The "Nordburg" of Megiddo: A New Reconstruction on the Basis of Schumacher’s Plan

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The so-called "Nordburg" of Megiddo, probably a palace of the end of MB IIA, was excavated at the beginning of this century by G. Schumacher and was reexplored by G. Loud 34 years later. Although he reexamined the structural sequence of the area and ascribed it to Level XII, Loud did not produce an overall plan of the building. That task was achieved for the first time by I. Dunayevsky and A. Kempinski, even though they did not focus their attention on the palace itself, but on the adjoining sacred area. The subsequent interpretations of the Nordburg were all more or less based on Loud’s schematic plan, putting aside the original plan of Schumacher. This article draws up a new plan of the palace on the basis of the accurate drawings and descriptions produced by its first excavator, identifying its most characteristic features.

EXCAVATIONS AND SURVEYS OF THE NORDBURG

During his soundings at Megiddo in 1904, Schumacher brought to light a wide building with several consistent walls in the northern section of his trench. He termed the building "Nordburg" because of its topographical location, although it actually lies in the inner northeast quarter of the tell. To follow the large structures of the building the German archaeologist had to broaden his 5-m-wide trench up to 20 m to the east for a length of almost 50 m, for the area covered by the building turned out to be almost 1500 m² (Schumacher 1908: figs. 32, 40). In publishing the report of his excavations Schumacher gave a detailed description of the remains in the area (Schumacher 1908: 37–50), including a huge cemetery that had been partially set up, dismantling or exploiting floors and walls of the Nordburg (Schumacher 1905a: 4–12). He reported all the structures identified in the area of the palace in an overall final plan summing up the four structural layers he distinguished (Schumacher 1908: pls. 12A, B). In this extremely accurate plan, Schumacher filled in with blue ink the walls he thought could be ascribed to the Nordburg (redrawn here in fig. 1); but he also represented all the other structures.

Nearly 34 years later, in 1938–1939, the American expedition of the Oriental Institute of Chicago explored the area immediately east of that section of Schumacher’s trench, in Area BB. During the first Oriental Institute excavations, C. S. Fisher in 1925–1926 (Fisher 1929: fig. 11) and P. L. O. Guy in 1927–1929 (Guy 1931: figs. 14, 17) had already explored the north end of that area. However, the extensive excavations of the 1920s involved only the upper strata of the tell, and did not reach the deeper level of the Nordburg. After establishing the stratigraphical and architectural sequence of the area, Loud tried to link the plans of Schumacher’s excavations with his own, especially with regard to the north section of the German trench (Loud 1948: fig. 415), also included in his sounding area (Squares M-N-O 11-12 corresponding in Schumacher’s grid to I-K-L-M-N 21-22-23-24). Thus, in fig. 415 of Megiddo II, he proposed to identify the proper layer of each wall recorded on the German plan, according to the new stratigraphical sequence. But, although he had redrawn Schumacher’s plan, Loud did not produce any
Fig. 1. Redrawing of the remains of the Nordburg as recorded by Schumacher in his final plan. Structures not belonging to the palace have been omitted (after Schumacher 1908: pl. 12A).
comprehensive plan using both the American and German architectural and stratigraphical remains. Therefore, to see the planimmetrical organization of the building in the westernmost part of Area BB, according to Loud's opinion, we have to patch together fig. 415 and fig. 398 of Megiddo II. Loud assigned the building to Stratum XII; therefore, only those walls marked as belonging to that level should be retained from fig. 415. Unfortunately, it is difficult not only to overlap and merge the German and American plans, but also to identify the proper stratigraphical layer of each structure, i.e. the structures belonging to the Nordburg. In some instances it is very difficult to accept Loud's attributions. He probably found several obstacles, the first of which was that the German and American surveys had been carried out using different orientations: the grid of the American excavations is based on a north that is 4° east of Schumacher's grid (Loud 1948: fig. 415), and the elevation in Schumacher's plan is 17.99 m higher than that of the Oriental Institute archaeologists. A second obstacle was that the ruins of the building had been gradually plundered by the inhabitants of el-Leijun after Schumacher's excavations. Nevertheless, since its publication in 1948, fig. 415 of Megiddo II represents a reference point for the understanding of the area, especially because it allows us to know the reciprocal position of the diverging grids of Schumacher and Loud according, of course, to the American reconstruction (fig. 2).

ACTUAL REMAINS OF THE NORDBURG

In addition to the two major problems of orientation and elevation, some interesting stratigraphical problems arise from Loud's reinterpretation of Schumacher's plan. Loud recognized that on the top of the longest perimetrical wall (b) parts of a narrower wall (b') were superimposed rotated somewhat to the west; he assigned it to Level XI. The two pillars (a', a''), protruding toward the inner rooms of the building, belong to this superior wall (b'), not to the original construction as Schumacher (1908: 39-40, fig. 46) thought. Following the same method, another wall (d''), which in Schumacher's plan seems to have an identical stratigraphical position, was considered a later addition by the American archaeologist. But this wall does not show a different orientation with respect to the thicker underlying structure and in the photo in Schumacher's excavation report it appears surely related to Wall k'' to the north (Schumacher 1908: fig. 37). Therefore it could be the superstructure of a larger foundation (d''). This interpretation may be supported by the fact that Schumacher considered the west end of the wall as the northern jamb of a door (he labeled it so on the plan), connecting Rooms D and K (Schumacher 1905a: fig. 3; the young man is in front of the passage). The threshold of that door jamb was created by the top of foundation d'', as a continuation of the step extending along the northern side of the Entrance Hall D.

Another important question concerns the 9-m-long Wall s on the east border of Schumacher's trench. Although this wall still stood 2.3 m high when it was exposed by the excavators, it was badly preserved because of a pit (which removed its southern end) and a grave (which was built in the middle using the stones of the wall itself). Having ascribed Wall r' on, which Wall s leans, to Stratum XII, Loud assigned the latter to the subsequent Stratum XI. In making this attribution Loud did not consider the fact that Wall s is coherent with the general orientation, elevation, and masonry of the building, as Schumacher had already pointed out (1908: 44, fig. 41). Dunayevsky and Kempinski (1973: fig. 13) reported this wall in their plan of Level XII, but they cut off the southern end of the structure to make their integration of the southern wall of the inner court of the palace reliable. Later, Kempinski rejected that report, as can be seen in his new plan (1989: fig. 42:3). Nevertheless, the attribution of Wall s to the Nordburg is strongly probable for chronological reasons. Inside its foundations Schumacher retrieved a children's burial with a dipper-jug and two carinated bowls (Schumacher 1908: figs. 41, 42). The first could belong to Group B of Kenyon's typological classification (1969: 31, fig. 7:14), dated to MB IIA.4 The bowls also are typical of that period, as indicated by their shape (Kempinski 1989: 50, fig. 21:12), which has several comparable pieces in the assemblage from MB IIA palaces in Aphek (Beck 1975: figs. 6:1-4, 12:7-9), and by their decoration, punctuated in the manner of Tell el-Yahudiyeh Ware5 (Amiran 1969: 118, 120, pl. 36:1, 2).

More difficulties arise when we focus on the northern wing of the palace. There Room X is enclosed by a continuous structure (Walls u', t', x', v), two sides of which (Walls v and x') were assigned to Level XI by the American archaeologists because of their different thicknesses. But the interruptions in Walls v and t' that Loud sketched on
the plan are not visible in the original Schumacher drawing, where all the walls are marked with the same elevation (176.89 m). Dunayevsky and Kempinski also noted this discrepancy, reporting on their redrawn plan of Level XII Walls $\nu$ and $x'$, even if they upset the symmetry of their reconstruction (1973: fig. 13).

Schumacher uncovered a third wall ($f'$) parallel to Walls $u'$ and $x'$ about 3 m further east. Loud ascribed it to Stratum XII, even though it lay in the
middle of the entrance (F) postulated by the German archaeologist. Actually, although it shows a particular masonry, this wall could belong to the Nordburg as the eastern side of a chamber flanking Room X, symmetrically disposed along the north-south axis. This hypothesis is corroborated by the presence of another section of Wall v a few meters east. Although neither Schumacher nor Loud attributed Wall v to the Nordburg, it could be considered as the eastern continuation of Wall v because of its orientation (Dunayevsky and Kempinski [1973: fig. 13] were the first to assign it to the Nordburg). Unfortunately, the crossing between Walls v, f, and v had been destroyed, and thus Schumacher interpreted it as a passage, even if he could not identify any door jamb or threshold.
Yet another problem hampers the analysis of these walls. The northeastern quarter of Schumacher’s trench (Squares K–L 23–24) was not excavated to the same depth as the rest of the area, because of the discovery of three walls that Loud rightly assigned to Stratum IVA (IV in Kempinski’s clearer scheme: 1989: 91) on the basis of the results of the first American excavations at Megiddo. This small portion of Schumacher’s trench was, in fact, contiguous to the soundings Guy made in 1929 (Guy 1931: 37–48, figs. 17, 26, 27; Lamon and Shipton 1939: 41–45, figs. 49, 51), which demonstrated that the structures first exposed by Schumacher were part of a building of Iron Age IIIB (“Stable” 364, Kempinski 1989: Plan 12). When the American archaeologists cleared these walls they uncovered another important wing of the palace, including a long north–south wall, whose emerging central section probably was Wall f. They also found a wide floor of crushed limestone, which turned out to belong to a large hall (Loud 1948: fig. 208). Loud recorded those structures in fig. 398 of Megiddo II, but—as we have seen—they were not drawn together with those belonging to the Nordburg, discovered by Schumacher.

Figure 2 shows the German and American discoveries in a single drawing, to more convincingly represent the planimetry of the Nordburg. The location of the walls has been established according to the excavations’ topographical grids, whose reciprocal orientations I derived from fig. 415 of Megiddo II. As can be seen easily, some structures that Schumacher excavated also were recorded in Loud’s plan (Loud 1948: fig. 398). It is quite likely that Loud again cleared these walls during his excavations and recorded them anew in the plan. There are also some inconsistencies, such as the floor identified by Loud covering Schumacher’s Wall y, a or a few overlaps that do not exactly correspond. As Müller (1970: 50–53) correctly pointed out, this problem could be explained as the result of the isometric view adopted in the plans of Megiddo II. The isometric projection could produce a misleading effect, especially in locating features with different elevations, such as floors and walls. Nevertheless, the general picture is reliable and permits us to add to Schumacher’s plan a central row of rooms and a large rectangular hall extending up to the alignment of Wall s to the east.

A number of walls that Loud discovered in the western half of Square N 12 and reported on the plan of Stratum XII are also of great importance. Those structures, though badly preserved, can be identified as part of two architectural units, as shown by the different widths of the masonry. To the west, the thickest walls could quite plausibly belong to the Nordburg, while to the east, the thinnest walls seem to be part of a less impressive building that connects the palace with the adjoining sacred area.

**URBAN CONTEXT OF THE NORDBURG:**

**THE PUBLIC DISTRICT OF MEGINDDO LEVEL XII**

Having listed the main problems concerning the recovering and the documentation of the structures, we now can deal with the definition of the plan. To grasp the planimetric organization of the Nordburg it will be useful to look at its urban context. The public quarter of Megiddo had been developing in this area of the town since the Early Bronze Age and had both a palace and a sacred area (Palace 3177 and the temples of Strata XVII–XVI). As the Oriental Institute’s excavations in Area BB demonstrated, this quarter came again into a floruit during the second half of the 19th century B.C. The public district was neatly enucleated in the urban system by the network of roads. A street running alongside the city wall bounded the quarter on the east; it crossed two other parallel west–east roads; those streets represented the northern and southern limits of the public area, which measured 90 m on the east–west axis and almost 60 m on the north–south axis. To the west, the double wall of the Nordburg (Wall b and the so-called Contre-Escarpe, Wall n) marked the district’s limit. Actually, the Contre-Escarpe’s main function was as a boundary of a burial area which extended alongside the west front of the palace. The Nordburg occupied the west wing of the public quarter, which also included a sacred compound in the middle and a row of courthouses to the east and south. The sacred area was bounded by a double enclosure: in the innermost temenos lay a bent-axis temple, while the outer one sheltered a cult installation (D) and a high place with a cell incircled by stelae (F). Two small buildings or big houses (5048 and 5038a) connected the sacred area to the palace. The building walls were incorporated into those of the Nordburg on one side, while on the other side they formed the west front of the sacred temenos, thus proving that the public quarter was the result of a unique planning.
effort (Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1973: 177–78). Therefore, this district appears as a sort of citadel including the religious and the political sectors of the city. The main entrance to the complex was through the middle of the northern side. A monumental bent-axis gate (Locus 5263, Square M 13), unfortunately preserved only below the floor level (Loud 1948: 92), led into the outer precinct of the sacred area, from which it was possible to enter the houses and the storerooms encompassing the sacred compound.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS: THE ENTRANCE WING

The archaeologists neither identified the entrance to Building 5038a or 5048, nor the linkage between those two buildings and the palace. Therefore the only entrance into the Noburg thus far known is the southern Door e, which joined the palace with a subsidiary building, probably coeval or slightly later, the so-called “Mittelburg,” also excavated by Schumacher (1908: 75–77). A square hall (G) served as forecourt to the entrance. Its roof probably was supported by a row of stone pillars, of which only two remained intact. Actually, this room probably was not fully roofed, as shown by the shifting to the north of the row of pillars. The pillars could have sustained a sort of porch. A similar structure has been discovered in Aphek, where a pillared hall in a contemporary palace (Palace II in the Lower City) also faces a central entrance (Kochavi and Beek 1978: 9–11, 22–23, figs. 3, 5–6; Beck 1985: 193–94, fig. 5).

A 1.2-m-wide door with two monolithic jambs and a raised threshold led into Hall D, a broadroom that was the vestibule of the palace. Four steps to the right was the raised eastern half of the hall (P). Here a door, unfortunately not preserved (its raised threshold was cut off by later structures), led to a small chamber (Q), which acted as a “circulation knot,” as in it people turned again to reach the main inner courtyard. This bent-axis entrance system adopted the same principle followed in the gate of the public district and in the northern gateway of the city (Loud 1948: fig. 378). A shallow bench or step (the top of foundation Wall d) ran alongside the northern wall of Hall D. Schumacher thought it was a kind of step preceding another door leading to Room K, but the floor levels in Room K and Hall D differ by almost a meter, a difference that might have been eliminated with another flight of steps in the passage.

THE WESTERN WING

The western wing is the best preserved part of the palace. The main feature is the impressive Wall b, which, with its deep, projecting foundations, is also the western boundary of the public quarter. About 2 m west, another constraining wall runs parallel to it, enclosing a hollow trench in which several graves have been excavated. The masonry of Wall b was comprised of flat fieldstones and broken bricks, usually used as hardening mortar. The stones (of nari limestone) of the wall proper reached almost 1 m higher than the floor level of the inner rooms. On this basement rose up a mudbrick superstructure, still preserved on the northern end of Wall b.

Three long units, all of the same width, stretched along the perimeter wall. The central unit, 13.8 m long, is the main hall of this wing (T). It connects to the inner Court C through a monumental entrance, flanked by two receding jambs. The northern end of this hall is raised and connected with another room (YIII) through a door in the corner.

The southern rectangular unit (K + K') is divided into two rooms by a thin wall (k''), which also forms a narrow (4.7 m x 1.0 m) corridor or a staircase along the west side. Room K' is a rectangular (4.65 m x 4.10 m) chamber directly dependent from Hall T. Schumacher thought it did not communicate with the adjacent Hall K, because the thin partition wall nearly reached inset k', the western jamb of the door connecting Hall T and Room K'. The southernmost: Room K is a rectangular (5.1 m x 4.8 m) hall paved with a crushed chalk floor. Schumacher ascribed a large jar containing burial remains to the second pavement of the room (Schumacher 1908: 45).

Like the southern unit, the northern rectangular one is divided into two almost square chambers (U + U''). A consistent wall (u'), 1.6 m thick, encompasses the rooms of that section of the palace; it does not show openings toward Hall T or to the accessory Room Y'', but it is strongly damaged by later intrusions, perhaps also below the actual floor level (the upper surface of the wall is at 176.89 m). Chamber U, although partially destroyed by two later graves, still preserves a segment of the partition Wall u'', which runs along the line of Wall v without reaching
Wall \( u' \); at that point there was a door leading to room \( U'^{iii} \) (Schumacher 1906: fig. 14).

THE INNER SECTORS AND THE EASTERN AND NORTHERN LIMITS

The inner row of rooms, only partly excavated by Schumacher, shows some characteristic features. It includes a long north-south wall, which runs parallel to the inner front of Hall T and limits a sector divided into four spaces (\( V^{iii}, X-X^{ii}, Y^{ii}, Y' \)). All these spaces have their longest side on the east-west axis, which means that they are perpendicularly orientated in respect to the outer row of rooms. The east-west partition walls were reconstrucated according to a regular pattern by Kempinski (1989: fig. 42:3), who has not accepted the attribution of Walls \( y^{iii} \) and \( y \) to the Nordburg. The excavator did not attribute the first of these walls to the palace; the second, which Schumacher thought was a sort of pillar, seems actually to have been a partition wall enclosing the southernmost chamber of the inner row of rooms. Notwithstanding its poor state of preservation, Wall \( y^{iii} \) could be tentatively ascribed to the Nordburg on the basis of its orientation and elevation, and because of a corresponding structure in Loud's plan. Walls \( v-v' \) and \( t \) also were recorded in Loud's plan, although (perhaps because of the same need for regularity) shifted slightly north. Loud identified the northern partition wall of the inner row of rooms, though a later pit had been sunk at the joint with the main inner north-south wall (\( f' \)). That wall was on the same line as a structure surrounding a well (\( u'^{iii} \)), brought to light by Schumacher. The latter surely is not attributable to the Nordburg, being related with later structures.

Five rooms were limited by these walls. The southernmost narrow chamber (\( Y' \)) opened directly into the inner Court C and possibly sheltered a staircase. The central major spaces (\( Y^{ii} \) and \( X + X^{ii} \)) had the same extension, but the northern one had been divided into two longitudinal chambers (4.2 m x 2.3 m), by Wall \( x' \). The northernmost room (\( V^{iii} \)), rightly identified by Loud, was not recognized by Schumacher, who believed that Wall \( v \) represented the northern face of the building. The five rooms were arranged according to a common planimetric scheme (below). Unfortunately, it is not possible to know the placement of the doors, except for the passage between T and \( Y^{ii} \) and a hypothetical opening between Rooms \( X^{ii} \) and \( Y^{ii} \). Room \( Y^{ii} \) could also communicate with the large eastern hall (5001a) discovered by Loud.

About 10 m north of Wall v, Schumacher discovered the strongly erased foundations of Wall z, which is thus far the northermost remnant of the palace. It runs perpendicular to the western Wall b and might represent the northern outer wall of the building. On the other hand, Dunayevsky and Kempinski believed that the Nordburg extended further north, up to the line of the gateway of the public district (1973: 178), a view subsequently withdrawn by Kempinski (1989: 46, plan 3).

The southern half of the palace, without an inner row of rooms, is almost completely occupied by a wide, open court (14.5 m x 11.0 m). The crushed limestone pavement of the courtyard was retrieved by Schumacher in only a few spots; many intrusions had removed or damaged the original floor. The eastern limit of this open area is constituted by a 9-m-long wall (s), which belonged to the Nordburg (above). This rubble structure has no openings to the east, although it is highly probable that there were rooms also on this side of the court. The alignment of Wall s fits well with the eastern edge of the large floor brought to light by Loud. About 10 m east, the small Chamber 5081 probably represents an adjoining unit. The thin wall of that room is bound with some thicker structures, which might be ascribed (above) to the palace. The walls are about 1 m wide, about half the width of Wall b; nevertheless, they could be the poor remains of the eastern limit of the Nordburg, since this side of the palace faced an inner sector of the public district and did not need a strong perimeter wall. Hence, the outer configuration of the building could be reconstructed on the missing sides (east and north), extending the lines of the western wall of Room 5081 and of Wall z. The plan of the palace results in a rectangular building almost 50 m long from north to south and 30 m long from east to west.

FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

Its placement in the public district of the city should indicate the dominant character of the Nordburg. The presumable size, 1500 m², and the impressive masonry testify to the palatial nature of the building, even though remains and finds are too scanty to identify the exact function of each wing. The majority of objects ascribed to the Nordburg actually were found in a number of graves and
burials spread over the area of the palace. Watzinger, who published these materials 20 years after they had been found, adopted an "altitude method" to ascribe the graves to the different phases. He established that all the artifacts found at a height less than 179 m probably belonged to the Nordburg's second phase, while those from below 178.46 m could be ascribed to the Nordburg's first phase (Watzinger 1929: 18). Unfortunately, his method could seldom be tested and the attributions remain uncertain if the stratigraphical location of the graves is not ascertainable by means of photos or additional drawings. Schumacher listed the objects retrieved outside the burials with only their relative elevation; often they were published together without precise indication of where they were found (Watzinger 1929: 18–25), so we cannot be certain that any given object actually belonged to the Nordburg. For this reason a functional analysis can be carried out almost solely on the basis of planimetric observations, and has to be deemed quite hypothetical.

Schumacher suggested a reception function for Hall T and Court C, which together would have constituted the audience suite of the palace. But as will be shown below, Hall 5001a can not be excluded as part of the reception wing of the palace. This room, in fact, in the innermost part of the building, is similar to the audience halls of several Syro-Palestinian palaces. Unfortunately, because it is very poorly preserved, we do not know if it had the installations that often characterize such rooms. On the other hand, Hall T, which is quite easily accessible from the entrance wing and has a raised floor level in the northern part, might have had a reception function related to services and administration. The southern sector of the palace could be considered the public wing, directly connected with the city, perhaps through the Mittelburg, while the northern sector, more isolated and accessible only through the sacred temenos, sheltered the audience Hall 5001a, the royal services (X, Xii, Viii), storerooms (U, Uiii), and the staircase to the upper residential wing.

**PLANIMETRICAL ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Scholars have suggested a few reconstructions of the palace focusing on courtyards. Rules of symmetry have governed those planimetric interpretations since the first publication, as shown by the schematic plan produced by Schumacher himself (1908: fig. 46). Thus, the first attempt to connect in a consistent way the German and American plans of the Nordburg (Kempinski and Dunayevsky 1973: fig. 13) followed the same criterium of symmetry. Although their main interest was the study of the development of the temples and cult buildings, the two scholars proposed an accurate reconstruction of the palace. They perceived a "resemblance" to the Palace of Area F in Hazor (Yadin et al. 1989: 138–49, pls. 60, 69, plan 28), which led them to duplicate mirror-like the building toward the north (Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1973: 178, n. 34). Their hypothesis is fascinating, but it does not fit the evidence. No structures found by Schumacher were related to the Nordburg in the area of Squares L–M 11–12, immediately north of the actual limit of the palace remains, although his pioneering excavation method should have induced him to trace the walls with care. Moreover, in Dunayevsky and Kempinski's reconstruction, there is an excessive shift of the public district limit to the north. Apart from the general planimetric scheme, Dunayevsky and Kempinski's plan faithfully records the actual remains of the building and can be largely accepted.

In his recent essay on Megiddo, Kempinski published a new plan of the Nordburg (1989: fig. 42:3). It clearly shows the attempt to unify Schumacher's and Loud's plans, but it also presents some contradictions. The greatest changes concern the southern court, which he now divides into a square hall and two small rectangular chambers, aligned with the inner row of rooms. This solution can hardly find confirmation (it is quite impossible to reconstruct a wall entering the door of Hall T, expressly labeled "Zugang" in Schumacher's plan) and also compels the author to shift the limit of Hall 5001a to the east, forsaking the alignment of Wall s. Furthermore, the passage joining the southernmost of the added rooms to Room K appears artificial; it actually leads into Hall D, not into the courtyard (Schumacher 1908: fig. 37). The symmetrical reconstruction produces several difficulties and prevents the scholar from identifying the northern limit of the palace, which—as stressed by Schumacher (1908: 47)—could be represented by Wall z.

In his quick review of Palestinian palaces, Fritz proposed another possible reconstruction of the Nordburg (Fritz 1983: 5, fig. 2). He eliminated the second inner row of rooms (Yi, Yii) leaving an enlarged rectangular courtyard with the longest side
on the north–south axis, which is exactly the opposite of what can be seen in Dunayevsky and Kempinski’s plan. Fritz’s proposal accepts an original idea of Schumacher without taking into account the structures that Loud discovered. Unfortunately, Fritz does not discuss those substantial changes.

The recent excursus by Oren (1992) on Middle and Late Bronze Age palaces again follows the key interpretation of “courtyards” and classifies the Nordburg as a “monumental courtyard palace.” Although from a general point of view his definition grasps one of the planimetric characteristics of the palace, Oren’s proposed reconstruction seems too dependent upon the “courtyard model.” It is mainly (if not solely) based on Megiddo II fig. 415 (Oren 1992: 107, fig. 1) and ignores the second plan by Loud (1948: fig. 398), representing American findings in Stratum XII. Oren continues the U–X row of rooms to the east, including an enlarged courtyard on the northern side. But this integration can hardly be accepted because of the presence of the massive pavement of Hall 5001a in correspondence with the added row of rooms.

As the previous examples show, inner courtyards have played an important role in the reconstruction hypotheses, because they permit mirror-like duplications not only of the rooms on their sides, but also of whole blocks of palaces. Of course, this integration method is based on the general assumption that the organization around a central courtyard is usually symmetrical. In the case of the Nordburg, however, such symmetry around the inner courtyard is almost completely lacking. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that, for the preservation state of this building, the planimetric organization depends mostly on reconstructions. For instance, if a “pro-courtyard” point of view prevails, Loud’s inner row of rooms will be eliminated from the Nordburg plan (see Oren 1992: 107, fig. 1; Fritz 1983: fig. 2); otherwise, if the similarity with a doubled plan is thought to be conclusive, a symmetrical scheme will be preferred (Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1973: fig. 13; Kempinski 1989: fig. 42:3). Hence, two different planimetric typologies have been taken as models by scholars. The first is typified by a large central courtyard surrounded by a continuous row of rooms (represented, for instance, by Palace I of Tell el–Ajjul: Petrie 1932: 2–3, pls. 43–45; 1933: 1–3, pls. 2, 46). The second is characterized by bipartition: rooms are articulated around two almost identical courtyards or architectural spaces. The Nordburg does not fit well with either type, although it probably shares some of their characteristic planimetric patterns.

**DISTINGUISHING AND COMPARATIVE PLANIMETRICAL FEATURES**

While the new plan of the palace reconstructed here is hypothetical, it includes all the structures assigned to the building by its excavators. The computer-aided resetting of Schumacher’s and Loud’s plans restores a rectangular palace (fig. 3) with two major spaces and reveals that the planimetric organization is not totally dependent on the inner courtyard. Along the outer perimeter are rectangular units, while in two cases square chambers find their natural collocation in the corners (K, L10), at the crossing of two perpendicular rows of rooms. A sort of mirror-like rule could be recognized in the disposition of the western rooms, but those rooms are completely separated from the courtyard itself. In fact, Court C does not seem to have a centralizing planimetric role in spite of its distributive function. Hall 5001a, with its fine crushed limestone pavement, may be the most important room of the palace. Actually, the plan of the Nordburg does not show rooms gathered around a central courtyard or hall, but seems to be arranged into two main “L”-shaped wings: a northern wing surrounding Hall 5001a and a southern one composed by the entrance block, Court C, and the longest western room (T). It is quite likely that those two sections had independent entrances, although they certainly communicate at the level of secondary circulation. The main entrance was to the south, through a pillared hall and a vestibule; a second access linked the palace with the adjacent sacred area through Room 5081, which is part of an accessory building (5038a). Thus, the northern section of the palace was connected to the public district, while the southern section was linked with the Mittelburg. This bipartite system is one of the most characteristic features of the building, and, in spite of some revolutionary changes, is found also in the successors of the Nordburg, Palace 5059 and Palace 5019 of Strata XI–X.

The plan of the Nordburg does not reveal the adoption of a peculiar architectural design. Rather the general shape of the palace is determined by its collocation on the western edge of the public quarter. In an area extending with its longest side on the east–west axis, the orthogonally oriented palace is stretched from north to south. The Nordburg
seems to have been conceived as part of a unified public district, of which it represents one of the main poles. For the same reason, the buildings adjoining the palace on the eastern (Buildings 5038a and 5048) and southern (Mittelburg) sides are not clearly separate units. However, the Nordburg proper was probably the ruler's residence, as its masonry and size indicate.

We know too few MB II A palaces to be able to judge at which level the Nordburg is representative of the palatial architectural tradition of Syria-Palestine. Efforts to determine the planimmetrical typology of this palace are hampered by the fact that it was conceived as part of a greater complex, which means that the overall urban plan must have affected the eventual acquisition of planimmetrical patterns. Nonetheless, this original aspect of its architectural conception allows us to propose some characteristics common to Syro-Palestinian palaces. The general organization of the public district and the overall planning of the palace could recall the so-called "Courtyard Temple" of Shechem (Wright 1965: 115–18, 230–31, figs. 64–65), a building unfortunately interpreted following a misleading a priori opinion (Fritz 1983: 6–9, fig. 4). The palatine complex of Shechem lay, like the Nordburg, in a kind of citadel, grouping the religious and political poles of the city (Otto 1979: 137–38, fig. 15); it was divided into two sections, one occupied by a large courtyard, the other by a rectangular hall. Although this palace is almost a century later, it could furnish a good comparison for the bipolar temple-palace system, first seen in the public districts of Megiddo itself and later at Alalakh and, in a monumental realization, at Ebla (Matthiae 1991: 320–32).

The regular row of rooms, which enclosed the palace on the outer perimeter, might be compared to that of Palace I of Tell el-Ajjul and Palaces 4031 and 2134 of Strata X–IX in Area AA at Megiddo (Loud 1948: 16, figs. 380–81). As Kempinski pointed out (1983: 171–72), this manner of organizing the outer row of rooms is typical of Middle Bronze Age palaces. But, unlike the Nordburg, the comparable Middle Bronze palaces usually have a large central courtyard with rectangular rooms along the sides.

Looking at the inner organization, some segments of the palace, such as the entrance wing with the pillared forecourt and bent-axis passageway and Hall 5001a with its surrounding chambers, can be ascribed to the Syro-Palestinian palatial tradition. Thus, Hall 5001a might be compared to the reception Hall 4038 of the Northern Palace at Ebla (Matthiae 1989: 171–75, fig. 40) because of its proportions (the side ratio is in both cases 1:2) and placement. Like the audience room of the Ebla palace (Matthiae 1990: 220–21, fig. 6), Hall 5001a has small service rooms on one side (west) and the entrance on the other (east). Although the exact position of this access is quite obscure, it is highly probable that it was through an out-of-axis passageway. Moreover, Rooms Y 1, Y 2, X, and X 2 could be considered another example of a typical Syro-Palestinian palatial planimmetrical scheme, comprised of two longrooms side by side facing a latitudinal hall or a small court; a narrow staircase generally occupies the opposite side of the hall. This device is also attested in Ebla Palace Q, where it serves as a main planimetrical model (Matthiae 1989: 169).

The entrance wing (above) repeats the bent-axis layout of the gateway of the public district and of the city itself; the pillared forecourt might, on the other hand, be compared with the pillared hall of Palace II in Aphek (Kochavi and Beck 1978: fig. 5).

To summarize, the most typical features of the Nordburg of Megiddo seem to be: an overall size of almost 1500 m²; subdivision into two L-shaped wings, each clustered around a major space (Court C and Hall 5001a); a row of rectangular rooms along the perimeter; the double bent-axis entrance system; and the audience hall (5001a) constituting the reference point of the wing directly communicating with the sacred compound.

CONCLUSIONS

The palace that Schumacher excavated in the northeastern quarter of Tell el-Mutesellim in 1904 and that Loud and that his Oriental Institute team partially reexplored is one of the most relevant examples of Middle Bronze Age Palestinian palatial architecture. Its plan represents a puzzle, because of Loud's interpretation of Schumacher's original drawing and because we lack a comprehensive plan connecting the structures discovered by the first excavator with those retrieved by his successor. The resetting of the different plans of the actual building's remains shows an articulated palace (fig. 4) with an outer row of rooms encompassing a large courtyard to the south, and an inner group of rooms and a rectangular hall to the north. The latter grouping and the courtyard are the main inner spaces of the palace; we presume they were entered
Fig. 4. Schematic perspective view of the remains of the Nordburg. Structures retrieved by excavators have been hatch-marked on vertical faces. Integrations have an arbitrary height of 0.5 m.

through independent entrances, because they constitute functionally differentiated wings. Scholars tried, by means of reconstructions, to relate the plan of the Nordburg with two main typologies; one with a large central courtyard, the other bipartite with two specular wings. Conversely, the plan seems to fall primarily into the general shape of the public quarter in which it lies. The inner courtyard occupies a lateral place and does not totally determine the plan. The most characteristic feature seems to be the division into two perpendicularly placed sectors, one formed by the entrance wing, the courtyard, and the longest western hall, the other by Hall 5001a and the surrounding rooms.

Notwithstanding its planimetric peculiarity and its extremely damaged remains, the Nordburg presents several traits common to other Syro-Palestinian palaces. Those traits again testify, also in nonreligious architecture, to the cultural unity of this area.

The planimetric interpretations presented here must be mere proposals because of the actual preservation state of the Nordburg and the tormented history of its excavation and surveying. The greatest efforts have been devoted to resetting the plan of the palace, retaining as much as possible of the information reported by its excavators. This work has revealed great accuracy of the German plan, even though it was drawn still in a “pioneering archaeological era.” Unfortunately, Schumacher, who produced this faithful plan, was not able to carry on his initial intent to explore entirely the Nordburg (1905b: 82).

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1The excavations at Tell el-Mutesellim, carried out by Schumacher on behalf of the Kaiser, himself, lasted from April 1903 to December 1905. The German archaeologist worked at Megiddo for six campaigns, twice every year, usually in spring and autumn. The third and fourth campaigns took place in spring and autumn 1904 (from 25 February to the end of May and from 6 October to 1 December). During the second season, the trench was opened from north to south, where the Nordburg lies. This campaign was directed on the field by J. Benzinger, because of Schumacher’s engagement at Samaria (Benzinger 1904: 65).

2In autumn 1903 Schumacher decided to dig a long trench across the whole tell from north to south. This project was at first carried out by Benzinger, then it was pursued again under Schumacher’s direction in spring and autumn 1904. The final edges of Schumacher’s trench are recorded in the general plans of the tell drawn by the topographer, DeLoach, during the first American expedition (Fisher 1929: fig. 11; Guy 1931: fig. 14).

3The doubtful reliability of Loud’s assignments was already pointed out by Kenyon (1969: 25). The assumption that all the structures found at the same elevation really belong to the same layer and period obviously produced several mistakes of attribution.

4Amiran noted a similarity between the pottery assemblages of Megiddo Area BB Stratum XII and those of Kanish Stratum Ib. She dated both to MB IIA (Amiran 1968).

5These are the only bowls so far known decorated with the characteristic Tell el-Yahudiye incised pattern (Kaplan 1980). This kind of decoration and fabric is in fact generally adopted only for juglets and juglets (Amiran 1969: 118, n. 6). Actually, the profiles drawn by Amiran (1969: pl. 36:1, 2) do not correspond to the shape visible in Schumacher’s photo.

6The so-called Stable 364: the functional interpretation of this kind of building is still being debated (Yadin 1976; Davies 1988).

7Walls y, f, v, v, y can be recognized as part of the structure represented in Loud’s plan; while it is not possible to identify Wall x which seems to have disappeared in the time between the two excavations.

8Kempinski has tried to solve this problem by shifting Wall y to the south, but his solution creates a greater difficulty with the crossing of walls in correspondence with the door to Hall T (Kempinski 1989: fig. 42.3).

9This little cemetery, in use for a time ranging over the life of the palace itself, as testified by the burials and tombs spread all over the area of the palace, occupied the westernmost part of the public quarter (Kempinski 1989: Plan 3).

10H. Weippert (1990: 191) has discussed Kempinski’s attribution of this installation to Stratum XII.

11Even though her chronological and stratigraphical attributions turned out to be wrong (Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1973: n. 40), Epstein had already singled out the western wall of the sacred area (Epstein 1965: 216).

12This wing of the palace was rebuilt several times during Stratum III, so the exact chronological relation between the two buildings remains uncertain. Schumacher (1908: 37) suggested that they were more or less contemporary, even if the structures of the Mittelburg are at a higher level than those of the Nordburg.

13Schumacher (1908: 50) interpreted two stelae 1.5 m high (m and m') as massēbot.

14The presence of an oven in the northeast corner of the portico (Schumacher 1908: fig. 38) is not a definitive proof of the partial roofing of this room.

15In Room K, Schumacher found three subsequent floors of the palace ranging in elevation from 177 m to 179 m (Schumacher 1908: 43).

16This structure, called Wall n or Contre-Escarp by its excavator, was probably later than the Nordburg, as is proved by its function as a boundary of the cemetery (Schumacher 1908: 41, pl. 12B).

17The bricks were rectangular (0.50 m × 0.33 m × 0.11 m) or square (0.33 m × 0.33 m × 0.11 m) and the wall was preserved up to 181 m, although this elevation is not recorded on the plan (Schumacher 1908: 40).

18Schumacher (1908: 45) thought that Wall kIII belonged to a second phase, because its north end is only 0.25 m from the western jamb of the door connecting Rooms K1 and T. On this basis, scholars eliminated it from the plan. Actually, the northern end of Wall kIII was cancelled by two later graves; so it cannot be proven that the wall does not belong to the Nordburg.

19The German archaeologist stressed the similarity between Wall y and Walls kIII e uIII (Schumacher 1908: 47).

20This room was called “5001a” by Kempinski (1989: 156), who believed it was an open court.

21This sort of podium could be proof of a reception function, even if the hall does not show the monumental- ity of a Throne Room.

22The presence of an upper floor, devoted to residential functions, in the northern sector of the palace may also be proved by the thickness of the walls. A possible confirmation of the different height of the northern and southern wings of the palace might be found in the so-called architectural “maquettes” from Emir (Margueron 1976), although the relationships between this kind of terracotta and building typologies has been reasonably discussed (Muller 1992). Oates (1987: 183–86, fig. 6) recently proposed a similar model for the reconstruction of the superstructure of the Mitannian Palace of Tell Brak.

23The so-called “Double Temple” of Hazor is a wide building on the eastern slope of the Lower City. It is very poorly preserved and its plan and function are doubtful. Yadin interpreted it as a Double Temple (1972: 96–98, fig. 23), but Kempinski and later Fritz (1983: 6, fig. 3), Weippert, and Ben-Tor (Yadin et al. 1989: 138–39)
thought that it was a palace. From the chronological point of view the two buildings are separated by about 200 years.

More substantial similarities perhaps relate the so-called Double Temple of Hazor with the later Palace 2134 of Megiddo Area AA (Loud 1948: 16, fig. 381).

22 Also Hall 5 of the Royal Palace of Mishrifé-Qata shares an identical ratio and has small chambers on the side facing the entrance (du Mesnil du Buisson 1935: 79–97, pl. 17; Margueron 1987: 141–42, fig. 6).

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