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THE HIGH PLACES (BAMÔT) AND THE REFORMS OF HEZEKIAH
AND JOSIAH: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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

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

The term bamah according to its Semitic derivation

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

1 This paper is based on a talk given at the April 1998 meeting of the American Oriental Society. It has profited immensely from the comments of the audience there, as well as from those of G. Beckman, L. H. Cole, D. Fleming, V. (A.) Hurowitz, B. A. Levine, P. Machinist, J. Sasson, D. Ussishkin, and three anonymous reviewers, and from the bibliographic help of Y. Nadelman. All errors remain my own.
2 References to the extensive literature on the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah can be found in N. Na'aman, "The De-

4 For a recent history of Israelite cult sites and their implications for the history of religion in Israel, see B. A. Naishai, Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2001). For reasons that should become clear below, I do not agree with many of her conclusions.
6 Idem., 4.
the body around which the legs of the rider hang. It is translated most conveniently into English by the term “back,” but it should be thought of as the side or flank of an animal.

Akkadian knows two forms of the word: banatu and bámátu. Banatu B has the same meaning as in Ugaritic. This can be seen most clearly by its designation in the Sumerian lexical lists. The Sumerian word UZU.TI.TI is defined by the Akkadian word banatu, but also by selu, “rib, side (part of the human and animal body).” In agreement with Vaughan, the word most likely means in Akkadian what it means in Ugaritic, and should be translated “flank.”

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

The Akkadian expression, banatu ša šaad, has a corresponding expression in the Hebrew Bible, bámáth תַּאְרֶשׁ. Like the Akkadian, this is always plural. There are many examples: “He causes him to ride upon the flanks of the earth (bámáth תַּאְרֶשׁ)” (Deut. 32:13); “Then you shall cause him to ride the flanks of the earth” (Isaiah 58:14); “[YHWH] who treads upon the flanks of the earth” (Amos 4:13; Micah 1:3; Job 9:8). The bámáth תַּאְרֶשׁ are the “flanks,” since the flank is that part of the body, according to Semitic thought, which is ridden. This secular use of the term is always introduced by the preposition “al, “on,” which may be what gave rise to the Greek translation of bámáth תַּאְרֶשׁ as τὸ ὕψιν (the “high” or “lofty” place).

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

THE TERM BÁMÁH ACCORDING TO THE SEPTUAGINT

Although the LXX sometimes simply transliterates the term as bámu, or bōmu, it most often uses the phrase τὸ ὕψιν (the high or lofty place) to express the Hebrew word. Occasionally, however, the LXX uses the Greek word bōmu, which indicates a raised platform or pedestal. Used in Homer to indicate a platform for chariots, it came to refer to the pedestal or base for the statue of the god, and then to a raised place for sacrifice, an altar. In the LXX, bōmu is sometimes used to translate misbāh, “altar,” so that the same word renders both bámáh and misbāh.

Present understanding reflects this Septuagintal usage. A bámáh has been viewed on the one hand as a natural high place or peak, ὕψιν, and on the other as a constructed platform for an altar, or the altar itself, bāmu.10

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5 CAD B, 78ff. Banatu A, meaning “half, half shares,” appears to be unrelated (CAD B, 77).
6 CAD B, 78; Vaughan, ‘Bamah,’ 7. According to CAD B 78–79, “the Sumerian correspondences as well as the Akkadian references show that the word denotes the rib cage, the chest (as front of the human body), the thorax or an animal.”
7 CAD B, 76–77.
9 CAD B, 76.
12 H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, 9th edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 334. D. Ussishkin (personal communication) suggests that this meaning of the word may have been adopted by the Greeks from the North Semitic world.
13 For a clear introduction to the topic and further references, see W. B. Barrick, “High/Place,” ABD III (1992), 196–200; “On the Meaning of מִשְׁבָּה and מִשְׁבַּת and the Composition of the Kings History,” JBL 115 (1996): 621–42;
Wellhausen applies the term ḏāmōt to the isolated altars built by Saul and the Patriarchs, even though the term is never used of these altars in the text. Haran defines ḏāmōh as an open-air altar or platform, although he recognizes other open-air altars that he does not call ḏāmōt. Vaughan similarly defines ḏāmōh as “a constructed stone platform used for cultic rites.” All these writers classify the ḏāmōh with Wellhausen and the LXX as an open-air altar out in the countryside on a mountain peak. Is this view correct? Is the LXX's understanding the same as that of the biblical writers?

THE ḏĀMŌH ACCORDING TO THE BIBLICAL CORPUS

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

e.g., “there was a sacrifice for the people in the ḏāmōh” (1 Sam. 9:12). 1 Samuel 9 provides the only description of a ḏāmōh in the Biblical text. According to this description, a ḏāmōh includes a līškāh which, at least at the time of Ezekiel, indicated rooms inside a roofed temple building. At this time, these rooms served as places where priests’ vestments were kept, and where priests would eat the sacrificial offering (Ezek. 42:13). This is the image in 1 Samuel 9 as well. Here too the līškāh is used as the room in which to eat the sacrifice. Since it is big enough to seat the thirty invited guests (1 Sam. 9:22), the līškāh must be a hall in a public building. The ḏāmōh in the area of Ziph was not an isolated open-air platform, ḏāmōh or ḏāmōt. It was a sanctuary complex containing a public building with a large hall and a sacrificial altar. Indeed, the Greek translator was constrained to simply transliterate the term as βασα (since no Greek word would apply).

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

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18 Haran, Temples, 23, argues that the verb ḫāṣ in cannot be used with a building, but can be used with bāḥāmōt, which he defines as “simple, solid, and exposed constructions.” The difference escapes me; buildings can be removed, stone by stone.
19 For an explanation of the term, see Barrick, “On the Meaning of ḫāṣ,” 747–52.
20 The LXX has ḫασσω (into Bama), perhaps treating it as an area of the city. Haran, Temples, 24, states that “it is difficult to explain why the offering of animal- and grain-offerings is said to have taken place ‘in the bāḥāmōt’ and not ‘on the bāḥāmōt,’ as in all these cases the text has the prefixed b instead of the preposition at (as would be demanded). The reason seems to be connected with certain architectural details of the bāḥāmōh the knowledge of which has been lost.” What was lost is the realization that these are not altars but sanctuary complexes, as will be shown below.
21 Pointed out by S. Daniel, Recherches, 35.
The bāmāh created by Jeroboam at Bethel was associated with the city (1 Kings 12:29). The Bible does refer to isolated open-air altars out in the countryside, but these are not called bāmōt. When the Biblical text speaks of either bāmōt or bātāy bāmōt it has cities in mind.

The Biblical text suggests, moreover, that bāmōt were located inside the city walls, not outside of them. Numerous verses describe the bāmāh as baʿir. The phrase baʿir occurs 195 times in the Hebrew Bible, but only when it refers to bāmāh do translators render it as “at the city” rather than “in the city.” Yet, when the text wants to indicate a bāmāh at a city, but outside its walls, it has a way of doing so. 1 Kings 11:7 (2 Kings 23:13) states that Solomon built bāmōt ‘al pānēy yərušāliym, “facing Jerusalem.”

As stated above, the only bāmāh described in the Biblical corpus is the one associated with the town of Zuph used by Samuel (1 Samuel 9). Did the Deuteronomist imagine that bāmāh to be inside or outside the city walls? Difficulties arise because the text appears corrupt at crucial points. Verse 14 of the MT states “in the midst of the city,” yet many translators and commentators render it “in the midst of the gate” with no textual reason for doing so. Further, the MT reads in verse 18 “and Saul met Samuel in the midst of the gate.” This commentators do not alter, though both the LXX and 4QSama have “in the midst of the city.” This should be considered the preferred reading. The passage should be translated: “And they [Saul and his servant] went up to the city. Upon coming into the midst of the city they saw Samuel coming out towards them to go up to the bāmāh. . . . And Saul met Samuel in the midst of the city, and he said, ‘Tell me, please, where is the house of the Seer?’” In verse 6, prior to this passage, Saul is told that the Seer lives in the city, so here, having entered into the midst of the city, Saul asks for the location of his house. Samuel has come out of his house to go up to the bāmāh when he meets Saul. He is not coming out of the gate at all. The bāmāh is inside the city, not outside of it. Neither yaʿadeh habbāmāḥ, “he went up to the bāmāh,” nor wayerdu nehabbāmāḥ haʿir “and they came down from the bāmāh towards the city,” necessarily implies a location outside the city walls. It can equally refer to a sacred precinct separate from the city proper but within its walls.

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

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

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

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22 Haran, Temple, 24–25, admits that the great high-place where Solomon worshipped was “in Gibeon,” and that according to the Deuteronomist editors, the bāmōt were “in the cities of Samaria.”


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

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

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

THE BĀMĀḤ IN MOAB 28

As has long been recognized, the "Moabite Stone" or "Mesha Inscription" (KAI 181), contains the only extant extra-biblical reference to the term bāmāḥ. 29 The stele was found among the ruins of the ancient site of Dibon (modern Dhibān), a city occupied continuously from the Early Bronze Age to Iron Age II. Iron Age Dibon had city walls and a gateway which is dated to the mid-nineteenth century. 30 The EB city was no doubt also defended, but these walls have not been found. The eighth-century Israelite prophet knows of a bāmāḥ in the Moabite city of Dibon:

He goes up to the temple (ḥēl), so Dibon does, to the bāmāṭ to weep (15:2). 31
Moab goes up to the bāmāḥ; 32 he enters his sanctuary to pray, but it does not avail him (16:12).

If the Israelite writer employs bāmāḥ in the same way as the deuteronomistic historian does, then to understand the bāmāḥ in Moab is to understand the biblical term. 33 King Mesha writes in line 3:

wäʾēʾ sḥmrn zrʾt šmrn ḥqqḥ
And I made this hmrn for Kemoash in ḥqqḥ.

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

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26 Haran, Temples, 25.
28 This section has benefited from conversations with B. Routledge.
31 Various translations have been suggested for this verse; these are discussed in W. B. Barrick, "The Bamoth of Moab," Maarav 7 (1991): 67–89.
32 I emend Moab 'al habbāmāḥ ("Moab on the bāmāḥ") to Moab 'aih bāmāḥ ("Moab ascends to the bāmāḥ"), which simply involves moving the heh.
33 Haran, Temples, 20, also understands them to be the same.
35 CAD K, 404–5.
This is most likely its meaning in the Mesha Inscription as well. There we read (21–26):

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

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

**THE BÂMAH AT TEL DAN**

Before examining specific sites in Judah and Samaria for evidence of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, it may be worthwhile to consider Tel Dan. It would be preferable to discuss Bethel (modern Beitin), since it is specifically labeled a bâmah (2 Kings 23:15; Hosea 10:8) while Dan is not. Unfortunately, the bulk of the ancient city of Bethel lies under the modern one, and the remaining area was very poorly excavated. The excavations there have yielded no sign of an Iron Age cult center. It is possible, however, that the Deuteronomist considered Dan a bâmah even if it is not explicitly labeled as one, for he writes that Jeroboam I son of Nebat made two calves, “and he set one up in Bethel and the other he put in Dan. This thing became a sin, for the people went before the one even up to Dan. He made a bêt bâmôh and installed priests from the margins of the people who were not Levites” (1 Kings 12:28–31). If so, the nature of a bâmah may be further elucidated by looking at the cultic temenos at Tel Dan.

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

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36 Morton, "Excavations at Dhiban."
37 Ibid., 245.
38 Ibid., 245–46.
39 G. L. Mattingly, "Moabite Religion and the Mesha Inscription," in Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab, 227, states that "it is here assumed that Qarḥah was simply another name for a part of Dibon, perhaps its royal quarter or acropolis." J. A. Dearman, "Historical Reconstruction," 171, states that "many interpreters have concluded that Qarḥah is a quarter or suburb of Dibon, or perhaps the royal acropolis. This conclusion has much to commend it and is more satisfactory than [other assumptions]."
41 Dever, *Or* 40 (1971): 463. It is possible that the modern city of Bethin is not Bethel after all. It seems odd to find absolutely no cultic paraphernalia from the Iron Age if Bethin were truly Bethel.
42 For a discussion of these verses and the application of the term bâmah to Bethel (primarily) and secondarily to Dan, see W. B. Barrick, *JBL* 115 (1996): 621–42.
43 As of this writing, site reports for Iron Age structures at Tel Dan are still forthcoming. The following discussion necessarily relies on popular summaries only.
44 A. Biran, *Dan I: A Chronicle of the Excavations, the Pottery Neolithic, the Early Bronze Age and the Middle Bronze Age Tombs* (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1996), 1.
Remains of a massive podium, eighteen meters wide, seven meters deep, and built of large dressed travertine blocks, were uncovered in the northern part of Area T. Based on the associated pottery, the excavator dates the podium to the end of the tenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries and to the period of Jeroboam I. A horned altar was found on the eastern floor in front of the podium. One of the horns was completely broken away, two others were damaged, but a fourth is in its original state. The altar is almost square, 40 x 40 cm, and stands 35 cm high to the tip of the horn; its size suggests it was used for burning incense. To judge from the depth of the calcined surface it was in use for a long time. The excavator dates it to the ninth century by the surrounding material, but it may be later or earlier; Zwickel dates it to the eighth century.47

Just south of this podium, under a destruction layer caused by a fire in the area, were the remains of three storerooms. Among the jugs, red-slipped bowls, and storage jars housed there were two upright pithoi, each decorated with an encircling snake relief.48 South of the storage buildings stood a 7.5 x 5 m construction of basalt boulders partially covered by two layers of immense travertine blocks. This structure was surrounded by a cobbled courtyard. On the cobbles lay a decorated incense stand, the head of a male figure, and a bar-handle bowl full of small animal bones and with a trident incised on it.49 Since no signs of burning, collapsed brick, or roofing were found here, the excavator surmises that the cobbled was part of an open-air courtyard, and the basalt structure the foundations of a sacrificial altar.50

The excavator reasonably believes this walled area to be a sanctuary precinct.51 It is likely the very one created by Jeroboam I for the golden calf—although no golden cai was ever found. The golden calf may have been taken either by Arameans or Assyrians as a trophy of war. According to the excavator, it cannot be determined whether the massive podium was the foundation for a temple or an open-air platform.52 That a temple stood on this podium is entirely possible.53 Whatever had been on top of this podium, if anything, was destroyed in the conflagration which ended the stratum. The burning was so great that the stones of the podium turned red.

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

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE REFORMS

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

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49 A. Biran, Biblical Dan (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, HUC-JIR, 1994), 168.
50 Ibid., 173. 51 Ibid., 173. 52 Ibid., 165. 53 Ibid., 181.
55 Pace Zwickel, Temple Kult, 254–56, who argues that since the platform was most likely the foundation of a building, the reason for labeling it a high place ("Kulhōte") is removed. This would be true if the foundation were not for a temple, or if temples were automatically excluded from the definition of a bāmāh.
56 I use the term "Samaria," rather than "Israel," first, because that is the term used in the Biblical text to describe the area of Josiah's reforms in Israel, and second, because I restrict the search for cult sites to the area of the Assyrian province of Samaria and the city of Megiddo. Sites north of Megiddo are not considered.
again in seventh-century levels. Seventh-century strata in Samaria should reveal a single dismantling of sanctuary complexes.

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

THE REFORMS OF HEZEKIAH

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

Lachish

The earliest Israelite period at Lachish is represented by Level V.59 This settlement was walled, although the outer ring of houses may have formed its defensive fortifications. In the middle of the tell, west of the foundations of the Level I solar shrine, Aharoni identified a one-room building as a sanctuary. A small, well-dressed basalt slab, broken at its lower part, was found lying on what was presumed to be the door-sill. It was identified as a small māṣēhāh. Around the perimeter of the room was a bench of stone and plaster, about 50 cm in width. Most of the bench was only slightly above floor level, but in the western corner, opposite the entrance, the bench reached a height of 40 cm, forming a platform. A limestone altar and four clay incense burners were found on the floor. The altar, which was about 45 cm high, had four horns, only one of which was preserved.

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

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


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

61 D. Ussishkin, The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv Univ., 1982), 26–27.
On the eve of its destruction by Sennacherib, Lachish was dominated by the Palace Fort, a huge edifice of monumental proportions. Between the Palace Fort and the inner city gate were many houses and shops that were small and densely crowded together. No cult site or cultic paraphernalia was present among the finds of either the Palace Fort or the private dwellings of Level III. However, the reliefs in Nineveh of the conquest of Lachish depict among other things a procession of Assyrian soldiers carrying booty away from the burning city. The first soldier carries a scepter, and the second and third carry large bronze incense burners. Following soldiers carry a throne, a ceremonial chariot, and weapons. The size and value of the incense altars, as well as their position near the head of the procession, suggest that these incense burners were used in a public cult center in Lachish, a cult center which was active until its destruction by Sennacherib. If so, it had not been destroyed in Hezekiah’s reforms.

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

**Arad**

Contrary to the situation at Lachish, a full temple sanctuary was found at Arad in the northwestern corner of the fortress. The sanctuary was oriented east-west and consisted of a broadroom, labeled by the excavators as the hekal, and a room behind it, labeled the d’bir. The entrance to the d’bir was approached by two steps; at the top of the steps, at the entranceway, were two limestone incense altars, in which the remains of burnt organic matter were found. At the back of the d’bir on a raised platform was a smooth stele, or massēbāh. Plaster-covered benches on which offerings could be placed lined the rear wall of the hekal. In front of the hekal was a square courtyard, paved with smooth wadi stones. In the center of the northern side of the courtyard was an altar, built of bricks and unhewn field stones. Its top was without horns and overlaid with a flat slab, girdled with plastered channels to drain the blood of the sacrifices. A stone step or bench was constructed at the foot of its southern and eastern sides. A small compartment was built adjacent to its western side. A red-slipped clay incense burner composed of a bowl and stand and a large oil lamp found inside suggest that this was a storage compartment for ceremonial articles. At the foot of the altar two small flat bowls were found, inscribed with the letters qop kap, which may signify qōdeš lakkôhanîm, “consecrated for the priests.” To the north (and perhaps also to the south) of the courtyard were rooms, apparently for storage. This sanctuary complex agrees with the Biblical description of a bamah.

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

The stratigraphy of Arad is difficult, but was reassessed recently by Ze’ev Herzog, one of the original excavators. According to his reassessment, the temple

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62 D. Ussishkin, “The ‘Lachish Reliefs’ and the City of Lachish,” IEJ 30 (1980): 174–95, has shown that the reliefs at Nineveh portray, in the main, actual features of Lachish and the siege, and do not simply depict an imaginary event.


66 Aharoni had mistakenly assumed that a fallen building stone was a second massēbāh.


68 See references in notes 64–67.

69 This idea has been put forth most recently by O. Borowski, “Hezekiah’s Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria,” BA 58 (1995): 148–55.

70 The following discussion is based on Z. Herzog, Arad, part 2: The Arad Fortress (Tel Aviv: Hakikhotz Hammeu- chad Publishing House, Israel Exploration Society, Israel
was constructed in Stratum X. When the courtyard was filled in to cover the altar, the floor of the courtyard was raised two meters above that of the dābir. The lack of steps leading down from the courtyard to the dābir meant that the latter became inaccessible as soon as the courtyard altar was buried. Thus, the temple complex (māṣēḇāḇ, incense altars, and sacrificial altar) was dismantled and intentionally buried all at once. These temple installations were found buried under walls assigned to Stratum VIII, so they had to have been buried prior to the construction of those walls. The temple was not rebuilt, and there was no second stage of destruction under Josiah. The temple was in use only in Strata X and IX.

What are the dates of these strata? The pottery of Stratas X, IX, and VIII is similar to each other and to that of Level III at Lachish, whose destruction is attributed to Sennacherib.21

There are still difficulties. Stratum XI was destroyed in a conflagration. The excavators originally attributed this destruction layer to Pharaoh Sheshonq I (925), but Herzog now admits the possibility that it was Stratum XII that was destroyed by that pharaoh.22 This would lower the date of Stratum XI to the ninth century. The temple was built afterwards during Stratum X.23 Stratum X did not experience a destruction layer. Stratum IX can be distinguished from Stratum X only by changes in the floor level. The temple continued in use in this stratum.

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

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

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

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

22 Personal communication, I. Finkelstein, Near Eastern Archaeology 62 (1999): 35–52, esp. 39; Levant 28 (1990): 171–87; Levant 30 (1998): 167–74, dates Stratum XII to the tenth century and Stratum X to the ninth. This is based on O. Zimhoni's assessment—"Iron Age Pottery of Tel 'Eton and its Relation to the Lachish, Tel Beth Mirsim, and Arad Assemblages," Tel Aviv 12 (1985): 63–90, esp. 86–87—that the pottery of Stratum XI is very similar to that of Lachish IV. Zimhoni dates Stratum XI at Arad to the ninth century and Stratum XII to the tenth. She suggests that Stratum XII was the town destroyed by Sheshonq. That stratum was not fortified. N. Na'aman, "Arad in the Topographical List of Shishak," Tel Aviv 12 (1985): 91–92, suggests that the term htp in Sheshonq's topographical list is not a determinative for "fort" but simply part of the name. It does not require that the installation Sheshonq destroyed was enclosed. Nonetheless, Stratum XII shows no sign of a destruction. Further, the pottery in Strata XII and XI resembles each other "very closely"—O. Zimhoni, Tel Aviv 12 (1985): 86; A. Mazar and E. Netzer, BASOR 263 (1986): 87–91—and the pottery of both strata resembles that of Lachish IV.

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23 Pace D. Ussishkin, "The Date of the Judean Shrine at Arad," IEJ 38 (1988): 142–57, who noticed that the temple was built over fill layers that cover a water channel. He assumes that this water channel built beneath the shrine had no roof, so that the shrine could only have been built after the channel went out of use. He therefore dates the shrine to Stratum VII. In fact, the tunnel system under the shrine consisted of two stories. The lower served to bring water into an underground reservoir in the center of the fort; the upper channel served as an escape route for the soldiers in the case of siege. Both tunnels were roofed with smooth stones (Herzog, Arad Fortress, 166). The bottom of the water channel is over three meters below the foundations of the temple walls, so that the narrow channel could have been hewn into the bedrock as a tunnel at any time, irrespective of the period of the temple. More importantly, the floor levels of Stratum VII are about 2.5 meters above the temple's floor, and the pottery found on the temple's floor and in its immediately neighboring structures is definitely earlier than Stratum VII. The temple and the escape tunnel collapsed into the water channel at a later period, after the temple had gone out of use, perhaps after the site as a whole had been abandoned, leading to Ussishkin's perception that the temple had been built on fill (Z. Herzog, personal communication).
destroyed the Stratum IX tell. Herzog suggests two possibilities: 1) the sanctuary was buried prior to the destruction in order to defend and safeguard its sacred status in the face of enemy attack; or 2) the sanctuary was buried after having survived the destruction which destroyed the tell. In this case, the dismantling would have been to preserve the sanctuary until the city could be rebuilt. The decision taken in Stratum VIII not to rebuild the sanctuary and to place secular buildings directly over it was due to the reforms of Hezekiah. Herzog prefers the latter option.

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

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

**Beer Sheba**

During the 1973 season at Tel Beer Sheba a large horned altar was discovered, but not in situ. Rather, its stones were found in a repaired wall of a storehouse complex of Stratum II. The four horns of the altar were arranged one beside the other, three intact and one with its top knocked off. They are undoubtedly altar horns. In the last season of excavations at Tel Beer Sheba, four new stones were found belonging to the upper layer of the altar, between the horns. These four stones showed traces of fire, suggesting to the excavator that animal flesh or fat had been burned upon them. According to the excavators, the altar had been built during Stratum III or before and dismantled during Stratum II. Stratum II was destroyed in a huge conflagration which the excavators assign to Sennacherib (701). The excavators attribute the altar's dismantling and its use in the storehouse wall to Hezekiah's reform. They date the dismantling between the time that Hezekiah ascended the throne and Sennacherib's campaign. All that can be determined archaeologically, however, is that the secondary use of the altar stones occurred before the destruction of the wall in 701, sometime during the life of Stratum II.

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

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75 Ibid., 136.
long enough to consume a sheep or goat without breaking apart.\textsuperscript{80}

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

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

\textit{Tel Halif}

Oded Borowski reports a shrine room in a four-room house among the remains of Stratum VIIb in Field IV of Tel Halif, a site south of Lachish and relatively close to Beer Sheba and Arad.\textsuperscript{86} The shrine room occupied the ground floor of the rear broad-room of the house. According to the excavator, the original domestic house had been remodeled to be used as a shrine. The room contained several cultic artifacts: a white-painted, molded head of a female pillar figurine and a ceramic fenestrated incense stand with a broad bell-shaped base. Next to the incense stand were two smooth rectangular, carved limestone blocks. These may have been masjēbāh, and may have held bowls for incense. The house-shrine continued in use until the stratum was destroyed in a military defeat, attributed to Sennacherib in 701.

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

\textit{Kuntillet Ajrud}

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

\textit{Vered Jericho}\textsuperscript{88}

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

\textit{Jerusalem Cave I}

Jerusalem Cave I is a man-made cave cut into the rock on the eastern slope of the City of David.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{80} N. H. Gadegaard, “On the So-called Burnt Offering Altar in the Old Testament,” \textit{PEQ} 110 (1978): 35–45. He argues they were ordinarily not used for burning the animal, but for exposing it and spilling its blood.

\textsuperscript{81} Yadin, “Limestone Incense Altars,” in \textit{Beer-Sheba I}, 52–53.

\textsuperscript{82} Yadin, “Beer-Sheba: The High Place,” 5–17.


\textsuperscript{84} Herzog, Rainey, Mostovitch, \textit{BAR} 225 (1977): 49–58.

\textsuperscript{85} Stern, \textit{Beer-Sheba I}, 52–53.


\textsuperscript{88} I thank Y. Nadelman for calling this site to my attention.


\textsuperscript{90} S. Stern, \textit{Archaeology of the Land of the Bible}, 134.

\textsuperscript{91} The discussion is based on K. Kenyon, \textit{Digging Up Jerusalem} (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1974), 130–43; H. J.
though the shape of the cave suggests that it was originally cut as a tomb shaft, it does not appear to have been used for that purpose—there are no traces of human bones. During a second occupation phase, the slope became densely settled and domestic buildings were built along the rock scarp. One of the walls in these buildings blocked off most of the cave’s entrance, leaving a space only 50–60 cm wide. During this occupation level, the cave was filled with over 1,300 household objects, including pots, figurines, and other artifacts. The excavator noted four separate layers, all from the late eighth century, and all from the same deposition “horizon,” so that the deposit must have been rapid. The destruction that ended this phase caused a mass of pots, building stones, and other debris to fall from the outside rooms through the entranceway and into the front of the cave. It was impossible to determine what had been stored in the cave prior to destruction, and what had fallen in as a result of it. Sherds from a single item were found both at the entrance and inside the cave. The total accumulation included 1200 pottery cooking and serving vessels, sixty-one terra cotta figurines, three hollow incense stands, and three chalices. Many of the cooking pots were blackened from long-term use; some still contained animal bones. Nothing of value was found: no jewelry, scarabs, imported items, luxury pottery, or metalwork.

Some scholars have concluded the cave served a cultic function. Kenyon identified the cave as a favissa because she erroneously interpreted a building north of Cave 1 as a sanctuary. This interpretation has been repeatedly refuted. Stager points out that if the room Kenyon had designated as a sanctuary had been inside the city walls, she would have regarded it as an ordinary domestic building. Recently, R. Reich and E. Shukron found a late-eighth-century city wall at the base of the Kidron valley, enclosing both the Gibon Spring and Kenyon’s shrine. It is likely that this defensive outer wall was built by Hezekiah in preparation for the siege (2 Chron. 32.5; Isa. 22:11). Neither Cave 1 nor Kenyon’s putative shrine were extra-mural by the end of the eighth century.

Steiner also proposes a cultic purpose to the cave. She suggests that because all the figurines in Cave 1 were found broken at the neck, and because they were often found next to intact bowls, the heads must have been cut off in a deliberate act. However, these figurine heads were only secondary attached to the bodies, and could become detached easily. There is no need to posit a purposeful destruction. Based on the several figurines, Shukron suggests the cave was in the house of a sorcerer.


Y. Nadelman, personal communication.
who used the figurines to help people in their daily activities. This is possible, but for all the speculation about pillar figurines, there is no way of knowing how they were used or who used them.

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

Ekron

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

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

CONCLUSIONS: THE REFORMS OF HEZEKIAH

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

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

THE REFORMS OF JOSIAH

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

98 Franken, "Cave I at Jerusalem."
99 Ariel and De Groot, City of David, 156.
100 ANET, 287, with references.
101 T. Dothan and S. Gitin, "Miqne, Tel (Ekron)," NEAEHL, vol. 3, 1054.
made cult statues to their gods in all their cities: "Each nation continued to make its gods and to set them up in each bētē habbamāt which the Samaritans had made, each nation in the cities where they lived." If so, cultic material, including statues of foreign gods, should be evident from Assyrian-period strata in the provinces of Samaria and Megiddo. 2 Kings 23:19 states that Josiah removed the bātē habbamāt of Samaria. This implies that a destruction of bātē habbamāt should be visible in the cities which Josiah controlled, in strata assigned to the last half of the seventh century, Iron Age II.

SOUTHERN ISRAEL (SAMARIA AND MEGIDDO)

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

Megiddo

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

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

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Most interesting is the destruction of Building 338. Parts of the building were found burnt; yet, Shumacher, its excavator, notes that the shrine room itself showed no traces of destruction. He found everything “complete and in perfect order. The walls of the chamber still stood to a height of about 2.5 meters; the two monolithic stele and the four cult columns—the latter made of a number of superimposed stones—were found secured in the ground and standing erect; the idol was found in situ on top of the southernmost column, and various clay vessels and other objects placed in the shrine were uncovered whole. Most significantly of all, the entrance to the shrine was found blocked by a wall of a later period.”

Not only was the entrance blocked, but the shrine was filled with earth, leaving everything inside just as it was. The outside was buried as well, allowing the exterior walls to be preserved. Ussishkin does not suggest a reason for the shrine’s burial except that it was an act of reverence. Like the temple of Arad, it may have been buried to protect it from imminent enemy attack. Pharaoh Sheshonq erected a stele in Megiddo at the time of his Israelite campaign (ca. 925). It may have been out of fear of desecration by enemy forces that the shrine was carefully buried. The stratum was destroyed by fire, perhaps by Pharaoh Sheshonq, or perhaps a little later in the period of Jeroboam I (930–909). Ussishkin assigns a seal belonging to Shema, Servant of Jeroboam I, plus three other contemporaneous seals, to this stratum.

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

A second shrine, Shinn 2081, is also assigned to Stratum VA/IVB. It too was housed in a massive monumental public building. This building had walls a meter thick. The shrine proper was entered through Room 2081, which was either an entrance hall or a courtyard. Guarding the entrance to the shrine were two upright stones, about 1.5 meter high, embedded firmly in the stone-paved floor. A group of cult objects was found in the southeast corner of Room 2081, the forecourt. Ussishkin points out the similarity between these cult objects and those found in Building 338: “As in the latter there are a limestone offering table with a round depression, square limestone horned altars, a round limestone stand, an identical basalt three-legged mortar and pestle, and small juglets. Square pottery model shrines are absent here, and instead there is a round stand on a fenestrated foot.”

Ussishkin suggests that this shrine was also deliberately buried. The two stelae were found in situ preserved to their original height. The cultic equipment was found intact, just as it had been placed, in its niche in the corner of Room 2081. Ussishkin does not speculate on the reason for the burial, but it may also have been in anticipation of an attack by Pharaoh Sheshonq. During the time of Stratum IVA nothing was built above this shrine, and only in Stratum III was the area rebuilt with secular buildings. The shrine was never rebuilt.

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

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110 Ussishkin, “Schumacher’s Shrine,” 166. (Ussishkin reports here from Schumacher’s findings.)

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


113 Ussishkin, “Schumacher’s Shrine.” This interpretation has been disputed: Stern, IEJ 40 (1990): 102–7; but no one has suggested an additional cult site had been built there.

114 The discussion of this shrine is also based on Ussishkin, “Schumacher’s Shrine,” as well as Loud, Megiddo II.

115 Ussishkin, “Schumacher’s Shrine,” 172.
Stratum IVA, assigned to the divided monarchy, differs markedly from its predecessor, being fortified with a city wall and possibly with governmental marketplaces for international trade.\textsuperscript{116} This occupational level came to a peaceful end when the city became part of a new Assyrian province with the conquest of Tiglath-pileser III in 732.\textsuperscript{117} The city itself was not destroyed. Stratum III is this Assyrian town. Except for a four-horned incense altar found in Stratum III, no additional cultic material was found at Megiddo.\textsuperscript{118} This altar, M4555, shows evidence of use, as the top was discolored by fire. It was found in a completely domestic area of the tell, an area with no public buildings.\textsuperscript{119} There were no other cultic paraphernalia in this room, or anywhere in this or later strata of the site. This room may have been a private "cult corner," but the absence of other cultic paraphernalia suggests that a secular use is more likely.

**Tel Kedesh**

Tel Kedesh lies in the Jezreel Valley, midway between Megiddo and Ta'anach.\textsuperscript{120} The excavators identify the site as the Kedesh mentioned in Judges 4:11, the home of Heber the Kenite.

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

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

**Ta'anach**

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

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\textsuperscript{118} H. May, Material Remains of the Megiddo Cult (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1935), 12 and pl. xit. According to S. Gitin, "Incense Altars from Ekron, Israel and Judah: Context and Typology," EI 70 (1989): 65*, the excavation records and disposition information relating to this altar and presumed to be at the Oriental Institute are missing.


\textsuperscript{120} E. Stern and L. Rettig-Karik, "Excavations in Tel Kedesh (Tel Abu Qudeis)," in Excavations and Studies: Essays in Honor of S. Yeivin, ed. Y. Aharoni (Tel Aviv: Univ. of Tel Aviv Press, 1973), 93-122 (Hebrew); "Excavations at Tel Kedesh (Tel Abu Qudeis)," Tel Aviv 6 (1979): 1-25.


\textsuperscript{122} W. Rast, "Priestly Families and the Cultic Structure at Ta'anach," in Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King, 355-65.
associates the basin with the rooms of the Canaanite Structure, and interprets the basin as cultic and the stone slab as a standing stele which had fallen into it.\textsuperscript{123}

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

\textit{Tel 'Amal}

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

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

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

Only isolated remains of foundations and floors with a few sherds were found from Stratum II, Iron Age IIB–C. Judging from the finds, which are household goods only, this stratum should be dated to the eighth or seventh century.

\textit{Tell el-Far'ah (North)}

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

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

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


Samaria Trench E207

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

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

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

Shechem

Ancient Shechem lies at the eastern end of the pass between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal in the central hill country. The 15-acre mound is situated on the lowest flanks of Mt. Ebal.\(^{133}\) The Bronze Age saw a long history.

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\(^{127}\) N. Avigad, "Samaria (City)," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1300–1310.


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


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\(^{132}\) Sukenik, "Outside the City," 24.

\(^{133}\) E. F. Campbell, "Shechem," *NEAEHL*, vol. 4, 1345–1354. I appreciate a long conversation with Professors Bull, Campbell, and Callaway regarding this site.
of cultic occupation at the site.\textsuperscript{134} During his excavations, Sellin discovered a large Migdal or Fortress Temple in the northwest corner of the tell. He dated it to Middle Bronze IIC (1650–1550). A later Migdal or Fortress temple, dated to the Late Bronze Age, was discovered on top of the earlier temple during the Drew-McComick excavation of 1960.\textsuperscript{135} The plan of this temple was identical to the earlier one, except that the axis of this later temple was shifted from the earlier by about five degrees. The excavators suggest that this was so the cells would catch the rays of the rising sun during the winter solstice.

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

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

There was gradual recovery and rebuilding in Stratum IX in the late tenth and early ninth centuries, assigned by the excavators to Jerobeam I.\textsuperscript{141} At this time a deliberate secularization of the sacred precincts occurred. A massive public warehouse or granary was built directly over the remains of the destroyed Migdal or Fortress Temple.\textsuperscript{142} The builders of the granary carefully leveled the area under their building down to the plaster floor of the Migdal Temple, and through it to the supporting fill. A 10 cm layer of gray earth was spread over this, and then a layer of white marl cement, 20–25 cm in thickness. Before the cement had completely dried, the stones for the first course of the walls were put in place and sunk into it. The altar and mazar of the forecourt were buried and covered with this new plaster floor, suggesting a deliberate nullification of the shrine.

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

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item R. J. Bull, J. A. Callaway, E. F. Campbell, Jr., J. F. Ross, and G. E. Wright, "The Fifth Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)," \textit{BSOR} 180 (1965): 7–41.
  \item Wright, \textit{Shechem: Biography}, 123ff.
  \item Campbell, "Shechem," 1352.
  \item Ibid., 1353. Finkelstein would lower this date by a half-century.
  \item Ibid., Again, Finkelstein would lower the date to the beginning of the eighth century.
  \item Wright, \textit{Shechem: Biography}, 145ff.
  \item Finkelstein, "Bible Archaeology," 167–74, suggests the Iron Age settlement process at Shechem covers a time span of two centuries, not three. This would not prevent the destruction of Stratum VII from being dated to the Assyrians and to 723.
  \item L. E. Toombs and G. E. Wright, "The Fourth Campaign at Balatah (Shechem)," \textit{BSOR} 169 (1963): 38.
  \item E. Sellin, "Die Ausgrabung von Sichem: Kurze vorläufige Mitteilung über die Arbeit im Frühjahr 1926," \textit{ZDPV} 49 (1926): 232–33, pls. 31b, 31c.
  \item Wright, \textit{Shechem: Biography}, 24.
\end{itemize}
in by later excavators because, quoting Wright, "we had no hope of being able to make much sense of Sellin's work, either of what had been dug through or what was still exposed on the surface after an interval of thirty years." In subsequent excavations just northeast of Sellin's east-west trench no evidence occurred of Iron Age occupation. Hellenistic walls were dug directly into the MBIIIC glacis. Indeed, Stratum VI attests to limited inhabitation of the entire tell during the Assyrian occupation. It may be that the dating of Sellin's first "Hausaltar" to the Assyrian period should be revised to Hellenistic. Whatever date we assign to this altar, it was excavated in a domestic context and no other cultic paraphernalia were found. A domestic purpose for the incense altar rather than a cultic one is likely.

**Gezer**

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

In the destruction debris between Strata 6B and 6A of Field II, a purely domestic area of the tell, a small incense altar was found. Discovered in a secure locus—on the floor of Stratum 6B and well sealed beneath the floor of 6A, it has been dated by the excavator to the mid- to late tenth century by associated ceramics. It is 9.0–9.2 cm high and about 3.6 cm wide across the front below the decorative moldings. The top is slightly concave, but shows no traces of burning. There is no evidence of horns. On the front of the altar is incised a stick figure brandishing a spear in its left hand. No other cultic material has appeared in the excavations of Iron Age Gezer; found in a purely domestic area of the tell, this tiny incense altar seems to have served a decorative function only.

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

**Conclusions: The Reforms of Josiah in Samaria (and Megiddo)**

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

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

Jerusalem

Besides the Temple itself, the only putative cult sites dated to seventh-century Jerusalem are several tumuli on the hills west of the city. Three of these have been excavated (no. 5, no. 6,152 and 99 and no. 3153). A tumulus is a conical heap of stones with a truncated top, surrounded and stabilized by a wall. Buried under the six-meter-high heap of stones that made up Tumulus 5 was a platform. The platform area included a small stretch of pavement, an elongated rampart leading up to it, a pit, and a place for burning.154 The pit was 9 m deep. Its walls were lined with flagstones of the same type as made up the pavement and was filled with earth (but no sherds or bones). On the southeastern slope below the platform was an area of burnt debris containing charcoal pieces, burnt animal bones, and black earth saturated with fat. Fragments of a cooking pot were found immediately below this area. Around the entire tumulus was a 17-sided ring wall. The ring wall had two entrances into the tumulus: one oriented due east, and one west-northwest. Five steps from the eastern entrance led to the platform and the pit. The western entrance consisted of two steps leading from the wall to the floor of the tumulus. That entrance had been blocked with fieldstones. The sherds in the fill were dated to the seventh century. There were no human bones nor any sign of interment.

Tumulus 3 was excavated in 1959.155 In general, it had the same structure as Tumulus 5. The surrounding wall was oblong, rather than round, but it too seems to have been composed of 17 sides. When the fill was cleared away, a long wall was revealed, but the excavator determined that there was no connection between the tumulus and the wall. The wall was only an early terrace. The sherds that were mixed among the rocky fill date, like those of Tumulus 5, to the seventh century.

Amiran interprets these tumuli as bāmāh. Yet there is no hint of any ritual activity: no incense altars, no masebāh, and no sacrificial altar. Cooking and eating took place within Tumulus 5, but not at Tumulus 3. At this stage of our knowledge, it is impossible to determine the purpose of these heaps of stones. They may have been covenant-witness heaps:

And Jacob said to his kinmen, "Gather stones." So they took stones and made a heap, and they are there on the heap (יָנַע לָעַי) (Gen. 31:46).

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

EDOM

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

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

Horvat Qitmit

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

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154 Amiran, "The Tumuli West of Jerusalem," 211.
155 Yeivin, "Excavation of Tumulus 3."
156 See references in n. 58 above.
enclosed on three sides; the north side was left open. The platform’s surface was smooth and heavily plastered. Scattered objects at the site included human and animal figurines, cult stands, pottery vessels, statues, and stone and bronze artifacts, including the head of a three-horned goddess. Most were Edomite, but some were Judean.

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

Complex B was about 15 m north of Complex A. A massive wall enclosed a building of several rooms with an open courtyard. Near the southeast corner of the building a rectangular standing-stone or massēbah (0.8 x 0.6 x 0.3 m) was found in situ.

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

Horvat ‘Uza

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

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

Thus said Lumalak, say to Bibl: Are you well? I bless you by Qaus. And now give the food (grain) that Ahjma/o serves [...]
And may Üj[i]el lift upon the [let] the grain become leavened(?).

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

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

En Hasevah

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

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161 Beit-Arieh, Horvat Qitmit, 13–18.
162 Ibid., 18–20.
163 Ibid., 20–24.
166 Ibid., 134. The present writer has emended the translation slightly. The custom of not placing leavened grain on the altar is similar to that described in Lev. 2:1–11.
167 Stern, Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 151–63.
was upon the order of Josiah, and that he had spread his reforms to this far southern locale. It is not likely, however, that Josiah controlled this area and ordered the destruction of the shrine here, since there is no indication of purposeful dismantling of Edomite shrines much closer to Judaea. It is more likely that the inhabitants destroyed the shrine themselves and buried its artifacts prior to the Babylonian conquest, perhaps to prevent cultic material from falling into Babylonian hands.

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

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER ISSUES

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

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

Continuity of Sacred Space

Michael Coogan has argued that the principle of continuity of sacred space permits a locus to be interpreted as cultic if that locus was cultic in an earlier or later stratum. This principle requires nuance. It is true that Bronze Age temples at Megiddo, Shechem, and elsewhere continued for centuries with minor modification, later temples being built on top of pre-existing ones. Yet, archaeological data show that numerous Iron Age temples were destroyed by enemy attack and not rebuilt; secular buildings were constructed on top of them. Other cult sites (Arad, Megiddo) were deliberately buried in anticipation of such attack. Secular installations were built on top of these as well. The principle of continuity of sacred space does not always apply.

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

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

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172 Cited in Cogan, Imperialism, 29.

173 Ibid., 31.

174 ANET, 316.
rebuilt until cult items were restored to it (Ezra 1:7–9). 175

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

The Doctrine of Cult Centralization in Deuteronomy 12

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

The Date of the Deuteronomist

To the Deuteronomist writing later, the responsibility for this overwhelming devastation lay not with the Egyptian or Assyrian kings, but with the kings of Israel and Judah. YHWH had made clear (through the agency of foreign kings) that he (or his name) dwelt only in the Temple in Jerusalem. Native kings could be evaluated, therefore, according to whether or not they had aided or hindered worship there. Good kings facilitated centralization, bad kings hindered it. According to this yardstick, all the kings of Israel were bad, and receive censure from the Deuteronomist. This was not true of the Judaean kings, who were evaluated on a case-by-case basis. YHWH was in charge of history. By examining the records of the Judaean kings, it was easy to determine who had been in YHWH’s favor and who had not. Those in YHWH’s favor had succeeded in their political endeavors; those not in his favor failed. Those who had succeeded in their political endeavors were obviously those who had helped to make Jerusalem the only place of worship. Those who had failed just as obviously had contributed to the proliferation of cult sites. The greatest political successes belonged to Hezekiah and Josiah; therefore, they must have done the most to centralize worship. The Appendix provides a table of the Judaean kings that illustrates the Deuteronomist’s evaluation process.

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


176 If not by Pharaoh Sheshonq and Sennacherib directly, then by fear of them.

177 Cited in Cogan, Imperialism, 22–41. The god’s abandonment may be implied in its burial as well.

## Appendix

### The Judaean Kings

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

¹ Not being legitimate, she receives no official evaluation. The notice of the temple of Ba‘al suggests the typical negative evaluation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Azariah/Urziiah</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>&quot;YHWH touched him, and he was leprous until the day of his death. He lived in a separate house, and Jotham the son of the king was over the house judging the people of the land.&quot; (2 Kings 15:5). <strong>Judah and Jerusalem were not affected by war and remained intact</strong> (2 Kings 15).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jotham</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>He retained Judah intact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaz</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;Rezin, King of Aram, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, King of Israel, went up against Jerusalem to wage war and they besieged Ahaz, but they could not conquer him. At that time the King of Edom returned Edath to Edom and he cleared the Judeans out of Elath.&quot; (2 Kings 16:5-6).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>&quot;He rebelled against the King of Assyria and would not serve him. He smote the Philistines as far as Gaza and all her territories, from watch tower to fortified city&quot; (2 Kings 18:7b-8; cf. Prism of Sennacherib, ANET, 287). <strong>Jerusalem was miraculously saved</strong> (2 Kings 19:35; Prism &amp; of Sennacherib, ANET, 287-88), although &quot;Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came up against the fortified cities of Judah and took them&quot; (2 Kings 18:13).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>&quot;YHWH brought against them commanders of the array of the King of Assyria. They captured Manasseh in manacles, bound him in iron, and led him to Babylon&quot; (2 Chron. 33:11). He was a vassal of Esarhaddon (Prism A, ANET, 291).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;The servants of Amon conspired against him and they killed the king in his house. But the people of the land struck down those who conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place&quot; (2 Kings 21:23, 24).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>He reclaimed for Judah Bethel (2 Kings 23:15) and the cities of Samaria (23:19) up to Megiddo (23:29). He was killed in battle by Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo (23:29).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:*
- "He did what was right in the eyes of YHWH like all that Amaziah his father did. Only the bāmol were not removed and the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the bāmol" (2 Kings 15:3, 4).
- "He did what was right in the eyes of YHWH like all that Uzziah his father did. Only the bāmol were not removed and the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the bāmol" (2 Kings 15:34-35).
- "He did not do what was right in the eyes of YHWH his god as David his father. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even made his son cross through fire like the abominations of the nations that YHWH drove out from before the people Israel. He sacrificed and burned incense in the bāmol, and on the hills and under every green tree" (2 Kings 16:2-4).
- "He did what was right in the eyes of YHWH like all that David his father did. He removed the bāmol, he broke in pieces the manṣūbūt and cut down the 'aṣerāh..." (2 Kings 18:3, 4a).
The Judahic Kings, Cont.

Jehoahaz 3 mos. “Pharaoh Necho imprisoned him in Riblah in the area of Harnath against his reigning in Jerusalem. He imposed a punishment on the land of 100 talents of silver and one talent of gold. Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of Josiah his father, and he changed his name to Jehoaahaz. He took Jehoaahaz and brought him to Egypt and he died there” (2 Kings 23:33, 34).

Jehoiakim/Eliakim 11 “In his days Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon rose up and Jehoiakim served him three years, but he turned and rebelled against him. So YHWH sent against him hands of Chaldeans, hands of Arameans, hands of Moabites, and hands of Ammonites, and he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of YHWH which he spoke by means of the authority of his servants the prophets” (2 Kings 24: 1, 2).2

Jehoiakim 3 mos. “At that time (of his accession) the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem and the city was besieged. Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it. Jehoiakin, King of Judah, went out to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he, his mother, his servants, his commanders, and his eunuchs, and the King of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he brought out from there all the treasures from the Temple of YHWH and the treasures from the palace of the king. . . . He deported Jehoiakim to Babylon and the mother of the king, he deported him and led him, the wives of the king, the eunuchs, and the leaders of the country to Babylon. . . . The king of Babylon made Mattaniah, his uncle, king in his place, and he changed his name to Zedekiah” (2 Kings 24:10–13a, 15, 17).

Zedekiah/Mattaniah 11 “Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he and all his army, came up against Jerusalem and encamped against her, and they build against her a siege-ramp all around her. The city came under siege until the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah. In the ninth month the hunger was strong in the city, there was no food for the people of the land. The city was breached, the king and all the fighting men (escaped) that night by the way of the gate between (the city wall) and the wall of the king’s garden, while the Chaldeans surrounded the city.

“He did evil in the eyes of YHWH like all that his fathers did” (2 Kings 24:19).

“‘He did what was evil in the eyes of YHWH like all that his fathers did’ (2 Kings 23:32).

“‘He did evil in the eyes of YHWH like all that his fathers did’ (2 Kings 23:37).

2 His young age at his death (36) suggests an unnatural end. He may have been killed in the fighting for Judah.
They went towards the Aravah. But the Chaldean army pursued the king and reached him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army scattered away from him. They captured the king and brought him to the King of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. The sons of Zedekiah they slaughtered before his eyes, then they blinded the eyes of Zedekiah, then they bound him in shackles and brought him to Babylon. In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (it was the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon), Nabuzadana, rab-shcabachim, servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the temple, and the palace, and all the buildings in Jerusalem, even the largest, he burnt with fire. As for Jerusalem’s surrounding wall, the Chaldean army tore it down, (according to the word) of the rab-shcabachim... So Judah was deported from his land” (2 Kings 25:20b–25:10, 21b).