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Tel Jerusalem: The Place Where It All Began (Archaeological Remains From the Epipaleolithic Period to the Iron Age II Period)

Abstract

Israel as the Holy Land has been the focus of archaeologists for more than 200 years (the first excavations took place in 1810 in Ashkelon), and the city of Jerusalem has been explored for almost 180 years (Robinson, 1838). There are a substantial number of archaeologists who have had various motivations to dig in Jerusalem. The understanding of the occupation of this city has been an important issue until the present. This paper approaches the history of excavations as well as the important finds from the part of Jerusalem that is known as the City of David. Excavations in Jerusalem are problematic, because in the Old City there is not too much open space where it is possible to excavate. The majority of the Old City area is covered with modern buildings. There is no possibility for archaeologists to excavate on the platform at the Temple Mount. This is why current research is focused on the City of David, the Ophel and some areas around the Temple Mount (tunnels and the Western Wall Plaza). Only in the City of David is it possible to see continuous settlement from the Epipaleolithic period to the modern period, because of the presence of only one source of water up to the Roman period.

Key words: Jerusalem, archaeology, history, ancient, City of David, Hezekiah, Gihon Spring, water system, Ophel, Stepped Stone Structure, Large Stone Structure

1. Introduction

For the beginning of the settlement in Jerusalem it is necessary to focus on the part of the city that is located outside the present city walls, the area known today as the City of David.¹ According to the biblical text this is the place that was chosen by King David to

1) At the beginning of the 19th century the hill had not yet been identified as the City of David. There were only two sites known – a spring and a pool. In 1867 Charles Warren was the first excavator in Jerusalem during the Ottoman rule over Israel. He focused on the Temple Mount Walls, the Temple Mount itself and the area around the Gihon Spring (tunnels and a vertical shaft that was named for its discoverer). In 1880 Conrad Schick's student discovered the famous Shiloah inscription and C. Schick revealed the Channel II (Hezekiah's Tunnel). In 1901 E. Masterman and C.A. Hornstein excavated the Channel I in the City of David. At the end of the 19th century F. J. Bliss and A. Dickie revealed the southern walls of Jerusalem; the steps of the Shiloah Pool from the Second Temple periods and parts of the road that leads from the Shiloah Pool to the Temple Mount. The research of M. B. Parker and F. L. H. Vincent took place between the years 1090–1911. They uncovered some parts in the Gihon Spring area. During the years 1913–1914 and 1923–1924 R. Weill discovered burial caves of the Davidic dynasty and Greek inscriptions from the Second Temple period. During the British mandatory period excavations were conducted by R.A.S. Macalister and J. G. Duncan. They worked on the top of the hill of the City of David in the years 1923–1925 and there they found there a line of wall, two towers and the "Jebusite" Ramp (Stepped Stone Structure). In 1927 J. W. Crowfoot and G. M. Fitzgerald worked in the Tyropoeon Valley – at the site that is known as the Givati Parking Lot. K. M. Kenyon excavated during the time of the divided Jerusalem between years 1961–1967 at the eastern slope in the City of David. She discovered there residential buildings, fortress walls and the main street in the Tyropoeon Valley. David Ussiskhin researched in Silwan village in 1968 after the reunification of Jerusalem. Y. Shiloh continued excavating the City of David between the years 1978-1985. He opened two new areas (A1 and H) and he discovered in area G the House of Ahiel. Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron excavated this area from 1995 to 2012. They uncovered the Shiloah Pool and the Second Temple period Road and they also worked under the Spring House. Eilat Mazar conducted excavations at the Visitors Center Area during two seasons between the years 2001–2011. She found there a large structure that she presents as King David's Palace. Currently, she is digging at the Ophel, located close to the Temple Mount. Doron Ben Ami (The Hebrew University in Jerusalem) has been excavating in the Givati Parking Lot (City of David) since 2007. The last excavation project has began in 2014 under Yuval Gadot (Tel Aviv University) in area D3 (City of David/Silwan) (Reich 2011, 13, 17, 43, 44 and 91 and City of David: Ancient Jerusalem: Archeology, <http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/archeology>, 28. 9. 2014).

establish his new city – the future capital city of Judah. "So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward."² Until this moment each city in Canaan had its own ruler and no existing central authority among Canaanite cities in the Canaanite period.

Why did the first settlement start here on the eastern slope of the mound? The reason is very simple. In this area there was located only one source of water – the Gihon Spring. The City of David (the Lower City) is placed in the south of the Temple Mount to the east – there is the Kidron Valley that is today ca. 10–15 meters higher than in ancient times. It has been filled with garbage during the thousands years (Fig. 1). On the west side of the city there was the Tyropoeon Valley (also known as the Central Valley). Today we cannot see it, because it was also filled with various materials and was covered with houses. This valley separated the Southern Hill from the Temple Mount and from the City of David. The Tyropoeon Valley runs from the Damascus Gate around the Temple Mount down under the City of David, where the Kidron Valley meets the Hinnom Valley.³ Thanks to a series of rock-cut tombs that were discovered on the hills around Jerusalem it is possible to imagine where the borders of the city were situated.

Fig. 1: The Kidron Valley: on the right is eastern slope of the City of David; the Gihon Spring is located in the center (see arrow)



Source: Photographed by author, 2013

2) 2 Sam 5: 9.

3) Mazar 1992, 418–419.

Some of the tombs from the 8th century B.C.E. were found at the Western Hill (the Upper City). This discovery indicates that until this time the city could not have been located here. Other tombs are located in the eastern part of the Kidron Valley (the present Arab village of Silwan). Dozens of tombs above the Kidron Valley are visible from the City of David. The tombs are often parts of modern houses, sometimes they are bases of cellars, and some of them were reused and changed. This means that no one can see the tombs. All tombs close to the hill of the City of David indicate limits of the possible size of the city of Jerusalem.⁴ Cut-tombs are a good indicator of the expansion of cities, because they are often outside city walls. In the burial caves there were found various things, such as complete pottery vessels, seals, jewellery, etc.

2. Epipaleolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic period

The City of David was (and still is) a small hill in ancient times and looked different than it looks today. It is also important to remember that the hill was not (during King David's time) the first phase of settlement in Jerusalem. The earliest evidence of human activity and presence in the prehistoric Jerusalem is from the Epipaleolithic period (22000 B.P.–9500 B.C.E.).⁵ Limited finds, such as flint stones, come from the area around the Gihon Spring. It is hard to say if the owners of the tools lived permanently in this area or if they came from other places. Artefacts from the Neolithic period (9500–6400 B.C.E.) are still very poor. Only flint tools and some shards were discovered on the mound of the City of David.⁶

The Chalcolithic period (6400–3600 B.C.E.) has got a poor amount of any archaeological evidence. Nevertheless it is possible to see settlement activity in the area of the City of David, where potsherds, flints, pottery and cup-marks in bedrock were found.⁷

3. Early Bronze Age

The earliest architectural remains are dated to the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3600–2400/2300 B.C.E.). The series of three burial caves in the City of David with complete pottery vessels were found, but we do not have any more contexts or details. The two typical Early Bronze Age houses (broad-room) were uncovered by Y. Shiloh. K. M. Kenyon found the rough stone structure and many early bronze sherds. From this period we do not have evidence of fortifications; Jerusalem was probably unfortified.⁸

4. Middle Bronze Age

The Middle Bronze Age is dated to ca. 2200–1550 B.C.E. Some socioeconomic changes took place in the land of Israel (exactly in Canaan) during this period. For a complete understanding it is better to divide this period into two phases:

4.1. Middle Bronze Age I

From the Middle Bronze Age I (ca. 2200–2000 B.C.E.) there are not too many material remains, nevertheless, the most important evidence comes from cut-tombs. For example, graves at the Mount of Olives, tombs at Bethany and in the village of Silwan, and tombs at Mount Scopus (dolmen tombs) and at the Mount Zion are known. All these graves indicate the similar and very common types of tombs. The same types were also uncovered in other sites in the central hill country.⁹ This is the last period when the material and architectural remains are too poor, and we do not have other sources for the reconstruction of Jerusalem's history.

4.2. Middle Bronze Age II

The first documents originate from the time of the Middle Bronze Age II (2000–1550) - they include heretofore the oldest mention of the name of Jerusalem. These textual materials belong to groups of execration texts. In these documents there are notes of names of cities and rulers of the potential enemies of Egypt. Among them there is also the name Jerusalem (in a form probably to be read Rushalimum).¹⁰ The execration texts are from the time period when the Egyptian empire ruled over Israel, Libya and Sudan. The first group could be dated from the 20th to the 19th century B.C.E. Archaeological finds show ink inscriptions on pottery vessels from this time. Other groups of the texts are from the 19th and 18th centuries B.C.E. They were written on the pottery figurines that represent prisoners with tied hands. The figurines were used by the priest and were destroyed by him as a sign of the possible destruction of enemies.¹¹ In the group of execration texts from the 20th to the 19th century B.C.E. there were names of cities and their rulers. Two or three rulers are mentioned for each city. In the case of Jerusalem two personal names are written: Yqr'm and Šs'n – they are the western Semitic names of local rulers (according to E. Mazar it is possible to read them as Y'qar'am and Shas'an). It could be a sign that Jerusalem had two (maybe three) rulers at the same time. Each sovereign was the head of a different group or clan of citizens.¹² The stray political order

4) Broshi 1974, 21–22.

5) Chronology of the historical periods in this paper is based on Reich (2011, 351).

6) Reich 2011, 281.

7) Maeir 2011, 171.

8) Maeir 2011, 173.

9) Maeir 2011, 175.

10) Mazar 1978, 698.

11) Ben-Dov 2002, 30–31.

12) Mazar 2009, 25 and Ben-Dov 2002, 31.

denoted change that we can see according to the later group of textural material from the 19th and 18th centuries B.C.E. We can read about just one monarch for each city.¹³ Jerusalem was mentioned among other cities in Canaan, but only one other city from the Central hill country was inscribed – Shechem.¹⁴

The remains of the Middle Bronze Age II bear witness to the transformation of Jerusalem from the rural style to the urban planning settlement. Jerusalem became the centre of emerging polity. The most important archaeological evidence arose from excavations conducted by K. Kenyon, Y. Shiloh, Parker and Mazar. The oldest known walls have been uncovered at the eastern slope of the City of David, half-way up the slope. As we can see from the archaeological survey, the wall was built in the 19th century B.C.E. According to Kenyon, the wall was part of a fortification and included a tower.¹⁵

Two excavators, Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron have improved the understanding of ancient Jerusalem. They started working close to the Gihon Spring in 1995 (Fig. 2). They found a structure – a massive “fortress” surrounding the source of water and the Rock-Cut Pool that was used as a huge reservoir.¹⁶ Kenyon and other previous researchers thought that the Gihon Spring was located unfortified outside of the city walls. Reich’s and Shukron’s excavations changed this view, because they exposed a huge unknown tower (13.8 x 16.6 m) – the Spring Tower.¹⁷ Water flowed from the Gihon Spring through a rock-cut channel (channel II) down to the foot of the hill, where the meeting point of the Kidron Valley and Tyropoeon Valley was. There was a small pool (later known as Siloam Pool). The first part of this tunnel was cut from the surface, and it was covered with large stones. The second part continued as a rock-cut tunnel. The second way that water flowed from the Gihon Spring was the short rock-cut tunnel to the bottom of the fortified Rock-Cut Pool (10 x 15 m) that was dug into the hard rock. The maximum depth of the pool is 14 m.¹⁸ Water was conducted with another, shorter tunnel to the bottom of the pool. The pottery shards associated with the floor of the reservoir and parts of the fortification of the pool were dated to the period of the Middle Bronze Age II. This was the first phase in which a water system was built and used.¹⁹ The pool was also protected

by a tower – the Pool Tower. On the northern part of the pool were found the remains of two massive walls that were included in the system of the tower.

The inhabitants of the fortified city could enter the “Pool” via a cut tunnel that was part of Warren’s Shaft System. At the end of the 19th century Warren excavated a tunnel and a vertical natural shaft in this area. At the bottom of the shaft there was Hezekiah’s Tunnel, which was explored in 1838 by E. Robinson and in 1865 by Ch. Warren. Warren did not know very much about the shaft because as he stood in Hezekiah’s Tunnel, the whole shaft above him was full of garbage. He started to clean it from the bottom up to the top of the shaft. When he was working on the clearance of the shaft, he found a hole in its upper part that led to the Canaanite tunnel to the city. It was used by inhabitants who came from Jerusalem to the “Pool” for water. Warren did not have any idea that the vertical shaft had native origins. He connected all the parts of the water system with the same period – the Middle Bronze Age II. This uncovered system was forgotten for the next 100 years, and it was again filled with rubbish. In the 80s of the 20th century Y. Shiloh began to clean the Warren shaft system again. Shiloh, as the first researcher, thought that this was the Iron Age system, because no other earlier water system in Israel was known. This theory was changed later, because the system is too primitive. It brought people to water, but it did not bring water close to the people. Some experiments were conducted to try to retrieve water with pottery vessels on a rope from the bottom of the Warren shaft, but a lot of vessels were destroyed. The walls of the shaft were formed unevenly. The researchers found out that jars were cracked after collision with the sides of the shaft during the process of dropping them. The result of this experiment was the fact that this shaft could not be used for scooping water. After the year 2000 Reich and Shukron uncovered a walled room in the upper part of the tunnel that led to the shaft. Again, they changed the old theories and chronology of Warren’s shaft system. Explorers detected two levels inside of the tunnel. Currently visitors can stand just in the lower level. The present line of the floor on the sides of the upper tunnel continues to the newly discovered room. The lower floor level ends next to the upper part of the vertical Warren’s shaft. (Warren finished his cleaning of the shaft from the bottom in this point, as is described above). Today it is necessary to ascend the modern stairs to the newly discovered chamber. This means that everybody climbs from the end of the later tunnel level to the upper older level. This scope was filled with the pottery artefacts from the Iron Age II, which helped to date it. The upper tunnel was cut into just the softer rock (limestone) and constitutes the access to the pool. Warren’s Shaft was invisible, inaccessible and unknown to the diggers of the Middle Bronze Age. The lower or deeper part of the access tunnel was built later in the Iron Age, when people began to use better and stronger iron tools for cutting harder rock (dolomite), (Fig. 3 and 4).

Fig. 2, Fig. 3 and 4 →

13) According to N. Na’aman there are several ways how to decipher words written in Egyptian transcription (see Na’aman 1992, 279).

14) Mazar 2009, 25.

15) Maeir 2011, 175.

16) Mazar 2009, 27 and City of David: Ancient Jerusalem: Archeology, <http://www.cityofjuda.org.il/en/archeology/excavations/spring-house>.

17) Reich and Shukron 2004, 212.

18) Reich and Shukron 2004, 213.

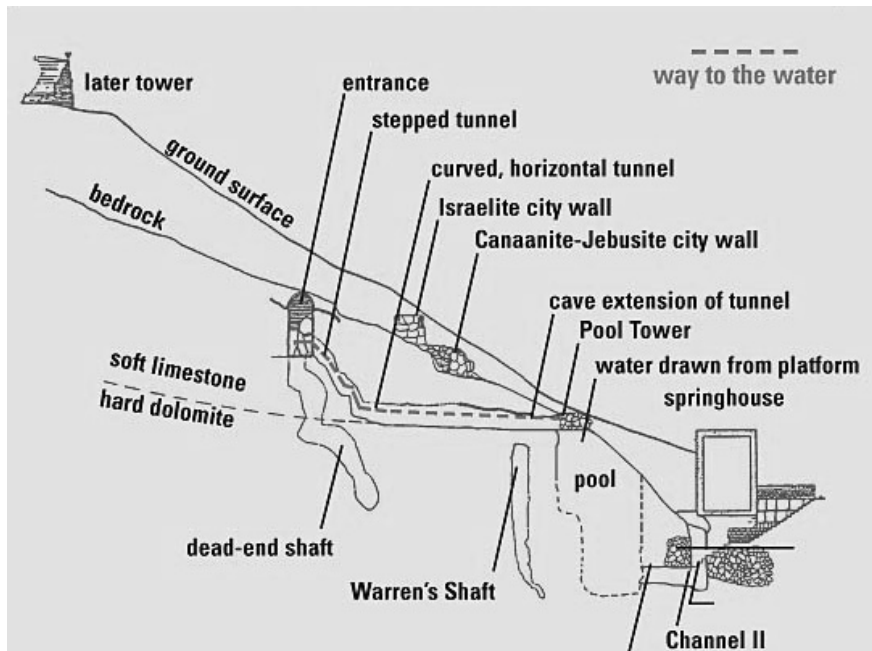
19) Reich and Shukron 2004, 213.

Fig. 2: The Spring House – under it is situated Gihon Spring



Source: Photographed by author, 2012

Fig. 3: Map of Bronze age tunnels, the Warren's Shaft and the access to the Gihon Spring



Source: Anonymous 1999, 26

Fig. 4: Line between limestone and dolomite rock



Source: Photographed by author, 2014

More archaeological remains of buildings from the Middle Bronze Age came from the Kenyon and Shiloh excavation. They have more than one phase of building activity. There was also found one burial of infant inside a jar under the floor.

From the same time period we can find a lot of caves located on the eastern side of Jerusalem (the City of David in the past). The caves are, for example, on the Mount of Olives and around it, at Bethany and at Silwan. The burial cave was discovered on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. It was used from the Middle Bronze Age until the Late Bronze Age IIA. Among the findings from this cave there were more than 1,200 pottery vessels, alabaster, metal vessels, jewellery, bones, scarabs and other artefacts.²⁰ According to archaeological evidence from Jerusalem we do not have any more remains that can tell us details about the daily lifestyle during this time of the Middle Bronze Age. It is hard to say what happened between the end of the Middle Bronze Age and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. We have not found archaeological evidence from this time period. Nevertheless, according to some scholars, the tombs' presence is a sign that Jerusalem was not destroyed between these two time periods. Many sites in this region were destroyed, but not all, including Jerusalem.²¹

20) Maier 2011, 176–177.

21) Maier 2011, 177–179.

5. Late Bronze Age

In the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 B.C.E.) there are only a few material remains. Close to the Gihon Spring we have no pottery from the Late Bronze Age. Also, there is no evidence of human activity close to the Gihon Spring. If anything can tell us more about the political status of Jerusalem, it is necessary to focus on the El-Amarna documents. The letters from the Egyptian city Tel El-Amarna are historical sources from the 14th century B.C.E. This correspondence included letters between Egypt (the Pharaoh Akhenaton that overruled Canaan) and local rulers. According to the Amarna letters, Jerusalem (mentioned as Urusalim) was the city of a local king. Jerusalem and Shechem were two main cities that occupied all of the Central Hill Country.²² Shechem was the Canaanite kingdom in the Late Bronze Age with territory that extended between the Jezreel Valley in the north and Shiloh with a number of settlements. An archaeological view shows us that Shechem was a medium-sized Canaanite city-state and that the region was occupied by independent rural and pastoral population groups. In the case of Jerusalem the El-Amarna letters express that Jerusalem was the seat of the king nominated by the Pharaoh. Jerusalem's king lived in a palace with 50 Egyptian soldiers. The king sent rich caravans with tributes to Egypt. As we can see from the letters, an Egyptian messenger came to Jerusalem often. In Jerusalem there were uncovered the remains of a few building fragments in the part above the City of David called the Ophel. The Ophel is an area inside the present city walls between the City of David and the Temple Mount. A fragment of Egyptian stele with hieroglyphic inscriptions (probably from the 19th Dynasty) was found north of the Temple Mount.²³ The most important correspondence was between Abdi-Hepa, the king of Jerusalem, and the Pharaoh. Abdi-Hepa asked the Pharaoh for the military help because he had problems or a crisis with some groups of inhabitants. We have six diplomatic letters that were sent by the kings of Jerusalem to the Pharaoh. The correspondence indicates that Jerusalem had its own professional scribes and administrative apparatus.²⁴ The settlement in Jerusalem was still small during the Late Bronze Age, but it played an important role in the geopolitical activity of Canaan. From this time period there is no archaeological evidence that indicates the presence of foreign inhabitants in Jerusalem.²⁵

In the City of David the Late Bronze Age pottery was found in the accumulation of earth under the Large Stone Structure from the Iron Age period (see below). Three sherds of vessels were painted with animal images (ibexes, scorpion). This decoration was typical for the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age I. Among the findings there

were also very small fragments of Cypriot imports (white shaved, white slip and base-ring wares) and a bronze arrowhead. They are also typical in the Late Bronze Age and show the cultural connections between Jerusalem and the Aegean area. The Iron Age Large Stone Structure which was identified with King David's palace by E. Mazar covered the original open area from the Late Bronze Age.²⁶

According to G. Barkay an Egyptian shrine existed in Jerusalem during Late Bronze Age. He supposed it was located north of the Damascus Gate, but no archaeological evidence exists about this sanctuary.²⁷

6. Iron Age I

The Iron Age I period (1200–1000 B.C.E.) is connected to the person of Joshua and David's conquest of Jerusalem. According to absolute chronology, we can date the period between 1207 and 1050 B.C.E. The Merneptah Stele (the Israel Stele) is a victory stele of the Egyptian king Merneptah (ruled between 1213–1203 B.C.E.) from 1207 B.C.E. It contains information about the campaign to Canaan in the 5th year of Merneptah's reign, and at the stele there is the first mention of Israel. The discovery of the Merneptah Stele indicates that Canaan was inhabited by Israelites at the end of the 13th century B.C.E. The term does not mean nation of Israel, but some tribe or ethnicity.

The Iron Age I period is also connected with Joshua's campaign to conquer Canaan and with the period of Judges. Some of the cities had already ceased to exist before this time, because most of the Canaanite cities were destroyed at the end of the Bronze Age (for example Arad, Jericho, and Ai). This means that Joshua could not have captured Canaanite cities where somebody had not been living. But in Jerusalem it was a different story. According to the Book of Chronicles, before David's conquest Jerusalem was the Jebusites' city – Jebus.²⁸ The archaeological records includes nothing about this Canaanite tribe, therefore it still uses the term "Canaanites," and that is the reason why archaeologists do not like to use this term.

The year of 1200 B.C.E. is the date when something changed. The Sea People invaded Canaan, and Egypt lost influence in Canaan. Because most of the Canaanite cities were destroyed and abandoned, the Canaanite territory was empty and ready for "new" inhabitants. They could settle in the Judean Highlands. We have no archaeological or historical evidence that Jerusalem was also abandoned in the end of the Late Bronze Age. It is assumed that Jerusalem was settled continuously. Jerusalem used the same building elements as in the Bronze Age period.

22) Na'aman 1996, 19.

23) Na'aman 1996, 20.

24) Na'aman 1996, 21.

25) Maeir 2011, 181.

26) Mazar 2009, 39.

27) Maeir 2011, 180.

28) 1 Chron. 11:4.

An excavation at the eastern slope of the City of David was under the direction of Macalister and Duncan. They did not find any evidence of the monumental architecture in 1923-1925. Kenyon and later Shiloh uncovered the part of the Stepped Stone Structure in area G in the 60s of the last century (Fig. 5). The Large Stone Structure on top of the Stepped Stone Structure was found in 2005 during E. Mazar's excavations. Mazar says that these two structures (Stepped Stone and Large) were included into one enormous building complex. The Stepped Stone Structure was a support structure for a large platform on which would be built a huge building complex – King David's palace.²⁹ According to Steiner and Cahill, the Stepped Stone Structure was built in a late phase of the Iron Age I at the earliest, and it was not constructed as a part of the Canaanite Jerusalem (Jebusite) fortress. This theory assumes no Canaanite (E. Mazar says "Jebusite") fortress, but the structure was another monumental building. The latest possible dating of the Stepped Stone Structure is, according to Cahill, in the 10th century B.C.E. Other buildings from the Iron Age II (the Burnt Room and the House of Ahiel) were erected on the Stepped Stone Structure. This means that the Stepped Stone Structure is older than these houses which were destroyed by Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. E. Mazar discovered pottery in the accumulated earth under the Large Stone Structure similar to what was between the stones of the Stepped Stone Structure. This pottery is dated back to the Iron Age I and some of the cooking pots are characteristic for the Late Bronze Age, but with a different type of the rim. The rim is one of the indicative parts of the pottery objects, and it could help with dating it correctly. It could be presumable that this type of cooking pot is from the Iron Age I. The conclusion of the first season of E. Mazar's excavations is the fact that the Large Stone Structure can be dated to the late Iron Age I period when king David conquered Jerusalem.³⁰

In the accumulation of earth were found a quantity of animal bones. The bones have signs of different meat preparation. Sheep, goats, and cattle were used for food and labour. The radiocarbon method shown that all samples from the accumulation of earth are dated from a very late phase of the Iron Age I or the very beginning of the Iron Age II.³¹

The second season of E. Mazar's excavations discovered that the open area was under the Large Stone Structure until the time of its erection. Maybe the area was used for human activity, indicated by the accumulation of earth. Among the findings from the second season was the upper half of a clay figurine with the face of a lioness goddess and the body of a woman. This type of figurine is known to be from the Late

Bronze Age, Iron Age I and II sites up to the end of the First Temple period (found e.g. in sites like Lachish, Tel Rehov, and the Ophel).

Above the sub-layer of the earth accumulation predating the Large Stone Structure was uncovered a room (Room E) as a part of the "Large Structure." Inside there was a fragment of a typical cooking pot that was used up to the end of the Iron Age I.³² Pottery (a storage jar – a pithos) from Kenyon's excavations from the floor of a room below the Stepped Stone Structure was also characteristic for the end of the Iron Age I period. E. Mazar's comparative ceramic analysis from the Stepped Stone Structure and the Large Stone Structure concluded: "*The pottery assemblages from within the Stepped Stone Structure in area G, as well as those associated with the Large Stone Structure from our excavations, should be exhaustive by examined in order to more precisely date then and ascertain their relationship to the Jebusite sovereignty and the reign of David in Jerusalem.*"³³

I. Finkelstein introduces an alternative interpretation. According to him, the earth accumulation is too thin for several centuries. This means that it could have been imported from a different place as make-up for construction of the Large Stone Structure. E. Mazar presented only the selected pottery cooking-pot – typical for the end of the Iron Age I or early Iron Age II. It was not found on the floor, so it is very difficult to date the building. Other pottery sherds were found broken. They are not parts of the complete vessels, but they are only fragments. That is an indication that they are part of the fill and had been brought from the another area. According to Finkelstein, the Stepped Stone Structure has more than one phase of construction, with the last level from the Hellenistic period and the Large Stone Structure having been built later than the Iron Age Ila.³⁴

The Stepped Stone Structure was described by Steiner and Cahill in five components:

1. The upper terrace system;
2. The mantle wall;
3. The massive stone structure built of very large stones;
4. The three walls;
5. The massive stone wall.

Component 1 was dated by Kenyon and Shiloh to the Late Bronze Age, and by Steiner to the Iron Age I. Component 2 was dated by Kenyon to the Hellenistic period, by Shiloh to the 10th century B.C.E. and by Steiner to the 10th–9th centuries B.C.E.³⁵ The dating of the Stepped Stone Structure was based on the earliest findings from the

29) Mazar 2009, 46.

30) Mazar 2009, 48.

31) Mazar 2009, 48–49.

32) Mazar 2008, 39–41.

33) Mazar 2008, 42.

34) Finkelstein, Herzog, Singer-Avitz and Ussishkin 2007, 147–150.

35) Mazar 2006, 257–259.

residence quarter built over the Stepped Stone Structure. These stone buildings were destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. They could have been built, according to Steiner, only in 7th century B.C.E., and according to Cahill, in the Iron Age II. She used the pottery from the lower two floors of the Burnt Room for dating. A. Mazar, Ben-Shlomo, Shai, Maier, Herzog and Singer-Avitz support the theory about the buildings on the Stepped Stone Structure that were built in the approximate dates of 980–840/830 B.C.E. (Iron Age II).³⁶ The Stepped Stone Structure could have been constructed during the Iron Age I or during the earlier phase of the Iron Age II.³⁷ To sum up this problem is the conclusion that the Stepped Stone Structure and the Large Stone Structure could be dated any time from the Iron Age I to the Iron Age II, and it is possible to say that everybody is right if it these two components were built as one project. If not, it is also possible to date the Stepped Stone Structure to the Late Bronze Age. Each scholar uses only selected findings to approach a conclusion that is established from the beginning of his/her research.

Fig. 5: The Stepped Stone Structure and the House of Ahiel



Source: Photographed by author, 2013

36) Cahill 2003, 44–53; Finkelstein, Herzog, Singer-Avitz and Ussishkin 2007, 148–154.

37) Mazar 2006, 261–262.

7. Iron Age II period (1000–586 B.C.E.)

7.1. The City of David – Area G

The most important square of the Iron Age II period in the City of David is area G. The reason is very simple: this area is very close to the acropolis, and it contains strata from the Bronze and Iron Age, and it is still close to the Gihon Spring.

During Kenyon's excavations on the Stepped Stone Structure in area G, she uncovered part of the house from the Iron Age II (the Burnt Room). During the excavations in the years 1978–1982 there was discovered a fragment of a cultic stand together with the pottery. A similar find was uncovered at Megiddo and Tanach (10th century B.C.E.).³⁸ The figurine on the cultic stand has the same type of hair dress as is known from the Sea People reliefs (Medinet Habu in Egypt) and from clay anthropoid coffins (Beth Shean). Another artefact from area G is the bronze fist that is also known from another site of Canaan from the Late Bronze Age until the 10th century B.C.E.³⁹ Shiloh completed the excavation of the House of Ahiel,⁴⁰ now dated to the end of the Iron Age II. This house against the Stepped Stone Structure is typical of Iron Age II architecture – a Four-Room House. In one of these rooms thirty-seven storage jars were discovered. On some of jars, there were rosette impressions on the handles from the end of the Iron Age.⁴¹ In 1985 50 stamped bullae were found inside another building located close to the House of Ahiel. The stamps included the official Judean names from the 7th century B.C.E. They were probably parts of papyrus, and when Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylonians, the fire preserved the clay bullae and the organic papyrus burnt. The bullae indicate the presence of administration in this House of Bullae (or maybe in the whole quarter). The House of Bullae was a complex of buildings on the lower terrace. For this reason this area is marked as the Royal Quarter. On the first floor level that had been covered by plaster were found ca. 70 cm of a destroyed layer containing the bullae, and pottery vessels, arrowheads and four worked limestone stands (cult stands). According to Y. Shoham this house was used for storing documents. We can find a few names from the bullae in the Bible. All of them are from the second half of the 7th century B.C.E. to the beginning of the 6th century B.C.E.⁴² The House of Ahiel was built into the Stepped Stone Structure, and that opened questions of dating this stone complex. Shiloh uncovered thin terrace walls under the Stepped Stone Structure and he dated them to the end

38) Shiloh 1984, 17

39) Shiloh 1984, 17.

40) Name of this house was lent because of discovery of the Hebrew ostraca that contains name Ahiel.

41) Shiloh 1984, 18.

42) Shoham 2000, 49–61.

of the Late Bronze Age. So it means that the Stepped Stone Structure is sandwiched between these thin terrace walls and the Iron Age II houses.

In the same area there were found walls and two more buildings, the Lower House and the Ashlar House (all of them are from the Iron Age II). A very interesting object has been lying close to the House of Ahiel until the present. This square stone with round space in the middle was interpreted as a toilet.⁴³ All houses (Room, House of Ahiel and House of Bullae) contain burnt wooden beams *in situ* from the conflagration of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E. Thanks to this violent destruction, the upper parts of some walls and wooden beams collapsed onto the floors. Tens of the pottery findings from these houses are typical for the latest pottery phase of the Iron Age II period in Judah.⁴⁴

7.2. The Clay Figurines

Also during the excavation between the years 1978–1985 there were uncovered more than 1300 clay figurines from the Iron Age and the later periods. There are two groups of figurines: anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines (82% horses). Anthropomorphic figurines were used in rituals; we know of more artefacts from many sites in Israel and Judah. At present we have about 2000 clay objects (figurines, animals, models of furniture, etc.) only from Jerusalem! The type of figurines that was found in the City of David does not have any relationship with other similar objects outside of Judah. This means that there was limited distribution of these figurines outside Judah. Figurines from the City of David consist of 73% animal figurines, 19% anthropomorphic figurines and 2% furniture. The use of these cultic figurines up to the 6th century refers to some cultic reforms during this century. People used figurines as an expression of popular beliefs with roots developed in Judah. There is not any archaeological evidence of cultic buildings for this religious purpose.⁴⁵

7.3. The Ophel

The place between the City of David and the Mount of Moria is called Ophel. E. Mazar uncovered the public Building (C) with vessels in the Ophel in 1976. She dated the pottery to 587/586 B.C.E. In the Ophel there was discovered a complex of four rooms from the Iron Age period. Building A – additional tower; building B – projecting tower; building C – four chambered gatehouse; building D – a royal building without a defined function.⁴⁶

In the southern room there were found forty storage jars of the same type, a small pendant with an image of the Egyptian goddess of war – Sekhmet, and a jar

handle with the inscription “Hannah of war daughter of Azariah,” In the second room there was found a storage jar that was commonly used at the end of the Iron Age. Many years ago, in 1967, Ch. Warren discovered a fortification system (towers) in the Ophel. He dated the system to the First Temple period. B. Mazar and E. Mazar continued excavating close to the smaller tower – in the royal building (D) with seven large pithoi *in situ*. The height of each pithoi was ca. 80 cm, and they were used for liquid like oil or wine. The pithoi were damaged by collapsed stones. The original construction of the building was dated to the 9th century B.C.E. In the other room was found another crushed pithoi. Characteristic royal inscriptions were discovered on one of the vessels. It includes letters typical for the 7th century B.C.E.

7.4. Hezekiah’s Projects

One of the most interesting and important finds from the archaeological research in Jerusalem is Hezekiah’s Tunnel. It is 530 m long with a width 60 cm, and its height is from 1.4 to 5.8 m. According to an inscription, the tunnel was cut by two groups of labourers. These two parts met about 214 m from the northern entrance.⁴⁷ The Siloam tunnel is also known as the Hezekiah’s tunnel. The inscription does not tell us the name of the builder. We have just one real candidate – the king Hezekiah. This tunnel was part of the big military project connected to the problems of Assyrians campaigns. Hezekiah had enough time to prepare the city of Jerusalem for the Assyrian invasion. He built new city walls, he protected the Siloam pool with walls, and he built a new water tunnel through the rock in the City of David. The older Siloam Tunnel (Chanell II) from the Bronze Age was used as an irrigation system to support the (royal) gardens in the Kidron Valley, because water flowed through the tunnel outside the city walls to the pool that was originally unfortified. Hezekiah’s Tunnel leads to the Siloam Pool that was fortified and protected from enemies during Hezekiah’s reign. The tunnel was cut into the hard rock by two groups of workers. The first group began to work from the Gihon Spring area, and the second one started from the Siloam Pool. They were directed by someone who made noise with an instrument on the top of the bedrock. The workers heard the sound and continued step by step to dig the tunnel. Finally the two groups met in the middle of the tunnel. This “meeting point” is clear also today because the ceiling has different heights and different directions of cutting marks. The beginning of the new tunnel lies 2.5 m lower than the Canaanite Bronze age (Channel II), and it made the Canaanite tunnel dry. Hezekiah’s Tunnel was cut as a dry tunnel just after the completion. The short tunnel that brought water from the spring was cut. According to Reich and Shukron, originally there was a plan to mark both ends of the tunnel with commemorative inscriptions.

43) Reich 2011, 127–134.

44) Shiloh 1984, 18–19.

45) Gilbert-Peretz 1996, 29–39.

46) Mazar 2000, 65–70.

47) Reich 2011, 184

These places on the rock were prepared, but only the southern inscription was finished.⁴⁸ At present there are some questions without answers about this project. Why did Hezekiah build a similar water-way through the rock with the same purpose as the Canaanite Channel? What was his “water policy?” He tried to store more water in the Pool of Siloam like during the Assyrian attack. Maybe this pool was connected with the growth of the population on the Western Hill, and there was a need for water for all inhabitants.⁴⁹ According to some scholars (e.g. Ussishkin), Hezekiah imitated similar monumental Assyrian’s water projects.⁵⁰ During the 8th century B.C.E., after the conquest of northern Israel in 722 B.C.E. by Sargon II, thousands of Israelites came to Judah. They settled in Judah’s cities, including Jerusalem. At the end of the 8th century B.C.E. Jerusalem expanded to the Western hill that was still uninhabited. Hezekiah built massive city walls with gates around Jerusalem. There was excavated a part of a broad 40 m wall in the Jewish Quarter, ca. 6.4–7.2 m wide. The city grew from the 44 dunams (The City of David) and the 130–180 dunams in the 8th century B.C.E. to the 500–600 dunams of the 7th century B.C.E.⁵¹ The second wave of immigration came after 701 B.C.E., when Sennacherib destroyed many Judean cities during his campaign.

We can see that Hezekiah prepared more than one possible protection of water in case Jerusalem would be attacked by the Assyrians. It is the reason why archaeologist found “double” (two lines of the) walls in the mid-slope. If one would be broken, there would be prepared another wall for Sennacherib. There is no possibility to say how deep the bed of the Kidron Valley was at the time, but this slope was well protected against enemies that would attack the City of David from the opposite side of the Kidron Valley.⁵²

7.5. Question of Fortification

One of the most important questions discussed is the existence of the fortification of the Iron Age City of David. The fortification existed in the late 8th century B.C.E., as is mentioned above (Fig. 6). But did the fortification between the Middle Bronze Age and the Iron Age II really exist? At the eastern slope of the City of David three lines of city walls were found. The upper one was dated to no earlier than the Persian Period. The lower line of the walls goes close to the Gihon Spring and the third line is almost on the present bed of the Kidron Valley.⁵³ In this case it is very important to remember and

imagine that the present bed of the Valley is higher. The Lowest walls were originally in the mid-slope. The first fortification was built in the mid-slope during the Middle Bronze Age, but according to D. T. Ariel and A. De Groot, there is a possibility that the Early Bronze age city also had a fortification like other urban centres in the region. The next stratigraphic evidence for mid-slope fortification is from the 9th century, and it lasted until 586 B.C.E.⁵⁴ According to many scholars, there is no reason why it could be the City of David between the Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age II without fortification walls. If Jerusalem was controlled by King David or the Judahites without the destruction of Jerusalem, there is a chance that the Bronze Age Walls could be used or reused in this time period. How could this original city state be without any protection of water, a royal palace, other buildings or the temple?

Fig. 6: The Bronze age and the Iron Age II fortification on the eastern slope of the City of David



Source: Photographed by author, 2012

At the eastern slope of the City of David Reich and Shukron uncovered a 2-meter-thick wall with Iron Age sherds: “The wall did seem too thick to be part of a dwelling but all in all it looked quite innocent. It was uncovered along a few meters, and could have been part of some public building.”⁵⁵ The wall was originally 5m in height. Shukron

48) Reich and Shukron 2004, 216–217.

49) Ariel 2000, 161–162.

50) Ariel 2000, 162.

51) Broshi 1974, 21–23.

52) Ariel 2000, 162–163.

53) Ariel 2000, 159.

54) Ariel 2000, 160.

55) Reich 2011, 177.

argued that this wall was the eastern city wall. According to Reich, maybe it had been a simple terrace wall. Later, more than 3m of the Iron Age II wall was uncovered, and it became clear that it is the city wall with another segment of thick wall nearby.⁵⁶

8. Conclusion

Many scholars think that Jerusalem is a the centre of great focus for the archaeologists only because it is Jerusalem. Until the present there have been no clear answers to many questions. For example: Who were the original inhabitants? How big was the influence of Jerusalem during various periods? Was Jerusalem the capital City of the United Monarchy or the capital only of Judah? Was Jerusalem a royal capital city or only a “temple city” during the Iron Age period? During the Bronze Age Jerusalem was a city-state with Canaanite kings (e.g. Abdi-Hepa). Later, during the Iron Age I, according to findings, Jerusalem was a small city with a royal palace, but its influence in the region was not too strong. Jerusalem was established as the eternal city of the Lord – with His house and with the house of the king of Judah. Reconstructing the history of Jerusalem according to only archaeology is difficult because archaeology does not say anything about some periods. It does not mean that nothing happened, but this activity was probably destroyed or covered by later activities. Many times the original level was completely removed (after earthquakes, after conquests, etc.) to the bedrock, and inhabitants built new buildings. Sometimes a more modern level of activity reused the parts of the older dwelling or walls, and it is very hard to separate each level from the others. This is the reason why we have so many theories, so many opinions and only a limited quantity of finds. Some important places in Jerusalem are not allowed to be discovered for many reasons. For example, it is a place that is holy for other religions, or it is a place in Eastern Jerusalem, or it is a place that is overbuilt by modern dwellings, etc. It is also important to save some places for the future generation with better tools and methods. Each small find could improve knowledge about ancient Jerusalem and could help to reconstruct the history of the Israelites and their capital city (For example in 2009 in the Ophel a small fragment of the Akkadian letter that was dated to the Amarna period was found; in 2012 a bulla was discovered in the Old City from the First Temple period that bears the name Bethlehem; in 2013 in the Ophel Byzantine treasure and a 3000-years-old jug were uncovered, with perhaps the earliest written text in Jerusalem). Many other artefacts are still waiting in the tens of meters of earthen fill for unearthing, but it is necessary to be vigilant in the process of interpreting the findings, and not to use archaeology as the medium for policy.

⁵⁶ Reich 2011, 177–179.

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Resume

Tato studie s poněkud dlouhým, ale výstižným názvem se zaměřuje na vývoj archeologického výzkumu nejstarší části Jeruzaléma – Města Davidova. Od prvních vykopávek v roce 1867 až do dnešních dnů je Jeruzalém zkoumán téměř nepřetržitě.

Úvodní část článku se věnuje geografii pahorku, který je možné díky mnoha sídlením vrstvám označit za tel. Nechybí ani připomenutí biblických zmínek o tomto místě, které se nachází mimo dnešní hradby Starého města, ale paradoxně právě zde existují důkazy o nejranějším osídlení Jeruzaléma. To se se nacházelo v okolí tehdy jediného vodního zdroje - pramene Gíchon, který leží ve východním svahu pahorku. Pro přesnou představu dřívější podoby města, než ho dobyl král David, je nutné poznamenat několik základních topografických faktů. Město Davidovo je dodnes na východní straně obklopeno Kidronským údolím, ale před pár tisíci lety existovalo ještě druhé obdobně hluboké údolí i na západní straně. Jmenuje se Centrální údolí nebo Údolí Tyropoenon a dnes ho není možné spatřit z důvodu, že je zasypáno a zastavěno domy. Také Kidronské údolí bylo po tisíciletí zaplňováno odpadem a vším, co lidé nepotřebovali. Tento trend trvá i nyní. Takto se údolí stalo mělčím až o 20 metrů a hradby z doby bronzové i pramen se dostaly z původní strategické výšky velmi blízko ke dnu údolí. Nedaleká Chrámová hora nebyla součástí tehdejšího Jeruzaléma až do 9. století př. n. l. a tzv. Západní pahorek byl osídlen a začleněn do města až o století později (po pádu Samaří).

Jednotlivé kapitoly se postupně věnují archeologickým nálezům od epipaleolitu přes dobu bronzovou až po konec doby železné II, kdy byl Jeruzalém zničen Babylóňany. Nejedná se o pouhý popis toho, kdo a co zkoumal, ale základem a cílem studie je také sledovat mnoho desítek let trvající diskuzi mezi jednotlivými archeology. Postupným zdokonalováním archeologických metod a přibývajícím počtem nálezů z různých míst, byly a stále jsou některé závěry přehodnocovány a dodnes neexistuje shoda ve většině interpretací nálezů, ale ani v otázce chronologie. Celý obor biblické archeologie ovlivňují snahy některých badatelů na potvrzení, či vyvrácení historicity Bible. O to více se tyto postoje odrážejí v archeologii zaměřené na Jeruzalém. Tato studie se snaží představit Jeruzalém, tak jak ho odkrývá archeologie, čili na základě nalezené materiální kultury a neklade si za cíl hodnotit biblické texty.

Některé oblasti Města Davidova nyní procházejí revizními výzkumy a občas se stává, že místo odpovědí vznikne řada dalších otázek a pochybností. Nejasnosti se týkají například hledání paláce krále Davida (Eilat Mazar tvrdí, že ho objevila, ale stojí téměř sama v opozici proti většině archeologů). Také stále nebylo nalezeno žádné opevnění z doby železné a bronzové na západní straně Města Davidova a chybí archeologické doklady o původním Šalomounově chrámu. Archeologické nálezy jsou od dob epipaleolitu po mladší

dobu bronzovou velmi chudé a obdobně je tomu i u doby železné I. Proto se dá jakýkoliv vědecký závěr jen těžko obhájit, nebo vyvrátit. Není se o co opřít. Hojná stavební aktivita je prokazatelná ve střední době bronzové (byla zbudována mohutná věž zakrývající pramen, otevřená nádrž na vodu, jež byla vytesaná do skály a obehána masivními hradbami a městské hradby nad Kidronským údolím). V 8. století př. n. l. (část doby železné II), za vlády judského krále Chizkijáše hrozilo napadení Jeruzaléma Asyřany, a proto došlo k realizaci strategických projektů. Pod Městem Davidovým byl ve skále vysekán přes 500 metrů dlouhý tunel od pramene Gíchon až k Šiloašskému rybníku, který byl nově obehán hradbami. Městské opevnění poprvé vzniklo i na Západním pahorku. Tím byla zabezpečena ochrana obyvatel města i jejich vodních zdrojů před případným vpádem asyrského vojska.

Archeologové po více jak 150 let upínají svoji pozornost na tel ve městě, o které by nebyl tak velký zájem, kdyby se nejednalo o kontroverzní Jeruzalém. Velká koncentrace archeologických projektů v Jeruzalémě umožňuje neustálý vývoj oboru směrem kupředu a s ním je spojena i nekončící debata o rekonstrukci podoby starověkého Jeruzaléma a života jeho obyvatel.