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THE MOUND ON THE MOUNT: A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE “PROBLEM WITH JERUSALEM”

ISRAEL FINKELSTEIN, IDO KOCH &
ODED LIPSCHITS
TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

The conventional wisdom regards the City of David ridge¹ as the original mound of Jerusalem. Yet, intensive archaeological research in the last century—with excavations in many parts of the ca. six hectares ridge (see Fig. 1), has proven that between the Middle Bronze Age and Roman times, this site was fully occupied only in two relatively short periods: in the Iron Age IIB-C (between ca. the mid-eighth century and 586 B.C.E.) and in the late Hellenistic period (starting in the second half of the second century B.C.E.). Occupation in other periods was partial and sparse—and concentrated mainly in the central sector of the ridge, near and above the Gihon spring. This presented scholars with a problem regarding periods for which there is either textual documentation or circumstantial evidence for significant occupation in Jerusalem; we refer mainly to the Late Bronze Age, the Iron IIA and the Persian and early Hellenistic periods.²

Scholars attempted to address this problem in regard to a specific period. Na'aman (2010a) argued that the Late Bronze city-states are underrepresented in the archaeological record also in other places; A. Mazar (2006; 2010) advocated the “glass half full” approach, according to which with all difficulties, the fragmentary evidence in the City of David is enough to attest to a meaningful settlement even in periods of weak activity; one of us (Lipschits 2009) argued for enough spots with Persian Period finds on the ridge; another author of this paper (Finkelstein 2008) maintained that the weak archaeological signal from the late Iron I—early Iron IIA (the tenth century B.C.E.) and the Persian and early Hellenistic

¹ We are using the term “City of David” in its common archaeological meaning, that is, the ridge to the south of the Temple Mount and west of the Kidron Valley, also known as the southeastern hill. For the biblical term see Hutzli, in press.

² The intensive archaeological work in the City of David in the last century (probably unparalleled in anywhere else in the region), renders the “absence of evidence is not evidence for absence” argument irrelevant in this case.

periods reflects the actual situation in Jerusalem—which was only sparsely populated in these periods. Still one must admit that the bigger problem—of many centuries in the history of Jerusalem with only meager finds—has not been resolved.

In what follows we wish to put forward a solution to this riddle. Following the suggestion of Knauf (2000) regarding the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I, we raise the possibility that similar to other hilly sites, the mound of Jerusalem was located on the summit of the ridge, in the center of the area that was boxed-in under the Herodian platform in the late first century B.C.E. Accordingly, in most periods until the second century B.C.E. the City of David ridge was outside the city. Remains representing the Late Bronze, Iron I, Iron IIA, and the Persian and early Hellenistic periods were found mainly in the central part of this ridge. They include scatters of sherds but seldom the remains of buildings, and hence seem to represent no more than (usually ephemeral) activity near the spring. In two periods—in the second half of the eighth century and in the second half of the second century B.C.E.—the settlement rapidly (and simultaneously) expanded from the mound on the Temple Mount to both the southeastern ridge (the City of David) and the southwestern hill (today's Jewish and Armenian quarters).

The theory of “the mound on the Mount” cannot be proven without excavations on the Temple Mount or its eastern slope—something that is not feasible in the foreseen future. Indeed, Na'aman (1996: 18-19) stated that since “the area of Jerusalem's public buildings is under the Temple Mount and cannot be examined, the most important area for investigation, and the one to which the biblical histories of David and Solomon mainly refer, remains *terra incognita*”, and Knauf (2000: 87) maintained that “Abdi-Khepa's and David's Jerusalem lies buried under the Herodian-through-Islamic structures of the Temple Mount, thus formulating a hypothesis which cannot be tested or refuted archaeologically.” We too regard our reconstruction below as no more than a hypothesis. In other words, for clear reasons—the inability to check our hypothesis in the field—we cannot present a well-based solution for the “problem with Jerusalem.” Rather, our goal in this paper is to put this theory on the table of scholarly discussion.

THE SETTLEMENT HISTORY OF THE CITY OF DAVID

What follows is a brief discussion of the City of David's settlement history—a summary rather than a thorough description of every parcel of land excavated. The ridge should be discussed in three sectors: north, south, and center (Fig. 1).

In “north” we refer to excavations between the southern wall of the Temple Mount and the City of David visiting center (E. Mazar's “palace of King David”).

In B. and E. Mazar's “Ophel” excavations, Hellenistic remains were found superimposed directly on Iron IIB-C remains, which were founded, in turn, on bedrock (B. Mazar and E. Mazar 1989).

Kenyon's Sites R and S revealed remains from the Roman period and later (Kenyon 1974). Recent excavation in the Giv'ati Parking Lot by Reich and Shukron and by Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovetz revealed remains from medieval times down to the late Hellenistic period, and below them, on bedrock on the slope to the Tyropoeon, late Iron II and some Iron IIA remains (Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovetz 2008; 2010). The latter should be understood, in fact, together with the remains in the central sector of the ridge (below). Remains unearthed nearby by Crowfoot (Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929) were interpreted as a Bronze Age, Iron Age and Persian Period western gate to the City of David (e.g., Alt 1928; Albright 1930-31: 167); in fact, they comprise a sub-structure covered by a fill for a large late Hellenistic or early Roman building (Ussishkin 2006a).

To sum up this evidence, no remains of the Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Iron I, Persian and early Hellenistic Periods have so far been discovered in the northern sector of the City of David. It is also significant that apart from a few pottery sherds and some other scanty remains, finds of these periods were not reported from B. Mazar's excavations near the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount either (B. Mazar 1971). On the other hand, rich Iron IIB-C remains were unearthed near the southern wall of the Temple Mount.

By "south" we refer to all soundings south of Shiloh's Area D1 (see Fig. 1). Here too the Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Iron I, Iron IIA and Persian and early Hellenistic Periods are absent. In Area A1, Early Roman remains were found over late Iron II remains (De Groot, Cohen and Caspi 1992). In Kenyon's Site K, located on the southwestern side of the City of David, ca. 50 m to the north of the Siloan Pool, late Iron II sherds were found on bedrock, superimposed by Late Hellenistic finds (Kenyon 1966: 84). Shiloh's Area K, in roughly the same line as Kenyon's Site K, was excavated to bedrock; the earliest remains date to the Early Roman period. In this case a large-scale clearing operation, which could have destroyed earlier remains, seems to have taken place in the Roman period (also Kenyon 1965: 14; 1966: 88 for her excavations nearby).

The central part of the City of David—between the visitors center/Shiloh Area G and Shiloh's Area D1—should in fact be divided into west and east. Only a few, limited in scope excavations have been carried out in the former; they did not reveal early remains. The eastern part of the central sector includes mainly the Macalister and Duncan dig/E. Mazar's visitors' center excavations (Macalister and Duncan 1926; E. Mazar 2007; 2009), Kenyon's Area A (Steiner 2001), Shiloh's Areas G, E and D (Shiloh 1984) and Reich and Shukron work near the Gihon spring (e.g., 2004; 2007; 2009). Iron IIB-C and late Hellenistic remains were found here too. In addition, this is the only sector of the City of David that produced finds from the "missing periods." These include: the

impressive Middle Bronze fortifications near the Gihon spring and remains of this period in Kenyon's Area A and Shiloh's Area E1; Late Bronze pottery in Shiloh's Areas E1 and G and in E. Mazar's excavations in the area of the visitors' center; Iron I finds under the terraces on the slope and in the visitors' center excavations; and Iron IIA, Persian and early Hellenistic finds between Shiloh's Area D1 and G and in E. Mazar's excavation.

Still, even in the central part of the City of David ridge the finds from the "missing periods" are fragmentary: Not a single building, in fact, not a single floor of the Late Bronze Age or Persian Period has so far been found, and only one structure of the early Hellenistic Period has been unearthed (in Shiloh's Area E1). Actual building remains of the Iron IIA exist only in two places:

- 1) The Stepped Stone Structure (Cahill 2003; A. Mazar 2006; in fact, only its lower part—Finkelstein et al. 2007; Finkelstein, in press a). This is a stone mantle that covers terraces constructed in order to stabilize the steep slope. Its dating is circumstantial—it may belong to the late Iron IIA or to the Iron IIB (Finkelstein et al. 2007);
- 2) Several walls in E. Mazar's excavations in the area of the visitors' center may date to the Iron IIA (Finkelstein, Fantalkin and Piasezky 2008; Finkelstein, in press a). E. Mazar (2009), A. Mazar (2010) and Faust (2010) reconstruct a major complex which constituted a revetment on the slope (the Stepped Stone Structure) and a fortress or a palace on the ridge. Though this is possible, evidence for a large edifice on the ridge is meager, and physical connection between the two structures non-existent (Finkelstein, in press a).

Late Iron IIA (or transitional Iron IIA/B) finds—pottery and bullae—were retrieved from a fill deposited in the rock-cut pool near the Gihon spring (Reich, Lemaire and Shukron 2007; Reich and Shukron 2009; De Groot and Fadida 2010).

A summary of this short review of the settlement history of the City of David is as follows: In the Late Bronze, Iron I, Iron IIA, Persian and early Hellenistic Periods activity—sparse in nature and with very little building remains—concentrated in a strip on the center-east part of the ridge, mainly its slope, from the Gihon spring to Shiloh's Area D about 200 meters to its south.

THE PROBLEM WITH JERUSALEM

In recent years a formidable Middle Bronze fortification and elaborate water system have been unearthed near the Gihon spring (Reich and Shukron 2004; 2009). These finds, however, are not accompanied by habitation remains, which raise a question as for the location of the Middle Bronze settlement of Jerusalem.

The Amarna letters indicate that in the 14th century B.C.E. Jerusalem was one of the most influential city-states in Canaan. Jeru-

salem dominated a vast territory in the southern hill country (Finkelstein 1996; for a somewhat different view see Na'aman 1992; 2010b: 45-48) and its political sway reached large areas in the lowlands. Pointing out to the meager finds also in sites of other Late Bronze city-states in Canaan, Na'aman (2010a: 167-169) linked this situation to the general decay of Canaan at that time. Still, the question is, whether a few pockets of pottery in the center of the City of David—without evidence for the construction of a single building—can represent Jerusalem of the Amarna period.

Difficulties regarding the Iron IIA emerge from both archaeology and text. Archaeologically speaking, the first fortifications in Judah, in the Shephelah (Lachish IV and possibly Beth-shemesh 3) and Beer-sheba Valley (Arad XI and Tel Beer-sheba V) date to the late Iron IIA in the mid- to second half of the ninth century B.C.E. (Finkelstein 2001; Herzog and Singer Avitz 2004; for absolute dating see Finkelstein and Piasezky 2009; 2010). The Great Wall of Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah) seems to have been built at that time on the northern flank of Judah (Finkelstein, in press b). No fortification has so far been found on the western side of the City of David (see recently Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2010: 72) and the Iron Age fortifications along the eastern slope of the ridge date to the Iron IIB (Shiloh 1984; recently Reich and Shukron 2008b). It is illogical to assume that Judahite countryside towns were strongly fortified in the late Iron IIA while the capital was left unprotected.

From the textual perspective, 2 Kings 14:13 relates how Joash, king of Israel (who reigned in 800–784 B.C.E., that is, in the end-phase of the Iron IIA), “broke down the wall of Jerusalem” (see Na'aman 2010a: 169-170). No wall which can be associated with this account has been found. The Tel Dan Inscription supports the biblical testimony that Judah participated in the struggle against the Arameans in the days of Hazael. 2 Kings 12:18–19 says that Jehoash paid tribute, probably as a vassal, to the Damascene king. This source seems to be reliable historically, mainly because of the reference to Gath, which has recently been supported by the results of the excavation at Tell es-Safi (Maier 2004). The meager late Iron IIA finds near the Gihon spring can hardly account for Jerusalem of that time.

Jerusalem of the Persian Period has recently been a focus of debate between two of the authors of this article (Finkelstein 2008; Lipschits 2009). Setting aside the disputed issues of the nature and date of the description of the city-wall in Nehemiah 3 (Lipschits 2007), it is clear— from an Elephantine letter (Porten 1996: 135–137) which mentions priests and nobles in Jerusalem, and seemingly also from the distribution of the *yhw*d stamp impressions—that during the Persian period Jerusalem was the center of the province of Yehud (Lipschits and Vanderhooft 2007). Early Hellenistic sources such as Ben-Sirah testify for the importance of Jerusalem in the Ptolemaic and early Seleucid periods. Finally, it seems clear that a significant number of biblical texts were compiled in Jerusa-

lem in the Persian and early Hellenistic periods. Some of these works are of special importance, for example, the Priestly material in the Pentateuch, prophetic works, a late redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, and at least parts of Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles. The extremely poor finds in the City of David ridge can hardly account for a town that produces such a large and varied number of literary works.

A SOLUTION: A MOUND ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT?

Over a decade ago, Axel Knauf (2000) proposed that Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Jerusalem had been located on the Temple Mount. Knauf rightly argued (*ibid.*: 76) that from the strategic point of view a town covering the southeastern hill would have been indefensible without commanding the top of the ridge—the Temple Mount. In what follows we wish to elaborate on Knauf's proposal, adapt it to what we know about the archaeology of Jerusalem today, and interpret it in view of the textual evidence for the “missing periods” in the City of David.

To start with, it should be noted that major Bronze and Iron Age towns in the central hill country were located on relatively small mounds. Shechem (Tell Balata) and Hebron (Tell er-Rumeideh) covered an area of 4–4.5 hectares each; the mound of Bethel covers an area of ca. 3 hectares (Kelso 1968: 2); and most other mounds are smaller. Even ninth century Samaria—the center of a relatively large and powerful kingdom which competed with Damascus on the hegemony in the Levant—covered an area of no more than 8 hectares (Finkelstein, *in press c*). Hence, one should not expect Late Bronze-to-Iron IIA Jerusalem to have covered a much larger area.

There can be no question that the ruling compound of Iron Age Jerusalem—the Temple and the palace of the Davidic kings—was located on the Temple Mount. But scholars seem to evaluate Iron Age Jerusalem with the notion of the Herodian Temple Mount and current *Haram el-Sharif* in mind. In Herodian times, when the city covered a very large area of some 180 hectares, the Temple Mount featured substantial open areas—somewhat similar to the situation today. Yet, there is no reason to telescope this situation back to the Bronze and Iron Ages. Bronze Age city-states in the Levant, such as Megiddo and Lachish, were the hub of territorial entities. They accommodated a palace, temple(s), and other buildings which served the bureaucratic apparatus, as well as residential quarters for the ruling class. Most members of other sectors of the society lived in smaller settlements in their hinterland. The same holds true for the hubs of Iron Age territorial kingdoms in the southern Levant, such as Samaria and Hama. Jerusalem probably looked the same: The Temple Mount must have accommodated the temple, the palace, other buildings related to the administration of the kingdom as well as habitation quarters for the king-

dom's bureaucrats; one should not envision large open spaces in its midst.

How big could a mound located under the Temple Mount have been? Had there been such a mound, the huge construction project which had taken place on the Temple Mount in Herodian times, including major leveling operations, must have eradicated much of its remains. Still, one could have expected to find pottery representing Bronze and Iron Age activity (as well as finds from the Persian and Early Hellenistic periods), for example in B. Mazar's excavations near the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount and in B. and E. Mazar's excavations to the south of the Temple Mount. The fact that no such remains have been found may be linked—among other reasons—to intensive later construction activities, which cleaned these areas down to bedrock, or to intensive post-Iron Age erosion or accumulation of debris. However, there may be another explanation: The current Temple Mount is comprised of the rectangular Herodian platform; had there been an ancient mound on the hill, it could have covered a smaller area, with its lower slopes located dozens of meters away from the current boundaries of the platform. Judging from the situation in other hilly mounds, if one walks a few dozen meters away from the slopes, the ancient sherds diminish in number and then disappear. This factor—together with erosion, leveling and accumulation of debris—could have resulted in the absence of Bronze and Iron Age debris on the slopes of the hill.

The Herodian platform covers an area of ca. 470 x 280 m (about 13 hectares). Taking down 50–60 m on each side—to account for the paucity of Bronze and Iron Age as well as Persian and Hellenistic pottery around the hypothetical tell—one gets a mound of ca. 350 x 180 m, that is, an area of about 5 hectares (Fig. 2)—equivalent in size to or bigger than Tell Balata (Shechem). This is a meaningful mound-size even in the lowlands, taken into consideration that Iron Age Megiddo (the top of the mound) covered just below 5 hectares and that Iron Age Lachish stretched over an area of 5.7 hectares. According to this reconstruction, an ancient mound was completely “trapped” under the Herodian platform.³

Such a mound would be well-defended topographically on almost all sides: by the steep slope to the Kidron Valley in the east, by the relatively steep slope to the Tyropoeon in the west (which, according to results of excavations, was much deeper in the Iron Age than today, see e.g., Ben Ami and Tchekhanovetz 2010: 68; section in B. Mazar 1971: Fig. 1), and by the steep slope to the Valley of Bethesda under the northeastern sector of the current Temple Mount in the northeast (see topography of the Temple

³ Somewhat similar to the ancient mound of Atlit, or the Moabite site of ancient Kerak, which both seem to have been boxed-in under the large medieval castles there.

Mount in Hubbard 1966: Fig. 1). The vulnerable sides would be the northwest and the south.

In the northwest, a moat must have been cut in the saddle which separates the hill from the continuing ridge. Warren (Warren and Conder 1884: 136 ff. and see Hubbard 1966: Fig. 1) mapped the natural rock around and inside the Temple Mount by digging shafts alongside the Herodian supporting walls, and by examining the subterranean chambers within the *Haram el-Sharif* compound. While doing so, he investigated the saddle that connects the Temple Mount with the northeast hill, and reported on two ditches there—one to the north of the Temple Mount and another inside its limits. The latter is a six-meter ditch that disconnects the Temple Mount from the ridge (Warren and Conder 1884: 215, and cf. Wilson and Warren 1871: 13). This trench in the rock, which was identified as a fosse or a dry moat, was also documented by Vincent (1912: section K–L; see also Bahat 1980: 11a; Ritmeyer 1992: 32–33), and was dated by Hubbard (1966: Fig. 3), Ottosson (1979: 31; 1989: 266), Oredsson (2000:92–95), and Ussishkin (2003: 535; 2006a: 351; 2009: 475) to the period of the Judahite Monarchy.

If one envisions the temple on the highest point of the hill, the ruling compound could have been located on the edge of the ancient mound, in approximately one third of the site in its northwestern sector, with the palace, possibly, behind the temple (e.g., Ussishkin 2003: 535; 2006b: 351–352; 2009: 473, and cf. Wightman 1993:29–31). This leaves the entire southern and eastern parts of the hill for the rest of the city.

According to this proposal, during the second millennium and the early first millennium B.C.E.—until the great territorial expansion of Jerusalem in the Iron IIB—as well as during most of the second half of the first millennium, after the 586 destruction and until the late Hellenistic period, Jerusalem had been located on a mound which was later leveled and boxed-in under the Herodian platform.⁴ This area could have been fortified in the late Iron IIA—in parallel to the fortification of major Judahite towns such as Lachish, Tel Beer-Sheba, and possibly Mizpah. This means that until the Iron IIB the southeastern hill (the City of David) was an open area outside of the city, which probably featured agricultural installations, sporadic activity areas and several buildings, mainly near the spring. It was only during the late eighth century B.C.E. that the southeastern ridge, together with the southwestern hill, was

⁴ Another clue for the location of Bronze and early Iron Age Jerusalem comes from the distribution of burials: The two more significant Middle and Late Bronze tombs found close to the Old City are located on Mount Olives—to the east of the Temple Mount (map in Maeir 2000: 46), whereas the late Iron II tombs surround the large city of that period (Bar-kay 2000). We wish to thank Ronny Reich for drawing our attention to this issue.

incorporated into the city and fortified. In other words, in both the Iron IIB and the late Hellenistic periods the expansion of Jerusalem to the south (the City of David = the southeastern ridge) and the southwest (the southwestern hill) took place at approximately the same time. This, in turn, is the reason why no fortification of these periods has ever been found in the west of the City of David: simply, there was no period when this was the outer line of the city and therefore there was no need to fortify it (Ussishkin 2006a: 153).

The only ostensible difficulty with this scenario is the location of the spring—outside and relatively far (over 300 m) from the city. This could have been compensated by water cisterns on the Temple Mount. Those mapped by Warren (Warren and Conder 1884: 163ff; Gibson and Jacobson 1996) probably represent later periods in the history of Jerusalem, mainly in Herodian times; but as indicated by Tsuk (2008: 114) at least some of them had first been cut in earlier days. In any event, it is noteworthy that Samaria too is far from a spring and on a daily routine must have subsisted on rock-cut cisterns.

DISCUSSION

In what follows we suggest a brief reconstruction of the extent of Jerusalem from the Middle Bronze Age to the late Hellenistic Period.⁵

MIDDLE BRONZE

The situation in the Middle Bronze is perplexing. The massive, monumental stone walls uncovered near the Gihon were erected in order to protect the spring and provide a safe approach to the water from the ridge (Reich and Shukron 2009; 2010); this includes the segment of the wall unearthed by Kenyon (1974: 81–87; Reich and Shukron 2010). The key area is E1, where Shiloh (1984: 12, Fig. 14) uncovered a stretch of a fortification with fills carrying Middle Bronze pottery on its inner side. More important is a floor with Middle Bronze vessels, which ostensibly abuts the fortification. No fortification has been unearthed in the western side of the City of David; as mentioned above, the “gate” dug by

⁵ The sifting of the debris taken from the southern part of the Temple Mount by the Islamic *Waqf* has revealed a small number of sherds representing early times, except for the Iron IIB-C and the Hellenistic periods (Barkay and Zweig 2006: 219–220; 2007, especially table in p. 59). As a result, Barkay and Zweig (2007: 59) reject the possibility of an ancient mound on the Temple Mount (*ibid.*). We do not agree and do not incorporate this information into our discussion, because: A) the debris was taken from the southern end of the Mount, away from the supposed mound; B) much of the debris there was not *in situ* and there is no way to know where it had come from and for what reason it was deposited there in antiquity.

Crowfoot is probably a substructure for late Hellenistic or early Roman building (Ussishkin 2006a). No Middle Bronze finds have been detected in the northern sector of the City of David. Accordingly, E. Mazar (following Macalister and Duncan 1926: 15) proposed that the Middle Bronze city was limited to the southern part of the City of David, south of Shiloh's Area G and the visitors' center, with the fortifications near the spring located in its northeastern corner (E. Mazar 2006; 2007: 16–17, 28, 52; 2009: 24, 26). This idea is also based on Macalister and Duncan's assumption (1926: 15) that a depression (labeled by them the "Zedek Valley") ran in this place from east to west across the ridge. Yet, "Rock Scarp A" (Macalister and Duncan 1926: Fig. 39 and Pl. I)—probably the reason for this theory—seems to be no more than an ancient quarry. Indeed, Kenyon indicated the obvious—that the bedrock along the crest of the ridge rises toward the north (Steiner 2001: Fig. 4.18). Also, there is no parallel to a town built on the lower slope of a ridge, dominated by higher grounds immediately outside its walls.

We would suggest that the Middle Bronze city was located on the supposed mound under today's Temple Mount. If the fortification in Area E1 indeed dates originally to the Middle Bronze, then the city of this period could have stretched over a bigger area, comprising both the Temple Mount and the north-center sectors of the City of David. This scenario raises three difficulties: first, Middle Bronze finds are absent from the north of the City of David ridge; second, no other Middle Bronze city in the hill country, not even Shechem, covered such a large area; third, no fortification has so far been unearthed in the western side of the City of David. The other possibility—that the fortification in Area E1 is later than the Middle Bronze (this can be checked only when detailed sections are published)—also raises difficulties: In this case, the city was located on the mound in the north, with a separate fortification near the spring—an arrangement unknown in any other city in the Levant. In any event, since no connection between the mound on the Temple Mount and the fortification near the spring has so far been discovered and no finds from this period were unearthed in the northern part of the City of David, the nature of at least some of the Middle Bronze remains in the City of David ridge, as well as the extent of the Middle Bronze city, remain a riddle.

LATE BRONZE

The Late Bronze city was located on the mound under today's Temple Mount (Knauf 2000). The small quantity of Late Bronze pottery found here and there in the City of David above the Gihon Spring probably represents ephemeral presence outside the city, near the water source.

IRON I

Activity near the spring intensified in the Iron I. Remains of buildings were uncovered under the terraces on the slope (Steiner 1994) and in E. Mazar's excavations in the area of the visitors' center (2009: 39–42). Poor finds—mainly pottery—were retrieved by Shiloh from his Areas D1 and E1 (1984: 7, 12). The quantity of Iron I pottery in the brown deposits found under E. Mazar's "palace of King David" (2007: 48) is also significant. All this seems to indicate that activity near the spring intensified. Yet, the area between the spring and the mound in the north remained uninhabited.

IRON IIA

In the Shephelah and the Beer-sheba Valley, the Iron IIA can be divided stratigraphically, and in the case of large-enough assemblages of finds also ceramically, into two phases—early and late Iron IIA (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004). The results of excavations in Jerusalem, as well as in other sites in the highlands, do not provide enough data for such a distinction. Still, it seems that both the original Stepped Stone Structure and the early walls in E. Mazar's excavations date to the later phase of the period (Finkelstein 2001; in press a; Finkelstein et al. 2007; 2008). At that time, the main settlement, which was probably fortified by a massive wall similar to the Great Wall of Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah), was still located on the Temple Mount. Assuming that the story in 2 Kings 14:13 is historically sound, this could have been the wall which had been breached by King Joash of Israel in the very early eighth century. It is possible that the Stepped Stone Structure was erected outside of the city in order to support a large building on the eastern flank of the ridge—possibly a fortress (A. Mazar 2010 and Faust 2010 suggested the existence of such a fortress but dated it to the Iron I), which protected the approach to the water source. Yet, there is no link between the Iron I rooms and the large walls around them, and the connection between the stone revetment and the walls on the ridge is impossible to verify today (Finkelstein, in press a).

IRON IIB

The turning point in the settlement history of Jerusalem came in the Iron IIB, in the mid-to-late eighth century B.C.E. Prosperity in Judah as an Assyrian vassal and demographic changes—be they sharp and quick following the fall of the Northern Kingdom (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006; Finkelstein 2008), or slow and more graduate (Na'aman 2007; 2009)—brought about a major urbanization process in Jerusalem. For the first time the settled area expanded to the entire City of David ridge, which was now densely occupied. During the same time, the city expanded to the southwestern hill (today's Jewish and Armenian quarters). The new quar-

ters were surrounded by a city wall, which must have been connected to the older (probably Iron IIA) fortification on the mound under the Temple Mount (Ussishkin 2009: 473). In the City of David, the new city-wall is known only along the eastern side, above the Kidron Valley (Steiner 2001: 89–92; Shiloh 1984: 8–10, 28; Figs. 30, 33; Reich and Shukrun 2000; 2008). Segment of this fortification, already noticed by Warren, was excavated by E. and B. Mazar (1989) in the “Ophel.” On the southwestern hill it has been uncovered in the modern day Jewish Quarter (Avigad 1983:46–60; Avigad and Geva 2000; Geva and Avigad 2000), and possibly also under the western wall of the Old City (near Jaffa Gate—Geva 1979; 1983: 56–58) and in HaGai (*el-Wad*) Street (Kloner 1984). There was no need to fortify the western side of the City of David (Ussishkin 2006a: 153).

PERSIAN AND EARLY HELLENISTIC

In the Persian and early Hellenistic periods the settlement shrank to the original mound on the Temple Mount. The City of David was again an open, desolate area. Pockets of pottery found in the center of the ridge testify for some activity in the vicinity of the spring and possibly on the eastern slope to the south of it. According to Finkelstein, the description of the construction/repair of the wall of Jerusalem in the “Nehemiah Memoir,” with no reference to specific places, should probably be connected to the old, Iron Age fortification of the mound on the Temple Mount, while the detailed description in Nehemiah 3, which represents an insertion into the original text (e.g., Torrey 1896; 37–38; 1910: 249; Mowinckel 1964: 109–116), probably relates to the long Hellenistic fortifications, which encircles the southeastern ridge and the southwestern hill. According to Lipschits, the verses in Nehemiah 3 that describe the construction of six gates are unique in their sentence structure, word order, and verbs used; they differ from the usual formula deployed to describe the construction of the wall itself (see already Reinmuth 2003: 84, who pointed out the different sources of the verses, and Lipschits 2007, who demonstrated that gates-verses are part of two different later additions to the original list of people who supported the building of the wall). Without the burden of the many gates, the original account described the course of the city wall of the small mound of Jerusalem on the Temple Mount.

LATE HELLENISTIC

The entire City of David ridge was settled again in the late Hellenistic (Hasmonean) period. Similar to the situation in the Iron IIB, the city expanded in parallel to the southeastern and southwestern hills, and hence in this period too there was no need to fortify the western side of the City of David.

SUMMARY

There are two solutions for the “problem with Jerusalem”—the fact that archaeology does not supply enough data for several periods in the second and first millennia B.C.E. which are well-documented by textual material. According to the first, the acropolis, with the temple and the palace only, was located on the Temple Mount and the town itself extended over the ridge of the City of David. This means that in the Late Bronze, Iron I, Iron IIA, Persian and early Hellenistic period Jerusalem was a small, sparsely settled settlement.

In this article, we suggest a second solution to the quandary: The original mound of Jerusalem—that is, the acropolis *and* the settlement—which had been located on the Temple Mount, was boxed-in under the Herodian platform in the late first century B.C.E. This theoretical mound could have covered a significant area of ca. 5 hectares—the size of the larger Bronze and Iron Age mounds in the hill country. It was probably fortified in the Middle Bronze Age, and again in the late Iron IIA in parallel to the fortification of important towns in the countryside of Judah, mainly Lachish, Tel Beer-sheba and Mizpah. This mound on the Temple Mount was the sole location of the town in the Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Iron I, Iron IIA, Persian and early Hellenistic periods. In all these periods activity in the City of David was meager and restricted to the central part of the ridge, mainly its eastern side near the Gihon spring. In two periods—the Iron IIB and the late Hellenistic—the settlement expanded to include the southeastern ridge (the City of David) and the southwestern hill; the new quarters were fortified, but there was no need to build a city-wall in the western side of the City of David, as this line ran in the middle of the city.

FIGURES

Fig. 1: Map of the City of David indicating main excavation areas mentioned in the article.

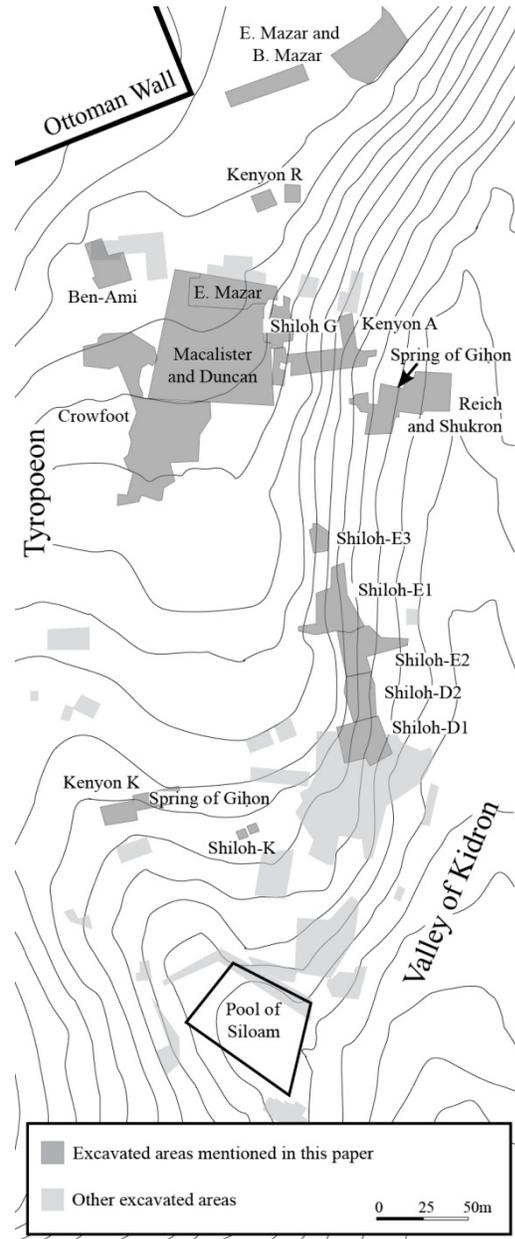
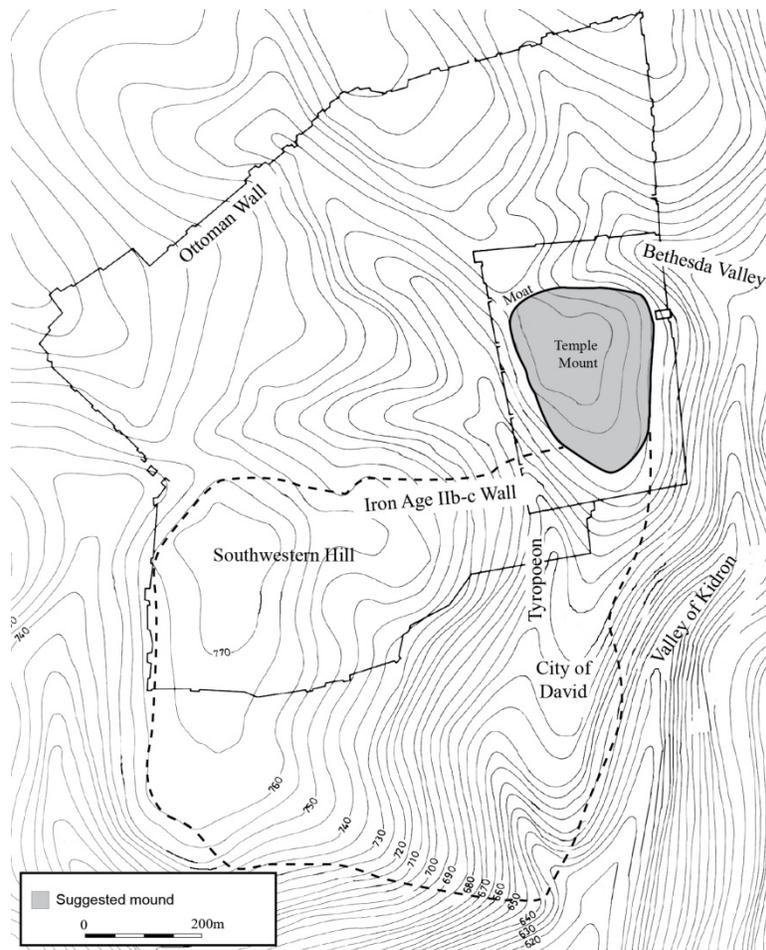


Fig. 2: Map of Jerusalem showing the possible location of the supposed mound on the Temple Mount, the City of David and the line of the Iron IIB-C city-wall.



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