

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM BY ANTIOCHUS VII SIDETES

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Of more than a dozen recorded sieges of Jerusalem during its history, four took place from the second half of the first millennium BC until 70 CE, during what is called the Second Temple Period.<sup>1</sup> Despite the inordinate amount of military activity during the second century BC in the southern Levant in general and Judea in particular, the only siege of Jerusalem in that century<sup>2</sup> was mounted by Antiochus VII Euergetes, nicknamed Sidetes (138-129<sup>3</sup> BC). The Seleucid success in holding Jerusalem, however, was short-lived. Jerusalem was probably the last city that Sidetes ever conquered. Antiochus VII's courageous efforts to recover the splintered eastern part of the Seleucid Empire at its height collapsed when the king died in Media fighting the Parthians. With the end of Sidetes' eastern campaign, the last plausible Seleucid attempt to reassert power in Mesopotamia and Persia ended and the empire relapsed into the same state of decline that had characterized the period before Antiochus VII's reign.

Sidetes' siege of Jerusalem was preceded by a campaign through Judea (AJ, 13, 237). According to 1 Macc., 15, 37-16, 8, a first invasion by the king's forces was repulsed. A second invasion culminated in a siege on the capital city, Jerusalem. From 1 Macc. and a not insignificant number of other sources, including the historian Josephus' books, *Jewish War* and *Antiquities of the Jews*, the (second ?) campaign, siege and subsequent

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<sup>1</sup> The other three were executed by Pompey Magnus (64 BC; Cameron 2018), Herod I (37 BC) and Titus Flavius Vespasianus (70 CE). I am grateful to the following people for their assistance in this research: Navit Popovich, Adi Asudri-Ziv and Peri Harel. The images were made by Clara Amit and Dafna Gazit. I am especially appreciative of G. Finkielsztejn for our many collaborations. Additional specific assistance is acknowledged in other footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> Just before the second century, in 200, at the end of the Fourth Syrian War, Antiochus III Megas besieged the Jerusalem's citadel only (Josephus, AJ, 12, 133).

<sup>3</sup> For new evidence suggesting that Sidetes died in the very beginning of 128 BC, see Ariel (2019b), p. 51, n. 16.

negotiation, and capitulation by the Jewish high priest, John Hyrcanus (I), can be pieced together, followed by the levelling of (part of?)<sup>4</sup> Jerusalem's city-wall<sup>5</sup>. According to Josephus (*AJ*, 13, 247), Hyrcanus promised five hundred talents of silver and an undisclosed number of hostages as part of the settlement. Three hundred talents were remitted and the hostages were handed over and subsequently Sidetes departed to undertake his ill-fated Parthia campaign.

In this paper, I will discuss three archaeological discoveries relating directly to Antiochus VII's siege of Jerusalem. These subjects provide new or updated on-the-ground evidence for the siege. Using the discoveries, I will then summarize and critique a recent source-critical analysis of the longest and most detailed account of the siege, found in Josephus' *Antiquities*, composed in the last decade of the first century CE, and try to synthesize a historical framework for Sidetes' Judean campaign.

### Archaeological background to Antiochus VII's siege of Jerusalem

In the Hellenistic Period, a siege is not possible without there first being a city-wall. Hence, before the above subjects are discussed the walls of Jerusalem need to be described. Very roughly speaking, there were four city-walls surrounding Jerusalem in antiquity. The oldest wall (not numbered by Josephus) enclosed the hill defining the most ancient quarter of the city, the City of David hill. That north-south narrow ridge was surrounded by sheer, deep valleys on the two long sides. On the elevated northern end, a cultic area was located ('Mount Moriah' = Temple Mount). The City of David hill was fortified with a wall in the Middle Bronze Age and then possibly continuously until the eighth century BC, and possibly later<sup>6</sup>.

Organic expansions beyond the urban nucleus just described were subsequently fortified by walls. Josephus described the capital's fortifications as they were on the eve of the Roman siege of 70 CE: "The city was

<sup>4</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 410, n. 30; Ariel (2019b), p. 28 n. 18.

<sup>5</sup> There is no evidence that the dismantling of the wall was part of the agreement; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 434.

<sup>6</sup> The well-known subject of the topography of Jerusalem is not explained here. Nevertheless, the reader is directed to Fig. 7 to follow the basic features of the city (City of David; Temple Mount and Southwestern Hill), as portrayed for the period of the siege. Anachronistic features are provided in Fig. 7 for orientation; see the caption there. On Fig. 7 the key modern landmarks discussed in this paper are also noted: The 'First Wall', David's Citadel and the GPL (Giv'ati Parking Lot).

fortified by three walls ... Of the three walls, the most ancient [Josephus' 'First Wall'], owing to the surrounding ravines and the hill above them on which it was reared, was well-nigh impregnable. But, besides the advantage of its position, it was also strongly built, David and Solomon and their successors on the throne having taken pride in the work" (Josephus, *AJ*, 5, 136-143). Josephus' description makes clear that in 70 the City of David hill was no longer fortified along its western edge, as it must have been for a millennium, but rather the 'First Wall' enclosed the City of David hill together with Mount Zion and the Armenian and Jewish Quarters of today. Josephus then proceeded to describe the other two walls: the 'Second Wall' enclosing a further extension northward from the northern side of the 'First Wall' and the 'Third Wall', a yet further expansive fortification enclosing what had been before then suburbs of the first century CE.

For Josephus the 'First Wall' was just that, the oldest wall. He erred; only the fortification of the eastern side of the City of David hill followed the original wall line. By 70 CE, the western fortification line around the City of David hill had been dismantled<sup>7</sup>. In this presentation, two city-walls are at the heart of understanding Antiochus VII's siege of the city: the original, unnumbered wall only around the City of David hill, and the 'First Wall'.

#### **Archaeological contexts of the bronze coins of Antiochus VII discovered at the Giv'ati Parking Lot<sup>8</sup>**

The Giv'ati Parking Lot (GPL) site is located just south of the Ottoman 'Old City' walls, 150 m south of the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount. Topographically, the GPL straddles the western edge of the City of David hill and the eastern descent into what was in later times called the Tyropoeon Valley. The upper, eastern most scarp at the site has a very steep drop. Upon it, between 2011 and 2015, a fortification system was excavated. Comprised of a 3.4 m wide north-south wall preserved to a maximum height of 3.7 m, a 4.0 m wide tower, or salient<sup>9</sup>, was added to it. Two distinct superimposed

<sup>7</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 36. The demolition happened at the end of the second–beginning of the first century BC.

<sup>8</sup> The GPL was excavated numerous times. The relevant expedition team for our purposes was directed by Doron Ben-Ami and Yana Tchekhanovets, who were in the field between 2007 and 2016. My thanks to Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets for their permission to mention finds from their 2011-2015 seasons.

<sup>9</sup> Zilberstein (2021), p. 40.

glacis elements were revealed alongside the tower. In all, a roughly 24 m fortification line was exposed<sup>10</sup>.

The material outside — to the west — of the fortification, in the two glacis and other stratified elements, were Hellenistic in date. The excavators, Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets, drew an obvious connection to the city-wall line excavated at roughly the same elevation on the eastern side of the City of David hill, in three excavations, in the 1920s, 1960s and between 1978 and 1985. The wall on the eastern side of the City of David hill and the new wall at the GPL were parallel and had common features, including a glacis.<sup>11</sup> However, rather than understanding the two walls to belong to one urban fortification, the GPL excavators viewed them as part of a Seleucid fortress constructed by Antiochus IV, the famous Akra, or Citadel, garrisoned by Seleucid forces until the mid-140s BC<sup>12</sup>. For a century, the Akra has been the holy grail of Hellenistic Jerusalem. Because no consensus on its location has come about, more recently, an idea has taken hold that the Akra was the Greek name for a part of the fortifications of the City of David hill, and that the Akra was essentially the highest portion of those fortifications.

Be that as it may, the most recent archaeological analysis of the fortifications at the GPL, by Ayala Zilberstein, reverts to a more generic identification of them as part of the western defenses of the City of David hill. This is due, in part, to Zilberstein's comparison of the features of the GPL fortifications with other defensive elements — in line with the GPL — in the 1927-1928 excavations several dozen meters south of the GPL<sup>13</sup>.

*The Lily/Anchor Coin:* In the GPL's 2012 and 2013 excavation seasons, a large percentage of the coins naming Antiochus VII Euergetes were found in the upper (later) of two Hellenistic glacis layers thrown against the tower of the abovementioned western defensive system<sup>14</sup>. Ninety-one of these

<sup>10</sup> Zilberstein (2019), p. 33. The various preliminary excavation reports provide further details of the elements of the fortification.

<sup>11</sup> Shiloh (1984), p. 20-21; p. 62-65, Figs. 27-29; Pls. 26.1; 36.1.

<sup>12</sup> Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets (2016), p. 26\*, Fig. 4; p. 27\*-28\*. Built by Antiochus VII's great-uncle, the Akra, with its extensive modern history regarding its location, is only discussed in this paper insofar as it has impacted on other's understandings of archaeological elements that I interpret as relating to the siege.

<sup>13</sup> Crowfoot and Fitzgerald (1929), 12-23; Zilberstein (2019), 41-47. Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets, who had originally rejected this idea, have now accepted it; Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets (2016), p. 27\*.

<sup>14</sup> Zilberstein (2019), p. 37-40; Zilberstein (2021), p. 44-45. I am most grateful to Zilberstein for sharing with me her analysis of these features, and for reading an earlier draft of this paper and suggesting improvements.

Antiochus VII coins were of the lily/ anchor type first attributed to the Jerusalem mint in 1854 (Fig. 1)<sup>15</sup>.



**Fig. 1.** Coins of Antiochus VII minted in Jerusalem in 132/1 and 131/0 BC; a. (1.5:1 scale). *Obv.* Lily on stem. *Rev.* BAΣΙΛΕΩΣ/ANTIOXOY/EYEPΓETOY Anchor, flukes above pointing downward. a. GPL, L3928 (IAA 144416); b. GPL, L3991 (IAA 144465); c. Heritage 3032, April 10-16, 2014, Lot 30226 (for comparison). SC II/I, 392, No. 2123.

Besides the high numbers of finds of these coins even before the GPL finds, the iconography of the lily/anchor coin suits its mint attribution because ancient Jewish coins were primarily characterized by deliberate aniconism and a longstanding aversion to human images (Exod. 20, 4; Deut. 5, 8)<sup>16</sup>. On the obverse, the almost universal portrait of the Seleucid king was replaced by a lily device. On the reverse, the anchor identified with the Seleucid dynasty is also aniconic and non-figural, in keeping with the biblical second commandment.

The minting of the lily/anchor coin constitutes the inauguration of the Hellenistic-period Jerusalem mint, which continued to strike coins for almost exactly two centuries, until 70 CE<sup>17</sup>.

Two years are read on the lily/anchor coin: 181 SE (132/1 BC) and 182 SE (=131/0 BC). The earlier date necessitates that Antiochus VII had

<sup>15</sup> De Saulcy (1854), p. 100-102. Since Meshorer (1982, vol. I, 39) published the fact of high numbers of provenanced finds of these coins in Jerusalem, the type's mint attribution has almost universally been accepted.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Hendin (2010), p. 72-76; Ariel and Fontanille (2012), p. 100-104; Lykke (2015), p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> On the coin see Ariel (2019c), p. 49-50.

captured Jerusalem well before the end of 181 SE, by the spring or autumn 131 BC, in order to allow enough time for a mint to be established *de novo* in that city, and coins to be struck in it. Discussion of the dating of the Jerusalem siege, and the coins' role in it, appears in my *Dating of the Siege* subsection towards the end of this paper.

*The Helmet/Aphlaston Coin:* Many coins of another type of Antiochus VII coin (Fig. 2) were found scattered alongside the lily/anchor coin in the upper glacis layer at the GPL.<sup>18</sup> The coin was bevelled like the lily/anchor coin coins, but the coin bore no date<sup>19</sup>.



**Fig. 2.** Coins of Antiochus VII newly attributed to the Jerusalem mint, presumably issued in 132/1–131/0 BC (1.5:1 scale). *Obv.* Helmet r. *Rev.* ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ Aphlaston. a. GPL, L3994 (IAA 144468); b. Heritage 357, September 2004, Lot 12017 (for comparison). SC II/I, 391, No. 2122.

The helmet/aphlaston coins are much less common than the lily/anchor coins. Only 23 coins are provenanced, coming from seven sites; 18 of the coins derive from Jerusalem (Table 1).

Origin	Qty.	Publication
<b>North (Samaritis, Galilee)</b>		
‘Northern Israel’ hoard, 2002	1	Hoover (2010), 238, No. 309; for doubts about the stated provenance cf. Ariel (2019a), 332
Shiḥin	1	Syon (2006), 21; SC II/I, 391
‘En Eshtori (Bet She’an)	1	Unpublished

<sup>18</sup> I argued that they were the lily/anchor coin’s ‘younger sister’; Ariel (2019c), p. 53.

<sup>19</sup> Other coins of these types were found dispersed in other non-glacis elements of the GPL excavations; Ariel (2019b), p. 35, n. 54.

Origin	Qty.	Publication
Samaria	1	SC II/I, 391
<b>Judea and South</b>		
‘Etri, H.	1	Unpublished
Jerusalem, Binyane ha-Umma	2	Unpublished
Jerusalem, City of David: GPL (GPL glacis area and Hellenistic fills)	13	Unpublished
Jerusalem, City of David: GPL (excluding GPL glacis area and Hellenistic fills)	2	Unpublished
Jerusalem, Sederot ha-Nasi Ben Zvi	1	SC II/I, 391
	23	

Table 1. Provenanced helmet/aphlaston coins

The mint of the helmet/aphlaston coins had not been determined. My attribution of the type’s mint to Jerusalem is based on the provenance information above, as well as to the coins’ same aniconic and non-figural character — and appropriate victory symbolism on the coins<sup>20</sup>.

### *The Archaeological Contexts of the Antiochus VII Coins at the GPL*

The two substantial glacis elements are important for understanding the dating of the fortification system found at the GPL. They were analyzed archaeologically by Zilberstein and a preliminary discussion of the historical implications of the two glacis was provided<sup>21</sup>. They postdate the wall and tower. The pouring of the lower, ‘gravel glacis’ was proposed to date sometime during the second half of the second century BC and interpreted to be a preparation for the expected Sidetes siege, while the upper, ‘pottery glacis’ was poured after the Sidetes siege, during to the 20s of the second century BC.

The coins found in the two elements are very different.<sup>22</sup> Small numbers were found in the lower, ‘gravel glacis’ with the latest of those coins dating

<sup>20</sup> Ariel (2019c), p. 58, Fig. 5 (for the geographic distribution); p. 60, p. 62-63 (for the iconography).

<sup>21</sup> Zilberstein (2021), p. 44-45; see also Zilberstein (2019), p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Shalev *et al.* (2019), p. 52 cited the presence of well-contextualized stamped Rhodian amphora handles at the GPL. They have not yet been studied (Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets (2016), p. 24\* n. 4) and it is not known whether the chronological information arising from

to Demetrius I (162-150 BC). The early coins found in the upper, ‘pottery glais’ have a similar profile to those in the lower glais. However, in addition, high numbers of the aforementioned Antiochus VII coins — and no coins later than that — were found<sup>23</sup>.

Chronologically, the distinction between the lower glais and the upper glais is undeniable. The Demetrius I coin, which supplies a *terminus post quem* date for the lower, gravel glais, can suggest a number of historical reconstructions for the pouring of that glais. The upper, pottery glais, however, must be dated after 131 BC, certainly after Sidetes’ siege of Jerusalem. More than that, the absence of coins *later* than 131/0 BC in the upper glais indicates that that later phase of the GPL fortification system, and by extension, entire city-wall encircling the City of David, cannot date much after 131 BC.

How much later than 131 BC might the later renovation (the upper glais) of the City of David’s city-wall date? The date of the next coin issues in Jerusalem, the first series of Hasmonean coins (the autonomous John Hyrcanus I coins) — not found in that glais — is *c.* 125-123/2 BC<sup>24</sup>. As the following, second Hasmonean series, likely to date to the decade before the high priest’s death in 105 BC, is also not found in the glais, the date of the laying of the upper glais is restricted to between 131 and 105 BC. That also happens to be close to the archaeological date given by Zilberstein for the dismantling of the entire fortification<sup>25</sup>. Historically speaking, however, the most likely post-131 date for the reinforcement of the city-wall would certainly be immediately after word of Antiochus VII’s 129 (/beginning of 128 BC) death reached Jerusalem. At that moment, High Priest Hyrcanus would have scrambled to repair his former overlord’s breach in the city-wall<sup>26</sup> and reinforce other parts of the fortification, before the late king’s

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their identifications, and from further study of the other ceramic finds, will affect the analysis here, which is based primarily upon the numismatic evidence.

<sup>23</sup> Zilberstein (2021), p. 45.

<sup>24</sup> Ariel (2021), p. 135.

<sup>25</sup> Zilberstein (2019), p. 40; Ariel (2019b), p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> In 1 Macc., the achievements attributed to John Hyrcanus after the death of his father Simon, “his wars and the brave deeds that he did...written in the annals of his high priesthood” (vs. 23-24) explicitly included the city-wall that Hyrcanus (re)built. This verse, together with the fact that Hyrcanus’ death is not mentioned in 1 Macc., caused Bar-Kochva to determine (1996), p. 277, that 1 Macc. was written not long after 129 BC (or between 129 and 126, Bar-Kochva [1989], p. 163). The date may possibly be said to be consensual. Bar-Kochva argued that city-wall building would logically have been one of the first things that Hyrcanus undertook after the death of Sidetes and that the high priest’s (re)construction



successor would assume the reins of power and potentially interfere with Hyrcanus' initiatives.

With the coin evidence pointing to a date of the later phase of glacis reinforcement at the GPL to after the end of Antiochus VII's siege of Jerusalem, and most likely after the king's death, it becomes clear that if an element in the numerous phases of the fortification system described by Zilberstein<sup>27</sup> may be related to the period of Antiochus VII's siege, as I argue below, the lower, 'gravel glacis' is a strong candidate to be an additional reinforcement to that fortification. This means that the GPL wall and tower were standing at the time of the siege.

Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets had thought that there was one glacis and that it served to reinforce the Akra, being poured by the Seleucid soldiers garrisoned in the Akra. Alongside Zilberstein's refinement that there are two glacis at the GPL, she analyzed the complex stratigraphy of the layers below the tower. Her analysis raised the possibility that the Seleucid Akra is to be identified with one of those earlier phases.

This assumes that Josephus was correct that the Akra was demolished (*AJ*, 13, 217). However, as 1 Macc. was the almost exclusive<sup>28</sup> — if not the only<sup>29</sup> — source of Josephus' narrative on Simon's life until almost his death, there are strong reasons to accept the account of the Akra's fortification over its demolition, *i. e.*, Josephus fabricated the colorful dismantlement story<sup>30</sup>.

Accepting 1 Macc.'s account of the events that, *contra* Josephus, Simon did not demolish the Akra, but rather repurposed the structure for his own aims (1 Macc., 13, 52: he "strengthened the fortifications of the temple hill alongside the citadel, and he and his men lived there"), the GPL wall and tower may both be part of the original Akra and have still been ~~were~~ standing at the time of Antiochus VII's siege.

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of Jerusalem's fortifications would probably not have been highlighted in such a way if the author of 1 Macc. had been aware of Hyrcanus' other achievements. See Ariel (2019b), p. 39.

<sup>27</sup> Zilberstein (2021), p. 48-49.

<sup>28</sup> Feldman (1994), p. 42-43.

<sup>29</sup> Dąbrowa (2020), p. 229.

<sup>30</sup> Support for this comes from the presence of two other features characteristic of Josephus' interventions in the narrative of the dismantlement of the Akra: the approbation of leaders, and their inspiring/persuasive rhetoric, Feldman (1994), p. 62-63. For other narrative additions of Josephus in connection to Sides' siege, see below, section on the *Connection between the Archaeology of the Siege and the Written Accounts*.

Whether or not the fortification at the GPL is to be identified as the Akra, the wall and tower appear to have been standing when Antiochus VII set up his siege camp outside of Jerusalem. Before or after Sidetes' arrival, the 'gravel glacis' is likely to have been poured by Hasmonean troops in order to reinforce the city-wall and thus enhance the City of David hill's protection against attack. The initiative could have been taken by Jonathan or Simon. Hyrcanus is also a candidate, either in his capacity as Simon's army chief (before his father's murder) — or as High Priest, before or after Sidetes began his sweep through Judea<sup>31</sup>.

### **Archaeological remains of military projectiles associated with Antiochus VII at David' Citadel and the GPL**

#### ***Finds from the Excavations at David's Citadel***

*Arrowheads:* In 1982-1983 Renee Sivan and Giora Solar excavated in the courtyard of David's Citadel (*i. e.*, the Tower of David / Jerusalem Citadel complex adjacent to the Jaffa Gate). Their excavations, which revealed a fragmentary floor with signs of burning, was unfortunately only summarized in a preliminarily report. The floor was located near bedrock, along the outer face of a fortification identified as part of the 'First Wall.' In addition to a thick layer of carbonized material, presumably ash, Sivan and Solar described "dozens of typical Hellenistic arrowheads...found together with ballista stones" on the floor<sup>32</sup>. They viewed the remains on the floor as evidence of a battle associated with the siege that Antiochus VII laid on Jerusalem.

Archaeologists have accepted Sivan and Solar's conclusion. The partially preserved floor has also been cited by Geva in support of his argument that the Southwestern Hill of the city was walled before Sidetes' siege, between 141 and 133/2 BC<sup>33</sup>.

Recently published information about the arrowheads, all bronze, support both the excavators and Geva's view. In a recent comprehensive

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<sup>31</sup> See Zilberstein (2021), p. 48-49.

<sup>32</sup> Sivan and Solar (2000), p. 173. Shatzman concurred; (1995), p. 54; p. 64, n. 35. Approximately 200 ballista stones were found. See Mazar and Eshel (1998), p. 265 (299 ballista stones).

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Geva (2018), p. 45.

analysis of the arrowhead form, the arrowheads from the David's Citadel floor were classified by Mazis and Wright as Baitinger Type IA5.<sup>34</sup> Mazis and Wright remarked that this type of arrowhead is rarely found stamped. The stamp bears a monogram composed of the Greek letters *beta* and *epsilon* (Ε). Sivan and Solar had stated that most of the arrowheads on their floor were marked with the monogram. A photo of two such arrowheads was published (Fig. 3) and a photograph provided by Sivan to Mazis and Wright showed four stamped arrowheads (Fig. 4)<sup>35</sup>.



**Fig. 3.** Two cleaned arrowheads published from David's Citadel (Sivan and Solar (2000), 174) (scale unknown)

<sup>34</sup> Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 215-216. Mazis and Wright described them as a tanged arrowhead with rhombic or lenticular blade. Ivantchik (2016), p. 480, classified them as a tanged arrowhead with leaf-shaped blade.

<sup>35</sup> Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 215. See Mazar and Eshel (1998), p. 265 (a few dozen Hellenistic arrowheads).



**Fig. 4.** Arrowheads from David's Citadel (Loci 1121, 1127, 1128); most are uncleaned (1:1 scale) a-h (IAA 2019-1454, 1451, 1415, 1445, 1416, 1452, 1456, 1458). All are bronze except a, which is iron; c-f are stamped.

Mazis and Wright argued that the  $\Xi$ -stamped arrowheads may be associated with a body of archers serving in the campaigns of Antiochus VII Sidetes. Much of Mazis and Wright's support for this connection is based upon the clustering of such finds in controlled excavations in Syria and Israel<sup>36</sup>. In addition to the  $\Xi$ -stamped arrowheads from David's Citadel, a stamped arrowhead was published from Ashdod-Yam<sup>37</sup> — and we will see that more  $\Xi$ -stamped arrowheads were reported from the GPL. Mazis and Wright postulated that at another site, Tel Dor, where arrowheads “almost identical” to the David's Citadel finds and apparently attesting to Antiochus VII's siege of Dora, were noted (without illustration), may also be of the Baitinger IA5 type<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 213, Table 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ashkenazi and Fantalkin (2017), Fig. 8c; Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 216.

<sup>38</sup> Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 216. Stern cited arrowheads and ballista stones from Tel Dor (1988, 14 n. 24). Lead sling bullets were also found at Dor (Schlesinger [1982]; Gera (1995), 491). Without hesitation, Stern dated the sling bullets to the historically documented siege against the city (1 Macc., 15, 13-14, 25; Josephus, *AJ*, 13, 236-248, 261). However,

In 2019, I added new details about the finds on the David's Citadel floor and other contexts in the Sivan-Solar excavations.<sup>39</sup> Serendipitously, I had the opportunity to examine metal finds from Sivan and Solar's excavations, after they were first relocated in 2018<sup>40</sup>. I was able to establish that the floor they published (L1128) was excavated in 1982 and I added details relating to what Sivan and Solar reported. Other types of arrowheads were in the delivery, but none of them came from that floor context. Rather, two arrowheads of another type were found in one of the contexts which I believed were excavated nearby to it<sup>41</sup>. One must therefore not view the tanged arrowheads associated by Mazis and Wright with Antiochus VII as the only arrowhead type employed by the Seleucid forces<sup>42</sup>.

I did not know whether the material I saw constituted all of Sivan and Solar's military equipment. Upon full registration of the assemblage in 2020 it became clear that the photograph provided by Sivan to Mazis and Wright, and showing four stamped arrowheads were from L1128. In fact, the two stamped arrowheads illustrated in Sivan and Solar's report (Fig. 3) were not among the items received in 2018. Together with two other two stamped arrowheads from another context (L1113; IAA 1984-1627, 2019-1447), and three whose contextual information were lost (IAA 2020-2241, 2020-2242, 2020-2243) it thus appears that 11 stamped arrowheads were found in the dig.

Besides the arrowheads on the published floor and the contexts believed to have been near it, numerous iron butt spikes<sup>43</sup> were found. In addition, two lead sling bullets (or missiles) with winged thunderbolt decorations were found, one of them in one of the 'nearby?' contexts<sup>44</sup>.

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there is no evidence that the arrowheads from this "almost identical" assemblage were stamped.

<sup>39</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 31-32.

<sup>40</sup> Cited by Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 215.

<sup>41</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 32. Those arrowheads, described by Stiebel as socketed, trilobate arrowheads with three vanes, were also uncovered at the GPL (*e.g.*, Stiebel 2013), p. 297, No. 1).

<sup>42</sup> Johns, who earlier excavated a context similar to those found by Sivan and Solar, reported the appearance of what are called here the Baitinger IA5 arrowheads ([1950], p. 130, Fig. 7, 2-4) with iron arrowheads of different types ([1950], p. 130, Fig. 7, 5-6) (1950). These same types were in the newly rediscovered assemblage.

<sup>43</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 32; Sivan and Solar (2000), p. 173: "ferrules of spear hafts".

<sup>44</sup> Sivan and Solar (2000), p. 173. Also cited by Yuzefovsky (2018), p. 199. The sling bullet not from the main contexts or the presumed nearby contexts bore, in addition to the thunderbolt, an arrow device and a still undeciphered Greek inscription; Ariel (2019b), p. 33, n. 40 (IAA 1984-1637). The phenomenon of inscribed sling bullets have been discussed by Kelly (2012), p. 9-16. Of all the sling bullets provenanced to Jerusalem above,

The military projectiles described by the excavators and (except for the ballista stones<sup>45</sup>) examined by me show that four kinds of weapons were shot or thrown at the David's Citadel fortification, arrows, spears, ballista stones and sling bullets. Their accuracy and effective ranges, between 50-60 and 160-175 m<sup>46</sup>. The dozens of butt spikes attest to fighting closer to the wall. That said, the objects do not establish that the 'First Wall' was breached at David's Citadel. It may have been breached elsewhere (below). But the signs of siege against the 'First Wall' do provide archaeological proof that that city-wall was standing already in the last third of the second century BC.

Although Baitinger IA5 arrowheads are found well beyond the Levant, those with :stamps from Judean sites strengthen Mazis and Wright's case for identifying the Baitinger IA5 sub-group with archers fighting in Antiochus VII's army. From Tel 'Akko, approximately 100 tanged, bronze arrowheads were reported and five illustrated arrowheads are of the Baitinger IA5 type<sup>47</sup>. None of the illustrated arrowheads is stamped and the text does not mention any being stamped. 'Akko may have been the port where Sidetes made land upon his return from the 'islands of the sea' (1 Macc., 15, 1; but see Finkielsztejn in this volume). The absence of stamped arrowheads at 'Akko, among such a large quantity of finds, if substantiated, could provide support for the argument that the E-stamped arrowheads relate only to the Judean arena. Of course, it must be recognized that only a small percentage of arrowheads appear to have been stamped, and on even fewer would the stamps be preserved.

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two bore inscriptions, both undeciphered: this one and another from the Monbaz-Street site. Another inscribed sling bullet was found at Tel Dor. Despite Gera's (1995), p. 493, argument that that latter bullet, found 100 m from the tel, was prepared in Dora for use *against* Sidetes' forces, it nevertheless makes sense that the other decorated sling bullets identical in style to those found at the other Judean and Samaritan sites were manufactured by Sidetes' forces. One may also note that Fischer (1992), also ascribing the inscribed sling bullet from Dor to Tryphon's forces, emended Gera's reading to bear Zeus' name. In other words, the Zeus in Fischer's reading may even have been meant to respond to the symbolism of the thunderbolt as Zeus' attribute on the sling bullets which I associate with Sidetes' troops. Shatzman (1995), p. 67, disagreed with this view.

<sup>45</sup> The ballista stones cited by Sivan and Solar (n. 32 above) were not part of the 2018 delivery.

<sup>46</sup> McLeod (1965), p. 8, p. 14; Ariel (2019b), p. 32. Kelly cited a range for lead sling bullets up to twice the higher range (2012, 8) as the one I cited in 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Dothan (1976a), p. 41; p. 46, Fig. 47.

*Lead Sling Bullets:* The same is true for the lead sling bullets: only a small percentage of them were customized, although technologically, that would have been easier to accomplish. Unlike the bronze arrowheads that were stamped with a monogram after casting, the lead sling bullets were customized through engraving a variety of simple depictions or inscriptions into simple two-sided molds. The low melting point of lead enabled casting to take place on site in the course of a campaign.<sup>48</sup> The main symbols for Sidetes' units of slingers seem to have been a thunderbolt (winged or unwinged) and, less so, a trident (and the thunderbolt and trident devices are often paired).

Thunderbolt-decorated bullets are attested in a number of locales in the eastern Mediterranean<sup>49</sup>, where their overall heyday ranges from the fourth century BC through the Hellenistic period. In the southern Levant, however, where a disproportionate quantity of provenanced sling bullets are known, the distribution of decorated specimens can be analyzed. Zeus' thunderbolt is the most common device employed (two thirds). The reverse sides of these bullets are often decorated, sometimes with another thunderbolt. For cases where a different device is found, the common thunderbolt could represent a larger military grouping while the less common symbol on the other side could reference smaller units. The numbers of thunderbolt-decorated sling bullets from 'Akko, Dora, Jerusalem, and some less well-known sites also enable us to propose a date for them, based upon the accounts of sieges in both Dora and Jerusalem during Antiochus VII's short stay in the region.

Besides two unclear devices on the reverses of single thunderbolt bullets from the GPL and the new southern 'Arnona Slopes' neighborhood of the modern city<sup>50</sup>, only thunderbolt and trident symbols are known on bullets from excavations in Jerusalem. Two derive from David's Citadel (Fig. 5), and two others come from the adjacent sites (Qishle<sup>51</sup> and near Jaffa

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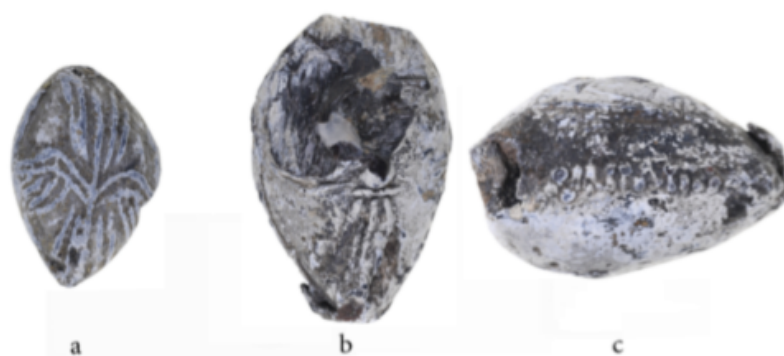
<sup>48</sup> Molds for casting up to 9 bullets at one time are known (Empereur [1981], p. 555, No. 1; Fig. 29).

<sup>49</sup> Kelly cited lead sling bullets with thunderbolt decorations from numerous locales, including Crete and Cyprus; Kelly (2012), p. 27. Paunov and Dimitrov cited two from southwestern Thrace; (2000), p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> Neria Sapir and Nathan Ben-Ari (pers. comm.).

<sup>51</sup> Yuzefovsky (2018), p. 199, No. 2.

Gate<sup>52</sup>). Others were excavated at the GPL (4)<sup>53</sup>, Kenyon's City of David excavations (1)<sup>54</sup>, Reich and Shukron's City of David excavations (3)<sup>55</sup> and 'Arnona Slopes' (2). Outside of Jerusalem, four bullets with the thunderbolt symbol are attested from two sites affected by Sidetes' military activity, Tel Dor (2)<sup>56</sup> and Tel Gezer (2)<sup>57</sup>.



**Fig. 5.** Sling bullets from David's Citadel (1:1 scale): a. L1129 schematic thunderbolt device (IAA 1984-1629); b-c. thunderbolt device and undeciphered inscription<sup>58</sup> L1122 (IAA 1984-1637) (arrow device not illustrated)

Sling bullets decorated with thunderbolts and winged thunderbolts have been found further afield, where the extent of the effect Sidetes' campaign is

<sup>52</sup> The thunderbolt bullet is unpublished (IAA 2019-832), as is an undecorated one (IAA 2019-831). See Sion and Rapuano (2014).

<sup>53</sup> The Maccabees Project (2016).

<sup>54</sup> Presumably from Site A; Tushingham (1985), p. 64; p. 423, Fig. 70:34; Pl. 117. A trident is depicted on the reverse.

<sup>55</sup> Yuzefovsky (Forthcoming), Nos. 18-20.

<sup>56</sup> Schlesinger (1982).

<sup>57</sup> Gilmour (2014), 116; Pl. 37:1; [http://www.antiquities.org.il/t/item\\_en.aspx?CurrentPageKey=1&q=sling](http://www.antiquities.org.il/t/item_en.aspx?CurrentPageKey=1&q=sling). The object, from the pre-Mandate 'nucleus' collection, and now in the Israel national collection, administered by the Israel Antiquities Authority, is clearly provenanced to Tel Gezer; however, it does not appear in Macalister (1912). See Macalister (1912), vol. II, 370. Thunderbolts decorate both sides of the bullet. For Gezer's connection to Antiochus VII, see Finkielsztein, this volume.

<sup>58</sup> Sivan and Solar (2000), p. 174 (illus.).



not known. For some of these sites Finkielsztejn (this volume) has found amphora evidence of disruption at this time. Seven were found at Tel ‘Akko<sup>59</sup>, one off the coast of Atlit<sup>60</sup>, five at Tel Tanninim<sup>61</sup>, one at Mount Gerizim<sup>62</sup> and eight from the area of Yavne-Yam.<sup>63</sup> They also appear as single finds in Samaria<sup>64</sup>, Sepphoris<sup>65</sup> and Sasa<sup>66</sup>. As noted above, Tel ‘Akko, may have been Sidetes’ port of entry upon his return from exile. Tel Tanninim is around seven km south of Dor, and thus a connection can be made to Sidetes’ siege of Tryphon at Dora.

**Table 2** presents a summary of the provenanced Hellenistic sling bullets from Israel (see the map in Finkielsztejn, this volume, Fig. 1 for most of their locations), here including the undecorated finds, with details of Antiochus VII’s (isolated) coin finds from those sites<sup>67</sup>, as a crude indication of possible robust connections of the sites to Sidetes’ Judean campaign.

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<sup>59</sup> Dothan published images of between three and six sling bullets each from Tel ‘Akko; (1976a), p. 41, p. 46, Fig. 48 (right); (1976b), p. 73. From the Tel ‘Akko finds registered in the Israel national collection, seven bullets came from the site, all bearing a thunderbolt on one side and a scorpion on the other. E. Stern related those finds to a specific event in the history of that city, because they depicted an unusual decorative program, which included a scorpion; (1994), p. 213. A better formulation, used concerning the David’s Citadel finds, is that the decoration referenced a specific military unit; Mazar and Eshel (1998), p. 265.

<sup>60</sup> Galili *et alii* (2016), p. 27.

<sup>61</sup> Schlesinger (1984), p. 89. Two depicted winged thunderbolts (one illustrated).

<sup>62</sup> Magen (2008), p. 219, Fig. 296 (upper right).

<sup>63</sup> *I. e.*, from the late Aaron Sadeh collection at Bet Miriam; Schlesinger (1991), p. 67-68, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 21.

<sup>64</sup> Reisner, Fischer and Lyon (1924), vol. 1, p. 367, No. 4d; vol. 2, Pl. 83: c2. Tridents were also depicted on the other side of the Qishle, Samaria and Kenyon’s City of David sling bullets, and on one of the thunderbolt-decorated sling bullets from the GPL; Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 200. Yet another thunderbolt-trident bullet is known from a private collection in Israel; Schlesinger (1991), p. 67.

<sup>65</sup> Stray find (IAA 1991-5398).

<sup>66</sup> Smithline (1997), p. 22, Fig. 23. In 2000, six other, unprovenanced thunderbolt-decorated sling bullets were registered in the Israel national collection. All of the last group are likely to have been found in Israel.

<sup>67</sup> Primarily based upon the coins in the Israel national collection.

Site	Thunderbolt-decorated bullets	Other Decorated bullets	Undecorated bullets	Totals	Antiochus VII coins (pre-siege)	Notes
JERUSALEM	Monbaz Street	1 (inscription)		1	17 + 1§	
	David's Citadel	2 <sup>68</sup>	1	3		
	Qishle	1 (trident on rev.)	1	2		
	Jaffa Gate	1	1	2		
	Jewish Quarter		2	2		Zitronblat and Geva (2003), 358, No. M51; Nenner-Soriano (2014), 312, No. M4.
	City of David	1	2	3		
	GPL	4 (trident on rev. of 3)	32	36		1 (2007 season) <sup>69</sup> + 35 (The Maccabees Project (2016))
	'Ophel'	1 (trident on rev.)		1		
	'Arnona Slopes'	2 (1 with thunderbolt on rev.)		2		Neria Sapir and Nathan Ben-Ari (pers. comm.)
[Subtotals for Jerusalem:]		11	1	39	53]	
Sasa		1		1	2	
Tel 'Akko		7 (scorpion on rev.)		7	15	port of Sidetes?
Sepphoris (incl. Shihin)		1	[7 unexamined]	1	3 + 1§	

<sup>68</sup> One with arrow device and undeciphered inscription.

<sup>69</sup> Stiebel (2013), p. 299, No. 6. I have not included the "oval leaden pellet" published by Stiebel (2013), p. 299, No. 7, as akin to a sling bullet and coming from the Hellenistic stratum, because it has a very different shape than the sling bullets discussed here. See Ariel (2019b), p. 34.

Site	Thunderbolt-decorated bullets	Other Decorated bullets	Undecorated bullets	Totals	Antiochus VII coins (pre-siege)	Notes
Atlit	1			1		
Tel Dor	2	1 (inscriptions)	1 [+ 13 unexamined]	4	5 <sup>70</sup>	
Tel Tanninim	2 (inscription on rev.)	3 (lituus, anchor, cornucopia, amphora, inscriptions)		5		~7 km south of Tel Dor
Bet She'an (Tel Izṭabba)			23	23	26	Atrash and Mazor <i>forthcoming</i> ; destruction in late 2nd c.
Samaria	1 (trident on rev.)		3	4	22 <sup>71</sup>	destruction in late 2nd c.
Mount Gerizim	1	6 (trident, scorpion, crab, spider)	[15 unexamined]	7	242 <sup>72</sup>	destruction in late 2nd c.
Yavne-Yam	8 (inscription, trident on rev.)	4 (scorpion, cornucopias, inscriptions)	11	23	3	
Tel Gezer	2 (1 with 2nd thunderbolt on rev.)	1 (anchor/serpent) 1 (rosettes)	2		6	2 + "cluster" of 48, the latest Ant. VII <sup>73</sup>
Tel Maresha		1 (inscription)	5	6	34	
Totals:	40	18	84	140		

**Table 2.** Summary of the provenanced sling bullets from Israel, according to site

In summary, the thunderbolt sling bullets found at the foot of the fortifications of David's Citadel and other locales in Jerusalem, and those from Tel Dor, securely indicate that despite the distribution of thunderbolt-

<sup>70</sup> Meshorer (1995), p. 468, Nos. 64-65.

<sup>71</sup> Reisner, Fischer and Lyon (1924), vol. 1, p. 261; Kirkman (1957), 52; Fulco and Zayadine (1981), p. 207-208, Nos. 98-103.

<sup>72</sup> Bijovsky (2021), 158-159, nos 268-292.

<sup>73</sup> Barag (2014), 242; 246, No. 16.

decorated sling bullets in various parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, those projectiles found in the southern Levant derive from the sling pockets of Sidetes' slingers<sup>74</sup>. This evidence joins the ₤-stamped Baitinger IA5 type arrowheads, as strong markers of Sidetes' military activity inside and outside of Jerusalem. It is also noteworthy that in both cases, the distribution of these weapons cannot support a counterargument that they were used by the enemies of Antiochus VII's army, the Judeans. And in the case of the sling bullets decorated with Zeus' thunderbolt it may be added that, because of the Zeus symbolism, they would not have been made or used by the defenders of Jerusalem, certainly not two years before the city's mint made efforts to distance itself from offensive imagery on its first coins (above).

At three of the sites conquered by High Priest John Hyrcanus I, consensually late in his tenure, Mount Gerizim, Samaria and Maresha, decorated sling bullets were found. An uncertain number (but apparently at least six) were reported from Mount Gerizim, one from Samaria and one from Maresha. This leads to the question, what is the likelihood that the decorated sling bullets from these sites derived the high priest's forces? In the aniconic Hasmonean world, it would seem unlikely that such weapons were used and it may be slings were not even part of Jewish military traditions, which had its beginnings in guerilla warfare.

Magen discussed this in connection to the finds from Mount Gerizim and concluded that it was conceivable that the mercenaries in the Hasmonean army used the decorated bullets (Magen (2008), 211). Magen did not consider that Antiochus VII and his proxy Cendebeus provide a more likely explanation to finds of decorated sling bullets in numerous sites. No doubt, there are no attestations in the written record of assaults of Sidetes' forces on Mount Gerizim, Samaria, Maresha and other sites where these objects were found. Nevertheless, it would be more difficult to argue that Hyrcanus and the mercenaries in his army are to be associated with these finds. Finkielsztein (this volume) argues convincingly that evidence of Seleucid

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<sup>74</sup> Table 2 also serves to suggest that coastal sites not heretofore associated with Antiochus VII's Judean campaign may nevertheless have some connection with the king's activity in the region: Tel Tannim (five decorated bullets, two with thunderbolts) and Yavne-Yam (twelve decorated bullets, eight with thunderbolts). The ₤-stamped arrowhead from Ashdod-Yam brought about a proposal that a Seleucid fortress and garrison were located there (Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 216). However, 1 Macc., 16, 10 suggests that the arrow with the ₤-stamp was shot by an archer of Cendebeus' troops in flight from forces of John Hyrcanus. This would make that find the only such arrowhead whose findspot associates it with the first phase of Sidetes' Judean campaign.

military activity in the Judean countryside under Antiochus VII can be traced using stamped amphoras. In the case of Mount Gerizim, where no stamped amphora's were found, it would nevertheless seem that the distribution of decorated bullets is more likely associated with some Seleucid presence in Samaritis than to Hyrcanus' campaigns at the end of the second century BC<sup>75</sup>.

### *Military Projectiles from the GPL*

The robust finds of military projectiles from David's Citadel is matched by the finds from the GPL. Three E-stamped arrowheads known from there have already been noted<sup>76</sup>. Mazis and Wright quoted a personal communication by the excavator at the GPL, Doron Ben-Ami: "the spatial distribution of the arrowheads [found at the GPL] shows they mostly come from the glacis [of the aforementioned fortification system]". Because the finds from those excavations are still being studied, the full scope of finds of military equipment at the GPL is unfortunately unknown. A popular article on the GPL citing "an enormous number" of bronze arrowheads and sling bullets<sup>77</sup> may not be trustworthy, but the evidence for a large quantity of sling bullets is backed up by other images on the internet<sup>78</sup>.

Stiebel, who is charged with the publication of the military equipment from those excavations, thus far only published the military equipment from first (2007) season<sup>79</sup>. Even at that early stage of the excavations, Stiebel considered it "striking" that the GPL finds predominated in projectiles, while most of the Hellenistic weaponry known to him from Jerusalem had been from other categories, and were found on the Southwestern Hill<sup>80</sup>.

The 2007 season's finds at the GPL in Stiebel's chapter attest to parallels to the military-related finds from David's Citadel, but in smaller

<sup>75</sup> Another case is Tel Izṭabba at Bet She'an. Here, too, there is no evidence that this incarnation of Nysa-Scythopolis, which barely existed from Antiochus IV's reign (Finkielsztein [2018], p. 18), was attacked by Sidetes' forces. In this case, however, only undecorated sling bullets were found, including 21 from one small cache. We know that Nysa-Scythopolis was destroyed by Hyrcanus, but their presence as cache raises the possibility that the sling bullets from Tel Izṭabba did not belong to Hyrcanus' men but rather the defenders of the town preparing themselves for Hyrcanus' attack.

<sup>76</sup> Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 215.

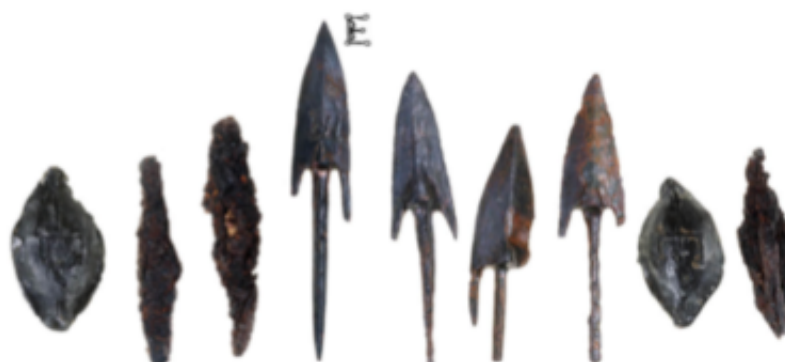
<sup>77</sup> Hayardeni (2017), p. 10. See also Ngo (2015).

<sup>78</sup> Some 35 sling bullets from the GPL were displayed by The Maccabees Project (2016); see also <https://youtu.be/-lDZRGX3w3M>.

<sup>79</sup> Stiebel (2013).

<sup>80</sup> Stiebel (2013), p. 297.

quantities. However, the finds from the later seasons, although not fully published, do provide more robust parallels (Fig. 6). These parallels reportedly derived from the 2012 and 2013 excavation seasons, when the two Hellenistic glacis layers were excavated (above)<sup>81</sup>.



**Fig. 6.** Arrowheads and sling bullets (trident sides) from Giv'ati Parking Lot Site (Hayardeni (2017), 10). The leftmost of the three Baitinger Type IA5 arrowheads is stamped; the corroded three arrowheads are iron. (scale unknown)

In sum, the rich military equipment found at the courtyard of David's Citadel (11 E-stamped arrowheads, 3 sling bullets) and the equally rich related finds from the GPL (3 E-stamped arrowheads, large numbers of sling bullets), whether well contextualized or not, most likely provide graphic evidence of the siege Antiochus VII laid on Jerusalem. In both locales in Jerusalem, we find evidence of attacks, probably by Antiochus VII's forces, on fortification lines. How this summary, with seemingly incongruent evidence of two assaults in the city, one on the relatively new 'First Wall' and the other on an older city-wall now inside the city, contributes to a historical synthesis of the siege will be addressed following a summary of the third archaeological component in this paper, the finds of Aegean wine amphoras northwest of Jerusalem's 'First Wall'.

<sup>81</sup> The number of three E-stamped arrowheads from the GPL is cited for the 2015 season only; Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 215.

### Provisioning Antiochus VII's siege in Jerusalem

#### *Sites with Aegean Amphora Fragments Northwest of the Hellenistic City of Jerusalem*

The study of Hellenistic imported transport amphoras and their stamped handles has long informed the history of Jerusalem. Only in the past few years has a window opened into the connection between amphora research and the siege on Jerusalem laid by Antiochus VII. In June 2017, a short salvage excavation was undertaken at 13 Yesha'yahu Street in the old Zikhron Moshe neighborhood now considered part of the larger Mea She'arim district of Jerusalem. The still unpublished diminutive site, some 1,500 m northwest of David's Citadel, revealed a refuse dump mainly of broken imported amphoras. Expectedly, the Rhodian class predominated, but many other stamped and unstamped amphora classes were represented<sup>82</sup>.

The amphora handles attest to a restricted range of dates towards the end of the second third of the second century BC. Almost half of the readable stamps, and the overwhelming majority of the stamps naming Rhodian eponyms, read Νικασαγόρας (2nd) — equivalent to 133~2 BC according to Finkielsztein's chronology<sup>83</sup>. Assuming the dating is accurate, the refuse dump provides a clear end date for Antiochus VII's anabasis to Judea, placing Seleucid troops outside the walls of Jerusalem in that year. This would settle scholarly disagreements, based on textual arguments, on the exact year of the Seleucid king's siege of Jerusalem. Until now, the contested dates had ranged from 135/4 BC to 131 BC.

The Yesha'yahu Street dump must have been located close to a major encampment, or even the main camp, of the siege forces<sup>84</sup>. The amphora-based date also accords well with the only coin found in the excavation, a bronze of Antiochus VII issued in Antioch throughout the king's reign<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> I am grateful to Kfir Arviv and Alexander Wiegmann, who excavated the site, and to Gérard Finkielsztein, principal investigator of the imported amphora material, for their permission to include the 13 Yesha'yahu Street refuse dump in this discussion.

<sup>83</sup> Finkielsztein (2021), p. 213.

<sup>84</sup> It is ironic that Josephus' account of the immediate aftermath of the siege has Hyrcanus supplying the Seleucid army with provisions (*AJ*, 13, 250). The evidence of provisions for the Seleucid forces found in the area of Mea She'arim cannot be ascribed to Hyrcanus. The high priest would have had no access to Greek wine within the city. This anecdote is clearly part of Posidonius' imaginative and tendentious reporting of Sidetes and Hyrcanus' good relations after their peace agreement; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 403.

<sup>85</sup> *SC* II/I, 366, No. 2066.

The aforementioned refuse dump is particularly interesting because it served to bring other equally small, previously published salvage digs of the Israel Antiquities Authority into focus. A 2006 excavation at Ḥayei Adam Street in the Sha'are Moshe neighborhood (also part of Mea She'arim) produced a Rhodian 'top-of-jar' amphora and another unattached Rhodian handle found on a hewn floor.<sup>86</sup> The 'top-of-jar' also named Νικασαγόρας 2nd, the aforementioned eponym from 13 Yesha'yahu Street<sup>87</sup>.

A half-year later, two seasons of excavations at a site on Monbaz Street yielded two stamped eponymic handles, the later one restored as Ἀνδροεικος, dating 134~3 BC<sup>88</sup>, a year before the latest dated stamps at the other two sites.

Four months after the second Monbaz season, in November 2008, at a small archaeological site on Sonnenfeld Street in the Ge'ula neighborhood (next to Mea She'arim) another Rhodian stamped handle was found. Finkielsztejn restored the name as Ἀνδροεικος, the same eponym as above<sup>89</sup>.

South of the Monbaz Street site, another stamped handle, found at Kikkar Safra (City Hall; less than 600 m from David's Citadel) is of the Koan class<sup>90</sup>. The stamped handle dates to the later part of the second century BC, and is discussed below, together with the amphora fragments themselves from the David's Citadel excavations.

Some 330 m southwest of the Kikkar Safra site, at the end of 2005-beginning of 2006, a stamped amphora handle was uncovered in excavations at the Center for Human Dignity (Museum of Tolerance) site next to the Mamilla cemetery<sup>91</sup>. The site is not along the axis I have been describing, from the Yesha'yahu Street–Ḥayei Adam Street–Monbaz Street–Kikkar Safra sites in the direction of David's Citadel. Like the Sonnenfeld Street site, which is east of the axis, the Mamilla site deviates from the axis, being 730 m west-northwest of David's Citadel. The stamp on the handle is from yet another amphora produced in the eponymic year of Νικασαγόρας 2nd, 133~2 BC<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Landes-Nagar (2009).

<sup>87</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 38, n. 64.

<sup>88</sup> Finkielsztejn (forthcoming).

<sup>89</sup> Finkielsztejn (2008).

<sup>90</sup> Ariel (2004), p. 183, Fig. 14:2.

<sup>91</sup> Solimany (2017).

<sup>92</sup> The stamp is identified as RE-NIKΑΣΑΓΟΡΑΣ ΟΙ-ΠΑΝΑΜΟΣ-003; Cankardeş-Şenol (2016), p. 73 (the dating of the stamp from Νικασαγόρας 1st should be corrected to Νικασαγόρας 2nd).



The Hayei Adam Street site is 1,350 m northwest of the fragmentary floor with evidence of fighting and fire in the courtyard of David's Citadel; the Sonnenfeld Street site is 1,400 m north- northwest of it; and the Monbaz Street site is 840 m northwest of it. The area would have been well out of range of projectile or other attack from the Jewish defenders of Jerusalem. The idea of a provisioning center or centers in the vicinity of the Yesha'yahu Street refuse dump therefore makes sense. That leaves the last two sites, Kikkar Safra and Mamilla, much closer to the effective ranges of ancient artillery, more likely to have been forward bivouacs.

It is actually remarkable that, besides the Aegean amphora remains as an indication of a foreign presence, nothing about the abovementioned sites suggests a military connection for those foreigners — with one exception. The exception is the excavation at Monbaz Street (Table 1, above). There, a worn sling bullet with undeciphered inscription was excavated alongside a “considerable amount of finds that date from the late Hellenistic” period,<sup>93</sup> thus associating the site with belligerent activity.

The distribution of sites with amphora fragments northwest of the Hellenistic city does not argue against other bivouacs being located along different sections of wall of the besieged city (Fig. 7). Seven camps are mentioned by Josephus (*AJ*, 13, 237). In 2019, I wrote that that many camps surrounding the city was an example of the exaggeration found in the Josephan account<sup>94</sup>. However, my statement was poorly worded and should be requalified. Seven camps along the over 600 m long northern wall would, in my opinion, be an exaggeration. Yet, in all likelihood, seven camps around the entire city (with a roughly 4 km circumference) would not. There would have had to be camps strategically placed outside the parts of the large city in places where, owing to the precipitous topography, a circumvallation would have been difficult to build — in order to deter the population from escaping. If that was the case, we can imagine that the main siege-camp for the provisioning of the besieging forces is somewhere within the cluster of sites in the area of Mea She'arim, owing to its great distance from the city-walls of Jerusalem. From that area the seven camps surrounding the entire city were supplied, as were what we can now agree was probably a large number of scattered bivouacs, at least to the northwest. It should also be acknowledged that the siege-camp was intentionally located

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<sup>93</sup> Rapuano (2018), p. 18. The sling bullet is cited on p. 20 and illustrated in Fig. 9, p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 43.

not far from where most of the military activity is presumed to have taken place, along the northern stretch of the city-wall<sup>95</sup>.



**Fig. 7.** Map of Jerusalem during Antiochus VII Sidetes siege (a=Yesha'yahu; b=Ḥayei Adam; c=Sonnenfeld; d=Monbaz; e=Kikkar Safra; f=Mamilla). Based upon map in Geva (2011), 300, Fig. 1. Lines of the Ottoman Old City, the "Second" and "Third" walls, the Herodian temenos and some other anachronistic features are provided for orientation.

Let us return to the axis defined by 13 Yesha'yahu Street–Ḥayei Adam Street–Monbaz Street–Kikkar Safra leading to at least one focal point of

<sup>95</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 419.

the fighting, the strategic David's Citadel. The fact that the Sonnenfeld Street site is some 500 m east of that line would then support the idea that at least one of the seven Seleucid camps was located further to the east, closer to the fighting that Josephus did describe as taking place along the northern section of the 'First Wall'.<sup>96</sup> One could argue the same for the site next to the Mamilla cemetery, that a camp was situated in that area. However, the Mamilla site's location almost within range of likely Judean defensive capabilities suggests that, like the Kikkar Safra site, it was another bivouac area supporting the fighting at David's Citadel.

It is consensual that the reason that most attacks on ancient Jerusalem were undertaken against the city's northern fortifications is because of the unfavorable topography on the other sides of the capital. Jerusalem's topography on the east, west and south served to protect the city in both its minimal (City of David only) and maximal (including the Southwestern Hill) extents. Further support for this idea comes from the literary evidence for a number of camps of besiegers of the city north of the northern city-wall. Josephus cited the 'Camp of the Assyrians' twice (*BJ*, 5, 303; 504). This camp was located by Ussishkin in the vicinity of the Russian Compound (or Kikkar Safra-City Hall, roughly where the Koan stamped handle cited above was found).<sup>97</sup> One of Ussishkin's arguments in support of this location was its basic agreement with Josephus' description of the siege camp of 701 BC as being on higher terrain than the city below it. The spot he suggested was 30 m above the highest point in the Southwestern Hill.

Because, according to Josephus, centuries after Sennacherib's 'Camp of the Assyrians', the place became the Roman general Titus' camp, Dąbrowa (2015), who supplemented his claim with archaeological information and familiarity with Roman military practice, proposed another point not far from Ussishkin's 1979 placement for the Assyrian Camp. Dąbrowa

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<sup>96</sup> It is important to remember that one cannot compare the possibility of one Seleucid camp located approximately at Jerusalem's Zikhron Moshe-Sha'are Moshe neighborhoods with the array of camps that Herod and Sosius built to besiege Jerusalem in 37 BC. At that later time, the first city-wall that needed to be breached was the 'Second Wall', north of the 'First Wall'. One also cannot compare the location of a site such as that at Yesha'yahu and Hayei Adam Streets to Titus' preparations for the Roman assault of the city, which first began with a breach of the 'Third Wall', even further to the north, before the 'Second Wall' was overrun. At the time of Antiochus VII's siege the 'Second' and 'Third' walls had not yet been built.

<sup>97</sup> Ussishkin (1979), p. 139.

described “the valley contained approximately within today’s streets Shivtei Yisra’el and Derekh Shkhem (the Nablus Road)” as the spot<sup>98</sup>.

Most recently, Ecker has argued for the placement of another landmark very close to the former Roman siege-camp. For archaeological and topographical reasons different from those employed by Dąbrowa, Ecker suggested that the post-70 CE *campus* (training ground) of the Roman tenth legion was situated in the shallow valley north of the Damascus Gate.<sup>99</sup> This spot overlaps Dąbrowa’s Titus camp location centered slightly further west. Ecker’s *campus* was accessed from inside the postwar city through the place of today’s Damascus Gate. His main arguments are that his proposed location was the “most level ground around Jerusalem” and was almost devoid of other structures during the post-70 period<sup>100</sup>.

Historiographically, then, Ussishkin’s ‘higher terrain’ argument for the eighth-century BC ‘Camp of the Assyrians’ was replaced by a somewhat lower more easterly alternative by Dąbrowa for Titus’ camp, and Ecker picked an even more level area for the tenth legion’s peacetime training area. Vis-à-vis the Seleucid camps of Antiochus VII’s forces besieging Jerusalem, it is clear that all the above alternatives would have been appropriate. They are all the same distance, some 500-600 m, from the line of the northern portion of the ‘First Wall’. The further west one goes the terrain is slightly higher, but because most of the 600 m extent of the northern segment of the ‘First Wall’ is level, an actual assault of the city-wall itself would have been possible at almost any point.

In sum, in addition to indicating which low-quality wine the officers in charge of provisioning Sidetes’ army were purchasing, the amphora-related sites northwest of ancient Jerusalem constitute unique, heretofore unknown, evidence for the presence of the Seleucid forces outside Jerusalem. Their discovery has been dictated by the intensive development of the modern city northwest of ancient Jerusalem. Were there more salvage excavations to the east of Mea She‘arim, perhaps similar evidence of Sidetes’ besiegers would also have come to light along the rest of the northern sector of the ‘First Wall’.

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<sup>98</sup> Dąbrowa (2015), p. 28.

<sup>99</sup> Ecker (2019), p. 111.

<sup>100</sup> Ecker (2019), p. 112.

*Amphoras from David's Citadel*

After surveying the new amphora evidence from the sites northwest of the ancient city of Jerusalem, an opportunity arises to examine the stamped amphora handles from Sivan and Solar excavations in David's Citadel. In 1989, Sivan entrusted me with the 14 stamped handles from the 1982-1983 excavations for study. After the metal projectiles were relocated in 2018, I discovered that one of the stamped handles in my care was contextualized to the fragmentary floor (L1128) with the Baitinger IA5 arrowheads, including four with : stamps. Four of the stamped arrowheads were part of Reg. No. 11680, two of the iron arrowheads were Nos. 11681 and 11682 and the stamped handle was No. 11683.

The Rhodian stamped amphora handle is an incongruous find in a context characterized by remains of weapons and signs of burning. The object may therefore be intrusive, as no soldier would have carried an amphora fragment with him to battle, and one should not try to impart to it great importance. Moreover, the stamped handle is unfortunately poorly preserved; it reads: [ῚΕπ'] ιεϑέως/[- -]δα/[- -], where the *delta* may also be a *lambda*. At this stage, the name is unrestorable, but there is no doubt that it dates to the second century BC. Until a parallel with an identical stamp is found for No. 11683, it is futile to speculate further.

Most of the other stamped handles in the David's Citadel assemblage attest to the occupation of the site well before the Antiochus VII's reign. Regarding the period immediately after the siege, however, I was unable to isolate well-dated stamped handles. None of the material could be associated with the decade-long range of amphora evidence found in the Yesha'yahu Street<sup>101</sup> refuse assemblage treated by Finkielsztein in his contribution to this volume.<sup>102</sup> All this suggests that no garrison was placed at this militarily strategic point after the Seleucid forces took the Southwestern Hill. To me

<sup>101</sup> One stamped Koan-class handle (with the same name — and general date — as the one from Kikkar Safra) was in the assemblage. It reads Λόχος and also has parallels in the Jewish Quarter and the City of David, and dates to the later part of the second century BC. See Ariel (2013), 335; (2019b), 38 n. 65. Together with the handle reading Λόχος in the assemblage, there were three other stamped Koan amphora handles.

<sup>102</sup> Later than the Antiochus VII horizon, there is at least one Rhodian stamped amphora from Sivan and Solar's excavations, of ῚΑσκληπιάδας 2nd (Ariel and Finkielsztein [1994], 199, SAH 32; [http://www.amphoralex.org/timbres/eponymes/accueil\\_epon/affiche\\_LRF\\_un-nom.php:RF-AΣΚΛΑΠΙΑΔΑΣ](http://www.amphoralex.org/timbres/eponymes/accueil_epon/affiche_LRF_un-nom.php:RF-AΣΚΛΑΠΙΑΔΑΣ) 02-005).

that supports my rejection (below, following section) of a suggestion that Seleucid officials were left in the city as part of the peace agreement<sup>103</sup>.

### **An archaeological-historical view of Sidetes' Jerusalem siege**

#### ***The Dating of the Siege***

The three sections above have provided the archaeological background to the complex chronological issues regarding Antiochus VII's siege of Jerusalem. A consensus on these issues has not yet been achieved, although the strong archaeological evidence detailed above and in Finkielsztein's contribution to this volume tends to support later-date scenarios for the siege over the earlier ones. That said, there are a number of details about the late scenarios that are quite uncertain.

A well-known asynchronism exists between two datings of the siege supplied together by Josephus in the same sentence in his *Antiquities*: "in the fourth year of his [Antiochus VII's] reign and the first of Hyrcanus' rule [135/4 BC], in the 162nd Olympiad [132-128 BC]" *AJ*, 13, 236<sup>104</sup>. For this and other reasons, Bar-Kochva argued that Josephus used two sources for his siege narrative. Nicolaus of Damascus was his source for the shorter narrative used in *Jewish War*, and Strabo was added to the mix in the longer narrative in *Antiquities*. According to Bar-Kochva, because Strabo began writing his encyclopedic *Geographica* over a century after the siege, the geographer-historian surely relied on an earlier source, Posidonius of Apamea. Posidonius, alive at the time of the siege of Jerusalem, most likely did not witness it<sup>105</sup>, but rather he himself relied on the apparent eyewitness account of a figure named Timochares<sup>106</sup>. Despite the difficulties in identifying 'kernels of historical truth'<sup>107</sup> in the longer siege narrative in

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<sup>103</sup> The evidence of the coin finds also does not support a presence of Sidetes' troops at David's Citadel from the period of the breach of the 'Third Wall' to the cessation of hostilities. See Ariel (2019b), p. 44.

<sup>104</sup> No date for the siege appears in *Jewish War*; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 404.

<sup>105</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 458.

<sup>106</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 415-416. The historian reported that Timochares' fragmentary account was preserved by Eusebius (*Praeparatio evangelica* 9, 35, early part of the fourth century CE). Eusebius wrote that he found it in Alexander Polyhistor's Jewish anthology (first c. BC). Geva (2018), p. 31, n. 7) cited Bar-Kochva's view that Timochares described the siege; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 466.

<sup>107</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 433.

*Antiquities*, with its numerous exaggerations and contradictions, Bar-Kochva mined the account to determine the chronology of the siege and its stages<sup>108</sup>.

One of Bar-Kochva's rationales<sup>109</sup> for preferring Josephus' (= Strabo's<sup>110</sup>) 162nd Olympiad dating (132-128 BC) for Antiochus VII's siege was the 132/1 BC lily/anchor coin struck in Jerusalem. It may be recalled from my discussion of the numismatic evidence from the GPL (above), that that coin was issued after the end of the siege, thus in better harmony with the Olympiad, which began in July 132 BC. There would be little logic for Sidetes and Hyrcanus to make peace, and then tarry<sup>111</sup> before coins would first be issued marking Jerusalem's recognition of Seleucid hegemony. This argument for preferring the siege's 162nd Olympiad date gains credence now with the new amphora evidence, detailed above, but unknown to Bar-Kochva in 2010.

Details of the end of the siege are provided in the *Antiquities* narrative. The 'beginning of the end' began with a temporary truce reported by Josephus to coincide with the week of the Feast of Tabernacles. This opened the stage for the extension of the ceasefire and the commencement of negotiations towards a settlement. Another source, the Aramaic *Megillat Ta'anit* (XI:c), cites a departure (Bar-Kochva: withdrawal) of a "King Antiochus" from Jerusalem on 28 Shevat (late winter)<sup>112</sup>.

Bar-Kochva's use of the rabbinic source brought him to reconstruct that the referenced Feast of Tabernacles fell in September/ October 132 BC holiday, and the withdrawal of "King Antiochus", if the king in *Megillat Ta'anit* is Antiochus VII, took place four-and-a-half months later, in the late

<sup>108</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 433.

<sup>109</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010, p. 405, n. 20; p. 433.

<sup>110</sup> The main reason to prefer the Olympiad date is that the source of the main narrative of the siege is consensually attributed to Strabo, who seems to have provided most of the Olympiad dates used by Josephus (Bar-Kochva [2010], p. 405 n. 20). Cameron (2018), p. 236, states that in *Antiquities* Josephus imposed Olympiad dates on 'pre-existing' narratives, but in this case it is more likely that although there is an obvious error in *AJ*, 13, 236, the Olympiad date is the correct one. For a proposed emendation to Josephus' text that also produces a late dating for the siege, see Zeitlin (1918), p. 168.

<sup>111</sup> As much as a year, if Shatzman's idea of an earlier (133/2 BC) siege date (n. 114 below) were adopted, or if Hoover's idea that an undated series probably preceded the two dated lily/anchor lily/anchor coins is accepted (Hoover [2003], p. 29, n. 1; Ariel [2019c], p. 47).

<sup>112</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 434 and n. 92. Noam, who surveyed the identification of "King Antiochus" in this source, indicated that the attribution of the figure to Antiochus VII was proposed by only one [Lichtenstein (1931-1932), 287-288] of the many scholars identifying the named king; Noam (2003), p. 292.

winter of 131. Bar-Kochva<sup>113</sup> explained the rather lengthy gap by suggesting “that the negotiations dragged on for a few months ...”

Bar-Kochva’s chronological reconstruction, together with some tweaks of my own, produces the following. Antiochus VII first ‘ravaged the country’ before ‘shutting (ἐνέκλεισε) Hyrcanus up in the city’ of Jerusalem (*AJ*, 13, 237). The first invasion of Judea may possibly have been “in the fourth year of [Sidetes’] and the first of Hyrcanus’ rule” (*AJ*, 13, 236), *i. e.*, 135/4 BC. This first phase of the conflict was not personally directed by Antiochus VII, but rather by a proxy named Cendebeus, while the king pursued Tryphon to Apamea (*AJ*, 13, 223). It would not have taken a full two years to ravage the Judean countryside, especially if that campaign was repulsed, as 1 Macc., 15, 37-16, 8 reports. However, that period provides an opportunity for Antiochus VII to return to Judaea after pursuing Tryphon to Apamea (*AJ*, 13, 223) — and perhaps deal with other issues<sup>114</sup> — where he remained until the end of the siege (*AJ*, 13, 236-246).

Upon Sidetes’ return, the second campaign commenced, followed by the siege, which would have begun at some point before or after the summer solstice of 132 BC (the beginning of the 162nd Olympiad). The 132 BC Feast of Tabernacles episode then places the cessation of hostilities around September/October of that year, appropriate as armies rarely engaged each other in the winter. Because fighting never recommenced after the Tabernacles armistice, this means that the entire siege would have lasted only a few months and, if Bar-Kochva’s interpretation of the *Megillat Ta’anit* source as referencing Antiochus VII is to be trusted, the peace agreement was completed by late winter 131.

The above chronological reconstruction provides a coherent explanation for the asynchronism between the ‘fourth year of Antiochus VII’s reign /

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<sup>113</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), 434.

<sup>114</sup> Atkinson raised the possibility of an otherwise unattested victory of Sidetes in Mesopotamia before the end of the reign of Mithridates I; (2011), p. 49. After Sidetes came to the region to dispose of Tryphon, he left to pursue the usurper (leaving Cendebeus to engage Judea). If, after that, he went to Parthia, was victorious there, and returned to reinvade Judea, such a scenario could lend support to Bar-Kochva’s preference for the later, Olympiad dating of the siege, by obviating the need to posit a long period in which the Judean countryside was ravaged. Alternatively, Shatzman argued for a two-season Parthian campaign, beginning in spring 131 BC (2012), p. 34, n. 19). In this view, this would only have been possible if the Jerusalem siege, assuming a year-long duration, began in 133/2 BC or if, *contra* Josephus, Antiochus VII did not remain in Jerusalem until the end of the negotiations. See Assar (2020), for a new in-depth chronological analysis, the result being that the Parthian campaign began in spring 130.



first year of Hyrcanus' rule' and the 162nd Olympiad. The first date (135/4 BC) marked the beginning of a process whose culmination was the siege that began around the time of the inauguration of the 162nd Olympiad<sup>115</sup>. In the intervening period are placed, at the least (n. 114), Cendebeus' campaign, Sidetes' pursuit of Tryphon and the king's return.

The summer timing of the siege is certainly appropriate. I also find the idea of a short siege quite reasonable, considering the complete imbalance of the competing sides. In my view, Bar-Kochva's shortening of the siege<sup>116</sup> improves on another scenario, whereby the first post-summer rain, dated by the "setting of the Pleiades"<sup>117</sup> occurred a short while *after* the beginning of the siege instead of being moved to almost a year earlier than the agreement to the ceasefire leading to the peace treaty<sup>118</sup>. All told, the siege mainly took little effort because it never ran its full course, being cut short by Hyrcanus' call for negotiation. The talks towards an agreement, and the ultimate acquiescence of the High Priest, was a windfall for Sidetes, who (below) had an incentive to move on.

Sidetes' incentive was this. Around 133/2 BC, near the time of the siege on Jerusalem, Antiochus VII would have heard of the death of the king of the Parthian Empire, Mithridates I. The Parthian king had left only a young son (Phraates II) to replace him on the throne. Considering Sidetes' wish both to deter Parthian westward expansion and address his own territorial ambitions, his decision to retake Babylon would have been made swiftly. This may also have influenced the sense of leniency on the king's part in his negotiations with Hyrcanus, who for his part may also have been aware of Mithridates' death and knew that his negotiating position could be forceful. As soon as a treaty with Hyrcanus was signed, if not before, the king would probably have hastened to Antioch to make preparations for an eastern campaign.<sup>119</sup>

Following Bar-Kochva's chronology, with the Tabernacles ceasefire occurring in October 132 BC, it is possible that the king's departure took place after Jerusalem's first coin emission in his name, in 132/1 BC. This

<sup>115</sup> For another chronology, proposed to me by Duncan Cameron, see Ariel (2019), p. 48-49, n. 14.

<sup>116</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 408.

<sup>117</sup> *AJ*, 13, 236; see, e.g., Shatzman (2012), p. 33, n. 17. Like Shatzman, but for different reasons, Barag arrived at the same year-long extent for the siege ([2009], 80-83).

<sup>118</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 434.

<sup>119</sup> According to Assar ([2020], p. 7 and n. 4), Sidetes embarked on his campaign "around half a year later".

depends, of course, on when in 132/1 the coins were first issued — and whether that year ended in the spring<sup>120</sup> (Babylonian calendar) or autumn (Macedonian calendar). If, however, the ceasefire dated a year earlier, to 133 BC (n. 114 above), and the king's treaty with Hyrcanus was completed in the following months, the coins would have been minted after his departure.

With or without Antiochus VII's presence in Jerusalem during the peace negotiations, it is clear that the first lily/anchor coin, and probably also the helmet/aphlaston coin, were minted before the end 132/1 BC; i.e., before spring or autumn 131 BC. I can now consider the idea of a potential ment of the king's underlings in the minting of those coins. Barag thought that the inauguration of the Seleucid Jerusalem mint was carried out through "the presence of royal officials of [Antiochus VII there] and probably a small military force to protect them"<sup>121</sup>. However, as Antiochus' compromise<sup>122</sup> with Hyrcanus was that hostages were accepted in lieu of stationing a garrison in Jerusalem (AJ, 13, 247; the memory of the Seleucid presence in the Akra for so many years was still very fresh), a significant Seleucid presence remaining in the city is unlikely. For this reason, it is more reasonable to suppose that, possibly with the early chronology for the siege (summer through October 133 BC), and certainly with the later chronology (summer through October 132 BC), the lily/anchor coin was issued by John Hyrcanus I, in his role as Antiochus' vassal — without the king or a subordinate being present.

### ***The Connection between the Archaeology of the Siege and the Written Accounts***

Josephus' accounts of the early Maccabean period in his *Antiquities* are essentially a paraphrasis of 1 Macc<sup>123</sup>. However, in his narrative of the siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus VII Sidetes (AJ, 13, 236-252), Josephus could not compose a restatement of 1 Macc, because the siege was not described

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<sup>120</sup> Following Bar-Kochva's interpretation of the *Megillat Ta'anit* source, a departure of Sidetes in late winter 131 BC would occur at the very end the minting of the SE 181 (132/1 BC) coin — if the Babylonian calendar was followed.

<sup>121</sup> Barag (1992-1993), p. 3.

<sup>122</sup> According to Bar-Kochva (2010), 434, the king's *only* compromise.

<sup>123</sup> Bar-Kochva (1989), p. 165.

there. Rather, he fused two other largely conflicting sources, as analyzed by Bar-Kochva<sup>124</sup>.

Overall, Bar-Kochva's 2010 reconstruction is convincing, especially in the late horizon of the siege. The recent archaeological finds, however, suggest a few different emphases. The historian's analysis appeared in a volume entitled *The Image of the Jews in Greek Literature*, where Bar-Kochva focused on Posidonius of Apamea. The historian found Posidonius' tendentious embellishment of Timochares' narrative instructive in understanding the philosopher's complex but generally negative view of Jews<sup>125</sup>. These include "extreme exaggeration with regard to military installations and constructions"<sup>126</sup>. Bar-Kochva gave Josephus credit for his work in conjoining the Strabo and Nicolaus sources into one siege account in *Antiquities*. But the modern historian ascribed almost no responsibility for textual *adjustments* to those post-Posidonius players (Josephus, Strabo and Nicolaus). Bar-Kochva cited Strabo and Josephus with only one possible emendation each<sup>127</sup>.

Specific to the fighting itself, Bar-Kochva discounted the erection of "a hundred towers, each three stories high, on which [Antiochus] mounted companies of soldiers" (Josephus, *AJ*, 13, 238) as exaggerations of Posidonius, and rejected the description of the construction of a deep and broad double ditch<sup>128</sup>. Although the historian did not note it, this in fact would have been difficult to achieve in a siege lasting only a few months.

Posidonius' source, Timochares, did not speak of any level ground along the perimeter of Jerusalem<sup>129</sup>, although Josephus' account did (*AJ*, 13, 238). For Bar-Kochva, this was insignificant<sup>130</sup>. The historian was so invested in developing Timochares as an eyewitness to the siege<sup>131</sup> that he

<sup>124</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 404, p. 415.

<sup>125</sup> Bar-Kochva summarized the most 'peculiar' of these embellishments on p. 421–422, describing them as "well-calculated additions, omissions, and alterations."

<sup>126</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 421; see also p. 468.

<sup>127</sup> For Strabo, Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 416; for Josephus, naming the pretext for the truce as the Feast of Tabernacles, Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 417; Ariel (2019), p. 40, n. 83. *Apophthegmata* 184F, attributed to Plutarch, when citing this episode, only reads μέγιστην ἐορτήν instead of Tabernacles. That Plutarch was unfamiliar with the works of Josephus supports the idea that Josephus made the emendation; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 419.

<sup>128</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 419.

<sup>129</sup> Timochares' fragment in Eusebius describes Jerusalem as being "hard to take, being shut in on all sides by precipitous ravines"; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 258.

<sup>130</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 460.

<sup>131</sup> Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 466, p. 468.

did not try to identify who noted the level ground on Jerusalem's northern side. Did Posidonius, who most likely was never in Jerusalem, add that detail<sup>132</sup>? Was it Josephus? Was it Strabo? Or was the discrepancy Eusebius' doing, or Alexander Polyhistor (Eusebius' source), who removed that point from Timochares' account?

It is useful to return to the possibility that Timochares was not an eyewitness to the siege. Had he been, one would expect that the vulnerable northern section of the 'First Wall' would have been mentioned. There are a number of ways to explain the lapse. Timochares, who wrote a posthumous panegyric biography of Antiochus VII<sup>133</sup>, may have wished to go to lengths to describe the natural defenses of the city of Jerusalem as impenetrable. It may be that the hyperbolic absence of vulnerable points along Jerusalem's city-wall was Timochares' way to glorify the memory of Sidetes, by making the king's easy siege look more difficult.

Another possibility is this: Bar-Kochva was aware that the growing archaeological consensus was that the 'First Wall' was completed before Sidetes' siege. But he did not know that Geva influentially proposed a date for the construction as early as the end of the 140s<sup>134</sup>, less than a decade before the siege. Perhaps Timochares, or *his* source, was acquainted with the Jerusalem of a decade earlier, when its Southwestern Hill had not yet been fortified. It seems to me too much of a coincidence that Timochares' fragment in Eusebius seems to describe a Jerusalem that less than eight years before had no significant vulnerable northern city-wall segment.

Of all the players involved in the text, Josephus is the one who would certainly have known of the northern stretch of the 'First Wall', and was capable of 'improving' Posidonius' embellishment of Timochares account. It would have been natural for the Jewish historian to add the word 'northern' to Timochares-Posidonius text as reported by Strabo, as he intimately knew the city fortifications, albeit from exactly two centuries later.

I observed above (n. 127) that Bar-Kochva raised the possibility that Josephus named the holiday that catalyzed the beginning of negotiations towards ending the siege as the Feast of Tabernacles. It is appropriate to credit that interpolation with the Jewish historian, as both Timochares and Posidonius were much less likely to be able to name that holiday.

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<sup>132</sup> See Britt and Boustán (2017), p. 68.

<sup>133</sup> Timochares is even deemed by Bar-Kochva to have been Antiochus VII's "court historian ... or at least a person close to the court"; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 465-466; Ariel (2019b), p. 29.

<sup>134</sup> Geva (2018), p. 45.

It may be added in this regard that 11 paragraphs after Josephus' Tabernacles reference (*AJ*, 13, 241), an episode explicitly drawn from Nicolaus of Damascus recounted how Hyrcanus the Jew held up the Seleucid army's advance near the Lycus river (in Iraqi Kurdistan) for two days owing to back-to-back Pentecost-Sabbath holidays (*AJ*, 13, 252). The use of the late spring holiday's name and its pairing with the Sabbath suggests that here, too, Josephus emended his source<sup>135</sup>.

Although it is not possible to determine the full extent of Josephus' intervention in his sources, his account of Sidetes' siege is correct about the weaknesses on the northern side of the city. In 2019, I was wary of using Josephus' *Antiquities* siege narrative to support the date of the initiation of construction of the 'First Wall' to the end of the 140s BC, because the possibility of a Josephan interpolation there<sup>136</sup> would have created a circularity in the argument about that wall's date<sup>137</sup>. The problem still exists. However, it seems to me to be less critical because the totality of the archaeological evidence today compellingly establishes that the "First Wall" was built before the siege.

In sum, the likely interpolation of the Feast of Tabernacles into Josephus' narrative of Antiochus VII's siege of Jerusalem forms the basis for both chronological scenarios of the siege raised here: summer through October in 133 or 132 BC. The earlier date shortens the time Antiochus VII left Cendebeus in charge in Judea, provides more time for the king to prepare for his eastern campaign but also removes any logic for Josephus' 162nd Olympiad dating. The later date gives Antiochus more time in Syria before the siege, less time in Jerusalem overall and helps to solve the asynchronism in *AJ*, 13, 236. Both dates are preferable than any earlier scenario, especially with the new evidence of the Rhodian amphora stamps.

Thus far, in this section I have detailed the contributions of the numismatic and amphora evidence to better understanding the written evidence on the siege. The last contribution of archaeological evidence to interpreting the texts is the presence of two focal points of Seleucid assaults on Jerusalem's

<sup>135</sup> Assar (2020), 18, concurred with this. As an emendation, however, it is unreasonable to use the consecutive Pentecost-Sabbath holiday anecdote as the basis for Assar to calculate as he did that the supposed two-day delay occurred on June 13 and 14, 130 BC; Assar (2020), 39. It may also be recalled that, in our discussion above of the fate of the Akra after its capture by Simon Thassi, I identified another characteristic Josephan emendation.

<sup>136</sup> "... on the north side of the wall, where the ground happened to be level ..." (Josephus, *AJ*, 13, 238).

<sup>137</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 41.

walls, one on the northwestern corner (David's Citadel) — and probably also the northern stretch of 'First Wall' — and the other on western side of the original, unnumbered city-wall around the City of David hill, where the GPL is located.

### *Two Assaults by Antiochus VII on City-walls in Jerusalem*

Before Antiochus VII's siege, a fortification line, the 'First Wall', had recently been built to create a defensive line around Jerusalem's newest neighborhood (the upper city) on the Southwestern Hill. Nevertheless, the stratigraphic evidence from the GPL establishes, based upon contextualized pottery and coins, that the western fortification line of the City of David hill, now no longer an external city-wall, was still fully functional. Not only was it standing, it had two glacis laid upon part of it on its (western) exterior. One of these glacis was laid after the Sidetes' siege was over — and most likely after the king's death.

The robust evidence (Æ-stamped bronze arrowheads, thunderbolt / trident lead sling bullets) for a Seleucid attack on the fortification of the GPL means that the Syrian forces had penetrated into the Southwestern Hill. Despite the evidence of an assault at David's Citadel, there is no clear indication where the 'First Wall' was breached. Although I have raised a doubt about when the word 'northern' appeared into the account of the main siege narrative in *Antiquities*, nonetheless, it is likely that Sidetes' forces entered the Southwestern Hill from somewhere in the north.

It is highly likely that Hyrcanus knew that Seleucid forces would first take the Southwestern Hill. For that reason, he would have planned a retreat of the population of the city and its defenders into the reinforced ancient quarter of the city when the time came. A very plausible reconstruction of the events is that, after the city was blockaded and the siege was prepared, Hyrcanus' fighters focused their defense of the city on the Seleucid attacks against the 'First Wall' — from David's Citadel and eastward along the northern sector of the wall. Their defense held for a few months until the 'First Wall' was ultimately breached. Thereupon those Jews who previously had not withdrawn into the City of David hill did so post-haste. Afterwards, Seleucid forces entered the (upper) city<sup>138</sup> and attacked the reinforced old

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<sup>138</sup> To my knowledge as assistant director of Shiloh's City of David excavations (1978-1985), no Baitinger Type IA5 arrowheads, no lead sling bullets and no ballista stones were found in those excavations, suggesting that Antiochus VII's assault on the City of David hill only took place from the west. The find of three sling bullets found together at the edge of the

western city-wall<sup>139</sup>. At that point, on the pretext of some Jewish holiday, likely but not definitely the Feast of Tabernacles, Hyrcanus called for a cease-fire. Antiochus accepted and enacted the cease-fire, and then extended it in order to enter into negotiations on the terms of surrender, and those talks ultimately led to a settlement.

This reconstruction of the events of Sidetes' siege of Jerusalem, including from the Jewish defenders' point of view, is the most reasonable interpretation of the evidence presented here. Josephus' fantastical account of the Sidetan siege, with its 100 towers built alongside the north city-wall, and a double ditch to deter escapees is possible, but the length of the siege suggests that the part of the narrative on the Seleucid preparations (the 100 towers and a double ditch) is grossly exaggerated. There remains to discuss summarily the defensive logic of multiple coexistent city-walls in Jerusalem.

In his descriptions of various sieges in Jerusalem, Josephus detailed how a number of wall lines were assaulted and taken, one by one, during each siege. This is found for all three other Hellenistic-Roman sieges of Jerusalem enumerated at the beginning of this paper (Pompey, Herod and Titus; n. 1 above)<sup>140</sup>. After the external city-wall was breached, these 'internal' wall lines were significant additional encumbrances, slowing down the invaders' progress and the ultimate capture of the city. The 'internal' wall lines were mostly former city-walls, but the fortifications around the Temple temenos also served this purpose.

The 'First Wall', initiated by Simon Thassi as early as the late 140s BC, may very well have been built with his son John Hyrcanus' help. Hyrcanus also almost certainly was involved in reinforcing the fortification along the western side of the City of David hill, before Sidetes' siege (the lower glacis). Thus, it is clear that Hyrcanus would have recognized the continued value of the former City of David hill city-wall as a bulwark against Sidetes' army. Additional proof is supplied after Sidetes' departure and probably after the death of Antiochus VII, when Hyrcanus went back to work on those

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Kidron Valley (Area J in Reich and Shukron's City of David excavations; n. 55 above) does not significantly change this.

<sup>139</sup> Thirteen ballista stones were found at the GPL in the 2007 season (Stiebel (2013), 299-300). Some were contextualized to the Hellenistic stratum, but it is not clear how many. Nevertheless, as the fortification line in this part of Jerusalem ceased to exist by the end of the second century BC, based on current archaeological analysis, this suggests that, if in fact there was an assault by Antiochus VII on the GPL after the 'First Wall' was breached, part of the second assault included repositioning ballista catapult(s) to the Southwestern Hill.

<sup>140</sup> Ariel (2019b), p. 46-48.

fortifications, and poured the upper glacis on the western fortification line for its final incarnation.

The most explicit parallel account in Josephus' writings of the issues driving Hyrcanus to prepare as he did for Sidetes'<sup>141</sup> siege is found in the historian's account of Pompey's siege, for which he, in Rome, would have had access to relevant written sources. Josephus described the Roman general standing before Jerusalem in advance of his attack, acknowledging that the city's inhabitants would retreat to the Temple, "a temple also so strongly fortified as to afford, after the capture of the town, a second line of defense to the enemy" (*BJ*, 1, 141).

The above interpretation of the archaeological evidence that Sidetes' forces attacked both David's Citadel and the GPL shows that it was natural that, throughout the Second Temple Period, the city's defenders would know not to dismantle 'redundant' city-walls<sup>142</sup>. While Antiochus VII's army was ravaging the Judean countryside, the able-bodied men and women remaining in Jerusalem had time to prepare their defenses, including the reinforcement of the newly obsolete city-wall along the western perimeter of the City of David hill. Relative to the former city-wall the 'young' 'First Wall' functioned as a kind of advanced fortification, or outwork.

Just as the fact of fighting at David's Citadel did not mean that that was where the 'First Wall' was breached, so too at the GPL. Because of the evidence of fighting at the GPL, we know that the 'First Wall' was breached somewhere. However, the Seleucid attack at the GPL does not establish that the City of David's defenses were ultimately compromised. Hyrcanus could have called for the temporary truce just before the enemy breached that wall and thus minimized the loss of life<sup>143</sup>.

### Conclusions

A decade and a half can be a long time, even in antiquity. Between 142 BC, before the Seleucid garrison was evicted from their fortress, Akra, and 128 BC, by which time news of Antiochus VII Sidetes' death had

<sup>141</sup> The king who double-crossed his father (1 Macc., 15, 27).

<sup>142</sup> Ironically, the 'rule' that 'redundant' city-walls were not torn down in Jerusalem was overridden when, according to stratigraphic evidence, the western segment of the City of David hill' city-wall was eventually dismantled at the end of the second-beginning of the first century BC (n. 7 above).

<sup>143</sup> This may be what happened as, according to Bar-Kochva, the image of Hyrcanus in Josephan and Hebrew sources is unanimously positive; Bar-Kochva (2010), p. 419–420.



certainly reached Jerusalem, the former Hasmonean guerilla fighter Simon Thassi completed the eviction of Seleucid forces from Jerusalem, had himself become High Priest at the Jerusalem Temple, declared some level of territorial autonomy, was assassinated and was succeeded by his son Hyrcanus. Hyrcanus, in turn, immediately had to deal with Sidetes' Judean invasion, followed by the siege of the capital. He successfully — from a Judean perspective — negotiated an end to the siege through surrender. Subsequently, the young High Priest participated in the Seleucid Parthian campaign, and was home in time to take 'advantage' of the Seleucid king's death, adroitly improving the city's defenses and positioning Judea for more robust autonomy. Throughout this 15-year period, the geo-political situation in Jerusalem underwent a number of extreme metamorphoses, and a decade after that, Hyrcanus was able to set out to enlarge Hasmonean territory deploying a mercenary army. At the heart of this period, the siege of Jerusalem, followed by Antiochus VII's death, were milestones in the enormous changes to the Hasmonean polity.

New archaeological discoveries have informed the summary above. The inaugural coin issues of the Jerusalem mint, probably sanctioned by Antiochus VII before leaving Jerusalem to prepare his star-crossed Parthian campaign, were struck *de facto* by John Hyrcanus I before his short hitch with the king's army in the East.

Details regarding the military equipment of Antiochus VII's forces, including the Æ-stamped arrowheads and thunderbolt-decorated sling bullets, are apparent evidence placing specialist archers<sup>144</sup> and slingers of Antiochus VII's army at two attack points in Jerusalem.

Finally, analysis of a surprising number of finds of Aegean amphora fragments in the modern city northwest of the ancient town have enabled identification of the rear supply area for the siege as well as the presence of numerous bivouacs northwest of the city, not far from the probable focus of the fighting, the northern piece of the 'First Wall', presumably the place where the external city-wall was breached.

All this has enabled a critical examination of the historicity of the main written sources on the only full siege of Jerusalem in the second century BC. Despite uncertainty about critical pegs<sup>145</sup> in the chronology of the siege, Antiochus VII's siege of Jerusalem may now be identified as one of the

<sup>144</sup> Mercenaries according to Mazis and Wright (2018), p. 224.

<sup>145</sup> *E.g.*, the placement of the rain on the "setting of the Pleiades" in the narrative; the identification of Tabernacles as pretext for the temporary truce that began the negotiation between the warring sides.

inflection points in the history of Judea in the second half of the second century BC<sup>146</sup>.

Antiochus VII's great-uncle, Antiochus IV, has received the main scholarly and popular focus in writing the history of Seleucid-Judean relations throughout the second century BC. The main reason for this is the powerful story of the underdog Maccabean heroes of Hanukkah fame, and the anti-Jewish undertones<sup>147</sup> in the behavior of their 'wicked' antagonist, Antiochus IV. Antiochus VII's role in Judean history has consequently largely been eclipsed in non-scholarly imagination. Other reasons for Antiochus VII's poor modern exposure could be Hyrcanus' seemingly less-than-heroic capitulation to end the Jerusalem siege — certainly less heroic than the stories of Maccabean valor — and the absence of Sidetes' Jerusalem siege from the first book of Maccabees, a key source in the (Catholic and Orthodox) canon.

Fortunately, however, thanks to Josephus' composite account of the siege in Jerusalem in *Antiquities*, the affair continued to hold the attention of some later authors, who kept alive some the details of the events until the Byzantine Period. From that period, an exciting mosaic panel from the fifth-century Galilean synagogue floor at Huqoq has recently been interpreted as representing Antiochus VII's siege<sup>148</sup>.

Now, by virtue of a number of recent archaeological discoveries, a new spotlight may now be thrown on the siege of Antiochus VII Sidetes in Jerusalem.

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<sup>146</sup> Ariel (2021), p. 231-232.

<sup>147</sup> Bar-Kochva (2017).

<sup>148</sup> Britt and Boustán (2017), p. 78-80.

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