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Review Article

Strategic settlement expansion and architectural adaptation: The stratigraphy and fortifications of area J2 at tel Shiloh (middle bronze II – iron age II)

Ofer Gat*

Senior Lecturer, Kaye Academic College of Education, Beit Berl Academic College, Israel

***Correspondence:** Ofer Gat Senior Lecturer, Kaye Academic College of Education, Beit Berl Academic College, Israel

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Introduction

In the summer of 2011, archaeological excavations were renewed at Tel Shiloh, identified as "the first supra-tribal center" of the Israelite population.[1] The excavations focused on the southern margins of the tell, where two adjacent areas were investigated. Area N1, located to the southeast, yielded a residential structure and an olive-oil production complex, the final phase of which dates to the Early Islamic period.[2] Area N2, excavated by the author (not yet published), revealed remains spanning from the Middle Bronze Age onward, including a continuation of the southern city wall, a fortified complex abutting the wall from the south in which ceramics from the Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age I were recovered, a Roman-period residential structure, and architectural remains from the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods.

Two additional excavation seasons (2012–2013) were conducted in Areas J2 and B. Area B constitutes the so-called "Northern Platform," situated outside the tell. This area has been proposed as a possible location for the Tabernacle. To date, however, the excavations have yielded no evidence supporting this identification. The principle remains uncovered in Area B consist of residential complexes dated to Iron Age I, the Hellenistic period, and the Byzantine period.[2] The first archaeological probing of Tel Shiloh was carried out in 1922 by A. Schmidt, who conducted a preliminary test excavation within the tell.[3] This was followed by three excavation seasons directed by the Danish expedition under H. Kjaer between 1926 and 1932.[4–6] In 1963, an additional excavation season was conducted under the direction of H. Holm Nielsen, and in 1969 a comprehensive final report summarizing the results of all excavation seasons was published.[7] Between 1981 and 1984, four further excavation seasons were undertaken—representing the last campaigns prior to the renewal of excavations at Tel Shiloh by the present expedition of the Staff Officer for Archaeology—by the Department of Land of Israel Studies at Bar-Ilan University, under the direction of I. Finkelstein.[8]

Keywords: Tel Shiloh, Middle bronze age IIa, Middle bronze age IIb, Iron age I, Iron age II, Four-room house, Fortifications, City wall, Offset-and-recess wall, Glacis

Overview of the site's character across different periods

According to the results of the partial excavations conducted at Tel Shiloh to date, remains spanning from the Middle Bronze Age through the Late Islamic period have been identified Figure 1. For some periods, architectural remains are well attested, whereas for others the evidence consists solely of ceramic assemblages. The Middle Bronze Age is represented primarily by fortification remains, including city walls exposed along the southern, western, and northern margins of the tell. In addition, subterranean rooms or cellar-like installations were uncovered within the interior of the tell, abutting the city wall and supported by its inner face.[8] Based on the evidence available at the time, the excavator proposed two alternative interpretations.[9] The first suggests that, in the apparent absence of residential structures from this period, the habitation quarters were located in the southern part of the tell, an area that had not yet been excavated (a hypothesis not supported by the results of later excavations). The second interpretation posits that during this period Shiloh did not function as a civilian settlement but rather as a cultic center, situated on the summit of the tell and enclosed by a city wall or constructed on an elevated podium supported by massive fortification walls.[8] Finds dated to the Late Bronze Age have also been identified, expressed primarily through ceramic assemblages and other portable artefacts recovered mainly from a large favissa adjacent to the summit of the tell (Area D). According to Finkelstein,[7] the absence of architectural remains from this period suggests continuity of the cultic center established in the preceding period, with the site maintaining its religious character into the Late Bronze Age.Remains from Iron Age I are known primarily from Areas D, C, N1, and J2, the latter being the focus of the present study. Data from Areas D, C, and J2 indicate that these remains represent predominantly a civilian settlement, expressed in domestic architecture and storage facilities.[8] interpreted the buildings

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and storehouses uncovered in western Area C as service structures associated with the Tabernacle, which he suggested was located on the summit of the tell. However, the results of later excavations clearly indicate that these remains belong to a settlement that expanded into the southern and western parts of the tell.The evidence from Iron Age II is extremely fragmentary and is represented mainly by residential structures scattered across different parts of the site. In addition, a fragment of a four-horned altar dating to this period was discovered reused within the wall of the narthex of the early church on the southern slope of the tell (forthcoming publication by the author).

Figure 1: Area J2: general plan by periodization

During the Roman period, a settlement existed at Tel Shiloh, as attested by residential buildings uncovered in Areas N1 and J2, located in the southern and western parts of the tell. In addition, a large-scale structure with adjoining storage facilities was identified in Area J2, although most of this complex remains unexcavated. In the Byzantine period, Shiloh functioned as a Christian religious center. To date, five churches have been identified at the site,[10–12] all densely concentrated south of the tell, along with remains of residential buildings on its southern and southwestern margins. From the Islamic period and its various phases, residential buildings and agricultural installations-such as an olive-oil press dated to the Early Islamic period-are known, constructed mainly along the southern slope of the tell.

The renewed excavations

Two excavation seasons were conducted in Area J2 in 2011 and 2012. The excavations formed part of a community-based educational project carried out on behalf of the Staff Officer for Archaeology and the Shiloh Ancient Site Association, with the participation of students from Herzog and Orot Colleges, as well as youth volunteers from across the country, under the direction of the author. Area J2 is located at the southwestern corner of the tell Figure 2, south of Area C, where a storage complex dated to Iron Age, I was previously uncovered. The area was first sampled in the early 1980s as part of the excavation expedition directed by,[8] which sought to assess the extent and boundaries of the Middle Bronze Age city wall.[8] The topography of Area J2 is characterized by three stepped terraces aligned along a north–south axis. These terraces represent the cumulative result of massive architectural remains dated to the Middle Bronze Age II: the upper northern terrace, the intermediate terrace, and the lower southern terrace. As noted, this stepped topographic division is dictated by the spatial organization imposed by the city's Middle Bronze Age fortification system, particularly the massive city wall, remains of which are visible in the southern and western parts of the area, and by the glacis slope located west of the intermediate terrace, which defines its boundary.

The excavation results reveal evidence for five occupational phases: the Byzantine period, the Early Roman period, Iron Age II, Iron Age I, and the Middle Bronze Age II Figure 1. It is evident that the architectural characteristics of the structures from the various periods later than the Middle Bronze Age differ markedly in their location and functional definition on each of the stepped terraces. This variation in architectural configuration derives from the "interaction" between these later constructions and the earlier architectural framework that preceded them-namely, the Middle Bronze Age II city wall. The massive presence of the Middle Bronze Age fortification walls fundamentally shaped the builders' spatial perception, determining the character, layout, and placement of later structures.

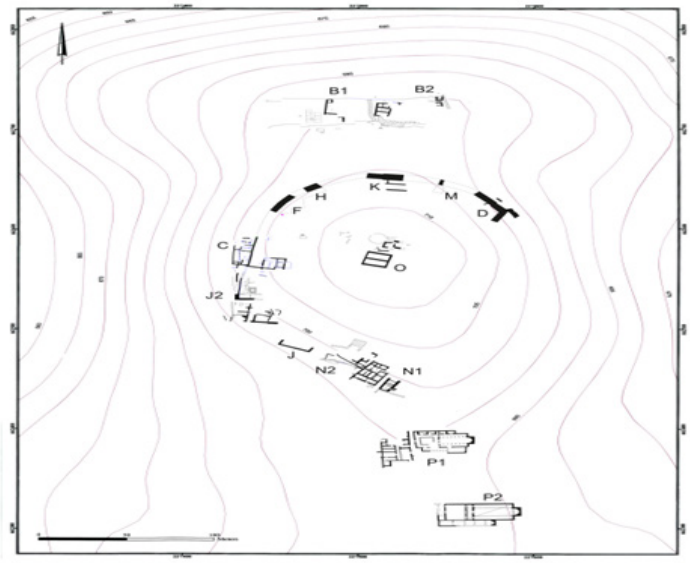

Figure 2: General plan of Tel Shiloh

Thus, in the later periods-and particularly during the Early Roman period-it is clear that the builders perceived the city wall as a structural foundation for their buildings, which were constructed atop its crest and upon the levelled glacis. This architectural-spatial approach resulted in the concentration of buildings primarily within the interior of the tell. In contrast (though not uniformly, as suggested by the partial data from the 2012 excavation season), the builders of Iron Age I chose to utilize the earlier city wall encountered upon their settlement at the site as an "anchor wall," against which they leaned through lateral construction, cutting into the glacis layer and incorporating the wall as one of the structure's bounding walls. This spatial strategy dictated that the main concentrations of buildings from this period were located chiefly along the outer margins of the tell and may reflect the absence of well-established architectural traditions among this population, necessitating reliance on earlier architectural remains.

Iron age II remains

The Iron Age II assemblage, identified on the basis of architectural remains and ceramic finds, is highly fragmentary and is known only from the southwestern corner of the excavation area, on the interior side of the tell (Plan 2). These remains are represented by walls attributed to this period, combining mudbrick construction (Walls W-5262, oriented east–west, and W-5263, forming its southern corner) with a "core-wall" construction technique (W-5141)-a wall built with a stone outer facing and an interior core of earth and mudbrick, whose upper courses continue in mud brick.The core wall, whose upper continuation was constructed of mudbrick, was built atop the remains of an Iron Age I domestic

structure. The walls of this earlier building were later damaged by construction dated to the Early Roman period. Sherds dating to Iron Age II were recovered between the terrace wall (the partition wall separating the glacis section from the Iron Age I residential structure, W-5181) and the core wall to the south. These finds include several ridge-handled jars, which constitute a diagnostic feature of this period, as well as typical cooking pots.[10–13] It is evident that the core wall continued northward (W-5201), forming the eastern boundary of an additional parallel room to the north, which utilized the line of the city wall and was constructed upon it. East of this pair of rooms, a narrow room also dated to this period was uncovered. Its width measures 1.5 m, and its excavated length-its full extent was not exposed and excavation was halted at the section of the courtyard floor from the Early Roman period-measures approximately 2.3m. To the west, the space is bounded by Wall W-5139, dated to the Early Roman period and founded upon the Middle Bronze Age II city wall; to the south, it is bounded by the city wall (W-5202); and to the east, the complex is delimited by Wall W-5235, which curves eastward as it continues north.

A floor abutting the described walls extends into the enclosed space. Only body sherds of ceramic vessels were recovered from its surface, possibly indicating attribution to this period. Beneath the bedding of this floor, an additional floor was uncovered, dated by ceramic evidence to Iron Age I. While the precedence of this phase relative to the Early Roman period is certain, the sparse ceramic assemblage recovered from the upper of the two floors adjacent to the walls introduces a degree of chronological uncertainty. It is therefore possible that this phase represents one of two Iron Age I phases rather than Iron Age II. On the southern side of the east-facing recess of the city wall (as noted, 6.5 m in length), dated to the Middle Bronze Age II, within the northern part of the courtyard of the Early Roman residential structure, an industrial installation was uncovered. This installation consists of a pavement incorporating two pairs of parallel cupmarks Figure 3 a northeastern pair and a southwestern pair (see Plan 2). Approximately 0.5 m to their south, a water cistern was identified. All four cup marks were hewn into the bedrock; their depths vary due to later reworking of the natural rock surface and range between 0.15m and 0.30m.

Figure 3: Photo 1. The intermediate terrace: on the right side of the image is the recessed section of the city wall separating the intermediate terrace from the upper terrace; to the left of the recess are the northern part of the courtyard and the cupmark installation. View from east to west.

Ceramic sherds recovered from within the cupmarks are predominantly dated to the Early Roman period, with a smaller quantity attributed to the Byzantine period. These sherds represent the earliest fill layer within the courtyard, dated to the Early Roman period, which accumulated above the level of the cupmarks and may have sealed their use. It may therefore be suggested that the cupmarks predate the Early Roman period.The dating of cupmarks in the absence of a clear archaeological context is inherently problematic. Cupmarks are known throughout a broad chronological range, from the Chalcolithic period through the Middle Bronze Age, Iron Age II, the Early Roman period, and beyond. Typical Iron Age settlement sites do not usually exhibit an extensive array of agricultural-industrial installations for the processing of olives and grapes,[14] and most documented examples of cupmark installations are associated with Iron Age II contexts e.g.,.[15,16]

Accordingly, on the basis of regional characteristics of the period in question, together with the associated architectural and ceramic remains, it is possible to propose that the cupmarks uncovered in Area J2 date to Iron Age II. Additional support for this dating may be derived from the discovery of a bodeda stone-characteristic of olive-oil production during this period-found reused as a building stone in the southern bounding wall (W-5240) of the central courtyard of the Early Roman residential structure, which may plausibly be associated with this industrial installation.

Iron age I remains

Remains from this period are evident to varying degrees across the three stepped terraces that comprise the excavation area under discussion. The bulk of the material uncovered to date (in addition to insights derived from the most recent excavation season of 2013) is concentrated in the southwestern corner and the southern part of the area-on the lower terrace Figure 3. In this zone, a four-room house was uncovered during the excavation season under discussion. On the basis of the ceramic assemblage (see Pl. 1), and in close similarity to the remains known from Area C, the structure is dated to the course of the 12th century BCE.[9]The building, of the so-called "Shilonite type," represents an early example of its kind. It is subdivided into four main spaces and, through the addition of a partition in Room I, into five distinct functional units. This architectural plan attests to a well-developed body of architectural knowledge already present in the early phases of this period.[9]The Iron Age I builders at Shiloh encountered what Bunimovitz[8] has termed "fossilized remains," belonging to earlier societies that had lived and operated at the site. These remains served as a source of inspiration for the builders of the period and significantly influenced their perception of space, which was constrained by earlier architectural vestiges that dictated the characteristics of their construction-unlike contemporary single-period sites. At the same time, the diagnostic architectural features of the structure and its occupants highlight the importance of adherence to ethnographic building conventions, reflecting the cultural traditions of the period's population. These ethnographic traditions, in dialogue with the fossilized remains of earlier societies preserved at the site, accompanied the practical realization of the building's construction.

Description of the building

The residential structure was constructed along a west–east symmetry axis. Its outline forms an irregular quadrilateral, shaped by its imposed contact with the Middle Bronze Age city wall to the east and expanding at its northeastern corner; the precise location and characteristics of its southeastern corner remain insufficiently known at this stage. The building measures 7.0 m in width from south to north in its western part and 8.5 m in its eastern part, and 7.5 m in length from west to east.The builders truncated the southern part of the Middle Bronze Age glacis, which was laid out along a north–south symmetry axis, and constructed adjacent to it a terrace wall intended to separate the glacis from the residential space (W-5181; see Photo 2). A similar phenomenon is known from Area C, approximately 40m to the north, where early Israelite settlers "cut into" the glacis dump oriented east–west and

incorporated it into the construction of their buildings.[8,9] (Figure 4) The entrance to the structure was located on its western side, accessed through a curved courtyard entrance that widens toward the northwest and is bounded by a western curved wall measuring 8 × 2–3.7 m (W-5230). It is possible that the western continuation of this curved wall represents the remains of an additional residential structure from the same period and that the settlement expanded westward. This western extension was partially sampled, and the ceramic assemblage associated with it is unmixed and dated to Iron Age I. Moreover, the results of the most recent excavation season indicate that the settlement of this period expanded both westward and southward, lending further support to this interpretation. A comparable example of an access courtyard separating architectural units at Tel Shiloh is known from Area C, where a courtyard separates Building 312 to the south from Building 335 to the north (see Passage 611 in).[9]

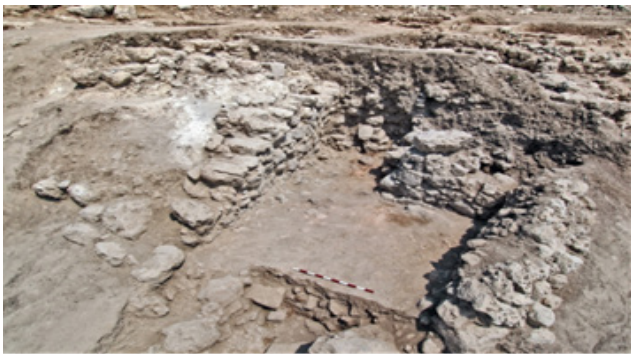

Figure 4: Photo 2. The Iron Age I residential structure: an initial excavation phase; on the left side of the image are the terrace wall and the white glacis material. View from west to east.

The architectural plan of the building and its division into four main spaces-and five spaces in a further subdivision-was achieved by means of walls. This contrasts with the architectural type commonly associated with the period, in which spatial division is typically created by two rows of monolithic pillars.[17] In the present case, the internal division was effected by a longitudinal wall (W-5325, oriented west–east), which divided the structure into two main zones: a southern zone (Room III) and a northern zone (Rooms I and II). The northern zone was further subdivided by a truncated transverse wall, W-5208, oriented south–north, creating two additional spaces: a western space (Room II) and an eastern space (Room I). The eastern Room I was further subdivided into two subspaces by a partition abutting a segmental pillar positioned at its center, which supported the building's ceiling (see Photo 3).

The transverse wall measures 3.3 m in length from south to north. It stands perpendicular to the terrace wall but does not about it, leaving a passage 1.7 m wide. At the northern end of this wall, on its upper course, an irregular rectangular stone considerably larger than the other building stones of the wall was incorporated. This stone appears to represent a base for a segmental pillar that formed part of the ceiling support and bore the load of the second story. Three additional segmental pillar bases were uncovered in the southern longitudinal room, aligned along its southern bounding wall. Segmental pillars of this type are likewise known from Area C.[9]These segmental pillars, together with the internal wall divisions (W-5208), supported the ceiling of the structure and its second story. The height of the segmental pillar in the northeastern room was preserved to approximately 1 m and consists of three segments.

In all areas of the structure, a thick and compact ash layer was exposed. Based on the thickness of this ash layer-exceeding 1 m-and the disposition of the vessels recovered within it, it is evident that the residential structure had two stories. The distribution of the vessels within the ash layer can be divided into two principal levels: sherds (see Pl. 1) recovered from an upper level, enclosed by ash both above and below, and sherds found resting directly on the floors in Room I. The vessels from the upper level of the ash layer appear to derive from the second story. This observation provides an explanation for the presence of the transverse wall. Current scholarly consensus regarding four-room houses holds that the second story extended over the entire area of the ground floor and functioned as the primary residential space.[17]

Room I.

The dimensions of this room are irregular, as they are influenced by the stepped outline of the Middle Bronze Age city wall and the diagonal, northeastward-expanding construction of the terrace wall. Its length ranges from 4.3m in the western part to 5.6m in the eastern part, while its width ranges from 3.5m in the northern part to 3.7m in the southern part. The room is bounded by the longitudinal wall (W-5325) to the south, the transverse wall with a segmental pillar at its northern end (W-5208) to the west, the terrace wall to the north, and the stepped city wall to the east.In the southern part of the room, a segmental pillar was installed, of which three segments have survived; its preserved height is approximately 1 m. Flat stone slabs were set against this pillar on both its western and eastern sides, laid along its narrow face. To the west, an elongated stone slab (1.0 × 0.3 m) was set against the pillar; its upper continuation was built of mudbricks, the impressions of which are clearly visible on the stone surface. To the east, a row of three stone slabs (total length: 1.3 × 0.4 m) abuts the line of the natural bedrock exposed in the northeastern corner of the room, oriented north–south. This partition created an internal spatial subdivision within the room, defining different functional uses for the two resulting units. The larger northern unit was paved with a combined surface of stone slabs and compacted earth, whereas the floor of the smaller southern unit consisted solely of compacted earth (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Photo 3. Room I, southeastern part: the segmental pillar with two stone slabs abutting it on either side; in the background, the thick ash layer is visible, with a complete rim of a collared-rim jar preserved in its upper part; the southern wall of the room, founded on the white glacis material remaining after its removal; on the right, the stepped corner of the Middle Bronze Age IIa city wall and the junction between it and the southern wall of the Early Roman complex. View from south to north.

Room III and associated iron age I remains

Room III, the southern room of the complex, is an elongated space measuring 2.2 × 6.9 m. As noted, adjacent to its southern wall (W-5364) a row of three segmental pillars was exposed, of which only a single segment from each has survived. The floor of the room was constructed

in two different manners, similar to Room I: small areas paved with irregular stone slabs were uncovered in the northern part of the room, abutting the northern bounding wall, alongside extensive areas where the floor consisted of compacted white material representing the remains of the Middle Bronze Age glacis (cf. a similar example from Area C; Finkelstein 1987: 201).Between the northeaster and southern rooms of the building, at the eastern end of the wall separating them (W-5325), a plastered water cistern was uncovered (as in Area C; Finkelstein 1987: 201; 1993: 21). The cistern is divided into two chambers: a large eastern chamber and a smaller western chamber (the cistern was not excavated). This installation predates the Early Roman period, as the wall attributed to that period (W-5139) sealed it and was constructed over its opening. At the same time, it postdates the Middle Bronze Age, since according to the outline of the glacis, this area would have been covered during that period; remnants of the glacis are visible in the section extending south of the cistern opening. It may therefore be suggested that the cistern dates to Iron Age I.The longitudinal wall (W-5325), which bisects the building from west to east, abuts the water cistern. The wall measures approximately 0.9 m in width and meets the cistern at about half the width of its western side. Water cisterns appear to have been a characteristic feature of Iron Age I domestic architecture at Shiloh, as evidenced also in nearby Area C, in the northern Building.[8,9] The location of the cistern between the rooms, together with the row of segmental pillars uncovered in southern Room III, may define this space as a courtyard and work area.

The eastern boundary of the structure was formed by a mudbrick wall built against and supported by the stepped western face of the Middle Bronze Age II city wall. The mudbricks, laid along a north–south symmetry axis, are adjacent to the foundations of Wall W-5139, dated to the Early Roman period, which was constructed on the same axis atop the earlier mudbrick wall. The presence of the city wall thus appears to indicate the location of the eastern boundary of the Iron Age I residential structure, defined by it.Room II, serving as the entrance hall of the building, measures 3.6 × 2.8m. Its floor consists of light-colored compacted earth containing traces of the earlier glacis material. In the north-western corner of the room, between the terrace wall (W-5181), oriented west–east, and the western wall of the structure (W-5228), a corner entrance was established, leading into the residential building. This entrance is not marked by a clearly defined threshold but rather by the truncation of the northward continuation of Wall W-5228. While this may partly reflect the state of preservation of the wall, the combination of the possible opening and the curved access corridor suggests with a high degree of probability that this was indeed an entrance.

Approximately 3.3 m east of the residential building, a narrow and dense ash band was exposed, measuring 2 × 6 m. This band lay directly on bedrock and is characterized by numerous ash concentrations, burned fieldstones, and traces of reddish fired material adhering to the face of the city wall, indicating exposure to fire. The ash layer contained pottery shards, cooking pots, and storage jars dated to Iron Age I. It is evident that this area functioned as a zone of daily activity, such as cooking. The location of this daily cooking area, near the southern room of the building and the water cistern, may further support the interpretation of Room III as a work or activity room.

Iron age I finds from the intermediate terrace

At the stepped south-western corner of the Middle Bronze Age IIb city wall, within the interior of the ancient city, fragmentary architectural remains dated to the period under discussion were uncovered. In accordance with the structural remains of the Middle Bronze Age city-which dictated their character and outline-these remains were exposed at a level higher than that of the four-room house abutting this section of the wall from the west.

Within this interior space, two floor levels were identified. To the west, they are bounded by Wall W-5139, representing an Early Roman period wall constructed atop the Middle Bronze Age city wall. Its northward continuation forms a wider wall segment that represents construction from the period under discussion, which likewise utilized the eastern face-facing the city interior-of the Middle Bronze Age wall. To the south, the room is bounded by the city wall (W-5202), and to the east, the complex is delimited by Wall W-5235, which curves eastward as it continues north.As noted, the upper floor abuts walls dated to Iron Age II; however, the ceramic assemblage recovered from its surface is extremely sparse, rendering its dating difficult. The lower of the two floor levels is more limited in extent and is truncated by the western and eastern bounding walls of the space. It appears that the walls in question and the upper floor abutting them are later than the lower floor segment and are dated to Iron Age II, whereas the lower paved level is dated to Iron Age I.

The lower floor segment is composed of compacted yellowish calcareous material and was covered by a thin ash layer. Its exposed area measures approximately 0.50 × 0.50 m. Only three pottery sherds were recovered from its surface: a handle fragment, a body sherd of a cooking pot, and a ribbed shoulder fragment possibly representing a collared-rim jar. These finds date the floor level to Iron Age I. On the upper floor dated to Iron Age II, only scant ash remains were detected. It is possible that the later floor disturbed the Iron Age I ash layer and removed much of it during construction.Adjacent to the curvature of Wall W-5235 (oriented south–north), another floor composed of compacted yellowish calcareous material was uncovered to the north, laid directly on the natural bedrock. To its west, an irregular rectangular rock-cut feature was exposed. A thin ash layer was identified on the surface of this floor. This floor, like the one described immediately to its southwest, was made of identical material. No Iron Age pottery sherds were recovered from this floor segment, apparently because they were removed during the construction of the central courtyard of the later Early Roman residential structure, which lies approximately 0.5 m above it. The presence of a thin ash layer on the lower-level floor in the southwestern corner, and its absence on the higher Iron Age II floor in the same space, may tentatively suggest that this floor also dates to Iron Age I. However, in the absence of associated ceramic finds, such a dating remains uncertain, and it is equally possible that it should be attributed to Iron Age II.

Iron age I finds from the upper terrace

The boundaries of the upper terrace, as well as its elevation, approximately 2 m higher than that of the intermediate terrace were defined and created by the presence of the Middle Bronze Age city wall. As noted above, Area J2 exhibits a stratigraphic sequence representing five occupational periods. Architectural activity over the course of these periods disturbed earlier remains, leaving only partial and fragmentary evidence.The uppermost level of the excavation area is represented by a large-scale structure extending across the entire upper terrace, dated to the Early Roman period. At the south-western corner of the recess on the interior side of the tell, a thick ash layer was uncovered, containing pottery sherds dated to the period under discussion, including fragments of collared-rim jars and cooking pots characteristic of Iron Age I. This ash layer, which has not yet been fully excavated, is bounded to the west by the city wall and abuts, to the east, a lower-level wall (W-5380), oriented south–north and lying below the floor level of the Early Roman storage building that reused it as a foundation. This wall is located approximately 2 m east of the city wall, and its dating to Iron Age I

remains uncertain.

According to Finkelstein's excavations (1993: 49) in Areas H and F, structures abutted the inner face of the city wall, including cellar complexes dated to Middle Bronze Age III.[8] In contrast, Iron Age I remains within the interior of the tell are extremely fragmentary. It is therefore possible that the earlier wall W-5380 dates to the Middle Bronze Age II and was reused during Iron Age I.The ash layer uncovered at the southwestern corner of the Canaanite wall continues northward at the same level and was also exposed in two squares extending the excavation sequence northward (Squares D48–D47). In this area, later disturbance is more pronounced, and within the ash layer-alongside pottery dated to Iron Age I-sherds from later periods, including the Byzantine and Early Roman periods, were also recovered.

In the northwestern corner of Square D47, the junction between Wall W-5236 (oriented west-east), dated to the Early Roman period, and the Middle Bronze Age city wall was identified. Abutting the northern face of Wall W-5326, with the same west–east orientation, is another wall, W-5381. Wall W-5326 postdates Wall W-5381, a conclusion based on the relationships between the walls and the various floors abutting them. It is evident that a floor composed of compacted yellowish calcareous material, located in Square D47, abuts Wall W-5381 from the north. To the south, a white plaster floor abuts the later wall W-5326; this plaster floor served as the bedding for a mosaic floor dated to the Early Roman period. The plaster floor is visible in the eastern and southern parts of the square and lies at a higher elevation than the compacted calcareous floor exposed in the adjacent square to the north.Furthermore, the higher plaster floor covers the top of Wall W-5381, thereby sealing its use (this wall forms a southeastern corner with another low wall, W-5382). Pottery sherds dated to Iron Age I were also recovered on and adjacent to the lower floor level, together with sherds from later periods, including the Early Roman and Byzantine periods.As in the case of the finds from Square D49, the stratigraphic sequence must be re-examined in order to establish the construction phases of the walls under discussion. Two possibilities merit consideration:

1. That the architectural remains-Walls W-5381 (west–east) and W-5382 (north–south)-date to the Middle Bronze Age and were reused during Iron Age I; or
2. That the yellowish calcareous floor was laid at a later stage, either in association with these walls or independently, and that both the construction of these walls and the floor abutting them should be dated to Iron Age I. Should the latter scenario prove correct, it would indicate that the interior urban space on the western side of the tell was also utilized during this period, and not solely the city's outer margins (Figure 6).

Middle bronze age remains

The principal manifestation of the finds known from this period is architectural, expressed primarily through fortifications, including the city wall, glacis deposits, and retaining walls associated with both the city wall and the glacis-internal and external alike. As noted above, this area was first sampled by Finkelstein's expedition.[8,9]The city wall remains are visible in two main locations. One extends along the northern part of Area J2, where it was constructed along a north–south symmetry axis. This section of the city wall, together with a prominent recessed offset, defined the western and southern boundaries of the upper terrace (Photo 4) (Figure 7). In the southern part of the excavation area, along a west–east symmetry axis, the southern wall of the city fortification from the period under discussion is visible. This wall was first partially exposed during the excavations of the 1980s.[8] The city wall defines the southern boundary of the intermediate terrace (Photo 5). In both areas, the wall is constructed of cyclopean masonry-large boulders laid directly on the bedrock-and its preserved height גויכ ranges between 2.0 m and 2.2 m. This construction technique, regarded as innovative, characterizes additional sites such as Shechem, which at the beginning of Middle Bronze Age IIb was fortified with a city wall built of cyclopean stones[18]as well as Hebron and Gezer.(Figure 8) [19]

Figure 6: Figure 3. Area J2: Middle Bronze Age II and Iron AgeI

Figure 7: Photo 4: The east-facing recessed section of the city wall; to its right abuts the southern wall of a storage complex from the Early Roman period. View from west to east.

The length of the city wall (W-5173) in the northern part of the area measures approximately 20.7 m, and its width is about 2 m (see Photo 6). Its continuation to the north-where it joins the line of the city wall known from Area C[8]-and to the south, at its junction with the east-facing recessed offset, has been truncated. As is known from other sections of the city wall, it appears that the wall was quarried in antiquity and reused by builders of later periods as a source of building stones.[8] The truncation of the wall at both its southern and northern ends appears to have taken place during the Early Roman period, in order to provide access to the wings of structures from that period. The southern part, near the recessed corner, was breached for the construction of a storage wing, while the stepped eastern-facing northern end was cut to create an accessible ramp leading to the monumental residential structure, whose builders made use of the city wall as a foundation (Figure 9).

Parallel to city wall W-5173 in the northern part of Area J2, which is oriented south–north, a low retaining wall (W-5394) was uncovered (see Photo 7). This wall measures 6.68 m in length and approximately 1 m in width and is constructed with two distinct faces: the western face is built of large, dressed rectangular stones, whereas the eastern face, oriented toward the city wall, is constructed of medium-sized stones. The retaining wall was found directly on the bedrock, and a single course has been preserved. Examination of the city wall foundations and the northward continuation of the retaining wall suggests that this may represent its original height, intentionally matched to the height of the lower foundation course of the city wall.

Figure 8 Photo 5: The southern city wall from Middle Bronze Age IIa; general view. View from south to north.

Figure 9: Photo 6: The western city wall (W-5173) in the northern part of Area J2: at the center of the image is a section of the wall quarried during the Roman period. View from southeast to northwest

The northward continuation of this retaining wall is visible in Area C (C-432; Finkelstein et al. 1993: 16),[8] and its total preserved length-interrupted by later activity dated to Iron Age I is approximately 20.88 m. In Area J2, the distance between the retaining wall (measured to its western face) and the city wall is approximately 1.4 m, whereas in Area C the distance between the retaining wall and the line of the city wall, prior to the recessed offset in that section, is approximately 5.2m. In both areas, this wall functioned as a retaining wall: in Area C it served to regulate the mass of the glacis and prevent its slippage down the western slope (Finkelstein et al. 1993: 43), whereas in the area under discussion, where traces of the glacis are absent, the wall appears to have functioned as a retaining wall supporting the foundations of the city wall (Figure 10). In contrast to Area C-where a glacis sloping east–west was laid between the city wall and the retaining wall, and within which a residential or storage complex from Iron Age I was constructed-in this part of Area J2 (located approximately 10 m south of Area C) no glacis or descent is visible at all. The absence of a glacis in this sector of the tell may result from the relatively proximity of the city wall approximately 8m-to the steep western slope of the tell, where the natural topography may have served as a natural obstacle in front of the wall. It is also possible that the high likelihood of westward slippage of the glacis deposits, due to the closeness of the wall to the steep slope, rendered the construction of a glacis unnecessary (in Area C, the distance between the wall and the slope is approximately 12 m).The exposed length to date of the city wall defining the southern boundary of the city during this period (W-5214) is approximately 13.4m; its thickness, like that of the northern wall, is about 2 m, and its preserved height is approximately 2m. The western part of the wall in this area (Upper Area J) was first partially sampled in Finkelstein's excavations in the early 1980s[8], and its exposure eastward toward the interior of the tell was continued during the present season. At approximately 60 m to the southeast of the southern city wall's end, in Area N2 (also excavated by the author in the summer of 2011 and not yet published), another massive wall was partially exposed. Its characteristics, the thickness of its walls and the size of its building stones-correspond closely with those known from the city wall segments in the area under discussion.

Figure 10: Photo 7: The western city wall (W-5173) and the parallel retaining wall (W-5394). View from west to east.

The continuation of the wall marking the southern boundary of the city westward was previously unclear, and Finkelstein[8]suggested that it extended further west, forming a corner together with the wall located in the northern part of the area. At this point, a test excavation conducted using mechanical equipment yielded no results.[8] The present excavation data indicate, however, that the city wall does not continue westward and was not quarried in antiquity; rather, it forms a stepped corner turning northward for approximately 3.5m. After this turn, the wall turns westward again for about 2.5 m. and then turns northward once more for approximately 17 m, until it meets the recessed section of the wall, which, as noted, extends 6.5 m eastward into the interior of the tell.The reasons for this deviation in the wall's outline are not yet fully clear. A principal difficulty stems from the complex stratigraphy of the area in general, and of this locus in particular, as well as from the construction of later-period buildings atop the stepped wall alignment. In addition, the natural topography confronted by the wall's builders is not sufficiently understood. The stepped turn of the wall westward and northward, together with its proximity to the recessed wall section located approximately 17 m to the north, naturally constitutes an important architectural reference point within a more demographically sensitive space and may represent a tower-like salient intended to "cover dead zones" beyond the defenders' direct line of sight.[20] As such, this feature likely served as a "seam" and as a solid foundation for later walls

from Iron Age I and the Early Roman period, which are visible atop and adjacent to it and largely obscure, it.

Two hypotheses may be proposed regarding this architectural feature. The first concerns the location of the wall and its surroundings: Area J2, situated at the upper southwestern corner of Tel Shiloh, faces west toward the hill-country road. This strategic position-close to the gently sloping southern spur approaching the tell and to a potential vantage point overlooking the road and its traffic-may have necessitated the construction of a tower-like recessed projection to provide enhanced defensive and observational capabilities for the city. The alternative explanation is technical, suggesting that at this point the planners of the wall were compelled to contend with a topographic obstacle, such as a sharp rise in the bedrock, which imposed engineering constraints.

West of the city wall on the intermediate terrace (now obscured by later construction), and south of the east-facing recessed wall section, a glacis composed of white calcareous material was laid along a north–south symmetry axis. Its dimensions are approximately 9 m from east to west and 13.6 m from north to south (until its truncation by the Iron Age I terrace wall). The glacis is bounded to the north by the east-facing recessed wall section, to the east by the concealed city wall, and to the west by an external retaining wall (oriented south–north) that delimits the westward slope of the glacis (Photo 8). This retaining wall was built along the slope of the tell and has not survived along its entire length. The characteristics of this retaining wall differ between its northern and southern sections. In its northern part, it is a well-ordered wall built of a single course of medium-sized squared stones, whose outline forms a protruding salient extending approximately 2.4m westward from the corner of the city wall, after which it turns south. The southern portion of the wall is constructed as an irregular stone tumble. It appears that both the glacis and its retaining walls were laid upon a layer of dark soil. This area has not yet been fully clarified, and a systematic section will be excavated in the upcoming season to examine the relationship between the glacis and the underlying fill layer.

In a stepped westward section cut through the northern inner part of the glacis, an internal retaining wall built of a row of small stones was exposed (Photo 8). The purpose of this wall was to divide the load of the glacis deposits into two components: an eastern half abutting the internal retaining wall, and a western half forming the westward-sloping glacis that abutted the external retaining wall. In its southern part, the glacis is truncated by the wall of an Iron Age I residential structure, which abuts it from the south and separates it from the later building. The city wall and the western glacis retaining wall together enclose the glacis on three sides-north by the recessed wall section, east by the city wall, and west by the retaining wall-forming a kind of "glacis box" with two slope axes: north–south and east–west.During the Roman period, the slope of the glacis toward the south and west was levelled and served as the floor of two residential rooms in the western wing of the structure, as well as the substrate into which their foundations were cut. The calcareous material quarried from the glacis during this levelling process was reused to pave the southern and central portions of the main inner courtyard of the residential building from this period. XRD (X-ray Diffraction) analyses (my thanks to Dr.Kobi Anker, R&D Judea and Samaria; to Alex Gimburg, who prepared the samples; and to Alexei Kosenko of Ariel University, who conducted the analyses) indicate that the glacis material in this area of the tell consists primarily of crushed limestone (calcite) mixed with small amounts of carbon. The carbon may derive either from a single large-scale fire event, traces of which were not preserved on the glacis surface, or from a sequence of secondary fire events associated with everyday domestic activities, such as hearths, during periods later than the glacis-namely Iron Age I and the Early Roman period.

These results stand in marked contrast to the mineralogical composition of the massive city glacis in Area D).[8] The glacis material in Area D, located in the northern part of the tell, consists predominantly of crushed dolomite with minor amounts of limestone and no traces of carbon. This difference is further underscored by comparison with the lithological composition of the northern platform outside the tell (Area B), which has been proposed, based on its topographic characteristics, as a potential quarry for the glacis material. Its mineralogical composition includes limestone, lime (CaO_2), and several types of potassium salts. This variability, together with the differing fortification characteristics between Areas D and J2-such as wall thickness and glacis construction, will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion section and may indicate different construction phases of the city wall and glacis system: Middle Bronze Age IIa in Area J2 and Middle Bronze Age III in Area D (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Photo 8: The glacis and the internal and external retaining walls. View from west to east.

Discussion

Middle bronze age iia fortifications

It is evident that the fortification system, as observed in different parts of Tel Shiloh-its western sector (Areas J2 and C) and its northern sector (Area D)-differs substantially. Their structural characteristics vary: in Areas J2 and C the city wall is 2 m thick, whereas in northern Area D its thickness ranges between 2.8 m and 3.8m.[8] In Area C, the Middle Bronze Age wall was heavily disturbed by Byzantine construction (E412). Nevertheless, the thickness of the wall's salient (E381), visible north of this wall and forming the northeastern half of the bounding wall of the Iron Age structure (Building 335), is approximately 2 m. Finkelstein[8] notes the difficulty in defining the thickness of the wall segment that served as the foundation[8] for the Byzantine wall (E401), yet he does not specify the thickness of the salient, which is clearly observable in the field. It follows that the characteristics of the truncated wall segment in Area C resemble those documented in Area J2, its continuation to the south. A shared diagnostic feature of the city wall segments in both areas is their construction in the offset-and-recess technique.

In addition, the material and structural characteristics of the glacis differ between these areas. On the western slope of the tell (Areas J2 and C), the glacis is not continuous but is arranged as two "glacis boxes." One, in Area C, was quarried westward from the wall line by Iron Age I settlers, who then constructed their buildings within it (Finkelstein 1987: 201). The second, in Area J2, was laid from the recessed wall segment southward, after it had likewise been cut by the later settlers in its southern part. Between these two glacis boxes, along the city wall

segment (W-5173; c. 21 m long), no glacis was laid. It is further apparent (though not yet fully clarified) that the glacis box in Area J2 was laid over a dark soil fill layer. Alongside the pronounced difference in the massiveness of the wall segments-expressed by their thickness-there is a corresponding and marked difference in the scale and characteristics of the glacis retaining walls. The width of the retaining walls in Areas J2 (W-5394) and C (C-432) is approximately 1m, and in Area D (M-291) it is 0.9m-thus broadly comparable. However, in the western areas of the tell, the retaining wall was preserved as a single course, whereas the retaining wall in northern Area D was preserved to its original height of 3.2m.[8]Moreover, the role of the retaining wall in Areas C and J2 differs in part from the primary functional definition for which it was constructed-namely, to support the glacis. Along the northern part of city wall W-5137 (its southern continuation did not survive due to Iron Age I architectural activity clearly visible in the squares to the south), and in the absence of a glacis, the wall appears to function as a support for the city wall, which was built directly on bedrock, at a distance of approximately 1.4 m. In Area C, by contrast, it functioned as an external retaining wall supporting the western margins of the glacis. An additional important observation is that the pottery associated with the retaining wall in Area J2, both to its west and to its east (between the city wall and the retaining wall), is entirely dated to Middle Bronze Age IIa (see Pl. 1:1), represented mainly by rims of storage jars typical of the period.

Beyond these structural data, it is apparent that the stratigraphy and composition of the glacis deposits in different parts of the tell (Areas C and J2 on the west and Area D on the north), and their overall massiveness, also differ. Finkelstein[9] noted this variability as well, describing the complexity of the northern glacis with its five layers, in contrast to the material and technological simplicity of the glacis in Area C. The glacis deposits in Areas C and J2 are constructed identically, comprising a single layer of relatively fine calcareous material of whitish hue laid directly on the bedrock surface.Finkelstein[9] attributed the structural differences among the various wall segments-particularly those prominent in Area D-to different construction techniques, rejecting the possibility that these represent distinct chronological phases. This assumption may be valid for Area D, yet it does not align with the evidence from Area J2, which forms the southern continuation of Area C. As noted, the thickness of the wall segments in the western areas is 2m. Such relatively thin city walls (in comparison with later phases of the period and with the thicker wall documented in Area D at Tel Shiloh) are known from sites dated to earlier stages of Middle Bronze Age IIa.[20] Examples include Tel Megiddo, where the wall in its earliest phases measures c. 2 m thick, while in a later phase dated to the end of Middle Bronze Age IIa (Stratum XII) it was widened to c. 4m.[20] Similar patterns are known at Tel Beit Mirsim and Gezer.[17]This inference is further supported by a relative ceramic dating based on Middle Bronze Age IIa jar rims recovered in the foundations of the retaining wall (W-5394), both to its west and between it and the city wall of this period to its east.

Iron age I

The Iron Age structure uncovered in Area J2 constitutes, on the basis of its architectural characteristics and the ceramic assemblage—primarily cooking pots and storage jars—a residential building. In certain respects it resembles the buildings (storage structures or public buildings) uncovered in Area C.[8]In both cases, Iron Age I builders "cut into" the Middle Bronze Age IIa glacis material and made use of the "fossilized remains"[21]of that period-namely, the fortification system. The outline of the Middle Bronze Age city wall was a decisive factor in determining the placement of the residential buildings and in shaping their development, orientation, and spatial planning within the site.A similar pattern emerges in both areas (C and J2), which together represent a single settlement continuum along a north–south axis in the western sector of the tell. In Area C, houses were constructed between two salients forming two recesses in the wall (E-401) and within the "glacis box," so that the residential buildings effectively leaned against the recesses of the earlier wall. It is evident that the main architectural mass of Iron Age I buildings in this area (and similarly in Area J2)-including the outer walls and most internal partition walls-was adjusted to the location of the wall's recesses, exploiting them as structural support. Area C lies very close to the steep western slope and is situated on a relatively narrow topographic strip, thus limiting urban development.[8] suggested that the character of the buildings in Area C-the substantial labour invested in their construction involving the quarrying of the Middle Bronze Age glacis, the challenge of the steep slope to the west, the ceramic assemblage rich in storage containers and relatively poor in cooking pots, and the north–south alignment of the buildings-may indicate a public function as "annex buildings" associated with the Tabernacle. The present discussion does not address the location of the Tabernacle, but the strict north–south alignment of the buildings should not be understood as evidence for such an association; rather, it reflects an ecological architectural strategy that exploited an existing structural element (a city wall built with dense offsets and recesses in this sector). The simplicity of the glacis in this area likewise facilitated its removal for the construction of the Iron Age buildings.

A comparable situation is evident in Area J2, where the residential structure was established at the southern end of the glacis box aligned north–south, reflecting a clear selection and exploitation of the stepped outline of the city wall, using this architectural point of strength to anchor the structure and implement its plan. As in Area C, the building was planned in accordance with the structural constraints imposed by the city wall and its outline. At the wall's stepped point, and in alignment with it, the main architectural mass of the structure-expressed especially in its internal walls-was concentrated. It may further be assumed that the combination of the stepped wall and the mass of the glacis, which functioned as a supporting shelf, together provided a stable foundation for the construction and load-bearing requirements of a second story. The internal planning of the ground floor in many four-room houses in the southern Levant was shaped in relation to the need to establish a second story above it.[22] Additional support for the presence of a second story in the present building is provided by the row of three segmental pillars (preserved only as bases) uncovered in close proximity to Wall W-5364, the southern bounding wall of the building (at a distance of 0.4m), set at relatively short intervals of 1.3–2.0m from base to base. This row of pillars, together with the built wall, created a stronger support system for the ceiling of this space (Room III) and for an open area above it.

Further support for this interpretation-regarding the deliberate selection of locations for Iron Age I residential buildings-derives from the architectural characteristics of the city wall continuing to the northeast in Areas H and F.[7] In that area, the wall is straight and continuous and lacks offsets and recesses; based on current evidence, the Iron Age settlement does not extend northward along the wall in these areas. It is possible that a similar conscious choice in locating buildings in the western areas of the tell (Areas C and J2)-even if it entailed substantial investment and human resources for removing glacis deposits-indicates two key aspects. The first is chronological: the western buildings at Tel Shiloh may represent a later stage within Iron Age I and the westward expansion of the early settlement core, which originated in Area D. These buildings exhibit relatively high construction quality and planning complexity, despite the topographic challenge of a steep setting (especially in Area C). At the same time, they lack silos, a common feature of Iron Age I settlements (which may explain the high frequency of storage jars in

Room 335). By contrast, in northern Area D, on the interior side of the wall's crest, a rough stone floor was uncovered with collared-rim jar fragments on its surface, and 14 silos were exposed to the south of this floor. The excavator suggested[8] that the floor served as a base for huts or tents, since no evidence for permanent construction was uncovered nearby. It may therefore be proposed that settlement development in Iron Age I proceeded from east (Area D), representing the earliest phase, toward the west (Areas C and J2).

A second aspect concerns the diachronic exposure of Iron Age I settlers at Shiloh to earlier remains. If the earliest Israelite settlement was indeed located in the northern part of the tell (Area D), which lacks architectural remains representing permanent structures in the earliest phase, the settlers-apparently living in huts[8]-were nevertheless exposed over time to architectural remains left by inhabitants of earlier periods. Such prolonged exposure may have fostered cognitive connections that influenced the architectural perception of builders in a subsequent phase of Iron Age I, the product of which is represented by the buildings in Areas J2 and C. Renfrew[23]addresses the distinction between invention and innovation, emphasizing that the temporal and spatial transfer of inventions and innovations is a significant theme in geography, anthropology, and archaeology. He distinguishes invention from innovation and stresses that innovation is a new creation that has undergone an adaptive process reflecting the cognitive perception of adopters and a conscious process of "innovation choice." A further example addressing the movement of an artefact-or even a conceptual practice—through space may be found in the "circular diffusion model," where glass kohl bottles served as a case study from which broader inferences may be drawn regarding the diffusion of material culture. The model examines the core area in which an artifact was invented and its spread into secondary distribution zones (with time as a variable rather than a constant.[24]

Unlike Area C, which is constrained within a narrow topographic strip, the residential structure discussed here was exposed in the southern part of Area J2, at the boundary between the intermediate and lower terraces, the latter constituting a relatively extensive space (c. 20×50m). This space enabled the Iron Age I settlement to expand southward (partial results from the 2013 season, which sampled parts of the southern lower terrace, indicate that the Iron Age I settlement expanded westward and southward).The elevated southern and southwestern portion of the lower terrace is artificial and represents the result of depositional processes arrested by architectural remains (not yet exposed). The uppermost layers close to the surface of the lower terrace are dated by the ceramic assemblage to Iron Age I, yet it remains possible that builders of this period made use of structural remains dated to Middle Bronze Age II. The terrace outline from west to east appears as a gentle ramp, which may represent an indirect access ramp leading to the city gate in Middle Bronze Age II, one hypothesis being that this gate was located in the southern part of the tell (east of the ramp). A comparable example (thus far regarded as a rare case for the period) is known from Megiddo (Strata XII–XIIIA).[25]At this stage, this suggestion remains hypothetical and will be tested in future excavation seasons at Tel Shiloh.

Given the limited dataset currently available, it is difficult to assess the degree of urban planning and the overall extent of the Iron Age I settlement. One commonly used criterion for evaluating urban planning is the identification of open areas and a street system. For Iron Age I, definitions of urban planning vary widely, ranging from sites with no streets at all-where ecological connections between built units are maintained through irregular open spaces-to settlements displaying a relatively high level of planning.[26] At present, it remains difficult to determine the extent and manner of planning (if any) of the Iron Age I settlement at Shiloh.A possible indication of urban planning may lie in the curved access passage turning northwest that led into the residential structure. As noted, the residence is located on the lower terrace, an extensive level that permitted the expansion of the settlement. A partial probe conducted in a limited area west of Wall W-5230 showed that the pottery associated with it dates to Iron Age I, raising the possibility that an additional structure from this period existed there, separated from the excavated building to the east by a street.

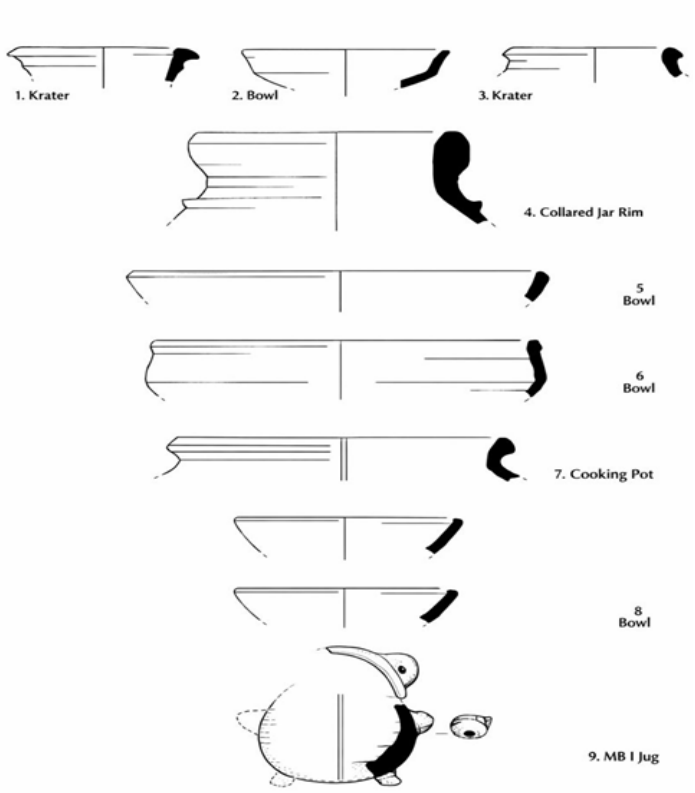

Figure 12: Pl. 1. Pottery vessels from the Iron Age I residential complex and from the foundations of the city wall and retaining wall of Middle Bronze Age IIa.

Conclusions

The data from the excavation season under discussion add significant layers to our understanding of the remains in the western parts of Tel Shiloh on the one hand, and thereby enhance our capacity to analyze the site's overall archaeological record on the other. The evidence indicates that the diagnostic characteristics of the Middle Bronze Age II city wall differ in various parts of the tell. On the basis of a relative ceramic dating (based on rim sherds of storage jars typical of the period recovered between retaining wall W-5394 and city wall W-5173) (Pl. 1), the construction of the city wall in the western part of the tell may be assigned to Middle Bronze Age IIa, suggesting that the city developed northward and eastward in later stages. It further emerges that, beyond differences in the city's fortifications, there is a fundamental difference in the structural characteristics and material composition of the glacis between the western and northern sectors.

An examination of the Iron Age I settlement remains in the north-eastern and western parts of the tell suggests the existence of a conscious spatial–cognitive movement. Its beginning lies in the earliest settlement phase, characterized by the absence of permanent architectural remains and

represented instead by huts founded on a rough stone floor exposed atop the city wall in Area D.[8] This was followed by a gradual developmental transition, reflecting prolonged exposure to "fossilized" remains from earlier periods, which influenced the architectural perception of Iron Age I builders. This perception was shaped through their understanding of the spatial relationships within the given environment, its "frozen" remains-such as the city wall-and their innovative building practices (at present, this hypothesis lacks direct ceramic proof and is based primarily on the architectural evidence from the two western areas). While the degree of urban planning in the Iron Age I settlement at Shiloh remains difficult to assess, the excavation data from Area J2 clearly indicate that the settlement expanded westward and southward. A first indication of possible orthogonal planning may be seen in the curved access ramp leading to the residence, which appears to separate it from another architectural unit to its west, and in the settlement's broader expansion southward and westward (Figure 12) (Table 1).

Table 1: Pl. 1. Pottery

No.	Vessel	Locus	Period	Provenance
1	Jar	5431	**Middle Bronze** Age IIa	Between city wall W-5173 and retaining wall W-5394.
2	Bowl	5123	Iron Age I	Residential building; upper part of the ash layer in the entrance hall.
3	Jar	5309	Iron Age I	Residential building; Room III, floor level.
4	Collared-rim jar	5289	Iron Age I	Residential building; Room I, northern part of the room, on the floor.
5	Bowl	5309	Iron Age I	Residential building; Room III, floor level.
6	Bowl	5309	Iron Age I	Residential building; Room III, floor level.
7	Cooking pot	5123	Iron Age I	Residential building; upper part of the ash layer in the entrance hall.
8	Bowl	5191	Middle Bronze Age I	In the foundations of the city wall at the junction with the foundations of the southern wall of the Early Roman structure.
9	Jug with perforated knob handles and knob feet	5191	Middle Bronze Age I, Northern Family (Amiran 1982: 106)	In the foundations of the city wall at the junction with the foundations of the southern wall of the Early Roman structure.

Conflicts of interest

None.

Acknowledgment

None.

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