

WESTERN AREA M (THE 1998-2000 SEASONS)

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Gottlieb Schumacher, the first excavator of Megiddo, worked at the site on behalf of the Deutschen Palästina-Vereins from 1903 to 1905 (Schumacher 1908; for the finds see Watzinger 1929). One of his main efforts was the excavation of a 10 m wide trench (Fig. 5.1) which crossed the centre of the site from south to north (Schumacher 1908: Taf. II; see also Lamon and Shipton 1939: Fig. 114)). Two of the three main sectors of his excavation in this trench were named the Nordburg and the Mittelburg (*ibid.*: Taf. II, XII, XVI). The former was found to be a part of an elaborate edifice, usually interpreted as a palace, while the latter was, in the main, a necropolis in which two elaborate burial chambers labelled Grabkammer I and Grabkammer II were uncovered (*ibid.*: Taf. V, VI, XVI) and found full of rich gifts (Watzinger 1929: 2-17). Another structure is a well-preserved monument with a corbelled roof (*ibid.*: 77, Abb. 102, Taf. XX, marked 'f' in Taf. XVI). This structure has usually been interpreted as a monumental tomb (e.g., Mazar 1990:278; Ussishkin 1992:670), though it was found empty of goods. We therefore refer to it by the original title given by Schumacher – Chamber f.



Fig. 5.1: Location of Area M vis-à-vis the central sector of Schumacher's trench. *Left*) Plan (based on Loud 1948: Fig. 415); *Right*) Aerial view 1998, looking north.

Schumacher dated Grabkammer I and Grabkammer II of the Mittelburg to his Second Stratum (that is, the second from the bottom), the Nordburg and other walls of the Mittelburg to his Third Stratum (though he considered the Nordburg to be the ‘younger’ of the two), and Chamber f of the Mittelburg to his Fourth Stratum. He also noticed that Chamber f was covered by a 1 m thick conflagration layer (for his stratigraphic description see mainly 1908:66, 75).

Watzinger (1929:24) dated the earliest parts of the Mittelburg and the Nordburg to ca. 1600 BCE. He argued that the former was destroyed ca. 1400 BCE while the latter continued to be in use, possibly until 1200 BCE. The Oriental Institute team published a new plan of the area of the Nordburg (Loud 1948: Fig. 415) and assigned the main phase of the Nordburg and Chamber f to Stratum XII of the Middle Bronze Age. Kempinski (1989:46, Plan 3) accepted the dating of the Nordburg (and Chamber f) to Stratum XII, and dated Grabkammer I and Grabkammer II to the “late phase of the MBII B and the LBI” (1989:193, Strata X-IX of the University of Chicago excavations; see Watzinger 1929:24).¹ Ussishkin (1992:670) and Nigro (1994) accepted the dating of the Nordburg to the Middle Bronze Age.

The work in Area M in 1998-2000 aimed at clarifying stratigraphic and chronological issues related to Schumacher’s excavation in the trench, specifically the date of the Nordburg and Chamber f located to its south. In 1998 excavations were carried out in the narrow space between the two monuments (Squares AT-AU/28-29), i.e., Vorhof g (Schumacher 1908: Taf. XII), with the eastern end of Schumacher’s trench functioning as the eastern baulk of the excavation (Fig. 5.2). Schumacher’s baulk was trimmed and cleaned, and became the stratigraphic section of the area – almost 7 m long and over 2.5 m high (Fig. 5.3).

In 2000 excavation was expanded in three directions (Figs. 5.4, 5.5). In the north, work was extended into the southern part of the Nordburg (Squares AT-AW/30, AT-AU/31). In the south, a small sounding was opened immediately to the south of and adjacent to Chamber f (Squares AT/26-27). The latter was no more than a cleaning operation of the Schumacher dig, aimed at observing the relationship between the different architectural elements. In the second half of the 2000 season and in 2002 excavation was extended to the east of the Schumacher trench (Eastern M). The excavation in the Schumacher trench was terminated in the middle of the 2000 season.

The excavations in Area M revealed remains of ten layers. Levels M-10 to M-5 were unearthed in 1998-2000 in the trench (Western Area M), and remains of Levels M-5 to M-1 were uncovered in 2000-2002 to the east of the trench (Eastern Area M). In 2004 the western and eastern sectors of Area M were combined into one area. This chapter reports the finds of Levels M-10 to M-5 unearthed in 1998-2000 in the trench (Western Area M).² The most important layer is Level M-6, which is comprised of elements of the Nordburg including Schumacher’s Vorhof g. In all squares in Western Area M which are located to the north of Chamber f excavation penetrated through the surface left by Schumacher and reached remains, including floors, of earlier layers. The dig yielded crucial information pertaining to the dating of the monuments excavated in the beginning of the 20th century. The 2004 season revealed vital data regarding Levels M-6 to M-4, including new information on the Nordburg and on Chamber f, though another season is needed in order to clarify their stratigraphic situation. Hence the remains uncovered in the 2000-2002 seasons in Eastern Area M, including all finds related to Chamber f, will be described in the next report covering subsequent excavation seasons.

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1. Kempinski was wrong from the outset about the dating of Chamber f, as it is built over the two corbelled tombs which he dated correctly to the MBIII/LBI.
 2. The excavation of this area yielded a limited amount of well-stratified pottery which is therefore presented here rather than in a separate chapter.



Fig. 5.2: General view of the excavation in Western Area M in 1998, looking east. Note the southern wall of the Nordburg on the left and the monumental Chamber f on the right (with an opening in the roof).

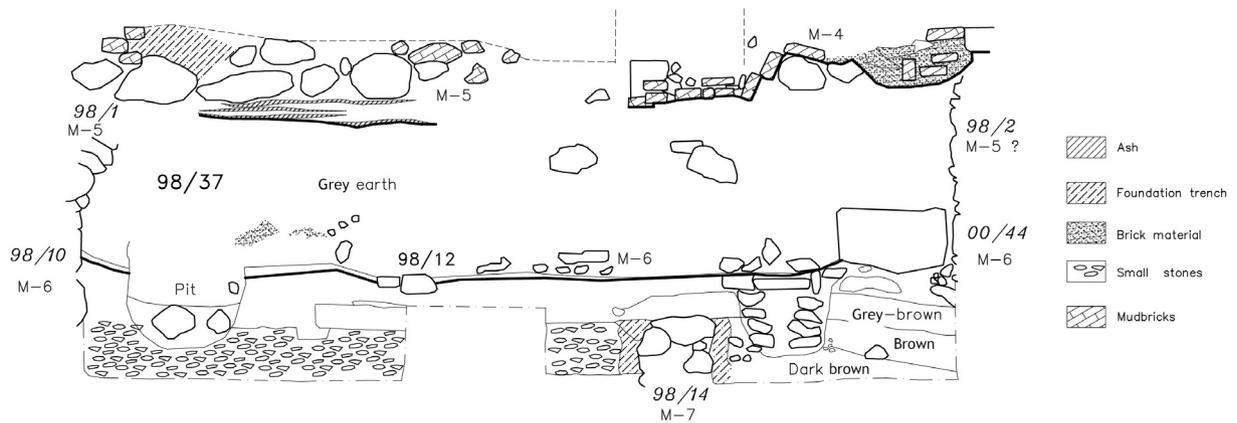


Fig. 5.3: The east baulk of Western Area M (the east baulk of Schumacher's trench).



Fig. 5.4: General view of the excavation in Area M in 2000, looking east. Note remains of the Nordburg on the left, the monumental Chamber f on the right (with an opening in the roof) and Western Area M in top background.



Fig. 5.5: General view of Area M in 2000, looking north. Team member stands on the roof of the monumental Chamber f. Eastern Area M on top-right.

A word on the topography of the mound in general and Area M in particular is appropriate here. Both now (after removal of the top strata by the University of Chicago team) and in the past, Megiddo's highest point was in the southeast (see map in Schumacher 1908: Taf. I). From there the layers slope towards the northwest, reaching the lowest point in the area of the gates. This means that buildings in the south of the Schumacher's trench could have had higher levels than buildings of the same period in the north. Yet, in the limited distances in our excavation in Western Area M, elevations of a given layer in adjacent squares are basically the same.

LEVEL M-10

A few MB I (Albright's MB IIA) pottery items (Fig. 5.6) were found on a patch of floor, in a deep probe in the southwestern corner of Square AT/30 (Locus 00/M/14; elevation 159.40) ca. 2 m under the floor of the Nordburg. It is noteworthy that Schumacher unearthed a MBI grave (labelled Grab f) further north, also about 2 m under the floor of the Nordburg (1908: Abb. 61, 63-64, his elevation 176.00).

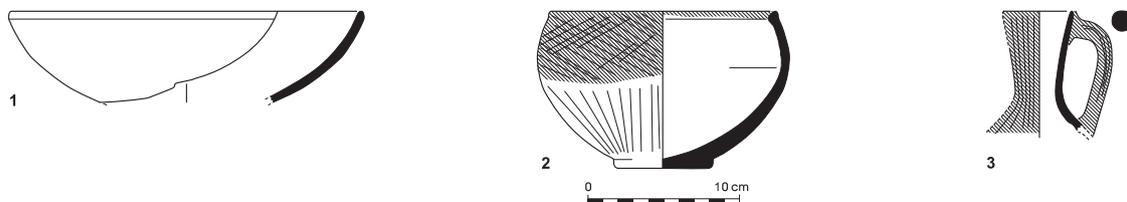


Fig. 5.6: MB I pottery from a probe in Square AT/30 (Level M-10).

FIGURE 5.6: MIDDLE BRONZE I POTTERY FROM A PROBE IN SQUARE AT/30 (LEVEL M-10)

No.	Reg. No.	Vessel	Bucket elevation
1	00/M/14/VS2	Bowl	159.40-159.87
2	00/M/14/VS3	Bowl	159.40-159.87
3	00/M/14/VS1	Juglet	159.40-159.87

LEVEL M-9

Excavation in the northernmost square in Area M (AU/31), under the southwestern corner of the courtyard of the Nordburg, started from the level reached by Schumacher, that is, significantly below the Nordburg's floor and wall foundations (the floor in Room k of the Nordburg can still be seen in one of the sections, elevation 161.21). The remains of Level M-9 (Fig. 5.7) consist of two parallel walls, with an entrance in one of them, and two sections of a light earthen floor (Loci 00/M/17 and 00/M/23). Wall 00/M/5 of Level M-9 runs under Wall 00/M/8 of the Nordburg.

The latest items from the few sherds found on the floor date to the MB II (Fig. 5.8). Their limited number does not allow a precise chronological conclusion.

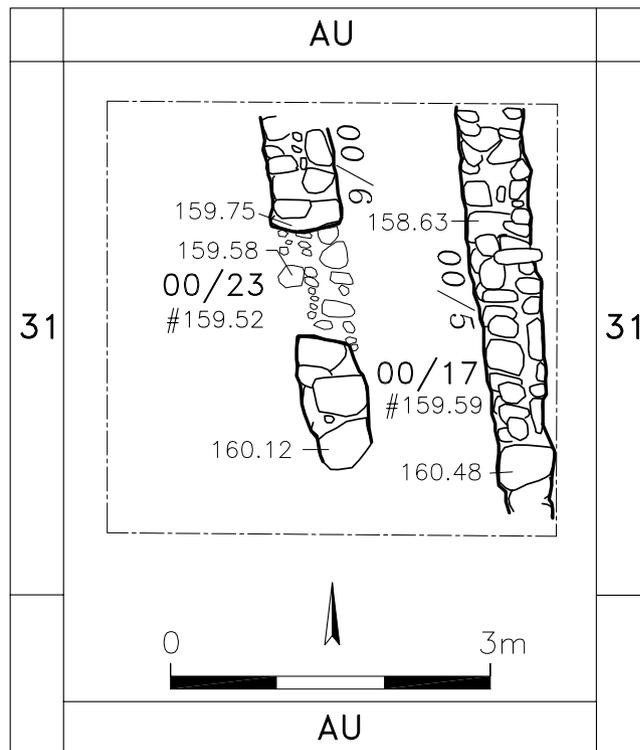


Fig. 5.7: Plan of Level M-9.

LEVEL M-8

Sparse remains of this layer (Fig. 5.9) were unearthed in several squares. They are oriented somewhat differently from the remains of Level M-9.

Wall 00/M/24 in Square AU/31 was built over Floor 00/M/23 of Level M-9. A partly preserved floor (00/M/9) was found connected to Walls 00/M/17 and 00/M/26 in Square AT/30 (under Room k of the Nordburg [Schumacher 1908: Taf. XII]). The walls in Squares AT-AU/28-29 were affiliated with Level M-8 only because they were found under remains of Level M-7.

A limited number of Middle Bronze Age sherds were unearthed on Floor 00/M/9. They are not enough to determine a more specific phase in the period.

LEVEL M-7

Level M-7 is the first layer in Area M which produced a coherent plan (Figs. 5.10, 5.11). The remains in Squares AT-AU/28-30 include walls, a tabun, installations and patches of floors belonging to a building of a domestic nature. They were found sandwiched between the remains of Level M-8 below and the remains of the Nordburg and Chamber f above. The limited number of sherds found in relation to these remains date to the Middle Bronze Age; they do not allow a more accurate dating.

Walls found by Schumacher which we cleaned to the south of and under Chamber f (Fig. 5.5) should probably be affiliated with this level. Firstly, they too are sealed under Chamber f and secondly, their elevations seem to be similar to those of the Level M-7 walls found to the north of Chamber f.

These remains belong to Schumacher's Grabkammer I and Grabkammer II (1908: Taf. IV), which date to one of the later phases of the Middle Bronze Age (Gonen 1992:155; MBIII/LBI according to Kempinski 1989:193). Therefore, it seems plausible to tentatively date Level M-7 to the time-frame of Strata XI-X.

LEVEL M-6

The main feature of Level M-6 (Fig. 5.12) is the Nordburg, which was almost fully excavated by Schumacher (1908:37-66, Taf. XII). In 1998 new information on this level came mainly from the dig in Squares AT-AU/28-29.

The key element for dating Level M-6, including the Nordburg, is Floor 98/M/12, which had been partially unearthed by Schumacher (Vorhof g in Schumacher 1908: Taf. XII). On the floor Schumacher found several worked basalt stones – two described as *masseboth* and one as *ausgehöhlter stein* – and a tabun (see the bottom right of picture in Schumacher 1908: Abb. 32). This floor was re-exposed in 1998 (Fig. 5.13) with the items uncovered by Schumacher found *in situ* or lying nearby. Two stone-lined pits also belong to this layer: 98/M/16 and 98/M/22 in Squares AU/29 and AT/29 respectively (for the latter see below).

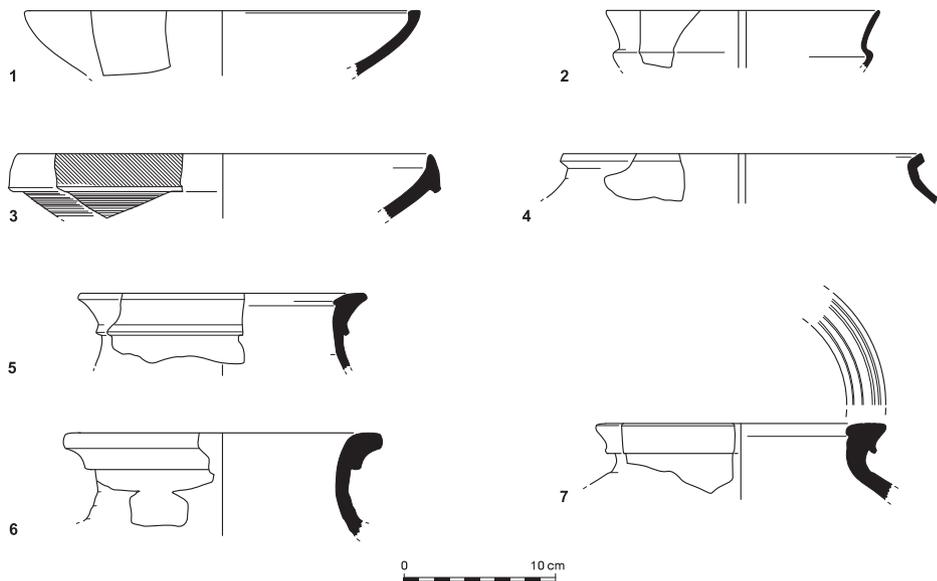


Fig. 5.8: Pottery from the floor of Level M-9.

FIGURE 5.8: POTTERY FROM THE FLOOR OF LEVEL M-9

No.	Registration No.	Vessel	Bucket elevation
1	00/M/17/VS1	Bowl	159.70
2	00/M/23/VS6	Bowl	159.52-159.53
3	00/M/23/VS5	Bowl	159.52-159.53
4	00/M/23/VS4	Cooking-pot	159.52-159.53
5	00/M/23/VS3	Storage jar	159.53-159.61
6	00/M/23/VS2	Storage jar	159.53-159.61
7	00/M/23/VS1	Storage jar	159.53-159.61

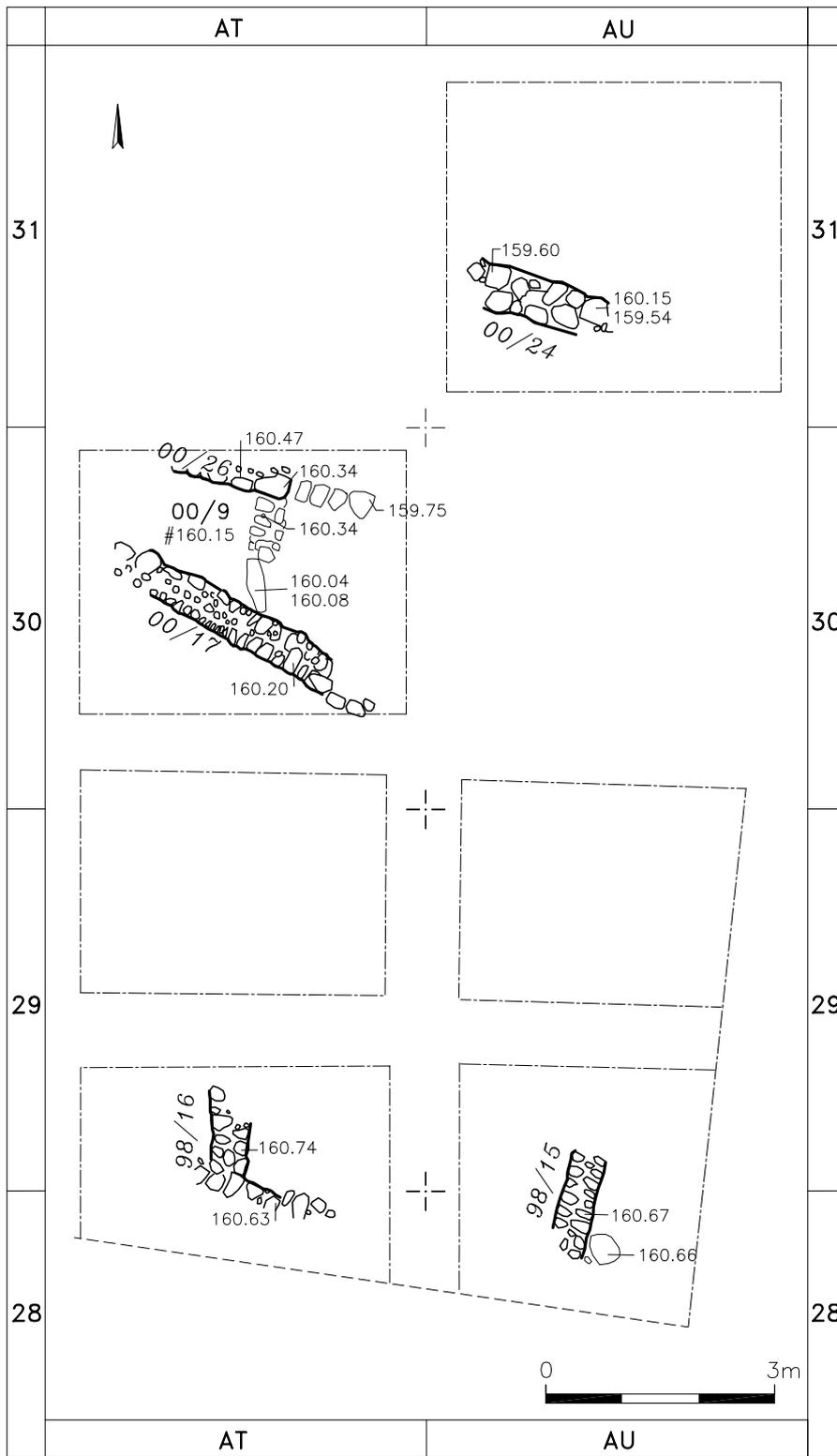


Fig. 5.9: Plan of Level M-8.

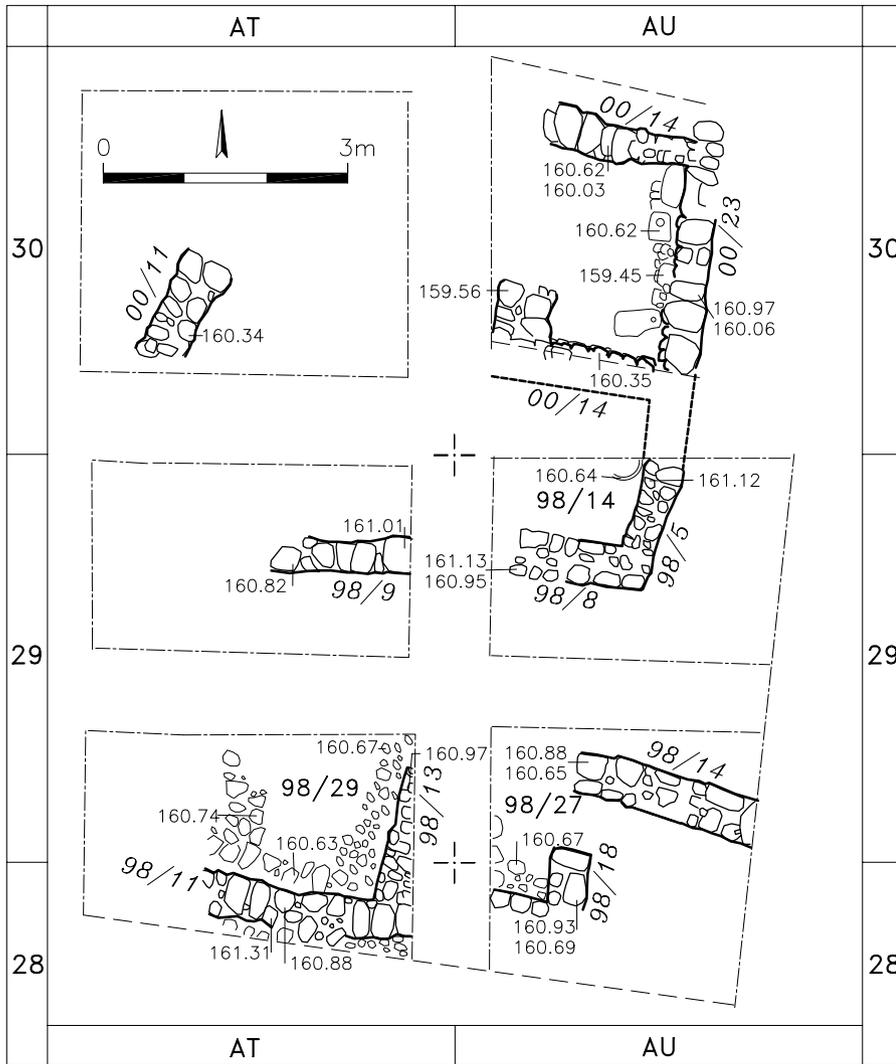


Fig. 5.10: Plan of Level M-7.

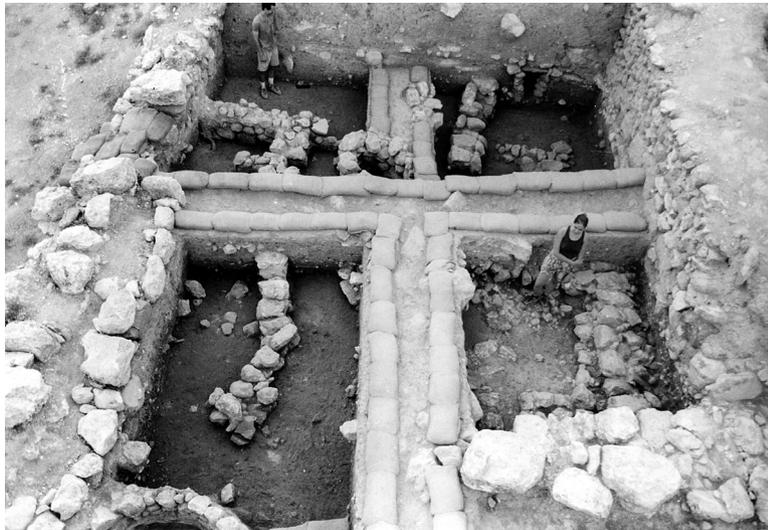


Fig. 5.11: Remains of Level M-7 in Squares AT-AU/28-29, looking east.

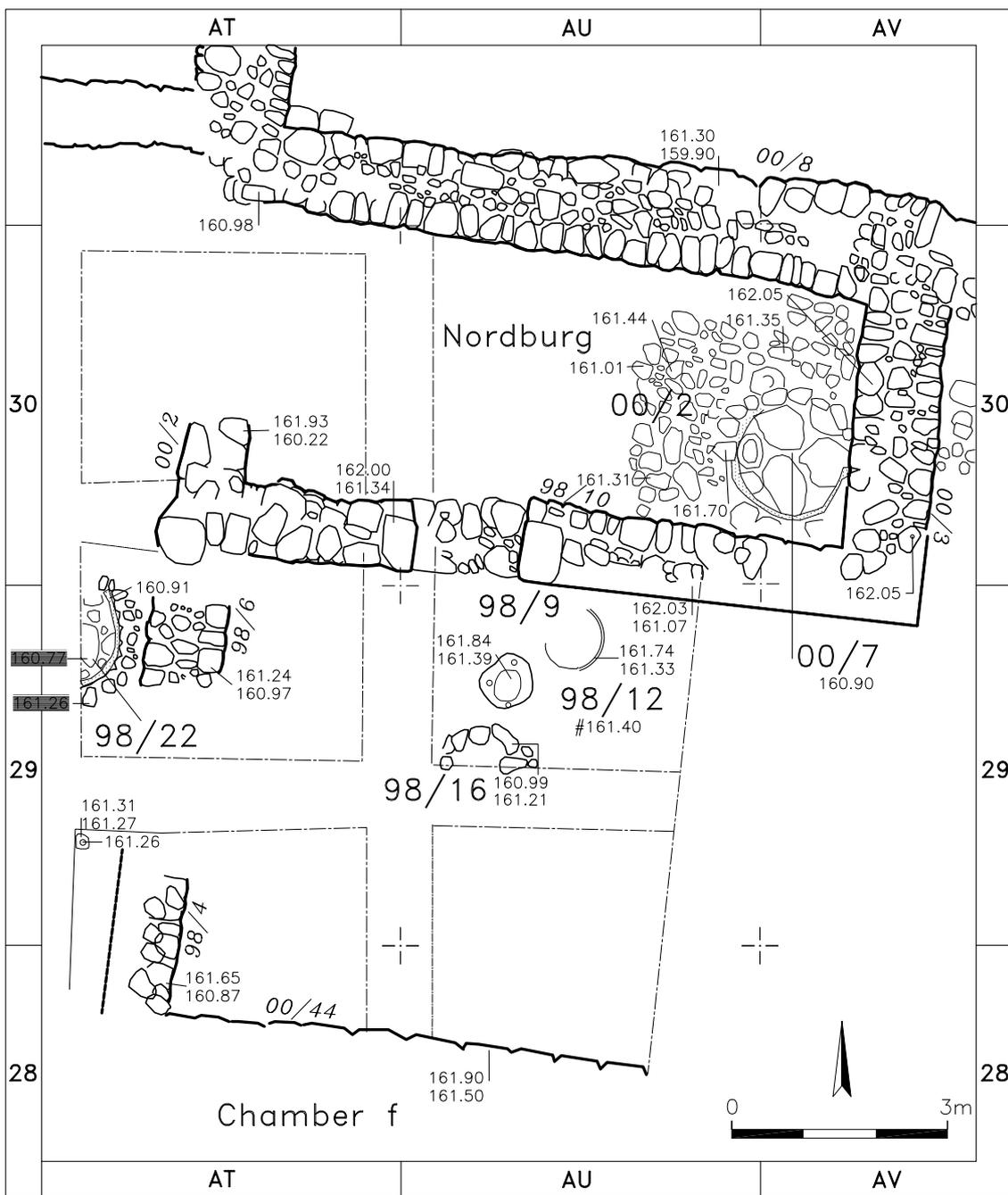


Fig. 5.12: Plan of Level M-6.



Fig. 5.13: Tabun 98/M/9 and a worked basalt stone on Floor 98/M/12, looking southeast.

Floor 98/M/12 clearly connects to Wall 98/M/10 – the southern wall of the Nordburg (Figs. 5.3, 5.13). Whether it touches Wall 00/M/44 (the lower courses of Chamber f) or the wall cuts through the floor is not clear, but Wall 00/M/44 connects to Wall 98/M/4, which in turn seems to connect Wall 98/M/6 and the Nordburg. Hence, it looks as if Wall 00/M/44 was part of the construction effort of Level M-6.

Another question is whether Wall 00/M/44 can be considered an integral part of Chamber f, or was reused by its builders. (It is noteworthy that the upper part of the northern wall of Chamber f is built of much smaller stones than Wall 00/M/44.) The first option implies that Chamber f was built in Level M-6 and that in this phase it was a free-standing structure. The second option means that Chamber f was added later (in Level M-5 or M-4), that it was buried in a fill, and that in the time of Level M-6 this area was part of the southern sector of the Nordburg – a walled space which had a domestic function. The answer to this question, which was still being debated in 2004, will hopefully come when the excavation of the area to the east of Chamber f will be finished, probably in the 2006 season.

The excavation of the part of Floor 98/M/12 which had not been cleaned by Schumacher yielded a handful of LB II sherds (Fig. 5.14:1-5, 7-11). The walls of Tabun 98/M/09 were lined with sherds that also dated to the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 5.14:6, 13). This, and the fact that Level M-6 lies over MB III/LB I remains (Level M-7) and under Iron I remains (Levels M-5 and M-4 in Eastern M), indicate that the Nordburg should be dated to the Late Bronze II, and that it was probably built during the days of University of Chicago's Strata VIII or VII. This conclusion has been confirmed by the results of the 2004 excavations, which indicated that the Nordburg functioned until the end of Stratum VIIA. As mentioned above, at the end of the 2004 season it was still being debated whether Chamber f was built in the LB II, together with the Nordburg (Finkelstein and Franklin, supervisor of Area M in 2004), or in the Iron I, after it went out of use (Ussishkin and Deutsch).

In 2000, as part of the operation in Western Area M, Rooms d and p of the Nordburg (Schumacher 1908: Taf. XII) were cleaned. Schumacher uncovered the stone-lined, round, plastered Installation P in the Nordburg east of Room d (Figs. 5.12, 5.15). This installation (00/M/7) was cleaned after the 2002 season and the stones which Schumacher left untouched inside (Fig. 5.15) were removed. A handful of olive stones were found under them (Chapter 35). The installation is well-incorporated into the floor of the Nordburg and hence belongs to Level M-6. Half of a possibly similar installation (98/M/22) was uncovered in Square AT/29 and another, also with olive stones inside, was unearthed in Level K-6, which seems to date to the latest phase of the Late Bronze Age. These installations should no doubt be identified as olive oil presses (Chapter 35).

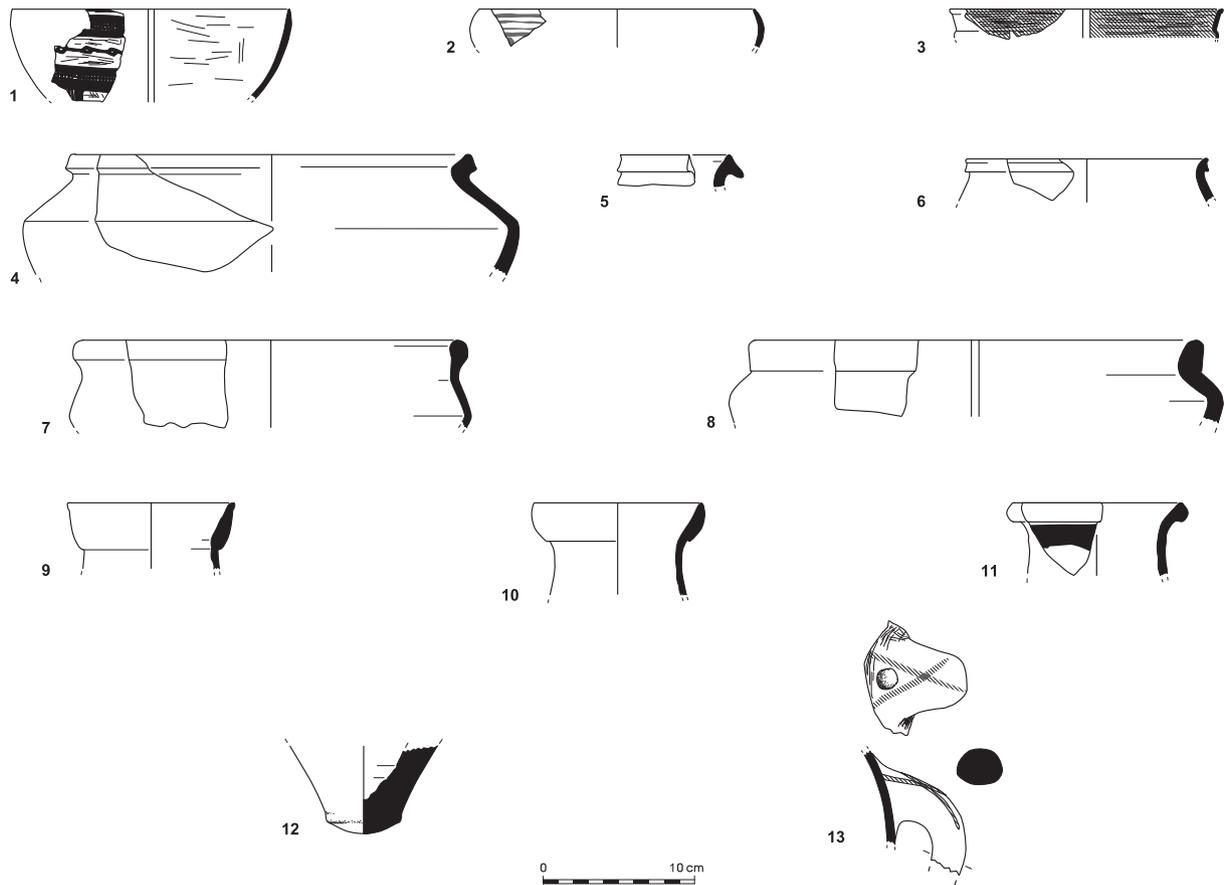


Fig. 5.14: Pottery from Floor 98/M/12 (1-5, 7-11) and Tabun 98/M/9 (6, 13) of Level M-6.

FIGURE 5.14: POTTERY FROM FLOOR 98/M/12 (1-5, 7-11) AND TABUN 98/M/9 (6, 13) OF LEVEL M-6

No.	Reg. No.	Vessel	Bucket elevation	Comments
1	98/M/12/VS7	Bowl	161.06-161.08	Milk bowl; make-up of floor
2	98/M/12/VS10	Bowl	161.36-161.37	Milk bowl (locally made?)
3	98/M/12/VS9	Bowl	161.06-161.08	Cypriote; make-up of floor
4	98/M/12/VS3	Cooking-pot	161.33-161.36	
5	98/M/12/VS6	Cooking-pot	161.36-161.37	
6	98/M/9/VS1	Cooking-pot	161.33-161.47	
7	98/M/12/VS2	Krater	161.02-161.09	Make-up of floor
8	98/M/12/VS1	Krater	161.33-161.36	
9	98/M/12/VS4	Storage jar	161.22-161.33	
10	98/M/12/VS5	Storage jar	161.36-161.37	
11	98/M/12/VS8	Jug	161.22-161.33	
12	98/M/16/VS2	Storage jar	160.73-160.98	Make-up of floor
13	98/M/9/VS2	Storage jar	161.33-161.47	



Fig. 5.15: General view of the southern part of the Nordburg after the 2000 season, looking northwest. Note the Round Installation P, unearthed by Schumacher, in the foreground. It was cleaned after the 2002 season (Locus 00/M/7).

LEVEL M-5

Several elements could be safely assigned to this layer (Fig. 5.16):

1. Traces of a reconstruction attempt in the southern wall of the Nordburg, labelled Wall 98/M/12.
2. Wall 98/M/1 which supports Fill 98/M/37 was built over Wall 98/M/9 of Level M-6. It was constructed like a terrace leaning towards the fill.
3. Wall 98/M/23 in Square AT/29, which supports the same fill.
4. Wall 00/M/7 built in Square AU/30 on top of and with a slightly different orientation than Level M-6 Wall 00/M/8 of the Nordburg.
5. Wall 98/M/2 considered as the original upper part of the northern wall of Chamber f (Ussishkin) or as the reconstruction of the original wall (Finkelstein and Franklin).

These elements belong to the Iron I reconstruction operation, which included the laying of a fill over the Nordburg, after the destruction of the latter. Most of this operation was detected in Eastern Area M and will be reported in the next *Megiddo* volume.

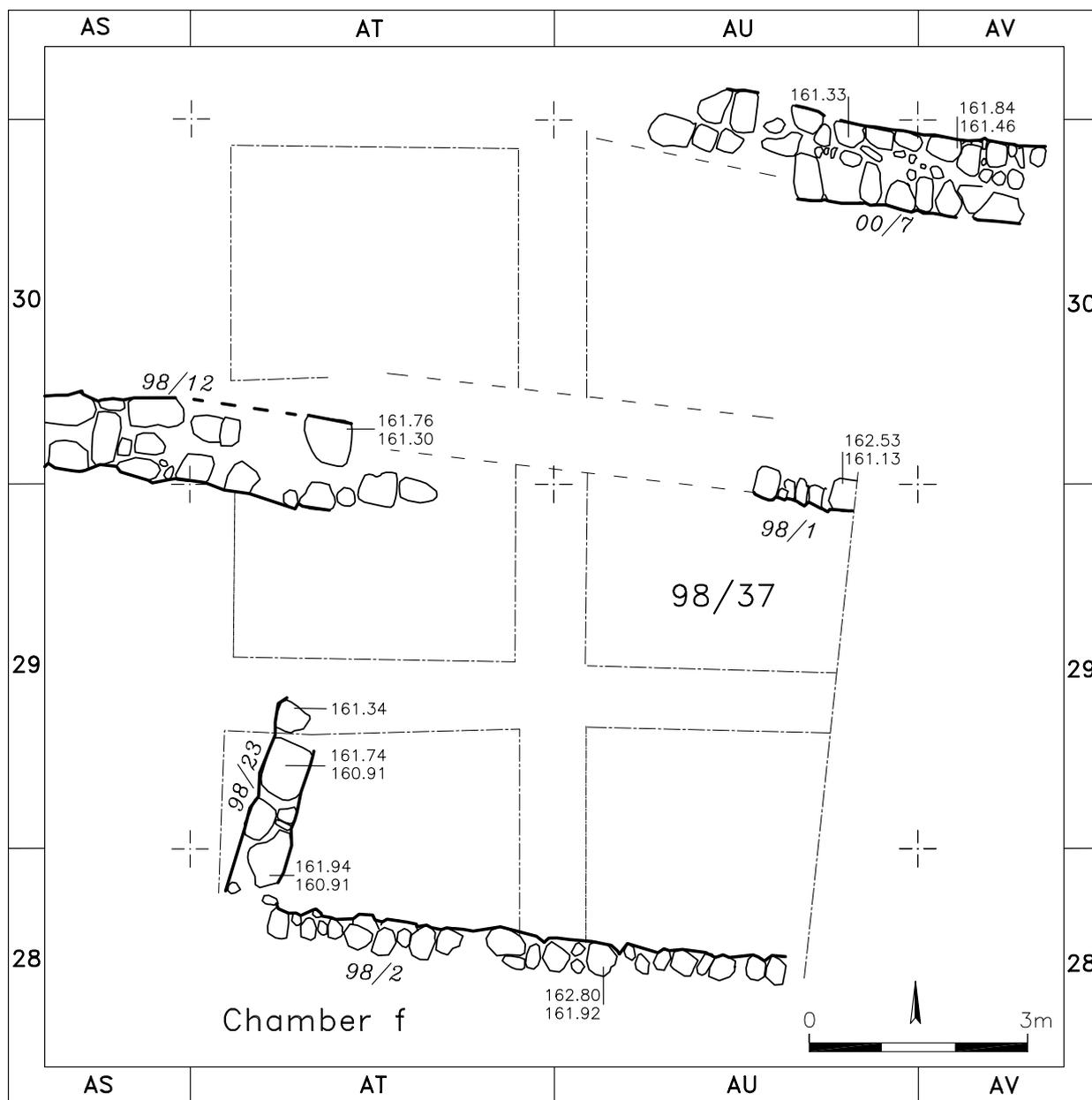


Fig. 5.16: Plan of Level M-5.

SUMMARY

Table 5.1 summarizes the 1998-2000 finds in Western Area M:

TABLE 5.1: THE STRATIGRAPHY IN WESTERN AREA M

<i>Western Area M Level</i>	<i>University of Chicago stratum</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Floor elevation</i>	<i>Main remains</i>
M-10	XIII?	MB I	159.40 (Square AT/30)	Pottery in a deep probe
M-9	XII?	MB II	159.52-59 (Square AU/31)	Part of a building
M-8	XI?	MB II	160.15 (Square AT/30)	Fragmentary remains
M-7	IX or X	MB III/LBI	160.65 (Square AT/29)	Domestic building/s
M-6	(VIII-) VII	LB II	161.30-161.40 (Squares AU/29-30)	The Nordburg
M-5	VI	Iron I	No floors in Western M	Several support walls

The excavation in Western Area M shows that Schumacher's sequence – Grabkammern I and II and later the Nordburg – was correct. Grabkammern I and II were built in the MB III/LB I over a series of MB I-II strata. The Nordburg was built next, in Level M-6; it dates to the LB II, probably to the days of University of Chicago's Strata (VIII-) VII.

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