

Dr. Jeffrey Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 17, Archaeology and Solomon Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 17, Archaeology and Solomon, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Jeffrey Hudon's lecture on Biblical Archaeology, Session 17, explores the reign of King Solomon. The lecture **examines archaeological evidence** potentially linked to Solomon, such as the Gezer calendar and Solomonic gates found at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo. **Biblical sources**, primarily the Book of Kings, are analyzed, considering their theological context and the use of now-lost historical chronicles. The lecture also **discusses the geography and topography of Jerusalem** during Solomon's reign, including the location of Solomon's Temple and other significant sites. Finally, the lecture explores **Solomon's economic and political relationships** with neighboring kingdoms, including his trade networks and construction projects.

2. 36 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 17 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Introduction & Languages → Archaeology).



**Hudon_BibArch_Ses
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3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes, ideas, and facts from the provided source, "Hudon_BibArch_EN_Ses17.pdf":

Briefing Document: Archaeology and the Reign of Solomon

Overview: This document summarizes Dr. Jeffrey Hudon's lecture on the archaeology of the reign of King Solomon, focusing on the interplay between the biblical narrative and archaeological evidence. The lecture explores the historical context, key sites, and cultural artifacts associated with this period. It also acknowledges the theological lens through which the biblical account is written.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Theological History vs. Complete History:

- The Deuteronomistic history (Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings) is a *theological* history, not a complete one. It emphasizes the relationship between God and the people of Israel.
- Geopolitical events are mentioned based on their relevance to the theological narrative, not their overall importance.
- The Book of Kings was written during the exile in Babylon to explain why Israel was in exile, emphasizing disobedience to God. "This is what you did to disobey the Lord. And this is what happened."
- The "cumulative retribution" theology is noted, where sins of ancestors accumulate until judgment falls on descendants.

1. Royal Annals and Sources:

- The Book of Kings used sources like "the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah," which are now lost.
- Josephus may not have used these chronicles, relying more on the biblical text itself.
- Each king's account includes a brief reign account, mother's name, theological assessment, and death/burial details.

1. Jerusalem's Topography:

- Jerusalem is a city of hills and valleys, situated in a mountainous region.

- Key valleys include the Kidron Valley (Wadi al-Jawz), the Central Valley, and the Hinnom Valley.
- Key features include:
- **The Eastern Hill:** The oldest part of Jerusalem, dating back to the Chalcolithic period.
- **Mount Moriah/Mount Zion:** The site of the temple, initially the Tent of Meeting, then Solomon's temple, later rebuilt.
- **The Western Hill:** The highest point in ancient Jerusalem, initially mistakenly identified as the oldest part of Jerusalem, as "Mount Zion"
- **The Ophel:** Area between the Temple Mount and City of David.
- The Ottoman-era walls (1517) did not encompass the oldest parts of Jerusalem.

1. **Solomon's Jerusalem:**

- Solomon's expansion included the Ophel, the Milo, and the Temple Mount.
- Later, Jerusalem expanded to include the Western Hill by later kings of Judah.
- The Siloam Pool was initially outside the city but was later incorporated.
- The Gihon Spring was a crucial water source for the city and was protected by towers and defensive structures.

1. **Solomonic Architecture and Construction:**

- **Ashlar Masonry:** Finely carved, square or rectangular stones were used in royal construction. "This is, again, a step forward in architecture where you have not just field stones or roughly carved and chipped field stones but very nicely carved masonry..."
- **Royal Gardens:** Located on the terraces of the Kidron Valley, seen as an attempt to recreate "Paradise Lost" (Garden of Eden).
- **Administrative Districts:** 12 districts, aligned with tribes, that supported Solomon's bureaucracy through taxation and forced labor.

1. **Solomon's Temple:**

- First Kings 6-8 provides detailed descriptions of the Temple's layout and dimensions.

- No known remains of the Temple exist today, so archaeologists look for parallels and reconstructions.
- **Parallels:** The temple at Ein Dara (northern Syria) provides a close floorplan parallel with its antechamber, hall, and holy of holies. The Ein Dara temple also had similar design elements like Cherubs and latticework. "This is a massive temple, a pagan temple, but it had almost incredible similarities to Solomon's temple..."
- **Lattice:** The lattice carving discovered at Ein Dara provides a visual confirmation to the architectural term.
- **Temple Site:** Leen Rittmeyer's research places Solomon's Temple on the Temple Mount, based on exposed bedrock under the Dome of the Rock and has identified a depression for the Ark of the Covenant. "And more than that, he's actually identified a rectangular depression, exactly the dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant, exactly where it would be in the center of the Holy of Holies."
- The Well of Souls cave under the Dome of the Rock is speculated by Rivka Gonen to be a Bronze Age tomb, though the dating is controversial.

1. **Solomon's Building Projects and Strategy:**

- 1 Kings 9 mentions Solomon's extensive building projects, providing archaeologists with clues for research.
- Key locations mentioned include: Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Lower Beit Horon, Baalath, and Tadmor.
- Pharaoh's attack on Gezer, followed by Solomon's rebuilding is described in Kings, and provides a specific example of a place to look for Solomonic-era construction
- **Fortified Cities:** Six-chamber gates were found at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, all with similar dimensions and style and are "dated to the time of Solomon, by pottery, clearly you've got what are called Solomonic gates here at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo."
- These were strategically important for defense: Megiddo protected the Jezreel Valley, Hazor protected the north, Gezer protected the west, and Tamar protected the south and east.
- **Storehouses/Stables:** These were built in the fortified cities as a place to store food and military supplies.

1. Solomon's Foreign Relations:

- **Trade with Sheba:** The Queen of Sheba's visit was likely focused on trade and economics. "But that was probably a guise for trading relationships."
- **Naval Expeditions:** Solomon's ships, with Hiram of Tyre's sailors, sailed to Ophir and Tarshish for exotic goods. The exact locations of these are debated but have been suggested as far away as Spain, India, Mozambique, and Africa.
- **Copper Mines:** Solomon controlled copper mines in the Aravah (Khirbet En-Nahas).
- **Beekeeping:** Extensive beekeeping operation at Tel Rehov produced beeswax for copper casting. "In the northern part of the Kingdom of Israel, you've got this huge operation making beeswax, while to the south of Israel, in the Aravah, in Edom, you've got extensive mining operations."
- **Ezion-Geber:** Solomon's seaport, likely near Coral Island/Pharaoh's Island in the Red Sea.

1. Negev Highlands Settlements:

- Fortified sites in the Negev Highlands, dating to the 11th-10th centuries, are debated whether they are Solomonic, and their purpose (agricultural, military, or other) remains unclear.

1. Land of Kabul:

- The land traded to Hiram of Tyre is represented by the ruins of Rosh Zayit, with an open question of whether the site is Phoenician or Israelite.

Key Quotes:

- "This is what you did to disobey the Lord. And this is what happened." (Referring to the purpose of the Book of Kings)
- "This is, again, a step forward in architecture where you have not just field stones or roughly carved and chipped field stones but very nicely carved masonry..." (On Ashlar Masonry)
- "And more than that, he's actually identified a rectangular depression, exactly the dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant, exactly where it would be in the center of the Holy of Holies." (On Rittmeyer's work locating the Temple of Solomon)

- "This is a massive temple, a pagan temple, but it had almost incredible similarities to Solomon's temple..." (On the temple at Ein Dara)
- "...dated to the time of Solomon, by pottery, clearly you've got what are called Solomonic gates here at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo." (On the Six-chamber gates)
- "But that was probably a guise for trading relationships." (On the visit of the Queen of Sheba)
- "In the northern part of the Kingdom of Israel, you've got this huge operation making beeswax, while to the south of Israel, in the Aravah, in Edom, you've got extensive mining operations." (On the economic resources of Solomon's kingdom)

Conclusion:

This lecture provides a comprehensive overview of the archaeological evidence associated with the reign of Solomon, emphasizing the relationship between the biblical text and material culture. It also highlights areas of ongoing research and unresolved questions. Dr. Hudon effectively integrates biblical, historical, and archaeological data to construct a nuanced portrait of Solomon's kingdom.

4. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 17, Archaeology and Solomon

Archaeology and Solomon: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. What is the Gezer calendar, and why is it significant?
2. Explain the concept of the Deuteronomistic history and its purpose in the books of Joshua through Kings.
3. What is cumulative retribution, and how does it relate to the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah?
4. Describe the topography of Jerusalem during the time of Solomon.
5. Name and describe the significance of the three main valleys surrounding ancient Jerusalem.
6. What were the three main sections of ancient Jerusalem, and how did they develop?
7. Explain the significance of the six-chamber gates discovered at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo.
8. Describe the evidence for the existence of copper mining operations in the Aravah during Solomon's reign.
9. What is the significance of the site of Ein Dara, and how does it relate to the study of Solomon's Temple?
10. What does Rittmeyer's research suggest about the location of Solomon's Temple?

Answer Key

1. The Gezer calendar is a small, soft limestone tablet with inscriptions, likely a school exercise, detailing harvest times. It is significant as an early piece of epigraphic evidence from Solomon's time, demonstrating early Hebrew writing and agricultural practices.
2. The Deuteronomistic history is a theological history spanning Joshua to Kings, focusing on the relationship between God and Israel. It interprets history through the lens of obedience and disobedience to God's law, explaining why the Israelites were exiled.

3. Cumulative retribution is the idea that the sins of ancestors accumulate, leading to judgment on their descendants. During the time of the kings of Israel and Judah, this meant that judgment could come on the nation long after a king's sinful reign.
4. Jerusalem was located in a mountainous, hilly region surrounded by higher hills, situated in a kind of bowl. This was protected by steep valleys on many sides.
5. The Kidron Valley starts opposite the old city and runs down to meet the others; the Central Valley runs down to meet the Kidron; and the Hinnom Valley winds around the south of the city to eventually empty into the Dead Sea. They served as natural boundaries to defend the city.
6. The three main sections were the Eastern Hill (the oldest inhabited area), Mount Moriah/Mount Zion (the sacred precinct and site of the temple), and the Western Hill (the highest point in ancient Jerusalem which was later called Mount Zion).
7. The six-chamber gates are significant because they were found at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo with similar dimensions and were dated to Solomon's time. This suggests a centralized building program and a shared architectural style across these important cities.
8. Evidence of copper mining operations in the Aravah includes the copper mines at Khirbet En-Nahas, the nearby beekeeping operations at Tel Rehov, and the presence of fortified gatehouses. This indicates large scale mining and production during Solomon's reign.
9. Ein Dara is a Syrian pagan temple with a floor plan remarkably similar to descriptions of Solomon's Temple (two columns, antechamber, hall, and a holy of holies). The site provides an architectural parallel to the description of Solomon's Temple and confirms some architectural terms.
10. Rittmeyer's research suggests that the actual location of the Holy of Holies of Solomon's Temple is under the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount. He identified foundation courses and a depression matching the Ark of the Covenant on the exposed bedrock.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the challenges of using archaeological evidence to reconstruct the history of Solomon's reign, focusing on the interpretation of the biblical texts and the limited number of datable artifacts directly related to Solomon.
2. Analyze the economic and political factors that contributed to the power and prosperity of Solomon's kingdom, considering the role of trade, administrative districts, and relations with foreign powers.
3. Evaluate the significance of the six-chamber gates and other architectural features discovered at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo, and what they suggest about the level of control Solomon had over his kingdom.
4. Describe the ways that foreign architectural influences can be seen in structures built during the time of Solomon, and suggest how this might be interpreted given his many marriages to foreign women.
5. Compare and contrast the archaeological evidence for Solomon's building projects with the descriptions of his reign in the Old Testament, noting any areas of agreement, divergence, and ambiguity.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ashlar Masonry:** Finely carved, square or rectangular stones placed in a header-stretcher fashion to form walls, characteristic of Solomon's reign.
- **Cumulative Retribution:** The concept that the sins of ancestors accumulate and lead to judgment on their descendants.
- **Deuteronomistic History:** A theological history found in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, interpreting history through the lens of Israel's obedience or disobedience to God.
- **Ein Dara:** An ancient pagan temple in Syria that has remarkable architectural similarities to the biblical descriptions of Solomon's Temple.
- **Gezer Calendar:** A small, limestone tablet with early Hebrew inscriptions believed to be from the time of Solomon, detailing agricultural practices.
- **Hinnom Valley:** A valley on the west side of Jerusalem that winds around the south of the city.

- **Kidron Valley:** A valley east of Jerusalem, also called Wadi al-Jawz, that starts opposite the old city.
- **Khirbet En-Nahas:** A site in the Aravah region with copper mines and fortifications dating to the time of Solomon.
- **Megiddo, Hazor, Gezer:** Three cities fortified by Solomon, each with a six-chamber gate and storehouses.
- **Mount Moriah (Mount Zion):** The hill within ancient Jerusalem where the Tabernacle and later Solomon's Temple were located.
- **Ostrakon:** A piece of pottery used as a writing surface.
- **Palimpsest:** A writing surface (such as a parchment) on which the original text has been erased or scraped away to allow for new writing.
- **Red Burnish:** A type of pottery characteristic of the Solomonic period, featuring a red slip and polished surface.
- **Rittmeyer, Leen:** A scholar who has studied the Temple Mount for many years, and who has proposed a theory about the exact location of the Holy of Holies.
- **Solomonic Gates:** The six-chamber gates with similar dimensions found at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo, attributed to Solomon's building projects.
- **Tel Rehov:** An ancient city in the Beit-Shan Valley where evidence of beekeeping for beeswax production has been found.
- **Western Hill:** The highest point in ancient Jerusalem and later referred to as Mount Zion.

5. FAQs on Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 17, Archaeology and Solomon, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions About Archaeology and the Reign of Solomon

1. **What is the Gezer Calendar, and why is it significant?** The Gezer Calendar is a small limestone tablet, likely used as a school exercise, with an inscription detailing harvest seasons. It's considered significant epigraphic evidence from the time of Solomon. It also demonstrates a practice of reusing tablets (palimpsest), where earlier inscriptions were scratched out to make way for new ones.
2. **How does the Deuteronomistic History in the Old Testament impact our understanding of Solomon's reign?** The Deuteronomistic History (Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings) is not just a straightforward historical account but a theological one. It focuses on the relationship between God and Israel. Therefore, it may omit or downplay certain geopolitical events if they do not directly relate to this theological theme. This means the biblical narrative offers a selected history, not necessarily a comprehensive one. Also, the book of Kings was written during the exile to answer why the Israelites were in exile.
3. **What is the concept of "cumulative retribution" in the context of the kings of Israel and Judah?** Cumulative retribution is the theological idea that sins of past generations accumulate, eventually leading to judgment on the descendants, not necessarily the original offenders. For instance, Manasseh's actions sealed the fate of Jerusalem and Judah, which fell about a century after his death. The idea is that divine justice unfolds over generations, addressing the accumulation of wrongdoing.
4. **What is the significance of the Temple Mount's topography and the various valleys surrounding Jerusalem?** Jerusalem is located in the hill country, surrounded by higher hills and valleys which create a bowl-like setting. The valleys, such as the Kidron, Central, and Hinnom Valleys, served as both natural defenses and significant landmarks. The Eastern Hill is the oldest inhabited part of Jerusalem, while Mount Moriah (or Mount Zion) is the sacred site of the temple. The Western Hill was a later addition to the city. The city's layout influenced its defenses and was an important feature in the biblical narrative, particularly its topography and location, being surrounded by hills, played a major role in how the psalmist understood God's protection of Jerusalem.

5. **What architectural evidence supports the biblical descriptions of Solomon's building projects?** Archaeological evidence, particularly the discovery of identical six-chamber gates with corresponding dimensions at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, support the biblical account of Solomon's fortifications and construction. Also, ashlar masonry, using finely carved rectangular stones, is common in buildings from this period, especially in royal structures. These architectural consistencies point to a coordinated building program during Solomon's reign. The similarities with the floor plan of Ein Dara's temple and Solomon's temple further supports the biblical description of the temple.
6. **Besides Jerusalem, what other sites have provided significant archaeological finds related to Solomon's reign?** Key sites outside of Jerusalem include Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Tamar, Etzion Geber/Eilat, Khirbet En-Nahas, and Tel Rehov. These sites reveal evidence of Solomon's building activities, strategic fortifications, copper mining, and extensive trade networks. The sites at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer show a unified building style. Also, copper mines at Khirbet En-Nahas, a bee-keeping operation at Tel Rehov, and ports at Etzion Geber indicate a large economic infrastructure during Solomon's time. The fortified settlements in the Negev Highlands also relate to this period but further research is needed.
7. **What was the relationship between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba?** The relationship between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba was primarily economic, revolving around trade. The Queen of Sheba likely visited Solomon to explore trade opportunities, although there may be a popular conception of this relationship as being romanticized. Archaeological evidence, such as an 8th-century inscription mentioning trade between Saba (Sheba) and Judah, supports this economic perspective.
8. **What evidence suggests Solomon's international trade network?** The biblical text mentions Solomon's ships sailing to Ophir and Tarshish for exotic goods. While the precise locations of these destinations are debated, there is evidence of Solomon's fleets in the Red Sea, implying long-distance voyages. The location of Etzion Geber (likely Coral Island) near the Gulf of Eilat indicates Solomon's control of Red Sea trade. Furthermore, copper mines at Khirbet En-Nahas and bee-keeping at Tel Rehov would have supported this trade infrastructure. These all paint a picture of Solomon as a king that sought after and was able to establish extensive international trading relationships.