



# Beyond the Walls: New Findings on the Eastern Slope of the City of David and their Significance for Understanding the Urban Development of Late Iron Age Jerusalem

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## ■ Introduction

Since 2013, archaeological excavations have been conducted on the eastern slope of the City of David, near the visitors' entrance to the Warren's Shaft system (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The current project (Area U) is among the many excavations conducted in this area due to its proximity to the Gihon Spring – Jerusalem's main water source in the Iron Age (Reich and Shukron 2004), and the numerous water systems and fortifications built around it (for a detailed summary of the water systems and excavations in this area, see Reich 2011). Noteworthy among the excavations are those of K. Kenyon, about 30 m north of Area U. These excavations uncovered remains of some 30 m of what is widely accepted as the eastern city wall of Jerusalem during the Iron Age II–III (W1, known in Kenyon's preliminary publications as Wall NA; and see Kenyon 1974 and Steiner 2001; for the stratigraphic relationship between W1 and other remains excavated by Kenyon, see recently Gadot and Uziel 2017). About 70 m south of Kenyon's excavation, approximately 80 m of the same wall line was discovered in Y. Shiloh's excavations of Area E (Shiloh's Wall 219; Shiloh 1984; de Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012). According to most scholars, considering the continuity of its two long segments described above (de Groot 2012), this line, known as the "Kenyon-Shiloh wall", was the main line of Jerusalem's eastern fortifications in the Iron Age II–III.

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1 The current excavation began in 2013 after a storm damaged the visitors' passage near the entrance to the Warren's Shaft system. After the storm it was decided to build a retaining wall to prevent future collapses. The excavation, undertaken prior to construction of the retaining wall, was conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority within the area of the national park. The dig was funded by the Elad association, which also oversaw the logistical and engineering aspects of the project. In 2013 and 2014, the excavation was headed by N. Szanton and J. Uziel. In 2015, it was headed by M. Hagbi and J. Uziel, and in 2016, by S. Dan-Goor. Since 2017, the excavation has been headed by O. Chalaf and J. Uziel. This article will describe the results of the final seasons of the excavations. The excavation was assisted by V. Essman and Y. Shmidov (drafting and surveying); A. Peretz (photography); Y. Regev and E. Boaretto (micro-archaeology and C14); A. Bejerano and L. Sapir-Hen (archaeozoology); A. Mendel-Geberovich (epigraphy); M. Laor, K. Gur-Arieh, N. Mizrahi and Y. Tamam (work supervisors); N. Nehama (administration); O. Cohen (engineering); and M. Kupfstein (registration). The soil from the site was wet-sifted at the Emek Tsurim site. We would like to thank the Israel Antiquities Authority Jerusalem district heads – Y. Baruch, A. Re'em and Y. Zelinger, who gave us the opportunity to take part in this excavation, and to everyone who assisted in the excavation, whether in fieldwork, discussions of the significance of finds, and especially the excavation workers, without whom we could not have unearthed the finds presented here.

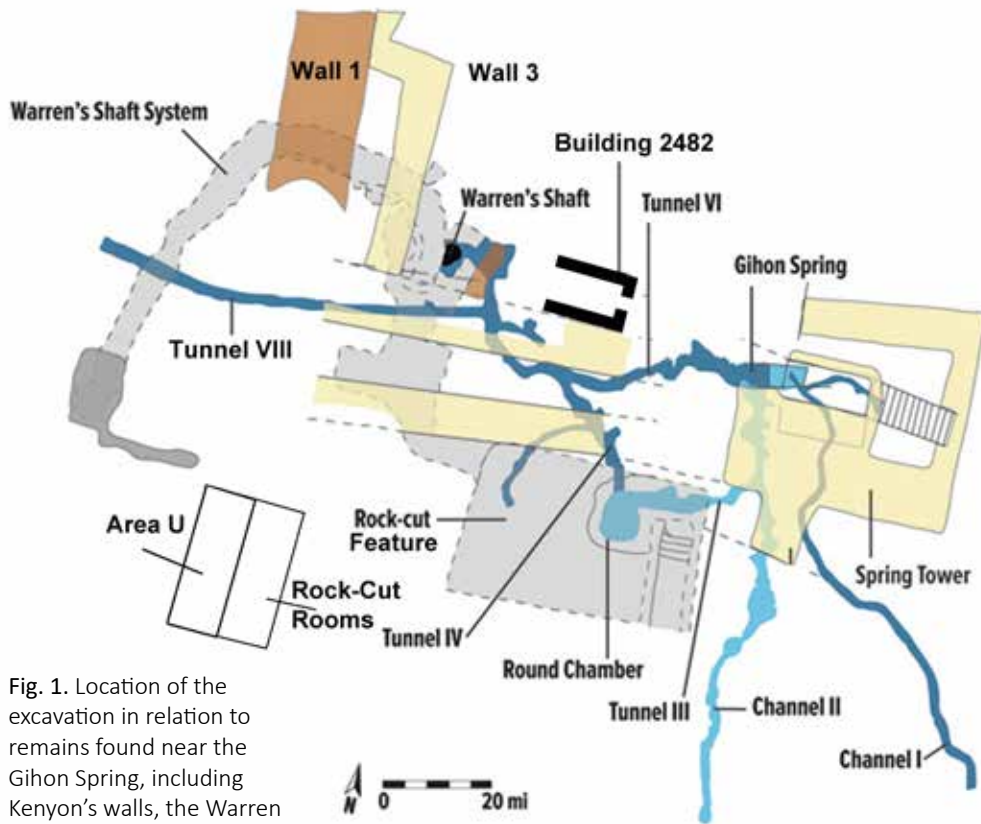


Fig. 1. Location of the excavation in relation to remains found near the Gihon Spring, including Kenyon's walls, the Warren Shaft system and the spring fortifications (Israel Antiquities Authority, after Gadot and Uziel 2017: Fig. 2).

Moreover, directly east of Area U a system of rock-cut rooms was discovered, also dating to the Iron Age II (Vincent 1911; Reich and Shukron 2011a; for the connection between these rooms and Kenyon's Cave 1 see Szanton 2013). The tops of the built walls of these rooms were uncovered, as well as additional structures that existed concurrently with these rock-cut rooms. In addition, wooden beams that had supported tunnels dug by M. Parker, who was the first to excavate this part of the City of David hill, were exposed. Reich and Shukron also unearthed these supports in their excavations.

In the first seasons, remains were uncovered that post-dated the Iron Age (for the preliminary results from these seasons see Szanton and Uziel 2015; Hagbi and Uziel 2017; Dan-Goor 2017). These remains covered and sealed a number of structures preliminarily dated from the eighth century BCE to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The excellent state of preservation of the architecture and artifacts, and the fact



that the buildings were in continuous use, has afforded us the opportunity to carry out numerous studies of the finds. This article will offer an initial presentation of the findings and discuss their possible significance for Jerusalem's urban development in the Iron Age.

### ■ Stratigraphy and Architecture

Two strata were uncovered in the excavation that can be dated to the Iron Age II–III. Each of these strata had several phases. It should be noted that in the southern part of the area, a structure was discovered that post-dates the Iron Age, but whose dating is still not certain. This structure cut the southern end of the Iron Age structures. It is possible that structures resembling those described below continued southward, but this cannot be determined unequivocally.

The earliest structure (Building 17081, see Fig. 2), was built directly on the bedrock above earlier rock-cut installations (for example, cupmarks, see Fig. 3). The structure consisted of four spaces: three longitudinal rooms (from north to south: 17129, 10063 and 17130, see Fig. 4), and a broad room (Room 17043, see Fig. 2). These spaces are quite narrow, their width measuring from 0.70 m (Room 17043) to 1.60 m (Room 17129). The structure is built of medium-size fieldstones; its walls, which are 50–70 cm thick, were preserved to a height of more than 2 m above the bedrock. The structure was built between the two back walls of the rock-cut rooms (see Fig. 2). In the northern space, the

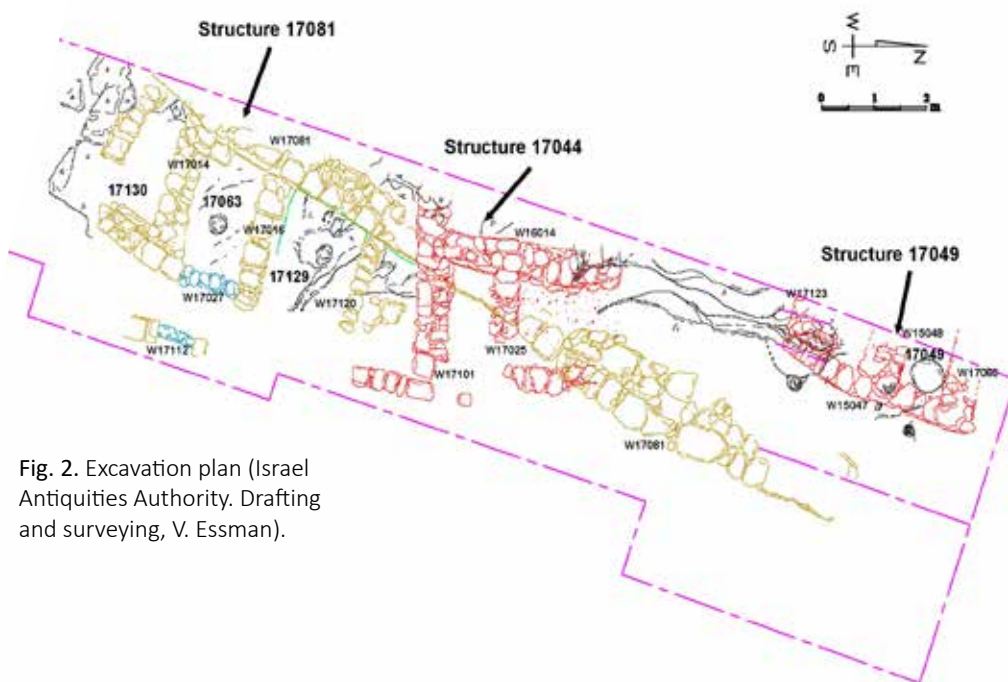


Fig. 2. Excavation plan (Israel Antiquities Authority. Drafting and surveying, V. Essman).



Fig. 3. Room 17063, the middle room of Building 17081, looking south. Note the earlier cupmark in the room, which was sealed beneath Floor 17063 (Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo by A. Peretz).



Fig. 4. Building 17081, general view, looking north (Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo by J. Uziel).



Fig. 5. Room 17129, with walls consisting of a lower rock-cut part and an upper built part, looking west (Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo by J. Uziel).

lower parts of the walls were quarried out of the rock, in a similar fashion to the rock-cut rooms (see Fig. 5).

This fact, together with Building 17081's location, indicates that the building was an integral part of the array of rock-cut rooms (see Reich and Shukron 2011a). Soil-based plaster, in which an intentional pattern was discerned, made by fingers spreading the plaster, was found still coating the building stones. In the first phase of Building 17081, a doorway was discerned in eastern W17027, opposite which was another doorway, in W17112 – which is the western wall of the rock-cut rooms. These doorways were apparently used for passage between the rock-cut rooms and Building 17081. At a later phase these doorways were blocked and the eastern and the northern rooms were filled with soil and went completely out of use.

In Rooms 17063 and 17130, 10 continuous, superimposed floors were found,<sup>2</sup> the earliest of which belonged to the first phase of the structure and has been preliminarily dated

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2 The identification and excavation of the floors was done jointly with Y. Regev and E. Boaretto, with the goal of distinguishing the various phases, carrying out micro-archeological studies and precise C14 dating of the Iron Age II-III. This research, to determine absolute dating of the City of David, is sponsored with the assistance of a research grant (no. 1873/17), from the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities (the study is headed by E. Boaretto, Y. Gadot, D. Ben-Ami and J. Uziel; its results will be published separately in the future).



to the eighth century BCE. This phase is parallel to Stratum 12 of the Shiloh excavations (Shiloh 1984; de Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012) and to Status 8 of Szanton and Uziel's excavations of Area C (see Uziel and Szanton 2015). It should be noted that in the earliest stratum, a layer of smashed vessels was discovered in situ, attesting to a traumatic event. It seems that the above-mentioned changes were made to the structure after this event. However, Rooms 17063 and 17130 continued in use until the end of the Iron Age, although violent destruction was not evident in these rooms, as opposed to Structure 17049 (below). The lack of destruction and raising of the succession of floors attest to the continuity of use from the eighth century BCE until the end of the Iron Age (Figs. 6, 7). Together with the pottery found on each floor, fragments of pillar figurines and zoomorphic figurines were also uncovered, typical of Jerusalem in the late Iron Age (see, e.g., Kletter 1996; Gilbert-Peretz 1996).



Fig. 6. Seriation of floors in Room 17063, looking west (Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo by O. Chalaf).

Fig. 7. Seriation of floors in Room 17130, looking west. Note that stamped handles mark the chronological horizon of the sequence (Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo by O. Chalaf).





Fig. 8. View of Building 17044, built above the rock-cut rooms, looking west (Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo by O. Chalaf).

During the Iron Age III, two more structures were built above the complex of rock-cut rooms – Building 17044 and Building 17049.

Building 17044 is situated in the center of the excavation, north of Room 17063, and it cuts W17081 – the western wall of the rock-cut rooms, which was also the western wall of Building 17081. Building 17044 was built above the fills that sealed the rock-cut rooms (Fig. 8. For the sealing of the rock-cut rooms see Reich and Shukron 2011a). It should be noted that the northern part of Building 17044 was damaged by Parker's Channels XI and XVII (Vincent 1911, Map VI). Three rooms of this structure were partially uncovered in the current excavation. Their walls consist of two rows of fieldstones (thickness of walls 50–70 cm), preserved to a maximum height of 1.80 m. Floors made of plaster and beaten earth abutted W16014 both on the east and the west. Pottery was discovered on the floors that can be preliminarily dated to the Iron Age III. In the second phase, the southern room was sealed with stones and went entirely out of use. It is unclear why the room was sealed; nevertheless, the rest of the structure continued in use until the end of the Iron Age, like Building 17081, which also continued in existence until the end of the Iron Age and lacks evidence of the 586 BCE destruction.



In Building 17049, which was found in the northern part of Area U (see Fig. 2), three longitudinal rooms were identified, two of which were partially excavated. The walls were built of fieldstones 0.50–1 m wide and the rooms were built on an east–west axis. The eastern (outer) wall of the building was built of one row of stones; some of the stones in the lower courses are the walls separating the rooms, preserved to a height of 2.5 m, were built of smaller fieldstones with well-dressed faces. This building was also built above earlier hewn installations and above a natural rock channel on a north–south axis. The channel, discovered by Parker (Vincent 1911: Pl. VI), is situated west of the complex of rock-cut rooms.

The walls of Building 17049 were not built on bedrock, but rather on a layer of soil c. 10 cm thick, which contained no indicative finds except for a single bulla.<sup>3</sup> In the middle room (Room 17049) a plaster floor with a particularly thick makeup of c. 30 cm, was discovered. The floor bore a destruction layer that included collapsed stones, and a large quantity of burned pieces of wood – apparently the room’s ceiling beams, which had collapsed on a group of jars standing on the floor (Fig. 9). The jar handles bore rosette stamps, typical of the destruction layer of 586 BCE (for dating of rosette-stamped handles, see Barkay 1985; Cahill 1995; Lipschits, Sergi and Kokh 2010; for paleomagnetic research on stamped handles, see, recently, Ben-Yosef et al. 2017). Alongside the jars three round, clay stoppers were found.



Fig. 9. Layer of destruction discovered in Room 17049, looking west (Israel Antiquities Authority, Photo by A. Peretz).

<sup>3</sup> Dozens of bullae were unearthed in the excavation from various contexts, which were dated to the Iron Age II–III. The bullae, some of which were published in the media in conjunction with last year’s conference, are now being studied by A. Mendel-Geberovich, and will be published in a separate article.

Interestingly, Room 17072, which was found south of Room 17049, revealed no remains of destruction, although this may have been due to damage during the excavation of Parker's Channel XV. East of Building 17049, a layer of stones was discovered abutting the structure's eastern walls. This layer, like the building's walls, was set on a thin layer of soil separating it from the bedrock. This layer seems to have been intentionally laid rather than stemming from collapse. The findings revealed in this layer of stones date it to the Iron Age III, after the construction of Building 17049.

## ■ Discussion

The current excavation has revealed important information that sheds additional light on various aspects of Jerusalem's urban development and material culture during the Iron Age II-III. In discussing these finds, we will focus on settlement west of the wall line discovered by Kenyon, and farther south, by Shiloh. The current excavation area passes along the presumed line of this wall. It has been suggested in the past that the western wall of the northern rock-cut rooms was the continuation of Kenyon's W1 – that is, the city wall – from the Iron Age III (Reich and Shukron 2011a: 92; Szanton 2013: 5). The width of the top of the wall, uncovered in the current excavation, does not exceed 1 m, and in certain points it is built of a single row of stones. Therefore this wall cannot be interpreted as the continuation of the city wall. Considering that the city wall was not found in the current excavation, it is possible that Kenyon's Wall 1 and Shiloh's Wall 219 should be interpreted as retaining walls for construction on the slope rather than defensive walls of the city (and see Ussishkin 2016: 8, 2017). In this framework, de Groot's opinion (2012) is noteworthy, in that he states that the inner faces of fortifications no doubt also served as support for buildings abutting them, but the difference between a city wall and a retaining wall can be noted in its continuity. A defensive wall may be identified when it can be continuously followed along a significant distance. In this case, it seems that following our excavation a continuous city wall cannot be reconstructed between Shiloh's Area E and Kenyon's excavation. Nevertheless, it may be proposed that the "Kenyon-Shiloh" wall does follow the natural topography of the hill; in the area of the current excavation, a small topographical saddle can be seen, noting a point of recession of the rock scarp on which W1 was built. Thus it seems that the city wall should be sought west of the current excavation area.

If this is indeed the case, the buildings described above are part of a neighborhood that extended beyond the city wall in the Iron Age II–III. Indeed, Reich’s and Shukron’s excavations have also shown that this area was settled at the end of the Iron Age. As noted above, the system of rock-cut rooms excavated by Parker (Vincent 1911) and Reich and Shukron (2011) was in use in the Iron Age II. As noted, these rooms were blocked, apparently intentionally, during the Iron Age itself (Szanton 2013). The possibility cannot be ruled out that they were blocked in the seventh century BCE, and the rock-cut rooms may have been abandoned long after the expansion of the city to the western hill.

Moreover, farther to the east, Reich and Shukron uncovered a structure built within a rock-cut installation (which they called the Rock-Cut Pool – Reich, Shukron and Lernau 2007). That structure was apparently built sometime at the end of the ninth century BCE or the beginning of the eighth century BCE, based on the rich findings discovered in the fills under the structure (de Groot and Fadida 2011), but continued to be in use, with changes, apparently until the end of the Iron Age. The stratigraphic continuity recently discovered by Szanton and Uziel north of the fortified passage, which included strata from the ninth century to the Babylonian destruction in 586 BCE (Uziel and Szanton 2015), underscores this conclusion.

The discovery in our excavation of a number of construction phases that can be dated to a brief span from the eighth century BCE to the Babylonian destruction in 586 BCE, suggests that urban Jerusalem flourished at this time. This growth, which began at the latest in the ninth century BCE (Uziel and Szanton 2015; de Groot 2012; 2018), persisted with the expansion of settlement westward to the western hill (Avigad 1974; and see Geva 2014 on the meager settlement on the western hill). It seems that even before this expansion, Jerusalem was already experiencing a process of natural growth, and that the original fortified area – which was apparently based on the fortifications from the Middle Bronze Age (e.g., Mazar 2006) – was becoming too crowded. This overcrowding led to the construction of another wall, farther down the slope, which was uncovered in Reich and Shukron’s excavations in Area J (Reich and Shukron 2008). In the eighth century BCE, a residential quarter was built between these two walls. That quarter existed for a very brief period and was already abandoned in Shiloh’s Stratum 11, at the time when the city expanded westward and the Gihon Spring water was diverted to the Pool of Siloam (de Groot 2012: 161; Reich 2011: 313).

A similar phenomenon has been revealed by the various excavations east of the line of the city wall near the spring. The structures discovered there began to be built as early as



the ninth century BCE (Uziel and Szanton 2015). However, in contrast to other areas, such as Areas D and E, the area near the spring continued to be settled simultaneously with settlement on the western hill. Moreover, it apparently continued to develop: Not only did the existing structures continue in use; new structures were built, as can be seen from Building 17049, which was built in the last phases of the period, and was destroyed in 586 BCE.

The reasons for the difference between this area and the rest of the eastern slope cannot be determined unequivocally at this time. It may be suggested that the difference stems from the special location of these structures near the Gihon Spring. But according to most scholars, by this stage of the city's development, when settlement had already expanded to the western hill, water was already flowing from the spring through the Siloam Tunnel to the Pool of Siloam at the southern end of the hill (see, recently Finkelstein 2013).<sup>4</sup> As has been proposed in the past, there may still have been access to the spring from within the tower by means of the fortified passage (Uziel and Szanton 2015), but it seems that such access would have been from within the walls, and so it still does not seem likely that settlement in this area would have relied on proximity to the spring. Nevertheless, it is possible that despite the diversion of the water to the Pool of Siloam, this area was still perceived as very important in the cityscape, and therefore it continued to be settled and even contained structures of a special nature, such as the rock-cut rooms.

## ■ Conclusion

In the current excavations in Area U, which is situated on the rock terrace west of Area C and the rock-cut rooms excavated by Reich and Shukron (2011), three structures were unearthed dating to the Iron Age II–III. These structures, which are located beyond the line of Kenyon and Shiloh's walls, are evidence of settlement on the eastern slope of the City of David hill. This settlement expanded east of the wall line, and continued not only to exist but to grow, even after settlement expanded to the western hill. This picture runs counter to the picture revealed elsewhere on the eastern slope of the City of David, for

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4 There are various opinions about the dating of the Siloam Tunnel. Some scholars have proposed moving the date it was hewn from the end of the eighth century BCE, proposed in the past and supported by the absolute dating of the plaster on the tunnel walls (Frumkin, Shimron and Rosenbaum 2003). Reich and Shukron (2011b) proposed an earlier dating, to the ninth century, while a number of proposals have suggested a later date, in the seventh century BCE (Sneh, Weinberger and Shalev 2010). However, we believe that the most likely date for the quarrying of the tunnel is the late eighth–early seventh centuries BCE, as Finkelstein has shown (2013).

example in Areas D and E, which were abandoned after the city expanded westward and construction ceased between the walls (de Groot 2012). We hope that continued study of the findings will provide an answer to the question of why settlement continued in this area in the Iron Age II–III, outside the walls, despite the expansion of the city westward.

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