

THE POOLS OF SILOAM BIBLICAL AND POST-BIBLICAL TRACES

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Summary

Scholars celebrated the 2004 discovery of a large first-century pool at the southern end of Jerusalem's City of David. That pool and the related complex of underground conduits are archaeological echoes of biblical texts from both First and Second Temple periods. Potential identifications of and connections among these vital water sources are already evident in language employed in biblical and post-biblical texts, are reflected in centuries of travellers' reports, and appear in nineteenth- and twentieth-century maps. Data from each of these categories contribute to our comprehensive understanding of the water systems that served Jerusalem through the millennia.

1. Introduction

The pool of Siloam and the related network of water conduits underlying the City of David have received renewed attention in the last two decades as the result of significant archaeological work, capped by the 'new' discovery in 2004 of a first-century pool at the south end of the City of David.¹ The latter has been especially noteworthy as it adds to the understanding of the geographical context

¹ Ronny Reich, *Excavating the City of David: Where Jerusalem's History Began* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2011). Reich summarises the history of exploration from the 19th century onward, adds insights and reinterpretations from the most recent work, and suggests further understanding of the known relationship amongst the parts of the ancient water systems in the Second Temple period.

of John 9. Simply making that New Testament connection, however, misses additional rich layers of textual and geographical exploration.²

It turns out that knowledge of the pool and its connection to the spring located on the eastern flank of the City of David has been embedded in the memory of the local populations for centuries – this was not a new discovery. Even prior to post-biblical indications, however, we find ambiguity in the biblical text itself regarding the identification and nature of the developing water systems. Thus, as a prelude to investigating the post-biblical references to the pool, it is important to review the geographical and literary contexts that, though they are familiar, do introduce certain complexities.

2. A Brief Review: Geographical and Biblical Data

2.1 Geography of Jerusalem³

Biblical Jerusalem has always been defined by its primary water source, the Gihon,⁴ located on the eastern flank of the City of David, the lower spur that extends south of the hill of Moriah (2 Chron. 3:1) where the massive temple platform stood in Jesus' day. Long before David and the Israelites conquered the city (2 Sam. 5:8), there was a network of rock-hewn channels and pools near the source of the water.⁵

Directly west of David's Jerusalem is the Central Valley, called by Josephus the Tyropoeon ('cheesemakers') Valley. Josephus noted that this valley distinguished the hill of the upper, western part of the city from that of the lower, and the valley 'extends down to Siloam; for so

² As with so many investigations, this one started simply with a serendipitous look – in this case, at an old map of Jerusalem from the period of the British Mandate while I was on a brief research stay at Tyndale House, Cambridge, UK. I am grateful to have had access to the sets of maps Tyndale House is currently curating.

³ Readers desiring a visual context in which to place the following summary will find an abundance of maps online that depict the city of David and Jerusalem in the First Temple period.

⁴ An initial challenge is that the Gihon is never called a 'spring' in the biblical text. Instead, we read of the 'waters of Gihon' (2 Chron. 32:30); the Hebrew word implies 'gushing forth'. The three named springs in this geographical vicinity were En Rogel, En Shemesh, and En Hatannin. The last means 'spring of the dragon' (see Neh. 2:13). Further, the Gihon subsequently acquired additional names. To complicate matters even more, in the attempts to make sense of the centuries of references to the network of water sources, the name Gihon itself 'migrated' for some scholars. We will return to these related issues.

⁵ See Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 254 (fig. 168).

we called that fountain ...'⁶ It appears that in the first-century AD context of Josephus, the source of water for the pool located at the southern end of the Central Valley was thought to be near the pool itself.⁷

West of the Central Valley is a higher and much more formidable crest, the Western Hill, beyond which the Hinnom Valley defines both the western and southern edges of Jerusalem as it swings around to meet the Kidron Valley. Where the Central Valley meets the Kidron Valley was the general location of the pool of Siloam. Because this was the lowest point around the City of David, it was an obvious place for the construction of pools to collect water runoff. Further, given the tangle of underground rivulets and the fact that their 'paths' changed over the millennia, locations of springs and wells were not necessarily static. For the sake of perspective, this area was just about half a mile south of the Temple Mount in the Second Temple period.

2.2 Sketch of the Biblical Data

When Adonijah was on the cusp of making himself king in place of his aging father, David, he staged the event at En-Rogel, its name indicating it was a 'spring' (1 Kgs 1:9). Gihon was the alternative location where Solomon was crowned (1 Kgs 1:33,38,45), thus sealing its historical importance.

During the reign of Hezekiah in the late eighth and early seventh centuries (715–686 BC), the higher Western Hill was extensively settled.⁸ Because the primary source of water for both the lower and upper cities was the spring and its outflow, protecting and managing that water was critical. Toward that end, Hezekiah's engineers hewed a tunnel through the bedrock to transport water from the spring on the

⁶ *BJ* 5.140. Many of the translations of older sources, both biblical and post-biblical, use the word 'fountain' in place of 'spring'. Both refer to the same phenomenon – that is, water issuing from a rock surface. I use them interchangeably in the pages that follow.

⁷ This was also the conclusion of the 19th century explorer Edward G. Robinson in *Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions: Journal of Travels in the Year 1838* (3 vols; 11th ed.; Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1874), 1: 333-43. Robinson was a careful student of the land, oral reports of local populations, and centuries of written records from Jerome in the late fourth century up to the 19th century.

⁸ Excavations in today's 'Jewish Quarter' of the Old City of Jerusalem indicate evidence of this expansion and the eventual construction of a wall to protect the citizenry there as the impending Assyrian siege loomed on the horizon (Isa. 22:9-11; 2 Chron. 32:5).

east side of the City of David to a pool inside the city walls, more accessible to those who lived on the Western Hill. This would become the Pool of Siloam. The Siloam inscription, discovered in 1880, describes the waters going from the ‘source’ to the ‘pool’.⁹

The biblical text remembers Hezekiah’s efforts: ‘He made the pool and the conduit, and brought the water to the city’ (2 Kgs 20:20). The Chronicler adds that Hezekiah and his officers worked to ‘stop the water of the springs that were outside the city’ and ‘they stopped all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land’ (2 Chron. 32:3-4).¹⁰ The Chronicler further indicates that Hezekiah ‘closed the upper source of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west of the City of David’ (2 Chron. 32:30).

Isaiah mentions collecting the waters of the ‘lower pool’ (22:9) and continues ‘you made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool’ (Isa. 22:11). It seems there was already a pool of sorts in this general location that had been fed by seepage through fissures in the bedrock from the spring. Perhaps the engineering measure was to shore up rather haphazard water collection basins. There is one final mention of Gihon by the Chronicler. Hezekiah’s successor, Manasseh, rebuilt ‘the outer wall of the City of David, to the west of Gihon in the valley as far as the entrance of the Fish gate and brought it around the Ophel’ (2 Chron. 33:14).¹¹

2.3 *What’s in a Name?*

Introducing another name in conjunction with the water sources for Jerusalem, Isaiah contrasts ‘the waters of Shiloah that go slowly’ with the mighty waters of the River (Euphrates), symbolising the king of Assyria (8:6-7). Nehemiah includes a version of this name as well. In his presentation of the wall repairs in chapter 3, he starts on the western side of the City of David with the Valley Gate. From that point, the

⁹ Shmuel Ahituv, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions* [Hebrew], *The Biblical Encyclopedia Library, VII* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1992): 14.

¹⁰ These multiple springs reflect the wider environment, especially to the north and west of the city. Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century: The Old City* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi Institute, 1984): 84-85 names a number of them. The ‘stream’ no doubt referred to the Kidron with its steady source at the Gihon.

¹¹ The spring was sufficiently low in the Kidron that it was generally outside the city walls. Note the Middle Bronze-period fortifications already accommodated this with a fortified corridor from the city wall out to the spring towers (Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 253-61).

description moves south to the Dung Gate. The next focus is repairing ‘the Spring Gate’, building ‘the wall of the pool of Shelah as far as the King’s Garden and the steps that go down from the City of David’ and reinforcing the wall opposite the tombs of David to the ‘made pool’ (3:15-16).¹² The Hebrew verb *shalah* means ‘to send’. Perhaps Israelites came to think of the waters as ‘sent’ from the source at the ‘gushing’ spring to sustain the community and provide precious irrigation to multiple points in the southern part of the Kidron Valley.

Several additional details from Nehemiah may be helpful for our pursuit. Prior to the public works project of the wall repair, Nehemiah went on a private inspection tour, exiting the Valley Gate and passing the ‘Dragon’¹³ Spring on his way to the Dung Gate. After observing that the walls and gates had been consumed by fire, he continued to the Spring Gate and the Pool of the King. Beyond that point, there was no passage, so he went up via the valley and returned to the Valley Gate (2:13-15).¹⁴

The name Shiloah (Siloam) would continue into the first-century context of the gospels and beyond.¹⁵ At the feast of Tabernacles, a golden vessel was filled with water ‘from the *Shiloah*’ (*m. Suk.* 4:9),

¹² The installations and garden were at the southern lowest extremity. The wall of the pool seems to have needed reinforcement, perhaps because of the ravages of erosion into the valley. The presence of a gate called the Spring at that point suggests that either the local perception had (re-)located the water source to that location or it refers to the spring called Rogel. The latter is generally identified not with a spring but with a well called Bir Ayub, somewhat farther down the Kidron. Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 274 notes that the last report on that site was in 1863. See G. Dalton, ‘The Exploration of En-Rogel, or Job’s Well’, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 55(4) (1923): 165-73. This report contains additional gems. The author suggests that the name Ayub, usually thought to refer to Job, was given to this location by Salah ad-din after he conquered Jerusalem from the Crusaders to honour his family, the Ayyubid dynasty. As Dalton explored the well interior, he noted that the masonry changed about 40 feet down. This suggested to him that the original ground level had been that low, and the possible evidence of the spring was then not so much farther below that point. Centuries of sedimentation, which we certainly know from the rest of the valleys surrounding Jerusalem, filled in this location as well.

¹³ The name ‘Dragon’ survived into post-biblical tradition, perhaps because of the sound of waters issuing from the subterranean tunnels. In a passing reference, Quaresmius (see below) noted that Bonifacius called it the ‘dragon’s spring’ (Ch. 27; II, 290).

¹⁴ The Valley Gate likely issued west into the Tyropoeon Valley while ‘the valley’ itself may have designated the Kidron.

¹⁵ Recall the statement by Josephus (n. 6 above). For further on the linguistic shift to ‘Siloam’, see Elaine A. Phillips, ‘Pool of Siloam’, *Lexham Geography Commentary on the Gospels*, ed. Barry J. Beitzel (Lexham: Logos, 2017): 365-73.

carried up to the altar, and poured out in worship.¹⁶ It is helpful to have this collection of names in mind as we transition to the following centuries of developing traditions and additional place names.

3. Post-Biblical Literary Indications: Travellers and Residents Before the Nineteenth Century

Commenting on Isaiah 8:6, Jerome said, ‘Now we especially who live in this region cannot doubt that *Shiloah* is a spring at the foot of Mount Zion. It bubbles up not with perennial waters, but at certain hours and days, and with a great roar it passes through the deep places of the lands and the caves of very hard rock.’¹⁷ From the sixth to the sixteenth centuries, there were numerous travellers who noted the presence of the spring (fountain) and the pool, some also remarking on the irregular flow of the spring. Among them, sixth-century Antoninus the Martyr wrote that water ran under the street from the temple down to the pool of Siloam. The fountain of Siloam was reached by descending ‘many steps’ and it issued forth from beneath the steps of a ‘round church’. He further indicated that in his day the fountain was inside the city walls.¹⁸ Joannes Phocas (12th century) referenced the pool of Siloam, which ‘by its overflowing waters the whole of that dry country’.¹⁹

We have a more extensive description from the early seventeenth century. Franciscus Quaresmius spent some time in Jerusalem enquiring about local traditions, conducting his own explorations, and writing a description of the Holy Land.²⁰ Of interest for our topic, he described 1) the village of Siloam at the foot of the Mount of Offence

¹⁶ Even though the Mishnah was put into writing around AD 220, it purports to reflect the activities in conjunction with the festival when the Temple was standing.

¹⁷ Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (New York/Mahweh, NJ: The Newman Press, 2015): 179.

¹⁸ Aubrey Stewart, trans., *Of the Holy Places Visited by Antoninus Martyr (circ. 530 A.D.)* (London: Palestine Pilgrims’ Text Society, 1884): 20.

¹⁹ Aubrey Stewart, trans., *The Pilgrimage of Joannes Phocas in the Holy Land (in the Year 1185 A.D.)* (London: 1 Adam Street Adelphi, 1889): 23. Additional noted chroniclers of the pool and fountain included William of Tyre, a 12th century native of Jerusalem; Benjamin of Tudela, 12th century; Marino Sanudo Torcello, 14th century; and John Mandeville, likewise 14th century (Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, 1: 334-35).

²⁰ Franciscus Quaresmius, *Elucidatio Terrae Sanctae*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior 32 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1989). I have presented in text the specific references as they appear in this edition, citing in parentheses both chapter numbers and the primary references.

and opposite the Siloam spring (Ch. 14; II, 270); 2) the pool near the Siloam spring that was filled with the waters of the spring – he located Jesus’ miracle recorded in John 9 at this place (Ch. 24; II, 285); and 3) the possibility of a subterranean channel that seemed to connect water sources and a pool (Ch. 15; II, 270). In addition, Quaresmius revisited Jerome’s allusion to the uneven nature of the gushing spring water as well as his claim that the spring of Siloam was the same as the Gihon.²¹ Quaresmius seems to have relocated the latter to the west side of the city, but noted that it was no longer a spring because it had been blocked (Ch. 26; II, 288); this was also Robinson’s conclusion two centuries later. Finally, inspired by one Brother Julius’s prior adventure, Quaresmius related his own exploration of the channel that connected, as he labelled them, the Virgin’s Spring and the Siloam Spring. He seemed to think that there was one main place where the waters of each fountain spouted forth and that they earned their different names on account of their different effects (Ch. 27; II, 289).

4. Renewed Zeal of the Nineteenth Century²²

4.1 Explorations of the Water System/Cartography

Fast forward two centuries. Discovering that local inhabitants believed that there was an unexplored connection between the Virgin’s Fountain and the pool,²³ Robinson undertook his own examination and measurement of the entire passage on two separate days in April 1838. The first time, he and his assistant entered from the pool end, and the second time from the spring source. Because the passageway had filled with sand, they were compelled to lie full length and drag themselves along on their elbows. While he noted with care the details of

²¹ Jerome ‘seemed to perceive that the spring of Siloam is the same which is called Gihon ... those skilled in the sacred Language say it is from the Hebrew word *gavahh* meaning to burst out or cut short, as if they were to burst out from there by some attack’ (Ch. 26; II, 288).

²² Both Ben-Arieh (*Jerusalem in the 19th Century*) and Reich (*Excavating the City of David*) present thorough summaries of this period, both in terms of wider historical cultural developments as well as increasing scientific investigative work in the second half of the 19th century.

²³ Robinson concluded that the Gihon spring was on the west side of the city in the Hinnom Valley and, after it was stopped up by Hezekiah, had since dried up. Following the long-standing local tradition, he called the spring that fed the channel leading to the pool of Siloam the Virgin’s Fountain (*Biblical Researches*, 1: 346-47).

chiselling and the fact that those who cut the channel had worked from both ends,²⁴ he did not spy the inscription – perhaps because it was partially submerged – nor did he connect this endeavour with the biblical accounts of Hezekiah’s work.

With regard to the pool itself, of greatest interest is Robinson’s following notation: at the mouth of the Tyropoeon Valley the ground was lower, ‘forming a sort of basin, which is now tilled as a garden. Here, according to reports of travelers near the close of the sixteenth century, was formerly another larger reservoir, in the form of a parallelogram rounded off at the western end. It was dry in that age, and was probably not long after broken up; inasmuch as Quaresmius makes no distinct mention of it. Brocardus speaks also of two reservoirs, which in his day received the waters of the fountain of Siloam. Not improbably both were ancient.’²⁵

In the decades following Robinson’s adventure, Jerusalem’s water supply grew more precarious and unhygienic, especially as the population increased.²⁶ The Ordnance Survey maps, spearheaded by Charles Wilson and completed in 1867, were initially intended to assist in the improvement of the water supply and sewage disposal systems.²⁷ The mapping was indeed accomplished, but the plumbing improvements did not materialise as the Ottoman government did not want to take on the responsibility of upkeep. Nevertheless, the mapping effort was superb, and was soon augmented by the archaeological investigations of Charles Warren. While much of his work focused on the areas directly contiguous to the Temple Mount, he also made significant contributions to understanding the water systems. He described his own exploration of the tunnel and, following the discovery of the Siloam inscription, was the first to link it with the

²⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, 1: 335-41.

²⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, 1: 336.

²⁶ Documented by Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 90-91.

²⁷ Shimon Gibson, ‘British Archaeological Work in Jerusalem between 1865 and 1967: An Assessment’, *Unearthing Jerusalem: 150 Years of Archaeological Research in the Holy City*, ed. Katharina Galor and Gideon Avni (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011): 26. The philanthropist who sponsored the effort was Angela Burdett-Coutts. Reich notes the irony of her purpose – to establish a proper water line – and the first discovery being an extensive underground water system (*Excavating the City of David*, 17). Equally ironic, however, are the circumstances of the 2004 discovery of the Second Temple-period pool as the Jerusalem municipality was dealing with a sewer line!

reign of Hezekiah.²⁸ In addition, Wilson and Warren noted two pools of Siloam, a small one into which the subterranean tunnel issued, and a larger one. They concluded that the latter had probably been outside the wall, but was surrounded on three sides by an outer wall, and would thus have been secure.²⁹

Ben-Arieh likewise noted that nineteenth-century travellers observed two pools in the area of Siloam, a large rectangle and a smaller one above it that received water from the tunnel. It seems that in 1896 the larger pool of Siloam dried up, perhaps due to drought or to shifting in the underground channels. He said: '[t]he so-called lower pool of Siloam, which for so many years has been a receptacle for sewage, and is such a source of annoyance to all visitors to the Old Pool, has recently been purchased by the Greek ecclesiastical authorities, who have surrounded it with a good wall, have to a large extent cleared it out, and are proposing to make it the site of a convent'.³⁰ In early Mandate period, however, the pool was again filled up by Greeks and turned into a vegetable garden.³¹ Today, the southern portion of this lower pool is still covered by an orchard of fig trees.

4.2 Revisiting the Matter of Names

Prior to the nineteenth-century focus on locating biblical place names, the spring on the east side of the City of David was not called Gihon. It was descriptively known as Ein Umm ed-Daraj, 'spring of the mother of steps'. Because the spring is deep in the Kidron Valley, getting to the water source meant descending multiple steps; the name fits, and we recall that Antoninus the Martyr noted 'many steps' to the fountain. The name, 'Virgin's Fountain', was also common, presumably due to its relative proximity to the Eastern Church traditional tomb of the

²⁸ Charles Wilson and Charles Warren, *Recovery of Jerusalem: A Narrative of Exploration and Discovery in the City and the Holy Land* (London: Richard Bentley, 1871): 238-42. While this volume is edited by Walter Morrison, the names of Wilson and Warren are sufficiently prominent that I have chosen to cite it accordingly.

²⁹ Wilson and Warren, *Recovery of Jerusalem*, 21-22, 238-39. Additional representative maps of Jerusalem from the 19th century, all accessible online, likewise indicate a larger pool to the southeast of the small pool associated with the current egress of the tunnel. Significant maps include those of Catherwood (1835), Van de Velde (1858), and Cuinet (1896). Robinson's keen observations, made more than a millennium after the pool was abandoned, have been borne out.

³⁰ Palestine Exploration Fund, Palestine Exploration Fund: Quarterly Statement for 1904 (London: PEF, 1904): 4.

³¹ Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century*, 62-65.

Virgin Mary at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Wilson and Warren noted that inhabitants drew water from the Virgin's Fountain, which always had water that sometimes ran underground through the rock-hewn passage to Siloam.³² It seems that the water sources, be they springs or reservoirs in the valleys, were all well known; they had to be in an environment where water was so precious. The name, Shiloah, could have served as the designation for the whole water system for centuries.³³

4.3 *Transitioning to the Twentieth Century*

At the end of the nineteenth century, Bliss and Dickie issued a very detailed report of their excavation seasons 1894–1897, complete with excellent maps based on the Ordnance maps. Among their finds were the remains of a Byzantine church built where the tunnel attributed to Hezekiah exits into the smaller pool, evidence of a 'great stairway' and sections of the paved street to the west of that pool, the nearby drainage system, and pavement to the south of the pool with steps leading downward. They determined that the smaller pool had been square with a surrounding portico and raised 'arcade' at the southwest corner.³⁴

Macalister and Duncan, working under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund,³⁵ issued a full report of the 1923–1925 seasons. The most significant part of their work was a detailed map compiling results of excavations between 1867 and 1925. The map presents the same basic contours as those included in the report of Bliss and Dickie.

³² Wilson and Warren, *Recovery of Jerusalem*, 25. Circling back to the first century, at the same time that Josephus noted the apparent source of water near Siloam (*BJ*, 5.140) at the south end of the city of David, the source at the upper end of the conduit was also in use. Excavation results have shown that the spring we now associate with the names Gihon, Virgin's, or Mother of Stairs on the east side of the city of David was also used in the first century (Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 301).

³³ Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 227.

³⁴ Frederick Jones Bliss and Archibald Campbell Dickie, *Excavations at Jerusalem, 1894–1897* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1898): 151–58. Reich's summary of their work acknowledged their discovery of a wall crossing the southern end of the Tyropoeon Valley, making a dam that formed a pool behind it (Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 50).

³⁵ R. A. S. Macalister and J. Garrow Duncan, *Excavations on the Hill of Ophel, Jerusalem 1923–1925* (Manchester; London: Order of the Committee, Palestine Exploration Fund, 1926).

5. Recent Developments

The impressive archaeological advances in the last half century have been ably summarised elsewhere. There is no need to reiterate them, especially since the most salient observations have already found their way into sections above. Here we simply return to the ‘rediscovery’ in 2004 of the Old Pool. Digging to refurbish a sewer line between the end of the rock scarp at the southern end of the city of David and a fertile orchard revealed three sets of descending steps with wider landings between the sets.³⁶ The entire north side of the pool has since been exposed (225 feet), but the rest remains under the orchard. It is evident that the pool was not strictly a rectangle since the angles of the exposed corners are more than 90 degrees.³⁷ There were apparently two stages to the construction of the installation. The steps in the earlier pool were plastered. Coins of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BC) were found in that context, indicating that the pool was likely constructed in the late Hasmonean / early Herodian period and repaved later. Excavators also found coins dated to years 2, 3, and 4 of the First Jewish Revolt. In other words, it was a functioning pool as the gospel events unfolded in Jerusalem.

Apparently, the pool was abandoned after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Because low-lying valleys rapidly fill with rubbish and silt, sediment soon covered the pool until the Byzantine period.³⁸ At that time, it seems that a small area on the northeast side of the pool may have been used for a tannery of sorts as there were signs of chemical erosion that might be related to that process. This would be a good location for an ‘industry’ that required a considerable amount of water.³⁹

³⁶ Reich indicates he had hoped to excavate under the orchard for years, but it was not practical (*Excavating the City of David*, 225). He further notes that Bliss’s description of the earlier shaft exploration showed steps that were at a 90-degree angle to the ones uncovered in 2004.

³⁷ Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 225-32, 236. See also Hershel Shanks, ‘The Siloam Pool: Where Jesus Cured the Blind Man’, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 31 (2005): 20.

³⁸ Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 226-27; Shanks, ‘The Siloam Pool’, 21. The Byzantine church directly at the mouth of the smaller pool would have drawn pilgrims to focus on that site in their remembrances. The scattered column drums in the current small pool are from porticoes of the Byzantine church, most of which has been covered by a mosque (Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 336-38).

³⁹ Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 229-30.

While there has been some wishful thinking about excavating the entire pool, Reich has suggested there is no need to disturb the remainder of the grove of trees. There are a number of low-lying, water-collecting areas in that vicinity, and the orchard provides an illustration of the ‘King’s Garden’ that would have also been in this area rich with pools (Neh. 3:15).⁴⁰

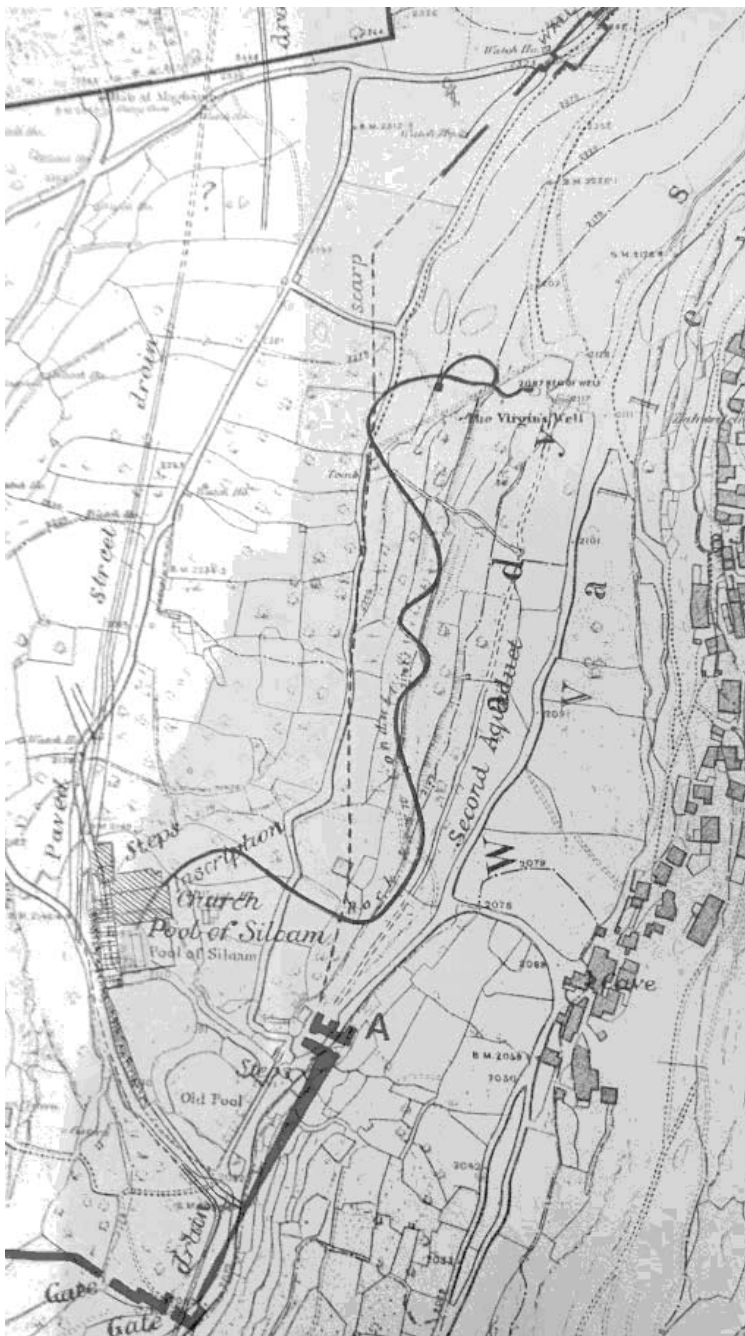
6. Closing Observations

This investigation has probed into multiple layers of evidence, starting with complexities in the biblical texts themselves. It is not inconsequential that the name Gihon, now solidly attached to the spring at the base of the eastern slope of the City of David, was never called a ‘spring’ in the biblical narratives. Further, that spring, so vital for the water needs of Jerusalem, was known in the centuries after the Second Temple period by names other than Gihon, most notable among them the Virgin’s Fountain. The designation ‘Gihon’ did not disappear, but migrated over those centuries to some location on the western side of Jerusalem.

Equally important for our enquiry, however, is the evidence in post-biblical sources reflecting knowledge of subterranean connections between that spring and the pools near the junction of the Tyropoean and Kidron Valleys. The name that came to dominate was Shiloah/Siloam (‘sent’), characterising the water flowing from its source to accessible reservoirs. This symbolic ‘sending’ of waters is a rich symbolic backdrop for Jesus’ repeated emphasis on his own being ‘sent’ (John 5:30-40; 6:38-58; 7:16-34; 8:12-30,42). On the last great day of the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus was teaching in the temple, inviting those who were thirsty to come to him, promising that ‘rivers of living water’ (spring water) would flow from within them. Jesus joined the invitation in Isaiah 55:1 (‘come to the waters’) and promises of cleansing water and spirit (Ezek. 36:25-27) with the drama of the Jewish water ritual on the occasion of the feast (John 7:37-39). Shortly thereafter, he ‘sent’ the blind man to the pool of Siloam (John 9:7).

⁴⁰ Reich, *Excavating the City of David*, 230.

Appendix: Selected Maps



1) Bliss and Dickie (using the Palestine Exploration Fund's Ordnance Survey map, 1894-1897)

Named locations include the Virgin's 'Well', the Pool of Siloam at the end of the rock-hewn conduit, the Church at the Pool of Siloam, and the Old Pool, with what appears to be a wall across the southeastern end. Bliss and Dickie also marked in steps and gates where they found evidence of them.



2) Mandate map (detail) (1943)

Major indications on this updated map are the Virgin's Fountain and the rock-hewn conduit (Hezekiah's Tunnel) ending at the small pool of Siloam. At the latter location, the mosque built in the location of the Byzantine church is marked. The map notes the Old Pool in the archaic lettering of an old site and the pool area is dotted with trees, indicating the orchard overtop the pool.