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The Monumentality of Iron Age Jerusalem Prior to the 8th Century BCE

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The article reviews the chrono-stratigraphy of the City of David ridge—the site traditionally considered as the location of Bronze and Iron Age Jerusalem. Several scholars have recently challenged this conventional view, arguing that the southeastern hill became part of the city only in the 8th century BCE. Five stratigraphic anchors are discussed in detail, including the finds from Kenyon's Section A, remains surrounding the Gihon Spring and the stratigraphic sequence in Area E. These, as well as remains excavated in Area G and the 'Ophel', show that at least three Iron II construction phases need to be taken into account, the earliest probably dating to before the middle of the 8th century BCE.

KEYWORDS Jerusalem, City of David, southeastern ridge, Middle Bronze Age, Iron Age, Gihon Spring

The urban character of Jerusalem during the Bronze and early Iron Ages stand at the centre of a fierce debate as growing numbers of scholars raise doubts regarding the date and nature of the finds unearthed on the southeastern ridge (the "City of David"; see, e.g., Finkelstein, Lipschits and Koch 2011; De Groot and Geva 2015; Ussishkin 2016). It seems that despite the fact that the ancient core of Jerusalem is one of the most excavated archaeological sites in the world, with over 150 years of intensive field research (Reich 2011), there is still uncertainty regarding the relative and absolute dating of many of Jerusalem's pre-Herodian monumental building projects. These include the water systems (see, e.g., Gill 2012; Grossberg 2014 and further references therein) and the fortifications unearthed along the eastern slope of the ridge. The latter include the spring tower (Reich and Shukron 2000), the fortified passage (Reich and Shukron 2010) and the wall excavated by Kenyon and Shiloh halfway between the summit of the ridge and the spring (Shiloh 1984; Steiner 2001; De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a). Finkelstein, Lipschits and Koch (2011), following Knauf (2000), have recently argued that the core of the ancient city of Jerusalem should be sought on the Temple Mount, with the expansion towards the southeastern hill occurring only during the 8th century BCE or possibly slightly earlier,

during the late 9th century (Finkelstein 2016; Fig. 1a–b). According to this view, other than the fortifications surrounding the spring that date to the Middle Bronze Age, and construction above the spring (the Stepped Stone Structure and part of what is described as the Large Stone Structure), nothing significant was built on the southeastern ridge prior to the second part of the 9th century BCE. Ussishkin pointed to numerous problems in the dating of remains found on the southeastern ridge, particularly along its eastern slopes. He concluded that:

Analysis of the above evidence indicates, in my view, that there is a good case for suggesting the re-dating of the various fortifications successively assigned by Kenyon, Shiloh, Reich and Shukron to MB II, as well as almost all the water systems associated with the Gihon Spring to Iron IIB–C, to the 8th–7th centuries BC when Jerusalem became a heavily fortified metropolis which flourished until its destruction by the Babylonian army in 587/6 BC. (Ussishkin 2016: 14)

In this paper, we examine this and other statements. We reevaluate the stratigraphic relationship and chronological framework of architectural features in several spots along the ridge.¹ Five anchors for the stratigraphy and the relative chronology of the eastern slope are examined (Fig. 2), followed by a short discussion of the tunnels near the Gihon Spring and the stratigraphy and chronology of the finds located in Shiloh's Area G and E. Mazar's excavations in the 'Ophel'.²

We begin with a conclusion. It seems to us that the proposal to redate all structures to a single chronological phase oversimplifies the complex stratigraphic sequence and the input of certain datable materials (pottery and radiocarbon results). We argue for the existence of a significant phase in the history of Jerusalem before the middle of the 8th century BCE.

Five stratigraphic anchors

Anchor 1: Walls 1, 3 and 108 above the Gihon Spring (Figs. 2–6)

The first features to be addressed are the supposed fortifications in the vicinity of Warren's Shaft, above the Gihon Spring. These are Walls 1 and 3 that were exposed by Kenyon (1974; Steiner 2001) and dated to the Iron IIB–C (Wall 1) and the MB II (Wall 3), and Wall 108—the northern wall of the fortified passage, which was exposed by Reich and Shukron (2010) and dated to the Middle Bronze Age (Figs. 2 and 3). Stratigraphically this is one of the most important areas on the southeastern ridge. In what follows, we argue for at least two and possibly three phases of monumental construction in this spot, with one or two additional phases in between, that are more domestic in nature.

Walls 1 and 3 are located in Kenyon's Trench I, designed as a section from the Stepped Stone Structure exposed previously by Macalister and Duncan, all the way down to the Gihon Spring (Kenyon 1962; 1974: 47–48). They were found in the lower part of the section midway down the slope (Squares A/XXIX, XV and XIV Steiner 2001: Figs. 1.2). In order

¹ The function of the architectural elements will not be discussed here.

² We use here the term 'Ophel' as a geographical designation, acknowledging the fact that there is no clear understanding of the biblical term (and see Franklin 2014).

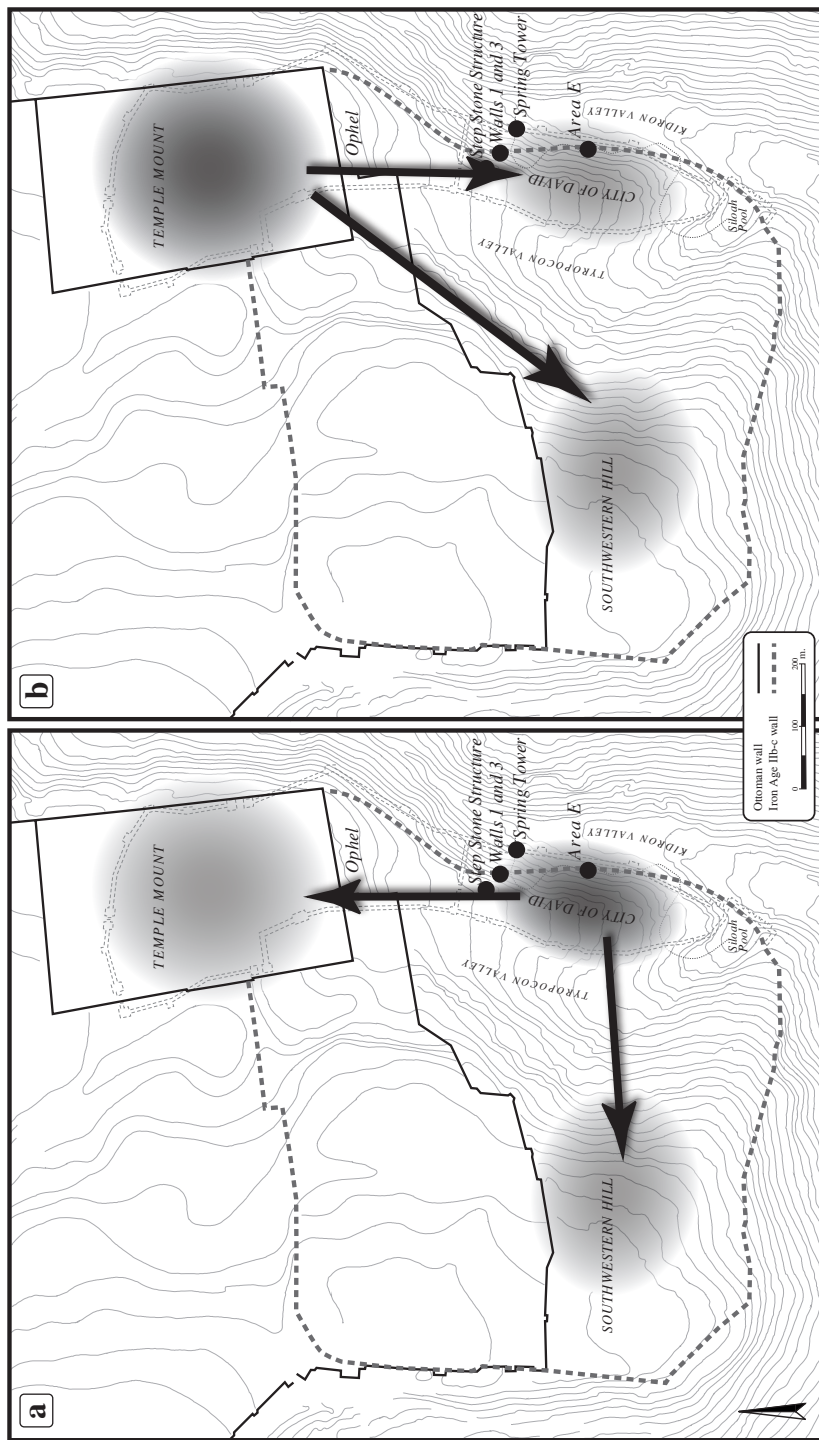


FIGURE 1 Map of Jerusalem, marking the location of the Temple Mount, the City of David ridge and the Western Hill. The map presents two possibilities regarding the urban development of Jerusalem: a) the conventional view; b) an alternative model put forward by Finkelstein, Lipschits and Koch 2011. Note the location of the spring and Area E (prepared by Itamar Ben-Ezra).

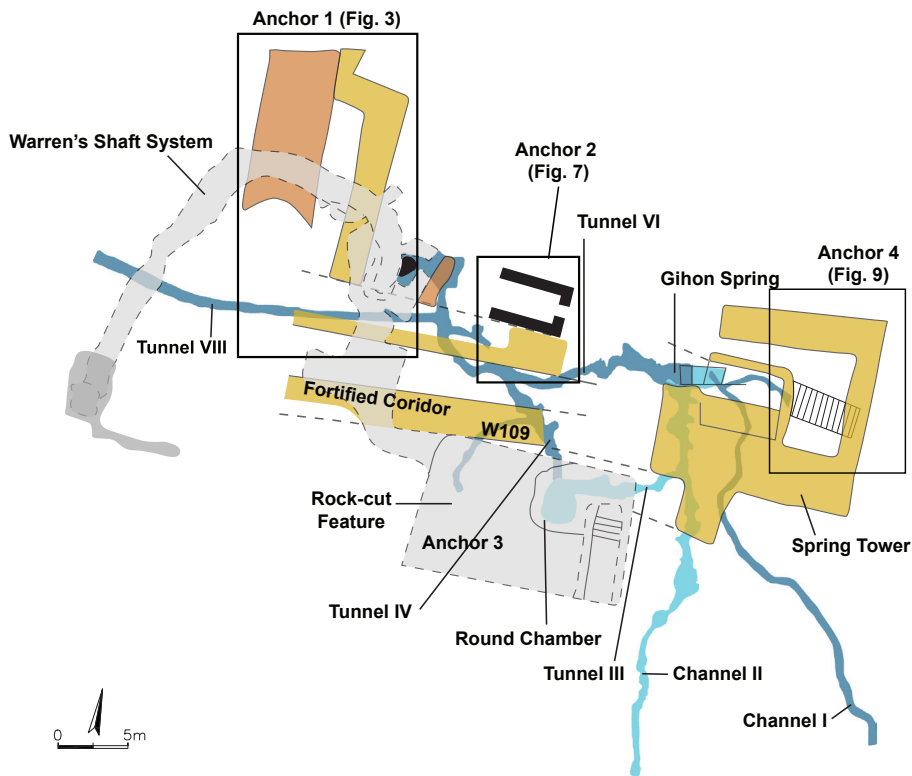


FIGURE 2 Plan of the area of the Gihon Spring, showing four of the five anchors discussed in the article (after Reich and Shukron 2010: Fig. 2).

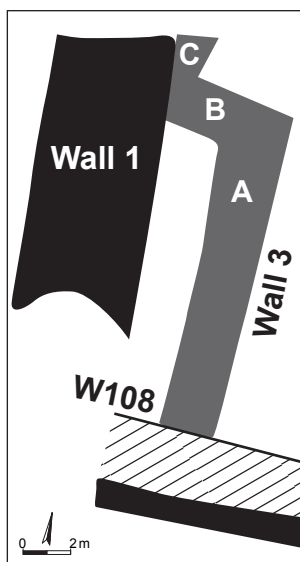


FIGURE 3 Anchor 1: schematic plan of Walls 1, 3 and 108.

to follow the contour of Walls 1 and 3, Kenyon excavated four additional squares (A/XXI, A/XXII, A/XXVII and A/XXVIII) farther to the north. Apparently, the leap was too great; there were no walls in these new squares (Kenyon 1974: 135). Two more squares—A/XXV and A/XXVI—were then dug between the two clusters of squares previously excavated. Here Kenyon was able to find the continuation of Wall 1 along with domestic architecture dating to the Iron Age; the continuation of Wall 3 was missing.

Kenyon was convinced that Wall 3 had been built in the Middle Bronze, that it continued to function until the late Iron II (Kenyon 1963: 11) and that it was then replaced by what she termed the ‘vanished wall’ (that is, a wall that had eroded). The ‘vanished wall’, she claimed, was built after Wall 3 was destroyed and before Wall 1 was constructed (Kenyon 1965: 11; 1966: 81). According to her understanding, the ‘vanished wall’ existed together with a pavement (termed ‘the cobbled street’), segments of dwellings, Caves I and II and cult related structures. Kenyon dated all these elements to the 8th century BCE.

Steiner revalued the finds in this area (1986, 2001; Franken and Steiner 1990), and presented a different stratigraphic sequence. She divided the above Iron Age architectural elements into nine phases, Phase 1 being the earliest (Franken and Steiner 1990: 6; Steiner 2001: 105). Steiner assumed that Wall 3 (dated to the Middle Bronze) predated all of the abovementioned phases, whereas she assigned the construction of Wall 1, together with the ‘cobbled street’, to Phase 7. Accordingly, she recognized at least three significant architectural phases dating to the Iron Age prior to the construction of Wall 1 (Steiner 1986: 30, point C; Franken and Steiner 1990: 52–56). The evidence for these is as follows:

Wall 3 was built with insets and offsets, two segments of which were exposed (marked A and B in Fig. 3). Farther north, a group of stones may indicate a third section of the wall (marked C: Figs. 3 and 4a–b; Franken and Steiner 1990: Pl. 8).³ Note that in the western edge of Wall 3, Segment b is partly built over by the foundations of Wall 1 (Steiner 2001: Fig. 3.2; Fig. 4b here). Obviously, then, the two walls cannot date to the same period; the construction of Wall 1 took place only after Wall 3 had already collapsed (Steiner 1986). Wall 3 was sealed below the pavement which abuts Wall 1 (Figs. 4a and 5; Franken and Steiner 1990: 50–56; Steiner 2001: 89–90).⁴ The domestic buildings located farther to the north were found sealed by the same ‘cobbled street’ (Franken and Steiner 1990: 50 and Pl. 19). Close examination of Segment C (Fig. 4 a and b) indicates that it is part of the architectural unit defined as Wall 3. If this is so, then Wall 3 was cut by the walls of the domestic structures belonging to Steiner’s Phase 4 (see above; Franken and Steiner 1990: Fig. 2.22; Fig. 4a and b).

To sum up this point, three main phases can be defined here. From bottom up these are: Wall 3; the structures to its north; and Wall 1 along with the ‘cobbled street’ which seals the earlier structures.

³ Reich and Shukron 2004: Fig. 1 noted this additional segment in various plans. They do not however discuss its stratigraphic significance.

⁴ Steiner’s examination of Wall 1 and the ‘cobbled street’ led her to determine that there was no ‘vanished wall’, and that in fact the ‘cobbled street’ abuts the outer face of Wall 1, making the two contemporary.

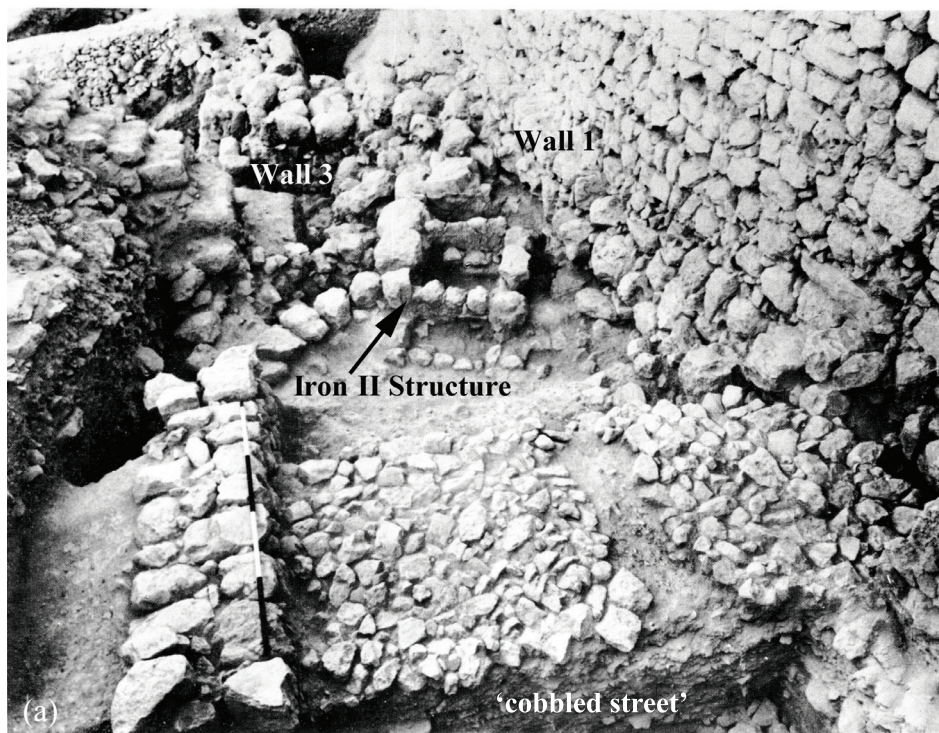


FIGURE 4 Wall 3's presumed continuation to the north (Segment C) and its relation with Iron II architecture: a) as documented by Kenyon (Franken and Steiner 1990: Plate 19); b) as seen today (photo by David L. Moulis).



FIGURE 5 Section of Kenyon's excavations showing Wall 3 below the 'cobbled street' (after Steiner 2001: Fig. 3.3).

Farther south, Parker dismantled the point of connection between Wall 3 and Wall 108 of the fortified passage (Vincent 1911: Pl. VI; Fig. 3). Reich and Shukron re-exposed this spot (2010: 149 and 152); according to them, the two walls were either bonded, or more likely, Wall 3 abutted Wall 108. Our close examination shows that certain stones were actually shared between Walls 108 and 3, indicating that they were in fact bonded (Fig. 6). Furthermore, many of the stones used in the construction of Wall 3 are of the same 'cyclopean' dimensions as Wall 108, suggesting that the former was just as monumental and imposing as the fortified passage.

It is clear then that Walls 3 and 108 must predate the construction of Wall 1 and the adjoining 'cobbled street'. Both walls are also earlier than the domestic buildings found farther to the north. If Walls 3 and 108 are contemporaneous, then there are indeed three stratigraphic phases here, as suggested above.⁵

The date of Wall 3 (and as a result, the dating of Wall 108 as well) can be determined by three pottery assemblages:⁶ 1) in a fill west of Wall 3 and above the bedrock; 2) in association with the domestic structures; 3) above Wall 3 and under the 'cobbled street', plus pottery found on the 'cobbled street'.

⁵ If Wall 108 is earlier than Wall 3, as argued by Reich and Shukron, then four clear phases are discernible here.

⁶ The dating of Wall 108 will be discussed further in regard to its relation to Structure 2482 (Anchor 2 below). The inner face of Wall 1 was not sufficiently exposed and therefore there is no pottery assemblage that can help determine its date independently.

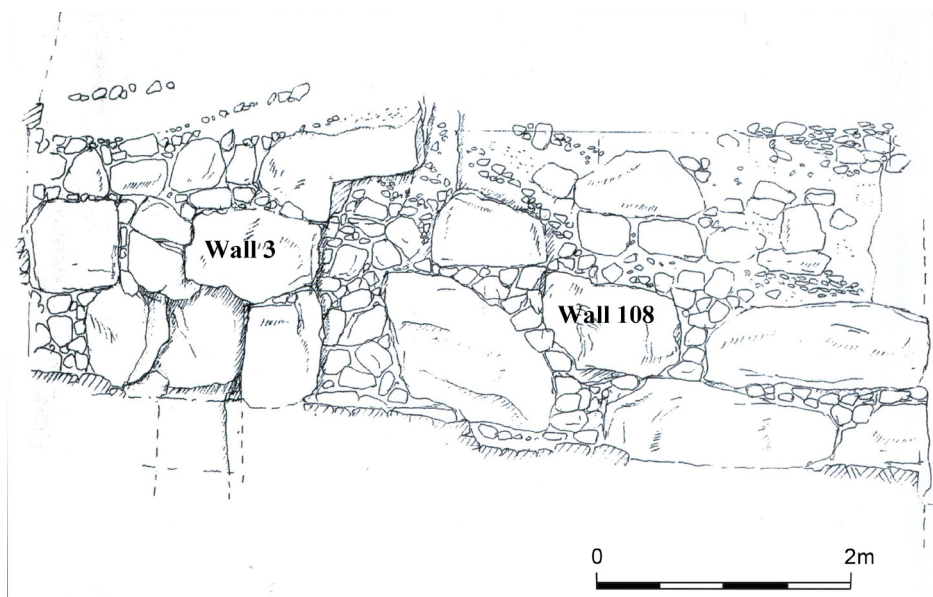


FIGURE 6 The connecting point between Walls 3 and 108 as documented by Reich and Shukron (2010, looking west). According to their understanding Wall 3 abutted Wall 108. We suggest that the two walls were built together.

Kenyon and Steiner noted that all the pottery found in the fills abutting the western face of Wall 3 dates to the Middle Bronze Age; although admitting that this pottery comes from a fill, they suggested dating the wall to this period (Steiner 2001: 12). Ussishkin's assertion (2016: 4) that this pottery provides only a *terminus post quem* is correct. However, his alternative suggestion to date the wall to the 8th century BCE is even less valid than Kenyon's and Steiner's claims, as it is based on pottery found in a fill *outside* of the wall. Ussishkin ignored the fact that the fill located above and east of Wall 3 was sealed by the 'cobbled street'. Hence, pottery found in the fill can provide only a *terminus ante quem* for the wall's destruction and *terminus post quem* for the pavement's construction.

The pottery found on the floors of domestic structures north of Wall 3 was not published. Pottery found lying on the 'cobbled street' or directly below it was summarized but not fully published (e.g., Eshel 1995: 16). The pottery found under the 'cobbled street' was described as dating to the end of the 8th century BCE (Steiner 2001: 89 and 91), whereas the debris above the 'cobbled street' was dated to the 7th century BCE (Franken and Steiner 1990: 129; Steiner 2001: 92). Forty-two impressed *lmlk* handles are reported to have been found on the 'cobbled street' and an additional 19 were found slightly higher, but are also associated with it. (Franken and Steiner 1990: 129). According to Eshel and Prag (1995: 16), some of these *lmlk* stamped handles were found below the 'cobbled street'. The *lmlk* stamp impressions found on the 'cobbled street' were described as all being of the 'Two-Wing types' (Steiner 2001: 92). If the *lmlk* stamp impressions found above or below the street are all of the Two-Wing type, then it is possible that they are of the types recently

dated to the 7th century BCE (Lipschits *et al.* 2011: n. 10). This corresponds well with the date assigned to the ‘cobbled street’ by Franken and Steiner (1990: 6). The construction of the ‘cobbled street’ can be assigned to the Iron IIB. Therefore, the construction and collapse of Wall 3 must have occurred early in the Iron IIB.

In sum, monumental Wall 3—whether it is a fortification wall, tower or support wall—represents pre-late 8th century BCE activity on the eastern slope.

Anchor 2: Building 2482 and the fortified passage (Figs. 2 and 7)

To the north of the fortified passage, Uziel and Szanton (2015) uncovered a sequence of two buildings that were constructed against Wall 108. They were overlaid by a thick layer of debris. The earlier of the two, Building 2482, was built directly on bedrock. The entrance to the structure was from the east, and its southern wall (Wall 20) was built against Wall 108 of the fortified passage. Two successive floors of Building 2482 were uncovered; the earliest was made of thick white plaster that curved upward to coat the walls, including Wall 20, while the latter was a hard, beaten earth floor that abutted the (earlier established) walls. In the next phase, Building 2482 was built over by the smaller Building 2473. This structure was also constructed against the fortified passage, abutting the northern face of Wall 108. It had a beaten earth floor that had pottery sherds resting on it. A thick layer of debris covered the building.

Chronologically, the three architectural phases described above (Wall 108, Building 2482 and Building 2473) can be dated by pottery sherds found on the floors. The most important is the assemblage unearthed on the lower floor of Building 2482, as it indicates the earliest use of the structure,⁷ which must post-date Wall 108. The excavators proposed dating this assemblage to the late 9th–early 8th centuries BCE (Uziel and Szanton 2015), meaning that Wall 108 is even earlier in date.

Anchor 3: The rock-cut feature south of the fortified passage (Figs. 2 and 8)

To the south of the fortified passage, Reich and Shukron uncovered a large rock-cut depression (Reich, Shukron and Lernau 2007). Part of this feature had been investigated over a century before, when Parker discovered in its northeast corner a round depression, some 2 m deeper than the floor level of the square rock-cut feature (Vincent 1911). Because of proximity to the spring, Reich and Shukron interpreted the rock-cut feature as a pool, though its floor is some 6 m higher than the spring.

Regardless of its function (Gill 2012), the finds from within the square rock-cut feature provide an important sequence for the current discussion (Fig. 8). The earliest stage in this sequence had been the cutting of the rock feature. At a later point in time, large boulders were either pushed into the rock-cut feature, or collapsed into it from above (almost certainly from Wall 109 of the fortified passage). These blocks were then covered with a thick fill, deposited in order to level the depression for the construction of a house within its limits. Finally, this structure was sealed by a thick layer of debris (Reich, Shukron and Lernau 2007).

⁷ Contra Ussishkin 2016: 11, who doubted the validity of this material for dating.

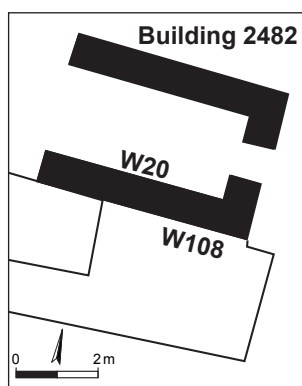


FIGURE 7 Anchor 2: Schematic plan of Building 2482 and Wall 108 of the fortified corridor.

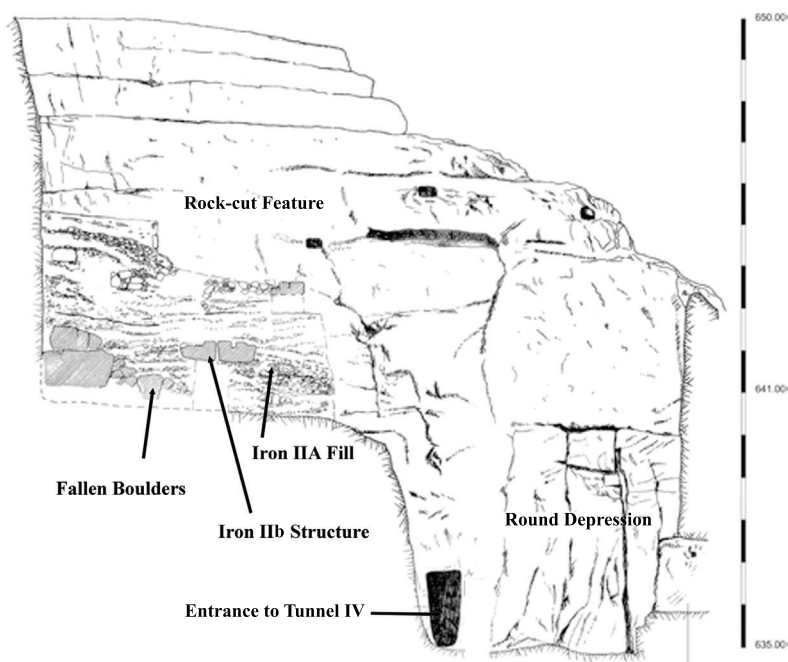


FIGURE 8 A reconstructed section of the fill inside the square rock-cut feature, looking north. Wall 109 of the fortified passage is located at the top of the section, just to its north (after Reich and Shukron 2011: Fig. 4).

Turning to chronology, the domestic structure, which sealed all earlier phases, was dated to the end of the 8th century BCE (Reich, Shukron and Lernau 2007). The cutting and original use of the rock-cut feature were attributed to the Middle Bronze Age (Reich and Shukron 2011) based on circumstantial reasoning—the association of the rock-cut feature with the fortified passage. De Groot and Fadida (2011) date the pottery from the fill in the rock-cut feature to the late 9th century BCE. Singer-Avitz (2012) and Finkelstein (2013) called this dating into question, arguing that the fill should be dated by the latest pottery

found within it, which likely dates to the late 8th century BCE. The recent publication of floor assemblages from Stratum 13 in Area E (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012b) and Building 2482 (Uziel and Szanton 2015), that are contemporaneous with the assemblage from the fill, support the original late 9th–early 8th century date for the fill (De Groot and Fadida 2011).

To sum-up this point, the stratigraphic sequence described above indicates that the rock-cut feature must predate the late 8th century BCE. Admittedly, the evidence here is more circumstantial, depending on Anchors 1 and 2 above, which proved that the fortified passage was already in use no later than the late 9th century BCE. Therefore, the rock-cut feature would have been cut even earlier, whether in the Middle Bronze Age or in the 9th century BCE.

Anchor 4: The spring tower (Figs. 2 and 9)

The spring tower is the most monumental feature known in the pre-Herodian Jerusalem landscape. Its dating to the Middle Bronze Age has been widely accepted since it was unearthed by Reich and Shukron (2000) (e.g., Finkelstein, Lipschitz and Koch 2011). This dating was based on two factors. The first is Middle Bronze pottery found in fills above and around the structure. The second is the similarity of the construction technique of the tower to highlands fortifications dating to the Middle Bronze Age (e.g., Shiloh–Finkelstein and Bunimovitz 1993; Hebron–see Eisenberg and Ben Shlomo 2016).

A radiocarbon-based attempt to date the tower has recently been reported by Regev *et al.* (2017): Organic material found under the eastern wall of the tower was dated to the late 9th century BCE. This date ostensibly provides a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the tower, or a repair in the tower (Regev *et al.* 2017). Either option indicates a significant building project undertaken in Jerusalem in the late 9th century BCE. Theoretically, since the samples may have originated from a fill, the tower may have been built still later. This however is less plausible, as the tower and the fortified passage are clearly of the same construction method, even if not linked physically, and the pre-late 8th century date of the latter has been shown above.

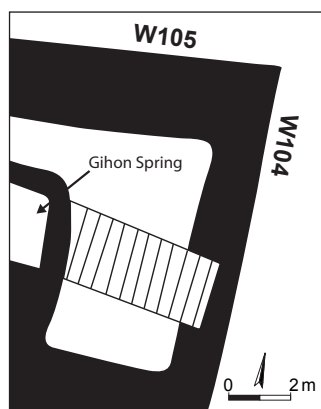


FIGURE 9 Anchor 4: Schematic plan of the the walls of the Spring Tower.

Anchor 5: Area E (Fig. 10–11)

Area E in general, and Area E North in particular, serve as the stratigraphic backbone for Jerusalem from the Chalcolithic to the Hellenistic period. They provide pottery assemblages which are compared to finds from other parts of ancient Jerusalem, as well as other sites in Judah (Shiloh 1984; De-Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a, b).

Architectural remains of 13 of the 19 strata in the City of David were unearthed and were all dated according to pottery sequencing. Substantial finds dating to the Middle Bronze Age were assigned to three strata (18, 17b and 17a), while the finds dating to the Iron II were divided into six strata (15–10). The primary features for our discussion are Walls 285 and 219 described as fortifications (de Groot 2012: 147, 158–159). The excavators maintained that Wall 285 was built during the Middle Bronze Age, and that Wall 219 was added in the Iron IIB, probably in the late 8th century BCE (De Groot 2012a). Other scholars question the existence of a Middle Bronze fortification wall here (Finkelstein, Lipschits and Koch 2011: 11; Ussishkin 2016: 8). Ussishkin (*ibid.*) challenged the interpretation of Wall 219—even if attributed to the Iron Age—as fortification and suggested seeing it as a revetment for buildings constructed to its west.

The relationship between Wall 285 and buildings of Stratum 18 and 17b was documented by the Shiloh expedition in three different spots:

1. In Square P/4-5, Pavement 1689 of Stratum 18 abuts the inner face of Wall 285 (Fig. 10; De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: 118 and Plan 51a). The transition to Stratum 17b is marked by the thickening of Wall 285, with the thickened part built over Pavement 1689.
2. In Squares N-O/4-5, Floor 1601 of Stratum 18 abuts the inner face of Wall 285 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: 117–118 and Plan 51a).
3. In Squares Q/4-5, Floor 1631/1635 of Stratum 17b abuts the inner face of Wall 285 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: 110 and Plan 51a).

It seems that these three stratigraphic anchors are sufficient to prove that Wall 285, whether it functioned as a retaining wall or a fortification, coexisted with architecture of Strata 18 and 17b, both dated to the Middle Bronze Age.⁸ It is also notable that architectural elements dating to the Middle Bronze Age had not been found east of Wall 285. Ussishkin suggested that the wall had no inner foundation trench and that it actually cuts the three floors described above. Although hypothetically this may be possible, in order to accept such an argument, one must imagine a perfect incision that placed the wall neatly against the floors in three different places. We would therefore follow the Occam Razor logic here: in a case with two possible explanations, one should adopt the simpler and straightforward one, unless proven otherwise. In this case Wall 285 abuts the floors and therefore dates to the Middle Bronze Age.

According to De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg (2012a: 53) Wall 285 was rebuilt during the later phase of Stratum 12 (Stratum 12b); this rebuilt wall has been labeled Wall 219. In at least three spots, architectural elements that belong to an earlier phase of Stratum 12 (Stratum 12a) are bonded into this wall (*ibid.*: Plan 33a and b). Another such spot has

⁸ One of the authors (Gadot) is currently conducting a joint field operation with the D-REAMS Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, Weizmann Institute of Science, aimed at radiocarbon dating the different strata in Area E. Initial results will be published shortly.



FIGURE 10 Wall 285 and Pavement 1689 (after De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: Photo 142. Courtesy of the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

recently been traced in Baulk P-Q/5 of Area E North. Here, east of Wall 625, the existence of an additional wall (Wall 635) can be noted in the section drawing (*ibid.*: Plans 47a and 58). In between the two walls, Pavement 1397 was noted (*ibid.*: 87). These elements belong to the Pavement Building described by De-Groot and Bernick-Greenberg (*ibid.*: 84–93). During the excavations of the baulk in 2016, one of the authors (Gadot) exposed Wall 635 together with another pavement labeled F123, this time built to its east (Fig. 11). This pavement, made of small pebbles, seems to form part of the above-mentioned Pavement Building. As can be seen in Figure 11, the pavement runs over Wall 219, indicating that the latter was constructed prior to the Pavement Building of Stratum 12a.⁹

The water systems

The sophisticated water systems of Jerusalem indicate monumental public construction. They are, however, difficult to date and so cannot serve as independent chronological anchors. The Siloam Tunnel, for example, was alternatively dated to the early 8th century BCE (Reich and Shukron 2011), late 8th century BCE (Frumkin, Shimron and Rosenbaum 2003; Finkelstein 2013), onset of the 7th century BCE, subsequent to the Assyrian campaign to Jerusalem (Grossberg 2014) and early part of the 7th century BCE (Ussishkin 1995; Knauf 2001; Sneh, Weinberger and Shalev 2010).

⁹ Ussishkin (2016: 8) argued that the only Iron Age fortification on the eastern slope is Wall 501, dated to the Iron IIB according to pottery in the fill behind it (Reich and Shukron 2008). In the same breadth Ussishkin says, regarding Wall 3 (2016: 3), that such a fill ‘can serve as a *terminus post quem* for dating the wall but not more.’ Note that Wall 501 was not found south of Area J and hence its function should be interpreted with caution (Gadot 2014).

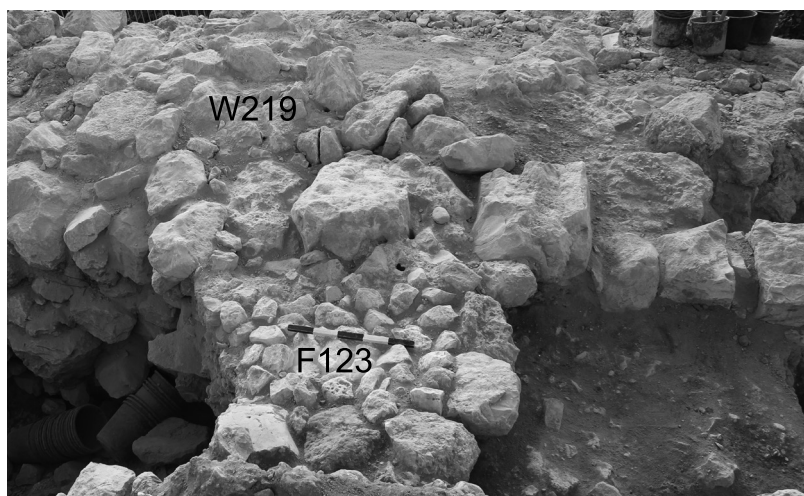


FIGURE 11 Pavement F123 of Stratum 12 built over Wall 219 (Photo: Y. Gadot).

It is broadly agreed that the latest feature in the sequence of water systems around the Gihon Spring is Tunnel VIII (Fig. 2; the Siloam Tunnel),¹⁰ as it rendered all previous water installations obsolete. The lowering of the level of the rock west of the spring-cave caused the water to flow into Tunnel VIII instead of Channel II, an earlier conduit, which carried the spring's water to the south. This determines that Channel II—which may have been built in two separate phases (Reich and Shukron 2009)—must predate the construction of Tunnel VIII. Another installation—Warren's Shaft—seems to date between Channel II and Tunnel VIII (Faust 2003; Gill 2011; De Groot 2012b: 10).

This indicates that there were at least three sequential water systems in the vicinity of the Gihon Spring. The earliest is Channel II (at least in its northern section – Grossberg 2013). This segment is covered by the boulders of the southern wall of the spring tower (see, e.g., Reich and Shukron 2011: Fig. 1), and therefore must be contemporary to or earlier than the spring tower itself. As the tower probably predates the late 8th century BCE, so does Channel II.¹¹

Area G and the 'Ophel'

No understanding of Jerusalem's early development is complete without discussing the remains uncovered by Kenyon, B. Mazar, E. Mazar and Shiloh above the eastern slope, in Area G (Shiloh 1984; Cahill 2003) and in the 'Ophel', farther to the north (Mazar and Mazar 1989; Mazar 2015). While the dating and interpretation of the finds are quite

¹⁰ Tunnel VIII is actually the second part of the system; earlier it had been fed water by Tunnel VI (Vincent 1911; Gill 2012).

¹¹ The idea that Channel II was a minor building project (Ussishkin 1995) is unacceptable. The channel was quarried for a distance of approximately 400 m. This would have required significant effort and organizational skill.

complex and at times problematic (see, e.g., Finkelstein *et al.* 2007; Finkelstein 2011), there are still hints of stratigraphic sequences which cannot be ignored.¹²

The Stepped Stone Structure includes a series of stone compartments filled with earth, above which a ‘mantel’ of stones was laid, forming a stepped architectural element on the slope. Scholars have divided the structure into several phases (Mazar 2006; Finkelstein *et al.* 2007; Finkelstein 2011). Two arguments dictate the dating of this structure: 1) Late Bronze III/Iron I pottery was found under the stone compartments (Steiner 2001; Cahill 2003). 2) Cutting into the Stepped Stone Structure are several buildings, such as the House of Ahiel and the Burnt Room House (Shiloh 1984), the construction of which was dated to the Iron IIA (Cahill 2003) or the Iron IIB (Finkelstein *et al.* 2007). Arguments have been made for architectural relationship between the Stepped Stone Structure and architectural units built further down the slope; these were excavated by Kenyon and dated to the Iron IIA (Steiner 2001; Mazar 2006). If these structures are indeed related, then the Stepped Stone Structure would likely date to the Iron IIA. Even though the Stepped Stone structure did not function as a fortification, its massive nature demonstrates the existence of public architecture in Jerusalem prior to the Iron IIB (and see Mazar 2006; Finkelstein 2011; Sergi 2015: 54 for other possible dates).

In the ‘Ophel’ a series of non-domestic architectural elements were unearthed (Mazar and Mazar 1989; Mazar 2015). E. Mazar interpreted them as fortification features and dated them to the Iron IIA (2015: 464). Mazar (2015: Plan III.1.2) designated four construction phases here, though it is possible that several of the elements need to be assigned to the same phase. These features are partially sealed by architecture dating to the Iron IIB–C. According to Mazar, Iron IIA pottery was found in a fill under the earliest of the structure’s floors (Mazar, Ben-Shlomo and Ahituv 2013: 40). It seems, then, that regardless of the structures’ function, the excavations provide evidence for the existence of public architecture here prior to the late 8th century BCE.

Conclusions

We have presented five locations in Jerusalem, in which at least three Iron II phases, some of them monumental, were identified.¹³ In each case, it is difficult to lump them into a single chronological episode at the end of the 8th/beginning of the 7th century BCE. Reliable relative and absolute dating has been achieved in several locales. For example, both the ceramic dating of Building 2482 (Uziel and Szanton 2015) and the ¹⁴C dates from below the spring tower point to the end of the 9th century or the beginning of the 8th century

¹² As the Iron Age remains from these areas were only partially published, the discussion below is limited to the accepted phases, without delving into debated elements or absolute dating.

¹³ The evidence presented above also has implications for Jerusalem of the Middle Bronze Age. Architectural remains that unequivocally date to this period include the buildings constructed against Wall 285 in Shiloh’s Area E. Whether Wall 285 served as a fortification or revetment wall, it clearly indicates a certain level of urban planning and ability to organize communal building activities. Despite the ¹⁴C dates beneath the spring tower, the option that during the Middle Bronze the spring was fortified, with access provided through the fortified passage, and that a water system was cut (i.e., Channel II) should not be dismissed.

BCE as the date of construction (Regev *et al.* 2017). In other locales, too, significant architectural elements predate the end of the 8th century.

Ussishkin (2016) imposes the stratigraphy and chronology of Lachish on the archaeology of Jerusalem, a place that developed independently and under different historical circumstances. The history of Jerusalem is more nuanced, as demonstrated by Stratum 13 in Area E (De-Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: 100–101; 2012b: 210–213) and in Building 2482 (Uziel and Szanton 2015), which represent a post-Lachish IV–pre-Lachish III horizon in Jerusalem. These assemblages lend support to De Groot and Fadida's dating of the fill in the rock-cut feature to the pre-Lachish III horizon, together with the many bullae, which provide evidence for early administration in pre-late Iron IIB Jerusalem.

Monumental architecture in general, and fortifications in particular, are part of a material language used by elite groups in their effort to consolidate social order and group identity (Finkelstein 1992). Yet, an attempt to assess monumentality and urbanism should be based on a more holistic approach that also looks at specific environmental and social circumstances. In the case of Jerusalem, the eastern slope of the southeastern ridge is notoriously steep and in some sectors features a number of scarps that are close to impossible to climb (Ariel and Lender 2000; De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012a: 9 and see various section drawings such as Plan 75 and Plan 85). Under such circumstances, it is questionable whether construction of a city wall for defensive reasons was needed. Accordingly, Walls 285, 219, 1 and 3 could have been multipurpose, serving as revetments for houses constructed above them, and at the same time used to define the limits of the settlement and to form some sort of protection downslope (De Groot 2012a: 158). The same can be said regarding the complex system of water channels and tunnels near the Gihon Spring. The manipulation of the water, whether to be protected, moved into pools, or provided for daily use and agriculture in various parts of the city, indicates impressive organizational capabilities, made possible only through a strong governing body, which had to have existed in Jerusalem prior to the late 8th century BCE.

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