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# Using Evidence: Archaeology and the Bible

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# The Israelite United Monarchy

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When did the events take place?

Ca. 1040-930 BC. (the Reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon)

Where did they take place?

Israel (Israel and the West Bank), Transjordan (Jordan), Aram (Syria)

Who wrote about them?

Court records, the "Deuteronomist", the prophets Samuel, Gad, and/or Nathan. Depends on who you talk to

What literary sources do we have for an event/personage?

Dan Stele

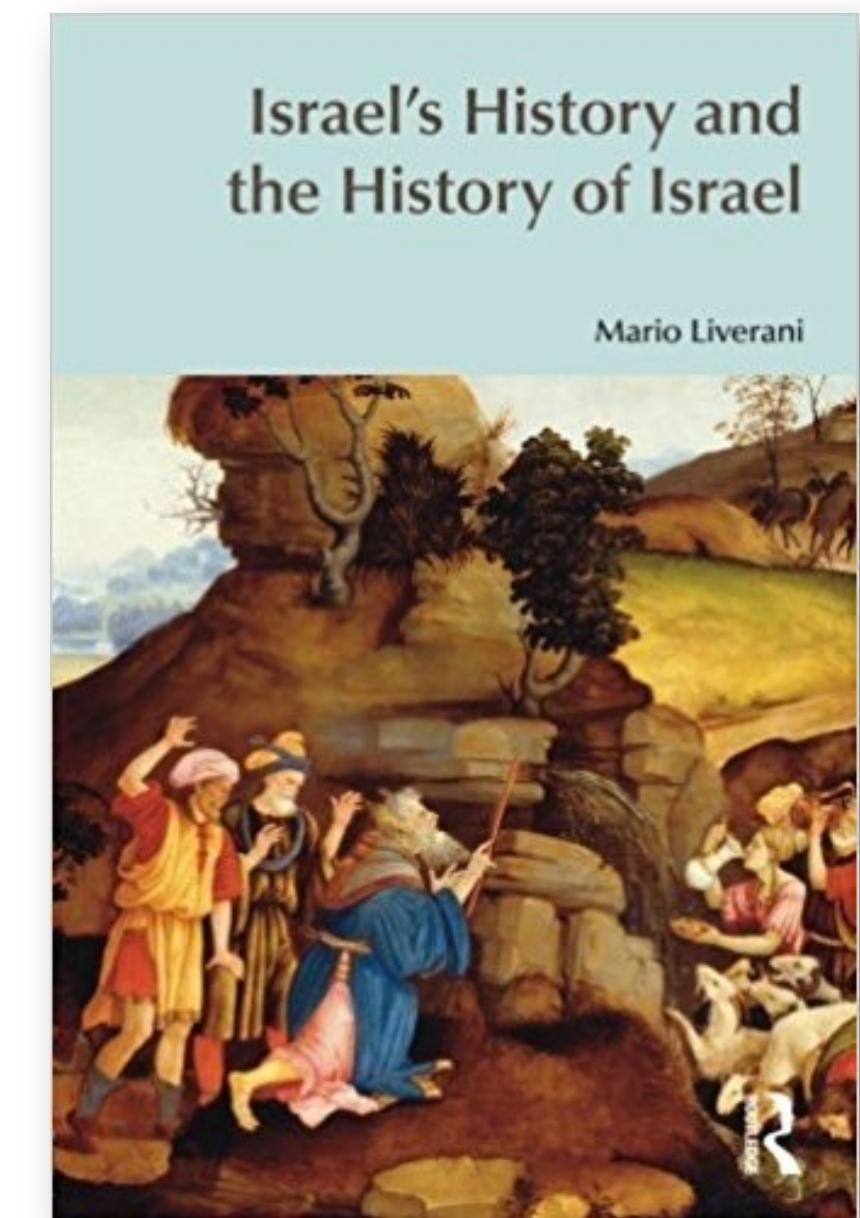
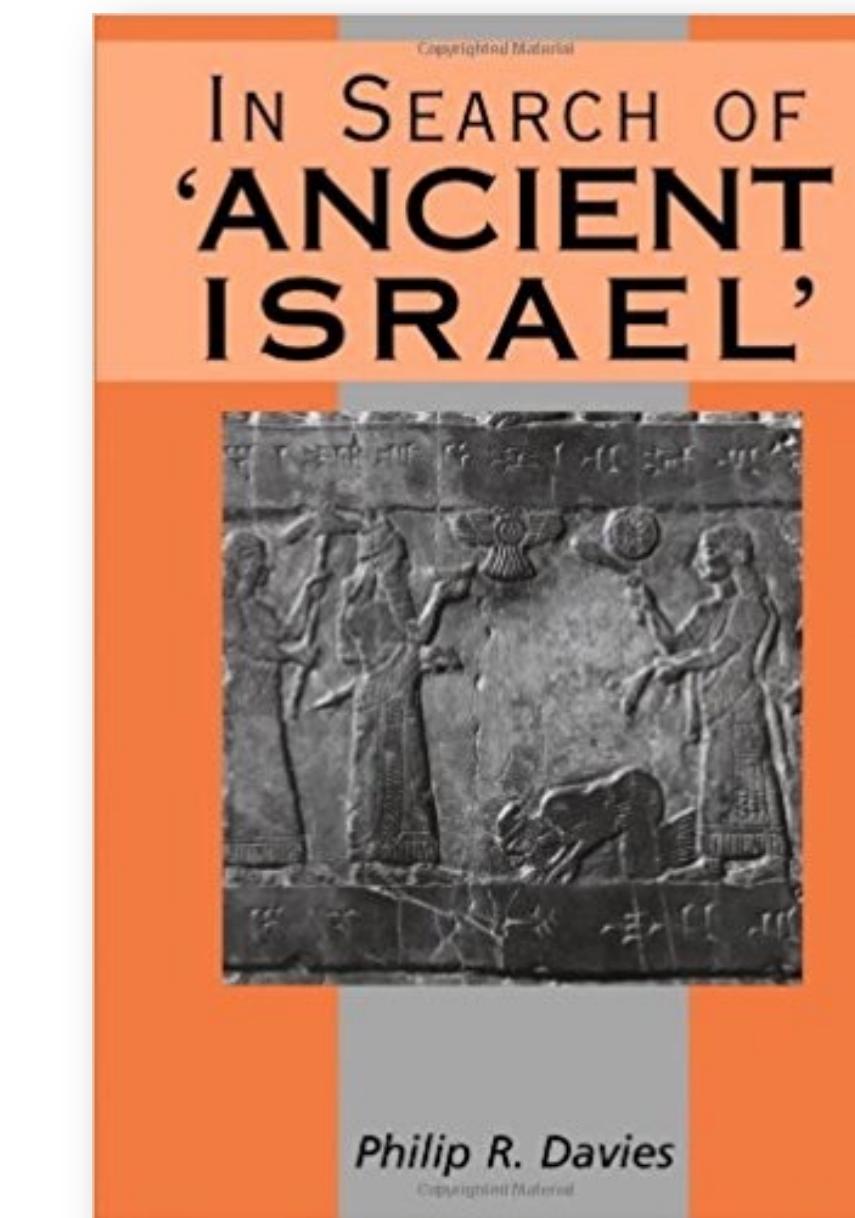
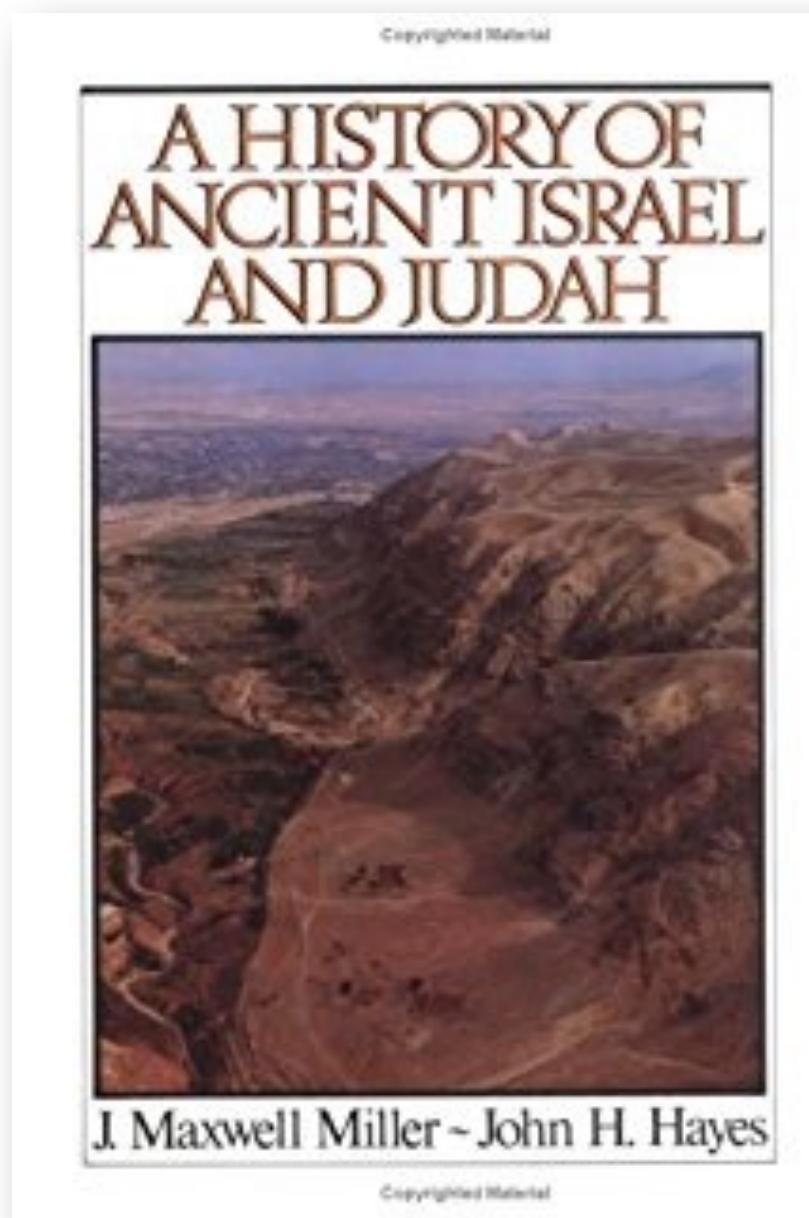
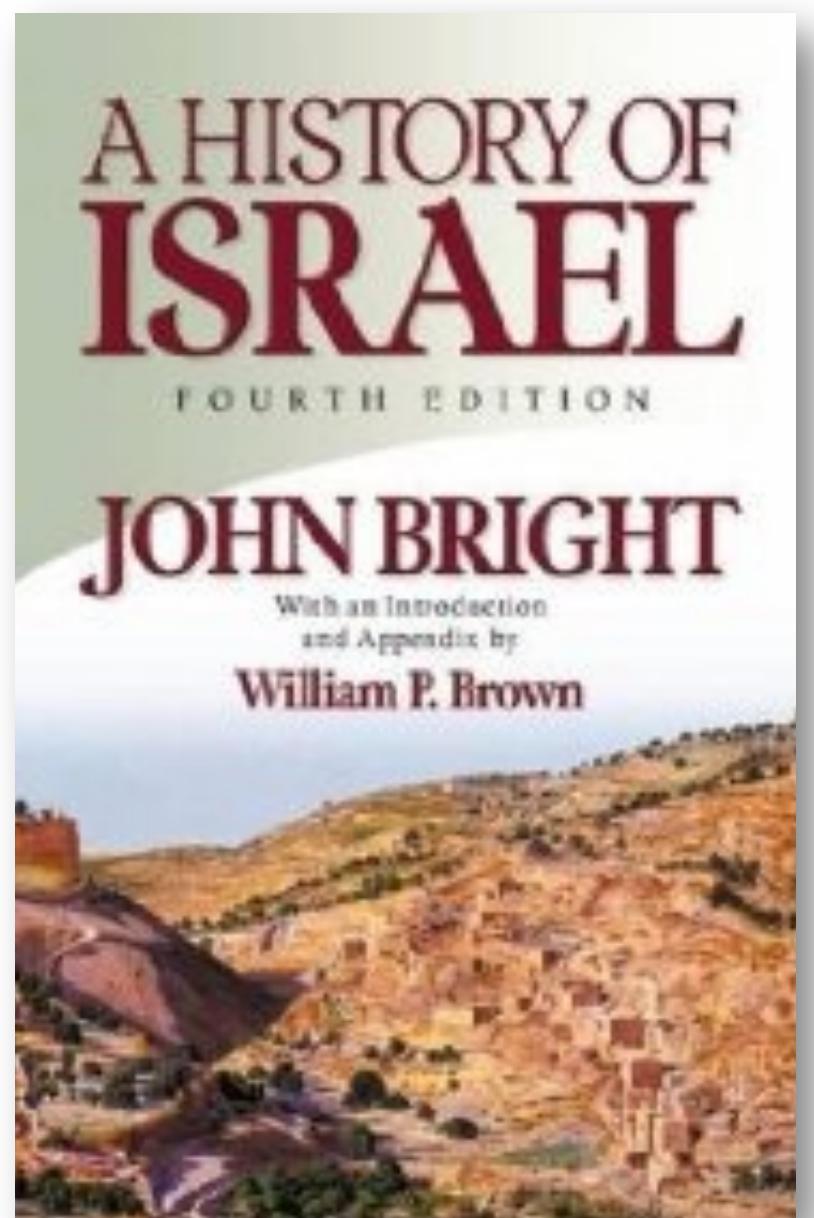
What archaeological material is there?

Also depends on who you talk to

# Approaches to the Israelite United Monarchy

From the Biblical Sources

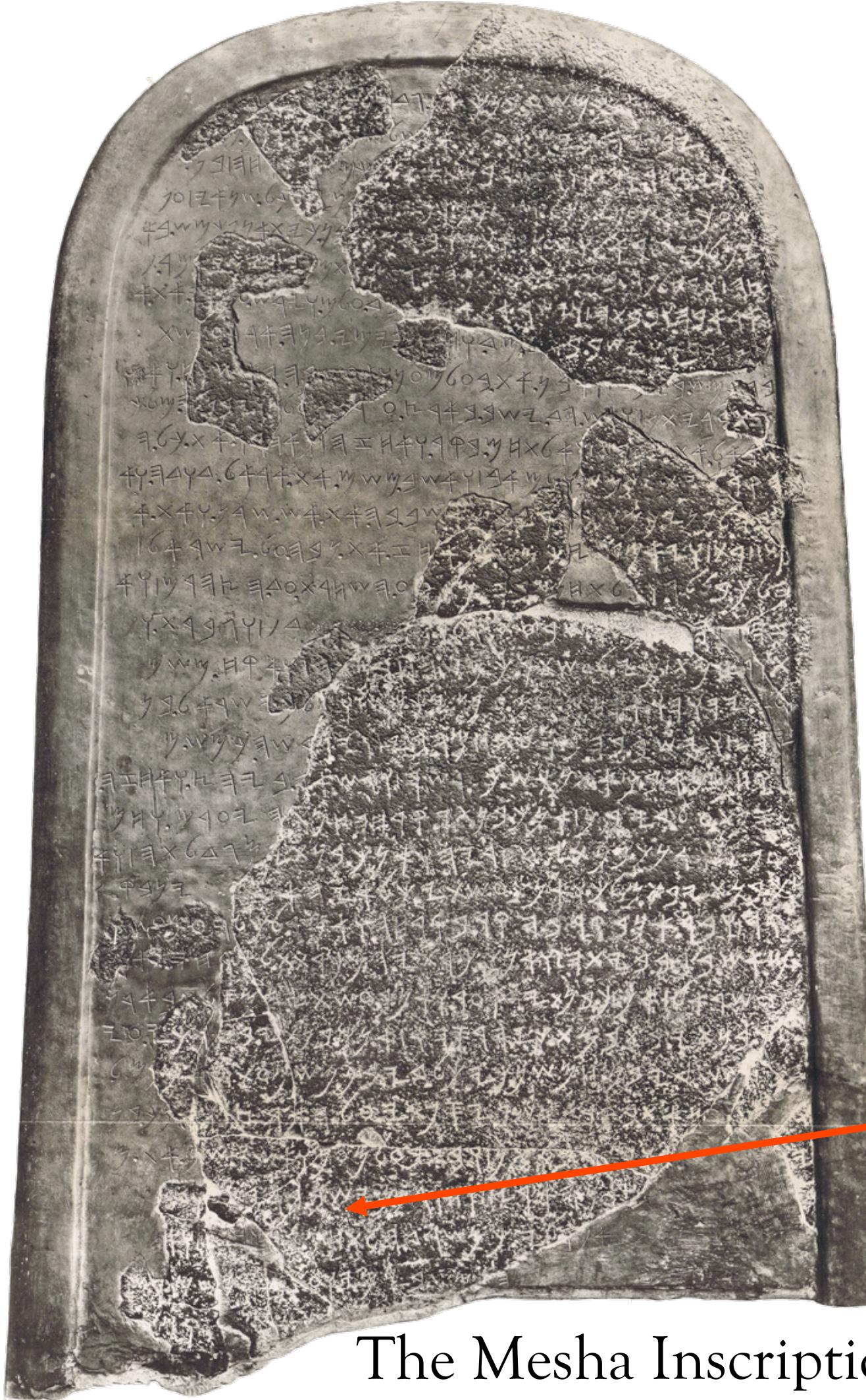
- a. Pre-1980s: Biblical account of UM a sound reflection of history
- b. 1990s to Present: Biblical account of UM considered increasingly useless for establishing accurate view of the UM (if there was one)



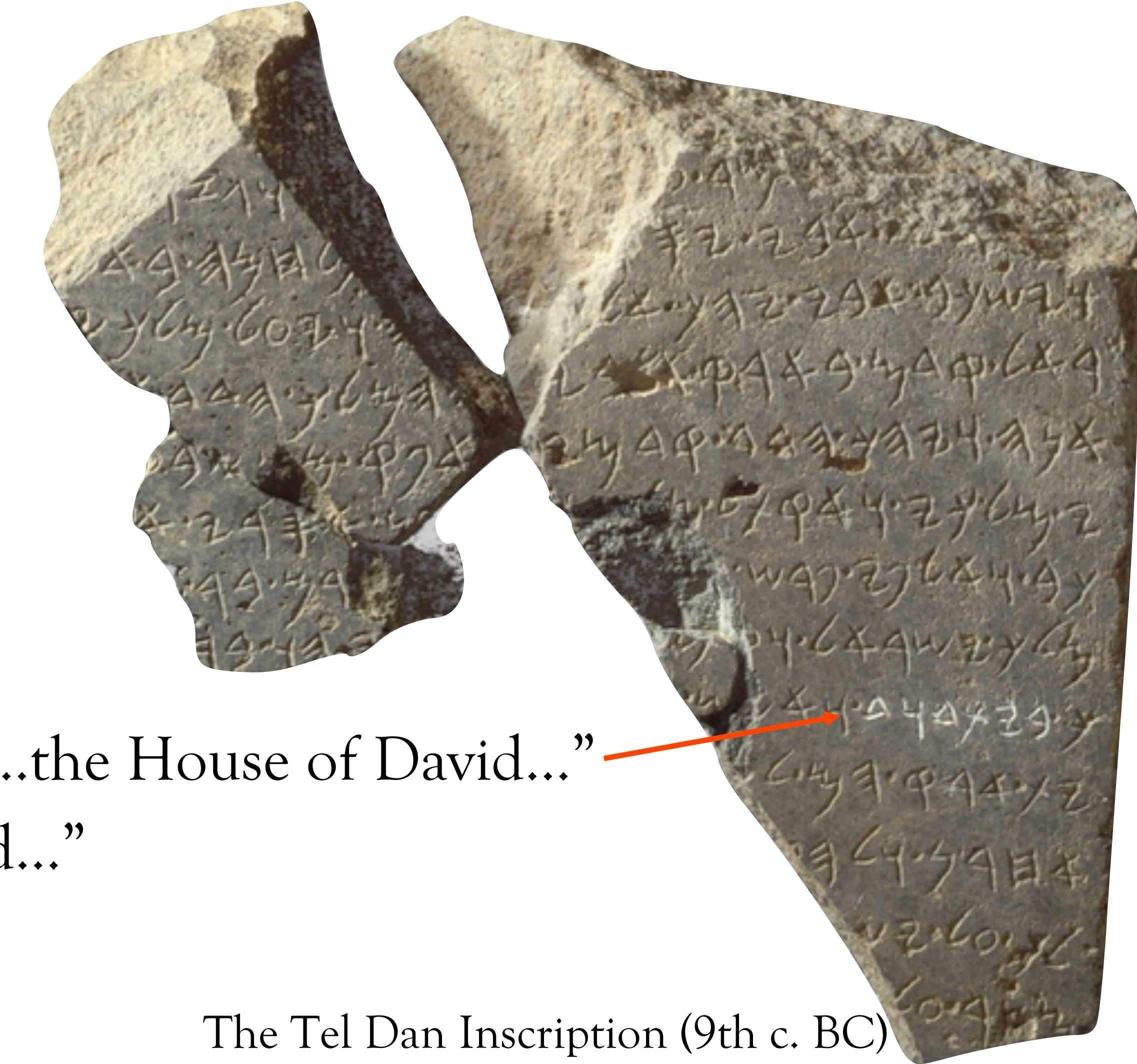
# Approaches to the Israelite United Monarchy



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The Mesha Inscription (9th c. BC)



The Tel Dan Inscription (9th c. BC)

“...the House of David...”

“...the House of [D]avid...”

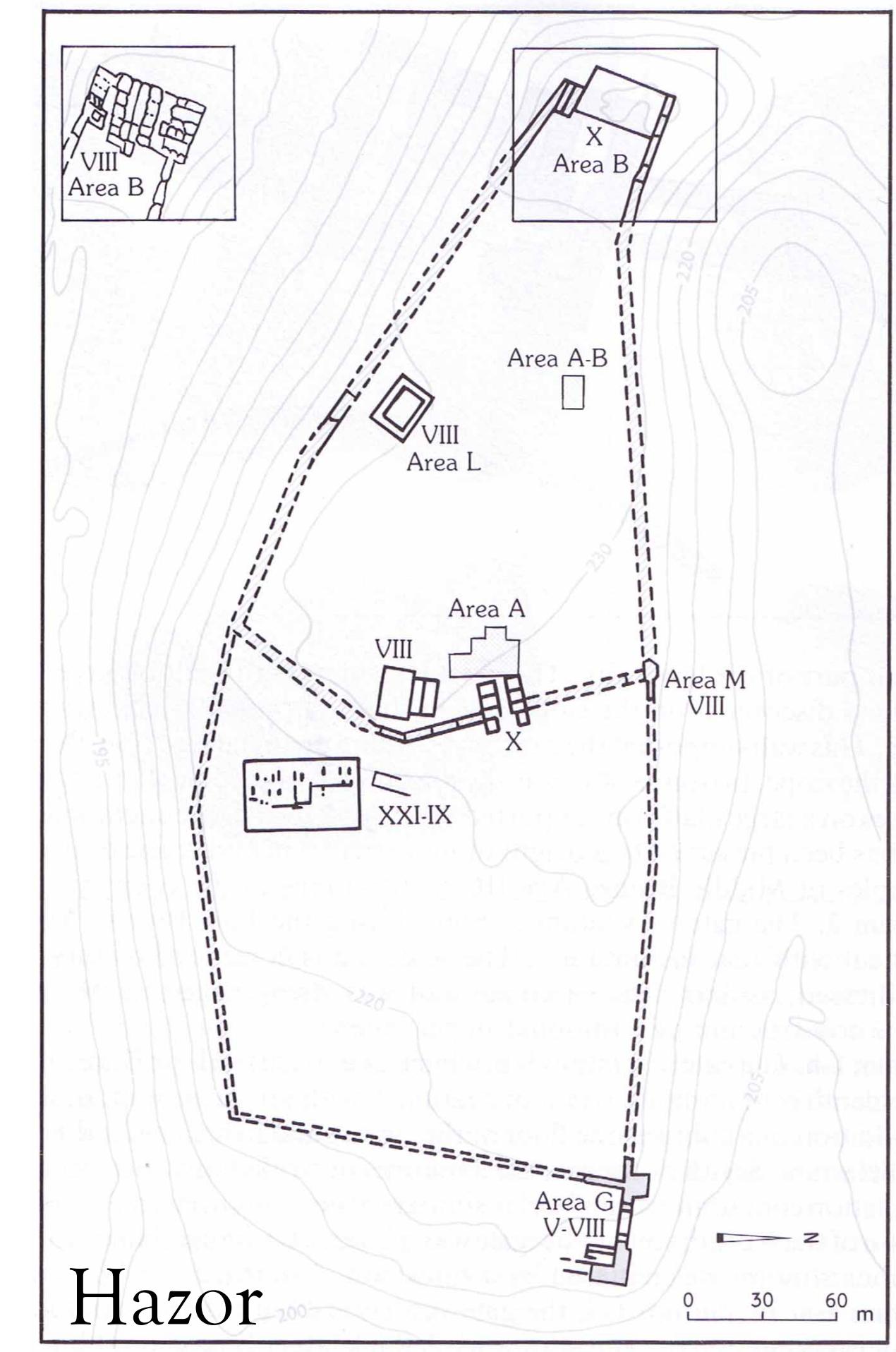
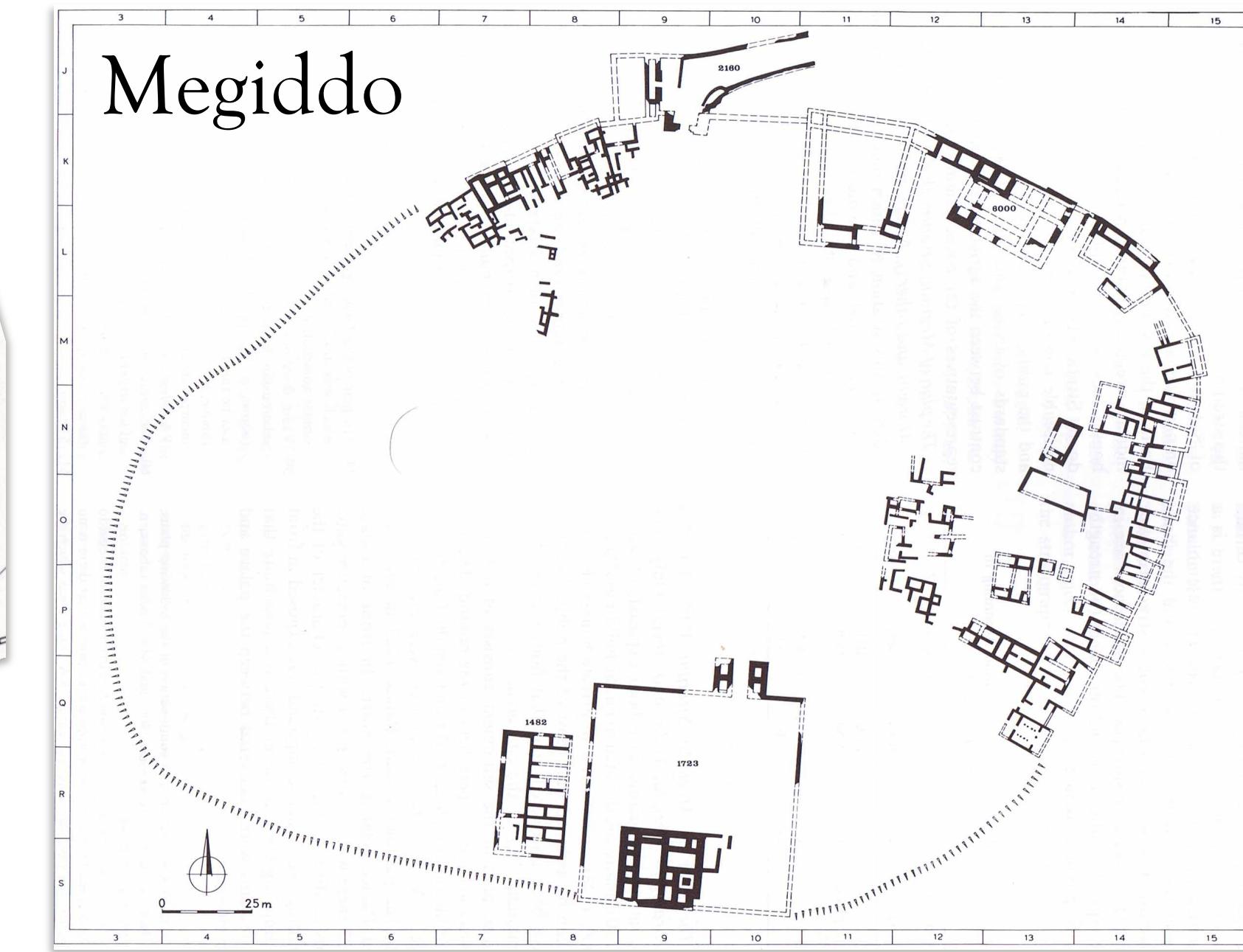
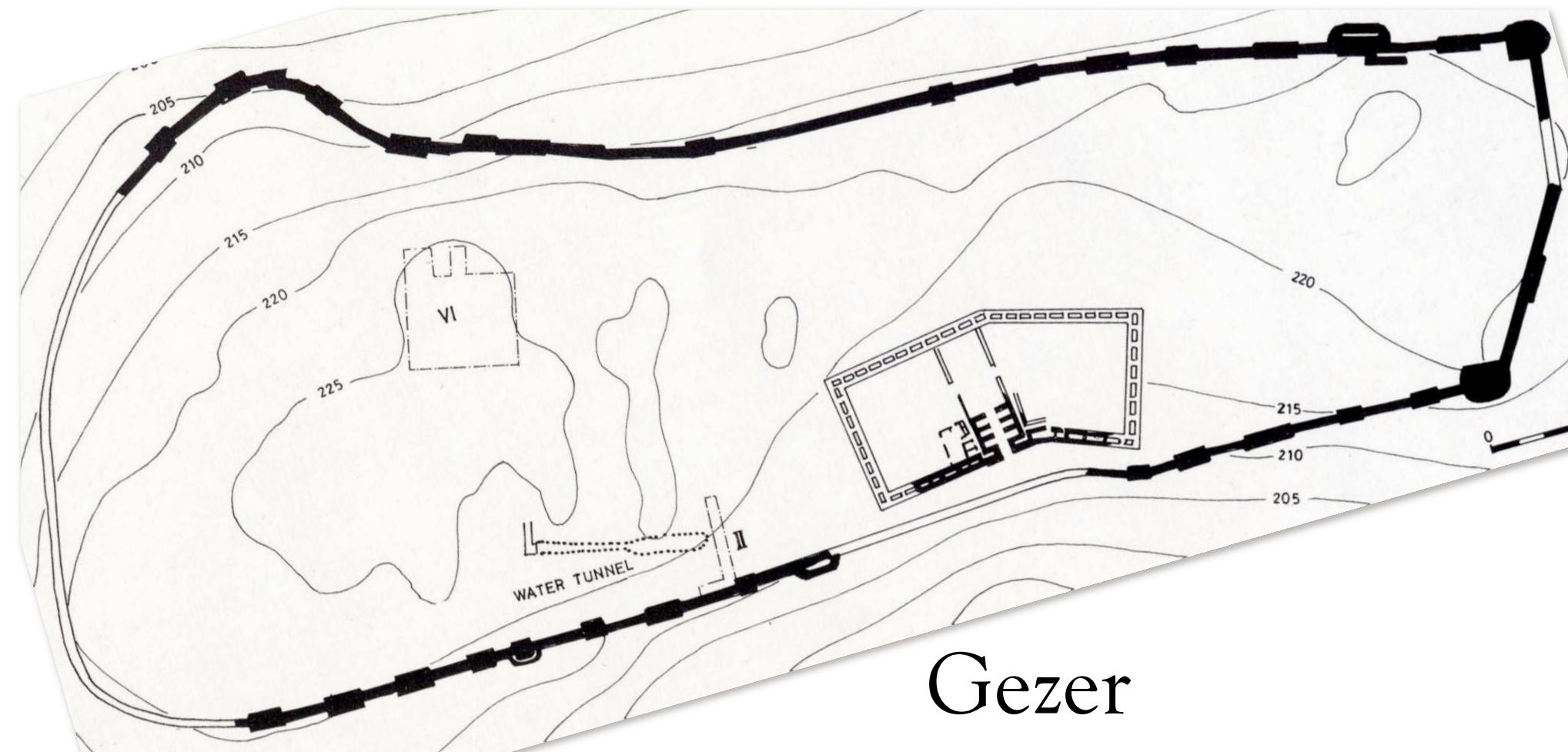
# Approaches to the Israelite United Monarchy



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From the Archaeological Material

- a. Pre-1996: Archaeology generally supports view of UM in the Bible and has much material correlation
- b. Post-1996: Questionable association of material culture to the 10th century BC and the UM vs. Traditional ascription of material to the UM

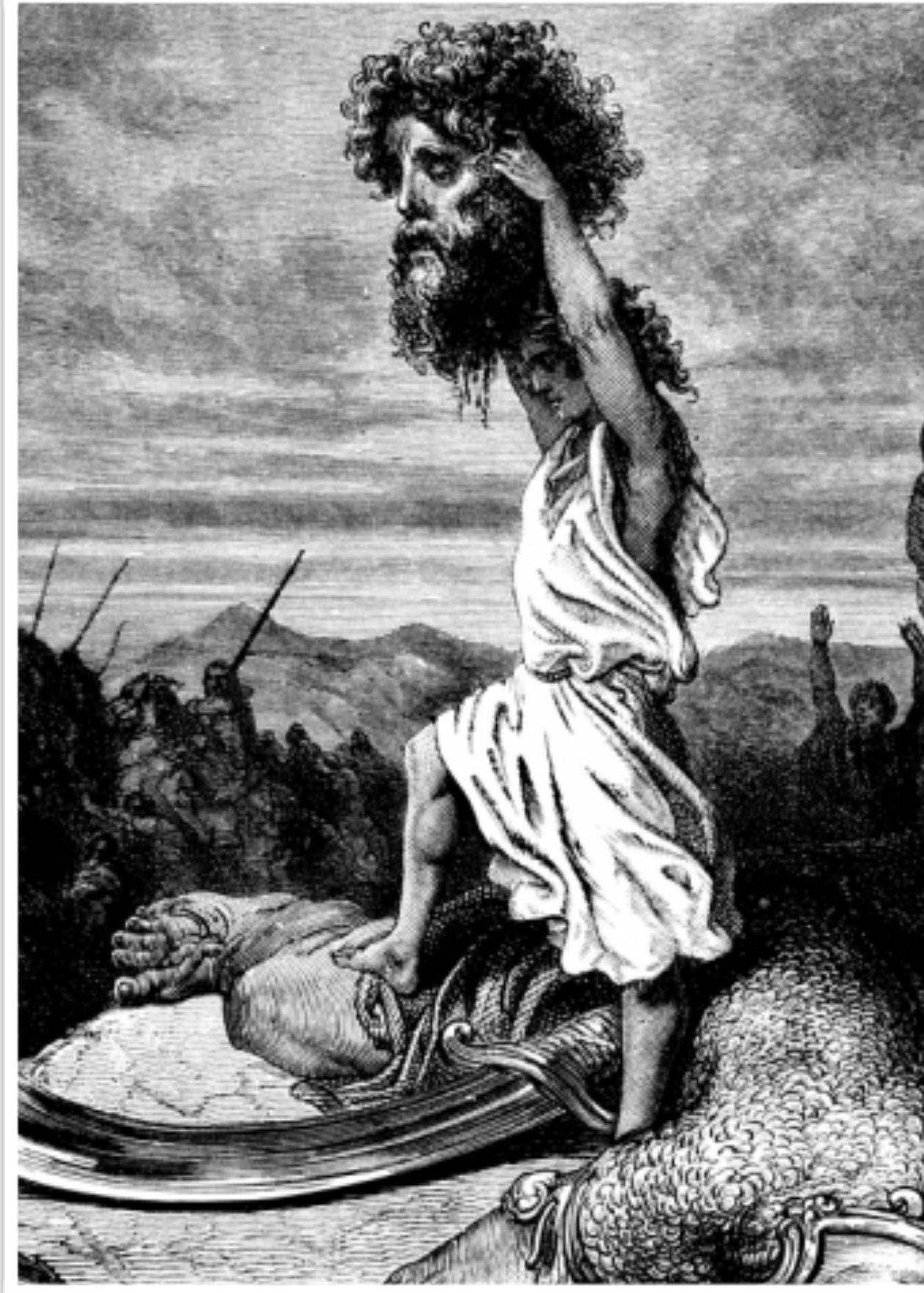




# The Quest for King David

What “footprint” did David leave?

Ideology  
Texts  
Geography  
Archaeology



# RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY - A LAYERED APPROACH

## CONTEXT

Biblical Texts

Ancient Near Eastern Sources

Archaeology

Geography

Geology

## RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY - A LAYERED APPROACH

Systematic Theology

Biblical Theology

CONTEXT

Biblical Texts

Ancient Near Eastern Sources

Archaeology

Geography

Geology

# The Early Israelite Monarchy in Text and Archaeology

## The Days of Saul, David, and Solomon

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### What does the Biblical text actually say?

#### Saul

Unifies the tribes of Israel, builds an altar (1 Sam 14:35)

#### David

Starts as warrior, wins support of Judah, reigns from Hebron, wins support of “Israel”, makes Jerusalem his capital, builds the “millo and inward” (2 Sam 5:9; 1 Chr 11:8) and an altar (2 Sam 24:25; 1 Chr 21:26), battles neighbors and wins, rules via treaty/vassaldom/prefects

#### Solomon

Inherits father’s kingdom, exploits northern tribes, intensifies administration, Solomon is wise, powerful, wealthy, “builds”:

*Jerusalem* – his house, the Temple, the wall of Jerusalem (1 Kgs 3:2; 9:15), the House of the Forest of Lebanon (1 Kgs 7:2), the “millo” (1 Kgs 9:15, 24), a house for Pharaoh’s daughter

*Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, Baalath, Tamar/Tadmor, store cities, chariot cities, cities for his horsemen, and whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion* (1 Kgs 9:15-19; cf 2 Chr 8:1-11)

# The Early Israelite Monarchy in Text and Archaeology

## The Days of Saul, David, and Solomon



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### When was the Biblical text written?

	Authorship:	Date of Writing:	Historical Date:
• 1 Samuel 8 - 2 Samuel 24	?	10-6th c BC?	Ca. 1040-970 BC
• 1 Kings 1 - 1 Kings 12	?	10-6th c BC?	Ca. 970-930 BC
• 1 Chronicles 10 - 2 Chronicles 9	?	4th c BC?	Ca. 1040-930 BC

# The Early Israelite Monarchy in Text and Archaeology

## The Days of Saul, David, and Solomon



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### What do we see in the archaeology?

#### Saul

Gibeah (Tell el-Ful)

#### The United Monarchy in Archaeology

- Bible and Archaeology
- Low Chronology
- Modified Conventional Chronology

Iron Age I  
1200-1000 BC  
ca. 1130-930  
ca. 1180-980

Iron Age IIA  
1000-925 BC  
ca. 930-830/800  
ca. 980-830

#### David

Jerusalem Str 15, Kh. Qeiyafa, Kh. el-Rai

#### Solomon

**Jerusalem – the Ophel:** The Far House (Building Ia+b), the Great Projecting Tower (Building II), the Gatehouse complex, the “Royal Building”, the “Straight Wall” (Wall IV), Wall V (casemate)?

**Hazor X-IX** – City gate, casemate wall

**Megiddo VA-IVB** – City gate, casemate wall, Palace 1723, Palace 6000

**Gezer VIII** – City gate, casemate wall, Palace 10000

Tamar (En Hazeva), Negev “Forts”, Horbat Rosh Zayit IIb, Arad 12, and many more

Reconstruction of Jerusalem from the days of Solomon



# Assumptions and/or Accepted Views

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Ancient Israel was a “State” and it can be identified archaeologically by the presence of specific traits identified through comparative studies and associated with social complexity

Israel’s political organisation was bureaucratic

Jerusalem, Israel’s capital, should be a large and prosperous city to match the complex political/administrative structure

Monumental architecture and writing go hand-in-hand with political complexity and should be expected in ancient Israel

David, and particularly, Solomon, ruled an ‘Empire’

# Challenges to the Assumptions and/ or Accepted Views

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Ancient Israel was a “State” and it can be identified archaeologically by the presence of specific traits identified through comparative studies and associated with social complexity      Only the case if the following are true, which they are not

Israel’s political organisation was bureaucratic      Israel’s political organisation was patrimonial

Jerusalem, Israel’s capital, should be a large and prosperous city to match the complex political/administrative structure      Size does not equate to reach

Monumental architecture and writing go hand-in-hand with political complexity and should be expected in ancient Israel      Not if there is no sense of private/public or bureaucracy

David, and particularly, Solomon, ruled an ‘Empire’      ‘Empire’ is an inappropriate term



### Conclusions

1. Use an appropriate theory for understanding the ancient Near East and ancient Israel in particular. Understand the context.
2. Match our expectations to our theory
3. A reading of the biblical texts must be attuned to a given text's genre, our hermeneutics, and the available comparative ancient literature
4. Interpretation of the archaeological remains requires a theoretically informed hermeneutic so the best model of ancient society can be allowed to speak for itself (as much as possible)
5. When points 1-4 are considered, many disparities noted by biblical scholars and archaeologists become resolvable
6. When points 1-4 are considered, a literarily viable, historically reliable, and archaeologically verifiable portrait of the United Monarchy is possible.