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*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 122, No. 3. (Jul. - Sep., 2002), pp. 437-465.

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*Journal of the American Oriental Society* is currently published by American Oriental Society.

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# THE HIGH PLACES (*BĀMŌT*) AND THE REFORMS OF HEZEKIAH AND JOSIAH: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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This paper investigates the historicity of Hezekiah and Josiah's reforms of the *bāmôt*. A description of a *bāmāh* is derived from the biblical text. Structures matching the description are then sought in Iron Age II cities of Judah and Samaria. Cult sites matching the description are found, but these sites were not destroyed as a result of the edicts of these reforming kings. Rather, they were destroyed during the onslaughts of Pharaoh Sheshonq I and of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Sennacherib. The historicity of the reforms is not supported by archaeological data. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the principle of continuity of sacred space, the *Sitz im Leben* of Deuteronomy 12, and the date of the Deuteronomist.

THE BIBLICAL TEXT castigates the people of Israel and Judah repeatedly for going to *bāmôt* to sacrifice and burn incense rather than to the great temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 3:2, 3; 22:44; 2 Kings 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35). Hezekiah and Josiah receive praise, however, for removing them: "And [Hezekiah] did what was right in the eyes of YHWH in all that David his father did. He removed the *bāmôt*, he broke the *maššēbôt*, and he cut down the *ʿašērôt*" (2 Kings 18:3,4). The *bāmôt* are described as a source of contention in pre-Exilic Judah. After the death of Hezekiah, Manasseh, his son, reportedly rebuilt them (2 Kings 21:3), and King Josiah, Manasseh's grandson, tore them down again (2 Kings 23:8). These notices suggest that a destruction, a rebuilding, and a second destruction of the *bāmôt*, should be visible in the archaeology of Judah during the eighth through seventh centuries B.C.E.—roughly Iron Age II. Josiah is also credited with removing the *battey bāmôt* ("the buildings of the *bāmôt*") in Samaria (2 Kings 23:19). A destruction of *bāmôt* (buildings ought then to be visible in archaeological strata from Samaria dating to the second half of the seventh century.<sup>1</sup>

This paper is based on a talk given at the April 1998 meeting of the American Oriental Society. It has profited immensely from the comments of the audience there, as well as from those of G. Beckman, L. H. Cole, D. Fleming, V. (A.) Hurowitz, B. A. Levine, P. Machinist, J. Sasson, D. Ussishkin, and three anonymous reviewers, and from the bibliographic help of Y. Nadelman. All errors remain my own.

<sup>1</sup> References to the extensive literature on the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah can be found in N. Naʿaman, "The De-

## THE TERM *BĀMĀH* ACCORDING TO ITS SEMITIC DERIVATION

To seek archaeological evidence for the destruction of *bāmôt*, it is necessary first to know what a *bāmāh* is and second where one might be found. Assurance is needed that its remains would leave a trace in the archaeological record. To begin with, the Hebrew word *bāmāh* has cognates in both Ugaritic and Akkadian.<sup>2</sup> The Ugaritic term *bmt* occurs only seven times.<sup>3</sup> Vaughan (citing Held) has shown that it refers to the side, flank, or rib cage of a person or animal.<sup>4</sup> It is the area to which a belt is fastened, and from which cuts of beef are taken. It is also the part of the animal that is ridden, i.e., the part of

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bated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research," *ZAW* 107 (1995): 179–95. For a recent history of Israelite cult sites and their implications for the history of religion in Israel, see B. A. Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel* (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2001). For reasons that should become clear below, I do not agree with many of her conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> See discussion in P. H. Vaughan, *The Meaning of 'Bamah' in the Old Testament: A Study of the Etymological, Textual and Archaeological Evidence* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–6; cf. M. Held, "Studies in Comparative Semitic Lexicography," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger*, ed. H. G. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1965), 406.

the body around which the legs of the rider hang. It is translated most conveniently into English by the term "back," but it should be thought of as the side or flank of an animal.

Akkadian knows two forms of the word: *bamtu* and *bamātu*. *bamtu* B has the same meaning as in Ugaritic.<sup>5</sup> This can be seen most clearly by its designation in the Sumerian lexical lists. The Sumerian word UZU.TI.TI is defined by the Akkadian word *bamtu*, but also by *šelu*, "rib, side (part of the human and animal body)."<sup>6</sup> In agreement with Vaughan, the word most likely means in Akkadian what it means in Ugaritic, and should be translated "flank."

According to the *CAD*, *bamātu* means "open country, plain," but occurs only in the plural.<sup>7</sup> Vaughan points out that it participates in a three-fold division of the land: city, arable field inside or outside the city, and *bamātu*, suggesting that the *bamātu* are the outskirts, the edge of habitable civilization, open country.<sup>8</sup> It appears as the location of battles, so it is likely a non-inhabited area. In agreement with Vaughan, it cannot mean "level ground, or plain," as suggested by the *CAD*, for in many cases the word is in opposition to "plain" (EDIN).<sup>9</sup> Further, the phrase *bamâte ša šadi*, "the *bamātu* of the mountains," appears very often as the scene of pitched battles. Thus, it cannot mean "peaks of the mountains," as battles are not easily fought on mountain peaks. Since the term is contrasted with EDIN "level plain," it must mean the "slopes" or "sides" of the mountains, the foothills. If it refers to the open country on the slopes of the hills, it would fit all the topological occurrences. Furthermore, the idea of mountain slopes is most congruent with the idea of the slopes of an animal's flank.

The Akkadian expression, *bamātu ša šadi* has a corresponding expression in the Hebrew Bible, *bāmôtê ʿāreš*. Like the Akkadian, this is always plural. There are many examples: "He causes him to ride upon the flanks of the earth (*bāmôtê ʿāreš*)" (Deut. 32:13); "Then you shall take your delight upon YHWH, and I will cause you to ride the flanks of the earth" (Isaiah 58:14); "[YHWH] who treads upon the flanks of the earth"

(Amos 4:13; Micah 1:3; Job 9:8). The *bāmôtê ʿāreš* are the "flanks," since the flank is that part of the body, according to Semitic thought, which is ridden. This secular use of the term is always introduced by the preposition *ʿal*, "on," which may be what gave rise to the Greek translation of *bāmôt* as τὸ ὑψηλόν (the "high" or "lofty" place).<sup>10</sup>

None of the Ugaritic or Akkadian references occurs in a cultic context. If this is the Semitic derivation, how or why was the term transferred to the cultic sphere? The answer may be simple: the *bāmôtê ʿāreš* are the places of the earth where YHWH treads. The *bāmāh* may be a place where YHWH can be found and where he may be worshipped. The term may say nothing about its structure or location. It may speak to its function only. The Semitic derivation of the word does not help to determine the type of cultic installation that Hezekiah and Josiah reportedly removed.<sup>11</sup>

#### THE TERM *BĀMĀH* ACCORDING TO THE SEPTUAGINT

Although the LXX sometimes simply transliterates the term as βαμα, or βαμωθ, it most often uses the phrase τὸ ὑψηλόν (the high or lofty place) to express the Hebrew word. Occasionally, however, the LXX uses the Greek word βωμός, which indicates a raised platform or pedestal. Used in Homer to indicate a platform for chariots, it came to refer to the pedestal or base for the statue of the god, and then to a raised place for sacrifice, an altar.<sup>12</sup> In the LXX, βωμός is sometimes used to translate *mizbēah*, "altar," so that the same word renders both *bāmāh* and *mizbēah*.

Present understanding reflects this Septuagintal usage. A *bāmāh* has been viewed on the one hand as a natural high place or peak, ὑψηλόν, and on the other as a constructed platform for an altar, or the altar itself, βωμός.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *CAD* B, 78ff. *bamtu* A, meaning "half, half shares," appears to be unrelated (*CAD* B, 77).

<sup>6</sup> *CAD* B, 78; Vaughan, 'Bamah', 7. According to *CAD* B 78-79, "the Sumerian correspondences as well as the Akkadian references show that the word denotes the rib cage, the chest (as front of the human body), the thorax of an animal."

<sup>7</sup> *CAD* B, 76-77.

<sup>8</sup> Vaughan, 'Bamah', 7-9.

<sup>9</sup> *CAD* B, 76.

<sup>10</sup> S. Daniel, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire du culte dans la septante* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1966), 33.

<sup>11</sup> This idea is adumbrated with differences in L.-H. Vincent, "La notion biblique du haut-lieu," *Revue Biblique* 55 (1948): 438-45.

<sup>12</sup> H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 334. D. Ussishkin (personal communication) suggests that this meaning of the word may have been adopted by the Greeks from the North Semitic world.

<sup>13</sup> For a clear introduction to the topic and further references, see W. B. Barrick, "High/Place," *ABD* III (1992), 196-200; "On the Meaning of בְּמֹת / הַ-יְתָבָה and בְּתֵי-יְהוָה-בְּמֹת and the Composition of the Kings History," *JBL* 115 (1996): 621-42;

Wellhausen applies the term *bāmôt* to the isolated altars built by Saul and the Patriarchs, even though the term is never used of these altars in the text.<sup>14</sup> Haran defines *bāmāh* as an open-air altar or platform, although he recognizes other open-air altars that he does not call *bāmôt*.<sup>15</sup> Vaughan similarly defines *bāmāh* as “a constructed stone platform used for cultic rites.”<sup>16</sup> This is also the view of Wright.<sup>17</sup> All these writers classify the *bāmāh* with Wellhausen and the LXX as an open-air altar out in the countryside on a mountain peak. Is this view correct? Is the LXX’s understanding the same as that of the biblical writers?

#### THE *BĀMĀH* ACCORDING TO THE BIBLICAL CORPUS

The term *bāmāh/bāmôt* appears in a cultic context 97 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is evident from these passages that *bāmôt* are not naturally occurring sites, but man-made. They are “built” (cf. 1 Kings 11:7; 14:23; 2 Kings 17:9; 21:3; 23:13; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 32:35; 2 Chron. 33:3, 19) and they are “made” (2 Kings 23:15, 19; Ezek. 16:6; 2 Chron. 21:11; 28:25). They can be “torn down” (2 Kings 23:8, 15; 2 Chron. 31:1), “burned” (2 Kings 23:15), and “removed” (1 Kings 15:14; 22:44; 2 Kings 12:4; 14:4, etc.).<sup>18</sup> Moreover, they have buildings associated with them, for there are several references to *bāttēy habbāmôt* (1 Kings 12:31; 13:32; 2 Kings 17:29, 32; 2 Kings 23:19).<sup>19</sup> One goes *into* them to worship,

M. Gleis, *Die Bamah* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 1–26; and B. A. Nakhati, “What’s a Bamah? How Sacred Space Functions in Ancient Israel,” *BAR* 20 (1994): 18–29. Barrick and Nakhati find the origin of present understanding in Jerome’s fourth-century Latin Vulgate in which *bāmāh* is translated as *excelsus*, “high place.” The Latin is doubtless based on the Greek, however.

<sup>14</sup> J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 17–19.

<sup>15</sup> M. Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 18–25. See also “*Bāmôt* and Sanctuaries: From Arad to Dan,” *Beth Mikra* 24 (1978): 94–105 (Hebrew).

<sup>16</sup> Vaughan, “*Bamah*,” 25.

<sup>17</sup> G. R. H. Wright, “Pre-Israelite Temples in the Land of Canaan,” *PEQ* 103 (1971): 17–32.

<sup>18</sup> Haran, *Temples*, 23, argues that the verb *hēsîr* cannot be used with a building, but can be used with *bāmôt*, which he defines as “simple, solid, and exposed constructions.” The difference escapes me; buildings can be removed, stone by stone.

<sup>19</sup> For an explication of the term, see Barrick, “On the Meaning of *במֹתֵי הַבָּמֹת*.”

e.g., “there was a sacrifice for the people in the *bāmāh*” (1 Sam. 9:12).<sup>20</sup>

1 Samuel 9 provides the only description of a *bāmāh* in the Biblical text. According to this description, a *bāmāh* includes a *liškāh* which, at least at the time of Ezekiel, indicated rooms inside a roofed temple building. At this time, these rooms served as places where priests’ vestments were kept, and where priests would eat the sacrificial offering (Ezek. 42:13). This is the image in 1 Samuel 9 as well. Here too the *liškāh* is used as the room in which to eat the sacrifice. Since it is big enough to seat the thirty invited guests (1 Sam. 9:22), the *liškāh* must be a hall in a public building. The *bāmāh* in the area of Zuph was not an isolated open-air platform, ὕψηλόν or βωμός. It was a sanctuary complex containing a public building with a large hall and a sacrificial altar. Indeed, the Greek translator was constrained to simply transliterate the term as βαμα, since no Greek word would apply.<sup>21</sup>

If one were to search the archaeology of Israel for these public building complexes, where should one look? Rather than being out in the country on isolated mountain peaks, or “high places,” as suggested by the Septuagint’s τὸ ὕψηλόν, the terms *bāmôt* and *bāttēy bāmôt* are associated with cities. 1 Kings 13:32 speaks of “all the *bāttēy bāmôt* (*bāmôt* buildings) which are in the cities of Samaria.” 2 Kings 17:9 states that “they built *bāmôt* for themselves in all their cities.” 2 Kings 17:29 (cf. 2 Kings 23:19) states that “every nation which had been brought up to Samaria built the *bāttēy bāmôt* (‘buildings of their *bāmôt*’) each in their cities where they lived.” This is not only in Samaria; 2 Kings 23:5 mentions “the *bāmôt* in the cities of Judah.” The Chronicler also assumes that the *bāmôt* were associated with cities, for he states “in each and every city of Judah they made *bāmôt*” (2 Chron. 28:25). In addition to these general statements, the text mentions several specific *bāmôt*. The great *bāmāh* where Solomon worshipped was associated with the town of Gibeon (1 Kings 3:5; 2 Chron. 1:3).

<sup>20</sup> The LXX has εἰς βωμα (into Bama), perhaps treating it as an area of the city. Haran, *Temples*, 24, states that “it is difficult to explain why the offering of animal- and grain-offerings is said to have taken place ‘in the *bāmôt*’ and not ‘on the *bāmôt*’, as in all these cases the text has the prefixed *b* instead of the preposition *‘al* (as would be demanded). The reason seems to be connected with certain architectural details of the *bāmāh* the knowledge of which has been lost.” What was lost is the realization that these are not altars but sanctuary complexes, as will be shown below.

<sup>21</sup> Pointed out by S. Daniel, *Recherches*, 33.

The *bāmāh* created by Jeroboam at Bethel was associated with the city (1 Kings 12:29). The Bible does refer to isolated open-air altars out in the countryside, but these are not called *bāmôt*. When the Biblical text speaks of either *bāmôt* or *bāttēy bāmôt* it has cities in mind.

The Biblical text suggests, moreover, that *bāmôt* were located inside the city walls, not outside of them. Numerous verses describe the *bāmôt* as *ba<sup>c</sup>ir*. The phrase *ba<sup>c</sup>ir* occurs 195 times in the Hebrew Bible, but only when it refers to *bāmāh* do translators render it as "at the city" rather than "in the city." Yet, when the text wants to indicate a *bāmāh* at a city, but outside its walls, it has a way of doing so. I Kings 11:7 (2 Kings 23:13) states that Solomon built *bāmôt al p<sup>e</sup>nēy y<sup>e</sup>rušālayīm*, "facing Jerusalem."<sup>22</sup>

As stated above, the only *bāmāh* described in the Biblical corpus is the one associated with the town of Zuph used by Samuel (1 Samuel 9). Did the Deuteronomist imagine that *bāmāh* to be inside or outside the city walls? Difficulties arise because the text appears corrupt at crucial points. Verse 14 of the MT states "in the midst of the city," yet many translators and commentators render it "in the midst of the gate" with no textual reason for doing so.<sup>23</sup> Further, the MT reads in verse 18 "and Saul met Samuel in the midst of the gate." This commentators do not alter, though both the LXX and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> have "in the midst of the city."<sup>24</sup> This should be considered the preferred reading. The passage should be translated: "And they [Saul and his servant] went up to the city. Upon coming into the midst of the city they saw Samuel coming out towards them to go up to the *bāmāh*. . . . And Saul met Samuel in the midst of the city, and he said, 'Tell me, please, where is the house of the Seer?'" In verse 6, prior to this passage, Saul is told that the Seer lives in the city, so here, having entered

into the midst of the city, Saul asks for the location of his house. Samuel has come out of his house to go up to the *bāmāh* when he meets Saul. He is not coming out of the gate at all. The *bāmāh* is inside the city, not outside of it. Neither *ya<sup>c</sup>aleh habbāmātāh*, "he went up to the *bāmāh*," nor *wayēr<sup>e</sup>du mēhabbāmāh hā<sup>c</sup>ir* "and they came down from the *bāmāh* towards the city," necessarily implies a location outside the city walls. It can equally refer to a sacred precinct separate from the city proper but within its walls.

Emerton has recently contested the view that the *bāmāh* is an urban phenomenon. He cites 1 Kings 14:23, 2 Kings 16:4, and 2 Kings 17:10 to argue that the *bāmāh* is a rural shrine, an open-air platform located "on every high hill and under every green tree."<sup>25</sup> These three texts by the Deuteronomist (plus one in Jeremiah [17:2], one in Ezekiel [20:28], and one in Chronicles [2 Chron. 28:4]) are the only six verses in the Biblical corpus which combine the word *bāmāh* with the phrase "on every high hill and under every green tree."

Emerton relies especially on 2 Kings 17:9–11: "The people of Israel secretly did things which were not right against YHWH their god. They built for themselves *bāmôt* in all their cities, from watch-tower to fortified city. They set up for themselves *maššēbôt* and *ʾašērīm* on every high hill and under every green tree. They burned incense there in all the *bāmôt* like the nations which YHWH exiled from before them, and they did evil deeds to vex YHWH." It seems clear from these verses that the Deuteronomist understands the *bāmôt* to be located in cities (vs. 9). It also seems clear that he understands the *maššēbôt* and the *ʾašērīm* to be located "on every high hill and under every green tree" (vs. 10). Yet vs. 11 states: "They burnt incense there in all the *bāmôt*." It is unclear what the word "there" (*šam*) refers to. Are the *bāmôt* in the cities (vs. 9) or on the high hills (vs. 10)? Emerton argues that the *maššēbôt* and the *ʾašērīm* are associated with *bāmôt* "on every high hill and under every green tree," and that the word "there" must refer to the countryside.

Yet, if the "high hills" are *in* the city, there is no contradiction. It is possible to test this hypothesis. The expression "on the tops of mountains, on the hills, and under every green tree" occurs in some form or other fifteen times in the Hebrew Bible. In eight occurrences, both "mountains" and "hills" appear. In these eight there is no reference to a *bāmāh*. The expression occurs six times with a reference to *bāmāh*. In these six, all refer-

<sup>22</sup> Haran, *Temples*, 24–25, admits that the great high-place where Solomon worshipped was "in Gibeon," and that according to the Deuteronomist editors, the *bāmôt* were "in the cities of Samaria."

<sup>23</sup> E.g., P. K. McCarter, *1 Samuel* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), 165; H. W. Hertzberg, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 76.

<sup>24</sup> McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 169. R. W. Klein, *1 Samuel* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 81, retains "city" in both verses with the versions, as does P. R. Ackroyd, *The First Book of Samuel*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971), 77. Ackroyd admits it is unclear whether the *bāmāh* is inside or outside the city, and acknowledges that either vs. 14 or vs. 18 must be emended.

<sup>25</sup> J. A. Emerton, "The Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study," *PEQ* 129 (1997): 116–32.

ence to “mountains” is dropped; in these cases there is only reference to “high hills” and “green trees.” (In one case, Jer. 2:20, there is reference to neither “mountains” nor to a *bāmāh*.) The words “mountains” and *bāmāh* never co-occur. The cliché is altered when used in conjunction with *bāmôt*. Why might this be? If the biblical writers understand *bāmôt* to be in cities, then “mountains” and *bāmāh* cannot co-occur. Neither “high mountains” nor “the tops of mountains” occur within city walls, but hills and leafy green trees do.

In light of the foregoing, I conclude that, contrary to the Greek and Latin translations, the Biblical term *bāmāh* refers to a sanctuary complex. In addition to sacrificial and incense altars, a *bāmāh* includes public buildings (*bāttīm*) with rooms for storage or for dining (*liškôt*). It is located in a city and is a permanent structure. The text refers to the great *bāmāh* at Gibeon (*habbāmāh hag-gēdōlāh*), indicating a permanent and well-known place of worship. *Bāmôt* may have priests associated with them. The Biblical text makes numerous references to *bāmôt* priests (1 Kings 12:32; 13:2, 33; 2 Kings 17:32; 23:9, 20). Because of the presence of buildings and of priests, Haran concedes that the term *bēt bāmôt* refers to temples.<sup>26</sup> He limits the isolated altar to instances when the term *bāmāh* appears alone. The distinction between *bēt bāmôt* and *bāmôt* which Haran makes is not made by the Biblical writers. Both *bāmôt* and *bēt bāmôt* refer to permanent and public sanctuary complexes.<sup>27</sup> Both are in cities, both include public buildings, both have priests.

#### THE BĀMĀH IN MOAB<sup>28</sup>

As has long been recognized, the “Moabite Stone” or “Mesha Inscription” (*KAI* 181), contains the only extant extra-biblical reference to the term *bāmāh*.<sup>29</sup> The stele

<sup>26</sup> Haran, *Temples*, 25.

<sup>27</sup> See also Z. Herzog, “The Meaning of the Term ‘Bāmāh’ in the Light of the Archaeological Finds,” *Beit Miqra* 72 (1977): 177–82 (Hebrew).

<sup>28</sup> This section has benefited from conversations with B. Routledge.

<sup>29</sup> For a translation, see W. F. Albright, “The Moabite Stone,” *ANET*, 320–21, with references, and K. A. D. Smelik, “The Literary Structure of King Mesha’s Inscription,” *JSOT* 46 (1990): 21–30. For general discussion and background of the text and the archaeology, see the articles in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. J. A. Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989). The following discussion is based in large part on chapters 3 and 4 of that book: K. P. Jackson and J. A. Dearman, “The Text of the Mesha<sup>c</sup> Inscription” (93–95),

was found among the ruins of the ancient site of Dibon (modern Dhiban), a city occupied continuously from the Early Bronze Age to Iron Age II. Iron Age Dibon had city walls and a gateway which is dated to the mid-ninth century.<sup>30</sup> The EB city was no doubt also defended, but these walls have not been found. The eighth-century Isaianic prophet knows of a *bāmāh* in the Moabite city of Dibon:

He goes up to the temple (*bēt*), so Dibon does, to the *bāmôt* to weep (15:2).<sup>31</sup>

Moab goes up to the *bāmāh*;<sup>32</sup> he enters his sanctuary to pray, but it does not avail him (16:12).

If the Isaianic writer employs *bāmāh* in the same way as the deuteronomic historian does, then to understand the *bāmāh* in Moab is to understand the biblical term.<sup>33</sup> King Mesha writes in line 3:

w<sup>2c</sup>š. hbmt. z<sup>2t</sup>. lkmš. bqrhh

And I made this *bmt* for Kemosh in *qrhh*.

There is no doubt that *bmt* is the Moabite form of the Hebrew noun *bāmāh*; both are feminine, both refer to a man-made structure, both are dedicated to a god. Is it an open-air altar on a hill or a sanctuary building complex? Is it inside or outside the city, a temporary or permanent structure? Whatever it is, it is in *qrhh*. The word *qrhh* is attested only in this inscription, but most probably it is to be identified with Akkadian *kirḫu*.<sup>34</sup> Akkadian *kirḫu* refers to a walled citadel or fortified area within a city, or to the walls enclosing a sanctuary area within a city.<sup>35</sup>

and K. P. Jackson, “The Language of the Mesha<sup>c</sup> Inscription” (96–130).

<sup>30</sup> A. D. Tushingham, *The Excavations at Dibon (Dhibān) in Moab: The Third Campaign 1952–53* (Cambridge: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1972), 23. More recent excavations have yielded similar results (W. H. Morton, “A Summary of the 1955, 1956 and 1965 Excavations at Dhiban,” in Dearman, *Studies in the Mesha Inscription*, 239–46).

<sup>31</sup> Various translations have been suggested for this verse; these are discussed in W. B. Barrick, “The Bamoth of Moab,” *Maarav* 7 (1991): 67–89.

<sup>32</sup> I emend *Moab ʿal habbāmāh* (“Moab on the *bāmāh*”) to *Moab ʿalah bāmāh* (“Moab ascends to the *bāmāh*”), which simply involves moving the *hek*.

<sup>33</sup> Haran, *Temples*, 20, also understands them to be the same.

<sup>34</sup> G. W. Ahlström, *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 13–20; Barrick, “The Bamoth of Moab”; M. Gleis, *Die Bamah*, 27–31.

<sup>35</sup> *CAD* K, 404–5.

This is most likely its meaning in the Mesha Inscription as well. There we read (21–26):

I built *qrhh*: the walls and park-lands, the walls of the citadel. I built its gates and I built its watchtowers. I built the palace and I made the restraining support for the spring withi[n] the city. There was no well within the city in *qrhh* and I said to all the people, 'make for yourselves each one of you a well for his house.' And I dug ditches for *qrhh* with Israelite prisoners.

This description of *qrhh* is entirely consistent with the use of the Akkadian term *kirhu*. According to the stele, it is a walled area, or citadel, within the city, with park-lands, watchtowers, and a palace, as well as a *bmt* within it. The realization that *qrhh* indicates a citadel within the city caused W. H. Morton to move the excavations to Tel Dhiban's center.<sup>36</sup> This absolute summit of the mound, Section L, was quite productive of Iron Age II structures. The area included broad well-built walls, suggesting a palace complex 42.9 meters long and 21.1 meters wide.<sup>37</sup> Pieces of a small Iron I terra cotta incense stand were found near a smaller wall adjacent to the so-called palace wall. Two fertility figurines were found in adjacent rooms in the same general area in which the incense stand was found. On the basis of these finds near the palace area, Morton suggests that a sanctuary was located adjacent to the palace on the summit of the mound.<sup>38</sup> If Morton indeed found *qrhh* with its palace, then the *bmt* that Mesha built for Kemosh was within it and within the center of the city. This is the view of many.<sup>39</sup>

#### THE BĀMĀH AT TEL DAN

Before examining specific sites in Judah and Samaria for evidence of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, it may be worthwhile to consider Tel Dan. It would be preferable to discuss Bethel (modern Beitin), since it is specifically labeled a *bāmāh* (2 Kings 23:15; Hosea 10:8)

<sup>36</sup> Morton, "Excavations at Dhiban."

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 245. <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 245–46.

<sup>39</sup> G. L. Mattingly, "Moabite Religion and the Mesha<sup>c</sup> Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, 227, states that "it is here assumed that *Qarhoh* was simply another name for a part of Dibon, perhaps its royal quarter or acropolis." J. A. Dearman, "Historical Reconstruction," 171, states that "many interpreters have concluded that *Qrhh* is a quarter or suburb of Dibon, or perhaps the royal acropolis. This conclusion has much to commend it and is more satisfactory than [other assumptions]."

while Dan is not. Unfortunately, the bulk of the ancient city of Bethel lies under the modern one, and the remaining area was very poorly excavated.<sup>40</sup> The excavations there have yielded no sign of an Iron Age cult center.<sup>41</sup> It is possible, however, that the Deuteronomist considered Dan a *bāmāh* even if it is not explicitly labeled as one, for he writes that Jeroboam I son of Nebat made two calves, "and he set one up in Bethel and the other he put in Dan. This thing became a sin, for the people went before the one even up to Dan. He made a *bēt bāmôt* and installed priests from the margins of the people who were not Levites" (1 Kings 12:28–31).<sup>42</sup> If so, the nature of a *bāmāh* may be further elucidated by looking at the cultic temenos at Tel Dan.<sup>43</sup>

Tel Dan is a large (20 hectare) artificial mound located at the northern end of the Hulah Valley in northern Israel, at the foot of Mt. Hermon. It is situated at the headwaters of the Dan, the most profuse of the Jordan River's tributaries.<sup>44</sup> The city was surrounded at all times by massive Bronze Age ramparts that demarcated the artificial tell.<sup>45</sup> Excavation of Area T began in 1968. This area is separated from the rest of the city by a rough stone wall preserved on the western, southern, and eastern sides of the precinct. The Bronze Age city ramparts form its northern border. The entrance to the precinct is in the center of the southern wall, where a gate 2.4 m wide with dressed limestone jambs was found.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>40</sup> W. G. Dever, "Archaeological Methods and Results: A Review of Two Recent Publications," *Or* 40 (1971): 459–71.

<sup>41</sup> Dever, *Or* 40 (1971): 463. It is possible that the modern city of Beitin is not Bethel after all. It seems odd to find absolutely no cultic paraphernalia from the Iron Age if Beitin were truly Bethel.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of these verses and the application of the term *bāmāh* to Bethel (primarily) and secondarily to Dan, see W. B. Barrick, *JBL* 115 (1996): 621–42.

<sup>43</sup> As of this writing, site reports for Iron Age structures at Tel Dan are still forthcoming. The following discussion necessarily relies on popular summaries only.

<sup>44</sup> A. Biran, *Dan I: A Chronicle of the Excavations, the Pottery Neolithic, the Early Bronze Age and the Middle Bronze Age Tombs* (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1996), 1.

<sup>45</sup> A. Biran, "Dan," *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Society for the Study of the Land of Israel and Her Antiquities, 1992), 323–32.

<sup>46</sup> A. Biran, "Notes and News: Tel Dan, 1976," *IEJ* 26 (1976): 202–6, plate 35.

Remains of a massive podium, eighteen meters wide, seven meters deep, and built of large dressed travertine blocks, were uncovered in the northern part of Area T. Based on the associated pottery, the excavator dates the podium to the end of the tenth and beginning of the ninth centuries and to the period of Jeroboam I. A horned altar was found on the earthen floor in front of the podium.<sup>47</sup> One of the horns was completely broken away, two others were damaged, but a fourth is in its original state. The altar is almost square, 40 x 40 cm, and stands 35 cm high to the tip of the horn; its size suggests it was used for burning incense. To judge from the depth of the calcined surface it was in use for a long time. The excavator dates it to the ninth century by the surrounding material, but it may be later or earlier; Zwickel dates it to the eighth century.<sup>48</sup>

Just south of this podium, under a destruction layer caused by a fire in the area, were the remains of three storerooms. Among the jugs, red-slipped bowls, and storage jars housed there were two upright pithoi, each decorated with an encircling snake relief.<sup>49</sup> South of the storage buildings stood a 7.5 x 5 m construction of basalt boulders partially covered by two layers of immense travertine blocks. This structure was surrounded by a cobbled courtyard. On the cobbles lay a decorated incense stand, the head of a male figure, and a bar-handle bowl full of small animal bones and with a trident incised on it.<sup>50</sup> Since no signs of burning, collapsed brick, or roofing were found here, the excavator surmises that the cobbling was part of an open-air courtyard, and the basalt structure the foundations of a sacrificial altar.<sup>51</sup>

The excavator reasonably believes this walled area to be a sanctuary precinct.<sup>52</sup> It is likely the very one created by Jeroboam I for the golden calf—although no golden calf was ever found. The golden calf may have been taken either by Arameans or Assyrians as a trophy of war. According to the excavator, it cannot be determined whether the massive podium was the foundation for a temple or an open-air platform.<sup>53</sup> That a temple stood on this podium is entirely possible.<sup>54</sup> Whatever had been on

top of this podium, if anything, was destroyed in the conflagration which ended the stratum. The burning was so great that the stones of the podium turned red.

As at Dibon, Dan's sacred temenos is entirely within the city's ramparts, confirming that *b'dān* ought to be translated as "in" Dan, not as "at" Dan. The layout of the *bāmāh* in Dan seems similar to the one described in 1 Samuel 9. The cultic precinct in Dan is physically level with the rest of the city. It is still natural to speak of "going up" to the *bāmāh* and "coming down" from it "to the city," even though the cultic precinct within Dan is not elevated.

Whether the podium was the foundation for a temple or only for a platform, it was not a temporary structure. It was a permanent installation, built to last, and lasting, many centuries. Further, the cultic precinct included buildings for storage if not for dining (*bāuīm, liškôt*). This cultic temenos is consistent with the description of a *bāmāh* derived from the biblical text.<sup>55</sup>

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE REFORMS

In the light of these findings, it is reasonable to look within the cities of Iron Age II Judah and Samaria for archaeological remains of *bāmôt*.<sup>56</sup> These cultic installations should consist of public building complexes with rooms for storage and for dining. They should include altars for burning incense or for the sacrifice of animals, as well as *maṣṣēbôt* and *ʿašērīm*. Judean sites should yield evidence of their purposeful dismantling in eighth-century strata, their rebuilding, and subsequent dismantling

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*the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods*, ed. A. Kempinski and R. Reich (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 161–87; L. Stager and S. Wolff, "Production and Commerce in Temple Courtyards: An Olive Press in the Sacred Precinct at Tel Dan," *BASOR* 243 (1981): 95–102; Y. Shiloh, "Iron Age Sanctuaries and Cult Elements in Palestine," in *Symposia Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, ed. F. M. Cross (Cambridge, Mass.: ASOR, 1979): 147–57.

<sup>55</sup> Pace Zwickel, *Temple Kult*, 254–56, who argues that since the platform was most likely the foundation of a building, the reason for labeling it a high place ("Kulthöhe") is removed. This would be true if the foundation were not for a temple, or if temples were automatically excluded from the definition of a *bāmāh*.

<sup>56</sup> I use the term "Samaria," rather than "Israel," first, because that is the term used in the Biblical text to describe the area of Josiah's reforms in Israel, and second, because I restrict the search for cult sites to the area of the Assyrian province of Samaria and the city of Megiddo. Sites north of Megiddo are not considered.

<sup>47</sup> A. Biran, "An Israelite Horned Altar at Dan," *BA* 37 (1974): 106–7.

<sup>48</sup> W. Zwickel, *Der Tempelkult in Kanaan und Israel: Studien zur Kultgeschichte Palästinas von der Mittelbronzezeit bis zum Untergang Judas* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1994), 255.

<sup>49</sup> A. Biran, *Biblical Dan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, HUC-JIR, 1994), 168.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 173. <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 173. <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 165. <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>54</sup> A. Mazur, "Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel from*



again in seventh-century levels. Seventh-century strata in Samaria should reveal a single dismantling of sanctuary complexes.

For the purposes of the present study, an Iron Age II installation will be labeled a *bāmāh* if: 1) it includes a public building, and 2) either an incense or a sacrificial altar is present. Incense altars will serve to label a public building complex as a *bāmāh*, even though it is recognized that they can be used for domestic purposes.<sup>57</sup>

#### THE REFORMS OF HEZEKIAH

If this identification of a *bāmāh* is correct, the next step in verifying the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah is to search for remains of *bāmōt* in the cities of Iron Age II Judah and Samaria. In the eighth century the boundary between Israel and Judah fell on the line between Jericho, Ai, and Bethel (which all belonged to Israel), and Mizpah (which belonged to Judah).<sup>58</sup> The western border included Azekah, Lachish, and Beth Shemesh. Gezer belonged to Israel; Ekron was Philistine, except perhaps for a very brief period. Judah's eastern border was the Dead Sea, and its southern border was the Arad and Beer Sheba valleys.

#### Lachish

The earliest Israelite period at Lachish is represented by Level V.<sup>59</sup> This settlement was unwallled, although the outer ring of houses may have formed its defensive

fortifications. In the middle of the tell, west of the foundations of the Level I solar shrine, Aharoni identified a one-room building as a sanctuary. A small, well-dressed basalt slab, broken at its lower part, was found lying on what was presumed to be the door-sill. It was identified as a small *maṣṣēbāh*. Around the perimeter of the room was a bench of stone and plaster, about 50 cm in width. Most of the bench was only slightly above floor level, but in the western corner, opposite the entrance, the bench reached a height of 40 cm, forming a platform. A limestone altar and four clay incense burners were found on the floor. The altar, which was about 45 cm high, had four horns, only one of which was preserved.

The sanctuary and its adjacent courtyard were covered by a thick layer of destruction debris, clearly indicating that Level V had been sacked and burned to the ground. Aharoni dates this destruction by the pottery to the last half of the tenth century and attributes it to Pharaoh Sheshonq I.<sup>60</sup> The sanctuary was not rebuilt. The excavator argues that the adyton of the Level I solar shrine was built over this locus in order to retain continuity of sacred space. It is doubtful that this was purposeful. The tenth-century cult place was buried under four destruction layers and forgotten by the time the solar shrine was erected in Level I.

Lachish experienced two other massive destructions, one by Sennacherib and one by Nebuchadnezzar. The destruction by Sennacherib is unique in the history and archaeology of Israel. Not only do we have the Biblical testimony to its destruction at the hands of the Assyrian king, but we also have a vivid literary and pictorial account from the viewpoint of Sennacherib himself. Although originally hotly disputed, the dating of the destruction layers at Lachish has been clarified. The destruction of Level II was assigned by Ussishkin to 588–86 and to the Babylonian conquest, and the destruction of Level III to 701 and Sennacherib.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> M. D. Fowler, "Excavated Incense Burners: A Case for Identifying a Site as Sacred?" *PEQ* 117 (1985): 25–29; M. Haran, "Incense Altars—Are They?" in *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990*, ed. A. Biran and J. Aviram (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 237–47; K. Nielsen, *Incense in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1986); Y. Shiloh, "Iron Age Sanctuaries."

<sup>58</sup> L. G. Herr, "The Iron Age II Period: Emerging Nations," *BA* 60 (1997): 114–83; R. Kletter, "Pots and Politics: Material Remains of Late Iron Age Judah in Relation to its Political Borders," *BASOR* 314 (1999): 19–54. The borders of Judah in 701 are also discussed in E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, vol. 2: *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (723–332 B.C.E.)* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 134–63. See too H. G. May, *Oxford Bible Atlas* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 69.

<sup>59</sup> The discussion of the Stratum V temple at Lachish is based on Y. Aharoni, *Investigations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and the Residency (Lachish V)* (Tel Aviv: Gateway Publishers, 1975), 26–32; D. Ussishkin, "Lachish," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, IV (1992), 114–26; and "Lachish," *NEAEHL*, 905–11.

<sup>60</sup> I. Finkelstein, "The Archaeology of the United Monarchy: An Alternative View," *Levant* 28 (1996): 177–87, dates this level to the early ninth century according to his "Low Chronology"; but see S. Bunimovitz and A. Faust, "Chronological Separation, Geographical Segregation, or Ethnic Demarcation? Ethnography and the Iron Age Low Chronology," *BASOR* 332 (2001): 1–10; and references in n. 112 below. A discussion of the low chronology is beyond the scope of this paper, but dating the sites according to the low chronology would not affect its conclusions.

<sup>61</sup> D. Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv Univ., 1982), 26–27.

On the eve of its destruction by Sennacherib, Lachish was dominated by the Palace-Fort, a huge edifice of monumental proportions. Between the Palace-Fort and the inner city gate were many houses and shops that were small and densely crowded together. No cult site or cultic paraphernalia was present among the finds of either the Palace-Fort area or the private dwellings of Level III. However, the reliefs in Nineveh of the conquest of Lachish depict among other things a procession of Assyrian soldiers carrying booty away from the burning city.<sup>62</sup> The first soldier carries a scepter, and the second and third carry large bronze incense burners. Following soldiers carry a throne, a ceremonial chariot, and weapons. The size and value of the incense altars, as well as their position near the head of the procession, suggest that these incense burners were used in a public cult center in Lachish, a cult center which was active until its destruction by Sennacherib. If so, it had not been destroyed in Hezekiah's reforms.<sup>63</sup>

There is no evidence of any cultic activity in Level II, a level attributed to the periods of Josiah and the last kings of Judah. At that time the city was refortified, but sparsely populated. The large public buildings which would have housed the shrine in Level III were not rebuilt until Level I and Persian occupation.

### Arad

Contrary to the situation at Lachish, a full temple sanctuary was found at Arad in the northwestern corner of the fortress.<sup>64</sup> The sanctuary was oriented east-west and consisted of a broadroom, labeled by the excavators as the *hēkāl*, and a room behind it, labeled the *d<sup>e</sup>bīr*.<sup>65</sup> The entrance to the *d<sup>e</sup>bīr* was approached by two steps; at the top of the steps, at the entranceway, were two limestone incense altars, in which the remains of burnt

organic matter were found. At the back of the *d<sup>e</sup>bīr* on a raised platform was a smooth stele, or *maššēbāh*.<sup>66</sup> Plaster-covered benches on which offerings could be placed lined the rear wall of the *hēkāl*. In front of the *hēkāl* was a square courtyard, paved with smooth wadi stones. In the center of the northern side of the courtyard was an altar, built of bricks and unhewn field stones. Its top was without horns and overlaid with a flint slab, girdled with plastered channels to drain the blood of the sacrifices. A stone step or bench was constructed at the foot of its southern and eastern sides. A small compartment was built adjacent to its western side. A red-slipped clay incense burner composed of a bowl and stand and a large oil lamp found inside suggest that this was a storage compartment for ceremonial articles. At the foot of the altar two small flat bowls were found, inscribed with the letters *qop kap*, which may signify *qōdeš lakkōhanim*, "consecrated for the priests."<sup>67</sup> To the north (and perhaps also to the south) of the courtyard were rooms, apparently for storage. This sanctuary complex agrees with the Biblical description of a *bāmāh*.

The temple was found intentionally dismantled. The two incense altars and the *maššēbāh* which stood in the *d<sup>e</sup>bīr* were placed on their sides and covered with a layer of dirt and plaster almost a meter thick. Part of the walls of the sanctuary was taken down and the entire sanctuary area was buried under three meters of dirt, so that the sacrificial altar in the courtyard was completely concealed. It was originally thought that the sacrificial altar had been buried during the life of Stratum VIII, and that the rest of the temple continued to operate into Stratum VII when it too was finally put out of use.<sup>68</sup> This was consistent with an original reform under Hezekiah and a second under Josiah. According to this theory, Hezekiah removed sacrificial altars but permitted incense altars to continue in use.<sup>69</sup>

The stratigraphy of Arad is difficult, but was reassessed recently by Ze'ev Herzog, one of the original excavators.<sup>70</sup> According to his reassessment, the temple

<sup>62</sup> D. Ussishkin, "The 'Lachish Reliefs' and the City of Lachish," *IEJ* 30 (1980): 174–95, has shown that the reliefs at Nineveh portray, in the main, actual features of Lachish and the siege, and do not simply depict an imaginary event.

<sup>63</sup> O. Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria," *BA* 58 (1995): 150; N. Na'aman, "The Debated Historicity of Hezekiah's Reform in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research," *ZAW* 107 (1995): 179–95.

<sup>64</sup> Y. Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," *BA* 31 (1968): 1–32.

<sup>65</sup> Z. Herzog, M. Aharoni, and A. Rainey, "The Israelite Fortress at Arad," *BASOR* 254 (1984): 1–34; "Arad: An Ancient Israelite Fortress with a Temple to Yahweh," *BAR* 13 (1987): 16–44.

<sup>66</sup> Aharoni had mistakenly assumed that a fallen building stone was a second *maššēbah*.

<sup>67</sup> A. Rainey *apud* Z. Herzog et al., "The Israelite Fortress at Arad," *BASOR* 254 (1984): 15.

<sup>68</sup> See references in notes 64–67.

<sup>69</sup> This idea has been put forth most recently by O. Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria," *BA* 58 (1995): 148–55.

<sup>70</sup> The following discussion is based on Z. Herzog, *Arad*, part 2: *The Arad Fortress* (Tel Aviv: Hakkibbutz Hammeuchad Publishing House, Israel Exploration Society, Israel

was constructed in Stratum X. When the courtyard was filled in to cover the altar, the floor of the courtyard was raised two meters above that of the *d<sup>e</sup>bîr*. The lack of steps leading down from the courtyard to the *d<sup>e</sup>bîr* meant that the latter became inaccessible as soon as the courtyard altar was buried. Thus, the temple complex (*maššēbāh*, incense altars, and sacrificial altar) was dismantled and intentionally buried all at once. These temple installations were found buried under walls assigned to Stratum VIII, so they had to have been buried prior to the construction of those walls. The temple was not rebuilt, and there was no second stage of destruction under Josiah. The temple was in use only in Strata X and IX.

What are the dates of these strata? The pottery of Strata X, IX, and VIII is similar to each other and to that of Level III at Lachish, whose destruction is attributed to Sennacherib.<sup>71</sup>

There are still difficulties. Stratum XI was destroyed in a conflagration. The excavators originally attributed this destruction layer to Pharaoh Sheshonq I (925), but Herzog now admits the possibility that it was Stratum XII that was destroyed by that pharaoh.<sup>72</sup> This would

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Antiquities Authority, 1997), 113–292 (Hebrew); on his forthcoming manuscript, “The Date of the Temple at Arad: Reassessment of the Stratigraphy and the Implications for the History of Religion in Judah,” and on recent discussions with Herzog at the site itself. I thank him for his time and for the manuscript.

<sup>71</sup> M. Aharoni, “On the Israelite Fortress at Arad,” *BASOR* 258 (1985): 73; A. Mazar and E. Netzer, “Chronology of the Pottery Assemblages from Arad,” *BASOR* 263 (1986): 89–91. Based on the similarity of the pottery to that of Level III at Lachish, these writers date all three strata to the eighth century. This may be correct, but one should remember that Level III at Lachish covers 150 years.

<sup>72</sup> Personal communication. I. Finkelstein, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 62 (1999): 35–52, esp. 39; *Levant* 28 (1996): 177–87; *Levant* 30 (1998): 167–74, dates Stratum XII to the tenth century and Stratum XI to the ninth. This is based on O. Zimhoni’s assessment—“Iron Age Pottery of Tel ‘Eton and its Relation to the Lachish, Tel Beit Mirsim and Arad Assemblages,” *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985): 63–90, esp. 86–87—that the pottery of Stratum XI is very similar to that of Lachish IV. Zimhoni dates Stratum XI at Arad to the ninth century and Stratum XII to the tenth. She suggests that Stratum XII was the town destroyed by Sheshonq. That stratum was unfortified. N. Na’aman, “Arad in the Topographical List of Shishak,” *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985): 91–92, suggests that the term *ḥgr* in Sheshonq’s topographical list is not a determinative for “fort” but simply part of the name. It does not require that the installation Sheshonq destroyed was enclosed. Nonetheless, Stratum XII shows no sign of a de-

lower the date of Stratum XI to the ninth century. The temple was built afterwards during Stratum X.<sup>73</sup> Stratum X did not experience a destruction layer. Stratum IX can be distinguished from Stratum X only by changes in the floor level. The temple continued in use in this stratum.

According to Herzog, the temple complex was buried either before the destruction of Stratum IX or immediately thereafter. Secular buildings of Stratum VIII were built directly on top of the buried temple. The sanctuary was not burnt in the course of the conflagration which

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struction. Further, the pottery in Strata XII and XI resembles each other “very closely”—O. Zimhoni, *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985): 86; A. Mazar and E. Netzer, *BASOR* 263 (1986): 87–91—and the pottery of both strata resemble that of Lachish IV.

The lack of a destruction level to end Stratum XII and the similarity of pottery in the two strata suggest that the community of Stratum XII erected the fortress of the succeeding occupational stage—Z. Herzog, “Arad: Iron Age Period,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 1, 174–76, esp. 174. Stratum XI was destroyed in a violent conflagration (mistakenly stated as Stratum X in *OANE*, 174; but see Herzog, *Arad Fortress*, 136, 155–66). In my opinion, it was this stratum which was destroyed by Sheshonq, and its destruction should be dated to the tenth century. If the dates are lowered in conformity with the views of Zimhoni and Finkelstein it will require assuming that Sheshonq did not destroy every site he conquered. It will also require supplying another cause for the destruction of level XI.

<sup>73</sup> Pace D. Ussishkin, “The Date of the Judaean Shrine at Arad,” *IEJ* 38 (1988): 142–57, who noticed that the temple was built over fill layers that cover a water channel. He assumes that this water channel built beneath the shrine had no roof, so that the shrine could only have been built after the channel went out of use. He therefore dates the shrine to Stratum VII. In fact, the tunnel system under the shrine consisted of two stories. The lower served to bring water into an underground reservoir in the center of the fort; the upper channel served as an escape route for the soldiers in the case of siege. Both tunnels were roofed with smooth stones (Herzog, *Arad Fortress*, 166). The bottom of the water channel is over three meters below the foundations of the temple walls, so that the narrow channel could have been hewn into the bedrock as a tunnel at any time, irrespective of the period of the temple. More importantly, the floor levels of Stratum VII are about 2.5 meters above the temple’s floor, and the pottery found on the temple’s floor and in its immediately neighboring structures is definitely earlier than Stratum VII. The temple and the escape tunnel collapsed into the water channel at a later period, after the temple had gone out of use, perhaps after the site as a whole had been abandoned, leading to Ussishkin’s perception that the temple had been built on fill (Z. Herzog, personal communication).

destroyed the Stratum IX tell. Herzog suggests two possibilities: 1) the sanctuary was buried prior to the destruction in order to defend and safeguard its sacred status in the face of enemy attack; or 2) the sanctuary was buried after having survived the destruction which destroyed the tell. In this case, the dismantling would have been to preserve the sanctuary until the city could be rebuilt. The decision taken in Stratum VIII not to rebuild the sanctuary and to place secular buildings directly over it was due to the reforms of Hezekiah.<sup>74</sup> Herzog prefers the latter option.

However, the fact that the temple complex showed no signs of fire indicates that it must have been buried prior to the conflagration which ended Stratum IX, rather than after it in Stratum VIII. The first of Herzog's two options is the only one possible: it was buried to protect its sacred character prior to enemy attack. Contrary to his Table of Strata,<sup>75</sup> his text mentions no destruction for Stratum VIII—only for Stratum IX. It was Stratum IX which was destroyed by Sennacherib, not Stratum VIII. The temple continued in use, with periods of remodeling, until it was buried just prior to Sennacherib's attack which destroyed Stratum IX.

The fortress and town of Arad were rebuilt in Stratum VIII. New secular buildings were built over the site of the sanctuary during the first days of Stratum VIII. The site continued to be occupied with no further destruction levels into the seventh and sixth centuries. The temple itself was not rebuilt after its dismantling.

### *Beer Sheba*

During the 1973 season at Tel Beer Sheba a large horned altar was discovered, but not *in situ*.<sup>76</sup> Rather, its stones were found in a repaired wall of a storehouse complex of Stratum II. The four horns of the altar were arranged one beside the other, three intact and one with its top knocked off. They are undoubtedly altar horns. In the last season of excavations at Tel Beer Sheba, four new stones were found belonging to the upper layer of the altar, between the horns. These four stones showed traces of fire, suggesting to the excavator that animal flesh or fat had been burned upon them.<sup>77</sup> According to the excavators, the altar had been built during Stratum

III or before and dismantled during Stratum II. Stratum II was destroyed in a huge conflagration which the excavators assign to Sennacherib (701).<sup>78</sup> The excavators attribute the altar's dismantling and its use in the storehouse wall to Hezekiah's reform. They date the dismantling between the time that Hezekiah ascended the throne and Sennacherib's campaign. All that can be determined archaeologically, however, is that the secondary use of the altar stones occurred before the destruction of the wall in 701, sometime during the life of Stratum II.

Is it possible to date Stratum II? According to the excavators, Stratum IV was destroyed no later than the early part of the ninth century. Strata III and II are difficult to distinguish, since there is no destruction layer between them. In most places the same floor was used, and much of the pottery is indistinguishable in the two strata. One should not speak of two separate strata, III and II, but rather of a single stratum (Stratum III/II) which lasted about 160 years. The pottery in this stratum is virtually indistinguishable from that of Level III at Lachish.<sup>79</sup> It was sometime during this single historical period that the storehouse wall was repaired with the altar stones. Assigning the destruction of this stratum to Sennacherib in 701 is reasonable, but does not determine the time of the wall repair. It does not allow the repair to be dated precisely to the fourteen years before its destruction. Moreover, if the secondary use of these altar stones was indeed part of a reform as the excavators suggest, it is curious that the stones were so irreverently treated. The very excavators who attribute the careful burying of the *bāmāh* at Arad to the reforms of Hezekiah attribute to these same reforms the use of a similar altar as bricks for a storehouse wall! It is not likely that stones which had been used as part of an altar to YHWH would be treated so unceremoniously. It may be that the altar broke apart during first use and had become profane. Gadegaard argues that the altars at Arad and Beer Sheba could not sustain a fire hot enough or

<sup>74</sup> Herzog, *Arad Fortress*, 202–3. <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>76</sup> Y. Aharoni, "The Horned Altar of Beer-Sheba," *BA* 37 (1974): 2–6.

<sup>77</sup> Z. Herzog, *Beth Mikra* 72 (1977): 177–82; *contra* Y. Yadin, "Beer-Sheba: The High Place Destroyed by King Josiah," *BASOR* 222 (1976): 5–17. Herzog (personal communication) suggests that an iron gate was used on the altar.

<sup>78</sup> Y. Aharoni, "The Stratification of the Site," in *Beer-Sheba I: Excavations at Tel Beer Sheba, 1969–1971 Seasons*, ed. Y. Aharoni (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv Univ., 1973), 4–8; Z. Herzog, A. Rainey, Sh. Moshkovitz, "The Stratigraphy at Beer-Sheba and the Location of the Sanctuary," *BASOR* 225 (1977): 49–58; A. Rainey, "Hezekiah's Reform and the Altars at Beer-Sheba and Arad," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, ed. M. C. Coogan, J. C. Exum, and L. E. Stager (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 333–54.

<sup>79</sup> Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I*, 5.

long enough to consume a sheep or goat without breaking apart.<sup>80</sup>

The existence of these altar pieces does indicate that altars were built prior to the destruction of Stratum II. In fact, two incense altars were found *in situ* in this stratum. They were found in Locus 442, a room of House 430, suggesting that House 430 may have been used as a shrine room or cult site.<sup>81</sup> Yadin appears not to have known about the incense altars, since he makes no mention of them, but this is the very house posited by him to be a cult site on other grounds.<sup>82</sup> The location of House 430 near the gate and among public buildings suggests that it may have been used as a public shrine or temple.<sup>83</sup> The four-horned altar was too large to fit inside House 430,<sup>84</sup> but if it was a sacrificial altar, it would have been used outside in a courtyard as at Arad, and its size would have been irrelevant. A courtyard in front of the eastern entrance of the house and just inside and to the left of the city gate would be an appropriate place for the magnificent altar. The presence of the incense altars in the house—found *in situ*—suggests that a cult site functioned at Beer Sheba until the destruction of the stratum in 701.

During the seventh and sixth centuries, Tel Beer Sheba was poorly populated, with no monumental public buildings and no evidence of cultic activity. Two more incense stands were found on the site, but these were Persian.<sup>85</sup>

#### Tel Halif

Oded Borowski reports a shrine room in a four-room house among the remains of Stratum VIB in Field IV of Tel Halif, a site south of Lachish and relatively close to Beer Sheba and Arad.<sup>86</sup> The shrine room occupied the ground floor of the rear broad-room of the house. According to the excavator, the original domestic house had been remodeled to be used as a shrine. The room

contained several cultic artifacts: a white-painted, molded head of a female pillar figurine and a ceramic fenestrated incense stand with a broad bell-shaped base. Next to the incense stand were two smooth rectangular, carved limestone blocks. These may have been *maṣṣēbôt*, and may have held bowls for incense. The house-shrine continued in use until the stratum was destroyed in a military defeat, attributed to Sennacherib in 701.

These four are the only cult sites known from Iron Age II Judah out of the dozens of cities, towns, and villages that have been excavated. Except for Arad, each continued in use until its destruction by Sennacherib. Arad was dismantled prior to Sennacherib's attack. None was rebuilt.

#### Kuntillet Ajrud

A fifth site, Kuntillet Ajrud, is often assumed to be a *bāmāh*, but no altars, incense burners, or *maṣṣēbôt* have been found there.<sup>87</sup> The site most likely functioned as a way station, a caravansary, where travelers came, rested, ate, and made votive offerings before continuing on. It went out of use by the middle of the eighth century.

#### Vered Jericho<sup>88</sup>

Avraham Eitan, its excavator, considers the fortress of Vered Jericho to have been a cult site.<sup>89</sup> Yet, there is little to warrant this designation. There are no altars—either incense or sacrificial. There are no cultic utensils, no *maṣṣēbāh*, no material of any sort to suggest a cult site. It was simply a well-defended two-family house; Stern suggests that it was a “small regional military or administrative fortified center.”<sup>90</sup>

#### Jerusalem Cave 1

Jerusalem Cave 1 is a man-made cave cut into the rock on the eastern slope of the City of David.<sup>91</sup> Al-

<sup>80</sup> N. H. Gadegaard, “On the So-Called Burnt Offering Altar in the Old Testament,” *PEQ* 110 (1978): 35–45. He argues they were ordinarily not used for burning the animal, but for exposing it and spilling its blood.

<sup>81</sup> Stern, “Limestone Incense Altars,” in *Beer-Sheba I*, 52–53.

<sup>82</sup> Yadin, “Beer-Sheba: The High Place, 5–17.

<sup>83</sup> O. Borowski, “Hezekiah's Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria,” *BA* 58 (1995): 148–55.

<sup>84</sup> Herzog, Rainey, Moshkovitz, *BASOR* 225 (1977): 49–58.

<sup>85</sup> Stern, *Beer-Sheba I*, 52–53.

<sup>86</sup> Borowski, *BA* 58 (1995): 148–55; P. Jacobs and O. Borowski, “Tel Halif, 1992,” *IEJ* 43 (1993): 66–70.

<sup>87</sup> Pace W. Dever, “Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntillet ‘Ajrud,” *BASOR* 255 (1984): 21–37.

<sup>88</sup> I thank Y. Nadelman for calling this site to my attention.

<sup>89</sup> H. Shanks, “Antiquities Director Confronts Problems and Controversies: BAR Interviews Avraham Eitan,” *BAR* 12 (1986): 30–38; A. Eitan, “Rare Sword of the Israelite Period Found at Vered Jericho,” *Israel Museum Journal* 12 (1994): 61–64.

<sup>90</sup> E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 134.

<sup>91</sup> The discussion is based on K. Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1974), 130–43; H. J.

though the shape of the cave suggests that it was originally cut as a tomb shaft, it does not appear to have been used for that purpose—there are no traces of human bones. During a second occupation phase, the slope became densely settled and domestic buildings were built along the rock scarp. One of the walls in these buildings blocked off most of the cave's entrance, leaving a space only 50–60 cm wide.<sup>92</sup> During this occupation level, the cave was filled with over 1300 household objects, including pots, figurines, and other artifacts. The excavator noted four separate layers, all from the late eighth century, and all from the same deposition “horizon,” so that the deposit must have been rapid. The destruction that ended this phase caused a mass of pots, building stones, and other debris to fall from the outside rooms through the entranceway and into the front of the cave. It was impossible to determine what had been stored in the cave prior to destruction, and what had fallen in as a result of it. Sherds from a single item were found both at the entrance and inside the cave. The total accumulation included 1200 pottery cooking and serving vessels, sixty-one terra cotta figurines, three hollow incense stands, and three chalices. Many of the cooking pots were blackened from long-term use; some still contained animal bones. Nothing of value was found: no jewelry, scarabs, imported items, luxury pottery, or metalwork.

Some scholars have concluded the cave served a cultic function.<sup>93</sup> Kenyon identified the cave as a *favissa*

because she erroneously interpreted a building north of Cave 1 as a sanctuary. This interpretation has been repeatedly refuted.<sup>94</sup> Stager points out that if the room Kenyon had designated as a sanctuary had been inside the city walls, she would have regarded it as an ordinary domestic building. Recently, R. Reich and E. Shukron found a late-eighth-century city wall at the base of the Kidron valley, enclosing both the Gihon Spring and Kenyon's shrine.<sup>95</sup> It is likely that this defensive outer wall was built by Hezekiah in preparation for the siege (2 Chron. 32:5; Isa. 22:11). Neither Cave 1 nor Kenyon's putative shrine were extra-mural by the end of the eighth century.

Steiner also proposes a cultic purpose to the cave. She suggests that because all the figurines in Cave I were found broken at the neck, and because they were often found next to intact bowls, the heads must have been cut off in a deliberate act.<sup>96</sup> However, these figurine heads were only secondarily attached to the bodies, and could become detached easily.<sup>97</sup> There is no need to posit a purposeful destruction. Based on the several figurines, Franken suggests the cave was in the house of a sorcerer,

Franken and M. L. Steiner, *Excavations in Jerusalem 1961–1967*, vol. 2: *The Iron Age Extramural Quarter on the South-East Hill* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), 1–60, 123–31; I. Eshel and K. Prag, *Excavations by K. M. Kenyon in Jerusalem 1961–1967*, vol. 4: *The Iron Age Cave Deposits on the South-East Hill and Isolated Burials and Cemeteries Elsewhere* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 3–26, 209–20; D. T. Ariel and A. De Groot, “The Iron Age Extramural Occupation at the City of David and Additional Observations on the Siloam Channel,” in *City of David 1978–1985*, vol. 5: *Extramural Areas* (Jerusalem: Hebrew Univ. Press, 2000), 155–69.

<sup>92</sup> I. Eshel, “The Architecture of the Cave Structures and their Stratigraphical Setting,” in I. Eshel and K. Prag, *Excavations by K. M. Kenyon in Jerusalem 1961–1967*, 6.

<sup>93</sup> H. J. Franken and M. L. Steiner, *Excavations in Jerusalem 1961–1967*, vol. 2: 49; H. J. Franken, “Cave I at Jerusalem—an Interpretation,” in *Trade, Contact, and the Movement of Peoples in the Eastern Mediterranean: Studies in Honour of J. Basil Hennessy*, ed. S. Bourke and J.-P. Descoudres (Sydney: Meditarch, 1995), 233–40; M. Steiner, “Two Popular Cult Sites of Ancient Palestine,” *SJOT* 11 (1997): 16–28; “The

Archaeology of Ancient Jerusalem,” *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 6 (1998): 143–68; J. S. Holladay, Jr., “Religion in Israel and Judah under the Monarchy: An Explicitly Archaeological Approach,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Festschrift Frank Moore Cross*, ed. P. D. Millar, Jr., P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 249–99; as well as Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, 130–43.

<sup>94</sup> C. F. Graesser, “Standing Stones in Ancient Palestine,” *BA* 35 (1972): 34–63; L. Stager, “The Archaeology of the East Slope of Jerusalem and the Terraces of the Kidron,” *JNES* 41 (1982): 111–21; Franken and Steiner, *Excavations in Jerusalem 1961–1967*, vol. 2: 1–60, 123–31; M. Ottosson, *Temples and Cult Places in Palestine* (Motala: Borgströms Tryckeri AB, 1980), 105; Y. Shiloh, *Excavations at the City of David I: Interim Report of the First Five Seasons (1978–1982)* (Jerusalem: Hebrew Univ. Press, 1984), 28; D. T. Ariel and A. De Groot, *City of David*, 156; W. Zwickel, personal communication.

<sup>95</sup> R. Reich and E. Shukron, “A Wall from the End of the First Temple Period in the Eastern Part of the City of David,” in *New Studies on Jerusalem: Proceedings of the Fourth Conference, December 10th, 1998*, ed. E. Baruch (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan Univ. Press, 1998), 14–26 (Hebrew); H. Shanks, “Everything You Ever Knew About Jerusalem is WRONG (Well, Almost),” *BAR* 25:6 (1999): 20–29; Ariel and De Groot, *City of David*, 159–64.

<sup>96</sup> M. Steiner, “Two Popular Cult Sites of Ancient Palestine,” *SJOT* 11 (1997): 16–28.

<sup>97</sup> Y. Nadelman, personal communication.

who used the figurines to help people in their daily activities.<sup>98</sup> This is possible, but for all the speculation about pillar figurines, there is no way of knowing how they were used or who used them.

In spite of the figurines, the three incense stands, and the three chalices, the material in the cave points overwhelmingly to domestic and household use. The cave was accessed through a domestic building in a densely populated area. There were no public buildings to suggest a public cult site and cultic material (the incense stands and the chalices) amounted to only 2.2% of the registered finds. The number of figurines is also low (4.6% of the total). The large amount of cooking pots, serving bowls, and utensils in varying states of disrepair suggests that Cave 1 may have served as a junk heap for all the houses in the neighborhood. Whatever its purpose, the site was most likely destroyed by earthquake; there were no signs of a man-made destruction. The excavators date the destruction to ca. 700. The buildings were abandoned afterwards, and the whole site sealed by a city street next to the rebuilt mid-slope city wall.<sup>99</sup>

#### Ekron

Sennacherib's annals suggest that Ekron may have submitted to Hezekiah prior to the Assyrian advance at the end of the eighth century.<sup>100</sup> If so, evidence of Hezekiah's reforms might exist here. The lower city was the heart of Iron Age I Ekron (Stratum VIB, mid-twelfth century). Excavations revealed a monumental public building composed of several rooms, a large hall and courtyard, and a "hearth sanctuary," similar to those found on Cyprus and in the Aegean.<sup>101</sup> In the following strata (V–IV), the building complex was enlarged until it was abruptly abandoned at the end of the tenth century—perhaps in response to the campaign of Pharaoh Sheshonq. The lower city was not settled again until the eighth century. Between the tenth and eighth centuries, the size of the city shrank from 50 to 10 acres, and occupation was restricted to the upper city. (This might reflect Judaean expansion. Two *l'melech*-stamped jar handles were found on the slope of the acropolis—one inscribed *lmik hbrn*, "belonging to the king of Hebron.") There is no evidence of cultic activity in tenth- to eighth-century strata, and no sign of a reform.

<sup>98</sup> Franken, "Cave I at Jerusalem."

<sup>99</sup> Ariel and De Groot, *City of David*, 156.

<sup>100</sup> ANET, 287, with references.

<sup>101</sup> T. Dothan and S. Gitin, "Miqne, Tel (Ekron)," *NEAEHL*, vol. 3, 1054.

At the end of the eighth century, after the Assyrian conquest, Ekron expanded again into the lower city—after a gap in occupation of about 250 years. Cultic items, including four-horned incense altars, unhorned altars, and incense stands appear in industrial, domestic, and elite occupation zones of the seventh-century city.<sup>102</sup> No separate cult room, shrine, or temple was found. The city was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 603.

#### CONCLUSIONS: THE REFORMS OF HEZEKIAH

Archaeological evidence indicates only four cult sites among all the cities, towns, and villages of eighth-century Judah: Lachish, Arad, Beer Sheba, and Tel Ḥalif. Other sites, originally interpreted as cultic, do not appear to be such on close inspection. Additional cult sites existed earlier (one at Lachish V and one at Ekron) but they had been destroyed by Pharaoh Sheshonq and not rebuilt. The four eighth-century cult centers continued in use until their destruction by Sennacherib in 701. None was rebuilt. The shrine at Arad is the only one to be dismantled intentionally, but this was not necessarily part of a reform. More likely, it was taken down and buried to protect it from Sennacherib's anticipated attack. It has been argued that Hezekiah only banned sacrificial altars, not incense altars. This hypothesis can no longer be based on data from Arad. The sacrificial and incense altars were buried at the same time.

The predicted pattern of a general dismantling of cult sites under Hezekiah, their rebuilding under Manasseh, and a second dismantling under Josiah does not appear anywhere in the archaeology of Judah. Instead, archaeological data from Judah reveal cult sites in operation up to the time of the onslaught by either Sheshonq or Sennacherib, their destruction or dismantling at the time of the attack, and no rebuilding. These data argue against the historicity of Hezekiah's reforms of *bāmôt*.

#### THE REFORMS OF JOSIAH

If Hezekiah's reforms are not historical, what about those of Josiah? No cult sites are evident in the cities of Judah after the onslaught of Sennacherib in 701, but perhaps they are apparent in seventh-century strata in the Assyrian provinces of Samaria and Megiddo. According to 2 Kings 17:29, peoples brought in by the Assyrians

<sup>102</sup> S. Gitin, "Incense Altars from Ekron, Israel and Judah: Context and Typology," *EI* 20 (1989): 52\*–67\*; "New Incense Altars from Ekron: Context, Typology and Function," *EI* 23 (1992): 43\*–49\*.

made cult statues to their gods in all their cities: "Each nation continued to make its gods and to set them up in each *bēt habbāmôt* which the Samaritans had made, each nation in the cities where they lived." If so, cultic material, including statues of foreign gods, should be evident from Assyrian-period strata in the provinces of Samaria and Megiddo. 2 Kings 23:19 states that Josiah removed the *bāttē habbāmôt* of Samaria. This implies that a destruction of *bāttē habbāmôt* should be visible in the cities which Josiah controlled, in strata assigned to the last half of the seventh century, Iron Age IIC.

#### SOUTHERN ISRAEL (SAMARIA AND MEGIDDO)

Sites included in this section are those which Josiah would have been able to dominate during his reign in the last half of the seventh century. The boundaries remain speculative and controversial. The Biblical text implies that Josiah was able to extend his domains as far as the Jezreel Valley in the north, including such sites as Megiddo and Ta'anach. Based on archaeological data, however, many scholars believe that Judah's northern boundary extended no further than Jericho.<sup>103</sup> Judah's western boundary was defined by the cities of Philistia, which remained under the control of Assyria.<sup>104</sup> Her southern boundary was very likely guarded by the fortified cities of Arad and Beer Sheba. Quite a few cities in the southern Negev were founded in the seventh century, but these were Edomite. This southern border will be discussed more fully below.

#### *Megiddo*

Megiddo (Stratum III) was the capital of the Assyrian province of Magiddu.<sup>105</sup> It lay north of the Assyrian province of Samaria, and was most likely the area furthest north that Josiah could have extended his reforms. A great deal of cultic material has been discovered at Megiddo—temples and cult sites existed here since the

beginning of the establishment of the city in Chalcolithic times.<sup>106</sup> The earliest Israelite stratum is most likely Stratum VB.<sup>107</sup> The indisputably Israelite stratum just above it is known as VA/IVB. It housed at least two Iron Age cult sites. One of these was uncovered in room 340 at the southern end of a monumental public building, Building 338.<sup>108</sup> Building 338 opened onto a square forecourt. This forecourt contained two installations: a stone laver and a number of stone altars. The forecourt opened onto the western wall of a rectangular broad-room. Six stelae extended along the center of this room in a north-south row. Two large stelae, equal in size and symmetrically positioned, formed the room's focus. These had no structural purpose, and appear cultic. What may have been an idol was found perched on top of the southernmost of these two central columns. Offering tables and benches were found opposite the entrance next to the idol. Large amounts of ashes around these tables indicate that fires were lit here, possibly as part of cultic rites. Additional cult objects were found in this building in two storage rooms located directly north of the broad-room. A round limestone altar or offering stand was found in Room 332, just north of the broad-room. Two round pottery stands were found in Room 331, just north of Room 332. Fragments of a rectangular clay model shrine were also found in Room 332. Parts of a second and third model were found in the forecourt to the broad-room. The excavator reasonably labeled the broad-room a shrine.<sup>109</sup>

Buildings 10 and 1A lie directly south of the building housing the shrine and are contemporary with it. Three "limestone altars, badly split up into fragments by heat," were found in the court between these two buildings. Two of these altars had four horns, the third had slightly upcurved corners. A fourth and fifth model shrine were found near these altars.

<sup>106</sup> G. Loud, *Megiddo II: Seasons of 1935-39, Text* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948).

<sup>107</sup> D. Ussishkin, "The Destruction of Megiddo at the End of the Late Bronze Age and its Historical Significance," *Tel Aviv* 22 (1995): 240-64. Stratum VI appears to be Philistine: A. Mazar, "The Emergence of the Philistine Material Culture," *IEJ* 35 (1985): 95-107. Finkelstein dates VIA to the United Monarchy according to his low chronology.

<sup>108</sup> The following discussion is based on D. Ussishkin, "Schumacher's Shrine in Building 338 at Megiddo," *IEJ* 39 (1989): 149-72.

<sup>109</sup> Pace Shiloh, "Iron Age Sanctuaries," and E. Stern, "Schumacher's Shrine in Building 338 at Megiddo," *IEJ* 39 (1989): 149-72.

<sup>103</sup> See the articles listed in n. 58 above. N. Na'aman, "The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah," *Tel Aviv* 18 (1991): 3-71, suggests that the extent of the kingdom of Judah in Josiah's time is reflected in the town lists for Judah and Benjamin in the Book of Joshua. These do not extend further north than Bethel. For a more complete treatment see "Town-lists of Judah and Benjamin and the Kingdom of Judah in the Days of Josiah," *Zion* 54 (1989): 17-71 (Hebrew).

<sup>104</sup> Herr, *BA* 60 (1997): 114-83.

<sup>105</sup> D. Ussishkin, "Megiddo," *OEANE*, vol. 3, 467.



Most interesting is the destruction of Building 338. Parts of the building were found burnt; yet, Shumacher, its excavator, notes that the shrine room itself showed no traces of destruction. He found everything "complete and in perfect order. The walls of the chamber still stood to a height of about 2.5 meters; the two monolithic stelae and the four cult columns—the latter made of a number of superimposed stones—were found secured in the ground and standing erect; the idol was found *in situ* on top of the southernmost column, and various clay vessels and other objects placed in the shrine were uncovered whole. Most significantly of all, the entrance to the shrine was found blocked by a wall of a later period."<sup>110</sup> Not only was the entrance blocked, but the shrine was filled with earth, leaving everything inside just as it was. The outside was buried as well, allowing the exterior walls to be preserved. Ussishkin does not suggest a reason for the shrine's burial except that it was an act of reverence. Like the temple of Arad, it may have been buried to protect it from imminent enemy attack. Pharaoh Sheshonq erected a stele in Megiddo at the time of his Israelite campaign (ca. 925). It may have been out of fear of desecration by enemy forces that the shrine was so carefully buried.<sup>111</sup> The stratum was destroyed by fire, perhaps by Pharaoh Sheshonq, or perhaps a little later in the period of Jeroboam I (930–909). Ussishkin assigns a seal belonging to Shema, Servant of Jeroboam I, plus three other contemporaneous seals, to this stratum.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Ussishkin, "Schumacher's Shrine," 166. (Ussishkin reports here from Schumacher's findings.)

<sup>111</sup> D. Ussishkin, "Notes on Megiddo, Gezer, Ashdod, and Tel Batash in the Tenth to Ninth Centuries B.C.," *BASOR* 277–78 (1990): 71–91, argues that Pharaoh Sheshonq would not destroy a city in which he had set up his inscription. He suggests the city would have continued under Egyptian control but was destroyed later. Of course, the occupants would not have known that their town would not have been destroyed, and may have buried their shrine in anticipation of attack.

<sup>112</sup> D. Ussishkin, "Gate 1567 at Megiddo and the Seal of Shema, Servant of Jeroboam," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, 410–28. I. Finkelstein, "The Archaeology of the United Monarchy: An Alternative View," *Levant* 28 (1996): 177–87; and "Bible Archaeology or Archaeology of Palestine in the Iron Age? A Rejoinder," *Levant* 30 (1998): 167–74, disputes the usual chronology for Iron Age I Megiddo. He dates Megiddo Stratum VA–IVB to the early ninth century according to his "Low Chronology." But see the responses by A. Zarzeki-Peleg, "Hazor, Jokneam and Megiddo in the Tenth Century B.C.E.," *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997): 258–88; A. Ben Tor,

The shrine was never rebuilt, and nothing was built over the area until the Ottoman period. During Strata IVA–I, the periods of the divided monarchy and of the Assyrian and Persian domination, the site of the shrine was left barren. A Stratum II fortress was built around the area of the shrine, leaving it as an empty hill in the central courtyard of the fort.<sup>113</sup>

A second shrine, Shrine 2081, is also assigned to Stratum VA/IVB. It too was housed in a massive monumental public building. This building had walls a meter thick.<sup>114</sup> The shrine proper was entered through Room 2081, which was either an entrance hall or a courtyard. Guarding the entrance to the shrine were two upright stones, about 1.5 meter high, embedded firmly in the stone-paved floor. A group of cult objects was found in the southwest corner of Room 2081, the forecourt. Ussishkin points out the similarity between these cult objects and those found in Building 338: "As in the latter there are a limestone offering table with a round depression, square limestone horned altars, a round limestone stand, an identical basalt three-legged mortar and pestles, and small juglets. Square pottery model shrines are absent here, and instead there is a round stand on a fenestrated foot."<sup>115</sup> Ussishkin suggests that this shrine was also deliberately buried. The two stelae were found *in situ* preserved to their original height. The cultic equipment was found intact, just as it had been placed, in its niche in the corner of Room 2081. Ussishkin does not speculate on the reason for the burial, but it may also have been in anticipation of an attack by Pharaoh Sheshonq. During the time of Stratum IVA nothing was built above this shrine, and only in Stratum III was the area rebuilt with secular buildings. The shrine was never rebuilt.

A long history of cultic activity at Megiddo, stretching back to the Chalcolithic Age, thus came to an end with the close of Stratum VA/IVB. The two shrines of this stratum were deliberately buried and not rebuilt.

"Hazor and the Chronology of Northern Israel: A Reply to Israel Finkelstein," *BASOR* 317 (2000): 9–16; and S. Bunimovitz and A. Faust, *BASOR* 332 (2001): 1–10. As I noted above, a full discussion of the debate is well beyond the scope of this paper, but dating the strata according to Finkelstein's chronology does not change the conclusions.

<sup>113</sup> Ussishkin, "Schumacher's Shrine." This interpretation has been disputed: Stern, *IEJ* 40 (1990): 102–7, but no one has suggested an additional cult site had been built there.

<sup>114</sup> The discussion of this shrine is also based on Ussishkin, "Schumacher's Shrine," as well as Loud, *Megiddo II*.

<sup>115</sup> Ussishkin, "Schumacher's Shrine," 172.

Stratum IVA, assigned to the divided monarchy, differs markedly from its predecessor, being fortified with a city wall and possibly with governmental marketplaces for international trade.<sup>116</sup> This occupational level came to a peaceful end when the city became part of a new Assyrian province with the conquest of Tiglath-pileser III in 732.<sup>117</sup> The city itself was not destroyed. Stratum III is this Assyrian town. Except for a four-horned incense altar found in Stratum III, no additional cultic material was found at Megiddo.<sup>118</sup> This altar, M4555, shows evidence of use, as the top was discolored by fire. It was found in a completely domestic area of the tell, an area with no public buildings.<sup>119</sup> There were no other cultic paraphernalia in this room, or anywhere in this or later strata of the site. This room may have been a private "cult corner," but the absence of other cultic paraphernalia suggests that a secular use is more likely.

#### *Tel Kedesh*

Tel Kedesh lies in the Jezreel Valley, midway between Megiddo and Ta'anach.<sup>120</sup> The excavators identify the

site as the Kedesh mentioned in Judges 4:11, the home of Heber the Kenite.

At the level of Stratum IV (the beginning of the ninth to the middle of the eighth century) the remains of a large public building were found. This was partially excavated, revealing a large hall. A four-horned limestone altar was found on the west side of the hall, and a number of jar bases were found embedded in the clay floor. South of the hall was a paved area which may have been an open courtyard. The excavators suggest that the building served a cultic function. The altar is 45 cm high, 28 × 25 cm at the base and 34 × 34 cm at the top. The excavators liken this altar to others from Israelite strata at Megiddo, Gezer, Lachish, Arad, and Beer Sheba.

Stratum IV was destroyed in a violent conflagration and the destruction has been attributed to Tiglath-pileser III. It was completely covered by a deposit of pulverized brick and ash one meter thick. Occupation of the site did not reoccur until the Persian period of the fifth century (Stratum III).

#### *Ta'anach*

A cult site was also found in Iron Age Ta'anach, a city five miles southeast of Megiddo on the Plain of Esdraelon.<sup>121</sup> During his excavations in the beginning of the twentieth century, Sellin found two cult stands. In the 1963 excavations of the same area, two rooms of a building emerged. These had been partially demolished both by later building during Iron Age II and by Sellin's earlier trench. The southernmost of these two rooms, Room 1, appeared to be a storeroom. Packed closely together were a large number of pieces of pottery, figurines, pig astragali, and other material, including another beautiful and elaborate cult stand. Because of the presence of these cult stands this building was dubbed the Cultic Structure.<sup>122</sup> East of the remains, a large stone monolith was found lying in a basin. The excavator

<sup>116</sup> Ussishkin, "Gate 1567 at Megiddo and the Seal of Shema, Servant of Jeroboam." The function of these tripartite pillared buildings is unknown. Various interpretations have been suggested: stables, storehouses, barracks, and most recently marketplaces: M. Kochavi, "Tripartite Buildings: Divided Structures Divide Scholars," *BAR* 25:3 (1999): 44–50; "The Eleventh Century B.C.E. Tripartite Pillar Building at Tel Hadar," in *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition*, ed. S. Gitin, A. Mazar, and E. Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society Press, 1998), 468–78; L. G. Herr, "The Iron Age II Period: Emerging Nations," *BA* 60 (1997): 115–83.

<sup>117</sup> See now H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria. Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), and N. Na'aman, "Tiglath-Pileser III's Campaigns Against Tyre and Israel (734–732 B.C.E.)," *Tel Aviv* 22 (1995): 268–78.

<sup>118</sup> H. May, *Material Remains of the Megiddo Cult* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1935), 12 and pl. xii. According to S. Gitin, "Incense Altars from Ekron, Israel and Judah: Context and Typology," *EI* 20 (1989): 65\*, the excavation records and disposition information relating to this altar and presumed to be at the Oriental Institute are missing.

<sup>119</sup> G. J. Wightman, "Megiddo VIA–III: Associated Structures and Chronology," *Levant* 17 (1985): 117–29.

<sup>120</sup> E. Stern and I. Beit-Arieh, "Excavations in Tel Kedesh (Tel Abu Qudeis)," in *Excavations and Studies: Essays in Honor of S. Yeivin*, ed. Y. Aharoni (Tel Aviv: Univ. of Tel Aviv

Press, 1973), 93–122 (Hebrew); "Excavations at Tel Kedesh (Tel Abu Qudeis)," *Tel Aviv* 6 (1979): 1–25.

<sup>121</sup> P. Lapp, "The 1963 Excavations at Tel Ta'anek," *BASOR* 173 (1964): 4–44; "The 1966 Excavations at Tel Ta'anek," *BASOR* 185 (1967): 2–39; "The 1968 Excavations at Tel Ta'anek," *BASOR* 195 (1969): 2–49; "Taanach by the Waters of Megiddo," *BA* 30 (1967): 2–27; W. Rast, *Ta'anach I: Studies in the Iron Age Pottery* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978).

<sup>122</sup> W. Rast, "Priestly Families and the Cultic Structure at Ta'anach," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, 355–65.

associates the basin with the rooms of the Cultic Structure, and interprets the basin as cultic and the stone slab as a standing stele which had fallen into it.<sup>123</sup>

The excavator suggests that the Cultic Structure, and the entire tell, were destroyed by Pharaoh Sheshonq, who lists Ta'anach among the sites he conquered. Occupation appears light until the Persian period and no other cultic material was found.

#### Tel 'Amal

Tel 'Amal was a small unfortified settlement in the Harod Valley, about 3 km west of Beth-Shean, on the 'Amal brook.<sup>124</sup> Strata at the site were dated to the Iron Age, and to the Persian, Byzantine, and Early Arab periods.

Strata IV and III are early Israelite. The pottery of both date to the tenth century, Stratum IV to its beginning and Stratum III to its second half. Stratum III included an almost completely ruined public building (ca. 225 square meters). It was separated from a workshop to its east by a street made of beaten earth and gravel. The entrance to the building was on the east and led to a courtyard with a partially preserved stone pavement. One of the three rooms behind the courtyard contained two brick basins filled with ash. A stone incense burner or cult stand topped by a Phoenician-style bowl, and a fragment of a similarly decorated stone bowl were also found in the room. Pottery vessels lay on the floors of both this and an adjoining room. These included jugs and juglets, both slipped and burnished, as well as chalices and storage jars. One of the jars contained charred cereal grains. Excavators labeled this structure a cult place.

A second incense burner was found in Stratum IV in another part of the site. The excavators could not determine whether this second area also served a cultic purpose or if it served a domestic function. According to the excavators, the tell was destroyed at the end of the tenth century. These cultic areas were not rebuilt, and no additional cultic apparatus has appeared at the site.

Only isolated remains of foundations and floors with a few sherds were found from Stratum II, Iron Age

IIB–C. Judging from the finds, which are household goods only, this stratum should be dated to the eighth or seventh century.

#### Tell el-Far'ah (north)

Tell el-Far'ah lies 11 km northeast of the ancient town of Shechem, on the Nablus-Tubas road. The identification of Tell el-Far'ah with Biblical Tirzah has been accepted by most scholars.<sup>125</sup> Iron Age remains were found in all parts of the tell and covered five successive periods (VIIa–e).

The remains of the earliest Iron Age (Period VIIa) indicate that occupation was slight. This period does not end in a destruction level. Period VIIb seems to have witnessed simply a renewal and rebuilding of VIIa structures. This rebuilding included a refortification of the Western Gate and installation of a pillar and basin on the plaza in front of the gate. Since neither the pillar nor the basin seem to have had a utilitarian purpose, Père de Vaux and later excavators have interpreted them as a libation vessel and *maṣṣēbāh*. They identify this installation as a *bāmāh* or "high place at the gate" (2 Kings 23:8), as Emerton also did recently.<sup>126</sup> The fact that neither incense altar nor sacrificial altar was discovered indicates that this identification cannot be correct and another interpretation must be sought. There are many biblical references to the establishment of standing stones, *maṣṣēbôt*, as witnesses (e.g., Gen. 28:18; 31:45; 35:20). The absence of other cultic paraphernalia indicates that this is the most likely purpose of the stele here as well. Like Jacob's pillar at Bethel, the basin may have held water or oil with which to anoint the pillar. Maintaining the pillar over generations and re-erecting it after each destruction, as was done here at Tirzah, is consistent with the role of witness.

During the seventh century, the basin inside the gate area was replaced by a watering trough, and a silo and threshing floor were built. Only this watering trough, silo and threshing floor would have greeted Josiah had he arrived.

<sup>123</sup> The identification of this basin, and indeed of the entire building, as cultic has been disputed: M. Fowler, "Concerning the 'Cultic' Structure at Taanach," *ZDVP* 100 (1984): 30–34. But see W. Rast, "Priestly Families," *EI* 20 (1989): 172\*.

<sup>124</sup> G. Edenstein and N. Feig, "Tel 'Amal," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1447–1450; S. Levy and G. Edelstein, "Cinq années de fouilles à Tel 'Amal (Nir David)," *RB* 79 (1972): 325–67.

<sup>125</sup> A. Chambon, "Far'ah, Tel El- (North)," *NEAEHL*, vol. 2, 433–40; T. Briend, "Tell el-Far'ah et son identification ancienne," in P. Amiet, J. Briend, L. Coutois, and J.-B. Dumortier, *Tell el-Far'ah: Histoire, Glyptique et Ceramologie* (Freiburg: University Press, 1996), 8–14.

<sup>126</sup> J. Emerton, "The 'High Places of the Gates' in 2 Kings XXIII 8," *VT* 44 (1994): 455–67.

*Samaria Trench E207*

As reported in the Biblical text, Samaria was the capital of the kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 16:24, 29). Ten kilometers northwest of Shechem, it has been identified with the village of Sebastia.<sup>127</sup> Samaria has been excavated with considerable difficulty.<sup>128</sup> It had been destroyed and reoccupied several times, and each new occupant dismantled the previous structures, reused the stones, and dug foundations into the bedrock. This means that building foundations from different periods have often been found side by side, rather than in clear horizontal layers. It was still possible for excavators to make out the Israelite fortification system since the builders cut trenches into the rock for their foundation stones. These trenches were still visible, although the stones themselves had long since been robbed. Internal buildings were too fragmentary to reveal their structure.

Remains of walls on the summit of the mound were assumed to have enclosed the royal quarter of the city, an area 178 m by 89 m. Inside was a large courtyard. Additional foundation trenches revealed a large building north of it, and another on the west.<sup>129</sup> These were the earliest buildings on the site; subsequent periods reveal modifications, but they are difficult to discern as most of the stones had been robbed in the Hellenistic period. The Israelite city (Period VI) was destroyed by Shalmaneser V in 722 after a three-year siege (2 Kings 17:5, 6).<sup>130</sup> A sooty destruction layer separated this level from

<sup>127</sup> N. Avigad, "Samaria (City)," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1300–1310.

<sup>128</sup> J. W. Crowfoot, K. M. Kenyon, and E. L. Sukenik, *The Buildings at Samaria* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1942), 5–20; K. Kenyon, "The Summit Buildings and Constructions II: From Israelite Period I to Hellenistic Fort Wall Period," in *The Buildings at Samaria*, 93–117.

<sup>129</sup> Kenyon, "The Summit Buildings," 97.

<sup>130</sup> M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 199, affirm that Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria for at least two calendar years and captured it before his death, in the winter of 722/21. "Chronicle 1: 27–28," in A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (rpt. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 73, reads:

On the twenty-fifth day of the month Tebet, Shalmaneser (V) ascended the throne in Assyria <and Akkad>. He destroyed Samaria.

For the name "Samaria," see H. Tadmor, "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," *JCS* 12 (1958): 22–40, 77–100. Sargon II takes credit for Shalmaneser's capture of the city (ANET<sup>3</sup>, 284–85).

the succeeding Period VII (Assyrian). This summit area remained unpopulated until Period VIII, the end of the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century.

The Israelite periods of the site (Periods I–VI) did not reveal any cultic paraphernalia. If the royal quarter housed a royal shrine, it is not evident. The material may have been taken by the Assyrians when they conquered the site, or none may ever have existed. It is also possible that the cultic material had been removed to a site outside the city and buried in the face of Assyrian attack. Outside the city, a trench (E207) was found surrounding a trapezoid-shaped mound (26 m × 30 m).<sup>131</sup> The trench varies in depth from 3 to 3.75 m and in width from 4 m at the bottom to 6 m at the top. The whole trench had been cut from the living rock. Near the southwest corner, the inner side was lined for a distance of eight meters with a rubble wall. Sukenik described the area as an open-air shrine or "high place."<sup>132</sup> The pottery in the trench was uniform, all Israelite, all from Period VI (the last decades before the fall), with some resembling that of Periods V and IV (the first half of the eighth century). There was none from Periods I, II, or III (ninth century), and none from Period VII (Assyrian). In addition to the large quantity of householdware, there were also objects designated as chalices, censers, braziers, footbaths, "cup and saucer" lamps, baking trays, rattles, and many figurines. All these are dated to the late eighth century. There were also animal bones with traces of burning. No material was found on the top of the mound, neither altar nor *maššēbāh*. No limestone incense altar is mentioned among the objects in the trench. Had a cult site existed at Samaria, all the material was intentionally removed prior to the Assyrian attack. It was not rebuilt.

*Shechem*

Ancient Shechem lies at the eastern end of the pass between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal in the central hill country. The 15-acre mound is situated on the lowest flanks of Mt. Ebal.<sup>133</sup> The Bronze Age saw a long history

<sup>131</sup> E. L. Sukenik, "Outside the City," in *The Buildings at Samaria*, 23–24; G. M. Crowfoot, "Israelite Pottery, General List," in *The Objects from Samaria*, ed. J. W. Crowfoot, G. M. Crowfoot, and K. M. Kenyon (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1957), 134–98.

<sup>132</sup> Sukenik, "Outside the City," 24.

<sup>133</sup> E. F. Campbell, "Shechem," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1345–1354. I appreciate a long conversation with Professors Bull, Campbell, and Callaway regarding this site.

of cultic occupation at the site.<sup>134</sup> During his excavations, Sellin discovered a large Migdal or Fortress Temple in the northwest corner of the tell. He dated it to Middle Bronze IIC (1650–1550). A later Migdal or Fortress temple, dated to the Late Bronze Age, was discovered on top of the earlier temple during the Drew-McCormick excavation of 1960.<sup>135</sup> The plan of this temple was identical to the earlier one, except that the axis of this later temple was shifted from the earlier by about five degrees. The excavators suggest that this was so the cella would catch the rays of the rising sun during the winter solstice.

In addition to the Migdal or Fortress Temple, the Late Bronze Age town included a second temple located just south of the northwest gate. This second temple, "Building 7300," was discovered in 1973 by W. Dever in the process of preparing the site for tourism.<sup>136</sup> In 1964 a small sanctuary was discovered in the middle of the tell southeast of the second precinct.<sup>137</sup> Both this small sanctuary and the larger Bronze Age temples were destroyed in the twelfth century in a massive conflagration that the excavators assigned to Abimelech (Judges 9:45).<sup>138</sup> No additional cultic material was found at Shechem by the American excavators.

After this destruction, the site lay unpopulated for almost a century. Indeed, regional excavations show that the whole Shechem basin was sparsely occupied at this time.<sup>139</sup> Gradual recovery occurred in the next stratum, Stratum X, in the form of walled working spaces and simple huts. Stratum X ended in a conflagration which was dated by the pottery to the last quarter of the tenth century and assigned by the excavator to Pharaoh Sheshonq.<sup>140</sup>

There was gradual recovery and rebuilding in Stratum IX in the late tenth and early ninth centuries, assigned by the excavators to Jeroboam I.<sup>141</sup> At this time a delib-

erate secularization of the sacred precincts occurred. A massive public warehouse or granary was built directly over the remains of the destroyed Migdal or Fortress Temple.<sup>142</sup> The builders of the granary carefully leveled the area under their building down to the plaster floor of the Migdal Temple, and through it to the supporting fill. A 10 cm layer of gray earth was spread over this, and then a layer of white marl cement, 20–25 cm in thickness. Before the cement had completely dried, the stones for the first course of the walls were put in place and sunk into it. The altar and *maṣṣēbôt* of the forecourt were buried and covered with this new plaster floor, suggesting a deliberate nullification of the shrine.

Strata VIII and VII represent the eighth century. The occupation level of Stratum VII was destroyed by the Assyrians in 723.<sup>143</sup> The connection of Stratum VI to the post-Assyrian conquest period of the late eighth and early seventh centuries is suggested by numerous fragments of Assyrian Palace Ware.<sup>144</sup> This type of ware is found in nearly all excavated sites known to have been under direct Assyrian control.

Although the American excavators have not found any cultic material in strata later than Stratum X, Sellin found two incense altars in a late domestic context during his first excavations of the site.<sup>145</sup> Sellin had dug a trench 50 meters long and five meters wide from east to west. Here he found two "Israelite house altars" which he dated to the Assyrian strata (eighth-seventh centuries) on the basis of associated ceramics. The first was a small stone incense altar 60 cm high, 36 cm wide. It had a round depression on the top 30 cm in diameter, surrounded by four horns. The second incense altar or cult stand was 90 cm high and made of clay. In disagreement with Sellin, Wright dated this second cult object to the Hellenistic period.<sup>146</sup> The dating of either of these items cannot be secure since no drawing was made of the stratigraphy of the trench, nor has further work been done in that area of the tell. The trench was filled

<sup>134</sup> G. E. Wright, *Shechem: The Biography of a Biblical City* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).

<sup>135</sup> R. J. Bull, "A Re-examination of the Shechem Temple," *BA* (1960): 110–26.

<sup>136</sup> W. Dever, "The MB IIC Stratification in the Northwest Gate Area at Shechem," *BASOR* 216 (1974): 31–52.

<sup>137</sup> R. J. Bull, J. A. Callaway, E. F. Campbell, Jr., J. F. Ross, and G. E. Wright, "The Fifth Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)," *BASOR* 180 (1965): 7–41.

<sup>138</sup> Wright, *Shechem: Biography*, 123ff.

<sup>139</sup> Campbell, "Shechem," 1352.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 1353. Finkelstein would lower this date by a half-century.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, Again, Finkelstein would lower the date to the beginning of the eighth century.

<sup>142</sup> Wright, *Shechem: Biography*, 145ff.

<sup>143</sup> Finkelstein, "Bible Archaeology," 167–74, suggests the Iron Age settlement process at Shechem covers a time span of two centuries, not three. This would not prevent the destruction of Stratum VII from being dated to the Assyrians and to 723.

<sup>144</sup> L. E. Toombs and G. E. Wright, "The Fourth Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)," *BASOR* 169 (1963): 38.

<sup>145</sup> E. Sellin, "Die Ausgrabung von Sichem: Kurze vorläufige Mitteilung über die Arbeit im Frühjahr 1926," *ZDPV* 49 (1926): 232–33, pls. 31b, 31c.

<sup>146</sup> Wright, *Shechem: Biography*, 24.

in by later excavators because, quoting Wright, “we had no hope of being able to make much sense of Sellin’s work, either of what had been dug through or what was still exposed on the surface after an interval of thirty years.”<sup>147</sup> In subsequent excavations just northeast of Sellin’s east-west trench no evidence occurred of Iron Age occupation. Hellenistic walls were dug directly into the MBIIC glacis.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, Stratum VI attests to limited inhabitation of the entire tell during the Assyrian occupation. It may be that the dating of Sellin’s first “Hausaltar” to the Assyrian period should be revised to Hellenistic.<sup>149</sup> Whatever date we assign to this altar, it was excavated in a domestic context and no other cultic paraphernalia were found. A domestic purpose for the incense altar rather than a cultic one is likely.

### Gezer

Southwest of Shechem lies the site of ancient Gezer. It is located on the last foothills of the central hill country where they slope down to the northern Shephelah.<sup>150</sup> Although technically part of Ephraim (Jos. 16:3, 10), according to the biblical text it did not become part of Israel until it was ceded to King Solomon by Pharaoh as a dowry for his daughter (1 Kings 9:15–17).

In the destruction debris between Strata 6B and 6A of Field II, a purely domestic area of the tell, a small incense altar was found.<sup>151</sup> Discovered in a secure locus—on the floor of Stratum 6B and well sealed beneath the floor of 6A, it has been dated by the excavator to the mid- to late tenth century by associated ceramics.<sup>152</sup> It is 9.0–9.2 cm high and about 3.6 cm wide across the front

below the decorative moldings. The top is slightly concave, but shows no traces of burning. There is no evidence of horns. On the front of the altar is incised a stick figure brandishing a spear in its left hand. No other cultic material has appeared in the excavations of Iron Age Gezer; found in a purely domestic area of the tell, this tiny incense altar seems to have served a decorative function only.

These eight are the only sites which could be labeled cultic in all of Iron Age II southern Israel.

### CONCLUSIONS: THE REFORMS OF JOSIAH IN SAMARIA (AND MEGIDDO)

This survey reveals no functioning cult site in any city, town, or hamlet of the Assyrian period provinces of Samaria and Megiddo. In Megiddo, the great Bronze Age temples were destroyed in a major conflagration, and were not rebuilt. The site’s two Iron Age cult sanctuaries were deliberately buried at the end of the tenth century. They were not rebuilt. The cult site at Kedesh was destroyed, probably by Tiglath-pileser III. It was not rebuilt. The one at Ta’anach was destroyed most likely by Pharaoh Sheshonq I. It too was not rebuilt. The cult sites at Tel ‘Amal were destroyed probably at the end of the tenth century and probably by Pharaoh Sheshonq. They were not rebuilt. The great Bronze Age Migdal or Fortress Temple at Shechem, a second large temple, and another small sanctuary, were all destroyed in a twelfth-century conflagration. They were not rebuilt, their remains being deliberately buried by Israelites at the beginning of the ninth century. This is our entire evidence for cult in Iron Age Samaria and Megiddo. Three altars were found in domestic, non-public loci: one in tenth-century Gezer, one in an Assyrian stratum of Megiddo, and one in a possible Assyrian stratum of Shechem. In none of these were additional cultic paraphernalia found, making it likely that these private incense altars served domestic purposes only. Thus, every known cult site dated to the Divided Monarchy was destroyed in an enemy attack; none was rebuilt.

These results cause surprise. According to the Deuteronomist, there ought to be evidence of temples to foreign gods and evidence of their cult statues in the cities of Samaria (2 Kings 17:29–34). This is not the case. Rather, the combination of first the Egyptian and then the Assyrian onslaughts created a cultic vacuum. By the time of Josiah, no cult site existed to be reformed. The so-called reforms of Josiah in the cities of Samaria (and Megiddo), like the reforms of Hezekiah in Judah, are not consistent with the archaeological record.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>148</sup> R. J. Bull et al., “Fifth Campaign”; Wright, *Shechem: Biography*, 32.

<sup>149</sup> S. Gitin judges the first of Sellin’s altars to be similar to two from Ekron, which he dates to the last third of the seventh century. These Ekron altars were surface finds, however. Gitin notes that the second of Sellin’s altars had no parallel in either Israel, Judah, or Ekron. See S. Gitin, “Incense Altars from Ekron, Israel and Judah: Context and Typology,” *EI* 20 (1989): 52\*–67\*.

<sup>150</sup> W. G. Dever, “Gezer,” *OANE*, vol. 2, 396–400; “Gezer,” *NEAHL*, vol. 2, 496–506.

<sup>151</sup> W. G. Dever, *Gezer II: Report of the 1967–70 Seasons in Fields I and II*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Annual of the Hebrew Union College/Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, 1974), 64–68.

<sup>152</sup> Finkelstein, “Archaeology of the United Monarchy,” 177–87 dates Stratum VIII at Gezer to the ninth, not tenth century.

Perhaps the effects of Josiah's reforms are evident in Jerusalem itself or in the cities of Edom on Judah's southern border.

#### Jerusalem

Besides the Temple itself, the only putative cult sites dated to seventh-century Jerusalem are several tumuli on the hills west of the city. Three of these have been excavated (no. 5, no. 6,<sup>153</sup> and 99 and no. 3<sup>154</sup>). A tumulus is a conical heap of stones with a truncated top, surrounded and stabilized by a wall. Buried under the six-meter-high heap of stones that made up Tumulus 5 was a platform. The platform area included a small stretch of pavement, an elongated rampart leading up to it, a pit, and a place for burning.<sup>155</sup> The pit was 9 m deep. Its walls were lined with flagstones of the same type as made up the pavement and was filled with earth (but no sherds or bones). On the southeastern slope below the platform was an area of burnt debris containing charcoal pieces, burnt animal bones, and black earth saturated with fat. Fragments of a cooking pot were found immediately below this area. Around the entire tumulus was a 17-sided ring wall. The ring wall had two entrances into the tumulus: one oriented due east, and one west-northwest. Five steps from the eastern entrance led to the platform and the pit. The western entrance consisted of two steps leading from the wall to the floor of the tumulus. That entrance had been blocked with fieldstones. The sherds in the fill were dated to the seventh century. There were no human bones nor any sign of interment.

Tumulus 3 was excavated in 1959.<sup>156</sup> In general, it had the same structure as Tumulus 5. The surrounding wall was oblong, rather than round, but it too seems to have been composed of 17 sides. When the fill was cleared away, a long wall was revealed, but the excavator determined that there was no connection between the tumulus and the wall. The wall was only an early terrace. The sherds that were mixed among the rocky fill date, like those of Tumulus 5, to the seventh century.

Amiran interprets these tumuli as *bāmôt*. Yet there is no hint of any ritual activity: no incense altars, no *maššēbāh*, and no sacrificial altar. Cooking and eating took place within Tumulus 5, but not at Tumulus 3. At this stage of our knowledge, it is impossible to deter-

mine the purpose of these heaps of stones. They may have been covenant-witness heaps:

And Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather stones." So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there *on* the heap (עַל הָאֵל) (Gen. 31:46).

There is no archaeological evidence in the Jerusalem area for any cult site beyond the Temple itself.

#### EDOM

The location of the southern border of Judah during the seventh century is controversial.<sup>157</sup> It most likely ran along the line connecting Beer Sheba and Arad, but it may have also included at one time a series of forts outside this line. If so, these forts (Horvat 'Uza, Tel Malḥata, Horvat Radum, and Tel Aroer) would have comprised an outer defensive ring against the incursion of Edomites into southern Judah. They sprung up in the middle of the seventh century during the *pax Assyriaca*, when the Edomites moved west into the southern Negev, and then into the area south of the Beer Sheba valley. The number erected at this time could not have been sustained by agriculture alone, and must have received state support, probably under Manasseh.<sup>158</sup>

The sites were all destroyed in the early sixth century, most likely by Nebuchadnezzar, but perhaps by Nabonidus.<sup>159</sup>

#### Horvat Qitmit

Horvat Qitmit is a one-period site (mid-seventh to early sixth century), located in the eastern Negev, 10 km south of Tel Arad and visible from it.<sup>160</sup> The site covers 650 sq. m, and consists of two complexes. Complex A includes a building with three rooms, a platform (termed a *bāmāh*), a stone basin, and an altar, enclosed by a stone wall. The so-called *bāmāh*, or podium-type platform, was 1.25 m × 1 m, preserved to a height of ca. 30 cm. A 60 sq. m area which surrounded the platform was

<sup>157</sup> See references in n. 58 above.

<sup>158</sup> Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 161; L. Tatum, "King Manasseh and the Royal Fortress at Horvat 'Uza," *BA* 54 (1991): 136–45.

<sup>159</sup> I. R. Bartlett, *Edom and the Edomites* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 157–61.

<sup>160</sup> I. Beit-Arieh, *Horvat Qitmit: An Edomite Shrine in the Biblical Negev* (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv Univ., 1995), 9; "Qitmit, Horvat," *OEANE*, vol. 4, 390.

<sup>153</sup> R. Amiran, "The Tumuli West of Jerusalem: Surveys and Excavations, 1953," *IEJ* 8 (1958): 205–27, plates 37–40.

<sup>154</sup> Z. Yeivin, "Excavation of Tumulus 3 Near Orah," *EI* 25 (1996): 175–83 (Hebrew).

<sup>155</sup> Amiran, "The Tumuli West of Jerusalem," 211.

<sup>156</sup> Yeivin, "Excavation of Tumulus 3."

enclosed on three sides; the north side was left open.<sup>161</sup> The platform's surface was smooth and heavily plastered. Scattered objects at the site included human and animal figurines, cult stands, pottery vessels, statues, and stone and bronze artifacts, including the head of a three-horned goddess. Most were Edomite, but some were Judaeans.

East of the platform enclosure was the altar precinct.<sup>162</sup> It included the altar, basin, and pit. It was probably also enclosed by a stone wall. The altar was 50 cm high, and consisted of a large flat flint slab (90 cm × 70 cm × 30 cm thick). It was laid on a base of medium-sized flint slabs. It was not otherwise worked; there is no indentation, no channel, no horns, nor was it smoothed.

Complex B was about 15 m north of Complex A. A massive wall enclosed a building of several rooms with an open courtyard. Near the southeast corner of the building a rectangular standing-stone or *maṣṣēbāh* (0.8 × 0.6 × 0.3 m) was found *in situ*.<sup>163</sup>

The site was reasonably designated by the excavator as an Edomite shrine to Qos. He considered it to be an open-air cult site which served the nearby town of Tel Malḥata, about five kilometers to the northwest. It was abandoned early in the sixth century; there is no evidence of man-made destruction.

#### *Ḥorvat ʿUza*

Ḥorvat ʿUza is situated in the vicinity of Ḥorvat Qitmit and about 10 km southeast of Tel Arad.<sup>164</sup> It consists of a fort and an associated settlement on the slope outside the fort's northern wall and outside its only gate. It is also a one-period site, occupied from the mid-seventh century to the early sixth, when it was destroyed in a conflagration that also destroyed the tell. In the settlement area outside the gate, a fieldstone platform was uncovered. It is 1.5 m long, 1 m wide and 1 m high. It stood in a courtyard, at the side of a street. Three steps in its southwest corner lead up to its top. Beside the platform was a thick layer of ashes mixed with animal bones.<sup>165</sup> The excavators term the structure a *bāmāh*.

An ostrakon at the site indicates that the fort was Edomite:

<sup>2</sup>*mr. lmlk. 2mr. lblbl* (Thus) said Lumalak, say to Bibl:  
*hslm. 2t. whbrkt* Are you well? I bless you  
*lqws. w6t. tn. 2t. h'kl* by Qaus. And now give the food (grain)  
<sup>2</sup>*sr. 6md. 2h2mh[. . .]* that Ahima'o serves [. . .]  
*whrm 6[z]l. 6l* And may U[z]iel lift it upon the  
*mz[bh(?) . . .]* al[tar(?) . . .]  
*[. . .]hmr. h2kl* [lest] the grain become leavened(?).<sup>166</sup>

The excavators suggest that the ostrakon was written by a high Edomite official who addressed it to the (Edomite) commander of the fort. More likely, it was written by one Edomite priest to another; it deals with matters of concern to priests. The altar in question is most likely the one discovered at the fort.

This site was destroyed by the Babylonians, probably at the time of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>167</sup> There is no evidence of a prior demolition by Josiah.

#### *ʿEn Ḥaṣevah*

ʿEn Ḥaṣevah is a fortress situated on a hill on the southern bank of Naḥal Ḥaṣevah, 40 kilometers south of Arad in the southern Negev.<sup>168</sup> The fortress dates back to the tenth century (Stratum 6). The latest Iron Age fortress at ʿEn Ḥaṣevah (Stratum 4) was built in the middle of the seventh century and destroyed in the beginning of the sixth, most likely at the time of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. This stratum is Edomite. Outside the Stratum 4 fort is a contemporary Edomite shrine with its associated cult remains. According to the excavator, the shrine "is in all respects alien to Judean culture." The layout of the room, the cultic vessels, and other cultic paraphernalia closely resemble that of Ḥorvat Qitmit. The cultic material: vessels, figurines, incense burners, chalices, altars, pomegranates, etc., had been deposited in a pit to the east of the shrine and deliberately buried by placing ashlar of varying size on top of them. The excavators surmise that the ashlar were taken from the shrine itself. They interpret this as a deliberate dismantling of the shrine prior to the destruction of the site. The excavators conclude that the destruction

<sup>161</sup> Beit-Arieh, *Ḥorvat Qitmit*, 13–18.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–20.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–24.

<sup>164</sup> I. Beit-Arieh and B. C. Cresson, "Ḥorvat ʿUza: A Fortified Outpost on the Eastern Negev Border," *BA* 54 (1991): 126–35; I. Beit-Arieh, "ʿUza, Ḥorvat," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1495–97.

<sup>165</sup> Beit-Arieh and Cresson, "Ḥorvat ʿUza," 131.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 134. The present writer has emended the translation slightly. The custom of not placing leavened grain on the altar is similar to that described in Lev. 2:1–11.

<sup>167</sup> Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 151–63.

<sup>168</sup> R. Cohen and Y. Yisrael, "The Iron Age Fortresses at ʿEn Ḥaṣeva," *BA* 58 (1995): 223–35; *On the Road to Edom: Discoveries from ʿEn Ḥaṣeva* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1995).



was upon the order of Josiah, and that he had spread his reforms to this far southern locale. It is not likely, however, that Josiah controlled this area and ordered the destruction of the shrine here, since there is no indication of purposeful dismantling of Edomite shrines much closer to Judaea. It is more likely that the inhabitants destroyed the shrine themselves and buried its artifacts prior to the Babylonian conquest, perhaps to prevent cultic material from falling into Babylonian hands.

Archaeological data reveal that cult sites flourished in seventh- and sixth-century towns in the southern Negev. These sites were Edomite, they were not controlled by Josiah, and they did not experience Josiah's reforming activities. They were either abandoned or destroyed by the Babylonians, probably in 586. One was purposely buried in advance of Babylonian attack.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER ISSUES

There is no archaeological evidence consistent with the assumption that Josiah removed cult sites from the Iron Age II cities of Judah, Samaria, Megiddo, or the Negev. Except for sites under the control of Edom and beyond Josiah's reach, there were none to be removed. All had either been destroyed by Egyptian or Assyrian kings, or purposely buried in anticipation of such destruction. None was rebuilt. Neither the reforms of Josiah nor those of Hezekiah against the *bāmôt* should be considered historical.

These results have implications for three further issues: the principle of continuity of sacred space, the doctrine of cult centralization in Deuteronomy 12, and the date and the number of Deuteronomists.

#### *Continuity of Sacred Space*

Michael Coogan has argued that the principle of continuity of sacred space permits a locus to be interpreted as cultic if that locus was cultic in an earlier or later stratum.<sup>169</sup> This principle requires nuance. It is true that Bronze Age temples at Megiddo, Shechem, and elsewhere continued for centuries with minor modification, later temples being built on top of pre-existing ones. Yet, archaeological data show that numerous Iron Age temples were destroyed by enemy attack and not rebuilt; secular buildings were constructed on top of them. Other

cult sites (Arad, Megiddo) were deliberately buried in anticipation of such attack. Secular installations were built on top of these as well. The principle of continuity of sacred space does not always apply.

The phenomenon of discontinuity of sacred space is not unique to Israel. The temple to Ishtar in ʿAin Dara in northern Syria is a case in point.<sup>170</sup> Built in three stages, it was first erected in the thirteenth century B.C.E. It was renovated or rebuilt around 1000. In a third stage, dated to 900–740, a walkway was added around the temple and decorative orthostats were added to the exterior. The temple was destroyed by Tiglath-pileser III between 742 and 740. After its destruction it lay exposed for half a century, while its stones were robbed and plundered. Domestic buildings were built above it in the seventh century.

ʿAin Dara's excavator has been at a loss to explain why the temple had not been restored, but perhaps this phenomenon should not surprise us. Mordechai Cogan describes the effect of Assyrian attack on cult sites.<sup>171</sup> During these attacks the sacred images were either destroyed, or most often, taken to Assyria or to other cities to pay homage to the Assyrian gods. Cogan reports numerous cases in which shrines were not restored until the image was returned: Esarhaddon says, "(I am he who) returned the pillaged gods from Assyria and Elam to their shrines, and who let them stay in comfortable quarters until their temples could be completed for them."<sup>172</sup> Sargon says, "I returned the pillaged gods to their cult centers and restored their interrupted regular offerings."<sup>173</sup> The Cyrus Cylinder quotes Cyrus as saying, "I returned to (these) sacred cities . . . , the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins a long time, the images which (used) to lie therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries."<sup>174</sup> This has a parallel in the Biblical text. The temple in Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines and the ark captured in battle. It was not rebuilt (Jer 7:12). The Temple of YHWH in Jerusalem was not

<sup>169</sup> M. D. Coogan, "Of Cults and Cultures: Reflections on the Interpretation of Archaeological Evidence," *PEQ* 119 (1987): 1–8.

<sup>170</sup> A. Abu Assaf, "Der Tempel von ʿAin Dara in Nordsyrien," *Antike Welt* 24 (1993): 155–71. See now J. Monson, "The New ʿAin Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel," *BAR* 26:3 (2000): 20–35, 67. I thank Paul Zimansky for calling this site to my attention.

<sup>171</sup> M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974), 22–41.

<sup>172</sup> Cited in Cogan, *Imperialism*, 29.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>174</sup> ANET, 316.

rebuilt until cult items were restored to it (Ezra 1:7–9).<sup>175</sup>

This explains the failure to rebuild temples which were destroyed in battle, the great majority of cases. It does not explain the situation at Arad or Megiddo, where operating cult centers were purposely buried in anticipation of such destruction and not rebuilt. The principle of continuity of sacred space requires re-examination.

#### *The Doctrine of Cult Centralization in Deuteronomy 12*

By 701 every cult site in Judah and southern Israel had been destroyed—except for one, the Temple in Jerusalem. These cult sites had been destroyed, not as a result of the reforms of Hezekiah or Josiah, but by Pharaoh Sheshonq I, Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, or Sennacherib.<sup>176</sup> Only the Temple in Jerusalem had withstood the onslaught. Cogan describes the theology prevalent in Mesopotamia: enemy destruction of a shrine and the god's removal from it implied that the deity had abandoned the city and participated in the attack.<sup>177</sup> The Temple's miraculous survival in 701 after the demise of every other cult site may have given rise to the belief that the Temple in Jerusalem was the only place in which YHWH had caused his name to dwell. All other sites were anathema. Cult centralization and the theology which accompanied it were not the consequence of edicts by reforming kings. They were the result of events on the ground. The doctrine of cult centralization elucidated in Deuteronomy 12 was not a program for the future. It was an interpretation and explanation of a devastating present.

#### *The Date of the Deuteronomist*

To the Deuteronomist writing later, the responsibility for this overwhelming devastation lay not with the Egyptian or Assyrian kings, but with the kings of Israel and Judah. YHWH had made clear (through the agency of foreign kings) that he (or his name) dwelt only in the

Temple in Jerusalem. Native kings could be evaluated, therefore, according to whether or not they had aided or hindered worship there. Good kings facilitated centralization, bad kings hindered it. According to this yardstick, all the kings of Israel were bad, and receive censure from the Deuteronomist. This was not true of the Judaeen kings, who were evaluated on a case-by-case basis. YHWH was in charge of history. By examining the records of the Judaeen kings, it was easy to determine who had been in YHWH's favor and who had not. Those in YHWH's favor had succeeded in their political endeavors; those not in his favor failed. Those who had succeeded in their political endeavors were obviously those who had helped to make Jerusalem the only place of worship. Those who had failed just as obviously had contributed to the proliferation of cult sites. The greatest political successes belonged to Hezekiah and Josiah; therefore, they must have done the most to centralize worship. The Appendix provides a table of the Judaeen kings that illustrates the Deuteronomist's evaluation process.

The archaeological results described in this article challenge the theory of a double redaction of the Deuteronomistic History.<sup>178</sup> That theory assumes that one redactor wrote during the time of Josiah and a second during the Exile. The theory is based on the fact that many statements promise an eternal dynasty to David, while others portray the exile and the end of the kingdom. The promise to David could only have been composed while an eternal Davidic dynasty seemed likely and when it seemed that the state would achieve its former glory, i.e., under Josiah. Yet if the historical reality of Josiah's reforms is doubtful, so is the historical reality of an historian who wrote contemporaneously to them. It is more likely that a single Deuteronomist lived in Judah at the time of his people's restoration to the land and during his Temple's reconstruction. This historian would have been able to write of an eternal Davidic dynasty, an eternal Temple, an eternal Levitical priesthood, as well as of a punitive exile. He may have written his history to serve as a warning and example to Zerubbabel, God's new signet ring (Hag. 2:23).

<sup>175</sup> I develop this point in "The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient Near East," in *Judah and Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, ed. O. Lipschits (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002).

<sup>176</sup> If not by Pharaoh Sheshonq and Sennacherib directly, then by fear of them.

<sup>177</sup> Cited in Cogan, *Imperialism*, 22–41. The god's abandonment may be implied in its burial as well.

<sup>178</sup> See R. D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1981); G. N. Knoppers, *The Nations Under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies*, vols. 1 and 2 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993–1994).

## APPENDIX

## The Judaeen Kings

King	Years of Reign	Data Available to the Deuteronomist	Deuteronomist's Conclusion
Rehoboam	17	He <b>lost the Northern Kingdom</b> (1 Kings 12:20–24). “In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, <b>Shishak King of Egypt came up against Jerusalem</b> ” (1 Kings 14:25). “There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all his days” (1 Kings 14:30).	“Judah did <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH and made him jealous in all that they did, more than their fathers did in the sin which they sinned. They even built <i>bāmôt</i> , <i>massēbôt</i> , and <i>ʿasērim</i> on every high hill and under every green tree” (1 Kings 14:22, 23).
Abijam	3	“There was <b>war</b> between Abijam and Jeroboam all the days of his life” (1 Kings 15:6).	“He walked in all the sins of his father which he did before him and his heart was <b>not whole</b> with YHWH his god like the heart of David his father” (1 Kings 15:3).
Asa	41	King Baasha of Israel came up against Judah and extended the southern border of his kingdom to Ramah, five miles north of Jerusalem. Through an alliance with Ben-Hadad of Aram, Baasha was forced back. Asa <b>reclaimed the area of Benjamin</b> for Judah (1 Kings 15:17–22).	“Asa did what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH as David his father. He put away the <i>qedēšim</i> from the land, he removed the idols which his fathers had made. . . . He did not remove the <i>bāmôt</i> , but <b>the heart of Asa was whole</b> toward YHWH all his days” (1 Kings 15:11–12, 14).
Jehoshaphat	25	He <b>conquered Edom</b> (1 Kings 22:48; 2 Kings 8:20). He maintained <b>Judah intact</b> in wars with Aram and Moab (1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 3). He made peace with the king of Israel (1 Kings 22:45).	“He walked in all the ways of Asa his father, he did not turn from it, doing what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH. But he did not remove the <i>bāmôt</i> and the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the <i>bāmôt</i> (1 Kings 22:43, 44).
Jehoram	8	“In his days <b>Edom rebelled</b> from under the hand of Judah, and they set their own king over themselves” (2 Kings 8:20).	“He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel just as the house of Ahab did because the daughter of Ahab was his wife, and he did evil in the eyes of YHWH” (2 Kings 8:18).
Ahaziah	1	Ahaziah was <b>killed</b> by Jehu (2 Kings 9:27–28).	“He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab and he did <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH like the house of Ahab, because he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab” (2 Kings 8:27).
Athaliah	7	Athaliah was not a legitimate queen, she was not a descendent of David. She killed all the royal seed, except for Joash, who was hidden. She was <b>killed</b> by Jehoiada the priest and the palace guards (2 Kings 11).	“(After the death of Athaliah), all the people of the land went to the temple of Baʿal, pulled down his altars and thoroughly smashed his images, and they killed Mattan, priest of Baʿal, before the altars” (2 Kings 11:18). <sup>1</sup>
Jehoash	40	He <b>saved Jerusalem</b> from King Hazael of Aram by giving him offerings, his own and the Temple’s (2 Kings 12:18, 19). He was <b>killed</b> by his servants.	“Jehoash did what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH all his days which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. Only the <i>bāmôt</i> were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the <i>bāmôt</i> ” (2 Kings 12:3, 4).
Amaziah	29	He <b>reconquered Edom</b> (2 Kings 14:7, 10). He fought against Israel, was <b>defeated and captured</b> , but released (or escaped). Israel attacked Jerusalem, but after receiving booty and hostages, <b>Jerusalem was left intact</b> (2 Kings 14:8–14).	“He did what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH, only not as David his father; he did as Joash his father did. Only the <i>bāmôt</i> were not removed and the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the <i>bāmôt</i> ” (2 Kings 14:3, 4).

<sup>1</sup> Not being legitimate, she receives no official evaluation. The notice of the temple of Baʿal suggests the typical negative evaluation.

The Judean Kings, *Cont.*

Azariah/ Uzziah	52	“YHWH touched him, and he was leprous until the day of his death. He lived in a separate house, and Jotham the son of the king was over the house judging the people of the land” (2 Kings 15:5). <b>Judah and Jerusalem were not affected by war and remained intact</b> (2 Kings 15).	“He did what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH like all that Amaziah his father did. Only the <i>bāmôt</i> were not removed and the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the <i>bāmôt</i> ” (2 Kings 15:3, 4).
Jotham	16	He <b>retained Judah intact</b> (2 Kings 15:32–38).	“He did what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH like all that Uzziah his father did. Only the <i>bāmôt</i> were not removed and the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the <i>bāmôt</i> ” (2 Kings 15:34–35).
Ahaz	16	“Rezin, King of Aram, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, King of Israel, went up against Jerusalem to wage war and they besieged Ahaz, but they could not conquer him. At that time the <b>King of Edom returned Elath to Edom</b> and he <b>cleared the Judeans out of Elath</b> ” (2 Kings 16:5–6).	“He <b>did not do what was right</b> in the eyes of YHWH his god as David his father. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even made his son cross through fire like the abominations of the nations that YHWH drove out from before the people Israel. He sacrificed and burned incense in the <i>bāmôt</i> , and on the hills and under every green tree” (2 Kings 16:2–4).
Hezekiah	29	“He rebelled against the King of Assyria and would not serve him. He <b>smote the Philistines</b> as far as Gaza and all her territories, from watch tower to fortified city” (2 Kings 18:7b–8; cf. Prism of Sennacherib, <i>ANET</i> , 287). <b>Jerusalem was miraculously saved</b> (2 Kings 19:35; Prism 8 of Sennacherib, <i>ANET</i> , 287–88), although “Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came up against the fortified cities of Judah and took them” (2 Kings 18:13).	“He did what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH like all that David his father did. He <b>removed the <i>bāmôt</i></b> , he broke in pieces the <i>massēbôt</i> and cut down the <i>ʿašērāh</i> . . . (2 Kings 18:3, 4a).
Manasseh	55	“YHWH brought against them commanders of the army of the King of Assyria. <b>They captured Manasseh in manacles, bound him in irons, and led him to Babylon</b> ” (2 Chron. 33:11). He was a vassal of Esarhaddon (Prism A, <i>ANET</i> , 291).	“He did what was <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH like the abominations of the nations which YHWH drove out from before the people Israel. He <b>rebuilt the <i>bāmôt</i></b> which Hezekiah his father destroyed, he erected altars to Baʿal and made an <i>ʿašērāh</i> just as Ahab King of Israel had done, and he bowed down to all the host of heaven and served them” (2 Kings 21:2, 3).
Amon	2	“The servants of Amon conspired against him and they <b>killed the king</b> in his house. But the people of the land struck down those who conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place” (2 Kings 21:23, 24).	“He did <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH just like Manasseh his father. He walked in all the ways which his father walked, he served the idols which his father served and bowed down to them. He abandoned YHWH, god of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of YHWH” (2 Kings 21:20–22).
Josiah	31	He <b>reclaimed for Judah Bethel</b> (2 Kings 23:15) <b>and the cities of Samaria</b> (23:19) <b>up to Megiddo</b> (23:29). He was killed in battle by Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo (23:29).	“He did what was <b>right</b> in the eyes of YHWH, he walked in all the ways of David his father, and did not turn to the right or to the left” (2 Kings 22:2).

The Judaeon Kings, *Cont.*

Jehoahaz	3 mos.	"Pharaoh Necho <b>imprisoned him in Riblah</b> in the area of Hamath against his reigning in Jerusalem. He imposed a punishment on the land of 100 talents of silver and one talent of gold. Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of Josiah his father, and he changed his name to Jehoiakim. <b>He took Jehoahaz and brought him to Egypt and he died there</b> " (2 Kings 23:33, 34).	"He did what was <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH like all that his fathers did" (2 Kings 23:32).
Jehoiakim/ Eliakim	11	"In his days Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon rose up and Jehoiakim served him three years, but he turned and rebelled against him. So YHWH <b>sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites</b> , and he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of YHWH which he spoke by means of the authority of his servants the prophets" (2 Kings 24: 1, 2). <sup>2</sup>	"He did <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH like all that his fathers did" (2 Kings 23:37).
Jehoiakin	3 mos.	"At that time (of his accession) the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem and <b>the city was besieged</b> . Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it. Jehoiakin, King of Judah, went out to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he, his mother, his servants, his commanders, and his eunuchs, and the King of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he brought out from there all the treasures from the Temple of YHWH and the treasures from the palace of the king. . . . <b>He deported Jehoiakin to Babylon</b> and the mother of the king, he deported him and led him, the wives of the king, the eunuchs, and the leaders of the country to Babylon. . . . The king of Babylon made Mattaniah, his uncle, king in his place, and he changed his name to Zedekiah" (2 Kings 24:10–13a, 15, 17).	"He did what was <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH like all that his father did" (2 Kings 24:9).
Zedekiah/ Mattaniah	11	"Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, <b>Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he and all his army, came up against Jerusalem</b> and encamped against her, and they build against her a siege-ramp all around her. <b>The city came under siege until the eleventh year</b> of the reign of Zedekiah. In the ninth month the hunger was strong in the city, there was no food for the people of the land. The city was breached, the king and all the fighting men (escaped) that night by the way of the gate between (the city wall) and the wall of the king's garden, while the Chaldeans surrounded the city.	"He did <b>evil</b> in the eyes of YHWH like all that Jehoiakim did" (2 Kings 24:19).

<sup>2</sup> His young age at his death (36) suggests an unnatural end. He may have been killed in the fighting for Judah.

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The Judaeen Kings, *Cont.*

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They went towards the Aravah. But the Chaldean army pursued the king and reached him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army scattered away from him. **They captured the king and brought him to the King of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. The sons of Zedekiah they slaughtered before his eyes, then they blinded the eyes of Zedekiah, then they bound him in shackles and brought him to Babylon.** In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (it was the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon), Nabuzradan, *rab-tabachim*, servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. **He burned the temple, and the palace, and all the buildings in Jerusalem, even the largest, he burnt with fire. As for Jerusalem's surrounding wall, the Chaldean army tore it down, (according to the word) of the *rab-tabachim*. . . . So Judah was deported from his land"** (2 Kings 24: 20b–25:10, 21b).

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