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THE MILITARY MIGHT AND ACTIVITY OF KING AHAB

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

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CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

Dtr	Deuteronomic
Fig.	Figure
m	Metre

I. INTRODUCTION

A cursory reading of the book of Kings introduces the reader to Israelite kings who are involved with other international powers. The biblical text with its mention of ancient history and practices, tends to defy understanding for the one who is uninformed of its context. In order to avoid undue assumptions, the twentieth century reader must come to an understanding of the history of the biblical text, as the events recorded therein are inextricably linked to their historical context.

The author of this thesis believes that the meaning of a biblical text is to be found in the author's intent or purpose. While a text, or a reader centred approach to biblical interpretation does have some merit, the intent of the biblical author is that which provides proper restraint and stability to biblical interpretation. Tremper Longman stated that "the study of the historical context of an author is helpful, since it places constraints on interpretation and helps to elucidate the meaning of a text."[1] Therefore, an understanding of the historical background of a text is essential to biblical interpretation.

In order to understand the historical context of a biblical text, the role of archaeology and the relationship of the biblical text to what actually happened in ancient times needs to be explored. *Time* magazine on its front cover portrayed a picture of

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[1]Tremper Longman, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987), 66.

Moses with the ten commandments and the title, "Is the Bible Fact or Fiction?"[2] The author promised that archaeology could shed light on what did and did not happen in the biblical narratives. In Lemonick's article for this popular magazine, finds such as the Aramaic inscription from Tel Dan affirm the existence of the Judean monarchy, while the bullae of "Baruch the scribe" provided another positive correlation with the biblical text.[3] The characters of Abraham and Moses were in question, however, since the biblical text is the only witness to their existence. Lemonick quotes several influential scholars such as David Ussishkin, W.G. Dever, Hershel Shanks, Kenneth Kitchen and F.M. Cross during his discussion of the relationship between the Bible and archaeology. The very presence of such an article in a popular magazine like *Time* reveals the interest on this topic and the appropriateness of its discussion in this thesis.

This thesis will attempt to ascertain the historical context of King Ahab as it relates to his military power and activity. This historical context will then serve to inform the author's biblical interpretation of Ahab's confrontations with Ben-Hadad I of Damascus as recorded in 1 Kings 20 and 22. An analysis of present views on the relationship between the biblical text and the genre of history and historiography will be discussed. As well, the discussion of the relationship between the Bible and archaeology will precede the survey of the monumental remains in the northern kingdom of Israel during the ninth century BCE, that pertain to military might and activity. Only through an understanding of this historical context would it be possible to properly determine the

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[2]Michael D. Lemonick, "Are the Bible's Stories True?" *Time* 146/25 (Dec 18, 1995): 1.

[3]Ibid., 41.

author's intent and therefore provide for sound biblical interpretation.

Questions

In attempting to ascertain the historical context of King Ahab's military power and activity, one may turn to the field of archaeology and the biblical text itself. In regards to archaeology, this thesis will attempt to determine what archaeological remains may be specifically related to the ninth century BCE in the northern kingdom of Israel. What is the nature of these monumental remains and their function? Is there any correlation between these remains and the biblical text? Epigraphic finds from Tel Dan, the Aramean kingdom and Assyrian inscriptions will also be discussed as they contribute to the military might and activity of King Ahab. Also, the reliability of the Assyrian inscription which specifically mentions King Ahab in the battle of Qarqar for determining Ahab's military strength and activity will be examined.

Secondly, this thesis will attempt to answer questions that arise from the passages in 1 Kings that deal with King Ahab's conflict with the King of Aram. Some of the questions that will be dealt with pertain to both text critical issues and exegetical matters. Have these passages been wrongly attributed to the military activity of King Ahab? How can these biblical passages be used as a source for the history of King Ahab? What do these biblical passages contribute to the understanding of Ahab's military might and activity? Furthermore, how do these biblical passages correlate with the findings from the archaeological and epigraphic survey?

Assumptions

As has been previously mentioned, the author of this thesis assumes an author centred approach to biblical interpretation. From this perspective, then, the historical context is crucial in determining the author's intent. Secondly, the present author believes that the Bible is absolutely true in all that it affirms. As well, matters of textual origin and transmission will be discussed when they are necessary for understanding the text. Thirdly, the Bible was written by the nation of Israel and for the nation of Israel,[4] through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This demands a careful analysis of the genre of the book of Kings, as the ancient author's intent was not to write a Syro-Palestinian history. Therefore, through this analysis of genre, the author will be careful not to allow the record of Kings to be the means of interpreting archaeological data.

Limitations and Delimitations

This thesis is limited to the archaeological information that is published up until the date of the writing of this thesis, or that information that was given to the author by permission of the excavators. The author recognizes his personal limitation in the use of translations for the Assyrian inscriptions which will be analyzed. Finally, this thesis will not consider the prophetic ministry that was active during the reign of King Ahab, but will focus simply on Ahab's military power and activity.

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[4]William H. Hallo, "Biblical History in Its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Approach," in *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method* (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1980), 6.

Methodology

The methodology employed for achieving the purpose of this paper will follow four main objectives. First the archaeological remains will be analysed, as to their dating to the reign of Ahab and for any contribution they may lend to an understanding of his military power. Secondly, Tel Dan inscription, the Bar-Hadad stele and especially the Assyrian "Monolith Inscription" will be analysed according to their genre in order to determine whether the information contained therein is reliable for understanding Ahab's military power and activity. Thirdly, this thesis will provide an investigation of the above mentioned passages to determine the nature of Ahab's battles with Aram, in light of their genre and historical context. Fourthly, conclusions will be drawn from all three areas of study as to the nature of Ahab's military power and activity, and any implications thereof on the understanding of the biblical text.

1. Bible and History: Literary Genre Approach

Several scholars explore the relationship of the Hebrew Bible with history through a genre-centred approach. These scholars attempt to understand how the text relates to what actually happened by analysing certain forms of writing described as historiography. While these scholars employ other methods, such as archaeology, they all attempt to understand the biblical text and history through an analysis of the literary genre.

Prior to discussing the various scholars who have contributed to the literary analysis of the Bible as it relates to history, it is important to define the term "historiography." Baruch Halpern defined historiography as "the way in which history is

written and constructed."[5] Historiography refers to the way or the manner in which the biblical authors recorded the events that they portray. History commonly refers to the real world of the past or what actually happened, while historiography refers to how that "history" was written down. Philip R. Davies stated that, "historiography is a narrative genre."[6] The discussion for the following scholars about historiography centres around the relationship between history and historiography, and the details of what historiography looks like as a literary genre.

Historiography is not unique to the Old Testament, but the inscriptions and writings of other ancient cultures reveal the manner in which these ancient scribes recorded history. J. Van Seters has been a pioneer in this area of historiography and has surveyed the historiography of Early Greece, Mesopotamia, the Hittite empire, and Egypt.[7] Mesopotamian historiography consisted of royal inscriptions, king lists, omens, chronicles, historical epics and prophecies. Such things as the Assyrian king lists represent, according to Van Seters, a nationalistic and antiquarian motivation that attempted to connect the monarchy of Assyria with the distant past.[8] Another literary genre in Mesopotamia was that of omens which instructed based on their judgements of the lives and activities of rulers, and the historical information that can be gained from

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[5]Baruch Halpern, "Radical Exodus Redating Fatally Flawed," *BARev* 13/6 (1987): 56.

[6]Philip R. Davies, "Method and Madness: Some Remarks on Doing History with the Bible," *JBL* 114/4 (1995): 703.

[7]J. Van Seters, *In Search of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

[8]Ibid., 76.

them is strictly a by-product of other religious concerns.[9] Mesopotamian chronicles, according to Van Seters, were significant for the rise of historiography because they showed the authors used secondary sources and through historical research conbined it with other material to form a new work which may be strongly biased (e.g. the Synchronistic History) or simply antiquarian in nature.[10] The Hittite kingdom produced annals that did not possess either the well-developed chronology of Mesopotamia or its focus on the role of historicity. Hittite historiography seems to have had the two fold goal of associating the past with admonition and using the past for political justification.[11] The kingdom of Egypt produced a massive corpus of inscriptions and writings that served to render an account to itself of its past. Van Seters grouped Egyptian historiography into several sections beginning with the Palermo Stone and its antecedents and included other forms of literature such as king lists, royal inscriptions, dedication inscriptions, commemorative inscriptions, historical novels, biographies and the ways that the kingdom used the past as propaganda. One can see how these kingdoms in the ancient near east sought to render an account of their history through various literary genres.

J. Van Seters

J. Van Seters began his discussion of historiography with J. Huizinga's definition of history: "history is the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself

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[9]Ibid., 79.

[10]Ibid., 91.

[11]Ibid., 114.

of its past."[12] With this definition as a guideline, Van Seters defined national history as a presentation of the peoples' constitution followed by a moral judgment of its subsequent actions as a people.[13] The national history contains not only the actions of the people but a commentary on those actions, whether they be worthy of praise or condemnation based upon the belief system of the people. The Law formed the interpretive grid for the nation's history, and the deeds of the nation were measured according to their observance of that Law.

History writing, according to Van Seters, was done according to certain observable criteria. First, history writing is a specific form of tradition and not an accidental accumulation of material. Secondly, history writing's primary concern is not the accurate reporting of past events but the significance or reason for recalling those past events. Third, history writing examines the cause of present conditions and circumstances in order to determine who is responsible, based on moral considerations, for the current situation. Fourth, history writing is national or corporate in scope, and the deeds of the king are viewed nationally. Finally, history writing is a part of the literary tradition that is influential in determining the corporate tradition of the people.[14]

Van Seters proposed a connection between the work of the Greek historian Herodotus and that of the Old Testament. Some correlations that Van Seters identified were the recurrence of interpretive themes that are applied to events and traditions at the

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[12]Ibid., 1.

[13]Ibid., 2.

[14]Ibid., 5.

discretion of the historian.[15] This form of writing was presented in what Van Seters refers to as a "paratactic style" and was not systematized into periodic fashion.[16] The deuteronomic historian was the one responsible for the historiography of the former prophets, and would be contemporary with Herodotus, i.e. around the fourth century BCE Van Seters described the method of the deuteronomic historian as tying together blocks of material of uneven length by means of certain unifying devices such as patterns and analogies, repetition of formulaic statements, prophecies and their fulfilment, and contrasts between major figures like David and Saul or David and Jeroboam.[17] These unifying devices are characteristic of the paratactic style, and accordingly allow the deuteronomic historian to develop a number of different themes and incorporate a variety of source materials of different styles.

S.L. McKenzie commented on Van Seters' view of the deuteronomic historian as being largely fictional because the deuteronomic historian did not incorporate any earlier historiographic works into his history.[18] Specifically, Van Seters identified king lists that referred to the deeds of the king, such as battles and royal building activities, and the official records such as "the book of the deeds of Solomon" and "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel/Judah" as two sources that the deuteronomic historian

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[15]Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 40.

[16]Ibid., 40.

[17]Ibid., 321.

[18]S.L. McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History" *ABD* 2: 206-212.

used.[19] The corpus of material referred to by Van Seters as prophetic legend, and the theological judgment passed upon each reign was the work of the deuteronomic historian.[20] Therefore, apart from the king lists and official records, the majority of the former prophets are the construct of a fourth century historian. According to Van Seters the majority of the deuteronomic history is a fourth century construct, but it is done with the purpose of rendering an account to Israel of its past.

Philip R. Davies

Philip R. Davies, along with T.L. Thompson and Niels Lemche, offered another viewpoint on the discussion of history and historiography. Davies defined history as what happened in the past, while historiography is a narrative about the past.[21] Historiography, according to Davies, is a well known genre of the Persian period and later that reported on past events, fictions, myths, legends and hearsay along with embellishments provided by the historiographer.[22] Davies cited some examples from this genre of historiography as Josephus, Chronicles, Jubilees, and 2 Maccabees.[23]

With this notion of historiography as a framework, Davies then proceeded to distinguish between three different Israels. The "Biblical Israel" never existed, but was a

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[19]J. Van Seters, *In Search of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 293.

[20]Ibid., 303, 315.

[21]Philip R. Davies, "Method and Madness: Some Remarks on Doing History with the Bible" *JBL* 114/4 (1995): 701.

[22]Ibid., 701.

[23]Ibid., 701.

literary construct of the writers, editors and redactors of the Hebrew Bible. The "Historical Israel" was not a nation state as described in the Hebrew Bible, but was a term applied to the inhabitants of the highlands of Canaan during the Iron Age, and limited mostly to the north. Finally there is "Ancient Israel" which is a modern scholarly construct that is a conglomeration of the "Biblical" and "Historical" Israels. William G. Dever in an archaeological critique of Philip R. Davies work, *In Search of Ancient Israel* declared that,

> The first and third, or textual Israels are simply illusions; and the second Israel may have existed in theory, and might be brought to light by archaeological investigation, but practically speaking is unrecoverable because of the limitations of archaeology. For Davies, this might have been a prudent point at which to stop his nonhistory.[24]

For Davies the history of Israel, i.e. what actually happened, is completely lost due to the limitations of archaeology and the ideological nature of the biblical text. Because of these presuppositions Dever declared that Davies' "nonhistory" was an exercise in futility due to its basic nihilistic foundation.[25]

Davies argued that the Bible's history contained contradictions and does not match up well with archaeological data, therefore it cannot be termed as history. Since the Bible is ideological therefore it is historically unreliable. The expression of this ideology is what Davies referred to as biblical historiography.[26] The overall description of Israel's history from Genesis through Kings and Chronicles is not confirmed by the

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[24]William G. Dever, "Will the Real Israel Please Stand Up? Archaeology and Israelite Historiography: Part I," *BASOR* 297 (1995): 67.

[25]Ibid., 67.

[26]Davies, "Method and Madness," 702.

available non-biblical data, and its historicity (whether or not it actually happened as the historiographer asserts) is dubious. Davies recognized that there are some isolated incidents attested in non-biblical literature, but he freely admits to attacking the ideology that biblical accounts can be confirmed with nonbiblical data.[27] This sceptical view of the biblical accounts has embroiled Davies in not a few scholarly discussions regarding these nonbiblical confirmations.[28] Both the Law and the former prophets, according to Davies, have very little to do with history, instead they reflect the ideology of a post-exilic author writing in a well known historiographic style.

T.L. Thompson

T.L. Thompson is another scholar whose views have fuelled a popular discussion that has leaped beyond academic journals or the Internet and onto the pages of *BARev*.[29] A brief overview of his basic views regarding history and historiography and their relationship to the Hebrew Bible will be provided.

Thompson stated that the Greeks were responsible for the development of the genre of *historia* which was both a rational and a critical method of research.[30] The criterion used in this sort of writing was the truth of the events recounted. Thompson

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[27]Ibid., 702.

[28]Anson Rainey, "The `House of David' and the House of the Deconstructionists," *BARev* 20/6 (Nov/Dec 1994): 47.

[29]Neils P. Lemche, T.L. Thompson, William Dever, and P. Kyle McCarter, "Face to Face: Biblical Minimalists Meet Their Challengers," interview by Hershel Shanks, *BARev* 23 (July/Aug 1997): 26-42.

[30]T.L. Thompson, "Israelite Historiography," *ABD* 3: 207.

noted that although we refer to the "historical books" of the Bible, the term "history" is completely absent in the Hebrew.[31] History writing as a critical enterprise, relating to the historicity of the biblical events, is not found in the pages of the Hebrew Bible. Thompson contends that the Hebrew Bible should not be read as expressive of history.[32]

Since the Hebrew Bible is not "history", Thompson then discussed the genre of "historiography." Thompson's view of historiography is not the familiar definition by J. Huizinga, "the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past." Thompson does not view historiography as "history interpreted" and this definition would be more appropriately applied, according to Thompson, to such genres as ethnography, genealogies, constitutional narratives, origin stories and much of mythology, instead of historiography.[33] This broad view of historiography allowed scholars to view the Former Prophets, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah as historiographies which, according to Thompson, is in direct contrast to the genre traditions of Mesopotamian, Hittite and Greek historiography.[34]

Historiography is a much more narrow genre for Thompson. Historiography is merely one of many discrete formal types of literature such as traditional tales, fables, parables, legends, myths, tribal histories, genealogical tales, romances, geographical tales, biographies, constitutional tales, origin stories, ethnographies along with

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[31]Ibid.

[32]Lemche, Thompson, Dever, and McCarter, "Face to Face," 42.

[33]T.L. Thompson, "Israelite Historiography," *ABD* 3: 209.

[34]Ibid., 207.

historiographies.[35] Defining a portion of the Hebrew Bible as historiography is a difficult task, according to Thompson, as one must distinguish a possible historiographical tale (Gen 14?) both from the historiographic intentionality that formed smaller collections (Exod 1-15) and the historiographically motivated collection of larger works into their present form.[36] Historiography is essentially the domain of larger redactions and the final form of compositions.[37] With this notion of historiography in mind, Thompson declared that "historiography proper seems unlikely to have been part of the Palestinian culture prior to the Hellenistic period."[38]

The question arises, after studying Thompson's views regarding history and historiography, regarding what elements recorded in the Hebrew Bible have a pre-exilic context. Thompson noted that extra-biblical records from Assyria, and Babylon that mention Israel and Judah are undoubtedly pre-exilic, along with certain names such as *Amuru*, and *Peleset*.[39] In answer to a question regarding what in the Hebrew Bible is expressive of history, Thompson responded, "I think that we have a great deal in terms of literary history, in terms of theology, in terms of the self-identification of people in Palestine in the second, first century BCE."[40] The majority of the Hebrew Bible is therefore an expression of the theology and ideology of the Jewish people in the

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[35]Ibid., 209.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., 207.

[39]Lemche, Thompson, Dever, and McCarter, "Face to Face," 32.

[40]Ibid., 28.

Hellenistic period, with very little correlation to anything pre-exilic. The seeming chronological progression in the Law and the Former Prophets is, according to Thompson, late and secondary, if not entirely accidental.[41] The Hebrew Bible has very little to offer the historian of the pre-exilic period, apart from partial king lists and a few ancient names.

Understanding the disparate nature of the biblical texts for the determination of a pre-exilic history, according to Thompson, one must then turn to other sources to elucidate this history. Thompson then turned to the realm of archaeology and the extra-biblical inscriptions regarding the early history of Israel. Archaeology must, therefore, be of great importance for Thompson in determining a history of Israel, yet W.G. Dever in an archaeologically based critique of Thompon's work described "Thompson's failure as an historian is archaeological."[42] Having concluded that the biblical texts are unproductive for determining history, Thompson begins the history of northern Israel with the first neo-Assyrian inscription mentioning the "house of Omri" and the history of Judah begins only in the eighth century. Dever faulted Thompson's use of archaeology on four accounts: first, Thompson does not refer to primary source material such as site reports, and scholarly synthesis works; secondly, Thompson refered only to the few authorities that he knows or likes and not those who are experts in the field; third, he does not have command of the archaeological data available and finally his caricature of the

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[41]Thompson, "Israelite Historiography," 209.

[42]Dever, "Will the Real Israel Please Stand Up?" 65.

Iron Age is something completely unrecognizable by other archaeologists.[43] Dever also noted that Thompson's *ipso facto* declaration that the texts are unhistorical does not take into consideration the "historical core" that is evidenced in the many "convergences" between archaeology and the biblical texts.[44] Unfortunately, Thompson's history has become a history without sources, in regards to the pre-exilic period.

Niels Peter Lemche

Niels Lemche addressed the question of the genre of history writing as it relates to the biblical writers. Contrary to Baruch Halpern, Lemche believes that the ancient writers did not possess the necessary methodological tools to compose a history in the present sense of the term.[45] The history of Israel as told by the Old Testament writers was not an old history and did not represent what actually happened in antiquity, especially in reference to anything prior to the Hebrew monarchy.[46] The history writing of the Bible, unlike modern day histories, was not concerned with the presentation of hard historical facts. This interpretation of the genre of history writing being true to the facts is a modern interpretation, and was completely unknown to the ancient writers.[47] The genre of history writing for the biblical historian, according to Lemche, was more along the lines of a

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[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid., 64.

[45]Niels Peter Lemche, *The Canaanites and Their Land*, JSOTSup 110 (JSOT *Press,* 1991): *151.*

[46]Ibid., 158.

[47]Lemche, Thompson, Dever, and McCarter, "Biblical Minimalists," 29.

novel, the theme of which was the origin of Israel and its ancient history.[48] Ancient history writing was not concerned with the presentation of historical facts, but more of a narrative that exposed their fate in terms of the past, present and the future.[49] Lemche stated that,

> The history writers were therefore free to convey their message to their readers in the form they had themselves chose and were not bound to present a true picture of what had actually happened. A narrative could be considered true and genuine if its message was understood and accepted by the audience, not because it was true to the facts of past history.[50]

The genre of history for the biblical writer, according to Lemche, was the communication of a message, the truth of which was determined by the acceptance of the audience and not on the authenticity of the events presented.

Lemche further developed the implications of this view in light of the biblical figures of David and Solomon. Several scholars believe that history writing essentially begins with the monarchy, but Lemche believes that David and Solomon were not historical figures but were invented during the Hasmonean period when an independent Jewish community extended its control to all or most of Palestine.[51] The Old Testament writers did have sources and traditions that were old, but the difficulty arises in how one can determine what is ancient and what is from the time of the writing of the biblical texts

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[48]*Canaanites and Their Land*, 158.

[49]Ibid., 161.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Hershel Shanks, "New Orleans Gumbo: Plenty of Spice at the Annual Meeting," *BARev* 23 (Mar/Apr 1997): 58.

(Greek/Hasmonean Period).[52] This process of determining what is old from the biblical text was described by Lemche as treasure hunting for historical information.[53] Most of the "historical" information in the biblical texts refers to the mental history of the people from the time in which it was composed, which is all post-exilic.[54] The Hebrew Bible for Lemche represents a novel regarding the beliefs of the post-exilic Jewish community, and is not something that is useful for determining what actually happened prior to the exile.

Keith W. Whitelam

Keith Whitelam is one person who advocates the importance of archaeology in the determination of Israel's history, but it is his treatment of the biblical text that accords his position in this section regarding literary genre. For Whitelam the biblical text records the self perception of the Davidic monarchy and is not a witness to a particular historical reality.[55] The biblical text offers an insight into one level of Israelite society, and preserved their view on history, which does not necessarily pertain to what actually happened. Whitelam argued that the historian must consider the role and interrelationships of all social groups and not perpetuate the bias of the biblical text in espousing the lives of the great men of history.[56] Accordingly, Whitelam considers that

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[52]*Canaanites and Their Land*, 164.

[53]Lemche, Thompson, Dever, and McCarter, "Biblical Minimalists," 28.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Keith Whitelam, "Recreating the History of Israel," *JSOT* 35 (1986): 53.

[56]Ibid., 54.

the biblical text is elitist in its discussion of history, and the true historian must go beyond this elitist viewpoint to record the perspective and inter-relationships of all social groups. Whitelam concluded that, "the study of the history of Israel needs to be released from the constraints imposed on it by the methodological priority accorded to the biblical texts."[57]

Having determined that the biblical texts merely produce an insight into one level of Israelite society, Whitelam then identified the "new archaeology" espoused by William G. Dever as the source for determining a non-elitist history.[58] It is interesting to note that in Whitelam's enthusiastic endorsement of Dever's multidisciplinary approach to archaeology, he does not mention Dever's consistent emphasis on the dialogue that needs to exist between biblical studies and archaeology. Dever never viewed his "new archaeology" as something that would liberate us from the constraints of the biblical text, instead he envisioned a dialogue between two independent disciplines, that of biblical studies and archaeology.[59] Since the writing of Whitelam's article, he has separated himself from Dever's view of archaeology. Archaeology, according to Whitelam, provides the historian with alternative sources of information that were not available to earlier scholars.

W.W. Hallo

W.W. Hallo, a noted Assyriologist, took exception, along with K.A. Kitchen, to

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[57]Ibid., 59.

[58]Ibid., 57.

[59]William G. Dever, "Is This Man a Biblical Archaeologist? *BAR* Interviews William Dever, Part 1," interview by Hershel Shanks, *BARev* 22 (July/Aug 1996): 32.

the views of J. Van Seters, and T.L. Thompson and openly admits skepticism over these literary-critical methods.[60] Kitchen referred to Thompson's and Van Seters' work as "negative fundamentalism" which he stated is "quasi-philosophical, at time almost neurotic, attitude of unremitting denigration of anything and everything to be found in the biblical writing, in the name of "scientific" skepticism often so extreme that it has frequently long ceased to be "scientific" in any meaningful sense."[61] After discussing these views of Thompson and Van Seters, Hallo detailed his own views by rewriting Huizinga's definition which was quoted by J. Van Seters. This definition, according to Hallo, now reads, "*each* civilization or ethnic entity is entitled to render account of the past *to itself* by appropriating *to itself* that portion of the past which it chooses *for itself*."[62] This definition by Hallo allows for a variety of historiographies within the biblical text made by several different cultic entities. Therefore, Israelite historiography has its beginning point in the Egyptian oppression when a collective consciousness was first realized in aggregate group of diverse origins.[63] This historiography can be distinguished from the royal historiography of the Davidic court, or the universal historiography of the priesthood that begins by a test of collective focus and its

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[60]Hallo, "Biblical History in Its Near Eastern Setting," 3.

[61]Kenneth A. Kitchen, "New Directions in Biblical Archaeology: Historical and Biblical Aspects," in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 48.

[62]Hallo, "Biblical History in Its Near Eastern Setting," 3.

[63]Ibid., 16.

emergence is formulated in the Book of Exodus.[64] Hallo's view allows the biblical text to preserve several historiographies written by different social or cultic groups.

Baruch Halpern

Baruch Halpern discussed the meaning of history and historiography as it related to the biblical text. Halpern described history as at best an abridgment of an originally fuller reality.[65] History by its necessity is the discussion of one or a number of things to the exclusion of many others, as it relates to a historical event. Halpern stated that,

> . . . histories purport to be true, or probable, representations of events and relationships in the past. They make this claim as to particular allegations: the people they describe, the significant actions they describe, are historical, authentic.[66]

Although histories are an abridgment, that does not diminish their claim to authenticity regarding the people and events described. In light of the previous discussion of the views of T.L. Thompson, Niels Lemche and others, Halpern's definition of history is quite illuminating,

> History is not how things happened, but an incomplete account, written toward a specific end, of selected developments. Yet normally we would say that if the author does not try to get the events right and to arrange them in the right proportion, the result cannot be history.[67]

A narrative may be termed history not in its comprehensive and orderly detail of what

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[64]Ibid.

[65]Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 7.

[66]Ibid., 6.

[67]Ibid., 7.

actually happened but in the intention of the author and its claim to accuracy in the details of the account.

Historiography, as well, is not something that is infinitely detailed. Assyrian royal inscriptions were described by Halpern as examples of historiography about the king's building and military accomplishments. These Assyrian inscriptions were not absolutely comprehensive but were selective in mentioning the king's service to nation and god, or the king's appreciation for divine blessing.[68] Historiography by nature is not something that is comprehensively accurate, as even the Assyrian inscriptions do not detail royal agendas or political motivations for appointment of governors, yet most scholars consider these as an example of early historiography. The criterion for historiography is not comprehensiveness but lies in the intention of the author to provide an accurate account of what is detailed.

Personal View

The divergence of views in some ways reflects the struggle to comprehend the exact nature of a living text that has been in use for thousands of years. The Hebrew Bible does not simply record "what happened in the past." Past events are interpreted as to their meaning for those who have become the people of Yahweh through the covenant relationship. In many ways, the view of J. Van Seters that the Hebrew Bible is a record of the Israelites relating an account to themselves of their past is valuable. The Israelites did gain an understanding of their identity and found meaning in their present situation

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[68]Ibid.

through a history of God's dealings with their forefathers. I would concur with Baruch Halpern in that the biblical writers did not intentionally misrepresent the events that they described. Certainly, the biblical texts are an abridgement of the history of the people of Israel, but this does not detract from their claim to reliability in the details they present. Though the biblical texts interpret events and provide a theology that is interwoven through these narratives, that does not make them a pseudo-history that is fabricated for the purpose of making a theological point.

As will be shown in this thesis, there are many "convergences" in the biblical texts with extant monumental remains, inscriptions, and material culture that are contemporaneous with the period that the text claims to describe. The Hebrew Bible is not entirely the product of either the Greek period or the Hasmonean period, as some of the above mentioned scholars claimed. On the basis of genre, one cannot categorically relegate the Hebrew Bible to being a product of the post-exilic period. Although the majority of the texts may have not reached their final form prior to the Greek or Hellenistic period, there is a great deal within these texts that pertain to "what actually happened" in the pre-exilic period. Through an analysis of the mid-ninth century BCE, as previously defined, the author will show that this biblical "maximalist" position is not entirely indefensible. The biblical text is not a comprehensive discussion of the history of the mid-ninth century BCE in Israel and Judah, but many of the elements in these texts can be attributed to this period.

2. Bible and History: Archaeological Approach

Another approach to understanding the Hebrew Bible's relationship to history is through the use of archaeology. Previous to the early 1970's the discipline of archaeology was inextricably linked to this question. During the years of W.F. Albright, archaeology's purpose was to establish the historicity of the biblical text. This section will analyse the growing relationship that exists between archaeology and the Hebrew Bible from the time of Albright until the present day. Special note will be made of the contributions of W.G. Dever to this discussion.

W.F. Albright

This brief analysis of W.F. Albright will not deal with his valuable contributions made to the field of archaeology in the area of pottery sequencing, or the excavations at *Tell Beit Mirsim*, but instead it will focus on his views regarding archaeology's relationship with the Hebrew Bible. Albright saw archaeology as the tool by which the documentary hypothesis of Julius Wellhausen could be disproved. Wellhausen and other proponents of the documentary hypothesis were rewriting a history of Israel that, among other things, believed the patriarchs were not historical figures, that the Law was a very late (post-exilic) development, and that a Babylonian conquest never existed of any notable duration, or severity.[69] Albright confidently declared that, "the theory of Wellhausen will not bear the test of archaeological examination."[70] Albright sought in

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[69]Thomas W. Davis, "Faith and Archaeology: A Brief History to the Present," *BARev* 19/2 (1995): 55.

[70]Ibid.

the *realia* of archaeological facts the historicity of the Bible and the subsequent disproval of Wellhausen's theory. Albright confidently boasted that, "we now recognize the substantial historicity of the entire Scriptural tradition from the Patriarchs to the end of the New Testament period."[71] For Albright archaeology provided the objective data that could answer the question of biblical historicity.

In attempting to refute the views of Wellhausen, Albright sought to establish the Bible as a valid resource for understanding ancient life. Thomas W. Davis quoted Albright as saying, "Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of unnumerable details, and has brought increased recognition of the Bible as a source of history."[72] Archaeology had become a sub-discipline of biblical studies, during Albright's day and biblical studies would set the agenda for archaeological research for several decades to come.

G. Ernest Wright

The influence of W.F. Albright continued to dominate the field of archaeology through the work of one of his students, G. Ernest Wright. According to Wright, archaeology allowed people to better understand "the mighty acts of God." Archaeology could not verify a person's faith in God but it could enhance it, because God always acted in history and anything that helps a person understand history therefore helps them understand God. This view was called into question following Wright's excavations at

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[71]W.F. Albright, *History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism* (London: A. and C. Black, 1964), 56.

[72]Davis, "Faith and Archaeology," 55.

the biblical site of Shechem. Wright realized that archaeology did not provide the objective facts that Albright so confidently asserted. In the end Wright concluded that, "the problem of the Scripture's truth and validity cannot be solved."[73] Archaeology did not possess the *realia* that it once assumed, because even the best field methods included a realm of subjectivity that could never be eliminated. Wright recognized that archaeology was insufficient for proving the historicity of the biblical texts. This conclusion that Wright reached near the end of his career would be further developed and championed by one of his students, William G. Dever.

William G. Dever

William G. Dever did not revitalize the biblical archaeology of Albright and Wright, but instead admitted to have written its obituary several times.[74] Dever has written extensively over the past twenty five years, calling for a reform of the previous Albright/Wright approach to archaeology and biblical studies. In fact, Dever prefers using the term "Syro-Palestinian" archaeology instead of the term biblical archaeology. Dever stated very boldly, "the fact is that 'Biblical Archaeology' of the classic Albright-Wright' style is dead, either as a serious intellectual enterprise, or as an effective force in American academic or religious life."[75] The reason for this demise was two-fold: partly because of the challenge of the "new archaeology" but primarily because it could not

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[73]Ibid., 58.

[74]William G. Dever, "What Remains of the House that Albright Built?" *BA* 56 (1993): 32.

[75]Ibid.

support the weight of the original aim of Albright-Wright to prove the authenticity of the Bible. The collapse of this classical approach to biblical archaeology was due to the external pressures of new methods, and the internal weaknesses which are both historical and theological.[76] Because of these factors, the classical form of "biblical archaeology" no longer exists, and Dever has been at the forefront in identifying its replacement.

William Dever refers to the successor of the Albright/Wright form of archaeology simply as "new archaeology." This "new archaeology" that Dever calls for is one that is a separate discipline from biblical studies. Archaeology is no longer a mere sub-discipline of biblical studies but is now an independent discipline with its own hypotheses and agendas. This new independent discipline is one that is multi-facetted and is no longer limited to the constraints of biblical studies. Dever describes the results that can be obtained through this "new archaeology:"

> the basic data with which archaeologists work - thanks largely to the more beneficial, interdisciplinary aspects of the "new archaeology" - are ecological setting, settlement types and patterns, subsistence, trade, technology, art and architecture, demography, and, especially, larger social structure.[77]

This new archaeology does not speak of *realia* in the classical sense of the term, instead there is a recognition that there is always an element of subjectivity even though "new archaeologists" formulate and test hypotheses in a scientific manner.[78] Archaeology is no

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[76]William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Syro-Palestinian and Biblical," *ABD* 1: 357.

[77]William G. Dever, "Biblical Archaeology: Death and Rebirth," in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1990), 711.

[78]William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Texts, and History-Writing: Toward an Epistemology," in *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardso*, ed. Lewis M. Hopfe (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 108.

longer a subsidiary of biblical studies or a proof-text for historical or theological propositions, and in this manner Dever declared that the "new archaeology" has triumphed.[79]

Having liberated archaeology from its status as a sub-discipline of biblical studies, one must question what kind of relationship exists between the "new archaeology" and biblical studies. Dever declared that, "from the very beginning, I wanted to separate archaeology from Biblical studies for the purposes of dialogue."[80] A dialogue is available only when there are two independent disciplines, otherwise only a monologue exists when archaeology is a sub-discipline of biblical studies.[81] Interestingly, over the past two decades since Dever has been writing on this topic, there is another threat to this dialogue that Dever envisioned. It is now biblical studies that is being eclipsed by the predominance of archaeology as it relates to the discussion of history. As has been shown in the views of Thompson, Lemche, Davies and others the biblical text no longer has a voice regarding pre-exilic history. Dever again responds in favour of a dialogue between the two stating that this dialogue between biblical studies and archaeology is essential and beneficial, even in the present crisis.[82] Dever is not in favour of a monologue on either the side of biblical studies, or archaeology and continues to

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[79]William G. Dever, "Biblical Archaeology: Death and Rebirth," in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1990), 707.

[80]William G. Dever, "Is This Man a Biblical Archaeologist? BAR Interviews William Dever, Part I," interview by Hershel Shanks, *BARev* 22/4 (July/Aug 1996): 32.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Dever, "Will the Real Israel Please Stand Up?" 62.

encourage that a dialogue is the most fruitful avenue in the discussion of history.

Having established the need for two separate disciplines, the question arises as to what contribution would archaeology make in this dialogue with biblical studies. Dever explained this role of archaeology in deepening our understanding of biblical times,

> Nowhere in the Bible do we have more than a passing hint about what most people looked like, what they wore or ate, what their houses and furniture were like, what went on in the streets and plazas of the average town, how agriculture and trade were conducted, how people wrote and kept records, how they went about their daily chores and entertained themselves, how long they lived and what they died of or how they were buried. These are precisely the details that archaeology can supply.[83]

One is reminded of Baruch Halpern's definition of history writing as being, at best, an abridgement of an originally fuller reality, archaeology then is useful in understanding that originally fuller reality. Archaeology is able to provide a different context than the literary one presented in the Hebrew Bible. Sometimes this different context is in addition to the information known through the biblical text, as archaeology answers questions and uncovers information that the biblical text simply does not address. Dever also recognizes that often archaeology provides "convergences" with the biblical text that help one understand the ancient context of these writings.[84] Dever also describes the effect that a knowledge of archaeology can have on a reader of the biblical text,

> For me, the great excitement about archaeology is that it enables you to read the Bible from a new perspective. . . When I read the text, I read it with a sensitivity and an understanding that only a knowledge of archaeology can bring to the text.

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[83]William G. Dever, "Archaeology and the Bible," *BARev* 16/3 (May/June 1990): 53.

[84]William G. Dever, "Is the Bible Right After All? BAR Interviews William Dever, Part 2," interview by Hershel Shanks, *BARev* 22/5 (Sept/Oct 1996): 35.

The text comes alive for me in a new way.[85]

Understanding the role of archaeology provides an opportunity for a dialogue that brings new life and understanding to the biblical text.

Dever has also entered into this discussion regarding the relationship of the Bible to history, and has written regarding the nature of the biblical text. Dever admits with most scholars that the final "redaction" of the text was relatively late, but explains that there is a significant historical "core" found in the biblical texts.[86] This core is readily apparent in the many "convergences" that occur between archaeology and the biblical text. Although these convergences do not "prove" the Bible, they do provide historians with a "balance of probability" in discussing the biblical texts.[87] Dever emphatically declared that these numerous "convergences" prove that the narratives of the Bible were in no way a pseudohistorical "setting" used to promote a religious groups theocratic propaganda.[88] These convergences suggest a contemporaneity between the biblical texts and the period of the Iron Age.

While Dever recognizes that the convergences between archaeology and the Hebrew Bible reveal a historical core, he declares that the Bible is not history in the modern sense of the word.[89] The biblical writers' primary focus was not on the recording

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[85]Ibid.

[86]Dever, "Will the Real Israel Please Stand Up?" 72.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid.

[89]William G. Dever, "Archaeology and the Bible," *BARev* 16/3 (May/June 1990): 55.

of all the facts in proper and orderly detail. Instead the biblical writers were concerned more about the meaning of the event described, than a full and accurate account of the details of the event. Dever summarized his view regarding the Bible and history in the following manner,

> I think Baruch Halpern was right. The Deuteronomist was the world's first historian, earlier than the Greek historians. But of course the Bible is not, in the final analysis, about history at all. It's about His Story. But there is history there as well.[90]

With this in mind, Dever described the Hebrew Bible as a curated artifact, or an item that originally functioned in a social context but has been subsequently reused in others ways and other settings.[91] The Bible retains what it once was, but also represents what it has become through centuries of interpretation by both Christian and Jewish communities. It is with this understanding of the biblical text that Dever seeks to encourage a dialogue between biblical studies and archaeology.

Personal View

The work of W.G. Dever has been a great step forward in developing the discipline of archaeology. Archaeology is not a means to prove the historicity of the Bible, or a method of promoting the "mighty acts of God." Archaeology is an independent discipline that can provide meaningful dialogue with the field of biblical

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[90]William G. Dever, "Is the Bible Right After All? BAR Interviews William Dever, Part 2," interview by Hershel Shanks, *BARev* 22/5 (Sept/Oct 1996): 36.

[91]William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Texts, and History-Writing: Toward an Epistemology," in *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardso*, ed. Lewis M. Hopfe (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 109

studies. The development of Dever's "new archaeology" with its multifaceted approach will undoubtedly contribute in a greater way to the understanding of the ancient Near East. This approach to archaeology has become the "norm" in most academic circles, and is providing a vast amount of information to the ancient historian.

Dever in recent years has been writing about the necessity of creating a new "biblical archaeology" where the discipline of biblical studies is capable of entering into a dialogue with archaeology without being dismissed *a priori*. This thesis will provide a dialogue with the biblical text, and considers that there is indeed a historical "core" in the texts that are being considered. Several elements within the biblical text will be noted, regarding Ahab's wars with Ben-Hadad, that are expressive of the mid-ninth century BCE. This dialogue between biblical studies and archaeology is still valid and needs to be explored further.

3. Date of Ahab's Reign

In regards to the dating of King Ahab's reign, the mention of Ahab of Israel on the Kurk Monolith inscription by Shalmaneser III becomes very important. The Assyrians followed the practice of appointing a person to the office of eponym, or *limmu*, each year. The *limmu* held this office for one calendar year, and to that year the Assyrians assigned the name of the person who held this office of *limmu*. Each year was dated according to the name of the limmu, and occassionally the year of the reign of the king, with the extant Assyrian lists dating from 891 to 648 BCE. Ahab participated in the battle of Qarqar, as recorded on the Kurk Monolith Inscription, in the sixth year of the reign of Shalmaneser III which corresponds to 853 BCE.

Edwin R. Thiele correlated Ahab's presence at the battle of Qarqar in 853 with another Assyrian text (Black Obelisk Inscription) that mentions King Jehu of Israel paying tribute to Shalmaneser III in the eighteenth year of his reign, which is a span of twelve years according to these inscriptions. The MT of Kings states that between Ahab and Jehu, Ahaziah ruled for two years (1 Kgs 22:51) who was followed by Joram who ruled for twelve years (2 Kgs 3:1) for a total of fourteen years. The difference of two years between the MT of Kings and the Assyrian inscription is proof, according to Thiele, that Israel during this time was using a nonaccession year calendar.[92] Essentially, the first year of the Israelite king would begin with the month that he ascended the throne, and the second year would begin with the coming of the new year, either in Nisan or Tishri. According to this nonaccession calendar the reign of the Israelite kings can be out by two calendar years, which corresponds to the dates given by the Assyrian inscriptions. Therefore, according to Thiele, "Ahab's death and Ahaziah's accession can be established as 853, and the date of Joram's death and Jehu's accession as 841."[93] Accordingly, the twenty-two year reign of Ahab (1 Kgs 16:29) spans from 874/3 until 853 BCE.[94] Thiele is followed by other scholars such as W.W. Hallo who declares that this system allows for an account of the chronological data in Kings and Chronicles without the need of emendation.[95]

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[92]Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965), 27.

[93]Ibid., 51.

[94]Ibid., 64.

[95]W.W. Hallo, "From Qarqar to Carchemish," *BA* 23 (1960): 35.

However, some scholars such as J. Maxwell Miller believe that Thiele's system of coregencies and shifts between accession and nonaccession year calendars give the impression of being exact but is nonetheless contrived.[96] Miller prefers the dating system of W.F. Albright who allowed for scribal errors and secondary changes in the biblical figures by later redactors who did not understand the meaning of the original numbers, and therefore was willing to make adjustments to the biblical data in order to achieve harmony.[97] Since there is no evidence as to whether Israel had a Tishri - Tishri calendar or a Nisan - Nisan calendar, or if they switched back and forth from an accession year to a nonaccession year calendar, Miller believes that Albright's hypothesis in light of the possibility of scribal error is the most realistic.[98] Miller then dates the reign of King Ahab from 875/873 to 853/851 BCE, which differs from Thiele's by two years at the most.

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[96]J. Maxwell Miller, "Israelite History," in *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters*, eds. Douglas A. Knight, Gene M. Tucker (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985), 15.

[97]J. Maxwell Miller, "Another Look at the Chronology of the Early Divided Monarchy," *JBL* 86 (1967): 277.

[98]Ibid., 278.

II ARCHAEOLOGY

As previously mentioned, archaeology can provide a different context than the literary one found in the biblical text. This section of the thesis will provide an archaeological survey of monumental structures with military purposes from published excavations of ninth century BCE sites in northern Israel. This survey will deal with extant ninth century fortifications, citadels/acropolises, pillared buildings, and "siege time" water systems. Epigraphic remains dealing with Ahab or Ben-Hadad will also be discussed.

A. Monumental Remains

In discussing the extant monumental remains, the determination of which strata reflects the ninth century BCE is of great importance. The following diagram (Fig. 1) will display which strata are being considered at the following sites for the ninth century BCE, and more specifically the mid-ninth century at certain sites (e.g. Samaria). Questions regarding the stratum assigned to each site will be discussed in the following analysis of the monumental remains discovered at each site.

Fig. 1. Ninth Century BCE strata

Location	Strata
Megiddo	IVA
Hazor	VIII
Samaria	Phase 2 (Acropolis)
Tel Dor	Area B (Gate), Wall 1
Tel Jezreel	No Strata Numbers
Tel Dan	No Strata Numbers
Ein Gev	III
Khirbet Marjamah	No Strata Numbers
Yoqneam	10

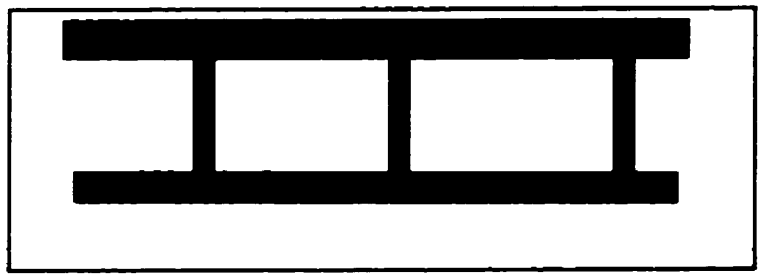
1. Fortifications

The initial section regarding fortifications will deal with extant, published, examples of ninth century BCE city walls. These walls fall into two general categories, solid walls and casemate or double walls. These categories will be discussed specifically in relation to the individual sites.

a) Casemate/Double Walls

One category of walls used in the fortification of a town, is the double wall or the casemate wall. Essentially, the casemate wall is two parallel walls with smaller walls running perpendicular to these two walls and creating small, narrow rooms (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Casemate Wall



Predominantly these casemate walls were used earlier than the ninth century BCE, but there are examples of casemate walls in both Israel (Samaria, Jezreel) and Judah (Beer-Sheba, Ramat-Rahel).

At the site of Samaria the second phase of construction, which has been attributed to King Ahab, employed the use of casemate walls for the protection of the acropolis. The first wall of phase one (Omri) was a solid wall 1.6m thick that encompassed an area 89m x 178m.[99] This enclosure in phase two was enlarged to the north by 16.5m and to the west by 30m and was surrounded by a casemate wall.[100] The enclosure was now double the size of the entire city of Beer-Sheba. The royal acropolis of Samaria was only rivalled in size by the Judean fortress of Lachish which was a little more than half its total area.[101] The exterior wall of the northern casemate measured 1.8m thick, while the inner wall measured 1m thick with the space between them being 7m for a total width of

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[99]Ronny Reich, "Palaces and Residences in the Iron Age," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel,* ed. Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 206.

[100]Nahman Avigad, "Samaria," *EAEHL* 4 (1993): 1302.

[101]Reich, "Palaces and Residences," 206.

10m.[102] The western casemate wall was only 5m wide in total and had smaller casemates as a result. The northern wall had a total of 54 casemates and 52 casemates were on the south and west, which allowed for extensive storage space for royal treasuries, arsenal and food stocks.[103] This casemate wall not only protected the royal section of the city in an acropolis fashion, but provided storage space in times of peace. Possible remains of a square tower (18.8m x 34.4m) were found in the southwestern corner of the casemate wall. Also the remains of a large pool (5.2 x 10.2m) was discovered in the northwestern corner of the phase 2 enclosure, which may have been the pool or similar to the pool used to clean the blood from Ahab's chariot after his final battle with Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 22:38).

The building technique used at Samaria in the construction of the walls of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 exhibited exceptionally fine craftsmanship. The stones were dressed on the spot and were set in place dry, that is without mortar, and even to date not even a knife blade fits between the adjacent stones.[104] This form of construction is referred to as ashlar masonry. The foundation stones were placed in rock hewn trenches and placed as headers only, which refers to a rectangular stone being placed with the short side facing out. The foundation stones that were below the surface had dressed margins on two or three sides, and the boss was left irregular, while the boss on the visible stones was

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[102]Nahman Avigad, "Samaria," *EAEHL* 4 (1993): 1300.

[103]Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 408.

[104]Avigad, "Samaria," 1303.

smoothly dressed.[105] The courses of stones above the foundation followed either a header and stretcher (rectangular stones placed lengthwise) pattern, or two headers alternating with one stretcher.[106] The construction technique of the Samarian acropolis revealed both great precision and effort. The building technique, combined with the size of the royal enclosure, not to mention the Samarian ivories, would contribute to the impression of an affluent monarchy during the Omride period.

Excavations at Tel Jezreel in 1992 and 1993 have revealed an ambitious system of fortifications that includes casemate walls and a rock-cut moat encircling the Iron Age site. In areas A and D of their excavation a casemate wall was found. The casemate walls had been largely robbed of their stones, and only the foundation (robber's) trenches traced the line of the fortifications in most cases. The builders of the casemate walls also brought in a vast amount of construction fill from the vicinity and created a level platform between the line of the walls and the central part of the site. The floors of the casemate walls are all at the same elevation within 0.5 metres, except for the north-east corner of the site which was due to the steep natural slope.[107] Attached to the corners of the casemate walls were two towers in areas B and D. These towers were both square, measuring 15 x 15m, and had three rows of rooms inside that included a long rectangular

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[105]Ibid.

[106]Ibid.

[107]D. Ussishkin and John Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1992-1993: Second Preliminary Report," *Levant* 26 (1994): 45.

centre aisle.[108] The back walls of these towers were in line with the inner casemate walls and projected out about 10m from the outer wall, thus reducing the blind spots along the base of the wall for the defenders of the city. The casemate wall was not the only fortification technique used by the builders of Jezreel. A massive moat encircled the site that was hewn out of rock. In area A the excavators probed the depth of the moat to a depth of 5.70m which in this location was plastered to a height of 1.50m from the bottom, presenting the possibility that the moat contained water.[109] This moat was a massive project that was a total of 670m in length, an average of 8m wide and over 5m deep which meant that a total of approximately 26,800 cubic metres of rock were quarried to make this moat.[110] A small revetment wall was found on the inner edge of the moat which formed the foundation of the earthen rampart that extended between the moat and the casemate walls, a distance of 7m. While the fortifications were both massive and ambitious, the standards of construction was relatively low with very little ashlar masonry, as compared with other contemporary sites such as Dan or Samaria. The casemate walls fell into disuse, even during the Iron Age, as domestic dwellings of the late eighth century were found above the ruined casemate walls that had been largely robbed of their stones.[111]

Another double wall of this period was found at the site of Yoqneam, which is

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[108]Ibid., 46.

[109]Ibid., 14.

[110]Ibid., 46.

[111]Ibid.

13km north-east of Megiddo. This double wall differs from a typical casemate wall and its excavator A. Ben-Tor stated that he was unaware of any similar fortification system in the Iron Age.[112] The outer wall measured 2-2.3m, and the inner wall 1.6-1.7m with the space between these two walls being between 1.5-1.6m wide for a total width of 5-5.5m.[113] There are small cross walls between the outer and inner walls roughly a distance of 7m from each other which would give the impression that this is a casemate wall. However, the excavator believes that these cross walls are not free-standing casemate walls but are in fact retainer walls that were used to create a level space between the two walls and to provide a foundation for stairs.[114] There were also doorways that were discovered in the inner wall that allowed access to the space between the double walls. Further evidence that the double walls of stratum 10 at Yoqneam were not casemate walls, lies in the fact that these walls were built atop of the stratum 11 casemate walls which the builders had filled with stones.

The double walls of Yoqneam were built of large, undressed, blocks of dolomite and limestone. These large blocks had to be transported to the site from the opposite side of Nahal Yoqne`am about 1km to the west. The excavator pointed out that the use of dolomite and limestone which is harder and more difficult to work, along with the fact that it had to be transported to the site, was in sharp contrast to the Islamic-Crusader

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[112]Amnon Ben-Tor, Yuval Portugali, and Miriam Avissar, "The Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavations at Tel Yoqne`am, 1979 and 1981," *IEJ* 33/1 (1982): 37.

[113]Ibid., 35.

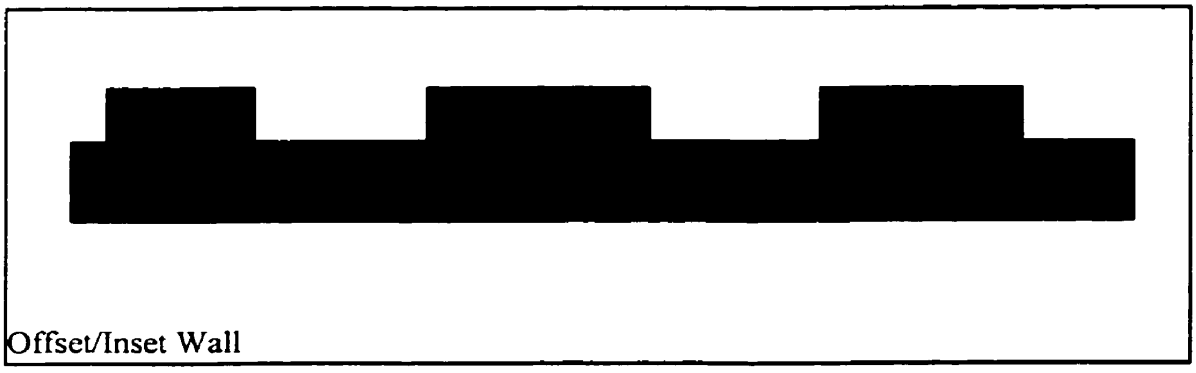
[114]Ibid.

period that simply used the local chalk that was lighter and easier to work.[115] Amnon Ben-Tor concluded that Yoqneam's massive fortifications were in fact greater than those of contemporary Megiddo, and this may be due to Yoqneam being on the border of the kingdom of Israel, facing Phoenicia.[116]

b) Solid Walls

Even though casemate and double walls were the most common earlier than the ninth century and continued to exist at such sites as Yoqneam and Samaria in northern Israel, the most prevalent fortification was the solid wall. These solid walls had several forms: the massive wall, either with or without towers, and the offset-inset wall that had small buttresses that alternately pointed outward and inward (see Fig. 3).

Fig. 3.



[115]Ibid., 37

[116]Ibid.

Solid walls were generally 4-4.5 metres thick, but walls 8m thick have also been discovered.[117] The massive nature of these walls was intended to prevent tunnelling through the walls and to provide a defence against the Assyrian siege engines, such as the battering rams that are depicted on Assyrian reliefs from the ninth century onward.[118] These solid walls were not impervious to Assyrian battering rams, however, as the 6m solid wall at Lachish from a later period was breached by the Assyrians.

At Megiddo the entire mound was surrounded by a new solid wall (wall 325) that was built according to the offset-inset type. In the confusing stratigraphy of Megiddo, Yigal Shiloh, along with Yigael Yadin and Ephraim Stern, attributed wall 325 to Stratum IVA because this wall cut through the residential buildings of VA-IVB, along with the southern side of palace 1723 and the northern part of palace 6000 which were also attributed to stratum IVB.[119] Ze`ev Herzog, however, attributes wall 325 to stratum IVB which belongs to the tenth century.[120] Wall 325 was 820m long and 3.6m thick with an inset placed about every 6m along the wall and projecting out a distance of 0.5-0.6m. G. Barkay stated that the use of projections and towers on a city wall was to reduce blind spots that existed at the base of the wall.[121] Herzog contested that a projection of only

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[117]Gabriel Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, ed. Amnon Ben-Tor (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 308.

[118]Ibid.

[119]Yigal Shiloh, "Megiddo," *EAEHL* 3 (1993): 1020.

[120]Ze`ev Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning in the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel,* ed. Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 270.

[121]Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," 308.

0.5m would not be enough to allow a direct line of sight to the base of the wall, due to the balustrade that protected defenders along the top of the wall.[122] Instead, Herzog stated that the insets which faced outwards allowed for a balcony to be built on the top of the wall, which would allow the defenders to shoot straight down through holes in the balcony floor.[123] Herzog's theory cannot be proven in the material remains, but the use of the offset-inset wall at Megiddo was most likely to allow the defenders to have a line of sight along the entire length of the wall.

At the site of Ein Gev the previous casemate wall of stratum IV was modified in stratum III in order to form a solid wall of the offset-inset type. B. Mazar reported that stratum III of Ein Gev, on the Sea of Galilee, marked the coming of new settlers who built a new town on the ruins of the previous town and employed construction techniques prevalent in that day.[124] The thick outer wall of the casemate fortifications in stratum IV was reused in stratum III, and was also strengthened with additional sections of masonry on the exterior side of the wall. As a result, the new wall was 3.15m thick in those places that had been strengthened and 1.75m where the previous outer casemate wall remained unchanged.[125] The inhabitants of Stratum III also added a stone-faced glacis to the base of the new offset-inset wall, that extended to the remains of the city wall of stratum V that was used as a revetment wall for the glacis. The glacis, which is an angled rampart, was

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[122]Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 270.

[123]Ibid., 271.

[124]B. Mazar, A.Bima, M. Dothan, and I. Dunayevsky, "Ein Gev: Excavations in 1961," *IEJ* 14 (1964): 10.

[125]Ibid., 11.

thought to have the function of making it more difficult for siege engines to reach the base of the wall and to deter the opposing army from undermining the ramparts.[126] Herzog argued that the use of the glacis was not to hinder siege engines, because in the Assyrian siege of Lachish an earthen ramp was constructed in order to bring the battering ram up to the city wall, and a glacis would make a firm foundation for the construction of this ramp. Instead, Herzog believed that the function of a glacis was to prevent the enemy from tunnelling under the city walls and to protect the foundation of the wall from erosion.[127] Whether the glacis was intended to impede tunnelling and erosion or inhibit the use of battering rams, the fortifications of Ein Gev were certainly monumental in nature.

E. Stern and the other excavators of Tel Dor have likewise uncovered an offset-inset wall in Areas A, B, and C of their excavations. In areas A, and C this wall was referred to as wall 2 and was 3m thick with limestone and mud-brick foundations. In Areas A and C the wall was composite in nature, being made primarily of mud-brick while the outer face of the wall was built with boulders and the corners were reinforced with ashlar blocks. The composite nature of this wall continued in Area B where this offset-inset wall was associated with both the four-chambered and the later two-chambered gate. The use of the offset-inset wall with both the four and two chambered gate is similar to the findings at Megiddo.[128] A mason's mark was found on one of the

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[126]Ibid.

[127]Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 267.

[128]Ephraim Stern, "The Walls of Dor," *IEJ* 38 (1988): 8.

ashlar blocks that reinforced the corner. This mason's mark was done in a typical Israelite-Phoenician style like the marks found at Megiddo.[129] In Area B, where the wall joined the gate, a clay glacis that had been covered with plaster was also found. Ephraim Stern provided another rationale for the construction of offset-inset walls, in that the defenders were able to focus more fire power on any section of the wall because arrows or sling stones could be launched from both sides.[130] Whether the arrows or sling stones were fired from the projecting insets, or from the balcony that rested atop of the insets, it is apparent that there were certain military advantages to the construction of the offset-inset walls at Megiddo, Ein Gev and Dor.

At the sight of ninth century Hazor, the builders employed two different techniques in the fortification of the city. The western portion of the site had been fortified in stratum X (tenth century BCE) with a casemate wall. This casemate wall was now filled by the builders of stratum VIII (ninth century BCE) with stones in order to create a solid wall. This new casemate wall filled with stones was now 5m thick on the western side of the mound. Originally, Y. Yadin attributed this filling of the casemate wall to the presence of Assyrian battering rams. However, Z. Herzog stated that once a battering ram breached the outer casemate wall, the stone fill would either spill out or be easily scooped out in order to expose the inner casemate wall.[131] Therefore, the purpose of filling a casemate wall was to build the wall higher in order to accommodate the rising

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[129]Ibid.

[130]Ephraim Stern, "How Bad was Ahab?" *BARev* 19 (March/April 1993): 24.

[131]Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 270.

floor levels inside the tel.

Y. Yadin discovered in his excavations of Area M at Hazor (east of the casemate enclosure) that a new solid wall of the offset-inset type was built during the ninth century in Stratum VIII. This new wall doubled the size of Israelite Hazor.[132] Amon Ben-Tor in later excavations confirmed Yadin's conclusions, that this section of the city was not inhabited in the Iron Age prior to the ninth century and the construction of the solid wall.[133] Ben-Tor concurred with Yadin that this wall can be attributed to stratum VIII and the efforts of King Ahab. This new offset-inset wall in Area M had a depth of 0.3m for each inset and a length of 10m for each segment. This offset, inset wall was further fortified with at least two towers that were partially excavated in 1992 by Amon Ben-Tor.[134] The advantages of the offset-inset wall have already been discussed.

At the biblical site of Tel Dan a massive solid wall was found by the excavator A. Biran. This solid wall was 4m thick and was built of large basalt boulders. Close to the gate area two stone bastions were found that were 5m long and extended 0.2m from the wall.[135] These bastions were probably meant to strengthen the gate area in a similar manner as an offset-inset wall. Biran attributed the construction of this massive city wall to King Ahab.[136]

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[132]Amnon Ben-Tor, "Notes and News: Tel Hazor, 1994," *IEJ* 45 (1995): 66.

[133]Amnon Ben-Tor, "Notes and News: Tel Hazor, 1993," *IEJ* 43 (1993): 255.

[134]Amnon Ben-Tor, "Notes and News: Tel Hazor, 1992," *IEJ* 42 (1992): 257.

[135]A. Biran, "Tel Dan Five Years Later," *BA* 43 (1980): 177.

[136]Ibid., 177.

At Khirbet Marjamah a solid wall 4m thick was discovered that encompassed the entire 10 acre site. The city wall consisted of two attached strips of stone that were each 2m wide.[137] Due to the steep nature of the site, revetment walls 3.5m wide had to be constructed in order to protect the foundation of the walls from erosion.[138]

Finally, at the site of Dothan a solid city wall measure 1.15m wide was attributed to the ninth century by the excavator Joseph Free.[139]

The following table (Fig. 4) will provide a summary of the type of walled fortification that were used in the kingdom of Israel during the ninth century.

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[137]Amihai Mazar, "Three Sites in the Hills of Judah and Ephraim," *BA* 45 (1982): 172.

[138]Ibid.

[139]Joseph P. Free, "The Fifth Season at Dothan," *BASOR* 152 (1958): 14.

Fig. 4. Ninth Century BCE Fortifications

Site	Type of Wall	Dimensions
Samaria (Acropolis)	Casemate & Solid	Exterior Wall = 1.8m Interior Wall = 1m Total = 10m on North 5m on West Solid Wall = 1.6m
Tel Jezreel	Casemate & Moat	Total = 5m Moat = 8m wide and 5m deep
Yoqneam	Double Wall	Outer Wall = 2-2.3m Inner Wall = 1.6-1.7m Total = 5-5.5m
Megiddo	Offset/Inset Wall	3.6m Wide
Ein Gev	Offset/Inset Wall	3.15m wide with insets, 1.75m without.
Tel Dor	Offset/Inset Wall	3m Wide
Hazor	Filled Casemate, Offset/Inset Wall	Filled Casemate = 5m Offset/Inset = N/A
Tel Dan	Solid	4m Wide
Kh. Marjamah	Solid	4m Wide
Dothan	Solid	1.15m Wide

A survey of the area around Samaria has discovered about a dozen isolated forts and defensive towers that protected all the access roads leading to the capital.[140] These were not cities with walls, but were single buildings with thick exterior walls that functioned independently. The Israeli Department of Antiquities excavated three such round towers at the sites of Kh. Es-Saqq, Kh. El-Markhruq, and Rujum Abu Mukheir.

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[140]Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 416.

These three round towers were very similar in layout and the excavators suggested that they were probably built as a royal fortification system.[141] The fortress of Kh. Es-Saqq guarded the Wadi Malih road, Kh. El-Markhruq guarded the main road of Wadi Far'ah heading toward Shechem, and Rujum Abu Mukheir guarded the road ascending to the Shechem - Jerusalem route.[142] These towers and fortresses formed a protective ring, and surveillance points, around the capital city of Samaria.

c) City Gates

Another element in city fortifications was the gate complex. In comparison with the diversity of walled fortifications, the majority of the sites that will be discussed have four-chambered gates. Four chambered gates have been found in the kingdom of Israel at the sites of Beth-Shean, Tel Batash, Megiddo, Dor, Dan and Tel Jezreel. A. Mazar stated that not only were the four-chambered gates the most common during the ninth century in Israel, the same phenomena existed in northern Syria during this time period.[143]

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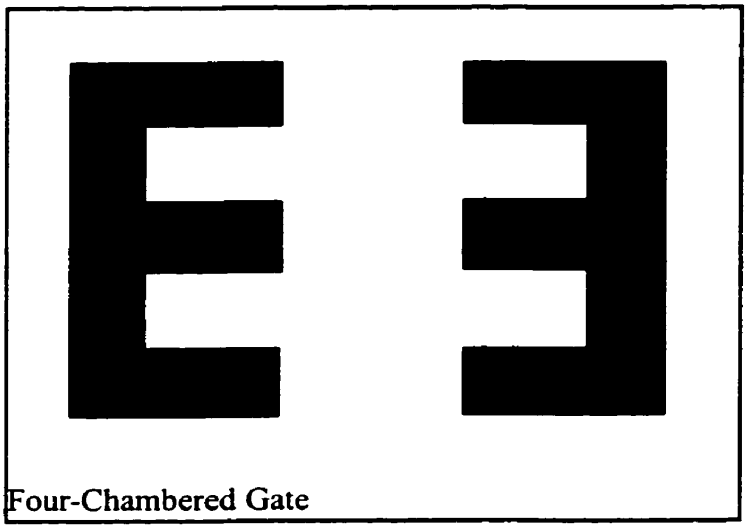
[141]Adam Zertal, "Three Iron Age Fortresses in the Jordan Valley and the Origin of the Ammonite Circular Towers," *IEJ* 45/4 (1995): 263.

[142]Ibid.

[143]Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 469.

Fig. 5.



Four-Chambered Gate

Again in the discussion of the site of Megiddo, the issue of stratigraphy comes into question. The four-chambered gate of stratum IVA is referred to as gate 500, or gate 500b of the Chicago Expedition, which was attached to the offset/inset wall (wall 325). E. Stern pointed out that although the conclusions of Yadin were challenged by Aharoni and Herzog regarding the pillared buildings and their function, all agreed that the four-chambered gate was constructed in the ninth century.[144] Only D. Ussishkin would date the earlier six-chambered gate to the ninth century, in correlation with the one that he excavated in Lachish.[145] Herzog more specifically dated the gate to the early ninth

[144]Ephraim Stern, "Hazor, Dor and Megiddo in the Time of Ahab and Under Assyrian Rule," *IEJ* 40/1 (1990): 21.

[145]D. Ussishkin, "Was the Solomonic Gate at Megiddo Built by Solomon?" *BASOR* 239 (1980): 1-18.

century, following the campaign of Pharaoh Shishak.[146] The overall dimensions of this gate was 25m wide and 15.5m deep with a central passageway that was 4.2m wide.

The four-chambered gate at Tel Dor was also dated with relative certainty to the ninth century. The excavator, E. Stern, discovered a tenth century layer directly beneath the gate, and a two chambered gate built in the Assyrian period was exposed above it.[147] The gate was most likely constructed following the campaign of Pharaoh Shishak in 918 BCE and remained in use until its destruction by the Assyrians and the campaign of Tiglath Pileser III in 733/2.[148] The four-chambered gate at Dor was compared to the one discovered at Megiddo and, according to E. Stern, was built according to the same design, and was most likely the work of the same architect.[149] The gate at Megiddo is slightly larger than the one discovered at Dor. However, the quality of construction is superior at Dor, since the gate at Dor was constructed of massive, well hewn limestone blocks from the Carmel cliffs as compared to the small stones used in the Megiddo gate.[150] Some of these limestone blocks had to be transported over 1km and were 2.3m long and 1.4m high. In front of the four-chambered gate was a pebble paved square and a paved road that led to an outer gate. Inside the four-chambered gate was found a rectangular stone basin, that was reused in the two-chambered gate. This basin was used as a water receptacle for men

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[146]Stern, "Hazor, Dor and Megiddo," 21.

[147]Ephraim Stern, "Dor," *EAEHL* 1 (1993): 365.

[148]Stern, "Hazor, Dor and Megiddo," 20.

[149]Ephraim Stern, "How Bad was Ahab?," *BARev* 19 (March/April 1993): 24.

[150]Ibid., 25.

and animals who either entered the city or were a part of the gate's garrison.[151] The function of the paved area in front of the gate will be discussed in association with the city gate at Tel Dan.

Another four-chambered gate was discovered in the excavations of Tel Jezreel. This gate was attached to the casemate city wall with the facade of the gate being in line with the outer wall.[152] This gate was constructed according to the "built up"foundation method. According to this method the foundations were laid on the ground surface (rather than digging a trench) and construction fill was placed around the foundation stones thus raising the elevation of the floor. The overall dimensions of the gatehouse was 17.5m deep by 14.5m wide. The gatehouse at Jezreel was poorly preserved with nothing of the superstructure remaining, and the foundation walls could only be traced by robber's trenches in many areas. In front of the gatehouse was found a piazza that extended from the face of the gate to the edge of the moat. Even though the rock-cut moat extended in front of the gateway, the excavators were not able to determine how the roadway crossed the 8m wide moat.[153] D. Ussishkin and J. Woodhead believe that the piazza in front of the gatehouse provides a positive correlation with the biblical story of 2 Kgs 10:7-8 where Jehu had the seventy heads of the sons of Ahab placed in two heaps at the entrance of the city gate until morning.[154]

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[151]Ibid., 23.

[152]David Ussishkin and John Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1992-1993: Second Preliminary Report," *Levant* 26 (1994): 14.

[153]Ibid.

[154]Ibid., 46.

The four-chamber gatehouse found at Tel Dan provides an example of the non-military uses associated with a gate complex. The main gate was a four-chambered structure similar to those found at Megiddo and Dor. This four-chambered gate was preceded by an outer gate, and a paved square that A. Biran believed could be a place for people to gather or where chariots could be left.[155] One unique feature of the paved flat stone courtyard was a structure with decorated column bases that supported a canopy which lead the excavator to believe that this pavement could be considered a royal ceremonial route.[156] A stone bench outside of the gate also contributes to the nonmilitary applications of the gatehouses.

Z. Herzog stated that the gate chambers and the open courtyards or piazzas in front of the gatehouses were "used for drawing up agreements before witnesses and for concluding business deals, as a seat for elders, the judges and the prophets, and sometimes, in an emergency, a seat for the king himself."[157] In a four-chambered gatehouse the doors would be open during the day and the doors could be housed in the first two chambers while the second pair of chambers could be used for commercial or religious affairs. Z. Herzog provided support for this view through the excavations at Beersheba in stratum II, where only the rear chambers of the four-chambered gatehouse had plastered benches.[158] The courtyard outside the gate at Tel Dan could have been the

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[155]Avraham Biran, "Tel Dan Five Years Later," *BA* 43 (1980): 177.

[156]Ibid.

[157]Herzog, "Settlement and Fortification Planning," 272.

[158]Ibid.

starting point for religious processions that journeyed along the paved roadway that extended from the courtyard to the "high-place." These examples provide insight into the civilian and religious pursuits that were associated with the ancient gatehouses.

d) Citadels

During the ninth century, city fortifications did not stop with the construction of the city wall and a gate complex. Excavations at sites such as Samaria in the kingdom of Israel have revealed raised and independently fortified acropolises. This phenomenon of an independent fortified acropolis has been found in such cities as Hamat, Zinjirli, Guzana and Carchemish from the tenth century and onwards.[159] A brief survey of such acropolis structures at the sites of Samaria, Hazor, and Kh. Marjamah will be presented.

According to the biblical text, the site of Samaria was bought by Omri, king of Israel, who established a city on the hill that he bought from Shemer for two talents of silver (1 Kgs 16:24). The founding of this site, had certain military advantages according to several scholars. Kathleen Kenyon, who was a part of the Samaria excavations, stated that, although the hill of Samaria is not a commanding one, it rises up fairly steeply from the valley and provides a good view of the surrounding area.[160] The hill of Samaria commanded the central ridge route that ran north - south, along with roads heading both to the Sharon Plain and the Jezreel Valley. The central location of this sight did provide a

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[159]Gabriel Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, ed. Amon Ben-Tor (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 308.

[160]Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1970), 263.

fortified establishment along important ancient roadways. The construction of this acropolis was a major accomplishment, as the apex of the hill was turned into a rectangular level platform measuring 89 x 178m which was the size of many contemporary towns. Massive retaining walls supported the construction fill that was required to level the site.[161] Within this acropolis remains of palace buildings and other structures were found, and within two of these structures was found the ivory plaques and the Samarian ostraca. The Samarian ostraca were potsherds inscribed with ink detailing the distribution of goods such as fine oil or wine, along with the names of people, places, geographical regions and the regnal years of a king. The acropolis of Samaria and palace structures "are considered to be the most magnificent and unsurpassed remains of buildings belonging to the first Temple period in the Land of Israel."[162]

Another citadel was found at the site of Hazor on the western part of the tel. This citadel was actually built atop of the filled casemate walls of Stratum X on the western spur of the mound, thus forming the city wall in this portion of the mound. The walls of the citadel did not require any further strengthening because of the steep slope of the mound at this location.[163] The citadel measured 21x25m with walls that were 2m thick and was constructed by King Ahab, according to Yigael Yadin.[164] The citadel was divided

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[161]Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 408.

[162]Reich, "Palaces and Residences," 206.

[163]Yigael Yadin, "The Third Season of Excavations at Hazor, 1957," *BA* 21 (1958): 42.

[164]Yigael Yadin, "Hazor," in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 256.

into elongated rectangular spaces, similar to the plan of a typical four-room house.[165] The buildings beside the citadel have been interpreted as possible governor's residences or houses for other royal officials. The citadel was separated from the rest of the site by a wall and an elaborately decorated gate. This gate was decorated with proto-aeolic capitals which were rectangular stone blocks with either the lotus flower or a stylized palm carved in relief on their elongated sides. The lotus flower was a life-symbol in Egyptian religious art and the tree of life was a well known motif in ancient Canaanite civilizations. These capitals were placed atop an eight foot pillar that was discovered a few yards from the capitals themselves. The sill, that formed the pillar's foundation, was found in the paved corridor between the citadel and the adjacent service house.[166] Similar proto-aeolic capitals were found at the excavations of the acropolis at Samaria.

At the remote site of Khirbet Marjamah a large fortified structure was found on the northern edge of the city. The town was built above the valley along a ridge which provided natural protection on all but the north side of the town where the ridge continued. The builders of this town erected a rectangular building with a semicircular shape at this more vulnerable northern end. This building appeared to be a circular tower from outside the town and measured 14.4m wide and 30m long and was described by A. Mazar as the largest Israelite fortification so far discovered.[167] The pottery sherds found in

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[165]Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 412.

[166]Yigael Yadin, "The Fourth Season of Excavations at Hazor," *BA* 22 (1959): 11.

[167]Amihai Mazar, "Three Israelite Sites in the hills of Judah and Ephraim," *BA* 45 (1982): 173.

the site reveal that this structure could have been built in either the tenth or ninth centuries BCE. The fortified structure could have served as the home of the garrison protecting the city. Mazar noted that this was the only major fortified city in the area and was far from any major road, but the site did possess a natural spring, fertile agricultural land and a naturally defensible location.[168]

2. Pillared Buildings

Within the sites of Hazor and especially Megiddo have been found buildings that some determined to have military uses. The classification of the pillared buildings at Megiddo has been a topic of controversy over the past thirty years. Essentially J.B. Pritchard, Y. Aharoni and Z. Herzog contest that these buildings are in fact storehouses and not stables, with Herzog continuing to write about this view as recently as 1992.[169] However, several scholars such as Y. Yadin, J.S. Holladay, J.W. Crowfoot, Yigal Shiloh, Amihai Mazar, and Gabriel Barkay believe that these pillared buildings were stables and not storehouses. The dimensions of the pillared buildings ranged from 22 - 26.5m long and from 11 - 12.5m wide. They were made of three elongated chambers, the central aisle had a beaten earth floor while the outer two chambers had paved cobblestone floors. The central aisle was flanked by two rows of pillars. These monolithic pillars supported the roof of the central hall and it is thought that this central hall had a higher roof which

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[168]Ibid.

[169]Ze'ev Herzog, "Administrative Structures in the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel,* ed. Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 226.

would allow for clerestory windows that allowed for both sunlight and air circulation.[170] In these monolithic pillars was found holes that would allow animals to be tethered. Between the pillars were placed stone troughs for the feeding of the animals. Outside the five southern pillared buildings at Megiddo was a walled courtyard that was over $55m^2$. At the side of this southern courtyard several large stone mangers were discovered. In the northern portion of the site there were twelve similar pillared buildings arranged in three groups around a central rectangular courtyard.[171] The presence of the tethering holes in the monolithic pillars, the feeding troughs, the mangers in the southern courtyard, the plausibility of using the walled courtyard as a training area for horses and the architectural features of the buildings themselves have led many of the excavators to conclude that these were in fact stables. It was conjectured that the 17 pillared buildings at Megiddo could have housed approximately 450 horses.[172]

Herzog objected to the identification of the Megiddo pillared buildings as stables because the narrow halls would have prevented the easy passage of horses. These buildings also lacked sufficient drainage in the flanking halls that supposedly housed the horses, for the vast quantities of urine and droppings. The cobblestone floors would have become very slippery, thus making it difficult for horses and handlers alike.[173] The tethering holes and the feeding troughs can be easily explained in the storeroom

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[170]Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 476.

[171]Ibid., 477.

[172]Yigael Yadin, "Megiddo of the Kings of Israel," *BA* 33 (1970): 96.

[173]Herzog, "Administrative Structures," 227.

hypothesis, as pack animals could be tethered in this central aisle while their goods could be unloaded and placed in the flanking halls.[174] Likewise the large walled courtyards would have provided an excellent area for the loading of pack animals for caravans or military deployments. These pillared buildings would have performed well as storehouses as the division of the central aisle from the flanking corridors allowed for a division of jobs from those who unloaded the animals to those who received the goods.[175] The areas between the pillars would have formed a counter for the receiving of goods. The paved floors of the flanking halls would have insulated the goods from the damp ground, while the long narrow rooms allowed for orderly storage of the goods along the walls.[176] Herzog also believes that the finds associated with these pillared buildings have not produced any item that could have been associated with a stable, whereas the pillared building at Beersheba produced a large number of pottery fragments along with flour mills, clay vessels and stone/bone tools.[177] This interpretation would make Megiddo and other sites with pillared buildings into administrative centres for the collection and distribution of food and other goods.

Epigraphic evidence from the ninth century, i.e. the Kurkh Monolith of Shalmaneser III, does ascribe 2000 chariots to Ahab king of Israel. Along with other biblical references (1 Kgs 5:6) there is indeed impetus for the determination of some

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[174]Ibid.

[175]Ibid.

[176]Ibid.

[177]Ibid.

buildings as stables in the ninth century BCE G. Barkay noted that the pillared building of Beersheba did not reveal a consistent pottery assemblage of storage vessels of standard size and shape which would be consistent with the notion of a royal storeroom.[178] Instead a large assemblage of pottery was discovered in Beersheba, along with other domestic effects that would be consistent with the pillared buildings being inhabited in their final stage by villagers who had sought refuge in a walled town.[179] Barkay also noted Herzog's declaration that there were no finds related to the pillared buildings in fact being stables was imprecise as parts of harnesses have been found at Megiddo, Beth Shemesh and Lachish, although their excavators did not identify them as such.[180] Barkay concluded that pillared buildings everywhere must have served the same purpose, which in his opinion was stables, as it would be difficult to imagine different usages for buildings of identical character and plan.[181] A. Mazar, although identifying the pillared buildings at Megiddo as stables, believed that similar buildings in other sites could have been storehouses rather than stables as the local needs could have dictated the function of the same architectural form.[182] This observation of Mazar's would be strengthened as the pillared buildings most likely found secondary uses in later historical contexts. It seems that the most plausible explanation is that the pillared buildings of Megiddo, stratum IVA, were in fact stables

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[178]Gabriel Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, ed. Amnon Ben-Tor (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 315.

[179]Ibid.

[180]Ibid.

[181]Ibid., 314.

[182]Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 478.

and not storehouses.

At Hazor a single pillared building was discovered that belonged to both Sratum VIII and VII. This building had the same design of three long halls with two rows of monolithic pillars. The building measured 14 x 21m with the two outside halls measuring 2.4-2.6m and the central hall was 3.6m wide.[183] Like Megiddo the flanking halls were paved, while the central aisle had a beaten earth floor. Yadin in his excavations believed that the building was definitely not a stable, but a large public building with two rows of columns that supported a second story.[184] Amon Ben-Tor in his 1993 excavation discovered a large public building from the ninth century with three long halls adjacent to the previously mentioned pillared building.[185] Ben-Tor concluded that this building served as a storehouse, although no finds were discovered in the building except for a large storage jar sunk into the floor of the central hall.[186] The existence of pillared buildings at Hazor that did not function as stables, seems to support A. Mazar's hypothesis that a similar style of buildings can have different usages depending on the occupant's particular domestic needs.

3. Siege-Time Water Systems

One of the most remarkable engineering feats of the ninth century BCE are the

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[183]Herzog, "Administrative Structures," 223.

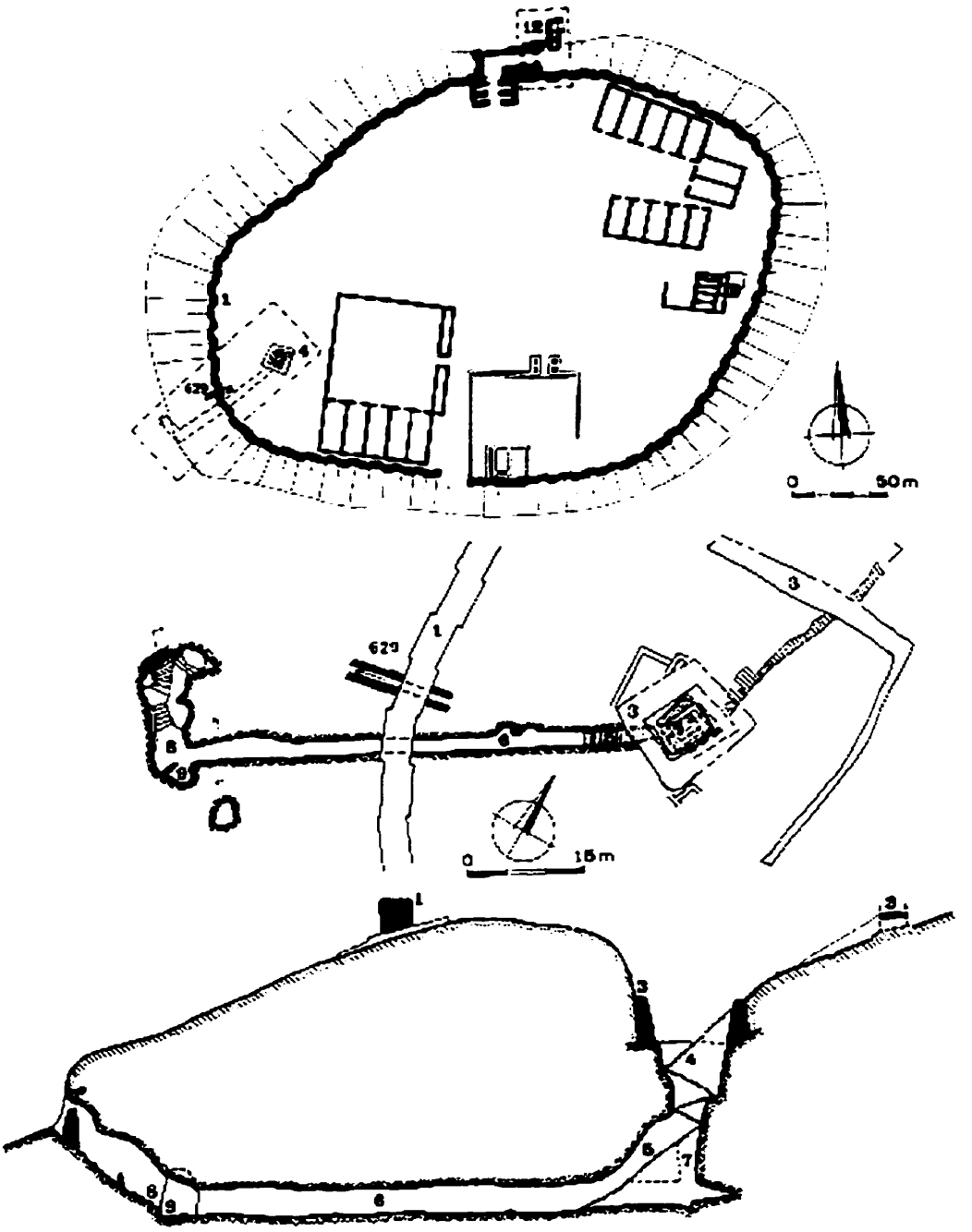
[184]Yigael Yadin, "Excavations at Hazor," *BA* 19 (1956): 7.

[185]Amnon Ben-Tor, "Notes and News: Tel Hazor, 1993," *IEJ* 43 (1993): 253.

[186]Ibid.

elaborate water systems of Megiddo and Hazor. The site of Megiddo was supplied with water by two springs, a northern spring named `Ain el-Qubi and a spring in the southwestern corner of the mound which fed the city's water system. In previous strata, most likely from the tenth century, a passageway was cut through the city walls (gallery 629), and a stairway was cut into the rock descending to the southwestern spring. This method of obtaining water from the spring was not sufficient during a siege and the city would be cut off from its water source. In stratum IVA the builders determined to remedy this problem through a massive building effort (see Figure 6). A vertical shaft was dug in the southwestern corner of the mound down through previous strata to a depth of 36m below the surface of the mound. The vertical shaft measured 6.5 x 5.0m with the steps being an average of 1.2m wide. Supporting walls were erected near the surface of the shaft to prevent the sides from eroding, and steps were hewn into the sides of the walls spiralling downwards to the bottom of the shaft. Then a horizontal tunnel 2m wide and

Fig. 6. The Water System at Megiddo (Used by Permission)



3m high was hewn out of the rock from the base of the vertical shaft to the spring itself which was a distance of 50m.[187] The natural entrance to the spring from outside was blocked off with a massive wall and covered with earth to hide it from view. Now the residents of Megiddo were able to reach the water of the spring, even during a siege, by descending the steps of the vertical shaft and walking along the horizontal tunnel to the underground spring. The water system was dated to the ninth century and the reign of King Ahab, because the last layer cut by the vertical shaft belonged to the tenth century.[188] The offset-inset wall, the four-chambered gate, the numerous chariot installations associated with the stables and a siege-time water system made Megiddo a formidable obstacle for opposing armies. In fact this water system, although receiving some modifications, continued in use until the destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians.

Y. Yadin in his fifth season of excavating at Hazor, had as yet to determine the city's water system that could continue to function in times of a siege.[189] Yadin, during the summer of 1968, explored a depression in the southern portion of the upper city. This depression had been plastered in later periods and had been used as a reservoir for collecting rain water. Yadin and the excavators removed the vast amount of fill in this depression and discovered a massive water system from the ninth century BCE (Fig. 7).

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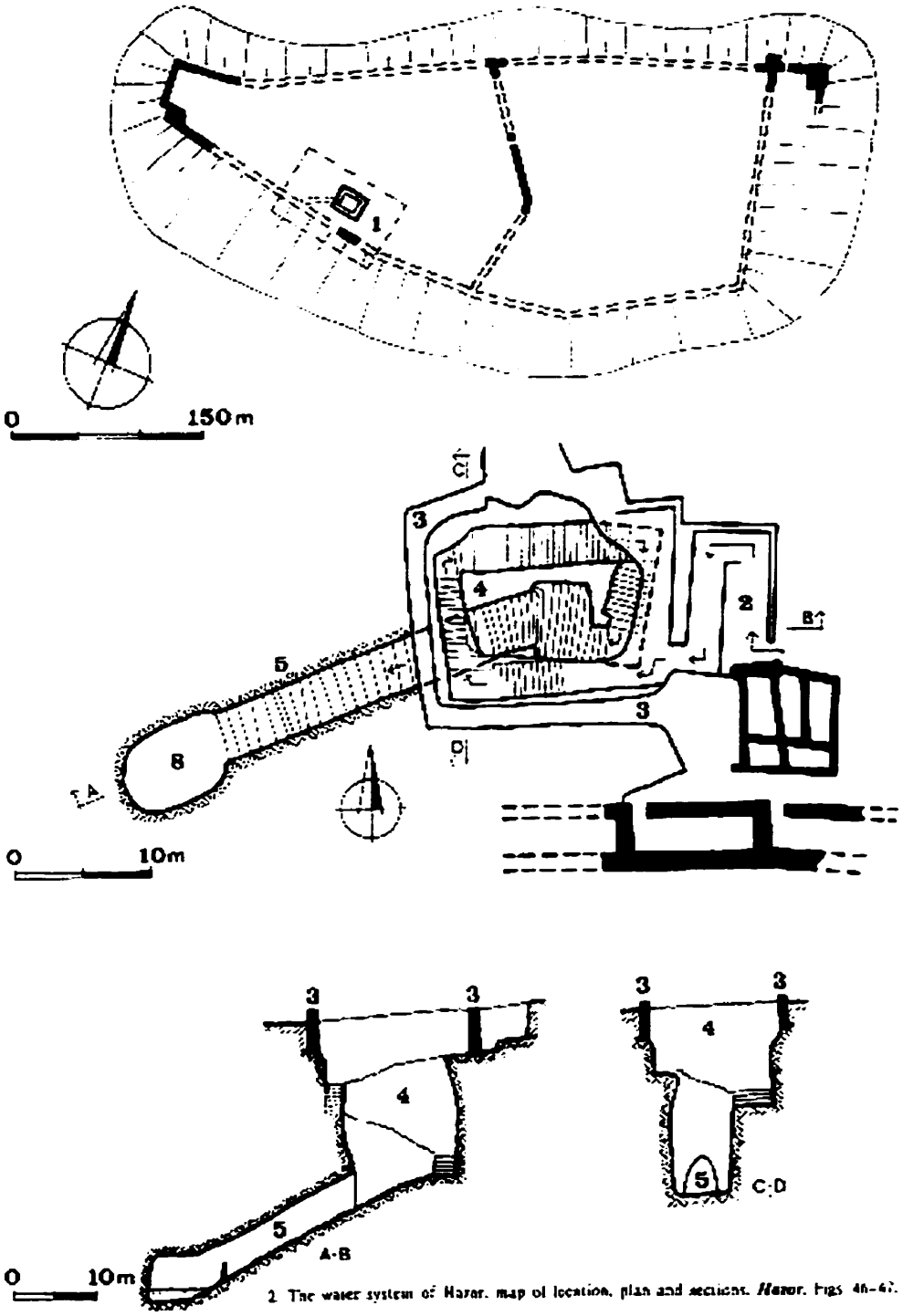
[187]Yigal Shiloh, "Underground Water Systems in the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*, ed. Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 277.

[188]Yadin, "Megiddo of the Kings of Israel," 92.

[189]Yigael Yadin, "The Fifth Season of Excavations at Hazor, 1968-1969," *BA* 32 (1969): 63.

Fig. 7. The Water System at Hazor (Used by Permission)



2. The water system of Hazor, map of location, plan and sections. *Hazor*, Figs 46–47.

This water system consisted of four parts, the entrance structure, a rock-hewn shaft, a stepped tunnel and a water chamber. The entrance chamber had a retaining wall and a series of ramps that led down to the rock-hewn shaft. The rock-hewn shaft was roughly square shaped measuring 13 x 16m and had steps hewn into the sides of the shaft that were between 2-6m wide. The wide nature of these steps in the vertical shaft has been interpreted as allowing pack animals to descend into the shaft in order to carry water.[190] The descending tunnel was cut out of the soft conglomerate bedrock and measured an impressive 4m wide and 4.5m high and travelled a distance of 22m.[191] This tunnel ended in a water chamber measuring 5m long, 5m wide and 5m high, and was about 36m beneath the surface of the mound.[192] Unlike the water system at Megiddo, the system at Hazor did not end at a spring, but instead the water chamber was at the depth of the aquifer. As a result, the water level in the water chamber would fluctuate depending on how much rain the region had received and the subsequent height of the water table.

Amnon Ben-Tor praised the geological brilliance of the Hazor builders who by digging down to the aquifer spared themselves the 75m of tunnelling that was needed to reach the springs.[193] The entire water system was built within the confines of the walled city, which would provide an advantage over the water system at Megiddo. The possibility did exist that the opposing armies might have located and breached the outside

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[190]Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 481.

[191]Shiloh, "Underground Water Systems," 281.

[192]Ibid.

[193]Amnon Ben-Tor, "Hazor," *EAEHL* 2 (1993): 605.

entrance to the spring at Megiddo thereby entering the city, which would not have been possible at Hazor. The water system at Hazor cut through stratum X and can be attributed safely to stratum VIII and the building projects of King Ahab.[194] The water system of Hazor provides another example of the rebuilding that took place during stratum VIII, and what several excavators refer to as the time of King Ahab.

4. Conclusions

The period of the ninth century saw massive building projects at many sites across the kingdom of Israel. Massive new walls were constructed at sites such as Dor, Megiddo and Dan, along with reinforcing the walls at other sites such as Hazor and Ein Gev. Truly herculean efforts were required to build the water systems of Hazor and Megiddo, to quarry a moat around Jezreel, or to construct the platform and royal acropolis of Samaria. Building projects were not limited to the fortification of major cities as remote areas such as Khirbet Marjamah received monumental fortifications, and forts or towers defended every roadway around the capital. Pillared buildings also provided a possible insight into the military capacity of the kingdom of Israel. Ashlar construction and proto-Aeolic capitals reveal that these construction projects were not only massive but were indicative of fine craftsmanship.

The proposed dates of these construction projects are contemporary with the reign of Ahab of Israel who is mentioned in the Kurkh Monolith Inscription of 853 BCE and the biblical text. The massive and extensive buildings projects in the kingdom of Israel

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[194]Yadin, "The Fifth Season of Excavations at Hazor," 70.

during this period does reveal a rather energetic royal building program. Whether one believes all that is written in the biblical text regarding Ahab and his religious involvements, it seems that Ahab of Israel was one of the greatest builders of the first temple period. Ephraim Stern stated that Ahab was probably the greatest builder prior to Herod the Great.[195] The ninth century was definitely a boom time of construction activity, and this can likely be tied to the reign of King Ahab.

B. Epigraphic Remains

1. Tel Dan Fragments

During the 1993 excavations at Tel Dan, the excavators found a fragment (Fragment A) from an inscribed stele in secondary use as one of the paving stones of the *piazza*. The latest date for this stele was determined by the destruction layer that covered the entire gate complex, attributed to the conquest of Tiglath Pileser III in 733/2.[196] The stele was set in the wall and the pottery assemblage discovered beneath the inscribed fragment contained nothing later than the ninth century which suggests that the stele was smashed and reused during the first half of the ninth century.[197] As well, the language of the inscription was early Aramaic and an analysis of the script would be consistent with a

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[195]Stern, "How Bad was Ahab?" 26.

[196]A. Biran and Joseph Naveh, "Aramaic Stele Fragment from Dan," *IEJ* 43/2-3 (1993): 86.

[197]Ibid.

ninth century BCE date.[198] A. Biran and Joseph Naveh correlated this stele to a destruction layer discovered in the sanctuary area dating to the first quarter of the ninth century BCE. They ascribed this destruction layer to Ben-Hadad's attack of Dan recorded in 1 Kings 15:20 and wonder if this inscription also described the event.[199]

The authors admit that the preserved letters in each line comprise only a small part of the text, and therefore any reconstruction must be treated as tentative. Biran's and Naveh's reconstruction reads as follows,

Fragment A
1. ...
2. ... my father went up ...
3. ... and my father died, he went to [his fate ... Is-]
4. rael formerly in my father's land ...
5. I [fought against Israel?] and Hadad went in front of me ...
6. ... my king. And I slew of [them X footment, Y cha-]
7. riots and two thousand horsemen . . .
8. The king of Israel. And [I] slew [... the kin-]
9. g of the House of David. And I put ...
10. their land ...
11. Other ... [... ru-]
12. Led over Is[rael ...]
13. Siege upon ...

Line 5 of the fragment "and Hadad went in front of me" is essentially "Hadad caused my victory" and is identical to the Kurk Monolith where Nergal goes in front of Shalmaneser III.[200] The expression yklm in line 6 indicates the writer of the inscription was a vassal or a dependent king. Biran and Naveh concluded that the writer of the stele could not have

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[198]Ibid., 87.

[199]Ibid., 86.

[200]Ibid., 92.

been the king of Aram-Damascus who was a sovereign ruler but may have been one of the commanders of the Damascene king (1 Kgs 15:20) who might have become the governor of Dan and its vicinity.[201]

The identification of this vassal who erected the stele at Tel Dan might be alluded to in the phrase "land of my father." In 1 Kgs 20:1,16 there are 32 kings mentioned who participated in the war with Ben-Hadad against Ahab of Israel. The authors believed that Maacah, Beth Rehob and Zoba were vassals of Aram-Damascus and may have had a claim on the region of the Golan heights in ancient times.[202] Furthermore, the mention of "Baasa son of Ruhubi" in the Kurkh Monolith inscription may have alluded to a king of Beth Rehob who would be a good candidate for the vassal who erected the stele at Tel Dan.[203] From the information of the stele fragment and biblical sources Biran and Naveh stated that Tel Dan changed hands four times in a thirty year period (885-855).[204] Initially Ben-Hadad I captured Dan in 885 BCE (1 Kgs 15:20), then Dan was regained by Israel under Omri's reign, afterwards it was regained by the author of the stele in the first years of Ahab's reign and finally Ahab received it back from Ben Hadad II (Adad-idri) as described in 1 Kings 20:34.[205]

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[201]Ibid., 96.

[202]Ibid., 97.

[203]Ibid.

[204]Ibid., 98.

[205]Ibid.

Two other fragments were found during the summer excavations of 1994.[206] Fragment B1 was discovered only 13m northeast of fragment A in the fill above the flatstone pavement. Fragment B1 contained six lines on a flat surface that was 15 x 11 cm. Another fragment, named B2, was found ten days later about 8m north of fragment B1. Fragment B2 consisted of four lines inscribed on a flat surface about 9 x 6 cm. In both inscriptions the letters were clearly inscribed and the words were separated by dots. The excavators realized that fragment B1 and B2 were a part of the same inscription and the excavators reconstructed these two pieces to form fragment B. Through corroboration with other experts from the Israel museum, Biran and Naveh formed a logical inscription by combining both fragment A from the previous season and the new fragment B. Biran and Naveh preceded their translation with the following qualifier,

> Fragments A and B cannot be joined in an obvious unequivocal way. . . The following presentation and interpretation of the inscription is hypothetical. Further discoveries will no doubt lead to modifications, if not major changes, in the understanding of the inscription.[207]

The reconstruction of all three pieces of the inscription reads as follows,

1. [... ...] and cut [...]
2. [...] my father went up [against him when] he fought at [...]
3. And my father lay down, he went to his [ancestors] (viz. Became sick and died). And the king of I[s]
4. Entered previously in my father's land. [and] Hadad made me king.
5. And Hadad went in front of m, [and] I departed from [the] seven [. . . -]
6. s of my kingdom, and I slew [seve]nty kin[gs], who harnessed thou[sands of cha]
7. Riots and thousands of horsemen (or: horses). [I killed Jeho]ram son of [Ahab]
8. King of Israel, and [I] killed [Ahaz]iahu son of [Jehoram kin-]

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[206]A. Biran and Joseph Naveh, "The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment." *IEJ* 45/1 (1995): 2.

[207]Ibid., 11.

9. g of the House of David. And I set [their towns into ruins and turned]
10. their land into [desolation ...]
11. other [... And Jehu ru-]
12. led over Is[rael . . . And I laid]
13. siege upon [...][208]

This new reconstruction modifies the previous interpretation of fragment A in several ways. The text now deals with the time of Hazael and not to the time of Hadadezer as previously mentioned. Hazael was most likely the author of the stele, although his name does not appear in the text itself. Therefore, the site of Tel Dan did not have the four part occupation that Biran and Naveh had previously considered. The author of the stele did not refer to an occupation between the reign of Omri and Ahab but a conquest dating to the time of Jehoram and Ahaziah. The stele's relationship to the military might and activity of King Ahab does not provide a contemporary picture that was once considered, but portrays events immediately following Ahab's reign.

2. Bar-Hadad Inscription

A stele in the figure of a god with an inscription on its lower half was discovered in 1939 at Breidj which is 7km north of Aleppo. The top half of the stele was a relief of the god Melcarth to whom the stele was dedicated and was carved in a style derivative of previous Hittite reliefs. The entire relief measured 1.15m high and was 0.43m wide. A similar style of carving was found in other early monuments from Zenjirli, prior to the Assyrian influence, which would place the inscription in the ninth century, probably in the

[208]Ibid., 13.

first half of the century around 860 BCE.[209] The Bar-Hadad inscription consisted of five lines:

1. Statue which Barhadad,
2. Son of Tobrimmon, son of Hezion,
3. King of Aram, raised for his lord Melcarth,
4,5 to whom he had made a vow when he listened to his voice.

Gibson recorded that lines one to three could alternatively be read as,

1. Statue which Barhadad,
2. Son of Ezer, the Damascene, son of
3. The king of Aram, raised . . ."[210]

This reading of "Son of Ezer, the Damascene" originated with F.M. Cross that provided another interpretation of the stele than the one given by W.F. Albright.[211] According to Cross, the person who erected the stele would have been the son of the "king of Aram" which in this case was the Hadad-idri of the Kurkh Monolith inscription. Others such as J. Andrew Dearman have opposed Cross on this point stating that the "son of the king of Aram" was the son of the Ben-Hadad I (son of Tabrimmon) which in this case is Hadadidri himself.[212]

Wayne Pittard also offered another reading for the patronym of Barhadad. According to his analysis of the statue in the National Museum of Aleppo, Pittard argued

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[209]John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions, Vol II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1.

[210]Ibid., 3

[211]F.M. Cross, "The Stele Dedicated to Melcarth by Ben Hadad of Damascus," *BASOR* 205 (1972): 36-42.

[212]Dearman, J. Andrew and J. Maxwell Miller, "The Melqart Stele and the Ben Hadads of Damascus," *PEQ* 115 (1983): 6.

the inscription should read, "Bir Hadad, the son of `Attar-hmk, the king of Aram."[213] Pittard does not attribute this patronym to Ben Hadad II, instead he states that "Bir-Hadad son of `Attar-hamek was a ruler over an Aramaean state in northern Syria sometime between 850 and 770 B.C."[214]

Hadad was the chief deity of the Aramaic pantheon. Greenfield explained that Hadad was also known as Ramman "the thunderer," or Rimmon of the biblical text (2 Kgs 5:18; Zech 12:11).[215] None of the extant Aramaic inscriptions refer to Hadad as Rimmon, although some personal names in cuneiform sources and seal impressions do use Rimmon as the theophoric element.[216] Hadad appears in the west semitic pantheon already in the Old Babylonian period as indicated by some of the Amorite personal names.[217] Although Hadad is the equivalent of the Akkadian storm-god Adad the mythology is not well developed either in Akkadian or Aramaic inscriptions. Greenfield turned to the Ugaritic texts both for the mythological and the epic references about Ba`lu-Haddu who is a major figure in the Canaanite pantheon. In the inscription from Tell Fakhariyah the god Hadad was extolled by king Hadda-yisi as his lord and as the lord of the Habur river.[218] Hadad is seen as the grantor of fertility and is the provider of his "brother" gods which would be a

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[213]Wayne T. Pittard, "Bir Hadad of the Melquart Stele," *BASOR* 272 (1988): 7.

[214]Ibid., 11.

[215]Jonas G. Greenfield, "Aspects of Aramean Religion," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honour of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 68.

[216]Ibid.

[217]Ibid.

[218]Ibid.

role fitting of a chief deity. In addition Hadad was called upon to execute the curses described in the inscription. In the inscription from Zinjirli Hadad is listed as the head of the pantheon, and even takes precedence over El. Punamuwa expresses gratitude to Hadad for granting him the "sceptre of succession" and thus erects a statue in the god Hadad's honour.

There has been some discussion as to the correlations of the Ben-Hadad's mentioned in the biblical texts and the inscriptions. The biblical text in 1 Kgs 15:18 mentions Ben-Hadad son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, who was contemporary with Baasha king of Israel and Asa king of Judah. A Ben-Hadad is mentioned in his confrontations with King Ahab during both conflicts in 1 Kings 20, while in 1 Kings 22 it is simply the king of Aram. The Kurkh Monolith inscription of 853 BCE mentions Adad-idri or Hadadezer as the king of Aram. The Bible also records Hazael (the son of nobody according to Assyrian texts) as murdering Ben-Hadad king of Aram (2 Kgs 8:7-15). Hazael also had a son named Ben-Hadad who is mentioned in both the Zakir inscription and in 2 Kgs 13:24. Scholars have been divided as to whether there were two or three Ben-Hadads. W.F. Albright believed that Ben-Hadad son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion was the Ben-Hadad of Baasha's and Asa's time, as well as that of Elijah and Elisha and the Bar-Hadad inscription. Therefore, the Ben-Hadad son of Hazael (2 Kgs 13:24 and the Zakir inscription) would be Ben-Hadad II and not Ben-Hadad III according to Albright.[219] Benjamin Mazar, however, does not concur with Albright's interpretation of the Bar-Hadad inscription and favours the alternate reading provided by Gibson.

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[219]W.F. Albright, "A Votive Stele Erected by Ben-Hadad I of Damascus to the God Melcarth," *BASOR* 87 (1942): 26.

Therefore, Mazar concluded that the Ben-Hadad of Ahab's time was none other than the Adad-idri (Hadadezer) of the Kurkh Monolith and of the Bar-Hadad (Melqart) stele, making him Ben-Hadad II.[220] This view was further supported by Mazar in his conclusion that Ben-Hadad, or Bar-Hadad, was not a personal name but rather a dynastic name referring to the "son of the god Hadad."[221] Given the previous discussion of the god Hadad and the common ancient practice of referring to the king as the son of the god, Mazar is probably correct in assuming that Ben-Hadad was indeed a throne name. Therefore, the Ben-Hadad referred to in the two confrontations of 1 Kgs 20 could either be Ben-Hadad son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion or the Hadadezer of the Kurkh Monolith inscription. Since the battle of Ramoth Gilead in 1 Kgs 22 followed Ahab's participation in the battle of Qarqar, the king of Aram can be none other than Hadadezer (Adad-idri), who was also the Ben-Hadad killed by Hazael (2 Kgs 8:7-15). Gibson believes in a single Ben-Hadad followed by Hadadezer who was then followed by the usurper Hazael, but made the statement that Hadadezer was "carelessly called Benhadad in the Bible."[222] Mazar's conclusions point out that this was probably not a careless inclusion, but the biblical writers were simply using the throne name attributed to the Damascene dynasty and Hadadezer is in fact Ben-Hadad II. The author would postulate that there were three Ben-Hadads in the biblical text: Ben-Hadad son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion; Hadadezer who is the king of Aram in 1 Kgs 22 and the Ben-Hadad murdered by Hazael;

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[220]Benjamin Mazar, "The Aramean Empire and its Relations with Israel," *BA* 25 (1962): 106.

[221]Ibid.

[222]Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions,* 4.

and finally Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael (2 Kgs 13:24 and the Zakir inscription). Depending on the reading that one adopts for the Bar-Hadad inscription it could refer to either Ben-Hadad I or Ben-Hadad II, and one cannot conclude with relative certainty which of the first two Ben-Hadads took part in the conflict with Ahab in 1 Kgs 20.

3. Kurkh Monolith Inscription

The Assyrians were famous for their carved reliefs which depict battles, such as the siege of Lachish as well as tributes and hunting expeditions. The Assyrians also left behind a large number of inscriptions on reliefs, statues, throne pedestals, buried tablets, stelae, and even cliff faces along the Tigris and Euphrates river.[223] One such epigraphic find is a seven foot high limestone stelae discovered at the site of Kurkh, on the Upper Tigris river and thus called the Kurkh Monolith Inscription. This inscription was discovered in 1861 by J.C. Taylor of the British Counsel at Diarbekir. This inscription was written in the sixth year of Shalmaneser III, in the year of eponym Daian-Ashur which corresponds to 853 BCE. Of particular interest in this inscription was the battle waged at Qarqar between Shalmaneser III of Assyria and a Syrian coalition, in which Ahab of Israel participated. This is the first mention of both Israel and Ahab in an Assyrian text. An analysis will be made of the genre of the Kurk Monolith inscription and how this inscription can provide insight into the military might and activity of King Ahab.

D.D. Luckenbill provided the following translation of the Kurkh Monolith

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[223]Tammi Schneider, "Did King Jehu Kill His Own Family?" *BARev* 21/1 (Jan/Feb 1995): 28.

inscription:

> Karkar, his royal city, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. 1,200 chariots, 1,200 cavalry, 20,000 soldiers, of Hadad-ezer of Aram (? Damascus); 700 chariots, 700 cavalry, 10,000 soldiers of Irhuleni of Hamath, 2,000 chariots, 10,000 soldiers of Ahab, the Israelite, 500 soldiers of the Gueans, 1,000 soldiers of the Musreans, 10 chariots, 10,000 soldiers of the Irkanateans, 200 soldiers of Matinuba'il, the Arvadite, 200 soldiers of the Usanateans, 30 chariots, [ ],000 soldiers of Adunu-ba'il, the Shianean, 1,000 camels of Gindibu', the Arabian, [ ],000 soldiers of Ba'sa, son of Ruhubi, the Ammonite, - these twelve kings he brought to his support; to offer battle and fight, they came against me. (Trusting) in the exalted might which Assur, the lord had given (me), in the mighty weapons, which Nergal, who goes before me, had presented (to me), I battled with them. From Karkar, as far as the city of Gilzau, I routed them. 14,000 of their warriors I slew with the sword. Like Adad, I rained destruction upon them. I scattered their corpses far and wide, (and) covered (lit., filled) the face of the desolate plain with their wide spreading armies. With (my) weapons I made their blood to flow down the valleys (?) of the land. The plain was too small to let their bodies fall, the wide countryside was used up in burying them. With their bodies I spanned the Arantu (Orontes) as with a bridge (?). In that battle I took from them their chariots, their cavalry, their horses, broken to the yoke.[224]

This portion of the inscription referred to the sixth year of Shalmaneser II in the year of Daian-Assur.

The coalition of the twelve kings covered the regions of central Syria and areas to the south extending to Israel and Egypt, and was led by Adad-idri (Hadadezer/Ben-Hadad II) of Damascus and Irhuleni of Hamath. Hayim Tadmor grouped this coalition into five categories: the major powers including Damascus, Hamath and Israel, the north Phoenician ports, Usnu, Shiana, Arqa and Byblos, the Egyptians who apparently came to assist Byblos, the Arabians of the Syrian desert and Beth Rehob which was a small

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[224]D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Part One* (London: Histories and Mysteries of Man LTD., 1989), 223.

Aramean state.[225] The underlying factor in the formation of this alliance was most probably economic and the control of the trade routes running from Egypt all the way to Syria. The presence of Arabians from the Syrian desert and a token Egyptian contingent support the notion that it was an economic factor that motivated the alliance. Tadmor noted that this was the only time in the history of Syro-Palestine that a confederation of mutually opposing states was active for such a considerable period of time, being able to halt the advance of the greatest military power of that age.[226] This period in Assyrian history was one of ascendancy during the reign of Shalmaneser III, and the formation of this southern Syria coalition was similar to a north Syrian coalition that resisted Shalmaneser during the first five years of his reign.[227]

The monolith inscription summarized the participating rulers and then recorded how many chariots, cavalry and infantry they supplied for the battle. From the reliefs of Shalmaneser's times it is apparent that the cavalry units consisted of two horses and two riders. M. Elat described how one rider would hold the reins for both horses in one hand and a shield protecting both riders in the other, while the second rider would serve as the archer.[228] This approach to cavalry units did not allow the Assyrians to exploit the full speed of their horses and would inhibit the cavalry unit's element of surprise along with

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[225]Hayim Tadmor, "Assyria and the West: The Ninth Century and Its Aftermath," in *Unity and Diversity*, ed. Hans Goedicke and J.J.M. Roberts (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), 39.

[226]Ibid.

[227]W.W. Hallo, "From Qarqar to Carchemish," *BA* 23 (1960): 39.

[228]M. Elat, "The Campaigns of Shalmaneser III against Aram and Israel," *IEJ* 25 (1975): 29.

reducing their striking power.[229] The relief on the bronze gates of Balawat depict a battle where the chariots initiated the charge and the cavalry units followed in their wake, thereby revealing the importance of chariots in ninth century BCE warfare.[230] The total number of chariots of the Syrian coalition numbered 3,940 which was almost double the chariot force of the Assyrians that was recorded in other confrontations with the Syrian coalition.

The Kurkh Monolith represents a royal Assyrian inscription that described the annual royal campaigns, which are referred to as annals. The Monolith represented a new trend in Assyrian writing, as the Kurkh Monolith differs from previous Assyrian inscriptions by no longer describing atrocities.[231] It is not sure whether this is a new military policy employed in the west, or simply a new development in the writing of Assyrian annals. However, the Kurkh Monolith stands in the tradition of Assyrian inscriptions as Shalmaneser is the ferocious warrior king fighting on behalf of his gods with the usual descriptions of the horrible fate of those who failed to surrender along with the difficult trek to the sites mentioned in the inscription.[232] Inscriptions dating from the end of Shalmaneser's reign reflect another shift in Assyrian inscriptions, as the difficult nature of the journey and the horrible fate of the captives are no longer recorded in favour

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[229]Ibid.

[230]Ibid.

[231]Tadmor, "Assyria and the West," 36.

[232]Schneider, "Did King Jehu Kill His Own Family?" 29.

of describing more campaigns in a less embellished fashion.[233] The focus of the inscriptions are the deeds of the king. The inscriptions were meant to further the reputation of the king in the eyes of the people, therefore, a military defeat would not be recorded while a draw or setback like the one at Qarqar was recorded as a glowing victory. This process changed in the Babylonian era, as Babylonian chroniclers would impassively record Babylonian defeats on the battlefield in the pursuit of recording what happened rather than furthering the reputation of the king.[234]

It is this self-aggrandising nature of the Assyrian inscriptions that have led many scholars to believe that the number of military units supplied by the opposing kings are overly exaggerated. Tammi Schneider stated that,

> Scholars often use this passage to demonstrate Israel's strength under King Ahab's rule, but the numbers in the Kurkh text might well be grossly exaggerated. The inscription is not well-written (there are many scribal errors), so the numbers for Israel might even be the result of scribal error. Or the author may have inflated the numbers to make Shalmaneser's feat look more glorious.[235]

The Assyrian accounts may have represented a form of royal propaganda intended to instill fear into the hearts of the king's subjects and his enemies. This propaganda would be greatly enhanced by padding the numbers of the enemy armies that were conquered by the Assyrian army and her king. The fact that Israel contributed the most chariots from any nation in the coalition, even more that Hadadezer of Damascus, made some scholars consider these numbers as fictitious. Even when the inscription is viewed in this fashion,

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[233]Ibid., 31.

[234]A.K. Grayson, "Mesopotamian Historiography," *ABD* 3: 206.

[235]Schneider, "Did King Jehu Kill His Own Family?" 30.

Ahab's presence in the battle of Qarqar is not called into question, since the incorrect assignment of a ruler's name or country would do little to further the reputation of the king. T.C. Mitchell believed that 2,000 chariots for King Ahab was disproportionately large and due to scribal error the number was more likely 200.[236] Nadav Na'aman noted that many scholars have had to resort to emendation because of the scribal difficulties in the inscription.[237] Based on these scribal errors Na'aman made the following conclusion,

> It would seem that the Monolith text was carved by a provincial scribe dwelling in Tushan (Kurkh), who was insufficiently skilled in his profession. It may be assumed that this scribe recorded the events of the first seven years of Shalmaneser III's reign by copying a standardized text furnished to him, but since he did not space his work properly, he had to break off in the middle, thus omitting both the narrative of the campaign of 852 BCE and the "building inscription" which should have concluded the text.[238]

The chariot force of King Ahab seems overly large when one considers that the Assyrian army at the height of its greatness under Shalmaneser III in 839 only consisted of 2,001 chariots. Na'aman noted that Assyrian chariots required four horses per chariot, and even though one does not know how many horses were required for Israelite chariots, it is apparent that several thousand horses were required.[239] Na'aman believed that it is doubtful that a small country like Israel could possess the resources to purchase the horses and chariots along with the funds necessary for the maintenance of the chariots and the

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[236]T.C. Mitchell, "Israel and Judah until the Revolt of Jehu (931-841 B.C.)," *CAH* 3/1 (1982): 477.

[237]Nadav Na'aman, "Two Notes on the Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III from Kurkh," *Tel Aviv* 3/3 (1976): 91.

[238]Ibid.

[239]Ibid., 99.

training of the charioteers.[240] Although Ahab's presence in the battle of Qarqar is not disputed, the number of chariots, cavalry and infantry that he supplied are not considered as being accurate.

When analysing the numbers of the Kurkh Monolith inscription it is profitable to consider the matter of recording numbers in other Assyrian inscriptions. Inscriptions record such things as the booty taken from battles, the tribute received from subjects, the number of sheep or bulls used as offerings, or the number of slain in a battle. Alan Millard remarked that, "the meticulous accountancy of the Third Dynasty of Ur is abundantly documented with notes ranging from the delivery of one goat to the grand total of 246,155 sheep in a single document."[241] Scribes were no doubt employed in the daily activities of recording the taxes and tribute that were received, along with some who would record the royal activities. From the accurate detail presented in the Assyrian reliefs and inscriptions it is most likely that the royal scribes and artists accompanied the king on his military campaigns. It is apparent that in a single Assyrian inscription both round numbers such as 5,000 men or 16,000 citizens can be used along with a seemingly exact number like 69,574 guests.[242] Millard concluded that such numbers cannot be treated as exact numbers, but are in fact an approximation that is near to the truth.[243]

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[240]Ibid., 101.

[241]Alan R. Millard, "Large Numbers in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," in *Ah Assyria . . . Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor,* ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph`al (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1991), 218.

[242]Ibid., 216.

[243]Ibid.

Millard noted that the battle of Qarqar was recorded not only by the Kurkh Monolith (853 BCE), but the Cameron tablet from Assur (842 BCE), the Bulls inscription (841 BCE), the Safar Tablet (839 BCE), the Assur Statue (833 BCE) and the Black Obelisk (828 BCE) which all provide summaries of this battle.[244] From this perspective it is obvious that the numbers recording the slain are exaggerations, because they increase as the years go on. The Assyrian scribes did make errors as they copied the royal records, and it is apparent that there are some estimates being made through the use of round numbers. Nonetheless, Millard concluded that,

> each statement deserves a positive assessment, whether it be the 72,950 people deported from Urartu by Tiglath-Pileser II, or the 30,000 camels he took from the Arab queen of Samsi, the 240 Babylonian lambs he offered to Assur or the 1,223 men of Hamath he settled in Ulluba.[245]

The Assyrians did make an attempt to provide a reasonable assessment of the numbers that were quoted and these numbers need not be dismissed *a priori*.

The use of the Kurkh Monolith inscription to determine the military might and activity of King Ahab is not lost in the self aggrandising nature of the Assyrian inscriptions. For several reasons the number of chariots supplied by King Ahab, although not an exact number, does deserve a positive treatment. As has been previously shown the period of the ninth century that is contemporary with the Monolith inscription is a time of unprecedented construction and grandiose buildings projects in the kingdom of Israel. These building projects reveal a wealthy and established monarchy, that would have the resources capable of sending a large chariot force. The stable structures at Megiddo alone

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[244]Ibid., 220.

[245]Ibid., 221.

were able to house 450 horses, not to mention the levelled site of Jezreel that according to D. Ussishkin formed a military stronghold during the ninth century. One might consider what propagandistic purposes the Assyrian king would achieve by ascribing to the king of Israel the largest chariot force of the Syrian coalition. Even in considering the genre of the Monolith inscription it is most likely that if Ahab's chariot force did not number 2,000 it was in fact the largest or one of the largest chariot forces in the alliance. C.F. Whitley made a statement in the 1950's that might need to be reconsidered in light of the Dan inscriptions. Whitley believed that it was inconceivable that Judah did not send some troops into the battle of Qarqar, which may have been lumped together in the summaries attributed to Ahab of Israel.[246] Judah does not show up in Assyrian inscriptions until the eighth century BCE, and the Assyrian scribe may have included Judah's chariots in those ascribed to King Ahab. Furthermore the biblical text reveals that during the reign of King Ahab there was positive relations with Judah, that was evidenced in the alliance with King Jehoshaphat in the battle of Ramoth Gilead (1 Kgs 22). The Dan inscription also reveals that these kinds of military alliances were continued by Ahab's and Jehoshaphat's successors. Since the biblical text does not mention the battle of Qarqar, one cannot exclude the possibility of Jehoshaphat's forces participating in the battle along with King Ahab. The biblical text and an inscription reveal at least two military alliances between the king of Israel, and the king of Judah. The ninth century may have seen many battles where the armies of Judah and Israel were considered in the words of King Jehoshaphat "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses" (1 Kgs 22:4, NASB).

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[246]C.F. Whitley, "The Deuteromic Presentation of the House of Omri," *VT* 2 (1952): 141.

These arguments may dispel the notion that the numbers of the Kurkh Monolith inscription are simply a gross exaggeration. The number of chariots supplied by King Ahab, and possibly Jehoshaphat of Judah, may be the largest of the Syrian coalition and in the relative vicinity of the 2,000 recorded in the Monolith inscription.

The outcome of the battle of Qarqar is another matter that is under discussion. Although Shalmaneser III reported a devastating victory, whereby the valley could not contain the dead, and the corpses were used as a bridge over the Orontes river, several factors revealed that this was not a decisive victory. Shalmaneser fought Hadadezer and the alliance on three subsequent occasions, in the tenth year of his reign (849), in the eleventh year (848), and in the fourteenth year (845) until he finally destroyed Hazael's army in (841) after the disintegration of the alliance.[247] Secondly, after the battle of Qarqar (853), the next three years were spent in campaigns that focussed on consolidating the area closed to Assyria, without venturing abroad.[248] Thirdly, Israel and Damascus must have felt secure enough to break their alliance and to renew hostilities over the territory of Ramoth Gilead (1 Kgs 22). As well, the inscription does not record any booty or tribute received from the members of the coalition, nor does it mention the onward push to cities like Hamath, or phrases such as washing their weapons in the sea. A.K. Grayson noted that the cities of Carchemish and Bit-Agusi had to be forced into paying tribute in 849, and 848, whereas they had freely given tribute to Shalmanser III previous

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[247]M. Elat, "The Campaigns of Shalmaneser III against Aram and Israel," *IEJ* 25 (1975): 25.

[248]W.W. Hallo, "From Qarqar to Carchemish," *BA* 23 (1960): 41.

to the battle of Qarqar, showing that Assyria's hold on this region was not conclusive.[249] Grayson further noted that after the defeat of Hazael following the disintegration of the coalition there were no military activities in this region until the rebellion of Patinu in 831.[250] These factors reveal that although Assyria may have inflicted heavy casualties upon the alliance, they had not scored a conclusive victory in this region. The recurrence of the alliance in further battles with Assyria reveal that the battle of Qarqar was not a glowing victory for Assyria. Qarqar may have been a slight victory for Assyria, or more likely a draw between the two sides.

An understanding of the military might and activity of King Ahab is enhanced through the Kurkh Monolith inscription. Ahab was able to furnish one of the largest chariot forces in the region, possibly through an alliance with Judah. Ahab was also willing to form a military alliance with former enemies if it was deemed advantageous for the protection of his economic interests. The inscription also revealed that Ahab was involved in at least one other military campaign that was not recorded in the biblical text. The monolith inscription revealed that a complete picture of Ahab's actual military activity can probably not be drawn from the extant sources. The deuteronomistic author was selective in his choice of Ahab's military campaigns, as the three conflicts with Aram-Damascus were chosen because they furthered his theological point and were not intended to be a complete record of Ahab's military activities.

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[249]A.K. Grayson, "Assyria: Ashur-Dan II to Ashur-Nirari V (934-745 B.C.)," *CAH* 3/1 (1982): 262.

[250]Ibid.

III. Exegesis

A. Textual Considerations

The relevancy of 1 Kings 20 to the reign of King Ahab has been called into question for over fifty years. Scholars such as A. Jepsen (1942), C.F. Whitley (1952) and J. Maxwell Miller (1966) have written several articles questioning the placement of the three battles with Ben-Hadad, as recorded in 1 Kings 20 and 22, within the reign of King Ahab. As early as 1912, scholars such as C. Steuernagel and later G. Holscher (1923) believed that the battle at Ramoth Gilead was a secondary insertion made by the Deuteronomistic editor.[251] An analysis of the arguments of Miller and Whitley, along with other scholars, will be presented in order to understand whether 1 Kings 20 and 22 can be used as a source for the military might and activity of King Ahab.

Miller argued that although these three battles with Ben-Hadad appeared in the context of Ahab's reign the conditions described therein does not correspond to what is known of the Omride period from other sources. These biblical sources reveal, according to Miller, "a day in which the king of Israel was little more than a vassal of Syria."[252] Accordingly, the nonbiblical documents from the ninth century, archaeological discoveries, and the other biblical sources combine to describe the Omride kings as energetic rulers that exerted a great deal of influence in international affairs.[253] The

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[251]N. Na'aman, "Prophetic Stories as Sources for the Histories of Jehoshaphat and the Omrides," *Bib* 78/2 (1997): 153.

[252]J.M. Miller, "The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars," *JBL* 85 (1966): 443.

[253]Ibid.

conditions described in 1 Kings 20 and 22 do not fit that time of Ahab, but these passages do reflect the conditions in Jehoahaz's day, especially if Jehoahaz is identified as the king who defeated Ben-Hadad three times.[254] Secondly, the nonbiblical sources, such as the Kurkh Monolith inscription, attributed 2,000 chariots and 10,000 infantry to Ahab, yet in 1 Kings 20 the armies of the Aramean kings grossly outnumber those of King Ahab. The Assyrian inscription and the wealth associated with the building projects attributed to King Ahab do not match up with the weak character of Ahab's army in 1 Kings 20. S.L. McKenzie also pointed out that the Kurkh Monolith inscription described the participation of both Ahab and Hadadezer in the alliance against Shalmaneser III, which does not correspond to the animosity between the two parties in 1 Kings 20 and 22.[255]

In addition to the aforementioned arguments concerning 1 Kings 20, the battle at Ramoth-Gilead in 1 Kings 22 has elicited further objections by scholars. Objections have been raised that during the reign of King Ahab the region of Ramoth-Gilead was not in need of restoration. During the time of Jehoram, Ramoth-Gilead was considered part of Israel, as Jehoram's forces were simply on guard protecting against Syrian encroachment. It is from the site of Ramoth-Gilead that the story regarding the coup of Jehu begins (2 Kings 9:14), thus presupposing Israelite control over this region.[256] McKenzie also noted that it was not until Jehu's reign that Yahweh began "to cut off parts of Israel" including

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[254]Ibid.

[255]S.L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1991), 88.

[256]J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 262.

the area of Gilead (2 Kgs 10:32-33).[257] The argument from the Kurkh Monolith inscription was again applied to 1 Kings 22, since Israel and Aram were allies at this point, and the Syrian coalition continued to face Shalmaneser III on subsequent occasions (849, 848 and 845 BCE). The reference to the dogs licking up Ahab's blood in accordance to the "word of the Lord" (1 Kgs 22:38) was in reference to the prophecy of Elijah and the murder of Naboth, however the dogs licked up Ahab's blood in Samaria and not in Jezreel according to the original prophecy of Elijah (1 Kgs 21:19). The further reference to Ahab who "slept with his fathers" (1 Kgs 22:40) is a stereotypical phrase used of those kings who died peaceably which was in direct contrast to the preceding account of Ahab's death in the battle of Ramoth Gilead.[258] These apparent contradictions raise questions as to whether the battle of Ramoth Gilead was rightly applied to the reign of King Ahab. As well, Ahab was called by name only once in this narrative, otherwise he was referred to simply as the "king of Israel" which may allow for an easy misappropriation by the Deuteronomistic editor.

Miller, Whitley and DeVries attributed the battle of Ramoth Gilead to the reign Joram ben Ahab (2 Kgs 8:28-29), based on the similarities in the narratives. In both cases the "king of Israel" was wounded while fighting the Arameans. Each king received the fatal blow while riding in his chariot and both died in their chariots. In both accounts the king of Judah was an ally to the king of Israel and participated in the battle. Both the deaths were interpreted as the fulfilment of the prophecy that the dogs would lick up the

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[257]Ibid., 89.

[258]J.M. Miller, "The Fall of the House of Ahab," *VT* 17 (1967): 313.

blood of the kings.[259] Whitley noted that in 2 Kgs 3:7ff. Jehoram ben Ahab and Jehoshaphat joined in an alliance against Mesha, king of Moab and Jehoshaphat uttered the familiar words "I am as you are, my people as your people" (2 Kgs 3:7) along with a similar inquiry if there was a true prophet of Yahweh present (2 Kgs 3:11).[260] The fact that Yahweh would cause an evil spirit to tempt Ahab into going to his death made Whitley consider the account of 1 Kgs 22 highly suspicious.[261] These similarities between the two accounts may point to the possibility that the battle of Ramoth Gilead accords better with the reign of Jehoram than that of Ahab.

In light of the above mentioned inconsistencies, scholars have attempted to determine the different stages in the development of 1 Kings 20 and 22. DeVries described the work of a Jehuite redactor who combined two different sources (narrative A & B) to form the account of the three battles with Ben-Hadad.[262] This redactor, according to DeVries, was responsible for such passages as 1 Kgs 20:20b and vv. 22-25 along with 1 Kgs 20:43 and 1 Kgs 21:1 that form connective links between the battles and the Naboth story.[263] The process of interweaving the two independent sources was clearer in the battle of Ramoth Gilead (1 Kgs 22), according to DeVries. Narrative A dealt not with

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[259]Ibid., 315.

[260]Whitley, "The Deuteronomic Presentation," 148.

[261]Ibid., 149.

[262]S.J. DeVries, *Prophet Against Prophet: The Role of the Micaiah Narrative (1 Kings 22) in the Development of Early Prophetic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 75ff.

[263]S.J. DeVries, *1 Kings, WBC* 12 (1985): 247.

Ahab but with his son Joram and originated with the prophetic circles friendly to the Jehu dynasty around the end of the ninth century.[264] Narrative B was from the time of Hezekiah, ca. 700 BCE and dealt with the contest between rival claimants to revelation that revealed Yahweh's ability to combat conflicting prophecies and bring about his historical purposes.[265] After listing twelve inconsistencies in the present form of 1 Kgs 22, DeVries made the following conclusion,

> Add to this mass of detail the facts that the story has no meaningful structure as it now stands, and that the separate narratives that we have been able to disentangle do have meaningful structures in and of themselves and we have a compelling case for the acceptance of this literary hypothesis.[266]

The battle of Ramoth Gilead in 1 Kgs 22 is not useful for determining the military might and activity of King Ahab, according to DeVries, but in Narrative A it described the actions of Joram ben Ahab and in Narrative B it represented a genre of prophetic conflict from the time of Hezekiah.

J. Maxwell Miller has written that the three battles with Ben-Hadad were originally a part of the Elisha narratives. The Elisha cycle anticipated three victories over the king of Aram (2 Kgs 13:18-19), and these three battles with Ben-Hadad and the anonymous "king of Israel" originally formed the fulfilment of this prophecy. The northern prophets originally left out the name of the king of Israel, because the prophet Elisha was the main character of the story, and the king of Israel was only secondary.[267]

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[264]Ibid., 265.

[265]Ibid., 266.

[266]Ibid., 265.

[267]Miller, "The Elisha Cycle," 447.

In later times, the tendency was perhaps to attribute these anonymous sources to well-known personalities of the past, and Jehoshaphat was a well known personality who was remembered for his alliances with the kings of Israel.[268] Once the king of Judah was identified with Jehoshaphat, then the king of Israel must have been Jehoshaphat's contemporaries, the Omrides.[269] This editing process most likely took place after the fall of Samaria when these Elisha legends found their way into the southern kingdom, where the identification of the king of Judah as Jehoshaphat was made. The attempt to restore Ramoth Gilead by the anonymous kings of Judah and Israel, originally described the activities of Jehoahaz of Israel and Joash of Judah, not Ahab and Jehoshaphat.[270] S.L. McKenzie doubts that 1 Kgs 20 and 22 were ever part of the Elijah/Elisha cycle as the prophets in 1 Kgs 20 are nameless, Micaiah ben-Imlah is the lone "true" prophet in Israel (1 Kgs 22), the prophets in these two chapters are not miracle workers like Elijah and Elisha but are mediators of the word of Yahweh, and the conflict of 1 Kgs 22 is not between the prophets of Yahweh and the prophets of Baal, but between prophets of Yahweh.[271] Nonetheless, according to Miller, 1 Kgs 20 and 22 cannot be used to describe the military might and activity of King Ahab.

B. First Confrontation, 1 Kgs 20: 1-21

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[268]Ibid.

[269]Ibid., 448.

[270]Ibid.

[271]McKenzie. *The Trouble with Kings*, 88.

The aforementioned arguments will be analysed and discussed as they relate to the understanding of each of the three confrontations with Ben-Hadad. The first argument of Miller and others was that the depiction of King Ahab as a mere vassal of Syria does not accord with either the epigraphic or archaeological evidence. From the previous archaeological survey, one can conclude that the reign of King Ahab was one of grandiose building projects and major refortifications. An archaeologist even described Ahab as the greatest builder in Israel prior to Herod the Great.[272] There were no apparent destruction levels in any of the major cities during mid-ninth century BCE, except for possibly one identified during Wright's excavations at Shechem (strata IXb).[273] In light of the archaeological evidence, 1 Kgs 20:1 could not mean that the armies of Ben-Hadad and the thirty two kings had ransacked the country of Israel and were now besieging the capital of Samaria. In fact, this kind of widespread destruction that would support this interpretation does not happen at all until the campaigns of Tiglath Pileser III in the late eighth century. In whatever manner a person interprets 1 Kgs 20:1, it does not mean a widespread destruction climaxing with a siege upon the capital of Samaria at any point during the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, or Jehu.

There is also the manner of the demands that Ben-Hadad made of Ahab that leads one to believe that he was a mere vassal of the Aramean king. Ben-Hadad sent messengers to Ahab informing him that his silver and gold along with his wives and children belonged to him (1 Kgs 20:3), to which Ahab replied, "I am yours and all that I

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[272]Stern, "How Bad was Ahab?," 26.

[273]G. Ernest Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 153.

have." Most commentators believe that this first request was a mere formality and that Ahab did not give up his gold and his harem at this time.[274] This was considered as a formal request for Ahab to recognize the overlordship of Ben-Hadad to which Ahab agreed.[275] The return of the messengers of Ben-Hadad clarified the matter, and insisted that Ben-Hadad did not want mere ascent to his supremacy but demanded that Ahab deliver all the things of value that he possessed. At this point, Ahab called together his officials and did not comply with Ben-Hadad's demands for surrendering his valuables. This would bring about a question as to what kind of vassalship existed between Ahab and Ben-Hadad. The black obelisk, an Assyrian relief, depicted Jehu, king of Israel, prostrate before Shalmaneser III and presenting him with tribute. Ahab, however, refused to offer the tribute that Ben-Hadad required, but did recognize Ben-Hadad's lordship over him in a formal manner. Ben-Hadad had even set up markets in the capital of Samaria (1 Kgs 20:34) which B. Mazar, in discussing the work of G. Bostrom, stated that "this was an extra right given to the stronger ally to build business quarters for merchants in the large cities and especially in the capital of the state."[276] These observations would reveal that Ahab was not a mere vassal of Ben-Hadad but was united with him through an alliance, in which Ahab recognized that he was the weaker of the two. Interestingly, when Ahab defeated Ben-Hadad at Aphek (1 Kgs 20: 26-34), Ben-Hadad did not offer his silver, gold and other precious possessions as tribute in a vassal relationship, but recognized that now

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[274]DeVries, *1 Kings,* 248.

[275]T.J. Meek, "1 Kings 20:1-10," *JBL* 78 (1959): 73.

[276]B. Mazar, "The Aramean Empire and its Relations with Israel," *BA* 25 (1962): 106.

Ahab was the stronger party of the alliance and invited him to place markets in the capital of Damascus (1 Kgs 20:34). What many translators translate as "merciful" in 1 Kgs 20:31 is in fact dsj, which refers to covenant loyalty. The kings of the house of Israel were dsj yklm, or "kings who keep covenants," implying that there was in fact an alliance between Ahab and Ben-Hadad. This alliance continued after Ahab's victory at Aphek ("he is my brother," v32), but now Ahab was recognized as the stronger party. The objection that several scholars have made that the continuation of the Syrian alliance in their battle against Shalmaneser III (849, 848, 845) proves that these narrative do not fit the time of Ahab seems to have been answered. Ben-Hadad appealed to the covenant loyalty of King Ahab, in spite of the present hostilities and the response of the two parties was fitting of treaty participants. Was Ahab the kind of king who would be willing to make foreign alliances? Through marriage Ahab was allied with Phoenicia, the Kurkh Monolith recorded Ahab's alliance with eleven other kings, and the Bible recorded his alliance with King Jehoshaphat. If one does not consider the biblical text accurate, the Tel Dan inscription recorded an alliance between the kings of Israel and Judah merely one generation later. Ahab was not a "mere vassal" of Ben-Hadad but he had formed an alliance with the ruler of Aram-Damascus and could be considered an able statesman rather than a lowly subject. From the position of alliance, rather than vassalship, the reply of Ahab to Ben-Hadad, "let not him who puts on his armour boast like him who takes it off" is no longer a meaningless bluff but a strong statement that could be made by someone of Ahab's position and ability.

Yigael Yadin ascertained that the armies were not encamped around Samaria in twks (booths), but were in fact encamped in the famous city of twks, situated between the

rivers Jordan and Jabbok on the road leading to Samaria from Syria.[277] The term "tent" (lha) was the normal accommodations for military encampments in the field, attested in several biblical passages including the reference to an Aramean army encamped against Samaria fleeing their tents (<hylha) (2 Kgs 7:7-9). A similar construction was used of Elah, son of Baasha who was murdered by Zimri while drinking in Tirzah: Ben Hadad twksB rwKv htc ddh-/bW (1 Kgs 20:16) and Elah rwKv htc hxrtb aWhw (1 Kgs 16:9). Yadin also noted that the LXX understood twks not as the common noun but as the name of a city in 3 Reigns 21:16.[278] Once this identification was made, the continued use of messengers throughout the narrative, and the twice repeated statements about Ben-Hadad's condition and his whereabouts (1 Kgs 20:12,16) becomes clear. Even though it was noon, Ben-Hadad had to be told by messengers that men had come out from Samaria, revealing that the army was probably not encircled around the city of Samaria (1 Kgs 20:17). Yadin showed that 1 Kgs 20:1 can be referred to as an introduction for the chapter, and the first order "to set against" Samaria comes after the reports of the messengers in 1 Kgs 20:12.[279] Also the ability of Ahab to summon the rulers of the provinces and all the sons of Israel does not seem viable in a siege situation. The fact that Ben-Hadad was able to escape, considering his drunken state, while the horsemen and chariots were smashed can be easily explained by understanding twks as the city rather

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[277]Y. Yadin, "Some Aspects of the Strategy of Ahab and David (1 Kings 20; 2 Sam 11)," *Bib* 36 (1955): 337.

[278]Ibid.

[279]Ibid., 334.

than simple booths.[280] It is feasible that Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings were consolidating and enforcing their sovereignty over the southern kingdoms such as Moab and Edom, especially in light of a coming Assyrian threat to the north. Ben-Hadad sent out messengers to Samaria to ensure Ahab's adherence to their alliance, which he affirmed (1 Kgs 20:4). The report was brought back to Ben-Hadad in Succoth, and maybe from his drunken stupor, Ben-Hadad sent the messengers back to Samaria to demand tribute from Ahab which he refused. Enraged and in his drunken state, Ben-Hadad sent out the army against Samaria, while he remained with the other kings drinking in Succoth. The army of Ben-Hadad would have crossed the river at the Damiyeh pass and headed up Wadi Far'ah enroute to Samaria. As has been previously shown, Ahab recognized the importance of this passage and had constructed the circular tower of Khirbet El-Makhruq. Adam Zertal believed that the battle between the armies of Ahab and Ben-Hadad probably took place in Wadi Far'ah.[281]

C. Second Confrontation, 1 Kgs 20: 22-34

After Ben-Hadad's initial defeat, he returned the following year and faced the armies of Ben-Hadad at Aphek. The biblical text described the scene at Aphek with Ahab's army resembling two small flocks of goats while Ben-Hadad's army filled the country side (1 Kgs 20:27). Another objection that was raised regarding the attribution of

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[280]Ibid., 336.

[281]Adam Zertal, "Three Iron Age Fortresses in the Jordan Valley and the Origin of the Ammonite Circular Towers," *IEJ* 45/4 (1995): 265.

these battles to the reign of King Ahab was the despairingly small size of Ahab's army, given the apparent affluence ascribed to Ahab's reign. In the first battle with Ben-Hadad, Ahab was reported as mobilizing 7,000 men, and in the second confrontation his army was described as two small flocks of goats in comparison to the large Aramean army. It is notable that although Ahab supplied the largest chariot force of the Syrian alliance, the chariot force was not mentioned in these accounts. It is interesting that although Solomon was said to have 1,400 chariots, and chariots are mentioned several times in association with the forces of Israel (1 Kgs 16:9; 2 Kgs 8:21) they were never enumerated in the battles recorded in the book of Kings. Although the Kurkh Monolith reported the numbers of chariots, cavalry and infantry of each army, the book of Kings simply reported the number of men involved and made general references to the presence of chariots and horsemen. Although one might like to compare the chariot force mobilized by Ahab in the battles with Ben-Hadad as compared to the Kurkh Monolith inscription, one is left with only the number of 7,000 for the infantry in the first confrontation and the analogy of two small flocks of goats in the second confrontation. According to the Kurkh Monolith inscription, Ahab was responsible for supplying 10,000 men for the Syrian coalition, yet in the first confrontation with Ben-Hadad, he only supplied 7,000 men which was 70% of the force that he sent to Qarqar. This number of 7,000 may be explained in several ways, rather than simply ascribing the text to the reign of another king. First of all, in light of Ahab's willingness to enter into treaties, and both biblical and nonbiblical sources stating that the king of Israel and the king of Judah entered into alliances, it had been mentioned that the Kurkh Monolith inscription may in fact represent a combined force from the kingdom of Israel and of Judah. This possibility would bring the number of 7,000 to well

in line with the Monolith inscription. Furthermore, if Yadin's hypothesis that Succoth was about one day's ride from Samaria is considered correct, which was also alluded to in the reference to "about this time tomorrow" in the statement of the messengers, then the force of 7,000 would represent all the house of Israel who would be able to gather at Samaria in about one day. This would represent the armies of such cities as Megiddo, Jezreel, Beth-Shean, Samaria and possibly Dor, but would not include the major sites of Hazor or Dan. The second confrontation simply describes how vastly outnumbered the forces of Ahab were at Aphek in comparison to the Aramean contingent. In comparison to the Kurkh Monolith inscription the infantry from the entire Syrian coalition numbered 51,900 plus the armies of Adunu-ba'il, the Shianean, and Ba'sa, son of Ruhubi, the Ammonite, whose armies could not be read from the inscription. If one adds another 10,000 armies for Adunu-ba'il and Ba'sa to the previous total of infantry units, then the sum total of the entire infantry supplied by the Syrian coalition at Qarqar was less than half of the Aramean dead recorded in the second confrontation with Ahab (127,000). Even if Ahab supplied 20,000 infantry, equivalent to the greatest supplier of the Syrian coalition (Hadadezer of Damascus), his army would still be outnumbered 6:1 by those Arameans killed during this battle. These sort of odds would certainly seem like two small flocks of goats compared to a massive army. Even if one considers the number of 127,000 as being completely bogus, the resultant conclusion is that an accurate picture of a king's military might cannot be ascertained from the biblical numbers and therefore the objection that this narrative does not belong to the reign of King Ahab is nullified.

D. Third Confrontation, 1 Kgs 22: 1-38

The third confrontation between Ahab and Ben-Hadad was the result of an alliance between the king of Israel and the king of Judah aimed at restoring the site of Ramoth-Gilead from the control of Aram-Damascus. Miller stated that this battle does not refer to the time of King Ahab because,

> the account of Jehu's coup presupposes that the Omrides still controlled much of the Transjordan at the end of Jehoram's reign. We are told, namely, that Jehu made his move when the Israelite army was "on guard" at Ramoth-Gilead, defending against Syrian encroachment (2 Kgs 9:14). Thus Israel's holdings in the Transjordan presumably still extended as far north as Ramoth-Gilead.[282]

Miller's argument presupposes that from the time of Ahab's death (853) until the beginning of Jehu's coup (841), according to Thiele's numbers, the city of Ramoth-Gilead did not change hands. This argument would be convincing if the borders of the kingdom of Israel and of Aram-Damascus were static at this point. Apart from the battle of 1 Kgs 22, there is mention of the Moabite rebellion both in the biblical account and in the Mesha inscription to the south of Ramoth-Gilead. The heavily fortified site of Tel Dor was lost to Hazael just prior to Jehu's coup and, according to the excavations and the secondary use of the inscription, was regained a short time later. The Syrian coalition continued to battle Assyria in 849, 848 and 845 before the coalition disintegrated and the Assyrians beat Hazael in 839, only two years after Jehu's coup. Miller's assumption that Ramoth-Gilead did not change hands in 12 years is a large one considering the volatile nature of this region during the above mentioned time period. Considering the preoccupation of Aram-Damascus with the Assyrian threat and the volatility of this region, it is feasible that either during the reign of Ahaziah or Joram ben Ahab the city of Ramoth-Gilead could

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[282]Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 262.

have been regained from the Arameans in time for Jehu to be "on guard" before the beginning of his coup. The fact that Jehu and a contingent of soldiers and chariot units were stationed in Ramoth-Gilead "on guard" against the advance of Aram-Damascus also attests to the volatile nature of this region. Gray offered a plausible explanation regarding Ahab's interest in Ramoth-Gilead in that it might have been one of the cities that had been ceded by Ben-Hadad after his defeat (1 Kgs 20:34) but had not yet been handed over after three years. This might explain the impetus behind Ahab's question in 1 Kgs 22:3, "Do you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and we are not doing anything to take it from the power of the king of Aram?" Besides an ancient Deuteronomistic claim on this region, the agreement made between Ahab and Ben-Hadad only three years earlier might have elicited this response.

Nadav Na'aman in his recent article argued that the mention of Jehoshaphat in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead was not a late addition by a Deuteronomic redactor but was actually included in the deuteronomic history.[283] The book of Kings provides a summary statement regarding the deeds of the kings of Judah and Israel. These summary statements are often illustrated in the biblical account of that king's reign, such as Solomon's deeds and "his wisdom" (1 Kgs 11:41), or what Manasseh did and the "sin that he committed" (2 Kgs 21:17), or the "conspiracy which he made" for Zimri (1 Kgs 16:20). Jehoshaphat's concluding statement refers to his might (wtrwbg) and how he warred (<jln rvaw) (1 Kgs 22:45). This combination of "his might" and "how he warred" was also included in the concluding statement of Jehoash (2 Kgs 14:15) who successfully fought the Arameans and

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[283]Nadav Na'aman, "Prophetic Stories as Sources for the Histories of Jehoshaphat and the Omrides," *Bib* 78/2 (1997): 156.

Amaziah of Judah. The concluding statement of Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:28) who fought the Arameans and extended the border of Israel to Lebo-Hamath, also included this statement of "his might" and "how he warred."[284] The expression "how he warred" was included in the summary statement of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 14:19) who led a successful rebellion against Solomon and fought against Rehoboam all their days (1 Kgs 14:30). References to "might" were also made in the concluding statement of the reigns of Asa, Hezekiah, Baasha, Omri, Jehu, and Jehoahaz who all participated in wars or led successful rebellions.[285] The concluding statements all reflect an episode that was recorded during the reigns of each of these kings. The only two battles that Jehoshaphat participated in that exhibited "his might" and "how he warred" was the battle of Ramoth-Gilead with Ahab (1 Kgs 22:1-38) and his battle with Jehoram against the Moabites (2 Kgs 3:4-27).[286] Miller had originally doubted the presence of Jehoshaphat in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, and believed that his name had only come to be attached to this narrative at a much later time. Na'aman on the basis of this concluding formula would argue that the record of Jehoshaphat's participation in these two battles was written on the basis of sources available to the Deuteronomic historian, and was not the inclusion of a late Judahite redactor.[287]

Another objection in 1 Kgs 22 to this narrative being applied to the reign of King

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[284]Ibid., 155.

[285]Ibid., 156.

[286]Ibid.

[287]Ibid., 157.

Ahab was the mention of Ahab having "slept with his fathers" which was a term applied only to kings who experienced a nonviolent death, which was in direct opposition to the previous thirty eight verses that described Ahab's death in battle. This observation was first made by G. Holscher in 1923, and therefore the story of Ahab's death in battle was inserted at a later date, as Deuteronomic editor was not aware of Ahab's violent death.[288] DeVries, after analysing the concluding summaries of the kings of Israel and Judah stated that, "those kings who are recorded as having "slept with their fathers were kings who died at home, in peace, and with honour."[289] Na'aman observed that for all the Omride and Jehuite kings who died peacefully, their concluding summaries included both lying with the ancestors and burial in Samaria (1Kgs 16:28; 2 Kgs 10:35; 13:9; 13:13; 14:16; 14:29).[290] In the concluding summary of Ahab's reign it was only recorded that he slept with his fathers (1 Kgs 22:40). The record of Ahab's burial in Samaria was recorded in 1 Kgs 22:37, which according to many scholars was a much later addition. However, a plausible explanation might be that the Deuteronomic historian did not include the "buried in Samaria" remark in the concluding summary of Ahab's reign because it already existed in the narrative of Ahab's battle at Ramoth-Gilead. One presupposition that is made by assuming 1 Kgs 22:1-38 to be a late addition because of the concluding formula is that the biblical authors and editors produced a consistent text.

The development of the biblical text, and trying to ascertain the progression of the

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[288]McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings*, 89.

[289]DeVries, *Prophet Against Prophet*, 99.

[290]Na'aman, "Prophetic Stories," 156.

biblical text is at the foundation of this particular argument. The Greek text of 1 Kings reveals several variations from the present Masoretic Text. In regards to the reign of King Ahab, the LXX groups the battles with Syria in consecutive chapters, whereas the MT divides the second and third confrontation with Syria with the story of Naboth's vineyard. D.W. Gooding pointed out the following sequence of events in both the MT and the LXX:

> The sequence of events, therefore, according to the MT is: Ahab sins, is sentenced, is unrepentant; no delay in execution of the sentence is mentioned. Ahab sins again, is sentenced, but repents; delay in execution is promised, but execution follows immediately. Compare with this the sequence of events in the LXX: Ahab sins, is sentenced, but repents; delay in execution is promised. Ahab sins again, is sentenced, is unrepentant; no delay in execution is promised, and execution follows immediately. At once it is apparent that the LXX's sequence is the far more logical one.[291]

If logical order is the deciding factor, then it seems like the LXX is copied from a Hebrew text that is superior to the MT in this respect. But logical order, and perhaps concluding formulas, are not always the best indicators of later additions or redactions to the text. Gooding shows that the LXX translator depicts an Ahab who is more weak than wicked, who is grieved over Jezebel's crimes and is quick to repent of his misdeeds.[292] In response to the end of the drought announced by Elijah, the LXX adds that Ahab *wept* and went to Jezreel (3 Kgdms 18:45b). In regards to Naboth's vineyard, Ahab is deeply grieved over Naboth's death and only takes over his vineyard after a time of genuine mourning (3 Kgdms 20:27-29). Gooding explains that these "pluses" of the Greek text were the work of an interpreter who inserted an anticipatory gloss in verse 27 that would explain Ahab's

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[291]D. W. Gooding, "Ahab According to the Septuagint," *ZAW* 76 (1964): 271.

[292]Ibid., 272.

contrition in verse 29.[293] Gooding concluded that, all the textual variants in the LXX are all calculated to emphasize Ahab's repentance, which was also the motivation behind the LXX chapter arrangements that differed from the MT. The further anticipatory gloss in verse 27 that explained a phrase that only occurred later in verse 29 revealed that this was the work of an interpreter and not of the original author.[294] The LXX interpreted these passages in order to present an Ahab who was not really as wicked as the one described by the MT.

It has been shown that the LXX does include the freedom of interpretation in the midst of its translation but what about the MT? Can the MT be considered a consistent text, completely homogenous in its methodology and application of stock formulas? I.L. Seeligmann made the following statement: "there is no consistency in this tendentious replacement of words, nor is there consistency in all the processes of reworking in the MT, or even in the LXX."[295] Na'aman came to a similar conclusion:

> Unlike the modern historian, biblical authors and editors were never systematic in their work and sometimes left contradictory statements in place. It goes without saying that an uneven text may indicate later editorial intervention, but we must take into account the possibility that certain contradictions are merely the result of uneven work by an author/editor.[296]

As the Deuteronomic historian compiled his sources one wonders whether his approach was to produce an entirely consistent text or to include the information that was before

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[293]Ibid., 275.

[294]Ibid., 277.

[295]I.L. Seeligmann, "Researches into the Criticism of the Massoretic Text of the Bible," *Tarbiz* 25 (1956): 123 [Hebrew].

[296]Na'aman, "Prophetic Stories," 160.

him, even to the point of including an apparent contradictory statement. Like the discussion of the other objections to 1 Kgs 20 and 22 being applied to King Ahab, it does not follow that the statement of Ahab having "slept with his fathers" demands that Ahab did not participate in and meet his demise in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead.

IV. SYNOPSIS

A. Conclusions

At the outset of this thesis it was discussed that history is always at best an abridgment of an originally fuller reality. It was suggested that the biblical writers while writing an account of their past to themselves did attempt to present an accurate account of the events that they described. Through information gained by an archaeological survey and the contributions of other scholars it was shown that the biblical records of 1 Kings 20 and 22 do indeed represent an accurate account of the events that they described. In spite of popular scholarly opinion, these biblical narratives do describe the military activity of King Ahab and his three battles with Ben-Hadad of Aram-Damascus.

Archaeology should not be used to prove the authenticity of the biblical text. Archaeology exists as an independent discipline capable of formulating its own hypotheses and testing those through field and synthesis work. Dever's challenge for a dialogue between the two independent disciplines of archaeology and biblical studies is one that leads to the most fruitful results. An archaeological survey of the ninth century has revealed a different context than the literary one provided in the biblical text. The archaeological survey revealed a period of massive construction, and grandiose projects that required an immense amount of energy and skill to accomplish. A survey of the

major published sites in the northern kingdom of Israel revealed that King Ahab was probably the greatest builder of the first temple period in this geographic region. The massive scale of such projects as the rock-hewn moat at Jezreel, the water systems at Hazor and Megiddo, the major fortifications of Tel Dan, Dor and Megiddo along with the craftsmanship of the Samaria acropolis could earn Ahab the title the greatest builder of the kings of Israel and Judah. Ahab, however, was not depicted in such a positive light in the biblical accounts. The biblical text recognized Ahab's ivory house and the cities that he built (1 Kgs 22:39), but deemed him a failure because he did evil in the eyes of the LORD. The Deuteronomic history evaluated the reigns of the kings based upon their relation to the covenant and not according to their military victories or their building accomplishments. Although the Deuteronomic historian possessed a definite theological imperative in his writing, the events described were not mere fabrications to further his theological point.

B. Implications

First of all, the narratives of 1 Kings 20 and 22 deserve a positive assessment. Certainly the arguments contained herein need to be refined and challenged by further scholarly inquiry, which will happen over time. However, these arguments I believe present sufficient reason for the biblical scholar to examine these biblical texts carefully, instead of perfunctorily dismissing them as being irrelevant to the reign of King Ahab.

Second, the archaeological summary begun here will indeed grow as more and more sites are excavated and published. Our understanding of the royal building programs of King Ahab will increase and be sharpened as sites such as Beth Rehob and

others yield further information about the ninth century BCE. Archaeology has provided a different context for King Ahab, revealing that he instituted a skilled and ambitious building program.

Third, the theological perspective of the Deuteronomic historian and his ethical assessment of the kings of Israel and Judah does not negate the fact that there was an attempt to accurately portray the events described. The particular genre of the biblical literature does not *ipso facto* declare that all events contained therein are necessarily late and irrelevant to the discussion of ancient history.

Fourth, a dialogue between archaeology and biblical studies is possible. Archaeology can inform biblical interpretation, and in this case the biblical records do contain information relevant to the period of the divided monarchy. The warning of W.G. Dever that present scholarship is once again threatened by the presence of a monologue instead of a dialogue is worth heeding. In this dialogue, whether archaeology or biblical studies is silenced as to its input in understanding of ancient times, it is to the detriment of both disciplines.

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