

THE OLD TESTAMENT  
IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY



THE OLD TESTAMENT  
IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

*Jennie Ebeling, J. Edward Wright, Mark Elliott,  
and Paul V. M. Flesher*  
Editors

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY PRESS

© 2017 by Baylor University Press  
Waco, Texas 76798

*All Rights Reserved.* No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of Baylor University Press.

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

*Cover design:* Daniel Benneworth-Gray

*Cover image:* In this relief from the Assyrian King Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh, Lachish's soldiers defend against an approaching battering ram by throwing torches from a tower. In the lower right, civilians attempt to leave the besieged city via the gate. Photo from Todd Bolen/bibleplaces.com.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ebeling, Jennie R., editor. | Wright, J. Edward, editor. | Elliott, Mark Adam, 1956– editor. | Flesher, Paul Virgil McCracken, editor.

Title: The Old Testament in archaeology and history / Jennie Ebeling, J. Edward Wright, Mark Elliott, and Paul V.M. Flesher, editors.

Description: Waco, Texas : Baylor University Press, [2017] | "A century ago it was true that if you wanted to understand the ancient Israelites you had to read the Bible, the Old Testament. Today, if you want to understand the Old Testament, you need to study the history and archaeology of the ancient people of Israel"—Preface. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017003708 (print) | LCCN 2017027764 (ebook) | ISBN 9781481307413 (ePub) | ISBN 9781481307420 (ebook-Mobi/Kindle) | ISBN 9781481307437 (web PDF) | ISBN 9781481307390 (hardback: alk. paper) | ISBN 9781481307406 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Bible—Antiquities. | Bible—Criticism, interpretation, etc.

Classification: LCC BS621 (ebook) | LCC BS62.O43 2017 (print) | DDC 221.9—dc23  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017003708>

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper with a minimum of 30 percent recycled content.

*To our students,  
past, present, and future*



## CONTENTS

Preface	xi
Archaeological Ages	xv
Historical Timeline	xvii
Ancient Jerusalem	xxi
List of Maps	xxiii
List of Figures	xxv
List of Abbreviations	xxxiii
Introduction	1

### I

#### **Archaeology, the Bible, and Epigraphy** Discovery, Techniques, and Development

1	Introduction to the Geography and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East <i>Gary P. Arbino</i>	15
2	Introduction to the Old Testament and Its Character as Historical Evidence <i>Mark Elliott, with Paul V. M. Flesher</i>	45
3	The West's Rediscovery of the Holy Land <i>Victor H. Matthews</i>	83
4	"Bible Lands Archaeology" and "Biblical Archaeology" in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries <i>Rachel Hallote</i>	111
5	A Critique of Biblical Archaeology History and Interpretation <i>William G. Dever</i>	141

## II

### Israel before Settling in the Land

- 6 In the Beginning, Archaeologically Speaking  
Archaeology to the Bronze Ages in Canaan 161  
*K. L. Noll*
- 7 Archaeology and the Canaanites 185  
*Jill Baker*
- 8 The Book of Genesis and Israel's Ancestral Traditions 213  
*Mark Elliott and J. Edward Wright*
- 9 Israel in and out of Egypt 241  
*J. Edward Wright, Mark Elliott, and Paul V. M. Flesher*

## III

### Israel Settles in the Land of Canaan

- 10 Looking for the Israelites 275  
The Archaeology of Iron Age I  
*J. P. Dessel*
- 11 Looking for the Israelites 299  
The Evidence of the Biblical Text  
*Paul V. M. Flesher*
- 12 The Philistines during the Period of the Judges 317  
*Ann E. Killebrew*

## IV

### The Kingdoms of the People Israel

- 13 The United Monarchy 337  
David between Saul and Solomon  
*Baruch Halpern*
- 14 Israel 363  
The Prosperous Northern Kingdom  
*Randall W. Younker*
- 15 The Southern Kingdom of Judah 391  
Surrounded by Enemies  
*Aren M. Maeir*
- 16 Daily Life in Iron Age Israel and Judah 413  
*Jennie Ebeling*

17	Israel and Judah under Assyria's Thumb <i>J. Edward Wright and Mark Elliott</i>	433
18	The Religions of the People Israel and Their Neighbors <i>Richard S. Hess</i>	477

**V**

**Judah as a Province**

From the Babylonians to the Persians

19	Destruction and Exile Israel and the Babylonian Empire <i>Bob Becking</i>	505
20	Persia and Yehud <i>Charles David Isbell</i>	529
	Glossary	557
	Bibliography	567
	Gazetteer	607
	Index of Biblical and Ancient References	613
	General Index	624
	Contributors	649



## PREFACE

Several years ago the editors began discussing how beginning students in college Bible courses and a public interested in biblical studies and the ancient Israelites actually studied the Bible. In particular, we wondered, how much did new archaeological discoveries and historical research impact their understanding of ancient Israel and its history? Were such students dependent on biblical scholarship that strictly privileged the biblical narrative? Did the public only encounter apologetic testimonies supported and presented by church and synagogue?

What we found was disappointing. Introductory textbooks, even at the college level, focus mostly on the biblical books and refer to archaeological knowledge only in passing—usually when there is a good picture. Old Testament textbooks depend on the biblical narrative rather than on archaeology for their organization. The situation for the general public is worse. From “biblical mysteries” TV programs more interested in viewership than accuracy to books propounding a variety of theologies and tendentious interpretations, we could not see how an interested and intelligent reader would get a solid understanding of the contributions made by the fields of archaeology, biblical studies, and ancient history to the understanding of ancient Israel. Finally, where serious works are available, they were not written to be accessible to beginning students.

A century ago it was true that if you wanted to understand the ancient Israelites, you had to read the Bible, the Old Testament. Today, if you want to understand the Old Testament, you need to study the history and archaeology of the ancient people of Israel.

The editors decided it was necessary to present ancient Israel’s origins and history in a such way that students could understand the Israelites from all of the evidence, not just from a single collection of ancient writings. The study of ancient Israel should be multifaceted and not simply a study of the Bible. This book aims to address the needs of students and the public at large by showing how archaeological finds, including ancient texts and inscriptions from other

countries and empires, help modern readers comprehend the political, social, and sometimes military dynamics that shaped the ancient Israelites and led their scribes to write the books now in the Bible.

The present book brings together biblical experts and active archaeologists to contribute their understanding of the present state of research and put together a picture of the origins and history of the people Israel, within the history of the ancient Near East. Despite the in-depth expertise of our authors, all of them composed their chapters for an audience without a deep knowledge of ancient Israel—for people seeking a better understanding rather than those who were already knowledgeable. Fourteen experts in different periods of ancient Israel's history contributed chapters, as did the editors. This achievement is a result of teamwork, for despite the seemingly natural conjunction of the Bible and the archaeology of ancient Israel, the two fields do not have a history of working together. True, archaeologists working in Israel were once accused of digging with a trowel in one hand and a Bible in the other. But few archaeologists were trained as biblical scholars. As William Dever identifies the distinction in chapter 5, the combination inherent in “biblical archaeology” before the 1970s was between archaeology and *theology*, not archaeology and *biblical studies*. Indeed, as Mark Elliott shows in chapter 2, biblical archaeologists like William F. Albright saw themselves as opponents of “higher criticism” and its related research into the biblical text. From the opposite perspective, few biblical scholars had the training and background to understand the details of archaeological investigation and were able to incorporate it into their research at the primary level. Textual scholars of course made use of the inscriptions archaeologists unearthed, but the excavations that discovered them? Not so much.

In this light, the teamwork and cooperation that this textbook represents was hard won. The editors thank the authors for working with us to help achieve the vision that guided this book. They put up with many editorial “suggestions” and requests for revision in particular areas. We appreciate the patience and diligence that all showed to us.

Baylor University Press and its director, Carey Newman, have shown a great deal of support and patience for this project. The BUP production team has shepherded this work through the publication project to its completion. The editors are pleased and thankful for the care and creativity that this book has received from BUP. Another institution deserving our thanks for its support of this work is BiblePlaces.com and especially Todd Bolen. BiblePlaces.com supplied most of the photographs in this book gratis. Thanks also go out to Norma Franklin, Jim West, and Pat Landy, who read drafts of many chapters and provided useful comments, and to Conor McCracken-Flesher, for doing the index.

Both Jennie Ebeling and Paul Flesher would like to thank the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem for support provided during the final year of work on this project. The Albright appointed Jennie as the prestigious Annual Professor for 2015–2016, and it made Paul the Seymour Gitin Distinguished Professor during spring 2016. The libraries of the École Biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem and the Israel Antiquities Authority in the Rockefeller Museum were also extremely helpful. Paul would also like to thank Dean Paula Lutz and the University of Wyoming for awarding him sabbatical leave for 2015–2016 (during which he worked to bring this project to conclusion) as well as the staff of the Interlibrary Loan Department of the University of Wyoming's Coe Library for their work in obtaining volumes not available on campus. Jennie would like to thank the Department of Archaeology and Art History at the University of Evansville as well as Alexandra Cutler.

Mark Elliott wants to thank all the other editors—Jennie Ebeling, Paul Flesher, and Ed Wright—for their valuable assistance in creating and developing the website *Bible and Interpretation* ([www.bibleinterp.com](http://www.bibleinterp.com)). Ed Wright thanks the faculty, staff, students, and supporters of The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies for their interest in and support of this project over many years.

Finally, the editors would like to thank their spouses and children for their support and love during the long process of putting this book together. This volume is dedicated to our students—past, present, and future. Every day the students in our classes reveal their fascination for the ancient world as they seek insight into the choices people made when confronted with momentous (and not so momentous) events. Our past students inspired us to create this volume, and we hope it will guide the learning of our future students.



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AGES

<b>Paleolithic Era</b>	1,500,000–22,000 BP
Lower	1,500,000–250,000
Middle	250,000–50,000
Upper	50,000–12,000
<b>Epipaleolithic Period</b>	12,000 BP–8500 BCE
<b>Neolithic Period</b>	8500–4500 BCE
Pre-Pottery Neolithic	8500–5500
Pottery Neolithic	5500–4500
<b>Chalcolithic Period</b>	4500–3600 BCE
<b>Early Bronze Age</b>	3600–2400 BCE
EB I	3600–3000
EB II	3000–2750
EB III	2750–2400
<b>Intermediate Bronze Age</b>	2400–2000 BCE
<b>Middle Bronze Age</b>	2000–1550 BCE
MB I	2000–1900
MB II	1900–1650
MB III	1650–1550
<b>Late Bronze Age</b>	1550–1200 BCE
LB I	1550–1400
LB II	1400–1200
<b>Iron Age</b>	1200–586 BCE
Iron I	1200–1000
Iron II	1000–586
Iron IIA	1000–928
Iron IIB	928–722
Iron IIC	722–586
<b>Neo-Babylonian Period</b>	586–539 BCE
<b>Persian Period</b>	539–332 BCE
<b>Hellenistic Period</b>	332–63 BCE

<b>Roman Period</b>	63 BCE–330 CE
<b>Byzantine Period</b>	330–630 CE
<b>Islamic Period</b>	630–1918 CE
Early Arab Period	630–1099
Crusader Period	1099–1250
Mamluk Period	1250–1517
Ottoman Period	1517–1918
<b>Modern Period</b>	1918–present

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Focus is primarily on kings and political figures, as well as key events, with some mention of extrabiblical finds. All dates are BCE.

- ca. 9400** Jericho inhabited
- ca. 7000** Megiddo inhabited
- ca. 4000** Beer Sheva inhabited
- ca. 3500** Hazor inhabited (upper city)
- 1353–1336** Pharaoh Akhenaten
  - Builds capital at Amarna
  - Receives the Amarna letters
- 1292–1290** Pharaoh Ramesses I
- 1290–1279** Pharaoh Seti I
- 1279–1213** Pharaoh Ramesses II
- ca. 1250** Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt
- 1213–1203** Pharaoh Merneptah
  - Commemorates his invasion of Canaan in the Merneptah Stele. Claims to have defeated Ashkelon, Gezer, and Yanoam and a people known as Israel.
- ca. 1250–1050** Major increase in small settlements in Canaan's Central Hill Country
- ca. 1200–1000** Period of Israelite tribes and the Judges
  - Judges: Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson
- 1186–1155** Ramesses III
  - Sea Peoples (including Philistines) attempt to invade Egypt. Ramesses drives them off and settles them on the Levant coast.
- 1185–1175** Sea Peoples (including Philistines) begin settling in cities along the Canaanite coast
- 1030–1010** Saul, king of Israel
- 1010–970** David, king of Israel
  - Founds a united kingdom of Israel, bringing together all twelve/thirteen tribes

- Captures Jerusalem and makes it the capital  
Conquers Ammon, Edom, Aram, and Moab
- 970–931** Solomon, king of Israel
  - Builds palace, fortifications, Millo (stepped-stone structure), and temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem
  - Builds fortifications at Gezer, Hazor, Megiddo, and possibly other sites
  - Solomon establishes a shipping trade out of Eilat into the Red Sea
- 931** Division of kingdom into Northern Kingdom of Israel and Southern Kingdom of Judah
- 931–911** Jeroboam I, king of Israel (Northern Kingdom)
  - Creates independent Kingdom of Israel from ten tribes
  - Establishes capital at Shechem
  - Builds major shrines at Dan and Bethel
- 931–915** Rehoboam, king of Judah (Southern Kingdom)
- 926** Pharaoh Sheshonq I (Shishak) invades Israel and Judah
- 915–912** Abijah/Abijam, king of Judah
- 912–871** Asa, king of Judah
- 911–910** Nadab, king of Israel
- 910–887** Baasha, king of Israel
  - Moves capital to Tirzah
- 887–886** Elah, king of Israel
- 886** Zimri, king of Israel
- 886–875** Omri, king of Israel
  - Moves capital to Samaria
  - Conquers Moab
- 875–852** Ahab, king of Israel
  - Fortifies Gezer, Megiddo, and Hazor
  - Builds second palace at Jezreel
- 871–849** Jehoshaphat, king of Judah
- 853** Ahab fights Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria, to a draw at Qarqar, as part of a coalition of eleven countries (Kurkh Monolith)
- 852–851** Ahaziah, king of Israel
- 851–842** Joram/Jehoram, king of Israel
  - Defeated by Aram and loses northeastern lands
  - House of David Stele at Tel Dan
- 842** King Mesha of Moab throws Israel's control off Moab (Mesha Stele)
- 849–84** Joram/Jehoram, king of Judah

- 842–814** Jehu, king of Israel  
Overthrows Joram (last of Omride Dynasty) and slays all relatives  
Jehu submits to Assyrian king Shalmaneser III as a vassal (Black Obelisk)
- 842–841** Ahaziah, king of Judah
- 841–835** Athaliah, queen of Judah
- 835–796** Joash/Jehoash, king of Judah
- 814–806** Joahaz, king of Israel
- 806–791** Joash/Jehoash, king of Israel
- 796–766** Amaziah, king of Judah
- 791–750** Jeroboam II, king of Israel
- 776–736** Uzziah/Azariah, king of Judah (became a leper in 750)
- 750–735** Jotham, king of Judah
- 750** Zechariah, king of Israel
- 749** Shallum, king of Israel
- 749–739** Menahem, king of Israel
- 745–727** Tiglath-Pileser III, king of Assyria
- 742** Menahem pays tribute to Tiglath-Pileser as a vassal
- 739–737** Pekahiah, king of Israel
- 737–732** Pekah, king of Israel
- 735–715** Ahaz/Jehoahaz I, king of Judah  
Assyrian vassal
- 735–733** Syro-Ephramite War
- 732** Tiglath-Pileser invades Galilee, Gilead, and the northern part of Israel; takes many Israelites captive; and resettles them in Assyria
- 732–722** Hoshea, king of Israel
- 727–722** Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria
- 722–705** Sargon II, king of Assyria
- 722** Fall of Samaria to Assyrians  
Vast numbers of Israelite citizens taken into exile by Assyrians; population reduced significantly  
Samaria, Aram, and Phoenicia absorbed into Assyrian Empire  
Judah, Philistia, Ammon, Moab, and Edom become vassal states
- 715–687** Hezekiah, king of Judah  
Expands and improved the fortifications of Jerusalem; has the Siloam tunnel excavated (Siloam Inscription)  
Tries to centralize worship at the Jerusalem temple and eliminate other worship sites

- 705–681** Sennacherib, king of Assyria
- 701** Sennacherib invades Judah, conquers Lachish, and besieges but does not conquer Jerusalem.
- 687–642** Manasseh, king of Judah  
Assyrian vassal
- 642–640** Amon, king of Judah
- 640–609** Josiah, king of Judah  
Centralizes worship in Jerusalem by destroying all hill shrines, temples, and other worship sites in Judah and southern Israel  
Killed when attacking Pharaoh Necho II and his army
- 622** Josiah remodels Jerusalem temple
- 609** Jehoahaz II/Shallum, king of Judah
- 608–598** Jehoiakim, king of Judah
- 605** Babylonian Empire conquers Assyrian Empire at Carchemish
- 598–597** Jehoiachin/Jeconiah, king of Judah
- 597** Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar sack Jerusalem  
Judah's royalty and most members of its nobility and middle and upper classes taken into exile and settled near Babylon.
- 597–586** Zedekiah, king of Judah
- 586** Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar destroy Jerusalem  
Take more Judahites into exile  
Ezekiel active in Babylonia  
Jeremiah active in Judah and Egypt
- 586–538** The Babylonian Exile
- 576–530** Cyrus the Great (Cyrus II), king of Persia
- 539** Persian Empire conquers Babylonian Empire
- 538** First Israelite return from Babylon to Jerusalem under Sheshbazzar
- 520** Second Israelite return to Jerusalem under governor Zerubbabel and priest Joshua/Jeshua
- 515** Jerusalem temple rebuilt
- 458** Third return to Jerusalem under Ezra
- 445** Fourth return to Jerusalem under Nehemiah  
Jerusalem walls rebuilt
- 333** King Alexander the Great of Macedon begins to conquer the Persian Empire, including Syria, Israel, and Egypt

## ANCIENT JERUSALEM

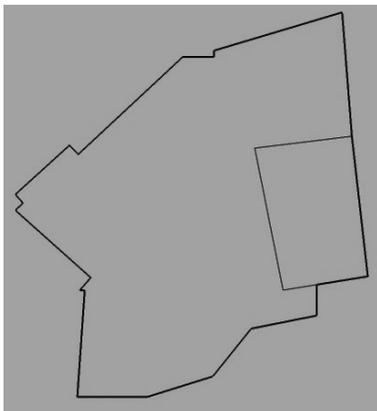
When one reads the Bible's descriptions of Jerusalem during David and Solomon's time—the tenth century BCE—it is easy to imagine a large city. But Jerusalem in their time was actually quite small, just a sliver of a city along the ridge of a hill that had its highest point in the north and then dropped down toward the valley in the south. Jerusalem did not add substantially to its walls until several centuries later (see chapters 13, 15, and 17).

It was King Hezekiah who expanded and fortified Jerusalem after the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to accommodate the many refugees who fled south into Judah. This apparently happened as he readied for the Assyrian Empire's invasion, which finally took place in 701 BCE. Jerusalem then retained this form until its destruction by the Babylonian Empire in 586 BCE (chapter 17).

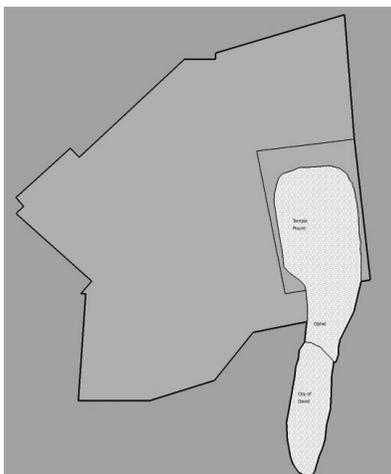
When the exiled refugees and/or their descendants returned to Jerusalem in 539 BCE and later, there were only enough people to repopulate the city of David and Solomon (chapters 19–20).

Today, the cities of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and the returning exiles are buried under more than two millennia of continuous human habitation. Archaeologists have unearthed some remains, including the occasional stretch of city wall. Jerusalem's "Old City" of today is not old at all but was built by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in the sixteenth century, between 1535 and 1542 CE. It is just over one-third of a square mile in size. The ancient cities during the First Temple Period were significantly smaller. Furthermore, Suleiman built his Jerusalem with most of it outside the ancient boundaries of Jerusalem, at least those prior to the end of the Persian Period.

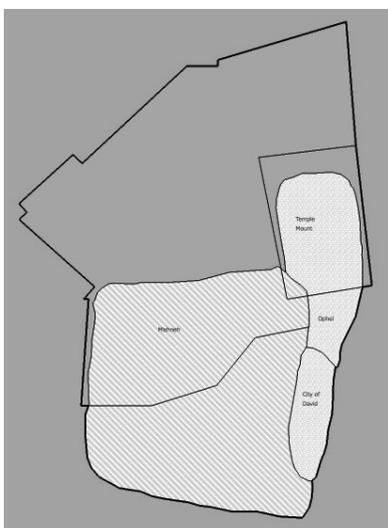
Below you will find three outline maps of Jerusalem. Map 1 features the walls of Suleiman's Jerusalem that appear today. Map 2 places the City of David and Solomon's expansions within the background of today's Old City. Map 3 shows Hezekiah's expanded Jerusalem in the same format. While Map 3 shows Jerusalem as it was from about 701 to 586 BCE, Map 2 shows it at two times: 940(?) to 701 BC, and after 539 BCE.



JERUSALEM MAP 1



JERUSALEM MAP 2



JERUSALEM MAP 3

## LIST OF MAPS

All maps of territory were designed by Paul V. M. Flesher using ArcGIS software by Esri (Esri.com). They were constructed on a base map showing modern topographical imagery supplied by Esri and used with permission. All maps copyright © (2017) Esri. All map designs, except 7-1, 7-2, and 7-3: © Paul V. M. Flesher.

<b>Jerusalem maps</b>		xxii
<b>Map 1-1</b>	Egypt	18
<b>Map 1-2</b>	The Fertile Crescent	20
<b>Map 1-3</b>	Mesopotamia	21
<b>Map 1-4</b>	The Levant	23
<b>Map 1-5</b>	The southern Levant	24
<b>Map 3-1</b>	The lands surrounding the eastern Mediterranean Sea	84
<b>Map 3-2</b>	Italy and Greece	87
<b>Map 7-1</b>	Early Bronze Age sites in Canaan (After Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, <i>The Macmillan Bible Atlas</i> , rev. ed., 1980.)	191
<b>Map 7-2</b>	Middle Bronze Age sites in Canaan (After Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, <i>The Macmillan Bible Atlas</i> , rev. ed., 1980.)	192
<b>Map 7-3</b>	Late Bronze Age sites in Canaan (After Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, <i>The Macmillan Bible Atlas</i> , rev. ed., 1980.)	193
<b>Map 8-1</b>	The territory through which Abram supposedly journeyed from Ur to Canaan	214
<b>Map 8-2</b>	Canaan during the time of Abraham	216
<b>Map 9-1</b>	The exodus: possible routes	260
<b>Map 9-2</b>	The exodus: from Kadesh-barnea to the Plains of Moab	268

<b>Map 10-1</b>	The Central Hill Country at the end of the Late Bronze Age and the early part of the Iron Age I. This map echoes Stager 2001 (p. 95) and is based on the research in Finkelstein and Naaman 1994 and Mittmann 1970.	284
<b>Map 11-1</b>	Israelite shrines and the towns and tribes associated with individual judges	307
<b>Map 12-1</b>	Ancient Philistia and Israel (After Stager 2001)	317
<b>Map 13-1</b>	Southern Israel under David and Solomon	339
<b>Map 13-2</b>	Northern Israel under David and Solomon	351
<b>Map 14-1</b>	Northern Kingdom of Israel in the centuries after it separated from Judah to the south	364
<b>Map 14-2</b>	The approximate boundaries of Israel, Judah, and the countries around them	381
<b>Map 15-1</b>	Southern Kingdom of Judah after separating from Israel in the north	396
<b>Map 17-1</b>	The westernmost limits of the Assyrian Empire after 722 BCE	445
<b>Map 17-2</b>	The boundaries of the Assyrian Empire in 722 BCE	447
<b>Map 18-1</b>	Sites important in the discussion of ancient Israelite religion	482
<b>Map 19-1</b>	The Babylonian Empire in 580 BCE	516
<b>Map 20-1</b>	The boundaries of the Persian Empire in 530 BCE	531
<b>Map 20-2</b>	The boundaries and towns of Yehud (Judea) at the end of the sixth century BCE	537

## LIST OF FIGURES

The following list indicates credits and permissions. Unless noted otherwise, all photos (and Figure 9-1) © Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com. Tables (excluding Figure 14-2) are creations of respective chapter authors.

<b>Figure 1-1</b>	The Shephelah	17
<b>Figure 1-2</b>	Sea of Galilee	25
<b>Figure 1-3</b>	Agricultural terraces	27
<b>Figure 1-4</b>	St. Etienne's cave	31
<b>Figure 1-5</b>	Student volunteers excavating at Jezreel <i>Photo: Courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition</i>	32
<b>Figure 1-6</b>	Tell Dothan	33
<b>Figure 1-7</b>	A bowl from the Middle Bronze Period in situ at Tel Megiddo	36
<b>Figure 1-8</b>	Teaching pottery identification and sorting at the Jezreel excavations <i>Photo: Courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition</i>	39
<b>Figure 2-1</b>	The Isaiah Scroll <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Great_Isaiah_Scroll_MS_A_%281QIsa%29_-_Google_Art_Project-x4-y0.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Great_Isaiah_Scroll_MS_A_%281QIsa%29_-_Google_Art_Project-x4-y0.jpg</a></i>	47
<b>Figure 2-2</b>	Table: Books of the Tanakh	51
<b>Figure 2-3</b>	Partial page from the <i>Codex Leningradensis</i> <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LeningradCodex_text.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LeningradCodex_text.jpg</a></i>	53
<b>Figure 2-4</b>	St. Catherine's Monastery	56
<b>Figure 2-5</b>	The Qumran settlement	58
<b>Figure 2-6</b>	Julius Wellhausen <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AJulius_Wellhausen_-_Studien_zur_semitischen_Philologie%2C_1914.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AJulius_Wellhausen_-_Studien_zur_semitischen_Philologie%2C_1914.jpg</a></i>	66
<b>Figure 2-7</b>	William G. Dever <i>Photo: Courtesy of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research</i>	77

<b>Figure 3-1</b>	Pantheon in Rome	86
	<i>Painting by Giovanni Paolo Panini, 1734. Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pantheon-panini.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pantheon-panini.jpg</a></i>	
<b>Figure 3-2</b>	Herculaneum	88
<b>Figure 3-3</b>	Ruins of Pompeii	91
<b>Figure 3-4</b>	The Rosetta Stone	93
<b>Figure 3-5</b>	Petra	103
<b>Figure 3-6</b>	The Western Wall of Herod's Temple Mount and Robinson's arch	106
<b>Figure 3-7</b>	Early twentieth-century photo of Jerusalem from Mt. Scopus	109
<b>Figure 4-1</b>	Austen Henry Layard	118
	<i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AustenHenryLayard.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AustenHenryLayard.jpg</a></i>	
<b>Figure 4-2</b>	Frontispiece from Layard's 1849 book on his excavations	118
	<i>Photo: <a href="https://books.google.com/books/about/Nineveh_and_Its_Remains.html?id=OhMGAAAQAAJ">https://books.google.com/books/about/Nineveh_and_Its_Remains.html?id=OhMGAAAQAAJ</a></i>	
<b>Figure 4-3</b>	Detail of the wall engravings from Sennacherib's Nineveh Palace depicting his siege of Lachish	120
<b>Figure 4-4</b>	The frontispiece of Charles Wilson's survey of Jerusalem	125
	<i>Photo: New York Public Library, <a href="http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-6429-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99">http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-6429-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99</a></i>	
<b>Figure 4-5</b>	The Siloam Inscription	131
<b>Figure 4-6</b>	The tenth-century Gezer Calendar	135
<b>Figure 5-1</b>	The "Albright"	142
	<i>Photo: Courtesy of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research</i>	
<b>Figure 5-2</b>	Late Bronze gates at Shechem	145
<b>Figure 5-3</b>	Tell Hazor	145
<b>Figure 5-4</b>	The Solomonic gates (Iron II) at Gezer	148
<b>Figure 5-5</b>	Female terra-cotta figurines	154
<b>Figure 6-1</b>	Table: Archaeological periods	163
	<i>See also the table of "Archaeological Ages" at this book's beginning (pp. xv–xvi)</i>	
<b>Figure 6-2</b>	Neolithic plastered skull from Jericho	166
<b>Figure 6-3</b>	Copper scepters from the Nahal Mishmar Cave	168
<b>Figure 6-4</b>	Cuneiform tablet	170
<b>Figure 6-5</b>	The city of Megiddo	173
<b>Figure 6-6</b>	An ancient bronze statue of El	181
<b>Figure 7-1</b>	Tell Lachish	194

<b>Figure 7-2</b>	Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Age gates (Adapted from Tell el-Far'ah [North], De Miroschedji 1993, vol. 2, 437; Tel Yavneh-Yam, Kempinski 1992, 136 [from ZDPV 91 (1975): 10, no. 13]; Tel Dan, Kempinski 1992, 136 [from IEJ 34 (1984): 12–13]; Tel Balata [Shechem], Kempinski 1992, 136 [from Shechem, fig. 9]; Megiddo, Kempinski 1992, 136 [Megiddo Str. VIIB, from Megiddo II, fig. 383]; and Hazor, Kempinski 1992, 136 [Area K, from Hazor, fig. 14]. Not to scale.)	195
<b>Figure 7-3</b>	Rampart and glacis Photo: Jill L. Baker	196
<b>Figure 7-4</b>	Upper: Middle Bronze Age gate at Ashkelon (2006) Lower: Late Bronze Age gate at Megiddo (2006) Photo: Jill L. Baker	197
<b>Figure 7-5</b>	Middle and Late Bronze Age palace architecture (Adapted from Megiddo Str. XII, Oren 1992, 107 [from Megiddo II, 1948, fig. 415]; Aphek, A. Mazar 1992a, 210; Megiddo, Str. IX, Oren 1992, 107 [from Megiddo II, 1948, fig. 381]; Megiddo, Str. VIII Area DD, Oren 1992, 108 [from Megiddo II, 1948, fig. 411]; Megiddo, Str. VIIB, Oren 1992, 108 [from Megiddo II, 1948, fig. 382]; Tell el-Farah [South], Oren 1992, 119 [from Beth Pelet I–II, 1932, plates 51–54. Not to scale.]	198
<b>Figure 7-6</b>	Bronze Age temple architecture (Adapted from: En-Gedi, Barag 1992, vol. 2, 405 [cf. IEJ 22 (1972): 11, fig. I:A]; Ai, Kempinski 1992, 55 [from 'Ay, 1949, plate XCII]; Hazor, Area H, Str. 3, A. Mazar 1992a, 163 [from Hazor, fig. 18]; Hazor Area H, Str. 1B A. Mazar 1992a, 163 [from Hazor, fig. 20]; Tel Balata [Shechem], A. Mazar 1992a, 163 [from Shechem, 1965, fig. 41]; Lachish, A. Mazar 1992a, 176 [from Qadmoniot 10, no. 40 (1978): 108]; Lachish Fosse Temple III, A. Mazar 1992b, 255. Not to scale.]	200
<b>Figure 7-7</b>	Bronze Age domestic architecture (Adapted from: Arad, Ben-Tor 1992a, 65 [from Arad, 1978, plate 183, no. 2318a]; Meser, Ben-Tor 1992a, 65 [from IEJ 9 (1959): 16, fig. 3]; Tell Beit Mirsim, Ben-Dov 1992, 102 [from Tell Beit Mirsim II, 1938, plate 56:G]; Megiddo, Str. XII, Ben-Dov 1992, 101 [from Megiddo II, 1948, fig. 397, 398]; Tel Batash, Patrician House, A. Mazar 1990, 247; Ashdod, Area B, Patrician House, Oren 1992, 117. Not to scale.)	202
<b>Figure 8-1</b>	Shechem with standing stone in the tower temple	214
<b>Figure 8-2</b>	The Gezer standing stones	217
<b>Figure 8-3</b>	Temple of Nannar the Mesopotamian moon god at Ur	222
<b>Figure 8-4</b>	Camels	226
<b>Figure 8-5</b>	Ostrakon from Khirbet Qeiyafa	238

<b>Figure 9-1</b>	Table: Outline of the exodus story, from Exodus to Deuteronomy	243
<b>Figure 9-2</b>	Bronze calf from Samaria hill country	245
<b>Figure 9-3</b>	Tomb painting at Beni Hassan	250
<b>Figure 9-4</b>	Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and their children <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Akhenaten,_Nefertiti_and_their_children.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Akhenaten,_Nefertiti_and_their_children.jpg</a></i>	251
<b>Figure 9-5</b>	Seti Stele from Beth Shean	253
<b>Figure 9-6</b>	The Merneptah Stele	256
<b>Figure 9-7</b>	Sinai Desert	260
<b>Figure 9-8</b>	Table: Documentary sources for the crossing of the sea in Exodus	261
<b>Figure 9-9</b>	St. Catherine's Monastery	265
<b>Figure 9-10</b>	Kadesh-barnea	269
<b>Figure 10-1</b>	Detail from scene of Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah attacking Ashkelon	278
<b>Figure 10-2</b>	View of Tel Megiddo, looking south	280
<b>Figure 10-3</b>	A collar-rim storage jar (CRSJ) from Shiloh	285
<b>Figure 10-4</b>	The altar at Mount Ebal	287
<b>Figure 10-5</b>	Tall al-Umayri	289
<b>Figure 10-6</b>	The large "Building A" at Tell Ein Zippori <i>Photo: J. P. Dessel</i>	290
<b>Figure 10-7</b>	Fourteenth-century Amarna letter	295
<b>Figure 11-1</b>	Table: Organization of the book of Judges	304
<b>Figure 11-2</b>	Table: Organization of 1 Samuel 1–15	305
<b>Figure 11-3</b>	Table: The Judges	306
<b>Figure 12-1</b>	Detail of Ramesses III's naval battle against the coalition of Sea Peoples <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medinet_Habu_Ramses_III._Tempel_Nordostwand_44.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medinet_Habu_Ramses_III._Tempel_Nordostwand_44.jpg</a></i>	321
<b>Figure 12-2</b>	Detail of captive Philistine chief <i>Photo: Courtesy of Ann E. Killebrew</i>	322
<b>Figure 12-3</b>	Detail of Ramesses III from the Papyrus Harris <i>Photo: Image ID EA9999,43. Copyright of the Trustees of the British Museum. Used with permission.</i>	323
<b>Figure 12-4</b>	Aerial view of Tell es-Safi/Gath	325
<b>Figure 12-5</b>	Philistine monochrome pottery <i>Photo: Gabi Laron, Tel Miqne-Ekron Publications Project. Courtesy of Seymour Gitin.</i>	326

<b>Figure 12-6</b>	Philistine bichrome pottery <i>Photo: Gabi Laron, Tel Miqne-Ekron Publications Project. Courtesy of Seymour Gitin.</i>	326
<b>Figure 12-7</b>	Aerial view of Tel Miqne-Ekron <i>Photo: Ilan Sztulman, Tel Miqne-Ekron Publications Project. Courtesy of Seymour Gitin.</i>	327
<b>Figure 12-8</b>	Philistine temple at Tel Qasile <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tel_Qasile_040113_02.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tel_Qasile_040113_02.jpg</a></i>	330
<b>Figure 12-9</b>	Potter's kiln at Tel Miqne <i>Photo: Ilan Sztulman, Tel Miqne-Ekron Publications Project. Courtesy of Seymour Gitin.</i>	331
<b>Figure 12-10</b>	Iron Age I ostracon from Ashkelon <i>Photo: Zev Radovan. Courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. Line drawing courtesy of Ann E. Killebrew.</i>	333
<b>Figure 13-1</b>	The tenth-century(?) BCE Stepped Stone Structure	345
<b>Figure 13-2</b>	A wall of the public building that Eilat Mazar has identified as a "palace" from the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE	346
<b>Figure 13-3</b>	Khirbet Qeiyafa	347
<b>Figure 13-4</b>	The remains of a tower from the Middle Bronze II Period found in the City of David	348
<b>Figure 13-5</b>	The ostracon from Khirbet Qeiyafa with an abecedary inscribed on it	348
<b>Figure 13-6</b>	An aerial view of the six-chambered gate at Gezer	350
<b>Figure 13-7</b>	An Iron Age workshop at the copper mines of Khirbet en-Nahas	359
<b>Figure 14-1</b>	The wall of the Bubastite Portal at the Karnak Temple	366
<b>Figure 14-2</b>	Table: The stages of the Iron Age <i>(as per A. Mazar 2005, 24)</i>	366
<b>Figure 14-3</b>	The hill of Samaria where Omri built his capital	374
<b>Figure 14-4</b>	A sphinx carved in ivory found in the Iron II Samaria palace	375
<b>Figure 14-5</b>	The remains of the southeast tower at Tel Jezreel	377
<b>Figure 14-6</b>	The large podium of the Israelite temple ("high place") at Dan	378
<b>Figure 14-7</b>	The Tel Dan Inscription	382
<b>Figure 14-8</b>	A scene from the Black Obelisk	383
<b>Figure 14-9</b>	Samaria ostraca from the time of Jeroboam II	385
<b>Figure 15-1</b>	The City of David south and downhill from the temple platform	395
<b>Figure 15-2</b>	The narrow tunnel dug during King Hezekiah's reign	400

<b>Figure 15-3</b>	Relief from the Assyrian king Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh	401
<b>Figure 15-4</b>	Tel Lachish	401
<b>Figure 15-5</b>	The Judahite fortress at Tel Arad	402
<b>Figure 15-6</b>	LMLK stamps	408
<b>Figure 16-1</b>	Judean Pillar Figurines from eighth-century BCE Jerusalem	415
<b>Figure 16-2</b>	Palestinian women and men harvesting olives <i>Photo: "Harvesting olives." Library of Congress, Prints &amp; Photographs Division [LC-DIG-matpc-18895]</i>	421
<b>Figure 16-3</b>	A statue depicting a servant woman from Old Kingdom Egypt <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_egyptian_statuette_of_a_woman_grinding_grain_2.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_egyptian_statuette_of_a_woman_grinding_grain_2.jpg</a></i>	424
<b>Figure 16-4</b>	Reconstruction of a vertical warp-weighted loom with clay loom weights	426
<b>Figure 16-5</b>	House F7, a four-room house at Tell Halif, Israel <i>Illustration is reproduced with permission from James Walker Hardin, Lahav II: Households and the Use of Domestic Space at Iron I Tell Halif (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010), fig. 5.3.</i>	428
<b>Figure 17-1</b>	Tel Megiddo	440
<b>Figure 17-2</b>	Samaria ostraca	442
<b>Figure 17-3</b>	A <i>lamassu</i> (winged bull with a human head) from the Khorsabad palace of Sargon II	444
<b>Figure 17-4</b>	The "broad wall" built during the reign of King Hezekiah	449
<b>Figure 17-5</b>	Aerial view of Tel Lachish	452
<b>Figure 17-6</b>	Kuntillet Ajrud <i>Photo: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuntillet_Ajrud#/media/File:Ajrud.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuntillet_Ajrud#/media/File:Ajrud.jpg</a></i>	466
<b>Figure 18-1</b>	Baal	478
<b>Figure 18-2</b>	Temple at Tel Tayinat <i>Photo: Stephen Batiuk. Courtesy of Tayinat Archaeological Project.</i>	478
<b>Figure 18-3</b>	Bronze calf and shrine from Ashkelon	479
<b>Figure 18-4</b>	The Mesha Stele (Moabite Stone)	481
<b>Figure 18-5</b>	Taanach cult stand depicting Asherah	488
<b>Figure 18-6</b>	Sanctuary at Arad patterned after the tripartite (three-room) temple in Jerusalem	489
<b>Figure 18-7</b>	Amulet from Ketef Hinnom <i>Photo: <a href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Birkat_kohanim_22.jpg">https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Birkat_kohanim_22.jpg</a></i>	491

<b>Figure 19-1</b>	The restored Adad Gate at Nineveh	507
	<i>Photo: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineveh#/media/File:Nineveh_Adad_gate_exterior_entrance_far2.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineveh#/media/File:Nineveh_Adad_gate_exterior_entrance_far2.jpg</a></i>	
<b>Figure 19-2</b>	Babylon in 1932	507
	<i>Photo: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon#/media/File:Babylon,_1932.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon#/media/File:Babylon,_1932.jpg</a></i>	
<b>Figure 19-3</b>	The Lachish Letters	511
<b>Figure 19-4</b>	The modern reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate	515
	<i>Photo: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishtar_Gate#/media/File:Ishtar_Gate_at_Berlin_Museum.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishtar_Gate#/media/File:Ishtar_Gate_at_Berlin_Museum.jpg</a></i>	
<b>Figure 19-5</b>	Cyrus Cylinder	525
<b>Figure 20-1</b>	Mausoleum of Cyrus	534
<b>Figure 20-2</b>	The palace complex at Persepolis	545
	<i>Photo: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persepolis#/media/File:Parseh.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persepolis#/media/File:Parseh.jpg</a></i>	
<b>Figure 20-3</b>	The Yehud coin	549
	<i>Photo: <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yehud_Medinata#/media/File:YHD_coins.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yehud_Medinata#/media/File:YHD_coins.jpg</a></i>	
<b>Figure 20-4</b>	Elephantine Island	553
	<i>Illustration: Courtesy of Stephen G. Rosenberg</i>	



## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	David Noel Freedman, ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
AD	Anno Domini, “Year of the Lord”
Amos	Amos
<i>ANET</i>	James B. Pritchard, ed. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</i> . 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
<i>AUSS</i>	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i> (forerunner of <i>NEA</i> )
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BC	Before Christ
BCE	Before the Common Era
<i>BibRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BP	Before Present
<sup>14</sup> C	Carbon-14
CAP	A. E. Cowley, ed. <i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> Oxford: Clarendon, 1923.
CAT	Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, eds. <i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places</i> . 3rd enlarged ed. KTU3. AOAT 360/1. Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2013.
CE	Common Era
CH	Chronicler’s History
1 & 2 Chr	1 & 2 Chronicles
COS	William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger. <i>Context of Scripture</i> . 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
DH	Deuteronomistic History

EB	Early Bronze Age
Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Esth	Esther
Ex, Exod	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gen	Genesis
Hag	Haggai
<i>Harper Atlas</i>	James B. Pritchard, ed. 1987. <i>Harper Atlas of the Bible</i> . New York: Harper & Row.
Hos	Hosea
Isa	Isaiah
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
Jer	Jeremiah
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
Jon	Jonah
Josh	Joshua
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
Judg	Judges
Lam	Lamentations
LB	Late Bronze Age
Lev	Leviticus
1 & 2 Macc	1 & 2 Maccabees
Mal	Malachi
MB	Middle Bronze Age
MCC	Modified Conventional Chronology
Mic	Micah
Nah	Nahum
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i> (successor to BA)
NEAEHL	Ephraim Stern, ed. <i>New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . 4 vols. New York: Simon & Schuster; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Carta, 1993. Vol. 5, 2008.
Neh	Nehemiah
Num	Numbers
Obad	Obadiah
PEF	Palestine Exploration Fund
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
Prov	Proverbs
Ps, Pss	Psalms

1 & 2 Sam	1 & 2 Samuel
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
Song	Song of Songs
SS	Supplement Series
<i>TDOT</i>	G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . 15 vols. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
Zech	Zechariah
Zeph	Zephaniah



## INTRODUCTION

The people known as **Israel** stand at the center of the Hebrew Bible—a collection of books Christians call the Old Testament.<sup>\*</sup> The Bible describes their origins—how God rescued them from **Egypt** and made an “everlasting” **covenant** with them. It then relates their interactions with God over the following centuries. This set of stories, laws, and other writings became the foundation for three major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

For many centuries, the only information about Israel came from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Then, at the end of the nineteenth century, a new source of information about ancient Israel became available: **archaeology**. The remains of ancient Israel and its neighbors could be dug up from the ground at sites in the Holy Land, the Middle East, and the eastern Mediterranean. These discoveries provided knowledge that could be used to supplement and inform the study of the Bible. From its origins, archaeology in the Holy Land was subordinated to the Bible and became an important weapon in the fight of faith. In the aftermath of the Enlightenment, the Bible and its reliability had come under attack. To counter this, Protestant Christians used the new “science” of archaeology to provide support for the Bible’s historical accuracy. This approach came to be known as biblical archaeology, and its fundamental goal was to use archaeological excavations and their finds to demonstrate the correctness of biblical accounts—that is, to prove that the Bible is historically accurate.

Today the idea of subordinating archaeology to biblical studies seems entirely wrongheaded, even backward, but it describes the conception and motivation of biblical archaeology up to the latter half of the twentieth century. As many biblical scholars have noted (see chapter 2), even the great archaeologist W. F. Albright—who is credited with founding the American branch of archaeological research in the Holy Land and did much to set such research on a sound footing—saw archaeology as demonstrating the accuracy of the Bible. As late as the 1960s, Albright held that archaeology confirmed Scripture.

<sup>\*</sup> The first appearance of a glossary entry is indicated in **bold** type.

As J. Edward Wright (2002, 63) has observed, when Albright moved from excavation to explanation,

Albright's reconstruction of biblical history and religion followed the existing biblical narratives almost literally. He noted that archaeological evidence confirmed repeatedly the basic reliability of biblical history.

Albright epitomized the practices and theological interpretations of biblical archaeology that had developed in the twentieth century. As chapters 3 and 4 lay out, archaeological finds were interpreted and presented as upholding biblical accuracy whenever possible. But despite Albright's accomplishments—and in part because of them—biblical archaeology's heyday was coming to an end.

The 1970s saw important changes in both the archaeology of ancient Israel and in the discipline of archaeology as practiced in Western universities. The decade's beginning saw two of biblical archaeology's foremost practitioners—G. Ernest Wright (1971) and Roland de Vaux (1970)—arguing that archaeology and theology needed to be practiced separately, each according to the independent standards of its own discipline. Only when results were complete within each field, they argued, could archaeology be used to address questions posed by theology (see chapter 5). In other words, the theological component inherent in biblical archaeology needed to be separated from the archaeological one, giving archaeological research into the Middle East's past independent standing.

At the same time, archaeology as a field began a transformation inspired by “New Archaeology”—now referred to as processual archaeology. These changes emphasized archaeology as a branch of anthropology and a part of that discipline's investigation of human culture. Archaeology's purpose was to study past human cultures through the remains they left behind. In this transformation, archaeology self-consciously reformulated itself along scientific lines. Rather than “just digging,” it required explicit research questions with planned excavation projects to answer them. It worked to interpret **artifacts** as evidence of past societies and it studied them in comparison to similar human cultures, both past and present. Archaeology furthermore allied itself with other scientific disciplines—creating new specialties such as **archaeozoology** and **paleoethnobotany**.

New Archaeology quickly impacted archaeological practices in the land of Israel, as chapter 5 describes, where its new character led it to take on the name “Syro-Palestinian archaeology.” By 1985, archaeological research into Israel's past and that of other peoples in the southern **Levant** had ceased to be a stepchild of biblical studies and operated as an independent field, pursuing its own research agendas guided by anthropological and scientific principles. Today, the archaeology of ancient Israel fits into the discipline of anthropology

alongside the archaeology of other ancient cultures. Its professorial practitioners usually consider themselves anthropologists and publish in that discipline's journals, as well as in more specialized ones, where the analysis and debate over the archaeology of ancient Israel take place among, and according to the same standards as, the archaeology of other past societies and cultures around the world.

And that is where this textbook comes in. Despite its acceptance in archaeological circles, Syro-Palestinian archaeology has been slow to make inroads into biblical studies and its text-based approach to studying ancient Israel. Tens of thousands of students in universities and colleges across North America take courses on the Old Testament or ancient Israel—usually in religious studies or theology departments. But the results, discoveries, and insights of Syro-Palestinian archaeology have made surprisingly little impact on these courses' textbooks. Typical Old Testament introductory texts emphasize the biblical books and their analysis. In a few places, archaeological materials are brought in, but they remain subordinated to textual explication and rarely shape the pedagogy of even a single chapter. And although a few textbooks of other kinds explore archaeology alongside the Bible, too often they still seek to use archaeology to support Scripture's reliability.

In this light, the present textbook focuses on the history of ancient Israel. While the Old Testament immortalized the Israelites through its stories, laws, psalms, and prophecies, the people Israel were much more than the limited picture presented in those pages. They were more than the priests and prophets, the kings and judges who led Israel. Even though these leaders usually take center stage in the biblical books, we must recognize that they were the "1 percent." The rest of the Israelites were more like Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz—land holders, farmers, and day laborers in the agricultural economy. Archaeological excavations have the ability to reveal all levels of Israelite society: from the farming villages of the hill country to the cities of the Jezreel Valley—from the wine vats, olive presses, and pottery workshops to the palaces of Samaria. It can inform us about people's diet, their standard of health, their houses, and their level of wealth. It can uncover the society's economic structure and trade relations as well as their use of metal and technological sophistication. The biblical texts may provide hints on some of these matters, but it is the archaeological record that can provide solid evidence for them and for topics Scripture does not even suggest we broach.

Not even the language of the Hebrew Bible is complete. Although the average American adult has an active vocabulary of twenty thousand to thirty-five thousand words, the Hebrew Bible contains about only eight thousand different words. It is clear that much is missing. The Bible talks about combing one's hair but does not use the word for "comb." It speaks of knives and forks

but never mentions spoons. It speaks of sewing but never of needles (Ullendorf 1971, 251–52). All these items, by the way, appear in the archaeological record.

It was thought for many centuries that to understand the ancient Israelites, you had to understand the Bible. It is now clear that to understand the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible, you must understand ancient Israel, and the only way to do that is to use all aspects of archaeological and textual data to reconstruct Israel's history.

That is what this book aims to accomplish. Its goal is to develop for its introductory readers a historical understanding of the ancient Israelites as they were, in all their achievements and failures. It will describe what events happened to the Israelites and what they were like—back then. The book is not interested in how the biblical material has been interpreted and reimagined by later Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the centuries since it was composed. Thus, the integration in this book comes not between archaeology and theology—as it had in biblical archaeology—but between archaeological analysis of data from the ground and literary analysis of the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible. These provide the evidence for the history of ancient Israel.

The book's opening chapters lay out these two key categories. Chapter 1 explains how archaeology works, from planning and carrying out an excavation to the types of analyses archaeologists perform on their finds. It also looks at the geography of the ancient Middle East, the location where these archaeological excavations take place. Chapter 2 looks at the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible, describing its books, how we know what its text says, and how modern scholarship studies its literary and historical character. The next three chapters explore the development of archaeology in the Holy Land and the Middle East over the last two centuries, how it has changed in recent decades, as well as its future. In chapter 6, the book settles into its main task of laying out the history of ancient Israel, and the following chapters pursue that goal in a chronological fashion—more about those chapters in a moment. But first we must unpack what we mean by the two terms we have used in these opening pages: Old Testament and Hebrew Bible.

### **What Do We Call It?**

The collection of books Christians call the Old Testament comprises a sacred, foundational document for two religions, Judaism and Christianity. But despite this commonality, each religion understands the collection differently and sees it as leading to the formation of their own religion, their own community of believers, and their own theology and practices. For the benefit of their community, both religions emphasize how the contents are relevant today, not just in hoary antiquity.

In Christianity, the name “Old Testament” indicates that, along with a second collection called the “New Testament,” it is part of a larger sacred work Christians call the “Bible.” This combination implies that the former can be understood only in conjunction with the latter. In Judaism, by contrast, this work is called the “TaNaK” (usually transcribed as “**Tanakh**”), which is a Hebrew acronym indicating the three collections of books out of which it was formed. “T” stands for the books of the **Torah**. “N” stands for the books of the **Neviim** (the “Prophets”), and “K” stands for **Ketuvim** (the “Writings”). When Jews use the word “Bible,” they mean the Tanakh. Both Old Testament and Tanakh are sectarian titles and both usually imply an interpretation that conforms the relevant religion. By contrast, this book focuses on history, seeking the meaning of the books at the time they were composed.

Recognizing this problem, biblical scholars coined the designation “Hebrew Bible.” They aimed to create a neutral term for the Tanakh/Old Testament, and the term became widely adopted for that purpose in the academic world. This identification has its own problems, not the least of which is the fact that the Hebrew Bible uses Aramaic as well as Hebrew. However, since this book’s chapters are written by authors of differing religious, academic, and national backgrounds, the editors decided to allow each author to use the term(s) they preferred. We should also note that this book’s title uses “Old Testament” because it is the most widely used designation in English.

### **The Academic Study of History**

In and of itself, the past is unknown. We are not born knowing what happened before our birth, nor do we know about events at which we were not present—to state the obvious. We learn about past events from what people tell us, either orally or in writing, and from objects (to use a general, all-inclusive term) that were created in the past and still exist in our time. The academic study of history takes all the evidence that can be found and draws upon it to compose a reconstruction of the past, whether of past events or of the character and circumstances of past societies.

The academic discipline of history differs significantly from notions of history found in popular culture. It aims to reconstruct the past as accurately as possible and as neutrally as possible, based on evidence. Historians may not always achieve this aim, but that is the standard. Historical research uses all available evidence; it does not cherry-pick. It does not ignore inconvenient data. Historical research aims for a neutral and unbiased use of that evidence; it does not purposely slant its conclusions to suit a modern agenda. It seeks honest results and transparent explication of the research.

The practice of academic history takes place in three steps. The first step in the study of a past event or culture is to find as much information as possible.

To function at its best, the academic study of history draws upon evidence, lots of evidence. The more sources of data about the past event or society being studied, the more reliable its conclusions can be. The fewer sources of information we have, the more uncertain the reconstruction of the past. When dealing with the ancient world, unfortunately, there is often too little evidence. Many events are known from a single source—the exact opposite of what is needed for a successful and reliable historical reconstruction.

In the study of ancient Israel, as this book's title suggests, historical research can draw upon the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament and archaeological finds. Depending on what is being studied, both the Hebrew Bible and archaeology may reveal multiple sources of data. If the research question focuses on the laws of ancient Israel, for example, the Ten Commandments, the Covenant Code, the Priestly Code, and the Deuteronomic Code could be sources, as well as stories about the practice of laws, as seen in the books of Ruth and Kings. The law codes of many ancient societies have been discovered by archaeologists, such as the Code of Hammurabi, and they contain laws parallel to those found in Scripture. If the research topic concerns **Philistine** society, the excavations at Philistine sites would constitute evidence, along with the Egyptian records about contact with them as well as the biblical stories in the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings about Israelite interaction with them. Investigations into diet draw from descriptions of food in the Old Testament and from the excavated remains of bones, grains, and cooking implements.

Once all the data have been gathered, the second step takes place. Here, a historian must examine and test each piece of evidence for reliability, evaluate its relevance, and assess its content. Written evidence, whether drawn from a biblical book or found in an archaeological excavation, is always composed from the author's perspective, knowledge, and ability. The historian must appraise those, examine the character of each source, gauge the accuracy and amount of its information, and then use and trust the piece of evidence accordingly. If the subject is a conflict, for instance, the side a writer favors will affect the way the writer presents information and draws conclusions. Or perhaps an author knows about an event only through an earlier source. The author's work then cannot be treated as an independent piece of evidence.

Archaeological finds pose a different challenge at this stage; they must be interpreted by the field's scientific and disciplinary principles. Indeed, archaeology's strength comes from its ability to discover objects from an ancient human context and work out their dating, their function, and what they reveal about the people who created and/or used them. See chapter 1 for further explanation.

Finally, in the third step of the academic approach to history, a historian studying an event takes all the sources into account and brings them together

in a synthesis. The historian uses the results of the previous two steps and matches the different pieces of evidence that fit together. When several reliable items of information point to the same conclusion, that makes the historian's job easy. But, frequently, pieces of evidence differ—sometimes in major ways, sometimes in minor ways. Then historians must use their judgment, drawing on their determination of the reliability of each source, to create the most accurate reconstruction.

These three steps should not be seen as a simple progression that historians follow through once to arrive at their synthesis or reconstruction. Academic historians are always asking questions, both of the data and of their conclusions. The questions then inspire them to find answers, sending them back to step one to search for more evidence to answer them. Indeed, historians continually seek to understand a past event fully, repeatedly moving back and forth through the three steps until they are satisfied that all evidence has been found and plumbed and that the synthesis they created from it is the strongest and most accurate reconstruction possible.

When their research is complete, academic historians present their reconstructions to their peers, ultimately in a published form. Each presentation then undergoes evaluation by their peers, who assess it and respond to it in ways that can range from a withering critique to an appreciating confirmation of the overall synthesis. Some scholars may write their own reconstruction of the past from the same data. The goal is to develop a historical reconstruction that accounts for all the evidence and that resolves as many questions being asked by historians as possible. A solid synthesis of this type may guide understanding and interpretation of the period for decades, but it must also be remembered that the synthesis and assessment process never ends, since new data and new interpretations often emerge.

Two further observations are needed at this point. First, historical analysis does not artificially line up textual data on one side and group archaeological data on another side and then compare them. Each piece of evidence, whatever its type, stands independently and must be evaluated on its own merits. A research question may have dozens of relevant pieces of evidence, from the Bible and from archaeology. Analysis may find textual *and* archaeological data in favor of one interpretation, while other textual *and* archaeological data support another interpretation. The search for history does not pit text against archaeology but weighs all evidence together according to their relative merits.

Second, our simplified explanation of this book's goal should not be understood to imply that neither textual scholars nor archaeologists practice history. Nothing could be further from the truth. Both address historical questions regularly, and they often bring in data from the other field to help them out.

Unfortunately, this sometimes has the effect of subordinating one field to the other. At the introductory level of this textbook, however, the goal is to bring all the evidence for ancient Israel together and to treat each source equally, using them together to create the best reconstruction of ancient people of Israel, their history and culture, and how they changed through the centuries.

### **A Guide: What to Expect in This Book**

As you might expect from a book featuring the evidence of archaeology and the Bible, the first two chapters provide an introduction to each type of data. This is preceded by an overview of the geography of the Middle East and the place of the land of Israel in it, for this is the location of both kinds of evidence.

Chapters 3 through 5 complete section 1 and trace the recent history of how the archaeological study of the Middle East and the land of Israel arose in the past two centuries or so. This leads to the advances in “digging up the past” that ultimately inspired the formation of what became known as biblical archaeology. This field, despite later criticism, made important and lasting contributions to archaeological practice in the Middle East, even though its theological presuppositions were later replaced by more theoretically sound foundations. This new approach to archaeological investigation enables this book’s focus on history and historical evidence of all kinds, treated equivalently.

Chapter 6 begins the book’s historical study of ancient Israel, drawing upon archaeological and biblical data. From here, the book is divided into four further sections. Sections 4 and 5, the book’s second half, have a clear thematic unity: their chapters feature the People of Israel in the land of Israel, beginning with David’s creation of the Israelite kingdom and continuing to its split into two smaller countries and then to their destruction and the exile of their inhabitants, followed by the return of some exiles and their reestablishment of the Israelite community in the land. Throughout these chapters, the historical reconstruction draws upon both biblical and archaeological information.

Sections 2 and 3 (chapters 6 through 12) are not so neat. At their start, neither the people of Israel nor the land of Israel exist. The first two chapters of this section (chapters 6 and 7) feature the land of **Canaan** before it became the land of Israel sometime after 1200 BCE. They begin with the appearance of human beings in the southern Levant and then quickly move to the two thousand years of Canaanite cities and culture during the Bronze Age—before anyone knew anything about the Israelites. These chapters draw solely from archaeological finds, since the Hebrew Bible contains only a small amount of material that is relevant to these time periods.

The next two chapters (8 and 9) address the biblical books of the Torah and feature the Hebrews—first through Abraham and his extended family and then a growing group of his descendants. At the beginning, they are not

called Israelites or Hebrews but acquire that name in the course of their experiences. During these five books, the Israelites and their ancestors are nearly always traveling. The tales never describe putting down roots, not even in Genesis when Abraham and his descendants journey in Canaan or in Exodus, where, despite generations of forced labor in Egypt, the story is about leaving and then traveling for forty years. It should not be surprising that most of the discussion in these two chapters focuses mainly on the biblical tales, with little contributed from archaeology—since people on the move leave few long-lasting remains.

Chapters 10 through 12 examine in detail the appearance of the People of Israel in the land of Canaan, which will become the land of Israel. And here we have both types of evidence. The biblical books of Joshua and Judges tell of how the Israelites arrived in Canaan, took possession of it, and lived there. Archaeologically speaking, this is the Iron Age I, beginning at the end of the thirteenth century and the early twelfth century. At this time, archaeological evidence reveals a period of increasing population in the previously empty **Central Hill Country** of Canaan. This is essentially where the biblical books place the early presence of the Israelites and at roughly the same time. But because archaeology has discovered no written finds from this time, we cannot reliably name these settlers. Even though we cannot be sure of the origins of these settlers, many scholars believe the proto-Israelites lived among them. But another group appears in Canaan at about the same time, one that settles in the lowlands along the southern coast: the Philistines. And it is the interaction of the Canaanites with these newcomers—the Philistines and the Israelites (as well as the newcomers with each other)—that sets the stage for the next segment of Israelite history.

The six chapters of section 4 then look at the rise of the Israelite kingdoms in the hill country, as they appear in the archaeology and as recorded in the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicle, and many of the prophets. This begins in chapter 13 with David's establishment of the united monarchy and his son Solomon's continuation of it, a period of approximately seventy years. The kingdom David established split in two after Solomon's death, and chapters 14 and 15 describe the history of the northern country of Israel and the southern country of Judah over the next two centuries, respectively. This stable political period provides an opportunity to shift our attention in chapter 16 from the elite to the vast majority of working people who supplied the food and labor for the two countries.

The two and a half centuries beginning with David—which archaeologists identify as Early Iron Age II—were characterized by a lack of foreign domination in the land of Israel. This situation certainly eased the way for David's establishment of his monarchy and for the continuing independence of first

one and then two countries in the land of Israel. During the earlier Late Bronze Age, by contrast, Canaan had been under the thumb of Egypt and only gradually escaped that control in Iron Age I. True, Solomon's son Rehoboam had to deal with an invasion by Pharaoh Shishak/Sheshonq as well as with Egyptian interference in his succession, but this seems to be Egypt's last incursion into the southern Levant for several centuries. Israel and Judah continued without threat from external empires until the **Mesopotamian** empire of **Assyria** appeared on the scene in the eighth century. This provides the focus of chapter 17, which looks at the increasing pressure on Israel from the Assyrian Empire until Israel's defeat in 720 BCE and then looks at Judah's response.

Since a major recurring theme of all the biblical books is Israel's relationship with God, we need to take a look at what we know about Israelite religion from the sources. This provides the main focus of chapter 18.

Section 5 contains the last two chapters, featuring the end of the historically oriented material in the Old Testament. Chapter 19 deals with the defeat, exile, and destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the **Babylonian Empire**—an event that should have been the end of Israel. But the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell of a new start, when the **Persian Empire** permitted the exiles' descendants to return to the land of Israel and reestablish a community there. Chapter 20 brings the archaeological discoveries of this period to bear on the biblical materials.

And this is where the biblical "history" ends, although not the history of the people Israel. They remained under Persian rule until the coming of Alexander, when the Greek culture and Greek empires replaced that of Persia—first under the Egyptian-located Ptolemaic Empire and then under the Syrian-located Seleucid Empire. Then, beginning in 167 BCE, the Maccabees threw off Greek overlordship and established the last independent Kingdom of Israel before the modern era, and perhaps the largest. Even though this continued into King Herod's time (d. 4 BCE), this achievement failed to make it into either the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible or the New Testament.

### **How to Use This Book**

Each chapter has been written by a different author—some are primarily experts in the Old Testament literature and others have their expertise in archaeology—and represents the author's expert analysis and judgment about content and presentation. That means that there will sometimes be interpretive differences between them. At times, different dates will be given for the same event; these should be seen not as mistakes but as deriving from differing evaluations of the available evidence. Given the ongoing debates in these fields, it would be impossible to arrive at and enforce unity; the editors did not

even try. These divergencies are actually good, for they show readers that these are living and active fields and not old, accepted wisdom.

To keep footnotes at a minimum, citations are given by parentheses within the text by author, date, and page numbers. These works appear in the bibliography in the back of the book. Each chapter ends with a few suggestions for further reading, for students who would like to pursue the chapter's central topics in greater depth.

From chapter 6 onward, this book is organized in chronological order. Within each chapter, the order likewise is roughly chronological. For further chronological information about events, see the "Historical Timeline" in the front of the book. Since much of the discussion is based on Syro-Palestinian archaeology, which determines time by archaeological eras rather than year-by-year progression, a table of the "Archaeological Ages" appears in the book's front matter as well.

Most chapters feature a map or two to indicate towns, cities, and other sites mentioned within. Sites mentioned in chapters without maps usually appear in other maps. There is a gazetteer in the back that indicates the map on which a site first appears. Jerusalem maps appear separately at the front. There is also a glossary, which defines key terms whose first occurrence is **highlighted**.

Finally, a word about unprovenanced objects—archaeological excavations constitute careful, controlled, recorded, scientific investigations into the remains of the past. Any object found in this way is related both spatially and temporally to a host of other material items—from architectural remains and pottery to seeds and pollen, to bones, and so on. Archaeologists can then link the entire complex of items to the peoples who produced them and to the time when they lived. An object's context can often reveal more about the object than the object itself. Unfortunately, nonarchaeologists will sometimes dig into ancient sites looking for items that can be sold. These looters disturb the site, destroy items important to archaeology but worthless to them, and strew around their holes everything from human bones to remains of stone tools and rotted materials of fabric, wood, and basketry as well as pottery. "Valuable" objects taken in this way and stripped of their ancient context often make their way into Western hands, ending up in collections and even occasionally museum displays. Indiana Jones is a looter rather than an archaeologist.

Unprovenanced objects constitute a major problem for archaeologists and historians. Should they be used as evidence about ancient peoples? Much information about them that could have been gleaned in a controlled archaeological excavation is missing. However, if they display writing or a picture of some sort, they may reveal useful information—if they can be trusted. Many unprovenanced objects are modern fakes. Even if they are real, the exact location where they were dug up is usually unknown, and sometimes even their

country of origin is unidentified. Modern scholarly societies, such as the American Schools of Oriental Research and the Society for Biblical Literature, have policies that discourage use of such materials. However, often the temptation for scholars to use them is too great to overcome, especially if they contain writing. This is the case with the **Dead Sea Scrolls** (which are a mix of provenanced and unprovenanced texts and fragments) and more recently with the so-called James **Ossuary** and the Jehoash Inscription. In the present work, there are general references to unprovenanced objects (such as seals and bullae) and occasionally to specific items (such as the tablets from Al-Yahudu in Babylonia/Persia and related places discussed in chapters 19 and 20). In these cases, the authors see their fields as a whole engaging with this material; to leave it out would be seen as providing an incomplete explanation.