The goals of season 2018 were 1) to discover the extent, direction and plan of the casemate structure, 2) to obtain information concerning the date of the citadel construction, 3) to look for Iron IIB occupation levels. With these goals in mind, eight new squares were excavated, expanding the area mainly southwards, eastwards and westwards. These are, from west to east: C/20, D/1, E/1, F/1, G/20-1 and H/20-1.

Most of the newly exposed architecture and related accumulation/fill layers are preliminarily attributed to Phase B4, the Iron IIA stratum to which the casemate building belongs. Excavation in some places underneath the foundations of the citadel reached earlier features that are attributed to Phases B5 and B6. Walls and layers uncovered to the south of the citadel walls were insufficiently revealed so that their phasing remains unclear. Several elements that overlaid the citadel walls in the west were exposed, their phasing still tentative.
Phase B6

Phase B6 pertains to the MBII gravel rampart and other elements related to this period. This season we exposed small segments of the interface between the Iron Age citadel and the Middle Bronze II glacis in the eastern end of the structure. As seen in previous seasons when looking from the north, the northern wall of the citadel is built directly on top of the gravelly material of the MBII glacis that occupies the lowest level reached in most of Area B. A clear foundation trench dug into the glacis is evident along the northern face of Wall 3715 (the eastern segment of the northern casemate wall). In the present season, we reached this level on the northern face of Wall 6742 (the eastern continuation of Wall 3715). Wall 6742 floats at 398.55 in the west and 398.31 in the eastern end, built directly on top of the glacis layer that was levelled flat for this purpose. This matrix also extends somewhat to the south of the wall foundation (Locus 6734) where it was cut by Locus 6735/6777 – an irregular contour filled with brick and some burnt debris (see discussion of 6735 and 6777 below).

The floor in this room (5790/5806) was laid above a thin layer of debris/sub-floor fill 6703/6719 that, in turn, was laid directly on the gravel of the MBII matrix.

Square F/20, looking north. Northern wall of the eastern casemate room (W3715) built directly on top of glacis material – L6734. 6777-foundation trench(?) cut into the glacis material. (ABM18_B_FPh_087)
Square F/20, looking west; gravelly layers in the MB II glacis 6734 as exposed under W3715 (on the right), where it is cut by 6777 which is a possible foundation trench for the southern casemate wall - W5808. Note patch of white plaster set on top of the gravel of the glacis in the west (along Wall 5733). This is a remnant of the floor makeup in this part of the room. Stones of 6801 below 5808.
(ABM18_B_FPh_089)

Square F20, looking northwest at sloping gravel layers of MBII glacis (with meter stick against northern part) under corner of B4 Walls 5733 (west) and 3715 (north) Wall 5808 and Wall 6741 on the south (left). (ABM18-B-081-BOB).
Phase B5

Phase B5, the pre-citadel occupation (apparently to be dated to the late Iron I), consists of two sub-phases—B5a and B5b; the subdivision is represented mainly by superimposed floors and ovens, with architecture related only to the upper phase so far. This season we encountered very few features attributed to this phase, only in Squares D/19-20, the area of the westernmost casemate room (although see also below the discussion of the room in Square E/1 which might possibly belong to this phase as well). These features include a possible beaten earth surface – designated 6746, and possibly a wall – W6705. However, due to discrepancies in elevations and other features that remain unclear, it is not certain that these two elements are contemporary and that they belong to Phase B5. It is possible that they belong to an early, original phase of B-4, based mainly on the premise that the western wall in this room was a later addition, as described in detail below. Here we will describe the elements as belonging to B-5, but this must be further examined in the future.

The western casemate room is bounded between walls – W6722=W5791=W4740 on the north, W4790 on the east and W5720 at the south. Excavation here started towards the end of the last
season in two loci – 5801 abutting the northern wall W5791=W4740 and 5770 abutting the southern W5720 (L5770 was dug 0.3m deeper than L5801). Excavation proceeded down to the level of the upper courses of the surrounding walls. No clear floor was discerned. These loci are considered to belong to B4, the main phase of the casemate room.

This season, 6721 was opened to level the higher step of 5801 left in the north and west down to the elevation of Locus 5770 (in the south of the room). When the room was leveled (at 400.94) the locus was changed to 6746, though no change in the soil matrix was observed - same dark brown homogenous mudbricks material characterized both loci. 6721 poses a question as its top abuts the northern wall 5791 but its lowest level runs just below the floating level of that wall. On the level of Locus 6746 are three basalt stones with relatively flat tops, running in an east-west row along the line of Wall 5791 and close to the brick material underneath it.

Squares D/19-20 looking east; Locus 6746 with three stones on the north (below the floating level of Wall 5791/4740 seen on the left). Top of Wall 4791 visible just past the balk in the east. (Kent photo IMG_0036)
Notably, the abovementioned layers –6721 and especially 6746 – that abut the bottom of Wall 5791 and run under its floating level, reach the northern face of Wall 5720, the southern closing wall of this casemate room, since the foundations of 5720 penetrate much lower than those of the northern wall, most likely due to topographical features here. This is the situation throughout the entire casemate building – the northern wall floats while the southern wall continues down. Thus, the phasing in this room between B5 and B4 remains ambiguous. It does seem that 6746 and the basalt stones should be ascribed to Phase B5 when looking at their relationship to the northern wall. This seems to also be supported by Wall 4791. This is a small segment of an east-west wall running underneath Wall 4740 (which is the eastern continuation of Wall 5791). This segment is located just to the west of Wall 4790, the eastern closing wall of the western casemate. It is the southern continuation of a wall (3790) that ran in Square E/19 to the north (presently removed). It is definitely earlier than Wall 4791 and has been phased in B5. The level of 6746 reaches the preserved top of Wall 4791 on its west; Wall 4791 is not yet floating. Wall 4791 ends abruptly after one meter; it was probably cut when the B4 room was built.

The caveat to phasing 6746 in B5 is that it does abut the southern casemate wall in this room – 5720. No foundation trench was discerned here. However, 1-it is possible that 5720 was built without such a cut into earlier levels and 2-a possible foundation trench was detected along the northern face of the eastern continuation of this wall – 5721 – in the next casemate room. Another caveat is the understanding of the brick material below Wall 5791/4740. This is a layer (unnumbered) of hard brown-red brick debris in which the contour of a brick or two is visible so that it is not clear if it is built or if it is brick debris. The possibilities to understand this layer are:

1-a construction or debris layer that predates Wall 5791/4740 and was used together with floor 6746

2-a constructional fill underneath Wall 5791/4740 that was laid when the wall was built so it is later than 4746 (cuts it)

3-Wall 5791/4740 might represent a later addition/repair to the northern casemate wall in this room – postdating the original use of the room. If so, then the bricks under this wall might actually represent the original northern wall of the room (or some other feature in it). If so, then 6746 would still belong to Phase B4 (an early phase – B-4a?) and not B5.
Another element to consider when discussing the phasing of 6746 in B5 is the relationship of the three basalt stones embedded in this layer to other such stones that have been phased as B5 as well. A concentration of similar stones was found in Square E/19 to the north; they are located just to the south of Wall 3790 (the continuation of 4791 to the north) and surround two well-preserved ovens, but on a slightly lower level so they were phased as B5b (although it is possible that they are contemporary with the wall). Their level (400.80) is similar to that of 6746 (400.95-400.75). Two additional stones are found in the casemate room to the east; however their level, along with the surface they are related to – 5802 – is lower (400.40-34 as opposed to 400.95-75 of 6746).

W6705 is a NE-SW stone wall segment, running just east of the western balk of Square D/19 (and its southern end in Square D20). It is composed of medium and large fieldstones rather carelessly built (or poorly preserved); its center part is somewhat damaged and it terminates ca. 1.5 m south of its juncture with Wall 6722 on the north. Above the wall is layer 6704, gray colored hard debris. Underneath the wall is a layer of hard brown brick debris with many white speckles; it is not clear whether this is debris or possibly a construction. On the southern end of
the wall, ca. 1.5 m south of its juncture with Wall 6722 (see below), there is a gap between 6705 and Wall 5720. In this gap, the hard brown brick layer with white speckles continues to the south to abut Wall 5720, while the gray debris of 6704 covers it. On the northern end, the top of Wall 6705 reaches the bottom of Wall 6722 -the very top of the stones abut the bottom of the lowest stone of 6722, i.e., 6705 cannot be seen penetrating under 6722.

As discussed above concerning Locus 6746, the dark brown brick debris underneath Wall 5791/4740 can represent two different scenarios: one is that it is an earlier layer and thus 6746 is phased as B5, while the other is that this layer belongs to B4, and 6722/5791/4740 is a later rebuild. (a third scenario is that Wall 5791/4740 is also B4 and the dark brown bricks are part of its construction, although this seems less likely). This assessment may hold for Wall 6705 as well. The possibilities are:

1-this is the western closing wall of the casemate room and it is built on top of a B5 layer. In this case, the gap on its southern end would be an entranceway leading to the west and gray debris 6704 would be related to it (debris on a floor? The floor being the bottom of this layer as resting on the brown brick layer?).

2-this is an earlier wall belonging to B5, penetrating under the original northern casemate wall. In this case, it is possible that Wall 6705 is B5a and the brown debris under it (and to its east – 6746) is B5b.

The first possibility would be valid if Wall 5791/6722/4740 is a later rebuild or repair of the northern casemate wall (which seems most likely) and also if the brick layer underneath this northern wall is part of the B4 construction. The second possibility would be valid if Wall 5791/6722/4740 is indeed the original casemate wall in this room.

The attribution of W6705 to phase B5 or B4 and whether it is part of the casemate room (B4) or earlier architecture (B5) requires further investigation.
Schematic section, not to scale, of the subsidiary balk under Wall 6705 (Squares D/19–20, looking west) of relationship of Walls 5720, 6705 and 6722, as well as related layers.

Schematic section, not to scale of the layers between Walls 5720 and 5791 in the middle of the casemate room in Squares D/19-s0, looking west. The bricks below Wall 5791 are not numbered, but might be a constructional element, perhaps the original northern wall of the western casemate room.
Squares D19-20, looking west; excavation of Wall 6705 on the level of Locus 6721; light gray debris 6704 in the “entranceway and above the wall in the balk behind it. Stones of Wall 6722 on the upper right. (ABM18_B_FPh_014)

(Looking west) Excavation of W6705 down to level of 6746; below wall: brown brick and white speckle layer; gray debris of 6704 in balk to the west. Meter stick resting on level of 6746. (ABM18_B_FPh_042)
(Looking west) suggested opening between W5720 and W6705. Notice the difference between the two debris layers – L6704 is the upper one, abutting both W6705 and W5720; the lower darker layer designated L6746 continue north under W6705, thus is earlier to it. (ABM18_B_FPh_046)

Wall 6705, looking north at the junction with Wall 6722; debris 6746 with two westernmost stones below. Note possible gap in the northern wall (between 5791 on the east and 6722 on the west). Center of photo: emergence of two of the three flat-topped stones in 6746 (ABM18_B_FPh_044)
Squares D19-20 looking northwest at juncture between Wall 6705 and 6722; note possible gap between 6722 and 5791 just to the east of this juncture (ABM18-B-206-BOB)

Squares D19-20 looking northwest at juncture between Wall 6705 and 6722 (ABM18-B-209-BOB)
Phase B4

Most of the architecture and layers exposed this season are attributed to this main phase and are related to the Iron IIA casemate structure. Excavation in 2018 concentrated on the eastern and the western ends of this structure, as well as along its southern wall.

An elaborated description of the casemate complex was offered in the previous season 2017 field report and thus will not be repeated here. The main stratigraphic conclusions regarding the Iron Age IIA casemate complex still stand after this season. A change in the interpretation of the western segment of the northern wall – W6722=W5791=W4740 – will be offered.

It should be noted that the northern wall of the casemate building was floating along its entire length, while the southern wall was not and continues down. This is apparently due to the topography and the mode of construction of the MBII glacis layers, on top of and into which the walls are built. It seems that there is a drop down towards the south and southeast, so that the glacis layers are encountered on a higher level in the north. It is not clear at this point whether this descent is because of natural topography or because the glacis slope here was steeper. Whatever the reason, it required building the southern casemate wall deeper than the northern one. See further below.

The following description will be divided into three units – the eastern casemate room and the continuation eastwards and southwards of the casemates complex; the western casemate room and its continuation westwards; and a room to the south of the central casemate room whose phasing to B4 is still uncertain.
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The Eastern/Southeastern Area– Squares F-G-H/20-1

The easternmost casemate room as excavated in 2017 is enclosed by W5733 (west), W3715 (north) and W5808 (south). The goal was to expand the excavation to the east and south to define the room and the overall plan of the casemate structure in this area. In order to do so we opened five new squares – F/1, G/20-1, H/20-1, while resuming work in square F/20. It was found that this room terminated on the east with Wall 6756, making it ca. 6.5 m long, and that there is yet another space on the east before the casemate structure ends. Thus, this room is not the easternmost casemate room, although the one to its east is much smaller, as described below.

The continuation to the southeast of the northern and southern casemate walls was exposed under a shallow top soil layer (mainly loci 6729, 6730) in Squares G/20-1. The continuation of W3715 is designated W6742 and the continuation of W5808 is designated W6741. The eastern closing wall of this casemate room was exposed in Sq. G/1, designated W6756. With the discovery of this wall, we could see that this casemates’ interior measures (within the walls) 2X5 m or 4X6 m including its outer walls. The eastern W6756 was much disturbed, particularly on its south, near the expected corner with Wall 6741. This could be due to erosion or to disturbances caused by later activity. The corner with Wall 6742 in the north was better preserved (although Wall 6742 itself at this spot was not well preserved). No clear continuation of Wall 6756 to the south beyond the line of Wall 6741 could be detected, although many collapsed stones, some of them large, are visible in this area (center of Sq. G/1, Loci 6759, 6784) that might indicate the wall did originally continue to the south. With the exposure of Wall 6756, it became clear that this large and long room was not the easternmost casemate room, as there is yet another space (6764) between Wall 6756 and what now seems to be the eastern closing wall of the entire building (Wall 6800 in Square H1; see below).
Squares F-G/20, 1, looking north at the end of season 2018. The eastern room is entirely exposed, with a balk (sandbagged) in its center; the southeastern corner (6759) is disturbed (ABM18_B_FPh_131)

Squares F-G, 20, 1, looking west at the eastern casemate room, bordered by Wall 5733 on the west (background) and Wall 6756 on the east (foreground); balk with sandbags in middle of room and meter stick on Locus 6762 (ABM18-B-065-BOB)
The Western Part of the Eastern Casemate Room

Inside the room, the remnant of earthen floor 5806 that remained in the western part of the room was removed (excavated as Locus 6719), as was the last remnant of stone installation 5807 against Wall 3715 (excavated as 6716). The installation was set on a thin layer of debris (6719). Two patches of plaster-like white clay material were exposed in the western part of the room, close to the eastern face of Wall 5733 (one of these patches was left unexcavated in a small balk running parallel to this wall); this could either be a sub-floor makeup or patches of an earlier, poorly preserved floor; the former possibility seems more likely. Thus, it seems that F5806 is the only floor that can be surely identified in this casemate room; it was detected only in the western part of the room (although see Locus 6760 in the eastern part of the room, discussed below). F5806 (#399.04) abutted the bottom of W3715 (#398.98-398.93) and was laid about 10cm above the MB II glacis (designated here L.6734 – top elevation #398.94). It was also laid above the western part of the proposed foundation trench of Wall 5808 (see description of Locus 6735 and 6777 below). On its south, F5806 abutted the preserved top of the casemate southern wall W5808 (top elevation of W5808 #399.11 at the point where the floor abutted the wall).

Directly underneath the floor makeup in the western part of the room were two matrices: in the center and mainly the north of the room (particularly visible in the western part), was the whitish gravelly sloping makeup of the MBII glacis. This makeup clearly ran underneath Wall 3715 showing that the wall was built directly on top of it. From the northern part of the room (in the west) up to Wall 5808 was a different matrix composed of dark red-brown hard brick debris with some ash and occasional patches of orangey brick material (6735 and 6777). The interface between this debris and the glacis forms a roughly oval shape. It is suggested that this might be a foundation trench for Wall 5808 (see below concerning 6801 as well). The makeup of the accumulation in this assumed trench also abuts the stones called 6801: these are a rectangular structure built against the northern face of Wall 5808 at its western end (see further discussion below). As noted above, the northern wall is floating while the southern wall is not. Note also that this “foundation trench” was not found along the northern face of the eastern continuation of Wall 5808 (termed Wall 6741) (see further below).
Square F20, looking north; Locus 6703 represents the cleanup of Floor 5806. Installation 5807 before its removal (as Locus 6716) (ABM18_B_FPh_006)

Square F/20, looking west at western end of eastern casemate room; after removal of floor 5806 (6703) and installation 5807; MBII glacis gravelly matrix on the north (6734) and dark brick layer of a possible foundation trench (6735) on the center and south. Stones in the center against the northern face of Wall 5808 are 6801 (ABM28_B_FPh_006)
Square F/20, looking west; detail of how Wall 5808 and adjoining stones 6801 cut into the white MBII glacis makeup (6734), with a possible foundation trench (upper layer of trench: 6735). (ABM18B_FPh_063)

Square F/20, looking north at glacis layer under Wall 3715; in foreground, possible foundation trench (6777-lower level under 6735 and below floating level of 6801) (ABM18_B_FPh_087)
Square F20, looking northwest at the western part of the eastern casemate room (west of the balk with the sandbags); meter stick on locus 6734, below the B4 floor (ABM18-B-058-BOB)

**Stones 6801**

Abutting the second course below the wall segment termed 5808, on its northern face and some half a meter to the east of the corner with Wall 5733, is a roughly rectangular block of stones termed 6801 (upper level 398.84, lower level 398.66). It ran for ca. 1.5 m and is composed of large and medium fieldstones one course high. 6801 was covered on its western end by floor 5806 and 6703. Its relationship to Wall 5808 is not clear. The stones of 6801 seem to have been built together with it, and the bricky debris to the north (6735) cover their top. However, it also seems that these stones adjoin those in the course below 5808; if this second course is part of an earlier phase of this wall (see below, description of Wall 6741), then it is possible that 6801 should be phased before 5808. The function of these stones is unclear; it is possible that they served as a reinforcement of some sort, perhaps due to natural topography here. It is notable that these stones run the wall segment 5808 that is composed of two large oval basalt boulders that flank four large field stones. The suggestion that this configuration might have been a threshold was considered, and that 6801 was a step leading down to the north. However, no floor was
found to abut stones 6801 and in fact, the only floor identified in this room (5806) covered the western stones of 6801. Thus, it seems it is a constructional element.

Square F/10, looking south; stones 6801 against the northern face of Wall 5808; in foreground, brick debris in Locus 6777 (ABM18-B-225 BOB)

Western end of eastern casemate room, Square F/20, looking west. Note the western end of stones 6801 cutting the sloping glacis layers (AB<18-B-090 BOB)
The Eastern Part of the Eastern Casemate Room

A balk between Squares F-G/1 was left in the center of the room; the eastern part of the room (in fact, the expansion excavated this season) is located to the east of this balk, and up to Wall 6756 on the east.

The area to the west of the balk (=the center of the room) was dug as L.6760 and the area to the east of the balk (=the eastern end of the room) as L.6755, although they are most likely the same layer. It is possible that this layer was a floor, although it this was packed brick debris and no clear floor could be identified. The reason for this suggestion is based on several elements found in or on this layer that seem to represent activity. In the northwestern part of Locus 6760 was a squarish, flat stone around which debris with traces of metallurgical activity were found (this stone was revealed at the end of 2017 and a tuyere fragment was found just to its west). In 6755, the mandible of an animal was found (in the western part of the locus, not far from the abovementioned stone; this was assigned to Locus 6762 but in fact, its level is still 6755) and a small concentration of smashed pottery was found in the eastern part, in the northeastern corner of the room (corner of Walls 6742 and 6756).

Excavation below layer 6755 revealed that Wall 6742 was floating and thus the locus was changed to 6762, although there was no visible change in matrix. It was found that 6762, only ca. 10 cm deep, covered the white chalky MBII glacis material in the far north of the room and in fact, intervened between it and the foundation of the wall. This arrangement was not found in the western part of the room, where the northern wall (designated there 3715) was built directly above the glacis. Notably, 6762 (which had to have been laid before the construction of Wall 6742) abutted the southern wall of this room (6741). It was expected to find a foundation trench similar to the one in the western part of the room (as described above and in relation to Wall 5808), but it was not visible here.
Top, looking north, Square G/20; debris layer 6762 south of and directly under W6742 (the large boulders on the right). This layer was just above the MBII glacis material (emerging in the center, marked with red arrow) Note the animal mandible in the center left (west) (ABM18_B_FPh_081)

Bottom, looking west. The entire eastern casemate room at the end of the season. L6734 marks the glacis material exposed directly under W3715 in the western part of the room, while the continuation of W3715 to the east (W6742) was built on top of an intervening brick debris layer (6762). 6762 continues to the south and abuts Wall 6741. Wall 6756 in foreground. (ABM18_B_FPh_083)
One issue to further examine is the discrepancy in floor levels between the western and the eastern parts of this casemate room: Floor 5806 in the west was identified at 399.00/398.95. The level of 6760 and 6755 is lower by ca. 30 cm. Explanations for this: 1-6760/6755 are not a floor; 2-6760/6755 are an earlier floor (and the floor that would have continued 5806 to the east was missing or eroded here); 3-the floor in the room was stepped, due to the downslope in this area.

Square F/20, looking west; The western end of the eastern casemate room. Wall 5808 on the left. Higher step in back with installation 5807, on the level of Floor 5806. Foreground: level with flat square stone (anvil?) – Locus 6760. Photo from Sept. 2017 before exposure of eastern part of the room.
A Note on Wall 5808/6741 (southern closing wall of the eastern casemate room)

The exposure this season of the entire length of the closing wall of this room revealed a complex relationship between the two segments: 5808 and 6741.

Wall 5808 is the western segment in Squares F-G/1; it was revealed in the past season in the balk between Square F/20 and F/1. The top elevation on this wall is 399.11 in the west and 398.91 in the center and east. The floor (5806) on which the faience head was found abutted the northern face of the wall, as described in last season’s report. This segment is composed of two large stones, one rectangular and one round, flanking four smaller ones. This formation looks something like a threshold. Excavation to the east and south of 5808 this season showed that this segment seems to have been built on top of the two rows that comprise Wall 6741, making it somewhat higher and separate than the rest of the wall. Note also that 5808 do not bond with Wall 5733 on the west, as the lower course does. If this is so, then the adjoining floor 5806 and the installation on it 5807 might represent a later phase in this room. The foundation trench along the northern face of Wall 5808 was not found along the eastern continuation of the wall 6741.

Square F/20, looking east. Wall 5808 on right and Wall 3715 with adjoining installation 5708 on right. Level of Floor 5806. Top of photo: lower step with square stone “anvil” and possible floor 6760. Photo from Sept. 2017, before exposure of eastern part of room. Note two large stones flanking four smaller ones and row of smaller stones to their right (south) that is the northern row of Wall 6741.
**Left:** Square F/20, looking southwest; corner of Wall 5808 and 5733 in upper center. Note the lower southern row of stones just beyond the two large stones and four smaller stones. Meter stick on layer/foundation trench 6777 (ABM18-B-058 BOB). **Right:** closeup of 6801 under Wall 5808, looking south (ABM18-B-227 BOB)

Squares F/1, 20, looking north at southern face of Wall 6741 with stones of 5808 on top of its northern row. (ABM18-B-158 BOB)

Excavation along the entire length of Wall 6741 (Squares F-G/1) shows that it continues down, as opposed to the northern wall of the room which was floating on a higher level. No traces of the MBII glacis were found along this wall (as opposed to the northern wall, as described above). Wall 6741 is poorly preserved on its eastern end and, in fact, was not found to continue past its corner with Wall 6756. It seems that this is due to a later disturbance (Locus 6759), since the parallel on the north (6742) does continue to the east and the closing wall of the building on the east (6800) continues south up to the line of Wall 6741.
The lowest level reached this season to the north of the wall was 398.25 (in the eastern part of the room- Locus 6762, described above) and the lowest level on the south was 398.34-398.23.

Excavation along the southern face of Wall 5808/6741 revealed the following:

1- A strip of dark red hard brick material, with some yellow and white patches and traces of burning (ash and charcoal) (6737, 6778), was revealed along the southern face. Although it also contained dark red-brown brick material, in fact, this matrix was not similar to Locus 6735/6777 that ran along the northern face and understood as a foundation trench. It does not seem that the southern area served such a purpose. It is possible that this strip represents a fill to level out a downslope here (possibly due to the MBII glacis slope), although the plaster patch and traces of burning seem to preclude this.

While 6735 and 6777 (north of W5808) were found almost empty of any findings, the strip along the southern face of the wall (6737, 6750, 6778 had more pottery. At the end of the season, both contexts still continue down.

2- In Locus 6737, near its eastern end, was a patch of hard white plaster (in 6737) at 398.55. If this represents a floor, it abuts the course below the segment 5808 and is at a lower level than the floor abutting all 5808 on the north (with the faience head). In general, the same hard mudbrick material characterize the excavation along the southern face of Wall 6741 in Square F/1 until the end of the season.

3- To the south of this strip, in Squares F and G/1, was an accumulation of rather homogeneous dark brown loose debris with some small stones (Loci 6783, 6784, and 6785, 6761, 6763). In fact, this layer was also found further to the west in the southern part of Square E/1. This layer was found on a downslope to the south and might be erosion. However, its homogeneity across the whole southern part of the excavated area this season might indicate that it was a cultural accumulation and not merely erosion.

4- Bordering the matrix excavated to the south of Wall 5808/6741 is a line of red-brown brick material with white plaster/mortar line/s that continues the line of Wall 5733 to the south. These bricks are covered by brick installation 6797 and are described below, together with the “Southern Room”.

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Square F/1, looking west at the beginning of excavation along the southern face of Wall 5808. Note brown bricks of 6797 (below topsoil 6709) south (left) of Wall 5733 (ABM18_B_FP_17).

Square F/1, looking west. Strip of reddish brown brick debris along southern face of Wall 5808/6741 (6737). Southern row of Wall 6741 emerging. Note brown bricks 6797 continuing line of 5733 to the south. Chalky plaster-like patch marked by the red arrow (ABM18_B_FP_057).

Square F/1, looking west (left) and north (right). Brick debris and burn layer 6778 abutting southern face of Wall 6741. Note soft brown debris layer 6761 on the left (south). brown bricks 6797 in background (ABM18_B_FP_102 – left; 106-right).
Regarding W5808=W6741 at the end of 2018 season we can conclude:

a) Segment 5808 might be a later addition to Wall 6741, added in the west on top of the northern row of the wall. Stones 6801 appears to be contemporary with 5808, although this is not certain and it might have been built with the lower course below 5808.

b) W6741 clearly abuts W5733 on the west and thus is an integral part of the original casemate construction. This is also evident by the wall construction method – its building technique and the stones/boulders sizes similar to the rest of the walls.

c) Although an integral part of the casemate building, it seems that this part of the southern wall was built on a lower step or terrace, its top ca. 0.75m lower than W5733 and the other casemate walls – W5720=W5721 and W3789 – and also lower than the wall paralleling on the north (W3715=W6742). If so, the structural reason for this is not clear. Alternatively, the upper courses were robbed or eroded.

d) Unlike the northern wall 3715 that was built directly on top of the glacis, Wall 6741 was built into a layer of mudbrick material that could be regarded as constructional – it might be that due to the MBII glacis steeper slope (southwards and eastwards) at this area some leveling work was needed prior to the construction of any new walls.

At the end of the season, the top of a concentration of large stones was found in Square F/1, in the burnt bricky debris of 6778, and 50 cm south of the southern face of Wall 6742. Its southern part is inside the subsidiary balk left here on the south. It was designated “Wall” 6804, although it has yet to be defined as part of a wall.
The Eastern End of the Casemate Building (Squares G-H/20, 1)

Excavation in Squares G–H/20, 1 in the southeastern part of Area B revealed that the casemate building continued to the east up beyond the eastern casemate room described above, terminating with a massive wall (6800) that appears to be the eastern closing wall of the casemate structure.

Wall 6756 is the wall dividing the eastern long casemate room from the small eastern space. As described above, it corners with Wall 6742 on the north and Wall 6741 on the south (the latter corner is disturbed). While large stones indicate that Wall 6742 continues to the east (although disturbed-Locus 6747), such stones are lacking in the parallel continuation line of 6741 to the east. One possibility is that the stones of Wall 6741 here were robbed or eroded; if so, then this room would measure ca. 2.1 x 2 m. Such a room would show that the casemate walls were composed of one long room, one small room, another long room, and another small room. Alternatively, it is possible that Wall 6741 did not originally continue to the east and this space continued to the south, making it long and narrow instead of a small square room. Bordering this space on the east, in Square H/1, a massive 1.6 m wide northeast-southwest wall (wider by half a meter than the other casemate walls that average 1.1 m wide), oriented just like the other casemate dividing walls, was revealed. The space between Walls 6756 and 6800 is no more than 2 m wide (east to west). If we project Wall 6741 to the east, we can reconstruct the other dimension of this room as also being 2 m, making it a square room. However, if 6741 did not originally exist here, as suggested above, this would be a long narrow room, perhaps an entrance corridor.

Wall 6800 (top elevation #398.22-397.57, sloping down towards the south) was exposed to a length of 2.5 m and exhibiting the same orientation to the casemates complex. It is composed of two rows of large boulders on each face, enclosing a concentration of smaller stones. This method of construction differs from most of the other walls of the casemate structure. The southern end of the wall is eroded, although the fact that it is found on a downslope towards the south indicates more stones might be revealed on a lower level (although excavation did proceed quite a way down here and not such stones were revealed). It is possible that there had been an opening/entranceway at this point.
A feature in this room that is as of yet unclear is an apparent gap between Wall 6800 and the eastern end of Wall 6742. A balk (between G-H/1 and 20) runs just here and it is possible that with its removal, stones will be discovered. Alternatively, this might represent an entranceway leading from the north. If so, then it would lead into a long narrow corridor between Walls 6756 and 6800 if, as mentioned above, Wall 6741 did not border this room on the south. Another explanation is that Wall 6800 belongs to a different building, although this seems less plausible.

Inside this room, the only part that appears to not be disturbed was its western part, especially the northwestern corner, where a small concentration of smashed pottery was found on a hard-lacked layer (Locus 6757) which might represent a floor; it was reached at 398.38, which is similar to the level of the possible floor in the eastern part of the room to the east (6755). The rest of the room on the east contained mostly disturbed, mixed soft debris.
Southeastern part of Area B, looking northwest. Right center: Wall 6800. Note possible gap between Wall 6800 and the eastern end of Wall 6742 (where the balk runs. (ABM18_B_136 BOB)

View of eastern end of casemate structure (Wall 6800), looking west (ABM18-B-144 BOB)
Excavation North of Wall 6742

Limited excavation along the northern face of Wall 6742 in Square G/20 (6743) revealed a thin layer of debris that rested on the MBII glacis makeup. Inside this layer was a semi-circular fieldstone installation (6773) that adjoined the wall’s northern face. In the debris inside the installation (in its upper layer) was a clay conical seal (67284) that apparently displays a boat.

Looking west, area to the north of the casemate building. Installation 6773 adjoining north face of Wall 6742 (ABM18-B-147 BOB)

Square G/20 looking north. Stones of Wall 6742 on the left and upper part of installation 6773 on the right. Ruler marking findspot of conical seal (ABM18-B-044 BOB).

The conical seal after discovery
The Southern Room and Brick Wall/Installation 6797– Squares E/1, 20

Excavation in Squares E/1 and 20, south of the central part of the casemate structure, revealed two major elements that are described here as belonging to Phase B4, although this is not certain and further excavation is required. These are 1) part of a room located ca. one meter to the south of the central small casemate room and 2) a brick wall/installation (6797) to the south/southeast of this room. The relationship between these two elements and their relationship to the casemate structure is not yet clear and requires further investigation. The possibilities are: the room is earlier (B-5), contemporary (B-4) or later (B3, B2, B1?) than the casemate building.

End of 2018 season, relation of the “southern room” to the casemate structure; north on top (Drone photo DJ100899)
The Southern Room

In Square E/1, some 1 meter to the south of Wall 5721 (the southern closing wall of the central small casemate room), three stone walls that appear to comprise a small room were revealed (the southern wall has not yet been found). The northern wall runs parallel to the outer walls of the casemate building, and the western and eastern wall roughly line up with the east-west cross walls of the central small casemate room. However, these walls are much narrower (ca. 60 cm wide) and no clear relationship between the structures can be defined at this point.

The northern wall is Wall 6788/6726. It runs ca. 5 m and is built of two rows of small-medium fieldstones. It stands 3-4 courses high and is not yet floating. Its highest preserved top elevation is in the center. The western/central part (designated Wall 6788) is preserved 70 cm higher than the central/eastern part (designated 6726) (400.39-400.32 as opposed to 399.62). It seems that this is the result of the downslope towards the east. The top of the wall is preserved ca. 40 cm lower (399.97) on its western end, just where it enters the northern balk into Square D/1. While this might be due to erosion or robbed stones, it is possible that this might represent a threshold in an entranceway, possibly continuing the line of the western wall 6794 (see below). Wall 6726 makes a corner with Wall 6754 on its south.

The eastern wall is W6754. It runs ca, 1.2 meters from its corner with Wall 6726 on the north and terminates, possibly due to erosion. Its eastern face is not yet revealed (or is missing). A large stone located just at the external (eastern) corner of Wall 6754 and 6726 might represent the northern end of the missing eastern row. Wall 6754 is built similarly to Wall 6726/6788. Its upper preserved elevation is 399.61, more or less the same as Wall 6726. Only one course was exposed so far.

The western wall is Wall 6794. It runs adjacent to the western balk of the square so that part of its western face is not yet revealed. It runs 1.5 m and stands three courses high, not yet floating. Its upper preserved elevation is 400.22, similar to that of the high western end of Wall 6788. It is built in a similar manner to the other two walls. The northern end of Wall 6794 is lower and is, in fact, on the same level as the lower western end of Wall 6788. This might be a stone threshold, but needs more clarification with the expansion of excavation to the west.
The area to the south of the walls is disturbed and contains loose gray earth with many stones (Loci 6733, 6751, 6752, 6771) with pottery mixed from Iron Age to Ottoman. Remains of a modern burial (6775) were found as well, cutting the southern end of this room on its upper level. This disturbed debris fans out as excavation proceeds down and due to the rather severe slope down to the south here (more acute than in the eastern squares), the stratigraphic brown layer is reached at a lower level as excavation progresses to the south.

The matrix inside these three walls (6770, 6771, 6775, 6798, 6753) is mixed. Yet, in the lowest excavated level (6798) (399.72), the matrix turned to dark brown hard brick debris with pottery and a small scarab (67675). No floor has yet been identified and it is still not clear whether we can interpret this layer as being part of the room’s in situ contents.
Squares E/1, 20, looking north. Walls of the southern room to the south of casemate Wall 5721. Loci 6771 and 6774 in the foreground are disturbed debris covering the hard brown brick debris inside the room (6792, 6798). (ABM18_B_FPh_129)

Square E/1, looking west; inside the southern room; note possible entrance with stone threshold between Walls 6788 and 6794; disturbed/eroded area with stones on the left (south); (ABM18-B-184 BOB)
The Area between Wall 6788/6726 and Wall 5721

To the north of the southern room (north of Wall 6788/6726) is a ca. one-meter wide strip running up to the southern wall (5721) of the casemate structure here. On the south, this matrix abutted Wall 6788/6726. The loci here are 6732 (east) and 6790 (west). 6790 was composed of dark brown and reddish brick debris with evidence of burning (ash and charcoal), and a large amount of pottery, some of it appearing to be restorable. It was difficult to determine whether there was a foundation trench here, either along the northern face of Wall 6788/6726 or along the southern face of Wall 5721 of the casemate structure. If the former, then the southern room would be later than the casemate. If the latter, then the casemate would be later than the southern room. The third possibility is that the apparent lack of a foundation trench might mean that the two elements were contemporary.

Square E/1, looking southwest; meter stick on Locus 6732 (between Wall 6726 and Wall 5721 (top visible in foreground. In this photo, the western continuation of this area between the southern room and the casemate wall (6790) was not yet excavated. Note the gray bricky and burnt area on the eastern end of 6732 (=6797) (ABM18-B-011 BOB)
Square E/1, looking south during excavation of strip between casemate Wall 5721 (not seen in the photo) and the Southern Room, along the northern wall of this room (6726/6788) (ABM18_B_FPh_114)

Area between casemate Wall 5721 and the Southern Room; 6732 in the east and a higher ‘step’ in the west, 6790 (subsidiary balk is left between them). On the eastern end of 6732 is brick installation/wall 6797. (cut from drone photo)
Brick Installation, 6797, Square E/1

On the eastern end of the strip between the Southern Room and the casemate wall, described above, are features that remain stratigraphically unclear as of yet.

Just east of the corner of Walls 6726 and 6754 is a disturbance that is burnt and has a rounded contour (pit?); this feature is not numbered separately and it is not clear what its phasing is (or if it is related to 6797, described below). If it is cut into Wall 6754 then it would be post this phase.

Disturbance/pit near corner of Walls 6788 and 6754 (ABM18-B-006 BOB)

To the northeast of the corner of Walls 6726 and 6754 (the northeastern corner of the Southern Room), on line with the large stone marking the eastern end of Wall 6726, is a ca. 60 cm wide (east to west) and only 6 cm deep patch of gray mudbrick material on a north-south axis (designated 6797), located on line with the projected southern continuation of the line of Wall 5733.

The eastern end of 6797 is bordered by a white plaster or mortar line. Beyond it is an irregular area of gray brick material whose eastern end is jagged, probably the result of how we excavated it. On the north, just near the southern face of Wall 5721, is a horseshoe-shaped shallow ‘pit’ (open to the west) with slightly raised ends that is set into the gray brick material and is orange/reddish color. Inside it was a concentration of dark ash; a piece of metal was found in it as well (testing with a magnet did not reveal any additional metal fragments). It seems that the orangey color was the result of the burning activity here.

To the south of this small ‘fire pit’ (and up to the northern face of Wall 6726) was an irregular patch of somewhat similar orange material and some ash, but not as well defined as the
one on the north. It is either a similar pit that is poorly preserved or some kind of shallow dump from the one on the north.

It is not clear whether the gray brick material of 6797 was built first and then the ‘fire pit’ was set into it, or whether they are one and the same element. The latter seems more likely, but this needs to be further examined. The answer to this is also related to the configuration below the gray brick patch, as described below.

Square E/1 (east on top); brick installation 6797, with the horseshoe-shaped ‘pit’ with ash. Note a slight depression with some ash and reddish brick in the area to the south of the ‘horseshoe’ and up until Wall 6726. (ABM18_B_FPh_121)

Close up of previous photo after further excavation into the fire pit (almost down to its bricky bottom) and to its south (after removal of the small ashy patch); note white line bordering the fire pit on the east (ABM18_B_FPh_122)

View of Installation 6797 looking south (top of photo); meter stick on irregular gray brick material to east of “horseshoe” fire pit. Note large that is at the eastern end of Wall 6726 stone just to the south of 6797 (ABM18_B_FPh_119)
The relationship of brick installation 6797 to Wall 5721 on the north and Wall 6726 on the south remains unclear, and is a critical point in understanding the stratigraphy between the casemate structure (north), the Southern Room (south). It seems that the brick material of 6797 abutted W5721 but its relation with W6726 is not as certain; it is on line with the large stone that is found just east of the corner of Walls 6726 and 6754. If 6797 abuts Wall 5721 but is cut by Wall 6726, it would support a later date for the Southern Room. If 6797 abuts Wall 6726, it would argue for the contemporaneity of the casemate building and the Southern Room.

The Area Below Installation 6797: The Western Balk of Square F/1

An additional element that needs to be understood in relation to the phasing of 6797 vis a vis the casemate structure and the Southern Room is the area below it that is seen in the western balk of Square E/1. This also has bearing on the stratigraphy of the layer to the south of Wall 6741/5808 (discussed above).

Below the gray brick layer (6 cm) of 6797 is a matrix of hard brick material with inclusions. Running through its center on an east-west line is a white mortar or plaster line that seems to separate this brick matrix into two courses. This white line extends to the south from the uppermost stone of Wall 6741/5808, just at the point where that wall meets the balk. In this sense, it looks like a floor surface. The matrix above the white line is composed of reddish-gray material, while underneath the white line, the matrix is red-brown with many inclusions. The upper layer above the white line continues a short distance to the north, to cover the actual corner between Walls 6471/5808 and 5733. Just about on line with Wall 6726 (in Square E/1 to the west) is a large stone that juts out of the balk; the white line runs up to this stone and seems to continue past it to the south, although less clear than on the north. To the east of this large stone were two stones that also were set on a white layer and they might possibly have been related to it.
The possible explanations for this complex configuration are:

1-6797 (thin gray brick layer with fire pit) seals and covers the entire brick matrix and white line seen in the balk (i.e., is later).

2-There are two phases here: the upper phase is 6797 that is composed of the thin gray brick layer with the fire pit and the gray-red brick debris above the white line in the balk, which would represent its bottom. If so, then the large stone on the south would perhaps represent the border of this installation. The lower phase would be the red-brown bricks below the white line, which abut Wall 6741/5808 on its southern face, would be an earlier phase related to Wall 6741/5808.
3-There are three phases here: uppermost: the thin layer of 6797; the middle: red-gray brick material and large stone/s down to the white line (surface related to upper part of 6741/5808?); the lowest: the red-brown brick material with inclusions below the white line.

In Nos. 2 and 3, it is possible that the element/s above the white line are contemporary with the floor (5806) inside the casemate room to the north, where the faience head and a concentration of pottery were found. However, this is not certain and needs to be further examined.
Balk between Squares F-E/1, looking west; Note reddish-brown brick material covered by white plaster(?) line in the balk, continuing the line of Wall 5733 to the south. This layer is covered by brick installation 6797.

**The Western Area – Squares C–D/19–20-“Phase B-4a”**

This season we extended the excavation area westwards, aiming to follow the trajectories of the casemate building to this direction, up the slope.

The continuation of W5720 to the west was exposed in Square C/20 under a layer of topsoil (6731); the elevation on the top of the westernmost new stone is 401.80. Abutting the stone is mudbricks debris layer designated 6738 and 6767 that went down to a beaten earth surface 6767 (=6791, it is extension to the west). To the south of the westernmost stone of Wall 5720, resting on the floor, was a circular stone installation - 6780 (401.86-401.67). Both the surface and the installation clearly abut W5720.

The western continuation of Wall 5720 was not found beyond the three ‘new’ stones in the western end of the wall. At the spot where we expected the wall to continue is a soft area that might indicate the stones were robbed here. Excavation to the north of the projected wall line revealed a layer of hard brick debris (Locus 6768; 401.84–401.72) with almost no finds, and no floor that would equal 6767. Layer 6768 continues to the north underneath Wall 6722 (floating elevation #402.03). Very little pottery or other finds was recovered from Floor 6767 or from debris layer 6768 (both considered contemporary, despite their different natures). This floor is
assigned to Stratum B/4 though it is possible that it is a later phase that utilized the still-standing Wall 5720. The date of this phase is not clear, as no indicative pottery has been recovered. It could be a later phase of B-4 or a post-B-4 Phase that might be dated to Iron IIB (which is still missing as a stratigraphic entity in Area B) and is thus tentatively designated “B-4a.

Based on the relationship to debris layer 6768 that penetrates under it, we can conclude that Wall 6722 was a later addition that was apparently built after Wall 5720. Throughout the casemate building, the northern wall is floating while the southern wall is going down, probably a result of the topography. The fact that 6722 is built above a layer that abuts Wall 5720 indicates that it is a later wall and not just built higher because of the slope here. Wall 6722 is the western continuation of Wall 5791=4740 and it is thus possible that they too comprise a later addition, post Phase B-4; their phasing is discussed below.
If the suggestion that Wall 6722 (and the segments of it to the east – 5791, 4740) was built after the activity described above (Floor 6767, installation 6780 and debris 6768), the question is what was the northern border of this activity? It is possible that some of the architecture revealed to the north of Wall 5791 and 6722 (described below – Post B-4) might be related, although there is no direct evidence for this. The construction of Wall 6722/5791 would have removed any such connection. As it stands now, the B-4a activity seems to have been an open area, using the extant western stones of Wall 5720 but no other architecture that could be defined.

**The Phasing of the Western End of the Northern Casemate Building Wall**

The northern wall of the western casemate room was excavated during several seasons and thus was assigned several numbers, from east to west: 4740, 5791 and, in 2018, 6722 (the westernmost end, continuing into the western balk). Excavation down in this room revealed that this wall demonstrates several differences from its eastern part:

1. It consists of one stone/boulder course, while the eastern end has 4-5 courses.
2. The stones/boulders are more rounded and aligned in pairs (one next to the other), suggesting a different construction technique than the very rough ‘headers-like’ elongated boulders with smaller stones that can be found in the rest of the wall to the east (and in the southern wall).
3. Although the stratigraphy is not entirely clear, it seems that the central segment of this wall 5791 was built on top of mudbricks that might represent a constructional element in Phase B4, found on the northern end of the western casemate room (see description above – Loci 6721 and 6746). (Above it was considered that these bricks belong to B-5, based on the assignment of Wall 5791 to B-4; however, if this wall is a later addition, post B-4, then the bricks can indeed be B-4).
4. Wall 6722 is abutted on its southern face by a segment of a pebble floor (6781) at 402.05; an iron chisel (67509) was found directly south of it. This floor looks similar to those found in Stratum B-3b-c (the early phase of the large Persian-early Hellenistic building). This would suggest that the hypothetical later addition to the northern casemate wall that we see in the western room might have been added when the latter building was built. The possibility was suggested that this building had first
been built in Iron IIB (=B-3c-b), although there is no ceramic or other evidence for this. Thus, the phasing of this addition/repair remains unclear.

An issue to consider when suggesting that the western segment of the northern casemate wall is a rebuild, possibly in B-3 or even earlier (but post B-4) is the question of what was the original western closing wall here in B-4? It is suggested that the mudbricks under Wall 5791 might represent such a wall, but this is far from certain. This can be possibly clarified when excavation takes place to the north of the present northern casemate wall in Squares C-D/19.
Drone photo 00681 (2017). This photo was taken before the removal of late walls 5704, 5724 and 5756, and before the expansion of the excavation to the west (an aerial photo showing this wall segment was not available in 2018). The top of Wall 5791 is emerging here. It can be seen how this wall segment – 4740 and 5791 – is built differently than the other casemate walls. Red line delineates the possible rebuild – to the left (west) of the line.

Western end of Area B, end of 2019, looking east; Squares C/19-20 in foreground; western continuation of northern wall (6722) on the left and missing continuation of Wall 5720 on the right; note...
Squares C-D/19–20, looking north; the post B-4 (or B-4a) activity of Floor 6767 and Installation 6780 are seen in the lower left corner; pebble floor 6781 (covered with sandbags) can be seen in the upper right corner, abutting Wall 6722. Note the floating level of Walls 4740/5791 and 6722, as well as the gap between 5791 and 6722 – a possible entranceway. (ABM18-B-108 BOB)

**North of the Western Casemate Room in Squares C-D/19- Phases B-2 and B-3**

The area to the north of the western end of the northern casemate wall in Squares C-D/19 was very small and disturbed, being underneath the high layer of modern debris removed by the tractor. Some of the wall segments were exposed in the previous season and only one was revealed this year (6712). It seems that all these segments postdate Walls 6722 and 5791; based on elevations and relationship to the B-3 remains found to the southeast, as well as loci excavated in the previous season to the south, these elements are assigned mostly to B-2, and a few to B-3, although this is tentative at this point. No in situ pottery was recovered here and most all of it was mixed Iron II and later.
Wall 5704 (Square D/19) cannot be securely phased as it is detached from the others and surrounded by mixed debris layers; its elevations suggest the possibility that it might be contemporary with Wall 5724. It was phased by Ariel to B2. This wall was removed this season.

Wall 5767 (Square D/19) was built on top of Wall 5791, with a thin layer of debris between them (6748). The elevation of this wall (401.95/402.06 upper, 401.70/401.80 lower) makes it difficult to phase vis a vis the nearby walls, since the founding level is lower than the nearby Walls 6712. The founding level of Wall 5767 is the same as a layer identified as a possible surface – 6787 at 401.73 (and 6779 further to the west) – and it is possible they are related, and earlier than Walls 5724 and 6712. This wall was phased to B3b by Ariel and pebble floor 5773 to its south was possibly contemporary with it. This wall was removed this season. Below it was a thin layer of debris – 6748 between it and the top of Wall 5791.

Wall 6712 (Square D/19), located ca. 2 m west of Wall 5724, might be contemporary with it, based on their relatively similar floating levels (6712: 402.22/00; 5724: 402.44/15). Thus this wall might be phased to B2, as was 5724.

Square D/19, looking west; stones of Wall 6712 floating above extant top of Wall 6722. Stones and debris of 6727 – collapse east of Wall 6712; the small stones to the east of Wall 6722 are found in the gap between it and Wall 5791 (the latter not seen in the photo) (ABM18_B_FPh070)
Wall 5724 (Square D/19), was excavated last season and phased as B-2. Its northern end seems to cover the southern part of B3 Wall 3761. This wall was removed this season and below it was a thin layer of debris, 6740, that rested on a layer that might have been a floor – 6787. If the wall is B-2, then this layer might be B-3; it is higher than the top of Wall 5791.

Between Walls 5724 and 6712 is a deep layer of collapsed stones and debris, 6727 (402.15-401.73); the pottery from this layer is mixed Iron II and later, but this cannot be indicative since the area is very disturbed. A row of stones in the middle of this locus along its western end, and just below the floating level of Wall 6712, appeared to have been constructed, but this was not certain. Stones continuing this line were found in the possible gap between Walls 6722 and 5791.

Additional debris loci in this area include: 6731, 6769, 6715, 6725, 6728, 6745, 6779, 6789, 6796, 6738, 6782 (= 6799?). 6789 was defined as a surface, although this is not certain. It abuts the top of Wall 5791 from the north. Some of the pottery forms in these loci date to Iron IIB, such as cooking pots. However, none of this pottery is found in situ on a floor and later forms are found as well. Continued excavation might reveal ‘clean’ contexts that might relate some of these loci, especially the lower ones (such as 6789) to Iron IIB. No traces of destruction or burning were found anywhere in this small area north of the casemate room.

With the removal of most of the above elements north of the western casemate wall, most of which appear to belong to Phase B-2, we are on a level that abuts the northern face of the ‘added’
Thus, it will be possible to explore the phasing of the northern wall vis a vis the lower phase inside the casemate room, as well as in relation to the B-3 large building.

**Phase B-1 in Squares D-E/1, 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Squares</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Loci</th>
<th>Walls</th>
<th>Proposed date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D/1</td>
<td>Burials</td>
<td>6717 (unexcavated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E/1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6736</td>
<td>6775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/1</td>
<td>W5737 continuation southwestwards and abutting fills/mudbricks debris (layer disturbed by later burial activity)</td>
<td>6706, 6707, 6708, 6711, 6714, 6723, 6724</td>
<td>W6710</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remains attributed to Phase B-1 in Square D-1 include two burials (6717 and 6736), and a wall (6710/5737) that runs along the western balk; loci abutting this wall were very disturbed and mixed (6708, 6723) with pottery mostly from Roman to Ottoman periods. Burial 6736 was excavated and backfilled; burial 6717 was not excavated.

It is possible that the wall 6710/5737 should be attributed to B-2.
Square D/1, looking north; W6710 is clearly the continuation of W5737. L6717 is the burial abutting W6710 and was left unexcavated this season. L.6723 detonated the lowest we dug down east of W6710, and L6736 was completely dug by the end of the season.
**Dating - B-6 to B-3**

No new evidence for dating B-6 (the MBII glacis) or B-5 (late Iron I – dated by C14 to the 10th century BCE) was found, as no pottery or other finds were associated with the excavated layers. Pottery found in the eastern casemate room and its eastern extension is mostly Iron IIA, with some later forms, a few of them possibly Iron IIB but none in situ on a floor. The pottery from the Southern Room and the area between it and the casemate building is Iron IIA and B. No clear assemblages were found to date the activity abutting Wall 5720 on its south, nor the elements to the north of the casemate wall in this western end of the building.

The chronological and stratigraphic questions at the end of 2018 in Area B are:

1-Are there two phases in the eastern casemate room, marked by the floor with the faience head and the floor with the “anvil” stone? Are these suggested two phases related to architectural changes, such as the relationship between Walls 5808 and 6741? Can two phases also be discerned to the south of this wall?

2-What is the relationship of the Southern Room to the casemate building and to the bricks on Installation 6797 and below?

3-What is the relationship of the bricks below Installation 6797 to Walls 5720/6741/5808? Are they a built element representing the continuation of the casemate building to the south and if so, when were they built?

4-Is the activity abutting the western end of Wall 5720 postdate the use of the casemate building (B-4a) or does it represent a latest phase within the time that the building was still in use? What is its date? Could it represent Iron IIB?

5-Assuming that the northern wall of the western casemate room is a later addition, when was this done? During the latest phase of use of this building (and what is its date)? Post the Iron Age IIA (B-4) use of this building, possibly in Iron IIB (Phase B-4a?)? Built when the B-3 building was built? The date of the latter is presently Persian/early Hellenistic, but it has two phases; was it possible that the earlier phase was constructed in Iron IIB?
Top plan at end of 2018 season: eastern part of Area B
Top plan at end of 2018 season: western part of Area B