

## WHERE THERE ISRAELITES IN “JUDAEAN EXILE”?

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### **Summary: Where there Israelites in “Judaeon Exile”?**

In historical terms, there is evidence of an early political use of the name “Israel” (14<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) and a much later religious use of it (3<sup>rd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC); in the time in between, its predominant designation was “Samaria(ns).” Biblical and non-biblical evidence supports the notion that Israelites/Samaritans settled in Judah as refugees after 721 BC, and therefore the impulse for the emergence of biblical Israel can be located in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. The historiography of the Books of Kings should be studied with caution, since its textual history documents quantitative and qualitative changes that include the restructuring and deletion of texts. The literary history of the Books of Kings reveals our lack of knowledge over the sources it draws from, when it was composed, and how intensively earlier stages of the Masoretic text were revised.

**Keywords:** Israel – Exile – 1–2Kings – Textual Tradition – Palimpsestus Vindobonensis

### **Resumen: ¿Existieron Israelitas en el “exilio judaíta”?**

En términos históricos, existe evidencia que refiere a un uso político mucho más temprano del nombre “Israel” (siglos 14–9 a.C.), mientras que su uso religioso es muy posterior (3/2 siglos a.C.); entre ambos períodos el término que predominaba era el de “Samaritanos”. La evidencia bíblica y no bíblica apoya la noción de que los israelitas/samaritanos se asentaron en Judá como refugiados posteriormente al año 721 a.C. Por lo tanto, el impulso para la emergencia de la Israel bíblica podría ubicarse en el siglo 8 a.C. La historiografía de los Libros de Reyes debe ser estudiada con cautela, puesto que la historia de su redacción documenta cambios cuantitativos y cualitativos que incluyen la reestructuración y eliminación de textos. La historia literaria de los Libros de Reyes revela nuestra falta de conocimiento acerca de las fuentes sobre las

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cuales se basan, cuándo fueron compuestos, y cuán intensivas fueron las revisiones de las etapas tempranas del texto masorético.

**Palabras claves:** Israel – Exilio – I-II Reyes – Tradición textual – Palimpsestus vin-dobonensis

## INTRODUCTION

Why people of Judah were called “Israel” in biblical texts? In 1974 archaeologist M. Broshi proposed that a massive expansion of the city Jerusalem around 700 BC was generated by “the immigration of Israelites, who came to Judah from the Northern Kingdom after the fall of Samaria in 721 BC.”<sup>1</sup> This hypothesis has been recently developed by I. Finkelstein in many articles, based on a sudden growth of Jerusalem and the rise and economic development of Judah.<sup>2</sup> The most prominent criticism of Finkelstein’s hypothesis has been N. Na’aman’s, who interprets the archaeological data vastly differently;<sup>3</sup> yet some of Na’aman’s arguments allow for a reexamination.<sup>4</sup> Recent excavations in Jerusalem confirm Na’aman’s estimation that Jerusalem grew gradually, starting from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC and culminating around 700 BC.<sup>5</sup> Therefore Finkelstein’s theory should be reconsidered and, at least in part, revised.

Since until now archaeological data has been able to draw only a rough picture, a theory based upon written sources must be developed.<sup>6</sup> Why did the name of Israel survive in Judah? This essay follows the path of the name “Israel” from what can be grasped archaeologically and historically from the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. Furthermore, it explores how the name “Israel” is to be distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Broshi 1974.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Finkelstein and Silberman 2006; Finkelstein 2015.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Na’aman 2007; 2014.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Burke 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Uziel and Szanton 2015; Gadot and Uziel 2017.

<sup>6</sup> “The differences in type and quality of data between literary and archaeological mean that archaeology is often a means of testing the credibility of the text, while the text provides details that cannot be given by the artifacts” (Grabbe 2007: 60).

from biblical "Judah." I will also turn attention to the Books of Kings and its textual history. Differences among manuscripts allow to answer the main question under discussion here, in a way that has as yet scarcely been discussed.

### THE NAME "ISRAEL" AND "JUDAH" HISTORICALLY RECONSIDERED

Two references from the New Egyptian Kingdom that point to an "Israel" entity located somewhere in Palestine are recorded on a stone relief of unknown origin (14<sup>th</sup> century BC?), and in the famous victory poem of Pharaoh Merneptah (*ca.* 1208 BC).<sup>7</sup> However, it is not possible to connect this "Israel" directly to the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC Omride kingdom of Israel. Archaeological excavations provide evidence that the Omride kingdom developed into full statehood earlier than the Judaeon polity.<sup>8</sup> In 853 BC Assyrian king Shalmaneser III mentioned the military strength of "Ahab, the Israelite."<sup>9</sup> Slightly later, the Tel Dan Stela (*ca.* 841 BC) reports [Hazeal's] victory over "[Jo]ram, king of Israel."<sup>10</sup> The Moabite Mesha Stela (*ca.* 840 BC) recorded the former strength of Omri, "king of Israel." After the rise of the Aramean empire of Damascus under Hazeal, Assyrian allusions to the "house of Omri," the "land of Samaria," and finally to the "city of Samaria," reflect the diminishing political status of the Israelite kingdom.<sup>11</sup> "Samerina" became in the end the name of the Assyrian province after the conquest of Samaria in 721 BC. Judah, mentioned for the first time in the Tel Dan Stela, was probably called "house of David." However, from Tiglath-pileser III's reign on, as well as from Assyrian and Babylonian sources in general, it has been identified as "Judah."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Zwickel and van der Veen 2016; Rainey 2001; Morenz 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Finkelstein 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Kurkh-Monolith II,92 cf. Pritchard 1955: 279.

<sup>10</sup> Kottsieper 1998; Lipiński 2000. However, G. Athas (2003) identifies the "king of Israel" with Amaziah ben Joash.

<sup>11</sup> Kelle 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Tadmor 1994: 170–171 (Summary Inscription from Calah, No. 7, 11').

Although the existence of Israelites deported to Assyria in 734/33 and 721 BC can be reflected in the personal names referring to YHWH, “no commoner bears gentilic ‘Israelite.’”<sup>13</sup> Since 701 BC, when Sennacherib deported people from Judah to Assyria, we cannot distinguish Israelites from Judahites by name; between 700 and 602 BC a sole name is explicitly described as Samaritan.<sup>14</sup> Religious life of Israelite people continued in the now-Assyrian province of Samaria, as we can assume from historical parallels.<sup>15</sup> Although we will not discuss non-literary artifacts from Judah referring to Israelites here, it is worth mentioning that analyses of the Siloam inscription have already interpreted some linguistic peculiarities as pertaining to Israelite Hebrew used by refugees living in Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> Refugees from Samaria to Egypt and Transjordan can also be considered; however, up to now we have no reliable evidence. Papyrus Amherst 63 Column XVII,1–6, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, reports troops fleeing from Samaria, who seek protection somewhere (in Palmyra?);<sup>17</sup> they were led by a Judaeans whose “sister” came from Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup>

When the Assyrian empire disintegrated, Babylon became Judah’s suzerain. The capture of “the city of Judah” in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar (597 BC) is recorded in a Babylonian chronicle.<sup>19</sup> Deportations in 597, 586 and *ca.* 582 BC (cf. Jer 52:30) are only recorded by the Hebrew Bible. Besides the Babylonian Ration Lists for King Jehoiachin, we have cuneiform sources dating after 572 BC from Yāhūdu, the village of Judah in Babylonia and its Judaeans inhabitants,

<sup>13</sup> Zadok 2015: 159.

<sup>14</sup> Zadok 2015: 166.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Berlejung 2002; 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Rendsburg and Schniedewind 2010.

<sup>17</sup> K. Van der Toorn (2018: 10–11.205), defends Sennacherib’s campaign in 701 BC as the historical background of this text. On a Samaritan background in Judah at the time of Micah, cf. W. Schütte (2016: 84–86). Yet a connection to the fall of Samaria (721 BC) cannot be excluded. “Nearly all the compositions compiled in this ‘anthology’ are from about 700 BCE or before” (Van der Toorn 2018: 205).

<sup>18</sup> Column XVII, 3–4: “my brothers have been brou[ght] from Samaria and now a man is bringing my sister from Jerusalem” (Van der Toorn 2018: 75).

<sup>19</sup> Grayson 2000: 102 (ABC 5 rev 11–12).

bearing witness to these deportations.<sup>20</sup> The biblical story of Gedaliah's assassination alludes to the assassins' flight to Transjordan, along with refugees to Egypt (Jer 41–42). But again, we have no reliable extra-biblical evidence for these events.

Evidence of Judaeen life in Judah under Babylonian suzerainty is scarce.<sup>21</sup> Many settlements were destroyed and only the Benjaminite area recovered soon;<sup>22</sup> Mizpah seems to have served as a Babylonian administration center. Although no Hebrew literary source has been found as yet to demonstrate scribal activity for the period from 586 to 350 BC,<sup>23</sup> the archaeology of the Persian period reveals a “religious revolution” taking place.<sup>24</sup> Cultic female figurines, widespread in Judah before 586 BC, were found in the Persian period along the coastal region but not in the areas of Judaeen settlements. Instead of local sanctuaries, the Samari(t)an sanctuary<sup>25</sup> on Mt. Gerizim and the new Temple (היכל ד' בית) of Jerusalem were now standing. Outside Palestine, a YHWH “shrine” (אנורה)<sup>26</sup> existed in Elephantine, southern Egypt, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, while another temple (בית) is mentioned by an Idumaeen ostrakon dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>27</sup> Written sources from

<sup>20</sup> Weidner 1939; Stolper 1985; Pearce and Wunsch 2014. I know of no Babylonian reference to Judaeen religious practices in the Babylonian exile. A rental contract for a slave shows that by the time of Nabonidus Babylonian legal conventions were followed within the Jewish community (Pearce and Wunsch 2014: 106).

<sup>21</sup> Lipschits 2003; even in Samerina: Zertal 2003: 380.

<sup>22</sup> Lipschits 2003: 346–348; 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Finkelstein 2016: 9–10.

<sup>24</sup> Stern 2006, but cf. a criticism by Frevel, Pyschny and Cornelius 2014.

<sup>25</sup> The sanctuary is often called “this place” (אתרא דנה), once “house of sacrifice” (בית דבחה), “sanctuary” (מקדש) and “shrine” (אנורה); evidence for “temple” (היכל) is disputed, cf. Becking (2012: 62) and Tsedaka (2012: 421–423), Hensel (2016: 39–43, 47–50). τὸ ἱερόν (Ἀργαριζίου) (Pseudo-Eupolemos, Fragment 1, cf. Holladay 1983: 172) denotes in a most general sense a temple complex (Schrenk 1967: 232).

<sup>26</sup> TAD A4.7; A4.8; cf. inscription No. 200 (אנורה), found on Mt. Gerizim, and its interpretation by Becking 2012: 61–62; TAD A4.9 “Altar-house” (בית מדרבחה); TAD A3.3; D7.18 “house of YHW/YHH” (בית יהו / יהה). Also Egyptian temples are referred to as shrines in TAD A4.7; A4.8 (אנורה); Kratz 2006a: 251–252.

<sup>27</sup> Lemaire 2001: 1152–1158. References to the YHWH temple at Leontopolis (163 BC–73 CE; ὁ ναός or τὸ ἱερόν cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12,388; 13,62–73.285; 20,226; *JW.* 1,33; 7,426–436) and at the Tobiad center 'Araq el-Emir; cf. Frey 1999: 186–195.

Elephantine (*ca.* 407 BC) document a request for help from the Persian governors of Samaria and Jerusalem and from the temple of Jerusalem, to restore the shrine at Elephantine that had been destroyed.<sup>28</sup> These and later sources from Egypt reveal Judaeans (and Samaritan) religiosity to be notably different from biblical demands.<sup>29</sup> The name “Israel” is not recorded at all in these texts, only “Judaeans” and “Samaritans.”<sup>30</sup>

During the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods, Samaria and Jerusalem belonged to a single province, Syria and Phoinike, or Coele Syria. Competing economic interests between the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary and the temple of Jerusalem increasingly generated tensions between them.<sup>31</sup> Then the Hasmonaean policy of expansion intensified conflicts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, and religious hostility increased.<sup>32</sup> In the reign of John Hyrcanus (134–104 BC) the Samaritan region was conquered and the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim destroyed.

Whithin this background, the name “Israel” is found again on two Hellenistic inscriptions excavated on the Cycladic island of Delos (250–175 and 150–50 BC).<sup>33</sup> They mention a group of “Israelites” making contributions to their (Samarit[an]) sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim.<sup>34</sup> The biblical manuscripts from Qumran show that the name “Israel” was common in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC even in Judah, but only in religious contexts. In contrast, a political use of the name “Israel” was not usual in Hasmonean Judah after 142 BC, as shown

<sup>28</sup> TAD A4.7/8 cf. Porten and Yardeni 1986–1999.

<sup>29</sup> Elephantine documents: the divine epithet “Bethel” as a synonym for YHWH (even in pAmherst 63), cf. Van der Toorn (2018, 30); concerning offerings, cf. J. Frey (1999: 177–178); in reference to the Sabbath cf. A. Rohmoser (2014: 331–333, 374–377); G. Granerød (2016: 204–206.) pAmherst 63 (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) column XII,11–19 represents a Samaritan psalm, which is a precursor of Jewish Ps 20 (Van der Toorn 2018: 165–169); documents from Herakleopolis (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) show that Egyptian legal conventions were followed within the Jewish community, *e.g.* for receivable interest J. M. S. Cowey and K. Maresch (2001: 25).

<sup>30</sup> Judaeans: Tcherikover and Fuks 1957; Cowey and Maresch 2001; even Samaritans: Van der Toorn 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Hensel 2016: 218–230.

<sup>32</sup> Hensel 2016: 195–208.

<sup>33</sup> M. Kartveit (2009: 219) re-evaluates the inscriptions and dates in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

<sup>34</sup> Bruneau 1982; cf. Hensel 2016: 76–85.

especially by coin inscriptions.<sup>35</sup> The name "Israel" was written for the first time on tetradrachms from the period of the first Jewish rebellion (66–70 CE) ("Shekel of Israel").<sup>36</sup> Rebels again alluded themselves as "Israel" in coins and letters from the time of the Bar Kochba rebellion (132–135 C.E.),<sup>37</sup> while the title "nasi" given to Simon bar Kochba emphasizes their religious ideology.<sup>38</sup>

In sum, only Samaritans and Judaeans are attested between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The name "Israel" appears historically until the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but then again only from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC on, when it was claimed as a religious legacy by two increasingly competitive communities, a Samari(t)an one based in the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim, and a Judaeans/Jewish one oriented toward Jerusalem.

### THE NAME "ISRAEL" BIBLICALLY RECONSIDERED

The Pentateuch that stands today was a textual tradition shared by the Samaritan and the Jerusalem communities, while its completion in the Persian or in the Hellenistic period<sup>39</sup> was likely a result of the cooperation between the two communities.<sup>40</sup> It is probable that the Samari(t)an Israelites living in the erstwhile land of Israel saw no problem in reckoning the Jerusalem Judaeans among the twelve tribes of Israel. But a different question is whether this biblical understanding can be traced back into the (pre-) monarchical period. For the Jerusalemite claim to be "Israel," examination of the local Jerusalem tradition of the *Neviim* and *Ketuvim* takes precedence.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Goodblatt 1998.

<sup>36</sup> For this discussion see Goodblatt (1998: 26–28).

<sup>37</sup> Goodblatt 1998: 28–35.

<sup>38</sup> Goodblatt 1998: 32–33.

<sup>39</sup> "During the rule of the Persians, and in the time of the Macedonians, who overthrew them, through intermingling with foreign nations, many of the traditional customs among the Jews were altered. ...This is what Hecataeus of Abdera has related about the Jews" (Diodorus Siculus 40:3, cf. Jacoby 1954: 13–15); cf. also A. M. Berlin (2013).

<sup>40</sup> On this discussion cf. B. Hensel (2016: 170–194).

<sup>41</sup> Only some of the main lines of what I have elaborated elsewhere can be traced here (Schütte 2016a).

For Haggai and Zechariah, “Judah” is a toponym for the place where “this people” lives.<sup>42</sup> The “remnant of this people” (Zech 8:6, 11, 12) is set by Zechariah 8:7 over against “my people,” who will come from the east and the west to Jerusalem. “My people” (עַמִּי) is biblically always “Israel.” We can only presume that “the house of Judah” and the “house of Israel” in Zechariah 8:13 were meant to denote the inhabitants of the country<sup>43</sup> and the Diaspora. A claim of this Diaspora-Israel to the political entity<sup>44</sup> Judah as homeland can be recognized in the mention of “Israel” in Nah 2:3 and Joel 2:27, and of “my people” in Joel 2:18–19, 26–27.<sup>45</sup> More clearly, 1–2 Chronicles formulate the idea that the Judaeans Israelites from Babylon newly settle Judah (1Chr 9:1–2).<sup>46</sup>

The book of Ezekiel alludes to an Israelite and a Judaeans community in Babylon, as well as to one in Jerusalem.<sup>47</sup> The Book of Jeremiah names Israelites and Judaeans simultaneously (Jer 11:10, 17; 13:11; 32:30, 32), so it is not necessary to identify those Israelites with the inhabitants of the Assyrian province Samerina or with the Israelites deported to Assyria (Jer 3:18; 16:15; 23:8; 32:30)<sup>48</sup> or to assign these assertions to the Judaeans deported to Babylon.<sup>49</sup> An interpretation implicitly assuming Jeremiah’s “all Israel” perspective must be proved rather than assumed. In political terms, Jeremiah speaks of the “people of Judah” or the “man (= inhabitant) of Judah,” but speaks of “my people” as a theological term, meaning Israel and Israelites only. Only with the help of the covenant formula (*Bundesformel*<sup>50</sup>) did people who were

<sup>42</sup> Hag 1:1–2; 2:2; Zech 1:12; 2:2, 4, 16.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Ezr 5:1 “Haggai and Zechariah, son of Iddo, prophesied to the Judaeans (יְהוּדִיָּא), who were in Judah and Jerusalem.”

<sup>44</sup> “Judah” (fem.): Nah 2:1; Joel 4:20; Zech 14:14; Mal 2:11. See also Is 7:6; Jer 14:2; 23:6; 33:16.

<sup>45</sup> Schütte 2016g: 201–218.

<sup>46</sup> Bortz 2018: 257–268.

<sup>47</sup> Ez 14:1; 20:1, 3 and 8:1 resp. Ez 8:11 and 8:17; cf. even Jer 50:4, 33. Zimmerli failed in his attempt to eliminate every mention of “Judah” in Ezekiel as being a secondary insertion, precisely because of Ez 8:1, 11, 17 (Zimmerli 1979: 1258–1261, cf. Schütte 2016g: 203–208).

<sup>48</sup> Fischer 2005a: 196; 2005b: 208 refers of the two parts of a former single Israel.

<sup>49</sup> J. R. Lundbom (1999: 315.769: Babylonia and/or Assyria). P. C. Craigie, P. H. Kelly and J. F. Drinkard Jr. (1991: 61: the Babylonian exile).

<sup>50</sup> Rendtorff 1995.

Judaeans by descent become “for me the people” (לִי לְעָם), that is, the people of God.<sup>51</sup> For the late Babylonian exilic chapters of Is 40–66, Judah is merely a toponym to which Jacob-Israel will return home.<sup>52</sup>

If we look at the Books of the Prophets pre-dating the Babylonian exile, at the time, when the kingdoms of Judah and Israel existed, only a few statements must suffice here.<sup>53</sup> The prophecy of First Isaiah, who was historically from Jerusalem or Judah, is aimed at “Israel.” Micah, living at Judahite Moreshet, was speaking to the “house of Israel” in Judah and Jerusalem. Amos from Tekoa in Judah, whose writings are dated as the earliest handed down in the Judaeon-Jewish *Neviim*, was active only in Israel. Words of Hosea, the Israelite “prophet”<sup>54</sup> working in Israel, distinguish time and again clearly “Israel” from “Judah.” His writing leads the collection of the Books of the Twelve Prophets—notwithstanding some changes in the order of the twelve prophetic writings during the textual history.<sup>55</sup> Even this prophetic literature is dominated by an Israelite perspective, distinguishing Israel and Israelites in Israel and Judah<sup>56</sup> distinctly from Judah (and Judahites?<sup>57</sup>).

A Babylonian-exilic origin for “Israel” is probably hinted at by the history of the term “remnant of Israel.”<sup>58</sup> Although the survivors of Nebuchadnezzar’s capture of Jerusalem in 597 BC are called the “remnant of Israel” (Jer 6:9; Ez 9:8; 11:13), the biblical term developed literarily. Already Jer 6:9 threatened the remnant of Israel in Judah with a “gleaning,” so this remnant—losing the attribute “Israel”—is condemned (Jer 8:3; 15:9; 24:8). Conversely, the deportees in Babylon are called “the remnant of Israel” (Jer 31:7; Mi 2:12; cf. Ez 11:14–20) who will inherit the land of Judah (Mi 4:6–7; Zeph 3:12–13).

<sup>51</sup> Schütte 2016g: 195–203.

<sup>52</sup> Is 40:9; 44:26; 65:9 cf. 48:1.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Schütte 2016a.

<sup>54</sup> Neither Hosea, nor Amos, nor Micah, nor Isaiah is called a prophet in the book bearing his name.

<sup>55</sup> The order in the MT and in the Septuagint differ. Different again is that in the Greek Codex Venetus.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Is 1:3; 2:5; 4:2; Mi 2:9; 3:1, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Hos 5:10, 12, 14; Am 2:4–5. Referred to Is 5:3, 7 cf. Schütte 2016f: 179; Schütte 2016g: 202.

<sup>58</sup> Schütte 2016g: 218–226.

Alongside these mentions, there are two extraordinary references. In 2Chr 34:9 a Judahite “remnant of Israel” living in Judah is distinguished, on one hand, from the people of Ephraim and Manasseh in former Israel, and on the other hand from Judah, Benjamin and Jerusalem. Only in the Old Latin manuscript *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* (L 115) in 2Kgs 17:18 does this term refer to the Israelites deported to Assyria in 721 BC: “Therefore the Lord was very angry with the remnant of Israel and removed them out of your sight; none was left but the tribe of Judah” (*et iratus est in indignatione dominus in reliquos israel ut transferret eos a faciem tua (sic!) non remansit nisi tribu iuda*).<sup>59</sup> Both passages refer to groups of Israelites from Israel and do not conform to any other biblical language used elsewhere.

In sum, the literary picture of the Masoretic Bible presents a vision of the Israelites living beside Judahites in Judah until 596 BC, moving from Judah to Babylon and later returning back to Judah.

## THE RISE OF “BIBLICAL ISRAEL”

The prevailing view among scholars is that the *biblical* understanding of Israel—designating even people of Judah as “Israelites”—dates no earlier than 721 BC, after Samaria was conquered by Assyria.<sup>60</sup> Conversely, H. G. M. Williamson claimed for some expressions, especially Isaiah’s “the Holy One of Israel” and “the two houses of Israel” (Is 8:14), a dating prior 721 BC.<sup>61</sup> Yet, the biblical texts lead back to the still undecided literary-historical question of who wrote these texts and when.<sup>62</sup> According to Finkelstein, it was the strong pressure made by Israelite refugees in Judah the force that prompted Hezekiah’s scribes to develop the idea of the biblical Israel. Resulting conflicting traditions had to be reconciled, as shown for example in the Saul-David

<sup>59</sup> B. Fischer (1983: 87), sees *a faciem tua* as a scribal error in place of *a facie sua*.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Kratz 2000; Schniedewind 2004: 68–90; Finkelstein and Silberman 2006; Na’aman 2009; 2010.

<sup>61</sup> Williamson 2001a; 2001b.

<sup>62</sup> Williamson 2001a: 31; Kratz 2006b.

tradition.<sup>63</sup> Na'aman sees Josiah as the initiator of this process one hundred years later, taking over Bethel as "the highly prestigious vacant heritage" of Israel.<sup>64</sup> In the same vein, E. A. Knauf views Bethel as the center where the Israel tradition flowed into the Judaeen literature, probably in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC when Jerusalem was destroyed.<sup>65</sup> However, archaeological finds in Bethel speak against Knauf's proposal.<sup>66</sup> In harmony with the archaeological evidence, Ph. R. Davies points to Benjaminite Mizpah as the factor behind the development of biblical Israel in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>67</sup> D. Fleming stands against these models, arguing that "The crucial question here is whether a clear Israelite identity and literature would have survived somewhere in that region for more than a hundred years, until it could be incorporated into Judah."<sup>68</sup> Although for Fleming, the David lore is an argument to assume a Judaeen Israel-tradition since the time of Rehoboam, claiming this a historical assumption is, without non-biblical evidence, not sufficient.<sup>69</sup>

## TEXTUAL HISTORY OF 1–2KINGS

The historiography of the Books of Samuel and Kings plays a large role in the discussion. The Books of Kings in the Septuagint (LXX) differ from the Masoretic tradition (MT) in manifold ways, but also among its textual witnesses there are significant differences. The early, so-called kaige recension brought large parts of the text into line with the MT,<sup>70</sup> while the remaining parts of the text show only a slight kaige

<sup>63</sup> Finkelstein and Silberman 2006: 275–279; Finkelstein (2011), yet for a different view on Benjaminite history cf. Na'aman (2009).

<sup>64</sup> Na'aman 2010: 17, cf. Schütte (2016b: 10).

<sup>65</sup> Knauf 2006.

<sup>66</sup> Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz 2009.

<sup>67</sup> Davies, 2006; 2007a; 2007b; 2017.

<sup>68</sup> Fleming 2012: 14; cf. Schütte (2016b: 10).

<sup>69</sup> Fleming 2012: 299. This is true also for the assumption of Weingart 2014 that the biblical concept of the Twelve Tribes is pre-monarchical. Cf. Schütte (2016f).

<sup>70</sup> LXX 2Sam 10:1–1Kgs 2:11 and 1Kgs 22:1–2Kgs 25:30. 1Kgs 1:1–2:11 belongs for ANT still to 2Sam and could have formed with the kaige section LXX 2Sam 10:1–1Kgs 2:11 (= ANT 2Sam 10:1–26:11) an early extension of 1–2Sam (Trebolle Barrera 2006), which linked the book with 1–2Kgs.

recension.<sup>71</sup> The tradition of the Antiochene text (ANT) generally preserves an older stage of the text than the strong kaige recension, although it shows also traces of later recensions.<sup>72</sup> The original Greek translation (“Old Greek” – OG) of the Books of Kings may well have used a Hebrew version that differed clearly from the MT. Numerous scholars are convinced that this OG version represents a text form older than the MT.<sup>73</sup> Therefore the MT is perhaps responsible for the exchange of the chapters 1Kgs 20 and 21 or for the shift of the notes on Jehoshaphat (LXX/ANT 1Kgs 16:28a-h cf. MT/LXX 1Kgs 22:41–51).<sup>74</sup> Several small changes in the text of the MT usually aim at showing an irreproachable and perfect representation of the Jewish religion throughout its history, better accommodating to the situation in the Second Temple period.<sup>75</sup>

This discussion of the Septuagint and MT will now be broadened through intensive engagement with the Old Latin (OL) tradition of the Books of Kings.<sup>76</sup> According to P. Lagarde’s axiom, the further a (good) textual witness of the Septuagint is from the MT, the older is its textual tradition.<sup>77</sup> Why should anyone in ancient times waste his resources for making an imprecise or even false text? If this supposition stands scrutiny, the OL text tradition of the *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* (ca. 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) stands out.<sup>78</sup> As the only large OL

<sup>71</sup> 1Sam 1–2Sam 9 and 1Kgs 2:12–21:28 (Aejmelaeus 2008; Kreuzer 2014). In my opinion, the strong kaige recension could be accounted for by a strong textual revision by LXX/MT in these sections, which connected the Books of Samuel and Kings (ANT 2Sam 10–26; Schütte 2018a: 39, cf. Treballe Barrera 2006), dealt with memories of the Aramaic wars (LXX 1Kgs 16:28a-h/ MT 1Kgs 16:29–2Kgs 14; Schütte 2018a), and conflated a description of Israel’s Judaeane-exilic times (2Kgs 16; 18–25) from various parts (very different traditions from the monarchical annals, Isaiah and Jeremiah respectively) with a revised 2Kgs 17.

<sup>72</sup> Fernández Marcos and Busto Saiz 1992; Torijano Morales 2017.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Hugo and Schenker 2017: 315–317.

<sup>74</sup> Schenker 2004: 86–107.

<sup>75</sup> Schenker 2004: 175–178. This assessment of the history of the text of the Books of Kings is disputed. On the additions of the Septuagint in 1Kgs 2 cf. P. S. F. van Keulen (2005); A. S. Turkanik (2008) *contra* A. Schenker (2000).

<sup>76</sup> Kauhanen 2013; Tekoniemi 2016; 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Lagarde 1863: 3.

<sup>78</sup> Critical edition by Fischer (1983).

manuscript of the Books of Kings, it possesses numerous distinctive features. The text in 1–2Kings is influenced by no clearly recognizable kaige recension.<sup>79</sup> Very striking are two large textual aberrations. The death news of Elisha are moved from the time of Jehoahaz (2Kgs 13) into Jehu’s (between 2Kgs 10:30 and 31). In addition, the Jehu information in OL is more broadly developed, while the text of 2Kgs 17 diverges consistently from all tradition and 2Kgs 16 is missing. Text historical studies hold *Palimpsestus* in these cases, which deviate from the entire Greek and Hebrew tradition, for the oldest text tradition (OG).<sup>80</sup> The missing Ahaz tradition of 2Kgs 16 may well not be a copyist’s mistake, because in 2 Kgs 17:1 the customary synchronism of Hoshea of Israel with Ahaz of Judah was missing too. The obvious conclusion is that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* originally knew no Ahaz tradition and with that no continuation of the Judaeen royal history after Jotham (2Kgs 15).<sup>81</sup> Its narrative aims at a theological commentary on the downfall of Israel and finishes with it.<sup>82</sup>

There are at least three reasons for following this interpretation. This hypothesis allows for a resolution of the differences in the chronology of the kings in 2Kgs 15–18. It is very probable that Ahaz in Judah reigned beyond the crisis of the year 721.<sup>83</sup> When the MT makes Hezekiah a contemporary witness to the downfall of Israel, this may well be for theological reasons.<sup>84</sup> Assuming that 2Kgs 16 and 18–25 are

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<sup>79</sup> Tekoniemi 2016; 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Schenker 2004; 2005; Richelle 2015; Tekoniemi 2015; Schütte 2018b *contra* Treballe Barrera 1984.

<sup>81</sup> However, Schenker (2004, 167–170) suspects the Ahaz allusion—against the chronological structure of the Books of Kings—being after the Hoshea note and behind 2Kgs 17. Actually, the *Palimpsestus* itself must have reported on the Judahite kings after Jotam, especially about Josiah. Only so can OL 2Kgs 17,15 (and [?] OL 1Kgs 13:19–29 cf. MT 2Kgs 23:17) be explained (Schütte 2018c). However, OL 2Kgs 21–23 (Lucifer of Cagliari) shows textual deviations from ANT/LXX/MT.

<sup>82</sup> Schütte 2017. This thesis corresponds also to the narrative weight in the Books of Kings with events from Israel.

<sup>83</sup> Schütte 2017: 380; cf. Sulpicius Severus I 49:2–5, Jerome’s chronicle (Helm 1956: 88a) and the Gallic Chronicles (Mommsen 1892: 124.135.393.635; Mommsen 1894: 443).

<sup>84</sup> Schenker 2004: 170.

secondary additions to the revised 2Kgs 17, it becomes clear why the theological judgment about Hoshea (2Kgs 17:2) changed. If Hoshea represented in the OL/ANT the peak of the growing wickedness of the kings of Israel, then this was retracted by MT/LXX,<sup>85</sup> and the evil of the kings increased anew with Ahaz and Manasseh. From this point on, Ahab of Israel was identified as the model of evil. Several pieces of evidence also suggest that the Ahab stories were revised and enhanced.<sup>86</sup> Also speaking for a later attachment of 2Kgs 16 and 18–25 is the phrase “my servants, the prophets,” being documented only in MT 2Kgs 9:7; 17:13, 23; 21:10 and 24:2. Since OL leaves the verses 7–14 in 2Kgs 17 out, verse 23 is likely a later addition along with 2Kgs 17:13. The evidence from 2Kgs 21:10 and 24:2 resides in the postulated addition. ANT 2Kgs 9:7 reads—other than later MT/LXX—only “the prophets.” The phrase “my servants, the prophets” has recognizably its origin in the Book of Jeremiah and could have come through the borrowing of Jeremiah in 2Kgs 25 (cf. Jer 52) into the MT Books of Kings.<sup>87</sup>

Considering the fragmentary state of preservation of the manuscript, we can cautiously suggest that this OL text knew of no covenant<sup>88</sup>—and originally<sup>89</sup> also of no Torah theology. Only OL 2Kgs 17:15 does refer back to the Torah, where MT does, however, speak of “covenant.”<sup>90</sup> Instead, OL 2Kgs 17:16 prefers to speak of “the Lord’s

<sup>85</sup> From Omri (OL/ANT 1Kgs 16:25) through Ahab (OL/ANT/LXX/MT 1Kgs 16:30, 33), Ahaziah (ANT 1Kgs 22:54) to Hoshea (OL/ANT 2Kgs 17:2). Incidentally, B. Halpern and D. S. Vanderhooft (1992: 250–254, 260–261), only use the Septuagint and do not recognize this older formal principle of OL/ANT which was abandoned by MT/LXX.

<sup>86</sup> Schütte 2018a.

<sup>87</sup> MT (and LXX) Jer 7:25; 25:4; 29:19 (MT only); 35:15; 44:4 and Am 3:7; Zech 1:6; Dan 9:6, 10; Ezra 9:11. For the late Torah and prophetic theology in 1–2Kgs cf. R. Achenbach (2007: 43–47).

<sup>88</sup> Thus four times in OL 1Sam 4:3–5 stands as in non-kaige LXX “ark” instead of “ark of the covenant” (ANT, MT). The expression “covenant” is missing in OL 2Kgs 17:15.

<sup>89</sup> OL 2Kgs 10:31: “and Jehu was not careful to walk in the way [ANT/LXX/MT: the law] of the Lord the God of Israel with all his heart” (*et ieu non observare ire in viam domini dei israel ex toto corde suof...*).

<sup>90</sup> OL 2Kgs 17:15 “they despised his law [ANT: covenant; MT: statutes], and his commandments [ANT: statutes, MT: covenant] that he made with their ancestors” (*et dereliquerunt legem eius et mandata eius quae disposuit patribus eorum*).

commandment” (*praeceptum domini*),<sup>91</sup> as it was the characteristic guiding concept of MT Dtn 12–26 and LXX 2Kgs 21:8 (“the commandment of Moses”) and was still used by Hebrew Ben Sira as precursor concept in place of “the Torah.”<sup>92</sup> The Deuteronomistic nomism in 1–2Kings may well, according to OL 2Kgs 10:31; 17:16, have first begun with a Greek *Vorlage* of *Palimpsestus* containing the text of OL 2Kgs 17:15.<sup>93</sup> As the narrative of Josiah’s covenant was added (2Kgs 23) into the Book of Kings, were also the Torah and covenant theology introduced successively into their narratives.<sup>94</sup>

1Kings–2Kings 17 had simultaneously two shorter political touches as representations of an inevitable destruction of Israel. The first is the theological criticism of grievances or abuses in Israel aimed directly at Judaeon conditions under Ahaz and Manasseh.<sup>95</sup> Second, although OL 2Kgs 17:18 reports on the complete deportation of the “remnant of Israel,” the text continues:

*V. 19 et iudas non observavit iustificationes domini dei sui set ambulaverunt in actibus totius israel secundum quae fecerunt V. 9 et revelaverunt filis israel<sup>96</sup> quae non ita oportebat at deos suos et aedificaverunt sibi excel[sa in omnibus civitatibus*

<sup>91</sup> OL 2Kgs 17:16 “and they left all the commandment (ANT/LXX/MT: commandments) of the Lord their God” (*et transierunt omnes praeceptum domini dei sui*).

<sup>92</sup> Hebrew Ben Sira speaks of “Torah” (תורה), when he more closely characterizes the divine “commandment” (מצוה) (cf. Sir 45:5). In language use Sir 41:8; 49:4 resembles OL 2Kgs 17:15: (*de*)*relinquere legem*. The recommended reading of Ben Sira’s guiding principle “commandment” was “commandments,” already in the Hebrew text tradition through marginal glosses (Ms B Sir 32:23; 37:12; cf. [www.bensira.org](http://www.bensira.org)). Greek Ben Sira translates מצוה—as LXX Dtn—always with “the commandments” (αἱ ἐντολαί). In Sir 44:20 Ben Sira’s grandson even translates the *status constructus* “the commandments of the Most High” (מצוה עליון) with “the Torah of the Most High” (νόμον ὑψίστου).

<sup>93</sup> Schütte 2018c: 5; cf. Pakkala 2008.

<sup>94</sup> On the development of covenant statements in 1–2Kgs cf. ANT, LXX and MT; Schütte 2017: 371.

<sup>95</sup> “They passed their sons and daughters through fire” (OL/ANT/LXX/MT 2Kgs 17:17) cf. ANT/LXX/MT 2Kgs 16:3; 21:6.

<sup>96</sup> Fischer 1986: 86 assumes “*filis* = *filiis* possibly an error for *filii*.” Schenker 2005 argues convincingly for the reading *filiis*. The result of both readings is a presence of Israelites in Judah after 721 BC.

*V. 19 And Judah did not keep the statutes of the Lord their God but walked in the customs of all Israel acting accordingly. V. 9 And they revealed the children of Israel, what is not right, to their Gods, and they built themselves high [places at all towns*

The *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* assumes that after 721 BC non-deported Israelites lived in Judah and started a new life, a time during which they became acquainted with the religious practices of Judah. The critical judgement of OL 2Kgs 17:9 is doubtless written in Judah from a very special Israelite perspective. This manuscript refers uniquely of a new cultural start of Israelites in Judah (cf. 2Chr 34:9), taking the Masoretic picture of Israelite life in Judah to a decisive step further: Israelite life in Judah was rooted in the Israelite homeland. The reworked Masoretic text confirms that this historical origin of Israelite tradition in Judah was later—because of antagonism toward the Samaritans?<sup>97</sup>—no longer to be recounted.

The text-historical witness of MT, LXX, ANT and in particular OL 1–2Kings points to Israelite life in Judah alongside Judahites before 597/586 and after 721 BC; *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* recounts about the Israelite exile in Judah. With the help of these sources, how can the formation of the biblical Israel be understood?

## THE BIBLICAL ISRAEL AS CULTURAL LEGACY OF THE REFUGEES FROM ISRAEL

In his *History of Israel* Chr. Frevel supports the idea that the kingdom of Judah was for a long time more than a vassal of Israel. Judah was rather a “filial kingdom,” a kingdom directly subordinated to Israel. At times, for example, the Israelites Joram, Ahaziah and Jehoahaz were both kings of Judah and Israel.<sup>98</sup> Since Ahaz’s reign (respectively, after

<sup>97</sup> What does it mean for the text history that anti-Samaritan statements such as in MT 2Kgs 17:24–41 are manifested outside the Bible for first time in the Hasmonean period (Hensel 2016: 207)?

<sup>98</sup> Frevel 2016. According to Frevel, Jeroboam I is also a literary creation on the basis of Jeroboam II. On this cf. the criticism of Grabbe (2017). See also the discussion on the text of the Tel Dan inscription. Does it read “and I kill[ed Ahaz]iah, son of [Joram]” (Kottsieper 1998)

the end of the Jehu dynasty), Judah emancipated from Israel. This proposal can explain Israelite life in Judah not only after 721 BC (per Finkelstein, Na‘aman), but before that. This perspective allows for a new interpretation of the formula “both houses of Israel” in the book of the Jerusalem Isaiah (Is 8:14).<sup>99</sup> Since the biblical tradition constantly identifies Jerusalem separately—as originally non-Judahite and Davidic property—beside the dominion of Judah, it is worthwhile to consider the possibility that in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC “the house of David” (Tel Dan inscription) only ruled Jerusalem. Before the territorial development of Judah in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, the southern Judaeans were under the hegemony of Israel, represented either by fortresses or trading posts like Kuntillet ‘Ajrud or by local chiefdoms that accepted the Israelite-Jerusalemite supremacy.<sup>100</sup>

If Jerusalem’s royal house were more Israelite than traditionally thought, it would be easier to imagine how the legacy of Israel was brought to Judah. The rise of biblical Israel is then historically plausible since the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC—and not as late as the days of Josiah (per Na‘aman). OL 2Kgs 17:19, 9 recalls an extensive presence of Israelite refugees alongside Judaeans in Judah after 721 BC. The note on the “House On,” which was built in Jerusalem by the kings of Israel as a high place for Baal, speaks by itself for an earlier Israelite presence in Jerusalem.<sup>101</sup> And Papyrus Amherst 63, column XVII, provides a third reference to a history shared by Judaeans and Samaritans.

The regency of Ahaz and Manasseh noticeably contradicts the ideological or religious aims of the narrators of the Books of Kings (cf.

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or “Ahaz]iah, [his] son” (Lipiński 2000: 378–379)? Was Joram Ahab’s son (Lipiński 2000) or Jehoshaphat’s (Strange 1975)?

<sup>99</sup> Williamson 2001b; cf. also Is 5:7 “house of Israel” and (Jeremiah’s term) “man of Judah.”

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Tebes (2018: 174–181). With this modification, is conceivable Fleming’s assumption that the Davidic dynasty understood itself as a representative of Israel from the beginning.

<sup>101</sup> ANT/OL (Lucifer of Cagliari) 2Kgs 23:11 (καὶ τὸ ἄρμα τοῦ ἡλίου κατέκαυνεν ἐν πυρὶ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ ὧν ὁν οἰκοδόμησαν βασιλεῖς Ἰσραὴλ ὑψηλὸν τῷ Βάαλ/*et fontem solis combussit in igne in domo domus quam aedificaverunt regis Israel excelso illi Baal*) gives a further example that an early presence of Israel or of Israelite kings in Jerusalem was suppressed by MT/LXX. Can the growth of Jerusalem in the 9<sup>th</sup> cent. BC (Uziel and Szanton 2015; Gadot and Uziel 2017) be attributed to the building activities of the Omrides?

OL 2Kgs 17:9; MT 2Kgs 16; 21). They cover a period of time of around 80 years since the downfall of Israel. Then Josiah is to have brought a turnaround (of whatever kind) whose ideas were admittedly not continued by his successors, but by someone within the upper class of Jerusalem (the circle around the Shaphanids) into Babylonian exile times.<sup>102</sup> In this period the Benjaminite Mizpah, as Davies believed, could have been a place of survival for the written tradition. The end of the Books of Kings with its focus on the Babylonian exile of Jehoiachin shows, however, that the work was aligned with the ideology of the group of 596 BC exiles from in Babylon, who did not recognize Zedekiah's rule.<sup>103</sup> Therefore the biblical Israel in the Book of Kings cannot be distinguished by the use of the word "Israel" in, for example, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or the pre-exilic prophets.<sup>104</sup>

The clear differentiation between Israel and Judah in Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Books of Kings suggests that their authors not only saw themselves as "Israel," but—in distinction to the Judaeans alongside them—understood themselves as Israelites by descent. A promotion of the idea of biblical Israel by the Judaeans kings—such as that presumed by Finkelstein and Na'aman—would have been in this case of secondary importance. It is the cultural legacy of Israelite refugees in Judah that is mirrored in our tradition of biblical Israel.

The Books of Kings' criticism of the pro-Assyrian kings Ahaz and Manasseh raises the suspicion that the memory of their regency could well have been problematic from an Israelite viewpoint. This is so even though—or precisely because—Judah in the time of Manasseh flourished in cooperation with the might Assyrian power.<sup>105</sup> Hezekiah and Josiah stand rather as symbols of hope during the critical period of Israelite existence in Judah.

<sup>102</sup> Schütte 2016b: 10.14–15 *contra* Na'aman 2010.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Ezechiel's reckoning of time after the rule of Jehoiachin (Ez 1:1; 8:1 and 2Kgs 25:27).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Schütte 2016a.

<sup>105</sup> Finkelstein 1994; Stavrakopoulos 2004.

## “ISRAEL” AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

The Books of Kings reveals a structured composition; their accounts of the kings of Israel and Judah are in strict chronological order, representing by themselves a historically remarkable achievement. Remarks about the kings have a firm framework within which the historical information is inserted.<sup>106</sup> The historiography<sup>107</sup> of the Books of Kings uses the name “Israel” very accurately. The name first appears in the description of the reigns of David and Solomon;<sup>108</sup> from Rehoboam to Ahaz of Judah the name “Israel” is not employed in Judahite contexts—also not as an epithet for God—but only in sections about Israelite kings. This changes only after the downfall of the kingdom of Israel, since Hezekiah of Judah. During the period of the two kingdoms, “Israel” was only a designation for the polity with capital in Samaria—and for its God.<sup>109</sup> G. Auld asked whether the fact that there were 19 kings in each kingdom after Solomon, both in Judah and in Israel, was more than a coincidental narrative pattern.<sup>110</sup>

Can the understanding of the narrative patterns help to know more about the dating of the Books of Kings? The end of the Books of Kings shows that this historiography of the biblical Israel included knowledge of events as late as the time of the Babylonian Exile; it must therefore have been created after 586 BC.<sup>111</sup> Can we postulate that a presumed precursor only reaching up to 2Kgs 17 was created after 721 BC?<sup>112</sup>

Anyone starting from such later or earlier dating boundaries—and lacking appropriate ancient text witnesses—must grapple with questions concerning the conditions for the possibility of this text tra-

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Halpern and Vanderhooft (1992).

<sup>107</sup> Cancik 1976: 13, uses the term “historiography” for the historical literature that proceeded by critical writing about history, beginning with the Greek tradition (Herodotus) (Cf. Grabbe 2008: 8–23).

<sup>108</sup> 1Kgs 1:1–2:11 (= ANT 2Sam 25:1–26:11).

<sup>109</sup> Zobel 1982.

<sup>110</sup> Auld 2007.

<sup>111</sup> Noth 1957: 91; Wolff 1973: 309 “wahrscheinlich um 550 im jüdisch-benjaminischen Gebiet” (probably around 550 in the Judaeon Benjamite area).

<sup>112</sup> Schütte 2017.

dition. Thus, a discussion, for example, of the question of the beginnings of the historiography in the Old Testament<sup>113</sup> should include a comparative look at the cultural area surrounding Palestine.<sup>114</sup> Archaeological evidence has already made clear that Israelite and Judahite/Judaeen historical writings can scarcely have begun before the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. The absence of traits of divine epithets in the entire Tanach, which are known by finds at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet Beit Ley, is a literary indication that the Books of Kings must also have undergone phases of linguistic "modernization."<sup>115</sup> Was this also part of the "religious revolution" which took place at the start of the Persian period or is this process to be expected after that time? The monarchical poly-Yahwism evidently lost its meaning for the biblical authors during the Babylonian Exile. But we can still find the biblically-rejected identification of YHWH with the God of Bethel in a syncretic text of Papyrus Amherst 63, (column XII, 17–18; cf. Jer 48:13). The polytemplism, with multiple temples for YHWH, had a still longer existence until the closing of the temple at Leontopolis (73 CE). In terms of the history of religion, the Egyptian evidence of the Judaeen and Samari(t)an religion up into the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC testifies to a precursor of the Jewish religion represented by *Torah*, *Neviim* and *Ketuvim*.<sup>116</sup>

J. Pakkala sees two major tendencies in the Books of Kings. The first is a bias toward the monarchy, shown (but not only) in 2Kgs 25:27–30. The second is an emphasis in some texts on the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>117</sup> Yet a nomistic reorientation of Israel's religion breaks with

<sup>113</sup> Witte 2005.

<sup>114</sup> The work of Cancik 1976 regarding the dating of Old Testament historiography is now outdated. However, his description of the Hittite historiography of the 14<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century BC raises the questions of whether and how this could have influenced the historical writings of the Old Testament.

<sup>115</sup> "YHWH of Samaria" and "YHWH of Teman" (Kuntillet Ajrud; early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC), "YHWH ... God of Jerusalem" (BLey A; ca. 701 BC). Cf. the explicit statement in 1Sam 9:9 and the late appearance of the designation "Prophet" for one of those figures having a biblical book dedicated to his activities.

<sup>116</sup> Becking 2003: 225–226.

<sup>117</sup> Pakkala 2008: 260–261.

these older tendencies. In Pakkala's opinion, an orientation toward the Mosaic commandments during the Persian period gave new accents for the received textual tradition. He stresses that the new emphases were likely far more than merely additions here and there to the traditional text: "It is clear that they did not regard these texts as unchangeable."<sup>118</sup> Pakkala's assumption comes close to the historically possible text comparison between MT, LXX, ANT and OL 1–2Kings.<sup>119</sup> The comparison between the Greek and Masoretic-Hebrew traditions suggests that the Masoretic tradition formed the Jewish final product of the Books of Kings' Judaeon tradition. The Old Latin textual tradition appears, however, to come closer to the beginning of the nomistic reorientation than the Greek tradition. The OL Nomism is still weakly articulated. Its particular text form in 2Kgs 10/13 and 17 appears to confirm Pakkala's judgment about the Deuteronomistic nomists. To be sure, the text of the OL tradition shows a large correspondence in wording with the Greek and (at last) with the Masoretic textual tradition. Yet the story of Elisha's death, with only some minor changes relocated from the time of Jehu (*Palimpsestus Vindobonensis*) to the time of Jehoash (ANT, LXX, MT), undermines the idea for establishing an older or "original text" by literary criticism without any textual witness. Under these conditions the oldest *Vorlage* of the Books of Kings can be established only to a very limited extent.

The kings of Israel and Judah, to the extent that they are mentioned outside the Bible, are arranged in correct order by the biblical historiography, but uncertainties arise concerning the Elisha cycle. The fragmentary character of the *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* leaves unanswered the question as to whether 2Kgs 10/13 and 17 are the only passages with serious cuts in the historical narrative. In this light, the note of a Gallic chronicle gains significance: "under this Jehu Hazael, the King of Syria, left from the army of Israel (in war) 50 teams of horses, 10 wagons and 1,000 men in accordance with the prophecy of

<sup>118</sup> Pakkala 2008: 266.

<sup>119</sup> What does this mean for the texts with references to the Torah (1Kings 2:3; 2Kings 10:31; 14:6; 17:13; 21:8; 22:8, 11; 23:24, 25)?

Elisha” (*sub ipso Hieu Azael rex Syriae reliquit de exercitu (in bello) Israhel quinquaginta equites, decem curros et mille viros secundum Elisei prophetiam*).<sup>120</sup> ANT/LXX/MT 2Kgs 13:7 attributes this situation, whereby the troop strength was raised to 10,000 men, to Jehoahaz the son of Jehu. The reference to a prophecy of Elisha suggests that the depiction of the regency of Jehu could have been more extensive than what is extant in the fragmentary textual tradition of OL. The textual tradition on Joram (2Kgs 1:17; 3:1),<sup>121</sup> the remarks on Jehoshaphat (LXX 1Kgs 16:28a–h/MT 1Kgs 22:41–51), and the stories of Jehu, suggest that the old depiction of the historical phase of the Aramaic wars compelled the (pre-)Masoretic redactors in the Seleucid or Maccabean period to put the history in a more favorable light.

The textual history of the Books of Kings is evidence that there is a double gap between real history and its historiography, a telling reminder that events are constantly reported with purpose, selecting them and then adding an assessment. Archaeology and exegesis stand here in a never-ending critical dialog to judge historical events on the basis of material culture and textual tradition.

The history of the text opens a second gap. At least for the Books of Kings, there exists an indisputable gap between the text-documented history and any possible (undocumented) earlier presentation. Theories about the development of a biblical text are limited by its textual witnesses; beyond that, only general assumptions can be made. Text critics rightly expect exegetes to deal more intensively with the textual history than has been done for a long time.<sup>122</sup> Their work must first pay attention to how the earliest transmissions of the biblical tradition, which we can first grasp in the oldest textual tradition, are to be understood in their historical contexts. This context is Hellenism, a cultural phenomenon dealt with by early Judaism with a new emphasis on its identity<sup>123</sup> The letter of Aristeas (*ca.* 150–100 BC) shows this

<sup>120</sup> *Liber genealogus Anni CCCXXVII*, No. 558 (Mommson 1892: 192).

<sup>121</sup> Schenker 2016.

<sup>122</sup> Tekoniemi 2018: 227; Person and Rezetko 2016; cf. Pakkala 2013.

<sup>123</sup> Carr 2005: 253–272.

effort to stand out in the sophisticated Hellenistic world with one's own canon of writings. In that letter there are earlier Greek translations of the Torah emphatically disparaged, which probably reflected a still older form of the text.<sup>124</sup> It was probably not by an accident that such older biblical texts survived in a blind spot of the Hellenistic world, Latin North Africa, texts like the *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* that were transmitted to us in the Old Latin tradition.

## CONCLUSION

Various lines of evidence seem to suggest that after 721 BC Samaritan people settled in Judah in a time when Jerusalem was ruled by a Judaeon dynasty of probably Israelite origin. Since the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Israelites in Palestine, in Babylon and in Egypt were invariably referred to as Samaritans and as Judahites/Judaeans in a political sense; from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC on, the expression "Israel/Israelites" was used solely in a religious sense. Both Judaeon "Israelites" returning home from the Golah and Samari(t)an Israelites—who in spite of the polemic description of Josephus (Ant. 11,8,2) on the Gerizim, had quite indigenous roots in the YHWH cult—shared the tradition of the Pentateuch. The latter's patriarchal tradition fits well with the picture conveyed by the Egyptian textual evidence of a pre-monarchical Israel. This tradition likewise supports those narratives having historical content.<sup>125</sup> But what could have given them the impulse—certainly differing in importance for Samari(t)ans and Judaeans/Jews—to call themselves Israelites, with recourse to a distant past? In this respect, B. Tsedaka refers to the Samaritans: "If the Jews ... adopted the foreign nickname Jews, it is their problem. On the contrary, the Israelite Samaritans ... never adopted the foreign nickname of 'Samaritans' but always called themselves Israelites (see Delos inscriptions)."<sup>126</sup> This assertion is confirmed by the biblical Books of Samuel and Kings but, likewise, many

<sup>124</sup> Letter of Aristeas 30–31; 310–311.

<sup>125</sup> Zwickel and van der Veen 2016.

<sup>126</sup> Tsedaka 2012, 422. An external witness to the Bible for the period before the 3<sup>rd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> century BC is still missing.

Jews were Israelites by descent according to the older textual tradition of the Book of Kings. Of course, they were called Jews or Judaeans, because they lived once in the Kingdom of Judah, a kingdom probably originally Israelite. The *modern* question of why the Judaeans/Jews were called Israel(ites) seemed to arise with the addition of the Jerusalemite *Neviim* and *Ketuvim* to the Samari(t)an-Judaean Pentateuch. These texts stress the Israelite descent of Judaeans/Jews exclusively, sometimes with an anti-Samaritan claim. Did MT *Neviim* and *Ketuvim* represent the final Jewish position on the Jewish-Samaritan quarrel that reached its most terrible turn by John Hyrcan's time? Indeed, this subject deserves consideration on its own merit.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> For now cf. G. N. Knoppers (2012); M. Böhm (2012).

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