Rethinking Israel

Studies in the History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel
in Honor of Israel Finkelstein

edited by
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New Evidence of Jerusalem’s Urban Development in the 9th Century BCE

Joe Uziel and Nahshon Szanton
Israel Antiquities Authorities

The thought-provoking articles written by Israel Finkelstein on the archaeology of the Bronze and Iron Ages as a whole, and on Jerusalem in particular, have had a tremendous influence on our work in the recent excavations of the eastern slope of the City of David. His call to question the consensus has created a challenge to accept new data and revise our interpretations accordingly. It is in this context that we are pleased to contribute this paper to a book in his honor.

The Importance and Status of Jerusalem in the 9th Century BCE

The status of 9th-century Jerusalem has traditionally suffered from being overlooked, partly as a result of being overshadowed by the debates regarding Jerusalem in the days of David and Solomon (e.g., A. Mazar 2006, 2010; Finkelstein et al. 2007; Finkelstein 2011), and the monumental nature of the late 8th-century finds, such as Hezekiah’s tunnel, the broad wall, and the Israelite tower (Avigad and Geva 2000; Geva 2003). Furthermore, the definition of a unique material culture for this period began with the definition of a ceramic horizon identified and characterized by O. Zimhoni (e.g., 2004), primarily in relation to the finds in Lachish Level IV, but became extensively prominent with recent discoveries of destruction layers related to the Aramean campaign to the southern Levant, such as those at Tell es-Safi/Gath (Shai and Maeir 2003, 2012; Maeir 2017), Aphek (Kleiman 2015), Tel Rehov (Mazar et al. 2005), Dan (Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995), Tel Zayit (Tappy et al. 2006; Sharon et al. 2007), and elsewhere (Kleiman 2016). Jerusalem, however, differs from these sites in that it lacks the destruction layers caused by military campaigns by forces such as those of the Arameans and Assyrians; destruction layers have helped to define the periodization of the Shephelah sites. Therefore, the chronological definition of any given structure at the site is more challenging, and the sub-division of periods becomes more dependent on defining small nuances in material culture which define specific periods.

Discussions on Jerusalem of the 9th century BCE developed with the debate that developed regarding the effects of the destruction of Israel on Jerusalem and Judah

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1. Recently, debate has arisen regarding the date of Hezekiah’s tunnel. Reich and Shukron (2011) have claimed that it should be dated to the 9th century BCE, whereas Sneh, Weinberger, and Shalev (2010) have proposed a 7th century BCE date. Finkelstein (2013) has argued for the traditional, late-8th-century date. Although his reasoning differs from our own (see below), we agree with his dating of the tunnel. For a different interpretation of the events leading up to Sennacherib’s campaign against Jerusalem and the dating of Hezekiah’s Tunnel, see Grossberg 2014.
in the late 8th century BCE (see, e.g., Broshi 1974). These debates were brought to the forefront by Finkelstein (e.g., Finkelstein 2008) and Naaman (2007, 2009, 2014), who argued regarding the extent of the Israelite component in Jerusalem. Our paper will discuss several pieces of evidence revolving around recent archaeological excavations in the City of David and will also reexamine other data in order to shed light on the nature of 9th-century BCE Jerusalem.

Jerusalem: The Primary Components

While many architectural structures of ancient Jerusalem are of great importance in understanding the Iron Age settlement history of the site, the current paper will focus on certain elements. To begin with, probably the most important feature to the settlement of Jerusalem is its perennial water source, the Gihon Spring (Reich and Shukron 2004), which provided a sufficient water supply regardless of the size of the population (Geva 2014). Surrounding the spring, a massive tower (herein the “Spring Tower”) protected the spring from the north, south, and east. The structure was first discovered by Reich and Shukron (2010; Reich 2011), who dated it to the Middle Bronze Age (although see Regev et al. 2017 and further discussion below). The tower was reached through a fortified corridor (Wall 108 to the north and Wall 109 to the south), built in the same manner of roughly-cut large boulders, which led from the city to the west, down to the spring at the eastern foot of the hill (Reich and Shukron 2010). Also connected to the Gihon Spring are several water tunnels and channels, two of which are discussed below: Hezekiah’s tunnel (or the Siloam tunnel), which moved the water from the spring to the Siloam pool to the south (see, e.g., Finkelstein 2013 and references therein), and Channel II, which also moved water from the spring toward the south (e.g., Grossberg 2014 and references therein). The date of this channel is further discussed below, although because the level of the channel is higher than that of Hezekiah’s Tunnel, it must predate it: it ceased to function once this water system was constructed.

Two lines of fortifications are discussed as well. Midway down the eastern slope of the City of David, both the Kenyon excavations (1974; Steiner 1978, 2001) and the Y. Shiloh excavations in Area E (Shiloh 1984; de Groot and Bernick Greenberg 2012) discovered a line of fortification that likely served as the city wall in Iron Age II. The walls were labeled Wall 1 (also known as Wall NA in earlier publications) and Wall 219, respectively. Wall 219 was built above an earlier line of wall (Wall 285), which was built sometime in the Middle Bronze Age and continued to function until the construction of Wall 219 (de Groot 2012).

Beyond these features, several other elements are discussed. The rock-cut pool (Reich, Shukron, and Lernau 2007), located to the south of the fortified passage, remains an enigmatic feature, although for the current discussion the importance of this feature is not its construction or function but rather the collapsed stones found within it (apparently part of the collapse of Wall 109), the construction fill at the base of the pool (de Groot and Fadidah 2011), and the structures constructed within the pool (Reich 2011). These structures and the constructional fill beneath them also belong to the Iron Age II remains in the area of the spring. To the north
of the fortified passage, an additional structure was excavated and dated to the 9th Century BCE (Uziel and Szanton 2015). This latter structure is of significance as it abuts the outer face of Wall 108 and is securely dated through a seriation of floors to the late 9th Century BCE. While many other buildings, installations, elements, and features have been attributed to the Iron Age II in the City of David, the features mentioned above are of special importance to the discussion at hand and therefore will be the focus of the paper.

**Recent Archaeological Research in the Vicinity of the Gihon Spring**

The contribution of recent excavations in the vicinity of the Gihon Spring to our understanding of 9th-century-BCE Jerusalem along the eastern slope of the City of David has been far-reaching: it has contributed new data regarding the character of the city in this period, and it also has tightened the chronological framework of previous features excavated—namely, that of the “rock-cut pool” (de Groot and Fadida 2011), Shiloh’s Stratum 13 (de Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012), and Givati’s Stratum XII (Ben Ami 2014). Most importantly in the context of the current paper is the discovery of a structure—Building 2482—built against the northern face of the fortified passage. This structure was securely dated to the late 9th century–early 8th century BCE, based on the seriation of floors, which yielded pottery that clearly pre-dates the destruction level of Lachish III, lacking typical late-8th-century forms (Uziel and Szanton 2015). While a similar assemblage was found just to the south of this structure, in the fill of the rock-cut pool (de Groot and Fadidah 2011), the dating of the finds there have been challenged (Singer-Avitz 2012; Finkelstein 2013) due to their context within a construction fill, which could easily contain earlier and later materials. That said, the assemblage from Building 2482, identical to that of the fill from the rock-cut pool, provides a securely dated parallel assemblage, supporting the original date provided for this assemblage. Therefore, it appears that this fill indicates the date of construction of the structures found within the rock-cut pool (Reich, Shukron, and Lernau 2007), indicating intensive settlement growth along the eastern slopes of the City of David.

Importantly, the position of these structures outside the line of Kenyon’s proposed fortification line (Wall 1, Steiner 2001) suggest that the settlement had expanded beyond the walled area. Wall 1 was dated to the latter part of the Iron Age by both the excavator (Kenyon 1974) and in the final publication (Steiner 2001). That said, the possibility that this line of wall follows an earlier fortification, as seen in Area E (see below), is possible. Furthermore, the dating of this feature was primarily based on the features to its east, such as a 7th-century-BCE pavement (Steiner 1978). This pavement however only provides a *terminus ante quem* for Wall 1, which could have been constructed earlier. If in fact Wall 1 is the same fortification as Wall 219, as suggested by Shiloh (1984), then there may be evidence for

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2. The excavation of Building 2482 as well as the absolute dating of the spring tower were conducted by the authors on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, within the confines of the City of David National Park and funded by the Elad Foundation. The absolute dating of the tower was undertaken as a joint research project with J. Regev and E. Boaretto (see Regev et al. 2017).
dating this wall to an earlier phase of the Iron Age. In Area E, this wall is abutted by the pillar house, first constructed in Stratum 12B (mid-8th century BCE; de Groot 2012). If this is the case, then Wall 219—and therefore Wall 1—must predate the construction of Stratum 12B and must therefore be associated with the late 9th century BCE. The buildings found beyond this line of fortification therefore seem to indicate a rapid growth of the city, which could no longer fit within the confines of the walled area prior to the annexation and fortification of the southwestern hill.

A word of caution is necessary, however. Recently, Ussishkin (2016) has referred to these as terrace walls, suggesting that only the lower wall found by Reich and Shukron in Area J be considered an actual fortification. The dating of this wall to the late 8th century BCE has been suggested by the excavators (Reich and Shukron 2008); however, here, too, the dating provided is at best a \textit{terminus ante quem}, as the fills with late-8th-century pottery abut the inner face of the wall. Therefore, it is completely feasible to date this construction to the late 9th century BCE. Because it is now clear that the settlement of this period reached the base of the Kidron Valley, it would not be impossible to think that this wall dates to that period. Even if Wall 501 does date to the late 8th century BCE, as suggested by the excavators (Reich and Shukron 2008), it comes as a result of the settlement growing beyond the city wall (Wall 1/219), as seen in the late 9th century–early 8th century buildings that extend to the east of the latter line of fortification, such as the structures in the rock-cut pool and Building 2482, as well as structures found in Area D dating to that period (Ariel and de Groot 2000; de Groot 2012).

Of no less importance are the recent radiocarbon dates from beneath the spring tower (Regev et al. 2016; 2017). The results of the radiocarbon dating of the sediment beneath the spring tower—with the latest dates falling in the late 9th century BCE—have shed new light on the nature of Jerusalem in this period. The dates have been explained in one of two manners: they either correct the erroneous dating of the from the Middle Bronze Age to the late 9th century BCE, or, alternatively, they represent a stage of extensive reconstruction, repair, and rebuilding of earlier fortifications, as has been suggested by other pieces of evidence, such as seams in the fortifications (Uziel and Szanton 2015). Regardless, there is no doubt that either of these scenarios supports the existence of a strong central authority in Jerusalem in the 9th century BCE, an authority that would have been capable of undertaking a grandiose construction such as this.

Recently, Ussishkin (2016) has claimed that all of the fortifications that had been dated to the Middle Bronze Age should be postdated to the late 8th century BCE. Within this context, the radiocarbon dates technically may support his theory, as they only provide a \textit{terminus poste quem} for the construction of the tower. However, if one takes into consideration that the fill from the rock-cut pool dates to the late 9th century–early 8th century BCE (see above and de Groot and Fadida 2011), and that this fill seals collapsed boulders from Wall 109 of the fortified passage, then the fortification cannot date to the late 8th century BCE, as Ussishkin suggested. Furthermore, along Wall 109, a section of repair was noted (see Uziel and Szanton 2015), which therefore indicates that the repair occurred prior to the 8th century.
Jerusalem’s Urban Development in the 9th Century BCE

BCE as well. Therefore, the evidence provided by Building 2482 north of Wall 108, and the collapse and repair of Wall 109, seen to the south of it, paint a clear picture of the existence and use of the fortified passage (and in turn the spring tower) in the late 9th century BCE.

Beyond this, if one considers the construction (or repair) of such fortifications in conjunction with the construction of fortifications in the Shephelah, at sites such as Lachish (Barkay and Ussishkin 2004), Beth Shemesh (Bunimovitz and Lederman 2016), and Tel Burna (Shai et al. 2012), as well as to the north of Jerusalem at Tell en-Nasbeh (Sergi 2015), the status of Jerusalem as the center of the Judean Kingdom is further solidified. While more fine-tuned chronology is necessary to determine the exact relationship between the rise of fortified cities in Judah and at Jerusalem, it appears as if, by the 9th century BCE (if not earlier as suggested by some, according to the finds at Khirbet Qeyafah—see, e.g., Garfinkel, Ganor, and Hasel 2011; contra Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2010), Judah was a rising monarchy, with Jerusalem as its growing, well-established capital.

Jerusalem and the Aramean Military Campaign

In this context, it is necessary to return to a biblical verse, 2 Kgs 12:18. The historicity of this verse—or at least the first part of it—has been proved through the 20 years of research at Philistine Gath (e.g., Maeir 2012, 2017). The connection between the vast destruction of the site in the latter part of the 9th century BCE has been solidly linked to the Aramean conquest of the southern Levant. Subsequent to the discovery of this destruction level, it became clear that the Aramean campaign/s to the southern Levant were quite influential on the political landscape of the 9th century BCE, with more and more destruction levels attributed to Hazael being discovered both in the north and south of Israel (Klieman 2016).

Interestingly, whereas the first part of the verse has led to the attribution of many destruction levels to Hazael and the Arameans, the second part, as well as the following verses discussing Jerusalem, have been largely left out of discussions on the reasons behind the campaign and the status of Jerusalem prior to, during, and subsequent to the Aramean approach to the city. It is important to note that within this context the historicity of the description of Hazael’s campaign is central. Whereas the first part—describing the conquest of Gath—has been widely accepted due to the archaeological evidence (Maeir 2012), excavations in Jerusalem have not offered direct evidence supporting or negating the attempted conquest of the city by Hazael. It is plausible that the mention of Jerusalem after the historic account of the destruction of Gath is a later addition, following the same formula as what was already known from the conquest of Sennacherib, in which the king of Judah paid from the riches of the temple in order to avoid being conquered (2 Kgs 18:16). While this may be the case, both the extent of the Aramean conquest, now well attested throughout the land of Israel, and the finds from Jerusalem presented above, indicating the significant stature of the city as the capital of the Judean kingdom, seem to suggest that Hazael had every intention of bringing Jerusalem into his sphere of dominance (Finkelstein, Fantalkin, and Piasetzky 2008). In this
light, it is imperative to consider that the biblical account suggests that payments were made both from the riches of the king’s palace and the temple. This suggests that Jerusalem was economically well established, with enough ability to pay tribute to an attacking army in order to remain undestroyed. The recent finds of a rich assemblage of fish bones (Reich, Shukron, and Lernau 2007; Uziel and Szanton 2015), as well the evidence of an existing bureaucratic system, indicated by the many bullae found, supports this. This is in contrast to other major urban centers of the 9th century BCE throughout the country, which have not yielded the same quantity of seal impressions. On the other hand, this may simply reflect the scope of wet-sieving undertaken in the excavations in the area of the Gihon Spring. 3

Many of the sites in the Shephelah, although lacking seal impressions, have yielded a multitude of seals (Koch 2017). Importantly, the discovery of seal impressions in the vicinity of the spring may indicate that this area should be connected to some form of administrative function within the city, similar to Area G in the later Iron Age. Furthermore, petrographic analysis has shown that Jerusalem was involved in local trade networks—particularly with the Philistines—in the 9th century BCE (Cohen-Weinberger, Szanton, and Uziel 2017). Interestingly, it appears as if trade relations with the Philistines were short-lived: they ceased in the 8th century BCE, as indicated by petrographic studies of the later assemblages (Ben Shlomo 2017).

Returning to the Aramean campaign to the southern Levant, the reasons behind this military action or actions are not completely clear. Within the chronological framework of the late 9th century BCE, significant destruction levels have been discovered, such as those mentioned above. Fantalkin and Finkelstein (2006) suggest that the conquest of the southern Levant—or, more particularly, Philistia—was undertaken as part of the attempt to control copper trade (contra Maeir 2012). In this light, the suggested Aramean hegemony over Judah in the late 9th century BCE must be seen completely separately from the conquest of sites such as Gath.

However, if one considers the possibility that the destruction layers of sites such as Lachish IV may have occurred at the same time as the destruction of Gath (Carmi and Ussishkin 2004; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2015), and not subsequent to it, then a different set of reasons must be considered for the Aramean conquests. The relationship between these destruction layers and the destruction of Gath is of utmost importance. Sergi (2013) has suggested that the rise of Jerusalem and the Judean Shephelah occurred subsequent to the destruction of Gath (contra Ussishkin 2014). However, if one considers that Hazael’s campaign included Jerusalem as a target—be it for different reasons than the conquest of Gath—then Jerusalem’s status must be seen as already significant prior to the destruction of Gath. The archaeological evidence from Jerusalem that has appeared may support such a scenario. First, trade between the Philistines and Judah, which seems to have been quite limited to the chronological horizon of the late 9th century BCE, may have been directly related to Gath and not other Philistine cities. This might be the reason behind the col-

3. The finds from the Gihon Spring—both of the Reich-Shukron excavations in the rock-cut pool, as well as the continued excavations by the authors—were sifted at the Emek Tzurim National Park. We would like to express our gratitude to the Park and its staff for their hard, professional work.
lapse of the trade network between Jerusalem and Philistia, from a petrographic point of view (Ben Shlomo 2017). This is significant, because if this is the case, it is likely that the trade and cultural influence noted in the importation and emulation of Late Philistine Decorated Ware (Cohen-Weinberger, Szanton, and Uziel 2017; Ben-Shlomo 2017) may have been a result of a unique connection between Gath and Jerusalem, as portrayed in some of the biblical narratives—which clearly reflect the realia of the 9th century BCE at the latest, because Gath of the Philistines was destroyed at that time (Maeir 2004). Furthermore, if one accepts the possibility of a later date for the Hazael destruction layers in the south (Kleiman 2015, 2016), then the recent radiocarbon dates for the rebuilding, repair, or construction of the spring fortifications fits well with the entrance of a dominant, emerging entity in the late 9th century BCE, which was establishing its power in the north and setting its sights on the south. Within this setting, one can suggest that the fortifications of Jerusalem’s spring and possibly other elements within its landscape—for example, the extension of Channel II and the construction of one of the city walls on the eastern slope of the City David—are an attempt to adapt to the changing political landscape of the southern Levant. Furthermore, if one accepts the later dating of the Spring Tower, than there is no reason not to assume that Channel II in its entirety was built in the 9th century BCE.

In this light, one can compare these constructions to those created by Hezekiah in the late 8th century BCE. Hezekiah extended the fortified area of the city, rearranged the water systems, and constructed a large pool at the southern corner of the city in conjunction with the Assyrian campaigns against Israel. It is possible to consider the fortifications and certain elements of the water systems in the same light—only approximately one hundred years earlier, in conjunction with Aramean intervention in the region. In this connection, it is important to stress that Channel II—including both sections (if one accepts the division proposed by Reich and Shukron 2009) must predate Hezekiah’s tunnel and therefore must predate the late 8th century BCE (contra Grossberg 2014). The southern end of Channel II ends at the rock scarp directly above the later, early Roman Siloam Pool. It is this point that the water of the Gihon spring must have reached, prior to the cutting of Hezekiah’s tunnel, essentially providing a similar assemblage of elements constructed in the 9th century BCE: the city wall, Channel II, and a pool to hold the flow of water from the spring, parallel to the situation in the late 8th century BCE, when Hezekiah’s tunnel, a new pool, and new lines of fortification were built. Despite the difference in time, the urban planning of Jerusalem was for the most part the same. Furthermore, the movement of water from the spring to the pool or a different installation or garden (e.g., Jer 39:4) in the south may be another indication of the growth (prior to fortification) of the southwestern hill prior to the destruction of the northern kingdom (Uziel and Szanton 2015).

Conclusions

Whether the changes to the fortifications and water systems of Jerusalem came as a direct result of a specifically planned military campaign to the city or as a reaction to the political intervention of powers beyond those of the local entities is not
of importance. What is important is that Jerusalem was sufficiently developed in the 9th century BCE to undertake these massive building projects and that a foreign kingdom deemed Jerusalem—and in turn, Judah—as important enough to go up toward the hill country in order to take control of the kingdom, which avoided destruction at the hands of the Arameans. Why Jerusalem’s fate differed from Gath’s can only be speculated. It is possible that the rulers of Gath refused to pay tribute to the Arameans, or that the reasons behind the Aramean campaigns differed for the different regions, leading to a different approach. Perhaps the geographic position or political status of Gath led to its destruction, whereas this was not necessary for Jerusalem. Regardless, the fact that both the Assyrian and Aramean campaigns marked Jerusalem as a target—which they failed to conquer, instead receiving tribute—indicates the similar nature in the status of the two historical events. The parallels between Jerusalem as an economically well-developed temple city in both the late 9th and late 8th Centuries BCE indicate that both cases are logically comparable and, from an archaeological point of view, parallel.

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