

An Interpretation of the Megiddo Sacred Area During Middle Bronze II*

CLAIRE EPSTEIN

I.

THE Megiddo sacred area (in the BB sector)¹ has long posed a series of problems of which the excavators were not unaware, the uncertainty of the correct attribution to appropriate strata of a number of buildings, walls, etc., being mentioned more than once in the final publication.² A perusal of the unpublished Field Diary kept by Gordon Loud³ only serves to emphasize this impression, since it contains many details observed during the day-to-day progress of the work which were omitted from the published volume and their value cannot be overestimated, even after the lapse of some quarter of a century. It is the purpose of this study to re-examine the evidence concerning Temple 2048 (the latest of the religious buildings found in the sacred area), to which were assigned three distinct phases, attributed to Strata VIII, VII B and VII A respectively, and to attempt to interpret the use of this same sacred area during Strata XII-IX. For it would indeed be strange if during the period of Hyksos' rule in Egypt, when most Palestinian cities witnessed

* All references, unless otherwise stated, are to *Megiddo II, Seasons of 1935-39, Text and Plates*, by the Megiddo Expedition, with Gordon Loud as Field Director, *OIP*, 62, Chicago, 1948. The plans for Strata XII-VII A are shown on Figs. 398-403 and are not subsequently cited at each reference to them.

¹ Fig. 376.

² Pp. 92, 102-3.

³ I am greatly indebted to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago for permission to publish extracts from the Megiddo Field Diary which would no doubt have been included in the Megiddo publication had this not, perforce, been brought out under emergency conditions resulting from the Second World War. I should also like to express my appreciation to the Oriental Institute for having been permitted to examine and make use of written documents, photographs, indices etc., relating to the Megiddo Expedition which are in their archives and also the Megiddo ceramic material in their collection, which includes hitherto unpublished sherds. My visit to the United States at the beginning of 1961 was made possible through a generous grant from the Central Research Fund of the University of London. I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to both the above institutions. I also wish to thank Miss K. M. Kenyon for having discussed with me the problems dealt with in this article and for the valuable suggestions made by her.

growth and increased prosperity, there had been no temple standing on what was undoubtedly one of the city's cult sites, on which shrines and temples had been erected from the very earliest times and where a temple was again in use during the Late Bronze Age.⁴

Before discussing the nature and extent of the possible sequence of buildings which crowned this spot during the period under consideration, a number of points should be noted :

1. The early altar, 4017, erected on the sacred area in all probability in Early Bronze III,⁵ already occupied a dominant position above the surrounding buildings. From this time onwards the sacred area continued to be higher than the associated buildings around it, especially those flanking it on the east, these being built on what had always been a natural slope on the side of the hill.⁶

2. Below Temple 2048 a series of rubble layers was found which the excavators were at a loss to allocate to any particular Stratum,⁷ showing them quite arbitrarily on the plan for Stratum IX. These rubble layers appeared below the actual foundations of the walls and in some places even extended beyond the outer wall face;⁸ a fact likewise commented upon in the Field Diary.⁹ Considerable lack of clarity prevails regarding their nature, number and depth: four are shown in section on the plan of the temple's three phases,¹⁰ three on the section through the area,¹¹ while the report speaks of 'a series' and the Field Diary records 'no less than eight stone floors about 30 cm apart . . . ending at the base of the foundation',¹² while other entries mention 20 cm as separating one layer from another.¹³ Interpreting this apparently conflicting information, it becomes evident that the rubble layers were by no means uniformly spread, since they were found at varying levels

⁴ See also p. 84.

⁵ K. M. Kenyon, 'Some notes on the Early and Middle Bronze Age strata of Megiddo,' *EI*, 5, 1958, 54*-55* and Fig. 1.

⁶ See section through BB, Fig. 416.

⁷ P. 102.

⁸ Fig. 126 and compare plans for Strata IX-VIII.

⁹ Entry for 24.11.35. '... along the east side . . . level after level of lime or small stone extending horizontally about 40 cm from the wall face.'

¹⁰ Fig. 247.

¹¹ See above, n. 6.

¹² Entry for 19.4.36, referring to a sounding made inside the temple.

¹³ Entries for 18.4.36 and 22.12.37.

below the walls of the temple and with the exception of two isolated sections, they were *not* found below the interior of the temple.¹⁴

3. On the plan for Stratum XII, a three-house complex is shown on the east slope facing a north-south street.¹⁵ This house complex is in alignment with the east lateral wall of Temple 2048 (as shown on the plan for Stratum VIII) while the plans for Strata XI-VIII show another, similarly-aligned house complex built further down the slope on the opposite side of the street. Both groups of houses underwent relatively minor changes throughout Strata XII-VII, indicating continuity of usage over a prolonged period in a position immediately adjoining the sacred area, to which their orientation remained constant.

4. South-west of the above house complexes two roughly parallel walls are shown on the plan for Stratum XII running from east to west, the more northerly of the two (re-used in Stratum XI) showing a pronounced bend.¹⁶ Commenting on this, the excavators suggested that this was due to the need to skirt an assumed sacred area beyond¹⁷—a most plausible interpretation in view of their character and the nature of the small-sized 'rooms' lying between them, which may well have been temple store-rooms. Neither of these two walls was excavated along its entire length, but it is clear that they were not integral to or connected with house units of any kind.

Furthermore, on the plans for Strata XI-X, a similar long substantial wall is shown running west of loci 5226 and 5026,¹⁸ while a second solid-looking wall runs parallel to it some two metres east. Between these two walls there are small square 'rooms' (without entrances) of the same kind as those found between the southern precinct walls referred to above. Likewise, on the plan for Stratum XII, an otherwise unexplained rectangular construction (situated north of T. 5255) appears on closer examination to form part of these double walls, which run from north-east to south-west. They, too are on the same general orientation as the west lateral wall of Temple 2048 (on the Stratum VIII plan) and were also not excavated along their entire length, but may be

¹⁴ It should be noted that on both the sections, Figs. 247 and 416, the rubble layers are shown extending below the interior of the temple, but this is not borne out by the plans, the report of the Field Diary.

¹⁵ In N 14 and O 14.

¹⁷ P. 92 and Fig. 212

¹⁶ On the grid line between O 13 and O 14

¹⁸ In N 13 and M 13

presumed to have formed a corner with the southern precinct walls in O 12. The function of these double walls is thus seen to be identical, namely, to serve as enclosure walls round the sacred area on the south and on the west, at the same time the space between them being utilized for purposes connected with the temple and the practice of its cult.¹⁹ With the changes in the temple building, changes in the arrangement of its associated structures were to be expected, and, in fact, the precinct walls were widened²⁰ or otherwise altered in succeeding periods.²¹

5. In the north of the BB sector, the plan for Stratum XII shows what the excavators describe as 'a fragmentary building of excellent construction', containing a massive stone drain and steps leading down from it to the street outside.²² Bearing in mind that there was a considerable difference in height between the sacred area and its surroundings—as is further emphasized by the flight of steps and the need for a drain to canalize the run-off from the accumulated rain-water—the excellently constructed building in M 13 was in all probability part of another complex which flanked the sacred area on the north and which unfortunately was not excavated further east. The building, however, does not appear to have belonged to a store-room block and may well have been used as a shop where votive objects were sold, serving its owner as both house and workshop at the same time.²³

From the above it is clear that almost the entire BB sector had the temple as its focal point, the majority of the buildings and the strikingly long and substantial double walls all being intentionally aligned round it. An understanding of the true function of these structures, however, in relation to the

¹⁹ See p. 213 for artifacts found here.

²⁰ See especially plan for Stratum X.

²¹ Additional store-rooms may also have been built between the temple and the adjacent house complex to the east, as the broken wall fragment, 2032, seems to indicate, especially in view of the large number of objects found in its vicinity. In that case, its east-west portion would have served as a partition between two such store-rooms, the north-south portion being built up against the outer face of the east temple wall. Alternatively, the purpose of 2032 may have been to wall in one of the rubbish dumps outside the temple walls, thus fulfilling a function equivalent to that of similarly situated pits at other sites. See below, n. 25.

²² P. 92.

²³ At Hazor a potter's workshop was found in a building complex associated with the Late Bronze II Stela Shrine, while votive vessels were also manufactured within the enclosure area of the Late Bronze I Orthostat Temple. Y. Yadin *et al.*, *Hazor*, II, 1960, 101. *idem*, *Hazor III-IV*—Plates 1961, Pl. CXIII:2 and Y. Yadin, 'Excavations at Hazor 1958 (Preliminary Communiqué)', *IEJ*, 9, 1959, 83.

successive temple buildings which stood on the site depends ultimately on the correct interpretation of the artifacts found in them and in their vicinity. These must now be considered.

II.

Turning to the ceramic evidence, it is of the greatest interest that the Field Diary contains repeated references to the finding in or near Temple 2048 not only of pottery but also of sherds which are typical of specific strata. Such references can be most revealing, especially when *quantities* of sherds are mentioned of which no other record remains.²⁴ In many instances these sherds were mixed with animal bones, large deposits being found outside the east lateral wall of 2048 as well as outside its southern (or back) wall. Such 'rubbish dumps' outside the walls, consisting of accumulated offerings of votive and cult objects which had been cleared from the *cella* and thrown out in order to make room for subsequent gifts, are a common feature of temples and have been found at Lachish (in pits) at Hazor²⁵ and elsewhere. Even before 2048 had been identified as a temple, accumulations of discarded offerings were being found, as the following entries in the Field Diary record:

'23. 10. 35... Heavy foundations of dressed masonry ... A bronze knife or dagger blade from rubbish north of this'.

'23. 11. 35 ... IX and X pottery found beside the outer face of the well-built wall' (of 2048).

'28.11.35. The area ... to the east of the Big House is barren of walls. The debris is full of sherds, as it has been all round.'

As the work progressed and a wider area was cleared, more and more pottery and sherds characteristic of specific periods came to light round the temple:

'30.12.35. Wares suggestive of MB come from the debris to the east of the SE corner'.

²⁴ Only relatively few sherds were retained and the presence of the vast numbers discarded by the excavators was not otherwise recorded.

²⁵ O. Tufnell *et al.*, *Lachish II. The Fosse Temple*, London, 1940, 43-44 and Y. Yadin, *IEJ*, 9, 1959, 83-84. Rubbish dumps were likewise found outside the north (or back) wall of the Late Bronze II phase of the Orthostat Temple, Hazor, excavated by the writer.

'17.2.36 . . . IX and X pottery just east of the temple . . . This area bordering on the east side of the temple continues to be the most interesting in objects'.

'18.2.36. Quantities of pottery and animal bones helter-skelter in the section immediately to the west of the temple and within the *temenos* enclosure . . . The pottery appears to be late MB, IX or X.'

'7.4.36. Very early pottery comes from near the temple where heretofore we have found quantities of sherds and bones. It is mixed with X and IX examples and probably dates to 1800.'

By the middle of the following season's work it becomes evident that the excavators themselves had begun to understand the nature of these revealing rubbish dumps (and probably, also store-rooms) and they seem to be on the verge of making the only possible deductions from the finding of so much datable pottery round the temple:

'1.1.37. Quantities of sherds of our last season's painted designs—fishes and union jacks, etc.—lying in the debris behind the temple, while quantities of earlier sherds lie about to the east of the temple. These facts, coupled with the large pottery deposit immediately beside the east wall make one wonder if these sherds are not cast-offs from the temple. It scarcely seems possible that the temple could have been in use in X, though there may have been an earlier temple.'

The above extracts leave little room for doubt that a temple was indeed standing on the sacred area at Megiddo prior to Stratum VIII and certainly during the period immediately preceding it—corresponding to Strata IX and X—if not earlier. Before, however, attempting to elucidate the nature or extent of such a building (or buildings), it will be worthwhile to re-examine the published material in the light of the data obtained from the Field Diary. And, in fact, the same story is unfolded here, though at first sight this is by no means evident.

On the plans for Strata IX and X (from which large amounts of characteristic pottery and sherds are recorded in the Field Diary) a number of loci are shown which do not appear to be connected with any structures and these lie plotted round the lines of the walls of Temple 2048 (as shown on the plan for Stratum VIII) as follows:

Loci outside Temple 2048 or within presumed precinct area

	<u>Stratum IX</u>	<u>Stratum X</u>
Outside east wall	2091 SW = 2091 (unpublished)	2032 = 2032 N = 2032 S = 2032
Outside south wall	2061 N = 3011 NW = 3011 3019 N = 3019 Square O 13 Square O 14	3037 S = 3037 W = 3037 E = 3037 3038 = 3038 3057 3179
Outside north wall	Square M 13 (in debris in SE corner) Square N 14	2005 2023 2024 On floor of 2024 Square N 14
Outside west wall	5014 N = 5014 5029 E = 5110	5026 N = 5026 S = 5026 NW = 5026

A careful examination of the artifacts from the above loci²⁶ shows that the objects—both pottery and otherwise—belong to just such categories as are known to have been used in the practice of a cult or to have been brought to shrines and temples either as actual offerings or as containers for offerings. These include: offering stands, chalices, a large number of bowls, lamps (one being of the seven-cupped variety), a serpentine votive axe-head, a bronze figure of a seated god,²⁷ bronze and lead figurines of the fertility goddess, a bronze

²⁶ The contents of these loci are given in the Register of Finds, pp. 145 ff.

²⁷ This long-robed figure with conical hat and silver torque, has the right hand raised in a benedictory attitude while the left holds an indeterminate cult object. It was found outside the south (or back) wall of Temple 2048 and is ascribed to Strata IX-VII, Pl. 235:23 and Field Diary entry for 31.12.35.

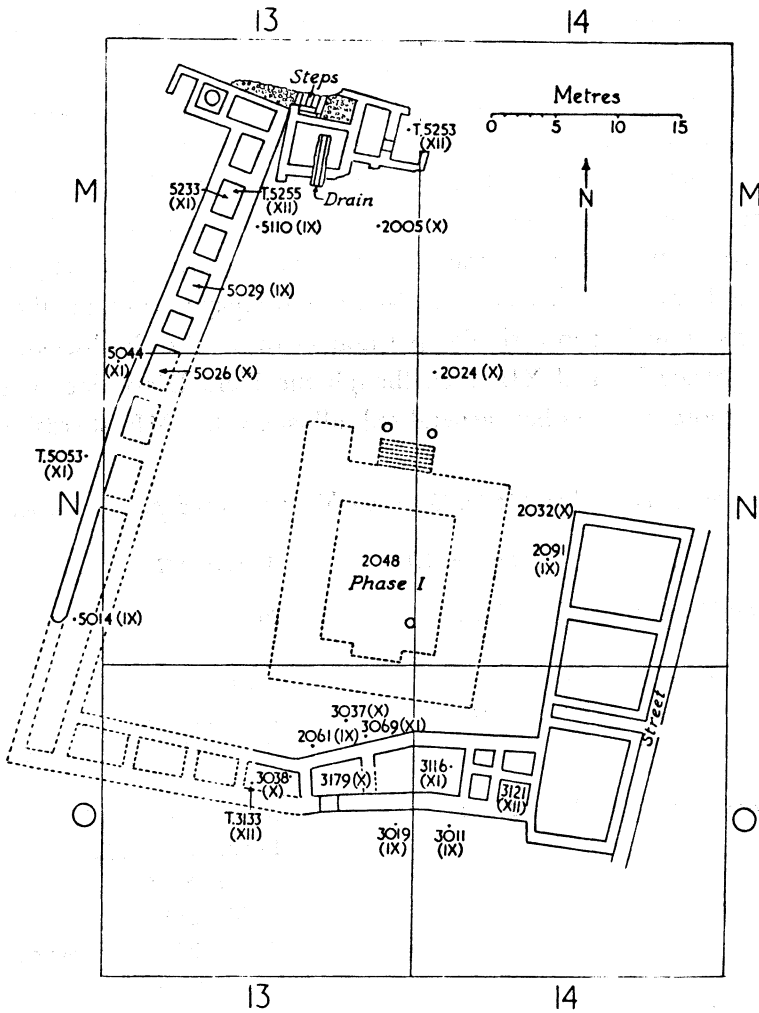


Fig. 1. Suggested plan of Phase I of Temple 2048 and its precincts, Strata XII-X.

serpent, pins and toggle-pins, beads, water-worn smooth pebbles, a bronze bracelet, miniature votive vessels, clay doves, a small jar decorated in red and black, a carinated footed bowl with tall internal cup attachment, a carinated chalice-top with internal projection (both the latter being decorated in red-black over a white wash), a number of published and unpublished bichrome ware sherds (including krater sherds, two of them decorated with fish), two bichrome ware jugs and only two dipper juglets. The predominantly cultic and votive character of this repertory is striking, while on the other hand vessels such as the larger types of jugs and piriform and cylindrical

juglets—so common in contemporary tomb and occupation levels—are noticeably absent.²⁸

In the light of the above assemblage, the conclusion to be drawn regarding the existence of a temple in the sacred area during the period covered by Strata IX and X concurs with the interpretation of the structural remains, though the latter are often elusive and not always correctly attributed on the published plans. Before attempting to unravel the evidence concerning a temple building which could have preceded Temple 2048, it will repay to continue the checking of artifacts from loci in a similar position as those already discussed, on the plans for Strata XI and XII, even though the Field Diary does not contain anything more than rather generalised allusions to 'MB sherds' or 'early sherd',²⁹

Loci outside Temple 2048 or within presumed precinct area

	<u>Stratum XI</u>	<u>Stratum XII</u>
Outside east wall	None	None
Outside south wall	3069 3116	3121 N = T. 3133 Square O 13 (edge of pavement)
Outside north wall	None	S = Room of T. 5232 Room of T. 5232 S = T. 5255 = T. 5255 Square M 13 (in debris in SE corner)
Outside west wall	5233 N = 5233 E = 5044 = T. 5053 (uncertain)	None

²⁸ Compare similar character of the votive vessels found in the Orthostat Temple at Hazor, where few large jugs and jars and no piriform or cylindrical juglets occurred, the commonest vessels being bowls of all shapes and sizes (including cooking pots and kraters), chalices, goblets, lamps and the like. Dipper juglets did, however, occur, mostly in the Holy of Holies where they were found in the vicinity of the two large kraters used for oil and wine, and in the neighbourhood of the libation altars. *Hazor* III-IV, Pls. CXXII:1-4, CCLVI:1-4, CCLXXV:1-6 and CCLXXXI:4-11.

²⁹ Apparently the excavators did not consider that there had been a temple building in existence during the period covered by these strata and merely assumed that there *might* have been one.

An examination of the above loci shows that during Strata XII and XI there do not appear to have been rubbish dumps from the presumed temple outside its walls, most of the find-spots being situated within the wider bounds of the precincts and for the most part within the small 'rooms' (or storerooms) found between the double enclosure walls. The objects from these loci include: chalices (two with red and black decoration over a white wash), bronze figurines of the fertility goddess, toggle-pins, a miniature votive vessel, pottery animal figurines (one probably of a bull), a painted sherd with red human figures and a pottery stand similarly decorated but having in addition an applied figure (possibly a monkey) a chalice top decorated with applied bulls' heads and snakes, a sherd of Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware, two large collared storage jars and one with a shoulder handle. Noticeable by their absence are the many bowls and lamps usually associated with the practice of a cult, as well as the piriform and cylindrical juglets which occur in the tombs and houses of the period.³⁰ Particularly interesting is the presence of large storage jars which come from small rooms situated between the enclosure walls, providing additional evidence of their use as store-rooms.³¹

Summary: The change in plan in the BB sector which took place in Stratum XII and continued through subsequent periods down to Stratum VII A is seen to be the direct result of the erection of a new temple occupying a new position on the traditional, and by now higher sacred area. On all four sides the buildings within the precincts and round the temple itself were oriented to the central structure. During succeeding centuries both the temple and the associated buildings underwent a series of reconstructions which incorporated minor changes but conformed in essence to the original plan.

What, then, is the evidence for the actual temple structure (or structures) during the above five hundred years or so?

III.

The last two phases of Temple 2048 were attributed to Stratum VII, the latest (VII A) being a somewhat poorer structure which utilized the earlier wall foundations and made certain changes connected with the central cult place

³⁰ The only sherd of what was probably a piriform juglet of Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware (Pl. 121:4) was found in a room of the house complex in M 13 situated north of the sacred area.

³¹ From locus 3121 in the south and locus S=T. 5255 in the north-west.

(changes in the rear wall, platform with stairway, etc.) This, the latest building, also made use of the preceding temple's heavy ritual furniture which was found embedded in a partially-burned lime floor associated with the Stratum VII B temple and it was assumed that this floor had served in both phases. The Stratum VII B structure, on the other hand, was distinguished by having the lower courses of its walls built of large ashlar blocks,²² the entrance being flanked on either side by towers built of the same material. In this building the arrangements affecting the central cult place were different from those of the later temple and they likewise differed from those of the temple which had been in use in the preceding period (changes in the back wall, abolition of the niche and introduction of a platform, side recesses, etc.). At the time of the building of the VII B structure, certain changes were also made in the orientation of the west boundary walls, these being no longer in complete alignment with the temple while the distance between them was widened. Against the east face of these two walls a series of rooms was added, which consequently were out of alignment with the temple and one of them appears seriously to have impinged on the west tower, which otherwise was built directly over the rubble foundations of the earlier one.²³ The east tower, however, appears to have been added to the VII B building, being constructed of the ashlar blocks which characterized its masonry. This is seen very clearly from the photographs²⁴ which shows that the large squared stones were not only 'distinctly different from the excellent rubble of the rest of the VIII walls',²⁵ but that they were an addition to and by no means bonded into the east lateral wall of the Stratum VIII building. It is doubtful whether there was a pair of columns before the two towers of Temple 2048 in its VII B phase. Only one column base was found and apart from uncertainty as to which building phase it did indeed belong, it does not appear to have been used structurally when found: contrary to the statement that it was 'set in a good lime pavement',²⁶ the published photographs show it placed on the pavement in front of the temple in secondary usage.²⁷ This is further borne out by the finding of the matching basalt base in debris considerably below the pavement in front of the temple²⁸ and it can be assumed that the two bases had originally been used for columns in an earlier structure.

²² Fig. 252.

²⁴ See especially Fig. 250

²⁷ Figs. 255 and 259

²³ Fig. 256 and compare plans for Strata VIII and VII B.

²⁵ p. 102.

²⁶ p. 105

²⁸ P 105 and entry in Field Diary for 26.1.38.

Below the temple assigned to Stratum VII B an earlier phase still of 2048 was found, the foundations of its walls being built of medium-sized rubble packed between an outer and inner face composed of larger stones.³⁹ Since this building had neither floor nor doorway, it was rightly inferred that what remained of it, directly beneath the Stratum VII B structure, must have been a foundation and that when constructing the new temple the builders had stripped the earlier building's walls to this level in order that they might serve as a base for the ashlar blocks. On the plan for Stratum VIII, the temple is shown as a one-roomed building having a niche in its back wall (close to the central cult place) and the entrance immediately opposite, all on a single axis. The doorway is flanked on either side apparently by non-matching towers which is rather surprising, but which bears out the evidence referred to above,⁴⁰ to the effect that the eastern tower was not part of this structure⁴¹ and that the east lateral wall—broken at its northern end and constructed of the same type of masonry as the rest of the building—originally extended some distance beyond the transverse wall of the entrance, forming some kind of forecourt.⁴²

Temple 2048 was considered by the excavators to have been built in the first instance in Stratum VIII, to which its first phase is assigned. There is, however, little supporting evidence for this and the attribution to Stratum VIII would appear to have been made on the assumption that each rebuilding took place in a succeeding stratum. Only three pottery vessels are recorded from inside the temple of this phase, though a number of other objects were found—some of them coming from below the floor of the Stratum VII phase. All these artifacts were almost certainly brought as offerings: a bronze Reshef figure⁴³ and part of another bronze figurine, two bronze spearheads, two bronze blades, a bronze chisel and bowl, a toggle-pin, a scarab, beads and a stone weight, as well as a

³⁹ Fig. 249.

⁴⁰ See Figs. 250 and 255 (showing entrance and two towers, with the earlier masonry below the Stratum VII structure).

⁴¹ This disconcerting asymmetry of plan is likewise reflected in the rubble layers found below the building (see below p. 218).

⁴² Compare the courtyard in front of the Late Bronze I Orthostat Temple at Hazor and the courtyard fronting part of the temple façade in Level VII at Alalakh. Y. Yadin 'Hazor', *Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*—brochure, 1964, 13 and plan on same page, and L. Woolley, *Alalakh*, London, 1955, Fig. 35.

⁴³ Found in the south-east corner close to the niche, Pl. 235:22 and entry in Field Diary for 17.12.37.

⁴⁴ Pl. 283:3. Compare the cult standard from Hazor, *Hazor II*, Pl. CLXXXI and the cult emblem (probably representing the attributes of the god) held in the left hand of the figure found in

bronze cult standard with tang.⁴⁴ The three pottery vessels found inside the temple are all bowls.⁴⁵ One (No. 24) is a small votive vessel with pierced ear-shaped handle, which belongs to a class of miniature vessels of which a number were found in the vicinity of the temple, all associated with artifacts earlier than Stratum VIII.⁴⁶ A very similar bowl was found south of the temple together with a bichrome ware krater sherd decorated with a fish⁴⁷ which can only be assigned to Stratum IX. Tiny votive vessels of this kind also occurred in sanctuaries and sacred areas at Gezer, Nahariya, Ras Shamra and Byblos,⁴⁸ at all of which they are dated to a period earlier than that of Stratum VIII. The second bowl from inside the temple (No. 3) is almost identical with a bowl found east of the temple⁴⁹ together with a pair of clay doves and a number of markedly carinated bowls on high foot or pedestal—an assemblage which must antedate Stratum VIII and which is rightly assigned to Stratum X. The wide, flaring bowl with high ring base (No. 13) is very similar to, but smaller than, a bowl from south of the temple⁵⁰ which was found together with a bichrome jug.⁵¹ Thus the pottery evidence which comes from within the temple building which should provide the basis for dating the so-called 'Early Phase', is seen to be not only scanty, but inconclusive, since the above three vessels could with equal justification be attributed to Stratum IX.

The Stratum VIII building was replaced by the 'Middle Phase' structure after no appreciable lapse of time, the latter having a lime floor. The artifacts found above this floor were assigned to a general Stratum VII level and were clearly associated with the latest temple building (Stratum VII A), which in all likelihood had no specifically laid floors, but rather a series of beaten earth surfaces upon which the offerings brought daily were placed and later disposed of. Since the 'Middle Phase' of Temple 2048 is securely tied to Stratum VII, the end of the phase immediately preceding it can be assigned to Stratum VIII. But, it is submitted, this same building was also in use during the period covered by Stratum IX, a submission which is supported by the finding of the

debris between the two towers of the entrance, Pl. 237:30 and entries in Field Diary for 13.12.35 and 19.12.35. See *Views of the Biblical World*, Jerusalem, II, 1960, 75, for cult standard after repair.

⁴⁴ Pl. 62:24, 3 and 13

⁴⁶ Pl. 256:9-13.

⁴⁷ In locus N=3019 Pls 53:4 and 134:2

⁴⁸ M. Dothan, 'The cult of Nahariya and Canaanite High Places', *Western Galilee and the Coast of Western Galilee* (Jerusalem, 1965-72) and Fig. 4 (Hebrew)

⁴⁹ In locus N = 203 Pl. 44:4 (with different rim)

⁵⁰ In locus 2061 Pl. 49

⁵¹ Pl. 49:14

rubbish dumps (and probably also store-rooms) outside the temple walls, with a repertoire which contains bichrome ware and other distinctive pottery types characteristic of Stratum IX. It remains to be demonstrated that there was a temple on the sacred area prior to Stratum IX since there are grounds for inferring that such a building (or series of buildings) did indeed exist during the centuries which intervened between the period of the earliest cult structures and the later ones.

IV.

The rubble layers found below the walls of Temple 2048 have long proved to be something of an enigma, yet it is in them and in a true understanding of what they represent that the solution to the correct stratification of the buildings on the sacred area during the latter part of Middle Bronze II lies. Both the excavators' descriptions and the published photographs make it clear that these 'pavements' were composed of small-sized rubble, such as could certainly have accumulated 'from the dressing of stones used in the construction of Temple 2048'.⁵² At first sight such an assumption appears to be somewhat far-fetched, since it is unlikely that sufficient building stones could have been prepared on the spot either to meet the requirements of the new structure, or in order to accumulate the vast quantities of chippings incorporated in the rubble layers. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that much of the material used in the new building was in fact obtained from the sacred area itself. This was done by stripping the walls of an earlier temple—the precursor of Temple 2048—down to foundation level, so that nothing remained of the actual building to show that it had indeed stood there and with only the accumulations round the line of its walls of the cast-off and redundant offerings which had been brought by worshippers to tell of its existence. The walls having been denuded down to their lowest courses, the stones suitable for use in the new building were carefully selected and the superfluous, and especially the small-sized rubble, was discarded. Wherever the former walls were dismantled, it was necessary to fill in their foundation trenches, at the same time guarantee adequate firmness in order to preclude all possible danger of the subsequent sinking of the new walls. This was done by packing in layers of earth and ramming them down between layers of small stones, which were readily to hand after having been rejected as unsuitable for re-use in the masonry of the

⁵² P 102

new temple. Since this process was carried out beneath all the walls of the earlier temple, the result was a series of uneven layers of rubble and earth in place of the former lower wall courses. This is precisely what the excavators found, namely, superimposed rubble 'pavements', separated from one another by layers of varying depths of earth fill. Furthermore, since these layers of small stone and earth were used to fill in the foundation trenches of the walls of the earlier temple structure, they were not merely a substitute for them, but were in position where the robbed walls had originally stood. It follows, then, that the plan of the rubble layers found by the excavators below Temple 2048 is in fact the blueprint of the foundations of the temple which immediately preceded it (Fig. 1). A close examination of this plan shows, that like its predecessors (Temples 5269, 5192 and 4040) and its successors, Temple 2048 consisted of a rectangular room, the entrance and the central cult place being on a single axis. While no niche is indicated in the rear wall, it is very likely that it contained one, since the rubble layers are shown to be considerably lower in the centre than at any other point along its whole length and this would be structurally consistent with a rectangular internal recess at floor level. Altogether there is a great deal of similarity between the two structures, the *cella* in each having almost identical measurements, while on the west side there was a tower, though in the earlier of the two buildings there does not seem to have been a wing projection to balance it on the east, as in the so-called 'Early Phase' of 2048, where it has been shown that the east lateral wall continued beyond the temple facade and probably served to demarcate an open court through which the sanctuary was approached. It is suggested that there was a similar open court before the earlier building, from which a flight of steps led up to the portico, supported on two columns. The position of such steps is indicated by the small tongue of rubble pavement which was found below the centre of the north transverse wall and which is seen to extend some two metres beyond its outer face.⁵³ As for the columns, it has been shown above that the two basalt bases which were found at different levels, must originally have been in use in a building which antedates the Stratum VII B Temple; and while not excluding the possibility of their use in the preceding phase of Temple 2048, the finding of one drum in the debris considerably below the pavement on which the other had been placed makes it likely that both had in the first instance been used earlier.

⁵³ On the grid line between M 13 and M 14.

Turning now to the interior,⁵⁴ it will be noted that near the south-east corner of the *cella* a circular installation was found and this was in all probability the base of a shallow pit connected with the temple ritual;⁵⁵ its position close to the rear wall only goes to strengthen this supposition. Close by, a group of 'plano-convex stone slabs'⁵⁶ was found lying in disturbed order within the limits of the central cult place. The fact that such excellent building stones were not appropriated for secondary usage points to the possibility that they, too, were connected with the rites of the earlier temple and that out of fear or superstition they had been purposely left by the builders who, in general, showed themselves only too ready to re-use all suitable material. The other groups of rubble are shown in the *cella*, somewhat further away from the central cult place, for which several interpretations offer themselves; but since their absolute levels are such that they would have been covered by the floor of the precursor of Temple 2048, it is safe to infer that they formed part of its sub-structure.⁵⁷ A word must be said here concerning the singularly shaped piece of broken masonry, 4006, which is shown as intrusive on the plan for the rubble layers. As is evident from the plan for Stratum XII, this is a carry-over from an earlier period.⁵⁸ This is further borne out by the artifacts found in its vicinity.⁵⁹ Whatever its original function, it would either have been covered by or incorporated in the foundations of the precursor of Temple 2048; and the same applies to two other groups of stones shown in square N 14. As no indication is given as to the nature of 4006, it can be inferred (especially in view of its irregular shape and size) that it was constructed of material which was not considered worthwhile to break down for re-use, so that there was no need to fill in the earlier foundation trench at this point.

⁵⁵ Compare a similar pit in the Orthostat Temple at Hazor, *Hazor* III-IV, Pls. CII:2 and CIV:3.

⁵⁶ Fig. 241.

⁵⁷ The level of the floor may be taken as being about 161.50—i. e., higher than the actual foundations of the walls as indicated by the levels of the rubble layers.

⁵⁸ The upright stone slabs attributed to Stratum XII were apparently also connected with an earlier cultic building and cannot be considered as intrinsic to the precursor of 2048. Pp. 87 and 92 and Figs. 206 and 207.

⁵⁹ See especially the bronze figurine of a deity with prominent nose and horn on head, Pl. 233:11. Similar prominent-nosed figurines have been found at Ras Shamra, Tell Simiryan, and elsewhere—all from contexts dated earlier than Stratum XII at Megiddo. C. F.-A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica* II, Paris, 1949; *id.*; 76, 79 and 82, R. J. Braidwood, 'Report on two sondages on the coast of Syria, south of Tartous', *Syria* 40, 1949, 183 ff. and Schaeffer, *op. cit.*, Fig. 34.

⁶⁴ See plan for Stratum IX.

V.

On the basis of the evidence presented, both as regards the structural remains, the ceramic and other artifacts found, it is clear that there was an earlier temple on the sacred area prior to that which the excavators considered was the 'Early Phase' of Temple 2048. Since the former occupied an identical position and was similar in plan to the buildings which succeeded it, these four structures cannot but be considered as successive re-buildings of the same temple, i. e., Temple 2048 (hereinafter referred to as Phases I-IV). Further, since it has been demonstrated that the Phase II temple originated in Stratum IX (continuing in use through Stratum VIII), it follows that the Phase I structure was superseded by its successor either at the end of Stratum X or at the beginning of Stratum IX. Moreover, it is abundantly clear that the new orientation in the plan of the greater part of the BB sector—in which the buildings were brought into alignment with the temple—took place in Stratum XII. It was then that at least one of (and possibly both) the three-house complexes to the east of the temple was erected, the double precinct walls on the south and the west of the sacred area built and a series of associated buildings (possibly dwellings, shops and workshops) put up to face on to the street by which it was approached from the north. The above building activity, taken in conjunction with the pronounced cultic character of the artifacts found within these precincts from Stratum XII onwards, points to it as the period in which Phase I of Temple 2048 was first erected, this building having continued in use throughout Strata XI and X.⁶⁰

Thus the continuity of tradition and usage which was shown by the excavators to have been in existence throughout the Late Bronze II period is, in the light of a re-interpretation of both the published and unpublished evidence, seen to go back even further, to the beginning of the Middle Bronze II B period—and doubtless even earlier (though this has yet to be proved). The erection of a new temple, 2048, in Stratum XII, rather than in Stratum VIII, is far more in keeping with our present knowledge of other sites where temples having a basically similar plan to that of Megiddo were erected, such as the Orthostat Temple at Hazor and the Fortress Temple at Shechem. Both buildings were in use over a considerable period, the earliest structures being dated

⁶⁰ It is possible that the original structure was modified and altered during this comparatively long period, but owing to the walls having been completely denuded there is nothing to indicate such structural changes within the building as were in all probability made in the temple's arrangements.

respectively to the late eighteenth-early seventeenth centuries⁶¹ and to the mid-seventeenth century,⁶² with which the new dating proposed for the Phase I temple at Megiddo ties in well (leaving a possible margin of some fifty years). By bridging the greater part of what has long been a puzzling gap in the use of the sacred area as a temple site, not only has a misconception been corrected, but a truer insight has been gained into the cultural history of Megiddo during a not inconsiderable and extremely important part of the second millennium B. C. E.

⁶¹ Y. Yadin, *IEJ*, 9, 1959, pp. 81 and 84.

⁶² G. E. Wright, *Shechem*, New York - Toronto, 1965, 100.

A: Section 6, looking east.
General view.



THE ROMAN ROAD
NEAR MEVO-BEITAR

B: Unpublished bichrome sherds
from outside the south wall of
Temple 2048, Phase II
from NW = 3011.

*(Photo by
courtesy of Oriental Institute,
Chicago)*

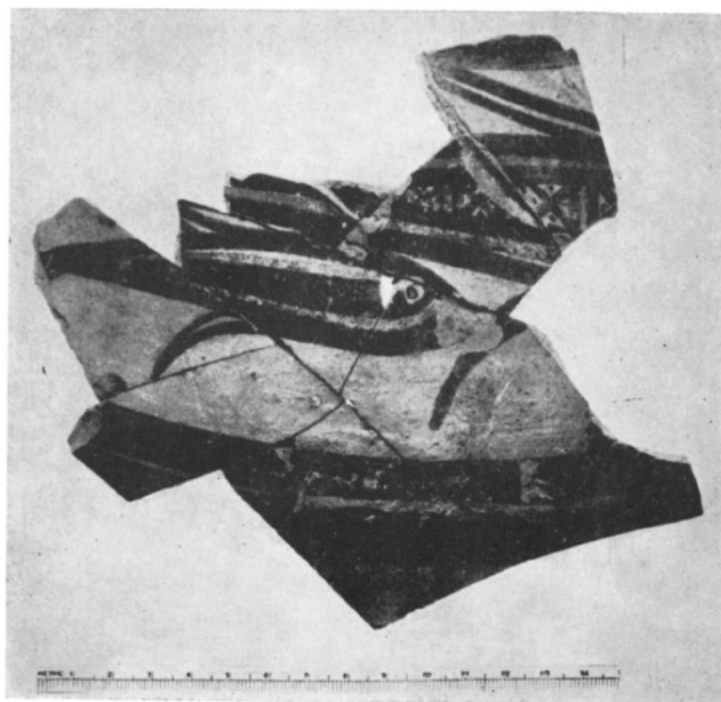


PLATE 40



A: Unpublished bichrome sherds from outside the south wall of Temple 2048, Phase II N = 3019.

(Photos by courtesy of Oriental Institute, Chicago)

MEGIDDO SACRED AREA MBA II



B



C



D



E



F

SEALS OF EXILES