182–December 1183.<sup>78</sup> The existence of a castellan of Ashkelon, however, does not necessarily imply that the city had a castle, physically independent of the

<sup>71</sup> Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 346; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 4.97.

<sup>72</sup> On the role of castellans in the kingdom of Jerusalem, see John of Ibelin, *Livre des assises* 221 and Z recension III.vi.2, ed. Edbury, 579, 647; Pringle 2013d.

<sup>73</sup> John of Ibelin, *Livre des assises* 237, 239, ed. Edbury, 607, 616; Edbury 1997:135, 195, 200.

<sup>74</sup> Mayer 2010:2.511–13, no. 283; de Marsy 1884:134–35, no. 15; *RRH*, 78, no. 303. The castellan named Gilbert (Gillebertus), who is mentioned on 30 November 1160 (Bresc-Bautier 1984:132–34, no. 49; Mayer 2010:2.530–32, no. 305; *RRH*, 93, no. 356), was very possibly the former viscount, but the castellany that he held was evidently that of Jaffa, rather than Ashkelon (see Müller 1879:28–29, no. 24; *RRH*, 178, no. 667), despite Mayer's reservations (1996:1.122–23; cf. 1964:64, 69).

<sup>75</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1883:127, no. 39; 1894:1.351, no. 516; Mayer 2010:2.680–82, no. 398; 846–47, no. 496; *RRH*, 145, no. 545.

<sup>76</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:1.360, no. 526; Mayer 2010:2.850–51, no. 501; *RRH*, 152, no. 570.

<sup>77</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:1.424, no. 625; Mayer 2010:2.728–30, no. 429; Paoli 1733:1.249, no. 207; *RRH*, 162, no. 613.

<sup>78</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1883:153–54, no. 61; 1894:2.78 n. 1; Mayer 2010 2.789–91, no. 470; *RRH*, 166, no. 627.

town walls,<sup>79</sup> and although around this time al-Harawi noted it as a frontier post with strong fortifications, his reference to a *ribat* is in relation to its status in the early Islamic period.<sup>80</sup>

Sometime between Christmas 1176 and 30 June 1177, when her husband William of Montferrat died, Countess Sibylla also granted part of the town wall to the nascent Spanish military order of Mountjoy, no doubt on the understanding that they would maintain and defend it. The sector included

the Tower of the Maidens in the town of Ascalon, and the garden below the tower, and two other towers on the walls of the same town between the previously mentioned tower and the church of St. Mary, and another one towards the sea on the other side of the Tower of the Maidens, and in hereditary right 100 bezants of the rent to be received annually at the [town] gate, payable quarterly.<sup>81</sup>

The sector of town wall granted to the order would therefore have comprised four mural towers and the intervening curtain walls between the sea and the church of St. Mary. The charter does not specify whether or not the tower “towards the sea” (*versus mare*) was actually on the sea, though that seems very possible; nor can it be assumed that the gate at which the tolls were collected was itself under the order’s control, as the phrase *redditus ad portam* more likely means “gate tolls” in general than tolls levied at a specific gate. The stretch of wall concerned, however, evidently lay on the southern side of the city, close to the sea (cf. Pringle 1993:1.64). Indeed in the 1850s–60s, Victor Guérin mentions a well, known as *Bi'r Burj al-Banat* (Well of the Tower of the Maidens) that was located beside a half-destroyed tower in the southwestern sector of the town walls (Guérin 1868:2.148). This would suggest that the section of the walls granted to the Order of Mountjoy may have run from the sea up to and possibly including the Gaza Gate.

In the same year Baldwin IV confirmed a grant made to the same order by Raynald of Châtillon, lord of Transjordan and Hebron, of a tract of land and the unnamed villages within it on condition that these properties would revert to their previous owners in the event of the order ceasing to wage war against the Muslims. The fact that the grant was made with the

consent of Countess Sibylla and her husband, William, suggests that these lands also lay within the county of Jaffa-Ascalon, but where exactly remains a mystery (Delaville le Roulx 1895:61, no. 119; Mayer 2010:2.675–77, no. 394; *RRH Ad*, 33, no. 553a). No such property or anything that might reasonably be identified with it is included in a papal confirmation of the order’s possessions issued by Alexander III on 15 May 1180, though the document does include “the Tower of the Maidens with three other towers and a garden adjacent to these towers in the city of Ascalon, and 100 bezants [*aureos*] annually from the market of the same city” (Hiestand 1984:309–12, no. 122; 315–19, no. 125; Delaville le Roulx 1893:51–54, no. 1; *RRH Ad*, 37, no. 594a). The fact that Baldwin IV’s confirmation, although now lost, appears to have found its way into the archive of the Order of St. John suggests that the lands granted by Raynald of Châtillon later came into the Hospitallers’ possession, perhaps after the departure of the head of the order of Mountjoy, Roderic, for Aragon around 1180 and the order’s subsequent amalgamation with the hospital of the Holy Redeemer in Teruel in 1188.<sup>82</sup> The tower “towards the sea” or its replacement may therefore very possibly have been the Tower of the Hospitallers that Saladin was to destroy in 1191.<sup>83</sup>

The Frankish refortification of Ashkelon and building of a covered market street are also described in somewhat exaggerated terms in an addition to the chronicle of Sigisbert of Gemblac, describing the fall of the city in 1153 and written apparently around 1168 (and certainly before 1187):

From that time [1153] Ascalon was made ours and has been in our possession. The town is fortified with 150 exceedingly strong towers and has been covered above by roofers with upper stories of roofs on its streets like a vault [*quasi crypta*], and is in a certain measure unstormable.<sup>84</sup>

The failure of Amalric’s campaigns in Egypt and the rise to power of Saladin in the final days of the Fatimid caliphate exposed Ashkelon and its territory once more to military threat. Sometime in the earlier part of his reign, Amalric had built a castle, associated with a small settlement, at Darum (Dayr al-Balah), south of Gaza. In December 1170, this was attacked by Saladin, whose troops forced an entry and

<sup>79</sup> For discussion of the distinction between *civitates* and *castella* in the kingdom of Jerusalem see Kedar 2009; Pringle 2010.

<sup>80</sup> al-Harawi, trans. Sourdel-Thomine, 75.

<sup>81</sup> Mayer 2010:2.843–45, no. 493 (trans. Denys Pringle); *RRH*, 147, no. 553; cf. Paoli 1733:1.63, no. 63.

<sup>82</sup> On the Order of Mountjoy, see Delaville le Roulx 1893; Forey 1971; Pringle 1993:2.43–45.

<sup>83</sup> See below.

<sup>84</sup> *Auctarium Aquiciense*, in *MGH SS* 6.396 (trans. Denys Pringle); cf. *Auctarium Affligemense*, in *MGH SS* 6.402.

occupied the ground floor of one of the towers before the king was able to come to the garrison's assistance from Ashkelon. Saladin then moved on to attack Gaza, whose Templar garrison Amalric had withdrawn to assist Darum. There he sacked the town lying outside the castle, before withdrawing to Ayla (Aqaba) to capture another Frankish castle, which like Darum was probably a recent construction.<sup>85</sup> The king meanwhile returned to Ashkelon, leaving behind a force to rebuild Darum.<sup>86</sup>

Saladin's next incursion into the territory of Ashkelon occurred in November 1177. Crossing the border with a large force of light cavalry, including knights (*tawashin*) and mamluks (*qaraghulamin*), he bypassed Darum and Gaza and made straight for Ashkelon, where the king, Baldwin IV, had assembled an army. The Muslims laid siege to the city, intercepting and taking captive a large number of the Frankish reserve levies, including burgesses from Jerusalem, who were still making their way there in response to the issuing of the *arrière ban*. Unable to bring the Franks to battle, however, Saladin lifted the siege after three days and moved north toward Ramla, allowing his men to disperse and pillage the coastal plain as far north as Qalqiliyya. This allowed the king's army, most probably commanded by the former regent, Raynald of Châtillon, to break out of Ashkelon. Joined by the Templar garrison from Gaza, they pursued and intercepted Saladin's main force on St. Catherine's Day (25 November) at Montgisart (Tall al-Jazar), southeast of Ramla, routing it and sending the Muslim survivors into headlong retreat back toward Egypt, pursued by the Franks, who subsequently rejoined the king in Ashkelon, laden with booty.<sup>87</sup>

Ashkelon finally fell to Saladin ten years later, two months after his crushing defeat of King Guy's army at the Horns of Hattin on 4 July 1187. After this victory, Saladin instructed his brother, Malik al-'Adil, to advance from Egypt and take Gaza and Ashkelon.<sup>88</sup> Such was the strength of the city's defenses, however, that the sultan found it necessary to join his brother before

it on Sunday 23 August, after his capture of Ramla, Yubna, Darum, Bethlehem, and Hebron. 'Imad al-Din describes in flowery language how the Muslims set about attacking the walls:

By order of the sultan the manjaniqs (trebuchets) pounded them with projectiles; the miners encouraged by the prince made the defensive wall fall down; the bastions were attacked and ceased to protect the town.<sup>89</sup>

More prosaically, though still with some exaggeration, an anonymous Latin source records:

Saladin . . . set up ten ballistae for throwing stones, so that from a distance and without harm to themselves they might dash the city wall to pieces by day and night and throw it to the ground. They therefore stoned the walls and towers of the city without ceasing and overthrew them down to the foundations. The king of Babylon [Cairo] then sent messengers to the Templars who were in the castle of Gaza . . . Meanwhile the city walls were shattered and already overthrown almost to the foundations, to the extent that the Saracens, if they wanted, could have gone in to the Christians over level ground.<sup>90</sup>

A letter sent by Saladin to the *'amir*, Nasir al-Din ibn Bahram, governor of the western provinces of Egypt, elaborates further:

Then we set up against them (the walls) military engines, and we caused them to taste the food of penetration, the violence of assault. And we took by force its large bastion and we demolished it. And when we caught sight of it with the strength of its might, then we destroyed it: our mangonels came up to the side of its walls. And its archers did not cease to bend the knee, and its stones to worship [i.e., to fall down]; and its *nağum* with their projectiles of the devils of godlessness hurled stones and repulsed, until we demolished a small bastion beneath its wall and destroyed it. And we ruined the towers of the wall and its wing, and we destroyed them. And we captured the fortress although its fortifications were impregnable, its earthworks lofty, its extremities new, and it had survived what time and man had been unable to make a breach in.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>85</sup> On Ayla, see Pringle 2005.

<sup>86</sup> William of Tyre 20.19–21, in *CCCM* 63.936–40, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.371–76; Runciman 1951:2.390–91; Barber 2012:257.

<sup>87</sup> William of Tyre 21.19–23 (20–24), in *CCCM* 63.987–94, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.426–34; Ernoul, ed. de Mas Latrie, 41–45; Abu Shama, *RHC Or* 4.184; Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 54; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 2.253–54; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 56; Runciman 1951:2.416–17; Lyons and Jackson 1982:121–26; Hamilton 2000:132–36; Barber 2012:270–71.

<sup>88</sup> Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 4.306; cf. al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 167–68.

<sup>89</sup> 'Imad al-Din, quoted in Abu Shama, *RHC Or* 4.312–14 (trans. Denys Pringle); cf. trans. Massé, 44.

<sup>90</sup> *Libellus*, in *RS* 66.237 (trans. Denys Pringle).

<sup>91</sup> *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 3.2.130.

The letter adds that the breach in the “large bastion,” which may possibly have been the complex around the Jerusalem Gate, occurred on Wednesday 26 August (19 Jumada).<sup>92</sup>

In order to avoid further delay in securing the capitulation of the whole city, Saladin sent for the captive King Guy and offered to set him free in return for the city’s surrender. Guy himself was permitted to confer with the burgesses, as there were no knights in the city, and advised them to surrender only if they could no longer defend it. The surrender took place on 5 September (29 Jumada II), thirteen days after the start of the siege.<sup>93</sup> According to al-Maqrizi, the inhabitants were allowed to go to Jerusalem,<sup>94</sup> but Ernoul’s Chronicle says that they were taken to Alexandria, where they were guarded in a camp outside the city while ships were found to take them to Europe.<sup>95</sup> Saladin meanwhile set about capturing the castles of Gaza, Latrun, and Bayt Jibrin, before moving against Jerusalem itself. The king was not released until early in the following year.<sup>96</sup>

Saladin appears to have made some effort to re-fortify Ashkelon. The *History of the Patriarchs* relates that when he left it for Jerusalem a week later, on Wednesday 16 September (11 Rajab) 1187, he entrusted it as a fief to one of his *mamluks*, ‘Alam al-Din Qaysar.<sup>97</sup> His secretary, Baha’ al-Din ibn Shaddad, also tells us that on 30 January 1189 Saladin set out from Jerusalem to Ashkelon to inspect its affairs, remaining there for some days “restoring its shattered fabric and putting its affairs to right.” At that time he also took Ashkelon back under his own authority from his brother, al-‘Adil, to whom it had evidently passed in the meantime, compensating him instead with Karak.<sup>98</sup> During the winter of 1190–91, Ashkelon

was also used as a base for supplying the beleaguered Muslim garrison in Acre by sea.<sup>99</sup> However, after the fall of Acre to the Franks in July 1191 and the advance of Richard I’s crusading army south along the coast, Saladin had to weigh the strategic value of Ashkelon to the Muslims against the damage that would be done to their position in Palestine if its garrison and defenses were to fall to the Franks. Following a meeting with his ‘*amirs* in Ramla on 10 September, he therefore sent al-‘Adil with a force to shadow the Franks near Jaffa while he himself set out to destroy Ashkelon, so as to deny the Franks further use of it.<sup>100</sup>

The sultan arrived in Ashkelon on the afternoon of 11 September 1191 and made his camp just north of the city. Despite severe misgivings, according to Bahā’ al-Dīn, the next morning

He summoned the governor, Qaysar . . . and ordered him to put pickaxes to work. . . . I saw him after he had passed through the market and the encampment personally urging the men to start the work of destruction. He assigned sections of the wall to the men. To each emir and detachment of troops he appointed a particular stretch of curtain wall and a particular tower to destroy. Our men entered the town and great cries and weepings arose. It was a verdant, pleasant town with strongly built, well-constructed walls and much sought after for residence there. The inhabitants were sorely grieved for the town and great were their wailings and weepings on leaving their homes. They started to sell what they were unable to transport. Things that were worth ten dirhams were sold for one. People got rid of their property for trifling sums, so that, for example, twelve chickens were sold for one dirham. There was chaos in the town and the inhabitants with their children and womenfolk went out to the army, for fear that the Franks would descend on the town. They offered many times the proper rate for the hire of mounts, some to go to Egypt, some to Syria, while some walked since they could hire no beasts. Dreadful things happened and frightful strife, which perhaps did not fall only on the wicked.

The sultan in person and his son al-Afdal urged our men on in the work of demolition and the need to press on with it, fearing that, if word got to the

<sup>92</sup> *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 3.2.131.

<sup>93</sup> The *Libellus* and *Itinerarium* place it on 4 September, at the time of an eclipse of the sun, while the *History of the Patriarchs* (trans. 3.2.128) dates it to 29 Jumada II (5 September) and mentions the eclipse as taking place at midday the same day.

<sup>94</sup> al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 84.

<sup>95</sup> Ernoul, ed. de Mas Latrie, 231–34

<sup>96</sup> Ambroise, lines 2580–601, ed. Ailes and Barber, 42; trans. Ailes, 69; Eracles 23.78, in *RHC Occ* 2:78–9; Ernoul, ed. de Mas Latrie, 184–6; *Itinerarium* 1.8, in *RS* 38.1:20; trans. Nicholson, 37; *Libellus*, in *RS* 66: 236–8; Abu’l-Fida, in *RHC Or* 1:57; Abu Shāmā (quoting ‘Imād al-Dīn), in *RHC Or* 4:312–14; Bahā’ al-Dīn, trans. Richards, 76–7, 91; ‘Imād al-Dīn, trans. Massé, 44, 97, 99, 100; Kamāl al-Dīn, trans. Blochet 4:182–3, 193; *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 3.2:122, 128–31.

<sup>97</sup> *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 3.2.131.

<sup>98</sup> Baha’ al-Din, trans. Richards, 89; cf. al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 89; ‘Imad al-Din, trans. Massé, 153.

<sup>99</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 2.379; in *RHC Or* 2.1, 32.

<sup>100</sup> Baha’ al-Din, trans. Richards, 177–78; cf. ‘Imad al-Din, trans. Massé, 346; Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.39–41; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards, 2.391; in *RHC Or* 2.1, 51; al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 174–75; *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 3.2.156.

enemy, they would come and demolition would be impossible. The men passed the night in a complete state of fatigue and exhaustion. . . .

The morning of Friday 20 Sha‘bān [13 September] found the sultan determined to carry on the demolition and to keep the men hard at work on it. He gave them a free hand with the granaries that were the stores of the town because of his inability to move them, because time was short and he feared a Frankish attack. He ordered the town to be torched, so the houses and residences were set on fire and burnt down. The inhabitants threw away the remnants of their goods and chattels because they could not transport them.

From the direction of the enemy there came constant reports that they were restoring Jaffa. Al-‘Adil wrote saying that the Franks were unaware of the demolition of Ascalon, to which the sultan replied, saying, “String them along and spin out your talks with them, so that we can perhaps manage to destroy the town.” He gave orders for the towers to be crammed full with combustibles and set on fire. On Saturday 21 Sha‘bān [14 September] he rode out to urge on the men in their task of destruction and burning. He continued to keep the men at their work, going the rounds in person with his encouragement until his health was slightly affected and so he was unable to ride or to take nourishment for two days.

Information about the enemy was flowing in all the time and clashes and skirmishes were occurring between them and our advance guard or nearest units. These reports were coming in while he assiduously encouraged the demolition work. He transferred the baggage-train to a position near Ascalon, so that the grooms and the porters and others could help. Eventually most of the wall was torn down. It was very strongly built, so much so that in places it was nine cubits thick, even ten in some. One of the masons mentioned to the sultan, when I was present, that the thickness of the tower they were undermining was a spear’s length. The demolition and the burning of the town and its walls were kept going until the end of Sha‘bān [22 September].

At that juncture a letter came from Jurdīk in which he reported that the enemy had widened their activities and had begun to leave Jaffa and raid the neighbouring lands. If the sultan moved, he could perhaps catch them unawares and gain some advantage. The sultan therefore decided to make a move and to leave some stonemasons at Ascalon to finish the demolition with some cavalry to protect them. He thought he should wait until the tower named after the Hospitallers had been burnt. It was a vast tower, overlooking the sea, like an impreg-

nable fortress. I went in to inspect it and saw that its construction was the most solid that one could imagine, on which pickaxes would have no effect. He wished to burn it merely to leave it thereby in a demolishable state on which the work of destruction could be effective.

On Monday 1 Ramaḍān [23 September 1191] he ordered his son, al-Afḍal, to take a direct part himself in this work along with his close staff. I saw him and his staff carrying timbers to burn the tower. Our men continued to bring timbers and cram them into the tower until it was full. The timbers were then lit and blazed into flame. The fire remained burning for two days and nights. . . .

That night, that is the eve of Tuesday 2 Ramaḍān [24 September], the sultan left camp half-way through the night because he feared the effect of the heat on his state of health. We prayed the dawn prayer and then set out [through Yubna to Ramla].<sup>101</sup>

It appears to have been at this time that the minbar from the *mash‘had* of al-Husayn in Ashkelon was transferred to the mosque in Hebron, where it still remains.<sup>102</sup>

The Franks at first seem to have been unaware of what was going on in Ashkelon, most of the information about its destruction that appears in Latin sources being evidently written with the benefit of hindsight. Even so, Ambroise and the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* attribute the work incorrectly to al-‘Adil, acting on Saladin’s instructions.<sup>103</sup> When reports about the destruction began to reach the Crusaders’ camp in Jaffa, however, Richard dispatched Geoffrey of Lusignan, William de l’Étang, and others in a galley to reconnoitre the site from the sea; but his proposal to intervene and save Ashkelon from destruction was vetoed by the French, who preferred instead to refortify Jaffa.<sup>104</sup> The

<sup>101</sup> Baha’ al-Din, trans. Richards, 178–80; cf. Abu’l-Fida, in *RHC Or* 1.64; Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.41–45; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards, 2.391–92, in *RHC Or* 2.1, 51–52; ‘Imad al-Din, trans. Massé, 346; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 93–94; Sharon 1995:77.

<sup>102</sup> Mujir al-Din, trans. Sauvaire, 16; Gil 1992:194.

<sup>103</sup> *Itinerarium* 4.23, in *RS* 38.1, 280; trans. Nicholson, 261; Ambroise, lines 6828–37, ed. Ailes and Barber, 110–11, trans. Ailes, 124.

<sup>104</sup> *Itinerarium* 4.26, in *RS* 38.1, 283–84, trans. Nicholson, 263–64; Ambroise, lines 6947–7019, ed. Ailes and Barber, 112–14, trans. Ailes, 126–27. The destruction of Ashkelon is also mentioned in letters written by Richard to the bishop of Rouen (Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, in *RS* 57.2, 377) and the abbot of Clairvaux (Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, in *RS* 51.3, 132).

work of rebuilding the walls of Jaffa continued from 10 September until 30 October 1191.<sup>105</sup>

In January 1192, a council of Crusaders held in or near Ramla agreed to abandon any further attempt to take Jerusalem and to concentrate instead on recovering and rebuilding Ashkelon.<sup>106</sup> When the army arrived there on 20 January they skirmished with a party of Asadiyya troops under Sayf al-Din Yazkuj and 'Alam al-Din Qaysar, who were collecting crops nearby.<sup>107</sup> According to the French continuation of William of Tyre's chronicle,

When [Richard] came to Ascalon, it was decided that it would require too much labor and too large a garrison to enclose the whole mound that had been enclosed before, for that would be a large undertaking; so he left the mound and chose a section of it towards its highest part, and began his work.<sup>108</sup>

This text, however, was written several decades after the events that it supposedly describes. The contemporary English and Anglo-Norman accounts and a building inscription give every reason for believing that Richard's intention was to restore the entire circuit of the city's walls to some state of defensibility, rather than just a part of it.

The *Itinerarium* relates that when the Franks reached Ashkelon,

They found that it had been so completely razed to the ground by the Saracens that it was only with great effort that they were able to get in through the gates over the heaps of stones.<sup>109</sup>

The lack of a safe harbor and a spell of bad weather, however, initially prevented ships from reaching Ashkelon for eight days; then, after the army had been resupplied, the bad weather returned and sank all the barges and galleys that had brought the food,

<sup>105</sup> *Itinerarium* 4.25–27, in *RS* 38.1, 282–84, trans. Nicholson, 263–65; *Eracles* 26.8, in *RHC Occ* 2.186.

<sup>106</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.1, in *RS* 38.1, 308–309, trans. Nicholson, 283–84; Ambroise, lines 7746–65, ed. Ailes and Barber, 125–26, trans. Ailes, 136; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, in *RS* 51.3, 179; cf. *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 3.2.157.

<sup>107</sup> Imad al-Din, trans. Massé, 373; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 95–96; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.51; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 2.396, in *RHC Or* 2.1, 57–58; cf. Kamal al-Din, trans. Blochet 4.201.

<sup>108</sup> *Eracles* 26.8–9, in *RHC Occ* 2.186–87 (trans. Denys Pringle).

<sup>109</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.3, in *RS* 38.1, 312, trans. Nicholson, 286; cf. Ambroise, lines 7872–80, ed. Ailes and Barber, 127, trans. Ailes, 138.

drowning most of the sailors.<sup>110</sup> At the end of January, Richard sent messengers to persuade the French to return to the Crusaders' camp in Ashkelon. They agreed to come, but would stay only until Easter at the latest and demanded that they should then be conducted safely to Acre or Tyre.<sup>111</sup>

Ambroise and the *Itinerarium* record that before their destruction by Saladin the walls of Ashkelon had possessed 53 tall, strong towers, in addition to smaller turrets. Five of the towers had particular names, which according to legend derived from the groups of people who had built them at the time of the city's foundation by the descendants of Ham, one of the sons of Noah. The Tower of the Maidens had been built by girls, the Tower of the Shields by knights, the Tower of Blood(s) by criminals, the Tower of the Emirs by emirs, and the Tower of the Bedouin by Bedouin.<sup>112</sup> As we have seen, the Tower of the Maidens was one of those granted to the Order of Mountjoy in 1177, while the Tower of Blood was the one that al-Maqrizi also calls the Tower of the Templars. Far from having been built by the descendants of Noah, the latter had been erected by the 'amir al-juyush, Badr al-Jamali (1073–94), and was demolished by Saladin's 'amir, Khutluj al-Mu'izzi.<sup>113</sup> It does not therefore appear to have been the same as the Tower of the Hospitallers, beside the sea, that was burned and destroyed by Saladin's son, al-Afdal.

Both the *Itinerarium* and Ambroise also give an indication of how the rebuilding work was organized:

The common decision was that they should repair the walls of Ascalon and rebuild the city, although the chiefs and greater people were already so impoverished that they hardly had enough to do anything. Nevertheless they began the work, each according to their own means. They threw out a heap of broken stone and dug down deeply, searching for the foundations of one of the greater gates, until they hit solid masonry. You would have seen everyone working together, chiefs, nobles, knights, squires, and men-at-arms passing stones and rocks from hand to hand. There was no distinction between clergy and laity, noble and commoner, servants and princes. All laboured equally together at

<sup>110</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.4, in *RS* 38.1, 313, trans. Nicholson, 286–87; Ambroise, lines 7882–7917, ed. Ailes and Barber, 128, trans. Ailes, 138.

<sup>111</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.6, in *RS* 38.1, 315, trans. Nicholson, 288; Ambroise, lines 7952–79, ed. Ailes and Barber, 129, trans. Ailes, 139.

<sup>112</sup> *Itinerarium*, 5.6, in *RS* 38.1, 316–17, trans. Nicholson, 288–89; Ambroise, lines 8008–43, ed. Ailes and Barber, 130, trans. Ailes, 139–40.

<sup>113</sup> al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 93–94; cf. Sharon 1995:77.

equal work, and so in a short time they made so much progress that even the workers themselves were impressed. . . .

When they had brought in skilled masons the work grew more rapidly. The king played a prominent part in the work as he did in all his operations. By building with his own hands, urging others on and distributing money he helped the work to advance more effectively. On his encouragement, each of the chiefs and magnates took responsibility for completing a part of the building, each according to their means. If any of them abandoned the work because of their lack of money, the noble-minded king, whose heart was greater than his rank, would bestow on them whatever they needed from his own resources. So the work advanced so much at his nod, with his persuasion, through his efforts and expense that it was said that he was responsible for completing the rebuilding of three quarters of the city.<sup>114</sup>

Richard's part in completing a section of wall between two gates is recorded in an inscription from Ashkelon, which attributes this work to the clerk of his chamber, Philip of Poitiers.<sup>115</sup> Matthew Paris also later remarked that the *castrum* of Ashkelon had been rebuilt at Richard's own expense,<sup>116</sup> while Ambroise underlines that the principal costs incurred were those for paying the masons.<sup>117</sup>

As it happened, Hugh III, duke of Burgundy, and his French contingent left well before Easter 1192, owing to Richard's refusal to lend him any more money to pay his men. Richard was then himself called north to Acre, arriving there on Ash Wednesday (18 February), to attempt to resolve the continuing dispute between Conrad of Montferrat and King Guy.<sup>118</sup> The same day a detachment commanded by 'Izz al-Din Jurdik carried out a raid near Ashkelon, taking 30 prisoners.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>114</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.6, in *RS* 38.1, 315–17, trans. Nicholson, 288–89; cf. Ambroise, lines 7980–8007, 8044–66, ed. Ailes and Barber, 129–30, trans. Ailes, 139–40.

<sup>115</sup> + *Magister . Filipus / [cleri]c(us) . de . camera regis / [Ricardi] Anglie fecit hoc / [opus a] po[r]ta usq[ue] ad porta(m)* (Master Philip / clerk of the chamber of King / [Richard] of England, made this / [work from] gate to gate): Pringle 1984; cf. Schick 1893:295–96, fig. 13; Clermont-Ganneau 1897:pl. XLVII; de Sandoli 1974:305–306, no. 407, fig. 132.

<sup>116</sup> *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4, 107.

<sup>117</sup> Ambroise, lines 8003–8005, ed. Ailes and Barber, 129–30, trans. Ailes, 139.

<sup>118</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.9–11, in *RS* 38.1, 320–24; trans. Nicholson, 291–4; cf. Ambroise, lines 8141–252, ed. Ailes and Barber, 132–4; trans. Ailes, 141–3.

<sup>119</sup> 'Imad al-Din, trans. Massé, 374; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.52.

The men of Ashkelon responded with a raid south of Darum between 25 and 28 March, taking a quantity of livestock and some 200 prisoners.<sup>120</sup> Richard returned to Ashkelon from Acre on 31 March and the following day the remaining 700 French knights left for Tyre, recalled there by the duke of Burgundy and the count of Montferrat. On Easter Monday (6 April), however, “the king diligently and enthusiastically returned to his project of completing the walls of the city,” bringing the work to completion soon afterward.<sup>121</sup>

Over the next two months, the Franks made use of Ashkelon in much the same way that it had been used by the Fatimids earlier in the twelfth century, as a base for raiding neighboring enemy castles, including Gaza, Darum, and Blanchegarde (Tall al-Safi).<sup>122</sup> On 23 May, Richard finally took Darum and gave it to Henry, count of Champagne, who was now effectively king of Jerusalem following the abdication of King Guy, the assassination of Conrad of Montferrat, and Henry's marriage to Conrad's widow, the princess Isabella.<sup>123</sup>

After a final unsuccessful attempt to take Jerusalem in June 1192, Richard resumed negotiations with Saladin (Prawer 1975:2.90–97). On 9 July, Saladin offered the king's envoys the return of the Holy Sepulchre and the establishment of a condominium over the area between his own and that held by Count Henry, but insisted that Ashkelon and everything to the south of it should be left in ruins and held by neither side.<sup>124</sup> When the envoys returned from Richard on 12 July, however, they requested the cession of the whole coastal plain and the establishment of a garrison of 20 men in the Citadel of Jerusalem. As for Jerusalem, Saladin would countenance no more than allowing Christian pilgrimage; but, he continued,

‘As far as territory is concerned, Ascalon and what is beyond it must be demolished.’ The envoy said, ‘The king has spent vast sums on the walls there,’

<sup>120</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.12, in *RS* 38.1, 325, trans. Nicholson, 291–94; cf. Ambroise, lines 8269–86, ed. Ailes and Barber, 134, trans. Ailes, 143; Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 198.

<sup>121</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.13–14, 17–18, in *RS* 38.1, 325–26, 329–30, trans. Nicholson, 295–96, 298; cf. Ambroise, lines 8309–62, 8409–22, ed. Ailes and Barber, 134–36, trans. Ailes, 143–45; cf. Roger of Howden, *Gesta Regis Henrici II*, in *RS* 49.2, 192; Roger of Wendover, in *RS* 84.2, 199.

<sup>122</sup> *Itinerarium* 5, 19, 29, 31–33, *RS* 38.1, 330, 343, 344–46, trans. Nicholson, 298–99, 309, 310–11.

<sup>123</sup> *Itinerarium* 5.39, in *RS* 38.1, 352–56, trans. Nicholson, 316–19; *Eracles* 26.10, in *RHC Occ* 2.188–89; Ernoul, ed. de Mas Latrie, 283; Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 203; 'Imad al-Din, 378–79.

<sup>124</sup> Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 213–24; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.64.

so al-Mashtūb asked the sultan to make Ascalon's fields and villages a recompense for his losses. The sultan agreed to that, but stipulated that Dārūm and other places should be demolished and their lands shared half-and-half<sup>125</sup>

When Richard's envoys returned to Saladin on 16 July, they conveyed the king's acceptance of the terms regarding Jerusalem, but still asked that the Franks be allowed to retain Ashkelon, Gaza, and Darum. This was again refused, though Saladin offered Lydda in recompense for Richard's expense in fortifying Ashkelon. The Frankish envoy, Geoffrey, did not return again after this, but when his Muslim counterpart, Hajji Yusuf, came back to Saladin on 19 July he reported that the king had said,

'It is impossible for us to demolish one stone of Ascalon. Such a thing shall not be spoken of us in the land. The boundaries of these lands are well known and there is no dispute.'<sup>126</sup>

According to the *Itinerarium*, however, when Richard was informed of Saladin's continued insistence that Ashkelon be razed to the ground,

he seemed unmoved and his expression remained completely unchanged. He at once commanded the Templars and Hospitallers and certain others with them to mount their horses, 300 knights in all and ordered them to proceed to break down and destroy Darum Castle, and to strengthen Ascalon very strongly and set guards. Those thus commanded hurried to carry out the king's commands, and having razed Darum Castle to the ground, they returned to the army.<sup>127</sup>

Richard then departed from Jaffa to Acre, but this gave Saladin the opportunity to capture Jaffa, which had only recently been refortified. After swiftly returning by sea and retaking it, Richard resumed negotiations with Saladin on 1 August. As the talks proceeded through August, the king continued to refuse to agree to Ashkelon's demolition,<sup>128</sup> but because of his sickness and a pressing need to return to deal with

problems at home before the approaching winter, on 2 September 1192 he finally acceded to the peace terms which subsequently became known as the Treaty of Jaffa. Both parties now agreed to collaborate in demolishing Ashkelon and not to attempt to refortify it for a period of three years and three months.<sup>129</sup>

On 5 September, Saladin appointed 'Alam al-Din Qaysar to carry out the demolition work and sent him with a company of a hundred engineers and stonemasons to Ashkelon. The king also sent a party from Jaffa to oversee the work and remove any remaining Franks; however, further instructions were required before the garrison would leave, so that work did not start until the morning of 7 September. As had happened during its construction, sections of the wall were divided for demolition among different groups of workmen. Most of the information that we have about the demolition comes from Saladin's secretary, Baha' al-Din ibn Shaddad.<sup>130</sup> 'Imad al-Din does not mention it, though he records Saladin's appointment of 'Alam al-Din Qaysar as governor of Hebron, Gaza, and Ashkelon on 14 October,<sup>131</sup> effectively, however, his governorship would have applied only to the territory of Ashkelon, as the city no longer existed. It is uncertain how long the demolition work took, though it may be assumed that it would have been complete by the time that Richard took ship for home from Acre on 9 October.<sup>132</sup>

Nonetheless, the site of Ashkelon appears to have received further attention from the Ayyubids six years later. In October 1197, having failed to prevent al-Malik al-'Adil from capturing Jaffa and dismantling its defenses, a group of German Crusaders under Henry of Brabant managed to retake Sidon and Beirut and proceeded to besiege Tibnin (Toron), east of Tyre. Al-'Adil summoned his nephew, al-'Aziz Musa, from Egypt. When the Franks heard that he had reached Ashkelon, they lifted the siege of Tibnin on

<sup>125</sup> Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 214–15; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.65.

<sup>126</sup> Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 215–16; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.65–66.

<sup>127</sup> *Itinerarium* 6.11, in *RS* 38.1, 398–99, trans. Nicholson, 348; cf. Ambroise, lines 10732–48, ed. Ailes and Barber, 173–74; trans. Ailes, 175.

<sup>128</sup> Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 224, 228; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.72–73, 76–77.

<sup>129</sup> *Itinerarium* 6.26–27, in *RS* 38.1, 425–29, trans. Nicholson, 369–71; Ambroise, lines 11675–767, ed. Ailes and Barber, 188–90, trans. Ailes, 185–86; *Eracles* 26.17, in *RHC Occ* 2.198–99; Ralph de Diceto, in *RS* 68.2, 105; Richard of Devizes, in *RS* 82.3, 453; Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.77; Abu'l-Fida', in *RHC Or* 1.66–67; Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 230–31; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards, 2.401–402, in *RHC Or* 2.1, 65–66; 'Imad al-Din, trans. Massé, 388–94; *History of the Patriarchs* (trans.) 3.2.158–60; Prawer 1975:2.99. Ernoul also includes the demolition of Gaza and Darum in the treaty's provisions (ed. de Mas Latrie, 292–93).

<sup>130</sup> Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 231–32; cf. Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.80.

<sup>131</sup> Trans. Massé, 396; cf. Mujir al-Din, trans. Sauvaire, 262.

<sup>132</sup> *Itinerarium* 6.37, in *RS* 38.1, 441, trans. Nicholson, 381.



11 February 1198 and another truce was subsequently agreed.<sup>133</sup> According to al-Maqrizi:

In the month of Rajab [A.H. 594 /May–June 1198] al-‘Ādil and al-‘Azīz renewed their resolve to dismantle Ascalon, to raze its walls, and to demolish its buildings. A party was sent from Jerusalem to tear out the key-stones and level the fortified wall towers. Thus was destroyed a city which had no like, a frontier station without equal, and a structure which time will not replace. All this came to pass from the incapacity of the kings to repel the Franks in arms, whereby they were compelled to demolish the cities and efface their trace.<sup>134</sup>

Although this action was consistent with al-‘Ādil’s dismantling of Jaffa, it is not entirely clear why it was deemed necessary to demolish Ashkelon so soon after its destruction by Saladin. It is possible of course that Saladin’s destruction was not considered to have been rigorous enough; or perhaps the Ayyubids themselves had begun rebuilding it after the lapse of the three-year truce. It may be noted, however, that al-Maqrizi does not mention Saladin’s destruction at all. This raises a third possibility, namely that al-Maqrizi or his source simply moved the 1192 destruction to 1198 in order to disassociate Saladin himself from the deed and pin the responsibility instead on his successors.

However one may choose to interpret al-Maqrizi’s account of the 1198 destruction, there is no doubt that Ashkelon continued to figure in the minds of Muslims and Franks as a key strategic point which had to be taken into account during the military and political confrontation that developed over the next three decades. During the early stages of the Fifth Crusade, while traveling on pilgrimage between Ramla and Bethlehem in the spring of 1218, the German pilgrim Thietmar noted that to the right of the road lay the five cities of the Philistines, one of which, Ashkelon, now lay deserted but contained “a certain tower, which is called the Tower of the Maidens and moreover is said to have been cemented with human blood.”<sup>135</sup> Quite evidently Thietmar did not visit Ashkelon himself and was perhaps unaware that the Tower of the Maidens and Tower of Blood, whose traditions he conflates, had been destroyed. In the summer of 1221, however, al-Malik al-Kamil offered the Franks Ashkelon along with the other Palestinian coastal cities, as well

as Tiberias and Jerusalem, in return for the surrender of Damietta; but the Franks insisted on having Karak as well as an indemnity of 300,000–500,000 dinars to compensate them for the Muslims’ destruction of Jerusalem’s walls.<sup>136</sup> Nothing therefore came of this offer. In 1225, the geographer Yaqut described Ashkelon as being still in ruins.<sup>137</sup> It lay outside the strip of coastal territory, including a refortified Jaffa as well as Jerusalem and Nazareth, that was subsequently granted by al-Kamil and al-Ashraf to the German emperor, Frederick II, in 1229, under the terms of the so-called treaty of Tall al-‘Ajjul Jaffa.<sup>138</sup>

This treaty expired in July 1239, at a time when the Ayyubid world was in confusion, following the death of al-Kamil in March 1238, and a new crusade, known as the Barons’ Crusade, was being prepared in France and England with the backing of the emperor (Prawer 1975:2.260–65; Holt 1986:65–66; Pacifico 2012:364–67). The Crusaders, led by Tibald, king of Navarre and count of Champagne, arrived in Acre on 1 September 1239. At this time Egypt was in the hands of al-‘Ādil II Abu Bakr, the son of al-Kamil, and Damascus was held by another of al-Kamil’s sons, al-Salih Ayyub, who was also occupying Nablus and parts of southern Palestine against the Egyptians. Western sources appear to indicate that one group of the Franks of Outremer, including the Templars, favored a treaty with Damascus against Egypt, while another, including the Hospitallers, favored one with Egypt against Damascus. In late September and October, however, the situation changed when al-Salih Isma‘il, al-Kamil’s brother, seized Damascus and al-Salih Ayyub was taken into custody in Karak by al-Nasir Da‘ud. In these circumstances, the local Franks and newly arrived Crusaders, meeting in Acre, therefore agreed to defend their position in southern Palestine by refortifying Ashkelon against the Egyptians.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 3.180, in *RHC Or* 2.1, 122; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 184; cf. Prawer 1975:2.166–67.

<sup>137</sup> Yaqut, *Mushtarik*, trans. Marmardji 1951:141.

<sup>138</sup> Prawer 1975:2.197–200, 259–60, map VII. The brief notice in the *Annals of Dunstable* (in *RS* 36.3, 126) that, in 1231, Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, returned to England from the Holy Land, where he had assisted in repairing the city of Ashkelon, is probably mistaken; Peter is recorded assisting Frederick II in refortifying Jaffa, but Ashkelon appears to have remained in Egyptian territory at this time (Prawer 1975:2.197; cf. *History of the Patriarchs* 4.1.106–109).

<sup>139</sup> Philip of Novara 117 (213), ed. Melani, 212; *Eracles* 33.44, in *RHC Occ* 2.413–14; *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 22, in *RHC Occ* 2.531–22, trans. Shirley 1999:41, 123; Runciman 1951:2.212–13; Painter 1969:469–73;

<sup>133</sup> Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, trans. Richards 3.28–31, in *RHC Or* 2.1, 88; Runciman 1951:3.92–97; Prawer 1975:2.112–18.

<sup>134</sup> al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 124–25.

<sup>135</sup> Thietmar, *Liber Peregrinationis* 8, ed. Laurent, *Mag. Thietmari Peregrinatio*, 25, trans. Pringle 2012:110.

The expedition to Ashkelon did not set out until 2 November, by which time al-ʿAdil II had time to reinforce the Egyptian garrisons in the area, commanded from Gaza by Rukn al-Din Altunba al-Hijawi. After raiding a passing Muslim caravan, the Christian army halted in Jaffa; a large party of local Franks and Crusaders then set out ahead of the main army on 12 November and continued south of Ashkelon as far as Bayt Hanun, near Gaza, beyond the Wadi al-Hasi, which marked the edge of Ashkelon's territory. There they were attacked the next morning by troops from Gaza, commanded by Shams al-Din Sunqur, and many of them were killed or taken prisoner.<sup>140</sup> Those who escaped, including Walter, count of Jaffa, and Hugh IV, duke of Burgundy, retired to Ashkelon, where they found Tibald and the remainder of the army; but although the latter proceeded to the battlefield, he arrived there too late to be of any assistance to the defeated Franks. Tibald therefore withdrew to Jaffa and thence to Acre without making any attempt to fortify Ashkelon.<sup>141</sup>

Over the next few months the divisions in both the Christian and the Muslim camps were exploited by factions on both sides. In December 1239, al-Nasir Daʿud, Ayyubid ruler of Karak, raided Jerusalem—then still held by the emperor's men, although under nominal Egyptian suzerainty<sup>142</sup>—and destroyed the citadel. In April 1240, however, al-Nasir released al-Salih Ayyub and assisted him in taking control of Egypt from his brother, al-ʿAdil, in return for Ayyub's promise of help to reinstall him in Damascus. In the face of this threat, al-Salih Ismaʿil of Damascus, supported by al-Mansur

Ibrahim of Hims and the ʿamir of Aleppo, opened negotiations with the Franks for a military alliance against Egypt, involving a joint expedition and the re-fortification of Jaffa and Ashkelon to block the route to Syria from Egypt. In return the Franks would regain Tibnin, Hunin, Tiberias, Safad, Beaufort Castle, and effectively such parts of Palestine west of the Jordan Valley that they could wrest from al-Nasir. This proposal was supported by the Templars and the lords of Sidon, Tibnin, and Tiberias, who had most to gain from it, but was opposed by the Hospitallers. Although Western sources describe a joint Christian and Muslim army gathering at al-ʿAwja (Ra's al-ʿAyn), near Jaffa, proceeding south toward Tall al-ʿAjjul, south of Gaza, but falling back in confusion (the Franks to Ashkelon) when the Damascene troops deserted to the Egyptians under al-Salih Ayyub, it appears that these events relate instead to a campaign that Arabic sources place in the following summer (1241) (see Jackson 1987:43, 49). During the summer of 1240, both al-Salih Ismaʿil and al-Mansur Ibrahim seem to have been preoccupied with problems in their own territories; and, while negotiations were opened between the Hospitallers and al-Salih Ayyub for the release of the prisoners from Bayt Hanun,<sup>143</sup> al-Nasir Daʿud changed sides once again and made a treaty with the Franks involving the return of those prisoners still in his care and the surrender of Jerusalem.<sup>144</sup>

Meanwhile the Franks began re-fortifying Ashkelon, without hindrance from either the Egyptians or the Damascenes. Indeed, the version of events given in the Rothelin continuation of William of Tyre's chronicle mentions the presence of the envoys of the sultan of Damascus with the Christian army in Ashkelon. It continues:

Prawer 1975:2.265–72; Jackson 1987:38–39; Pacifico 2012:367–68.

<sup>140</sup> Shams al-Din Sunqur commemorated his victory by constructing a mosque, known as the Mosque of Victory (*jamiʿ al-nasr*), beside which the bodies of the Muslim dead were buried; the dedicatory inscription above the door gives the date of the battle as 15 Rabiʿ II 637 (Sunday 13 November 1239): see Sukenik 1946; Sharon 1997:2.98–104.

<sup>141</sup> *Annales de Terre Sainte*, ed. Röhrich and Raynaud, AB, 440; ed. Edbury, 153; Philip of Novara 117, ed. Melani, 212–14; *Eracles* 33.44–45, in *RHC Occ* 2.414–15; *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 22–31, in *RHC Occ* 2.532–49, trans. Shirley 1999:41–53, 123–24; Abu Shama, *RHC Or* 5.193; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 251; Runciman 1951:3.213–15; Painter 1969:473–77; Prawer 1975:2.271–74; Jackson 1987:36, 39; Pacifico 2012:363, 368–72. The account of this inconclusive engagement in the *History of the Patriarchs* (4.2.195–96) places it at Furbiyya.

<sup>142</sup> According to the *History of the Patriarchs* 4.2.195, the garrison consisted of one knight and 70 footsoldiers. Jerusalem remained in Frankish hands and in spring 1240 Tibald of Champagne discussed the citadel's possible re-fortification by letter with Frederick II.

<sup>143</sup> The memorial tablet of the Hospitaller master, Peter of Vieille Bride, discovered in Acre, reads: “In A.D. 1242 died Brother Peter of Vieille Bride, eighth master of the Holy House of the Hospital of Jerusalem after the occupation of the Holy Land, on 17 September. May his soul rest in peace. Amen. In his time the count of Montfort and other barons of France were freed from captivity in Cairo, while Richard, earl of Cornwall, was building the castle in Ascalon” (Goldman 1962a; 1962b; de Sandoli 1974:303–305, no. 406; Prawer 1980b:223–24 n. 17; Pringle 2007:193–94, no. 2).

<sup>144</sup> *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 32–34, in *RHC Occ* 2.551–54; *Eracles* 32.47–49, in *RHC Occ* 2.416–20, trans. Shirley 1999:55–57, 125–27; Philip of Novara 119–20 (215–16), ed. Melani, 216–18; Abu'l-Fidaʿ, in *RHC Or* 1.117–20; Abu Shama, in *RHC Or* 5.193; Badr al-Din al-ʿAyni, in *RHC Or* 2.1.196–97; al-Makin, trans. Eddé and Micheau, 70–73; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 251, 258, 263–64; *History of the Patriarchs* 4.2.196–97, 217; Runciman 1951:3.315–17; Painter 1969:477–81; Prawer 1975:2.275–82; Jackson 1987:41–44; Pacifico 2012:372–78.

When the king of Navarre and the army of Christendom had confirmed these truces [with Damascus], they went off to Ascalon all together. There they found a great quantity of stones and walls, for the noble city of Ascalon had been a very large place. They began to build<sup>145</sup> a castle there and started to make good towers and ditches. Everyone was very glad to assist in person and it was plain to see that the work was very good and very strong.

While the work was in progress, Tibald and others went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, returning afterward to Ashkelon to the castle that was under construction (*au chastel que l'en fermoit*).<sup>146</sup> On the conclusion of the truce with Egypt, however, the count and most of the French departed for home in September 1240, leaving behind the duke of Burgundy, “who said that he would not depart until the castle of Ashkelon had been completely finished and fortified in such a manner that Christendom would be able to hold it.”<sup>147</sup>

Richard, earl of Cornwall, and the English Crusaders arrived in Acre on 11 October 1240, two weeks after Tibald’s departure. As the local Franks and military orders were still divided into pro-Damascene and pro-Egyptian factions, Richard decided to give his support to one activity on which both sides could agree: the refortification of Ashkelon. This was still continuing under the supervision and protection of the duke of Burgundy and local Franks. In the meantime, Richard also opened a dialogue with al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt with the aim of confirming the treaty made earlier with Tibald of Champagne, including the return of prisoners. Embassies passed frequently between the two parties, the Egyptian one being led by the *wazir* Kamal al-Din ibn al-Shaykh.<sup>148</sup> On 30 November Frankish envoys were sent from Ashkelon to Cairo to ratify the proposed treaty. Al-Salih Ayyub, however, detained them until 7 February 1241, while he discussed the matter with his *‘amirs*. The castle appears to have been finished around the end of April 1241, soon after the confirmation of the treaty and the release of the prisoners on 23 April. This new treaty effectively ratified de jure the Franks’ possession of the parts of Galilee west of the Jordan that had earlier been granted them de facto by al-Salih Isma‘il of Damascus, the coastal strip from Beirut in the north to the Wadi al-Hasi between Ashkelon and Gaza in the

south, and Jerusalem and a corridor linking it to Jaffa and Ashkelon, including the Hospitaller castle of Bayt Jibrin. After furnishing the castle at Ashkelon with supplies of men, arms, and foodstuffs and entrusting it to Walter Pennepié, the emperor’s bailiff in Jerusalem, to hold for the emperor, Richard then returned with his army to Acre, at all times shadowed by the troops of al-Salih Isma‘il of Damascus. According to Matthew Paris, he had expended 10,000 marks (£6,666. 13s. 4d.) in building the castle of Ashkelon.<sup>149</sup> From Acre he sailed for home on 3 May.<sup>150</sup>

The principal historical source for what Tibald of Champagne and Richard of Cornwall actually constructed in Ashkelon is a letter written by Richard himself to Baldwin of Revers, earl of Devon, the abbot of Beaulieu (Hants) and Robert the clerk in July 1241. After describing the terms of the treaty which had been negotiated with al-Salih Ayyub, Richard relates that he moved from Jaffa to Ashkelon, where he “began to build a substantial castle” (*quoddam castrum incepimus firmare non modicum*), though in fact, as we have seen, construction had already begun. From there he sent his envoys to Cairo, where the sultan detained them. He continues:

Meanwhile we were still in Ascalon, fully occupied and intent on constructing the castle [*castrum*] already mentioned, which, by God’s grace, within that space of time [i.e., the time during which the envoys were in Cairo, 30 November 1240–7 February 1241] was unexpectedly brought to completion; so that on the return of the bearers [of the letters], with a double wall enclosing it, properly provided with high towers, outworks, squared stones and cut-up marble columns,<sup>151</sup> everything that is appropriate to a castle had been duly completed, except the ditch about the castle, which, by the Lord’s good favor, would be completed without anything lacking with-

<sup>149</sup> Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, in *RS* 44.2.452; cf. 44.3.283.

<sup>150</sup> Philip of Novara 123 (219), ed. Melani, 218–20; *Eracles* 33.51, in *RHC Occ* 2.421–13; *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 36, in *RHC Occ* 2.555–56, trans. Shirley 1999:58, 128–29; *Annales de Terre Sainte*, ed. Röhrich and Raynaud, AB, 440, ed. Edbury, 153; Matthew Paris, *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4.138–45; *Chronicon S. Medardi Suessionensis* 2, an. 1239, ed. d’Achéry, *Spicilegium*, 491; *History of the Patriarchs* 4.2.221–22; Barber and Bate 2010:136–40, no. 66; Runciman 1951 3.217–19; Painter 1969:481–85; Praver 1975:2.283–88, 291–92, 295–96; Edbury 1997:81; Jackson 1987:44–48; Pacifico 2012:379–86.

<sup>151</sup> *incisis columpnis marmoreis*: probably a reference to the reused antique marble and granite through-columns, which are such a feature of the medieval fortifications of Ashkelon.

<sup>145</sup> *fermer*, meaning ‘strengthen, fortify, or build.’

<sup>146</sup> *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 33, in *RHC Occ* 2.553 (trans. Denys Pringle); cf. trans. Shirley 1999:56–57.

<sup>147</sup> *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 34, in *RHC Occ* 2.554 (trans. Denys Pringle); cf. trans. Shirley 1999:57.

<sup>148</sup> *History of the Patriarchs* 4.2.221.

in a month after Easter [i.e., between 31 March and 30 April].<sup>152</sup>

The castle, begun by Tibald of Champagne in spring 1240, was therefore completed except for the ditch by 7 February 1241 and the ditch was finished by 30 April.

It will be recalled that the *Eracles* version of the Continuation of William of Tyre's chronicle asserted that King Richard I had only fortified part of the city of Ashkelon in 1192, not the whole of it. The description of the building of Richard of Cornwall's castle in Ascalon that is found in the same text, and in almost identical words in the chronicle of Philip of Novara, records:

When [Richard of Cornwall] had found workmen and the things necessary for the work, he left [Jaffa] for Ascalon. When they arrived there, they organized themselves and began work; and the castle was built [*fermés*] in the same way that King Richard of England, the uncle of that Count Richard who was now building it, had built it.<sup>153</sup>

This appears to imply that Richard of Cornwall, like his uncle, Richard I, only fortified part of Ashkelon. Although, as already mentioned, there are good reasons for doubting the veracity of the *Eracles*' claim regarding Richard I, whom other sources describe re-fortifying the entire circuit, the view that the castle of 1240–41 only occupied part of the site is not only highly plausible but is also supported by the archaeological evidence for a ditched enclosure in the northwestern corner of the city, bounded by the city wall on the north and the sea cliffs on the west. The association of this enclosure with the building works of 1240–41 is also supported by the discovery in the ditch in front of the north wall, just west of the position of the former Jaffa Gate, of two panels of whitish-grey marble incised with the arms of Sir Hugh Wake, who accompanied Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, as banneret on the crusade in 1240 and died while in the Holy Land.<sup>154</sup> One of these is the panel incised with

the Fatimid inscription of A.D. 1150 (1.49 × 0.63 × 0.10 m) already mentioned, which has three shields bearing Sir Hugh's arms and another two unidentified smaller ones carved into it over and at right angles to the Arabic text. The other, found in 1994, is a grey-white marble lintel (1.52 × 0.21 × 0.18 m), on which eight such shields were incised. In both cases the outlines of the shields are tinted with red pigment (Sharon 1994; 1995; 1997:1.178–83; cf. Boas 1999a:134–35, pls. 5–6).

Richard of Cornwall's letter also includes a statement justifying the construction of the castle in terms of its utility to the Franks:

as we were not certain that the truce would be ratified we chose to construct and fortify the castle in the meantime so that if [for any reason] the truce was broken we would have a secure stronghold in the march on the edge of their territory, previously held by them, to which we could retreat if necessary. Its inhabitants need have no fear of a siege, for even if the besiegers could prevent all reinforcements or provisions coming to them by land, the besieged could receive all their goods by sea. The said castle is also useful in times of peace, since it is the key and protector of the kingdom of Jerusalem by land and sea, while it threatens danger to Babylon [Egypt] and the southern regions.<sup>155</sup>

This assessment doubtless exaggerates the castle's strength, but does at least confirm that it was located beside the sea.

Although, before his departure from the Holy Land in May 1241, Richard had entrusted the castle of Ashkelon to the emperor's bailiff, Walter Pennepié, two years later Walter's successor granted it and its appurtenances to the order of St. John. This transfer was made at the order's own request to the emperor, on condition that he undertook to reimburse any appropriate and necessary expenses that they might incur by holding it. On 31 August 1243 therefore, in Amalfi, Frederick II issued instructions to his bailiff and imperial legate, Thomas of Acerra, to entrust the castle to the Hospitallers at his pleasure and to install one or two of his own men in it to assess what the Hospitallers' expenses were, on the understanding that if the emperor or his heirs should ever want the castle back again, it should be given up on payment of the expenses; if on the other hand the castle should be lost to the enemy as a result of being attacked by an overwhelming force or following a long siege, the emperor would

<sup>152</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4.143 (trans. Denys Pringle). The translation of this passage by Barber and Bate (2010:140) changes the tenses, resulting in a confused chronology.

<sup>153</sup> Philip of Novara 123 (219), ed. Melani, 220 (trans. Denys Pringle); cf. *Eracles* 33.51, in *RHC Occ* 2.421–22, trans. Shirley 1999:128.

<sup>154</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4.44, 174–75; Bliss et al. 1893:1.176; Gregory IX, *Reg.*, ed. Auvray, 2.1123–24, nos. 4607 and 4509; Lloyd 1988:83, 99 n. 147, 150; Tyerman 1988:420 n. 161.

<sup>155</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4.143–44, trans. Barber and Bate 2010:140 [with additions].

still undertake to repay them the appropriate expenses, so long as no deceit, blame, or negligence could be imputed to the Hospitallers who had been defending the place.<sup>156</sup> Frederick's charter was confirmed by Conrad IV, king elect of the Romans and heir to the kingdom of Jerusalem, on 30 November 1243,<sup>157</sup> and again on 15 March 1244.<sup>158</sup> The castle was formally handed over to William of Châteauneuf, grand master of the Hospital, on 3 April 1244, by Thomas of Acerra, in the presence of Bohemond V, prince of Antioch and count of Tripoli, Amaury (Almary) Salaman, Henry, lord of Camerdes, Odo of Celles, and Thomas de Lambert.<sup>159</sup>

Richard of Cornwall's treaty with Egypt had been largely beneficial to the Hospitallers, but failed to satisfy the major barons and Templars, whose castle of Gaza remained in Egyptian hands.<sup>160</sup> Early in 1244, the Templars, supported by the clergy and some of the baronage, therefore made a military alliance with al-Salih Isma'il of Damascus and al-Nasir Da'ud of Karak against al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, ruler of Egypt. Under its terms, in return for military assistance the Franks received those parts of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, which up until then had remained in Muslim hands, as well as Tiberias and Ashkelon. They thus effectively held all the land west of the Jordan, except for the areas around Hebron, Nablus, and Baysan.<sup>161</sup> Between May and June, al-Salih Isma'il moved his forces to the agreed rendezvous

point for the allied army at Gaza, while al-Nasir Da'ud took up position west of Jerusalem. The Franks in Acre were joined by al-Mansur Ibrahim, 'amir of Hims. Faced by such an alliance, al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub called on help from his erstwhile allies in the Jazira, the Khwarizmian Turks under Berke Khan. The Khwarizmiens swept through Syria and Galilee, reaching Jerusalem on 11 July and taking it and massacring the inhabitants on 23–24 August. On 4 October, the Frankish army left Acre and advanced south through the coastal plain. After passing through Ashkelon and joining up with the forces of Damascus and Karak, they met the Egyptians and Khwarizmiens on 17 October between Gaza and Ashkelon at Harbiyya (Forbie), where the allied army was annihilated.<sup>162</sup>

In the aftermath of the battle of Harbiyya, the patriarch, Robert of Nantes, along with the constable, John of Ibelin, lord of Arsuf, Philip of Montfort, and other survivors, took refuge in the new castle of Ashkelon before withdrawing along the coast road to Acre.<sup>163</sup> Meanwhile al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub ordered the 'amirs Rukn al-Din Baybars and Husam al-Din Abu 'Ali al-Hudhbani to seize the castle of Ashkelon. The defenses proved so strong, however, that al-Salih ordered Husam al-Din, who had been wounded in the attack, to go to Nablus, leaving Rukn al-Din Baybars to prosecute the siege. On 22 November, the patriarch in Acre received envoys bearing letters from the Hospitaller castellan in Ashkelon telling him that the garrison was then under siege and requesting help.<sup>164</sup> How long the siege continued is unrecorded, though

<sup>156</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.605–606, no. 2301; 1895:86, no. 263; Huillard-Bréholles 1852:6.116; Mayer 2010:3.1180–84, nos. 691–92; Paoli 1733:1.118–19, no. 111; *RRH*, 289, no. 1112; cf. Riley-Smith 1971:2.176; Pacifico 2012:417–18.

<sup>157</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.608–609, no. 2308; 1895:86, no. 263; Huillard-Bréholles 1852:6.848–49; Mayer 2010:3.1191–93, no. 695; Paoli 1733:1.118–19, no. 111; *RRH*, 289, no. 1112.

<sup>158</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.614, no. 2319; Hiestand 1971:33–54, 55–56; Mayer 2010:3.1208–12, nos. 701–702; *RRH Ad*, 70, no. 1112.

<sup>159</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.615, no. 2320; 1895:86–87, no. 264; Mayer 2010:3.1382–83, no. 794; *RRH Ad*, 70, no. 1118a; cf. Riley-Smith 1971:2.176; Mayer 1984:150–51; Edbury 1997:81–82.

<sup>160</sup> The Templars and their associates made separate terms with Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub of Egypt in 1242: *History of the Patriarchs* 4.2.233–34.

<sup>161</sup> Templar of Tyre 18 (254), ed. Minervini, 58; Abu'l-Fida', in *RHC Or* 1.122; Badr al-Din al-'Ayni, in *RHC Or* 2.1.197; Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons and Lyons 2.1–2; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 272; Mujir al-Din, trans. Sauvage, 89–90; Matthew Paris, *Chron. majora*, in *RS* 57.4.288–91, 302, 307; Barber and Bate 2010:140–42, no. 67; Runciman 1951:3.223; Riley-Smith 1971:2.170; Prawer 1975:2.306–309; Pacifico 2012:419–20.

<sup>162</sup> *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 41, in *RHC Occ* 2.562–66; *Eraclès* 33.56–57, *RHC Occ* 2.427–31, trans. Shirley 1999:63–66, 132–34; Joinville 528–39, ed. and trans. Monfrin, 260–67; Matthew Paris, *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4.299–311, 337–44; *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Stevenson, 156–62; Templar of Tyre 16 (252), ed. Minervini, 56; Abu Shama, *RHC Or* 5.193–94; Badr al-Din al-'Ayni, in *RHC Or* 2.1.197–98; Abu'l-Fida', in *RHC Or* 3.122; al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 247–48; Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons and Lyons 2.4–7; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 273–75; Barber and Bate 2010:142–46, no. 68; *History of the Patriarchs* 4.2.238, 241–43, 268–69, 288–89, 294–95; Runciman 1951:3.223–27; Prawer 1975:2.310–13; Jackson 1987:53–60; Berkovich 2011; Lotan 2012; Pacifico 2012:420–23. Among the Egyptian casualties was the 'amir Sayf al-Din, son of the 'amir al-Salihi al-Najmi, whose tomb inscription survives in Gaza (Kalus 2012).

<sup>163</sup> *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 41, in *RHC Occ* 2.564–65, trans. Shirley 1999:65; Matthew Paris, *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4.342; Barber and Bate 2010:145, no. 68.

<sup>164</sup> Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons and Lyons 2.8; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 275; Matthew Paris, *Chron. Majora*, in *RS* 57.4.343; Barber and Bate 2010:146, no. 68; Prawer 1975:2.315.

Ayyubid attempts to take the castle were for the time being unsuccessful. On 19 February 1246, however, Pope Innocent IV wrote from Lyons to the archbishop of Nicosia and the bishop of Limassol asking them to ensure that in the event of the castle passing out of their hands the Hospitallers would be reimbursed for the considerable outlay of expenditure that they had invested in it.<sup>165</sup> It seems very likely that the pope's letter, addressed to two Cypriot bishops, was prompted by Henry I of Cyprus's assumption of the regency of the kingdom of Jerusalem and his assertion of his title to the county of Jaffa-Ashkelon, which may have caused the Hospitallers anxiety about their continued custody of the castle and the agreement over expenses made earlier with Frederick II (Mayer 1984:151; Edbury 1997:83); but it may also simply have reflected a more general concern, which was expressed in rumors circulating in the West, that the castle was now barely able to defend itself.<sup>166</sup>

The castle in Ashkelon was finally taken and destroyed by the *'amir* Fakhr al-Din ibn Shaykh al-Shuyukh for al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub of Egypt in 1247. According to some Muslim accounts Fakhr al-Din then went on to take Tiberias;<sup>167</sup> however, other Muslim sources and all the Western accounts place the fall of Tiberias several months before that of Ashkelon, citing dates of 17 June for the former and 24 October for the latter.<sup>168</sup> The most detailed Frankish account is that given by the French Continuation of William of Tyre, which relates that after storming the castle in Tiberias, the Muslims

went on to besiege Ascalon. Here they mounted a strong siege and attacked vigorously, using engines, mining, and direct assaults upon the ramparts. And in order to reduce the castle and prevent men and supplies being brought in by sea, the sultan sent to

Alexandria and Damietta for 22 galleys, as well as a supply vessel carrying victuals and gear for the galleys. These kept station off Ascalon so that no boats could get in.

When the Hospitallers, defending Ascalon for the emperor, saw this, they requested assistance from everyone in Acre, prelates, religious, communes, and others: let them help to provide armed vessels so as to drive the galleys off and allow supplies and reinforcements to come in. They sent to Cyprus for this purpose and asked King Henry for help. He sent eight galleys, well armed and well manned by knights and sergeants, under the command of Baldwin of Ibelin, seneschal of Cyprus. As soon as they were ready they left Famagusta and made for Acre, where they joined the other boats being prepared. From there they moved on all together. There were fifteen galleys and other vessels: galliots, galleasses and *ganguemeles*, at least fifty all told. Under sail and oars they all reached Ascalon.

When the Saracens saw them, they brought their galleys and supply ship as close inshore as they could, to protect them from attack. The Christians' ships lay opposite them, anchored out at sea, and there they remained five days. Then one evening a strong wind blew from the west, putting the Christian fleet into some danger. The vessels, however, rode safely at anchor, and the more so because they were a good distance offshore. Along this coast the sea is more turbulent and dangerous inshore than it is further out. Thus the Turkish galleys could not weather the storm but drove ashore and all twenty-two galleys and the supply ship were wrecked. In the morning the Christians saw the Saracen vessels lying smashed along the shoreline and were able to bring in fresh supplies. But the wind and sea were so violent they could not endure it any longer, but raised anchor, loosed their sails and returned to Acre.

When the Turks saw what had happened, they attacked the castle more vigorously than ever, and what was expected to help the place in fact harmed it. When the galleys were shattered, the Saracens used the timbers and planks to make cats, mantles and covered ways, they converted masts into engines to fling missiles into the castle, and so they pressed harder and harder until the castle could hold out no longer. Yet its defenders fought bravely; it is a long time since anyone has heard of men who endured as they did or showed such courage and resolve. This did not help them: the castle was stormed and taken, for they were exhausted by the incessant assaults which gave them no respite and no chance to rest. Besides this, the Turks dug a

<sup>165</sup> Innocent IV, *Registres*, ed. Berger, no. 1784; Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.640, no. 2394; Schabel 2010:1.351–52, no. e-12.

<sup>166</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chron. majora*, in *RS* 57.4.559–600.

<sup>167</sup> Abu'l-Fida', in *RHC Or* 1.125; Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons and Lyons 2.10–11; al-Makin ibn al-'Amid, trans. Eddé and Micheau, 82; cf. al-Dahabi, trans. Nègre, 252.

<sup>168</sup> Abu Shama, *RHC Or* 5.86, 194; Badr al-Din al-'Ayni, in *RHC Or* 2.1.200; al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 283, 284; Amadi, ed. de Mas Latrie, 198; *Annales de Terre Sainte*, ed. Röhrich and Raynaud, B, 442, ed. Edbury, 154; Bustron, ed. de Mas Latrie, 107; *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rotheilin) 41, in *RHC Occ* 2.564–65; *Eracles* 33.59–61, in *RHC Occ* 2.432–35, trans. Shirley 1999:65, 135–36; Templar of Tyre 22 (258), ed. and trans. Minervini, 58–59; Runciman 1951:3.228–29; Riley-Smith 1971:2.177; Prawer 1975:2.315; Thorau 1992:20.

mine into the very hill on which the castle stood; the miners broke through right inside the castle and the Turks rushed in pell mell. Some saw this happening before the others did, ran down to the shore and aboard the boats. Most escaped in this way, but others who stayed behind were killed or captured. The castle was demolished. Thus all the castles fortified by the king of Navarre, the count of Brittany and Earl Richard of Cornwall were lost, all except Safad Castle, which the Templars had fortified.<sup>169</sup>

According to the Rothelin text, the Hospitallers abandoned the castle after only two years when they saw that they could no longer hold it, “for it was broken and destroyed in many places and the ditches filled in.”<sup>170</sup>

The account of the siege given in the *Eracles* is largely corroborated by Sa’d al-Din, who fought on the Muslim side and adds significant details about the state of the fortifications and how they finally succumbed to attack:

[After the capture of Tiberias,] taking our engines of war, we all went to Ascalon, to which the ‘*amir* Shihab al-Din ibn al-Gharz had preceded us. Our troops surrounded the place. At its foot was the Frankish fleet; our own ships were anchored on the shore. Ascalon is a fine fortress with sixteen towers in a row beside the sea. We camped there and hurled stones at it from our mangonels. The Frankish fleet came to attack ours; that was a hot day; the sea became bad and the waves tumultuous, and our ships were broken on the shore, to the number of twenty-five; meanwhile the Frankish ships, which were lying at anchor on the open sea, came through the storm safe and sound. We took the timber from our ships and made parapets from them for the assaults. We had in all fourteen mangonels, throwing stones against the citadel; the enemy mangonels did not lie idle for one hour; the Franks burned the protective parapets of our mangonels; they fired on to them large fiery arrows from ballistas (*ziyar*) and broke two of our mangonels. Then they made a sortie, which cost us many people. After some days we set about filling in as quickly as possible the ditch on the side where the mine was. After that they received the help of twelve ships . . . and they made several more sorties. On 10 Jumada I [13 September 1247] we gave the assault on all sides, the Muslims

gave a bitter fight and took the forewall; there were some 60 dead and a host of wounded. We spent the night on the ditches and mining began on a tower and a curtain wall; after two days we launched ourselves into the attack. At one moment they retook the mine, from which our men fled, but the next day we took it back; on the 16th [19 September], we set fire to the mine under the tower, but the enemy had countermined and put out the fire. However, the following day the tower collapsed and buried twelve of their knights, whom our men recovered in order to take what they had on them. Another seven large vessels reached them. The mangonel stone that I possess weighs one and a quarter Syrian quintals. The siege continued with more than one incident. Two Frankish knights came over to our side and received from Fakhr al-Din clothes of honor. They reported that discord had erupted between the Hospitallers and Templars. The forewall collapsed and eight of our men died under the debris. On the night of Thursday 22 Jumada II [24 October], our men went up through the mined tower and seized it; they let out a great cry, drums were sounded in the night, a great uproar arose, the crowd rushed up; the Franks, struck with amazement, fled toward their boats or into the towers, where they fortified themselves; and the Muslims, still by night, entered the citadel. They massacred as they pleased and, in the throng, with the darkness and the thirst for booty, it is possible that some of them were killed. Right until the end of the night they did not stop carrying off precious objects and arms. The next day, the ‘*amir* Fakhr al-Din made his entrance and granted the Franks who had taken refuge in the towers their lives, without their goods. Among them were three respected leaders. There were 260 prisoners. In the sea we found drowned men and cut-off hands, for the Franks had clung to the ships to flee and those inside, fearing that they might sink, had cut off their hands with their swords. After that we set ourselves to demolish the citadel; then we departed, leaving the town to serve as a watering place for owls and a habitation for antelopes and gazelles.<sup>171</sup>

For at least a decade after the fall of the castle to the Ayyubids, the Hospitallers doggedly pursued their claim for reimbursement of the expenses that they had been promised by Frederick II and Conrad IV. Soon after assuming the regency of the kingdom of Jerusalem in 1246, however, Henry I of Cyprus had granted the

<sup>169</sup> *Eracles* 33.59–61, in *RHC Occ* 2.432–35, trans. Shirley 1999: 135–36.

<sup>170</sup> *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 41, in *RHC Occ* 2.564–65; cf. trans. Shirley 1999:65.

<sup>171</sup> Translated from the French translation in Cahen 1983:240–41.

county of Jaffa-Ascalon to John of Ibelin.<sup>172</sup> John evidently disputed the Hospitallers' claim, for, on 5 February 1252, Pope Innocent IV wrote to the archbishop of Tyre upholding the Hospital's right to compensation (Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.720, no. 2587; Paoli 1733:1.273); and on 7 March, Conrad IV also issued letters patent confirming the terms of his father's grant of the custody of the castle to the Hospitallers (Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.722, no. 2590; 1895:89, no. 278; Mayer 2010:3.1217–18, no. 705; *RRH Ad*, 73, no. 1198b). While in Jaffa, in January 1256, John finally appears to have agreed to grant the Hospitallers 650 carrucates of land in the lordship of Ascalon in compensation for their expenses in defending the castle.<sup>173</sup> These lands, however, were evidently at that time in Muslim hands, for a second charter, also given in Jaffa, on 2 February 1256, lists the fourteen *casalia* in which they lay and stipulates that if Ashkelon were to be returned by treaty into the hands of its lord, John, or his heirs, the Hospitallers would have forty days in which to request the demarcation of their lands; this would then be done by three appointed trustees, one acting for the Hospital, one for the lord, and the third being the Father Guardian of the Franciscans in Acre.<sup>174</sup>

This agreement appears to have been made at a time of renewed conflict on the southern borders of the kingdom, in which John of Ibelin's castle of Jaffa was used as the principal Christian base. The previous year, Jaffa had been excluded from a ten-year treaty made between the Franks and the sultans of Damascus

and Egypt. Just after Christmas 1255, however, a force which had assembled in Jaffa, led by Geoffrey of Sargines, marshal of the kingdom, carried out an incursion between Ashkelon and Gaza, returning with quantities of booty. Rather than paving the way for a new treaty including Jaffa and Ashkelon, however, this enterprise resulted in the combined forces of Damascus and Egypt laying siege to Jaffa and continuing to raid into the territory that was already designated as Frankish as late as March 1256. A new treaty was subsequently agreed; but its terms were the same as the earlier one and still excluded Jaffa and Ashkelon.<sup>175</sup> John of Ibelin's concession to the Hospitallers was thus probably made while the fighting around Jaffa was still in progress and it seemed possible that Ashkelon might yet be returned to him. When the hope of regaining Ashkelon had been extinguished, however, a new compromise arrangement seems to have been made. On 30 April 1256, the grand master of the Hospital, William of Châteauroux, made known that an agreement had been reached with John of Ibelin to submit the dispute over expenses to the arbitration of Philip of Montfort, lord of Tyre, Hugh Revel, grand commander of the Hospital in Acre, and Peter of Avalon, constable of Tiberias, and extended the period of arbitration until St. John's Day (24 June) (Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.814–15, no. 2810; 1895:101–102, no. 86; *RRH*, 328, no. 1247). On the eve of St John's Day (23 June 1256), John of Ibelin extended the period once again (Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.819, no. 2816; 1895:92, no. 299), confirming this and naming the same arbiters in a charter of July 1256 (Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.819, no. 2817; 1895:93, no. 300). Philip of Montfort and Hugh Revel were reappointed yet again in 1257 (Hiestand 1971:42 n. 33a; Mayer 1978:46; 1985:153). After this, however, nothing more is heard of the Hospitallers' claim.<sup>176</sup>

Despite the Ayyubids' destruction of the castle of Ashkelon in 1247, it appears that the surviving fortifications were still considered to pose a significant enough military threat for the Mamluk sultan, al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars I, to order further demolition works there in 1270, when it was reported that Louis IX had set sail from France with a new crusade. Baybars had personal experience of Ashkelon, since as an *'amir* of al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt he had

<sup>172</sup> Innocent IV, *Registre*, ed. Berger, no. 6465; Riley-Smith 1973:214–15; Edbury 1983:115.

<sup>173</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.833–34, no. 2845; Paoli 1733:1.155, no. 130; *RRH*, 327, no. 1245. Delaville le Roulx (1894:2.833–34, no. 2845 n. 1), followed by Edbury (1983:127; cf. 1997:83 n. 84), dates this and the following charter to 1257 on the assumption that the dating system used by the clerks drafting them began the year on 25 March; however, as Mayer has argued, this is far from certain and also produces a less easily explicable sequence of events (1984:152–55).

<sup>174</sup> Delaville le Roulx 1894:2.837–39, no. 2853; Paoli 1733:1.151–53, no. 128; *RRH*, 327, no. 1246. The 14 villages were: Malaques (Kh. Umm Laqis), Saarethe (Kh. Sha'rat-ta), Heleiquat (al-Hulayqat), Zeite (Kh. Zayta), Amouhde (Kh. Amuda), Elgedeide (Kh. al-Judayda), Phetora (Kh. Furut), Semsem (Simsim), Camsa (Kh. Qamsa), Beitderas la Seconde (Bayt Daras al-Sughara'), Elroeiheib (Hirbiya?), Agelen el Hayet (Kh. 'Ajlan), Agelen el Ahssas (Kh. Wahashiyya, Kh. Tannar), and Beze (?) (see Blakely and Huster 2016). Sareth had belonged to the Hospital beforehand (Luttrell 1994:67), as had another Bayt Daras (Bethduras, Betheras) in the territory of Ashkelon (Delaville le Roulx 1894:1.377, no. 557; Hiestand 1984:256–59, no. 41; *RRH*, 132–33, no. 503; *RRH Ad*, 36, no. 570a).

<sup>175</sup> *Cont. de Guillaume de Tyr* (Rothelin) 76–79, in *RHC Occ* 2.630–33, trans. Shirley 1999:113–15; *Annales de Terre Sainte*, ed. Röhrich and Raynaud, 446; Runciman 1951:3.281–82; Prawer 1975:2.356–57.

<sup>176</sup> On John of Ibelin's dispute with the Hospitallers, see Mayer 1978:45–46; 1984:151–55; Edbury 1978:126–27; 1997:78–84.



unsuccessfully besieged the castle there following the destruction of the Frankish army at Harbiyya in 1244. According to Ibn al-Furat:

Sultan Baibars set out for Ascalon on the 7th of Safar in this year (25 September), for he had heard that Louis, with the Frankish kings, had set sail and he suspected that he might be making for Ascalon in order to build it up as he had done in the past with Caesarea. Ascalon still had parts of the walls remaining, and especially those of its citadel. So Baibars went there himself in this year and destroyed its buildings, erased its traces and cast its stones into the harbour. Then he returned to Egypt, reaching his citadel on the 8th of Rabi' I in this year (25 October).<sup>177</sup>

Since Ashkelon's harbor was simply the beach, the statement that stones were thrown into it should probably be taken as a topos, like similar statements made about Jaffa. Ibn al-Furat's account is useful, however, in identifying the citadel, or castle, as the most strongly fortified element of the defenses, even at this time. As things turned out, the demolition proved to be largely unnecessary, as Louis' final crusade made instead for Tunis (Prawer 1975:2.496–97; Richard 1983:549–74).

Ashkelon's former status as a frontier city was alluded to by Burhan al-Din ibn al-Firkah al-Fazari (1262–1329) in his book on the merits of Muslim pilgrimage in Palestine (Matthews 1949:xii, 23, 145 n. 69). Around 1320, Abu'l-Fida' describes the site as uninhabited and in ruins (Le Strange 1890:402; cf. Marmardji 1951:142). The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta, who claimed to have visited Ashkelon in 1326 but based his account of it entirely on that of Muhammad al-'Abdari (1290) (El'ad 1987:266; cf. Talmon-Heller, Kedar, and Reiter 2016:195), describes it in similar terms, while devoting more attention to the still intact Mashhad Husayn and the ruined mosque of Umar south of it.<sup>178</sup> In 1346–47, the Western pilgrim Jacob von Bern also reported that Ashkelon had little in the way of walls or defenses.<sup>179</sup>

By this time Ashkelon had been replaced as a regional economic and administrative centre by al-Majdal (or Majdal 'Asqalan), lying a short distance to the

east, between Ashkelon and the coastal road. Here the principal mosque contains an inscription commemorating the construction of a mosque in Muharram A.H. 300 (16 September–15 October A.D. 1300) by Sayf al-Din Salar, vice-regent and effective joint ruler of Egypt with the high steward (*ustadar*), Baybars al-Jashnikir, during the second sultanate of al-Nasir Muhammad (1299–1309) (Sharon 1997:1.184–86; Petersen 2001:210–15; cf. Holt 1986:110–13).

The site of Ashkelon has remained unoccupied since 1247, though by the early nineteenth century much of it had been terraced and parceled into small cultivation enclosures by the inhabitants of the neighboring village of Jura, which existed just northeast of it until 1948 (Khalidi 1992:116–17). Apart from cultivation, made possible by the abundance of wells and cisterns within the former circuit of walls, the site also attracted attention as a ready source of building materials, including cut ashlar, antique columns of Egyptian granite, and marble, which was exploited both for building and for slaking into lime. At the time of Ahmad al-Jazzar (1775–1804), large quantities of building material were removed by sea to rebuild Jaffa and Acre (Meryon 1846:3.155, 167; cf. 1.195; 3.163); while even in the later nineteenth century Cunningham Geickie, approaching Ashkelon from Gaza, observed two Arabs "leading camels laden with squared stones from the ruins of Ashkelon, for use in some building at Gaza," and on the site itself, smashed-up marble waiting to be made into lime (Geickie 1887:191, 194–95).

Among Western visitors of the early modern period to the site were Laurent d'Arvieux in 1659 (d'Arvieux 1735:2.71–72) and Volney (alias Constantin-François Chassebeuf) in 1785 (Volney 1959:347). Between 1 and 14 April 1815, Lady Hester Stanhope, accompanied by Muhammad Agha, the governor of Jaffa, engaged 100–150 villagers from Jura for two weeks to excavate the site of the ruined mosque on behalf of the sultan in a vain search for gold (Meryon 1846:3.152–71; cf. Guérin 1857:92–93; 1868:2.146–47; Haslip 1945:142–43, 155–57; Schloen 2008:143–44, fig. 8.1). During the course of this work, "a small excavation was likewise made in one of the towers of the East wall of the city" (Meryon 1846:3.167). Count de Forbin spent a month among the ruins during his travels in 1817–18, but his description of the walls is more poetic than informative. Nonetheless, the engravings made by G. Engelmann to accompany his account include one of the town walls in the area of the east gate, from a drawing by Charles Bourgeois, showing considerably more standing masonry than exists there now (figure 19.7). Another, by Carle Vernet, depicts some other ruins, which if they relate to the town walls at all would appear to show part of the defenses on the north

<sup>177</sup> Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons and Lyons 2.152, cf. 140; cf. al-Maqrizi, trans. Quatremère 1.2.84; Prawer 1975:2.499; Thorau 1992:204.

<sup>178</sup> French trans. Defremery and Sanguinetti 1.164–65; cf. Le Strange 1890:402.

<sup>179</sup> "In dem lannd Palestina ist allain die stat Ascalon, dy hat auch chlain maur und wer": Röhricht and Meisner 1880:58.



Figure 19.7. The east wall of Ashkelon seen from the inside, from a drawing by C. Bourgeois (1819), engraved by G. Engelmann, and published by the Comte de Forbin in *Voyage au Levant* (1819a), pl. 42 (image © Denys Pringle)



Figure 19.8. View of what appears to be part of Ashkelon's north wall, from a drawing by C. Vernet, engraved by G. Engelmann, and published by the Comte de Forbin in *Voyage au Levant* (1819a), pl. 41 (image courtesy of Judith Mackenzie)

or northeast (figure 19.8) (de Forbin 1819a:48–49, 124, 131, pls. 41–42; 1819b:159–61, pl. opp. p. 135; cf. Schloen 2008:146).

Dr. Robert Richardson, traveling between Cairo and Jerusalem, arrived at Ashkelon on 8 April 1818, approaching the site from the village of Ni'ilya (Naidé) in the plain to the southeast and the ruins of the Fatimid Mashhad Husayn:

On the next eminence we found the remains of an edifice, with granite columns, like what we had seen at Rafia, and enjoyed an excellent view of the ruined walls of Askelon; winding around an eminence on our left, and having crossed a small stream in the intervening valley, we arrived at their base. The position of Askelon is strong: the walls

are built on top of a ridge of rock, that winds round the town in a semicircular direction, and terminates at each end in the sea. The foundations remain all the way round, the walls are of great thickness, and in some places of considerable height, and flanked with towers at different distances. Patches of the wall preserve their original elevation; but in general it is ruined throughout, and the materials lie scattered around the foundation, or rolled down the hill on either side. The ground falls within the walls in the same manner that it does without: the town was situated in a hollow, so that no part of it could be seen from the outside of the walls. Numerous ruined houses still remain with small gardens interspersed among them. . . .

In the highest part of the town we found the remains of a Christian convent, close upon the sea, with a well of excellent water beside it. The sea beats strongly against the bank, on which the convent stands, and six prostrate columns of grey granite, which we saw half covered with the waves, attest the effects of its encroachments. . . . From this saddening scene, we retraced our steps across the ruins, and rejoined our sheikh, who smoked his pipe, and waited for us without the gate of the city. (Richardson 1822:2.202–204)

In 1832, Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mehmet 'Ali, the independent ruler of Egypt and Syria-Palestine, began building a new town, known as New Ashkelon ('Asqalan al-Jadida), on a rise some 4 km northeast of the ancient site, an enterprise which involved demolishing the adjacent ancient walls for building materials; but little more than a military post and a cistern had been completed before he was forced to surrender Palestine to the Ottoman government in 1840, and by the 1860s even these had been demolished by the inhabitants of al-Majdal for building materials (Guérin 1857:82–83, 93; 1868:2.133–34; Roberts 1989:3.46). Ashkelon experienced another strong earthquake, followed by aftershocks, on 26 May 1834, but the effects of this on the built fabric are not recorded (Amiran, Ariei, and Turcotte 1994:272–73).

Eli Smith visited the site in February 1837 and described it to Edward Robinson as “one of the most mournful scenes of utter desolation he had ever beheld” (Robinson 1867:2.33 n. 3). A sense of desolation is also captured in a drawing from the northeast made by A. W. Callcott from an earlier sketch by A. Edmonstone and published ca. 1835 (figure 19.9) (Horne 1835:opp. p. 95). This shows what was left of the walling around the northern and eastern parts of the perimeter; and, while it seems to exaggerate the gap in the rampart at the Jerusalem Gate, it confirms,



Figure 19.9. The walls of Ashkelon from the northeast, drawn by A. W. Callcott from a sketch by A. Edmonstone (engraving by J. Stephenson in T.H. Horne, *The Biblical Keepsake* (London, ca. 1835), opp. p. 95)



Figure 19.10. Ashkelon viewed from the north, as depicted by David Roberts in 1839, showing the walls of the eastern and southern sectors (from *The Holy Land*, 3 vols. (London, 1855–56), 2, pl. 57)

like Richardson's account, that the valley on the east side of the city was considerably wetter than it is today. The Scottish artist David Roberts also visited in the spring of 1839. His lithograph (figure 19.10) shows a view from the northeast looking across the whole interior of the site, with in the foreground—according to Crowley's description—the exposed foundations of an antique "temple" and a church that had been recently uncovered by Ibrahim Pasha. Although his representation of the walls is generally credible, even including the same pitched-roofed tower that was depicted by Bourgeois in 1819, the antique building foundations give the impression of having been sketched elsewhere and repositioned, like the group of people in the foreground, for artistic effect (Roberts 1842:2, pl. 57; 1989:3.46–49, pl. 68; 1999:176–77; cf. Schloen 2008:147–48, fig. 8.3).

Emmanuel Rey visited Ashkelon in December 1859 while researching his comprehensive survey of Crusader military architecture in Syria and Cyprus. As well as preparing the first detailed plans of the site (figures 19.11–12), he has also left us the fullest description of the walls since that of William of Tyre:

At the two extremities of Ascalon, north and south, towards the sea, the walls terminated in considerable structures, today completely ruined. Only the layout of the one that is at the southern end is recognizable; it is a parallelogram, 20 m long and 12 wide, divided internally into two rooms by a partition wall pierced by a door. Unfortunately the whole of it is cut off 1 m above the ground.

Of the tower placed opposite it at the north end of the town no more is to be seen than enormous sections of wall overturned in one piece, which it

seems could not have been cast down in such a way except by an earthquake or a mine.

On the side towards the sea, that is to say to the west, there now only survive some feeble traces of walls revetting the cliffs.

The curtains which form the south and southwest sides of the enceinte were flanked by square towers, with sides 6–8 m wide. The original height of this wall seems to have been around 10 m.

The rampart is 2.5 m thick. It is made of rubble consisting of stones set in poured mortar and the facing is in ashlar of small height. On the outside antique column drums may be seen, set transversely through the thickness of the wall following a custom universally employed at that time as much by the Muslims as by the Franks.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was customary to set up in front of the walls of towns lines of palisades, forming what at that time were called the "lists" (*lices*) of the place. Sometimes they were also placed on the outworks and formed barbicans in front of the gates. It is probable that defenses of this kind stood in front of the ramparts whose study occupies us now; but they have gone without leaving any trace.

Unfortunately the remains of the enceinte, for the most part reduced from its original height, are so to speak buried under enormous dunes, piled up by the south wind, which little by little have risen even to the height of the base of the walls. These having crumbled away in many places, the dunes have penetrated through the breaches right into the town and pour in continually, forming thus to right and left of the rampart a moving sliding talus. According to William of Tyre the gate that opened to

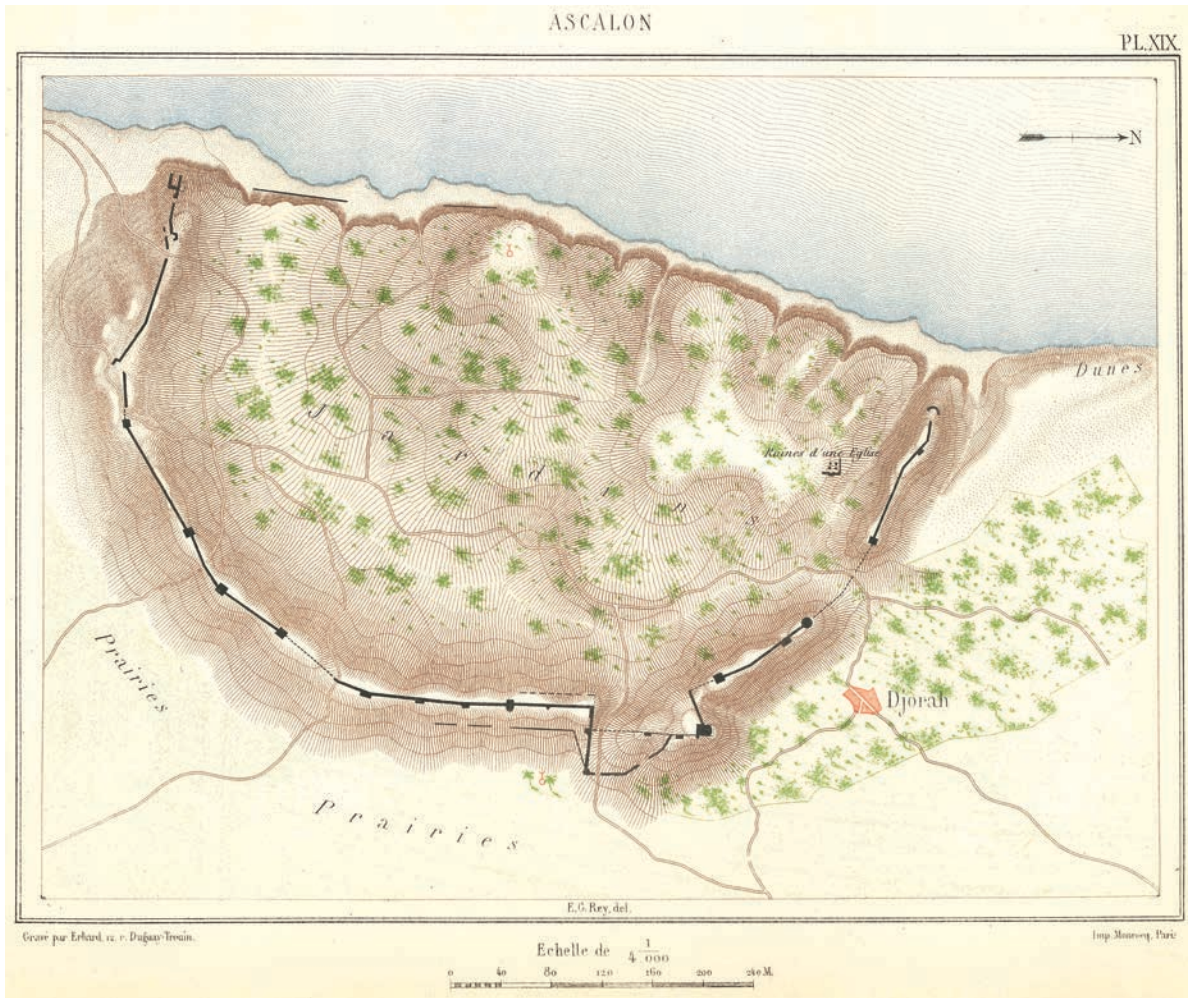


Figure 19.11. Plan of Ashkelon made by Emmanuel Rey in December 1859 (from *Étude sur les monuments de l'architecture militaire des croisés* (Paris 1871), pl. XIX)

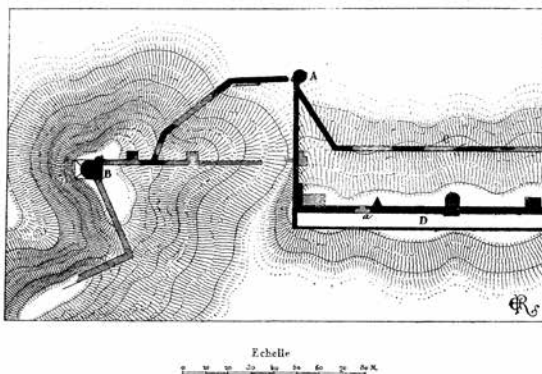


Figure 19.12. Plan of the defenses of the Jerusalem Gate area in Ashkelon made by Emmanuel Rey in December 1859 (from *Étude sur les monuments de l'architecture militaire des croisés* (Paris, 1871), Figure 52)

the south was called the Gaza Gate, but it is completely hidden below a mantle of sand.

Towards the east is the gate called the Jerusalem Gate, of which traces are still to be seen and which we find described [by] William of Tyre. . . .

The gate itself has disappeared. Although badly damaged, the remains of an outwork which stood in front of it are still very recognizable. As one may see from the plan [figure 19.12], this barbican had a very irregular form. It consisted of a wall 2 m thick; a staircase, still intact in December 1859, allowed me to reach the height of the wall walk that capped it. Its height was around 8 m. A turret *A*, of which no more than the foundations are visible, flanked one of the three entries which opened in the other faces of this work.

The large fortress *B*, which dominated the whole of these defenses, seemed to me to be an imitation of the Byzantine *φρουράι* or master towers. In all

probability, it was one of the two towers mentioned here by [William of Tyre] as the principal defenses of the place. It is greatly to be regretted that this important work, of which only the base is left, was not described or surveyed while it was still almost complete, its destruction dating from scarcely twenty years ago, if one is to believe what the inhabitants of the village of Jura assured me.

It is to the south of this entrance that the best preserved remains of the walls of Ascalon are to be found. Apart from the rampart itself, which exists at the summit of the mounds described above, they comprised a forewall halfway down the slope, in imitation of the ὀροτείχιον of the Byzantines.

Many traces are still visible of this first line of defense, in front of which extended ditches, today filled by the sands. . . .

In the same position at *D*, inside the town, are the remains of the walls revetting a terrace extending along the ramparts, which formed an assembly area for troops (*place d'armes*) a little below the wall walk (*chemin de ronde*). At *a*, between the wall of the barbican and the rounded tower, and roughly the same distance from both, a postern opens in the curtain. It gave access into the space which separated the two enceintes.

To the north, gardens fill the enceinte of Ascalon and the trees grow among the ruins. The site of the Joppe [Jaffa] Gate is still recognizable, and it was dominated to the east by a large round tower whose foundations were still in place when I visited there. It is one of those that William of Tyre mentions as defending each gate of the town.

Between this gate and the sea, in the midst of the rich vegetation that today covers a part of the town of the Middle Ages, are the remains of a small church. Its plan is perfectly recognizable: it was built with three naves terminating in apses.

The total circumference of these walls is about 1,500 m. But it is to be anticipated, alas, that in the not too distant future Ascalon will have completely disappeared, for these ruins are a quarry which is exploited continually for the extraction and exportation of construction materials (Rey 1871:205–209, fig. 52, pl. XIX [trans. Denys Pringle]).

Victor Guérin had first visited Ashkelon five years before Rey, in 1854, and produced a brief account of his visit (Guérin 1857). On 24 May 1863, he returned to the site and expanded his earlier preliminary report into two of the chapters of his comprehensive work on the historical geography of Palestine (Guérin 1868:2.133–71 (chs. 33–34); cf. Schloen 2008:148–49). Of the sea wall he writes:

The walls on the side facing the sea are three-quarters demolished, except in certain places, where enormous sections lie overturned on the beach. They rose above sheer cliffs, part rocky and part sandy, the elevation of which at the highest point may be as much as 30 m, but which elsewhere comes down to no more than 15 m. These cliffs are now cut through by a number of clefts, caused by the rains which have gullied the ground. In former times, in order to block these fissures and also prevent an escalade or collapses, the weakest places had been revetted externally and thus rendered more solid and more inaccessible with a wall of regular masonry, which today is almost completely destroyed.

The port did not extend the whole length of the chord of the arc, but only for the southern three-quarters of it. The two moles which formed it had been built with an incredible number of grey granite columns, which are still lying on the beach or in the sea; they were defended, especially the southern mole, by strong bastions, of which there survive several sections of quite considerable walls, collapsed and piled in confusion one on top of the other. These sections, constructed with stones of every sort bound together by an extremely tenacious cement, contain as reinforcing elements through the width of their mass, either granite columns, as is most frequently the case, or columns of white or grey marble, derived in both cases from earlier buildings.

The shore between these two moles does not describe a cove, but an almost straight line, and a space of about 30 paces now separates the sea from the cliffs. This long band of beach is entirely composed, for all its width, of a very deep sand and a prodigious mass of small shells, which one crushes when walking on and which crunch under one's feet.

For the rest, the port which the two moles in question delimit was completely open towards the west, and consequently very insecure, as William of Tyre observed. . . .

The site of [the sea] gate is still today very recognizable, and the inhabitants of Jura still call it by the name of Bab al-Bahr (Gate of the Sea). Lying quite close . . . to the southern mole, it was defended to left and right by towers or bastions. In the part of these works that is still standing one remarks, set transversely through the thickness of the walls and projecting on the outside, fifteen or sixteen antique column drums of grey granite, which appear from afar like guns poking out through their embrasures. (Guérin 1868:2.138–39 [trans. Denys Pringle])

Of the landward defenses Guérin writes:

Along the southern section of the enceinte, the walls had been built on hillocks, half-natural, half-artificial. Incessantly besieged by the enormous sand dunes, which, piled up little by little by the south wind, now rise right to their summit, they are almost completely buried under these invading waves, which will eventually submerge them completely; even now they burst through numerous breaches into the interior of the town, forming to left and right of the line of the ramparts a sloping talus, which slides and gives way beneath one's feet and which one may climb only with difficulty.

Once one has come to the ridge of the slope, which is at the same time that of the walls in their present elevation, as one follows it one comes at intervals across the remains of several collapsed towers. A fairly large depression marks the site of the South or Gaza Gate mentioned by William of Tyre. . . . On this side the second enceinte indicated by that writer is hardly recognizable.

The eastern section of the ramparts seems to have been the most formidable of all. Even so, it is continually battered by flows of sand, above which it is still standing to a large extent. For the mounds which support the walls on the east dominate to a greater extent the nearby plain and, besides, the current of the sea of sand in the middle of which Ascalon is placed seems to be directed from south to north, rather than from east to west; the result is that this part of the ramparts is the least buried and consequently the easiest to study. These are the characteristics which they present in their construction and which must be the same for the whole enceinte. Standing about 10 m high, as far as it is possible to judge by some of the parts that are better preserved or less invaded by the sand, they are more than 2 m thick. They are faced on the outside with a very regular work of medium-sized stones; the inside is filled with a rubble composed of stones of all sizes set in poured mortar. In many places the masonry is crossed through by column drums, either of marble or of grey granite, laid horizontally and making on the outside a projection of 12–15 cm. It was on the east side that the Great Gate, called the Jerusalem Gate, stood, because it was facing towards that city. Defended to right and left by two strong towers, whose remains are very considerable, it was preceded by other gates made in fortified outworks, which have been overturned from top to bottom [as described by William of Tyre]. . . .

As for the northern section of the enceinte, it is quite difficult to follow it, first because it has experienced a more profound overthrow, either by the hand of man or by the effect of an earthquake,

and also because it is invaded by gardens, which are separated by hedges of cactus or thorns. Climbing vines, old fig trees, and other fruit trees grow in confusion among large sections of walls or collapsed towers. This mixture of ruins and greenery, the disorder of which disconcerts the archaeologist who wants to study inquiringly the remains of the past, charms on the other hand the artist, who seeks above all the picturesque. The gardens on this side extend as far as the village of Jura. Their soil is fertile, although sandy; it is cut by several small valleys: these are the *valliculae* mentioned by William of Tyre.

In summary, this vast enceinte, along with that of Caesarea, constitutes one of the most beautiful ruins of the Middle Ages in Palestine. Constructed on the north, south, and east on a semicircular mound, the result at the same time of nature and the work of man, and to the west along the sea on a straight line of cliffs, it was pierced by four gates, each one looking towards one of the four cardinal points. At intervals it was flanked by towers, the strongest of which seemed to have been those that defended these gates, and in particular the East or Jerusalem Gate. Forewalls which have long since been razed or buried below the sand, except in certain places, notably towards the east, where their trace can be made out, formed the town's first line of defense. . . .

The whole had been well and solidly built, and the stones jointed with an excellent cement, whose good quality William of Tyre justly praised. (Guérin 1868:2.141–43 [trans. Denys Pringle])

Guérin went on to describe some of the features within the city, including remains of three churches (one of them being that excavated by Lady Hester Stanhope), a ruined structure known locally as “the castle” (al-Qala') which still stands at the south end of the *cardo*, and several underground vaults (Guérin 1868:2.143–48). Among the wells was one still known as Bi'r Burj al-Banat (Well of the Tower of the Maidens); this was situated beside a half-demolished bastion on the southwestern side of the enceinte, from which it evidently took its name (Guérin 1868:2.148).

Lieutenants C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener of the Royal Engineers visited Ashkelon for the Survey of Western Palestine on 3, 9, and 10 April 1875 and carried out a survey by chain and prismatic compass (figure 19.13) (Conder and Kitchener 1881:3.237–41; cf. Conder 1879:2.164–66; Schloen 2008:149–52, fig. 8.5). Their description of the walls repeats much of the information given by Rey and Guérin, but adds some significant details.



Figure 19.13. Plan of Ashkelon made by the Survey of Western Palestine in April 1875 (from C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs*, 3 (London, 1883), pl. opp. p. 236)

The masonry of the walls is throughout small, and the stone a friable sandy limestone, but the mortar used is extremely hard and full of black ashes, and of shells from the beach; the walls have fallen in blocks, and the stone seems to have given way in preference to the cement.

There is no harbour, but on the coast are rocky precipices from 20 to 70 feet [6–21 m] high. To the south near the jetty there are reefs of rock below the water. The lowest part of the town is between the ruined church in the north-west corner and the sacred Mukâm of el Khüdr. A sort of valley here runs down, and the cliffs above the beach are lower. The cliff in the north-west corner is the highest part.

There are remains of five towers on the land side of the wall [figure 19.14]. In the north-west corner of the town are remains of a wall, with a deep masonry well 4 feet [1.22 m] diameter, beside which is a cistern. A large ruined tower is situated 150 yards [137 m] north of the mainland entrance. It is 40 feet [12.2 m] square, with round turrets 12 feet [3.66 m] diameter in the north-east and south-east corners. The interior is supported on vaults; the turrets were solid at the base. At an equal distance south of the gate is a tower projecting 28 feet [8.54 m], and 34



Figure 19.14. Ashkelon from the east, photographed by H. H. Kitchener in April 1875 (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/KIT/P4011)



Figure 19.15. Ashkelon, the eastern wall looking north from the now-vanished “Large Tower,” photographed by H. H. Kitchener in April 1875 (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/KIT/P4012)

feet [10.37 m] wide outside [figure 19.15]. The wall south of it is carried back 28 feet [8.54 m], so that flank defence is obtained on that side. At the south-east angle of the wall is a fourth ruined tower; a fallen block of masonry is alone visible. Near the south-west corner of the fortification is a tower 50 feet [15.25 m] broad, projecting 64 feet [19.52 m], and apparently there was here a postern gate.

In addition to the towers there were buttresses on the walls, apparently at intervals of 100 feet [30.5 m]. These project 8 to 13 feet [2.44–3.96 m], and were 4 feet [1.22 m] wide. There are also on the east three large buttresses, 24 feet by 6 feet 9 inches [7.32 × 2.06 m], and south of the main gate is a wedge-shaped buttress 14 feet [4.27 m] thick at the back, 2 feet [0.61 m] in front, 17 feet [5.18 m] along one side, 13 feet [3.96 m] along the other.

The eastern or land gate is constructed like most of the twelfth century fortress gates, in such a manner as to secure flank defence. The entrance was from the south, in a wall running out at right angles



Figure 19.16. Ashkelon, the upturned “Round Turret fallen,” photographed by H. H. Kitchener in April 1875 (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P984 (old no. 257))

to the main wall east and west. There are remains of an outer wall east of the main wall about 35 yards [32 m] from it, and this appears to have covered the entrance. The angle between the main wall and that projecting from it was strengthened by a polygonal tower on the south, foundations of which remain. A block of masonry lies fallen on one side [figure 19.16]. It is 20 feet [6.10 m] diameter, and 5 feet 9 inches [1.75 m] in height, being apparently the base of a turret, probably flanking the gate. This must have been overthrown by violent means, probably in the destruction of the walls by Saladin, according to the treaty of 1192 A.D.

Excavations have at some time or other been made at this gate, and at the tower on the wall north of it.

The sea gate is in the sea wall, near the southwest corner of the fortifications. The same care is shown here also in constructing the entrance. There is an outer wall running parallel with the west wall. It is 3½ feet [1.07 m] thick, and the clear space between is 9 feet [2.74 m]. It appears to have extended for 66 feet [20.13 m]. A wall also runs out from the main wall, and joined the outer wall apparently at its south end.

The gate in the wall is immediately north of this projecting wall, and on its north side is a buttress projecting 2 feet [0.61 m], and at a clear distance of 8 feet [2.44 m] from the projecting wall. The passage thus formed protects the gate either side, and a party approaching had first to proceed south for 66 feet [20.13 m], and then turned east through a passage 8 feet [2.44 m] wide, and entered the gate, which was only 3 feet [0.91 m] wide. A tower stood on the wall north of the gate, and projected *inwards* for 22 feet [6.71 m], forming an internal flanking

defence to the gate. Inside this tower was a vaulted cistern, 7 feet east and west by 19 feet north and south [2.13 × 5.80 m], lined with hard white cement.

Steps led up the side of the precipice to this sea gate, and below a small jetty ran out into the water. It was formed, like that at Caesarea, of the shafts of granite pillars laid side by side. Similar shafts project from the walls all along the sea face of the town, for the ashlar has here been either removed or disappeared, and only the rubble core of the walls remains, with the pillars sticking out from it. (Conder and Kitchener 1881:3.237–40)

Conder’s own account of his visit the site also mentions the rounded turret near the Jerusalem Gate:

A huge tower-foundation lies tilted up on one side, like a great cheese, close to the land-gate; it is twenty feet in diameter [6.10 m], and six feet [1.83 m] thick. (Conder 1879:2.165)

Other late nineteenth-century descriptions of Ashkelon’s defenses include those of Sir Charles Wilson (ca. 1880:3.149–66, pls. pp. 169, 172, 173), H. Guthe (1879; 1880), and Cunningham Geickie (1887:1.191–98).

After the Turkish army’s withdrawal from Gaza in the face of General Allenby’s advance on 7 November 1917, a Turkish regiment was positioned near the ancient site of Ashkelon for two days to cover their army’s retreat northward along the main coastal road. On the 8th it counterattacked the British left flank, inflicting 285 casualties on the 155th Brigade. Ashkelon was occupied by the 52nd Division the following day (Ewing 1925:2.519–22; Falls 1930:1.132–37; Grainger 2006:150–58). It is uncertain, however, whether any of these brief military actions affected the surviving defenses in any way (figure 19.17).

With the establishment of the British Mandate in Palestine, the newly appointed Director of Antiquities and Director of the British School of Archaeology, John Garstang, conducted excavations at the site in 1920–22, assisted by W. J. Phythian-Adams (figure 19.18). Although this work was not primarily concerned with the medieval fortifications, it did result in a new survey of the site, on which the surviving walls and towers were duly recorded (“After the Armistice” 1920; Phythian-Adams 1920; 1921; 1923; Garstang 1921a; 1921b; 1922; 1924; Abel 1921). The key attached to the published plan appears to attribute most if not all of the surviving remains of the town walls to the Byzantine period (figure 19.19). It also appears from the plan and from photographs taken at the time that their state of preservation was much as it is today (figures 19.20–21). Subsequently the walls have been



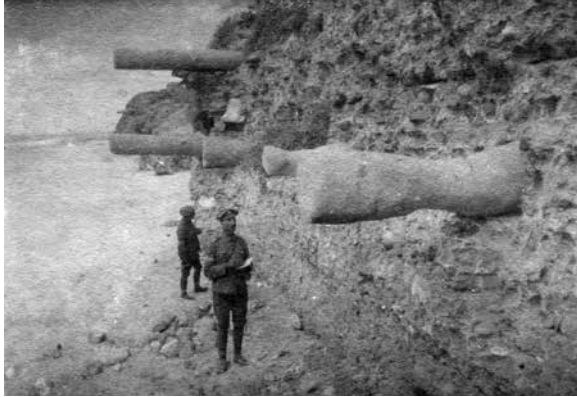


Figure 19.17. Royal Engineers inspecting the sea wall of Ashkelon, while stationed at al-Majdal between November 21, 1917 and January 7, 1918 (photo courtesy of John Dent, whose grandfather, Ernest Parkin of the RE Signals Unit, was most probably the photographer)



Figure 19.18. Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner of Palestine, Professor John Garstang, and others viewing Ashkelon from the ramparts in 1920 (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/GAR/G265.02)

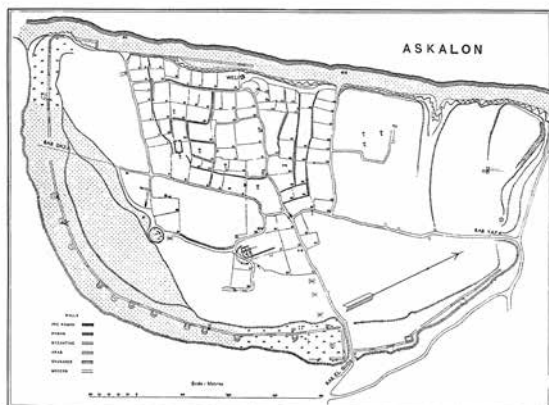


Figure 19.19. Plan of Ashkelon published by John Garstang (from PEFQS 1921)



Figure 19.20. Ashkelon, the Jerusalem Gate area seen from inside the walls to the north in May 1920 (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/GAR/G240.02)



Figure 19.21. Ashkelon, the Jerusalem Gate area (field 56) seen from the west (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/GAR/G236.02)

described and commented upon by Santino Langè (1965:67–71, 178–79, figs. 29–32), Meron Benvenisti (1970:114–30), and Denys Pringle (1984; 1993:1.61–69; 1997a:21), among others,<sup>180</sup> while the strategic position of the city for the kingdom of Jerusalem has been discussed by Joshua Praver.<sup>181</sup>

#### Description

The city walls describe an arc some 1.9 km in length, with the sea forming the chord on the northwestern side. Overall the defended area measures some 1,080 m northeast to southwest by 580 m northwest to southeast. On the landward side the walls are set on top of a line of artificial earthworks, the remains of earth and mudbrick ramparts of Middle Bronze and Iron Age date, while on the seaward side, remains of walls now survive only toward the southern end and at the very northern point. It is uncertain whether there was a continuous sea wall, or whether the high cliffs of the central and northern tells made artificial fortifications unnecessary in those parts. On the south, the

<sup>180</sup> Most recently Boas and Piana 2008.

<sup>181</sup> 1956; 1958. Many of the ideas presented in these two papers, published in Hebrew, are also developed in Praver 1975: *passim*.

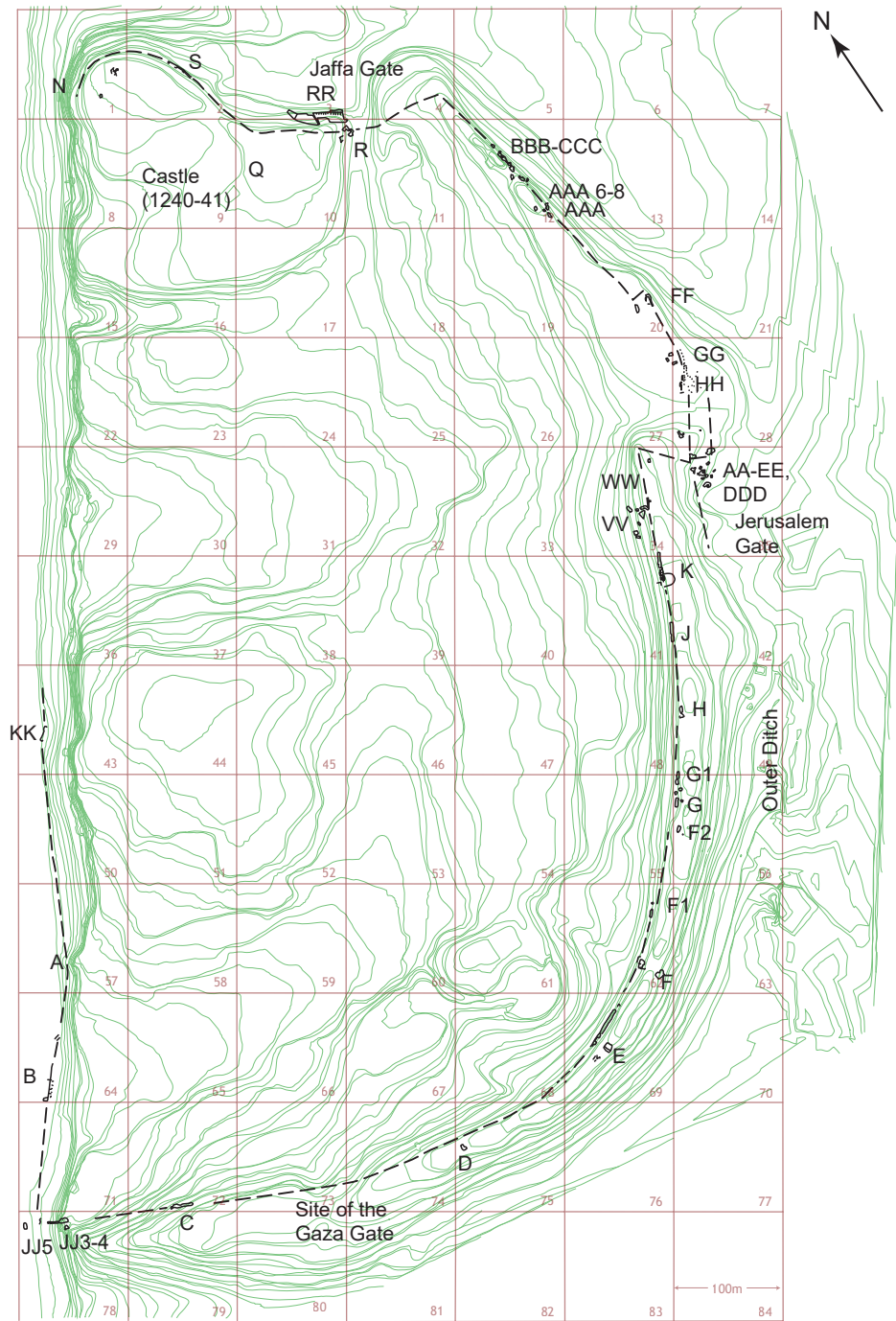


Figure 19.22. Contour plan of Ashkelon showing the surviving parts of the town walls, with letters corresponding to the sections in the following description

earthen ramparts have now been encroached upon by sand dunes, while in the northeastern part of the site the profile of the ramparts has been altered by post-medieval cultivation terraces and field boundaries. The walls themselves survive in no more than a fragmentary state, with the result that not all of the towers and stretches of curtain that are shown on the

earlier plans surveyed by Rey in 1859 (Rey 1871: fig. 52, pl. xix), the Survey of Western Palestine in April 1875 (Conder and Kitchener 1881: vol. 3, plate facing p. 236) or the British School of Archaeology in 1920 (Garstang 1921a) can now be recognized.

In the following account each surviving element is described and, where possible, its phases of

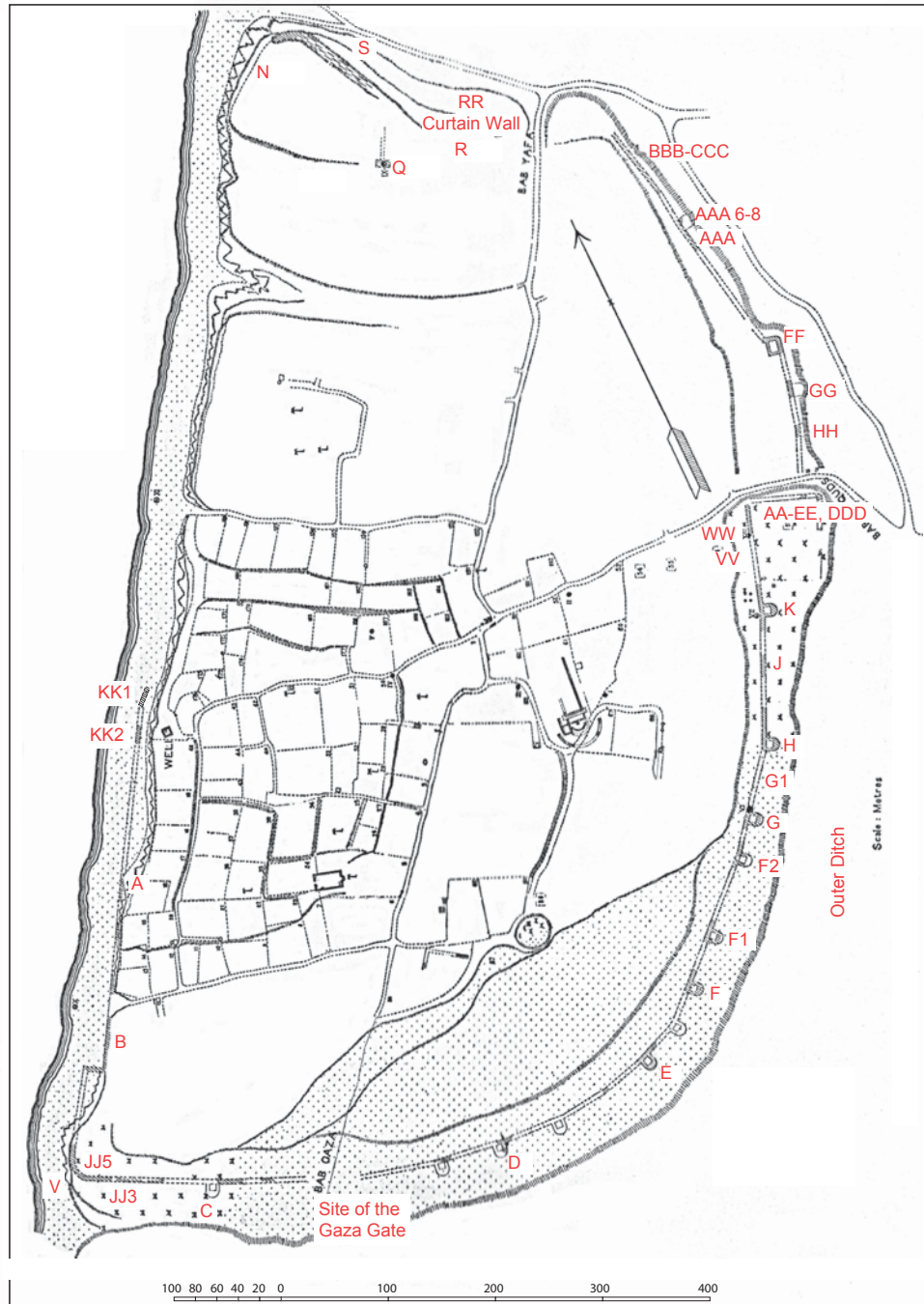


Figure 19.23. Garstang's plan of Ashkelon (1921a), with added lettering identifying areas and features described in the following description

construction are identified. The description begins with the sea wall on the west and continues in a counterclockwise direction around the whole enceinte, ending at the point in the north where the land wall again met the sea. The sections of wall are identified by letters or combinations of letters and numbers (see figures 19.22–23), which correspond with the

identifications given to individual pieces of masonry in the field records (starting in 1981).<sup>182</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Related pieces of masonry are phased with the higher phase numbers referring to earlier phases. This order is not typical in architectural phasing but is an accommodation to the phasing conventions of the Leon Levy Expedition. In

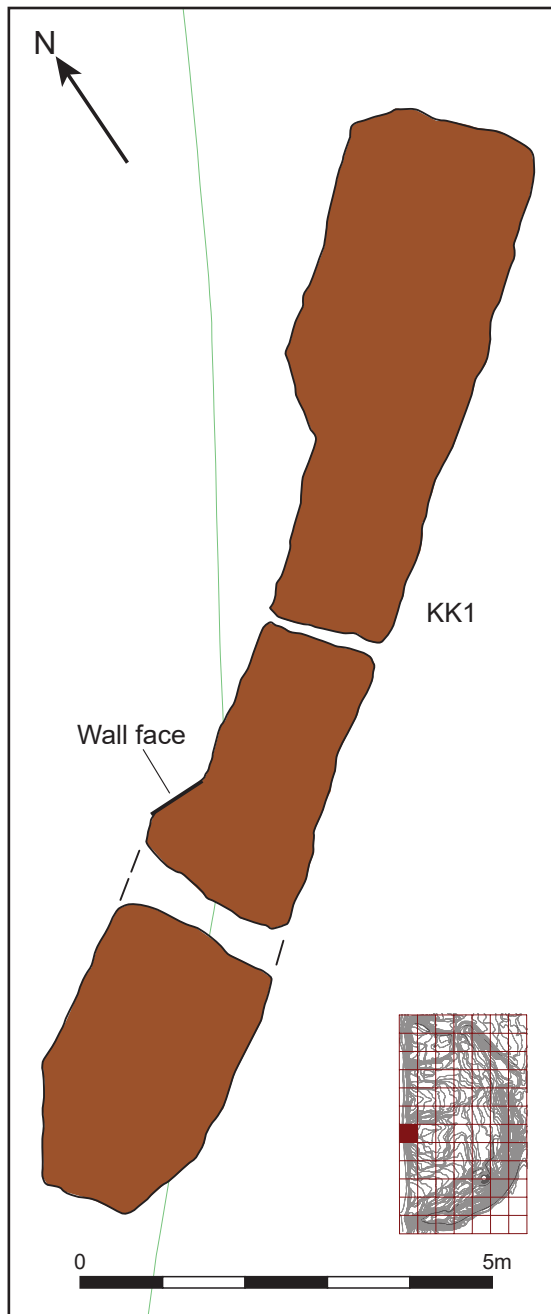


Figure 19.24. Plan of fragment of sea wall KK1, Grid 43

In almost all phases, the wall is constructed of rubble concrete, the mortared core being laid *pari passu* with the facing courses, usually one course at a time. Course heights, where given, are set out in ascending sequence.

In addition, the “grids” mentioned in these chapters follow the grid system of the Leon Levy Expedition.

### The Sea Wall (from North to South)

#### SEA WALL (KK1–2) AT THE FOOT OF TALL AL-KHADRA, GRID 43

Two pieces of sea wall are exposed on the beach at the base of Tall al-Khadra. One of these (**KK2**) lies slightly south of a point immediately below Maqam al-Khadra, while the other (**KK1**) is just north of it.

**Wall KK1** (figures 19.24–25) represents a stretch of the sea wall, broken into three pieces and measuring overall some 12.3 m in length. The northern section (ca. 7.10 m long) is apparently still in situ; the central one (ca. 3 m long) has broken from it, while the third (ca. 2.25 m long) has not only broken away but has moved forward as a result of the sea undermining it and cutting into the cliff behind it. Although the wall has lost its outer facing, it is at least 2.3 m thick at the base and the visible lower 0.65 m was built without a facing directly against the sloping foot of the cliff. It may be suspected that the missing outer face would have been correspondingly battered at the bottom, but there is no longer any way of confirming this. Above its unfaced lower section, the rear of the wall was faced with two courses of reused ashlar blocks (together some 0.40 m high), above which the face steps away from the cliff by 0.55 m and then continues with a vertical facing of reused ashlars; this appears to have been originally freestanding, but material from the cliff has later accumulated against it. Altogether, the wall fragment stands to a maximum height of 3 m on the west and 2.6 m on the east, the upper part (albeit lacking its outer facing) being some 1.45 m thick.

Despite transverse and longitudinal fractures, the wall appears to be of one constructional phase. The mortar is grey and harder than the *kurkar* stone, which has often eroded away as a result. It contains a lot of charcoal, some coarse pottery fragments, a fine (ca. 3 mm) aggregate presumably collected from the beach, and some small pieces of shell. In some courses, the



Figure 19.25. Fragment of sea wall KK1, from north (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.26. Fragment of sea wall KK2, from north. The piece of masonry to the left represents a more recent arrival from the cliff face (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.27. Tall al-Khadra from the beach, showing a fragment of the sea wall (KK2) lying at the base of the cliff, as depicted in C. Wilson, ed., *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*, 3 (London, ca. 1880), p. 172

mortar batches contain a coarser aggregate (8 mm or more). Some of the pieces of reused *kurkar* in the core have adhering to them a very shelly grey mortar containing some coarse pottery. The course heights of the core vary from 24 to 28 cm; those of the rear facing are similar, though somewhat irregular as a result of the variability of the sizes of ashlar available for reuse.

**Fragment KK2** represents a pinnacle of wall similar to **KK1**, some 3 m long and 6.3 m high, which has fallen face forward onto the beach and broken into four pieces (figure 19.26). This collapse, however, is far from recent, as the fragment is already shown in this position in an illustration published in *Picturesque*

*Palestine* around 1880 (figure 19.27) (Wilson ca. 1880:3.172). (A fifth fragment, however, lying immediately east of these four pieces, represents part of another structure of Byzantine or later date, which fell from the cliff face in a more recent storm.) Only the wall core of **KK2** remains. It consists of coursed rubble masonry set in a hard mortar varying in color from grey to white and containing a lot of shell and some pottery. The course heights average 15 cm in the lower 1.5 m, but are more regularly 18–19 cm above that (making an overall average of 17.4 cm). About 4.65 m above the bottom, a granite column (diam 56 cm) was set transversely through the wall. Two such columns are shown in the illustration referred to above.

#### SEA WALL (A), GRID 57

A piece of sea wall, some 18.3 m long and 5.5 m high, was recorded in situ in 1983 and 2011–12 retaining the southwestern foot of Tall al-Khadra (figures 19.28–30). It was also noted by Rey and Garstang, but not apparently by the SWP. It is clear, however, that already by Garstang's time the continuation of this wall to the north had been largely swept away by the sea. Two phases were identified.

#### Phase 2, Byzantine/Umayyad

Embedded in this wall fragment are the remains of an earlier wall, which presents an ashlar face toward the west (course heights: 18, 21, 22, 17, 28 cm) in places where the later Phase 1 masonry has fallen away. It is constructed with a grey shelly mortar containing potsherds and a little charcoal, though the mortar used for bedding the facing stones (horizontal joints 0.9–1.5 mm thick) is more finely graded and lacks the shell content. The western face of the wall has been burned red in places. The wall turns 30° to the southwest at the southern end of the surviving fragment, where it can be seen to be some 0.60 m thick, its rear face being vertical and composed of reused ashlar blocks of differing sizes. This wall does not appear to have extended the full length of the fragment to the north, as no trace of it is visible in the surviving north section. In view of its relative slenderness, it may be doubted whether it was ever intended either as a sea wall or for defense.

#### Phase 1, Umayyad

The earlier wall was subsequently incorporated into a more massive construction, which enveloped its outer face and extended it both in height and toward the north (and south). The facing of this wall has gone, but the course heights visible in the mortared rubble

Sea Wall A (Grid 57)

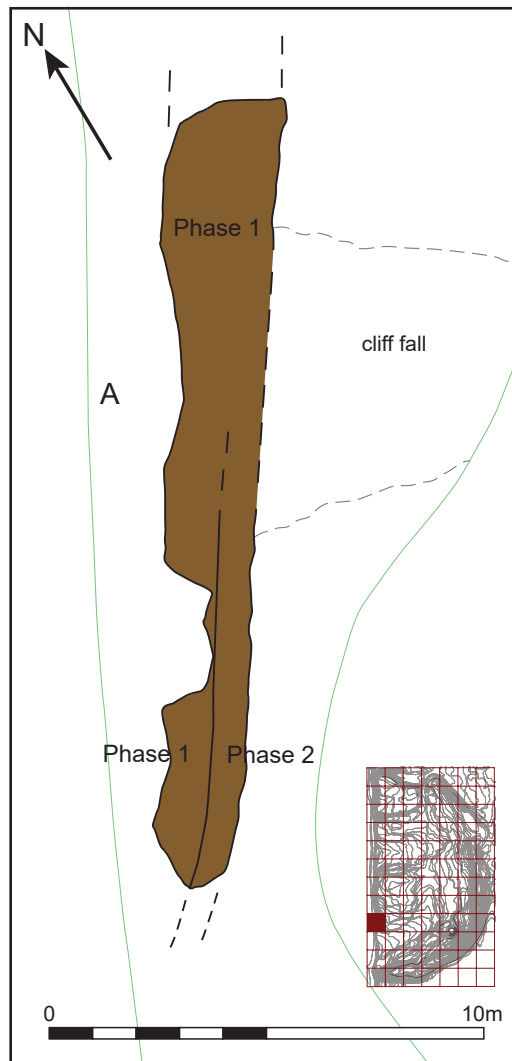


Figure 19.28. Plan of fragment of sea wall A, Grid 57



Figure 19.29. Sea Walls from the beach, showing sea walls A and, with the outline of land wall C on the skyline behind (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.30. Sea wall A from the beach (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.31. Sea wall A and cliff section behind it (photo Denys Pringle 1983)



Figure 19.32. Sea walls A and B, photographed by John Garstang in 1920, showing the now collapsed portion of wall between the two (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/GAR/G244.02)

vary from 11 to 34 cm, averaging 22 cm lower down and 23 cm higher up. The mortar is similar to that of Phase 2. At the north end (figure 19.31) the lower 2.30 m of the wall may be seen to have been built like **Wall KK1** against the sloping base of the cliff. Above this the east face became vertical and was probably freestanding, but it has subsequently been eroded or

robbed away like the west face and covered by material falling from the cliff. A horizontal fracture running through the length of the wall seems to indicate a break in construction between the completion of the base and the building of the vertical superstructure (as also seems to be apparent at **Wall KK1**), rather than the existence of two distinct phases.

A photograph taken by Garstang in 1920 (figure 19.32) shows another section of this wall immediately south of **Wall A** and in line with **Wall B**. It stands to a similar height as **Wall B** and has two through-columns projecting from it at roughly the same level as the upper through-column in **Wall B** (see below).

#### SEA WALL (B), GRID 64

This section of wall was noted by Rey, Guérin, the SWP, and Garstang and still exists, though it has been consolidated since 1983 by the addition of a sacrificial masonry cladding to the lower part of its outer face, some 1.1–1.3 m thick. It is some 5.5 m high and runs for 35 m parallel to the water's edge before turning a right angle and running for another 8 m toward the sea at its southern end (figures 19.32–35). On the SWP plan the turn is shown as a buttress or stub wall, with the wall continuing beyond it to the south on the same alignment; but the erosion of the cliff by storm in 2010–11 has revealed the corner, showing that Garstang's plan is correct. Doubtless, as Garstang's plan also suggests, the wall would have turned another right angle to the south to join the land wall at the base of the cliff.

Except at the recently exposed southeast corner, the facing of the wall has all gone. The core masonry is bound in a white mortar (appearing brownish grey where exposed to the sea), containing graded aggregate (mostly < ca. 5 mm) but with some inclusions of shell, coarse pottery, and small charcoal fragments. At the southeast corner, the course heights average 19.3 cm, with a tendency to be somewhat larger toward the bottom (23, 24, 20, 19, 26, 22, 18, 17, 16, 16, 14, 17 cm). The lower 2.3 m or more of the wall was cut into the base of the cliff. Some 2.5 m above its base the wall has grey granite columns set transversely through it at intervals of 4–5 m. In most cases the ends of these columns seem barely to have projected from the face of the wall, allowing its original thickness to be estimated at around 3 m (compared to about half that at present, or 2.6 m for the south return); however, the fourth column north of the angle would have projected some 1.5 m, and about 2 m above it there is another with a similar projection, suggesting that there may perhaps have been a masonry projection at this point, such as a buttress or turret.

On the south face, the iron head of a crossbow bolt is embedded in one of the mortar joints, with only about 20 mm left protruding (figure 19.36). It seems

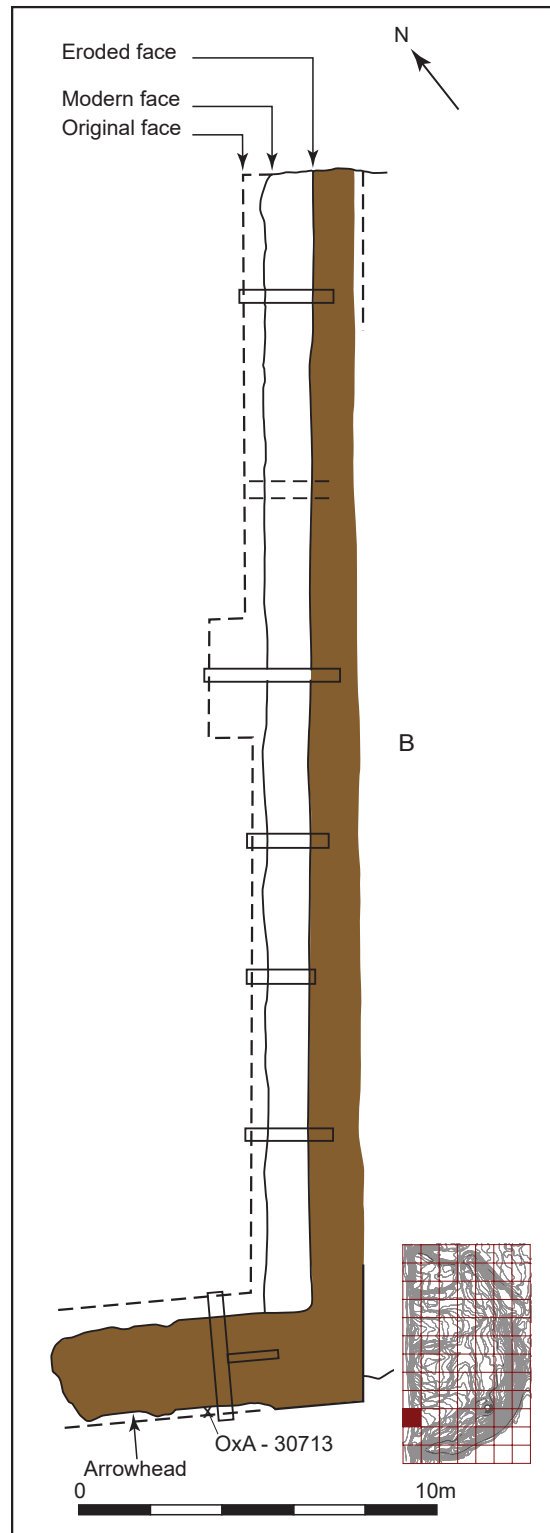


Figure 19.33. Plan of sea wall B, Grid 64

to have been rounded in profile, some 15 mm in cross section with a rounded tang measuring 3–5 mm across. The type is one common to both Muslim and Frankish armies in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Raphael 1999:153–56, fig. 8; Ashkenazi, Golan, and Tal 2013; Töröka et al. 2017). In view of its present position, the bolt must have been fired into the wall after the wall face in this area had fallen away.



Figure 19.34. The strand and sea wall and Tall al-Khadra, seen from the south (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.35. The western return at the south end of sea wall B, from the south (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

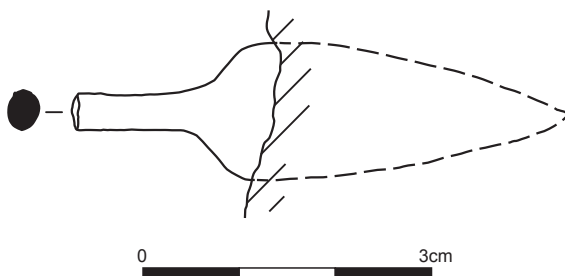


Figure 19.36. Iron crossbow bolt embedded in the western return at the south end of sea wall B

A single sample of charcoal from a patch of shelly mortar on the south face gave an early fifth- to mid sixth-century cal A.D. date (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30713). It is likely, however, that this piece of masonry represents debris from an earlier building that was reused in the wall; the date should therefore be regarded as a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the wall.

#### JETTY OR SOUTHERN SEAWARD TERMINATION OF LAND WALL (V), GRID 78

The SWP plan identifies the rocky projection into the sea at the southwestern end of the land wall as a “Jetty,” while Guérin identified it as a mole protecting the south end of the harbor (which in effect was no more than the beach). The artificial nature of a wall (referred to inconsistently as either “pier” or “city wall”) continuing the line of the land wall into the sea at this point was confirmed by underwater survey in 1985, though what remains of it is now mostly indicated by the large number of antique granite columns that had evidently been built into it which litter the sea bed. On this basis its investigators have attributed it to the Crusader period, though there is no reason why it could not equally well have dated from Tulunid or Fatimid times. The underwater investigation also found remains of what appears to be a northern return of the wall, running some 80 m northeast of it parallel to and some 100 m from the shore. This is represented by a mass of rubble masonry, some 30 m wide, which rises some 2 m above the sea bed (Raban and Tur-Caspa 2008:72, figs 4.1, 4.8–4.14). It is doubtful whether this could have provided a satisfactory shelter for ships of deeper draft, though the outer wall could have sheltered small craft and lighters from northwesterly gales.

#### The Southern Walls (from West to Northeast)

##### TOWER (OF THE HOSPITALLERS?) AT SOUTHWESTERN END OF LAND WALL (JJ5), GRID 71

The northeast corner of the foundations of a large rectangular tower still remains in situ at the top of the cliff, where the land wall would have met the coast (figures 19.37–39). The precarious state of the cliff made it too dangerous to examine this from above. Seen from the beach below, however, the foundation appears to be several meters deep and cut into the *kurkar*. It includes several lumps of masonry salvaged from earlier buildings. Although its masonry could not be characterized from such a distance, two lumps of tumbled masonry immediately below it have a shelly mortar, while





Figure 19.37. The southern termination of the land Wall JJ3 at Tower JJ5, with fragments of structures from different periods lying on the beach below (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.38. The foundation of Tower JJ5, viewed from the beach below (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

another two a little to the south have a buff-cream sandy mortar, containing less shell.

In the same position Rey saw remains of a tower standing 1 m above ground; it was shaped like a parallelogram, measuring  $20 \times 12$  m overall and divided internally by a wall containing a door. The SWP give the tower's measurements as 15.25 m broad with a 19.52 m projection, and suggest that there was also a postern gate here. This may perhaps have been the tower toward the sea (*versus mare*) that was granted to the Order of Mountjoy in 1177 and the Tower of the Hospitallers that Saladin destroyed by fire in September 1191.<sup>183</sup> Baha' al-Din describes the latter as "a vast tower, overlooking the sea, like an impregnable fortress . . . [whose] construction was the most solid that one could imagine, on which pickaxes would have no effect."<sup>184</sup>

<sup>183</sup> The same suggestion is made by Benvenisti 1970:125–27, though his accompanying photograph is of a cistern.

<sup>184</sup> Baha' al-Din, trans. Richards, 178–80.



Figure 19.39. The foundation of Tower JJ5 with the end of a possible outer Wall JJ6 to the right of it (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.40. The section through a possible outer Wall JJ6 visible in the eroded cliff south of Tower JJ5 (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

#### FRAGMENT OF OUTER WALL (JJ6), GRID 78

Also visible in the cliff face from the beach, some 15 m south of the foundations of **Tower JJ5** and down the slope from it, is the cross section of an outer wall, about 1 m thick (figures 19.39–40). On the south the wall presents an almost vertical face, preceded by a horizontal surface or berm cut in the *kurkar*; a photograph taken

in 2009, before subsequent erosion, suggests that this may have been paved, either in plaster or perhaps in stone. On the northern uphill side the foundation is cut obliquely into the sloping surface of the *kurkar* from a higher position. The mortar appears to be grey and extremely shelly. Another fragment of the same wall lies on the beach immediately below. It remains to be demonstrated, however, whether this fragment belongs to a linear feature associated with the fortifications or to some other quite independent structure.



Figure 19.41. Fragment of curtain Wall JJ3, with view along shore to the north (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

FRAGMENTS OF CURTAIN WALL AND  
POSSIBLE TOWER (OF THE MAIDENS?)  
(JJ3–4), GRID 78

A short way to the east of **Tower JJ5**, a stretch of the town **Wall JJ3**, some 13.5 m long and at least 3.10 m wide, survives in situ (figure 19.41). As the facing



Figure 19.42. Fragments of curtain Wall JJ3 and JJ4 (not in situ), looking along the line of the wall to the east (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

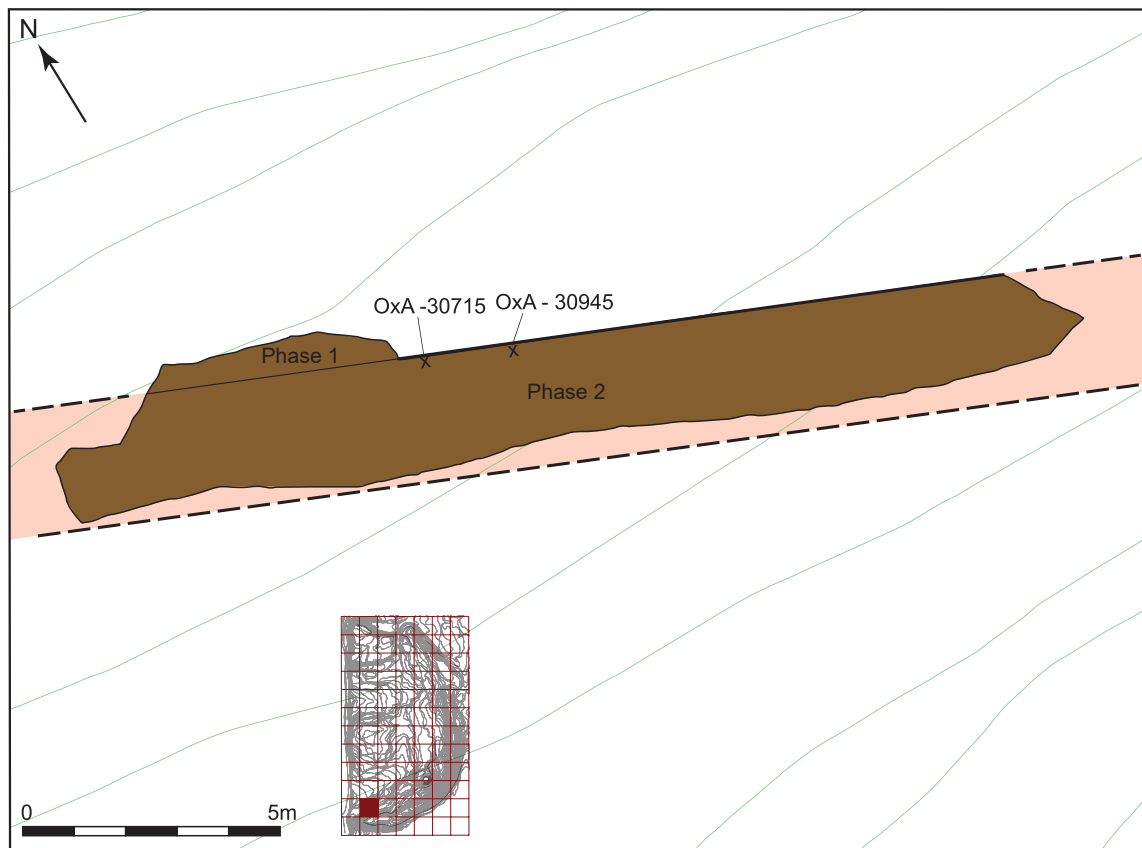


Figure 19.43. Plan of curtain wall fragment C, Grid 72.

has all gone, the course heights are hard to estimate. The core is built with rubble set in a grey gritty mortar containing some shell and a little wood charcoal. It includes pieces of masonry from an earlier construction (in one case a piece comprising three ashlar facing blocks stuck together), built with a much more shelly grey mortar; similar mortar surviving in situ at the base of the wall to the west suggests that these may have come from an earlier wall built in the same position.

Another fragment of **Wall JJ4** lies upside down some 3 m southeast of **JJ3** (figure 19.42). This may have come from the same stretch of town wall as **JJ3**, or perhaps from a tower. Its mortar is similar to that of **JJ3**, being grey-buff in color and sandy, containing some grit (< 10 mm), shell, and occasional potsherds, as well as some charcoal. It also includes some lumps of reused masonry with very shelly mortar attached to them. The wall was at least 2.20 m thick but, unlike **JJ3**, it preserves a face, eleven courses high with a chamfer on the third course from the bottom (course heights: 17, 21, 18, 20, 22, 19, 23, 20, 21, 23, 16 cm; average 20.18 cm).

Two charcoal samples from **JJ3** provide the basis for an estimated date between the mid-eleventh and the mid-twelfth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30124,—31025). It was probably in this area that Victor Guérin saw a half-demolished tower, beside which was a well, known locally as Bi'r Burj al-Banat (Well of the Tower of the Maidens) (Guérin 1868:2.148). This was the name of the tower next to one “towards the sea” (*versus mare*) that Countess Sybilla granted to the Order of Mountjoy in 1176–77 (see p. 103).

#### FRAGMENT OF CURTAIN WALL (C), GRID 72

A fragment of curtain wall some 18 m long remains standing between the site of the Gaza Gate and the seaward termination of the land wall (figures 19.43–45). The SWP’s plan, followed by Garstang, indicates a “Large Tower R[ui]ne[d]” at its western end, but no trace of any tower is now in evidence. The wall comprises two phases.

##### Phase 2

A curtain wall at least 2.30 m thick survives some 18 m in length and 3 m high on its inner (north) side; but on the outer side, where the ground level is higher, the facing is missing. The inner face is built with ashlar laid as headers and stretchers (course heights: 27, 26, 31, 33, 26, 24, 21, 25, 26, 24, 25 cm; average 26.18 cm). The mortar binding the core is grey and shelly and contains charcoal. Just below the top of the



Figure 19.44. Curtain wall fragment C, from the east (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.45. Curtain wall fragment C, from the northwest, showing Phase 1 (left) abutting and running over the top of Phase 2 (right) (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

wall there is a ghost of a through-column (diameter ca. 32 cm) running 1.43 m into the wall.

Two fragments of charcoal from the mortar of Phase 2 were analyzed, providing an estimated construction date in the late seventh to late eighth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30714,—30715,—30945).

## Phase 1

The Phase 1 work is built against the inside face of the Phase 2 wall and runs over the top of it (course heights: 21, 22, 20, 21 cm; average 21 cm). The masonry is identical to that of the earlier phase (though with only small specks of charcoal) and there is no obvious horizontal division between the two phases, suggesting that Phase 1 may simply represent a thickening of the wall by > 1.32 m for a length of > 4.6 m that took place during its construction.

## SITE OF THE GAZA GATE, GRID 73

The site of the **Gaza Gate** may be inferred by projecting the line of the lane that runs south from the **Jaffa Gate** (and probably represents the line of the *cardo*) to the south wall. Rey's plan indicates some kind of tower or forework, and the SWP a ruined tower a little east of this position. Indeed, the rampart appears broader and lower here than it does to either side; the fact that this was also noticed by Guérin indicates that

it is not the result of recent earth movement. A modern track, also shown by Rey, leads up the outer bank of the gate. Doubtless the original gate would also have been approached by a road or track set obliquely into the side of the rampart.

## TOWER (D), GRID 75

Part of the southwest corner of a rectangular tower projecting from the town wall and standing over 3 m high survives to the east of the site of the **Gaza Gate** (figures 19.46–49). It is marked “Buttress” on the SWP's plan and is indicated incorrectly as the east wall of a D-shaped tower on Garstang's plan.

The tower's west wall was 2.18 m thick and the south wall 2.27 m, both walls being set on a battered plinth 0.36 m wide at the bottom and 0.88 m high. The upper course of the plinth is itself chamfered back 5–6 cm, and there is another similar chamfer 1.67 m above it. The external facing of the south (or side) wall survives 4.85 m from the southwest corner (5.35 m

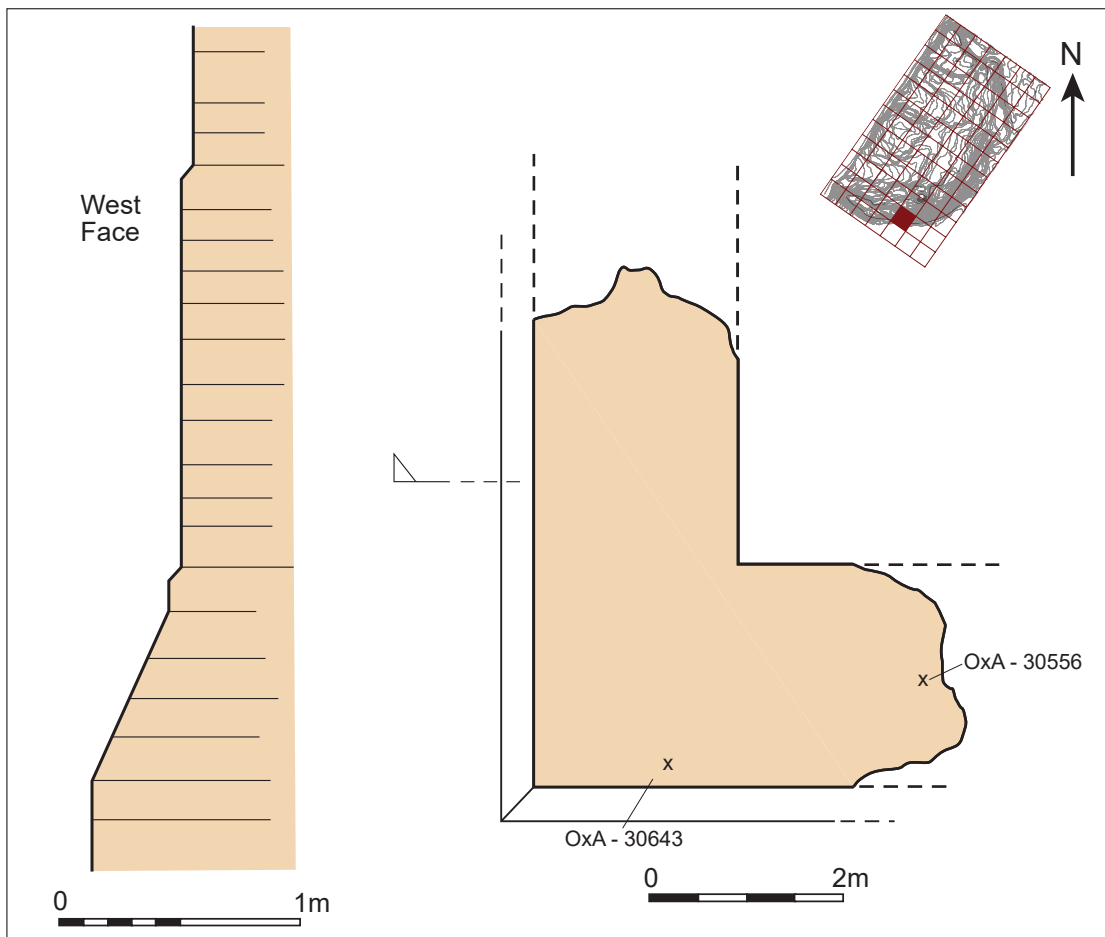


Figure 19.46. Plan and profile of the surviving southwest corner of Tower D, Grid 75



Figure 19.47. The southwest corner of Tower D, from the west (photo Denys Pringle 1979)



Figure 19.48 The southwest corner of Tower D, from the southwest (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

including the surviving core) and the south (or front) wall 3.30 m (4.55 m including the core); but since the line of the town wall is no longer apparent, it is impossible to determine without excavation how far the tower projected from it.

The tower is faced with extremely fine ashlar masonry (course heights: vertical: 15 cm; batter: 19, 16, 16, 20 cm; chamfer: 17 cm; vertical: 17, 12, 14, 18, 14, 20, 15, 13, 13, 13 cm; chamfer: 18 cm; vertical: 13, 13, 21 cm; overall average 15.85 cm). The external

joints are filled with fine white lime mortar and vary in thickness from 2.5 to 10 mm. The rubble core was laid *pari passu* with the facing. Typically, a layer of largish stones, set in a creamy buff, somewhat gritty sandy mortar, containing occasional pieces of charcoal, was laid over the level surface of the preceding course. Over this was then tipped a thin uneven spread of very shelly white mortar, above which the course was leveled up with small stones (including occasional pottery fragments) and another spread of the creamy-buff, sandy type of mortar. It seems possible that the shelly mortar was made up from debris recycled from a demolished earlier wall.

Two fragments of charcoal from the mortar were analyzed, one from the wall core exposed in fracture on the east and the other from the exposed core at the damaged southwest corner. They proved to be of different ages. The second, more recent, result points to a date of construction in the mid-twelfth to mid-thirteenth century cal A.D. (see ch. Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4; OxA-30556,—30643). As this tower stood well away from the site of the castle of 1241–47, the likeliest context for its construction on present evidence would seem to be either just before the end of the first Frankish occupation in 1187, Saladin’s repairs of 1189, or Richard I’s refortification of 1192.

### The Eastern Walls south of the Jerusalem Gate

#### TOWER (E), GRID 69

This tower is marked “Tower R[ui]ne[d]” on the SWP plan and is shown as a rounded tower by Garstang. It survives in two parts: its rear wall, which corresponds with the line of the town wall, stands *in situ* some 7–8 m high, while the eastern half of the undermined front part has slumped forward and now lies at an angle some way down the rampart slope and quite detached from the rear wall (figures 19.49–51). It seems to have been already in this state by 1875 (figure 19.14). The surviving masonry shows two principal phases. The first phase represents the town wall itself. Subsequently a large hole was punched in the wall, possibly as a result of an earlier tower having been demolished. In the second phase of construction, the present tower was built, its rear wall repairing the gap in the town wall. This tower was then evidently undermined from the front, with the result that it fell forward, leaving its rear wall still relatively intact.

#### Phase 2

The mortar used in the first phase of construction, corresponding to the town wall, is grey and shelly,

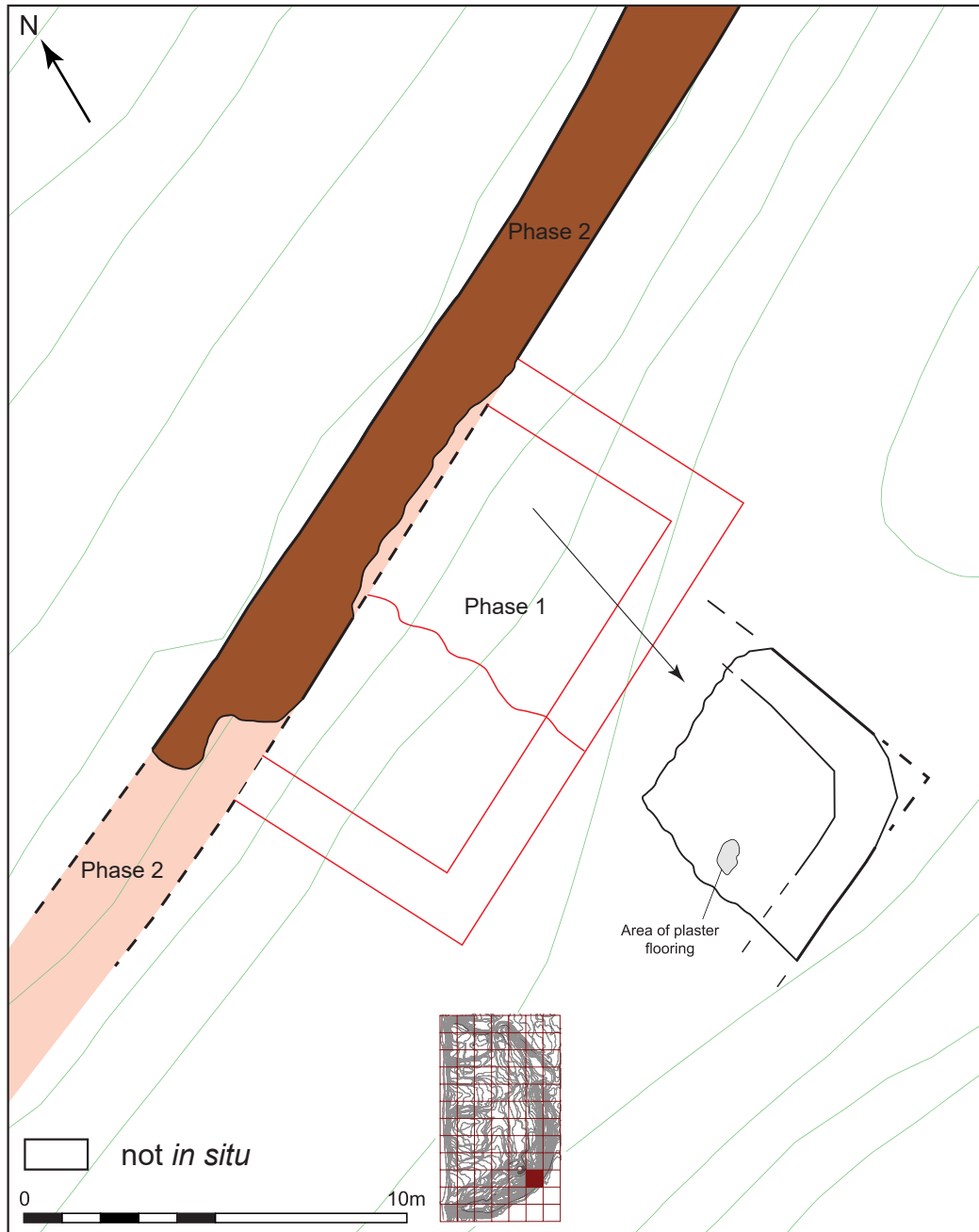


Figure 19.49. Plan of Tower E, Grid 69

containing occasional pieces of ceramic and charcoal (course heights: 28, 28, 28, 22, 24 cm). The facing does not survive, though what is visible suggests that it was ca. 2.5 m thick. To the northeast of the tower the wall core survives some 1.5 m high for a distance of some 26 m. The same masonry continues as the lower courses of the tower's rear wall, but the height to which it survives dips below ground level just before reaching the southwest corner. It evidently then rose

almost vertically where the town wall continued to the west, but the only evidence for this is the negative impression of the join, which is still visible in the Phase 1 masonry that was built up against it.

#### Phase 1

The tower appears to have had an elongated rectangular shape, 13.6 m wide and projecting some 7.7 m from



Figure 19.50. Tower E, from the west (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.52. Tower E, rear wall overlying the earlier curtain wall, seen from the northwest (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.51. Tower E, from the northeast (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

the face of the town wall. Its rear wall, still standing ca. 6.5 m above ground level, was built over the gap made in the town wall. As mentioned, the western end of the rear wall formed a vertical joint with the surviving town wall, but at a higher level it overhung it by some 1.10 m. Northeast of this, the junction between the two phases dips below ground level and then rises in an irregular fashion to around 1.5 m in height at the other end. The tower's rear wall (figure 19.52) is faced in ashlar (course heights from the base up: 13, 14, 12, 14, 17, 21, 11 cm). The mortar of the core is buff-colored, containing ground-up pottery or brick but very little charcoal. In places the core shows the same type of intermediate shelly-mortared spreads that were noticed on **Tower D**, though here the construction also includes reused stones with grey shelly mortar still adhering to them. Three marble columns are built through the wall ca. 2 m above ground level, at horizontal spacings of 3.5 and 2.9 m. On this elevation the wall face is also slightly set back on a horizontal chamfered string course 0.97 m above ground level and again 1.87 m.

above that; two more chamfered courses are also visible at similar intervals. In addition, the elevation also shows evidence for an abutting wall, or more likely simply a pilaster or plain buttress, some 0.80 m wide, defining its western end, and another similar one 7.5 m from it, roughly in the center of the tower's rear wall. The purpose of these is uncertain. The central one, however, appears to have caused the masons building the tower some difficulty in maintaining the correct alignment of the wall face to either side of it: while the wall to the west of the pilaster is more or less vertical, that to the east leans slightly southward. The third chamfered string course is represented in both sections of the wall face, despite the fact that by the time that construction had reached this height the wall faces to either side of it were already out of plane with one another. By the time that construction had reached the fourth string course, however, the mistake had evidently been recognized and an attempt was made to correct it by corbeling out the eastern section of wall and using the chamfered string course to set back the plane of the western section. This allowed the wall face above it to achieve a consistent alignment.

The surviving slumped part of the tower represents only its eastern half, the rest having disappeared. Two of the original ashlar wall faces are visible (figures 19.53–54), representing the lower 3.0–3.5 m above what would have been the external ground level and measuring ca. 7.70 m wide on the east and ca. 6.25 m on the south. Two chamfered string courses similar to those on the rear wall are visible on both faces, spaced vertically 1.20 m apart. Up to this height the tower was completely solid above its foundations, but traces of a floor visible on the upper surface indicate the existence of a room inside it at this level with walls some 1.40 m thick. The base for the floor consists of a layer of broken brick or ceramics laid on a flat mortar bed.



Figure 19.53. Tower E, detached fragment, south face (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.54. Tower E, detached fragment, east face (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

The upper part of the tower above this level evidently sheared off when it was undermined and began to slip down the slope. The western part would also have broken away, leaving the present irregular fracture on this side, similar to that on the north where it broke away from the rear wall.

TOWER ATTACHED TO TOWN WALL (F), GRID 62

Little survives of this tower, which appears to have been built against the outside face of a preexisting section of town wall (figure 19.55). Garstang's plan shows

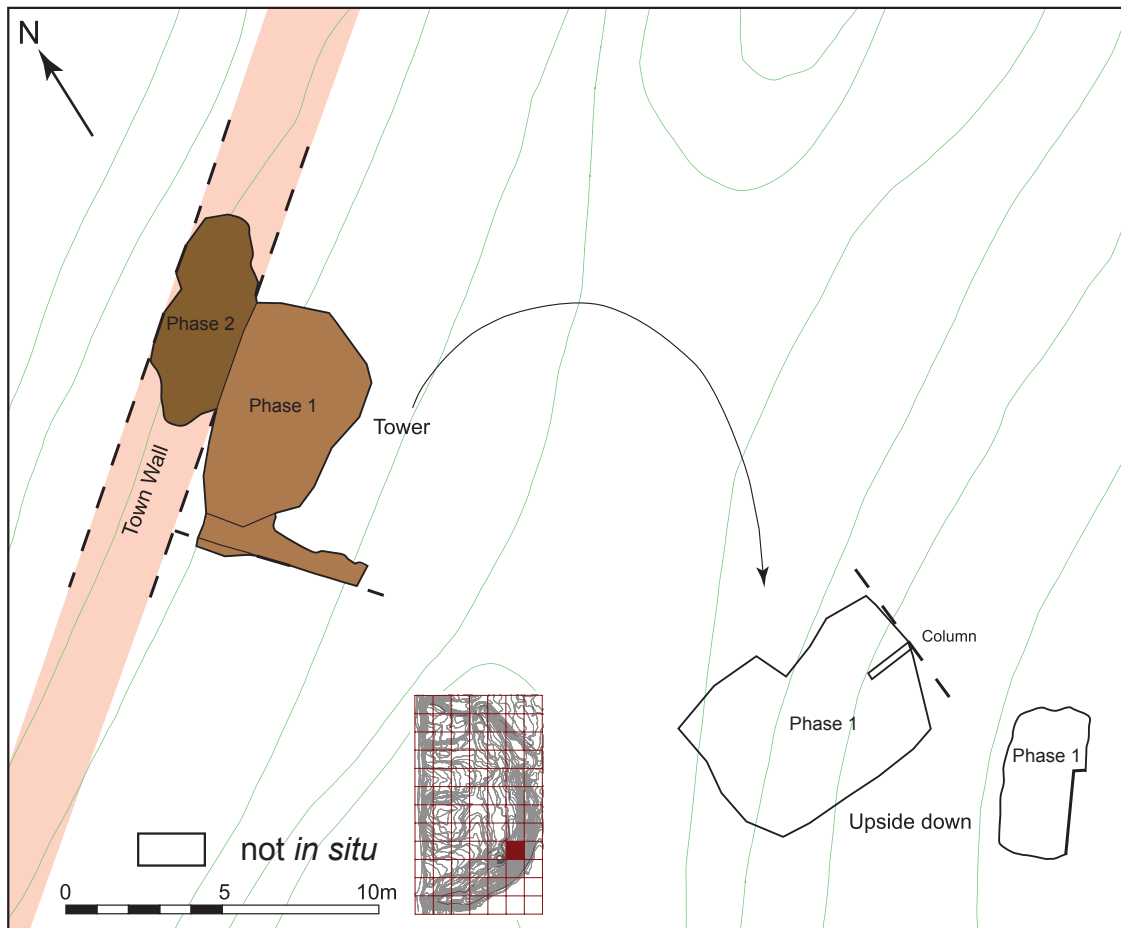


Figure 19.55. Plan of surviving fragments of Tower F, Grid 62



it as rounded, though the surviving remains are those of a rectangular tower. It is doubtful whether much, if anything, of it remained in situ in Garstang's time, as the SWP plan shows no more than the curtain wall.

#### Phase 2

The town wall is here at least 2.6 m wide and built with the same type of shelly mortar that is found in the town wall adjacent to **Tower E**.

#### Phase 1

A small section of the rear part of a rectangular tower survives in situ, built against the outer face of the town wall (figure 19.55). This fragment is 8.10 m wide and projects ca. 5.5 m, with a straight face on the south standing six courses high (course heights: > 10, 24 rebated 8 cm in the middle, 15, 19, 16, 14 cm). The facing stones are set in a hard white lime mortar, which is slaistered over the face of the ashlar, suggesting that originally the whole face may have been lime-washed. The mortar of the rubble core is very hard, cream-colored, and sandy, varying in places to creamy pink as a result of the inclusion of crushed ceramics. No charcoal was found in it. As in some other towers, the rubble includes some reused stones with shelly mortar, similar to that of the earlier town wall, still adhering to them.

Two more fragments of the tower lie some 11 m away down the slope to the south, one above the other and both now upside down. The upper fragment measures overall some 7.6 × 5.4 m and is about 3 m thick. It has an external face, albeit badly damaged, on its east side (> 5.4 m wide) containing a through-column of grey-veined marble (diam. ca. 28 cm). The lower fragment measures overall some 4.85 × 2.45 m and appears to represent a thinner horizontal slice derived from an upper part of the same tower, which evidently became detached and rolled down the slope before being joined by the larger fragment. Its south side presents two ashlar courses from two wall faces (> 3.10 and > 0.35 m wide respectively) of a room inside the tower, meeting at right angles. The walls of the tower at this level would have been at least 2.10 m thick.

#### FRAGMENT OF A FEATURE ATTACHED TO THE INSIDE FACE OF THE TOWN WALL (F1), GRID 62

#### Phase 2

The town wall in this area has all but disappeared above ground level, though two pieces of it survive attached

to the east face of a feature that was built against its inside face in a secondary phase (figure 19.56). The mortar of these pieces of wall is hard, grey-white, and very shelly, containing some ceramics and charcoal, as well as two unidentifiable bronze coins (MC66045/ASH0014097). Other fragments of the same wall also survive, although not in situ, a few meters to the north and south.

#### Phase 1

In a subsequent phase, a feature was attached to the inside face of the wall (figures 19.56–58). This is now represented by a very eroded section of unfaced wall core some 7.65 m long and at least 1.93 m wide. On its inward-facing side are the remains of a recess ca. 2.40 m wide, > 1.58 m deep, and ca. 1.80 m high, covered by a low pointed arch constructed with two rows of voussoirs. The back wall of the recess was solid, with no sign of there ever having been any opening in it. The purpose of the arch is unknown, though it is possible that it supported a feature such as a stair leading up to the wall head.

The construction of the surviving piece is consistent throughout. The rubble core is laid in courses averaging 14.7 cm thick (course heights: 16, 12, 13, 14, 16, 16, 15, 16 cm). The mortar is hard, creamy buff in color, and sandy, containing occasional small red or black inclusions and pottery sherds. The rubble also includes stones with grey shelly mortar adhering to them, evidently reused from an earlier construction.

An olive stone (*Olea europaea*) from the core mortar of Phase 1 gave a radiocarbon date of the mid-eleventh to mid-twelfth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30919).

#### LUMP OF CURTAIN WALL (EX SITU) (F2), GRID 56

This piece from the base of the curtain wall, 4.5 m long, lies fallen forward onto its outer face between **F1** and **G** and ca. 25 m south of **G**. There is a chamfered string course near the base (course heights: 11, 12, 12 [including chamfer], 14, 14, 14, 14 cm) (figure 19.59). The mortar of the core is creamy and sandy, containing some grits and occasional pottery sherds. Lumps of reused shelly-mortared masonry are also incorporated into the core.

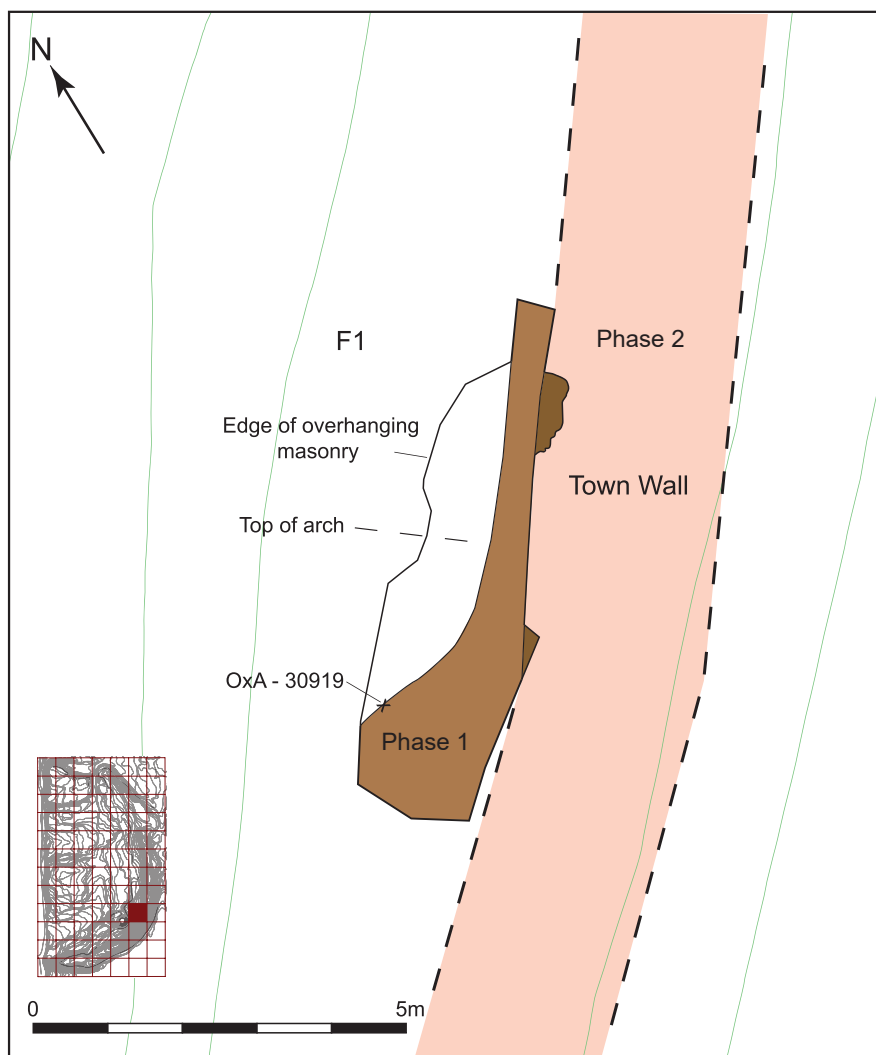


Figure 19.56. Plan of surviving fragment of Feature F1 attached to the inside face of the town wall, Grid 62



Figure 19.57. Feature F1 attached to the inside face of the town wall, viewed from the north (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.58. The arched recess in Feature F1, attached to the inside face of the town wall (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

Wall G (Ph.1)

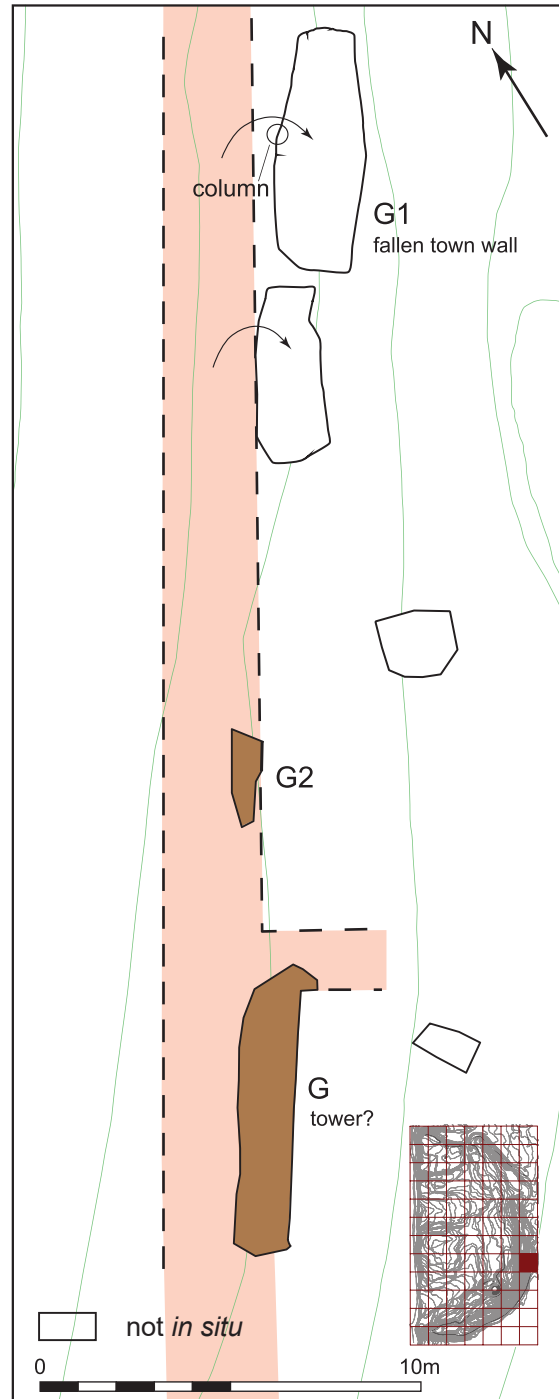
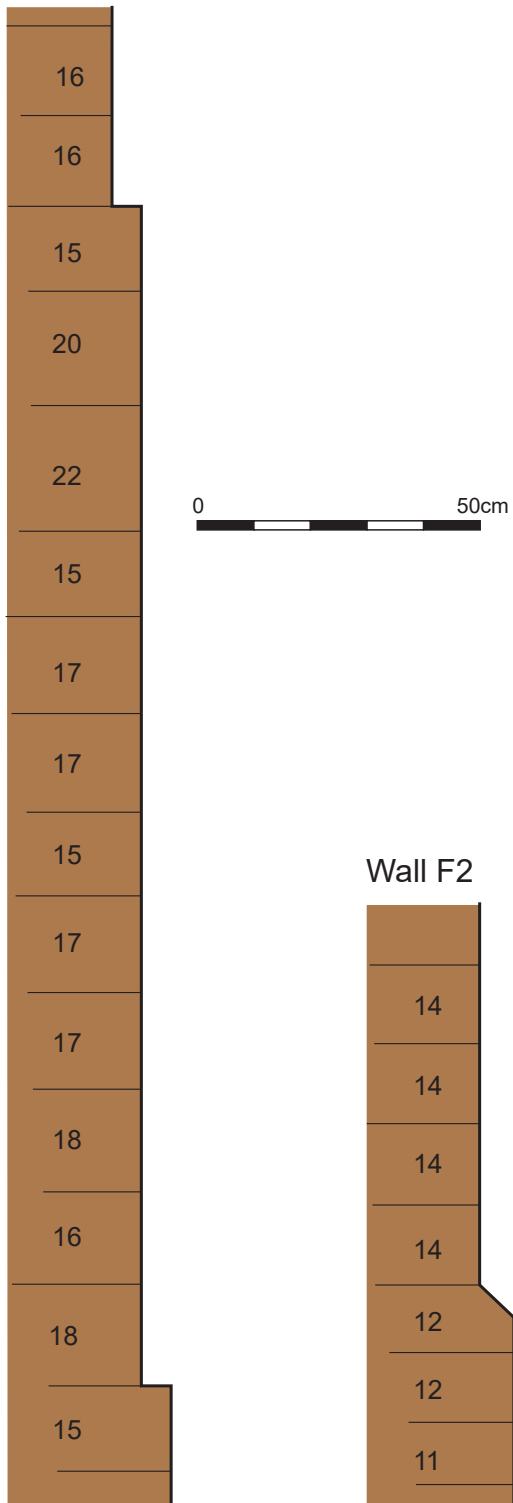


Figure 19.59. External profiles of curtain Walls F2 and G

Figure 19.60. Plan of fragments of curtain Wall G1 and G2, with a possible tower abutment at G, Grid 56

FRAGMENT OF CURTAIN WALL WITH  
POSSIBLE ABUTMENT OF TOWER  
(G, G2), GRID 56

**Fragment G** consists of part of a wall surviving in situ (figures 19.59–61).<sup>185</sup> The east face survives for a length of 6.92 m, with the beginning of another wall (> 0.63 m in length) running off at right angles to it at its north end. It was at least 1.50 m thick, though its western side, facing the city, has now gone. The ashlar facing the east side are set in white lime mortar containing some black specks, with beds of 4–25 mm between the courses. The mortar was also splayed generously over the edges of the ashlar, which were possibly originally covered with a lime wash (course heights: 15; face set back 5.5 cm: 18, 16, 18, 17, 17, 15, 17, 17, 15, 22, 20, 15 cm; face set back 5.5 cm: 16, 16 cm) (figure 19.59). The mortar of the rubble core is medium hard, buff-cream in color, sandy, with large inclusions including shell, pebbles, charcoal, and pottery. Among the latter is a small piece of green-glazed pottery (6 × 6 mm), identified as Fustat Fatimid *sgraffiato* of the late tenth to eleventh century A.D.<sup>186</sup>

It is not immediately obvious whether **Fragment G** represents part of the curtain wall itself or part of a tower. Some 4 m north of it, however, there survives in situ another, smaller fragment of walling **G2**, 2.7 m long and 0.82 m wide, built in the same manner as **G** and with the same type of mortar. Its eastern face, which survives for a length of 0.80 m (course heights: 21, 20, 18, 20.5 cm; average 20 cm), is set back somewhat from that of **G**. This could suggest that **G** represents the rear wall of a rectangular tower that was built at the same time as an adjacent stretch of curtain wall.

FALLEN SECTION OF CURTAIN WALL (G1),  
GRID 49/56

Between **G** and **H** a section of walling 11 m long lies fallen forward onto its outer face and broken into two pieces (figures 19.60 and 19.62). One of these contains a granite through-column (diameter 52.5 cm, length > 2.02 m), indicating that the wall would have been at least 2 m thick. The wall's mortar is similar to that of **G** and **F2**, that is, medium hard, buff-cream, sandy, containing some shell and ceramics.

<sup>185</sup> In Table 19.3, two phases are designated for **Fragment G**. Phase 2 consists only of lumps of shelly-mortared masonry that are preserved in the rubble core of the better preserved Phase 1—lumps which were apparently recycled from an earlier wall. Thus when **G** is mentioned in the text, the reference is to Phase 1.

<sup>186</sup> I owe this identification to Dr. Tracy Hoffman (12 July 2012).



Figure 19.61. Wall fragment G, from the east (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.62. Fallen section of curtain Wall G1, from the southwest (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

OUTER DITCH

Traces of a broad outer ditch and counterscarp bank may be observed on the southeastern side of the walled city, extending from the Jerusalem Gate as far south as **Tower F** (figures 19.22, 19.150). These lie

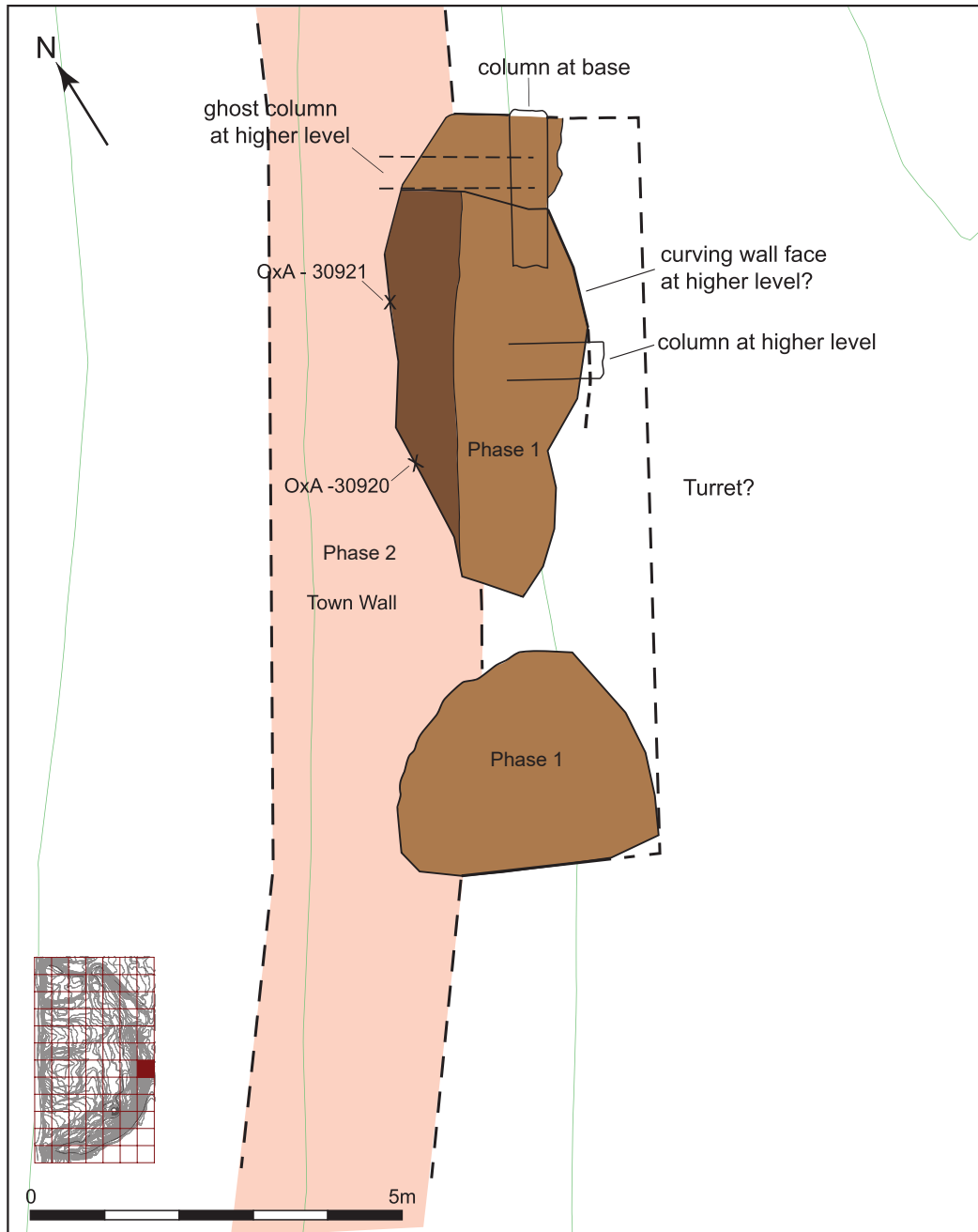


Figure 19.63. Plan of Tower or Turret H, Grid 49

between the rampart and the natural watercourse, remarked on by nineteenth-century travelers, that runs from north to south in this area. A slighter ditch, partly natural, also appears to have once surrounded the northeastern quarter, between the Jerusalem Gate and the sea (figure 19.22).

#### FRAGMENTARY REMAINS OF A TOWER OR TURRET (H), GRID 49

All that remains of this presumed tower or turret are two relatively amorphous lumps of overgrown masonry (figure 19.63). Two phases are recognizable, characterized by different types of mortar and construction. They appear to suggest that the turret was added to an existing section of the town wall.



*Figure 19.64.* Detail of the west side of H, showing the Phase 2 shelly-mortared masonry (right) intersected by the Phase 1 addition (left) (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



*Figure 19.65.* East corner of Tower or Turret H, seen from the northeast (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



*Figure 19.66.* East corner of Tower or Turret H, seen from the east, with traces of a possible curved wall face visible in the upper masonry (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

#### Phase 2 (town wall)

The surviving piece of **Town Wall H** stands some 3.5 m high. Its mortar is grey-buff, sandy, and very



*Figure 19.67.* Tower or Turret H, seen from the south (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

shelly (including complete and broken shells), and it also contains quite large pieces of charcoal (figure 19.64). The eastern wall face was cut back before the tower was added to it. The western face does not survive.

Two pieces of carbonized wood from branches or logs of *Pinus* were analyzed from this phase. The more recent of the two suggests that the wall would

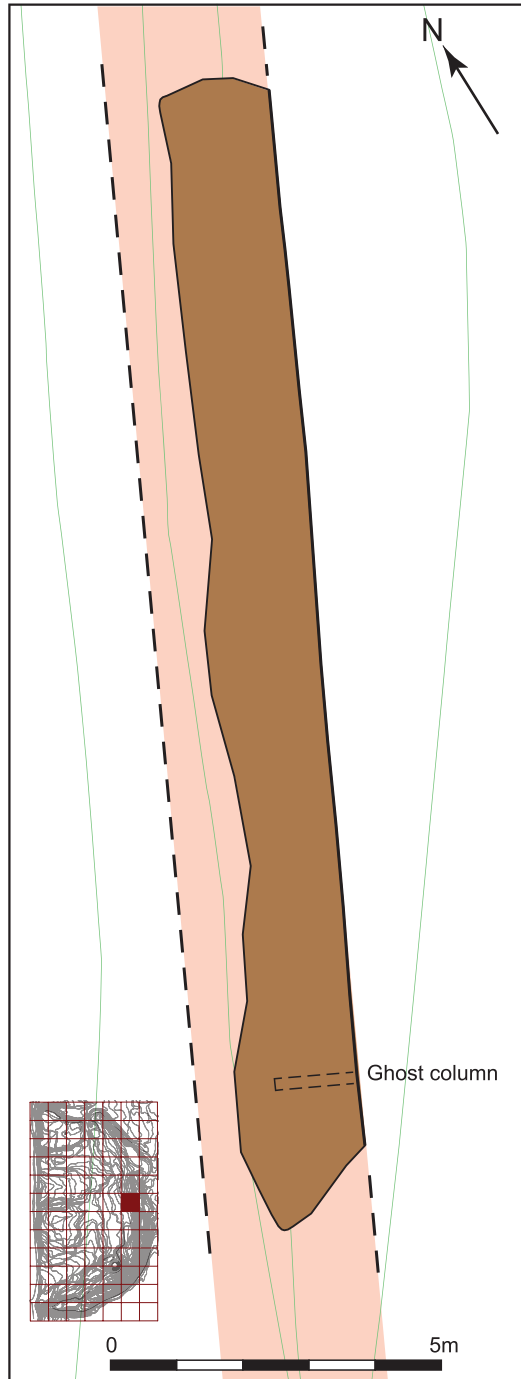


Figure 19.68. Plan of curtain wall Fragment J, Grid 41

have been built in the late eighth to late ninth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30920,—30921).

#### Phase 1 (Tower or Turret)

A solid **Tower or Turret H** appears to have been added to the cut-back outer face of the town wall and bonded



Figure 19.69. Curtain wall Fragment J, viewed from the south (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

to it at the north end by an irregular spur running back into it (figures 19.63–67). The mortar of this addition is beige-cream, sandy, with some larger grits; in places it is also pinker in color and contains pottery and shell (the latter mostly derived from lumps of masonry recycled from Phase 2). The northern surviving piece of masonry contains two granite through-columns and the ghost of another. Two of these (including the ghost) run east–west through it at a height of ca. 2.30 m above ground, while the other (diam ca. 55 cm) runs north–south near its base. It may reasonably be assumed that all three would originally have been visibly expressed in the external wall face. Despite the eroded nature of the masonry there is a clear indication of a wall face at the north end and less conclusive evidence of one at the south. The evidence appears to indicate the turret’s overall width as being some 9.95 m and its projection ca. 2.5 m, though without excavation of the base of the walls such an interpretation remains speculative. At a level just above the upper through-columns, however, there is also what appears to be the trace of a curving wall face, albeit eroded, suggesting that the upper part of the turret might have been set back on its rectangular base and shaped somewhat differently.

The now-vanished “Large Tower” recorded by the SWP in 1875 seems to have been in this general area, though whether or not it was physically related to **Turret H**—and if so, how—remain imponderable questions, so complete seems to have been its destruction.

#### SECTION OF CURTAIN WALL (J), GRID 41/42

This section of town wall survives for ca. 17.4 m in length and was at least 1.90 m thick, but has lost its western internal face, due no doubt to the direction of the prevailing wind (figures 19.68–69). It stands on the western edge of the rampart, so that while its surviving

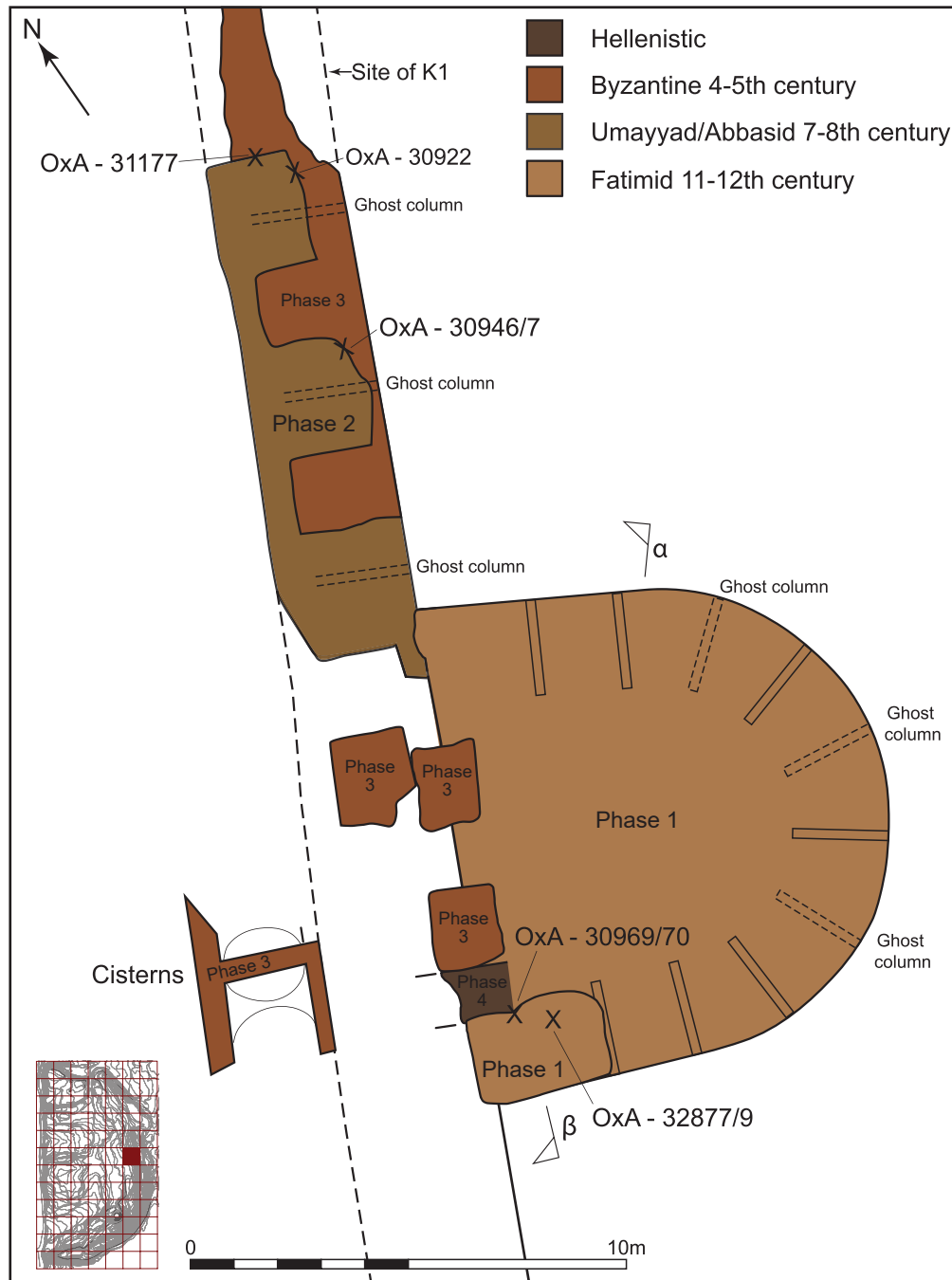


Figure 19.70. Plan of Tower K and adjoining curtain wall, Grid 41

east face stands 1.5 m high and is faced in ashlar (course heights: 20, 20, 21, 19, 17, 17, 17, 18 cm), pointed in white lime mortar, on the west it stands 3.35 m above ground level. It also leans slightly to the west.

The mortar of the rubble core is medium hard and sandy, varying in color from buff-cream to grey and containing some grits (< 10 mm) and pieces of shell, pottery, and charcoal. Toward the north it becomes more consistently grey and very hard. The rubble also

includes some lumps of reused masonry with very shelly mortar adhering. Toward the south end is the ghost of a through-column (diameter ca. 30 cm).

#### D-SHAPED TOWER AND ADJOINING CURTAIN WALL (K), GRID 41

Tower is D-shaped and was added to the front of an existing curtain wall, which itself incorporated earlier



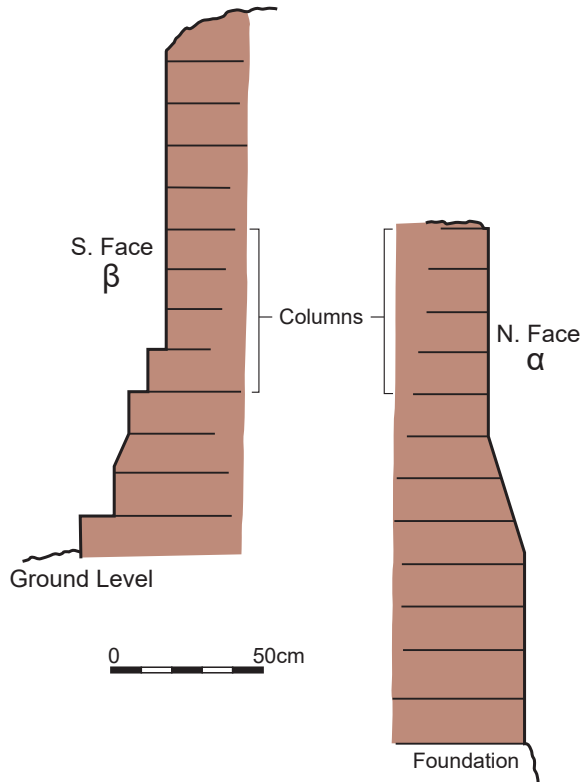


Figure 19.71. Profiles of north and south sides of Tower K



Figure 72. Fragment of Hellenistic wall incorporated into the town wall where it is abutted by Tower K (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.73. Curtain wall to the north of Tower K, east face (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.74. Curtain wall to the north of Tower K, looking north toward Grid 34 along the present wall head (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

structures (figures 19.70–71). It is correctly shown on the plans of Rey and Garstang, though the former shows it straddling the wall, for which there is no evidence. The SWP's plan erroneously appears to indicate it as rectangular.



*Figure 19.75.* Tower K (Phase IV), from the northwest, showing remains of Phase 1 features standing forward from the line of the earlier town wall (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



*Figure 19.76.* Byzantine and later chapel whose chevet forms part of a retaining wall supporting the rampart behind the town wall (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

#### Phase 4, Hellenistic: Fourth–First Century B.C.?

A fragment of an early wall, 1.25 m thick and running east–west at right angles to the curtain wall, is incorporated into it near the southern abutment of the tower (figure 19.72). It stands three courses high (heights: 40, 34, 40 cm) and is built throughout in ashlar blocks bonded with a creamy mortar. The similarity between the construction of this wall and that of the earliest features excavated in Grid 20 (**Fragment FF**) suggest that this may represent another surviving fragment of a tower belonging to the Hellenistic fortification of the site.

#### Phase 3, Arcaded Town Wall with Cisterns

The wall to which the tower was attached was built on a foundation over 3 m thick. A curious feature of the surviving wall, however, is the presence in it of two rectangular voids, each some 1.6 m wide and 2.3 m deep, both now open on the east but originally enclosed by ashlar facing (figures 19.73–74). There are also remains of another two similar voids, one at either end of this surviving section of wall, making a sequence of at least four in all. A key to understanding these is provided by the section of walling **WW** that survives further north in Grid 34, where the evidence is better preserved. It appears that as first built, the wall consisted of a relatively thin curtain facing east and perhaps no more than 60–80 cm thick. This was backed by an integral series of piers and arcades, which would have supported a much broader walkway at the level of the wall head. The piers would have been some 1.6 m wide and 1.9 m deep, and the arches some 2.6–2.8 m wide. These piers have now been almost entirely eroded away, leaving a negative

impression of themselves in the surviving later masonry. What little remains of them indicates that their construction would have been similar to that of the foundation, with relatively large ashlar and ample mortar joints, the mortar being soft, grey, and sandy, containing a lot of broken shell and charcoal. Traces of a hard grey hydraulic mortar lining surviving at the north end of the section of wall also indicates that, as in **wall WW**, the lower part of at least one of the original voids was occupied by a rainwater cistern.

Three other pieces of similar masonry also survive, enclosed by the later rounded tower (figure 19.75). One of these abuts one of the arcade piers and two of them stand forward of the original outer wall face. This suggests that they may relate to an early tower that preceded the rounded one in the same position.

The Phase 3 wall also appears to be contemporary with a retaining wall cut into the rampart some 3 m to the west of it and parallel to it. This wall constitutes the east wall and chevet—including the apse—of a baptismal chapel with flanking rooms, whose construction evidently involved cutting into the western slope of the rampart (figure 19.76) (see Stager and Esse 1986:5–6, fig. 4; 1987:72, fig. 2; Pringle 1993:1.68, fig. 22; Tzaferis and Stager 2008). The chapel's wall is built in ashlar of 21–24 cm in height with 2–4 cm high joints between them. The mortar is cream in color (though grey on the weathered surfaces) and is sandy, containing orange and red grits, quantities of shell, and coarse ceramics.

The chapel stands just north of **Tower K**, but it remains uncertain how far the retaining wall extended in either direction. Rey's plans show it continuing south beyond **Tower K** and north as far as the point beyond **WW** where the town wall turns a right angle to the east; however, this cannot now be verified without



*Figure 19.77.* Tumbled wall Fragment K1, lying on the north side of the chapel complex (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

excavation. In a secondary phase a baptismal font was inserted into the central bay of the chapel, fed by a water channel which cut through the chancel step from the east. It seems possible (though is as yet unverified) that the water supply came from the rainwater collection system associated with the wall and with a pair of small vaulted cisterns, built against the inside face of the town wall in the space between the two walls.

#### Phase 2 (Rebuilding of Town Wall, Blocking of Arcades and Cisterns)

Subsequently the town wall was rebuilt in an operation which involved filling in the arcades and cisterns of the earlier wall at the lower level, adding a new facing on both sides (thereby encasing the arcade piers inside the wall), and completely rebuilding the upper portions of wall. The rebuilt wall is around 3.26 m thick. Although most of the facing on the west, toward the sea, has gone, on the east it stands 2.35 m high (course heights: 22, 21, 12, 13.5, 13.5, 13, 15, 15, 13, 12.5, 15, 15, 12.5, 15, 14, 13.5 cm; average 14.7 cm). The core mortar is grey, containing a large quantity of shell (graded so as to include both intact small ones and fragments of larger ones), much charcoal, and some pottery and even glass. At a high level the ghosts of three through-columns (probably granite) may be seen built into the outer face of the wall, spaced 4.4 m apart.

Another fragment of walling (**K1**), which was still in situ and attached to the northern end of the surviving portion when photographed by Garstang ca. 1920, subsequently tumbled westward and now lies broken in two, lying on top of the northern part of the Byzantine chapel complex (figures 19.76–77). It represents a piece of curtain wall some 8 m in length and 3–4 m high, which preserves much of its external ashlar



*Figure 19.78.* Tower K, from the south (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



*Figure 19.79.* Tower K, from the northeast (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

facing, including the end of a marble column drum (diam. ca. 40 cm) dressed flush with the wall face.

Four samples of charcoal taken from the mortar of the elements of this phase remaining in situ were successfully analyzed, providing the basis for an estimated date of construction in the late seventh to late eighth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30922,—30946,—30947,—31177).

#### Phase 1 (D-shaped Tower)

The D-shaped **Tower K** (figures 19.78–79) was simply tacked on to the outer face of the town wall, the ashlar facing being cut back by no more than 20–30 cm to receive its facing ashlars. It measures 11.67 m across, and projects 9.70 m. Apart from the northwest corner, it stands no more than about 1.8 m high. It sat on a chamfered plinth, just over a meter high and 12 cm wide, which toward the southwest, where it met the town wall, was modified to a less regular stepped and chamfered profile (see figure 19.71). Just above this a series of ten granite through-columns (diam. 55.5 cm)

were set in the wall at intervals of 1.9–2.45 m. The floor level inside the tower would probably have been above the surviving height of the masonry, but as the interior has not been excavated it is not possible to verify this. The wall on the south, however, appears to have been 2.45 m thick, indicating that the interior might have been some 6.75 m north–south by 7.25 m east–west.

The tower was faced with finely cut ashlars (course heights on the south: 13.5, 14, 13, 13.5, 14, 13.5, 13, 13, 13.5, 14, 14, 14, 14 cm, averaging 13.6 cm; on the north: 15, 16, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14.5, 14, 14, 13.5, 14, 14 cm, averaging 14.25 cm). These were laid in a fine white lime mortar, which was spread over the face of the ashlars, giving the impression that the whole surface may originally have been lime-washed. The mortar of the rubble core was creamy white (brownier lower down, where it is also damper), sandy, and fairly hard, containing few inclusions other than an occasional potsherd and small pieces of charcoal. In places it is apparent that the core was laid two courses at a time.

Five fragments of charcoal from the core material of the standing pinnacle at the southwestern corner of the tower were dated and provide the basis for an estimated construction date in the early eleventh to mid-twelfth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30969,—30970, —32877,—32878,—32879).

#### TRIANGULAR TURRET (VV) AND WALL FRAGMENTS (VV1–2), GRID 34

To the north of **Tower K**, a number of fragments of walling lie in a tumbled position on the western slope of the rampart (figures 19.74, 80–82). Rey's plan of this area (figure 19.12) shows the entire wall in its original position (though whether it actually was when he saw it is perhaps questionable). He also depicts a solid rectangular turret projecting from it beside what



*Figure 19.80.* Fragments K, VV, and WW as they appeared ca. 1920, seen from inside the walls to the west (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/GAR/G237.04)

he interpreted as a postern gate (Rey 1871:fig. 52a, pl. XIX). It seems more probable, however, that the gap in the wall was simply another void created by the same process of erosion of the earlier Byzantine arcaded wall that occurred in with **fragments K** and **WW**. Since his day the **Turret (VV)**, like most of the wall to which it was attached, has fallen, and the turret



*Figure 19.82.* Aerial view of the eastern wall and Jerusalem Gate area, from the south (© Richard Cleave)



*Figure 19.83.* Fragments WW and VV from the west, with wall Fragment VV2 in foreground and Turret VV and Wall WW behind (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



*Figure 19.84.* Triangular Turret VV, upside down and facing the wrong way, seen from the west (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

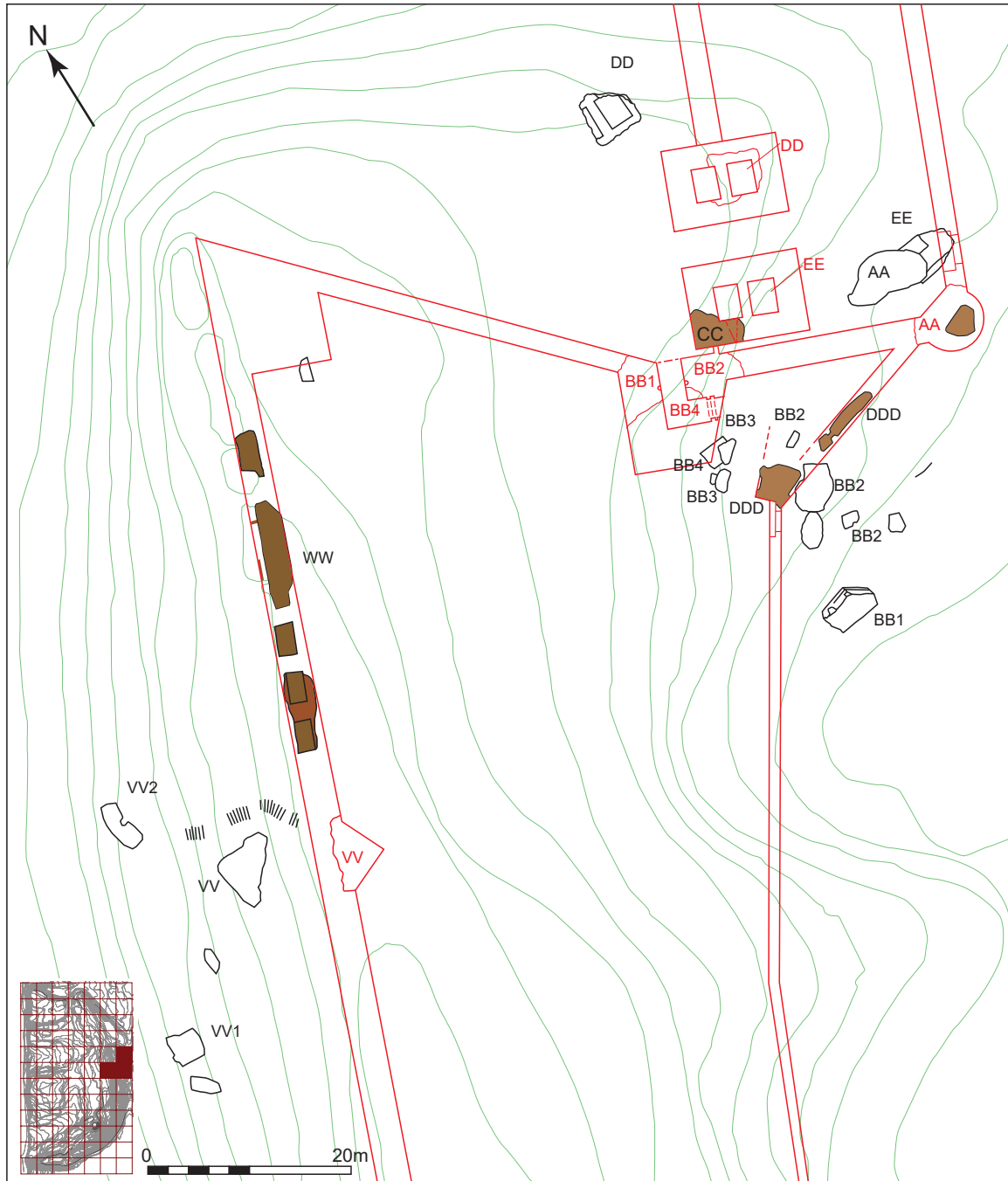


Figure 19.81. Plan of the Jerusalem Gate area and barbican, with suggested reconstruction, Grid 28, 34, 35

itself has rolled backward down the slope to the west. What remains of it now is therefore lying upside down and facing in the wrong direction (figures 19.83–84).

The turret is solid, with projecting faces of 4.6 m (south) and 4.0 m (north) respectively, meeting at an angle of 80°. A granite through-column (diameter ca. 43 cm) is set in the center of each ashlar face. The course heights of the turret average 14.1 cm, while

those of the adjacent curtain wall average 20.5 cm (figure 19.85). The two parts are completely bonded, with the coursing equalized at every third course of the turret and every second course of the wall (turret course heights in cm: 14, 16, 14 // 13.5, 16.5, 13 // 13, 14, 13 //; wall course heights in cm: 20 // 21, 19.5 // 20.5, 21.5 // ?28). The rubble core of the wall and turret is also uniform. The mortar is creamy buff in color,



Figure 19.85. Triangular Turret VV (upside down), showing the bonding between the northeast face (right) and the curtain wall (left) (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

sandy, and very shelly, containing some charcoal, grit, and small pieces of pottery. The physical evidence therefore all indicates that the turret and the town wall at this point were constructed together as part of the same building operation.

Three charcoal samples taken from different parts of the core masonry of the fallen fragment produced statistically consistent dates, which provide a date for the construction of the wall and turret in the late seventh to early ninth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-30949, —31029,—31030).

#### CURTAIN WALL (WW1–9), GRID 34

A stretch of wall some 31 m long and ca. 3.0 m thick survives just south of the site of the Jerusalem Gate (figures 19.81 and 19.86). Two principal phases of construction may be identified.

##### Phase 2 (Byzantine)

The Phase 2 work is represented in the foundations of the entire wall, and at the southern end stands 2.6 m high (figures 19.86–89). The construction is characterized by a facing of ashlar with somewhat rounded arrises (course heights on west: 16, 14, 16, 15, 15–17, 20–22 cm) with thick (4–5 cm) mortar spreads between them. The rubble core is set in grey, shelly, sandy mortar, containing a lot of ash and charcoal and some pottery. Where the northern part of the **Wall (WW9)** collapsed during the winter of 2011–12, it is possible to see that its mortared foundations were no more than 80 cm deep.

The wall appears to have been built originally in a fashion similar to that surviving just north of **Tower K**, with a blind arcade on its west side carrying the

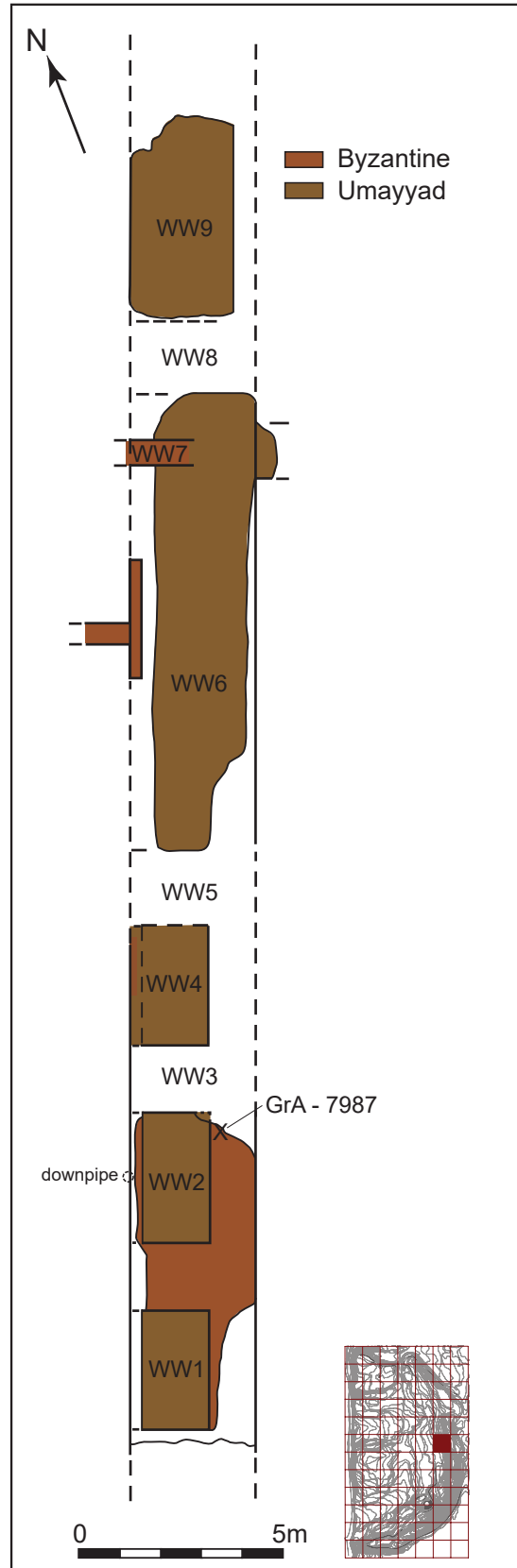


Figure 19.86. Plan of curtain Wall WW, Grid 34



Figure 19.87. Wall WW from the east (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.88. Wall WW from the northwest (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.89. The southern block of Wall WW from the east, showing the Phase 2 (Byzantine) wall overlain by Phase 1 (Umayyad/Abbasid) rebuilding (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

wall walk. The pilasters of this largely survive today as negative impressions, caused by the infilling of the voids in Phase 1 and the subsequent erosion of the more friable Phase 2 masonry. The curtain itself seems to have been ca. 1.10 m thick, while the piers supporting the arcading were 1.65–1.75 m wide, ca. 1.90 m deep, and spaced 2.90–3.05 m apart. The foundation itself seems to have been about 3 m thick.

Two of the voids at the southern end of the wall had water tanks or cisterns (1.60 × 2.90/3.05 m) inserted into them by walling up the open west side and plastering the interior (figures 19.90–92). The first **Tank (WW1)** has remains of two linings, which reduced its



Figure 19.90. The south end of the southern block of Wall WW from the south, showing exposed filled-in cistern WW1 (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

internal dimensions to 1.32 × 2.70/2.82 m. The first lining, ca. 3 cm thick, consisted of shelly lime mortar applied to the ashlar of the wall, coated with pink hydraulic mortar. This stepped in toward the bottom by ca. 15 cm, though the base of the tank was not visible. The stepped part was made of small stones and some ceramic fragments in hard grey-white mortar containing shells, and was presumably applied against the ashlar which no longer exists. The secondary lining was applied over the first and had the effect of converting the horizontal ledge near the bottom of the earlier lining into a gently curving surface. The building up of the ledge was done with horizontally laid tile fragments set in grey shelly mortar containing some largish pieces of pottery. This was covered by a layer of hydraulic mortar. The lining of the second **Cistern (WW2)** was 16 cm thick and consisted of horizontally laid tile courses 14–16 cm apart, set in rubble bound with a grey-white shelly mortar containing a lot of charcoal. This was covered by a layer of pink hydraulic plaster, 0.7 cm thick, containing crushed or graded shell and ground pottery. This lining extended



*Figure 19.91.* The north end of the southern block of Wall WW from the northeast, showing the exposed filled-in cistern WW2 (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

some 2.2 m in height (or 2.5 m above ground level). A ceramic pipe, probably for an overflow, was built into the wall enclosing the western side of this tank. The pipe was set in fine white mortar in a chase, which had been cut into the cistern's lining from the outside (or west). It may perhaps have led to a barrel-vaulted cistern, constructed in grey shelly mortared masonry, which stands just below the two tanks on the western slope of the rampart.

To the north of **Tank WW2**, as on the west, the masonry of the Phase 2 **Arcade Pier WW3** has eroded away completely, as has the next one (**WW5**), the void between them (**WW4**) being represented by the Phase 1 masonry that later filled it. This void, however, does not appear to have been lined for holding water. Another gap in the wall (**WW8**), 1.75 m wide and 25.1 m from the southern end of the wall, might perhaps represent another area where part of the Phase 2 wall remained standing when Phase 1 was constructed and was subsequently eroded away; this idea is also supported by the existence of a straight vertical fracture inside the northern piece of this wall



*Figure 19.92.* The north end of the southern block of wall WW from the north, showing the exposed filled-in cistern WW2 and overflow pipe (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

(**WW9**), which collapsed over the winter of 2011–12. Alternatively, it is also possible that **WW8** represents an intentional gap in the Phase 1 wall. Just 1.20 m south of it another earlier ashlar wall, running east–west (**WW7**) and evidently related to cisterns, is incorporated into the wall; this is only 0.6 m wide and built with shelly mortar containing potsherds, with traces of hydraulic plaster on each side of it.

It was from the mortar of this phase in the masonry adjoining **Void WW2** that a bulk sample of carbonized material was taken in the 1970s (GrA-7987). This produced a date of cal A.D. 260–550 (2σ). Although the mortar of Phase 2 was relatively rich in carbonized material, it proved difficult to secure any short-lived samples from identifiable plant species. Out of seven samples collected, the only one from the lower part of collapsed **Fragment WW9** was successfully analyzed. This produced a date statistically consistent with GrA-7987, allowing for an estimated construction date of the late fourth to mid-sixth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-28841).



## Phase 1

This phase represents a complete rebuilding of the wall and survives over 5 m high. At the northern end (**WW 6, 9**) the Phase 2 wall had already been demolished down to ground level and the mortar surface seems to have been left exposed to weathering for some time before the new wall was built off the old foundations (figure 19.93); however, the new wall was narrower than the old one, ca. 2.60 m wide at a lower level and 2.30 m higher up, the facing being set back on the west side. At the southern end, where the early wall survived to some 2.60 m in height, the rebuilding consisted of filling in the arcades and water tanks and rebuilding the wall above that height. The **Tanks (WW1, 2, 4)** appear to have been filled in from the west side. Although the new wall face does not survive at this level, the western face also appears to have been set back somewhat from the earlier foundation edge.

The rubble masonry filling the water tanks is set in very shelly grey mortar containing some odd bits of tile and white marble. Elsewhere the shelly mortar of this phase varies from grey to cream to yellow-brown, the grey batches containing a lot of charcoal. In places it also contains lumps of Phase 2 mortar. To the north, the ashlar facing survives on both sides in places. On the east (outer) face of the northern part (**WW 9**), which is now lying in two pieces downhill to the west, the course heights above the Phase I foundation are: 18, 19, 14.5, 16, 15, 14.5, 13, 15, 17, 13.5, 14.5, 15 cm—then five courses with the facing missing, the upper two including a column drum (diam. 30 cm)—15, 13, 13, 13, 13.5, 13, 13, 13, 12, 12, 13, 15, 13, 13, 14, 13 cm. Marble through-columns are set into the wall ca. 2.30 m above ground level in two places (**WW6** and **WW9**), and a granite one survives in situ at a level some 2.5 m above



Figure 19.93. The east face of block WW6, representing mainly Phase 1 (Umayyad/Abbasid) work built off the Phase 2 (Byzantine) foundation (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

them in the masonry over filled-in **Cistern WW2**. Traces of walls or buttresses abutting the wall on the east side are observable 12 m and 23 m respectively from the south end of the wall, but in neither case can the thickness of the abutments be determined.

Five statistically consistent radiocarbon dates were obtained from charcoal fragments: three from the fill of **Cistern WW2** and two from the upper part of collapsed **Wall Fragment WW9**. These allow for an estimated date of construction in the late seventh to late eighth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-28842,—28843,—32880,—32881, OxA-X-2650—48).

## The Jerusalem Gate

## THE JERUSALEM GATE (CC, DD, EE), GRID 35

Rey's two plans (figures 19.11–12) and that of the SWP (figure 19.13) show the town wall turning a right angle to the east at the north end of the surviving section of **WW**, with a rectangular or rounded structure in the reentrant angle, and then running eastward for some 60 m to a rounded tower or turret, which is identifiable as **Tower AA**. Not quite halfway between **WW** and **Tower AA**, Rey shows another rectangular tower, from which the main town wall resumed a northerly course, while on the SWP's plan the turn happens three-quarters of the way along the wall. From what it is possible to tell from surviving evidence, the SWP's plan is the more correct of the two in its location of the tower and the turn in the town wall.

The tower marking the abrupt turn of the wall to the east at the northern end of **WW** does not survive, but appears to be illustrated in a destroyed state in an

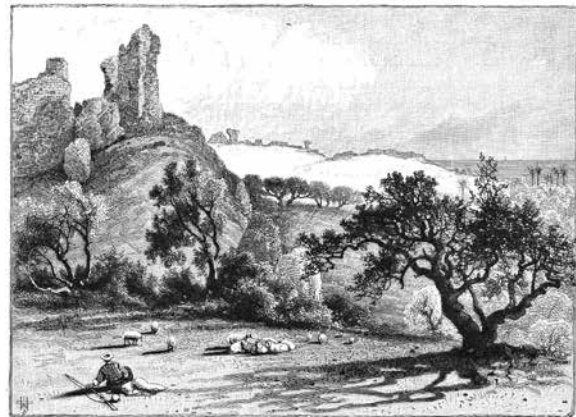


Figure 19.94. Ashkelon: The tumbled remains of the tower that marked the eastward turn of the wall at the northern end of **WW**, viewed looking SE from around point GG (from Wilson ca. 1880:3.169)

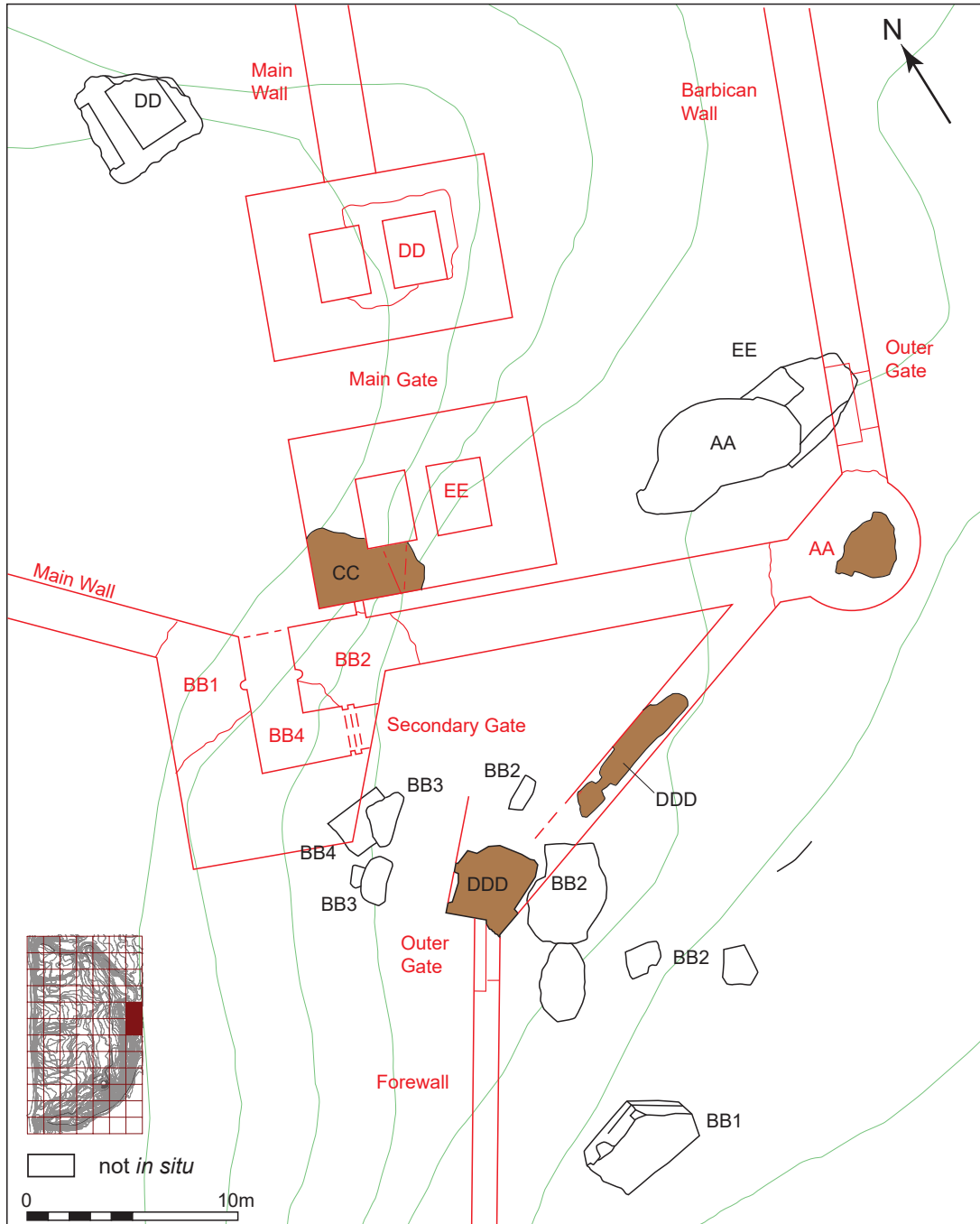


Figure 19.95. Plan of the Jerusalem Gate area, with suggested reconstruction of missing or displaced features, Grid 28, 35

engraving published around 1880 (figure 19.94). The east–west (or, more accurately, northwest–southeast) wall is no longer visible above ground (figures 19.81 and 19.95). At roughly 43 m from **WW** and 17 m from **Tower AA**, however, the southwest angle of a **Tower CC** still stands to a height of some 12 m (figures 19.96–98). Its construction is rather irregular, with

courses averaging ca. 16.7 cm and at least one granite through-column (diam. 53 cm) visible in its south wall ca. 3 m above ground level. The mortar is generally fairly hard, creamy buff, and sandy, with very little charcoal. Some areas of shelly mortar also occur, but as these are often in lumps comprising stones and mortar it is likely that in most cases they represent

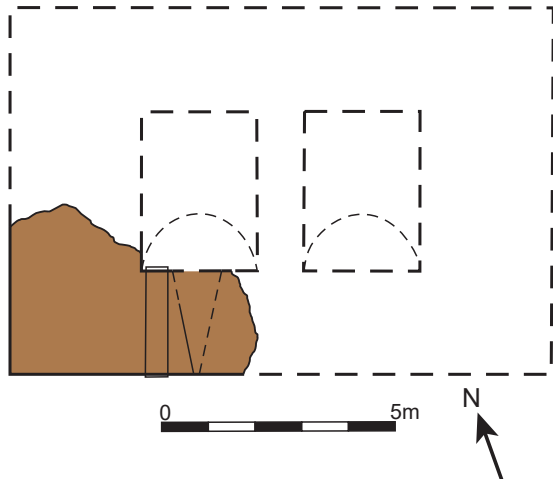


Figure 19.96. Plan of Tower CC, Grid 35



Figure 19.97. Tower CC, stump of southwest corner from south (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

material reused from an earlier construction. Roughly 3.2 m survives of the west wall and 5 m of the south, and their thicknesses appear to have been some 2.80 and 2.25 m respectively. In the south wall, 3.95 m



Figure 19.98. Tower CC, stump of southwest corner from east, showing basement window reveal and traces of interior wall face at first-floor level (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

from the external southwest corner, the western reveal of a splayed opening survives at ground-floor level, with signs of burning on it; possible remains of another opening are also visible at a higher level.

It seems unlikely that **Tower CC** was the structure shown projecting south from the east–west wall on Rey’s plan, as that now appears more likely to have been **Gate BB1–4**. It therefore seems more likely that it represents either part of an independent structure or the southern of a pair of rectangular towers that flanked the main **Jerusalem Gate**. The road that ran through it would then have followed roughly the course of the present road into the site, the line of which, passing through a dip in the rampart at this point, is also shown as a track on the plans of Rey, the SWP, and Garstang.

On the northern side of the road opposite **Tower CC** there also lies a large lump of masonry (**DD**), measuring overall some 6.2 m × 5.4 m in plan and 2.45 m in visible height (figures 19.99–100). This represents the remains of a pair of parallel barrel vaults, cut off at the level of the springing and now lying upside down. The profiles of both vaults are roughly semi-circular. The more intact one measures internally 2.5 × 3.45 m and is separated from the other by a spine wall some 0.96 m thick. The outer facing of the gable walls is not visible, but the surviving masonry indicates that their minimum thickness would have been ca. 1.35 m. The facing of the “outer” wall of the more intact vault, however, does exist, allowing that wall to be measured as only 0.60 m thick. However, closer examination of the wall face (on the side now facing east) showed that it was not an outer wall, as there exists in it just above the present ground level (albeit now upside down) the chamfered springing of a transverse arch, which would have been at a level some 2 m above the level of springing of the pair of barrel vaults. It therefore seems likely that this wall face actually represents the side of an intramural passage, very possibly a staircase, and that the wall itself would have been somewhat thicker.

In view of the position of **Vault DD** and the fact that it is lying upside down, it also seems very possible that it belonged to the same structure as **Tower CC**, most likely the northern of a pair of identical towers flanking a gateway. As it happens, it is perfectly possible to reconstruct **Tower CC** with a pair of basement vaults of similar proportions to those of **DD**, with the embrasure in its south wall occupying the center of the western basement vault. Each tower would have measured overall a little over 8 × 11 m.

A possible candidate to identify as one the basement vaults of **Tower CC** lies closer at hand, some 10 m down the slope to the east, also now upside down and below the upturned remains of **Tower AA** (figure 19.101). This fragment (**EE**) measures overall a maximum of 4.3 × 4.25 m on plan. The profile and span of the vault (ca. 2.5 m) appear similar to those of **DD**, though the outer wall appears to have been only about 2 m thick and the gable wall 2.8 m. There is also an indication of a passage, chamber, or shaft having existed in the inner spandrel of the vault. The mortar is creamy buff and sandy, with a few inclusions such as pottery and little charcoal.

Thus, although it would be feasible to reconstruct all three fragments (**CC**, **DD**, and **EE**) as having come from a single tower, it seems more likely that they represent remains of a pair of towers, each measuring overall some 8 × 11 m, that once flanked the main east gate through which the road from Jerusalem entered

the city. Further light could doubtless be shed on this question by excavating the base of **CC**.

#### ROUNDED TOWER (AA) AND BARBICAN, GRID 28/35

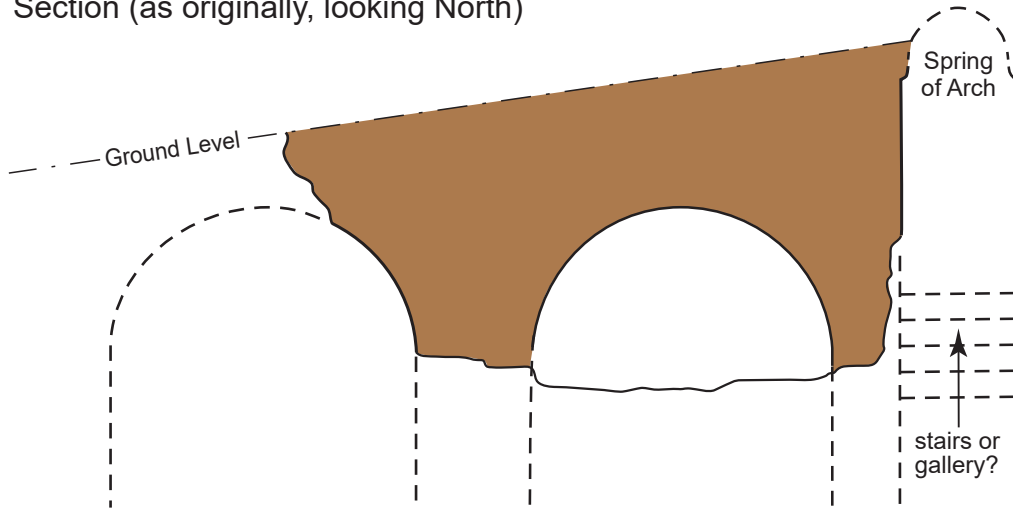
The plans of Rey, the SWP, and Garstang all show the town wall continuing north from **Tower CC** to **Towers GG** and **FF**, following the edge of a scarp; this alignment is still clearly visible (see figure 19.82 and below). Rey, however, also shows some outworks at this point. First of all, he indicates that the wall from **WW** to **CC** continued eastward to meet the solid rounded **Tower AA**, some remains of which still exist in situ (figures 19.101–104). According to his larger-scale plan, to the north of this tower another wall ran northward for some 25 m, before turning toward the west through two angles to meet the inner town wall between **Towers GG** and **FF**. He also noted the position of a gate in the wall next to **Tower AA** (his tower *A*), and a staircase attached to the wall’s inside face just before its first turn to the west. At the time of his visit in 1859, he was able to ascend the stair to the wall head some 8 m above ground level. In addition, Rey recorded another wall to the south of **Tower AA**. This ran obliquely southwest (or west-southwest), before turning to form a forewall parallel to the main town wall and ca. 25 m in front of it (but see **DDD** below).

Like Rey’s plan, the SWP’s plan also shows the position of a “Round Turret Fallen,” some 60 m east of **Wall WW**; but, as already remarked, it correctly places **Tower CC** and the northward turn of the wall some 43 m from **Wall WW**, thus closer to **Tower AA** than Rey places it. The outline of the fragmentary remains of the barbican that the SWP shows, however, appears to extend too far east, effectively disconnecting it from



Figure 19.100. Vault DD (upside down) viewed from the north, with remaining stump of Tower CC behind (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

Section (as originally, looking North)



Plan

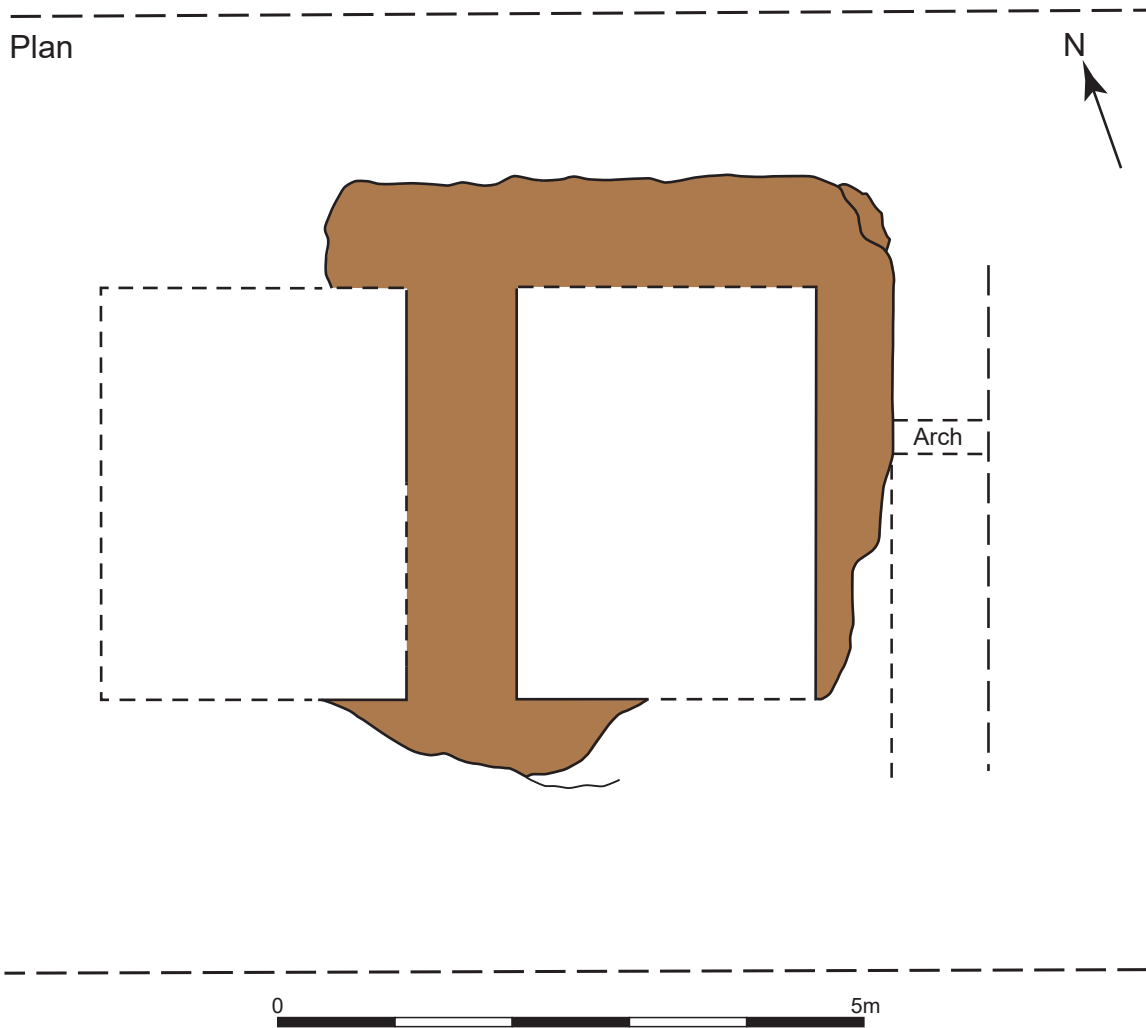


Figure 19.99. Plan and section of Vault DD



Figure 19.101. Tower Fragment EE lying upside down beneath upturned Tower AA (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.102. Southwest corner of Tower CC from southwest, with upturned remains of Tower AA and fragments of secondary Gate BB3-4 lying east and south of it respectively (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

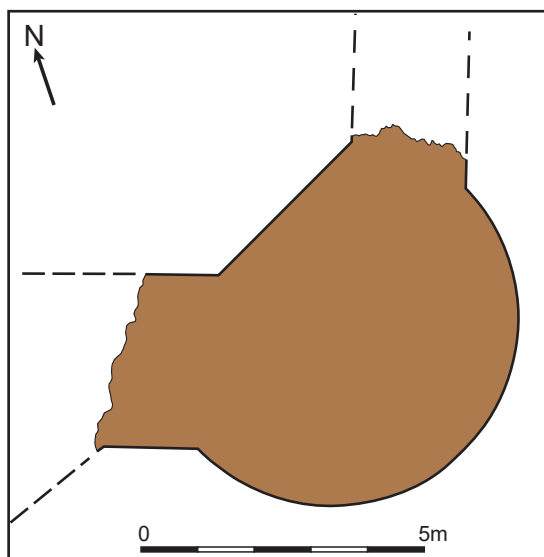


Figure 19.103. Plan of Tower AA, Grid 35



Figure 19.104. Upturned remains of Tower AA, with its foundation to the right (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

the rounded **Tower AA**, which Rey indicates (correctly, as will become apparent) forming the barbican's south-eastern corner. These discrepancies can perhaps best be resolved by proposing that the east-west width of the barbican was closer to 10 m than the 35 m indicated by Rey, and that the SWP placed the fragmentary remains of the barbican's east wall too far east either because they were unduly influenced by Rey's existing plan or, more likely, because they were representing tumbled masonry as opposed to walling surviving in situ.

No trace is visible above ground today of any wall between **Tower CC** and **Tower AA**, or of one running north from **AA**. The trace of the forewall (**DDD**) running diagonally south from **AA**, however, is still visible and the existence of the other two walls is also attested by the remains of **Tower AA** itself (figure 19.103).

When **Tower AA** collapsed it fell to the north, with the result that the principal surviving part of it is now lying upside down on top of what appears to be part of one of the towers of the **Jerusalem Gate (EE)**, which had rolled down the slope from the west. Its foundation, however, remains in situ, though at an angle (figure 19.104). The tower was three-quarters round, with a chamfered internal angle, and would have stood projecting from a right-angled corner (figure 19.103). It measured 6.6 m across and 5.23 m from front to back, the chamfer being 3.35 m broad. The wall that ran north from it was about 2 m wide and the one running west (toward **Tower CC**) 3.06 m. At a point 1.7 m from the tower, the outer face of the latter wall still displays the abutment of the forewall (**DDD**) that is shown running obliquely southwest from it on Rey's plan. The tower was solid (at least in its lower part) and was built with a rubble fill laid in horizontal courses corresponding to those of the facing ashlar (course heights: 16, 12, 15, 14, 13.5, 13.5, 13.5, 14, 13, 13, 14 cm; average 13.8 cm). The mortar is creamy buff and sandy, containing no shell or charcoal but a

lot of pottery, including some large pieces. There is also some evidence of modern consolidation on the foundation, which is well done and not easy to distinguish from the original mortar.

#### OUTER GATE AND FOREWALL (DDD), GRID 35

As remarked, the trace of the forewall running obliquely southwest (or west-southwest) from **Tower AA** is still apparent today, as is the point, some 20 m from **Tower AA**, at which it turned through an angle of  $38^\circ$  to continue southward (or south-southwest) parallel to the town wall (figures 19.81 and 95). Although Rey's plan suggests that the distance between the forewall and the town was ca. 25 m, in reality the distance between the outer faces of both walls was ca. 48 m. It was investigated by two trenches excavated in 2011. One, on the line of the wall southwest of **Tower AA**, exposed about 7 m of the wall and identified two principal phases of construction. The other examined the reentrant angle further southwest of this, where the wall turned toward the south; here the visible masonry all appeared to belong to the second of the phases identified in the first trench (see report in Chapter 19, this volume).

#### Phase 2

The first phase consisted of what appears to have been a foundation, some 1.2 m thick, built of concrete rubble poured between shuttering and surviving just over a meter in height. It rested on a spread of mortar some 0.15–0.20 cm thick, overlying a more irregular rubble foundation. Within the poured rubble work was the northeastern half of a segmental arch, built of rough stone voussoirs. On its northwestern face the arch sprang from a bedding of dressed ashlar, though their extent is uncertain. Although only half of the arch survived, it was estimated to have been ca. 3.7 m wide and ca. 1.65 m high above the springing. No surfaces were found associated with it and its function remains unknown. It seems unlikely to have been part of a gate or postern, as it would seem to have been below ground level at the time when it was built. A more plausible interpretation is that it was simply a relieving arch, designed to carry the wall over an unstable area of ground or possibly over a man-made feature such as a drain or water channel.

#### Phase 1

In the second phase, the southwestern half of the arch was demolished and a new wall was built over the

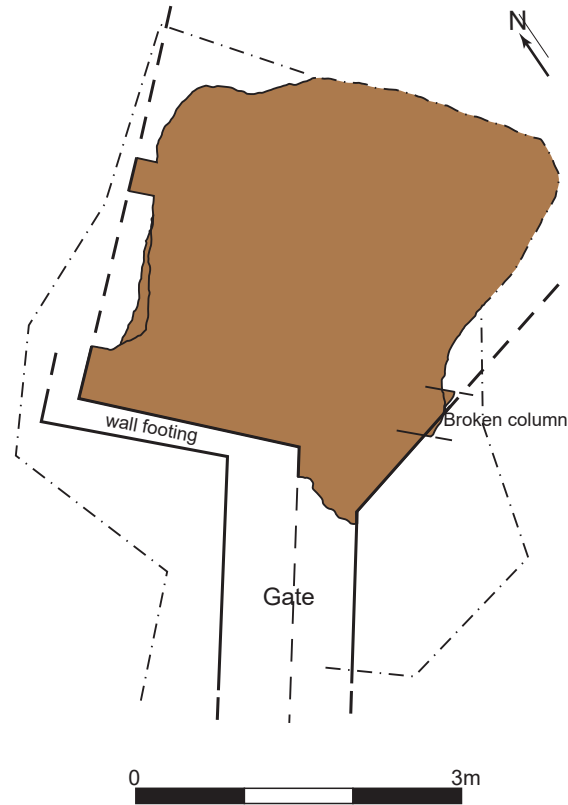


Figure 19.105. Plan of outer Gate DDD, Grid 35

remains of the old one, filling in what was left of the arch. The new wall was built with ashlar faces of *kurkar* enclosing a rubble masonry core laid course by course with the facing stones. To the northeast of the former arch, the northwest side of the earlier wall was refaced in ashlar, the lowest course being associated with a mortar surface. This suggests that inside the wall the ground surface was lowered, though whether to create a roofed or an open area remains uncertain. The refacing also extended over the filled-in arch and continued in a new section of walling on the same alignment to the southwest. On the southeastern or outside face of the wall, however, there appears to have been no refacing of the earlier wall at this level. However, the masonry core of the new wall overhung the top of the old on this side, suggesting that the new wall was somewhat thicker than the old and would most likely have had an ashlar facing at a higher level (above ground level) like that on the inside.

At the point where the wall changed direction, the second trench revealed the northern jamb of a gateway attached to the south corner of a solid quadrangular tower or turret measuring some 2.80 to > 4.60 m NW–SE by > 3.60 m NE–SW and surviving 2.8 m high (figures 19.105–106). The southeast face of the tower



Figure 19.106. Outer Gate DDD, as excavated in 2011 (photo A11–19262)

was aligned with the southeast face of the curtain wall to the northeast of it and with the outer face of the gate jamb. The latter, however, was damaged and its precise details are unknown, save that it was around 0.52 m thick and was seated on a lower wall, 1.20 m thick, with whose outer face it was also aligned. The tower's construction was similar to that of the curtain wall, with an ashlar facing laid in courses corresponding to those of the mortared rubble fill. The course heights varied (av. ca. 15.5 cm), and just to the right of the gate jamb a granite column drum (diam. ca. 0.45 m), albeit now broken off, had projected at least 0.60 m from the wall. The southwest face of the tower, representing the northeast side of the gate passage, sat on an ashlar footing, projecting some 30 cm, which also seems to have continued on the unexcavated northwest face. To the southeast the footing ran into the wall below the threshold. It is difficult, however, to determine precisely at what level the roadway through the gate would have been, as the original threshold did not survive and the bottom of the jamb was some 0.40 m above the footing of the gate passage. Possibly the intervening space was taken up with the missing

threshold and the setting for the swivel post for the timber door, in which case the roadway would have been at about this level. Below the threshold, however, the outside face of the wall (which was not excavated to the bottom) continued down at least 1.10 m below the wall footings of the gate passage or 1.50 m below the supposed road level, indicating that the ground level outside the gate was considerably lower than that inside. This suggests that there would have been a ditch or scarp outside the gate and that a bridge, probably of timber, would have been necessary to reach it. It is possible that the column drum projecting from the gate tower might have been connected in some way with such a structure.

#### SECONDARY GATE TOWER (BB1–4), GRID 35

Two large lumps of masonry, which appear to have been related to the outer defenses around the Jerusalem Gate, survive, albeit not in situ. When they were observed in 1983, these were interpreted as part of a polygonal **Tower (BB1)** and part of a rectangular **Gate Tower (BB2)** respectively. It now appears more likely, however, that along with two other fragments (**BB3–4**) they formed part of the same structure, an elaborate gate tower containing a bent entrance protected by one or possibly two portcullises (figure 19.107).

At first it was thought that this gate might have occupied the reentrant angle in the forewall itself. However, as already indicated, the excavation of Grid 35 in 2011 revealed foundations with a somewhat different plan from those indicated by fragments **BB1–4**. Further assessment of the way in which **BB2** is likely to have fallen also suggested that it had slipped downhill from the area where **BB3** and **BB4** now lie, before flipping over at the point where it hit the forewall and finally coming to rest upside down on the other side of it (see figure 19.95). These considerations make it more likely that the structure represented a secondary gate in the main town wall running east–west between the main twin-towered **Gateway CC** and **Wall WW**. Such a gate would have provided access between the city and the lists between the eastern city wall and the forewall, as well as forming an inner gate for the roadway that would have led up from the outer gate in the reentrant angle of the forewall in front of it.

On plan, fragment **BB2** represents the northeastern part of the gate tower, including internally the right-hand side of the gate passage, with its right-angled turn to the right. Externally it represents: part of the north side of the tower, with the abutment of a wall about a metre wide closing the gap between it and **Tower CC**; the abutment of the wall, 2.56 m thick, that ran east toward **Tower AA**; part of the east side of the tower,



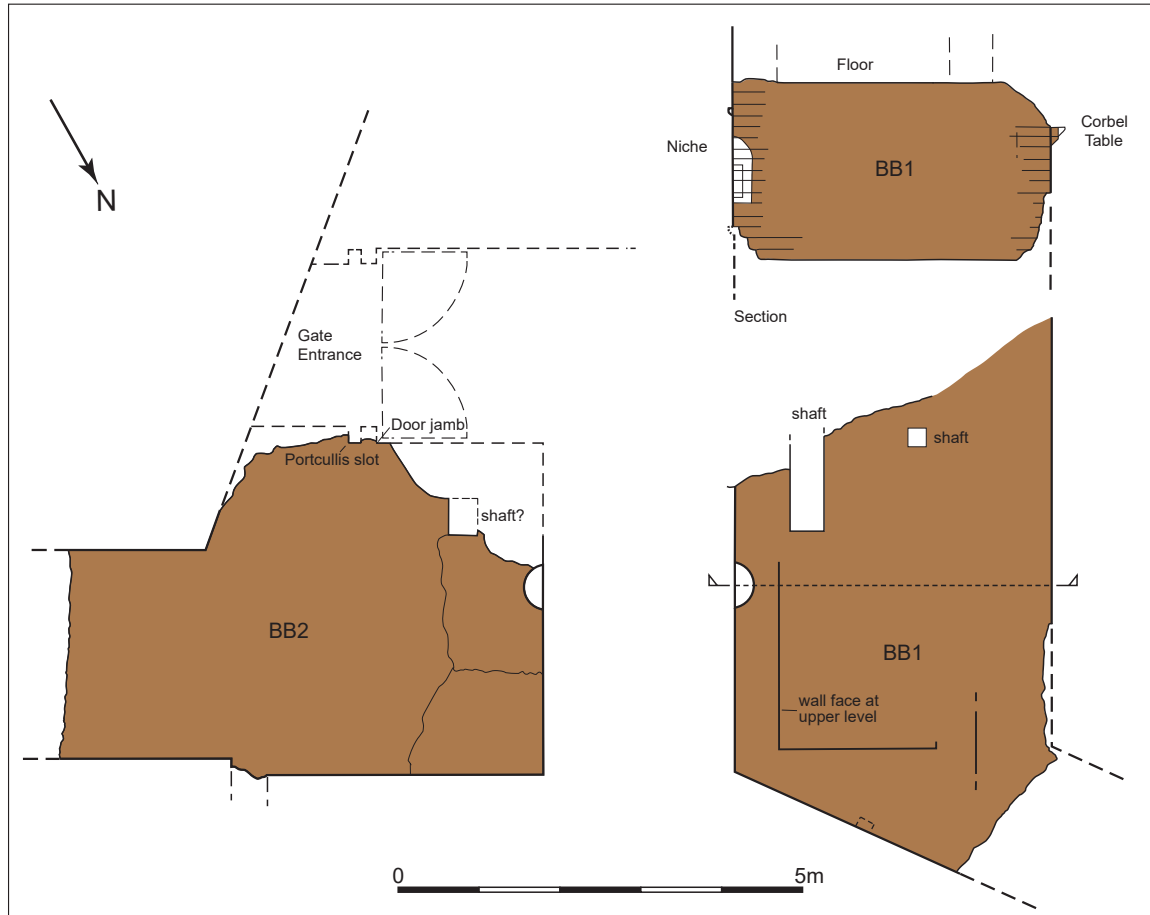


Figure 19.107. Plan of secondary Gate Tower BB1–4, Grid 35



Figure 19.108. Gate tower Fragment BB2 as it was in 1983, with Tower CC behind (photo Denys Pringle 1983)



Figure 19.109. Gate tower Fragment BB2 after its collapse, with Fragments BB3 and Tower CC behind (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

which is angled obliquely at  $109^\circ$  to the east–west wall, presumably to respect the alignment of the fore-wall; and the outer – albeit damaged – jamb of the gate set inside the tower. The masonry of **BB2** is similar to that of **Tower AA**, with course heights of 13–14 cm.

When seen in 1983, this fragment, measuring overall some  $12 \times 4.25$  m, had slipped downhill to the south from its original position immediately south of **Tower CC** and had come to rest against **Wall DDD**, pointing obliquely skyward (figure 19.108). Since then it has



*Figure 19.110.* Gate tower Fragment BB2 after its collapse, lying upside down on top of Gate DDD (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



*Figure 19.112ab.* Gate tower Fragment BB2, remains of the niche and cornice in the inner gate passage (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



*Figure 19.111.* Gate tower Fragment BB2 (upside down), showing the outer gate passage and remains of the door jamb and portcullis slot (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



fallen to the south, leaving its stump still embedded in the ground and breaking into at least three other pieces, including a large one lying upside down partially on top of **Wall DDD** and two smaller ones downhill to the southeast (figures 19.109–12). The original foundation and lower parts of the walls, however, may well remain in situ and available for future excavation further up the slope.

Although **BB2** has now lost most of the north side of the outer gate passage and door post, the surviving parts allow one to estimate that the outer opening would have been ca. 1.6 m from where the tower met the town wall running east of it toward **Tower AA**. Some 1.25 m behind this outer angle there was a portcullis slot, 0.16 wide and probably of similar depth, immediately behind which was the jamb, 0.19 m thick, for a timber door. The depth of the rebate for the door is unknown, but may have been ca. 0.20–0.25 m. Although it is not possible to calculate the width of the opening with any precision, if one assumes that there

were a pair of wing doors and that, when open, the northern one would not have obstructed the turn of the passageway inside, the maximum possible width of the gate passage would have been 4 m. However, the maximum width of the outer part of the gate would have been constrained by the oblique alignment of the tower's east wall. Thus, although the distance between the portcullis slot and the outer face was ca. 1.25 m on the north side of the passage, on the south side, the wider the gate, the shorter this distance would have been. On this basis the gate seems unlikely to have been more than about 2 m wide and the passage behind it ca. 2.40–2.50 m.

The inner part of the gate passage after the turn was 4.10 m long. In **Fragment BB2**, some 1.5 m after the turn as one entered the gate there was set in the right-hand side of the passage a niche, ca. 0.5 m wide and 0.23 m deep, flanked by colonnettes each 10 cm wide with plain bases (figures 19.112–13). Only the lower three courses (41 cm) of the niche survive, and the right-hand part of it is also missing. Two courses (i.e.,

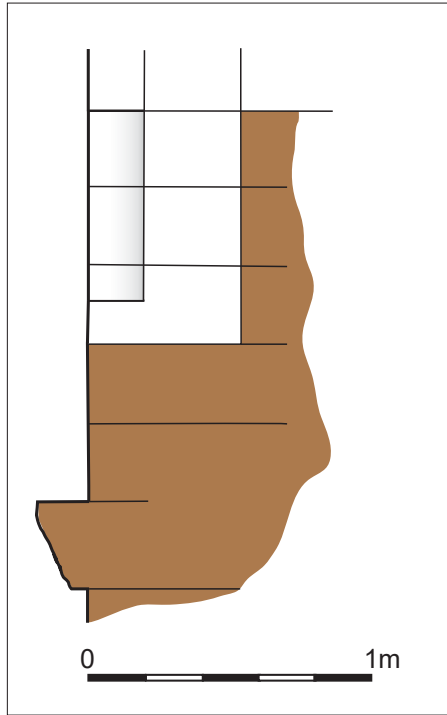


Figure 19.113. Gate tower Fragment BB2, profile of the niche and cornice in the inner gate passage

28 cm) below the base of the niche, however, was a string course, 15 cm high, decorated with a chevron molding. The three courses above the string course still bear traces of fine white lime plaster, suggesting that the whole wall surface would originally have been plastered or lime-washed.

The other fragment of the gate tower (**BB1**) is now lying upside down some 7.5 m further down the slope south of **BB2** (figure 19.114). It appears to represent the other side of the inner gate passage, as it has an identical—though more complete—niche set in it at precisely the same distance from the inner end of the passage (2.06 m) (figure 19.107). As it is ex situ, the width of the inner gate passage is unknown, though if it was the same as the part before the turn it would have been, as suggested above, ca. 2.40–2.50 m. The niche in **BB1** (the left-hand side of the passage) is 55 cm wide, ca. 80 cm high, and 24 cm deep (figures 19.114–16). It is flanked by colonnettes, 10 cm wide with plain bases and impostes, supporting a rounded arch. The voussoirs of the arch are 23 cm thick and enclosed by a plain hood molding, 11 cm thick, with label stops. The semi-dome of the niche is somewhat crudely contrived out of a single piece of stone. Whether or not there was once a horizontal molding below the niche, as in **Fragment BB2**, is unknown, as that part is now missing, though it appears likely. To



Figure 19.114. Gate tower Fragment BB1 (upside down), showing the niche in the inner gate passage (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.115. Gate tower Fragment BB1, detail of the niche in the inner gate passage (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

the left of the niche the wall face continues for at least a meter, while to the right it continues for 2.06 m up to an obtuse-angled corner (115°); after this the wall face continues for at least 3.30 m. This angle is close to that of the angle of the tower's east wall, suggesting that to the west of the inner end of the gate passage a wall (some 1.90 m thick) ran off in a northwesterly direction, roughly at right angles to the tower's east wall, in the direction of the north end of the ridge continuing north of **Wall WW**, where one may expect it to have met the tower in the reentrant angle whose remains were seen by Rey and the SWP (see figure 19.81).

Although both **BB1** and **BB2** appear to be solid blocks of masonry (and both are now upside down), it is possible to see on the present underside of **BB1** a floor surface and traces of the walls of a room enclosing it, measuring 1.96 m by at least 2.3 m. This was evidently at first-floor or mezzanine level, above a solid base. In addition, set in the masonry some 0.83–0.86 m behind the wall face of the inner passage, one to each side, are two vertical shafts (**BB1**: > 0.44 × >

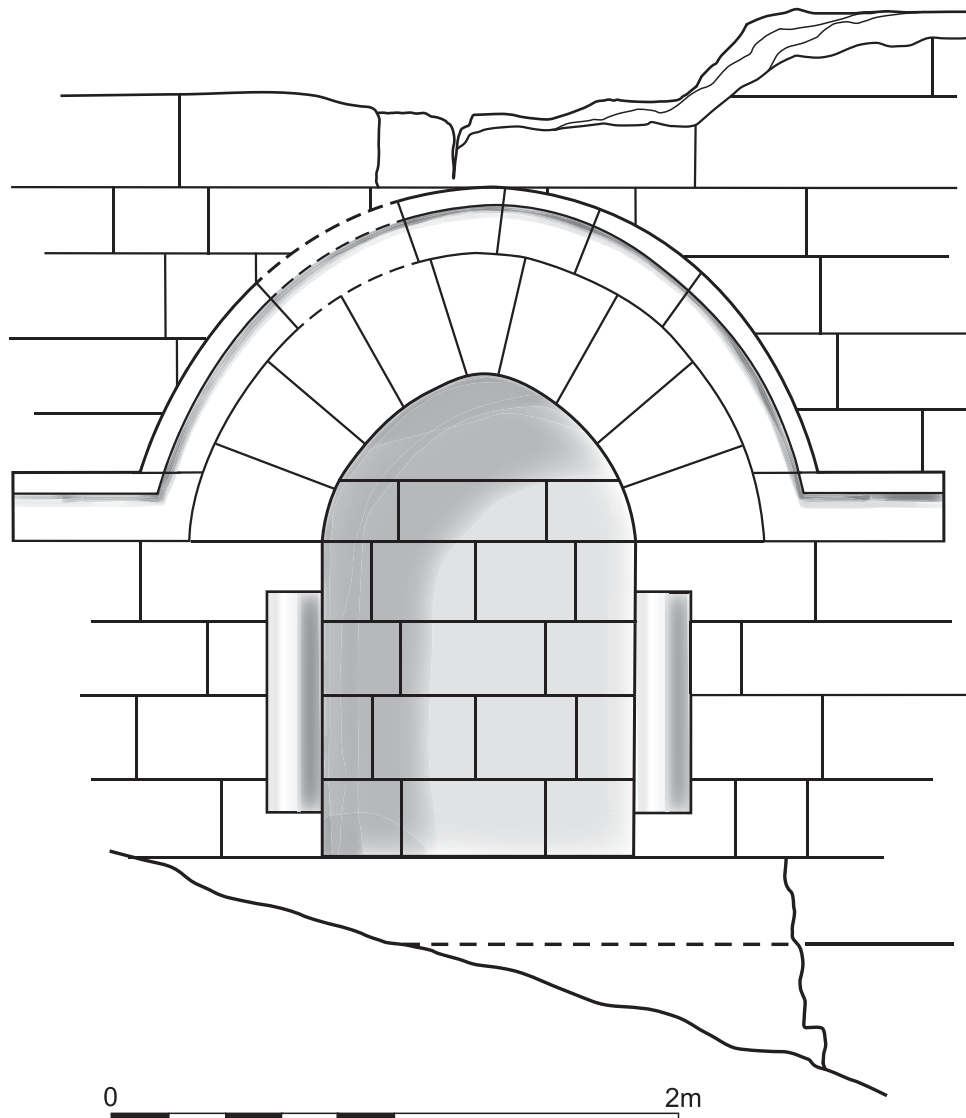


Figure 19.116. Gate tower Fragment BB1, elevation drawing of the niche in the inner gate passage

0.49 m; **BB2**: 0.44 m × ?). These have the appearance of shafts for containing the counterweights of a portcullis, which could perhaps have closed off the outer end of the inner gate passage at the turn, where the masonry no longer survives. **BB1** also contains another shaft, 0.23 m square, the function of which is uncertain; possibly it was a drain.

On the external (west) wall of **BB1**, which was parallel to the inner gate passage, roughly level with the top of the niche is a corbel table (0.24 m high), consisting of a row of three surviving chamfered corbels set on a chamfered cornice.

Some 7 m northwest of where **BB2** now lies and upslope from it lie two other fragments (**BB3** and **BB4**) that may once have formed part of the same gate. **Fragment BB3** possibly represents a lower part of the same block of masonry from which **BB2** slipped and fell toward the east, presumably when the tower was undermined. It is inclined at an angle toward the east and measures overall ca. 5.10 × ca. 2.40 m. and is ca. 1.6 m thick. Vertically it has fractured into two main pieces, while horizontally the courses have separated like a pile of dominoes lying sideways. It also contains the ghost of a through-column (diameter ca.



Figure 19.117. Gate tower Fragment BB4, segmental arch over the inner end of the gate passage, with Fragments BB3 and BB2 (stump) behind (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

40 cm, length > 2.25 m). An illegible bronze coin was found stuck in the surface of one of the mortar courses (MC66046/ASH0014098).

**Fragment BB4** lies west of **BB3**, resting against it though at less of an angle. This measures overall ca. 4.20 × ca. 2.60 m, and is > 1.5 m thick. It evidently represents part of the vault over a gate, as the ca. 4.20-meter-wide face that now looks northwest has in it the face of a segmental relieving arch no more than 2.4 m wide, composed of voussoirs 22 cm thick (figure 19.117). The facing and lintel below the arch have gone, revealing a rubble core, but two courses of facing survive above it. This would appear to represent the inner end of the tower's gate passage.

#### Northeastern Walls between the Jerusalem Gate and the Jaffa Gate (SW to NE)

##### SECTION OF CURTAIN WALL (HH), GRID 28

Some 60 m north of the standing corner of **Tower CC** the remains of part of the town wall may still be observed with a granite column, some 2.2 m long, set through it (figures 19.118–19). Rey's plans indicate a tower in this position, while Garstang's shows merely a section of wall with dashes indicating the suggested former location of a projecting tower. What little mortar is visible appears grey and sandy, though this could be due to weathering.

##### TOWER (GG), GRID 28

The location of the next **Tower (GG)** is more certain, though the outer projecting part of it—assuming such existed—has completely gone. It is uncertain therefore whether it sat astride the town wall or against its inner

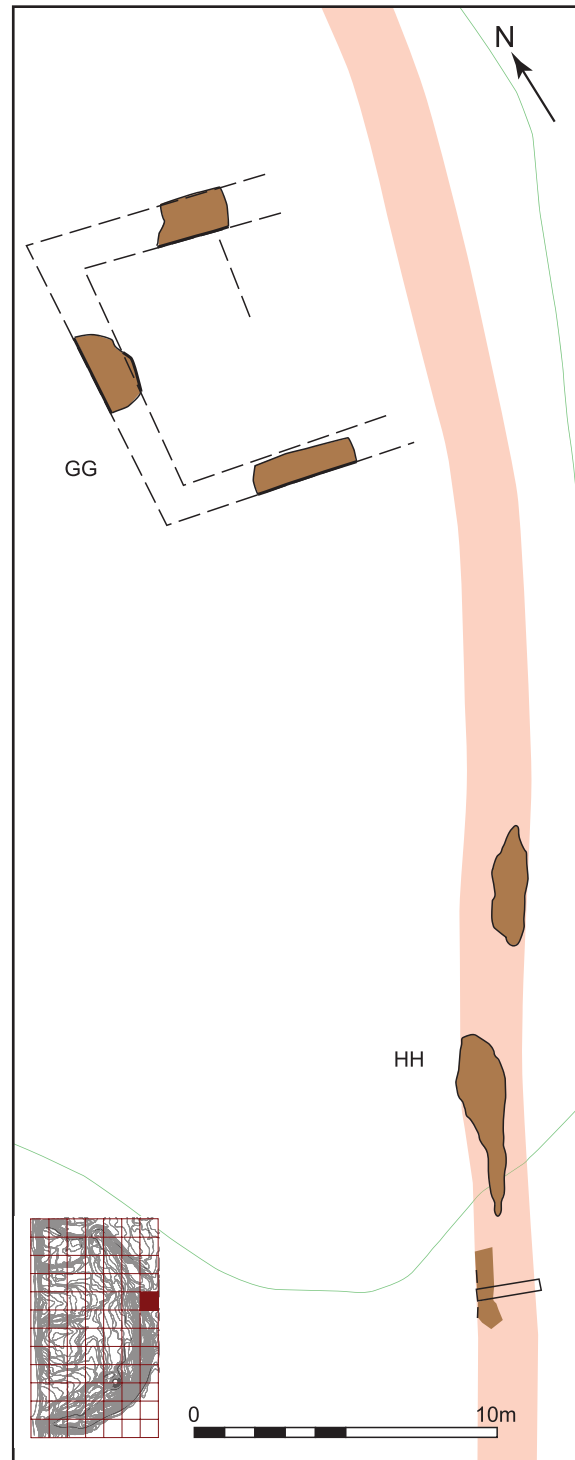


Figure 19.118. Plan of Wall HH and Tower GG, Grid 28

face. The former is perhaps more likely, as the roughly level top of the rampart extends some 6–7 m east of the projected line of the town wall. Rey indicates its form to have been rectangular, though this cannot at present



Figure 19.119. Through-column in Wall HH (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.120. Tower GG from the northwest (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

be verified. What remains visible are three lumps of masonry belonging to the rear (west) wall and the two side walls (north and south) (figure 19.120). It appears to have been some 10 m broad with walls up to 1.3 m thick. The west wall is faced in ashlar on both sides, with a projecting external plinth course. The lower ca. 1.5 m of what remains of the north wall, however, is unfaced and seems to have been built either against the south face of a preexisting wall that has now disappeared or against shuttering or the side of a trench dug into the rear of the rampart. In contrast, the inside face of the wall is in ashlar with what appears to be the return for a transverse wall, or possibly merely a pilaster, ca. 4.6 m from the estimated northwest inside corner of the tower. This might seem to support the idea that the tower was built into the rear of an existing rampart and had a stepped interior, with a western basement possibly containing an internal stair to the upper floors. Whatever the case, the internal facing of the north wall now stands at least 2.7 m above the level of the surviving external plinth course of the west wall, suggesting that deposits up to 2 m deep may still survive to be excavated inside the tower.

The mortar of the northern part of the tower is creamy buff, sandy, with few or no inclusions and very little charcoal except in ashy patches. It also contains some lumps of grey shelly mortar containing a lot of charcoal, which evidently came from an earlier structure (presumably the town wall), and some smaller lumps of almost pure lime with charcoal. The southern part is less well preserved and shows signs of modern consolidation in a buff-cream sandy mortar with no inclusions (or charcoal), closely matching the original.

#### TOWER (FF), GRID 20

Some 60 m north of **Tower GG** the wall changes alignment, kinking to the west for some 20–25 m and then north again to follow the edge of the ridge. At the point where it turned at right angles to the west there stood another **Tower (FF)**, built apparently of a piece with the town wall and facing outward on only two sides: north and east (figure 19.121). Rey's plans of this tower (figures 19.11–12) show it projecting on the north, with a rounded front built on triangular spurs forming a pyramidal talus; the rear (south) side he shows straight, but with a solid rounded turret or buttress projecting east at the southeast corner. However, he exaggerates the extent to which the wall changed course, estimating the length of the dogleg as ca. 50 m, whereas it is no more than ca. 25 m (including the tower); he also shows the rounded tower facing north instead of east. The SWP plan (figure 19.13) shows the tower as rectangular and identifies it as “Large Tower R[ui]ne[d]” with a solid “Round Tower” at the northeast and southeast corners respectively, corresponding to Rey's triangular spurs. The officers also noted that, like the Jerusalem Gate, excavations had “at some time or other been made . . . at the tower on the wall north of it” (Conder and Kitchener 1881:3.239). Judging by their plan, this observation would appear to refer to this tower, rather than **Tower GG**, and may well relate to the excavation by Lady Hester Stanhope in 1815 or to subsequent stone-robbing by Ibrahim Pasha and others (Meryon 1846:3.167). Garstang's plan (figure 19.19) also shows the tower as rectangular, with a rounded northeast corner, and suggests that the town wall would have abutted its northwestern and southeastern corners. Contemporary photographs show that Garstang also excavated the external corner of this tower (figures 19.122–23), though no report of this clearance work can be traced. Excavation by the Leon Levy Expedition in 2014 found evidence of late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century clearance inside it, suggesting that Garstang may also have dug inside it. The 2014 excavation also revealed that the medieval

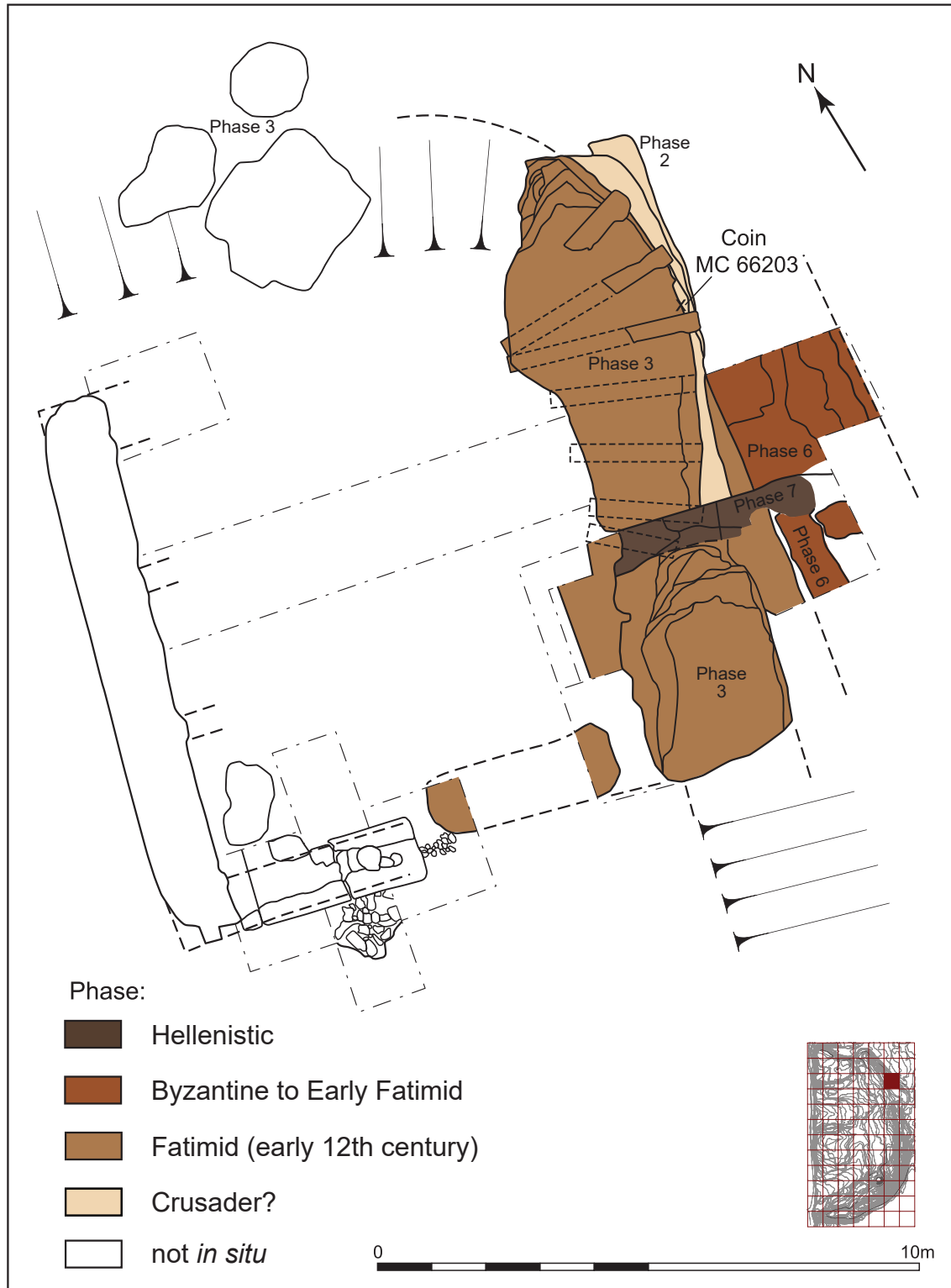


Figure 19.121. Plan of Tower FF and features excavated in 2014, Grid 20

wall (10.40 m long, 1.44 m thick, 4.3 m high) that stood 7.4 m inside and parallel to the east of the town wall represented not the tower's west wall, as all the previous plans suggest, but the west wall of an earlier

Fatimid building that was almost entirely demolished when the present town wall and tower were built.

Taking account of the results of the 2014 excavation, six principal constructional phases may be identified

in this sector of the town walls.<sup>187</sup> The four phases that relate directly to the walls themselves are as follows.

Phase 7—Hellenistic (Late Second Century B.C.)

The earliest evidence for fortification consisted of a wall, 0.86 m thick, which was traced running east–west for some 3.5 m below and enveloped by the later town walls. When the Phase 3 (Fatimid) town wall was built, this earlier wall must still have been standing 3.20 m high, as is shown by its eroded profile in the later masonry. The wall was built of large, well-cut blocks of *kurkar* separated by beds of fine white lime mortar, 1–3 cm thick, but with very fine jointing on the wall faces. When excavated, the mortar was still relatively soft and appeared to be pure lime putty with little or no aggregate. The blocks were on average 34 cm high, 42 cm long, 15 cm thick, and arranged as headers and stretchers in *emplekton* style. Although the wall was built mostly of blocks, in some places there was also a mortar core containing fist-sized lumps of ashlar. The lower exposed courses of the wall showed that it narrowed by ca. 10 cm on the south side, but not apparently on the north, and that it was associated with a return wall running at right angles to the south, below the line of the later Phase 6 wall. Unfortunately, this could only be observed on its west side and it was not possible to reach any intact layers associated with its construction. Nonetheless, the walls' construction and dimensions are consistent with their being identified as part of one of the Hellenistic towers associated with the refortification of Ashkelon's Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age defenses in the late second century B.C.<sup>188</sup>

Phase 6—Byzantine (?) to Early Fatimid (Late Fifth/Sixth?)–Early Eleventh Century A.D.)

In the second phase a massive wall of concrete construction was built on a north–south alignment over the top of the Phase 7 structure. Only the foundation survived in the 4.6 m length that was investigated. Its state of preservation was fragmentary and the outer (east) face was missing as a result of subsidence and stone robbing. Toward the north the foundation survived 1.3 m high and at least 2.8 m thick, while to the south it was only 0.85 m in elevation and at least 1.6 m thick. The masonry consisted of rubble concrete, laid in courses some 15 cm high. The mortar was light grey and included large amounts of shell as well as



Figure 19.122. Tower FF in 1920, seen from the southeast (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/G241.04)



Figure 19.123. The base of Tower FF under clearance ca. 1920, seen from the east (Palestine Exploration Fund: PEF/P/G242)

<sup>187</sup> For further details of the excavation, see Chapter 17 in this volume; cf. Pringle and Buckingham 2016.

<sup>188</sup> Stager, Schloen and Master 2008:240. I am grateful to Dr. Kate Birney for discussion of the Hellenistic defenses. For further information, see Birney forthcoming.

some small stones and charcoal. Toward the south, the inner (west) of the foundation was faced with roughly rectangular blocks of *kurkar* covered in mortar, giving the impression that it had completely filled its foundation trench, a suspicion confirmed by traces of orange



sandy soil found in the interstices between the courses, which contrasted with the evidently later fill that excavation revealed running against it.

The dating of the Phase 6 wall is problematic, as few layers could be directly associated with it. In the middle of the excavated section the foundation overlies a layer of silt containing pottery of Byzantine and early Umayyad date, while to the south the latest pottery from a layer of brown soil running against its robbed east side was also Byzantine. A Byzantine or early Umayyad *terminus post quem* also seems to be indicated by the shelly mortar used for the wall's construction. Evidence for post-Byzantine construction, however, is suggested by Garstang's photograph of the continuation of this wall a little way to the north (figure 19.123), which appears to show two antique granite column drums built through it. One of these still exists, though no longer in situ. Finally, statistically consistent radiocarbon dates obtained from three short-life samples, comprising seeds, leaves, and twig charcoal, from an area of mortared rubble at the north end of the excavated wall (context 90) provide the basis for a construction date of that part of the wall in the late tenth to early eleventh century cal A.D., suggesting repair or rebuilding in the early Fatimid period, sometime after 969 (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-33101,—33102,—33103).

Although the northern fragment of the excavated wall may thus be dated with reasonable certainty to the late tenth or early eleventh century, it does not necessarily follow that the other excavated fragments of walling are of the same date. Indeed, the likelihood that here as elsewhere in Ashkelon the Islamic walls represented a series of rebuildings of the Byzantine walls on the same alignment is supported by traces of a sequence of occupation layers from the Byzantine to early Fatimid periods excavated just east of it, including the Fatimid building (Phase 4, see Chapter 2, this volume) whose west wall is still standing.

#### Phase 3—Fatimid (Early Twelfth Century): Rebuilding of the Town Walls

The Phase 6 wall was eventually demolished and replaced by an entirely new wall, built just inside it to the west. As remarked already, at this point the medieval town wall following the edge of the scarp from the Jerusalem Gate made a dogleg turn of some 25 m to the west before continuing on a northerly course. In the rebuilt Phase 3 wall the exposed angle was strengthened by a massive quarter-round tower or bastion, built together with the curtain wall to the south of it. Only the southern part of the tower still survives in situ, though several other large fragments of the tower

or from the wall that ran west of it lie on the downhill slope to the north. The masonry that survives in situ extends some 11.5 m north–south and is some 2.5 m thick. An irregular foundation, 1.4 m thick and 3.5 m long, which runs west at right angles to the southern end of the existing wall also appears to have belonged to the same construction.

Although it is likely that the wall and tower would have stood at or near the edge of the east-facing scarp, it is clear that most of what is now visible of them represents a foundation and would originally have been hidden below ground. It is therefore difficult to appreciate the topography existing when the walls were built and in use. There has also clearly been considerable undermining and subsidence to the north. Before excavation the difference between the ground levels to the east and west of the wall was 1.55 m at the southern end and 2.56 m in the center; but it is likely that both ground levels would have been some 2 m higher when the wall was first built, probably with a bank or berm running against the outer face.

Whatever the ground levels may have been when the walls were first constructed, the builders evidently understood the need to provide them with deep foundations. Although the 2014 excavation did not reach the bottom of the foundation, it extended at least 4.8 m below the present ground surface on the inside and 3.16 m on the outside. Such a foundation would have required a massive construction trench. On the inside, however, the cut had been largely removed by later clearance, some of it by stone robbers and some possibly by archaeologists.

On the outside (east side), the outer edge of the foundation trench was delimited by the west (inside) face of the foundation of the Phase 6 wall, which was partly undermined in the process. Here the 2014 excavation followed the wall down 3.10 m below the level reached on the inside. At this level the wall would have been 4.6 m thick. The lower 2.2 m of its external face was built with a slight batter, which turned into a more pronounced 70-cm-wide chamfered plinth some 50 cm from the bottom. This part of the wall was built of rammed earth (*pisé* or *tapial* construction), consisting of earth, clay, and some stones, including pottery and mortar fragments. At least two horizontal divisions could be discerned in it, one ca. 20 cm below the top and another 39 cm below it, each characterized by a spread of pebbles and some potsherds.

Above the rammed-earth construction, the wall continued more or less vertically in lime-mortared masonry for five courses, before thickening and overhanging its base for its remaining height. The facing stones above ground level, however, had been completely robbed, as had most of those immediately above the



Figure 19.124. Tower FF from the northeast (photo Denys Pringle 2014)

rammed-earth wall. The construction consisted of irregular courses of rubble set in a hard grey-buff sandy mortar containing granules of white lime. The rubble included at least one lump of grey shelly mortar containing charcoal, most likely derived from the Phase 6 wall. For its upper 1.80 m, the wall continued to project outward and its construction changed slightly, with relatively more stone to mortar. The core consisted of horizontal courses of varying height (13–38 cm, some of them probably double courses) containing pieces of *kurkar* set in a hard buff-cream sandy mortar containing no charcoal. Traces of two courses (14–15 cm high) of what may have been an eroded outer face also exist, but they do not relate very convincingly to the coursing of the core material. The loose fill of the construction trench between the Phase 3 and Phase 6 walls included some sherds from the mid-ninth to mid-tenth century.

The foundation of the Phase 3 town wall and tower enveloped a portion of the Phase 7 (Hellenistic) tower running east–west through it to a height of over 3 m. On the north side of the Hellenistic wall, the splayed masonry base of the rounded tower ran up against it and against the inside face of the Phase 6 wall on the east. Above this the outer (east) face of the rounded tower stands 4.5 m proud of the present ground surface (figures 19.124–25), though when built most of its present “facing” would have been below ground level. Its mortar is very hard, cream-buff in color, sandy with small grits (< 5 mm) including some shell fragments but very little charcoal. The lower 2.20 m is rounded or sub-polygonal in plan and is faced with irregular ashlar (14–24 cm high) besides two marble columns set transversely into the wall and some other column fragments. During surveying in 2012, a bronze coin, subsequently identified as an Abbasid-period cast *fals* of a type minted between A.D. 800 and 830, was recovered from the mortar bed below the topmost course of

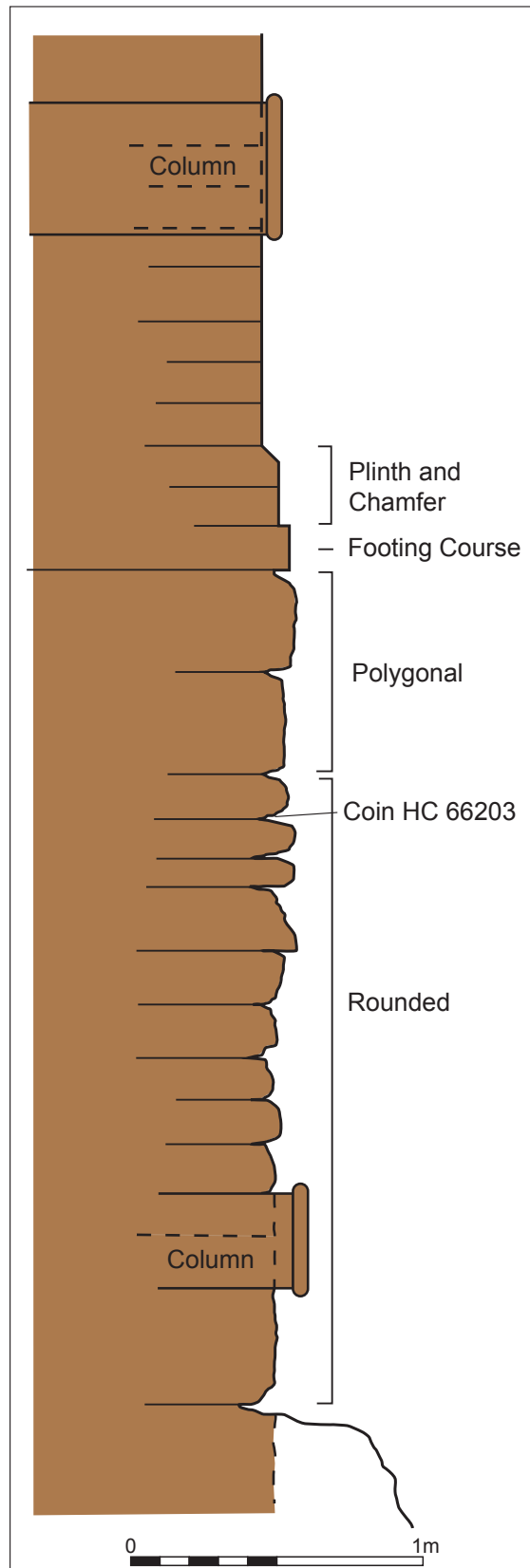


Figure 19.125. Tower FF, profile of the facing

this rounded lower section.<sup>189</sup> Above this section are two further courses, each 35 cm high, arranged to a slightly more regular polygonal plan. All the masonry up to this point appears to represent a foundation, rather than an intended wall face; it would therefore most likely originally have been covered by soil, which has since been eroded away. Indeed, a photograph taken by John Garstang in 1920 shows soil extending over it (figure 19.122). On this foundation stood the rounded tower itself: first a footing course in rough ashlar, ca. 14 cm high and set slightly forward; then two plinth courses, also 14 cm high, the upper one with a plain chamfered top. Above this there survive eight courses of ashlar, each ca. 14 cm high, with a splayed array of granite through-columns set through the wall, 1.02 m above the base. Three of these columns survive in situ, while the mortar impressions of another one may be seen to the north of them and another three or four to the south. The remains of the tower itself stand 1.48 m above the base course. The floor level of the tower would have been above the height of these columns and well above the present ground level on the west, and thus has now been lost.

The subsequent eroding away of the upper part of the Phase 7 wall incorporated into the wall of Phase 3 resulted in the creation of a gap between the north part (including the rounded tower) and the south part of the Fatimid wall. As the facing of the upper part of the wall to the south has also gone, it is difficult to tell how the rounded face of the “tower” related to the wall face to the south of it. Even in what survives, however, the curving face of the tower extends behind the projected line of the eroded wall face, suggesting that there would have been a vertical indentation at this point, to emphasize the change from straight to rounded wall and, in effect, make the rounded portion appear from the outside more like a tower and less like a rounded continuation of the wall. A similar architectural device is used on one of the rounded towers built in 1169–71 on the walls of Cairo by Saladin (Salah al-Din), while acting as *wazir* for the Fatimid sultan al-‘Adid (1160–71) (figure 19.183).

As remarked already, the floor levels associated with the tower would have been some 2 m or more above the present ground level and the northern part of the tower has been completely destroyed. Furthermore, no part of the wall face survives on the west side above the foundation level. It is therefore hard to tell whether the back of the tower was open or enclosed, how tall it might have stood, or what provision was made in it for defending it at different levels by embrasures, wall walks, or parapets. The only piece of masonry on the

inside of the wall that might relate to an associated structure is an irregular foundation, 1.4 m wide and 3.5 m in length, which runs east–west from the southern end of the existing wall, separated from it by a gap of 0.60 m. Its construction is similar to that of the wall.

#### Phase 2—“Mise En Valeur” of the Tower after Partial Demolition (Crusader?—1192?)

It appears that the rounded tower was undermined and slighted while Ashkelon still retained a military significance, for an attempt was subsequently made to refortify it. The main evidence for the attempted rebuilding consists of two triangular masonry “spurs” that were added to the southeast and northeast sides of its foundation with the evident intention of producing a rectangular base enclosing the rounded tower. The north part of the tower, already perhaps damaged or fallen, was also squared off in line with the northern “spur.” In some places an attempt was made to bond the “spurs” into the rough facing of the foundation, but elsewhere—including on the plinth of the rounded tower itself—rubble was simply applied to the earlier facing. The mortar used for the spurs is medium hard, creamy grey, and sandy, containing grits (< 3 mm) and finely graded crushed shell; in places it also includes potsherds, but they seem to have been used more as pinnings than as part of the mortar mix. Some small *kurkar* ashlar still adhering to the lower part of the foundation indicate that the whole squared base would have been faced, though apart from these few survivals all the ashlar have now been robbed out. Given that the northern part of the rounded tower no longer existed, it may be doubted whether much of its superstructure remained standing at all. Indeed, the facing up of the foundation suggests that the external ground level was deliberately lowered in order to present something resembling more a low rectangular bastion than a standing tower. It also seems that at this point a section of blocking was added to bridge the gap in the wall where the remains of the Phase 7 (Hellenistic) wall had been partly eroded.

#### FRAGMENTS OF CURTAIN WALL (AAA1–5), GRID 12

Various fragments of walling survive along the outer edge of the Middle Bronze Age rampart between **Towers FF** and **R** (figures 19.127). The first (**AAA1**) extends for some 10 m, but is represented mainly by fragments of core material. At the north end the course heights are ca. 15–28 cm with thick mortar joints. The mortar is quite soft, grey-cream in color, sandy with a lot of grit and shell as well as small worn pottery sherds. It also contains ashy patches, with charcoal.

<sup>189</sup> See Chapter 24, this volume, cat. no. 73.



Figure 19.126. Tower FF, from the north, showing the Phase 2 spur running against the curving Phase 3 ashlar face and the squaring off of the north side of the tower (photo Denys Pringle 2014)

**Fragment AAA2** represents another part of the same wall surviving in situ; **AAA5**, on the other hand, appears to have slumped a little to the northwest as a result of the removal of part of the rampart northwest of it, while **AAA3** and **AAA4** have fallen to the east.

#### REMAINS OF A POLYGONAL OR ROUNDED TOWER (AAA6–8), GRID 12

Four large fragments of masonry, apparently from a tower, lie to either side of the line of the rampart near **AAA5**: three outside the wall to the east (**AAA6–7**), and a larger one that rolled down inside it to the west and came to rest upside down (**AAA8**) (figure 19.127). The construction of these pieces differs from that of the town wall in this area. The mortar is cream-buff in color, sandy, with few inclusions and no charcoal. **Fragment AAA8** has remains of an internal corner (107°), suggesting that it came from a polygonal or rounded tower, no doubt originally attached to the outer face of the wall. One of its external sides is reasonably straight, though unfaced, giving a wall thickness of ca. 1.95 m. The other wall, however, would have

been at least 2.35 m thick. Possibly therefore the thinner wall was the rear wall, built against the town wall. The course heights of the ashlar internal face are: 18, 18, 13.5, 14.5, 14, 17 cm (average 15.8 cm).

Garstang's plan also indicates the remains of a tower in this position. It may also be the "Tower (small R[uine]d)" marked on the SWP's plan, though that appears to have been at the southern end of **AAA1**.

#### FRAGMENTS OF CURTAIN WALL (BBB, CCC), GRID 12

After a gap of some 37 m from **AAA2**, the line of the wall is again apparent, running on the eastern slope for some 45 m, though many of the visible fragments appear not to be in situ (figures 19.127, 19.130–32). At **BBB1** the wall itself is 2.40 m thick, and built with course heights of 26–27 cm. The mortar is grey, sandy, with few inclusions apart from some shells and ceramic sherds (and a fragment of natron glass). In a secondary phase a block of masonry > 2 m thick (**BBB2**) was built against the inside face of this wall. Its mortar is medium hard, grey-cream, sandy, and contains a lot of shell (mostly small abraded pieces) and some ceramics and charcoal. The course heights are variable. Although the southwest facing has gone, the side abutting the town wall was faced in roughly squared blocks, which now display the pick marks of the stone robbers of the **BBB1** wall. **Fragments CCC1** and **CCC2** appear to represent other pieces of this secondary attachment to the wall, the first in situ, the second not. Their mortar is similar to **BBB2** and contains a lot of pottery.

Further northwest, **Fragment CCC** represents the town wall surviving in situ, though mostly barely above ground level. No facing stones remain and its overgrown and weathered surface makes the mortar hard to characterize. However, it appears to be similar to that of **BBB1**, though with more shell and pottery, particularly toward the north. At the north end a piece of apple-green glazed pottery set in the mortar is identifiable as Fatimid of the tenth century A.D. or later.<sup>190</sup> **Fragments CCC3** and **CCC4** appear to be parts of the same wall, though not in situ.

Rey's plan and description indicate that this wall ended in a massive rounded tower, whose foundations he observed at the end of the ridge overlooking what he took to be the site of the Jaffa Gate, where the modern road now enters the site. It seems more probable, however, that the modern road runs along the line of a ditch dug through the Bronze Age rampart

<sup>190</sup> I owe this identification to Dr. Tracy Hoffman (16 June 2012).

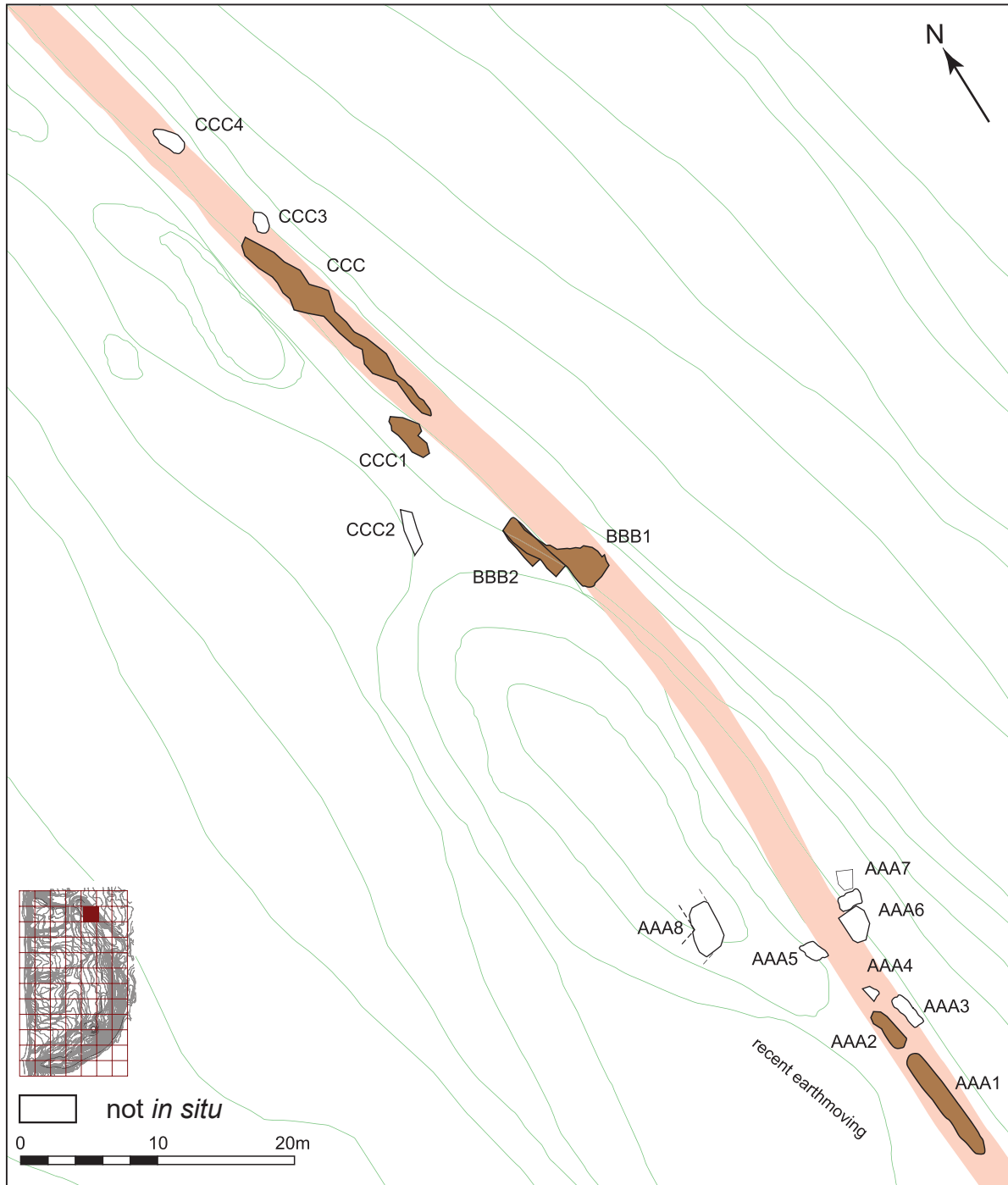


Figure 19.127. Plan of Features AAA, BBB, and CCC, Grid 12

when the castle was built in 1240–41 and that the medieval **Jaffa Gate** was a little further west. The thirteenth-century building works also appear to have entailed reducing the height of the rampart to the east of the ditch, in order to prevent the castle being overlooked, and spreading the material from them out to

the north. There is also evidence of further earth-moving in recent years. The location of Rey's round tower is therefore uncertain, though his plan suggests that it may not have been very far from the northwestern end of **Wall CCC** and thus quite unconnected with the Jaffa Gate.



Figure 19.128. Remains of walling (AAA, BBB, and CCC) looking north from AAA1 (photo Denys Pringle 2008)



Figure 19.130. View along the line of the wall looking south from BBB1-2 toward AAA1-8 (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.129. Tower Fragment AAA8 (upside down), showing internal angle (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.131. View along the line of the wall looking south from CCC, including CC3 (left) and CC1 and BB2 (right), with AAA1-8 behind (photo Denys Pringle 2008)

### The Jaffa Gate and Various Walls on Ashkelon's Northern Mound

#### THE JAFFA GATE (R1-4), GRID 10/11

The general position of the northern or Jaffa Gate is indicated on the surveys of Rey, the SWP, and Garstang by the point at which a track, corresponding roughly with the modern road into the site, crosses the line of the northern rampart. Today there is a gap in the rampart at this point. There is reason to believe, however, that in the twelfth century the rampart was continuous at this point and that the Jaffa Gate stood on top of it, approached by a ramp from the west, just as the southern or Gaza Gate would have been (figure 19.133). The creation of a gap in the rampart appears to have been due to the builders of the castle in 1240-41, who would have removed a considerable section of rampart in order to complete the castle ditch, the line of which may still be clearly seen on the west side of



Figure 19.132. View along the line of the wall looking north from CCC, including CCC1 (left) and CCC3 distant (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

the modern road (which partly encroaches on it). As indicated above, the rampart to the east of the modern entrance road also appears to have been reduced in

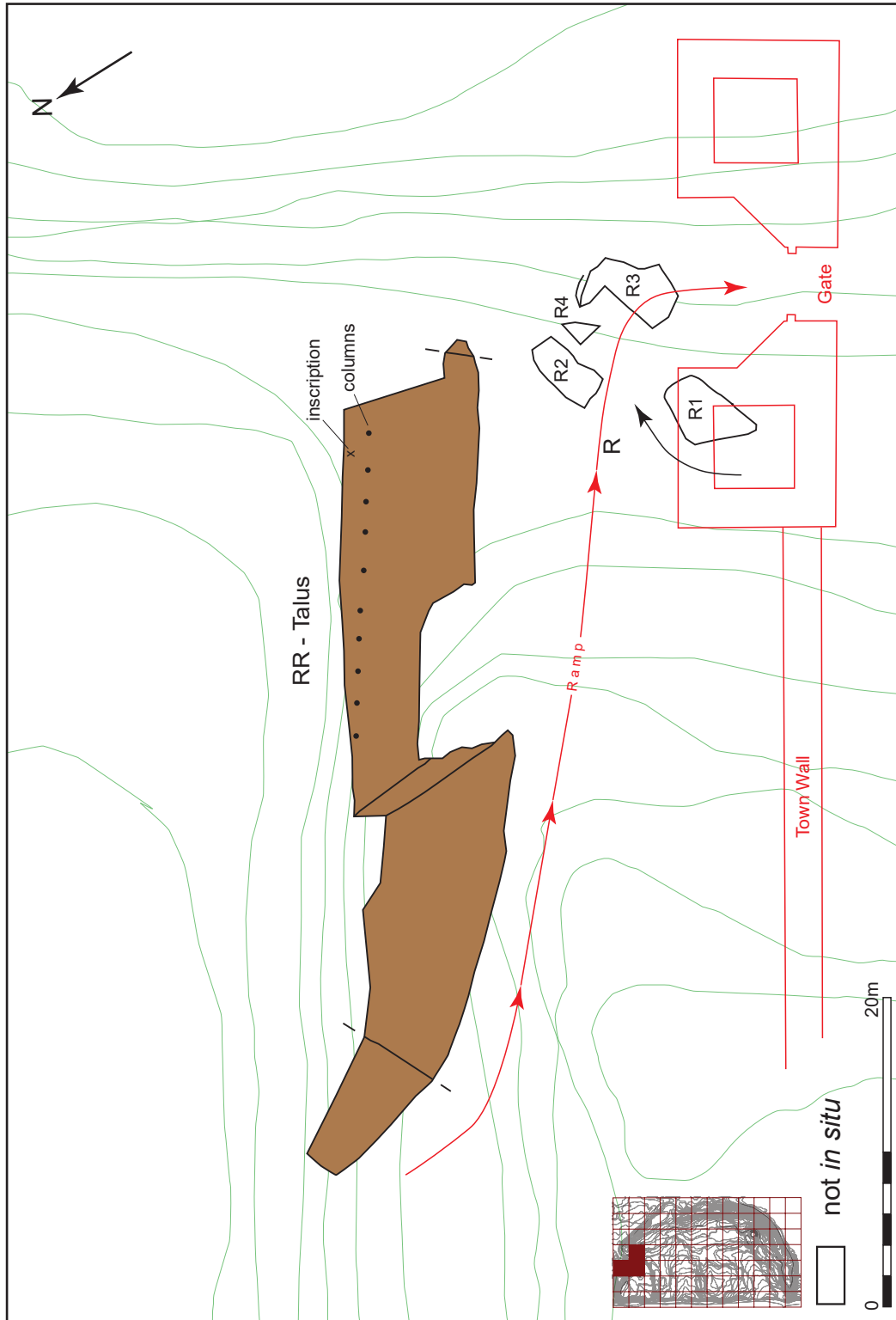


Figure 19.133. Plan of the Jaffa Gate, with suggested restoration, Grid 3, Grid 10, Grid 11

height and the debris spread out to the north of it, in order to prevent the castle being overlooked. This explains why no trace of the town wall has been found in situ between the road and **Wall CCC**.

It might be thought that Saladin’s final destruction of the city’s defenses in 1192 and the digging of the castle ditch in 1240–41 would also have removed all trace of the Jaffa Gate itself. Remains of a large tower, however,

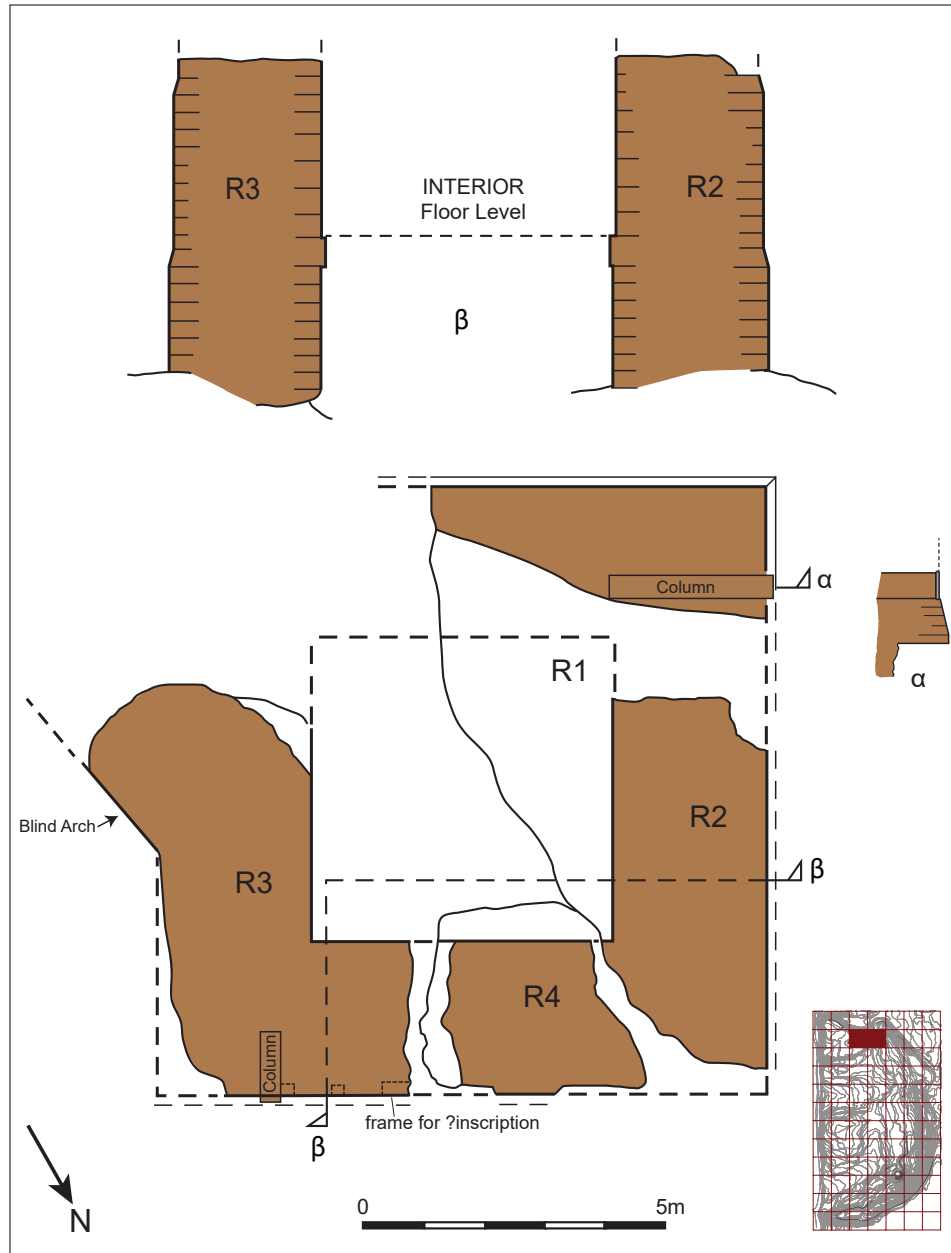


Figure 19.134. Plan and section of Tower R

survive in a precarious state at the eastern corner of the north tell, on the west side of the castle ditch (figure 19.134).<sup>191</sup> It was built in the usual way of coursed concrete masonry, the mortar being cream-buff colored, hard, and sandy, with few inclusions other than some ceramic fragments and occasional small grits and crushed pieces of shell. It generally contains little charcoal. Some of the *kurkar* blocks used in the foundation are almost completely composed of shell. In addition to these, however, there are also some lumps of ashy

<sup>191</sup> Noted by Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008:244.

grey mortar containing quantities of shell and charcoal; these are sometimes found adhering to reused stones and were evidently derived from an earlier structure.

The tower appears to have been between rectangular and trapezoidal in plan, with its north and west sides measuring 10 m or more.<sup>192</sup> It is clear that it originally stood on top of the Middle Bronze Age rampart and was evidently linked to the medieval wall that ran along it. The tower's position and unusual plan, how-

<sup>192</sup> Here the tower is described as if it were still facing north (or north-northeast), rather than east as at present.





Figure 19.135. Tower R, fragments R1 and R3 from the east (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.137. Tower R, fragment R1 (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.136. Tower R, from the northeast showing fragments R2, R3, and R4 with R1 behind (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.138. Tower R, fragment R2, interior wall face (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

ever, give reason to believe that it was originally the western of a pair of towers that flanked a gate (figure 19.133), though the fact that anything survives of it at all also seems to indicate that it was still standing after the castle ditch was dug, possibly being incorporated into the eastern corner of the castle. It finally seems to have met its end by being undermined from the east, its most exposed side. As it tipped forward and rotated clockwise, the upper parts would have become detached and rolled down into the ditch, while parts of the north, east, and south walls immediately above the solid foundation simply slid down the slope to the northeast, where they lie today as three principal lumps of masonry (**R2**, **R3**, and **R4**) (figures 19.135–36). What remained of the foundation (**R1**) continued to tip, rotating another 45° in a clockwise direction before coming to rest in its present attitude at an angle of some 45° to horizontal (figure 19.137).

Examination of these fragments allows a general impression to be gained of the tower's construction. **Fragment R1** represents the foundation and base of

the west corner of the tower, including some 6 m of the southwest wall face and 9.5 m of the northwest. The foundation was solidly built of reused *kurkar* blocks and mortar; it was some 4 m deep but its edges were set back by ca. 0.80 m from the face above. At the base of the wall was a battered plinth, 0.75 m (five 14–16 cm courses) high and projecting 0.15 m with a vertical bottom course. Above this only two courses of vertical wall face remain, each 14 cm high. Set in the lower three courses in the west wall some 1.5 m from the corner is a granite column, some 0.45 m in diameter, its base exposed in the wall face.

Fragments **R2**, **R3**, and **R4** show that the walls that stood on this solid base were 2.49–2.55 m thick. On fragment **R4**, which represents part of the northeast side of the tower, the wall does not stand higher than the foundation level, but its outlines are clearly visible in the surviving masonry. In the case of fragments **R2** and **R3**, representing parts of the the northwest wall and east corner respectively, the lower 1.00–1.03 m of the interior east and west wall faces are built in ashlar



Figure 19.139. Tower R, fragment R3, interior wall face (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.140. Tower R, fragment R3, north wall face (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

courses averaging 14.3 cm in height (figures 19.138–39). Above this is a more irregular course 21–25 cm high, which appears to represent the ground-floor level within the tower, the space between the floor surface and the solid foundation being made up with rubble covered by a concrete screed. Above this the wall face steps back slightly and continues in a regular fashion but with variable course heights (**R2**: 20, 19, 24, 21, 18, 14, 15, 14 cm; **R3**: 21, 21, 21, 21, 16, 14, 14, 15 cm).

Neither **R2**, **R3**, nor **R4** shows any trace of the battered plinth found on **R1**, suggesting that the two to three courses surviving above it on **R1** represented part of the solid base, rather than the walls. The northwest face of the tower represented in **R2** stands 2.46 m high with course heights similar to the corresponding interior face and its wall face set back on chamfered scarcements 0.82 m (6 courses) and 2.27 m (16 courses) above the bottom. On the northeast face represented on fragment **R3** (figure 19.140) there are also chamfered scarcements 0.85 m (6 courses) and 2.26 m (16 courses) above the bottom, as well as a marble column drum (diam. 33 cm) set into the wall two courses above the lower chamfer. Also set into this face is what appears to be a recess for a plaque or



Figure 19.141. Tower R, fragment R3, east wall face showing decorative blind arch (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.142. Tower R, fragment R3, detail of decorative blind arch in east wall (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

inscription (0.42 m high, < 0.22 m deep and > 0.30 m wide). There are also two (or possibly four) secondary putlog holes (18–20 cm wide, 25 cm high, 12 cm deep, and 55 cm apart) made in the course immediately above the lower chamfer; like a similar one in the outer face of **R2**, their profiles suggest that these were

intended to support diagonal timber struts, perhaps for a lean-to structure or part of scaffolding associated with a refurbishment of the tower at some time.

Little of the southeast wall face of the tower survives on **R3**. Some 3 m from where the southeast corner ought to be, however, the wall face turns some 45° to the south and includes the right-hand side of a blind arch with two rows of voussoirs springing from a plain abacus (figures 19.141–42). As the wall is solid at this point and the arch does not continue into the wall core the purpose of the arch seems to have been decorative rather than structural. One may therefore imagine the gate being flanked by a pair of blind arches, set in the oblique walls to either side of it.

Four charcoal samples from the core mortar of the tower were analyzed. Three, from **R1**, **R2**, and **R3**, gave statistically consistent dates, while the fourth, from **R1**, was older. Taken together, the first three indicate a construction date in the late tenth to early twelfth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-28796,—28839,—28840,—30948).

#### CURTAIN WALL, GRID 10

Some traces of walling, not all in situ, may still be seen at or just above ground level running west from **Tower R** along the top of the ridge of the rampart, as indicated on Rey's plan. An attempt to investigate the relationship between these and the talus in 2011, however, was foiled by the nonsurvival of any trace of the town wall in the area chosen for the excavation trench (see report by Tracy Hoffman in Chapter 16, this volume).

#### NORTHERN TALUS (RR), GRID 3/10

Immediately north and west of **Tower R** and below it extends the masonry talus exposed by excavation in 1993–94, revetting the outer face of the eroded Middle Bronze Age rampart for a length of some 60 m (figures 19.133, 19.143). It stands 8.6 m high, its face inclined at an angle of around 45°. On excavation it appeared to rise from the level bottom of an artificial ditch, part of which was found to be paved with flagstones set in clay. However, since neither the width nor the extent of the supposed ditch are known and there is no evidence in this area for any outer lip or counterscarp, it seems just as likely to have been simply a leveled berm at the base of the wall.

The talus is constructed in fine ashlar masonry (course heights 13–25 cm) facing a mortared rubble core, built against the scarped slope, the ashlar being set at an angle with squared faces rather than horizontally with faces cut diagonally. Near the bottom a row of columns are set transversely into the wall, also at an



Figure 19.143. The masonry Talus (RR) in front of the Jaffa Gate (R) (photo Denys Pringle 2012)



Figure 19.144. The base of the masonry Talus (RR), showing the change from granite to marble through-columns (photo Denys Pringle 2008)

angle, with their exposed bases flush with the ashlar face (figure 19.144). From east to west these include five granite columns (diameter 38 cm, or 42 cm including the base), set at intervals of 2.43, 2.08, 2.00, 2.50, and 2.62 m respectively, measuring to the centers of the columns. These are followed after a space of 2.62 m, but with no appreciable difference in masonry type, by seven marble columns (diameters 20–24 cm, some of them squared) set one course lower than the granite ones and at intervals of 2.62, 1.86, 2.19, 2.07, 2.19, 2.19 and 2.12 m respectively. Two courses above the bottom of the talus, the excavators found an Arabic inscription set into the wall face (figure 19.145). This was carved on a sandstone slab, 0.64 m wide and 0.17 m high, and read *الذم لله* (Dominion is God's), the two words being separated by an interlaced knot motif of Fatimid type (Sharon 1997:79–80, figs. 9–10). As there is no reason to doubt that this inscription is in its original position, it would appear to date the talus to the period of Fatimid rebuilding work of the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

The talus runs at least 60 m east–west, but how far it originally extended is uncertain. At the west it ends



Figure 19.145. Fatimid inscription (64 × 17 cm) at the base of the wall reading: الله الملك (Dominion is God's)

in a more or less straight vertical line, as though it had been built up against an existing feature that has now disappeared—or, perhaps, was being built in sections but was never completed. Alternatively it may have continued in another material, such as mudbrick, which was also used in places in the Fatimid walls of Cairo. To the east, just where it turns to the south, it has simply been cut through, apparently when the castle ditch was dug. Overall it has an elongated S-shaped plan, turning slightly to the north at its west end and to the south at the east. It also rises in height from west to east, and roughly at the halfway point steps out by about 2 m, no doubt to accommodate the increasing height of the rising “platform” behind it. This dogleg would also have provided defenders at the wall head with flanking cover for the section of talus to the west.

The purpose of the talus and its relation to the curtain wall that once crowned the summit of the rampart are not immediately obvious, owing to the amount of natural erosion and later agricultural terracing that has occurred in the area between them. The talus's angle of inclination and the relative elevation of the scant traces of curtain wall that survive west of **Tower R**, however, indicate that the two walls cannot have been directly connected, in the way, for example, that the medieval talus at Caesarea directly abuts the outer face of the town walls. In Ashkelon it seems more probable that the talus was topped by an apron wall

masking a platform set below and in front of the town wall. Rather than being simply a fighting platform, however, a more plausible interpretation, suggested both by the talus's elongated S-shaped plan and the way in which it appears to rise from west to east, is that it was intended as a barbican, protecting and supporting a roadway leading from west to east up to the Jaffa Gate on top of the rampart. Traces of the roadway itself may also be identified in the area of paving excavated at the foot of the talus and traces of similar clay and cobble bedding material excavated in 2011 on top of it, between it and the line of the town wall. Thus the approach to the gate from the Jaffa road to the north would have taken a sinuous path, running westward along the foot of the talus before doubling back and rising eastward between the town wall and the apron wall, before turning to the right to enter the gate itself. When the castle was built in 1240–41, the city gate—if it still existed—would have become redundant; by then, the talus would also have served no useful purpose, other than to act as a retaining wall for the remaining rampart and castle wall.

#### CURTAIN WALL (S), GRID 2

A section of walling, at least 2.20 m thick with a rubble core built with somewhat friable grey-buff-colored mortar containing quantities of shell and some charcoal, survives in situ on top of the excavated Middle Bronze Age glacis, built over the remains of a late Hellenistic wall constructed of large squared blocks and other stones (figures 19.146–47) (see Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008:240, 244, figs. 14.1, 14.36, 14.42). The facing does not survive and what remains appears to have done so only by virtue of having been built over the earlier masonry.

Three samples gave statistically consistent radiocarbon dates, indicating a construction date between



Figure 19.147. Medieval town wall (S) overlying wall of the Hellenistic period (photo Denys Pringle 2012)

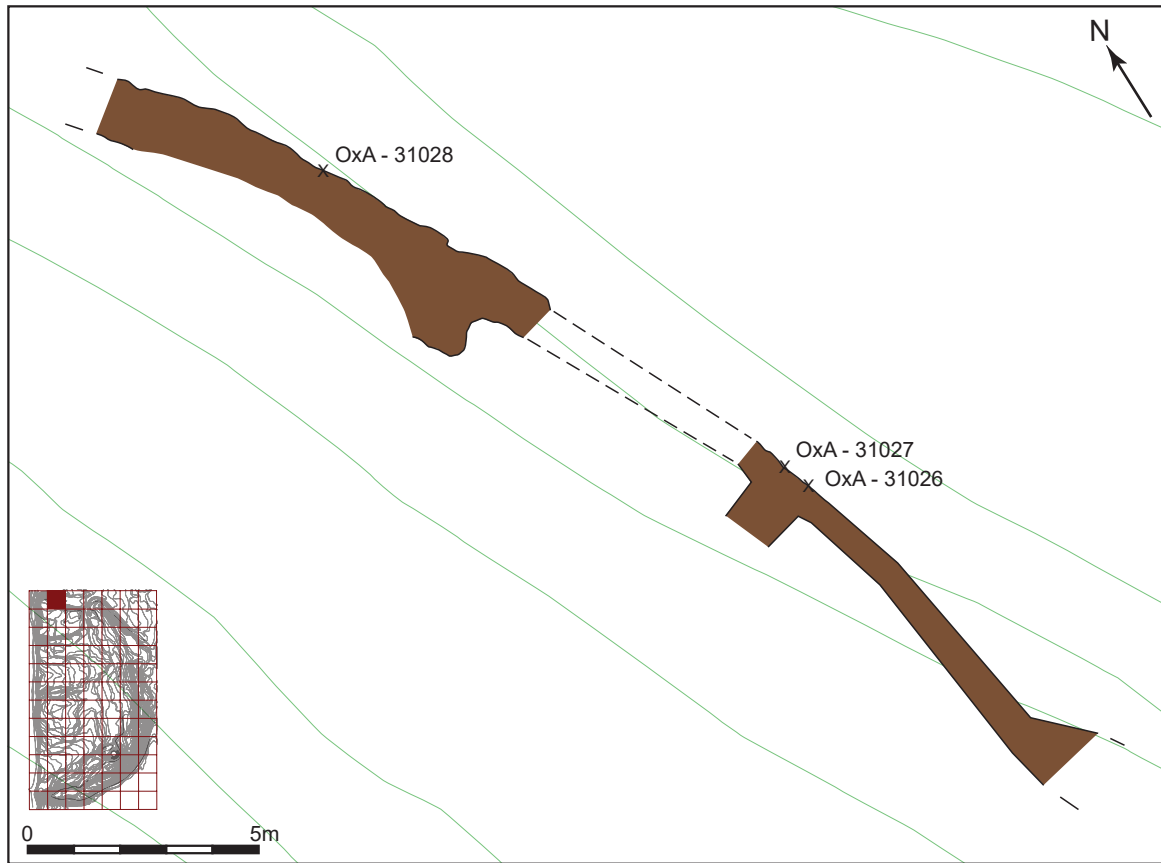


Figure 19.146. Plan of section of medieval town (S) overlying wall of the Hellenistic period, Grid 2

the late eighth and the end of the ninth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-31026,—31027,—31028).

#### FRAGMENT OF WALL (N), GRID 1

A large fragment of masonry wall survives on the edge of the cliff overlooking the sea at the north end of the site. The mortar is dark grey, containing much charcoal (some pieces as large as 1–1.5 cm across) and shell. Two of the course heights of the core were measured at 45 and 47 cm, though it is possible that these each corresponded to two courses of the facing, which has gone. The SWP plan indicates a “Tower” in this position.

Four samples of charcoal from the mortar of the upper wall gave statistically consistent dates, providing the basis for an estimated construction date in the late eighth to late ninth century cal A.D. (see Chapter 20, this volume, tables 20.1 and 20.4: OxA-28792,—28793,—28794, 28795).

#### NORTHERN TERMINATION OF LAND WALL

Underwater survey in 1985 identified a continuation of the northern city wall into the sea. It was built like the southern continuation, using antique through-columns (Raban and Tur-Caspa 2008:79, fig. 4.1). Its purpose, like its southerly counterpart, seems to have been to prevent infiltration of the city’s perimeter along the beach.

#### THE CASTLE, GRID 9

The castle constructed in Ashkelon by the Crusaders between November 1239 and the spring of 1241 was evidently located on the northern tell, in the north-east corner of the city beside the sea.<sup>193</sup> Apart from the Fatimid masonry talus defending its northern side in front of the line of the former town wall, the main

<sup>193</sup> For earlier discussion, see Pringle 1984:143–46, fig. 4. The same location was also suggested by C. N. Johns during a visit to Ashkelon on 10 March 1945 (PEF: Johns papers: Field Notebook 1943–46).



Figure 19.148. The southern ditch of the castle (1241–47), looking east (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.149. Trebuchet stones found lying in the castle ditch in 2009 (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

feature of the castle to survive is a ditch, some 25 m wide, which encloses it on the south and east. On the east side it is now partly filled by the make-up for the modern road which gives access to the national park. On the south side, however, the cut rock scarp on the southern side of the ditch shows clearly that it is artificial (figure 19.148). At present the ditch has a flat bottom, but this may be due to later filling and to leveling for cultivation. In 1983 there was still a granite column projecting from the north side of the south ditch, but this has since disappeared, and much of the rest of the bank has also been dug away by heavy machinery. However, a number of fragments of medieval masonry still lie in the bottom of the ditch, and further remains of walling, both fallen and in situ, were found in excavations by the Leon Levy Expedition in 2014 and 2015 (Vander Vorst 2014; Walton 2014).

Also found in the bottom of the ditch in 2009, having evidently fallen out of later terrace walls, were two roughly spherical trebuchet stones, one of them made from part of a column drum (figure 19.149). These seem likely to date from the time of the Ayyubid siege

of the castle between 1244 and 1247 and may be compared with some of the 2,700 or more similar stones flung at the Hospitaller defenders of Arsuf Castle by the Mamluk sultan Baybars in 1265 and recently excavated (Roll, Yohanan, Tepper, and Harpak 2000; Tal and Roll 2011:38–39, fig. 26).

Garstang's plan suggests the existence of an inner enclosure, occupying the northwestern part of the castle site and enclosing the remains of the **Crusader church Q** at its southeastern corner. This enclosure is no longer as obvious as it was in 1983, when a lump of masonry, faced in ashlar (course heights: 20, 22, 29, 19 cm), was visible at the corner.

#### CRUSADER CHURCH (Q), GRID 10

The **Crusader church** that once stood on the northern tell and was noted by Rey (1871:209, pl. XIX), Guérin (1868:2.147, no. 7), and the SWP (Conder and Kitchener 1881:3.240, 242, map) is represented today by no more than a pinnacle of masonry from its north wall, comprising an internal pilaster with the impression of a robbed-out engaged column and an external buttress. It is likely, however, that much of the floor plan of the church could still be revealed by excavation.<sup>194</sup>

#### *Dating the walls*

What remains of Ashkelon's medieval walls today can represent only a small fraction of what once existed. The dating of these surviving elements and the reconstruction of their development from the Byzantine period until their final abandonment in the mid-thirteenth century is therefore not at all easy. Although the historical sources examined above are informative for some periods, in others they are as fragmentary or nonexistent as the walls themselves, with large lacunae particularly obvious in the late Umayyad, Abbasid, and early Fatimid periods (see table 19.1). Historical sources must in any case be used with care, as eastern and western accounts of warfare are equally prone to exaggerate the extent of destructions and reconstructions of town walls in order to highlight their own side's achievements. A similar degree of caution must also be applied to epigraphic texts, though sometimes these do at least have the advantage of being physically linked to the building work that they document. In Ashkelon, however, although a number of inscriptions relating to Fatimid and Frankish building works are known, only one has been found in situ: a short Islamic text of the Fatimid period built into the face of the

<sup>194</sup> The church is discussed in more detail in Pringle 1993:1.66–67, fig. 21, pl. XXXII.

**Northern Talus RR.** Architecturally, much of what remains of the walls is also relatively undistinguished, providing few clues as to date or attribution. Nonetheless, as will be shown below, despite the somewhat unpromising quality of the surviving architectural

evidence, a number of points of resemblance can be noted with better preserved examples of Byzantine and medieval fortification elsewhere in Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, indicating or confirming possible dates or functions.

Table 19.1. Summary of Historical Evidence for Construction and Destruction of the Walls of Medieval Ashkelon

<i>Period</i>	<i>Date A.D.</i>	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Destruction</i>
<b>Byzantine</b>	<b>ca. 324–637</b>		
	ca. 557	Madaba Mosaic Map	
<b>Muslim/Umayyad</b>	<b>637–750</b>		
	640/1–672	Fortified as a <i>ribat</i> by Mu‘awiya	Earthquake
	685/93–(705)	Rebuilding of walls by ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705)	
	718	Umm al-Rassas mosaic	
	749		Earthquake
<b>Abbasid</b>	<b>750–878</b>		
<b>Tulunid</b>	<b>878–905</b>		
	880s (or 900/13)		Byzantine raid
<b>Abbasid</b>	<b>906–935</b>		
<b>Ikhshidid</b>	<b>935–969</b>		
<b>Fatimid</b>	<b>969–1153</b>		
	1032		Earthquake and tsunami
	1048	Building inscription, reign of al-Mustansir (1035–94)	
	1068		Earthquake
	1073–94	Tower of Blood (or of the Templars) built by Badr al-Jamali, reign of al-Mustansir	
	1093	Building inscription (Muharram A.H. 486)	
	1150	Building of a tower under al-Zafir (1149–54)	
	ca. 1153	Building inscription	
	1153		Frankish siege: demolition of wall near E Gate and filling of ditches
	<b>Frankish/Crusader</b>	<b>1153–87</b>	
	1153–87	Repairs to walls damaged in siege (assumed)	
	1176–77	Tower of the Maidens and 3 others granted to Order of Mountjoy	
	1187		Besieged by Saladin: destruction of walls and towers
<b>Ayyubid</b>	<b>1187–92</b>		
	1189	Ayyubid refortification	

	1191		Ayyubid destruction, including Tower of the Hospital and Tower of Blood (or the Templars)
<b>Frankish/Crusader</b>	<b>1192</b>		
	1192	Refortification by Richard I (with inscription)	
	1192		Deliberate destruction by Ayyubids and Franks
<b>Ayyubid</b>	<b>ca. 1195–1240</b>		
	1198		Deliberate destruction by Ayyubids (?)
<b>Frankish/Crusader</b>	<b>1240–47</b>		
	1240–41	Construction of castle by Tibald of Champagne, Hugh IV of Burgundy, and Richard of Cornwall (with heraldic panels)	
<b>Ayyubid</b>	<b>1247–50</b>		
	1247		Castle taken and destroyed by Ayyubids
<b>Mamluk</b>	<b>1250–1516</b>		
	1270		Deliberate destruction of castle (and town walls?) by Baybars
<b>Ottoman</b>	<b>1516–1917</b>		
	1775–1804		Destruction of walls for building materials by Ahmad al-Jazzar
	1815		Excavation inside a tower by Lady Hester Stanhope
	1832–40		Destruction of walls for building materials by Ibrahim Pasha

At an early stage of the project, an attempt was made to overcome the limitations of the documentary, epigraphic, and architectural evidence by making a direct visual characterization of the different masonry styles and mortar compositions observable in different areas. The method for constructing and reconstructing walls and towers in Ashkelon changed little from the Byzantine period onward. It consisted of binding two faces of lime-mortared ashlar with a solid rubble concrete core, laid usually course by course. The friability of the local *kurkar*, which William of Tyre correctly remarked was softer than the mortar binding it,<sup>195</sup> tended to favor relatively narrow courses. Subtle differences in construction, however, can be observed, and where different builds meet, it is usually possible to tell which one followed the other, thus allowing a relative chronology to be developed. An initial analysis of the walls suggested that the masonry could be broadly divided into two main types (Pringle 1984:140–42).

<sup>195</sup> William of Tyre 17.22, ed. Huygens, 791, trans. Babcock and Krey 2.219.

The more recent survey, however, which expanded the amount of available data, suggested the existence of three main types of construction, from which it was possible to propose a rough chronological sequence.

- An earlier type of masonry, apparently Byzantine, characterized by a somewhat soft, friable, grey, shelly mortar containing a lot of charcoal and ash, with course heights usually averaging over 20 cm.
- A second type, which appeared to be early Islamic (Umayyad to Abbasid), with hard and extremely shelly mortar, containing moderate amounts of charcoal, course heights also usually over 20 cm, and antique column drums set transversely through the wall to help bind the faces to the core.
- A third type, more often associated with work attributable to the Fatimid (and possibly Frankish) period, characterized by hard, sandy, cream or buff-colored mortar with few inclusions and little charcoal or shell, with course heights averaging under 21 cm, and also with through-columns.



This model has proved useful as a general indicator of date but is not infallible. For example, the potential danger of relying on course heights as an indicator of date is illustrated by **Turret VV**, where the ashlar of the adjacent town wall average 20.5 cm in height and those of the turret itself 14.0 cm, even though the two elements were evidently built in a single operation, with the courses being equalized after every two courses of the wall and three of the turret respectively. Furthermore, an eleventh-century glazed pottery sherd from **Wall CCC** indicates that, in this area, construction using a grey sandy mortar containing a lot of both pottery and shell can be dated no earlier than the Fatimid period; indeed, much of the northeastern sector of the walls is built with a shelly mortar that also appears to be Fatimid, the result perhaps of the builders making use of a local source of aggregate from the nearby beach rather than conforming to a set recipe. Elsewhere, a *sgraffiato* sherd provided a tenth- to eleventh-century *terminus post quem* for the **wall at G**. Most of the pottery that was found incorporated into the masonry of the walls and towers, however, was usually not sufficiently distinctive to provide a reliable basis for dating. The same applies to the handful of coins found embedded in the mortar, of which the only one that was identifiable, a ninth-century Abbasid *fals* from Phase 3 of **Tower FF**, was evidently residual. In any case, coins and pottery will usually only provide a *terminus post quem* for construction, rather than indicate the construction date itself.

Radiocarbon dating of charcoal fragments, representing the carbonized pieces of identifiable short-lived plant remains that had been burned during the process of slaking the lime, provided a more direct means of dating the mortar of individual contexts and hence a probable date of construction. The methodology and the results of the radiocarbon dating project, which proceeded in parallel with the other elements of the town walls project, are fully presented and discussed elsewhere in this volume.<sup>196</sup> Table 19.2 summarizes the five (or six) phases of building activity identified as a result of the radiocarbon dating and subsequent statistical modeling. The phases include: Byzantine (late fifth–early sixth century), late Umayyad to early Abbasid (ca. 700–ca. 775), Abbasid/Tulunid (ninth century), Early Fatimid (ca. 969–ca. 1050), Later Fatimid (ca. 1080–1153), and a final date possibly associated with Ayyubid or Crusader repairs at the time of the Third Crusade (1189 or 1192). This sequence throws significant light on building activity in the Early Islamic period that is unrecorded or only obliquely referred to in the historical record. However,

<sup>196</sup> See the report by Denys Pringle, Frances Healy, and Christopher Bronk Ramsey in Chapter 20 of this volume.

although the radiocarbon dating program produced a good range of dates, it is possible that there are still lacunae, owing to such factors as the chances of survival, the failure of some apparently carbon-rich mortars to provide suitable charcoal samples for analysis, the observation that the later masonry tends to contain less carbon anyway, and the consideration that the last phases of repair or rebuilding are likely to have been the first to be subsequently destroyed, by human or by natural agency.

Opportunities for dating elements of the walls by excavation were limited, since even where wall fragments still survived in situ there was often very little stratified material associated with them. This was either because they had been built with very shallow foundations or because the rampart into which they were set had been subject to later natural erosion or disturbance by stone robbers or early archaeologists. Of the excavations undertaken at the **Forewall DDD** near the Jerusalem Gate, on the **Northern Talus**, and at **Tower FF** (see Chapters 16–18, this volume), for example, only the latter produced much stratigraphic information relevant to dating the walls themselves, and even there the ground levels contemporary with the Fatimid- and Crusader-period walls no longer survived. In general, excavation has so far proved to be more valuable for elucidating the context, layout, and construction of buried masonry than for directly dating it.

A summary of the identifiable masonry contexts is set out, area by area, in table 19.3. The table includes brief descriptions, dating evidence from coins, ceramics, or radiocarbon analysis, and in the final column a suggested date for each context. On the basis of the historical, archaeological, and architectural evidence presented above and in tables 19.1–3, a general chronological outline of the development of Ashkelon's medieval defenses may be proposed.

#### *Architectural development and discussion*

##### Byzantine (late fifth–early sixth century)

Apart from whatever remained of its late second-century B.C. Hellenistic defenses, Ashkelon appears to have remained unfortified during the Roman period. It was only in the late fifth or early sixth century that the political situation in the East prompted the imperial government to enclose the city once again with a town wall. The principal dating evidence for this comes from two radiocarbon dates obtained from charcoal samples in the wall close to the Jerusalem Gate from **Wall WW** (Phase 2), which together provide a probable date in the late fourth to mid-sixth century cal A.D. (table 19.2). Another date in the early fifth to mid-sixth century cal A.D., from a piece of recycled masonry in

Table 19.2. Summary of estimated Periods of Construction Work, Based on the Evidence of the Radiocarbon Dating. The age ranges in *italics* are probabilistic estimates as set out in Chapter 20 (this volume), table 20.4, models 1 and 3, and derived by the methods described there.

	<i>cal A.D. 95% probability</i>	<i>cal A.D. 68% probability</i>
<b>Byzantine (Radiocarbon Group 1)</b>		
WW (Phase 2)	395–555	410–25 (7%) 490–540 (61%)
B (Phase 2)	420–550	430–95 (55%) 510–20 (5%) 525–40 (8%)
<b>Late Umayyad/Early Abbasid (Group 2)</b>		
K (Phase 2)	<i>690/765–735/810</i>	<i>700/755–755/775</i>
	670–730 (40%)	685–90 (4%)
	735–70 (55%)	700–20 (14%) 740–70 (50%)
WW (Phase 1)	680–775	700–20 (15%) 740–70 (53%)
C (Phase 2)	685–780 (91%)	715–55 (50%)
	790–855 (4%)	760–75 (18%)
VV	685–830 (94%)	715–75
	840–55 (1%)	
<b>Abbasid/Tulunid (Group 3)</b>		
	<i>765/855–815/905 (90%)</i> <i>or 920/950 (5%)</i>	<i>770/825–845/890</i>
H (Phase 2)	715–55 (11%)	770–865
	760–890 (84%)	
N	775–895	815–85
S	770–900 (93%)	810–90
	925–40 (2%)	
<b>Early Fatimid (Group 4)</b>		
	<i>955/1030–1020/1110</i>	<i>980/1015–1025/1055</i>
FF (Phase 6) wall 90	965–1035	990–1020
R	990–1060 (86%)	1005–1045
	1080–1125 (9%)	
K (Phase 1)	1020–70 (57%)	1020–50 (50%)
	1075–1130 (32%)	1095–1120 (18%)
	1135–55 (6%)	
<b>Later Fatimid (Group 5)</b>		
	<i>1035/1140–1085/1165</i>	<i>1045/1055 (9%) or</i> <i>1065/1125 (59%)–1115/1160</i>
F1 (Phase 1)	1025–1160	1035–55 (12%) 1080–1155 (56%)
JJ3	1040–1160	1090–1155
<b>Crusader/Ayyubid (Group 6)</b>		
D	1055–65 (1%) 1155–1265 (94%)	1165–1225

Table 19.3: List of Masonry Contexts, with Descriptions, Radiocarbon Dates and Suggested Periodization

Key to descriptions: Cc = charcoal, Pp = pottery, Ss = shell; LARGE QUANTITY, small quantity, (very little).

<i>Fragments</i>	<i>Grid</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Core mortar</i>	<i>Course heights: range</i>	<i>Course heights: average (sample)</i>	<i>Through-columns</i>	<i>Cal AD 14C estimate (95% probability)</i>	<i>Cal AD 14C estimate (68% probability)</i>	<i>Suggested Period (14C Group)</i>
A (Phase 2)	57	Wall preceding sea wall	Grey, cpS	17–28	21.2 (5)				Byz/Um
A (Phase 1)	57	Sea wall	Grey, cpS	11–34	22 (7)				Um
AA	35	Rounded tower	Creamy buff, sandy, P	12–16	13.8 (11)				Fat (4/5)
AAA1–5	12	Land wall	Soft, grey-cream, sandy, cps						Fat (4/5)
AAA6–8	12	Polygonal tower	Cream-buff, sandy	13.5–18	15.8 (6)				Fat (5)
B (Phase 2)	64	Reused mortar in sea wall (?)	S				420–550	430–495 (55%) 510–520 (5%) 525–540 (8%)	Byz (1)
B (Phase 1)	64	Sea wall	White-grey, cps	14–26	19.3	granite			Um
BB1	35	Secondary gate-tower	Creamy buff, sandy, cp	13–15	14.2 (6)				Fat (4/5)
BB2	35	Secondary gate-tower	Creamy buff, sandy, cp	13–14	14 (6)				Fat (4/5)
BB3	35	Secondary gate-tower	Creamy buff, sandy, cp			ghost			Fat (4/5)
BBB1	12	Land wall	Grey, sandy, ps	26–27					Fat (4/5)
BBB2, CCC1–2	12	Addition to wall	Grey-cream, sandy, cpS						Fat (5)
C (Phase 2)	72	Land wall	Grey, cS	21–33	26.2 (11)	ghost	685–780 (91%) 790–855 (4%)	715–755 (50%) 760–775 (18%)	Um/Abb (2)
C (Phase 1)	72	Land wall addition	Grey, cS	20–22	21 (4)				Um/Abb (2)
CC	35	Fragment of gate?	Creamy buff, sandy, (c)		ca. 16.7	granite			Fat (4/5)
CCC	12	Land wall	Grey, sandy, PS (incl. 10c. Fat. glazed pottery)						Fat (4/5)
D	75	Tower	Cream-buff, sandy, cp(s)	13–20	15.8 (20)		1055–1065 (1%) 1155–1265 (94%)	1165–1225	Cr pre-1187, Ayy 1189, Cr 1192

DD	28	Fragment of gate?							Fat (4/5)
DDD	35	Outer gate and forewall							Fat (4/5)
E (Phase 2)	69	Land wall	Grey, cpS	22–28	26 (5)	-			Byz/Um (2)
E (Phase 1)	69	Tower added to wall	Buff, (c) crushed p (s)	11–21	14.6 (7)	marble			Fat (4/5)
EE	35	Fragment of gate?	Creamy buff, sandy, (c)p						Fat (4/5)
F (Phase 2)	62	Land wall	Grey, cpS						Byz/Um
F (Phase 1)	62	Tower built against wall	Cream (-pink), sandy, crushed p, s	15–24	17.6 (5)	marble			Fat (4/5)
F1 (Phase 2)	62	Land wall	Grey-white, cpS						Um/Abb (2)
F1 (Phase 1)	62	Attached feature	Creamy buff, sandy, p	12–16	14.7 (8)		1025–1160	1035–1055 (12%) 1080–1155 (56%)	Fat (5)
F2	56	Land wall	Creamy, sandy, p	11–14	13 (7)				Fat (4/5)
FF (Phase 7)	20	Tower	Lime putty	34	34				Hell
FF (Phase 6)	20	Town wall	Grey, cS				965–1035	990–1020	Fat (4)
FF (Phase 3)	20	Tower and wall	Cream-buff, sandy, cs (coin: Abbasid fals, A.D. 800–830)	14	14 (11)	marble, granite			Fat (5)
FF (Phase 2)	20	Tower spurs added	Creamy grey, sandy, ps						Cr (6)
G (Phase 2)	56	Reused masonry in land wall	Grey, S						Byz/Um
G (Phase 1)	56	Land wall	Buff-cream, sandy, cps (incl. 10–11c. Fat <i>sgraffiato</i> )	15–22	17 (15)				Fat (4/5)
G1	49, 56	Land wall	Buff-cream, sandy, ps			granite			Fat (4/5)
G2	56	Land wall	Buff-cream, sandy, cps	18–21	20 (4)				Fat (4/5)
GG	28	Tower inserted into wall	Cream-buff, sandy, c						Fat (4/5)

H (Phase 2)	49	Land wall	Grey-buff, sandy, CS					715–755 (11%) 760–890 (84%)	770–865	Abb (3)
H (Phase 1)	49	Tower added to wall	Beige-cream, sandy, p(s)			granite				Fat (4/5)
HH	28	Land wall	Grey, sandy			granite				Fat (4/5)
J	41, 42	Land wall	Buff-cream to grey, sandy, cps	17–21	18.6 (8)	ghost				Fat (4/5)
JJ3 (Phase 2)	78	Reused masonry in land wall	Grey, S							Byz/Um
JJ3 (Phase 1)	78	Land wall	Grey, gritty, cs					1040–1160	1090–1155	Fat (5)
JJ4	78	Land wall or tower (of the Maidens?), not in situ	Buff-grey, sandy/gritty, cps	16–23	20.2 (11)					Fat (5)
JJ5	78	Tower (of the Hospitallers?)	Buff-cream, sandy							Fat (5)
JJ6	78	Outer wall	Grey, S							Byz/Um
K (Phase 4)	41	Tower	Creamy	34–40	38 (3)					Hell
K (Phase 3)	41	Land wall	Soft, grey, sandy, CS	(21–24)						Byz
K (Phase 2)	41	Land wall rebuilt	Grey, CpS	12–22	14.7 (16)	marble, ghost (granite?)	670–730 (40%) 735–770 (55%)	685–690 (4%) 700–720 (14%) 740–770 (50%)		Um/Abb (2)
K (Phase 1)	41	D-shaped tower	Creamy white, sandy, cp	13–14 13.5–15	13.6 (13) 14.25 (12)	granite	1020–1070 (57%) 1075–1130 (32%) 1135–1155 (6%)	1020–1050 (50%) 1095–1120 (18%)		Fat (4)
KK1 (Phase 2)	43	Reused masonry in sea wall	Grey, hard, pS							Byz
KK1 (Phase 1)	43	Sea wall	Grey, hard, Cps	24–28 (core)	26 (5)					Byz/Um
KK2	43	Sea wall	Grey/white, hard, pS		17.4 (36.5)	granite				Um
N	1	Land wall	Dark grey, Cs	22.5–23.5?	23 (4)			775–895	815–885	Abb/Tul (3)

R	10, 11	Tower of Jaffa Gate	Cream-buff, hard, sandy, (c)ps	(R2) 14–24 (R3) 14–21	18.1 (8) 17.9 (8)		990–1060 (86%) 1080–1125 (9%)	1005–45	Fat (4)
RR	3, 10	N talus	Cream-buff, hard, sandy, cp (Fat. inscription set into face)	13–25		marble, granite			Fat (5)
S	2	Land wall	Grey-buff, friable, cS				770–900 (93%) 925–940 (2%)	810–890	Abb/Tul (3)
V	n/a	Jetty?							Um
VV	34	Land wall and integrated turret	Cream-buff, sandy, cpS	19.5–21 13–16.5	20.5 (5) 14 (9)	granite	685–830 (94%) 840–855 (1%)	715–775	Um/Abb (2)
VV1	34	Land wall				marble			Um/Abb
WW (Phase 2)	34	Land wall	Grey, sandy, cpS	14–22	16.3 (6)		395–555 490–540 (61%)	410–425 (7%)	Byz (1)
WW (Phase 1)	34	Rebuilding of wall	Grey/cream, cS	12–17	14.2 (28)	marble	680–775 740–770 (53%)	700–720 (15%)	Um/Abb (2)

the **sea wall at B**, does not necessarily relate to the Byzantine town wall and should probably be discounted. The date from **WW**, however, corresponds with a known period of military activity and the building of fortifications in the East during the reigns of Zeno (474–91), Anastasius I (491–518), Justin I (518–27), and Justinian I (527–65), around the time of the Samaritan revolts (484, 495, 529–31, 555–56) and the wars against the Sassanid Persians (502–506, 526–32, 540–45, 548/9–61). There is no mention of Ashkelon, however, in Procopius's somewhat sketchy list of Justinian's building works in Palestine.<sup>197</sup>

Given the location of **Wall WW** and the similar and most likely contemporary wall fragment at **K** (Phase 3), it seems reasonable to assume that the Byzantine walls followed more or less the same alignment as their Hellenistic, Iron Age, and Middle Bronze Age predecessors. Indeed it would have made little sense to have left any part of the circuit undefended. Masonry similar to that in **WW** (Phase 2) is found elsewhere

<sup>197</sup> Procopius, *Buildings* 5.6–5.9.22, *Loeb*, 342–59; cf. Cameron 1985:84–112.

around the base of the surviving walls, though in practice it is often difficult to tell Byzantine apart from Umayyad or Abbasid work, and in some places walls initially considered to be Byzantine produced radiocarbon dates that turned out to be later. Whether or not the Byzantine city was also defended on the side facing the sea remains uncertain in view of the lack of reliable radiocarbon dates from that area.

The Byzantine refortification of Ashkelon is comparable in general terms to that of Caesarea, the provincial capital, though there the Byzantine walls enclosed an area roughly double that enclosed by the earlier Herodian walls. The precise dating of Caesarea's Byzantine walls is uncertain. Pottery associated with a section near the hippodrome has suggested a date in or after the fourth or fifth century, while a Greek inscription found near the west gate records the construction of a tower (βουργος) during the governorate of Flavius Procopius Constantius Severus Alexander, sometime between ca. 500 and 536. Like the walls of Ashkelon, those of Caesarea described an arc some 2.65 km in length with the sea forming its chord, enclosing an area of some 128 ha. Although it

has received relatively little detailed archaeological examination, a stretch of the curtain wall in the north-eastern quarter, excavated in 1959 and 1988–89, is recorded as being 2.1 m thick and constructed with ashlar facings of *kurkar*, apparently laid initially without mortar,<sup>198</sup> enclosing a rubble core bonded with grey mortar, containing quantities of charcoal. The external joints were subsequently slaistered with a fine whitish lime mortar, with false coursing (or masoning) incised at the joints. This wall was associated with a rectangular open-backed tower, 7.3 m broad and 5.6 m deep, with walls 2.2–2.6 m thick, set astride the curtain and projecting externally some 2.9 m. In a similar section of wall face exposed southeast of the hippodrome in 1974, the lime-mortar slaistering was found to have diagonal incisions in it, perhaps to act as keying for another coat of plaster or lime wash covering the entire wall face. In both areas some ashlar courses were laid on edge, rather than following the natural bedding (Mesqui 2014:56–63, figs. 39, 48, 50, 52, 65; Holum et al. 1988:164–65, figs. 1, 52, 111; Porath 2008:1662).

Apart from Caesarea, few local comparanda exist for Ashkelon's Byzantine walls. Among the coastal cities, Apollonia-Sozousa (Arsuf) was unwallled in this period (Tal and Roll 2011:10), while of the walls of Joppe (Jaffa) and Ptolemais (Acre) we know next to nothing. According to Choricius, the walls of Gaza were rebuilt by Bishop Marcianus (ca. 530–49) at the time of Justinian, with towers and a surrounding moat.<sup>199</sup> They are also depicted on the Madaba Mosaic Map (ca. 557) (Donner 1992:75–76, no. 118) and on a mosaic in Umm al-Rassas (figure 19.151), but no trace of them has yet been found. The Madaba Map also shows Maiumas, the port of Gaza (al-Mina, medieval Mimas), enclosed by a wall,<sup>200</sup> but a stretch of walling excavated near the shore in 1976 and claimed to be part of them (Ovadiiah 1993:466–67) has now been shown to belong to the temenos of a Roman temple in nearby Anthedon (Agrippias, al-Iblakhiyya, Tayda) (Humbert and Godlewski 2000). Inland, the walls of Tiberias were built by Justinian at a date which should be placed between his accession in 527 and ca. 554, when Procopius mentions them.<sup>201</sup> These replaced earlier walls of the first and fourth centuries A.D., but the

<sup>198</sup> It may be suspected, however, that mortar was used, but would have been similar to and thus indistinguishable to the eye from that used for the subsequent slaistering.

<sup>199</sup> Choricius of Gaza, *Orationes*, ed. Boissonade, 111; Meyer 1907:66; Saliou 2000:75.

<sup>200</sup> Donner 1992:76, no. 119. Around 985, al-Muqaddasi also calls Mimas a “small fortified town” (trans. Collins, 146).

<sup>201</sup> Procopius, *Buildings* 5.9.21, *Loeb*, 358–59. On the date of *Buildings*, see Cameron 1985:84–86.



Figure 19.150. Ashkelon from the southeast, showing trace of outer ditch and bank (© Richard Cleave)



Figure 19.151. Vignette showing the fortified city of Gaza in a mosaic in the church of St. Stephen at Umm al-Rassas, Jordan (A.D. 718) (photo Denys Pringle 2001)

alignment was not identical. They ran for 2.8 km enclosing an area of some 90 ha extending along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and rising to the top of Mount Berenice on the west. Although built throughout of rubble concrete faced with blocks of basalt (in one area coated with a whitish, gritty lime wash), the construction is variable, with the wall thickness ranging from 1.9 to 3.1 m and the facing from rough blocks



Figure 19.152. Tiberias: Justinian's city walls (527–ca. 554), enclosing Mount Berenice and the church of St. George (photo Denys Pringle 2003)



Figure 19.153. Tiberias: Justinian's city walls (527–ca. 554): southern tower of the Mount Berenice salient, with postern gate beside it (photo Denys Pringle 2003)



Figure 19.154. Rome: arcaded addition made by Maxentius (306–12) to the city wall near Porta San Giovanni (photo Denys Pringle 1982)

to ashlar. Rectangular towers project from the walls on the north and on the Mount Berenice salient (figures 19.152–53), but on the south side of Mount Berenice the towers are set on the inside of the wall, no doubt on

account of the sloping terrain (Hirschfeld 1992:10–13, 26, 40–42, 49–50, 52–54; 2004:78–87, 92, 128–29, figs. 7.2–7.14; Stacey 2004:28–30, 46–47, plans 4.3, 4.7).

In Ashkelon no identifiable towers or gates have been found from the Byzantine period, although there are remains of what may have been a tower projecting from the wall at **K** (Phase 3). The most significant feature of what survives at **WW** (Phase 2) and at **K** (Phase 3), however, is the evidence in both locations for the existence of arcading on the wall's inside face. Such arcading is found elsewhere in late Roman and Byzantine fortifications, but has not until now been attested anywhere in Palestine. The additions to the walls of Rome made by Maxentius between A.D. 306 and 312, for example, included adding ca. 8 m to the height of the existing 3-meter-thick walls built by the emperor Aurelian in the decade following A.D. 271 (figure 19.154). The heightening comprised a solid face on the outside, buttressed by a continuous open arcade on the inside, supporting a parapeted wall walk the same width as before. The arcade, however, effectively allowed for an additional fighting gallery below that of the wall head, with a continuous passage through the arcade piers giving access to arrow loops set in the outer wall below each arch (Richmond 1930:251–56; Todd 1978:46–50, figs. 10–11, 22–23; Pringle 2001:147). A similar arrangement is also found in Justinian's walls at Sergiopolis (Rusafa), in northern Syria, where the curtains were also some 10–11.5 m high and 3 m thick, with a galleried arcade on the inside some 6 m above ground level.<sup>202</sup> Procopius describes a similar method of construction at Dara, on the Euphrates, and in Justinian's wall on the Gallipoli peninsula.<sup>203</sup> In the case of Ashkelon, however, the arcade is at ground level and there is no evidence for arrow loops, suggesting that here the use of arcading was intended simply to economize on building materials. The same may also have been the case at Antioch, where in the early nineteenth century Rey noted arcaded curtain walls on the east side of the city associated with ashlar-built cutwater-shaped towers with brick internal vaulting (figure 19.155); although he suggested that this section may have postdated Justinian's re-fortification,<sup>204</sup> there seems to be no particular reason

<sup>202</sup> Procopius, *Buildings* 2.9.3–9, *Loeb*, 104–105, 156–59; Karnapp 1968; 1976; Lawrence 1983:199–200; Foss and Whitfield 1986:9, fig. 25.

<sup>203</sup> Procopius, *Buildings* 2.1.14–16, 4.10.10–13, *Loeb*, 102–103, 300–301.

<sup>204</sup> Rey 1871:191–93, figs. 50–51. On Justinian's work at Antioch, see Procopius, *Buildings* 2.10, *Loeb*, 164–67; cf. Downey 1961:546–53, 612–20.



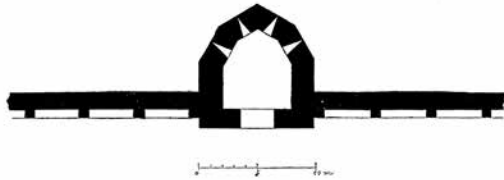
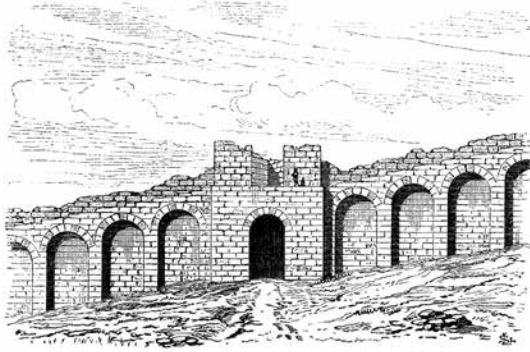


Figure 19.155. Antioch: arcading on the inside face of the eastern Byzantine city wall (from Rey 1871:figs. 50–51)

why that should be so. Arcading also seems to have been used as an economy measure in Byzantine fortifications in Africa in the years following Justinian's reconquest in 533 (figure 19.156) (Pringle 2001:147, 148, figs. 11–12, 16, 18, pls IIIa, XXa).

A particular secondary aspect of the arcading of the walls at Ashkelon is that a number of the arched niches had plaster-lined cisterns built into them, with the evident purpose of collecting rainwater falling on the wall head and adjacent towers for the use of the garrison. At **WW** (Phase 2) a ceramic overflow pipe built into the blocking wall seems to have fed an auxiliary cistern located further down the rampart slope, while at **K** (Phase 3) another additional double cistern was built against the inside face of the curtain wall. Although precise parallels for cisterns built into wall arcades are elusive, it may be noted that when Justinian rebuilt the city of Antioch and its walls after the sack by Chosroes in 540, Procopius tells us that he “dug a cistern in each tower, remedying by means of rain-water the want of water which had previously existed there.”<sup>205</sup> Water supply was always a significant concern for Byzantine military architects (Pringle 2001:164–65), but in a situation like Ashkelon's where water was always scarce and troops would have been spread out along an extended front, to have a

<sup>205</sup> Procopius, *Buildings* 2.10.14, *Loeb*, 166–67; cf. Lawrence 1983:196–97.



Figure 19.156. M'daourouch (Madauros), Algeria: arcaded inside face of the Byzantine fort constructed around the former Roman theater by Solomon, *magister militum* and prefect of Africa (534–44) (photo Denys Pringle 1975)



Figure 19.157. Caesarea: D-shaped tower of the late Byzantine kastron built around the Roman theatre (photo Denys Pringle 2005)

ready supply near at hand would have been particularly important.

One question which remains unanswered is whether there was at any time a citadel, before the construction of the castle on the northern tell in 1240–41. In Caesarea, for instance, Byzantine and early Islamic dates have been proposed for an ashlar-built wall with rectangular and D-shaped towers that enclosed the abandoned Roman theater and the area between it and the sea (figure 19.157). This now appears more likely, however, to be identifiable as the late Byzantine or possibly Sassanid *kastron* in which St. Anastasius, a Persian convert to Christianity, was imprisoned by the Persian governor before his martyrdom in 627–28 (Mesqui 2014:52–53, 64–75, figs. 65–82; cf. Porath 2008:1663; Holum et al. 1988:165, figs. 112–13). Town citadels, however, were not usually necessary in cities that had adequate town walls and sufficient troops to

defend them and in which military commanders and their men enjoyed the support of the local population. The citadel of Zenobia (Halabiyya), for example, was created by Justinian for strategic reasons, because the natural hill on which it stood dominated the walled town below it and therefore, like Mount Berenice in Tiberias, had to be brought within the defensive circuit.<sup>206</sup> It remains uncertain what else it may have been used for or how its functions differed from those of the large mural tower, commonly referred to as the “*praetorium*,” which stands downhill some 100 m northeast of it (Lauffray 1983:121–23, 133–36, figs. 5, 46–53, 61, pls. I, IVa, XX–XXVI). In general, however, urban citadels appear to be rare in Syria and Palestine before the eleventh century (Pringle 2010:225, 226–27 [repr. 6, 9–10]). The lack of one in Ashkelon would therefore not be at all unusual.

#### Later Umayyad/Early Abbasid (ca. 700–ca. 775)

Four separate contexts produced radiocarbon dates attributable to the late Umayyad or early Abbasid periods (table 19.2). These included the rebuilding of the Byzantine wall and filling in of its arcades and cisterns at **K** (Phase 2) and **WW** (Phase 1), the earliest phase of the land wall at **C** (Phase 2)—which is effectively the same phase as **C** (Phase 1)—and the land wall and integral triangular turret at **VV**. In each case the masonry corresponds to type 2 described above, with the exception already noted that the ashlar coursing of the turret at **VV** is consistently two-thirds of the height of that of the wall, with which it is integral. The construction also includes the use of antique column drums laid transversely through the wall to provide extra cohesion. On the basis of this evidence it is possible to suggest a number of other contexts that may also belong to this period of construction (or possibly to the following later Abbasid phase described below). These include work on the sea wall at **KK2**, **B** (Phase 1), and possibly **A** (Phase 1), and on the land wall at **VV1** and possibly **E** (Phase 2), **F**, and **F1** (Phase 2). It thus seems likely that the entire circuit of Byzantine walls, including the sea wall (if it already existed and was not a new construction), was rebuilt and strengthened in this period. However, there is little to distinguish the surviving work of this period architecturally, as what is left all appears to relate to the curtain wall itself and does not include any such features as towers or gates. The only possible exception is the suggestion that there might have been a solid projecting turret or buttress on the sea wall at **B** (Phase 1), reminiscent of those of the

Umayyad citadel defenses in Amman (Wood 1992) and the (probably later) walls of Caesarea.<sup>207</sup>

Although the range of the radiocarbon dates would not preclude the possibility that some of the work of this period could have fallen in the reign of the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705), whom al-Baladhuri credits with fortifying Ashkelon and other coastal cities, including Tyre, Acre, and Caesarea,<sup>208</sup> when the group is taken as a whole it appears more likely to reflect a later campaign of works, undertaken in the first half of the eighth century and possibly continuing into the third quarter of that century. Possible sponsors could have been al-Walid I (705–15), Sulayman (715–17), who earlier as governor of Palestine had founded the new city of Ramla in the coastal plain north of Ashkelon,<sup>209</sup> ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (717–20), Yazid II (720–24), or Hisham (724–43). It was Hisham who restored Acre and Tyre, moving the arsenal (*dar al-sina‘a*) from the former to the latter.<sup>210</sup> He is also credited with building Kafr Lam (see below). The period of turmoil between the murder of al-Walid II in 744 and the coming to power of the Abbasids in 750 might seem a less likely context for any major building works, but the harbors of Acre and Tyre were nonetheless repaired under the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan II (744–50) (El‘ad 1982:149). Nor were the Mediterranean coastal frontier or its fortifications neglected by the early Abbasids, despite the moving of the capital from Damascus to the new city of Baghdad in 763 by al-Mansur (754–75). According to sources quoted by al-Baladhuri:

When Abu-Ja‘far al-Mansur began his rule, he examined the forts and cities of the coast, peopled and fortified them, and rebuilt those of them that were in need of being rebuilt. He did the same for the frontier cities. When al-Mahdi became caliph [775–85], he carried the work in the remaining cities and forts to completion and strengthened the garrisons.<sup>211</sup>

A number of other fortifications documented archaeologically in Palestine have also been attributed

<sup>207</sup> Mesqui 2014:89–99, figs. 97, 108–109. On the dating, see below.

<sup>208</sup> al-Baladhuri, trans. Hitti, 180, 219–20; Yaqut, trans. Le Strange 1890:332–33; Marmardji 1951:169; El‘ad 1982:150–51.

<sup>209</sup> al-Baladhuri, trans. Hitti, 220–21; Le Strange 1890:303–308.

<sup>210</sup> al-Baladhuri, trans. Hitti, 180–181; Yaqut, trans. Le Strange 1890:332–33; al-Ya‘qubi, trans. Le Strange 1890:342; El‘ad 1982:149.

<sup>211</sup> al-Baladhuri, trans. Hitti, 251–52; cf. El‘ad 1982:150, 151–52; Raphael 2014:11.

<sup>206</sup> Procopius, *Buildings* 2.8.12–14, 21–23, Loeb, 150–51, 152–55.



Figure 19.158. Arsuf (Apollonia): Umayyad town wall with external buttresses as it appears on the south (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

to this period, though in some cases the dating is not conclusive. In Caesarea, for example, the Byzantine town walls were abandoned sometime in the early Islamic period and a new town wall erected, enclosing a quadrangular area, about one-fifth of the size, adjacent to the Roman harbor. However, although Jean Mesqui's recent discussion of the dating of this development opts for construction having taken place in the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods (Mesqui 2014:94, 184, 283), the evidence that he presents seems to argue more persuasively for a date somewhat later, in the late eighth or ninth century at the time of the later Abbasids and Tulunids (see below). This does not mean, of course, that other as yet unexcavated parts of the town walls could not have been built earlier; but until clear evidence for that is forthcoming, it seems wiser to assume that whatever was done to strengthen Caesarea's fortifications in the Umayyad period was concentrated on the existing Byzantine defenses, rather than on a new defensive circuit.

This also seems to have been the case in Tiberias, which like Ashkelon retained its Byzantine walls until the Crusader occupation in the early twelfth century, when a smaller walled settlement developed roughly where the Ottoman-period walled town later stood. In the Umayyad period, however, the occupied area seems to have shrunk, with the great mosque and associated administrative buildings located in the central forum area but much of the previously walled southern suburb being unoccupied. As capital of the Jund al-Urdunn, Tiberias's walls were presumably kept in repair, though there is no archaeological evidence of rebuilding before the Tulunid period.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Stacey 2004:ix, 2, 7, 247–48. On the great mosque, see Cytryn-Silverman 2009.

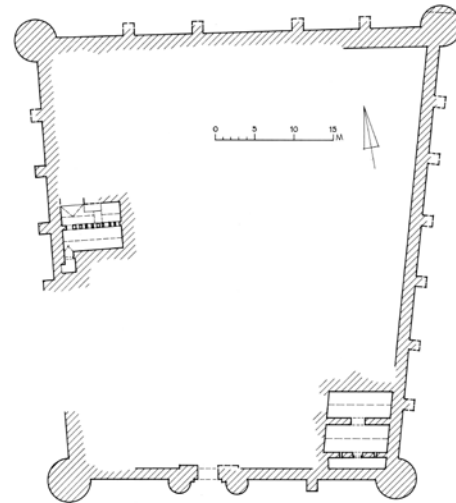


Figure 19.159. Kafr Lam (Ha-Bonim): plan of Umayyad fort (drawn by Matthew Pease, BSAJ survey 1989)



Figure 19.160. Kafr Lam (Ha-Bonim): Umayyad fort from the southeast (photo Denys Pringle 1980)

On the other hand, Arsuf (Apollonia), on the coast south of Caesarea, had been unwalled in the Byzantine period, but under the Umayyads the central 8 ha of the city were enclosed by a new wall forming an elongated quadrangle, its west side following the edge of the sea cliffs with a gate on the east. The wall itself, built of *kurkar* ashlar enclosing a mortared rubble core, was about a meter thick, with small external rectangular buttresses spaced at intervals of 9–13 m and in some places possibly a ditch (figure 19.158). Ceramics and coins dating from the end of the seventh century and beginning of the eighth were found in layers associated with the wall on the east, southeast, and west, suggesting to the excavators a date of construction under 'Abd al-Malik (A.D. 685–705), though a later date cannot be excluded. Underlying the later Frankish castle



Figure 19.161. Kafr Lam (Ha-Bonim): Umayyad fort, south gate (photo Denys Pringle 2000)



Figure 19.163. Mahuz Azdud (Minat al-Qal'a, Ashdod Yam): Umayyad fort, east wall and blocked gate (photo Denys Pringle 2009)



Figure 19.162. Mahuz Azdud (Minat al-Qal'a, Ashdod Yam): Umayyad fort from northwest before restoration (photo Denys Pringle 1984)



Figure 19.164. Mahuz Azdud (Minat al-Qal'a, Ashdod Yam): Umayyad fort, interior from southeast (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

the excavators also discovered the base of a solid rounded tower, some 5 m in diameter, which could have belonged to a smaller fort of this period (Roll and Ayalon 1993:73–74; Roll 2008:1568; Tal and Roll 2011:11–12, figs. 1, 3; Raphael 2014:22).

Next to Arsuf, the best examples of military architecture of the Umayyad period surviving in Palestine are the two coastal forts of Kafr Lam and Mahuz Azdud. The founding of Kafr Lam (or Kafr Lab, Ha-Bonim), north of Caesarea, is attributed by the geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229) to Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik (724–43) (Le Strange 1890:470; Marmardji 1951:175; El'ad 1982:149). The fort stands on a *kurkar* ridge a kilometer from the sea. It has a trapezoidal plan, measuring internally ca. 55 m north–south and 39 m (south)/44 m (north), with walls mostly 1.60 m thick, strengthened externally like Arsuf's by rectangular buttresses, some 1.4 m square and spaced 7–8 m apart (figures 19.159–60). Solid rounded towers (diam. 5.2–6.0 m) project from the corners and in the south wall is

an arched gateway, 2.7 m wide, set between half-round solid projecting turrets (figure 19.161). The construction is in *kurkar* ashlar, mostly laid as stretchers and bonded with lime mortar containing shell. Excavations in 1999 found vaulted rooms built against some of the internal wall faces and opening onto a central court with cisterns, but it remains uncertain to what extent the interior was built up or whether it was even completely finished. From the Abbasid period onward the interior came to be occupied by a mass of small irregular buildings (Barbé, Lehrer, and Avissar 2002; 2008; Pringle 1993:4.241–45, figs. 20–21, pl. CXV–CXVI; 1997a:58–59, fig. 31; Raphael 2014:10).

The fort at Mahuz Azdud (Minat al-Qal'a, Ashdod Yam) stands on the seashore between Ashkelon and modern Ashdod and was excavated in 1985 and 1997–99 (figures 19.162–64). It is also roughly trapezoidal in plan, measuring internally 31 m east–west by 52 (west)/54 m (east), with walls varying in thickness between 2.5–2.8 m (east and west), 1.6 m (north) and

2–2.5 m (south) and strengthened externally with small rectangular buttresses spaced 3.3–5.0 m apart. Solid rounded towers project from the two western angles and quadrangular ones from the eastern, while gates in the center of the east and west walls are flanked by half-round turrets. To either side of the gate passages, narrow staircases lead up to the wall heads. The interior of the fort is filled with the remains of buildings of different periods, but the published accounts of the excavations make little attempt to explain the phasing and the available stratigraphical information is limited. The finds, however, suggest that the fort was built sometime in the Umayyad period over the remains of buildings of the Byzantine town and that the first phase included a mosque, the mihrab and qibla wall of which still survive among the later buildings (Nachlieli 2008; Raphael 2014). On a visit to the site in April 2009, it was also possible to confirm that, apart from areas of modern consolidation, all the phases of construction appear to have made use of the same type of shelly mortar that is found in Umayyad-period contexts in the walls of Ashkelon.

Later Abbasid/Tulunid  
(Late Eighth–Ninth Century)

Another cluster of radiocarbon dates suggests a phase of construction on the walls of Ashkelon having taken place in or around the late eighth to ninth century A.D. (table 19.2: group 3). The contexts include the land wall on the eastern side of the city at **H** (Phase 2) and on the north at **S** and **N**. The dates could point to works associated with any of the Abbasid caliphs after al-Mansur (d. 775) until the seizure of Palestine and Syria by the Egyptian dynasty of Ahmad ibn Tulun (868–84) in 878 and the subsequent rule of independent Tulunid governors.

Works to improve the coastal defenses of Palestine are also attested elsewhere in this period. Al-Baladhuri refers to the completion of the strengthening and garrisoning of the coastal and frontier forts and cities under Caliph al-Mahdi (775–85) and goes on to mention the distribution of possessions in these cities by Harun al-Rashid (786–809) and the stationing of ships and garrisons on the coasts, including Acre, under al-Mutawakkil (847–61) in 861.<sup>213</sup> A few years previously, following Byzantine raids and the seizure of Damietta in 852, it was al-Mutawakkil who had fortified the Egyptian Delta cities of Tinnis, Damietta, and al-Fara-

ma (Pelusium) and in 854 established an Egyptian war fleet. Rosetta was fortified after another raid in 859 (El'ad 1982:152–53; Pradines 2015). The strengthening of the Palestinian coastal defenses continued after 868, when Ahmad ibn Tulun gained control of Egypt, quasi-independent of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad. According to al-Muqaddasi, when Ibn Tulun visited Acre soon after taking control of Palestine in 878, he found the city inadequately walled and decided to make its town and harbor defenses as strong as those of Tyre. The subsequent work on the harbor was undertaken by al-Muqaddasi's grandfather, Abu Bakr al-Banna'. It included building a raft of sycamore trunks on which the harbor wall was gradually built up in masonry, bonded with antique through-columns every five courses, until it sank onto the sea bed. After leaving it to settle for a year, Abu Bakr then continued building the wall on top of the sunken foundation and attached it to the land walls, leaving an opening to allow ships in and out on the west, spanned by a bridge and protected by a defensive chain.<sup>214</sup> Ibn Tulun is also credited with establishing the layout of the double walls of Alexandria that was maintained and developed throughout the Middle Ages (Pradines 2015:88, fig. 4).

Apart from the construction of a small coastal watch tower at Tall al-Qantur (Tel Michal), dated on the basis of pottery and geometrically decorated plaster to the eighth to ninth century (Herzog 1993:1041), there might appear to be little archaeological evidence for the improvement of coastal defense in Palestine in the later Abbasid period. Despite Mesqui's conclusion that construction of the medieval walls of Caesarea began in the late Umayyad period and continued under the early Abbasids (Mesqui 2014:94, 184; Martineau and Barbé 2014:283), however, reconsideration of the same evidence suggests a later Abbasid foundation to be more likely, as already suggested by Yosef Porath for an excavated section of the south wall (Porath 2008:1663). Mesqui's dating was largely based on the excavation of mural Tower 6 and part of the adjacent east curtain wall; however, although a small amount of Umayyad pottery was recovered from the foundation levels of Tower 6, the same layers also contained ceramics of the eighth to ninth or tenth centuries (Martineau and Barbé 2014:289–90, 328–29). The two radiocarbon dates obtained from this area also point to a later date, similar to those of the group 3 dates from Ashkelon. One, a date of cal A.D. 670–970 (2 $\sigma$ )/710–890 (1 $\sigma$ ), was derived from an olive stone from the lime mortar of the curtain wall itself (Boaretto 2014:RTT-5806 [1210 $\pm$ 55 BP]). The other

<sup>213</sup> al-Baladhuri, trans. Hitti, 181, 252; El'ad 1982:152. Yaqut (ca. 1225) appears to repeat al-Baladhuri in a somewhat garbled form, substituting the name of the caliph al-Muqtadir (908–32); see Le Strange 1890:332–33.

<sup>214</sup> al-Muqaddasi, trans. Collins, 138–39; Le Strange 1890:328–29; Marmardji 1951:144; Gil 1992:251–52.



Figure 19.165. Caesarea (Qaysariyya): the east gate (1251–52), incorporating the two towers of the early Islamic gate, whose faces are represented by the areas of larger ashlar masonry on the right-hand side of the gate passage (photo Denys Pringle 2013)

sample, consisting of unspecified seeds from a piece of mortar found in a mixed deposit lying on the floor inside the tower, gave an almost identical date: cal A.D. 680–970 (2 $\sigma$ )/720–900 (1 $\sigma$ ) (Boaretto 2014:RTT-5805 [1200±50 BP]). Although the same deposit also included pottery of the ninth to eleventh centuries (Martineau and Barbé 2014:287–88, 298–99, 328–29), the equivalence of the dates from the mortar fragment and that from the curtain wall supports the excavators’ supposition that the former came from the tower. Both the ceramic evidence and the radiocarbon dates therefore appear to point to a more likely date of construction for the wall and tower in the later eighth, the ninth, or possibly the early tenth century. One reason for favoring an earlier date seems to have been the excavators’ idea of associating an apparent underpinning and rebuilding of the rear wall of the tower, following subsidence, with the historically documented earthquake of 749 (Martineau and Barbé 2014:283–84, figs. 469–70; Mesqui 2014:89–90, 94, fig. 98); but even if the subsidence had been caused by an earthquake, which is not certain, there is enough documented seismic activity in the 850s and in 881–82, when Acre was hit by a tremor and tsunami, to suggest other possible contexts (Amiran, Ariei, and Turcotte 1994:267–68). Building work on Caesarea’s fortifications in the later ninth century is also attested by an inscription found in the sea near the Roman theater, which records the construction of a tower (*burj*) or “frontier fortification” (*thaghr*) at the time of Ahmad ibn Tulun (868–84). This might relate either to the refortification of the late Byzantine fort enclosing the former theater or, more likely perhaps, continuing work on the new town wall (Sharon 1997:2.275–76, fig. 79; Mesqui 2014:78–79, 95, fig. 88; Holum 2012:173).



Figure 19.166. Caesarea (Qaysariyya): tower 10, incorporating an early Islamic buttress or turret, abutted by domestic buildings over the street, and enclosed by the talus and ditch of 1251–52 (photo Denys Pringle 2013)

The early Islamic walls of Caesarea enclosed an area of some 28 ha, roughly a fifth the size of the walled Byzantine city. The area lay next to the Roman harbor and included the Herodian temple platform, on which a Friday mosque had by then replaced the Byzantine cathedral. The quadrangular layout of the walls was influenced by the Byzantine street grid, with the east wall set out along the eastern portico of the *cardo maximus*, incorporating the columns of the colonnade either as they stood or laid as horizontal braces within the foundation, both transversely and longitudinally. The north and south walls ran parallel to the *decumanus*, with the west end of the south wall bending north to join the southern mole of the harbor. The east gate consisted of an arch, 4.30 m wide, spanning the former *decumanus maximus* between two projecting rectangular towers (7.05–7.53 m wide, 8.6–8.7 m deep) with solid bases but presumably guard chambers above, one of them adapted from the pier of an earlier triumphal arch (figure 19.165). A similar gateway, 4.24 m wide and flanked by rectangular towers (6.9–7.4 m wide, 8.65 m deep) containing guard chambers, spanned the *intervallum* road following the line of the *cardo maximus* where it met the north wall at the northeast corner, while the south gate was aligned with an earlier *cardo* leading up to the monumental stair to the former temple platform. Typically the curtain walls were 2.5 m thick and flanked at intervals of 38–46 m by rectangular towers with timber floors or by solid buttresses, each some 7.5 m wide and projecting 3–4 m and 0.8 m respectively (figure 19.166). There appears to have been no ditch. The construction, faced in ashlar, usually of *kurkar*, was variable, depending no doubt on the quality of earlier material available for reuse (Mesqui 2014:81–95, 164–68, 172, 174–75, 179–80,



Figure 19.167. Anavarza (Anazarbos): the Abbasid city walls enclosing an area now almost completely devoid of buildings, seen from the southeast (photo Denys Pringle 2002)

185–88, 190, 192–93, 195–200, 204–10, 212–13, 217–21, 229–30; Martineau and Barbé 2014).

Mesqui draws apt comparisons for the walls, towers, and gates of Caesarea with those built around Hisham's palace in the Citadel of Amman (724–43) and repaired by the Abbasids after earthquake damage in 749, and with the town walls of Anavarza (Anazarbos, 'Ayn Zarba), in Cilicia (Mesqui 2014:96–99, figs. 113–19; cf. Wood 1992). Repairs to the city walls of Anavarza are mentioned in two inscriptions of the fifth century and it is likely that there would have been further rebuilding in the sixth century, when the city was restored and renamed successively after the emperors Justin I (518–27) and Justinian I (527–65). The surviving walls, however, date from after the Abbasid resettlement and refortification of the town under Harun al-Rashid in 796 (figure 19.167). Although their architecture is similar to that of fifth- and sixth-century Byzantine fortifications, it is doubtful whether they incorporate much of the earlier walls, as on the north they appear to have excluded a previously walled part of the city and on the south pass outside a Roman triumphal arch, which seems at an earlier time to have been incorporated into the defensive circuit. An inscription from a ruined tower in front of the west gate naming the caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–61) points to reconstruction work after the Byzantine raids of 804, 806, 835, and 855, and a later extensive rebuilding is also recorded under the Shi'ite Hamdanid Sayf al-Dawla 'Ali (945–67). The walls themselves are some 2 m thick and built of ashlar, including much spolia in the lower parts. They were strengthened by rectangular towers, 5.60 × 5.90 m, spaced 33.7 m apart, and 9 m in front of them was an outer wall with external buttresses. This also formed the inner revetment to a ditch, which was 7.45 m wide

and counterscarped. Of the five gates, those on the northwest and west were linteled, 3.15 m wide, with a wider vault behind; they were flanked by rectangular towers, 3.8 m broad and 5.5 m deep. The south gate was larger and flanked by towers 6.5 m wide and 7 m deep (Gough 1952:98, 103–104, fig. 2; Hellenkemper 1976:191–97, figs. 42–43, 83; Edwards 1987:65–72). Similar gates echoing earlier Byzantine prototypes, although built of brick, are found in al-Mutawakkil's fortification of Farama in the Nile Delta dating from 843, though there the 36 projecting mural towers were D-shaped, like those of early Umayyad Ayla (Aqaba) (Whitcomb 1988c; 1994; 2006), with cylindrical ones at the corners (Pradines 2015:89–91, figs. 5–6).

In Tiberias there also appears to have been a revival of the town in the late Abbasid and Tulunid periods, possibly connected with an upturn in trade following the restoration of the harbor of Acre. The upper part of the inner southern Byzantine city wall was rebuilt in places, but its width was reduced from 2.7 to 1.5 m. Although the rounded towers and guard chambers of the first-century Roman gate remained derelict or in alternative use, the gate itself was narrowed to 1.5 m and fitted with a pair of timber doors (Stacey 2004:2–4, 34–38, 47–52, 247, plans 4.4, 4.8, figs. 4.17–22).

In Ashkelon, however, as for the Umayyad period, the wall fragments identifiable from the Abbasid and Tulunid periods preserve no architecture to speak of, and without the radiocarbon dates we would hardly even know that any building work had taken place.

#### Fatimid (969–1153)

The radiocarbon dates obtained from the walls suggest the possibility of there having been two phases of building work in the Fatimid period (see table 19.2: groups 4 and 5). The first group of dates cluster in the later tenth to mid-eleventh century cal A.D. and include what was probably a repair or rebuilding of the Byzantine/Umayyad curtain wall at **FF** (Phase 6), the construction of the western gate tower of the **Jaffa Gate R**, and the addition of a D-shaped **Tower K** (Phase 1) to the front of the existing curtain. Two stretches of curtain wall at **G** (Phase 1) and **CCC** may also be included in this or the later Fatimid phase on the basis of glazed pottery of the tenth to eleventh century found embedded in their mortar. The second group of dates cluster in the late eleventh to mid-twelfth century cal A.D. and include an arched feature attached to the inside face of the Byzantine/Umayyad wall at **F1** (Phase 1) and a newly built stretch of curtain wall at **JJ3**. To these may be added the wall and rounded tower at **FF** (Phase 3), which is stratigraphically later than **FF** (Phase 6), and the talus and barbican below the Jaffa

Gate at **RR**, which is associated with an inscription associated with a decorative interlaced rosette datable to the later Fatimid period.

It is possible, however, that the two phases suggested by the radiocarbon dates are more apparent than real, since the strategic importance of Ashkelon to the Fatimids from the later tenth century until 1153, when it fell to the Franks, makes it likely that repairs and rebuilding would have had to be more or less continuous to keep the city in a reasonable state of defense. Furthermore, the reign of Caliph al-Mustansir (1035–94), from which we have two or maybe three building inscriptions from Ashkelon dating to 1048, 1073–94, and 1093 respectively, the second referring to the construction of the Tower of Blood, overlaps with both potential phases. The final dated Fatimid building inscription refers to a tower being built in 1150, just three years before the city's capture by the Franks.

The masonry of the elements dated to the Fatimid period conforms in general to that described as type 3 above, although as already remarked the mortar in the Fatimid walls in the northwestern sector between the Jerusalem and Jaffa Gates contains larger proportions of shell than are normal elsewhere. Other elements that can be attributed to the Fatimid period, without specifying whether they should be regarded as early or late, include: stretches of curtain walling at **JJ4**, **F2**, **G2**, **G1**, **J**, **HH**, **AAA1–5** and **BBB1**; **Towers JJ5** (possibly the Tower of the Hospital), **E** (Phase 1; possibly the Tower of the Maidens), **F** (Phase 1), **H** (Phase 1), and **GG**; and, most likely, all the works at the **Jerusalem Gate**, including its associated barbican and forewall. The polygonal **Tower AAA6–8** and indeterminate **Features BBB2/CCC1–2** that were added to existing stretches of Fatimid walling may perhaps be among the later Fatimid works.

Apart from the defenses built in stone, the lower parts of the curtain wall running south from **Tower FF** (Phase 3), were found on excavation to have been constructed in rammed earth (see discussion of the remains from Grid 20 in Chapter 17, this volume). This raises the possibility that other elements of the Fatimid fortifications of Ashkelon may in the past have been either overlooked or misidentified as belonging to earlier periods. Construction in rammed earth (*tabiyya*, Fr. *pisé*, Sp. *tapial*) was used from the Umayyad period in fortifications and other buildings in Muslim al-Andalus and was adopted in the Maghrib in the ninth century A.D. at the time of the Aghlabids.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Golvin 1979:264–65; Zozaya 1992:68–70; Serra 2009:30; Barrucand and Bednoiz 1992:100, 134–35, 141, 145–48; Collins 1998:44, 46, 76, 128–29, 133, 205–206, 231, 286, 299; Bazzana 2008:7; Ewert 1986; Boujibar,

A description of this method of construction was written by the Maghribi scholar Ibn Khaldun, in 1377:

Another (material) is simply earth. One builds walls with it by using two wooden boards, the measurements of which vary according to (local) custom. The average measurements are four cubits by two. They are set upon a foundation. The distance between them depends on the width of the foundation the builder considers appropriate. They are then joined together with pieces of wood fastened with ropes or twine. The two remaining sides of the empty space between the two boards are joined by two other small boards. Then, one puts earth mixed with quicklime into (this frame). The earth and quicklime are pounded with special mixers used only for this purpose, until everything is well mixed throughout. Earth is then added a second and third time, until the space between the two boards is filled. The earth and quicklime have combined and become one substance. Then, two other boards are set up in the same fashion, and (the earth) is treated in the same manner, until it is ready. (All) the boards are then properly set up piece upon piece, until the whole wall is set up and joined together as tightly as if it were of one piece. This construction is called *tabiyyah*, and the builder of it is called *tawwab*.<sup>216</sup>

In al-Andalus, walls of *tabiyya* were normally constructed on a stone foundation, but this practice seems to have died out in the early twelfth century (Zozaya 1992:70). Curiously, in Ashkelon *tabiyya* seems to have been used as a foundation for a masonry wall, perhaps in order to compensate for the instability of the earthen bank into which it was set.

Until recently medieval construction in *tabiyya*, unlike mudbrick, has been recorded only rarely in Egypt and not at all in Palestine. In 2011, however, archaeologists working in Cairo uncovered a 30 m stretch of what appears to have been the north wall of the new city that Jawhar al-Siqqili established and fortified after his conquest of al-Fustat on behalf of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz (952–75) in 969. The wall was some 2 m wide, preserved to a height of 1.2 m and built in *tabiyya*.<sup>217</sup> It seems likely that *tabiyya* would

Alaoui, and Cherradi 2000:148–49, 222–23, 229–31; Lane et al. 2014:141, 149, 151, fig. 5; Jiménez and Navarro 2001:133–34, 141–43.

<sup>216</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah* 5.24, trans. Rosenthal, 2.359–60.

<sup>217</sup> Pradines 2012:1029–30, fig. 1. On the foundation and layout of the city, see Creswell 1952a:1.21–33, figs. 8–10; Bloom 2008:54–59; Abboud-Haggar 2001:97–98.



have been chosen not only because of the relative speed with which it could be built but also because the army that set out with Jawhar from Qayrawan in Ifriqiyya (Tunisia) included Berber troops from areas further west, where both rammed-earth and mudbrick construction were relatively common (Kennedy 1986:317–20; al-ʿAbbadī 2001).

By the mid-eleventh century, the walls of Jawhar’s Cairo had disappeared beneath the buildings of the expanding city, though the gates were still recognizable.<sup>218</sup> When the Saljuq Turks threatened Egypt in the years after 1076, the *wazir* Badr al-Jamali therefore undertook the construction of a new town wall enclosing an expanded area on all but the western side, where space was limited by the line of an existing canal. Badr al-Jamali’s walls in Cairo, built between 1087 and 1092, are best known for their surviving stone-built elements, including the northern section with its two new monumental gateways, Bab al-Futuh and Bab al-Nasr, and a shorter section of the south wall including Bab Zuwayla (Creswell 1952a:1.161–217; Behrens-Abouseif 1989:67–72; Bloom 2008:121–28; Pradines 2012:1030–38, figs. 2–4). We now know, however, that the continuation of the north wall to the east of Bab al-Nasr and the whole of the eastern wall were built initially in mudbrick, with projecting rectangular towers and turrets. At the eastern gate, Bab al-Tawfiq, ashlar was reserved for the monumental portal and entrance passage while the flanking rectangular towers and adjoining curtains were mudbrick (Pradines 2012:1036, 1038–41, figs. 5–8; 2014; 2016:55–59, figs. 2–4; Pradines and den Hejjer 2008; Pradines and Talaat 2007; Pradines et al. 2009:186, figs. 5, 12–13, 19–24).

Regarding the stone-built elements of Badr’s walls, the late fourteenth-century chronicler al-Maqrizi records that it was related that “three brothers, who were architects [*muhandisīn*], came from ar-Ruhā” (Urfa) to Cairo; each built one of the three great gates. The Bāb Zuwayla was built in 484 [1091–92], and the Bāb al-Futūh in 480 [1087–88]” (Creswell 1952a:1.162). One of the architects is mentioned by name in an Arabic text written by an early thirteenth-century Coptic priest, Abu’l-Makarim. He recorded, near the cave church of St. John the Baptist in the desert monastery of al-Qusayr al-Haqqani, “the tomb of John the monk, who planned the walls of Cairo and its gates, in the caliphate of Al-Mustanṣir, and in the vizierate of Amīr al-Juyūsh Badr.”<sup>219</sup> Because Abu’l-Makarim’s



Figure 19.168. Cairo: the north wall of Badr al-Jamali (1087–92), looking west from Bab al-Nasir (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

book was incorrectly attributed to a previous owner of the manuscript, Abu Salih al-Armani, it has often been assumed that the builders were Armenians; however, while it is certainly likely, given the composition of Badr’s following, that Armenians would have been involved, the architectural influences are perhaps better regarded as more generally North Syrian in character (cf. Pradines 2012:1035–36).

Badr al-Jamali’s masonry walls are mostly some 3.4 to 4.1 m thick and between 8.6 and 12.5 m high (figure 19.168). They are built with a facing of large blocks, dressed smooth with the edges beveled off for about a centimeter, enclosing a rubble core; in places the wall faces are bound to the core by the use of antique columns, laid typically near the base of the wall about 3 m apart and with their ends exposed. At the wall head there is a broad walkway, provided with an outward-facing parapet with rounded crenellations. The towers are square or oblong and set astride the wall. Normally the wall walk runs through the towers and communicates with platforms over the gates; but in places there is also a barrel-vaulted passage (*gaine* or *chemin de ronde*) at a lower level inside the wall, leading to splayed arrow slits set in casemates with vaults intersecting that of the passage. Creswell also noted Badr’s habit of placing a large tower next to gateways; for this he offered no explanation, though the towers usually contain stairs. Possibly they were used for accommodating troops (Creswell 1952a:1.181–96, 205–206, figs. 89–95; 1952b: 114–16, pls. 7–8, 13).

Bab al-Nasr stands at the eastern end of Badr’s masonry north wall, where it turns south to meet the mudbrick wall (figures 19.168–70). An inscription records that it was originally called Bab al-ʿIzz (Gate of Glory) and was begun by Badr in April–May A.D. 1087 (Muharram A.H. 480). Two square towers, solid for two-thirds of their height, flank the gate. They are

<sup>218</sup> Nasir-i Khusraw, *Safarnama*, ed. and trans. Thackston, 59; Pradines 2012:1030.

<sup>219</sup> Abu’l-Makarim, trans. Evetts, 151–52 (fol. 51a); cf. Creswell 1952a:1.162.

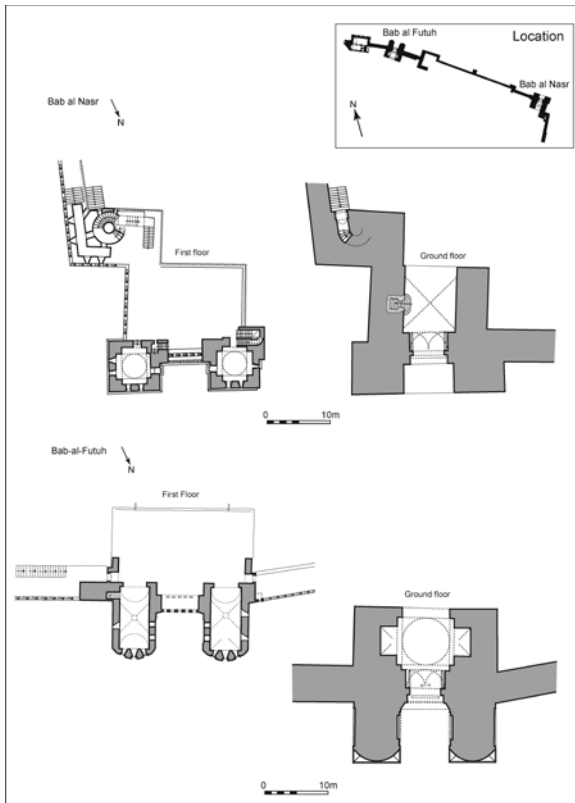


Figure 19.169. Cairo: Bab al-Nasir (1087) and Bab al-Futuh (1087–88), plans of the gates (© Stéphane Pradines, IFAO, Murailles du Caire)

built in ashlar and have three stories, the lower two solid and the upper one corresponding in level with the platform over the gate. Through-columns, spaced 1.85 m apart, are set through the wall at the level of the seventh course; and there are more, one course higher, in the side walls. The second story is set back from the first and is decorated by a series of carved shields, some rounded and others kite-shaped. A decorative cornice separates the third story from the second. The gate is closed by a pair of wing doors and protected in front by a slit machicolation. Behind it is a groin-vaulted passage. An oblong mural tower behind the gate contains a spiral stair to the platform above the roadway. Originally the platform's parapet, like the tower tops themselves, was capped by rounded crenellations, but these were removed by Napoleon's engineers in 1800–1801. The rooms inside the towers at this level originally had splayed arrow slits facing outward. From this level, stairs also led to the tower tops. According to al-Maqrizi, the gate originally had a *bashura* (or barbican) containing a bent entrance in front of it (Creswell 1952a:1.162, 166–76, figs. 81–83; 1952b:113–14, fig. 12, pls. 4–6; Behrens-Abouseif 1989:68, pl. 51; Williams 2008:208–209).



Figure 19.170. Cairo: Bab al-Nasir (1087) (photo Denys Pringle 1980)



Figure 19.171. Cairo: Bab al-Futuh (1087–88) (photo Denys Pringle 1980)

Bab al-Futuh stands to the west of Bab al-Nasir and the mosque of al-Hakim and is dated by an inscription to April–May A.D. 1087 (Muharram A.H. 480) (figures 19.171–73). This text, which was evidently also seen by al-Maqrizi, refers to the gate as Bab al-Iqbal (Gate of Prosperity), but as with Bab al-Nasir, it seems that the name of the corresponding lost gate of Jawhar's wall soon reasserted itself and replaced the new one.



Figure 19.172. Cairo: Bab al-Futuh (1087–88): the gate portal (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

Like Bab al-Nasr, Bab al-Futuh consists of a gateway flanked by two towers, which are solid for two-thirds of their height. In this case, however, the towers have convex fronts, albeit resting on a rectangular plinth with a pyramidal talus. There is an arched recess on the face and sides of each tower, and through-columns are set into the sixth course. Seen from outside, the arrow slits of the upper rooms are set in rectangular recesses. The gate is placed behind two arches, the inner one having cusped voussoirs and the outer one being splayed and highly decorated. The passage behind is covered by a dome on pendentives. The platform over the gate is reached by a stair built against the inside face of the wall to the east. The parapet is carried forward on triangular corbels, which are decorated like timber work with coffered panels between them. Below the parapet is a series of murder holes, evidently intended to discharge liquids, and behind them another series set between the two gate arches. In this gate, the front of the platform is screened by a wall pierced by five rounded-arched openings and covered by a crenellated wall walk at the same level

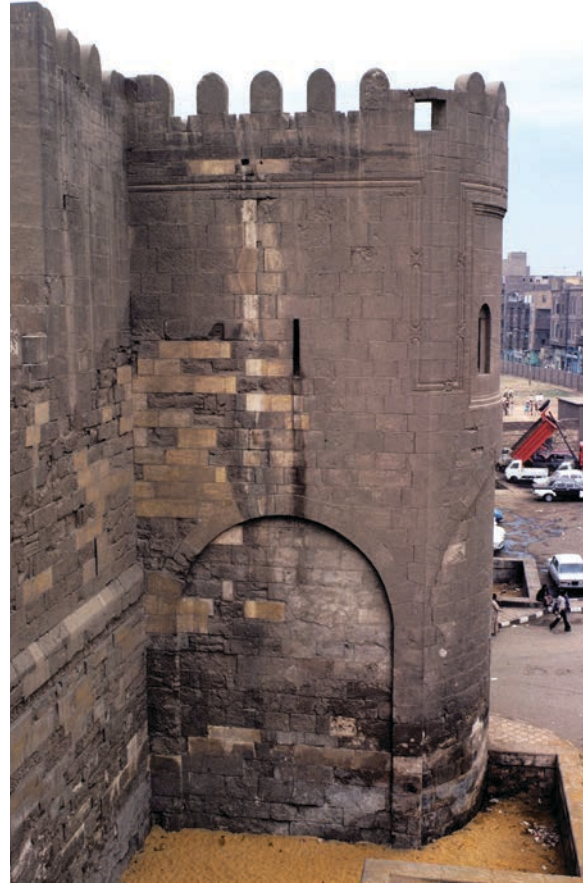


Figure 19.173. Cairo: Bab al-Futuh (1087–88), from the east (photo Denys Pringle 1980)

as the tower tops. An odd feature is that the *chemin de ronde* within the town wall also passes through the gatehouse inside the masonry above the gate; but there is no internal communication with the gate, apart from three rectangular openings into the dead space of the slit machicolation and two murder holes covering the gate passage. Al-Maqrizi also mentions that the gate originally had a *bashura* in front of it (Creswell 1952a:1.162, 176–81, figs. 84–88; 1952b:116–19, pls. 9–11; Behrens-Abouseif 1989:69, pl. 52; Williams 2008:207–209).

Bab Zuwayla stands in the south wall of Cairo and is dated by al-Maqrizi and Ibn Muyassar to A.H. 485 (A.D. 1092–93) (figures 19.174–75). It also had a dedicatory inscription, but it is now unreadable. In design it is very similar to Bab al-Futuh. According to al-Maqrizi, there was no *bashura*, but the ground level was originally some 3 m below the present street to the south of the gate and the gate was approached by a ramp (*zallaqa*), paved with blocks of granite, to make it difficult for cavalry to rush the gate. This feature was later destroyed—or effectively covered up—by



Figure 19.174. Cairo: Bab Zuwayla (1091–92): from the south (photo Denys Pringle 1980)

the Ayyubid sultan al-Kamil Muhammad (1218–38) after his horse slipped on it. Other features of the gate include elaborate niches in the sides of the towers flanking the gate passage and a vaulted loggia over the gate, enclosing murder holes (Creswell 1952a:1.162, 197–205, figs. 97–99; Behrens-Abouseif 1989:69–72, pl. 53; Williams 2008:158–60).

Creswell identified a number of architectural features of the walls of Cairo as originating in North Syria, Armenia, or northern Mesopotamia, where they appear in buildings of the fifth century onward. They include the use of spherical triangular pendentives to support domes, through-columns in both walls and the gates, semicircular as opposed to pointed or two-centered arches, arcuated lintels (or lintels with an arch cut into them), the gadrooned voussoirs of the arch of Bab al-Futuh, and the knot motif on the rounded shields of Bab al-Nasr.<sup>220</sup> It seems as likely that the North Syrian influences discernible in the Cairo walls and gates may be attributed as much to the involvement of Armenian and Greek architects and builders from that area as to the commanding position of the Armenian *wazir*, Badr al-Jamali.<sup>221</sup> The same is also likely to have been the case in Ashkelon, where the Tower of Blood was also constructed in the period between 1073 and 1095 when Badr al-Jamali was *wazir* and commander-in-chief (*‘amir al-juyush*). Before being called to Cairo at the age of sixty or more, however, Badr had already served al-Mustansir in Syria as governor,

<sup>220</sup> Creswell 1952:1.208–16. The origins of gadrooned voussoirs are in fact uncertain, though they were used extensively in Frankish and Ayyubid buildings in Syria and Palestine, from where they appear to have been reintroduced into Egypt in the Mamluk period.

<sup>221</sup> See further discussion by Allen 1986: 29–35, fig 38–45; Bloom 2008:121–28.



Figure 19.175. Cairo: Bab Zuwayla (1091–92): from the southeast (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

first of Damascus and then, from 1068, of Acre (Brett 2005:63–64). It is therefore quite possible that some of the earlier Fatimid building work in Ashkelon was carried out under his superintendence. After his death, however, a succession of Armenian *wazirs*, including his son al-Afdal Shahanshah (1094–1121) and grandson Kutayfat (1130–31), were in charge of military affairs in Egypt until 1162, some of them being Muslim converts while others remained Christian (Dédéyan 2003:1.265; 2.881–926). During this period, in 1111, the Fatimid governor of Ashkelon, Shams al-Khilafa, himself an Armenian convert to Islam, staged a brief, unsuccessful rebellion against al-Afdal, allying himself with King Baldwin I and garrisoning the city with Armenian troops.<sup>222</sup> In these circumstances, the architectural and military experience on which the commissioners of Ashkelon’s Fatimid defenses drew could have been as geographically diverse as those apparent in Cairo. Some glimpses of this may be seen in the surviving remains, despite their fragmentary nature.

<sup>222</sup> See the section on Historical Sources above, p. 98.



Figure 19.176. Cairo: Bab al-Nasir (1087), the outer arch of the gate (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

The masonry **Talus RR** in front of Ashkelon's northern or Jaffa Gate has at times been compared to thirteenth-century Frankish works such as Louis IX's refortification of Caesarea in 1251–52 (figure 19.166) (Pringle 1984:145), but has now been proved by an inscription set in it to be Fatimid, though whether of the eleventh or twelfth century is uncertain (Sharon 1995:79–80, figs. 9–10; 1997:1.172–73, pl. 10, fig. 66). The interlaced rosette that divides the text (figure 19.145), however, is similar to those found on the rounded shields on Bab al-Nasr (figure 19.176) and on the reentrant faces of the towers flanking Bab Zuwayla (figure 19.177), for which Creswell has demonstrated Syro-Byzantine precedents (Creswell 1952a:213–15, figs. 108–14). The Fatimid dating of the talus is also supported by the row of marble through-columns set just above its base (figures 19.143–44), which is another feature of Badr al-Jamali's walls in Cairo (figure 19.178).

The Jaffa Gate itself has been associated by Moshe Sharon with the tower built in 1150, whose construction is recorded in an inscription found in the excavations in front of the talus. Before it came to be deposited at the base of the talus, however, the marble slab on which the inscription was carved had already been reused for another purpose in the walls of the Crusader castle, built in 1240–41. There is therefore no way of knowing where it had originally been located. Nonetheless, our analysis of the remains of the large **Tower R** that once stood on top of the rampart supports Sharon's view that it represents one of the towers that formerly flanked the Fatimid Jaffa Gate. Sharon published two quite different reconstruction drawings of this gate. The first looks remarkably similar to Bab al-Nasr, while the second shows a bent entrance with no flanking towers and **Tower R** as a mural tower enclosed by the talus, which rises from the bottom of a ditch (Sharon 1995:77–78, figs. 7–8; 1997:1.162–83,



Figure 19.177. Cairo: Bab Zuwayla (1091–92): decorative arch and niche flanking the gate (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



Figure 19.178. Cairo: the north wall of Badr al-Jamali (1087–92), looking east toward Bab al-Nasir. Note the through-columns near the base of the walls and towers (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

pl. 9). Neither of these reconstructions can be correct, as **Tower R** was not 25 m square as claimed, but quasi-trapezoidal and only about 10 m wide (figure 19.134) and there can never have been any physical connection between it and the talus, nor does there appear to have been any ditch in this position. While still supporting the view that the Fatimid Jaffa Gate stood on top of the Bronze Age rampart, the recent survey suggests instead that, like the Gaza Gate to the south, it was approached by a road or track that led obliquely up the outer face of the rampart from the west. The purpose of the talus, which may well have been a secondary addition, would therefore have been to retain this ramp and act as a barbican (*bashura*) to the gate. As noted above, al-Maqrizi mentions the existence of some kind of paved ramp in front of Bab Zuwayla in Cairo, and there are remains of another leading obliquely up to the south gate of the Abbasid walls of Farama (853) (Pradines 2015:90, fig. 5). The radiocarbon dates from **Tower R** also indicate that the gate itself would have been built sometime in the first half of the eleventh century, thus preceding all the surviving gates in Cairo, as well as the unknown tower built in Ashkelon in 1150. It would have comprised a pair of quasi-trapezoidal towers, of which **R** was the western one, set one either side of the gate (figure 19.133). The plan of these towers is classical in origin and may be compared with that of the towers built soon after A.D. 135 flanking the north gate of Hadrian's Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem); this gate would still have been standing at the time when Ashkelon's Jaffa Gate was built and was rebuilt to the same plan by Sulayman II in 1537 (Pringle 1993: 3.307–9). The family connection of the Jaffa Gate with the walls of Cairo, however, is also indicated by the large blind arch that occupies **Tower R**'s oblique reentrant face flanking the entrance (figure 19.142), a feature that is repeated in Bab al-Futuh and in Bab Zuwayla (figures 171, 173, 175, 177)

The fragmentary remains of the Fatimid East or Jerusalem Gate confirm William of Tyre's description of it as being flanked by "two very tall towers, which appear to dominate the city below like a strongpoint and citadel," with "three or four lesser gates in the outworks in front of it, through which one reaches it by certain tortuous routes."<sup>223</sup> The southwest corner of the southern **Tower CC** remains standing, while major pieces of its internal **Vaulting (EE)** and that of its fellow **Tower (DD)** lie some distance away, where the catastrophic collapse of the structure threw them. Although the illustrations on the Madaba and Umm al-Rassas mosaics (figures 19.1–2) suggest that the

<sup>223</sup> William of Tyre 17.22, in *CCCM* 63.790–91 (trans. Denys Pringle).



Figure 19.179. Cairo: Jami' al-Aqmar (1125), façade (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

Byzantine gate was also flanked by massive rectangular towers, the present remains appear to be medieval, most likely early Fatimid. The towers each measured some 8 m in breadth and 11 m in depth, with perhaps two internal stories carried on pairs of barrel vaults, but little can be said of the form of the gate itself.

Immediately south of the main gate, however, stood a secondary **Gate Tower BB1–4** containing a bent entrance linking the area within the town to the space between the town wall and the forewall running south from the Jerusalem Gate barbican. No part of this secondary gate remains visible in situ, but it has been possible to locate its original position by surveying the surviving displaced fragments and estimating how they would have fallen when the gate was demolished. On this evidence, the gate tower appears to have been trapezoidal on plan, measuring some 10 × 7.5–10 m, with an entrance some 2 m wide in the oblique side facing east, closed by a portcullis and wing doors. The vaulted gate passage turned right through 90 degrees to the north to enter the town just inside the adjacent main gate. The massively thick walls enclosing the gate passage appear to have been solid, like those of Badr al-Jamali's gates in Cairo, but at first-floor level the walls were evidently thinner, allowing for a more amply proportioned internal space. A particular architectural feature of the gate tower is a pair of small niches, flanked by colonnettes and standing on a decorative frieze, which faced each other to either side of the inner part of the entrance passage (figures 19.107, 19.112–16). Recessed arches, though somewhat different in form, also decorate the reentrant sides of the towers flanking Bab al-Futuh and Bab Zuwayla in Cairo (figures 19.172, 175, 177) (Creswell 1952a:1.177, 199, 215, pls. 62–64, 67, 72, 75), while small niches resembling mihrabs, with scalloped heads and spirally fluted colonnettes, are also found on the façade of the Jami' al-Aqmar in Cairo, founded by the *wazir* Ma'mun al-Bata'ih in



*Figure 19.180.* Cairo: Bab al-Futuh (1087–88), the gate passage, showing a niche above head height in the south wall (the door below it is a later insertion) (photo Denys Pringle 2011)



*Figure 19.181.* Cairo: Bab al-Futuh (1087–88), niche in the south wall of the gate passage (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

1125 (figure 19.179) (Creswell 1952a:1.241–45, pls. 82–93; Behrens-Abousseif 1989:72–74, pl. 54, fig. 17; Bloom 2008: 139–46, figs. 105, 109). The location of the Ashkelon niches within the inner gate passage is also mirrored by a rectangular niche placed above the cornice that defines the springing of the groin vault over the gate passage inside Bab al-Nasir; this niche is rectangular in plan and covered by a semi-dome, formed of five voussoirs radiating from a half rosette and supported on diminutive pendentives (figures 19.180–81). Closer parallels for the form of the Ashkelon niches can be seen in the North or Kharput Gate in the city walls of Diyarbekir (now in southeastern Turkey), where the gate itself is flanked by four niches with scalloped semi-domes, two immediately to either side of it and another pair set in the flanking sides of the massive rounded towers either side of the gate (figure 19.182). As Creswell pointed out, the gate and towers appear to be Byzantine in origin, as therefore should also be the two niches immediately flanking it. Indeed, they seem originally to have decorated the pilasters dividing the main central arch from the two pedestrian entrances flanking it. An inscription

over the gate, however, records building work in A.H. 297 (A.D. 909–10) in the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir. As at the South or Mardin Gate, this evidently included blocking the two pedestrian side entrances and possibly adding, or at least altering, the niches in the flanking towers (Creswell 1998:3–5, figs. 1–2; cf. Baer 1998:95–99, fig. 110; Blair 1998:55, fig. 5.21). While the niche on the left-hand tower is broadly similar to the two on the gate itself, with similar spiral-fluted colonnettes and molded arch, but with cuboid capitals and no scalloped semi-dome, the right-hand one, larger and crudely decorated with a frieze of wild and domestic animals, has no such classical pretensions and seems later in date, perhaps twelfth or thirteenth century. The Ashkelon niches may therefore point to connections with both Cairo and North Syria.



Figure 19.182. Diyarbekir: the Byzantine Kharput Gate, rebuilt by Caliph al-Muqtadir in A.H. 297/A.D. 909–10 (photo © Balázs Major)



Figure 19.183. Cairo: the round-fronted tower attributed to Saladin, while wazir of Sultan al-ʿAdid between 1169 and 1171 (photo Denys Pringle 2011)

The Towers of Maidens, Shields, Blood, Emirs, and Bedouin named in Frankish, Ayyubid, and Mamluk sources also seem likely to have been Fatimid in origin, despite the legendary origins put forward for them. Indeed, the Tower of Blood, later known as the Tower of the Templars, was built during the wazirate of Badr al-Jamali himself.<sup>224</sup> None of these can be identified today with any certainty, though that of the Maidens should lie at or near **JJ3–4**, close to **Tower JJ5**, later

<sup>224</sup> al-Maqrizi, trans. Broadhurst, 93–94; cf. Sharon 1995:77.

referred to as the Tower of the Hospitallers overlooking the sea. Of the towers of which elements still remain, **Tower E** appears to have been built on a solid rectangular base, some 13.6 m wide and projecting 7.7 m, with 1.40 m thick walls at an upper level. **Tower F** (Phase 1) also seems to have been rectangular with a solid base, but its dimensions are unknown. **Tower G**, if it was a tower, was integral with the town wall and had a hollow base, as had **Tower GG**, which seems to have been built astride the wall or possibly against its inside face. Solid rounded towers include **AA** and **FF** (Phase 3), which were three-quarters round and placed where the wall turned a right angle; in fact the latter seems to have been somewhat more than three-quarters round, with a quirk or indentation where it met the curtain wall in a manner reminiscent of the round-fronted tower (*tour ronde outrepassée*) that was added to the north wall of Cairo by Saladin while serving as *wazir* to Sultan al-ʿAdid between 1169 and 1171 (figure 19.183) (Pradines 2012:1047–50, fig. 12; Creswell 1952a:1.192–94, fig. 95, pls. 124–25; 1952b:119, fig. 14). **Turret or Buttress H** (Phase 1) may also possibly have presented a shallow rounded face, though on a rectangular base. Phase 1 of **Tower K**, however, was clearly a D-shaped tower, with a splayed solid base, and the radiocarbon dates from it place its probable date of construction between the second quarter of the eleventh century A.D. and the first quarter of the twelfth. **Tower AAA6–8**, though polygonal internally, would probably also have been rounded externally. Most of these towers contain through-columns, most notably **Towers K** (Phase 1) and **FF** (Phase 3), which are distinguished by their formidable horizontal arrays of granite column drums salvaged from the Roman-Byzantine colonnaded streets.

The fortified coastal towns and watch stations mentioned by al-Muqaddasi (ca. 985) south of Beirut (Bayrut) in the early Fatimid period included Sidon (Sayda), Tyre (Sur), Acre (ʿAkka), Caesarea (Qaysariyya), Arsuf, Jaffa (Yafa), Mahuz Yubna, Mahuz Azdud, Ashkelon (ʿAsqalan), Mimas (Maiumas of Gaza), and Gaza (Ghazza).<sup>225</sup> Most of these places were already fortified before the Fatimid conquest, and in Acre and Caesarea, as has been shown, the defenses had been augmented at the time of Ibn Tulun (878–84). Outside Ashkelon, however, there is at present little historical or archaeological evidence to indicate any new building work in the Fatimid period. The strong fortress with an iron sea gate and other gates plated with iron that al-Muqaddasi describes in Jaffa

<sup>225</sup> al-Muqaddasi, trans. Collins, 137–49, map VII; Le Strange 1890:23–24; Elʿad 1982:155–57; cf. Hudud al-ʿAlam, trans. Minorsky, 149.





Figure 19.184. Mahuz Azdud (Minat al-Qal'a, Ashdod Yam): the blocking of the east gate, attributed to the Fatimid period (photo Denys Pringle 2009)

has yet to be located.<sup>226</sup> At Mahuz Yubna (Yavneh Yam), however, a rectangular tower measuring some 5 m × 4.8 m and surviving to some 5 m in height has been dated between the ninth and eleventh centuries, though on what evidence is not entirely clear (Fischer 2008:2075). The blocking of the east gate and rearrangement of the internal buildings in the Umayyad fort at Mahuz Azdud (Minat al-Qal'a, Ashdod Yam) (figures 19.163–64, 184) has also been attributed to the Fatimid period (Raphael 2014:19–20), though here too the dating is not certain, despite abundant finds indicating Abbasid- and Fatimid-period activity at the site (Raphael 2014:34, 36, 60; Raphael and Kool 2014:40, 57; Ouahnouna 2014). Another coastal station not mentioned by al-Muqaddasi is Minat Abu Zabura or Minat al-Batikh (Tel Mikhmoret), where a stone-built watch tower some 8 m square with walls a little over a meter thick and buttresses set back from the corners overlooked a natural landing place near the mouth of the Nahr Iskandaruna. The walls were built with ashlar blocks of *kurkar*, laid in lime mortar and plastered. Interior corner pilasters suggest that it may have been groin-vaulted. Here the finds from an associated surface included tenth- to eleventh-century ceramics and a dinar of al-Mustansir (1035–94) (Paley, Porath, and Stieglitz 1982:260–61, pl. 43c; Porath, Paley, and Stieglitz 1993:1044–46; Pringle 1986:7–9).

#### Crusader and Ayyubid (1153–92)

From the historical sources discussed above we know that Ashkelon was in Frankish hands from 19 August 1153 until 5 September 1187, during which time it may be assumed that damage sustained in the Frankish

siege would have been repaired. Saladin is also known to have repaired the defenses when he used Ashkelon as a base between 1189 and 1191, but after the recapture of Acre by the Franks he dismantled its defenses in September 1191 before abandoning it. The entire circuit of walls was then refortified by Richard I of England between January and April 1192, before the defenses were again dismantled and the town again abandoned in September 1192 by common agreement between the Franks and Muslims under the terms of the Treaty of Jaffa. The next phase of fortification to be mentioned concerns the construction of a castle, occupying only part of the previously fortified area, by Tibald of Champagne and Richard, earl of Cornwall, between the summer of 1240 and April 1241. This in turn was stormed and demolished by the Ayyubids in October 1247 and subjected to further slighting by Sultan Baybars in 1270.

Despite the tendency of guidebooks to attribute all the surviving walls to the Crusaders and a more cautious but, as it now turns out, over-optimistic attempt to identify parts of them as belonging to Richard I's 1192 restoration (Pringle 1984), one result of the recent survey has been to show how extremely difficult it is to point to any surviving piece of the town walls that could unequivocally be identified as having been built either by the Franks or by the Ayyubids. In retrospect this may seem unsurprising in view of the fragmentary nature of what does survive and the consideration that whatever the Franks and Ayyubids may have added to the existing walls would most likely have been the first elements to have been destroyed again. Only one carbon sample from **Tower D**, giving a date between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries cal. A.D., could possibly relate to work of this period—if not Frankish from just before 1187, then possibly Ayyubid from 1189 or Crusader from 1192. What may possibly have been an attempt to make what was left of the rounded **Tower FF** (Phase 2) serviceable again after it had been slighted, by adding triangular spurs to its exterior, might also possibly be associated with Richard I's refortification, though precise dating evidence is lacking. On the other hand, earlier architectural arguments for suggesting the possible identification of D-shaped **Tower K** (Phase 1) and the adjacent triangular **Turret VV** as Frankish (Boas and Piana 2008:266, figs. 4–6; Pringle 2017) have now been disproved by radiocarbon dating, which shows the former to be Fatimid and the latter Umayyad/Abbasid.

The discovery in 1993 in front of the **Northern Talus RR** of a panel and lintel bearing the arms of Sir Hugh Wake, a participant in Richard of Cornwall's crusade, gave support to a view already expressed that the castle built in 1240–41 occupied the northwestern

<sup>226</sup> al-Muqaddasi, trans. Collins, 146. On Jaffa's walls in the Frankish period see now Peilstöcker 2006; Kedar 2006.

corner of the city, enclosed on the south and east by a **rock-cut ditch** (Pringle 1984:143–47). Excavation of the southern rim of the north tell has more recently found traces of walling, though the origins of the ditch (reexcavated by Earl Richard's army) now seem to be somewhat earlier. An earlier view that the castle stood at the southwestern corner of the town (Prawer 1975:2.292 n. 3; Benvenisti 1970:126–29) may therefore be definitively laid to rest, as should the flawed argument based on it that the discovery of the panels indicated that Richard of Cornwall had walled the whole city (Sharon 1995:83, fig. 1). The very comprehensive destruction of the castle by the Ayyubids in 1247, however, followed by later stone robbing, seems to have left very little of its masonry structure intact.

#### *Acknowledgments*

When I first arrived in Jerusalem to take up the position of assistant director of the British School of Archaeology in January 1979 and began to look for a suitable postdoctoral research project to undertake, Professor Joshua Prawer suggested that I might consider resuming the work that the first director of the British School, John Garstang, had begun but left unfinished at Ashkelon in 1919–21. As it happened, such a major project would have been beyond the resources of the School at that stage, and when a few years later I raised the possibility of a small excavation in Ashkelon with the then director of the Israel

Department of Antiquities, Dr. Avi Eitan, he advised me to look elsewhere, as another foreign mission had already expressed an interest in working in Ashkelon. That foreign mission, of course, was what became the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, which under the direction of Professors Laurence Stager and Daniel Master conducted a series of annual excavations between 1985 and 2015. It has been a great privilege for me to have been involved with this project from 2008 and to be able to make the present contribution to the medieval volume of the final report.

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