THE RISE OF SECONDARY STATES IN THE IRON AGE LEVANT

BY

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Abstract

This paper examines the formation of states during the Iron Age of the eastern Mediterranean, with particular emphasis on the Levantine states of Israel, Judah, Ammon, and Moab. Using archaeology and texts it proposes that the formation of secondary states was fundamentally different from that of early states such as in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Secondary states in the Levant needed to create not new bureaucratic methods, but new social identities, novel ethnic categories and boundaries. New ideologies were disseminated through material culture which was saturated with symbols of identity, from royal architecture through personal emblems.

Cet article examine la formation des états pendant l'âge de fer du méditerranéen oriental, avec l'emphase particulière sur des états de Levantine de l'Israel, du Judah, de l'Ammon, et du Moab. En utilisant l'archéologie et les textes il propose que la formation des états secondaires ait été fondamentalement différente de celle des états tôt comme dans Mesopotamia et l'Egypte. Les états secondaires dans le Levant ont dû ne pas créer des méthodes bureaucratiques nouvelles, mais de nouvelles identités sociales, des catégories de roman et des bornes ethniques. De nouvelles idéologies ont été diffusées par la culture matérielle qui a été saturée avec des symboles d'identité, de l'architecture royale par les emblèmes personnels.

Key Words: secondary state formation, ethnicity, Levant, Iron Age, Israel

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This paper addresses two questions in the archaeology of the Southern Levant, the nature of the rise of states during the first millennium BCE, and the organization of both state and society. It attempts to delineate the external context and internal dynamics of secondary state formation, demonstrating that polities emerged by interacting with more developed neighbors but employed new methods of integration based on collective identity which combined elite and local concepts. The paper proposes that archaeology can, to a surprising extent, demonstrate the

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emergence of "ethnic states," that is, polities integrated by means of identity, especially ethnicity, and which are territorially based (compare A. D. Smith 1998; 2000).

"Ethnic states" are not types or stages in an evolutionary scheme. Rather they are novel and historically contingent political systems which appear in the Levant during the first millennium BCE thanks to the confluence of several factors, not least of all the collapse of imperial domination and the longstanding city-state system. New forms of local identity and organization developed during the centuries of relative dislocation, which were later utilized in part by reemergent elites. The phenomenon has recurred periodically in the interstices between larger units such as empires, along the margins, and during periods of collapse. This approach necessarily sees the clustering of certain behaviors, symbols, and historical evidence as indicative of 'ethnic' or identity organized groups (contra Jones 1997). The extensive use of symbolism and particular forms of administration make the "ethnic state" archaeologically detectable.

Previous studies of the rise of Iron Age states, especially Israel, have been heavily oriented toward biblical accounts. Historical studies have relied almost exclusively on biblical texts, with their attendant weaknesses, while archaeological efforts traditionally attempted to compare and harmonize texts and artifacts (e.g., Wright 1962). Most of the archaeology of ancient Israel has followed the 'history' as presented by texts, and even recent efforts to introduce significant revisions tend to implicitly subordinate archaeology to 'history' (e.g., Dever 1997; Finkelstein 1999a; cf. Joffe n.d. a). A smaller number of social science oriented approaches have set textual and archaeological evidence against rigid models or typologies derived from neo-evolutionary theory. Generally these have succeeded only in restating older ideas (e.g., McNutt 1990; Routledge 2000; Master 2001; Levy and Holl 2002) or reifying dubious taxonomies (Frick 1985; Jamison-Drake 1991). Even if there is a nominal advantage in situating discussions within comparative traditions, the weaknesses of 'ethnographic tyranny' are well known and need not be recapitulated (Yoffee 1993).

How may a sequence of investigations be structured which is not conditioned, consciously or otherwise, by the seeming completeness or verisimilitude of textual information? Using any text for historical reconstruction creates a paradox of priority. Texts are both 'seeking and seeing' (Bagley 1992), and in a historicist tradition of archaeology the temptation has been to use texts as the beginning and ending point of research. These are standard problems in every branch of 'historical archaeology' (e.g., Andrén 1997; Paynter 2000; Armstrong 2001), made acute by the distinctive position of the Bible as a document composed over a period of centuries as canonical national literature and the center-

piece of religious faith (Rofé 1999). Since the focus of this exercise is archae-
ological the discussion will not commence with a biblical reference. In method-
ological terms this 'secular' approach seeks to tack away from texts toward
archaeology (*sensu* Wylie 1989) in an effort to write 'history from things' (com-
pare Lubar and Kingery 1993).

PATTERNS OF STATE FORMATION IN THE LEVANT

Entities and Identities in the Bronze Age

The second millennium Levant was organized around competing city-states,
ruled largely by headmen or mayors, some of whom regarded themselves as
hereditary 'princes,' with a much smaller number administered by councils of
elders. These were in turn under the control of the Egyptian New Kingdom
empire, which increasingly assumed direct control of the Levant from its estab-
lishment, c. 1500 BCE, until its dissolution c. 1100 BCE (Weinstein 1981). This
system represented the largely organic continuation of the pattern which
emerged first during the Early Bronze Age, c. 3600 BCE, with urbanism appear-
ing c. 3200 BCE in the Southern Levant and c. 2900 BCE in the north (Joffe 1992;
Philip 1999). In the Southern Levant there was a characteristic rising and falling
of complexity 'cycling' (or perhaps better, 'spiraling') through episodes of vil-
lage—level agro-pastoralism and small-scale urbanism, during which trade was an
important economic component (Joffe 1993). During the second millennium BCE
new ethnic elements such as Hurrians were incorporated into the overwhelmingly
Semitic-speaking population (Na'aman 1994). By the Late Bronze Age, partic-
ularly after the Hyksos interlude, during which Southern Levantines briefly
ruled Egypt (Oren 1997), the Levant was receptive to Egyptian cultural and reli-
gious influence. Mediterranean trade was widespread, and brought the Levant
into contact with "palatial societies" of Cyprus, Crete, western Anatolia, and the
Aegean, as well as those of states in Syria and Mesopotamia (Knapp 1990;
Sherratt and Sherratt 1991).

The primary governmental institution of the Levant was the palace. During
the period of 2000 to 1500 BCE intimate connections were established by ruling
elites around the Eastern Mediterranean. Diplomatic and economic contacts cre-
ated a strongly hierarchical world order that was maintained by carefully cali-
brated rhetoric, trade, gift exchanges, royal marriages, and warfare. Levantine
states participated as the lessers, spoilers, and spoil, to the great powers of
Egypt, Babylonia, Mitanni, and Hatti (Liverani 1990). The actual power of the
palace varied widely throughout the Levant. In Ugarit it was the main, but not

sole, economic and social institution, owning and operating sea-going vessels, subsidiary villages and industries, and controlling and redistributing rations and tools (Heltzer 1976; 1979; Liverani 1989). In the Southern Levant city-states were numerous, but with the possible exceptions of Shechem and Jerusalem (Na'aman 1996) their diplomatic correspondence reveals them as flimsy constructs, often barely capable of projecting authority beyond the confines of the city (Moran 1992). On the eastern edges in Transjordan, city-states were even more limited in number and power (LaBianca and Younker 1995). In all areas, however, elite control over population was a critical problem (Bunimovitz 1994). Strategic resources such as metals formed another basis of palatial power, to the extent that on Cyprus metals were implicated in religious concepts such as symbols of patron deities (Knapp 1986). The drive for wealth necessary to maintain the appearance of legitimacy in the international system was the over-riding concern of Bronze Age elites.

Other factors at work in the Late Bronze Age Levant were Egyptian taxation and corveé, geo-political competition and warfare with the Mitannians and Hittites, and ḫab/piru, a generic term for unruly elements who rejected urban control, including villagers, nomads, and even some townsfolk (Na'aman 1986). On the margins, various nomadic Bedouin-like groups utilized the semi-arid zones and posed occasional threats to urban-controlled settled areas (Giveon 1971). There is evidence for the generation and considerable concentration of wealth, especially at the coastal and largest inland sites, but most settlements were unfortified and rather poor. These gave Levantine city-states in the late second millennium a predictable brittleness and fragility.

Social identity during the second millennium has been a contentious subject, largely due to the paucity of references in the documentary record. New Kingdom Egyptian sources appear to use the term 'Canaan' as a generic geographic and ethnic designation for the Central and Southern Levant (Rainey 1996; cf. Lemche 1991). Imperial administration, commerce, and functional identification, however, were primarily city-state oriented. Other terms point to differently organized tribal or 'ethnic' groups, not least of which is the mention of 'Israel' in the famous Merneptah stele (Ahlström and Edelman 1985). Archaeological studies have suggested material culture was frequently employed for purposes of social differentiation, in particular imported luxury items, including jewelry, pottery, and consumables. Studies of mortuary behavior, however, have only succeeded in indicating the presence of "non-Canaanites" such as Babylonians, and the archaeological identification of the presence of ethnic 'Aegean' persons has been equivocal (e.g., Gittlin 1985; cf. Gonen 1992).

Palaces and ruling elites were vested with the only meaningful sets of identities above the local. Second millennium BCE elite culture was detailed and all-

encompassing (Liverani 1990). It defined geo-political and residential space, norms of reciprocal behavior, which included the giving of tribute and gifts, styles of palatial architecture and decoration (Hult 1983), necessitating exchange of craftsmen and raw and finished materials (Zaccagnini 1983, 1987), organic materials such as drugs and other organic goods (Knapp 1991), specific differ-entiating behaviors requiring elaborate equipment and products, such as metal "wine sets" consisting of decorated wheeled carts and strainers, and imported wines (Moorey 1980; Leonard 1995), and required the use of Akkadian and cuneiform as the *lingua franca* (Demsky 1990; van der Toorn 2000). The need to communicate alone created a scribal class, which further disseminated and naturalized the norms of international culture across language and dialectic boundaries, sometimes at the smallest sites.

For Levantine elites, the specific and demanding grammar and vocabulary of the international system defined the identities that over-rode all local concerns. The terms and requirements of these asymmetrical relationships were of course defined by and for the large powers, and the city-states' failure to comprehend and submit could result in disaster. Certainly other identity concepts existed, based on kinship or 'tribal' affiliation, but these are difficult to perceive in the laconic documentary evidence. In practical terms such concepts may be at work in the existence of enormous family tombs, used over generations and supplied with enormous quantities of removable wealth (Gonen 1992), and in 'patrician' houses in which extended families resided (Oren 1992).

But the ideological and economic systems of the palaces, to a far greater extent than the practical systems of local organization or even trade and com-munication, were the over-riding components which 'collapsed' at the end of the Bronze Age. Ironically, it was the persistence and reestablishment of elite communication during the Iron Age that served a dramatically different end, the development of ethnic states and their attendant ideologies.

Collapse and Transition

The Levantine city-state system began to collapse c. 1200 BCE, along with the Egyptian and Hittite empires. Scholars have long debated the causes, with much attention paid to the textually reconstructed predations of the Egyptian empire, repeated invasions of 'Sea Peoples,' and the presumed impact of Israelites and other 'nomadic' groups (Sandars 1978; compare Bauer 1998). More recently the traditional interpretations have faltered, certainly with regard to the role of the Israelites. A more contextual interpretation sees a variety of factors at work, including the generalized collapse of palatial economies and international trade throughout the Central and Eastern Mediterranean, highly localized collapse of

political and settlement systems, and both small and large scale migrations and resettlement. Egyptian weakness during the 20th Dynasty was both cause and effect, and culminated in the complete abandonment of the empire c. 1150 BCE. A complex array of new social and settlement forms then appeared, some of which represented new ethnicities in the process of formulation. Whether these were coeval with or otherwise organically related to social or ethnic identities such as 'tribes' and lineages known a few centuries later from inscriptions and texts is unclear (cf. Dever 1992).

Some of the weaknesses of the city-state system and the Egyptian empire have been outlined earlier. The dependence on continuous circulation of prestige items and metallic wealth was a structural weakness. Cascading failures were created by the local security problems, and subsequent inability of both superpowers and local elites to extract surpluses necessary for procurement of strategic materials. Commerce conducted by entrepreneurs increasingly bypassed the palaces and undermined their wealth and authority. The development of iron metallurgy by the 'sub-elites,' and the dissemination of utilitarian objects outside palatial control, also contributed to the 'subversion of the established order' (Sherratt 1994; 1998). And new patterns of international mobility included the appearance of migrants, not least of all 'Sea Peoples,' that further destabilized areas of Cyprus and the Southern Levant (Stager 1995).

These infamous groups, largely of Aegean origins, had slowly and perhaps violently moved east to the Southern Levant via Cyprus. Egyptian texts depict their land and sea invasion being successfully repulsed by Ramses III at the very borders of Egypt, after having allegedly ravaged Cyprus, Syria, the Hittite lands and the Levant (Dothan 1982; Betancourt 2000; O'Connor 2000). Archaeological evidence, however, indicates a more complex and equivocal picture. The Hittite empire indeed collapsed, as did the Cypriot and Mycenean city-state system, largely for reasons described above, mainly in processes of localized dissolution. Little beyond the Egyptian accounts suggest invasions or anything other than localized conflict contributed to their demise. With the notable exception of Ugarit (Yon 1992; Bonatz 1993), most of the cities of the Northern Levant either continued to exist in a diminished condition or were quickly reoccupied, as were those of the Central Levant and inland Syria (Liverani 1987; Caubet 1992). In the South a few inland city-states persisted, many were abandoned, and a few others along the coast were occupied by 'Sea Peoples' (Bietak 1993). These urban coastal sites are consistent with the area known later as Philistia, a term derived from the Egyptian term *plst* for one of the 'Sea Peoples' groups. They contain distinctive material culture with strong Aegean affinities that may be called 'Philistine' (Dothan 1982; Stager 1995; Bunimovitz and Yasur-Landau 1996). Much of the Philistine assemblage appears specifically designed for use

in the creation and maintenance of group identity, such as religion and rituals, including those related to male solidarity, and perhaps patron-client relations, such as drinking and feasting (Joffe 1999; Killebrew 2000).

Another outstanding question is that of 'tribes' at the end of the Late Bronze Age (see the discussion in Routledge 2000). Much research and controversy have been predicated on the existence of tribes as understood through biblical texts. External texts do not address the existence of tribal entities which may be persuasively related to those of Biblical Israel, although a variety of roughly contemporary parallel groups such as Arameans are found during the later second millennium (Zadok 1991; Sader 2000: 64-65; Peckham 2001) along with arid zone groups such as *Shasu* (Giveon 1971). Discussion is greatly complicated by the elaborate biblical presentation of putative relationships between various Israelite tribes, their role in religion, culture, defense, and the development of the state. These have been enthusiastically embraced by biblical scholars, as have many sociological and anthropological studies that are presumed to offer analogies for antiquity (Gottwald 1979; Overholt 1995).

It is prudent, therefore, to merely point to the relative balance between kin-based organization and mobility strategies. In the Mediterranean zones of agro-pastoral village settlement, ruralized society reemphasized real and fictive kinship as means of creating bonds between families and settlements. In the semi-arid zones, where resources were limited and pastoralism and other mobile strategies were always more important, the release from even nominal political constraints may have permitted 'real' tribes to expand and elaborate their organization, and enter into larger confederations (LaBianca and Younker 1995; cf. Tapper 1990). But in all areas the eclipse and collapse of palatial power, the emergence of new technologies, and social and spatial reorganization, including ruralization resulting from resistence to or flight from state power on the part of villagers, were far more important factors than immigrants.

In the final analysis what collapsed during the period c. 1200-1150 BCE was the international system and its interdependent network of local city-states. The end of palatial and imperial superstructures opened up spaces for local populations to shift and reconfigure, and to expand their own international contacts. The relative contribution of newcomers to disruption and growth was small, even as it loomed large in the imagination of Egyptian scribes, later biblical writers, and earlier generations of archaeologists. Local elites quickly began to assert themselves, in the same fashion as their predecessors throughout the Bronze Age, and palatial society was quickly reborn. What was different, however, was not how these new palaces were organized, but rather the size of the units over which they stood, and the differentiated identities of their societies.

Iron Age Secondary State Formation

The Early Phases: Phoenicia 1200-1000 BCE

Several phases of state formation are apparent in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1200 BCE. In each of these a similar constellation of features is found, pointing to an integrated process, similar to that of 'peer polity interaction' described by Renfrew and Cherry (1986). In effect, the concept of the state and statecraft cascaded outward in a process of elite emulation and competition that took some 150-200 years. But it was only in a few examples, namely Israel, Judah, and perhaps Ammon and Moab, that more fully fledged 'ethnic states' emerged (see Figure 1).

The first states appear along the Mediterranean coast in what becomes known as Phoenicia. The primary sites were Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, Byblos and Arvad, each separated from one another by rivers flowing west into the Mediterranean from the Lebanon Range. These Canaanite city-states did not collapse entirely at the end of the Late Bronze Age, but maintained social and institutional continuity across the putative boundary of 1200 BCE. Previously the Syrian and Lebanese coasts had been part of the generalized province and concept of 'Canaan,' but after 1200 BCE an area of some 200 km from Arvad on the Nahr el-Kebir in the north to the Plain of Akko in the south, was differentiated into 'Phoenicia.' This process of cultural and political differentiation may be outlined to some degree (Aubet 1993: 12-16; Moscati 1993; Peckham 2001; Krings 1995).

To the north of the coastal cities was the singular entity of the kingdom of Ugarit, which had dominated much of the northern coast politically, economically and even militarily, collapsed. Dominated politically by the Hittite empire, heavily dependent on trade with the Hittites and with Cyprus, and with demanding and top-heavy administration and elite structure, this kingdom succumbed to the multiple disruptions of the late 13th century. The end of Ugarit permitted the independence of former vassals at large sites such as Karatepe and Carchemish, a wave of renewed urbanization, and the emergence of culturally hybrid 'Neo-Hittite' or 'Syro-Hittite' city-states across North Syria and Southeastern Anatolia (Mazzoni 1995).

To the east, the interior city-states of the Beqaa Valley and those in Syria beyond the Anti-Lebanon range had been deeply enmeshed in the Egyptian system, since they stood on the border with the Hittite sphere of influence. The withdrawal of the Egyptians and Hittites, their exactions and protections, left the interior temporarily adrift, a condition which coastal sites found highly advantageous. It is precisely in these eastern areas, notably along the Euphrates, Habur and Orontes Rivers, and in the Damascus Basin, that "semi-nomads"
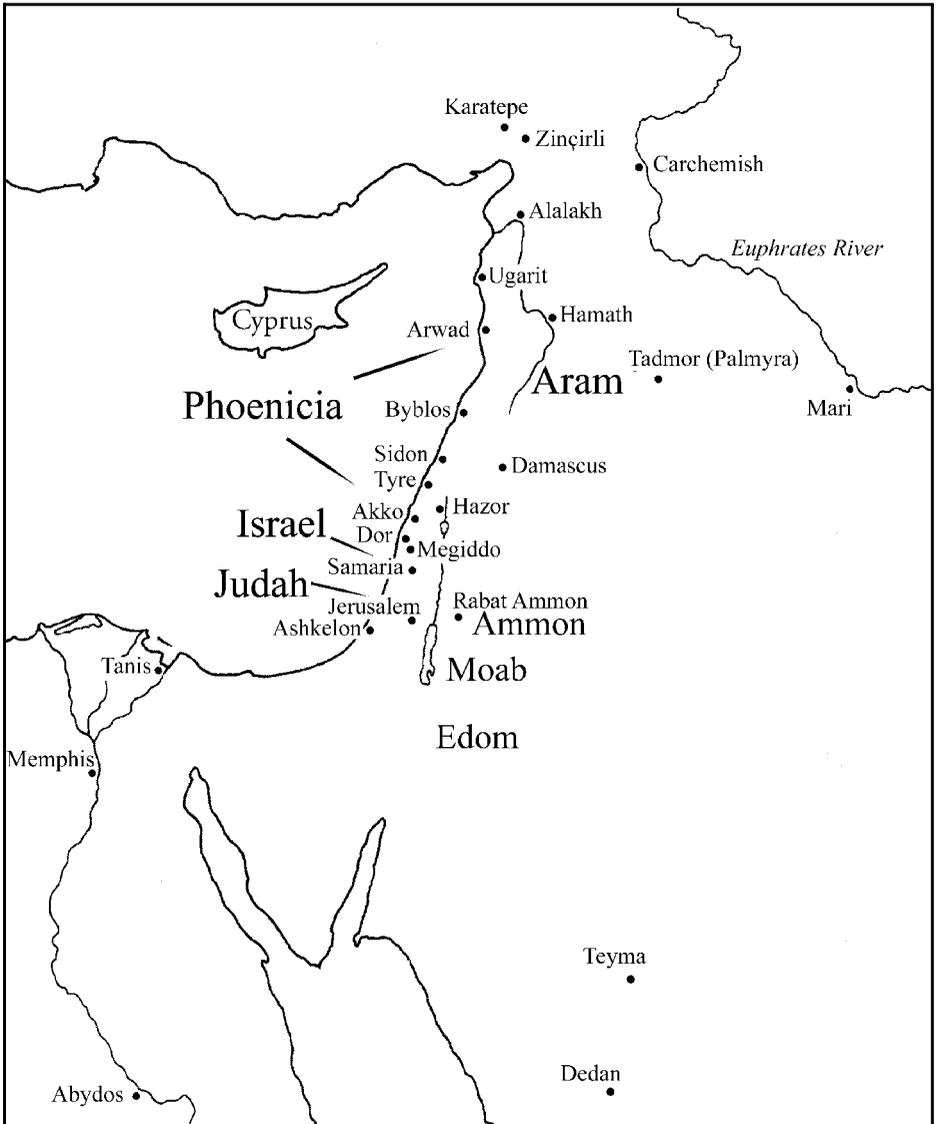
Figure 1: Map of the Levant in the Iron Age

from the Syrian steppe were able to enter and begin establishing themselves in an already rural environment (Sader 2000). The *aḥlamu*-Arameans had long been part of the local population of Syria, associated with the area called Aram by the Assyrians, a generic designation for a wide swath from the Habur River to the Lebanon Range (Nashef 1982). By the 11th century the term Aramean was used alone by the Assyrians, and the emergent states of the 10th century referred to themselves as '*bît*,' 'house of,' a term reflecting the tradition of "tribal" origins and patrilineal organization (Postgate 1974; Zadok 1991).

Finally, to the south, the Southern Levant was undergoing a complex situation of imperial retreat, urban decline and accompanying ruralization, and foreign settlement. Phoenicia was a semi-protected geographical entity, with an economy based on the exploitation of the sea and the mountains to the immediate east. While the central coast of Phoenicia had been heavily involved in maritime trade and the exploitation of timber products during the Bronze Age (and had perhaps even been disadvantaged by the relative strength of Ugarit), the relative reduction in the client base simply meant that sites could temporarily reemphasize subsistence exploitation of marine and coastal resources. But already by the reign of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) tribute was being sent from the Phoenicians cities of Byblos, Sidon, and Arvad (Grayson 1976: 23). At the same time Egyptian interest in Phoenician products was reemerging, as recorded in the famous report of the emissary Wen-Amun (Goedicke 1975).

In a sense, the involution of Phoenicia during the lull of imperial politics and international trade meant the reemergence of specifically coastal adaptations and identities (as measured by the crude proxy of material culture), which had prevailed during prehistory. During the Iron Age this logically bounded entity had the benefit of a very long tradition of local administration and politics. It is not surprising that a cultural and political identity such as 'Phoenicia' coalesced during this period. It is critical to note, however, that this unity was cultural rather than political. Individual cities retained political autonomy under separate, named dynasties and patron deities, and were never united except in dire situations. Individual Phoenician dynasties called themselves by the name of their city, Sidonian, Tyrian, Byblian, and so on. For all intents and purposes, these were simply extensions of Bronze Age concept and practices. The very term 'Phoenician' is applied not by the cultural or historical tradition of the Levantine coast, but rather by outsiders, notably Greeks. While Phoenicians must have been sufficiently distinctive in the eyes of others, they regarded themselves as 'Canaanites.'

As both a cultural and political concept, therefore, Phoenicia was only moderately integrated. What was new and innovative in Phoenicia were technolo-

gies and styles, and their dissemination, both through Phoenician expansion, and emulation. A singular technology which appeared first in Phoenicia is the alphabet. Developed originally during the mid-second millennium, apparently by West Semitic speakers working in Egyptian turquoise mines in the Southern Sinai desert, the first 'proto-Sinaitic' or 'proto-Canaanite' alphabet employed a collection of signs derived from Egyptian hieroglyphs and pictographs which expressed Semitic phonetic values (Sass 1988; 1991; Colless 1990; 1991). Used in the Southern and Central Levant during the Late Bronze Age for short, prosaic inscriptions on objects such as sherds and ceramic vessels, in Phoenician society the alphabet was employed widely for everyday communication, as well as commemorative, funerary, and votive inscriptions. The use of the alphabet facilitated the emergence of a standard dialect, orthography, and script (Garr 1985; Krahmalkov 2001; Peckham 1968).

The significance of the alphabet as a means of facilitating cultural interaction by others than trained scribes has been much discussed, most notably in the contentious debate over the transmission of the alphabet to the Greeks (e.g., Bernal 1990; Powell 1991; Sass 1991). The alphabet was easy to learn and use on a variety of basic materials, and was able to express a variety of languages with slight modifications. An information system capable of recording and codifying both prosaic data and high culture, or even generating multiple streams within historical or cultural traditions should not be underestimated. After 1200 BCE literacy became theoretically accessible to a far wider spectrum within Levantine societies. In Phoenicia royal monumental inscriptions appear at about 1000 BCE with the famous tomb of Ahiram (Teixidor 1987), but a variety of smaller inscriptions are known earlier, such as on bronze arrowheads (Bordreuil 1982). These are also among the earliest artifacts in the Southern Levant bearing Phoenician script, dating before approximately 1100 BCE (Cross and Milik 1956). Even unsuccessful or short-lived examples such as the Late Bronze Age Ugaritic alphabetic cuneiform system, the enigmatic script of the Deir 'Allā tablets, and the Early Iron Age Philistine use of inscribed seals, shows that many groups tried to utilize the economical concepts of the alphabet (Dietrich et al. 1995; Franken 1964; Keel 1994).

The transmission of the alphabet is one of many Phoenician innovations that profoundly affected the rest of the Mediterranean and the Levant. Critical to Phoenicia's influence was the rapid expansion of the various city-states, ultimately leading to the establishment of colonies throughout the central and western Mediterranean. Trade relations with Greece, Sicily, Italy and North Africa evidently began by the 10th century, with actual colonies founded slightly later (Aubet 1993). Phoenician trade with the eastern coast of Cyprus and Egypt receded in the 13th and 12th centuries, but quickly reemerged in the 11th cen-

tury, with a different pattern of exports and imports than seen previously.
Cypriot exports to the mainland declined but Phoenician and other Levantine
exports to Cyprus expanded considerably (Gilboa 1998; Bikai 1987). Inland par-
ticipation in the new trading order was limited until the 10th century, but these
regions were hardly isolated. Closer at hand, however, Phoenician city-states
vied with one another for power and extended their control both inland toward
the Lebanon range and to the south, into the Galilee and the Plain of Akko.
Major sites such as Tell Keisan and Tell Dor appear to have been under Phoe-
nician control during the late 11th century, although the presence of other ethnic
groups is indicated by the crude proxy of ceramic types (Mazar 1994; Gilboa
1998; Lehmann 2001; cf. Stern 1998). More specialized sites such as Ḥorvat Rosh
Zayit, a small border fortress and olive oil production center, were also founded
during the late 11th or very early 10th century (Gal and Alexandre 2000).

   The cultural centrality of Phoenicia and its organizational concepts to the
Levant were materialized further through the arts and crafts. Among the most
notable categories of material culture are ceramics, metal and ivory working,
textiles, and coroplastic art (see the essays in Moscati 1988). Phoenician ceram-
ics, painted and in particular burnished jars and bowls, were distributed and the
latter imitated widely during the 10th century in particular (Anderson 1990), as
were the elaborate metals and ivories, reflecting complex integration of Egypt-
ian, Syrian and local motifs (Markoe 1985; Winter 1976). Hybrid motifs were
also present on engraved seals and scarabs, which combined iconography and
alphabetic inscriptions for administrative and display purposes (Gubel 1993).
The ease with which Phoenician artisans adopted motifs, and perhaps underly-
ing cultural concepts, is another distinctive feature of Levantine coastal culture
glimpsed already during the third millennium BCE (Joffe 1992). And the dis-
semination of Phoenician, Syrian and Egyptian iconography and ideas through-
out the Levant was critical in exposing primarily rural areas to elite culture and
organizational methods.

   Despite this, Phoenicia was not a politically centralized state, nor an inte-
grated ethnic group or nation. It was functionally interrelated by economics and
many aspects of shared culture and language, but the city-states were not inte-
grated politically and territorially. However, maintaining overall cultural dis-
tinctiveness was not a priority for elites and their states, or communities and
households. The greatest significance lies in that Phoenician city-states devel-
oped organizational methods which could be tailored to distinct, local societies,
and that during the early Iron Age Phoenicia actively asserted itself over less
sophisticated neighbors. These 'core-periphery' relationships were hardly unique
at the very end of the second millennium BCE and in the initial centuries of the
first. The Aramean regions of northern Syria were enmeshed in similar, if very

much more complex, interactions with Phoenicia, the Neo-Hittite city-states, and Assyria, as were the Urartian regions to the east of Lake Van, not to mention the Phrygians and Lydians of central and southern Anatolia (Zimansky 1985; Muscarella 1995). What makes the otherwise undistinguished Southern Levantine periphery interesting is the emergence of progressively culturally integrated, rather small ethnic states or better, "ethnicizing" states. (I choose the neologism "ethnicizing" precisely to indicate that the resulting ethnic states were constructions, not natural entities).

The Early Phases: Change in the Phoenician Periphery

The period 1200-1000 BCE in the Southern Levant is perhaps the most closely studied and hotly debated in all Near Eastern archaeology, with 1000-700 BCE a close second. Despite the heavy burden placed on the archaeological data by biblical texts, new projects have created a much clearer picture of shifts in settlement and organization that led to the rise of states in the Southern Levant. These do not, however, appear to resemble closely the entities depicted either in the Bible or by most archaeologists.

As noted earlier, ruralization is a dominant theme at the end of the second millennium BCE in the Southern Levant and in inland Syria. Beginning c. 1200 BCE many small rural sites were founded throughout the highlands on both sides of the Jordan River (Finkelstein 1988a; 1994). Settlements were located in upland regions suitable for carefully calibrated balances of agriculture and pastoralism. In areas of higher rainfall, agriculture, including Mediterranean crops of olives, grapes, figs, and dates, dominated, while in more arid regions, herding of ovicaprids prevailed. The differences between these two areas and their subsistence balances amounted in all cases to only a few kilometers. Typically comprising a handful to a dozen or so structures, most were open settlements. The orientation of buildings and walls seems designed to provide enclosure for livestock and at best notional defenses (Fritz 1995:50-75). Total population density could only have numbered in the low thousands, and there is a strong gradient of settlement density decline from north to south, and from west to east (Finkelstein 1988a; Ofer 1994). The nature of settlement in southern Transjordan during this period is a matter of some controversy (Finkelstein 1995: 127-137; cf. Bienkowski 2001).

The origins of these rural settlers has been much debated, but on the available evidence of ceramic style, technology, and other material culture, including religious and ritual (Nakhai 2001: 170-176; cf. Zevit 2001: 84-85), most appear to have simply been indigenous 'Canaanites.' The organization of new agro-pastoral villages, with characteristic two-storey, four or five room farm-

houses (Ji 1997) suggests complex domestic groups, probably extended families (Stager 1985). Since labor remained the key limitation for exploiting the environment, various strategies for enlarging domestic groups were likely to have been employed, including coresidence of multiple generations and siblings, matrilocal or patrilocal residence, and adoption. The manipulation of kinship also provided an important means to generate linkages between domestic groups, in order to enlarge families, and create extensive webs of shared culture and reciprocal obligation within and between communities.

Religious rituals and other activities such as community feasting in the context of seasonal agricultural labor (Joffe 1999), not to mention common defense, fixed the ties, and identities which held communities together. Though much has been made by some scholars of the lack of pig bones at early Iron Age sites, these do not necessarily reflect a deliberate food preference or religious prohibition so much as the difficulty in raising these animals in highland settings. But the probability that such behavior unconsciously reinforced patterns of interaction and the development of community identities should not be discounted (Hesse 1990; Hesse and Wapnish 1997).

Larger social networks were the foundation for community-wide abatement of subsistence risk. In the unpredictable environments of the Levant, and the Mediterranean as a whole, survival was contingent on creating social units which could cope with stresses such as drought through social storage and mutual obligation (Halstead and O'Shea 1989; Butzer 1996). This necessitated the creation of larger productive units, extended families, and beyond that, communities and shared culture. These, in turn, were the foundation for still larger processes of centralization, and the corollary accretion of power.

The situation described here for the 12th and 11th centuries mirrors uncannily two earlier episodes of collapse, the Early Bronze (EB) I and EB IV, where larger scale societies disassembled into agro-pastoralism (Joffe 1993). With some important differences, in terms of available technologies, traditions of organization, and not least of all in that the EB I followed the quintessential agro-pastoral Chalcolithic period, earlier episodes were characterized by gradual development of ever larger villages with 'proto-urban' features, such as site planning and social architecture. The increasing numbers of 12th and 11th century sites show similar trends (Mazar 1994). Sites became larger and more organized, with more storage facilities and social architecture, such as the extremely large structures at 'En Ḥagit and Tell 'En Ẓippori (Dessel 1999), plausibly interpreted as civic buildings. Silos also proliferated at settlements, suggesting social storage, although how this was administered is unclear. In the northern Negev it has even been proposed that the largest site, Tell Masōs, was the site of a 'chiefdom' (Finkelstein 1995).

Critical to the return of states in the Southern Levant are that some diminished Late Bronze Age city-states, such as Megiddo, Beth Shan, and 'Afula, persisted into the 11th century. Such continuities raise the possibility that at least some urban institutions and traditions remained intact. It is unclear whether elites at these sites were at the forefront of creating larger political entities. But their close proximity to Phoenicia makes it likely that they had considerable familiarity with those elite concepts and styles, through observation and trade relations over very short distances. The mechanisms and motivations for observing and emulating more sophisticated organization were extremely close at hand.

At the same time other influences were penetrating the Southern Levant. The site of Tell Hadar, for example, on the east shore of the Sea of Galilee is a small, fortified citadel used for storing agricultural products, but whose scant domestic architecture appears Aramean in design (Kochavi 1989). It is unclear whether this site was part of one of the small entities called in second millennium sources Geshur and Maacah, possibily in the process of becoming Arameanized, or simply a southern manifestation of Aramean society (Pitard 1987: 87-89). What is certain is that this area was a frontier zone with Aram-Damascus. Even the Sea Peoples in their guise as "Philistines" were, unlike their Cypriot counterparts, becoming less distinguishable in material culture terms from the surrounding Southern Levantine culture (Dothan 1995; Iacovou 1998).

By the 11th century trends toward greater social and economic differentiation and political centralization in the Southern Levant are evident. The motivation and the models for recreating states on the periphery of Phoenicia were immediate. The simplest explanation is that, as had recurred repeatedly during the Bronze Age, powerful elites, evocatively called 'mafiosi' by Gilman (1990), saw it to their advantage to reorganize space, labor, and ideology in order to create more productive and exploitative social and economic structures. This was likely accomplished with an ever-shifting balance of coercions and benefits, such as violence, patronage, and the creation of new economies, as well as the through social organization and ideology. The manipulation of genealogies, in all likelihood already a mechanism for establishing real and fictive kinship relations between lineages and communities, was also a longstanding means for leaders to establish their legitimacy in local, historical, and even cosmological terms (Van Seters 1983).

The question of who these elites were, however, is tantalizingly vague. A variety of rural headmen were likely to have been involved in the process, but it is unclear whether these were the true or only instigators. Given that urbanism and then state institutions reappear most forcefully at former city-states, with defensible locations on key trade routes and possessed of especially ample agricultural lands, two complementary suggestions may be offered. The first is

that greater demographic and institutional continuity existed at major sites west of the Jordan River, as likely occurred during earlier episodes of reurbanization and the initial emergence of the state (Joffe 1993). The second is that regardless of the actual level of continuity, the economic and social centrality of key sites gave them important advantages over smaller ones in the reestablishment of social hierarchies and social differentiation. But the emergence of a rural component, with strong networks of connections, also created for the first time in the Southern Levant a meaningful social counterbalance to the power of cities. The Iron Age is the uneasy fusion of both urban and rural, where loci of politics, economics, and culture are in constant tension.

The Later Phases: Israel and its Neighbors 1000-900 BCE

The 10th century is the pivotal period in the study of Iron Age states, and it becomes increasingly difficult to keep the biblical accounts from intruding upon the archaeological record and archaeological imagination. Predictably, the archaeological evidence is a fragmented mosaic, not easily arranged into a coherent picture.[1] It is sufficient, however, to identify the existence of a state west of the Jordan River. A series of palatial structures, and other forms of material culture, both delineate and delimit the 10th century state. (see Figure 2).

Biblical archaeology's traditional view of the 10th century presumed the existence of kings named David and Solomon and revolved around insights which correlated three sets of elements from the sites of Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo (Yadin 1958; Dever 1982; Fritz 1995: 79-96). Fortification walls, administrative

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[1] Recent studies have attempted to lower the chronology of the Iron Age Southern Levant by 50 to 100 years, deliberately throwing off a web of relationships between archaeological strata, ceramic styles, and historical associations (Finkelstein 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 1999a; 1999b; 2001; cf. Mazar 1997; Ben-Tor and Ben-Ami 1998). In brief, the approach proposes that the presence or absence of specific early Iron Age ceramic types be regarded as indication of sequential rather than simultaneous cultures (Bunimovitz and Faust 2001). Reorganizing the stratigraphic sequence in this fashion redates architectural components at key sites downward and creates a new alignment of material culture with the historical (actually Biblical) sequence. Thus reordered, strata identified by traditional Biblical Archaeology with David, Solomon, Omri, and other early Israelite kings therefore appear to contradict the Biblical accounts of a highly centralized and wealthy kingdom (see generally Finkelstein and Silberman 2000).

The exercise usefully illustrates the weakness inherent in using texts as the guide to archaeological interpretation, and the often equivocal nature of stratigraphy and ceramic dating. It also demonstrates the necessity to unpack archaeological 'strata' into variously dated components, thereby rendering less convincing the architectural and settlement plans too frequently accepted without critical assessment. But it is still a strictly historicist effort (Joffe n.d. a) and seems unlikely to be confirmed fully by radiocarbon data. Many more assays are needed, but see now Mazar and Carmi 2001 and Gilboa and Sharon 2001.

The Southern Levant ca. 900 BCE

50km

Tyre
Dan
Achziv
Hazor
H. Rosh Zayit
Bethsaida
Tell Keisan
Tell
Tell Abu Hawam
Hadar
Sea
of Galilee
Dor
Megiddo
Jezreel
Taanach
Ramot Gilead
Dothan
Beth Shan
Tirzah
Samaria
Tell es-Saidiyeh
Tell Deir 'Alla
Tell Qasile
Rabat Ammon
Gezer
Ashdod
Jericho
Heshbon
Ekron
Tell Batash
Beth Shemesh
Jerusalem
Ashkelon
Lachish
Hebron
Dhibon
Tell Beit Mirsim
Tell Sera
Beer-Sheva
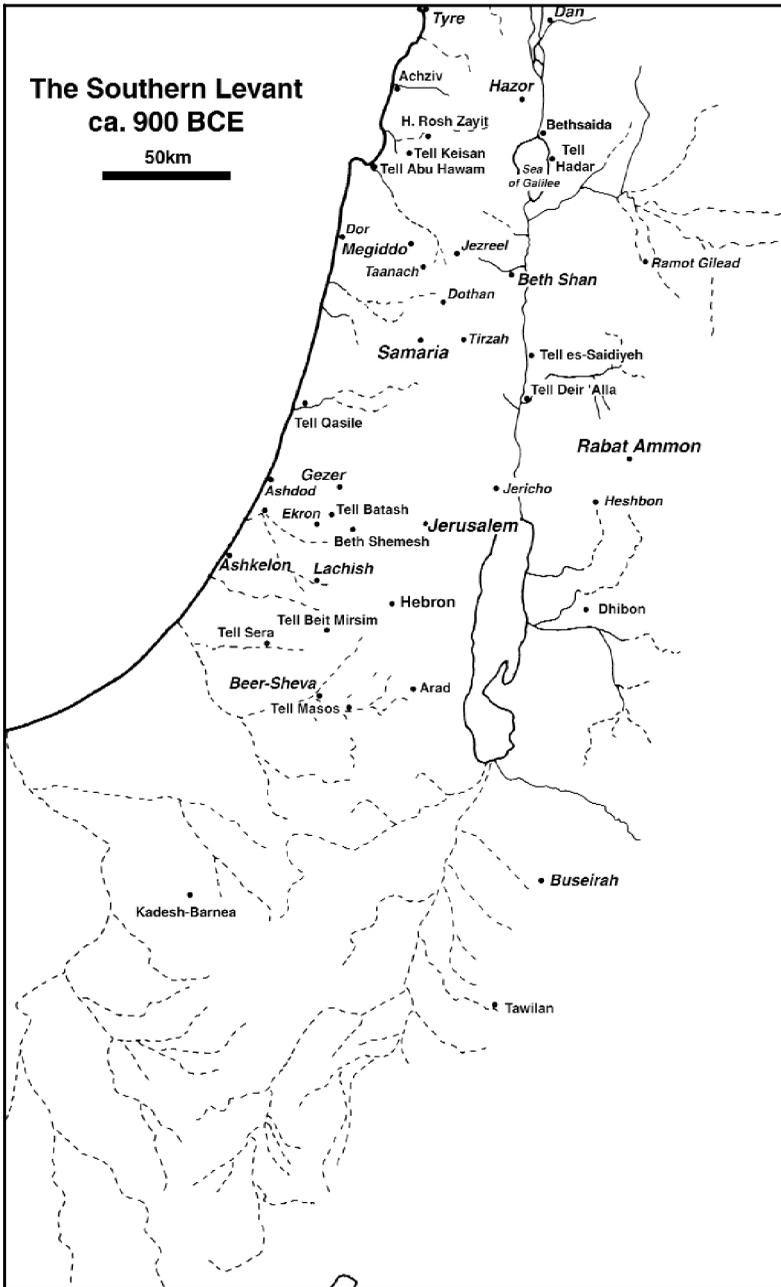Arad
Tell Masos
Buseirah
Kadesh-Barnea
Tawilan

Figure 2: Map of the Southern Levant around 900 BCE

buildings, and three-pier gates all show remarkable similarity in terms of design, dimension, and execution, leading to the conclusion that they were constructed by a single team of architects and craftsmen under the direction of a royal administration, probably Solomon's. It has become increasingly clear, however, that all these elements are not precisely contemporary. For example, the gates at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer were not built exactly at the same time as accompanying fortifications, which suggests that the capabilities of the organizing authorities were not especially great (Ussishkin 1980). At the same time, however, the masonry and construction styles at these sites are extremely similar, in essence, employing Phoenician techniques (Shiloh 1979).

The administrative structures were not reused Late Bronze Age structures but were constructed new. Importantly, most are variants of a style called '*bît ḥilâni*', with an entranceway flanked by pillars leading to a central court. This style originates in Northern Syria among Arameans with strong familiarity with Neo-Hittite terms and practices (Frankfurt 1952; Reich 1992; Arav and Bernett 2000), but by the 10th century and afterwards quickly became a standard template for palaces throughout Western Asia, including Assyria. At Hazor and Megiddo these are the dominant structures on the sites, with only fragmentary evidence for domestic architecture (Figure 3). But the lack of storage facilities is critical and indicates that elites occupying these structures were not primarily engaged in providing economic and social services to local communities but were concerned rather with establishing a local ideological presence and conducting political affairs. Furthermore, each site was constructed on a border, Megiddo with Phoenicia, Gezer with Philistia, and Hazor with Aram-Damascus, indicating these were not in fact independent city-states but rather part of a larger entity whose borders remain difficult to define. The presence of multiple palaces at these sites is difficult to understand but may even reflect competing elites within each site who were somehow subservient to the still vague center (cf. Herr 1997: 126).

Notable decorative features in these palaces are elaborate column capitals decorated with carved volutes representing palm trees. These 'proto-aeolic' capitals are found not only in the Southern Levant but across the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly on Cyprus (Figure 4). In later centuries this style decorated palaces from Moab to Etruria, used on a variety of capitals, stelae, ceramic shrines, carved ivories, and other items (Shiloh 1979). The wide dissemination of specific royal architectural and decorative styles in a strong indication that from the 10th century onward a new international system was emerging, which like its Late Bronze Age predecessor had a specific grammar and syntax.

Another element of the emergent 'royal' culture in the 10th century Southern Levant was red burnished pottery imitating Phoenician wares. Often called
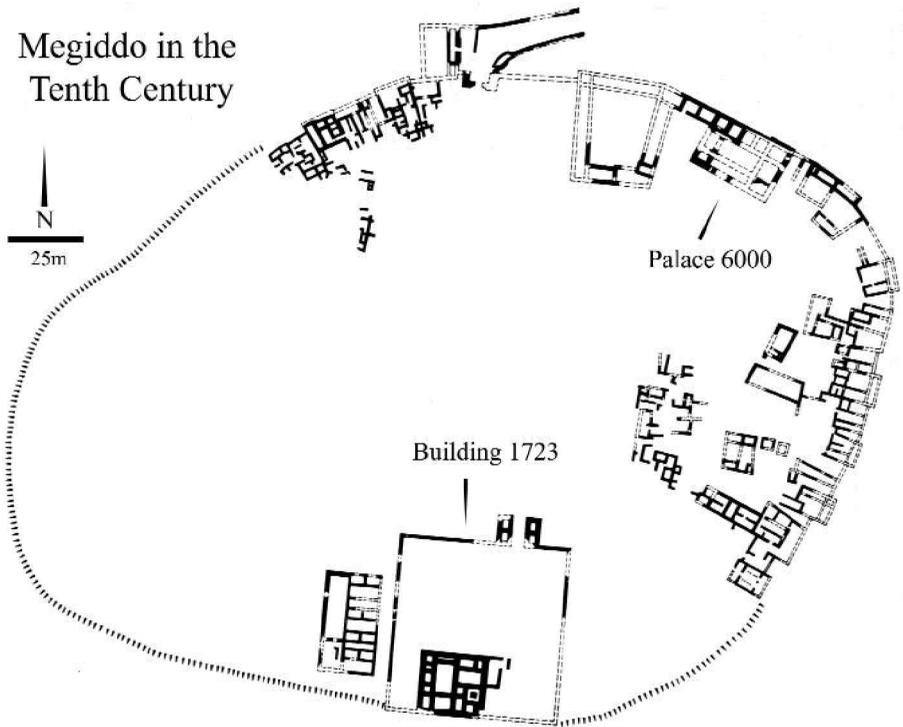
Figure 3: Plan of Megiddo during the 10th century BCE.
Palace 6000 is a "bît ḫilâni" style building

'Solomonic' pottery, this assemblage was limited to open bowls and vessels and did not possess a full range of forms, for example, cooking pots or storage vessels. The assemblage was intended for use in specific social situations such as drinking and feasting. Pottery of this sort never exceeded some 15% of the total assemblage at any site, sometimes much lower, suggesting that it was disseminated narrowly. It was especially common in various administrative structures (Holladay 1990). Whether this was an elite assemblage manufactured from above, or a sumptuary assemblage purchased from local producers, is unclear. But the association with Phoenicia is deliberate, and identified the users as associated either directly or informally with the royal establishment and its ideology. At the same time another ceramic type, the so-called 'hippo' storage jars, was widely distributed through the north, and its distribution and ceramic materials demonstrate strong commercial connections with Phoenicia (Alexandre 1995). The movement of actual agricultural products from the periphery to the

core underpinned the export of selected ideological artifacts in the opposite direction.

A number of obvious elements, namely monumental architecture and pottery, which indicate the deliberate materialization or concrete expression of a royal concept (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996), but many more are lacking. There are few indications of the reorganization of space or labor, since the vast majority of the population remained in rural sites, little different from those of preceding centuries. Indeed, social storage continued to take place in rural society. There are no representational art, monumental inscriptions, inscribed or decorated objects that can be dated to the 10th century. Any direct discussion of royal iconography or administration is impossible, along with prosopography in general. There were not large numbers of even uninscribed seals or weights, making it difficult to discuss economic structures such as standardization and exchange. Only the construction of administrative sites suggests extraction of labor by the state. Relying therefore on negative evidence, is it reasonable to suggest that beyond architecture, iconographic and administrative means for disseminating royal ideology, through a presence in the visual environment and domination of forms of business and administration, were lacking. Overall, the 10th century state seems barely integrated at all. Integration is prosaic at best, based on preexisting social and economic connections, and little suggests any meaningful level of ethnic unity.

The 10th century state did not or could not construct a complete set of administrative and symbolic structures, but it did use elements of the emerging
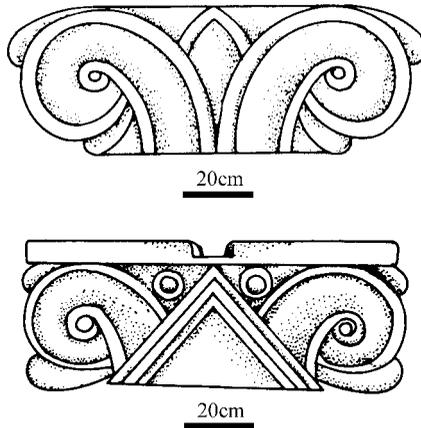

20cm

20cm

Figure 4: Examples of "Proto-Aeolic" capitals from 10 century BCE Megiddo and Hazor

international style. The limited residential, administrative, and ceremonial struc-
tures show that 10th century sites were ideological shells, where state func-
tionaries carried on administrative and diplomatic functions. Social storage and
provisioning were not used as a state service to generate allegiance. What wealth
that could be extracted was channeled into materializing the state in overt ways,
but not the elaboration of a royal ideology that redefined the local political and
cosmological orders to lend legitimacy to the new system (Baines and Yoffee
1998). Only the international elements gave hint of larger ideological frame-
works into which new elites were connected. Royal pottery, like royal architec-
ture, was only loosely integrated with society at large. Social organization and
local religious ideology appear unchanged, with kin networks, and household
cult and small open-air shrines directed at the same Canaanite deities as before
(Dever 1990: 128-140). In a sense the 10th century state was a fragile and per-
ishable Potemkin Village, with a royal establishment that was not especially
powerful.

Though a slender basis for asserting a new state, creation of a royal assem-
blage which projected the ideology of an emergent elite across socially diverse
landscapes was common during the Iron Age. An excellent example of this is
Urartu, where extensive and elaborate art, architecture, and material culture
materialized imperial authority across a much larger area and more ethnically
diverse than the Southern Levant (Zimansky 1995; A. T. Smith 1999; 2000). A
meager Southern Levantine parallel to this far-flung and visually rich undertak-
ing was a network of small fortresses and caravanseri throughout the northern
Negev Desert, designed to project 10th century state authority, and defend and
pacify the desert frontier. It might be as correct to say that desert fortresses
were a state means of organizing the rural frontier from the outside inward. But
no 10th century inscriptions from Phoenicia, Egypt or Mesopotamia mention a
political entity called Israel or rulers called David and Solomon. To its con-
temporaries, the 10th century state was probably too ephemeral to really notice
as a political entity (cf. Malamat 1982).

The biblical texts speak of the capital city in Jerusalem, but the area where
the royal establishment and temple may have stood cannot be excavated. Strong
arguments can be made on archaeological, historical and literary grounds that a
capital existed in Jerusalem during the 10th century (Na'aman 1996), and the
pattern of establishing new capitals either 'disembedded' from or 'reembedded'
in pre-existing geographies of power is well-attested, especially in Assyria (Joffe
1998a). But the problem of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the question regard-
ing who were the leaders of this unusual state. The biblical texts speak about
the tribal structure, and how after a period of adjudicant/religious/war leaders or
judges, kingship was divinely assigned to Saul and then David and his lineage.

David and especially Solomon are credited with creating a state whose admin-
istrative districts defied tribal boundaries, a capital in Jerusalem, complete with
palace and temple, royal cities and garrisons, and an aggressive foreign policy,
all overseen by corps of administrators (Soggin 1977).

As elegant and attractive as this scenario is, the archaeological evidence sug-
gests a far more modest state whose center remains for the moment obscure. It
is difficult to even speak of kingship during the 10th century, only of elites with
lesser or fragmentary rather than overarching forms of power, perhaps even
competitive and overlapping elites, sorting out prerogatives for rule under some
common, state-level framework. The literary and historical emphasis on tribes
and kingship, and the documentable appearance of the latter from the 9th cen-
tury onward might indicate that such forms indeed existed in the 10th century
but this cannot be demonstrated as yet archaeologically. The adoption of ele-
ments of the international ruling style is an indication that this small, peripheral
state was closely aware of the world outside its borders and the norms for elite
behavior, as is later literary emphasis on the international stature of dynastic
founders. In the end, the fragility of the 10th century state, however, had unex-
pected effects. It both stimulated the development of even more peripheral poli-
ties, and new concepts of identity. The state preceded the ethnicity.

Ethnicizing States of the Ninth Century

The rise of the 10th century state was largely a function of the northern and
central portions of the Southern Levant becoming a periphery of Phoenician
city-states and a neighbor or competitor to Aramean city-states. As noted above,
Phoenician city-states were culturally integrated but politically independent.
Aramean city-states were in practical terms politically independent but texts
such as the Sefire inscription suggest that some elites possessed at least a notion
of ethnic-geographic integration (Grosby 1998). In contrast, the emergence of
9th century states took place in a more complex international geo-political sit-
uation. In the north, Phoenicia and Aram were the dominant local entities, but
further afield the Neo-Assyrian empire was resurgent and moving inexorably
westward. One effect was to reactivate old political patterns of fight or flight,
confronting elites with the choice of paying tribute or resisting individually or
uniting into larger coalitions which temporarily overrode local disputes (Kah-jin
Kuan 1995; Bar 1996). Political elites vacillated between these strategies, some-
times with success, and other times without.

Another effect was intensification of long distance trade including routes in
the desert margins, which had diminished in importance since the evaporation

of the Egyptian empire some 200 years earlier. In Transjordan this made tribes the middlemen between villagers and pastoral nomads for transport of considerable wealth from Arabia. The archaeological evidence for the timing and extent of desert trade is still incomplete, but the appearance of 'Midianite' pottery in southern Jordan and western Saudi Arabia by 1200 BCE demonstrates the emergence of local groups on the far margin of the empire (Finkelstein 1988b; Parr 1992). The appearance of states east of the Jordan River during and after the 9th century, including the expansion of the Arameans along the shores of the Sea of Galilee (Arav and Bernett 2000) should be linked with new sources of wealth on an otherwise lean periphery.

The historically attested raid of Shoshenq, a non-Egyptian general who ascended to the throne and founded the 22nd Dynasty (Kitchen 1986: 72-76, 285-302; Redford 1992: 312-319; cf. Na'aman 1992), around 925 BCE has been long sought as a stratigraphic benchmark dividing the first and second stages of Iron Age states. This is also the lone synchronism between Egyptian and biblical texts, since the latter records Shoshenq's raid as taking place in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor (1 Kings 11: 40). But the interest of Shoshenq demonstrates that the redeveloping urbanism of the Southern Levant was a tantalizing target. As far back as the third millennium Egyptian kings raided the Southern Levant for short-term gains. This seems to have been Shoshenq's intent as well, although the biblical texts implies the raid was part of an effort to create a separate vassal state in Israel under Jeroboam (Wilson 2001). But the temporary reemergence of Egypt as a major state, capable of projecting its power and influence far beyond its borders was another major factor in the emergence of still more states. Egypt represented a threat, but also an opportunity.

Given these external complexities, the 10th century state fragmented. Regional divisions become far more apparent from the 9th century onward. West of the Jordan, the ceramic evidence indicates the bifurcation of north and south, in historical terms, Israel and Judah, along the same geographic lines displayed as far back as the late fourth millennium. From the 9th century onward ceramic assemblages in these regions varied considerably, as did assemblages on either side of the Jordan River. During the Bronze Age there was little east-west distinction in ceramic assemblages, and this persisted through the early Iron Age. After the 10th century, however, variation becomes notable, even profound, and is the best indication of social groups with very limited economic and social interaction (Amiran 1969: 191-299; Hendrix, Drey, and Storfjell 1996: 170-202). Early Iron Age integration, which consisted of local economic and social interaction in which there was little horizontal differentiation in terms of identity, language or belief system, were confounded by political geographic factors

from above. Networks of settlement, trade, marriage, and kinship were gradually severed by divergence of local interests and the emergence of local elites.
By some time in the later 9th century the southern Judean and Moabite states
had established themselves as politically and culturally independent from the
northern Israelite state. But while Philistine city-states maintained their political
autonomy, they shared almost all the material culture of Judah (Gitin 1998).
The creation of new ethnicities and ethnicizing states was a more powerful
force than the maintenance of older ethnic concepts and political forms.

During the 9th century a wider range of state functions begin to emerge at
sites both west and east of the Jordan River. In contrast to the 10th century, the
9th displayed a more routinized and articulated approach to rule. This is seen
first of all in the design of palaces, such as Samaria, which contain both living
and administrative areas, and substantial storage facilities (Crowfoot, Kenyon,
and Sukenik 1942; Tappy 1992). Constructed again using Phoenician style masonry,
this palace was far larger than the border sites of Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer,
which are also rebuilt during the course of the 9th century with the notable
addition of storage facilities (Holladay 1986). Unlike the 10th century examples,
the palace at Samaria was eventually elaborately equipped with sumptuary
items in the Phoenician style, especially carved ivory furniture inlays and decorative items (Crowfoot and Crowfoot 1938). These items, obtainable only
through elite contacts, situate the occupants not simply within the Levantine but
a broader international sphere of political style (Winter 1976; Barnett 1982: 43-
55; Herrmann 2000). Other indications of the northern ruling approach are seen
in the construction of additional palaces, and the production of 'Samaria Ware,'
thin, red slipped and burnished bowls imitating Phoenician prototypes. This
should be contrasted with the prosaic evidence of varied household architecture
suggesting considerable ethnic diversity (Faust 2000). The façade state by necessity evolved into the rent-seeking state, but ethnic homogeneity was not an
overriding goal.

The 'independence' of 'Judah' took place over several decades during the 9th
century. The same considerations which had impelled the creation of the 10th
century state as a periphery which supplied Phoenicia and consumed its products, which supported a high level of urbanism and elite sumptuary behavior,
now motivated elites in Judah to loosen their connections with the north. Egypt
was vastly larger and wealthier than Phoenicia, but had different strategic needs,
primarily for buffer states. Settlement in Judah had been minimal from the 12th
through the 10th centuries, with a far lower density of settlement than in Israel,
Ammon and even Moab (Ofer 2001). The geography of Judah, with higher hills
and steeper slopes which grade to desert in the east and south, was less conducive to the limited agro-pastoral settlement characteristic of the 12th-11th

centuries than Israel in the north. Even during the 10th century more extensive rural settlement, urbanism had been limited to a few 'royal' outposts like Arad.

But Judah, previously a periphery to a periphery, found itself during the 9th century oriented increasingly toward Egypt. Jerusalem itself remained relatively small through the 8th century, but during the 9th century a coherent settlement system emerged with an imposing citadel on the southeast frontier facing Egypt, Lachish, desert fortresses like Arad, and storehouse complexes in smaller towns like Beersheba, designed to protect the borders and serve as central places for economy and society. Steady growth of villages and towns took place throughout the 9th and 8th centuries with few breaks (Mazar 1997: 163). During this period Judah began to pursue an independent economic policy, using mass produced pottery, a distinct system of inscribed weights, based on Egyptian numbers and measures (Aharoni 1966; Kletter 1998; Fox 2000: 250-268) and relied on the widespread use of inscribed stamp seals and bullae, based also on Egyptian practices (Avigad and Sass 1997). Other features becoming visible in the late 9th and early 8th centuries include burial in bench tombs with bone repositories and headrests shaped like the hairstyle of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, which become characteristic of the south (Bloch-Smith 1992; Joffe n.d.c.).

Among the most significant indicators of the independence of Judah are inscribed seals and bullae. More than 1200 Iron Age seals and impressions are known from the Southern Levant, virtually all bearing some sort of inscription. The majority date to the 8th through the 6th century, but a small number show that the practice began in the 9th century or earlier. Almost all Southern Levantine examples are stamp seals rather than Mesopotamian-style cylinder seals. The stamp seal, and the approach to sealing clay bullae identifying folded papyrus, parchment or vessel tags and vessels themselves, identify the practice as being of Egyptian inspiration. The iconography of Southern Levantine seals is also strongly influenced by Egypt. Winged scarabs and griffins are among the most common motifs, and even the tiny decorative element that divides the various fields is often decorated with a lotus bud (Sass 1993).

An important observation is that the overwhelming number of seals with personal names indicates a high level of literacy, at least among individuals who conducted economic transactions. This should be contrasted with contemporary Neo-Assyrian seals where inscriptions are rare (Millard 2001). The use of numerous official titles on seals also reflects a complex bureaucracy and the institution of kingship, which were deeply involved in economic oversight and military affairs (Fox 2000). The paleography of inscribed seals supports the view that scripts and dialects became distinct by the 9th century, although the persistent difficulty in classification points to their continued mutual intelligibility. Even more important, the use of theophoric elements in personal names,

such as Yahweh, El, Milkom, Ba'al and others, points to the incorporation of regional or state religion into the practices and worldview of daily society (Avigad 1987; Zadok 1988).

The identity of the elites who gradually assumed control of the Judean and Israelite states remains problematic, but by the middle of the 9th century extra-biblical references give indication of who was in charge. Dating to c. 850 BCE, the Mesha Stele mentions the king of Israel "who oppressed Moab many days" and distinguishes him from Omri who had assumed power later. It also states that in a raid vessels had been taken from Yahweh and given to the Moabite deity Kemosh. In further distinction from Israel, the 'House of David' is mentioned as controlling a southern area that the Moabites then reclaimed in battle (Routledge 2000: 247-250). The "Black Obelisk" of Shalmaneser III (c. 853 BCE) names and depicts Jehu, son of Omri, lying before the Assyrian king offering gifts (Pritchard 1969: 281). Finally, the two fragments of the Tell Dan inscription (c. 805 BCE) mention both the 'King of Israel' and the 'House of David,' thus presenting fragments of royal names that have been interpreted variously (Galil 2001). These inscriptions demonstrate that two distinct political entities existed, with separate dynastic lines, whose politics can from mid-century onward be understood by triangulating archaeology, extra-biblical, and biblical evidence.

Similar to Judah, the cultural and political independence of areas to the east, some of which had been dominated by the 10th century state, were occurring during the 9th century (Knauf 1992). Already in the 11th century at the site of Tell 'Umayri in Ammon earlier fortifications were reused. In the 10th century portions of the Amman citadel were surrounded by a fortification wall, and in Moab at Hesban, a water reservoir seventeen meters on a side and seven meters deep may have already been in use. During the 9th century the Amman Citadel becomes the capital of that state, and an inscription found there employs the Ammonite dialect to praise the patron deity Milkom (Aufrecht 1989: 154-163). In Moab a fortified site with public buildings was constructed at Dhibon, and a commemorative stele in the local dialect was erected by king Mesha. A series of fortresses were constructed along the southern boundary, as well as possibly a second capital, complete with a second Mesha stele (Routledge 2000: 245). Names on Moabite and Ammonite seals employ theophoric elements which include the patron deity, and their iconography is heavily Egyptian. Ammonite political (or religious) sculpture further depicts individuals wearing the Egyptian *atef* crown. In the space of fifty or so years these states become visible geo-political entities with distinctive cultures.

Local and international legitimacy by the 9th century were *de facto*, which permitted states to begin a seemingly endless cycle of predations against one

another, seeking minor territorial and demographic advantages (Donner 1977; Ahlström 1993: 601-638). These miniature states of the Iron Age also had to carefully balance their own needs with the productive capabilities of their environments, and this was especially true in Transjordan. Unlike their northern counterpart, the southern entities were not dominated by multiple and redundant palaces. A clearer relationship between the capital and the outlying districts is visible, but in Israel the redundancy of palaces has even lead to the suggestion that a form of city-state organization prevailed (Finkelstein 2001). The comparative lack of conspicuous consumption and display in the south point to different strategies for ruling over different balances of agriculturists, pastoralists, traders and nomads, necessary in more marginal and vulnerable environments.

The expensive palatial and sumptuary infrastructure in Israel suggests that taxation rather than storage was the goal. In contrast storage was emphasized much more in the public architecture of Judah, since agricultural shortages could result in population movements and the dissolution of the state. Portable wealth, such as jewelry, was abundant however, and points to an exit strategy for elites. The same strategy was employed in Ammon, where similar environmental conditions prevailed, as seen in the construction of fortification walls with storage spaces. There were limited expenditures on sumptuary items, but these did include elements of international political style such as 'proto-aeolic' column capitals and ashlar masonry. In Moab, however, an even more sparse approach was adopted, reflecting the limited resources of the state, and perhaps its nature as a tribally constituted entity, namely one with a very weak king and strong ties among kin-groups and villagers. Providing a buffer for agricultural production was a state prerogative, but unlike early states, daily provisioning was not an issue in the Southern Levant. There is no evidence in the Southern Levant for large-scale food preparation facilities such as bakeries and breweries, nor for standardized ration containers (Joffe 1998b). As with most states, those of the Iron Age were concerned primarily with their own survival. Ironically, the concept of ethnicity permitted states to limit their investments ensuring the survival of the people.

Incomplete as they may have been, the core ethnic identities of Israel, Judah, Ammon, and Moab, were in place by the 9th century. With the addition of Edom in the 8th century, and even after the demise of Israel at the hands of Assyria in 721 BCE, the Southern Levant's particular adaptation—the ethnic states became a persistent feature of the social and political landscapes of the Mediterranean and beyond. The adaptive quality of ethnicity also emerged quickly (Oded 1979; Na'aman 1995). After 721 BCE, some of the Israelite population was dispersed to Assyria, but those finding refuge in Judah were integrated into society. And with the Babylonian Exile, the Judean population began

its transformation into Jews (Brettler 1999). In the cases of the Philistines and the Transjordanian states, however, the end of states meant the end of specific ethnic concepts such as 'Edomite.' Later groups such as Nabateans may possibly have been their demographic but not conceptual descendents.

IDENTITY FROM ABOVE AND BELOW

The reconstruction presented here differs in key respects from both the traditional view of the United and Divided Monarchies, and recent efforts that have revised substantially the chronology and history of the Iron Age (e.g., Finkelstein 1999a; Jamison-Drake 1991). The approach adopted here is not fundamentally historicist, seeking in the main to prove, disprove, or otherwise comment on the biblical accounts. Nor does it try to test the archaeological data against limiting models of socio-political evolution, which are then reflected back on the biblical texts. In fairness it may be argued that the core-periphery perspective proposed here does bring a series of implications regarding socio-politics, but that is only true because many archaeologists and especially historical sociologists discussing the topic have been determined to create generalizations where none may in fact exist (Joffe 2000:120). But if the overt dynamics of secondary state formation are familiar, the emergence of ethnicizing states from 1000 to 850 BCE is not.

This discussion has demonstrated the gradual emergence of states and distinct social identities during a period of some two hundred years. The 10th century was an effort to create a state from the outside in. Rather than inventing a new identity, the 10th century elite created a shell state that made reference outward to Phoenicia as the source of ideological legitimation. What other developments occurred at 'court' or within the emerging religious establishment are unclear, but identity concepts at the lower levels remained centered on kinship and location, both intensely local and unsurprisingly regional. During the 9th century bifurcation of north and south, and the decisive process of state formation in Moab, regions became a patchwork of small states, each striving to construct its own ethnic identity.

In their developed stages these states perceived themselves in elite and canonical documents as having stable territorial boundaries, in which groups claiming descent from common ancestors were unified by patron deities and common dialects (Machinist 1991; Grosby 1993; 1997; 1999; Sparks 1998). Royal monumental and dedicatory inscriptions consistently address or mention deities such as Melkart of Aram, Kemosh of Moab, or Milkom of Ammon. But where does ethnic identity come from? How much is by design and how much by accident, or the law of unintended consequences? And what comes from below and what

from above? Iron Age states emerged by design, in another manifestation of the ancient pattern of elites reorganizing labor, land, and ideas to the own advantage. But even mafiosi do not operate solely on the basis of coercion. Benefits, in the form of physical and nutritional security, and ideas that facilitate integration, such as a sense of safety and social cohesion, must also be real. Identity facilitates integration.

The international ruling style was one means of demonstrating an elite's impressive foreign connections, impressing upon the populace the elite's suitability for rule by making explicit statements about their international legitimacy, which have implicit subtexts about the elite's capability for locally maintaining order and fostering wealth (Helms 1993; Joffe 2000). Externally, the style expressed to neighbors, trading partners, competitors and potential predators the regime's legitimacy and wealth. The most extreme examples of this are found in Neo-Assyrian palaces, where whatever ambiguity remained for a visitor experiencing the massive architecture was dispelled utterly by the decorative art, depicting an endless series of military victories, resulting in the subjugation of enemies (Winter 1981; Russell 1991; Marcus 1995; Cifarelli 1998).

Iron Age Levantine palaces could not make such grandiose statements and their squabbling elites had more modest practical and rhetorical goals than those of empire. Dynastic legitimacy was paramount. The earliest Assyrian and Southern Levantine inscriptions, and the biblical tradition, reflect the emergence of discrete dynasties and traditions, as well as laconically record the appearance of usurpers, such as Omri, of whose ascent the Bible speaks at length. In the creation of dynastic traditions such as the "House of David" Iron Age elites made contributions to the development of ethnicity, for these dynasties were intimately connected to religious traditions around which the state as a whole then accreted. Already in the 9th century the king and his lineage were depicted as chosen by patron deities like Yahweh and Kemosh. The deities themselves were mostly preexisting figures, local manifestations ultimately derived from the Canaanite pantheon and given new emphasis. The relationship between deity, dynasty, and place was common during the Iron Age. The Neo-Assyrian example saw the king as viceroy to the god Assur, the patron deity to the city that bore his name (Postgate 1992). To paraphrase the Sumerian King list, kingship, and god, descend from above.

But ethnic identity is not merely an elite concept foisted on the populace from on high. The new order encompassed society from above and below. The word of the god might be handed down, but on earth it encountered the quotidian dimensions of cult and kinship. With regard to the former, it is clear both from archaeology and from the Bible itself that various deities were present in Israel and Judah throughout the Iron Age. Domestic shrines, innumerable

figurines and amulets, and inscriptions such as those from Khirbet el Kôm and
Kuntillet 'Ajrûd (Dever 1990:140-150), which mention Yahweh and his female
consort Asherah, make clear the worship of other deities and use of magic in a
polytheistic, or at best, monolatrous, society (Zevit 2001; cf. Tigay 1986). The
ascension of Yahweh and his dynasty did not preclude but incorporated these
practices, which came under criticism from various prophets and reformer kings
such as Josiah and Hezekiah. This process culminated by the 7th century with
a religious and literary tradition apparently centered around an assortment of
sacred texts. This is shown, for example, by the silver amulets bearing frag-
ments of the Priestly Blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) found in a burial in Jerusalem
(Yardeni 1991; Barkay 1992).

As regards kinship, although the existence of tribes remains archaeologically
opaque, the existence of lineages is indicated by the texts such as the Samaria
ostraca, which record deliveries of commodities to or from rural locations to the
royal center (Kaufman 1982). "Houses" existed from below by the 8th century,
and there is no reason to think that such organization did not emerge much
earlier. Ties between various lineages might easily be construed as 'tribal'
in nature, particularly given the patterns of local and regional integration that
existed from the 12th century onward. The tribal concept as a means of inte-
gration would certainly have been advantageous in Ammon, Moab, and Edom,
where links between settled and mobile populations had to be continually nego-
tiated. The tribe and the house would have been ideally suited for an integra-
tive process that enlarged the local into a master narrative of collective identity.
For the household, however, retaining kinship as an organizing concept, even
writ large through the ethnic mechanisms of the state, also provided an escape
route in the event of social collapse. The state and its constituent elements were
the ultimate risk abatement strategies.

Mediating all these elements was language. The divisions between dialects
and scripts are apparent by the 9th century. Local dialects and local scripts
reified political and social differentiation which was occurring from 1200 to
1100 BCE in the dissolution of the city-states system and its economy. From
1100 to 1000 BCE dialects and scripts played a role in reintegration during the
reemergence of local and regional village and town culture. And from 1000 to
900 BCE they contributed to the development of local lineages and religious
traditions, and elites with political ambitions. Scripts and dialects thus served
both unity and diversity. Material culture such as pottery styles also played
a role. In the active sense material culture styles from 1200 to 900 BCE served
first to differentiate the new from the old, the urban Canaanite from the new
rural society, to integrate the rural into communities, and finally to differentiate

and diacritically mark the regions as separate economies and loci of socio-political development.

Once set into motion, the cultural systems described here began to assume lives of their own. Because states and ethnicities in a sense married high and low culture no single sector was the sole mechanism for cultural transmission. The royal establishment, complete with priests and scribes, had to compete with household and village mechanisms, such as heads of local shrines and mystics. Each might espouse a different version, but the core elements of peoplehood connected to god and the land were likely shared. Another important mediating factor was the emergence of autonomous "axial" elites as semi-autonomous carriers of culture, independent of rulers and with a "transcendent" view of proper government (Eisenstadt 1986). Already in the 9th century the enigmatic "Balaam Inscription" from Deir 'Allā in Ammon recounts the prophecy of Balaam, son of Beor, known from Numbers 22-24, and is written in a variant of Ammonite or Aramaic. It suggests either the presence of a 'prophetic' tradition in Ammon and/or Aram, or a common tradition of such an individual in several societies (Hoftijzer and Van Der Kooij 1991). By the 6th century Lachish letters, correspondence between a garrison commander and subordinates on the border of Egypt, there are enigmatic references to Yahweh, as well as to prophets, showing such individuals to have been well-established social phenomena (Torcyner, Harding, Lewis, and Starkey 1938). Like other oppositional features encouraging ethnic differentiation, such as warfare, these axial elites cannot yet be otherwise detected archaeologically. It is clear, however, that the historical memory did not reside solely with kings or commoners.

Whatever their sources, unlike city-states, ethnicizing states are not simply by and for elites. With culture distributed throughout society "the people lives on after the death of the state" (Moscati 1960:226; cf. Aberbach 2000). Modern analyses of nationalism have tended to stress the instrumental roles of intellectuals (Kedourie 1993) or political elites and class consciousness (Hobsbawm 1993) in the promulgation of general principles and specific formulae. Other approaches emphasize the social conditions of dislocation (Gellner 1983) or the technology of dissemination (Anderson 1991) as key features, as well as the central role of symbols (A. D. Smith 1998; Hutchinson 2000). The present study has demonstrated elements of all these at work. The question of when or on what basis ethnic states may be defined as 'proto-nations' is therefore logical, but falls outside this discussion (see Armstrong 1982; Hastings 1997).

CONCLUSION

This discussion has proposed that ethnicizing states developed in the Levant during the first millennium BCE. The collapse of Bronze Age empires and their economies, and the waning of the closely connected city-state system, permitted new identities and political systems to emerge. Important elements of identity developed at the village and regional level, as did elites which quickly reconstituted town and urban life. The 10th century state, however, typically associated with David and Solomon, invested in symbols and forms of state administration that were closely linked to reemerging Eastern Mediterranean political culture rather than local ethnicity. Only subsequently did ethnic identity begin to assume a political role, especially in the form of state cults but also through local and axial elites outside of state control. Thus, while some elements of ethnicity preceded the state, the ethnicizing state was ultimately the fusion of a number of elements. Ethnicizing states were not examples of state ethnicities, but more subtle convergences of identity and politics.

How in the end are we to coordinate this reconstruction with biblical evidence? Should we even try? The exercise here has been to use archaeology and texts, but only those from outside the Bible, to reconstruct the development of ethnicity and state formation during the Iron Age. The much debated and ultimately ill-conceived questions regarding the 'historicity' of the Bible in general, or the existence of specific individuals, such as David and Solomon are as much literary as historical. Reconstructing history from one-sided texts is always a problem, which is compounded by the literary nature of the Bible. Neither credulity in favor or against the Bible is warranted, although the trend in recent years has been toward the latter (e.g., Thompson 1999). Such impossibly skeptical approaches founder on their own reductionism (Liverani 1999), or worse, political assumptions (Joffe n.d.a). The anger with which some biblical critics approach the problem, and explicitly reject archaeology's contribution, suggests that archaeology and text should perhaps remain separate domains (Halpern 1997). As much as anything else the persistence of 'two monologues' reflects the need for widely based research outside the confines of philology and literary criticism. The study presented here demonstrates archaeology's ability to address the political, economic, and social worlds of Iron Age states, their means of integration and senses of identity. Establishing these parameters independently but still alongside texts is a goal for future collaborative investigations.

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