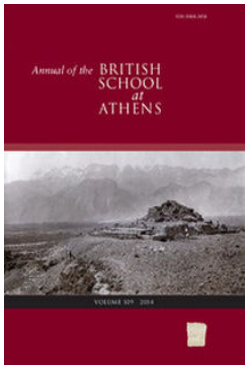

Two Watch Towers in the Megarid

H. J. W. Tillyard

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TWO WATCH TOWERS IN THE MEGARID.

THE mountain-road from Megara to Thebes has always been a highway of some importance. Rising from the Megarian plain, it wound upwards among the hills until it topped the pass leading to the harbour of Aegosthena, passing on the right the site of the modern Vilia; near this pass it joined another road running up from Pagae, the other Megarian harbour. From the nature of the ground the old road and the modern mule-track must have followed much the same lines. The rocky range of hills, over which the pass already mentioned leads, is Mount Carydi. The need of guarding such a strategic point, whence the Megarian plain and the land round Pagae could easily be overlooked, is clear at first sight; and in fact there are still standing two fine Greek towers on the southern side of the pass. These were first described by Buchon[1]: they are also marked in the map accompanying a dissertation by Lebègue, and mentioned in his text.[2]

THE SQUARE TOWER (FIGS. 1 AND 2).

This, the easternmost of the two, stands near the path leading from Megara to Vilia. It measures 17 ft. 6 in. square at its base. The blocks of grey stone used in the work range from 4 ft. to 2 ft. in length, and are about 2 ft. high and 1 ft. 5 in. thick. On the south-west side there shows

[1] *La Grèce Continentale et la Morée*, 557.

[2] *De Oppidis et Portibus Megaridis ac Boeotiae*, 51, 54. The towers are also marked in Winterberger's sketch-map, *Jahrbuch d. k. deutschen Arch. Inst.* vii. (1892), 122. I saw and measured both towers in May 1905, and visited them again in March 1907. The plans were drawn for me by Mr. C. C. T. Doll, architect and member of the School.

above the ground a shallow base-course about 10 in. deep, which projects some 6 inches beyond the face of the wall. Above this sixteen courses remain ; the highest is in place only near the south corner and on the north-east side. The height must be about 33 ft. ; this was obtained by counting the courses, and confirmed by a rough reckoning by trigonometry. Buchon's estimate of 40 ft. or 50 ft. was excessive. All the blocks

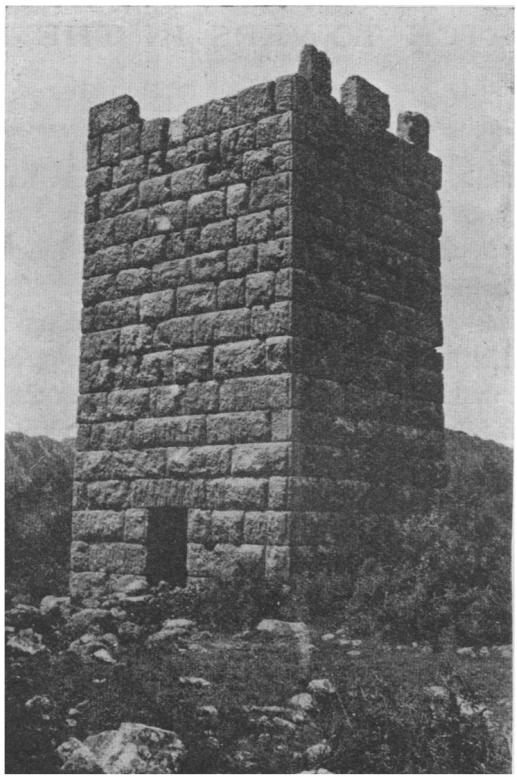

FIG. 1.—THE SQUARE TOWER.

are roughly squared, but the outer faces are smoother than the inside and have a smooth draft of $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. round the edges. The corner blocks are also drafted.

The door faces nearly south-east ; its height was originally 6 ft. The lintel, which forms part of the fourth course, is 6 ft. $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. in length. The inside elevation of the doorway shows two holes in the lintel ; these must have been used to hold metal sockets, into which the bars slid to fasten the

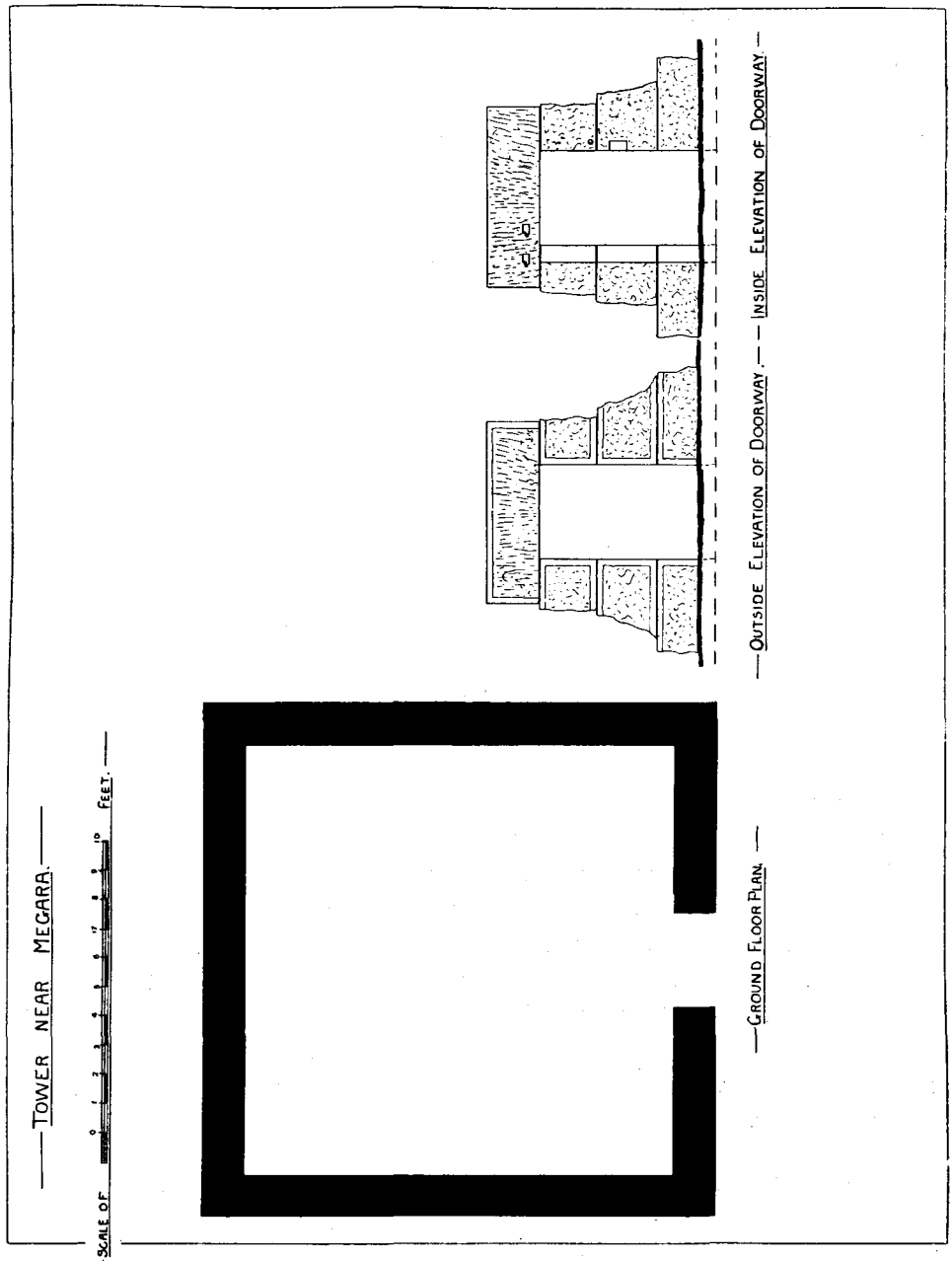

FIG. 2.—PLAN AND ELEVATION OF THE SQUARE TOWER.

door. On the same side as these cuttings the door-jamb is smoothed for a width of $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.; this was doubtless where the closed door was meant to rest. On the other jamb can be seen a round and a rectangular cutting in which the hinges must have been fixed; no pivot-holes appear, so that the door would have been wholly supported on its hinges.

Inside the tower and at the top of the sixth course, we find a hole cut out to a depth of a few inches at each corner, another over the doorway, and another in the back wall opposite; these three pairs of holes are evidence of a first floor borne by three joists. In the ninth course the stone has been cut away to make a splayed loophole in the middle of each of the four walls. These slits are of the height of the course itself, but are so narrow on the outside as to be quite unseen, though on the inside they may be a foot in breadth. As the upper storey began with course seven, the bottom of the loophole was at the easy height of four feet from the floor. Whether above the loopholes there was another floor with other loopholes, can only be guessed. The upper floors and the roof must have been reached by wooden ladders. There are no cuttings to carry the supports of a regular staircase.

It is quite clear from the solidity of the masonry, the evenness of the courses, and the general style of building, that this square tower belongs to a good period of Greek fortification. In many ways it is like the towers on the walls of Aegosthena,[1] which also show drafted edges at the corners as well as on the other blocks, splayed loopholes, and the same regular courses. The works on Ithome show many of the same features; but unfortunately it is not known how long this style of construction lasted in Greece:[2] perhaps our tower may be roughly dated as fourth-century work. Square towers are common in Greek lands: there is a fine example between Oenoe and Eleutherae near the modern road,[3] built in the same style as our tower, but with smaller blocks, and there are square towers in Ceos,[4] Amorgos, and other Greek islands.[5]

There are no remains of any wall or court surrounding the tower; there are, however, one or two seemingly mediæval store-tanks sunk in the ground near by.

[1] For Aegosthena, cf. *J.H.S.* xv. (1895), 314 ff., Pls. IX., X. [2] Cf. Lebègue, *op. cit.* 71.
[3] Frazer's *Pausanias*, v. 538; Milchhöfer, *Karten von Attika*, Text vii., viii., p. 16.
[4] Ross, *Inselreise* i. 132; Bent, *Cyclades*, 301; Bröndsted, *Voyages et Recherches*, i. 26; Ἐφ. Ἀρχ. 1898, 230. [5] See pp. 155 f., below.

THE ROUND TOWER (FIGS. 3 AND 4).

This tower measures in its inside diameter, from 16 ft. 9 in. to 16 ft. 3 in. above the first course, and from 16 ft. 5 in. to 16 ft. above the second course. The outside girth at these heights came to 67 ft. and 60 ft. The heights of the four lowest courses are 2 ft. 1 in., 2 ft. 2 in., 2 ft. 1 in., 2 ft. There are twenty-three courses, and this would give about 50 ft. as the full height, in agreement with Buchon. The tower can never have been much higher, as very few stones have fallen from the top. The blocks are very big, many being over 5 ft. long, and 2 ft. thick; on the inside they are very rough, but on the curved outer face are finished with some care. Many of the joints are not upright but slope at an angle of about 70 degrees. Almost every joint is filled with mortar.

The doorway is 6 ft. 8 in. in height, its breadth at the top 3 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. and at the bottom 3 ft. 5 in. The lintel forms part of the fourth course, and is 5 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. long. The cuttings in the door-jambs may not all be of the same date; they suggest that the door swung on hinges; no pivot-holes appear. In the seventh course a hole is seen above the doorway, there is another opposite to it, and at least two others at the same height on either side; these would be joist-holes for an upper storey. In the tenth course there are three splayed loopholes reaching the whole depth of the course. In course sixteen there is a square hole over the door, and in course thirteen there seem to be at least two joist-holes; these would belong to a third storey.

Round towers are especially common on the Greek Islands, the most famous being the large tower at Andros.[1] In this a staircase was carried round the wall, while in our tower no trace of such a flight appears. The door of the Andros tower was high above the ground, and the lower part, built of larger blocks, was used as a basement; in the present case the entrance must always have been at the ground level. Splayed loopholes occur at Andros as here. Some of the towers in the islands have surrounding courts for the shelter of cattle in case of attack, but nothing of the kind seems to have existed in the case before us. There appears to be a remnant of a retaining wall, which supported a platform on which the tower stood; this was needed, owing to the slope of the ground. There is also a large mediæval cistern about twenty yards from the tower.

[1] Le Bas, *Voy. Arch.* Sect. *Îles de la Grèce*, Pl. 2.

The tower must in the first instance have been Hellenic work, but the date of its building is uncertain; the presence of mortar in the joints suggests that it was repaired in the middle ages. Buchon states that he found remains of a mediæval wall joining the two towers, and he supposes this to have been built by the Franks, who may at the same time have repaired the round tower with mortar. Of this wall nothing can now be seen near

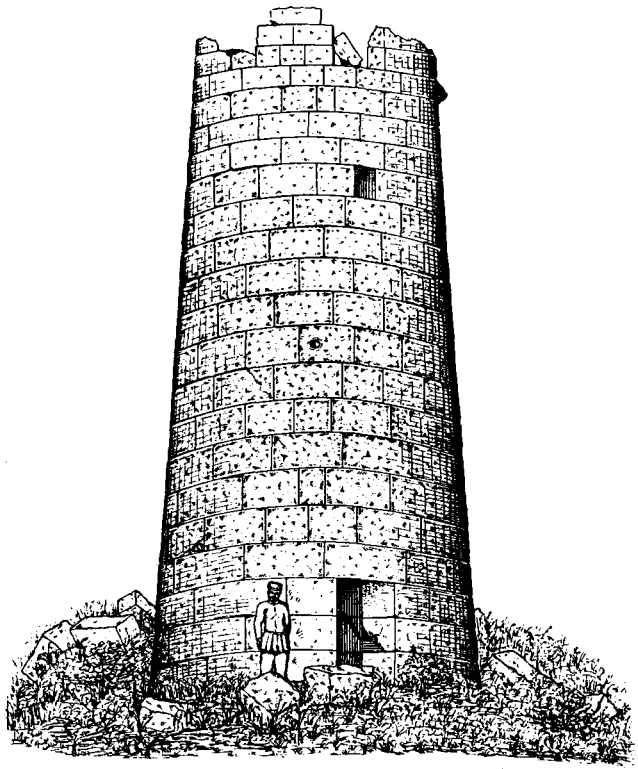

FIG. 3.—THE ROUND TOWER.

either of the towers. It is known that in 1256 William Villehardouin attacked Guy de la Roche, Duke of Athens, who had refused to do him homage. Villehardouin took the harbour of Megara, driving out the Corinthians, and marched up the Thebes road; by Mount Carydi he was met by Guy de la Roche, whom he routed. The quarrel was eventually referred to the King of France (Louis IX.), who decided that Guy should

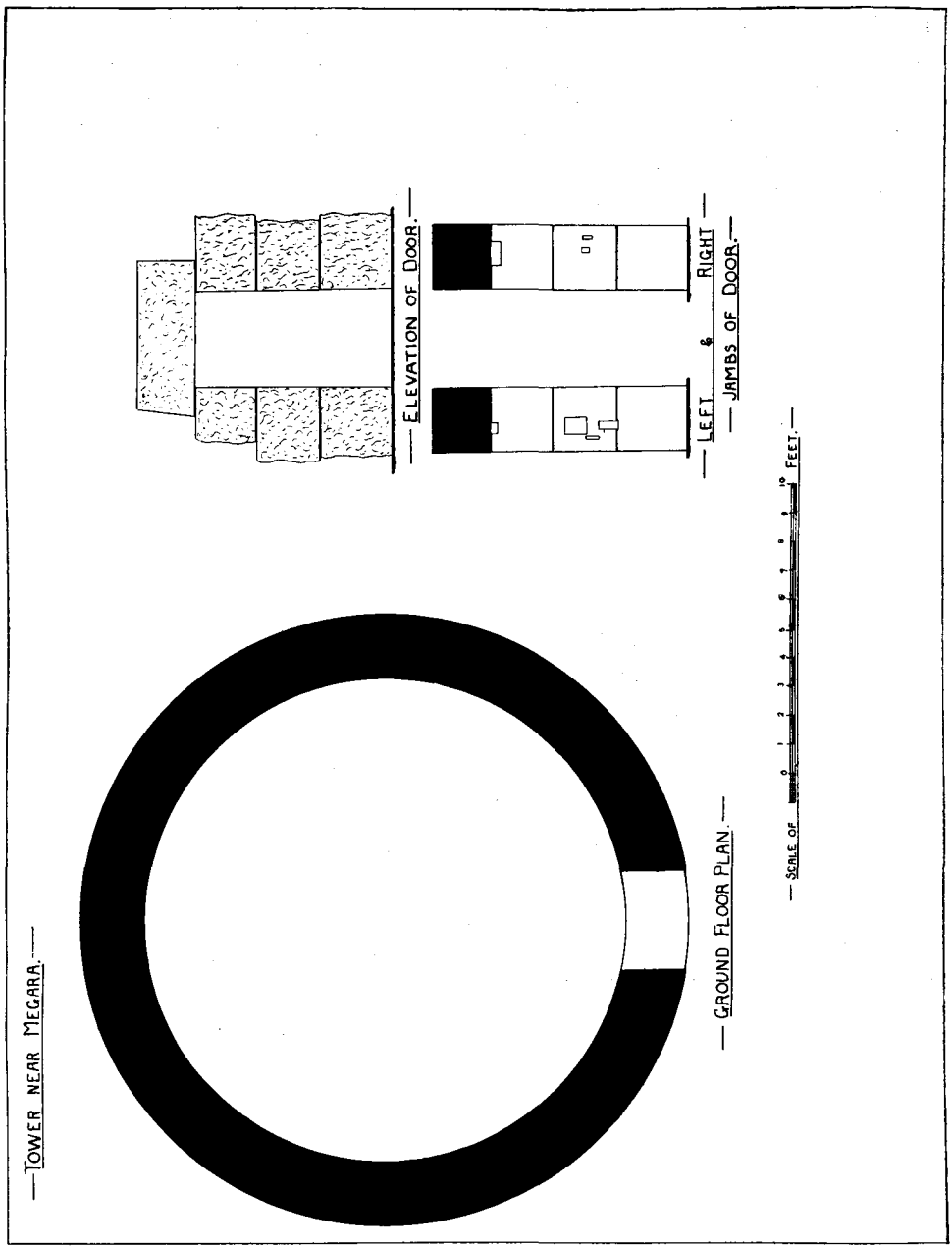

FIG. 4.—PLAN OF ROUND TOWER.

keep his dukedom.[1] The neighbourhood of the towers was the natural place for an army to entrench itself when defending the Thebes road, and it is likely that the round tower may have been restored at that time.

It must be noted finally that neither tower can be considered as a work of fortification, nor as a shelter for any large number of refugees; for the buildings are small, have no surrounding court, and stand in exposed positions. For points of outlook both are well placed: the round tower commands a view of the land round Pagae, and the square tower of the plain of Megara. Although the principal view is towards the south and west, it is not likely that Aegosthena, even when it belonged to the Boeotian league, would have pushed so far south as to build these towers with hostile intentions against Megara: more probably the Megarians built the towers for the purpose of signalling to Pagae and Megara itself, in case of an attack from the north. It would have been easy to post watchers higher up the pass who could have descried an enemy approaching from the neighbourhood of Vilia, and so have given a timely warning; at the same time, any goatherds or foresters who happened to be at work on Mount Carydi could have been sheltered in the towers. Aegosthena itself was not likely to be attacked from the south by an enemy of Megara, so that there was no need to send signals from Mount Carydi to Aegosthena. The towers, moreover, were rightly placed to serve as a temporary base for a Megarian army holding the pass against an attack from the north, and their strength of wall would secure the watchmen until reinforcements marched up.

[1] For these events cf. the *Chronicle of the Morea*, 3265:

ἐπῆρεν τὰ φουσσᾶτα τοῦ κ' ἦλθεν εἰς ἀπάντην τοῦ,
κ' ἐκεῖ ἐσυναπαντήθησαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Καρύδιν . . .
κ' ἐκέρδισεν ὁ πρίγκιπας τὸν πόλεμον ἐκεῖνον.

Buchon, *Recherches Historiques sur la Morée*; Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, iv. c. 7, § 3, p. 200; Sir Rennell Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, i. 194.

H. J. W. TILLYARD