

HISTORY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

ARCHAEOLOGY AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

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Christian Frevel





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Preface

The history of ancient Israel presented here began in 2007 as an overview in one of the most important textbooks on the introduction to the Old Testament, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. When the editor, Erich Zenger, asked me to write about thirty pages on the history of ancient Israel—including the new trends and discussions—I soon realized that such brevity was impossible. Nevertheless, I greatly compressed my view in order for it to be included in the textbook. When the opportunity arose in 2015 to publish the new take on Israel's ancient history in a book of its own, I jumped at the chance. This new book provided space to take into account the rapid developments in archaeology, epigraphy, and historiography and to base the presentation on these rather than on the biblical account. The book was published in the same series as the *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* so that students could easily access both. Obviously, the presentation succeeded in hitting a point that was of importance beyond the classroom to the interested circle of scholars: a new conceptualization of the history of Israel that corresponded to the current state of archaeological research (beyond the tedious minimalist-maximalist controversies) and that also took into account the trends of the European discussion on the emergence and successive growth of biblical literature. For the English edition—which took far more time than I had originally anticipated—additions and adjustments to the state of research and the wealth of literature were made anew.

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I very much hope that the English edition can also serve the purpose of disseminating our increased knowledge of the history of ancient Israel.

Bochum, 5 July 2021
(birthday of Erich Zenger, 1939–2010)

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- 51e. Keel, Othmar. *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*. Vol. 2. OBO.SA 29. Fribourg: Presses Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. Page 349, fig. 15 (line drawing only). © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
- 51f. Keel, Othmar. *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel*. Vol. 2. OBO.SA 29. Fribourg: Presses Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. Page 351, fig. 19 (line drawing only). © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
52. Keel, Othmar, and Max Küchler. *Der Süden: Ein Handbuch und Studienreiseführer zum Heiligen Land*. OLB 2. Zurich: Benziger; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982. Page 926, fig. 625. © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
53. Tufnell, Olga. *Lachish III: The Iron Age*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953. Pl. 68:1. Courtesy of Wellcome Library London; Reference: WA/HSW/AR/Lac/F.

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54. Keel, Othmar. *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*. OLB 4.1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007. Page 1170, fig. 674. © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
55. Keel, Othmar. *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*. OLB 4.1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007. Page 1246, fig. 687. © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
56. Keel, Othmar. *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*. OLB 4.1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007. Page 1253, fig. 691. © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
57. Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. Fig. 21, cutouts. © Oxford University Press.
58. Top: Zwickel, Wolfgang, Renate Egger-Wenzel, and Michael Ernst, eds. *Herders neuer Bibelatlas*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2013. Page 297. © R. Jacob.
58. Bottom: Zwickel, Wolfgang, Renate Egger-Wenzel, and Michael Ernst, eds. *Herders neuer Bibelatlas*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2013. Page 297. © W. Zwickel & R. Hintersteiner.
- 59a. Keel, Othmar. *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*. OLB 4.1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007. Page 1226, fig. 684. © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
- 59b. Keel, Othmar. *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*. OLB 4.1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007. Page 1226, fig. 683. © Stiftung Bibel+Orient.
- 60a. Hendin, David. *Guide to Ancient Jewish Coins*. New York: Attic Books, 1976. Page 67, fig. 136. © D. Hendin.
- 60b. Hendin, David. *Guide to Ancient Jewish Coins*. New York: Attic Books, 1976. Page 70, fig. 146. © D. Hendin.

Abbreviations

¹⁴ C	Radiocarbon, i.e., the ¹⁴ C carbon atom
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung: Beiheft
ÄgLev	Ägypten und Levante
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
A.J.	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJBI	<i>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</i>
AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
Anab.	Arrian, <i>Anabasis</i>
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
ANES	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement Series
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ATALA	<i>ATALA: Cultures et sciences humaines</i>
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BARIS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum

BG	Biblische Gestalten
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibEnc	Biblical Encyclopedia
<i>B.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum judaicum</i>
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
<i>BK</i>	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i>
BM	British Museum
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNPSup	Brill's New Pauly Supplements
BThS	Biblich-Theologische Studien
BWA(N)T	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten (und Neuen) Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>C. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	conventional chronology
CG	Egyptian Museum Cairo
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CHJ	Cambridge History of Judaism
CIIP	Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
COS	Hallo, William W., and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds. <i>The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World</i> . 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2016.
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CWSS	Sass, Benjamin, and Nahman Avigad. <i>Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals</i> . Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; Israel Exploration Society; Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DMOA	Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui
Dtr	Deuteronomistic
EA	el-Amarna

EB	Early Bronze Age
<i>Ebib</i>	<i>Etudes bibliques</i>
EBR	Klauck, Hans-Josef, et al., eds. <i>Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–.
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
HACL	History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant
HAE	Renz, Johannes, and Wolfgang Röllig. <i>Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik</i> . Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2016.
HBAI	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HdA	Handbuch der Archäologie
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
<i>Hist.</i>	Herodotus, <i>Historiae</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTAT	Weippert, Herbert. <i>Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament</i> . Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010.
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HvTSt	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies (HTS Teologiese Studies/ HTS Theological Studies)</i>
<i>Hypth.</i>	Philo, <i>Hypothetica</i>
IA	Iron Age
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Il.</i>	Homer, <i>Iliad</i>
INJ	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>
JAJ	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
JASup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement Series
JANEH	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History</i>
JANER	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JFA	<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>
JHebS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>

JJAR	<i>Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KAI	Donner, Herbert, and Wolfgang Röllig, eds. <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002.
LAOS	Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien
LB	Late Bronze Age
LC	low chronology
Leg.	Cicero, <i>De legibus</i>
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSTS	The Library of Second Temple Studies
m.	Mishnah
MB	Middle Bronze Age
MCC	modified conventional chronology
MT	Masoretic Text
Nat.	Pliny, <i>Naturalis historia</i>
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NEAEHL	Stern, Ephraim, ed. <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSK	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBO.SA	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica
OeO	Oriens et Occidens
OIM	Oriental Institute Museum
OJA	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta

OLB	Orte und Landschaften der Bibel
ORA	Orientalische Religionen der Antike
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
P.Anast.	Papyrus Anastasi
P.Harr.	Papyrus Harris
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PHSC	Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts
PLoS ONE	<i>Public Library of Science ONE</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	Philo, <i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevistB</i>	<i>Revista Bíblica</i>
RINBE	Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Period
RLA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
SBAB	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico</i>
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
SJ	Studia Judaica
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SMNIA	Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
Ta'an.	Ta'anit
TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
<i>ThRev</i>	<i>Theologische Revue</i>
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>

<i>Transeu</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
TRE	Krause, Gerhard, and Gerhard Müller, eds. <i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–.
TRu	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TTZ	<i>Trierer theologische Zeitschrift</i>
TUAT	Kaiser, Otto, et al., eds. <i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i> . Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1982–2020.
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VF	<i>Verkündigung und Forschung</i>
VSI	Very Short Introductions
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WUB	<i>Welt und Umwelt der Bibel</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Notes on Detailed Dates and the Use of Text Editions

In order to facilitate orientation into a period of time that is wide and unfamiliar to most readers, the names of rulers were very often given dates. This should not be associated with the idea that the course of history is completely clear and datable. Chronologies have their own problems, especially if they are only based on the information of the Bible and no extrabiblical sources are available (see §§1.8, 5.2).

The New Revised Standard Version translation (NRSV) is generally used for quotations from biblical texts. The Tetragrammaton of the name of God is reproduced with <y> according to the transcription of the letter ך // *yod* as usual in comparative Semitics. In the case of extrabiblical texts, translations are typically not by the present author, but reference is made to standard text editions available in most libraries: (1) *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments* (TUAT), edited by Otto Kaiser et al. (1982–2020); (2) the one-volume handbook by Manfred Weippert, which was published in 2011 under the title *Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament* (HTAT); and, for the English publication, (3) the four-volume handbook edited by William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr., *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* (COS). Text examples are given, if possible, from the more easily accessible latter work. Other inscriptions are quoted either from the standard work of Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (KAI) or the *Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik* (HAE) edited by Johannes Renz and Wolfgang Röllig. For seals, either the *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals* (CWSS) edited by Benjamin Sass and Nahman Avigad or the multivolume *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: Von den Anfängen bis zur Perserzeit* by Othmar Keel are used.

Further literature is given at the beginning of each section. Excluded from this are basic textbooks and sourcebooks, histories of Israel, and

overviews, which are not listed in each case but are referenced at §10.3. The presentation dispenses with detailed footnotes, which would locate the respective explanations with references in the corresponding scientific discourses. To refer to specific positions and opinions, the authors are indicated in brackets.

Preliminary Remarks on History and Historiography

1.1. HISTORIOGRAPHY BETWEEN PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Essen, Georg, and Christian **Frevel**, eds. *Theologie der Geschichte – Geschichte der Theologie*. QD 294. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2018. ♦ **Knauf**, Ernst Axel. *Data and Debates: Essays in the History and Culture of Israel and Its Neighbors in Antiquity = Daten und Debatten: Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte des antiken Israel und seiner Nachbarn*. AOAT 407. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013. ♦ **Knauf**. “From History to Interpretation.” Pages 26–64 in *The Fabric of History*. Edited by Diana Vikander Edelman. LHBOTS 127. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991. ♦ **Pföh**, Emanuel. “Rethinking the Historiographical Impulse: The History of Ancient Israel as a Problem.” *SJOT* 32 (2018): 92–105. ♦ **Rüsen**, Jörn. *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Meaning*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2017. ♦ **Rüsen**. *Historik: Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2013. ♦ **Rüsen**. “How to Make Sense of the Past: Salient Issues of Metahistory.” *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 3 (2007): 169–221. ♦ **Rüsen**. *Zeit und Sinn: Strategien historischen Denkens*. Frankfurt am Main: Humanities Online, 2012.

In the nineteenth century, history was understood as the knowledge of events, as was argued, for instance, by the doyen of modern history, Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–1884). The key to understanding this sentence lies neither in the term “history” nor in that of “event” but in that of “knowledge.” Knowledge is purposeful information that serves as the foundation of meaning in the present in order to change the future. History and the past are not identical, but history is obtained from the past. Droysen also wanted to draw attention to the fact that history is not about the past that has passed, but about the past that still impacts the here and now. History—including the history of ancient Israel (in the

following also referred to as the history of Israel)—that plays a role in the context of religious or historical studies deals with the past without being absorbed into that past. It uses forms of historical narrative to (re)fashion time. It does not do this for the sake of the past, but for the sake of the future. Because history *makes* sense!

History attempts to establish a coherence between past, present, and future and to offer orientation in the interconnecting processes. No matter how objective it may seem, history aims at a subjective sense that constitutes identity in the course of time. Thereby, historiography always follows an interest. If those who recount the past would not be affected by that past, they would not tell it. The subject is located through the stories in history, in the continuum of time. These remarks do not deny that history is never objective, rather it supports a normative claim. Yet, as one of the most influential German theorists of history Jörn Rüsen has pointed out, it is exactly this normativity that brings history and future into a reciprocal relation: without normative intentions for the future, experiences of the past are historically blind; normative intentions for the future are historically empty without experiences of the past.

Because historiography wishes to offer orientation, it always requires a point of view, both of the one who writes history and of the one who receives it. However, not all decisions will be—or wish to be—made by the person who presents the historiography to his or her readers. The ancient writer Herodotus (ca. 485–424 BCE), whom Cicero (106–43 BCE) called the “father of historiography” (*Leg.* 1.5), already stressed this when he wrote at the beginning of his major historical work: “For my own part, I will not say that this or that story is true” (*Hist.* 1.5). This does not mean that there is an objective representation free of interpretation, but that readers are called upon to see themselves as an active participant in the interpretative process. Even a history of Israel—however implicit and casual it may be—cannot be read without a normative claim and without reference to the construction of a collective identity.

1.2. HISTORY AS AN INTERPRETIVE AND MEANINGFUL SELECTION AND CONSTRUCTION

Bieberstein, Klaus. “Was es heißt, Jerusalems Geschichte(n) zu schreiben: Arbeit an der kollektiven Identität.” Pages 16–69 in *Provokation Jerusalem: Eine Stadt im*

Schnittpunkt von Religion und Politik. Edited by Michael Konkel and Oliver Schuegraf. Jerusalem Theologisches Forum 1. Münster: Aschendorff, 2000. ♦ **Essen**, Georg. “Historische Sinnbildung: Zeitkonzepte in der Perspektive einer theologischen Historik.” Pages 59–76 in *Das Testament der Zeit: Die Apokalyptik und ihre gegenwärtige Rezeption*. Edited by Kurt Appel and Erwin Dirscherl. QD 278. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2016. ♦ **Frevel**, Christian. “Bibel und Geschichte.” Pages 46–58 in *Die Welt der Hebräischen Bibel: Umfeld – Inhalte – Grundthemen*. Edited by Walter Dietrich. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2021. ♦ **Hartenstein**, Friedhelm, ed. *Geschichte Israels und biblische Geschichtskonzepte*. VF 53. Munich: Kaiser, 2008. ♦ **Kaiser**, Otto. *Glaube und Geschichte im Alten Testament: Das neue Bild der Vor- und Frühgeschichte Israels und das Problem der Heilsgeschichte*. BThS 150. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2014. ♦ **Rüsen**, Jörn. *Zerbrechende Zeit: Über den Sinn der Geschichte*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2001.

History focuses on what has happened in order to preserve knowledge of it for the present, “so that what has happened to man does not fade with time,” as Herodotus formulated it (*Hist.* preamble). Right at the beginning, the *pater historiae* distinguished between the traditional myths and the historical time about which he alone wanted to tell. Throughout the entire work, he reserved the right not to believe everything that had been reported to him. This not only created strong tendencies in his presentation but even contradictions. Thus it is ultimately significant that the credibility of Herodotus’s portrayal was already the subject of lively discussion in antiquity and that the writer Manetho of Egypt, who lived under King Ptolemy I Soter (306–283 BCE) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285/83–246 BCE), for example, severely criticized it. Flavius Josephus (ca. 37–100 CE) even summarized in the first century CE that all Greek authors were aware of the untruthfulness of Herodotus’s presentation (*C. Ap.* 1.73). This, however—and this shows the indispensable importance of Herodotus’s narratives—was not the last word spoken about their historical significance, as shown by their modern reception, which—after a phase of complete rejection—turned again increasingly to the ancient writer Herodotus. It is precisely the blurring of the distinction between myth and history in Herodotus that raises the question of the relationship between past and narrative.

The latter points out not only that the selection of sources is central to Israel’s history, but also that events and history are not—and cannot be—identical. But where is the boundary between construction (which refers to what has happened) and fiction (which is beyond what has happened)? The narrative of the origin of the world in Gen 1–3 has just as

little *history* as a point of reference as the flood narrative in Gen 6–9 and probably also the Abraham cycle in Gen 12–25. Where the boundary runs, whether with the patriarchal narratives (Gen 12–36), the Joseph novella (Gen 37–50), the exodus narrative (Exod 1–15), the wilderness narrative (Exod 16–Deut 34), the conquest narrative (Josh 1–24), or even later is assessed differently. Therefore, there is much discussion in research as to *when* a history of Israel should begin and whether such a history can be written at all (Lester L. Grabbe). Historiography cannot show “how it actually was” (according to Leopold von Ranke 1795–1886) because “the past has passed” (so Johann Gustav Droysen 1808–1884) and is therefore unattainable today. There is no objective history that stands in the mine of the past and could be brought to the surface of time (ch. 9), but the unity of the past is contradicted by the plurality of possible stories. Historiography is always a construction and a form of constituting meaning that uses productive memory (explicitly retrospective, i.e., looking back) in order to inform and understand the present and future (implicitly prospective, i.e., looking forward). History is not a mere representation of the past but a form of understanding and interpretation.

The simple distinction between *story* and *history* or between *fact* and *fiction* is helpful because it can make it clear that what is narrated is not what has been and that it is not only separated from it by the past. But at the same time the distinction is too marked because the narrative is not independent from what has been, and the two cannot be clearly delineated from each other anyway.

History provides orientation, and historical remembrance constitutes a sense that forms a collective identity and—at the same time—situates itself in relation to this collective identity. Historiography is a subjective process of interpretation and part of a collective construction of identity. The amount of data available varies, but history can only be constructed coherently through the selection, abstraction, reduction, and combination of data. One must be aware that, on the one hand, the available data are incomplete, representing only a selection and, on the other hand, that their use in a history of Israel requires a selection from within the abundance of available data. Historiography is thus subject to a double selection, of which only the second can be maneuvered. However, even after the selection, the data are not related to each other. The selected data must be linked together to form a story, which is described here by the term *construction*. This means that in the retrospective draft of the story, the information must be evaluated and measured. They must be selected and related to

each other, whereby the result always remains incomplete when compared to the past. There is no unchangeable historical truth, and the yardstick is not how it actually was. Only interpretation enables the recounting of past events. Meaning is not something that is inherent in history, but meaning is attributed to history from the present and inscribed in the past. However, this process of interpretation rarely is made explicit but runs behind the scenes in virtually every construction of history.

The Bible as a book of history is part of this interpretation process, but that does not mean that the Bible can simply be understood as a representation of history. This would be a fundamentalist position, whereas in biblical studies the biblical presentation of history is understood as traditional literature whose historical value requires critical examination. Just as biblical scholarship does not identify the biblical representation with historical representation, neither does it assume that biblical stories are merely narratives. They at least relate to history in the sense that they originated in the past. Over long stretches—for example in the so-called historical books (1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra–Nehemiah, 1–2 Maccabees)—they provide the pretense of historical plausibility. Thus although they do not offer a reliable historiography, they cannot be excluded from the outset as a source for the reconstruction of a history of Israel.

1.3. MINIMALISTS, MAXIMALISTS, AND THE SOURCES OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

Becking, Bob E. J. H., and Lester L. **Grabbe**, eds. *Between Evidence and Ideology*. OtSt 59. Leiden: Brill, 2011. ♦ **Davies**, Philip R., and Diana Vikander **Edelman**, eds. *The Historian and the Bible: Essays in Honour of Lester L. Grabbe*. LHBOTS 530. London: T&T Clark, 2010. ♦ **Dietrich**, Walter. "Historiography in the Old Testament." Pages 467–99 in *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*. Edited by Magne Sæbø. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015. ♦ **Grabbe**, Lester L. *Can a 'History of Israel' Be Written?* JSOTSup 245. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997. ♦ **Hjelm**, Ingrid. "History of Palestine Versus History of Israel? The Minimalist-Maximalist Debate." Pages 60–79 in *A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine*. Edited by Ingrid Hjelm, Hamdan Taha, Ilan Pappé, and Thomas L. Thompson. Palestinian History and Heritage Project 1. London: Routledge, 2019. ♦ **Hjelm**. "Maximalist and/or Minimalist Approaches in Recent Representations of Ancient Israelite and Judaeon History." Pages 1–18 in *History, Politics and the Bible from the Iron Age to the Media Age*. Edited by James G. Crossley and Jim West. LHBOTS 651. London: T&T Clark, 2017. ♦

Kaiser, Otto. *Glaube und Geschichte im Alten Testament: Das neue Bild der Vor- und Frühgeschichte Israels und das Problem der Heilsgeschichte*. BThS 150. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2014. ♦ **Lendering**, Jona. “Maximalists and Minimalists.” Livius. <https://tinyurl.com/SBL1737a>. ♦ **Mazar**, Amihai. “Archaeology and the Bible: Reflections on Historical Memory in the Deuteronomistic History.” Pages 347–69 in *Congress Volume Munich 2013*. Edited by Christl M. Maier. VTSup 163. Leiden: Brill, 2014. ♦ **Moore**, Megan Bishop. *Philosophy and Practice in Writing a History of Ancient Israel*. LHBOTS 435. London: T&T Clark, 2006. ♦ **Moore**, Megan Bishop, and Brad E. **Kelle**. *Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. ♦ **Niesiołowski-Spanò**, Łukasz. “How Did ‘Minimalists’ Change Recent Biblical Scholarship?” *SJOT* 34 (2020): 43–50.

Opinions differ widely on the value of the Bible as a historical source, for which the methodological distinction between minimalists and maximalists has prevailed since a controversy in the 1990s. While the so-called minimalists include biblical texts in the reconstruction of history only if they can be reconciled with nonbiblical (archaeological, → epigraphic, → iconographic) evidence, maximalists take the Bible as a historical source so long as it cannot be refuted by extrabiblical evidence or is not plausible in itself (Ernst Axel Knauf, Kenton Sparks, Lester L. Grabbe, Megan Bishop Moore). Such categories distort through their sharp dichotomy, but they are heuristically helpful for determining a principled handling of the sources. Everyone agrees that a history of ancient Israel must *not be allowed to* dissolve into the retelling of biblical stories. For then salvation history (history interpreted as God's saving action) and history (as critically reflected reconstruction of history) would be inadmissibly intermixed. However, the biblical presentation is less interested in the historical events than in their interpretation. Therefore, in the context of the history of Israel, the Bible is often referred to as *Tendenzliteratur* (biased literature). The literary term is used in different ways but usually has a strongly pejorative, derogatory tone. It also refers to literature that is misused for religious, political, ideological, and propagandistic purposes, as well as literature that is used to secure collective identity and tends toward partiality and unambiguous positioning at the expense of objectivity.

On the one hand, it is true that the Bible is *Tendenzliteratur* in the sense of being theologically biased, but that does not necessarily mean that it is a thoroughly late, ahistorical fiction. There are a number of examples that show that the information that the Bible provides has a high degree of plausibility in individual cases. For example, the important role of Hazor in

the Late Bronze Age (Josh 11:1), the note about the Aramean king Hazael's (ca. 845–800 BCE) attack on the Philistine city of Gath (2 Kgs 12:18), or the information that Darius I (522–486 BCE) accessed an archive in Ecbatana (Ezra 6:1). But even these examples show how usable information stands in widely different contexts: while the military conquest recounted in the book of Joshua is ahistorical, the factuality of the second temple's reconstruction as recounted in Ezra is historical. In the latter instance, only the documents cited as allegedly original and the current context are to be questioned regarding their historicity. Regarding the tribute of King Joash in 2 Kgs 12:19, only the literary decorative framing is questioned. The conquest of Philistine Gath, however, is highly plausible due to the archaeological record. Each individual passage needs to be examined to see what role it can play in a historical argument. A sweeping rejection of the Bible as a source for the history of Israel would be foolish. A complete rejection would misjudge the fact that the Bible's historiography is quite comparable in many respects to ancient historiography more broadly. This nonetheless means that the biblical historiography cannot be used uncritically in modern historical research. Rather, it must be viewed according to the literary history of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, which analyzes and chronologically classifies the respective historical works. The distance between the time that is told (the narrated time) and the time in which it is told (the narrator's time) is as important as the contextualization of the texts in their ancient contexts.

It is true that Israel as portrayed in the Bible and historical Israel differ greatly, and one has to bear in mind that biblical Israel was *never* a real historical entity (Philip R. Davies). Yet, it also must not be underestimated that both entities are related to one another. Biblical Israel as presented in an ancient text remains part of the historical Israel. This fact challenges a variety of differentiations due to the long history of the origins, traditions, and reception of the texts.

While accounting for the biblical narrative's rather low level of historicity, it must be noted that extrabiblical sources do not necessarily have a better or even more objective degree of historicity. There is no such thing as objective data or sources. Archaeological evidence, extrabiblical inscriptions, and other ancient Near Eastern texts and images also require methodologically controlled interpretation. The assumption that there are *bruta facta* that make the past immediately tangible is an illusion. The gap between reality and history is the interpretive perspective, which once again leads to the basic insight: history is constructed (see §1.2). That this

is not a new insight is shown by the oft-quoted saying of Julius Wellhausen (which, however, was coined in the context of the reconstruction of literary history): “But history, it is well known, has always to be constructed.... The question is whether one constructs well or ill.”¹

1.4. THE SOURCES OF A HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Frevel, Christian. “‘Dies ist der Ort, von dem geschrieben steht’: Zum Verhältnis von Bibeltext und Palästinaarchäologie.” *BN* 47 (1989): 35–89. ♦ **Grabbe**, Lester L., ed. *The Hebrew Bible and History: Critical Readings*. London: T&T Clark, 2019. ♦ **Hardmeier**, Christof. *Steine – Bilder – Texte*. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001. ♦ **Niemann**, Hermann Michael. *History of Ancient Israel, Archaeology, and Bible: Collected Essays = Geschichte Israels, Archäologie und Bibel: Gesammelte Aufsätze*. AOAT 418. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2015. ♦ **Pföh**, Emanuel. “Rethinking the Historiographical Impulse: The History of Ancient Israel as a Problem.” *SJOT* 32 (2018): 92–105.

One of the crucial questions in any history is which sources are used as the basis for the presentation. This is because the selection and weighing of the sources decide whether a construction is good or bad. The targeted exclusion of sources (such as archaeology when limited to its relevance to the Bible) leads to a one-sided result (see §1.3). Therefore, “everything that can make any contribution, direct, or indirect, is to be welcomed wholeheartedly.”² These include in particular (1) biblical traditions, (2) extrabiblical texts, (3) → epigraphy, (4) archaeology, (5) → iconography, and (6) → numismatics. All sources should be subject to critical analysis and evaluation in equal measure.

(1) The fact that the Bible, despite its presentational bias, is to be included among the sources of a history of Israel has already been explained above. Of course, not all information from narrative or wisdom texts has the same informative value for the presentation of history. In particular the so-called historical books—the books of Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but also the books of Samuel, Joshua, and Judges—have to be included in the reconstruction and their information individually evaluated. For example, the Bible reports that King Jehoshaphat of Judah (868–847 BCE) sought to

1. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: Black, 1885), 367.

2. Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper, 1960), 49.

install a sea-faring fleet at Ezion-Geber in order to engage in foreign trade with the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt across the Gulf of Eilat. The king of the northern state is said to have offered to jointly operate the fleet (1 Kgs 22:49–50 [48–49 ET]). This note, which is important in terms of economic history and foreign policy (see §5.4.5.3–4), must be evaluated for the development of the two states of Judah and Israel. However, the question is not whether this is historically accurate in a one-to-one sense. Rather, it must be critically reviewed in the context of the other available information from the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, such as the relationship of Judah and Israel, the relationship to the report of 1 Kgs 9:26–28, where the same activity is attributed to Solomon and his partner Hiram of Phoenicia, the archaeological findings at Ezion-Geber, and the plausibility of long-distance trade with Ophir (which is not real, but only a mythical country). The use of the Bible as a source must, however, be methodically reflected and integrated with the literary history of the Bible. For example, it makes a difference whether information about David and Solomon was written contemporary with those kings' courts or only centuries later.

(2) Important extrabiblical texts include ancient Jewish writers such as Philo of Alexandria (ca. 10 BCE–40 CE) and above all Flavius Josephus (ca. 37–100 CE). Also important is the information provided by non-Jewish Greek writers such as Herodotus, Thucydides of Athens, or Hecataeus of Abdera. Herodotus (ca. 485–424 BCE), himself originally from Asia Minor, offers a history of the Persian Empire from the Lydian King Croesus (ca. 560–547 BCE) onwards, filled with a wealth of stories about the peoples of the Persian Empire. Thucydides (born 460, died at an unknown date, ca. 399 or 397 BCE) describes Greek history in the second half of the fifth century BCE, beginning with the war between Athens and Sparta up to the year 411 BCE. While Herodotus and Thucydides are completely preserved, only fragmentary works are preserved from the fourth century BCE historian and philosopher Hecataeus of Abdera. Among them is a history of Egypt that provides important information about the Judeans/Jews in Egypt quoted by Josephus. Finally, Manetho, a historian from Egypt, who lived under King Ptolemy I Soter 306–283 and Ptolemy II Philadelphus 285/83–246 BCE, whose original work on the history of Egypt has been lost, is only known through quotations from Josephus and ancient Christian writers.

Among the important extrabiblical sources for a history of Israel is the → onomasticon of Eusebius of Caesarea (born shortly after 260 CE, died between 337 and 340 CE), which has been transmitted in Syriac and

Greek. With its list of biblical place names, it is indispensable for historical regional studies. In addition to the deuterocanonical books, such as the two books of Maccabees (1–2 Macc), which are preserved in the canon of the Greek Septuagint, many apocryphal extrabiblical books also present sources of usable historical information. For example, the third book of Maccabees (3 Macc), preserved in the canon of the Orthodox churches, recounts the salvation of the Alexandrian Jews from the persecution of the Ptolemaic king Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BCE); the fictional story of Aristes reports—in legendary form—the translation of the Torah into Greek under Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285/83–246 BCE).

In addition to the so-called historians and historical works, Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts are of great value for the history of ancient Israel, whether narratives, royal lists, or chronicles. Mention should be made of the story of Sinuhe from the second millennium BCE or the so-called report of Wenamun's journey written around 1071 BCE. Of more direct value as a source is the so-called Babylonian Chronicle, in which the events of the period 626–594 BCE are described chronologically on four preserved clay tablets.

(3) → Epigraphy is a subdiscipline of linguistics and historiography that deals with inscriptions. These are of indispensable value as sources for a history of Israel. Examples of a lapidary inscription would be the Aramaic fragments on the paneling of an → orthostat from Dan/Tell el-Qāḍi (see §§4.5.2, 5.4.2.1) found in 1993, in which an Aramean ruler describes conflicts with Israelite and Judean kings in the middle of the ninth century BCE. Multiple → hoard finds of → ostraca, which are texts written in ink on clay sherds, enrich the knowledge of the economic and political organization in Israel and Judah during the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. Examples include letters from Lachish, formulaic letter templates with introduction and blessing formulae from Kuntillet 'Aḡrūd and documents of the military organization from Arad. In addition to the ostraca, inscriptions on stamp- and cylinder-seals as well as on → bullae and seal impressions (see fig. 1) are of importance beyond the → onomasticon. Examples include more than 1,400 *lmlk* seal impressions from Judah (see fig. 38), in which—besides the inscription “for the king” (*lmlk*)—any of four places are named (Hebron, Socoh, Ziph, or *mmšt*). Seal impressions on jar handles can be used as a source for appreciating the organization of the Judean economy and taxation during King Hezekiah's reign (725–697 BCE), shortly before (and probably shortly after) the Assyrian attack on Judah in 701 BCE. Due to the large number of different types of *lmlk*

stamp impressions, the development of the administrative system in Judah in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE can be described more precisely. Stamp impressions are also important indicators for dating archaeological finds, as they were only used for a relatively short period of time.

(4) The available archaeological data plays a central role in the reconstruction of the history of Israel. In this context Fernand Braudel's terminology is important regarding the historical information on the *longue durée*, the *moyenne durée*, and the *courte durée/événement*. The *longue durée* refers to only slowly changing constants, such as geological, climatic, or cultural conditions, or largely unchanging geopolitical structures, recurring settlement patterns, et cetera. The *longue durée* is a term that is used to describe the changing nature of a region. The *moyenne durée*, on the other hand, describes economic cycles such as the

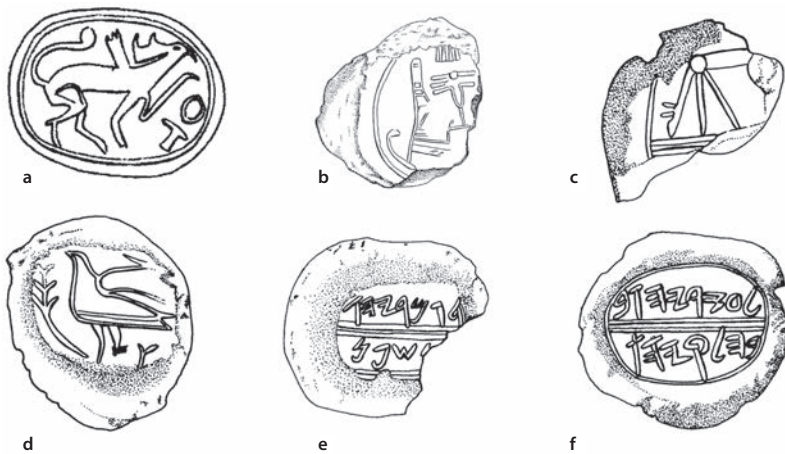


Fig. 1. Examples of seals and bullae from Judah and Samaria from different periods. The scarab (a) comes from the Gihon excavation and dates to the late ninth or early eighth century BCE. The winged creature is probably to be interpreted as a griffin protecting the symbol of life. The motif has Syrian parallels, but the griffin often protects a tree of life. The bulla (b), also found near the Gihon Spring, shows a throne with a high back (possibly resting on a boat) and a winged sun disc mounted on a pedestal above it (late ninth or early eighth century BCE). The symbol possibly represents the solar (city-)god. The two seal impressions from the so-called House of the Bullae date from the late seventh century BCE, with exemplary motifs such as a grazing doe (c) and a dove with twigs (d). Also from the House of the Bullae at the slope of the South-eastern Hill in Jerusalem come two aniconic seal impressions (e) with the inscription “(belonging) to Gemariah, the [so]n of Shaphan” and (f) *l’zryhw bn ḥlqyhw* “from/for ‘Azaryāhū, the son of Ḥilqiyāhū.”

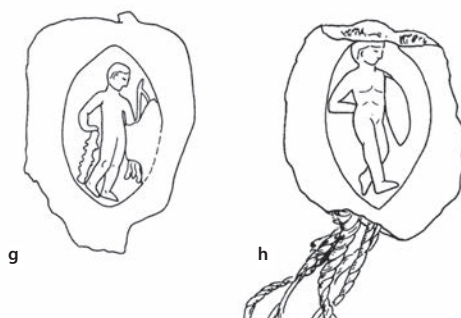


Fig. 1. (*Continuation*) The two bullae (g) and (h) come from the → hoard find from Wādī ed-Dāliye, which dates to the fourth century BCE (around 375–335 BCE), and demonstrate Greek influence. The young naked man (g) can be identified as Heracles because of the club and the remains of a lion's skin still visible in the lower right corner. Along with six others, this bulla sealed Samaria P.1 (deed of a salve sale), which dates to the year 335 BCE. (h) Illustrates the impression of a metal finger ring with an almond-shaped ring head on a bulla that still shows the remains of the string and depicts a young, naked warrior with a shield.

phased change from → urbanization to deurbanization, the collapse of international trading systems in the Late Bronze Age, phases of particular climatic drought, et cetera. The *moyenne durée* is a study of the economic and social development of the region. Finally, the *événements* level refers to historical events such as the archaeologically attested conquest of Lachish in 701 BCE, the conquest of Gaza by Tiglath-pileser III in 734 BCE, or the devastating earthquake that is attested both textually (Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5) and archaeologically (in Gath/Tell eš-Šāfī, Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Lachish, Tell Dēr 'Allā, etc.) and shook Palestine between 800 and 760 BCE, at the latest, and is typically dated 762 BCE (Aren Maeir).

The archaeological data derive from both excavations and surface surveys, in which all available settlement traces are collected from a large area. In excavations carried out in Palestine since the middle of the nineteenth century, settlement layers, so-called → strata, are isolated so that the relative sequence of these layers on a → tell can be used to reconstruct the settlement history of a place. Architectural remains, very often only the foundations of buildings, can be hypothetically reconstructed into the fortification and development of a site. For example, the so-called Broad Wall, a piece of wall discovered in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem, testi-

fies to the western fortification of the city in the eighth century BCE and to the simultaneous expansion of the city to the west—because there was no fortification wall in the western part of the city before that. Remains from the material culture (pottery, tools, weights, jewelry, figurines, etc.) allow a relative chronological classification and often provide further information about the history of a place or a region.

(5) The → iconography of Palestine deals with the imagery of the southern Levant (Israel/Palestine/Jordan), which is also an important source for the reconstruction of the history of Israel. It is not so much concerned with depictions of the Assyrian, Persian, or Israelite kings (for images are stylized and thus all subject to certain conventions of representation), but of information on cultural history derived from the system of symbols (e.g., image constellation or semiotics). Of particular historical importance are seal impressions, which themselves contain obviously relevant historical information. For example, a stamp seal featuring a royal cartouche from Gezer (see fig. 2), which dates back to the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1550–1292 BCE) of Pharaoh Amenophis III (1388–1351/50 BCE) thus contributes to the dating of the → stratum in which the find was made.

The impression on the vessel handle from Tel Hārāsīm (see fig. 3), not only preserves the name of the owner Hanuna, but also mentions the name of the province Yehud. It thus raises the (probably to be answered

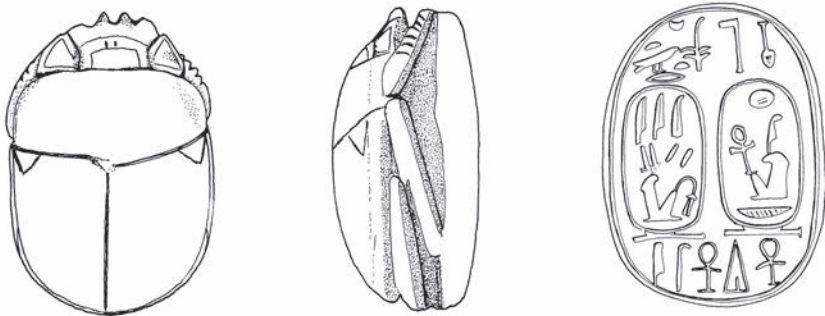


Fig. 2. Scarab from Gezer (ca. 1390–1353 BCE), which contains the throne name Amenophis III in the right cartouche and the queen's proper name ("Great Royal Wife Teje, may she live") in the left cartouche. Above ("perfect god") and below ("to whom life is given") the cartouches there are further Egyptian inscriptions. The top and side views depict the structure of a scarab, which is a copy of a Scarabaeidae, most likely the Egyptian dung beetle (*Scarabaeus sacer* L.), which was connected to the sun in Egypt and stands for constant renewal. In the shape of scarabs, stamp seal amulets are widespread in the southern Levant.

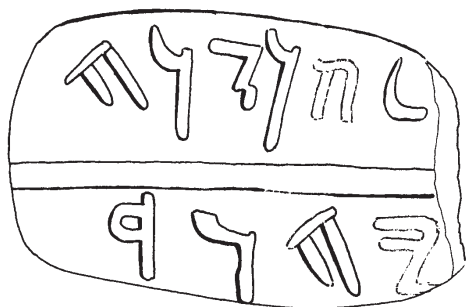


Fig. 3. Persian period seal impression on a vessel handle from Tel Ḥārāsīm (ca. 530–330 BCE) with the Aramaic inscription *lhnnwnh yhw* “(belonging) to Hanunah, Yehud.” The mention of the province of Yehud might indicate that Hanunah was a member of the administration.

negatively) question of the affiliation of the site in the Shephelah to the Persian province of Yehud.

Since the addition of Yehud otherwise points to official members of the administration, the seal impression raises the question of the role of women in the Persian provincial administration and, finally, that of the returnees from Babylon, since a similar example from Babylon is known.

(6) Coins, particularly those from the Persian period, are also an important source of dating, whereby the dating from the Hellenistic period can in some cases reach an accuracy to even individual years. However, the dating of finds with a secondary date is generally subject to uncertainty, since the minting period of a coin does not have to be identical with its period of use. For example, the excavations on Mount Gerizim uncovered a total of 14,000 coins. With the seventy-two Persian coins, the earliest construction phase of the temple can be dated approximately. The oldest coins in the excavation finds, coming from Cyprus, Tyre, and Sidon (see fig. 4), together with other evidence, indicate that the sanctuary already existed in the fifth century BCE.

First, however, there is only a *terminus post quem*, that is, a date *after which* the corresponding evidence can be dated, if the corresponding finds have been recovered from the foundation area. However, since it cannot always be excluded that the coins were kept as means of payment beyond their earliest period of circulation and so their period of use could have extended well beyond the minting period, some uncertainty remains. The trend of a dating often depends on the find context. If a coin is found in/under the foundation area of a building, this provides a *terminus ante quem*, that is, the building cannot have been constructed *before* the coin was minted. If, on the other hand, the coin was found on the floor of a building, it indicates the time of construction, which must precede the minting of the coin. The *terminus post quem* is more secure for single coins because

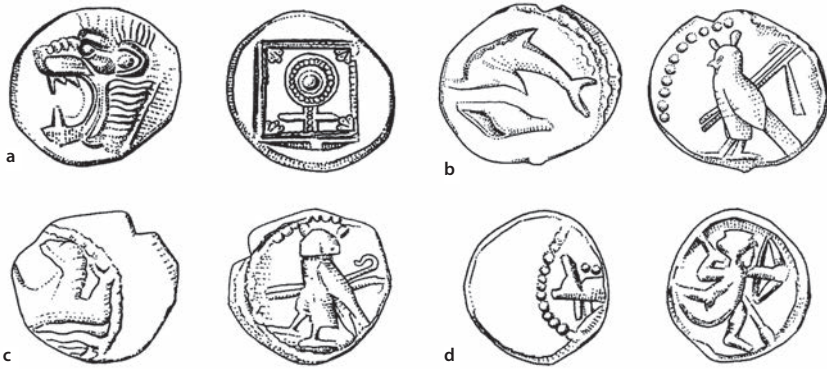


Fig. 4. The oldest from a total of 14,000 coins from the temple district on Mount Gerizim. The drachma (a) was minted in Cyprus around 480 BCE, (b) in Tyre between 450–400 BCE, (c) in the first half of the fourth century BCE also in Tyre, and (d) in the late fifth century BCE in the port city of Sidon.

it cannot be ruled out that an older coin has remained in use longer. In addition to the dating function, coins are of great value as an indication of economic and political connections.

Once again, the last example makes it clear that sources also have a context and require classification and analysis before they can be evaluated for historical reconstruction. In a scientific context, the verifiability of the argumentation is indispensable. There is one principle in particular that needs to be stressed: positive evidence is far more conclusive than the lack of evidence. For the lack of evidence as such does not really say much. The saying, “the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence” applies. Just because there is no source that proves the existence of Solomon outside the Bible, does not automatically mean that King Solomon is ahistorical. From the absence of *lmlk* seals in Ziph/Tell Zif southeast of Hebron it cannot necessarily be concluded that the place was outside the Judean administration (cf. Josh 15:24, 55; 2 Chr 11:8) or had nothing to do with the *lmlk*-Ziph seal impressions found predominantly in the north of Judah. Sometimes, however, a lack of evidence can be revealing, for example, when there is no archaeological evidence to support a military conquest of Jericho (Josh 6) or Ai (Josh 8).

Although extrabiblical sources do not in principle have veto rights and all sources can have the same historical value in principle, extrabiblical sources are to be preferred in particular if there is a coincident agreement against the biblical evidence. However, there is no fixed hierarchy between

the sources. The distinction between primary sources (archaeology, → epigraphy, → iconography) and secondary sources (e.g., the Bible, Babylonian Chronicle, Josephus and other ancient historians) is only useful to the extent that it considers the distance to the temporal events as a qualitative criterion and thus gives preference to the primary sources. Both types of sources must be introduced into a history of Israel in an equally critical and methodologically reflected manner.

The history of ancient Israel (which is often addressed in the context of the introduction into the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament) does not stand for itself but also requires the supplementary framework of the social and cultural sciences, philosophy, and—in particular—the historical disciplines (ancient history, historical anthropology, ancient Near Eastern studies, Egyptology, etc.).

1.5. WHEN SHOULD A HISTORY OF ISRAEL BEGIN?

Day, John, ed. *In Search of Preexilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. JSOTSup 406. London: T&T Clark, 2004. ♦ **Grabbe**, Lester L. *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know And How Do We Know It?* 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. ♦ **Grabbe**. *Can a 'History of Israel' Be Written?* JSOTSup 245. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997. ♦ **Ska**, Jean Louis. "L'histoire d'Israël." *RSR* 103 (2015): 15–34. ♦ **Ska**. "Questions of the 'History of Israel' in Recent Research." Pages 391–432 in *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*. Edited by Magne Sæbø. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015.

Different options are discussed regarding when a presentation of a *History of Ancient Israel* should begin. The differing positions depend on the preliminary decisions as to how the relationship between biblical and extrabiblical sources should be evaluated, what dates the biblical texts are assigned, and how the political entity of the state defines the basis of history. If the Bible serves as the starting point, the two most extreme positions begin either with the ancestors (oral traditions from the so-called patriarchal period form the oldest biblical stratum), on the one hand, or, on the other hand, with the Hellenistic period (the Bible is understood as a Hellenistic book). Whereas if the extrabiblical data serve as the starting point, the history of Israel begins with the so-called conquest (from which Israel emerged), the tenth/ninth century BCE (when the state structures of an Israel become recognizable for the first time), the ninth century BCE

(when the term *Israel* is mentioned extrabiblically for the first time as an identifiable political entity), or even later. In the following presentation, a middle position is assumed. It makes sense to distinguish between a *pre-history of Israel* and the *history of Israel* but to keep the transition between these two more or less fluid. It must be admitted that a state entity in the actual sense can only be spoken of in the tenth century BCE at the earliest (!), or more confidently in the ninth century BCE. It is only then that a history of Israel can sensibly begin. But without the prehistory of Israel, which must go back at least to the Middle Bronze Age (MB II, 2000–1550 BCE), but which is omitted here for reasons of space, a history of Israel is just as incomprehensible as it would be without the context of neighboring cultures. Here, too, the presentation must be greatly reduced. Strictly speaking, if one disregards the biblical depiction, an entity called Israel neither existed ethnically nor politically before the ninth century BCE. But since the term *monarchic period* has been employed for the time beginning approximately 1000 BCE, the term *early history* is used here for the conquest, which is often understood as → ethnogenesis.

For chronological data, in addition to year dates, the epoch designations of the *Bronze Age* and *Iron Age* introduced in archaeology are also used. The Early Bronze Age ca. 3200–2000 BCE (EB), the Middle Bronze Age ca. 2000–1550 BCE (MB), and the Late Bronze Age ca. 1550–1200 BCE (LB) are roughly distinguished from the Iron Age ca. 1200–587 BCE (IA). The Iron Age was followed by the so-called Babylonian-Persian period 587–333 BCE, then the Hellenistic period 333–37 BCE, followed by the Roman period. The respective periods are further subdivided, as shown in the table at §10.1.1. It is meaningful to memorize first the epoch classification for orientation.

1.6. WHAT DOES ISRAEL MEAN IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL?

Diebner, Bernd Jørg. *Seit wann gibt es "jenes Israel"? Gesammelte Studien zum TNK und zum antiken Judentum*. Beiträge zum Verstehen der Bibel 17. Berlin: LIT, 2011. ♦ **Pfoh**, Emanuel. "From the Search for Ancient Israel to the History of Ancient Palestine." Pages 143–58 in *History, Archaeology and the Bible Forty Years after "Historicity"*. Edited by Ingrid Hjelm and Thomas L. Thompson. Changing Perspectives 6. London: Routledge, 2016. ♦ **Smend**, Rudolf. "Das alte Israel im

Alten Testament.” Pages 1–15 in *Bibel und Wissenschaft*. Edited by Rudolf Smend. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004. ♦ **Thiel**, Nathan. “‘Israel’ and ‘Jew’ as Markers of Jewish Identity in Antiquity: The Problems of Insider/Outsider Classification.” *JSJ* 45 (2014): 80–99. ♦ **Weingart**, Kristin. *Stämmevolk – Staatsvolk – Gottesvolk? Studien zur Verwendung des Israel-Namens im Alten Testament*. FAT 2/68. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. ♦ **Weippert**, Manfred. “Israel und Juda.” *RIA* 5 (1978): 200–208.

The term *Israel* is ambiguous. The first (but not the oldest) biblical attestation of the word *yīsrāʾel* in the Pentateuch refers to the patriarch Jacob, to whom the honorary name Israel is given in Gen 32:29 (v. 28 ET; cf. Gen 35:10).

Later in the Pentateuch, Israel refers to the totality of the twelve sons of Jacob and their descendants, who in Exod 1:9 are called “the people of the children of Israel” (KJV) or more simply “the Israelite people” (NRSV). From the exodus (see §2.4) until the monarchic period, Israel biblically describes the people who left Egypt, as well as their political constitution as a tribal union (see §3.5–7), as a kingdom (see §4.4–6), or as a state. However, Israel is not only the “whole Israel,” but following the so-called division of the kingdom (see §4.7), in which the united monarchy under [Saul,] David, and Solomon was sundered due to Jeroboam’s accession (1 Kgs 11), *Israel* is used to denote the political entity in the north, while *Judah* denotes the smaller part in the south. After the fall of the political entity Israel in 722/20 BCE (see §5.6), however, Judah is also biblically referred to as Israel, primarily in prophetic texts, so that Israel goes into exile, even though residents were not once again deported from the former Northern Kingdom in 597 or 587/6 BCE (see §§5.9, 5.11). The postexilic community (see §6.3) is also addressed as Israel; this holds true over the Hellenistic period—when there is again a king of Israel among the Hasmoneans (see §7.6)—and even over the change of epoch into the time of the New Testament (see ch. 8). If one looks at the extrabiblical findings, the entities listed are indeed rarely referred to as Israel. The first inscription that clearly names Israel can be found on the Merenptah Stela (1208 BCE), although it is not clear what the name means there (see §2.3). On the Moabite Mesha Stela in the second half of the ninth century BCE (see §5.4.1) and on the Aramaic Stela from Dan (see §5.4.2.1), Israel designates the state ruled from Samaria. The evidence from an inscription of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) dates from the year 853 BCE in which Ahab of Israel (written ^{kur}*Sir-ʾi-la-a-a*) is named (see §5.4.4). There is no evidence

for the period between the twelfth and the ninth centuries BCE, and ultimately it cannot be clarified at present on the basis of extrabiblical sources, when Israel entered the stage of world history as a political entity. But it seems that it was only the case by the ninth century BCE with the kingdom ruled from Samaria (see §4.7). The meaning of the name is just as unclear as its original referent.

Early Judaism and postbiblical Judaism are continuously aware of their identity as Israel even after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. From the foundation of the modern state of Israel in 1948 to the present day, the term has not only been a religious term for the people of Israel, which is used synonymously with the term *Judaism*, but also for a politically constituted community. In addition, Israel is a geographical designation of the land of Israel, whose territorial extent has differed throughout history.

Since the variety and breadth of the different understandings always resonate, the term Israel is not easy to use. In the following presentation, Israel is almost exclusively used to refer to the political or geographical entity from the first millennium BCE. If the theologically and religiously charged levels of meaning are explicitly meant, this is indicated in the text. Thus the title “History of Ancient Israel” follows a given convention for the overarching title of the representation rather than being an accurate term.

However, there is no ideal solution for specifying the enterprise of a “History of Ancient Israel.” At first glance, it seems to make sense to include Judah in the designation and thus to speak of a “History of Ancient Israel *and* Judah.” However, since Israel is also used, at times, to designate the southern state after 722 BCE, this remains equally inaccurate. Another possibility is to speak of Histories and thus to direct the reference to the overlapping and convergent phases, in which Israel was more than just the northern state ruled from Samaria. Pluralization, however, has the disadvantage of abandoning the unity of history denoted by the singular. Being aware of its shortcomings, the present book retains the traditional title “History of Ancient Israel.”

1.7. THE GEOGRAPHICAL REGION OF THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL AND THE NAMES OF THE LAND

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Just as Israel can mean something very different as a sociopolitical entity through time, the geographical concretion of the term likewise differs due to changing border demarcations. This also applies to Palestine, Syria, Jordan, or Egypt, which are also modern political entities. The extrabiblical designation *Palestine*, for example, derives from the Aramaic *pelištā’in*, which is echoed in the Hebrew *pəlišṭīm* “Philistine” (cf. the Egyptian *prst/pw-r3-s3-t*). Herodotus (*Hist.* 1.105; 3.5, 91; 7.89) names the settlement area of the Philistines in the coastal plain from Jaffa to Gaza thus (Παλαιστίνη), but the designation in Neo-Assyrian sources even includes parts of the Phoenician coastal plain already in the ninth/eighth centuries BCE. In 135 CE Palestine became the name of the Roman province Syria Palaestina, which initially only included the land west of the Jordan. Under Emperor Diocletian (284–305 CE), the northern part of the Provincia Arabia, the southern Transjordan, the Negev, and Sinai were added to the province. Around 400 CE the province was divided into three parts: Palaestina Prima (Judah, Samaria, coastal strip), Secunda (Galilee, northern Transjordan), and Tertia (southern Transjordan from the Arnon River southward, the Negev, Sinai) (to the regions see §10.4, map 14). The area of British Mandate of 1920, which roughly encompasses the areas of present-day Israel, Palestine (Palestinian Authority territories), and Jordan (the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan) maintained these boundaries, as does scholarly jargon, which uses this term to refer to the southern portion of the Syro-Palestinian land bridge. Thus, using Palestine as a designation has certain political implications, although this term is employed in academic contexts as a rather neutral designation for the southern part of the Syro-Palestinian land bridge. In such academic usage, Palestine designates the southern part of the Levant, the so-called Fertile Crescent, which stretches from Mesopotamia via Syria, Lebanon, and the Phoenician coast to the Nile alluvial plain in Egypt (see §10.4, map 13).

Like the concept of Israel (see §1.6), the names of the lands are not neutral but connected with historical and modern connotations. *Judea* and *Samaria* are, for example, in the modern context of use, the State of Israel’s designations for the occupied area of Cisjordan in relation to the borders

of 1967. Using biblical designations in the modern context makes an Israeli claim to the territory of the autonomous regions. Each choice of term or designation takes on a specific perspective. For example, when the seemingly neutral *Transjordan* is used, meaning the area *beyond* the Jordan, the point of view necessarily stems from Cisjordan and that implicitly means a valuation. Even Syria, Israel, and Palestine cannot be completely kept from under the spell of ideologies. It is important to always bear this in mind when using these terms. In this presentation, the southern Levant is often mentioned when referring to the area of southern Syria. Palestine is also used as neutrally as possible as a geographical designation.

Based on the use of Palestine as the regional designation of the area west and east of the Jordan Valley and its southern continuation in the Arabah Valley, the history of Israel played out in this region or in parts of this region (see §10.4, map 14). In any case, it is not to be limited only to the territory of today's Israel or to ancient Israel and Judah. The term *Holy Land*, which appears in the Bible only in Zech 2:16 (v. 12 ET; *'admat haqqōdeš*) and is echoed in the "holy border" or the "holy area" (*gəbūl qodšō*) of Ps 78:54, is less suitable in comparison with the more neutral Palestine, since it is quite theologically charged, and, moreover, it is by no means always clear which area is exactly meant by it.

Finally, the name *Canaan*, which is more often used as a synonym for Palestine in literature, was already used in the third millennium BCE and goes back to the cuneiform *kinahḫi*. In the texts of the Syrian city of Ebla/Tell Mardīḥ at the end of the third millennium BCE, the name *kinahḫi*/Canaan seems to designate the territory of northern Syria, but in the second millennium BCE Canaan stands for the Egyptian province of Canaan, which bordered Egypt in the south and reached up to Byblos in the north. In the Amarna Letters (see §2.2.6), however, there is a further use of Canaan that encompasses the whole of Syria up to the River Orontes. The term designates the entire dominion of Egypt in the northern Levant. Aside from the Bible, Canaan as designation is not used in the extrabiblical accounts of the first millennium BCE, neither in inscriptions nor in cuneiform texts.

An Egyptian statuette fragment (Walters Art Gallery 22.203) subsequently inscribed in the Twenty-Second or Twenty-Third Dynasty (946/45–716 BCE) mentions an envoy named Pediese from "the Canaan" (HTAT 104), which typically refers to the city of Gaza. The name then disappears from the source material and reappears in Phoenician sources in the Hellenistic-Roman period. Biblically, Canaan is one of the names for

the promised land (e.g., Gen 12:5; Exod 6:4; Num 13:2), though the same geographical space is not meant throughout. Moreover, the designation is strongly charged by the constructed cultural-religious contrast between Israel and Canaan (Gen 9:25; Lev 18:3), so that it is not suitable for general use. In the current presentation, Canaan is used in the narrower sense for the area of the Late Bronze Age province of Canaan and for the southern Syrian foothills of Bronze Age urban culture (see §2.2.1, map 1).

These brief comments on the names of the land and the associated connotations show that the history of Israel cannot be separated from a history of the region that also takes into account the political history of its neighbors. The Late Bronze Age Canaan (see ch. 3), as well as Israel and Judah of the monarchic period (see chs. 4, 5), the Persian provinces Yehud and Samaria (see ch. 6), and the Hellenistic Judea (see ch. 7) are integrated into the ever-changing balance of power in the greater Near East. The location of the region on the Syro-Palestinian land bridge between the Near East and Egypt made it strategically and politically relevant for the great powers that determined regional political events.

1.8. BIBLICAL NUMBERS AND CHRONOLOGIES

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When did the events reported in the Hebrew Bible take place? The question of the biblical chronology, that is, the location of events in an absolute

temporal course, arises independently from the question of what historical value is attached to the individual pieces of information. This can be shown by the example of 1 Kgs 14:25, which mentions a campaign of the Egyptian pharaoh against Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam. While the event is not historical in its narrated form (an attack on Jerusalem), a campaign of Shoshenq to Palestine is highly probable. Shoshenq is the first pharaoh mentioned by name in the Hebrew Bible, and it is striking that the biblical account, written down several centuries later, contains any knowledge of this campaign. It is one of the most important events of the tenth century BCE, but the precise dating of this campaign is very complicated (see §4.8), and the indication of 1 Kgs 14:25 is an important clue so long as one assumes that it is accurate. But when was the fifth year of Rehoboam? How does one reach an absolute date from the relative date?

The statements in the biblical texts are often understood as *supposedly* concrete: the construction of the first temple took place 480 years after the exodus (1 Kgs 6:1 MT); Israel's stay in Egypt is said to have lasted 430 years (Exod 12:40 MT, but cf. Gen 15:13). These seem to be precise statements, and one is inclined to believe them. If data in Gen 21:5; 25:26; and 47:9, 28 are combined, Israel's stay in Egypt began 290 years after the birth of Abraham. Taken together, the temple must have been built 1200 years after Abraham's birth (Klaus Koenen). None of the dates in this relative chronology are absolute, and the round number at the end indicates that the aim of the statement is *not* purely chronology but salvation history. For a reliable absolute chronology, the data are therefore hardly usable. This quickly becomes apparent when one considers that Jacob's grandson Kohath went with him to Egypt (Gen 46:11), but Kohath's grandson Moses brought the Hebrews out of Egypt (Exod 6:18, 20), which can hardly amount to 430 years in Egypt. There is an abundance of data in the Bible (e.g., Num 33:38; Judg 11:38; 1 Sam 4:18), but not a single date that corresponds to our calculation of time. Usually these are relative dates that do not help much for orientation in absolute time. Take, for example, the statement that Samson was a judge in Israel for twenty years at the time of the Philistines (Judg 15:20): neither the dates of Samson's birth nor the reference point of the time of the Philistines provide a reliable indication for an absolute dating. The data stating that David and Solomon each reigned for forty years (2 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 2:11; 11:42) is a rather general approximation utilizing a number that also has a highly symbolic meaning (Gen 25:20; 26:34; Exod 16:35; Num 14:33; and Judg 13:1). Much of the biblical chronological data

are scribal constructions that are not suitable for serving as a basis for the reconstruction of the history of Israel. One comes a step further with dating that refers to concrete events that are also documented outside the Bible. Three brief examples are: (1) the dating of the first conquest of Jerusalem; (2) the construction of the second temple; and (3) the dating of the Hanukkah festival for the rededication of the temple after the pollution by Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE).

(1) Most of the data in the book of Ezekiel refer to the Israelites' stay in exile in Babylon (Ezek 1:1; 8:1; 20:1; 29:1; 40:1; etc.). These are biographical dates that are focused on the fate of the prophet. Thus, they refer to the first exile to Babylon in 597 BCE because Ezek 1:2 is dated "in the fifth year after the deportation of King Jehoiachin." This is related, in Ezek 40:1, to the conquest of Jerusalem in 587 BCE (cf. Jer 1:3; 39:1; Bar 1:2). Babylonian sources attest to King Jehoiachin's stay (who reigned 598/97 BCE) (see §5.10.2) without the absolute date 597 BCE being mentioned. The Babylonian Chronicle dates the event to the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar. Relating these data to each other allows the scope of absolute dating to be narrowed.

(2) Haggai and Zechariah mention King Darius several times (Hag 1:1, 15; 2:10; Zech 1:1, 7; 7:1), and the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem is dated exactly in Hag 1:15 "on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius." But this is (apart from the question of its historicity, see §6.5.4) not yet sufficient for an absolute dating. Unfortunately, not only one Achaemenid ruler bore the name *Dārayavahuš*/Δαρεῖαῖος = Darius; rather three Persian rulers spread over two centuries and, additionally, one king of Elymais bore this name at the end of the second century BCE. Since Ezra mentions the construction of the temple, the last Persian king—Darius III (336–330 BCE), mentioned in 1 Macc 1:1—can be excluded. However, Ezra 4:5–7 reports that the construction of the temple began under Cyrus (II), but that its completion was delayed until the reign of King Darius. The temple construction is said to have been suspended under Xerxes and Artaxerxes until the temple building was continued in the second year of Darius (Ezra 4:24, cf. the completion in Ezra 6:15). This dating is linked in Ezra 5:1 with the dating of Haggai. This does not exclude Darius II (423–405/04 BCE) as a point of reference, but it is unlikely, even if the sequence Cyrus → Xerxes → Artaxerxes → Darius I does not correspond to the historical sequence (i.e., Cyrus II → Cambyses II → Darius I → Xerxes → Artaxerxes). Under this assumption, the temple was built in 520 BCE (on the problems, see

§6.5.4) because Darius the Great became king in Persia in 522 BCE. But how do one know that Darius I took office in 522 BCE?

(3) Dates appear most reliably in the books of Maccabees (e.g., 1 Macc 2:70; 3:37; 13:41; etc.). There, events are dated with an exact calendar specification; for instance, the rededication of the temple is connected with the Hanukkah festival on 25.9.148 (BCE) in 1 Macc 4:52, which took place exactly three years after the “desolating sacrilege” (1 Macc 1:54, so NRSV), the pollution of the temple by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (1 Macc 1:10). Reference points for the dating are, on the one hand, the Jewish calendar, here the month Kislev, which according to the Gregorian calendar lies in December, and, on the other, the dating according to the Seleucid era, which is also used outside the Bible. The Seleucid era began in autumn 312 BCE with the conquest of Babylon by Alexander the Great’s (356–323 BCE) successor Seleucus I (312–281 BCE). Thus the Hanukkah festival can be dated to the year 164 BCE. But also here the absolute dating does not result from the dating system of the Seleucid era itself, but from the reference to the Gregorian calendar.

Absolute data for the first millennium can only be obtained via very few (mostly astronomical) fixed points (Hans J. Nissen). One of them is the exactly calculable total solar eclipse, which according to the Gregorian calendar fell on 15 June 763 BCE. Since this eclipse was observed during the reign of Ashur-dan III (= Aššur-dān III) (773–755 BCE), absolute data can be calculated approximately. Because lists are available for the Babylonian and Assyrian kings, the relative → eponym dating can be converted into absolute dates. The few overlaps between these lists and the biblical chronology (see §5.2.4) then allow a relationship to the → synchronistic data (see §5.2.2) in the Bible.

The indication of absolute data is quite uncertain in many cases up to the second half of the first millennium BCE due to the interdependence of different ancient Near Eastern chronological systems. Nevertheless, it is virtually impossible to dispense with the information of annual figures for orientation purposes.

This presentation uses the conventional acronyms BCE/CE to indicate the year instead of more neutral mathematical calculations (e.g., -0722). However, in order to avoid offense, BCE should be read as Before the Common Era instead of Before the Christian Era.

1.9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CHRONOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

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♦ **Streit**, Katharina, and Felix **Höflmayer**. “Archaeomagnetism, Radiocarbon Dating, and the Problem of Circular Reasoning in Chronological Debates.” *NEA* 79 (2016): 233–35.

In archaeology one speaks of metal ages, that is, the Chalcolithic (Copper Stone Age), Bronze, and Iron Ages. The orientation toward metals only gives a first approximation but does not, for example, mean that there was no bronze in the Iron Age. Changes in material culture are significant for epochal boundaries, although they are not the only decisive factor. But Helga Weippert’s remark “Kings come, kings go, but the cooking pots remain” (“Könige kommen, Könige gehen, aber die Kochtöpfe bleiben”) makes it clear that archaeology is not primarily oriented toward the course of historical events. An overview of the archaeological epochs can be found in the appendix (see §10.1.1). The absolute dating of artifacts is at least as difficult as that of events. Archaeological dating is based on relative chronologies derived from the typological comparison of pottery (see below) and combined with events that can be dated relatively accurately on the basis of the sources, such as documented earthquakes. Dendrochronology and ^{14}C isotope analysis are scientifically more accurate. Although the methods can only be understood to a limited extent without scientific knowledge, it is important to bear these in mind when discussing dating. How does one date findings from excavations? Here, too, it is helpful to distinguish between absolute and relative dating. The settlement strata (→ stratum) that come to light in an excavation stand in a relative chronological order to each other. The settlement layer closer to the surface is more recent. This sequence of layers is not always the same in different excavations; for example, the last settlement layer might belong to the Byzantine period at one site, but the late Persian period at another. Nor can it be assumed that every Tell was inhabited at the same time. Pottery typology, that is, the comparison of pottery characteristics (size, shape, rim, base, handle, decoration, manufacturing, composition of clay and temper, etc.), determines the types of pottery that are considered to be simultaneous (Seymour Gitin). The timeframe in which a certain type of

pottery was used is called the duration, pottery phase, or period of usage. The periods of usage of pottery types are not exact in different places, but they are approximately the same, which is why one can compare layers that feature the same pottery types. In most cases, the duration of two consecutive types overlaps, which also makes more accurate dating difficult. Pottery typology leads to relative dating of layers, for example, that the strata of Lachish V, Timnah IV, Arad XII are concurrent and date into the Iron IIA period. Artifacts are set relative to strata or settlement layers. If, for example, a cooking pot lies *under* a floor, the dating of the floor is the pot's *terminus ante quem*, that is, the time *before* which the pot must have been created (and the horizon of the floor is *younger* than the construction of the pot) (see §1.4). If, on the other hand, it lies *on* the floor, the dating of the floor is the pot's *terminus post quem*, that is, the time *after* which the pot was still in use (the horizon of the floor is *older* than the use of the pot). While in this example the *terminus ante quem* allows a statement about the production period but not about the usage period (in another context the same type could have been used even longer), the opposite is true for the *terminus post quem*. The pot may have been made long before, but it was certainly still in use *after* the floor was made. If either the floor or the pot can now be dated more accurately from other points of view (e.g., by a dated inscription, scientifically supported dating, or dating knowledge from other sources), the dating approaches an absolute figure. An absolute dating means that a statement is made about a dating in years; for example, the pottery dates to the second half of the tenth century or the first half of the ninth century BCE. Absolute dating is often possible only approximately, for example, by reference to a fixed date such as an earthquake, which can be dated exactly by reference to astronomical phenomena. With ^{14}C data analysis (also called isotope analysis or radiocarbon dating), developed by Willard Frank Libby in the 1950s, relatively exact dating is possible. This analysis measures the decay of the radioactive carbon atom ^{14}C taken up by organisms in their lifetime and calculates their age on the basis of the half-life of the Carbon-14 atoms (i.e., the time in which the quantity of atoms has been reduced by half, 5730 ± 40 years for ^{14}C atoms). However, the ^{14}C carbon content in the atmosphere fluctuates, and the uptake of ^{14}C atoms in organisms is not always exactly the same, leading to considerable fluctuations. In addition to these fluctuations, the method is hampered in the period between 750 and 400 BCE, where the calibration of the measurements always leads to a consistently flat

area in the graphs, the so-called Hallstatt plateau. In this period the ^{14}C isotope method is unusable. For this reason, dendrochronology is often used in addition, which counts the number of rings in wood to assign a precisely defined timeframe. Dates by this method reach back about 12,500 years. In addition, more recent archaeometric dating methods have been developed such as thermo-luminescence dating, uranium isotope decay, archaeomagnetism, optical stimulated luminescence, and so on. These methods are rapidly evolving and beginning to be applied in archaeological science. However, pottery typology is still indispensable, especially for the later Iron Age until the emergence of coin series that allow an exact dating. Although the geochemical analysis of pottery has been challenged recently for its limitations (Kamal Badreshani, Graham Philip) this method is a useful tool to better understand regional developments of (serial) pottery production and the techniques applied to it, and to improve the typology of pottery (Sabine Kleiman).

The discussion is complex because the traditional cultural comparison chronology, which is based on the comparison of pottery types and their relationship to absolute data, is increasingly supplemented by absolute scientific dating using ^{14}C and other methods. However, even calibrated ^{14}C data cannot be fixed to an exact date but can be dated in a spectrum that always includes deviations of $\pm 30\text{--}35$ years. Overall, the material data for dating has grown enormously in recent years and is becoming more and more important than comparative ceramic analysis. It is not only olive pits or raw organic material that is used for radiocarbon dating, even pollen are extracted and used in archaeometric methods. Also this method is improving rapidly; since 2020, for instance, even the lipid residues, which infiltrated into the surface of pottery during the usage period, can be extracted and used for radiocarbon dating (Emanuelle Casanova, et al.). Archaeology often speaks of a “radiocarbon revolution,” and that holds true with regard to the rapidly increasing knowledge in this field. However, an assessment is only possible with prior knowledge and some expertise in science. Thus the discussion becomes sometimes arcane for lay people what can be demonstrated with the so-called chronology debate.

For about twenty-five years, there has been a so-called chronology debate, which is primarily concerned with the tenth century BCE and the Iron IIA period, which is why it will be discussed in more detail in an excursus in the section on Solomon (see §4.6.3.4). It is sufficient, first of all, to consider the different dating approach of the low chronology (LC)

advocated by Israel Finkelstein in comparison to the traditional conventional chronology (CC) (for an overview, see §10.1) and, secondly, to consider the central position of a modified conventional chronology (MCC) brought into the discussion by Amihai Mazar. It is important for the discussion of the monarchic period that the Iron IIA period is divided into two distinct phases (*early* Iron Age IIA 950–900 BCE and *late* Iron Age IIA 900–840/30 and 800 BCE). This distinction was introduced to the discussion by Zeev Herzog and Lily Singer-Avitz and is now widely accepted, although the beginning of the Iron IIA1 period is still being discussed (Amihai Mazar). Thus, while the Iron IIB period marks the period of upswing for the two kingdoms between the appearance of the Arameans and the fall of Israel (ca. 830–701 BCE), the transition to the Iron IIC period is controversial, especially as there are no clear horizons of destruction (Amihai Mazar, Pieter van der Veen, Oded Lipschits). The fact that the archaeological chronology is still oriented towards the historical upheavals is shown not only by the date 701 BCE with the campaign of Sennacherib (Lachish III), but also by the fluctuation between an Iron IIC and the Babylonian-Persian period. Since the material culture does not change significantly after the fall of Judah, the phase between 587/86 BCE and 450 BCE is sometimes also called the Iron Age III (for an overview, see §10.1). The chronological data should not hide the fact that there are large regional differences in some cases. The ages defined by metals do not end at the same time in all places. The dates of the archaeological chronology are therefore only approximate values.

In addition to the above methods for dating archaeological horizons, numismatics should be mentioned. With the spread of coinage and reconstructable minting sequences of different types of coins, *post quem* dating of a stratum is possible when coins are found in an archaeological horizon. This is often the case from the late Persian period onward.

1.10. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL AS IT RELATES TO OTHER HISTORIES

Grabbe, Lester L. *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know And How Do We Know It?* 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. ♦ **Grabbe**. *Can a 'History of Israel' Be Written?* JSOTSup 245. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997. ♦ **Liverani**, Mario. *Israel's History and the History of Israel*. London: Equinox, 2005.

The special feature of the depiction of the history of ancient Israel presented here is that regional archaeological and extrabiblical sources are taken into account as widely as possible. The evidence cannot be unpacked in detail but always remains present in the background and changes the view of the history of events. In the presentation of the events, which does not seek to perform a narrative recounting (historical retelling), structures of the course of history should become recognizable. The biblical testimony and the presentation of its historical value, on the other hand, cede some value but are not irrelevant because of that. They form the starting point of the presentation. It is always attempted to distinguish between a biblical, an archaeological, and a historical perspective. The biblical account, however, is often itself very complex, for instance when one compares the various sources regarding the downfall of Jerusalem. Often the biblical presentation deserves a differentiated analysis, which cannot be developed here. Especially in those parts where the Bible offers broad narratives with many historical details (such as with David, in the Hezekiah-Isaiah story in Isa 36–38//2 Kgs 18–20, in the prophetic books, etc.), the presentation is limited to the essential and may seem too scarce at many points for readers interested in the course of the Bible. Literary history is not developed in the present reconstruction, but some of the European classical introductions stand in the background.³ The history of the theological interpretation of the events and also the religious and social history are only to a small extent included in the presentation in order not to increase the abundance of data and problems in a confined space.

3. Recommendation: Erich Zenger et al., *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 9th ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2016), or, for English-speaking readers, Jan Christian Gertz et al., *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Literature, Religion and History of the Old Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2012).

Israel's Prehistory

Finkelstein, Israel, and Amihai **Mazar**. *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*. Edited by Brian B. Schmidt. ABS 17. Leiden: Brill, 2007. ♦ **Görg**, Manfred. *Die Beziehungen zwischen dem alten Israel und Ägypten: Von den Anfängen bis zum Exil*. Erträge der Forschung 290. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997. ♦ **Görg**. "Mose – Name und Namensträger: Versuch einer historischen Annäherung." Pages 17–42 in *Mose: Ägypten und das Alte Testament*. Edited by Eckart Otto and Jan Assmann. SBS 189. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2000. ♦ **Römer**, Thomas. "La périodisation de l'histoire de l'Israël ancien: Constructions bibliques et historiques." *ATALA* 17 (2014): 87–100. ♦ **Sass**, Benjamin. *The Alphabet at the Turn of the Millennium: The West Semitic Alphabet ca. 1150–850 BCE; The Antiquity of the Arabian, Greek and Phrygian Alphabets*. Tel Aviv Occasional Publications 4. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2005. ♦ **Yurco**, Frank J. "Merenptah's Canaanite Campaign and Israel's Origins." Pages 27–55 in *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence*. Edited by Ernest S. Frerichs and Leonard H. Lesko. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

Israel constitutes itself as a foreigner in the land of Palestine. From the biblical perspective of salvation history, Israel originated outside the land and had its roots in Mesopotamia (Gen 12:1–3; Deut 26:5), in Aram-Naharaim. From Abraham via Isaac to Jacob, who was called Israel (Gen 32:29 [v. 28 ET]; 35:10), it became a people in Egypt (Exod 1:7, 9). The people of the "children of Israel" entered the land of Canaan as a whole and took possession of it after the exodus and the desert migration from the outside. A historical perspective depicts Israel's emergence in a completely different light. Israel developed *in the land* and not outside of it (in Egypt, in the desert, etc.). And even this occurred over a long process. In order to make this basic assumption understandable, several steps of Israel's prehistory need to be outlined.

2.1. ON THE HISTORICITY OF THE PATRIARCHS AND MATRIARCHS

Alt, Albrecht. "Der Gott der Väter: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der israelitischen Religion (1929)." Pages 1–78 in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel 1*. Edited by Albrecht Alt. Munich: Beck, 1953. ♦ **Blum**, Erhard. "The Jacob Tradition." Pages 181–212 in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. Edited by Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen. VTSup 152. Leiden: Brill, 2012. ♦ **Bormann**, Lukas. *Abraham's Family: A Network of Meaning in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. WUNT 415. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel, and Neil Asher **Silberman**. *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 2001. ♦ **Frevel**, Christian. "Jacob as Father of the Twelve Tribes: Literary and Historical Considerations." Pages 155–81 in *The History of the Jacob Cycle (Genesis 25–35): Recent Research on the Compilation, the Redaction and the Reception of the Biblical Narrative and Its Historical and Cultural Contexts*. Edited by Benedikt Hensel. Archaeology and Bible 4. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021. ♦ **Jericke**, Detlef. *Abraham in Mamre: Historische und exegetische Studien zur Region von Hebron und zu Genesis 11,27–19,38*. CHANE 17. Leiden: Brill, 2003. ♦ **Knauf**, Ernst Axel. "Ishmael (Son of Abraham and Hagar), I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament." *EBR* 13:352–55. ♦ **Knohl**, Israel. "Jacob-el in the Land of Esau and the Roots of Biblical Religion." *VT* 67 (2017): 481–84. ♦ **Köckert**, Matthias. *Abraham: Ahnvater–Vorbild–Kultstifter*. BG 31. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2017. ♦ **Köckert**. *Vätergott und Väterverheißungen: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Albrecht Alt und seinen Erben*. FRLANT 142. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988. ♦ **Köckert**. *Von Jakob zu Abraham*. FAT 147. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021. ♦ **Lemche**, Niels Peter. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israel*. 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. ♦ **Lemche**. *Die Vorgeschichte Israels: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 13. Jh. v. Chr.* Biblische Enzyklopädie 1. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1996. ♦ **Lemche**. *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy*. VTSup 37. Leiden: Brill, 1985. ♦ **Na'aman**, Nadav. "The Jacob Story and the Formation of Biblical Israel." *TA* 41 (2014): 95–125. ♦ **Römer**, Thomas. "D'Abraham à la conquête: L'Hexateuque et l'histoire d'Israël et de Juda." *RSR* 103 (2015): 35–53. ♦ **Römer**, Thomas, and Israel **Finkelstein**. "Comments on the Historical Background of the Abraham Narrative: Between 'Realia' and 'Exegetica.'" *HBAI* 3 (2014): 3–23. ♦ **Schmitz**, Barbara. "Wahre Geschichte(n): Die biblischen Texte als Geschichte und Geschichten." *BK* 68 (2013): 128–33. ♦ **Seidl**, Theodor. "Conflict and Conflict Resolution: Inner Controversies and Tensions as Places of Israel's Self-Conception in the Patriarchal Traditions of Genesis." *OTE* 26 (2013): 840–63. ♦ **Thompson**, Thomas L. *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham*. BZAW 133. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002.

There are no contemporary sources about the prehistory of Israel and its ancestors, the matriarchs and patriarchs. Even though some of their names are documented as West-Semitic personal names outside the Bible, the historicity of the biblical persons cannot simply be presumed. The only source is the book of Genesis, and what is told there is not to be understood historically, nor is it *intended* to be understood historically. The narratives collected there in clusters of traditions (Abraham cycle, Jacob-Laban cycle, Jacob-Esau cycle, etc.), which according to biblical chronology take place in the first half of the second millennium BCE, mainly represent retrojections into the period before the constitution of the states of Israel and Judah. Yet these traditions were themselves only written during the period of these states and later. The actual age of the traditions is currently the subject of much debate, but there is broad consensus that written traditions of the ancestors do not date before the eighth century BCE. There is a tendency to understand the Jacob traditions as being older than the Abraham-Isaac traditions. That these traditions, whether oral or written, have preserved historical memories from the Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age (eighteenth–twelfth centuries BCE) is very unlikely from what comparative ethnology can say about the transmission of collective memories. By denying the historicity of the biblical narratives, they are not devalued, but theologically valorized. The negation of direct historicity (the narratives about the patriarchs and matriarchs are not true in the historical sense) raises the question of the function of the narratives (formation and constitution of Israel as a collective entity). At present, the question is being discussed, especially for the Jacob narratives, to what extent they reflect the process of when the entity of Israel was literarily formed in such a way that it could constitute an ethnically homogeneous entity of Israel in collective memory (Nadav Na'aman, Erhard Blum, Theodor Seidl).

2.1.1. Albrecht Alt's Hypothesis of the God of the Ancestors

The peculiar names of God in Genesis have been cited as an argument for the historicity of the so-called patriarchs. Genesis not only mentions the “God of your/my/our father Abraham/Isaac/Jacob” (Gen 26:24; 28:13; 32:10; 46:1; Exod 3:6), but also the “Fear of Isaac” (Gen 31:42, 53) and “Mighty One of Jacob” (Gen 49:24). In 1929 Albrecht Alt developed the influential thesis of the “God of the Ancestors” as a nomadic type of religion preceding the YHWH religion, which—due to the attachment of God

to the individual as recipient of revelation—necessarily assumed the historicity of the patriarchs. This thesis has been vehemently contradicted (Matthias Köckert), since the texts do not really reflect a nomadic milieu, and the type of religion can be explained much more socioreligiously than as an expression of individual or family piety. Thus, the origin of the tradition from prestate times cannot be guaranteed, nor can the possibility of fiction be excluded.

2.1.2. Abraham as a Historical and Fictitious Person

The example of Abraham illustrates the problem. The name, which means “he is sublime in relation to the father,” is documented similarly in Amorite texts of the second millennium BCE, but there is no possibility of identification with a person who emigrated from Ur of the Chaldeans to Palestine. The reference to the Ugaritic personal name *abrm* is still unclear and does not help. Further, it may be mentioned that Pharaoh Sethos I (1290–1279 BCE) boasts that he fought the “Asiatics of *rh*m” at Beth-Shean/Tell el-Ḥöşn (“small” or Second Beth-Shean Stela IAA S-885.11; COS 2.27–28; HTAT 064). If this is a reference to a group of Š3šw (pastoralists and subsistence farmers) in the area of Yarmut, which remains unclear, the progenitor could have been called *ab-rhm* (Ernst Axel Knauf, critically Manfred Weippert). Not only does that remain a historically vague assumption, but the connection to the biblical Abraham, whose traditions are rather anchored in the south of Palestine, could only be at best tenuously associated with it. Even if the names of the persons have been used as group names and the names are West Semitic, it cannot be excluded that these are fictitious persons who were made into → eponyms (where the names stand for groups, e.g., Jacob for the Jacob clan or Judah for the tribe of Judah).

2.1.3. The Evidence of the Tribe Šumu'il in Assyrian Sources

A good second example is the possible trace of Ishmael in the sources, which is taken as proof for the existence of the patriarchs. The starting point is the linguistic connection between the name Ishmael and the Proto-Arabic name Šumu'il, which is assumed to be of the same meaning (“God/El answers or has answered”). The name Šumu'il (*Šama'il) is attested in Akkadian sources of the Neo-Assyrian period (end of the eighth or beginning of the seventh centuries BCE) for a proto-bedouin tribe or a tribal

confederation located mainly in the Nefūd Desert in northern Arabia. The city of Duma (Dūmat al-Ġandal) was its center. The name was quite important as one of the gates of Nineveh is named “the wealth of Šumu'il enters here.” Whether it is a single tribe or a Proto-Arabic tribal confederation is debated. Although there is no positive evidence that the tribe of Šumu'il was also present in the western Negev, the relation of the biblical Ishmael and Šumu'il (which goes back to Franz Delitzsch but was prominently advanced by Ernst Axel Knauf) is widely accepted in research. However, there is a chronological difference between the extrabiblical sources and the biblical account. This chronological difference makes it impossible to recognize the biblical Ishmael as the historical ancestor of those tribe(s). Four possibilities remain: (1) there was no confederation of tribes named Šumu'il at all, and the connection between the names Ishmael and Šumu'il is philologically unsound (Matthias Köckert); (2) the confederation of Šumu'il existed earlier or contemporaneously in the west and in the western Negev, and the biblical texts refer to those earlier groups (historicizing interpretation of an old tradition) (Hermann Gunkel); (3) the confederation of tribes named Šumu'il existed in both places at different times (historicizing interpretation of two separate but related traditions) (Gregor Geiger); and (4) the confederation of Šumu'il existed only in northern Arabia and is only alluded to in the biblical text by displacing it geographically and temporally. Thus, no *real* Ishmaelites ever existed historically in the neighborhood of Abraham in the Negev (the tribe of Šumu'il in the eighth century is historical, the existence of Ishmaelites in the Middle Bronze Age is a biblically invented tradition that emerged in the eighth or seventh century BCE or later) (Ernst Axel Knauf).

2.1.4. Jacob = Ya'qub'ilu and Its Possible Link to Ancient Israel

Within the stories of Gen 12–50, there is a strong link between the biblical patriarch Jacob and Israel, particularly because Jacob is renamed Israel twice—in Gen 32:29 (v. 28 ET) and Gen 35:10. In prophetic passages the names Israel and Jacob are often used in parallel or even synonymously (e.g., Hos 12:3; Mic 3:8–9; Jer 46:27; Isa 46:3). Therefore, it is obvious to look for the historical origin of this equation. The name Jacob is assumed to be a shortened version of the theophoric name Jacob-El, a name frequently attested as Ya'qub'ilu/Ya'āqōb-ʾĒl in ancient extrabiblical sources. Particularly the attestation of Ya'qub'ilu in lists of toponyms from Thutmose III (1479–1423 BCE), Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE), and Ramesses III

(1183–1151 BCE) has attracted scholars, and some argue for locating the mentioned region in Gilead and/or Transjordan. Since Isra-El is also attested in Egyptian sources (albeit as a group of people; see §2.3), the argument sometimes links Israel in a very early stage with Jacob. Accordingly, it is assumed that clans of Jacob-El joined the Israelite people by the late thirteenth century BCE (Israel Knohl). The figure of the patriarch Jacob thus supposedly reflects the early history of Israel. However, there is simply no link between these two in the existing Egyptian sources, so that this hypothesis remains mere speculation. This is true even more so for the connection of Ya‘qub’ilu with the early history of YHWH, the later God of Israel. Since the sources mention the name Ya‘qub’ilu alongside names with the element *q-ś*, which is then linked to the later Edomite deity Qōs (*qws*), this is evaluated as an early testimony of the God of Israel (Israel Knohl). However, the presupposed relation—or even equation—of Qōs and YHWH is a rather speculative point in this argument (see §2.4.4.2). In short, there is no sure way to identify the connection of Jacob and Israel in any sources before the biblical traditions. The identification (which is confirmed very late *explicitly* via the renaming in Genesis) must be explained from the biblical tradition itself (Thomas Römer, Israel Finkelstein, Christian Frevel).

In sum, it cannot be proven or excluded that there have been historical persons named Abram, Sarai, Ishmael, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, Leah, and so on. Whether these then also stand behind the narrative traditions of the patriarchs and matriarchs is another question. Many indications suggest that the biblical tradition constructs rather than reflects the period of the ancestors.

2.1.5. Migrations in the Bronze Age

Researchers often presumed large migratory movements of people-groups as informing the historical background of the Abraham narrative, but even this can find no point of historical verification. Neither climatic nor political changes can be proven to have led to ethnic mass movements in the third and second millennia BCE in the southern Levant. The demographic changes in Palestine in the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Ages (for the epochal terms, see §§1.5, 1.9, 10.1.1) were not due to large-scale migrations of peoples, but to changes in the forms of settlement, that is, the socio-economically justified change between urban and rural forms of life. Thus, some Amorite or Aramean migration as the background of the patriarchal

and matriarchal narratives is invalid for the second millennium BCE. “Mass migrations are not movements of short duration but usually represent a longer process of resettlement of a group of people.”¹ It was not foreign populations that invaded Palestine/Syria. Rather, it was smaller population groups changing their way of life and their place of residence due to environmental factors such as local periodic droughts. However, major climatic changes are so slow that shifts in settlement patterns can only be detected over a long period of time. From the complex processes of the second millennium BCE, which are characterized by strong political change, the small states in the greater Syria/Palestine area emerge. The migrations of the patriarchs were caused by the historical and literary growth of the narratives into narrative cycles, not by actual or historical migrations of people. “The attempt to visualize them on a map borders on the grotesque.”² It is striking that the Abraham-Lot narratives are located almost continuously in the south (important places are: Beersheba, Mamre, Hebron), while the Jacob-Esau cycle is anchored in central Palestine and the Transjordan (e.g., Bethel, Penuel, Mahanaim, Succoth). Whether this local distribution looks back to tribal traditions in its background (Abraham tradition from the Leah tribes and the Jacob tradition from the Rachel tribes) is controversial due to the fact that the writing of the tradition occurred much later. The assignment of the Jacob-Esau narratives to the north and the Abraham narratives to the south remains relatively certain. At any rate, a historical evaluation for the prestate period cannot be justified at the current state of the discussion.

2.2. THE LATE BRONZE AGE CITY-STATES IN PALESTINE

Bean, Adam L., et al. “An Inscribed Altar from the Khirbat Ataruz Moabite Sanctuary.” *Levant* 50 (2018): 211–36. ♦ **Benz**, Brendon C. *The Land before the Kingdom of Israel: A History of the Southern Levant and the People Who Populated It*.

1. Niels Peter Lemche, *Die Vorgeschichte Israels: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 13. Jh. v. Chr.*, Biblische Enzyklopädie 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1996), 37: “Die Völkerwanderungen sind nicht Bewegungen von kurzer Dauer, sondern sie stellen meist einen längeren Prozess der Umsiedlung einer Menschengruppe dar.”

2. Herbert Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn in Grundzügen*, 2 vols., ATD Ergänzungsreihe 4.1–2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007–2008), 1:84 n. 3: “Der Versuch, sie am Kartenbilde anschaulich zu machen, grenzt ans Groteske.”

HACL 7. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016. ♦ **Berner**, Christoph. "Hebrew/Hebrews." *EBR* 11:675–80. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. "Shechem of the Amarna Period and the Rise of the Northern Kingdom of Israel." *IEJ* 55 (2005): 172–93. ♦ **Finkelstein**. "The Territorial-Political System of Canaan in the Late Bronze Age." *UF* 28 (1996): 221–55. ♦ **Goren**, Yuval, Israel **Finkelstein**, and Nadav **Na'aman**. "Petrographic Investigation of the Amarna Tablets." *NEA* 65 (2002): 196–205. ♦ **Grabbe**, Lester L. *The Land of Canaan in the Late Bronze Age*. London: T&T Clark, 2016. ♦ **Greenberg**, Raphael. *The Archaeology of the Bronze Age Levant: From Urban Origins to the Demise of City-States, 3700–1000 BCE*. Cambridge World Archaeology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. ♦ **Horowitz**, Wayne. "Hazor: A Cuneiform City in the West." *NEA* 76 (2013): 98–101. ♦ **Jasmin**, Michael. "The Political Organization of the City-States in Southwestern Palestine in the Late Bronze Age IIB (Thirteenth Century BC)." Pages 161–91 in "I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times." Edited by Aharon Maeir and Pierre de Miroschedji. Vol. 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006. ♦ **Kafafi**, Zeidan A., and Gerrit **van der Kooij**. "Tell Dēr 'Allā during the Transition from Late Bronze Age to Iron Age." *ZDPV* 129 (2013): 121–31. ♦ **Killebrew**, Ann E., and Gunnar **Lehmann**, eds. *The Philistines and Other "Sea Peoples" in Text and Archaeology*. ABS 15. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013. ♦ **Lehmann**, Gustav Adolf. "Umbrüche und Zäsuren im östlichen Mittelmeerraum und Vorderasien zur Zeit der 'Seevölker'-Invasionen um und nach 1200 v. Chr." *Historische Zeitschrift* 262 (1996): 1–38. ♦ **Loretz**, Oswald. *Habiru—Hebräer: Eine sozio-linguistische Studie über die Herkunft des Gentiliziums 'ibri vom Appellativum ḥabiru*. BZAW 160. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984. ♦ **Na'aman**, Nadav. "The Fortified Cities of the Siddim (Joshua 19,35)." *BN* 160 (2014): 59–67. ♦ **Noort**, Edward. *Die Seevölker in Palästina*. Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994. ♦ **Oren**, Eliezer D., ed. *The Sea People and Their World: A Reassessment*. Pennsylvania: The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 2000. ♦ **Pfälzner**, Peter. "Levantine Kingdoms of the Late Bronze Age." Pages 770–96 in *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Daniel T. Potts. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. ♦ **Pfoh**, Emanuel. *Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age: An Anthropology of Politics and Power*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2016. ♦ **Schloen**, J. David. *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001. ♦ **Strobel**, Karl. "Qadesh, Sea-Peoples, Anatolian-Levantine Interactions." Pages 501–38 in *Across the Border: Late Bronze-Iron Age Relations between Syria and Anatolia*. Edited by Kutlu Aslıhan Yener. Leuven: Peeters, 2013. ♦ **Yener**, Kutlu Aslıhan, ed. *Across the Border: Late Bronze-Iron Age Relations between Syria and Anatolia*. Leuven: Peeters, 2013. ♦ **Yoffee**, Norman. *Early Cities in Comparative Perspective, 4000 BCE–1200 CE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. ♦ **Yoffee**. *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. ♦ **Yoffee**. "The Obvious and the Chimerical." Pages 255–63 in *The Archaeology of City-States: Cross-Cultural*

Approaches. Edited by Deborah L. Nichols and Thomas H. Charlton. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

2.2.1. Emergence and Evolution of the City-States in the Second Millennium BCE

In the second millennium BCE, after a nonurbanized period at the end of the third millennium BCE (ca. 2200–2000 BCE), the entire Levant experienced a renewed → urbanization. The cities, some of which were built on top of the ruins of Early Bronze Age city complexes, were founded in two phases (twentieth and eighteenth centuries BCE) and existed until the end of the Late Bronze Age (around 1200 BCE). With a few exceptions in the mountainous regions (Shechem/Tell Balāṭa, Jerusalem) and in Transjordan (Tell Zerāʿa, Pella/Ṭabaqāt Faḥil/Tell el Ḥuṣn, Tell Dēr ʿAllā, Tell el-ʿUmēri, Amman/ʿAmmān), the Late Bronze Age urban complexes in Palestine were built along the major traffic routes, predominantly in the Cisjordan plains, that is, in the coastal plain (e.g., [from north to south] Achzib/ez-Zīb, Dor, Tell Mubārak/Tel Məvōrak, Ashdod, Tel Mōr/Tell Ḥēdar, Ashkelon, Tell el-ʿAḡūl/Šaruḥen/Sharuhen?), in the adjacent Shephelah (Aphek/Tell Rās el-ʿĒn, Gezer, Timnah/Tel Bāṭāš/Tell Baṭāši, Ekron/Tel Miqnē/Ḥirbet el-Muqannaʿ, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, Tell Jemmeh/Tell Ġemme, Tell el-Fārʿa [south]), in and around the Jezreel Plain (Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim, Tel Yoqnāʿam/Tell Qēmūn, Taanach/Tell Taʿannek), and in the Beth-Shean Basin (Beth-Shean/Tell el Ḥōṣn, Tel Rehov). The city complexes were not large; on average they had a settlement area of about 5 ha (this corresponds to a square area whose sides are about 225 m). As a rule, no more than 2,000 people lived in the cities. Only in individual cases (e.g., Dan/Tell el-Qāḍi with 20 ha or Hazor/Tell Waqqāš with a huge 80 ha) did the cities reach a larger extent. As a rule, the urban area included a hinterland that was at least politically, economically, and culturally influenced and in most cases even controlled to varying degrees of dependency (Norman Yoffee). The surrounding settlements, which formed the periphery of a city, were usually no more than a day's journey away, which pragmatically limited the size of the city-states. The smaller settlements assigned to the city (usually between 0.5 and 3 ha of settlement area) formed a city-state that encompassed a wide territory. Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr in the Shephelah, for example, was the largest city in the south, apart from the Philistine cities on the coast. Despite its relatively moderate—but still considerable—size of circa 7 ha, the city's sphere of influence

reached around twenty-five surrounding settlements in an area of almost 1,000 km² or more than 30 ha of populated area (in comparison, Gath totaled 55 ha, Ashkelon 59 ha) (Israel Finkelstein). Calculating based on a population coefficient of about 200 people per hectare of populated area suggests about 6,000 inhabitants in the Late Bronze Age city-state of Lachish. This corresponds roughly to the comparable city-states in Syria. The cities, or rather city-states, were comparable in social structure, political and economic infrastructure, and the like and were in a variety of relationships and competitions with each other. They formed regional networks, but at the same time they were separate from each other. As a rule, they did not form clusters or city alliances that belonged together but acted on their own in foreign and domestic policy, albeit not without context. The strong fragmentation did not allow the city-states to act together, which made them appear weak in the face of expansive empires such as Egypt or the Hittite Empire.

2.2.2. Religion and Society in the Late Bronze Age Cities

The cities were economically integrated into long-distance trade and had a stratified social structure. Besides the peasants, who mostly lived in the cities, but also in the surrounding area, there were slaves, day laborers, craftsmen, and merchants, as well as a small ruling upper class comprising influential families, officials, and priests. The supreme representative was a city lord or local king, whose family was particularly prominent and involved in government affairs. The position of king was hereditary, which also kept the → clientele relations to the influential families stable for a long time (J. David Schloen, Emanuel Pfoh). The king granted the rights to manage the surrounding countryside to the urban elite. The economy and society were thus thoroughly determined by one central authority (Gunnar Lehmann). All the resources of the city-state ultimately served to preserve and promote the expanded royal budget. Offices and prominent positions of the leadership elite were based on kinship and heredity. The king was regarded in a special way as the representative of the supreme God in the regional pantheon. The city temples—usually one or more temples determined the cityscape—had regional significance. The respective cults between the cities were similar with regard to gods and goddesses, rituals and ritual experts, and their symbol systems, but the individual city cults were at the same time characterized by regional or local peculiarities.



Map 1. Late Bronze Age Canaanite city-states. The map shows the relatively high density of city-states in the Shephelah and in the northern city belt compared to only two central places in the mountainous country (Shechem and Jerusalem). The borders come about through the approximate allocation of the settlements in the respective hinterland.

Unlike the biblical depiction, there was no such thing as *the* Canaanite religion, which the Israelites would have found upon their arrival in the land. The Canaanites and their religion are stylized in the biblical texts as contrasting foils; de facto, the early Israelite religion was not very different from the religions of the Canaanite city-states from a religious-historical perspective. These did not have a uniform religion but nevertheless comparably structured panthea (“families of gods”), in which gods of different origin were worshipped. Usually, a god or a pair of gods was at the head of the local family of gods, but not in all cities; for example, in Ugarit, El was the supreme city god. Often the names of the cities show a connection to the highest city god (the sun god Šamaš in Beth-Shemesh, the moon god Yariḥ in Jericho, the deified evening star Šalem in Jerusalem), but often there is also no connection between the place name and the revered highest deities (e.g., Mekal and Anat in Beth-Shean). In the Late Bronze Age, the presence of Egyptian deities strongly increased, which was related to the Egyptian dominance in the region.

2.2.3. Emergence of Egyptian Supremacy during the New Kingdom

A brief historical overview shows the political constellations: After the expulsion of the Hyksos (from Egyptian *ḥqꜣw ḥꜣswt* “Rulers of the Foreign Countries”) at the end of the sixteenth century BCE, Egypt expanded under the so-called New Kingdom (Eighteenth–Twentieth Dynasties ca. 1550–1070/69 BCE; for an overview of dynasties, see §10.1.2) with renewed strength toward Palestine and southern Syria, first under Ahmoses (1550–1525 BCE), who occupied the Hyksos capital of Avaris and besieged Šaruḥen (Tell el-‘Ağūl) for three years. Thutmose I (1504–1492 BCE) advanced to the Euphrates. The Canaanite rulers lost their independence and became → vassals of the Egyptian Empire.

The high point of the Eighteenth Dynasty’s (1550–1292 BCE) expansion policy occurred under Thutmose III (= Tuthmosis) (1479–1425 BCE). Initially the affairs of government were conducted by Hatshepsut (1479/73–1458/57 BCE), Thutmose II’s (1492–1479 BCE) wife, whose successful policy was directed toward the expansion of trade relations and internal stabilization. During his twenty-second year of reign (1458/57 BCE), Thutmose III fought a battle against a coalition of Canaanite and Syrian princes under the leadership of the “feeble enemy of Kadesh” at Orontes, which the pharaoh repulsed at Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim (see inscriptions Thutmose III, COS 2.2 [quote from 2.2A], HTAT 031–035). In

the first decades of his regency, Thutmose III undertook campaigns to the Near East almost annually in order to secure the achieved supremacy. At the same time he wanted to protect himself against the expansive desires of the Indo-Aryan-Hurrian kingdom of Mittani, which had been growing in strength in the Ḥabūr area of northern Mesopotamia since the fifteenth century BCE. The Egyptian presence on the Via Maris along the coast was strategically expanded in Gaza/Ġazze, Ashkelon/ʿAsqelān, Jaffa/Yafā, Dor/Ḥirbet el-Burġ, and Rās en-Naḳūra and strengthened inland by Egyptian garrisons in Beth-Shean and Kumidi/Kāmid el-Lōz. Under Thutmose III no formal, even only temporary, peace agreements with Mitanni seem to have been reached, but the somewhat later correspondence at the royal court of Amarna testifies to manifold diplomatic relations. The successor Amenophis II (1428–1397 BCE), who was initially coregent alongside his father for three years, rarely needed to reach out to Palestine and Syria, because the Egyptian supremacy over Palestine was largely secure. However, the kingdom of Mittani, pushed back by Thutmose III, established itself more and more as an important power. In his seventh year, Amenophis II seems to have suffered a defeat against Mittani beyond the Orontes. The rulers of Ḥanigalbat, as the kingdom of Mittani is called in Akkadian texts, attacked northern and central Syria but were increasingly under pressure from the Hittites. Thus, an agreement was reached with Thutmose IV (1397–1388 BCE), which was sealed with a diplomatic marriage between the daughter of Aratama and the Egyptian pharaoh. But the balance of power soon shifted again due to the influence of the Hittites. The Hittite Šuppiliuma (ca. 1355–1320 BCE) defeated King Tušratta of Mittani (ca. 1365–1323 BCE) and extended the Hittite influence to northern Syria. In Mesopotamia, on the other hand, the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit I (= Aššur-uballiṭ I) (1364–1328 BCE) regained independence and conquered Mittanian territory in the north. The Egyptian influence in Syria/Palestine began to wane. It was not until the Ramessides of the Nineteenth Dynasty (1292–1185 BCE) that a new consolidation phase began for Egypt's foreign policy, leading to Egypt's renewed supremacy under Sethos I (1290–1279 BCE) and Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE). Sethos I promptly marked his claim in his first year of reign 1290 BCE by a campaign to Palestine. This is evidenced, for example, by a stela in Beth-Shean, in which the pharaoh boasts that he saved the region from the hands of the enemy who was expanding southward from Syria. His successes against the Hittites, however, remained selective at first, leading to a balance of power. In 1275 BCE at Qadeš/Kadesh on the Orontes, Ramesses II and a large

army (partly comprised of mercenaries, including the Palaštu, see below) marched against the Hittites under King Muwatalli II (ca. 1290–1272 BCE). The battle had no clear winner, even if Ramesses II propagandized it in Thebes by all the means at his disposal (in Egyptian pictorial art the pharaoh never loses—that is part of the program): according to the Egyptian representation, the pharaoh, of course, won gloriously (see fig. 5)!

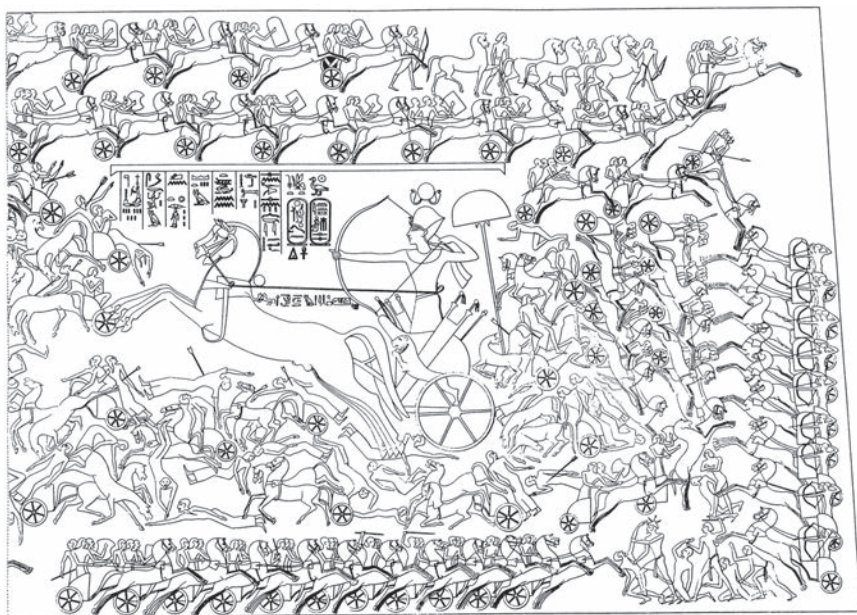


Fig. 5. Representation of the battle of Ramesses II against the Hittite Muwatalli II 1275 BCE at Qadeš on the Orontes. The pharaoh in the chariot radiates a dominant dynamic with the stretched bow, while below him the conquered enemies are depicted in chaotic disorder.

Upon the pharaoh's retreat, Muwatalli seems to have followed him and temporarily brought the Egyptian province of Upe under his control (stelae from eṭ-Ṭurra and Tell Šēḥ Sa'd/Qarnayim in the northern Transjordan may testify to the reconquest; Manfred Weippert, Stefan Wimmer). It was not until 1259 BCE, in the twenty-first year of Ramesses II, that a peace treaty was concluded with the Hittite Ḫattušili II (ca. 1265–1240 BCE, mostly named Ḫattušili III, *TUAT* 1:135–54, see also *COS* 2.5B, *HTAT* 078). Palestine became a border region between Egyptian and Hittite rule.

2.2.4. The So-Called Sea Peoples and the Loss of Egypt's Supremacy

The last phase of the Late Bronze Age was marked by the collapse of the Hittite Empire in the late thirteenth century BCE in the wake of the invasion of the Sea Peoples from the Aegean and South Anatolia, against whom even the Egyptian Empire under Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) could only withstand with difficulty (battle against the Sea Peoples in the Nile Delta 1175 BCE). Between 1200 and 1150 BCE, Egypt reacted to the loss of power by strengthening the garrisons in Palestine (Beth-Shean, Tell eš-Šeri'a, Tell el-Fār'a [south], Tel Mōr/Tell Hēdar were strengthened or rebuilt; the palace in Megiddo was refurbished). The foreign policy of the Ramessides after Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) weakened in the second half of the Twentieth Dynasty (1185–1070/69 BCE), with the Syrian-Palestinian provinces increasingly neglected, leading to a complete loss of foreign political supremacy in the Twenty-First Dynasty (1070/69–946/45 BCE).

The disappearance of Egyptian control was one of the prerequisites for the development of state structures in the first millennium BCE (see §4.1) in the area of southern Palestine (Israel, Judah, Ammon, Moab, Edom, see §§4.2.3–6, 4.3), the first signs of which occurred in political consolidations in the coastal plain (Philistine and Phoenician city-states, see §4.2.1–2).

The so-called Sea Peoples were not an ethnically homogeneous group and did not originate—as the name suggests—exclusively in coastal areas of the Mediterranean. Rather, the collective term *Sea Peoples* refers to a mixture of invasive ethnic groups, only some of which had their origin in the Aegean Sea, but partly also from the Balkans, Asia Minor, and the Near East. In Egyptian texts, “the islands in the sea” or “the middle of the sea” are indicated as the area of origin, which is why they are referred to in research as “Sea Peoples.” Beginning in the fourteenth century BCE, they formed massive coalitions that militarily influenced events from Anatolia via the southern Levant to Egypt, especially from the turn of the thirteenth to the twelfth century BCE. Sources from the Ramesside period (Nineteenth–Twentieth Dynasty, 1292–1070/69 BCE) mention various Sea Peoples as a threat in the Nile Delta. Already under Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) a chain of fortresses was built in the northern delta. But conflicts with groups of the Sea Peoples first occurred only in the fourth/fifth year of the Pharaoh Merenptah (1213–1204/3 BCE), when they attacked the west flank of the delta alongside Libyans. The texts mention Aqajwaša (Achaeans), 'Turša (Etruscans), Šardana (Sardinians), Škrš (Cilicians), and R/Lkk

(Lycians), whereas the identifications with the ethnic groups known from later texts are likely, but not equally certain in all cases. Under Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE), a second wave of invasion occurred, comprising a coalition of, among others, Prst/Palaštu (Philistines), Tkry/Tjekker, and Dnn (Danaans), which is documented in large wall reliefs at Medīnet Hābū depicting the battle in the Mediterranean (see fig. 11). Even if these sources suggest a highly invasive potential of the coalitions and associate it with the collapse of the Hittite Empire as well as the relations of power in Syria and Cyprus, it is still unclear to what extent the seafaring peoples (see fig. 6) contributed to the economic and political collapse of the empires, the conquest of Cyprus, the downfall of Ugarit and other Syrian city-states, and in particular the collapse of the Hittite Empire.



Fig. 6. Mercenaries of the Sea Peoples armed with short swords and round shields. Due to the only slightly varied headdress, a decorated headband, and a feather crown the Philistines, Tjekker, and Danaans are easily recognizable on the reliefs in Medinet Hābū (see fig. 11).

For example, one must also take into account that the Sea Peoples were not only invaders but could have previously played an important role in international long-distance trade. To what extent the settlement of Sea Peoples in the southern Levantine coastal strip was part of Egyptian foreign policy (→ P.Harr. 1, BM 9999, HTAT 094) or was simply the consequence of the declining Egyptian influence in Palestine, remains controversial. Whether caused by Egyptian politics or not, the settlement of population groups of the Sea Peoples in the southern Levant belongs to the emergence of the Palaštu/Philistines, even if their origin is far more complex (see §4.2.2).

2.2.5. Israel as Part of the Egyptian Province of Canaan

The process of → urbanization (expansion of urban centers) and deurbanization (abandonment of cities in favor of rural settlement) in the second millennium BCE in Syria/Palestine can be seen in the larger political context described above. The Egyptian presence in the Palestine region was decisive for the development and flourishing of the Late Bronze Age urban culture, which can be understood as the southern extension of the Syrian city-state culture. Among the Egyptian administrative sites that were of particular importance for the organization of Egyptian rule in Palestine, Gaza stands out, where there was a temple of Amun that played an important role in the administration of the province. In Tell el-Fār'a (south), Tell Jemmeh/Tell Ġemme, Tel Sera/Tell eš-Šerī'a, Tell el-Ḥesī, Aphek, and Beth-Shean, representative buildings in Egyptian style have been found. Jaffa, Ashkelon, Gezer, Gath, Megiddo, and Lachish are also places with a strong Egyptian presence.

At this time there was not yet a state entity Israel, but the area in which Israel later arose was part of the Egyptian province of Canaan. Especially in the Egyptian outposts, there was an alignment of the ancestral Canaanite culture with the Egyptian culture, particularly among the upper class, but also beyond that.

The political situation in Palestine was determined by three factors: (1) the Egyptian supremacy, which meant both protection and dependence; (2) the relative political autonomy that led to rivalries among the city-states; and (3) the threat of the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru—looting, nonurban population elements that are often called *outlaws*.

The various, individual city-states did not form an → agnatic association, that is, an association connected by kinship or the construction of a common → genealogy, but were in a relationship of cooperation and competition. It was this relationship that united the political situation under the hegemonic power of Egypt—which dominated in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE following its establishment under Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE)—rather than the consciousness of being Canaan.

2.2.6. The Amarna Correspondence and the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru

The Amarna correspondence in particular provides information about the overall political situation in Palestine during the Late Bronze Age. The documents from el-Amarna (EA) consist of 379 letters from the local

rulers of the areas ruled by Egypt, including the Syro-Canaanite city lords of Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Akko, Ashkelon, Megiddo, Gezer, Lachish, and Jerusalem (see selection in COS 3.92A–G, *HTAT* 043–060). The letters were sent to the Egyptian ruler Amenophis III (1388–1351/50 BCE) during the fourteenth century BCE. They were found in 1887 in the administrative district of Tell el-Amarna (312 km south of Cairo), which was the residence of Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) (1351–1334 BCE) as the new capital of Aton of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1550–1292 BCE). They provide information about the organization of the Egyptian province of Canaan, which was administered from Gaza, and about the political situation at the beginning of the detachment from Egyptian supremacy. The ‘Apiru/Ḫapiru were probably migrants of different origins who formed groups to create new, not necessarily → agnatic social alliances in the districts of the Canaanite city-states—often in the surrounding mountainous hinterland—and secured their livelihood through looting, raids, and extortion. Like the Šššw nomads (Shasu nomads), who lived as peasants in nonurban regions, they were not a closed ethnic group but had the status of living on the fringes of urban society. The ‘Apiru/Ḫapiru are documented in texts of the second millennium BCE for the southern Levant in the texts of Nuzi, Mari, Ugarit, Alalakh, and in numerous Egyptian texts and are considered as the disruptive element in the polymorphic society of the Late Bronze Age city-states.

In the Amarna correspondence, much is reported about disputes between the cities and the ‘Apiru/Ḫapiru. These were branded as *the* political adversaries and troublemakers, not least to emphasize the loyalty of the city-kings to the Egyptian overlord, so that the disputes between the cities themselves appeared less dramatic.

2.2.7. Two Examples for the Regional Development of Urban Culture

A brief glance at two regions should make this clear. These are deliberately not examples from the heartland of the cities in the plains, but two landscapes that later play a major role in settlement development in the Iron I period (see §3.5.3): (1) Galilee as well as (2) the Manasseh hill country and the Judean hill country (see maps 1 and 14).

(1) While Galilee in the Late Bronze Age had some important sites only in its lower southern part (Hannathon/Tel Ḫannaton, Gath-hepher/Tell Gath-Ḫefer, Tel Reḳeš/Tell el-Muḫarḫaš, Tel Qišyon, Ḫorvat Mesiḳ, Tel Yin‘ām, Tel Qarnei Ḫiṭṭin), Upper Galilee was largely inhabited only

in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages. Only a larger settlement on Tel Roš, which according to Zvi Gal can be identified with Beth-Anat (more commonly Şafad el-Baṭṭiḥ or el-Bi'na) and is also mentioned in the Amarna correspondence, played a larger role. A letter of the king Abdi-Milki of Tyre (EA 148) reports concerning the territory of Upper Galilee that the area was disputed between the kings of Hazor and Tyre and inhabited only by groups of 'Apiru/Ḫapiru. The 'Apiru/Ḫapiru also lived outside the city belt in the more inaccessible forest and mountain regions.

(2) The fact that they were an important factor in the conflicts also emerges from the second example, the Manasseh and Judean hill country. In the Amarna correspondence, the ruler Lab'ayu (= Lab'āya) is accused of controlling large parts of Canaan with his sons, distributing the land to 'Apiru/Ḫapiru and attacking other cities (EA 289, *TUAT* 1:514–16, *HTAT* 058). Although it is not clear where the residence of this Lab'ayu was, based on new analyses of the tone of letters EA 252–254 (Yuval Goren), it is likely that he resided in Shechem (Tell Balāṭa). The nearby city-states of Tel Shimron/Sim'on, Tel Reḳeš/Anaharat/Tell el-Muḥarḥaš, Jokneam, Ashtaroth/Tell 'Aštara, Ginti-Kirmil, and Gezer belonged to the network formed by Lab'ayu through diplomatic alliances, while the neighboring ones in Megiddo, Tel Rehov, and in the south in Jerusalem were not included (Israel Finkelstein). Through the inclusion of the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru, the network began to control the important trade routes from Egypt to Syria and Mesopotamia and thus became a political danger for the Egyptian supremacy in Canaan (see §2.2.3). The coalition between cities and 'Apiru/Ḫapiru was certainly not a stable partnership, but the example of the accusations in the Amarna letters against Lab'ayu shows that the question of land suitability outside the cities also played an important role in the less densely populated regions themselves and that 'Apiru/Ḫapiru were a decisive factor here. In addition, local development shows the great strategic importance of the Jezreel Plain and the northern city belt (Jokneam, Megiddo, Taanach, Beth-Shean, Tel Rehov, etc.).

During the Late Bronze Age, there were only two city-states in the central Palestinian Highlands: Shechem, which was ruled by Lab'ayu, and Jerusalem, which was governed by Abdi-Ḫeba.

Six letters from the city-king of Jerusalem have certainly been preserved (EA 285–290, in selection *COS* 3.92A–B, *HTAT* 057–060, *TUAT* 1:512–16), in which he repeatedly complains bitterly about the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru, presenting them as a threat to Egyptian hegemony and demanding troop support from the pharaoh. “The 'apiru men have plundered all

the lands of the king" (EA 286) and would even take the cities of the pharaoh, who was addressed as "king" (EA 288). Through gifts of land from enemy city-kings, they were bribed and thus became a threat to the rule of Abdi-Heba.

As an example, the letter of the Jerusalem city-king EA 286 is quoted in excerpts. There, Abdi-Heba expresses his loyalty to the king named Pharaoh in diplomatic phrases and thus underlines the political as well as military dependence on the Egyptian sovereignty. Apparently, the Jerusalem ruler was suspected of not sufficiently consolidating Egyptian rule and of deliberately causing the loss of hegemonic control. On the other hand, he claims to have done everything possible against the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru, and blames the Egyptian commissioner Yenḫamu/Enḫamu for the loss of land. He was not allowed to withdraw troops but had to strengthen them with archers to protect the surrounding area and the lords of Jerusalem. Therefore, he urges the pharaoh to take care of the land and to defend it against the attacks of the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru.

¹Speak [t]o the king, my lord; ²thus 'Abdi-Heba, your servant: ³at the feet of my lord, the king, ⁴seven times and seven times have I fallen. ⁵What have I done to the king, my lord? ⁶they are maligning me; I am being maligned ⁷before the king, my lord: "Abdi-Heba ⁸has deserted the king, his lord." ⁹Look, as for me, neither my father ¹⁰nor my mother put ¹¹me in this place. ¹²The strong arm of the king ¹³installed me in the house of my father. ¹⁴Why would I (of all people) commit ¹⁵a crime against the king, my lord? ¹⁶As (long as) the king, my lord, lives, ¹⁷I will say to the commissioner of the king, my lord: ¹⁸"Why do you love ¹⁹the 'apiru and ²⁰hate the city [rulers]?" Thus, ²¹I am maligned in the presence of the king, my lord, ²²because I am saying, ²³"Lost are the lands of the king, my lord," ²⁴thus I am slandered to the king, my lord. ²⁵So may the king, my lord, be apprised ²⁶that the king, my lord, ²⁷placed a garrison (here) (but) ²⁸Yenḫamu took [a]ll of it.... ⁵³May the king turn his attention to the regular troops ⁵⁴so that the regular troops ⁵⁵of the king, my lord, may come forth. ⁵⁵The king has no lands! ⁵⁶The 'apiru men have plundered all the lands of the king. ⁵⁷If there are regular troops ⁵⁸in this year, there will still be ⁵⁹lands of the king, <my> lord. But if there are no regular troops, ⁶⁰the lands of the king, my lord, are lost. (translation by Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence* [2015]; cf. COS 3.92A, HTAT 60)

2.2.8. The 'Apiru/Ḫapiru and Their Connection with the Hebrews

Although the situation in the Amarna correspondence was clearly dramatized with respect to the Egyptian hegemonic power, it seems certain that the constellation of city-states and uninhabited peripheral zones presented a favorable environment for social conflicts between the city dwellers and the nonsettled population groups. But how much influence the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru actually had in the Late Bronze Age, and what role they played in the decline of city rule, cannot be clearly ascertained. The 'Apiru/Ḫapiru were *one* but certainly not *the sole* triggering factor of the decline of the cities at the end of the Late Bronze Age. What remains striking is that after the social and economic upheaval that led to the settlement of the mountainous regions, there is no more mention of marauding groups that were perceived as a threat by the cities. This holds true for the persisting urban structures, the so-called New Canaan, and for the emerging urban centers in the late Iron IIA. The 'Apiru/Ḫapiru disappear from almost all available sources from the twelfth/eleventh century onward. In earlier research this was interpreted as an indication that the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru might be associated with the emergence of the new village culture (see ch. 3). From a historical perspective, things are not so straightforward (Oswald Loretz).

The biblical term *Hebrews* ('ibrîm) or *Hebrew* ('ibrî), which is derived from the verb 'br "to pass (by, through, or over)," is a gentilic for a group of people related to the Israelites. It is used in the biblical narrative first with Abram (Gen 14:13), a few times in the Joseph story (Gen 39:14, 17; 40:15; 41:12; 43:32), frequently in the (non-Priestly) Exodus narrative through chapter 10 (Exod 1:15, 19; 2:7, 13; 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3), and sometimes in 1 Samuel in opposition to the Philistines (1 Sam 4:6, 9; 13:3, 19; 14:11, 21; 29:3). In at least four other passages the term is used to qualify a slave as Hebrew (Exod 21:2; Deut 15:2; Jer 34:9, 14). Finally, Jonah 1:9 takes up Exodus terminology as Jonah identifies himself as a Hebrew ('ibrî) who worships YHWH, the God of heaven. The distribution pattern raises the question of whether the term Hebrew represents an ancient connection to Israel or if the term is rather a late terminological intrusion or redactional addition (Christoph Berner). The latter option stems from the fact that the Greek ὁ Ἑβραῖος is frequently used in the books of Maccabees and beyond to designate Israelites and their language, making this at least as plausible as the assumption of an old linguistic relic. However, an explanation has to be given for *why* the term is employed so specifically in the Exodus narrative and contexts of early Israel, even though there

is no conclusive evidence to relate the Hebrews and the Proto-Israelites *via* the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru. While the name 'Apiru/Ḫapiru sounds similar to the biblical name "Hebrew" 'ibrîm and a linguistic-historical connection cannot necessarily be excluded (Oswald Loretz, Christoph Berner), the Late Bronze Age 'Apiru/Ḫapiru were neither simply Proto-Hebrews or even Proto-Israelites, nor did they demonstrably become simply Hebrews with the emergence of Israel. For such a monocausal derivation, the process of transition from Late Bronze Age to Iron Age is too complex.

Christoph Berner has suggested an alternative linguistic derivation of the term by relating it to the geopolitical term *Eber-Nāri*, which was already in use in the Neo-Assyrian period to designate the area "Beyond the River" west of the Euphrates (Transeuphratene, see §6.3). The specific use of the term in the biblical context and the lack of hard epigraphic or textual evidence from the seventh–fourth centuries BCE stand against this identification. Perhaps a new epigraphic find also contradicts this proposal. In 2019 a Moabite inscription on a limestone incense altar was uncovered in Ḫirbet 'Atārūz. Dating to the ninth/eighth century BCE, one line reads "4 60 *mn* 'brn," which can perhaps be related to a number (64) of commodities (*mn*) from the Hebrews ('brn with the plural ending *n*) (Adam L. Bean et al.). However, the word may also be understood to refer to the place named Abarim (see Num 27:12; 33:47–48; Deut 33:48; Jer 22:20). If the inscription indeed refers to the Israelites from a Moabite perspective, this would be the earliest extrabiblical attestation of the term *Hebrews*.

2.2.9. The Ššw Farmers as Part of Late Bronze Age Society

Sociologically, besides the city dwellers and the 'Apiru/Ḫapiru, the Ššw (pronounced Shá'-su) also played an important role in the Late Bronze Age and are frequently mentioned in Egyptian texts. The Ššw (meaning "wanderer," "shepherd") were groups of pastoralists who lived seminomadically, that is, in tents and not permanently settled. Depending on the climatic and economic conditions, they shifted their grazing areas from the cultivated land (more than 500 mm rainfall per year) in the dry season to the adjacent semiarid marginal areas (semidry steppe areas with 250–500 mm rainfall per year) in the rainy season (transmigration). The pattern between prolonged sedentariness, seasonal pasture change, and nomadism, as well as the degree of symbiotic connection with urban culture, was regionally differentiated and dependent on political, economic,

and climatic factors. The Ššw lived in predominantly peaceful economic exchange with the cities, but in Egyptian sources they, like ‘Apiru/Ḥapiru, were regarded as trouble spots (inscriptions of Thutmose II; autobiography of Ahmose; annals of Thutmose III in the temple of Amun in Karnak; Amenophis III in Soleb; Sethos I in the temple of Amun in Karnak; Ramesses II in Abū Simbel, a stela in Wādī Ṭumilāt, annals of the battle of Qadeš, → P.Anast. 1; Ramesses III P.Harr. 1; cf. COS 2.3, 2.4, 2.5B, 3.2; HTAT 073–083). Occasionally there were also warlike conflicts between the Ššw and the cities. Their share in the total population was likely not insignificant, especially as the urban population in the Late Bronze Age was considerably smaller compared to the Middle Bronze Age. This suggests that a part of the urban population had returned to a semisettled form of existence. Like the ‘Apiru/Ḥapiru, they play an important role in theories on Israel’s historical emergence. For the exodus, the Ššw, who, at least in part, dwelled in the Egyptian Nile Delta area in the thirteenth/twelfth century BCE, attain central importance (see §2.4).

2.3. ISRAEL IN EGYPT AND ITS EARLIEST MENTION ON THE STELA OF MERENPTAH

Adrom, Faried. “Israel in Berlin? Identifizierungsvorschläge zur Fremdvölkerliste Berlin 21687.” Pages 288–301 in *Geschichte und Gott: XV. Europäischer Kongress für Theologie (14.–18. September 2014 in Berlin)*. Edited by Michael Meyer-Blanck and Laura Schmitz. VWGTh 44. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016. ♦ **Görg**, Manfred. “Israel in Hieroglyphen.” *BN* 106 (2001): 21–27. ♦ **Morenz**, Ludwig D. “Wortwitz – Ideologie – Geschichte: ‘Israel’ im Horizont Mer-en-ptahs.” *ZAW* 120 (2008): 1–13. ♦ **Rainey**, Anson F. “Israel in Merenptah’s Inscription and Reliefs.” *IEJ* 51 (2001): 57–75. ♦ **Veen**, Pieter Gert van der, and Wolfgang **Zwickel**. “Die neue Israel-Inschrift und ihre historischen Implikationen.” Pages 425–33 in *Vom Leben umfassen: Ägypten, das Alte Testament und das Gespräch der Religionen: Gedenkschrift für Manfred Görg*. Edited by Stefan Jakob Wimmer and Georg Gafus. ÄAT 80. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014. ♦ **Zwickel**, Wolfgang, and Pieter Gert van der Veen. “The Earliest Reference to Israel and Its Possible Archaeological and Historical Background.” *VT* 67 (2017): 129–40.

Possibly the oldest testimony of the name *Israel* is found on the fragment of a statue base ÄM 21687 held in the Berlin museum (Manfred Görg, Pieter Gert van der Veen, Wolfgang Zwickel). Besides the mention of Ashkelon and Gaza/Canaan, the remaining text is uncertain (Manfred Weippert,

Faried Adrom); however, if *īš-šr-ir* can actually be read as Israel, then this statue base dating to the time of Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) in the Nineteenth Dynasty (1292–1185 BCE) represents the oldest attestation of the name.

However, Israel in the so-called Israel Stela of his son (see fig. 7), Pharaoh Merenptah (1213–1204/3 BCE), is certain and quite prominent. The 3.1 m high granite stela was built under Pharaoh Amenophis III (1388–1351/50 BCE) and, probably in 1208 BCE, was inscribed a second time on the back by Merenptah (also called Amenephtes). The inscription reports the Libyan campaign from the pharaoh's fifth year of reign and names, in lines 26–28, besides the Libyan tribes, T'ḥnw, Ḥatti, Gaza (*p3-k-n'-n'-c* "Canaan"), Ashkelon, Yeno'am, Syria (*Ḥ3-rw/Ḥr*), and Israel as part of the defeated "Nine Bows" ("Israel lies fallow and has no seed"). Israel is written in group spelling as *Y-s-ī-r-ʿ-3-r'* (= YŠR'L) and, unlike the neighboring geographic (foreign) designations, is identified by a determinative suggesting a clan designation (i.e., a "people" instead of a "land").



Fig. 7. 3.1 m high victory stela of Pharaoh Merenptah from Thebes-West with likely the oldest mention of the name Israel (spelling *Y-s-ī-r-ʿ-3-r'*, line 27; see the detail redrawn). The text dates from the fifth year of the king's reign, 1208 BCE. The granite stela, found in the ruins of Merenptah's funerary temple, is exhibited in the Egyptian Museum Cairo (CG 34025).

However, this does not completely exclude the possibility that Israel refers to a geographical area (Manfred Görg). What exactly was meant by the ethnic or social entity to be sought in Palestine and the conquest by the Egyptian pharaoh remains open to interpretation. The assumption of a Palestinian campaign by Merenptah seems possible, but other evidence is missing (Kenneth Kitchen). The sequence of the names could indicate the direction of the campaign from south to north, but there is no clear order. Yeno'am, which can be identified with the small place Tell en-Na'am/Tel Yin'am 5 km southeast of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, is listed directly before Israel; Kharu, which stands for the region of Palestine, Damascus, and the Phoenician coast (most often translated as Syria), is mentioned directly after Israel. This keeps the interpretation open for Israel as a geographical reference. Most likely, however, the change of the determinative toward Ashkelon, Gaza, and so on just describes a nonurban group (possibly 'Apiru/Hapiru) in central Palestine. The idea that the term Israel already represents a state or substate entity or designates a Canaanite city-state can be largely ruled out, even if no secure information can be gained regarding the entity and territorial location of the tribal or clan composition of Israel. Since there are no references in the biblical tradition to a single tribe Israel, but to a prestate tribal network (Judg 5), the latter entity—to whatever extent—becomes obvious (differently Ernst Axel Knauf). It should also be noted that the entity Israel was considered by the Egyptians to be so important and referentially clear that it was mentioned in the stela next to the city-states. This applies regardless of whether Merenptah's campaign is to be understood as historically plausible (Ludwig D. Morenz) or whether the final passage is merely a universalized depiction of Egypt's expansive rule, which follows on from the depiction of the Libyan campaign (Manfred Weippert). Attempts to identify the group called Israel on reliefs in the temple of Karnak (Cour de la Cachette, west wall) (Frank J. Yurco, Anson F. Rainey) are not sufficiently plausible due to the strongly symbolic representational canon of Egyptian reliefs (Michael G. Hasel, Manfred Weippert). The new settlements in the Ephraimite, Manassite, and Samarian highlands, which could be associated with the emergence of Israel, fit geographically. Archaeologically, it can be proven that these began slowly, at the earliest in the phase of the collapse of the Late Bronze Age urban culture after 1250 BCE, and then developed gradually (Israel Finkelstein also dates the beginning only from 1200 BCE). In this respect, the mention of Israel on the Merenptah Stela provides more questions than answers. Although the earliest evidence of the name Israel does not prove

its prestate existence or the stay of Israel in Egypt as historical, the militarily expansive foreign policy, of which Pharaoh boasts, shows one of the reasons why Semites came to Egypt: as prisoners of war. In addition, economic refugees repeatedly arrived in Egypt in periodic waves.

Most likely the name Isra-El is a compound comprising the god El (a prominent and widespread Canaanite deity in the Late Bronze Age) and the homonymous Semitic root *śrh* (meaning either “to fight, to contend, to strive” or “to rule”). Accordingly, the verbal name can either mean “the God El fights” (which accords with the relatively late popular etymology presented in Gen 32:29 [v. 28 ET]) or “the god El (supremely) rules” (which fits well with the position of a high god at the top of the pantheon).

Another of the unsolved mysteries remains: how the use of the name Israel for the state that ruled from Tirzah and Samaria in the ninth century BCE (regarding the oldest evidence in extrabiblical testimonies, see §1.6) could be linked with the testimony from the second millennium BCE. One possibility is that the name survived in the region from which the Omrides—the founders of the state of Israel (see §5.4)—came. It is conceivable that Omri, for whom no biblical → genealogy has been transmitted, was in contact with the group that called itself Israel or even belonged to it. Omride rule, then, would have brought the name to the political entity. The name Israel was connected with the god El, but the Omrides probably made YHWH the protective god of the family and national god of the state of Israel (see §2.4.4.2). In literary terms, the name Israel is closely linked to the exodus tradition, the oldest form of which probably functioned as the founding narrative of the northern kingdom. Only later was Israel connected with the Jacob tradition (Gen 32:29; 35:10).

2.4. THE EXODUS

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2.4.1. The Exodus in Biblical Tradition

The biblical account of the exodus begins in the book Genesis. In the Joseph narrative (Gen 37–45), the sons of Jacob return to Egypt under Joseph's leadership after the burial of the patriarch Jacob in Hebron/Machpelah (Gen 50:13–14). Joseph and his father's house remain in Egypt until Joseph dies at the age of 110 years (Gen 50:22–26). His death in the foreign land of Egypt motivates the request that he be buried in the land of Canaan, which occurs in Josh 24:32 (cf. also the bones of Joseph in Exod 13:19). After Joseph's death, Israel's eleven other sons (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher) along with his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh became a great people in Egypt (Exod 1:1–6). The initial seventy persons (Exod 1:5) “were fruitful and prolific” (Exod 1:7), becoming 603,550 by the time they left Egypt (Exod 38:26; Num 1:46; 2:32, cf. Exod 12:37; Num 11:21; 26:51). A few generations after Joseph (Exod 12:40–41: 430 years), another pharaoh feared the people's huge size (Exod 1:8–10), so he oppressed the Israelites with hard labor. He built up the two storage cities, Pithom and Rameses, exploiting the Hebrews as slave laborers. Moses (Exod 3:1–4:17), who received a divine calling in Midian at God's mountain, Horeb, together with his brother Aaron (Exod 4:14), led the negotiations with Pharaoh. These negotiations resulted in the dismissal of the people after the death of the Egyptians' firstborn (Exod 12:29–33). After the Israelites (together with cattle and a variety of other people) left Rameses for Succoth (Exod 12:37–38), the group made a detour through the desert toward the Sea of Reeds (traditionally “Red Sea”; Exod 13:17–18) and first camped at Etham (Exod 13:20). According to Exod 14, the Israelites had to turn back in order to pitch their camp before Pi-Hahiroth between Migdol and the sea (Exod 14:2). When Pharaoh learned that the Israelites had followed his command to leave (Exod 12:31; 13:17), he changed his mind (Exod 14:5) and pursued the people with six hundred chariots. At Pi-Hahiroth before Baal-zephon (Exod 14:9) and at YHWH's command, Moses miraculously divided the sea (Exod 14:16, 21) with his staff. The sea was displaced by a strong east wind (Exod 14:21) and, at the same time, stood on both sides like a wall (Exod 14:29). The Egyptians followed the Israelites but were caught by the water flowing back (Exod 14:28), while the Israelites crossed the sea dry-footed. After this miraculous saving act, the people, under the leadership of Moses, moved toward the promised land (Exod 15:22). After visiting the mountain of God in the desert of Sinai (Exod 16:1; 19:1), they

also made a longer stop in Kadesh in the desert of Paran (Num 10:12; 12:16; 13:3, 26). From there scouts were sent to the land of Canaan and brought back a grape from the Valley Eshcol or Valley of Grapes. Since the people repeatedly rejected the leadership of Moses and Aaron (Exod 15:24; 16:2; 17:3) and since, in the scout narrative (Num 13–14), they questioned the land as a promised gift, the exodus generation was condemned to die in the wilderness (Num 14:34). This was followed by forty years in the wilderness, during which Israel moved from one desert station to another (Num 33). Because of the king of Edom's refusal to let Israel pass through his land (Num 20:14–21), Israel had to take a detour and arrived at Moab via the desert. This is where the first disputes with the resident population took place (Num 21:10–35). The whole land of Transjordan was taken and distributed to the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (Num 32). Israel camped in Shittim in the plain opposite Jericho. Here, with Deuteronomy, Moses gave a great speech recapitulating the history of Horeb “to the present day” on the last day of his life. After the full forty years, Moses died in Transjordan on Mount Nebo (Deut 34:7), and the people crossed the Jordan into Cisjordan under Joshua's leadership.

2.4.2. The Exodus from a Historical Perspective

The exodus—as the Bible describes it—is *not* historical. The main reasons for this clear statement from a historical perspective are as follows.

2.4.2.1. Chronology of the Exodus

The biblical chronology, which dates the exodus after a 430-year stay in Egypt and 480 years before the beginning of the temple building (1 Kgs 6:1 MT), represents a theological construct. This would set the exodus around 1440 BCE under Pharaoh Thutmose III (1479–1425 BCE). This dating would then contradict the Israelites' participation in the construction of the city of Rameses, named after Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE).

2.4.2.2. Exodus Routes

The routes reported for Israel's departure contradict each other or do not result in a meaningful exodus journey. The Priestly texts describe the exodus by the Way of Horus along the Via Maris via Pi-Hahiroth and Baalzephon (Exod 14:2). The non-Priestly texts are distinct from this in that

they depict a route leading from Pithom and Succoth (Exod 12:37) through the Bitter Lakes into the desert (Exod 13:20). Both do *not* lead directly to the southern Sinai Peninsula or to Midian, that is, to where God's mountain presumably stood. Numbers 33 simply juxtaposes these conflicting geographical indications and fills the gaps with partly invented stations. The geographical blur can be seen particularly clearly in the localization of the Sea of Reeds (*yam sūf*; e.g., *p3 twf* "reed"). This varies between Lake Serbonis on the Mediterranean Sea, the Bitter Lakes, and the northern end of the Gulf of Suez (the → LXX reads the "Sea of Reeds" as *θάλασσα ἔρυθρά* = "Red Sea") or the nearby Ballah Lakes and Lake Timsah.

2.4.2.3. The Size of the Exodus Group according to Biblical Accounts

In Exod 12:37 and Num 11:21, the Bible suggests 600,000 persons left Egypt; and Num 1:46 and 2:32 even suggest 603,550 able-bodied adult men had departed. It would be impossible for such a group to survive in the desert; the water resources of the natural springs are not sufficient for this. Apart from that, there are *no* archaeological traces of a forty-year-long mass migration in the Late Bronze Age within the entire Sinai Peninsula. None of the Israelite camps listed in Num 33 can be archaeologically proven, nor are the camps plausible from an archaeological point of view.

2.4.2.4. Kadesh-Barnea/Qadesh-Barnea

The oasis Kadesh (ʿĒn el-Qudērat, Kadesh-Barnea, often spelled Qadesh-Barnea), in which Israel is said to have stayed several times and once for a longer time (Num 13:26; 20:1; Deut 1:46; etc.), was *not* inhabited during the Late Bronze Age. In the late eighth century BCE a huge rectangular fort of 60 x 40 m with eight massive towers was set up (Stratum III); it existed until the Persian period. The earliest phase (Stratum IVc, including a number of Qurayyah Painted Ware sherds, formerly known as Midianite pottery) is dated by radiocarbon and ceramic analysis to the twelfth through tenth centuries BCE. This substratum continued into substratum Stratum IVb, which persisted into the eighth century BCE. The remains cannot be attributed to an early oval fortress (Israel Finkelstein) but rather to a small settlement or way station on the Darb el-Ġazze, a trade route that leads from the Gulf of Eilat to Gaza. The massive rectangular fortress was built only by the eighth century BCE in Stratum III–II. Thus, until the eighth century BCE, the oasis Kadesh was obviously not that important.

About 3 km southeast of Kadesh-Barnea, at ‘Ēn el-Qudēs, a large tenth-century BCE casemate-walled structure was identified by Y. Aharoni and excavated by R. Cohen. It is not clear that this structure can be called a fortress, so it should not be associated with King Solomon’s building activities. However, some hold on to the view that Kadesh-Barnea Stratum IV was built up by the early monarchy, by Solomon. Be that as it may, the archaeological evidence cannot substantiate the Israelites’ stay in Kadesh. The same applies to the city of Arad mentioned in the context of the wilderness narrative (Num 21:1), the Transjordanian city of Heshbon (Num 21:25–26), and the port of Ezion-Geber (Num 33:35–36).

2.4.2.5. Moses’s Historicity

The paramount person Moses appears in no known Egyptian sources (see §2.4.2.6) and eludes a historical location. His name, which derives from Egyptian *mś/mśj* “to give birth” (and only in a folk etymology from Hebrew *mšh* “to pull out,” Exod 2:10), represents a short form in which the → theophoric element has been elided. Thus, the person lacks any identifiable traces in extrabiblical contexts. This is reflected in the blurred information on Moses’s family history (Exod 2:21–22; 3:1; 18:1–4; Num 10:29; 12:1). The degree to which Moses represents a *biblically* stylized figure, whose depiction takes its inspiration from existing traditions, is shown by the proximity of his birth narrative to the Sargon legend. The biography of Moses was developed in the Neo-Assyrian period in the eighth century BCE and, like the later → genealogy (Exod 6:18–20), has no reference to a historical person in the thirteenth century BCE.

2.4.2.6. Lack of Contemporary Sources

For the time of the Nineteenth to Twenty-First Dynasties (1292–946/45 BCE) neither a mass flight nor a mass expulsion of Semites from Egypt can be proven. Egyptian sources are completely silent about the exodus. It is true that Egyptian documents of the thirteenth century BCE, particularly P.Anast. 6.51–61 (COS 3.5, HTAT 067) acknowledge migrations of Semitic people into the Nile Delta, but none of these sources can be related to the exodus event as such. While Papyrus Anastasi admittedly uses Semitic loanwords (Manfred Bietak), this cannot be taken as evidence for Hebrews or Proto-Israelites in Wādī eṭ-Ṭumēlāt. Even attempts to find the echo of a historical exodus in the classical historical representations

of Diodorus Siculus, which Hecataeus of Abdera reproduces, can only increase the plausibility of—but not prove—the historicity of the event. Without the biblical narratives, no historian would assume that there had been an exodus. Since none of the biblical evidence is contemporary and its source value remains limited, the search for historical evidence of an exodus is futile (Thomas L. Thompson, John Van Seters, Lester L. Grabbe). Almost all extrabiblical references to the exodus depend on the biblical representation. Inscription 4.3 from Kuntillet 'Ağrūd, from the eighth century BCE, was introduced into the discussion as the earliest extrabiblical reference to the exodus (Nadav Na'aman). However, the seven lines of the plaster inscription on a doorjamb are very fragmentary, and a lexemic connection to the exodus (in the words *nēd* and *yam* “heap of water” and “sea”) remains essentially guesswork. In sum, there are justified doubts that the suggested reading is correct and that it can be invoked as a reference to the exodus (Joachim J. Krause).

2.4.3. The Location of Sinai

In terms of religious history, the origins of YHWH worship remain in the dark. The biblical tradition knows YHWH as the “God of the Hebrews” (Exod 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; etc.), who was mediated by Moses to the Israelites in Egypt. Moses experienced the name YHWH in a revelation on the mountain of God, which is called Sinai or Horeb in the biblical narrative (Exod 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Deut 1:6; 5:2; etc.). This mountain lies “beyond the wilderness” (Exod 3:1) in Midian and cannot be clearly located even today. The connection with the 2285 m high Mount Moses/Ġebel Mūsā originates from the Christian pilgrim tradition. Already in late antiquity, monks settled at the foot of this mountain. Under Justinian I (482–565 CE), a monastery—later called Saint Catherine's Monastery—was built there to mark the supposed location of the burning thornbush. The nearby 2637 m high Mount Catherine/Ġebel Kātrīnā was included in the identification by the pilgrims, so that Sinai and Horeb became different mountains. In the biblical tradition, *Horeb* is an artificial name that was chosen in the eighth century BCE in place of *Sinai* (perhaps because of its connection to the Assyrian moon god Sin), but it did not completely supplant the name Sinai. Horeb and Sinai are the same mountain, but whether they are located in the remote region around Mount Catherine is uncertain. In the academic discussion, therefore, Ġebel Sirbal in Wādī Fērān (Paran, Deut 1:1) has often been preferred. But this also does not lie in Midian, which

is closely connected with the mountain of God via Exod 2:15–16, 3:1, and 4:19. Due to the volcanic associations in the description of theophany in Exod 19:18, the 2580 m high Ġebel el-Lawz in Saudi Arabia was also proposed as an option for Mount Sinai. This mountain is easier to connect to Midian due to its location, but its localization in northern Arabia has other problems. Thus, it can hardly be connected with the other place names mentioned or meaningfully integrated into one of the biblical exodus routes (see, e.g., Exod 3:18; 5:3; 16:1). It also presupposes the identification of the Sea of Reeds with the Gulf of Eilat (Exod 13:18). Whether this localization belongs to the oldest (Christoph Berner) or the latest (Hedwig Lamberty-Zielinski) strata of the exodus narrative, however, is disputed. Each attempt to locate Sinai (and there are more than a dozen of them, each selecting different textual indications and making them the starting point for identification) has its own geographical or literary-historical problems. The same issues also apply to the attempt to locate Sinai according to Num 33:1–50. The list of stations, in which the entire route of the desert migration from Rameses to the steppes of Moab is listed by indicating the camp stations, turns out on closer inspection not to be an old list, but a very late construct that is less concerned with topographic precision than with a complete compilation of the locations of the wilderness narratives (Angela Roskop Erisman). Thus, the reconstruction of an old pilgrimage path to Sinai, which Martin Noth wanted to glean from Num 33, is superfluous. This attempt failed not least because of the doubtful existence of a later pilgrimage to God's mountain. On the contrary, the biblical tradition seems to lack any interest in a topographically precise location of the mountain of God and rather prefers to obscure it in the network of literarily dense traditions. All historicizing identifications therefore inevitably lead nowhere. Mount Sinai cannot be topographically located or identified.

From this it follows, on the one hand, that such statements in the biblical narratives must *not* be reduced to their supposed historical value. The exodus narrative is not intended to be understood as reporting a historical event; it is myth rather than history. It establishes a collective identity in memory. There is a consensus that the literary form emerged long after the events narrated, that is, several centuries later; the earliest tangible form of the exodus narrative dates no earlier than the eighth century BCE. However, not all individual features of the narrative can be derived from the eighth or seventh centuries BCE (Erhard Blum). On the other hand, it must be asked whether such an effective founding myth as the exodus can do without any reference to historical events. That is, can such a marked

tradition be a complete fabrication? As this question is to be answered in the negative, it makes sense to ask about the narrative's historical plausibility. However, there are different opinions on *what* the exodus narrative may have preserved.

2.4.4. The Various Historical Contexts of the Exodus Tradition

The historical settings of the exodus story have been discussed since the beginning of historical criticism. Within this process, the dating of the exodus story, its assumed historicity, and information on the historical entanglement of the southern Levant and Egypt has led to various settings for the exodus event. In each case, the argument is dependent on theories of literary history, which implies a certain circularity in their reasoning.

Egyptian Dynasty / locating the exodus	Pharaoh(s) of the exodus	Background, context, and thrust
Eighteenth (ca. 1550–1425 BCE)	Thutmose or Hatshepsut	Biblical chronology taken for granted: 480 years before building Solomon's temple
Nineteenth (ca. 1304–1224 BCE)	Ramesses II	Historical information given in Exod 1:11, the building of Pithom and Rameses involved West-Asian corvée workers
Twentieth (ca. 1190–1150 BCE)	Setnakhte or Ramesses III	The exodus narrative reflects Egyptian dominance over the province of Canaan
Twenty-First/ Twenty-Second (ca. 960–875 BCE)	Psusennes I or Osorkon I	The parallel of the corvée under Solomon and Rehoboam is decisive for dating the exodus tradition
Twenty-Sixth (ca. 650–600 BCE)	Psammetichus I or Neco II	Renewed Egyptian dominance in the southern Levant and the burden of taxes

Table 1. Placing the exodus event in various historical contexts.

Checking the historical plausibility of the exodus events can begin from several different angles (with the concrete data on sites, the exodus routes, the persons mentioned, the oppression narrated, etc.). Thus, one can also arrive at different results. The archaeologist William G. Dever holds the view that it is not necessary to adhere to the exodus as an event in Israel's prehistory because Israel originated in Canaan. This makes the

search for historical points of contact between the biblical narrative and Egyptian history superfluous. Nadav Na'aman, who sees the origin of the exodus tradition in the history of the Egyptian province of Canaan in the Nineteenth (1292–1185 BCE) and Twentieth (1185–1070/69 BCE) Dynasties, reached a similar position. De facto, the exodus did not take place in Egypt at all—but in Canaan—and refers to the separation of the province of Canaan from Egyptian dominance (Matthias Köckert). Talk of the exodus is a metaphor from its outset. The collective memory that was preserved centuries later in the exodus narrative moved the events from Canaan to Egypt. The problem with these solutions is twofold: on the one hand, they cannot explain why so little of the Late Bronze Age situation in Canaan, which supposedly informed its origins, has been preserved in the exodus narrative. On the other hand, the Mosaic tradition and the origin of YHWH, who is inseparably connected with the biblical tradition as God of the exodus, remain open questions that speak against an origin of the exodus tradition exclusively within Canaan.

Most researchers, on the other hand, assume that the exodus tradition, the tradition-historical connection of YHWH with Sinai, and the mediation of the belief in YHWH to Israel can be better explained if one assumes the existence of a group of people who lived in Egypt in the concluding second millennium BCE and whose memory has been preserved in the exodus tradition (Rainer Albertz, Ernst Axel Knauf, Graham I. Davies). With Rainer Albertz it is to be noted that the use of the exodus as a founding myth for Israel in the literature of the first millennium BCE (possibly connected with the foundation of the state of Israel under the Omrides and Nimshides) does not yet exclude its historical origin in the events of the second millennium BCE. In addition, there have been alternative proposals for the derivation of the exodus tradition, for example an anti-Egyptian narrative against Pharaoh Neco II (610–595 BCE) (Israel Finkelstein, Bernd Schipper) or an anti-Assyrian narrative against Esarhaddon (ca. 681–669 BCE) (Eckart Otto). But so far these have not been completely convincing, since the biblical tradition had precursors and the exodus tradition is more strongly connected to the north than to the south. The argument that the exodus tradition is rooted in the separation of Canaan from the foreign rule of Egypt only at the end of the Twentieth Dynasty (1185–1070/69 BCE) and then found its way into the collective memory (Nadav Na'aman, see above) also has the problem that the end of the Egyptian rule was not so abrupt that it could captivate the collective memory as a specific event.

The fact that nothing decisively contradicts the flight or forced migration of Ššw groups from the eastern delta region after the expulsion of the Hyksos in the middle of the second millennium BCE stands alongside the lack of any positive evidence. That is, while nothing precludes such an exodus, nothing affirms it either. This remains particularly true during the late Ramesside period of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties under Pharaohs Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE), Merenptah (1213–1204/3), Sethos II (1200/1199–1194/93 BCE), or Setnakhte (1185–1183 BCE). Therefore, seeking the plausibility of the exodus account as a historical event does not mean positively affirming it. Rather, it means examining what might commend tracing the tradition's roots to Egypt in the second millennium BCE.

2.4.4.1. The Presence of West Asians in the Nile Delta Region at the End of the Second Millennium BCE

The presence of southern Levantine people from Syria and Palestine in Egypt is undisputed and well documented in Egyptian materials (inscriptions of Thutmose II, Thutmose III, Amenophis III, Sethos I, Ramesses II, Ramesses III; see specifications above in §2.2.9, *HTAT* 073–083; cf. *COS* 2.3, 2.4, 2.5B, 3.2). They came as economic refugees or as prisoners of war to the Nile Delta area (see §10.4, map 13). There they were deployed as foreign workers and mercenaries and sometimes rose to the highest state offices. Some of the toponyms of the Nile Delta used in Egyptian texts supposedly have a Semitic origin, which may also indicate the influence of West Asians in the area (Manfred Bietak). The land of Tjeku, mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi 5, is reminiscent of the biblical Succoth, which is mentioned as the first station of the exodus after Rameses (Exod 12:37; 13:20; Num 33:5–6). The land of Goshen in which Jacob's family resided, which is mentioned in the Joseph story (Gen 45:10; 46:28; etc.) and twice in Exodus (8:18; 9:26), is perhaps to be located in the Wādī Ṭumilāt. The Septuagint replaces Goshen in Gen 46:28–29 (but only there) with Heroonopolis, which is located at Tell el-Maṣḥuta, a place related to Pithom (see §2.4.4.3).

The most important documents in this context are the two letters of P.Anast. 5.19.6 and 6.53–60 (*COS* 3.4–5), which report the escape of foreign laborers from Tjeku (supposedly equivalent to Succoth) and the migration policy regarding a group of Ššw from Edom respectively. According to Manfred Görg, the deportation practice of the Egyptians and the defense of the West Asians associated with the trauma of overalienation represent

a plausible motif for an escape of ‘Apiru/Ḫapiru and Šššw groups from Egypt, especially in the context of the exaggerated claims to power of the Ramesside era.

2.4.4.2. YHWH and the Exodus

Within the biblical presentation there is a close connection between YHWH and the exodus (Exod 3:14–15; 6:4, differently Gen 4:26). Literarily, both are virtually indissolubly linked. If it is assumed that the oldest exodus narrative originated as a narrative that established the identity of the northern kingdom of Israel (i.e., as a founding myth, charter myth), the God of the exodus belongs to this self-understanding, which is most plausible for the time of the Omrides. All of Ahab’s children suddenly carry YHWH-containing → theophoric personal names (Joram, Ahaziah, Athaliah), and the → epigraphic evidence in seals and inscriptions also points to the intensification of YHWH worship in the ninth/eighth centuries BCE. Via his function as the dynastic and national god, YHWH was then mediated to Judah (Christian Frevel) and, in the late eighth century BCE, connected with a pan-Israel perspective. While this hypothesis contains a high level of speculation due to the lack of evidence from the Late Bronze Age, it can be reliably assumed that the deity YHWH was not an → indigenous Canaanite deity but came from outside. Even to this day no extrabiblical evidence locates him in Canaan in the Middle Bronze Age or Late Bronze Age. The only clue remains the name, which—following a hypothesis of Julius Wellhausen—derives from the old North-Arabian verbal root **hwy/hawā* “to blow” (Ernst Axel Knauf). If the origin of the weather god YHWH from northwest Arabia or the southern Transjordan is still plausible, then the Šššw groups of Edom/Seir are of particular importance for the connection of YHWH with the exodus. The Egyptians brought Šššw, who were used as miners for copper extraction, to Timnah/Wādī el-Menē’īye, and Fēnān in the Arabah region, as well as to Egypt. Besides Šššw from Seir (Šššw š’rr), Šššw from Yhw (Šššw yy-h-wš-w), which could possibly be associated with the deity YHWH, are mentioned in lists of place names in Egyptian temples of Amenophis III (1388–1351/50 BCE) in Soleb in Sudan and then—probably dependent on the above—in inscriptions of Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) in ‘Amāra-West. For it is by no means illogical that the god bearing the same name as the region to which a group of Šššw was assigned was also connected with this Šššw group. Thus, the Šššw could have mediated the faith to the exodus group.

This hypothesis is a modern variant of the so-called Kenite-Midianite hypothesis. According to this biblically based hypothesis, metalworking Kenites in the Arabah or Midianites in northern Arabia and the Sinai Peninsula mediated YHWH to the Israelites (Martin Leuenberger).

However, this hypothesis also has weaknesses because it must presuppose what it seeks to prove. Evidence of early worship of YHWH in Palestine between the twelfth and the ninth centuries is completely lacking (Christian Frevel). It is not entirely clear whether the Šššw groups can be located in southern Palestine (and where exactly therein). The other names on the list refer to Syria/Palestine as a whole, and the bottleneck to the south stems from the connection with the Šššw from Seir (Ernst Axel Knauf, Manfred Görg). The God of Israel's southern origin and thus also his connection with the exodus (and Sinai) have no alternative support in the history of tradition, even if Judg 5:4–5; Ps 68:8; Hab 3:3; and Deut 33:2 do not belong to the premonarchic or early monarchic period. In contrast, the idea that these texts theologically constructed YHWH's origin from the south only in the Hellenistic period (Henrik Pfeiffer) or that the earliest connection between YHWH, Egypt, and the exodus occurred in the eighth century BCE (John J. Collins) seems unlikely (Martin Leuenberger). If one is forced to speculate, the Kenite-Midianite hypothesis currently presents the only hypothesis that can explain YHWH's origin *and* connection with the exodus.

2.4.4.3. The Store Cities of Pithom and Rameses

Exodus 1:11 states that the Israelites were used for forced labor in the building of the supply cities of Pithom and Rameses. Pithom (Eg. *pr-Jtm* “House of the [god] Atum”) can be found at Wādī eṭ-Ṭumēlāt, which connects the eastern Nile Delta with Lake Timsah. A stela of Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) was found on Tell el-Maṣḥuta (also Tell al-Maṣḥūṭa) that mentions *pr-Jtm*. Additionally at that site, the so-called Pithom Stela of Ptolemy II (285/83–246 BCE) provides the name of the place as *pr-Jtm Tkḡ*. Those who wish to prove the ahistorical nature of the exodus like to point out that Tell el-Maṣḥuta was only resettled at the end of the seventh century BCE, and the stela of Ramesses II must have been moved there secondarily. This, however, raises the question to which Pithom the stela refers. It may have come from the western Tell er-Retabe (also Tell ar-Reṭāba), where an older border fortress stood. Ramesses II built an Atum temple there, and Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) reinforced the local fortress to

ward off the Sea Peoples. After 600 BCE, the place was abandoned for two hundred years. Tell el-Mashuta could have been the successor settlement of Tell er-Retabe, when Pharaoh Neco II (610–595 BCE) was constructing a channel to the Red Sea. Tell er-Retabe would then be Pithom, which also bore the name Succoth.

The location of Rameses is much more difficult because there were several cities named Rameses in Egypt. The full title of the city in Egyptian texts is *pr-R^c-mś-św-mrj-Jmn ʿ3-nḥtw* “House of Ramesses, the Beloved of Amun, Great in Victorious Strength.” It is possible that the Bible has employed a shortened form, but even then one would expect Pi-Rameses rather than Rameses (Bernd Schipper). The fact that the transliteration of the city’s name in Hebrew rather follows the phonetics of the first millennium BCE does not contradict locating the city in the thirteenth/twelfth century BCE, so long as it is accepted that the textual version of the exodus narrative dates from later times. If one assumes that it refers to the most significant Rameses city of Pi-Rameses, this was located near the old Hyksos city Avaris in the eastern delta on the Pelusian Nile arm. Pi-Rameses was extensively developed by Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE). Since the excavations of Manfred Bietak and Edgar Pusch (under Henning Franzmeier since 2015), Rameses has been identified with Tell el-Dab’a, today’s Qantir, replacing the former identification with Tanis (the biblical Zoan). The city of Pithom, built on several square kilometers, was one of the largest copper processing plants in the southern Levant, where more than one thousand tons of bronze were produced in an almost industrial fashion every day at peak times. High temperature technology also permitted the production of (ruby red) glass and (turquoise blue) Egyptian faience in large quantities. The raw materials came from copper mining areas such as Oman, Timnah/Wādī el-Menē’īye in Sinai, and Fēnān in the Arabah region, as well as Cyprus. The excavations point to a large number of foreign workers from the eastern Mediterranean and especially the southern Levant (Edgar M. Pusch and Henning Franzmeier, Frederik W. Rademakers et al.).

Although the archaeological findings at Pithom and Rameses cannot prove the exodus, they do not contradict the assumption that some West Asian Semitic people group(s), who were initially employed there as foreign workers, fled or were expelled from Egypt as an exodus group. Although the pharaoh of the exodus is not named in the biblical narratives, a connection between the exodus and Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE) remains historically possible in principle. In any case, there are no compelling reasons to assume

the pharaoh was Neco II (610–595 BCE), which has been introduced several times as an alternative (Israel Finkelstein, Wolfgang Oswald).

The motif of forced labor in a foreign country is central in all strands of the exodus tradition (Exod 1:11; 2:11, 23; 5:4–5; 6:5–7; 13:3, 14; 14:12; 20:2; Lev 26:13; Deut 6:21; 7:8; 13:6, 11; 26:6; Josh 24:17; Judg 6:8; 2 Kgs 17:7; Neh 9:17; Jer 34:13; Mic 6:4; Jdt 5:11; etc.). Just like the “redemption” from slavery (Exod 13:15; Deut 5:15; 15:15; 24:18; 2 Sam 7:23; 1 Chr 17:21; Ps 78:42; Esth 5:17; etc.), the harsh treatment (Deut 26:6–7; Ps 105:23–24) belongs to the central components of the exodus motif, which reaches even to the motivation of laws (Exod 22:20; 23:9; Lev 25:42; Deut 5:6, 15; 6:12; 8:14; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22; etc.), and cannot simply be derived from later history. Although there are close links between the forced labor under Solomon, his successor Rehoboam (1 Kgs 4:6; 5:27–28; 9:15, 32; 11:28; 12:18), and the exodus tradition, Solomon’s reign does not provide any *de facto* historical evidence for a broad, state-organized obligation for the people or foreigners to work (see §§4.6.3, 4.7.1). It is not easy to find a historical point of connection for the formation of these traditions in later history since the motif certainly did not come into being in or after the exile. Jeremiah 42:15, 17; 44:28; Isa 52:4, or references to the reign of Manasseh are hardly sufficient. Bernd Schipper has strengthened the interpretation that the forced labor relates to Pharaoh Neco II (610–595 BCE). Exodus 1:11 is a Judean memory of Egyptian hegemony in the late seventh century BCE, which was accompanied by coercive measures and oppression. The Greek writer Herodotus (*Hist.* 2.158) reports about Neco’s 120,000 workers, who were employed to build the canal from the Gulf of Suez to the Nile Delta. The hypothesis assumes a lot but is possible. However, as long as there is nothing compelling against the reference to Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE), a late seventh-century background need not necessarily be given preference, especially since it has problems with the widely recognized setting of the exodus narrative in the northern kingdom of Israel.

Thus, the idea that the exodus narrative is connected to an old memory of forced labor by homeless and lawless West Asian Semites (most likely Ššw farmers) as foreign workers in Egypt remains a plausible alternative. At least the identity-creating function of this central memory can be better explained in this way. The situation was undoubtedly associated with repression and a high level of social violence on the part of the Egyptian builders, which is also reflected in the exodus narrative. The fact that the production of bricks from clay and straw (Exod

1:14; 5:8, 14, 18–19) fits well in the Egyptian context is not decisive but a supporting argument.

2.4.4.4. Flight or Expulsion from Egypt

Based on the Egyptian documents, several departures are conceivable in the late Ramesside period, the memory of which could have been preserved in the exodus tradition. Particular attention should be given to the period of unrest associated with upheavals before Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) acceded, when—according to the document of → Papyrus Harris I (*HTAT* 94) and the so-called Elephantine Stela of Setnakhte around 1185/84 BCE (Dan’el Kahn)—West Asians were expelled from Egypt. The extent to which the administrative functionary Beja, who played a decisive role in the unrest, can be connected with Moses (Ernst Axel Knauf) and thus grant a historical point of connection for the biblical figure, is discussed in research, as is the proposal to see Moses as a redeption of Amenophis IV (Akhenaten) (1351–1334 BCE) and his monotheistic reform (Jan Assmann). In both hypotheses, the problems predominate due to a lack of (or very late) historical starting points (Stefan Timm). Manfred Görg’s suggestion to see Moses as a “corporate personality” comparable to the patriarchs also solves the problem of the figure’s unprovable historicity by resorting to the formation of tradition.

2.4.4.5. Summary

Historically, one cannot advance beyond uncertainty about the person of Moses, who certainly bears an Egyptian name (*msj* “give birth,” i.e., either simply “born, child” or “the god X is born/has born him,” Manfred Görg) (see §2.4.2.5). But the historicity of an event that is remembered as an exodus from Egypt does not depend on the question of whether Moses is a historical person, a remembered figure, or both. An exodus tradition without Moses is literarily unlikely. If there had been an exodus group that interpreted the disengagement with Egypt as liberation, that connected this experience with the god YHWH, and that conveyed this experience to the later Israel, then this group was relatively small. Judged from the exodus-conquest narrative, the first point of connection occurred in the north, most likely in the Ephraimite hill country. Perhaps this tradition was preserved and transmitted by the clan from which the Omrides originated and was elaborated to form the founding myth with the foundation

of the state in the ninth century BCE. The exodus from Egypt, interpreted as liberation, was connected from its beginning with the deity YHWH. From a historical point of view, it is no longer possible to reconstruct the details of the exodus event; instead, one is referred to the enduring, meaningful power of this myth of origin (Jan Assmann).

2.4.5. Exodus and Monotheism

In addition to the historical question, which has stood in the foreground (see §§2.4.2–4.4), the history of ideas and memories is of particular importance. The exodus as departure from slavery is the foundation myth, which is firmly anchored in the collective memory of Judaism and thus also of Christianity. Jan Assmann connects the revolutionary detachment from Egyptian culture and religion associated with this memory to the so-called Mosaic distinction between truth and falsehood. This distinction is inextricably linked to monotheism (because it *must* challenge the existence of other gods), and the complex formation of biblical monotheism in the history of religion is in turn inextricably linked to the memory of the exodus. Through the theses of Assmann, which have been widely discussed in cultural, historical, and social sciences since the publication of *Moses the Egyptian* (1998), exclusive monotheism is suspected of being intolerant. The questions raised by Assmann are urgent, since they touch on the truth question of religion(s) as such and reach into the foundations of political thought. Although they have historical aspects, they cannot be answered historically. The discrediting of biblical monotheism as inherently violent, which often appears in the reception of Assmann's theses, has often rightly met with criticism. In contrast, freedom and fidelity were emphasized as central aspects of the exodus foundation myth, in contrast to which the question of truth takes a back seat (Erich Zenger). As for any trace of memory about the exodus that might point to the degradation of Akhenaten in Egyptian history, this lies outside the questions that are appropriate for a history of Israel.

Israel's Early History and Its Origin in Palestine

Baur, Wolfgang. "Die Anfänge Israels." *WUB* 48 (2008): 1–80. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel, and Neil Asher **Silberman**. *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 2001. ♦ **Fritz**, Volkmar. *The Emergence of Israel in the Twelfth and Eleventh Centuries B.C.E.* Translated by James W. Barker. BibEnc 2. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011. ♦ **Kamlah**, Jens, and Simone **Riel**. "Agriculture in the Bronze Age Levant." Pages 193–210 in *A Companion to Ancient Agriculture*. Edited by David Hollander and Timothy Howe. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2021. ♦ **Sergi**, Omer, and Yuval **Gadot**. "The Rise of Ancient Israel in the Iron I–IIA: The Need for a Closer Look." *NEA* 82 (2019): 5–7. ♦ **Thiel**, Winfried. *Die soziale Entwicklung Israels in vorstaatlicher Zeit*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985. ♦ **Zwingenberger**, Uta. *Dorfkultur der frühen Eisenzeit in Mittelpalästina*. OBO 180. Fribourg: Presses Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001.

3.1. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Bekkum, Koert van. *From Conquest to Coexistence: Ideology and Antiquarian Intent in the Historiography of Israel's Settlement in Canaan*. CHANE 45. Leiden: Brill, 2011. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. "Ethnicity and Origin of the Iron I Settlers in the Highlands of Canaan: Can the Real Israel Stand Up?" *BA* 59 (1996): 198–212.

Israel originated on the soil of the cultivated land of Palestine (Herbert Donner). What sounds like a matter of course has long been highly controversial in research. The emergence of Israel stands in a regional context of deurbanization and reurbanization (→ urbanization) as well as reli-

gious, social, ethnic, and political group formation (formation of tribes, becoming a people, → ethnogenesis, state formation). These complex processes are not to be understood as one-time occurrences but as part of a long-running dynamic rhythm specific to the southern Levant. It is important to note that the early Iron Age culture not only flowed into the urban culture of the middle Iron Age (Iron IIB) (reurbanization), but also originated to a large extent from the Late Bronze Age culture and continued well beyond its decline (deurbanization). Again, the development differed considerably from region to region and proceeded differently in the north than in the south, differently in the hill country than in the Shephelah, and in Gilead differently from in the Jordan Valley.

In any discussion of the conquest of the land, it is essential to understand the conceptual contrast between an Israel that entered the country as an ethnic entity *from outside* and an Israel that only gradually formed *within the country* and emerged therefrom as a new ethnic entity. Expressed in technical terms, one may speak of an → allochthonous (coming from outside) or allogeneic (originating outside) and an → indigenous (emerging regionally) culture. Recent research has shown that Israel is no different from its neighbors in this respect. “With the exception of the Philistines, all the subsequent peoples of Palestine—for example, Moabites and Ammonites as well as Judeans and Israelites—are predominantly indigenous.”¹ And an allochthonous origin is by no means undisputed any longer, even for the Philistines (see §4.2.2). The process of transition from the Canaanite urban culture to the Israelite village culture is part of a long-term development in the southern Levant in which—to put it a little more poetically—the rhythm of history remains recognizable.

3.2. MIGRATION AS A CAUSE OF CONQUEST?

Rosen, Steven A., and Gunnar Lehmann. “Hat das biblische Israel einen nomadischen Ursprung? Kritische Beobachtungen aus der Perspektive der Archäologie und Kulturanthropologie.” WO 40 (2010): 160–89. ♦ **Steen, Eveline J. van der.**

1. Jens Kamlah, *Der Zeraqōn-Survey, 1989–1994: Mit Beiträgen zur Methodik und zur geschichtlichen Auswertung archäologischer Oberflächenuntersuchungen in Palästina*, ADPV 27.1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 168: “Mit Ausnahme der Philister haben folglich alle nachmaligen Völker Palästinas—also beispielsweise Moabiter und Ammoniter ebenso wie Judäer und Israeliten—eine überwiegend indigene Abstammung.”

Tribes and Territories in Transition: The Central East Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages. OLA 130. Leuven: Peeters, 2004. ♦ **Tobolowsky**, Andrew. *The Sons of Jacob and the Sons of Herakles: The History of the Tribal System and the Organization of Biblical Identity.* FAT 2/96. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017.

Any migration of larger parts of the population as a background for the emergence of Israel must be ruled out. Israel neither came from Egypt nor from Transjordan to the hill country of Samaria on a large scale, as was recently brought back into the discussion on the basis of ethnographic studies. This also applies to the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age for the migrations of the patriarchs: There were migrations due to climatic and political shifts, and this includes people groups crossing the Jordan, but not on a large scale such as a mass migration of peoples, an exodus, or a conquest. The assumption that the archaeological findings from the Iron I period do not presuppose an extensive population exchange, but rather contradict it, is now a consensus. Other explanatory models must be sought for the emergence of Israel on Palestinian soil.

The reasons for the change lie in the political and cultural developments of the Late Bronze Age (see §2.2), which led to the collapse of the economic system and thus of the Late Bronze Age city-state culture.

3.3. THE DECLINE OF CANAANITE URBAN CULTURE

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3.3.1. A Complex Process

The collapse of the Late Bronze Age urban culture (see §2.2.1 and map 1) did not occur in one fell swoop but in a process of continuous decline that lasted from the fifteenth through the twelfth centuries BCE and culminated in the transition to the Iron I period. It is important to understand that this process did not affect exclusively the southern Levant but the entire Mediterranean region, especially the Aegean, Anatolia, and Cyprus. At the end of the Late Bronze Age, Mycenae, Knossos, Troy, Miletus, Hattuşa, Kition, Enkomi, Qatna, Aleppo, Alalakh, Ugarit, and many other cities were also destroyed. The Levant entered a phase of upheaval that is equally characterized by collapse, instability, crisis, uprooting, migration, mobility, appropriation, transformation, creolization, hybridization, transculturation, and → ethnogenesis (Ann Killebrew). These processes should not be evaluated only negatively, for example, as abandonment. They may even be evaluated as a departure toward something new (Norman Yoffee). The tension between continuity and discontinuity, homogeneity and diversity, or stability and dynamic consistently characterizes the changing economic, political, cultural, and social systems. The changes did not take place linearly but in a multifaceted interaction. They had global, but also

local aspects, and developed in complex, regionally differentiated processes that affected the macro-, meso-, and microlevels.

As with the entire Levant, the phase of deurbanization (→ urbanization) in Palestine should not be regarded as a self-contained and coherent development. The characterization of the process as a transition from the urban (city-based) Late Bronze Age to the rural (village-based) Iron Age only describes the complexity to a limited extent. The development differed greatly from region to region. This can be seen, among other things, in the fact that the transitional phase, which was completed in the second half of the twelfth century BCE, is sometimes referred to in the literature as Late Bronze Age III/LB III and sometimes as the early Iron Age I/Iron IA.

Town	Stratum/Dating
Hazor	Stratum XIII of the upper and Stratum 1A of the lower town; around 1250 or in the second half of the thirteenth century BCE, respectively
Megiddo	Stratum VIIIB; second half of the thirteenth century; Stratum VIIA; 1250–1150/25 or 1141–1113 BCE; two disturbances in the twelfth century BCE and a final blow around 1100 BCE
Aphek	around 1230 BCE
Beth-Shean	Stratum VII; 1250–1175 resp. 1151–1145 BCE
Lachish	Stratum VII; around 1200 or 1140 BCE, respectively
Beth-Shemesh	Stratum IVB; around 1200 BCE
Gezer	Stratum XV; around 1200 BCE
Ashdod	Stratum XIV; around 1200 BCE
Tel Mōr	Stratum VII; around 1200 BCE
Tell Abū Ḥawām	Stratum VB; around 1200 BCE
Tell Bēt Mirsim	Stratum C2; end of the thirteenth century BCE
Tell Dēr ‘Allā	around 1200 BCE
Bethel	around 1200 BCE
Timnah/Tel Bāṭāš VI	around 1200 BCE
Tell eš-Šerī‘a	around 1200 BCE

Town	Stratum/Dating
Shechem/Tell Balāṭa	around 1200 BCE
Tell Azekah	around 1130–1100 BCE
Qubūr al-Walāyida	Stratum 1–5d; 1230–1185 BCE
Jaffa	around 1100 BCE
Gath/Tell eṣ-Ṣāfi	around 1230–1155 BCE

Table 2. Overview of selected city destructions at the end of the Late Bronze Age with information on the stratum of settlement. The varying data reflect different approaches (pottery typology, radiocarbon dating) in different chronology systems (see §1.9 and §4.6.3.4 as well as the overview in §10.1.1).

The absolute dating of the destruction of the cities is just as difficult as the clarification of the cause. Especially the analysis of ^{14}C data from destruction layers has led to a much more differentiated picture in recent years, which is still far from clear (Yotam Asscher et al.; Israel Finkelstein). One can probably assume a kind of regional domino effect that gradually took hold of the cities. In general, the ^{14}C data has pushed the end of LB III closer to the end of the twelfth century BCE (e.g., Megiddo, Jaffa, Azekah), although a few higher dates are still discussed (e.g., Qubūr al-Walāyida).

In some places (Megiddo, Beth-Shean) traces of Egyptian occupation under Ramesses IV (1151–1143 BCE) were found immediately prior to the destruction layer, which suggests the middle of the twelfth century BCE as the earliest date of destruction. However, not every destruction can be connected with a cultural or settlement discontinuation. In some cities, the Late Bronze Age urban culture continued seamlessly into the reurbanization phase of the Iron II period. De facto, the Iron I period did not occur at such sites at all, at least not as a cultural or political development recognizable in the material remains. This applies, for example, to the Egyptian garrison in Beth-Shean, which survived until the end of the tenth century BCE (Stratum VIII–V). Until the tenth century BCE, local pottery produced there was Egyptian in technique and style. Stronger continuity than discontinuity can also be found in the twelfth century BCE in Megiddo, Jokneam, Tel Rehov, Tell Zerāʿa, Gezer, Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe, and Lachish, which were not so strongly influenced by the Egyptian elite. Tel Rehov did not experience any violent destruction throughout the Late Bronze Age-Iron I sequence (Amihai Mazar). During the Iron IIA period,

Tel Rehov developed into one of the most important urban centers, whose settlement strata are in continuity with the Late Bronze Age strata, meaning the inhabitants were predominantly Canaanites. The material culture in the Iron IIA period does *not* reflect any change indicating it (consequently) belonged to Israel. This observation underlines, on the one hand, the fact that the contrast between Canaan and Israel as stylized by the biblical account bypasses reality. On the other hand, it underlines our uncertainty as to when the transition from a city's general autonomy to its integration into a centralized state could have occurred, which remains an open question. This is all the more the case as one reckons with political alliances between the strong cities and the gradually developing state of Israel in the hill country (see §§4.1, 4.4).

The cities in the coastal plain such as Tell Abū Ḥawām, Dor, Tell Keisan/Achshaph, Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile, and Ashdod were less affected by deurbanization. “The collapse of the Canaanite cities thus did not occur at the same time or conclusively.”² The necessary regional differentiation shows that the transition from urban to village culture was neither abrupt nor homogeneous. Israel Finkelstein described the early Iron Age continuity of the development of the northern city cluster of Chinnereth, Megiddo, Jokneam, Tel Rehov, Beth-Shean, Tell Keisan, Dor, and Gezer as “New Canaan” and the swan song of Late Bronze Age material culture in order to emphasize their connection to the Late Bronze Age city culture. The cities' prosperity probably stemmed from their regional importance and the continuation of trade with the Phoenician coast (and later, also less intensively, with the Philistine cities of the coastal plain). In addition to the → indigenous population, some of the Sea Peoples apparently also settled in the cities, as Aegean-type weaving weights from Tel Rehov—in addition to Mycenaean IIIC pottery—suggest (Amihai Mazar). Although only a few metal products have been found in the Iron IIA layers in Tel Rehov, an apiary with beehives imported (!) from Anatolia points to metal processing. The by-product wax was used in the so-called lost-wax casting technique for the manufacture of metal products (and—as residual analysis of vessels from Ḥorvat Ṭevet demonstrates—in mortuary practices). Perhaps the Jordan Valley, and also Tel Rehov, profited from the intensive metal trade with the Fēnān region by subsequently treating metal implements (1 Kgs

2. Volkmar Fritz, *The Emergence of Israel in the Twelfth and Eleventh Centuries B.C.E.*, trans. James W. Barker, BibEnc 2 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 75.

7:46). New Canaan only faced its final conclusion following the renewed destruction of the cities in the final stages of Iron I (Israel Finkelstein).

3.3.2. Reasons for the Decline of Late Bronze Age Urban Culture

Which cause(s) triggered the process is still unclear. Recent investigations of pollen indicate a dry phase lasting about three hundred years, which could have led to massive crop failures (Dafna Langgut et al., David Kaniewski et al.). Such conditions may have forced people to move from the already drier fringes to wetter areas in the hill country. Moreover, they may have caused turmoil, riots, and growing pressure on the cities to expand their peripheral dry farming land due to diminishing crop returns. This climate change, which reached its peak at the end of the second millennium BCE (1250–1100 BCE), seems to have been an essential but probably not the only decisive factor. The collapse of the Late Bronze Age system is characterized by three further factors: (1) the decline of Egyptian influence; (2) the collapse of international trade; and (3) an increase in population at the end of the Late Bronze Age.

(1) The Egyptians, whose hegemonic power with simultaneous economic exploitation held the system together under the *pax aegyptiaca*, increasingly lost power in the late Ramesside period (see §2.2.3).

(2) International trade in the southern Levant was collapsing, resulting in supply shortages. It is generally assumed that the Cypriot copper trade collapsed at the end of the twelfth century BCE. The system of Mediterranean maritime trade (Fabian Heil) was linked to this. The extent to which Cypriot copper production, and the trade linked to it, actually collapsed at the end of the twelfth century BCE is the subject of controversial debate (discontinuity Andreas Hauptmann, continuity Vasiliki Kassianidou), but there is agreement that the collapse of the Late Bronze Age city-state culture led to a radical change in international trade. In addition to tin, copper—smelted and cast into ox-skin-shaped ingots—was indispensable for the production of bronze, which was used to ship various other goods in maritime trade. The merchant ship of Uluburun, for example, which was recovered from the southwest coast of Turkey, had copper, tin, pistachio tree resins, ivory, wood, fruit, pottery, luxury goods, and other items in addition to the metals on board (Ünsal Yalçın et al.). The collapse of long-distance trade, exacerbated by climate change, led to a recession and an economic crisis that, in addition to the power vacuum, can be described as the engine of development. At the

end of the Late Bronze Age, the gap between everyday products of low quality and luxury goods or imports of high or highest quality increasingly widened. The discernible deterioration in living conditions caused social tensions and increasing rivalry between cities. These factors led to greater ruralization and a return to a subsistence economy. This meant that self-sustaining smaller units were formed which did not generate any appreciable excess production (\rightarrow surplus) that could be used in foreign trade. In the newly developed villages and farms, at least some of the former inhabitants of the cities were able to survive after the collapse of the economic system.

(3) In addition to these two developments, a demographic factor accelerated development: the population (after the end of the dry seasons) was growing, which led to an ever-increasing shift toward new forms of settlement. The developments did not take place in abrupt bursts, but in an accelerating process, the result of which is described in §§3.4–5. From the end of the thirteenth century BCE, one or more waves of destruction occurred in which a large number of cities were attacked and destroyed. Who destroyed them remains unclear, and a monocausal explanation probably falls short in this case as well. Possible candidates are the Sea Peoples invading from the north, the Egyptians during Ramesses III's reign (1183–1151 BCE) in securing their foreign policy, the 'Apiru/Hapiru taking advantage of the decline, the Israelites or other migrating unsettled groups coming from outside, and, finally, the rival Canaanite cities themselves. An exclusive determination cannot be made, although the Sea Peoples and the regional rivalry of the cities among themselves have preeminence. Even the final destruction of the cities described above as New Canaan at the transition from the late Iron I period to the Iron IIA period remains unclear. Possibly, there were even groups of inhabitants settling in the hill country (Israel Finkelstein), but this too remains very hypothetical. Be that as it may, the destruction of cities led to shifts in regional settlement patterns. The previously balanced economic exchange processes and socioeconomic networks were getting out of hand, the surplus was breaking off, and the distribution of resources was radically changing. All this led to shifts in the subsistence economy from urban and coastal regions to the more inaccessible hill country. Whereas city dwellers used to live in a reasonably secure economic system, it was subsequently, very roughly speaking, kept afloat by the peasant elements of the population that bred cattle and cultivated crops.

3.4. EARLY ISRAEL'S EMERGENCE

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3.4.1. The Biblical Presentation of the Conquest of the Land

The biblical account understands that the attempted occupation of the promised land from Kadesh-Barnea failed (Num 14:41–45; Deut 1:43) and that Israel therefore detoured via Transjordan (Num 21:4; Deut 2:1). The first conquests took place in the battles with the Amorite kings Sihon (Num 21:21–32) north of the Arnon (Wādī el-Mōğib) to the Jabbok (Wādī ez-Zerqā) and Og in the Bashan area (Num 21:33–35). This land was then distributed to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Transjordan (Num 32:33). After the death of Moses (Deut 34:6–7), Israel set out and crossed the Jordan at Jericho (Josh 3), first conquering Jericho (Josh 6), then Ai (Josh 8), and finally the cities of the Shephelah and the Judean hill country (Makkedah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir; see Josh 10). The conquest of Hazor (Josh 11) marked the end of the conquest of the Cisjordan (Josh 12) and the distribution of the conquered land to the tribes (Josh 11:23; 13–21). Some parts of the land remained uncaptured, and some cities did not immediately become Israelite property despite the conquest, as recorded in the so-called negative ownership notes or the negative list of possessions (Josh 15:63; 16:10; 17:11–12, 18; Judg 1:18–19; 1:27–35). These cities included Jerusalem, which according to the Hebrew Bible was first conquered by David (2 Sam 5:6–9), and Gezer, which Solomon received as a dowry (1 Kgs 9:16–17), as well as the cities of the plain in the interior of the country (Taanach, Megiddo, Beth-Shean), the coastal plain and the Shephelah (Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Sidon, and Achzib, among others).

3.4.2. Models for Israel's Emergence

In the 1980s and 1990s, the discussion regarding the conquest was one of the most dynamic fields of research in Israel's early history. The change can be seen, for example, in the fact that in recent times there has generally been no talk of a conquest at all, but of the “emergence of Israel.” This indicates that the question of whether Israel should be understood as an entity that arose outside the land and before some conquest has been subject to a major change (see §§3.1–3). At the same time, the weighing of the sources has shifted considerably. In the older conquest discussions, the archaeological findings were merely brought into relation with the biblical presentation, and the description of the Bible remained the

Designation	Keyword	Israel's emergence is ...	Relationship Israel/Canaan	Brief outline	Key text	Main representative
Invasion hypothesis	intruding conquest	allogeneous	Israel <i>against</i> Canaan	Israel emerges in Egypt, departs from there in the exodus, and conquers the land after entering it	Josh 1–12	Albright
Infiltration hypothesis sedentarization	penetrating transhumance	allochthonous	Israel is created <i>next to</i> Canaan	Seminomadic tribes enter from the eastern desert fringes by seasonal migration (transhumance) and sedentarize successively	Judg 1:27–34	Alt
Revolutionary hypothesis	overthrow toppling	indigenous	Israel emerges <i>from</i> Canaan	Rebellion against city dwellers by the rural population/“Apiru/Hapiru	Amarna Letters	Mendenhall
Evolutionary model	developing residentialization	indigenous	Israel is born <i>in</i> Canaan	Seminomads who gave up their settlement in the MB resettle as a result of the collapse of urban culture	–	Finkelstein

Table 3. Schematic overview of the conquest models (see §3.4.2 for a brief explanation of the terms used).

primary, hypothesis-guiding source. Following this, sociological theories came to the fore. Now, the most recent discussion is very strongly influenced by archaeology (Volkmar Fritz, Jens Kamlaḥ). A marked increase in archaeological data on the early Iron Age, mainly from surface surveys (Israel Finkelstein, Zvi Gal), has dramatically redrawn the picture of Israel's emergence. A total of four models can be distinguished. They can be understood with the catchwords invasion, infiltration, revolution, and evolution, complemented with the verbal metaphors intruding, penetrating, toppling, and developing. Table 3 is intended to facilitate orientation (simplified reproduction of the terms used: resedentarization—resettlement, transhumance—seasonal and cyclical pasture change, alloigenous—originated outside, → allochthonous—coming from outside, → indigenous—originated within).

3.4.2.1. The Invasion Model

The conquest is presented as a military invasion by the Israelites who immigrated from the east. This assumes Israel was created outside the country (alogeneically) and invaded Palestine by force. In the early biblical archaeological discussion, attempts were made to combine the layers of destruction of the Late Bronze Age cities with the biblical reports of conquest (e.g., by William F. Albright in Tell Bēt Mirsim or by Yohanan Aharoni in Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr). The dating of the destruction and the conquest story reciprocally influenced each other. Today, however, only fundamentalist circles would deny that the biblical account is *not* to be read as a historical report. The classical counterarguments can be illustrated by Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. According to the archaeological evidence, Jericho/Tell es-Sultān was not inhabited from the fourteenth to the twelfth century BCE, and, contrary to the biblical narrative, was not fortified before this. There is no layer of destruction that could be used as evidence affirming Josh 6. The city of Ai (et-Tell) presents a similar case, as it was not settled from the end of the Early Bronze Age in the second millennium BCE, while in the Iron I Age, it contained only a modest settlement. The thesis of a military conquest of the land has most stubbornly adhered to Hazor (Yigael Yadin), once the largest city in Cisjordan. Toward the end of the thirteenth century BCE—or a little earlier according to Israel Finkelstein—the upper and lower town were destroyed. After a short, partial repopulation, the lower town was abandoned before 1200 BCE. After a settlement gap, a very modest, two-phase successor settle-

ment (Doran Ben-Ami) was built on the ruins of the upper town in the eleventh century BCE. This does not necessarily speak for the Israelites as conquerors, nor would it argue against them. Including the destruction of Hazor in the process of decline in the southern Levant, the biblical explanation of Joshua's conquest appears more as a narrative fabrication than as a historical report. Israel is not the cause but a consequence of the decline of urban culture.

The military conquest model, which assumes an invasion by the Israelites and follows the biblical portrait in Josh 1–11, was questioned early on in research. Today it is rightly regarded as the most unlikely historical model, which already fails on the assumption that Israel must have emerged as a social entity capable of action outside the land, that is, allogeneically (see §2.4).

3.4.2.2. The Infiltration Model

Research initially continued to conceive Israel's roots as originating from outside the land. In 1925 and 1939 Albrecht Alt developed the so-called infiltration model. This model is based on periodic transmigration, that is, seminomads' changing of pastures from the adjacent (Syrian and Transjordanian) steppe/desert to the cultivated land. Alt called this economic system "transhumance," which is insufficiently precise. Alt assumed that the small livestock-breeding tribes of Israel infiltrated into the land in a peaceful process, settled down (sedentarization), and then, in addition to animal husbandry, also started farming. Israel arrived from outside in preexisting → agnatic associations ("tribes"), so it originated → allochthonously but did not yet form a fixed social or political entity. Israel did not come into being *in* Canaan but *next to* Canaan. Only in a second phase did Alt assume warlike conflicts with the cities, which eventually led to the upheaval from which the state of Israel emerged. The fundamental opposition Canaan/Israel continued to guide this theoretical model.

Alt's model also fails because it assumes Israel's origin outside the land, as well as historically undetectable migratory movements over greater distances, and because it does not take sufficient account of the internal collapse of urban culture.

3.4.2.3. The Revolution Model

In 1962, George Mendenhall developed the so-called revolution model, the earliest cultural-historical, indigenous model of conquest that allowed Israel to develop sociologically not only *inside* Canaan but also *from* it. His starting point was the tension between socially weak elements of the population close to the city and urban society, specifically, the breakdown rooted in conflicts between the 'Apiru/Hapiru and the cities (see §2.2). At the end of the Late Bronze Age, the 'Apiru/Hapiru violently resisted the urbanized system and forced a radical change via revolts ("a peasant's revolt against the network of interlocking Canaanite city-states").³ The sociological entity "tribe" became the organizational form of the rebellious *outlaws* that united against the urban population, that is, the settlers were already *settled* in the open country beforehand (which is not compatible with the archaeological findings). Israel's origin was → *indigenous*; it originated *in and from* Canaan. While Mendenhall focused on sociological categories of explanation, Norman K. Gottwald (1979) tried to make the YHWH religion the driving factor of this process. There has been criticism of the revolution model from the outset. On the one hand, it is questionable whether there had been such a social resistance movement as revolution. On the other hand, the model lacks a convincing explanation of the two decisive changes of the early Iron Age (the rapid growth of settlements in the Iron Age and a change of settlement pattern).

3.4.2.4. The Evolution Model

In 1988, Niels P. Lemche presented a further development of the revolution model: the evolution model. The decline of the Late Bronze Age urban culture is explained as multicausal, so that Israel gradually emerged from the remains of the Canaanite urban culture and the newly formed tribes secured community cohesion.

Also since 1988, the evolution model has been brought together with Alt's infiltration model and further developed by Israel Finkelstein. Finkelstein starts from the archaeological findings, which, in addition to the collapse of

3. George E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," in *Community, Identity, and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Charles E. Carter and Carol L. Meyers (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 152–69, here 159.

urban culture, evince a change in the settlement pattern (80–90 percent of the new settlements are located in places which were not populated during the Late Bronze Age) and a disproportionate increase in new settlements (regionally differentiated up to five times more than during the Late Bronze Age). The settlers first settled on the eastern edge of the plateaus of the centrally located Samaritan mountains (Ephraim and Manasseh; for the distinction between *Samaritan* and *Samaritan*, see §6.8). This was then followed by a western expansion, as well as an expansion toward Galilee and in the Negev to Beersheba (Bīr es-Sebaʿ) (see map 2). Only at the beginning of the monarchic period did the plains become an Israelite settlement area (see below). According to Finkelstein, the settlers did not come from the Late Bronze Age cities but in a delayed process of resedentarization from the Middle Bronze Age city culture. In the meantime, they lived as seminomads in the vicinity of the cities. With the decline of urban culture, the symbiosis between city dwellers and seminomadic small-scale farmers broke down. The grain trade, on which the seminomadic elements of the population depended, collapsed and forced them to cultivate their own crops and become permanently settled. The settlers therefore came from within Palestine, Israel originated → *indigenously*. Israel was created *in* Canaan but not *from* Canaan.

3.4.3. Summary Evaluation

The evolution model based on Finkelstein's analyses is currently the most plausible conquest model. However, the return of the process to deurbanization (→ urbanization) in the Middle Bronze Age is not demonstrable. The assumption of a larger population of mobile nomads in Palestine living autonomously away from the cities and organized into → tribes is also doubtful (Steven A. Rosen, Gunnar Lehmann). The settlers' seminomadic origin cannot be proven. "In fact, the settlement of non-sedentary groups historically takes place primarily in phases of prosperity [scil. affluence] and not in times of crisis.... The archaeological findings speak against the thesis that during the Late Bronze Age there was an above-average number of 'cultivated land nomads.'"⁴ In addition, the distinction

4. Kamlah, *Zeraqōn-Survey*, 178: "Tatsächlich vollzieht sich die Sesshaftwerdung von nicht-sesshaften Gruppen vornehmlich in geschichtlichen Phasen der Prosperität (scil. Wohlstand) und nicht in Krisenzeiten.... Der archäologische Befund spricht gegen die These, es habe während der späten Bronzezeit überdurchschnittlich viele 'Kulturland-Nomaden' gegeben."



Map 2. Settlement development in the early Iron Age. The presentation attempts to bring together the results of various surveys in order to provide an approximate cartographic representation of settlement development. For the western Jordan Valley, the settlement areas are indicated by hatching instead of individual locations. The survey results of the Shephelah, in the Cisjordan, and the regions north of the Yarmouk and south of the Jabbok in Transjordan are not presented.

between two phases of early Iron Age settlement and the sharp separation between the Late Bronze Age and Iron I Age (Jens Kammlah) must be questioned. Like the other models, Finkelstein's approach has, in addition to undeniable advantages in the evaluation of archaeological surveys and pottery, its weaknesses in determining the complex relationship between continuity and discontinuity at the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

None of the conquest models is completely convincing, and it must be asked whether any single model can do justice to the complex process (see §§3.5, 3.7.3). What is certain is that an explanation should be based on archaeological findings and not on sociological or biblical theories and that—above all—the term Israel for the newly emerging village culture should only be used very cautiously. Settlement process and → ethnogenesis are not the same but cannot be separated from each other. The regional differentiation in the land, the continuities of the Late Bronze Age urban culture, and the differentiated diversity of the material culture advise against referring to an entity Israel in the processes described with the conquest models. This also applies to the new village culture to be described in the next section.

3.5. THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW VILLAGE CULTURE IN THE HILL COUNTRY

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3.5.1. Continuity and Discontinuity with the City-State Culture

At first glance, the settlement patterns between the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age give the impression that a complete change occurred. The published survey data report that the number of settlements in the highlands increased approximately 500 percent between the Late Bronze Age (61) and the Iron Age (334) (Yuval Gadot). Furthermore, the changed settlement pattern was not only accompanied by a demographic rise of settled people, but also included technological and architectural changes. While all this points toward a radical change, things are not straightforward. There was continuity, change, and regional diversity: the northern cluster of new settlements evinces much more continuity with the city culture than the cluster of new farmsteads in the Samarian hill country, which were almost entirely new. The Iron Age I was a transitional period between the urban cultures in the Late Bronze Age and those in the Iron Age II (Jens Kamleh). The process was often conceptualized as a sequence of clear-cut phases of decline and emergence. However, recent data have convincingly shown that the phases overlap somewhat. The Late Bronze Age city-states continued for a while during the process of decline and coexisted with the developing new settlement patterns. Or, to phrase it the other way around, the new settlement process had already begun in the twelfth century BCE when the city culture started to decline. When the peak of settlement waves was reached in the eleventh century, the decline still continued, and the waves of settlement extended into the tenth century BCE. Despite the changed settlement pattern (see §3.4.2.4, map 2), the early Iron Age village culture cannot be described in complete discontinuity with the Late Bronze Age urban culture. It is true that luxury goods such as ivory, jewelry, and valuable ceramics, as well as the Late Bronze Age cylinder seals, were no longer produced (i.e., the material culture is characterized by a significantly lower quality). However, no complete break connected with the newly developed village culture can be interpreted ethnically in the sense of an opposition between Canaan and Israel. There was no change of language or dialect, at least as far as discernible. Utilitarian pottery and architecture were subject to functional changes but were still in continuity with the Late Bronze Age. Funeral rites hardly changed. The religion of the early Israelites was not fundamentally different from Canaanite religion. However, its system of symbols was far more oriented toward the immediate needs of the farmers of the hill country. The transition between Late Bronze Age urban society and early Iron Age village

society was economically, culturally, and socially much more fluid than often assumed. This also brings the biblical portrayal of a clear contrast between the Late Bronze Age Canaan and the early Iron Age Israel into question. While the Late Bronze Age urban culture was characterized by a division of labor and achieving economic growth (trade and crafts), village culture functioned as a subsistence economy, characterized by the bartering of natural products. This was due to the relatively low level of social stratification in village culture; that is, there were only minor differences in status and hardly any elite or economically distinct classes within society. Scholarship therefore often refers to the early Iron Age social structure as an → egalitarian tribal society (see below). It should not be overlooked, however, that craftsmen were also needed in early Iron Age contexts and (perhaps apart from long-distance trade) trade was also conducted. Land ownership in the early Iron Age → tribal society was also dependent on social networks, usually reflecting kinship, which cultivated the idea of a common heritage (*naḥalāh*). The undoubted changes in social structure, economy, political organization, demographics, and way of life were probably due far more to the upheaval of the Canaanite city-state society than to an Israel that contrasted with Canaan. Looking at all the available information, one cannot help feeling that the contrast between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age has been strongly overemphasized in research to preserve Israel's distinct otherness. However, this corresponds far more to the traditional models of the allogeneic origin of Israel than to the currently more plausible models of → indigenous origin (see §3.4.2). De facto, the transitions were far more fluid.

3.5.2. The Culture of the New Villagers and the Ethnicity Debate

Researchers have discussed widely the question of whether the inhabitants of the new village culture stand out ethnically from the urban population of the Late Bronze Age (with particular emphasis recently, Avraham Faust). If Israel came from outside, it must differ. But if it originated in and from Canaan, ethnic differentiation is questionable from the outset. The problem starts with the terminology: if one describes the villagers as early Israelites, one presupposes an Israel (→ ethnogenesis) that must then naturally stand out culturally (→ ethnicity). One also does not escape this circular conclusion by speaking of Proto-Israelites (William G. Dever), since such a people, if they should be distinguishable, would themselves again presuppose an ethnicity.

Possible indicators of ethnicity are language, tradition, or material culture. In the meantime, the broad discussion among experts has led to the conclusion that the category of \rightarrow ethnicity is itself a construct and that there are no definite markers in Iron Age culture that can be traced to an ethnic difference (Raz Kletter). The Israel of the Merenptah Stela (see §2.3) can, therefore, hardly be used to distinguish an ethnic group, since there is no discernible connection to the early Iron Age culture (see §3.7.3). If the construct of otherness is attributed to Israel, the biblical depiction functions already as the blueprint.

The conquest debate has long held two material findings as markers of ethnic difference and indicators (or “guiding fossils”) of a *new* culture: the so-called four-room house and collared-rim storage jars. However, these can also be interpreted as functionally based transformations of Late Bronze Age cultural elements. The four-room house (or better: four-zone house) consists of a broad room and a large courtyard, which is divided into three parts by two rows of pillars, or a wall and a row of pillars, from which one enters the rooms (fig. 8).

One of the long rooms and a part of the courtyard were roofed. Some of the houses were partly two-story (in the rear wide area), the roof area may also have been used as a living and sleeping area. Attempts have been made to see this type of house as a derivative of the (much later) bedouin tent because the room layout there is similar, the pillar construction corresponding to the tent poles. The construction method was, however, rather functional and optimal for a small family that was engaged in simple subsistence farming with modest small livestock breeding and grain farming. A derivation from the nomadic way of life or even an ethnic classification (\rightarrow ethnicity) is therefore not indicated (Volkmar Fritz), even if an obvious derivation from Late Bronze Age house types is not apparent. The fact that four-room houses also appear in the early Iron Age Transjordan is also not an indication that these belonged to one and the same seminomadic population group (Israel) (Avraham Faust), but rather indicate a comparable way of life.

The ovoid storage jars, standing about 1 m high with a raised ridge at the base of the thick rim (the so-called collared-rim jars; fig. 9), appear in slightly different expressions according to region in the Central Highlands, Upper Galilee, and Transjordan during the Iron I period.

The jars were adapted to the needs of subsistence farming and stem from an agricultural context. They were used for transporting and storing grain, oil, and wine and were, therefore, not an ethnic marker (\rightarrow ethnic-

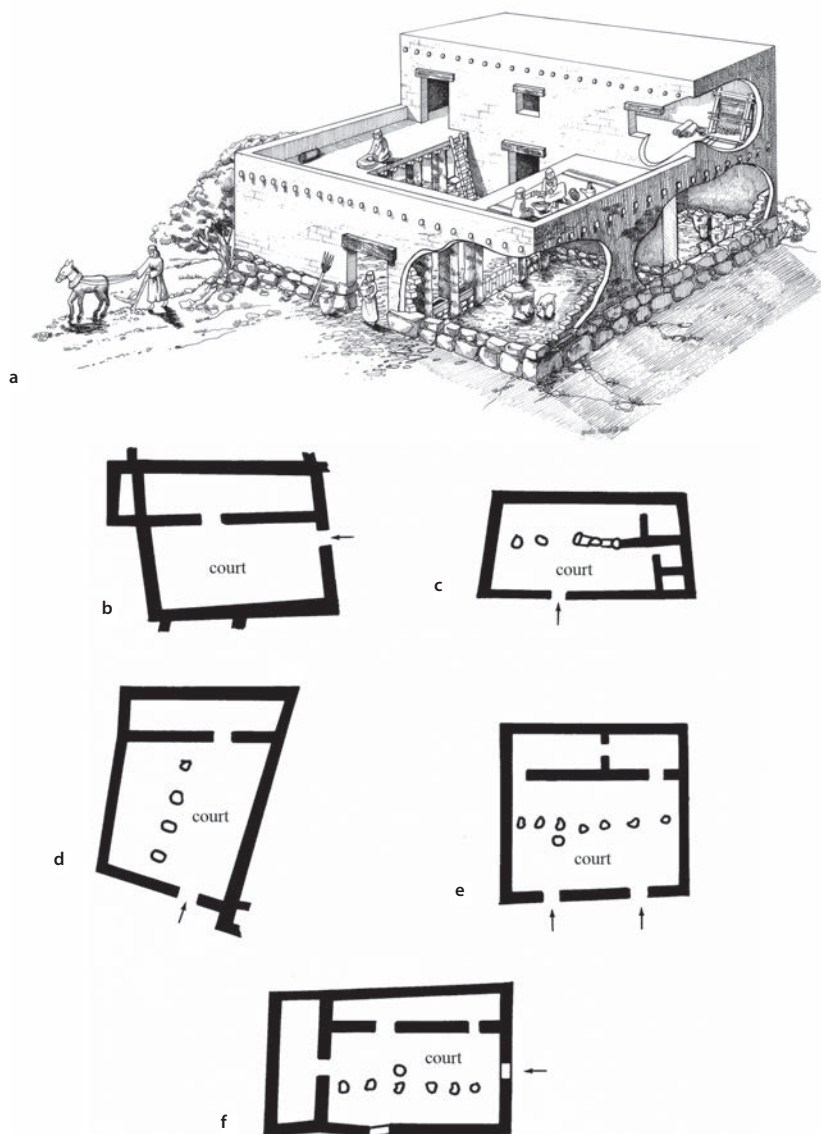


Fig. 8. Various house types with yard (from Hīrbet el-Mšāš and Tel 'Esdār): broad-room type house (b), three-room house (c and d), and four-room house (e and f). The roofed courtyard served as a living and working area for humans and animals, while the roof was used as a living and sleeping area. Some of the houses had a second floor, which offered additional living, working, and storage rooms (see reconstruction drawing a).

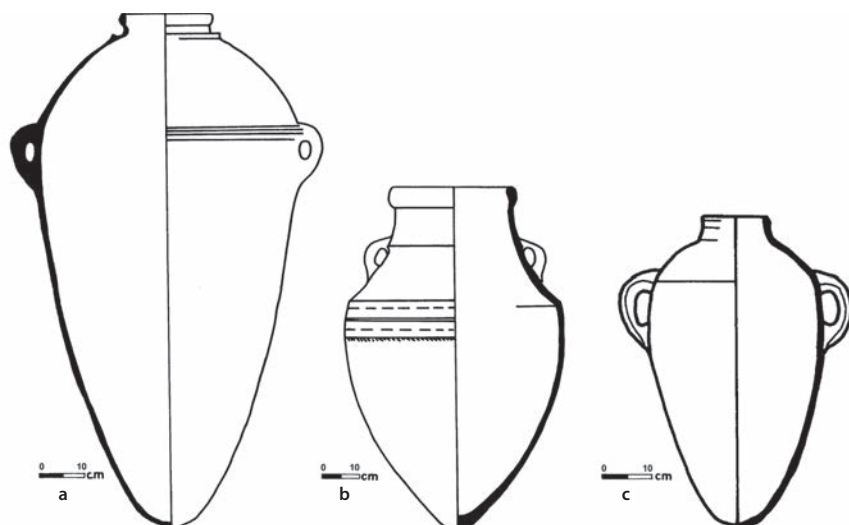


Fig. 9. Examples of storage jars from the Iron I and early Iron IIA period from Saḥāb, Tulēl, and Tel 'Esdār. The jars were used to store and transport agricultural goods such as grain, oil, or wine. Because of the characteristic folded neck that forms a bulge at the thickened rim, the type documented in the central highlands and in Transjordan (a, from Saḥāb) is called "collared-rim jar." The southern type (c, from Tel 'Esdār), which comes from the coast and the Negev, is smaller and has no bulge on the neck. In the north in Upper Galilee the bulbous type is documented (b, from Tulēl), with handles set higher on the shoulder.

ity). Their emergence is also not completely congruent with the emergence of the Iron Age culture, so that they cannot be regarded as vessels that the settlers brought with them. One of the earliest specimens of the collared-rim type comes from the Late Bronze Age garrison in Aphek/Tell Rās el-ʿĒn. Other Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age specimens come from urban contexts such as Achshaph/Tell Keisan, Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim, Tell es-Saʿīdiye, Beth-Shean, or Mālḥa in the Valley of Rephaim. The time-frame during which these vessels were used extends well beyond the early Iron Age and spans the Late Bronze Age to the middle of Iron Age II (Jens Kamlah). Early Iron Age cooking pots, which were cited as markers of a new culture, also stand in continuity with other ceramic forms. Overall, the continuity of utilitarian pottery between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age is quite high. Terraced farming, which had been newly introduced in some places, can also be explained in terms of function, which,

like the cisterns for rainwater placed in the houses, optimized the use of the scarce resource water (Uta Zwingenberger).

In addition to the four-zone house and the storage jars, the pottery's lack of decoration is also cited as an ethnic indicator. Avraham Faust, for example, presents this as an intentional demarcation from the Philistines. Just like the import of pottery types, the early Israelites intentionally avoided decoration in order to differentiate themselves. This interpretation is forced upon the findings rather than corresponding to them. The pottery types are oriented even here toward the needs of rural subsistence farming and are not an expression of an → egalitarian self-understanding.

Much attention has been paid to dietary habits and, in particular, to the question of pork consumption. The lack of pig bones in the mountain settlements is interpreted as compliance with the rules of Lev 11:7/Deut 14:8. Since pigs have split hooves but do not ruminate (Lev 11:7), their consumption was avoided. The renunciation of pork is, at the same time, interpreted as the core of a religious identity (2 Macc 6:18; 7:1). Philistines, on the other hand, did consume pork, as proven by the discovery of porcine bones in areas of Philistine settlement. Settlements in which no pig bones have been found are accordingly assigned to the Israelites. Pig bones are thus elevated to an archaeologically verifiable ethnic marker. This line of argumentation is problematic because it presupposes that these dietary rules were always extant and normative, which is doubtful. When this dietary taboo developed is an open question, and it is by no means clear that the absence of evidence of pork consumption is a consequence of a conscious renunciation.

The conspicuous lack of pig bones in the settlement areas can also be attributed to an economic background, insofar as humans and pigs compete for food. The grain surplus required for pig breeding could not be generated by the new village culture under the conditions of the mountainous region. Moreover, climatic conditions for the successful rearing of pigs were hardly suitable in the settlement areas of the early Israelites (Brian Hesse, Paula Wapnish; Lidar Sapir-Hen et al.). There are also contextual conditions (e.g., mobility, type of farming, trade in secondary products, long-term economic strategies such as the production of textiles, etc.) that are of great importance for pig breeding. Even if there were occasionally pigs among early Israelites, it is not surprising that the settlers usually did not keep pigs. So it is striking that during the Iron IIB period and later there is evidence of pig breeding in the cities, for example, in Beth-Shean, Megiddo, Jokneam, Rās Abū Ḥamīd in Israel, and in Lachish, Tell

es-Seba⁶, Tel Moza, and even in Jerusalem in Judah. Here, the introduction is apparently linked to the changed relationship between population and grazing land for small livestock (Lidar Sapir-Hen et al.). Here, too, there is no indication of an ethnic difference between the new inhabitants and the inhabitants of the cities and neighboring regions. Apparently, there is less need for a predetermined taboo within an ethnically closed group than for certain complex conditions for pigs to be bred and consumed.

The debate on → ethnicity presented in this section with its most important arguments (four-zone houses, storage jars, and food regulations, to which the lack of difference in the linguistic testimonies should be added) is also conducted for the Philistines or the Arameans with the interest of clearly demarcating ethnic groups. Therefore, the argumentation, for which in contemporary literature Avraham Faust stands out, is criticized as circular since it first defines the discriminating other and then identifies it in material culture (Raz Kletter). The entity Israel, which should be identifiable in the material evidence, is therefore premised beforehand (Emanuel Pfoh). Ethnicity, as an analytical concept altogether, is thus called into question (Philip R. Davies, Thomas Thompson). In material culture, there are no ethnic markers that stand almost indexically for Israel.

3.5.3. Examples of the Regional Development of Village Culture

The regionally differentiated processes of change are to be illustrated again (see §2.2.7) using the examples of the Lower Galilee region and the Manasseh Hill Country.

(1) In Lower Galilee in the twelfth century BCE, many new settlements were built in continuation of the Late Bronze Age settlements. These appear especially in the mountainous area around Nazareth and on the network of roads through the Naḥal Šippori, mostly along smaller watercourses. These settlements were quite small (ca. 0.1–0.4 ha) and existed only briefly. It can be concluded that these were subsistence settlements that required the destruction of the cities and that the population included the former urban population. It is striking that in the area of Megiddo and Beth-Shean (i.e., the cities that existed the longest under Egyptian influence bordering the Jezreel Plain, and lasting far into the Iron I period), no new settlement structures developed in the surrounding area (the persisting northern valley's wall of cities, called by Israel Finkelstein the "New Canaan," see §2.2.1, map 1). This indicates that the new settlements

replaced the cities as functioning units when the latter no longer had any attraction or radiance due to destruction or abandonment. While no town was founded in the mountainous region during the Iron I period, the town of Chinnereth/Tell el-‘Orême/Tel Kinrot was established on the Sea of Galilee, perhaps in the context of the settlement of the Aramean tribe or polity of Geshur (Walter Dietrich, Stefan Münzer). Also, at the much smaller site of Tel Hadar on the eastern bank, a city was built and fortified like Tel Kinrot—which was unusual for the Iron I period. The region around the lake thus shows a special regional development in the Iron I period, which even continued in the tenth through eighth centuries BCE.

(2) For the Manasseh Hill Country in the northern part of the Samarian Mountains, the collapse of major city-state structures cannot be assumed, since the only significant example is Late Bronze Age Shechem/Tell Balāṭa. In the Iron I period, a plethora of new, predominantly very small (< 1 ha) settlements emerged, almost half of which had no precursors in the Late Bronze or Middle Bronze periods. Only 21 of the 146 locations display evidence of continuity from the Middle Bronze to the Late Bronze period. It is likely that the population settling in the region increased as a result of immigration from northern Palestine. The small settlements were predominantly one-period sites, that is, locations that were soon abandoned as prosperity—a result of economic development—increased. In addition, the larger settlements of more than 1 ha, most of which were sufficiently supplied with water by springs, predominantly continued to exist in the Iron IIA period. The abandonment of the settlements in the reurbanization phase (→ urbanization) of the tenth/ninth centuries BCE underlines the transitional character of the Iron I period (Erasmus Gass). Important centers of the later state of Israel (Taanach, Samaria, Tirzah, Shechem) are located in this area (see §§5.4, 5.7.3).

3.5.4. Israel Emerged in and from Canaan: Summary

The terms Israel and Canaan are used in the following only as placeholders due to a lack of more accurate designations. Israel’s → ethnogenesis did not conclude with the emergence of the new village culture. This culture can neither be equated with Israel nor diametrically opposed to Canaan. Regional differentiation shows that a theory aimed at monocausality does not go far enough to explain the so-called conquest. Israel did not come entirely from outside, nor did a gradual sedentarization take place in a broad sense, nor did it exclusively arise from the population of the col-

lapsed city-state culture. Nevertheless, it is striking that the settlements existed only for a very short time and were abandoned first in the highlands, then in Galilee and in the Negev (Avraham Faust). Obviously, none of the theories (see §3.4) discussed so far can alone explain the radical changes satisfactorily and completely. Thus, a combination seems preferable. The population of Israel comprised, to a lesser extent, seminomadic groups such as the Šššw, who came from outside, and, to a greater extent, a mix of peoples who came both from the cities as well as the rural areas surrounding the cities. Intra-Palestinian movements of peoples also took place, for example, from north Palestine to central Palestine, but also from the coastal plain inland. The entire process is to be placed in a broader temporal horizon, ranging from the twelfth to the tenth centuries BCE. A further example that a one-size-fits-all explanation is unsatisfactory can be seen in the settlement of the Negev. Settlement there is now understood to have begun in the Iron IB and early Iron IIA periods in the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE, independently of the phenomenon of nomadism emerging in the urban centers of the Mediterranean coast (in particular Gaza) (Steven A. Rosen, Gunnar Lehmann). This regional development was closely related to the collapse of the Cypriot copper trade at the end of the Late Bronze period, which was then replaced in part by copper mining in the region of Fēnān. This transformation of the copper trade may have acted as a trigger for some regional development (Jordan Valley, “New Canaan,” Negev). Even though the relationship between early Iron Age village culture and Late Bronze Age urban culture has not yet been conclusively clarified, it is already clear that diametrical comparisons cannot adequately describe the complexity of temporary coexistence. All in all, for the so-called conquest, a predominantly peaceful coexistence with the rest of the urban culture and an interest in joint development offers a much more accurate description of the process than competition and displacement. This is true both chronologically and culturally: a large part of social, religious, cultural, and economic life was more or less continuous during and beyond the Late Bronze Age. Israel developed to a large extent *in* and *from* Canaan, *not* against—or by the destruction of—Canaan. An ethnically closed group named Israel cannot be detected in the Iron I period. At present, the question as to when the Proto-Israelites understood and described themselves as Israel cannot be answered with certainty from a historical standpoint (not even with the Merenptah Stela, see §2.3). Neither can an inseparable connection be established from the thirteenth century BCE with the Israel of the stela, nor is there a seamless continuity

from Israel of the eleventh century BCE to the Israel that is extrabiblically tangible as a political entity beginning in the ninth century BCE (see §1.6).

3.6. THE SO-CALLED CONQUEST IN TRANSJORDAN

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3.6.1. The Situation before the Conquest in Transjordan

The biblical representation of Transjordan conveys an image similar to that of the land west of the Jordan but not identical to it. Like Cisjordan, Transjordan was already populated by earlier inhabitants who resisted the Israelites' seizure of land. As with Cisjordan (Num 13:29), Num 21:31–32; 32:39 name the previous inhabitants, Amorites (see §4.2). The first resistance from an alleged Transjordanian polity against the Israelites was in Kadesh by the Edomites, who refused to grant Israel passage through their territory (Num 20:14–20). This forced the Israelites to detour (Num 20:21; 21:4). This detour is not mentioned in the parallel representation in Deut 2:4, 29. They did not fight Edom (Deut 2:5) or Moab to the north (Deut 2:9), nor did they fight the Ammonites (Deut 2:19). However, the battle against the kings Sihon and Og (Num 21:21–35; 32:33) is of great importance. Sihon is said to have been king in Heshbon/Tell Ḥesbān (Num 21:26; Deut 2:30; 3:6) and to have displaced the Moabites from there. Og, on the other hand, is listed as king of Bashan in Ashtaroth/Tell 'Aštara (Num 21:33; Deut 1:4). The decisive battles were located in Jahaz and Edrei. While Edrei can be identified with Edre'i/Dar'ā on the eastern edge of the cultivated land in today's Syria, the location of Jahaz is unclear. Possible candidates are Ḥirbet er-Rumēl and most likely Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine in the heartland of Moab, northwest of Dibon. The historical setting, on

the other hand, presents the greatest difficulty: Sihon and Og are completely absent in extrabiblical sources; references to organized kingdoms in Bashan and south of it are missing. Heshbon/Tell Ḥesbān was inhabited in the Late Bronze period and early Iron I period but shows no traces of a royal residence. It was not until the seventh through fifth centuries BCE that Heshbon became an Ammonite city of considerable size. Ashtaroth, which is mentioned in the Amarna letters, was more international, but there are no traces of King Og there either. Therefore, there is relative scholarly agreement that Sihon and Og are legendary kings.

There are also doubts about the biblical picture that Edom, Moab, and Ammon were already developed states. State structures were not yet in place in Transjordan either. This applies to Edom as well as to Moab and Ammon. The states in Transjordan, as the biblical depiction knows them, were only created in the Iron II period (see §4.2). Neither in ‘Ammān (Rabbat [Benê] Ammon), the capital of the Ammonite state, nor in Dibon/Dībān, the capital of Moab, can representative buildings be identified for the Iron I period. South of the Arnon there was a substate political entity related to copper mining in the Fēnān region (see below), but state structures in administration and trade are not yet discernible. These developed from north to south only in the Iron II period. Ammon’s development may have begun in the tenth century BCE, but judging by its monumental buildings and its participation in long-distance trade, it did not likely really start until the first half of the ninth century BCE. A little later in the ninth century BCE, a tribal chiefdom without state structures formed in Edom. It was not until the eighth century BCE—when the settlement of the Edomite plateau became more intensive—that archaeological and extrabiblical evidence of a central political power organization appears. Only then does the city of Bozrah/Buṣērā come into view as a central location and capital for about two centuries. For the time of the conquest, however, from a historical point of view, the preceding figures and entities are almost nonexistent. The biblical representation reflects a much later time. Archaeology also confirms this picture.

3.6.2. The Transition from Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age in Transjordan

While the destruction layers in the cities of the Cisjordan at the end of the Late Bronze Age in principle leave open the possibility of a military-based conquest (even against convincing arguments from archaeology), similar indications for Transjordan are almost completely absent. The

collapse of international long-distance trade mainly affected the places along the trade routes in the Jordan Valley. Many places were abandoned, some—for example, Tell Dēr ‘Allā, Tell el-‘Umēri, or Tell el-Ḥamme—were destroyed (at quite different times) and then afterwards partly fortified and repopulated. But the destructions were rather the exception. Especially in the northern Transjordan, for example, the larger Late Bronze Age settlements in the Zeraqōn region (Sāl, Tell el-Mu‘allaqa, Tell el-Muḡayyir, Tell el-Fuḡḡār) or Irbid, and Tell el-Ḥiṣn were continuously populated up to the Iron Age I. The same applies to settlements in the central Jordan Valley. However, in the transition to the Iron IIA period a significant reduction of the colonized area can be observed several times (Tell ‘Ammatā, Tell el-‘Adliyyeh/Tell ‘Adliyah, Tell el-Ḥamme, Succoth/Tell Dēr ‘Allā). This was also the case in Tell es-Sa‘īdiye, which was strongly reduced compared to the Late Bronze period, but the once-large → tell remained inhabited and perhaps even shows traces of a local sanctuary. Also, in Pella/Ṭabaqāt Faḥil the Late Bronze Age Migdal temple, for example, persisted in the transition from Iron Age I to Iron Age II. Overall, the picture for Transjordan is at least as complex as it is for Cisjordan. The predominant lack of weapons as grave goods in the Iron I period and the archaeological findings of the predominantly unfortified villages of the Iron I period give rise to doubts about theories describing the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age through conquests. Nelson Glueck’s old hypothesis that only nomads were present south of the Jabbok (Wādī ez-Zerqā) during the Late Bronze period can now be regarded as outdated (Jens Kamlah). In the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age, Transjordan shows neither evidence of immigration of larger population groups nor of far-reaching destruction of cities. The cultures in Transjordan also developed → indigenously. The ceramic findings from locations in the middle Jordan Valley and at the lower reaches of the Jabbok (Wādī ez-Zerqā) in part show more or less intensive Iron Age settlement, as, for example, in Tell es-Sa‘īdiye, Tell ‘Ammatā, Tell el-Qōs, Tell el-Mazār, Tell Dēr ‘Allā, Katārat as-Samrā’, Tell ‘Umm Ḥammād (aš-Šarqī), and Tell Dāmiyā (Lucas Pieter Petit), whereby it is not always possible to distinguish between Iron I and Iron IIA period pottery. Urban structures, however, as in the Late Bronze Age, have not been preserved in the middle Jordan Valley in the Iron I Age.

3.6.3. The Development of Settlements in Transjordan

The political development followed the settlement development: only the plateau north of the Jabbok (Wādī ez-Zerqā) and the Jordan Rift were significantly populated within the territory east of the Jordan; moving south, the settlement density decreased, with settlements in the land south of the Arnon (Wādī el-Mōğib) being only marginally detectable. In the transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron I period, the number of settlements increased fivefold, especially in ‘Aglūn north of the Jabbok River and south of the Yarmuk River. Increased settlement activities can also be demonstrated in what later became Moab in the Madaba region up to the Kerak plateau (Arḍ el-Kerak) in regions where rain-fed farming was possible due to the amount of precipitation. The development in southern Transjordan, in Edom, was similar to that in northern Transjordan and Cisjordan but probably started later (Piotr Bienkowski, differently Israel Finkelstein) and reached its peak in the eighth–sixth centuries BCE—starting from the north and the agriculturally suitable valley of the River Zered/Wādī el-Ḥesā. Formerly seminomadic, small-scale farmers, mentioned in Egyptian texts as Ššw, settled down after the collapse of trade. The question of a chronological delay is currently the subject of much debate, mainly due to the lack of clear references from excavations for pottery typology. A distinction between settlement activities of the Iron I and Iron IIA periods is often not (yet) possible.

3.7. THE SO-CALLED PERIOD OF THE JUDGES AND THE SYSTEM OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

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When did Israel complete its process of emergence? Already, the term *process* shows that no fixed date can be determined, but rather only a gradual, step-by-step emergence can be sketched. The criteria are demographic, social, political, religious, and economic. They mark the transition to a newly reurbanized city culture with a centralized ruling organization reaching beyond its own social group and consisting of a centralized administrative body with officials, troops, organized trade, education, and so on. Biblically, the period of the judges is marked by the image of chaos, which stems from Israel’s apostasy from the required exclusive worship of YHWH. Following this, YHWH awakens again and again so-called major (Othniel Judg 3:7–11; Ehud Judg 3:12–30; Shamgar Judg 3:31; Deborah and Barak Judg 4–5; Gideon Judg 6–8; Jephthah Judg 10:17–12:7; Samson Judg 13–16) and minor (Tola Judg 10:1–2; Jair Judg 10:3–5; Ibzan Judg 12:8–10; Elon Judg 12:11–12; Abdon Judg 12:13–15) judges or saviors who stabilize Israel through their governance and consolidate it in the YHWH religion. In terms of literary history, Judges is based in part on very old traditions such as the Song of Deborah (Judg 4–5) or the early Book of Saviors, the narrative cycle of older Judges stories. Yet, the book as a whole tends to be late redactional composition (postexilic), and the traditions are often recast and/or edited. This later recomposition and editing is only one reason that has led to its rejection as a source of reliable historical information from prestate times (as it was in the historiography of the past century).

3.7.1. The Opposition Israel ↔ Canaan

For biblical literature, Canaan stands in contrast to Israel. The Canaanites are the inhabitants of the land to whom religious and ethical practices are ascribed (Exod 34:11–13; Lev 18:3) and whose moral judgment is allegedly not fully developed (Gen 9:25; 19; 34; Ps 106). While the biblical texts present the basis for the Canaanites' devaluation, the secondary literature has always provided them with an even more severely bad press. They are understood as a foil to an ideal Israel. This Canaan and this Israel have never existed in such a way from a historical point of view.

Looking at the material culture and way of life of the villagers, they were—to put it bluntly—far more Canaanite than Israelite. The contrast Israel—Canaan, which long determined the theory of the formative phase of Israel's emergence on a biblical basis, existed neither in religious nor in cultural terms (see §3.5.2). In social terms, too, it was rather a difference between urban culture and the rural population, not the difference between Israelites and Canaanites. It is not really surprising, however, that the Late Bronze Age society, which was shaped by international trade in luxury goods and was strongly socially stratified, differs from the → segmented and acephalous (i.e., “without a head”) structure of the small endogamous (i.e., marrying within the clan) village populations. If one understands Canaanite not as a synonym for the Late Bronze Age urban culture (see §1.7), but rather as the culture determined and shaped by the requirements of the land, the contrast between Canaanite urban culture and Israelite village culture is only partially accurate. For in the Iron I period the actual collective culture emerges with great clarity. “Yes, one could even say that the early Iron Age villages were more Canaanite than the Late Bronze Age cities ever were.”⁵

3.7.2. Social Structure of Early Iron Age Villages

The villages in the hill country had small populations: a few larger families lived there together. Since there were neither central buildings nor large differentiations in the size and quality of the houses, it can perhaps be assumed that the villagers largely formed a community of equals (ideally and often

5. Kamlah, *Zeraqōn-Survey*, 175: “Ja, man könnte sogar sagen, daß die früheisenzeitlichen Dörfer kanaanäischer waren, als es die spätbronzezeitlichen Städte jemals gewesen sind.”

socioromantically described as a so-called → *egalitarian* society of equals among equals). This conclusion, however, remains strongly hypothetical and should not be interpreted as *differentia specifica Israelitica* (Avraham Faust) but should be attributed, if at all, to the simple peasant way of life (Raz Kletter). If there was organized communal political action in the villages, it would have been determined by village elders, clan leaders, local chiefs, or charismatic leaders (i.e., judges). A characteristic difference is found in the mores of marriage, which varied—according to a group's size—between endogamy (marriage within the clan association) and exogamy (marriage outside the clan association). While endogamous relationships prevailed in larger villages and towns, small villages were characterized by regionally limited exogamy to limit the threat of incest (so-called village exogamy). Marriage outside the village context was an important factor in social change (Gunnar Lehmann, Hermann M. Niemann). It enabled communication, trade, and regional alliances and promoted the formation of a cross-village organization. In short, village exogamy was an important stage in the development of Israel into a comprehensive social network and the formation of a territorial state with a centralized structure of power. Little by little, regional societies based on kinship emerged, forming a clan or tribal structure. Described according to an ideal typology, a → segmentary lineage society was created in which the limbs (segments) were connected to each other by an → agnatic lineage. Speaking again according to an ideal typology, the decision-making processes within these clan-based contexts were not bound to a central authority (top down) but followed a consensual model (bottom up). Stronger than the institutional and centralized bond was the one attained through common rituals and mutual social obligations.

3.7.3. Israel and Early Iron Age Village Culture

Where the name Israel for this entity came from remains unclear. It is possible that a part of this society in the Samarian hill country probably took the name Israel from the social group for which this name was already used in the late thirteenth century BCE (Merenptah Stela, see §2.3), but this remains speculation. Perhaps an → eponym stood in the background, that is, a legendary ancestor to whom the name refers. Israel was not a real progenitor or the oldest common ancestor but rather the → genealogical umbrella under which the polymorphic society of clans and territorially originating tribes were brought together in literature (genealogically constituted → ethnicity). An actual kinship of all villagers (biblically speaking:

the twelve tribes of Israel) with one another, as the biblical narrative of the conquest construes (cf. Josh 3:12; 24:1; etc.), can be excluded for various reasons (among others the development of the settlement history and on the basis of archaeogenetic investigations). The emergence of an ethnic entity from the → tribally organized groups in Palestine, however, does not simply fit together under the name Israel. Rather, in the eleventh/tenth centuries BCE a social unity emerged that can be conceived as an ethnic entity, characterized by a common language, culture, → genealogy, economy, and religion. Whether this elusive entity was identifiable under the name Israel (→ ethnogenesis) or called itself Israel currently remains completely open, albeit rather unlikely. Extrabiblically, there is certainly no proof of it. The oldest biblical evidence for the use of the term Israel is still the Song of Deborah in Judg 5:1–31, where a total of ten tribes (Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir, Zebulun, Issachar, Reuben, Gilead, Dan, Asher, Naph-tali) are bound together under this name. But the Song of Deborah dates back to the period of the state, to the end of the tenth century BCE or, even more likely, to the first half of the ninth century BCE (Ernst Axel Knauf, Walter Groß). The Song of Deborah thus reflects the union of the tribes at a time when political Israel already existed. Since the state of the northern tribes apparently used the term Israel from its beginnings (as proven by the Mesha Stela for the Omrides, COS 2.23, *HTAT* 105), it is obvious that the early state originated from a tribal union called Israel. The fact that Judah and Simeon are missing from the Song of Deborah not only points to the northern origin of the song, but also to the fact that Israel was territorially limited to the north. It was not until the eighth century BCE that the name Israel came to describe the Judean tribes.

One need not imagine the early Israel of the eleventh/tenth centuries BCE to be too uniform in the factors mentioned. What remains is rather a polymorphic (multiform) and purpose-oriented, rather than sociologically homogeneous (uniform) association. The idea of → equality, the social equality of all members, should not be romanticized. On the one hand, the system of religious symbolism portrays the dominance of war-like deities (fig. 10), on the other hand, social stratification is recognizable even in the early tribal societies (Ernst Axel Knauf).

The details of the development—which began regionally and continued through a long process that ended in the supraregional tribal conglomerate of possibly ten tribes in a tribal class society consisting of farmers, craftsmen, slaves, and foreigners/sojourners—remain largely in the dark due to the absence of written sources. It must be emphasized



Fig. 10. Bronze figurines from the Iron I and Iron IIA period, which are in continuity with Late Bronze Age representations. Characteristic is the striding position of the armed juvenile god (Baal/Reshef) who holds his right hand high. Only the ca. 4 cm tall closed fist was found of the left figure in the excavations of the city of David in Jerusalem. Thus the figure was clearly larger than the second example from a shrine in Megiddo, 11.5 cm in total, whose feet were also anchored on a pedestal for installation (see fig. 17). The bronze figurines, some of which were plated with gold, were used in the cult in the tenth century BCE. Whether they were also produced then or whether they are precious heirlooms from the Late Bronze Age that were reused cannot be determined with certainty.

again and again that the biblical narratives of the so-called period of the judges generally fail to provide reliable historical information about this development. The period of the judges as a disordered and largely chaotic time is, to a large extent, a theological construct.

3.7.4. The System of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

The biblical presentation describes the prestate society as a kinship-based entity Israel. The smallest unit is the family, often referred to as the “house” (*bayit*) or “ancestral house” (*bêt ’āb*). This refers not to the immediate

family but the family comprising several generations. The clan (*mišpāḥāh*, extended family) forms the next larger social unit. The tribe (*šēbet*) forms a superordinate unit that remains sociologically indeterminate. One reason for this is that the concept of tribe is not clearly defined in ethnology. It is used for different sizes of kinship groups as well as for associations of unrelated families. If one understands the tribe as a form of political organization, it usually refers to family alliances or kinship-based → client relationships in a jointly inhabited geographical area that are led by a chief (Emanuel Pfoh, Gunnar Lehmann). Biblically, however, the entity of Israel consists of exactly twelve tribes, whose → eponyms are all related to each other in the first degree and have in common the patriarch Jacob as father, Isaac and Rebekah as grandparents, and finally Abraham and Sarah as great-grandparents. Thus, the connection of the prestate Israel in the Pentateuch (as well as in Joshua and Judges), which is constructed on the basis of a → genealogical system, leads back to the progenitor Jacob, who was renamed Israel (Gen 32:29 [v. 28 ET]; 35:10). Due to his parents' (Isaac and Rebekah) demand for endogamy (see Gen 26:34–35; 28:1–2), Jacob married his cousins Rachel and Leah in Paddan-Aram, which lies outside the land of Canaan in the region of the Arameans. Rachel and Leah—each with the participation of their maids, Bilhah and Zilpah—gave birth to twelve sons and one daughter, Dinah (Gen 30:21).

Leah's Tribes		Rachel's Tribes	
Leah	Zilpah	Rachel	Bilhah
1. Reuben	7. Gad	11. Joseph	5. Dan
2. Simeon	8. Asher	12. Benjamin	6. Naphtali
3. Levi			
4. Judah			
9. Issachar			
10. Zebulun			

Table 4. Overview of the tribes sorted by mother and birth order (according to Gen 29:31–30:24; 35:23–26; 46:8–25; 49:3–27).

The genealogical connection between the tribes is not to be understood historically. Nor is it the result of a sacred twelve-tribe alliance concluded in Shechem as a central sanctuary (the so-called → amphictyony hypothesis based on Greek twelve- or six-tribe alliances, Martin Noth). Rather,

the genealogical connection reflects the idealized construction of a relationship (which neither necessarily presupposes nor precludes biological ancestry) between a large, originally regionally rooted, → segmentary, substate group of peasant farmers that merged into the later state of Israel and only then formed a political federation. It is unclear to what extent this has a historical basis in the early Iron Age. Rather, it is a narrative construct idealizing shared identity.

While family relationships form the sociological basis of tribal societies, at the literary level → genealogies (i.e., the networked structuring and orientation of a line of ancestry to an → eponym) are an instrument for organizing the relational—as well as the social, geographical, historical, ethnic, and political—contexts in which a community lives. They organize groups and bring them together via a founding narrative. They do not serve to depict actual kinship relations but to constitute connections through kinship. They create identity and at the same time enable the assignment and classification of the Other and the grounds for distinguishing oneself from that Other. They are constructs, but they are not completely fictitious and detached from historical circumstances. The degree to which these literary constructs store historical information can vary greatly. The basic problem is that the assumption of a union of tribes as an impulse for the formation of states (clustering of clan-based regional power relations, see §4.1) is still a plausible historical model that is modified and reflected in the biblical narrative, but this narrative cannot be understood as a mirror of the development of the tenth century BCE. Rather, it points to the time after the fall of the so-called northern kingdom in the eighth century (see §§4.7.1, 5.9.4). When the fiction of unity of twelve genealogically connected tribes first came into being and when this collective was linked to the name Israel remains presently an open question in research. Both the seventh century and the fifth century BCE can be considered.

From a sociological or ethnological perspective, beyond the territorial reference and the construction of a common ancestry, the entity tribe is an elusive entity that often does not go beyond short-lived and fragile alliances (Gunnar Lehmann). In → tribal societies, the tribes usually pursue particular interests and are not so concerned with joint political action. From a historical point of view, a twelve-tribe Israel from its inception is unlikely. Thus, the challenge remains to classify the biblical narrative as a unifying historical fiction in an appropriate historical and literary-historical fashion.

The system of the twelve sons of Jacob who moved to Egypt and emigrated from there to the land of Canaan, together with the exodus narrative, forms the myth of Israel's origin. The connection between the entity Israel and the sons of Jacob—and thereby to the line Abraham-Isaac-Jacob—only becomes possible through Jacob's renaming as Israel, which is reported twice (Gen 32:29 [v. 28 ET] and 35:10) and is connected with the twelve sons of Israel/the twelve tribes from Gen 35:21–26 onward. When this system of the twelve tribes of Israel found its literary expression is controversial in research. A postexilic origin stands in contrast to the assumption of an origin in the middle of the monarchic period (Christian Frevel). In any case, the literary construct of the twelve-tribe system may well be based on the historical existence of (some) tribes and individual, early tribal alliances. What is certain is that the tribes did not emerge simultaneously (biblically: from one family), but—according to the complex settlement history in the Iron I period—one after another and side by side.

In sociohistorical terms, the prestate tribal society can best be described as a → tribal class society, in which kinship clans form—via political alliances—tribes. These, in turn, join together to form regional tribal alliances or coalitions (Judg 4–5) that did not yet represent unchangeable entities. A tribal society organized in a tribal way can best be described as a social network that rests on family relationships and is formed in a common territory. The individual tribes are → segmentary and do not form strong hierarchies or specializations. However, the sociological term *class* is only rudimentarily correct due to the extensive lack of personally owned private property. While the biblical representation assigns the tribes an idealized settlement area only with the conquest in the book of Joshua, which they then colonize for the first time, the tribes may have originated rather from endogamous kinship groups/clans regionally (thus Ephraim, Benjamin, Judah, and Naphtali are also—and probably originally—landscape names).

The narrative of the connection between the descendants of Jacob, linked to the themes of fraud, deception, rivalry, and childlessness, is not historical, and the twelve-tribe system as described has never existed in such a historical way, but it cannot be assumed that the order is completely arbitrary. None of the explanations presented so far has been historically proven: a geographical division is opposed, for example, by the fact that the territories of the tribes of Leah with Reuben in Transjordan, Judah and Simeon in the southern mountains, Issachar and Zebulun in Lower

Galilee are not geographically connected to each other. The fact that, from an archaeological point of view, the new Israelite village culture begins in the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh speaks against the assumption that the order represents a successive growth of various alliances. This would give priority to the tribes of Rachel, which is contrary to the traditional assumption that the tribes of Leah are an older group. The historical process behind the system of the twelve tribes of Israel can no longer be clarified.

The Emergence of the Monarchy

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4.1. PRELIMINARY REMARKS: FORMS OF RULE

Ben-Yosef, Erez. “And Yet, a Nomadic Error: A Reply to Israel Finkelstein.” *Antiquo Oriente* 18 (2020): 33–60. ♦ **Ben-Yosef**, ed. *Mining for Ancient Copper: Essays in Memory of Benno Rothenberg*. SMNIA 37. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2019. ♦ **Bienkowski**, Piotr. “‘Tribalism’ and ‘Segmentary Society’ in Iron Age Transjordan.” Pages 7–26 in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau*. Edited by Piotr Bienkowski. ANESSup 29. Leuven: Peeters, 2009. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. “The Arabah Copper Polity and the Rise of Iron Age Edom: A Bias in Biblical Archaeology?” *Antiquo Oriente* 18 (2020): 11–32. ♦ **Herzog**, Ze’ev, and Lily **Singer-Avitz**. “Redefining the Centre: The Emergence of State in Judah.” *TA* 31 (2004): 209–44. ♦ **Holladay**, John S., and Stanley **Klassen**. “From Bandit to King: David’s Time in the Negev and the Transformation of a Tribal Entity into a Nation State.” Pages 31–46 in *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the Negev and Edom in the Iron Age*. Edited by Juan Manuel Tebes. Leuven: Peeters, 2014. ♦ **Kessler**, Rainer. “Chiefdom oder Staat? Zur Sozialgeschichte der frühen Monarchie.” Pages 148–66 in *Studien zur Sozialgeschichte Israels*. Edited by Rainer Kessler. SBAB 46. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2009. ♦ **Kessler**. *Staat und Gesellschaft im vorexilischen Juda: vom 8. Jahrhundert bis zum Exil*. VTSup 47. Leiden: Brill, 1992. ♦ **Levy**, Thomas E. *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*. London: Leicester University Press, 1995. ♦ **Levy**, Thomas E., Mohammad **Najjar**, and Erez **Ben-Yosef**. *New Insights into the Iron Age Archaeology of Edom, Southern Jordan: Surveys, Excavations, and Research from the University of California, San Diego—Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Edom Lowlands Regional Archaeology Project (ELRAP)*. Vol. 1. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2014. ♦ **Miller**, Robert D., II. *Chieftains of the Highland Clans: A History of Israel in the Twelfth and Eleventh Centuries B.C.* 2nd ed. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012. ♦ **Müller**, Reinhard. *Königtum und Gottesherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur alttestamentlichen Monarchiekritik*. FAT 2/3. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004. ♦ **Na’aman**, Nadav. “A Hidden Anti-Samaritan Polemic in the Story of Abimelech and Shechem (Judges 9).” *BZ* 55 (2011): 1–20. ♦ **Niemann**, Hermann Michael. *Herrschaft, Königtum und Staat: Skizzen zur soziokulturellen Entwicklung im monarchischen Israel*. FAT 6. Tübingen: Mohr, 1993. ♦ **Niemann**. *History of Ancient Israel, Archaeology, and Bible: Collected Essays = Geschichte Israels, Archäologie und Bibel: Gesammelte Aufsätze*. AOAT 418. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2015. ♦ **Tebes**, Juan Manuel. “Socio-economic Fluctuations and Chiefdom Formation in Edom, the Negev and the Hejaz during the First Millennium BCE.” Pages 1–30 in *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the*

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4.1.1. Judges 9 and Resistance to Monarchy

As Judg 9 characteristically reports, the first failed attempt to establish a territorial state with centralized rule occurred in Shechem. The royalty claimed there by Abimelech and sustained for three years after his elevation resumed the Late Bronze Age tradition of a regional center in the Samarian hill country. The fact that Shechem (Tell Balāṭa), which had absolutely no urban population in the Iron I and beginning of the Iron II periods, was chosen as a place of failure is not purely coincidental in view of the Late Bronze Age tradition of Lab'ayu's city-state (see §2.2.7). The historical value of the revised narrative at the transition to monarchy, however, is low (differently Rainer Kessler). In connection with the Jotham fable (Judg 9:6–20) and other narratives, it becomes apparent that the fundamental rejection of the monarchy is a later, rather than an original, part of the story. While former researchers justified the rejection of monarchy with the assumption that royalty was foreign to a → segmentary and → egalitarian Israel and was imposed primarily by external pressure (Frank Crüsemann), an increasing number of researchers see the emergence of centralized rule in continuity with the Late Bronze Age conditions in the city-states (Hermann M. Niemann). Although this was not uninterrupted and changed by the expansion of rule within a territorial state (increased reurbanization [→ urbanization] in the Iron IIB period), it can still be clearly recognized as a phenomenon of a secondary, and not primary, organization (Norman K. Gottwald).

4.1.2. Sociological Models in the Discussion of Emergent Monarchies

The discussion about the formation of kingship and the formation of states in Israel and Judah is currently highly controversial and polarized. In the background is mostly sociological terminology from the 1960s, which has become very popular in the recent discussion and which reflects a so-called neo-evolutionary sociological model in which societies develop in organizational form from *bands* to *tribes* to *chiefdoms* and finally to *states*. In the more recent discussion with reference to sociology, ethnology, and archaeology, both the appropriateness of these categories for Levantine

antiquity, the criteriology (e.g., the requisite existence of an expansive palace for statehood), the often judgmental use of the classifications, and the assumption of an evolutionary development are critically questioned (Raz Kletter, Norman Yoffee, Rainer Kessler, Juan Manuel Tebes).

4.1.3. Writing as a Criterion of Statehood

Keeping lists, documenting administrative procedures, and the production of diplomatic correspondence and its archiving are all important elements of internal state organization. Therefore, it seems natural to link written testimonies—in an indexical way—with statehood (just as smoke indicates fire, administrative writing indicates statehood). However, the situation is much more complex. On the one hand, it cannot be denied that the first administrative texts did not appear until the late ninth and eighth centuries BCE and that writing in Judah did not reach its peak until the seventh century BCE (Benjamin Sass, Johannes Renz). These include in particular the letter forms from Kuntillet ‘Ağrūd, the Arad → ostraca, and some other texts. One significant exemplar is the agricultural inscription from Gezer, the so-called Gezer Calendar. This text is still regarded as the earliest Hebrew text and was often assigned to the tenth century BCE, but it remains difficult to classify paleographically (i.e., from the written forms → epigraphy). Due to the theophoric personal names ending in *-yhw* on the edge and on the back, it is probable that the writing exercise on this small limestone tablet is rather to be dated to the ninth century BCE. The ostrakon from Ḥirbet Qēyafa stands out insofar as a coherent text from the early Iron Age can be found on it, which—like the Gezer Calendar—comprises a writing exercise. The content, which probably revolved around issues of social law, might also refer to a school text. Even though there are some indications for the training of scribes, so far, no schools have been clearly identified in archaeology. The evidence for writing is distributed very differently from region to region. If one adds the few Philistine and Proto-Canaanite → ostraca and abecedaria from Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfī, Tel Zayit, ‘Izbet Ṣarṭa, Beth-Shemesh/‘Ēn-Šems, Ḥirbet al-Ra‘i, and other places, then the coast and Shephelah formed the starting point from which writing began to spread inland in the eleventh/tenth century BCE and arrived there in the ninth century BCE. The earliest inscriptions from Judah are mostly very short and insignificant. This also applies to the seven-letter ostrakon from the eleventh/tenth century BCE found on the Ophel in Jerusalem in 2012, whose read-

ing and language are highly controversial. It is rather unlikely that the Proto-Canaanite inscription, which may still be pre-Davidic, is a distribution note with an administrative background. Only two centuries later, there were inscriptions from Jerusalem that have a higher degree of writing and indicate a developed administration. The findings in the north are similar. Here also the early inscriptions from the tenth/ninth century BCE are limited to a few letters, measurements, numbers, personal names, or alphabets. The inscriptions from Tel Rehov, an important town in the Jordan Valley, which was no longer inhabited after the end of the ninth century BCE, should be mentioned as an example. There is a larger number of inscriptions from the tenth/ninth century that were found on jar shoulders, partly with names (e.g., [belonging to] Nimshi), partly with single letters. It cannot be denied that writing was used to identify quantities or objects, even if this does not imply administration. The situation changed significantly for the north in the ninth century BCE, where not only the wall inscription of Tell Dēr 'Allā and the Moabite Mesha Stela from Transjordan (see §5.4.2.2) can be considered literary texts, but also references to diplomatic correspondence can be found. The letter forms in Kuntillet 'Aḡrūd, a caravanserai in northern Sinai (see §5.4.5.4), were probably exercises made by scribes from the Northern Kingdom of Israel that can be used as a testimony to administrative structures in Samaria. The earliest Arad → ostraca—short lists from a military fort (Stratum XI)—perhaps still date to the concluding ninth century BCE. The first administrative texts from Judah date back to the eighth century BCE (Ze'ev Herzog) and are therefore the oldest evidence of administrative texts from southern Judah. However, their stratigraphic and epigraphic classification remains difficult. All in all, when the inscriptions are examined together, a rather clear picture emerges: to a large extent the written form was used administratively in the north in the ninth century BCE, somewhat earlier than in the south. Lists of officials, palace archives, royal inscriptions, and the like are completely missing for this time.

Depending on how high one sets the criterion of writing as a prerequisite of a state, the more hesitant one will be to speak of a fully developed state in the tenth–ninth centuries BCE or even in the early eighth century BCE (Israel Finkelstein). On the other hand, it should be noted that extensive written bureaucracy and administrative documentation is not a *sine qua non* for a state, and even at the turn of the eras hardly more than 3–5 percent of the population could read and write. The criterion of writing is relative, like that of representative buildings, but remains a criterion.

The discussion about the existence of representative or administrative architecture is comparable to the evaluation of writing as a prerequisite or consequence of statehood. While some want to recognize no state without such buildings, others speak of an architectural bias in the discussion (Erez Ben-Yosef).

4.1.4. Israel's Transition from Prestate to Statehood

For a meaningful middle position, the diametric opposition between *no state* and *state* must be broken open so that one might speak of a monarchical substate formation phase, which lasted until the rule of the Omrides at the beginning of the ninth century BCE. In order to describe the difference between unstable forms of rule and well-organized institutionally based rule, research applies the analytical category of *chiefdom*. Within local communities, this refers to the leadership of → tribal federations by a chief (Juan Manuel Tebes, Norman Yoffee). The early forms of rule under Saul and David show the characteristics of chiefdoms. They were more family based, supported by few elites, and regionally limited. It is not decisive whether one should address the early forms of rule under the ethnosociologically well-founded but (in the discussion) strongly polarizing term *chiefdom*. More importantly, there is a relative consensus based on archaeological, → iconographic, and → epigraphic facts that, beginning in the north, full-fledged statehood can only be demonstrated from the ninth century BCE onward. It is only there that a centrally organized institutional rule with sanctions, civil servants, a military, a judiciary, taxes and levies, public or publicly financed buildings, state economic action, and an increasingly centralized state religion, as well as a sociologically more stratified society, was gradually established. The formation phase preceding this development can be described as a prestate. The epochal transition between the prestate chiefdom as a form of rule and the early state cannot be clearly delineated.

4.1.5. State Formation Processes in the Southern Levant at the Beginning of the First Millennium BCE

In contrast to the biblical depiction, transitions between epochs are not characterized by sharp breaks but by a gradual transformation. The biblical presentation of history fixes the transitions to the titles “judge” and “king,” whereas the office of judge (Othniel, Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson,

Samuel, etc.) cannot be equated with that of a chief in a chiefdom. Rather, the early rule of David should be characterized as such (see §4.5). The transition should also not be tied to the title “king,” which is, of course, used biblically for the rule of Saul and David (e.g., 1 Sam 11:12; 13:1; 18:6; 2 Sam 2:5; 8:15; 1 Kgs 1:1;).

The formation of state rule in the Iron Age Levant occurred in several, regionally differentiated places in the same period from the eleventh to the ninth centuries BCE. The processes, which did not necessarily take place strictly simultaneously, influenced each other. For the southern Levant, the interplay of seminomadic groups and settled population elements in emerging centers was of key importance. One may speak, following Michael B. Rowton, of a dimorphic chiefdom, in which the two groups were intertwined. In addition to sociological and political factors, economic interrelationships were particularly important. The state dominions in Moab, Edom, and Ammon, as in Judah and Israel, derived from early forms of domination. Here, too, the processes were not linear (evolutionary bottlenecks are the main point of criticism of the conceptualization of early rule as chiefdom). A state need not necessarily develop from a chiefdom, as the examples in the copper mining areas in the Arabah and in the southern Negev demonstrate.

4.1.6. Early Chiefdoms in the Arabah Copper Mining Regions

The interregional copper trade conducted from the mining areas in Fēnān and the western Arabah (Timnah/Wādī el-Menē'īye, Wādī 'Amrānī) to Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, which at least partially substituted for the collapsed (and mostly Cypriot) copper trade from the Late Bronze Age (see §4.6.4.2), can be regarded as a triggering and driving factor for the emergence of several regional chiefdoms. In general, the copper industry and copper trading in the southern Levant proved to be important factors even beyond their beginnings (see §§3.3.2, 3.6.2, 4.6.4.2, 5.5.4, 5.7.5.3). The copper mining areas formed economic enclaves, which, on the one hand, were strongly dependent on existing local social networks. But, on the other hand, they were under the strong influence of international trade due to the resource copper. For the production of bronze—the most important metal product—large quantities of copper and tin were needed. Since there are no tin deposits in the Levant (the nearest tin deposits of importance in the Bronze Age were in Afghanistan and Central Asia, namely, in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; it was imported via Susa in Mesopotamia but

was also transported by ship across the Mediterranean, Jennifer Garner, Klaus G. Sommer), metal production was heavily dependent on international trade. The mining of copper ore and the trade of the extracted or smelted ore, which was carried out by the → tribally organized local population, required an organization, which encouraged the development of a chiefdom (Juan Manuel Tebes).

While it is clear from archaeometric analysis that the origin of (at least some of the) copper used in Egypt in the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE was the Arabah copper mines (Shirly Ben-Dor Evian et al.), the connection to producers and distributors is currently open for discussion (Erez Ben-Yosef, Israel Finkelstein). No archaeological traces hint at an early Edomite nonsedentary kingdom. But it is clear from the archaeological record that copper production began to grow in the eleventh century BCE in the regions of the southern Negev (Timnah, and the related Iron I → case-mate fortress in Yotvatah) and particularly the Arabah (Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš). This may be linked with a territorial formation of desert groups. In the context of mining and smelting copper ore, the local tribes formed the Fēnān chiefdom (or Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš chiefdom named after the ca. 10 ha large central town). Similarly, though somewhat later, in the Negev region tribes formed the Tel Masos/Ḥirbet el-Mšāš chiefdom or gateway community in the Beersheba valley in the context of trade. Both were connected with representative administrative buildings and an increasing integration into supraregional trade networks, which in turn were connected with an increase in luxury goods.

4.2. ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWELFTH–NINTH CENTURIES BCE

Gass, Erasmus, and Walter **Groß**. *Studien zum Richterbuch und seinen Völkernamen*. SBAB 54. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2013. ♦ **Knauf**, Ernst Axel. *Midian: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordanabiens am Ende des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* ADPV 41. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988. ♦ **Niesiolowski-Spanò**, Łukasz. “Early Hebrew States: Autochthonous Evolution versus Foreign Influences: An Historiographical Consideration.” *The Polish Journal of Biblical Research* 6 (2007): 55–64. ♦ **Staubli**, Thomas. *Das Image der Nomaden im alten Israel und in der Ikonographie seiner sesshaften Nachbarn*. OBO 107. Fribourg: Presses Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991. ♦ **Veen**, Pieter Gert van der. *The Final Phase of Iron Age II in Judah, Ammon, and Edom: A Study of Provenanced Official Seals and Bullae as Chronological Markers*. AOAT 415.

Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014. ♦ **Versluis**, Arie. *The Command to Exterminate the Canaanites: Deuteronomy 7*. OtSt 71. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

In the biblical narrative, Israel had to deal with enemies before and at the time of entering the land of Canaan: the Amalekites (Exod 17:8; Num 14:45; Judg 3:13; 10:12), the Midianites (Num 31), the Canaanites (Num 14:45; 21:3), the Amorites (Num 21:31–32; 32:39), the Moabites (Josh 24:9), and the Ammonites (Judg 11). Deuteronomistic texts mention seven peoples as preinhabitants of the land with minor variations; among them are the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites (e.g., Exod 3:8, 17; 33:2; 34:11; Deut 7:1; Josh 3:10; 9:1; 24:11). These so-called people lists may perhaps rely on older exemplars (Arie Versluis) but should not be regarded as historical data. They mix well-known people groups with mythical prehistoric and early historical figures and extend beyond the settlement area of Israel. The Amorites, for example, represent an echo of the Amurites of the third and second millennia BCE, who were connected with western Syria and whose southern part, according to the Amarna correspondence, was Canaan. The kingdom of the Hittites was connected to its heartland in southeast Anatolia and perished during the upheavals of the outgoing second millennium BCE.

Often the nations that Israel dealt with according to the biblical text can hardly be grasped historically, as can be seen with the example of the Amalekites, who are not part of the lists of peoples. This people group is neither tangible as a tribe nor as a state outside of the Bible (differently Manfred Görg). The Amalekites appear for the first time in Gen 14:7, in the time of Abraham, near Kadesh-Barnea. In Exod 17:8–16, they attack Israel when the people were camped in Rephidim in the wilderness of Sinai. Even the location of Rephidim is unclear (Ġebel Refāyid or Tell el-Maḥārit). Since the fight is said to have taken place at the foot of Sinai, the place is sought near Mount Moses/Ġebel Mūsā in Wādī Refāyid, but Sinai's location is anything but clear (see §2.4.3). Numbers 13:29 specifies that Amalek lived in the Negev (Num 14:25: “in the plain”) and fought the Israelites near Kadesh. Since Judg 1:16 reports that the Amalekites' settlements reached up to the area of Arad, Rephidim is sought in the Wādī Fērān or in the Negev. The possibly Proto-Arabic name (Ernst Axel Knauf), the connection with the Midianites, as well as the mention of camels (1 Sam 30:17; Judg 6:5) point to the southern Negev and northern Sinai—that is, the two sides of the Arabah as their homeland. It is therefore usually assumed that the Amalekites were a

trading and marauding nomadic tribe (Thomas Staubli). The settlement of the Beersheba Basin and the Negev in the twelfth/eleventh century BCE, however, does not lead to the conclusion of a distinguishable ethnic group. The material culture shows the mixed culture is associated with Edomites (see §4.2.6) and Proto-Arabian influences. Attacks on the cultivated land are conceivable, but only documented from the eighth century BCE. This would fit in well with the development of the Negev and the Arabian long-distance trade. If the Amalekites are not to be regarded as a complete invention, then the disputes can be interpreted as a retrojecting of conflicts from the Iron IIB and IIC periods into the prestate period (Erasmus Gass).

If no reliable evidence is available for the prestate period, the question naturally arises as to what the situation was with the early state conflicts. The Hebrew Bible gives the impression that from the beginning Israel was surrounded by neighbors with whom it had some permanent conflicts. For example, 1 Sam 14:47 reports that Saul, immediately after he was made king, fought against the Philistines, the Arameans, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites. David fought for King Saul against Goliath (1 Sam 17:23–50) and thus prepared the way for the Philistines' defeat (1 Sam 17:51; 19:5). After this, David repeatedly fought against the Philistines (1 Sam 23:5; 2 Sam 5:25; 8:1; 21:15; 23:9). But David fought not only the Philistines; the Bible also reports that he fought the Arameans (2 Sam 8:5; 10:17), the Ammonites (2 Sam 11:1), the Moabites (2 Sam 8:2), and the Edomites (2 Sam 8:13–14). Before a historical evaluation of the biblical presentation can be attempted, the individual variables must be briefly unpacked and their own development presented. The following sections on the Philistines (§§4.2.2, 4.4.4), the Arameans (§§4.2.3, 5.3), the Ammonites (§§4.2.4, 4.3), the Moabites (§§4.2.5, 5.4.2), and the Edomites (§§4.2.6, 5.10.5.4) present the respective states or political entities whereby the middle of the monarchic period must be partly anticipated. The section begins with an overview of the Phoenicians (§§4.2.1, 4.6.4.4), with whom David is said to have had trade relations (2 Sam 5:11).

4.2.1. The Phoenicians and the Phoenician City-States

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Phoenicia was not an independent state but rather the name of the geopolitically significant strip of land on the Mediterranean coast between the Carmel in the south and Ugarit in the north. The name Phoenician (Φοίνικες) was first used by Homer (*Il.* 9.168, 607; 14.321) to describe the inhabitants of the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine). It is possible that the trail to the name’s origin leads back to the intense purplish-violet dye (Tyrian purple) derived from the purple snail (*murex trunculus*) found on the northern coast and marketed by the cities. Biblically, Phoenicia first appears in the Greek Septuagint, where the word is rarely used (Exod 16:35; Josh 5:1, 12) as a translation for Canaan. In 2 Macc 3:5, 8; 4:4, 22; 8:8; 10:11, the geographical designation Φοινίκη is consistently referred to together with Κοίλη Συρία “Coele Syria” and designates the (coastal) area of southern Syria and Palestine, over which the Hasmonean state extended (see §7.6). Closest to the traditional understanding comes the reproduction of the “traders of Sidon” in Isa 23:2 with μεταβόλοι Φοινίκη “Phoenician traders.” As the spectrum of the term’s use already indicates, the Phoenicians in the sense of an ethnically closed group, a clearly defined territory, or a political unit did not exist, and the ancient Near Eastern sources know neither the term *Phoenicia* nor *Phoenician*. The term is mostly used for the Syrian-Lebanese coastal region between Arvad in the north and the Carmel Range in the south.

4.2.1.1. The Rise of the Phoenician City-States

The boom of the Phoenician cities in the first millennium required the upheavals at the end of the second millennium BCE and the decline of the Hittite and Egyptian influence in the province of Canaan (see §3.3). The partly very old Phoenician settlements had formed city-states from the second millennium BCE, the most important being (from north to south): Arvad, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon, Sarepta, Tyre, and Akko. Other settlements such as Kumidi/Kāmid el-Lōz, Achshaph/Tell Keisan, Achzib/ez-Zif, Tell Abū Ḥawām, Rosh ez-Zayit, or the port city of Dor were partly under Phoenician influence well into the first millennium BCE. As with the Late Bronze Age city-states, the hinterland with its sociopolitical relations was of outstanding importance for the supply of the cities. Until the development of Assyrian dominance during the reign of Ashurnasirpal (= Aššur-nāširpal II) (884–859 BCE), the coastal city-states of the second millennium BCE achieved great independence through maritime trade (Josette Elayi). The cities' affluence was based on trade in metals (silver, gold, bronze, tin), textiles (wool and linen), and luxury products like ivory, pearls, glass, rare woods, and resins, and the like. The Phoenicians emerged rather strengthened by the collapse of Late Bronze Age trade networks because they continued to trade by sea. The exceptional development of seagoing sailing ships allowed the Phoenicians to expand, starting from the city of Tyre (see §4.2.1.2). The expansion began by the end of the ninth century BCE at the latest and included the precolonial presence of Phoenicians on the Atlantic coast of Iberia, particularly Huelva, well known for its wealth of metallurgical resources. The important foundation of the new city of Carthage in North Africa occurred in 814/13 BCE and was operated by Tyre. This increase in prosperity also included the Tyrian presence in Kition (Cyprus) in the late ninth/eighth century BCE (the name, Kition, is echoed in the biblical Kittim in Isa 23:1; Jer 2:10; and Ezek 27:2). Of central importance was the import of silver from southern Spain (see §4.6.4.4), which brought great wealth to the Phoenician cities and spurred expansion to the North African coast, Sardinia, and the Balearic Islands.

4.2.1.2. Tyre and King Hiram I

Little is known about the early history of Tyre, and even this comes almost exclusively from much later written sources such as Herodotus

and Josephus. Only the Egyptian Amarna correspondence (EA 147) mentions an Abdi-milki/Abdi-Milkutti as ruler of Tyre. However, in the first millennium the city stands out in the development of the southern Levant. It successively surpassed the neighboring cities of Sidon and the much older Byblos. Tyre achieved dominance among the Phoenician harbor cities. Tyre was built on an island in the sea and was perhaps already settled in the third millennium BCE. The town, whose settlement area extended into the coastal strip, was the most important Phoenician trading metropolis in the monarchic period and the center of Phoenician expansion in the Iron IIB period (Bärbel Morstadt, Markus Saur).

The king Hiram mentioned in 1 Kgs 5 and 9 could be a shortened form of the Phoenician name Aḥīram, which is the name of the king of Byblos inscribed in the so-called Aḥīram sarcophagus, which dates to the tenth century BCE. The only other information about a king of the same name connected to the dominant trading metropolis, Tyre, Hiram (ca. 962–929 BCE) is from Josephus (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.109–121), but how far his description of foreign policy trading is dependent upon the biblical reports (e.g., 2 Sam 5:11; 1 Kgs 5:15), rather than more authentic sources (the historians Diodorus Siculus and Menander of Ephesus), cannot be determined (Josephine Quinn). Josephus also indicates the age of Hiram with reference to the foundation of Carthage, which suggests a reign from 969–935 BCE. This would largely preclude David's relationship with Hiram I if one follows the biblical chronology that Solomon reigned for forty years. One only knows of 'Abi ba'al, the father of Hiram, through Josephus, who is otherwise known simply as the king of Byblos outside the Bible. This does not speak well for the reliability of the author's statements from the first century CE, even if he seems to know a complete list of the kings of Tyre and refers to older sources for it. The expansion of the city and its temples, which Josephus extensively reported, has also left no archaeological traces. Some things point rather to a much later time. A Phoenician inscription on a bronze bowl in Cyprus that mentions "the governor of Kharthadašt, the servant of Hīram, the king of the Sidonians" (*TUAT* 2:599, *KAI* 31), probably refers to Hiram II (ca. 739–730 BCE) (Wolfgang Röllig), even if the Phoenician influence of the city of Tyre on the island of Cyprus, about 80 km away, and on Kition probably began somewhat earlier. Even though after 814 BCE not only Kition was referred to as Kharthadašt "new city" (the newly founded Carthage was more commonly given this name), Hiram II indeed remains the more plausible candidate for whom the governor of Cyprus served.

Archaeological evidence for the economic boom of Tyre dates back to the ninth century BCE, the time of King Ethbaal (887–856 BCE Bärbel Morstadt or 879–848 BCE Edward Lipiński), who was the father of Jezebel according to 1 Kgs 16:31. Israel Finkelstein considers Hiram—in his entirety—to derive from the Assyrian sources of the eighth century BCE that mention the ruler Haramu. Accordingly, he locates the tradition also in the eighth century BCE. Of course, Hiram II of Tyre comes to mind as eponym for a then legendary king of the Phoenicians (Edward Lipiński). This suggests that, as with Jeroboam I (see §4.7), a king was invented and placed as eponym back to the beginning of Tyre by the Judean (or even Israelite) historiographers in the eighth century BCE. This does not mean that there were no Tyrian kings before Hiram II but that they were unknown to the historians of the Hebrew Bible. Hiram I, then, would not be a historical person, and David—like Solomon—would not have been able to maintain trade relations with him. Hiram's assistance in building the palace by supplying cedar wood from Lebanon (2 Sam 5:11) is therefore probably fictitious. The same probably holds true for the lasting friendship (1 Kgs 5:15) between David and Hiram. This is a fictional note intended to emphasize the greatness and importance of David. Similarly, the willingness of Hiram to support Solomon in building the temple has to be evaluated as fictitious (1 Kgs 5:24–26; 9:11).

4.2.2. The Philistines in the Coastal Plain

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The dispute with the Philistines plays an important role in the biblical traditions of state formation (Judg 13–16; 1 Sam 4–7; 9:16; 13–14; 17; 23; 31; 2 Sam 5:17–25; etc.). The Philistines inhabited the southern coastal plain and the edge of the bordering hill country (Shephelah) between the Yarkon River and the border brook of Egypt (Wādī l-ʿAriš). According to the biblical (and de facto Israel-centric) representation, they formed a five-city federation (Pentapolis) to which Gaza (Ġazze), Ashkelon (ʿAsqalān), Gath (Tell eṣ-Ṣāfi), Ekron (Ḥirbet el-Muqannaʿ/Tel Miqnē), and Ashdod (Esdūd) belonged. Other important places were the port and border town of Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile in the north, Beth Shemesh (ʿĒn Šems) and Timnah (Tel Bāṭāš) in the Shephelah, and Tell el-Fārʿa (South) and Qubūr al-Walāyida in the south in the Wādī l-ʿAriš. The coastal road, Via Maris, and the foreign trade ports, on the one hand, and the very fertile Shephelah, on the other, made the area economically and politically significant. In contrast to these advantages, the adjoining Judean highlands were clearly disadvantaged in economic and logistical terms, which explains the foreign policy conflicts between Judah and Israel and the Philistines and the biblical antipathy toward one another (Hermann M. Niemann, Erasmus Gass).

Biblically, the Philistines appear for the first time in the table of nations in Gen 10:14, where they are → genealogically connected with the Egyptians in the second generation via the Casluhim. Amos 9:7 and Jer 47:4,

however, connect them with Caphtor, which probably means the island of Crete. Deuteronomy 2:23 sees the Caphtorites as invaders who settled in the Gaza area. If one associates this with the Philistines, then the biblical tradition also has knowledge of the fact that the Philistines immigrated into the region. However, this cannot be judged much differently from the Israelites, the Edomites, or the Arameans: it is much more part of an ethnogenetic reconstruction in the biblical texts than a reflection of a historical reality. The name of the Philistines mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as *pelištim* is first mentioned in Egyptian texts in inscriptions of Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) as *prst/pw-r3-s3-t*. The derivation of the name, which also connects to the much later Palestine, is perhaps related to the Mycenaean *plōfistoi*, which is a term for seafarers.

4.2.2.1. Dating the Settlement of the Philistines

The culture of the Philistines was an internationalized mixed culture of the coastal plain, strongly influenced by trade. For a long time the emergence of Philistine culture in the southern Levant was exclusively understood to have its background in the invasion of the Sea Peoples in the early twelfth century BCE from the Aegean, Cyprus, and south Anatolia (see §2.2.4). The direct connection between the emergence of the Philistine culture in the coastal plain and the Sea Peoples mentioned in Egyptian sources has meanwhile been extensively discussed in research and in some cases completely questioned (Ido Koch), but this cannot be entirely resolved either. When exactly this process began is also openly discussed in research. As with the chronology of Israel/Palestine (see §1.9), options range between early, middle, and late variants. There is agreement that the transition from the Late Bronze IIB/III to the Iron IA/B can be associated with the emergence of the Philistines in the coastal plain. The emergence of imported late-Mycenaean type IIIC pottery, which was then locally produced very shortly after, is the decisive indicator for the beginning of Philistine culture. However, since the characteristic bichrome (two-colored) Philistine pottery (Mycenae IIIC:1b, also called sub-Mycenaean pottery due to local production) did not appear in → strata before Ramesses IV (1151–1143 BCE), a settlement of the Philistines *before* Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) is difficult to accept (but see below). Ramesses III defeated the Sea Peoples in a sea and land battle in 1175 BCE, as attested in writing and in a relief in the Temple of the Dead at Medīnet Hābū in western Thebes (see fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Representation of the battle of Ramesses III against the so-called Sea Peoples 1175 BCE on a relief from Medinet Hâbü. While the Egyptians on the left fight as victors in their boats and take prisoners, the opponents sink with their boats into chaos. The typical headdress of the Philistines is clearly visible in the central upper boat.

Whether Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) subsequently settled the Philistines, referred to as *prst/pw-r3-s3-t*, in military colonies on the coastal plain (→ Papyrus Harr. 1, BM 9999) is currently highly contested (Ann Killebrew, Gunnar Lehmann). Alternatively, a dating around 1130 BCE is proposed and is connected to the withdrawal of the Egyptians from Canaan (Israel Finkelstein). ¹⁴C data from Qubūr al-Walāyida, on the other hand, point to a late middle variant suggesting the emergence of the Philistines around 1140 BCE (Yotam Asscher et al.). The earliest date in this yet undecided discussion stems from the excavations at Tell eṣ-Ṣāfi/Gath. Some radiocarbon dates stemming from a marker horizon (Stratum A6) with Mycenaean IIIC pottery point again at the late thirteenth century BCE (Steve Weiner, Elisabetta Boaretto). At the same time, however, recent studies underline that the emergence of Philistine culture should not be associated with a specific event (such as the invasion or settlement of Sea Peoples) but is rather marked by a gradual process that dates the emergence of Philistine culture simultaneously with imports of late Helladic, sub-Mycenaean pottery forms. The Sea Peoples were not the (exclusive) cause of the collapse of the Late Bronze Age city-states. Yet, the cultural upheaval favored the innovations of the Philistine culture and accelerated the emergence of the hybrid mixed culture of → allochthonous and → indigenous elements.

In any case, the characteristic locally produced bichrome Philistine pottery replaced Egyptian imports when they failed to appear after the collapse of international trade. Perhaps a settlement of the Philistines can only be associated with the local production of Mycenaean pottery. Starting from the coastal region, the locally produced, mostly bichrome Philistine pottery spread quickly throughout almost the whole of Cisjordan, including the north. Only a few places (e.g., the more Egyptian-influenced Beth-Shean, where Cypriot imports predominated) did not include the new pottery in their local production cycles. Otherwise, it can be found in the Samarian hill country, in the Jezreel Plain, and the lake region up to Dan. The local Philistine pottery was largely produced in the Philistine area of the southern coastal region and the northwestern Negev (Naḥal Bəśōr and Naḥal Gerar) and imported via the urban emporia, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod (probably via maritime trade along the coast). To a lesser extent, however, it was also produced at other production sites in the hill country, the Shephelah, the northern coastal region, or the Jezreel Plain (although often without the characteristic white silt coating) (Mario A. S. Martin). In most places outside Philistia, Philistine pottery made

up a characteristic, but quantitatively small proportion (in Megiddo, for example, less than 1.5 percent of the total pottery).

4.2.2.2. Origins of the Philistines

The connection with the invasion of the Sea Peoples must not, however, leave the impression that the Philistines were an ethnically closed group that came into the land from outside in the “Storm of the Sea Peoples” (see §2.2.4, for the biblical references Amos 9:7; Jer 47:4).

Although there are also connections to the Mycenaean material culture (e.g., the typological development of sub-Mycenaean pottery from the Greek late Helladic IIIB and IIIC pottery), the early Philistine culture did not arise from it. Thus, beside Mycenaean and Minoan, one also finds Syrian and Anatolian influences (Ann Killebrew, Gunnar Lehmann). Added to this were → indigenous elements, that is, elements originating from Palestine, so that the Philistine culture can best be described as a mixed Philistine-Canaanite culture characterized by trade and exchange. More recent proposals do not assume a mass invasion of Sea Peoples but rather smaller ethnically very heterogeneous groups under charismatic leadership. These groups originated, in part, from the migration of elites from the Aegean; others were involved in maritime trade, whether as traders, transporters, or pirates (Aren M. Maeir, Louise A. Hitchcock); others still were farmers, potters, textile craftsmen, and the like.

The discussion regarding the origin of the Philistines from the Aegean was enriched by an inscription from Aleppo found in 2003. It names a King Taita of Palistin (*pa-lá/i-sà-ti-[nt]-za-sa*), whose kingdom lay in the Amuq plain in northern Syria. Palistin, or Walistin as it is called in other inscriptions, included the cities of Tell Ta‘yīnāt and Aleppo and reached Hamath in the south (John David Hawkins). If a lexemic and historical connection to the Philistines is to be identified here (Matthew J. Adams, Margaret E. Cohen remain reserved), it implies there was a Philistine kingdom in northern Syria in the eleventh century BCE (Benjamin Sass, Manfred Hutter), in whose culture Aegean, Anatolian, and Syrian traditions converged (Timothy Harrison). However, there is nothing to suggest that Taita and the culture associated with his kingdom derived from the Aegean Sea (Gunnar Lehmann). Currently, dating the inscription to the eleventh century BCE (John David Hawkins, Kay Kohlmeyer) seems more likely than dating it to the late tenth century BCE (Benjamin Sass). However, some scholars have recently put forward the suggestion that there

were two successive kings named Taita in the eleventh/tenth century BCE (Timothy Harrison). Taita and the northern Syrian kingdom of Palistin show a clear change in the state of the discussion regarding the Philistines. The Philistines are understood less as an isolated individual phenomenon and more as part of the complex upheavals in the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age, which encompassed Syria, southern Anatolia, Cyprus, and the southern Levantine foothills of the coastal strip.

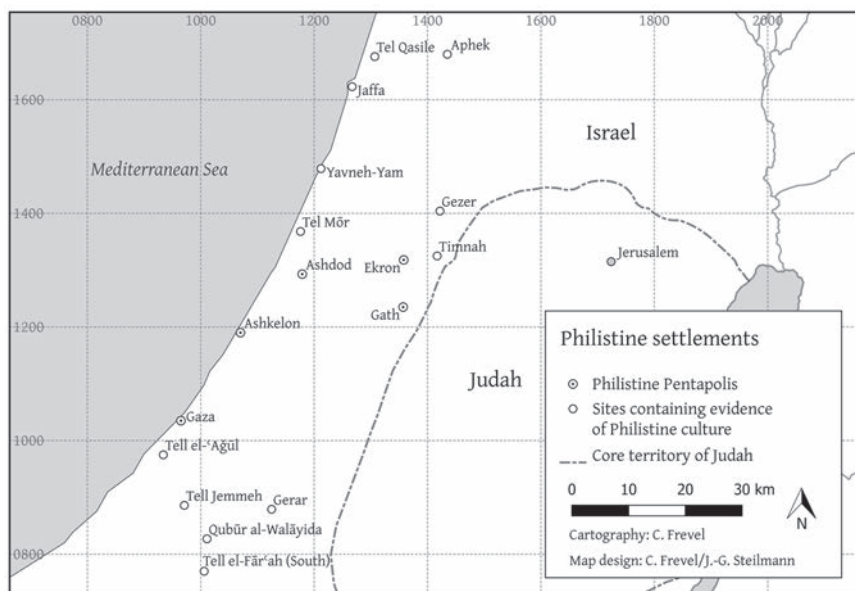
Traditionally and based on Egyptian sources (see §2.2.4), three groups of Sea Peoples were regionally distinguished in the southern Levant: the *plst* “Philistines” in the southern coastal plain, the *skl* “Tjekkers” in the Sharon plain and the coast south of Carmel, and, finally, the *šrdn* “Šardana” north of Carmel in the plain of Akko. However, an ethnic separation of these groups through their material culture has not succeeded. It has in many cases been abandoned altogether, even though the influence of Cyprus and Syria is more evident in the north (e.g., in Tel Dor) than in the south.

4.2.2.3. Philistine Culture

The smaller → allochthonous groups of Philistines acculturated relatively quickly, integrated themselves into the local population, and formed the elite in their cities. It is therefore better to speak of Philisto-Canaanites in order to, on the one hand, take into account the → indigenous element but, on the other hand, to emphasize that the Philistines did not represent a homogeneous population group. The Philisto-Canaanites took advantage of the power vacuum created at the end of the Egyptian provincial rule of Canaan by continuing the Canaanite urban culture in the coastal plain (especially in Ekron, Ashdod, and Gath), which led to new economic prosperity in the Iron Age. Maritime trade did not play the decisive role here. Rather, it was the regional development in the Shephelah. For the Iron I and Iron IIA periods, there were striking differences to the culture in the hill country: the forms of settlement fortifications differ insofar as no → casemate walls can be found in the western Shephelah and the coastal plain; the pottery differs markedly with the so-called Philistine pottery decreasing in frequency the further east a place lies in the land; the coastal inhabitants kept and consumed pigs, whereas the inhabitants of the hill country did not; the forms of burial differed insofar as rock-cut tombs with multiple burials can only be found from the ninth/eighth century in the hill country; the further processing of iron began in the Shephelah in the early Iron IIA period, while iron played no role in

the hill country at this time; written records of the Iron I–IIA period are striking for the Shephelah but are still missing in the hill country. Finally, the absence of luxury goods and Egyptian imports in the hill country is noticeable compared to the coastal plain (Gunnar Lehmann, Hermann M. Niemann). The differences clearly show that the coastal plain and the Shephelah were more developed and socioeconomically more differentiated than the culture found in the Judean and Samarian hill country during approximately the same period. Even if immigration and processes of intercultural exchange played a certain role, this was due less to ethnic differences and external influences than to different starting conditions for the development of a differentiated economy, which were clearly better in the coastal area and the fertile Shephelah than in the inaccessible and clearly less rainy hill country.

The differences in the material culture caused by external influences in the Iron I period, which cannot be derived from the southern Levant, quickly converged in an acculturation process up to the Iron II period. In the Iron IIB period (following the campaign of the Aramean king Hazael



Map 3. Philistine settlements. The map shows the five Philistine cities and settlements that, due to the occurrence of so-called Philistine pottery and other artifacts, are regarded as settlements of the Philistines in the Iron I and Iron IIA periods. The core area of the Iron IIB period Judah is provided for orientation.

into the Shephelah between 840 and 830 BCE), the material culture of the Shephelah was then identical to that of the hill country, which was also due to the associated economic boom in the Judean hill country and Judah's political influence on the Shephelah.

Some non-Semitic roots of the original language of the immigrants are still tangible in a few inscriptions and names (e.g., Achish, Goliath) (Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò), but most of the Philistines' writings used a local Canaanite dialect. A direct derivation of the form of writing from the Aegean can in any case be excluded based on evidence attested in very few Philistine inscriptions. Despite intensive excavation activities in Ekron, Gath, or Ashkelon, there are no signs that a non-→ indigenous Philistine script and language were systematically applied. The result here is the same: although there are influences from outside, the language did not stem from there. It is a Philistine local Canaanite dialect (Judg 12:6) rather than a Philistine language.

The same applies to the Philistine religion, if one wishes to speak of one at all. On the one hand, the figurine and plaque repertoire is also characterized by a recognizable continuity when compared to the Late Bronze Age Canaanite polytheism. Figurines classified as Philistine usually differ in their typological connections to Cypriot and Mycenaean types, for example, the so-called Ashdoda, a stylized representation of a seated woman, whose body is almost completely fused with the seating furniture. Fragments of such Ashdoda figurines come from all major Philistine settlements (e.g., thirty-seven from Ashdod, along with some from Ashkelon, Ekron, and Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile), but also from other places not considered Philistine (e.g., the Transjordanian Pella). The same applies to the male head forms of the figurines typical of the Philistines, which are also documented, for example, in Tel Moza near Jerusalem. The discovery of several thousand fragments of ceramic cult stands or temple models from a repository in Yavneh Yam is significant. Similar objects were also found at other sites. Above all, the Hebrew Bible mentions Dagon (Judg 16:23; 1 Sam 5; 1 Chr 10:10) as the deity of the Philistines. While Dagon used to be interpreted as an imported fish deity, today it is believed to have been a West Semitic deity associated with grain. Also, here the → allochthonous derivation of the Philistine religion has not been proven. The origin of the goddess Ptgyh, who is mentioned in a dedication inscription from a temple in Ekron from the seventh century BCE (COS 2.42, HTAT 192), is still a mystery. Also, here a connection with Greek cults (*Πυθωγαῖα) was often assumed (Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger). The Beelzebul mentioned

in 2 Kgs 1 is probably a local variant of the god Baal. The name, which is reproduced in the Hebrew text as Baal Zebub “Lord of the Flies,” is perhaps not, as is often assumed, a corruption of “Prince Baal” but a protective god connected with the defense against the oil fly (*dacus oleae*), to whom the huge olive groves in Ekron in the seventh century BCE (see §4.2.2.4) were entrusted for protection.

According to archaeological evidence, the Philistines did not possess an iron monopoly that would have cast them into military superiority over the Israelites (1 Sam 13:19–22), even though it is true that iron products are almost completely lacking in the hill country and the processing of iron products in Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfi began in the early Iron IIA period. Besides the biblical depiction, the impression that the Philistines were a warlike people with technologically advanced weaponry is created by the connection with the battle of the Sea Peoples (see §2.2.4) depicted in Medīnet Hābū and the idea of a warlike mass invasion (see §4.2.2.2). However, this cannot be maintained from the archaeological point of view (Aren M. Maeir, Louise A. Hitchcock).

More important than ethnic (i.e., ancestral) differences seems to be the cultural difference between the inhabitants of the coastal strip and the fertile Shephelah against those of the rather inaccessible hill country. The geographical location of the Via Maris favored its economic position, which was further supported by access to resources, logistics, trade, production, and innovation. The coastal plain formed urban elites far earlier than the hinterland. These mentioned aspects are reflected in the conflicts between Israel and the Philistines far more than an ethnic difference between the coastal inhabitants and the Israelites (Hermann M. Niemann).

4.2.2.4. The Philistine Pentapolis

The Bible provides the impression that the Philistines attained special strength through a five-tribe federation. Their rulers are named in Josh 13:3; Judg 3:3; 16:5, 8; 1 Sam 5:8, 11; 6:4, 16, 18; 7:7; 29:2; and elsewhere, not as kings (*mālākīm*) but as *sarānīm*, a word that is used biblically *only* for the Philistine princes. The word was associated with Greek *tyrannos* according to the hypothesis that the Philistines came from the Aegean. More likely, however, is a connection with the Luwian (originating from northern Syria) word for “warlord,” *tarwanis*. So far, the term has not been proven to be a self-designation of the local rulers of the Philistines. Be that as it may, it is striking that the Hebrew Bible emphasizes the peculiarity of

the Philistines' organization of rule and often speaks of *five* local rulers. Due to the connection with the Aegean Sea, the biblical evidence was related to a federation of cities and derived as a form of rule and life from (usually much later) Greek models. However, when viewed in detail, not much points to the political union of the five communities, known from the Greek world as synoecism. Moreover, the Libyan Pentapolis of western Cyrenaica cannot be viewed as the model for the five Philistine cities. The so-called Philistine Pentapolis with Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron, and Ashdod (see §4.2.2.3, map 3) does not constitute a union that was contractually bound or could be understood outside the Bible as a federation of cities. Only in the legendary tale of Samson and Delilah in Judg 16 and in the ark narrative in 1 Sam 5:8, 11 do the princes act together. But in these cases, they are not characterized by the number five. Perhaps, as in other places, the number five is a literary motif that summarizes the cities (Gen 14:2; Num 31:8; Josh 10:5–6; 1 Chr 4:32; Isa 19:18). A verifiable tribal alliance between the five dominant cities obviously did not exist; at least neither biblical nor extrabiblical references can be found. Rather, it concerns the five cities associated with the Philistines in the Bible (Josh 13:3; 1 Sam 6:16–18, cf. Judg 3:3), which historically formed cooperating but largely independent city-states.

None of the five cities can be considered a Philistine establishment. Since the urban area of ancient Gaza (Ġazze) probably lies below today's modern city and older excavations have hardly been undertaken there (Moain Sadeq, Peter M. Fischer), statements about pre-Philistine history remain uncertain. However, the name of the Egyptian province Canaan also stood for the city of Gaza as an administrative center (see §2.2.5) in texts of the Late Bronze Age, which underlines its importance. In Egypt during the seventh century BCE, Gaza was still called "Canaan of the Philistines." Gaza was probably also a trading emporium for long-distance trade with Egypt and northern Arabia. The city of Ashkelon (ʿAsqālān), which was also under Egyptian rule during the Late Bronze period, developed in continuity with the huge Middle Bronze Age complex that covered an area of almost 60 ha and was the largest of the five cities in the twelfth century BCE. The (uncertain) size and importance is due to the natural harbor, which distinguishes Ashkelon from Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. After destruction at the end of the Late Bronze period and the arrival or new settlement by the Philistines around 1175 BCE, Ashkelon, like the other Philistine cities, retained its traditional Semitic name—a further sign of cultural continuity. It is uncertain whether the entire settlement area of the Middle Bronze Age

enclosure of 50–60 ha was used in the Iron Age (Aaron Burke). Perhaps areas remained unpopulated or were used for agricultural purposes (personal communication from Daniel Master). The datum of 25–30 ha in the Iron Age is therefore likely to be a lower limit. Ekron (Ḥirbet el-Muqannaʿ/Tel Miqnē), which lies further inland, was small during the Late Bronze period but was active in trade and exchange relationships. The city was destroyed by fire at the end of the Late Bronze period and a larger Philistine city was rebuilt in the Iron I period (Strata VII–VI). The rebuilt Ekron shows architectural influences from Mycenaean palace architecture, and the material culture is typically identified as Philistine. But initially there was a short phase in Stratum VIII in which Late Bronze Age continuity dominated. For example, the → glyptic from Gath (Tell eš-Šāfi) also shows that the Iron I period city developed in continuity with the Late Bronze period administration (Stefan Münster). In Ashkelon, which was the most important city after Gaza in the Late Bronze Age, there is more continuity than discontinuity in the Iron I apart from the emergence of sub-Mycenaean pottery. In Ashdod, Late Bronze Age cooking pots remain as modern as those from the Aegean, even during the Iron I period. A large part of the population was made up of → indigenous Canaanites, who did not simply disappear with the arrival of the new settlers. Neither the end of the Late Bronze period nor the new Philistine beginnings reveal a homogeneous process that could be sufficiently explained by an invasion of the Sea Peoples. Assaf Yasur-Landau speaks of opportunistic settlers instead of violent conquerors. It is difficult to say in which period the cities, according to the material culture, were Philistine; that is, Minoan (architecture), Cypriot (pottery), Anatolian (elements in the language), and southwestern European (ritual knives) influences can be discerned that complemented the → Canaanite culture. Neither in pottery nor in the → glyptics, → iconography, → epigraphy, nor in other material culture from the cities can Philistine markers simply be read out that would allow for the conclusion of a closed Philistine ethnicity or a Pentapolis (Aren M. Maeir, Louise A. Hitchcock). In any case, the five cities did not experience a sudden change caused by migration, which made them Philistine cities rather than Canaanite ones. To a (small) extent, the influences in material culture are already discernible *before* the destruction by, and the arrival of, the Philistines (Assaf Yasur-Landau). The new hybrid mixed culture can rather be described as Philisto-Canaanite, and some external influences may not be due to immigration alone, but also to imitation by the local elite (so-called elite emulation) (Susan Sherratt).

The size of the populated area also indicates that the weight shifted several times during the Iron I and Iron II periods. While Ashdod/Esdūd only had a medium sized settlement area of ca. 7 ha in the twelfth–ninth centuries BCE, it grew throughout the eighth century BCE to 30 ha. After the destruction of the city in 711 BCE, the settlement of Ashdod-Yam, located directly by the sea, could no longer reach the previous size of Ashdod with 15 ha. Gaza also grew in the transition from Iron I to Iron II, reflecting the increasing expansion of the Assyrians into the Negev. Ekron/Ḥirbet el-Muqanna'/Tel Miqnē, on the other hand, was dominant and consistently large in the Iron I period, but in the ninth/eighth century BCE it was reduced to an insignificant 4 ha. Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfi reached its peak in the tenth/ninth century BCE, when it was the largest city in the region, with an inhabited area of 45–50 ha. Following the destruction by the Aramean king Hazael in the second half of the ninth century BCE (cf. 2 Kgs 12:18), it fell into insignificance from the eighth–sixth centuries BCE (Hermann M. Niemann; see §5.6.1, table 9). Following the uprisings in Gaza and Ashdod in 711 BCE, the coastline of the Assyrian province and the autonomous existence of the city-states ended. Under the *pax assyriaca*, Ekron, for example, experienced an unprecedented boom as an olive oil producer (Seymour Gitin) (see §5.8.4). Ashkelon was the only city in the Pentapolis to remain about the same size throughout the Iron Age, with at least 25–30 ha (see above).

Although the explicit details regarding regional shifts are unattested in the biblical presentation, it perhaps allows the development to show through in some places (e.g., in 2 Kgs 1 and the meaning of Ekron or in the absence of Gath in Jer 25:20; Zeph 2:4; Zech 9:5–7 compared to Amos 6:2). First Samuel 4–6 shows that Israel was inferior at first, but then under Saul (1 Sam 13–14) and David (2 Sam 5:17–25), it became stronger than the Philistines and controlled them. Archaeologically, there are no traces of early conflicts between Israel and an entity acting as a union called the Philistines. The destruction layer of Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile, Stratum X, was often associated with David in the past. Yet it provides no indication of the united monarchy's unfolding dominance over the Philistines in the tenth century BCE, even though Avraham Faust adheres to it with far-reaching consequences. This is also true for Ḥirbet Qēyafa, which is identified by the excavators with Shaaraim (1 Sam 17:52) and is interpreted as a boundary site fortified by David at the transition to the Philistine territory (see §4.5.4). The western expansion of the early Judean state in the second half of the ninth century BCE possibly provides the context for stories of

David's confrontations with the Philistines (1 Sam 23:1–5; 2 Sam 5:17–25; 8:1) (Nadav Na'aman, Omer Sergi). While David and early conflicts with the states of Israel and Judah that were emerging in the hill country left little or no traces, Philistine culture in the ninth/eighth century BCE was more or less completely integrated into the regional context. The economically and geopolitically more significant change in the region can be seen in the archaeologically demonstrable destruction of the city of Gath by the Aramean king Hazael around 830 BCE (see §5.3.4). The conquest of the Philistine metropolis not only ended an unbroken continuity from the Iron I period, but also enabled the western expansion of the Judean state (see §5.4.5.3).

4.2.3. The Arameans and Israel's Development

Arav, Rami, and Richard A. **Freund**. *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee*. Bethsaida Excavations Project Reports and Contextual Studies 3. Edited by Richard A. Freund. Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2004. ♦ **Berlejung**, Angelika, Aren M. **Maeir**, and Andreas **Schüle**. *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives*. LAOS 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017. ♦ **Berlejung**, Angelika, and Michael P. **Streck**. *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millennium B.C.* LAOS 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013. ♦ **Dušek**, Jan, and Jana **Mynářová**. *Aramean Borders: Defining Aramean Territories in the Tenth–Eighth Centuries B.C.E.* CHANE 101. Leiden: Brill, 2019. ♦ **Faßbeck**, Gabriele. *Leben am See Gennesaret: Kulturgeschichtliche Entdeckungen in einer biblischen Region*. Mainz: von Zabern, 2003. ♦ **Frevel**, Christian. “Die Geschichte ist zurück: Neuere Literatur im Umfeld der Geschichte Israels.” *ThRev* 112 (2016): 3–24. ♦ **Frevel**. “State Formation in the Southern Levant: The Case of the Arameans and the Role of Hazael's Expansion.” Pages 347–72 in *Research on Israel and Aram: Autonomy, Independence and Related Issues; Proceedings of the First Annual RIAB Center Conference, Leipzig, June 2016; Research on Israel and Aram in Biblical Times I*. Edited by Angelika Berlejung and Aren M. Maeir. ORA 34. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019. ♦ **Frevel**. “Was Aram an Empire? A Kind of a Shibboleth-Question.” *Sem* 60 (2018): 397–426. ♦ **Hafþórsson**, Sigurður. *A Passing Power: An Examination of the Sources for the History of Aram-Damascus in the Second Half of the Ninth Century B.C.* ConBOT 54. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006. ♦ **Kleiman**, Assaf, and Omer **Sergi**. “The Kingdom of Geshur and the Expansion of Aram-Damascus into the Northern Jordan Valley: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives.” *BASOR* 379 (2018): 1–18. ♦ **Lipiński**, Edward. *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*. OLA 100. Leuven: Peeters, 2000. ♦ **Lipiński**. *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches*. OLA 153. Leuven: Peeters,

2006. ♦ **Na'aman**, Nadav. "The Kingdom of Geshur in History and Memory." *SJOT* 26 (2012): 88–101. ♦ **Yahalom-Mack**, Naama, Nava **Panitz-Cohen**, and Robert **Mullins**. "From a Fortified Canaanite City-State to a City and a Mother in Israel: Five Seasons of Excavation at Tel Abel Beth Maacah." *NEA* 81 (2018): 145–56. ♦ **Younger**, K. Lawson, Jr. *A Political History of the Arameans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Polities*. ABS 13. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016. ♦ **Zwickel**, Wolfgang. "Zwei Aramäerstaaten in der Beqa'-Ebene." *UF* 47 (2016): 431–48.

The Arameans play a special role in the biblical depiction. Jacob, who is later called Israel (Gen 32:29; 35:10), is closely related to the Arameans as Abraham's grandson. In Gen 22:21 Kemuel, the progenitor of the Arameans, is called a nephew of Abraham. Rebekah, Jacob's mother, is a granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen 22:20). Jacob stays with Rebekah's brother, Laban (Gen 24:29), to court his two wives, Leah and Rachel, the mothers of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen 29:1–31:25). If it is true that → genealogies do not so much reflect actual relationships but political relationships, this positive image of the Arameans must either have come from a time when relations between Arameans and Israel were close and positive or when the bearers of the tradition knew that they were closely connected to Aram because of their own history. Section 5.3 shows that in the ninth century BCE the territory of Israel north of the Sea of Galilee was dominated by Arameans and inhabited by an amalgamated Aramean-Israelite population. The fact that the positive image of the Arameans can also be linked to the legitimacy of the → *golah*, that is, the Israelites who returned from exile, does not have to exclude the late preexilic early dating of the tradition (Erhard Blum, Nadav Na'aman). In many other references in the Hebrew Bible, the relationship to the Arameans is clearly less positive. Already in Judg 3:8–10, the king of Aram-naharaim is said to have attacked Israel but not defeated it. David is said to have defeated the Arameans from Zobah, namely, Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, and the Arameans of Aram-Damascus (2 Sam 8:5–10) who were allied with him (§4.2.3.2). Their attempts to free themselves from David's domination by forming an alliance with the Ammonites failed (2 Sam 10). The Arameans are perceived in these texts, on the one hand, as a closed entity; on the other hand, several kingdoms are mentioned: Aram-zobah, Aram Beth-rehob, Aram-Damascus, Hamath, Maacah, and Geshur. These can be connected with the Aramean small states, all of which lie north of Israel and some of which already existed in the eleventh/tenth century BCE. While in past research little attention was paid to the Arameans, within the

(approximately) last decade they have gained a strong focus (K. Lawson Younger Jr., Herbert Niehr, Christian Frevel). Looking at the development of the discussion in recent years, there are far-reaching parallels between the reconstruction of the history of Israel and Judah and the history of the Arameans. This concerns, for example, questions of → indigenous or → allochthonous origin, the emergence of state structures from clusters of local rule, and the constructed character of the biblical representation of the early days of the Arameans.

4.2.3.1. Origin and Formation of the Arameans

The Arameans, like the Moabites, Philistines, or early Israelites, were not a homogeneous population. The term *Aramean* does not seem to have been a self-designation either but only a foreign name that first appears as “the land of the Arameans” (for an area in northeast Syria) in Assyrian sources of the twelfth century BCE. While the older conquest theories assumed that the Arameans migrated from arid desert areas to Syria in large groups (which made them comparable to the Israelites; cf. Deut 26:5), today one can assume that the Arameans (like the early Israelites) emerged from the transformation processes after the collapse of the Late Bronze Age urban culture in and from Syria (Angelika Berlejung). As in the Manassite-Ephraimite hill country (see §3.5), the Arameans were also a multiethnic, mixed population composed of a few immigrants, former city dwellers, and → tribally organized, nonurbanized peoples, who supported themselves via animal husbandry and seasonal agriculture. From the late twelfth/early eleventh century BCE onward, a phase of → urbanization began, leading to the emergence of new urban centers. These represent the germ cells for the formation of the first Aramean sub-state (chiefdom) and then state (monarchy) structures, which arose from exchanges with the tribal-structured hinterland and were also involved in transregional trade in precious metals and ivory. With the beginning of the first millennium BCE, a considerable number of Aramean microstates and local kingdoms (e.g., Bit Agusi, Bit Gabbari/Sam’al, Hamath, Bit Baḥiani, Bit Adini) were formed from the Euphrates to southern Syria/Lebanon, of which, above all, Aram-Damascus is of significance for the history of Israel (see §5.3.4). From the tenth/ninth century BCE, Arameans also settled in the areas that are traditionally counted as Israelite: Zobah, Beth-rehob, and Abel-Beth-Maacah in the southern Beqaa Valley and Upper Galilee, in the western Golan, and in the area around the Sea

of Galilee. The initially independent chiefdoms were gradually consumed by Aram-Damascus. Prior to the conquest of Damascus in 732 BCE, however, primarily the regions of northern Israel (Galilee, Sea of Galilee, Jezreel Plain) were exposed to mutual claims from Israel and from the strengthened Aramean state (cf., e.g., 1 Kgs 15:20). A strengthening of Israel was possible whenever Aram-Damascus came under pressure from the Assyrians in the west. Especially since in the northern region of Israel, Arameans and Israelites were not culturally, linguistically, or ethnically clearly distinguishable from each other, one can speak of flexible loyalties of the inhabitants toward the respective dominant centers of power. The inhabitants were a multiethnic amalgam from very different groups. So, it is not surprising that the material culture does not provide sufficient evidence for an ethnic differentiation between Arameans and Israelites.

4.2.3.2. The Arameans' Political Importance in the First Millennium BCE

The political importance and presence of the Aramean part of the population and their political structures should not be underestimated for the north of Israel as a whole. Stated differently: without the Arameans no state could be made in the area north of the Jezreel Plain and the Beth-Shean Plain. The same applies to the land east of the Jordan. Neither Israel nor the Arameans considered the Jordan River a (geopolitical or natural) border. In the north of Gilead and the southern Bashan, as well as in the lake region of lower Galilee, Aramean populations lived from the tenth/ninth century BCE onward, regardless of who was holding the political reins. The influence of Aram-Damascus expanded—if not already under Ben-Hadad I (ca. 900–875 BCE), then at any rate under Hadadezer (875–845 BCE) and massively under Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE)—to such an extent that the Aramean substates located in Israel's sphere of influence partly came under the control of Damascus as → vassals (Edward Lipiński).

The biblical report about the early cultural contacts between Arameans and Israelites are not historically reliable. The statement of the so-called small historical creed in Deut 26:5–9 (Gerhard von Rad), formerly regarded as the primordial rock of biblical tradition, which ascribes the ethnic origins of Israel to the Arameans on the basis of family ties, is usually no longer associated with the beginnings of tradition formation in contemporary exegesis. Also, the romanticized positive interpretation of the migration to Egypt ("a wandering Aramean," NRSV) has rather given

way to an interpretation of threat (“an Aramean close to extinction”—“Mein Vater war ein Aramäer, dem Umkommen nahe,” revised Bible translation by Martin Luther 2017) or failure (“an extinct Aramean was my father,” Eckart Otto). This leads to a deposition rather than an identification of the origins with the Arameans, which places the text in relation to postexilic perspectives. The initially plausible identification of the father mentioned in Deut 26:5 with the ancestor Jacob/Israel (Gen 32:29; 35:10) and thus the connection with the Aram notices in the narratives (Gen 31:20, 24, cf. Gen 25:20; 28:5) faces the difficulty that neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob were Arameans (see §4.2.3.1).

The biblical tradition speaks of an Aramean king named Cushan-Rishathaim, who oppressed Israel before Othniel defeated him (Judg 3:8–10). The event as well as the name and existence of this ruler are mere fictions from the sixth century BCE at the earliest. Even the notes on the early state disputes hardly provide any reliable information from a historical point of view. The expansion of David’s rule is said to have been accompanied by military confrontations with the Arameans and to have resulted in a comprehensive vassalage of the Aramean territories (2 Sam 8:5–12). Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, appears there as king of Zobah. Zobah/Šobah is documented as an Aramean microstate in the ninth/eighth century BCE (see §5.3.3). Nonetheless, extrabiblical references to the early period are missing. Moreover, it is not quite clear how far the territory in the Beqaa Valley (Wādī l-Biqāʿ), east of the Lebanon Mountains, reached and whether it was identical with Beth-Rehob, to which the father’s name could refer as → eponym (Edward Lipiński, Nadav Naʿaman). In any case Hadadezer is not documented as the ruler of Zobah, but of Aram-Damascus in the ninth century BCE (see §5.3.4). The same applies to King Toi (2 Sam 8:9), who was king of Hamath on the Orontes and whose son, Hadoram, is said to have given tribute to David. Whether there is actually a connection to the inscribed Taita of Palistin/Walistin in the eleventh/tenth century BCE (Charles Steitler, Pavál Čech), to whose kingdom Hamath belonged (see §4.2.2), is questionable (K. Lawson Younger Jr.). This is especially likely, since the report in 2 Sam 8:9–11 has similarities to the annals of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE).

Thus, David’s subjugation of the Arameans and their integration into a great empire remain far more legend than reality (see §4.5.7). The formation of tradition seems to have been oriented more toward later facts of the ninth/eighth century BCE (“passe-partout for Hazael,” Ernst Axel

Knauf), which is also confirmed for the early history of Aram-Damascus (see §5.3.4).

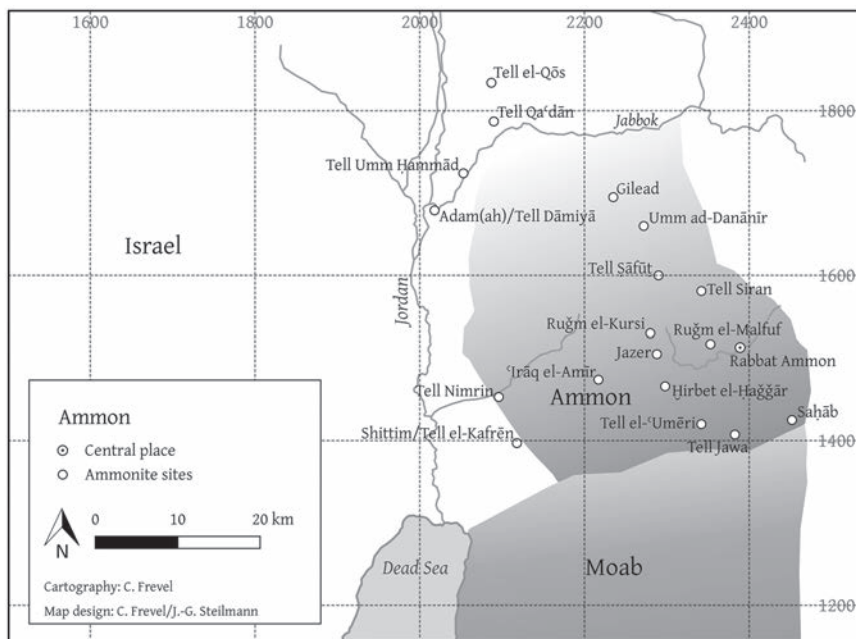
4.2.4. The Ammonites and the Early Israelite Kingdom

Aufrecht, Walter Emanuel. “Ammonites and the Books of Kings.” Pages 245–49 in *Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography, and Reception*. Edited by André Lemaire, Baruch Halpern, and Matthew J. Adams. VTSup 129. Leiden: Brill, 2010. ♦ **Groß**, Walter. *Richter*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2009. ♦ **Hübner**, Ulrich. *Die Ammoniter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion eines transjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* ADPV 16. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1992. ♦ **Kratz**, Reinhard G. “Nahash, King of the Ammonites, in the Deuteronomistic History.” Pages 163–88 in *Insights into Editing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East: What Does Documented Evidence Tell Us about the Transmission of Authoritative Texts?* Edited by Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala. CBET 84. Leuven: Peeters, 2017. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded. “Ammon in Transition from Vassal Kingdom to Babylonian Province.” *BASOR* 335 (2004): 37–52. ♦ **MacDonald**, Burton, and Randall W. **Younker**, eds. *Ancient Ammon*. SHCANE 17. Leiden: Brill, 1999. ♦ **Roskop Erisman**, Angela. “For the Border of the Ammonites Was ... Where? Historical Geography and Biblical Interpretation in Numbers 21.” Pages 761–76 in *The Formation of the Pentateuch*. Edited by Jan Christian Gertz, Bernard M. Levinson, Dalit Rom-Shiloni, and Konrad Schmid. FAT 111. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016. ♦ **Tyson**, Craig William. *The Ammonites: Elites, Empires, and Sociopolitical Change (1000–500 BCE)*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. ♦ **Tyson**. “The Religion of the Ammonites: A Specimen of Levantine Religion from the Iron Age II (ca. 1000–500 BCE).” *Religions* 10 (2019): 1–33.

The Ammonites were a small neighboring people in Transjordan who in the polemically colored biblical representation were closely related → genealogically to Moab (Gen 19:38). Unlike Moab (see §4.2.5) and Edom (see §4.2.6), the Hebrew Bible does not report any conflict with the Ammonites during the time of the desert migration (Deut 2:19–21; Num 21:24). On the other hand, the Bible tells of disputes with the Ammonites in the prestate period of the judges (Judg 3:13; 10:6–12:7), for Saul (1 Sam 11:1–11), and for David (2 Sam 10; 11:1; 12:26–31).

The area of the Ammonites, situated on the Transjordan plateau, bordered the desert to the east, Moab to the south, and Gilead, Israel, and the Arameans to the north. Biblically, the upper Jabbok River and the Arnon are named as boundaries (Num 21:24; Deut 3:16; Josh 12:2; Judg 11:13). The place named Jazer can perhaps be identified with Ḥirbet eṣ-Ṣār. Where the western border ran is not entirely clear, but it *did not* include the fertile

Jordan Valley, which includes Shittim/Tell el-Kefrēn, Zarethān (perhaps Tell el-Qōs or Tell Umm Ḥammād), Adam(ah)/Tell Dāmiyā, and Succoth/Tell Dēr ‘Allā. The central locale was Rabbah (Deut 3:11; 2 Sam 12:26–31; Jer 49:3) or Rabbat-Ammon (Ezek 21:25), the present-day ‘Ammān.



Map 4. Area of Ammon.

By naming Nahash and Hanun (1 Sam 11:1–2; 2 Sam 10:1–4; 17:27), the biblical report gives the appearance of historical information, as if there had been a kingdom on the other side of the Jordan parallel to Israel. The notes, however, are to be related, if at all, to proto-Ammonite leader figures and do not say much about statehood. The Ammonite monarchy was connected with the development into a territorial state, which apparently developed at about the same time as the Israelite monarchy in the first half of the ninth century BCE. The archaeological findings are relatively difficult to interpret, especially as there are no clear Ammonite artifacts that would verify an assignment to the Ammonites. Heshbon/Tell Ḥesbān, for instance, one of the most important cities on the Jordanian plateau after the capital, is not yet mentioned in the Mesha Stela. The place was urbanized for a short time in the tenth century BCE, but only

became significant in the seventh/sixth century BCE. Outside the Hebrew Bible, a king Šanip of Beth-Ammon is documented in the vassal lists of Tiglath-pileser III in the second half of the eighth century BCE and from then on in Assyrian inscriptions (*HTAT* 140, 181–97; *COS* 2.117A–B, D, 2.119B–C). Late Bronze Age sources for the area on the Jordanian plateau are missing. Between the decline of the Late Bronze Age cities (‘Ammān, Saḥāb) and the emergence of a regionally more significant kingdom, the Ammonite territory was thinly populated by a largely → indigenous rural society (see §4.2.4). In terms of road networks, it was connected to the King’s Highway, the most important north-south axis in Transjordan. Thus, the Ammonites were able to profit from long-distance trade between the Arabian Peninsula and Damascus, especially in their heyday from the eighth to the sixth centuries BCE. Under the protection of the Assyrian superpower, Ammon was able to assert itself as a vassal until the end of its statehood. Due to foreign policy misjudgments (Jer 27:3; Ezek 21:23–29), the Neo-Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BCE) liquidated the state of Ammon in 582/81 BCE. In the first half of the first millennium BCE, economic life on the Transjordan plateau was still predominantly agricultural and the society was only slightly structured. There are few signs of international contacts (Craig William Tyson). Under these conditions, the early history of the disputes between Israel and Ammon seems historically less probable. There may have been isolated conflicts with the northern bordering inhabitants of Gilead (biblically, the Gadites) and perhaps also with the leaders of the early state of Israel reaching into Transjordan, which may be reflected in the biblical report. As a historical report, however, the data on the early conflicts cannot be taken as accurate, so that, as in the case of the Philistines and Moabites, they cannot be used as a safe haven for Israel’s early history. The assumption that the disputes with Saul, David, and Solomon were developed at a later period and contain little evidence of the early history of the monarchy is more likely.

4.2.5. The Moabites

Bean, Adam L., Christopher A. **Rollston**, P. Kyle **McCarter**, and Stefan J. **Wimmer**. “An Inscribed Altar from the Khirbat Ataruz Moabite Sanctuary.” *Levant* 50 (2018): 211–36. ♦ **Becking**, Bob. “A Voice from across the Jordan: Royal Ideology as Implied in the Moabite Stela.” Pages 125–45 in *Herrschaftslegitimation in vorderorientalischen Reichen der Eisenzeit*. Edited by Christoph Levin and Reinhard Müller. ORA 21. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017. ♦ **Bienkowski**, Piotr. *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of*

Michèle Daviau. ANESSup 29. Leuven: Peeters, 2009. ♦ **Clark**, Douglas L., Larry G. **Herr**, Øystein S. **LaBianca**, and Randall W. **Younker**. *The Madaba Plains Project: Forty Years of Archaeological Research into Jordan's Past*. London: Routledge, 2016. ♦ **Daviau**, P. M. Michèle, and Margreet L. **Steiner**. *A Wayside Shrine in Northern Moab: Excavations in the Wadi ath-Thamad*. Oxford: Oxbow, 2017. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel, and Thomas **Römer**. "Early North Israelite 'Memories' of Moab." Pages 711–27 in *The Formation of the Pentateuch*. Edited by Jan Christian Gertz, Bernard M. Levinson, Dalit Rom-Shiloni, and Konrad Schmid. FAT 111. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel, Nadav Na'aman, and Thomas **Römer**. "Restoring Line 31 in the Mesha Stele: The 'House of David' or Biblical Balak?" *TA* 46 (2019): 3–11. ♦ **Frevel**, Christian. "The Various Shapes of Moab in the Book of Numbers: Relating Text and Archaeology." *HBAI* 8 (2019): 257–86. ♦ **Gass**, Erasmus. *Die Moabiter: Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* ADPV 38. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009. ♦ **Lemaire**, André. "La dynastie Davidique (byt dwd) dans deux inscriptions ouest-sémitiques du IXe S. av. J.-C." *SEL* 11 (1994): 17–19. ♦ **Timm**, Stefan. *Moab zwischen den Mächten: Studien zu historischen Denkmälern und Texten*. ÄAT 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989. ♦ **Weippert**, Manfred. "Ar und Kir in Jesaja 15,1: Mit Erwägungen zur historischen Geographie Moabs." *ZAW* 110 (1998): 547–55. ♦ **Weippert**. "Mōši's Moab." *Transeu* 46 (2014): 133–51.

The relationship between Israel and Moab was not that of allied brother states. This is already shown by the distorting polemics in the story of Gen 19:30–38. The etiological narrative, which is closely related to Gen 19:8, interprets the name Moab in Gen 19:37 as denoting "from the father," thus alluding to an incestuous liaison as the origin of the neighboring people. Even before their entering the promised land, Israel's conflicts with Moab play an important role (Num 21:29–30). Finally, in Deut 23:4, the so-called law of the congregation states that Moabites and Ammonites may never enter the congregation, not even in the tenth generation. The hostility between Moab and Israel seems to be as deep as the hostility between Israel and Edom, and it seems to have its origin in the same era: the period of Israel's forty years in the wilderness. The biblical record gives the impression that Moab had always been constituted as a state. The Bible mentions several kings of Moab. The ruler of Num 21:26, who is said to have waged war against the legendary Amorite king Sihon, remains unnamed. The Balaam narrative in Num 22–24 knows a king named Balak, whose father is called Zippor. Neither Zippor ("bird") nor his son Balak ("he destroyed") are recorded with certainty outside the Hebrew Bible (even if the name *b[lq]* was recently reconstructed in the difficult reading of line 31 of the

Mesha Stela by Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Na'aman, and Thomas Römer, see §4.2.5.2). The lack of extrabiblical attestation is not surprising historically speaking, because there are no signs of a developed statehood for Moab in the twelfth–ninth centuries BCE. However, Moab is already mentioned in the inscriptions of Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE), which refer to a region or an early substate entity (see below). Also King Eglon, mentioned in Judg 3:12, 14, 15, 17, and the unnamed king whom David asks for help for the shelter of his ancestors (1 Sam 22:3) can be largely excluded from a historical evaluation (Walter Groß, Erasmus Gass). Only with King Mesha, who is mentioned (or perhaps even supplemented) in 2 Kgs 3:4, does one enter safe ground. That is because Mesha is documented extrabiblically in the second half of the ninth century BCE (see §5.4.3) in the Mesha Stela (or the so-called Moabite Stone) stemming from Dibon, which was found in 1868. Besides that, a Moabite king is attested in the so-called El-Kerak inscription. The → orthostat fragment acquired in 1958 reads *k]mšyt.mlk.m'b* “Chemoshyat, King of Moab.” On this basis, the first line of the Mesha Stela is usually read as “I am Mesha, the son of Chemosh[yat], the king of Moab, the Dibonite,” thus naming two kings for the early state of Moab. The Mesha Stela, which is probably to be interpreted as a building inscription for a high-place or sanctuary of Chemosh (Manfred Weippert), reports of a prolonged struggle between the house of Omri and Chemoshyat, which extended over one generation to the reigns of Ahab, son of Omri, and Mesha, son of Chemoshyat.

4.2.5.1. Moab's Territory and State

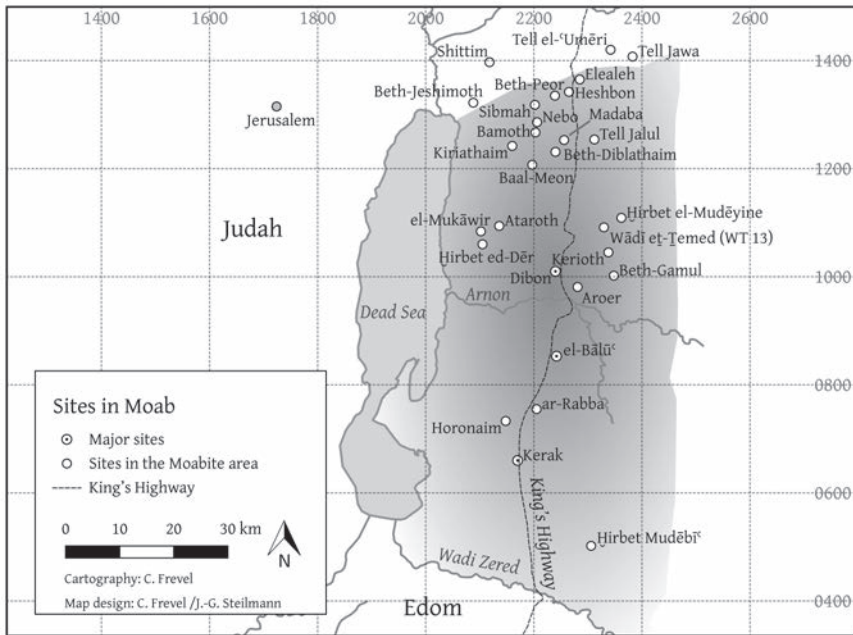
The name *Moab* is probably originally a name of a region and not the name of a state. Moab refers to the high plateau of the Arḏ el-Kerak (Num 21:15; Deut 2:9; Isa 15:1), located between the two deeply cut valleys caused by the Arnon (Wādī el-Mōḡīb) in the north, which flows into the Dead Sea (roughly in the middle, north of the Lisan Peninsula), and the Zered (Wādī el-Ḥesā) in the south, which flows into the southern end of the Dead Sea and marks the northern border of Edom. The most important place within this central area in the Iron II period was el-Bālū' (often mentioned also as Ḥirbet el-Balū'a/Khirbat al-Balū'a/Bālū'a, etc.), which was protected by a number of fortresses (Israel Finkelstein, Oded Lipschits). Other important places were Kerak (Kir-Moab?) and ar-Rabba. The place where the Mesha Stela was found did not belong to it but to the district north of it, which is

bounded by the Wādī l-Wāla and the Wādī l-Hēdān. Dibon/Tell Ḍibān—an early settled town on the most important north-south traffic route, the so-called King's Highway (Num 20:17; 21:22)—belongs to this northern district. Although the excavations at Dibon have already uncovered larger buildings for the Iron I period, there is some evidence of expansion during the Iron IIA period, either by King Mesha (Mesha Stela) or previously by the Omrides (2 Kgs 3:4). Actually, Dibon is probably a landscape name and the city can instead be identified as Qarḥo mentioned in the Mesha Stela (Manfred Weippert).

Dibon, like the other cities in this region, is typically attributed to Moab (Isa 15:9; Jer 48:18, 22), but in conquest texts it is attributed to the Israelite tribes (Num 32:3, 34–38; Josh 13:9, 17). It is important to understand that Moab extended territorially far to the north, but this northern border was changing (differently Erasmus Gass, for whom the settlement impulse always came from the north). Places as important as Ataroth/Ḥirbet 'Atārūz (Num 32:3, 34; Josh 16:2, 57) or Madaba, Heshbon/Tell Ḥesbān (Num 21:25–30; Isa 15:4; Jer 48:2), and Elealeh/al-'Āl (Num 32:3, 37; Isa 16:9; Jer 48:34) were not always Moabite territory. Particularly among the Omrides, the area from the northern end of the Dead Sea to the Arnon (Wādī el-Mōḡib) was contested, as the Mesha Stela testifies. There King Mesha reclaimed for himself the territory that Omri and Ahab are said to have taken from the Moabite royal house in the ninth century BCE. The places that Mesha claims to have reconquered and expanded all point to the disputed area north of the Arnon: Madaba, Baal-Meon, Kiriathaim, Ataroth, Kerioth, Nebo, Jahaz, Qarḥo/Dibon, Bamot, and Beth-Diblathaim.

A newly discovered ninth/eighth-century BCE Moabite inscription from a sanctuary in Ataroth/Ḥirbet 'Atārūz possibly gives new evidence for the Israelite/Moabite territorial border. The text, inscribed on a limestone incense altar, is difficult to read but perhaps refers to the “Hebrews” (the Israelites?) and the acquisition of land (Adam L. Bean).

The fact that Moab's boundaries have at times extended as far as the northernmost part of the Dead Sea is also evidenced by the designation of the Gōr lowlands opposite Jericho as the “plains of Moab” (Num 22:1; 26:3, etc.). Israel camped in Shittim/Tell el-Kefrēn (Num 25:1; Josh 2:1; 3:1) and met the Moabites there. According to the biblical data, Moses gave his great farewell speech in Beth-peor/el-Muṣaqqar (Deut 3:29; 4:46) in Moab (Deut 1:5) and died on Nebo, which is also explicitly in Moab (Deut 32:49; 34:1; Isa 15:2; Jer 48:1).



Map 5. Settlements of the so-called Moabites. The map shows the area of Moab at its maximum extent north and south of the Arnon River.

4.2.5.2. Early Substate Moab before Mesha

The complex state of affairs, the changing claims, and the detailed local information in the biblical texts underline the importance of this region, whose highlands are extremely fertile and suitable for growing grains. The deeply carved valleys made it difficult to control, which is why the cities along the trade routes in particular gained importance. The most important trade route was the King's Highway, which runs north–south over the plateau and connects the port at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba/Eilat with Syria. This road also leads through the copper mining area in the Arabah. The extent to which this road was already used for the flourishing trade in the Late Bronze Age is controversial (Erasmus Gass). Perhaps the significance of this trade route explains the emergence of a chiefdom in the area of Moab in the eleventh/tenth century BCE. In connection with copper trading in the Fēnān area to the south, however, the first copper trading centers were established as early as the eleventh century. In the tenth century BCE, a not yet fully developed state or rather a chiefdom

in Dibon/Dībān and south of the Arnon River (Wādī el-Mōğib), whose central or at least most important place was el-Bālū^ʿ/Ḥirbet el-Balu^ʿa, was protected by a number of fortresses (Israel Finkelstein, Oded Lipschits). After the collapse of the copper trade, which may have been caused by Shoshenq I (946/945–924 BCE) (see §4.8), this consortium, which perhaps stands behind the memory of Sihon in Num 21:26, broke up. The great Moab only emerged gradually in the Iron IIA period in the ninth century BCE, when it came into conflict with the Omride dynasty and to which the Mesha Stela bears witness.

Earlier conflicts, which the Bible dates to the time of David and Solomon, are thus not completely impossible, even if they remain unlikely for other reasons (see §4.5.4). The attempt to substantiate David's role in southern Moab extrabiblically by reading *bt[d]wd* in line 31 of the Mesha Inscription (“and the house of David lived there [in Ḥawrōnēn],” André Lemaire) is unlikely for historical and epigraphic reasons. On the one hand, the reading *bt[d]wd* is quite uncertain (as is the aforementioned alternative suggested by Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Naʿaman, and Thomas Römer of a reference to the Moabite king Balak; see §§3.2.5.1, 4.5.2). On the other hand, suggesting that the rather small Jerusalemite kingdom dominated Horonaim south of the Arnon (see §4.5.2) makes little sense in the tenth century BCE in geo-strategic and political respects.

4.2.6. The Edomites

Bienkowski, Piotr. “The Beginning of the Iron Age in Edom: A Reply to Finkelstein.” *Levant* 24 (1992): 167–69. ♦ **Danielson**, Andrew J. “Edom in Judah: An Archaeological Investigation of Identity, Interaction, and Social Entanglement in the Negev during the Late Iron Age (Eighth–Sixth Centuries BCE).” PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2020. ♦ **Danielson**. “On the History and Evolution of Qws: The Portrait of a First Millennium BCE Deity Explored through Community Identity.” *JANER* 20 (2021): 113–89. ♦ **Edelman**, Diana Vikander, ed. *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He Is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition*. ABS 3. Atlanta: Scholars, 1995. ♦ **Frevel**, Christian. “‘Esau, der Vater Edoms’ (Gen 36,9.43): Ein Vergleich der Edom-Überlieferungen in Genesis und Numeri vor dem Hintergrund der historischen Entwicklung.” Pages 329–64 in *The Politics of the Ancestors: Exegetical and Historical Perspectives on Genesis 12–36*. Edited by Mark G. Brett and Jakob Wöhrle. FAT 124. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018. ♦ **Hensel**, Benedikt, Ehud **Ben Zvi**, and Diana Vikander **Edelman**, eds. *About Edom and Idumea in the Persian Period*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2022. ♦ **Knauf**, Ernst Axel. *Ismael: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und*

Nordarabiens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989. ♦ **Levy**, Thomas E., Mohammad **Najjar**, and Erez **Ben-Yosef**. *New Insights into the Iron Age Archaeology of Edom, Southern Jordan: Surveys, Excavations, and Research from the University of California, San Diego—Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Edom Lowlands Regional Archaeology Project (ELRAP)*. Vol. 1. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2014. ♦ **Na’aman**, Nadav. “Judah and Edom in the Book of Kings and in Historical Reality.” Pages 197–211 in *New Perspectives on Old Testament Prophecy and History: Essays in Honour of Hans M. Barstad*. Edited by Rannfrid I. Thelle, Terje Stordalen, and Mervyn E. J. Richardson. VTSup 168. Leiden: Brill, 2015. ♦ **Tebes**, Juan Manuel, ed. *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the Negev and Edom in the Iron Age*. ANESSup 45. Leuven: Peeters, 2014. ♦ **Weippert**, Manfred. “Edom.” Diss., Universität Tübingen, 1971.

In the biblical stories, Edom is tied to Esau and thus moved into close kinship with Jacob/Israel (Gen 25:30; 36:8). The relationship between Israel and Edom was strained since the early days by the brothers’ conflict. Biblical accounts also suggest that the first conflicts arose when the Edomites refused to allow the Israelites to pass through their territory (Num 20:14–21). Saul was said to have waged war with the Edomites (1 Sam 14:47). David crushed the Edomites in the Valley of Salt and set *nešibîm* over them (2 Sam 8:13–14), which is usually rendered in English translations as “garrisons” but denotes “bailiffs” or “governors.”

4.2.6.1. Biblical and Historical Edom

The biblical presentation is remarkably and densely networked. Thus, for example, the mention of the destruction in the Valley of Salt and the establishment of the bailiffs in 2 Sam 8:13 is connected with 2 Kgs 14:7; the note on the monarchy in 1 Kgs 22:48 is connected with 2 Kgs 8:20–22; or the port note in 1 Kgs 9:26 is connected with 2 Kgs 14:22 and 16:6. The early history of Edom is, more or less, fictitious throughout and spun out of later notes. The deep hostility between Edom and Israel, which plays a prominent role in biblical literature and culminates in vengeance like that toward no other neighbor (Lam 4:21; Ezek 25:12–15; Isa 34:6; Obad 1:8–10; Ps 137:7), reflects the conflicts over the central and southern Negev in the late monarchic and later periods after the fall of Judah in 587 BCE. The background to this is the stabilization and expansion of the chiefdom, which was characterized by copper mining and long-distance trade in the first millennium BCE to 552 BCE (Nadav Na’aman). In the early days Edom

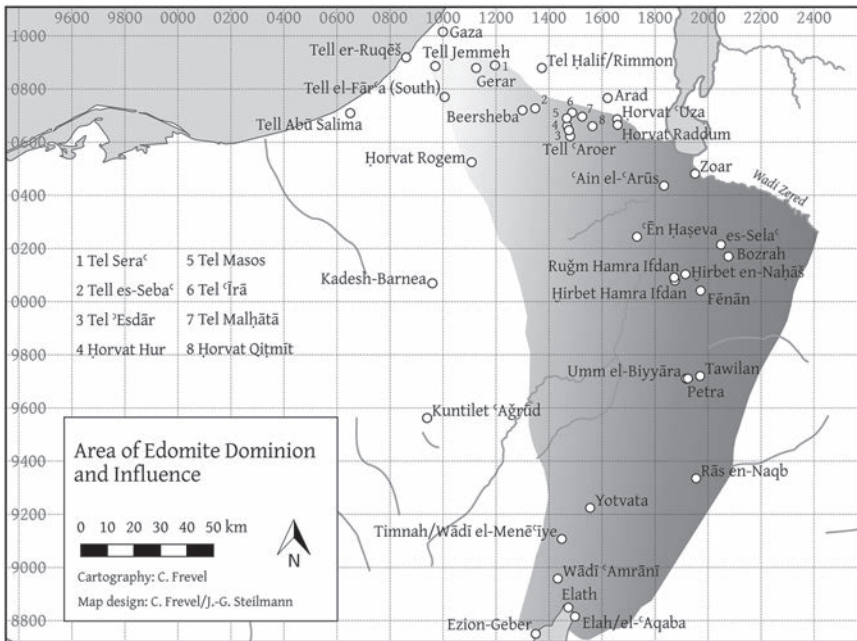
was a → tribal society comprised of seminomads and sedentary peasants and it was only in the eighth century BCE that—if at all—Edom became a nation state. The list of former kings in Gen 36:31–39 does not reflect an early kingdom of Edom before the tenth century but is rather an invention mixing various traditions centuries later, probably in the late sixth century or even later (Ernst Axel Knauf).

Following the western expansion of the Assyrians under Adad-nirari III (811–783 BCE), Edom, like its neighbors, became a → vassal that flourished due to its location along the great north-south and east-west trade routes. However, this did not result in a territorial or even a national Edomite state. This meant, demographically speaking, that Edom developed in the transit zones in the southern Negev and in the Arabah rather than on the Edomite plateau. Assyrian sources show that Edom was a vassal to the Assyrian kings in the eighth century BCE and that it took part in anti-Assyrian upheavals alongside its neighbors in 712 BCE. The Neo-Babylonian Nabonidus (556–539 BCE) probably ended Edom's sovereignty by destroying Bozrah/Buseirah (see §5.10.5.4).

4.2.6.2. Edom's Territory

The name *Edom* (“Red”) refers to the reddish color of the Nubian sandstone east of the Arabah Valley and was originally a landscape name rather than a term for a political entity. In addition to Edom and Esau, the area is also associated several times with Seir (Gen 14:6; Deut 1:44; 2:22) and Teman (Amos 1:12; Obad 1:9; Hab 3:3; Bar 3:22–23). Seir refers to the eastern Negev, the wide Arabah depression, and the rise of the Transjordanian plateau. Teman refers to the southern part of the plateau reaching as far as northern Arabia. However, both terms can be used synonymously with Edom. Great problems are caused by the determination of the area biblically considered to be part of Edom, since it was subject to great changes in biblical times and the perspective on which the texts are based can be very decisive. At the time of the Persian province of Idumea, Edom was something different than in the early monarchic period. Particularly striking are the places where Edom not only encompassed the Negev but stretched across the Beersheba Valley to the coast at Gaza. The Valley of Salt (1 Chr 18:12; 2 Kgs 14:7; Ps 60:2), which was connected several times with Edom, is assumed to be in the northern Arabah Valley, perhaps at the Scorpion Pass. Further, 1 Kgs 9:26 names the port of Ezion-Geber on the Gulf of Eilat as Edomite territory. Since the Arabah Valley is not really a

natural boundary, the area on both sides of the deep depression, starting from the area called Kikkar at the southern end of the Dead Sea down to the Gulf of Eilat or the Gulf of Aqaba, is considered to be part of Edom. On the east side of the plateau is the important traffic axis of the King's Highway, on which long-distance trade was carried out and from which Edom greatly profited in the first millennium BCE. Control of the copper mines in the Fēnān district and in the southern Arabah (Timnah/Wādī el-Menē'īye, Wādī 'Amrānī), which were already massively exploited in the Iron I period and led to the formation of one or more early chiefdoms (see §4.1.6), was crucial to the economy.



Map 6. Edomite dominion and expansion of the sphere of influence of Proto-Arab tribes along the trade routes in the southern Negev in the first half of the first millennium BCE. Edom was not a state that developed around a central authority but rather a union of territorially limited clusters of tribal communities. The copper mining on both sides of the Arabah Valley and the trade routes to the west played an important role for the Edomite presence. The area in the Beersheba Basin and the southern Negev is best described as an Edomite-Judean mixed zone.

The core area of Edom initially lay on the 1300–1500 m high plateau south of the Dead Sea between the Zered/Wādī el-Ḥesā and the edge of

the tableland at Rās en-Naqb in the south. It included Umm el-Biyyāra (perhaps Sela, 2 Kgs 14:7; Isa 42:11; Judg 1:36), located at 1158 m altitude in the inaccessible Petra mountain massif, where there was a fortress during the Iron IIC period (Piotr Bienkowski). It also included the larger, unpaved, agricultural settlement in Tawilan, which reached its highpoint in the late eighth century BCE. The same applies to the capital Bozrah/Buseirah (Isa 34:6; 63:1; Jer 49:13, 22), which opposes the assumption of an early statehood on the Transjordanian plateau. If the term Edom was used in the early monarchic period, it hardly referred to a territorial state, but rather to tribal associations, some of which were formed on specific occasions and some of which were permanently united, but which had no king as their central authority and no central place as their residence. Already, in the Iron I period these formed around strategic locations (in terms of resources and road networks) in Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš and Tel Masos/Ḥirbet el-Mšāš, and perhaps also in Dibon (see §§4.1.6, 4.3). Still, in the eighth century BCE, the polity associated with Bozrah/Buseirah is to be described as a chiefdom rather than a nation state (Juan Manuel Tebes).

4.2.6.3. Edom West of the Arabah

The Edomite region experienced a considerable economic boom, first through the interest of the Aramean king Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) (see §5.5.4), later through the western expansion of the Neo-Assyrians (see §5.6.2) due to copper, and then products of the Arabian long-distance trade (especially aromas, perfumes, and spices). This boom was not only connected with the formation of more stable political structures, but also with the integration of the Proto-Arab tribes in the southern Negev and thus the control of the east-west axis of trade (the Darb el-Ğazze) ending in Gaza. In addition to the important east-west trade route, the groups collectively labeled as Edomites also controlled the sea link on the Gulf of Eilat, which was central to long-distance trade.

With the southwest expansion of Judah (see §5.4.5.3) from the eighth century BCE in Nahal Besor and the Beersheba Valley (approximately along the line from Tell Jemmeh/Tell Ğemme, Gerar/Tell Haror, Tel Sera/Tell eš-Šerī'a, Tell es-Seba', Tel Masos, Tell 'Aroer, Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt, to Ḥorvat 'Uza/Ḥirbet Ğazze), conflicts occurred, as reflected in the Negev fortresses erected in the eighth/seventh century BCE. The material culture (pottery, figurines, inscriptions) shows Edomite and north Arabian influences as well as Judean influences. This mixed material culture means that

finds long considered to be characteristically Edomite can no longer be treated as such, in particular these include the so-called Busayra Painted Ware or the Qurayyah-pottery as well as the cult sites in Ḥorvat Qīṭmīṭ or ʿĒn Ḥaṣṣēvā. The situation in the Negev—characterized by coexistence, interaction, and hybridity—demonstrates that political boundaries were determined by discontinuity. This, however, does not contradict continuity in regional socioeconomic systems. In the eighth–sixth centuries BCE, the tribal networks that operated long-distance trade in the Negev region can be described as Edomite (Christian Frevel) if one breaks away from territorial state fixation and from the idea of ethnically closed nation states. From this constellation arose the idea of Edom and Israel as hostile brothers, which led to sharp slander and, among other things, to the untenable reproach that the Edomites had actively participated in the conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (see §5.10.5.3). That the Edomites in the Negev and Seir profited sustainably from the collapse of the state structures in Judah seems certain and the prerequisite for the establishment of the province of Idumea under Persian rule around 400 BCE (see §6.9).

4.3. ISRAEL/PALESTINE BEFORE THE EMERGENCE OF A MONARCHIC AUTHORITY

Bloch-Smith, Elizabeth, and Beth Alpert **Nakhai**. “A Landscape Comes to Life: The Iron Age I.” *NEA* 62 (1999): 62–92. ♦ **Fleming**, Daniel E. *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. ♦ **Pfoh**, Emanuel. *The Emergence of Israel in Ancient Palestine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*. Copenhagen International Seminar. Sheffield: Equinox, 2014. ♦ **Pfoh**. “Notes on Ethnographic Method and Biblical Interpretation.” *BN* 172 (2017): 43–52. ♦ **Pfoh**. *Syria-Palestine in the Late Bronze Age: An Anthropology of Politics and Power*. Copenhagen International Seminar. London: Routledge, 2016. ♦ **Sergi**, Omer. “Rethinking Israel and the Kingdom of Saul.” Pages 371–88 in *Rethinking Israel: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel in Honor of Israel Finkelstein*. Edited by Yuval Gadot, Oded Lipschits, and Matthew J. Adams. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017. ♦ **Yoffee**, Norman. *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

In approaching its early history, the entity Israel must not simply be taken for granted. Nor can the biblical presentation simply be followed uncriti-

cally. The treatment of the exodus (see §2.4) has made it clear that there is no sufficient extrabiblical evidence to assume an entity Israel that originated in Egypt in the thirteenth/twelfth century BCE and left Egypt. The description of the conquest (see §§3.4–7) indeed underlined that Israel might have originated *in* and *from* Canaan in the twelfth–eleventh centuries BCE, but even there the substate entity Israel as such had not yet taken on a recognizable form. A look at Israel’s neighbors and above all at their early history (see §4.2) shows a gradual process in the tenth–eighth centuries BCE that only slowly developed the phenomenon of statehood in the sense of territorially limited political structures that were not exclusively → tribal or → client-related. Central authorities were often lacking, and substate structures did not develop until the ninth–seventh centuries BCE. The biblical depiction of the early history of Israel’s neighbors appears almost throughout as a construct that combined historically plausible information, fictitious data, and clearly later connections (mostly from the eighth/seventh century BCE). The traditions of the early history of Israel are therefore not to be regarded as historical representations. On the other hand, it is striking that the image of the political structures of the Iron I period, mainly derived from archaeological data, is hardly reflected at all in biblical terms. The early chiefdoms in the copper mining areas in Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš, Tel Masos/Ḥirbet el-Mšāš, or the early clusters in which regional rulers dominated, as in Shechem/Tell Balāṭa and Jerusalem, are not adequately represented in the biblical account. The biblical account, according to which the structures existing in the country were militarily destroyed by the invading Israelites and the previous inhabitants expelled from the land (Josh 13:6; 14:12; 15:14; 23:5, 9; 24:18), is not historically accurate. The view reflected in late Deuteronomistic texts, that not all inhabitants of Israel could be expelled (Josh 17:13, 18; Judg 1:19–21, 27–36), is more appropriate. But also here, it is noticeable that detailed information about those indigenous continuities is missing. The most appropriate reference is to the so-called Canaanite urban district in the north and to the continuance of urban structures in the coastal plain (Judg 1:27–33). Joshua 10:5 identifies five kings of the Amorites and locates them in Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, that is, in the Judean hill country and in the Shephelah (see also Josh 12:10–12). Here, too, real and invented aspects are combined. While the significance of pre-David Jerusalem is becoming more and more archaeologically evident (see §4.5.6 on the so-called large stone structure and the stepped stone structure), Lachish seems to have been of regional importance in the Late Bronze period, and

the settlement cluster around Hebron is reflected at least biblically (1 Sam 30:31; 2 Sam 2:1–3; 5:3); however, both archaeological and further biblical references to substate clusters of rule in the eleventh/tenth century BCE are missing for Lachish, Jarmuth, and Eglon.

In summary, it can be said that this was a prerequisite for the development of the monarchy and the later territorial states: Israel was not yet the Israel of a biblical united monarchy in the eleventh/tenth century BCE. The structures more clearly determined by the *longue durée* were much more regionally determined than the idea of a unified Israel would suggest. Developments were neither simultaneous nor homogeneous but varied greatly from region to region. What they do have in common, however, is that territorial state structures before the ninth century BCE are not discernible and tended to develop from the expansion and merging of existing ruling clusters. This view will be confirmed in the kingships of Saul, David, and Solomon.

4.4. SAUL

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Saul is considered to be the first king of Israel. His reign, which began around 1000 BCE, can neither be verified archaeologically nor by contemporary sources and is therefore intensely debated in research. In the biblical account Saul is anointed “prince” *nagid* by the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 9:10–10:16) as the charismatic leading figure and elected king by the people of Gilgal (1 Sam 10:1).

4.4.1. Saul’s Domain

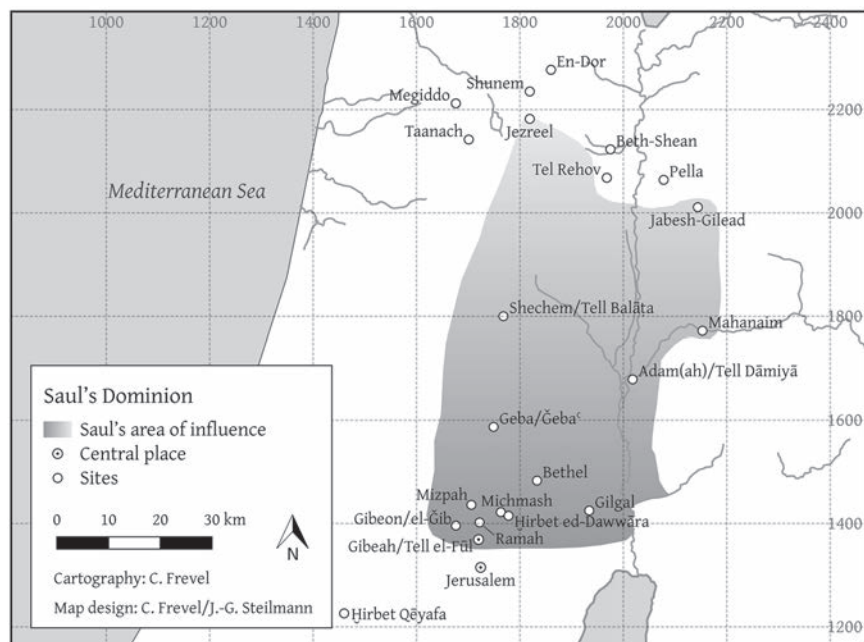
According to 1 Sam 9:1–2, Saul came from a distinguished family of the tribe Benjamin in Gibeah, but even the description of his extraordinary height and handsomeness seems idealized. With the help of a mercenary troop and the support of his fellow Benjaminites, Saul achieved a leadership role over the central Palestinian and northern Transjordanian tribes in the mountainous region north of the Dead Sea and in Gilead (2 Sam 2:9, Nadav Na’aman). The Benjaminite villages of Mizpah, Gilgal, Gibeah, Ramah, Geba, and Michmash formed the core of the Saulide Israel. Saul’s kingdom, however, did not reach the tribal area of Judah, the area around the Jezreel Plain, and the Beth-Shean Basin, nor the locations dominated by Canaanite city lords such as Megiddo, Tanaach, and Beth-Shean (perhaps with the exception of the sparsely populated place Jezreel/Ḥirbet Zer’in/Tell Yizre’el in the Iron I period), nor the Aramean-dominated Galilee, the Sharon plain, nor the Philistine coastal plain (Walter Dietrich, Stefan Münster). Saul’s dominion was territorially very limited, but—according to the biblical data—already of remarkable size in that it extended beyond the core area of Benjamin. While the core region is determined by Saul’s origin from the southern tribe of Benjamin and the places mentioned in the Samuel tradition, the kingdom’s northern exten-

sion is mainly determined by the story of the fight against the Philistines in 1 Sam 28–29 and the story of Saul's death 1 Sam 31. There Jabesh is also mentioned in the Transjordanian Gilead (1 Sam 31:11), whereby this area is attributed to Saulide dominion on the basis of 1 Sam 11. But one cannot presume the narratives simply reflect historical events (see §4.4.3). Second Samuel 2:8–9 (Walter Dietrich, Stefan Münger) points to the southern Transjordanian areas, but even here safe ground cannot be found. Control of Transjordan only makes sense if Saul had control over the two Jordan fords at the southern exit of the Beth-Shean Basin and at the Jabbok outlet at Adam(ah)/Tell Dāmiyā. Saul's territory in the north-central Palestinian highlands and in the northern Transjordan cannot be reliably determined. Therefore, speculations that extend Saul's rule beyond the core region in the south to include Ḥirbet Qēyafa (Israel Finkelstein, Alexander Fantalkin) seem unlikely.

Saul chose his hometown of Gibeah as his residence, usually located at Tell el-Fūl, 5 km north of Jerusalem (Horton Harris). Whether the oldest structures of a tower can be assigned to the late Iron I period is currently the subject of controversy. Alternatively, it can be dated to the Iron IIB period (seventh century BCE), which is more in line with the ceramic findings. This is because the few Iron Age fragments were found below the building in fill layers. No architectural remains of the Iron I–IIA period settlement have survived (Israel Finkelstein). The identification of Tell el-Fūl with Saul's Gibeah has been questioned by Israel Finkelstein, who wants to identify the Tell as Faraton. Faraton is mentioned in 1 Macc 9:50 as a place that was fortified by the Seleucids around 160 BCE. The architectural remains, which Finkelstein interprets as a Hellenistic tower, support this interpretation. Gibeah, on the other hand, was not a place in its own right but identical with the nearby Geba/Ġeba^c, since even in biblical tradition the two were not always distinguished (Judg 20:10, 33; 1 Sam 13:3, 16). The starting point for the statehood of Saul's rule thus hardly changes, for Geba has no Iron I structures that could have served administrative, representative, or even military purposes. Since there is no real alternative to Tell el-Fūl, Finkelstein leaves open the question of whether Saul's center of power was in Geba/Ġeba^c or Gibeon/el-Ġib.

4.4.2. Organization of Saul's Charismatic Rule

Given the real economic and cultural conditions in the country, there is no question that Saul's rule was overshadowed by the Philistines. Sure



Map 7. Saul's dominion and sphere of influence.

signs of statehood—such as a residence, administrative apparatus, judicial organization, military and economic organization, and a tax and contribution system—are completely absent (apart from the very uncertain findings of Hīrbet Qēyafa), so that one can speak less of a state than of a chiefdom (see §4.1.5). Only a small differentiation of the ruling class is recognizable, though this remains largely rooted in the family circle. Thus, according to the Bible, Saul's cousin Abner led the rather modest army (1 Sam 14:50). His son, Jonathan, also acted as commander (1 Sam 13–14; 18; 20). The biblical texts indicate the existence of a crown estate, or better, of royal property (Rainer Kessler) (1 Sam 22:7; 2 Sam 9:9–10). However, most biblical traditions about Saul (1 Sam 9–11; 13–14; 15; 28:3–25; 31) cannot be historically evaluated because the biblical texts have been transformed in two ways: on the one hand, the report about his kingship has been subsumed into the contrast with his successor David and by negative idealizations (the “failure of Saul”); on the other hand, the weal and woe of monarchy is described paradigmatically from a post-state perspective using Saul's rule as the example. In view of the limited organization of the mechanisms of power, Saul's rule, as was the case with

the so-called great judges (see §3.7), can be described as *charismatic rule* or an *incompletely realized early state*, following the terminology of Max Weber (see Rainer Kessler).

4.4.3. Saul's Elevation to King

Saul's monarchy is, in the biblical account (1 Sam 11), closely linked with the repulsion of the Ammonite military threat to Jabesh-Gilead (probably identified with Tell el-Maqlūb [Erasmus Gass] or Tell Abū Ḥaraz/Tell Abu al-Kharaz [Peter M. Fischer]). Unlike the other traditions of Saul's accession—the legend of Saul's asses and the subsequent anointing by the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 9:1–10:16) or Saul's selection by lot from the assembly of all tribes in Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe (1 Sam 10:17–27)—this tradition is the most likely to contain credible information despite its legendary structure. The charismatic form of the temporary union linked to the specific event of the dispute with Nahash the Ammonite, as it is portrayed in 1 Sam 11–12, certainly suits the setting of a charismatic leader of a chieftdom that is transitioning into a state. This means it is not completely incorrect to attribute it to an older tradition (Hannes Bezzel). But here, too, justified doubts have been expressed, especially by Volkmar Fritz. Although the reference to Jabesh's special role in the Saul tradition may increase the plausibility of the Ammonite campaign (Walter Dietrich, Stefan Münzer), if one takes into account the early history of the Ammonites (see §4.2.4) one cannot assume that one is dealing with historical events of the tenth century BCE (Klaus-Peter Adam, Reinhard G. Kratz). However, should the threat of the Ammonites be removed from the historical background to Saul's accession, the beginnings of Israel's monarchy remain in the dark.

4.4.4. Saul and the Conflicts with the Philistines

Besides the disputes with the Ammonites, the conflicts with the Philistines play an important role in Saul's history (1 Sam 13–14; 17); 1 Sam 14:52 reports that these rivalries continued throughout his reign (which, according to the → Dtr editors' doubtful claim, lasted two short years). According to 1 Sam 28–31, Saul's demise occurred in the conflict with the Philistines in the mountains of Gilboa together with his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua (1 Sam 31:2–4). The narrative evokes a struggle for the supremacy of the strategically important plains. Nonetheless, the

contested area's location far north of the Philistine area of influence speaks against simply and uncritically evaluating this as a specific historical event. Philisto-Canaanite resistance against the formation of centralized rule from the tribal territory of Benjamin, however, is plausible in the south since southern Ephraim and Benjamin were economically significant, in that they formed the Philistine hinterland to the cities in the coastal plain. It is also not unlikely that military conflicts were associated with this. A historically plausible background could be, for example, that the Philistines defended their supremacy in regional coalitions of city rulers against Saulide rule (possibly initiated by Ekron, which with its 24 ha in the Iron I period possessed the largest expansion of any Philistine city before its destruction at the end of the eleventh century BCE). However, this still does not make a fight for supremacy in the Jezreel Plain or in the Beth-Shean Basin very plausible. Such a conflict fits far better into the period of Omride-Nimshide Israel's resistance against Aramean expansion in the late ninth century BCE (see §5.3). The defense of northern Gilead also more plausibly belongs to this period (see §5.4.2.2).

4.4.5. Attempt to Establish Dynastic Rule after Saul's Death

After Saul came to his end in battle, the biblical tradition—embedded in David's ascension story—briefly reports the failed attempt to organize a dynasty. Saul's remaining son, Ishbaal, was given power by the commander Abner (2 Sam 2:8–9). However, the center of power was no longer located in Gibeah but in the Transjordanian Mahanaim on the lower reaches of the Jabbok (Wādī ez-Zerqā). The description of the dominion may refer only to the core region of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Gilead in the north and accurately separates the dominion of Absalom, son of David, from the northern zones of influence of Jezreel and the kingdom of Geshur (Nadav Na'aman). Mahanaim lies across from this and only hints at some connection to the Transjordanian part of Gilead. This city on the Jabbok, a logistically and economically important place, was chosen as the center, but effective political control over the Cisjordan was hardly possible.

If this reference has any historical value, perhaps the attempt to establish Ishbaal as a counterking in Transjordan stands in the background. Yet, this attempt failed because of David's claim to power (2 Sam 3). The commander Abner's change of allegiance to David sealed the end of the house of Saul. The biblical tradition underlines Ishbaal's weakness by distorting his name to Ish-bosheth ("man of shame"), not only placing

him completely under Abner's influence (2 Sam 3:11), but even leaving his head buried in his grave after the murder (2 Sam 4:1–8).

The biblical account is based on the assumption that David acceded as the successor to Saul's reign (2 Sam 2:4). The Davidic claim to power, which had its roots in Judah in the south, spread to the Jezreel Plain in the north and also across to Transjordan. In the biblical account, the kingdom developed continually from Saul toward David, gradually forming and slowly consolidating. The roots of a kingdom that spanned Judah *and* Israel lie biblically with David but go back to the kingdom of Saul and the early development of the monarchy.

Israel Finkelstein presents another hypothesis, according to which Egyptian intervention—namely, the campaign of Shoshenq I (see §4.8)—ended Saul's reign. The Saulide kingdom originated on the Gibeah-Bethel-Plateau north of Jerusalem (which includes Gibeon/el-Ğib, Bethel, Mizpah/Tell en-Naşbe, Ai/et-Tell, Ramah/Ğirbet Raddāna, Tell el-Fül, and Ğirbet ed-Dawwāra), extended north to the edge of, or even into, the Jezreel Plain, east to Gilead into the area between the Yarmuk and the Jabbok in Transjordan, west to the transition to the Shephelah, and even reached south of Jerusalem. This expanding kingdom became a danger to Egyptian interests, which is why Shoshenq I (946/45–924 BCE) was forced to intervene militarily. As a consequence, the border town of Ğirbet Qēyafa (see §4.5.4), for example, was abandoned. This would also explain the sudden decline of the villages in the Gibeah-Bethel Plateau. The rulers operating in Tirzah in the tenth century BCE would then have had, beginning with Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE), an Egyptian supported counterweight to the rule of the Davidides in the south (see §4.7.2). This view of things assesses the *de facto* Saulide monarchy in Gibeah to be more important than the early Davidic monarchy that established itself in the south. It dates the → casemate-like fortifications in Ğirbet ed-Dawwāra, Gibeon/el-Ğib, Ai/et-Tell, Mizpah/Tell en-Naşbe, and then Ğirbet Qēyafa from the transition from Iron I to Iron IIA as fortifications of core Saulide locations. This, then, compares Saul's dominion with Lab'ayu's dominion in the Late Bronze period (see §2.2.7). Jeroboam I is thus understood as a → vassal of Shoshenq I and immediately follows Saul's kingship. David, Solomon, and Rehoboam, whose unstructured and politically rather insignificant rule was rooted in Judah, thus more or less function as fictitious characters ruling at the same time as the kings in Tirzah. The chronological extension of the late Iron I period into the beginning of the tenth century BCE and Judah's dependence on Israel under the Omrides (see §§4.7, 5.4) are thus presupposed.

As attractive as this may seem at first glance to the maximalist view of the Saulide monarchy, it is difficult to explain why Judean editors placed Saul's kingdom at the beginning of the presentation about the monarchy, if, as Finkelstein assumes, the traditions only reached Judah after the downfall of the northern kingdom of Israel and only existed orally beforehand. Omer Sergi has also pointed out that the northern kingdom's key locales play no role in the Saul tradition. Moreover, the signs of strong Saulide rule, which could have been a problem for Shoshenq I, are quite circumscribed. Much, therefore, depends on the classification of David's rule and its territorial extension, as well as on the formation of an early state in Israel or Judah. Nadav Na'aman, Israel Finkelstein, and others attribute the area of Benjamin, from which Saul originated and where he developed his early clustered dominion, originally and until the second half of the ninth century BCE, to the kingdom of Israel under the Omrides. They thus connect the tradition regarding Saul to the north. However, Omer Sergi advocates for the territory of Benjamin's continuous connection to Judah and Jerusalem from the tenth century BCE. This assumption, which includes the continuity of Saul-David, presupposes the considerable importance of Jerusalem in the eleventh/tenth century BCE.

4.5. THE KINGDOM OF DAVID

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4.5.1. Great Empire, United Monarchy, or Chiefdom? The Dominion of David

Are the united monarchy and the great empire of David projections from the late preexilic or even postexilic period? In the more recent discussion, the sequence of the kingships of Saul, David, and Solomon can by no means be regarded as certain (Israel Finkelstein). This is because the data about the life and regency of the first kings are idealized and appear to be a construct from later times. While the tradition is hardly able to provide meaningful data for Saul's regency (1 Sam 13:1), for David and Solomon it is transmitted that each had a precise forty-year reign (2 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 11:42). The availability of sources has only marginally improved for David: contemporary textual and archaeological evidence for David's monarchy is largely lacking and, historiographically, the Hebrew Bible's idealized representation as a source can only be evaluated to a very limited extent. This also applies to the Bible's so-called ascension and succession narrative (2 Sam 9–20; 1 Kgs 1–2), which due to the manner of its cultural congruence with the details given in the narrative (authenticity of the portrayed milieu) is still regarded, at least in part, by many researchers as a relatively contemporary source (at the earliest, dating to the ninth century BCE) (overview by Albert de Pury, Thomas Römer).

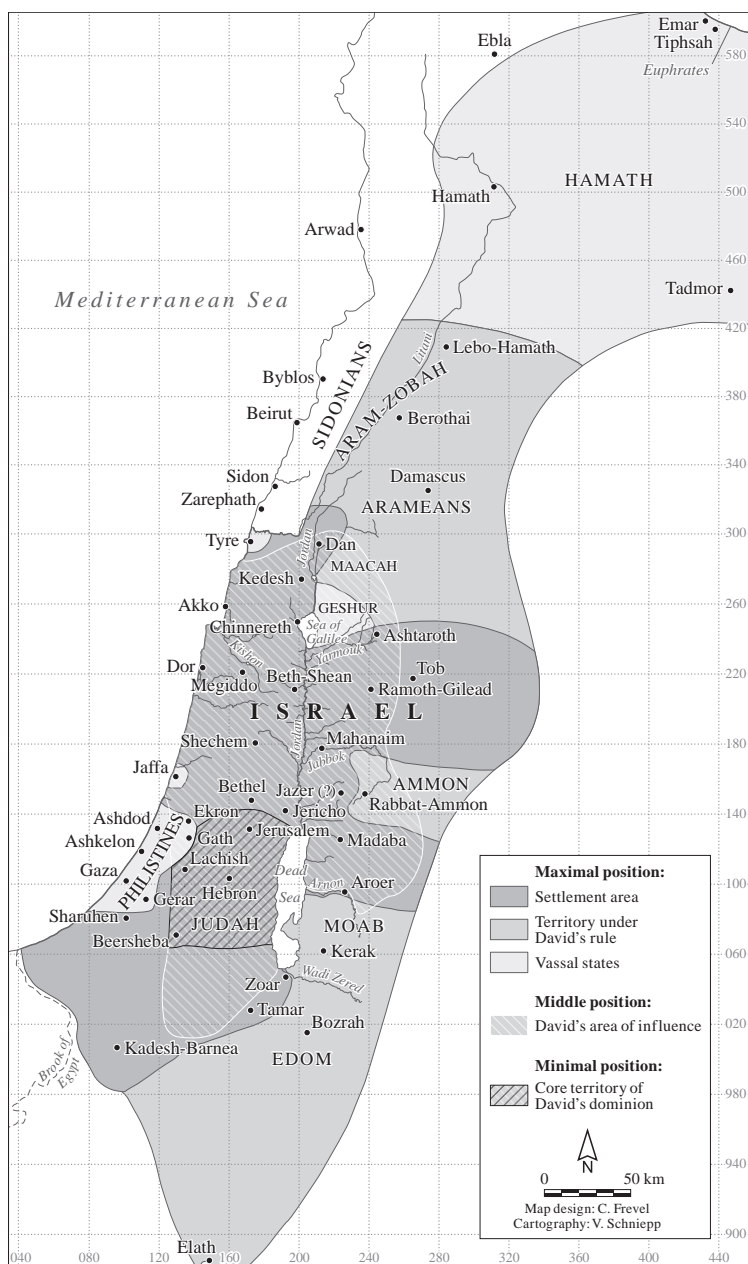
Research is divided into a broad spectrum of maximalist positions that conform to the biblical presentation of a great Davidic empire stretching from Egypt to Lebanon (from the brook of Egypt/Wādī l-ʿAriš to the Euphrates) including Transjordan (Edom, Moab, Ammon, Gilead, and Golan, as well as → vassals in Geshur and Syria) and the Aramean regions (Walter Dietrich). On the other hand, there are minimalist positions that limit the

monarchy of David to a locally exercised rule and consider the assumption of the united monarchy and the spreading of David's rule to the north to be a fiction (Israel Finkelstein), with some even questioning the historicity of David in the tenth century BCE (Niels Peter Lemche, Thomas L. Thompson).

4.5.2. David's Historicity in Light of the Inscription from Tel Dan

A complete challenge to the historicity of David fails because of the extra-biblical evidence. The "house of David" certainly appears as the name of the monarchy (to be determined in whatever way) in an Aramaic inscription from Dan/Tell el-Qāḍī from the ninth century BCE found in 1993 (COS 2.39, *HTAT* 116). It comes from a stela or rather from the outer representative paneling of an → orthostat. If one follows the (not unproblematic) reconstruction of the first publication, the Aramean Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) boasts in lines 7–9 to have killed the kings Joram from Israel and Ahaziah from Judah or rather the "house of David" ("I killed kin[gs] who harnessed [ch]ariots and thousands of horsemen [Jeho]ram, son [Ahab], / king of Israel and kill[ed Ahaz]-yahu, the son of [Joram, the king] / of the house of David"; compare COS 2.161–162; on problems of reconstruction, see §§5.4.5.2, 5.5.2). That the word *bytdwd*, written without a word divider, should not be read as "the house of (the god) Dôd" but as "the house of David" has become more probable in light of a second fragment found in 1994 with a king's name ending in -yahû (presumably Ahaziah) (George Athas). The -yahû in line 8 can be assigned by a so-called join (unambiguous connection of fragments), which is only visible on the reverse side. This increases the probability of *bytdwd* referring to the king's name. The usage is analogous to the designation Bit Ḥumrî, "house of Omri," for Israel in Shalmaneser III's report on the Battle of Qarqar 853 BCE (cf. COS 2.113A; *HTAT* 106). So, at least in the ninth century BCE, a tradition can be verified that claims a connection of a king's rule back to David. Although this is not proof of David's historical existence, it makes it very probable. However, neither the more precise dating of David in the tenth century BCE nor the extent of his dominion can be ascertained. In particular, *bytdwd* is not proof of some unbroken Davidic dynasty from the tenth century. It should rather be understood as a link to an eponymous founder in analogy to the Aramean Bit Agusi, Beth-Rehob, or as already mentioned Bit Ḥumrî.

The second possible reference to the house of David may be found in line 31 of the Moabite Mesha Stela, which also dates to the middle



Map 8. David's domain. The map shows different proposals about the extent of David's rule. The maximum position is based solely on the Bible; the minimum position does not assume that David really ruled in the area north of Jerusalem.

of the ninth century BCE. However, this reference remains much more controversial. At approximately the same time, André Lemaire and Émile Puech proposed reading line 31 as *bt.[d]wd*, based on a renewed investigation of the first squeeze (i.e., a paper impression) of the original inscription. Manfred Weippert also translated the inscription “and in Ḥawrōnēn lived Bēt [Da]wīd” (*HTAT* 105), which means that the Horonaim located 7 km SW from ar-Rabba (Isa 15:5; Jer 48:3, 5, 34) was counted among Judah’s domain. Baruch Margalit, Anson F. Rainey, Nadav Na’aman, and others take issue with this uncertain reading and interpretation, since the king’s name is not mentioned. Furthermore, if the place mentioned is Ḥōrōnayim/ed-Dēr, this is a place located south of the Arnon/Wādī el-Mōḡib and thus much farther south than almost every other toponym on the inscription. This makes the idea of Davidic control over this territory less likely. A location north of the Arnon (Ġebel Ḥāuran south of el-Mukāwir or Ḥirbet ed-Dēr) (Erasmus Gass), which does not really solve the problem of the unlikelihood of Davidic control, is therefore out of the question. Possibly a south Moabite dynasty of similar name (Nadav Na’aman reads DWDH) is meant, but this also remains uncertain. The most recent suggestion is to read the contested phrase *b[lq].wd* thus referring to the biblical Balak, who is mentioned as the Moabite king in the Balaam story (Num 22–24) (Israel Finkelstein et al.). Following the suggested reading, his seat is located in Horonaim. However, the reading and conjecture remain rather speculative, because of the poor state of the lacuna. Be that as it may, the Mesha Stela cannot bear so much of the burden of proof as evidence for a Davidic dynasty in the ninth century BCE and thus for the historicity of the → eponymous dynasty founder.

Even though the biblical David is a highly idealized figure, through whom political conceptions of rule are literarily reflected upon into the late postexilic period, the considerable political significance and effect of the historical David can be assumed to stem from early on. The geographical extent of David’s—even extrabiblically probable—rule as well as its precise date remain controversial in research. Yet, divorced from the biblical findings, there is nothing to suggest it should be dated around 1000 BCE.

4.5.3. The Beginning of David’s Reign and the Philistines’ Influence

David’s rule initially has nothing in common with a kingdom. Scholarship applies terms such as *warlord*, *militia leader*, *chief*, *guerrilla*, *bandit*,

mafioso, *desperado*, and the like to him and therefore attempts to use partly romanticized analogies from the present and recent past. David, as the biblical account shows, does not come from a ruling dynasty but is the youngest of eight brothers (three of whom are named 1 Sam 17:13) from Bethlehem in Judea (1 Sam 17:12). Perhaps, he was not only in constantly good relations with the Philistines but was possibly himself of Philistine descent. His ascent in Saul's court (from singer to son-in-law and general) cannot be historically illuminated; perhaps it is not even historical (Baruch Halpern). According to the Bible, David joined Saul's followers (1 Sam 16:21) and tried to penetrate beyond Benjamin into the territory of the central tribes.

He gained political influence from the south. The area stood under Philistine influence as the Philistines, in cooperation with the highlanders, exploited the resources of the hinterland and controlled the trade of salt and asphalt from the Dead Sea. Sponsored by the Philistine prince of Gath, David developed his power from Ziklag, based on the loyalties and raids of his private mercenary troop. It is not possible to definitively locate this city in the Negev, but the most probable candidate is Tell eš-Šerī'a about 22 km northwest of Beersheba. Other possible locations are Ḥirbet el-Mšāš, Tell el-Ḥuwēlifa, Tell es-Seba', or Ḥirbet al-Ra'i. Because none of these places archaeologically evince any central buildings of note for the eleventh/tenth century BCE, the urban Philistine settlement at Tell el-Fār'a (south) becomes a plausible option (Ernst Axel Knauf, Hermann M. Niemann).

According to biblical tradition, Ziklag was granted to David as a fief (1 Sam 27) in order to secure the southern Philistine border. At that time, David was supposedly a → vassal of the Philistine city-king Achish from Gath/Tell eš-Šāfi (1 Sam 27). How far the tribe of Judah had already formed *before* David in the context of settlement development (see §3.5.4) ("Judah" is missing, e.g., in Judg 5) is debated in scholarship. It seems more probable that the work of David from Ziklag and Hebron made Judah into a more or less closed social composition (*Sozialverbund*). This social term is applied to closed social structures that hardly have open borders, such as villages, clans, → patrimonially organized groups.

4.5.4. The Kingdom of David after Saul's Death

According to the biblical account, as a result of the destabilized situation in the Benjamin-Ephraimite heartland after Saul's death, the southern

clans established a kingdom in Hebron as the “house of Judah” and elevated David to king by acclamation (2 Sam 2:4). Although this cannot be ruled out historically, it nevertheless appears to be an ideological literary construct. In any case, David’s rule over Judah began in the insignificant (from an archaeological point of view, so Ze’ev Herzog, Lily Singer-Avitz) Calebite village of Hebron, from which David established a tribal kingdom that competed with the house of Saul and further destabilized its rule (2 Sam 2). Recent excavations in the center of Hebron have uncovered remains of a Middle Bronze period cyclopean wall to fortify the city and a city wall from the Iron IIB and Iron IIC periods, but not much from the Iron I period (Emanuel Eisenberg, David Ben-Shlomo). Earlier excavations also have confirmed an urban settlement for the EB and the expansion of the town in the Iron IIB and Iron IIC periods, whereby the Middle Bronze period fortification seems to have continued in use (Daniel Vainstub, David Ben-Shlomo). The remains of the early Iron Age, on the other hand, do not seem to have had any connection with the previous urban structures, but rather to have belonged to an unfortified settlement. Judging from the archaeological findings, Hebron had no regional significance immediately before David and at the time of David’s local reign, but at best a very limited local significance. How diplomatically or militarily active David had ruled with Philistine tolerance, whether with their help or even in the service of the Philistine superiors, remains open to speculation since the process has not been further documented historically. The idea that the impetus came from the northern tribes themselves and that a sovereign contract was concluded (2 Sam 5:1–3) is more legendary than accurately reflecting historical events. It also remains unclear how David was able to professionalize political influence over the central and perhaps even the northern Palestinian tribes after Ishbaal’s murder, since there is no archaeological evidence of a structured polity.

For the rule over the north of Israel, a \rightarrow personal union rather than a united monarchy is to be assumed, at least for the first phase (Albrecht Alt). *Claims to supremacy do not automatically mean effective rule* (Ernst Axel Knauf). Sociologically, the polarized relationship between a \rightarrow segmentary, peasant-based tribal society and an urban monarchy in the early days of David is referred to as a *dimorphic highlands chieftdom* (Israel Finkelstein). This terminology expresses, at the same time, the distance between David’s rule and organized statehood.

4.5.5. The Role of Ḥirbet Qēyafa in the Discussion of David's Kingdom

In more recent discussions, Ḥirbet Qēyafa/Khirbet Qeiyafa is interpreted as an indication of David's organized rule (Yosef Garfinkel, Saar Ganor). This locale, situated in the Elah Valley (1 Sam 17:2, 19; 21:10), was only well populated for a single phase lasting about twenty to thirty years. It thus also plays a key role in the chronology debate (see §4.6.3.4), since it belongs to the transition between Iron I and Iron IIA periods. While the excavators date the site to the Iron IIA period or 1020–980 BCE and attribute it to David, with his *low chronology* perspective Israel Finkelstein assigns the settlement to the late Iron I period between 1130 and 915 BCE. ¹⁴C data indicate a range between 1050–915 BCE (Israel Finkelstein) or—according to the excavators (Yosef Garfinkel et al.)—the data support precisely a dating to the transition from the eleventh to the tenth centuries BCE. The site was fortified with a massive wall, which was reinforced → casemate-like by the adjoining parts of buildings. Because of the two four-chamber gates in the west and south, the excavators identified the site with Shaaraim (lit. “two gates”; Josh 15:36; 1 Sam 17:52; 1 Chr 4:31–32). This identification is not undisputed, however (differently Nadav Na'aman: Gob, Yehuda Dagan: Adithaim, Yigal Levin: David's “circle of wagons” 1 Sam 17:20). It is said to have served David as a military safeguard against the Philistines. That the place is compatible with the location of David's battle against Goliath (the Philistine camp is said to be in Ephes-Dammim between Socoh and Azekah, 1 Sam 17:1) is sometimes interpreted, in a biblicistic manner, as a historical reminiscence of the Goliath legend. *De facto*, its interpretation as an Israelite border town, as the “camp in the Elah Valley” (1 Sam 17:2), or as “David's circle of wagons” (1 Sam 17:20) cannot be secured and the legend cannot be made historically plausible. Methodologically speaking, it rather requires the separation of biblical and archaeological findings.

A fragmentary → ostrakon, linguistically classified as Hebrew, indicates an organized form of state rule (Émile Puech). The content of the very early and difficult to read text may be reminiscent of the social laws of the great ancient Near Eastern and biblical legal corpora, especially the protection of the *personae miserae* (widows, orphans, foreigners) and the socially weak. The protection of these persons is the task of the king in ancient Near Eastern royal ideology and such a text could indicate the training of royal officials as a writing exercise (Reinhard Achenbach). But they would have actually been trained centrally and not decentrally.

In order to not overstrain the findings, one must be careful: the ostrakon is not clearly written in Hebrew nor can the site safely be attributed to the reign of David. Hermann M. Niemann therefore rightly rejected the interpretation of the complex and its public buildings as the seat of a Judean governor. The more than seven hundred stamped jar handles (Yosef Garfinkel) suggest a local administration (if they are not markings of the potters), but these are not recognizably connected to the later Judean systems of the *lmlk* seals or to other places in the supposed Davidic empire. To infer a centralized administration from this (Hoo-Goo Kang, Yosef Garfinkel) overstates the findings. Another ostrakon was discovered in 2015. The Proto-Canaanite inscription mentions a certain 'Išba'al/Ishbaal and was placed in the still-moist clay of the shoulder of a storage jug before firing. ¹⁴C samples of the destruction layer date the place to the transition from the eleventh to the tenth century BCE; the inscription is also assigned to the eleventh century BCE (Yosef Garfinkel et al.). The Baal-honoring personal name, which matches the biblical name of Saul's son (2 Sam 2:8, etc.), is cited by the excavators to support the proximity of the place to David. Nonetheless, 'Išba'al ben Beda' cannot be associated with 'Išba'al ben Šā'ul, nor can it be ensured that the name refers to a high-ranking person in Ḥirbet Qēyafa.

The excavators under Yosef Garfinkel see strategic urban planning in the → casemate fortification and the two gates. This should represent a prototype in comparison to the (later) cities of Tell es-Seba', Tell Bēt Mirsim, Tell en-Našbe, and Beth-Shemesh/Ēn-Šems of the Iron II period. This, according to their interpretation, again speaks for its connection to Judah or the Davidic monarchy. Finkelstein compares the → casemate with those in Ḥirbet ed-Dawwāra, Gibeon/el-Ğib, Ai/et-Tell, and Mizpah/Tell en-Našbe, which favors the allocation to the Iron I period and Saul's monarchy.

The excavators also associate the evidence of cultic activity found in Ḥirbet Qēyafa (pillars/standing stones, pottery for ritual use, fragments of figurines and cult stands, miniaturized altars, and two shrine models) with Judah. Architectural details on the shrine models such as the recessed door frame and a triglyph frieze are compared with architectural details of Solomonic buildings (1 Kgs 6:5, 31, 33; 7:1–6) (Yosef Garfinkel, Madeleine Mumcuoglu). Since David and Solomon are both said to have relied on Tyrian builders (2 Sam 5:11; 2 Kgs 5:15–24), the transfer of architectural knowledge could be explained as a result of those relationships. However, the findings cannot plausibly connect the report in 1 Kgs 6–8 with the

tenth century BCE nor be used as an argument that Ḥirbet Qēyafa was Israelite and that the architectural model was Davidic. Divorced from the biblicistic interpretation, the find probably represents the earliest evidence for a triglyph frieze, which is closely connected with the far later Doric architecture from Greece.

The ceramic findings, like the stratigraphy (→ stratum), are currently a controversial subject of discussion (Yehuda Dagan, Israel Finkelstein, Yosef Garfinkel, Saar Ganor). An assignment to the late Iron I period would point more to the time of Saul than to the time of David. Under Saul, however, the rule was hardly centrally organized and barely extended beyond Benjamin's territory in the south. Also, a connection with 1 Sam 17:1–3 (Israel Finkelstein) does not commend itself. The purpose of the site, which was only inhabited for a short time during one phase, remains a mystery. A connection with the campaign of Shoshenq I (Nadav Na'aman, Israel Finkelstein; for the campaign, see §4.8) is possible but not archaeologically attested by a destruction layer or similar evidence.

How the site functionally related to the dominant Philistine cities must be discussed further. As an alternative to the excavators' assignment to David, the rather unlikely connection to the Gibeah polity (Israel Finkelstein, Alexander Fantalkin), or even an assignment "to the north," Ḥirbet Qēyafa has also been interpreted as an independent regional micropolity (roughly: village-state) (Hermann M. Niemann). Perhaps it was a Philisto-Canaanite outpost associated with Ekron or Gath (Ido Koch, Nadav Na'aman). From the material culture, in any case, one cannot unequivocally conclude a political affiliation with Judah, even if the → casemate wall suggests an affiliation to the hill country because of the parallels. The same applies to the absence of pork bones, which is better explained by the climatic conditions than by an ethnic renunciation of pork (see §3.5.2).

In short, the highly controversial findings of Ḥirbet Qēyafa cannot bear the burden of proof for King David's extensive dominion nor for a fully developed state.

4.5.6. Jerusalem as the City of David

The kingdom of David is unthinkable without Jerusalem. Thirty-three of his total forty years in government were conducted in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 2:11). The short episode in 2 Sam 17:53–58, which predicts the kingdom of David in the battle against Goliath, at the same time underlines the importance of Jerusalem in that David brings the severed head of the

Philistine hero to Jerusalem (2 Sam 17:54). However, Jerusalem's unfavorable geographical location in the Judean highlands does not make it a natural capital, which is why Albrecht Alt described the pre-David city as an "ephemeral Jebusite nest." The biblical depiction closely connects Jerusalem's affiliation to Israel/Judah with the person of David. While Jerusalem remained unconquered at first (Josh 15:63; Judg 1:21; 19:12, differently Judg 1:8 and perhaps 1 Sam 17:54) and was said to be inhabited by Jebusites (Josh 15:8), the city is said to have been conquered by David (2 Sam 5:5–8) and expanded (2 Sam 5:9). After David's conquest, the name "city of David" appears (2 Sam 5:7, 9; 6:10; 1 Kgs 3:1; Isa 22:9). However, Jörg Hutzli has shown that this name does not *have to* mean the whole city but can refer only to the area of David's palace (or the "stronghold of Zion") or the Southeastern Hill. The term *Zion* ("dried up"), which later migrates from the *mašūdat šīyyôn* "stronghold of Zion" in the aforementioned city of David over the Temple Mount to the Western Hill, is not documented outside the Bible. The name *Jebus*, which can also be found in Josh 18:28; Judg 1:21; 1 Chr 11:4, is perhaps not ancient but possibly invented by biblical authors as the name of the city (Klaus Bieberstein). The name *Jerusalem*, which was already documented from the second millennium BCE, however, identifies the city as the "foundation of (the god) Šalem." The history of Jerusalem has always been the focus of the history of Israel. The density of archaeological information over the past fifteen years has led to a new overall picture of the history of Jerusalem (Klaus Bieberstein). No significant traces of either David or Solomon can be found in the city. However, Jerusalem of the tenth century BCE (Iron IIA period) is still one of the most controversial questions in the current debate about David and the early kingdom (Amihai Mazar).

Earliest traces of human activity in Jerusalem (see §10.4, map 16) go back to temporary visits of hunter-gatherers in the Epipaleolithic Near East period (16,500–12,500 BCE). The site was continuously settled from the EB II (ca. 3000–2600 BCE). Since the MB IIB (ca. 1800 BCE), it comprised a medium-sized, walled, Canaanite town (4–5 ha, ca. 1,000 inhabitants), which monumentally secured its water supply at the Gihon Spring (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron). If they were not erected in their entirety at a later date (Johanna Regev et al.; Joe Uziel, Itzhaq Shai), the massive towers and the spring basin were also used in the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age (up to ninth/eighth century BCE; see §5.7.1.3); at least there are no traces of destruction. In addition, almost all archaeological traces of an important city from the Late Bronze Age (David Ussishkin)

are missing, but the Jerusalem city-state is attested in the Amarna letters (EA 285–290, probably also EA 291) (see §2.2.7). That the city of Jerusalem also survived the destruction of the Late Bronze Age largely unscathed (Othmar Keel) remains an assumption, which largely lacks positive archaeological evidence. This is because large quantities of Late Bronze Age pottery are missing in the excavations on the Southeastern Hill, which would be expected if the Middle Bronze period fortifications had been in direct connection with a Late Bronze period city. The most recent excavation in the Givati Parking Lot, south of the temple district, is also characterized by an absence of Late Bronze period pottery (Doron Ben-Ami). Therefore, it seems more plausible to understand Jerusalem not as a big city but as a strategic outpost for the control of the southern mountains (Margreet Steiner, Klaus Bieberstein), which also fits well with the Amarna correspondence.

Due to the lack of archaeological evidence, Ernst Axel Knauf suggested that the place mentioned in the Amarna letters was not located on the Southeastern Hill but on the Temple Mount, which is completely beyond archaeological investigation. The fact that the settlement was built at the site's highest point (743 m) seems basically plausible. Even if one would assume a slightly smaller area compared to the walled sides of the Herodian temple district, there would still be enough space for a city on the site. Others have therefore taken up this proposal with interest and justified it further (Israel Finkelstein, Ido Koch, Oded Lipschits), especially since it underlines the methodological problem that despite a lack of evidence—as with the Davidic-Solomonic Jerusalem—the city is concluded to have had a significant existence. On the other hand, the settlement on the southeast spur, the so-called city of David, is often overestimated in its extent.

Israel Finkelstein posits the following development: the formation of the Iron Age Jerusalem began in the second half of the ninth century BCE from the Temple Mount expanding toward the south over the Ophel to the Gihon Spring (personal communication). None of the Late Bronze Age or early Iron Age buildings on the Temple Mount have been preserved. Jerusalem was a small town and part of a Canaanite-style chiefdom in the sparsely populated hill country region (“dimorphic kingdom”). Neither David nor Solomon developed Jerusalem into a city of significance. This development only occurred under the influence of the Omrides in the late ninth century BCE. The new status can also be seen in the simultaneous administrative expansion of Lachish, Beth-Shemesh, Beersheba, and Arad, as well as in a → hoard find of clay → bullae from the late ninth century

BCE or the middle of the eighth century BCE, found during excavations at the Gihon Spring (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron).

In contrast, the traditional view assumed that the city developed from the southeastern spur toward the north in the early Iron IIA period. At the highest point of the spur in the north, level with the Gihon Spring (see §10.4, map 16), stood the pre-Israelite stronghold (*māšūdat šīyyôn* 2 Sam 5:7) that King David conquered and chose as his seat of government. The naturally sloping terrain adjoining the Millo (2 Sam 5:9) in the north was first united to the Temple Mount by Solomon via backfill and integrated into the city fortification (1 Kgs 9:15, 24; 11:27). Solomon built a palace next to the temple as a new seat of government.

So far, despite intense excavation activity in Jerusalem, this picture has not been confirmed even if over the course of time there have been various attempts in this direction. The alternative proposal, therefore, explicitly no longer proceeds from the biblical findings. In its place, attempts are made to integrate the archaeological information with the black box of the holy district under the assumption that it formed the core of the Late Bronze Age city. It is true that none of the similar cities of the Late Bronze Age and Middle Bronze Age are comparable to the layout of the presumed Jerusalem on the Southeastern Hill in terms of urban planning, and it is also true that hardly any traces of settlement have been found in the southern part of the spur that could indicate a pre-Davidic existence. Rather, settlement activity was concentrated in the area of the northern city of David, and it can be proven that it was not until the Iron IIB and Hellenistic periods that settlement activity extended more clearly to the southern tip. In the absence of large quantities of Bronze Age pottery on the Southeastern Hill, the hypothesis of where the important city was located can be answered. The massive development of the Ophel, that is, the area between today's temple district and the so-called city of David, can be used for both solutions: Either the city grew from the Southeastern Hill to the temple district or vice versa.

Several details speak against this black box solution. First, it can be stated that in this case the water supply of the Gihon Spring would not have been in the immediate vicinity of the city (see §10.4, map 16). Although the archaeological findings so far have validated the massive reinforcement of the spring by the two Middle Bronze Age towers and the spring pool (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron), no connection with the Temple Mount is discernible. Second, while the Southeastern Hill of Jerusalem offered natural protection by the Kidron and—before the filling of the Millo—the

Tyropoeon/Central Valley, the Temple Mount in particular was unprotected from the north. This space was protected by an artificial trench that was created with great effort. Does it make sense to build a settlement at an unprotected starting point and 300 m away from the water supply? Finally, the substructure at the northern end of the so-called city of David (see below) points to a pre-Davidic settlement in the Late Bronze Age. If this was connected to the “stronghold of Zion” (*mašūdat šīyyôn*) mentioned in 2 Sam 5:8 (see below), it would not have had a connection to the Late Bronze Age city. Thus, this solution also has recognizable weaknesses, and the problem of Jerusalem remains. The undetectable colonization of the Acropolis and the uncertain colonization of the city of David, like focal points of an ellipse, form the starting point of all theories on pre-Davidic, Davidic, and Solomonic Jerusalem.

Conversely, the negative evidence must not be used methodologically to draw conclusions about the marginal significance and the one-horse-town character of Jerusalem. This is all the more true when the massive, tiered, 27 m high (or—minus the wall below—20 m, Amihai Mazar) and almost 50 m wide substructure on the slope of the Southeastern Hill (the so-called stepped stone structure) had precursors in the Late Bronze Age (Yigal Shiloh) or served to support the (pre-Davidic) citadel (Amihai Mazar) in the Iron I Age. The stepped stone structure is the most discussed archaeological construction of the Southeastern Hill. It is difficult to interpret due to its multiphase installations and superstructures. The sparse ceramic findings in the fills indicate that they originated in the late Iron I or early Iron IIA period. The sloped terraces seem to have been laid out at the beginning of the Iron I period but only developed into a stepped stone structure in the Iron IIA period (Margreet Steiner). Since the steep slope could hardly support buildings (that were built up to the edge of the plateau) without support, it can be assumed that a connection with a larger structure was created. The late Eilat Mazar assumed a connection with the so-called large stone structure, which she interpreted as David’s palace (see below).

Estimations of Jerusalem’s population in the Late Bronze Age range between two hundred and two thousand inhabitants (Hillel Geva), and the figures are largely directed by one’s presuppositions on the area settled. In any case, it is certain that Jerusalem did not belong to Saul’s dominion (see §4.4.1, map 7) and—with whatever political weight—lie between the core area of Benjamin and the tribal area of Judah. So it must have been in David’s interest to include the city-state of Jerusalem in his → personal

union, along with the chiefdoms of Ziklag, Hebron, and Gibeon. How David managed to establish Jerusalem (around 980 BCE) under his rule, whether by conquest (2 Sam 5:7–9) or by negotiation, is currently an open question. The earlier hypothesis that his commander, Joab, conquered the city via a surprise attack through the water system (Warren's Shaft) must be abandoned due to the chronological readjustment of the tunnel system (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron, Shlomo Guil). What remains is the designation of Jerusalem, or rather the southeast spur, as the city of David (e.g., 2 Sam 5:9), which points to a bond between the city (or this part of the city) and the person of the charismatic leader. The term *'ir*, usually translated "city," does not necessarily mean that it was a larger fortified settlement. The term can also refer to a district or a fortress (Othmar Keel, Jörg Hutzli). It is said of David that he lived in the stronghold (*māṣūdāt*) and he "built the city all around from the Millo inward" (2 Sam 5:9). While the Greek translation (→ LXX) identifies the Millo with the stronghold and lets David build his house, it usually follows the Hebrew text according to which the Millo is a part of Jerusalem. This Millo is understood in 2 Chr 32:5 as part of the city of David but is otherwise closely connected with Solomon's construction activities in 1 Kgs 9:15, 24; 11:27. Derived from its basic meaning (*ml'* "to be full"), the Millo is mostly understood as a landfill and linked to the area that represents the lowest point of the Southeastern Hill and forms a depression in the transition to the higher terrain of Ḥaram eš-Šerīf. Solomon is said to have filled this as he expanded the city to the north (see §4.6.3.2). More recently, the Millo has often been identified with the stepped construction or linked to the area supported by the stepped stone structure. This stepped structure, which runs down the slope, is made of quarried stones. The lower area is covered by houses dating from the Iron IIA or Iron IIB period (House of Ahiel, House of the Bullae, see §5.7.2). Pottery found below the surface layer are dated to the Late Bronze/early Iron I period, which also suggests an early dating for the support structure to the Late Bronze Age or early Iron Age. So far, however, David's construction measures in this area have not been unequivocally proven. Eilat Mazar believed she had found David's palace mentioned in 2 Sam 5:11 in her excavations on the 200 m² platform supported by the massive substructure (the stepped stone structure mentioned above). Yet, doubts remain both about its attribution to David (it may belong to the ruins of the stronghold of Zion that David allegedly "conquered," 2 Sam 5:7) as well as the classification of the architectural remains of the large stone structure as centralized royal architecture of the tenth century BCE (Israel Finkelstein

et al.). If one attributes the fragmentary ruins to a single building complex, it is one of the largest known Iron Age structures in Israel (Amihai Mazar). Probably, however, the mentioned architectural fragments belong to several buildings—and not merely one—from different epochs, from the Iron IIA to the early Roman period. Parts of the massive walls can, however, be interpreted as Iron IIA era architecture, although the dispute over dating them to the time of David (tenth century BCE) or the ninth century BCE (Israel Finkelstein) remains unresolved.

With recent excavations, the evaluation of Davidic Jerusalem only increases insofar as the significance of the pre-Davidic Jerusalem is increasing. Yet, the historical connection of the mentioned structures to the Middle Bronze Age fortified city is currently highly disputed. According to Amihai Mazar, there is nothing to suggest that the building(s) were no longer in use during the Iron I and IIA periods. While recent excavations in Lachish/Tell ed-Duwër (Yosef Garfinkel) and Gezer (Steven Ortiz, Samuel Wolf) as well as the structures in Ḥirbet Qēyafa (see §4.5.5) advocate for the presence of monumental architecture in the Shephelah in the Iron I–Iron IIA transition, attributing these monumental structures to the reign of King David remains an open question. Whatever the outcome of the debate in archaeology around the tenth century BCE, its significance cannot easily be argued away. But whether the tenth century BCE must be connected with King David and how far his reign extended are separate questions.

4.5.7. The Extent of David's Rule in the North

It remains open how far David's → patrimonial kingdom extended beyond the central and southern Palestinian tribes and above Jerusalem into the northern Palestinian tribes. According to 2 Sam 24:5–7, David's dominion extended to Dan in the north, Beersheba in the south, the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and into Transjordan—including Gilead and a large part of Ammon—in the east.

The assessment of how far north David's rule extended also depends on the assessment of the presence of the Arameans in the designated area. According to 2 Sam 3:3, David married Maacah (while still in Hebron), a daughter of the Aramean royal house of Geshur. Absalom, the son born of this union, fled to Geshur (cf. also the flight of Sheba in 2 Sam 20:14–18) after the murder of his half-brother Amnon, whose mother was a Jezreelite (2 Sam 3:1). There is no agreement in current scholar-

ship on the localization of the kingdom of Geshur. Two geographical centers come into view and are often linked together. The first is in the region around the Sea of Galilee with Bethsaida/et-Tell, Tel Hadar, ʿĒn Gēv, and Tel Dover/Ḥirbet ed-Duwēr. A late Iron I stronghold 1 ha in size and situated above a ford of the Nahal El Al in the neighborhood of Moshav Haspin, about 13 km inland from the seashore, must be added to this. This place revealed characteristic iconographic features of the moon god, which is prominently attested in Bethsaida. Of all the mentioned places, et-Tell is the main location most probably connected with the name Geshur (Nadav Naʿaman). Whether or not the city of Chinnereth (Tel Kinrot/Tell el-ʿOrēme), which lies on the western shore of the sea, was also part of this polity is discussed in scholarship. However, another possible localization of the territory of Geshur much farther to the north results from the biblical conglomeration with Maacah, so that the kingdom would have to be connected with the city Abel-Beth-Maacah (2 Sam 20:14–15; 1 Kgs 15:20, 29) (see §5.3.2). Abel-Beth-Maacah, which is probably identical with Abel (2 Sam 20:18) and Abel-Maim (2 Chr 16:4; Jdt 4:4 [Belmain]), is situated on the Tell Ābil el-Qamḥ at the upper course of the Jordan (about 18 km north of Lake Hula and 7 km NW of Dan) (Robert Mullins, Naama Yahalom-Mack, Nava Panitz-Cohen). The epithet Beth-Maacah may refer to the Maacah dynasty. This large town, which is centrally located along the traffic route to Damascus (the “northern gate of Israel,” William D. Dever; or “northern exposure,” Robert Mullins et al.) and which was continuously populated during the Late Bronze Age and Iron Ages, belongs, alongside Dan and Hazor, to the most important places in the north. But, unlike the two aforementioned, it does not play a major role in biblical traditions. If one combines both approaches in locating the kingdom of Geshur, then the Aramean micro-state not only encompassed the Jordan spring area but also reached south to the Sea of Galilee and Chinnereth/Tell el-ʿOrēme. Abel-Beth-Maacah, which has been undergoing extensive archaeological excavations on Tell Ābil el-Qamḥ since 2013, seems to have been particularly significant in the Middle Bronze IIB and Iron I periods (Nava Panitz-Cohen, Robert Mullins, Ruhama Bonfil, Naama Yahalom-Mack, and others; differently Eran Arie). If one compares the pottery with that of Dan from the same time, it can also be assumed that Abel-Beth-Maacah was initially sparsely populated in the Iron IIA period but was then rebuilt and expanded by Hazael of Damascus (ca. 845–800 BCE). The casemate facility has parallels in Hazor, Megiddo, and in Syrian Zincirli. If Abel-Beth-Maacah was

not the center of the Aramean kingdom of Aram-Maacah but was connected to the Geshur monarchy, its center of gravity may have shifted to the south later. Finally, the lake region lies about 40 km south of Abel-Beth-Maacah. According to 1 Kgs 15:20, Abel-Beth-Maacah was already Israelite in the ninth century BCE and was conquered by the Arameans. But the note could also explain the city having belonged to the Arameans, which is why its historical content is controversial in research. That results in the conclusion: Abel-Beth-Maacah—like Dan—was probably not Israelite under David, only becoming so in the Iron IIB period in the eighth century BCE. The area can be eliminated as a far northern indicator of an established rule by David, even if 2 Sam 8 gives the impression that David made the Arameans pay tribute.

According to 2 Sam 8, David's sphere of influence extended to the Euphrates in the north (Aramean kingdoms) and to Eilat in the south (including Moab and Edom) and also to the Mediterranean (the Philistines) (see §4.5.1, map 8). This empire, which David bequeathed to his son Solomon upon his death (Euphrates: 1 Kgs 5:1; Eilat: 1 Kgs 9:26), is a legend. Neither the archaeological nor the sociological prerequisites for such an extensive empire governed from Jerusalem as a territorial state are discernible. It is only conceivable that Davidic influence ("some degree of authority," J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes) extended beyond the limited domain to the Jezreel Plain, the Galilee, and the northern Transjordan. This influence maximally reached into the areas that correspond approximately to the west Asian area of Egyptian influence of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties (1292–1070/69 BCE), but with the exception of the Philistine cities (Othmar Keel).

Bringing the evidence altogether questions not only the empire and the expanse of the dominion of David "from Dan to Beersheba" (2 Sam 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15; 1 Sam 5:5), but even the extent to which David was king over Israel (in the singular). In any case, there was no "all Israel" that comprised the twelve tribes including the southern tribes, neither in the period of the conquest (see §3.7.3) nor at the time of David. While it is conceivable that David called himself king over Israel when he ousted Ishbaal (2 Sam 2:10), it is unlikely that he united his entire dominion under the title king over all Israel (which is only partly attested in the Hebrew textual record of 2 Sam 8:15 and lacking in LXX). If anything, David was king over Israel *and* Judah in → personal union (2 Sam 5:5, cf. 1 Kgs 5:5), but even that remains more than uncertain. If the monarchy as an organized state arose only in the ninth century BCE and there was neither a

united monarchy nor a division of the kingdom (see §4.7), Israel is the name of the state in the ninth century BCE and has no connection with the local ruler David, whenever—tenth or ninth century BCE—he is to be dated.

4.6. THE KINGDOM OF SOLOMON

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4.6.1. Solomon as David's Successor and His Dominion

In the court intrigues at the end of David's reign, Solomon prevailed against Adonijah (1 Kgs 1–2). Like David, the Hebrew Bible describes the duration of Solomon's reign with the rounded figure of forty years (1 Kgs 11:42). However, as the Mesha Stela from the ninth century BCE shows, this was not unusual in cases of ignorance. Little is known about the historical Solomon. The stories about his legitimation have led to the assumption that the son of the Jerusalemite Bathsheba was perhaps not even a son of David but came to power in Jerusalem in a coup d'état (Ernst Axel Knauf). This would explain why the influential court prophet Nathan wanted to name him Jedidiah ("YHWH's favorite") in order to legitimize him. But this remains speculation, as does the assumption that his name was formed only from the story in 2 Sam 12.

The name formed from the root *šlm* makes Solomon either compensation or a substitute (2 Sam 12:24 indicates *šlm* means "provide compensation") or the ruler of peace (from *šalôm* "peace, prosperity," as indicated in 1 Chr 22:9). But the connection with the deified evening star *Šalem*, which is also present in the name of the city of Jerusalem ("City of Salem"), is also conceivable. This could be read as an indication that David brought YHWH with him to Jerusalem but that he could not immediately displace the gods that were already there and were associated with the city. This is also suggested by the names of David's sons listed in 2 Sam 5:14–16, which do not feature any YHWH-related name components. The name of David's son, Absalom, is better interpreted as "[my] father is Salem" rather than as "father of peace." In support of compensation are the quite frequent biblically and epigraphically documented names Shelemiah ("YHWH replaced [the deceased child]"), Shillem ("he replaced"), or Shallum ("he was replaced"). Salem is supported by the fact that the twin pendant to *šalem*, the dawn *šaḥar*, is also documented on name seals and that it is often not possible to decide whether the *šlm* seals are a reference to compensation or to the Canaanite deity already documented in Ugarit. Whether the morally charged narrative of the unclear succession to the throne 2 Sam 12 appropriated the name Solomon or whether the name inspired the narrative is difficult to decide. Assuming that Solo-

mon and Rehoboam are artificial names (see §4.7.5.1) and not attached to historical figures, the latter would be the case. One cannot escape the suspicious facts.

Indeed, the fact that Solomon was a historical king and that he exercised some kind of rule over the so-called southern kingdom of Judah can only be doubted with difficulty. This is true, especially since the source situation vis-à-vis David—apart from the lack of extrabiblical testimony—does not significantly change. Like David, Solomon is called king over “all Israel” (1 Kgs 4:1, 7; 11:42; Neh 13:26), but at the same time king over Israel and Judah (1 Kgs 5:5). His empire is said to have extended, similar to David’s, from Lebo-Hamath in Lebanon to the border brook of Egypt (Wādī l-‘Ariš) (1 Kgs 8:65). But, as with David, the question arises as to how extensive Solomon’s kingdom actually was, whether one should proceed from a fully developed state, and above all whether it extended to the territory of the later kingdom of Israel. The question of Solomon’s great empire depends entirely on this decision. From the biblical point of view, three texts in particular are relevant, the historical reliability of which is highly controversial in scholarship: (1) the so-called List of Solomon’s Districts in 1 Kgs 4:7–20, which offers a list of the “rulers” (NRSV “officials”) of Solomon and expresses through the geographical indications his dominion over all Israel (1 Kgs 4:1) in the united monarchy of the southern and northern kingdoms (see §4.6.2); (2) the list of Solomon’s works of construction in the cities of his kingdom (1 Kgs 9:15–18), where—besides the temple, the palace, and the Millo—the walls of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer are mentioned, as well as the lower Beth-Horon (Bēt ‘Ūr et-taḥta), Baalath, and Tamar (see §4.6.3); (3) the report of the cession of twenty cities in Galilee to Hiram of Tyre in 1 Kgs 9:10–13, which presupposes that Solomon also ruled over the north (see §4.6.4).

4.6.2. The List of Solomon’s Administrative Districts: 1 Kgs 4:7–20

The twelve *niṣṣābīm* ‘*al-kol-yiśrā’ēl* mentioned in 1 Kgs 4:7–20 were long taken for granted as governors (the Latin Vulgate has *praefecti*) of the Solomonic provinces (the translation varies: governors, officers, officials, district leaders, district prefects, provincial governors). This seemed to be evidence of the organization of the united monarchy as a great empire. This evidence, in addition, was presumed to come from a reliable source dated to that time (Albrecht Alt, Martin Noth, Walter Dietrich). The more

recent discussion, on the other hand, has sought to make it more probable that they are not administrative functionaries but influential members of the local elite whom Solomon tried to integrate as representatives of his interests and thus increase his power (Hermann M. Niemann).

This melded the great empire together, and even Solomon's rule can be estimated as far more provincially oriented than the biblical sources represent it. At any rate, the empire of Solomon was not a well-organized official state. Rather, the signs pointing to a network of domination based on kinship and relationship, as with David, should be taken seriously.

The geopolitically very disparate list, if it can be regarded as credible, represents a scheme to structure dominion. This scheme would reflect the tax and duty system (as well as the *corvée*?), that is, the absorption of the → surplus generated in the ruled territory. The importance of → genealogical and kinship relations appearing in the list could well point to existing structures of rule *before* Solomon (Jens Kamla), but this assumption does not stand on a secure footing.

4.6.3. Solomon's Building Activities

Solomon, alongside Herod the Great, is considered the great builder of Jerusalem. If one ascribes to the biblical report, he built his own palace over thirteen years (1 Kgs 7:1), and besides this he pursued several major projects in Jerusalem. Among these, the most prominent achievement of Solomon is the construction of the First Temple in Jerusalem, for which a total of seven or eleven years is estimated (1 Kgs 6:38).

Scholars often regard the town planning list in 1 Kgs 9:15–19 as a reliable historical document. It mentions that Solomon rebuilt Gezer, which the Egyptian pharaoh had transferred as a bridal gift for his daughter, whom Solomon married. In addition, Beth-Horon/Bêt 'Ūr et-taḥta, Baalath, and Tamar/Ēn 'Haṣeva were expanded. These construction activities are connected with the expansions of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer (1 Kgs 9:15). The *corvée* in connection with Solomon's construction activities in Jerusalem is mentioned (besides 1 Kgs 4:6; 5:27, 28; 9:15, 21) in 1 Kgs 11:28, which speaks of Jeroboam's uprising. In any evaluation, a distinction must be made between the mention of an Egyptian campaign and its consequences in 1 Kgs 9:16–17a (see §4.6.3.1), Solomon's construction activities both in and outside of Jerusalem (see §§4.6.3.2–3), and the motif of *corvée* (see §4.6.3.5). Textual and archaeological findings should be considered separately but not divorced from each other.

4.6.3.1. An Egyptian Campaign as the Background to Solomon's Building Activities

For the assessment of the overall political situation in Palestine, the reference to an Egyptian campaign in 1 Kgs 9:16 is significant. This reference—if the biblical statement is reliable—can be paralleled with a destruction of Gezer/Tell el-Ğazari Stratum IX. Solomon's diplomatic marriage to Pharaoh's daughter and the subsequent expansion of Gezer attributed to King Solomon link to the question of Solomon's foreign policy toward Egypt and the Philistines. These matters link in turn to an important archaeological anchor for the chronology of the Iron IIA period: the so-called six-chamber gate in a later construction phase of Gezer Stratum VIII.

The last pharaohs of the Twenty-First Dynasty (1070/69–946/45 BCE)—Siamun (979/78–960/59 BCE) and Psusennes II (960/59–946/45 BCE) or, more recently, Shoshenq I (946/45–924 BCE)—were the subject of fierce debates surrounding this campaign. From an Egyptian point of view, Psusennes II is hardly an option (Bernd Schipper). For Siamun, construction activities were undertaken in the Tanis area, in the context of which a relief fragment once stood showing the pharaoh in a lunging position as he kills an enemy with a two-headed axe (fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Fragment of the relief of Pharaoh Siamun from Tanis. He is grabbing his enemies with his outstretched left hand in a typical posture and striking them with a raised right hand in which he probably holds a weapon. Opposite his face is a cartouche that verifies this figure's identification. A two-headed axe, which some associate with Syria/Palestine, can be seen in the enemy's lowered hand.

This weapon (which is in fact not restricted to Syria/Palestine) is used to infer a campaign of Pharaoh Siamun to Palestine. Since, however, this is a symbolic representation and not an image of a historical campaign (and certainly not indicative of Gezer), the relief fragment is hardly suitable for verifying the plausibility of Siamun's foreign policy undertakings. The archaeological findings in Gezer show two levels of destruction in the tenth century BCE. The second level of destruction points undisputedly to Shoshenq I's Palestinian campaign around 926 BCE. According to Bernd Schipper, the first level of destruction cannot bear the burden of proof for a Palestine campaign of Siamun, even if relations between Egypt and Palestine can be verified by a group of amulet seals from the tenth century BCE (Stefan Münzer) (fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Stamp seals from Tanis, Beth-Sahur (from the antiquities market), and Tell en-Nasbe with the cryptographically written name of the god Amun. Like other mass-produced items, these seals clearly demonstrate Egyptian influence in the tenth century BCE (late Iron I and early Iron IIA periods).

The assignment of the first level of destruction currently remains impossible. In the → strata of the Iron I and early Iron IIA periods, nothing in the modestly developed administrative area can be recognized to have been of interest to Pharaoh Siamun (Steven Ortiz, Samuel Wolff). First Kings 9:16 must refer to the campaign of Shoshenq I. This campaign did *not* take place during Solomon's reign, as argued in the traditional dating (see §4.8). The note on Gezer's expansion thus does not reflect Solomon's policy; perhaps it refers rather to Omride activities (Israel Finkelstein, Ernst Axel Knauf).

4.6.3.2. Solomon's Construction in Jerusalem

Scholars evaluate Solomon's construction measures reported in 1 Kgs 9:15, 17–19 quite differently, since the list's historical reliability cannot be

guaranteed. The situation for Jerusalem differs from that of the cities in the land: Neither the extent of the city wall, the palace complex with its residence, the House of the Forest of the Lebanon, nor the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem have left any archaeological traces. The present-day Western Wall is part of the supporting wall of the Herodian temple complex and has no connection to the so-called First Temple. A small pomegranate made of ivory from the antiquities market sold to the Israel Museum in 1988 (4.3 cm high) may be old, but the inscription on it, *lby[t] [YHW]H qdš khnm* “belonging to the house of YHWH, holy to the priests,” which assigns the scepter’s head to the/a temple, is a forgery (Eran Arie). Because the Temple Mount (Hebrew *har habbayit*, Arab. Ḥaram eš-Šerīf “the noble district”) is still holy for Judaism and Islam today, excavations there are impossible. Knowledge about the temple and the palace district southeast of it is limited to literary sources. In addition, the pottery of the Iron IIA period hardly permits any differentiation between David and Solomon in the tenth and ninth centuries BCE. The assignment of tenth-century BCE archaeological structures to Solomon’s construction activity is thus hardly possible without taking the biblical evidence as an aid.

In the past decade, a fierce dispute has been waged around the tenth century BCE in Jerusalem. This dispute has been fueled by excavations (in the Givati Parking Lot, on the south and west side of the temple area, on the Ophel south of the temple district, in the area of the Gihon Spring, etc.), as well as the interpretation of the individual finds. Even if it is generally true that the lack of archaeological or extrabiblical evidence may not be equated with the evidence of nonexistence (“the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence”), claims of Solomonic activity in Jerusalem generally stand on weak ground. To make this assessment clearer, one must look at Solomon’s central construction projects in Jerusalem, (1) at the temple, (2) at the perimeter wall of the city, and (3) at the palace district with the palace and the House of the Forest of the Lebanon.

4.6.3.2.1. The Temple of Solomon

The literary sources (mainly 1 Kgs 6–7, besides Ezekiel’s vision of the Second Temple in Ezek 40–48) describe the temple as an east-facing, tripartite longhouse in the style of Syrian temple buildings (porch *’ulām*, main hall *hēkāl*, holy of holies *dabīr*; see fig. 14a and b). The windowless holy of holies was a cube lined with wood, the height, width, and depth of which were specified in 1 Kgs 6:20 at 20 cubits each (ca. 10 m). If one

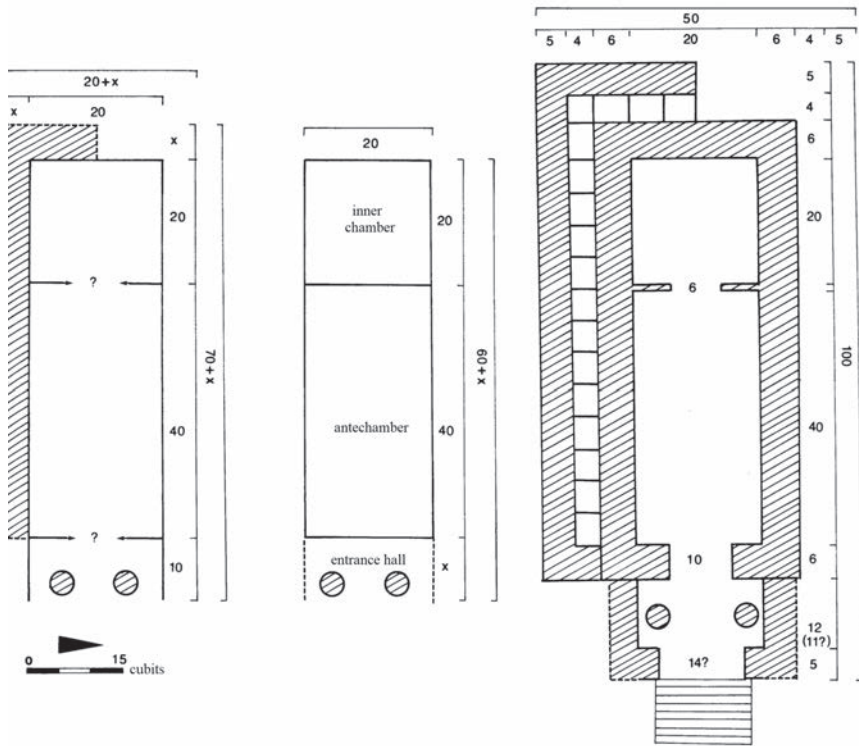


Fig. 14a. Floor plans of the Jerusalem temple with measurements according to 1 Kgs 6 (left); 2 Chr 3 (middle); and Ezek 40–48 (right). The main room (Antecella) is twice the size of the holy of holies (Cella).

assumes the so-called royal cubit (52.5 cm over against the more common 44 cm), the total length of the building was about 35 m, with a width of 10 m (1 Kgs 6:2: 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and altogether 30 cubits high).

Lower annexes on the sides surrounded the tripartite main building. If one compares these measurements with contemporaneous temples in the Levant (such as Ekron, Ataroth, Beth-Shean, Pella/Ṭabaqāt Faḥil, Tell ‘Āfis, Tell Ta‘yīnāt, ‘Ain Dāra), the Jerusalem temple would have been of extraordinary size. The costs of such a construction would have exceeded the actual economic power of the Davidic-Solomonic monarchy many times over. One must therefore assume that the dimensions are greatly exaggerated.

The inner sanctum (*qōdeš haqqōdāšim*, 1 Kgs 6:16, more commonly called the “holy of holies”) was equipped with two cherubim (sphinx-like

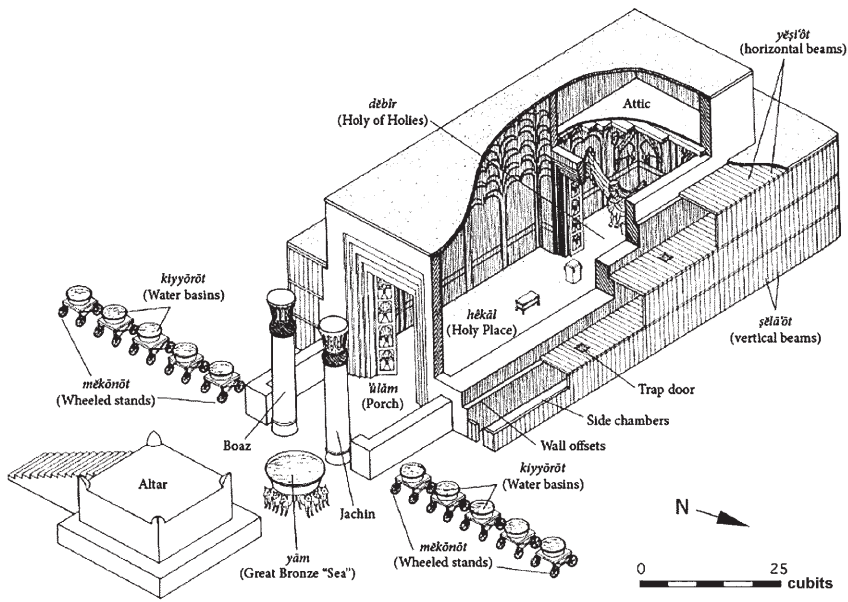


Fig. 14b. This drawn reconstruction by architect Leen Ritmeyer attempts to implement the description of the temple in 1 Kgs 6–7 in a detailed manner but remains entirely hypothetical.

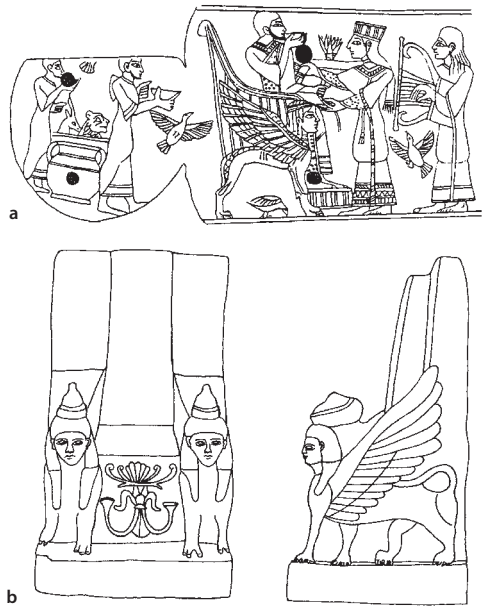


Fig. 15. In a representation of a cherubic throne, two mixed beings with leonine bodies, gryphon wings, and human head flank the seat. The example on a Late Bronze Age ivory plaque from Megiddo (a) shows Egyptian influence. The stone throne from the Lebanese coast from the seventh century BCE (b) may have supported a king's or god's statue, since empty cherubim thrones are mostly attested only later. But see the example in fig. 1b of a bulla from Jerusalem showing a winged sun over an empty throne.

creatures with leonine bodies, gryphon wings, and human heads), the inner wings of which formed the surface of a throne in abutment with each other (fig. 15), while the outer wings stretched upwards to the wall (1 Kgs 6:23–28).

Under the cherubim stood the wooden ark indicating the presence of God. This ark probably originally served as a war palladium (2 Sam 4–5) that David had already transferred from Shiloh to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6). The main room, equipped with only a few objects (table for food offerings, candelabra, instruments for offerings of incense), was covered with cedar wood decorated with carvings (palmettes, floral motifs, cherubim). The vestibule, which was (covered⁷ and) open at the front, was equipped with two decorated columns roughly 9 m high with lotus-blossom capitals. According to 1 Kgs 7:21 and 2 Chr 3:17, these columns are called Jachin and Boaz. The temple's symbolism aimed at expressing the vitality, prosperity, and regeneration of the life-giving God. The temple's construction clearly followed a theological concept of divine presence, oriented along the longitudinal axis such that the presence of God was centered in the holy of holies at the point furthest from the entrance. The altar of sacrifice and burnt offering formed a second center, set up in line with the long axis in the area outside the building, although this is not specifically mentioned in 1 Kgs 6–7. The forecourt was the scene of the sacrificial cult. In addition to the altar and the facilities necessary for the preparation of the offerings, there was a basin in the forecourt called the “molten sea” with a diameter of 5 m and an alleged capacity of 39,000 liters of water. That an object of that size was manufactured from bronze (in Jerusalem or in the lower Jordan Valley, 1 Kgs 7:46) in the tenth century BCE is, technically speaking, hardly feasible; comparable basins from Late Bronze Age temple facilities are mostly made of stone (Wolfgang Zwickel). The molten sea probably symbolized the tamed chaos of the primeval flood and the vitality of water.

Whether the inner sanctum contained a cult image of the city god (and his partner Asherah), which was later removed along with all textual references to it due to the ban on images (Exod 20:4; Deut 5:8), is controversial. Arguments can be made for both positions. The idea of an empty cherubim throne is archaeologically without parallel for the tenth century BCE and is only demonstrable with the Phoenicians from the seventh century BCE onward (see figs. 1b and 15). Othmar Keel, on the other hand, sees the cherubim throne in analogy to the throne footstool of the sun god in northern Syria. Such representation was already present in the

tenth/ninth century BCE, so that an empty throne remains conceivable. As a rule, however, comparable temples were equipped with a cult image, which is confirmed not least by the removal of images of gods in Assyrian texts (fig. 16).

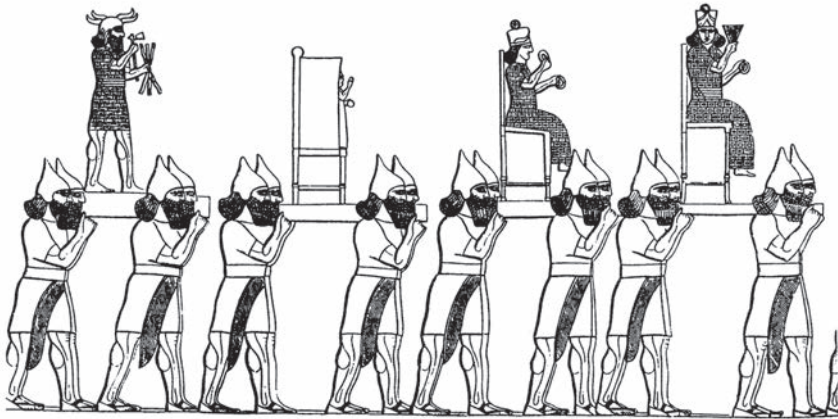


Fig. 16. Transport of four statues of gods by Assyrian soldiers (probably from the city of Gaza 734 BCE) on a relief detail from the palace of Tiglath-pileser III in Nimrud. The gods hold symbols in their hands. The first two goddesses sit on their thrones. Another smaller goddess stands in a blessing posture in a shrine. The fourth, male figure with a crown of horns and weapons in his hands probably represents a weather god.

That anthropomorphic representations of gods also existed in Palestine in the Iron I–II period is archaeologically beyond question (see fig. 17). The fact that an image of the consort Asherah was placed in the temple (2 Kgs 21:7) also makes a cult image of YHWH in the First Temple (at least for the eighth/seventh century BCE) more likely. Conversely, however, the assumption that the ban on images only arose after the exile and that references to the cult image were removed from the text in a *damnatio memoriae* is problematic. There is no evidence of such censorship processes, even if there is no question that the Second Temple was without a cult image.

Conclusion: The question can hardly be decided with certainty at present. There may have been images of the God YHWH, but perhaps not in the temple in Jerusalem. It remains at least plausible to maintain (for the time being) that YHWH had no cult images in the Jerusalem temple. It is connected with the presumably imageless prehistory of the Jerusalem city and a dynastic god YHWH in northern Arabia (cf. Deut 33:2; Judg 5:5;

Hab 3:3; Ps 68:18), which could have encountered an imageless tradition of a sun god in Jerusalem (Othmar Keel).

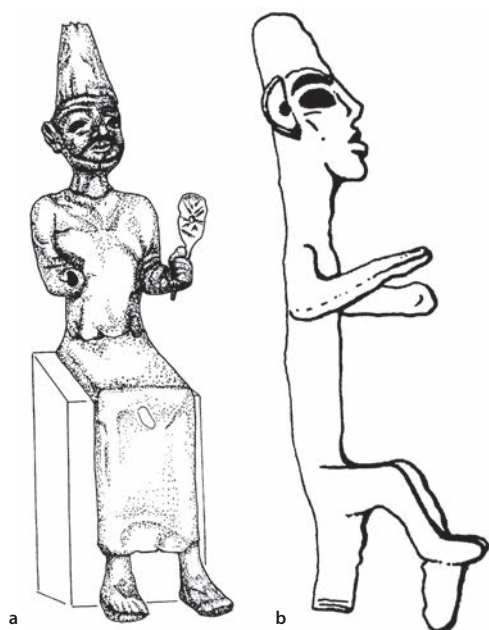


Fig. 17. Bronze figures of enthroned deities from Megiddo (a) and Hazor (b). The small bronze figures were gold-plated and decorated with jewelry and other paraphernalia. The enthroned figures wear a long robe, sandals, and a conical cap. They usually hold the right hand in a pose blessing or greeting the viewer and hold a scepter, a standard, or a cup in the angled left hand. They probably represent a superior god, which is why researchers speak of the El-type. The figurines, fashioned in the Syrian tradition, originate from the Late Bronze Age or the Iron I period.

The exact location of the city temple of Jerusalem is not clear. The only thing that seems relatively certain is that it stood on the site of today's Haram eš-Šerif, although not exactly on the site of today's Dome of the Rock. In all probability it was the highest point of the city, free of other urban settlements and dominating the cityscape. According to biblical information, Solomon built a coherent ensemble of temples and palace buildings. The latter even appear in larger dimensions than the temple, which even in nineteenth-century scholarship led to the somewhat disrespectful but not unrealistic term "palace chapel." It also expresses that the temple did not start out as a public national sanctuary but was first and foremost closely related to the monarchy. It probably did not become a national sanctuary until the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, which was accompanied by an upgrading of the central sanctuary and the reduction of local shrines (Tel Moza, Tell es-Seba', Arad, etc.).

In assessing the plausibility of assigning the temple's building plan described in 1 Kgs 6–8 to Solomon, one usually references analogous

buildings in the Levant. These primarily consist of the similarly large Syrian longhouse temples of Tell Ta'yīnāt, 'Ain Dāra, and Tell 'Āfis. The similarity of the temple's construction plan to these Syrian buildings has been associated with the biblical statement that Hiram, the king of Tyre, maintained good relations with the court of David and Solomon and that he supported Solomon in the construction of the temple by supplying wood from Lebanon in exchange for supplies of grain (see §4.6.4.4).

From an archaeological perspective, there are no → iconographic references to the Solomonic temple from Jerusalem. The excavator of Ḥirbet Qēyafa, Yosef Garfinkel, has linked structures uncovered in 2010–2012 near the southern gate to the Solomonic temple insofar as he interpreted them as a decentralized YHWH sanctuary. Aside from two standing stones, he interpreted a small basalt altar and some vessels as indicating cultic function. In the façades of two clay shrine models (20 cm and 35 cm high), Garfinkel sees references to the Jerusalem temple. One façade presents two external columns parallel to Jachin and Boaz. The other has a triglyph frieze above the stepped entrance area, which Garfinkel associates with 1 Kgs 6:31; 7:4–5. He interprets the empty façades as an indication of an imageless cult. The assumptions are not very meaningful as references to the Solomonic temple, especially since there were comparable shrine models throughout the southern Levant (which are also by no means connected with an imageless cult). The interpretation is therefore rejected by most experts (Israel Finkelstein, Alexander Fantalkin, Silvia Schroer). Also, the interpretation as a regional sanctuary must be regarded as uncertain since the findings can also be assigned to a house cult. The significance of the finds of Ḥirbet Qēyafa remains nevertheless highly relevant, as it currently represents one of, if not the, earliest evidence for a triglyph frieze in the Levant.

The extent to which a precursor building can be expected in (pre-) Davidic Jerusalem remains a topic of discussion. At present, the prevailing arguments reckon with a temple already existing in Late Bronze Age Jerusalem, which was possibly dedicated to a sun god (not least because of its eastern alignment and the role of darkness in the temple dedication, 1 Kgs 8:12) (Othmar Keel). Solomon's temple would then at least not have been a new building. A few biblical references (2 Sam 12:20; 22:7) indicate that Solomon was not the first to build a temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps the type of temple also speaks to this assumption, considering that it was discontinued at the end of the Late Bronze Age. However, there are still examples throughout the southern Levant, such as the Iron II period longhouse ded-

icated to a moon god in Ruġm el-Kursi near Amman in Transjordan. Be that as it may, it is indeed difficult to imagine that the Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age city of Jerusalem, which had been massively fortified since the Middle Bronze period, had *no* central sanctuary. This sanctuary would hardly have stood in any other place than Solomon's temple. Thus, the stylization of Solomon as the initial and first builder of a temple in Jerusalem (2 Sam 7:12–13; 1 Kgs 5:19) would represent a glorification of Solomon's image.

4.6.3.2.2. City Wall

In 1 Kgs 3:1, Solomon's three great building projects are listed as the palace, the temple, and the city wall around Jerusalem; 1 Kgs 9:15 also mentions the wall of Jerusalem as Solomon's building project. Based on the biblical data, the city would, and, of course, should, be reconstructed as being surrounded by a system of walls. However, the largely lacking archaeological findings have always generally opposed this. Older research, on the basis of the conquest report 2 Sam 5, assumed that pre-Davidic Jerusalem was already surrounded by a wall, at least in the area of the Southeastern Hill, and therefore associated the wall remains with the Jebusite city. Nonetheless, there have been doubts more recently about a pre-Hezekian fortification of the city in general (David Ussishkin, Doron Ben-Ami). The massive MB II city fortifications were no longer used in the Late Bronze period, so that Jerusalem remained unfortified in the Iron I/Iron IIA period. The only fortification is the so-called stepped stone structure (see §4.5.6) as part of a substructure reinforcing the citadel (Gunnar Lehmann). Others believe that the MB II period walls, uncovered in the area of the city of David, including at least one of the two massive towers that secured access to the Gihon Spring, continued to be used as city fortifications (Kathleen Kenyon, Jane M. Cahill, Amihai Mazar). Almost every trace of Solomon's wall project, as reported in the text, is missing, apart from dubious fragments or single finds of little consequence (e.g., a Proto-Aeolic volute capital; see §5.4.3.3). In the excavations at the Ophel, the area between the city of David and the southern boundary of the temple area, in 2011 Eilat Mazar identified a wall up to 6 m high with a total length of 70 m. She connected it, together with a two-chamber gate and remains of storehouses, with King Solomon as a city fortification due to the pottery. However, it is almost impossible to distinguish in the assemblage of pottery between the tenth century BCE (early Iron IIA) and the ninth century

BCE (late Iron IIA) (Amihai Mazar). The ceramic findings are thus by no means unambiguous, which is why a classification in the tenth century BCE remains controversial.

Structures of a building that could date back to the Iron IIA period (Eilat Mazar) were also uncovered on the Ophel and are said to have been integrated into the hypothetical → casemate fortification. There is no question that these were massive structures. While the western part must be dated later due to the pottery found in the foundation area, the eastern wing could be older. Based on the pottery, Israel Finkelstein dates the structures on the slope to the late Iron IIA period (second half of the ninth century BCE; private communication). With this, the dispute about the tenth century BCE in Jerusalem continues. According to the excavator, large fragments of Iron IIA *pithoi* (storage jars) were placed under the subfloor for stabilization. One of them had an enigmatic Proto-Canaanite inscription (*mqphnl'n*; the meaning remains unclear) that *could* date back to the Iron I period (Eilat Mazar, David Ben-Shlomo, Shmuel Ahituv). The exact dating of the storage jars to the Iron IIA period (early tenth century BCE, Eilat Mazar; ninth century BCE, Israel Finkelstein) determines whether it is possible to assign the structures to Solomon. A stamp seal (seal amulet/scarab) with four antithetically arranged ram heads (Othmar Keel, Corpus V, Jerusalem no. 454) found in the rubble of the excavation dates back to the early Iron IIA period, but perhaps also somewhat later. Significantly, a stamp seal with a very similar motif was found in the excavation of Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron at the Gihon Spring (Othmar Keel, Corpus V, Jerusalem no. 198, see fig. 18). That the motif of a ram's head, as well as its parallels, was influenced by northern Syria speaks for a “not too late” dating into the Iron IIA period (Othmar Keel). The dating of the building structures connected with a wall cannot be dated exclusively by individual seals, but the example shows that the questions of city fortifications in the Iron IIA period cannot be clarified unequivocally in one direction or another. Accompanying evidence comes ultimately from the recent Jerusalem excavation in the Givati Parking Lot, which did not provide any evidence of an Iron IIA fortification wall—although it was expected there. Thus, at least for the moment, the hypothesis can be presumed that the Southeastern Hill was *not* fortified during the Iron IIA period (Doron Ben-Ami). The question of Solomonic city fortification in the tenth century BCE thus remains one of the most controversial topics of Jerusalem's archaeology.

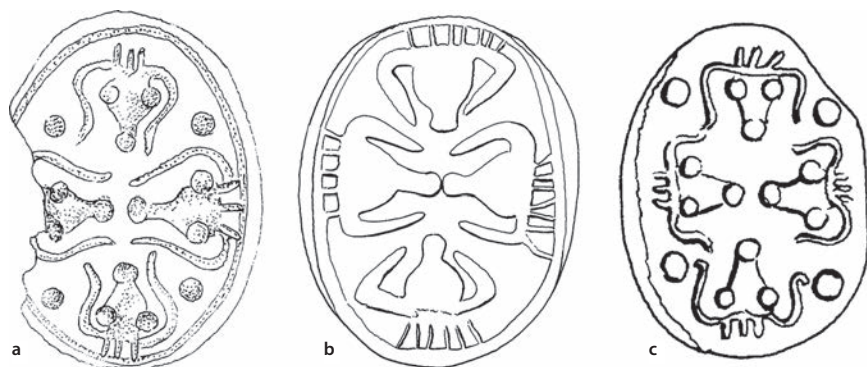


Fig. 18. Scarabs with four antithetically arranged ram heads from Jerusalem (a: Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron excavation, b: Eilat Mazar excavation) and Beth-Shemesh (c: surface find). The seals probably date back to the Iron IIA period (tenth/ninth century BCE), although a later dating (down to the Iron IIC period) can be considered. The unusual design of the motif underlines the northern Syrian influence in Jerusalem, which is also otherwise present.

4.6.3.2.3. Palace and the House of the Forest of the Lebanon

According to the Hebrew Bible, David did not build his own palace. Rather, the Phoenician Hiram provided material and craftsmen “and they built David a house” (2 Sam 5:11). Things are different for Solomon, who is said to have built his own house over thirteen years (1 Kgs 7:1). However, the information for this is extremely brief, and the text goes directly over to the “House of the Forest of the Lebanon” (1 Kgs 7:2), a hall that apparently had an administrative and representative function and served as an arsenal and treasury (cf. 1 Kgs 10:17, 20; Isa 22:8). We learn little more in 7:8, 12: the palace was in the same architectural style as the House of the Forest of the Lebanon and stood together with this and the similarly built house for Pharaoh’s daughter in a large walled-in courtyard. There is also no clarity about the possible location of the palace. Most likely, the administrative palace complex was closely connected to the temple, and together they formed an ensemble of buildings. While the palace of Solomon is usually assumed to be south of the temple (in approximately the location of today’s Dome of the Rock), David Ussishkin locates it north of the temple.

The House of the Forest of the Lebanon, the construction plan of which cannot really be reconstructed on the basis of the biblical data, seems to have been an elongated tripartite or quadripartite hall. The size

specifications in 1 Kgs 7:2 of 50 x 25 x 15 m suggest the building was larger than the palace chapel. A column construction consisting of four (→ LXX: three) rows of fifteen cedar columns each is said to have supported the ceiling(s); the openings are architecturally designed with staggered frames. It is unclear how many buildings are to be included in the palace complex. If the columned hall and the throne hall represent buildings of their own, the number adds up to five (House of the Forest of the Lebanon, columned hall, throne hall, residential building, house for Pharaoh's daughter, Volkmar Fritz), which once again reduces the significance of the temple in the ensemble. All the buildings in the palace complex are said to have been built in a similar way, but there are no traces of either the architecture or the walls of the palace district.

To sum up, as long as the archaeological evidence for Solomon's construction activity in Jerusalem remains thin, the so-called city in the tenth century BCE, in which no more than two thousand people lived (Hillel Geva), is better described as "a highland stronghold" (Nadav Na'aman) than as the centralized capital of a strong and developed monarchy. Architectural indicators of centralized state administration are still quite sparse. For future developments, one must refer to the Ophel and the more recent excavations of Eilat Mazar, whose final evaluation and classification are still to be released.

4.6.3.3. The Expansion of Hazor, Gezer, and Megiddo under Solomon

While Solomon's Jerusalem can only be described in literary terms, the tradition of Solomon's construction activities in the country is limited to brief notes in 1 Kgs 9:15, 17–18, where extensive works are reported. The so-called six-chamber gates (see fig. 19) play an important role in the discussion.

4.6.3.3.1. Six-Chamber Gates

These gates were discovered in Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer in uniform construction and assigned by Yigael Yadin to the construction activity of Solomon. Thus, an archaeological confirmation of 1 Kgs 9:15 seemed to have been provided, so that as a rule the whole list was considered authentic. More recent discussions, however, have questioned the classification of the buildings to the tenth century BCE and thus also the dating of the list. It is largely undisputed that the archaeological data of Baalath (el-Muḡār

or Tulul el-medbaḥ[?]), Tamar (probably ʿĒn Ḥaṣēvā/ʿĒn el-Ḥuṣb, Detlef Jericke), and Beth-Horon (Bēt ʿŪr et-taḥta) cannot be linked to any significant expansion by Solomon. The situation is different with the three larger cities of Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo. In Gezer (Tell el-Ğazari), a → casemate wall was excavated, which was preceded by a ring wall. Whether the two wall systems belong together is of fundamental importance in the ascription of them to Solomon. While those who favor Solomon assume this (William G. Dever), most researchers date the outer wall system only to the Iron IIB period. The gate system is closely connected to the casemate wall, which is both typical of early fortifications and a feature of the later Iron IIA period. The large six-chamber gate in the south (Stratum VIII) has roughly the same dimensions as the city gates of Hazor (Stratum X) and Megiddo (Stratum VA/IVB):

	Hazor	Megiddo	Gezer
Length	20.3 m	20.3 m	19.0 m
Width	18.2 m	17.5 m	16.2 m
Width of the gate passage	4.2 m	4.2 m	4.1 m
Width between towers	6.1 m	6.5 m	5.5 m

Table 5. Measurements of selected city gates.

The six-chamber gate systems are comparable with other constructions from Ashdod, Lachish, Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine, Tel ʿĪrā/Ḥirbet el-Ğarra, and perhaps also Jezreel (differently Amnon Ben-Tor). These certainly date to a post-Solomonic period. Consequently, Solomon's expansion of Megiddo, Gezer, and Hazor is generally questioned. Rather, the buildings are more likely part of the prospering young kingdom of Israel under the rule of the Omrides (see §5.4.3.3).

In Megiddo, the situation seems to be the clearest. Instead of the → casemate wall assumed by Yigael Yadin, which would parallel Gezer and Hazor, a massive city wall with projections and recesses is connected to the monumental six-chamber gate. The gate in Megiddo is *not* from the same time period as the facilities in Hazor and Gezer, so that in the Iron IIA period a fortification of Megiddo is questionable. The excavators of Hazor (Amnon Ben-Tor) and Gezer (William G. Dever), however, deny a downgrading of the gate buildings and continue to hold to a Solomonic dating.

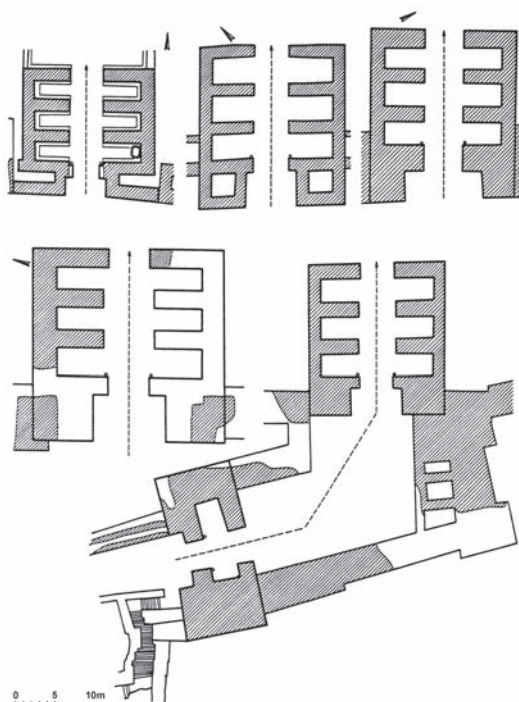


Fig. 19. Six-chamber gates from Gezer (top left), Hazor (top center), Ashdod (top right), Lachish (bottom left), and Megiddo (bottom right). The opposing massive tongs form chambers, which could be used in different ways: as a place for the guards to stay, as a trade zone, as a well-protected archive, and so on. The tongs form a passage of approximately uniform width (about four meters), which was closed behind the towers by heavy gate wings. The example from Megiddo shows a kinked entrance with a two-chamber gate in front, which offered additional security.

For example, the smaller six-chamber gate of Stratum X, which continued to be used on the acropolis in Hazor when the city was expanded with a six-chamber gate in Stratum VIII, remains connected to the tenth century BCE (Amnon Ben-Tor), while Stratum X is dated by Israel Finkelstein only to the late phase of the Iron IIA period, that is, to the Omrides. Since the pottery of Stratum X is similar to that of Jezreel/Ḥirbet Zerʿin/Tell Yizreʿel, which was built under the Omrides and probably destroyed by Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) in the last third of the ninth century BCE, a connection between Hazor Stratum X and Solomon is questionable. Strata X–IX have to be dated between 875/50 and 830/800 BCE (Harel Shochat, Ayelet Gilboa). Also in Gezer, the Iron IIA pottery from fill layers

of buildings, which are to be counted as part of the city gate, points to a later origin (Steven Ortiz, Samuel Wolff regarding a cautious distancing from the older excavation results).

The only way to save the strata of Hazor X and Megiddo VA–IVB for Solomon would be to extend the lifetime of the pottery and allow for the developed city of stratum VA–IVB to date from the tenth to the ninth century BCE (David Ussishkin, Amihai Mazar). On the other hand, there is the more plausible hypothesis of attributing the finds to the Omrides (see §5.4), so that the concordance between 1 Kgs 9:15–17 and the archaeological data should be abandoned.

4.6.3.3.2. Storage Halls

In the excavations of Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo at the edge of the Jezreel Plain, a large number of elongated halls divided into three naves by two rows of pillars was discovered and identified as Solomon's stables. Thus, Solomon's military importance and international horse trade (1 Kgs 5:6–8; 10:26–29) seemed to be confirmed outside the Hebrew Bible, even though no evidence of horse keeping was found in the accompanying artifacts. In the first half of the twentieth century, this thesis had developed great importance for the demonstration of Solomon's splendor while also strongly influencing the interpretation of the findings in other places.

The comparison with similar buildings (see fig. 20) and the stratigraphy (→ stratum) in Megiddo soon showed, however, that the buildings neither date back to the time of Solomon nor were they necessarily horse stables. Rather, they were warehouses for storage from the ninth/eighth century BCE. In Palestine, three-aisled, pillared halls were also identified in Hazor/Tell Waqqāš, Tell el-ʿOrēme/Chinnereth, Eš-Šēḥ Ḥaḍar/Tel Hadar, Tell Abū Ḥawām, Ḥirbet el-ʿĀšeq/ʿĒn Gēv, Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile, Beth-Shemesh/ʿĒn-Šems, Tell Ġalūl, Tell el-Ḥesī, Tell es-Sebaʿ, Malatha/Tell el-Milḥ/Tel Malḥātā. They predominantly originate from the Iron II period. Since the construction method of separating ancillary rooms by pillars is also used in the classic four-room house (see §3.5.2), the transition to residential housing in smaller buildings (such as in Taanach/Tell Taʿannek, Tell es-Saʿīdiye, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine, etc.) is fluid, making it somewhat difficult to discern whether they were warehouses or residential buildings. The central rooms of the larger halls were usually equipped with a floor made of beaten earth, clay, or lime plaster, while the side aisles were paved with unhewn stones

or cobblestones. Although this also favored the narrowing of interpretations to stables, the long spaces can best be described as multifunctional buildings that could serve various economic purposes (Helga Weippert, Manfred Weippert). Since they are usually quite large in relation to the size of the settlement, they are evidence of a certain economic centralization in local stockholding or a centralized organization of craft activities (such as textile production in Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine). Occasionally, they may also have been used as stables, since the training of chariot horses requires temporary stabling. Despite all the openness of the interpretation, however, they certainly *cannot* prove Solomon's splendor and his biblically praised wealth of horses.

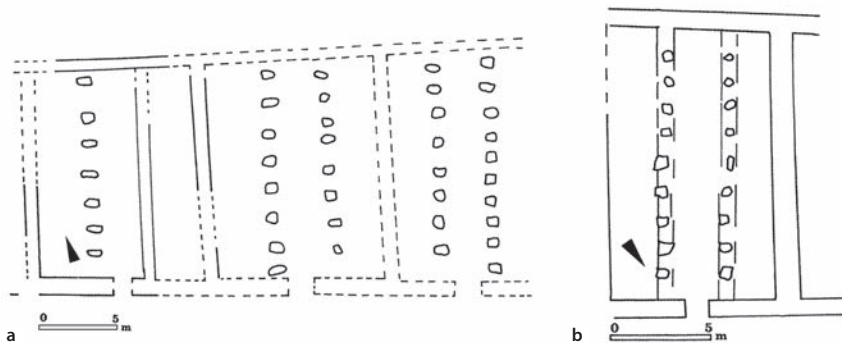


Fig. 20. Reconstruction of three-aisled pillar halls from Tell el-Ḥesī (a) and from Chinnereth/Tell el-'Orēme (b). The halls, which are only slightly different from the residential buildings, can be seen as signs of a centralized economy and administration. The multifunctional buildings could be used for various purposes (warehouses, food storage, trade, animal husbandry, etc.).

4.6.3.3.3. Palace Architecture

The palace complex in Megiddo (Palace 6000) with its large courtyard was influenced by Syrian architecture. Yet even this can hardly be derived from Solomon's relations with Tyre. It points rather to the ninth century BCE than the tenth century BCE, especially since the Syrian type, the so-called Bīt-Ḥilāni type, is not documented as a model at the time of Solomon. Israel Finkelstein therefore compares the construction of the palace with the Omride palace in Samaria. Accompanying this, he argues using pottery typology to highlight the proximity of the pottery of Megiddo Stratum

VA–IVB to the Omride pottery of Jezreel/Hirbet Zer‘in/Tell Yizre‘el from the ninth century BCE. Accordingly, he dates Megiddo Stratum VA–IVB to the Omrides and not to Solomon. Recently this latter argument has been relativized in the so-called chronology debate (see §4.6.3.4), insofar as a longer period of operation is claimed for the pottery in the tenth/ninth century BCE (Amihai Mazar). Under these conditions, Solomon remains possible as the benefactor of the architecture in Hazor/Tell Waqqāš in Upper Galilee, where, following the destruction at the end of the Late Bronze era, the upper city was only expanded and refortified during the Iron II era.

Closely connected with the discussion about the tenth century BCE and the kingship of David and Solomon is the so-called chronology debate, which deals with the dating of archaeological → strata and thus the possible archaeological evidence for the reigns of David and Solomon. Since the chronology debate has become of overarching importance for understanding Palestinian archaeology, it will be briefly dealt with in an excursus.

4.6.3.4. Excursus: The Chronology Debate in Archaeology and the Tenth Century BCE

The catchphrase *chronology debate* describes the ongoing, strongly polarized discussion initiated in 1996 by the Tel Aviv archaeologist Israel Finkelstein that reached its peak between 2000 and 2010 but has not yet really concluded (see bibliography at §1.9). The subject of the discussion pertains to the absolute dating of certain archaeological phases in the twelfth–eighth centuries BCE in Israel/Palestine, particularly the transition from late Iron I to the (early) Iron IIA and the subdivision of the Iron Age II (see the overview in §10.1.1). The assignment of certain archaeological strata to David and Solomon is particularly controversial. Most specifically, the debate reflects on the biblical portrait of the tenth century BCE, although the contexts of the discussion pertain much more broadly to Levantine archaeology. Discussions about the absolute dating of relative → strata are not unusual in archaeology, but special problems arise in the archaeology of Palestine, as so often happens, because the credibility of the biblical representation is at stake. Since the Hebrew Bible is no longer the major reference point for the reconstruction of the development in the Iron I period (see §3.4), the Iron IIA period is facing the same fate in the chronology debate.

Briefly, the chronology debate is about the following. Finkelstein determined that locally produced monochrome Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery (so-called Philistine Monochrome Pottery) was used in Palestine from the twelfth to the tenth centuries BCE and the bichrome sub-Mycenaean successor pottery (so-called Philistine Bichrome Pottery) (see §4.2.2.1) for fifty to eighty years longer. This determination led to a shift in the conventional boundary between the Late Bronze and the Iron I periods. Whereas the appearance of this type of pottery was previously associated with the end of the Egyptian presence in Palestine, it should be associated with the subsequent phase from around 1135 BCE according to Finkelstein. The earliest settlement of the Philistines is accordingly delayed in comparison to the traditional settlement under Ramesses III (1183–1151 BCE) into the *late* twelfth century BCE. Consequently, Finkelstein shifts the dating of the Iron IB-strata to the Iron IIA and the Iron IIB-strata to the Iron IIC period. In the discussion, this chronology is called low chronology (LC). This is contrasted with the traditional chronology, the so-called conventional chronology (CC). For over a decade, Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar have been the two figureheads of the chronology debate. Mazar presented an alternative concept to Finkelstein, mainly with recourse to his excavations in Beth-Shean and Tel Rehov. Mazar's concept makes considerable concessions with regard to the dating down of archaeological epochal thresholds, on the one hand. Yet at the same time, it maintains the tenth century BCE for the Iron IIA period (see below). This concept is titled modified conventional chronology (MCC) (for the time estimates, see the overview in §§1.9, 10.1.1).

The debate has now expanded considerably and is confusing due to many intermediate positions (e.g., Ze'ev Herzog, Ernst Axel Knauf, Ilan Sharon), discussions of pottery typology, ¹⁴C dates, and the interpretation of individual findings (Raz Kletter offers an understandable, methodically reflective overview).

The conventional chronology is rightly criticized for creating an archaeological gap in the ninth century BCE vis-à-vis the well-attested tenth and eighth/seventh centuries BCE. Conversely, the low chronology is criticized for the fact that the arguments for the dating of sub-Mycenaean pottery are insufficient or that the absence of such pottery is not significant in Lachish Stratum VI (William G. Dever, Rüdiger Schmitt). For example, it is argued that the imported late Helladic Mycenaean IIIC pottery in Beth-Shean and the locally produced sub-Mycenaean pottery in the coastal plain are closely related to Cypriot pottery that was clearly

produced before 1130 BCE (Ann Killebrew, Gunnar Lehmann). On the other hand, the Iron IIA findings would be squeezed into a period of seventy to one hundred years, which would lead to problems, especially in places with complex Iron Age stratification (Amnon Ben-Tor, Amihai Mazar, Rüdiger Schmitt).

A key role is played by the typology of pottery in the north and, in particular, by the pottery of Jezreel. The Jezreel complex was built in the ninth century BCE and probably destroyed by Hazael at the end of the same century. While representatives of low chronology compare pottery with layers traditionally dated (Solomonically) in the tenth century BCE (especially Hazor X, Megiddo VA–IVB) and thus arrive at a lower dating of those layers, representatives of conventional chronology emphasize the difference between the pottery assemblage of Jezreel and Hazor, Megiddo, Yokneam, and so on (Amnon Ben-Tor, Anabel Zarzecki-Peleg).

The far-reaching consequences for the history of Israel appear in the tenth century BCE and the beginning of the Iron IIA. While the traditional chronology dates the beginning of the Iron IIA to about 1000–900 BCE, the low chronology delays this beginning by roughly a century (e.g., Israel Finkelstein about 900–830 BCE [low chronology], traditional Yohanan Aharoni 1000–925 BCE [conventional chronology], Amihai Mazar 980–830 BCE [modified conventional chronology]). Archaeologically speaking, this pulls the rug out from under the feet of the flourishing empire of David and Solomon. For the Solomonic era, low chronology can highlight no noteworthy change in archaeological findings. The kingdom of Solomon is not the golden age with which magnificent administrative palaces and walls can be connected; rather, the tenth century and the beginning of the ninth century BCE are a less-developed interim period in continuity with the Iron I period in which state rule was slowly being established. Solomon is no longer the builder of the monumental buildings, such as Palace 6000 and Palace 1723 in Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim or the six-chamber gates in Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo. These rather belong—as with the comparable monumental buildings in Samaria and Jezreel—to the rulers of the Omride dynasty, in particular Omri and his son Ahab (see §5.4). An important point of discussion in the current debate is therefore whether a significant change in material culture can be observed in the first half of the tenth century BCE. The representatives of low chronology deny this, while the representatives of the modified conventional chronology want to keep open the possibility that the kings of the united monarchy were responsible for the buildings. Methodically problematic, however, is the

amalgamation of archaeological and historical argumentation (Raz Kletter). A decision in the chronology debate is not currently possible despite the increasing amount of reliable ^{14}C data (as recently methodologically argued by David Ussishkin), but there are signs of compromise. That the biblical date 926/25 BCE (the so-called division of the kingdom, see §4.7) represents a significant archaeological pivot and represents the transition from the Iron IIA to the Iron IIB period is no longer maintained by an increasing number of researchers. At least it can be stated that the data on the transition from the Iron IIA to the Iron IIB period after initially large differences (e.g., with respect to the end in the ninth or eighth century BCE) have, in the meantime, converged among the main counterparties (Israel Finkelstein 900–835/30 BCE, Amihai Mazar 980–830 BCE, somewhat differently, e.g., Ze'ev Herzog 950–800 BCE). Meanwhile, there is a large consensus that the whole Iron IIA covers some of the second half of the tenth century BCE and a large part of the ninth, ending between 830–810 BCE (Harel Shochat, Ayelet Gilboa). Although the exact beginning is discussed, the division between two phases of the Iron IIA period is widely accepted (early Iron Age IIA 950–900 BCE and late Iron Age IIA 900–840/30 and 800, respectively) (Ze'ev Herzog, Lily Singer-Avitz). Only the beginning of the late Iron IIA period is sometimes estimated to be twenty-five years earlier (Amihai Mazar).

Disagreement between the chronologies thus basically exists only for the tenth century BCE and the beginning of the Iron IIA period, but this is exactly the chronological window in which the united monarchy would have left archaeological traces under Solomon's rule. In more recent studies, a regional differentiation and a developmental progression moving successively from the north (where the Iron IIA may have started earlier) to the south complicates matters further even beyond ^{14}C dates. A perfect chronological parallelism, nevertheless, is only required if it is assumed that events (e.g., the campaign of Shoshenq I, see §4.8) or monarchies (David and Solomon) affect the whole area equally. But it is precisely this that is currently in question. However, the decision on Solomon's monarchy does not rest on a differentiated chronology alone.

4.6.3.5. Forced Labor

The biblical account closely connects Solomon's building activities with forced labor, which led, in the end, to the breaking away of the northern tribes and the division of the kingdom (1 Kgs 11:28; 12:4, 11, 14, 18).

According to 1 Kgs 5:27–29, Solomon deployed 30,000 men “out of all Israel” to work on the procurement of building materials in Lebanon. In addition, 70,000 men were forced to carry out transport work, and 80,000 broke stones in the mountains. Those subject to *corvée* are said to have been directed by 3,300 supervisors (the number varies in the Greek tradition) under the leadership of the governors from 1 Kgs 4:7–20 (see §4.6.2). Adoram/Adoniram played an important role as a supervisor of forced labor during the reigns of David (2 Sam 20:24), Solomon (1 Kgs 4:6), and Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12:18). While in the passages just mentioned it was Israelites who were subject to *corvée*, 1 Kgs 9:15–21 and 2 Chr 8:8 point in another direction. There, only the foreigners remaining from the time of the conquest were used as slaves for the building projects (cf. Josh 16:10; 17:13; Judg 1:30). Apart from this conceptual difference and the completely exaggerated numbers, the obligation to work in the civil service appears plausible at first glance. Forced labor, both in major construction projects and for so-called feudal services in land management, was more or less common throughout the Middle East as a form of taxation (see 1 Kgs 15:22; Neh 4:4, 10–11; Deut 20:11; 1 Sam 8:17). The title *‘al hammas*, used in 2 Sam 20:24; 1 Kgs 4:6; 5:28; 12:18; 2 Chr 10:18 for those “set over the *corvée*,” is also attested, for example, on an official seal (CWSS 20; see fig. 21) from the seventh century BCE (Nahman Avigad).

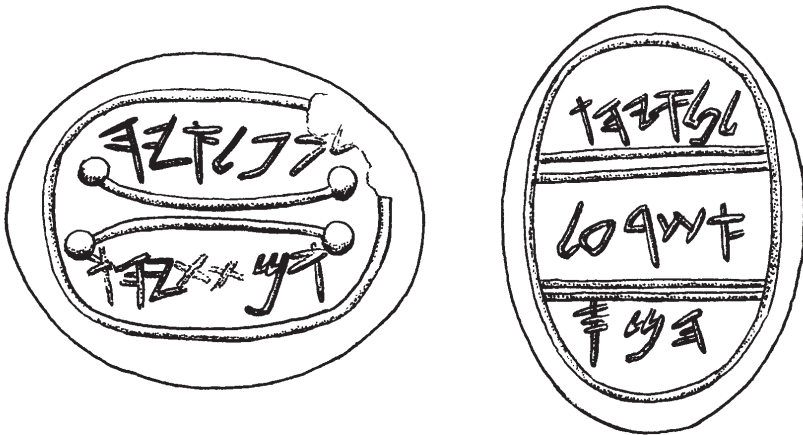


Fig. 21. The seal from the seventh century BCE, inscribed on both sides, bears the inscriptions “(belonging to) Pela’yāhū (the son) of Mattatyāhū” and “(belonging to) Pela’yāhū, who (is set) over the *corvée*.”

Critically, it is to be objected that, for the prescribed obligation of forced labor in 1 Kgs 5 and 9, a state organization and administration (list system) must be assumed, for which there is no evidence in the tenth century BCE (and even later). This objection results in a circular argument for the tenth century BCE: *there was no corvée because there were no administrative buildings, which did not exist because there was no state organization of the workers who could have built them.*

The motif of corvée, which apart from the exodus narrative (see §2.4.4.3) can only be found prominently in King Solomon's (and subsequently in his son Rehoboam's) work, even makes forced labor appear to be a literarily developed paradigmatic critique of royal hegemony. Therefore, one can rightly remain skeptical about an uncritical historical transfer to King Solomon.

4.6.3.6. Summary: Solomon and the Tenth Century BCE

From an archaeological point of view, there is not much left of Solomon's splendor, his international trade relations, his splendid building activity, or his well-structured dominion. Notable building activities should not be connected with Solomon, and the expansions attributed to Solomon are better attributable to the Omrides. From a methodological point of view, the archaeological evidence remains an *argumentum e silentio* but a strong one: the biblical presentation has not been entirely disproven, but it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain, against the archaeological findings, that Solomon extended his dominion into a great empire. The archaeological discussion leads to a devaluation of the historical significance of Solomon and to a revaluation of the Omrides (see §5.4).

4.6.4. Solomon's Trade Relations

The biblical account attaches great importance to Solomon's trade relations. He is accused of political marriages on a grand scale. Besides his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, Solomon accumulated a huge harem; 1 Kgs 11:3 describes an incredible seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines from all over the world. They became Solomon's doom in his old age, as they drew him away from the exclusive worship of YHWH into apostasy (1 Kgs 11:4–8, 33). The → Deuteronomists use this to explain the so-called division of the kingdom as the result of his misconduct. Marriage is associated with foreign trade relations and political alliances. Of

particular importance are the specifically named Phoenicians, Ammonites, and Moabites. These connections suggest that Solomon ruled over Transjordan (see §4.6.4.2) and had the best of relations with the Phoenicians. Hiram, the king of Tyre, supplied Solomon with the necessary resources for the construction of the temple and the palace from Lebanon (1 Kgs 5:15–26). He was, in turn, repaid with agricultural goods (1 Kgs 5:25) and the assignment of claims to power in the north (1 Kgs 9:11–12) (see §4.6.4.5). According to 1 Kgs 9:26–27; 10:11, 22, the trade partnership even extended to joint ventures in maritime trade to the borders of the known world, to Ophir (a legendary country on the Arabian peninsula, in east Africa, or even India) and Tarshish (in the west of the Iberian peninsula) (see §4.6.4.4). The biblical description of trading activities goes well beyond the Phoenician partnership when it allows Solomon to develop his horse trade with Egypt and Quwê in Cilicia into a quasi-monopoly in the ancient Near East (1 Kgs 10:28–29) (see §4.6.4.3). The stylization of the incomparable Solomon as a great ancient Near Eastern king culminates in the visit of the queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10:1–13) from northern Arabia (see §4.6.4.1). From a historical point of view, these are legends and → anachronisms.

4.6.4.1. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

The situation is clearest with the queen of Sheba. Reliable evidence of the southern Arabian kingdom of Sheba does not begin until the ninth/eighth century BCE. It is more likely that the queen reflects the Proto-Arabs, who occupied the north of the Arabian peninsula since the time of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) (Ernst Axel Knauf, Herbert Donner). Long-distance trade in luxury wares from northern and southern Arabia ran through the Negev along the so-called incense road, which had its end point in the trading emporium of Gaza. There is an unprovenanced Sabaeen bronze inscription (perhaps from the city of Nashq) documenting south Arabian trade with cities in Judah at the end of the seventh century BCE (André Lemaire). Its authenticity, however, has been questioned. It is unlikely that King Solomon already had trade relations with southern Arabia. The visit of the queen of Sheba is legend, not history.

4.6.4.2. Copper Mining and Long-Distance Maritime Trade

The situation is not much different with long-distance trade on the Gulf of Aqaba. Ezion-Geber, mentioned in 1 Kgs 9:26, is to be identified with

Ġezîret Far'ûn at Eilat (see §5.4.5.4). It demonstrates an expansion in the eighth century BCE, according to recent archaeological investigations (Wolfgang Zwickel, differently Israel Finkelstein). Thus, the trading port must be omitted as evidence for the time of Solomon. This does not change if one identifies Ezion-Geber with Eilat/Tell el-Ĥulêfe, the structures of which also date from (perhaps a little later) the eighth century BCE (Israel Finkelstein, Hermann M. Niemann). The older Qurayyah pottery found at the site provides no archaeological contextualization for the settlement. As long as there was no harbor built, the place was not suitable for shipping. It can therefore be assumed that Arabian long-distance trade did not use the sea routes on the Gulf of Aqaba until its intensification in the eighth century BCE. The trade route then led both along the so-called King's Highway toward the north as well as along the Darb el-Ġazze, via Kuntillet 'Aġrûd and Kadesh-Barnea ('Ēn el-Qudêrat), toward Gaza.

The matter is somewhat different for copper mining in the southern Arabah. While the development of the archaeological discussion leads away from the time of Solomon (Nelson Glueck) to the Ramessides in the Late Bronze Age (Benno Rothenberg), the most recent results point again to a dating into the Iron IIA period. However, there is no room for Solomon's activities, whether in copper mining in Timnah (Wādî el-Menē'îye) or east of Arabah, even if the evaluation of ¹⁴C data of findings in Timnah (Erez Ben-Yosef et al.) and in the Fēnān area (Thomas E. Levy) indicates intensive smelting activities in the tenth century BCE. The copper mining area in the southern Arabah, which traditionally was connected with Solomon (but only since the nineteenth century CE!), represents an important branch of industry that was of great economic and regional importance. The two mining areas in Fēnān and Timnah were apparently more closely linked than previously assumed (Erez Ben-Yosef et al.). Copper mining was initially used seasonally by the Ramessides in expeditions to Timnah as a replacement for the Cypriot copper trade. This had been interrupted at the end of the Late Bronze period, but the copper industry seems to have undergone independent local development and intensified thereafter. The copper mining and smelting plants, operated by the local Edomite and Moabite populations on both sides of the Arabah Valley, reached their peak capacity of use in the tenth century BCE. Smelting in the area around Ĥîrbet en-Naḥāš in Fēnān in the Arabah region, which was huge by ancient standards (10 ha, 50,000–60,000 tons of slag), was probably carried out by the local population. After the collapse of the maritime trade in copper, mainly via Cyprus, in the twelfth century BCE, Ĥîrbet en-Naḥāš seems to have

gained international importance, as evidenced by an 80 x 80 m fortress. The dating of the building itself is disputed, since some ^{14}C data under the gate, its pottery, and the architectural plan point only to the ninth century BCE (Israel Finkelstein). However, control over trade was of central importance even before the establishment of architectural or administrative structures. ^{14}C data here already point to the twelfth century BCE and reach down into the ninth century BCE. Social structures in the tenth century BCE suggest a hierarchical organization that can be called a “chiefdom” (Juan Manuel Tebes) (see §4.1, esp. §4.1.6). The transport of the copper-bearing rock to the furnaces, as well as the smelted copper, was carried out by donkeys and, as recent finds suggest (Caroline Grigson), also by camels.

Trade was conducted locally via two trade routes: north via the so-called King’s Highway (Num 20:17; 21:22), where Moab played a central role (see §4.2.5); and west through the Beersheba Valley in the Negev to Gaza to the Via Maris along the Mediterranean Sea. Western trade allowed settlements and chiefdoms to prosper as in Ḥirbet el-Mšāš/Tel Masos. The Egyptians were also affected by the collapse of the Cypriot copper trade in the twelfth century BCE and expanded copper mining in the Arabah Valley and in Timnah. If the stela found in el-Bālū/Bālu’a is to be connected with Egyptian control over the local ruler, Egyptians of the Twenty-First Dynasty (1070/69–946/45 BCE) also influenced this Moabite trade node (Israel Finkelstein, Oded Lipschits). Northern trade was presumably suppressed by Pharaoh Shoshenq I (946/45–924 BCE) (see §4.8), who saw Egyptian interests endangered or wanted to redirect the monopolized copper trade entirely to the Via Maris leading to Egypt. A seal amulet/scarab from Ḥirbet Hamra Ifdan in the Fēnān district (see §§4.8.4–5) indicates the presence of Shoshenq I (fig. 22).

Fig. 22. The Iron Age scarab from a copper mining area (Ḥirbet Hamra Ifdan) is the second epigraphic testimony of Pharaoh Shoshenq I to date. Since it is a surface find, no exact dating is possible, but an assignment to the reign of Shoshenq I (946/45–924 BCE) seems plausible.



The small Moabite entity south of the Arnon/Wādī el-Mōḡib collapsed, and the settlements fortified in the Iron I Age were abandoned. Israel Finkelstein and Oded Lipschits have recently argued that the Negev settlements and the Ḥirbet el-Mšāš/Tel Masos chiefdom emerged stronger after the relocation of copper trade routes in the Iron IIA. This would be supported by the strategic shift of trade routes initiated by Egypt. The copper trade, on the other hand, appears to have been controlled less by Solomon than by local forces or Egypt (see §§4.8.4–5).

Nonetheless, the origin and trade of tin, which is necessary for the production of bronze, is still largely unknown. Copper as a raw material is soft and can only be processed into the harder yet more malleable bronze by alloying it with tin. Since there were no tin deposits in the southern Levant itself, continuous imports from Anatolia and/or Uzbekistan/Afghanistan were necessary for the processing of bronze (Kutlu A. Yener).

4.6.4.3. Solomon's Horse Trading

Downdating from Solomon to the eighth century BCE also applies to the trading of horses, which is only sensibly conceivable from the time when the Cilicians had to pay tribute to the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) (Bernd Schipper). The Assyrians—not Solomon—integrated Quwê into long-distance trade with the Phoenician coast through commercial agents (cf. Nah 3:16). Not until the late eighth century BCE was there a centrally controlled trade in horses from northern Syria, but this was still without significant Palestinian involvement. In the ancient Near East, horses were used almost exclusively in military contexts, which connects Solomon's horse trade with the expression of military strength. There are doubts about this from a historical perspective. The mention of Egypt in Solomon's horse trade also points to the late eighth century BCE. Although Egypt probably never traded horses on a large scale, Hezekiah's request for help (Isa 31:1, 3; 36:9 // 2 Kgs 18:24) points to the military superiority of the Cushite eight-spoke chariot. This would fit well with 1 Kgs 10:28. Significant trade contacts with Egypt in the tenth century BCE, however, are not demonstrable, even if the conspicuously positive evaluation of the marriage with the pharaoh's daughter (1 Kgs 3:1; 7:8; 9:16, 24) as compared to the devaluation of the "foreign women" possibly goes back to an older source (Bernd Schipper). Alongside this, one can refer to the growing importance of horses in the terracotta figurines only in the Iron IIB and Iron IIC periods. These have been interpreted as evi-

dence of cavalry and military strength. This fits well with the shift in the importance of the horse trade that had taken place in Palestine.

4.6.4.4. Trade with the Phoenicians

For a historical evaluation of Solomon's trade contacts, the relations with the Phoenician coast remain the most plausible. However, even the mention of Hiram I under David (2 Sam 5:11) causes great problems. It was shown above (see §4.2.1.2) that it is rather Hiram II who stands behind 1 Kgs 5 and 7. Trade relations between Jerusalem and Tyre are less plausible in the tenth century BCE than in the eighth century BCE.

A trade partnership with Hiram's fleet is mentioned in 1 Kgs 10:22, taking up the core competence of the Phoenician cities in the expanding sea trade. Solomon's ships are said to have brought "gold, silver, ivory, monkeys, and baboons/peacocks/guinea fowls [translation uncertain]" into the kingdom every three years and thus increased his legendary wealth. If the text actually mentions peacocks, then this indicates trade with southeast Asia. For the tenth century BCE, it is indeed possible to prove trade with India through the evidence of cinnamon (Ayelet Gilboa, Dvory Namdar). But this was controlled more by Egypt than by Solomon. However, there is evidence that, in the eighth century BCE, the Assyrians under Esarhaddon (ca. 681–669 BCE) allowed the Euphrates to be used as a shipping lane via Tyre. Perhaps the trade partnership with Tyre in the books of Kings aimed to demonstrate that Solomon was in no way inferior to the successful Assyrian kings. Regardless of their actual origin, rare luxury goods are biblically associated with the Tarshish fleet. The location of Tarshish is still unclear, but most indications suggest the south of the Iberian peninsula in the western Mediterranean. A more specific proposal is the Huelva trading base in southern Spain. The latter is known for its extensive silver exports, which according to ¹⁴C data are possible at the earliest from the late tenth century BCE (Fernando González de Canales, Lorenzo Serrano, Jorge Llompart) and then were intensified with the Phoenician colonization in the ninth/eighth and seventh centuries BCE (Eleftheria Pappa). Forced trade between the Iberian peninsula and the eastern Mediterranean area by the Phoenicians is also documented in Assyrian sources for the eighth century BCE and connected with the western expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. For the time of Solomon, however, the evidence remains very thin, even more so for the participation of Judah (Barry J. Beitzel).

If Solomon erected representative buildings in Jerusalem (temple and palace) (see §4.6.3.2), he needed Lebanese cedars as timber and a good deal of gold and other precious metals. Both could be obtained only through trade with the Phoenicians, who controlled the long-distance sea trade.

4.6.4.5. Paying Phoenicia by Surrendering Claims of Dominion

The note of twenty cities in Galilee handed over to Phoenicia (1 Kgs 9:11–13) sits awkwardly beside the otherwise glorifying image of Solomon. Payment via renouncing claims to dominion is certainly not a glorious chapter for a great king (cf. the “correction” in 2 Chr 8:2). Does the note reflect the fact that Solomon became highly indebted with the purchase of the luxury and prestige commodity cedar wood (Othmar Keel)? The fact that the Phoenicians could not be put off exclusively with payment in natural goods is also shown by the Egyptian traveler’s story of Wenamun (Bernd Schipper). Wenamun came to the court in Byblos in the eleventh century BCE as envoy of the Egyptian king to procure wood for the construction of a temple but realized that trade was no longer so easy to organize, due to the dwindling power of Egypt (COS 1.41, *HTAT* 100). So, although 1 Kgs 9:11–13 could reflect conditions of the Solomonic period (the area around Akko is omitted in 1 Kgs 4:7–20), this presupposes a prior rule of Solomon over Galilee, which is by no means secure. Herbert Donner rightly assumes that—by providing a Solomonic period dating—the trade relations with the Phoenician coast reflect the supremacy (a political-economic superiority) of Solomon’s Tyrian partner, possibly even a → vassal relationship. Hermann Michael Niemann sees the extension of Solomon’s dominion to the north failing due to Tyre. In any case, there is no reliable evidence of this if one no longer wants to rely on Hazor (see §4.6.3.3). In more recent times, a historiographical reference to the time of Solomon has been dealt with much more cautiously, and the note has been claimed for a later time (Bernd Schipper). The fact that the politically and economically expanding Tyre in the ninth/eighth century BCE was dependent on the agricultural resources of the hinterland called Kabul, to which the fringes of the Galilee belonged, makes the note historically possible in principle. The expansion of the Tyrian city-state into the plain of Akko already during the Iron IIA period makes clear just how “Phoenician” Tyre’s hinterland

was (Gunnar Lehmann). Nevertheless, this notice possibly originated only in the eighth century BCE, when Israel, under Assyrian pressure, could have been forced to cede territories to Tyre's control (Ernst Axel Knauf). Assyria also left the use of Lebanon's forests under the control of the Phoenician coastal towns in return for taxation (Karen Radner). Further, when Sidon attempted to conspire against Assyria in 677 BCE, Esarhaddon (ca. 681–669 BCE) expanded the alliance with the king of Tyre (*HTAT* 189). The Tyrian king Ba'alū gained not only access to the Lebanon Mountains but also the freedom to expand Tyre's trading power on the coast and in "all cities in the mountains." It cannot be ruled out that this also included control over the Tyrian hinterland, so that the note in 1 Kgs 9:11–13 reflects the actual circumstances in the eighth/seventh century BCE: Galilee was (all along) "Phoenician" (Edward Lipiński, Gunnar Lehmann). The Tyrian ruler, however, approached Egypt and endangered Assyria's dominance. This brought to him a punitive expedition in 671 BCE and led to the coastal city's territorial losses, which may reflect Hiram's displeasure in 1 Kgs 9:13, but that remains pure speculation.

4.6.4.6. Summary

If the archaeological and historical references are taken together, the flourishing united monarchy under Solomon is more legend than reality. The evidence is insufficient to responsibly maintain the biblical presentation. The legend points to conditions from the eighth century BCE. Solomon's splendor was not *nothing*, but it certainly was not *great* either. The prerequisites are lacking for a "Solomonic enlightenment" (Gerhard von Rad), at any rate, as are those for comprehensive literary productions and historical works. Against the background of the emergence of the two states, Israel and Judah (see §5), and the realization that it is time to bid farewell to any united monarchy (see §4.5), the question must be asked whether Solomon was at all a historical person. In contrast to David, this question cannot yet be answered positively by extrabiblical evidence. Much can be better explained if the literary tradition of Solomon was constructed as a *bridge* between the older tradition of David (from the south) and the annals of the Omrides (from the north). There is no question that the tradition of Solomon grew in several stages and that the greater part of its historical significance, as with David, is greatly exaggerated.

4.7. THE SO-CALLED DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

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Judah as a Political Entity between Jerusalem and Benjamin.” *ZDPV* 133 (2017): 1–23. ♦ **Sergi**. “Judah’s Expansion in Historical Context.” *TA* 40 (2013): 226–46.

According to biblical accounts, conflicts at the end of Solomon’s reign led to the permanent break-up of the kingdom. The theologizing → Dtr account attributes this to Solomon’s breach of covenant, connected to the worship of foreign gods and goddesses. According to this interpretation, in his old age Solomon’s marriage practices caused his misconduct in the religious sphere (1 Kgs 11:1–10), which resulted in the destabilization of the dominion due to divine punishment. Solomon was humbled, such that his successor’s rule was limited to the territory of Judah. Jeroboam, who is introduced as the overseer of Solomon’s forced labor (1 Kgs 11:28), receives a promise from the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh that he will rule over the ten “northern tribes” (1 Kgs 11:29–39). Jeroboam was subsequently persecuted by Solomon and fled to Egypt, where he remained until Solomon’s death (1 Kgs 11:40; 12:2). According to 1 Kgs 12:20, all Israel heard of his return and made him king over “all Israel.” Between 1 Kgs 12:2 and 12:20, there is a story that describes the breaking apart of Solomon’s kingdom at an assembly of the people in Shechem. All Israel came to Shechem to make Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, king (1 Kgs 11:43). This story references the promise of the prophet Ahijah in 1 Kgs 12:15, when Solomon’s son shows himself unyielding to the people, which results in division. But here the reason for the division is not Solomon’s behavior (1 Kgs 11:11), rather the kingdom breaks apart because of the great obligation to perform hard labor that Rehoboam imposed on the people (1 Kgs 12:4–14, 16–19). Unmistakably, in 1 Kgs 11–12, different stories of the division of the kingdom overlap with different reasons: Solomon’s religious misconduct in 1 Kgs 11 versus repressive measures against the people in 1 Kgs 12.

According to the biblical account, the tribe of Benjamin to the north of Judah plays a special role. While 1 Kgs 11:36; 12:17, 20 emphasize that only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty, Rehoboam gathers “the whole house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin” after his return to Jerusalem (1 Kgs 12:21, cf. 1 Kgs 12:23). Tensions and military conflicts define the beginnings of the two states (1 Kgs 12:21; 14:30; 15:6, 7, 16, 32). The biblical depiction places special religious emphasis on the divergence, which is also stylized as the apostasy of the northern tribes. Since Jeroboam had the support of the people, according to the account of 1 Kgs 12:26, he also strove to implement a secession from the temple and its cult in Jerusalem. Thus, he had two calves made for the sanctuaries in

Bethel and Dan. This act became the northern kingdom's original sin in the depiction of Kings, which is why it was conquered by Shalmaneser V/Sargon II 722/20 BCE after two centuries of existence (2 Kgs 17:7–12).

If one follows the biblical account, the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, emerged from the united monarchy and were separated until the conquest of Samaria by the Neo-Assyrians in 722/20 BCE, which marked the final downfall of the northern kingdom. There were always conflicts between the brother states, but they were now two separate states. The idea of the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah) was regarded as a model for older representations of the history of Israel. But the term *division of the kingdom* only makes sense if there was a unified kingdom under David and Solomon that could have been divided. Recent research has strong doubts about this (see §§4.5–6). Thus, the biblical perspective diverges from a historical point of view: David and Solomon do *not* represent the origin of the kingdom from which the monarchies of Jeroboam in the north and Rehoboam in the south derive; rather, the birth of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah is to be sought beyond Jeroboam and Rehoboam, probably later in the ninth century BCE in Samaria and in the eighth century in Judah. For the reconstruction of the history of the two states in the tenth–eighth centuries BCE, the treatment of the so-called division of the kingdom is therefore of great importance. Speaking of a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom is meaningful only if the biblical perspective of a division of a unified kingdom stands in the background.

4.7.1. Rehoboam's Kingdom of Judah

While the biblical account associates the accession of David's successor to the throne with considerable confusion, the transition from Solomon to Rehoboam (926–910 BCE) is initially described as smooth (1 Kgs 11:43). The novelistic form of 1 Kgs 12 then reverts to an electoral process which took place in Shechem, but this failed completely and led to the secession of the northern tribes (1 Kgs 12:19). It is said that the corvée services of the northern tribes resulted in the swing against the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12:4, 10–11, 14). An unsolved chronological problem arises from 1 Kgs 15:1, because Rehoboam's successor, Abijah (910–908 BCE), becomes king in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam (927/26–907 BCE), but Rehoboam reigned only seventeen years according to 1 Kgs 14:21. Reconstructing a later accession for Rehoboam in Jerusalem from this (Georg Hentschel), however, does not conform to the narratives in 1 Kgs 12. Other proposed

solutions suggest different dates for the beginning of the year in Judah and Israel or that the events in Shechem date around the New Year celebration, which could account for the discrepancy in the count (J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes).

The reference to Shechem appears suddenly in the books of Kings and cannot be independent of the parable in Judg 9:6–20. Shechem/Tell Balāṭa, which in the tradition of the Late Bronze Age played a central role in the hill country, could have been a crystallization point of early organized rule in the Ephraimite hill country. The fact that Rehoboam, after Solomon's glorious and radical royal rule, is said to have been dependent on an acclamatory royal election is historically untrustworthy. There are different assessments of the emphasis of his descent from an Ammonite mother, Naamah. For some it is an indication that Solomon must have started early with a political marriage policy to expand his territory; for others the two-fold reference in 1 Kgs 14:21, 31 with recourse to 1 Kgs 11:5–12 justifies the negative evaluation of Rehoboam or Judah in 1 Kgs 14:22–24.

Chronicles expounds on the events about the consequences of the division of the kingdom but contradicts the view that there was *continuous* (1 Kgs 14:30; 15:6) war between Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) and Rehoboam (2 Chr 11:1–4, cf. 1 Kgs 12:24). Rehoboam's son, Abijah (910–908 BCE), on the other hand, is said to have crushed Jeroboam I (2 Chr 13:1–23) during his three years in power, as well as conquering Bethel, Jeshanah/Ḥirbet el-Burğ or Burğ el-Isāne, and Ephron/aṭ-Ṭayyiba (2 Chr 13:19). That is, he moved the border about 20 km northward. Archaeology seems to preclude this for Bethel, as the village shows significant traces of settlement only in the Iron IIB period. The same applies to Ephron/aṭ-Ṭayyiba and Jeshanah/Ḥirbet el-Burğ.

It is possible that the northern extent of Josiah's territory or the northern border of the Persian province Yehûd stand in the background of these data (see §§5.9.4, 6.3.1). Perhaps the conquest of Jeshanah is also an → etiology connected with the restoration of the Jeshanah gate in Jerusalem (Neh 3:6; 13:29).

Finally, the list of Rehoboam's fortresses in 2 Chr 11:5–12 has been much discussed, since there is a tendency in scholarship to consider material in lists as being older, since it is assumed that a list is less the result of invention but instead traces its origin back to old records. But even lists can be fabricated and originate from a time other than the one to which they refer. Rehoboam is said to have converted the cities west and south of Jerusalem into Judean fortresses, that is, Bethlehem, Etham,

Tekoa, Beth-Zur, Socoh, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, and Hebron. Whereas earlier scholarship viewed this as an authentic list, more recent discussion dates the list to the time of the Assyrian threat and assigns it to the government action of the kings Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) or Josiah (639–609 BCE). Israel Finkelstein has recently put forward considerable arguments for dating the list from 2 Chr 11:5–12 to the second century BCE, which, however, does not fit well with the common pre-Hellenistic dating of the composition of the books of Chronicles. In any case, fortifications in Judah cannot be proven at all for the time of Rehoboam but can only be identified in Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr at the end of the Iron IIA period in the ninth century BCE. Hebron, like other places on the list, appears to have been expanded only in the transition from the eighth to the seventh century BCE. Finally, it must be noted that only places to the west and south of Jerusalem are mentioned and that (according to the biblical account) the critical northern border (see map 9) plays no role at all. The mention of Mareshah, Adoraim, and Beth-Zur supports the reference to the historical realities in the Maccabean period. Finkelstein interprets the list as the defenses of the Maccabees against the advance of Bacchides (1 Macc 7–9) (see §7.5). According to 1 Macc 9:50, after the Seleucid governor returned to Jerusalem, he had fortresses built in Jericho, Emmaus, Beth-Horon, Bethel, Timnah, Pharathon, and Tephon, which were abandoned after the victory of the Maccabees (1 Macc 10:12) (see §§7.5.4.4, 7.6.2). The places listed in 2 Chr 11:5–12 form an abutment to the Bacchides' line in the north. Regardless of whether the list of fortresses should be assigned to the foreign policy of the Judean kings in the eighth/seventh century BCE or understood according to the interpretation above, 2 Chr 11:5–12 remains completely inadequate for a reconstruction of the early Judean kingdom under Rehoboam.

Thus, the extrabiblical evidence for a stable monarchy in Judah at the end of the tenth century BCE remains quite thin. In addition, the Egyptian pharaoh, Shoshenq I (946/45–924 BCE), seems to have taken little interest in the hill country of Judah during his campaign (see §4.8), probably because it was more or less politically and economically meaningless. Nothing outside the Hebrew Bible points to consolidation measures, trade, construction measures, border conflicts, and so on.

As a result, this means that a post-Solomonic Judean monarchy at the time of Rehoboam is barely historically comprehensible. Taking all the evidence together, it is even conceivable that the beginnings of the Judean monarchy were no longer precisely known to the authors of the books of

Kings. Only later—in the north with the Omrides, in the south perhaps with Jehoshaphat—was list material available to them. The first narrative description of the division of the kingdom, then, would have been created as a bridge between the David-(Solomon) narrative and the beginnings of historiography in Israel and Judah of the ninth century BCE with the Omrides and Nimshides. If that were true (and there is some evidence to support it), then Jeroboam and Rehoboam would also be constructed as → eponymic kings of the beginning rather than as historical figures. Although the name of the king, Rehoboam, “the people’s enlarger” (he who creates space for the people), is not unthinkable as a personal name (1 Chr 23:17; 24:21; 25:26), it could also be an instructional device in opposition to Jeroboam, “the people’s contender.” Jeroboam, who is named outside the Bible, was known as a glorious king from the eighth century BCE; however, that is Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE). A bearer of the same name is stylized in 1 Kgs 12 from the perspective of the southern kingdom as the negatively portrayed founder of the northern kingdom. The reign of Jeroboam II and his successors is connected with the secession of Judah from the political dominance of the north, which seems to have been completed only under the Judean king Ahaz (741–725 BCE) (see §§4.7.5, 5.6.3). Thus the name Jeroboam offered a good starting point for a historiography that depicted the southern kingdom of Judah dominating the northern kingdom of Israel since the former’s foundation, thereby turning the actual course of history upside down. Perhaps also the originally positive meaning “he who contends for the people” led to using exactly this name for the little-respected founder of the northern kingdom, but in the sense of “he who contends with/against the people,” and placing Rehoboam as “the people’s enlarger” as his opposition.

The compositional technique suspected behind the historical construction of the origins of the two kingdoms, which takes a prominent person from the scribe’s recent past and makes him the eponym of an entire community, can also be observed in other contexts of Jewish historiography. For example, Hiram I from the time of David and Solomon lacks extrabiblical clues, while Hiram II (ca. 739–730 BCE) seems to have been a prominent king of Tyre (see §4.6.4.4). The situation is similar with Ben-Hadad I as a ruler of Damascus (1 Kgs 15:18), who is also only documented in biblical literature. Even though he is described with a complete → genealogy, there are some indications that he, too, was only an extrapolation from the knowledge about Ben-Hadad II (ca. 800–780 BCE) (see §5.3.4).

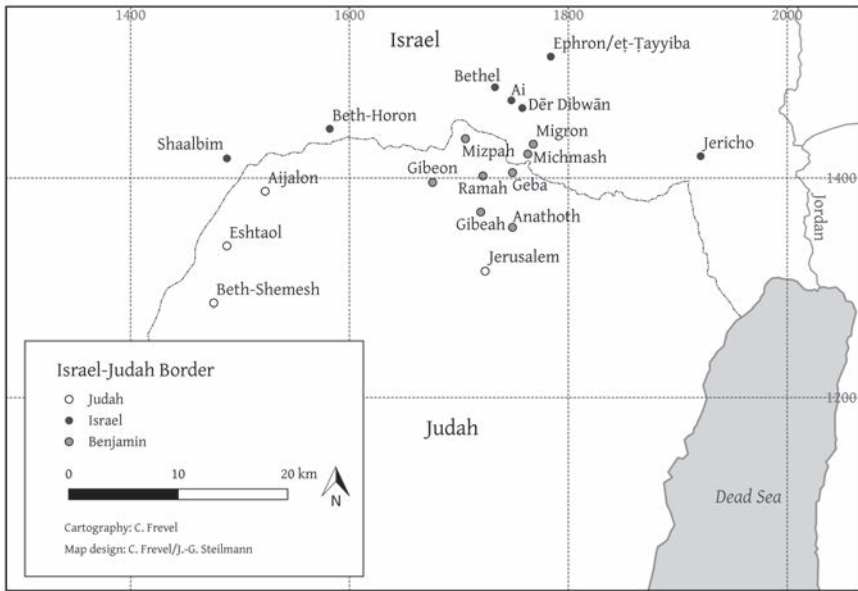
4.7.2. Jeroboam's Elevation to King

Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) is introduced in 1 Kgs 11:26, 28 as the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zeredah (Ḥirbet Banāt Barr), and as the supervisor of forced labor in Jerusalem. The narrative reports that Jeroboam encountered the prophet Ahijah, who proclaimed via a prophetic sign that he would soon be appointed king over the ten northern tribes. Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, who then fled to Egypt. The motif of the flight to the Egyptian royal court, however, is already found in 1 Kgs 11:14–25, where the ahistorical Edomite origin of the Aramean king, Hadad of Damascus, is preserved (Garrett Galvin).

After Solomon's death, the persecuted Jeroboam returned from Egypt and, according to biblical accounts, was immediately involved with the northern tribes in the turmoil of the throne and the conflict of succession (1 Kgs 11:2–3). When Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was to be anointed king in Shechem, there was an open argument about the tax burden and forced labor, which led to the separation of the ten northern tribes. The ten northern tribes made Jeroboam I king over them (1 Kgs 12:20), so that the Davidic successor only ruled the territory of the tribe of Judah. A precise demarcation between the two states is not given in the text and cannot be ascertained. Looking for clues, the northern tribal boundaries of Benjamin described in Josh 18:11–20 and the southern boundary of Ephraim described in Josh 16:1–3 commend themselves. However, these data do not reflect any historical reality at the time of Rehoboam and Jeroboam: "This historical geography is primarily scribal erudition."¹ In addition, the data in 2 Chr 13:19 that attribute Bethel, Jeshanah/Ḥirbet el-Burğ, and Ephron/aṭ-Ṭayyiba to the south in the later regnal years are rather more relevant for the determination of the northern border of the Persian province. They can be evaluated historically for the monarchic period only insofar as they characterize the area as a "border region." Finally, the list of Rehoboam's fortresses in 2 Chr 11:5–12 contributes nothing to demarcating the border (see §4.7.1).

Following biblical indicators, Bethel and Ramah belong to the north, while Geba, Mizpah, and perhaps also Gezer belong to the south. Jericho, which according to Josh 18:12 belonged to Benjamin, is counted to

1. Ernst Axel Knauf, *Josua* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2008), 150: "Diese historische Geographie ist primär Schriftgelehrsamkeit."



Map 9. The border between Israel and Judah accounting for terrain and the biblical data.

the north (which will change later, see §5.9.4). Nadav Naʿaman has highlighted the strategic importance of the east-west link, which provided access to the sea in the west and Moab in the east, and attributed it to Israelite control. Thus, not only would Michmash north of Geba/Ġebaʿ have been under Israelite control as a strategic way station of the connection from Bethel to Jericho, but also—including Gezer—the connection from the Shephelah to Bethel via the ascent of Beth-Horon would have been as well.

4.7.3. Jeroboam's Residences

According to the biblical depiction, Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) built Shechem (Tell Balāṭa) and then Penuel (Tilal eḏ-Ḍahab) in the Ghor of the Jordan Valley on the Jabbok (Wādī ez-Zerqā). It is also possible that Tirzah (Tell el-Fārʿa [North]), which is verifiably the capital only under Baasha (1 Kgs 15:21, 33), was already one of Jeroboam's residences. At least the story of the illness of his son, Abijah, in 1 Kgs 14:17 suggests this when his wife returns to Tirzah after the visit of the prophet in Shiloh.

The choice of Penuel as a residence raises questions, because it was located on the lower reaches of the Jabbok River in the Transjordan, far from the center of power in Cisjordan. That Jeroboam I fled from the Egyptian pharaoh, Shoshenq I (see §4.8), and escaped to the Jordan Valley is explained in 1 Kgs 11:40. Jeroboam would have developed from a protégé of the pharaoh to a dissident and would therefore have had to leave the Samarian hill country. No less likely is the hypothesis, derived from 1 Kgs 12:26, that Jeroboam I sought to defend himself against Judean claims in Transjordan. Taking the Jabbok as the border between two separate regions of Transjordan, Penuel is an important border town, but the area provides no indication of Judean dominance during the Iron IIA period.

The changing residences point—should one see them as succession—to an unstable monarchy in the north. But such transfers are perhaps also the hallmark of a → tribal organization of rule, which works more with alliances and cooperatives than with centralized rule. Hermann M. Niemann points in this direction, suggesting the peculiar form of rule can be explained by the concept of a “mobile military kingship with alternating residences.” The succession of residences thus approaches a juxtaposition. Different territorial areas would have been administered in → personal union, while Jeroboam’s monarchical rule would rather be the networking of claims to power from different tribal kingdoms. Under the Omrides, Samaria (1 Kgs 16:24) and Jezreel (1 Kgs 21:1) were also added as residences in addition to Shechem and Tirzah. According to this information, the center of the northern kingdom of Israel gradually moved northwards.

Archaeological traces of changing or parallel residences during the reign of Jeroboam I can hardly be found. Shechem is quite securely located at Tell Balāṭa. The archaeological finds there, above all, reveal the important tradition of the Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age (see §2.2.7). On the other hand, the Iron Age remains after a settlement gap point more to the ninth/eighth century BCE than to the time of Jeroboam I.

The identification of Penuel is still quite uncertain. Judges 8:8 suggests that it is to be differentiated from Succoth (probably Tell Dēr ‘Allā). Penuel and Mahanaim are said to be near one another and close to the Jabbok/Nahr ez-Zarqā/Wādī ez-Zerqā (Gen 32:3, 31). This might include the two twin hills, the western Tell ad-Dahab al-Ġarbīyā and the eastern Tell ad-Dahab aš-Šarqīya (Thomas Pola, Israel Finkelstein, Ido Koch, Oded Lipschits), which are located 8 km above the mouth where the river runs into the Jordan. The larger western Tell has a plateau of a little more than half a hectare in size, on which remains of Iron II Age buildings have

been uncovered (Thomas Pola et al.). There is no evidence of Iron I era monumental architecture (Judg 8:9, 17) or of any destruction by Shosh-enq I although Penuel appears on the list in Karnak (see §4.8). However, scratch drawings were found on secondarily installed, large stone blocks, which could indicate a representative building, perhaps also a sacral building, possibly dating from the ninth/eighth century BCE. Dating and context, however, remain uncertain due to intense Hellenistic rebuilding. The motifs used (lion, tree of life, lyre player, horse, (gift) procession or offering scene, etc.) fit well into the → iconography in (semi-)official contexts of the Iron IIB period and show a certain proximity to the sketches and wall paintings from the Kuntillet 'Ağrūd complex, even if the style points to Syria (Tell Halaf). As an alternative to the twin hills of Tilal ed-Dahab, Penuel has been sought on Tell el-Ḥamme, a little further west. After examination of the archaeological findings, one will have to soberly conclude that there are (still) no reliable indications for a residence of Jeroboam I in the Jordan Valley.

Of the named locations, Tirzah is the most important, where not only Jeroboam I but also Baasha (1 Kgs 15:21, 33), Elah (1 Kgs 16:8), Zimri (1 Kgs 16:15), and Omri (1 Kgs 16:17, 23) reigned. Tirzah is usually located at Tell el-Fār'a, 11 km northeast of Shechem. The archaeological findings are dated very differently. The traditional interpretation sees an unfortified village in the Iron I Age, which was then fortified in the eleventh/tenth century BCE using the Middle Bronze Age walls. Some associate an unfinished structure with Omri's move from Tirzah to Samaria (1 Kgs 16:23–24). On the other hand, a new interpretation (Zē'ev Herzog, Lily Singer-Avitz, Israel Finkelstein) no longer sees any connection between the unfinished building and Omri's move to Samaria. Rather, the building was added to the post-Omride Iron IIB period in the eighth century BCE. The refortification in the late Iron IIA is viewed critically; Tirzah, as in the early Iron IIA period, remained unfortified and in a socioeconomically and infrastructurally underdeveloped state. Whether the unfortified and simple structures of the tenth century BCE could have served as a residence for Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) and his successors—Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri—cannot be determined, although the pottery from Stratum VIIb points to the Omrides. Finally, the palace complex and the formation of elite sectors from Stratum VIId are to be connected with the Iron IIB and fit better with Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE).

In conclusion, none of the three cities that could be considered residences has representative architecture that would suggest an extensive

monarchy in the transition from the tenth to the ninth centuries BCE. A real surge of development first took place among the Omrides and then again in the eighth century BCE. From an archaeological point of view, the evidence for an enlarged and expansive state that would have stood in continuity with Solomon's rule in the north or been established by Jeroboam I remains thin. If anything, we can identify regional centers of domination that did not, however, form a territorial state. The Samarian hill country seems to show little, if any, urban development; the so-called Canaanite city district (Megiddo, Taanach, Beth-Shean, Tel Rehov) was more semiautonomous than part of a contiguous state. Construction methods also partly speak in favor of this. In Tel Rehov clay-brick walls were built without stone foundations, which is without parallel in Iron Age Israel (Amihai Mazar). While Tel Rehov perhaps continued to exist as a polity in its own right, the north—more precisely, the region around the Sea of Galilee, Lower and Upper Galilee, and the Golan through Bashan down to the northern Gilead—stood under the influence of the Aramean microstates Maacah, Geshur, and (Beth-)Rehob.

4.7.4. The Establishment of Royal Shrines in Bethel and Dan

The Hebrew Bible reports that Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) built two sanctuaries, in Bethel and Dan, which the king established in the north and south of his realm after the separation from Jerusalem (1 Kgs 12:29–30). These were built in order to legitimize his rule and consolidate it domestically. These sanctuaries would be associated with a central state cult, an important prerequisite for organized rule. The report in 1 Kgs 12 is strongly colored and hardly historically evaluable. The biblical data cannot be confirmed by archaeological findings either. During the Iron IIA period, Dan/Tell el-Qāḍī, located far north at the Jordan springs, does not seem to have been populated (Eran Arie). Probably in the Iron IIB period before King Joash of Israel (802–787 BCE) it was at least intermittently, if not generally, Aramean and *not* Israelite. The earliest phase of the sanctuary dates back to the end of the ninth century at the earliest, probably to the beginning of the eighth century BCE. However, this means that Jeroboam I can no longer be regarded as the builder or benefactor of this sanctuary. The sanctuary on the northern border may have gained national importance only for the Israel that overcame Aramean dominance in the eighth century BCE.

More significant was Bethel/Bētin, 16 km north of Jerusalem. Yet here also archaeology fails to confirm the thesis of a royal sanctuary. Apart from the fact that a sanctuary cannot be identified in the remains, the Iron IIA period is scarcely archaeologically attested. The findings for the Iron IIB period in the eighth century BCE, on the other hand, are unequivocal. The narratives' background can also be assumed to stem from Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE), a king of the same name (Ernst Axel Knauf, Angelika Berlejung). This is also indicated by the speech at the king's temple in Amos 7:13. If one wished to maintain some connection to Jeroboam I, one would need to rely on hypothetical reconstructions or on the highly unlikely assumption that the shrine was located outside of the city. While the archaeological evidence of the settlement speaks for the eighth century BCE (but no sanctuary can be found then either!), from an → iconographic point of view, this dating raises questions regarding the classification of the biblically prominent bull symbolism (1 Kgs 12:25–33; Hos 10:5–6) as an invention of the eighth century BCE. This is because bull symbolism—whether as representation of an attribute or as a carrier animal—is prominent in the LB II and Iron I period → iconography (fig. 23) but extremely rare in the Iron IIB period. Although it is quite plausible that a bull was prominently displayed in Bethel as an animal attribute of YHWH, who was perhaps identified with Baal, this would belong to a reforming continuation of older traditions in the Iron IIB.

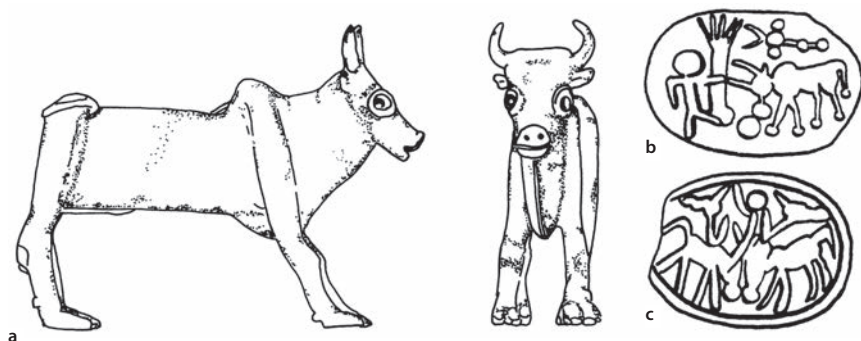


Fig. 23. Bronze figurine of a young bull (possibly a *zebu*) (a), height 12.4 cm, width 17.5 cm. The cult statuette was manufactured using the lost wax technique and was probably originally coated with gold plating and decorated eyes. It was found in an open-air sanctuary of the Iron I period in the Samarian hill country in Dahret eṭ-Tawile near Dothan. The two seals (b and c) with powerful bulls—symbolizing vitality, strength, and fertility—date to the Iron IIA period and originate from Akko in the coastal plain.

The opinions of minimalists and maximalists also differ on the question of the meaning of Bethel. While for some, the biblical report provides the basis, for others, all references to an established state in the so-called northern kingdom are missing, which, not least, makes the talk of division of the kingdom problematic. The beginnings of the kingdom in the north thus remain largely in the dark, safe ground is only entered with the Omride dynasty.

The royal sanctuary in Bethel is one of the most important locales of the early state in the north (see §5.5.9). The foundation of a state shrine is based on the thesis that Jeroboam I had to compensate for the cult center in Jerusalem. Archaeologically, as shown, it is not possible to affirm this. If the division of the kingdom as an explanation breaks down, there is also no need for any compensation at all between Jerusalem and Samaria. The narrative of 1 Kgs 12:26–27 (as well as the narrative in 1 Kgs 13) is therefore more etiology (cult legend) than historical information.

Besides Bethel, Dan becomes the second state shrine. Here, too, there are doubts about the organizational implementation and its interpretation as an imperial sanctuary for the tenth century BCE. The existence of two bull images that symbolize or represent YHWH (attribute animals) or are to be understood (analogous to the ark in Jerusalem) as pedestal animals, on which the invisible God is thought to be standing (1 Kgs 12:26–29), cannot be secured. The → Dtr interpretation understands the bulls as representing the original sin of the northern kingdom, which ultimately led to the state's downfall in 722/20 BCE. With that, the general question arises as to how the so-called division of the kingdom can be explained if it had no historical, tenth-century development as its background.

4.7.5. A Thesis on the So-Called Division of the Kingdom

The following section tries to bring together the arguments about Saul, David, Solomon, Jeroboam I, and Rehoboam and to synthesize from the available evidence a thesis on the division of the kingdom in the eighth century BCE. The presentation of the thesis on the separation of the northern and southern kingdoms presupposes several elements that are not unpacked until chapter 5 below. It is therefore advisable to read the two sections in parallel and in a complementary manner. Readers with limited knowledge of the history of Israel and Judah are advised to read chapter 5 first and then return here. It should be stressed that the minimalist synthesis presented here remains hypothetical: the united monarchy in the

tenth century BCE is a biblical construct that set a glorious early period at the beginning of the monarchy and thus created a point of reference for the assessment of the history of the monarchy in the late preexilic (seventh century BCE) and exilic-postexilic (sixth/fifth century BCE) periods. A nationally significant monarchy in Judah only emerged, historically speaking, as a subsidiary kingdom or under Omride → clientelism (client kingdom). The idea of a monarchy linking the north and south is not, however, a mere projection from Hellenistic times or pure fiction. It also does not go back as far as Saul's monarchy (Israel Finkelstein). Rather, it was an extension of the northern state of Israel's *de facto* dominion over the south, which served as a → vassal or client state under Omride hegemony. This northern dominion of the south lasted—supported by marriage politics and nepotism (cronyism, clientelism)—more or less until the reign of Ahaz (741–725 BCE). The fact that the idea of a united monarchy was taken up several times in later periods and expounded as an ideal is a different story.

The weakening of the northern kingdom by the Aramean king Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) in the last third of the ninth century BCE created the prerequisite for a sovereign statehood in the south. The boom of urban development in the south in the ninth/eighth century BCE, which was only made possible by the north, fulfilled the economic, social, and infrastructural prerequisites for the sovereign statehood of Judah in the eighth century BCE. The Judean-colored depiction of the events only emerged *after* the fall of the northern state of Israel in 722/20 BCE. Even though the data in the lists and → synchronisms in the books of Kings can be classified as generally reliable, a number of uncertainties suggest the depiction should not only be regarded as tendentious, but in part also as idiosyncratically construed.

4.7.5.1. Notes from the Lists of Kings and Synchronisms in the Books of Kings

The following ten observations can be used to support the thesis that the presentation of the books of Kings conceals a lack of independence on the part of Judah and the dominance of Israel.

(1) The discussion of the united monarchy under David and Solomon must be regarded as settled, since in the tenth century BCE there was neither an internationally significant, glorious monarchy of a Davidic-Solomonic empire nor a far-reaching dominion from Jerusalem over the north (see §4.5.6). This means that *no* “united monarchy” broke apart in

the division of the kingdom as a result of Jeroboam's uprising. On the contrary, it seems more probable that the early period of the monarchy up to the Omrides is more or less a historical construct from later times. But the question remains: At what point and in which details does the biblical account draw closer to historical events?

(2) It is striking that the duration of David's and Solomon's reigns is presented in generalized round figures (2 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 11:42) that are not very reliable for reconstructing the beginnings of the kingdom. Although David is referenced in the inscription from Tell Dan as the founder of the dynasty (see §4.5.2), this does not simultaneously mean that the tradition must date back to the tenth century BCE. The question is not whether David existed, but whether he was a king in Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE and whether his successors were his son Solomon and his grandson Rehoboam. Both the dynastic sequence David → Solomon → Rehoboam and the existence of Solomon and Rehoboam are not beyond all historical doubt.

(3) David cannot be dated demonstrably to the tenth century BCE as dynastic progenitor; his historicity, however, cannot (any longer) be denied in principle. Nonetheless, any traces of Solomon, on the other hand, are lost beyond the literary tradition. His name (related to compensation, 2 Sam 11:27; 12:24, cf. v. 25), his unclear integration into the → genealogy of the royal house (2 Sam 3:2–5; 5:14), and the dispute about the succession to the throne (1 Kgs 1:10, 18, 25; 2:13, 15) can also be read as the construction of an ideal figure. The stylization of the ruler Solomon as a great builder with the best international relations and great wisdom fits in well with this. Whether a historical character whose name was related to the city god Šalem stood in the background of this later construction of Solomon is open for discussion.

(4) The similarity of the names Jeroboam and Rehoboam (i.e., “the people's contender” and “the people's enlarger” respectively), as well as the fact that there is a second king Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) for whom much of what is biblically told about Jeroboam I is more plausible, must be noted. The fact that there were such retrojections of names and rulers is shown by the mention of Ben-Hadad instead of Hadadezer (ca. 875–845 BCE) in 1 Kgs 20 next to Ahab and perhaps even the mention of Ben-Hadad in 1 Kgs 15:18, 20 (see §5.3.4). Rehoboam's elevation to king *in* Shechem and not in Jerusalem does not fit into a strong preceding reign of Solomon. Jeroboam's flight to the Egyptian royal court can hardly be considered historical considering that it is tied to Solomon's construction

activities on the one hand and the oracle of the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh on the other (1 Kgs 11:40; 12:2–3). Furthermore, it is interspersed with echoes of the exodus narrative and set within the context of the “division of the kingdom.” All this suggests that the pairing of Jeroboam/Rehoboam is a construct.

(5) The sources on the division of the kingdom, the novelistic historical work in 1 Kgs 12:1–19, the data on the administrations of Rehoboam and Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 12:25–32 and 14:19–31, and the → Dtr revised prophetic narrative in 1 Kgs 11:29–40; 12:21–24; 14:1–18 (Herbert Donner) are written mostly from a Judean perspective. This does not correspond to the actual historical and political power distribution. Even the division of the twelve tribes into ten and one according to 1 Kgs 11:29–31 (where actually two—Judah and Benjamin—are meant) points to Judean priority (the narrative reflects a Judean perspective and is not a charter myth of the northern state). The idea of a twelve-tribe Israelite perspective, which lurks behind the miscalculation $10 + 1 = 12$ developed only long after the tenth century BCE (see §3.7.4).

(6) The biblical, Judean-biased depiction construes the early history of the northern state of Israel as a chain of uprisings, coups, and regicide that could only build a succession for one generation, if at all, before collapsing again. Thus, before and with the Omrides (1 Kgs 16:9–12, 21–22) the impression arises of an illegal royal rule lacking divine support and authority (Christian Frevel). If this reflects historical reminiscences at all beyond the theological construct and the coups were not extrapolated (or even completely invented) from the Omri or Jehu revolutions (see §5.5), this points to an unstable monarchy in the north, as do the changing residences (Shechem, Penuel, Tirzah, Samaria) (see §4.7.4).

(7) The archaeological and the → epigraphic findings also show that the south was poorly developed in the early Iron IIA and that signs of an organized state administration are largely absent. The western expansion of Judah also presupposes the Aramean king Hazael’s (ca. 845–800 BCE) attack on the Philistine metropolis Gath/Tell eṣ-Ṣāfi, which was dominant in the ninth century BCE (Omer Sergi). Hazael’s campaign can be limited to the time between 840–830 BCE (Aren M. Maeir). The strongly polemicized view that the monarchy in the north was built on coups and revolts even continues after Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) up to the last king (2 Kgs 15:14, 23, 25, 30), which does not exactly increase the credibility of the data.

The account of the history of Israel and Judah presented here often mentions the dates of the kings’ reigns. This serves as a guide and should

not obscure the fact that the exact timing of administrative periods remains as unclear as their duration. Ultimately, any estimate of a king's reign up to the end of the ninth century BCE is very uncertain from a historical point of view.

(8) Examining the data on Omride regencies, one notes the close links between the royal houses of Samaria and Jerusalem (see §5.4.5.2). Ahaziah (Judah: 845 BCE) is the son of Joram (2 Kgs 8:25) but could also be the brother of Joram of Israel and grandson of Omri. Second Kings 8:27 seems to indicate this when Ahaziah follows the ways of the house of Ahab. Ahaziah of Judah visited Joram (2 Kgs 8:29; 9:16), probably to assist him militarily. The fact that Ahaziah of Samaria is said to have maintained relations with Ekron (2 Kgs 1) can be interpreted as a reflection of the broad influence of the Omrides. Ahaziah is said to have tried to have a decisive influence on Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:50). Athaliah (845–840 BCE), the wife of the Judean Joram, is a daughter of Ahab (2 Kgs 8:18, differently 2 Kgs 8:26: daughter of Omri) and mother of the Judean Ahaziah. That Joram of Judah is described as the son of the Judean king in 1 Kgs 22:51 is not unusual for a dynastically legitimizing construct. Such practice also occurs several times outside the Hebrew Bible, for example, with Hazael of Damascus in the Dan Inscription (see §5.4.2.1) or when Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) refers to Jehu as “Son of Omri” (see §5.2.4).

The names and close chronologies of Ahaziah (Israel: 852–851 BCE) and Ahaziah (Judah: 845 BCE), Joram (Israel: 851–845 BCE) and Joram (Judah: 852–845 BCE), Joash (Israel: 802–787 BCE) and Joash (Judah: 840–801 BCE) suggest that these are the same persons. Strikingly, the data on the duration of the respective regencies of these three pairs of kings also *tend* to coincide: Ahaziah one or two years, Joram for seven or eleven years, and Joash for thirty-nine or fifteen years.

Joash of Judah's (840–801 BCE) father is Ahaziah (2 Kgs 11:2); Joash of Israel's (802–787 BCE) father is Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:9). The Hebrew name components are the same, only reversed (Ahaz-iah/Jeho-ahaz ^{ʾh}z-yhw/yhw-^{ʾh}z). The deceased brother of Jeroboam's successor, Nadab of Israel (907–906 BCE), was Abijah (1 Kgs 14:1), which is also the name of the successor of Rehoboam (910–908 BCE) (1 Kgs 14:31). The sons of Jeroboam, Nadab and Abijah, are—at the same time—very reminiscent of the negatively evaluated and deceased sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1), whereby Aaron and Jeroboam are also connected by the production of idolatrous calves (Exod 32:4; 1 Kgs 12:28) (J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes). The proximity of the names and the associations are so

conspicuous that the assumption that all this is coincidence tests the limits of plausibility.

All this rather suggests that the early → synchronistic data of the royal houses of Judah and Israel came about through a good deal of combinatorial construction (see table 6 and the table at §10.1.4). The historians were guided more by associations than by reliable data. In the background is probably the historical influence of the Omrides on the monarchy in Jerusalem, which in the ninth century BCE was a northern Israelite → vassal, a kind of client or satellite state (a state that was only formally or partly autonomous, but *de facto* dependent) or a subsidiary kingdom (a neighboring territory governed by a pretender to the throne) led partly in → personal union.

(9) It is also noteworthy that data on coregencies only exist in the south (Joram, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz) and only until the reign of Ahaz (741–725 BCE). The justifications are different in each case and in some cases only serve to compensate for chronological inconsistencies: While the succession formula in 1 Kgs 22:51 depicts Joram as taking the throne after the death of his father, 2 Kgs 8:16 reports that the Judean Joram became king at the age of thirty-two in the fifth year of the Israelite king Joram, when his father Jehoshaphat (868–847 BCE) was still alive. On the other hand, according to 2 Kgs 1:17 Joram became king in Israel when Joram had already reigned for two years in Judah. But according to 2 Kgs 3:1, he rather became king in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat (for the problems connected with it, see §5.4.5.2). Azariah or Uzziah (787–736 BCE) could also have reigned in Jerusalem for fourteen years next to (or contrary to) Amaziah. During his exceptionally long reign (fifty-two years according to 2 Kgs 15:2), the biblical data reports he suffered from a skin disease, so that Jotham (756–741 BCE) ruled as coregent for fifteen years and Ahaz (741–736 BCE) for eight years. Here, too, not all of the biblical details on the succession to the throne coincide (2 Kgs 15:7, 38; 16:1), which is why the absolute regency data are usually adjusted (the regnal data given here in brackets represent tendencies based on the biblical data—for an overview, see §10.1.4—not absolute dating; see §§5.2, 1.8). Only after Ahaz (741–725 BCE) does dynastic consolidation begin, which lasts until the end of the southern kingdom. This may indicate that the data for Judah before Ahaz are not necessarily reliable either.

(10) The first Judean king attested outside the Hebrew Bible is (though reconstructed) Ahaziah of the house of David in an → orthostat fragment (the so-called stela) from Dan (see §§4.5.2, 5.4.2.1). There, however,

he seems to have acted together with (his brother?) Joram, the king of Israel. The Aramean king (probably Hazael, ca. 845–800 BCE) boasts of killing both of them. If the reconstruction of the inscription is correct, Hazael seems to have seen the two kings so closely connected that he even mentions them together in an inscription that was directed toward the occupation of the northern villages. The “house of David” is thus first of all a relative statement that says nothing about a Davidic dynasty in Jerusalem that had been independent for a long time. If one disregards the evidence of the Dan Inscription and the uncertain Mesha Stela (see §§4.5.2, 5.4.2.1), a monarchy connected to Jerusalem per se only emerges in later Assyrian inscriptions with King Ahaz’s tribute to Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) (see §5.2.4). Moreover, there the kingdom’s name is not traced back to David (like Israel to Omri), but it is named Judah. At this time, the north had already been present in comparable inscriptions for more than 140 years (see §5.2.4). This can be partly coincidence, but it supports *de facto* the tendency to assume an autonomously acting and externally perceived entity only under Ahaz (741–725 BCE).

4.7.5.2. Judah as a Subsidiary Kingdom of the North in the Ninth/Eighth Century BCE

Taking all the evidence together, the division of the kingdom, as well as the united monarchy, proves to be a literarily designed, idealized course of history for the tenth century BCE. The earlier assumption that the lists on which the composition of the books of Kings were based—from Jeroboam (927/26–907 BCE) to Hoshea (732–723 BCE) in the north and from Rehoboam (926–910 BCE) to Zedekiah (598/97–587/86 BCE) in the south—were unimpeachable and historically reliable in their data on succession must be abandoned. Both the details of the monarchies and their lines of succession, in Jerusalem before Joram (852–845 BCE) and in the north before Omri (882–871 BCE), are vague and do not provide (neither before nor after) an exact history of the two kingdoms. They were designed with the first composition of the books of Kings, probably in the late eighth or early seventh century BCE (at least after the conquest of Samaria and the loss of statehood in the north), from a critically evaluative *Judean* perspective. How much historical information, if any, has been preserved must be examined on a case-by-case basis. Existing lists may have been supplemented freely or with vague information (Mario Liverani). For the historical reconstruction, the perspective

changes radically if one is prepared to take seriously the kings' shared names as identity of the persons (see §4.7.5.1). Then, from a historical perspective, the history of the separate monarchies presents itself in broad outlines as follows:

In the middle of the ninth century BCE until well into the eighth century BCE, there was a close connection between Israel and Judah, which developed as Judean dependence on Israel, similar to a → vassal relationship: protection against political and economic influence. Judah was only conditionally independent and was ruled by the Omrides Joram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah. This dependence continued even under the Nimshide Joash and the kings Amaziah, Azariah, and Jotham. Judah was administered by the rulers of Samaria as a subsidiary kingdom and also intermittently in → personal union. Such a subsidiary kingdom entailed not only Judah's dependence, but the hegemony of a member of the royal house from Samaria. In contrast to the later Neo-Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians, the Omrides (and later partly the Nimshides as well) did not select a ruler from the Jerusalem aristocracy, but determined who from their own family would take rule in Jerusalem through a skillful → clientele policy.

Omride sovereignty over the south began during the reign of Jehoshaphat (868–847 BCE) and developed under Ahab's sons, Joram and Ahaziah. After the death of Ahaziah of Judah (845 BCE), the Omride Athaliah preserved the interests of Samaria in Jerusalem. When the Omrides in Samaria were forced out of office by the Arameans or by the Jehu revolution, Athaliah also fell in a coup in Jerusalem. The Hebrew Bible wishes to depict Joash, who then followed, as the rescued son of a Judean king, having been installed by the influential aristocracy as a Davidide in place of the Omride Athaliah. This is dated to Jehu's seventh year, when Joash was seven years old and Athaliah had reigned seven years in Jerusalem. More plausible than this almost obvious construct is the assumption that the Jerusalem aristocracy dispatched the Omride Athaliah in order to prevent a dangerous detachment from (the then Nimshide-Aramean) Samaria. Accordingly, a Nimshide (i.e., a member of the northern Jehu dynasty, whose [grand]father was called Nimshi), Joash, acceded the throne in Jerusalem to further protect the interests of Samaria (table 6).

tury BCE (see §5.3.4), which aimed at economic supremacy, significantly shifted the balance of power in the region. Aramean dominance expanded from the north (see the Aramaic inscription of Dan, see §§5.4.2.1, 4.7.5.1, 5.5.2; Abel-Beth-Maacah see §4.5.7; Hazor see §4.6.3.3) to the economically important centers around the Jezreel Plain and in the upper Jordan Valley. The destruction of Tel Rehov (Stratum IV) probably dates back to Hazael and preceded his advance into the Shephelah, which can be seen in the conquest of Gath. The expansion reached its peak between 840 and 830 BCE. When the southern subsidiary kingdom under Joash (840–802/01 BCE) submitted to Hazael's pressure and paid a tribute of → vassalage (2 Kgs 12:19), Joash was perhaps deposed by the Arameans as king of Judah and Amaziah was appointed as an Aramean vassal king in Jerusalem (802/01–773 BCE). The Nimshide Joash withdrew to the north and reigned *further* (or perhaps later?, 2 Kgs 14:1) in Samaria as Jehoahaz's successor. According to 2 Kgs 13:25 after the death of Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE), he succeeded against Ben-Hadad II (800–780 BCE) in reconsolidating the north. Amaziah, who had been appointed in Jerusalem, strove for autonomy and shortly afterwards instigated a war with Joash of Samaria, which ended in the bitter defeat of the Jerusalemite. Again, the Nimshide Joash succeeded in bringing Jerusalem into his sphere of influence (2 Kgs 14:8–14). Amaziah was forced out and moved to Lachish, where he tried to establish a counterkingdom, which had no chance against the dominance of Joash. Only under Azariah (probably also a Nimshide), who was installed as a vassal in Jerusalem, could Judah gain strength. Azariah/Uzziah (787–736 BCE) once again extended Judah's dominion down to the Gulf of Eilat (2 Kgs 14:22) but was replaced in the final twenty years of his life by Jotham (756–741 BCE). Jotham was the last southern king under northern, Nimshide influence.

When the fate of Jehu's dynasty was sealed by Zechariah's murder (directed by Rezin of Damascus) in 747 BCE in Samaria, restless years followed. The situation temporarily stabilized during Menahem's reign (747–738 BCE) in Samaria. This allowed the south to secede from Samaria under Ahaz (744–725 BCE) in Jerusalem. Only after this can one speak of a permanent division of the kingdom or of truly two separate realms. The south's secession from the north was bought with vassalage to the Assyrians (2 Kgs 16:7–8) and would not have been possible without the growing weakness of the northern state of Israel. To put it bluntly, Judah could only establish itself as an independent state from the north with the end of the northern kingdom at the end of the eighth century BCE.

4.7.5.4. Summary of the Division of the Kingdom

The proposed reconstruction of the background of the so-called division of the kingdom is closely interwoven with the emergence of Judah as an independent state. It is based on the assumption that there was *no* united monarchy in the tenth century BCE that could have been divided. Probably, neither Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) nor Rehoboam (926–910 BCE) were historical figures, but constructs based on Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE). The beginning of the northern kingdom would have been connected eponymically with Jeroboam I when Israel experienced an extraordinary heyday under Jeroboam II (see §5.5.9.1). This fictitious founding figure, probably paralleled with Moses and heroically colored, was transformed into a contrarian by the Judean historians. Here, Jeroboam I becomes an insurgent rebel who renounced the perspective of a united Israel.

In the narrative of the division of the kingdom, Judean collective memory has preserved the birth of Judah as a state independent from Israel and the vision of unification with the north. The *de facto* course of Judah's history was quite different. While for the early days from David and Solomon through Rehoboam to Jehoshaphat, Judah's statehood can only be described in a limited way devoid of biblical information, all evidence suggests that Judah was a substate dependent on Israel in the second half of the ninth century BCE. The Omrides not only extended their rule in Transjordan to the south as far as the border of Moab, but also established Judah as a subsidiary kingdom under Ahab (871–852 BCE). The sons of Ahab, Joram and Ahaziah, also led the affairs of government in Jerusalem, partly in → personal union with the hegemony in Samaria and partly before they competed for succession in Samaria. This situation continued with Joash even after the coup of Jehu (845–818 BCE). Only when Aramean pressure at the end of the ninth century BCE led to increasing marginalization in the north, the south could successively detach itself somewhat from Israel under Amaziah (801–773 BCE) as an Aramean → vassal. Neo-Assyrian pressure on the Arameans, culminating in Tiglath-pileser's conquest of Damascus in 733 BCE, enabled Judah to enter a phase of independence, albeit under the dominance of the *pax assyriaca*. If one wants to look for a division of the kingdom, one can find its beginnings in the eighth century BCE, especially in the second half. It is closely connected with the emergence of Judah as a state. Dependency on or vassalage to the northern kingdom, the Arameans, the Neo-Assyrians, and even the Neo-Babylonians determined the degree of independence of the kingdom

in Jerusalem, whose size and independence is strongly exaggerated by the biblical representation.

The line sketched here forms the background to the depiction of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in §§5.4–6. It changes the view of the early phase of Israel and Judah from the tenth to the ninth century BCE as well as the assessment of the so-called Syro-Ephraimite war.

4.8. THE CAMPAIGN OF PHARAOH SHOSHENQ

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395. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012. ♦ **Wallenfels**, Ronald. "Shishak and Shoshenq: A Disambiguation." *JAOS* 139 (2019): 487–500. ♦ **Wilson**, Kevin A. *The Campaign of Pharaoh Shoshenq I into Palestine*. FAT 2/9. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

For the chronological classification of the findings of the tenth century BCE, there is currently hardly a more important date in the history of Israel than the campaign of Pharaoh Shoshenq, which is traditionally dated to 926 BCE. However, this dating is based almost exclusively on biblical sources. The biblical depiction sees Shoshenq as an Egyptian pharaoh who granted Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) political asylum when he was persecuted by Solomon (1 Kgs 11:40). In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, Shoshenq led a campaign against Jerusalem and stole the treasures of the temple and the royal palace (1 Kgs 14:25–26).

4.8.1. Problems Dating the Campaign

There is no doubt that there have been several pharaohs with the name Shoshenq ($\text{Š}3\text{-}\text{š}3\text{-}q/\text{Š}šq$ or $\text{Š}3\text{-}\text{š}3\text{-}n\text{-}q/\text{Š}šnq$, other forms of the name: Sheshonq, Shoschenk, Sesonchosis) and that the founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty (946/45–ca. 730 BCE) in Egypt carried this name. There is also no doubt that this pharaoh from Libya undertook a campaign to the Levant. It is obvious that this Shoshenq I (946/45–924 BCE) is identical with the Shishak mentioned in the Bible in 1 Kgs 11:40; 14:25; 2 Chr 12:2, 5, 7, 9. At least there is no sensible alternative. If one assumes the traditional dating of Solomon's reign from about 970–931 BCE, the campaign dates back to 926/25 BCE. On the other hand, if one follows the so-called short chronology for the Israelite kings (see §5.2.2), Rehoboam's reign is postponed to the year 926, so that the campaign "in the fifth year" (1 Kgs 14:25) can only be dated to 921 BCE. Sometimes it is even dated a little later, to the year 918 BCE. However, if one follows the standard Egyptian middle chronology (see §10.1.2), Shoshenq I did not live at this time. His reign is typically dated 946/45–924 BCE, whereby in the chronology of the Twenty-First (1070/69–946/45 BCE) and Twenty-Second Dynasties (946/45–ca. 730 BCE) much remains uncertain. The lack of synchronicity between the Egyptian and Israelite/Judean chronologies has long been known in research as a problem, but it cannot be solved. The traditional dating of the campaign in 926 BCE depends on the biblical data, which in turn depend in absolute chronology on the classification of Shoshenq in the Egyptian chronological system. The chronological conundrum

led Ernst Axel Knauf and Hermann M. Niemann recently to suggest the identification of Solomon and Rehoboam. Rehoboam is assumed to be the son-in-law of David's and Maacah's son Absalom. Jeroboam and Rehoboam are then real historical figures while Solomon is assumed to be the throne name (only during the first four years of Rehoboam) that developed into a fictional independent literary character. Although creative, this hypothesis nevertheless ignores some biblical and extrabiblical opposition. As is argued in this book, Rehoboam is a fictional character created as an opposite to Jeroboam I, who was created as an eponymous founder of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE).

The problem of the exact dating is multilayered: Which places were destroyed by Shoshenq at the relevant time (perhaps even several times), and of these, which were plausibly the result of the Egyptian campaign? The available sources for this are a relief on the Bubastite Portal of the temple of Amun in Karnak, which lists places of the campaign (see §4.8.2), a fragment of a stela from Megiddo with a cartouche of Shoshenq (see §4.8.4), and the archaeological evidence of destruction layers in Palestine, from which an approximation can possibly be attempted (see §4.8.3). Independently from the biblical evidence, the campaign cannot be dated *absolutely* but only *relatively* into the second half of the tenth century BCE (i.e., potentially also during the reign of Solomon; Giovanni Garbini, Ernst Axel Knauf, Herbert Donner). Until further clarification is possible, the traditional date of 926 BCE will be retained here, although a link between the date and the reign of Rehoboam (926–910 BCE) is to be left open. It is also possible that several expeditions of Shoshenq were undertaken (Ernst Axel Knauf).

Due to the chronological dating of the Iron I period, Israel Finkelstein holds a strikingly different position. The campaign then responds to the expansion of political rule under Saul in the late Iron I and early Iron IIA periods on the Gibeah-Bethel Plateau. Saul's kingdom had grown into a danger for Egyptian politics, which is why Shoshenq I was forced to intervene militarily. This could be reflected in the battle in the mountains of Gilboa (1 Sam 30–31). The view expressed here on the significance of Saul's rule (see §4.4) is difficult to reconcile with Finkelstein's view.

4.8.2. The Foreign Policy of Rehoboam and Jeroboam and the Reason for the Campaign

First Kings 14:25–26 mentions only an attack on Jerusalem. Second Chronicles 12:4 alternatively mentions other fortified cities in Judah without

naming them. In contrast, the so-called Shoshenq list (see fig. 24), found on a relief on the south wall of the Bubastite Portal in Karnak from the twenty-first year of the Pharaoh's reign, contains more than 150 locations in central Palestine, the Negev, and the southern coastal zone, including Gaza, Gezer, Taanach, Gibeon, Beth-Horon, Beth-Shean, Megiddo, Tirzah, Mahanaim, Penuel, and others. Striking are the omission of the Judean highlands and the absence of Jerusalem.

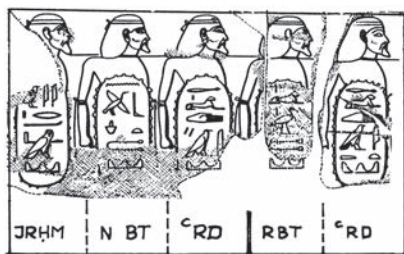


Fig. 24. Detail from the so-called Shoshenq list at the Bubastite Portal of the Amun temple in Karnak. The inscription, which reports on the campaign of Shoshenq I to Palestine, mentions Arad (twice) as one conquered city among many. The conquered people are represented as bound prisoners who each carry the name of the conquered place in a cartouche.

However, the inscription is, as usual, a composite, that is, it uses portions of other lists as templates. To what extent the list of place names with 120 *preserved* names therefore genuinely depicts the campaign itself is unclear. There are places mentioned that are not in earlier lists (especially in the core area of Israel), but it is not possible to reconstruct a consistent chronological campaign from the list. The Pharaoh prides himself on having brought the Asians depicted as prisoners to the temple, but one must reckon with a fair amount of propagandistic bombast, especially since there are no other extrabiblical sources for this campaign. Not every place mentioned in the list must have been conquered; some may have bought their freedom by paying a tribute or may only appear in the list for traditional reasons. But that Jerusalem, contrary to the brief statement in 1 Kgs 14:26 and the narrative based on it in 2 Chr 12:2–9, is *not* mentioned in the list is astonishing, regardless of whether Jerusalem was actually conquered or Rehoboam (926–910 BCE) (or whoever ruled in Jerusalem) paid tribute to the Egyptian pharaoh in order to spare the city from conquest. Perhaps the phrase “Shoshenq robbed” in 1 Kgs 14:26 is to be understood as “Rehoboam *surrendered*,” as also suggested by the interpretive narrative in Chronicles. The parallel account in Chronicles is a doctrinal example in theological historiography. The attack is said to have been caused by Rehoboam’s faithlessness, and accordingly it is linked to further details and a prophetic figure, Shemaiah (2 Chr 12:2b–7, 12–13). Thus, it is even

paralleled to the portrayal of the campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE (Sara Japhet). The repetition of the raid in verse 8a indicates the expansion of the text (so-called resumptive repetition [*Wiederaufnahme*], a redactional technique to insert additions). However, the Chronicler adds some more or less reliable details, as if he had access to other historiographic sources (e.g., the participation of Libyans, Sukkim, and Ethiopians, or the conquest of the fortified cities of Judah). In particular the Sukkim who accompany the Nubian pharaoh are striking because they are not mentioned elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and may have roots in Egyptian contemporary texts (*tk[tn]* Tjekten, people of the western oasis). While this may point to an independent source (Troy Leiland Sagrillo), adding the Judean cities (which are mostly lacking in the Karnak list) demonstrates that his information is allegedly of no independent value (Martin Noth). The Chronicler even explicitly mentions that the city and its rulers were spared (v. 7b), so that the golden shields are more likely to be understood as a tribute.

It is unlikely that this tribute (contrary to the biblical account) took place in the lead-up to the campaign and that the territory of Judah therefore does not appear. Even in that case, Shoshenq would probably have boasted of the conquest of Jerusalem. Rather, the sparsely populated Judean hill country in the tenth century BCE seems to have been of little significance to Egyptian interests, so that the conquest was omitted in the campaign. But the fact that the economically more important Shephelah is omitted shows that this is probably not the whole truth either.

The mention of the residences of Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) and the inclusion of the eastern Jordan Valley (the list mentions Adamah, Succoth, Penuel, and Mahanaim) has strengthened the presumption that it was (also) a punitive expedition against the renegade → vassal Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 11:40) (or whatever the local ruler may have called himself). Succoth can probably be identified with the Tell Dēr ‘Allā in the central Jordan Valley, where a regional sanctuary served as a meeting place for a group of prophets. The town, perhaps 3 ha in size, had a certain strategic importance due to the metal processing there, but there are also indications that it was involved in long-distance trade (Margreet Steiner, Eveline J. van der Steen, Fawzi Zayadine). The twin towns of Penuel and Mahanaim, which are probably identifiable with two sites nearby, Tell ad-Dahab aš-Šarqīya and Tell ad-Dahab al-Ġarbīyā in the lower Jabbok Valley, may have been a residence from which the Jabbok area and adjacent Jordan Valley were controlled. The scribal drawings found there from

the ninth/eighth century BCE (see §4.7.3) point to its integration into the trade route to the north. They may also underline the regional importance of the medium-sized town (6 ha) for the central Jordan Valley and the lower Jabbok Valley. However, a residence of Jeroboam, as suggested in 1 Kgs 12:25, has not yet been found in the excavations (Thomas Pola et al.). If Adamah can indeed be identified with Tell Dāmiyā, then there was no significant city that could have geostrategically interested Shoshenq. On the contrary, the excavations of the approximately 1.5 ha large settlement evince a regional sanctuary (Lucas Petit). The relatively small size of the mentioned places does not indicate any geostrategic importance of the relatively densely populated region in the middle Jordan Valley. The most likely strategic objectives were the copper processing in the Jordan Valley (1 Kgs 7:46) and control of trade routes to the north (Bernd Schipper). The locations of the third part of the list, which at first glance also mentions insignificant locations in the Negev region, also refer to this. This interpretation could be supported further if the extraction, smelting, and processing of copper in the Fēnān area, in the Arabah, *and* in the Jordan Valley (see §§3.3.1, 4.6.4.2) had been the aim of the campaign (Amihai Mazar). Shoshenq I would then have tried to strengthen the mining areas he controlled on the Sinai Peninsula and to stop or redirect trade and processing associated with other sites. By monopolizing the trade, he directed the copper flow to the southern coastal plain and to Egypt. This situation lasted for several decades, at least until the growth of the Omride polity in the ninth century BCE and the emergence of a new power in the north, the Arameans.

4.8.3. Traces of Destruction in the Tenth Century BCE

The question of the extent to which the destruction layers in the Shephelah, in central and northern Palestine, and in Transjordan can be associated with Shoshenq's campaign has still not been clarified (see §4.6.4.2). Not every place mentioned in the list has a destruction → stratum from the tenth century BCE, and not every place with a destruction layer from the tenth century BCE is mentioned in the list of place names in Karnak. Thus, for example, the important sites Penuel or Tirzah, which could also be connected with Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE), do not show significant destruction in early Iron IIA layers. The attributions of the destruction of the cities in the north, which formed a “New Canaan” in continuity with the Late Bronze period urban culture,

are debated. While Israel Finkelstein first associated the destruction of Megiddo Stratum VIA, Jokneam Stratum VII, Tell el-Qasile Stratum X, Tell Keisan Stratum IX, and Tel Hadar Stratum V with Shoshenq's campaign, Amihai Mazar rejects such an assignment because ^{14}C data from the sites suggest destruction in the early tenth century BCE. In contrast to Finkelstein (see §4.8.1), he assumes the traditional dating of the campaign in 926 BCE. However, the destruction of the apiary in Tel Rehov at the end of the tenth century was only partial and more likely caused by an earthquake. Thus strikingly, Tel Rehov in Mazar's interpretation does not evince any destruction layer that can be attributed to Shoshenq I.

The assignment of a destruction layer to a campaign requires not only the dating of the destruction, but also the dating of the campaign, and as shown in §4.8.1, this is by no means certain. Since the absence of a destruction layer cannot disprove or even date the campaign, the argumentative circle transforms into a *cul-de-sac*. Again and again, one reaches the point where one presupposes what one seeks to prove.

It is debated to what extent the attacks took place in the east and whether places in the south were destroyed during the campaign. Two places with the name Arad are mentioned in the list in Karnak (see fig. 24). One of them might be Tell 'Arād, the biblical Arad, but Stratum XI, which was earlier associated with the campaign, clearly can be dated after the tenth century BCE due to a more recent pottery typology (Ze'ev Herzog). The rather poor underlying Stratum XII, which is thus a possible candidate for Shoshenq, has parallels in Ḥirbet el-Mšāš/Tel Masos Stratum II, which might have interested Shoshenq as an economically important central location in the Negev region because of its control over the copper trade. Some places in the Besor Valley/Naḥal Bəśōr and in the Negev (for example, Tell es-Seba' Stratum VII) seem to have been destroyed during the campaign (Israel Finkelstein). Whether the destructions associated with burnt layers of the sparsely populated places in the middle Jordan Valley in the eleventh/tenth century BCE (Tell Dēr 'Allā/Succoth, Tell Dāmiyā/Adamah, Tell el-Mazār, Tell 'Ammatā, Tell el-'Adliyyeh, Tell el-Ḥamme, and others) were indeed caused by the Egyptian army is still open for discussion. This is particularly true because the rationale of the destruction of these places in the tenth century BCE, which were rather unimportant economically and strategically speaking, remains unclear. Furthermore, if Tell el-Mazār, Tell Dēr 'Allā/Succoth, Tell 'Ammatā, Tell el-'Adliyyeh, and Mahanaim/Tulul aḏ-Ḍahab were abandoned after the destruction around 950 BCE (Lucas P. Petit) and Shoshenq's campaign took place later, the

archaeological picture is even more complicated. In sum, the campaign also raises many questions in archaeological respects.

4.8.4. A Fragment of a Stela from Megiddo

A further important indication that the campaign actually took place is a fragment found in Megiddo in 1926 by the Chicago Expedition. It was, unfortunately, *unstratified* (i.e., not attributable to a specific settlement layer), since it originated from the rubble of Schumacher's excavation from 1905. The fragment is usually attributed to a stela of about 312 x 156 cm in size (differently, Bernd Schipper). The fragment shows the Pharaoh's birth name, his epithet "Beloved of Amun," and his throne name (fig. 25).



Fig. 25. Fragment of a stela (?) from Megiddo that bears the birth and throne names of Shoshenq I. The erection of the stela is probably connected with the conquest of the place and the subsequent Egyptian domination of the region. The dating to around 940 BCE—as well as the assignment of Stratum VA–IVB to Solomon based on it—remains very uncertain, as the fragment was found unstratified in rubble from the excavation.

With the inscription situated in the center of the city, the pharaoh visibly marked his claim to power. What is certain is that if the fragment is attributed to a stela of Shoshenq, it must have been erected in Megiddo *after* the conquest of the city by the pharaoh (*terminus post quem*). Which of Megiddo's destruction layers, however, can be assigned to the campaign is currently controversial in the context of the chronology debate (see §4.6.3.4). The traditional dating assumes Stratum VA/IVB—the Solomonic Megiddo. However, Israel Finkelstein initially suggested (the fiery destruction layer) Stratum VIA, but more recently preferred Stratum VB, as the fire that destroyed Stratum VIA was possibly caused by an earthquake (Eric H. Cline) and is too early. However, by attributing the stela to Stratum VB, the formerly Solomonic Megiddo VA/IVB slides into the ninth century BCE and Stratum IVA moves into the late ninth century/early eighth century BCE. Thus, the six-chamber gate, along with other

administrative Solomonic architecture, becomes Omride rather than Solomonic. Following Ernst Axel Knauf, Megiddo was expanded in Stratum VB as an Egyptian administrative center after Shoshenq. Whatever is decided in this debate, the erection of the stela documents the Egyptian pharaoh's claim to dominance over northern Palestine, which goes hand in hand with the destruction of the most important city centers.

4.8.5. Egyptian Dominance in Palestine in the Tenth and Ninth Centuries BCE

The fact that Egypt under Shoshenq I once again tried to achieve political supremacy in Palestine and possibly even achieved it for some time (according to Ernst Axel Knauf until 850 BCE) is an aspect that must not be underestimated. Both Israel and Judah presumably accepted status as → vassals in order to exercise power further. However, in contrast to the Late Bronze Age situation, they were no longer controlled from Gaza or Beth-Shean, but rather *from Egypt*. Only under the Omrides did Israel achieve sovereignty. The Egyptians were interested in controlling access to mining and copper smelting in the Fēnān area (Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš), either because they wanted to tap the raw material (Bernd Schipper) or because industrial production there thwarted their own economic interests (Thomas E. Levy et al.). The Egyptian presence seems to be confirmed by Egyptian amulets from Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš and also a seal amulet/Scarab of Shoshenq (see fig. 22) that was found in 2014 in Ḥirbet Hamra Ifdan in the copper mining district of Fēnān (Thomas E. Levy, Stefan Münzer, Mohammed Najjan).

The main objective of the campaign would have been to secure and control important sites on the long-distance trade routes to the Red Sea, through the Arabah and Negev in the south, and the route to the north, especially in the coastal plain (Via Maris) and the important traffic junction and trading center Megiddo (Bernd Schipper). Although Egypt's foreign policy thus resumed the line of Egyptian supremacy of the Late Bronze Age, its cultural impact was far less than in the Late Bronze Age. It is unclear to what extent the vassal status of Israel and Judah at the end of the tenth and ninth centuries BCE continued limited local rule (Alexander Fantalkin, Israel Finkelstein). At least in the ninth century BCE, there are still motifs and cartouches on Judean bone seals that clearly point to Shoshenq I (Stefan Münzer, Othmar Keel). This suggests that Egypt's supremacy at the beginning of the Iron II period was more enduring than

the Hebrew Bible depicts. The extent to which the campaign was accompanied by the destruction of cities—especially in the south—is currently the subject of much debate because the destruction of the infrastructure would not have been in the Egyptians' best interest. It is possible that the still internationally influential monarchy or chiefdom in Jerusalem profited from the campaign and was subsequently able to develop dominance over territories in the north in the short term (with Egyptian approval) (Israel Finkelstein), but that remains highly uncertain.

History of Israel and Judah

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Textbooks on the history of Israel commonly divide the time after the division of the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom into a history of Israel and a history of Judah. This makes all the more sense if the assumption of a united monarchy under David and Solomon is abandoned and referring to the division of said kingdom into the northern and the southern kingdoms (neither are biblical terms!) is understood to be misleading from a historical point of view (see §4.7.5). The development of the south and the formation of its own state strongly depended on the north’s development until well into the eighth century BCE. Thus, the reconstruction here avoids a strict separation for reasons beyond merely the pragmatic: Judah was *at least* a century behind Israel in its development as a state. Much suggests that the independent development of the Judean state and its separation from Israel did not begin until the eighth century BCE and that Judah only really developed after the fall of the kingdom of Israel in 720 BCE. Prior to this it was dependent on Israel for a significant period of time, during the periods of both the Omrides and the Nimshides. This observation commends a not too strongly separated reconstruction. In

order to make this change clear, the perspective in the eighth century BCE has been deliberately reversed with Judah discussed first so as to not devalue the final phase of the kingdom of Israel.

Both the monarchy in Judah and large parts of the Samarian monarchy are inconceivable without the influence of the Arameans (see §5.3) and, above all, of the Neo-Assyrians. For this reason, an overview of the Neo-Assyrian Empire is provided prior to the main presentation.

5.1. OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

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Whereas the Late Bronze Age was characterized by Egyptian dominance in the Levant, which appeared again briefly in Palestine at the end of the transitional period (Iron I–IIA), the ninth–seventh centuries BCE were determined primarily by the emergence of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its influence on Israel and Judah. It remains true, however, that the balance of power between Egypt and Mesopotamia also impacted the course of events. Israel and Judah, located on the Syro-Palestinian land bridge, were pincered in dueling claims to power that were roughly in balance. With the weakening or strengthening of one of the two great powers, the situation in Israel and Judah usually also shifted, sometimes with considerable consequences. Already at the end of the tenth century BCE, Adad-nirari II (912–891 BCE) created the first foundations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire through the annexation of territories (campaigns against Babylon and the Arameans) and the introduction of a state administration. Under Ashur-

nasirpal II (884–859 BCE), the area of power expanded to the west via vassal relationships. Under him and his successor, Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE), the Neo-Assyrians extended their empire to Cilicia and Syria, as well as far to the east. Their claims to power were limited in the north due to the powerful opposition from the empire of Urartu. Immediately to the empire's west, the small Aramean states resisted, as manifested particularly in the anti-Assyrian coalition in the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE, when the Assyrian Empire tried to expand into southern Syria (see §§5.3.4, 5.4.4).

The Neo-Assyrian policy of expansion reached its zenith in the eighth century BCE under Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE), who forced almost all of the Near East into → vassalage and who legitimized—religiopolitically and ideologically—his brutal annexation policy through claims to world power through the divine authority of the state god Aššur (Roland Lamprichs). Regular tribute payments from the vassals were associated with the imposed *pax assyriaca* (Jürgen Bär). Integration into the Assyrian economic and trading system was not exclusively disadvantageous, however, even with its levies on resources. Rather, at the same time, it enabled the vassals—through participation in international trade—to develop economically via better utilization of resources or increased opportunities to improve productivity. However, when vassal kings became unfaithful or rebelled against Assyrian rule, great military hardship was imposed, often accompanied by the deportation of the resident population and the resettlement of foreign populations from elsewhere in that Assyrian territory. Unfaithful vassals were either replaced or the area was transformed into an Assyrian province. Herbert Donner differentiates three stages of vassalage that go back to Tiglath-pileser III: (1) loyalty oath (*adê*-oath of allegiance) and obligation to pay tribute and, where necessary, the provision of auxiliary troops; (2) after suspected or actual rebellion against the burdens of vassalage, the forced control of foreign policy and increased economic and military pressures; (3) if the vassal was then still conspiratorial or openly rebellious, the Assyrian Great King intervened militarily, exchanging the upper classes by forced migration and letting his military control the land. Although Assyrian policy was more flexible than this rigid three-stage scheme, it makes clear that Assyrian pressure could be increased in escalating stages and adapted to the respective situation.

In Palestine, the renewed resistance of Syrian coalition leaders finally led to the conquest of Samaria (722/20 BCE, see §5.6.7) under Shalmaneser V (727–722 BCE) and the end of the political independence of the northern kingdom of Israel. Initially the weaker southern kingdom

preserved its political independence under the Sargonids. During the Sargonid era, Assyria—under the eponymous → usurper Sargon II (722–705 BCE) and his descendants Sennacherib (705–681 BCE), Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE), and Aššur-bāni-apli (= Ashurbanipal) (669–631 BCE)—reached the peak of their power, expanding to Cyprus and Egypt. From the eighth century BCE, Babylon, which had been controlled by a → personal union since Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE), began to strengthen itself under Marduk-apla-iddin II (722–710 and 703 BCE). This resulted in the destruction of Babylon in 689 BCE. From the end of the seventh century BCE, clear signs of the disintegration of the Neo-Assyrian Empire become apparent, which strengthened not only Babylon but also Egypt. With the Assyrian-Babylonian fratricidal war (652–648 BCE) between Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin (= Šamaššumumkīn) (668–648 BCE), which occurred while Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE) was still ruling in Babylon, the conflict between Babylon and Assyria flared up. Babylon was defeated once again (648 BCE), but in the following period the Babylonian Empire grew stronger under Nabopolassar (= Nabû-apla-ušur) (626–605 BCE), who magnificently expanded the capital and who saw himself charged with exacting Marduk's revenge for Sennacherib's traumatizing conquest of Babylon in 689 BCE (Rainer Albertz describes it as the founding myth of the Neo-Babylonian Empire). In 614 BCE, Assur was conquered; in 612 BCE, Nineveh fell; and, with the conquest of Haran in 609 BCE, the Medes and Neo-Babylonians finally took over the heritage of the Neo-Assyrians.

In addition to the Neo-Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians, the Egyptians dominated the greater political scene. They used phases of Assyrian weakness to expand their hegemonic claims to power. These claims grew again in the second half of the eighth century BCE after a period of international weakness. The control of trading on the Via Maris was just as decisive as access to resources—for example, in the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula. In 713 BCE, the Egyptians entered into an anti-Assyrian coalition with the small states of the southern Levant for the first time (*COS* 2.118E–F, *HTAT* 161–63), though it was ultimately unsuccessful. The following decades were marked by further unrest. In 701 BCE, Egypt appears to have been engaged in a battle against the Assyrians in Elteke, but Assur retained the upper hand and forced back the power on the Nile. Pharaoh Tirhakah (690–664 BCE) tried again to push the Assyrians back but was defeated by Ashurbanipal (669–631 BCE). Thebes was seized in 664 BCE, and Egypt was conquered. But that was not the end of the story: when the Neo-Assyrians came under pressure

from Babylon (see above), the dominant forces in the southern Levant changed again. Psammetichus I (664–610 BCE) again expanded Egyptian influence into Palestine (HTAT 256) and brought Judah, under King Josiah, into an Egyptian → vassalage. This Egyptian interlude before the Neo-Babylonian defeat of the Egyptian army at Carchemish (on the Euphrates, on today's Turkish-Syrian border) in 605 BCE can hardly be overestimated in its importance for Judean history. It allowed hope to arise for the last kings of Judah that Egypt would help and prevent the worst. However, Judah overestimated its value to Egypt and its foreign political significance in this: rather than support Judah in its most dramatic time of need, the Egyptians used the siege of Jerusalem to regain control of the Phoenician trading cities.

5.2. SOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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5.2.1. The Use of Lists in Biblical Historiography

With the ninth century BCE, the sources for the history of Israel change significantly. Although there are no comprehensive original documents from state archives (chronicles, monumental inscriptions, administrative documents, etc.), information about the reigns of the later kings in the biblical texts is much more precise than for Saul, David, and Solomon. From 1 Kgs 15:1, from the reign of King Asa of Judah (908–868 BCE) to King Hezekiah of Judah (725–697 BCE), the books of Kings present so-called synchronisms, that is, interweaving of regnal data from Jerusalem and Samaria (see the example below from 1 Kgs 15:9–24).

Example of a King's Regnal Evaluation

Composed of varied information: a synchronism of regnal dates, cultic notes, historical notes, and references to sources:

⁹In the twentieth year of King Jeroboam of Israel, Asa began to reign over Judah; ¹⁰he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom. ¹¹Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David had done. ¹²He put away the male temple prostitutes out of the land and removed all the idols that his ancestors had made. ¹³He also removed his mother Maacah from being queen mother, because she had made an abominable image for Asherah; Asa cut down her image and burned it at the Wadi Kidron. ¹⁴But the high places were not taken away. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was true to the LORD all his days. ¹⁵He brought into the house of the LORD the votive gifts—silver, gold, and utensils. ¹⁶There was war between Asa and King Baasha of Israel all their days. ¹⁷King Baasha of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, to prevent anyone from going out or coming in to King Asa of Judah. ¹⁸Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and gave them into the hands of his servants. King Asa sent them to King Ben-hadad son of Tabrimmon son of Hezion of Aram, who resided in Damascus, saying, ¹⁹"Let there be an alliance between me and you, like that between my father and your father: I am sending you a present of silver and gold; go, break your alliance with King Baasha of Israel, so that he may withdraw from me." ²⁰Ben-hadad listened to King Asa, and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel. He conquered Ijon, Dan,

Abel-beth-maacah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. ²¹When Baasha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah and lived in Tirzah. ²²Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah, none was exempt: they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building; with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. ²³Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, all his power, all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? But in his old age he was diseased in his feet. ²⁴Then Asa slept with his ancestors, and was buried with his ancestors in the city of his father David; his son Jehoshaphat succeeded him. (1 Kgs 15:9–24 NRSV)

Most cases provide synchronistic data, information about the reign, a → Deuteronomistic evaluation note, a reference to a source, a death note, and information about the successor. For the kings of Judah, the name of the king’s mother, information about the king’s age at his accession to the throne, and a funeral note are also often added (see also the idealized overview of the framework scheme).

Kings of Israel	Kings of Judah
Synchronistic dating	Synchronistic dating
	Age at the time of accession
Length of reign	Length of reign
	Mother’s name (and from Amnon, 2 Kgs 21:19, also her place of origin)
Theological evaluation	Theological evaluation (from Jehoahaz onward, clearly changed)
Reference to the Book of the Kings of Israel	Reference to the Book of the Kings of Judah
Note of death	Note of death
	Funeral (type)
Successor	Successor

Table 7. Overview of the regnal formulae of Israelite and Judean kings.

The books of Kings themselves name two chronicles as the sources of these dates: the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah (1 Kgs 14:29;

2 Kgs 24:5; etc.) and the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel (1 Kgs 14:19; 2 Kgs 25:13; etc.). While the synchronisms (the references to data shared by each) have been created editorially, research generally assumes that the editors of Kings had access to list-like material from both Israel and Judah. Lester L. Grabbe assumes a more comprehensive chronicle only of the kings of Judah. The exaggerated alternatives of assuming either an unaltered use of sources or a complete fabrication appear to be wrong. Rather, it can be assumed that, in addition to the source-like elements that include both the synchronisms and the regency data, an increasing amount of fabrication was added the further one goes back into the kingdoms' origins (see §4.7). This commends itself only if one assumes the earlier development of literacy in Israel and Judah as a prerequisite for list keeping. As it stands, it does not make sense to reckon with list material from Israel and Judah before the ninth century BCE.

In addition to the differences already mentioned, other special features can be appealed to for the acceptance of predefined lists, but they simultaneously complicate the entire dating system: apparently, the dates are partly based on different calendars with the year beginning in either autumn or spring. Transitions in regency are counted differently (see §5.2.2) and coregents are not uniformly counted. If one counts the reigns of the kings of Israel or Judah in isolation, there is a difference of twenty-two years between Israel and Judah. In short: the dating is *not* based on a uniform system.

The written tradition of lists can be attributed to Judah in the eighth century BCE with Ahaz (Omer Sergi argues slightly earlier, after Athaliah) and in Israel with the Omride dynasty. There is uncertainty about the reliability of the lists before the ninth century BCE. Substantial evidence suggests that lists existing from the ninth century BCE were updated by appending available information from later time periods. The differences between the lists relating to the Jerusalem dynasty and the information on the monarchy in the north were often interpreted as a sign of reliability. Thus, the reference to the king's mother (she is missing only for Asa, Joram, and Ahaz) was associated with Hittite traditions and understood as a reminiscence of Hittite-Anatolian influences in the early history of Jerusalem (Nadav Na'aman). Alternatively, reasons for mentioning mothers have been sought in the history of Judah itself, that is, with Athaliah (Omer Sergi).

The books of Kings maintain a strong interest in presenting the Davidic dynasty in perfect → genealogical continuity (cf. 2 Sam 7; 2 Chr 3). That all the kings of Judah descend from a single lineage is at varying

points probably at least as much a construct as it is a reality. At least for Joram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash, and perhaps also Amaziah and Azariah, it has to be considered that they were *not* of Davidic descent. Only after Ahaz did the Davidic dynasty seem to consolidate. However, this does not necessarily imply that Ahaz is an offspring of historical David.

One can assume that the authors of the books of Kings had list material from the north as well as from the south. These materials were then related to each other by the framework scheme and the → synchronisms and were composed with the help of more or less free additions to a story from a Judean perspective. Either the source text originated after the fall of Samaria in the eighth century BCE (Alfred Jepsen, Klaus-Peter Adam), or it was an excerpt from a more extensive source from the seventh century BCE (Christoph Levin), or the references to the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel/Judah (1 Kgs 22:39, 46; 2 Kgs 1:18; 8:23; 10:34; etc.) are standardized fictitious references.

More recently, a relative consensus has emerged that the first composition of the books of Kings was written in the preexilic period (differently Erik Aurelius, Felipe Blanco Wißmann). This is indicated by changes in the framework scheme from Hezekiah or Josiah and other indications. There is ongoing discussion whether a first version was already written under Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) (Helga Weippert, Georg Braulik), or under Josiah (639–609 BCE) (Frank Moore Cross), or only under Jehoia-kim (608–598 BCE) (Michael Pietsch).

5.2.2. On the Dating of the Kings of Israel and Judah

The regnal dates are only approximate. They are based on the information on the duration of reigns in the → synchronisms in the books of Kings. Deviations are caused by different versions of the text (→ MT/→ LXX), differently counted coregents, inconsistencies in the system, or the determination of the beginning of the year. A synchronistic overview of the data used in this book can be found in the appendix (see §10.1.3). The provided regnal dates differ in detail from almost all conventional historical presentations, since for the second and first millennia BCE, only a few absolute dates (e.g., 853 BCE the battle with Qarqar) are available from which the relative data of the Hebrew Bible and/or the ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian king lists and annals can be related to each other (see §1.8). Since the works of Joachim Begrich (1929) and Alfred Jepsen (1964), the so-called short chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah has more or

less established itself. This chronology assumes a change in the internal dating system from 2 Kgs 15:23 onwards based on Assyrian influences. This is the method of dating the change of government: While the final year of the predecessor and the first year of the successor were initially counted as *two* years, after 2 Kgs 15:23 such transitions are counted as only *one* year, that is, there is an uncounted year of accession. The fact that the first system generated surpluses can be seen in the example of Ahab's sons, Ahaziah and Joram of Israel. Assuming the absolute date of the battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE (see §5.4.4), King Ahab must have ruled at that time even if the battle is not mentioned biblically, for the Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) mentions him as part of the anti-Assyrian coalition. Twelve years later Jehu of Samaria paid tribute to the same Shalmaneser III. This is documented on the Black Obelisk (fig. 26) (see §5.2.4), which lists the first thirty-one years of the Assyrian king's reign, with 841 BCE corresponding to his eighteenth year.



Fig. 26. Section of the so-called Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE). The scene shows King Jehu kneeling on the ground, bowing before the Assyrian king and his entourage. The inscription mentions the precious tribute that the king brought with him and identifies him as the tributary: “I received tribute from Jehu, son of Omri.”

The Hebrew Bible also lacks any reference to this tribute. On the other hand, Kings presumes the reigns of the two sons of Ahab, Ahaziah and Joram, between these events but indicates two and twelve years for their respective reigns (1 Kgs 22:52; 2 Kgs 3:1). If one counts 841 BCE as Jehu's first regnal year (Georg Hentschel, Jonathan Miles Robker, Shuichi Hasegawa; 842 BCE, Kenneth T. Andersen, J. Alberto Soggin), it seems obvious to assume that Joram of Israel's regency occurred between 852–841 BCE and Ahaziah

of Israel's occurred approximately in 852–851 BCE. 852 and 841 BCE would then be years of the change of government, which are counted twice in the biblical system. However, if one dates Jehu's coup so late (841 BCE), there is no time for him to act independently. He comes to power in the whirlwind of the Assyrian western expansion and pays tribute almost immediately.

The reconstruction presented here dates Jehu traditionally to 845 BCE (Joachim Begrich, Alfred Jepsen, Herbert Donner) and leaves a few years for the development of the Nimshides. The Arameans are attributed a decisive role at the beginning of Jehu's reign (see §5.5.2). The sum of the Nimshides' reigns is 103 years. If it is correct to date Shallum's reign to 747 BCE and if the transitions of the regnal years are counted twice, one arrives at about 845 BCE as the beginning of Jehu's reign. But none of this is very certain. This can be seen if one dates the conquest of Samaria to 722/20 BCE and Hoshea's tribute to Tiglath-pileser III to 732/31 BCE, which both have a high probability. But adding together the biblical data on the reigns of the kings from Jehu to Pekah results in 134 years, which then does not coincide with Jehu's tribute in 841 BCE, even if one assumes that the transitions were counted twice (Shuichi Hasegawa).

Already the example of the Omrides and Nimshides shows that the biblical data are tendentious and that, at the same time, the entanglements between Judah and Israel, which are historically very likely in the ninth century BCE, are superimposed on the supposedly exact dates (cf. 2 Kgs 1:17) (see §§4.7.5, 5.4.5, and the overview in §4.7.5.2, table 6). Just as the absolute dates regarding Shalmaneser III's reign (859–824 BCE) are taken as uncertain, the biblical data should be treated likewise.

Note: The following account of the history of Israel and Judah adds the regency dates of the kings in brackets at almost every occurrence (see the overview in the table at §10.1.4). This is merely intended to facilitate orientation on the time axis and in the course of history. The expectation of an absolute dating accurate to the year is usually *not* associated with the data. This must be emphatically underscored so that no misunderstandings arise such that an unequivocal course of history can be derived from the chronological data.

5.2.3. Reliability of the Biblical Data

How far the reliability of the given data reaches and how much has been supplemented or obscured (e.g., the beginning of the monarchy in the

eleventh/tenth century BCE, Israel's economic and political supremacy over the south, the rule of Omrides and Nimshides in Jerusalem) will be discussed further. In addition to uncertainties in the chronology and changes in the presentation scheme, the striking duplication of names of several of the kings in Israel and Judah, for example, suggests that additions have been made. If one assumes, for example, that Ahaziah, Joram, and Jehoash of Judah are one and the same as the kings of Israel by the same name, the history of the Jerusalem monarchy presents itself radically differently (see already §4.7.5).

The inclusion of the seven-day kingdom of Zimri (1 Kgs 16:15) in the chronology of the kings of Israel and the omission of Athaliah in the → synchronistic chronology of Judah (2 Kgs 11) could also point to targeted editing. In addition, there are examples in which extrabiblical and biblical evidence do not fit together at all. The biblical chronology of the last six kings of Israel in the eighth century BCE is particularly precarious, as the following overview shows:

King	Biblical Passages	Reign	Synchronism	Synchronistic Data of Judah
Zechariah	2 Kgs 14:29; 15:8	six months	38th year of Azariah/Uzziah	Azariah/Uzziah of Judah becomes king in the 27th year of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 15:1)
Shallum	2 Kgs 15:10, 13	one month	39th year of Azariah/Uzziah	
Menahem	2 Kgs 15:14, 17	ten years	39th year of Azariah/Uzziah	
Pekahiah	2 Kgs 15:22–23	two years	50th year of Azariah/Uzziah	
Pekah	2 Kgs 15:25, 27	twenty years	52nd year of Azariah/Uzziah	In Pekah's 2nd year, Jotham son of Azariah/Uzziah began to reign (2 Kgs 15:32); in Pekah's 17th year Ahaz became king of Judah (2 Kgs 16:1)

King	Biblical Passages	Reign	Synchronism	Synchronistic Data of Judah
Hoshea	2 Kgs 15:30; 17:1	nine years	20th year of Jotham; 12th year of Ahaz	

Table 8. Synchronisms of the last six kings of Israel.

A fifty-two-year reign of Azariah/Uzziah is not possible, however, if one considers the data underlying 2 Kgs 15:1; 16:1. Rather, it is only possible if—on account of 2 Kgs 15:5 and against 2 Kgs 15:7—one includes the reigns of Jotham and Asa up to about the year 737 BCE. Zechariah of Israel is the direct successor of Jeroboam II, who reigned in Samaria for forty-one years according to 2 Kgs 14:23. After his twenty-seventh year, at least twelve remained, into which a thirty-eight-year reign of Azariah/Uzziah cannot fit. The data from Zechariah to Hoshea show at least thirty-eight years, which conflicts with the conquest of Samaria in 722/20 BCE, that is, if Jeroboam II ruled until 747 BCE. Above all, this information cannot be combined with the installation of Hoshea by Tiglath-pileser III, which according to Assyrian sources occurred in 732 BCE. This problem is usually solved by shortening Pekah's reign (Herbert Donner: 735–732 BCE, Georg Hentschel: 735–731 BCE), especially since Menahem still paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III in 738 BCE. This also makes a twenty-year reign for Pekah impossible. Various proposals have been made to explain the explicit textual reference that “he reigned twenty years in Samaria” from 2 Kgs 15:27. Either Pekah had already held high offices under Menahem and Pekahiah, which were included here (note that the Greek Lucianic recension records ten years for Pekahiah in 2 Kgs 15:23 instead of the two years in MT, which fits the date for Hoshea in 2 Kgs 17:10 MT, Steven L. McKenzie), or Pekah had established a counterkingdom in Gilead, or he saw himself as the only legitimate successor of Zechariah and the Jehu dynasty (Nadav Na'aman), so that his reign was calculated from then on (this still results in twenty years only with some difficulty). None of these solutions can be found in the biblical text, such that the changes are not methodologically unproblematic.

All in all, the reigns of the kings are far too long, and the data can only be brought into a coherent chronological system with many additional assumptions (Georg Hentschel). It follows from all of this that the

data should not be seen as a reliable anchor of historical events, but also that the degree of complexity in the reconstruction is quite high. Despite all justified skepticism about reliability, it is beyond doubt that the lists are not completely constructed or fabricated, but they can, at least in part, be traced back to authentic material. However, they are adjusted to the needs of the Judean and Israelite historiographers. Extrabiblical sources, at least from the ninth century BCE onwards, also support this view. From the uncertainties (which are further increased by the dating provided in the prophetic books), however, the methodological consequence must be drawn that a reconstruction of historical events should not be based exclusively on the biblical regnal data. An adjustment of the biblical data to create a consistent chronological system should, in any case, not be the aim of the presentation of a history of Israel.

Marginally, another basic methodological problem should be pointed out: where the reliability of the synchronistic data and the information on the duration of reigns cannot be ascertained, the historical picture can change considerably in the case of shifts (Mario Liverani). If, for example, one assumes a shorter reign of the kings *before* the Omrides in the ninth century BCE and at the same time detaches oneself from the → synchronism of Shoshenq's campaign in the fifth year of Rehoboam, David and Solomon slide from the beginning to the end of the tenth century BCE. This would have serious consequences in the chronological debate. However, since this markedly complicates the reconstructions, it is assumed in the present context that the biblical data on the reign should be used, knowing full well that no monarchy should be reconstructed on the basis of it for the tenth century BCE.

5.2.4. The Kings of Israel and Judah in Extrabiblical Sources

For the first time, in the ninth century BCE both Israel and Judah appear as political realities in extrabiblical texts and inscriptions. Of great importance are the Moabite Mesha Stela found near Dibon/Dībān in 1868 (see fig. 29), which mentions Omri by name and which also obliquely refers to his son Ahab (COS 2.23, HTAT 105, TUAT 1:646–59). Whether it also mentions the house of David is controversial (see §4.5.2). In addition, the Aramean inscription from Dan (COS 2.39, TUAT 1:176–79, HTAT 116; see §§4.5.2, 5.5.2), which was only found in 1993, is central. It possibly names Joram as king of Israel and Ahaziah of the house of David. On the other hand, the so-called Joash inscription—which appeared in 2003 and

allegedly came from Jerusalem and mentions the temple renovation at the beginning of the eighth century BCE—is a forgery. There is still no monumental inscription from Palestine about an Israelite or Judean king.

Besides these texts, there are Assyrian sources in which kings of Israel and Judah are most commonly mentioned alongside other kings of south Syrian entities such as Tyre, Sidon, Damascus, and so on. The Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III should be mentioned (859–824 BCE). It specifies Ahab's participation in an anti-Assyrian coalition (COS 2.113A, HTAT 106). The same king's Black Obelisk from Kalḫu/Nimrud depicts Jehu (see fig. 26) and his tribute in 841 BCE along with the following inscription: "I received the tribute of Jehu, from the 'house of Omri' (^m*Ia-ú-a DUMU* ^m*ḫu-um-ri-i*): silver, gold, a golden bowl, a [*zuqutu*] golden goblet, golden cups, golden buckets, tin, a staff for the king's hand, (and) javelins(?)" (see COS 2.113F, TUAT 1:263, HTAT 113). The phrase *mār Ḫumrī* is often understood as synonymous with "the house of Omri" (*Biṭ Ḫumrī*) because this is the designation of the northern state in later Assyrian records (Manfred Weippert). However, literally it reads "son of Omri," perhaps indicating that Jehu, who was no offspring of Omri, was a usurper. Jehu is also mentioned as son of Omri in an annal fragment and on a marble slab of Shalmaneser III (COS 2.113D, HTAT 112). Finally, Joash of Samaria is named as a tributary in the Tell er-Rimāḥ Stela of Adad-nirari III (= Adad-nērārī III) (811–783 BCE) from Iraq (COS 2.114F, HTAT 122). The Annals of Tiglath-pileser III (745–724 BCE) probably do not name Azariah of Judah but certainly mention Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea of Samaria or Israel. They are mentioned in connection with the downfall of the state of Israel in 722/20 BCE (COS 2.117A–D, F; HTAT 140, 147–49). In addition, Assyrian texts speak several times of Samaria or of the land of the house of Omri.

Judah is much less present in the Assyrian sources than Israel until the end of the eighth century BCE. Even then it is not comparably listed after an → eponym such as the house of David, but as the "Land of Judah" (^{KUR}*Ia'ūdāya*) with the tribute payment of Ahaz (*Yahū'aḫaz*) to Tiglath-pileser III, or as the "Land of Judah" (*mât Ya'ûdu*) in an → orthostat inscription from Nimrud/Kalḫu, or as the "Land/City of Judah" (^{KUR/URU}*Ia-ú-da-a*) in the inscriptions of Sennacherib. Besides Ahaz as a tributary to Tiglath-pileser III (vassal lists of Tiglath-pileser III, COS 2.117D; HTAT 140), Hezekiah is listed as a tributary to Sennacherib (the Taylor Prism in London and the Chicago Prism OIM A2793 COS 2.119B, HTAT 181; cf. RINAP 3.2.46.1, 40.142), and Manasseh is listed as a → vassal

of Ashurbanipal (Prism C, *HTAT* 191), as well as supplier of building material for Nineveh in an inscription of Asarhaddon. The unbalanced evidence is not surprising, because the regional differences in development and—derived from this—the political significance of north and south were quite different.

5.2.5. Judah's Development in Comparison with Israel

From an archaeological point of view, Judah developed with some lag time compared to the north. It is only in the Iron IIB that the beginnings of a territorial state can be discerned, as can be seen in the expansion of urban infrastructure, in central administrative buildings, and in the growth of administrative documents. The southern advance of the Arameans in the last third of the ninth century BCE (see §5.3), which is connected with a weakening of the influential northern kingdom of Israel, led to a developmental thrust in Judah. This also made Judah's expansion toward the west and south possible. But Judah was altogether a small state with a limited economic performance that lagged behind Israel in its development by at least a century. The cities of the south were fewer in number, smaller in size, poorer in economic wealth, and did not correspond to the urban standard of their northern neighbor Israel. For a perceivably longer time, Judah remained a small state, centered around the city of Jerusalem, surrounded by villages in which mountain farmers and small cattle breeders traded in limited agricultural products. Until the expansion to the south and west in the eighth century BCE, Jerusalem was the only city. The density of settlements grew slowly and reached a peak in the Iron IIB period in the eighth century BCE. In the early ninth century BCE, Judah can best be understood in analogy to the Late Bronze Age city-state tradition (Avi Ofer), with Jerusalem playing the role of the center. The population of the Shephelah increased from the Iron IIA era onwards and the region, which was superior in development to the hill country, developed as a trade and economic zone between the Philistines and the Judeans (Hermann Michael Niemann). The coastal inhabitants continued to dominate this economically important area via Judah's foreign long-distance trade. In the ninth century BCE, Philistine Gath was a city that extended over 30 ha, overtaking the supremacy of Ekron, which had developed in the eleventh/tenth century BCE. In comparison, ninth century BCE Jerusalem seems rather modest with less than 10 ha. Only the expansion in the eighth/seventh century BCE allowed the city to grow to a dominant size (with a maximum

of 60 ha of settlement area). In the late ninth and eighth centuries BCE, the towns of the south (such as Tell es-Seba⁶, Beth-Shemesh, and Lachish) also demonstrated development toward cityhood with the introduction of fortifications, central buildings, administrative buildings, water supplies, and so on. All this suggests an organized territorial state.

For orientation, one can keep the phrase “north before south” in mind. This means that the transformation of → tribal structures into regionally centered chiefdoms and later into monarchic territorial states in the southern Levant tended to take place earlier in the north than in the south. The Aramean states were earlier than Israel, the state of Israel was earlier than the state of Judah, and Moab was earlier than Edom. Impulses for development in the north came from Syria and the Phoenician coastal states, and in the south they came from the western Philistine Pentapolis.

The observation of Judah’s delayed development is diametrically opposed to the biblical account that the Davidic kingdom was the more important state structure. However, the Omrides and Nimshides were far more important than the Davidides until the eighth century BCE.

In the ninth century BCE, the northern kingdom of Israel, which existed for only about two centuries, developed under the Omrides into a potent territorial state that dominated Judah to the south as the middle power of the southern Levant and annexed it under its own rule as a subsidiary kingdom. The conceptualization of Judah’s dependence on Israel as a → vassal, which was attempted in earlier presentations (Herbert Donner, Israel Finkelstein), still clearly seems too weak (see already §4.7.5.2) in view of Samaria’s having sent rulers to Jerusalem. In principle, however, the size of the northern kingdom of Israel is also overestimated if it is assumed, as in the biblical evidence, that from Jeroboam I (927–907 BCE) until Hoshea (732–723 BCE) Israel ruled the whole north, that is, from Bethel in the south to Dan (1 Kgs 12:29) in the north. This view is biblically determined by the division of the land between the tribes (Num 32; 34:1–14; Josh 13–21) and the idealized idea of a Davidic-Solomonic empire (1 Kgs 5:4; 8:65; 2 Sam 8:2–15), but it is not in accordance with historical circumstances. Only the Omrides and Nimshides were able to rule *de facto* over the road networks and strategically important area north of the Samarian hill country, although for only a relatively short period of time. The Jezreel Plain, the Beth-Shean Basin, and the area north of it around the Sea of Galilee with lower Galilee and the region along the Jordan up to its sources in upper Galilee were exposed to changing influences (Gunnar Lehmann). The same applies to the Transjordan north

of the Jabbok, that is, Gilead and the Hauran (Bashan and Golan). The Phoenicians, the Assyrians, and—not least of all—the Arameans played a decisive role there.

In regional terms, northern Israel, which was conveniently situated for transport, formed the hinterland of the southern Phoenician city-states (Tyre and Sidon). Their political, economic, and cultural influence continued even into the Iron II period. A more important factor in the first millennium BCE was the influence of the Arameans from the north (Edward Lipiński). In addition, the struggle for supremacy over southern Syria and northern Palestine between the Arameans with their neighboring small states and the Assyrians pushing to the west had a decisive influence on the development of the region in the first half of the first millennium BCE.

5.3. THE ARAMEANS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

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In the past, Aramean influence on the development of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah was often underestimated. Only recently have the Arameans been assigned a central role, which will be developed in the following on the basis of what has already been said in §§3.2–3, in particular, on the region's early history and political forms of organization. First of all, the regional kingdoms (see §5.3.1) will be dealt with again—Geshur, in particular (see §5.3.2), because it was important for the development of the northern kingdom. In order to assess the influence and interplay of forces, the material culture of the Arameans is then discussed (see §5.3.3), before the Aramean expansion to the south (see §5.3.4) is presented in more detail.

The chronology of the Aramean kingdoms presents an even greater problem than that of the kings of Israel and Judah, as there is no sufficient source or list material available. This is especially true for the kings of the tenth century BCE (Hadad, Ezron/Rezon, Ḥadyān I, Tabrimmon), but also for Ben-Hadad I (see §§5.3.4, 5.4.2.1). There are more or less, unsolvable problems in the → synchronisms between the extrabiblical and biblical reports in all variations (e.g., the year Hazael took power and the

murder of Ahaziah and Joram). The overview in appendix §10.1.3 shows the differences between the approaches of Edward Lipiński, K. Lawson Younger Jr., and Mario Liverani, who is followed here with slight changes.

5.3.1. Local Aramean Chiefdoms

At the latest for the ninth/eighth century BCE, but probably already from the tenth century BCE onward, some local chiefdoms, whose exact geographical location is difficult to discern, are important for the history of Israel. These stand beside (Aram-)Damascus and Hamath, the most important small Aramean states located in Syria. Among them the most significant were the Aramean states located in southern Syria and northern Palestine, Beth-Rehob (Judg 18:28), Zobah (2 Sam 10:6), Geshur (cf. Deut 3:14; Josh 12:5; 13:2, 11, 13; 2 Sam 3:3; 13:37–38), Abel-Beth-Maacah (Deut 3:14; 1 Kgs 15:20, 29), and Tob (2 Sam 10:6, 8). The extent to which Aram-Zobah and Beth-Rehob can be distinguished from each other is currently under discussion. Following settlement patterns, Wolfgang Zwickel distinguishes two centers, Rehob (Tell er-Rahīb) and the northern Zobah (Tell el-ʿUjūn). In part, however, it is also assumed that Zobah/Beth-Rehob and Geshur/Beth-Maacah are shared designations (Edward Lipiński) and refer to two local units on the upper reaches of the Jordan up to the Beqaa Valley and around the Sea of Galilee. However, information about this is rather sparse, especially since the biblical texts attribute the entire area north of the Jezreel Plain and the Beth-Shean Basin to David's great empire and then later to the northern kingdom of Israel. According to the archaeological and textual information at hand, however, the mentioned area seems to have been exposed to Aramean dominance for longer periods. The mentioned territories seem to have belonged to Israel's domain perhaps under Joash (802–787 BCE) but certainly under Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE). Extrabiblical witnesses, however, attest to the presence of Arameans in Beth-Rehob and Zobah in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE. Aramean political autonomy ended—like that of Israel—with the western expansion of the Assyrians under Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) and then, ultimately, under Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE). In between, however, Aram-Damascus in particular became stronger and dominated the entire region for a short period (see §5.3.4).

5.3.2. Geshur

The assumption of an identity for the pair Beth-Maacah and Geshur is not without problems. This is because Beth-Maacah is most often associated with Abel-Beth-Maacah—identified with the Tell Ābil el-Qamḥ in upper Galilee—while Geshur has been associated more recently with et-Tell, situated about 40 km southeast on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (see §4.5.7). Et-Tell, the later Bethsaida (and possibly Zer, Rami Arav), was founded in the tenth century BCE and developed into a large city (20 ha) with massive fortifications, huge gates, and a Syrian (Bīt-Ḥilāni) palace (Stratum VI). This all underlines the impression that it was an important regional center. In 1997, a cult installation with a podium dating back to the Iron IIB period was excavated in the city's entrance area. Inside was a large stela with a stylized bull-shaped deity with moon-shaped horns (fig. 27).

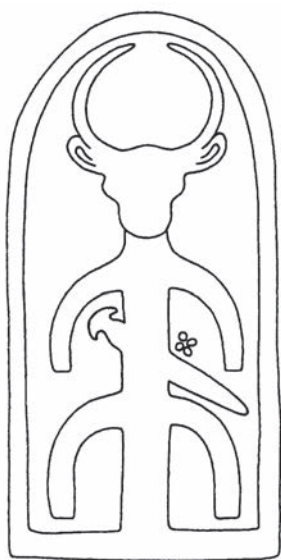


Fig. 27. A 115 cm tall basalt stela from et-Tell/Bethsaida (Iron IIB period). The stela was set up together with aniconic stelae in the area of the city gate in a cult installation on a podium. The stela—of which parallels are known from Tell es-Aš'arī and Boşra in the Hauran, from eṭ-Ṭurra in Jordan, and from Gaziantep in Turkey—is iconographically distinct because it combines an abstract symbol with an animal-like form of representation. An armed god with a bull's head and crescent-shaped horns is depicted, probably a moon god in the shape of a bull. In 2019, a second stela of 66 cm height was uncovered at a cultic site close to the southern fortification tower of et-Tell, probably dating to the first phase of the Aramean city in late Iron I. A basalt stone from a late Iron I stronghold in the Galilee near Moshav Haspin also revealed the same kind of iconographic abstraction. Two similar figurines were carved into the stone, which resemble closely the moon god of et-Tell/Bethsaida. The moon god of Haran may also be indicated by the abstractly stylized crescent moon standard on the seal of fig. 28b (left) from northern Syria. The upward-facing crescent moon crowns a man-shaped frame as head. Also, the rosette-like arranged four ball-stars and the dagger rising out of the torso show similarities to the basalt stela of et-Tell/Bethsaida.

The stela points → iconographically to the north Syrian moon god of Haran, who played an important role in the Aramean religion (fig. 28) and began his triumphal march as a motif on seals in the Iron IIC period.



Fig. 28. Typical for the iconography of the moon god of Haran in the Iron IIB(–C) period is the standard on which a crescent moon-shaped sickle is mounted and from which tassels hang on both sides. (a) Cylinder seal with the emblem of the moon god of Haran in the center; on the left an offering table, above it an eight-pointed star; on the right the symbolized Pleiades and a Uraeus snake with Lower Egyptian crown (seventh century BCE). (b) Stamp seal from the Amanus mountains with a strongly stylized crescent moon standard. The rosette-like balls may symbolize the phases of the moon. Next to it a bulla from Ḥorvat 'Uza/Ḥirbet Ġazze (seventh century BCE) with the stylized symbol of the moon god on an altar-like frame. (c) Two amulet seals from Tell Jemmeh and from Tel Shiqmona/Tell es-Samak, each showing a worshiper with raised arms in front of the crescent moon standard of the moon god of Haran.

The town of Bethsaida, identified with the capital of the Aramean microstate Geshur, was destroyed by Tiglath-pileser III only in 732 BCE as part of the Assyrian western expansion. Already in the ninth/eighth century BCE, however, it seems to have lost its central function (after conquest by Ben-Hadad I [ca. 900–875 BCE], Hadadezer [ca. 875–845 BCE], or Hazael [ca. 845–800 BCE] of Damascus), since the palace was used thereafter for textile production. The Aramean microstate Geshur included the

main town Bethsaida/et-Tell (after Rami Arav: Zer) and the villages on the eastern shore of the sea: Tel Hadar, 'Ēn Gēv, and Tel Dover/Ḥirbet ed-Duwēr. Chinnereth/Tell el-'Orēme is often counted among this chain of commercially active Geshurite cities. Chinnereth on Tell el-'Orēme, located on the northwest bank of the sea, was reestablished after a settlement pause in the eleventh century BCE and quickly developed into an important regional urban center of up to 9 ha. After about a century, the city, which was unusually well-fortified and structured for the Iron I period, again declined until its abandonment at the end of the eighth century BCE. This possibly reflects the establishment of et-Tell as the central site of the kingdom of Geshur. While the residential architecture has connections to Syria, the pottery shows a typical regional profile, with some vessels having characteristic parallels in Syria, the Jordan spring area, and the southern Beqaa Valley. The findings can be evaluated as coming from an Aramean entity (such as the microstate Geshur) or against such an assessment (Stefan Münzer). The proximity of the pottery assemblage to Tel Hadar could speak in favor of et-Tell's belonging to Geshur, but there are no indications of an idiosyncratic Aramean material culture.

5.3.3. Aspects of Aramean Material Culture

A clear allocation of individual finds to the Arameans—understood here as an ethnonym, which excludes a political affiliation to another state (such as, e.g., to Israel)—is not possible. The fortifications are striking when related to contemporary buildings in the Samaritan hill country or the Jezreel Plain, but there is as little clarity to be gained here at present as there is for the findings at Dan/Tell el-Qāḍi in the upper Galilee. Judges 18:28 locates Laish—another name for Dan—in the valley of Beth-Rehob and thus in an area with strong Aramean influence. The Aramaic inscription from Dan (see §§5.4.2.1, 5.5.2) clearly shows that Dan was at least temporarily occupied by Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) and perhaps already by one of his predecessors. It is possible that the expansion of Stratum IVA in the Iron IIB period relates to this, so that Dan first came under Israelite control in the eighth century BCE under Joash (802–787 BCE), where it remained until the Assyrian conquest by Tiglath-pileser III (734/33 BCE) (Israel Finkelstein, Angelika Berlejung). The history of Hazor/Tell Waqqāṣ in the north is to be similarly reconstructed. It could have been an Aramean city under Hazael (Stratum VIII and VII) that only returned (in connection to the Omride Hazor?; see §4.6.3.3) to the kingdom ruled

from Samaria under Joash (802–787 BCE) or Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) (Israel Finkelstein, Doron Ben-Ami, Nili Wazana).

How far Aramean influence in the ninth century BCE reached to the south cannot be clearly determined. Yokneam, Megiddo, Tel Rehov, and Beth-Shean do not seem to have belonged to one of the small Aramean kingdoms, although there are some similarities in material culture, architecture, and inscriptions. But the whole area north of Gilead and the Jezreel and Beth-Shean Plains, the northern lower and—in any case—upper Galilee, but at least the area of the eastern shore and the Golan north of the Yarmuk and the area south of the Beqaa Valley was regionally inhabited by Aramean settlers from the eleventh century onwards. During the eleventh–eighth centuries BCE the area was under Israelite control only in short intermediate phases, especially under King Joash (802–787 BCE) and Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE). The biblical concepts of the expansion of the kingdom of Israel beginning already in the time of Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) seem more or less extrapolated from the short-lived situation of the first half of the eighth century BCE.

5.3.4. Hazael and the Rise of Aram-Damascus as a Hegemonic Power

Not much is known about the beginnings of the Aramean state of Aram-Damascus. Archaeologically, all Iron Age remains have disappeared or have been built over several times, so that it is no longer possible to ascertain when the city became the capital. Even the list of its early rulers is uncertain. Rezon of Zobah, mentioned in 1 Kgs 11:23–25, appears to be legendary (Rezon means “leader, prince”). His Hebrew name is reminiscent of the ruler of the eighth century BCE Rezin/Raṣyān, and his fate is similar to that of David (K. Lawson Younger Jr.). Like the second adversary (“satan”) of Solomon named Hadad (who, of course, remains problematic in text-historical terms), Rezon seems to be a later legendary formation to contrast with 1 Kgs 5:18 (5:4 ET). The extrabiblical sources know nothing about an early ruler from Zobah in Damascus.

The name Ben-Hadad is often mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 15:18–20; 1 Kgs 20; 2 Kgs 6:24; 8:7–9; 13:3, 24–25; 2 Chr 16:2–4), and, based on the reading of the so-called Melqart Stela (COS 2.33, KAI 201, TUAT 1:625), it had been assumed that there were four rulers with the name Ben-Hadad (Frank Moore Cross). The inscription found near Aleppo names a Ben-Hadad, but paleographically it should probably be dated only to the late ninth or even to the eighth century BCE. This Ben-

Hadad was not a ruler of Damascus but more likely a ruler of Arpad/Bit Agusi in north Syria (Wayne T. Pitard, K. Lawson Younger Jr.). Thus the number of Ben-Hadads of Damascus has shrunk again to two, with Ben-Hadad I—who is mentioned in 1 Kgs 15:18 (cf. 2 Chr 16:2, 4) as king of Aram in Damascus and son of a certain Tabrimmon and grandson of Hezion—not attested outside of the Hebrew Bible. Perhaps even the Ben-Hadad mentioned in the constructed conflict between Asa and Baasha in 1 Kgs 15 was copied and adapted from 2 Kgs 13:3, 24, 25. The name of his supposed grandfather Hezion is reminiscent of the much later king Ḥaḏyān of Damascus (ca. 780–750 BCE). The disputes between Aram-Damascus and Ahab in 1 Kgs 20 also point to a certain Ben-Hadad who is said to have besieged Samaria (1 Kgs 20:1–20; 2 Kgs 6:24), but these refer to Hadadezer (875–845 BCE) if anyone, rather than Ben-Hadad I. It seems even more probable that the stories in 1 Kgs 20 and 22 reflect later disputes between Ben-Hadad II (800–780 BCE) and the kings of Israel (see §5.5.5.2). Hazael's predecessor, Ben-Hadad, mentioned in 2 Kgs 6:24, is probably also Hadadezer (875–845 BCE) in reality. In the inscription from Dan/Tell el-Qāḏī (see §§4.5.2, 5.4.2.1), the probable author, the → usurper Hazael, speaks of the fact that his father had to surrender his land to the king of Israel, which Hazael again claims for himself. If this father was not Ben-Hadad I, the only plausible options are a local ruler of Dan (Manfred Weippert) or Hadadezer.

In terms of historicity, one is on safer ground with Hadadezer, though not with the ruler of the kingdom of Zobah, who is named as David's contemporary in 2 Sam 8. Rather, more security is ascertained with Hadadezer (spelled Adad-Idri), who is mentioned in Assyrian sources from the middle of the ninth century BCE as the ruler of the "Donkey Drivers' Land" (*mātu ša imērišu*), that is, Damascus. Hadadezer (and not Ben-Hadad I) seems to have been ousted from his throne by the "son of a nobody" Hazael (see §5.5.3.3). If this is correct, then historically there is perhaps only one Ben-Hadad: the son of Hazael who ascended the throne in Damascus around 800 BCE and who, according to the Zakkur inscription (COS 2.35, KAI 202, TUAT 1:626), led a grand coalition against the king of Zakkur in 797 BCE and besieged the city of Hazrak. At the latest, the dominance of Aram-Damascus ended in 774 BCE, when Ḥaḏyān had to pay heavy tribute to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser IV (COS 2.116, HTAT 124). The classification of the information on the kingdom of Aram-Damascus presented here in condensed form shows that biblical depictions of its origin reveal strongly constructed and idealized traits. Gaps in knowledge were

simply constructively bridged with fragments from later times for the founding narrative. In this it resembles the biblical depiction of the pre-Omride early period of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (see §§4.6.3.6, 4.7), in which some rulers were invented whose names resembled those of kings who existed later.

Historically, the gradually expanding Aramean dominance in the ninth century BCE is characterized by the halting, or at least slowing down, of the Neo-Assyrian western expansion (see also §5.6.2). This is also echoed (in a semilegendary way) in the Bible, for example, in 2 Kgs 8:7–8, 28–29; 9:14–15; 10:32–33; 13:3–25; Amos 1:3–5; Jer 49:23–27; Isa 8:4; 17:1–3. The LXX version of 2 Kgs 9:16 and 2 Kgs 13:22 has possibly preserved even more of Hazael's hegemonic strength than the Hebrew text. For there he is described as a “strong man” and the Lucianic recension attributes to him the conquest of the city of Aphek (probably ʿĒn Gēv/Ḥirbet el-ʿĀšeq, Fīq/Afik, or, less likely, Aphek/Antipatris/Tell Rās el-ʿĒn; see §5.5.5.2). The actual regional strength of Damascus, however, has so far been underestimated in the historical presentation or underestimated when compared to Assyrian imperial might. Additionally, in contrast to the substantive annals of the Assyrian kings, Aramaic sources for Aramean expansion are almost completely lacking. Written sources are limited to a few inscriptions (e.g., from Tell ʿĀfis, COS 2.40, *HTAT* 117–19; see §5.5.2) and brief mentions of Aramean kings (e.g., Hazael is mentioned on a bronze horse-blinker and a forehead-plate from sanctuaries on the Greek islands Samos and Euboea, Herbert Niehr, K. Lawson Younger Jr.). Longer witnesses, composed by the Arameans themselves, such as the Dan Stela, are rare. Of decisive importance for the expansion of the Arameans seems to be the fact that Damascus was not captured during the Assyrian campaigns in 841 BCE and 838/37 BCE, even if apparently control over the south initially had to be surrendered. Jehu (845–818 BCE), the usurper of the throne of Samaria and former → vassal of Hazael (see §5.4), paid tribute to Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) along with Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon in 841 BCE (COS 2.113D–F, *HTAT* 112–13). In 858 BCE, Shalmaneser III was still facing fierce resistance from the Aramean and Hittite microstates as he crossed the Orontes, but he successfully defeated them. Only the Aramean microstate Bit Adini continued to resist under its ruler Aḥūni. When Shalmaneser III again attempted to advance west over the Orontes in 853 BCE, the broad anti-Assyrian coalition, in which the Omrides also participated, opposed him at Qarqar (see COS 2.113A, *HTAT* 106) (see §5.4). The coalition was led by Hadadezer (ca. 875–845 BCE) and seems to

have achieved at least a draw, even though Shalmaneser III claims to have delivered them a crushing defeat in a terrible slaughter with the “supreme forces which Aššur, my lord, had given me” (COS 2.113A, *HTAT* 106). Shalmaneser III then tried several times (849, 848, 845 BCE, COS 2.113B, *HTAT* 108–10), unsuccessfully, to break this coalition. He succeeded only in 841 BCE, yet without being able to conquer Damascus (COS 2.113E–G, *HTAT* 111–12). The “son of nobody,” Hazael, seems to have already grown to considerable strength, even though he could not protect the coalition members from the Assyrian invasion. But in 838 and 837 BCE, Hazael successfully resisted Assyrian pressure without the Syrian coalition members. Damascus was not conquered until 732 BCE by Tiglath-pileser III (see §5.5.5.3) and the Aramean microstate was thus incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system. In the final third of the ninth century, Aramean power reached its peak in the southern Levant, when Hazael was able to push back the influence of the Assyrians in the north to the Euphrates and to northern Syria again and again (COS 2.40, *HTAT* 117). With the southward procession in the final third of the ninth century BCE, Hazael finally strengthened his hegemonic position in the southern Levant.

The southern expansion of the Arameans and their extensive control over Israel and Judah did not take place in one fell swoop and was not limited to the reign of Shalmaneser III. Several overlapping phases can be distinguished (Assaf Kleiman). During the reign of the Omrides, the conflicts in Transjordan over dominance in the Golan, Hauran, Bashan, and especially in Gilead were limited. Probably the conflicts between 850 and 840 BCE led to increasing Aramean dominance (see 2 Kgs 8:28–29; 9:24; 1 Kgs 22). What triggered the conflicts is controversial. Either Hazael’s expansion policy formed the background, or it was a recapture of territories that the Omride Joram of Israel (851–845 BCE) had previously captured from the Arameans (1 Kgs 22:1–4). The author of the text on the → orthostat fragment from Dan (see §§4.5.2, 5.4.2.1)—probably Hazael—also claims that the Omrides started the aggression, that Joram had invaded the land of the author’s father. This may be true for the north, since Dan was probably not even Israelite in the Iron IIA era (Yifat Thareani), but it does not explain Hazael’s advance in Transjordan. The fact that the wave of conquest reached down to the Jabbok speaks for Hazael’s expansive approach, as Hazael probably also destroyed Tell Dēr ‘Allā (Herbert Niehr). An ever increasingly expansion of power followed 838 BCE. This expansion was accompanied by annexations (in several phases?) of areas in both Cis- and Transjordan (e.g., Gilead, Galilee, the

Beth-Shean Basin, and the Jezreel Plain), and it severely restricted the dominion of the Nimshides. In order to control the trade in raw materials (Alexander Fantalkin, Israel Finkelstein), Hazael finally advanced southward along the coast around 830 BCE, breaking the regional dominance of the Philistine power of Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfi, and briefly controlled the entire southern Levant (2 Kgs 12:18–19, see §5.5.4). A large number of Iron II cities and settlements demonstrate Hazael's military power. The cities were not destroyed in every case, but a break in habitation (which marks the beginning of the Iron IIB period) is often observable. For example, Dan (Stratum IVA), Hazor (Stratum IX), Megiddo (Stratum VA/IVB), Jokneam/Tell Qēmūn (Stratum XIV), Aphek/Tell Rās el-ʿĒn (Stratum A7), Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfi (Stratum A3), Tel Rehov (Stratum IV), Beth-Shean/Tell el Ḥōšn (Stratum S-1b), Tel ʿĀmāl/Tell el-ʿAsī (Stratum IV), Tel Michal/Makmish (Stratum XIV), and other towns farther south were destroyed or show a distinct break (Aren M. Maeir, Assaf Kleiman). The main focus of military intervention can be identified in the Beth-Shean Basin and in the Shephelah in the region of Gath. This probably also indicates control of copper trading and metal processing or its suspension. The hegemonic power, skillfully developed by Aram-Damascus under Hazael, was of relatively short duration. His son Ben-Hadad II (ca. 800–780 BCE) could not withstand the pressure and had to accept Assyrian dominance as they pushed west (COS 2.114G, *HTAT* 121; see §5.4).

However, the consequences of this hegemonic expansion on the development of Israel and Judah can hardly be overestimated. The clear weakening of the northern kingdom cleared the way for Judah to secede, albeit initially under the protection of a suzerain in Aram-Damascus. At the same time, Hazael's destruction of Gath was the prerequisite for Judah's expansion to the west and south (see §5.4.5.3).

5.4. ISRAEL AND JUDAH UNDER THE OMRIDES

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5.4.1. The Israelite Monarchy from Jeroboam I to Omri

The books of Kings depict the history of the northern kingdom as a series of changing and unstable reigns. While for Judah a continuous dynastic monarchy in Davidic succession is claimed for Jerusalem, stable rule in the north is not established. This can be seen already in the fact that even the monarchic centers changed (Shechem, Penuel, Tirzah, Samaria) and half of the kings of the north ascended the throne by more or less irregular means (Jeroboam I, Baasha, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, Jehu, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, Hoshea) (Christian Frevel). The humble beginnings of dynasty formation (Jeroboam I–Nadab, Baasha–Elah, Menahem–Pekahiah) repeatedly end by royal murders and (military) coups. Only among the Omrides and, after the coup by Jehu, the Nimshides are dynastic conditions said to have prevailed for seventy and one hundred years, respectively (Omrides: Omri–Ahab–Ahaziah–Joram 882–845 BCE, Nimshides: Jehu–Jehoahaz–Joash–Jeroboam II–Zechariah 845–747 BCE). The interest in the stability of the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam 7) is unmistakable in its depiction, which becomes even clearer when one begins to have historical doubts about the uninterrupted genealogical continuity of the Davidides in Jerusalem (see §§5.4.5, 5.4.3). Conversely, the unstable rule in the north has a certain historical plausibility, if one considers that the north in particular was strongly exposed to the pressure from the Arameans and the Assyrians. The overall depiction of the northern

kingdom in the books of Kings is nevertheless strongly tendentious and (from Judah's perspective) consistently interested in the illegitimacy of that state. This becomes particularly clear in the passages in which the words of prophets underline this interpretation (1 Kgs 11:29; 14:2, 18; 15:12; 16:1, 7, 12; 19:16; 2 Kgs 14:25; 17:13, 33). Therefore, a cautious assessment of historicity is necessary here, especially when chaos prevails, as in the lead-up to Omri's reign (the drunkenness of Elah 1 Kgs 16:9, the suicide of Zimri 1 Kgs 16:18, the division of the people under Tibni 1 Kgs 16:21), or when there is talk of warlike confrontations with Judah in a formulaic way during the kingdom's early phase (1 Kgs 14:30; 15:6, 7, 16, 32). None of these events left any traces outside of the Hebrew Bible. In general, extrabiblical data for the early Iron IIA period in the Samarian hill country, Gilead, Galilee, or Bashan remain thin. State structures in economy and administration cannot be identified. Only in the Beth-Shean Basin and in the Jezreel Plain, as well as in the northern Shephelah and on the coastal plain (Beth-Shean, Tel Rehov, Megiddo, Jokneam, Gezer, Dor), could a number of cities from the Late Bronze Age survive and develop into regional centers ("New Canaan," see §3.3.1) that continued to operate with a system of → clientele relations of influential families with the royal family (see §2.2.2). The other regions, in particular, the hill country of Ephraim and Manasseh, were village areas (see §3.5). They had no important central locales and were not recognizably integrated into transregional trade. Traces of a central administration are missing, as well as central places with palaces, temples, and the like. To put it more bluntly: there are no traces of a kingdom in the north in the tenth century BCE.

According to the biblical account, Jeroboam I ruled (927/26–907 BCE) for twenty-two years (1 Kgs 14:24). Following the biblical narrative, his son Nadab (907–906 BCE) (2 Kgs 14:22) succeeded him, but he was soon killed by the usurper Baasha (906–883 BCE). After a twenty-three-year reign, Baasha's son Elah (883–882 BCE) (1 Kgs 15:33; 16:6, 8) took over the monarchy 883 BCE. Shortly thereafter, a military revolt took place in which the commander Zimri (882 BCE) exterminated the king and then his family. But Zimri in turn was besieged by the general Omri, who also came from the military and was supported by the people (1 Kgs 16:16). These circumstances resulted in Zimri's suicide in the palace in Tirzah. But even Omri (882–871 BCE) did not initially succeed in establishing a stable reign. He was embattled with the counterking Tibni for four or five years, until in 878/77 BCE, respectively, he was finally able to assert

himself as king in Israel (1 Kgs 16:21–22). How far the depiction of the circumstances is historical remains open, since the → Dtr historiography has recognizably more interest in presenting the instability of the situation than in adequately evaluating the actual achievements of the Omrides.

Omri is the first king of the northern kingdom whose name is documented outside the Bible in the Moabite Mesha Stela. The great importance of the Omride dynasty for the consolidation of the northern kingdom can be seen through the designation *Bīt Ḥumrī* or “house of Omri” with which King Jehu (845–818 BCE) of the kingdom seated in Samaria appears in the Annals of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) and on the Black Obelisk. The designation of Israel as the Land of Omri, ^{KUR}(*māt*) *Ḥu-um-ri-i*, which is mentioned extrabiblically beside the names Sidon, Tyre, or Edom at least from the time of the → orthostat inscription of Adad-nirari III (811–783 BCE) from Nimrud, up to the Annals of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) (see COS 2.23, 2.113D–F, 2.114G, 2.117F; HTAT 105, 112, 113, 121, 146), also attests the great importance of the Omrides. In short, the kingdom of Israel came into being under their rule.

5.4.2. Disputes with Judah and the Consolidation of Northern Rule

The transition from the tenth to the ninth century BCE, which in the biblical account corresponds to the first decades of the separate kingdoms of Israel and Judah, remains dark in historical and archaeological terms. There is a lack of extrabiblical reports as well as references to separate economies or significant archaeological developments in state structures. The biblical account stylizes the early years of the two states as a distinct time of crisis and propagates the pro-Judean perspective (cf. 1 Kgs 12:21, 24, 26). The reports in 1 Kgs 14:30; 15:6–7, 16–17, 32 that there was constantly war between the two kingdoms—that is, between Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) and Rehoboam (926–910 BCE), between Jeroboam I and Abijah (910–908 BCE), and between Baasha of Israel (906–883 BCE) and Asa of Judah (908–868 BCE)—is strongly stylized. On the other hand, if the biblical description of a division of the kingdom were correct, there would also be little reason to doubt disputes between the states during the phase of consolidation. Although the foundation of the northern kingdom of Israel is stylized in the Hebrew Bible as the secession of the north under Jeroboam I from the south, the historical reality is more likely to have been the other way round. Indeed, little Judah was permanently under the north’s influence in the ninth/eighth century BCE. Rulers from the

royal house in Samaria were at least in part also the lords in Jerusalem. Judah did not detach itself from this dependency until the eighth century BCE (see §4.7). The archaeological development indicates that the consolidation of a stable state in Judah began about a century later than in the north (as Judah was generally delayed in development in the first millennium BCE), so that the conflicts between the brother kingdoms are rather sweeping statements, which are due to the pejorative representation of the so-called division of the kingdom in 1 Kgs 12. Perhaps the phase of the early ninth century BCE can be reconstructed rather as a temporary expansion of the power claims of the local rulers in Shechem, which gradually encompassed the local rulers in the south and finally flowed into the reign of Jehoshaphat of Judah (868–847 BCE) in Omride supremacy over the south that made Jerusalem Israel's subsidiary.

5.4.2.1. Ben-Hadad, Hazael, and Israel's Dominion in the North

First Kings 15:18–20 describes the attempt of Asa of Judah (908–868 BCE) to escape the supremacy of the northern kingdom through an alliance with the Aramean king Ben-Hadad I (ca. 900–875 BCE). Perhaps this was also in order to keep Asa's own territorial gains in the tribal territory of Benjamin (Geba/Ġeba' and Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe) vis-à-vis the northern kingdom and put to an end the expansion of Ramah/er-Rām, which was dangerous for Jerusalem (1 Kgs 15:22) (Winfried Thiel, Nadav Na'aman). Ben-Hadad I of Damascus then severely weakened the northern kingdom and added Ijon/Tell Dibbīn, Dan/Tell el-Qāḏī, Abel-Beth-Maacah/Tell Ābil el-Qamḥ, the whole of Chinnereth (i.e., the region on the western side of the Sea of Galilee), and the whole of Naphtali to its territory. On the one hand, this corresponds to the overall historical situation. That historical situation suggests that, from the ninth century BCE, the early kingdom of Israel had to deal not only with the Philistines in the coastal plain (such as the dispute over Gibbethon [probably Rās Abū Ḥamīd] in the Shephelah, which was west of Jerusalem and approximately 20 km north of Gath, 1 Kgs 15:27; 16:15, 17), but—far more importantly—also with the Arameans, who were growing stronger in Aram-Damascus (1 Kgs 15:20). On the other hand, however, there are considerable doubts about the historicity of these early disputes at the time of Asa and Baasha and about the existence of a Ben-Hadad I as an early ruler in Aram-Damascus (see §5.3.4). Reliable archaeological indications are lacking for the events in the south reported in 1 Kgs 15:22, for both the development

of Ramah/er-Rām and for the affiliation of Gibbethon with the Philistines (1 Kgs 15:27) (Christian Frevel). Rather, the rule of the kings of Israel before the Omrides seems to have been limited to the Jezreel Plain, the hill country of Samaria, and the lowlands of the Transjordanian Gilead that descended toward the Jordan. Galilee—that is, Ijon/Tell Dibbīn, Dan/Tell el-Qāḏī, Abel-Beth-Maacah/Tell Ābil el-Qamḥ, and probably also Chinnereth—did not belong to pre-Omride Israel. Conflicts with the Philistines in the Shephelah are therefore also rather unlikely. The territorial expansions claimed in 1 Kgs 15:20 are more likely retrojections from the time of Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) (Angelika Berlejung) or of his son Ben-Hadad II (ca. 800–780 BCE). The fact is that the area around the Sea of Galilee as well as Galilee—that is, the area labeled as the tribal area of Naphtali (Josh 19:32–39)—was under Aramean influence in the middle of the ninth century BCE (see §5.3). If one takes the parallel between 1 Kgs 15:20 and 2 Kgs 15:29 as a starting point, the traumatic experience of the western expansion of the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) stands behind the note, which was then transferred to Asa and the fictional Ben-Hadad I (Christian Frevel) in the creative construction of the kingdom of Israel's early history.

When and to what extent the Omride kingdom extended its rule over the Jezreel Plain northwards toward Hazor, or even Dan, is currently intensively debated. Perhaps, it is no coincidence that the Elijah and Elisha narratives (1 Kgs 17–19; 21; 2 Kgs 1–2; 8) focus centrally on the Carmel region, the Jezreel Plain, and Gilead, but the area north of it remains omitted. The Aramean king—who is in all probability Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE)—states in the inscription from Dan/Tell el-Qāḏī (see §§4.5.2, 5.5.2): “[] my father went u[p against him when] he fought at x[]. Then my father lay down and went to his [fathers]. There came up the king of I[s]rael beforetime in the land of my father, [but] Hadad [ma]de [me] king []” (COS 2.39). It is *possible* to read the inscription such that Aramean dominion over Dan and Galilee had already begun in 883 BCE under one of Hazael's predecessors (whom he here—although he himself had illegally acquired the throne—calls “my father”). This could have been Ben-Hadad I or a regional, non-Damascene, local ruler. Then, after this predecessor's death in 880 BCE, Omri (or, somewhat later, Ahab, perhaps even his son Joram) tried to claim the land for Israel. During Hazael's reign (ca. 845–800 BCE), he recaptured (or successfully defended) this territory, which included killing Ahab's sons, Joram and Ahaziah, about which the inscription's author boasts. Understood in this way, the inscription would

plausibly verify the statements of 1 Kgs 15:20, which does not preclude 1 Kgs 15:20 having been formed from 2 Kgs 15:29.

5.4.2.2. Expansion of Omride Rule to Transjordan

Be that as it may, territorial expansion of the Omrides' dominion seems quite likely. The extent and sustainability of the territorial gains against the Arameans in the north remains difficult to assess in detail, not least because there is no clearly identifiable Aramean material culture. The extension of the influence to the south has already been described. During the reign of Jehoshaphat of Judah (868–847 BCE) at the latest, the presence of Athaliah in Jerusalem demonstrates the Omrides' influence, regardless of whether one sees the son of Ahab or the son of Jehoshaphat as the coregent of Joram of Judah (852–845 BCE). The fact that Transjordan from eastern Gilead to the Moabite plateau can also be attributed to Omride dominion is shown not only by the architecture (see §5.4.3.3), but also by the Mesha Inscription.

Fig. 29. Stela of King Mesha of Moab, discovered in Dibon in 1868 and exhibited in the Louvre (Paris), in which disputes with Israel are mentioned. In the inscription, which belongs among the most important extrabiblical sources of the ninth century BCE, the Moabite king Mesha boasts of having freed himself from Omri and his son or grandson (Ahab, Ahaziah, or Joram): “Omri was the king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab for many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him, and he said—he too—‘I will oppress Moab!’ In my days did he say [so], but I looked down on him and on his house, and Israel has gone to ruin, yes, it has gone to ruin forever! And Omri had taken possession of the whole la[n]d of Medeba, and lived there (in) his days and half the days of his son, forty years, but Chemosh [resto]red it in my days” (COS 2.23, HTAT 105.4–9).



The Moabite Mesha Stela (fig. 29, above), found as early as 1868 in Dibon/Dībān, is a building inscription from the ninth century BCE. The stela's conclusion relates to the construction of a sanctuary for the Moabite national god Chemosh (Judg 11:24; 1 Kgs 11:7, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 48:7, 13, 46) in Qarhō, which is either near the capital Dibon or identical to it.

The text can be read against the background of the information given in 2 Kgs 3:4, according to which Mesha ended a kind of → vassal relationship after the death of Ahab in 852 BCE. This relationship required the delivery of sheep, goats, and wool to Israel as tribute. In this context, Mesha mentions places north of the Arnon/Wādī el-Mōğib that he claims to have taken into his possession (among others: Baal-Meon, Madaba, Kiriathaim/Ḥirbet el-Qurēye, Ataroth/Ḥirbet 'Atārūz, Nebo/Ḥirbet el-Muḥayyaṭ, Jahaz/Yahṣ/Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine, Aroer/Ḥirbet 'Arā'ir). He explicitly associates Ataroth (to be identified with Ḥirbet 'Atārūz) and Jahaz (to be identified with Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine) with Israel's construction measures (see §5.4.3.3). Apparently, the Omrides had extended their dominion into the strategically important and fertile area northeast of the Dead Sea, and Moab had been pushed back into the heartland of the Arḏ el-Kerak between the Arnon/Wādī el-Mōğib and the Zered/Wādī el-Ḥesā (see §4.2.5.1, map 5). How far south Omri actually advanced (Ataroth/Jahaz/Nebo) or where the territory remained Moabite, but forced to pay tribute, cannot be fully ascertained.

5.4.2.3. Omride Dominion in the West to the Coast

The question of the western extent of the Omrides' domain remains open. The biblical account gives the impression that the coastal plain south of Carmel had always belonged to Israel (Josh 12:33; 17:11; 1 Kgs 4:11; 1 Chr 7:29, differently Judg 1:27). The coastal strip, which begins very narrowly south of Carmel, was sparsely populated in the Iron II period down to Yarkon and the Philistine metropolises. But Dor contained one of Israel's few natural harbors. The port city Dor/Tel Dor/Ḥirbet el-Burğ, which was initially Phoenician, seems to have passed to Israelite rule in a peaceful transition in the late Iron IIA period (Ayelet Gilboa et al., Nadav Na'aman). This was followed by massive fortifications only in the Iron IIB. To link the Israelite dominion in Dor with Ahab's political marriage to Jezebel remains hypothetical, but tempting. However, Eran Arie has argued that the massive fortification of the city in the Iron IIB indicates that Israel gained control of the way of the sea only at the end of Iron IIA and that it

became a commercial hub only after the Assyrian conquest. If it is accepted that it was Israelite in the mid-ninth century BCE, Dor can be described as an Omride emporium for long-distance maritime trade (Israel Finkelstein), but that is by no means certain. The evidence from material culture is ambiguous. In contrast to the Philistine pottery of the Iron I period found elsewhere in the land, which was largely produced in the Philistine region, the pottery from Dor came partly from the northern coastal region (Mario A. S. Martin). This origin suggests a connection to other Phoenician places. The pottery assemblage of the early Iron IIA period is close to Megiddo, Yokneam, Hazor, and Dan, but also to the pottery of the Akko Plain (Ilan Sharon, Ayelet Gilboa). For some, the evidence from material culture in the ninth/eighth century BCE speaks for an Israelite occupation (Thomas Beyl) and for an economy oriented toward the Israelite-influenced interior (Ayelet Gilboa et al., Gunnar Lehmann). An assignment to the Omride territory remains questionable for others (Manfred Weippert). If it is assumed that the Omrides controlled the Carmel (1 Kgs 18)—but this is by no means certain—Dor would be cut off from the Phoenician coast in terms of trade routes. That might argue in favor of Omride control of the area between the Carmel Range and the Crocodile River/Zerqā/Wādī Taninîm, including the Sharon Plain to the south of it. In principle, it is also conceivable that, like the southern Phoenician coastal towns of Sidon and Tyre, Dor was an independent city during the Iron IIA period (Gunnar Lehmann). Phoenicia was not a closed ethnic entity (Josephine Quinn) but rather an attribution based on commonalities: urban maritime existence, pronounced trade and a material culture shaped by it. To call Dor “Phoenician” therefore does not necessarily require viewing it within a politically closed network with other Phoenician cities north of Carmel (Gunnar Lehmann). With the integration into the Omride rule, the mentioned characteristics would have been abandoned. There are also signs for this.

The list of the administrative districts of Solomon in 1 Kgs 4, supposedly from the eighth century BCE (see §4.6.2), is often used to affiliate this region with Israel (Nadav Naʾaman). Naʾaman interprets the peaceful transition from the Phoenicians to the Israelites as meaning that the port city was a bridal gift given to Israel on the occasion of Ahab's marriage to Jezebel. Perhaps it had even been acquired by Ahab in the course of an Israelite-Tyrian alliance. Since all this remains very uncertain, a reliable decision as to whether the Omrides had access to the Mediterranean Sea is not possible based on the preceding data. What is certain is that Dor was destroyed in

the eighth century BCE—probably by Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE)—and then rebuilt as an Assyrian center after a short break in settlement.

5.4.3. Omride Foreign and Domestic Policy

5.4.3.1. Marriage Policy

Omri's extremely skillful domestic and foreign policy served to ward off increasing pressure from the north. The marriage of his son Ahab to the Tyrian princess Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:31), which is viewed very negatively by the → Deuteronomist, has more frequently been evaluated as the religio-political attempt to create a balance between "Israelite" and "Canaanite" sections of the population (Albrecht Alt). It is more likely that the connection to the Phoenicians of the coastal plain served concrete political and economic interests. Jezebel's father, Ethbaal, is called king of the Sidonians but was more likely a king of Tyre. The fact that the city-states, which were only about 35 km apart, had a common king is discussed again and again (Josette Elayi) but remains rather unlikely (Josephine Quinn, Philip J. Boyes). Hiram II (the king of Tyre) is also called king of the Sidonians (*KAI* 31) in inscriptions on bronze bowls from Limassol (Cyprus), but in Assyrian inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III only a king of Tyre is mentioned for that period. To take Ethbaal/Ittobaal as the king of Tyre seems (contra Stefan Timm) the more plausible explanation. Be that as it may, Jezebel would not have married Ahab for reasons of religious politics but for the sake of economic relations with the Phoenician coastal city. Whether the situation was rather hostile during the reign of Omri before that strategic marriage (as the strongly fortified settlements on both sides may indicate, Eran Arie) is open for discussion. Many of the Phoenician sites such as Achzib, Akko, Achshaph/Tell Keisan, Atlit, Tell Abū Ḥawām, Tel Shiqmona/Tell es-Samak, and even Dor flourished during the Iron IIA. Perhaps the marriage was an attempt to overcome rivalry between Israel and Phoenicia. In the ninth century BCE, Tyre began to become more and more economically dominant and to expand (Bärbel Morstadt).

The emergence of Athaliah in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 11) also points to a tangible interest in power. Whether Athaliah was Omri's daughter (2 Kgs 8:26) or (more likely) Ahab's daughter (2 Kgs 8:18) can hardly be clarified, but it seems certain that she was related to Joram of Judah (852–845 BCE) (2 Kgs 8:26). If Joram really was a Davidide (for doubts, see §§4.7.5.1, 5.4.5.2), Athaliah would have been married off to Jerusalem under King

Jehoshaphat of Judah (868–847 BCE) to strengthen the bond between the two states (see §§5.4.5.1, 5.4.5.2).

5.4.3.2. State Administration, Economic and Fiscal Policy

Good economic relations led to an economic upswing, which can be inferred from the Phoenician luxury imports. Agricultural yields were skimmed off more substantially and taxes (paid in natural products = render) were probably also levied in order to finance the expansion of the kingdom and its military security. For the administration of the kingdom, which was probably based on patronage relations, the Samaria → ostraca are often cited. These, however, probably did not originate from the time of the rule of the Omrides. Most were found in contexts that postdate the so-called ostraca house in the palace area (Ron E. Tappy). Nevertheless, they possibly indicate the organization of the levies.

The 102 so-called Samaria ostraca found in the palace district in 1910 (see examples at COS 4.18A–O, HTAT 125–38; see fig. 30) list the appointed quantities of agricultural products in addition to references to times and locations. They can possibly be interpreted as documents of the palace registry and traced back to taxes paid by the rural population to the court by a tax official (Johannes Renz, Matthew J. Suriano, otherwise Rainer Kessler).

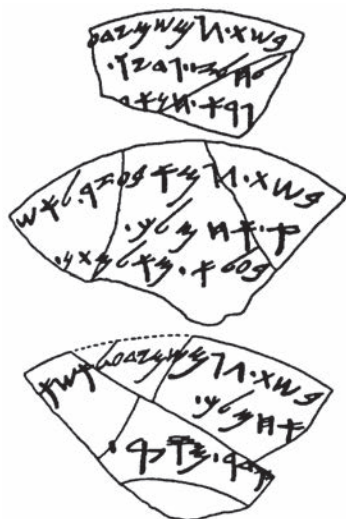


Fig. 30. Examples of Samaria ostraca (nos. 30, 28, 29). The inscriptions of this type each begin with a year, e.g., “in the fifteenth year,” and then name a clan or an area, e.g., “from/of ’Abī’ezer” or “from/of Šemyādā,” and then a recipient, e.g., “to ’Āša, (son of) ’Aḥimelek,” and an origin, e.g., “from/of ’Elmātan.” The system allows for different interpretations and classifications, but the → hoard find, with a total of 102 ostraca, points to a system of palace registration in the eighth century BCE.

Problems arise when interpreting the documents, as it remains unclear how the senders and recipients named on the ostraca relate to each other. Perhaps they were clan elites who were supplied with prestige goods from their hometowns (Hermann Michael Niemann). Roger S. Nam understands them less as part of a system of financing the administration in a system of taxes and more as a system of gifts with which the king engaged in power-relations to secure the loyalty of the local elites through prestige commodities. The ostraca thus demonstrate the complex interactions with which the clan-based society and centralized monarchy were related to each other. The ostraca, however, date back no earlier than to the time of Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) from the second quarter of the eighth century BCE and cannot safely support the described practice for the Omrides. However, it does not seem unlikely that the earlier local elites were similarly involved in administration among the Omrides. This may also be corroborated by the fact that the ostraca in the palace administration were allegedly written by very few scribes (Sira Faigenbaum-Golovin et al.).

It seems quite plausible that the Omrides maintained economic relations with the Phoenician coast. Not least, Ahab's marriage to the Sidonian princess Jezebel speaks for closer relations. It remains unclear whether the Omride state itself had access to a seaport (see §5.4.2.3) or was dependent on cooperation with the Phoenicians for this purpose. The only Omride candidate is actually Dor/Ḥirbet el-Burğ, the material culture of which, however, points rather to Phoenicia (see §5.4.2).

5.4.3.3. Omride Building Activities

That the kingdom blossomed under the Omrides can also be seen in the Omride buildings. Their representative buildings helped to communicate power; that is, they did not function solely as administrative centers or official seats. Discussion of these buildings will proceed as follows: (1) Samaria, (2) Megiddo and Gezer, (3) Jezreel, and finally (4) other places.

(1) Samaria developed under the Omrides as a residence. The site, which was previously only sparsely populated during the Early Bronze and Iron I periods and used intensively for agricultural purposes (cf. 1 Kgs 16:24), was strategically located such that it linked major trade routes in all cardinal directions. The Via Maris provided access to the east and west, while the north-south axis connected Jerusalem in the hill country to the Jezreel Plain. For the construction of the first representative buildings, the

top of the hill was levelled and an acropolis was created over a steep slope carved into the rock. Archaeologically, the earliest massive palace complex built of ashlar stones can be connected to Omri, but the characteristic → casemate walling of the palace district is perhaps only post-Omride (Norma Franklin). This means it did not originate from Ahab (871–852 BCE), as the early excavations traditionally assumed, but from the eighth century BCE, possibly from the reign of Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE). In addition, Omer Sergi and Yuval Gadot have argued that the casemate wall was designed to enhance further the palace's representative features. Israel Finkelstein, on the other hand, assumes that Omride Samaria was not only much larger than the 2.5 ha palace district suggests, but also that the → casemate wall erected to support the platform can be attributed to Ahab's palace district. Hermann Michael Niemann, in contrast, sees Samaria neither in the ninth nor in the eighth century BCE as an urban center. Rather he sees it as the residence of a still largely mobile kingdom (see §4.7.3) that distributed its rule through flat hierarchies, in a rhizome-like fashion (comparable to medieval palatine palaces), among other key locales (Shechem, Tirzah, Penuel, Megiddo, Jezreel, Hazor, Ataroth, Jahaz, etc.). Samaria, which was no larger than the other Omride locations with administrative functions, did not therefore serve as a residence for an overarching central government, but rather only for a local elite.

Accordingly, Samaria was not exclusively and solely an Omride residence. Rather, the installations indicate (at least) that Samaria was the center of the wine and olive industry of the southern Samaritan hill country (see Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kgs 21, which was perhaps originally also connected to Samaria and not to Jezreel, Adrian Schenker). The management of agricultural production formed the economic backbone of the Omride state. The ostraca from the eighth century BCE also indicate this (see above). The excavations of 1909–1910, 1932, and 1935 found large quantities of ivory, most of which served as decoration of wooden furniture (inlays and appliques) (see fig. 31). Because of the ivory house mentioned in 1 Kgs 22:39, the unstratified pieces are traditionally associated with the Omride Ahab (871–852 BCE). For various reasons—among others due to the inscriptions on items taken from Samaria to Nimrud and dating back to the eighth century BCE (*HAE* Nim[8]:1–3)—it is also conceivable that, like the ostraca, they date to the Iron IIB period under Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) (Claudia E. Suter). The pieces, carved in the Syrian tradition, point not only to considerable luxury (cf. Amos 3:15; 6:4, ivory had to be imported from Egypt after the extinction of the Syrian

elephant in the ninth/eighth century BCE), but also to trade and economic relations with Phoenicia.

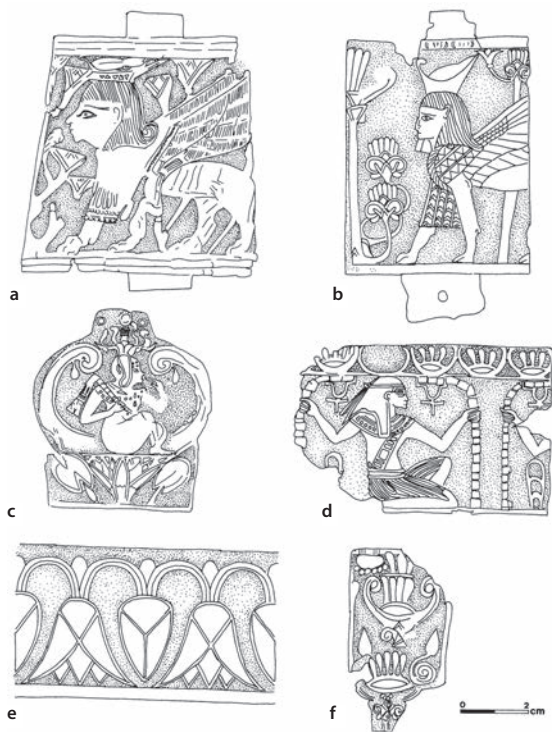


Fig. 31. Examples of ivory plaques from the palace district of Samaria. The striding cherubs in front of a tree with stylized flowers (a and b) symbolize prosperity, vitality, and protection. The Egyptianizing Horus child or Harpocrates in the open lotus flower (c), the kneeling figures under the flower band (d), and the stylized lotus buds and flower motifs (e and f) also symbolize vitality and joy of life. The colored and inlaid plaques, which use Egyptian motifs as an expression of luxury, were attached to furniture as ornaments. They probably date back to the early eighth century BCE.

(2) Further fortress, palace, and functional representative buildings were built under the Omrides in Megiddo, Hazor, Gezer (see §4.6.3.3), and Jezreel. While Megiddo and Jezreel were located in the core area of the Israelite monarchy, Hazor was the most important city in the north claimed by the Arameans. Until the end of the Iron IIB period in 734 BCE, Gezer was an Israelite border town in the southwest (Baruch Brandl).

(3) The town of Tell Yizre'el/Hirbet Zer'in, on the southeastern edge of the Jezreel Plain between Megiddo and Beth-Shean, is conveniently situated in terms of transportation infrastructure and military strategy. It is often listed as the winter residence of the Omride kings on the basis of the data in 1 Kgs 18:45–46; 2 Kgs 8:29; 9:17, 30; 21:1, 23. The biblical findings, however, can support neither the assumption of two capitals (Albrecht Alt) nor that of a double residence with summer and winter palaces with any certainty (cf. already in medieval Midrashim with reference to Amos

3:15; Midrash Samuel 2:1; Midrash Esther Rabbah 1:12, etc.). In addition, *no* palace complex has yet been excavated in Jezreel (Norma Franklin). A rectangular complex of 289 x 157 m was found, protected by an earthen wall with a ditch in front of it and surrounded by a → casemate wall. Two large corner towers and a four- (Amnon Ben-Tor) or rather six-chamber gate (David Ussishkin) on the long side form the core of the find, which remains difficult to interpret due to the lack of further monumental architecture in the interior (which one would actually expect). Currently, the most plausible explanation is that it was for military use (Israel Finkelstein) to defend the Omride state in the north (see §5.4.2). If it is true that the Omrides (at first) had difficulties controlling the Beth-Shean Basin (Eran Arie), Jezreel would have served as a military foothold. While the excavators classify the site as Omride (David Ussishkin), Norma Franklin dates the site of the second construction phase of Samaria (see above) as post-Omride, to the time of Joash (802–787 BCE) or Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE), that is, to the Iron IIB period. However, a large portion of the pottery and its similarity to other Omride facilities (Orna Zimhoni, Israel Finkelstein, Oded Lipschits) speak against this. The assumption, based on an inscription of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) (see §5.4.4), that Jezreel was used for the rearing and training of Ahab's chariot horses remains speculative. The site was destroyed in the late ninth century BCE, perhaps by the Aramean Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) (Nadav Na'aman) (see §5.5.4).

(4) Irrespective of the question whether Jezreel is to be described as an Omride palace, the complex can be counted among the Omride construction measures because of the parallels to the construction method in Samaria. Further expansion activities in Shechem, Bethel, Tell el-Mālāt, Tirzah/Tell el-Fār'a (North), Dor, Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile, and Beth-Shean can also be dated to the Omrides (Israel Finkelstein). Perhaps Ramoth-Gilead (probably to be identified with er-Ramṭā, Israel Finkelstein, Oded Lipschits, Omer Sergi), a fortified place in Gilead, should also be counted among the Omride fortified places. At least Tell er-Rāmīt, located 7 km south of it, shows the interplay of rampart and moat that is characteristic of Omride fortifications. If one adds the Mesha Inscription, according to which Omri extended his rule to Moab north of the Arnon/Wādī el-Mōğib (line 4: "Omri was king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab for many days," COS 2.23, HTAT 105), Omri also expanded Ataroth (Ḥirbet 'Atārūz) (line 11) and Jahaz/Yahš (line 19). The latter can perhaps be identified with the fortress-like Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine in the Wādī eṭ-Temed in northern Moab (Israel Finkelstein, traditionally

Ḥirbet er-Rumēl), which has a → casemate wall, a wall/glacis, and—like Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo—a (smaller) six-chamber gate. A similar facility, including a regional shrine, was excavated in Ataroth/Ḥirbet ‘Atārūz. Although the casemate building technique is far more widespread (e.g., in the Iron I), its increased appearance under the Omrides makes it significant—if not indicative—if other arguments point in the same direction.

Proto-Aeolic volute capitals found in Megiddo, Samaria, Hazor, Dan, and on Gerizim belong among the elements of Omride architecture (Oded Lipschits; see fig. 32), in addition to the plateaus surrounded by casemate walls, moat fortifications, six-chamber gates, and ashlars. Perhaps these volute capitals were even a genuine invention of the Omride architects that might have impacted (later) architectural forms in Judah (Jerusalem, Rāmat Rāḥēl, ‘Ain Joweizeh, Armon Hanatziv), in Moab (Ḥirbet Mudēbī‘), in Phoenicia (‘Ain Dāra), in the palace of Sargon II (722–705 BCE) in Dur-Šarrukin/Khorsabad, in the palace of Sennacherib in Nineveh, and in other places (Israel Finkelstein, Oded Lipschits, differently Raz Kletter). Others attribute the use of the volute capitals to a common market of stylistic elements that are not specifically Omride, but can be attributed in their entirety to the high culture of Syro-Phoenicia of the Iron II period (Detlef Jericke). The repeated use of the architectural element in cult stands and so-called architectural models could also speak in favor of this broader allocation (Raz Kletter).

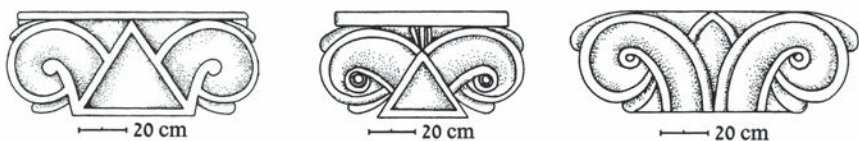


Fig. 32. Examples of volute capitals from Samaria, Megiddo, and Hazor. The capitals, which have their origin in the Omride architectural style in the ninth/eighth century BCE but even spread beyond that (e.g., in Judah, Moab, and Ammon), are characterized by two outwardly curved petals (volute), which branch off from a central triangle.

5.4.4. The Anti-Assyrian Coalition under Ahab

The Hebrew Bible reports little more about the Omrides beyond their construction activity. Yet the fact that the state of Israel developed into a significant force in the southern Levant under the Omrides is shown above

all by its entry into an anti-Assyrian coalition under Omri's successor, his son Ahab (871–852 BCE). The monolith of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) reports that a coalition, led by Damascus and Hamath, opposed the Assyrian king's western expansion at Qarqar on the Orontes (Ḫirbet Qerqūr) in Syria in 853 BCE. Twelve kings were involved, among them Hadadezer (ca. 875–845 BCE) from the “donkey driving country” (Aram-Damascus), Irhuleni of Hamath, with smaller contingents from Byblos, Egypt, and northern Arabia, as well as “2,000 chariots (and) 10,000 troops of Ahab, the Israelite” (2.91–92, COS 2.113A, *TUAT* 1:361, *HTAT* 106). Ahab is named in the third position among the coalition members and has the largest contingent of chariots. This figure may be exaggerated, but it indicates Israel's considerable military potency. It is striking that Judah and the Phoenician coastal towns are not mentioned in a coalition that stretched as far as northern Arabia and Egypt. Winfried Thiel explains the absence of Tyre and Sidon by the fact that they had already paid tribute during the first campaign of Shalmaneser III (inscription from Balawāt). Perhaps for political reasons they were not involved. In any case, the aim of the campaign was to secure the southern flank of the entrance to the Mediterranean (Helga Weippert). The fact that Judah is not mentioned could be due to the fact that it did *not* enter the battle as an independent entity, but was counted under Ahab's contingent (Lester L. Grabbe). This appears the most likely solution, should Judah have in fact been a subsidiary of Israel as described above. But it is no more certain than the brilliant victory Shalmaneser III boasts of in his fight against the coalition. Indeed, the absence of the obligation to pay tribute perhaps points more toward an Assyrian defeat (Winfried Thiel).

5.4.5. Judah's Dependence on Israel

Judah's dependence on Israel, for which the term “veiled → vassal relationship” (Herbert Donner: *verschleierte[s] Vasallitätsverhältnis*) still seems too weak, could speak for the presumed inclusion of Judean forces as well. Israel and Judah were brother states but not in the sense of a close alliance. Rather, they were such in the sense that brothers or sons of the Omride kings ruled in Jerusalem (see §4.7.5 and the explanation below). Just as Ahaziah fought on the side of Joram (2 Kgs 8:28 LXX; 9:21) and Jehoshaphat on the side of Ahab (1 Kgs 22:4), so Jehoshaphat and Joram fought side by side (2 Kgs 3:7). What other option remained if the rulers in Jerusalem were dependent on Samaria both in terms of familial and politico-military relations?

The north's massive dominance permitted Judah's emergence as a discrete state dependent on Samaria (differently Nadav Na'aman), and this left little political space for independent military action.

The north's economic and political superiority is reflected not only in the south's delayed development, but even more clearly in Samaria's massive influence on Jerusalem in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE. This northern supremacy was rooted in the success of Omride politics and Israel's northern expansion, and it led to a skillful family-based → clientele policy of the Omrides in the economically and politically inferior south that lasted until the eighth century BCE. In part, the relationship of dependence went well beyond a → vassalage and approached a → personal union, in which Judah may *not* have even been perceived at times as a subordinate brother state with any real state sovereignty (see already at a glance §4.7.5).

There are a number of strong indications of dependence: (1) reports of political and military alliances; (2) Omrides (and probably also Nimshides) temporarily ruling Judah; (3) Judah's upswing and expansion in the ninth/eighth century BCE; and, finally, (4) Israel's trading activities in the south.

5.4.5.1. Political and Military Alliances between Judah and Israel

There are several reports of Judah voluntarily closing ranks with Israel in Israel's clashes with its neighbors. One example is Jehoshaphat of Judah (868–847 BCE) joining Ahab of Israel (871–852 BCE) in the legendary war story about Ramoth-Gilead in 1 Kgs 22:2–38. This tale has little historical value otherwise. The story reports that Jehoshaphat, for whatever reason, came to Samaria (1 Kgs 22:2) and without hesitation consented to a common military expedition (1 Kgs 22:4). According to 2 Kgs 3:4–27, Jehoshaphat (868–847 BCE) also participated alongside Ahab's successor, Joram (852–845 BCE), in his attempt to prevent Moab from gaining independence from Israel in the Madaba region after Ahab's death (also documented by the Mesha Stela, see §4.5.2). Here too, the legendary nature of the prophetic narrative, which is very similar to that of 1 Kgs 22, predominates and the identification of the kings by name is a late addition rather than original. In both cases, Jehoshaphat's involvement in wars that only indirectly affected the interests of the small southern state in the ninth century BCE lingers in the background. If the networking between the more important kingdom in Samaria and the (subsidiary)

kingdom in Jerusalem was based on a relationship of dependence, a joint action against the Arameans or against Moab was not Jehoshaphat's sovereign action, but rather an alliance naturally demanded by the north (differently Nadav Na'aman). The strange note that Jehoshaphat accepted the danger posed by the king of Israel disguising himself without protest (1 Kgs 22:30–31) might be read as a covert reference to a relationship of dependence (Omer Sergi).

The participation of Ahaziah (845 BCE) of Judah in a renewed dispute between Joram (852–845 BCE) and the Arameans over Ramoth-Gilead reported in 2 Kgs 8:28 should be evaluated similarly. The note is supplemented by Ahaziah's visit to the sick Joram in Jezreel after the latter had been wounded in battle (2 Kgs 8:29; 9:16). This visit, like Jehoshaphat's visit to Ahab in 1 Kgs 22:2, is of the king's own free will. To interpret both visits as mere family matters, because Athaliah was married to Joram early on, and Ahaziah was possibly Joram's brother, does not go far enough. Rather, the visits should also be read as indications that the rulers in Jerusalem were already dependent on the Omride monarchy in the north under Jehoshaphat of Judah. The orthostat fragment from Dan (see §§4.5.2, 5.5.2) also knows of a military alliance between Israel and Judah.

5.4.5.2. Omrides in Judah in the Ninth/Eighth Centuries BCE

There is a network between the Omrides and the kings in Judah after the death of Ahab that is difficult to understand historically, which was already mentioned above in the section on the division of the kingdom (see §4.7.5) and evaluated for the close connection between Judah and Israel.

In Israel, Ahaziah (852–851[?] BCE), Ahab's elder son, succeeded his father for two years in Samaria (1 Kgs 22:40). The transition to Joram of Israel is clearly outlined in the narrative of 2 Kgs 1: Ahaziah falls through the roof of his upper chamber and hurts himself so badly that he dies as a consequence from the fall. Since Ahaziah remained childless, his brother Joram (852[?]/851–845 BCE) subsequently became king (2 Kgs 1:17). The fact that Ahaziah turned to Ekron reflects the enormously increased importance of the location as a place for olive oil production (Baal Zebub as "Lord of the Oil Flies," see §4.2.2.3), but perhaps this also indicates the international relations of the Omrides in the south. The king of Judah, who was also named Ahaziah, is said to have reigned in Jerusalem for only one year (2 Kgs 8:26), and he is said to have had good relations with the royal house in Samaria (2 Kgs 8:27),

which also led to military cooperation (2 Kgs 8:28). The regency data is very uncertain here. Thus, two kings of the same name (!) as kings of Samaria reigned in Judah at almost the same time: Joram (847–845 BCE), who reigned as coregent (or counterking) already in 852–847 BCE beside Jehoshaphat; and, according to 2 Kgs 8:26, Ahaziah of Judah, who reigned briefly in the year 845 BCE. This Ahaziah in Jerusalem is closely linked to the Omride dynasty in historical terms, because unlike any other king in Jerusalem it is said that he “followed the ways of the house of Ahab” (2 Kgs 8:27). It is striking that both Ahaziahs are unambiguously attributed with a relatively short period of government. If one sees the narrative of 2 Kgs 1 as a narrative construct in which the worship of Baal over against the relationship of the Omrides to YHWH prophecy in the seventh century BCE is exemplarily presented from a Judean perspective, Ahaziah’s death need not be the historical prerequisite for the change of government. Ahaziah was killed by Hazael or Jehu together with his brother Joram. The brothers Ahaziah and Joram might have exchanged roles in Samaria and Jerusalem beforehand. Then it could be explained why the sequence of the two is reversed in the biblical representation.

The → synchronism in 2 Kgs 1:17 has the Judean Joram coming to power two years before the Israelite Joram, while 2 Kgs 3:1 dates the Israelite Joram to the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat. Second Kings 8:16 sets the Judean Joram in the fifth year of the Israelite Joram. The Hebrew text uses two forms of the name, the short Joram (e.g., 2 Kgs 8:21, 28; 9:14, 16; 11:2) and the longer Jehoram (e.g., 2 Kgs 8:16, 25; 9:15, 17), but does not distinguish between the Judean and the Israelite Joram. Joram and Ahaziah of Israel are biblically both sons of Ahab (1 Kgs 22:40), while Joram of Judah is a Davidide and son of Jehoshaphat (2 Kgs 22:51). Ahaziah of Judah is the son of the Judean Joram and the Omride Athaliah (2 Kgs 8:24, 26), but the political network between Samaria and Jerusalem is particularly close at the time of these kings (see §5.4.5.1): Ahaziah of Samaria proposes a joint venture to Jehoshaphat of Judah, who rejected it (1 Kgs 22:50); Ahaziah of Judah fought alongside Joram of Israel against the Arameans; he also accompanied Joram of Israel to meet Jehu (2 Kgs 9:21), and he visited the sick king of Israel in Jezreel (2 Kgs 8:29; 9:16). Jehoshaphat of Judah is said to have visited Ahab in Samaria (1 Kgs 22:2) and promised him his loyalty in the fight against the Arameans. This visit is usually associated with the relationship between the Davidides and the Omrides (see §5.4.3). All this shows the great proximity of Israel and Judah in the time of the Omrides.

It is also conceivable from the regnal data that Joram ruled over the north and the south in a kind of double reign or → personal union and that he was, more or less, supported by his brother Ahaziah for a short time.

According to 2 Kgs 8:25–26, Ahaziah of Judah was the son of Joram of Judah and Athaliah. Athaliah, however, is called Ahab's daughter in 2 Kgs 8:18. If one does not see her primarily as Ahaziah's mother (2 Kgs 8:26), which makes her rather Omri's daughter, one can well imagine that Athaliah was Ahab's daughter and therefore Joram's half-sister. If Joram of Judah (852–847 BCE) was not a Davidide, but a son of Ahab (see below), he was raised by Ahab to lead the subsidiary or → client monarchy in Jerusalem and later became heir to the throne in Samaria. Joram took Athaliah to Jerusalem. Joram was apparently married to his half-sister, which is not really unusual within the royal family to maintain power within the family. If Athaliah was Omri's daughter (2 Kgs 8:26), she was married to her nephew Joram and moved to Jerusalem as an experienced politician when the young Joram took over the regency there. Only the sequence of Ahaziah/Joram in Samaria compared to Joram/Ahaziah in Jerusalem causes difficulties. All this suggests that Joram and Ahaziah exchanged roles in Samaria and Jerusalem.

Even if one does not agree with the identity of the persons proposed here, Athaliah's marriage to Joram was part of Omride politics, which served primarily to influence the monarchy in the south through their political alliance (Omer Sergi).

After Joram of Israel and (his brother) Ahaziah of Judah (!) died in the Jehu Revolution 845 BCE (2 Kgs 9:23–27) (or in the conflict with Hazael, cf. the inscription from Dan), Athaliah took the wheel in Jerusalem and exterminated almost the entire royal family according to the account of 2 Kgs 11. The legendary tale narrates that only the underage son of Ahaziah, Joash, was saved as heir to the throne by his aunt Jehosheba. While Athaliah was implicitly accused of having sponsored the Baal cult (2 Kgs 11:19), Joash of Judah was hidden in YHWH's temple for six years and came to power in the seventh year of Athaliah's reign (840–801 BCE). Mathematically, this would be the year 839 BCE, but the scheme of six years/seven years from 2 Kgs 11:4 must be understood symbolically. Perhaps it has been transferred from 2 Kgs 12:1–2. Athaliah, on the other hand, was killed in a popular revolt led by priests. The rather implicitly negative evaluation of Athaliah in 2 Kgs 11 becomes explicit in 2 Chr 24:7.

Various solutions have been put forward in scholarship regarding these entanglements between Judah and Israel in the ninth/eighth century

BCE (overviews by W. Boyd Barrick, J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes). One possibility is to see the Judean kings Joram and Ahaziah not as Davidides but as Omrides. Thus, one can assume either a → personal union between Israel and Judah or a division of the dominion over Israel and Judah between the sons of Ahab for the phase of the second half of the ninth century BCE. In the section on the division of the kingdom, this solution was favored (see §4.7.5) and supported by a number of other indications. Going one step further, it seems that Joash was not a Davidide either, but a Nimshide, that is, he belonged to the family that usurped power in Samaria with Jehu (see below). He was probably not a son of Ahaziah, but a son or grandson of Jehu. The latter is supported by the proximity of the names, Jehoahaz/*yhw-ʿhz* and Ahaziah/*ʿhz-yhw*. Joash of Israel, the son of Jehoahaz, and Joash of Judah, the supposed son of Ahaziah, would then also be the same person.

If history is reconstructed on the basis of these assumptions, the military alliances and joint ventures can be read and understood as the south's dependence on the north. King Jehoshaphat of Judah (868–847 BCE) was probably already dependent on Israel, perhaps even a king through Ahab's grace. If one follows 2 Kgs 8:16–17 (and presupposes the identification of Joram with Jehoram—2 Kgs 1:17), Joram, son of Ahab, became king of Jerusalem while Jehoshaphat was still alive. It is quite conceivable that the change in Jerusalem was a consequence of Ahab's → clientelism (see also 2 Kgs 8:15, 18). Joram would then have de facto pushed Jehoshaphat out of power as a pretender or counterking.

Perhaps the beginning of Judah's dependence on the Omrides lies behind the offer of cooperation from Ahaziah of Israel and its rejection by Jehoshaphat of Judah in 1 Kgs 22:51 and the emphasis on peace in 1 Kgs 22:41 under Jehoshaphat. That Ahaziah of Judah was Omride seems to have been preserved in the note in 2 Kgs 8:27, even though the situation there remains more opaque.

The presupposition that the two Ahaziahs are the same person creates ambiguities. While the Israelite Ahaziah was the son of Ahab and the elder brother of Joram of Israel (1 Kgs 22:40; 2 Kgs 1:18), according to 2 Kgs 8:25 he was the son of Joram of Judah. There it states: "In the twelfth year of King Joram son of Ahab of Israel, Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign" (whereas the older version of the LXX leaves out the "king of Judah"). The dating of the synchronisms is particularly problematic in the case of Joram (see §5.5.2), since the date of Jehu's coup depends on his regency, which must have already begun by the time of the Assyrian

tribute in 841 BCE (see §5.5). Moreover, since the figures of 2 Kgs 1:17; 3:1; 9:29 are not fully compatible, the duration of Joram's reign is usually "adjusted." The two Jorams differ only slightly in their spelling (see above). While according to 2 Kgs 11:2 Ahaziah's son, Joash of Judah, arose to the throne with a delay, 2 Kgs 1:17 reports that Ahab's son had no son, so his *brother* Joram of Israel succeeded him on the throne in Samaria. The origin of Joash, however, is uncertain (see below). Joram and Ahaziah were probably brothers, and the Omrides expanded their influence in Judah through skillful familial → client politics. The relationship between Ahaziah and Joram was very strong (2 Kgs 8:29) and plays an important role during Jehu's revolt. They fight together and are killed by Jehu according to the Hebrew Bible (2 Kgs 9:24, 27). Due to their deaths, there are irregularities in the succession, both in Jerusalem (Athaliah) and in Samaria (Jehu). The fact that the young Ahaziah of Judah (who would have been twenty-two or twenty-three years old, 2 Kgs 8:26–28) fought alongside Joram of Israel (who was either his father or more likely his brother, i.e., also a son of Ahab) against Hazael in Transjordan in 845 BCE was due less to the sovereignty of the young ruler and more to the dependence of Jerusalem's monarchy on the Omrides.

The Omride origin of Ahaziah of Judah cannot be contradicted by the reference to the Aramaic inscription from Dan/Tell el-Qāḏī (see §§4.5.2, 5.4.2.1, 5.5.2). In fragment B2, found in 1994, the last two lines are *...rm.br....yhw.br...*, which are usually read as a sequence of two royal names. Since in fragment A, from 1993, Israel and *byt.dwd* are mentioned, the names are reconstructed as "[Jo]ram, son of [Ahab], king of Israel" and "[Ahaz]iah, son of [Joram], king of the house of David." If this reconstruction is in any way correct (the assumed width of the inscription underlying the reconstruction demands that it remains hypothetical; the same applies to the supposed textual relationship of fragments A and B to each other), it does not mean that [Ahaz]iahu was a Davidide (and son of Joram), but merely that he ruled over the house of David, that is, Judah. Similarly, the Black Obelisk from Nimrud/Kalḥu and the Annals of Shalmaneser III ascribe Jehu to the house of Omri (Jehu of Bit Ḥumrī, literally *iu-ú-a mār ḥu-um-ri-i* Jehu, son of Omri) without him being Omride (see §5.2.4).

When Jehu's coup in Samaria forced the Omrides out of power in the north, the Omride Athaliah maintained Omride claims to power in the south for a short period. But she was replaced—owing to northern superiority—by a Nimshide from Samaria. So ended the Omrides' reign in Jerusalem as well.

The reconstruction of events proposed here depends on the assumption that the same identity of persons stands behind the strikingly identical names of the kings in Samaria and Jerusalem and that the destinies of the two monarchies were much more closely linked than the biblical view of the division of the kingdom suggests. It presupposes that the reconstruction of biblical history was not based on lists of kings and royal archives that were reliable in every respect. Rather, history was constructed from a Judean perspective (using preexisting material), so that the connection between the Omrides and the royal house in Judah was obscured more than revealed. However, one cannot advance beyond the hypothetical reconstruction, since no real clarity can be obtained about the political actions of Ahab's successors or their exact chronology. This becomes clear in the present reconstruction not least by the fact that the chronology (see §5.2.2) used here as a basis, which utilizes the widely accepted, so-called short chronology of Alfred Jepsen (Herbert Donner, Walter Eder), does *not* allow Ahaziah of Judah and Joram of Israel to die in the same year. This datum contradicts both 2 Kgs 9:23–27 and the reconstruction of the Dan Inscription.

There are numerous examples in ancient Near Eastern history of both the close connection of royal rule by marriage and the appointment of a member of the royal family in a neighboring state. The city kingdoms of Alalakh and Iridu were founded in the seventeenth century as a subsidiary kingdom of Aleppo. The Hittite Šuppiluliuma (ca. 1355–1320 BCE) gave the kingship in Carchemish (and another strategically important town on the Euphrates) to his son Pijašili/Šarri-Kušuh, who in turn supported his brother Muršili II (ca. 1318–1290 BCE) in the battles for the succession to the throne. As seal finds show, Šuppiluliuma himself also intervened in the foreign policy affairs of the Syrian subsidiary kingdom. The Hittite Hattušili II (ca. 1265–1240 BCE) later established a subsidiary kingdom for his brother Kurunta-Ulmitēsub in Tarḫuntašša in Asia Minor, which was put on an equal footing with the kingdom in Carchemish. In the Neo-Assyrian period, Babylon and Assyria were ruled by brothers such as Ashurbanipal (669–631 BCE) and his older brother Shamash-shum-ukin (668–648 BCE), who had been appointed ruler over Babylon by his father Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE), but who remained subordinate to his younger brother in the exercise of power throughout his life. In scholarship, these secondary lines are also referred to as → secundogenitures. Whether one speaks, as here, of subsidiary kingdoms or → clientele monarchies or → secundogenitures, the intermediate

position between vassalage and territorial integration, as well as the lasting connection of the local rulers to the dominant mother (in this case Samaria) is characteristic.

Along with the alternative to the reconstruction of the history of Israel and Judah in the ninth/eighth century BCE put forward here, a plausible concept is presented which (1) takes the political strength of the Omrides seriously, (2) makes sensible use of the striking accumulation of kings with the same names in the ninth/eighth century BCE, (3) can plausibly explain the delayed development of the south in the ninth/eighth century BCE, (4) can plausibly provide a better understanding for the military cooperation between Judah and Israel in the political context, (5) also records the consequences of the Jehu revolution for Jerusalem, (6) can provide clues to the historical background behind the biblical fiction of a united monarchy under David and Solomon, and finally (7) can stand in accordance with the spread of Yahwism in the south following the Omride dominance.

The truth underlying the depiction of Judah and Israel as brother states rests not in the division of the kingdom from within an empire united under David and Solomon and then broken apart, but is rooted in northern dominance over the south. The Omride politic extended its dominion to the south by the installation of a subsidiary kingdom in the south. The line of the Jerusalem Davidides is a fictitious → genealogical-dynastic construct of a *byt.dwd* rather than one based on an actual blood relationship. This primarily originated from the biased presentation of the books of Kings. However, one must detach oneself from the strongly pro-Judean and pro-Davidic representation in Kings in order to augur the actual course of history. The biblical account has only preserved indications of this, such as the joint ventures between Israel and Judah, but perhaps even the unbalanced relationship of the ten northern tribes against the one southern tribe of Judah as well (for Simeon see §3.7, for Benjamin see §5.11).

5.4.5.3. Judah's Western and Southern Expansion in the Ninth Century BCE

While the Omrides maintained political influence over Judah, Judah was only able to partake in a somewhat delayed part in the economic upswing of the late Iron IIA and Iron IIB periods. The state of Judah's territorial expansion into the Shephelah, the Negev, and the Beersheba Valley between 850 and 820 BCE is connected with this. This can be seen archaeologically in the expansion of Beth-Shemesh, Lachish, Tell es-Seba⁶, and

Arad. Prior to this, the territory of Judah comprised only Jerusalem, the Judean Highlands, and the transition from the Shephelah to the Highlands (east of the line Beth-Shemesh–Azekah–Tell Ġudēde). When this expansion should be situated chronologically is still a matter of debate; there is only agreement that it cannot be dated before the early ninth century BCE (Omer Sergi). Nadav Naʿaman argues that the expansion was undertaken earlier by Jehoshaphat (868–847 BCE) and Joram (852–845 BCE). More likely, however, it required the weakening of the Philistine metropolis Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfi, which (like the neighboring places Tel Zayit and Tell Ġudēde) was destroyed by the Aramean king Hazael in the last third of the ninth century BCE (between 840 and 830 BCE; cf. 2 Kgs 12:18). Prior to this Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfi was so large (with at least 40 ha) that a western expansion by Judah toward this economically and politically important metropolis is hardly conceivable, as it ran counter to the regional interests of Gath (Gunnar Lehmann, Hermann Michael Niemann).

5.4.5.3.1. Judah's Western Border and the Role of the City of Gath

It is unclear to what extent the unfortified Gath asserted its interests against the Judean settlements located in the transition from the hill country to the lowlands (Beth-Shemesh, Tel Burna [Libna], Tell Ġudēde [Moreseth-Gath], Tel Zayit, Azekah, Mareshah, Lachish, all of which lie roughly on the same axis on the fringe of the Shephelah). It is possible that Beth-Shemesh/ʿĒn-Šems, located about 20 km between Jerusalem and Gath in the Sorek Valley, had already been expanded and fortified by Judah in the decades *before* Gath's destruction (Shlomo Bunimowitz, Zvi Lederman). In the material culture of Gath/Tell eṣ-Šāfi itself, a change indicating Judean dominance becomes apparent only much later, after the earthquake in the middle of the eighth century BCE (around 762 BCE) in the reign of Ahaz in 741–725 BCE (Aren M. Maeir). But perhaps 1 Kgs 15:27; 16:15, 17; 2 Kgs 8:22 also point to Judah's early conflicts with the regional power in Gath (Gunnar Lehmann, Hermann Michael Niemann). This would mean that the monarchy in Jerusalem had already attained a corresponding regional strength during the reigns of Jehoshaphat (868–847 BCE) and Joram (852–845 BCE) in the middle of the ninth century BCE. This fits well with the presence of the Omrides, Joram and Ahaziah (see §5.4.5.3). Because of the (forced) alliance, Jerusalem, backed by the political and military (see §5.4.4) weight of the north, could behave quite differently.

5.4.5.3.2. Lachish and Judah's Southern Border

Whether Lachish was built as a Judean fortress before or after Hazael's campaign (Stratum IV) is still controversial. The fortification with the 6 m thick wall could have been built in the middle of the ninth century BCE, so that Lachish, 15 km from Gath, served to secure the Judean border (Omer Sergi). The → casemate fortification of Tel Burna (perhaps the biblical Libna) may also date from the Iron IIA period (ninth/eighth century BCE) (e.g., Joe Uziel, Itzhaq Shai), so that there is increasing evidence that the western border of Judah was massively fortified. These include the southern fortresses at Arad and Tell es Seba' (Ze'ev Herzog), which extended Judean control in the Negev region. The site on Tell el-Ḥesī seems to have secured a trade route from Gaza to Lachish in the ninth century BCE, and Tell el-Milh/Malatha, Tell eš-Šuqaf/Tell Sheqef, Tel Qeshet, and Tel 'Erani in the vicinity of Lachish may also have secured the important site (Jeffrey A. Blakely et al.).

In the second half of the ninth century BCE the balance of power in the area seems to have shifted in a gradual process (Omer Sergi). The upswing of the region around Ḥirbet el-Mšāš/Tel Masos was connected with the intensification of copper trading in the Arabah in the tenth century BCE owing to Egyptian interests (see §4.6.4.2). In the middle of the ninth century BCE, the copper trade broke down, and the expansion of Judean political control over the region can be observed. Judah's southern and western expansion, together with Jerusalem's upswing as an administrative center in the late Iron IIA period (see §§5.6.1, 5.7.1), is in tune with this.

5.4.5.3.3. Amaziah as an Aramean Vassal

With the appearance of Hazael in the Shephelah in the last third of the ninth century BCE, the balance of power shifted, and a stronger Judean presence in the south became increasingly possible. Aramean support could have played a decisive role in this. When the southern subsidiary kingdom under Joash (840–802/1 BCE) succumbed to the pressure of Hazael and paid a tribute of → vassalage (2 Kgs 12:19), the conditions seemed favorable for the development of local strength in the south. When Joash succeeded Jehoahaz in Samaria, Amaziah (802/1–773 BCE) was appointed as an Aramean vassal king. One can only guess about his origin (for details, see §5.5.3.2). Biblically, he was swept into office after

Joash's murder, but he is said to have been a Davidide, the son of Joash (2 Kgs 12:21–22). However, the palace revolt against Joash also raises a whole series of questions, and perhaps Amaziah was neither a Davidide nor Nimshide but a vassal determined by the Arameans.

The Nimshide Joash retreated to the north and continued to rule in Samaria. He seems to have been a strong king and, taking his reign in both Jerusalem and Samaria as a guideline, ruled for an exceptionally long time. During the unstable phase of the transition of power in Damascus after Hazael's death (800 BCE) and at the beginning of the reign of Ben-Hadad II (800–780 BCE), he probably succeeded in recovering northern territory lost to the Arameans (2 Kgs 13:25). In this short phase, when Judah was expanding south and Samaria was under strong pressure from the Arameans, one can speak of two sovereign states: Jerusalem and Samaria.

5.4.5.3.4. Edom's Role and Control over the South

There are several references in the books of Kings to the activities of the kings of Jerusalem as far south as the Gulf of Eilat for the period of the ninth/eighth century BCE. Jehoshaphat (868–847 BCE) is said to have made an effort to trade by sea, but his ships were wrecked at Ezion-Geber. Jehoshaphat allegedly refused to cooperate with Israel in this matter (2 Kgs 22:49–50). According to 2 Kgs 8:20–22, Edom rebelled against Joram of Judah (852–845 BCE). Although the biblical report brings Zair (which sounds—or is intended to sound—similar to Seir, another name for Edom) under Joram's control, it also admits, in contradiction to this, that Edom could not be defeated. Perhaps the events had originally been reported less favorably toward Judah, namely, that it was not Joram who defeated Edom, but Edom that defeated Joram. The current contradictions would then be due to a later amendment of the presentation.

Amaziah of Judah (802/1–773 BCE) finally conquered the Edomites in the Valley of Salt and conquered the city of Sela (2 Kgs 14:7). Perhaps it is the name of the Edomite capital Umm el-Biyyāra in the rock massif near Petra. On the other hand, 2 Kgs 14:22 ascribes the reconquest and expansion of Eilat/Tell el-Hulēfe from the Edomites to Azariah/Uzziah (787–736 BCE). According to 2 Kgs 16:6, Judah once again lost control of Edom due to Aramean intervention.

The data's historicity is difficult to assess, but in sum the data point to disputes over supremacy in the south after Egyptian influence, which

lasted until the early Iron IIA period (see §4.6.4.2), had diminished in the Arabah and Negev. Zair (2 Kgs 8:21), which is also missing from the original → LXX, may not stand for Seir and all of Edom east of the Arabah, as suggested, but rather for Zoar and the area at the southern end of the Dead Sea (Omer Sergi). The fact that Joram had not yet succeeded in gaining control there could, like Amaziah's successes, correspond to the historical course of Judah's expansion.

5.4.5.4. Israel's Trade Activities in the South

A further indication of Judah's dependence on Israel is indirect and comes from archaeology. Kuntillet 'Ağrūd's secure fortress-like complex, which enclosed a large courtyard, can be interpreted as a trading or way station. It is located on a trade route (Darb el-Gazze) connecting Kadesh-Barnea (Tell el-Qedērat), 50 km to the north, with Eilat (Tell el-Ḥulēfe). From Kadesh-Barnea as well as from Kuntillet 'Ağrūd, east-west connections branch off, leading to the Via Maris on the coast. Important trading centers/emporia such as Tell Abū Salima and Tell er-Ruqēš can be found there, which were also used by the Assyrians for long-distance trade in the eighth/seventh century BCE (Juan Manuel Tebes). The trade route through the Negev connected with the sea trade in Ezion-Geber (Ĝezīret Far'ūn) (see §4.6.4.2). When it comes to trade activities, one must not only think of the import of spices, resins, and luxury goods, but also of the export of surplus from Israel's agricultural production. Raw materials such as wool and flax were processed into textiles and subsequently marketed. During the excavations in Kuntillet 'Ağrūd, considerable residual quantities of elaborately dyed textiles, including mixed fabrics, were found, some of which had been professionally processed (further) in a facility (Ze'ev Meshel). Israel had little beyond textiles to offer in long-distance trade. A portrait of a seated figure on a wall painting (fig. 33) in the entrance area indicates the official character of the way station in Kuntillet 'Ağrūd. This portrait can be interpreted as depicting a king or a high official due to its expression and gestures (Pirhiya Beck, Irit Ziffer).

The complex itself was erected at the beginning of the eighth century BCE at the latest and existed until the last quarter of the eighth century BCE. In it, there were, among other things, inscriptions on storage jars, which are very important for the history of religion as they mention the goddess Asherah next to YHWH of Teman (or the south) and YHWH of Samaria. The paleography (→ epigraphy) of these inscriptions and the



Fig. 33. Wall painting in the entrance area of the complex at Kuntillet 'Ağrūd. The ca. 30 cm high figure, applied to the wall plaster in red, yellow, and black, sits on a throne and holds a lotus blossom to its nose and mouth. The size and execution, as well as the position and context, suggest an official representative. Perhaps the depiction was part of a ceremonial scene (see, e.g., fig. 15a).

→ theophoric personal names with the ending *-yw* instead of the usual southern-style ending *-yhw* for YHWH point to Israel in the eighth century BCE (the goddess Asherah is also mentioned beside YHWH in a Judean shaft chamber tomb in Ḥirbet el-Kōm in inscription no. 3 from the middle of the eighth century BCE). The dating of the Kuntillet 'Ağrūd complex to the eighth century BCE is confirmed by pottery typology and ¹⁴C data. However, the data are dated earlier by excavator Ze'ev Meshel (ca. 820–755 BCE) than by Israel Finkelstein and Eliazer Piasetzky (ca. 795–730/20 BCE). The drawings on the storage jars and the wall paintings show Phoenician influence and thus also point to the north. References to Judah are almost completely missing. This at least leads to the conclusion that the station was operated as a joint venture in long-distance trade together with Israel. This would fit in well with the activities of Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE), who achieved an economic flowering in the north after the renewed expansion of the territory (see §5.5.9.1).

According to 1 Kgs 22:49–50, Jehoshaphat (868–847 BCE) is said to have tried to initiate long-distance trade in Ezion-Geber and to have refused offers to cooperate with the Omrides in long-distance trade. However, the joint venture did not eventuate because the ships were wrecked at Ezion-Geber. Now, if one follows 2 Chr 20:36, the ships crashed precisely *because of* the union with the Omrides. The note remains dubious in several respects. On the one hand, it is quite reminiscent of Solomon's trade connection with Hiram of Tyre (1 Kgs 9:26–28; 10:22). Tarshish, which

probably refers to the southern Spanish Tartassos (and not the turquoise of the Sinai Peninsula or to another [semi-]precious stone; e.g., Exod 28:20; 39:13; Ezek 1:16; Song 5:14), cannot be reached from the Gulf of Eilat, where Ezion-Geber lies. Circumnavigation of the African continent is essentially logistically precluded, and a connection from the Gulf of Eilat to the Mediterranean, as with today's Suez Canal, was only established under Pharaoh Neco II (610–595 BCE) and further developed under Darius I (522–486 BCE) (cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.158). Tarshish otherwise stands for the participation in the flourishing Phoenician sea trade but is partly synonymous with long-distance trade in general (Isa 2:16; 23:1, 3, 6, 10; Jer 10:9; Ps 48:8; 72:10), especially with precious metals (2 Chr 9:21; Isa 60:9; Jer 10:9), and is in some places also parallel to trade with the Arabian peninsula (Ezek 38:13). The destination of Jehoshaphat's fleet is the legendary gold country called "Ophir," which is to be sought either on the Arabian peninsula or on the African continent (Egypt, Libya) or even on the Indian subcontinent. Ezion-Geber is probably connected with Ġezīret Far'ūn, located 14 km south of Eilat. Ezion-Geber was previously identified as Tell el-Ḥulēfe, but this identification fails due to the lack of a harbor basin, whereas Ġezīret Far'ūn, as an island off the coast, has a natural harbor. The trading post at the northern end of the Gulf of Eilat was built at about the same time as Kuntillet 'Ağrūd (Gary D. Pratico, Wolfgang Zwickel) according to the pottery assemblage. Thus, construction during Jehoshaphat's reign is probably out of the question. Be that as it may, the rejection of cooperation with the Omride Ahaziah (852–851 BCE) may reflect precisely the opposite, namely, that Israel—and not Judah—*de facto* controlled international maritime trade in the Gulf of Eilat conducted with Phoenician participation and expertise.

5.5. JEHU'S COUP AND THE REIGN OF THE NIMSHIDES IN THE NINTH/EIGHTH CENTURIES BCE

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The anti-Assyrian coalition between the Arameans and Israel under King Ahab was a Copernican Turn (Winfried Thiel) in foreign policy but not a permanent one. The reports on the later campaigns of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) to the west, no longer specifically mention Israel among the coalition members. The reasons for this are not entirely clear but are mostly interpreted as the foreign political weakness of Ahab’s successors. The end of the extraordinarily successful rule of the Omrides is directly connected with the strengthening of the Arameans and increasing pressure from the west. In literature, the change from Joram to Jehu is often referred to as a *revolution*, but it is rather a military coup, possibly initiated or at least backed by the Arameans.

5.5.1. Israel’s Dispute with the Arameans and the End of the Omrides

It seems certain that there were clashes between the Arameans and Israel. Hazael’s foreign policy (ca. 845–800 BCE) was of central importance for events in the southern Levant in the second half of the ninth century BCE. Hazael is introduced in an Assyrian inscription as the “son of a

nobody” (*mār lā mammāna*) (COS 2.113G, HTAT 111), which indicates the absence of dynastic descent. Perhaps he even came from southern Lebanon or from upper Galilee (Angelika Berlejung). In any case, through the murder (?) of Hadadezer (ca. 875–845 BCE) he seized power (alluded to in the theologically framed 2 Kgs 8:7–15), and this could be the background for the biblically described arguments. Perhaps Joram of Israel (852–845 BCE) took advantage of the change of government and the immediately intensified pressure from Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE) on Damascus in 845 BCE to advance into Aramean territory or even to win back such territory. The biblical tradition connects this to Ramoth-Gilead in eastern Gilead (2 Kgs 8:28; 9:14–15). If one does not identify Ramoth-Gilead with Tell el-Ḥiṣn but with ar-Ramṭā (Edward Lipiński), which is situated on the King’s Highway heading to Damascus north of Tell el-Ḥiṣn and is strategically favorable in terms of road networks, then archaeology may provide clues to the changeable history of Gilead. Seven km south of ar-Ramṭā lies an outpost fortified with a rampart called Tell er-Rāmiṭ, which shows a remarkably condensed series of destruction layers. The place, which was possibly first built by the Omrides, could have been destroyed by Hazael in 845 BCE and have fallen back into Israelite possession only under Joash (802–787 BCE) or Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE). Subsequently, but still prior to the fortress’s final destruction by Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE), it was once again conquered by Rezin of Damascus (ca. 750–732 BCE) (Israel Finkelstein, Oded Lipschits, Omer Sergi, who prefer that Tell er-Rāmiṭ was a place founded by Arameans and conquered by the Omrides).

In any case, according to 2 Kgs 8:26, Joram was wounded in the battle for Ramoth-Gilead and withdrew to the military fort at Jezreel. Ahaziah, the king of Judah, visited him there (2 Kgs 8:29; 9:16), probably in order to reassure the (familiarily and politically) closely connected king (or brother) of Judah’s loyalty during the phase of destabilization. Jehu, the commander of the army, who at first continued fighting against Hazael in Ramoth-Gilead, made use of the king’s weakness—in the biblical account thanks to the authorization of the prophet Elijah (1 Kgs 19:15–17)—and revolted. The attempt by the two kings to gather together at Jezreel to prevent the coup failed. According to the biblical account, Jehu killed Joram immediately (2 Kgs 9:24) and wounded the fleeing Ahaziah during the pursuit so that he ultimately died in Megiddo (2 Kgs 9:27).

The protagonist of the seizure of power, Jehu, is dubbed chief/leader (*śar*) and was counted among the commanders of the Israelite army. While

in 1 Kgs 19:16; 2 Kgs 9:20; 2 Chr 22:7 he is called the son of Nimshi, it is stated in 2 Kgs 9:2, 13, 20 that he was a son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi. In accordance with the first statement, the kings Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II, and Zechariah are all referred to as “Nimshides.” Nimshi is inscribed as a name in the Samaria ostraca (no. 56, eighth century BCE), on two Judean seals (CWSS no. 266, 574, seventh century BCE; see fig. 34), but also in two inscriptions from Tel Rehov (ninth century BCE) as well as in a very similar one from nearby Tel ‘Āmāl/Tel al-‘Asī (Shmuel Aḥituv, Amihai Mazar). Perhaps the Nimshide family came from the Upper Jordan Valley or the Beth-Shean Basin.

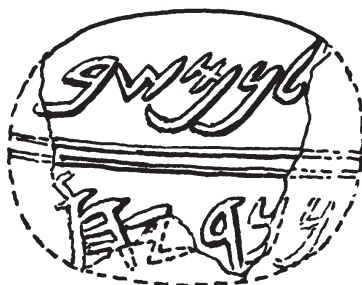


Fig. 34. Impression of a seal that documents the name *nmš*/Nimshi. The aniconic perforated scaraboid dates to the Iron IIC period but does not—in contrast to the Nimshi Inscriptions mentioned in this text—originate from a controlled excavation but from the antique trade in Jerusalem. The inscription, divided by a double line, reads “(belonging) to Nimshi, the son of Neriyāhū.”

The biblical presentation stylizes Jehu (because of his name “YHWH he/it is”) in 2 Kgs 9–10 as a fighter against the Omride Baal cult, but the background of his coup d’état seems to be a military revolt. The term *revolution* is due to the biblical depiction in which Jehu, via a letter, involved the city aristocracy in the coup (2 Kgs 10:1, 6). Literarily, the depiction is closely connected with the announcement of the downfall of the house of Ahab in 1 Kgs 21:18–24 as well as the presentation of the overthrow of Athaliah in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 11). The dismantling of the Baal temple in 2 Kgs 10:27 belongs to the literary stylization of the revolution, but the change of power was apparently accompanied by the destruction of representative Omride buildings (Omer Sergi, Yuval Gadot). Assuming that the Aramean victory over Israel in Transjordan catalyzed events (i.e., Jehu’s army was defeated by the Arameans in Transjordan), it is quite likely that Jehu’s coup was, if not initiated by the Arameans, then at least enacted with their approval. Perhaps the proximity of Hazael and Jehu in 1 Kgs 19:15–17 has this connection in its background. The fact that the Nimshides came under strong Aramean influence, or were influenced by them from the beginning, can still be seen in the sharp social critique of the

prophet Amos in the middle of the eighth century BCE, who criticizes the Samarian upper class and thereby sees a close connection with Damascus (Amos 3:12; 4:1–3; 5:27; etc.).

5.5.2. The Thesis of Jehu's Vassalage and the Inscription from Dan

In the more recent discussion, an assessment of the narrative's historicity is closely linked to the inscription from Dan/Tell el-Qāḍī (see already §§4.5.2, 5.4.2.1). The inscription, which appears on an → orthostat from Dan and dates to the middle of the ninth century BCE, was made by an Aramean king. On it the Aramean monarch reports that the king of Israel had invaded the Aramean territory of QDM. This fits well with 2 Kgs 8:28. But problems arise if one assumes that the Aramean king who had the orthostat made (and perhaps installed in the city gate) was the → usurper Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE), in spite of the fact that he refers to his predecessor as “my father”—the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III refer to Hazael as “son of nobody” (i.e., an illegitimate heir to the throne)—and his peaceful end (line 3). This is because on fragment B₂ the Aramean king lists the names of kings he has killed. If one reads the names Joram and Ahaziah there, then this contradicts the biblical depiction in 2 Kgs 9:24, 28, which attributes this deed to Jehu.

The contradiction was resolved by the first editors, Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, by the assumption that Jehu had defected to the Arameans and seized power in Samaria as an ally or as Hazael's → vassal. Ingo Kottsieper even supplements the mention of Jehu in line 11 (*TUAT* 1:179; see also Manfred Weippert in *HTAT* 116). Others have tried to harmonize the contradiction by assuming that Jehu killed the kings but acted *de facto* as a vassal on Hazael's behalf. This is why Hazael claims the killing in the inscription (William Schniedewind, Baruch Halpern). If the Aramean inscription of Tell 'Āfis (*HTAT* 119, Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo), despite its fragmentary condition and being nearly unreadable, actually mentions Jehu next to Hazael, this could provide further support for the assumption of a close relationship between the two. The basalt stela fragment of seven lines with 1–4 characters each, reads in line 5 *hzi'l'[l]* and in line 6 *yhw*. If the latter is part of a name and refers to a king (both of which are uncertain) it may refer to Jehu or his son Jehoahaz. As captivating as these solutions are, Nadav Na'aman has dampened such speculation by correctly pointing out that there are no other sources to suggest that Jehu was an ally of the Arameans in the first phase of his reign (but see below). For the

assumption that, although Jehu was the actual actor, Hazael attributes the result to himself, there are also no other extrabiblical examples. So, what is historically more credible: the biblical narrative or the inscription of Dan? Both are biased literature. The story of Joram's necessary recuperation and Ahaziah's related visit in 2 Kgs 9:16 (cf. 2 Kgs 8:28–29) locate the events in Jezreel, dramatically linking them to the defenestration of the femme fatale Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:22, 30–37). The story of the events in Samaria described in 2 Kgs 10 depicts the revolution as religiously motivated. Both texts are tendentious, pervaded by propaganda, and certainly not a faithful reflection of historical events. Thus, there are some arguments for the assessment that the two kings (despite the evidence supporting 2 Kgs 9:24, 28 in Hos 1:4) were not killed by Jehu but by the Arameans, and that the Hebrew Bible attributes these murders to Jehu in order to underline his illegitimacy. For although the outline shows a certain sympathy for Jehu and his coup, the biblical presentation leaves no doubt that he came to power irregularly. Perhaps in the line “the Arameans struck Joram” in 2 Kgs 8:28, which from the context means that he wounded the Israelite king, a reference to Aramean agency has been preserved, because the verb *nkh* (“strike”) can also be used for an active killing (Edward Lipiński, Nadav Naʾaman, Susanne Otto).

It can be assumed that Hazael at least approved, if not actively supported, Jehu's coup or even that Jehu was appointed by Hazael as the Aramean vassal. The pragmatic policy of the military to change sides in the face of the death of its commander-in-chief King Joram and to offer itself in the service to the superior, that is, the Aramean Hazael, would then be recognizable behind the depiction of the military coup in Ramoth-Gilead (2 Kgs 9:13). The Aramean would then have ensured his loyalty by sparing his life and making the supreme commander king in Samaria. That Jehu became an Aramean vassal within the framework of Hazael's expansion policy is plausible in itself, but in the end the relationship between Jehu and the Arameans cannot really be clarified. The thesis of Jehu's continuous vassalage, in any case, is countered by the fact that Jehu apparently left the anti-Assyrian coalition in 841 BCE and paid tribute to Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE), perhaps not least to shake off Aramean influence and at the same time to exchange it for the more politically successful Neo-Assyrian influence.

It is difficult to judge the historicity of 2 Kgs 9:27–28, which is claimed as part of an older Judean annal note (Susanne Otto, Nadav Naʾaman). There Ahaziah's flight before Jehu, his wounding near Ibleam leading to his

death in Megiddo, and his subsequent burial in Jerusalem are described. Ahaziah is said to have fled from Jehu when he recognized in the killing of his brother Joram the brutality of the usurper/revolutionary. The note presupposes his participation in the fight against the Arameans and a stay in the north. The fact that Ahaziah felt at all threatened by Jehu's claim to power speaks at least for the close connection between Samaria and Jerusalem at the time of Joram. The biblical escape route, however, raises questions. The villages of Ibleam and Gur are located at the south-east exit of the Jezreel Plain and southeast of the village of Jezreel, where the kings are said to have resided. Megiddo, on the other hand, where Ahaziah was wounded and died, lies northwest of Jezreel. Ahaziah is said to have escaped in the direction of Beth-Haggan. If one does not locate this as is usual in Jenin, that is, near Ibleam and Gur (Wolfgang Zwickel), but in lower Galilee (Zvi Gal), then Ahaziah perhaps attempted, according to biblical accounts, to flee into Hazael's sphere of influence, in order to offer himself as a vassal and thus escape death. The biblical representation would then reflect the dominance of Hazael and his elimination not only of the Omrides of Samaria but also of the Omrides of the house of David. But that's just a guess.

However, the tension between the Dan Inscription and biblical data can be ultimately resolved, Jehu is in any case listed on the Black Obelisk and in the Annals of Shalmaneser III for the year 841 BCE as a tribute payer to Assyria (see §5.2.4, COS 2.113D–F, *HTAT* 112–13; see fig. 26) and thus no longer part of the anti-Assyrian alliance under Aramean leadership. At this point, he must have freed himself from the Aramean grasp, perhaps using the strength of the Assyrians and the tribute to gain more freedom of action with Assyrian backing.

5.5.3. Athaliah's Fall and Its Connection with Jehu's Coup d'État

In the biblical presentation, the installation of the only surviving Davidide, Joash, in Jerusalem was not directly related to what happened in Samaria. Ahaziah of Judah was on Joram of Israel's side, as they prepared to meet the approaching military troops of Jehu (2 Kgs 9:21). When Joram recognized the hostile intention of his commander Jehu, he warned Ahaziah, who was fleeing from Jezreel (2 Kgs 9:23, 27; regarding the escape route, see above). However, he was wounded "on the ascent to Gur" and tried to find refuge in Megiddo, where he died. After Jehu had eliminated the members of the government who were within reach in Jezreel, he set off for the capital to

completely exterminate the descendants of Ahab there as well. He met the “relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah” who were on their way to Jezreel to pay their respects to the sons of King Joram and Jezebel (2 Kgs 10:13). The association again places the royal house of Jerusalem in great proximity to Samaria (2 Kgs 10:14). According to the biblical depiction, upon hearing of the death of her son Ahaziah, the Omride Athaliah, who was still in Jerusalem, showed her true colors and began killing all the remaining descendants of the Davidides—those who could lay claim to the throne—along with the members of the royal house (2 Kgs 11:1). Only Joash was spared; his sister or aunt Jehosheba (the name means “YHWH swore”; cf. Ps 89:4–34; 132:11) had hidden him in a bed chamber, and he then spent six years in the temple until he was crowned by Jehoiada (“YHWH knew it”) and installed as king. The interest of the presentation is easily recognizable in the references to the exodus narrative and the dynastic promise to David. Athaliah is stylized as an accident in the monarchy of Jerusalem because, as an Omride, she disrupted the (constructed) Davidic dynastic sequence. As Omri's daughter/granddaughter, she did not allow herself to be Davidized. With Joash the legitimate heir to the throne in the dynastic line is formally (re)established in the narrative. Athaliah, who had taken over the affairs of state during the seven-year period, was killed on a horse path to the palace (2 Kgs 11:16, 20). Athaliah and Jezebel are thus paralleled in their doom.

Although Athaliah's downfall has only a loose connection in 2 Kgs 11:1 to Jehu's coup d'état on the textual level, the parallelization with the coup is palpable in the stylization of the events. Just as members of the royal house in Jezreel and Samaria were eliminated by Jehu (2 Kgs 10:11, 17), so also those belonging to Ahaziah of Judah were exposed to the deadly threat in two places (2 Kgs 10:14; 11:1). In both narratives a female protagonist, who is also associated with Baal worship, plays a central role (Jezebel in 2 Kgs 9, Athaliah in 2 Kgs 11). Both coups d'état eliminate Baal worship, which is supposed to have taken place in Baal temples in Samaria and Jerusalem (2 Kgs 10:25–28; 11:18). The two upheavals of Jehu and Athaliah are unmistakably connected on the literary level. That they are also connected from a historical point of view becomes apparent when one sees Joram, Athaliah, and Ahaziah as Omrides in Jerusalem, who acted in general dependence on the Omrides in Samaria. So, Jehu also had to take over power in Jerusalem for the complete overthrow, which succeeded because of additional support from the politically influential upper class through the installation of Joash (see §5.5.3.2).

5.5.3.1. Athaliah's Political Background

Like her siblings, Athaliah is introduced to Omride politics as the daughter of Ahab (2 Kgs 8:18, see §§5.4.3.1, 5.4.5.2). She seems to have married Joram at an early stage. If Joram of Israel and Joram of Judah are the same person, Athaliah came to Jerusalem with the young Omride king as his sister (2 Kgs 8:18). After the death of her son Ahaziah, she continued to run the government and—probably initially with the support of the local elite (Omer Sergi)—continued to represent Omride interests. This phase was ended indirectly by Jehu's coup in Samaria and the later installation of a Nimshide (Joash) in Jerusalem. At first Athaliah remained in power in Jerusalem as a representative of the Omride claim to power. Through the change of power in Samaria, Jerusalem was cut off; a cooperation between the enemy rulers was not possible. Jerusalem, however, could not prosper in the decoupling from Samaria; it was too weak for a politically autonomous monarchy. When the urban elite in Jerusalem realized that they had more disadvantages than advantages under the continuation of Omride politics through Athaliah and that the land of Judah would again be left behind in terms of general development because of the loss of the protectorate or patronage on the part of Israel, they turned away from Athaliah and brought about her downfall. The stronger the Nimshides became under Jehu in Samaria, the greater the pressure on the followers of the Omrides in Jerusalem to return to the previously practiced paths of dependence on Samaria. The Judean landed gentry then overthrew Queen Athaliah—perhaps even with the active support of Nimshides from Samaria. For Jehu, the change of power was not completed until he exerted influence in Jerusalem like the Omrides. The young Joash (as with Joram under the Omrides) was used after the assassination of Athaliah as a subsidiary or → client king of the Nimshides in Jerusalem. Thus, the configuration practiced under the Omrides was restored. Just as the Omrides reigned in Jerusalem before, so now the Nimshides did too. Athaliah's reign was only a brief interlude of independence, albeit under Omride auspices or as a refuge for Omride power interests. With the fall of Athaliah, however, the change from the Omrides to the Nimshides was complete.

5.5.3.2. Joash of Jerusalem in the Context of Athaliah's Downfall

The chronological data on Athaliah and Joash of Judah are strikingly rounded: Joash became king in the seventh year of Jehu when he was

seven years old and reigned forty years in Jerusalem. That means Athaliah reigned seven years in Jerusalem. The constructed character of these statements is palpable (Mario Liverani), and one can ask whether the effort does not serve to conceal the fact that Joash was no Davidide at all. Assuming the forty years is accurate, this results in a change of throne in the year 801 BCE, or even 802 BCE seems equally likely, if Joash of Judah and Joash of Israel are the same person. Perhaps the report that his mother came from Beersheba, the southernmost town in Judah (2 Kgs 12:2), also functions to cover over the fact that he came from the north. The legendary narrative in 2 Kgs 11 can perhaps be evaluated to the effect that Athaliah suppressed tendencies in the royal house to oppose Omride interests in Jerusalem after the assassination of Joram of Israel by the Aramean Hazael (Dan Inscription) via a hard crackdown. With the initial support of influential elites who recognized the benefits of an alliance with the Omrides, Athaliah led the government in Jerusalem. When the Aramean coup of general Jehu ended the Omride rule in Samaria, the daughter of Ahab in Jerusalem was overthrown by the priest Jehoiada and the Judean landed gentry (2 Kgs 11:4). This was probably to nip in the bud any separatist tendencies in the monarchy in Jerusalem. Therefore, Athaliah's downfall was at least influenced, if not directly steered, by Samaria or Damascus.

5.5.3.3. Nimshides in Jerusalem

The influential and probably conservative aristocracy made the Nimshide Joash (840–802/1 BCE) king in place of the Omride Athaliah, assuming that the equivalence of names implies the equivalence of persons. Joash later succeeded Jehoahaz (818–802 BCE) in Samaria and gave (or had to give up) the throne to Amaziah (802/1–773 BCE). After Hazael's expansion, the Aramean dominance was so great that Amaziah could only rule in Jerusalem as a dependent of the Arameans in Damascus.

The Jehu revolution also swept away the Omride rule in Judah with delay. So, the years of the Omride Athaliah's reign in Judah were only the aftermath of the Omride presence in Jerusalem, until the Nimshides determined the destinies not only of Samaria, but also of Jerusalem. After the consolidation of their power in the north, the Nimshides thus made the same claim to the south as the Omrides had before. Athaliah fell victim to this (Omer Sergi).

The legitimate Davidic dynastic succession from David to Zedekiah, which was interrupted (if at all) only by Athaliah's seven-year interim,

proves to be a biblical fiction in the service of a constructed continuity of the Davidic monarchy. Neither before nor after Athaliah were the kings in Jerusalem Davidides in the sense of a blood relationship. Of course, they were Davidides in the construct of dynastic continuity, but without descending from David. That such constructs were not unusual is shown, for example, by the “my father” in the Dan Inscription, which inscribes the → usurper Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) into the dynastic line of Hadadezer (ca. 875–845 BCE). In the Annals of Shalmaneser III, Jehu is also simply described as *mâr Ḥumrī*, the son of Omri (COS 2.113D–F, *HTAT* 112–13), because he was viewed in continuity with the rule of the Omrides.

As the further development under Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah will show, there is not much to see of the Davidides in Jerusalem in the eighth century BCE either. Ahaz (741–725 BCE) was the first king to succeed in permanently detaching from the north—but at the cost of → vassalage to Assyria. Any genealogical relationship he might have had with David can no longer really be clarified. Since his name is only the short form of Aha-ziah or Jehoahaz, he is not fundamentally different from the Omrides and Nimshides who ruled Jerusalem before him.

5.5.4. Aramean Expansion under Hazael

In the second half of the ninth century BCE the Assyrians massively increased their pressure on Damascus to bring the Arameans to their knees. No less than twenty-one more or less futile attempts until the reign of Adad-nirari III (811–783 BCE) can be traced from the sources. In the phases in which the pressure—for whatever reason—eased, Hazael extended his rule over the whole of Syria to the Euphrates and advanced south, probably to use the copper trade in the Negev as an important resource for the further expansion of his power (see §5.3.4). The dating of this development and the campaign to the south is not entirely clear. The successor of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE), Shamshi-adad V (= Šamši-Adad V) (824–811 BCE), was de facto barely present in the west. Only Adad-nirari III (811–783 BCE), who made military advances to Syria five times (Eponym Chronicle COS 1.136, 2.114G, *HTAT* 120–21), was forced to intervene in the shifting balance of power in the southern Levant apparently brought about by Aram-Damascus and to resume the expansive foreign policy of his grandfather. An orthostat inscription from Nimrud/Kalḫu summarily mentions the successes: “I subdued from the bank of the Euphrates, the land of Ḫatti, the land of Amurru in its entirety,

the land of Tyre, the land of Sidon, the land of Israel [Ḥumrī], the land of Edom, the land of Philistia, as far as the great sea in the west. I imposed tax (and) tribute upon them. I marched to the land of Damascus. I confined Mari' [= "my Lord"; the title either refers to Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE) or more probably to his son Ben-Hadad II (ca. 800–780 BCE)], the king of Damascus in the city of Damascus, his royal city. The fearful splendor of Aššur, my ["his"] lord, overwhelmed him; and he submitted to me. He became my vassal. 2,300 talents of silver, 20 talents of gold, 3,000 talents of bronze, 5,000 talents of iron, linen garments with multicolored trim, an ivory bed, a couch with inlaid ivory, his property (and) his possessions without number—I received inside his palace in Damascus, his royal city" (COS 2.114G, *HTAT* 121.15–24).

Aram-Damascus had apparently become so strong that it threatened Assur's economic interests in the west, causing Adad-nirari III (811–783 BCE) to intervene. On a stela from the northeastern Syrian Tell er-Rimāḥ, Adad-nirari III mentions a tribute from Joash of Samaria (802–787 BCE) together with the subjugation of Tyre, Sidon, Arvad, and Lebanon (also see §5.5.5.1). How the expansion efforts of the Arameans under Hazael relate to the Assyrian dominance in the west cannot be fully explained, but Israel's economic upswing under Joash (802–787 BCE) and Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) (see §§5.5.5, 5.5.9.1) is probably to be seen against the background of the weakening of Aram-Damascus in the beginning eighth century BCE.

Due to the succession disputes after Shalmaneser III's (859–824 BCE) death, Assyrian pressure exerted toward the west weakened. This allowed Damascus some breathing room. Thus, Hazael's (ca. 845–800 BCE) expansion efforts are often dated to the final two decades of the ninth century BCE or more precisely to 810 BCE. The tribute of Joash of Judah (840–802/1 BCE), mentioned at the end of his reign in 2 Kgs 12:18–19, provides orientation. Nothing, however, compels this imprecisely dated event to be set at the end of Joash's reign. If one assumes that Adad-nirari III's campaign against Damascus in 796 BCE was a reaction to the Aramean desire for expansion (after Hazael's death around 800 BCE), a later dating would also be possible. This is opposed not only by the biblical report, but also by the destruction of Gath/Tell eš-Šāfi, which can be dated to the third quarter of the ninth century, about the year 830 BCE (Dvory Namdar et al., Aren M. Maeir).

A probable scenario therefore dates Hazael's expansion efforts earlier. A few years after his assumption of power in Damascus, Hazael exploited

the brief weakness of the Assyrians and began to seize control deep into the south from around 837 BCE through military pressure. At this stage, if not earlier, the southern Aramean centers of (Beth-)Maacah and Beth-Rehob were under Damascene control (Angelika Berlejung; Edward Lipiński, Herbert Niehr suggest perhaps already under Ben-Hadad I, 900–875 BCE). The consequences for the kingdom of Israel, which had strengthened under the Omrides, were far-reaching. Nearly half of the previously expanded territory of the Omride kingdom was lost, and Israel had to once again confine itself to the core area of the hill country. Hazael took possession of Transjordan (2 Kgs 10:32–33), at least the eastern Gilead up to the Jabbok including Succoth/Tell Dēr ‘Allā (but probably did not penetrate further south), destroyed Megiddo, and occupied the Jezreel Plain and the nearby cities (Tel Rehov, Beth-Shean, Taanach, Jokneam). He brought the north under his control and expanded Dan, Hazor, and Bethsaida as Aramean cities.

In the south he conquered the coastal region and its most important city, the Philistine Gath (2 Kgs 12:18). There are even archaeological indications for his siege and conquest of Gath around 830 BCE (Carl S. Ehrlich, Aren M. Maeir, otherwise David Ussishkin). In Beth-Shemesh, Aphek, Tell el-Fār‘a (south), and Tel Sera/Tell eš-Šerī‘a there are also traces of destruction associated with Hazael’s advance. The advance to the south served to control the economic and trade routes and may even have extended down to the Gulf of Eilat (2 Kgs 14:22; 16:6). Hazael was probably pursuing the goal of bringing the Edomite copper trade in the Negev region under his control in order to gain access to a resource that would have been central to his expansionist quest, as well as his resistance to the Assyrians.

According to 2 Kgs 12:18–19, the Judean king Joash (840–802/1 BCE) could only prevent the taking of Jerusalem by paying a heavy tribute. Perhaps the Judean monarchy even profited from this diplomatic kowtow in the following period (Israel Finkelstein). This could have included the expansion of the Judean territory into the western and southern Shephelah following the campaign and the expansion of Lachish (Stratum IV) (Gunnar Lehmann, Hermann Michael Niemann), which was hardly possible beforehand. How the development occurred in detail remains speculative because the archaeological data for the southern and western expansion do not permit an exact dating (see §5.4.5.3). However, the increased political and economic importance of the southern kingdom is closely linked to Hazael’s campaign and the tribute raised by Joash. Perhaps this historical development brought Judah closer to politi-

cal autonomy, especially as—on the one hand—Aramean pressure on Samaria and the north continued to grow, and, on the other, as the influence of the Assyrians in the west continued to expand.

5.5.5. Joash and Aramean Dominance in the Eighth Century BCE

When Jehoahaz, the elder son of the Nimshide Jehu, died in Samaria (818–802 BCE), his brother (or according to 2 Kgs 13:10, his son) Joash transferred from Jerusalem to Samaria (probably with Aramean approval). He is said to have reigned in Jerusalem for an unusually long and smooth forty years (which would leave him in power until 801 BCE, depending on the reckoning). After the attack of the Arameans in his final years, he was only king by Hazael's grace, which did not fundamentally change in Samaria either. The Arameans were too strong for that at the end of the ninth century BCE. In Jerusalem, Amaziah (perhaps also a Nimshide if he really was a son of Joash, or maybe even the “son of a nobody” from the military or the bourgeois elite; according to 2 Kgs 12:22 he was a son of the Davidide Joash) was appointed as an Aramean vassal king. The signs of a great dominance of the Arameans in the transition from the eighth century BCE are discernible, but the continued western expansion of the Neo-Assyrians determined the shape of the future even more.

5.5.5.1. Joash of Samaria as an Aramean Vassal

In the Tell er-Rimāḥ Stela (796 BCE), in which Adad-nirari III (811–783 BCE) reports that he received tribute payments (by this time Aram-Damascus had also become a → vassal), he neither names Joash of Israel (802–787 BCE) as king of Bit Ḥumrī (he was also not a Nimshide according to the → genealogy, but see the simple ^{KUR}[māt] *Ḥu-um-ri-i* “land [of] Omri” for Samaria under Adad-nirari III in the orthostat inscription from Nimrud/Kalḥu, COS 2.114G, HTAT 121), nor does he name Joash king of Bit Nimshi or similar, but as ^I*Ia-a-su* ^{KUR}*Sa-mi-ri-na-a*, “Joash of/ from Samaria” (COS 2.114F, TUAT 1:368, HTAT 122). J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes interpret this as an indication that Israel remained under Aramean dominance merely as a kind of de facto city-state around Samaria. Since the pressure of the Assyrians on Hazael's successor, Ben-Hadad II (ca. 800–780 BCE), increased at the beginning of the eighth century BCE, the Arameans' payment of tribute to Assyria in 796 BCE was one of the prerequisites for Israel's strengthening.

Perhaps the Aramean pressure led the state, which under Omride rule expanded both internally and externally, into a short phase of recession, because trade to the north collapsed and payments to Damascus weakened the economy, but that remains very uncertain. The recession at the transition to the eighth century BCE cannot be completely clarified. In addition to the political shifts, the economic effects of a devastating earthquake (Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5) may also be included. Traces of this quake can be found in many archaeological → strata, among others in Hazor, Megiddo, Tell Dēr ‘Allā, Tell Dāmiyā (Lucas P. Petit), and Tell el-Mazār (Edward Lipiński). However, the exact dating of the severe earthquake that struck the entire southern Levant remains uncertain. It is often dated to 762 BCE, but the possible range is much wider (about 800–760 BCE) (Alexander Fantalkin, Israel Finkelstein, Aren M. Maeir).

5.5.5.2. Joash of Samaria's Attempt to Break Away from Damascus

Perhaps already under Jehoahaz (818–802 BCE) (2 Kgs 13:4–5) (J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes), but more probably under Joash of Samaria (802–787 BCE), Israel again defended itself against the Arameans (2 Kgs 13:25). The announcement that Jehoash of Samaria would annihilate the Aramean king at Aphek (2 Kgs 13:17) is stylized as the testament of the prophet Elisha and concludes with the interweaving of prophetic narratives with the history of the Omrides and Nimshides (1 Kgs 17–2 Kgs 13). The extent to which the brief note that Moabite bands invaded the country after Elisha's death can be historically evaluated or how much is simply a connection to 2 Kgs 3 and the beginning of the Elisha narratives remains uncertain. With reference to 2 Kgs 6:23, it is also assumed that the Moabites here simply stand for Arameans, and that Aramean pressure remained consistently high until Hazael's death (2 Kgs 13:22). In any case, it is announced that Joash finally pushed the Arameans back at Aphek. This fortified Aramean Aphek cannot be located with certainty. It is sought either on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (‘Ēn Gēv), or 6.5 km east of it in the southern Golan near Hippos (Fīq/Afīk), or in the Jezreel Plain, or north of Carmel in the coastal plain on Tell Kurdane. While the latter is impressive, it was not settled in the Iron II period (Gunnar Lehmann), ‘Ēn Gēv on the eastern shore of the sea fits the expansion of the Damascene rulers into the kingdom of Geshur (see §§5.3.2, 5.5.4). The mention of the place shows the connection to 1 Kgs 20:26, 30 (perhaps also 1 Sam 4; 29, Shuichi Hasegawa). The chapters 1 Kgs 20 and 22, which

are biblically dated to the time of Ahab, should probably be claimed for the time of Joash of Israel (802–787 BCE) (André Lemaire). Should 2 Kgs 6:24–7:19 not be completely legendary, the attempt of Ben-Hadad II once again to force Israel into an anti-Assyrian coalition failed. The Nimshides, Joash of Israel (802–787 BCE) (2 Kgs 13:25) and Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) succeeded in reconsolidating the state with considerable territorial recovery (Amos 6:13), though not, as 2 Kgs 14:25 enthuses, from “Lebo-Hamath to the Sea of Arabah,” that is, from the Dead Sea to Syria. The economically and geopolitically important cities of the Jezreel Plain came back under Israel’s control, as did the agriculturally important zones in Gilead, Bashan, and Galilee, along with the important cities Hazor and Abel-Beth-Maacah. Thus, the regions of textile production, which were important for the export surplus and which formed the backbone of the economy of the north, were again in Israel’s hands. The control of the coastal strip with access to the sea in Dor enabled the integration into foreign trade. The trading station in Kuntillet ‘Ağrūd (see §5.4.5.4), operated by the Nimshides in northern Sinai, shows the commitment to long-distance trade with textile products, among others (Ze’ev Meshel). Israel was regaining its former strength or perhaps even gaining strength that it had never reached before. Dan/Tell el-Qādi, located very far to the north, could well have fallen to Israel under Joash and thus marked the northern border. Even if Israel’s dominion north of the Sea of Galilee (until the final downfall of the Aram-Damascus empire in 732 BCE under Tiglath-pileser III [745–727 BCE]) remained limited (differently 2 Kgs 14:28), or at least repeatedly changed hands, the episode in 2 Kgs 14:7–14 depicts the former Omride power with the extension of the dominion of Israel to the south.

5.5.5.3. The Murder of Joash of Judah and the Installation of Amaziah as His Successor

The biblical presentation depicts Joash of Judah (840–802/1 BCE) as having been eliminated by a regicide carried out by two servants with almost the same name—Josabad/Jehosabad (= “YHWH gave”) (2 Kgs 12:22). One is introduced as the son of Shimeath (“the message”) and the other as the son of Shomer (“the keeper”). The details do not really give the impression of providing reliable information. Perhaps the names provide a reflection on the short-term detachment from the north during Amaziah’s reign.

If one does *not* see Joash of Judah (840–802/1 BCE) and Joash of Israel (802–787 BCE) as identifying the same person, the rule of Joash in Jerusalem ended with the palace revolt described in 2 Kgs 12:22. Joash's son, Amaziah (802/1–773 BCE), became the legitimate king in his place, without the conspiracy instigated by Josabad having any effect on the acceptance of the regular dynastic successor as king. Such a scenario raises the question of why Joash was killed by influential Jerusalemites close to the court. It is conceivable that Joash's policy increasingly turned against the Arameans and that the officials of the Jerusalem court recognized a danger in it. Therefore, they had Joash eliminated with the help of the Arameans and installed the still malleable Amaziah (with the support of Damascus?) as (counter?) king in Jerusalem. Amaziah's biblically described subsequent confrontation with Joash of Samaria perhaps documents the south's associated striving for autonomy, which, however, ultimately went completely wrong.

But if one takes seriously the doubts about Joash's murder in Jerusalem and presumes the equivalence of royal persons (Joash of Judah *was* Joash of Israel), the events present themselves differently. After the death of Jehoahaz (818–802 BCE) Joash took over the affairs of state in Samaria. Thus, he was not murdered but moved from Jerusalem to Samaria at the end of the ninth century BCE (and here, too, it becomes apparent that one must not cling too tightly to the regnal data collected from the biblical → synchronisms). As a very young son or grandson of Jehu, the Nimshide Joash had been sent to Judah to remove the last Omride, Athaliah, from power in accordance with the notables in Jerusalem (see §5.5.3). In the meantime, he led Judah to prosperous development (see §5.4.5.3). He seems to have honestly earned the crown in Samaria, especially since in the north a wise and experienced political force against the Aramean pressure was needed (see §5.5.4). Jehoahaz's government in Samaria was not able to cope with the pressure of the Arameans. It seems that toward the end of his reign, however (J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes with reference to 1 Kgs 20; 22)—perhaps with the help of his self-confident and already experienced brother Joash (840–802/1 BCE) from Jerusalem, but certainly with help from the pressure of the Assyrian Adad-nirari III (811–783 BCE)—he began to turn things around (see §5.5.5.1). During his reign, the Nimshides succeeded not only against Hazael (ca. 845–800 BCE), but also against his successor Ben-Hadad II (800–780 BCE) in consolidating the north (2 Kgs 13:25; cf. 1 Kgs 20:34).

The upper class in Samaria were anxious not to break off trade relations with the Arameans that secured wealth and prosperity. But politically,

Joash tried to completely free himself from Damascus. The political skill that he exercised in the leadership of the south after Athaliah was also shown during his term in Samaria. From Samaria, Joash again succeeded in bringing the south along with Jerusalem back into his sphere of influence (2 Kgs 14:8–14) when Amaziah tried to separate himself from Samaria. The political fate of Joash may have been preserved in the (military) honorary title “the chariot of Israel and its driver” (2 Kgs 13:14, other translation “the chariots of Israel and its horsemen”).

Whether or not Joash was forced out of office in Jerusalem as the story of the palace revolt of 2 Kgs 12 suggests, he politically and militarily detached himself from the Arameans in Samaria, to whom he ultimately owed his kingship. His successor in Jerusalem, at any rate, was Amaziah, who in the biblical sense is almost naturally presented in → genealogical succession as the son of Joash of Judah (2 Kgs 12:22; 14:13, 17, 23), but this remains uncertain (see §5.5.5). The fact that Amaziah started a war against Joash and attacked Israel does not necessarily speak for close family ties between Amaziah and Joash, but rather for Amaziah as an Aramean → client who → usurped the throne and was thus the “son of a nobody.” It is conceivable that Joash’s move from Jerusalem to Samaria was not caused by the death of Jehoahaz, but rather by the coup d’état in Jerusalem. Israel possibly tried to free itself from the influence of the Arameans already under Jehoahaz. Then Aram-Damascus would have tried, through Amaziah, to at least keep Jerusalem secure under its influence and strengthen its influence on the weaker state in the south. Perhaps Joash of Samaria, also after his change from Jerusalem, reigned over both kingdoms from Samaria for a few years in → personal union (2 Kgs 14:1), which could have led the officials in Jerusalem to the pro-Aramean coup and cleared Amaziah’s way to power. But, in the end, this cannot be clarified. Regardless, whichever of the above scenarios one prefers, a violent change of government in Jerusalem seems likely.

5.5.6. Amaziah of Judah and Renewed Dependence on Samaria

Regardless of whether Amaziah (802/1–773 BCE), as a → usurper, owed his royalty to the political elite in Jerusalem or to the influence of Damascus or the interaction of both, he led Judah into a short phase of prosperity. After apparently isolated successes against Edom in the south and southeast (2 Kgs 14:7), Amaziah (787 BCE or somewhat earlier? The date is uncertain) tried to renounce Israel completely. To achieve this he picked a quarrel with Joash,

who declared war on Judah (2 Kgs 14:8). He obviously completely overestimated himself and his military power. Joash's mockery in 2 Kgs 14:9–10 speaks of the north's continued superiority. Amaziah's military attempt failed completely. He was crushed at Beth-Shemesh/ʿĒn-Šems in Judean territory (!). The Nimshide Joash took him captive and stormed Jerusalem. After breaking the city's resistance, he plundered the temple and palace. He therefore apparently took the tribute that was supposedly due to him as the victor. The punitive expedition restored the north's political dominance over the south (2 Kgs 14:8–14) and ended Judah's interim political independence. The Aramean influence on Jerusalem was thus also repressed.

How far this sealed Amaziah's fate remains unclear. Perhaps he gave in and was allowed to continue his political business in Jerusalem. Since the data of 2 Kgs 14:2, 23; 15:1 are not really compatible, one assumes Azariah's coregency after the defeat at Beth-Shemesh. Then Azariah, perhaps also one of the princes of the Nimshides, would have been raised to the throne by Joash as a → client in Jerusalem.

We read in 2 Kgs 14:19 // 2 Chr 25:27 of a conspiracy against Amaziah that led him to flee to Lachish in the south. In the early eighth century BCE, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr was an important city in the Shephelah and larger than Jerusalem in terms of area. Perhaps the Jerusalem aristocracy did not approve of his separatist tendencies to break free from Samaria and his attempts at autonomy, which is why there was a coup against him. After being driven out of office, perhaps Amaziah tried to establish a counterkingdom in Lachish against Azariah in Jerusalem in the southern part of Judah (2 Kgs 14:18), which, however, had no chance against northern superiority in the long run. Although 2 Kgs 14:19 suggests that Amaziah was seized and murdered immediately after his flight to Lachish, the reign of Azariah (787–773 BCE) (who is said to be Amaziah's son and is called Uzziah in Chronicles, for example, in 2 Chr 26:1; see §5.5.8) initially also leaves room for a somewhat longer episode of a counterkingdom. Anyway, Azariah again extended Jerusalem's power to the Gulf of Eilat. At the latest, then, this would mark the end of Amaziah's reign in Lachish, concluding the episode. With Azariah the old conditions were restored: Samaria ruled Jerusalem by means of a well-founded client policy.

5.5.7. Jotham and the Last Nimshides in Jerusalem

With or without the backing of the Arameans, Amaziah's military adventure against Joash, who ruled in Samaria, was a serious mistake

of foreign policy and a complete overestimation of the young state's actual military capability, which had previously developed only in the shadow of the north. So, it is not surprising that the counterkingdom of Amaziah in Lachish (see §5.5.6) established against Azariah had little prospect of survival.

After the defeat of Amaziah in Jerusalem, Azariah was installed as a Samaritan → client and initially acted very successfully. He extended the dominion back to the Gulf of Eilat (2 Kgs 14:22) and restored the conditions of a greater Judah. Economically, it is just as impossible to make a state without the Shephelah and the Negev, as it is without access to a seaport.

According to 2 Kgs 14:21, Azariah was only sixteen years old when he took over the affairs of government in Jerusalem. He was probably from the house of the Nimshides, perhaps even a son of Joash, but that is not clear. The biblical account naturally sees him as the son of Amaziah in the required Davidic succession. This is, however, in view of the described circumstances and southern inferiority to Joash of Samaria, a rather improbable descent. The biblical → synchronisms let Azariah take over the government in Jerusalem in the year in which the successful Joash died (2 Kgs 13:13; 14:16). Perhaps Azariah was Joash's younger son, while Jeroboam followed his father on the throne in Samaria. But that, too, remains speculation.

Apparently Azariah—for whatever reason (2 Kgs 15:1–5)—was not able to attain a permanently strong position in Jerusalem after his initial successes but was first replaced by Jotham (756–741 BCE), then in his final twenty years of life by Ahaz (741–725 BCE). In the biblical presentation, a skin disease is the reason why Jotham is placed alongside him to govern. Royalty's illness is always portrayed as causing turmoil (Isabel Cranz). However, the actual background remains in the dark. In any case, Azariah no longer lived in the palace (2 Kgs 15:5). The Hebrew *bēt ḥopšît* is most commonly interpreted as a “separate house” and related to leprosy. But *ḥopšî* also means “free,” which could mean that he was deposed and deprived of power but enjoyed a certain level of grace in Jerusalem. Jotham, on the other hand, had a “general power of attorney”; he was *‘al habbayit set* “over the house” and directed the *‘am hā’āreš*. This in turn can be understood as “speaking justice,” “ruling” (cf., for Solomon, 1 Kgs 3:28 and in the books of Kings only in these two places!), or “making justice.” The *‘am hā’āreš*, which can be understood as all the people or only influential nobles, were last mentioned in the narrative of Kings at the fall of

Athaliah (2 Kgs 11:14, 18–20), where the influential citizens of Jerusalem cede to Jehu and Samaria and exchange the Omride Athaliah for the Nimshide Joash. It is possible to read 2 Kgs 15:5 in such a way that Azariah did not fulfill the Samaritans' expectations and was therefore deposed by his government and replaced by the Nimshide Jotham. Jotham was, of course, naturally listed as a Davidide in the presentation of Kings (2 Kgs 15:8), but that probably does not mean much more than that he led the affairs of government in the "House of David" in Jerusalem.

Jotham is the last king under the influence of the Nimshides from the north. He was followed by Ahaz (741–725 BCE), who was the first ruler able to detach himself from the north, even though he came to office while Azariah was still alive (he died only in 736 BCE). Under Azariah and Jotham, Jerusalem was reestablished as a subsidiary kingdom as formerly practiced under the Omrides. This was briefly interrupted by Amaziah's attempts at autonomy. However, the equivalency of names observed with the sons of Ahab and the move of rulers from Jerusalem to Samaria are only present for Joash.

When the end of the Jehu dynasty in Samaria was sealed by the murder of Zechariah (747 BCE) (directed by Rezin of Damascus), the south finally separated from Samaria under Ahaz. Once again, foreign policy made this possible. Through a skillful vassalage policy under the *pax assyriaca* (2 Kgs 16:7–8), King Ahaz managed to evade Aramean pressure and to renounce Samaria until the north was conquered, albeit at the cost of → vassalage to the Assyrians. Only then, in the final decades of the eighth century BCE, did two separate kingdoms de facto come into being, although they had been more or less politically aligned in terms of foreign policy over a long period of time from the Omrides to the Nimshides. But first, Azariah's attempt to free himself from the influence of Samaria requires investigation.

5.5.8. The Long Reign of Azariah/Uzziah and the Coregencies of Jotham and Ahaz

If one follows 2 Kgs 14:21, Azariah already acceded the throne in Jerusalem at the age of sixteen and reigned for a long fifty-two years in total. This caused the Chronicler to develop his successes in more detail. From a historical point of view, however, the data for the long period of government remain thin. The assumption, derived from Akkadian sources, that he played a decisive role in an uprising of the Syrian provinces of

Hamath against Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) in 738 BCE has not only overestimated his political significance, but has now been shown to be a false reading (Nadav Na'aman, Manfred Weippert). There is no extra-biblical evidence for King Azariah. There is also uncertainty concerning the renaming of Azariah: Above all in the prophetic superscriptions (Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1; Isa 1:1, cf. Zech 14:5, but also in 2 Kgs 15:13, 30, 32, 34; and in Chronicles until exclusively in 1 Chr 3:12) the king is called Uzziah. There is no external reason to question the identity of the two names as one person, especially as the renaming seems unmotivated (2 Kgs 15:8, 13, 17, 27, 30) and biblically unfounded. Perhaps it is due to the proximity of the two roots *ʿzr/ʿzz*, but that, too, is not certain. A total regency of fifty-two years is a very long time. However, it is possible that this period actually hides the reigns of several rulers (in a “coregency”). The name Uzziah is documented on two official seals (see fig. 35), and it can be assumed that these were officials of King Uzziah (CWSS 3–4). It is remarkable that the name forms of the seal owners are typically Israelite and not Judean. This once again underlines the connection of the king and his officials to Samaria.



Fig. 35. Seal of an official of the Judean king Uzziah (787–736 BCE) from the Iron IIB period. The infant Horus decorated with a horned sun disk kneels in a blessing posture on three lotus blossoms. The inscription next to it assigns the seal “(belonging) to Abiyau, the servant of ‘Uzziyau.” The motif shows that the wearer is not only a high civil servant, but also a member of the Egyptian influenced upper class.

How strong Azariah’s/Uzziah’s position in Jerusalem really was can not be clarified. The biblical account reports, as previously mentioned, a severe skin disease that made it impossible for him to rule (2 Kgs 15:1–5). In his place, Jotham (756–741 BCE) conducted the royal office as coregent (see §5.5.7). Ahaz (741–725 BCE) is even said to have spent the first years of his reign in Jerusalem while Azariah was still alive. But even here, the evidence is extremely insecure. All this makes the fifty-two-year regency

appear as a kind of bracket in which the detachment of Jerusalem from Samaria had at least begun, if not also concluded.

Thus, it remains unclear how long Israel's (renewed) supremacy over the southern kingdom under the Nimshides, established under Azariah, could be maintained. In addition, the details in the books of Kings are too sparse and permit only suppositions in each case. According to J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, the dependence on Israel lasted until the so-called Syro-Ephraimite War (see §5.6.4). In any case, Israel's superiority, visible in the failure of Azariah, provides further evidence that Judah was not equal to the northern kingdom even in the first half of the eighth century BCE. This is also reflected in the flowering of Samaria in the late Nimshide period under Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE), the successor of the powerful and politically astute Joash (802–787 BCE).

5.5.9. Israel's Heyday during the Reign of Jeroboam II

The renewed political supremacy of the north over the south in the eighth century BCE presupposes a strong state in the north that was successfully led by Joash until his death. Joash's successor was not the sixteen-year-old Nimshide Azariah, who was appointed coregent in Jerusalem, but Joash's (perhaps older) son Jeroboam. Possibly the two changes to the throne were too close to each other so that the previously practiced system was disrupted, according to which the son who had previously been sent to Jerusalem acceded. It is also possible that Azariah was needed to stabilize the situation in Jerusalem (see §5.5.6) or that it was already the period of coregency in Jerusalem when his father Joash died in Samaria. However, there is no evidence that his illness (see §5.5.8) prevented him from assuming greater responsibility in Samaria. During the reign of Joash, or during the reign of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25) at the latest, Israel regained control over the territories that had been lost since the advance of the Arameans under Hazael (see §5.5.5.2). This facilitated a development that led Israel to achieve its actual zenith in the first half of the eighth century BCE.

5.5.9.1. Economic Upswing under Jeroboam II

In any case, Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE) led Israel into an economic apogee, which—after a short phase of recession (see §§5.4.4–5)—can be seen in the expansion of strongly fortified cities and in the high standards of material culture. He fortified Chinnereth/Tell el-'Orême (Stratum

II) into a fortress and expanded Hazor (Stratum VI/VA), Jokneam, and Ibleam. The expansion of Megiddo with administrative and military buildings, which account for 80 percent of the city's area, is particularly clear. The rural areas were also integrated into the state administration. This is indicated by a building at Tel 'Ēsūr/Tel el-Asāwir in the northern Sharon Plain. It should be dated to the Iron IIB period according to the pottery. This building comprised a tower and three connected, long hall-like rooms that were used for storage purposes. Both are relatively typical signs of state-controlled structures, which in the example of Tel 'Ēsūr/Tel el-Asāwir attest to state organization in the periphery (Yiftah Shalev, Shay Bar). Comparable structures (some of which date back to earlier periods) can often be found at more central or economically important sites such as Chinnereth/Tell el-ʿOrēme, Tel Hadar/Eš-Šēḥ Ḥaḍar, Megiddo, Hazor, Taanach/Tell Taʿannek, and most recently Ḥorvat Ṭevet but also in the south in Beth-Shemesh/ʿĒn-Šems, Lachish, and Tell es-Sebaʿ. Such hall structures, often subdivided by rows of pillars, were typical beginning in the Omride period and served multifunctional purposes, above all for the central storage of agricultural goods (Helga Weippert, Manfred Weippert). The Nimshide journey toward state organization and standardization is evident not only in economics, but also in religious policy. The important cult centers of the country were in Dan (Stratum II), which was once again under Israelite rule, and in Bethel. There must also have been a sanctuary in Samaria—although archaeologically not provable (see also Hos 8:6; 1 Kgs 16:32)—when the Assyrians (Sargon II) removed images of gods during the conquest 722/20 BCE (Nimrud Prisms of Sargon II, COS 2.118D, *HTAT* 151).

5.5.9.2. Writing and Literary Production during the Reign of Jeroboam II

The strength of Jeroboam II, which can be seen in the country's development, suggests that it is not unlikely that he depicted himself as an important leader of the kingdom of Israel. This, however, contrasts with the biblical tradition, which only very briefly refers to his reign (2 Kgs 14:23–29). Even there, however, an unusually positive assessment both of the expansion of the area (2 Kgs 14:25, 28, cf. 1 Kgs 8:65, but also Amos 6:14) and of the duration of Israel's existence (2 Kgs 14:27: "But the LORD had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven") is connected with Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE). These data might have come from Israelite annals, because they run counter to the negative tendency

of the Judean perspective. The tension between the succinct presentation and the actual success has led to the assumption that some of Jeroboam II's achievements (such as the construction of the sanctuaries in Bethel and Dan) have been included in the negative presentation of Jeroboam I (927/26–907 BCE) (Thomas Römer, Ernst Axel Knauf). The tendency to diminish his achievements fits in with the pejorative Judean perspective, which perhaps also associated his name with the negative beginning of the kingdom and its decline. This is especially true if the thesis presented here is correct, that the existence of the founder of the northern monarchy, Jeroboam I, and the idea of a division of the kingdom are retrojections, rather than that Jeroboam II was deliberately named after the historical founder of the kingdom (so Israel Finkelstein).

With the reign of Jeroboam II (787–747 BCE), the administrative and educational conditions for the production of literature were in place. For example, the Samaria ostraca (see §5.4.3.2) show that an increasing number of economic processes were registered administratively (Ron E. Tappy et al.). The letter forms found in the caravanserai in Kuntillet 'Ağrūd show the high level of training of northern officials and writers. The forms, which in addition to a salutation also contain blessing forms ("be blessed by YHWH and by his Asherah"), show that diplomatic correspondence was highly standardized. It was probably transmitted to the scribes via a school system. The Aramaic plaster inscriptions in Tell Dēr 'Allā in Transjordan (see §4.8) can already be considered literary compositions. The ¹⁴C data of the destruction layer (the building at Dēr 'Allā was destroyed by a severe earthquake) indicate the end of the ninth century BCE or perhaps the beginning of the eighth century BCE (Erhard Blum). These inscriptions were written in red and black on the wall plaster from the late ninth century BCE (COS 2.27; cf. *TUAT* NS 8:459–74). Combination A offers a prophetic narrative colored with wisdom motifs that feature the seer Balaam as protagonist. He is also mentioned several times in the biblical tradition and is connected with the Jabbok region (e.g., Num 22:5; 31:8; Mic 6:5). Combination B, where a wisdom dialogue can be recognized, is clearly more fragmentary but also testifies to a large literary form. This is particularly remarkable because an institutional connection with the state or a reference to the communication of power cannot be discerned. There is no evidence for a religious function or interpretation as a state local sanctuary. Erhard Blum has renewed the hypothesis that this was a school, which cannot be ruled out but cannot be confirmed with certainty either. Finally, the interpretation of the building as a prophetic assembly room

(Robert Wenning, Erich Zenger) is more of a stopgap owing to the mention of Balaam than a sure interpretation of the use of the building.

Judged by the number and quality of the written records, the economic highpoint of Israel in the eighth century BCE offers sufficient clues to speculate about the origin of biblical traditions that are particularly connected to the north. These include, apart from the Elisha tradition, the older Jacob tradition, the exodus tradition, and the older traditions in Judges—the so-called Book of Saviors (Thomas Römer, Israel Finkelstein, Ernst Axel Knauf). Perhaps the positive stylization of the Jehu revolution, which initiated the phase of the Nimshide rule and which was also of great importance for the narrative consolidation of the cultural identity of the kingdom, also belongs to this context. If one is looking for a place in the history of the northern kingdom where the idea of a unified kingdom of Israel, spanning north and south, may have first appeared, then the reign of Jeroboam II commends itself. The assignment of concrete literary works to the writing schools of Jeroboam II, however, remains largely speculative.

5.5.9.3. Poverty and Social Tensions in the Eighth Century BCE

Economic prosperity led not only to a cultural, economic, and demographic upswing, but also to increasing social tensions, since not everyone benefited equally from the wealth (Walter Houston, Gunther Fleischer). As under the Omrides, the landowners, with whom a large part of the means of production was concentrated, settled in the cities, while the poorer rural population became increasingly dependent due to over-indebtedness. The financing of the state administrative and military apparatus through taxes and levies also contributed to this scenario. Unlike in the early subsistence economy, the farmers now had to lease the land and raise the rent through the proceeds (so-called rentier capitalism). This led to the impoverishment of the lower class and to an increasing gap between the rich living in luxury and the impoverished small landholders. While in the early days of Israel, the ratio of population size to arable land was unproblematic, over time agriculture came up against resource limits through strong population growth. If the yield generated was lower than that required for taxation and rent, impoverishment and debt bondage resulted. The small upper class, which accumulated the available capital, profited from trade. With this, they financed a life of luxury, which further drove the development of the market economy: a spiral in which the distances between rich and

poor became ever greater. This social fragmenting resulted in prophetic social criticism. This criticism began with Amos in Israel and a little later with Micah (e.g., Mic 2:1–6; 6:9–16*) and in Judah with Isaiah (e.g., Isa 5:8; 10:1–3) (Rainer Kessler). In Amos, a conflict with the Aramean-influenced upper class of Samaria can still be clearly observed when the luxury in Samaria is seen as alignment with Damascus (Amos 3:12) or the women of Samaria are dubbed as “cows of Bashan,” who shall be led away toward Hermon (Amos 4:1–3). In both areas, Aramean influence was dominant.

5.5.10. Notes on the Cult and Temple Renovation in the Ninth/Eighth Centuries BCE

The presentation of the history of Judah is pervaded by notes on the ongoing construction activities of the Solomonic temple, the details of which are difficult to judge historically. These culminate in the extensive renovation measures in the temple under King Josiah (639–609 BCE), which are described as the background of the so-called cult centralization (2 Kgs 22–23, see §5.9.5). Besides building and renovation notes, there are reports on the reorganization of the cult and/or on the plundering of the temple treasure by or with Rehoboam (1 Kgs 14:26–28), Asa (1 Kgs 15:12, 15, 18), Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:47), Joash (2 Kgs 11:18; 12:5–17, 19), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:14), Jotham (2 Kgs 15:30), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:8, 10–18), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:4, 15–16), Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:3–5, 7), and, finally, Josiah (2 Kgs 22–23). The only exceptions are the Jerusalem-based Omrides: Joram, Ahaziah, and Queen Athaliah, as well as Azariah/Uzziah—who had leprosy—and Abijah and Amon, who each reigned in Jerusalem for only two years, for whom no notes exist. It is not difficult to recognize Josiah's reign as the highlight of the presentation. It fully corresponds to that of King David (2 Kgs 23:2), whose reign is stylized as the measuring stick. Only after Josiah was the temple once again plundered (2 Kgs 24:13; 25:13–17) and set on fire (2 Kgs 25:9). Before this, the account records two major low points, the reorganization of the cult under Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:10–18) and Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:4–5, 7). In addition, the image is clouded by the so-called high place formulas, which assume that Judah erected or maintained cultic high places and that it served foreign gods (e.g., 1 Kgs 14:23; 15:14; 22:44; 2 Kgs 14:1; 15:1). The bottom line is that the representation is dominated by the continuity of the cult at the Jerusalem temple.

The stylization of the cult history of the northern kingdom is quite different. Just as the (supposed) continuity of the Davidic monarchy stands

against the turbulent history of the north—marked by upheavals, coups, and royal murders—so also does the cultic continuity culminating in the cultic purity and unity in the Jerusalem temple stand over against the cult history of the kingdom of Israel. The north had no central sanctuary but strongly gravitated away from the sole worship of YHWH with the sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan (the “sin of Jeroboam”: e.g., 1 Kgs 12:29–33; 14:16; 15:30; 2 Kgs 13:2; 15:28), on the one hand, and the Baal temple erected by Ahab in Samaria (1 Kgs 16:32), on the other. Only Joram (2 Kgs 3:1) and Jehu (2 Kgs 10:26–28) are said to have corrected the Baal-state cult. That 2 Kgs 17:15–16, 21–22 depict the reason for the fall of the kingdom as due to the cult related deviations shows the tendency of the overall representation to devalue Israel’s cult history when compared to Judah’s.

If one takes this as a basis, it seems extremely questionable to take the notes as historical information and to make them the foundation of a cult history. These doubts are additionally nourished by extrabiblical evidence. On the one hand, these cannot prove a state cult dedicated to Baal in the north, and, on the other hand, make an exclusive orientation toward YHWH in the south dubious. Although → epigraphy, → iconography, and the → onomasticon (via the → theophoric personal names) confirm an increasingly monolatrous tendency in the eighth/seventh century BCE (Othmar Keel, Christoph Uehlinger, Rainer Albertz, Rüdiger Schmitt) at all levels of society (family and regional, as well as national), no evidence remains of an exclusive worship of YHWH. The fact that the diametrical juxtaposition of the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom is hardly true in the history of religion is shown by the distribution pattern of the so-called female pillar figurines (fig. 36), of which countless examples were found in almost every place in Judah, but only a few specimens come from the north. In the north there is a greater diversity, but overall, a lower density of female figurines.

Asherah as a partner at YHWH’s side is documented for the north in the inscriptions of Kuntilet ‘Ağrūd (YHWH of Samaria and his Asherah) as well as for the south in Hīrbet el-Kōm and Kuntilet ‘Ağrūd. The economic development and the integration into the international long-distance trade with Phoenicia and the Arameans speak for stronger religious pluralization and internationalization of the north. This can also be seen in the → iconographic findings, but the striking distribution pattern of the pillar figurines remains a phenomenon that has not yet been completely clarified. Already these few remarks show that an independent, regionally differentiated religious history of Israel and Judah is of great importance

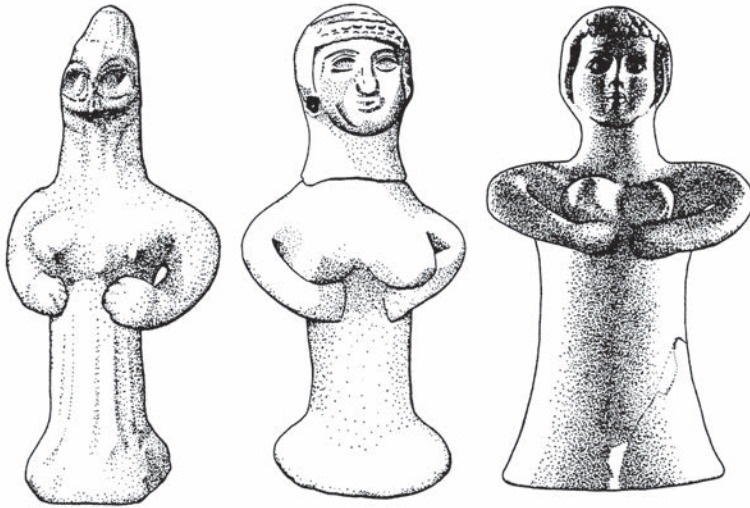


Fig. 36. Three examples of so-called Judean pillar figurines. Characteristic are the large, often protruding or sagging breasts, which are supported by both hands. The heads are either only hinted at by pinching the still damp clay together (so-called pinched-nose) or pressed separately in a model and put on the wheel-thrown body. The large, almond-shaped eyes and the tightly wrapped pearl hairstyle are characteristic. Most statuettes are between 12 and 15 cm tall. Meanwhile more than a thousand figurines (fragments) of the eighth/seventh century BCE from private or domestic, but also official contexts, are almost exclusively documented for Judah. Their interpretation is controversial, but the figurines probably represent the vitality and life force of the goddess Asherah, who was worshiped in Judah.

for the presentation of history. At least an evaluation of the historicity of the cult (reform) notes must also be read against the background of the religious development in both kingdoms.

However, this does not automatically mean that the information given in the notes can be considered ahistorical from the outset. Basically, renovation work on a building that has been in use for several centuries is more than likely. Also, a successive expansion of the temple-palace complex, which corresponds to the increasing expansion of the state, is quite plausible if one breaks away from the Solomonic fiction (Nadav Na'aman). Whether this transformation from the palace chapel to the national sanctuary can be linked with concrete notes, such as the mention of new gates (Jer 26:10; 36:10) or the upper gate (2 Kgs 15:35), is not certain (André Lemaire). The suspected measures cannot be linked directly to the biblical notes. Scholarship has always tended to judge the historicity of notes

according to their detail and degree of concreteness: concrete details are not invented; details have a reference to actual events. However, both criteria can at most indicate a trend but are ultimately insufficient for assessing the historicity of specific data. This is all the more true since the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is not subject to archaeological investigation.

According to 2 Kgs 12:2, 5, when King Joash (840–802/1 BCE) was fourteen years old, he ordered the restoration of the Jerusalem temple and decreed that the revenue from taxes and duties of the temple should be used for this purpose. However, the system was unfruitful, leading to embezzlement on the part of priests who felt deprived of their source of income. Joash therefore had a collection box installed in his twenty-third regnal year in which the money for the renovation of the temple was collected. The narrative in 2 Kgs 12:1–16 is detailed and describes a reorganization of the system of taxes at the temple. Comparable installations are known from ancient Near Eastern temple renovations (Nadav Naʾaman), at the same time the report in 2 Kgs 12 shows great proximity to the reform report 2 Kgs 22 (Oded Lipschits). Like Jehu in Samaria (2 Kgs 9–10), Joash should be stylized here as a ruler closely associated with YHWH and the temple. While this does not necessarily preclude its historical reliability, the narrative's focus is clearly more on a literary characterization of this figure than on reporting history.

Since Julius Wellhausen, the assumption that the biblical report was a narratively edited version of a document that originated in a temple archive is a possibility, but it remains speculation. Supposedly, the assumption was confirmed in 2003 by the discovery of an inscription on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in which Joash dubbed himself “son of Ahaziah” and boasted that he had renovated the temple in Jerusalem. The inscription is considered fake (Yuval Goren, Israel Ephʾal, Ernst Axel Knauf). There is no trace of a temple archive.

5.6. JUDAH UNDER ASSYRIAN INFLUENCE AND THE FALL OF ISRAEL IN 720 BCE

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At the end of the eighth century BCE, a reversal of Judah’s subordination to Israel, which had been developed and practiced for more than two centuries, began to take place in light of the weakening of the northern kingdom that culminated in the seventh century BCE. For the history of Israel, this means that it was only after this that Judah comes into view as an autonomously acting entity and as a developed state. In order to accentuate this change, Judah’s development is now treated first in the following presentation.

5.6.1. Judah’s Development in the Eighth Century BCE

The foregoing economic upswing reached the south with some delay. With the transition from the ninth to the eighth century BCE, the indicators for an administrative organization of the state in Judah increase. A → hoard find of about 180 → bullae (see fig. 1) found in Jerusalem probably dates to the middle of the eighth century BCE (Othmar Keel, a slightly earlier date Israel Finkelstein, Benjamin Sass). The sealed clay bullae, which indicate administrative activity, were found near Jerusalem’s Gihon Spring, more precisely in the fill of the so-called Rock Cut Pool (Ronny Reich et al., Othmar Keel). The Ophel excavation added thirty-four further examples of administrative bullae (Eilat Mazar et al.). Another sixty-eight bullae were found recently in the new area U at the eastern slope of the city of David (Anat Mendel-Geberovitch et al.).

In general, the large number of bullae from the Iron IIB/IIC period shows a clear increase in administration (see §5.7.2). Due to extensive excavations in Jerusalem, the evidence for administrative activities in Judah by far outstrips the archaeological data from Samaria.

In the south, the number of inscriptions also increased. Although part of a proto-Canaanite inscription was found on the shoulder of a storage jar during Eilat Mazar’s Ophel excavation, which possibly dates to the tenth

century BCE, this remains an isolated case and cannot prove a developed scribal-based administration nor the predicated scribal training. It was not until the final quarter of the eighth century BCE that an increasing number of Hebrew ostraca come from the Ophel and from the western expansion of the city (late Iron IIA period), which has led to the conclusion that there were well-developed state structures.

The advancing development of Jerusalem in the Iron IIA and Iron IIB period is undisputed. The settlement area of Jerusalem expanded to the west in the eighth century BCE at the latest (see §5.7.1). It is disputed, however, when this development began and when the character of Jerusalem as an important Iron II period city is to be set in absolute chronology. Here again the disputes regarding the tenth century BCE continue (see §4.6.3.4). For those who cling to an important Davidic-Solomonic Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE, the economic upswing of Judah would have made virtually no change in Jerusalem: everything was already there. For others, the development of Jerusalem did not begin until the ninth century BCE, and only after the boom did it produce massive structures on the Ophel and above the stepped stone structure (Israel Finkelstein). The dispute can only be decided on reliable ¹⁴C data from the more recent excavations. The picture is still contradictory, but it is undisputed from the point of view of pottery that the Southeastern Hill *was* inhabited during the Iron IIA period (Alon De Groot, Hannah Bernick-Greenberg, Doron Ben-Ami). On the one hand, the excavations in the Givati Parking Lot show the initially still modest character of the settlement of the area south of the temple district in the Iron IIA period (Doron Ben-Ami), which remained unfortified until the end of the eighth century BCE. On the other hand, the excavations by the late Eilat Mazar have shown that massive building structures can be found on the Ophel to the northeast, which lead to the conclusion that Jerusalem was an important city in the (late) Iron IIA period. The most recent archaeometric investigations of the massive facility at the Gihon Spring indicate that it may not have been built as early as the Middle Bronze but perhaps originated from the expansion of Jerusalem in the eighth/seventh century BCE or at least was massively altered then (Johanna Regev et al., differently Ronny Reich). The expansion of the city is well in line with the territorial expansion process of Judah in the eighth century BCE (see §5.4.5.3).

The density of settlements in the south increased noticeably in the eighth century BCE (Avi Ofer). Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, the most important city in Judah next to Jerusalem, was developed and fortified at the end of the Iron IIA period in the ninth/eighth century BCE (Stratum IV–III) as

a military base and local administrative center of the southern Shephelah comparable to Megiddo. Tell Bêt Mirsim was also protected by a strong → casemate wall in the eighth century BCE:

Century	Ashdod	Ekron	Gath	Jerusalem
Twelfth	7	20	20	3
Eleventh	7	20	40	4
Tenth	1 (+x)	4	45–50	5
Ninth	7	4	45–50	8
Eighth	30	4 (+x)	15–20	12
Seventh	15	35	<1	> 50
Sixth	15	0	0	4

Table 9. Settlement growth of the Philistine cities (in ha) compared to Jerusalem (based on Hermann Michael Niemann, “Neighbors and Foes, Rivals and Kin: Philistines, Shepheleans, Judeans between Geography and Economy, History and Theology,” in *The Philistines and Other “Sea Peoples” in Text and Archaeology*, ed. Ann E. Killebrew and Gunnar Lehmann, ABS 15 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013], 250, supplemented by information on Gath 2018 by Aren M. Maeir).

As the largest Philistine city, Ashdod/Esdūd replaced Gath/Tell eṣ-Ṣāfi with a settlement area of 30 ha in the eighth century BCE until its destruction in 711 BCE. Ekron/Tel Miqnē/Hirbet el-Muqanna‘ then grew exponentially in the seventh century BCE to 24 ha (see above) and developed under Assyrian dominance into the regional center of olive oil production in the Shephelah. Approximately 1,000 tons of olive oil were produced annually (see fig. 37); in the less agrarian-intensive months the large number of workers also processed wool into textile products. Philistine Ashkelon expanded within the huge area of the MB II city wall, but it is not clear whether the entire 60 ha of fortified area was used for housing in the twelfth–seventh centuries (Lawrence Stager) or *only* about 25–30 ha. But even under this condition Ashkelon was still far larger than Jerusalem in the twelfth–eighth centuries BCE.

Beth-Shemesh, located a short distance west of the three large Philistine (and economically dominant) cities in the coastal region, was reestablished after a destruction in the eighth century BCE while also demonstrating the importance of the Shephelah as an economic zone (olive oil and textile

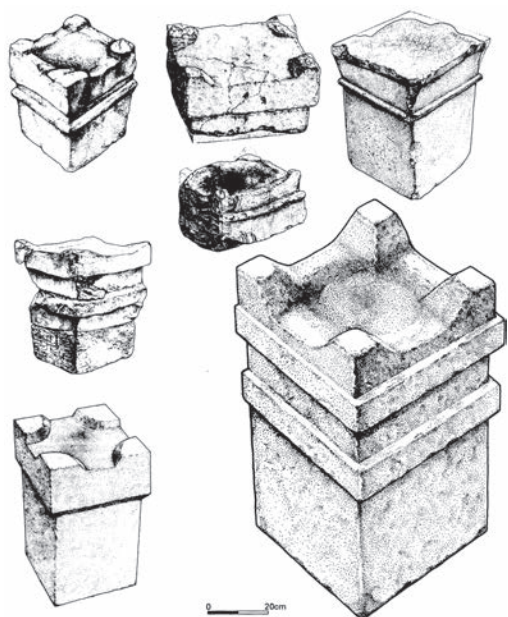


Fig. 37. The nineteen altars found in Philistine Ekron represent the largest collection of specimens in Cisjordan from the Iron II period (in Transjordan: Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine). They all date to the seventh century BCE and were found in domestic and industrial contexts in various shapes and sizes. They were primarily used to burn fragrant substances, which is why they are often referred to as “incense altars.” Although a connection with olive oil or textile production in Ekron seems obvious, it has not yet been clearly demonstrated.

production) for Judah. The fortress built in Arad in the second half of the ninth century BCE (Stratum XI) was expanded in the eighth century BCE (Stratum X/IX) (Ze'ev Herzog). In the expanded fortress there was a local sanctuary with a sacrificial altar in the courtyard and a cult niche in the cella (a room of the inner sanctum beyond the main room). One standing stone marked the presence of the revered God (YHWH), two limestone incense altars indicate cultic activity at the entrance to the inner sanctum. Recent residual analysis surprisingly detected residues of psychoactive drugs that were fumigated in the sanctum. The sanctuary had already been abandoned in Stratum VIII at the end of the eighth century BCE or was made unusable by having it covered with a layer of earth. The functional site Tell es-Seba' (Stratum III–II) developed in the eighth–seventh centuries BCE into a well-planned fortified settlement with a → casemate wall, which served as a military and trade base. Jerusalem was growing slowly and gaining in importance (Amihai Mazar, Ze'ev Herzog), but only reached its greatest expansion *after* the fall of the kingdom of Israel. The expansion of Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe, located circa 12 km northwest of Jerusalem, secured the northern border of the small state.

Further settlements in the south became fortified (e.g., Tell el-Milh/Tel Mallḥātā, Ḥirbet el-Mšāš/Tel Māsōs). In the southern Negev, a number

of fortresses were built in the eighth century BCE (Kadesh-Barnea/Tell el-Qed̄rat, Ezion-Geber/Ġezīret Farʿūn, Eilat/Tell el-Ḥulēfe). For the Assyrian great power, the south was of special importance because of the Edomite-Arabian long-distance trade (see Tiglath-pileser III's seizure of Gaza 738 BCE).

5.6.2. The Assyrian Expansion Policy and Its Consequences

The phase of prosperity extending to the middle of the eighth century BCE, in which Judah also operated as a fully developed state, was dominated by the policy of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE). After a period of weakness during which Assyria was under pressure from Urartu in the northwest, Tiglath-pileser III ascended the throne in 745 BCE after a coup d'état and vigorously continued Assyria's policy of expansion. Already in his third regnal year (743 BCE) and then in rapid succession in 742, 741, 740, 738, 734, 732, and 731 BCE, he led campaigns to the west until the entire Levant paid him tribute and large parts were converted to Assyrian provinces (Ariel M. Bagg). The years 738, 734, and 733 BCE are decisive for Palestine.

With the death of Jeroboam II in 747 BCE, the kingdom of Israel entered another unstable phase. Shallum ousted the last Nimshide, Zechariah, from the throne in Samaria, which the Hebrew Bible reports occurred only six months into Zechariah's reign (2 Kgs 15:10). Shallum himself only lasted one month (2 Kgs 15:13) before being murdered by Menahem (747–738 BCE) (2 Kgs 15:14). It can only be assumed that the coups (if historical) were not only based on a desire for power, but also on concrete debates about the appropriate foreign policy in view of the Assyrian threat, even if Menahem's first decade of reign can be considered the calm before the storm. In 738 BCE, however, Tiglath-pileser III again moved west, subjugating central Syria and Cilicia. The campaign in his eighth Palu (regnal year) reached only into the Amuq Plain to the city of Kullani, but that was sufficient to receive tribute from Byblos, Tyre, Damascus, and also Bit Ḥumrī. The "donkey-driver land" Damascus and Tyre seem to have become tributaries of Assyria perhaps as early as 740 BCE but no later than 738 BCE. The rest would not wait for the Assyrian army to invade their land. Second Kings 15:19 reports the 1,000 talents of heavy tribute that Menahem (747–738 BCE) had to pay and how he, therefore, increased the taxes on the wealthy. Assuming 1,000 talents weigh approximately 34 kg, the heavy tribute would require 60,000 strong shoulders to pay 50 silver shekels (1 shekel

≅ 11.4 g) each. The number is likely exaggerated, but it makes clear that tributes could not simply be paid out of the king's pocket, but rather had to be skimmed off the country's financial resources. The tribute is diplomatically explained as "so that he might help him confirm his hold on royal power" (2 Kgs 15:19). ¹*Miniḥimme* ^{KUR}*Sâmīrināya* "Menahem of Samaria"—as he is called in the annals of the Assyrian king (stela of Tiglath-pileser III, Iran, HTAT 141)—was allowed to stay in office but died in 738 BCE.

His son Pekahiah was king for two years but was removed from power and killed in a military coup by Pekah in 736 BCE. The report in 2 Kgs 15:25 that Pekah was accompanied by fifty Gileadites can be interpreted in such a way that the coup was motivated by the pro-Assyrian attitude of Pekahiah in light of the anti-Assyrian alliance with Aram-Damascus (see §5.6.4). Second Kings 15:37 and Isa 7:1–9 can also be interpreted in this manner.

5.6.3. Ahaz as a Neo-Assyrian Vassal

Judah was initially spared from → vassalage (Antoon Schoors, differently Herbert Donner, who considers a tribute payment of Azariah/Uzziah probable but ultimately leaves the question open). But in 734 BCE the Assyrian king advanced along the Philistine coast to Gaza (Tiglath-pileser III's campaign to Gaza, COS 2.117E–F, HTAT 142). This move was probably initiated with the aim of establishing a base (Naḥal Muṣur at Wādī l-⁴Ariš) on the border with Egypt and at the terminal of the Arabian incense and spice trade. Like Ashkelon, Ammon, Moab, and Edom, Ahaz of Judah (741–725 BCE) also responded to the pressure and more or less voluntarily paid the demanded tribute (2 Kgs 16:8; see the vassal list COS 2.117D, HTAT 140). With ^M*Ia-ú-ha-zi* ^{KUR}*Ia-u-da-a*—the long form Jehoahaz—the listed king represents the first available non-biblical evidence of the kingdom of "Judah." It names the land rather than the eponymous founder (*bytdwd*) as in the inscription from Dan (see §4.5.2) (see also the → bulla from the antiquities market with the inscription *lḥz yhwtm mlk yhdh* "[seal impression] of Ahaz, [son of] Jotham, king of Judah," HAE 2.2.128 no. 1.33; cf. COS 2.73, HTAT 226).

With their campaigns, the Assyrians spread fear and terror, so that in realpolitik it was preferable to pay the tribute in the interest of peaceful coexistence between unequal partners (Jürgen Bär). With the tribute payment, Ahaz (736–725 BCE) created space for his own political action in the shadow of the Assyrian protective power. Archaeologically, it is

not completely clear whether Tiglath-pileser III had already annexed and destroyed the territory of Judah (Tell Bêt Mirsim, Tel Ḥalif, Tell es-Seba⁶, Tell eš-Šeḥ, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, Tell ‘Eṭūn, Tell el-Ḥesī, so Jeffrey A. Blakely, James W. Hardin) such that it was reduced to a small state (see J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes, who assume that Judah was still attributed to Bīt Ḥumrī until the conquest of Samaria) or whether the mentioned destructions date back to Sargon II 712 BCE or (best archaeologically documented) Sennacherib 701 BCE (Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Na’aman).

5.6.4. The Attempt to Reestablish the Anti-Assyrian Coalition

When the Assyrian Great King had again withdrawn from the region, Rezin of Damascus (ca. 750–732 BCE), Hiram II (ca. 739–730 BCE) of Tyre, and the military captain Pekah (735–733/32 BCE, 2 Kgs 15:23, 25)—who had reigned in Samaria since the successful coup (with Aramean support?) against Pekahiah—tried to relaunch the anti-Assyrian coalition. It remains unclear when exactly this transpired, who was still involved in the attempt, and the connection between the events and the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE). Older research dated it with Joachim Begrich mostly in the period 738–734 BCE, more recently Herbert Donner has made the probable classification of shortly before this, that is, *after* the campaign to Gaza in 734 BCE. King Ahaz of Judah (741–725 BCE) refused to join the anti-Assyrian coalition. This was a sign not only of smart real-politik but also of an attempt to assert political autonomy vis-à-vis the north. According to Isa 7:1, 5–6, Rezin and Pekah are said to have tried to forcibly depose Ahaz and instead to bring the “son of Tabeel” (an Aramean or Phoenician), who was willing to join the coalition, to power in Jerusalem. The attack is called the Syro-Ephraimite War, although scholars disagree on how far the military attempts of the coalition actually went (2 Kgs 16:5–6; Isa 10:27–32; 2 Chr 28:5–15) and whether Judah mounted a counterattack (Hos 5:5–14). According to the biblical account (2 Kgs 16:7–8), Ahaz, against Isaiah’s advice (Isa 7:1–9 and other Isaiah texts detailed by Othmar Keel), requested military help from Tiglath-pileser III. He underlined this with an additional voluntary tribute, for which he perhaps even had the elaborate metal installations in the temple forecourt reworked (2 Kgs 16:17–18). While the request to take action against the insurgents may not have been necessary, being put forward by insignificant Judah, the additional tribute may have made it unmistakably clear that Ahaz was a loyal → vassal of Assyria and was therefore to be spared.

With its foreign policy action clearly distinguished from Israel's, it is also recognizable that Judah was no longer in a position of weakness vis-à-vis Israel, but—due to the expansion to the west and south, as well as the *pax assyriaca*—could now appear distinct. The other side of the coin is that this ultimately enabled the survival of the state of Judah.

5.6.5. The Construction of a New Altar in Jerusalem and the Question of the Assyrianization of the Cult

In 2 Kgs 16:10–18 a reform report is connected with the kowtowing of the Judean monarch before Tiglath-pileser III, which raises many questions. Before his return, Ahaz had a large stepped stone altar built in Jerusalem, which was based on the altar he had seen during his visit to Damascus. On this altar he conducted burnt offerings after his return, which from then on were to be offered on this new great altar. The bronze-coated altar was moved to the northern side and was subsequently used for the viscera show—a form of divination particularly common in Mesopotamia. The report has often been interpreted as an indication of a voluntary or an enforced Assyrianization of the cult (Hermann Spieckermann), for which, however, the indications are insufficient. First, it is an Aramean stepped altar (Othmar Keel). Second, it is striking that this measure—unlike the horses dedicated to the sun god according to the Assyrian divination cult (2 Kgs 23:11, see §5.9.5)—was neither criticized nor ever dismantled in a counterreform. There are no reliable indications of an obligation to introduce Assyrian cults, especially a sacrificial cult, from Assyrian sources. The introduction of Assyrian gods into foreign temples was limited to Babylon and Haran. Recent studies stress that there had been neither a political program nor de facto Assyrianization (Angelika Berlejung). Assyrian gods were worshiped by Assyrians in Palestine (e.g., in the cult room of Tell Abū Salima, Ronny Reich), but there was no Assyrian propaganda requiring → vassals to worship the god Aššur (or other Assyrian deities such as the main god Ištar, the weather god Adad, or the war god Ninurta). The explicit presence of Assyrian deities on plaques, amulets, or seals is extremely rare (the great goddess Ištar, the goddess of healing Gula, the demons Lamaštu and Pazuzu) and strikingly omits the main god Aššur. Although there is a general tendency toward astralization in the eighth/seventh century BCE in the → iconographic symbol system (Othmar Keel, Christoph Uehlinger), this reflects a regional development and not

an Assyrianization of the cult. The solar symbolism of the *lmlk* seal jar handles in the eighth/seventh century BCE (see fig. 38), for example, points to Egyptian and non-Assyrian solar symbolism (Othmar Keel). All this may not preclude tendencies to transfer the attractiveness of the Assyrian gods to one's own or to introduce Assyrian practices in isolated cases. However, it can be ruled out that this was demanded from the vassals. Against this background, the altar building under Ahaz can be understood as a reorganization of the sacrificial cult (Othmar Keel). But *why* Ahaz wanted to copy an Aramean stepped altar for this while he simultaneously wanted to set himself apart from Damascus in foreign policy remains a question that cannot be answered satisfactorily. Perhaps it was an indeterminate moment of the attractiveness of the (Assyrian-mediated?) Aramean religion. This appears somewhat later in the Iron IIC period also in the widespread distribution of the moon god of Haran, whose emblem (a crescent moon disk on the standard with tassels) often appears on seals in Judah (see fig. 28).

5.6.6. Tiglath-pileser III's Punitive Expedition and Hoshea's Accession

Hardly at the insistence of the eager Judean king, but out of a clear interest in maintaining power in the southern Levant, Tiglath-pileser III (= Tukulti-apil-Ešarra) (745–727 BCE) undertook a punitive expedition from 733 BCE against the coalition members. The territory of Israel was considerably curtailed in the north; Galilee and Gilead were annexed and added to the newly established provinces of Megiddo/Magidû and Gilead/Gal'ad. The cities of Dan, Hazor, Beth-Shean, Tel Rehov, Megiddo, et-Tell, Chinnereth, and Yokneam have layers of destruction that probably relate to Tiglath-pileser III's campaign. Parts of the upper class were led away to Assyria (2 Kgs 15:29). A short time later Pekah was overthrown and killed by pro-Assyrian forces (2 Kgs 15:30). Hoshea (732–723 BCE) was appointed or confirmed with Assyrian approval as king of Israel in his place. Hoshea paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III as a → vassal in 731 BCE in the Babylonian city Šarrabānu (Annals of Tiglath-pileser III, COS 2.117C, F; HTAT 147–49, 152; see TUAT 1:263, 266–67). Probably, in the same campaign (733/32 BCE) the coastal strip was subordinated to the Assyrian administration as the province of Dor/Dū'ru. The Assyrian Great King besieged Damascus, which resisted until 732 BCE but then fell; Aram-Damascus was also transformed into an Assyrian province.

5.6.7. Hoshea's Rebellion and the Siege of Samaria

After this profound restructuring, the region experienced a period of calm, which even persisted after Shalmaneser V (727–722 BCE) ascended the throne in Assur. For reasons that cannot be clarified, Hoshea stopped paying tribute either immediately after the change in regency (Nadav Na'aman) or, less likely, in 724 BCE (Herbert Donner) and began diplomatic negotiations to form an anti-Assyrian coalition with Egypt. The Egyptian king Sō' mentioned in 2 Kgs 17:4 masks Osorkon IV (730–713 BCE) (Bernd Schipper). This serious foreign policy mistake was severely punished by Shalmaneser V, who captured Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:4) and occupied the rump state of Israel. The conquest of Samaria was claimed by Shalmaneser V (Babylonian Chronicle) and (much more frequently) by Sargon II (Nimrud Prisms, The Great Summary Inscription of Sargon II from Khorsabad), who came to power in 722 BCE, for himself (COS 2.118D–E, *TUAT* 1:378–81, 401–2, *HTAT* 150–52). The biblically based view (2 Kgs 17:3; 18:9–10) had Samaria fall in 722 BCE after three years of siege under Shalmaneser V, but only under Sargon II does Samaria suffer the consequences from it (Herbert Donner). J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, like many others, assume two conquests in 722/21 BCE (Shalmaneser V after the first assault in 726/25 BCE) and 720/19 BCE (Sargon II), which raises the question of what happened in Samaria in between. M. Christine Tetley has therefore proposed making only Sargon II responsible for the conquest and setting it in 721–718 BCE. It seems more plausible, however, to assume the campaign was interrupted due to the death of Shalmaneser V, so that the final capture of Samaria only took place under Sargon II 720 BCE (Nadav Na'aman).

Outside the capital Samaria, the consequences varied greatly from region to region and again were more intense in the north than in the south. Yet, they were not comparable to the severe destruction caused by Tiglath-pileser III (see §5.6.6). In any case, there was no widespread destruction of the conquered area, but the Assyrians restricted themselves to strategic and administrative places, including Dan, Bethsaida, Tel Hadar, Tel Qarnei Hittin, 'En Gēv, Hannathon, Dor, Dothan, Beth-Shean, Kadesh/Tell Qedeš, Tirzah, and others (Gary N. Knoppers). Places like Taanach, Jezreel, or Tell Qiri, but above all Bethel (cf. 2 Kgs 17:28), were not destroyed and show a continuous settlement from the eighth to the seventh century BCE.

5.6.8. Israel's Integration into the Neo-Assyrian Provincial System

What remained of Israel was transformed into the Assyrian provinces of Samaria (Šamīrīna) and Megiddo (Magidû) and placed under the control of governors. Together with the two inland provinces, the province of Dor/Dû'ru was formed on the coast, although it is questionable whether Dor had belonged to the territory of the former Israel at all (see §5.4.2). Sargon II (722–705 BCE), like Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE) before him, deported the elite, specialist craftsmen, and soldiers (e.g., to Assur, Nimrud, Nineveh, Tell Šeḫ-Ḥamad, and other places), but, unlike his forebear, he settled a new foreign upper class in their place (2 Kgs 17:6, 24; cf. Sargon II COS 2.118A, *HTAT* 158; see §5.7.1). This resettlement made political control easier and at the same time prevented the collapse of economic power. Even if 2 Kgs 17 gives the impression that *all* Israel was deported (v. 18: “none was left but the tribe of Judah alone”), which forms the foundation of the myth of the ten lost tribes, this hardly can have corresponded to reality. Regional studies on Transjordanian Gilead (Meindert Dijkstra and Karel Vriezen) or on the cities in the Hula Basin (Dan, Abel-Beth-Maacah, Hazor) and the sea region in Galilee (Chinnereth, Bethsaida) (Yifat Thareani) show that the Assyrians were not interested in an empty land. Rather, through targeted expansion measures, they prevented the collapse of infrastructure and prepared the region for the greatest possible absorption of its economic power.

The loss of autonomy associated with integration into the Assyrian provincial system did not generally have negative consequences, as the Assyrians were interested in intensive use of resources and long-distance trade. The brick allocation list preserved in Nineveh shows that the provinces in the west were not neglected (Letter from Nineveh, SAA 5.291, *HTAT* 169). From Qāqun comes a fragment of a stela of Sargon II in which the political interest in the west can still be implicitly read. Although to a lesser extent than Megiddo (Stratum III), Dor, and Dan, Samaria was developed into the administrative center (see documents and references to the administrative activity in Šamīrīna and Magidû *HTAT* 164–79, COS 3.97, 3.111, 3.113, 3.116–118, 3.122, 3.128, on the lack of architectural references, Ron E. Tappy). In Megiddo, Chinnereth/Tell el-‘Orême, Hazor, and other places, palace complexes in Assyrian style were built in the seventh century BCE.

5.6.9. Deportation of Part of the Israelite Population

The general war practice in the ancient Near East included the deportation of parts of the population from conquered territories. On the one hand, human resources (elites, intellectuals, civil servants, soldiers, etc.) were siphoned off and new workers acquired; on the other hand, political resistance was permanently broken by the destruction of developed social structures. The aim was for the locals to behave more loyally toward their foreign rulers than before. One of the special features of Assyrian deportation practice was the *exchange* of elites and sections of the population (the so-called two way deportation) (Karen Radner, Katsuji Sano). For the province Šamīrīna this meant the deportation of parts of the population to the northeast of the empire and the resettlement of Babylonians, Elamites, and Proto-Arabs in Šamīrīna. In 2 Kgs 17:6; 18:11 the destinations of the deportation are listed in a rather blanket fashion: the city of Halah, probably Ḥalaḥḥû in the northwest of the city of Assur (later identified in the Talmud with Hulwan in the Zagros Mountains, where there was a Jewish community), the area of the Habor River (Ḥabūr in the northeast of Syria), and the cities of the Medes (in present-day Iran, later identified with the Sassanian → diaspora).

In the two Assyrian provinces of Samaria (Šamīrīna) and Megiddo (Magidû), founded in 720 BCE, foreigners defeated by the Great King were settled. Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim are listed as the places of origin of the resettled population in 2 Kgs 17:24. The consequence, which is also reflected in 2 Kgs 17:29–41 colored by the interest in pure YHWH worship, was a multiethnic and multireligious mixed society with its own challenges. The west became international, not Assyrian (Angelika Berlejung). Still, Assyrian administrative buildings in Megiddo and Samaria marked the Assyrian presence in the provincial cities. Overall, the influence of Assyrian material culture was minimal, although Assyrian documents have been found in Samaria, Tel Ḥādīd, and Gezer (COS 3.116–118, 3.122, *HTAT* 164–67), which testify to a larger number of Assyrian names (Ido Koch et al.).

The deportees were not prisoners of war interned in camps without rights. Clearly, they had rights. Social ties were respected and a minimum level of care guaranteed, in some cases houses were even built (Angelika Berlejung). Gozan, mentioned in connection with the river in 2 Kgs 17:6, is probably not the landscape through which the Habor/Ḥabūr River flows but the name of an important town on the upper reaches of the river

that can be identified with Tell Halaf (Bob Becking). In fact, an Israelite name, Hoshea, has been preserved there in a contract (Tell Halaf line 111). Another letter from Nineveh (*HTAT* 178) mentions that two Israelites were involved in the governor of Guzāna/Gozan's intrigue (Bob Becking). This indicates that the report in 2 Kgs 17, despite its almost grotesque exaggeration and Judean bias, cannot be denied all credibility, even though the text probably does not exhaustively mention all the places where Israelites were settled in the eighth/seventh century BCE.

The idea that *all* Israelites were displaced (see 2 Kgs 17:6, 23–24) certainly does not correspond to the historical realities (Ernst Axel Knauf). Sargon II (722–705 BCE) indicates that the number of deportees totaled 27,280 persons (Nimrud Prisms, The Great Summary Inscription from Khorsabad, *COS* 2.118D–E, *HTAT* 151–52, *TUAT* 1:379), which would correspond to about 10 percent of the total population. Compared to other mass deportations of the Assyrians, the statement seems more or less credible (Bustenay Oded, Gary N. Knoppers). Others consider this to be completely exaggerated and assume a far lower proportion of affected persons (3–4 percent, Richard J. Coggins). Overall, the consequences of the conquest of Samaria (apart from the destruction and collateral damage) were probably far less dramatic in demographic terms than described in the Hebrew Bible. This also corresponds to the fact that the prophets of the seventh century BCE did not particularly emphasize a significant reduction of the population or foreign elements in the north. In any evaluation, it must always be taken into account that the biblical presentation is guided by Judean interests and possibly also reflects the postexilic opposition between Judeans and Samaritans (see §6.8). In any case, some of the rural population was relocated to the cities, while others seem to have fled to the south—especially to Jerusalem—(taking their traditions with them, which were decisive for the development of literature).

5.7. JUDAH UNDER HEZEKIAH AFTER ISRAEL'S FALL UNTIL 701 BCE

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5.7.1. Jerusalem's Development in the Eighth Century BCE

Evidence of a migration from the north is shown by the demographic development in Judah in the transition from the eighth to the seventh century BCE. This development cannot be explained purely economically due to an incipient rural emigration. Jerusalem was considerably extended to the west on the Southeastern Hill and beyond it in the *mišneh* called the Second Quarter (Zeph 1:10–11; 2 Kgs 22:14) (see §10.4, map 16). The expansion probably occurred successively, beginning either in the late eighth century BCE under Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) or possibly only in the seventh century BCE under Manasseh (696–642 BCE) or Josiah (639–609 BCE) at the latest. At any rate, the significance of Jerusalem increased both biblically and extrabiblically in texts dating from or referring to the eighth/seventh century BCE. It was probably only at this point in time that the eastern side of the city was secured with a wall system (Margreet Steiner). The 5 m wide main wall on the slope was preceded by a 1 m wide facing wall. In between there was a 2–3 m wide weir. While parts of the main fortification wall were already uncovered by the excavations of Kathleen Kenyon and Yigal Shiloh, most recent excavations could reveal a third part almost connecting to the former course of the wall (Filip Vukosavovi, Joe Uziel). The exact dating of the construction, between the end of the eighth century BCE and the early seventh

century BCE, is uncertain. Another wall at the foot of the slope (perhaps built a little later?) provided the city a second layer of security (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron, Doron Ben-Ami).

So, if the city was now fortified on the eastern side of the Kidron Valley (and according to Klaus Bieberstein already before it was fortified around the acropolis), the question of the southern and western fortifications of the expanded city arises.

5.7.1.1. The Discussion of the City's Western Expansion

The short section of the 6.40–7.20 m wide so-called broad wall (Nahman Avigad) in the Jewish Quarter of today's Old City provides relatively reliable archaeological evidence of the city's expansion. This massive wall (Neh 3:8?) is part of the perimeter wall of the new district in the west and probably also part of a gate system (Middle Gate?, see §10.4, map 16). Several sections have been identified for the course in the west, none of which have (yet) proven to be certain and generally accepted. However, since the exact course of the wall is unclear, the extension to the west and south remains ambiguous, which has produced minimalist and maximalist positions (Hillel Geva). While the maximalist position in the west and south is roughly oriented to the slope of the Hinnom Valley, the minimalist position follows the course of today's Old City wall. In discussion are two sections in the northwest in the area of the so-called Tower of David as well as on today's Mount Zion and the south slope of the Southwestern Hill (Klaus Bieberstein). The population of Jerusalem grew considerably already in the eighth century BCE, which is also apparent from the population density in other parts of the city. However, it remains disputed how dense the settlement in the western part of the city actually was (Hillel Geva, Avraham Faust). The broad assumption that the city, which extended to the southwest, was very densely populated is usually associated with the fortification efforts and the costly water supply (see §5.7.1.3). The relatively dense settlement in the northwestern areas is then used to deduce the settlement density of the whole expanded city. Others, however, argue that cisterns are missing and that the water supply from the Gihon Spring was insufficient for a dense settlement and due to the overall rather sparse architectural remains from cattle pens (which can hardly be proven archaeologically as mobile boundaries for small livestock) assume a very thin scattered settlement. That the truth rests somewhere in the middle can hardly be proven because of the absence of large excavations, which

in any case are hardly possible due to the dense settlement of today's Old City. Accompanying this, one can argue that the later partly poor residential buildings in the southeastern part of the city from the Iron IIC period would hardly have been built (see §5.7.1.2), if there had been enough space within the walls on the newly developed Southwestern Hill. On the other hand, there is no evidence of a dense settlement on the Southeastern Hill for the eighth century BCE, which one would suspect prior to an expansion of the town to the west. During the construction of the broad wall, existing dwellings from the Iron IIB period were built over, which could have been avoided if the area had a small level of development. This in turn could speak in favor of a denser settlement, even if the course of the wall has to be judged from a strategic point of view. Nor does it seem very likely that a largely undeveloped area was enclosed by a massive wall. In the end, the question cannot be answered due to the lack of excavations. Avraham Faust therefore parallels the growth with the development in the Jerusalem hinterland. There, too, a considerable increase in the number of farmsteads can be assumed for the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, which were in close economic exchange with the flourishing city. Jerusalem's importance and population density can be seen in this. Such a view presupposes the density of settlement in Jerusalem rather than demonstrates it.

The exact course of the city wall and also the area that was thus integrated into the city area in the southwest also remain unclear due to the connections to the proven eastern city walling in the area of the city of David and to the temple-palace area. The construction of the perimeter wall of the western city would not have taken place before the securing of the eastern flank. Whether it was built at the same time can hardly be ascertained, since a connection between the two wall systems is currently not discernible. In terms of construction, the systems are not the same and the type of settlement expansion on the Western Hill also differs from that on the eastern slope of the city of David (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron). As an argument for an early dating of the western wall system, the missing *lmlk* seals in the settlement layers of the Southwestern Hill preceding the construction of the wall are cited. However, since the seals were introduced in the last quarter of the eighth century BCE (after 732 BCE) (Oded Lipschits et al., otherwise Nadav Na'aman: after 714 BCE), the argument is only of limited use, unless one dates the building of the wall directly to the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) (Klaus Bieberstein). It is also questionable whether *lmlk* seals can even be expected outside the administrative zones of the city (see §5.7.2).

5.7.1.2. Jerusalem's Demographic Development in the Eighth/Seventh Centuries BCE

The discussion of Jerusalem's demographic development is closely linked to the question of how many refugees arrived at the end of the eighth century BCE after the conquest of Samaria. The maximalist position, which is based on a population explosion caused by Israelite migrants to Judah, is contrasted with a minimalist position, which considers the flow of refugees from the north to be a modern myth (Philippe Guillaume) and instead assumes a gradual population growth. The latter assumption seems to correspond more to the pottery finds, which cannot be limited to the last quarter of the eighth century BCE as the beginning of the settlement of the western city and which do not show any significant influences from the north (Nadav Na'aman). Recently, Yuval Gadot and Joe Uziel have also argued, with reference to the end of the ninth century BCE, that Jerusalem would not have become a flourishing city in one blow in the late eighth century BCE. In contrast, Israel Finkelstein, with reference to the very short-term development in Jerusalem and to the traditions of the north that have been handed down and adapted further in the south (see §5.5.9.2), continues to adhere to a significant immigration to Jerusalem. He estimates that the urban population grew from 1,500 in the Iron IIA period to 10,000 in the Iron IIB period (see below). In his opinion, most immigrants came from the southern parts of the northern kingdom of Israel. However, the arguments for the increase by refugees are not very reliable: A simple litmus test is the attestation of origin in personal names. Since northern names vary from southern in terms of the theophoric element (namely, *-yw* instead of southern *-yhw*) one would expect at least *some* northern names in the Jerusalemite or Judean → onomasticon. This is not the case. The → bulla of *l'h'b bn mnhm* from Area U in the city of David (Anat Mendel-Geberovich et al.), which was presented as indicating a possible northerner, is not indicative in this regard, since *mnhm* is attested several times in the Judean → onomasticon but not in the Israelite onomasticon as attested beyond the bible. If the Tell 'Ētūn → bulla is not read *šbnyhw bn yw'b* (Daniel Vainstub) but as *šbnyhw bn yhw'b* (Anat Mendel-Geberovich, Mitka R. Golub), only three people from Judah bear names with the indicative element *yw* (Mitka R. Golub). Perhaps his name was changed from *mnhm ywbnh* to *mnhm yhwbnh* (CWSS 677–78).

The constitution of literary myths of origin such as the connection of the Jacob tradition with places of the south and the Abraham tradition are

causally connected with the collective formation of identity in Judah in the eighth century BCE (Christian Frevel), but they need not presuppose mass immigration. Population growth in Jerusalem was gradual rather than explosive. A selective increase directly in 722/21 BCE is difficult to prove, especially since even after the campaign of Sennacherib in 701 BCE, which ended with Jerusalem being spared (see §5.7.5), immigration from the Shephelah is conceivable (Nadav Na'aman). It is true that the number of settlements in the southern part of the former northern kingdom declined significantly, while the population in the Shephelah grew massively during the Iron IIB period. Whether they were refugees after 722 BCE and whether the inhabitants of the northern kingdom migrated is not so easy to determine from the findings. There are no reliable traces in the south's material culture indicative of the so-called northern kingdom. The most recent excavations in the city of David, on the Ophel, at the Gihon Spring, and in the Givati Parking Lot speak against the assumption that the city was settled in the Iron IIA period only on the site of today's Temple Mount. Rather, there was already a significant settlement of the Southeastern Hill before the conquest of Samaria (Yuval Gadot, Joe Uziel), which rather supports the thesis of a gradual increase, even if it does not exclude an increase due to refugees at the end of the eighth century BCE. This makes Israel Finkelstein's calculation of 1,500 inhabitants of the city in the Iron IIA period difficult to accept. The cultural transfer in construction and agricultural production techniques, storage techniques, and burial customs that Finkelstein suggests were introduced by the refugees can hardly be limited to the time after the fall of Samaria. On the whole, one cannot completely rule out the influx of refugees from the northern kingdom of Israel causing a moderate increase in the population in Judah, but one must remain cautious about a mass migration from the north. However, it can be explained causally: Jerusalem underwent massive demographic, geostrategic, and religious change as a result of the Assyrian conquest of the north and the Shephelah in the eighth and, above all, the seventh centuries BCE. For it is *de facto* initially the only *city* of Judah that survived the Assyrian invasion, while the region gradually recovered from the Assyrian punitive expedition only in the seventh century (see §5.7.5).

It was during this time, at the latest, that the Ophel, the intermediate area between the Temple Mount and the Southeastern Hill, became densely populated. On the east of the Middle Bronze city wall in the city of David, simple houses were built close to each other and at the foot of the slope—perhaps already during Hezekiah's reign, or maybe only under

Manasseh (2 Chr 33:14)—protected by a wall 2 m wide (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron). Thus the number of inhabitants at the *end* of the eighth century BCE was between 8,000 (minimalists, e.g., Hillel Geva) and 26,000 (maximalists, e.g., Oded Lipschits), depending on the area assumed and the assumed settlement density (overviews in Othmar Keel, Avraham Faust). Jerusalem was thus the largest and most populous city in Judah, much larger than the regionally significant towns of Beth-Shemesh, Gezer, Timnah, Tell Bēt Mirsim, Hebron, Azekah, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, Tell es-Sebaʿ, or Arad. There can be little doubt that Jerusalem, whose importance increased once again in the seventh century BCE, had profited from the so-called Assyrian crisis.

5.7.1.3. The Expansion of the Water Supply in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BCE

The water supply of the city of Jerusalem was almost completely dependent on the perennial Gihon Spring on the eastern slope of the Kidron Valley, which, strategically speaking, was inconveniently located outside the city walls. The Rogel Spring in the south of the city (Josh 18:16), on the other hand, was unsuitable for a stable water supply. The “lower pool” (Isa 22:9), probably the Shiloah pool (Pool of Siloam) in the south of the city, and the “upper pool” on the road to Fuller’s Field (Isa 7:3; 2 Kgs 18:17; Isa 36:2) are also mentioned. The “upper pool” would have also been located in the south and would have been connected with the former canal system on the slope. Alternatively, it is suggested that the “upper pool” was located outside the city wall in the north, either in the northwest (Birkat Hammam al-Batraq, see §10.4, map 16) or in the area of the pool—named “Beth-zatha” (Βηθζαθα, possibly from Aramaic *byt zyt* ‘house of the olive’) in John 5:2—in the northeast. That the source area of the Gihon was already secured by a massive fortification during the MB II period was undisputed for some time (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron). Since then, massive doubts have arisen (David Ussishkin) and it has been proposed that the entire complex should be attributed to the Iron IIB. The Spring Tower is the most massive known pre-Hellenistic complex in Jerusalem. The construction technique has parallels in the Middle Bronze period in Shiloh and Hebron, and so far, there is not a single comparable cyclopean wall from the Iron Age (Ronny Reich). This causes some hesitation with accepting the ¹⁴C data, which dates the construction of the complex to the Iron IIA period and the late ninth century BCE (Johanna Regev et al.). In any case, massive

construction work on the fortification of the water supply system (Yuval Gadot, Joe Uziel) took place at this time or a little later.

The water was channeled through a tunnel system into a 15 x 10 m reservoir located to the southwest of the spring, which was also secured by a massive construction. This so-called Pool Tower is located north of the pool, which is up to 14 m deep. A counterpart may be assumed for the southern area. Access to the water from inside the city was via a tunnel system. In the pool, where the water was always only up to a low height, the water could then be scooped up and brought into the city. In addition, the Gihon Canal (often also called Siloam Canal) led the water, dammed up at the source for irrigation, along the slope to the south and ultimately emptied (in the late eighth century BCE, Amihai Sneh et al.; 2 Chr 32:30 refers to it; cf. 2 Kgs 20:20) into a retention basin (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron). This efficient water supply system, which strongly reinforced one of the most vulnerable parts of the city, was abandoned and repurposed during the Iron IIB period. The large basin was filled and a house built on it; the pottery of the filling (with, among other things, a vast number of fish bones and about 180 → bullae, see §5.7.3) range from Iron IIA to Iron IIB period, which is why the dating is between the late ninth century (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron) and the second half of the eighth century BCE (Lily Singer-Avitz). Probably during this time more direct access to the spring was created and the so-called Gihon Canal was extended in the southern course as a tunnel into the area of Birkat el-Ḥamra (often called “Pool of Siloam/Shiloah”) at the southwestern end of the spur of the city of David (see §10.4, map 16). For the growing settlement of the city in the west (see §5.7.1.2), however, the water supply was insufficient in the long run. It also was unsafe due to the Gihon Canal, which partly runs outside the walls and is only covered with stones.

The construction of the 533 m long tunnel from the Gihon Spring to a basin at the southern end likely offered (assuming the maximalist position of the city wall) safe and sufficient water supply for the newly populated urban area in the southwest under Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:20; Isa 22:9) (on the basis of the biblical information, Othmar Keel) or Manasseh (Ernst Axel Knauf). The absolute dating of the tunnel system is archaeologically difficult because there are no clues and the inscription embedded in the wall at the southern exit (the so-called Shiloah Inscription or Hezekiah’s Tunnel Inscription, COS 2.28, *HTAT* 180, *TUAT* 1:555–56; see §10.4, map 16) has paleographic peculiarities (→ epigraphy) that make it difficult to classify more precisely. Thus the dates range from the end of the ninth century

BCE (Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron) to the beginning of the seventh century BCE (Amihai Sneh et al.). The close connection of the dating with the western expansion of the city further complicates the situation (see §5.7.1.2). David Ussishkin recently doubted this generally accepted connection of the water supply with urban expansion. Due to a lack of indications for the southern course of the wall system in the western part of the city, he proposed the construction of royal gardens in an Assyrianizing style as an alternative to defensive measures. However, due to the high costs involved, there is no equally sensible alternative to the water supply in the western part of the city. The tunnel, which is assumed to have taken several years to build, was excavated from two sides, probably along existing crevices. At the southwest exit a building inscription was attached, which describes the project but does not name the benefactor (see below). In contrast to the older Gihon Canal, it was on the same level as the spring, so that losses were minimized by the tunnel, the spring could be used optimally, and—at the same time—the water supply protected from access.

Text of the Shiloah Inscription

[The day of] the breach. This is the record of how the tunnel was breached. While [the excavators were wielding] their pick-axes, each man towards his co-worker, and while there were yet three cubits for the brea[ch], a voice [was hea]rd each man calling to his co-worker; because there was a cavity in the rock (extending) from the south to [the north]. So, on the day of the breach, the excavators struck, each man to meet his co-worker, pick-axe against pick-[a]xe. Then the water flowed from the spring to the pool, a distance of one thousand and two hundred cubits. One hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the heads of the excavat[ors] (*COS* 2.28; cf. *HTAT* 180).

In 2013, a 215 m long tunnel was discovered in ‘Ain Joweizeh (Daniel Ein-Mor, Zvi Ron), 8 km from Jerusalem. It probably also dates back to the Iron IIB period in the eighth/seventh century BCE. A fragment from a proto-Aeolian volute capital commends this dating. This architectural element can be found in the Omride architecture of Israel in Samaria, Megiddo, Hazor, Dan, and sporadically in Transjordan, as well as (later) in Judah in Jerusalem and especially in Rāmat Rāḥēl (Oded Lipschits) and (yet unpublished) in significant numbers from Armon Hanatziv near today’s UN headquarters in East Talpiot, Jerusalem (see fig. 32). It was

used in royal administrative and representative buildings, suggesting that the newly discovered irrigation canal also belongs in such a context. All in all, a large number of comparable tunnels for water are known. However, these are significantly smaller than the facilities mentioned here.

5.7.2. Expansion of Judah's Administration

The expansion of Jerusalem was undoubtedly associated with a revaluation of the city, which also aimed, although not exclusively, at the political stabilization of the state vis-à-vis Assyrian power. Under Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) and his successor Manasseh (696–642 BCE), Judah finally shows the undoubted signs of developed statehood, which had been more or less sorely lacking before: military expansion and administrative development (Jerusalem, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr III, Tell es-Seba^c II, Arad IX, Rāmat Rāḥēl/Ḥirbet Šālīḥ Vb), sudden increase of scribal activity, and royal administration. From the excavations in Jerusalem a → hoard find of → bullae (see fig. 1), roughly 180 specimens from the ninth/eighth century BCE, was found in the secondary fill layer of the Rock Cut Pool of the Gihon Spring (Ronny Reich et al.) (see §5.7.1.3), along with about fifty specimens from the second half of the seventh century BCE from the so-called House of the Bullae on the eastern slope of the city of David (Yigal Shiloh). In addition to the hoard find, over 200 further bullae were found in the excavations at the Ophel and in the city of David, so that the total number of the clay bullae from Jerusalem, which originate predominantly from the eighth century BCE, amounts to several hundred exemplars (Yuval Goren, Eran Arie).

The → bullae were kept in archives after use. This is indicated by a find from Lachish in which seventeen bullae were stored in a jar in an archive room. The seals and documents sealed with the stamped lumps of clay have not survived, but some titles in Jerusalem indicate (royal) officials. In the city of David, for example, a fragment of a bulla from the seventh century BCE was recovered, which perhaps refers to an official of the royal house (Yuval Gadot et al.). There are several such seals (or impressions) with the title “servant of the king” from places such as Lachish, Mizpah, and so on, as well as from the antiquities market. More than twenty seal impressions from eleven different seals alone are known from Hezekiah's officials from the antiquities trade (Eilat Mazar). From the excavations at the Ophel a seal impression, circa 1 cm in size with a winged sun disk, was recently published, bearing witness to the inscription *ḥzqyh* '[h]z

mlk yhw “Hezekiah, Son of Ahaz, King of Judah,” which points more to belonging to the royal administration than to the king himself. Seal impressions, which are connected by name with King Hezekiah, are so far only known from the antiquities market (André Lemaire), so that their authenticity remains uncertain. For example, a seal impression with the inscription *lbrkyhw bn nryhw hspr* (“[Belonging] to Berechyahu, the son of Neriyahu, the scribe”), which was commonly associated with Jeremiah’s scribe Baruch, came into the antiquities trade as supposedly authentic but is now regarded as a forgery (Yuval Goren, Eran Arie). Overall, however, the number of bullae from controlled excavations (Othmar Keel) reveals a significant increase in administrative activities during the Iron IIB and Iron IIC periods.

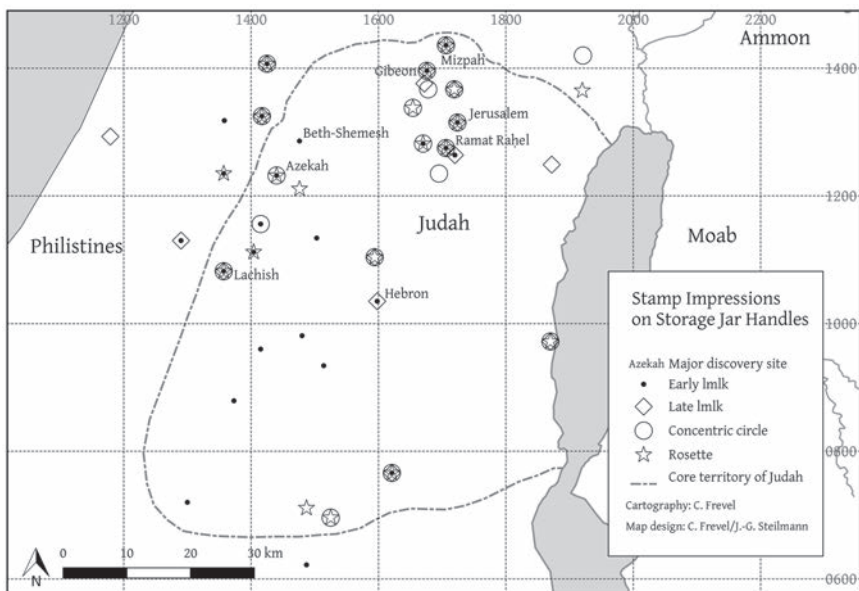
These clay bullae can be assigned to the economic administration. The increasing administrative activity is also documented by the so-called *lmlk* seals (fig. 38) from the last third of the eighth century (and early seventh century BCE, Oded Lipschits et al.).



Fig. 38. Examples of the various types of *lmlk* seal impressions that can be seen in the context of a state administrative system in Judah in the late eighth century BCE. A rough distinction can be made between a four-winged scarab (top) and a winged sun disk (bottom). The second criterion of a typology is the type and placement of the inscription. All impressions show *lmlk* “(belonging) to the king” in the upper register, mostly supplemented by one of the four places *hbrn*, *šwkh*, *zyp*, and *mmšt* in the lower register, partly combined with private or official seals.

No other → epigraphic object is so common. To date more than 1,400 seal impressions from over fifty locations and a total of at least 22 stamps are known. If one adds the *lmlk* seals from uncontrolled excavations and those with private seals, the count rises to over 2,000; the actual number must have been much higher. Newly recovered seals are regularly added; recently 30 more *lmlk* seals alone were found in Rāmat Rāḥēl (Oded Lipschits) and, in 2020, about 120 yet unpublished specimens were found in a huge administrative and/or storage context in the Jerusalem Arnona

neighborhood north of Rāmat Rāḥēl. The *mlk* seals are seal impressions probably initially including a four-winged scarab, then a four-winged and later a two-winged sun disk, and the inscription *mlk* “(belonging) to the king.” They were affixed to transport jars and storage jars, some of which were also combined with private or official seals. The type of storage jar on which the stamp impressions are found on the handles had been introduced in the ninth/eighth century BCE without stamps on the handles; that is, the jar type was later adapted for central administration. According to analyses of the clay, the four-handled storage jars were produced in the area of Lachish, suggesting centralized state administration. Presently, more than 2,150 seal impressions have been found on jar handles from all over Judah (together with other types) (Oded Lipschits), but none of the seals have yet been found (George M. Grena).



Map 10. Distribution of the stamped jar handles in the four merging variants of administrative stamps: (1) Early *lmlk* seal from the eighth century BCE with a two-winged sun disk, the place name at the bottom, and *mlk* at the top, (2) late *lmlk* variants, in which the above arrangement is varied and sometimes only *mlk* remains, (3) concentric circles in the seventh century BCE, and (4) rosette stamps in the seventh/sixth century BCE. The inscribed places represent the discovery sites with the most specimens. The dotted line indicates the core area of Judah, which can also be determined by the finds of pillar figures (see fig. 36 and §5.5.10) and inscribed weight stones (Raz Kletter).

The distribution of seals allows a fairly accurate determination of the national boundaries at the end of the eighth century BCE. The southernmost specimens were found in Beersheba (1), Tel ʿĪrā (1), and Arad (7), the northernmost in Mizpah (> 50) and Gibeon (> 70). There is a concentration in Jerusalem and Rāmat Rāḥēl (> 400) and in Lachish (> 380). The jars stamped as “(belonging) to the king” are more closely defined by four place names: Hebron, Socoh, Ziph, and *mmšt*. The first two can unquestionably be identified with Hebron and Ḥirbet ʿAbbad. Ziph, which is usually identified with the Tell Zif, provides the first enigma. The site is located southeast of Hebron and perhaps already outside the Judean administration (cf. Josh 15:24, 55; 2 Chr 11:8). The conclusion remains daring, however, because it rests purely on the absence of jar handle stamps in Tell Zif. In addition, Judean Achzib was also suggested as a place connected with the *lmlk* jars. Some search for the biblical Achzib at Ḥirbet Tell el-Bēḏā/Tell Lavnīn 7 km from Mareshah, while others have identified Ḥirbet ʿĒn el-Kizbe as the site (Boaz Zissu, Erasmus Gass), from where two stamped handles come. The most difficult is the assignment of *mmšt*, for which Jerusalem, Memphis, Eshtemoa, Mareshah, Tel Masos/Ḥirbet el-Mšāš, and other places have been proposed. More recently, ʿAmwās (André Lemaire), Beth-Hacherem (Wolfgang Zwickel), but also Rāmat Rāḥēl/Ḥirbet Šālīḥ (Gabriel Barkay) have been discussed as possibilities for identification. The latter suggestion makes good sense but remains uncertain. How the four places are connected with the seals, whether as administrative centers, properties of the crown, or special production or trading places, remains open. For Hebron, where fewer than 10 *lmlk* seals were found, it can be said that the place was expanded and fortified in the eighth/seventh century BCE. An ostrakon with a list of names and an official seal of a Šepatyāhū ben Sāmak from the Iron IIB period (Daniel Vainstub, David Ben-Shlomo) point to an administrative use. Hebron itself lies at the extreme southeastern end of the range of *hbrn* stamped jar handles found in an area between Tell Bēt Mirsim and Mizpah. The stamped jars were either used to store supplies in the event of a military threat or to supply the court with olive oil or wine from the royal wineries. The high number of stamps found in Rāmat Rāḥēl and Jerusalem supports the thesis that the oil and wine measured in the jars (of the royal estate, Oded Lipschits) were centrally administered in order to earn the necessary silver for the tribute or to levy taxes on this resource via a market. In any case, the jars are connected with a significant change in the economic and administrative system—probably in the context of Judean → vassalage to Assyria—and demonstrate a

developed and organized administration of the state under Hezekiah and his successors. Oded Lipschits and others have recently underlined, contra David Ussishkin, that it is unlikely that the use in the centralized administration would be restricted to the few years of the immediate Assyrian threat prior to 701 BCE. Instead, they propose that the *lmlk* seals should be seen in the context of an administrative system developing from 734 BCE, which was connected with the obligations to the suzerain or the Assyrian hegemon. The system developed from early *lmlk* seals (end of the eighth century BCE) via late *lmlk* seals (first third of the seventh century BCE) to concentric circles (in the second third of the seventh century BCE) and continued with the rosette seals (seventh/sixth century BCE) in Babylonian times until the downfall of Judah (to the rosette seals see §5.9.4). The administrative system then continued under Babylonian administration (for the lion seals see §5.11.1) even into the Persian period (for the Yehûd seal impressions see §6.3.1) until the Hellenistic period (late *yhw*d seals and *yršlm* stamp seals). Israel Finkelstein supported the suggestion and added that the seals with concentric circles could no longer be assigned to Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) but rather to Manasseh's reign (696–642 BCE). In contrast, David Ussishkin assigns all *lmlk* seals and those with concentric circles to the short phase before 701 BCE; the rosette seals (see fig. 39), on the other hand, belong to another administrative system in the phase shortly before the downfall of Judah in 587/86 BCE. Nadav Na'aman also challenged the early introduction and argued the two-winged *lmlk* seals were not introduced until after 704 BCE, while the first seals with a four-winged symbol were associated with the date 714 BCE. The discussion is repeatedly ignited by the presence or absence of *lmlk* seals or stamped handles in datable strata, but it remains to be seen whether it is always possible to fine-tune them to a precise year. The fact that the system is linked to the strengthening of the administration and the growing need for administrative coordination in the face of Assyrian pressure should be a consensus. Many researchers also follow the well-founded chronological differentiation of Oded Lipschits, which was recently updated in a comprehensive presentation of the whole system.

Like his predecessor Ahaz, Hezekiah's name also appears on → bullae from the antiquities market that identify him as king of Judah. Here, too, authenticity is not guaranteed (Manfred Weippert); a forgery is quite conceivable, especially since in 2015 the bullae of Berekyahu, son of Neriyahu, which were associated with Jer 36:1–4, were identified as forgeries. Altogether the six impressions with the identical inscription *lhzyqyhw 'hz mlk*



Fig. 39. The rosette seal impressions follow the *lmlk* seal impressions (see fig. 38) in the seventh and early sixth century BCE. They attest to the administrative continuity (marking and administration of goods) in Judah (95 percent come from the core territory of the kingdom of Judah).

yhdh “(seal [impression] of) Hezekiah, (son of) Ahaz, King of Judah” can be traced back to two different seals (cf. Manfred Weippert, *HTAT* 226). As the seals, the building inscription, and a clear increase in the number of written testimonies indicate that in the seventh century BCE a far greater scribal competency can be presupposed and that the significance of Jerusalem continued to grow.

Jerusalem’s significance as a city and (the only) central location of the expanding state is shown by the inscriptions from Ḥirbet Bêt Lay, which were found in a burial chamber 8 km east of Lachish/Tell ed-Duwër. Inscription 1 (*HAE* B Lay[7]:1) reads, “YHWH is the God of the whole land; the mountains of Judah belong to the God of Jerusalem” and organizes both the jurisdiction of the god of the land from the center as well as the deity’s function as a city god. At the same time, this inscription from the transition from the eighth to the seventh century BCE shows, despite all the uncertainties of the reading, that the expansion to the west and south in the Shephelah and Negev had not yet changed the perception of the land, since the whole country of Judah was perceived as the “hill country of Judah.”

5.7.3. Archaeological Evidence of Hezekiah’s Cult Reform

The biblical report sees Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) as a reformer who centralized the YHWH cult in Jerusalem and cleansed it of foreign influences or clarified it by removing ambiguous symbols (cf. 2 Kgs 18:4, 22). Hezekiah’s programmatic cult reform cannot be proven archaeologically, but neither can it be refuted. While for the Iron I and Iron IIA periods a large number of structures have been found which are interpreted as sacral architecture (see below), there are no sanctuaries of the outgoing Iron IIB period beyond the Jerusalem temple (almost *de facto* centralization) and thus no critical mass. Although Jeremiah polemicizes that the gods of

Judah were as numerous as the cities (Jer 2:28; 11:13) and the Deuteronomistic polemic sees sanctuaries “on every high hill and under every green tree” (1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:10; Jer 2:20; Ezek 20:28; etc.), archaeologically this abundance is certainly not proven for the eighth/seventh century BCE. Nevertheless, a considerable number of regional and local places of worship have been more or less archaeologically proven for the Iron Age. For the Iron IIB period, however, the number of locations is already limited considerably. Besides the shrines in the north (Dan, Bethsaida, Taanach, Megiddo, Beth-Shean, Bethel), in Transjordan (Pella/Ṭabaqāt Faḥil, Tell Dāmiyā/Adamah, Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine, Wādī eṭ-Ṭemed WT-13 [at Ruḡm er-Rumēl], Ataroth/Ḥirbet ‘Atārūz), in the “Edomite” south (Ḥorvat Qitmit and ‘Ēn Ḥaṣēvā), and in the coastal plain (Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile, Ekron, Ashdod, Tell Abū Salima), sanctuaries and cult installations *from Judah* are found only in Tel Moza, Tell es-Sebaʿ, Arad, and Lachish. The caravanserai Kuntillet ‘Aḡrūd in the northern Sinai played a special role, where many vessels were placed on benches in the entrance area as votive gifts.

For the centralization of sacrifices prescribed in Deut 12:13–18 and the supposedly related cult reforms of the kings Hezekiah and Josiah, only the sanctuaries mentioned above from Judah can be considered. The parts of a larger limestone altar secondarily built in Stratum II in Tell es-Sebaʿ cannot be assigned to a sanctuary in the functional site. Therefore, to conclude that there was an intentional destruction of a sanctuary in Tell es-Sebaʿ by King Hezekiah remains methodologically an inadmissible transfer of 2 Kgs 18:22 to the peculiar finding. Why the sanctuary in Arad was abandoned from Stratum VIII—probably in the time of Hezekiah (Ze’ev Herzog)—(see §5.6.1), and whether it was perhaps intended to reuse the carefully buried cult objects, is an open question (Christoph Uehlinger). One possibility of interpretation is the connection with measures of the king to strengthen the importance of the central sanctuary in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kgs 18:22). The (likely historical) removal of the Nehushtan, a snake image from the temple (2 Kgs 18:4), as an isolated measure hardly justifies the conclusion of a cult reform (Othmar Keel). Newly brought into the discussion was the sanctuary in the gate area in Lachish, which was uncovered during the recent additional excavations (Saar Ganor, Igor Kreimerman). With reference to 2 Kgs 10:27, the excavators have put on record that a toilet stone found in one of the southern rooms of the six-chamber gate would deliberately contaminate the sanctuary at the end of the eighth century BCE under Hezekiah and thus render it unusable. The gate sanctuary had previously



Map 11. Sanctuaries in the Iron I and Iron IIA–B periods. The map is intended to serve as an orientation and to cover a wide range of places for which a shrine has been bibli- cally attested. Thus, no distinction is made between temples and open installations. Also, a large tolerance is granted for the archaeologically proven sanctuaries, in order to clarify the problem of the cult centralization. With that, no distinction is made be- tween sanctuaries in the gate area, in city temples, or in open sanctuaries.

been shut down and then desecrated by the installation of the toilet. The thesis is daring. At any rate it cannot prove a Hezekian cult reform, particularly since not even the slightest traces of feces were detectable. This rather suggests that the toilet was never in operation. Why the gate sanctuary seems to have been abandoned is still unclear. The deconstruction of cult sites can also be seen from the findings of Tel Moza (see §5.9.5), probably even much earlier than in Beersheba and Arad (Shua Kisilevitz). The abandonment of these shrines confirms the trend toward a gradual reduction of local shrines in Israel *and* Judah, leading to a *de facto* cult centralization in the seventh century BCE. A building comparable to the Jerusalem temple never existed in Judah anyway. The dismantling of the regional shrines was not a simultaneous process, but rather a gradual process, which could have occurred for very different reasons. Irrespective of whether the development is considered intentional in terms of cultic policy or not, the process reflects the upgrading of the central national shrine in Jerusalem.

5.7.4. Hezekiah's Foreign Policy at the End of the Eighth Century BCE

Hezekiah (725–697 BCE) behaved like his father Ahaz (741–725 BCE) as a faithful partner in dependence on Shalmaneser V (727–722 BCE) and Sargon II (722–705 BCE). It seems that in this phase the → vassality toward the protecting power had fulfilled its purpose, because the tribute to be paid does not seem to have prevented the economic upturn in the country, but rather to have promoted it by participating in long-distance trade. Hezekiah does not seem to have participated in the uprising of Ḥanūnu of Gaza with Ilubi'di of Hamath 720 BCE (Annals of Sargon II, COS 2.118A, HTAT 154, TUAT 1:378, Nimrud Letter no. 16), because this would have left clear traces of the punitive expedition. The following decade, in which Assyria turned its attention toward the empire of Urartu in the north, allowed Judah a period of economic growth and prosperity. It is likely that Judah also benefited from the Assyrian-protected long-distance Edomite trade with Arabia in the Negev and the coastal region (Lily Singer-Avitz, Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Na'aman). Hezekiah took the opportunity to secure the military and possibly also to extend the territory westwards (2 Kgs 18:8). The so-called *lmlk* seals and a bronze *lmlk* weight from Gezer could suggest Judean control of this important place under Hezekiah (Baruch Brandl).

Egypt's recognizable strengthening seems to have prompted Jamān, a prince of Ashdod who had displaced the pro-Assyrian Aḥimīṭ in 713

BCE with the help of the city aristocracy, to propose relaunching the anti-Assyrian coalition between Egypt, Moab, Edom, and Judah (Sargon II's Campaign against Ashdod, COS 2.118E, G, J; *HTAT* 160–63; *TUAT* 1:381). According to the biblical tradition, the prophet Isaiah spoke out vehemently against participation, as he did under Ahaz (741–725 BCE) (Isa 20:1–6). Sargon II reacted in 711 BCE, conquered Ashdod and Gath, and transformed southern Philistia into an Assyrian province so that peace would return. But political calm is not everything; it was also important to secure Assyrian interests on the trade routes. The expansion of the Gaza-satellites Blakhiyah, Tell er-Ruqēš, and Tell Abū Salima was aimed at controlling the endpoint of the incense route and preventing access by Egypt (Nadav Na'aman). It is controversial whether Sargon II resettled the remaining population from Ashdod in Ashdod-Yam (Israel Finkelstein, Lily Singer-Avitz). In any case, he continued to expand Ashdod-Yam as an Assyrian residence and emporium and secured the transport of commercial goods through the construction of an artificial port (Alexander Fantalkin). Both the destruction of Ashdod and the restructuring of the economic base demonstrate the Assyrians' interests. This also shows that resistance to imperial pressure was not merely a matter of foreign political interest, for the local absorption of resources was significantly curtailed by the Assyrians (Yifat Thareani, Alexander Fantalkin).

The change of throne from Sargon II to Sennacherib (705–681 BCE) led to renewed unrest in the west, in which representatives of the entire coastal region of Ashkelon, Ekron, Arvad, Sidon, and Byblos, the Transjordanian states, and now also Hezekiah of Judah (2 Kgs 18:7) were significantly involved. The coalition members stopped tribute payments in 706 BCE in one fell swoop. Apparently efforts were made to involve the Cushite Pharaoh Shabaka/Sabakon (715/13–700/698 BCE) (Bernd Schipper), or according to another chronology Shebiktu/Šabataka/Shebtiqo (Erasmus Gass), because without Egyptian support a resistance against the great power hardly had any chance of success (Isa 18:1–7; 31:1). Hezekiah of Judah was apparently *spiritus rector* (Herbert Donner, Erasmus Gass) of the coalition. Padī, the king of Ekron/Tel Miqnē, who is called the “sworn vassal” in the inscriptions of Sennacherib, was deposed by the leading elites of the city because of his pro-Assyrian attitude and handed over to Hezekiah. He was later liberated by Sennacherib (from Jerusalem?) or released by Hezekiah after negotiation (see §5.7.5).

5.7.5. Sennacherib's Campaign of 701 BCE

Hardly any event of the southern Levant is so well documented in the sources as the so-called third campaign of Sennacherib, about which not only a detailed report exists (in multiple versions including abstracts) (COS 2.119B, *HTAT* 181–82), but also pictorial sources showing the conquest of Lachish on an originally 27 m long relief in the palace of Sennacherib in Nineveh (see fig. 40). The campaign of Sennacherib against Jerusalem is also reported in several places in the Hebrew Bible that are almost identical in wording (2 Kgs 18–19; 2 Chr 32; Isa 36–38; 2 Macc 8:19; Sir 48:18). Despite the good situation regarding sources, however, not all aspects of the campaign can be clarified.

First of all, Sennacherib (705–681 BCE) obviously had enough to do in his own country with the expansion of the new capital Nineveh, because the punitive expedition against the unfaithful → vassals in the west did not occur for some time. The confrontations with Babylon, which was only defeated in 689 BCE, demanded all his attention and (military) strength. When Sennacherib began his punitive expedition late in 701 BCE, the anti-Assyrian coalition quickly broke apart as soon as the successes of the Assyrians, who were moving along the coast, became known. Lūli, the king of Sidon, immediately fled to Cyprus when he learned of the arrival of Sennacherib's troops. In his place, Tūba'lu was appointed as faithful vassal in Sidon. The same goes for the rebel king Šidqā of Philistine Ashkelon who was replaced by Šarru-lū-dari. His name already shows where he comes from and to whom he belongs: Assyria. In short, Arvad, Byblos, Sidon, and Ashdod paid tribute again, as did Ammon, Moab, and Edom. In 701 BCE there was probably a battle in Elteke (perhaps Tell eš-Šallāf), located in the coastal plain roughly midway between Jaffa and Ekron/Tel Miqnē, between the Assyrian and the Egyptian armies—which had banded together from the Nile Delta (Bernd Schipper). The Cushite Pharaoh Tirhakah (Tarhaka) is mentioned in 2 Kgs 19:9 // Isa 37:9, but he did not ascend to the throne until 690 BCE and reigned until 664 BCE. According to the chronology, it can only have been Shabataka, even if it cannot be precluded that the troops were led by the still-young crown prince (Kenneth Kitchen, Bernd Schipper). Isaiah 30:2–5; 31:1–3 is often interpreted as involving or even inducing the confrontation between the Egyptians and Assyrians at Elteke that was agreed upon in the uprising against Assyria (Manfred Weippert, Klaus Koenen). The text takes a critical look at the foreign-policy turn toward Egypt, without specifically addressing the Battle of Elteke. To



Fig. 40. Image detail from the huge wall relief in the throne room of the southwest palace of Sennacherib in Nineveh. The twelve relief panels represent the siege, conquest, and looting of the city of Lachish in 701 BCE. The first panel on the upper left shows the Assyrian siege ramp and the archers on it, while the inhabitants of Lachish try to defend the city from the towers. In the middle and on the right, the transport of the spoils of war and prisoners after the conquest are visible. On the lower left and on the following panel, the harsh punishment of the Judeans is shown. At the lower right, the prisoners are led to the Great King enthroned on the right, whom they implore for mercy.

what extent the siege of Lachish and the Assyrian conquests in the southern Shephelah belong together with the Battle of Elteke remains just as unclear as to whether or not there was a clear winner. Herodotus (*Hist.* 2.141) even knows of an Egyptian victory in Pelusium/Tell el-Faramā in the eastern Nile Delta. Perhaps the forces also remained more or less balanced. According to Sennacherib's own account, the Assyrians of course doubtlessly won, although the report is somewhat restrained compared to other Assyrian documents (Eckart Frahm): "The officials, the nobles, and the people of Ekron who had thrown Padi, their king, (who was) under oath and obligation to Assyria, into iron fetters and handed him over in a hostile manner to Hezekiah, the Judean, took fright because of the offense they had committed. The kings of Egypt, (and) the bowmen, chariot corps and cavalry of the kings of Ethiopia assembled a countless force and came to their (i.e. the Ekronites') aid. In the plain of Eltekeh, they drew up their ranks against me and sharpened their weapons. Trusting in the god Ashur, my lord, I fought with them and inflicted a defeat upon them. The Egyptian charioteers and the princes, together with the charioteers of the Ethiopians, I personally took alive in the midst of the battle" (COS 2.119B; cf. *HTAT* 181, 2.73–3.6). Ekron, which had perhaps previously been annexed by Hezekiah (COS 2.28, *HTAT* 180), was conquered and the Assyrian loyalist Padi, arrested in Jerusalem, was reinstated (see §5.7.4): "I freed Padi, their king, from Jerusalem and set him on the throne as king over them and imposed tribute for my lordship over him" (Chicago/Taylor Prism, COS 2.119B, *HTAT* 181, 3.14–16; cf. RINAP 3.2:46, 140, 142, A. Kirk Grayson, Jamie R. Novotny). It can only be speculated whether Padi was released through negotiations with Hezekiah, was militarily liberated, or was perhaps imprisoned *by* Jerusalem but not *in* the city itself. Also it can only be speculated whether or not with the Assyrian conquest of Ekron an interim solution was found and Padi only became free after the siege of Jerusalem and was reinstated in the city as a king loyal to Assyria (Othmar Keel). From the coastal plain Sennacherib then moved on to the Shephelah and destroyed numerous cities in Judah (2 Kgs 18:13 // Isa 36:1).

5.7.5.1. Conquest of Lachish

Among the forty-six cities that Sennacherib claims to have taken, the city of Lachish in the Shephelah plays a special role. The palace reliefs in Nineveh illustrate the Assyrian siege and conquest of Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, the punishment of soldiers, and the deportation of

the population for the propagandistic self-assurance of Assyria's own strength (see fig. 40). Lachish obviously had a paradigmatic meaning, not only because it was the most important fortified place in Judah after the capital Jerusalem, despite its relatively modest size of at most two thousand inhabitants, but also because Sennacherib apparently did not conquer Jerusalem (see §5.7.6). According to 2 Kgs 18:14, 17; Isa 36:2; 2 Chr 32:9, Sennacherib also set up camp in Lachish, which functioned as his base during the attacks on the other cities of Judah. A massive double wall served above all to protect what was, by Judean standards, a huge complex in the center of the almost rectangular tell. The building complex, the history and function of which can no longer be fully explained, was one of the largest buildings in Judah. The large courtyard and the stables point to a partial, if not solely, military use, so that Lachish was primarily a military fort. In the area of the entrance to the massive six-chamber gate, the excavations were able to uncover a huge mound that can be identified as an Assyrian siege ramp. A corresponding abutment as a counter ramp was found in the southwest corner of the tell.

5.7.5.2. Destructures in Connection with Sennacherib's Campaign

Among many other cities, Lachish, Tel 'Erani, Timnah/Tel Bāṭāš, Tell Bēt Mirsim, Beth-Shemesh/'Ēn Šems, Arad, Tell 'Ēṭūn, Tell el-Ḥuwēlifa/Tel Ḥalif/Rimmon, Tel 'Īrā/Ḥirbetel-Ġarra, Tel Burna/Libna, Mizpah/Tell en Našbe, and Tell es-Seba' were all destroyed (Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Na'aman, David Ussishkin, Jeffrey A. Blakely, et al.), whereas the region north of Jerusalem was less effected (Ernst Axel Knauf). Sennacherib boasts in his annals to have besieged and taken forty-six cities in total (cf. 2 Kgs 18:13 // Isa 36:1): "As for Hezekiah, the Judean, I besieged forty-six of his fortified walled cities and surrounding smaller towns, which were without number. Using packed-down ramps and applying battering rams, infantry attacks by mines, breeches, and siege machines, I conquered (them). I took out 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, cattle, and sheep, without number, and counted them as spoil" (Chicago/Taylor Prism of Sennacherib, COS 2.119B, HTAT 181.1–24; cf. RINAP 3.2: 46.140.142). The settlement area in the Shephelah was reduced by almost two thirds in the following period (David Ussishkin). But even if the annals and the depiction of deported prisoners on the Lachish reliefs (and 2 Kgs

18:31–32) give a different impression, the evidence for mass deportations from Judah at the end of the eighth century BCE remains rather thin apart from the abandonment and reduction of settlements. There is evidence from the use of Judean foreign workers in the construction of the palace at Nineveh (David Ussishkin). However, references to an elite exchange as in the province of Šamīrīna (see §5.6.6) are completely absent for 701 BCE (Ariel M. Bagg). Even before that, Arab populations had been settled in the Negev to secure long-distance trade (Angelika Berlejung). The extent to which the figure of 200,000 deported Judeans is exaggerated cannot ultimately be clarified, nor can the number of people killed by the Assyrians; further, it is unclear how many migrated from the settlements or perhaps fled to the safe Philistine coastal strip in the Shephelah. In any case, the rapidly expanding Assyrian provincial town of Ekron seems to have provided food and lodging to a large number of Judeans in the early seventh century BCE (Nadav Na'aman, Seymour Gitin). Perhaps the same can be assumed for the towns of Ashdod, Beth-Shemesh, and Timnah, which prospered under Assyrian rule, although the population there did not increase as substantially as that in Ekron.

5.7.5.3. Impact of Sennacherib's Campaign on Judah

Sennacherib's policy aimed neither at annexation nor at the complete destruction of the infrastructure, but, apart from Hezekiah's reprimand, it aimed instead at the establishment of a buffer zone between Egypt and Palestine, which led to a renewed *balance of power*. This goal was fully achieved by the weakening of Judah, the conquest of the places in the Shephelah, and the establishment of a chain of fortresses and occasional trading posts in the Negev. Control over the Beersheba Valley and the Negev not only served as the required military buffer to Egypt, but also as an effective economic control which had become increasingly central after the conquest of Gaza by Tiglath-pileser III (734 BCE): (1) with regard to the copper trade from the Arabah to the maritime ports on the Mediterranean Sea, (2) for the control of the increasingly important Arab long-distance trade including the end point of the so-called incense road in Gaza, and (3) for the control of the maritime trade along the Via Maris. Judah was the means to an end rather than the goal of the campaign, apart from the demonstration of dominance over the rebels.

5.7.6. Sennacherib's Withdrawal from Jerusalem in 701 BCE

In Assyrian practice, it was customary not to attack the capital first. So, what happened to Jerusalem in 701 BCE? Sennacherib boasts of having locked Hezekiah “like a caged bird” in Jerusalem. “I surrounded him with earthworks and made it unthinkable for him to exit by the city gate” (Annals of Sennacherib, Chicago/Taylor Prism, COS 2.119B, *HTAT* 181; cf. RINAP 3.2.46). It is controversial whether the phrase presupposes a siege of the city. While Ludwig Massmann assumes that the economic potency of Judah, apart from the Shephelah, was so low that Sennacherib had no interest in the conquest of Jerusalem, Ernst Axel Knauf assumes that the Assyrian army was already too weak to conduct a siege and that in connection with the biblical texts (2 Kgs 18:17; Isa 36:2) strong military pressure on Jerusalem could be expected. From the description of the siege and conquest of Jerusalem by Titus (70 CE), Josephus mentions a place—probably near the northern enclosure wall of the temple district (David Ussishkin)—that he calls the “camp of the Assyrians” (*B.J.* 5.303, 504–508). It is unclear, however, to what extent the plan to cut Jerusalem off from all supplies, attack the walls, and conquer the city was actually implemented under the Assyrian soldiers Tartan, Rab-saris, and Rab-shakeh (2 Kgs 18:17). Arie van der Kooij, Walter Mayer, and others have pointed out that no military siege in the full sense can be derived from the formulations. For ultimately unclear reasons (an epidemic is suspected according to 2 Kgs 19:35–36 // Isa 37:36–37, a plague of mice reported by Herodotus [*Hist.* 2.141] in Egypt, or [a rumor about] the domestic political situation in Assyria [Nazek Khalid Matty], none of which offers a really plausible reason), the unexpected withdrawal of Sennacherib from Judah occurred without Jerusalem being conquered. Biblically, the circumstance of the miraculous salvation of Jerusalem was developed (2 Kgs 18:17–19:37 // Isa 36:2–37:38) and inspired the production of literature and the development of Zion theology. Jerusalem is stylized as an impregnable fortress, protected by the city god of Jerusalem (e.g., Ps 46; 48). That which strengthened the myth of Jerusalem theologically as the central and focal point contrasts sharply with what the city's inevitable defeat was from a historical perspective. The Annals of Sennacherib and 2 Kgs 18:13 show that Hezekiah made high tribute payments to spare Judah or rather Jerusalem (differently Nazek Khalid Matty, who subordinates the tribute payment to the withdrawal of Sennacherib). Sennacherib has it ideally represented as follows: “He, Hezekiah, was overwhelmed by the awesome splendor of

my lordship, and he sent me after my departure ... his elite troops (and his best soldiers, which he had brought in as reinforcements to strengthen Jerusalem, with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, choice antimony, large blocks of carnelian, beds (inlaid) with ivory, armchairs (inlaid) with ivory, elephant hides, ivory, ebony-wood, boxwood, multicolored garments, garments of linen, wool (dyed) red-purple and blue-purple, vessels of copper, iron, bronze and tin, chariots, siege shields, lances, armor, daggers for the belt, bows and arrows, countless trappings and implements of war, together with his daughters, his palace women, his male and female singers. He (also) dispatched his messenger to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance" (Chicago/Taylor Prism, COS 2.119B, *HTAT* 181.37–49).

5.7.7. Sennacherib's Subjugation of Judah

So, one probably must assume that Hezekiah's submission spared the city (Othmar Keel, Manfred Weippert, David Ussishkin). Judah was again forced into Assyrian → vassalage and political autonomy was further restricted. As a punishment for organizing the regional resistance, Hezekiah's territory was reduced in size. The Shephelah, which only became Judean with the southern expansion in the late ninth century BCE, was—according to Assyrian practice (Angelika Berlejung)—at least partly awarded to the Philistine princes of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza. "His [i.e., Hezekiah's] cities which I had despoiled I cut off from his land and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padī, king of Ekron and Šilli-bēl, king of Gaza, and thus diminished his land" (Annals of Sennacherib, Chicago/Taylor Prism COS 2.119B, *HTAT* 181.30–34; cf. RINAP 3.2.46). In connection with the conquest, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr became an Assyrian fortress and was possibly taken out of Judah's control. At many other sites, especially in the south, Assyrian buildings were built in the seventh century BCE: residences, administrative buildings, storage facilities, and military forts, and on the coast, for example, in Ashdod, Naḥal Shiqma/Wādī el-Hesi, Gaza, Blakhiyah, ar-Ruqēš/Tell er-Ruqēš, Tell Jemmeh/Tell Ğemme, Tell Abū Salima, south of Lachish in the inland in Tell Abū Hurēra/Tel Haror/Gerar, Tel Sera/Tell eš-Šerī'a, Ḥorvat Huga, Tell Bēt Mirsim. Again, apart from Gezer and Rāmat Rāḥēl/Ḥirbet Šāliḥ, the north of Judah was excluded, a pattern that is also confirmed in the distribution of Assyrian objects of material culture (Angelika Berlejung with distribution map).

With the loss of control over the western Shephelah and the Negev, Hezekiah's economic and military backbone was eradicated, and Judah

was forced to pledge loyalty to the Assyrian occupation, which was very present in the coastal plain and the western Shephelah. Further uprisings in the southern Levant thus had the rug pulled from under their feet, at least for the first half of the seventh century BCE. This was not exclusively to the detriment of Judah, however, as it also promoted the development of the state in its independence.

5.8. JUDAH IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY BCE UNDER MANASSEH

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After 701 BCE Jerusalem was de facto the only Judean city that remained; the territories of the Shephelah (85 percent was no longer settled in the seventh century BCE!) were transferred to the administration of the coastal cities Gaza, Ashdod, and Ekron. The southern mountains of Judah were also much less populated than in the eighth century BCE (Avi Ofer, differently Israel Finkelstein).

5.8.1. Manasseh's Foreign Policy and Assyrian Access to Egypt

In the seventh century BCE, Assyrian influence determined Judah's politics, and the reign of Manasseh (696–642 BCE) occurred in the period of the greatest expansion and economic prosperity of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Between the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty of Egypt (ca. 746–656 BCE) and Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE) a stalemate prevailed. Neither did the Egyptians succeed in extending their power to the Syro-Palestinian land bridge, nor could the Assyrian kings permanently bring Egypt under their rule. In 674 BCE, the Assyrian army was repulsed at the eastern delta, but during the second campaign in 671 BCE it advanced to Memphis. After Esarhaddon fell ill and died in 669 BCE during the third campaign, his son Ashurbanipal (669–631 BCE) continued the enterprise. He conquered Memphis in 667 BCE and Thebes in 664 BCE (Nah 3:8–10) but was unable to maintain rule over Egypt against the resurgent Psammetichus I (664–610 BCE), who was supported by the Lydian king Gyges and Greek mercenaries (Bernd Schipper). Apparently, there was cooperation between Assyria and the pharaohs of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (672–526/25 BCE), which again brought the coastal plain and Palestine under strong Egyptian influence at the end of the seventh century BCE. This influence lasted until Neco II (610–595 BCE) and the incorporation of Judah into the Neo-Babylonian provincial system (2 Kgs 24:7). In Ashurbanipal's campaigns to Egypt, Manasseh (696–642 BCE) is said to have participated with other vassals (Prism C, *HTAT* 191; cf. *TUAT* 1:397).

5.8.2. The Discrepancy between the Biblical and the Historical Images of Manasseh

Since the lack of destruction layers makes a sharp distinction between phases in the seventh century BCE based on pottery typology hardly possible, there is currently intense discussion as to how the construction and expansion of Judah in the seventh century BCE can be classified his-

torically. It turns out that Manasseh (696–642 BCE) is probably the most underestimated Judean king in scholarship so far. In the → Dtr account, Manasseh is a paradigmatically bad king and held responsible for the collapse of the kingdom in 587/86 BCE (2 Kgs 21:1–23; 23:26; 24:4). In contrast, his grandson Josiah (639–609 BCE) is glorified as a royal hero and loyal to YHWH (2 Kgs 22–23). Past scholars often simply followed the biblical depiction and attributed Judah's restoration to Josiah. More recently, this has been contradicted and the enormous achievement of the reconstruction after 701 BCE is attributed more to Manasseh than to Hezekiah (Lester L. Grabbe, Ernst Axel Knauf).

5.8.3. Manasseh as a Faithful Assyrian Vassal

Manasseh (696–642 BCE), who was possibly already installed—with the support of pro-Assyrian powers—soon after 701 BCE as Hezekiah's coregent, reigned (according to 2 Kgs 21:1) for fifty-five years. This is the longest reign of any of the kings of Judah. A long reign presupposes a long life and, according to the wisdom of relating deeds to consequences, this suggests a life lived in accordance with YHWH's commandments. Thus, the Chronicler underlines Manasseh's willingness to repent with the prayer of Manasseh and positively assessed his construction activity (2 Chr 33:13–16). Although the presentation is to be evaluated as a theological construct, Chronicles, with its partially positive evaluation, is closer to historical reality than the negative blanket judgement of the → Deuteronomists. Manasseh was a faithful → vassal of the Assyrian kings, Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE) and Ashurbanipal (669–631 BCE) (Esarhaddon's vassal list, Prism C, *HTAT* 188, 191), and probably also took the Neo-Assyrian oath of allegiance (the *adê*-oath), whether in writing or orally. It is currently discussed whether the (palace) complex enclosed by a → casemate wall in Rāmat Rāḥēl/Ḥirbet Šālīḥ Stratum VA can be interpreted as the center of the Assyrian presence near the capital despite the absence of clearly Assyrian finds (Nadav Na'aman, Ronny Reich). Alternatively, the complex, which was built as an administrative center under Hezekiah on the initiative of the Assyrians and expanded under Manasseh, served as the second residence of the king of Judah (Oded Lipschits et al.).

5.8.4. The Economic Expansion of Manasseh's Kingdom

Through his political actions, Manasseh led Judah into a phase of renewed prosperity. As mentioned in the previous section, the expansion measures in Jerusalem are not to be attributed to Hezekiah, but rather to Manasseh (696–642 BCE). The population continued to grow, and around the city there was a dense ring of smaller farms, villages, and fortresses that provided for and protected the city. Following their earlier destruction, Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, Tell Bēt Mirsim, Tell ʿĒṭūn, Tel Ḥalif, Ḥirbet el-Mšāš were repopulated. Perhaps parts of the Shephelah already under Manasseh returned to the administrative sovereignty of Judah (Othmar Keel). A number of fortresses in the south and east of the kingdom (Arad, Ḥorvat ʿUza/Ḥirbet Ġazze, Ḥorvat Raddum, Tel ʿĪrā/Ḥirbet el-Ġarra, En-Gedi, etc.)—commonly attributed to Josiah—were probably built or restored under Manasseh. The associated settlement of the semiarid marginal zones on the western shore of the Dead Sea between the area from Jericho to En-Gedi, on the one hand, and in the Beersheba Valley, on the other hand, is striking. The boom of the Negev can be seen not only in the fortress-like buildings used to secure Assyrian-protected trading activities against marauding gangs, but also in the northwest of the Negev at Tell eš-Šerīʾa or Tell Jemmeh/Tell Ġemme, where Assyrian pottery and architecture reflect such a boom. Due to the lack of affordable land in the Shephelah, however, Manasseh seems to have moved to the less accessible areas in order to produce grains in the Beersheba Basin. The Assyrian-protected long-distance trade in the southern Negev seems to have involved above all the Edomites and mobile Arab-Edomite groups, but to a lesser extent also Judah (Kadesh-Barnea/Tell el-Qedērat, ʿĒn Ḥaṣēvā, Ḥorvat Qiṭmīt), but the *pax assyriaca* also led to increased inland trade.

Economic activities seem to have been concentrated regionally under Assyrian protection. The Philistine Ekron/Tel Miqnē/Ḥirbet el-Muqannaʿ developed a monopoly-like position in olive oil production in the seventh century BCE, which may even have led to the abandonment of nearby Judean oil production centers (Tell Bēt Mirsim, Tel Ḥalif, Tell ʿĒṭūn, Beth-Shemesh/ʿĒn Šems) (Israel Finkelstein, Nadav Naʿaman). The hinterland of Ashkelon specialized in wine production. Judah seems to have been used, like the Negev, for grain production (Avraham Faust, Ehud Weiss). This was not only for self-sufficiency, as it seems that surplus was produced and brought into trade as shown by finds in the regionally important port city of Ashkelon, where remains of wheat from Judah were found.

5.8.5. Assyrian Cultural Pressure and Religious Developments under Manasseh

The increasing quantity of scribal activity shows that Judah under Manasseh (696–642 BCE) developed far better than the biblical presentation would suggest. It accuses Manasseh of having massively called into question YHWH's exclusive right of worship (2 Kgs 21:3–7). Under the label “Assyrian crisis of Israelite religion” (Herbert Donner), scholarship has therefore discussed whether the obligation to worship Assyrian deities was imposed on their → vassals (Hermann Spieckermann). Manasseh promoted Assyrian cults in an *interpretatio canaanitica* (Herbert Donner) as Baal, Asherah, and the Heavenly Host. From the end of the ninth century BCE onward, → iconography shows an increasing presence of celestial and astral symbols (sun, moon, stars), especially of the Assyrian-Aramean moon god of Haran, who became prominent in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE (see fig. 28). Thus, the development in Judean religion cannot simply be traced back to the misconduct of King Manasseh, intensified Assyrian imperialism, or the powerful Assyrian presence after 701 BCE. As a general rule, the enforcement of Assyrian cults was not a means of Assyrian domination (Mordechai Cogan; see §5.6) and the worship of Assyrian deities was also not a required substitute for the defeated and subsequently deported deities (e.g., from Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, Samaria, see COS 2.117E–F, 2.118D–E, *HTAT* 142.151, 160; Hos 10:5–6; see also fig. 16). Othmar Keel is right, however, to point to the increasing Assyrian-Aramean influence on the iconographic system of symbols in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, reinforced by dwindling Egyptian influence, the deportation of elites, the presence of Assyrian officials and soldiers, and the flourishing Assyrian economy. The presence of Aramean-Assyrian cult elements and symbols is therefore due more to Assyrian *cultural pressure* on the vassal state of Judah than to a targeted religious policy on the part of Manasseh. The undoubted attractiveness of the winners led to the worship of Aramean-Assyrian deities such as the moon god of Haran or the Queen of Heaven, as well as to the fashionable alignment of local deities (YHWH, Asherah, El, Baal, Astarte) with Ištar, Aššur, and other Assyrian deities (see §5.5.5), but which are not mentioned by name in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Isa 3:18; Jer 8:2; 19:13; 44:17; Zeph 1:4–5; Deut 8:2; etc.). The development in the system of religious symbols is thus analogous to the material culture, where a moderate Assyrian influ-

ence is also recognizable in pottery, jewelry, and building forms, among other things.

Leading conservative forces were skeptical about the fashionable adaptation to Assyrian culture and religion, as they saw it as a relinquishment of the traditional identity that had developed over time. The fact that this created a productive tension in society, which not least of all stimulated literary production in the seventh century BCE, should prevent a general condemnation of this cultural change as with the → Deuteronomists.

5.9. JUDAH IN THE POWER PLAY BETWEEN ASSYRIA, BABYLON, AND EGYPT—JOSIAH

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5.9.1. Internal Political Resistance against Assyria and Josiah's Appointment

Resistance to Assyrian politics already formed during Manasseh's reign (696–642 BCE), but he cleverly rejected attempts at emancipation. But with his death, anti-Assyrian forces seem to have gained ground. Whether the murder of his son Amon (641–640 BCE) was related to anti-Assyrian upheavals in the administration can no longer be determined. In any case, the eight-year-old Josiah (639–609 BCE), supported by influential aristocratic circles (*ʿam ḥāʾāreṣ* 2 Kgs 21:24; 22:1, Shaphanides), took his place. This seems to have ensured continuity in foreign policy, Judah remained an obedient Assyrian → vassal and the prosperous phase of Judah's restoration continued.

5.9.2. The Decline of the Assyrian Empire and the Ascent of the Neo-Babylonians

The reign of Josiah (639–609 BCE) was strongly influenced by the shift in political power in the ancient Near East. The rapid disintegration of the Neo-Assyrian Empire began toward the end of Ashurbanipal's reign (669–631 BCE). The tenacious revolt of Babylon and Elam could initially be fended off, but the Neo-Assyrian Empire also came under increasing pressure from the north through the Scythians, which penetrated to the Egyptian border (Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.105).

The union of the Neo-Babylonians with the Medes in the southeast of the empire finally caused it to shudder and fall. Nabopolassar, the founder of the Chaldean Neo-Babylonian dynasty, seized the throne in Babylon in 626 BCE and began military pinpricks against Assur, which gradually reached into the heartland. Assur fell in 614 BCE, and Nineveh fell in 612 BCE after a three-month siege. Thus the Assyrian Empire was de facto defeated. The last Assyrian ruler, Ashur-uballit II (612–610 BCE), could no longer be properly enthroned in Assur. He was beaten after his retreat to the province in Haran/Ḫarrān in 610 BCE but was able to flee. The decaying Assyrians sought help from Pharaoh Neco II (610–595 BCE), who, although having reconquered Haran in 609 BCE, was unable to stop the end of the Assyrian dynasty and the previously glorious Assyria. In the phase of dwindling Assyrian power, however, there was *no* power vacuum in southern Syria and Palestine. This was due to the Egyptian interests in the region, which were again growing noticeably in the second half of the seventh century BCE.

5.9.3. Judah under Egyptian Control

Already under Psammetichus I (664–610 BCE), whose desire to expand into Syria was documented by an → ostrakon from Karnak (*HTAT* 256), there seems to have been a cooperation agreement between Egypt and Assyria, in which Egypt was obliged to provide military assistance and assure its control over the southern Levant (Nadav Na'aman, Bernd Schipper). The fact that the Egyptians actually fought alongside Assyria is proven by the Babylonian Chronicle of Gadd (BM 21901.10–11, *COS* 1.137, *HTAT* 258) and Jer 46:2. The weaker Assyria became, the stronger Egypt took hold of Palestine. Herodotus reports the capture of Ashdod (*Hist.* 2.157), and the Scythians seem to have been displaced from the coastal plain by

the Egyptian ruler (*Hist.* 1.105). On a stela of Psammetichus I, the pharaoh probably rightly claims the dependence of the Syro-Palestinian rulers on Egypt in 612 BCE (Bernd Schipper). Archaeologically, the securing of the Way of Horus and the Via Maris is to be traced by the construction of fortresses in the coastal plain (Məşad Ḥāšavyāhū), by Egyptian scarabs (Othmar Keel), and by Greek imported goods in Ashkelon, Ekron, Timnah/Tel Bāṭāš, el-Kabrī, Məşad Ḥāšavyāhū, Dor, and other places (Robert Wenning), which were introduced by the Greek mercenaries in the Egyptian army and by trade with the Aegean. The commander of the garrison at Arad Elyashib is ordered in the Arad ostraca to deliver food to the Kittim (Greeks) (*HAE* Arad[6]:1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14). It is reasonable to assume that these were Greek mercenaries in the service of the Egyptians. The Negev fortresses in Arad and ʿĒn el-Qudērat were probably not only under the influence of the Egyptians in the late seventh century BCE, but also under their control. On the Nile island of Elephantine there was—already at the time of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (672–526/25 BCE) under Psammetichus I (664–610 BCE) and his successor Neco II (610–595 BCE)—a contingent of Judean mercenaries placed there to secure the southern border of Egypt. Finally, the presence of Neco in Megiddo (2 Kgs 23:29), as well as the archaeological evidence of the city, indicates that the place—as it had under Shoshenq I (946/45–924 BCE) (see §4.8)—served as the Egyptian power base (Abraham Malamat). The conclusion that Judah was nominally under Assyrian but de facto under Egyptian control in the time of Josiah (cf. 2 Kgs 24:7) is inevitable (J. Maxwell Miller, John H. Hayes). The increase in Hieratic Egyptian inscriptions (Stefan J. Wimmer), as well as the increasing quantity and quality of small Egyptian finds in the coastal region and inland (such as scarabs of the Egyptian rulers of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, especially Psammetichus I) (Bernd Schipper), also point in this direction. Inscribed seal impressions and an ostrakon, although controversial in its authenticity, may even prove that Judah paid vassalage taxes to Egypt under Josiah (Stefan J. Wimmer).

5.9.4. No Significant Expansion of Judah's Borders under Josiah

Under these conditions, the political activity of Josiah (639–609 BCE), who is not mentioned in any extrabiblical source, presents itself in a different light. The Assyrian withdrawal left *no* power vacuum. Hence there was no comprehensive extension of the borders of the Judean kingdom that aimed at controlling the Assyrian province of Samerina

and, by that, restoring a former united monarchy, a “restoration of the Israelite-Judean state.”¹ Josiah was not one of the “most brilliant, talented and fascinating figures on the throne of David,” and he did not expand the dominion of Judah according to a “never extinguished ideal of a Davidic-Solomonic united monarchy.”² This would correspond to the biblical ideal image of the hero Josiah (if such an ideal already existed in his time), but de facto it goes far beyond the actual political and military possibilities of King Josiah.

Məṣad Ḥāṣavyāhū, which is often claimed for Josiah’s interests on the coast due to the presence of Judeans, was an Egyptian base or a Greek-Egyptian trading colony (Alexander Fantalkin) secured by mercenaries. The coastal plain, like the Assyrian province of Magidū, was under Egyptian control and, like the provinces of Šamīrīna, Galilee, or Transjordan, contains no sign of Josianic expansion (Nadav Na’aman). Raz Kletter has suggested that the Judean area can be approximately determined by means of prominent elements of the Iron IIC material culture. The so-called pillar figurines (see fig. 36), the inscribed weights, and, above all, the rosette stamp seal impressions that followed the *lmlk* seals of Hezekiah in the seventh century BCE show in their distribution (see §5.7.2, with map 10) hardly any expansion beyond the core area of Judah.

Whether Josiah’s control of the Negev and the Shephelah went beyond that of Manasseh is currently under discussion. The lists of cities in the book of Joshua (Josh 15:21–62; 18:21–28; 19:2–8, 40–46) or the → Dtr conquest narrative, which are regarded as dating from the time of Josiah, are more frequently mentioned in scholarly research as indirect evidence of Josiah’s expansion, but these can only be cited as a program, not as proof of its implementation. Probably, there remains only a moderate northern expansion from Josiah, which included Jericho and Bethel, so that the territory of the kingdom of Judah at the end of the sixth century BCE was about the same extent as the later Persian province of Yehūd (Oded Lipschits; see §6.3 with map 12) or only went beyond this extent in the south. This slight northern expansion, however, seems to have given impetus to the view that the histories of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, were

1. Antonius H. J. Gunneweg, *Geschichte Israels bis Bar Kochba* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1976), 112: “Restauration des israelitisch-judäischen Staates.”

2. Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 2:374, 380: “glänzendsten, begabtesten und faszinierendsten Gestalten auf dem Throne Davids”; “nie erloschene Ideal des davidisch-salomonischen Gesamtreiches.”

combined for the first time in the first version of books of Kings, based on the list material (and perhaps first drafts from the north from the time of Jeroboam II; see §5.5.9.2) and, perhaps also for the first time, construed with the idea of a united monarchy under the → eponymic kings David and Solomon. They naturally saw Judah through Josiah's refraction as stronger, more significant, and so on and also transferred this view to the history of the collapsed northern kingdom. That the theologians thereby justified a presentation that would later be regarded as the norm for the history of Israel was certainly not originally intended.

5.9.5. Josiah's Cult Reform

This raises the question of the historicity of Josiah's cult reform in 622 BCE (2 Kgs 22–23). In 2 Kgs 22:3, Shaphan, a member of the government and a high-ranking official, is commissioned to renovate the temple. In the narrative that follows, Shaphan serves as the link between the temple administration and the state government. The influential family of the Shaphanides, named after the protagonist mentioned here, played an important role in the final decades before the fall of Jerusalem as well as after. Several members of the family, who were close to the prophet Jeremiah and who are also documented outside the Hebrew Bible on multiple seals, held positions of high office: Shaphan's sons Ahikam (2 Kgs 22:12, 14; Jer 26:24), Elasah (Jer 29:3), Gemariah (Jer 36:12, 25), and Jaazaniah (Ezek 8:11), as well as his grandchildren Mic(ai)ah (Jer 36:11–13) and, above all, Gedaliah (2 Kgs 25:22–25; Jer 40:5; 43:6; see §5.11.2). The family is tangible for the first time in the biblical texts in the story of the cult reform. Shaphan first read the book found in the temple *before* he brought it to the king. After the book's contents (which has been identified with Deuteronomy since Wilhelm M. L. de Wette, 1806–1807, but this is not the only possibility because of the name *sēper habbārīt* “book of the covenant”) had been read to the king, it was sent with legation to the west of town to the prophetess Hulda (2 Kgs 22:14). The king reacted to the assessment of the prophetess or the contents of the book (2 Kgs 23:24) with a cult reform, which cleansed the Jerusalem temple of foreign cult influences and is connected with measures that extended to the cities of Samaria in the north (2 Kgs 23:17, 19).

For any historical assessment, *cult centralization* and *cult purification* must be considered separately. The sacrificial cult in Judah in the seventh century BCE was already de facto centralized in Jerusalem (see

§5.7.3, map 11). The temple in Arad and (only implicitly detectable via the altar of sacrifice) Tell es-Seba⁶ no longer existed at the time of Josiah (see §5.7.3). Only cult places of lower rank like, for example, gate altars, could have fallen victim to the efforts of the king for cultic unity. However, the shrine of Tel Moza 7 km northwest of Jerusalem raises new questions. Not only were fragments of figurines and cult vessels, as well as a favissa (→ hoard find), found in the courtyard of building 500, but also an altar made of field stones (Shua Kisilevitz et al.). Bones and ashes were recovered in the immediate vicinity, clearly indicating animal sacrifices. The complex, following the Syrian temple tradition, was initially dated to the eighth/seventh century BCE (Zvi Greenhut, Alon De Groot), but this date has been corrected due to the most recent excavations. The building complex was therefore erected in the ninth century BCE, but it was apparently already no longer used as a sacrificial cult site in the eighth century BCE, since the elevation of the floor covered the cult vessels, figurines, and the remains of the altar with a thick layer of earth (Shua Kisilevitz et al.). The building itself continued to serve an administrative function, which Tel Moza apparently performed regionally. Thus, the findings at Tel Moza seem to point in a similar direction to those of Arad and Beersheba and belong instead to the beginning of the development. There was a gradual abandonment of regional shrines in favor of Jerusalem, which is interpreted in the Hebrew Bible as resulting from reform and cult centralization. The previously regional cult was de facto nationally centered.

The extension of Judah's border to include Bethel raises the question of how Josiah proceeded with the former royal shrine. Second Kings 23:4, 15, 17, 19 assume its destruction, which is plausible under a program consolidating the national cult in Jerusalem (Klaus Koenen). Yet, this cannot be archaeologically proven (Ernst Axel Knauf). The historicity of this claim can therefore hardly be decided. On the other hand, an extension of Josiah's activities to large parts of the territory belonging to the northern kingdom in biblical terms (2 Kgs 23:18–19) can be ruled out (see §5.9.4).

A “justified minimum” (Christoph Uehlinger) of a *cult cleansing* in Jerusalem must be acknowledged (2 Kgs 23:5, 6–7*, 11, 12, Christian Frevel). On the one hand, it implemented monolatry (the worship of only one deity without excluding the existence of other deities), which is also apparent in the → iconographic system of symbols of the seventh century BCE (Othmar Keel, Christoph Uehlinger). On the other hand, it eliminated elements used in Assyrian divination practices of the Šamaš cult with horses and sun chariots and reduced Assyrian-

Aramean influence (Othmar Keel). The moderate cult reform—more progressive than a conservative restoration—of Josiah did not lead to a fundamental paradigm shift but to the *de facto* sole worship of YHWH in the Jerusalem temple and in the state cult. Domestically, this was the basis for a national identity centered on the worship of God and historically an important prerequisite on the way toward the explicitly formulated monotheism of the exilic period. Josiah's cult reform had no targeted anti-Assyrian thrust (according to Martin Arneth) but internally implemented what was a fact of his foreign policy: the Assyrians were weakened and played an ever smaller role as a factor of influence in the southern Levant. The revaluation of the city of Jerusalem recognizable in Josiah's measures continued the developments begun under Hezekiah and Manasseh.

5.9.6. Josiah's Death and the Deposition of Jehoahaz

The death of Josiah in 609 BCE, narrated in 2 Kgs 23:29–30, poses a mystery because it does not fit well with the → Deuteronomistic idealization of the king. A military conflict between Josiah and Pharaoh Neco II (610–595 BCE), which is unpacked in 2 Chr 35:20–24 on the basis of 2 Kgs 23:29, is historically unlikely and cannot be inferred from the formulation in verse 29 (lit., “and he went to meet him”). The exact background is speculative, but the proposal that Josiah, because of suspected or actual infidelity toward Egypt in the context of the change of power from Psammetichus I (664–610 BCE) to Neco II (610–595 BCE), was summoned to Megiddo as a → vassal and killed by Neco II has some plausibility (Othmar Keel).

Josiah's younger son, Jehoahaz (Jer 22:11: Shallum), was appointed king by the Judean aristocracy but was not accepted by Pharaoh Neco II. Three months after Jehoahaz's succession, Neco, upon returning from the battle in Haran/Harrân in support of the Assyrians, stopped in Riblah on the Orontes, ordered Jehoahaz (609 BCE) before him, deposed him as king, and brought him as his captive to Egypt (2 Kgs 23:33–34). Neco II replaced him with Josiah's apparently (because of his pro-Egyptian attitude?) supplanted older son, Eliakim, whom he renamed Jehoiakim (608–598 BCE), and imposed a high tribute on him (2 Kgs 23:33, 35). The background of this now formal vassalage to Egypt can only be conjectured. On the basis of an → ostrakon from the Arad fortress (*HAE* Arad[6]:88; see also §5.9.3), some have concluded that there was some

preparation for a war against Egypt. Yet, this was probably not a letter, but rather a copy of an official document, perhaps as a student exercise. The text does not give any indication of preparations for war *against* Egypt (Bernd Schipper), so that the reason for Jehoahaz's deposition by the pharaoh remains unclear.

5.10. JUDAH AS A BABYLONIAN PROVINCE AND THE END OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

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5.10.1. Jehoiakim as a Neo-Babylonian Vassal and Babylonia's Defeat in 601 BCE

With the strengthening of the Neo-Babylonian rule under Nabû-kudurri-uṣur ("Nabu, protect my son, heir!"), the biblical Nebuchadnezzar (or Greek and Latin Nabuchodonosor) (605–562 BCE), the Syro-Palestinian land bridge once again came between the fronts of the great powers of Egypt and Mesopotamia. In 605 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar attacked the Egyptians at Carchemish on the Euphrates, which ended in a crushing victory. This is not only apparent from the Babylonian Chronicle (COS 1.137, *HTAT* 258) but is also documented in an Aramaic letter from King 'Adūn of Ekron (COS 3.54, *HTAT* 260) (see *TUAT* 1:403–4, 633; Jer 46:2–12). The subsequent conquest through Syria (in which it is hardly likely that Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem; Dan 1:1 is based on a mix-up of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, Othmar Keel) was interrupted by his accession to the throne after his father Nabopolassar's death. In the following years, the Egyptians were pushed back further, but the Neo-Babylonians were unable to advance as far as Egypt. With the advance of Nebuchadnezzar into Ḫatti-country (Syria/Palestine) or rather the whole land of Ḫamat (northern Syria), Jehoiakim of Judah became a Babylonian → vassal with-

out resistance (604 BCE) like the neighboring provinces of the region (only Ashkelon resisted unsuccessfully). He remained such for the first three years of his reign (2 Kgs 24:1). When the decisive battle against Neco II in 601 BCE at the Egyptian border ended indecisively, Nebuchadnezzar had to accept high losses. Egypt seems to have strengthened again, and Jehoiakim defected from Babylon. The hope in Egypt proved deceptive. Nebuchadnezzar must have feared the renewed loss of the Syro-Palestinian land bridge in an impending alliance. This explains the harsh exemplary action against ^{URU}*ia-a-ḥu-du* “the city of Judah” (Rainer Albertz).

5.10.2. The First Conquest of Jerusalem 597/96 BCE

Nebuchadnezzar did not react immediately (because of the high losses among his troops?, Oded Lipschits), but only marched against Jerusalem in his seventh year, 597 BCE, according to the Babylonian Chronicle (COS 1.137, *HTAT* 258, Jer 52:28–30). There are slight uncertainties regarding the dating, since 2 Kgs 24:12 dates the event to the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, which would correspond to 596 BCE. A comparable difference results for the year 587/86 BCE, if one compares 2 Kgs 24:18 with Ezek 33:21. The different dates probably stem from different dating systems (in one the year of accession is counted; in the other year it is not; Klaus Koenen).

Jehoiakim did not live to see the first conquest of the city. Whether he was murdered by pro-Babylonian forces when the punitive action became undeniable (cf. Jer 22:18–19), or he was killed by Nebuchadnezzar (Josephus, *A.J.* 10.97), or deposed and brought to Babylon (2 Chr 36:6), or actually died of natural causes in December 597 BCE (2 Kgs 24:6) three months prior to the capture of the city (during the siege?) can no longer be clarified with certainty. This is true even if the version in 2 Kgs 24:6 is usually granted a precedence in research (Rainer Albertz, Oded Lipschits). His son Jehoiachin took over the leadership on 10 December 597 BCE and soon capitulated in the face of Babylonian superiority (2 Kgs 24:12) to stop the destruction of the city at the last moment. The Babylonian Chronicle identifies the second of Adar of Nebuchadnezzar’s seventh regnal year for this decisive event. This date corresponds to 16 March 597 BCE. However, the Babylonian Chronicle states nothing about a capitulation but starts from the conquest of the city: “Year 7: in Kislev the king of Babylonia called out his army and marched to Ḫattu. He set his camp against the city of Judah [*Ya-a-ḥu-du*] and on the 2nd Adar he took the city and captured

the king. He appointed a king of his choosing there, took heavy tribute and returned to Babylon.” (COS 1.137, *HTAT* 258). The fact that the Babylonian Chronicle prefers to see the king captured with the *conquered* city is understandable in view of its propagandistic purpose. But Nebuchadnezzar’s care of Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:15), who was captured and brought to Babylon as documented several times in Babylonian archive notes for the year 592 BCE (see the data in the rations lists *TUAT* 1:412–13, *HTAT* 265–67), speaks primarily for a voluntary surrender of resistance. Despite the actions of Jehoiachin, the consequences for Jerusalem and Judah were grave: Nebuchadnezzar appointed Mattaniah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, as king (see §5.10.4). He took a high tribute as spoils of war to Babylon, including some of the temple utensils (2 Kgs 24:13; cf. Jer 27:18–22). Besides a large part of the royal family and the Jerusalem ruling class (including Ezekiel), he took artisans and smiths, as well as a part of the population of Judah, to Babylon (2 Kgs 24:15–16; Jer 29:2).

The documents from the archives of the Babylonian palace administration show that besides Jehoiachin and the members of the royal house, others belonging to ruling houses and elites were also cared for in the royal court in Babylon and held diverse offices. The conquered were by no means all treated equally, but according to their degree of resistance, loyalty, and function. In the allocation notes from the year 592 BCE Jehoiachin is mentioned several times together with his five sons (*HTAT* 267). First Chronicles 3:17–18 even names seven sons of Jehoiachin who were born in captivity. Jehoiachin’s fate as captive finally ends at Evil-merodach’s court (Amēl-Marduk, 562–560 BCE), who pardoned the Judean ruler after thirty-seven years of captivity upon his accession to the throne during the Akitu festival in 561 BCE (2 Kgs 25:27 // Jer 52:31). Thereafter, reports about this king are lost, which opened his fate for pro-Davidic restoration hopes (see §5.11.3).

5.10.3. Deportation of the Judean Population

The biblical account sees each of the significant sections in the history of the city of Jerusalem up to the conquest as connected with the deportation of inhabitants of Judah. After Jehoiachin had saved the city from being conquered by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BCE, the first wave of deportations took place. The formulation in 2 Kgs 24:14 makes the extent seem exorbitant, as Nebuchadnezzar is said to have taken “all Jerusalem” captive and only after that is it clarified that leaders, warriors, blacksmiths, and metal-

workers were taken, so that expressly only “the small people of the land” remained. The connection of the last phrase with the description of the second deportation in 587/86 BCE in 2 Kgs 25:11–12 is abundantly clear, because there were only a few vintners and farmers left in this remainder. Even more radical is the narrator’s commentary in 2 Kgs 25:21, which claims “*all* Judah” was led away (see also Jer 13:19; 20:4; 52:27; Lam 1:3). The focus of the biblical statements is often on the city (e.g., Jer 1:3: “the captivity of Jerusalem”), but some statements have a standardized reference to “Judah and Jerusalem” (Jer 27:20; 29:1; 40:1). Hardly any statement in the biblical texts is as varied as that of the exile of the Judean population in the sixth century BCE. Some texts even go so far as to suggest that the land was completely empty during the years of exile and lay fallow (e.g., Jer 44:22; 2 Chr 36:20–21). This view, called the “myth of the empty land” (Hans M. Barstad), functions as theological reassurance that the exile—interpreted as punishment—applied to everyone. At the same time, the → *golah*, the community of returnees from exile, is set in a position such that they constitute the *true* Israel. For just as all Israel went into exile, so also all Israel returned from it (see §6.4.4). Already these few hints show the enormous importance of the exile for the construction of postexilic Israel’s collective identity. The terminology used in modern research for the facts of the case is manifold. Even this demonstrates the significance of the event for the history of Israel: deportation, exile, banishment, forced migration, or being taken away. One speaks of the Babylonian captivity, or of the exiled Judeans, or the *golah*. The terms have different connotations and refer either to the operation or to the result. The historical reality behind the biblical notes is difficult to judge and ranges from positions that almost completely negate the meaning of exile to maximalist positions that approach the myth of the empty land.

The biblical figures pose a major problem. Already the data of the first, most extensive deportation 597/96 BCE differ between 10,000 + x (2 Kgs 24:14), 8,000 (2 Kgs 24:16), and 3,023 (Jer 52:28) persons. Chronicles does not give any concrete figures (2 Chr 36:20), and 2 Kgs 25:11–12 (Jer 52:15–16; 39:9) depicts the second exile as the removal of the entire remaining population, leaving the country *empty*. This attempts to justify the myth of the empty land. However, Jer 52:28–30 reports the most concrete figures: 3,023 *yəhūdīm* (“Judeans”) in 597/96 BCE, 832 persons from Jerusalem in 587/86 BCE, and 745 persons in 582 BCE, making the round number of 4,600 persons in total. The total number of deportees in the three waves of exile is much discussed in research and cannot be

safely calculated from the estimates. Is only the number of adult males given (Ernst Axel Knauf), or does the number 832 refer only to those who remained in the city until the end (Rainer Albertz)? Because of the great importance of the exilic community in Babylon (named *gôlāh* → *golah*), which was located in several places in closed groups (see below), a share of 10–30 percent of the total population is usually expected, even though it is consistently admitted that the lower numbers in Jer 52:28–30 sound more probable historically. Estimates of the total population of Judah in the sixth century BCE differ between 80,000 and 200,000 people. More or less consistently, Rainer Albertz, Othmar Keel, and Ernst Axel Knauf, despite using different calculations, come to a figure of around 20,000 deportees. Oded Lipschits, on the other hand, expects a far greater population decline in the sixth century BCE: about 30,000 of about 110,000 people remained in the demographically collapsing and economically weakened Babylonian province after killing, hunger, epidemics, exile, flight, and emigration.

Like the Assyrians before them, the Babylonians deported the land-owning elite and artisan specialists to Babylon. But in contrast to the Neo-Assyrian practice, they employed a one-way deportation. This means that unlike the Assyrians in the province Šamīrīna, foreign populations were not deliberately settled in Judah to replace those who had been deported. One of the reasons for the changed practice was the lower interest in the economic development of the provinces and their integration into an international economic system (Oded Lipschits). The primary concern of the Neo-Babylonian rulers, who did not see themselves as rulers of the world like the Assyrians, was Babylon and its economic prosperity. Accordingly, the deportees were deployed as workers in state construction projects of the Neo-Babylonians. The hint that only the insignificant people remained (2 Kgs 24:14; Jer 40:7; 52:15–16) therefore points in the right direction but reflects the perspective of the *golah*, who defined themselves as the *true Israel*.

5.10.4. Zedekiah and the Deceptive Hope for Egyptian Support

Nebuchadnezzar appointed a third son of Josiah, Mattaniah, as the king “after his heart.” To him he bestowed the throne name Zedekiah (598/97–587/86 BCE) (2 Kgs 24:17–20). Whether the establishment was accompanied by a reduction in area (the area south of Hebron was assigned to the Edomites, who continued to expand further and further northwest,

Ernst Axel Knauf) or whether the area of Judah continued to reach Aroer (Oded Lipschits) is still discussed. At first Zedekiah was the expected faithful → vassal until the balance of power between Egypt and Babylon shifted again. In 594/93 BCE, a rebellion broke out in Babylon, which occupied Nebuchadnezzar's attention in internal affairs. In the same year, Psammetichus II (595–589 BCE) came to power in Egypt. After a military expansion and campaigns to Nubia, he set out for a demonstration of power on the Syro-Palestinian land bridge in 591 BCE (Bernd Schipper). In 594/93 BCE, the region that had just been pacified was possibly already considering a revolt (Jer 27). Such consideration was met with prophetic resistance, this time by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, just as Isaiah had done under Hezekiah. When the successor Apries (589–570 BCE), the biblical Hophra (Jer 44:30), continued his father's foreign policy toward western Asia more aggressively and decisively, Zedekiah renounced his vassalage to Babylon. This again proved to be a serious foreign policy error. Whether he had only hoped for Egypt's help or had even contractually agreed to it (Rainer Albertz) must remain open.

5.10.5. The Second Conquest of Jerusalem 588/87 BCE

Like the first, the second punitive action against Jerusalem should be interpreted as a safeguard against Egyptian claims. This time Nebuchadnezzar did not participate directly (perhaps out of contempt for the former favorite Zedekiah) but remained in Riblah (2 Kgs 25:6). Captain Nabuzēru-iddina, biblically Nebuzaradan, began the siege of Jerusalem in 588 BCE (2 Kgs 25:8, 11, 20; Jer 52:12; etc.).

5.10.5.1. Interruption of the Siege of Jerusalem

The Egyptian Apries (589–570 BCE) used the concentration of the troops on Judah as an opportunity to attack the Phoenician coastal towns and perhaps Lebanon (Bernd Schipper), leading to the interruption of the siege of Jerusalem. The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BCE), first had to deal with the Egyptians in order to curb their claims and at the same time bring the important coastal trade route (Via Maris) under his control. The Lachish → ostraca (fig. 41) possibly prove that contact with Egypt was sought in the distressing situation: “General Konyāhū son of ’Elnātān has moved south in order to enter Egypt” (COS 3.42B, HAE Lak[6]:1.3).

Perhaps, however, the commander defected to Egypt in light of the hopeless situation, because Apries presumably fought back (Jer 37:5) and apparently had no interest at all in actually jumping into the breach for Judah (Bernd Schipper, otherwise Rainer Albertz). The threatening situation for Jerusalem is likely to have been exacerbated by the Edomites, who increasingly exerted expansive pressure in the southern Shephelah, making it even more difficult for troops to congregate in Jerusalem. In one of the Arad → ostraca (HAE: Arad[6]:24; Diana V. Edelman), 'Elyāšā', the commander of one of the Negev fortresses—Ramat-Negev (probably Ḥirbet el-Ġarra/Tel ʿĪrā)—urged the commander of Arad, 'Elyāšib, to strengthen his troop contingents for defense, “lest anything happen to the city. This is an order from the king—a life-and-death matter for you. I send (this message) to warn you now: The(se) men (must be) with 'Elyāšā' lest (the) Edom(ites) (should) enter there” (COS 3.43K). Also, Ostrakon 40, which can be dated a little earlier but paleographically probably also to the seventh century BCE (Nadav Naʾaman), mentions Edom and perhaps an administrative exchange between Edom and the commander of Arad. This could indicate that there was a conflict with Judah's southern neighbor, for which efforts were initially made to solve the situation diplomatically but with the pressure on Judah the situation threatened to escalate. This view, not unaffected by the biblical presentation, however, remains highly speculative (Philippe Guil-

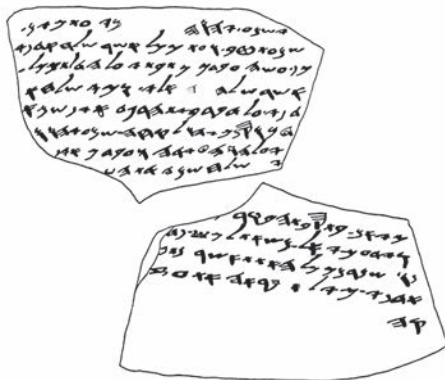


Fig. 41. Lachish Ostrakon 4 (COS 3.42, HAE Lak [6]:1.4). The letter begins with a blessing without address: “May Yahweh give you good news at this very time.” Then the correspondent describes the situation and assures his superior of his loyalty and obedience. It ends with a reference to the transmission of signals in a chain of posts between Lachish and Azekah: “Then it will be known that we are watching the (fire-)signals of Lachish according to the code which my lord gave us, for we cannot see Azekah” (COS 3.42C). This ostrakon also bears witness to the precarious military situation in the sixth century BCE in the southern Shephelah.

laume). One thus does not enter safe ground here any more than with the participation of Edom in the conquest of Jerusalem (see §5.10.5.4).

5.10.5.2. Taking the City of Jerusalem and Zedekiah's Flight

The brief sigh of relief due to the pause of the siege was deceptive (Jer 37:6–10); in Jerusalem political chaos erupted. If one follows the biblical account, Zedekiah began to react with increasing uncertainty: Jeremiah was held in a cistern under suspicion of collaboration with the Babylonians (Jer 37:11–16, cf. 32:6–15). In the late summer of 588 BCE, the siege resumed. One year later, on 29 July 587 (Rainer Albertz), a breach was made in the city wall (2 Kgs 25:3–4; Jer 39:2; 52:6). Zedekiah tried to flee but was captured at Jericho and brought to the Babylonian king at Riblah in Syria for punishment (2 Kgs 25:4–7; Jer 39:4–5). There he first had to watch his sons being killed, before he was blinded and taken to Babylon into captivity, where his trail has since been lost (2 Kgs 25:7; Jer 52:11).

5.10.5.3. The Destruction of the Temple

In the meantime, the defeated city remained in a state of limbo (2 Kgs 25:4–8; Jer 39:6–8). Only a month after Zedekiah was captured and interrogated, Nebuzaradan was ordered to destroy the city. In 587/86 BCE, Jerusalem was finally conquered, the houses of the wealthy were demolished, the walls were cut down, and the temple and palace were destroyed. The destruction of the temple, which is not mentioned in Jer 39:8, was unusually harsh—though not unthinkable—for a Babylonian punitive action (Walter Mayer). Following Christof Hardmeier and Rainer Albertz, it can be assumed that the leading anti-Babylonian forces were located among the temple aristocracy and priesthood meaning these were hit particularly hard and that the temple was understood as “a stronghold and symbol of the national revolt” (Rainer Albertz). The destruction of the temple in 586/87 BCE is still remembered today in Judaism on Tisha beAv, the ninth day of the month of Ab (together with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, m. Ta’an. 4:6). However, the temple cult in Jerusalem was not completely abandoned during the time of exile, but emergency solutions (Angelika Berlejung) and transitional regulations were established, to which Zech 7:3; 8:19; Ezek 33:25; and also Jer 41:4–5 bear witness.

5.10.5.4. Effects of the Punitive Action on Judah and the Role of the Edomites

Nebuchadnezzar's punitive action was largely confined to Jerusalem and its surroundings (Oded Lipschits). Archaeological traces of the destruction can be found in several parts of the city. One example is the destruction of merchant houses that were placed on the foot of the stepped stone structure on the Southeastern Hill in the seventh century BCE and in which strong traces of destruction can be found (House of Ahiel, House of the Bullae). In several places of the city, (Scythian) arrowheads were found (Nahman Avigad, Hillel Geva), which can be interpreted as traces of the Neo-Babylonian conquest (Sean Dugaw et al.).

The extent of the destruction of the surrounding countryside is controversial. According to Avraham Faust, it was far reaching, so that 80–90 percent of the former area was no longer populated. Even if this is untenable from the point of view of the findings, a massive decline in population figures must nevertheless be assumed. Oded Lipschits assumes a destruction rate of 60–70 percent with regional differentiations. Israel Finkelstein, due to recalculations, comes to a population of 12,000 people in the Persian settlements, which is far less than the 30,000 mentioned above and, when compared to the population in former Judah, only amounts to 10 percent of the former population. In the literature, there is still a lot in flux here, and the numbers are collected on different bases. However, the consensus seems to be that the discontinuity was greater than the continuity and that there were regional differences. The determination of the relationship between continuity and discontinuity is of great importance, because the stronger the break with the previous system, the greater the influence of the groups returning from exile in the sixth century BCE (→ *golah*).

The conquest of Judah was a drastic event especially in the south (southern Shephelah, Beersheba Valley, Negev, see below), while some places north of Jerusalem show unbroken continuity (see §5.11). This, too, suggests once again that the politico-military role of the Egyptians as potential or actual partners of Judah against the Neo-Babylonians should not be underestimated in the interplay of factors. On the other hand, the different degrees of destruction also demonstrate different strategic and economic significances. The role of the Egyptians in the destruction remains unclear as a whole, as the Negev region represented the buffer zone to the Neo-Babylonians for them.

Significant destruction of settlements associated with Nebuchadnezzar's punitive action can be demonstrated particularly in the south of the country. Jeremiah 34:7 mentions Lachish and Azekah, which during the siege of Jerusalem were the remaining cities against which the Neo-Babylonian army fought. For Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, a destruction of Stratum II is detectable; for Azekah/Tell Zakariye it is not clear. Also worth mentioning for the sixth century BCE are Tell 'Arād Stratum VI, Ḥorvat 'Uza/Ḥirbet Ġazze, Ḥorvat Raddum, Tel 'Īrā/Ḥirbet el-Ġarra, Tell el-Milh/Tel Malḥātā, Ḥorvat 'Anim, Ḥorvat Tōv, and others. It is unclear who caused the last-mentioned destructions and exactly when they took place (597/96, 587/86, 582 BCE, or later). Apart from Babylonians and Egyptians, the Edomites and proto-Arabic, seminomadic tribes are the most likely to be considered for the Negev fortresses destructions, unlike Lachish. Obviously the Edomites were able to make political capital out of the fall of the state of Judah (André Lemaire) and perhaps even cooperated with the Neo-Babylonians in taking Jerusalem (differently Manfred Weippert). That may explain their pronounced bad press in parts of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Jer 49:20–22; Lam 4:21–22; Joel 4:19; Obad 2, 8; Ps 137:7).

However, it is important to take a closer look here, because if and to what extent the Edomites participated in the conquest is not so easy to answer. Above all, Obad 11–14 accuses Edom of gloating when Jerusalem was conquered (cf. also Ezek 25:12; 35:5, 10–11, 15; 36:5). Obadiah 14 even suggests they robbed and slaughtered those who fled the city. There is no reliable evidence from Babylonian sources that the Neo-Babylonians used the support of auxiliary troops, even if this cannot be ruled out. A few decades later, King Nabonidus (556–539 BCE) spent ten years of his reign in the northwest Arabian oasis of Tayma, which suggests good relations. That the proto-Arabian tribes benefited from the Babylonian advance into the Negev can hardly be denied. As a mere possibility, it cannot be excluded that they were even involved in the destruction of settlements and military installations in the Negev. An active role in the conquest of Jerusalem, however, does not result from any of the available information, strictly speaking. In particular, the most detailed report in 2 Kgs 25:8–21 mentions nothing of it. Scythian arrowheads point perhaps to Asian mercenaries; for other participants there is no archaeological evidence. In any case, Nebuzaradan's troops hardly needed the help (Bob Becking). The Edomites or the tribes operating under this name in southern Palestine, the Negev, and on both sides of the Arabah Valley benefited from the weakening of the center and the destruction of the infrastructure in the

south. Perhaps this explains the deep hostility between Edom and Israel in biblical texts. Due to the upgrading of the later province of Idumea and its competition with Yehûd the situation in the later Persian period would not have been more relaxed.

Be that as it may, the last Neo-Babylonian king, Nabonidus (556–539 BCE), even ended Edom's sovereignty in 553/52 BCE. In the subsequent period, the Edomite core area, which is counted as part of the province of Arabia, increasingly came under the influence of proto-Arabian tribes from the Syrian desert. The political status of the Negev is nevertheless completely clear until the establishment of a Persian province of Idumea around 400 BCE (see §§6.3, 6.9). The destruction of the economic basis of the Judean state and the consequences of the decline in population caused Judah to fall behind Samaria in its development, which becomes evident again in the Persian period (see §§6.3.1, 6.3.2, as well as 6.8.1).

5.11. JUDAH AFTER THE KINGDOM'S FALL UNTIL THE END OF EXILE

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Excavations after 85 Years. Gorgias Studies in the Ancient Near East 9. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2015.

The decades following the conquest of Jerusalem have long received little attention. The city and its temple were considered completely destroyed, and the infrastructure completely collapsed. Research focused on the exiles who “by the rivers of Babylon ... sat and ... wept” (Ps 137:1). For a long time, it was not even noticed that the biblical presentation was unquestioningly followed according to which the → golah, the exilic community, moved to the center and the land was left empty. More recently this has changed considerably, but the indecisiveness in dealing with the chronology becomes apparent. The change of epoch is underlined by the fact that the Iron IIC period ends abruptly around 587/86 BCE. The next period is the victory of Cyrus II in the so-called Persian period, which began in 539 BCE. The interim period often falls by the wayside in terms of terminology as well, whereby the myth of the empty land is more or less uncritically perpetuated. Some prefer to describe a Babylonian-Persian period covering the lengthy period from 587/86–333 BCE. The designations of later periods oriented toward political upheavals as opposed to the earlier periods with their metal technologies remain blurred, especially with regard to the transitions. Alternatively, the time from 587/86 BCE to the appearance of Cyrus II is referred to as the Iron III period (Margreet Steiner, William G. Dever), but here there is an overlap in research with the Iron IIC period, which is also referred to as Iron III by others. Therefore, the combined designation Babylonian period/Iron III is recommended, whereby, on the one hand, the blurriness must be accepted that the Neo-Babylonians influenced Judah much earlier than 587/86 BCE and, on the other hand, that the material culture marks neither the transition from the Iron IIC to the Babylonian period nor that from the Babylonian period to the Persian period unambiguously. At the same time, this also anticipates a characteristic of the following period: the sixth century BCE is characterized by discontinuities as well as by continuities.

5.11.1. Continuity and Discontinuity after Jerusalem's Conquest

Oded Lipschits describes the first half of the sixth century BCE in archaeological terms as a period of transition from the Iron II to the Persian

period, marked by both continuity and discontinuity. The destruction of the center was not associated with a general break in material culture. The village settlements in the Judean highlands show a higher continuity than the border towns in the west of the province, which were destroyed like Jerusalem. In the Shephelah, in the Beersheba Basin, and in the eastern hinterland of Judah, the agricultural prosperity of the seventh century BCE did not continue into the sixth century BCE, but rather broke off markedly. For the area of Benjamin, on the other hand, continuity is noticeable despite a considerable population decline. Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe, located 12 km northwest of Jerusalem, was spared and played an important role as an administrative center in Stratum II until the middle of the fifth century BCE (Jeffrey R. Zorn). Gibeah/Tell el-Fūl was only partially destroyed, but like Gibeon/el-Ğib and Bethel/Bētīn it shows clear signs of continuity. While the biblical account assumes a complete collapse, the material culture points to an economy that, at least in administrative terms, stood in continuity with the administrative system of the Assyrian province. Instead of the *lmlk* and rosette stamp seals (see §5.7.2), so-called lion seals (Oded Lipschits, David Stephen Vanderhooft) were used until the beginning of the Persian period. But these were much less standardized than the seals previously used to mark jar handles.

Seal impressions with the inscription *mṣ(w)h* come from the area around Jerusalem, mainly from Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe (30), but also from Jerusalem (4), Gibeon/el-Ğib (4), Jericho (2), Rāmat Rāḥēl (1), Bēt Hanīnā (1), and Ṣūbā/Zobah (1). The stamp impressions may have belonged to a (perhaps Mizpah-related, local) administrative system of oil and wine production in the mid-sixth century BCE prior to the establishment of Yehūd Province and preceding the early Yehūd stamps (Oded Lipschits, David Stephen Vanderhooft). Whether the additional sixty-two seal impressions with place and personal names, which were concentrated on Gibeon/el-Ğib but not limited there, are proof of another local system will be discussed further. Perhaps the seal impressions on wine jar handles date paleographically somewhat earlier than the *mṣ(w)h* stamps. Both point to administrative activity anyway, so that the impression of a complete collapse of the economy after 587/86 BCE is misplaced.

5.11.2. Gedaliah as a Babylonian Administrator

There can be no question of a depopulated land, even if the exilic period led to strong reductions in economic and demographic terms. The Geda-

liah episode (2 Kgs 25:22–25; Jer 40:7) is closely linked to the question of political continuity in the country. The destruction of the temple and the city is to be seen in the context of the Babylonians' foreign political interest in maintaining power on the Syro-Palestinian land bridge. The selective punishment aimed at suppressing the anti-Babylonian insurrection movement in Jerusalem. The fact that the Neo-Babylonians were quite precisely informed about the political situation in Jerusalem is shown not least by the release of Jeremiah (Jer 39:13–14), who according to Jer 40:4–5 was even free to go with the exiles or to remain in Judah (Hermann-Josef Stipp) because of his pro-Babylonian attitude. A complete destruction of Judah was obviously not in the interest of the Neo-Babylonians. When the Neo-Babylonians left, they entrusted the pro-Babylonian Shaphanide Gedaliah (for the Shaphanides, see §5.9.5) with the administration of the province (e.g., 2 Kgs 25:22; Jer 40:5, 7, 11; 41:2). Several seal impressions attest to a high official named Gedaliah, presumably from the reign of Zedekiah rather than the administrative official in Mizpah (Othmar Keel, Pieter Gert van der Veen). One of the seals comes from Lachish and names a palace chief Gedaliah (fig. 42), while another from the antique trade names a Gedaliah, the servant of the king. Both date paleographically (→ epigraphy) to the seventh or perhaps into the early sixth century BCE, but an assignment to the administrative official Gedaliah remains uncertain.

Also, the Gedaliah mentioned in Jer 38:1 or a bearer of this frequent name not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible could be considered. Another → bulla was found in the excavations in Jerusalem with the inscription “Gedaliah, son of Pashhur” (fig. 43).

The find caused a sensation because a seal was found nearby a few years prior on which “Juchal, son of Shelemiah” was imprinted, who is also mentioned in Jer 38:1 beside Gedaliah. But even Gedaliah, son of Pashhur, who is listed as Jeremiah's opponent in Jer 38:1, cannot be identified with the administrator in Mizpah. He is mostly called the son of Ahikam and grandson of a Shaphanide (2 Kgs 25:22; Jer 39:14; 40:15; etc.). Gedaliah, “YHWH is great/made great,” was a quite common name (see also *HAE*: Arad[8]:71:3; Arad[6]:110:2; Zeph 1:1; Ezra 10:18; 1 Chr 25:3, 9). In short, there is no extrabiblical witness to Gedaliah nor of the title associated with him.

The status of Gedaliah, who probably resided in Mizpah, is not mentioned in the texts themselves (NRSV adds: “Governor,” 2 Kgs 25:22–23; Jer 40:7, 11). J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes assume that Gedaliah

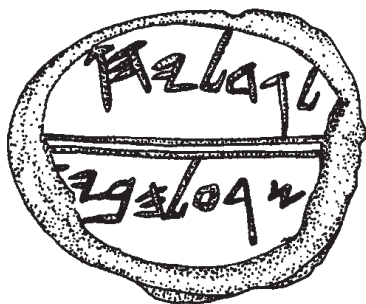


Fig. 42. Bulla from Lachish from the seventh/sixth century BCE with the inscription “(be-longing to) Gedalyāhū, who is over the house.” The title refers to the head of the palace, i.e., a high official. The impression was found unstratified in 1936 and is considered lost today.

Fig. 43. Bulla with the inscription *lgdlyhw | bn pshwr* “(belonging to) Gedaliah, the son of Pashhur” from the excavations in the city of David in Jerusalem (2008).



was appointed as a pro-Babylonian → vassal king and that the Babylonians thus enthroned a non-Davidide as Zedekiah’s successor. The reasons given are that Ishmael is described in Jer 41:1 as one of the “chief officers of the king” and Jer 41:10 speaks of the “king’s daughters.” In Tell en-Naṣbe, in the ruins of a Byzantine tomb (fifth–seventh century CE), a seal was also found that was inscribed with *ly’znyhw ‘bd mlk*, that is, “Jaazaniah, the servant of the king” (fig. 44).

As Jaazaniah is mentioned in 2 Kgs 25:23, it was concluded that Gedaliah had the title of king in Mizpah (Philip R. Davies). Since Gedaliah belonged to the pro-Babylonian forces and was not a Davidide, he was murdered by the national patriot Ishmael, who himself was of Davidic lineage (2 Kgs 25:25 // Jer 41:2). The mentioned seal does not date back to the sixth century BCE. Apart from that, the title “Servant of the King” which was quite common in the seventh century BCE, does not seem to be used anymore after the downfall of Judah. Like Gedaliah, Jaazaniah (“may YHWH listen”) was a common name (Jer 35:3; 40:8; Ezek 8:11; 11:1), so that the identification with the Maacathite Jaazaniah (2 Kgs 25:23) and



Fig. 44. Seal from a Byzantine tomb in Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe with the inscription *ly'znyhw | 'bd mlk* "(belonging to) Jaazaniah, servant of the king." The inscription dates around 600 BCE. The cock in the lower register, perhaps already associated with fighting spirit and pride, may be a family symbol.

assignment to Gedaliah in Mizpah is not very likely (Bob Becking, otherwise Pieter Gert van der Veen). Even if it were, the seal would rather come from the activity of Zedekiah's court (Rainer Albertz). So, the title of king cannot be claimed for Gedaliah by relying on the seal. The king's daughters of Jer 41:10 do not have to be Gedaliah's daughters either. Hermann-Josef Stipp has drawn attention to the fact that the older tradition of the → LXX does not contain the royal title for Gedaliah, and his status should therefore remain open. The assassination of Gedaliah by the Davide Ishmael (according to Jer 40:14 under Ammonite instigation) merely shows that Gedaliah, as a Babylonian sponsored governor, did not succeed and that anti-Babylonian forces did not vanish into thin air after 587 BCE. Rainer Albertz concludes from Jer 39:10 in combination with Jer 40:10; Ezek 11:14–21; 33:23–29 that Gedaliah's government program was connected to the → Deuteronomic reform of Josiah and that he instigated land and social reforms based on Deuteronomic brotherhood ethics. But also here, caution is required, especially since Jer 39:10 comes from the (proto-)Masoretic additions and was not yet contained in the oldest text of Jeremiah (Hermann-Josef Stipp). Thus, it could also be a question of a later alignment with the Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic social program in order to upgrade Gedaliah. It remains historically probable, however, that there were attacks on the land holdings of the exiles and possibly also official briefings on areas to be used for agricultural purposes. Conflicts with returnees were thus inevitable (see §6.4).

5.11.3. A Third Deportation after Gedaliah's Murder?

How long Gedaliah worked as a Babylonian administrative officer in Mizpah and what exactly happened after his murder remains uncertain. According to the biblical account, after the murder of the faithful Gedaliah, Ishmael attempted to deport the remaining population of Mizpah to Transjordan, but this was thwarted (Jer 41:10–14). Those affected then tried to escape to Egypt. An expulsion from Mizpah that resulted in a mass flight of inhabitants to Egypt (Jer 41:17–18; 43:7) is just as unlikely as the flaming warning of the prophet Jeremiah to the rest of the community not to flee to Egypt (Jer 42). It is conceivable that some of the remaining inhabitants felt the situation after Gedaliah's assassination to be threatening and emigrated to safe places. However, a mass exodus that left the land completely empty is historically implausible (Othmar Keel). Among those who emigrated to Egypt are, according to the Hebrew Bible, the prophet Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch (Jer 43:6). But there can be no talk of a deportation of the prophet to Egypt (Hermann-Josef Stipp), even if all traces of him are lost in Egypt. The “king's daughters” or “princesses” mentioned together with Jeremiah and Baruch in Jer 43:6, who remained in the land (cf. Jer 41:10), were not Gedaliah's daughters. Rather they were Zedekiah's daughters, who functioned as a counterpart to the king's sons who had already been killed (2 Kgs 25:7 // Jer 39:3 // 52:10).

According to biblical account, the Mizpah episode came to an end with the assassination of the Babylonian representative, particularly since no Judean population remained in Mizpah. If, however, one assumes that this depiction reinforces the myth of the empty land (see §5.10.3), the question arises as to how the administration of the Babylonian province continued. There are neither biblical nor extrabiblical references to governors after Gedaliah, but due to the archaeological findings in Mizpah/Tell en-Naşbe, one can assume that the administration remained in Mizpah for a decent period until it returned to Jerusalem. But when that was is difficult to clarify.

The biblical texts give the impression that these events occurred in the period immediately after the conquest of Jerusalem, thus limiting Gedaliah's activity to a few weeks. But since Jer 52:30 starts from a third deportation in 582 BCE and it is unclear why another punitive action against Judah (and the neighboring states Ammon and Moab, Ulrich Hübner) took place, it is often assumed, with reference to Josephus (*A.J.* 10.80–182), that Gedaliah's attempt at reform lasted for a longer period of time. The

renewed intervention of the Neo-Babylonians (probably during the siege of Tyre 585–572 BCE; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.156; *A.J.* 10.228; Ezek 26:7–14; 29:17–21) could have led to a further deterioration of the economic and political situation in Judah (Rainer Albertz). The fact that they also led to a deterioration of the conditions for Jehoiachin, who was brought to Babylon, remains an assumption that attempts to resolve the tension between the supply notes from the Babylonian archives (see §5.10) and the prison conditions reported in 2 Kgs 25:27, 29; Jer 52:31, 33. According to 2 Kgs 25:27–30, Jehoiachin was pardoned by Evil-merodach (Amēl-Marduk, 562–560 BCE), which would have strengthened the hopes of a Davidic restoration in the phase of the Neo-Babylonian Empire's decline under Nabonidus (556–539 BCE) (see §6.1). This hope is not really expressed in the text of 2 Kgs 25:27–30 itself, even if the “raising of the head” (*ns' r's*; cf. Akkadian *rēša našu*) and the phrases “he spoke kindly to him” and “he gave him a seat above the other seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon” indicate special treatment (Bob Becking). Jehoiachin's fate is lost in the court of Babylon. Neither he nor his sons are reported to have been allowed to return from exile. Nor does the pardon seem to have had any influence on the treatment of the Judeans in the Babylonian exile.

5.12. THE DIASPORA IN BABYLONIA AND IN EGYPT

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5.12.1. The Babylonian Diaspora

The Judeans brought to Babylon in the three deportation waves, 597/96, 587/86, and 582 BCE, were settled in closed groups. Textually documented are the places Tel Abib at the River Chebar near Nippur (Ezek 3:15), Tel Melaḥ, Tel Ḥaršā, Cherub-Addan and Immer (Ezra 2:59; Neh 7:61), and Casiphia (Ezra 8:17), as well as Nehardea, Pumbedita, and Sura (Josephus, *A.J.* 18.311, 314, 369, 379). A whole series of documents from the Babylonian-Persian period attest Judean names in Babylonian administrative contexts. The late Achaemenid Muraššû archive near Nippur, which was discovered in 1893 and contains over seven hundred clay tablets, deserves special mention. Above all, the transactions of the Muraššû descendants Enlil-šum-iddin and Rimūt-Ninurta, from the second half of the fifth century BCE (ca. 455–403 BCE), are documented. The bank and trading house operated by the Muraššû family archived tax receipts, credit, pledge, or lease agreements for transactions within a radius of up to 100 km from Nippur. Among the 2,200 personal names there are a considerable number of West-Semitic, including → theophoric personal names, which indicate exiled, but in the meantime, economically and socially well integrated, Judeans.

In addition to the Muraššû archive there are now about two hundred texts from āl-Yāḥūdu and Bīt Našar (at Sippar), held in private collections (Sofer, Schøyen, Moussaieff). The texts from the Moussaieff Collection have been published (Francis Joannès, André Lemaire, and Kathleen Abraham) and also the texts in the Collection of David Sofer (Laurie E. Pearce, Cornelia Wunsch) (see the selection *HTAT* 274–81). The documents from the Martin Schøyen Collection are still to be published (Cornelia Wunsch). Some of these texts, which provide deeper insight into an exilic community (Tero Alstola, Angelika Berlejung), date to roughly a century earlier than the Muraššû documents, but they mainly stem from the Persian period up to Xerxes I (486–465 BCE). They prob-

ably come from Karkara, Kes, and Nippur (Cornelia Wunsch). The name *āl-Yāḥūdu* ("Judah City") or as it is even called in early texts *āl-Yāḥūdāya* ("Judean City") indicates that it was a city in which Judeans were settled. The attested personal names also confirm this (Francis Joannès, André Lemaire speak of the "Jerusalem of Babylon"). The settlement *Bit Abi-rām*, the house of Abram, located in the southeast of Babylon, is also mentioned several times. The residents did not live in isolated communities but in clan-based social associations that functioned as a community of solidarity. Up to four generations of exiles can be reconstructed from the documents using the patronymics (i.e., the fathers' names). The Neo-Babylonian documents show that the exiles were socially, legally, and economically well integrated. Integration and status would have developed over a longer period of time, so that conclusions about the Neo-Babylonian period are also possible to a limited extent (skeptically Ruth Poser). In addition to the self-sufficient management of the land allocated from the crown estate, business contacts were established. They were permitted trade relations and contracts, and the former Judean elite seems to have implemented this, as well as their ability to self-govern for their own benefit. The exiles were organized as families in ancestral houses and concluded marriage and inheritance contracts. A strict practice of endogamy (marriage within one's own group) cannot be proven any more than ethnic homogeneity. Nevertheless, the degree of kinship solidarity was high and an essential factor for group cohesion. The weekly Sabbath and circumcision seem to have emerged as identity markers in the Babylonian → *golah*. It is certainly not possible to conclude from the economic documents that the status of exiled persons was generally favorable.

The Neo-Babylonians associated the deportations with an economic interest, so that the exiles were used as a work force in infrastructural or construction projects. These included, in particular, canal construction and maintenance projects for land reclamation and management (cereals and date palms) (see the canals of Babylon in Ps 137:1). The exiles lived from the established agriculture, while the Babylonians skimmed off the economic surplus through taxes and levies. But the idea of prisoners or slaves (cf. Ps 137:3; Bar 4:32; Ezek 34:27) is misleading, and it becomes understandable why not all exiled people returned to Judah after 539 BCE. The documents even give the impression that only a fraction of the migrants left the laboriously built new social and economic network of the now multiethnic exilic contexts at the beginning of Persian rule.

5.12.2. Judeans in Egypt and the Military Colony on Elephantine

In contrast to the → *golah* in Babylon, the Judeans were not forcibly deported to Egypt but mainly arrived there through emigration and flight. The group that settled in Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah (see §5.11.3) (for fear of Babylonian acts of revenge?) supposedly reached Tahpanhes at the Nile Delta (Jer 43:7). Jeremiah 44:1 mentions previously existing settlements in Migdol, another border fortress in the eastern Nile Delta, Memphis/Nof, below the delta, and—cumulatively—Patros/Upper Egypt. The beginnings of the Egyptian → diaspora date back to the destruction of Jerusalem. It is possible that Israelites had previously arrived in Egypt after the fall of the kingdom of Israel in 722/20 BCE (Ernst Axel Knauf). Certainly Judeans came to Egypt in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (672–526/25 BCE) in the seventh/sixth century BCE as merchants or mercenaries and were settled in military colonies to secure the Egyptian borders. The largest and best documented military colony is the one on the Nile island of Elephantine/Jeb near Aswan/Syene, where exiled Judeans (along with Samari[t]ans?) in the Persian period (407 BCE) requested permission in Aramaic → papyri (see the selection of texts COS 3.46–53, *HTAT* 283–94, or the edition of Bezalel Porten) to rebuild the Yhw/*Yahō temple destroyed in 410/9 BCE (see §6.6.2). The background of the destruction for which Nāfina, the commander of Syene, was responsible is not clear. On the one hand, a religious conflict with the priests of the neighboring Khnum temple is suspected. Speculation remains that the priests of the ram-like god Khnum considered the sheep and ram sacrifices of the Yahō priests an affront. This could perhaps explain why the permission received for reconstruction (COS 3.52, *HTAT* 286) no longer explicitly mentions animal slaughter and burnt offerings, but only grain offerings and incense, possibly indicating a ban on animal sacrifice. But perhaps it was not for religious reasons that the hostility between Khnum and Yahō priests precipitated but simply because of border disputes, since the holy districts were very close to each other.

The temple also left archaeological traces; however, the excavators cannot find sufficient evidence to reconstruct a floor plan (Werner Kaiser). The Elephantine mercenaries, who served the Achaemenid Great Kings, formed a garrison that had its own rights and that they administered with semiautonomy. This emerges from the correspondence archive, in which those responsible address various concerns to the Persian, Judean, and Samari[t]an authorities. The Yhw/*Yahō temple, which

was financed by an official temple tax (*HTAT* 288), formed the center of the political as well as the religious life of the Judeans/“Jews” (the quotation marks indicate that a clear distinction cannot be made). The tax register, which reports the regular donations to the temple cult, contains the name of a single female who donated two shekels to the cult of the god Yahō. At the same time, the list also reports that besides the main god in the aforementioned temple, Anat-Yahō (probably the wife of Yhw) and Ašim-Bethel were also worshiped. The identity of the gods behind the composite designations (Bethel is either a stand-alone divine entity or simply an alternative name for *Yahō) and their relationship to each other cannot be completely clarified. Still, the find shows, on the one hand, references to Samaria and that monotheism had not yet been fully achieved, on the other (see §6.9). The Elephantine Jews/Judeans celebrated Pass-over and the Feast of Unleavened Bread; other religious customs included lamentation and fasting. The Sabbath is also mentioned as a day of the week but there is no evidence that it was considered a day of rest/holiday (Reinhard Gregor Kratz).

In contrast to the Babylonian → diaspora, the Judeans did not return from Egypt in groups; rather they merged with the important Hellenistic diaspora centered in Alexandria (see §7.1.1). Though biblical texts (at least according to the textual evidence) did not yet play an explicit and binding role in Elephantine, the later Alexandrian Judaism represents a completely different picture (see §7.2.2).

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6.1. OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

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The Persian Empire—also known as the Achaemenid Empire after the → eponym Achaemenes (Gk. Ἀχαιμένης, son of Perseus)—replaced the relatively short-lived Neo-Babylonian Empire (which lasted about one hundred years) and existed until the political supremacy of the Greeks

from 332 BCE onward. At its peak, it covered the eastern Mediterranean area from the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, Egypt and Libya, the entirety of Mesopotamia, and the area of the Iranian highlands up to the Indus River (see §10.4, map 17). Information regarding the beginning of the Persian Empire until the second half of the sixth century BCE and its first rulers, Cyrus I and Cambyses I, is scarce and comes from late sources.

6.1.1. Cyrus the Great and the Fall of the Babylonian Empire

Cyrus II (559–530 BCE), called “the Great,” was a Persian king in the region of Anshan, east of the Persian Gulf, and thus initially a → vassal of the Median Empire. After 550 BCE, the balance of power shifted in the wider area when Cyrus II defeated the Median king Astyages, his grandfather, in 547/46 BCE and extended the imperial borders along the Tigris, over Elam, and up to Asia Minor (capturing Sardis and defeating the Lydian Croesus in 546 BCE). In 539 BCE, he attacked the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus (556–539 BCE): Babylon surrendered peacefully because the politically influential priests of Marduk cooperated with Cyrus. Underlying the eventual empire-corroding collaboration of the Marduk priests with the Persian king were the efforts of Nabonidus to grant the moon god Sin greater importance in the Babylonian Empire and to unite the empire through obeisance to Sin. This led to uprisings by traditionalists and Marduk partisans, who ultimately sought an ally in Cyrus against Nabonidus and, following the takeover of the city, celebrated him as a liberator.

Propagandistically, this is reflected in, among other things, the Cyrus Cylinder lines 15–23: “He [Marduk] ordered him to march to his city Babylon. He set him on the road to Babylon and like a companion and friend, he went at his side. His vast army, whose number, like the water of the river, cannot be known, marched at his side fully armed. He made him enter his city Babylon without fighting or battle; he saved Babylon from hardship. He delivered Nabonidus, the king who did not revere him, into his hands. All the people of Babylon, all the land of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors, bowed to him and kissed his feet. They rejoiced at his kingship and their faces shone. The Ruler by whose aid the dead were revived and who had all been redeemed from hardship and difficulty, they greeted him with gladness and praised his name. I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the

four quarters, son of Cambyses, ..., descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, (of an) eternal line of kingship, whose rule Bel (i.e., Marduk) and Nabu love, whose kingship they desire for their hearts' pleasure" (COS 2.124, cf. *TUAT* 1:408–9; *HTAT* 273, cf. Isa 44:28; 45:1, 4).

6.1.2. Cambyses II, Uprisings in Persepolis, and Darius I's Takeover

In the course of the expansion of the empire to the east, Cyrus II died in 530 BCE during a campaign against the Massagetae in the northeast. His son and successor, Cambyses II (530–522 BCE), succeeded in integrating Egypt into the Persian Empire in 525 BCE and began ruling Egypt as pharaoh of the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty (526/25–401 BCE). Riots in the homeland, kindled by the priest/magus Gaumata, who claimed to be the successor to the throne by impersonating Cambyses's brother, Bardiya, forced Cambyses II to return to fight the usurper. On his way back, he died under unexplained circumstances, and Gaumata was proclaimed king (Behistun Inscription §11, *TUAT* 1:421–49). Gaumata was later killed by Persian tribal aristocrats. Out of the confusion, one of these tribal aristocrats, Darius I (522–486 BCE), the son of Hystaspes, claimed the throne. The trilingual (Elamite, Babylonian, Old Persian) Behistun Inscription from western Iran dating to the end of the sixth century BCE, which is considered one of the most important documents of Near Eastern antiquity, describes the process. In it, Darius I traces his lineage back to the ancestor Achaemenes via Cyrus I's brother and chooses the self-designation "Achaemenid" (Behistun Inscription §§1–3).

From a historical perspective, it is not clear what precisely transpired so that Darius I ended up on the throne: Cambyses II's failure against the Nubians, the rebellion of Gaumata, or the claim to the throne of his brother Bardiya (Greek Smerdis), whom, according to the Behistun Inscription §10, Cambyses II is said to have already killed *before* his Egyptian campaign. The circumstances of Cambyses II's death on his way back to Syria remain unclear, as does Darius's seizure of power. He had possibly accompanied Cambyses II from Egypt and seized the throne as a → usurper (and may also have killed Bardiya, the rightful heir to the throne). The difficulties with a detailed historical reconstruction of these events continue to be a general problem of ancient Near Eastern historiography, but not due to a lack of information in individual cases, as was demonstrated already with the Arameans and also with the Israelites and Judeans.

6.1.3. The Empire's Instability after the Fall of Egypt

The strategic and economic significance of Egypt's allegiance to the Persian Empire should not be underestimated for the southern Levant or the Syro-Palestinian land bridge. That being said, it rebelled several times after its integration into the Persian Empire (especially significant is the killing of the satrap Achaemenes by the Libyan Inaros in 464 BCE) and Egypt fell out of the Persian Empire in 404 BCE after the death of Darius II. Beginning with the fifth century BCE, instability in the empire increased. At the western borders of the empire, there were many conflicts with the Greeks: the Ionian Revolt in 500–494 BCE, the battle of Marathon in 490 BCE, and the battle of Salamis in 480 BCE. The majority of scholars doubts whether the subsequent Persian wars under Xerxes I (486–465 BCE) and Artaxerxes I (465–424/23 BCE) could actually have come to an end owing to the so-called Peace of Callias with the Greek Cities in 449 BCE (Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.151–152). In 449 BCE, the western satrapies rebelled under the leadership of the Persian general and satrap, Megabyzus, and at the end of the fifth century BCE the satraps rebelled in Media and Asia Minor (410 BCE). The west of the empire remained restless even under Artaxerxes II Mnemon (405/4–359/58 BCE) and threatened to collapse. Under the reign of Pharaoh Amyrtaeus of Sais (404–399 BCE), Egypt was liberated from Persian hegemony for sixty years, and it expanded its dominion back to the Phoenician coast at the beginning of the fourth century BCE.

For the fourth century BCE, there is a lack of historical data for Syria and Palestine. Under Artaxerxes III Ochus (359/58–338 BCE), Egypt was once again briefly incorporated into the Persian Empire (343 BCE), after the satrap rebellions in Phoenicia had also been suppressed. With the advance of Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE) and his victory against Darius III Codomannus (336–330 BCE) at the Battle of Issos (333 BCE) and the Battle of Gaugamela (331 BCE), the reign of the Persian Great Kings ended after about two hundred years, and the Hellenistic Era began.

6.2. THE PERSIAN EMPIRE'S ECONOMY, ADMINISTRATION, AND ORGANIZATION

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6.2.1. Persian Policy of Tolerance

The significant difference when compared to the rule of the Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians is often referred to as the Persian politics of tolerance. Key elements of this policy change include the withdrawal of the Babylonian deportation policy, the promotion of local autonomy in the provinces, and a pragmatic religious policy that was not determined by submission to the Persian god, Ahura Mazda. More recent research, however, is much more skeptical of excessive liberalism in Persian religious policy, especially regarding the assumption of the active, permanent, central (especially financial) subsidization of local cults and of the so-called imperial authorization of local laws. Some things that appear as tolerance in the sources are distorted by propagandistic (like the proximity in visual art of Cyrus to Marduk, Sin, and Nebo) or tendential (promotion of the YHWH cult in Jerusalem, see §6.4) representation. Under Persian rule, temples were not only rebuilt, but also destroyed. Violent interventions by Darius I (522–486 BCE) in Didyma or Xerxes I (486–465 BCE) in Athens are commonly cited examples (Joachim Schaper, Lisbeth Fried). On the contrary, the destruction of the Marduk statue in Babylon by Xerxes I is not historical. So long as one ignores the negative and completely exaggerated depiction of the Persians by the Greeks (Hilmar Klinkott), Xerxes I's action against the priests in Egypt, which is reported in Herodotus (*Hist.* 7.7), also remains a politically motivated action against religious institutions lacking tolerance. It should be noted, however, that religious centralization was not used as a means of domination to unify the Persian Empire. The dominant Persian internationalization was counterbalanced by cultural and religious regionalism. Tolerance, which ends where loyalty to the Great King was called into question, was part of the political strategy of the Persians.

6.2.2. The Persian Imperial Administrative System

In order to keep the huge empire together, Persian politics aimed above all at securing the borders and maintaining peace and order within, which was repeatedly threatened by uprisings by high administrative officials and aristocrats and, from the fifth century BCE, by the advance of the Greeks. The vast Persian Empire was governed by an administrative system—by no means completely uniform throughout the entire region—known as satrapies and provinces. The larger administrative units were subdivided, but the distinction between upper and lower satrapies

(Bruno Jacobs) is controversial (Hilmar Klinkott). The local governors were subordinate to the regional satraps, who had administrative, legal, and military competencies and who in turn were subordinate to the Persian Great King. Internal cohesion was ensured by the balanced tension between loyalty to the Persian Great King and his central authority, on the one hand, and the partial autonomy of the provinces, on the other. In addition, (1) a central personnel policy (appointment of satraps and provincial governors, integration of the local elite into the central government), (2) monetary policy (introduction of coinage), (3) economic globalization (international “world trade”), (4) government decrees relating to the individual provinces, (5) the sending of special representatives, (6) a uniform administrative and government language (the so-called Imperial Aramaic as *lingua franca*), and (7) an empire-spanning news system played a significant role as a means of domination. The Persian court was continuously informed by “the ears of the king,” a kind of secret service from the periphery, in order to be informed about trouble spots in a timely manner. Furthermore, (8) the military presence in pacified revolt areas, or generally in regions and places of structural and transporting importance, should not be underestimated (John W. Betlyon).

6.2.3. Taxes and Duties

The administration was financed by a structured system of central and local tax levies, which were collected by the governor or were coordinated by the temple administration in some cases. Each satrapy had to pay a certain amount of tax in precious metal annually (Neh 5:4: *middat hammelek* “royal tax”; Ezra 6:8; 4:20: *middat ‘ābar nahārā* “tax of Transjordan”), which had to be produced in the provinces. There were also local levies to finance the governor (Neh 5:14–15), local administrative tasks, maintenance of the local cult, and temple administration (e.g., Neh 10:33–35; 13:12).

The economic history of the Persian period is closely linked to the emergence of coinage in the southern Levant. Standardization allowed different currencies—that is, initially different weight classes of precious metals—to be easily interchangeable, which facilitated trading, payment, taxes, credit, and so on. Above all, the introduction of small nominal values (→ numismatics) led to the intensification of local trade and thus to an economic boom. The allocation of minting sites and the distribution of coin finds make it easier to distinguish between ruling and economic

areas. The first coins to appear in Palestine were Greek silver coins from the end of the sixth century BCE onward. Apart from imported coins, the proliferation of coins began in the Phoenician coastal towns. Coins were first made in the middle of the fifth century BCE in the Phoenician coastal and trading town of Byblos. Initially imitations of Greek tetradrachms were minted, followed increasingly by local designs (Haim Gitler, Oren Tal). A little later, coins were also minted in Tyre, certainly in the Philistine city of Gaza, and perhaps also in Ashkelon and Ashdod. The earliest coins featured Attic motifs and conformed to Greek coin standards. Due to their role as maritime trade hubs, those cities held a special position in the empire in that they were nearly autonomous. This is further underlined by the fact that they held the right to mint their own coins, even if this right would not have been granted completely independent of the Persian provincial governors. Coins were first used by the trading elite in the port cities. In the fourth century BCE, silver coins of various denominations were minted in Samaria and Jerusalem. Most of the coins known today originate from the antiquities trade. Yehud coins from controlled excavations (a little over twenty-five sites) come from different excavations in the city of Jerusalem (a total of fourteen specimens from various sites in the city including Ketef Hinnom, French Hill, Mount Zion, Har Adar, Ḥorvat Zimri/Pisgat Zeev, as well as three further specimens from the Temple Mount Sifting Project), Beth-Zur (one), Ḥorvat 'Etri (three), Tell Jemmeh/Tell Ġemme (four), as well as two from Ḥirbet Qēyafa (Donald T. Ariel). For the early coins from Samaria, two → hoard finds from the antiquities market are of particular importance (see fig. 45), one from the city of Samaria (334 coins), the other from Nablus (965 silver coins [Haim Gitler, Oren Tal]), presumably from Wādī ed-Dāliye, see §7.2.2.1), which were buried in the middle or second half of the fourth century BCE. In order to contextualize these numbers and to illustrate the increasing proliferation of coins, it should be mentioned that fourteen thousand coins were found in the sanctuary on Gerizim, including one from the Ptolemaic period (Ptolemy I and Berenice); twenty-five coins come from the province of Samaria, which constitute approximately a third of the total of Persian period coins revealed in the excavation. All other coins are later (Gabriela Bijovsky).

In the province of Yehud, the first mintings (possibly the first outside the province in Ashkelon or Gaza, then later in Jerusalem) may have begun in the late fifth century BCE. Most coin finds, however, date from the fourth century BCE. The Athenian tetradrachm initially provided the prototype. The early coins carry a picture of Athena on the obverse and an



Fig. 45. Samarian coins have an international pictorial repertoire, which is essentially characterized by the copying, adaptation, and modification of Sidonian, Cilician, Egyptian, Persian, and Greek motifs. Particularly prominent are depictions of the Persian Great King (a–c), of Bes (a and e), of men and women in Persian or Greek clothing (perhaps in a shrine) (d), and of Athena or the Attic owl (f).

owl on the reverse. Later, these were replaced by depictions of a falcon, an ear, a lily, and an image of the Persian Great King (fig. 46).

In 2011, a drachm appeared in the antiquities trade, possibly representing an early Yehud coin type that may have been minted outside the province (Haim Gitler). A gorgon with snake-shaped Hathor curls is represented on the front, on the reverse is a lying bull attacked by a lion (fig. 47). The coins are assigned to the province of Yehud by the inscription *yhd* or (somewhat later) *yhw*. Names and titles of the governors are found only in the middle of the fourth century BCE—most are labeled *yhzqyh hp̄h* (“Hezekiah, the governor”).

The governor was responsible for the administration of taxes. These were collected locally and transferred via the satraps to the treasure houses of the Great King. From when and to what extent the temple administration played a role in this is a debated question. This depends not only on

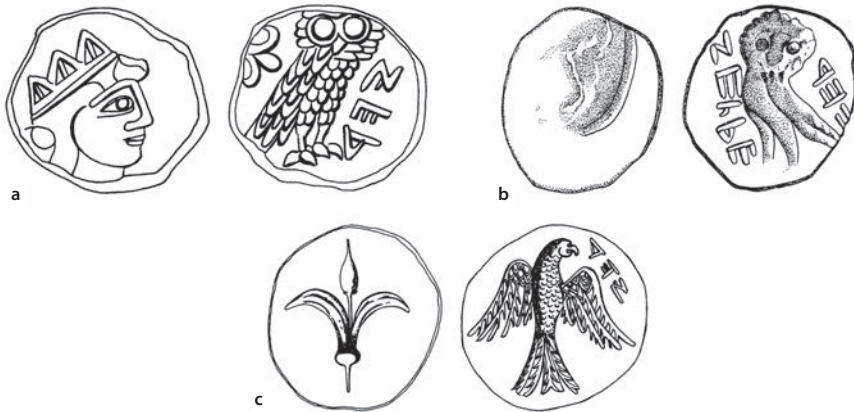


Fig. 46. Compared to the Philistine and Samarian coins, those from the province of Yehud are not only quantitatively underrepresented but also restrictive with regard to the repertoire of their iconographic motifs. The iconographic design mainly comprises the head of Athena (a), the Attic owl (a and b), the ear (b), the lily, and the falcon (c).



Fig. 47. In contrast to the comparatively limited iconography of the Yehud coins, the oldest drachm from Yehud exhibits a remarkable mixed iconographic style. The obverse shows a frontal female head (presumably with Hathor curls), a motif that is often on Samarian coins and has its precursor in the Arethusa heads from Tarsus. The reverse shows an animal combat scene (a lion attacking a bull) beside the inscription “Yehud.” The mixed style of the drachm might indicate that it was minted in Philistia and that the coinage authority of the Yehud coins was not transferred to Jerusalem until later.

the assessment of Zech 11:13 (Joachim Schaper), but also connects with how the introduction of the Jerusalem temple’s own mint (coins with the inscription *ywhnn hkwhn* “Johanan, the priest”; fig. 48) in the late fourth century BCE is to be evaluated (Reinhard Achenbach).

The coin probably does not refer to the Johanan mentioned in Neh 13:22 (ca. 415–395 BCE) but Johanan II (ca. 350–340 BCE). Despite similar motifs, the identification of the otherwise undocumented governor Hezekiah with the priest Johanan (Dan Barag) remains uncertain, so that



Fig. 48. The Yehud coin shows a face *en face* on the obverse and an owl with the inscription “Johanan, the priest” on the reverse. It probably dates back to the transition period from the Persian to the Ptolemaic epoch. An identification of the represented portrait is not possible in view of the rough execution and missing characteristics.

the right to mint coins was entirely vested in the temple. Rather, one can infer a great political as well as economic proximity between the temple aristocracy and the provincial management. Since the clues remain flimsy in the fifth century BCE, one should remain careful in presuming an active role of the temple until the Ptolemaic period (Lester L. Grabbe), at least in the early stages. Nevertheless, despite all restraint it is striking that the formation of a high-priestly ministry in very late biblical texts (e.g., with the title *hakkōhēn haggādōl* “high priest”; see, e.g., Lev 21:10; Num 17:16–26; 27:19, 21; 35:25, 28; Josh 20:6; see below) coincides approximately with the appearance of the priest on the coinage.

In addition to the official tax for the Great King, there were taxes for the exercise of the local cult, which represent a parallel system (Herbert Niehr). Nehemiah 10:33 and Exod 30:13, 15 report a temple tax of a third or half a shekel to be raised per capita per annum. No further details can be given as there is no reliable evidence of an established temple economy. The texts in Lev 27; Num 15; 18; and 30, dating from the later Persian period, show the importance of financing the sanctuary and the cult personnel. The assumption that the temple tax was abandoned soon after its introduction due to the high tax burden and was only reintroduced in the Hasmonean period cannot explain how the operation of the cult could be ensured without sufficient financial resources (only with natural objects, offerings, and voluntary contributions). Taxes to the temple administration, which were used for construction work, are also corroborated by the Elephantine → papyri, which contain a tax list (COS 3.53, HTAT 287–88). The beginnings of a temple economy in the late Persian period can therefore be seen.

The high tax burden strained the empire’s local economic systems in different ways. Whereas, for example, the Phoenician harbor cities—which

prospered in the Persian period and in which a → vassal king was established—could raise tax revenues more easily through foreign trade relations. The tax burden in Palestine, due to the predominantly subsistence economic structure, increasingly led to overindebtedness and, as a result, to impoverishment. This is particularly true in the first phase of the Persian period, when the economic conditions hardly permitted the generation of a → surplus (see §5.10.5.4). The gap between rich and poor continued to widen, which led increasingly to social tensions (cf. Lam 5; Ezek 18:7–8 or the socially critical texts from the eighth/seventh century BCE, updated in the fifth century BCE, such as Mic 6:9–15; 7:2–5*; etc.). A small upper class that accumulated land and consumed luxury goods faced a lower class that lived in poor conditions from the low yield of agriculture. Crop failures or special services such as the construction of the wall in Jerusalem or the temple led to additional aggravation, so that social unrest occurred in the middle of the fifth century BCE. Nehemiah 5:1–13 seems to confirm this view—independent of a possible later dating.

6.3. THE PROVINCE OF YEHUD AND ITS POLITICAL STATUS

Edelman, Diana Vikander. “Settlement Patterns in Persian-Era Yehud.” Pages 52–64 in *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbours in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods*. Edited by Yigal Levin. LSTS 65. London: T&T Clark, 2007. ♦ **Elayi**, Josette. “Achaemenid Persia and the Levant.” Pages 107–22 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: C. 8000–332 BCE*. Edited by Margreet Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. ♦ **Elayi**, Josette, and Jean **Sapin**. *Beyond the River: New Perspectives on Transeuphratene*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998. ♦ **Faust**, Avraham. “Forts or Agricultural Estates? Persian Period Settlement in the Territories of the Former Kingdom of Judah.” *PEQ* 150 (2018): 34–59. ♦ **Faust**. “Settlement Dynamics and Demographic Fluctuation in Judah from the Late Iron Age to the Hellenistic Period and the Archaeology of Persian Period Yehud.” Pages 23–51 in *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbours in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods*. Edited by Yigal Levin. LSTS 65. London: T&T Clark, 2007. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. “Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder.” *JHebS* 9 (2009): 2–13. ♦ **Finkelstein**. “The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods.” *RB* 117 (2010): 39–54. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded. “Between Archaeology and Text.” Pages 145–65 in *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010*. Edited by Martti Nissinen. VTSup 148. Leiden: Brill, 2012. ♦ **Lipschits**. “Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations.” *JHebS* 9 (2009): 2–30. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded, Yuval **Gadot**, Benjamin **Arubas**, and Manfred **Oeming**. “Palace and Village, Para-

dise and Oblivion: Unraveling the Riddles of Ramat Raḥel.” *NEA* 74 (2011): 1–49. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded, Yuval **Gadot**, and Dafna **Langgut**. “The Riddle of Ramat Raḥel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Period Edifice.” *Transeu* 41 (2012): 57–79. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded, Yuval **Gadot**, Manfred **Oeming**, and David Stephen **Vanderhooft**. “Seventeen Newly-Excavated Yehud Stamp Impressions from Ramat Raḥel.” *TA* 34 (2007): 74–89. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded, and Manfred **Oeming**, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded, and David Stephen **Vanderhooft**. “Continuity and Change in the Persian Period Judahite Stamped Jar Administration.” Pages 43–66 in *A “Religious Revolution” in Yehūd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Edited by Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny, and Izak Cornelius. OBO 267. Fribourg: Presses Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014. ♦ **Lipschits** and **Vanderhooft**, eds. *The Growing Corpus of Yehud Stamp Impressions: New Finds and New Research*. Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, 2007. ♦ **Lipschits** and **Vanderhooft**. *Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011. ♦ **Ronen**, Yigal. “Some Unrecorded Yehud Coins.” *INJ* 18 (2011): 27–30. ♦ **Schaper**, Joachim. “Numismatik, Epigraphik, alttestamentliche Exegese und die Frage nach der politischen Verfassung des achämenidischen Juda.” *ZDPV* 118 (2002): 150–68. ♦ **Shalom**, Nitsan, and Oded **Lipschits**. “Judah during the Transition between the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Regional Processes.” Pages 7–26 in *The Transition from the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic Period in the Levant, Cyprus, and Cilicia: Cultural Interruption or Continuity? Symposion at Philipps-Universität Marburg, October 12–15, 2017*. Marburger Beiträge zur Archäologie 6. Edited by Winfried Held. Marburg: Eigenverlag des Archäologischen Seminars der Philipps-Universität, 2020.

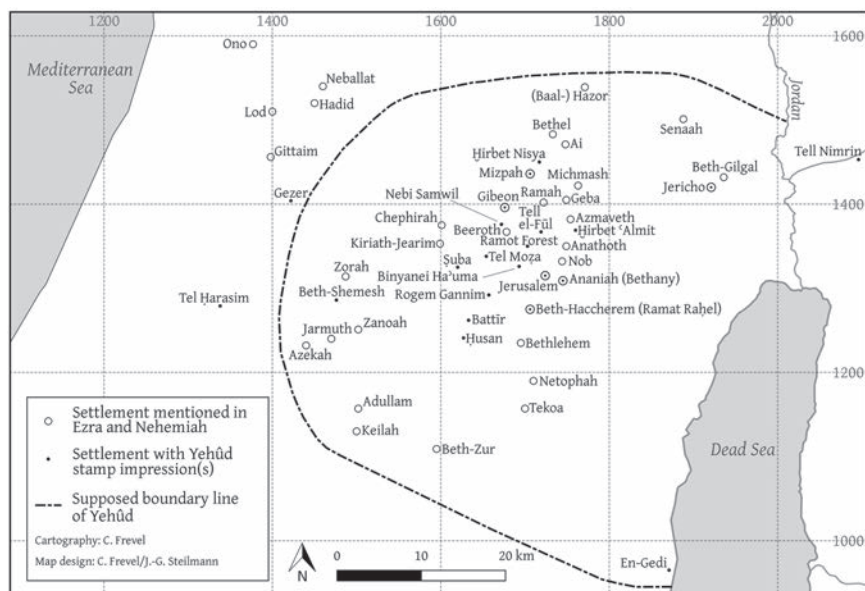
With the conquest of the Babylonian Empire in 539 BCE, Cyrus the Great (559–530 BCE) first took over the administrative structures of the conquered territory—as in other regions. Judah accordingly belonged to the satrapy of Babylon and Transeuphratene (Neh 2:7, 9; 3:7; Ezra 4:20; 8:36, Heb. *‘ēber hannāhār*, “beyond the river [Euphrates]”). As the first satrap, a man named Gubaru (Akkadian: Gú-ba/bar-ru; Persian: Gaubaruva; Greek: Gōbrýas) was appointed. While some identify him with Ugbaru, the general who captured Babylon for the Persian king or, better, coordinated the taking of the city and who died shortly after Cyrus II had begun to rule according to the Nabonidus Chronicle 3.22, it is more plausible to differentiate individuals named Gubaru. According to Josef Wiesehöfer, a certain Gubaru/Gobryas became governor of Babylonia and Transeuphratene (Ebir nāri) only in 536 BCE and for at least ten years. Ostanēs/Uštāni from 521–516 BCE is also attested as satrap. The satrapy initially included

Syria, Phoenicia, Cilicia, and Cyprus in addition to the Babylonian heartland. Perhaps, already under Darius I Hystaspes (522–486 BCE) (cf. Dan 6:2–3), but at the latest under Artaxerxes I (465–424/23 BCE) (Thomas Willi), the administration of the empire was reorganized. According to Herodotus (*Hist.* 3.89–91), the province of Yehud/Judah belonged to the smaller, fifth Transeuphratene satrapy that was separated from the Babylon satrapy and that covered the area of modern-day Syria, Jordan, and Israel. It was surrounded by the provinces Idumea, Ashdod, Dor, Samaria, Gilead, Ammon, and Moab (clockwise starting in the south). Like many other details, it is not clear where the administrative headquarters of the satrapy was: Sidon, Tripoli, or Damascus (Josette Elayi) are possible candidates. Damascus seems to be the most likely candidate due to its central location, its significance under Darius III (336–330 BCE), and because it also served as the administrative headquarters after the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.

6.3.1. Borders of the Province of Yehud

The territorial extension of the province of Yehud (for its status, see §6.3.3) was modest. It centered around Jerusalem, covering an area of at most 50 x 50 km. Nehemiah 3 suggests that the province was divided into at least five districts called *pelek* (Jerusalem, Beth-Haccherem, Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe, Beth-Zur, and Keilah). Although the course of the border is not precisely documented, it remained largely in continuity with the Babylonian province of Judah: the eastern border includes En-Gedi and Jericho and runs along the Jordan from the northern end of the Dead Sea to the north. The northern border safely includes Bethel, but does not run much farther north. The western border is the most insecure, insofar as the affiliation of the villages of the northern Shephelah (such as Gezer/Tell el-Ğazari) is disputed. The same applies to the villages of Ono, Nebellat, Lot, Hadid, and Gittaim, which are mentioned in Ezra 2/Neh 7 and Neh 11.

While the *lmlk* stamps and the pillar figurines allowed one to roughly trace the border of Judah (see map 10), the situation according to the distribution of the so-called Yehud stamp impressions is far more complex and hardly suitable for determining the boundaries with certainty. Although about 650 seal impressions from the Persian and early Hellenistic periods are currently known, these are concentrated in only a few places (e.g., more than 80 percent come from Rāmat Rāḥēl [372] and Jerusalem [163]), and none was found farther west than the



Map 12. The Persian province of Yehud.

line (from north to south) Ḥirbet Nisya, Mizpah, Gibeon, Nebi Samwil/an-Nabī Šamū'il, Tel Moza, Šübā/Zobah, Rogem Gannim, Battir, and Ḥūsān (Oded Lipschits, David S. Vanderhooft). Two sites containing seals are Ramot Forest and Binyanei Ha'uma, which are located in today's urban area of Jerusalem. The only sites north of Jerusalem containing seals are Tell el-Fül/Gibeah and Ḥirbet 'Almit. Two late *yhwd* stamps originate from Bethany/al-ʿEizariya (which is perhaps to be identified with Ananiah). The eastern Judean mountains have yielded no seal impressions, only Jericho and ʿĒn Gedi/En-Gedi, in the Jordan Valley and at the Dead Sea respectively. The Jordan or the Dead Sea is taken as an indication for the eastern border of the province (even if in Tell Nimrin an early specimen was found). The western border is more difficult in the transition from the mountainous area to the Shephelah: Eshtaol, Beth Shemesh/ʿĒn-Šems, Azekah/Tell Zakariye, and Sokho are probably to be counted among them. Gezer, on the other hand, remained outside the Persian province at least in its early period despite the discovery of a total of eight Yehud stamp impressions (though predominantly late Hellenistic types). The same applies to Tel Ḥārāsīm, although a seal impression reading *lḥnwnh yhd* (“[belonging] to Hanuna [in] Yehud”) was found (see fig. 3). The southern border

includes Keilah/Tell Qīla and Beth-Zur and less certainly En-Gedi at the Dead Sea, although in total ten Yehud stamps were found there. Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, on the other hand, did *not* belong to it, or if it did, then only as a subdistrict of Yehud. The palace in Lachish suggests rather that, like the Beersheba Valley and the Negev (only one stamp impression from Tell Jemmeh and one from Kadesh-Barnea), Lachish belonged to the province of Idumea. Idumea was either founded at the same time as Yehud or only around 400 BCE (see §4.2.6.2, map 6, and §6.9). This could also be supported by the fact that, unlike the *lmk* jars produced at the end of the eighth century BCE, the jars on whose handles the Yehud stamps are impressed can be shown by pottery analyses to have been produced in the region of Jerusalem, rather than the region of Lachish (see §5.7.2 with map 10). Since the material evidence for a Persian settlement of Gibeon or the importance of Beth-Zur in the Persian period was marginal, doubts about the reliability of Neh 3 have been increasingly raised (Israel Finkelstein). Whether Jerusalem was the administrative center of the province of Yehud from the beginning is unclear until the middle of the fifth century BCE. What can be clearly seen is a shift from Rāmat Rāḥēl to Jerusalem when the distribution of Yehud seal impressions is differentiated between early (ratio 64 percent to 16 percent), middle (ratio 56 percent to 21 percent), and late types (ratio 21 percent to 61 percent) (Oded Lipschits).

During the exilic period Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe played a central administrative role. The administration was possibly relocated to Rāmat Rāḥēl during the Persian period (Charles E. Carter, Oded Lipschits). The palace at Rāmat Rāḥēl, which was luxuriously furnished in the late monarchic period, was intensively used and equipped with a Persian garden (Pardes) using “exotic” seeds of trees and plants. It also served as an administrative center. Rāmat Rāḥēl is the place with the most Yehud stamps on jar handles (372 of about 647 stamp impressions in total from the sixth to the second century BCE, that is, about 60 percent) (Oded Lipschits et al.). During the third century a hiatus of activity might indicate that Jerusalem finally took over administrative centrality following the Ptolemaic policy (see §8.3) and that it continued as the center for tax collection and control throughout the Hasmonean and Roman periods (Nitsan Shalom, Oded Lipschits). The *yhwd* system, which continued to develop as the main administrative system on storage jar handles from the eighth century BCE onward, ended ultimately in the Hasmonean period.

6.3.2. Economic Boom in the Fifth Century BCE

The difference of economic potential between north and south, which was already pronounced during the monarchic period, continued into the Persian period, especially since the extensive collapse of the first half of the sixth century BCE initially had an effect. The province of Samaria was the more dominant and economically potent sister, which led Albrecht Alt to assume that Yehud was not initially an independent province (see §6.3.3 on the status of the province).

According to Ezra 5:3, 6; 6:6, 13, Tattenai became satrap of the higher administrative unit, Transeuphratene, under Darius I (522–486 BCE). However, since several satraps of the huge satrapy Babylon-Transeuphratene are still known by name after Darius I, it is more likely that the satrapy was only divided under Xerxes I (486–465 BCE) or Xerxes II (424/23 BCE), and—therefore—Tattenai is more likely to be a commissioned authority rather than a satrap (Hilmar Klinkott). It seems certain that the strategic importance of the Syro-Palestinian land bridge increased after the incorporation of Egypt into the Persian Empire in 525 BCE. This was associated with an archaeologically verifiable, modest economic boom that also began to take hold in the outlying Yehud in the fifth century BCE as the result of its integration into transregional trade. The number and size of the settlements (and thus the population density) grew (Diana V. Edelman, Avraham Faust), the number of Greek imports increased (Einat Ambar-Armon, Amos Kloner), and the number of seal and coin finds increased significantly, indicating increasing economic activities. This has led some scholars to suggest the need to distinguish between a Persian period I (539–450 BCE) and a Persian period II (450–333 BCE). However, there is a lack of possibilities for differentiation in the material culture (Charles E. Carter). For example, no distinction can be recognized in ceramic typology, which is rather characterized by continuity (Oded Lipschits). Significant demographic growth, which could be taken as an indicator of an economic boom, can therefore hardly be justified if the Persian settlements cannot really be divided into phases. The calculation of the total population of the province varies in the respective calculations, which may have several reasons. (1) The underlying coefficient (inhabitants per ha of populated area) varies between 200 and 250 people. (2) The counted settlement area is delimited differently (e.g., with or without the Shephelah) and varies between 61 and 120 ha of populated area. (3) The assumption of individual farmsteads that are difficult to detect archaeo-

logically or of intensive Hellenistic overbuilding of Persian houses differs considerably. In recent studies, the total population of Persian period Yehud thus ranges between 12,000 (Israel Finkelstein), 20,650 (Charles E. Carter), and 30,125 (Oded Lipschits). Even assuming the largest option (i.e., 30,125), the population of Persian period Yehud was very small and greatly reduced in size compared to the Judean state at the end of the seventh century BCE.

6.3.3. Political Status of the Province of Yehud

The importance of Yehud in the giant Persian Empire must therefore not be overestimated from the outset. The poor material culture and demographic development pose two central historical questions: How should the biblically described mass return from exile be assessed, and what political status did Yehud have in the early Persian period? Three models are discussed for its political status.

1. Yehud was part of the province of Samaria and not initially independent (Albrecht Alt, Herbert Donner, but against it Siegfried Mittmann). Yehud received provincial status only under Artaxerxes I (465–424/23 BCE) with the first governor Nehemiah (445–433 BCE).
2. In Yehud, as in the Phoenician city-states, a → vassal kingdom was established (Paolo Sacchi, Herbert Niehr, otherwise Nadav Na'aman). For this solution, the meaning of the Davidide Zerubbabel and the title *nāšī* "prince" is cited, to which Sheshbazzar is added in Ezra 1:8.
3. Yehud was its own province with its own governor (*pəḥāh*) from Cyrus II in continuity with the Babylonian administration (Lester L. Grabbe, Othmar Keel, and others).

Given that governors or functionaries for Judah (designated *pəḥā*) are already attested before Nehemiah both within the biblical testimony (Ezra 5:14–16; 6:7; Hag 1:1, 14) as well as with seal impressions (fig. 49), the first option is less probable. The special position of the Phoenician city-states, due to their strategic importance and their economic potency, suggests ruling out the second solution in light of the economic insignificance of Yehud. Hence, most arguments speak at present for the third solution.

Yehud's status as a province is attested beginning with the second half of the fifth century BCE due to coin finds containing the inscription *pḥh*

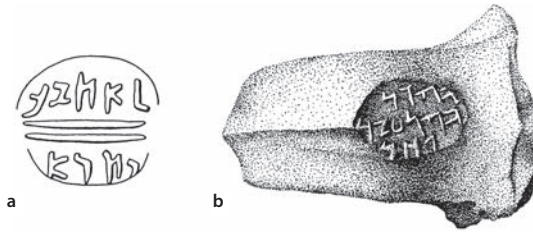


Fig. 49. The title of the governor for the province of Yehud is attested not only on coins but also on seals or seal impressions. Examples of this are (a) a seal impression from Rāmat Rāhēl with the inscription *l'ḥsw | pḥw'* “(belonging) to Achsai, the governor” or (b) a stamped jar handle from Jerusalem bearing the three-line inscription *yḥwd | yḥw'zr | pḥw* “Yehud, Jeho'ezer, governor.” Both date back to the early fifth century BCE.

“governor”! A complete list of governors cannot be reconstructed. The discussion about the status of Yehud in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE shows not only the difficult source situation but also the relative lack of importance of the province of Yehud in the early Persian period (Charles E. Carter, Rainer Kessler).

6.4. THE CYRUS EDICT AND THE RETURN FROM EXILE

Ballentine, Debra Scoggins. “Exile and Return of the First Temple Vessels.” *NEA* 82 (2019): 132–39. ♦ **Becking**, Bob. “‘We All Returned as One!’: Critical Notes on the Myth of the Mass Return.” Pages 3–18 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006. ♦ **Ben Zvi**, Ehud, and Christoph **Levin**, eds. *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*. BZAW 404. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010. ♦ **Fried**, Lisbeth S. *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*. BJSUCSD 10. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004. ♦ **Grätz**, Sebastian. *Das Edikt des Artaxerxes: Eine Untersuchung zum religionspolitischen und historischen Umfeld von Esra 7,12–26*. BZAW 337. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004. ♦ **Grätz**. “Kyroszylinder, Kyrosedikt und Kyros-orakel: Der König als Medium göttlicher Geschichtsmächtigkeit.” Pages 339–53 in *Geschichte und Gott: XV. Europäischer Kongress für Theologie (14.–18. September 2014 in Berlin)*. Edited by Michael Meyer-Blanck and Laura Schmitz. VWGTh 44. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016. ♦ **Knoppers**, Gary N. “Exile, Return and Diaspora: Expatriates and Repatriates in Late Biblical Literature.” Pages 29–61 in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and*

Related Texts. Edited by Louis Jonker. FAT 2/53. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. ♦ **Koch**, Klaus. “Der Artaxerxes-Erlaß im Esrabuch.” Pages 87–98 in *Meilenstein: Festgabe für Herbert Donner zum 16. Februar 1995*. Edited by Stefan Timm and Manfred Weippert. ÄAT 30. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995. ♦ **Pearce**, Laurie E. “New Evidence for Judeans in Babylonia.” Pages 399–411 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Edited by Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006. ♦ **Stökl**, Jonathan, and Caroline **Waerzeggers**, eds. *Exile and Return*. BZAW 478. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015. ♦ **Ville-neuve**, Estelle. “Der Kyrus-Zylinder: Der archäologische Beleg für das biblische Kyrus-Edikt?” *WUB* 76 (2015): 88–90.

One of the most important documents reproduced in the Hebrew Bible is the Cyrus Edict, which belongs in the context of the early Persian rule after the conquest of Babylon. The document is recorded twice, at the end of Chronicles (2 Chr 36:22–23) and at the beginning of Ezra (Ezra 1:2–3), which underlines an initial impression of its authenticity. It presents the Persian king, Cyrus II (559–530 BCE), as speaker and is linked to the beginning of his reign in 539 BCE. In addition to the order to rebuild the temple, it permits the return of those in exile. The text in Ezra 1:2–4 (NRSV) has the following wording: “Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of those among you who are of his people—may their God be with them!—are now permitted to go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem; and let all survivors, in whatever place they reside, be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods and with animals, besides freewill offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem.”

6.4.1. The Transmission of the Cyrus Edict

In both biblical accounts, the Cyrus Edict is closely linked with the prophecy of Jeremiah (2 Chr 36:21–22; Ezra 1:1) and his oracles regarding the restoration of Israel and the temple (Jer 25:11–14; 29:10). In addition, Ezra 6:3–5 contains (in Aramaic) the permission to rebuild a temple and the order for the return of the temple vessels taken to Babylon during the conquest of Jerusalem in 587/86 BCE (2 Kgs 24:13–14; 2 Chr 36:7, 18; Jer 52:17–20, cf. Jer 27:19–22), which Ezra 1:8–11 and 5:14–15 describe in detail.

6.4.2. The Authenticity of the Cyrus Edict

The document's authenticity is quite controversial in scholarship, and assessing it is not easy. The Aramaic version, which contains details on the execution and also regulations on financing by the royal court, differs from the Hebrew version, in which the temple building is connected with the return of the → golah. Although the Aramaic document presents itself with a stronger appearance of historicity due to the circumstances of the temple construction, so that it was long regarded in scholarship as an undoubtedly authentic copy from the archive in Ecbatana, fundamental doubts about it have arisen in recent times in view of the extent of the Achaemenid world empire and the associated minor importance of the province Yehud. Did Cyrus (559–530 BCE) (and even personally?) take care of the insignificant Judah before the Syro-Palestinian land bridge regained strategic importance with the expansion of power to Egypt? Persian policy supports religious tolerance, but it does not aim to actively protect or even finance insignificant local cults as described in Ezra 6:4. At least for Cyrus II's first year as Persian Great King (539/38 BCE) this seems unlikely. Moreover, in other Persian documents, Cyrus II *does not* refer to himself as the “king of Persia” (Ezra 1:2). The blessing “his God be with him” and the call for the support of the returning exiles by the rural population (cf. Exod 3:21–22; 11:2–3; 12:35–36) refer—at least in the Hebrew version—to a Judean redaction and the influence of the golah (Lester L. Grabbe, Rainer Albertz). The majority therefore questions the authenticity of the document reproduced in Ezra 1 and considers the eighteen-year span between the permission to build a temple under Cyrus II (539–530 BCE) and its execution under Darius I (522–486 BCE) as a construct.

6.4.3. Plausibility of the Return of the Temple Vessels

Nevertheless, even if the Cyrus Edict is not an authentic document, the events described within it are not to be immediately dismissed as ahistorical or implausible. It is not surprising that Cyrus does not subordinate himself to Ahura Mazda but to “YHWH, the God of heaven,” and states that he owes his world domination to him. This can be compared with the propagandistic style of the Cyrus Cylinder found in Babylon (lines 33–34), where Cyrus returns the gods of Sumer and Akkad “by the order of Marduk” and desires the intercession of Bel and Nabu (lines 35–36).

The Great King saw himself as a guarantor of the cult and as legitimized by the gods of the temples to rule (for example, in a brick inscription in the Eanna temple in Uruk). In the Nabonidus Cylinder from Sippar in Ur, Cyrus II even sees himself entrusted with world domination by the god Sin. On the other hand, the return of conquered statues and symbols of the gods from Babylon to their original contexts is testified several times in other documents (Cyrus Cylinder, Nabonidus Chronicle, clay cylinder from Sippar, stela inscription from Haran; see *HTAT* 268, 270, 272), which makes the order for the return of the temple vessels (or probably some of them; cf. 2 Kgs 24:13) to Jerusalem historically plausible. In research, therefore, often only this part of the edict is classified as historical (Rainer Albertz, Angelika Berlejung). But the Great King also boasts of his reconstruction of decrepit temples and the repatriation of deportees in the Cyrus Cylinder: “From [Ninev]eh (?), Assur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, Zamban, Meturnu, Der, as far as the region of Gutium, I returned the (images of) the gods to the sacred centers [on the other side of] the Tigris whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time, and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned (to them) their dwellings” (lines 30–32, *COS* 2.124, *TUAT* 1:408–9, *HTAT* 273). Thus, the plausibility of the Cyrus Edict is *not* limited to the return of the temple vessels.

6.4.4. The Return of the Exiles and Demographic Development in Yehud

On the other hand, there is now a scholarly consensus that a larger wave of return migration from 539 BCE under Cyrus II (559–530 BCE) cannot be expected. Sheshbazzar, who is said to have led the first returnees with the repatriation of the temple vessels (Ezra 1:8, 11; 5:14, 16), disappears into darkness (see §6.5.2). Although Ezra 2 offers a detailed list of returnees (reproduced again in Neh 7) and calculates 42,360 persons who returned from exile under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra 2:64 // Neh 7:66), this is more than unlikely from a historical point of view. On the one hand, the number is too high compared to the actual number of deportees to Babylon according to the biblical data itself (see §5.10.3). On the other hand, it can now be assumed that a large number of deportees remained in exile. The Babylonian archives from Muraššû and āl-Yāhūdu also suggest this (see §5.12). The biblical statements do not become more plausible if they are merely shifted from 538 BCE to 520 BCE under Darius I (522–486 BCE) (Kurt Galling). If one calculates the number of inhab-

itants of the Persian province of Yehud at the beginning of the Persian period as 12,000 (Israel Finkelstein), 13,350 (Charles E. Carter), or, more generously, as approximately 30,000 persons (Oded Lipschits), then the high number of returnees proves to be a continuation of the “myth of the empty land” (Hans M. Barstad, Ernst Axel Knauf). From an archaeological point of view, a collective mass return to Yehud under Cyrus II and/or Darius I can be ruled out (Charles E. Carter, Bob Becking). Neither in Jerusalem nor in the surrounding area is there any evidence of such an increase in settlement area. The settlements of the early Persian period show strong continuity with those from the Iron Age III, and it is only after the region experienced an increase in economic prosperity (around 450 BCE) that a clear increase in the number of settlements can be observed (Kenneth G. Hoglund, Charles E. Carter). On the basis of settlement data, Bob Becking estimates the number of returnees at approximately 4,000 who returned to Yehud in smaller groups throughout the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. Even if one does not accept this minimalist assessment, it cannot be historically assumed that there was a mass immigration in two waves as recorded in the biblical account. Much more plausible is the assumption of a slow seepage of returnees to Jerusalem and Judah (Lester L. Grabbe, Ernst Axel Knauf). However, the influx of returnees into the region inevitably resulted in conflicts with the population that remained in the country over rights to use land and real estate. The influence of the → *golah* was quite extensive despite its relatively small size.

6.5. JERUSALEM’S RESTORATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Judaism: The First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. ♦ **Cziglányi**, Zsolt. “Der Wiederaufbau des Zweiten Tempels als Ergebnis eines gesellschaftlichen Kompromisses.” Pages 385–401 in *Die Stadt im Zwölfprophetenbuch*. Edited by Aaron Scharf and Jutta Krispenz. BZAW 428. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012. ♦ **Edelman**, Diana Vikander. *The Origins of the ‘Second’ Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2005. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. “Archaeology and the List of Returnees in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.” *PEQ* 140 (2008): 7–16. ♦ **Finkelstein**. “Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah.” *JSOT* 32 (2008): 501–20. ♦ **Finkelstein**. “Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder.” *JHebS* 9 (2009): 2–13. ♦ **Finkelstein**. “The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and

Early Hellenistic Periods." *RB* 117 (2010): 39–54. ♦ **Grätz**, Sebastian. "Chronologie im Esrabuch: Erwägungen zu Aufbau und Inhalt von Esra 1–6." Pages 213–25 in *Nichts Neues unter der Sonne? Zeitvorstellungen im Alten Testament: Festschrift für Ernst-Joachim Waschke zum 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by Jens Kotjatko-Reeb, Stefan Schorch, Johannes Thon, and Benjamin Ziemer. BZAW 450. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014. ♦ **Jursa**, Michael, and Matthew W. **Stolper**. "From the Tattannu Archive Fragment." *WZKM* 97 (2007): 243–81. ♦ **Shalev**, Yiftah, Nitsan **Shalom**, Efrat **Bocher**, and Yuval **Gadot**. "New Evidence on the Location and Nature of Iron Age, Persian and Early Hellenistic Period Jerusalem." *TA* 47 (2020): 149–72. ♦ **Ussishkin**, David. "On Nehemiah's City Wall and the Size of Jerusalem during the Persian Period." Pages 101–30 in *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation*. Edited by Isaac Kalimi. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012. ♦ **Willi**, Thomas. *Esra: Der Lehrer Israels*. BG 26. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012.

6.5.1. Jerusalem's Condition in the Middle of the Sixth Century BCE

Jerusalem's significance at the beginning of the Persian period was marginal. The settlement was limited to the narrow Southeastern Hill, and, with a population of no more than 1,250 inhabitants, the "once so populous city" (Lam 1:1) shrank to the dimensions of the pre-Davidic or early Israelite Zion or even smaller than Jerusalem at the beginning of the first millennium BCE if the eastern part of "Nehemiah's wall" (which is, in fact, later) does not follow the Iron Age wall. How extensively the Ophel, the area between the Southeastern Hill and the Temple Mount, was populated in the early Persian period, is currently the subject of controversial discussion. While Oded Lipschits wants to see the settlement's concentration here, Israel Finkelstein assumes that the area was largely uninhabited due to the lack of archaeological evidence and calculates a city size of 2.0–2.5 hectares. The excavations in the Givati Parking Lot show a larger quantity of Persian pottery but no clearly associated architecture (Yiftah Shalev et al.), which could impact the importance of Persian Jerusalem. Less optimistic estimates of the demographic development of Jerusalem are based on a population of 200–500 inhabitants at the beginning of the Persian period, which in the course of the fifth/fourth century BCE rose to a maximum of 3,000 by the end of the Persian period (Wolfgang Zwickel, Israel Finkelstein; Oded Lipschits provides an overview). According to the biblical presentation, large parts of the city lay in ruins, walls and gates remained destroyed (2 Kgs 25:4; Neh 1:3; 2:3, 13; Lam 2:8), and the Temple Mount lay abandoned and devastated without a functioning sanctuary (Lam 5:18;

Jer 10:20; 12:10; Ps 74:3; etc.). The image of total devastation must be considerably reduced, as it is a stylized lament of urban decline or destruction. Not all walls and gates were completely destroyed except for their foundations, nor was every house razed to the ground. The temple roof and walls (probably) collapsed due to conflagration, but priests—according to Jer 41:4–9; Zech 7:3; 8:19—seem to have maintained a reduced ritual continuity through a sacrificial cult and periodic lament celebrations in the temple area or even in the ruins of the temple, which had been ritually cleaned beforehand. But even disregarding the exaggerated depiction of total destruction, Jerusalem was initially unfortified, considerably depopulated, and politically marginalized. The biblical representation of the city's reconstruction distinguishes the temple's construction and the reconstruction of the walls and gates as subsequent architectural phases.

6.5.2. Sheshbazzar and the Beginning of the Second Temple's Construction

According to the biblical account, Sheshbazzar was commissioned with the repatriation of the temple vessels by Cyrus II (559–530 BCE) as early as 539 BCE (Ezra 1:8; 5:14). A treasurer handed the vessels in their entirety over to him, whereby it is striking that the enumeration in Ezra 1:9–11 does not correspond exactly with the information given in any of the reports of their removal (2 Kgs 25:14–15 // Jer 52:18–19; Bar 1:8; Dan 1:2; 2 Chr 36:10, 18). The treasurer bears a (quite common) Persian name, Mitredath, which lends the statement some plausibility. According to Ezra 1:8, Sheshbazzar, whose name has a Babylonian background (Šamaš-aba-ušur “Shamash protects the father”), returned with the other exiles to Jerusalem, yet he is not mentioned in the list of returnees. Instead, the first named returnee is Zerubbabel, who also bears a Babylonian name (Zēr-Bābili “Sprout of Babel”) and who is often dubbed “commissioner for repatriation” (Peter R. Bedford, Albrecht Alt: “Repatriierungskommissar”). Moreover, since Sheshbazzar is only mentioned in this context, this has led to an equation with Zerubbabel, which, however, is not supported by anything else. While Ezra 1:8 grants him the title *hannāsi' lîhûdâ* “superior/ruler of Judah” (cf. Ezek 44:3; 45:7–8), he is referred to in Ezra 5:14 as governor (*pehâ*). This can hardly mean the satrap or governor for the whole satrapy of Transeuphratene/Ebirnāri, because under Cyrus II it also included Phoenicia, Syria, and so on in addition to Babylonia. If Sheshbazzar should indeed be a historical figure (and doubts are quite appropriate, Diana V. Edelman, Herbert Donner, differently Othmar Keel), he would more likely be a district administrator or

higher official. He was named accordingly a “building commissioner” (Kurt Galling) or “commissar of reparation” (Herbert Donner) instead of governor, but remains nevertheless historically obscure.

According to Ezra 5:16, Sheshbazzar was responsible for laying the foundations for the reconstruction of the temple (but cf. the role of Zerubbabel in Ezra 3:6, 11; Hag 1–2; Zech 4:9). The fact that the temple was not completed until 515 BCE (cf. Zech 1:12)—and thus eighteen years lie between the start of construction and its continuation—has challenged different explanatory approaches both biblically and in historiography. The beginning of the construction under Cyrus II is undoubtedly stylized in Ezra 1–6 as a turning point in salvation brought about by the God of Israel, and the continuity to the First Temple is restored by the return of the temple vessels and the resumption of the sacrifices (Ezra 3:1–5). This speaks more for a theological construct than for the historical plausibility proposed above on the basis of the Aramaic Cyrus Edict. Accordingly, Sheshbazzar is classified as a fictitious figure in research. But why, then, does he bear a Babylonian name and disappears from history as suddenly as he appeared? The identifications with Shenazzar, one of the sons of Jehoiachin (1 Chr 3:17–18), or even with Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiachin (1 Chr 3:17–19; Ezra 3:2), who is said to have built the temple at the time of Darius I (522–486 BCE), are only clumsy attempts to escape the conclusion that nothing more can be learned about Sheshbazzar and the historicity of his mission.

6.5.3. Zerubbabel and the Temple's Reconstruction

Far more clearly than Sheshbazzar, the Davidide Zerubbabel is biblically connected with building the temple (e.g., Ezra 3:2; Hag 2:4; Zech 4:6–10). He is also listed as Yehud's commissioner or governor (*paḥat yehûdâ* Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2, 21), which suggests an official function. A restorative monarchical claim of Zerubbabel is controversial as it would hardly have been tolerated by the Persian authority. Together with Jeshua, the son of Jehozadak (1 Chr 5:40–41), born in exile in Babylon from the priestly line, the construction of the temple advanced. The two became prominent protagonists mainly through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who in 520 BCE propagandistically promoted the temple's reconstruction (e.g., Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4, 23; Zech 4:6–7; 6:11). Yeshua ben Jehozadak, who in Haggai and Zechariah is called Joshua (*yəhōšuaʿ*), is given the title *hakkōhēn haggādōl* (literally “great priest”), a forerunner to the office of the high priests

whose position was → genealogically passed on from the Second Temple period (see §6.2.3) and which greatly increased in political status during the Hellenistic period (cf. the list at §7.4.3). Through the cooperation of Zerubbabel, a Davidide of royal descent, the distinguished priest Yeshua, and the leaders of the people—with the approval and encouragement of Persian sovereignty—the temple becomes an identity-forming joint enterprise in the texts, which is understood or hoped for as a prerequisite for a universal renewal of the entire world order. After its consecration, the temple became the center of the tax authority and thus a key element of the economy. The temple is therefore “de facto ... a Persian imperial sanctuary and an instrument of Persian imperial rule.”¹

6.5.4. Resistance to the Temple's Construction

According to the biblical account, after the solemn laying of the foundation stone (Ezra 3), there was resistance to building the temple after Zerubbabel rejected the participation of the inhabitants of the province of Samaria (Ezra 4). Further construction was suspended and only completed under Darius I in his sixth year, that is, 515 BCE. In the same text, the continued resistance against the reconstruction of Jerusalem (not the temple!) under Xerxes I (486–465 BCE) (Ezra 4:6) and Artaxerxes I (465–424/23 BCE) (Ezra 4:7–23) is reported. A coalition of leaders from Samaria and the rest of the Transeuphratene tried to prevent Jerusalem from being strengthened by denouncing their loyalty to the Persian Great King. The data are incomplete and in themselves not without chronological and textual contradictions, however the neighbors' resistance to the strengthening of Jerusalem in the first half of the fifth century BCE does not lack historical plausibility. The events described in Ezra 4:6–23 are to be connected chronologically and objectively with the mission of Nehemiah (see §6.6). Ezra 4:24 reports that the temple's construction was halted until the second year of King Darius. With this and Ezra 5:1, the process parallels the information in Hag 1:1, 15; 2:10; Zech 1:1, 7. If, however, the Persian king Darius mentioned were to be dated *after* Xerxes I (486–465 BCE) and Artaxerxes I (465–424/23

1. Angelika Berlejung, “History and Religion of Ancient Israel,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Literature, Religion and History of the Old Testament*, ed. Jan Christian Gertz, Angelika Berlejung, Konrad Schmid, and Markus Witte (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 59–234, here 196.

BCE), as suggested in Ezra 4:6–23, then it could only refer to Darius II (423–405/4 BCE). This would allow the temple to be completed almost a century later (see below). But Haggai and Zechariah link the second year of Darius with Zerubbabel and Yeshua (Hag 1:1, 12, 14; Ezra 5:2; etc.), who according to Ezra 2:2 were among the returnees, which again makes Darius II completely unlikely. The ahistorical sequence of Darius → Xerxes → Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:5–7 probably stems from the insertion of the (fictitious) Artaxerxes correspondence in Ezra 4:6–23 (and represents a preliminary reference to Nehemiah's city building, Maria Häusl), with which the resistance reported there can only be directed against the reconstruction of the city (and so temple and city are paralleled). During the construction, Ezra 5:3–6:15 tells us that doubts had arisen about the legality of the permission to rebuild, but these doubts could be clarified by an inquiry in Ecbatana. The process is quite explicit. First, Darius has the treasure house in Babylon searched. However, he finds what he is looking for in the royal archives in the citadel of the Median capital, Ecbatana, the early residence of Cyrus II (559–530 BCE) (other sources also report the existence of an archive; Hilmar Klinkott). The ancient writer Xenophon reports that the city was used by Darius only as a summer residence, which is why beginning the search in Babel is plausible. The Aramaic document cited in Ezra 6:3–5 confirms the construction of the temple and regulates its financing by the royal court and the return of the temple vessels (see §6.4.3). Although this document is more plausible than the Cyrus Edict, it is now predominantly classified as ahistorical in research (Rüdiger Lux, Lester L. Grabbe, Dirk Schwiderski, Sebastian Grätz, otherwise Thomas Pola, Rainer Albertz).

6.5.5. Dating the Temple's Rebuilding

On the basis of the document, Tattenai, the governor of Transeuphratene and instigator of the challenge (Ezra 5:3), was instructed not to obstruct the building further (Ezra 6:6–12). He also fulfills this with the utmost obligation (Ezra 6:13). This raises the question of whether the datum of Tattenai as satrap can be used to date the temple building? Under Darius I, Gubaru and Ostanes are documented as satraps, but Tattenai is not. Even though Arthur Ungnad identifies Ezra's Tattenai with a Tattenai mentioned in a Babylonian letter dated 502 BCE, there is no way to verify that it is the same Tattenai (Michael Jursa, Matthew W. Stolper). Tattenai was a rather common name that is also documented in the Muraššû archive

(see §5.12.1) (Diana V. Edelman). Thus, the extrabiblical mention for the dating of the process of Ezra 5:3—assuming its historicity—is omitted.

According to the biblical chronology in Ezra 6:15, the dedication of the temple took place on the third of Adar in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. Assuming this means Darius I, the dedication occurred in April 515 BCE. If one accepts the span of seventy years mentioned in Jer 25:8, 11; 29:10–14, 20 as binding for the biblical writers and understands the restoration of the temple as the completion of the repatriation, the period from 586–515 BCE could be meant and thus the date of completion dictated purely by the model of promise and fulfillment according to biblical dictates.

Standing against the extensive consensus that the rededication of the temple was completed in 515 BCE, before the restoration under Nehemiah in the middle of the fifth century BCE, Diana V. Edelman dates both to the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–424/23 BCE). This presupposes the greatest possible fictionality of the account in Ezra 1–6, which is instead understood purely in terms of prophetic fulfillment (Isa 44:28; 52:11; Jer 25:11–12; 27:22; 29:10; 30:16; 31:33). While doubts about the historicity of Ezra 1–6 are well-founded, the positive determination of the construction period to the reign of Artaxerxes I is equally unconvincing. So one can ask why Nehemiah was not biblically connected with the temple building. Nehemiah 2:8 (“for the house” = the temple) cannot bear this burden! Nevertheless, it seems historically plausible that either the city with its walls was restored first and then the temple or that temple and city were restored at the same time. The province’s economy was only able to raise the financial resources for the reconstruction of the temple in the middle of the fifth century BCE (see §6.3.2). Therefore, one should no longer place too much trust in the often stated date of 515 BCE for the dedication of the Second Temple.

6.5.6. The Second Temple’s Consecration in 515 BCE

While Ezra 4:1–4, 24 deal with the resistance to the temple’s construction from the outside, Haggai brings to the fore the internecine resistance, strengthened by the desolate economic situation (Hag 1:2–11; 2:15–19; cf. Zech 8:9–13). This seems plausible in view of the fact that the primarily agrarian-based economy of the largely rural Judah (only about 10 percent of the population did *not* have an agricultural livelihood) could hardly produce a → surplus, particularly in light of the high tax burden imposed by

the Persian administration. There are no indications in the Persian sources to suggest the empire provided financial support for the reconstruction of sanctuaries, thus it follows that reconstruction was to be financed locally, that is, via tax revenue in addition to the Persian taxes. Since it cannot therefore be assumed that—apart from “start-up financing” (Erhard S. Gerstenberger) at the very most—the costs of reconstruction were borne by the Persians, the socioeconomic problems described appear plausible. However, it is doubtful whether the economic reality must also contradict the statement made in Ezra 6:15 that a construction period of five years was necessary (Lester L. Grabbe) because the Second Temple cannot be compared with a medieval cathedral. It was a modest successor building, which is reflected in Hag 2:3 (with reference to the first construction phase), in Zech 4:10, and perhaps also in Ezra 3:12. In the biblical system, the completion makes sense despite the (later) mention of Artaxerxes in Ezra 6:14 in the sixth year of Darius, that is, in the spring of 515 BCE. If one follows Diana V. Edelman and detaches oneself from the leading assumption of the historicity of the biblical data, then it is hardly possible to make a statement about a concrete date of the rededication of the temple.

6.6. THE COMMUNITY'S REORGANIZATION UNDER NEHEMIAH

Becking, Bob. *Ezra–Nehemiah*. HCOT 10. Leuven: Peeters, 2018. ♦ **Becking**. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*. FAT 80. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. ♦ **Blenkinsopp**, Joseph. *Judaism: The First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. “Archaeology and the List of Returnees in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.” *PEQ* 140 (2008): 7–16. ♦ **Finkelstein**. *Hasmonean Realities Behind Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives*. AIL 34. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018. ♦ **Finkelstein**. “Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah.” *JSOT* 32 (2008): 501–20. ♦ **Kletter**, Raz. “‘Estates’ or ‘Forts’ in Persian Period Yehud?” *PEQ* 153 (2021): 42–61. ♦ **Knoppers**, Gary N. *Judah and Samaria in Postmonarchic Times: Essays on Their Histories and Literatures*. FAT 129. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019. ♦ **Knoppers**. *Prophets, Priests, and Promises: Essays on the Deuteronomistic History, Chronicles, and Ezra–Nehemiah*. VTSup 186. Leiden: Brill, 2021. ♦ **Laird**, Donna. *Negotiating Power in Ezra–Nehemiah*. AIL 26. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016. ♦ **Mittmann**, Siegfried. “Tobia, Sanballat und die persische Provinz Juda.” *JNSL* 26 (2000): 1–50. ♦ **Reinmuth**, Titus. *Der Bericht Nehemias: Zur literarischen Eigenart, traditionsgeschichtlichen Prägung und innerbiblischen Rezeption des Ich-Berichts Nehemias*.

OBO 183. Fribourg: Presses Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002. ♦ **Williamson**, H. G. M. *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography*. FAT 38. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004. ♦ **Zwickel**, Wolfgang. "Jerusalem und Samaria zur Zeit Nehemias: Ein Vergleich." *BZ* 52 (2008): 201–22.

Since there are no extrabiblical testimonies for Nehemiah's person or work, one is initially dependent on the biblical data as a source.

6.6.1. Nehemiah's Report and the Question of Its Authenticity

There is no clarity regarding the background, the concrete form, or the exact dating of Nehemiah's mission. For a long time the history of Nehemiah was reconstructed based on the assumption that Neh *1–7; *11–13 comprised an authentic so-called Nehemiah Memoir dating from the second half of the fifth century BCE. More recently, the historicity, background, and intention of these texts have become highly controversial. The maximalist position evaluates the details of the conflicts, Nehemiah's mission, and the actions initiated by him to be, as far as possible, historical, which then is authentically witnessed by Nehemiah's first-person report (e.g., Rainer Kessler, Titus Reinmuth, Ralf Rothenbusch). The minimalist position, on the other hand, doubts even the historicity of the person of Nehemiah. It does not see the Nehemiah Memoir as an authentic document but as a fictional account of later writers with theological intentions, who stylized Nehemiah as the model political leader. The Nehemiah Memoir is thus understood, as far as possible, to be an archetypal depiction without historical value (e.g., Joachim Becker, Erhard S. Gerstenberger). The story that Artaxerxes, upon seeing the depressed mood of his cupbearer, Nehemiah, granted him permission to leave the Persian court in Susa so that he might restore the ruined Jerusalem (Neh 2) can be regarded as a legendary formulation (Diana V. Edelman). It is not possible to precisely determine what lies in the background of the restoration measures: Was it Persian foreign policy interests (Herbert Donner, Kenneth E. Hoglund, Diana V. Edelman)—additionally motivated by the increasingly destabilized situation on the Syro-Palestinian land bridge caused by the uprisings in Egypt (Inarus 464 BCE) and the Transeuphratene satrapy (Megabyzos 449 BCE)—or was the refortification of the city simply due to the economic, demographic, and political development of Jerusalem (Othmar Keel), even if purely inner-Judean interests do not seem very likely due to the meager importance of the

province? In Nehemiah's account, the renewal of the wall of Jerusalem and the conversion of the city to a fortified *bîrâ* play an important role, but the archaeological findings point to Jerusalem's marginal importance at the beginning of the fifth century BCE (Oded Lipschits).

6.6.2. Nehemiah as Governor and the Dating of His Work

Nehemiah's position is also unclear. Scholarly literature describes his role with titles such as "Reconstruction Commissioner," "Special Envoy," and the like. On the one hand, at the time of Nehemiah's arrival, a governor of the province is presumed, although not mentioned by name (Neh 2:7), on the other hand, Nehemiah calls himself a governor, *pehâ* (Neh 5:14). Although the title can also cover other areas, the office of provincial governor for Yehud seems very probable for Nehemiah. However, there is no reliable evidence of a governor named Nehemiah from extrabiblical sources. Even the absolute dating of Nehemiah is not really clear. Nehemiah 2:1 dates his arrival in Jerusalem to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and according to Neh 5:14 Nehemiah remained for twelve years (cf. Neh 13:6). But which of the four Persian rulers with the name Artaxerxes is meant remains an open question. The only extrabiblical reference point for an absolute dating is a → papyrus from Elephantine in which a request was sent by the inhabitants of the Nile island to the governor of Judah Bagoas, from the seventeenth year of the reign of Darius II Nothus (423–405/4 BCE) on 25.11.407, to rebuild the Yāhō temple on Jeb, which had been destroyed three years before by the priests of Khnum (COS 3.51, *TUAT* 1:254–56, *HTAT* 285; cf. 284–88; see §5.12.2). The letter mentions that the matter was also brought to the attention of Dalaiah or Delaiah/Delayahû and Shelemiah, the sons of Sin'uballit, the governor of Samaria. Assuming that Sin'uballit is identical with the Sanballat mentioned in Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33; 4:1; 6:1, 2, 5, 12, 14; 13:28 and is not only identical in name (see §6.6.3), Nehemiah's activity is most likely to date back to the reign of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (465–424/23 BCE) from 445 to 433 BCE.

6.6.3. The Restoration of Jerusalem's Walls

The wall system of the Iron Age city was probably badly damaged by the breaking of breaches and the razing of the walls during the conquest in 587/86 BCE (see §5.10.5.2–3). At least that is what the reports of the conquest suggest. The rebuilding of a fortification system and the extension

of Jerusalem to the *bîrâ* (“fortress,” Neh 2:8; 7:2) has a close biblical connection with the person of Nehemiah (Neh 2). Nehemiah’s role suggests that the building of the wall was not exclusively in the city’s own interests and was at least approved by the Persian authority. This is indicated by the *terminus technicus*, *bîrâ*, as well as the indication that the Persian authority provided building materials. Nehemiah 2:8–9—regardless of the veracity of this note—indicates that the building of the wall is to be seen in the context of Persian interests (Diana V. Edelman). It is not unlikely that the neighbors were skeptical and resisted the growing province’s aspirations of autonomy. Whether this resistance is to be linked to the historical figures of Sanballat for Samaria in the north, Tobiah for Ammon in the east, Geshem for the province of Idumea in the south (Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33; 4:1; 6:1, 2, 5), and finally Ashdod in the west (Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33; 4:1; 6:1, 2), or whether the individuals are merely stylized (while foreign) as opponents remains controversial (Siegfried Mittmann). The inscription [...]’*yhw bn [Sn]blt pht šmrn* “[Dela]yahû, son of [San]ballat, governor of Samaria” on a → bulla on a Samaria → papyrus from Wādī ed-Dāliye (fig. 50) indirectly attests to one Sanballat as governor of the province of Samaria as an external datum to the Bible, if one assumes an inherited office.



Fig. 50. The impression of an oval seal from Wādī ed-Dāliye (ca. 375–335 BCE) on a bulla with a fragmentary two-line inscription in ancient Hebrew script: [*ldl/lyš*]’*yhw bn <sn> | blt pht šmrn* “(belonging) to [Dela/Yesha]yahû, son of [San]ballat, governor of Samaria.”

The inscription probably refers to Sanballat II, who ruled under Artaxerxes II (405/4–359/58 BCE). It is not possible to determine with any certainty what the attribution of Sanballat as a “Horonite” (Neh 2:10, 19) means; likely options include Beth-Horon (about 17 km northwest of Jerusalem), the southern Moabite Horonaim (ed-Dēr), or Hauran as his place of origin. Tobiah, who is labeled an “Ammonite servant” (Neh 2:10, 19; 3:35), was probably an Ammonite administrative officer in Persian service who,

like the influential Transjordanian Tobiad family (in the Hellenistic period!; see §7.4), maintained relations with the Jerusalem elite (Neh 6:17–19; 13:4–9). If Geshem (Neh 2:19; 6:1–2, 6) is to be associated with the inscriptionally attested Gušam bin Šahr, a leader of northwestern Arab desert tribes (Ernst Axel Knauf), this could be an influential Persian official in the southern province of Idumea. Granting these associations are correct, it can be assumed that Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were authentic persons.

Nehemiah's actual activity remains in the dark from a historical perspective. Despite the apparently precise topographical data (Neh 3:1–32; 12:37–43), there are hardly any archaeological traces of the city's refortification, which was undertaken after the "ride during the night" (Neh 2:12–14) and completed in fifty-two days (Neh 6:15). It is therefore not possible to decide whether Nehemiah simply restored the preexilic wall system, extended existing early exilic fortifications, or built new walls. The minimalist position connects the Nehemian construction report only with the Hasmonean city fortification in the second century BCE (Israel Finkelstein). Nehemiah's other activities are hardly on safer ground. According to Neh 7:4; 11:1–2 he is said to have changed the demographic relationship between the city and the countryside in favor of Jerusalem by a so-called synoecism (a union of smaller units with the city) after the building of the wall in order to give the city greater weight as the organizational and cultic center of the province. Starting from the course of the wall around the Southeastern Hill and the Temple Mount, the modest Jerusalem of the fifth century BCE hardly offered sufficient inhabitable space for the resettlement of 10 percent of Yehud's rural population, that is, about three thousand additional inhabitants, whether forced by lot (Neh 11:1) or built on a voluntary basis (Neh 11:2).

6.6.4. Nehemiah's Other Works

In addition to the order for stricter Sabbath observance (Neh 13:15–22) and the reorganization of the financing of the temple service, that is, the improvement of the Levites' position at the temple (Neh 13:10–14), Nehemiah also provided social welfare in response to the increasing impoverishment of the peasant underclass in Persian provincial society. Although these measures seem quite plausible within their fifth-century BCE setting, at the same time Nehemiah's actions can be understood as being oriented toward the torah. That is, Nehemiah can be seen as a stylized ideal figure dedicated to conforming himself to the torah. This makes historical evaluation diffi-

cult, especially since other sources are missing. For example, Nehemiah is said to have moved the elite to provide comprehensive debt relief for the poor (Neh 5:1–13) in order to restore the approximate social balance. However, this must be weighed against the fact that the tax burden from the Persian administration remained a burdening economic factor, as did the tithe owed to the temple. Finally, in the condemnation of mixed marriages (Neh 13:1–3, 23–29), as in the care for the Sabbath (Neh 13:15–22), the idealized Nehemiah is described as behaving in accordance with the torah (Deut 7:1–4; 23:4). Likewise, the more drastic treatment (i.e., expulsion) of the son of the high priest, Joiada—who is said to be related to Sanballat, the governor of Samaria (Neh 13:28)—is performed in accordance with Lev 21:13–15. However one might assess these individual actions historically, they show an increasing isolationist trend for Yehud's postexilic society, as is also reflected in Nehemiah's conflicts with the leaders of the neighboring provinces (Rainer Albertz, Saul M. Olyan). The demand to marry only women from one's own clan and not to give one's own daughters to strangers in marriage (required endogamy) constructed a homogeneous society, oriented to the specifications of the torah. The perspective of standardization concerned language (Neh 13:24–27), culture, and religion alike. This, on the one hand, decisively shaped the emergence of early Judaism as a constructed ideal. Yet, on the other hand, it could de facto hardly be sustained permanently because in actuality it excluded the → diaspora. Nehemiah's activities—likewise with the activities associated with Ezra (see §6.7)—pursued an ideological concept that Joseph Blenkinsopp calls "ritual ethnicity," that is, a religiously founded construction of identity, which is demarcated from the other. The extent to which intra- and interreligious conflicts can be distinguished will be discussed below, as well as the question of inner-biblical roots and parallels, to which the → Deuteronomistic theology and the plan for the Second Temple in Ezek 40–48, which were developed in the exilic or early postexilic period, belong.

6.7. EZRA'S MISSION

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6.7.1. The Biblical Presentation

According to the biblical account, during his seventh year of reign, Artaxerxes sent Ezra the priest by an ordered decree to make known the

“law of the God of heaven” and to check the observance of the torah in the province “Beyond the River” (Ezra 7:14, 25–26). His → genealogy is linked over many generations with the → eponymic priest Aaron (Ezra 7:1–5), so that one gains the impression that he was a legitimate high priest. With considerable financial support from the Persian court, he was instructed to get the Jerusalem temple cult going again (Ezra 7:1–18; 8:26–27) and secure its permanent operation via special access to the tax revenue of the Transeuphratene Satrapy (Ezra 7:20–23; Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.89–91). Ezra’s cult-related restoration activities secured a connection to the cult of the destroyed first Solomonic temple. At the same time, Ezra is identified as a scribe (literally, “a scribe skilled in the torah of Moses”) (Ezra 7:6, cf. 7:11), whereby his work is linked with the torah as law.

6.7.2. Problems with the Simultaneity of Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s Works

Ezra is biblically dated to the same time as Nehemiah (Neh 8; 12:26), which, however, leads to contradictions: Ezra arrives in Jerusalem and takes action against mixed marriages (Ezra 9–10), but does not read the “law of the God of heaven” until the thirteenth year of his activity (cf. Ezra 7:7–9: “in the seventh year of Artaxerxes,” i.e., 458 BCE; Neh 1:1; 2:1: “in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes,” i.e., 445 BCE). If the existing mixed marriages were already divorced under Ezra (Ezra 10:19), why does Nehemiah not refer to it years later when the problem appears to be virulent again (Neh 13)? In Ezra 9:9, Ezra praises the protective wall (*gādar*) around Judah and Jerusalem, which—if it is to be related to the outer wall of Jerusalem—presupposes Nehemiah’s work was (more or less) complete. Ezra 10:6 seems to indicate that Eliashib was no longer the high priest at the time of Ezra (cf. Neh 3:1, 20; 12:22–23; 13:4, 7). If the Johanan mentioned there is identical with the high priest Yahohanan mentioned in the Elephantine → Papyri, in the inquiry about building the new temple there, written in the year 407 BCE (COS 3.51, *TUAT* 1:254, *HTAT* 285; see §§6.6.2, 5.12.2), the events are to be dated to the late fifth or early fourth century BCE. However, the early succession of the high priests in Jerusalem is highly contested (Frank Moore Cross, Deirdre N. Fulton, differently James C. VanderKam, Jan Dušek). Besides Neh 12:10–11, 21–22, the order of high priests attested by Josephus (*A.J.* 11.121, 147, 158, 297, 302) (Joshua, Joiakim, Eliashib, Johanan, Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, Jaddua) also offers several possibilities for the classification

of Johanan. The coin with the inscription "Johanan, the priest" should be attributed at the earliest to the second Johanan, who held the office around 350–340 BCE (see fig. 48). But even the list in Neh 7:7–72 does not seem to know those who have returned with Ezra according to Ezra 8:1–14, which is astonishing if the coexistence of Ezra and Nehemiah is assumed. Altogether it should be noted that—apart from Neh 8—Ezra and Nehemiah do *not* appear together.

6.7.3. Dating of Ezra's Mission

A textual emendation in Ezra 7:7 shifts the work of Ezra from the seventh to the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes and thus by extension, following Neh 13, into the second phase of Nehemiah's activity in the year 428 BCE. Since this is a rather arbitrary solution, the dating under Artaxerxes II Mnemon (405/4–359/58 BCE) is discussed in scholarship as an alternative to the dating of Ezra under Artaxerxes I Longimanus (465–424/23 BCE), so that the appearance of Ezra in Jerusalem *after Nehemiah* occurs in the year 398 BCE. The difficulty of reading the torah in the square in front of the Water Gate in the Nehemiah Report can then only be solved in terms of editorial history, which is often underpinned by the Greek 1 Esdras, where Neh 8 follows Ezra 7–10.

6.7.4. The Question of the Historicity of Ezra's Activity

There are no compelling arguments for dating Ezra. The fact that the question cannot be decided from a historical perspective is due to the lack of any tangible historical details regarding Ezra, for whom no extrabiblical indications exist. Here, too, scholarship oscillates between the historical figure of a rich Aramean official and the literarily transfigured legend of *Moses redivivus*. As with Nehemiah, historical evaluation faces the difficulty of a highly artificial integration of notes about Ezra into a network of biblical reference texts, especially from the Torah. At the textual level, this presupposes the validity of the Torah, which is usually linked to Ezra 7.

An evaluation depends on the source value of the Artaxerxes rescript in Ezra 7:12–26. In the maximalist view, Ezra's mission is considered historical because of the Aramaic language; in the minimalist view, even Ezra's existence is denied. Sebastian Grätz's analysis, for example, denies the Achaemenid period background of the document and assigns it to the Hellenistic period.

6.7.4.1. The So-Called Imperial Authorization of the Torah

There is still a broad consensus in scholarship that the Torah, that is, the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, came to a formative conclusion in the second half of the fifth century BCE. Whether the conclusion was found from within, connected with the disputes with the Samari[t]ans (see §6.8), or owed to an external cause is discussed in research. The thesis of the so-called imperial authorization assumes that the Torah was presented to the Persians and then installed by them as imperial law. This thesis, brought into the discussion by Peter Frei and Klaus Koch and intensively discussed over the past decades, sees Ezra 7 as the documentation of an administrative process in which, in the context of Persian permissive politics, local law is elevated to Persian imperial law (Aram. *dāt*). Since such a process cannot really be affirmed by parallels in the Persian Empire and since Ezra 7 also shows clear signs of literary design from an “Israelite” (that is, in fact, Judean) perspective (Josef Wiesehöfer, Udo Rüterswörden, Christiane Karrer, Sebastian Grätz), the thesis in this form can at least be regarded as implausible, if not disproved (Christian Frevel). This applies all the more if Ezra 7 is a document from the late Persian period and is not used as evidence for the so-called imperial authorization (Sebastian Grätz, Juha Pakkala).

6.7.4.2. Ezra as an Idealized Figure

Given the above, the *de facto* starting points for a historical evaluation of Ezra’s mission slip between the fingers: “In chapter 7 of his book, as well as in all the other texts using his name, the figure of Ezra has so little flesh and blood that he could justifiably be construed as a literary product. It would by no means lose any significance thereby, for the biblical Ezra is completely taken up by his task of proclaiming Yahweh’s way of life.... If the person called Ezra (Aramaic ‘[God is] help’) ever existed, he was stylized by the shaping, super-elevating, and theologizing tradition into the prototypical to such an extent that one can recognize virtually nothing of his concrete biography.”² This view, which Charles C. Torrey established

2. Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Israel in the Persian Period: The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann, BibEnc 8 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 95–96.

already in 1896, has consequences for the evaluation of Ezra's other activities, in particular the forced dissolution of mixed marriages staged in Ezra 9–10.

6.7.4.3. The Dissolution of Mixed Marriages under Ezra

Due to the large number of opinions (both positive and negative) on the problem of mixed marriage in biblical texts (e.g., Gen 16:3; 21:21; 24:7; 25:1; 26:34–35; 27:46; 28:8–9; 29:19; 34:8–10, 15–16; 36:2, 6; 37–38; 41:45, 50–52; 46:10; Exod 2:21; 18:2; 34:15–16; Lev 21:13–15; Num 12; 25; 27–28; Deut 7:1–5; Josh 23:7, 12–13; Judg 3:6; 14:2–3; 1 Kgs 11; 16:31–33; Ruth; Tobit), it is indisputable that the demand for endogamy as a central means of identity formation in the early exilic period was prominent, but at the same time fiercely disputed. Thus, the concrete measures described in Ezra 10 can hardly be described as unambiguously historical. A forced divorce aimed at a larger number of so-called mixed marriages is programmatic at the literary level, but socially and historically unlikely. Rather, via the stylized, enforced divorce, the separation from the surrounding peoples is literarily profiled. Israel's election becomes the trigger of demarcation. That being said, there are other (integrative) texts that intensely hold on to the utopia of a universalization of election. These texts include those that integrate strangers and foreigners into the community (e.g., Exod 12:10; Lev 16:29; Isa 56:3; 66:19–21; Ruth 3; Ps 100) or in texts where the peoples make pilgrimage to Zion, where Jerusalem becomes a separate but unifying place. The idea that God's covenant with Israel is not exclusive but inclusive for all peoples unequivocally contradicts the negative attitude of Ezra 10. The discourse about mixed marriages even continued into the Hellenistic period in extrabiblical texts (Jubilees, the Aramaic Levi literature, the Temple Scroll, 4QMMT). Ezra 9–10, which refers to the postexilic community as a "holy seed" (Ezra 9:2), occupies a key position (Christopher Hayes), to which later texts from the Hellenistic period refer (Christian Frevel, Benedikt Conczorowski).

6.8. SAMARIA, THE SAMARIANS, AND THE SAMARITANS

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The religions of the Samaritans and the Jews have the same origin and did not form independently from each other. Their emergence is rooted in a very long process that encompasses the history of the two states of Israel and Judah in the first half of the first millennium BCE. Their paths of development are much more intertwined than they are separate. As one can observe with the interaction of two radio signals, one can conceive the growth of early Judaism and Samaritanism as “interference formation” (see §6.8.2). Particularly in recent years, Samaritan research has given new consideration to the common ancient origins and relations between Jerusalem and Samaria (Gary N. Knoppers, Magnar Kartveit, Benedikt Hensel). At the end of the complex processes, Jews and Samaritans stand as separate religious communities that still exist today. Important decisions took place during the Persian period that set the trajectories of these processes. Just as the term *Jews* is closely intertwined with the term *Judeans* and until the second century CE it is not always easy to decide whether the geographical, political, ethnic, or religious significance is intended, it is also often impossible to distinguish between *Samaritans* and *Samaritans*. The Samaritans were first the inhabitants of the Seleucid province in the third century BCE (Jan Dušek). Long before this (and even after) the texts speak of the Samaritans. The beginnings of the terminology lie approximately in the *ḥaššōmārōnīm* “Samaritans” or οἱ Σαμαριῖται “the Samari(t)ans” in 2 Kgs 17:29, which refers to the previous inhabitants of the province Samirina (see Σαμαρείται in Luke 10:33). The Septuagint also offers a possible origin when it replaces the Israelites in 2 Kgs 18:11 such that the “king of Assyria took τὴν Σαμάρειαν into exile.” To avoid confusion and a premature identification of the inhabitants of Samaria with the later Samaritans, this textbook uses *Samaritans* to refer to the inhabitants of Samaria prior to the emergence of the Samaritans and *Samaria* instead of Samirina to refer to the geographic name of the

hill country. In some ambiguous contexts both designations are possible, sometimes indicated by *Samari[t]ans*.

The traditions of the Persian period reflect a gradually intensifying rivalry between the two provinces of Samaria and Yehud. The roots of this lie in the economic development of the first half of the first millennium BCE, in which the formerly independent state of Israel (northern kingdom)—contrary to the biblical description—was the stronger, politically and economically more significant, and more modern state (see §5). The political dominance of the north, with its capital city Samaria, over the south with its central city Jerusalem, persisted from the eighth century BCE onward (see §§4.7, 5.4–5). This dominance deeply embedded itself in the collective memories as a rivalry and thus strongly influenced the constitution of identity in the seventh/sixth century BCE, when the first drafts of a history of Judah emerged in the form of the book of Kings. The depiction of the north is negative throughout and becomes increasingly so as the story progresses (see, e.g., the story of Samaria's downfall in 2 Kgs 17). In order to understand the rivalry in postexilic times, it is of central importance to underscore the point that Israel/Samaria and Judah/Jerusalem worshiped the same God, YHWH, they shared a common founding myth with the exodus narrative, and they referred to the same Torah (apart from a few differences) as the literary basis constituting identity in the Persian period.

6.8.1. Samaria's Development as a Persian Province

Despite falling more than a century before Judah (722/20 BCE) and despite the fact that during the Persian period the province of Samaria experienced no significant urban development (apart from Samaria and Shechem with their surrounding areas), the power differential between the north and south continued in the postexilic period (Gary N. Knoppers). This is primarily due to the archaeologically proven fact that the *Samari[t]ans* continued to live in relative continuity since the Assyrian-Babylonian period, and so simply had a developmental head start in the Persian period. During the Achaemenid period, Samaria developed into the largest and most important city in Palestine, whose influence was not insignificant (Adam Zertal).

According to the personal names on → papyri from Wādī ed-Dāliye (375–332 BCE) that probably originated from Samaria, the majority of the inhabitants were YHWH worshippers (Jehoḥanan, Ḥananiah, Jehonathan,

Delaiah, Nehemiah, etc.), although Aramaic, Edomite, Akkadian, or Phoenician names are also documented. Names honoring foreign deities (Qôš, Šamaš, Sin) are nevertheless rather rare. The multiethnic and multireligious character of the province of Samaria was a consequence of the settlement of foreign populations after the conquest by the Neo-Assyrians (see §5.6.9). This circumstance in itself required a higher degree of internationalism compared to Judah (see §5.6.9). The Samaritan coins of the fifth century BCE also show a high degree of internationality, depicting the Phoenician demigod Bes, Baal of Tarsus, perhaps the Persian Ahura Mazda, but also Greek gods such as Zeus, Aphrodite, and, above all, Heracles (fig. 51). In contrast, the coins from Yehud with the Athenian owl and the local lily are almost provincial (see fig. 46).

The same applies to the image selection used on the seals (most of which are aniconic!). In Wādī ed-Dāliye, one finds Satyr and Eros, Hermes, Perseus, Heracles, Nike, and so on. Thus far, none of these motifs has been discovered for the late Persian period from Yehud, which also speaks for some delayed development and Samaria's stronger international integration. Research has drawn far-reaching conclusions from this difference, including that Yehud deliberately distanced itself from the imagery of its neighbors because of a stricter monotheism. However, one should be very careful with such conclusions (Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny, Izak Cornelius), especially if economic and political explanatory models are available.

The developmental advance of the north over the south can also be observed in the province of Galilee, which was strongly Phoenician influenced during the Persian period. In the Jezreel Plain with Megiddo, Mišmar hā-ʿĒmek, Tell Qirī, and Tell Qēmūn/Yokneam, which was economically and geographically important in terms of road networks, several urban centers were emerging. According to evidence of the pottery finds, the density of settlements in the Beth-Shean Basin and the Jezreel Plain reached its apogee in the eighth century BCE.

6.8.2. The So-Called Samaritan Schism

During Jerusalem's restoration phase, tensions arose between the leading elites of Samaria and Yehud. This can be seen in the resistance against the fortification of the city and the temple building (see §§6.5, 6.6). The close cultural contacts, the unifying political interests under Persian rule, and the many similarities (language, tradition, culture), in particular, the



Fig. 51. The coin and seal images from Samaria show not only Achaemenid but also Hellenistic influence on the iconography. While the former is particularly evident in depictions of the Persian Great King on Samaritan coins (a–c), the latter is predominantly evident in portraits of Hermes (d), soldiers (e), and the very popular Heracles with lionskin (f) from Wādī ed-Dāliye.

common faith in YHWH, could not repair the cracks. The two centers developed in contrasting ways, but the bridges were not burned for a long time; rather, attempts at integration were made again and again. In many places, Judean literature retains traces of a discourse that reflects the question of integration or separation or inclusion or demarcation from different perspectives and with different positions (Gary N. Knoppers). The separation between Judeans and Samaritans is often called the Samaritan schism, which is the idea that one party separated from

the other at a fixed time. However, the idea of a gradual development of separation is now preferred. Formation and separation interlock as processes. At which point the divergence reached such an extent that one can speak of a clear separation between the Jerusalem cult community and the Samaritans is still discussed in scholarship, since the sources are insufficient. This includes such markers of separation as the mere existence of a temple on Gerizim (Tell er-Ra's or Ġebel aṭ-Ṭūr, southwest of Shechem/Tell Balāṭa), whether literary (2 Macc 6:2) or → epigraphic (as "house of YHWH" and as ΑΡΤΑΡΙΖΕΙΝ [(h)ar garizein] in two later Greek inscriptions from Delos, third/second century BCE). This is not the case with the text tradition of the Samaritan Pentateuch, in which the demand for cult centralization, for example, in the tradition of Deuteronomy, is consistently interpreted as referring to Gerizim (against Jerusalem in the Judean interpretation). However, the so-called Samaritan readings, additions, and variants are by no means to be confined to the Samaritans in diametrical opposition to Jerusalem. They develop *within* a textual plurality as can be demonstrated in the evidence from Qumran, where pre-Samaritan or proto-Samaritan readings can also be found (Emanuel Tov) (see §7.6.9.3). In addition, more recent Pentateuchal research shows that within the Hexateuch, Judean and Samaritan positions are often related to one another or brought into a discourse with each other. This also speaks in favor of interference formation and points away from a temporally fixed schism.

The metaphor of interference is borrowed from physics and memory studies. It should not be understood to indicate that one group or tradition (negatively) interferes with another (original/pure) group or tradition and that the result is, therefore, negatively tinged by that superimposition. Rather, the term should be understood as emphasizing the positive mutual influence between related but divergent communities both linked to a common tradition. It seeks to highlight the productive variance that characterizes the tension between conformity and difference, and at the same time underlines the role of tradition in the process of formation. The metaphor of interference lays the emphasis on crosstalk, interaction, overlap, and superimposition rather than on insularity, opposition, and separateness. The complex processes of formation are characterized by retroactive and proactive interferences, meaning that there is at the same time both concordance and integration, as well as disputes and demarcations. Thus, the so-called parting of the ways is far more complex than the model of a Samaritan schism allows.

The destruction of the temple on Gerizim during the conquest of Samaria by John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE), reported by Josephus (*B.J.* 1.63–65, *A.J.* 13.254–256, 275–279), which was traditionally dated to 129/28 BCE but more recently is only dated to 111/10 BCE (see §7.6.5), offered a relatively certain clue in earlier scholarship. If one understands this as an attempt to secure a monopolistic position for the Jerusalem temple, this presupposes clear competition between the two temples. Perhaps, however, the hope of a *de facto* unification through the abolition of the competing sanctuary (Gary N. Knoppers, Jonathan Bourgel) was associated with the powerful assertion of Judean interests. This was unsuccessful because the destruction of the temple did not lead to reunification, but to the strengthening of the Samaritan → diaspora, which (like a Judean diaspora) already existed in Egypt or on the island of Delos (1 Macc 15:23; Josephus, *A.J.* 14.10) (Martina Böhm). After the destruction of the temple on Gerizim, Samaritans and Judeans were *de facto* at least more separated than before. Thus the destruction of the temple was more decisive for the separation of Judeans and Samaritans than the erection of the sanctuary on Gerizim (Reinhard Pummer), whenever this actually took place.

Josephus sees the origin of the separation in the marriage of Manasseh, a brother of the high priest Jaddua, with a daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria under Darius III (336–330 BCE) (Josephus, *A.J.* 11.302–303). When Manasseh came into conflict with Jerusalem because of his mixed marriage to Nikaso (Sanballat's daughter), Sanballat had the temple built on Gerizim with the explicit approval of Alexander the Great (333–323 BCE) (cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 11.306–346; 13.254–256). One cannot help feeling that this is a legendary (almost midrashic, Lester L. Grabbe) tale inspired by Neh 13:28–29, even if the → papyri from Wādī ed-Dāliye (14 km northwest of Jericho) bears witness to a “Sanballat, governor of Samerīna” between 360 and 354 BCE. However, Josephus is the only source (Jörg Frey, Reinhard Pummer) for the assumption of a third governor (Frank Moore Cross) named Sanballat. Perhaps a common tradition lies in the background of Neh 13:28–29 and Josephus, who used it to criticize the high-priestly family (Jacob L. Wright). It remains highly speculative whether Manasseh, after becoming high priest of the newly erected Samaritan temple, changed his name to Jeroboam and is attested under *this* name on Samaritan coins as a political functionary (governor) (Ya'akov Meshorer, Shraga Qedar).

6.8.3. The Sanctuary on Gerizim

Recent archaeological investigations suggest that the Hellenistic temple on Gerizim had a Persian period predecessor dating around 450 BCE (Ephraim Stern, Yitzhak Magen, otherwise Menahem Mor). Whether it was a temple or an open sanctuary (Jürgen Zangenberg) must be discussed further. Bone finds and a later Aramaic inscription (*bbyt dbh*’ “in the house of sacrifice”) point to animal sacrifices being practiced at the site. The oldest coin found in the area of the sanctuary comes from Cyprus and dates to 480 BCE (Yitzhak Magen, Magnar Kartveit) (see fig. 4). Perhaps 1 Esd 5:49 attests to an early mention of the Samaritan temple building, which parallels the construction of a sanctuary on (the unnamed) Gerizim with the construction of the Second Temple (Adrian Schenker). The Samaritan religious community, which only recognizes the torah as a binding authority and still exists today, is therefore most likely to have its formative origin in the early phase of the Second Temple period, that is, in the fifth century BCE. Thus, on the one hand, the question of a special event that led to the final schism is put into perspective, while, on the other hand, the history of the Samaritans in the fifth–third centuries BCE, which flows into the history of the Samaritans as a separate religious community, is highly significant for the formation of differentiated identities of early Judaism. The history of the province of Samaria to be written on the basis of the archaeological and → epigraphic evidence and the reflections on it in the biblical books (e.g., Deut 27, the late arrangement of Josh 24, or the letters of Hezekiah to Ephraim and Manasseh for the celebration of the Passover in 2 Chr 30:1) are subject to a comprehensive and currently controversially discussed reevaluation (Gary N. Knoppers, Reinhard Pummer, Christophe Nihan, etc.). It is particularly significant that the Samari[t]ans (as probably also the Judeans at the same time) understood themselves as Israel, as can be seen from the inscriptions of Delos (second century BCE). The approximately four hundred Aramaic, Paleo-Hebrew, and Samaritan Hebrew inscriptions (and in addition only few Greek inscriptions) from the temple district of Gerizim from Persian and Hellenistic times indicate YHWH worshipers who hardly differ from the Judeans/Yehudites in their personal names. Although the inscriptions were not found in situ but in secondary use, it is possible that they were originally attached to one of the walls of the shrine as wall coverings (Yitzhak Magen, Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme). Few inscriptions are in Hebrew, none of which dates to the early phase of the shrine. One inscription in Paleo-Hebrew script (an old form

of Hebrew letters) contains the Tetragrammaton, YHWH (no. 383), and one in Aramaic “the one/single YHWH” (no. 391). In the inscriptions, the names Phinehas and Eleazar, known from the book of Numbers, are documented as priests. Again, the early history of the Samaritans shows the unity of—rather than the later sharp separation between—Judea and Samaria. The thirty-seven → papyri (mostly contracts of transactions, slave sale contracts, receipts) from Wādī ed-Dāliye (375–332 BCE) demonstrate that Samaria was at home in the same legal traditions that can also be found in the (later) Judean documents from Wādī Murabbaʿāt and Naḥal Ḥever, which are also written in Aramaic (Benedikt Hensel). Close contacts and the importance of Samaritan Judaism are also documented by the correspondence of the Elephantine Papyri (see §6.10).

6.9. IDUMEA AND THE IDUMEANS

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The development in the south was initially marked by the collapse of Judah’s statehood, which went hand in hand with the destruction of its temple in 587 BCE. Although the pharaohs of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty continued their attempts to achieve control over the trade zone in southern Palestine, Psammetichus II (595–589 BCE) and Apries (589–570 BCE) ultimately remained unsuccessful. A decisive historical milestone of the general development was the earlier defeat of the Egyptian army at

Carchemish in 605 BCE which was followed by the Babylonian conquest of the southern Levant up to the borders of Egypt. With this, the Negev and Sinai again became a geopolitically important buffer zone for both Babylonia and Egypt. The Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II was able to successfully repel the pharaohs and to prevent their return to the southern Levant. However the pharaohs, in turn, were able to ward off his repeated attempts to take Egypt (Dan'el Kahn). Nebuchadnezzar failed to invade Egypt a final time in 568/67 BCE, leaving the region under Egyptian control of Pharaoh Amasis (570–526 BCE).

Following the death of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE) the Babylonian Empire entered an unstable phase characterized by a rapid succession of kings. Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-merodach (Amēl-Marduk [562–560 BCE]), was murdered by Neriglissar (560–556 BCE), one of Nebuchadnezzar's generals (Jer 39:3, 13). He then also reigned for a short period. During this period, Edom and the region south of former Judah were dominated and operated by proto-Arabian tribes in the name of the Edomite kingdom of Bozrah/Buṣērā. This changed during the reign of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus (556–539 BCE), an Aramean from Haran by birth, who took control of the King's Highway, the major trade route passing through Edom from the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus (as evinced from his inscription and portrayal in the stronghold of as-Sila', Rocío Da Riva). The impact of Nabonidus's politics on the region cannot be underestimated. According to the Nabonidus Chronicle (*HTAT* 268; cf. *COS* 2.123), the king conquered Udumu in 553 BCE, which most likely refers to the capital Bozrah/Buṣērā/Busayra, and thus ended the autonomy of an Edomite monarchy (see §5.10.5.4) (although the city was rebuilt and existed throughout the Persian period, Piotr Bienkowski). The Neo-Babylonian king also advanced further south, conquered the caravan towns of northern Arabia (Tayma/Taymā', Dedan/Dadān, Fadak, Ḥaybar, Yadi', and Yaṭrib), and dwelled in the oasis of Tayma for about ten years until 543 BCE. This served to further divert the caravan trade from northern Arabia to the overland route, weakening the Negev's importance, wherein the Edomite political interests had shifted following the demise of the state.

Signs of continuity with the Transjordan polity of Edom appear not only in the name of the latter province Idumea, which recalls Edom/Udumu, but also in the presence of the national deity Qôš, who is repeatedly referenced in the Idumean onomasticon. However, the routes to the west in the Beersheba Valley and the Negev that ended in the trade hub in Gaza were controlled by proto-Arabian tribes such as the Qedarites and

not by a polity named Edom or Idumea. Whether this region was incorporated into the Babylonian Empire under Nabonidus and subjected to a Qedarite king (André Lemaire) is open for discussion. A fourth-century BCE Aramaic inscription from Tell el-Maṣḥuta in Egypt attests to a certain Qaynu, son of Geshem, as *mlk qdr* on a silver bowl, but there are no further signs of a Qedarite kingdom from the Aramean ostraca or other sources. The province of Idumea was founded only after the onset of Persian control, which triggered a development of the region as part of the satrapy Transeuphratene, “Beyond the River.” It nevertheless remains unclear when exactly the rule in Idumea moved from the tribal clients or *shaykhs* to a Persian provincial governor. The earliest date connects the province’s foundation with the administrative reorganization under Darius and control over Egypt in 520 BCE; the latest date considers a foundation only in the late fourth century BCE (Yigal Levin). The most probable date is around 400 BCE, perhaps following the upheaval against the Persians in Egypt (Diana V. Edelman).

Remarkable are thousands of Aramaic administrative ostraca, payment orders, accounts, lists, and commodity chits from the second half of the fourth century BCE (the so-called Idumean ostraca, most probably originating from Makkedah/Ḥirbet el-Kôm, the location most often mentioned in the inscriptions and where some of the ostraca have been found). These attest to a flourishing economy in the region (Bezalel Porten). Although stemming mostly from the antiquities market, the large quantity of Idumean ostraca perhaps even provides evidence for the collection of tax by the Persian officials (Diana V. Edelman). In addition, about two hundred Aramaic ostraca from various excavations throughout the region merit mention. These ostraca also belong to the transition from the Persian to the Hellenistic period and give some clues about the Persian administration in terms of granaries, storehouses, and taxes (André Lemaire).

The exact territory of the Idumean province is unknown, and—unlike the case for Yehud (see §6.3.1)—indicators such as administrative systems, coins, architecture, and the like are missing. Only some indicative pottery and the distribution of figurines provide clues. Most likely the province comprised the territory of the Beersheba Valley (including Beersheba, Malatha/Tel Malhata, Arad, and Aroer/Tell ‘Aroer), the coastal area (including Gaza, Ashkelon, and perhaps even Ashdod), and possibly extended down to the borders of Egypt, including the uninhabited areas in the southern Negev desert. The northern border of the province is also difficult to discern, but it included the southern Shephelah and the southern

part of the Judean hill country. It can be best determined via the southern border of Yehud (see §6.3.1) and a line of fortresses between Beth-Zur and Hebron (Nitsan Shalom, Oded Lipschits). While the exact date of the establishment and the borders are unclear, the province is obvious in early Hellenistic sources where it is mentioned as the *eparchia* or *hyparchia* of Idumea (the earliest attestation appearing in the Egyptian Zenon papyri from 298 BCE).

A change of climatic conditions toward higher precipitation levels allowed for a prosperous development in the transition between the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Dafna Langgut, Oded Lipschits). Most important was the city of Mareshah, which hosted about ten thousand inhabitants in the Hellenistic period. New excavations have revealed an archive belonging to private citizens comprising 1,027 seal impressions ranging from 8 to 14 mm in size, contained in a room of a subterranean complex (Room 67) located under a private house (Ephraim Stern, Donald T. Ariel). The archive dates to the mid-second century BCE. Here, as in the archive in Kedesh in Galilee (see §7.3.2), Greek motifs of gods, goddesses, and symbols (cornucopia) prevail. The *mélange* of motifs fits perfectly with other signs of cultural hybridity that characterized Idumea as a regional transition zone. Similar indicators of cultural hybridity are present in the figurine assemblages from several hoard finds from Mareshah, Tel Ḥalif, Lachish, Beersheba, Tel ‘Erani, Tell eš-Šafi/Tel Zafit, and other places, where Phoenician, Greek, Arabic, and Egyptian influences come together alongside indigenous traditions (Adi Erlich; Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny; Silvia Schroer, Patrick Wyssmann).

6.10. SANCTUARIES IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD AND THE PLURIFORMITY OF YHWH WORSHIP

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During the fifth century BCE, the Samari[t]an temple on Gerizim was not merely a countertemple or the like but rather one of, if not *the*, most important sanctuary of the YHWH religion. This is shown by the correspondence of the Judean inhabitants on the Nile island of Elephantine, who not only inquired in Jerusalem but also in Samaria when they wished to rebuild the temple in Elephantine (see §6.8.3). The importance of the Samaritan temple raises the question of whether there were other centers of the YHWH religion that were equipped with a temple.

The de facto centralization in Judah in the late seventh century BCE must be regarded as the starting point for the enquiry about further YHWH sanctuaries in the Persian period. Only in Jerusalem was there a central sanctuary for all Judah (see §5.9.5). This corresponds to the fact that apart from the Second Temple—which, of course, is also only testified in literature—no sanctuary could be found in Yehud, neither in Bethel (Joseph Blenkinsopp) nor in Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe (Jeffrey R. Zorn). Since the material findings of the Persian period in the province of Yehud differ significantly from those of the surrounding provinces—above all the coastal plain—by the (almost complete) absence of female figurines, Ephraim Stern spoke of a monotheistic revolution. According to this theory, Yehud consciously differed from its neighbors (following the ideology of the books Ezra and Nehemiah, see §§6.6.4, 6.7.4). Although it is true that monotheism, which developed in the late preexilic and exilic

periods, prevailed as far as possible in the Persian period in the province of Yehud, there are no signs of a targeted monotheistic (cleansing) policy that would have distinguished Yehud from the other provinces (Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny). Particularly in the first phase of the Persian period (up to 450 BCE), economic, sociohistorical, and other reasons for *de facto* monotheism (that is, worshiping only one deity without excluding the existence of others) should also be considered. For example, it is noticeable that the → iconographic repertoire on coins from the more developed province of Samaria is far more international than the contemporary program in Yehud. The same applies to the seal impressions from Wādī ed-Dāliye compared to the motif repertoire from Yehud (see §6.8.1). Both the Samarian coins and the seals from Wādī ed-Dāliye show a high degree of internationalization, Greek and Phoenician influence, and a plurality of deities. If one takes only this finding, Yehud is supposedly monolatrous. That such a conclusion is not so simple is shown by the so-called Persian rider figurines, which exist both within Yehud and from the surrounding provinces, but above all in the south (Beersheba, Mareshah, Tel Ḥalif, etc.) (Izak Cornelius, Christian Frevel, Katharina Pyschny), and which depict a bearded, probably warlike man (perhaps a deity [Baal, Qôš, Baalshamim, or even YHWH?]) with a typical headgear (fig. 52).

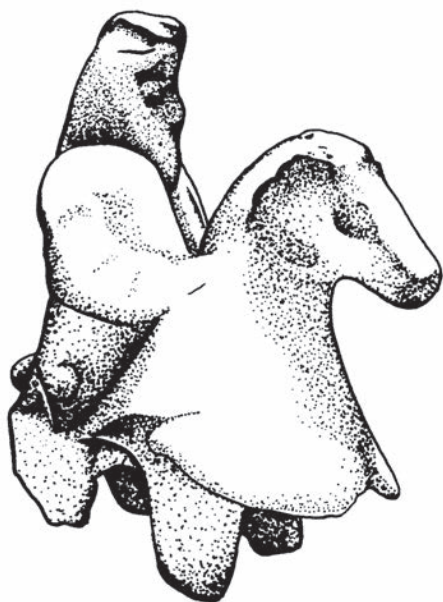


Fig. 52. Persian horse-and-rider terracottas, such as the specimen from Tel ‘Erani (fifth century BCE), stand in a continuity of motifs with the Iron Age IIB–C horse and rider figurines. They are supraregional, that is, specimens were found in the north, in the coastal plain, in the Shephelah, in the south, and by fragments (rarely) also in the province of Yehud. It is discussed whether the terracottas are representatives of cavalry or the representation of a male deity due to their stylistic characteristics (beard, Persian headgear, cloak, chest plate).

Also, the absence of figurines is not, at the same time, evidence of the absence of worship of a female deity. This can be seen when one considers that the distribution of the late preexilic pillar figures (see above) was almost completely restricted to the area of Judah, but that the goddess Asherah was also worshiped in the north following the epigraphic findings.

Looking at the temple on Gerizim, it seems that *only* the Samaritan YHWH was worshiped there. Neither the → iconography nor the → epigraphy may be used exclusively for deciding between monotheism and polytheism; rather, the distinction itself is misleading.

This can also be seen in the epigraphic finds, which have preserved indications of a polytheistic context. For example, a tax list from Elephantine dated around 400 BCE testifies to the worship of Anat-Bethel and/or Anat-Yahō and Ašim-Bethel beside Yhw/*Yahō at the temple there (*HTAT* 288).

A conflict with Jerusalem in the context of the reconstruction of the temple (see §5.12.2) is not discernible. The fact that YHWH was not exclusively worshiped in Jerusalem is shown not only by the temple in Elephantine and the Samari[t]an temple on Gerizim, but also by an → ostrakon dating from the late fifth or rather the beginning of the fourth century BCE from a hoard find. It probably originated from Ḥirbet el-Kōm, which can in all likelihood be identified with Makkedah. The Aramaic ostrakon (AL 283) mentions a temple of the north-Arabian or Edomite goddess (al-)‘Uzzā beside a *byt yhw*, a temple of Yahō, both in connection to fields and tombs. Nothing can be said of the exact location of these sanctuaries and their connection to each other, but it seems that they were both intact in the late fifth and fourth centuries BCE (André Lemaire). Outside Yehud, the so-called solar shrine in Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr, a sanctuary from the Hellenistic period, has also been proven to have existed probably already in the Persian period (Ephraim Stern, Melody D. Knowles). Whether YHWH was worshiped there along with other deities, which might be indicated by the → theophoric personal name Maḥalya on an incense altar (fig. 53), must remain open.

Apart from the coastal plain, where there is archaeological or textual evidence for a number of Phoenician sanctuaries (Dor, ʿElyākīn, Makmish/Tel Michal, Jaffa, Nahariya, Nebī Yūnis, Ashkelon) (Jens Kamlah), it is necessary to refer to Mišpē Yammīm/Ġebel el-Arbʿīn and the sacred area in Dan for the north. With both, it must remain open whether YHWH could also have been worshiped beside other deities. Figurines seem to have been deposited as votives in sanctuaries or cult places, such

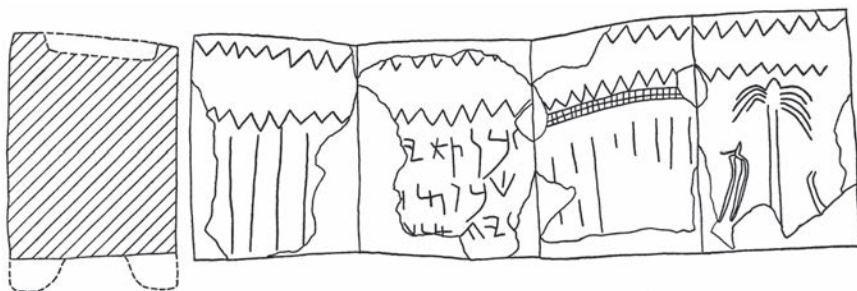


Fig. 53. The partially damaged object, measuring at least 16.5 cm high and 11–12 cm wide, comes from a → hoard find from Lachish (Cave 534) and dates back to the fifth century BCE. Incense was laid on the slightly depressed surface and charred. The inscription, which is not clearly legible, probably reads “Incense/incense altar of ʿIyyōš, the son of Maḥalya, from Lachish.” Even if there is no clear connection to a sanctuary and no traces of burning are visible, it seems quite plausible in view of the inscription and its character that this so-called incense altar was used in the context of cultic or ritual acts (possibly by a YHWH worshiper).

as in Dan, Makmish, or Mišpē Yammīm. Larger quantities of figurines in the Persian and Hellenistic periods come from favissae, that is, from pits in which figurines were deposited (Mareshah/Tell Sandaḥanna, Tel Ḥalif/Tell el-Ḥuwēlifa, Tel ʿErani, and also from Beersheba, Lachish, Tell Zippor, Dor, Ashkelon, etc.). However, in the majority of cases the associated sanctuaries have not yet been discovered. Whether or not all of these deposited figurines were connected to ritual activity is thus open for discussion (Nicole Straßburger).

At the end of 2017 two small incense altars were found near Mareshah in Ḥorvat ʿAmuda, including one with a relief of a bull flanked by two columns. Lunar symbols also relate it to the lunar cycle. The finds belong to Hellenistic architectural structures from the second century BCE, which are assigned by the excavators to an Idumean temple or palace that was destroyed in 112/11 BCE when John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE) conquered Idumea (see §7.6.5). In order to judge whether there was a predecessor building from the Ptolemaic period and whether the assignment remains Idumean, one must wait for the final publication (Michal Haber, Oren Gutfeld, Pablo Betzer).

Whether there was a YHWH temple in Transjordan is also an open question, since neither direct textual, epigraphic, nor archaeological evidence has survived. Only the disputes between the Transjordanian and Cisjordanian tribes described in Josh 22, which originates from the Persian

period, could point in this direction. (Regarding the alleged counter temple in 'Irāq al-Amīr in the second century BCE, see §7.4.2; for the temple in Leontopolis, see §7.4.7.) Even if not all the mentioned sanctuaries can be attributed to YHWH worship, the plurality of the Persian and early Hellenistic periods goes far beyond the supposed duality of Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim.

6.11. THE PERSIAN PERIOD AS A FORMATIVE PERIOD OF LATER JUDAISM: SUMMARY

Boyarin, Daniel. *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*. Key Words in Jewish Studies. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018. ♦ **Boyarin**. Review of *On the Origins of Judaism*, by P. R. Davies, *RBL* (2015). <https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress1737e4>. ♦ **Cohen**, Shaye J. D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. ♦ **Davies**, Philip R. *On the Origins of Judaism*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2011. ♦ **Edelman**, Diana Vikander, Anne **Fitzpatrick-McKinley**, and Philippe **Guillaume**, eds. *Religion in the Achaemenid Persian Empire: Emerging Judaisms and Trends*. ORA 17. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016. ♦ **Han**, Jae Hee, and Annette **Yoshiko Reed**. "Reorienting Ancient Judaism." *JAJ* 9 (2018): 144–54. ♦ **Honigman**, Sylvie, and Ehud **Ben Zvi**. "The Spread of the Ideological Concept of a (Jerusalem-Centred) Tōrâ-Centred Israel Beyond Yehud: Observations and Implications." *HBAI* 9 (2020): 370–97. ♦ **Kratz**, Reinhard G. *Das Judentum im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels*. 2nd ed. FAT 42. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013. ♦ **Kratz**. *Historical and Biblical Israel: The History, Tradition, and Archives of Israel and Judah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ♦ **Mason**, Steve. "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History." *JAJ* 38 (2007): 457–512. ♦ **Satlow**, Michael L. *Creating Judaism: History, Tradition, Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

However one might classify the historical events of the Persian period in detail, they make visible how significant the late sixth and fifth centuries BCE were for the emergence of, and differentiation within, early Judaism in the core territory and in the → diaspora. "The era of restoration under Nehemiah and Ezra was the birth of Judaism."³ The Judaism that formed in the Persian period was, however, already far more multifaceted in its

3. Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israels*, 2:431: "Die Epoche der Restauration unter Nehemia und Esra war die Geburtsstunde des Judentums."

earliest stages than it typically appears in scholarship due to the dominant influence of the Bible, which more or less only reflects the early Judaism of Judean Jerusalem. Regional diversity and internal pluriformity can only be inadequately described with schemes such as “orthodox/heterodox,” “syncretism,” “sects,” and the like, since there is no *single* point of reference. In the English-language literature one occasionally finds the plural Judaisms (Jacob Neusner, Diana V. Edelman, critically Michael L. Satlow). With the revaluation of the Persian period as a formative period of early Judaism, however, it should not be stated that there was already something like Judaism or a Jewish religion (certainly not in the singular) in the Persian period (Daniel Boyarin). Speaking against this is the lack of a uniform self-designation or an external one. Rather, it is a set of cultural, social, and religious options that unfold their formative power until the third/second century BCE. The formative phase of early Judaism, however, is not confined to the Hasmonean period, but begins decisively in the late Persian period. What is important here is that the various forms of Judaism were not differentiated (in the sense of separated), but developed slowly in mutual knowledge of each other and influence on each other (interference formation). That does not mean an insular existence, but rather mutual influence, negotiations, interdependence, demarcations, etc. (see §6.8.2).

However, despite its significance for early Judaism, one should not lose sight of the fact that little is known about the events of the fourth century BCE, and it must be regarded as a dark century from a historical point of view. “The darkness reaches beyond Alexander into the third and second centuries BCE.... Under these circumstances it is completely hopeless to try to even trace the main lines of the history of Palestinian Judaism.”⁴ Many representations of the history of Israel end with the conquest of Alexander and see the continuation in a history of Judaism that reaches to the present day. A problem with such a view is the sharp caesura in 333 BCE, which suggests that a history of Israel that was previously seen as a unity came to an end at this point. The fact that a uniformity did not exist even before this point and that the transition

4. Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 2:433–34: “Die Dunkelheit reicht über Alexander hinaus bis ins 3. und 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr.... Unter diesen Umständen ist es völlig aussichtslos, den Verlauf der Geschichte des palästinischen Judentums auch nur in den Hauptlinien nachzeichnen zu wollen.”

from a political Israel to a religious Judaism is far more differentiated has been shown by the above presentation. The following section on the Hellenistic period will demonstrate that the transition from Israel to Judaism was not yet complete, even after Alexander.

Israel's History in the Hellenistic Period

Berthelot, Katell. *In Search of the Promised Land? The Hasmonean Dynasty between Biblical Models and Hellenistic Diplomacy*. JAJSup 24. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018. ♦ **Collins**, John J. *The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity from Deuteronomy to Paul*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017. ♦ **Grabbe**, Lester L., ed. *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period*. JSOTSup 317. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001. ♦ **Grabbe**. *The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE)*. Vol. 2 of *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*. Edited by Lester L. Grabbe. London: T&T Clark, 2008. ♦ **Grabbe**. *Introduction to First Century Judaism: Jewish Religion and History in the Second Temple Period*. London: T&T Clark, 1995. ♦ **Grabbe**. *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*. London: SCM, 1994. ♦ **Haag**, Ernst. *Das hellenistische Zeitalter: Israel und die Bibel im 4. bis 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* Biblische Enzyklopädie 9. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003. ♦ **Honigman**, Sylvie, Christophe **Nihan**, and Oded **Lipschits**, eds. *Times of Transition: Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period*. Mosaics 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2021.

7.1. OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Collins, John J., and Daniel C. **Harlow**, eds. *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. ♦ **Dulk**, Matthijs den. “Seleucus I Nicator in 4 Maccabees.” *JBL* 133 (2014): 133–40. ♦ **Eckhardt**, Benedikt. *Ethnos und Herrschaft: Politische Figurationen jüdischer Identität von Antiochos III. bis Herodes I.* SJ 72. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013. ♦ **Eckhardt**. “The Impact of Hellenistic Monarchy on Jewish Identity.” *JSJ* 11 (2020): 11–25. ♦ **Eckhardt**. “Vom Volk zur Stadt? Ethnos und Polis im hellenistischen Orient.” *JSJ* 45 (2014): 199–228. ♦ **Ego**, Beate. “Alexander der Große in der alttestamentlichen Überlieferung.” Pages 18–39 in *Congress Volume Munich 2013*. Edited by Christl M. Maier. VTSup 163. Leiden: Brill, 2014. ♦ **Finkelstein**, Israel. “The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in

the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods." *RB* 117 (2010): 39–54. ♦ **Gera**, Dov. *Judaea and Mediterranean Politics 219 to 161 B.C.E.* Leiden: Brill, 1998. ♦ **Hauben**, Hans, and Alexander **Meeus**, eds. *The Age of the Successors and the Creation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms (323–276 B.C.)*. *Studia Hellenistica* 53. Leuven: Peeters, 2014. ♦ **Hoglund**, Kenneth G. "The Material Culture of the Seleucid Period in Palestine: Social and Economic Observations." Pages 67–73 in *Second Temple Studies III: Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture*. Edited by Philip R. Davies and John M. Halligan. *JSOTSup* 340. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002. ♦ **Hölbl**, Günther. *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches: Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994/2004. ♦ **Honigman**, Sylvie. *Tales of High Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion Against Antiochos IV*. HCS 56. Oakland: University of California Press, 2014. ♦ **Howe**, Timothy, ed. *Ptolemy I Soter: A Self-Made Man*. Oxford: Oxbow, 2018. ♦ **Lipschits**, Oded, Gary N. **Knoppers**, and Rainer **Albertz**, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007. ♦ **Meyers**, Eric M., ed. *Galilee through the Centuries: Confluence of Cultures*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999. ♦ **Müller**, Sabine. *Alexander der Große: Eroberungen—Politik—Rezeption*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2019. ♦ **Saur**, Markus. "Gedeutete Gegenwart: Ezechiel 26, Sacharja 9 und der Eroberungszug Alexanders des Großen." Pages 77–84 in "My Spirit at Rest in the North Country" (Zechariah 6.8): *Collected Communications to the XXth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Helsinki 2010*. Edited by Hermann Michael Niemann and Matthias Augustin. *BEATAJ* 57. New York: Lang, 2011. ♦ **Taylor**, Michael J. *Antiochus the Great*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2013. ♦ **Worthington**, Ian. *By the Spear: Philip II, Alexander the Great, and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

The Hellenistic period can be divided into two phases that cannot be sharply separated from each other. Roughly speaking, the period of Ptolemaic domination up to the beginning of the second century BCE is to be distinguished from the phase of Seleucid rule. Key events in this latter period include the crisis under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE), the Maccabean uprising, and the period of the Hasmonean kingdom, in which—from about 142 BCE to the beginning of Roman rule in Palestine (63 BCE)—the province of Judea once again developed into an independent state.

7.1.1. The Persian Empire's End and Alexander's Ascent

The gradual disintegration of Persian rule in the fourth century BCE left room for a new emerging power, not from Mesopotamia or Persia but

from the northwestern edge of the Aegean Sea (see §10.4, map 17). In the battle of Perinthus (Thrace) in 340 BCE, Artaxerxes III (359/58–338 BCE) forced back the Macedonian army led by Philip II (360/59–336 BCE) but did not destroy it. In 338 BCE, Philip of Macedonia won the battle of Chaeronea. Following his death in 334 BCE, his twenty-two-year-old son, Alexander III (356–323 BCE), succeeded him and continued his victorious campaign, first with a victory over the satraps of Asia Minor at Granicus near Troy. One year later Alexander III, or as he is more commonly known, Alexander the Great, defeated the Persian army led by Darius III (336–330 BCE) at Issus (333 BCE). This victory cleared the way south via Phoenicia. While Alexander left the conquest of Damascus to his commander Parmenion, he himself advanced to the Syro-Phoenician coast, where he encountered little resistance in the north. Arvad and Byblos surrendered, but the fortified city of Tyre, built as an island in the sea, resisted the new power. After a seven-month-long, complex siege of Tyre (perhaps reflected in Ezek 26:5b, 8b–12, 14aγ; Markus Saur), along with another two months besieging Gaza, Alexander advanced to Egypt, was crowned pharaoh, and was celebrated as son of the god Amon. In the period that followed, the Persian Empire fell to the Macedonians like dominoes. In 332 BCE, the last satrap was defeated without a fight, Babylon and Yehud surrendered to the new hegemon without resistance.

That Alexander actually visited Jerusalem and even granted privileges for the Jews to the high priest (Josephus, *A.J.* 11.329–339) belongs to the realm of legend. As with Damascus, the conquest of the interior was entrusted to the general Parmenion. Predictably, Samaria's resistance in 332/31 BCE was unsuccessful, and upon defeat the city was not clumsily punished but made into a Macedonian military colony. With the Battle of Gaugamela (Tell Gōmil in modern Iraq, 35 km north of Mossul) in 331 BCE, the end of the Persian Empire was finally sealed. In the same year, Alexandria was founded in the Nile Delta (see §7.2.2.2). With the campaign to India in 325 BCE, the Macedonian Empire reached its greatest expansion.

The appearance of Alexander in world history is usually associated with the terms *Hellenism* and *Hellenization* (see §7.2.2). Hellenism did not, as so often stylized, suddenly explode onto the world stage, nor did it exclusively begin with Alexander's empire. Alexander's claim to world domination can, however, be seen as the major driver of its development, which also deeply influenced the southern Levant over the following two centuries.

7.1.2. Alexander's Death and the Struggles of the Diadochoi

After achieving world domination and comprehensively pacifying his domain, Alexander (356–323 BCE) was not able to enjoy it for long. In 323 BCE, while preparing for further campaigns of conquest to the west and to Arabia, the thirty-three-year-old died in Babylon. Since he lacked a successor (Alexander's first child had not yet been born, and his half-brother Philip Arrhidaeus was regarded as an imbecile), his generals (Diadochoi, Gk. *διάδοχοι*, “successors”) struggled for power in the giant empire after a peaceful agreement by division of satrapies failed. Imperial unity broke down during the four so-called Wars of the Diadochoi, which lasted until 281 BCE. Cassander remained in Greece, while Thrace and Asia Minor fell to Lysimachus; the rest of Asia Minor and Syria as well as Mesopotamia fell to Seleukos (Latinized: Seleucus); and Egypt went to Ptolemaios (Latinized: Ptolemaeus; English: Ptolemy). Initially, the Syro-Palestinian land bridge was fiercely contested between Ptolemies, Seleucids, and Antigonids (named after Antigonus I Monophthalmus, the strongest of the Diadochoi, who had wrested power over Macedonia). Several armies crossed the Palestinian interior. In 320 BCE, Ptolemy I Soter (323–306 BCE satrap of Egypt; 306–283 BCE Ptolemaic king) took dominion over the satrapy of Syria-Transeuphratene but could not hold the area permanently. He was challenged by Antigonus I Monophthalmus and his son Demetrius Poliorcetes. Seleucus I Nicator (321–305 BCE satrap of Babylonia; 305–281 BCE Seleucid king) fought alongside Ptolemy for a victory against Demetrius at Gaza (315 BCE) and thus regained his satrapy of Babylonia. In 302 BCE, Ptolemy finally occupied Jerusalem. Voluntarily—and also perhaps, some involuntarily (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.3–9)—many inhabitants moved to Egypt, which further contributed to the flowering of Alexandria as a city of Hellenistic Judaism. After the battle between Antigonus I Monophthalmus and the commander Lysimachus at Ipsus in Phrygia in 301 BCE, Syria/Palestine was taken by the Ptolemies against the resistance of the Seleucids.

7.1.3. Power Struggles between Ptolemies and Seleucids

A balance of power existed only for about thirty years, too short for the region's comprehensive recovery. The following period was marked by power struggles between the Ptolemies ruling in Alexandria and the Seleucids operating from Antioch, even though the Ptolemies successfully defended their dominance over the Levant in the following Syrian Wars.

Syrian Wars		Ptolemies	Seleucids
1	274–271 BCE	Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285/83–246)	Antiochus I Soter (281–261)
2	260–253 BCE		Antiochus II Theos (261–246)
3	246–241 BCE	Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221)	Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226)
4	221/19–217 BCE	Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204)	Antiochus III Megas (222–187)
5	202–198/94 BCE	Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180)	
6	170–168 BCE	Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145)	Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164)

Table 10. The Syrian Wars between Ptolemies and Seleucids.

7.1.3.1. Antiochus III Extends His Rule

At the end of the Fourth Syrian War (217 BCE), Antiochus III Megas (222–187 BCE) tried to extend the influence of Seleucid rule and to force Phoenicia and Palestine under his sovereignty. But Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BCE) defeated him once again in the Battle of Raphia. Antiochus III as Great King extended his rule over Asia Minor (216–213 BCE) and the eastern satrapies (212–204 BCE), somewhat restoring the kingdom to its former status at the beginnings of the Seleucid Empire. However, his realm still did not include the Syro-Palestinian land bridge. Only in 200 BCE (older datings suggest 198 BCE) was Seleucid supremacy enforced—when the successor of the Ptolemaic throne, Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180 BCE), was still a child—during the fifth Syrian War in the Battle of Panium/Bāniyās (the later Caesarea Philippi at the foot of the Golan Heights) against the Ptolemaic commander Scopas.

7.1.3.2. Cultic Restoration in Jerusalem under Simeon II

In Jerusalem, which Scopas had devastated a short time before and then occupied the castle-like Acra in the south of today's temple square, the pro-Seleucid Tobiads (see §7.4) recognized the signs of the times and prepared for the change through negotiations. The high priest, Simeon II (ca. 215–

196 BCE)—representative of a theological cult restoration—seems to have politically achieved tax exemption for the temple economy in the “city of the sanctuary” (see the designation in, e.g., Neh 11:1; cf. Sir 50:1–4). Josephus quotes a letter according to which Antiochus III promoted the reconstruction of the city and the temple and ordered measures to segregate everything foreign and impure (*A.J.* 12.138–144). Thus, the conservative element was first strengthened by the Seleucids at the beginning of the second century BCE.

7.1.3.3. Relations with Egypt and Their Impact on Judah

Antiochus III (222–187 BCE) maintained diplomatic contacts with the Ptolemies, not least strengthened by the diplomatic marriage between Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180 BCE) and Antiochus's daughter Cleopatra I. This marriage had been arranged in 196 BCE, but only consummated in approximately 193 BCE in Raphia near Gaza. The fact that Cleopatra brought the privilege to collect taxes from Samaria, Judea, Phoenicia, and Coele-Syria as dowry into the marriage (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.154–155) is rightly viewed very skeptically in research, especially since there was no reason for it. Josephus presents this note as an introduction to the story of the Tobiads (*A.J.* 12.154–236), the events of which he → anachronistically sets at the beginning of the second century BCE.

7.1.4. Developments in the Second Century BCE

Even under the Seleucids there was no peace in the province of Coele-Syria. On the contrary, conflicts between the great political forces (the Seleucids, who became increasingly entangled in succession disputes; the Ptolemies, who were striving for a restoration of influence over Syria/Palestine; the Romans, who intervened ever more strongly in foreign policy; and the Parthians, who pushed into the Levant from Eurasia) defined the second century BCE. Additionally, ongoing power struggles within and between pro-Ptolemaic and pro-Seleucid partisans caused significant unrest during this period.

7.1.4.1. The Strengthening of the Romans and the Limitation of Seleucid Power

Seleucid expansion reached its limits just a few years later. After the defeat in the Battle of Cynoscephalae in the Second Macedonian-Roman War

(200–197 BCE), the Romans achieved dominance over Macedonia from the Macedonian Philip V (222–179 BCE). The attempt by Antiochus III Megas (222–187 BCE) and Hannibal to bring Greece under his control failed because of the Romans. The Seleucids lost the Battle of Thermopylae in 191 BCE and the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BCE and had to submit to the Treaty of Apamea in 188 BCE. This limited Seleucid influence to the territories of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Iran. It is unmistakable that the new world power, Rome, had now entered the stage in the Levant. Even if the supremacy of Rome only reached the Syro-Palestinian land bridge with the conquest of Pompeius in 64/63 BCE, the power of Rome could already be felt, since Antiochus III had to pay considerable reparations (15,000 talents of silver, i.e., over 400 tons, of which 3,000 talents were to be paid immediately) to the victors.

7.1.4.2. The Plundering of the Temple by Antiochus III and Its Consequences

The privilege to collect taxes, which Antiochus had granted to the pro-Seleucid high priest, Simeon II (ca. 215–196 BCE), was revoked, and appropriations of the temple's assets through confiscations or looting increased. Antiochus also reacted to the situation in other areas by plundering temples in order to fulfill his contractual obligations and not to endanger his family members held hostage in Rome. Antiochus III was killed in 187 BCE while trying to fleece the Baal temple near Susa. Since the rightful heir to the throne, Antiochus IV, was held captive in Rome, Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 BCE) ascended the throne and attempted to access the Jerusalem temple treasure. The failure of Heliodor, who was assigned this task, is described in a legendary manner in 2 Macc 3 (cf. Dan 11:20) and remains historically difficult to assess (see §7.4.5).

The aftermath of the assassination of Seleucus IV Philopator by Heliodor in Antioch, in which the Seleucid kingdom was further shaken, is so closely linked with internal developments in the province of Judea that it is not covered in this overview but explained in detail below (see §7.6).

7.2. HELLENISM

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7.2.1. The Term *Hellenism*

In ancient times the term Ἑλληνισμός, which appears in 2 Macc 4:13 to describe the influence of Greek culture on Jerusalem, originally described the correct use of Koinē Greek (ἡ κοινὴ διάλεκτος, “the common language”), which was established as the lingua franca in Alexander’s Empire. Since Johann Gustav Droysen (1836), *Hellenism* has been used as an epochal term and describes the fusion of Greek and West Asian culture through the politics of Alexander the Great (Reinhold Bichler). By convention, it now describes the complex phenomenon of the influence of Greek culture on the non-Greek sphere of power in the great empire of Alexander, which ended with the inclusion of Egypt in the Roman Empire by Emperor Augustus in 30 BCE. The term has been problematized several times, on the one hand, because it was connected with evaluations in regard to intellectual history and, on the other hand, because the clear spatial-temporal delimitation of the Greek cultural influence is not comprehensible in such a way. Already in the seventh century BCE, for example, there were Greek mercenaries in the Egyptian and later Persian armies who also brought elements of Greek culture with them. Greek coin finds are archaeologically documented from the sixth century BCE, trade with high-quality Greek imports expanded in the Levant from the sixth century BCE (Robert Wenning, Astrid Nunn), and already at the end of the fifth century BCE Greek influence replaced the predominance of the Egyptian. These processes of reception and transformation are not, as later on in the third and second centuries BCE, associated with radical changes in collective identity, but prepare for them. Nevertheless, one should not pretend that Hellenism as a culture was only imposed on the “barbarians” (as the non-Greek inhabitants were called) of the Levant after 333 BCE. “Hellenism is not the creation of Alexander the Great, nor is it the civilizing result of his conquest of the world... Hellenism is older than Alexander and does not always speak Greek.”¹ The

1. Antonius H. J. Gunneweg, *Geschichte Israels bis Bar Kochba* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1976), 156, 158: “Der Hellenismus ist nicht die Schöpfung Alexanders des Großen

keyword *revolution* (Martin Hengel), which rather corresponds to the black-and-white representation (Lester L. Grabbe) in the books of Maccabees, is therefore incorrect. A fundamental opposition between Judaism and Hellenism such as depicted in the biblical account only inadequately captures the complexity of the process and should therefore be considered an oversimplification.

7.2.2. Hellenization

Regional acculturation processes began slowly and their roots began in the Persian period, but only came to bear in Hellenistic times. A clear thrust in the Levant is associated with Seleucid rule. Hellenization did not only affect the language or Greek imports but all areas of daily life from fashion to education (*παιδεία*) and from mentality to architecture, religion, culture, literature, and social organization. The Greek model was not simply adapted, let alone imposed in a controlled manner by Greek rulers with a cultural mission. Rather, Greek forms of imagination and expression were amalgamated with local traditions and functionalized by local elites for their own positions of power. Johann Maier speaks of the cultural phenomenon of syncretistic Hellenism, which cannot be limited to the Alexandrian → diaspora Judaism. Nor does it take on a uniform expression everywhere in Palestine but elicits regional and group-specific shades (John J. Collins, Lester L. Grabbe). Regardless of the degree of Hellenization, early Judaism proves to be regionally diverse and internally pluriform (see §6.10).

7.2.2.1. Wādī ed-Dāliye and the Question of Pre-Alexandrian Hellenization

Following the conflict with Darius III Codomannus (336–330 BCE), Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE) subjugated Asia Minor (333 BCE) and immediately made Damascus the central switchboard of Syria. For seven months the strategist then besieged the island city, Tyre, in order to demonstrate his military superiority. Before he moved on to Egypt in 332/31 BCE, all of Palestine, including Samaria and Yehud, appears to have already submitted to him. Finally, Gaza's resistance was broken. In 2014, at Netiv

und auch nicht das zivilisatorische Nebenergebnis seiner Welteroberung.... Der Hellenismus ist älter als Alexander und spricht nicht immer griechisch.”

HaAsarah, located between Gaza and Ashkelon, a Persian military outpost that Alexander destroyed on his way to Egypt was excavated (Yael Abadi-Rice). According to the ancient historian Arrian of Nicomedia, Alexander already possessed all of Palestine-Syria at that time (Arrian, *Anab.* 2.25.4). Alexander successfully moved to Egypt, paid homage to Egyptian gods, and was revered as Pharaoh. Propagandistically, he visited the oasis of Siwa to question the important oracle of Amun-Re and to further legitimize his claim to world domination. While Alexander was in Egypt, the governor of Syria, Andromachus, was murdered by residents of Samaria. In his chronicle, Eusebius recounts the cruel retaliation against the inhabitants of Samaria: Alexander, or his general Perdiccas, transformed the city into a Macedonian colony (Gary N. Knoppers). Even if the background of the uprising and its course cannot really be clarified by the sources, it is not unlikely that the finds from a cave in Wādī ed-Dāliye (about 14 km northwest from Jericho) were brought there by refugees from Samaria. While those who hid in the cave from Alexander's soldiers fell victim to a massacre, their belongings have been preserved. The significant → hoard find included eighteen Aramaic → papyri and more than 170 clay → bullae, as well as jewelry and numerous coins. Another hoard of coins from the antiquities market can probably also be assigned to the cave. The finds have immeasurable value for the reconstruction of the history of the Persian province of Samaria (see §6.8), but also for the question of the beginnings of the Hellenization of Palestine. Here, in addition to a few figurines, imported Greek pottery, which has been documented particularly in coastal areas since the eighth/seventh century BCE, was considered the most important indicator (Robert Wenning, Astrid Nunn). The coin and seal images from Samaria from the fourth century BCE (see figs. 50–51) show the strong influence of Greek → iconography in addition to Achæmenidizing tendencies, be it in the posture, the portrayal of nudity, or in the depicted deities (Silvia Schroer, Florian Lippke). Like the coins, to which one is generally prepared to attribute a higher degree of internationality and Hellenism, the seals depict Greek deities (Heracles, Hermes, Perseus, Dionysus, Nike) and motifs. Some have rightly warned against speaking of Hellenization here (Robert Wenning), especially since there is no recognizable program in it. Nevertheless, Hellenism in Palestine apparently did not begin abruptly in 333 BCE or with Alexander's campaign and its Hellenic program of world domination. Rather, it appears already with fashionable engravings that testify to the attractiveness and slow spread of Aegean culture in the late Persian period that laid the foundation for

later Hellenization. Alexander did not invent Greek culture, and Greek themes and imagery were already circulating on the market in the southern Levant as well.

7.2.2.2. Alexandria as a Symbol of Ptolemaic World Domination

In the same year that Alexander defeated the Persian Empire in the Battle of Gaugamela (331 BCE), the city of Alexandria was founded in the Nile Delta as the first of the many cities built by Alexander. On a large columned boulevard, the Via Canopica, and the large Agora, the market and meeting place, public life was saturated with rituals that stabilized the ruling class and the economic pulse of the Hellenistic city. The population of the city was international and ethnically, as well as religiously, diverse: Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, Lycians, Phrygians, and so on. The theater, the library, and the lighthouse were striking. The lighthouse was built on a small island named Pharos located on the western edge of the Nile Delta (hence the lighthouse sometimes is called Pharos of Alexandria). The construction had probably begun under the successor of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy I Soter (323–283 BCE) in 297 BCE, and the lighthouse was completed under Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285/83–246 BCE) in 280/70 BCE. The lighthouse, which was indispensable for ship navigation in the shallow Nile Delta, was one of the highest buildings in the ancient world with a height of approximately 130 m. Its existence underlines the importance of Alexandria as a trade metropolis among the Ptolemies in the third century BCE, even if the reports in the classical literature are exaggerated. The lighthouse, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, which can be considered a technical and architectural masterpiece, was destroyed by an earthquake in 1100 CE.

The legendary Ptolemaic library, in which an impressive number of books was collected (perhaps significantly more than forty thousand volumes, Heinz-Günther Nesselrath), was probably also built under Ptolemy I Soter (323–283 BCE). Alexandria, with its two large ports, was an unsurpassed transshipment center for international maritime trade goods. The port city in the Nile Delta developed into the largest trading metropolis in the eastern Mediterranean under the Ptolemies and became the region's major Hellenistic center for the arts, sciences, literature, and philosophy.

At least since Alexandria's founding by Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE), Jews (Judean and Samaritan) were among its inhabitants, but it was not until the end of the fourth century BCE, after the Battle of Gaza

in 312/11 BCE, that Jews were brought to Alexandria as prisoners of war (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.7) and used as mercenaries to defend the city (Jürgen Zangenberg). Other Jewish inhabitants came to the flourishing city as merchants and craftsmen and then as refugees in the third and second centuries BCE. Thus, Alexandria developed into one of the most important Jewish centers of antiquity, which developed its own original ways of thinking, shaped by the internationality of the city. Philo of Alexandria (ca. 15 BCE–50 CE) is regarded as its most important representative. The Letter of Aristeas, a pseudepigraphic epistolary novel from the late second century BCE, reveals that the Jews in Alexandria, Heracleopolis, Leontopolis, and Berenice (James M. S. Cowey, Klaus Maresch) were regarded as a *politeuma*, which indicates that they belonged to the city community and were granted a limited self-administration but were not considered full citizens. The *politeuma* (πολίτευμα) was granted rights to organize and administer itself in internal affairs, including the practice of religion, local administration, and jurisprudence. The Jewish law, the torah, thus had an important meaning in the Egyptian → diaspora. Perhaps, this serves as background for the emergence of the Greek translation of the Torah in Egypt.

7.2.2.3. The Septuagint's Origin in Alexandria

The legendary description of the origin of the Septuagint under Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285/83–246 BCE), described in the Letter of Aristeas, was an effective instrument for the influence of Hellenization. The Letter of Aristeas is a pseudepigraphic work of a learned Jew written around 125 BCE in the form of a Hellenistic epistolary novel. While it belongs to the Hellenistic educational discourse of the second century BCE, it must *not* be understood as a historical description of the Septuagint's origins. It reports how, on the advice of his librarian Demetrius, the Ptolemaic king had the Jewish Torah translated for the Alexandrian library. The task was completed in seventy-two days by six translators from each of the twelve tribes (hence Septuagint/→ LXX from κατὰ τοὺς ἑβδομήκοντα “according to the seventy”) in such a way that (according to Philo) the end result was always identical. With the translation initiated by the Ptolemaic king, it becomes clear that an external cause was responsible for the Hellenizing tendencies of the translation, rather than an internal process of adaptation of Hellenistic Judaism. This latter view can no longer be upheld today. The authoritative status of the sacred text is to be underlined by the

selection of the representatives from the tribes and the spiritually guided translation, as well as by the request to the Jerusalem high priest Eleazar to select and send the translators. The translation of all the biblical books, or even just the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy), is unlikely to have taken place in one go, as the partial translations of the individual books differ greatly in style and translation technique. Whether there was an external reason for the translation, as the Aristeas legend suggests, is still unclear. A few reasons are discussed: the wish of the Jews living in Alexandria to have the tradition of their ancestors in their lingua franca (whereby the Alexandrian library could well have acted as a trigger) and a greater ability to acculturate themselves more fully in the Hellenistic environment, in education, or in worship. Neither the literary, the pedagogical, nor liturgical use can be positively proven. This, however, also applies to legal motivation as the reason for the translation. The latter assumes that the translation of the Torah was arranged in order to install it as one of the particular legal *πολιτικοὶ νόμοι* (“city/civil rights”) of the non-Egyptian sections of the population in the Ptolemaic legal system (Joseph Méléze-Modrzejewski). This could perhaps be supported by the papyri from Heracleopolis (James M. S. Cowey, Klaus Maresch), which explicitly prove the status of the Jewish community as a *politeuma* (see §§7.2.2, 7.3.3).

In any case, the translation began in the third century BCE (the first documented → papyrus fragments date from the second century BCE) with the books of the Pentateuch; the more literary translation of Genesis was earlier than the more formal and word-for-word translation of the book of Numbers. Older partial translations may have been used or incorporated to some extent as templates, but this remains a topic of controversy (Siegfried Kreuzer). In the second century BCE, most other books followed, the translations of which were also still completed in the environment of the Egyptian → diaspora. For the latest translations from the first century BCE (Esther, Ruth, Daniel, Song of Songs, Qohelet), however, this can no longer be said. In the meantime, Palestinian Judaism had also become so Hellenized that translations of Hebrew books into Greek were also carried out there. From the second century BCE, books were no longer written only in Hebrew or Aramaic, but also in Greek. These are also included in the Septuagint collection. Some of these have known Hebrew originals (e.g., fragments of Sirach from the Cairo Genizah and from Qumran or the Aramaic and Hebrew fragments of the book of Tobit from Qumran), some most likely had Hebrew originals (Baruch, Macca-

bees), while others are assumed to have been written in Greek from the beginning (e.g., Judith, Wisdom of Solomon).

7.2.2.4. Gymnasion and Ephebeion as Expressions of Hellenization

The adoption of the Greek educational ideal, which aimed at introducing young men into the aristocrat-dominated ruling class of the polis, was considered the central expression of Hellenization. Military aspects—such as strategy, leadership, and martial arts—that initially formed the focus continued to have an effect in the classic παιδεία (paideia) ideal. This ideal is usually attached to Athens and Sparta. The institutions and buildings aimed at education were the gymnasion, ephebeion, palaistra, and museion. Hellenistic education was the identity-forming expression of a collective Hellenic consciousness. This can be connected above all with the gymnasion and ephebeion. The gymnasion (γυμνάσιον) was an educational institution in which a collective Hellenistic identity and way of life was conveyed and publicly staged through musical and literary education as well as through the display (in some cities) of the naked (male) body in competitions and sporting exercises. In the ephebeion (ἐφεβείον), the transition of young men into adulthood as polis citizens was made visible through clothing and hairstyle and was ritualized and publicly staged at festivals and ritual acts. Both institutions are mentioned in 2 Macc 4:9 as the concern of the high priest Jason in the service of Hellenization.

7.3. ECONOMY, ADMINISTRATION, AND ORGANIZATION OF THE HELLENISTIC EMPIRES

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Ptolemy I Soter (306–282 BCE) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283–246 BCE) were strategically adept at implementing the Greek idea of organizing a Hellenistic state with the king at its center. The traditional requirements of the Egyptian pharaonic period accommodated the extensive ruler cult. Outside Egypt, the Ptolemies took over the administrative structures of the Persian Empire, which also then provided stability in the province now called Judea.

7.3.1. The Hyparchies and Judea’s Provincial Status

As in the Persian period, Judea was surrounded by the western part of Idumea in the south (with Mareshah/Tell Sandaḥanna as the central site), the city colony Samaria with Gerizim as the cultic center in the north, Ashdod with its center Jamnia in the west, and the Ammonitis in the east with Adoraim as the central place (see §10.4, map 18). The administrative units were called hyparchies or eparchies and had extensive autonomy in internal and religious matters, which strengthened the position of the high priest in Jerusalem. For Judea, therefore, one often speaks of a temple province. This nomenclature underlines the economic importance of the temple that received and administered the responsibility to collect taxes (see Josephus, *A.J.* 12.138–146). Although the high priest was entrusted with the *prostasia*, the leadership of the people, his power was not unlimited. He was probably supported—even if little can be learned about it from the sources—by additional influential priests,

notables, and economically potent citizens who formed the council of elders, the *gerousia*. In addition to internal affairs, cooperation with Ptolemaic officials, for example, in financial and economic matters, was also essential in Jerusalem. The hyparch (ὑπαρχος) of each administrative unit was subordinate and accountable to the commandant/strategos (στρατηγός) of all Syria-Phoenicia. The hyparchies in turn were subdivided into smaller administrative units (toparchies, each led by a toparch, τοπάρχης), and some individual cities (e.g., the Greek colony Scythopolis/Beth-Shean, or Dor, Jaffa, Ashkelon, and Gaza on the coast) were spun off as semiautonomous poleis. It remains unclear what the precise role of the economist (οἰκονόμος) or tax administrator (διοικητής)—who in Ptolemaic Egypt was responsible for economic affairs—and the comarche (κωμάρχης)—who was responsible for political-administrative affairs—was in the province of Judea (Othmar Keel).

7.3.2. The Judean Provincial Economy and Tax System and Its Social Consequences

One of the most important changes was the establishment of a finance-based economic and tax system. Profit-oriented trade was carried out exclusively with coins, which were made available in large quantities. The right to collect tax was leased to the highest bidder, that is, linked to private economic interests, so that it developed into its own profit-oriented economic sector. This ultimately also benefited the state. In economic terms, Palestine initially profited from the rule of the Ptolemies, who also brought Egypt to new heights through their state-run mercantilism in the third century BCE. The density of settlements in the Judean highlands, especially in the tribal area of Benjamin, increased enormously. A total of at least forty thousand people now lived within the borders of the former province of Yehud (Israel Finkelstein). However, not everyone benefited from the boom, which was financed by intensified exports of economic goods. The managed leasing of royal land accumulated the income of land ownership into the hands of a few wealthy families, who were thus in a position to guarantee the increase in proceeds required by the state. The transfer of the rights to levy taxes for the Ptolemaic king led to increased financial absorption of the rural population. The consequences were a strong social divide between a few wealthy people who benefited from the economic boom and an increasingly impoverished lower class. The rural population reacted to this with a rural exodus (anachoresis), which

further accelerated the process of urbanization that began among the Ptolemies. In the course of the second century BCE, for example, Gaza, Beth-Zur, Lachish, Shechem, Bethel, Dothan, and Shiloh were partially or even completely abandoned. During the Hasmonean period, Hellenized Jerusalem expanded across the Southwestern Hill at least up to the size of the late preexilic period. One of the economic consequences of the Wars of the Diadochoi was a recession in the second century BCE. The economic recession accelerated under the Seleucids, who were financially weakened by reparation payments and mercilessly exploited the country's resources, that is, those from the temple and agriculture. The tax rate also increased social tensions (see below).

An example of a flourishing administrative center in the Seleucid period was found in the excavation of Tell Qedeš, the ancient town of Kedesh in Upper Galilee. The building, lavishly furnished with stucco and mosaics, was erected in the Persian period around 500 BCE; after a short interim phase and renovations, it was also used in the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid periods from around 300 BCE and from the beginning of the second century BCE, respectively. In the middle of the second century BCE it came to an abrupt end (see §7.6). More than two thousand clay bullae were discovered in the excavations of the multispace storage and administration building. The seals came mainly from private individuals, but some also belonged to officials, among them Antiochus III (222–187 BCE), Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE), and the governor (“the one who is over the country”). Further seals came from the Greek city called Kudissos (Andrea Berlin, Sharon C. Herbert). In addition to a few Phoenician motifs (about 5 percent of the seal impressions), roughly 75 percent bore Greek mythological motifs; the other 20 percent featured Hellenistic portraits in the Hellenistic style (Adi Erlich). The subterranean complex of the city of Mareshah, the central place of the province of Idumea, brought to light a comparable private archive of 1,027 tiny clay bullae, also with a pastiche of Phoenician and Greek motifs on them (Ian Stern, Donald T. Ariel).

7.3.3. Organization of Diaspora Jews in Egypt during the Second Century BCE

Using the example of Heracleopolis, a city in central Egypt at the southern entrance to the oasis area of Faiyum, the organization of Jews in the Egyptian → diaspora can be illuminated. Like Jews in Alexandria and elsewhere, Jews in Heracleopolis were organized as a *politeuma* (πολίτευμα)

(see §7.2.2.2). A total of twenty papyri from the second half of the second century BCE, probably from the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE) and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (145–116 BCE), bear witness to this. It seems that the Maccabean crisis (see §§7.4–5) led to increased emigration to Egypt. Like Elephantine (see §5.12.2), Alexandria (see §7.2.2.2), and Leontopolis (see §7.4.7), Heracleopolis was also a place where Jews were settled for military purposes. In the fortress there was apparently also a synagogue for the liturgical assembly. The *politeuma*, to which only the Jewish inhabitants of Heracleopolis belonged, was led by a politarch and several annually elected archons, whose influence extended beyond the city itself. The papyri document arbitrations of disputes among Jewish residents (also from the surrounding villages) aimed at an out-of-court settlement, which is interpreted by James M. S. Cowey and Klaus Maresch as a concession by the Ptolemaic authorities to special jurisdiction among Jews. Thereby the law of the *politeuma* was not like that observed in the Greek dicasteries. Rather, applicable law was implemented (via requests for legal assistance, petitions) or claims arising from the law were redeemed. The law of the king was clearly superior to the law of the *politeuma*. Jews in Heracleopolis were Hellenized and spoke Greek, unlike the inhabitants of Elephantine, who still spoke Aramaic. Like other Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt, they bear predominantly Greek names. Their contracts correspond to Ptolemaic administrative practice, and the Jews—like diaspora Jews in Babylon—were adapted to Ptolemaic customs. Marriage law reveals a specifically Jewish character (James M. S. Cowey, Klaus Maresch). Otherwise there is no evidence of Jewish behavior that could be derived exclusively from the Torah (e.g., contrary to the biblical prohibition of interest for loans in Exod 22:24; Lev 25:35–38; Deut 23:20–21, the usual interest rate of 24 percent was also demanded from Jews). The documents refer to a *πάτριος νομός* (ancestral custom/ancestral law), which does not necessarily mean the torah. Although it cannot be ruled out that customary law was identified with the torah (Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski), there are no reliable positive indications of this.

7.4. TOBIADS, ONIADS, AND THE BACKGROUNDS OF THE MACCABEAN UPRISING

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7.4.1. The Tobiad Family and Its Prehistory

In the development of the second century BCE, the Tobiad family played a leading economic and political role in Judea. How far the information Josephus provides about the family's activities (A.J. 12.154–236) can be regarded as historically reliable is a matter of scholarly disagreement. The

family's influence has often been associated with Tobiah, the opponent of Nehemiah, a Persian civil servant from Transjordan (see §6.6.3), known as the "servant of Ammon" (Neh 2:10, 19). He is said to have been related to the high priest Eliashib and to have had a chamber in the forecourt of the temple (Neh 13:4–5). These aspects suggest a certain amount of influence on the operation of the temple. A connection of this ancestral lord with the Tobiads in the second century BCE, however, remains speculation. The Zenon → papyri from around 260 BCE document a landowner named Tobiah as commander of a Ptolemaic cleruchy (a Greek military colony) in the Ammonitis (called the Birta of the Ammonitis and situated on his own land), for whom a connection with the Tobiads is somewhat closer. This Tobiah is also related to the high priestly family by marriage to a sister of Onias II (ca. 220–215 BCE).

7.4.2. Developments under Onias II and Hyrcanus's Escape to Transjordan

Probably under Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BCE) (according to Johann Maier, Ernst Haag, Othmar Keel), Onias II refused to pay tribute to the Ptolemies. This was likely in the hopes of strengthening Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226 BCE). His refusal led to conflict. The Ptolemies threatened the expropriation of the land and its punitive transformation into a military colony. Politically adept, Onias II allowed his nephew, the Tobiad Joseph, to take up the *prostasia* (the leadership over the people that de facto included government power; see §7.3.1) in his place. That Joseph bought the general tax lease over all Coele-Syria and Phoenicia—by offering the highest bid—and kept it for twenty-one years might be exaggerated (Lester L. Grabbe). But it probably reflects the enormous political influence of the Tobiads in the province, which extended to the hyparchy (see §7.3.1). The so-called Tobiad Romance or Tale of the Tobiads (Josephus, A.J. 12.154–236) recounts in a legendary way how Joseph exercised the privilege to collect taxes for the benefit of the city of Jerusalem and not least for the benefit of his family. Because of his obvious skill, Martin Hengel called him and his family "the first Jewish bankers, with a variety of capital interests,"² and thus unintentionally propagated a common anti-Jewish stereotype.

2. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 1:270.

The Tobiad family was predominantly pro-Seleucid and open to the Hellenization of Jerusalem. Hyrcanus, on the other hand, tried to continue the pro-Ptolemaic policy of his father Joseph. Through skillful negotiations with Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BCE), he was appointed head of Judah. However, he could not then oppose his seven older pro-Seleucid brothers or the high priest Simeon II, who was in office during this time (ca. 215–196 BCE). So he sought refuge in the palatial family estate in Tyre, that is, at the modern site of Qasr al-‘Abd in ‘Irāq al-Amīr in Transjordan (17 km west of Amman), where he committed suicide in 175 BCE. The archaeological remains of buildings found in ‘Irāq al-Amīr from the third/second century BCE have been interpreted by several as sacral architecture. Nonetheless, it is more appropriate to interpret the complex as a fortress, meaning that Hyrcanus *did not* build a countertemple to Jerusalem.

7.4.3. The Office of the High Priest

In the conflicts over political influence in Jerusalem, the increasing importance of the high priesthood becomes apparent by the end of the third century BCE. There is no question that this was an office handed down in the older tradition (see already §§6.2.3, 6.5.3). Deuteronomy 26:3 speaks of *a* priest, but it is not yet clear whether he was appointed as the authority over the other priests. In the priestly texts in Exod 29; Lev 8–9; Num 8; 18; and others, it is clear, however, that Aaron or one of his sons (Eleazar or Phinehas) presided over the priesthood with its family structure. The title *hakkōhēn haggādōl* “high priest” is documented in Lev 21:10, Num 35:25, 28, Josh 20:6, 2 Kgs 12:11, among other places (see §6.2.3), with Hilkiah (2 Kgs 22:4, 8; 23:4; 2 Chr 34:9), Eliashib (Neh 3:1, 20), Joiada (Neh 13:28), and Jeshua/Joshua (Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2, 3; Zech 3:1, 8; 6:11) all being named with the title. The office was connected with an individual for life (Num 35:28, 32; Josh 20:6) and—assuming the model of the Aaronides (Lev 6:15; Num 20:28)—was passed on within the family to the oldest son. Besides the priesthood being traced back to the → eponymous Aaron, the tradition also preserved the heritage of the Jerusalem priestly family, the Zadokites (2 Sam 8:17; 15:24–37; 1 Kgs 1:8; 2:22; 1 Chr 5:34–41; 29:22; cf. Ezek 40:46; 44:6–16). In the postexilic period, the ideas of Aaronide and Zadokite ancestorship were amalgamated. However, the claimed continuity with the office of the eponymous Aaron—even if this cannot be demonstrated for the early office bearers—was crucially important in the discourse of

legitimacy. The last high priest, who stood in supposedly unbroken continuity with Aaron, was Onias III (196–174 BCE) (2 Macc 4:27–38) (see §7.4.9). The disputes over Menelaus, on the other hand, reveal that legitimation or delegitimation via the line of ancestry played a decisive role in the second century BCE. This continued in an intensified way among the Hasmoneans (see §7.6). The high priest indeed had a prominent cult function in the biblical tradition (Lev 4; 16), yet political leadership and ritual leadership converged even in biblical texts. The beginnings of hierocracy (i.e., the secular rule of priests or a sacred institution) appear in the tradition and were increasingly embraced in the second century BCE (see §7.5). With the building of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (see §6.5), the priest's influence on the provincial administration of Judah in Jerusalem increased more and more (differently Deborah Rooke). The close connection of the administration to the temple (tax-farm, temple economy, minting law) led to an interweaving of competences, which in turn led to serious conflicts in the Hasmonean period (see §7.6 and the chronological list of high priests in §10.1.7).

7.4.4. Conflicts between Pro-Seleucid and Pro-Ptolemaic Partisans

The clashes between pro-Seleucid and pro-Ptolemaic partisans in Jerusalem are already reflected in the conflict under Onias II, which intensified in the second century BCE under Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 BCE) and formed the historical background for the Maccabean uprising. The conflict was not primarily about theological positions or the opposition of Judaism and Hellenism, but rather about political and financial interests, in which the local elites—and above all the high priest—were increasingly involved. The power struggles ultimately led to the high priestly office becoming purchasable and to the disruption of the Zadokite → genealogy, that is, the family-inherited office. The last legitimate high priest was Onias III (196–175 BCE), the grandson of Onias II (ca. 220–215 BCE) and son of Simeon II (ca. 215–146 BCE). He took office under Seleucus IV Philopator and was involved in the so-called Heliodor affair.

7.4.5. The Heliodor Affair

The Seleucid king had to pay the high reparations agreed to by his father to the Romans, and he, like his father, sought to siphon off the temple economy as a source of funds. He instructed his chancellor, Heliodor,

to also access the temple treasury in Jerusalem after Simeon, the market supervisor and head of the temple, had disclosed the high value of the temple treasure to στρατηγός Apollonius, the highest Seleucid official in Jerusalem (2 Macc 3:6). The looting of the temple's assets was, however, prevented *in flagranti delicto* by the miraculous appearance of a rider on a rearing horse (2 Macc 3:25) or by two young men chastening Heliodor (2 Macc 3:26). Both motifs have precursors in Hellenistic literature and are legendary tropes, so that the narrative's historical value is limited, at most, to the failure of the undertaking. The fact that Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 BCE) actually relied more heavily on the temples in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia for fiscal purposes due to bureaucratic measures is documented by an inscription on a stela with a letter from the king to Heliodor (Hannah Cotton, Michael Wörrle), of which three further fragments originating from Mareshah were published in 2009 (Dov Gera). There Seleucus IV assigned the courtier, Olympiodor, powers over the sanctuaries in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, which undoubtedly led to conflicts of interest. As recounted in 2 Macc 3, the pro-Seleucid concessions of the temple administrator, Simeon, and the resistance of Onias III (196–175 BCE), whose pro-Ptolemaic attitude can also be seen in the reference to Hyrcanus's financial resources in the temple treasury (2 Macc 3:11), according to Othmar Keel, show the fierce arguments of the partisans in Jerusalem over the more viable foreign policy position between pro-Ptolemaic and pro-Seleucid accents.

7.4.6. Deposition of Onias III

Despite Heliodor's retreat, the affair shows that the pro-Ptolemaic attitude of Onias III (196–175 BCE) was not able to be imposed in the long run. The weights shift a short time later when Chancellor Heliodor murdered Seleucus IV (187–175 BCE) in Antioch on the third of the ninth month of 175 BCE (cf. Dan 11:20) and Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BCE) ascended the throne. As so often, the change of power led to political instability. Onias III first tried to exploit the situation and expelled the pro-Seleucid Tobiads, who fled to the new Seleucid king in Antioch. This led to the deposition of the high priest in 174 BCE. There are conflicting sources about the change of power. According to Josephus (*A.J.* 12.237), the natural death of Onias III allowed his brother Jason (174–171 BCE) to take office. According to 2 Macc 4:7–10, however, this same Jason actively pursued the deposition by promising the king greater tax revenue and the

Hellenization of Jerusalem. Onias III fled to Antioch and was later murdered there by Menelaus (171–162 BCE) (see §7.4.9.1).

7.4.7. The Temple in Egypt (Leontopolis/Heliopolis)

With the deposition of Onias III (196–175 BCE) a connection can be made to the temple—only attested in literature—on the edge of the Nile Delta. This is because the district of Heliopolis is also called the “Land of Onias” (Josephus, *A.J.* 14.131; Josephus, *B.J.* 1.190; for the inscriptional evidence, see Walter Ameling, Jörg Frey). There, Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE) allowed the Jewish high priest to settle (perhaps in an already existing pro-Ptolemaic Jewish settlement) and erect a YHWH temple (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.388; 13.65–71), which existed until 71 CE according to Josephus (*B.J.* 7.421–436). Where this temple (probably in combination with a fortress) was built, whether in Leontopolis (Tell el-Yehūdiye) as is usually assumed (Jörg Frey) or in Heliopolis itself (the biblical On, Gen 41:45; today a district in the northeast of Cairo), which is increasingly becoming the preferred option (James M. S. Cowey), is uncertain. Scholars also discuss whether, as Josephus states in the *Bellum judaicum*, this could be Onias III or, more likely, his son Onias IV. Onias IV, after having no more chance of succession in Jerusalem, moved to Egypt and could have built the temple there (Josephus, *A.J.* 13.62–63; cf. *A.J.* 12.237–239). Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE), who was friendly toward the Jews, provided Onias IV with a leadership position in the Ptolemaic army, which ensured his provisions. Jörg Frey suggests these events should be dated to the period between 163 and 145 BCE. The temple was only destroyed after the Jewish War (66–70 CE).

7.4.8. The Hellenization of Jerusalem under Jason

The establishment of a gymnasium and an ephebeion (see §7.2.2.4), Greek fashion (2 Macc 4:12), and the decline of circumcision (1 Macc 1:15), as well as a civil register, were intended to prepare the transformation of the city into an Antiochian polis (2 Macc 4:9). The active Hellenization of the city could also have been associated with religiopolitical concessions. This is indicated by the polemics about the priests neglecting the temple cult in 2 Macc 4:14 and the episode in 2 Macc 4:18–20, where Jason, on the occasion of Antiochus IV’s (175–164 BCE) visit to Tyre, sent envoys to the temple there to make a financial donation to the sacrificial cult of Heracles

and so insure the king's favor. In the assessment of the books of Maccabees, Jason's policy led to the sustained abandonment of Jewish identity, but it is not so easy to simply accept this harsh traditionalist evaluation. Through concessions to the Hellenistic and pro-Seleucid forces, Jason tried to return Jerusalem to a state of economic and political significance, for which the politics of the Seleucids created the basic framework. However, Jason hardly had time to prove to the traditionalists that proactive action in favor of Antiochus IV could benefit the city.

7.4.9. The Deposition of the High Priest Jason

Josephus gives the impression that the Tobiads were protecting Menelaus and trying to bring him to power (*A.J.* 12.239). Jason soon seems to have turned the leading pro-Seleucid forces in Jerusalem against his politics. Perhaps he lost the favor of both the Seleucids and the Tobiads in the context of Antiochus IV's visit to Jerusalem in 173/72 BCE (2 Macc 4:21–22). Or perhaps Jason changed fronts for political reasons, because after his deposition he fled to Transjordan, presumably to the fortress of Hyrcanus at 'Irāq al-Amīr, where an anti-Seleucid attitude could find allies (see §7.4.2).

7.4.9.1. Menelaus Acquires the Office of High Priest

According to Josephus (*A.J.* 12.238–239), Menelaus was Jason's brother and therefore a Zadokite. As such he had a legitimate right to become high priest. According to the more probable tradition in 2 Macc 4:23, however, he was a son of the pro-Seleucid temple chief Simeon (Johann Maier, Othmar Keel), who was active in the Heliodor affair (see §7.4.5), and thus probably not a Zadokite. When Jason sent him to Antioch for business, he acted like Jason himself had. He offered the king almost double the tribute in order that he might be awarded the position of high priest. Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) agreed, and Jason fled to Transjordan. The promise of 660 silver talents per year overtaxed the economic capacity of the small province of Judea, which was already under increasing tax pressure due to Jason's prior promises (Klaus Bringmann). Menelaus himself finally misappropriated the temple treasure to raise the money.

According to 2 Macc 4:32, the deposed Onias III learned of this and sharply criticized Menelaus, probably by intervention at the Seleucid royal court in Antioch. If one follows the presentation of the book of Maccabees, Onias III (196–174 BCE) was then killed at the instigation of Menelaus in

Daphne near Antioch and did not die a natural death (as in Josephus, *A.J.* 12.237; see above).

7.4.9.2. Resistance to Menelaus and the Emergence of the Community at Qumran

The fact that the high priesthood was not only for sale but that the traditional line of the Zadokites was broken by Menelaus led to upheavals with the traditionalists and opponents of Hellenistic politics. In earlier research it was assumed that the non-Hellenic (or even anti-Hellenistic) Zadokites *therefore* settled in Qumran (see §7.6.9.3) and formed a separatist community there. However, archaeological findings from Hirbet Qumrān speak for a sparse (new) settlement only in the mid-second century BCE, during the reign of Jonathan (161–142 BCE) or Simeon (142–134 BCE) at the earliest. Due to the coin and pottery finds, a settlement date only under John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE) or—connected with the expansion of the settlement—under Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) appears more probable (Armin Lange, Heinz-Josef Fabry, Jürgen Zangenberg).

7.5. THE CRISIS UNDER ANTIOCHUS IV AND THE MACCABEAN UPRISING

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7.5.1. Antiochus IV's Policy toward Egypt

Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) did not come to Jerusalem in 173/72 BCE to pay homage to the city and its high priest or even to ceremonially proclaim the city as a polis called Antiochia (Antioch). Rather, the foreign policy situation seems to have prompted the skilled strategist to make this visit. The tensions with the Ptolemaic Empire in Egypt had once again increased, and Palestine threatened to be wrested from the Seleucid Empire. Antiochus therefore demonstrated his military strength as a precautionary measure (2 Macc 4:21). A few years later, in the winter of 170/69 BCE, Antiochus IV Epiphanes began his Egyptian campaign in the so-called Sixth Syrian War, which had been instigated by the tutelary government of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE).

7.5.2. Jason Seizes Power Again in Jerusalem

A rumor that the Seleucid king had perished in Egypt led the high priest Jason to brutally seize power in Jerusalem. But the successful Antiochus returned from Egypt in 169 BCE and, interpreting the change of power as a rebellion, strongly punished Jerusalem. The temple was plundered and the ritual vessels stolen (Othmar Keel). Jason's partisans were killed, but Jason himself managed to escape to Sparta. According to Klaus Bringmann (followed, for example, by Ernst Haag), the change of power—with the appointment of Menelaus as high priest at the Acra fortress—only

occurred during the time of the second Egyptian campaign in 168 BCE, which Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) was forced to break off due to a Roman ultimatum. There is agreement that in the autumn of 168 BCE the crisis intensified when Antiochus IV sent the army commander, Apollonius, with soldiers to Jerusalem to enforce the pro-Seleucid position and establish a non-Jewish garrison on the Acra (2 Macc 5:24–25). This obviously did not succeed peacefully; rather civil war-like conditions ensued as the traditionalists resisted the non-Jewish settlement in the city of David and in the southern temple district. As a result, punitive actions and coercive measures followed.

7.5.3. Classification and Evaluation of Antiochus IV's Actions

The activity for which the book of Daniel and the books of Maccabees are available as strongly biased sources have been much discussed in scholarship. More recent research is more reserved toward drastic slogans such as “culture war,” “abolition of the Jewish religion,” or “systematic persecution of religion.” Although one of the roots of martyr theology lies in the books of Maccabees, the actual number of victims would have been rather small (Elias J. Bickermann). Likewise, the theory that Antiochus IV Epiphanes's (175–164 BCE) activity should be placed in the context of a religious policy that aimed at a unification of the local religions in favor of Greek cults in the entire Seleucid Empire (so 1 Macc 1:41–59; cf. 2 Macc 6:1–9) is to be historically excluded (Ernst Haag). Antiochus IV probably adhered in principle to the policy of his father Antiochus III the Great (222–187 BCE) and granted autonomy to the local cults. In Jerusalem, Antiochus IV was not concerned with the abolition of the YHWH cult, but with the consolidation and pacification of the city, which had become quarrelsome as a result of the upheavals and, therefore, in the Seleucid system of stabilized power relations, the volatile city had become an unpredictable factor. As an economically and culturally flourishing Hellenistic city, Jerusalem was far more important to Antiochus than a traditional and isolated temple city. The massive reforms were thus motivated far more from political means than religious conviction or Seleucid ideology.

7.5.3.1. The Role of the High Priest Menelaus

To what extent Antiochus's measures were actively supported, or even undertaken, by the high priest Menelaus (Ernst Haag calls him “the

intellectual originator of the prohibition of religion”³) and his reasons for doing so can barely be determined in light of the books of Maccabees. They simply present him as unscrupulous and power-hungry (2 Macc 4:39–50; 5:15; 13:4).

7.5.3.2. The Measures of Antiochus IV

The forced Hellenization of Jerusalem was based on various orders that affected Jewish life and worship and at the same time meant a change in traditional customs and laws (Dan 7:25; 2 Macc 6:1–7; 1 Macc 1:41–43, 49). According to biblical sources, circumcision was forbidden (2 Macc 6:6, 10), the Sabbath and other feasts were suppressed (Dan 7:25; 2 Macc 6:6, 11), and the distinction between clean and unclean animals was broken by eating pork. Whether the compulsion to worship deities other than YHWH was imposed (1 Macc 1:47) remains controversial. The temple was indeed dedicated to Zeus Olympios (2 Macc 6:2), yet it is unlikely that this corresponds to a statue of Zeus (see fig. 54) being erected in the temple. Rather, it seems, following Othmar Keel, to relate to the *interpretatio graeca* for YHWH. This is supported by the fact that the temple on Gerizim was similarly dedicated to the Hellenic Zeus Xenios (2 Macc 6:2).



Fig. 54. Tetradrachm of Antiochus IV (ca. 167–164 BCE) showing the portrait of his head on the front. The back has Zeus enthroned in the center, holding a figure of the goddess of victory, Nike, in his extended hand. The surrounding inscriptions are “of the king, Antiochus” (right), “of the Bearer of Victory” (below), and “of the God Manifest” (left).

7.5.3.3. The Abomination of Desolation

Uncertainty exists in the interpretation of the “abomination of desolation” (Dan 8:13; 1 Macc 1:54; etc.), the installation of which on the altar of burnt

3. Ernst Haag, *Das hellenistische Zeitalter: Israel und die Bibel im 4. bis 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Biblische Enzyklopädie 9 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003), 69: “der intellektuelle Urheber des Religionsverbotes.”

offering is called the pinnacle of tortious influence. It is unlikely to refer to one or more standing stones, which were erected as an obvious expression of forced syncretism and for the worship of the gods Hadad-Zeus, Anat-Athene, and Adonis-Dionysus (Jonathan A. Goldstein, Ernst Haag), but rather to an altar construction in connection with the newly introduced pig sacrifices (Josephus, *B.J.* 1.34, Othmar Keel). From the point of view of non-Jewish Hellenists, the sacrifice of pigs and the consumption of pork was unproblematic, but for Jews, that is, traditionalists and Hellenistic reformers alike, the abolition of the distinction between *pure* and *impure* represented an unforgivable sacrilege that went too far and thus triggered the Maccabean uprising.

7.5.4. The Maccabean Uprising

Under the leadership of Mattathias, a priest from Modein, and his sons, a resistance group of traditionalists formed against the Hellenists and against Menelaus in particular. Josephus (*A.J.* 12.265; *B.J.* 1.36) names Hasmon as the ancestor of the family, which is why the whole dynasty is called the Hasmoneans. The name Maccabees derives from Hebrew *maq̄qebet* or Aramaic *maq̄qābā* ‘hammer,’ the nickname of the third son, Judas, who led the armed resistance. The Maccabees mobilized the group—comprising the traditionalist rural population, suffering from the enormous tax burden, and part of the Jerusalem Hasideans, a loosely constructed group of the “pious” (1 Macc 2:42; 7:13; 2 Macc 14:6), who probably belonged to the upper class and had previously offered passive resistance against Menelaus’s politics—and engaged in a guerrilla struggle against the pro-Seleucid leadership and the Hellenistic upper class in Jerusalem.

7.5.4.1. Extending the Uprising's Political Objectives

The initial goal of the Maccabean wars (167–143/42 BCE), glorified in the books of Maccabees, was the liberation from the compulsion to Hellenize and the restoration of the social and cult legislation of the torah, but soon tangible political interests combined with the struggle. After the wars, this resulted in a phase in which Judea was almost politically autonomous and again monarchically led under the Hasmonean kings (see §10.4, map 18, with the table at §10.1.5).

7.5.4.2. The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Rededication of the Temple in 164 BCE

Initial military successes against Seleucid troops enabled the movement to grow. The Maccabees benefited from the fact that Antiochus IV Epiphanes's (175–164 BCE) attention and power were increasingly tied up by clashes with the Parthians in the east of the empire. In 164 BCE, Judas Maccabeus succeeded in entering Jerusalem. Obviously the negotiations led to an agreement with Menelaus (2 Macc 11:13–38) with the aim of a peaceful coexistence of torah observance and Hellenistic lifestyle. The high priest solemnly rededicated the temple on the twenty-fifth of Kislev in 164 BCE (the Jewish Hanukkah/Chanukkah festival memorializes this to this day; cf. 1 Macc 4:56–59). The rededication of the temple can be understood as a milestone of Hasmonean ideology. The narrative, which functionalized the altar's dedication for Jewish identity and sharply delimited the community from the outside, can be better understood as “invented tradition” (Eyal Regev) or perhaps because of the recourse to Exod 29 and Lev 8 as “reinvented tradition.” With the enhancement of the temple, the associated temple tax and the intensification of pilgrimages can be understood as Hasmonean innovations that further underline the importance of the temple for the Hasmonean understanding of themselves.

7.5.4.3. Lysias and the First Maccabean Failures

Judas Maccabeus built a fortress in the city of David in Jerusalem and subsequently undertook campaigns of conquest to Gilead, Galilee, Idumea, and the coastal plain under the leadership of his brothers. These campaigns were apparently not only for religious reasons but also for reasons of power politics. His attempt to benefit from the confusion caused by the death of Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) to secure political autonomy in Jerusalem and in the Acra (the center of Seleucid power) again led to hefty Seleucid intervention in Judea and Jerusalem. The Seleucid governor Lysias, who managed affairs on behalf of the underage Antiochus V Eupator (164–162 BCE), conquered Beth-Zur, which the Maccabees had fortified. He besieged Jerusalem and successfully recovered it (162 BCE). Only the throne disputes in Antioch, which ultimately brought Demetrius I Soter (162–151/50 BCE) to power with Roman help, prevented the total defeat of the Maccabees.

7.5.4.4. Alcimus and the Maccabees Forced Underground

Since the acting high priest Menelaus—on the advice of Lysias, according to 1 Macc 13:3–7—had been murdered, a change in the office of the high priest was concomitant with reaching a peaceful compromise in Jerusalem. Alcimus (162–159 BCE), an “Aaronide” (1 Macc 7:14, i.e., not a Zadokite) trying to legitimize himself by a genealogical recourse to Aaron, received the approval of the conservative Hasideans by conceding to tolerate a torah-compliant way of life. This concession (and the accusation against Judas, 1 Macc 7:5; 2 Macc 14:3–13) more or less forced the Maccabees, who continued to oppose the Seleucids, underground. Once more, the Maccabees achieved considerable successes (battle against Nicanor in Caphar-salama [1 Macc 7:31–32] and in Adasa [1 Macc 7:39–49]), which Demetrius I answered militarily by sending the governor Bacchides. The fact that this event is not recorded in 2 Maccabees raises questions about its historicity, with one possible explanation being that the following mission of Nicanor functioned as the source of the narrated sequels (Daniel R. Schwartz). However, the Nicanor mission (narrated in 1 Macc 7:26; 2 Macc 14:12) is legendarily stylized (promoting Nicanor’s defeat on the thirteenth of Adar as a holiday of remembrance, 1 Macc 7:47–49; 2 Macc 15:30–36), making it difficult to evaluate from a historical perspective. Be that as it may, the Seleucids besieged Jerusalem and in the course of events they strengthened the city and a line of strongholds (1 Macc 9:50) including Beth-Zur and Gezer (1 Macc 9:52, reconquered by Simon around 142 BCE, see §6.9).

In 161 BCE, during the battle of Elasa, Judas Maccabeus died, and his youngest brother Jonathan Apphus (161–142 BCE) took over the leadership of the partisans. They were persecuted by Bacchides and retreated into the inaccessible desert of Judah. First Maccabees 9:55–56 describes the dramatic end of the high priest Alcimus, who could no longer make arrangements for his succession, having been struck by a stroke of paralysis in the temple (supposedly while rebuilding the Jerusalemite temple and Hellenizing its accessibility). Some historical accounts leave a period of vacancy in the office, but others fill in the period with the installation of a person as the official high priest, like that mentioned in the Qumran literature as the teacher of righteousness (1QpHab VIII, 1–3, etc.).

7.6. THE HASMONEANS

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7.6.1. A Parallel Government in Michmash

A new turn of events impacted the political landscape in the Seleucid Empire. When Alexander Balas (150–145 BCE) tried to oust Demetrius I (162–151/50 BCE) from the throne, the constant conflicts were not to destabilize the political situation in Judea any further. The king needed allies, which is why the strategist Bacchides was commissioned by Demetrius to negotiate with the Maccabee Jonathan Apphus. In addition to an exchange of prisoners, Jonathan was allowed to establish a kind of parallel government (Othmar Keel) under his own jurisdiction from Michmash. The site, which is situated near Geba in Jerusalem, shows traces of settlement, so that a Maccabean use remains possible, but there are no architectural structures indicating an administrative function. Be that as it may, the more Demetrius came under pressure in the power struggles against the → usurper Alexander Balas, the more concessions he made.

7.6.2. Jonathan as High Priest in Jerusalem

When Alexander Balas first installed a parallel government in Akko in 152 BCE, Demetrius I (162–151/50 BCE) withdrew his troops from Jerusalem and Beth-Zur, leaving the field to the Maccabees in order to secure their loyalty against the competitor to the throne. However, the latter in turn offered the Maccabean Jonathan Apphus (161–142 BCE) the priesthood, abandoned since the death of Alcimus, and tried to lure him over to his side by this further concession of political power. For the Maccabees this meant the possibility of a semiautonomous government operating from Jerusalem (see §10.4, map 18). Although Jonathan came from a priestly family, his parentage was again clearly beyond the Zadokite Oniad genealogy, which provoked resistance in certain circles of the pious.

Geza Vermes and others see the origin of the Qumran community in the separation of Zadokite circles from the temple cult in Jerusalem such that the sacrilegious priest named in the Qumran texts refers to Jonathan whilst the teacher of righteousness refers to the legitimate high priest. As explained above (see §7.4.9.2), this is unlikely when considering the archaeological findings at Qumran, even if it remains plausible that the predominantly priestly withdrawal of the Zadokites in the second century BCE may partly be associated with the later Qumran community (see §7.6.9.3; and on the Onias Temple in Leontopolis, see §7.4.7).

7.6.3. The Connection to the Seleucids and the Increase in Power under Jonathan

For the Maccabees, the closer connection to the Seleucid government brought political success. Jonathan and his brothers brought Jaffa, Ashkelon, and Gaza under their control (see below) and advanced in the far north in the following years or only during the period in which Alexander Balas and Demetrius II were battling for succession. The administrative archive in Kedesh (see §7.3) came to an abrupt end in 144/43 BCE, perhaps in connection with Jonathan's advance (1 Macc 11:63, 73) (Andrea M. Berlin, Sharon C. Herbert). When Alexander Balas (150–145 BCE) became related to the Ptolemies by marrying Cleopatra Thea, a daughter of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–164 BCE), he made the Maccabean Jonathan a military strategist and *meridarch* ("partial ruler") over the province of Coele-Syria. With political skill and new power concessions in the north, Jonathan recovered profitably from the confusion of the thrones after Demetrius II Nicator defeated Alexander Balas in 145 BCE and killed him as he fled. However, since the Seleucid Empire remained unstable and Demetrius II (145–140 BCE) soon had a counterking in Antiochus VI (145–142/38? BCE), a son of Alexander Balas, Jonathan was worn down in the disputes over political power. First, Jonathan turned away from Demetrius II because he was not prepared to make any further concessions and conquered the southern part of Palestine for the counter-government. Through political contacts with Rome and Sparta, Jonathan tried to expand his political influence. This aroused the suspicion of the Seleucids. Tryphon, general and representative of the still youthful Antiochus VI, lured him into an ambush at Akko and shortly afterwards had him executed in Gilead.

7.6.4. Judah as a Semiautonomous State under Simeon

After the death of Jonathan, the older brother of Judas Maccabeus, Simeon (142–134 BCE), took over the leadership of the Maccabees. Demetrius II confirmed him as high priest (1 Macc 13:42; 14:38) and granted him extensive rights and a tax exemption. Judea became a *de facto* autonomous state, even if Simeon did not use the title king for himself.

Since the books of Maccabees, which glorify Simeon as *David* and *Solomon redivivus* (Adrian Schenker), also see the beginning of his reign as a turning point (1 Macc 13:42), most scholars no longer speak of the Maccabees but of the Hasmoneans from this point. Under Simeon, the Hasmoneans conquered the Acra in Jerusalem and thus eliminated the last anchor of Seleucid power. Their area of influence was extended farther to the west and access to the Mediterranean was first achieved through the integration of Jaffa (1 Macc 13:43–48) and later successfully defended against the Seleucid commander Cendebeus at the Battle of Beth-Horon (1 Macc 15:25–36) (see §10.4, map 18). A Mediterranean port remained the key prerequisite for independent economic development and profitable trade. That Antiochus VII Sidetes (138–129 BCE) found it politically advantageous in 139 BCE to allow the Maccabees the right to mint their own coins (Ulrich Hübner), a right that was later withdrawn, can also be seen as evidence of the growing economic power of the province of Judea during the reign of Simeon. It was only under John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE), after a break of some 150 years, that Judea could once again mint its own smaller coins (see fig. 55). Archaeologically, this corresponds to the increase in construction activity of the Hasmoneans (Wolfgang M. Thiel), of which the only tangible example attested in the literature is the tomb built by Simeon in Modein (1 Macc 14:27–30). But even this must remain provisional, despite great efforts being made in recent years, for example, to identify a large (and mostly Byzantine) burial complex near Modein (Ḥorvat Ha-Gardi/Sheikh el-Gharbawi) as the tomb of the Hasmoneans.

7.6.5. John Hyrcanus I

Simeon was murdered together with two of his sons near Jericho by his son-in-law Ptolemy in 135 BCE. Only John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE), as provincial governor in Gezer, escaped the attack and succeeded his father in Jerusalem. First Maccabees ends with this event; thus, for the



Fig. 55. Coin of John Hyrcanus I (bronze prutah) with the inscription “Johanan, the high priest, and the Jewish community” surrounded by a wreath on the obverse. On the back are two cornucopias with ribbons, a pomegranate, hanging grapes, and ears of grain. The coin probably dates back to 110–104 BCE.

subsequent period of the Hasmonean monarchy the only available source is Josephus.

After initially being challenged by Antiochus VII Sidetes (138–129 BCE), John Hyrcanus I succeeded in strengthening his position through military expansion when the Seleucid king was killed in battle against the Parthians in 129 BCE. Demetrius II (129–126/25 BCE), who was formerly held in Parthian captivity, was installed for a second term to rule. He led his own army in campaigns of conquest into Transjordan (taking Madaba and Samaga) in order to gain control of the main north-south trade route, the King’s Highway. Still during the reign of Antiochus VII Sidetes, bronze coins were minted in Jerusalem (132/31 and 131/30 BCE). The coins feature an anchor on one side, a symbol of the Seleucids, while the other side features a lily, a symbol that was already used on the early Persian period coins of the fourth century BCE to represent the Jewish temple, but in this context it can be interpreted as a symbol of the Hasmoneans. The Hasmoneans understood their rule as a crucial matter for the Jewish people and are often accused of expressing a national consciousness (which, however, is an anachronism, since nation states in the true sense do not emerge until the nineteenth century CE). The close connection of ideology to the temple, and the close interweaving of temple economy and national ideology point in this direction. For example, the markings used to indicate the authority of the coins minted in Jerusalem (see fig. 48) bear the inscription *yẖnn hkhn* “Yehoḥanan/Johanan, the high priest, and supreme commander of *ḥeber*,” that is, “Yehoḥanan, the high priest, and the *ḥeber hayyāhūdīm*,” which can be interpreted either as a Jewish council (and thus as a forerunner of *gerousia* or Sanhedrin) (so Daniel Sperber, Yaakov Meshorer) or as the Jewish people (so Uriel Rappaport, Eyal Regev). John Hyrcanus I’s destruction of the Samaritan temple on Gerizim probably did not take place—as the report by Josephus suggests (*B.J.* 1.63–65, *A.J.* 13.254–256, 275–279)—in 129/28 BCE at the beginning of his military expansion efforts, but rather—follow-

ing the archaeological destruction layers found in Mareshah, Beersheba, Shechem, and so on—only in 112/11 BCE (Jonathan Bourgel). The city atop Gerizim has strong traces of destruction dating to the same period, which probably also affected the competing Samaritan sanctuary (Reinhard Pummer, Yitzhak Magen). The reason for the violent destruction of the Samaritan infrastructure remains puzzling. It remains unclear if it was aimed at establishing a monopoly position for the Jerusalem temple by enforcing a (Jerusalem-focused) Deuteronomic centralization demand (Deut 12), and/or whether it was an attempt to create one Jewish people via religiopolitical unification (Gary N. Knoppers, Jonathan Bourgel). Ultimately, power politics appears to be the most likely explanation, even if the unifying perspective may have played a role. Perhaps, the Hasmonean annexation policy speaks for an ideologically founded and enforced unity, but it does not require the destruction of the temple city on Gerizim. Be that as it may, John Hyrcanus I understood himself to be a representative of the entire people.

This self-confident Hasmonean ruler also expanded his control from Judea farther north to Galilee, continuing the expansion policies of Jonathan Apphus (153–142 BCE) and Simeon Maccabeus (142–134 BCE). In 112/11 BCE, he also annexed Idumea and forcibly incorporated the inhabitants into the Jewish state. John Hyrcanus I rebuilt Jerusalem's fortifications and, as a countermeasure to the Seleucid Acra north of the temple district, he built the castle Baris (later called the Antonia Fortress) as the Hasmonean residence. On his royal estate (which produced dates and balsam) in Jericho/Tulūl Abū l-ʿAlāʾik, John Hyrcanus I built a winter palace in Hellenistic style, which the Herodians later extended (Ehud Netzer).

The political success of the Hasmoneans and their striving for expansion nourished the political resistance of the Pharisees (see §7.6.9.1), who increasingly advocated for a separation of secular rule and the high priestly office (Josephus, *A.J.* 13.290–292).

7.6.6. The Hasmonean State under Aristobulus I and Alexander Jannaeus

After the death of John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE), Judah Aristobulus I (104–103 BCE) took over both the high priesthood and the secular rule in → personal union. He imprisoned his brothers and his mother to enforce his claims of sole rule. Aristobulus continued his father's expansion policy in the north (see 10.4, map 18), which resulted in an increase in settlement development of Galilee in the first century BCE (Jürgen Zangenberg, Eric

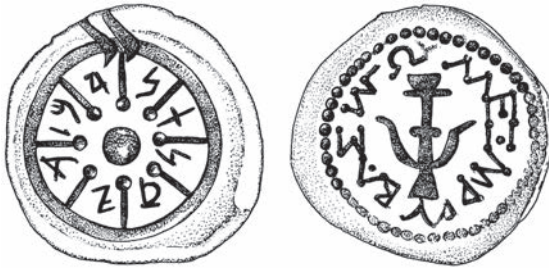


Fig. 56. A common type of a bronze prutah of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), probably minted in Jerusalem. The obverse shows an eight-pointed star surrounded by a diadem. Between the rays the inscription in Paleo-Hebrew script reads *hmlk. yhntn* “King Jehonathan.” Jannaeus seems to be the Greekized form of the Hebrew name Jonathan. The reverse shows an anchor surrounded by the Greek inscription ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ “(coinage) of King Alexander.”

M. Meyers). According to Josephus (*A.J.* 13.301), he was the first Hasmonean to have taken the title “king,” which is not unlikely. However, the earliest confirmed references to a Hasmonean monarch from coin finds (fig. 56) bear the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ “King Alexander” and the (equivalent) Hebrew name YHWNTN HMLK “Jonathan, the King,” that is, beginning with the reign of his successor, Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) (Ulrich Hübner, Eyal Regev).

When Aristobulus I died, his widow, Salome Alexandra, liberated his imprisoned brothers, married the eldest, and gave him power. Under Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), who took for himself the title king and high priest and ruled entirely as a Hellenistic ruler, the Hasmonean state reached its greatest expansion (see 10.4, map 18). He conducted brutal wars of conquest, which were said to have been accompanied by enforced Judaization and the expulsion of gentiles who opposed circumcision (Josephus, *A.J.* 13.397). Such Judaization, with which Josephus imputes the early Hasmonean rulers John Hyrcanus I, Aristobulus I, and Alexander Jannaeus, is historically rather unlikely (Benedikt Eckhardt). Following the expeditions of conquest, Alexander Jannaeus’s domain covered the whole of Galilee, the Golan, Transjordan to the southern end of the Dead Sea, and the entire Cisjordan, including Samaria, Idumea, and the coastal strip with the important trading ports of Gaza and Caesarea Maritima (Straton’s Tower). Only Ashkelon was able to preserve its independence. The size of Alexander Jannaeus’s kingdom is often compared in the literature with the Davidic empire, which never existed as an empire

per se (see §4.5). “His kingdom was greater than David’s sphere of influence ever could have been.”⁴

However, the foreign policy successes of Alexander Jannaeus stand vis-à-vis growing internal tensions—not least because of his cruel rule—that led to a bloody civil war. The Pharisees, who according to Josephus had already expressed criticism of the Hasmonean union of high priesthood and de facto royalty under John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE), formed the opposition party (see §7.6.9.1). With the help of the Seleucid Demetrius III Eucerus (95–87 BCE) they tried to oust the king, but because of Demetrius’s foreign policy weakness, they did not succeed in the long run. Josephus describes Alexander Jannaeus’s subsequent revenge on the resistance as an exercise in brutal violence (A.J. 13.380, 410). At the end of his reign, Alexander Jannaeus is said to have recognized the power of the Pharisees’ wrath and to have recommended a change of policy on his deathbed (Josephus, A.J. 13.398–406). How much of this is a legend remains in the dark in view of Josephus’s ambivalent sympathy for the Pharisees.

7.6.7. Salome Alexandra and the Power Struggle after Her Death

Salome Alexandra (76–67 BCE), the wife of Aristobulus and later the wife of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), took over the leadership of the state after the latter’s death and sought reconciliation with the Pharisees. They also supported her son, John Hyrcanus II (76–67/63–40 BCE), to whom Salome Alexandra granted the office of high priest. The Sadducees—on the other hand—who represented a temple-centered Zadokite position (see §7.6.9.2), adhered to his brother Aristobulus II (67–63 BCE), whom Salome entrusted with leading the military. Following Salome Alexandra’s death in 67 BCE, a power struggle broke out between the brothers, which only ended with Roman intervention. Aristobulus II seized a large portion of the military fortifications so that John Hyrcanus II was initially defeated. He lost the leadership in the battle at Jericho but then received support from the influential Idumean Antipater and the Nabatean king Aretas III. Since Transjordanian territory had been promised to him, Aretas attacked Jerusalem on behalf of John Hyrcanus II. Aristobulus was

4. Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*, OLB 4.1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 1260: “Sein Reich war größer, als das Einflussgebiet Davids je gewesen sein kann.”

beaten and entrenched himself with some Sadducees in the Jerusalem temple. The Romans reacted to the infighting and the associated disturbance of the political order by sending the Roman commander Pompeius, who had already penetrated into Syria, to intervene.

7.6.8. Roman Intervention and the End of the Hasmonean State

First, both John Hyrcanus II (76–67/63–40 BCE) and Aristobulus II (67–63 BCE) sent envoys with monetary gifts to the Roman legate, Scaurus, so that he would decide in favor of one of the two. Scaurus gave preference to Aristobulus II, thus causing the Nabateans, who feared the Romans, to retreat from the regional power struggle. However, this did not yet alleviate the situation. After the Roman general Pompeius ended Seleucid rule in Antioch in 64 BCE with the deposition of Philip II (67–65 BCE) and transformed Syria into a Roman province, the parties again tried to exert influence through diplomatic channels. According to Josephus, three delegations appeared in Damascus in 63 BCE. Besides the delegates of Aristobulus II and John Hyrcanus II, the Pharisees tried to work toward a separation of secular rule and the high priesthood. At the Pharisees' insistence, Pompeius entered Jerusalem with his commander Gabinius and took Judah Aristobulus II captive. He returned the displaced John Hyrcanus II (63–40 BCE) to his office as high priest, but his secular rule was revoked in 57 BCE. Even though his role in the political leadership was formally reinstated by Julius Caesar, the phase of an independent Hasmonean state finally came to an end with John Hyrcanus II. Judea was then placed under Roman rule. With the Transjordanian Decapolis towns and coastal towns separated off, the expansive Hasmonean territory was considerably reduced and its economic performance considerably weakened. Samaria, which had been annexed under John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE), also regained its independence and the cult on Gerizim was resumed. When the Parthians invaded in 40 BCE, John Hyrcanus II's ears were cut off, making him unfit by this for the high priesthood (Lev 21:18). The final Hasmonean high priest was Mattathias Antigonus (40–37 BCE), who lasted only a few years. He was deposed at Herod the Great's conquest of Jerusalem in 37 BCE, taken to Antioch, and killed there (see §8.3). John Hyrcanus II was initially brought back from captivity by Herod (37–4 BCE), but then executed in 31/30 BCE by his order (Josephus, *A.J.* 14.80–369). With the death of John Hyrcanus II, Hasmonean influence on the people's religious leadership ended for good.

7.6.9. Religious Groups in the Hasmonean Period

At no time is a religion or a society a monolithic bloc. There are always different positions, directions, and groupings that determine regional diversity and internal plurality. However, the second century BCE represents a special phase of diversification in the development of early Judaism. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that the divergence of positions in the sources is particularly evident, for example, the Samaritans, the Yaḥad in Qumran, and the Maccabees each appear in their own testimonies and those of others. On the other hand, it is due to the intense developments in the second half of this century, in which identity and politics have a particularly dynamic effect on one another. Therefore, in scholarship the formation of a pluriform early Judaism is particularly associated with the Hasmonean period (but see §6.10).

The frequently used terms *sects* or *religious parties* give the impression that these were self-designations of groups with fixed external boundaries and clear criteria for membership. The narrower concentration on the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes also reinforces the misconception that there were only these three groups. This overall impression, however, originates from the (tendentious) later reception and the ancient and rabbinic sources, because there are no contemporary emic sources that reflect the self-images of the Sadducees, the Pharisees, or the Essenes. In reality, the diversity of positions and sociological pluriformity was much greater (Albert I. Baumgarten, James C. VanderKam, Hindy Najman). It is unclear whether, when, and by whom exactly the terms Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes were chosen as major self-designations. One main source for the description is Josephus, who speaks of three Jewish *philosophíai* or *hairéseis*—“schools of philosophers,” “groups, sects”—among the Jewish people and includes among them Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 13.171–173, 288–298; 18.11–17; *B.J.* 2.119, 162–166).

While the interrelationships between the different groups within the varied politics of the Hasmoneans were presented above, the most important groups will now be dealt with individually.

7.6.9.1. Pharisees

The name *Pharisee* (Gk. Φαρισαῖος) probably derives from the Hebrew verb *prš*, “to separate (oneself),” although from what precisely the Pharisees separated themselves is unclear (from impurity, from an existing com-

munity, from lawlessness?). The name does not appear prior to the LXX (see §7.2.2.3) and other contemporary sources of the second century BCE. As a self-designation, Φαρισαῖος is documented for Paul in Acts 23:6 (cf. Acts 26:5; Phil 3:5) but rarely afterward in rabbinic literature. The origin of the Pharisees lies in the dark but is typically assumed to date to the period of the Hasmoneans in the middle of the second century BCE and only rarely earlier (Joachim Schaper). Historically, Pharisees and Essenes may have their origins in the same group called *ḥāsīdīm*, “the pious” (Gk. Ασιδάϊοι “Asidaeer/Hasidaeer”; 1 Macc 2:42; 7:13; 2 Macc 14:6), but the existence of the Hasidim as a group is also uncertain (Günter Stemberger). Since the Pharisees, according to Josephus (*A.J.* 13.288–298), criticized the Hasmonean fusion of political leadership and high priesthood (cf. 1 Macc 14:41–49) and this hierocratic position is expressed above all in priestly texts (see §§7.4.3, 7.6.5), Pharisaism has often been characterized as a lay movement with an antimonarchical tendency. In light of this, the Pharisaic position is then sketched such that focus on holiness and purity matters is not so concentrated on the Jerusalem priesthood but is rather directed toward the *whole* people, thus democratizing torah observance. The Pharisees broke with John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE) because of the dispute over the high priesthood. Both the determination of their position and their classification have been rightly questioned in recent times, since the evidence for this remains more than thin in the sources (Benedikt Eckhardt). One will have to admit that almost nothing is known about Pharisaic positions in the second and first centuries BCE, and most of it is based on retrojections from later times. Since the Pharisees played a decisive role in the reconstitution of rabbinic Judaism after the Jewish War in 70 CE, and since the characteristic understanding of Scripture associated with an educational concept only developed therein, these sociological characteristics were often inadmissibly transferred to the time of the Pharisees’ beginnings.

7.6.9.2. Sadducees

Similar to the Pharisees, the sources for the Sadducees in the second century BCE are also thin, with self-testimonies completely lacking. The main sources here are Josephus and the New Testament, in which the Sadducees appear as opponents of Jesus (Matt 3:7; Luke 20:27; Acts 5:17; etc.). The origin and meaning of the name (Gk. Σαδδουκαῖοι) from Hebrew *šdq* (“to be just”) and the connection with the proper name

Zadok (2 Sam 15:24 and elsewhere) are controversially discussed in scholarship. The interpretation fluctuates between an honorary title as self-designation or for legitimization purposes and a polemical foreign designation of Pharisaic circles against the Hasmonean high priests. The beginnings of the Sadducees can be traced back to the conflicts over the leadership in Jerusalem and the deposition of Onias III (196–174 BCE) or with his son Onias IV to Egypt (see §7.4.7). Josephus reports that Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE) became a disciple of the Pharisees but later took sides by joining the Sadducees (*A.J.* 13.288–298); the episode is dated in the Babylonian Talmud under Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) (*b. Qiddushin* 66a).

Since not all Sadducees were priests—members of the Jerusalem elite also seem to have joined the Sadducees—identification with the Zadokite group of priests is a constriction. That being said, an orientation toward the Jerusalem temple and priestly dominance of the Sadducee group seem certain. A conservative nation-state ideology oriented toward the temple is associated with this. In scholarship, the Sadducees as a group are usually characterized only by their difference from the rival Pharisees (cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 13.171–172, 288–298). The general characterization, that the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead and that their canon comprised only the Torah, as opposed to the broad range of written and oral traditions, only emerges from later sources. There are no reliable references of such dating from the Hasmonean period. This also includes the assumption that Manasseh mentioned in the Qumran Peshier of Nahum should be understood as an allusion to the Sadducees, as was frequently assumed but is now rejected by the majority (James C. VanderKam). This also applies to the idea that the “sons of Zadok” refer to the Sadducees.

7.6.9.3. Essenes and the Settlement of Ḥirbet Qumrān

Unlike the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the Essenes are not named in the New Testament texts. However, they are somewhat better attested in the ancient sources, appearing in Philo (*Prob.* 75–91; *Hypoth.* 11.1–8) and Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 5.73), in addition to Josephus (*B.J.* 2.119–161; cf. also *A.J.* 15.371–379), who once again provides the most comprehensive characterization. Nevertheless, here too the origin of the group lies in the dark and the designation of the party or movement as “Essene” has not been preserved as a self-designation in texts. Like its early history, the derivation of the term remains unclear. Proposals include a connection with “piety”

(cf. Aramaic *ḥasayya*^c), “holiness” (cf. Aramaic *ḥzn* and *hosiotes*, *hosioi* in Philo), “healing” (cf. Aramaic *asayya*^c and *therapeutai* in Philo), or the place Essa in the Damascus region. A direct connection with the settlement at the Dead Sea cannot be proven, even if Pliny mentions an Essene settlement at En-Gedi, which was decisive for the assignment of Qumran to the Essenes at an early stage. But the texts found in Qumran itself do not offer any clear references to the Essenes, which is why the so-called Essene hypothesis, which either equates the special features of the scriptures with the characteristics of the Yaḥad, the community of Qumran, or describes the community of Qumran on the basis of the information given by Josephus, has been often rejected in the meantime. Only for individual (albeit important) texts such as the so-called sectarian rule (1QS), the fragment 4QMMT, or the Damascus Document (CD) is a connection further discussed intensively. The hypotheses for the origin of the Essenes in the second century BCE are often derived from the Damascus Document. While it is generally assumed that a certain group of Essenes retreated to the Judean desert due to conflicts with the Maccabees or Hasmoneans, Eyal Regev sees the roots of the Essenes only in the Qumran community. Steve Mason, on the other hand, rejects any connection between the Essenes and Qumran outlined in Josephus for methodological reasons.

If one follows the more recent interpretations of the archaeological findings (see §7.6.2), the complex in Qumran at the northern end of the Dead Sea, first settled in the Iron IIB period until 586 BCE, was repopulated and expanded late in the reign of John Hyrcanus I (135/34–104 BCE). In the first, perhaps still secular phase (Jean-Baptiste Humbert), the Iron Age structures were reused and expanded. Later, in the time of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE), the complex was extended by a large watchtower and other buildings. The large 100 x 80 m facility includes storage rooms, workshops for pottery, production rooms, as well as water installations, cisterns, ritual baths, and a large meeting room. Because of this large 100 m² meeting room (22 x 4.5 m), which was also used as a dining room for about two hundred people, the whole complex was originally interpreted as a monastery, but this is no longer the case. A larger part of the inhabitants did not live in the complex itself but perhaps in the surrounding area in caves and tents (Jürgen Zangenberg). Even though only a few archaeologically usable traces can be found, this is implied not only by the large number of caves in which (the same) pottery was found but also by the large cemetery with more than one thousand burials of men *and* women (remarkably without ossuaries for

secondary burials). The assumption that it was only a Roman *villa rustica* used for agriculture (Pauline Donceel-Voûte, Robert Donceel) cannot conclusively explain the connection with the written finds and the water installations oriented toward purity requirements (Jodi Magness). This also applies to the interpretation that it was a military fortress (Norman Golb), which derives from the large two-story tower. A connection with a religious community, probably a (not necessarily homogeneous) group of Essenes or Essene-like settlers, who turned away from Jerusalem 21 km to the west and settled in the lower Jordan Valley or the shore zone of the Dead Sea, is therefore still the most plausible assumption. However, there is no agreement on the exact dating of the religious community of about 150–200 persons, called “Essenic” or “sectarian,” at Qumran. The second half of the first century BCE is certain, but an earlier date around 100 BCE is also possible. It is still not completely clear how the facility in Qumran related to the workshops located 3 km south, to the date and balsam plantations in ‘Ain Feskha, or to the more southern settlements in ‘Ēn Boqēq and ‘Ēn Gedi, even if it is now accepted that the settlement Ḥirbet Qumrān was integrated into the regional economy (agriculture, handicrafts, and trade) and was by no means isolated.

After a fire in 9/8 BCE (Jodi Magness), the destroyed site was rebuilt and used under Archelaus (4 BCE–6 CE) until it was destroyed by Flavius Vespasian in the context of the Jewish War in 68 CE, after which it was no longer inhabited by Essenes. This was followed by a short period of use during which the rebuilt facility was used as a Roman garrison during the siege of Masada (see §8.6.4).

The so-called scriptorium, the room in which writing utensils were found, originates from the second phase of use around the turn of the millennium. A connection between the settlement and the production of the scrolls is therefore assumed by most interpreters, even if such a connection remains very uncertain, strictly speaking. The scrolls, which were first discovered in 1947, were not found in the settlement, but in eleven nearby caves (since 2017, twelve), some of which were artificially created in the marl terraces and difficult to reach. At least a small part of the more than ten thousand fragments, which belong to about nine hundred scrolls (mainly → parchment, about 10 percent → papyrus, one document on a copper sheet), seems to have been written in Qumran itself, which is also indicated by a few pieces of blank parchment from Qumran from the antiquities market. Lastly, in 2014, the inventory of texts from Qumran was slightly expanded again when nine leather phylacteries/tefillin were

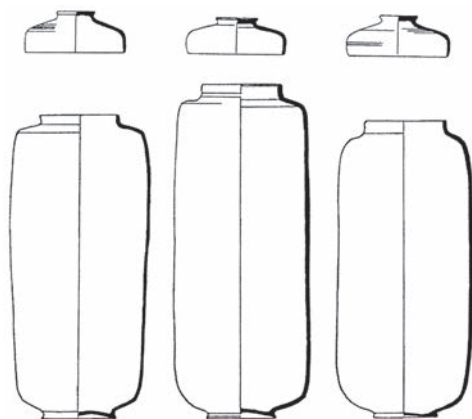


Fig. 57. Typical cylindrical Qumran jars from Cave 1 which were found in great number in Qumran and which are sometimes called “scroll jars.”

opened containing small pieces of inscribed parchment (with the decalogue text) (Yonatan Adler). In the twelfth cave, discovered in 2017, there were no other scrolls except broken jugs and some parchment (Oren Gutfeld). While some scrolls were most likely written in Qumran (although the term *scriptorium* for the room with tables and writing utensils is probably rather inappropriate), other scrolls are certainly older than the settlement and were brought by the settlers or hidden there during the Jewish uprisings. In Cave 1, the scrolls were kept in characteristic jugs (fig. 57); similar pottery was found near Jericho and Masada (Rachel Bar-Nathan).

The predominantly locally produced ceramic types of the residential caves and the settlement (among which the absence of Roman *terra sigillata* is as striking as the presence of imported pieces produced in Jerusalem) also show parallels to the Judean pottery in the lower Jordan Valley and the other settlements on the western shore of the Dead Sea.

The manuscripts found in Qumran include about two hundred copies of biblical books, as well as translations, commentaries, paraphrases, and some sectarian and nonsectarian writings written in Qumran. The scrolls date predominantly between the middle of the third century BCE and 70 CE. The oldest scroll fragment is 4Q17, which contains parts of Exodus and Leviticus and dates around 250 BCE. All Hebrew Bible/Old Testament books except Esther and Nehemiah are fragmentarily or fully documented, especially the Psalms (forty scrolls and scroll fragments), Deuteronomy (twenty-nine), and the prophet Isaiah (twenty-one). The popularity of these books in Qumran corresponds to the strong reception of these books in the New Testament. In addition to the biblical books, so-called apocryphal books (Jubilees, Enoch literature) are documented several times.

The manuscripts are written in Old Hebrew (predominantly the Assyrian or Aramaic square script), Aramaic (approximately seventy, twenty-two of which reflect pre-Qumran traditions), and Greek (eight biblical texts). Twelve biblical manuscripts use the archaic Paleo-Hebrew lettering that is otherwise only used for the Tetragrammaton in biblical manuscripts. It is very significant that in Qumran different text forms appear next to each other (e.g., in the book of Jeremiah). In addition to so-called proto-Masoretic manuscripts, that is, manuscripts with text forms preceding the Masoretic tradition, there are proto-Samaritan manuscripts and manuscripts that could contain the Hebrew *Vorlage* (Hebrew parent text) of the Septuagint text or are close to it (Emanuel Tov, Armin Lange). As mentioned above, the distinction is made between sectarian and nonsectarian to mark which writings can be assigned to the Qumran community. The residents, however, did not form a religiosociological sect, which is why the term *sectarian* is rightly rejected by some researchers. Others, however, continue to use it neutrally (Sacha Stern) to outline the linguistic peculiarities of the texts and the stock of ideas and concepts that guided and formed the identity of the Qumran community.

The History of Israel in the Roman Period: An Overview

Bernett, Monika. *Der Kaiserkult in Judäa unter den Herodiern und Römern: Untersuchungen zur politischen und religiösen Geschichte Judäas von 30 v. bis 66 n. Chr.* WUNT 203. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007. ♦ **Bringmann**, Klaus. *Geschichte der Juden im Altertum: Vom babylonischen Exil bis zur arabischen Eroberung.* Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005. ♦ **Eck**, Werner. *Rom und Judaea: Fünf Vorträge zur römischen Herrschaft in Palaestina.* Tria Corda 2. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007. ♦ **Eckhardt**, Benedikt. *Jewish Identity and Politics Between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba: Groups, Normativity, and Rituals.* JSJSup 155. Leiden: Brill, 2012. ♦ **Erlemann**, Kurt, Karl Leo **Noethlichs**, Klaus **Scherberich**, Thomas **Wagner**, and Jürgen **Zangenberg**, eds. *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur.* 5 vols. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2004–2008. ♦ **Franke-mölle**, Hubert. *Frühjudentum und Urchristentum: Vorgeschichte, Verlauf, Auswirkungen (4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.).* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006. ♦ **Grabbe**, Lester L. *Introduction to First Century Judaism: Jewish Religion and History in the Second Temple Period.* London: T&T Clark, 1995. ♦ **Grabbe**. *The Jews under the Roman Shadow (4 BCE–150 CE).* Vol. 4 of *History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period.* LSTS 99. London: Bloomsbury, 2021. ♦ **Meyers**, Eric M., and Mark A. **Chancey**. *Alexander to Constantine.* Vol. 3 of *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. ♦ **Ritter**, Bradley. *Judeans in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire: Rights, Citizenship and Civil Discord.* JSJSup 170. Leiden: Brill, 2015. ♦ **Schürer**, Emil, ed. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135).* Vol. 1. Revised and edited by Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar. London: T&T Clark, 1973. ♦ **Seeman**, Chris. *Rome and Judea in Transition: Hasmonean Relations with the Roman Republic and the Evolution of the High Priesthood.* New York: Lang, 2013. ♦ **Tomson**, Peter J., and Joshua **Schwartz**, eds. *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write Their History.* CRINT 13.

Leiden: Brill, 2014. ♦ **Weikert**, Christopher. *Von Jerusalem zu Aelia Capitolina: Die römische Politik gegenüber den Juden von Vespasian bis Hadrian*. Hypomnemata 200. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016. ♦ **Wilker**, Julia. *Für Rom und Jerusalem: Die herodianische Dynastie im 1. Jahrhundert n.Chr.* Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Antike, 2007.

The overview of the history of Israel could end here. Not because the history of Israel ended, but because the texts of the Hebrew Bible, apart from a few exceptions, do not refer to events after 63 BCE. Therefore, further Jewish history under Roman rule up to the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE is traditionally (in theological studies) the subject matter of New Testament history. One of the exceptions, however, is the Greek book of Wisdom, which was written after Marcus Antonius was replaced by the later Caesar Octavianus Augustus. This event is usually linked to the conquest of Alexandria (30 BCE). In order to underline the continuity of the history of the biblical Israel even in the Roman period, a brief overview covering the period until 135 CE is therefore included.

8.1. PALESTINE'S REORGANIZATION UNDER ROMAN RULE

Eck, Werner. *Judäa—Syria Palästina: Die Auseinandersetzung einer Provinz mit römischer Politik und Kultur*. TSAJ 157. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. ♦ **Mason**, Steve. *Orientation to the History of Roman Judaea*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016. ♦ **Schneider**, Wolfgang Christian. "Historische Kontexte: Palästina unter römischer Herrschaft: Die römische Eroberung von Syrien und Palästina." Pages 184–88 in *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur: Prolegomena—Quellen—Geschichte*. Edited by Kurt Erlemann, Karl Leo Noethlichs, Klaus Scherberich, and Jürgen Zangenberg. Vol. 1 of *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2004.

With the liquidation of the Seleucid Empire and the incorporation of the Hasmonean royalty, Pompeius established the province of Syria, which fundamentally reorganized the borders of Palestine (see §10.4, map 19). The coastal towns and the Transjordanian towns of the later Decapolis (Dion, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Gerasa, Amman) were placed directly under the authority of the provincial governor, Scaurus, and were thus able to develop into an important power factor. Judea initially remained semi-autonomous: the high priest exercised jurisdictional and executive power, but at the same time remained completely dependent on Rome.

Under the second governor, Gabinius (58–54 BCE)—as a result of the uprising of Alexander (see §8.2)—the influence of the high priest was further limited to the area of cultic matters due to the formation of five administrative districts with five local jurisdictions (Jerusalem, Gadara [Gader]/Judea, Jericho, Sepphoris/Galilee, Amathus/Perea). The tax revenue, which also financed the Roman troops in the country, was collected by Roman tenants.

8.2. THE REVOLTS OF ALEXANDER AND ANTIGONUS

Eckhardt, Benedikt, ed. *Jewish Identity and Politics Between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba: Groups, Normativity, and Rituals*. JSJSup 155. Leiden: Brill, 2012. ♦ **Plöger**, Otto. *Aus der Spätzeit des Alten Testaments*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971.

Soon, the first pro-Hasmonean revolts took place against Aulus Gabinius (58–54 BCE), the governor and proconsul of the Roman province of Syria. Aristobulus II (67–63 BCE), who had been pushed to take a back seat in the course of the Roman intervention by Pompeius and who had been taken hostage with his sons in Rome, made a successful escape and returned to Judea in 57 BCE. The firstborn son of Aristobulus II, Alexander, encouraged by initial military successes in Judea, tried to take power in Jerusalem (by accessing the royal title and replacing the high priest Hyrcanus) but was defeated by the later *triumvir* Marcus Antonius. In this process, Marcus Antonius was assisted by the strategist Antipater, who in turn supported the high priest Hyrcanus. Alexander fled to the Hasmonean fortress, Alexandreion. Gabinius then had the Hasmonean fortresses Machaerus, Hyrcania, and Alexandreion destroyed and—in order to put a stop to further pro-Hasmonean attempts to reestablish the kingdom—weakened the position of the leaders in Jerusalem.

Together with his father Aristobulus II, Antigonus, a brother of Alexander, tried again in the following period to rebel against Roman power (when the Parthians briefly invaded Judea) (42 BCE) and to gain the rank of king and high priest, but Aristobulus II soon had to surrender in the destroyed fortress of Machaerus and was taken to Rome. Antigonus-Matthias was captured and executed in Antioch at the command of Marcus Antonius when Herod the Great became king in Jerusalem 37 BCE.

8.3. JUDEA AFTER CAESAR'S VICTORY

Mason, Steve. *Orientation to the History of Roman Judaea*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016. ♦ **Udoh**, Fabian E. *To Caesar What Is Caesar's: Tribute, Taxes, and Imperial Administration in Early Roman Palestine (63 B.C.E.–70 C.E.)*. BJS 343. Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006.

During the conflicts between Julius Caesar and Pompeius from 49 BCE onwards, John Hyrcanus II (76–67/63–40 BCE) and Antipater supported the rising ruler in the battle in Egypt and were subsequently rewarded for their loyalty.

John Hyrcanus II was appointed ethnarch and named “Friend of Rome.” Antipater received Roman citizenship and was made procurator. The free practice of religion was granted in Judea and the → diaspora communities of the Roman Empire. Power over the economically important port city of Jaffa/Joppa was granted to the high priest, which noticeably increased the tax revenue. Antipater immediately carried out an administrative reform, turning his sons into strategists: Herod in Galilee and Phasael in Judea-Perea. After the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, the situation in Judea became even more troubled, driven by the intensified tax exploitation that Antipater's support of Caesar's killers (Cassius and Brutus) had required. With the help of the Parthians, the Hasmonean Antigonus Mattathias (40–37 BCE), a son of Aristobulus II (67–63 BCE), came to power in Jerusalem and took the place of the previously mutilated high priest, John Hyrcanus II. Herod escaped to Rome after having brought his family to safety in the Masada fortress at the Dead Sea. Since Rome needed an ally against the Parthians, the Senate declared Herod (40/37–4 BCE) *rex socius et amicus populi*, and in 40 BCE he became king of Judea. The → client monarchy meant extensive autonomy as long as Roman interests were safeguarded. With Herod, Hasmonean rule and the last dynastic royal family ended, and the Herodians—named after Herod the Great—entered the (Roman dominated) stage. The Herodians formed a wide, genealogically branched network of clientelism.

Although the Hasmoneans no longer had direct political influence or the high priesthood, their influence remained strong, leading to tensions during Herod's reign.

8.4. HEROD THE GREAT

Ariel, Donald T., and Jean-Philippe **Fontanille**. *The Coins of Herod: A Modern Analysis and Die Classification*. AJEC 79. Leiden: Brill, 2012. ♦ **Baltrusch**, Ernst. *Herodes: König im Heiligen Land: Eine Biographie*. Munich: Beck, 2012. ♦ **Curran**, John. "Philorhomaioi: The Herods Between Rome and Jerusalem." *JSJ* 45 (2014): 493–522. ♦ **Dąbrowa**, Edward. *The Hasmoneans and Their State: A Study in History, Ideology, and the Institutions*. Electrum 16. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2010. ♦ **Günther**, Linda-Marie. *Herodes der Große*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012. ♦ **Günther**, ed. *Herodes und Jerusalem*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007. ♦ **Günther**, ed. *Herodes und Rom*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016. ♦ **Günther**. "König Herodes in der jüngeren historischen Forschung." Pages 79–88 in *Zu Bethlehem geboren? Das Jesus-Buch Benedikts XVI. und die Wissenschaft*. Edited by Thomas Söding. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2012. ♦ **Lichtenberger**, Achim. *Die Baupolitik Herodes des Großen*. ADPV 26. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999. ♦ **Lykke**, Anne. *Reign and Religion in Palestine: The Use of Sacred Iconography in Jewish Coinage*. ADPV 44. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015. ♦ **Magness**, Jodi. "The Cults of Isis and Kore at Samaria-Sebaste in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods." *HTR* 94 (2001): 157–77. ♦ **Marshak**, Adam K. *The Many Faces of Herod the Great*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ♦ **Netzer**, Ehud. *The Architecture of Herod, the Great Builder*. TSAJ 117. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006. ♦ **Netzer**. *Die Paläste der Hasmonäer und Herodes' des Großen*. Mainz: von Zabern, 1999. ♦ **Porat**, Roi, Rachel **Laureys-Chachy**, and Yakov **Kalman**. *Herodium: Final Reports of the 1972–2010 Excavations: Herod's Tomb Precinct*. Vol. 1 of *Herodium: Final Reports of the 1972–2010 Excavations*. Edited by Ehud Netzer. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2015. ♦ **Regev**, Eyal. "Inside Herod's Courts: Social Relations and Royal Ideology in the Herodian Palaces." *JSJ* 43 (2012): 180–214. ♦ **Richardson**, Peter, and Amy Marie **Fisher**. *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans*. 2nd ed. Routledge Ancient Biographies. London: Routledge, 2018. ♦ **Schneider**, Thomas, ed. *Herod the Great*. NEA 77.2 (2014). ♦ **Vermes**, Geza. *The True Herod*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. ♦ **Vogel**, Manuel. *Herodes: König der Juden, Freund der Römer*. BG 5. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002. ♦ **Wenning**, Robert. "Das Grab Herodes des Großen: Israel—Herodium." *WUB* 45 (2007): 68–69. ♦ **Zangenberg**, Jürgen, and Helga **Kaiser**, eds. *Herodes: Grausam und genial*. WUB 70. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2013.

After harsh battles in Idumea and Galilee, Herod was only able to prevail against Antigonus (40–37 BCE) in 37 BCE with the support of Roman troops. Since Antigonus resisted bitterly until his execution in the Baris/ the Antonia Fortress, the conquest of Jerusalem became a bloodbath. This weakened Herod's position among the Hasmoneans' followers. Even

Herod's marriage to the Hasmonean Mariamne, Alexander's daughter (see §8.2), which took place during the siege of Jerusalem, did not change this.

8.4.1. The Distorted Picture of the Despot Herod

The sources, especially the New Testament (the legend of the slaughtering of the innocents in Bethlehem, Matt 2:16) and Josephus, portray Herod as a cruel and ruthless despot. This distortion is superimposed over the historical achievements of a long reign (37–4 BCE) that attests to Herod's great political skill such that, despite ruling in Rome's shadow, he brought the territory of his reign into a period of economic prosperity. Herod was distinguished through his broad education and possessed exceptional organizational and political talents. He often reacted flexibly and with foresight in response to developing situations.

8.4.2. Herod's Construction Policy

A visible expression of Herod's political success is his comprehensive construction policy, which began after the stabilization of his rule and was financed by high taxes. Like Masada, Herod also renovated the destroyed fortresses of Hyrcania, Alexandreion, and Machaerus with magnificent palaces. The Herodeion near Bethlehem was even architecturally designed by Herod the Great (37–4 BCE) as both a fortress and a palace. The whole country was covered with a system of comparable fortresses. Herod developed a luxurious palace complex in Jericho, where he would spend each winter due to the mild climate. The maritime trade base, Straton's Tower, was extended as a Hellenistic polis under the name Caesarea Maritima. It featured temples dedicated to Roma and Augustus. Similarly, an Augustus temple was installed in Samaria under the name Sebaste. Herod also replaced a former Isis-Sarapis shrine in Samaria/Sebaste with a sanctuary of the Greco-Roman goddess Kore when he was reaffirmed as king of the region by Octavian after 30 BCE (Jodi Magness, Anne Lykke).

Representative state buildings such as theaters, amphitheaters, hippodromes, and agora turned the cities into visible symbols of power and their legitimation by the "ruler of the world" in Rome. Thereby, Herod was not only a Hellenist faithful to Rome, but at the same time—and not only for political reasons—he was a Judean and a believing Jew who respected both Jewish tradition and Jewish laws more than he broke them. This can be seen not least in his largest construction project, the Jerusalem temple.

8.4.3. The Herodian Temple in Jerusalem

Herod the Great (37–4 BCE) designed Jerusalem as the capital and center of his rule with Hellenistic architecture and the Antonia Fortress, north of the temple district. Of particular importance was Herod's redesign of the temple (see fig. 58), which took from 20 BCE to 9/8 BCE and featured an extension of the temple district to more than twice its former area, a massive wall enclosure built of huge ashlar stones (today only visible from the outside at the Wailing Wall [or "Western Wall," Hebrew: כֹּתֵל *kōtel*]), columned halls above the outer walls, and new staggered stairways to the temple district from south and west, which made the sanctuary the visible center, both of the city (trade and market square and thus the center of public life) and of Herodian power (in accordance with Herod's self-understanding as the successor to David and Solomon).

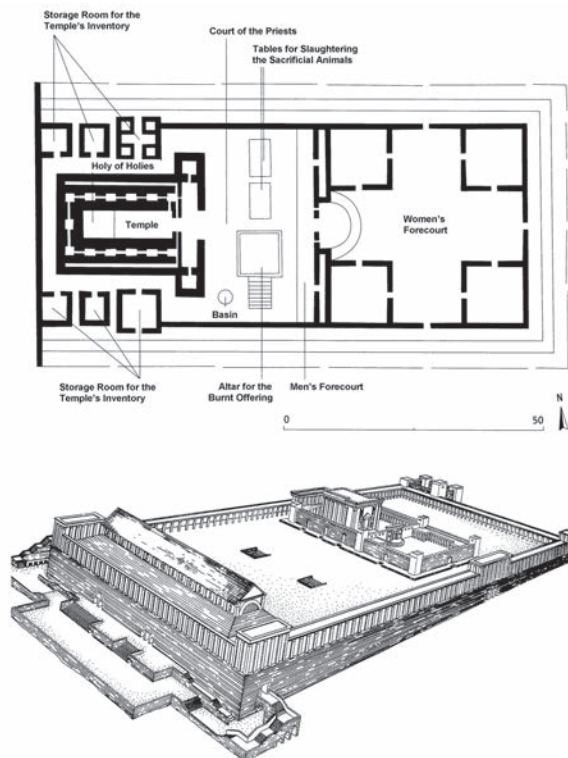


Fig. 58. Reconstruction of the Herodian temple district surrounded by columns. The sketch shows the schematic structure of the temple complex with the main building, outer buildings, sacrificial area, and the divided courtyards.

8.4.4. Conflicts over Herod's Political Heritage

Toward the end of Herod the Great's (37–4 BCE) reign, massive tensions arose at the royal court between pro-Hasmonean and pro-Herodian Roman circles, which made claims to succession in changing coalitions. Herod reacted with mistrust and unswerving interest in maintaining his power. Thus, he had his sons—Alexander and Aristobulus, who had been trained in Rome—executed in Berytos/Beirut in 9/8 BCE. Shortly before his own death, he had his eldest son, Antipater, executed in 5/4 BCE under suspicion of high treason with Roman approval. After Herod died in 4 BCE and was buried in the Herodeion, open tensions erupted again. The following year was marked by multiple uncoordinated revolts in the country (Judas the Galilean in Sepphoris, Simon of Transjordan from Athronges in Emmaus), which were brutally suppressed by Varus, the Roman governor of Syria, in order to partly restore public order.

8.5. HEROD'S SUCCESSORS

Giambrone, Anthony. "The Coins of Philip the Tetrarch and the Imperial Cult: A View from Paneas on the Fall of Sejanus." *JSJ* 52.2 (2021): 197–227. ♦ **Henten**, Jan Willem van. "Rebellion under Herod the Great and Archelaus: Prominent Motifs and Narrative Function." Pages 241–70 in *The Jewish Revolt against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. *JSJSup* 154. Edited by Mladen Popović. Leiden: Brill, 2011. ♦ **Jacobson**, David M. *Agrippa II: The Last of the Herods*. Routledge Ancient Biographies. London: Routledge, 2019. ♦ **Kogon**, Aaron J., and Jean-Philippe **Fontanille**. *The Coinage of Herod Antipas: A Study and Die Classification of the Earliest Coins of Galilee*. *AJEC* 102. Leiden: Brill, 2018. ♦ **Schumacher**, Thomas. "Herrscher zur Zeit Jesu: Das Reich unter den Nachfolgern des Herodes." *WUB* 70 (2013): 26–41. ♦ **Schwartz**, Daniel R. "Politische Verhältnisse: Römische Herrschaft, Herodes der Große, Antipas." Pages 185–97 in *Jesus Handbuch*. Edited by Christine Jacobi, Lena Nogosseck, and Jens Schröter. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017. ♦ **Vermes**, Geza. *The True Herod*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Since the → client monarchy was mandated *ad personam* from Rome, the succession of Archelaus—who was appointed by Herod as his principal heir for Judea, Samaria, and Idumea—had to be confirmed in Rome. Herod's sons Philip and Herod Antipas likewise asserted their claims in Rome before Emperor Augustus (31 BCE–14 CE). Since Archelaus brutally suppressed a revolt of Pharisaic partisans at a Passover festival in

Jerusalem immediately after the death of Herod, a Pharisaic delegation in Rome demanded that Judea be integrated into the Roman province of Syria and subordinated to a governor. Augustus divided the hegemony between the sons of Herod. Archelaus (4 BCE–6 CE) was appointed ethnarch of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, but was no longer allowed to hold the title of king. Herod Antipas (4 BCE–39 CE) was appointed tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. Philip (4 BCE–33/34 CE) was appointed tetrarch of the Transjordanian regions: Trachonitis, Batanea, Auranitis, Gaulanitis, and Paneas/Bāniyās (see §10.4, map 19).

8.5.1. Archelaus's Inadequacy and Reorganization in Judea

Because of his poor governance—which was connected with arbitrary acts, such as the deposition of the high priest, Joazar—and his marriage with Glaphyra, the widow of his executed half-brother, Alexander, Archelaus turned the people and leading circles against him. Caesar successfully intervened, which led to Archelaus's banishment to Gaul in 6 CE and to the transformation of his tetrarchy into a Roman province under the leadership of Caesar's special envoy Quirinius. Thus, this brought Judea under direct Roman control. Capital jurisdiction and fiscal sovereignty no longer belonged to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem but to the prefect in Caesarea Maritima. On the other hand, the Sanhedrin, which consisted of seventy members and was headed by the high priest, was given far-reaching domestic political powers as the central organ of Jewish self-administration. The reorganization in Archelaus's dominion was associated with an estimate of taxable assets (census), which was anachronistically associated with Jesus's birth year (7/6 BCE) in Luke 2:1–4. The census intensified anti-Roman emotions that had been smoldering for some time, not least because of the high tax burden, and led to the emergence of the Zealot movement. Founded by Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37), the Zealots formed a group which, on the basis of a radical theocratic ideology, engaged in armed conflict for political independence.

8.5.2. Herod Agrippa I and the Conflicts over the Imperial Cult

Herod Antipas (4 BCE–39 CE), who reigned in Galilee during the time of the public appearance of Jesus of Nazareth, expanded Sepphoris as a Hellenistic residence and had Tiberias rebuilt on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee in 19 CE but was also banished to Gaul in 39 CE. Herod

Agrippa I (39–44 CE) was appointed as his successor, who had already taken dominion of a portion of his later territory after the death of Philip, the Tetrarch, and was even granted the title of king from Gaius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, later known as Caligula (37–41 CE). When he took office in Alexandria, there were conflicts between the → diaspora Jews and the Hellenistic upper class, who had imperial portraits installed in the synagogues in order to enforce Jewish loyalty to Rome. Jews responded to this serious violation of autonomy by refusing to worship the imperial portraits. This, in turn, resulted in persecution and the deprivation of rights. Pressure towards the imperial cult, underlined by Caligula's intention to even erect a statue of the emperor's likeness in the Jerusalem temple, subsequently led to conflicts in the heartland. Only the more tolerant religious policy of Emperor Claudius (41–54 CE) calmed matters.

Claudius also entrusted Judea, Samaria, and Idumea to Agrippa I so that he could rule over the entire territory of the former kingdom of Herod the Great (see §10.4, map 19). His rule aimed to promote a national identity tied to the temple in the shadow of Rome. This political context forms also the background of the later persecution of the early Christian community in Jerusalem. After his death in 44 CE, the area was again transformed into a procuratorial province, which turned out to be a grave mistake (Bernd Kollmann), as it considerably strengthened the resistance against Rome. Agrippa's son, Julius Agrippa II, was born in 28 CE and so was still too young to be brought from Rome (where he was raised) to Jerusalem as ruler. He was initially granted partial dominion along with the supervision of the Jerusalem temple and then successively received more power. As a Roman → vassal, he took part in the campaign against the Parthians in 54 CE, which increased his reputation with Vespasian. He tried to settle the conflicts between the locals and the Romans but was then forced to take part in the Roman suppression of the Jewish uprising in 66 CE.

8.6. THE JEWISH WAR, 66–70 CE

Berlin, Andrea M., and J. Andrew **Overman**, eds. *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*. London: Routledge, 2011. ♦ **Bonnie**, Rick, Raimo **Hakola**, and Ulla **Tervahauta**, eds. *The Synagogue in Ancient Palestine: Current Issues and Emerging Trends*. FRLANT 279. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020. ♦ **Deutsch**, Robert. *Jewish Coinage during the First Revolt*

against Rome, 66–73 CE. Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications, 2017.

♦ **Eckhardt**, Benedikt. *Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba: Groups, Normativity, and Rituals*. JSJSup 155. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

♦ **Giambrone**, Anthony. *Rethinking the Jewish War: Archeology, Society, Traditions*. EBib 84. Leuven: Peeters, 2021.

♦ **Hengel**, Martin. *Die Zeloten: Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n. Chr.* 3rd ed. WUNT 283. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

♦ **Hengel**. *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* London: T&T Clark, 1989.

♦ **Mason**, Steve. *A History of the Jewish War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

♦ **Popović**, Mladen, ed. *The Jewish Revolt against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. JSJSup 154. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

♦ **Reeder**, Caryn A. “Gender, War, and Josephus.” *JSJ* 46 (2015): 65–85.

♦ **Regev**, Eyal. “Josephus, the Temple, and the Jewish War.” Pages 279–93 in *Flavius Josephus: Interpretation and History*. Edited by Menahem Mor, Jack Pastor, and Pnina Stern. JSJSup 146. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

♦ **Ronning**, Christian, and Johannes **Hahn**, eds. *Zerstörungen des Jerusalemer Tempels: Geschehen—Wahrnehmung—Bewältigung: Ergebnisse eines interdisziplinären Kolloquiums am 17.–18. November 2000 in Münster*. WUNT 147. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002.

♦ **Schmid**, Konrad. “The Rise and Fall of the Notion of ‘Spätjudentum’ in Christian Biblical Scholarship.” Pages 63–78 in *Protestant Bible Scholarship: Antisemitism, Philosemitism and Anti-Judaism*. Edited by Arjen F. Bakker, René Bloch, Yael Fisch, Paula Fredriksen, and Hindy Najman. JSJSup 200. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

♦ **Schwartz**, Daniel R., and Ze’ev **Weiss**, eds. *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History? On Jews and Judaism Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple*. AJEC 78. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

♦ **Schwartz**, Joshua, and Peter J. **Tomson**, eds. *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: The Interbellum 70–132 CE*. CRINT 15. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

8.6.1. Background and Origins of the Judean Uprising

No *single* event triggered the Jewish War or served as its background. Rather, it resulted from an accumulation of dissatisfaction with Roman rule. Such disaffection had already intensified during the reign of Herod the Great, but following the death of Agrippa I (39–44 CE), it repeatedly unleashed in unrest and mass protests. Since the renewed subordination under a governor in Caesarea Maritima was perceived as an attempted incapacitation, the Zealot movement grew enormously in popularity. When the governor Gessius Florus (64–66 CE) misappropriated the temple treasury in order to pay taxes, the situation in Jerusalem escalated. Despite demonstrations of great severity (looting, crucifixions), the governor did not succeed in calming the charged mood, so that the temple

district was ultimately occupied by protestors—under the leadership of Eleazar, son of the high priest Hannas/Ananias—and the daily sacrifice for the emperor was stopped (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.409–410). This was tantamount to an open revolt against Rome.

Julius Agrippa's mediation efforts were aggressively rejected and his military escort was trapped in the citadel. Menahem, the son of the Zealot founder Judas (see §8.5.1), entered Jerusalem armed and besieged the citadel. He had the high priest Hannas/Ananias killed for his loyalty to Rome, but despite the capture of the Antonia Fortress, which contained the Roman cohort, he was unable to assert his claim to power in Jerusalem and was murdered by Eleazar's priestly aristocratic followers (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.443–456). Thus, Eleazar played an essential role in the insurrection, which predestined him to become commander in Idumea (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.566).

8.6.2. The Zealots' Military Resistance

The wave of violence and outbreak of party disputes soon spread from Jerusalem to the whole country, leading to a civil war between the Hellenists loyal to Rome and nationally-minded, anti-Roman Jews. The Syrian governor Cestius tried in vain to restore order in Jerusalem by besieging the insurgents, but this failed and further boosted the Zealots' resistance. The Zealots took up defensive positions in the Hasmonean fortresses, which they firmly controlled, as well as in Jerusalem and Galilee, in preparation for the expected Roman counterattack. In Jerusalem, the central place of resistance, the forces were led by the high priest Ananus ben Hanan/Ananus (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.563), who had been deposed by King Agrippa because of the assassination of James (the brother of Jesus) in 62 CE (Josephus, *A.J.* 20.97–203). In Galilee, the forces were led by the historian Josephus, who did not act energetically enough in the eyes of the radical forces and was subsequently suspected of collaboration by the Zealot John of Gischala. After general Flavius Vespasian first took Gamla and Gischala and ultimately the Galilean fortress Jotapata, which resisted under the leadership of Josephus, Josephus changed sides. John of Gischala was driven out of Galilee following Rome's success and moved to Jerusalem, wherein his rival, the Zealot leader Simon bar Giora, had already moved. In the confusion of the civil war, in which the high priest Hanan/Ananus was murdered, the Jerusalem Christian community settled in Pella in Transjordan.

8.6.3. Roman Intervention by Titus and the Destruction of the Temple

After the civil war and the political turmoil in Rome following Nero's suicide, Vespasian finally emerged as emperor in 69 CE. He instructed his son Titus to quell the uprising in Judea, which had meanwhile been contained to Jerusalem due to the intervention of Roman troops. The insurgents could not withstand the Roman siege. Initially, the Antonia Fortress fell in June 70 CE followed a little later by the temple district. The temple was plundered and set on fire and thus was completely destroyed. To this day on the annual fast day of Tisha B'Av, Jews remember the temple's destructions in both 587/86 BCE and in 70 CE. These destructions are traditionally dated to the same day, that is, on the ninth of Ab (m. Ta'an. 4:6). Because of the bitter resistance of the Zealots, the city of Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Roman troops with great severity and many bloody sacrifices. Simon bar Giora and John of Gischala were captured and were brought in triumphal procession, together with the cult objects (Torah scrolls, the seven-armed candelabrum/menorah, the table for the bread of the Presence) from the Second Temple, in 71 CE to Rome (depicted on the Arch of Titus, detail, fig. 59).

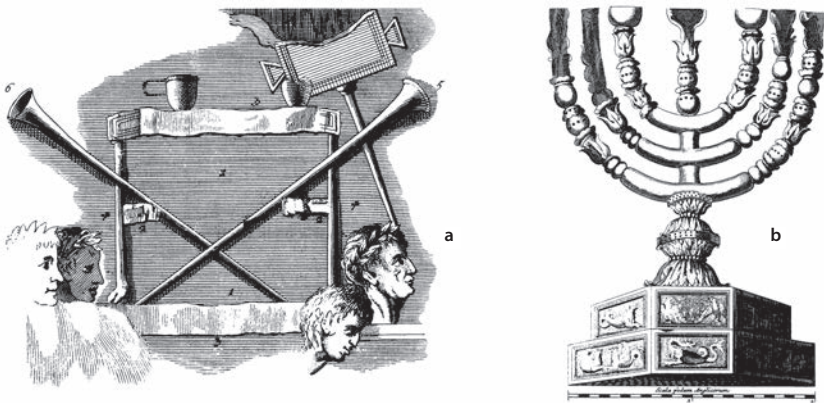


Fig. 59. Depiction of the table for the shewbread, the bread of the Presence, including the two trumpets (a) and the menorah or seven-armed candelabrum (upper section with seven arms and flower wreath above the pedestal) (b) on the Arch of Titus in Rome. The single-gate triumphal arch was probably erected by Emperor Domitian (81–96 CE) on the Roman Forum in honor of the victory of Emperor Titus over the rebels in Judea. The so-called booty scene shows Roman soldiers carrying the Jerusalem temple treasure following the conquest of Jerusalem (70 CE). The Dutch orientalist Adrianus Reland had the drawings shown here made at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

8.6.4. Masada

After the fall of Jerusalem, the Zealots continued to resist in the Hasmonean fortresses of Herodeion, Machaerus, and Masada. In the course of suppressing the uprising, the settlement at Qumran was also torched to the ground. Eleazar ben Yair, another descendant of the founder of the Zealot movement, entrenched himself in Masada. In order to escape the capture of the fortress after the extensive siege by the Roman legate Flavius Silva, the Zealots known as Sicarii committed collective suicide in 74 CE. After the conquest of Masada, the Romans also abandoned the complex in Qumran, which had been rebuilt during the siege and used as a garrison.

8.6.5. The Re-formation of Judaism after the Temple's Destruction

The social, political, economic, and religious consequences for Judaism were lasting and profound. The → diaspora communities, particularly the Egyptian ones in Alexandria and Cyrene, experienced hostility and persecution because they were charged with complicity in the resistance against Rome. This was reinforced by the success that some escaped Zealots had in the diaspora communities with their radical views. The temple of Leontopolis (see §7.4.7) was closed and many Jews were executed in Cyrene.

It was no longer possible to think of a cult in the destroyed city of Jerusalem, which then served as a Roman military camp. This fact was clearly expressed symbolically, as the temple tax was allocated to Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was dissolved, and the Sadducees suffered a considerable loss of status, while the Torah, as the remaining foundation of Judaism, was greatly enhanced. The Pharisaic movement took over the leading role in early Judaism, closely linked to the person of Yohanan ben Zakkai, who developed a center of Jewish scholarship in Jabneh/Jamnia. The origin of the rabbinate in the Tannaim period (the period from 70–ca. 225 CE, in which the legal interpretation of the Mishnah, compiled decisively by Yehûda ha-Nasi, originated) is indeed more complex than that it could be narrowly or exclusively tied to Jabneh. Yet, it certainly has some roots in the destruction of the temple and its consequences.

To conclude the portrayal of the history of Israel with the destruction of the temple in 70 CE creates the danger of linking Jewish history only with the connotations of catastrophe and dissolution and understanding it as a history of discontinuity. For many years this was done from a Chris-

tian perspective and one spoke of “Spätjudentum” (late Judaism), whereas today the more appropriate term “early Judaism” is used (Konrad Schmid). Indeed, Jewish history continues even further (even beyond the present), which is why this history takes a final look at the Bar Kokhba revolt 132–135 CE, the more precise outlines of which, however, remain in the dark.

8.7. THE BAR KOKHBA REVOLT, 132–135 CE

Ben Zeev, Miriam. “New Insights into Roman Policy in Judea on the Eve of the Bar Kokhba Revolt.” *JSJ* 49 (2018): 84–107. ♦ **Küchler**, Max. “Jesus von Nazareth und Schime’on ben Kosiba: Zwei ‘Könige der Juden’ und ihre Sterne in Texten und auf Münzen.” Pages 317–45 in *Jesus—Gestalt und Gestaltungen: Rezeptionen des Galiläers in Wissenschaft, Kirche und Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Gerd Theißen zum 70. Geburtstag*. Edited by Petra von Gemünden and David G. Horrell. NTOA 100. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013. ♦ **Mildenberg**, Leo. *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War*. Typos 6. Aarau: Sauerländer, 1984. ♦ **Schäfer**, Peter, ed. *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome*. TSAJ 100. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003. ♦ **Schwartz**, Joshua, and Peter J. **Tomson**, eds. *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: The Interbellum 70–132 CE*. CRINT 15. Leiden: Brill, 2018. ♦ **Sheinfeld**, Shayna. “Bar Kokhba and Leadership as Seen through the Revolt.” *Religion Compass* 13.7 (2019): 1–10. ♦ **Tilly**, Michael. “Der 2. Jüdische Krieg (Bar-Kochba-Aufstand).” Pages 96–99 in *Judäa und Jerusalem: Leben in römischer Zeit*. Edited by Jürgen Schefzyk and Wolfgang Zwickel. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2010. ♦ **Wise**, Michael Owen. *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea: A Study of the Bar Kokhba Documents*. ABRL. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015. ♦ **Zissu**, Boaz, and Erasmus **Gass**. “The Identification of Biblical Achzib at Khirbet ‘En El-Kizbe in the Judean Shephelah, and the Origins of Shimon Bar Kokhba.” Pages 377–426 in “Go Out and Study the Land” (*Judges 18:2*): *Archaeological, Historical and Textual Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel*. Edited by Aren M. Maeir, Jodi Magness, and Lawrence H. Schiffman. JSJSup 148. Leiden: Brill, 2012. ♦ **Zissu**, Boaz, Roi **Porat**, Boaz **Langford**, and Amos **Frumkin**. “Archaeological Remains of the Bar Kokhba Revolt in the Teomim Cave (Mughâret Umm et Tûeimîn), Western Jerusalem Hills.” *JJS* 62 (2011): 262–83.

While under the Caesars Titus (79–81 CE), Domitian (81–96 CE), and Nerva (96–98 CE), the situation in Judea eased so much that even the temple tax for Jupiter Capitolinus was removed, in the → diaspora areas and possibly also in Palestine there were rebellions during the reigns of Trajan (98–117 CE) and Hadrian (117–138 CE). In 2014, a monumental

Latin inscription from 129/39 CE emerged in Jerusalem, perhaps referring to a visit by Hadrian to the tenth legion “Fretensis Antoniniana” in the city. The secondarily repurposed inscription (which possibly can be supplemented by a piece already known from the nineteenth century) probably originated from a triumphal arch in the north of the Roman city where the legion was stationed (Rina Avner, Roie Greenwald). Perhaps the construction of the Roman theater, which was only discovered in 2017, is also connected with Hadrian’s expected visit. The small theater or Odeon with about two hundred seats was built at the height of the Wilson Arch directly in front of the Herodian temple wall but was not completed (the reasons for that remain unclear; perhaps because of the Bar Kokhba uprising?).

Although Hadrian’s policy was more aimed at balancing and pacifying the empire, an uprising broke out in Judea, the background of which is still not entirely clear. A ban on circumcision mentioned in Roman sources can be largely excluded as the cause, but the plan to rebuild Jerusalem as a Roman colony under the name of Aelia Capitolina and to erect a Jupiter sanctuary on the site of the temple seems to have been one of the triggers of the uprising. The leader was Simon Bar Kosiba, who perhaps came from Achzib in Judea, which Boaz Zissu and Erasmus Gass locate on Ḥirbet ‘Ēn el-Kizbe. The later naming of Bar Kosiba (*kwsbh/kwśbh*) to Bar Koziba (*kwzbh*) “son of a liar” may allude to that topographical designation. The renaming to Bar Kokhba “Son of the Star” could be influenced by Num 24:17 and refer to the messianic claim of his reign. Both epithets could already have been used as statements by proponents and opponents during the revolt. Rabbi Aqiva, for example, is often thought to be the originator of the connection to Num 24:17, but this remains uncertain (Peter Schäfer). The self-conception of Simon Bar Kosiba is preserved in texts from caves near the Dead Sea (Wādī Murabba‘āt/Naḥal Ḥever) and on the Bar Kokhba coins. These use the honorary title “Prince of Israel” (Hebrew *nāśî’*) (see fig. 60) and connect to the Maccabees, the Hasmoneans, the Zealots, and traditions from Qumran. Yet, it does not evince an explicitly messianic claim. However, Simon was probably already associated with Num 24:17 during the uprising. Whether the star or rosette above the temple façade on the Bar Kokhba coins, which were mostly overstruck Roman coins, should be interpreted as a sign of a messianic claim and reception of Num 24:17 remains highly controversial. Other coin legends bear witness to the priest Eleazar, which elicits the connection between the revolt and the plan to rebuild the Jewish temple. This would have been rendered impossible by the plan to establish a Roman temple of Jupiter.

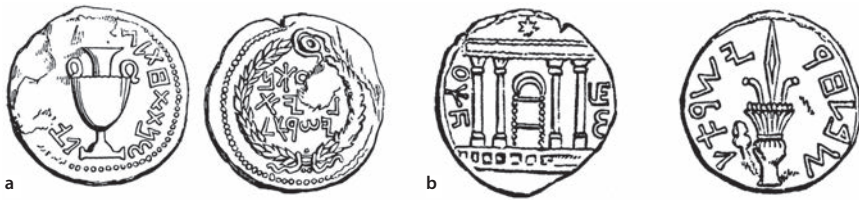


Fig. 60. Coins from the first (a) and second (b) years of the Bar Kokhba revolt. (a) Amphora surrounded by the inscription “first year of the liberation/redemption of Israel” and on the back “Simon, leader/superior of Israel” in a wreath; (b) temple front with the ark or the table for the bread of the Presence in the center; above, a star, and on the sides the inscription “Simon” (*šm-wn*); and on the other side of the coin, a lulav (date-palm frond) and an etrog (a lemon-like citrus fruit) surrounded by the inscription “second year of the liberation of Israel.”

It is still uncertain how far the uprising reached: the core area was Judea and probably did not include Galilee. The extent to which the underground insurgents, after initial military successes against the Romans in Judea, succeeded in bringing Jerusalem under their control in order to construct the new temple and how far they were able to assert the claim of an autonomous state ultimately remains unclear. The coins, which were probably minted outside Jerusalem, with the inscription “for the liberation of Jerusalem” or simply “Jerusalem” and a stylized temple facade with the ark of the covenant or the symbols of the Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles (lulav, the branch of a date palm, and etrog, a citrus fruit) clearly indicate this goal. In addition, Hadrian classified the rebellion as so serious that, after the failure of his governor Tineius Rufus, he sent the general Sextus Julius Severus from Britain to Judea, who suppressed the rebellion. The insurgents hid in inaccessible areas and caves, among others near Ḥirbet ‘Ēn el-Kizbe in Me’arat Ha’Teomim, where in 2009 a → hoard with over eighty Bar Kokhba coins was found (Boaz Zissu and Erasmus Gass). Bar Kokhba was probably killed in the fight for the fortress Bethar (Tel Betar/Bēttēr/Ḥirbet el-Yahūd) near Jerusalem. Perhaps already at an early date (at the latest, however, in the Talmud) he was defamed as Bar Koziba, “son of the lie,” because of his failure. Countless Jews were enslaved or fled before the Roman army into the Judean Desert. The so-called family archive of Babatha, a Jewish woman from Zoara, was found in a cave south of En-Gedi in Naḥal Ḥever. This archive attests to these dramatic circumstances.

After the suppression of the uprising, Jerusalem was renamed “Aelia Capitolina” and developed into a pagan cosmopolitan, multicultural Roman city through the resettlement of non-Jewish inhabitants. The

temple of Jupiter was erected, and an equestrian statue of Hadrian was placed in the temple square. Jews were forbidden from entering the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings under threat of the death penalty. The renaming of the province of Judea as “Syria Palaestina” also signaled to the outside world that Hadrian had restored order and suppressed all violent nationalistic Jewish resistance. It took until Moses Hess (1812–1875), Leon Pinsker (1821–1891), and Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) for the Zionist movement to reestablish the idea of a national Judaism and for this to be realized in the foundation of the modern state of Israel in 1948—not least by resorting to the biblical foundations of Israel.

9 Epilogue

The author's university is located in a traditional mining district, in Bochum in the Ruhrgebiet. This region is currently undergoing a far-reaching process of transformation. Therefore, a mining allegory commends itself. Through this presentation, the reader has laboriously entered the mine of history in order to extract the ore of a history of ancient Israel. Readers may have expected that this history stands directly in the depths of the past and can be mined like a vein in hard rock. That was not the case. Rather, hard work was put into freeing rocks in tunnels and corridors in which it was not always obvious that they contained what was sought. Through laborious procedures the ore was smelted and an abundance of slag was piled up along the way. Often only a handful of metal was produced out of whole mine cars full of boulders. And from that handful, only at some points could a thin thread of history be drawn. The present work has tried to reflect the current state of research. Some things may appear in a new light in the future. *Dies diem docet!* ("One day teaches another!")

Often, working on the history of ancient Israel is a burden for students of theology and for people rooted in faith. They approach a history of Israel with the expectation that it should present biblical history as a continuum and as a whole in the context of the history of the southern Levant. Such readers may well be disappointed after reading this book. The deconstruction of Abraham, Sarah, and the other patriarchal and matriarchal ancestors, the biblical presentation of the exodus, the conquest and glorious royal rule, the political independence of Israel and Judah, exile and restoration may be hard on them and their faith. *The Israel as it is described in the Bible did not exist in this way. Not even the Bible offered everything that obviously belongs to the diversity of this Israel.*

It was rather a struggle for identity *in* history and, less so, an unfolding of a clearly defined entity in the course of history. The biblical presentation has stepped aside and given way to an Israel that is quite different from that in the Bible, yet one in which the biblical version has its roots and remains recognizable. But what does it mean for the texts of the Bible if they must be measured against “history” but do not fully merge into it? Should they be devalued or ultimately valued more highly? When the texts are no longer burdened with having to be historical in all aspects, they reveal their real intention, namely, to *interpret* history in the light of faith. This dimension of the texts could often only be hinted at here and not explicitly or fully unpacked. It is a follow-up task that the exegesis and theology of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible must now take on the basis of the results of a historical analysis like the one presented here.

10

Appendices

10.1. CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEWS

10.1.1. Overview of the Archaeological Periods

Neolithic		ca. 8500–4000 BCE		
Chalcolithic		ca. 4000–3200 BCE		
Early Bronze I	EB I	ca. 3200–3000 BCE		
Early Bronze II	EB II	ca. 3000–2600 BCE		
Early Bronze III	EB III	ca. 2600–2300 BCE		
Early Bronze IV/ Middle Bronze I	EB IV/ MB I	ca. 2300–2000 BCE (nonurban interim period)		
Middle Bronze IIA	MB IIA	ca. 2000–1750 BCE		
Middle Bronze IIB	MB IIB	ca. 1750–1550 BCE		
Late Bronze I	LB I	ca. 1550–1400 BCE		
Late Bronze IIA	LB IIA	ca. 1400–1300 BCE		
Late Bronze IIB	LB IIB	ca. 1300–1150 BCE		
		Conventional CC	Low LC	Modified MCC
Iron IA	I IA/LB III	ca. 1250–1150	ca. 1150–925	ca. 1200–1140/30
Iron IB	I IB	ca. 1150–1000		ca. 1150/40–980
Iron IIA	I IIA	ca. 1000–900	ca. 925–835/30	ca. 980–840/30
	I IIA ₁		ca. 925–900	ca. 980–925
	I IIA ₂		ca. 900–835/30	ca. 925–840/30
Iron IIB	I IIB	ca. 900–700	ca. 830–700	ca. 830–732/01
Iron IIC	I IIC	ca. 700–587 BCE		
Babylonian-Persian/ Persian I	I III	ca. 587–450 BCE or ca. 605–520 and 520–450 BCE ca. 539–450 BCE		
Persian II		ca. 450–333 BCE		
Early Hellenistic		ca. 333–167 BCE		
Late Hellenistic		ca. 167–37 BCE		
Roman		ca. 37 BCE–324 CE		

10.1.2. Egyptian Dynasties from Thutmose to Alexander the Great

Eighteenth Dynasty	1550–1292 BCE
Nineteenth Dynasty	1292–1185 BCE
Twentieth Dynasty	1185–1070/69 BCE
Twenty-First Dynasty	1070/69–946/45 BCE
Twenty-Second Dynasty	946/45–ca. 730 BCE
Twenty-Third Dynasty	ca. 756–716 BCE
Twenty-Fourth Dynasty	ca. 733–712 BCE
Twenty-Fifth Dynasty	ca. 746–656 BCE
Twenty-Sixth Dynasty	672–526/25 BCE
Twenty-Seventh Dynasty	526/25–401 BCE
Twenty-Eighth Dynasty	404–399 BCE
Twenty-Ninth Dynasty	399–380 BCE
Thirtieth Dynasty	380–343/42 BCE
Thirty-First Dynasty	343/42–332 BCE

10.1.3. Overview of Selected Dynasties of Ancient Near Eastern Empires

Selected Neo-Assyrian Kings	
Adad-nirari II	912–891 BCE
Tukulti-Ninurta II	891–884 BCE
Ashurnasirpal II	884–859 BCE
Shalmaneser III	859–824 BCE
Shamshi-Adad V	824–811 BCE
Adad-nirari III	811–783 BCE
Shalmaneser IV	783–773 BCE
Ashur-dan III	773–755 BCE
Ashur-nerari V	755–745 BCE
Tiglath-pileser III	745–727 BCE
Shalmaneser V	727–722 BCE
Sargon II	722–705 BCE
Sennacherib	705–681 BCE
Esarhaddon	681–669 BCE
Ashurbanipal	669–631 BCE

Neo-Babylonian Kings	
Nabopolassar	626–605 BCE
Nebuchadnezzar	605–562 BCE
Evil-Merodach/Amēl-Marduk	562–560 BCE
Nergal-šar-ušur/Neriglissar	559–556 BCE
Lābāši-Marduk	556 BCE
Nabonidus	556–539 BCE

Persian Great Kings	
Cyrus I	640–600 BCE
Cambyes I	600–559 BCE
Cyrus II, the Great	559–530 BCE
Cambyes II	530–522 BCE
Darius I, the Great	522–486 BCE
Xerxes I	486–465 BCE
Artaxerxes I Longimanus	465–424/23 BCE
Xerxes II	424/23 BCE
Sogdianus	423 BCE
Darius II Nothus	423–405/04 BCE
Artaxerxes II Mnemon	405/04–359/58 BCE
Artaxerxes III Ochus	359/58–338 BCE
Artaxerxes IV Arses	338–336 BCE
Darius III Codomannus	336–330 BCE

Kings of Aram-Damascus in the Ninth and Eighth Centuries BCE			
Name	Edward Lipiński	K. Lawson Younger Jr.	Mario Liverani
Ben-Hadad I (uncertain, only attested biblically)	ca. 900–880 BCE	ca. 900–880 BCE	900–875 BCE
Hadadezer	ca. 880–843 BCE	ca. 880–844/43 BCE	875–845 BCE
Hazael	ca. 843–803 BCE	844/43–803 BCE	845–800 BCE
Ben-Hadad II	ca. 803–775 BCE	ca. 803–775 BCE	800–780 BCE
Ḥaḏyān	ca. 775–750 BCE	ca. 775–750 BCE	780–750 BCE
Rezin/Rašyān	ca. 750–732 BCE	ca. 750–732 BCE	750–732 BCE

10.1.4. Synchronistic Overview of the Kings of Israel and Judah

Kings of Israel		Kings of Judah	
Jeroboam I	927/26–907	Rehoboam	926–910
		Abijah	910–908
Nadab	907–906	Asa	908–868
Baasha	906–883		
Elah	883–882		
Zimri	882		
Omri	882 (Tibni)/78–871		
Ahab	871–852	Jehoshaphat	868–847
Ahaziah	852–851 (?)		
Joram	851–845 (?)	Joram	852–847 ^c /847–845
Jehu	845–818	Ahaziah	845 (?)
		Athaliah	845–840 (?)
Jehoahaz	818–802	Joash	840–802/1
Joash	802–787	Amaziah	802/1–773
Jeroboam II	787–747	Azariah/Uzziah	787–773 ^c /773–736
Zechariah	747	Jotham	756–741 ^c
Shallum	747		
Menahem	747–738	Ahaz	741–736 ^c /736–725
Pekahiah	737–736		
Pekah	735–733/32		
Hoshea	732–723	Hezekiah	725–697
Conquest of Samaria	722/20		
		Manasseh	696–642
		Amon	641–640
		Josiah	639–609
		Jehoahaz	609
		Jehoiakim (Eliakim)	608–598
		Jehoiachin	598/97
		Zedekiah (Mattaniah)	598/97–587/86

(^c = Coregency)

The overview given here for orientation is based on Herbert Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn in Grundzügen*, 3rd ed., 2

vols., ATD Ergänzungsreihe 4,1–2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 2:503–5; and Rüdiger Liwak, “III. Israel and Judah,” in *Chronologies of the Ancient World: Names, Dates and Dynasties*, ed. Wouter F. M. Henkelman, BNPSup 1 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007). In order to use a somewhat coherent chronological system for dating in the southern Levant, the supplement volume of Brill’s New Pauly is followed for data on the ancient Near East and Egypt (Joachim Friedrich Quack, Joachim Oelsner, Wilfred H. van Soldt). The dates of the Aramean kings follow the presentation of Mario Liverani.

10.1.5. Overview of the Maccabees and Hasmoneans

Mattathias (<i>of the Hasmon family</i>)	167–166/65 ² BCE
Judas Maccabeus, son of Mattathias	166/65–161 BCE
Jonathan, son of Mattathias	161–142 BCE
Simeon, son of Mattathias	142–134 BCE
John Hyrcanus I, son of Simeon	135/34–104 BCE
Aristobulus I, son of John Hyrcanus I (perhaps the first to bear the title of king)	104–103 BCE
Alexander Jannaeus, son of John Hyrcanus I	103–76 BCE
Salome Alexandra, wife of Aristobulus I and (later) Alexander Jannaeus	76–67 BCE
Aristobulus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus and Salome Alexandra	67–63 BCE
... without or with diminished secular rule ...	
John Hyrcanus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus and Salome Alexandra	63–40 BCE
Mattathias Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II	40–37 BCE

10.1.6. Overview of the Herodian Dynasty

Herod the Great	37–4 BCE
Archelaus	4 BCE–6 CE
Herod Antipas	4 BCE–39 CE
Philip	4 BCE–33/34 CE
Herod Agrippa I (Marcus Julius Agrippa I)	39–44 CE
Herod Agrippa II (Marcus Julius Agrippa II)	50 (?)–92/93 CE

10.1.7. List of High Priests until the Roman Period

Onias I, son of Jaddua	ca. 300 BCE
Simeon I, son of Onias I	ca. 300–280 BCE
Eleazar, son of Onias I	ca. 280–240 BCE
Manasseh, brother of Onias I	ca. 240–220 BCE
Onias II, son of Simeon I	ca. 220–215 BCE
Simeon II, son of Onias II	ca. 215–196 BCE
Onias III, son of Simeon II	196–174 BCE
Jason, son of Simeon II?	174–171 BCE
Menelaus, son of the temple chief Simeon (<i>non-Zadokite</i>)	171–162 BCE
Alcimus/Jacimus/Joachim	162–159 BCE
Seven-year vacancy	159–152 BCE
Jonathan Apphus, brother of Judas Maccabeus (<i>non-Zadokite</i>)	152–142 BCE
Simeon, brother of Judas Maccabeus	142–134 BCE
John Hyrcanus I, son of Simeon Maccabeus	135/34–104 BCE
Judah Aristobulus I, son of John Hyrcanus I	104–103 BCE
Alexander Jannaeus, son of John Hyrcanus I	103–76 BCE
John Hyrcanus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus	76–67 (and again 63–40 BCE)
Aristobulus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus	67–63 BCE
John Hyrcanus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus	63–40 (and before 76–67 BCE)
Antigonus-Mattathias, son of Aristobulus II	40–37 BCE

The list is based on Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus*, Orte und Landschaften der Bibel 4.1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 1148–49. For a complete list, see James C. VanderKam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), 491–92. In addition to the books of Maccabees, Josephus (A.J. 11–14) in particular serves as the source of the partly uncertain reconstruction.

10.2. GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TECHNICAL TERMS

agnatic. From Lat. *agnatus* “one born after.” The term is used in sociology to describe societies that construct their relationships through kinship. The descent of the male members of the community is of central importance

(it is patrilineal, i.e., according to the father). Agnatic means that the individual members can trace their roots back by means of (blood) kinship to a progenitor or a tribal → eponym. → Genealogies that construct a relational kinship characterize agnatic social structures.

allochthonous. From Gk. ἄλλος “other” and χθών “earth, earth’s surface.” Indicates a different origin or that something originated elsewhere (allo-genic). In ethnology and the social sciences allochthonous describes a foreign origin or an origin from outside the context in which the phenomenon (e.g., Israel, the Philistine religion, etc.) is now found. Used in opposition to the term → indigenous.

amphictyony. From Gk. ἀμφικτίζω “build around, found.” Term for an association of city-states formed around a sanctuary in ancient Greece. At first, the purpose was only to protect the shrine (e.g., Delphi, Delos). In 1927/1928, Albrecht Alt applied the term to sacred alliances in prestate Israel; in 1930, Martin Noth used this term in order to explain the “system of the *twelve* tribes of Israel.” Today, the model no longer plays a role in explaining Israel’s early history.

anachronism. From Gk. ἀναχρονισμός “confusion of times, going beyond time/standing against time.” The term refers to the classification of a term, fact, or idea in an earlier time in which it did not yet exist or in which it does not fit. For example, speaking of a duke in the first millennium BCE when the title belongs to the Middle Ages or Gen 24, where camels are mentioned as riding animals, when they were not yet used as such in the southern Levant.

bullae. Small lump, typically made of clay and often only fingernail-sized, stamped with a seal, which was used to seal documents or vessel openings. If a legal, administrative, or economic document was to be sealed with a bulla, the → papyrus (or → parchment) was rolled and tied with a string. The still-damp lump of clay was pressed onto the string, which is why impressions of the string have often been preserved on the back of clay bullae (see fig. 1). The small clay objects were discovered in large numbers only in recent excavations by sifting through the debris of the settlement (the numbers from the city of David provide some indication: Shiloh excavation, 51; Mazar excavation, 85; Gihon Spring, 170), which makes them often only paleographically datable (i.e., from the age of the writing, → epigraphy). Bullae provide an important indication of an administration. Especially in Jerusalem and Judah they point to the expansion of the administration in the eighth century BCE. Comparable → hoard finds from excavations in the northern kingdom of Israel are still lacking.

Important hoard finds of bullae date from the middle of the eighth century BCE from a spring basin near the Gihon Spring (“Rock Cut Pool”), from the late seventh century BCE Jerusalem from the so-called House of the Bullae in the city of David (area G) and the so-called burnt archive from the antiquities market, from the fourth century BCE from Wādī ed-Dāliye, and from the second century BCE from Kedesh and Mareshah.

casemate/casemate wall. Method of construction in which two parallel walls are connected by transverse walls in such a way that individual chambers called casemates are created. In individual cases, the casemates are filled, which considerably increases the strength of the wall system. Sometimes the inner wall of the system is used as the outer wall of houses, so that the housing estates are integrated into the fortification of the city. This type of construction saves important walled-in space but at the same time provides the inner wall with additional protection against rams and siege machines.

clientelism. From Lat. *cliens* “protégé, follower.” Refers to a group of persons in a mutual, asymmetric dependency relationship to a patron (from Lat. *patronus* “protector, defender”). The client is granted benefits, help, or protection by the socially superior patron, for which the patron receives services or fees. Client relationships in → tribal societies can be established or favored by kinship relationships. In the process, entire networks are formed in which the clients make their loyalty and resources available to the patron out of gratitude and/or dependence. In kinship contexts one then speaks of favoritism or nepotism. A client king is a king appointed to rule a territory by his patron (→ patrimonial), who rules above him. For the spin-off of a secondary line in royalty, the term subsidiary kingdom is used in the present textbook, in which the newly appointed king, like a client to the patron, is committed to the stronger neighboring state (e.g., the monarch of Judah in Jerusalem was subordinate to the monarch of Israel in Samaria). Since it is often the second-born son who is appointed as client, the term → secondogeniture is also used for this purpose.

Deuteronomist(ic)/Dtr. Texts or editorial portions that are in close linguistic, stylistic, and theological relation to the book Deuteronomy. In a broader sense Deuteronomistic means the books that Martin Noth linked together in the hypothesis of the so-called Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, and 1–2 Kings). Whether there ever was such a comprehensive historical work is controversial in scholarship. It is possible that the books of Samuel and Kings formed an early Deuteronomistic historical work. An independent existence of the books

Deuteronomy–2 Kings as a historical work or edition separated from the Pentateuch cannot be assumed, however.

diaspora. From Gk. διασπορά “dispersion.” Refers to forced (deportation, displacement, exile) or voluntary (emigration) migration and subsequent settlement in an area that is not considered to be traditional. For the Jewish diaspora, it means life outside Palestine, that is, far from the Jerusalem temple, and for Samaritans, far from Gerizim. Important Jewish centers of the diaspora in antiquity were (at different times) Babylon and Egypt but also North Africa, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Syria, Greece (including the islands), and Rome.

egalitarianism. A society of equals or equal members free from social antagonism (= opposition), in which all have the same rights and the same access to resources. Status differences are determined by age (age stratification) and/or skills (knowledge, expertise, etc.). The term can also be used to characterize a classless society. Often also described with ethnological terms as → segmentary or acephalous society (without a central ruling authority or without a prominent leadership elite).

epigraphy. From Gk. ἐπιγραφή “inscription, title, attribution.” Refers to the study of inscriptions. This includes inscriptions applied or inserted on movable objects such as sarcophagi, stelae, seals, weights, coins, or immobile objects like wall inscriptions, grave inscriptions, etc., but also on other carrier material such as → papyrus, → parchment, clay tablets, wax tablets, → ostraca, ivory, bone, wood, and so on. Lapidary inscription (from Lat. *lapis* “stone”) means an inscription engraved, chiseled, carved, or similar onto stone. Paleography (from Gk. παλαιός “old” and γράφειν “to write”) deals with the comparative investigation of the written form. Since script and writing change, inscriptions can be dated relative to one another by the differences in their written form.

eponym. From Gk. ἐπώνυμος “by name, name giving.” Means a special bearer of a name after which a thing, a place, a tribe, et cetera is named. An eponymous hero is sometimes historical, but often a fictitious, mythological, or primeval figure to whom one refers as an ancestor, progenitor, ancestral mother, founder, or the like.

ethnicity. From Gk. ἔθνος “people.” Describes what makes a people a people. In addition to concepts of foreign attribution and self-attribution, the so-called ethnicity debate has long critically discussed what makes a people a people: language, common narrative of origin, religion, material culture, et cetera. The debate over ethnicity has persisted for a long time. Ethnicity is usually understood as an analytical concept with

which socially and culturally homogeneous groups can be described. Because of its often normative definitions (e.g., in the view of what is Jewish or Israel, who *the* Philistines or *the* Canaanites were) the term or the concept associated with it is often rightfully rejected. The connection between material culture and ethnicity (pots and people debate) is, as a rule, highly problematic.

ethnogenesis. From Gk. ἔθνος “people” and γένεσις “origin, becoming.” Refers to the process of forming a people as a people. The term refers either to one’s collective self-understanding (in self-designations, legends of origin, or demarcations) or to the sociological process that can be described from external observation, namely, that one ethnic group can be distinguished from other ethnic groups. Therefore, ethnogenesis is closely linked to the concept of → ethnicity. The term is vague to the extent that it seems to imply that the development of a people has a clear beginning and can be encapsulated.

genealogy. From Gk. γενεά “birth” and the ending -logy “teaching, science.” Means a compilation of ancestry and kinship relations of a person, family, or clan (lines of ancestry).

glyptic. From Gk. γλύφειν “dig in, hollow out.” Used as a collective term for engraved stones, that is, mainly cylinder seals and stamp seals, as well as for gems (cut gemstones) and the associated art of stone cutting. Accordingly, one can speak, for example, of Syrian glyptics (→ iconography).

golah. From Heb. *gôlâ*, *glh* “go away, lead away, lead into exile.” Refers to the group of deportees to Babylon or those who returned from there. In contrast to the term → diaspora, it expresses in a special way a claim to leadership by the exiled congregation, which has its roots in the places of exile, but which in part only formed after the return of the various groups. The term *congregation* implies that the deportees were a closed community, which is not true because they were located in different places.

hoard find. Objects found together in a confined space, most of which were intentionally deposited there (therefore often also called deposit finds), for example, coins in a jug, clay bullae in an archive, or copper utensils in a favissa (a pit or niche that belongs to a cult installation and into which cult objects that were no longer used were sunk).

iconography. The term is composed of the Greek εἰκών “image” and γραφή “write” and originally refers to Aristotle’s description of images. Today the term is used to describe methodical image analysis. At the same time, however, the term is used to denote the motifs and image genres evinced in a particular space-time context. For example, the iconography of the Iron

IIC period in Palestine describes the set of motifs and styles that emerged or continued to be used during that period. The method of iconography typically consists of an image description, an image analysis, and an image interpretation. What is important is that visual art is a part of culture that can be understood at least as a partially autonomous system of symbols that is not completely independent of, but not identical with, other systems of symbols such as language. Ancient Near Eastern images have peculiarities that, for example, concern the configuration of such imaging.

indigenous. From Lat. *indigenus* “native.” Mostly used in the sense of native. In ethnology and in the social sciences, it refers to phenomena that have arisen in the context in which they are now mainly found. Indigenous languages are languages of the original inhabitants, indigenous cultures are ancestral cultures. An alternative term is *autochthonous*, which is used as a counter to *allogenic* and → *allochthonous*.

LXX. The Roman numeral for seventy, derived from *κατὰ τοὺς ἑβδομήκοντα* “according to the seventy.” Abbreviation for the Septuagint (see §7.2.2.3), the first Greek translation of the Hebrew texts of the later Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

MT. Abbreviation for the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes (from Heb. *masora* “fence”) were Jewish scholars and copyists of the Middle Ages who made an effort to preserve the traditional textual form of the Hebrew Bible by commenting on it. The Masoretic Text refers mostly to the Hebrew text form that is documented in the earliest complete codex *Leninградensis* (MS B 19A) from the year 1007 and forms the basis of the modern Bible editions.

numismatics. From Gk. *νόμισμα* “recognized by use, coin” or Lat. *numisma* “coin.” Numismatics deals with the minting, distribution, and use of coins and the associated monetary system. The term *mint* refers, on the one hand, to a struck piece of metal that can be used as a medium of exchange because of its countervalue and, on the other hand, to the place where the coin is minted. The striking process distinguishes between the front (obverse) and back (reverse) sides.

onomasticon. From Gk. *ὄνομα* “name.” Refers to list-type works that list names or terms in order to arrange and further explain them through compilation. The Onomasticon of Eusebius of Caesarea (260/64–339/40 CE), which is titled *τοπικῶν ὁμοματῶν* and which has been transmitted in Syriac, Greek, and Latin, is of particular importance for historical geography and thus for biblical historiography. The subdiscipline that analyses the development, use, and distribution of personal names is called *onomastics*.

orthostat. Upright standing stone block or a stone slab whose visible sides can be furnished with inscriptions or a relief.

ostracon. From Gk. ὄστρακον “pottery fragment.” A piece of text, typically written with ink, on a fragment of a clay pot as an inscription carrier. Apart from inscribed seal amulets, ostraca are the most common type of inscriptions in Israel/Palestine, since → parchment and → papyrus were not only considerably more expensive but also more poorly preserved, as soon as the climate became slightly more humid. The cheap remains of broken clay vessels were commonly used for everyday communication (letters, short messages, receipts, notes, etc.) and less for longer epic or poetic texts.

papyrus. Ancient writing material made from the papyrus plant (*Cyperus papyrus*). Papyrus was made from thin strips of bark laid at right angles on top of each other, which were then compressed with a wooden hammer and held together without additional glue by the drying plant sap. The smoothed surface could have writing on both sides. The papyri were glued together and processed into scrolls. Folded and placed inside or on top of each other and sewn together, they form a codex, which was increasingly practiced from about the first/second century CE onward.

parchment. Writing material made of untanned leather hide that has been prepared in a lime solution (calcination) and then elaborately worked and smoothed. It was used extensively from the third century BCE onward alongside → papyrus and → ostraca (and rarely clay tablets). The pieces were sewn together and rolled up to form a scroll (e.g., in the scrolls of Qumran) or laid on top of each other to form a codex and written on both sides. When the writing of a → papyrus or parchment has been scraped off and the piece has been rewritten, it is referred to as a palimpsest.

patrimonial. From Lat. *pater* “father.” A sociological term introduced by Max Weber to characterize a governance that is centralized on one charismatic leader without bureaucracy. The leader wields more or less absolute power over all institutions, including the military and the administration. Each member in the society is directly or indirectly dependent upon the patron. The concept of patrimonialism was applied prominently as a model for ancient Near Eastern society in the Late Bronze Age by J. David Schloen.

personal union. The term refers to the accumulation of offices by one person at the top, while the institutions themselves remain largely autonomous and separate. A good example is the high priest’s office held by the Hasmonean kings, for example, Aristobulus I (104–103 BCE) or Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE). The term is often used when two or more

states have the same monarch while their boundaries remain discernable. Examples include the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BCE), who took also the title “king of Babylon” for a period (which then continued under Sargon II 722–705 BCE). It is also discussed whether the rule of Babylon following the conquest by the Persians until Xerxes I (486–465 BCE) was a sort of personal union. David’s early rule over the north was also understood in older scholarship as a personal union (Albrecht Alt, Siegfried Herrmann). In this textbook it is put forward that Judah in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE was ruled at least in some phases and degree from Samaria in personal union.

secundogeniture. From Lat. *secundus* “following or second” and *genitus* “born,” meaning the rule of the “second-born son.” The term refers to a principle of succession according to which the younger brother of a throne’s successor (which is usually the firstborn son = primogeniture) rules a part of the empire or a dependent (client or vassal) state. A variant installs the firstborn initially in the dependent territory (cadet branch) until he succeeds his father; only then does the second-born receive rule over the dependent state (for examples, see §5.4.5.2).

segmentary lineage. A term introduced into ethnosociology by Émile Durkheim that states that a society is not determined by a central authority but is organized in lines of relationship. The society that is formed by equal-ranking (family) segments with no centralized leadership remains “acephalous” (literally “without head”), that is, leaderless. The respective segments are linked to each other via an → agnatic lineage. It is assumed that relationship-based tribal collectives in particular are organized on a segmentary basis. Family heads, clan elders, chieftains, et cetera have corresponding significance. The opposite of a segmentary lineage is the hierarchical society, class society, caste system, et cetera, in which social strata, including elites of leadership, are formed and can be distinguished from one another.

stratum/strata. A concurrent horizon of shared settlement characteristics in an excavation. The term stratigraphy is used to describe the sequence of settlement strata in an archaeological excavation. The layers are numbered starting from the surface. The youngest layers of a place therefore have the lowest numbers, the oldest horizons the highest numbers (Stratum IX is therefore usually *older* than Stratum VIII).

surplus. The term used to describe the excess generated by production, which remains after deducting the producer’s own requirements and covering the replacement of defunct means of production. The production of

added value is the prerequisite for trade in agricultural products and thus for a basic economic cycle.

synchronism. From Gk. σύν “with, together” and χρόνος “time.” In a broader sense the term refers to the simultaneity or simultaneousness of events. In the narrower sense it refers to information in which events are placed in a temporal relationship to one another. For example, “In the twenty-third year of King Joash son of Ahaziah of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria” (2 Kgs 13:1). Here Jehoahaz’s accession to the throne is linked with the reign of Joash. Synchronisms establish links between chronological data and thus enable better absolute dating.

tell/tel. From Arabic/Heb. (Plural Tulul). An artificial hill formed by successive settlement strata. Walls made of mud/clay bricks do not withstand the weather if they are not maintained. Therefore, the ruins of uninhabited settlements built from clay bricks wash away over time and form a surface, which is then levelled or primed and used in a subsequent settlement layer (→ stratum). In addition to the name *Tell* or Hebrew *Tel*, the Arabic place names often contain the name Ḥirbe or, in the *status constructus*, Ḥirbet/Khirbet/Chirbet/Khirbat/Ḥorvat, which means “ruin” or “ruin site.” Often the different designations occur next to each other, for example, Ḥirbet el-Mšāš is also called Tel Masos and Ḥirbet el-Muqanna‘ can also be written as Tel Miqnē/Tel Mikne. Rarely they are even combined as in Ḥirbet Tell el-Bēḏā. There are also Hebrew (Ḥorvat ‘Uza) and Arabic (Ḥirbet Ġazze) forms of the name, which also apply to the synonymous Ḥirbet and Khirbet (e.g., Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš = Khirbet en-Nahas). The fact that some places are called both Tell (masc.) and Ḥirbe (fem.) demonstrates that a strict differentiation between Tell (surface without visible building remains) and Ḥirbe (surface with clearly visible building structures) is just as difficult to maintain as a temporal differentiation (Tell = generally pre-Hellenistic because of the clay brick construction method, Ḥirbe = generally Hellenistic and later because of the stone construction method). While the use of easy spellings is often a convention to simplify things, this textbook provides transcriptions where possible when archaeological sites are addressed.

theophoric personal names. Names that contain an element that designates or names a deity or its action. Thus, the Hebrew name Nathanael (Jdt 8:1; John 1:45) is composed of the Hebrew verb *nātan* “give” and the noun *’el* “God.” The name then means “God has given” or “[The god] El has given,” because *’el* can also be understood as the name of a god. Many Hebrew names have YHWH as a component. The name of God

can be abbreviated as a prefix. For example, the name Jonathan *yehônātān* combines “YHWH” (*yeho-*) and “give” (*nātan*) (1 Sam 13:2), which is documented outside the Bible as *ywnṭn* and means “YHWH has given.” Or the theophoric (literally “God bearing”) element is appended as *-yāhû* or in the short form *-yāh* (as in the south, while the form *-yw/-yau* is predominantly found in the north). So, for instance in the name Nethaniah (*ntn + yh*) in 1 Chr 25:2, 12, “Given has YHWH,” which is documented on seals as *ntnyhw/netanyāhû*. Or in the name of King Uzziah (Isa 1:1) (= ‘*uziyyāhû* “YHWH is my strength”), which is documented outside the Bible both as ‘*zyhw* (long form) and as ‘*zyh* (short form). In addition, there is evidence of verbal names that, although they clearly indicate the deity’s actions, do not include or abbreviate them as part of the name. So, for example, in the name Nathan (2 Sam 7:2) “he has given,” which is also documented outside the Bible.

tribal. From Lat. *tribus* “tribe.” Used in an ethnosociological perspective to describe the organization of a society into tribes. While earlier research associated a valuation with it, the term is used neutrally today. A tribe is organized into clans, which are formed by a kinship connection (→ agnatic). Behind Judg 4–5 an early tribal network can be recognized, which however cannot be understood as an → amphictyony.

urbanization. From Lat. *urbs* “city.” The term refers to a process whereby new cities emerge or, in suburbanization, expand into rural areas or, in reurbanization, reemerge. The opposite is the term deurbanization, which describes the abandonment of cities. In most cases this is when the population moves from the city to the countryside or into rural structures, in the so-called process of ruralization.

usurper. From Lat. *usurpare* “take possession.” An usurper is an illegitimate successor who seizes power illegally in an usurpation (e.g., against the genealogically determined successor to the throne).

vassal. In the context of the early Middle Ages the term, which perhaps derived from Celtic, describes a free henchman to whom a lord grants a fief (usually a piece of land) because of his loyalty and allegiance and offers him his protection. In the ancient Near Eastern context, the word is applied to kings as representatives of cities or states who enter into a vassalage relationship with a superior lord. For this the vassal is granted protection, but no fiefdom is made available. Even if there were contractual protective relationships in other imperial contexts, the conception is mostly used for the Neo-Assyrians. Vassalage conditions also existed among the Hittites, Egyptians, Arameans, and Neo-Babylonians. The so-called vassal trea-

ties were foreign-policy, nonparty treaties in which the subordinate vassal swore an oath of allegiance to his overlord and thus entered into political and economic dependence. He was obliged to be loyal and, in most cases, to pay tribute and provide military assistance. Independent political action was then restricted or excluded. The vassal contracts contained the rights and duties of both the vassal and the vassal lord, including the penalties for violating the oath of loyalty. In detail, vassalage relationships were very individually designed and oriented to various factors (e.g., resources, economic power, geostrategic significance).

10.3. GENERAL AND COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE

The literature references in the section bibliographies are intended to stimulate in-depth reading. The following overviews and standard works were generally not taken into account in the selection, which is why they are compiled here again in a structured manner. In addition, the articles of *Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet* published by Klaus Koenen et al. at www.bibelwissenschaft.de are also recommended.

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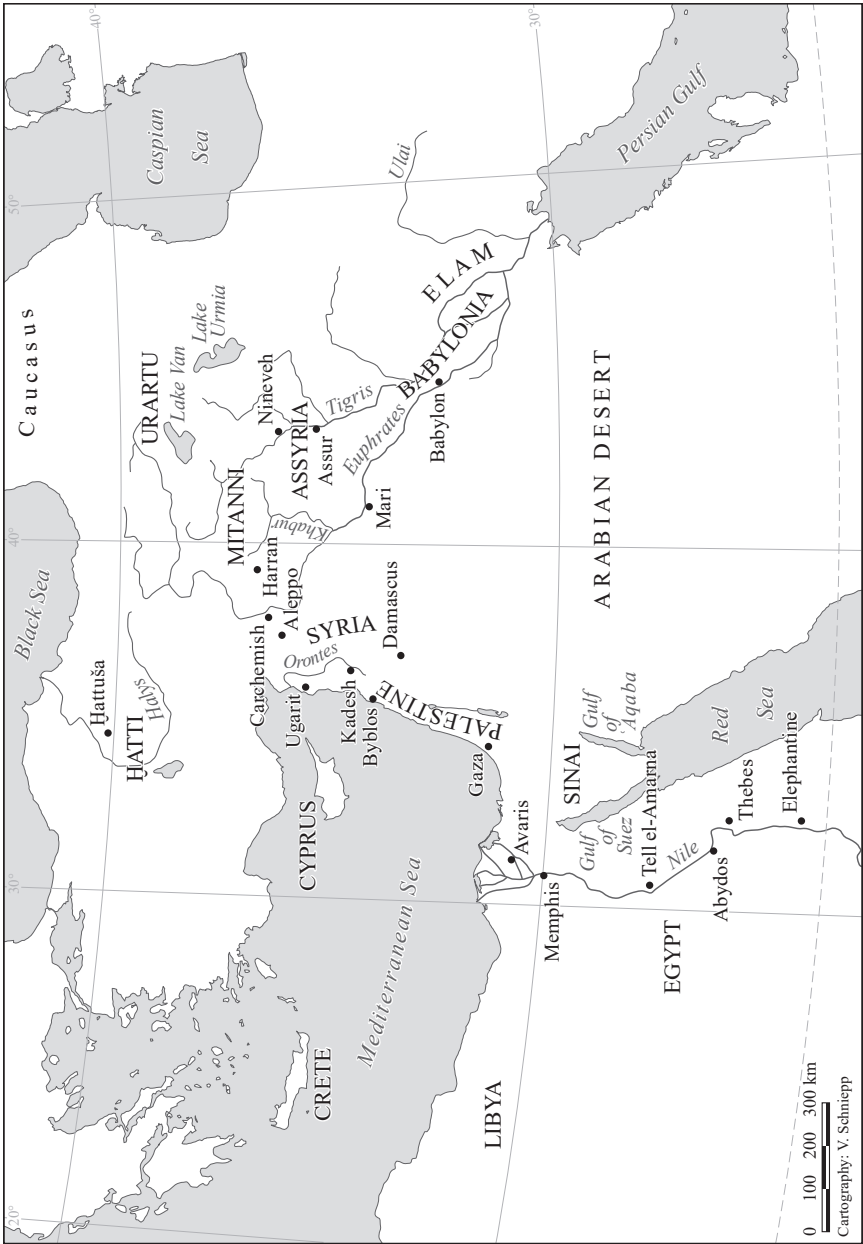
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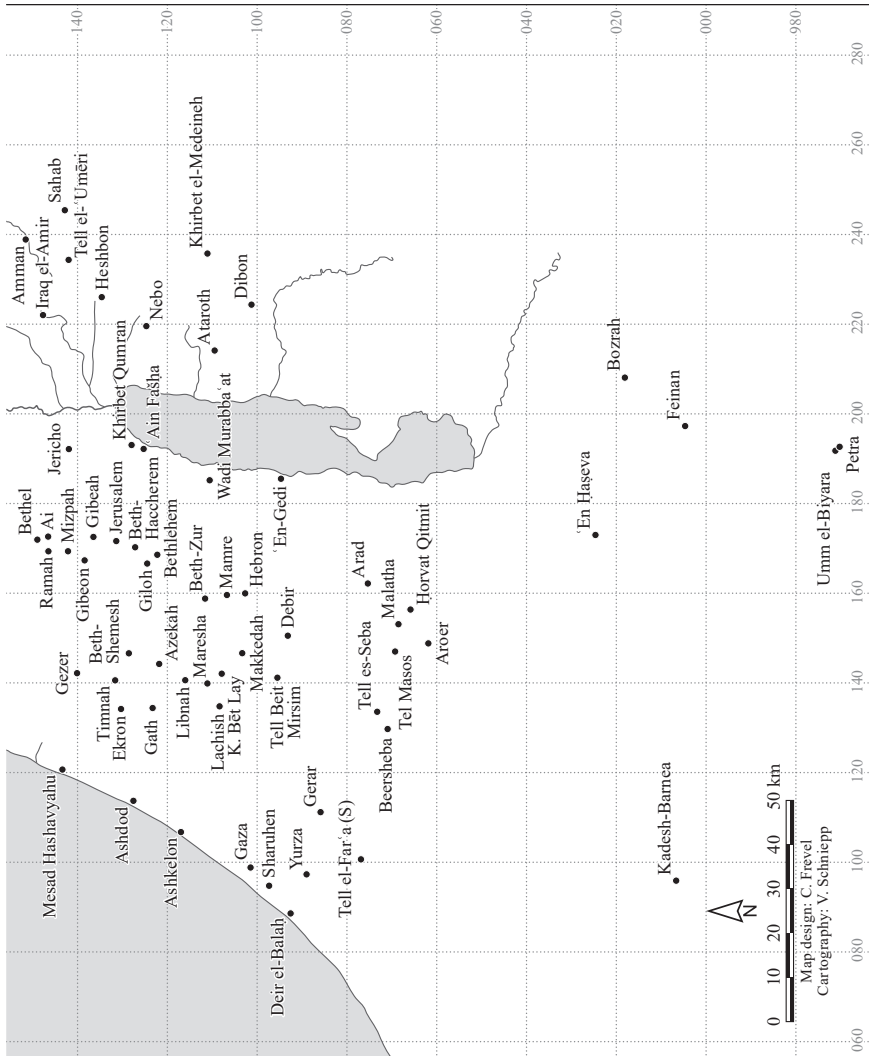
10.4. MAPS

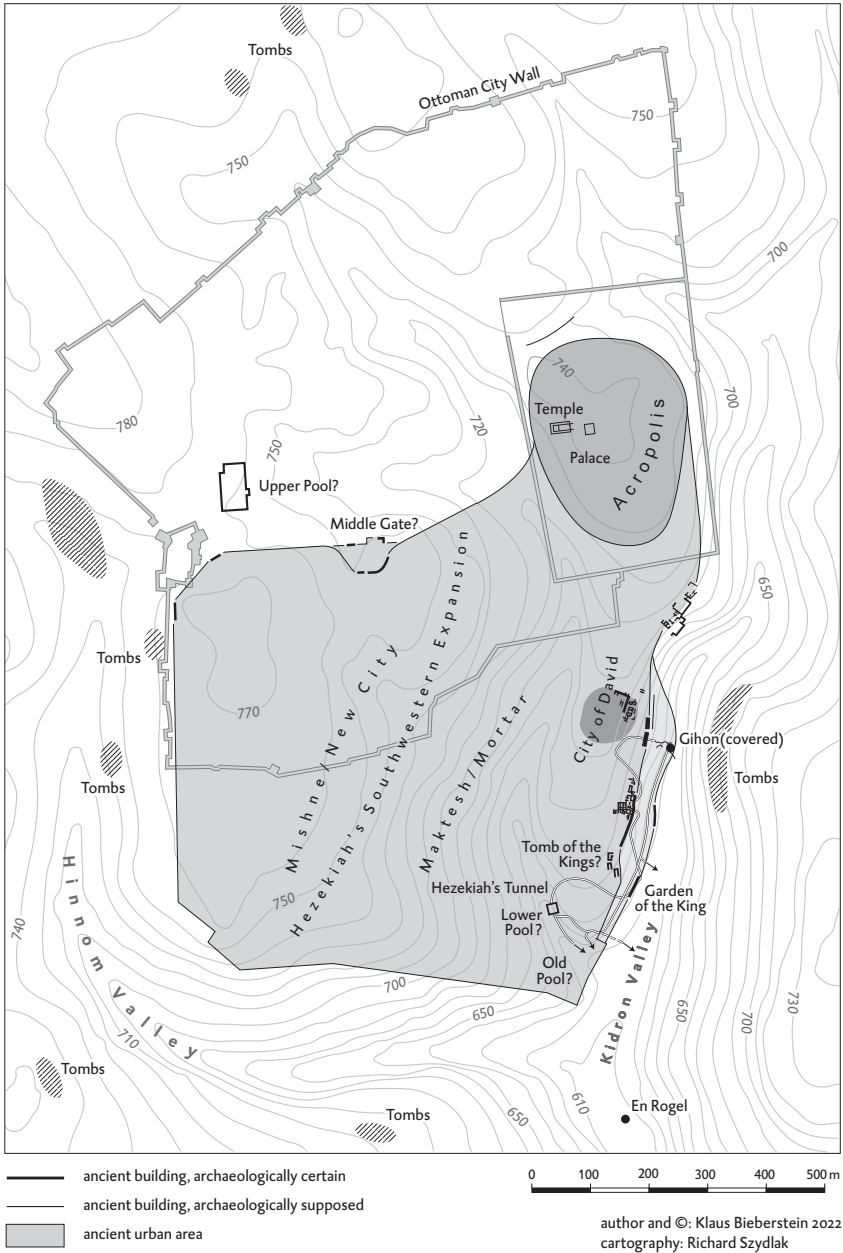


Map 13. The Near East in the second half of the second millennium BCE.

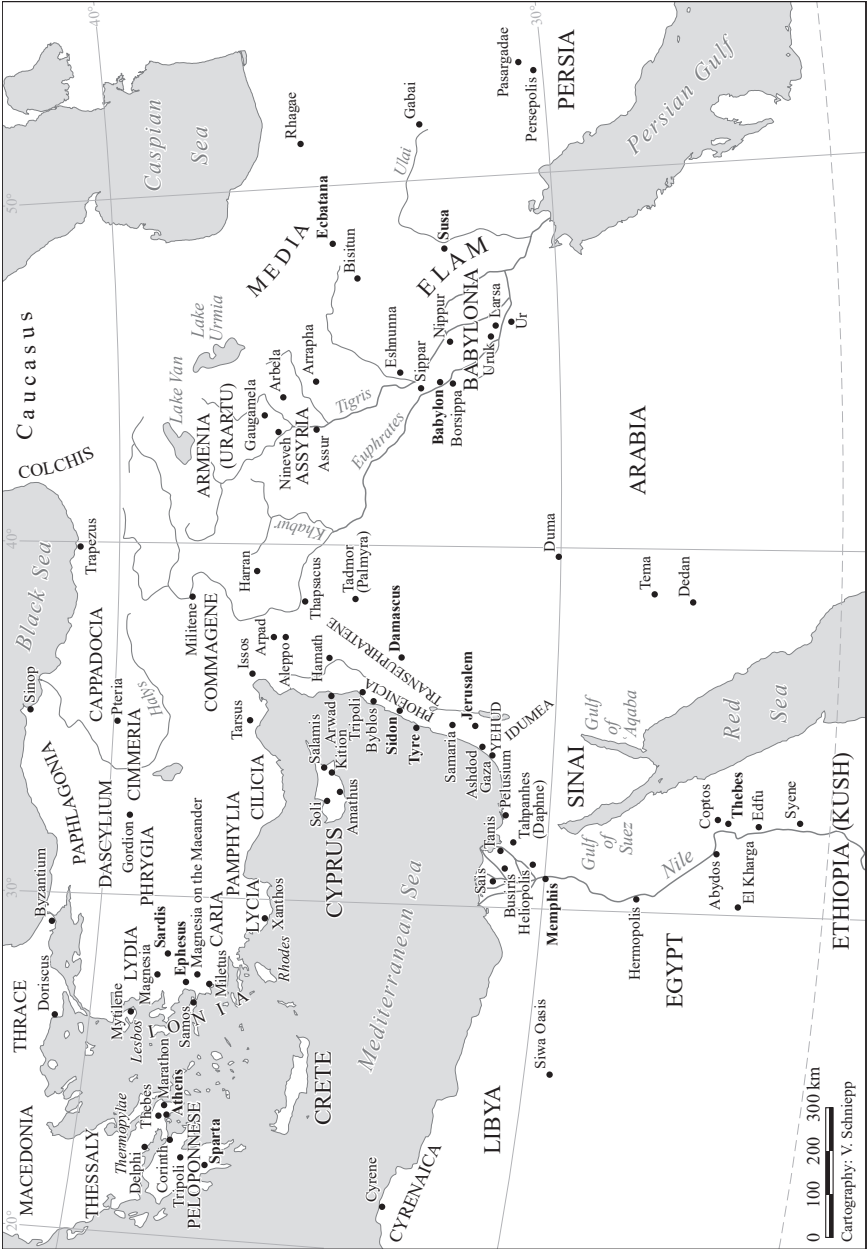


Map 14. Regions and landscapes of Palestine/Israel.





Map 16. Jerusalem in the Iron Age IIB and IIC.



Map 17. The Persian Empire.



Map 18. Palestine in the Maccabean period.



Map 19. Power relations in Palestine in Roman times.

10.5. PLACE NAMES WITH COORDINATES

The first list offers place names from Palestine/Israel used in this work with coordinates according to the so-called Palestine Grid or Old Israel Grid or the Cassini Soldner-Coordinates (ICS), so that they can be located on map 15 and other maps. The coordinates usually follow the specifications in TAVO, *NEAEHL* 5:2117–24, and Wolfgang Zwickel, Renate Egger-Wenzel, and Michael Ernst, *Herders neuer Bibelatlas* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2013), as well as details given in the excavation reports. The first number indicates the east-west coordinate, the second number the north-south coordinate. The coordinate system was designed in 1923, during the British Mandate period, and calculates from a fixed point in Gaza (coordinates 1000.1000 OIG) and is also used in atlases and map series for the indication of places from Jordan. However, the coordinate system is not very accurate compared to today's requirements, and it additionally produces negative coordinates in the Negev south of Beersheba. Therefore, in 1989 (officially in 1994) it was replaced in Israel by the more accurate New Israel Grid (NIG)/Israeli Transverse Mercator (ITM). The approximate conversion to this new system is simple: the east-west coordinate must be increased by 500, the north-south coordinate by 5000 (using the coordinates of Jerusalem as an example: 1724.1315 OIG becomes 2224.6315 NIG). For conversion to the WGS84 system (World Geodetic System 1984), which is often used in navigation systems or online maps, there are a number of programs (e.g., Alltrans) and online tools (e.g., <http://twcc.fr/>, which takes a six-digit input and provides a corresponding WGS84 result, e.g., latitude = 31.776242593493365°N, and longitude 35.2355868379082°E. Input separated by commas, e.g., in Google Earth as 31.776242593493365, 35.2355868379082 shows Jerusalem on the satellite map). For locations outside the coordinate system of the Palestine Grid, WGS84 coordinates can be found in degrees, minutes, and seconds.

The spelling of the biblical names, when possible, follows the NRSV for ease of reference. The biblical names are always accompanied by the Arabic or Hebrew place names under which the places are to be found or listed today. Unfortunately, the use of the transcription is not always uniform (for example, the spellings → Tell and Tel or Ḥirbet and Khirbet vary). As a rule (with slight simplification), it is based on the Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients (TAVO)—which follows the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG)—or otherwise Ephraim Stern, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, vol. 5 (Jerusa-

lem: Israel Exploration Society, 2008). Other conventions of transcription are used, if the name is commonly used in Israel or Jordan.

- Abel-Beth-Maacah/Tell Ābil el-Qamḥ 2045.2962
 Abu Hamid 2339.1662
 Achshaph/Tell Keisan/Tell Kēsān 1645.2532
 Achzib/ez-Zīb 1598.2725
 Achzib (Judah)/Ḥirbet ʿEn el-Kizbe 1504.1220
 Adamah/Adam/Tell Dāmiyā 2018.1679
 Adoraim 1526.1016
 Adullam/ʿĀdullām 1502.1157
 ʿAḡlūn 2209.1933
 Ai/et-Tell 1748.1471
 ʿAin el-ʿArūs 1834.0436
 ʿAin Feshka/ʿAin Faṣḥa 1920.1240
 ʿAin Joweizeh 1649.1274
 Akko/ʿAkkā 1586.2586
 Alexandreion/Qarn Sarṭaba 1938.1670
 Amathus
 Tell ʿAmmata 2085.1829
 Tell el-Ḥamme 2112.1778
 Amman/Rabbat-Ammon/ʿAmmān 2389.1513
 ʿAmwās 1493.1387
 Ananiah/al ʿĪzariya/Bethany (?) 1745.1309
 Anathot/ʿAnātā 1749.1350
 Aphek
 ʿĒn Gēv 2103.2435
 Fīq/Afik 2160.2428
 Tell Kurdane/Tel Aphek 1605.2500
 Aphek/Tell Rās el-ʿĒn 1435.1680
 Arad/Tell ʿArād 1621.0766
 Aroer/Ḥirbet ʿArāʿir (Moab) 2281.0981
 Aroer/Tell ʿAroer (Negev) 1480.0622
 ar Rabba/Rabba/Rabbat Moab 2205.0755
 Ashdod/Esdūd 1179.1293
 Ashdod Yam 1140.1320
 Ashkelon/ʿAsqālān 1070.1190
 Ashtaroth/ʿAštārot/Tell ʿAštara 2455.2460
 Azekah/Tell Zakariye 1440.1232
 Azmaveth/Ḥizma 1754.1382
 Baalath/el-Muḡār 1296.1385
 Baal-Hazor/Gebel el ʿAšūr 1771.1539
 Baal-Meon/Beth-Meon 2197.1207
 Bāluʿa/el-Bālūʿ/Ḥirbet el-Baluʿa 2242.0853
 Bamot/Beth-Bamot 2203.1267
 Bāniyās/Caesarea Philippi 2150.2946
 Battir/Betar/Bateer 1633.1262
 Beersheba/Bir es-Sebaʿ 1300.0720
 Bēsān/Scythopolis (cf. Beth-Shean) 1975.2117
 Beth-Anat (ident. uncertain)
 el-Biʿna 1758.2596
 Ṣafad el-Baṭṭiḥ 1908.2895
 Tel Roš 1815.2718
 Beth Azmaveth/Ḥizma 1754.1382
 Beth-Diblathaim
 Ḥirbet et-Tēm 2240.1231
 Ḥirbet Delelet eš-Šarqiye 2285.1163
 Beth-El/Bethel/Bētīn 1733.1483
 Beth-Gamul/Ḥirbet el-Gumel 2348.1002
 Beth-Gilgal/Ḥirbet al-Maḡfir 1936.1432
 Beth-haggan
 Beth-haggan (Lower Galilee) 1970.2355
 Beth-haggan/Jenin 1786.2075
 Bēt Hanīnā 1698.1373
 Bethar/Tel Betar/Ḥirbet el-Yahūd 1628.1260
 Beth-Haccherem/Rāmat Rāḥel 1706.1275
 Beth-Horon (Upper)/Bēt ʿŪr el-fōqā 1608.1436
 Beth-Horon (Lower)/Bēt ʿŪr et-taḥta 1582.1445
 Beth-Jeshimoth/Tell el-ʿAḡeme 2088.1322
 Bethlehem 1695.1235
 Beth-Meon/Baal-Meon 2197.1207
 Beth-Peor/el-Mušaqqar 2239.1335
 Beth Sahur 1710.1230
 Bethsaida/et-Tell 2094.2574
 Beth-Shean/Tell el-Ḥōšn 1975.2123
 Beth-Shemesh/ʿĒn-Šems 1476.1286
 Beth-Zur/Bēt Šūr
 Ḥirbet Burḡ eš-Šūr 1594.1104
 Ḥirbet eṭ-Ṭubēqa 1595.1109
 Binyanei Haʿuma 1693.1326
 Blakhiyah 0970.1057
 Bozrah/Buṣērā/Buseirah 2077.0170
 Caesarea Maritima (Straton's Tower) 1396.2107
 Caesarea Philippi/Bāniyās 2150.2946
 Chephirah/Ḥirbet Kafira 1601.1375
 Chinnereth/Tell el-ʿOrēme 2008.2529
 Ḍahret eṭ-Ṭawile 1800.2010
 Dan/Tell el-Qāḍi/Laiš 2112.2948
 Debir 1514.0934
 Dēr Dibwān 1758.1464

- Dibon/Tell Dībān 2240.1010
 Dion 2453.2391
 Dor/Tel Dor/Ḥirbet el-Burğ/Dū'ru 1424.2247
 Dothan/Tell Dōṭān 1726.2021
 Ebal/Ġebel Islāmīye 1760.1820
 Edrei/Edre'i/Dar'ā 2537.2246
 Eglon 1425.0999
 Eilat/Tell el-Ḥulēfe/Tell el-Kheleife 1473.8849
 Ekron/Tel Miqnē 1358.1318
 Ela/el-'Aqaba 1498.8815
 Elasa 1655.1395
 el-Bālū'/Khirbet el-Balu'a/Bālū'a 2242.0853
 Elealeh/Ḥirbet el-'Āl 2285.1365
 el-Kabrī 1644.2690
 el-Mukāwir 2102.1084
 Eleke/Tell eš-Šallāf (?) 1282.1444
 'Elyākīn 1430.2025
 Emmaus 1655.1338
 'Ēn Boqēq 1835.0672
 En-Dor 1860.2277
 'Ēn el-Qudērat 0960.0069
 'Ēn Gedi/Ein-Gedi/En-Gedi/'Ain Ġidi 1871.0965
 'Ēn Ġev 2102.2435
 'Ēn Ḥaṣēvā/'Ēn el-Ḥuṣb 1732.0244
 Ephron/aṭ-Ṭayyiba 1784.1511
 er-Ruqēš/Tell er-Ruqēš 0861.0919
 Eshtaol/Ḥirbet Dēr Šubēb 1488.1338
 Eš-Šēḥ Ḥaḍar/Tel Hadar 2110.2507
 Etham/'Ēṭām 1670.1214
 et-Tell/Ai 1748.1471
 et-Tell/Bethsaida 2094.2574
 eṭ-Ṭurra 2431.2275
 Ezion-Geber/Ġezīret Firā'ūn 1363.8750
 Fēnān 1972.0041
 French Hill (Jerusalem) 1725.1343
 Gadara/Umm Qēs 2140.2290
 Gamla 2195.2565
 Gath/Tell eš-Šāfi 1357.1235
 Gath
 el-Burğ 1520.1455
 Tell el-Ġudēde/Tel Goded 1416.1157
 Gath Hepher/Tell Gath-Ḥefer 1801.2382
 Gaza/Ġazze 0995.1015
 Gaza (port of) 0960.1030
 Gazara/Tell Ġazar/Tell el-Ġazarī 1422.1404
 Geba/Ġeba' (Benjamin) 1749.1405
 Geba/Ḥirbet at-Tall 1749.1587
 Gerar/Tell Abū Hurēra/Tel Haror 1125.0879
 Gerasa/Ġeraš 2347.1876
 Gerizim/Ġebel eṭ-Ṭōr 1759.1785
 Gerizim/Tell er-Ra's 1761.1793
 Gezer/Tell el-Ġazarī/Tell Ġazar 1422.1404
 Ġezīret Firā'ūn/Ezion-Geber 1363.8750
 Gibbethon
 Rās Abū Ḥamīd (?) 1398.1456
 Tell Mālāt/Tell el-Melat 1374.1405
 Gibeah/Tell el-Fūl 1720.1369
 Gibeon/el-Ġib 1676.1396
 Gilead (city)/Gal'ad 2235.1695
 Gilgal 1934.1425
 Gischala 1920.2701
 Gittaim/Ra's Abū Ḥamīd (?) 1398.1456
 Gur/Ḥirbet en-Nağğar 1782.2056
 Hadashah/Adasa/Tell Adasa 1698.1389
 Hannathon/Tel Ḥannaton 1743.2434
 Haradah 1623.1372
 Hazor/Tell Waqqāš 2035.2693
 Hebron 1598.1035
 Herodeion 1730.1193
 Heshbon/Tell Ḥesbān 2265.1342
 Hippos/Qala't al-Ḥiṣn 2121.2427
 Ḥirbet 'Abbad/Socoh 1476.1211
 Ḥirbet 'Almit (Almon) 1760.1369
 Ḥirbet al-Ra'i 1529.1110
 Ḥirbet 'Atārüz/Ataroth 2136.1094
 Ḥirbet Bēt Lay 1422.1080
 Hirbet Bēt Maqdūm 1472.1048
 Ḥirbet ed-Dawwāra 1778.1415
 Ḥirbet el-'Āseq/'Ēn Gev 2102.2435
 Ḥirbet el-Bālū'a/el-Bālū' 2242.0853
 Ḥirbet el-Burğ/Dū'ru/Dor 1424.2247
 Ḥirbet el-Ġarra/Tel 'Irā 1487.0711
 Ḥirbet el-Ḥağğār 2298.1466
 Ḥirbet el-Kōm 1465.1045
 Ḥirbet el-Mšāš/Tel Mašōš/Tel Masos 1467.0690
 Ḥirbet el-Mudēyine/Khirbet el-Medeineh 2362.1109
 Ḥirbet el-Muqanna'/Tel Miqnē 1358.1318
 Ḥirbet 'Ēn el-Kizbe/Achzib (Judah) 1504.1220
 Ḥirbet en-Naḥāš/Khirbet en-Nahas 1915.0103
 Ḥirbet er-Rumēl 2331.1097
 Ḥirbet eṭ-Ṭayyib 1531.1072
 Ḥirbet eṭ-Ṭayyib (north)/Ḥorvat Töv 1643.0188
 Ḥirbet Hamra Ifdan (WFD 120) 1875.0079
 Ḥirbet Huga/Ḥorvat Huga 1145.1024

- ʕirbet Mudēbī^c 2306.0502
 ʕirbet Nisya 1717.1449
 ʕirbet Qēyafa/ʕhirbet Qeiyafa/Shaaraim (?) 1460.1226
 ʕirbet Qumrān 1936.1277
 ʕirbet Tell el-Bēḏā 1456.1167
 ʕōrōnayim/Horonaim/ed-Dēr 2148.0733
 ʕorvat ʕAmuda 1427.1096
 ʕorvat ʕAnim 1562.0846
 ʕorvat ʕEtri 1474.1174
 ʕorvat Huga/ʕhirbet Huga 1145.1024
 ʕorvat Hur/Tel Hora/Tel Ora 1468.0660
 ʕorvat Qīṭmīt 1564.0660
 ʕorvat Raddum 1659.0665
 ʕorvat Rogem 1108.0524
 ʕorvat Ṭevet 1816.2271
 ʕorvat Tōv/ʕirbet aṭ-Ṭayyib (north) 1643.0818
 ʕorvat ʕUza/ʕirbet Ġazze 1657.0686
 ʕorvat Zimri/Anata 1738.1363
 ʕūsān/ʕusan 1627.1241
 Hycania 1847.1251
 Ibleam/Yīblā^cām/ʕirbet Bel^came 1777.2058
 Ijon/Tell Dibbin 2052.3054
 ʕIrāq al-Amīr/Iraq el-Amīr 2217.1474
 Irbid 2298.2182
 ʕIzbat Ṣarṭa 1467.1680
 Jabesh-Gilead/Tell el Maqlūb 2144.2011
 Jabneh/Yavneh/Jamnia 1260.1415
 Jaffa/Yafā/Joppe 1267.1623
 Jahaz/Yahṣ
 ʕirbet el-Mudēyine 2362.1109
 ʕirbet er-Rumēl (?) 2331.1097
 Jamnia/Yavneh/Jabneh 1260.1415
 Jarmuth/ʕirbet Yarmuk 1470.1240
 Jazer/ʕirbet eṣ-Ṣār 2288.1505
 Jericho/Tell es-Sulṭān 1921.1420
 Jericho/Tulūl Abū l-ʕAlāʕik 1913.1400
 Jerusalem 1724.1315
 Jeshanah/Yāṣānā/ʕirbet el-Burġ/Burġ el-Isāne 1748.1562
 Jezreel/ʕirbet Zer^cin/Tell Yizre^cel 1819.2182
 Jokneam/Tell Qēmūn/Tel Yoqnā^cām 1605.2300
 Jotapata 1763.2485
 Kabul/Kābūl 1700.2525
 Kadesh-Barnea/Tell el-Qedērat 0960.0069
 Kafar-Salama 1668.1399
 Karnaim/Qarnayim/Tell Šēḥ Sa^cd 2473.2495
 Katārat as-Samrā³/Al Katārah as-Samrā³ 2038.1743
 Kedeshtell Qedeš 1997.2796
 Keilah/Tell Qīla 1503.1134
 Kerak/Kir-Moab 2170.0660
 Kerioth 2338.1045
 Ketef Hinnom 1714.1307
 Kiriathaim/ʕirbet el-Qurēye 2160.1242
 Kiriath-Jearim/Dēr al-ʕĀzar 1599.1353
 Koseba/Kesib/Achzib (Judah) 1504.1220
 Kuntillet ʕĀgrūd 0940.9562
 Lachish/Tell ed-Duwēr 1357.1082
 Lebo-Hamath 2780.4040
 Libna
 Tel Burna 1375.1157
 Tel Goded/Tell Ġudēde 1416.1157
 Lo-Debar/Tell el-Ḥiṣn 2330.2102
 Machaerus 2102.1084
 Madaba/Medeba/Mādēba 2256.1253
 Mahanaim (ident. uncertain)
 Tell aḏ-Dahab al-Ġarbiyā 2149.1771
 Tell aḏ-Dahab aš-Ṣarqiya 2153.1772
 Tell Ḥaġġāġ 2154.1732
 Makkedah (ident. uncertain)
 ʕirbet el-Kōm 1465.1045
 Makmish/Tell Makmiš 1314.1744
 Malatha/Tell el-Milḥ/Tel Malḥātā 1525.0696
 Mālḥa/al-Māliḥa 1674.1291
 Mamre 1600.1072
 Mareshah/Tell Sandaḥanna 1404.1112
 Masada 1835.0805
 Me^carat Ha^cTeomim/Mūġhāret Umm et Tūeimīn 1520.1260
 Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim 1676.2212
 Məṣad Ḥāṣavyāhū 1207.1461
 Michmash 1763.1422
 Migron 1768.1431
 Mišmar hā-ʕEmek 1650.2239
 Mišpē Yammīm/Ġebel el-Arb^cin 1933.2604
 Mizpah/Tell en-Naṣbe 1706.1436
 Modein 1505.1490
 Moresheth-Gath/Tell Ġudēde/Tel Goded 1416.1157
 Moza/Tel Moza 1654.1338
 Nablus/Neapolis (cf. Shechem) 1768.1800
 Naḥal Bəṣōr/Nahal HaBesor 1009.0774
 Naḥal Gerar 1208.0694
 Naḥal Ḥever 1826.0934
 Naḥal Paṭṭiṣh 1242.0797

- Naḥal Shiqma/Wadi el-Hesi 1198.0880
 Nahariyya 1590.2680
 Nebi Samwil/an-Nabi Şamū'il 1672.1376
 Nebi Yūnis/Tell Yūnus 1248.1559
 Nebo/Hirbet el-Muḥayyaṭ 2206.1286
 Netiv Haasarah 1063.1089
 Nimrin/Tell Nimrin 2096.1453
 Nob/Rās eṭ-Ṭamīm 1744.1332
 Ono/Kafir 'Ana/Or Yehuda 1377.1590
 Paneas (cf. Bāniyās) 2150.2946
 Pella/Ṭabaqāt Faḥil/Tell el-Ḥuşn 2078.2064
 Penuel (cf. Mahanaim)
 Tell aḍ-Ḍahab aṣ-Şarqīya 2153.1772
 Qadesh-Barnea/Tell el-Qedērat 0960.0069
 Qāqun 1943.1963
 Qarnaim/Karnaim/Tell Şēḥ Sa'd 2473.2495
 Qasr al-'Abd 2212.1468
 Qubur el-Walaydah/Qubūr al-Walāyida 1011.0827
 Qumran/Hirbet Qumrān 1936.1277
 Rabbat-Ammon/Amman/'Ammān 2389.1513
 Rabbat Moab/ar Rabba 2205.0755
 Ramah/Bēt Rima (Ephraim) 1600.1600
 Ramah/er-Rām (Benjamin) 1722.1402
 Ramah/Hirbet Raddāna 1693.1466
 Rāmat Rāḥēl/Hirbet Şāliḥ 1706.1275
 Ramot Forest 1703.1350
 Ramoth-Gilead
 er-Ramṭā (?) 2450.2186
 Tell el-Ḥiṣn (?) 2330.2102
 Tell er-Rāmiṭ (?) 2455.2116
 Ramṭā/Ramoth-Gilead (?) 2450.2186
 Raphia 0787.0778
 Rās Abū Ḥamid/Tel Hamid 1398.1456
 Rās el-'Amūd 1732.1309
 Rās en-Naqb 1872.9683
 Rās en-Naqūra 1601.2776
 Rephidim
 Gebel Rufayyid (?) 0360.7840
 Tell el-Maḥārit (?) 0150.7910
 Rogem Gannim 1657.1292
 Rosh ez-Zayit 1713.2538
 Ruḡm el-Kursi 2280.1530
 Ruḡm el-Malfūf 2353.1517
 Ruḡm er-Rumēl (WT-13) 2330.1091
 Ruḡm Hamra Ifdan 1873. 0091
 Şafat/Safed/Zefat 1966.2635
 Şaḥāb/Sahab 2452.1425
 Sāl 2359.2198
 Samaga/Ra's Siyāḡa 2188.1307
 Samaria 1686.1870
 Şēḥ Sa'd/Qarnayim/Karnaim 2473.2495
 Sela/es-Sela^c 2049.0214
 Sela/Umm el-Biyyāra 1919.9712
 Senaah/Magdalsenna (?)
 Hirbet el 'Auḡā el-Fōqā/Tell aṭ-Ṭarūni 1888.1501
 Hirbet el 'Auḡā et-Taḥṭa 1940.1500
 Sepphoris 1764.2397
 Shaalbim 1488.1418
 Shaaraim/Hirbet Qēyafa (?) 1460.1226
 Shamḥuna/Tel Shimron/Sim'on 1700.2344
 Sharuhēn/Şaruḥēn/Tell el-'Aḡūl (?) 0934.0975
 Shechem/Tell Balāṭa 1768.1800
 Shiloh/Hirbet Sēlūn 1776.1626
 Shittim/Tell el-Kefrēn 2118.1397
 Shunem 1819.2235
 Sibmah/Hirbet 'Uyūn Mūsā 2202.1318
 Sidon/Şaidā/Şedā 1860.3330
 Socoh/Hirbet 'Abbad 1476.1211
 Socoh/Hirbet Şuwēka 1480.1207
 Şübā/Şuba/Tel Tzuba/Zobah/Belmont 1620.1325
 Succoth/Tell Dēr 'Allā (?) 2088.1782
 Taanach/Tell Ta'annek 1701.2142
 Ṭabaqāt Faḥil/Pella 2078.2064
 Tamar/Hazezon-Tamar
 'Ain el-'Arūs 1834.0436
 'En Ḥaşēvā 1732.0244
 Qaşr al-Ġuhēnija 1730.0485
 Tawilan 1970.9720
 Tekoa/Təkoa^c 1700.1157
 Tel 'Āmāl/Tell el-'Asī 1926.2123
 Tel Burna/Tel Bornā/Libna (?) 1375.1157
 Tel Dover/Hirbet ed-Duwēr 2121.2030
 Tel 'Erani/Tell Gath/Tell Şēḥ Aḥmed el-'Arēni 1290.1130
 Tel 'Esdār 1475.0645
 Tel 'Eşūr/Tell el-Asāwir 1521.2098
 Tel 'Ēṭōn/Tell 'Ēṭūn 1425.0999
 Tel Hadar/Eš-Şēḥ Ḥaḍar 2110.2507
 Tel Ḥādīd/el-Hadita 1456.1523
 Tel Ḥalīf/Tell el-Ḥuwēlifa/Rimmon 1373.0879
 Tel Hamid/Rās Abū Ḥamid 1398.1456
 Tel Ḥārāsīm 1338.1279
 Tel Haror/Tell Abū Hurēra/Gerar 1125.0879
 Tel Hevron/Gebel el-Rumēda 1597.1036

Tel ʿĪrā/Ĥirbet el-Ġarra 1487.0711	Tell el-Ĥiṣn/Ramoth-Gilead or Lo-Debar 2330.2102
Tel Malḥātā/Malatha/Tell el-Milḥ 1525.0696	Tell el-Ĥōṣn/Beth-Shean 1975.2123
Tel Masos/Tel Mašōs/Ĥirbet el-Mšāš 1467.0690	Tell el-Ĥulēfe/Eilat/Tell el-Kheleife 1498.8815
Tel Michal/Tel Mikhāl 1310.1742	Tell el-Ĥuṣn/Pella 2078.2064
Tel Miqnē/Ekron 1358.1318	Tell el-Ĥuwēlifa/Tel Ḥalif/Rimmon 1373.0879
Tel Mōr/Tell Ḥēdar 1176.1368	Tell el-Mālāt 1410.2161
Tel Moza/Moza 1654.1338	Tell el-Mazār 2074.1819
Tel Qarnei Ḥiṭṭin 1929.2459	Tell el-Milḥ/Malatha/Tel el-Malḥātā 1525.0696
Tel Qashish 1605.2323	Tell el-Muʿallaqa 2371.2235
Tel Qasile/Tell el-Qasile 1307.1676	Tell el-Muḡaiyir 2379.2239
Tel Qeshet 1275.1054	Tell el-Muḥarḥaš/Anaharat/Tell Reḡeš 1940.2288
Tel Qiṣyon 1871.2297	Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo 1676.2212
Tel Rehov/Tel Rəḥob/Tell eṣ-Šārim 1968.2068	Tell el-ʿOrēme/Chinnereth 2008.2529
Tel Roš 1815.2718	Tell el-Qasile/Tel Qasile 1307.1676
Tel Šera/Tell Sera/Tell eš-Šerīʿa 1196.0889	Tell el-Qōs 2087.1834
Tel Shimron/Simʿon 1700.2344	Tell el-ʿUmēri 2342.1420
Tel Shiqmona/Tell es-Samak 1461.2478	Tell en-Nāʿam/Yenoʿam 1982.2354
Tel Yinʿām/Yenoʿam 1982.2354	Tell en-Naṣbe/Mizpah 1706.1436
Tel Yoqnaʿām/Jokneam 1605.2300	Tell er-Raḥib 1807.2762
Tel Zayit 1539.1152	Tell er-Ruqēš/er-Ruqēš 0861.0919
Tell Ābil el-Qamḥ/Abel-Beth-Maacah 2045.2962	Tell es-Saʿīdiye 2045.1861
Tell Abū Ḥaraz/Tell Abu al-Kharaz 2062.2006	Tell eṣ-Šārim/Tel Rehov/Tel Rəḥob 1968.2068
Tell Abū Ḥawām 1522.2452	Tell es-Sebaʿ 1348.0727
Tell Abū Ḥayyāt/Tell el-Hayyat 2047.2038	Tell eš-Šēḥ Aḥmed el-ʿArēnī 1298.1133
Tell Abū Hurēra/Tel Haror/Gerar 1125.0879	Tell eš-Šerīʿa 1196.0889
Tell Abū Salima 0650.0709	Tell es-Sultān/Jericho 1921.1420
Tell Abū Sūs/Abel-Meholah (?) 2030.1978	Tell eš-Šuqaf/Tell Sheqef 1230.1075
Tell ʿAmmatā/Amathous 2085.1829	Tell ʿĒtūn/Tel ʿĒtōn 1425.0999
Tell ʿArād/Arad 1621.0766	Tell Ġalūl 2312.1254
Tell Balāṭa/Shechem 1768.1800	Tell Ġemme/Tell Gamma 0971.0886
Tell Bēt Mirsim 1415.0960	Tell Ġudēde/Tel Goded/Libna (?) 1416.1157
Tell Dāmiyā/Adamah/Adam 2018.1679	Tell Ḥammad 2555.2481
Tell Dēr ʿAllā 2088.1782	Tell Ḥesbān/Heshbon 2265.1342
Tell Dibbīn/Ijon/ʿIyyon 2052.3054	Tell Jalul/Ġalūl 2312.1254
Tell ed-Duwēr/Lachish 1357.1082	Tell Jawa 2382.1407
Tell el-ʿAdliyyeh/Tell ʿAdliyah 2081.1803	Tell Jemmeh/Tell Ġemme 0971.0886
Tell el-ʿAḡul/Sharuhēn (?) 0934.0975	Tell Judeideh/Tell el-Ġudēde 1416.1157
Tell el-Ašʿarī 2453.2391	Tell Keisan/Tell Kēsān/Achshaph 1645.2532
Tell el-Fārʿa (north)/Tirzah 1823.1882	Tell Mubārak/Tel Məvōrak 1434.2155
Tell el-Fārʿa (south)/Ziklag (?) 1006.0770	Tell Nimrīn/Nimrin 2096.1453
Tell el-Fuḥḥār 1586.2586	Tell Qaʿdān/Tell Abū Qadān 2091.1786
Tell el-Fūl/Gibeah 1719.1367	Tell Qedeš/Kedesh 1997.2796
Tell el-Ġazari/Gezer 1425.1407	Tell Qēmūn/Jokneam 1605.2300
Tell el-Ḥamme 2112.1778	Tell Qirī 1611.2274
Tell el-Hammeh/Hamath (?) 1974.1977	Tell Rās el-ʿĒn/Aphek 1435.1680
Tell el-Hayyat/ Tell Abū Ḥayyāt 2047.2038	Tell Reḡeš/Anaharat/Tell el-Muḥarḥaš 1937.2286
Tell el-Ḥesi/Tell el-Ḥasi/Tel Hasi 1244.1062	

Tell Rumeida/Tel Hevron 1597.1036	Wādī eṭ-Temed/ath-Thamad/WT-13
Tell Šāfūṭ 2290.1600	2330.1091
Tell Siran 2343.1581	Wādī l-Hēdān 2150.1000
Tell Umm Ḥammād al-Ġarbī 2053.1724	Wādī l-Wāla 2250.1100
Tell Umm Ḥammād aš-Šarqī 2055.1725	Wādī Murabbaʿāt 1854.1107
Tell Waqqāš/Hazor 2035.2693	Yavneh/Jamnia/Jabne 1260.1415
Tell Zakariyeh/Azekah 1440.1232	Yavneh Yam 1212.1478
Tell Zerāʿa 2119.2251	Yenoʿam/Tel Yinʿām/Tell en-Nāʿam
Tell Zif/Ziph 1628.0982	1982.2354
Tell Zippor/Tell Zippor 1250.1180	Yotvata 1555.9224
Tiberias 2010.2437	Zarethan
Timnah/Tel Bāṭāš/Tell el-Baṭāši 1417.1325	Tell el-Qōs (?) 2087.1834
Timnah/Wādī el-Menēʿiye 1448.9107	Tell Umm Hammād (?) 2053.1724
Tirzah/Tell el-Fārʿa (north) 1823.1882	Zereda/Ḥirbet Banāt Barr 1554.1622
Tulēl 2083.2730	Ziklag/Tell el-Fārʿa (south)(?) 1006.0770
Tyre/Šūr 1685.2975	Ziph/Tell Zif 1628.0982
Umm ed-Danānīr 2272.1660	Zoara 1951.0481
Umm el-Biyyāra 1919.9712	Zobah/Šuba/Tel Tzuba/Belmont 1620.1325
Wādī ʿAmrānī 1433.8958	Zorah/Šōrʿa 1487.1314
Wādī ed-Dāliye 1900.1550	

Other locations in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Cyprus, Greece, Asia Minor, and so on outside the Palestine Grid (WGS84 coordinates):

ʿAin Dāra 36°27'50" N 36°51'55" E	Dur Šarrukīn/Khorsabad 36°28'0" N
Alalakh 36°14'16" N 36°23'5" E	43°12'0" E
Aleppo 36°11'57" N 37°9'45" E	Ebla/Tell Mardīḥ 35°47'52" N 36°47'52" E
Alexandria 31°12'48" N 29°55'39" E	Ecbatana 34°48'23" N 48°30'58" E
ʿAmāra West 20°50'0" N 30°23'0" E	Enkomi 35°9'58" N 33°52'13" E
Antioch/Daphne 36°12'0" N 36°9'0" E	Gaugamela 36°20'0" N 43°20'0" E
Apamea (Cibotus) 38°4'18" N 30°9'56" E	Ġebel el-Lawz 28°39'16" N 35°18'16" E
Arvad 34°51'21" N 35°51'32" E	Ġebel Kātrīnā 28°30'39" N 33°57'19" E
Athens 37°58'17" N 23°43'35" E	Ġebel Mūsā 28°32'23" N 33°58'24" E
Babylon (city) 32°32'32" N 44°25'16" E	Ġebel Sirbal 28°38'47" N 33°39'06" E
Behistun/Bisitun 34°23'18" N 47°26'12" E	Ḥamat 35°06'55" N 36°46'01" E
Beirut 33°53'13" N 35°30'47" E	Haran/Ḥarrān 36°51'51" N 39°01'57" E
Berenice (Cyrenaica)/Benghazi 32°7'0" N	Hattuša 40°1'5" N 34°37'3" E
20°4'0" E	Heracleopolis 29°5'0" N 30°56'0" E
Berytos/Beirut 33°53'13" N 35°30'48" E	Hermon 33°24'51" N 35°51'26" E
Bit Adini 36°40'00" N 37°10'00" E	Huelva/Minas de Riotinto 37°41'0" N
Bit Agusi 36°10'00" N 36°10'00" E	6°35'0" W
Byblos/Gubla 34°7'25" N 35°39'4" E	Hulwan 34°27'54" N 45°51'18" E
Carthage 36°51'10" N 10°19'24" E	Issos 36°50'18" N 36°9'52" E
Chaeronea 38°29'39" N 22°50'35" E	Karnak 25°43'0" N 32°39'0" E
Cynoscephalae 39°25'0" N 22°34'0" E	Kition 34°55'23" N 33°37'48" E
Damascus 33°30'41" N 36°19'23" E	Knossos 35°17'52" N 25°9'47" E
Delos 37°23'56" N 25°15'59" E	Kumidi/Kāmid el-Lōz 33°37'24" N 35°49'16" E

Leontopolis/Tell el-Yehūdiyye 30°29'33" N 31°33'16" E	Siwa (oasis) 29°11'26" N 25°32'57" E
Magnesia (ad Sipylum) 38°36'47" N 27°25'33" E	Soleb 20°26'0" N 30°20'0" E
Marathon 38°9'18" N 23°57'49" E	Sparta 37°4'24" N 22°25'47" E
Medinet Hābū 25°43'12" N 32°36'3" E	Susa 32°12'0" N 48°15'0" E
Memphis 29°51'0" N 31°15'0" E	Tell 'Āfis 35°54'17" N 36°47'55" E
Miletus 37°31'52" N 27°16'32" E	Tell el-Dab'a/Qantir/Avaris 30°47'0" N 31°50'0" E
Mount Moses/Ġebel Mūsā 28°32'23" N 33°58'24" E	Tell el-Mashūta/Tell el-Mashūṭa 30°33'10" N 32°5'58" E
Mycenae 37°43'50" N 22°45'25" E	Tell el-'Ujūn 34°10'47" N 36°16'57" E
Nimrud/Kallḥu 36°6'0" N 43°19'43" E	Tell er-Retabe/Tell er-Reṭāba 30°32'51" N 31°57'49" E
Nineveh 36°22'0" N 43°9'0" E	Tell er-Rimāḥ 36°15'26" N 42°26'58" E
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Sarepta/Sarafand 33°27'27" N 35°17'45" E	Zyrene/Cyrene 32°49'17" N 21°51'19" E
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