

A New Section of the Third Wall, Jerusalem

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A NEW SECTION OF THE THIRD WALL,
JERUSALEM.¹

BY E. L. SUKENIK AND L. A. MAYER

IN 1928 we finished our excavations of the Third Wall of Ancient Jerusalem at the entrance to the American School of Oriental Research. In the small portion excavated within the courtyard proper, all that we discovered was the mosaic floor of a Byzantine building, but there were no traces of the Wall underneath.

The section of the Wall, uncovered on the road in front of the School, contained the remains of a gate with a tower to the west of it. It was natural to suppose that the Wall would continue eastward, for it seemed most unlikely that the gate of the city was at the angle of the Wall. This assumption was strengthened by the fact that our excavation underneath the foundations of the present Wall of the City, near Herod's Gate, in a straight North-to-South direction from the point of our last excavation, failed to yield positive results. In fact, Prof. Gallig, Père Mamert and Mr. Solomiac, who dealt with this problem after the publication of our book, thought that the Third Wall continued in a straight line eastward as far as the slope of the Kidron Valley, as Edward Robinson had thought nearly a century before. The most important point in the remaining part of the northern stretch of this Wall was, of course, the turn. But its distance from the gate of the Third Wall had to be determined by excavations.

The opportunity of continuing this excavation presented itself in August, 1940, when the Jerusalem Municipality undertook the construction of a network of roads in this section of the new city of Jerusalem. In the course of construction of a road running at the back of the American School of Oriental Research, parallel to Saladin Road, a few large and coarse stones were noticed appearing to be in line with the

¹ Translation of a Hebrew article published in *Kedem*, Vol. I, 1942.

course of the Third Wall which had been uncovered west of the School. The Department of Antiquities of the Government of Palestine, which was supervising the various archaeological discoveries made at that time in this area, informed us about these large stones. That same week the new excavation was started, this time on behalf of the Hebrew University in co-operation with the American School of Oriental Research. We were at work during August and September, first on the road passing by the School and later inside its enclosure. East of this point, across the road, there is the playground of the Raudat al-Ma'arif School, and beyond it two private houses set in gardens, where we could not excavate. Consequently, we had to find a convenient spot for further excavations east of these houses. We resumed our work in November on a plot of land owned by Mr. Ishaq Darwish, which the Municipality had assigned for the construction of a road—about 150 metres east of the property of the American School of Oriental Research.

We wish to take this opportunity of expressing our sincere thanks to all those who assisted us in one way or another in the course of our work : Mr. R. W. Hamilton, Director of the Department of Antiquities of the Government of Palestine, was very kind in issuing immediately the necessary licence and in sending the chief photographer of the Palestine Archaeological Museum, Mr. J. Schweig, to photograph the finds. We are grateful to the Town Clerk of Jerusalem, Mr. R. D. Badcock, and the City Engineer, Mr. A. K. Park, who suspended the work of road construction until we had completed our excavation and suffered with extreme grace and tolerance the inconvenience caused to them in their work. Prof. Cl. S. Fisher, Acting Director of the American School of Oriental Research, offered us at the very beginning the co-operation of the School, an offer which proved a great help in many ways. We appreciate very much Mr. Ishaq Darwish's goodwill and neighbourly friendliness whilst we excavated on his property. Mr. N. Avigad of the Museum of Jewish Antiquities assisted us during the excavations and prepared the plans and drawings accompanying this report. Nor can we fail to mention Mr. Michael Solomiac who has taken such an active interest during the last few years in the course of

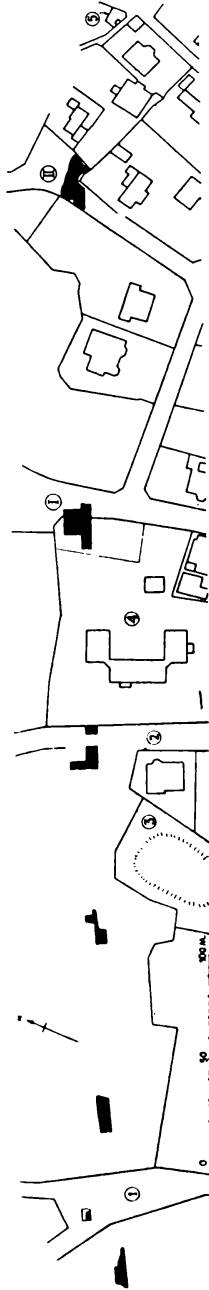


FIG. 1. SKETCH PLAN OF THE NEW SECTION OF THE THIRD WALL AND THE EASTERN END OF THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED PART

I, II—THE NEW ADDITIONS

- 1—NABLUS ROAD
- 2—SALADIN ROAD
- 3—ECOLE BIBLIQUE
- 4—AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH
- 5—HIJAZI MOSQUE.

the Third Wall in connection with his theory concerning the location of the Tower of Psephinos and other towers in the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. Mr. Solomiac was kind enough to call our attention to various finds in this area which seemed to be remains of the Third Wall, and he helped finance our excavation by a contribution to the Hebrew University.

Lovers of the antiquities of Jerusalem evinced great interest in this excavation. We were favoured quite frequently,

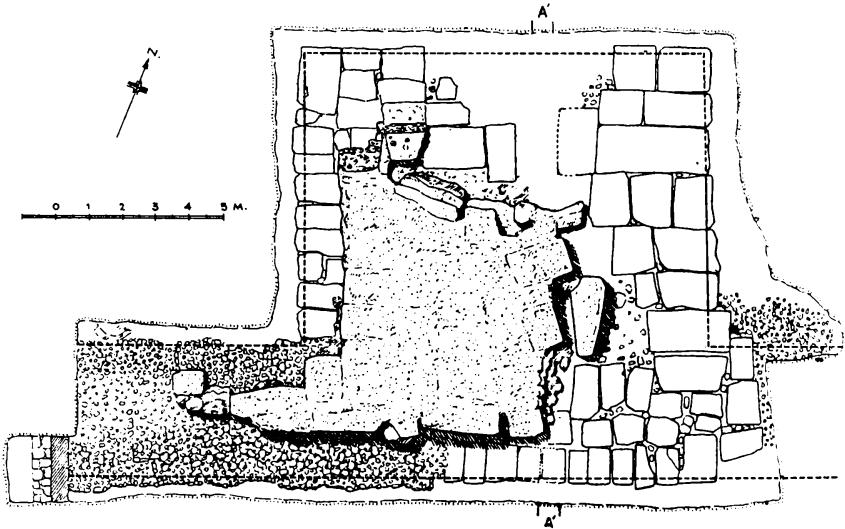


FIG. 2. THE TOWER NEAR THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH. A'-A' MARK THE FENCE OF THE SCHOOL GARDEN.

to our great pleasure, with the visits of members of the Department of Antiquities and the Palestine Archæological Museum, the President of the Hebrew University, members of the French Archæological School of the Dominican Fathers (to our regret Père Vincent was absent from Jerusalem at the time of our excavation, having remained abroad), the Director of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and members of the Board of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society.

The section which has been excavated by us and by the American School of Oriental Research on the grounds of the

School (Plate III, 1) contains the remains of a wall 23 m. in length, and a tower projecting to the north 9 m. in width (Fig. 2). Of the wall itself on either side of the tower, only the bedding has remained. Of the tower, the foundation layer was left, built of large flat stones, ranging in thickness from 20 cm. to 60 cm. The stones vary in size, the largest one measuring 3.30 m. in length and 1.50 m. in width (Plate III, 1). It should be noted that the larger stones were on the east side of the tower, and the smaller ones on the west (Plate III, 2). This layer was built on top of a thin bedding of small stones joined with cement, and resting on undisturbed soil composed of red loamy earth and rough stones, larger in size the nearer to the rock. At the south-east corner we found the rock at a depth of 1.30 m. beneath the first layer of stones. Between these stones, as well as between them and the layer above, there were patches of cement still adhering in various places. These remnants of cement made it possible to determine the exact position of the upper layer which has receded a little. Traces of this line are discernible on the east side for a length of 4-5 m. and somewhat more faintly on the western side of the tower. On two of the north-east corner stones there are grooves near the northern edge which apparently served to indicate the continuation of the line of the upper layer of stones (we found similar grooves, although clearer and of better workmanship, serving as indication for the masons in the westernmost tower of our previous excavation).

Only a few broken fragments were left of the upper layers of stones. On the other hand, a considerable part of the interior of the tower has remained intact. It consists of a filling of large coarse stones and solid blocks of smaller stones cemented together. On the western side of the tower this filling rests on the second row of foundation stones and on the northern side on the fourth row. A large part of the eastern portion was apparently destroyed during the construction of the road and the erection of the wall-fence of the American School of Oriental Research. The height of this filling above the foundation layer is 1.10 m. Presumably the foundation layer extended over the entire area of the tower and was covered by the filling, as can be seen near the edges of the

latter. However, since we did not demolish this block, we cannot make any definite statements with regard to the central area of the tower.

In the second portion east of the American School of Oriental Research (Plate IV, 1), the central point from which we started our excavation was a heap of rough-hewn

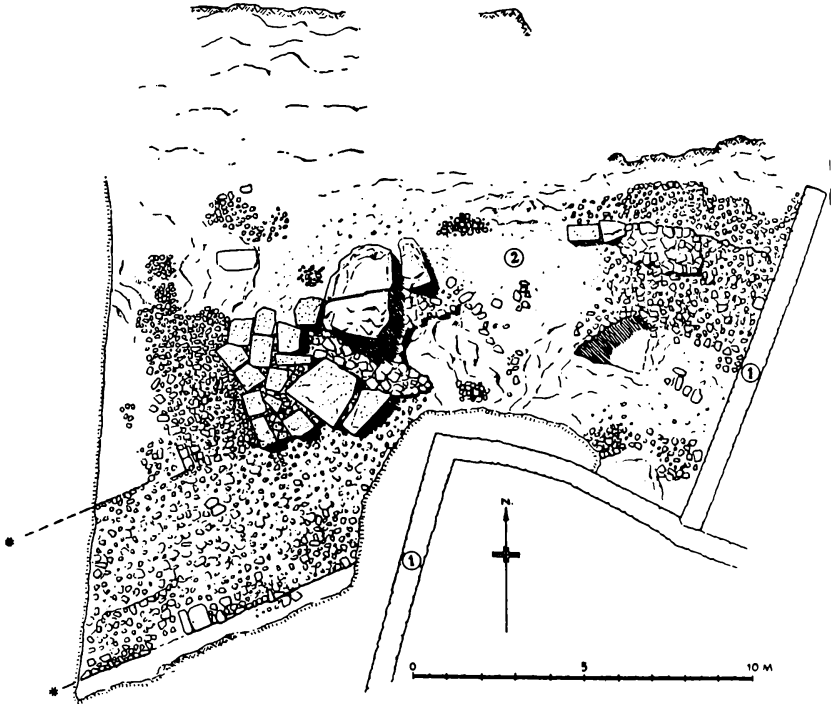


FIG. 3. THE EASTERN END OF THE EXCAVATION. 1—THE FENCE OF TWO ADJACENT HOUSES; 2—SITE OF ARAB KILN

stones near the block of solid rock rising almost to the height of the level of the ground at this spot. The large stones (0.60–1.10 m. high; 0.60–1.70 m. long; 0.60–1.60 m. wide) were placed either closely together or else the space between them was filled with earth and rubble. They rested on a bedding made up of small stones held together with clay and lime, which extended beyond the stones in all



1



2

THE TOWER NEAR THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH.
1. EASTERN PART LOOKING SOUTH. 2. WESTERN PART, LOOKING SOUTH.



1



2

THE EASTERN END OF THE EXCAVATION

1. HEAP OF STONES FORMING THE INTERIOR OF THE TOWER, LOOKING EAST.
2. REMAINS OF WALL, ADJACENT TO THE TOWER, LOOKING EAST.

directions. As the excavation showed, this heap of stones formed the interior of a tower. In the eastern half of our area we found a kiln of the Arabic period built into the Wall.

The remains of our finds in this section are shown in Fig. 3. That part of the bedding which is marked by asterisks indicates the line of the Wall, about 4.80 m. in width (Plate IV, 2). The portion which projects northward, extending at least 7.50 m. in width and 20 m. in length, forms a tower. On the west side, the outlines of the bedding seem to indicate that the tower was at right angles to the line of the Wall. The eastern and the northern boundaries remain undefined—the eastern, since we could not excavate on the private fenced-in property to the east of the excavation grounds; the northern, since the bedding was destroyed for the most part and only the rock-cuttings can perhaps serve as guidance in determining the outer extremity to which the tower extended. At all events this tower is the largest of all the towers we have uncovered so far in our excavations of the Third Wall.

The unusual length of the tower and the high level of the ground in this section, which drops suddenly in the immediate neighbourhood, lead one to suppose that there must be a turning point in the course of the Wall somewhere nearby. This assumption, however, can be turned into a certainty only by a further excavation, which we hope to undertake very soon.

This new section—beginning at the easternmost point of our excavation in 1928—has added 265 metres of length to the course of the Third Wall.