

## SECONDARY SOURCES ALSO DESERVE TO BE HISTORICALLY EVALUATED: THE CASE OF THE UNITED MONARCHY

Rainer Albertz

In his recent book, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (2007), Lester Grabbe, to whom I wish to convey my warmest greetings with this essay, has drawn a fascinating outline of how a reconstruction of Israel's history from the twelfth to sixth centuries B.C.E., one that fully meets the requirements of strict historical standards, could work. Remembering the heated debate between so-called minimalists and maximalists of recent decades, I very much appreciate this attempt; it is an important step forward. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Lester Grabbe for his constant efforts in bringing both "parties" into a critical dialogue on the panel of the European Seminar in Historical Methodology (ESHM), and his friendly invitation to me to participate. I consider the ESHM to be an important venture, forcing all of us to reconsider the material basis and methodical approach of our historical reconstructions. I hope he will enjoy the present contribution to those discussions.

### *Remaining Methodological Questions*

Grabbe (2007, 3–36) has greatly clarified, probably more than any other historian of ancient Israel, the methodological questions of historiography. I will mention here only the question of the status of sources. Like many others, Grabbe distinguishes fundamentally between primary and secondary sources:

Primary sources are those contemporary (or nearly so) with the events they describe and usually have some other direct connection (eyewitness report, compilation from eyewitness reports or other good sources, proximity to the events or those involved in the events). Secondary sources are those further removed in time and space from the original events. (Grabbe 2007, 220)

He rightly concludes: “Preference should be given to primary sources... this means archaeology and inscriptions” (2007, 35). As long as suitable sources of this first category are available, I think no one would argue against that general rule. According to Grabbe, the texts of the Hebrew Bible generally belong to the second category:

The biblical text is almost always a secondary source, written and edited long after the events ostensibly described. In some cases, the text may depend on earlier sources, but these sources were edited and adapted; in any case the source has to be dug out from the present context. (2007, 35)

Grabbe does not wish to attack or vilify the Hebrew Bible by categorizing the biblical texts in such a way (2007, 219). Rather, he opposes a “dogmatic scepticism that continually looks for a way to reject or denigrate the biblical text” (2007, 23), an attitude that Barstad (1998) has called “bibliophobia.” In contrast to a strict minimalist view, Grabbe demands:

The biblical text should always be considered: it is one of the sources for the history of ancient Israel and needs to be treated like any other source, being neither privileged nor rejected a priori, but handled straight forwardly and critically. (2007, 224)

According to Grabbe, “we cannot say that the biblical text is reliable or unreliable, because it all depends on which episode or text one has in mind” (2007, 219). From this insight he derives the methodical demand: “secondary sources normally need some sort of confirmation” (2007, 220). Thus, compared with some radical minimalist positions, Grabbe’s methodical approach seems well-balanced and fair.

Yet some serious material and methodological questions remain. First, we must recognize that our primary sources for the pre-exilic history of ancient Israel, despite their theoretical importance, are very limited. This is especially true of the epigraphic material: unfortunately, we have not a single monumental inscription or written document from monarchic archives of Israel and Judah that would allow us to reconstruct the political history of these states. The reasons for this strange situation are not totally clear. On the one hand, they may have to do with the frequency of warfare in that area, which could have damaged many of the potential written or inscribed sources. On the other hand, official documents were mostly written on papyrus in Palestine, a medium that is rarely preserved, given the wet climate. The only two—fragmentary—monumental inscriptions from Palestine that we have come from neighbouring states, the Mesha stele from a king of Moab, and the Tel Dan stele, probably from a king of Aram (Damascus). Together with several Assyrian, and a few

Babylonian, royal inscriptions and chronicles concerning events in Palestine, these are the only epigraphic sources enabling us to control the historical data supplied by the biblical texts; unfortunately, however, these potential sources are restricted to the period from middle of the ninth to the sixth century.

The other kind of primary source, the results of archaeological excavations including stratigraphy, architecture, pottery and other small finds, together with demographic calculations derived from surveys, comprises a huge amount of data, more than from any other place in the ancient Near East. Yet historical conclusions—especially conclusions based on an absence of evidence—are often ambiguous. While Grabbe earlier stressed the significance of “textual material, which provides much of the interpretative framework,” stating that “without textual data, the archaeology is much less helpful” (2000, 217), he now grants the archaeological data the highest status of objectivity, because they “actually existed in real life,” while “a text always contains human invention, and it is always possible that a text is entirely fantasy” (2007, 10).<sup>1</sup> But if we note the very different interpretations of archaeological results relating to the twelfth to tenth centuries, reported by Grabbe in detail, his earlier opinion seems equally to be justified. Important as such results may be for developments of the *longue* and *moyen durée*, without the interpretative framework of epigraphic material they do not provide the exact historical data necessary for reconstructing the *histoire événementelle*, the political history of Israel and Judah. Thus, for the whole period of about 350 years from the stele of Merneptah (1209/8 B.C.E.), which mentions Israel for the first time, to the Kurkh Monolith of Shalmaneser III (853 B.C.E.), which mentions King Ahab in the battle of Qarqar, we do not have the primary sources that we need in order to control the reliability of the secondary sources in the Bible. Since the biblical texts concerning this earlier period cannot be evaluated by external primary sources, Grabbe, in accordance with his methodological demands, concludes that they cannot be used for historical reconstruction. The outcome of this procedure is demonstrated in his book: despite the many possible suggestions about the early history of ancient Israel that Grabbe discusses in detail, no reliable historical reconstruction from the twelfth to tenth centuries B.C.E. is possible.

1. Thus, Grabbe is now ready to concede archaeology has paramount importance for his historiography: “The importance of archaeology cannot...be overestimated” (2007, 6); “The proper attention to archaeology is vital for any history of ancient Israel, and it is my intention to try to give it the prominence it deserves” (2007, 10).

Can we really be satisfied with such a negative result, which depends merely on a fortuitous lack of all epigraphic inscriptions? As long as this situation is not altered by new findings, should we not make use of the possibilities provided by the Hebrew Bible?

Grabbe sometimes relativize his strict division between primary and secondary sources, as, for example, when he concedes:

Primary sources are not always trustworthy, and secondary sources may sometimes contain reliable information, and no two sources agree entirely. Thus, the historian has to make a critical investigation of all data, what ever the source. (2007, 220)

I appreciate this statement: it implies that the texts of the Hebrew Bible, despite being classified as “secondary sources,” should be historically evaluated. Some may contain reliable historical information, some less, and some none. But, unfortunately, Grabbe is not really interested in developing internal criteria for distinguishing those biblical texts that may contain reliable historical information from those in which no clear external evidence is available. He reckons with the possibility that a biblical text may depend on earlier sources that might be retrieved (2007, 35), but does not offer much by way of examples. The results of literary historical exegesis seem too uncertain to him:

The complicated history of the biblical text has been partially worked out in the past two centuries, but there is still much unknown and much on which there is disagreement. (2007, 220)

Thus in most cases he prefers to deal with the biblical text (often taken in the singular!) as if all passages stand on the same level. But can that be the solution? The disagreement about the dating and interpretation of biblical texts is no worse than about the interpretation of archaeological data. In the realm of history we can never be absolutely sure. Nevertheless, there are some literary-historical criteria that provide us with a rough guideline for the historical evaluation of biblical texts. First of all, the uniformity or non-uniformity of a given text has to be proven by literary criticism and its units have to be dated: texts that lie closer to the events are normally more reliable. Form-critical classifications are also important: reports often contain more reliable information than narratives, narratives more than sagas and legends, and prophetic accusations more than prophetic announcements. In any case, all texts have to be interpreted against their *Tendenz* or ideology, which also has to be evaluated first. Of course, identical or similar information given by more than one independent biblical source has a higher degree of historical probability. This means that the same literary tools used for the historical

interpretation of the epigraphic material are valid for evaluating the degree of historicity of a biblical text. Because of the longer editorial history of the latter, however—which Grabbe rightly notes—the historical evaluation of biblical texts is more complex and must be handled very carefully.

Grabbe has demonstrated in great detail that there is no reason for mistrusting the historicity of biblical texts in general: he has shown that in many of those cases where we have external evidence from epigraphic sources, the information in biblical texts can be confirmed or brought into a meaningful correlation with such data (2007, 144–49, 163–64, 200, 209–10, 224–25). In other cases where they deviate, the discrepancy often can be explained by the specific ideological interest of the biblical author. The importance of form-critical categories can be demonstrated in the case of Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 701: the report of this event in 2 Kgs 18:13–16 perfectly accords with Sennacherib’s inscription (see Grabbe 2007, 200), while the Isaiah–Hezekiah legend (18:17–19:10, 32\*, 36\*) disagrees with both, despite including some historical details (but in an inaccurate way). For Sennacherib never besieged Jerusalem, but withdrew from Lachish after Hezekiah paid him a huge tribute.<sup>2</sup> In any event, the Deuteronomistic author concealed Sennacherib’s devastation of the Shephelah and the deportation of many of its inhabitants, presumably because he wanted to give a positive judgement on Hezekiah for ideological reasons. So, while it can be legitimately argued that without the Assyrian inscriptions and the archaeological evidence we would not see the overall extent of the catastrophe, nevertheless a sound literary-historical evaluation of the biblical accounts, giving the report priority over the legend, would not deliver entirely misleading results. I ask, therefore: Should we not similarly scrutinize the biblical texts for that period between the twelfth and the tenth centuries when no other written sources are available (especially for the tenth century B.C.E.)?

### *The Case of the “United Monarchy”*

The archaeological results concerning Jerusalem in the tenth and early ninth centuries (Iron IIA) are unfortunately very ambiguous, and Grabbe (2007, 71–73) describes in detail the dispute between archaeologists. On one side (Ussishkin 2003; Finkelstein 2003; Steiner 2003; Lehmann

2. The expression *URU.ĦAL ŠU.MEŠ* in Sennacherib’s inscription does not denote “ramps,” as is often suggested (*ANET* 288: “earthwork”), but “forts” which the Assyrian king had built in order to control the access to Jerusalem. So argues, rightly, Mayer (1995, 355–63).

2003; Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004), Jerusalem was only a minor settlement, a village or possibly a citadel. On the other side (Cahill 2003; Mazar 2007), it was a substantial city, the capital of an emerging state. The uncertainty has to do not only with the heavy destruction Jerusalem suffered during its long history and the severe restrictions to which all excavations in the Old City are subjected under the complicated political and religious regime, but also with the fact that archaeology has not so far found clear answers to substantial material questions. Were the impressive fortifications of the Middle Bronze (IIB) reused in later LB and Iron IIA–B periods, or was Jerusalem an unfortified settlement until the eighth century? What was the date and the purpose of the so-called stepped structure on the south-eastern slope? Was it already built in the tenth century or later? Did it served as a foundation of a monumental building such as a palace, or not? Depending on the answers to these and similar questions, very different reconstructions of the history of the tenth century can be supported.

Weighing up these two alternative reconstructions, Grabbe tends to follow the minimal position. He does not wish to deny that Saul, David and Solomon really existed, but would severely reduce the portrait of a great and renowned Davidic empire drawn by the Hebrew Bible:

Perhaps a city state, much like the city states of Shechem under Lab'aya or of Jerusalem under 'Abdi Ḥeba, would be feasible... It seems unlikely that David controlled anything beyond a limited territory centred on the southern hill country and Jerusalem. (2007, 121)

Moreover, following Finkelstein and Silberman (2001, 121–45; cf. Finkelstein 2003, 79) and others, Grabbe feels obliged to deny the existence of a “united monarchy” for more general reasons.<sup>3</sup> In his view, the ecological conditions and the economic and demographic development of northern Israel and the southern hill country were so different (2007, 70–71) that a unification of Judah and Israel in one territorial state under David “would have been an unusual development” (2007, 121)—perhaps not impossible, but rather unlikely. According to him, it is much more likely that the first Israelite state would have been established in the ecologically privileged northern area, where the Omride kingdom emerged. Thus he states:

3. The main archaeological argument for a “united monarchy,” the similar six chambered gates in Gezer, Megiddo and Hazor (cf. Mazar 2007, 130–31), is no longer mentioned by Grabbe. This feature has probably lost plausibility for him, since their traditional dating in the tenth century was questioned (cf. Finkelstein 2007, 111–13) in the controversy about the low chronology.

The first kingdom for which we have solid evidence is the northern kingdom, the state founded by Omri. This fits what we would expect from the *longue durée*; if there was an earlier state, we have no direct information on it except perhaps some memory in the biblical text. This does not mean that nothing existed before Omri in either the north or the south, but what was there was probably not a state as such. (2007, 222–23)

As plausible as this historical reconstruction may be, our limited external sources mean that the problem remains “what to do with the biblical traditions about the rise of the Israelite kingship,” as Grabbe puts it (2007, 121). He tries to explain why their authors came to the idea of a “united monarchy”: the territory controlled by David “might have overlapped with territory earlier controlled by Saul, which would lead to some of the biblical traditions that made David the usurper and successor of Saul” (2007, 121). But is this a sufficient explanation? There are not just “some traditions,” but dozens of texts between 1 Sam 10 and 2 Sam 21 which without exception describe the complicated start of Israel’s monarchic history in this way.

There is no space here to discuss all the biblical texts concerning the “united monarchy.” I would mention just two pieces of evidence which seem not to be taken sufficiently into consideration by Grabbe. The first is the external evidence of the Tel Dan inscription, which—astonishing enough—Grabbe does not use for his reconstruction of early monarchic history.<sup>4</sup> In line 9 of the inscription occurs the expression *bytdwd*, which in the political context of the inscription can only be rendered “house of David.” The element *beit* in this expression can have two meanings, “family/dynasty [of David]” and “state [of David],” just as we find with the expression *bît ḥumri*, “house of Omri,” in the Assyrian inscriptions (Weippert 1978), one of the terms denoting the northern kingdom.<sup>5</sup> Thus the Aramaean ruler of the ninth century (probably Hazael) regarded David as the founder of a dynasty and a founder of a state. This evidence not only calls into question all suggestions that Judah did not become a state before the eighth century,<sup>6</sup> but also shows that the political organization

4. See his very restricted reconstruction and cautious interpretation (2007, 129–30). For a more extensive reconstruction and historical interpretation, see Kottsieper 1998.

5. Also in the Hebrew Bible the term *בית* can denote a nation or a state: 2 Sam 2:4; 12:8; 16:3; 1 Kgs 12:21; 20:31; Isa 8:14; Jer 2:26; 5:11; Hos 1:4; 5:12, 14 etc.

6. This view is also questioned by the discovery of 170 clay bullae from the ninth century by near the Gihon spring, on which see Reich, Shukron and Lernau 2007, 156–57. Together with a large quantity of fish bones in the same area, these bullae verify that Jerusalem was a commercial and administrative centre in the late ninth century at least. The suggestion that this centre emerged only under the

founded by David belonged to the same category as the Omride kingdom, even if it probably represented a less developed form of it.<sup>7</sup> The Tel Dan inscription does not, of course, refer to the “united monarchy,” only the kingdom of Judah, but it does not exclude the possibility, since the extent of the “house of David” may have varied.

The second issue I will mention is the biblical traditions about the division of the monarchy, which seem to me overlooked in the present discussion. Relating the end of the Solomonic empire and the foundation of a separate northern kingdom makes sense only if a “united kingdom” had existed. The bulk of the traditions is collected and commented on by the Deuteronomistic historian in 1 Kgs 11–12, and a literary-critical analysis can distinguish four different sources, each with different degrees of historicity:

1. *A report of the rebellion of Jeroboam ben Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, against King Solomon.* First the rebellion failed; Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. He had to flee to Egypt, but after Solomon’s death he came back to Israel and was crowned as the first king of the northern kingdom (1 Kgs 11:26, 40; 12:2,<sup>8</sup> 20a<sup>9</sup>). This short report could have come from the “Chronicle of the kings of Judah and Israel.” From its *Gattung* and its possible origin, it claims a high degree of historicity.<sup>10</sup>

influence of the northern state, whose ally Judah was during the Omride period (Grabbe 2007, 127), is possible, but in no way necessary, and depends on the view that Judah was still much less developed than Israel.

7. Using the categories of Claessen and Skalník (1978) – namely, of an “inchoate early state” in contrast to a “typical early state.” I have argued (Albertz 2007, 358–59) that the Omride state should be categorized as a “transitional early state” on the way to a “mature state,” a stage reached in the eighth and seventh centuries.

8. That the verse does not really fit the narrative of 1 Kgs 12:1–19 is shown by the fact that it is missing here in the LXX; it comes at the end of ch. 11. In the MT its final clause is aligned to the context. As the deviating text of 2 Chr 10:2 and the LXX and Vulgate show, the verse should run: As Jeroboam ben Nebat heard (that), while he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from Solomon, he *came back from Egypt*. Originally the message heard by Jeroboam was not the assembly in Shechem but the death of Solomon (11:40, now explicitly reported by the Dtr’s final clause, v. 43; see the LXX). Furthermore, his return did not originally lead him to the assembly, where he was only secondarily included by DtrH (12:3a, 12, 20\*), but somewhere else (according to the LXX in 11:43: “straight to his town in the land of Samaria on the mountain of Ephraim”), from where he had to be called (12:20).

9. Only the words “in the assembly” are a Dtr addition. Whether v. 20b originally belonged to the report is not certain. In any case, it is a doublet to the end of the narrative in v. 19.

10. For more details, see Albertz 1994, 138–43.



2. *The fragment of a narrative about Jeroboam's failed rebellion (1 Kgs 11:27–28).* Its summary, probably given by the Deuteronomistic historian (v. 27), confirms that Jeroboam raised his hand against King Solomon when the latter was building the Millo. The narrative relates that Solomon had promoted Jeroboam because of his achievements and put him in charge for the labour-gangs of the tribal district of Joseph (v. 28). Unfortunately, the rest of the story is broken off, giving way to the Ahijah story. Although a narrative, the text accords with the report mentioned above. Its contention that the king himself fostered his later enemy runs against a tendency to glorify Solomon and so seems to be trustworthy.
3. *A long historical narrative about the separation of the northern tribes from the Davidic dynasty at the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12:1\*, 3b–14, 16, 18–19).*<sup>11</sup> The negotiations between the northern tribes and Rehoboam concerning the burdens of corvée, in which Jeroboam was originally not included (cf. v. 20) are stylized in a didactic manner and probably did not happen in this way. But the fact that the main reason for the division of the monarchy was a social conflict about compulsory labour accords with the fragmented narrative (11:27–28) and seems to be trustworthy. This is confirmed by the detail of the murder of Adoram, the commander in charge of the labour (v. 18). Since v. 19 characterizes the separation of the northern tribes as a sinful rebellion (פְּשָׁע) against the Davidic dynasty, the narrative is of Judean origin. As the aetiological motive (“until the present day”) at the end shows, it presupposes an interval from the events reported; yet its self-critical intention implies that the problem of the division of monarchy was still present. Thus, it should be assigned to not later than the time of Hezekiah and can claim a kernel of historicity for itself.
4. *The prophetic narrative on how Ahijah from Shiloh anointed Jeroboam king (1 Kgs 11:29–39\*).* The narrative has been heavily reworked by the Deuteronomists (vv. 32–36, 38a, 39); but the underlying plot containing Ahijah's symbolic act of tearing his new cloak in twelve pieces and offering Jeroboam ten of them already presupposes the existence of a “united monarchy.” As a prophetic legend, however, its degree of historicity is rather low.

11. Verse 2 originally belonged to the report: vv. 3a, 15 are Dtr additions. Verse 17 is a different interpolation reminiscent of 1 Chr 11:16–17.

It probably originated as a legitimating story about the beginning of the northern monarchy. Nevertheless, as such it confirms that the “united monarchy” was a concept not only promoted in Judah, but also acknowledged in a foundation story within the northern kingdom.

In contrast to his sources the Deuteronomistic historian presented his own view of the “division of the monarchy.” According to him, the main reason for this division was the later apostasy of Solomon, who has been seduced by his foreign wives (1 Kgs 11:1–13; generalized in 12:33). In his view the Judean state survived only because of the divine election of David, which remained valid (11:13). Such a difficult theological construction would have been superfluous had a considerable loss of power for the Davidides not taken place. Thus, even the Deuteronomistic historian, probably in the exilic period, in some way attests the division of the united monarchy.

The critical modern historian may nevertheless raise the objection that the sources intertwined in 1 Kgs 11–12 are not really independent of each other. Apart from the Ahijah legend they could perhaps have come from a similar Judean milieu. There is, however, an independent source which has nothing to do with Deuteronomistic History and its possible sources. It consists in a prophetic oracle in the book of Isaiah:

Yhwh will bring on you [and your people] and the house of your father a time, the like of which has not been come since the time that Ephraim deviated from Judah [the king of Assur]. (Isa 7:17)<sup>12</sup>

This verse constitutes the final oracle of judgment uttered by Isaiah against Ahab in his activity during the Syro-Ephraimite war (Isa 7:1–17). It is generally acknowledged that the verse belongs to the earliest layer of the book, often called the *Denkschrift* (Isa 6:1–8:19\*), which was probably written shortly after the events of 734–32 B.C.E.<sup>13</sup> I have pointed out above that prophetic announcements are obviously not reliable historical sources, because they can turn out to be wrong. Yet, in our case the

12. The passages set in brackets are probably, as their syntactical isolation shows, generalizing and explaining glosses.

13. Cf. Blum 1996/97, 552–57. According to Blum, this *Denkschrift* acquired its final form (including ch. 6) in the second stage of Isaiah’s “testament,” written at the end of the prophet’s life shortly after 701 B.C.E. Liss (2003, 72–92) wants to date Isa 7:1–17 in the time of Josiah, while Becker (1997, 21–60) has even pleaded for post-Dtr dating. Nevertheless, Blum is right to argue that Isa 6:8\* contains a vivid dispute with Isaiah’s pupils, which cannot have taken place long after the death of the prophet. For the complex structure of the unit, cf. Steck 1982a, 1982b.

reference to the division of the monarchy is a memory used as a comparison for the future. Indeed, the rather surprising comparison with its unusual terminology<sup>14</sup> probably provides the verse with a high degree of historicity. Thus, this prophetic source confirms that even more than two centuries after the event the separation of the northern tribes from the Davidic kings was remembered as a traumatic experience. It was seen as the worst catastrophe that had ever happened in the history of Judah so far. According to this source, the “division of the monarchy” was strongly anchored in the historical memory of Judah in the eighth century; thus it seems very improbable that this event should have been an invention.

There is a second prophetic reference to the united monarchy in a salvation oracle of the book of Ezekiel, probably coming from the late exilic period. According to Ezek 37:15–22, Judah and Israel will be reunited under one king in the future. If v. 22 proposes that Judah and Israel should no longer be two separate nations and should never again split into two kingdoms, the memory of the former division is still present. The use of the verb *חָצַק* (“divide”), uncommon in this context, shows that this prophetic announcement depends neither on Isaiah nor the Deuteronomistic historian. This late text reveals that it is impossible to regard the “united monarchy” as merely a projection of an exilic hope into the past. On the contrary, the exilic hope tries to overcome the unhappy experience of a political division that occurred in the past.

### *Conclusion*

A more detailed investigation of the biblical texts reveals that there are no fewer than seven different sources that confirm the “division of the monarchy.” At least three of these are independent of each other (the Deuteronomistic historian; Isa 7:17 and Ezek 37:22), and at least two of them, according to their features and content, are furnished with a high degree of reliability (1 Kgs 11:26, 40; 12:2\*, 20a; Isa 7:17), while at least three come from the monarchic period (1 Kgs 11:26, 40; 12:2\*, 20a; 12:1–19\*; Isa 7:17). Naturally, the withdrawal of the northern tribes was remembered more in Judah, because it included here a considerable loss of power (six sources). Yet it was also preserved in the tradition of the northern kingdom (1 Kgs 11:29–39\*). Although different in shape and content, each of the sources corroborates the others; there is no

14. In contrast to the pejorative terminology in 1 Kgs 12:19 (*פָּשַׁע בָּ*, “sinned or rebelled against”), the expression used by Isaiah (*סוּר מֵעַל*, “deviate from, separate from”) lacks any negative assessment.

single source that draws a totally different picture.<sup>15</sup> Assessed with the usual historical criteria, this result should be sufficient to establish the historicity of the division of the monarchy. Therefore, there is also good reason to postulate the existence of the united monarchy, whatever its shape and extent.<sup>16</sup>

I think Grabbe is right in pointing out that we should expect the emergence of statehood first in the more developed areas in the north. However, in accordance with the biblical tradition I think that this happened already with arrival of Saul (1 Sam 9–11). Generally speaking, there is no fundamental doubt that a strong character like David could have been able to turn the normal development in a different direction: after having become the king of Judah he actually usurped the throne of Saul in a bloody civil war and united the three dominions of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem under his rule (2 Sam 2–5). The united monarchy was precarious from its beginnings, as reflected in the stories of the Absalom and Sheba rebellions (2 Sam 16:5–14; 19:9b–41; 19:42–20:22). Nevertheless, it strengthened, or even created, an overall Israelite identity that embraced the north and the south (2 Sam 13:12, 15–19). In spite of the division of the monarchy after Solomon's death, some kind of overall Israelite identity must have survived. This is because it is presupposed by the prophets of the eighth century (cf. Isa 5:7; 8:14; 9:7–20) and it is the prerequisite of the assumptions that thousands of refugees from the north fled to Judah when the Assyrians conquered Samaria (722–720 B.C.E.). It therefore makes sense to assume that the first history of the early monarchy from Saul to Solomon (1 Sam 10–2 Kgs 2\*) was composed in the time of Hezekiah (Dietrich 2002, 259–73; Albertz 2009), when a compromise between the competing historical traditions of the inhabitants of Judah and the refugees from the north had to be found.

From these insights I would like to outline the following methodical demands: anyone who denies the historicity of the united monarchy for any reason should be obliged to answer two questions. First, how can the existence of so many biblical sources for the division of the monarchy be

15. This is also true for the shape of the tradition given by Chronicles (1 Chr 10:1 12:4; 13:4 12). This source is here intentionally excluded, because it clearly depends on DtrH and is much later. Its slightly different view of the event is not derived from older traditions, but depends on its dispute with the Samaritans of the fourth century B.C.E. See Bae 2005, 67–77.

16. For me, it is important to see that Na'aman (2006, 14–15), although reducing the biblical picture of David's and Solomon's rule considerably, does not deny the existence of a united monarchy.

explained if a united monarchy had never existed? Second, if not during the united monarchy, when should the consciousness of an overall Israelite identity have emerged—a consciousness already testified in the eighth century B.C.E.?<sup>17</sup>

### *References*

- Albertz, R. 1994. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*. 2 vols. OTL. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox.
- . 2005. Why a Reform like Josiah's Must Have Happened. Pages 27–46 in *Good Kings and Bad Kings*. Edited by L. L. Grabbe. JSOTSup 393; EHSM 5. London: T&T Clark International.
- . 2007. Social History of Ancient Israel. Pages 347–67 in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel*. Edited by H. G. M. Williamson. Proceedings of the British Academy 143. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2009. Israel in der offiziellen Religion der Königszeit. Pages 39–57 in *Die Identität Israels. Entwicklungen und Kontroversen in alttestamentlicher Zeit*. Edited by H. Irsigler. Herders Biblische Studien 56. Freiburg: Herder.
- Bae, H. S. 2005. *Vereinte Suche nach JHWH: Die Hiskianische und Josianische Reform in der Chronik*. BZAW 355. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Barstad, H. 1998. The Strange Fear of the Bible: Some Reflections on the "Bibliophobia" in Recent Ancient Israelite Historiography. Pages 120–27 in *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology*. Edited by L. L. Grabbe. JSOTSup 279; ESHM 2. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic.
- Becker, U. 1997. *Jesaja Von der Botschaft zum Buch*. FRLANT 179. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Blum, E. 1996/97. Jesajas prophetisches Testament: Beobachtungen zu Jes 1–11. *ZAW* 108:547–68 and 109:12–29.
- Cahill, J. M. 2003. Jerusalem at the Time of the United Monarchy: The Archaeological Evidence. Pages 13–80 in Vaughn and Killebrew, eds., 2003.
- Claessen, H. J. M., and P. Skalnik. 1978. *The Early State*. New Babylon 32. The Haag: Mouton.
- Dever, W. G., and S. Gitin, eds. 2003. *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestina. Proceedings of the Centennial Symposium W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American School of Oriental Research Jerusalem, May 29–31, 2000*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Dietrich, W. 2002. *Die frühe Königszeit in Israel: 10. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* Biblische Enzyklopädie 3. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Finkelstein, I. 2003. City States to States: Polity Dynamics in the 10th–9th Centuries B.C.E. Pages 75–83 in Dever and Gitin, eds., 2003.

17. Finkelstein and Silberman (2001, 275–88) regard Josiah's reform as the period that gave birth to such an identity, but that would be rather too late. Moreover, Josiah's interference in northern affairs was according to them rather limited (2001, 347–53); cf. my criticisms in Albertz 2005, 27–32.

- . 2007. King Solomon's Golden Age: History or Myth? Pages 107–16 in Finkelstein and Mazar, eds., 2007.
- Finkelstein, I., and A. Mazar, eds. 2007. *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*. SBLSS 17. Atlanta: SBL.
- Finkelstein, I., and N. A. Silberman. 2001. *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts*. New York: Free Press.
- Grabbe, L. L. 2000. Writing Israel's History at the End of the Twentieth Century. Pages 203–18 in *Congress Volume, Oslo 1998*. Edited by A. Lemaire and M. Saebø. VTSup 80. Leiden: Brill.
- . 2007. *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* London: T&T Clark International.
- Hardmeier, C. 1990. *Prophetie im Streit vor dem Untergang Judas. Erzählkommunikative Studien zur Entstehungssituation der Jesaja- und Jeremiaerzählungen in II Reg 18–20 und Jer 37–40*. BZAW 187. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Herzog, Z., and L. Singer Avitz. 2004. Redefining the Centre: The Emergence of State in Judah. *Tel Aviv* 31:209–44.
- Kottsieper, I. 1998. Die Inschrift vom Tell Dan und die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Aram-Damaskus und Israel in der 1. Hälfte des 1. Jahrtausends vor Christus. Pages 475–500 in *Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf': Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient*. Edited by M. Dietrich and I. Kottsieper. FS O. Loretz. AOAT 250. Münster: Ugarit Verlag.
- Lehmann, G. 2003. The United Monarchy in the Countryside: Jerusalem, Judah, and the Shephela during the Tenth Century B.C.E. Pages 117–62 in Vaughn and Killebrew, eds., 2003.
- Liss, H. 2003. *Die unerhörte Prophetie: Kommunikative Strukturen prophetischer Rede im Buch Yesha'yahu*. Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 14. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.
- Mayer, W. 1995. *Politik und Kriegskunst der Assyrer*. ALASPM 9. Münster: Ugarit Verlag.
- Mazar, A. 2007. The Search for David and Solomon: An Archaeological Perspective. Pages 117–39 in *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel*. Edited by I. Finkelstein and A. Mazar. SBLSS 17. Atlanta: SBL.
- Na'aman, N. 2006. The Contribution of the Amarna Letters to the Debate on Jerusalem's Political Position in the Tenth Century. Pages 1–17 in *Ancient Israel's History and Historiography: Collected Essays*. Vol. 3, *The First Temple Period*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns.
- Reich, R., E. Shukron and O. Lornau. 2007. Recent Discoveries in the City of David, Jerusalem. *IEJ* 57:153–69.
- Steck, O. H. 1982a. Beiträge zum Verständnis von Jesaja 7,10–17 und 8,1–4. Pages 187–203 in Steck 1982c.
- . 1982b. Rettung und Verstockung: Exegetische Bemerkungen zu Jesaja 7,3–9. Pages 171–86 in Steck 1982c.
- . 1982c. *Wahrnehmungen Gottes: Gesammelte Studien*. ThB 70. Munich: Chr. Kaiser.
- Steiner, M. 2003. Expanding the Borders: The Development of Jerusalem in the Iron Age. Pages 68–79 in *Jerusalem in Ancient History and Tradition*. Edited by T. L. Thompson (with the collaboration of S. K. Jayyusi). JSOTSup 381; CIS 13. London: T&T Clark International.

- Ussishkin, D. 2003. Jerusalem as a Royal and Cultic Centre in the 10th 8th Centuries B.C.E. Pages 529 38 in Dever and Gitin, eds., 2003.
- Vaughn, A. G., and A. E. Killebrew, eds. 2003. *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*. SBLSS 18. Atlanta: SBL.
- Weippert, M. 1978. Israel und Juda. *RLA* 5:200 208.