

## INTRODUCTION

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In February, 2013, a long-term excavation project began in what was designated as Area D3, the City of David (Fig. 1.1). The British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon called it the Southeastern Hill in relation to other topographical features that made-up the ancient Jerusalem landscape (Kenyon 1974: X).

Archaeological exploration in this part of Jerusalem had already begun in the second part of the 19th century CE and was conducted almost continuously from then on (Reich 2021: 21–77). The eastern slope's sharp incline towards the Kidron Valley made the land almost impossible to build upon and had it not been for the richly flowing Gihon Spring, the area would probably have been of no special importance. Archaeological exploration conducted in the area for over a century has revealed remains dating from as early as the Chalcolithic period and up to recent centuries, proving that the eastern slopes were an essential part of the city at least until the late Iron Age. From then onward the area was utilized for burial, agricultural exploitation and garbage disposal: activities that are usually located at the fringe of a settlement.

The eastern slope was purchased by Baron Abraham Edmond Benjamin James de Rothschild at the beginning of the 20th century in order to conduct archaeological excavations (Reich 2011: 70–77). Today this land forms part of what is known as The City of David National Park. In 1999, in order to stabilize the slope and prevent soil from washing down into the valley, it was modified by the construction of five concrete terrace walls. Olive trees were planted on each terrace (Fig. 1.2). Work conducted prior to the excavation included dismantling some of the concrete walls as well as removing some of the modern earth-fill behind the walls. Mechanical tools were used for these purposes (Fig. 1.3).

## THE EXCAVATION AREA

Area D3 is located along the eastern slopes of Jerusalem's Southeastern Hill, which is just west of the Kidron Valley's current riverbed (Fig. 1.1). The area is ca. 1000 sq m and was planned to be a section 40 m long and 25 m wide, oriented east to west into the occupational level of the site. To the east of the excavation is a modern paved street within the Kidron Valley. On the south, the area borders with Weill's excavation (Weill 1920, 1947; Reich 2004), on the west it borders with Shiloh's Areas B, D and E (Fig. 1.5; Ariel 2000; De Groot 2012) and on the north it borders with Reich and Shukron's Area J (Reich 2011: 177–187).

## THE EXCAVATION

The excavation was a collaborative project between the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Antiquities Authority, and was directed by me. The first season began on February 21, 2013 and continued until June 13 and then ran again between October 21 and December 10 of 2013 (License G- 4/2013; Figs. 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10). In 2014 the excavation



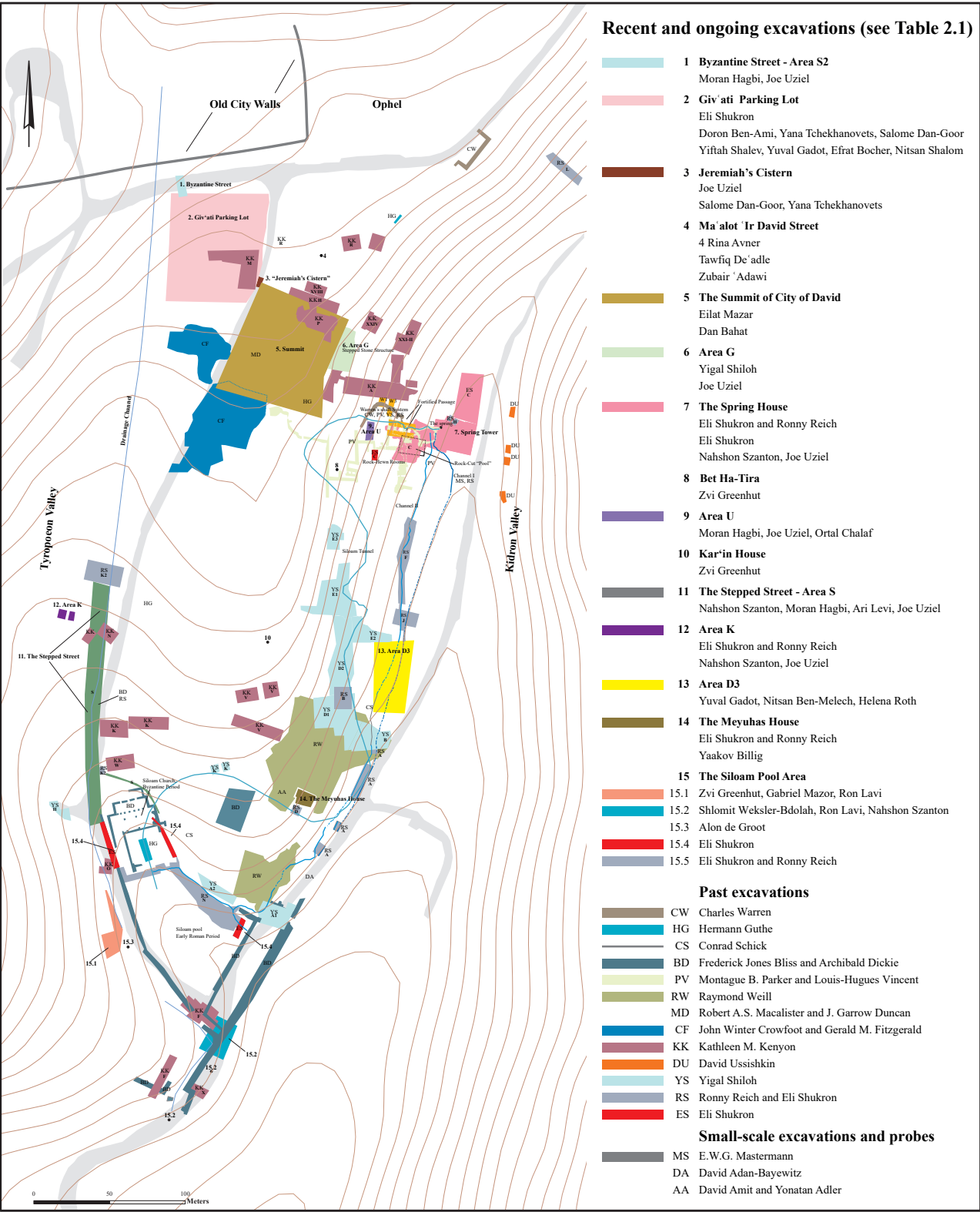


Figure 1.1: Location of the excavation areas on the Southeastern Hill. Area D3 is in yellow, outlined in black.





Figure 1.2: Construction of the concrete terrace walls in 1999 (photo by Yonatan Adler).



Figure 1.3: Removal of concrete terraces using mechanical tools (February 2013, photo by author).





Figure 1.4: Area D3 at start of excavations, looking southwest (photo by author).

progressed southward to an area that disturbed the earthen spill left after Weill's excavations (License G-19/2014).

The team included H. Machline (area supervisor); I. Peters and S. Hirshberg (Tal) (assistant area supervisors); O. Moshevich (wet-sifting supervisor); H. Kishoni (registration); N. Nehama and R. Abu-Halaf (administration); A. Peretz (photography); V. Assman and Y. Shmidov (surveying and drafting) and S. 'Adalah (metal detection) (Figs. 1.11, 1.12).

## HISTORY OF RESEARCH AT THE SOUTHEASTERN HILL

The Southeastern Hill, Jerusalem's ancient core, has attracted the attention of scholars for over 100 years. Each of the site's many excavations challenged past premises and added new information to the discussion of the city's political, social and economic history. Over the years, as the research questions were molded, the aim and nature of the excavations, as well as the field methods, were modified and updated. Remains exposed during past excavations in this part of the hill date to the Chalcolithic, Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, Iron II, Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. Most of the finds indicate that this sector of the city was domestic in nature (Ariel and De Groot 2000). However, two distinct architectural features can be identified as public: The first is Channel II, which leads water from the Gihon Spring southwards. The rock-cut channel, the underground of which was partly surveyed and partly excavated, is known to pass through the area designated for the current excavation (Ariel and Lender 2000: 1–32; Reich and Shukron 2002). According to Reich and Shukron, the northern part of the channel was cut during the Middle Bronze Age and the southern part was later added during the Iron Age. The seam between the two parts, documented by Reich and Shukron (2002: Fig. 2), was planned to be exposed during the excavation, but for safety reasons this goal was not achieved.

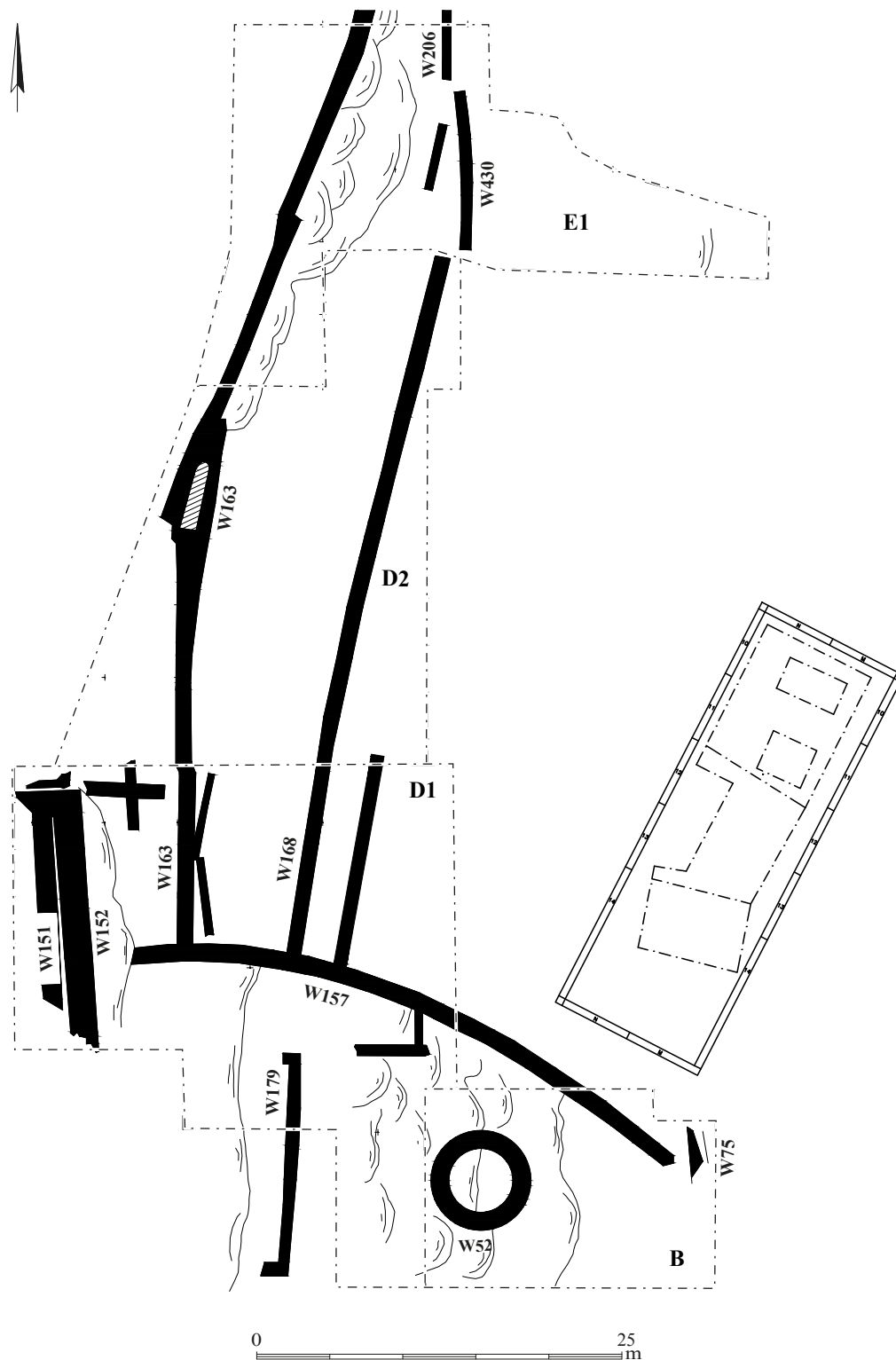


Figure 1.5: Plan of Area D3 in relation to Shiloh's areas of excavations and main discoveries in Area D3 (plan by Vadim Assman).





Figure 1.6: Area D3 at start of excavations, looking southeast (photo by author).



Figure 1.7: View to southeast of northern section as excavation progressed in Area D3, March 24, 2013 (photo by Assaf Peretz).



The second feature is Wall 501, which was exposed in Area J of Reich and Shukron's excavations (Reich and Shukron 2008, 2021: 191; Reich 2011: 177–181). The wall was dated to the Iron IIB (built at the end of the 8th century BCE) and understood to be a lower city wall, corresponding both in time and function to city Wall 219, which was revealed by Shiloh (Reich and Shukron 2003, 2008) ca. 30 m farther uphill.

Finds from the Late Hellenistic/Early Roman periods are principally terrace walls and columbarium towers, indicating that by these periods the eastern slope was used mainly for agricultural activities and therefore was most likely outside the built environment (Ariel and Lender 2000: 18–21; De Groot 2012: 177, 179).

The 2013 excavation was devoted mainly to understanding the thick layers of spilled soil. These layers are extremely rich in material culture remains and are dated to the Early Roman period (Stratum 5 according to Shiloh 1990: 6–7; De Groot 2012: 183–184). The nature of these layers is disputed in modern scholarship. The immense layers of landfill were observed by all those who excavated along the eastern slope of the City of David. The phenomenon was recorded in the plans of early 19th century explorers such as Schick and Weill (Schick 1886: Fig. facing page 198; Weill 2004: 92–93; see also Kenyon 1974: 132, 170–171, Pls. 44, 45, 64, 71). They were quick to recognize the fact that the landfill layers date to the Roman period. Shiloh, who was the first archaeologist to excavate these layers, claimed that although the layers' contents dated to the Early Roman period, their formation should be dated a few decades later, to the era following the city's destruction in 70 CE (Shiloh 1990: 6–7). According to this interpretation, Roman soldiers cleared the contents of the destroyed and deserted Jewish houses onto the slope as they prepared the ground for rebuilding the city (De Groot 2012: 183–184).



Figure 1.8: View of east of Area D3 in June 2013 (photo by Assaf Peretz).





Figure 1.9: Area D3 at renewal of excavations in October 2013 (photo by author).



Figure 1.10: Area D3 at the end of the excavations in December 2013 (photo by Assaf Peretz).



The first to interpret the layers as a landfill—that is, as an intentional garbage dump—were Reich and Shukron, in their excavations of the Gihon Spring and again later in their cooperative activities with Bar-Oz and Bouchnick during an in-depth study of the landfill content, especially animal bones (Reich and Shukron 2003; Bar-Oz *et al.* 2007; Bouchnick, Bar-Oz and Reich 2021). Their study led them to not only identify the layers as garbage, but to go a step further and associate the garbage with cultic activities performed on the Temple Mount and in association with pilgrimage to the Temple. Thus, this garbage provides a window into worship at the Temple in Jerusalem.



Figure 1.11: The excavation team, June 2013.



Figure 1.12: The excavation team, December 2013.





Figure 1.13: Adiel Kollman, who worked with us on the dig and was murdered in 2018 in the Old City of Jerusalem (photo by Simeon Bukstein).

## ON THE PRESENT REPORT

This final report is devoted to the publication of the excavations and to the analysis of the many artifacts found within these layers. Based on the study of the finds, a reanalysis of the nature of the debris layers as the city's landfill will be presented, as well as an evaluation of the landfill's social and historical context.

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