

# **WHY JEWS CAN ALSO BE CALLED ISRAELITES. A NEW APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF “BIBLICAL ISRAEL”**

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**Summary: Why Jews can also be called Israelites. A New Approach to the Question of “Biblical Israel”**

The gentilicium Jew as well as the historically differentiating terms Judahite and Judaeans refer back historically to inhabitants of the Judah region. An analysis of biblical texts reveals three stages in which the name Israel first penetrated Judaeans society through Israelites, reshaped the Judahite community and finally shaped the image of Jews who saw themselves exclusively as Israelites.

**Keywords:** Jews – Israelites – Judaeans – Israelitisation – Garizim Israelites

**Resumen: Por qué los judíos también pueden llamarse israelitas. Una nueva aproximación sobre la cuestión del “Israel bíblico”**

El gentilicio judío, así como los términos históricamente diferenciados judaíta y judaico, se refieren históricamente a los habitantes de la región de Judá. Un análisis de los textos bíblicos revela tres etapas en las que el nombre de Israel penetró primero en la sociedad judaica a través de los israelitas, reconfiguró la comunidad judaica y, finalmente, configuró la imagen de los judíos que se veían a sí mismos exclusivamente como israelitas.

**Palabras clave:** Judíos – Israelitas – Judaicos – Israelitización – Israelitas de Garizim

The use of the names “Jews” and “Israelites” as well as the names “Judah” and “Israel” is often confusing. Religious and political history of about 3000 years play into each other. They caused multiple transformations of these terms. The much-discussed question of how

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“biblical Israel” came into being examines the picture painted by the Hebrew Bible, according to which Judah represents Israel.<sup>1</sup> This paper focuses on the history of the name “Judah” and the question since when and how the name “Israel” could be literarily associated with Judah and Jews.

### **THE MODERN ERA: BEING A JEW, AN ISRAELI, AN ISRAELITE**

The most recent historical development in this question is the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. This political name is linked to the state of Israel conquered by the Assyrians in 721 BC with its capital Samaria, but not to the state of Judah with its capital Jerusalem, which existed alongside it until 586 BC. In modern Israel live—in the political sense—Israeli people, the majority of whom profess Judaism and Jerusalem as its political and religious centre. Why did the Jews in Palestine fight for a state of Israel in 1948, but not for a state of Judah? To understand this decision, one has to look back into religious history.

In Germany, for example, there are “jüdische Kultusgemeinden” (Jewish synagoge communities) and “israelitische Kultusgemeinden” (Israelite synagoge communities), although always Jews belong to them. Is every Jew an Israelite? On the basis of the Hebrew Bible, this is to be answered in the affirmative. Are all Israelites Jews? This must be answered in the negative, albeit from a different perspective of religious history. The members of the Samaritan religious community call themselves Israelites and “keepers” (שמרים) of the Mosaic faith, but not Jews.<sup>2</sup>

### **8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BC - 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD: BEING A JUDAEAN, A JUDAHITE, A JEW**

According to all known evidence, Judaeans called themselves Judaeans from the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC and their region of origin was called

<sup>1</sup> Davies 1992 and 2007; Na’aman 2009; Finkelstein 2011; Weingart 2014; Schütte 2016d.

<sup>2</sup> Tsedaka 2012: 422.

Judah. However, a very old text, the Tel Dan Stele (9<sup>th</sup> century BC?, before 733 BC), has an blank space concerning this designation. It reports events that are described in 2Kgs 9:14-29. But the king of Judah, who according to its reading was killed by Arameans, is referred to as "[King] of the house of David." A king of Judah, Ahaz, and thus Judah as a region is first mentioned in an inscription (after 733 BC) of Tiglatpileser III.<sup>3</sup> Judah and Judaeans or Judahites are later mentioned in archaeological evidence from the Babylonian Golah and Persian Judaism, Jews from Hellenistic Judaism in Egypt and the Hasmonean period in Palestine.<sup>4</sup> They confirm a continuous validity of the political name "Judah" for this region and the name "Judaeans" or "Judahites," "Jews" for its inhabitants and descendants since the last third of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. On the other hand, texts from the Greek island of Delos (250-175 and 150-50 BC) prove that members of the cult cultivated on Mount Garizim called themselves Israelites; Mount Garizim lies on the territory of the former state of Israel.<sup>5</sup> These Garizim Israelites were called Samaritans by Jews from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

Before 1948, only a short period of time can be traced in which Jews used the name "Israel" in their struggle for political independence. Coins from the first Jewish revolt (66-70 AD) against the Romans bear the inscription "Israel" for the first time. However, a political programme has not yet been proven. Coins and letters of Simon bar Kochba from the third Jewish revolt (132-135 AD) are clearer evidence of the rebels' intention to fight for an "Israel."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser 1984: 374-375. For further evidence from Assyria and Babylonia, see the Nineveh prism of Sargon II. with "Judah" (1984: 381; cf. Nimrud inscription, 1984: 387), Sanherib (Report of the third Campaign, 1984: 388-391), Nebuchadnezzar (Babylonian Chronicles, 1984: 403-404). See also Zadok 2015.

<sup>4</sup> For the political outlook in the Hasmonean period, see Goodblatt 1998 and 2009; Eckhardt 2013. According to Clearchus of Soli (c. 300 BC), the name "Jew" derives from the territory of Judea (Stern 1974: No. 15). For Hellenistic Egypt, see Tcherikover and Fuks 1957-1964. For Persian-period Egypt, see Porten and Yardeni 1986-1999; van der Toorn 2018; for the Babylonian era, see Pearce and Wunsch 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Bruneau 1982. I have presented my state of knowledge on the history of the name "Israel" in Schütte 2018a.

<sup>6</sup> On coin finds from both wars, see Goodblatt 1998: 25-33.

So when and how did Jews become Israelites? The ancient Bible texts discovered in Qumran document that at least the Jewish group living there understood themselves as “Israel.”<sup>7</sup> These texts make it likely that Jews outside Qumran who read biblical texts also identified themselves religiously with Israel, even though they were called Jews politically.

### **THE OLDEST BIBLICAL TEXTS: A TESTIMONY OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup>/2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY BC**

In order to come closer to answering our question, we have to rely on the biblical evidence. The Bible manuscripts found in Qumran date from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. There are no older textual witnesses. The text of the silver amulets of Ketef Hinnom (7<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century BC)<sup>8</sup> probably indicates a high age of the Aaronite blessing, but says nothing about the age of the corresponding Bible text (Num 6:24-26). The Judahite correspondence from the Egyptian Elephantine (c. 400 BC) lacks biblical texts and direct references to the biblical texts known to us. But it documents religious traditions that do not (yet) conform to the today’s Mosaic Torah.<sup>9</sup>

Hecataeus of Abdera (c. 300 BC) is credited with the oldest literary testimony about the Jewish religion. The historical value of the testimony, preserved by Diodorus (40.3, 5-6; 1<sup>st</sup> century BC), who in turn is quoted by Photius (9<sup>th</sup> century AD), is highly debatable.<sup>10</sup> It seems to testify to a precursor text of the Mosaic Torah.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, M. LeFebvre interprets the behaviour of the Jewish religious community towards the High Priest described in Hecataeus as if the community encountered a cult oracle that brought forth the authentic

<sup>7</sup> Fabry 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Renz and Röllig 1995: 447-456.

<sup>9</sup> On this, see Kratz 2007; Rohrmoser 2014: 334-359.

<sup>10</sup> For a critical judgement on the age and content of the text of Hecataeus, see Kratz 2021: 270-274.

<sup>11</sup> Exodus-Leviticus? Certainly not Deuteronomy; on this see Schütte 2021: 51-53.

word of God.<sup>12</sup> The lack of biblical testimonies from the Persian period must so far be interpreted as meaning that the training of priests and the instruction of the Judahite community in Palestine and in the Diaspora was primarily oral. Nevertheless, it may be assumed that centres such as Jerusalem or the Garizim, in addition to general correspondence, also recorded their religious traditions in their own archives (cf. 2Macc 2:13-15). Without such Persian-period evidence, however, we are dependent on an interpretation of the textual witnesses of the Tanakh before further-reaching assumptions about an unprovable, older textual development are developed. If the unusual Old Latin Tradition (OL) of the *Codex Monacensis* (5<sup>th</sup> century AD) on the Book of Exodus does indeed represent a Latin translation of the oldest tradition of Exod 36-40 (*Old Greek*), the biblical tradition of the Masoretic Torah was still developing at least deep into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>13</sup> For this reason, I see the Hellenistic period beginning with the epoch year 333 BC as the decisive phase in which the Torah and then the rest of the Tanakh developed in the version we know.<sup>14</sup>

Ptolemaic Egypt, to which Palestine belonged after the death of Alexander until the 5<sup>th</sup> Syrian War (202-195 BC), led Palestine into a

<sup>12</sup> LeFebvre 2006: 50.

<sup>13</sup> Bogaert 1996 shows that Exod 37:19<sup>OL</sup>, the oldest text tradition to Exod 38:21<sup>MT</sup>/Exod 37:19<sup>LXX</sup>, as well as Exod 38:22<sup>LXX</sup><sup>OL</sup> with its reference to Korah and his revolt (cf. Num 16) does not suggest knowledge of the Book of Numbers. The Greek text of the *Codex Monacensis* must therefore have been formed before Deuteronomy was connected to Genesis-Leviticus via the Book of Numbers in Hellenistic times, thus forming the five-part Mosaic Torah. Doubts about Codex Monacensis as a precursor text are formulated by Lo Sardo 2020: 69-73 and Rhyder 2020: 114-115.

<sup>14</sup> This means that a point in time which is "at the very latest" in the early Hellenistic period (Honigman and Ben Zvi 2020: 371note 4) is regarded by me as a rather early point in time (cf. Schütte 2021), if Honigman/Ben Zvi with "Torah" conceptually already mean the finished Deuteronomic Torah or the five-part Mosaic Torah. If they place the adoption of a Jerusalem-centred Torah by the Garizim Israelites so early, this appropriation requires a historical explanation (on this see also Hensel 2016: 413-415). Kratz 2007: 93 considers a period of 100 years for the editorial process of the Mosaic Torah to be quite realistic, although he himself is thinking of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC instead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The Persian period as the first period for the formation of Judaism and precursor literature to the Torah remains undisputed by me. But without textual evidence, little can be said about these texts of that time (cf. Frevel 2018: 367-368).

new era of pervasive Hellenistic culture. This included, first of all, new, profit-oriented economic methods<sup>15</sup> and a growing monetarism,<sup>16</sup> but also a high regard for Greek culture, literature and education.<sup>17</sup> The introduction of *polis* constitutions to establish Hellenistic cities was initially limited to a few cities and was only pushed forward by the Seleucids in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>18</sup> These developments were initially welcomed by the local elites, as they were also able to increase their wealth. After a few decades, the downsides of the new, efficient economy became clear to the rural population.<sup>19</sup> While rising taxes and (rent) duties led to revolts in the Egyptian Chora from the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC,<sup>20</sup> the “pious” formed in Palestine as a religious movement,<sup>21</sup> from whose circles support for the Maccabean revolt grew in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>22</sup> A new appreciation of their own culture and tradition emerged among the country’s elite.<sup>23</sup> The Jewish and Israelite literati, and possibly a Hellenistic interest in stories and history, initiated the dissemination of Jewish and Israelite narratives from the Books of Genesis and Exodus in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Hengel 1988: 76-107; Frevel 2018: 380-381; Knauf 2021: 384-385; historical insights into the Hellenistic economy in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC are provided by the Zenon Papyri (Edgar 1971).

<sup>16</sup> Hengel 1988: 84-85; Hübner 2014. Cf. Koh 5,7-6,10; 10,19.

<sup>17</sup> The bibliophile work of the library of Alexandria is mirrored in the letter of Aristeas. On a possible influence of Greek literature on the shaping of biblical literature, see Wajdenbaum 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Knauf 2021: 386; Kasher 1990.

<sup>19</sup> Hengel 1988: 102-103; Frevel 2018: 380-381.

<sup>20</sup> Hölbl 1994: 135-140.

<sup>21</sup> Hengel 1988: 319-330. These “pious” (Ἀσιδαῖοι cf. 2 Macc 14:6) did not develop group structures (Stemberger 1991: 91-96). Thus little is known about this grassroot movement.

<sup>22</sup> On the history of the Maccabean revolt, see Bernhardt 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, for Artapanus (Frgt. 3, with Euseb, *pr. ev.* 9.27.3-4) Moses is considered the teacher of Orpheus, for Eupolemos (Frgt. 1, in Clemens Alexandrinus, *stromata*, 1.23.153.4, and Euseb, *pr. ev.* 9.26.1) as the inventor of the alphabet. According to Pseudo-Eupolemos (Frgt. 1, in Euseb, *pr. ev.* 9.17.8) Abraham instructed the Egyptian priests in astronomy. According to Aristobol (Frgt. 3, in Euseb, *pr. ev.* 13.12; Frgt. 3a in Clemens Alexandrinus, *stromata*, 1.22.150.1-3), Plato and Pythagoras drew ideas from the Jewish tradition.

<sup>24</sup> For the assumption of Aitken 2020: 413, “that the Septuagint began not as a translation of law (νόμος) but as history (ἱστορία)” is argued by the fact that the use of νόμος for תורה (Gen 26, 5) does not yet seem to suspect that only the singular תורה applies to the Masoretic

It can be assumed that the priesthood and the scribes in Jerusalem and on the Garizim also reacted to the different movements. In any case, our oldest Bible fragments date from the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. They are texts from the Mosaic Torah (4QExod-Lev<sup>f</sup>/4Q17; 4QpaleoDeut<sup>s</sup>/4Q46).

### THE TORAH: BEING AN ISRAELITE AND BEING A JEW

The Torah is a common heritage of Jews and Samaritans. Existing differences in its text are due to divergent developments since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The correspondence of Elephantine with Samaria and Jerusalem for support for the rebuilding of the Temple of Elephantine<sup>25</sup> suggests that at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC at least there were not yet serious tensions between the two centres in Palestine. Archaeologically, Samaria and Garizim, situated along trade routes, appear more cosmopolitan and prosperous than Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it is reconsidered whether the Mosaic Torah or its literary sources could have been handed down in both places since the Persian period and developed as the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) or in the form of the Masoretic Text (MT).<sup>27</sup>

A rivalry between Jerusalem and Samaria with the Garizim may have first emerged with the formation of the Ptolemaic province of “Syria and Phoenicia.” “The relative independence of the two neighbouring Persian provinces comes to an end under the reign of Ptolemy I.”<sup>28</sup> Jerusalem and Samaria came under competitive pressure from the profit-maximising Ptolemaic provincial administration, which operated from Alexandria. This competition intensified when the province came under Seleucid sovereignty in 198 BC. Since the 160s BC, as a result

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Deuteronomy and that Greek νόμος is reserved for it. (More cautiously in the judgment Frevel 2018: 377-378) On the oldest Greek traditions of biblical material, see Holladay 1983-1996.

<sup>25</sup> Porten and Yardeni 1986-1999. Deuteronomi(sti)c, cult-centralist concerns about temple operations in Elephantine apparently did not exist in Palestine.

<sup>26</sup> Hensel 2018; see also Hensel 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Alt 1953; Schorch 2011; Rhyder 2020; Hensel 2021; cf. Edenburg and Müller 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Hensel 2016: 226, and cf. 218-230.

of the Maccabean revolt, Judah increasingly emancipated itself as a regional power in Palestine.<sup>29</sup>

The Torah tells the story of Israel's pre-state beginnings. It is generally addressed to the "Israelites," as the Samaritans call themselves. Jews derive their self-understanding of being Israelites in the Torah genealogically from the fact that, according to Gen 29:35, Judah is considered the fourth of the twelve sons of Jacob-Israel (Gen 32:29; 35:10). However, the tribe of Judah is explicitly mentioned only in the Book of Numbers as well as in Deut 27:12; 33:7; 34:2. In addition, Bezalel from the tribe of Judah is mentioned as the craftsman of the portable sanctuary (Exod 31:2; 35:30; 38:22). However, the blessing for Judah in Gen 49:8-12; Deut 33:7<sup>30</sup> emphasises its special position among the brethren. But how the Mosaic Torah, which can be traced in more and more manuscripts from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC onwards, came into being from different traditions—from stories, but also from profane and cultic legal texts, from Priestly and Deuteronomi(sti)c traditions—and with an unknown distribution of power between the centres of Jerusalem and Garizim, has not yet been clarified.

Without specific information about the traditions maintained on the Garizim or in Jerusalem, only rough theories can be put forward. Were the Priestly texts the genuine contribution of Jerusalem, while Deuteronomy describes the contribution of the Garizim Israelites?<sup>31</sup> If one counts the Book of Exodus, or at least the Exodus motif, with the Priestly texts as part of the Jerusalem tradition, this may at first seem surprising. The Exodus motif is not actually considered a Jerusalem *theologumenon*. The criticism of the Books of Kings of the calf cult in ancient Israel associated with the Exodus motif (1Kgs 12:28) either

<sup>29</sup> Samaria, however, served as a Seleucid military outpost to fight the Judaeans (Gonzalez and Mendoza 2020: 170).

<sup>30</sup> "Hear, YHWH, the voice of Judah, and to his people bring him" describes—unlike Gen 49:8-12—an undefined separation or distance between the tribe of Judah and "its people" (Israel). (שמע יהוה קול יהודה ואל עמו תביאנו Deut 33:7).

<sup>31</sup> See Rhyder 2020.



contradicts an overly simplistic theory for the genesis of the Torah or signals that the Jewish community oriented towards Jerusalem already saw itself as belonging to that Israel in that phase of cooperation with the Garizim Israelites. And if the supreme court mentioned in Deut 17:8-13 is only located in Jerusalem (cf. 2Chr 19:8-10),<sup>32</sup> the Deuteronomic Torah seems to be closer to the interest of Jerusalem than to the interest of Garizim.<sup>33</sup>

### **BEN SIRA: THE SPREAD OF THE TORAH AND POLEMICS AGAINST GARIZIM ISRAELITES**

The textual history of the Wisdom of Ben Sira allows us to occupy a timeline for the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC with theological key points. The late work of the Jerusalemite Ben Sira (c. 180 BC) has three characteristics. It knows a Mosaic *mitzvah* instead of the Mosaic Torah, it polemicalises against the Garizim Israelites as a “foolish people” (Sir 50:25-26) and it reckons Judah among the tribes of Israel (cf. Sir 45:11, 27). The Greek translation of Ben Sira’s wisdom (last third of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) propagates the Torah (and the prophets, cf. its Prologue 1:1) instead of the *mitzvah*,<sup>34</sup> it demarcates the Garizim Israelites from the Jews (Sir 50:25-26),<sup>35</sup> but reckons Judah—like the Hebrew original—among the tribes of Israel.

<sup>32</sup> If Deut 17:8, 10<sup>SP</sup> reads אשר בחר יהוה, then a supreme court should also have existed under the sovereignty of the Garizim Israelites. Regarding the clear reading בחר (SP) or יבחר (MT), it should only be noted that the statement of SP refers to the Garizim and is based on the text of the Torah, whereas the interpretation of the MT on Jerusalem can only be based on the interpretation by the Jewish *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*.

<sup>33</sup> See also Römer 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Schütte 2021. The historically secured testimony for the Deuteronomic, despite 4Q46, or even the five-part Mosaic Torah does not extend beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

<sup>35</sup> Hebrew Sir 50:25: Against two nations I have abhorrence, and the third is not a nation, (26) the inhabitants of Seir and of Philistia, and the foolish nation, who dwell in Shechem (בשני גוים קצה נפשי והשלישית איננו עם [26] יושבי שעיר ופלשת וגוי נבל הדר כשכם) but Greek Sir 50:25: Against two nations I have abhorrence, and the third is not a nation, those who sit on the mountain of Samaria, and the Philistines, and the foolish people who dwell in Shechem. ([25] ἐν δυσὶν ἔθνεσιν προσώχθισεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου καὶ τὸ τρίτον οὐκ ἔστιν ἔθνος [26] οἱ καθήμενοι ἐν ὄρει Σαμαρείας καὶ Φυλιστιμ καὶ ὁ λαὸς ὁ μωρὸς ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν Σικιμοῖς).

Within the fifty years or so between the two editions, the culture in Palestine changed a great deal. In the Seleucid empire, which was plagued by instability, various Jerusalem priestly groups fought for the claim to leadership in Judah. Claiming to seek a national restoration, the Maccabees were successful and established the Hasmonean dynasty with Simon (143-135 BC). The traces of the Torah religion are now visible archaeologically in Judah, but also on Mount Garizim and in Galilee.<sup>36</sup> However, the Damascus Scroll, written between 150 and 90 BC,<sup>37</sup> still sees the exodus of the pious to the “land of Damascus” as being rooted in a rebellion of Israel against the divine *mitzvah* (CD V 21-VI 5). 4Q390 locates the historical origins of the divine *mitzvah* in the Golah of the early Persian period.<sup>38</sup> Thus the view of CD V-VI and 4Q390 back into older Judahite history competes with the assertion of the Book of Nehemiah that Ezra brought the Torah from Babylon (Neh 8:1).<sup>39</sup>

The verbal exclusion of the Garizim Israelites from the Jewish understanding of “Israel” reaches a first political climax in the destruction of the Garizim sanctuary in 111 BC by John Hyrcan.

## DEUTEROCANONICAL AND CANONICAL LITERATURE FROM THE HASMONEAN PERIOD

Historical stories from the Hasmonean period (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) revolve around the Naftalite Tobit (Tob 1:4) in the Assyrian period, Judith from Manasseh (Jdt 8:1-3) and Daniel from Judah in Babylonian

<sup>36</sup> Böhm 2012; Berlin 2013; Ince 2017.

<sup>37</sup> Stökl Ben Ezra 2016: 242. Cf. CD V 21: מצות אל ביד משה.

<sup>38</sup> Dimant 2001: 237 dates 4Q390 (Frgt. 1,6: ראשלחה אליהם מצוה) to 30-20 BC.

<sup>39</sup> At the same time, statements of Ezra and Nehemiah on the Torah do not (yet) agree with the Mosaic Torah (cf. Pakkala 2011). The text history of biblical literature also knows several examples of a displacement of the Mosaic *mitzvah* by the Mosaic Torah (e.g. 2 Kings 21:8<sup>LXX</sup> or 21:8<sup>ANT/MT</sup>), which still reach into the time of Jerome (cf. Hos 8:12 תורתִי or תורתֵי?) and the Cairo Genizah texts from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (e.g. T-S B4.29: Deut 6:17 *mizwat YHWH* or *mizwot YHWH?*), cf. Schütte 2021.

times and around the Judahite Esther in Persian times (Est 2:5-7).<sup>40</sup> The Israelite Tobit praises Jerusalem (Tob 13:10) and in Jdt 4:1 and Dan 1:3, 6 Judaeans and Daniel respectively are counted among the “Israelites.” Political identity and religious assignment intermingle. Israelites align themselves with Jerusalem, Jews are Israelites. The Book of Esther alone speaks of the Judahites throughout and mentions the name “Israel” only in the Greek expansions after Est 4:17 and 10:3. Est 10:3e-f identifies the Judahites as Israelites.

1Macc, with its story of the Maccabean liberation struggle, sees the sons of Mattatias fighting against the Seleucids and against native opponents from Israel (e.g. 1Macc 10:61). However, the Maccabees were also able to draw on notable individuals among the elders of Israel (e.g. 1Macc 11:23). They die “for Israel” (1Macc 13:4, 26-28). Simon finally frees “Israel” from the yoke of foreign rule (1Macc 13:41), although only “the land of Judah” gained rest (1Macc 14:4). Thus, in the religious and propaganda literature of the Hasmonean period, the Jewish claim to be part of Israel and to form its centre with Jerusalem is unmistakable.<sup>41</sup>

## NEVI’IM AND KETUVIM: A JEWISH INTERPRETATION OF BEING AN ISRAELITE

*Nevi’im* and *Ketuvim* of the *Tanakh*, which were not shared by the Samaritans, allow deeper insights in our leading question. *Nevi’im* and *Ketuvim* place an interpretative ring around the Mosaic Torah and thus contribute—at least since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC—to a delimitation of

<sup>40</sup> For today’s versions of these narratives, polemics against and persecution of Jews as well as Jewish piety and empowerment play an important role. Both profiles of Jewish identity can be traced back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (according to Josephus, *C. Ap.* II, 112-114 for the first time in Mnaseas of Patara [around 200 BC]; cf. Stern 1974: No. 28 and Kratz 2021); on Hasmonean images of Jewish empowerment e.g. Bezold 2021. On the dating of Tobit to the first third of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC see Schwartz 1998. For the (late) 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC for Judith see Engel 2016b: 371-372; Goodblatt 2009. For Esther in the (3<sup>rd</sup>.) 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC see Zenger 2016: 383-384 (for a dating into the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC see Knauf 2021: 411), for Daniel in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Niehr 2016: 623-624.

<sup>41</sup> See also Goodblatt 2009.

who or what is “Israel” according to Jewish understanding and who and what does not belong to it.<sup>42</sup> Thus in their history, far more than in the history of the Torah, lies a key to understanding how Jews did become Israelites. The prophetic books, on the one hand, and the historical writings, on the other, are to be emphasised.

### *The Prophetic Books: Israelites and Judaeans Intermingle*

In the Masoretic Text (MT), the prophetic books begin with Isaiah as the oldest “major” prophet. The Septuagint (LXX) opens the prophetic books with the “minor” prophets, the *Dodecapropheton*. In this, the inner sequence of the twelve prophets deviates from MT when Hosea, Amos and Micah open this work.<sup>43</sup> If only a historical order was intended, Amos should actually come before Hosea. The thematic orientation of the first three writings subtly aims at a condemnation of historical Israel and its cultural inheritance by Judah. Hosea is the prophetic Israelite. Amos is the prophetic Judaeon who appears in Israel. Micah looks from Judah to the “justified” destruction of Samaria (Mic 1:2-7). Prior to this, Hos 2:1-3 and Am 9:11-12 articulate a Judaeon claim to leadership over Israel. The sequence in the Masoretic Book of the Twelve establishes other contexts, already when the Book of Joel comes between Hosea and Amos. This order is confirmed as a secondary development by a kaige revised Greek version of the Book of the Twelve from the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC (8 H<sub>ev</sub> XIIgr), adapted to MT.<sup>44</sup> With the tendency outlined, the sequence of the *Dodecapropheton* fits better with the theological key points of the Hebrew Ben Sira, which mentions the Twelve Prophets in Sir 49:10.

<sup>42</sup> Diebner 2001.

<sup>43</sup> On the textual history of the Book of the Twelve, see Jones 1995.

<sup>44</sup> 4QXIIa/4Q76 (middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC—all data of the oldest manuscript of a bible text from the Dead Sea according to Lange 2009) could have had Jonah as the conclusion of the Book of the Twelve (Fuller 1997: 228, see also Nogalski 1993b: 78-79, 270, 278-279). The catchword phenomenon according to Nogalski 1993a applies better to the sequence of books of MT than to the text of LXX. For example, in the case of the catchword “evil”/רשע (Hab 3:13/Zeph 1:3) LXX contradicts the text of MT and 8 H<sub>ev</sub> XIIgr.

The Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are consistently considered Judaeen prophecy. But these works also express hope about an understanding between Judah and Ephraim, as non-Jewish Israel is literally called since the Persian era.<sup>45</sup> These texts reflect at least a post-Babylonian-exilic period in which relations with Samaria and the Gari-zim were not yet tense. However, the Masoretic Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel still reveal text-historical traces of an adaptation that reaches into the Hellenistic period.<sup>46</sup>

The prophetic books give the reader an initial answer to the question of how the Jews became Israelites. In Hosea and Amos it is unambiguous who is meant by Israel and Judah respectively, since a historically "original" prophetic tradition must presuppose the correct naming of both states. The literary problem of how to interpret both terms comes to the fore with Micah. Micah, who lived in the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah (Mic 1:1), must have witnessed the downfall of the state of Israel and should therefore maintain the nomenclature of his time. So, as in the Books of Hosea and Amos, is a distinction to be made in Micah between Jacob-Israel with Samaria on the one hand and Judah with Jerusalem on the other (Mic 1:5) or is he addressing Judaeans with Jacob-Israel (Mic 3:1, 9)? For the reader of the *Dodecapropheton*, no conceptual reinterpretation is signalled. Thus Micah would have to address Israelites who settled in Judah after 721 BC.<sup>47</sup> This conclusion, which is only logical, is supported by the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They testify to the coexistence of Israelites

<sup>45</sup> Schütte 2016e: 187-191. Here "understanding" always means Ephraim's recognition of Jerusalem as the centre of power and Jewish dominance (cf. Hos 2:1-3; Am 9:11-15).

<sup>46</sup> Thus Jer<sup>LXX</sup> is generally considered to be text-historically older than Jer<sup>MT</sup>, (4QJer<sup>a</sup>/4Q70, 4QJer<sup>a</sup>/4Q71 and 4QJer<sup>d</sup>/4Q72a are dated 225-150 BC, 4Q71 being close to Jer<sup>LXX</sup>; 4Q72a has independent tendencies); on this see Stipp 2008 *sed contra* Fischer 2008. On Ezekiel (4QEz<sup>c</sup>/4Q75 is dated 100-50 BC) pap 967 and *Codex Wirceburgensis* prove a textual change in Ez 36-39 by the Masoretic tradition. Like the Masoretic transpositions in the Book of the Twelve, it probably served to reconcile the book with apocalyptic currents of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> century BC (see Rudnik 2000: 52-54). I am not aware of any major textual changes in the Book of Isaiah (1QIs<sup>a</sup> c. 150-125 BC). However, 2Chr 36:22 and Esr 1:1 attribute the Deutero-Isaiah prophecy to the prophet Jeremiah, suggesting yet other compositional-historical considerations for Is 40-66 that were not erased in final Masoretic redaction processes.

<sup>47</sup> Thus consistently Schütte 2016c.

and Judaeans since the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC in the state of Judah and the early Babylonian exile.<sup>48</sup> Deutero-Isaiah reveals that—as also indicated in 1 Chr 9:2—only “Israelites” returned to Judah and Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile.<sup>49</sup> At least according to this literature, an Israelitisation of the Judaeans would have to be assumed at least since the beginning of the Persian period. This is also indicated by the difficulties in the *Nevi'im* as to how the Israelites and Judaeans who remained in Palestine 721 BC and 586 BC respectively could be named.<sup>50</sup>

### ***The Books of Kings, Chronicle and Ezra/Nehemiah: The Development of an Israelite being a Jewish Israelite***

The Books of Kings recount the history of the Israelite and Judaeans monarchy. In addition to the Masoretic text,<sup>51</sup> the Greek tradition of the *Codex Vaticanus* (4<sup>th</sup> century AD) distinguishes two levels of redaction: a kaige redaction attributed to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and oriented towards the MT in 1Kgs 1:1-2:11 and 1Kgs 22-2Kgs 25 and a non-kaige or rather a weak kaige<sup>52</sup> redaction in 1Kgs 2:12-21:43. Some recent manuscripts of the Greek-Antiochene tradition (ANT)<sup>53</sup> testify

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Jer 2:2 (“call into the ear of Jerusalem ...”), 4 (“Hear, house of Jacob ... house of Israel”) (cf. Mic 3:9-10); Jer 5:11, 20; 11:10, 17; 32:30, 32. Even more clearly testifying to this are Ezek 8:1 (elders of Judah in deportation); 14:1 and 20:1 (elders of Israel in deportation) and 4:4-8; 9:9; 27:17. On the texts see Schütte 2016f.

<sup>49</sup> Schütte 2016f: 208-210. On the speech of “Israel” in Proto-Isaiah see below.

<sup>50</sup> On this see Schütte 2016e: 186-193 and 2016f: 210-218. See also Neef 2011.

<sup>51</sup> The oldest textual witnesses are 6Q4papKings/6Q4 (125-100 BC) with fragments from 1Kgs 3; 2Kgs 5-10 and 5QKings/5Q2 with pieces from 1Kgs 1. The dating of 5Q2 in Lange 2009: 336 (first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) refers to Milik 1962: 172. But Milik here dates “Écriture ‘hasmonéenne’, postérieure à celle de 5QDeut, mais probablement relevant de la même école de scribes” and Milik 1962: 169 speaks for 5QDeut of a “date pré-hasmonéenne: première moitié du I<sup>er</sup> siècle av. J.-C.” According to Fernández Marcos 2004: 199, 5Q2 dates to around 100 BC. Treballe 2010: 24 judges “[t]his manuscript in Hasmonean writing is dated to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE.” In contrast to Lange, I follow this majority assessment.

<sup>52</sup> Kreuzer 2014, cf. Aejmelaeus 2008 on 1Sam.

<sup>53</sup> Manuscripts 19 (11.-12. Jh. AD), 82 (12. Jh. AD), 93 (13. Jh. AD), 108 (13.-14. Jh. AD), 127 (10. Jh. AD) and 700 (10.-11. Jh. AD) (numberings according Rahlfs); cf. Fernández Marcos and Busto Saiz 1992.

to a non-kaige text, which was, however, exposed to kaige influences in transmission. According to A. Schenker, in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the oldest Hebrew tradition of the Books of Kings, which for us can only be grasped through the Greek and Latin translation, was edited in order to achieve greater theological coherence in the new Masoretic text and to emphasise the political weight of the high priest in a contemporary manner as well as "a bitter rejection of the sanctuary on Garizim."<sup>54</sup> The oldest Greek version of the text (*Old Greek*) gives "the impression of a gradually evolving literary work."<sup>55</sup> This impression is underlined by the Old Latin tradition. The *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* (L 115) testifies to a pericope shift from 2Kgs 13 to 2Kgs 10 (or reverse)<sup>56</sup> and several singular text traditions. Accordingly, the Jehu tradition may have originally been presented more broadly.<sup>57</sup> 2Kgs 17<sup>L115</sup> shows a version according to which the Books of Kings are expected to have a different ending after 2Kgs 17:6, since 2Kgs 16 and 18-25 were not yet part of the work.<sup>58</sup> One intention of this shorter, old version could have been to disparage the Garizim Israelite traditions with the depiction of the Israelite king's conduct of office, which was criticised in terms of religious politics.<sup>59</sup> Text-historically, it is significant that the tradition of L 115 obviously does not yet know the Mosaic Torah (cf. 2Kgs 10:31). L 115 introduces this term (*lex*) in 2Kgs 17:15<sup>L115</sup>, from which it disappeared again like other features of 2Kgs 17<sup>L115</sup> in the rest of the tradition.<sup>60</sup> The introduction of the term "Torah"

<sup>54</sup> Schenker 2004: 179-187, quote 185; cf. Schenker 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Schenker 2004: 187.

<sup>56</sup> Richelle 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Schütte 2018b and—*contra* 2 Kings 13:7—*sub ipso Hieu Azael rex Syriae reliquit de exercitu Israel quinqueaginta equites, decem curros et mille viros secundum Elisei prophetiam* (*Liber genealogus Anni CCCXXVII*, No. 558 Mommsen 1892: 192) speak for textual abridgements by MT.

<sup>58</sup> L 115 lacks 2Kgs 16 and the manuscript breaks off after 2Kgs 17:19, 9. Tekoniemi 2021 argues for a continuation of L 115 close to 2Kgs 17<sup>MT</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> On the editorial consequences of the addition of 2Kgs 16 and 18-25, see provisionally Schütte 2019.

<sup>60</sup> Only two early German Bible translations preserve the reading of L 115 (*lex*) with Early New Standard German *ee* (see Kurrelmeyer 1908; Ising 1968).

in *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* is comparable to the development of Hebrew to Greek Ben Sira in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

For our leading question, the observation of H.-J. Zobel is important that from 1Kgs 12, the end of the dual monarchy, the Books of Kings use the term “Israel” in every connection only with reference to the state with the capital Samaria.<sup>61</sup> It is not until 2Kgs 18:5 that the reference to the “God of Israel” is first connected to the Judaeen King Hezekiah. Zobel is to be clarified insofar as MT inserts already the verse 1Kgs 12:17, according to which Rehoboam remained king over “Israelites who dwelt in Judah’s cities.” Again 1Kgs<sup>MT/LXX/ANT</sup> 14:24 places the Judaeans in the history of the Israelites when it recalls—word for word with 2Kgs 16:3; 17:8;<sup>62</sup> 21:2—“the abominations of the nations which God had removed from the face of the Israelites.” Both textual evidences also point to an editing of the Rehoboam narrative at the beginning of the Books of Kings by the MT tradition.<sup>63</sup>

The new end of the Books of Kings, however, does not only linguistically signal a new presence of the God of Israel in Judah. It measures Ahaz and Manasseh of Judah (2Kgs 16; 21:1-17) as “bad” Judaeen kings by the example of Israelite kings. The Torah, which was “rediscovered” under Josiah and promulgated by the Judaeen king (2Kgs 22-23), becomes the standard of piety.<sup>64</sup> As the target statement of the extended Books of Kings and—in the final consequence—of the “*Deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk*” (Deut-2Kgs), the enthronement of the Deuteronomic Torah as the standard of ruling, exemplified by the Judaeen king Josiah and the failure of the Judaeen monarchy by this

<sup>61</sup> Zobel 1982: 994-995.

<sup>62</sup> 2Kgs 17:8<sup>MT</sup> is missing in the text of 2Kgs 17:1-6, 15-19, 9<sup>L115</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> This editing may be related to the merging of the Books of Samuel and Kings. The tradition of 2Sam<sup>ANT</sup> ends with 2Sam 26:11<sup>ANT</sup> (= 1Kings 2:11<sup>LXX/MT</sup>). A comparison with 1Chr 10-29 makes the court history within 2Sam 10-1Kgs 2 appear as an insertion (Trebolle 2006). Thus Solomon could have become the narratively necessary link between the David narrative (1-2Sam) and the history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel from Rehoboam and Jeroboam onwards (1-2Kgs).

<sup>64</sup> What 2Kgs 23:24-25 commends as Josiah’s observance of the Mosaic Torah, 2Kgs 23:2 elaborates as the promulgation of a Book of the Covenant (cf. Ex 24:7).



standard, thus stands.<sup>65</sup> Surprisingly, Hebrew Sir 49:1-3 does not speak of this outstanding event in Josiah’s reign.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, the vote of the Masoretic Books of Kings for a Torah-oriented priestly rule with a Judaeen claim to the “correct” Torah tradition fits chronologically into the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The extent of the extant manuscripts allows us to place this development of 1-2Kgs<sup>MT</sup> from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC with its kaige revision of the Septuagint. The continued history of 1-2Kgs<sup>MT</sup> establishes Judah’s existence as “Israel” from the Assyrian conquest of Samaria (721 BC) and with roots in the Davidic-Salomonic monarchy. The intensified anti-Samaritan polemic marginalises those named by 2Kgs 17 for the first time οἱ Σαμαριῖται as a religiously questionable community.

Using 1-2Kgs or their *Vorlagen*, 1-2Chr rewrites the history of the monarchy. But conceptually 1-2Chr considers only the Judaeen monarchy and uses the terms “Israel,” “God of Israel” and “Torah”

<sup>65</sup> The Masoretic Books of Kings mention the Torah only seven times before 2Kgs 22. 1Kgs 2:3 is considered a later addition (Trebolle and Torijano 2017: 280-281) and as 2Sam 26:3<sup>ANT</sup> possibly originally belonged to the final verses of the Books of Samuel. In 2Kgs 10:31<sup>L115</sup> *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* reads “way of the Lord” (*via Domini*) instead of Torah. “Torah” in 2Kgs 14:6 is a secondary insertion (Trebolle 2007: 486). 2Kgs 21:8<sup>LXX</sup> reads “the commandment” (τὴν ἐντολήν) instead of Torah (2Kgs 21,8<sup>ANT/MT</sup>). 2Kgs 17:13 is missing in the running text of 2Kgs 17: 1-6, 15-19, 9<sup>L115</sup>. Like 2Kgs 17:34, 37, which refer to Exod 24:12, 2Kgs 17:13 is probably a late addition to the Masoretic text. A special case is the short-lived reading of 2Kgs 17:15<sup>L115</sup> (*et dereliquerunt legem eius et mandata eius quae disposuit patribus eorum*). It signals the introduction of the term “law” into the biblical text history outside the Deuteronomistic Torah and reveals the core concern of the contemporary Masoretic Books of Kings. In the Masoretic religious critique of Israel’s monarchy, the Judaeen monarchy is fully included and specifically its chances and ultimate failure are now measured against the literary Mosaic Torah. With this interpretation of history, not only but especially the end of the Books of Kings refers back to the Deuteronomistic Torah. As the conclusion of the “*Deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk*” (Deut-2Kgs), it announces not only judgement (Noth 1943: 100), nor only a “call to repentance” (Wolff 1961), but also an establishment of the Jewish Torah as a directive for social and political life and survival in a new era, which has long since presupposed the rule of the Jerusalem priesthood (cf. Pakkala 2008).

<sup>66</sup> Greek Sir 49:1-3 speaks of ἀνομία and ἄνομοι in Josiah’s day, who himself preserved the νόμος τοῦ νότιστος. Hebrew Sir 49:1-3, on the other hand, speaks of תועבות and חמס, whereas Josiah did not leave the תורה עליון. If Hebrew Sir 49:1-3 also does not commemorate Josiah’s promulgation of the Torah, then 2Kgs 22-23 is lost for the historical dating of Deuteronomy (Schütte 2021).

already since Rehoboam's reign (2Chr 11:16; 12:1).<sup>67</sup> If the history of historical Israel is thereby almost completely blanked out, the more recent historical account of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah goes a step further and describes the Garizim-Israelites as strangers who can have no part in Judah-Israel's God and his temple (Ezr 4:3).<sup>68</sup> The oldest manuscripts of 1-2Chr, Ezra and Nehemiah do not argue against placing the final version of these texts in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> century BC on the basis of their theological orientation.<sup>69</sup>

### THE EMERGENCE OF "BIBLICAL ISRAEL"

Writings from *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* indicate that "biblical Israel" emerged in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC through the exclusion of the Garizim Israelites from a Jewish ideal of "Israel" which regarded the Mosaic Torah in a specific tradition as its religious heritage. The view of history in Deutero-Isaiah already presupposed an understanding of Judahites as "Israel" in Persian times. The Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel describe an even older prehistory. According to them, Judaeans and Israelites lived in Judah during the royal period and merged in the Babylonian exile to form the Golah community of "Israel." Linguistically, the Books of Kings mark an Israelitisation of Judah even earlier. It should have taken effect with the fall of the state of Israel in 721 BC. But the Books of Kings do not explain how this should have come about.

<sup>67</sup> See also Jehoshaphat and "(the people of) Israel" (2Chr 20:7, 29), "God of Israel" (2Chr 20:19) and "Sefer Torah" (2Chr 17:9); "Israel" in Judah under Joash (2Chr 24:5, 6); Ahaz and "all Israel" (2Chr 28:23). A Deuteronomic Torah observance and a Deuteronomic concept of history under Asa is already indicated by 2Chr 15:3-4, 12-13.

<sup>68</sup> For a classification of the position of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah in a historical context from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC onwards, see Hensel 2014. The Judaeans view of the "Israel"-ness of the Garizim Israelites in the historical books of the Bible is recapitulated by Weingart 2017.

<sup>69</sup> 4QChr/4Q118 with fragments on 2Chr 28; 29 (50-25 BC) and 4QEsr/4Q117 (about 50 BC) on Ezr 4-6.

### *Israelites in Judah during the Monarchical Period*

The multi-layered biblical testimony that ultimately produced “biblical Israel” can be traced back even further with the help of the text history of the Books of Kings and literary criticism. *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* 2Kgs 17:18, 19, 9<sup>L115</sup> speaks of a voluntary exile of Israelites in Judah, as the Book of Micah linguistically suggested. According to this text tradition,<sup>70</sup> the survivors of the Assyrian conquest of Samaria were deported to Assyria. Only the tribe of Judah remained as the inheritance of what God had entrusted to Israel. But Judah paid no attention and did just as Israel had done before. They revealed to the—apparently newly immigrated—Israelites about their gods which was not appropriate, and the Israelites built themselves<sup>71</sup> high places. This unique Latin tradition also distinguishes Israel and Judah at that time and clearly speaks of a settlement of Israelites in Judah after 721 BC.<sup>72</sup>

In 2Kgs 21:8, the Masoretic text may still have preserved a memory of these Israelite new settlers. The verse purports to have been recalled as a prophecy from Davidic-Salomonic times against Manasseh. “And I will not again cause the foot of Israel to wander...”<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> (18) *et iratus est in indignatione dominus in reliquos israel ut transferret eos a faciem tua non remansit nisi tribu juda* (19) *et judas non observavit iustificationes domini dei sui set ambulaverunt in actibus totius israel secundum quae fecerunt* (9) *et revelaverunt filis israel quae non ita oportebat at deos suos et aedificaverunt sibi excel[sa in omnibus civitatibus]* (Fischer 1983). The reference to the “remnant of Israel” (*in reliquos israel*) is at odds with the Masoretic use of the phrase for developments from 597 BC onwards, cf. Schütte 2016f: 218–226.

<sup>71</sup> Is “they built themselves” (*et aedificaverunt sibi* < καὶ ὠκοδόμησαν ἑαυτοῖς < יבנו להם) based on a misunderstanding? להם might originally have referred to the foreign gods (*deos suos*). Thus להם > αὐτοῖς > *eis* would have been a translation variant: “they built them (high places)” (Schenker 2004: 148); cf. the consistent criticism of the Judaeen high places in the Books of Kings.

<sup>72</sup> *Et revelaverunt filis israel* stands, as often, for *et revelaverunt filiis israel*. Less likely is *et revelaverunt filii israel* (Fischer 1983 on the passage). Then it would have to be explained why Judah should suddenly be called “sons of Israel”.

<sup>73</sup> יִשְׂרָאֵל / וְלֹא אֶסְפִּי לְהִנִּיד רֶגְלִי יִשְׂרָאֵל / καὶ οὐ προθήσω τοῦ σαλευῖσαι τὸν πόδα Ἰσραηλ.

In the style of the usual mentions of Israel from 2Kgs 18 onwards, the verse would have to be a historical reminiscence and remind us here of Israel's settlement in the promised land. Thus the "again" (יִשְׁׁ) could allude to the inner-Palestinian Judaeon exile of Israelites. For otherwise Manasseh and his people in Judah, after 721 BC, would thereby be addressed in an unprecedented way to their own "Israel"-ness. However, when 2Kgs 21:7 calls the temple in (= ANT)/and (= MT/LXX) Jerusalem "chosen from all the tribes of Israel," this Deuteronomistic interpretation of corresponding passages of Deuteronomy rather points to a historically recent context of 2Kgs 21:8, in which the construct of the Twelve Tribes Covenant became topical in order to integrate Judah into the federation of the tribes of Israel.

### *Israelites in Jerusalem*

The lost end of *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* leaves many questions unanswered. If *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* literarily confirms the thesis of an "Israel in Judaeon exile,"<sup>74</sup> the question must be asked why the tribe of Judah could become the heir of what God entrusted to Israel without being suitable for it. The author of the statement of 2Kgs 17:19, 9<sup>L115</sup> shows himself to be critical of Judah, as if it represented the cause of the misguided Israelites who had finally found their way onto the right path. The Masoretic redactors seemed to have found this Judah-critical statement inappropriate.<sup>75</sup> They heavily edited 2Kgs 17 and left it with the criticism of Judah of 2 Kgs 17:19<sup>MT</sup>. Likewise, they eliminated a statement of 2Kgs 23:11<sup>ANT</sup> according to which the chariot of the sun was burnt by Josiah in Jerusalem, "in the house of On, which

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Schütte 2016a.

<sup>75</sup> Another mitigation of Judaic criticism is the Masoretic approach of making Hezekiah, instead of Ahaz of Judah, a contemporary of the conquest of Samaria. If the "pious" Hezekiah saved Judah from a catastrophe like that of Samaria (Schenker 2004: 167-170), this shows, according to the revised historical account of the Masoretes, the power of the divine Mosaic Torah with its commandments (*mitzvot*).

the kings of Israel had built as a high place to Baal and to all the host of heaven.”<sup>76</sup> This building presence of the Israelite kings in Jerusalem according to 2Kgs 23:11<sup>ANT</sup> adds impetus to the likelihood of Israelite refugees in Jerusalem and Judah after 721 BC. An Israelite splendour building in Jerusalem opens up a new cultural background which can make the presence of Israelite refugees in Judah and the relationship between Judah and the “children of Israel” (2Kgs 17:19, 9<sup>L15</sup>) more understandable.<sup>77</sup>

Independent of such special text-historical traditions, Chr. Frevel developed the thesis that the Davidic kingdom of Judah should be understood historically as a filial kingdom of Israel, whose rulers came at least partially from the respective ruling Israelite monarchy. In doing so, he refers to some similarities in names between Israelite and Judaeans kings who were close in time and questions the independence of the Davidic dynasty.<sup>78</sup> This thesis makes it even more understandable why Judah was a vassal of Israel for a long time of its history. Likewise, it becomes understandable why the Jerusalem prophet Isaiah speaks of the “two houses of Israel” (Is 8:14 שְׁנֵי בְתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) or could compare Israel to a vineyard and the “man of Judah” (Is 5:7 אִישׁ יְהוּדָה)<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ ὧν ὁν ᾠκοδόμησαν βασιλεῖς Ἰσραὴλ ὑψηλὸν τῷ Βάαλ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ στρατιᾷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Fernández Marcos and Busto Saiz 1992); *in domo domus quam aedificaverunt regis israel excelso illi Baal et omni militiae caeli* (Diercks 1978: 208). Schenker 2004: 69-70 sees behind the ANT/OL tradition an original ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ οἴκου ὧν ὁν designating a Baal temple of Beth-On, which was located in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

<sup>77</sup> For political and economic reasons, the Baal temple of Beth-On is unlikely to have been built later than by Menachem of Israel. It was therefore at least 100 years old at the time of Josiah. Jerusalem thus enjoyed Israelite patronage before 721 BC, which makes the recognisably longer-term growth of this city more understandable. I would like to combine these literary conclusions with the archaeological justifications for a continuous growth of Jerusalem already before 721 BC (Na’aman 2014) to form a new overall historical picture that also incorporates archaeological observations on Israelite influences in Judah after 721 BC (on this see Schütte 2016b: 12-14).

<sup>78</sup> Frevel 2018: 185-194. It should also be noted that all known traditions are at pains to cover up historical facts in the story of Joram of Judah and Joram of Israel (cf. 2Kgs 1:17<sup>MT</sup>, 1:18a-d<sup>LXX</sup> and 1:19<sup>ANT</sup> as well as 2Kgs 3 and 2Kgs 8:16-24).

<sup>79</sup> Is this a “pre-state” terminology (till the time of Ahaz) in the oldest tradition of Isaiah (see below)? Only the narrative Is 37:31 par. 2Kgs 19:30 speaks of a “house of Judah”.

to its vines. It was only in the slipstream of Assyria that the young king Ahaz succeeded in ending Israel's hegemony over Judah after the Syrian-Ephraimite war (733/732 BC; cf. Is 7).

Frevel's thesis, however, needs to be clarified. As a Davidic crown estate, Jerusalem was never administratively part of Judah, which is why it is often mentioned specifically alongside Judah in biblical terms. The Tel Dan Stele, with its mention of the "House of David", indicates that at that time there was no state Judah ruled from Jerusalem. Until the times of Jotham of Judah, the Jerusalem dominion probably hardly extended beyond the city in terms of area. The finds and texts of Kuntillet 'Ajrud (early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC)<sup>80</sup> can be interpreted in such a way that the long-distance trade passing through the Negev was controlled by Jerusalem, but served Samaria in Israel in terms of trade policy. As J. M. Tebes has shown, Jerusalem's control of the long-distance trade probably took place indirectly via local leaders in the Negev.<sup>81</sup> The kingdom of Jerusalem developed into a territorial state under the influence of its new neighbour Assyria.<sup>82</sup> Since 721 BC, Judah under Ahaz<sup>83</sup> bordered directly on the Assyrian empire. Under Hezekiah at the latest, Judah developed into a territorial state with a corresponding administration.

If the city-state of Jerusalem could have been dominated by Israelites for generations, the idea of Judah's cultural "inheritance" of Israel after 721 BC seems less strange than theories can explain to this day.<sup>84</sup> Judah itself in the area may have had little or no part in this. Its "Israelitisation" was probably more or less promoted by the Jerusalem court between 721 and 597/586 BC.<sup>85</sup> In addition to Hezekiah, Josiah

<sup>80</sup> Meshel 2012.

<sup>81</sup> Tebes 2018: 174-181.

<sup>82</sup> Finkelstein 1999.

<sup>83</sup> Thus the testimony of Sulpicius Severus, *Chr.* I 49:4-5 and Latin chronicles (Mommsen 1892: 124.135.393.635; Mommsen 1894: 443; cf. Schütte and Schneider 2019: 83 note 68); on the biblical chronology of Ahaz, see Schenker 2004: 168-169; Schütte 2017: 380.

<sup>84</sup> On this cf. Schütte 2016b and 2016d.

<sup>85</sup> On an intermingling of Israelite and Judaeon scribal handwritings after 721 BC, see Renz 1997.

and the Shaphan family,<sup>86</sup> tradition also makes Josiah's son Jehoiachin the protagonist of a religious Israelitisation of Judah. He was regarded as the figurehead of the Jerusalem elite deported in 597 BC to the Golah,<sup>87</sup> from which the returnees to Judah later returned as "Israelites" (cf. Is 40-66). The distinction between Judaeans and Israelites in the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel shows that the cultural fusion progressed only slowly and that the decisive processes of religious Israelitisation of the people historically indiscriminately politically characterised as Judaeans took place in the Babylonian Golah.

The biblical picture of the monarchical period has been revised many times. Apart from the short biographies of the kings, which were determined by religious ideas of a later time and repeatedly reworked,<sup>88</sup> the religious tradition and language of old traditions were probably also subjected to a strong revision. For example, when an inscription from Hirbet Bet Lei (c. 700 BC)<sup>89</sup> attests to the proper name of the God of Israel as the national God of Judah, its qualification as the "God of Israel" according to biblical testimony remains possible for an Israelite elite in monarchical Jerusalem and Judah (2Kgs 18:5),<sup>90</sup> but the same inscription from Hirbet Bet Lei prefers to speak of the biblically unattested "God of Jerusalem." Even if the designation "YHWH of Samaria" (Kuntillet 'Ajrud) is missing from the Book of Hosea, although one might expect it in the original prophetic word, this and the reference to the "God of Israel" in 2Kgs 18:5 and 19:20 are more likely to be due to a redaction after 586 BC. These basic observations are a further argument to be generally cautious about assumptions about possible precursors of the oldest manuscripts of biblical texts. The history of science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century around a new evaluation of the Greek-

<sup>86</sup> Schütte 2016b: 9-10.14-15. Ez 8:11 reckons Ja'asaniah ben Shaphan among the elders of the house of Israel in Jerusalem.

<sup>87</sup> 2Kgs 24:8-16 and 25:27-30 par. Jer 52:31-34. A descent from Jehoiachin was still required for the Jewish exilarch in Babylonia to the times of the Geonim (Brody 1998: 69).

<sup>88</sup> On Jehu and the two Joram see above. Clearly Salomo and also Manasseh, cf. Stavrakopoulou 2004.

<sup>89</sup> Renz and Röllig 1995: 242-246.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. the name YHWH God of Israel in the tradition of Proto-Isaiah.

Antiochene text tradition in relation to the Greek Majority Text or the discussion about unique traditions of the Old Latin Tradition, which is just beginning, point to the methodological difficulties of classifying texts with a biblical tradition that deviates strongly from today's norm as precursors of the Masoretic text.

### **FROM A JUDAEAN TO A JEWISH ISRAELITE IN THREE HISTORICAL STAGES**

Ever since the state of Judah entered history at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, its inhabitants as well as the descendants from this region were referred to as Judaeans, Judahites or Jews. Only with the founding of the modern State of Israel can Jews become Israeli politically in a simple way. Apart from a political struggle for an Israel in the third and perhaps already in the first Jewish revolt, the Jewish self-designation "Israelite" is a religious description. Three stages of increasing probability could be described for its origin, all based on an analysis of biblical texts and text traditions. The origin of the religious statement that Jews are Israelites could lie in the history of the city of Jerusalem. According to biblical tradition, the city-state of Jerusalem, conquered by David, could have come under Israelite suzerainty at a very early stage, which had a decisive influence on which kings were allowed to rule in Jerusalem. As an Israelite underlordship (filial kingship), it was its task to ensure security on the trade routes in the south, through which Samaria's goods traffic passed, by means of a patronage economy. As Israel's vassal, the Israelite-oriented or even Israelite urban elite of Jerusalem and their city became a mediator of Israelite culture in the Judah region. It was only in the shadows of the Assyrian presence in the Syropalestinian region that Ahaz of Judah began a policy of successfully detaching himself from Israel. After 721 BC, it was in the Assyrian interest that Jerusalem secured the southern trade routes. Judah increasingly developed into a territorial state whose citizens were called Judaeans. Israelites from the north probably also found a new home in Judah. Jeremiah and Ezekiel attest to two compatriots,



Judaeans and Israelites, in Judah and in the Babylonian Golah that emerged in 597 BC.

In a second step, the community that saw itself religiously as the "true" heirs of Israel was formed in the Babylonian Golah from Judaeans and native Judaeans. Judahite returnees to Jerusalem and Judah built up a new community there according to these religious convictions. Biblical tradition is silent about the Judaeans population that remained in the land in 586 BC. The religious community that remained in 721 BC in former Israel around Samaria, the Garizim Israelites or Samaritans, was courted in some prophetic books under the name "Ephraim." But at last the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe them as strangers and enemies of the Judahite Israelites, although the Elephantine correspondence in the Persian period at least indicates business-like relations between Jerusalem and Samaria.

After Alexander's victory over the Persians in 333 BC, the political situation also changed in Palestine. For the first time, the sanctuaries of Jerusalem and Garizim were subordinate to the same provincial governor. This gave rise to a new economic rivalry between the two centres, which intensified in 198 BC, after the change from Ptolemaic to Seleucid suzerainty. The political success of the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids strengthened Jerusalem's political role in the region and led to the destruction of the sanctuary on Mount Garizim in 111 BC.

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC onwards, the Hellenistic period makes the biblical tradition tangible. The now tangible formation of the Mosaic Torah can still be understood as the joint work of Garizim Israelite and Jerusalem priestly circles. However, the purely Jewish *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* reveal an increasingly Garizim-critical position from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC onwards, which literarily led to an exclusion of the Garizim-Israelites from the Jewish understanding of who belongs to Israel in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC at the latest. This third development of the Jewish understanding of Israel is characterised literarily by the formation of "biblical Israel," through which *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* interpret the Torah as Jewish-Israelite heritage.

## REMARKS

The Jewish propagandistic procedure of excluding and marginalising the Garizim Israelites by means of *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* was quickly imitated within Judaism. First the Qumran community (the Yaḥad) was formed, which later perished in the Jewish revolts against the Roman occupation, and then the Christian church. Both communities show in their textual testimonies a self-understanding of seeing themselves as the incarnation of the “true” Israel.<sup>91</sup> The presented work intended to shed light on the historical development of the Israelitisation of Judah and the Jews. In doing so, it does not pass judgement on the truth of the religious claim to the heritage of Israel made by the Keepers (“Samaritans”), Jews and the Church today. In this question about the religious heritage of being “Israel,” all three communities remain in an inalienable responsibility before God and man to each give its answer in this time.

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<sup>91</sup> Fabry 2013: 296-301; Röm 11; Böhm 2012: 198-202.

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