

5.3 SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH

5.3.1 Hill Country of Judah

BETH-ZUR

Beth-Zur is identified as modern Khirbet Tubeiqah. It was an important city in Judah located on the old Jerusalem-Hebron road, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem and 4.5 miles north of Hebron. It controlled not only the southern approach to Jerusalem, but important routes to the Shephelah to the west.

Beth-Zur is mentioned in several scriptures. It was on the town list for the territory of Judah (Joshua 15:58 and 1 Chronicles 2:45.), fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11:7) and later was the administrative center of a half-district in the day of Nehemiah (3:16).

The excavations of Beth-Zur took place in 1931 and 1957, under the direction of O. R. Sellers.

Almost 8,000 square meters of the summit of the Tell was cleared to bedrock in 1931. Fields I, II, and III were assigned to the plan of the excavation. Continuous excavation resulted in exposing the Iron Age I and II levels, Middle Bronze, and Early Bronze. Further work was done on Fields I and III on the northeast side of the city and Field II on the southeast. Both campaigns supplemented each other and supported the results of the first expedition.

Remains of the Iron Age I settlement are concentrated for the most part on the north side of the hill. Numerous walls and piers of houses were found for this period during the 1931 dig. In 1957, it was discovered that during Iron

Age I the city area had been reduced in size on the north and a new city wall built. The early Israelite city exhibits poor masonry, the reuse of earlier structures, and a part of the city was destroyed in a fire, probably toward the close of the eleventh century. In the Iron period, sections of the Middle Bronze Age city wall were repaired and restored to use.

There was only a scant number of pottery shards found for the Iron Age II period dating to the second half of the seventh century. The settlers in the time of Josiah apparently made no use of the earlier fortification, nor did they build any of their own. Part of the Iron Age II city was found outside the old wall. The architecture was very limited. Eleven lamelech jar handles stamped with the two-winged symbol and five handles stamped with the rosette were found (Funk 1993:259-261).

DEBIR (KHIRBET RABUD)

Tell Rabud is a mound of about 15 acres that is located on the summit of a rocky hill surrounded on three sides by the Hebron River bed and is 12 km (7.5 miles) southwest of Hebron (Kochavi 1993a:1252).

Debir was originally a Canaanite city. In Joshua 15:15, Debir is called Kiriath Sepher or "town of books." It is included with Anab, Socoh, and Eshtemoa, all of which lay in a five-kilometer radius from Khirbet Rabud (Joshua 15:49). It was assigned to Judah. It later became a Levitical city (Josh. 21:15; 1 Chronicles 6:43-58), and an administrative center in Judah. Debir came under Philistine influence in the twelfth century being destroyed

by them about 1050 BCE during the battle of Ebenezer (1 Sam 4).

The identification of the site with Debir being Kiriath Sepher was first proposed by K. Galling. There is agreement between the archaeological finds and the biblical account of the history of Debir.

Two short seasons of excavations were conducted at the site in 1968 and 1969, sponsored by the Archaeological Department of Tel Aviv University and the American Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem.

They were directed by M. Kochavi. Two trenches (A and B) were opened on the west side of the mound, and a number of burial caves were investigated in the Ush e-Sagra cemetery on the east side.

The first settlement on the mound dates from the Early Bronze Age I. The first wall city dates from the Late Bronze Age II (fourteenth century BCE). Tombs of this period were also found which contained a large collection of imported Cypriot and Mycenaean ware and local pottery of this period.

Iron Age strata were encountered in two trenches. In trench A, the stratum from the period of the Israelite settlement (twelfth century BCE) lay directly above the last Late Bronze Age level. Rock-cut cisterns, as well as a number of tombs were attributed to the tenth century.

A massive wall was erected in the ninth century BCE (stratum III-B). It was revealed in both trenches, and about 900 meters of its course could be traced on the surface of the mound. The wall was some 4 meters thick and enclosed an area of 50 dunams (about 12 acres). The gate was probably erected on the north-east side. The destruction level (stratum II-B), which was distinguished

in all the rooms adjoining the wall, should be attributed to Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BC. In this stratum, a great amount of pottery was found including vessels with lamelech stamps and a seal inscribed "Shalom son of Aha."

The wall was rebuilt in the seventh century and it was widened in places to 7 meters (strata IB, IIA). Khirbet Rabud and the unwalled settlement were almost completely destroyed with the destruction of the First Temple. Only a few buildings, not surrounded by a wall, could be attributed to the period of the return from the Babylonian Exile (stratum I-A). A Roman watchtower on the summit of the mound is the latest remnant of the ancient occupation of the site (Kochavi 1993a: 1252).

GIBEAH

During its first period of Israelite settlement, Gibeah was apparently the capital of the Benjaminites; located on the main road leading from Judah and Jerusalem to Mount Ephraim (Judges 19:11-13). It became the royal residence of Saul after the victory he had with Jonathan over the Philistines. It was renamed, Gibeah of Saul (1 Samuel 15:34). The abandonment of Gibeah is mentioned in the description of the route of the Assyrian's invasion from the north (Isaiah 10:29). Care must be taken when studying about Gibeah because also North of Jerusalem is Gibeon and what is thought to be Geba. These are all within about 8 km (5 mi) or less of each other. See figure 5.1-1.

The modern name of the ancient site of Gibeah is Tell el-Ful, located at a height of about 840 meters near the Jerusalem-Nablus road, about 5 kilometers (3 miles) north

of Jerusalem. This mound was one of the first sites excavated in Palestine. In 1868, C. Warren sent a group of laborers to dig trenches on the north and south sides of the mound and a small pit on the summit. These early soundings had little or no archaeological value for the subsequent excavators of the mound.

The American Schools of Oriental Research carried out excavations at Tell el-Ful in 1922-23 and 1933 under the direction of W. F. Albright, and in 1964 jointly with the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary under the direction of P. Lapp. Albright concentrated in two areas, the hillock on top of the mound, where an ancient fortress once stood, and the eastern edge of the mound, once occupied by an ancient village.

Lapp extended the areas previously excavated and uncovered a part of the western edge of the summit north of the fortress tower. His finds confirmed the latest stratigraphic analysis, differing only at several points with the interpretation of the earlier excavators.

The earliest occupation of the mound seems to have been in the Middle Bronze Age. Five periods of occupation were found from the 12th century BCE to the 1st century CE.

The Iron Age town was founded about the twelfth century. Only fragmentary masonry remains of this first period were uncovered in the fortress and eastern area. This town was destroyed, probably at the hands of the Israelites as described in Judges 19-20. A deep layer of ash marks a great conflagration.

Large roughly dressed stones laid in irregular courses characterized the construction of the first fortress (11th century BCE). Only the southwest corner tower and parts of the adjacent casemate walls were preserved. The fortress

was a rectangle with casemate walls and reinforcing towers, presumably one in each corner. Some casemates were filled with earth and stones while others were used for storage, having doorways into the fortress. A possible reconstruction of the fortress would place its length at about 52 meters, its width 35 meters, and the preserved area of the tower about 13 by 9 meters. It seems probable that Saul built fortress I, however B. Mazar suggested that it was one of a series of Philistine fortresses built to control the principal trade routes and later occupied by Saul. Lapp challenged this by pointing out the fact that no Philistine pottery was found beneath the fort that dated to Saul's construction.

The stone masonry from the second fortress shows improved workmanship in comparison with the previous one. An iron plow tip was found which was similar to one found at Beth-Shemesh. They can be considered as the earliest known iron objects of Israelite date. Lapp found a 3-meter section of wall north of the fortress tower which he assigned to this period. The wall is not in line with the outer fortress wall.

In the late 8th-7th century BCE, a third fortress was erected. The new construction is more like a watch tower (migdal). This fortress was built on and around the southwest tower of the original citadel of the previous period, and well-built revetments protected its outer walls. The first phase (III-A) built in the late eighth century BCE was probably destroyed during the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem in 701 BCE. None of the pottery from the period requires a date before the seventh century BCE, but the situation under Hezekiah demanded a fortification on the summit of Gibeah.

There was a rebuilding and occupation in the seventh century BCE. The summit of Gibeah (III-B) is indicated by the handles of jars bearing the royal stamps of the kingdom of Judah (the flying-scroll type and the rosette design). The Babylonians probably brought this phase to an end in 597 or 587 BCE (Lapp 1993b:445-448).

GIBEON

Biblical Gibeon has an interesting history. In 1838, E. Robinson visited the village of el-Jib, 9 kilometers (5.5 miles) north of Jerusalem, and identified it as the site of biblical Gibeon. The discovery at el-Jib (during the excavations of 1956, 1957, and 1959) produced thirty-one jar handles inscribed with the name "GB'N" has now confirmed the identification of Gibeon with el-Jib.

Gibeon is first mentioned in Joshua 9. David defeated the Philistines from Gibeon on the north to Gezer on the south (1 Chron. 14:16). Solomon, at the outset of his reign, came to Gibeon to sacrifice and there in a dream he chose wisdom above other gifts that God offered him (1 Kings 3:3-15). People from Gibeon returned to Jerusalem from the Captivity and helped rebuild the walls (Neh. 3:7; 7:25). Jeremiah confronted a false prophet from Gibeon in the temple (Jer. 28:1).

The first major excavation was undertaken in 1956 by an expedition sponsored by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania and by the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, with the cooperation of the American Schools of Oriental Research, under the direction of J.B. Pritchard. Work continued into 1962. Results showed that

the site was occupied in the whole Bronze Age (Pritchard 1993:511-512.)

During the early part of the Iron Age I, a massive city wall, 3.2 to 3.4 meters in width, was built around the scarp of the natural hill. Two systems for providing the inhabitants of the walled city with spring water in time of siege were constructed during the Iron Age. The first is a cylindrical cutting into the rock, 11.3 meters (25 cubits) in diameter and 10.8 meters (24 cubits) deep. A spiral staircase was cut along the north and east sides of the pool. At the bottom, the stairway continues downward into a tunnel to provide access to a water chamber which lies 13.6 meters below the floor of the pool. By means of this spiral staircase of seventy-nine steps, the inhabitants of the city had access to fresh water lying 24.4 meters below the level of the city. This may have been the "pool of Gibeon" mentioned in 2 Samuel 2:13. The second device for obtaining water in time of siege is the stepped tunnel which leads from inside the city wall to the spring of the village.

Gibeon was a center for the production and export of wine in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. In the course of the excavations of 1959 and 1960, sixty-three rock-cut cellars were found for the storage of wine at a constant temperature of 18 degrees Centigrade (65 degrees Fahrenheit). The cellars are bottle shaped and average 2.2 meters in depth and 2 meters in diameter at the bottom. The opening at the top averages 0.67 meters in diameter. In the same area, there were found wine presses carved from the rock and channels for conducting the grape juice into fermentation tanks and into settling basins. Wine was stored in jars found in cellars. The jars had a capacity of holding 93 - 94 gallons each. It is estimated that the

sixty-three cellars would have provided storage space for jars which would contain a total of 25,000 gallons of wine. Smaller jars with inscribed handles were used for the export of wine produced at Gibeon. The standard formula for the inscriptions on the handles is "gb'ngdr" and one of the following proper names: "hnnyhw nr'", "'zryhw," "'mryhw." The proper names of "dml'" and "sb'l" also appear in a slightly different formula. Stoppers and a funnel for filling the jars were found (Pritchard 1993:512-513).

HEBRON

Hebron is located about 30 km. (19 miles) S of Jerusalem in the hill country. The site of ancient Hebron is named el-Khalil (Arabic for "The Friend" of God [Abraham]).

Hebron is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with Abraham. In his time the residents of the area were the "sons of Heth" (Hittites) and the Amorites (Gen. 14:13; 23:7-8). Originally, Hebron was called Kiriath Arba ("four-fold city" Gen. 23:2; 35:27; Josh 15:54; Neh.11:25). David was a fugitive here (1 Sam.30:31).

The site was an important fortress for Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11:10). During the Exile, the Edomites probably occupied the city, although it appears from Neh. 11:25 that Jewish exiles did colonize the site to some extent.

Because of the continuous occupation of the site, archaeological work has encountered great difficulties. During 1963-64, a trench was opened in the Wadi Tuffah on the western outskirts of Hebron. This produced only late Islamic fill above the bedrock. Two probes were conducted on Jebel Batraq, to the N of Hebron.

The most important areas investigated, however, were located on the slopes of Jebel er-Rumeide located just W of modern Hebron. Stratigraphic indications pointed to occupation during the Iron Age I and II, as well as the Late Bronze I and before.

Hebron was named on a number of royal stamp impressions found on jar handles discovered when Gibeon (el-jib) was excavated. The seals had a winged beetle on them, four Hebrew letters ("lmlk" ["for the king"]) and the names of four ancient places, Hebron, Socoh, Ziph, and Memshath. For more information see Chapter 4.5 titled Inscriptions. (Ofer 1993:606-609).

JERUSALEM

Jerusalem is located more than 48 km. (30 miles) E of the Mediterranean Sea and 32 km. (20 miles) W of the N end of the Dead Sea. The altitude of the present city is about 2,500 feet above the standard sea level.

The following information on Jerusalem was obtained from an article written by Nahman Avigad (Avigad 1993b:698-724).

Jerusalem is mentioned in the Egyptian Execration Texts of the nineteenth-eighteenth centuries BCE in a form probably to be read "Rushalimun." In the el-Amarna letters, of the fourteenth century BCE, it appears as "Urusalim" and in the Sennacherib inscriptions (seventh century BCE) as "Uruslimmu." The early Hebrew pronunciation appears to be "Yerushalem," as is evidence by the spelling in various inscriptions and by its form in the Septuagint.

The original meaning of its name may have related to the West Semitic elements "yru'" and "slm," which have been interpreted as "Foundation of Shalem." "SLM" or "Shalem"

would, in such Semitic languages, generally be understood to mean "peace" or "completion." A name of a particular "Shalem" is known from a Ugaritic mythological text which identifies their god's name, "Shalem" as meaning "completion." A few hundred kilometers North of Jerusalem at Ras Shamra (Ugarit) there was a god named Shalem, who with his twin Shahar (day star), is known from texts recovered from there. Shalem was represented by the evening manifestation, the Venus "star," and was perhaps a deity worshiped by the Canaanite population of the area. In the fourteenth-century BCE, the Tell el-Amarna tablets identified Jerusalem as "Urusalim." It was also known under the form "Beth-Shalem," which again related to the local deity and his cultic center. The Priest of God Most High was identified as Melchizedek "King of Salem" (King of Peace) in Gen. 14:18 when he met Abram/Abraham. Later in Psalm 76:2, the Tabernacle and dwelling place of God in Judah were identified as in Zion.

The city has been built and rebuilt and modified so many times that great care must be taken to differentiate what is found and how it relates to other construction. The Bible gives considerable information on the various kings and their construction efforts. Therefore the text needs some brief review, including the time periods just before and after the divided kingdom period.

The city was known also as Jebus, an ethnic name of the people (Yebusi, Jebusites) who lived there at least from when the Israelites were settling the land of Canaan down to when the city was conquered by David. Araunah, was apparently the last pre-Israelite ruler of the city. In the Scripture, it relates that "the king and his men went to

Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. David took the stronghold of Zion: the same is the "City of David" (2 Samuel 5:6-7). The name, "City of David," was given to the citadel of Zion by the king himself. "And David dwelt in the fort and called it the City of David" (2 Samuel 5:9; 1 Chronicles 11:7). The early name of "Zion" specified the eastern hill of the city, with its northern summit (Mount Zion), later known also as the Temple Mount, the "mountain of the Lord," and the "mountain of the House of the Lord." This was the area where Solomon built the Temple and the royal palace. The Temple Mount is also identified as Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1), the holy mountain in the "land of Moriah" (Genesis 22:2).

The sources in the Bible provide considerable information on the persistent efforts of the kings of Judah to fortify and glorify Jerusalem.

Special importance seems to have been attached to the establishment of the High Court in Jerusalem by Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 19). Of interest also are the descriptions of the repairs carried out in the city's defenses. Uzziah did much to reinforce the fortifications of the city in the difficult days of Assyria's rise in the mid-eighth century BCE (2 Chronicles 26). Great attention was given to the new citadel which was built to the south of the Temple Mount, between the royal palace and the City of David. A new phase in the history of Jerusalem began under Hezekiah, when the destruction of the kingdom of Israel and its capital Samaria (722 BCE) led to renewed ties between Judah and the remnant of the population of the northern kingdom.

The new political and economic conditions which came about in the days of Sargon II of Assyria (722-705 BCE) again raised Jerusalem to the status of the national-

religious and economic center for the entire nation. This enabled Hezekiah: to achieve a strong position for his country between Assyria and Egypt; to extend the political borders of Judah in the Negev and in Philistia; to take an important role in the trade with Egypt and Arabia; and to carry out religious reforms. However, the struggle of the Assyrian Empire for hegemony over the lands of the West and its conflict with Egypt brought Judah, too, into the surge of war.

Before Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BCE, Hezekiah achieved a number of building projects in Jerusalem. These included: the strengthening of the Millo and the city wall with its towers; the construction of a new wall (2 Chronicles 32:5); and the blocking of all sources of water outside the city. This also involved the diversion of the waters of the Gihon spring through the famous tunnel to the pool of Siloam. See Section 4.3.7.5, titled Jerusalem Water System in this dissertation.

Another phase in the city's history began toward the end of the reign of Manasseh (698-642 BCE) with refortification of Jerusalem, its citadel, and building of a new outer wall (2 Chron. 33:14). Eventually Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, in 597 BCE, with destruction of the Temple and the further exile in 586 BCE.

Excavations of Jerusalem have revealed much about this important Biblical site. The finds have been tremendous dating from the Jebusite period (3,000 BCE) to the Islamic period. The following is a summary of the primary finds that date to or are related to the Israelite (Iron Age) period in Jerusalem:

The earliest settlements at Jerusalem were established on the ridge of Ophel Hill close to the Spring of Gihon in the Kidron Valley. The earliest city wall was near the base of the slope. The wall of large unhewn boulders was first uncovered by Kathleen Kenyon in her excavations of 1961-66. A considerable stretch of wall was exposed by Yigal Shiloh. Both investigators dated the wall to the Middle Bronze Age, about 1800 BCE.

Some scholars consider the Bronze Age city on this site to have been the "Salem" whose king, Melchizedek, encountered the Hebrew patriarch Abram/Abraham (Genesis 14:18; cf. Psalm 76:2). The city behind this wall is undoubtedly the "Urusalim" referred to in the Tel el-Amarna Tablets. After David captured the city in or about 996 BCE (2 Samuel 5:6-9), the Israelites built their city wall along the same line used in the Bronze Age. At some points, they built directly on top of the earlier foundations. When Israelites built their domestic houses on the slopes above, however, they largely destroyed earlier structures as they dug through the debris of their predecessors' dwellings to find solid footing on bedrock for their own new homes. The house walls that appear today behind the city wall are from the 10th-7th centuries BCE, Israelite occupation. The remains of other homes of the period undoubtedly lie beneath the modern homes which now stand on the hill crest.

A 50-foot-high stepped-structure was founded on the rubble of 13th-century BCE Canaanite remains. It has been determined that the stepped-structure itself was built about the 10th century BCE, in as much as Israelite houses of the following centuries were built up against its east face. Its uppermost courses were still in use in the Second Temple Period. It served as part of the defense wall of the

city from the time of Nehemiah's rebuilding in the 5th century BCE through the period of the Hasmonean Kingdom.

In 1923, Irish archaeologist R. A. S. Macalister mistakenly identified the square tower as a fortification from David's time and the stepped-structure as a remnant of the pre-10th century BCE. It was labeled, "David's Tower".

In 1961, Kathleen Kenyon excavated and based on her work she determined that the so-called "David's Tower" had to be dated to the Second Temple Period. After Kenyon's discoveries, it was generally assumed that the stepped-structure also had been built after the 6th-century BCE Exile. The 7th century BCE house walls which Kenyon discovered seemed to be built under the stepped-structure. In 1980, when Yigal Shiloh re-excavated the area, he found that the stepped-structure was much older. He discovered that the stepped-structure continued downward behind the Israelite house walls of a total depth of over 50 feet.

The massive construction now appears to date from the pre-Davidic Jebusite period and to have been re-used in David's and Solomon's building activities. While its purpose is not entirely clear, it may be a retaining wall for an earthen platform which would have stood prominently, high above the city of the time, perhaps as the sitting for an important royal building. It was not part of the outer defense wall of either the Jebusite or Davidic city. Those walls were located by Kenyon about 100 feet down the slope to the east. Whatever the wall's function in the First Temple Period, Shiloh discovered that after the return from the Babylonian Exile the upper portion of the structure, still poking up above the earlier city's rubble, was faced with a thick "glaces" (glaze). The glaces was composed of

alternating layers of pebbles and beaten earth to form a steep slippery defense bastion.

The modest walls and steps in the lower left belonged to a domestic house of the 8th to 7th century BCE and are typical of the Israelite house architecture exposed on the slope. These walls are of natural or roughly hewn small boulders. Roof support inside the rooms was provided either by stacked flat boulders or by monolithic pillars which were topped by wooden posts. Because of the steepness of the ridge slope, retaining walls had to be built to provide horizontal terrace platforms. House builders then sometimes utilized space on two or more terraces for a house, using steps to connect the rooms of the split-level structure.

In the excavation on Ophel Hill a wall dating to the Jebusite period was uncovered. The wall was reconstructed during the later Israelite period and was there when the city was captured by the Babylonians in the 6th century BCE.

Several Proto-Aeolic capitals (dating to the 10th century BCE) were found in the excavation on Ophel Hill. They are similar to those found at Megiddo, Hazor and Samaria. This style of capital has been labeled both "Proto-Aeolic" and "Proto-Ionic" because its shape may have inspired those two capital styles in later Greek architecture. Styles like this with the "lily work" design may be like the capitals of the two special columns which stood at the entrance to Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:19, 22).

In 1867 Charles Warren excavated a water tunnel and part of a connecting shaft that he discovered on the eastern side of Ophel Hill. He determined that this was

Hezekiah's tunnel. For details and illustrations regarding Hezekiah's tunnel and Warren's shaft see Section 4.3.7.5 titled Jerusalem Water System in this dissertation.

In 1970, Nahman Avigad's excavations in Areas A of the modern Jewish Quarter of the Old City exposed a wall that dated to the late 8th century BCE. Houses of the 8th - 7th centuries BCE were also uncovered here. The wall had an attached floor, and all alongside of it were Iron Age sherds.

Further excavations revealed more complete pottery vessels and other objects that showed the level was an Israelite settlement. The buildings were built of undressed stones and had plastered walls. The finer floors were made of a thick layer of crushed and tamped whitening waste material (Hebrew "shlk" something thrown out; Arabic "hawar" whiten). The poorer floors were of beaten clay with a coating of lime. The fill beneath the floors was generally of red earth.

Potsherds were found in a great quantity. The complete vessels were ordinary household items, especially kitchen utensils of the sort usually found on any Judean site of the 8th-7th centuries BCE. These kitchen utensils included: bowls, kraters, jugs and juglets, cooking pots and storage jars. Many of them had an outer red coating and were burnished over their entire surface or in bands, typical of Iron Age II pottery from Judah. Pottery oil lamps were represented by bowl-like vessels-with rounded bases typical in the 8th century BCE, flat bases in the 7th century BCE and high bases in the late 7th and early 6th centuries BCE.

Another category of pottery common in this period was the various figurines and statuettes. The figurines were in

the shapes of animals. Others were statuettes, depicting women supporting their exposed breasts with their two hands. The head is generally molded separately and then attached onto the cylindrical body.

The uncovering of this Israelite wall was a slow process. The main point of interest, the uncovering of the first segment some 40 meters long, running from north to south in Area A, occurred during the 1969-1970 excavation, under the supervision of Ami Mazar. At first an paved area of large stones in several "squares" of excavation was noticed beneath the remains of the Second temple period. When this was exposed, it was proven to be one huge wall. The course of the wall was exposed as far northward as possible, eventually exposing a continuous stretch 40 meters long. Iron Age II pottery was found all along the wall's base. In summary, the Israelite wall is situated on the northern edge of the Jewish Quarter, about 275 meters west of the Western Wall of the Temple Enclosure. Uncovered was a stretch of some 65 meters, 45 meters of which ran on the north-south line. The wall turned westward and continued to the start of the Byzantine Cardo. The date of the wall is the Late Israelite period (8th-7th centuries BCE).

Further details regarding on Jerusalem can be obtained from the article written by Naham Avigad (Avigad 1993b:698-724).

MIZPAH (TELL EN-NASBEH)

Tell en-Nasbeh situated 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) north of Jerusalem is generally identified with biblical Mizpah, an identification suggested by A. Raboission in

1897 and by C. R. Conder independently in 1898. Some scholars, however, reject this identification, preferring to locate Mizpah at Nabi Samwil about 8 kilometers (5 miles) northwest of Jerusalem, and suggest identifying Tell en-Nasbeh with other sites such as Ataroth-Addar. Ataroth-Addar, however, is mentioned only in the boundary descriptions in Joshua (16:2, 16:7, 18:13) and so was apparently a place of little significance. But Tell en-Nasbeh provided some significant cultural finds.

Asa fortified Mizpah with the stones from Ramah according to 1 Kings 15:22. The site's major importance in biblical times was as Judah's northernmost border fortress (Zorn 1993:1098).

Excavations were done by W.F. Bade of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley from 1926-1935. The early occupations of Tell en-Nasbeh dated to Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age I. The site was abandoned and then resettled in Iron Age I (stratum 4) dated to the twelfth century BCE. This was determined by the Philistine pottery and early local forms, such as collared-rim storage jars. Many rock-cut installations such as cisterns, silos, and winepresses appeared to have been dug during this period and continued to be used into the later Iron Age I and II as was determined by the pottery found.

Iron Age II (stratum 3) findings were significant. On the western side of the mound a 2 m thick wall was uncovered. The back rooms of some houses (composed of either three or four rooms) were built against the wall. The town did not change and no destruction level was found for what appears to be almost 400 years. The structures remained the same into Iron Age II (Zorn 1993:1099).

Two towers were erected outside the casemate as reinforcements to the town's defenses before the offset-inset wall was built: one on the west and the other on the northwest. Both contain two narrow chambers. The houses in this period were initially built with walls one stone thick. In later phases, the walls of rebuilding, additions, and new constructions were usually wider and two stones thick. The general plan was to have two rooms (a courtyard and a room) parallel along their lengths, with a shorter room across the back. Larger dwellings have three long chambers, and one in the back. Some had their own cisterns. Some had second stories with stairs. Olive presses and storage facilities in six buildings show that this type of structure was used for industrial purposes.

The major addition to the town plan was the massive new wall and gate complex, which is usually associated with Asa's fortification of Mizpah. It is estimated to have stood 12 to 14 m above bedrock, and at least its lower half was covered with hard plaster. Eleven towers dotted it and they ranged from between 6 to 9 m in thickness, including the wall. Most of the stones used were unhewn and laid in mud mortar, with smaller stones used for chinking. The towers were protected by a stone glacis, and long sections of the wall itself on the western and eastern sides were protected in this way. Retaining walls were found along one part of the eastern glacis and along one section of the northern wall. Three sections of a dry moat were excavated along the perimeter of the defenses.

The gate complex consisted of an outer and inner gate. In the steeply sloping area between the original city wall and the ninth-century wall, a large fill was poured to provide a level surface. In the southern half of this oval

band, a chain of stone-lined bins was dug, creating new storage facilities (Zorn 1993:1101).

Tell en-Nasbeh's cemeteries contained a number of Iron Age tombs. Four were especially rich (5, 29, 32, and 54), yielding almost sixteen hundred objects. Tomb 5 was rectangular, had a court, entrance stairwell, a chamber with three benches, and a rear chamber for funeral deposits. The other tombs were oval shaped (Zorn 1993:1101).

Epigraphic finds include: inscribed ostraca; weights; scarabs; a cylinder seal; seal impressions and weights with seven lamelekh impressions. The major find of Iron II was a seal "belonging to Jaazmiah, servant of the king." He is possibly the servant mentioned in 2 Kings 25:23. Farming in the settlement was apparent by the number of iron plows, knives and sickles found. Other smaller finds include: querns, mortars, pestles, spears, arrowheads (bronze), dishes, fibulae, jewelry, and female pillar figurines. Pottery production was attested by a large kiln found in the southwestern corner of the mound (Zorn 1993:1101). The Babylonian period was identified by the material finds in stratum 2. This included a palace, storehouses, dwellings, and multiple small finds (Zorn 1993:1102).

RAMAT RAHEL (Beth-Haccerem)

Ramat Rahel is located midway between the Old City of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Excavations on the mound itself were undertaken in 1954. After five seasons of excavations the following main occupational levels found were Early Arab, Late, Middle and Early Byzantine, Late Roman, Herodian, and Iron Age III and II (Stratum V-B).

The results of the excavations prompted Y. Aharoni to suggest that the site is to be identified with Beth-Haccerem, an assumption shared by most scholars. Beth-Haccerem is first mentioned in a roster of Judean cities of the Bethlehem district which cannot be earlier than the ninth century BCE.

In the time of Jeremiah, fire signals to warn Jerusalem were sent up from Beth-Haccerem (Jeremiah 6:1). In the days of Nehemiah, Beth-Haccerem ("cerem" means "vineyard") was a district center located close to Jerusalem. The later citadel and the palace, which was described by Jeremiah (22:13-19), were probably built by Jehoiakim, son of Josiah (609-598 BCE). The window balustrades found in the excavations (stratum V-A) are apparently those mentioned by Jeremiah in the above-named passage (Aharoni 1993c:1261).

Most of the remains of stratum V-B (eighth to seventh century BCE) were destroyed during the construction work carried out by the builders of stratum A. Near the southeast edge of the mound the excavators uncovered a section of a casemate wall which probably belongs to this stratum. One of its walls, which had been preserved above floor level, is built of ashlar masonry. On the northern slope of the mound, the excavators discovered a quarry which supplied the building stones and which was covered by the wall of stratum V-A. The early citadel was not large since less than 50 meters north of the casemate wall was an agricultural terrace. At a distance of 100 meters north of the casemate wall were the remains of a house, evidently a private dwelling that had been built at the foot of the royal citadel and was later destroyed and filled with stones when the wall of stratum V-A was erected. Two seal

impressions were found in this house bearing the inscription "[Belonging} to Shebna {the son of} Shahar." The same seal impression is known from Tell en-Nasbeh (Mizpah) and Lachish. Most of the finds made in this stratum came from the fill used to level the ground in constructing stratum V-A. The pottery was of the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. One hundred forty-five jar handles with the royal (lamelekh) stamp were found, most of them of the two-winged type (class C) and some of the four-winged type (classes A and B). More than half came from the rubble fill of stratum V-B, and it appears that they belonged to this stratum and in all probability went out of use before its end. Seal impressions were also found with names, some identical with stamps discovered at other Judean mounds, such as Tell en Nasbeh, Beth-Shemesh, and Lachish. One handle bore two impressions side by side, one lamelech of Hebron with the two-winged symbol and the other a private seal (belonging) to Nera (son of) Shebna (Aharoni 1993c:1263).

This is the first instance that the impressions of royal and private seals were found stamped on the same handle. A Hebrew ostrakon was also found bearing two names, Ahiyahu and Hasdiyahu.

Significant findings from stratum V-A included a new fortress and building that contained an inner and outer citadel.

All the former buildings seem to have been razed to the ground and the terrain of the hill was considerably changed (Aharoni 1993c:1263).

5.3.2 SHEPHELAH SITES

AZEKAH

Azekah is known as Tell Zakariya stands on a high hill at the northern end of a ridge, 9 kilometers (5.5 miles) northeast of Beth Govrin. The mound is some 400 meters above sea level and 117 meters above the Valley of Elah, which skirts the hill on the north and east. The western slope is quite steep, but to the south it is linked to the ridge by a mountain saddle. The mound is flat topped, and only its southeastern section rises approximately 6 meters above the level of the ridge. The top of the mound is triangular in shape and attains the sizable proportions of 330 by 170 meters.

Azekah is first mentioned in the story of the flight of the five kings whom Joshua defeated at Gibeon and "smote them as far as Azekah" (Joshua 10:10-11). During the encounter of David with Goliath, the Philistines camped in the valley of Elah between Socoh and Azekah. The town lay within the confines of the northern Shephelah district of Judah (Joshua 15:35).

Rehoboam (922-915 BCE) fortified Azekah and included it within the defensive system erected after the division of the United Monarchy (2 Chronicles 11:9).

An Assyrian inscription, now in the British Museum mentions Azekah in connection with a military campaign in Palestine. H. Tadmor maintains that the inscription refers to Sargon II's expedition in 712 BCE against Iamani, ruler of Ashdod. The inscription reads, "In the city of Azaqa (a-za-ka-a) his stronghold, which is situated in the midst like a pointed dagger [...] [it was made like an eagle's]

nest and rivaled the highest mountains and was inac[cessible..] [..even for siege ram]mps and for approaching with battering rams, it was [too] strong.." (Tadmor 1958:80-84).

Still later Azekah and Lachish are mentioned as the last fortresses of Judah to withstand the Babylonian onslaught (Jeremiah 34:7). A similar item of information appears in one of the Lachish letters (Number 4), "He would know that for the signal stations of Lachish we are watching, according to all the signs which my lord gives because we do not see [the signals of] Azekah." The town was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon apparently in 588 BCE, a short while before the fall of Jerusalem.

Azekah was excavated from 1898-99 for a total of 12 months in three sessions by F. J. Bliss and R. A. S. Macalister. They published their work in 1902.

The mound was divided into four sections. Section 1 was located in the southwest and the foundations of three towers (each were 6 to 6.5 meters long) were found. The ceramic finds were from the Roman-Byzantine period.

Section 2 was in the southeastern section. Here a rectangular fortress was uncovered with a tower at each corner. Additional towers stood at the middle of the western and northern walls, and perhaps the eastern wall as well. The fortress gate was not discovered, although several doorways inside the towers were found. The entrance levels varied in height, and it seems that the fortress interior was not of equal height throughout.

The foundations of the tower walls and the fortress were submerged in bedrock. The parts beneath ground level were built of chipped stones bond with a mortar made of clay and gravel and set at uneven building levels. Above

ground level the walls were of ashlar with marginal dressing, laid in straight courses. All the towers were attached to the fortress wall from the back without forming an integral part of it, except one. The towers varied in size ranging from 9.15 to 10.75 meters. The tower projections were from 4.75 to 5.45 meters. Bliss and Macalister were both of the opinion that the fortress and towers had been constructed at the same time by different groups of masons. Both dated the construction of the fortress to Rehoboam (928-911 BCE) (2 Chronicles 11:9).

Other Israelite fortresses of similar construction from a later date were found at: Kadesh-Barnea; Khirbet Ghazze; Khirbet Rasm edh Dhab'a which is between Azekah and Tell Judeida; and at Arad. This led S. Yeivin to determine that the fortress at Azekah was constructed in the time of the Judges. He determined that the wall of city plus the repair of the fortress came during the time of Rehoboam. Another significant point was the fact that the excavation produced several stamped handles containing the word "lamelech" and the two winged scarab. This type of seal impression dated to the ninth-eighth century BCE (Stern 1993c:123-124).

BETH SHEMESH

Tel Beth-Shemesh of Judah is near the modern city of Beth-Shemesh, 12.5 miles west of Jerusalem. The city was founded in the Middle Bronze Age and existed, with interruptions, until the Byzantine period. Except for the Bible, it is not mentioned in ancient documents. Its name ("House of the Sun") is apparently of Canaanite origin and is meant to designate a city where there was once a temple

to the sun god. It is called "Ir-shemesh," "City of Sun" in Joshua 19:41. In Israel's tribal lists (Joshua 19:41), Beth-Shemesh was allotted to Dan, but it also appears on the northern boundary of Judah and as a Levitical city in Judah (Joshua 21:16). The city was clearly Israelite in the tenth century BCE, when the Ark was returned there from Philistia (1 Samuel 6:9). It is not mentioned as a site of importance in Israel's history after the tenth century BCE. Rehoboam fortified Zorah instead of Beth-Shemesh (2 Chronicles 11:10), although the town is mentioned as the scene of the battle between Joash of Israel and Amaziah of Judah (2 Kings 14:11, 2 Chronicles 25:21). During the reign of Ahaz, the Philistines seized the city from Judah (2 Chronicles 28:18).

Beth-Shemesh was first excavated by D. Mackenzie for the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1911-12. A Bronze Age city wall was followed throughout its course around the city, and a city gate belonging to it, with three entries, was excavated on the south side of the mound. Four strata were distinguished. The earliest, from the Bronze Age, ended with the cessation of Mycenaean and Cypriote importations. The second stratum was characterized by Philistine ware. The city of this stratum was destroyed by a fire.

The third stratum divided into two phases, the first interpreted as ending with the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BCE, and the second as a reoccupation in the Late Israelite Period (Lederman 1993:249).

Five seasons of excavation by the Haverford College Expedition were conducted in 1928-1933, under the direction of E. Grant.

The city of Stratum II-A dates from the early tenth century BCE when the Tel Erani (Tell esh-Sheikh Ahmed el-'Areini) site was retaken by David. A casemate repair of the old city wall was found. One large structure appears to have been built as the residence for an important person. A large public granary was found in the southeast section of the stratum, consisting of three long parallel rooms surrounded by well-built walls (1.5 to 1.75 meters thick). A large stone-lined silo (diameter, 7.5 meters on the north-south axis and 6.5 meters on the east-west axis) for grain storage was found east of the residence. It was plastered to a depth of about 4 meters, but its base may have been deeper. Its size suggests it was for public rather than private use (Lederman 1993:250-251).

After the tenth century BCE the site was an unfortified village. The building remains of the seventh century BCE were so eroded that little could be made of them. Quantities of pottery from the end of the Iron Age II indicate that the site was destroyed in the Babylonian conquest of Judah. Houses of the period between the tenth and eighth centuries BCE were published as belonging to one level. On the western side of the excavation, there were houses built around the edge of the mound and facing inward upon a street that turned in a large semicircle within the occupied area. Evidences of reconstruction were plentiful. There were vats found for olive oil and dyeing industries, plus a large number of grape presses. A series of tombs dating to the eighth-seventh centuries BCE were excellent examples of late Judean tombs. They consisted of a room in the slope of the rock, entered by a square-cut door with steps leading down into it. On three sides are benches for the burials. At the rear a pit or repository was dug to

store older bones when new burials were made. The entrance was sealed by a stone plug. There were a number of eighth-seventh century BCE seals and royal stamped jar handles. Of special interest was a stamped handle with the inscription "l'lyqm (n)'r ywkn," "Belonging to Eliakim, Steward (na'ar) of Jehoiachin (Yawkin)." It was stamped with the same seal as two stamped handles found by Albright at Tell Beit Mirsim (Lederman 1993:252-253).

TEL ERANI (Tell esh-Sheikh Ahmed el-'Areini)

This is in the Coastal Plain, inland from Ashkelon, opposite the remains of an abandoned Arab village. Excavations were carried out between 1956 and 1961 by the Israel Department of Antiquities. In 1985-88, further excavation was done by Tel Aviv and Ben-Gurion Universities. Iron Age I and II remains were found. The Iron Age I evidence was very scarce although there were significant finds such as Astarte figurines, vessels, and some fortification in the way of a glacis and a square structure. Iron II houses were found with sections of earthen floors. Areas K-M were valuable, with Area K being most interesting. Remains of a pottery kiln and a cooking oven were uncovered. Some pavement was present (Yeivin 1993:417-418 & 421).

GEZER

Gezer is located 30 kilometers (18 miles) NW of Jerusalem, between the Valley of Sorek and the Valley of Aijalon (Hebrew "Ayalon"). Gezer is situated on the last of the foothills in the Judean Range, where it slopes down to

meet the northern Shephelah. It guards one of the most important crossroads in the country, where the trunk road leading to Jerusalem and sites in the hills branches off from the Via Maris at the approach to the Ayalon Valley. It possesses plentiful springs just at the base of the mound and fertile fields in the nearby valleys.

Strong Canaanite defenses were over-thrown by Pharaoh Thutmosis III in 1468 BCE. Egypt then controlled the city. Ten el-Amarna letters from Gezer show the city vacillated, but finally remained loyal to Egypt in the 14th century BCE. At the time of the Hebrew conquest, its Canaanite king, Horam, tried to help Lachish, but was defeated (Josh. 10:33; 12:12). Gezer was not taken by the Israelites (Josh. 16:10; Judges 1:29). Even so, the city was included in Ephraim's territory as a Levitical city (Josh. 16:10; Judges 1:29). Soon after the Conquest, Pharaoh Merneptah (1207 BCE) claims on his stele to have recaptured it. Archaeological evidence indicates that after 1200 BCE, the Philistines controlled the city, possibly with Egyptian approval, which may explain David's battles in this region (2 Sam.5:25).

Gezer became an Israelite possession when the Egyptian pharaoh gave it to his daughter on her marriage to Solomon, who rebuilt the city and its defenses (1 Kings 9:15-17). Excavations (1964-73) uncovered a typical Solomonic gate and defenses.

The first excavations at Gezer were conducted between 1902-1909 by R. A. S. Macalister for the Palestine Exploration Fund (Dever 1993:497). Macalister began at the eastern end of the mound with a series of trenches, each about 10 meters wide, running the entire width of the mound. He dug each trench down to bedrock (as deep as 13

meters in some places). Then, proceeding to the next trench, he dumped the debris into the trench he had just completed, intending, as he put it, "to turn over the whole mound."

From his notion of stratification, he was able to recognize as many as nine strata. His failure to provide trained staff meant that he lost control of the mass of excavated material and he was unable to correlate his strata as he moved from one trench to the next. The tragedy of Macalister's excavation at Gezer was that a mass of rich material was torn from context and published in such a way as to make it virtually useless for reconstructing the history of the site.

The next excavations were in 1934 under the direction of A. Rowe for the Palestine Exploration Fund. The dig primarily exposed an Early Bronze cave and a Middle Bronze tower and inner wall.

Hebrew Union College took over the excavation from 1964-73. The project was directed in 1964-65 by Wright, from 1966 through 1971 by W. G. Dever, and in 1972-73 by J. D. Seger. Nelson Glueck was adviser from 1964 through 1971. A professional staff of thirty was joined each season by some one hundred student volunteers. The material finds were from Chalcolithic into the Iron Age.

In Iron I, strata XIII-XI showed evidence of the Philistine period. The Acropolis, phase 5 (12th century BCE) showed destruction from fire. Pottery, houses, and other structures were uncovered (Dever 1993:504).

The first Israelite level is stratum VIII (10th century BCE). Y. Yadin identified a typical Solomonic four-chamber city gate, almost identical to those previously discovered and published from Megiddo and Hazor.

The gate was exceptionally well built, with foundations in the guardrooms going some 2 meters below the surface and with fine ashlar masonry at the jambs. Plastered benches ran around the three walls of each inner chamber, a feature considered so essential that each time floor levels were raised these benches were also raised and replastered. Roofs over these inner chambers are indicated by a plastered downspout drain at the rear corner of the gate structure. Shortly after its construction about the mid-tenth century BCE, the gate was altered by the raising of the street level and the addition of a large drain, over a meter wide, running down the middle of the street and under the threshold.

The casemate wall connected with the gate has been investigated in field II, and it is also Solomonic in date.

The domestic architecture of stratum VIII was not impressive, perhaps indicating that Gezer was probably under Solomonic control for a short time and was an administrative center (Dever 1993:505).

In field VI, large ashlar identical to those in the gate were found in secondary usage in a citadel wall of about the Assyrian period. This was virtually all that survived from the post-Philistine period, for this reason it is possible that there was a Solomonic fortress or palace on the acropolis.

Several tombs were found that date to the late tenth century BCE. The pottery was typical of the period, with the red-slipped wares of the previous period now hand burnished. Among the small objects, was a small limestone incense altar inscribed with a stick figure who resembles the Canaanite storm god Ba'al, with an uplifted arm grasping a bundle of lightning bolts.

A destruction particularly heavy in the vicinity of the gateway, brought stratum VIII to an end in the late tenth century BCE. This was probably the work of Shishak about 924 BCE, as part of his well-known raid in Judah.

From this period an important inscription was found, it was the Gezer Calendar. It was written in one of the earliest Hebrew inscriptions in the last half of the 10th century BCE. It was perhaps a schoolboy's exercise tablet, giving an account of the seasons of the agricultural year. See further information see Sections 4.5.7.5 (Literacy and Inscription) and 4.10.1 (Farms and Equipment) of this dissertation.

Macalister's careless selection and publication of the material of the Iron Age II, led most scholars, including Albright, to assume that the site was virtually abandoned in the ninth-seventh centuries BCE. However, Macalister's tombs 28, 31, 84-85 upper, and 142 belonged to Iron Age II, and the gap has been closed by stratum VII-V. The occupation was slight during this time and the site declined following Shishak's destruction (Dever 1993:505).

In stratum VII (ninth century BCE), the Solomonic gate was rebuilt. This gate survived until stratum VI was destroyed; probably by Tiglath-Pileser III in the Assyrian campaigns of 734-33 BCE. Two cuneiform tablets found in the early excavations belong to the period of the Assyrian conquest. These tablets are legal contracts from the mid-seventh century BCE and bear Hebrew and numerous Assyrian names.

Slightly later in date are several royal stamped jar handles from these excavations, belonging possibly to the reign of Josiah (about 640-609 BCE) when Gezer was a part of the Kingdom of Judah. Stratum V (late eighth-seventh

century BCE) the Solomonic gate was converted into a two-chamber gate like that of Megiddo III. Shortly after, it was destroyed probably during the Babylonian invasion of 587-586 BCE.

In fields II and VII, stratum V domestic levels were found badly destroyed. In the casemate of the city wall in field II, there was found a quantity of smashed pottery, some of the sherds marked by firebrands, and a spill of calcined limestone (Dever 1993:505).

LACHISH

Lachish is located in the Shephelah and was occupied, with several interruptions, from the Chalcolithic period to the Persian period. Its remains were uncovered at Tel Lachish (in Arabic, Tell ed-Duweir), situated near the border of the Shephelah, about 30 kilometers (18.5 miles) southeast of Ashkelon. In 1878, C. R. Conder proposed Tell el-Hesi as the site of Lachish, and this identification remained unchallenged until W. F. Albright questioned it in 1929, proposing Tell ed-Duweir as its site. He based his identification on Eusebius (120:20), who stated that Lachish was a village in the seventh mile from Eleutheropolis (Beth-Govin) to the Negev (Daroma). An additional fact that contributed to his identification of Lachish was the size of the mound, which is four times as large as Tell el-Hesi. The excavations have given evidence that Tell ed-Duweir is Lachish (Ussishkin 1993:897). Canaanite royal city of Lachish is first mentioned in the el-Amarna letters of the fourteenth century BCE (Amarna letters Numbers 328, 329, 332). In the Bible, it is listed in the account of the Israelite conquest among the five

cities of the coalition that fought against Joshua at Gibeon and was defeated by him (Joshua 10:5). After the King of Lachish was put to death (Joshua 10:26, 32-33), it was included in the territory of Judah (15:39). It was listed among the cities fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 11:9). Amaziah, King of Judah, fled to Lachish from a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem "but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there" (2 Kings 14:19; 2 Chronicles 25:27). During Sennacherib's expedition to Palestine in 701 BCE, Lachish played an important role in the defense of the country. The siege of the city and its conquest are described in detail in parallel passages in the Bible (2 Kings 18; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 36) and in Assyrian sources (please see reliefs from Sennacherib's palace under Inscriptions).

From 1932-1938 the Wellcome-Marston Expedition spent an average of six months of the year at the site lead by J. Starkey. This came to a tragic end with Starkey's murder in 1938. He was succeeded for the remaining months of the season by L. Harding. Olga Tufnell and other members of the expedition, with contributions from other experts, prepared the publication of the excavation which was completed twenty years later in 1958 (Ussishkin 1993:897).

Lachish is not mentioned in the Bible from the days of Joshua to the time of Rehoboam. It is interesting that during this period there was a lack of much building activity on the mound between the twelfth and tenth centuries BCE. The northwest corner of a Bronze Age palace was embedded in the charred ash of its destruction. The builders of palace A (level V) used this destruction level for the foundation of an Iron Age building. This building

had a 6-meter brick wall around it that was partially cleared on the western edge of the mound and is attributed to the time period of Asa. The wall was exposed in a section north of the gateway and continued for a short distance. The extension of the citadel to the south for an additional 46 meters (Palace B) may have been initiated by Jehoshaphat during his recorded building activities in Judah. After this time a strip was added along the east wall of Palace B, forming the foundation of an enlarged building or a separate porch (Palace C), which underwent several phases of construction and repair. There was a flight of steps leading up to it, and under these stones two earlier stairways were partially preserved. Nothing remained of the building or buildings that once stood on the podiums (palaces A-C) except some patches of lime floor, but quantities of stamped jar handles found on the southern end suggest that a building had stood nearby in the eighth or seventh century BCE (Ussishkin 1993:907).

South of the citadel, a large area was excavated within the walls (levels III-II). The ruins were buried under debris, which varied in depth from a few centimeters to a meter-and-a-half, according to the slope of the ground. Two groups of houses were found. The first stood high on the south slope of the citadel, descending in terraces to a point where erosion had destroyed even the floors. Here also, erosion swept the higher ground almost clear of buildings and brought an accumulation of debris down toward the gate. This preserved the other houses near the gate to a substantial height. Masses of broken jars, some with stamped handles, were found in these rooms, which were poorly built of stone and brick with mud or cobbled floors, all deeply covered with charred ash.

Biblical and Assyrian sources both show that Lachish fell to Sennacherib about 700 BCE. There were no signs of destruction in the buildings of level III and VI. The brick wall, which was apparently built during the reign of Asa, continued in use until the time of Hezekiah. The gate towers, which may have stood for more than a century, were then buried under their own collapsed superstructure, over which other roadways passed. In the reconstruction after 700 BCE, a stone gateway replaced the underlying brick gate towers and the space on each side of the road was left clear. Not after later, further disaster came upon the city. Burning covered the threshold of the level II gate, and a charred heap just inside seems to represent the remains of a wooden door. (Ussishkin 1993:907-908).

In a further stage of defensive preparation, the width of the doorway was reduced. Remains between the inner and outer gate built over the once free-standing bastion were equally affected. The destruction of level III is attributed to the Babylonian expeditions. The second phase of level II (containing the famous Lachish ostrica) is dated to a time between the Assyrian and the Babylonian expeditions. The pottery from level III becomes especially significant because the other great cities fell to the Assyrians two or three decades earlier. Only at Lachish is there an excavated destruction level dating from the end of the eighth century BCE. (Ussishkin 1993:909-910).

The water system at Lachish was investigated by Starkey from 1935 to 1937. The "Great Shaft" of this water system remains one of the enigmas of this site (Tufnell 1953:158-63). It was hewn adjacent to the line of fortifications at the southeastern corner of the settlement. Starkey examined it by tunneling along its

walls and found that it measured 22 m x 25 m and is about 25 m deep. Since no tunnel was found at the bottom, the excavator assumed that its hewing was never completed (Tufnell 1953:162). It can be assumed that the hewers intended the shaft to reach down to the level of the water table, 40 m to 50 m below the present surface. This level was known on the basis of the level of the ground water in the well mentioned below.

The well uncovered at the northeastern corner of the mound is one of the few examples of deep wells found in an Israelite city (Ussishkin 1993:906-907). The sole chronological datum concerning the well is the fact that it is integrated within the fortification system of the Iron II city. The "Great Shaft" was hewn, during the construction of Stratum III in the days of Hezekiah, the late eighth century BCE. It can be assumed that the large shaft was abandoned after the destruction of Stratum III (701 BCE). The layers of stone discovered at the top of the depression, which remained on the site of the shaft after it had become filled with debris from the destruction of the city, indicate a later, secondary use as an open reservoir for rainwater in Stratum I of the Persian-Hellenistic periods. (Ussishkin 1993:906-907).

MARESHAH (Marisa)

Mareshah (Marisa) is identified with Tell Sandakhanna, located about 30 kilometers (18.5 miles) east-southeast of Ashkelon. This identification is based on references in the Bible and in Josephus where Marisa is mentioned in the vicinity of towns in the eastern Shephelah.

It is listed among the cities of Judah (Joshua 15:44) and in the "genealogies" of the settlements (1 Chronicles 2:42) as belonging to the Calabites. During the reign of Rehoboam, Mareshah was one of the fortified cities defending the southwestern approaches of Judah. Zerah the Ethiopian, who invaded the country in the time of Asa, reached Mareshah (about 900 BCE), but was defeated in the major battle fought in the Valley of Zephathah, located north of Mareshah (2 Chronicles 14:8-9) (Avi-Yonah 1993:948).

Tell Sandakhanna was partially excavated in 1900, by F. J. Bliss and R. A. S. Macalister, for the British Palestine Exploration Fund. The mound is about 152 meters in diameter. At its summit (357 meters above sea level) was found a stratified accumulation 3.6 to 6.1 meters thick. The excavators identified three strata: two Hellenistic and one Israelite.

They first excavated a network of squares (3 square meters) until they discovered walls directly beneath the surface. The Hellenistic city in its last phase was almost square in plan (158 meters from east to west and 152 meters from north to south) and covered an area of about 24 dunams. It was surrounded by a wall with square and rectangular towers (Avi-Yonah 1993:948-949).

In an earlier phase, the city was surrounded by a different wall which enclosed a slightly larger area of the early phase of the Hellenistic city. Under the Greek residences, at a depth of 3 meters was found a stratum from the Israelite period. The finds from this stratum include seventeen lamelech seals. Eleven were of the double winged type and six of the four-winged type. These were from various cities: Hebron, three; Mmst, three; Socoh, six;

Zif, two; and three seals bearing illegible names (1993: Avi-Yonah 950).

TELL BEIT MIRSIM, Debir or Kirjath-Sepher

The location and identification of the Debir which is mentioned in the Bible has been a somewhat more complex problem to solve than have the locations of many other sites.

Beit Mirsim occupies about 3 hectares (about 7.5 acres) and is about 497 meters above sea level. The history of occupation has proved to coincide with the biblical narratives related to Debir. According to the biblical text, Debir was a royal Canaanite city in the southwestern hills or the southern Shephelah, on the edge of the Negev.

In 1932, soundings to bedrock were made in thirteen places, distributed around the periphery of the site at points where the native rock is not visible today. They showed a thin occupation in the Early Bronze Age, followed by a reoccupation not later than the tenth century BCE and ending not later than the early sixth century BCE. This was followed by a Roman and Byzantine settlement (Albright 1993:177).

Some scholars had a proposal that Debir was located south of Hebron at a site known as Khirbet Tarramah, which is near 'Ain ed-Dilbeh. This was because in Joshua 15 and Judges some have thought it was referring to a place in the high hill country, south of Hebron. When Tarramah (in Aramaic, Tura Rama means High Hill) was excavated the pottery was almost exclusively Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine. In the story of the capture of Debir by Othniel, it is clear that Debir was not far from Hebron. The account

of the conquest of the towns of Judah by Joshua in 10:36 relates that Joshua went up from Eglon to Hebron, from which he returned to Debir. This shows the location of the latter to be south of the direct line of march from the neighborhood of Tell el-Hesi to Hebron, since all the definitely located towns of the sixth district of Judah, in which Debir was situated, are much to the south of this line.

Joshua 11:21 suggests a location for Debir between Hebron and Anab, which was in remarkable agreement with the actual location of Tell Beit Mirsim. The "gullot" (basin of water) of Joshua 15:19 and Judges 1:15 are clearly located in the valleys above and below the town. They correspond precisely to the modern wells leading down into underground basins fed by springs that are now subterranean.

Tell Beit Mirsim is located at the edge of the hill country at a point where the hill country and the Shephelah merge, and it is also definitely on the edge of the Negev where Joshua 15:19 and Judges 1:15 place it. Now the identification of Tell Beit Mirsim with Debir is very strong. The finds also give strong validation that Tell Beit Mirsim is Debir.

Debir is in the sixth district of Judah (Joshua 15:48-50). The inclusion of Debir in the list of priestly towns (Joshua 21:15, 1 Chronicles 6:58) proves that in the early Monarchy it was an important place (Albright 1993:177-178).

Raphael Greenberg presented an update on the excavations. The following are some of those comments and evaluations.

Albright's identification of the site with biblical Debir (Jos. 15:15-17) has been called into question, most convincingly by M. Kochavi, who identified Debir with Khirbet Rabud. The Late Bronze

to Early Iron Age transition at Tell Beit Mirsim, I proposed viewing the strata C-B sequence as that of an indigenous Canaanite settlement in gradual decline. The pottery in the silos, which characterizes phases B1 and B2, continues Canaanite traditions, with a small amount of Philistine ware, probably imported from the coast, appearing in B2. The establishment of an Israelite presence at Tell Beit Mirsim is to be associated with the construction of the B3 fortifications under the United Monarchy. Albright attributed the destruction of the Israelite city (stratum A2) to the Babylonians, primarily based on the seal attributed to a servant of Jehiachin. However, ceramic and epigraphic studies by Y. Aharoni, O. Zimhoni, and D. Ussishkin established that the destruction should be attributed to the Assyrian campaign of 701 BCE. There is slight ceramic and stratigraphic evidence for a partial reoccupation of the site in the seventh or early sixth century BCE (Greenberg 1993: 180).

After Beit Mirsim was identified in 1924, M. G. Kyle, President of Xenia Theological Seminary, proposed a joint excavation by his institution and the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. Four sessions were conducted from 1926 through 1932. The general coordinator and adviser was C. S. Fisher.

Tell Beit Mirsim was first occupied about the twenty-third century BCE, during the Early Bronze Age III-B period. Occupation levels were found and dated to all stages of the Middle Bronze and Late Bronze periods. The Iron Age period was identified in stratum A-1. The houses were solidly built of stone with quite massive stone pillars supporting the second floor and roof. A series of successive reconstructions showed that there had been at least four phases of construction between the ninth century and the early sixth BCE. The west tower of the city was dated to the ninth century BCE, since the foundation of the west tower straddled the tenth-century BCE wall. The east

gate of the city is dated to the seventh century BCE. The date of the final destruction of Tell Beit Mirsim is fixed by the find of two jar-handle stamps with the impression of the seal of Eliakim, steward "na'ar" of Jehoiachin "Yaukin", just as in the ration lists of Nebuchadnezzar from about 592 BCE. An identical stamp was found by E. Grant at Beth-Shemesh and a fourth was discovered by Y. Aharoni at Ramat Rahel in 1962 (Albright 1993:180).

NORTHERN NEGEV 5.3.3

ARAD (Tel' Arad)

Arad, an important city in the Negev in the Canaanite and Israelite periods, has been identified by most scholars with Tel' Arad, situated about 30 km (18 ½ miles) east-northeast of Beersheba. It is mentioned in the Bible as a fortified Canaanite city in the eastern Negev. The king of Arad, which dwelt in the South, prevented the Israelites from penetrating directly from the Negev into the Judean Mountains (Numbers 21:1, 33:40). Arad appears in the list of the cities of southern Judah (Joshua 15:21). In Pharaoh Shishack's list (see Inscription reference, chapter 4.5) of the cities drawn up after his campaign in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, the following mention is made. "Hgrm 'rd rbt 'rd n-bt Yrhm" (Shishack's inscription section numbers 107-12). The translation of that is, "The hagrims ["the citadels"] of greater Arad and of the house of Jeruham (Jerahmeel)." (Aharoni 1993a:75).

The mound, which retained its ancient name (Tell' Arad in Arabic), dominates the plains of the eastern Negev. The

small mound (upper citadel) with its deep stratification rises prominently above the lower city and an extensive area of low hills. Because the site lacks a spring or well, the water supply depends entirely upon the storage of rainwater in cisterns. The site stands on a hill of Eocenic rock that contrasts strongly with the white Senonian rock characteristic of the area. Since the Eocenic rock is impervious to water, it was possible to dig cisterns capable of retaining water. The site was therefore well suited for a settlement in antiquity.

The excavations at Arad were carried out in 1962-71. The directors included Y. Aharoni, R. Amiran, and M. Kochavi.

This fortified city was built on 22 acres and lies on the moderate slope-shaped depression eroded into the sides of a chalky hill.

The early occupations of Arad dates back to the Chalcolithic period (stratum V) and Early Bronze which produced a large amount of material finds. This early site was abandoned about 2650 BCE (Aharoni 1993a:82). In the Iron Age, the clan of Hobah, the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, settled in the Negev of Arad. The clan built a cult place, around which the settlement developed in the course of time. A new settlement was established on the high mound on the southeastern ridge surrounding the ancient city. There were twelve strata uncovered. The Iron Age included:

Stratum	Period	Dates (BCE)	Buildings
XII	Iron I	12 th - 11 th cent.	Settlement
XI	Iron II	Late 10 th cent.	1 Citadel
X	Iron IIB	9 th cent.	1 Citadel

IX, VII Iron IIC 8th – 7th cent. 4 Citadels
& VI

The six Israelite citadels are the largest and strongest structures on the site. The earliest ones measured about 50 by 55 m; the later ones were smaller. The earliest fortress (stratum XI) was surrounded by a casemate wall with projecting towers at the corners and two towers on each side. The entrance was at the northeastern corner. This citadel was destroyed in Shishak's campaign in 925 BCE. The stratum X fortress, ninth century BCE, was surrounded by a 4 m thick solid wall, with small insets at intervals of 9 to 10 m. Its entrance was in the middle of the eastern side. The wall continued in use in strata IX to VII. In stratum VII, only part of the thick wall was reused and parallel inner walls were added to reinforce it. The last Israelite fortress (stratum VI) was also encircled by a casemate wall with projecting towers, similar to the citadels at Kadesh-Barnea and Horvat Uza. In a number of stratum VI walls, dressed stones were found that were trimmed with a toothed adze, while the center was left rough and unworked. These stones appear to have come from walls of earlier strata.

The large quantities of vessels and other artifacts found on the floors of strata X and IX indicate the economic prosperity of the periods. There were numerous perfume bottles in stratum IX which showed a well-developed perfume industry. The destruction of this level is attributed to an Edomite raid in the campaign of Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah, king of Israel, against Judah (734 BCE, 2 Kings 16:5; 2 Chr. 28:5)(Aharoni 1993a:82).

The stratum VIII (Iron II-C) destruction was related to Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BCE. Some 90 percent of the pottery in this stratum resembled that which was found at Lachish (stratum III) and Beersheba (stratum II). Stratum VI was destroyed around 587-586 BCE (Aharoni 1993a: 83).

In strata XI (Iron IIA) and IX (Iron IIC), the citadel area contained storerooms and industrial installations, as well as residential quarters. A hoard of silver ingots and small pieces of jewelry was found in a small jar in the industrial area of stratum XI. This is the same area where the perfume industry was found (stratum IX of Iron II-C).

A sanctuary was found in the northwest corner of the citadel. Construction was determined to be during the Iron II-A period (stratum XI). Its beginnings can be traced to the bamah and altar erected here in stratum XII. The sanctuary consists of three successive rooms: the hall (a broad room); the sanctuary, containing a small niche facing west; and the holy of holies. The temple is oriented east-west, as was the Solomonic Temple in Jerusalem. The walls of the temple and the holy of holies were covered with thick plaster, some of which was in very good condition. The stele was one meter high. Its sides were smoothed and painted red. Two other stones, found built into the walls of the holy of holies, were no longer used as massebot in the area's last stage.

Standing on the last step were two stone incense altars (0.4-0.51 m high). Burned organic matter was found in their shallow, concave tops, probably the remains of incense of vegetable origin. In the courtyard was a 5 by 5 cubit altar (2.5 by 2.5 m), built of bricks and unhewn field stones. Its top was a plastered surface with a

channel to drain the blood of the sacrifices. To the left of the stratum X altar, a built cell with a door led to the courtyard. In this cell was a clay incense stand with lotus-leaf decoration. At the foot of the altar two small, incised flat bowls were found. On one was the Hebrew letters translated as holy ("qds") and on the other a ritual symbol similar to those found on Herodian stone vessels from Second Temple period in Jerusalem. In its size and construction the Arad altar resembles the altar in the sanctuary described in Deut. 27:5 (Aharoni1993a:83). See Section 4.6.3.3, Arad and Cultic Centers, of this dissertation.

This temple at Arad was the first Israelite temple discovered in an archeological excavation in Israel (Aharoni 1993a:83). It remained in use until the time of Hezekiah's religious reform (stratum VII).

There were one hundred and seven Hebrew ostraca written in ink found at Arad. Some of the ostraca from the temple had names of priestly families, Pashhur and Meremoth, mentioned in the Bible (Jer.20:1; Ezra 8:33). Five seals of the commanders of the citadel were found. A large proportion of the epigraphic material is dated to about 600 BCE. One letter referred to the "the House of YHWH." See Section 4.5.7.9., Arad Ostrakon 18, in this dissertation.

The pottery from the Israelite settlement through each level showed that vessels maintained the same forms for centuries, with little changes. A chronology of pottery was constructed. The earliest strata had red-brown slip and hand burnishing on bowls and jugs. At the beginning of the period most rims were straight or thickened some with bar handles and some with long sides.

As the years went by, the bowls changed from folded rims in stratum X to bowls with depressions beneath the rims in stratum VII. These were all typical of Judah and the Negev in the ninth to sixth centuries. Cooking pots also showed gradual changes in shape. In the early periods, they were shallow with profiled or carinated rims, then they changed to single-handled jug-pots (Aharoni 1993a:84-85).

UZA Horvat Uza (Khirbet GhazzeH)

This is a Judean fortress, just south of Arad. Horvat Uza (Khirbet GhazzeH) is situated at the eastern end of the Arad Valley, some 8 km (5 miles) southeast of Tel Arad. It overlooks Nahal Zina and controls the ancient road linking this region to Edom and the Arabah.

The site consists of a fortress with towers, whose beginnings date to the Iron Age. Near it, at the top of the site, a small Iron Age settlement was found. Upon studying the pottery, Aharoni, identified the Iron Age levels. The primary period was the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. A small quantity of pottery was from the tenth and ninth centuries BCE. According to A. Lemaire, this was the site of biblical Kinah (Josh. 15:22). Based on the finding of the excavations it seems that this is a favorable identification. Excavations were carried out between 1982-88. These were primarily done by a joint expedition from the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University and Baylor University.

The fortress dated to the seventh century BCE. It was 51 m by 42 m and had a wall around it (1.5 m thick) with ten square outer towers; four at the corners of the fortress; two in the entrance of the southern wall; one in

the middle of the eastern wall; two flanking the gate in the northern wall of the fortress; and one in the western wall. The gateway is 3.7 m wide and 6.5 m long; its left wing consists of two chambers; the first is 1.5 m long and the second is 3 m long. In the floor of the gateway was a drainage channel covered with stone slabs. The excavated parts of the fortress's courtyard revealed rooms abutting the wall (casemates) and a complex of buildings and narrow streets. A platform, perhaps a bamah (high place) was found near the gate.

Some of the rooms, particularly in the gate courtyard, contained large accumulations of charred wooden beams and other indications of a violent fire. Two cisterns were found outside the fortress. Pottery characteristic of the Negev at the end of the First Temple period was found both in the fortress and in the settlement. There were a variety of bowls, including some fine-quality red-slipped and burnished ware, testifying to a sophisticated technique. Among the finds were twenty-nine ostraca found in the first chamber of the gate. The ostraca were inscribed in Hebrew, but one was in Edomite. The translations gave reference to military direction, name lists and distribution of supplies (Itzhaz 1993:1495-1497).

TEL IRA (KHIRBET GHARA)

Tel Ira is located in the Beersheba Valley. The site covers an area of 6 acres. It is surrounded by an Iron Age solid stone wall, whose entire length has been exposed (1.6-1.8 m thick). It was built of local flint and hewn limestone set in segments. Its biblical identification has remained unclear, although it has been thought to be

equivalent with Jebabzeel in Neh. 11:25. Excavations were conducted at Tel 'Ira from 1979 to 1987 primarily from Tel Aviv University under the direction of M. Kochavie.

Stratigraphic sequence of the Iron Age:

Stratum	Period (BCE)	Findings
VIII	Iron II (10 th -9 th cent.)	Pottery, tomb
VII & V	Iron II (8-7 th cent.)	Fortified city
VIII	Iron Age II	Pottery sherds

The Pottery sherds from stratum VIII were found in various parts of the site. One Tomb contained intact vessels.

Stratum VII was noted for the fortified city which was found. In its eastern part, the city gate and some public buildings were uncovered; private houses were found in the other areas. The city gate in the east wall consists of six chambers and two towers (Building A). The northern wing and parts of the passageway have been cleared. Its total length is 18 m, the width of one wing is 6.5 m. and the thickness of the wall is 1.6 m. Within the passageway, remains of a drainage channel were found.

The structures were found in areas labeled A, B, C, and E. In area B, four rooms and a courtyard were found and destruction by fire was evident. A building in area C was a storehouse and it included two rooms. Two floors were found in area E's casemate rooms (building D) and in the casemate area C's offset wall.

On the necropolis about twenty-five tombs were discovered. The skeletal remains were uncovered, but the material finds were limited due to apparent looting.

Strata VII and VI revealed a number of material finds. There was Israelite pottery of the type common in Judah, Edom, and bowls imitating Assyrian style. There were

shekel weights and a single inscribed Hebrew "pym" weight. The epigraphic material includes an ostrakon inscribed with Hebrew which gave a list of individuals who lived in one of the city's houses. Two jar fragments contained personal names. Metal objects included a plow point, a sickle and arrowheads. The tombs of the period did produced some silver earrings and bronze bracelets (Beit-Arieh 1993a:643-646).

TEL BEERSHEBA

Tel Beersheba (Tell es-Saba') is located east of the modern city of Beersheba, on the road to the Bedouin settlement known as Tel Shelva. The mound covers an area of about 2.5 acres.

Beersheba is known in the Bible as the chief city of the Negev and as a sacred site. It is geographically the southern boundary of the Land of Israel, "from Dan to Beersheba" (Judges 20:1, 1 Kings 4:25.) In Genesis 21, 26, 28, and 46, it is mentioned as the holy place where God appeared. It was assigned to the tribe of Simeon (Joshua 19:2, 1 Chronicles 4:28) and appears among the cities of the Negev of Judah (Joshua 15:28). Samuels's sons judged the people at Beersheba (1 Samuel 8:2), and Elijah passed it on his way to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:3). In the days of Amos a temple was there which was condemned by the prophet (Amos 5:5 and 8:14). Josiah brought priest to Jerusalem "from Geba to Beersheba" (2 Kings 23:8). The final mention of the city is when the "Daughters of Judah" returned from Babylon, the province then spreading "from Beersheba unto the Valley of Hinnom" (Nehemiah 11:27,30).

The Archaeological Institute of the Tel Aviv University, under the direction of Y. Aharoni started excavation on the mound in 1969. In 1972 the site went into its fourth season. It was during this time that the main quarters of the last Israelite city were cleared.

The entire mound was settled only in the Israelite period, and its strong fortifications produced its distinctive form. Sherds of the twelfth to eleventh centuries BCE, found in the deepest layer (stratum VI), indicated that the mound was settled in the period of the Judges, although it was apparently unwalled at that time (Herzog 1993:167-168).

Stratigraphical Sequence at Tel Beersheba Iron Age

Stratum	Period	Century BCE	Significance
I	Iron II	Early 7 th	Reconstruction
II	Iron II	Late 8 th	Administrative City (rebuilt)
III	Iron II	9 th -8 th	Administrative (casemate wall)
IV	Iron II	Late 10 th -9 th	Administrative City (rebuilt)
V	Iron II	Mid-10 th	Admin. City (solid wall)
VI	Iron I/IIA	Early 10 th	Temporary camp
VII	Iron I	Late 11 th - Early 10 th	Enclosed settlement
VII	Iron I	Second half of 11 th	Unfortified settlement
IX	Iron I	12 th or 11 th	Pits and huts

Stratum V (10th cent. BCE) uncovered a solid wall 4 meters thick with insets and offsets. There was a ramp

covered with a glacis made of layers of brick fragments and ashes, to a depth of almost 2 meters. This fortification was also used in the following stratum (IV), which was destroyed at the beginning of the ninth century BCE.

Stratum III, ninth century BCE, produced a second wall, this was casemate in type and was built in part over the foundations of the solid wall from the earlier period. Its dimensions are standard ones (circa 1.6 meters for the external wall and circa 1.1 meters for the internal wall). Over the older glacis a new one was laid down, composed of layers of earth and alluvium. This new glacis was founded on heavy limestone revetments joined by braces to the earlier layers. The upper part, which was plastered, met the city wall horizontally. The casemate wall continued to be used throughout stratum II, whose destruction is dated at the end of the eighth century BCE. After its ruin, a final attempt was made to reconstruct the fortifications. A retaining wall consisting of layers of pebbles and earth was erected inside the casemate wall (Herzog 1993:170-171).

The city gate was discovered at the southern edge of the mound. Two gates were uncovered, on top of the other, corresponding to the two city walls. The early one, measuring circa 21 by 21 meters and contemporary with the solid wall (strata V - IV), is wide and massive. It has two guardrooms and a tower. Its foundations are 5 to 6 meters thick. Between the tower and the threshold of the gate was a square in which were found remains of a platform with a carefully constructed incense altar next to it. A similar cultic platform was also found in the square of the gate at Tel Dan (2 Kings 23:8). The area of the square measured 12 by 20 meters and was surrounded by several large rooms used by people passing by. From the square, a peripheral road

circled inside of the city parallel to the wall. Radial streets cut through the center of the city. Several dwelling quarters were excavated along the peripheral road. The houses are tangential to the casemate wall and many have the remains of stairs indicate that they had second stories. The houses showed evidence of repair. The entrances to the chambers of the wall were adapted to conform to the changes made in the houses.

A large building to the left of the gate, built partly of ashlar, apparently served as the residence of the local governor. Behind it was a large building of the four-room type, which contained a rich group of cult objects, mostly Egyptian. Among them was a votive cylinder seal with an Akkadian inscription, which was an offering by a man called Rimtuilani, son of Adad-idri (Hadad-ezer). To the right of the gate were three adjoining storehouses, of uniform plan. Each comprised three long halls separated by two rows of pillars. The storehouses contained an abundance of pottery of various types, including cooking pots, bowls, and other vessels, besides storage jars (Herzog 1993:171).

In addition to continuous and uniform streets, there were drainage channels that were cut beneath the street pavements. These channels conducted the rain water gathered from the rooftops and courtyards to other subterranean stone channels. The stone channels directed the water to the main channel, which passed beneath the gateway and drained the water into a well which was discovered outside the city gate which dates to Iron I.

The latest Israelite city (stratum II) was destroyed by a fire. In the ruins there was an abundance of pottery and other objects. They date from about the end of the eighth century BCE. This gives evidence to the fact that

the city of Beersheba was sacked during Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BCE. The settlement was not reestablished. There were also pillared buildings and a large horned altar (1.6 m by 1.6 m). Y. Aharoni believed this altar attested to the presence of a temple in the city. In his opinion, the temple was dismantled as a result of the cultic reform carried out by Hezekiah, king of Judah, as was seen in the discontinued use of the horned altar in the Arad fortress. Yadin suggested that the altar was the remnant of a high place, or bamah, which he believed had stood at the city gate (Herzog 1993:171).

There were two large structures uncovered in stratum II (early 7th cent. BCE) which were believed to be used by the commanders of the city. Building 416 was located by the city gate and was named the Governor's Palace. It contained three large reception halls whose entrances were built of ashlar, two dwelling units and a domestic unit (storehouse and kitchen). The other structure was named, Cellar House, because of the two rooms dug beneath its floor (Herzog 1993:171).

In addition to the public buildings, Beersheba had approximately 75 dwellings. Most of them were the four-room type, with a front entrance, an inner courtyard, a work and storage room adjacent to the courtyard, a storeroom, and a dwelling chamber. Based on the number of dwelling units, the population of Beersheba was estimated at four hundred. This number seems low in view of the resources and well-planned structures of the city. The reason given for this is the fact that Beersheba was the center of the royal administration during the period of the monarchy and continued to be an administrative city through the 7th century BCE. Common people usually lived in

villages and farms close by, but not in the city (Herzog 1993:172).

Among the special finds are a great number of cult objects. These include Astarte figurines, zoomorphic vessels, several small stone incense altars (one decorated, of the Persian period), and a pottery bowl on which the word "qds" ("holy") was scratched in Hebrew. In one of the gate rooms a large store jar was found displaying the royal seal "lamelekh Zif" with the four-winged scarab (Herzog 1993: 172-173).

TEL MASOS (Hormah) (Khirbet El-Meshash)

Hormah was a town in the Negev, formerly Canaanite Zephath (destroyed by Judahites and Simeonites, Judges 1:17); its king is listed as defeated by Joshua (Joshua 12:14). In the war with Arad, the place was taken by the Israelites and given the name Hormah, meaning "devoted," because it was devoted to destruction (Numbers 21: 1-3). In the list of kings conquered by Joshua, it appears with Arad (Josh. 12:14). Hormah was originally given to Judah (15:30), but shortly after was allotted to Simeon (19:4) because the portion of the tribe of Judah was too large for them. Judges 1:17 relates that it was Judah and Simeon who subdued Zephath and renamed it Hormah.

David sent part of the spoil of Ziklag to Hormah, as one of the cities of Judah (1 Sam. 30:26-30), but Hormah was reckoned among the cities of Simeon "until the reign of David" (1 Chron. 4:30-31). There have been several speculations regarding the identification of Hormah. One was from Albright who proposed Hormah to be Tell es-Sheri'ah (Tel Sera), but a more southerly location is

indicated in reading Numbers 14:45 and Deut. 1:44. Tell esh-Sheri'a is situated in the northwestern Negev midway between Gaza and Beersheba and some 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) northwest of Beersheba.

Aharoni did more extensive excavations at a Tel named, Masos, located 12 km. (7 miles) west of Beersheba and found that its location and material finds were more likely to be the site for Hormah (Kempinski 1993:986).

Until 1964, Tel Masos (Khirbet El-Meshash), was known only as a small mound of about 1.25 acres containing the remnants of a Roman-Byzantine fort and Iron Age II-C remains. In that year, Y. Aharoni, during a survey of the area, discovered a Middle Bronze Age II earthen rampart west of the main well (Bir el-Meshash, and the remains of a huge Iron Age I settlement (about 12 acres) located 200 meters east of the Roman-Byzantine fort. Aharoni reviewed these discoveries and the results of the excavations in the Beersheba Valley, at Arad, Malhata, and Beersheba. He proposed to identify Tel Masos with biblical Hormah (Joshua 15: 30), a city or district already known at the end of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom as "h'jm" in the Execration Text or "h'mj" (Wadi Meghara in Sinai). The biblical references conform well to the ceramic evidence at the site. The survey showed that the range of pottery spanned the entire Iron Age I, from the period of the Israelite settlement when Hormah is first mentioned (about the mid-thirteenth century BCE) to the early part of David's reign at Ziklag, when he sent the booty of the Amalekites to the city (1 Samuel 30:30).

From 1972 to 1975, three seasons of excavations were carried out at the site by a joint Israeli-German expedition.

Remains from the Chalcolithic period, Middle Bronze Age, Iron Age I, II-C, and Byzantine period were uncovered.

Iron Age I. Five areas (A, B, C, F, and H) were examined on the main site. In all the areas, three strata of the Iron Age I were revealed.

Stratum 3 was found mainly in areas A and C, this stratum represents the first settlement on the site at the end of the thirteenth century BCE. The architecture is very simple, with houses consisting of a broad room opening onto a rectangular courtyard. The pottery dates to the early phase of the Iron Age I (Kempinski 1993:986).

Stratum 2 contained well-constructed houses of the four-room type which were excavated in areas A, B, and F. Public buildings were in areas A and C, and a cult building was in area H. Stratum 2 was destroyed by an earthquake, as was indicated by some of the buildings in area A. Philistine, Phoenician Bichrome and "Midianite" pottery date this stratum from the mid-twelfth to the middle of the eleventh century BCE (Kempinski 1993:987).

Stratum 1 showed a decline of the settlement. Only a few of the buildings destroyed in stratum 2 were rebuilt. A new fortress, smaller than that of stratum 2, was built in area C. The pottery was of the late eleventh or early tenth century BCE.

The Iron Age II-C remains of Tel Masos were located west of the Iron Age I settlement. Included was the finding of a small fortress that had been erected during the seventh century BCE and destroyed at the beginning of the sixth century BCE.

As one of the largest sites in the northern Negev, Tel Masos was of major importance in the Middle Bronze Age. During the Israelite settlement of the Negev, Masos was the

largest center in the entire northern Negev area, a fact that clearly indicates its importance at that period. The prosperity of settlement of stratum 2 at the time of Philistine rule in Palestine suggests that it was incorporated into the Philistine commercial and political system. The archaeological data supports the fact that Masos was biblical Hormah (Kempinski 1993:987-988). Is

TEL MALHATA

Tel Malhata (Tell el-Milh) is in the Negev desert, near the juncture of Nahal Malhata and Nahal Beersheba. The level of groundwater of the area is high. This contributed to a good water supply and the digging of many wells at this site.

Excavations have been carried out in 1967 and 1971 by M. Kochavi. Early occupational levels were Chalcothitic, Early Bronze and Middle Bronze (Kochavi 1993b:934).

The walled city reached its peak of development during the Iron Age. A 5 m high rampart occupied the lower part of the mound, rising in level to the higher part. The flattened area was surrounded by a wall (4.5 m thick) founded on the new rampart on the lower part of the mound. The rampart was faced with stones. Buildings included a public building in section Z and private dwellings in section W. A violent conflagration was evident by the destruction level found in areas dating to the tenth century BCE. An immediate occupation phase, over-lying the ruins, was identified in the area of the houses in section W, followed by a new wall (3.5 m thick) built on the foundations of the earlier one and an earthen rampart reinforced the wall from the outside. In section Z

(located on the lower part of the mound), an Iron Age storehouse (7 by 15 m) was found. It consisted of three long rooms separated by rows of stone pillars. The storehouse was in use through three levels, from the ninth to the sixth centuries BCE. In the earliest level, the pillars were built of rounded stone drums. Through all three levels, the middle hall had a beaten earth floor, while the halls flanking it were paved with stone. Only the last level was destroyed by fire (Kochavi 1993b:935-936).

The material finds were primarily from the destruction level of the sixth century BCE, although some pottery from the earlier period was found (Kochavi 1993b:936).

AROER (In Moab)

Aroer is found in the following scriptures: Joshua 12:2; 13:9, 16; Deuteronomy 2:36; 3:12, 4:48; 2 Kings 10:33; and Jeremiah 48:19. The Mesha Stone (line 26) cited Aroer as being situated on the bank of the Arnon River.

The actual location of Aroer is at Khirbet' Ara'ir, which is located 4 kilometers (2 ½ miles) east of the Madeba-Karak highway on the northern slope of the Wadi Mojib (the biblical Arnon).

Archaeological excavations clearly show that Aroer was never a town or settlement. It was a strategically positioned fortress guarding the King's Highway, which crossed the Arnon (Jeremiah 48:19). Little is known of Aroer's history. According to the Bible, it was first occupied after the Israelite conquest by the Tribe of Reuben, which settled on the plain north of the Arnon (1 Chronicles 5:8). Aroer remained in the possession of the Israelites throughout the period of the Judges (Judges

11:26) and the United Monarchy. It marked the southern boundary of the Israelite territories in Transjordan. In the wake of the successful campaigns of King Mesha (850 BCE), Aroer, which was then in existence, was annexed to the Kingdom of Moab. As is related in the Mesha Stone (line 26), the king made the highway in the Arnon and "built Aroer."

A short time afterward, in the second half of the ninth century BCE, the king of Damascus conquered the Israelite territories in Transjordan, which extended between the rivers Arnon and Yarmuk (2 Kings 10:32-33). Aroer remained in Syrian possession until the fall of Damascus during the Assyrian expansion (732 BCE). According to Josephus (Antiquities X, 181), the destruction of the Aroer fortress took place in the course of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign against Moab (582 BCE). From that time on, Aroer was rebuilt only partially and transitorily.

Members of the Spanish Center, Casa de Santiago, in Jerusalem, under the direction of E. Olavarri, carried out excavations on the site of Aroer during three seasons (1964, 1965 and 1966). They uncovered six archaeological levels corresponding to as many periods of occupation. This included Middle Bronze Age I into the Iron Age.

Iron Age (level V) houses were discovered in trench D, loci 206 and 208. According to Goicoechea, Locus 204 contained the walls of an Israelite fortress that was conquered by King Mesha of Moab. The new fortress (level IV), which was built by this king over the earlier one, occupies an area of 50 square meters. It is constructed of very solid masonry and includes three parallel walls: an exterior one, 2 meters in width; an interior one, which served as a buttress in the central area of the fortress;

and an intermediate wall, 1.5 meters thick. The two inner passages running between them were filled with debris of former buildings, thus forming a defensive structure of great strength. The southeast and southwest sides of the fortress were built upon the steep cliffs of the Arnon, which served as a natural glacis. An additional double defense wall was put up on the northwest side, which faces the plain and is consequently more vulnerable. As in Dibon, King Mesha built a reservoir in Aroer to store rainwater in an artificial basin in front of the northwest wall of the fortress.

From the seventh to the third centuries BCE, Aroer experienced a further period of abandonment ((Goicoechea, 1993:90-92).

AROER (In Judea)

Aroer of Judea is located in the Negev desert, approximately 14 miles southeast of Beersheba. In the Bible, it is mentioned in Joshua 15:22.

Excavations were started in 1975, by the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem. Other campaigns were carried on from 1976-82.

The Iron Age was distinguished in three strata. Stratum I revealed an offset-inset wall (135 m long) which was plastered. There was a stone-faced earthen rampart built against it. Sections of the wall were also uncovered on the north and west sides. In this first phase, buildings were uncovered mainly along the wall and in the center of the mound. The pottery included high-necked jars, pithos, bowls, kraters which were identified to Iron Age II. No gap in occupation can be distinguished at Aroer. The next strata, III, produced houses and a silo.

The pottery finds were like stratum IV. Other things which were found included an Astarte figurine and a bone plaque with four columns that had a Proto-Aeolic capital at the top which was thought to be a game board. Pottery and seals were of Edomite origin.

Stratum II was the last of the Iron Age and dated to the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. Considerable pottery, figurines, and weights were found (Biran 1993:92).

HORVAT RADUM

Horvat Radum is about 6 miles southwest of Arad. Excavations were carried out at the site by Beit-Ariech and B. Cresson, on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University and Baylor University.

The excavation of the Iron Age II revealed a thick wall (2 m), a gateway (2.5 by 5.5 m), and a fort (21 by 25 m). There were also rectangular rooms against the walls of the fort and benches near the gateway. In the center of the courtyard was the base of what appeared to be a tower. Two cisterns were outside the fort. The material finds from Iron Age II, included a few sherds of pottery and a cooking pot which was Edomite in type. Five Hebrew ostraca were in various places in the fort (Beit-Ariech 1993b: 1254-1255).

5.3.4 CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN NEGEV

KADESH-BARNEA (Tell el-Qudeirat)

Kadesh-Barnea is located in the northern Sinai Desert. C.L. Woolley and T.E. Lawrence did a survey of the area in

1914 and identified it with Tell el-Qudeirat. Excavations were carried on there in 1956 and 1976 to 1979 primarily through Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Directors included M. Dothan and R. Cohen. These excavations resulted in the uncovering of three successive fortresses built in the tenth century BCE. It also was apparent that a settlement was there between the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Cohen 1993:841).

The Lower Fortress was found in the southeastern part of the mound and dated to the tenth century BCE. Part of a casemate room was later uncovered in this area. A rich assemblage of pottery vessels was found in the layer of ash that covered the floors of the early fortress's casemate rooms. There were wheel-made vessels typical of vessels from this time period. Also found were two Eyes of Horus, an amulet, and a fragment of a faience figurine.

The Middle Fortress, dated to the eighth century BCE was rectangular (40 m by 60 m), with a 4 m wide wall preserved to a height of 1.8 m and eight protruding towers. An earthen rampart resting on a 2.5 m high revetment wall surrounded it. The revetment wall was excavated along the eastern side of the fortress, along with segments on the north and south. Only small parts of the wall were exposed on the west. Portions of a fosse were found along three sides of the fortress. To the south of the two building units were a plastered channel and a cistern built of large stones with a plastered bottom. Three settlement phases were determined in the structures inside the middle fortress. A street (3.5 m wide) divided the fortress into two blocks of buildings. Five buildings were found in the northern sections. In the northwestern corner, two adjacent units (7 m by 10 m) were excavated. The units showed

traces of fire. The pottery assemblage included Negbite (distinctive Negev style) and Israelite ware. Many animal bones were also found (Cohen 1993:844).

A rectangular room (3.8 m by 5.5 m) was uncovered inside the fortress, to the east of the cistern. Its walls are preserved to a height of 2.8 m and its floor is paved with large stones. It was probably used as a silo. Near this was a round silo. Four granaries were found outside the fortress's north wall. The largest was about 1.8 m in diameter. A cistern was found near the fortress. A small room (3 m by 4 m) was found to the west of the granaries adjacent to the wall of the fortress. On the floor was a clay oven (tabun) with an intact Negbite cooking pot inside it. On the floors of the rooms, there were a number of wheel-made vessels typical of the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Two ostraca with Hebrew inscriptions were discovered (Cohen 1993:846).

The third fortress established at Kadesh-Barnea was probably built during the reign of King Josiah. It was destroyed in a violent conflagration dated to about 586 BCE. An unfortified settlement from the postexilic period was also found (Cohen 1993:847).

KUNTILLET 'AJRUD (Horvat Teman)

Horvat Teman (Kuntillet 'Ajrud) is a small, single-period Iron Age site from the early eighth century BCE. The Arabic name Kuntillet Ajrud means "Solitary Hill of Well." The site is located in northern Sinai, approximately 50 km (31 miles) south of Kadesh-Barnea and about 10 km (6.2 miles) west of Darb el-Ghazza. It is near the road that runs from Quseima and Kadesh-Barnea to Elath and southern

Sinai. Because of the wells, an important crossroad existed near the site.

Excavations were conducted at the site in three total sessions in 1975-1976. The site contains two single-period buildings: a main building (A) and a secondary building (B) to the east. The entrance to building A was from the east, by way of a small outer courtyard surrounded by stone benches. The benches, floor, and walls were plastered with a white, shiny lime plaster. Some of the plaster fragments were painted. They depict a female figure seated on a chair and floral motifs. Stone benches along the walls and white plaster (both decorated and undecorated) characterized the entrance complex. An opening led from the outer courtyard northward to a white plastered entrance room where fragments containing inscriptions in a Phoenician script were found.

Discovered in the bench room were two large pithoi jars decorated with inscriptions and drawings. Also found were several large and small stone bowls (four of them with names of donors).

Found in the building's other rooms were vessels such as juglets, lamps, flasks, bowls, and jugs. There were also pithoi and storage jars that had names, titles, and marking letters incised on their upper parts. The walls of the building were built of rough stones that were hewn from the local chalky rock and their height was 1.2 m.

The other structure at the site, the eastern building (B), is about 10 m east of the main building. Its floor and wall fragments were covered with the white plaster. The entrance was from the west was marked by two pilasters projecting from the wall.

A large pottery assemblage dating to about 800 BCE were discovered at the site. Three regions that provided parallels to these finds were: Judah; the southern coastal area; and northern Israel and Phoenicia. A large amount of textiles were recovered; about one hundred cloth fragments, mostly linen, and seven of wool (Zeev 1993:1458-1464).

The most important finds at Horvat Teman (Kuntillet 'Ajrud) are the inscriptions and drawings. See Section 4.5.7.7 in this dissertation.

EZION-GEBER (Tell el-Kheleifeh)

Tell el-Kheleifeh is a low mound with Iron Age and Persian period remains located about 500 m from the present northern shoreline of the Gulf of Elath, about midway between its eastern and western ends. It was first discovered by F. Frank in 1933. N. Glueck carried out the excavation in 1938-1940 on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. It was at Ezion-Geber that Solomon established his fleet of ships (1 King 9:26). Glueck searched to find Iron Age I-II remains near the modern city at Aqabah, nothing was found. Tell el-Kheleifeh is the only site on the north shore of the Gulf of Aqabah, whose pottery (Iron Age I and II) corresponded with the history of Ezion-Geber.

In the northwest corner of Tell el-Kheleifeh a large mud brick building was uncovered. It was 13.2 m square, with the outside walls 1.2 m thick and the partition walls about 1 meter thick. Originally, it had consisted of six rooms, three small square rooms at the north end and three rectangular rooms to the south, the latter being 7.4 meters in length. The mud bricks used in this structure each

measured about 40 by 20 by 10 centimeters. Part of the southern outer wall of the building was still standing to a height of 2.7 meters.

Each of the walls had two horizontal rows of holes piercing the width of the walls. The lower row was a meter above the base of the walls and the upper row 70 centimeters higher. These holes apparently held wooden cross beams inserted into the walls for bonding or anchoring purposes. Examples of this type of construction have been found at Sendschirli (Syria), Boghazkoy (Turkey), and Samaria (1 Kings 6:36). The outer and inner faces of its walls were plastered over with a thick coating of mud.

A sloping rampart of mud bricks was built against the outer sides of this main building, but it cannot be known if it dates from the first stage of the building. This well built structure with its glacis was enclosed by a fortification wall with salients and recesses on its outer face and casemate rooms against its inner face. Each side of the enclosure wall was 45 meters in length and was divided into three salients and two recesses each 9 meters in length. It was built of bricks somewhat larger (about 43.5 by 23.5 by 13 centimeters) than those of the "storehouse granary" and its glacis. The building, as well as the casemate wall with its salients and recesses, has been attributed to the time of Solomon.

In the middle offset of the south side of the wall was a 2.5 meter-wide gateway, with the outer entrance originally at the east end and the inner entrance at the west end. The gateway was in line with a massive later gate. Both gateways pointed toward the sea. The enclosure wall, including the salients, measures from 1.05 meters to 1.1 meters in width and with the addition of casemates they

measured 3.95 meters to 4.1 meters. Similar casemate walls from Solomon's time have been found at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. The buildings of Period I may have been destroyed in the invasion of Pharaoh Shishak in the last quarter of the tenth century BCE.

At the beginning of period II, a new series of massive fortification walls of mud brick were erected. The new outer mud-brick fortification consisted of a large inner wall and a smaller outer wall, each strengthened by a glacis, with a dry moat between them. The inner wall, with its comparatively slight salients and recesses and further strengthened by a strong glacis with corresponding offsets and insets tied into it above its foundation levels, was particularly massive. It was originally some 8 m high, about 2 meters wide at the top and 4 m wide at the base. About 3 m beyond the base of its glacis was the thinner outer wall, which seems to have mirrored the construction features of the inner one. The dry moat between the two walls had a stamped-clay and mud-brick floor. At the corners of the inside wall were towers overlooking its supporting glacis. The scheme of double-walled outer defenses with a dry moat between the walls can be paralleled at the Moabite site of Khirbet el Medeiyyineh overlooking the Wadi Themed and at other sites.

On the south side near the southeast corner of the double wall fortification was a massive, four-chambered gate, with three pairs of doorways and two opposite sets of guardrooms between them. It is very similar to the massive gateway of Megiddo (stratum IV-A), which Y. Yadin has shown was built long after the time of Solomon, perhaps by Ahab.

Period II may represent a reconstruction by Jehoshaphat of Judah, who reigned about 870-846 BCE. He

was the king who made the abortive attempt to revive the sea trade between Ezion-Geber and Arabia and Africa (1 Kings 22:48; 2 Chronicles 20:36, 37). As a result of economic decline, coupled with the growing political weakness of Judah, the importance of Ezion-Geber seems to have weakened. After the time of Jehoshaphat, it is no longer mentioned in the Bible.

Ezion-Geber may have been destroyed again during the successful rebellion of the Edomites against Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram (Joram) (2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10), shortly after the middle of the ninth century BCE.

Nearly seventy years had passed between the destruction and abandonment of Ezion-Geber and the rebuilding of a new city (period III) on its sand-covered ruins. In this new city, a seal signet ring with the inscription "Belonging to Jotham" was found. The reference is probably to Jotham, King of Judah, who was the successor of Uzziah. Underneath the inscription is a horned ram and in front of it an object that N. Avigad has identified as a bellows or a metal bar. In the city of period III, which was apparently built by Uzziah, the guardrooms of the gateway were blocked up and other changes were made in various constructions of the city.

During the war of Ahaz and Rezin, King of Aram, and Pekah, King of Israel (about 733 BCE), the city was again destroyed, and the Edomites rebuilt it anew (period IV). This city, in which several sub-periods are distinguished, lasted from about the end of the eighth century to the end of the sixth century. The freedom regained by Edom from Ahaz was never again threatened by Judah, which was not strong enough thereafter to dispute Edom's control over the 'Arabah and Elath. Edom itself, however, despite periods

of prosperity; apparently became progressively less able to take full advantage of its independence.

There were a number of jar handles found from the first phase of period IV (seventh century BCE) that were stamped with an Edomite inscription reading, "Belonging to Qausanal, the Servant of the King," an official of the King of Edom. Qausanal (namely Quas or Qos) is the name of a well-known Edomite deity. Also belonging to period IV were the fragments of a large jar, which was probably used for transporting incense and spices from Arabia. On two of its pieces were incised the first ancient South Arabic letters in Minaean script discovered in a controlled excavation in this area. Other objects found in the course of the excavations show connections with Egypt.

The Babylonian conquest brought an end to Edomite rule over the city of period IV. It was destroyed before the end of the sixth century BCE (Pratico 1993:867-870).

5.3.5 JUDEAN DESERT

EN-GEDI AND TEL GOREN (Tell el Jurn)

En-Gedi is an oasis on the western shore of the Dead Sea. It is the name of the perennial spring that flows from a height of 200 meters above the Dead Sea. The desert area in the vicinity of the spring is called the "wilderness of En-Gedi" (1 Samuel 24:1-2). The enclosed camps at the top of the mountains appear as the "strong holds of En-Gedi" (1 Samuel 23:29). En-Gedi is included in the list of the cities of Judah among those in the wilderness (Barag 1993:399).

Jehoshaphat (872-848 BCE), Asa's successor, instituted a series of religious and legal reforms. In addition, garrison cities, forts, and store cities were constricted and manned (2 Chron. 17), and internal administrative districts and governorships were established.

Later in the reign of Jehoshaphat, the Moabites, Ammonites, and inhabitants of Mount Seir invaded Judah from the east (2 Chron. 20:1-30). They evidently crossed the Salt Sea via a ford that led from the Lisan (Arab. "tongue") area westward, setting up camp at Hazaaon Tamar (En Gedi). From there they proceeded up the Pass of Ziz, evidently attempting to move up the road on the ridge just north of the Nahal Arugot. Jehoshaphat, after inquiring of the Lord, went out to meet them in battle. But before his arrival, the invading forces fought among themselves and slaughtered each other, so that the Judean army merely had to collect the booty left behind. Other biblical references are Ezekiel 47:10 and Song of Songs 1:14.

In 1949, a small expedition headed by B. Mazar began a series of surveys and excavations in the oasis of En-Gedi. Trial soundings in Tel Goren (Tell el-Jurn), a narrow hillock in the south-west of the plain near Nahal Arugot, established that from the end of Iron Age onward this had been one of the main centers of settlement in the oasis. A second survey was carried out under the direction of Y. Aharoni, and a third under J. Naveh (1956-57).

Archaeological excavations were carried out at En-Gedi on behalf of the Hebrew University and the Israel Exploration Society. In the first two seasons (1961-1962), the excavations were directed by B. Mazar, I.

Dunayevsky, and Trude Dothan, and in the following three seasons (1964 -65) by B. Mazar and I. Dunayevsky.

A short distance from En-Gedi was a settlement that expanded and spread over extensive areas in the plain between Nahal David and Nahal Arugot. This became known as Tel Goren. It is the most prominent site in the oasis area of En-Gedi. Five occupation levels were found during five seasons of excavation. The strata were from stratum V, the end of the Iron Age (about 630-582 BCE) to stratum I, Roman Age. No occupation was found from the main time period of concern for this dissertation (before 721 BCE).

Stratum V, the late Iron Age settlement was built on the top of the hill and on the terraces of its slopes (Barag 1993:400).

JERICHO (Tell el-Sultan)

No trace of an Iron Age occupation has been found at Jericho. In the seventh century BCE, there was an extensive occupation of the ancient site. Evidence of this does not survive on the summit of the mound, but is found as a thick deposit, with several successive building levels on the slopes of the tell. On the eastern slope, a massive building from this seventh century BCE period was found, with a tripartite plan common in the Iron Age II. The pottery suggests that this stage in the history of the site lasted until the period of the Babylonian Exile. A few jar handles with the seal impression "Yehud" (the name of the satrapy of Judea) were found. These belonged to the Persian period (Foerster 1993:681).