

# Excavations at Kiriath-jearim near Jerusalem, 2017: preliminary report

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**Résumé.** La première saison de fouilles à Qiryat-Ye'arîm a mis en évidence : (1) une plateforme rectangulaire soutenue par des murs massifs en pierre, créée au sommet de la colline, peut-être durant la première moitié du VIII<sup>e</sup> s. avant J.-C. Ce complexe a pu être érigé par un roi nord-israélite. (2) Un peuplement intensif au Fer IIC. (3) La reconstruction de la plateforme au Fer IIC et à l'époque hellénistique. Cette dernière pourrait être associée aux efforts de fortification du général séleucide Bacchidès. (4) La transformation de la colline en camp romain au I<sup>er</sup> siècle ap. J.-C.

## Introduction

The site of Deir el-<sup>c</sup>Azar (the mound of biblical Kiriath-jearim, below) is located on a dominating hill above the village of Qaryat el-<sup>c</sup>Inab (known today as Abu Gosh), 13 km west-northwest of the Old City of Jerusalem (Fig. 1) and less than one km north of the Tel Aviv–Jerusalem Highway. The hill (Fig. 2; 757 m above sea level)

<sup>1</sup> The Shmunis Family Excavations at Kiriath-jearim is a joint project of Tel Aviv University and the Collège de France, funded by Sana and Vlad Shmunis (USA). Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University and Thomas Römer and Christophe Nicolle of the Collège de France direct the project. The first season of excavation at the site took place during four weeks in August 2017. Staff of the excavation consisted of Sivan Einhorn and Margaret Cohen (coordinators of the Expedition), Sivan Einhorn and Joelle Cohen-Finkelstein (registration), Rima Abu Seif (administrator), Assaf Kleiman, Zachary C. Dunseth and Juliette Mas (supervisors of Areas A, B and C respectively), and Yana Levinger, Liora Bouzaglou, Eythan Levy, Erin Hall, Naama Walzer and Omer Zeevi (field archaeologists). About 50 students from Israel, France, Switzerland and other countries participated in the dig.

commands a sweeping view of large stretches of the coastal plain and the Mediterranean coast (from Jaffa to Ashkelon) in the west, the western neighborhoods of modern Jerusalem in the east and the Judean Mountains in the southeast. The Convent of the Ark of the Covenant (occupied by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition), built in the early 20th century, is located on the summit of the hill (Figs 2, 4, 12). The terraced slopes below the convent are planted with olive trees. Judging from the spread of pottery on these terraces, the size of the mound can be estimated at 4-4.5 hectares—one of the largest Bronze and Iron Age sites in the central highlands (approximately similar to the area of Tell Balata, the location of Shechem).

The modern construction on the summit of the hill consists of the convent's old building (constructed in 1906), its hostel (which developed gradually starting in the early years of the 20th century) and, to their east, the Church of Our Lady of the Ark of the Covenant, built in 1924 over remains (including mosaic floors) of a Byzantine church and monastery. The fact that the entire property belongs to the Order of St. Joseph helped to protect the slopes on the east and north from modern construction. The road that ascends to the convent and several parking lots are located on the southern slope (Fig. 4), making excavation here difficult. A large school-compound was built on the western slope about 25-30 years ago; in order to prepare the area for construction, the upper slope was cut several meters deep through earth accumulation and bedrock (Fig. 8). In a section created by a road near the buildings of the school the accumulation above the bedrock reaches about a meter or slightly more. Bedrock is exposed in several locations on the slopes of the mound (marked in Fig. 6), while, judging from the height of the terraces, in other places several meters of accumulation of remains can be expected (more below).

### **Identification of Kiriath-jearim with Deir el-‘Azar**

The identification of the site with biblical Kiriath-jearim is secure, based on the following arguments:

- In the description of the border between the inheritances of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah (Josh 15: 8-10, 18: 14-16) Kiriath-jearim is located south of Beth-horon (Beit Ur et-Tahta), north (in biblical terms, in fact, northeast) of Chesalon (Kasla, G.R. 154 132) and east of the Waters of Nephtoah (Lifta or Qaluniya;<sup>2</sup> see Fig. 1).
- Eusebius says that “there is a village Kiriathiareim on the way down to Diospolis, about 10 milestones from Ailia” (Onomasticon 48: 24). In another entry he puts it “between Ailia and Diospolis, lying on the road 9 milestones from Ailia” (114: 23). Note that the Roman road from Jerusalem to Lod (Diospolis) passed immediately to the south of the hill.<sup>3</sup>
- The Arabic name of the site, Deir el-<sup>c</sup>Azar, seems to be a corruption of “The Monastery of Eleazar”, probably the name of the Byzantine monastery, which commemorated the name of the priest who was in charge of the Ark when it was kept at Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam 7: 1).
- Preservation of the name Kiriath in the name of the village at the foot of the hill –Qaryat el-<sup>c</sup>Inab (currently known as Abu Gosh).

Deir el-<sup>c</sup>Azar is the only large-enough Iron Age site in the highlands west of Jerusalem that fits these descriptions.<sup>4</sup>

### The textual evidence

Kiriath-jearim appears in the Hebrew Bible under several names. The Greek does not always follow the MT, hence we also indicate below the variants of the LXX. References to Kiriath-jearim occur with the following names:

<sup>2</sup> I. Finkelstein and Y. Gadot, « Mozah, Nephtoah and Royal Estates in the Jerusalem Highlands », *Semitica et Classica* 8, 2015, p. 227-234.

<sup>3</sup> M. Fischer, B. Isaac and I. Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea II: The Jaffa—Jerusalem Roads* (BAR International Series 628), Oxford, BAR, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> See detailed discussion in C. McKinny, O. Schwartz, G. Barkay, A. Fantalkin and B. Zissu, « Kiriath-jearim (Deir el-<sup>c</sup>Azar): Archaeological Investigations of a Biblical Town in the Judean Hill Country », *IEJ* (in press).

- a) Kiriath-jearim: Josh 9: 17;<sup>5</sup> 15: 9, 15: 60;<sup>6</sup> 18: 14;<sup>7</sup> 18: 15;<sup>8</sup> Judg 18: 12; 1 Sam 6: 21; 7: 1; 7: 2; Neh 7: 29; 1 Chr 2: 50; 2: 52;<sup>9</sup> 2: 53;<sup>10</sup> 13: 5;<sup>11</sup> 13: 6;<sup>12</sup> 2 Chr 1: 4.<sup>13</sup>
- b) Kiriath ha-jearim: Jer 26: 20.<sup>14</sup>
- c) Kiriath 'arim: Ezr 2: 25; 1 Esd 5: 19.<sup>15</sup>
- d) Kiriath: Josh 18: 28 (or Gib'at Kiriath).<sup>16</sup>
- e) Ba'alalah: Josh 15: 9;<sup>17</sup> 15: 10;<sup>18</sup> 2 Sam 6: 2 (MT: **בְּעֵלֵי יְהוּדָה**);<sup>19</sup> 4QSam<sup>a</sup> has “Baalalah that is Kiria[th-jearim]”; 1 Chr 13: 6.<sup>20</sup>
- f) Kiriath Ba'al: Josh 15: 60; 18: 14.<sup>21</sup>
- g) The fields of Jaar **בְּשָׂדֵי יַעַר**: Ps 132: 6.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>5</sup> LXX: πόλις Ιαριν.

<sup>6</sup> LXX in Josh 15: πόλις Ιαριμ.

<sup>7</sup> LXX: Καριαθιαριν.

<sup>8</sup> LXX: Καριαθβααλ (!).

<sup>9</sup> LXX in all occurrences from Judg 18 to 2 Chr 2: 52: Καριαθιαριμ. The same name appears in the LXX (codex A) of Josh 3: 16 without an equivalent in the MT. For discussion of the latter, see K. Bieberstein, *Josua-Jordan-Jericho. Archäologie, Geschichte und Theologie der Landnahmeerzählungen Josua 1-6* (OBO 143), Freiburg-Göttingen, Universitätsverlag, 1995, p. 154-157; G.A. Auld, *Joshua. Jesus Son of Naué in Codex Vaticanus* (Septuagint Commentary Series), Leiden-Boston, 2005, p. 109-110.

<sup>10</sup> LXX: πόλις Ια'ρ.

<sup>11</sup> LXX: πόλις Ιαριμ.

<sup>12</sup> LXX: πόλις Δαυιδ.

<sup>13</sup> LXX: Καριαθιαριμ.

<sup>14</sup> LXX Jer 33: 20: Καριαθιαριμ.

<sup>15</sup> LXX: Καριαθιαριος.

<sup>16</sup> LXX: Γαβαωθιαριμ [B, codex Vaticanus] or πόλις Ιαριμ [A, Codex Alexandrinus]. There may be a text-critical problem in the MT: “jearim” may have been lost due to haplography because of the following **עָרִים**.

<sup>17</sup> LXX in Josh 15: 9-10: Βααλ.

<sup>18</sup> Josh 15: 10 mentions “Mount Jearim” (**הַר יְעָרִים**), which is identified by the author of this verse or a later glossator with “Chesalon” (according to Numb 34: 21 Chislon is the name of a Benjaminite). For the discussion of this error and an alternative proposal (Kesla), see R.G. Boling and G.E. Wright, *Joshua* (AB 6), Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1982, p. 369-370. LXX: πόλις Ιαριμ.

<sup>19</sup> Followed in the LXX: τῶν ἀρχόντων Ιουδα.

<sup>20</sup> This is the parallel text of 2 Samuel 6.

<sup>21</sup> The LXX has in both texts: Καριαθβααλ.

<sup>22</sup> LXX (Ps 131: 6): ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις τοῦ δρυμοῦ (in the plains of the forest).

There is some discussion whether Kiriath-jearim appears in the Sheshonq I list (mid-to-late 10th century BCE). Toponym 25 in the list reads q-d-t-m, identified by Mazar,<sup>23</sup> followed by Aharoni,<sup>24</sup> with Kiriath-jearim. They argued that the Egyptian scribe confused the hieratic “r” with a “d”, so that the original form would be q-r-t-m. This interpretation is, however, not unanimously accepted.<sup>25</sup>

The biblical references to Kiriath-jearim can be classified into four categories.

### **Tribal boundaries and towns<sup>26</sup>**

In Joshua 15, Kiriath-jearim is listed in the northern “district” of Judah, and according to 18: 14 it is a town of “the sons of Judah”. Joshua 18: 26-28, however, claims that Kiriath-jearim belongs to the *nahalah* of Benjamin. In the list of returnees from exile to the province (*medinah*) of Yehud (Neh 7: 29; Ezra 2: 25; 1 Esd 5: 19),<sup>27</sup> Kiriath-jearim appears together with Chephirah and Beeroth.

### **Genealogical lists**

In 1 Chronicles 2: 50, Shobal, a Calebite, is the founder (literally “father”) of Kiriath-jearim (cf. also 1 Chr 2: 52).<sup>28</sup> Here Kiriath-jearim

<sup>23</sup> B. Mazar, « The Campaign of Pharaoh Shishak to Palestine », in: *Volume du Congrès. Strasbourg 1956* (VT.S 4), Leiden, Brill, 1957, p. 60-61.

<sup>24</sup> Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1979, p. 325.

<sup>25</sup> See J.D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1997, p. 192; for a summary of this issue, see E. Junkkaala, *Three Conquests of Canaan. A Comparative Study of Two Egyptian Military Campaigns and Joshua 10-12 in the Light of Recent Archaeological Evidence*, Åbo, Akademi, 2006, p. 212-213.

<sup>26</sup> For discussion of Josh 15 and 18, see J.C. de Vos, *Das Los Judas: über Entstehung und Ziele der Landbeschreibung in Josua 15* (VT.S 95), Leiden, Brill, 2003, p. 311-540 and 185-207.

<sup>27</sup> According to K.D. Schunck, *Nehemia* (BK.AT 23/2), Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 2009, p. 212-213, the list in Nehemiah 7 corresponds to the extension of the kingdom of Judah before its fall in 587 BCE.

<sup>28</sup> G.N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9* (AB 12), New York, Doubleday, 2004, p. 314.

is placed in relation with Caleb, who is associated with Judah.<sup>29</sup> 1 Chronicles 2: 53 lists clans or families (משפחות) of Kiriath-jearim, among them the Zorahites and the Eshtaolites. Zorah and Eshtaol appear in Joshua 15: 33 as belonging to Judah. In Joshua 19: 41 they appear as border towns of the tribe of Dan; in Judges 13: 25; 16: 31; 18: 2, 8, 11, too, they are related to the territory of Dan (see below). These occurrences, especially in 1 Chronicles, seem to indicate the importance of the place in the late Persian or Hellenistic period.

### A poetic context

Psalms 132 is the only psalm that mentions the Ark and probably alludes to the narrative of 2 Sam 6—David’s transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem. Before the mention of the Ark in v. 8, v. 6 states: “We heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of Jaar” (הִגַּדְהָ שָׁמַעְנוּהָ בְּאֶפְרַתָּה מָצָאנוּהָ בְּשָׂדֵי-יַעַר). The form, “we found it” is constructed with a feminine suffix; in some cases the Ark is indeed considered as a feminine word (1 Sam 4: 17 and 2 Chr 8: 11). If, as often argued, Psalms 132 is a late text,<sup>30</sup> it can be understood as a poetic interpretation of 2 Sam 6. In this case “the fields of Jaar” would constitute an allusion to Kiriath-jearim.

### Narrative contexts

*Joshua* 9. The main story only speaks of the inhabitants of Gibeon, who are presented as non-Israelite autochthonous people who lived in what will become Benjaminite territory. However, in v. 17, when the Israelites realize that they have been deceived, they hurry to the towns of the Gibeonites: “So the Israelites set out and reached their cities on the third day.<sup>31</sup> Now their cities were Gibeon,

<sup>29</sup> Originally Caleb may have been associated with Edom. This is clearly the case for Shobal, who in other texts is presented as a Seirite: Genesis 36: 20 and 23, taken up in 1 Chronicles 1: 38.

<sup>30</sup> P. Porzig, *Die Lade Jahwes im Alten Testament und in den Texten vom Toten Meer* (BZAW 397), Berlin, de Gruyter, 2009, p. 228-243.

<sup>31</sup> Missing in the LXX.

Chephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim”. Since the three cities never appear again with Gibeon in the rest of the story, but are mentioned in the lists in Nehemiah 7: 29, Ezra 2: 25 and 1 Esdras 5: 19, one may conclude with Fritz<sup>32</sup> that these towns are additions to the original story with the aim of characterizing them as non-Israelites in the territory of Benjamin.

*Judges 18.* This story tells how the Danites were looking for a territory and how they ended up in the north, where they founded the town of Dan: “Six hundred men of the Danite clan, armed with weapons of war, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol, and went up and encamped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. As a result of this account, the place is called Mahaneh Dan to this day; it is west of Kiriath-jearim” (Judg. 18: 11-12). Interestingly we find in Judges 18 the towns of Zorah and Eshtaol, whose inhabitants also appear in 1 Chronicles 2 as belonging to the families of Kiriath-jearim. The fact that the Danites camped at or beyond Kiriath-jearim may signify its function as a border town.

*Jeremiah 26.* In a short story that follows the reaction of the people and the authorities to Jeremiah’s Temple speech, we hear of a colleague of Jeremiah, Uriah son of Shemaiah, who also announced the destruction of Jerusalem and therefore had to flee to Egypt: “There was another man prophesying in the name of Yhwh, Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. He prophesied against this city<sup>33</sup> and against this land in words exactly like those of Jeremiah” (Jer 26: 20). The reference to Kiriath-jearim is interesting in several respects: It shows that the town was settled at the end of the 7th century BCE or even later.<sup>34</sup> The fact that the prophet comes from

<sup>32</sup> V. Fritz, *Das Buch Josua* (HAT I/7), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1994, p. 105.

<sup>33</sup> Missing in the LXX.

<sup>34</sup> C.J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggle for Authority in the Deutero-Jeremianic Prose* (Old Testament Studies), London-New York, T & T Clark, 2003, p. 60-61 argues, with others, that vv. 20-23 are a late expansion of the foregoing story.

Kiriath-jearim<sup>35</sup> may hint at cultic activity at the site. And the comparison with Jeremiah, who was a Benjaminite from Anathoth, may suggest that Kiriath-jearim too had Benjaminite connections.

*The Ark narrative.*<sup>36</sup> Kiriath-jearim is mentioned in 1 Sam 6: 21, 7: 1 and 7: 2 as the place where the Ark of Yhwh was stored when it was brought from Beth-shemesh. In 1 Sam 7: 1 we learn that the son of Abinadab, in whose house the Ark was placed, was consecrated as a priest, which suggests that there was a shrine or a cultic place for the Ark. In 1 Sam 7: 2, which is often considered as a verse that marks the transition to the following Samuel stories, it is said that the Ark was in Kiriath-jearim for 20 years. In 2 Sam 6, which tells the story of David taking the Ark to Jerusalem, the name Kiriath-jearim does not appear. We have here in the MT *ba'ale yehudah* (which is a text-critical problem, see above). According to 1 Chronicles 13: 6 David and all Israel went up (in) to (b) Baala, to (?el) Kiriath-jearim, an expression that raises the question of the identification of Baal(a) and Kiriath-jearim. This reference also emphasizes the fact that Kiriath-jearim belongs to (l) Judah. Finally 2 Chronicles 1: 4, when speaking about Solomon's building of the Temple, recapitulates the fact that David brought the Ark from (*min*) Kiriath-jearim. For the Chronicler, Kiriath-jearim is still an important location, because he mentions it three times in relation to the Ark.

To summarize, Kiriath-jearim is apparently a border town, located between the territories of Benjamin and Judah. In late texts from the Babylonian or more probably Persian and Hellenistic periods, the Judahite character of Kiriath-jearim is emphasized, so that it was perhaps first considered as a Benjaminite location.

<sup>35</sup> According to G. Fischer, *Jeremia 26-52* (HThK.AT), Freiburg, Herder, 2005, p. 38-39, the mention of Kiriath-jearim in Jer 26 also contains an allusion to the Ark, since Jeremiah speaks in verses 6 and 9 about the destruction of Shiloh.

<sup>36</sup> We will deal with the Ark narrative more extensively in forthcoming articles.



## Past research and settlement history

Remains of a Byzantine basilica with mosaics in geometric patterns, possibly dating to the 5th century CE, were explored at the site in the early 20th century.<sup>37</sup> The church is mentioned by Peter the Deacon, who cited an earlier, anonymous source.<sup>38</sup> The Byzantine mosaics can be seen in the narthex and several places inside the modern church.<sup>39</sup>

Gabriel Barkay conducted a salvage excavation at the site in 1995-1996, in preparation for the construction of a new wing of the hostel, located on the western side of the convent. Bedrock was reached ca. 1-1.5 m below the surface. Remains of rock-cuttings and walls were uncovered, but seemingly clean loci could not be detected.<sup>40</sup>

Two intensive surveys were carried out at the site. The first was conducted by Amir Feldstein in the 1980s. The results of this survey, in which ca. 450 indicative sherds (rims, etc.) were collected, has never been published (the pottery is stored at the IAA). One of us (I.F.) reviewed the finds twice (with the kind permission of Amir Feldstein). The second survey of the site was carried out by Boaz Zissu and Chris McKinny in 2013.<sup>41</sup> Two of us (I.F. and A.K.) reviewed the finds (with the kind permission of Boaz Zissu).

Table 1 summarizes the results (pottery) of all works carried out thus far at the site of Kiriath-jearim: the salvage excavation by Gabriel Barkay, surveys of Amir Feldstein and Boaz Zissu and Chris McKinny and our own excavation (general impression regarding pottery in both clean and mixed loci).

<sup>37</sup> H. Vincent, « Église byzantine et inscription romaine à Abou-Ghoch », *RB* (nouvelle série) 4, 1907, p. 414-421; A. Ovadiah, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land*, Bonn, P. Hanstein, 1970, p. 18-19; B. Bagatti, *Ancient Christian Villages of Samaria*, Jerusalem, Franciscan Print. Press, 2002, p. 173-177.

<sup>38</sup> Y. Tsafrir, L. Di Segni and J. Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani Judaea Palaestina*, Jerusalem, The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994, p. 100.

<sup>39</sup> For an early description of the site, see F.T. Cooke, « The Site of Kirjath-Jearim », *AASOR* 5, 1923-1924, p. 105-120.

<sup>40</sup> O. Schwartz, *Kiriath Yearim in the Iron Age in Light of the 1995 Excavations*, MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 2018 (Hebrew); McKinny et al., *op. cit.* (above, n. 4). The pottery—mostly from mixed loci—was kindly shown to us by Oron Schwartz.

<sup>41</sup> For preliminary discussion, see McKinny et al., *op. cit.* (above n. 4).

Table 1. Observation on quantity of pottery in previous works undertaken at the site of Kiriath-jearim and from the 2017 excavation season\*

Period	Barkay's salvage excavation**	Feldstein's survey, 1980s***	Zissu-McKinny's survey, 2013****	The 2017 excavation season*****
Early Bronze	A few sherds	Single sherd	A few sherds	Several sherds
Middle Bronze	Single sherd	---	A few sherds	A few sherds
Late Bronze	Single sherd	Two sherds	---	Small number of sherds
Iron I	Two sherds	A few sherds	A few sherds	Several sherds
Iron IIA	Single sherd	---	---	Several sherds
Iron IIB	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity	Very large number of sherds, main period of activity
Iron IIC	Reasonable number of sherds	Significant number of sherds	Significantly present	Large number of sherds, main period of activity continues
Persian	?	One sherd	A few sherds	A few sherds
Hellenistic	Large number of sherds	Significant number of sherds	---	Reasonable number of sherds
Roman	Reasonable number of sherds	Significant number of sherds	Reasonable number of sherds	Significant number of sherds
Byzantine	Reasonable number of sherds	Small number of sherds	A few sherds	Reasonable number of sherds
Early Islamic	?	A few sherds	Single sherd?	Small number of sherds
Medieval	?	Single sherd	---	A few sherds

\* Additional finds to note: a Hebron *LMLK* handle and a handle with concentric circles among the items collected in the course of the Zissu-McKinny survey;<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> McKinny et al., *op. cit.* (above, n. 4).

one eroded *LMLK* handle, one rosette handle and one concentric handle were collected from the surface during our work at the site.

\*\* Pottery seen at Tel Aviv University, 2017.

\*\*\* Pottery seen in the storehouse of the IAA in the early 1990s and then brought to Tel Aviv University and rechecked in 2017.

\*\*\*\* Pottery seen at Bar Ilan University, 2017.

\*\*\*\*\* General impression of pottery from the excavated squares.

The four different field studies present a similar picture regarding the settlement history of Kiriath-jearim. The site was inhabited from the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine or Early Islamic period. It shows relatively low-level activity starting in the Early Bronze and continuing throughout the Bronze and early phases of the Iron Age until the Iron IIA. The peak prosperity at the site can be dated to the Iron IIB and strong activity continued in the Iron IIC. This was followed by a new phase of low-level habitation in the Persian and Early Hellenistic periods. Activity intensified in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. Relative to the fact that the Byzantine remains are close to the surface, the quantity of pottery from this period is small, perhaps indicating that occupation was limited to the monastery. Some activity seems to have taken place at the site in the Early Islamic period.

## Topography

The topography of the hill was judiciously studied before the field-work began, and during the first season of excavation. This was done in a four track approach: a) by actual inspection of the terrain; b) by examination of old aerial photos of the site—images taken by the Bavarian air force during WWI (1918; Fig. 3), during the British mandate in 1945 and by the Israeli air force in 1985 (before the school to the west was constructed); c) by creation of an orthophoto using a drone and Digital Elevation Model (Figs 4-5);<sup>43</sup> d) by

<sup>43</sup> The orthophoto and the Digital Elevation Model were prepared by Adam Prins of the Megiddo Expedition and the Jezreel Valley Regional Project.

investigation using seismic and geodetic equipment aimed at reconstructing the contour of the original, bedrock topography of the hill (Fig. 6).<sup>44</sup> The following observations resulted from these undertakings.

1. The top of the hill is broad and flat, a reality created by support terrace-walls that were erected around it. Some of these terrace-walls are modern; for instance, those built to the north, east and south of the modern church had not yet existed in 1918 (they do not appear in the Bavarian air photos, e.g., Fig. 3) and hence were probably built in order to facilitate the construction of the church of the convent in 1924.

2. High and massive old terraces surround the summit of the hill:

a) A ca. 100 m long, about six m high terrace runs in a straight north-south orientation in the east; it is a prominent feature on the terrain (Fig. 7) and is clearly seen in the old aerial images of the site (Fig. 3) and in the Digital Elevation Model (Fig. 5).

b) A ca. 100 m long, ca. 10 m high terrace runs in a straight north-south orientation in the west, parallel to the one in the east (Figs 3, 8; this terrace marks the western boundary of the modern convent's garden).

c) Two straight prominent terraces can be seen in the southeast, running from east to west. The southern (lower) one is 55 m long and the northern is 50 m long (Fig. 5).

d) The 1918 aerial photo (Fig. 3) possibly reveals a straight terrace in the north, running from east to west, but this cannot be verified on the ground today due to a modern terrace-wall built prior to the construction of the northern buildings of the convent to create a flat area.

The terraces in the east, west and south are prominent features in the Digital Elevation Model (Fig. 5). They seem to delineate a rectangular, elevated, flat platform, ca. 150 × 110 m in size, at the

<sup>44</sup> The seismic and geodetic investigation was carried out by Yaniv Darvasi of the Department of Earth Science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, with the help of Ben Laugomer, an MA student at Tel Aviv University, under the supervision of Amotz Agnon of the Department of Earth Science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

summit of the hill (Fig. 22). The view of the site from the north (Fig. 9) also hints at this possibility. Today, the elevation of the flat area above the terraces in the north, southeast and east is approximately the same – 753.5 m (ca. 1.5 m lower than the flat area on the summit).

3. The seismic and geodetic investigation carried out during the 2017 season indicates the existence of major fills at the summit of the hill, reaching a depth of six meters in the southwestern corner of the garden located to the west of the convent (Fig. 6).

Had an elevated rectangular platform existed at the site in antiquity, it would make a unique, monumental architectural feature. Creating a flat platform of this type requires significant filling operations between the sloping bedrock and the walls supporting it, and hence the latter must be considerably massive—stone built, thick and high, with support (for instance, a glacis) on their outer side, in order to prevent collapse.<sup>45</sup> It was therefore deemed essential to invest effort in checking out the possibility of a large ancient podium at the summit of Kiriath-jearim during the excavation season; and if indeed such a podium existed, to try dating it.

## The excavation

Another consideration dictated the decision regarding the location of the excavation areas in 2017. The entire site of Kiriath-jearim is the property of the Convent of the Ark of the Covenant of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition and hence the dig at the site and the location of the areas required the convent authority's consent. Obviously, work could not be carried out on the premises of the convent, that is, on the summit of the hill. In fact, the evidence of erosion (bedrock close to the surface in Barkay's excavation, as in most highlands mounds), as well as filling operations (revealed

<sup>45</sup> For Iron Age podiums in the territory of the Northern Kingdom, see I. Finkelstein, « Omride Architecture », *ZDPV* 116, 2000, p. 114-138; I. Finkelstein and O. Lipschits, « Omride Architecture in Moab: Jahaz and Ataroth », *ZDPV* 126, 2010, p. 29-42.

by the seismic work) in antiquity, demonstrated that even if excavation on the summit were possible, it is doubtful that it could provide significant results.

Taking into consideration the topographical features of the hill, the need to check the existence of an ancient podium and the sensitivities of the convent, three areas were chosen for excavation in 2017 (Fig. 4).

*Area A*, located on two flat terraces immediately to the north of the convent, with the aim of checking out the possibility of an east-west support wall on the northern side of the summit.

*Area B*, on the southeastern slope, aimed at checking out the southern end of the large eastern terrace.

*Area C*, on a flat, broad terrace on the lower eastern slope, aimed at investigating the nature of the site beyond the supposed summit platform and exploring the possibility of revealing a stratigraphic sequence, at least for the Iron Age.

Below we briefly summarize the results of the 2017 season.

### Area A

Area A is located on the upper, northern slope of the hill, a few meters to the north of where Barkay carried out his salvage excavations in the 1990s (Fig. 4). Excavations here aimed at exploring a location close to the summit of the hill and checking out the possibility of a massive terrace wall on this side, similar to the ones suspected in the east and west. Nine squares, located on two terraces, were excavated (Q-R/15-18 and W/14-15; Fig. 10).

Wall 17/A/1 is unmistakably the most recent feature encountered here; it is built as a terrace, dividing the local topography into an upper terrace (Squares Q-R/15 and the southern part of Squares Q-R/16) and a lower one (Squares Q-R/17-18 and the northern part of Squares Q-R/16). The difference in elevation between these terraces is ca. 2.20 m. This terrace-wall was apparently built—or renovated—in recent generations, probably in relation to the construction of the convent's hostel (it does not appear to have been in existence yet when the aerial photos of 1918 were taken).

In the lower terrace, remains of several modest walls were discovered. Their simple construction technique suggests that they served as agricultural terraces. Associated deposits yielded large quantities of sherds from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. In one location (Square Q/17), remains of earlier walls were encountered, one of them, established on bedrock (elevation ca. 750.50 m). A preliminary review of the deposits associated with these walls revealed sherds from the Bronze and early Iron Ages. No material from the Hellenistic or Roman periods was found here. A layer of stone collapse (ca. 0.5 m thick), distinct to the lower terrace, was unearthed mainly in Square R/17. Below it, sherds dating from the Iron I and/or Iron IIA were discovered. In the eastern part of the square, bedrock was partially exposed at elevation ca. 750 m.

In the upper terrace, massive Wall 17/A/5 was unearthed ca. 15 cm below topsoil (Figs 10-11). The wall, well-preserved in Square R/16, is ca. 3 m broad and preserved to 2.15 m on its outer face. The wall had two clear faces, built of medium to large stones; large stones were more characteristic in the eastern part of the outer face, probably denoting the original construction. At least one phase of reconstruction can apparently be identified in the western section of the outer phase. The inside of the wall, between the well-built faces, was constructed as a fill of small and medium stones. The lower courses of the wall were established directly on bedrock, which was reached on both its sides (elevation ca. 751.25 m in the north, and ca. 752.20 m in the south). Here the bedrock slopes from 752.17 m in Square R/15 to 750.50 m in Square Q/17; it is possible that Wall 17/A/5 was constructed on a step in the sloping bedrock. The upper courses of the western continuation of Wall 17/A/5 in Square Q/16 were robbed in antiquity and only the lower courses remained.

Wall 17/A/10 was found in a narrow probe dug in the southeastern part of Square R/15. It is situated ca. 2 m to the south of Wall 17/A/5, and was preserved to a height of ca. 1 m. Wall 17/A/10 was built of medium sized stones, more or less similar in size. Excavation between the two walls reached bedrock ca. 1.55 m below the modern surface. The space between the two walls yielded pottery from the Iron Age and the Early Roman period.

Following the exposure of Wall 17/A/5, we decided to check whether it continues along the terrace, on the northern side of the summit. A 2 × 4 m probe was dug in Squares W/14–15, ca. 20 m to the east of the main excavated area. Immediately below the topsoil, the remains of Wall 17/A/9 were unearthed. It is built in the same orientation and in line with Wall 17/A/5 (Fig. 10). The method of construction is also similar: here too the width of the wall is ca. 3 m, and its faces are constructed of large stones, with the fill between them made of small to medium-sized stones. Bedrock is higher here than in Square R/15 (elevation 753.10 m to the south of the wall), and hence the wall is preserved to a height of only 0.33 m. Excavations to the north of Wall 17/A/9 did not reach bedrock, and the dig here was concluded at an elevation of 752.68 m. A wall made of one line of stones was found adjacent to the outer face of Wall 17/A/9. Its function and date are unknown.<sup>46</sup>

No locus with clear, single-period pottery was found associated with Walls 17/A/5, 17/A/9 and 17/A/10; their dating was therefore established according to OSL investigation here and in Area B (below).

## Area B

Area B is located on a set of terraces along the southeastern slope of the mound. Excavations were conducted in four sub-areas (B1–B4; Figs 12–13) but here we focus only on Sub-Areas B1 and B2, with a note on the small probe of Sub-Area B4. Exposure in Sub-Area B3 was limited and close to the surface. The main investigation was carried out in Sub-Area B1, with three squares (Q/22–23 and R/23) and a small probe (in Square P/23) opened over two terraces (Fig. 14).

Four main construction phases were identified in Sub-Area B1, sealed by a sloping ca. 0.5 m layer of brown agricultural sediment in both the upper and lower terraces.

The first (earliest) phase features the massive north-south Wall 17/B/28, constructed of large (ca. 45 × 30 cm) field stones and built

<sup>46</sup> At the request of the convent's authority, Area A was backfilled at the end of the 2017 season.



directly on bedrock (inner face, elevation 746.82 m). It is preserved along its western face in Square Q/23 for 2-3 courses (ca. 0.70-1.2 m) (Fig. 15). Its outer face seems to be preserved for 1-2 courses (ca. 0.40-0.80 m), established on bedrock, in Square R/23 (Fig. 17). Accordingly, Wall 17/B/28 measures ca. 3 m in width.

The second phase corresponds to Wall 17/B/29, which seems to have been constructed as a thickening, or support of Wall 17/B/28. Wall 17/B/29 was exposed in a probe in Square P/23 and in Squares Q/22-23 (Fig. 18). The wall is mostly parallel to Wall 17/B/28, shifting in orientation only ca. 2 degrees north-northeast. The original western face of Wall 17/B/29 was constructed of a single row of medium (ca. 20 × 15 cm) field stones and is preserved to at least four courses (ca. 1.0 m). An additional three courses of smaller stones (ca. 10 × 5 cm) above are likely related to renovation/reconstruction activity (Wall 17/B/9, see below). The foundation course of Wall 17/B/29 has not been reached. The space between the western face of Wall 17/B/29 and the western face of Wall 17/B/28 was constructed as a fill of medium-sized stones (Fig. 18).

The third phase is associated with the reconstruction of Wall 17/B/28, defined by us as Wall 17/B/10. This phase is characterized by smaller (ca. 25 × 20 cm) semi-drafted blocks (Fig. 15). This stage of the wall is preserved up to five courses (in addition to the 2-3 preserved from the original wall). Altogether, the western face of the old wall and the renovated part in Square Q/23 stands to a height of ca. 2.7 m. The eastern face in Squares R/22-23 is preserved to 1-3 courses. The width of this massive wall is again ca. 3.0 m. The total exposure of this wall is ca. 10 m through Squares Q/22-23 (the western face) and R/22-23 (the eastern face). Semi-drafted blocks were also found in a sloping collapse in Square R/23 (Fig. 17), representing the subsequent erosion of the wall.

In order to facilitate the reconstruction of the inner face of Wall 17/B/28 as Wall 17/B/10, foundation Trench 17/B/50 was cut from the surface down to bedrock, destroying the eastern part (the core) of Wall 17/B/29 (Fig. 18). When construction was completed, several courses of semi-drafted stones were added to Wall 17/B/29 too (now titled Wall 17/B/9) and the foundation trench was backfilled. The backfill contains a mix of Iron IIB-C and Early Roman sherds (Fig. 16).

The fourth and final phase features the conversion of the eroded support-walls system into agricultural Terrace 17/B/2.

No datable material in secure loci can be associated with the above-mentioned construction phases; dating was based on OSL results (below).

Sub-Area B4 is located 30 m to the north of Sub-Area B1 (Fig. **19**). A 1.5 m wide sectional trench was cut into the large north-south terrace with the aim of locating the support system for the summit platform here too. The outer faces of at least three walls were uncovered, the upper probably a late-period terrace. The lower course of the lower wall (17/B/23) is built of large field stones and is founded on bedrock; it may be the continuation of the outer face of Wall 17/B/28.

Sub-Area B2 is a single 4 × 4 m square opened ca. 25 m to the south of Sub-Area B1 to follow modern Terrace-Wall 17/B/2 (Fig. **13**). A series of three sequential walls was identified, all roughly following the same north-south line of Terrace-Wall 17/B/2, which was sealed by a sloping ca. 0.3-1.5 m of agricultural fill. The earliest remains exposed were Wall 17/B/27, which makes an inset corner (or small tower) with Wall 17/B/21 (Fig. **20**). The wall is 1.4 m wide, and is lined with medium sized semi-drafted stones, and infilled with small field stones. The inset (or tower) is lined with large drafted stones (ca. 40 × 20 cm). The foundation of these walls has not been reached. West of the wall was a thick pebble debris (17/B/49). The latest ceramic material associated with these walls dates to the Roman period.

Directly above Wall 17/B/27 was 1.8 m wide, north-south Wall 17/B/7. Removal of this wall and its makeup produced Byzantine, Roman and Iron Age pottery. Wall 17/B/2 is the modern north-south terrace.

## Area C

Excavation in Area C aimed at exploring the occupational history on the eastern slope of the site. Four squares (M-N/5-6), as well as the eastern baulks (N-O/5-6) and the southern half of Baulk M-N/6,

were excavated to a maximal depth of 1.3 m (Fig. 21). Four main levels were identified.

Level C-4 features two walls (17/C/20 and 17/C/18) in Squares M/6 and N/5. No occupational surface related to them has been revealed so far. Judging from the pottery, Level C-4 dates to the Iron IIB-C.

Level C-3, which can be divided into two phases, is the best-documented occupational phase in Area C. Phase C-3b is attested in Squares N/5 and N-O/5 by Walls 17/C/12, 17/C/17 and 17/C/19, which could have belonged to one building. This could not be clarified due to disturbance caused by Phase C-3a features. Still, a fragment of an associated floor (elevation 742.94 m), on which Iron IIB-C pottery was found, was unearthed outside of this supposed building south of Wall 17/C/12. In Square M-6, Walls 17/C/15 and 17/C/16 are associated with a beaten earth floor, overlaid by some *in situ* smashed pottery and many faunal remains (elevation 743.15 m). Two hearths were dug into this floor.<sup>47</sup>

Phase C-3a is characterized by several installations, which were built directly on Phase C-3b remains. In Square M/6, Walls 17/C/1 and 17/C/6 were erected directly upon Walls 17/C/15 and 17/C/16, following the same orientation. Wall 17/C/13 was built in Square N/6, almost parallel to Wall 17/C/1. Walls 17/C/1, 17/C/6 and 17/C/13 delineate the boundaries of a platform that was filled with cobbles and covered by a floor with some smashed pottery. This floor is slightly tilted from south to north. In Square M/6, the platform was associated with a beaten earth floor (elevation 743.33 m), which yielded potsherds dating to the Iron IIB-C and a basalt pounding stone. A rounded basin made of cobbles was set up upon this floor. In Square N/6, the platform was associated with a plastered floor (elevation 742.70 m). A stone staircase led to the southern part of the platform. A set of installations was built on the platform's floor, among them a plastered basin, which was connected

<sup>47</sup> In fact, Walls 17/C/13 and 17/C/15 and the stone-filled space between them may be interpreted as a section of a ca. 3 m thick city-wall (eroded further to the south), with the whitish material to its west perhaps the top of a glacis (Fig. 21). If so, this city-wall had been built in the Iron IIB, went out of use/decommissioned in the late Iron IIB, and was overbuilt by different structures and/or installations in the Iron IIC. This scenario will be checked in the second season of excavations.

to a liquid evacuation channel in Square N/5. This channel was associated at its northern and eastern sides with a beaten earth floor set up on a layer of pebbles on which a thick accumulation of potsherds dating to the Iron IIC was found (elevation 743.08 m). A fragment of another floor (in the same elevation) was discovered south of the channel, partly covering it. In Square M/5, Phase C-3a is represented by several architectural remains, as well as a beaten earth floor (elevation 743.39 m), on which smashed pottery was lying *in situ*, together with the head of a pillar figurine, chipped stones and faunal remains. This floor was associated with a set of stone slabs, which seem to compose a threshold on the southern part of Square M/5.

The Level C-3 installations may represent industrial activity, which called for evacuation of liquids. One could think of a tannery or dyeing factory,<sup>48</sup> but no lithic scraping tools, usually associated with these crafts, were found.

Elevation differences between the Level C-3 floors in the western and eastern parts of Area C led us to suggest that Walls 17/C/13 and 17/C/15 served as retaining walls (or faces of a city-wall—see note 47 above), which were re-used for the Phase C-3 platform.

Level C-2 features two walls of lesser quality in Square M/5, with no floor associated with them. In Square N/5 two Level C-2 walls (17/C/7 and 17/C/11) were revealed, associated with an occupational level. In this area the surface level was raised by spreading a thick layer of earth with potsherds dating to the Iron IIC (elevation 743.34 – 743.14 m). A complete iron dagger was discovered in Square N/6. Level C-2 should be dated to the Iron IIC.

Level C-1 yielded mixed pottery (ranging from the Iron Age to the Byzantine/Early Islamic period), some *tesserae*, five coins, a

<sup>48</sup> For a possible tannery at Kinneret, see S. Münger, « Early Iron Age Kinneret – Early Aramaean or Just Late Canaanite? Remarks on the Material Culture of a Border Site in Northern Palestine at the Turn of an Era », in A. Berlejung and M.P. Streck (eds), *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millennium B.C.* (Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien 3), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2013, p. 153. For Bethsaida, see R.A. Freund, « The Tannery of Bethsaida? », in R. Arav and R.A. Freund (eds), *Bethsaida: A City by the Shore of the Sea of Galilee* (Bethsaida Excavations Project. 3), Kirksville, Truman State University Press, 2004, p. 203. Note that the Talmud (*Baba Batra* 2.9) advises that tanneries be placed on the eastern side of the city.

Persian (?) horse-rider figurine fragment, a jar handle with an Iron IIC rosette impression and incised bones. Two pits can be assigned to this layer, as well as four wall-stubs. No floor could be identified. These remains can probably be connected to reconstruction of the terrace system on the slope.

## Discussion

The results of the 2017 excavations, though preliminary, shed important light on the history of the site from the Iron IIB to the Roman period. Below we emphasize two subjects: Judah in the 7th and early 6th centuries BCE and the possibility that the summit of the hill was shaped as an elevated platform in the Iron Age, a platform which was reconstructed and reused in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods.

### Judah in the 7th and early 6th centuries BCE (Area C)

The excavation in Area C revealed several interesting points regarding the Iron IIC settlement. First, there is no evidence of destruction of the site during the Babylonian assault on Judah and Jerusalem. This is in line with what we know from other places in the vicinity of Jerusalem,<sup>49</sup> meaning that the hill country around the capital of Judah was not devastated in 586 BCE, and that settlements and farms continued to function for a while after this date. Since we do not know until when in the 6th century BCE the Iron IIC pottery repertoire was in use, there is no way to fix the exact time of abandonment at Kiriath-jearim. Second, the excavation in Area C revealed several stratigraphic/architectural phases within the Iron IIC. A serious problem in the archaeology of Judah in the

<sup>49</sup> For instance, A. Mazar, « The Excavations at Khirbet Abu et-Twein and the System of Iron Age Fortresses in Judah », *Eretz-Israel* 15, 1981, p. 237 (Hebrew); A. Mazar, D. Amit and Z. Ilan, « The “Boarder Road” between Michmash and Jericho and Excavations at Horvat Shilhah », *Eretz-Israel* 17, 1984, p. 241 (Hebrew); G. Edelstein, « A Terraced Farm at Er-Ras », *Atiqot* 40, 2000, p. 57.

Iron IIB-C is the lack of knowledge about developments in the material culture in the century *between* 701 and 586 BCE (both well-known because of the information from the Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar destruction layers).<sup>50</sup> Once fully processed, the finds in Area C may provide, for the first time, evidence of this “missing link” in the material culture of late-monarchic Judah.

### **The summit compound (Areas A and B)**

One of the main goals of the first season was to check the pre-excavation observation that the summit of the hill is man-shaped (see above, Topography). Indeed, the excavations in Areas A and B have proven this assumption: massive stone walls, three meters broad, which still stand over two meters high, had been constructed in order to support fills and create a flat platform on the summit. In the east, the massive old wall is indeed marked by the large, straight terrace we observed on the ground prior to the dig and in the aerial photos (Figs 3, 5, 7); we detected it in Sub-Areas B1 and B4 (Figs 15, 19). In the north, the wall—which was uncovered in Area A—seems to pass slightly to the north of the line possibly seen in the 1918 aerial photo. In light of these results, it seems quite safe to suggest that the big terrace in the west (Figs 3, 5, 8), which runs parallel to the eastern terrace, conceals the western support wall of the elevated compound. The fact that the massive wall known from Sub-Area B1 does not continue in Sub-Area B2, indicates that the latter was outside of the elevated platform. In other words, the southern wall of the platform should probably be sought in the upper (more northern) of the two southern terraces—the one that makes a right angle with the eastern terrace (and massive Wall 17/B/28 cached in it) immediately to the south of Sub-Area B1. If one imagines this southern terrace continuing in a straight line to the west, it meets the western terrace of the ele-

<sup>50</sup> I. Finkelstein, « The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh », in M.D. Coogan, J.C. Exum and L.E. Stager (eds), *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 1994, p. 169-187.

ated platform exactly at its southern tip. Accordingly, the elevated summit platform/podium can be reconstructed to have been rectangular in shape, ca. 150-110 m in size (covering an area of ca. 1.65 hectares), and oriented exactly north-south and east-west (Fig. 22), with an error of about 1°.

Two issues related to the construction of such an elevated platform require consideration. First, there is still a missing piece of evidence: massive walls holding large fills behind them must be supported on the outside in order to prevent collapse and/or erosion.<sup>51</sup> This feature has not been detected yet. The second issue is the location of the gate/s which led into the elevated compound. Looking at the topography of the site and its vicinity, the only convenient approach is from the south. One clue raises the possibility that the gate was located in the southeastern corner of the summit compound: the outer face of the original massive wall in Sub-Area B1 (Wall 17/B/28) ends abruptly in the south, possibly in a straight line (Fig. 17). The wall which continues to the south is built of smaller, semi-drafted stones (Fig. 17). These stones are relatively low here, seemingly resting on bedrock. This may hint at the existence of an opening in the old, Iron Age wall. According to this scenario, which needs to be checked in the future, the gate was located at the southern end of the platform's eastern wall. In Roman times, the eastern wall was repaired and extended to the south and the new section, blocking the old entrance, was built here with smaller, partly drafted stones (more below). A few very large boulders (larger than the stones in the foundations of the massive wall), which rest today as a group on the terrace a few meters to the east of Wall 17/B/28's outer face (Fig. 23), may have originally belonged to this supposed gate.

Dating the construction of the support walls which create the elevated summit platform is not easy. Straightforward archaeological dating—according to pottery assemblages (and/or organic samples for radiocarbon dating) on floors adjacent to the walls on

<sup>51</sup> For the Middle Bronze, see H. Lavee, M. Wieder and I. Finkelstein, « Micromorphological Investigation of the Middle Bronze Age Glacis », in I. Finkelstein (ed.), *Shiloh: The Archaeology of a Biblical Site* (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology Tel Aviv University 10), Tel Aviv, Institute of Archaeology, 1993, p. 294-302. For the Iron Age, see Finkelstein, *op. cit.* (above, n. 45).

their inner side—is not an option, as in both Area A and Sub-Area B1 the walls seem to have been preserved below the level of such floors. In fact, built as a support system, the massive walls may have been lower than the elevation of possible floors in the elevated compound from the outset. Another option is to look for the latest pottery in the foundation trenches on the inner side of the walls. Yet, in highlands sites, on steep slopes, foundation trenches could have been minimal in width, as the inner side of the constructed wall could have been adjusted to the cut created on the slope (as is the practice in constructing agricultural terraces in the highlands). In any event, excavation inside of the massive walls in both Area A and Sub-Area B1 revealed mixed pottery: most of the sherds belong to the Iron IIB and Iron IIC, but Early Roman sherds are present all the way down to bedrock. This means that either the walls were built in Roman times, or they were built earlier, in the Iron IIB or Iron IIC, and were renovated or reconstructed in Roman times; in the latter case, the foundation trenches for the renovation operation could have reached bedrock or close to it and introduced the Early Roman pottery.

For now, space on the inner side of the wall in Area A is too narrow to check these issues. Sub-Area B1 supplies important pieces of information regarding method of construction: a few courses of large stones rest on bedrock on both the inner and outer faces of Wall 17/B/28 (Figs **15**, **17**), while several courses of smaller, partly-drafted stones were added in the inner face (Wall 17/B/10; Figs **15**, **18**). The continuation of the bottom of the outer face to the south is also made of smaller, partly cut stones (Fig. **17**), similar to the stones in the outer face of Wall 17/B/27 in Sub-area B2 (Fig. **20**). Therefore, the massive wall in Sub-Area B1 seems to present two phases of construction.

Another wall in Sub-Area B1 (17/B/29) was added to the inner side of massive Wall 17/B/28. Figure **18** seems to show that this too was a thick wall with field stones in its core. At a certain moment in history Wall 17/B/29 was apparently cut (and only its western part survived) and a trench was created along the western face of Wall 17/B/28 all the way down to bedrock (Foundation Trench 17/B/50).



The pottery retrieved from this trench dates to the Iron IIB, Iron IIC and Early Roman period (Fig. 16). The style of construction of Wall 17/B/28 (as well as the lower, eastern part of the outer face of Wall 17/A/5)—large uncut stones—seems to fit Iron Age construction.<sup>52</sup> The same holds true for the phenomenon of a large rectangular elevated platform, created by support walls—a sort of a box filled with earth.<sup>53</sup> Hence it is reasonable to date the lower courses of Wall 17/B/28 to the Iron IIB-C and the upper courses (Wall 17/B/10) to the Early Roman period—the two main phases of activity at the site.

The difficulty in dating the massive walls according to stratigraphic-ceramic considerations (and the absence of samples for radiocarbon dating), led us to choose the only option left—a program of Optical Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating.<sup>54</sup> Toward the end of the 2017 season we took samples from different locations at the bottom of the inner and outer faces of massive Walls 17/A/5 and 17/B/28 and from the parallel walls on their inner side (Walls 17/A/10 and 17/B/29). As of now, we have obtained 10 ages, eight from the massive walls (four in Area A and four in Area B) and two from the parallel walls on their inner side (one from each area; Table 2, Figs 24-25).

Table 2. OSL ages in years before 2020 (changed from 2017 for easier calculation).

Sample	Area	Wall	Elevation (meters asl)	Age with sediment* (years)	Range (calendar years)	Age with sediment* & stones* (years)	Range (calendar years)
KYR-1	A	17/A/5 outer face, bottom	751.48	2100±100	180 BCE-20 CE	2300±120	400-160 BCE

<sup>52</sup> See parallels in, e.g., the Great Wall at Tell en-Nasbeh, Tel Dan and Lachish: C.C. McCown, *Tell en-Nasbeh I: Archaeological and Historical Results*, Berkeley, Palestine Institute of Pacific School of Religion, 1947, p. 191-199; A. Biran, *Biblical Dan*, Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society, 1994, Fig. 196; O. Tufnell, *Lachish III: The Iron Age, Plates*, London, Oxford University Press, 1953, Pl. 12: 2.

<sup>53</sup> Finkelstein, *op. cit.* (above, n. 45), rather than a box with vaults, e.g., the Herodian construction in the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

<sup>54</sup> M.J. Aitken, *An Introduction to Optical Dating*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.

KYR-2	A	17/A/5 outer face, bottom	751.50	2070±110	160 BCE-60 CE	2300±130	410-150 BCE
KYR-3	A	17/A/5 outer face, bottom	751.65	2360±110	450-230 BCE	2560±130	670-410 BCE
KYR-7	B	17/B/10 outer face, bottom	746.59	2110±110	200 BCE-20 CE	2260±130	370-110 BCE
KYR-11	B	17/B/28 inner face, bottom	746.89	2660±140	780-500 BCE	2960±170	1110-770 BCE
KYR-12	B	17/B/28 inner face, bottom	746.87	2900±140	1020-740 BCE	3160±180	1320-960 BCE
KYR-13	B	17/B/28 inner face, bottom	746.96	2590±140	710-430 BCE	2980±180	1140-780 BCE
KYR-19	A	17/A/5 inner face, bottom	752.12	1770±70	180-320 CE	1950±100	30 BCE-170 CE
KYR-21	A	17/A/10 outer face, bottom	752.15	2150±100	230-30 BCE	2390±130	500-240 BCE
KYR-24	B	17/B/29 outer face, lowest part reached	747.51	2450±100	530-330 BCE	2670±130	780-520 BCE

\* As the sediment is confined by building stones, gamma dose rates were calculated either with sediment only ("age with sediment") or with 2/3 contribution from sediment and 1/3 contribution from building stones ("age with sediment & stones"). Four different building stones were analyzed and averaged.

Though uncertainty in OSL ages is considerable, the determinations reported here are sufficient to distinguish between alternatives which are chronologically remote, for instance between the Iron Age and the Hellenistic or Roman periods. Deciding between

phases in the Iron Age or between Hellenistic and Roman times is more difficult.

Considering the OSL results, construction differences in the massive walls, the pottery found in Foundation Trench 17/B/50 and the settlement history of the site (Table 1), below we suggest a tentative reconstruction of the history of the massive walls and thus, the elevated platform on the summit of the hill.

### ***Iron IIB (in the first half of the 8th century BCE): construction of the walls***

The original construction of the walls is represented by OSL dates Nos. 11-13, which come from samples taken from the bottom of Wall 17/B/28's inner face (Fig. 24). Their calculated date-ranges (1320-770 BCE) span the Late Bronze II-III, Iron I, Iron IIA and the Early Iron IIB.<sup>55</sup> The time-span from the Late Bronze II to the Iron IIA is no option, as activity at the site was modest at best, not fitting monumental building activity. Considering this limitation, and the fact that the earliest pottery found in the debris along the inner face of Wall 17/B/28 dates to the Iron IIB (e.g., Fig. 16: 1-3), this period seems to be the only option for the construction of the massive wall in Area B, and thus the entire elevated platform. Bearing in mind the monumentality of this endeavor, and the fact that no

<sup>55</sup> Considering ceramic knowledge, the assemblage of Level 3 at Beth-shemesh, radiocarbon-dated to ca. 765-745, should be labeled Early Iron IIB (rather than transitional Iron IIA/B), contemporary with the Kuntillet Ajrud and Megiddo IVA assemblages. For the Beth-shemesh assemblage, see S. Bunimovitz and Z. Lederman, *Tel Beth-Shemesh: A Border Community in Judah. Renewed Excavations 1990-2000: The Iron Age* (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology Tel Aviv University 34), Tel Aviv, Institute of Archaeology, 2016, p. 329-370. For the date of this level, see I. Finkelstein and E. Piasezky, « I. Finkelstein and E. Piasezky, Radiocarbon Dating and Philistine Chronology with an Addendum on el-Ahwat », *Egypt and the Levant* 17, 2007, p. 74-82. For dating this assemblage to the Early Iron IIB, see A. Kleiman, *Tel Aphek and the Central Coastal Plain during the Iron Age IIA*, MA thesis, Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University, 2014, p. 68 (Hebrew).

elevated platforms of this type are known in Judah,<sup>56</sup> there are two possibilities within the Iron IIB: an Assyrian venture after 720 BCE, or a North Israelite construction before 732 BCE, in fact before the beginning of decline of the kingdom in 747 BCE.

Regarding the former possibility, an elevated podium, which may resemble the one at Kiriath-jearim, can be found at Buseirah in Edom. It seems to have served as an Assyrian administrative center along the Arabian trade route. One could argue that the Assyrians established a somewhat similar center at Kiriath-jearim, aimed at dominating Judah in general and Jerusalem in particular.<sup>57</sup> This could have been accomplished after 720 BCE or better, after the Sennacherib campaign in 701 BCE. Yet, a date ca. 700 BCE seems slightly too late for the OSL results, even if one allows a certain error in the measurements.

Elevated platforms such as the one featured at Kiriath-jearim—consisting of support walls, which together with fills laid behind them create an artificial hill—are well-known in the Northern Kingdom, in the capital Samaria and elsewhere.<sup>58</sup> Some were built in the Iron IIA by the Omride Dynasty, others (e.g., Penuel and certain elements at Samaria) could have been constructed in the Early Iron IIB.

An interesting item to be mentioned in this connection is a margin-drafted ashlar block found resting on bedrock outside the outer face of Wall 17/B/28 (Fig. 26). Blocks like this are known in the Iron II, Hellenistic and Roman periods. Commonly the Iron Age

<sup>56</sup> The only relevant structure is the podium for the residency at Lachish: D. Ussishkin, « A Synopsis of the Stratigraphical, Chronological and Historical Issues », in D. Ussishkin, *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973-1994)* (Monograph Series of the Institute of Archaeology Tel Aviv University 22), Tel Aviv, Institute of Archaeology, 2004, p. 81-82. But the Lachish podium is all stone-built and smaller –constructed in order to support a single building.

<sup>57</sup> For the possibility of Assyrian watchtowers/forts around Jerusalem, see I. Finkelstein, « Tell el-Ful Revisited: The Assyrian and Hellenistic Periods (With a New Identification) », *PEQ* 143, 2011, p. 112-113.

<sup>58</sup> Finkelstein, *op. cit.* (above, n. 45); Finkelstein and Lipschits, *op. cit.* (above, n. 45).

blocks are margin-drafted on three sides only,<sup>59</sup> but examples of drafting on all four sides (usually in headers) are also documented.<sup>60</sup> In the Iron Age, drafted ashlar blocks are known only in the Northern Kingdom—at Samaria, Megiddo and Dan—and there, usually in 8th century BCE construction.<sup>61</sup> The block in Area B is evidently not *in situ*. It could have originated from an elaborate building on the platform. If dated to the Iron Age, something admittedly impossible to prove, this block would provide another clue for an Israelite affiliation of early 8th century BCE Kiriath-jearim.

An elevated platform at Kiriath-jearim could have been built by Israel following the subjugation of Judah by Joash (see the chronic verses in 2 Kings 14: 11-13). As noted above, the earliest pottery in the debris adjacent to the inner face of Wall 17/B/28 dates to the Iron IIB, a period which commenced ca. 800 BCE or slightly thereafter.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, the days of Jeroboam II (788-747 BCE), in the middle of the 8th century, well-fit both the OSL and the ceramic data.

Turning to the biblical material, Kiriath-jearim is described as being located on the border between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and in the lists of towns in the Book of Joshua it is depicted as being both Judahite and Benjaminite (see above). Benjamin is

<sup>59</sup> For instance, J.W. Crowfoot, K.M. Kenyon and E.L. Sukenik, *The Buildings at Samaria*, London, Palestine Exploration Fund, 1942, Pls. XXI: 1, XXIV: 2, XXV: 1, XXXII: 1-2.

<sup>60</sup> For Megiddo: R.S. Lamon and G.M. Shipton, *Megiddo I: Seasons of 1924-1934, Strata I-V*, Chicago, University of Chicago, 1939, Fig. 15; for Samaria: Y. Shiloh, *The Proto-Aeolic Capital and Israelite Ashlar Masonry* (Qedem 11), Jerusalem, Institute of Archaeology, 1979, Pl. 28:1. Note that the block is broken on one side, which may fit those Iron Age specimens with two bosses, e.g., Crowfoot, Kenyon and Sukenik, *op. cit.* (above n. 58), Pl. XXXII.

<sup>61</sup> For the date, see N. Franklin, « Revealing Stratum V at Megiddo », *BASOR* 342, 2006, p. 108; idem, « Trademarks of the Omride Builders? » in A. Fantalkin and A. Yasur-Landau (eds), *Bene Israel: Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and the Levant during the Bronze and Iron Ages in Honour of Israel Finkelstein*, Leiden, Brill, 2008, p. 45-54.

<sup>62</sup> Considering that Level 3 at Beth-shemesh dates to the Iron IIB (above, n. 54).

considered as belonging to the North;<sup>63</sup> this was certainly true for the first half of the 8th century, when Israel under Joash and Jeroboam II was the dominant power in the region, with Judah probably serving as its compliant vassal. It is also noteworthy that the Ark Narrative in 1 Samuel 4: 1–7: 1\*, telling the story of the transfer of the Ark from Shiloh to Kiriath-jearim, seems to have originated in the North. The goal was probably to legitimate Kiriath-jearim as the “new” shrine of the Ark.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, in the case of a North Kingdom affiliation, the elevated platform was built in order to accommodate an Israelite administration compound, including a temple (of the Ark, which also served as a border sanctuary?), aimed at dominating the vassal kingdom of Judah.

In any event, more information is needed in order to reach firm conclusions regarding the date of construction of the Kiriath-jearim elevated platform and the identity of the builders. This will have to wait for the second season of excavations at the site, in the summer of 2019.

### ***Iron IIC: addition and reconstruction***

OSL date No. 3 comes from the outer face of Wall 17/A/5 in Area A (Fig. 25). It provides a date in the 670–410 BCE range. As activity at the site in the Persian period was meager, the Iron IIC is the only option. This date should probably be understood as representing the renovation of Wall 17/A/5’s outer face in a period of strong activity at the site (see Area C above).

OSL date No. 24 comes from Wall 17/B/29 in Area B, built parallel and west of Wall 17/B/28 (Fig. 24). The result (780–520 BCE) covers the Iron IIB–C and Babylonian period. In the latter the site was probably deserted, which leaves the Iron II as the only option. Wall 17/B/29 seems to have been added as a reinforcement (thickening) on the inner side of Wall 17/B/28, hence it does not belong to the original construction. A date of construction both in the late 8th

<sup>63</sup> I. Finkelstein, « Saul, Benjamin and the Emergence of “Biblical Israel”: An Alternative View », ZAW 123, 2011, p. 348–367, *contra* N. Na’aman, « Saul, Benjamin and the Emergence of “Biblical Israel” », ZAW 121, 2009, p. 211–224, 335–349.

<sup>64</sup> See on this a forthcoming article by I. Finkelstein and Th. Römer.

and 7th century BCE is possible. The Iron IIC pottery found in the trench dug on the inner side of Wall 17/B/28 (e.g., Fig. 16: 4-6) is of note; it provides a clue that the reinforcement was added in the Iron IIC.

The importance of Kiriath-jearim in the Iron IIC is indicated by the biblical references to the tribal territories and towns (above).<sup>65</sup> Continuity of cult activity in this place is hinted-at by Jeremiah 26: 20. The end part of the Ark Narrative in 2 Samuel 6, if dating to the time of Josiah,<sup>66</sup> may point in the same direction.

### ***The Hellenistic period: repairs in the massive walls***

Four OSL samples (Nos. 1, 2, 7 and 21) provided dates in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. One comes from the bottom of the outer face of massive Wall 17/B/28, two from the outer face of massive Wall 17/A/5 and one from the bottom of parallel Wall 17/A/10 (Figs 24-25). These samples seem to represent attempts to repair the massive support-walls. As activity at the site in the Persian and early Hellenistic periods was weak (Table 1), these dates should be interpreted as representing the Late Hellenistic period in the early 2nd century BCE; OSL dates 1 and 2 do not allow a date later than ca. 160/150 BCE and No. 7 falls no later than 110 BCE. Indeed, pottery collected in excavations and surveys indicates that the site came back to life in the Late Hellenistic period (Table 1). Repairs in the first half of the 2nd century BCE should probably be affiliated with the Seleucids (this is too early for a major Hasmonean effort). Note that three of the four samples come from the outer face of the massive walls—places prone to damage and collapse after four centuries of neglect.

The only known historical scenario for reconstruction/renovation of the massive support-walls in the first half of the 2nd cen-

<sup>65</sup> For the Josianic date of, at least, some of the town-lists in the Book of Joshua, see A. Alt, « Judas Gaue unter Josia », *PJb* 21, 1925, p. 100-116; N. Na'aman, « The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah », *Tel Aviv* 18, 1991, p. 3-71; de Vos, *Das Los Judas*.

<sup>66</sup> Römer and Finkelstein in a forthcoming article.

tury is the fortification operation undertaken in Judea by the Seleucid General, Bacchides (1 Macc 9: 50).<sup>67</sup> The places mentioned in the list are well-identified, except for Tephon (located by some at Tekoa, based on one of the manuscripts of Josephus<sup>68</sup>). Assuming that the list is historically genuine and complete, one can place the sites on a map in order to understand their geographical logic. In doing so, it becomes obvious that Jerusalem is surrounded on all sides, with special emphasis on the roads leading to the city from the coast. Note Jericho in the east, Bethel and Pharathon in the north<sup>69</sup> and Beth-zur in the south. For the roads approaching Jerusalem from the west (assuming that in the Hellenistic period they were similar to what we know about Roman times) we refer to Beth-horon on the road from the Aijalon Valley and Thamnatha on the road from the Soreq Valley.<sup>70</sup> Surprisingly, the entire western flank of Jerusalem and specifically the road ascending to the city directly from Lod and passing below the dominating hill of Kiriath-jearim,<sup>71</sup> is not represented.

There are two options to fill this gap. One is the admittedly far-reaching speculation that the original Hebrew read והגבעה, referring to Kiriath-jearim, also known as Gibeah (above); that the translator to Greek wrote τὸν βουβόν (compare, e.g., the LXX for Ex 17: 9); and that a later copier, no longer understanding the meaning of הגבעה here, corrupted it to Τεφών.<sup>72</sup> Another possibility, perhaps slightly less speculative, is to identify the Emmaus of the Bacchides list with Kiriath-jearim (rather than with the better known Emmaus, in the Valley of Aijalon). This would be based on the reference in Luke 24: 13, that Emmaus is located 60 stadia from

<sup>67</sup> See, e.g., I. Roll, « Bacchides' Fortifications and the Arteries of Traffic to Jerusalem in the Hellenistic Period », *Eretz-Israel* 25, 1996, p. 509-514 (Hebrew).

<sup>68</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquests (536 B.C. - A.D. 640)*, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1977, p. 54.

<sup>69</sup> For the latter, see Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.* (above, n. 67), p. 53-54; I. Finkelstein, « Major Saviors, Minor Judges: The Historical Background of the Northern Accounts in the Book of Judges », *JSOT* 41, 2017, p. 440-441.

<sup>70</sup> For the identification of the latter, see Avi-Yonah, *op. cit.* (above, n. 67), p. 53; Roll, *op. cit.* (above, n. 66).

<sup>71</sup> Fischer, Isaac and Roll, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), Fig. 16.

<sup>72</sup> We are grateful to Jonathan Price for his help with the Greek.



Jerusalem—exactly the distance to our site (but note that Josephus locates a place of this name 30 stadia from the city).<sup>73</sup>

### ***The Roman period: turning the platform into a fort or military camp***

OSL sample No. 19 comes from the inner face of Wall 17/A/5 (Fig. 25). We interpret this sample as representing a major reconstruction project of the massive walls in the Early Roman period. Though the sample is from Area A, the archaeological evidence for this operation seems to be clearer in Sub-Area B1. We refer to the reconstruction of massive Wall 17/B/28 with smaller, partly drafted stones, as can be seen in the upper courses of its inner, western face (now labeled Wall 17/B/10) and in the continuation to the south of the outer face of this wall (Fig. 15, 17). In order to reconstruct the wall a foundation trench was cut through the heart of the inner parallel (seemingly Iron IIC) Wall 17/B/29 (Fig. 18). The Early Roman sherds, which were found in the trench all the way down to bedrock (e.g., Fig. 16: 7-8), seem to have originated from this operation.

Wall 17/B/27 in Sub-Area B2 dates to the Roman period (pottery found in Debris 17/B/49; Fig. 20). It is built of stones similar to those used for the reconstruction of the massive wall in Sub-Area B1 (17/B/10) and the continuation of the outer face of this wall to the south. It seems that in the Early Roman period, with the renovation/reconstruction of the massive walls, the rectangular compound was extended to the south. But the new sector was surrounded by a thinner wall—in Sub-Area B2 Wall 17/B/27 is only 1.4 m wide. If this scenario is correct, the southern wall of the Roman period compound is to be found in the lower of the two southern terraces. The Roman compound would then create an exact square, 150 × 150 m in size. The corner in Walls 17/B/27 and 17/B/21, with the better quality construction of the latter (Fig. 20), may hint that a Roman period gate was also located in the southeast, in a similar orientation to the supposed Iron Age gate (see above).

<sup>73</sup> For the problem of one or two places named Emmaus to the west of Jerusalem, see Fischer, Isaac and Roll, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), p. 151-153, 223-223-224.

Evidence for this Roman period construction can be found in several Latin inscriptions discovered at the site and its vicinity:

- An inscription found at the site, now in the church on the summit of the hill, reading “Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus (and) Imperator Titus Caesar, son of Vespasianus Augustus, (have erected this building) under Sextus Lucilius Bassus, governor with praetorian rank, for the cohort...” (Fig. 27, right). The inscription “probably attests the building of a camp for a cohort either of the legio X Fretensis or, more likely, for an auxiliary cohort, which was stationed at Abu Gosh..., under the care of Sextus Lucilius Bassus, the second senatorial governor of Judaea”.<sup>74</sup>
- An inscription of the Xth Roman legion found at the site, now in the church on the summit of the hill (Fig. 27, left).<sup>75</sup>
- An inscription of the Xth Roman legion incorporated into the wall of the Crusader church in the village of Abu Gosh below the site.<sup>76</sup>
- A fragment of a funerary inscription of a Roman soldier found near the church of Abu Ghosh, reading “Dolens(?)..., soldier of the cohort... (is buried here)”.<sup>77</sup>

These inscriptions seem to indicate that following the destruction of Jerusalem, a Roman fort or a military camp was built somewhere in the area of Abu Ghosh. The most logical place is the hill of Kir-iath-jearim: first, it is located in a commanding place, with sweeping views to the coastal plain, the hill country of Jerusalem and the highlands of Judea. Second, the hill is located immediately above the road leading from Diospolis (Lod) to Jerusalem.<sup>78</sup> Third, the hill

<sup>74</sup> H.M. Cotton, L. Di Segni, W. Eck, B. Isaac, A. Kushmir-Stein, H. Misgav, J. Price and A. Yardeni (eds), *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*, Vol. I, Berlin, de Gruyter, 2012, p. 11; Fischer, Isaac and Roll, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), p. 119.

<sup>75</sup> Cotton et al., *op. cit.* (above, n. 73), p. 26; Fischer, Isaac and Roll, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), p. 119.

<sup>76</sup> Cotton et al., *op. cit.* (above, n. 73), p. 25; Fischer, Isaac and Roll, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), p. 119.

<sup>77</sup> Cotton et al., *op. cit.* (above, n. 73), p. 38-39.

<sup>78</sup> Fischer, Isaac and Roll, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), Fig. 16.

was already flattened before, and hence only repair of the old massive walls was needed, plus extension to the south, in order to make a square-shaped camp.<sup>79</sup> With the evidence at hand it is impossible to say what the nature of this supposed camp was and for how long it functioned.

## Summary

The first season of excavations at Kiriath-jearim revealed evidence for:

- A rectangular platform supported by massive stone walls, which was created at the summit of the hill, possibly in the first half of the 8th century BCE. This compound may have been erected by a North Israelite monarch.
- Intensive settlement activity in the Iron IIC.
- Reconstruction of the elevated platform in both the Iron IIC and the late Hellenistic periods. The latter may be associated with the fortification efforts undertaken by the Seleucid General Bacchides.
- Transformation of the flat hill into a Roman camp in the first century CE.

<sup>79</sup> Another piece of evidence seemingly supporting our interpretation: The 2017 excavations yielded several coins, two of which are Roman provincial, bearing countermarks of the Xth Roman legion (we wish to thank Yoav Farhi for this information; a full numismatic report will be published elsewhere).



*Fig. 1. Map showing the location of Kiriath-jearim and main sites mentioned in the article.*



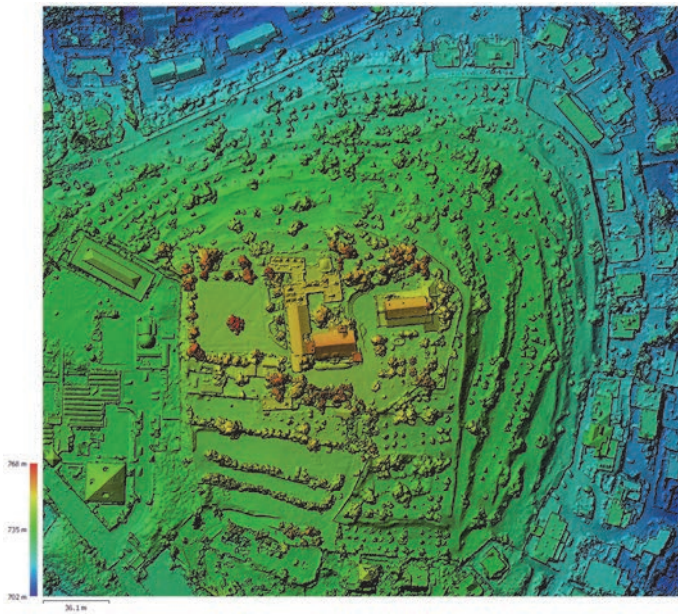
*Fig. 2. Aerial view of the mound of Kiriath-jearim, looking south.*



*Fig. 3. Aerial view of the site, taken by the Bavarian air force in 1918, looking north. Note large western and eastern terraces. The modern building is the old house of the convent; to its north are the foundations of the northern sector of the hostel (the church was not built yet).*



*Fig. 4. Orthophoto of the mound of Kiriath-jearim, with the three areas excavated in 2017, looking north.*



*Fig. 5. Digital Elevation Model of the mound of Kiriath-jearim. Note the straight line of the prominent terrace in the east, creating a right angle with two terraces in the southeast. Also note the southern end of the western terrace.*

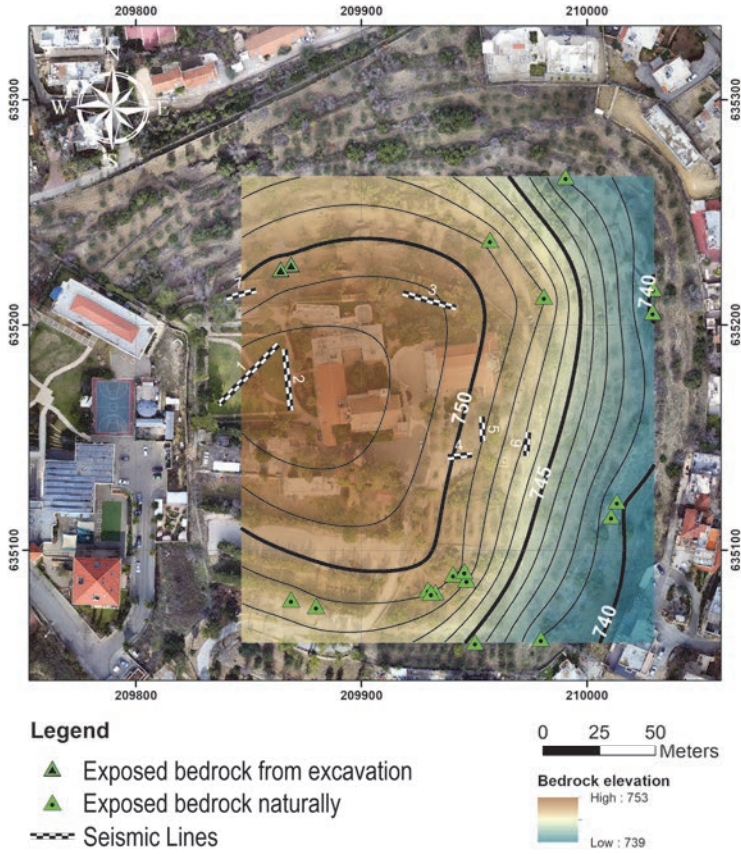


Fig. 6. The original bedrock topography, as revealed by the seismic investigation, imposed on the aerial orthophoto of the site (courtesy of Yaniv Darvasi and Amotz Agnon).



*Fig. 7. The long, straight, massive terrace which delineates the summit of the hill on the east, looking northwest.*



*Fig. 8. The long, straight, massive terrace delineating the summit of the hill on the west, looking northeast. Also note the deep cut in the accumulation and bedrock to its west, created in the 1980s, when the school on the slope was built.*





*Fig. 9. View of the site from the north; note the elevated, seemingly man-shaped summit.*



*Fig. 10. Aerial photo of Area A at the end of the 2017 season, looking south.*



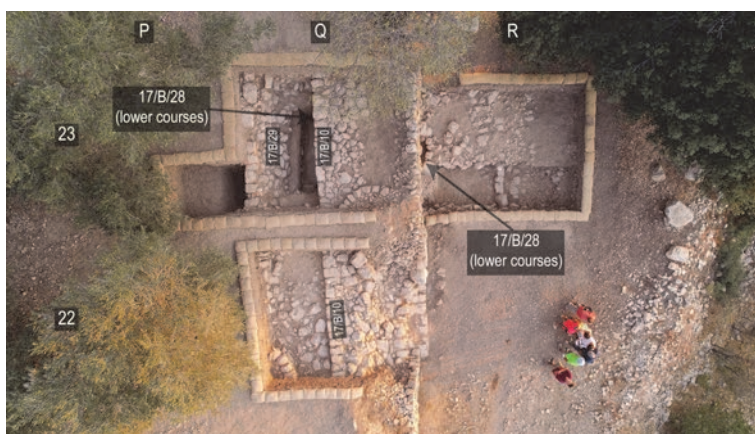
*Fig. 11. Wall 17/A/5 in Squares Q–R/15–16, looking southwest.*



*Fig. 12. Location of Sub-Areas B1, B2 and B4, looking northwest.*



*Fig. 13. Sub-Areas B1 and B2, looking west.*



*Fig. 14. Sub-Area B1, looking north.*



*Fig. 15. Square Q/23, looking east: Wall 17/B/28 (founded on bedrock), under Wall 17/B/10; note Foundation Trench 17/B/50.*

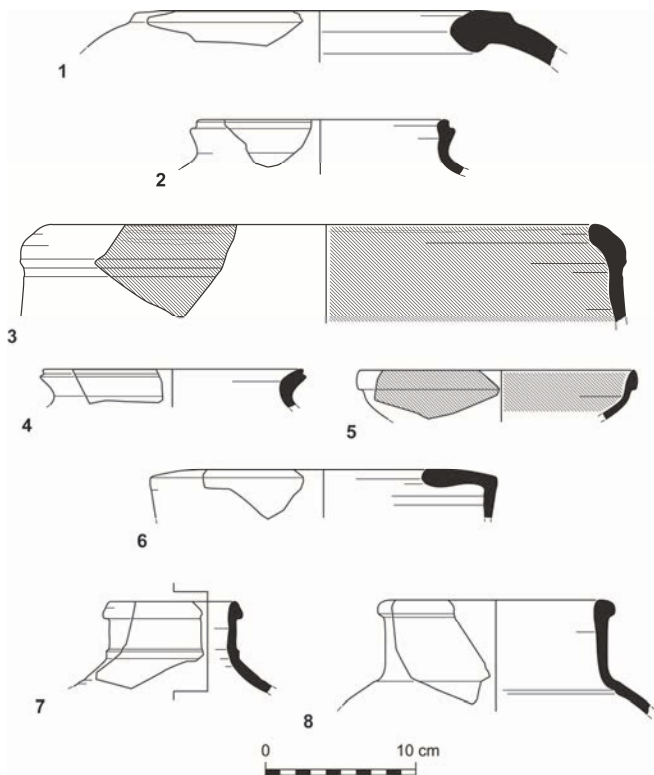


Fig. 16. Pottery retrieved from Foundation Trench 17/B/50. Nos. 1-3: Iron IIB; 4-6: Iron IIC; 7-8: Early Roman.



Fig. 17. Sub-Area B1, looking northwest. Note Wall 17/B/28 made of large stones, Wall 17/B/10 made of smaller, semi-drafted stones, and Terrace Wall 17/B/2.



Fig. 18. Square Q/23, looking south. Note Walls 17/B/28, 17/B/10, 17/B/9, 17/B/29 and Foundation Trench 17/B/50.



*Fig. 19. The sectional trench in Sub-Area B4, looking west.*



*Fig. 20. Sub-Area B2, looking south.*



*Fig. 21. An aerial view of Area C at the end of the 2017 season, looking north.*



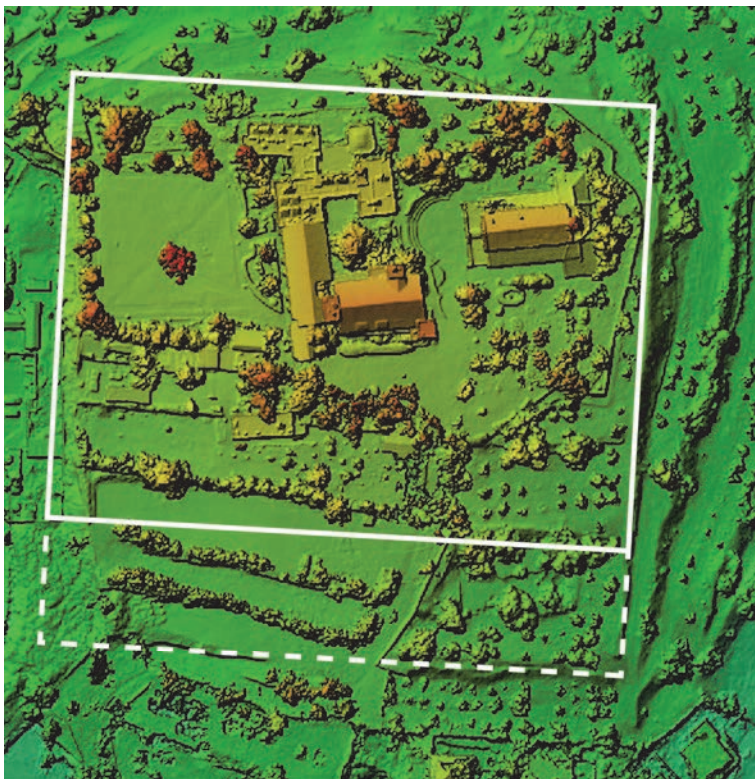


Fig. 22. Digital Elevation Model of the mound of Kiriath-jearim, schematically indicating the supposed lines of support walls which created the Iron Age elevated platform on the summit (full lines) and the Early Roman addition (dotted lines).



*Fig. 23. Large stones resting on the terrace a few meters to the east of Square R/23 in Sub-Area B1.*



Fig. 24. OSL results, Area B, providing sample number and date calculated with and without rock contribution (in parenthesis; see Table 2).



Fig. 25. OSL results, Area A, providing sample number and date calculated with and without rock contribution (in parenthesis; see Table 2).



*Fig. 26. Block with margin-drafting found in Square R/23, outside the outer face of Wall 17/B/28.*



*Fig. 27. Two Latin inscriptions from the site, now in the church at the summit of the hill.*