

The Formation of the Pentateuch

Bridging the Academic Cultures of
Europe, Israel, and North America

Edited by

Jan C. Gertz, Bernard M. Levinson,
Dalit Rom-Shiloni, and Konrad Schmid

Mohr Siebeck

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Early North Israelite “Memories” of Moab

Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Römer

Moab is a unique “laboratory” for studying materials in the Bible that portray what can be described as pre–late-monarchic historical realities. This is so because of the exceptional information in the Mesha Stela;¹ the relatively detailed geographical references in the Bible; and the well-preserved late Iron I and Iron IIA sites, which have been dealt with in detail in recent publications.² In what follows we wish to use these sources in order to reconstruct several “moments”

¹ For recent treatments of historical issues, see, e.g., N. NA'AMAN, “Royal Inscription versus Prophetic Story: Mesha’s Rebellion according to Biblical and Moabite Historiography,” in *Ahab Agonistes: The Rise and Fall of the Omri Dynasty* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 145–183; A. LEMAIRE, “La Stèle de Mésha et l’histoire de l’ancien Israël,” in *Storia e tradizioni di Israele: Scritti in onore di J. Alberto Soggin* (ed. D. Garrone and F. Israel; Brescia: Paideia, 1991), 143–169, here 153–157; IDEM, “La dynastie Davidique (Byt Dwd) dans deux inscriptions Ouest-Sémitiques du IX^e s. av. J.-C.,” *Studi Epigraphici e Linguistici* 11 (1994), 17–19; IDEM, “The Mesha Stele and the Omri Dynasty,” in *Ahab Agonistes: The Rise and Fall of the Omri Dynasty* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 135–144; P. BORDREUIL, “A propos de l’Inscription de Mesha’ deux notes,” in *The World of the Aramaeans, Vol. III: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugen Dion* (ed. P. M. M. Daviau et al.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 158–167; E. GASS, *Die Moabiter: Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 5–64.

² For instance, B. ROUTLEDGE, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); J. S. E. LEV-TOV et al., “Measuring Local Diversity in Early Iron Age Animal Economies: A View from Khirbat al-Mudayna al-’Aliya (Jordan),” *BASOR* 361 (2011), 67–93; P. M. M. DAVIAU, “Hirbet el-Mud’ayine in Its Landscape, Iron Age Towns, Forts and Shrines,” *ZDPV* 122 (2006), 14–30; P. M. M. DAVIAU and P. E. DION, “Economy-Related Finds from Khirbat al-Mudayna (Wadi ath-Thamad, Jordan),” *BASOR* 328 (2002), 31–48; P. M. M. DAVIAU and M. STEINER, “A Moabite Sanctuary at Khirbat al-Mudayna,” *BASOR* 320 (2000), 1–21; C.-H. JI, “Khirbet ‘Aratuz: An Interim Overview of the Ten Years of Archaeological, Architectural Findings,” *ADAJ* 55 (2011), 561–579; IDEM, “The Early Iron Age II Temple at Hirbet Atarus and Its Architecture and Selected Cultic Objects,” in *Temple Building and Temple Cult Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. mill. B.C.E.): Proceedings of a Conference on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Biblical Archaeology at the University of Tübingen (28–30 May 2010)* (ed. J. Kamlah; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 203–221; I. FINKELSTEIN and O. LIPSCHITS, “Omride Architecture in Moab: Jahaz and Ataroth,” *ZDPV* 126 (2010), 29–42; IDEM, “The Genesis of Moab,” *Levant* 43 (2011), 139–152.

in the history of Moab and Israel and shed light on the nature of the early memories on Moab that are embedded in the Bible.

Three Snapshots

Let us start with three archaeological/historical snapshots:

1. A system of well-preserved, fortified sites south of the Arnon³ dates – according to their pottery and radiocarbon determinations – to the late Iron I, in the late eleventh and tenth centuries BCE.⁴ They were abandoned before 900 BCE and hence cannot be connected either to the Omride expansion north of the Arnon or to the time of Mesha. They create a line on the Arnon in the north and along Wadi el-Lejjun – its major tributary in the east⁵ – and should probably be interpreted as fortresses that protected the borders of an early Moabite polity south of the Arnon.⁶ The hub of this formation was perhaps located at Khirbet Balua, where a similar fort may be reconstructed.⁷ The Balua Stela⁸ probably

³ Three of them have been excavated: Khirbet el-Medeineh el-Mu'arrajah (E. OLÀVARRI, "Sondeo Arqueologico en Khirbet Medeineh junto a Smakieh [Jordania]," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 22 [1977–1978], 136–142; IDEM, "La campagne de fouilles 1982 à Khirbet Medeinet al-Mu'arradjeh près de Smakieh [Kerak]," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 27 [1983], 165–178), Khirbet el-Medeineh 'Aliya (B. ROUTLEDGE, "Seeing through Walls: Interpreting Iron Age I Architecture at Khirbat al-Mudayna al-'Aliya," *BASOR* 319 [2000], 37–70; IDEM, *Moab in the Iron Age* [see n. 2], 101–108; IDEM, "Thinking 'Globally' and Analyzing 'Locally': South-Central Jordan in Transition," in *Israel in Transition* [ed. L.L. Grabbe; New York: T&T Clark, 2008], 144–176; LEV-TOV et al., "Measuring Local Diversity" [see n. 2], 67–93), and Khirbet el-Mu'mmariyya (F. NINOW, "First Soundings at Khirbat al-Mu'mmariya in the Greater Wadi al-Mujib Area," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 48 [2004], 257–266; IDEM, "The 2005 Soundings at Khirbat al-Mu'mmariya in the Greater Wadi al-Mujib Area," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 50 [2006], 147–155).

⁴ For the pottery, see ROUTLEDGE, "Seeing through Walls" (see n. 3), 37–70; for the radiocarbon dates, see LEV-TOV et al., "Measuring Local Diversity" (see n. 2), 67–93, 72, n. 7.

⁵ Another site that may belong to this group is Khirbet el-Lehun (D. HOMÈS FREDERICQ, *Découvrez Lehun et la Voie Royale: Les fouilles belges en Jordanie* [Brussels: Comité belge de fouilles en Jordanie, 1997]; IDEM, "The Iron Age II Fortress of al-Lahun (Moab)," in *Studies of Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau* [ed. P. Bienkowski; Leuven: Peeters, 2009], 165–182), located on the northern rim of the Arnon; for the possibility of early Moabite territorial formations that had their hub south of the Arnon but that included territory to its north, see below.

⁶ "Moab proper," see J.M. MILLER, "The Israelite Journey through (around) Moab and Moabite Toponymy," *JBL* 108 (1989), 577–595, here 577.

⁷ FINKELSTEIN and LIPSCHITS, "Genesis of Moab" (see n. 2).

⁸ E.g., B. ROUTLEDGE and C. ROUTLEDGE, "The Baluca Stela Revisited," in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau* (ed. P. Bienkowski; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 71–95, with previous bibliography.

belongs to this period. Another important site may have been located at Kerak, buried under the medieval fort. The background for the rise of this early Moabite polity is a short period of improved climatic conditions in the Iron I, revealed in pollen residues recently counted in a core of sediments from the Dead Sea,⁹ and prosperity that stemmed from participation in – or even domination of – copper production in Wadi Faynan south of the Dead Sea.¹⁰

2. The Mesha Stela reports that the Omrides established two fortresses in Moab – Jahaz and Ataroth.¹¹ Jahaz is identified with Khirbet el-Mudayna eth-Theméd¹² and Ataroth with Khirbet Ataruz. The two Omride forts were built along Wadi el-Walla – the northern tributary of the Arnon, facing Dibon. Both places¹³ reveal typical construction methods of Omride sites west of the Jordan: an elevated podium, casemate wall, four-entry gate, elaborate glacis, and moat.¹⁴ Mesha names Omri as the king who conquered the area north of Wadi el-Walla – the *mishor*. It is only logical to ascribe the beginning of Israelite activity in Moab not too early in his days, or, if “Omri” stands for the dynasty, better later, in the days of Ahab or Joram, and its end immediately following the defeat of Israel in the battle of Ramoth-gilead in 842/841 BCE. This means that Omride rule in Moab was short-lived – no more than about thirty years, and perhaps less.

3. Mesha the Dibonite took advantage of the weakening of Israel under pressure from Hazael, his suzerain, in order to throw off the yoke of the Northern Kingdom. He took Jahaz, Ataroth, Madaba, and Nebo, that is, the entire *mishor*. It seems that Mesha also expanded in the opposite direction; lines 31–33 in the inscription apparently speak of his takeover of Horonaim, certainly located, according to geographical references in the Bible (in connection with Zoar; Isa

⁹ D. LANGGUT et al., “Dead Sea Pollen Record and History of Human Activity in the Judean Highlands (Israel) from the Intermediate Bronze into the Iron Ages (~2500–500 BCE),” *Palynology* 38/2 (2014), 1–23.

¹⁰ On all this, see FINKELSTEIN and LIPSCHITS “Genesis of Moab” (see n. 2); on the Faynan copper industry, see, e.g., T. E. LEVY et al., “Reassessing the Chronology of Biblical Edom: New Excavations and 14C Dates from Khirbat en-Nahas (Jordan),” *Antiquity* 78 (2004), 865–879; IDEM, “High-Precision Radiocarbon Dating and Historical Biblical Archaeology in Southern Jordan,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105/43 (2008), 16460–16465.

¹¹ For the historical information in the inscription, see, e.g., N. NA’AMAN, “King Mesha and the Formation of the Moabite Monarchy,” *IEJ* 47 (1997), 83–92; IDEM, “Royal Inscription” (see n. 1), 145–183; LEMAIRE, “La Stèle de Mésha” (see n. 1); IDEM, “La dynastie Davidique” (see n. 1); GASS, *Die Moabiter* (see n. 1), 5–61.

¹² J. A. DEARMAN, “The Location of Jahaz,” *ZDPV* 100 (1984), 122–126.

¹³ For Khirbet Mudeyne eth-Theméd, see DAVIAU and STEINER, “Moabite Sanctuary” (see n. 2), 1–21; DAVIAU and DION, “Economy-Related Finds” (see n. 2), 31–48; DAVIAU, “Hirbet el-Mudēyine” (see n. 2), 14–30; for Khirbet Ataruz, see JI, “Khirbet ‘Aratuz” (see n. 2), 561–579; IDEM, “Early Iron Age II Temple” (see n. 2), 203–221.

¹⁴ FINKELSTEIN and LIPSCHITS, “Omride Architecture” (see n. 2), 29–42; I. FINKELSTEIN, “Omride Architecture,” *ZDPV* 116 (2000), 114–138.

15:5; Jer 48:34), south of the Arnon.¹⁵ This expansion created the first territorially developed kingdom in Moab, which stretched both north and south of the Arnon.¹⁶ His conquests (with a possible later expansion to the area of Heshbon in the north) decided the location of the border between Moab and Israel in the later phases of the Iron Age – north of Heshbon, near the northern edge of the Dead Sea.¹⁷

These observations raise several questions:

1. Who ruled south of the Arnon in the half-century or more between the decline of the late Iron I polity and the rise of Mesha?
2. Who ruled north of the Arnon before the Omrides?
3. Why did the Omrides not establish their forts on the northern rim of the Arnon (similar to Mesha's Aroer) – a more strategic location? Dibon alone was not strong enough to prevent this. In other words, was Dibon part of a larger polity that included territory south of the Arnon?
4. Whom did Mesha take the territory south of the Arnon from?

It seems to us that several biblical texts may help to answer these questions.

The Biblical Material

A persistent biblical tradition speaks about the Israelite conquest of Transjordan from two polities: those of Sihon and of Og, who ruled from the Arnon to Bashan (Num 32:33; Deut 3:8–17; 4:47–49; Josh 12:1–5; 13:9–12).¹⁸

Numbers 32:33–38 is part of a chapter that deals with the installation of the tribes of Gad, Reuben, half of Manasseh, and (interestingly) Makir (who does not belong to the “official” lists of the twelve tribes¹⁹) east of the Jordan. According to these verses, Moses gave to Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh the kingdoms of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. The

¹⁵ N. NA'AMAN, “The Campaign of Mesha against Horonaim,” *BN* 73 (1994), 27–30; for different reading of these lines, see LEMAIRE, “La dynastie Davidique” (see n. 1); A. F. RAINEY, “Following Up on the Ekron and Mesha Inscriptions,” *IEJ* 50 (2000), 116–117.

¹⁶ NA'AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11), 83–92.

¹⁷ On the affiliation of Heshbon in late monarchic times, see A. LEMAIRE “Heshbôn = Hisbân?,” *Eretz-Israel* 23 (1992), 64–70.

¹⁸ See references to discussions of the conquest traditions in, e.g., NA'AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11), 91, n. 27.

¹⁹ The idea of a twelve-tribe Israel is considered by most scholars to be a late Priestly or even post-Priestly construction; see, e.g., C. LEVIN, “Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels,” in *Congress Volume: Paris, 1992* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 61; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 163–178. The appearance of the name of Makir is probably an indication that we have some older material here and not just late speculations from the Persian period.

Gadites are said to have (re)built Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, and other towns; the Reubenites built Heshbon and other places. Nothing is said about Manasseh.

The same tradition is related in Deut 3:12–18, a passage that mentions the same tribes, Makir included. Here Moses gives to the Reubenites and Gadites the territory north of “Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead with its cities” (v. 12) or “as far as the valley of the Arnon, with the middle of the wadi as a boundary, as far over as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites. The Arabah also, with the Jordan as the boundary, from Chinnereth as far as the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah on the east” (vv. 16–17).²⁰ In this passage Bashan, kingdom of Og, is given to Manasseh (Sihon is not mentioned here).

Finally, Josh 13:9–12 and 15–31 reflect the same tradition of Transjordanian possessions of Gad, Reuben, and half Manasseh:²¹ “from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley, and all the tableland of Medeba as far as Dibon; and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the boundary of the Ammonites; and Gilead, and the region of the Geshurites and Maacathites, and all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah; all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei” (vv. 9–12).²² These verses anticipate a more detailed description in Josh 13:15–32 and may be an insert into a late text.²³

The tradition about towns that the Gadites and Reubenites are supposed to have built in Moabite territories from Heshbon to Ataroth occurs only in Num 32:34–38.²⁴ According to Horst Seebass, these verses belong to the original text of Num 32, which he attributes to a Yahwist from the eighth century BCE,²⁵ who claimed the territories in vv. 33–38* as genuinely Israelite. Even if one disagrees with the presence of a “Yahwist” in the book of Numbers, the list could indeed reflect a northern tradition, which is perhaps more of a “wishful thinking” in

²⁰ According to E. OTTO, *Deuteronomium 1–11* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2012), 480, vv. 14–17 are a later addition to Deut 3:12–13, 18ff.

²¹ For a comparison between Num 32 and Jos 13, see also GASS, *Die Moabiter* (see n. 1), 172–173.

²² See also the synopsis in R. ACHENBACH, *Die Vollendung der Tora: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 371–372, and for Josh 12–13 and Num 32, see E. A. KNAUF, *Josua* (ZBK 6; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2008), 130–133.

²³ KNAUF, *Josua* (see n. 22), 126–135.

²⁴ For identifications of the place names, see M. WÜST, *Untersuchungen zu den siedlungsgeographischen Texten des Alten Testaments* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1975), 147; J. A. DEARMAN, “Historical Reconstruction and the Mesha Inscription,” in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* (ed. J. A. Dearman; ABS 2; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 155–210, here 170–185.

²⁵ H. SEEBASS, *Numeri* (BKAT 4; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2004), 346–347. See also L. SCHMIDT, *Das vierte Buch Moses: Numeri 10,11–36,13* (ATD 7/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 195, who attributes the oldest layer to the “Elohist.”

late monarchic or even later times (below) than territorial reality.²⁶ It should be noted that for the six identifiable and excavated places in Num 32:34–38 (Heshbon, Medeba, Ataroth, Jahaz, Dibon, and Aroer) the picture is quite clear: they depict strong Iron II presence, no (or very weak) Persian period, and strong late Hellenistic occupation; the surveys portray a similar picture.²⁷

The parallel statements about the possessions given to the Reubenites and Gadites (and half Manasseh) in Num 32:33; Deut 3:12–18*; and Josh 13:9–12* are clearly interrelated. It could be that Num 32:33 and Deut 3:12–18*, building on the legendary (Dtr) tradition about Sihon and Og,²⁸ belong to literary layers that extend into the book of Joshua and could therefore be qualified as a “hexateuchal redaction.”²⁹ The focus on Transjordanian possessions in the Persian period could thus be explained either as a memory from the Iron II or by the fact that parts of this territory belonged at a certain time to the subprovince of Samaria,³⁰ it may also reflect an old claim from the time of the kingdom of Israel.

In a certain way, this tradition contradicts the Dtr (?) description of the Israelites’ passage through Moabite and Ammonite territory in Deut 2:9–23*.³¹ This passage insists that the Israelites are not allowed to conquer Moabite territory,

²⁶ According to WÜST, *Untersuchungen* (see n. 24), 180–183, the list reflects a territorial constellation before the Omrides. But there is not much evidence for that; SCHMIDT, *Das vierte Buch Moses* (see n. 25), 201, thinks that the territories correspond to Solomon’s twelfth district. But the historicity of the biblical presentation of the Solomonic empire should be given up. In fact, this list is not too different from the prophecies on Moab in Isa 15:1–16:1 and Jer 48:1–47; hence one may suppose that it represents knowledge of the late monarchic period telescoped into the past.

²⁷ For Heshbon, Dibon, and Aroer, see entries in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. E. Stern; 4 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) and bibliography there; for Jahaz and Ataroth, see n. 2, above; for Medeba, see, e.g., T.P. HARRISON et al., “Investigating 5,000 Years of Urban History: The Tall Madaba Archaeological Project,” in *Crossing Jordan: North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan* (ed. T.E. Levy et al.; London: Equinox, 2007), 143–152; for the survey, see the evaluation in I. FINKELSTEIN, “From Sherds to History: Review Article,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 48 (1998), 120–131, here 121–123.

²⁸ R. RENDTORFF, “Sihon, Og und das ‘israelitische Credo,’” in *Meilenstein: Festgabe für Herbert Donner* (ed. M. Weippert and S. Timm; ÄAT 30; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 198–203.

²⁹ As pointed out by OTTO, *Deuteronomium I–II* (see n. 20), 481, and KNAUF, *Josua* (see n. 22), 135, it is impossible to reconstruct precisely the reworking of these traditions and the late *Fortschreibungen* and attempts to harmonize. These texts are, as Knauf puts it, “eine schriftgelehrte Komposition” (135).

³⁰ U. HÜBNER, *Die Ammoniter: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte, Kultur und Religion eines transjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr.* (ADPV 16; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 213–215.

³¹ Different late glosses about the primitive inhabitants have been inserted into this passage; see, e.g., OTTO, *Deuteronomium I–II* (see n. 20), 479–482.

since YHWH has given these lands to Lot and his sons (2:9, 19).³² Apparently, the Deuteronomists considered the Jordan to be a “theological” border (see the crossing of the Jordan in Josh 3–4); it seems that they had no interest, after 587 BCE, in claiming Moabite or Ammonite territory.³³ But later revisions in the context of the Hexateuch did.

However, there was no moment in history when Israel dominated such a territory as described in the above-mentioned texts: in the two expansionist periods of the Northern Kingdom, the Omrides did not rule north of the Yarmuk, and Jeroboam II did not dominate the *mishor* of Moab. The Transjordanian emphasis in the above texts can therefore be seen either as a utopian wish or, better, as a late claim based on what one could describe as “accumulative memory” in the north, commemorating both the rule of the Omrides in the *mishor* and the conquest of Jeroboam II in Bashan (Amos 6:13).

This observation takes us to Num 21.³⁴ Scholars saw the song of Heshbon, or both the song and the prose, as belonging to the older narrative layers (J/E) in the Pentateuch.³⁵ The relevant part starts with the defeat of Sihon at the hands of the invading Israelites at Jahaz and a statement that “Israel settled in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its villages” (v. 25). Then comes the Song of Heshbon, which commemorates a military victory in the *mishor*. Scholars have debated the age of the song (giving dates ranging from the premonarchic to

³² Apparently this text presupposes the construction of the Abraham cycle, according to which Lot is either Abraham’s brother or his nephew.

³³ The origin of this Dtr idea may be located in the geopolitical situation of the seventh century BCE; the only old claim for these territories would be Israelite and date before 720, because this area was taken from Israel by Rezin of Damascus, followed by the conquest of Tiglath-pileser III.

³⁴ This is a highly complex chapter, including in the relationship between the prose and the song; see, e.g., J. VAN SETERS, “The Conquest of Sihon’s Kingdom: A Literary Examination,” *JBL* 91 (1972), 182–197, according to whom Deut 2:26–37 is the basis for Num 21:21–(24)25 and hence the latter is secondary (and late) and not historical; in contrast, see J. R. BARTLETT, “The Conquest of Sihon’s Kingdom: A Literary Re-Examination,” *JBL* 97 (1978), 347–351, who argues that the account in Numbers is the original source; see also E. W. DAVIES, *Numbers* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995); DEARMAN, “Location of Jahaz” (see n. 12), 122–126; B. A. LEVINE, *Numbers 21–36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 110; E. BLUM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 127–129. A middle position is adopted by E. OTTO, *Das Deuteronomium im Pentateuch und Hexateuch: Studien zur Literaturgeschichte von Pentateuch und Hexateuch im Lichte des Deuteronomiumsrahmens* (FAT 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 129–136, who claims that Num 21 stems from the hexateuchal redaction, which, however, used an older, pre-Dtr account.

³⁵ E.g., M. NOTH, *Numbers: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1968), 161–162; DAVIES, *Numbers* (see n. 34), 225–226; C. FREVEL, “Understanding the Pentateuch by Structuring the Desert: Numbers 21 as Compositional Joint” in *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology: Studies in Honour of Ed Noort* (ed. J. van Ruiten and J. C. de Vos; VTSup 124; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 111–135.

the postexilic periods)³⁶ and whether it relates to an Israelite victory over Heshbon³⁷ or a Heshbonite victory over Moab (emphasized in the tension between vv. 23–26, which deal with a victory over Sihon, and vv. 27–30, which recall a victory of Sihon over Moab).³⁸ We would side with the former, arguing that both the prose regarding Israelite settlement in the region (and possibly also the battle at Jahaz) and the song, describing a north-south campaign, commemorate the conquest of the *mishor* by the Omrides in the early ninth century BCE; the biblical record and the Mesha Stela describe the same historical situation. It is quite plausible that in the early days this “memory” was transmitted orally; the Song of Heshbon may have been put in writing in the first half of the eighth century,³⁹ possibly in conjunction with an Israelite claim to this territory in the days of Jeroboam II. Had this been the case, it would be possible that this song circulated in the north and was integrated into the book of Numbers by a “pentateuchal” or a Persian-period redactor (as claimed by Ludwig Schmidt and others⁴⁰).

Though in late monarchic times Heshbon⁴¹ was part of Moab (Isa 15:4; 16:8–9; Jer 48:2, 34),⁴² in the biblical tradition Sihon is described as king of the Amorites not of the Moabites (see also Num 21:13). This too may preserve a genuine memory of the pre-Omride situation in this territory: until the expansion

³⁶ See the presentation of the discussion in H.-C. SCHMITT, “Das Hesbonlied Num. 21,27aßb–30 und die Geschichte der Stadt Hesbon,” in *Theologie in Prophetie und Pentateuch: Gesammelte Schriften* (ed. H.-C. Schmitt; BZAW 310; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 131–154, and S. TIMM, *Moab zwischen den Mächten: Studien zu historischen Denkmälern und Texten* (ÄAT 17; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989), 75–89. For the text-critical problems, see TIMM, *Moab*, 65–75.

³⁷ E.g., E. MEYER, “Kritik der Berichte über die Eroberung Palaestinas,” *ZAW* 1 (1881), 117–146; M. WEIPPERT, “The Israelite ‘Conquest’ and the Evidence from Transjordan,” in *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900–1975)* (ed. F.M. Cross; Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1979), 15–34; DAVIES, *Numbers* (see n. 34), 231; NA’AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11), 90–91; LEVINE, *Numbers 21–36* (see n. 34), 132.

³⁸ VAN SETERS, “Conquest” (see n. 34), 195–196; R. P. KNIERIM and G. W. COATS, *Numbers* (FOTL 4; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 243; SCHMIDT, *Das vierte Buch Moses* (see n. 25), 113–4; according to Schmidt, it is only Dtr that make Heshbon the capital of Sihon. He argues that the song reflects the destruction of Heshbon around 539 BCE.

³⁹ On the beginning of significant writing in Israel only at that time, see I. FINKELSTEIN and B. SASS, “The West Semitic Alphabetic Inscriptions, Late Bronze II to Iron IIA: Archeological Context, Distribution and Chronology,” *HBAI* 2 (2013), 149–220.

⁴⁰ See Schmidt, *Das vierte Buch Moses* (see n. 25), 114–116; TIMM, *Moab* (see n. 36), 75–89; ACHENBACH, *Die Vollendung der Tora* (see n. 22), 365.

⁴¹ Unfortunately, the archaeology of Tell Hisban is not clear enough to produce minute observations regarding biblical traditions. For discussion, see also TIMM, *Moab* (see n. 36), 79–90, who summarizes the results of the excavations.

⁴² For resolving its appearance in the oracle against Ammon in Jer 49:3, see, e.g., LEMAIRE, “Heshbôn” (see n. 17), 65.

of Mesha the *mishor* was not considered part of Moab but rather was ruled by a late-Canaanite entity. Verse 26, which “paves the way” for the Song of Heshbon,⁴³ is peculiar: “For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former (Heb., *ha-rishon* = the first)⁴⁴ king of Moab and taken all his land [from the Jabbok]⁴⁵ to the Arnon.” This may have originated from an Omride polemic aimed at showing that the *mishor* had not belonged to Moab – that is, to legitimate its conquest⁴⁶ – or better, from a polemic related to later Israelite territorial claims,⁴⁷ perhaps in the first half of the eighth century.⁴⁸ The latter possibility is strengthened by v. 25: only Heshbon and its villages (literally “its daughters”) are mentioned here, not the entire territory of the *mishor*. In his inscription Mesha does not speak about the conquest of Heshbon, and hence this town could have been conquered by Moab later, closer in time to the high period of Israel in the first half of the eighth century.⁴⁹

Judges 11:25–26 repeats the account in Numbers and is probably dependent on it.⁵⁰ Judges 11:1–11a and 32–33 is an old north Israelite story,⁵¹ depicting Jephthah as a leader of an Apiru group that operated in the no man’s land on the eastern margin of the Gilead; this reality could not have existed anymore with

⁴³ NOTH, *Numbers* (see n. 35), 163; see also KNIERIM and COATS, *Numbers* (see n. 38), 243; SEEBASS, *Numeri* (see n. 25), 357.

⁴⁴ This expression may have been added in order to distinguish this Moabite king from Balak, who is mentioned in the following Balaam story (SCHMIDT, *Das vierte Buch Moses* [see n. 25], 115).

⁴⁵ J. M. MILLER, “Early Monarchy in Moab?,” in *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan* (ed. P. Bienkowski; Sheffield Archaeological Monographs 7; Sheffield: J. R. Collis National Museums and Galleries Merseyside, 1992), 77–91, here 84; IDEM, “Israelite Journey” (see n. 6), 578; NA’AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11), 91. There is a text-critical problem here: MT has “from his hand” (מִיָּדוֹ), LXX has ἀπὸ Ἀροῦρ. Possibly the original text had מִיָּבֶק as in v. 24, as suggested by the editor of BHS.

⁴⁶ NA’AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11), 90, identifies the “former king of Moab” with the house of Daudoh from Horonaim.

⁴⁷ DAVIES, *Numbers* (see n. 34), 227.

⁴⁸ See also GASS, *Die Moabiter* (see n. 1), 198–199, who also gives good arguments for why the tradition behind Num 21 is archaeologically and textually only possible in the ninth-eighth centuries BCE.

⁴⁹ Another possibility is to see v. 26 as a gloss, entered by a confused late author who no longer understood the earlier situation in the *mishor*, before the expansion of Moab in the days of Mesha (v. 29b may also be regarded in the same light; see LEVINE, *Numbers 21–36* [see n. 34], 133).

⁵⁰ BARTLETT, “Conquest” (see n. 34), 357–351; MILLER, “Israelite Journey” (see n. 6), 577–595; W. GROSS, *Richter* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2009), 593; for the opposite theory – that the account in Numbers depends on that in Judges – see VAN SETERS, “Conquest” (see n. 34); IDEM, “Once Again: The Conquest of Sihon’s Kingdom,” *JBL* 99 (1980), 117–119.

⁵¹ For Judg 11:1–11, see GROSS, *Richter* (see n. 50), 555–556; for 11:32–33, T. RÖMER, “Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell about the Sacrifice of Jephthah’s Daughter?,” *JSOT* 77 (1998), 27–38, 28–30.

the dense settlement system and strong central government of the Iron IIB in the eighth century BCE. Judges 11:11b–31 and 34–40 is probably a postexilic insertion.⁵² It seems, then, that the two additions to the Num 21 story in Judg 11:25–26 – that Balak was the contemporary of Sihon, who ruled south of the Arnon, and that the Israelites occupied the *mishor* for three hundred years – do not come from an old memory but are an attempt of the late redactor of Judges to combine different pentateuchal traditions. Balak was taken from Num 22, and the three hundred years should be seen as an attempt to harmonize the old account in Numbers with the later conquest traditions.

Part of the Balaam narrative, too, is traditionally seen as belonging to the old pentateuchal material.⁵³ However, it has often been observed that the Balaam tradition (which, as shown by the Deir Alla Inscription, is indeed an old one) existed independent of other pentateuchal traditions before it was integrated into the book of Numbers. According to Reinhard Achenbach and Rainer Albertz, the Balaam cycle was inserted by a hexateuchal redactor⁵⁴ who wanted to strengthen Israel's claim to possession of the land. The older tradition probably comes from the north⁵⁵ and is an account about a famous seer who took the side of Israel against Moab. If one follows Bickert's reconstruction of the older account, "Israel" did not come out of Egypt (Moses does not appear in this story) but rather settled in parts of Transjordan, in territories that were also claimed by Moab.⁵⁶

Numbers 22:36* (which according to Bickert and others belongs to the *Grunderzählung*⁵⁷) states that Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, went from his town to meet Balaam "at the city of Moab (Heb., *'ir Moav*), on the boundary formed by the Arnon" (the end of v. 36b is probably an explanatory gloss⁵⁸). Clearly, Balak reigns from a place located south of the Arnon. It is reasonable to assume that Ar/Ir Moab is the same as Kir Moab ("the City of Moab," similar in meaning to "Rabbah of the Ammonites") and should be identified with Khirbet

⁵² RÖMER, "Why," (see n. 51), 27–38; P. GUILLAUME, *Waiting for Josiah: The Judges* (JSOTSup 385; Sheffield: T&T Clark, 2004), 238–240.

⁵³ S. MOWINCKEL, "Der Ursprung der Bilämsage," *ZAW* 48 (1930), 233–271; NOTH, *Numbers* (see n. 35), 171; DAVIES, *Numbers* (see n. 34); A. ROFÉ, *Sefer Bala'am* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1979) (Hebrew), and recently, J.M. ROBKER, "The Balaam Narrative in the Pentateuch/Hexateuch/Enneateuch," in *Torah and the Book of Numbers* (ed. C. Frevel et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 334–366.

⁵⁴ ACHENBACH, *Die Vollendung der Tora* (see n. 22), 389–394; R. ALBERTZ, "Das Buch Numeri jenseits der Quellentheorie: Eine Redaktionsgeschichte von Num 20–24," *ZAW* 132 (2011), 171–183, 336–347.

⁵⁵ R. BICKERT, "Israel im Lande Moab: Die Stellung der Bileamerzählung Num 22–24 in ihrem redaktionellen Kontext," *ZAW* 121 (2009), 189–210.

⁵⁶ BICKERT, "Israel" (see n. 55), 204–205. He imagines that the original narrative was written down under Ahab or Jeroboam II.

⁵⁷ The beginning of the verse was added by the redactor who integrated the story about Balaam and his she-ass.

⁵⁸ NOTH, *Numbers* (see n. 35), 180; SCHMIDT, *Das vierte Buch Moses* (see n. 25), 118.

Balua, close to the Arnon.⁵⁹ Balak’s seat can then be located somewhat further to the south, at Kerak, possibly the biblical Horonaim,⁶⁰ which was taken over by Mesha. Kerak produced a ninth-century BCE royal Moabite inscription, probably written by Mesha’s scribes (after his annexation of Horonaim?), and other finds, all of which indicate the importance of this place at that time.⁶¹ The essence of the story is that Balak “saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites,” that is, to Sihon; hence, rather than relating to the passing of the Israelites on the way from the south to Canaan, it probably refers to the historical conquest of the *mishor* by the Omrides, who came from the north.⁶²

There are several clues for the antiquity of this story. First, Balak sends a delegation to a prophet from Pethor (Pitru of the Assyrian sources⁶³) “which is near the river” – that is, to Aram⁶⁴ – probably in conjunction with the Moab-Damascus alliance in the days of Mesha and Hazael. Second, as already mentioned, Balaam is referred to in the eighth-century BCE Deir Alla Inscription. Third, the postexilic text in Deut 23:5–6 presupposes the story and introduces a negative attitude toward Balaam.⁶⁵ Still, the broader Balaam tale is another example of “accumulative memory” – a story that incorporates realities from different periods: at least two of the high places visited by Balaam in order to bless Israel are located in the northwestern sector of the *mishor*, overlooking the border between Moab and Israel in late monarchic times.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ See discussion in MILLER, “Israelite Journey” (see n. 6), 593–595.

⁶⁰ NA’AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11); J.M. SPRINKLE, “2 Kings 3: History or Historical Fiction?,” *BBR* 9 (1999), 247–270, here 267; surveys of the possibilities and other views in I. WORSCHER and E.A. KNAUF, “Dimon und Horonaim,” *BN* 31 (1986), 70–95; J.A. DEARMAN, “The Moabite Sites of Horonaim and Luhith,” *PEQ* 122 (1990), 41–46; C. BEN-DAVID, “The ‘Ascent of Luhith’ and the ‘Road to Horonaim’: New Evidence for Their Identification,” *PEQ* 133 (2001), 136–144.

⁶¹ E.g., GASS, *Die Moabiter* (see n. 1), 66–69, 263–264.

⁶² LEVINE, *Numbers 21–36* (see n. 34), 232.

⁶³ SCHMIDT, *Das vierte Buch Moses* (see n. 25), 124–125, however, considers this information to be a kind of midrashic gloss, based on the root *p-t-r* (Gen 40:5ff. and 41:1ff.), which means “to interpret (dreams).”

⁶⁴ On the reading Aram, not Edom, see NOTH, *Numbers* (see n. 35), 173–174; DAVIES, *Numbers* (see n. 34), 245.

⁶⁵ ROFÉ, *Sefer Bala’am* (see n. 53), 47; see NOTH, *Numbers* (see n. 35), 172, who thinks that both Balak and Balaam echo historical figures. This attitude was also introduced in Num 22–24, especially in the story of the she-ass.

⁶⁶ In the Ehud and Eglon story in Judg 3, Moab reaches the area of the northern tip of the Dead Sea; see NA’AMAN, “Royal Inscription” (see n. 1), 168; E. GASS, “Zur Ehud-Tradition in historisch-topographischer Hinsicht,” *ZDPV* 124 (2008), 38–50. Alternatively, this tale may be folkloristic and have nothing to do with a “historical” Moab; see U. HÜBNER, “Mord auf dem Abort? Überlegungen zu Humor, Gewaltdarstellung und Realienkunde in Ri 3, 12–30,” *BN* 40 (1987), 130–140; J.A. SOGGIN, “Ehud und Eglon: Bemerkungen zu Richter III 11b–31,” *VT* 39 (1989), 95–100; E.A. KNAUF, “Eglon and Ophra: Two Toponymic Notes on the Book of Judges,” *JSOT* 51 (1991), 25–44; MILLER, “Early Monarchy” (see n. 45), 85.

Another story of conflict between Israel and Moab appears in 2 Kgs 3:4–27 – a “prophetic story”⁶⁷ about the campaign of Joram, king of Israel, against an unnamed king of Moab. The message of this story is of course theological,⁶⁸ and at least part of it – including the references to Elisha and Jehoshaphat – is anachronistic.⁶⁹ But its nucleus (especially vv. 24–25) is probably a chronistic source about a siege of Kir Moab (mocked here as Kir Hareseth, the city of sherds), that is, the capital of Moab, probably Khirbet Balua south of the Arnon,⁷⁰ by a northern Israelite king of the Omride dynasty. Evidence for the antiquity of this part is strengthened by the report of a human sacrifice by the king of Moab, which is not criticized by the redactors and is presented as provoking the failure of the assault of his enemies.⁷¹ Thus these verses seem to preserve a memory of an aborted Israelite attempt – possibly by Joram⁷² – to invade the heartland of Moab south of the Arnon in order to incorporate it into the territory ruled by the Northern Kingdom north of the Arnon.

The Israel-Moab Conflict in the Ninth Century BCE

Let us try to tie all these data – archaeological, biblical, and extrabiblical – into one coherent historical reconstruction.

⁶⁷ And hence containing little historical information; see M. COGAN and H. TADMOR, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 49. For the term, see M. NOTH, *Geschichte Israels* (7th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 216. For a critique of this passage as “prophetic story,” see E. WÜRTHWEIN, *Die Bücher der Könige* (ATD 11; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 285, who shows that the combination with the Elisha story is not original.

⁶⁸ B. O. LONG, “2 Kings III and Genres of Prophetic Narrative,” *VT* 23 (1973), 337–348; P. D. STERN, “Of Kings and Moabites: History and Theology in 2 Kings 3 and the Meshah Inscription,” *HUCA* 64 (1993), 2–14; NA’AMAN, “Royal Inscription” (see n. 1).

⁶⁹ For the different parts, see E. GASS “Topographical Considerations and Redaction Criticism in 2 Kings 3,” *JBL* 128 (2009), 65–84; according to WÜRTHWEIN, *Die Bücher der Könige* (see n. 67), the oldest story can be recovered in vv. 4–9a, 20–27*.

⁷⁰ Attempts to identify this place north of the Arnon (e.g., B. C. JONES, “In Search of Kir Hareseth: A Case Study in Site Identification,” *JSOT* 52 [1991], 3–24) go against the logic of the text and should be dismissed.

⁷¹ Pace WÜRTHWEIN, *Die Bücher der Könige* (see n. 67), 285. The “great wrath” that came over the Israelites in v. 27 was probably the wrath of Kemosh in the old story (which was censored later). For more details, see T. RÖMER, “Le sacrifice humain en Juda et Israël au premier millénaire avant notre ère,” *ARG* 1 (1999), 16–26.

⁷² This is the theory of most commentators (see WÜRTHWEIN, *Die Bücher der Könige* [see n. 67], 284); Bernhardt postulates a campaign waged by Joash around 800 BCE; see K. H. BERNHARDT, “Der Feldzug der drei Könige,” in *Schalom: Studien zu Glaube und Geschichte Israels: Festschrift A. Jepsen* (ed. K. H. Bernhardt; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1971), 11–22. There is, however, no indication of any Israelite attempt in Moab proper after 841 BCE.

An early polity emerged in southern Moab in the late Iron I (late eleventh and much of the tenth century BCE), a period of growing prosperity in copper production at Wadi Faynan,⁷³ and declined in the second half of the tenth century. Judging from the geographical disposition of the fortified sites in this territory, and from the Balua Stela, its seat was probably located at Khirbet Balua. Elsewhere, one of us suggested that the decline of this formation was the result of the monopolization of copper production and transportation by Egypt’s Twenty-Second Dynasty, following the campaign of Sheshonq I to Canaan.⁷⁴ Moab probably recovered after a while, possibly as a sovereign or ally of Damascus; its hub was still located south of the Arnon. The *mishor*, at least north of Dibon, was not part of this territory; it was ruled by a late-Canaanite territorial formation centered at Heshbon. This is in line with the long-term perspective – what we know archaeologically about the relatively dense settlement system and elaborate architecture in this area in both the Late Bronze and the Iron I.⁷⁵

Sometime in the first half of the ninth century, the Omrides took over the *mishor* from this polity – referred to in the Bible as “Amorite,” that is, Canaanite – and established their forts facing a Moabite kingdom that was centered south of the Arnon, probably at Ir Moab/Khirbet Balua, but that included the land of Dibon north of it. The Bible preserves a strong memory of this short phase of north Israelite history in Moab. First, the references to Jahaz as the place of the battle with Sihon, king of Heshbon (Num 21:23; Deut 2:32), and the reference to the same not-too-important place in the Mesha Stela as a fort of the Omrides cannot be coincidental. Second, there is consistent reference to the fact that Israel ruled over the towns of the *mishor*. An attempt by Israel to press further to the south may be referred to in the annalistic description of a siege over Kir – the capital of Moab south of the Arnon – in 2 Kgs 3:24–25. In this sense, the Balak mentioned in Num 22–24 and the king who was besieged at Kir Moab, though not necessarily the same individual, may represent the same period: they were contemporaries of the Omrides; note that in the texts one seems to have ruled at Horonaim/Kerak and the other at Ir (Kir) Moab/Khirbet Balua. Some biblical texts may preserve a memory that supports the information

⁷³ LEVY et al., “High-Precision Radiocarbon Dating” (see n. 10), 16460–16465; I. FINKELSTEIN and E. PIASETZKY, “¹⁴C and the History of Copper Production at Khirbet en-Nahas,” *Tel Aviv* 35 (2008), 82–95.

⁷⁴ FINKELSTEIN and LIPSCHITS, “Genesis of Moab” (see n. 2), 139–152; I. FINKELSTEIN, “The Southern Steppe of the Levant ca. 1050–750 BCE: A Framework for a Territorial History,” *PEQ* 146 (2014), 89–104.

⁷⁵ For Tell el-Umeiri in the Late Bronze and Iron I, see D.R. CLARK, “The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages at Tall al-‘Umayri,” in *The Madaba Plains Project: Forty Years of Archaeological Research into Jordan’s Past* (ed. D.R. Clark et al.; London: Equinox, 2011), 43–57; for the settlement pattern and territorial disposition in the Late Bronze Age, see I. FINKELSTEIN, “Settlement Patterns and Territorial Polity in the Transjordanian Highlands in the Late Bronze Age,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 45 (2014), 143–159.

in Mesha's description, namely, that the two places were seats of rival families who struggled for dominance over Moab (see below).

Moab took advantage of the weakening of the Northern Kingdom under pressure from Hazael, specifically Israel's defeat in the battle of Ramoth-gilead in 841 BCE. One may assume that there was rivalry between Mesha, who probably ruled at Ir Moab/Khirbet Balua, and the house of Daudoh at Horonaim.⁷⁶ With the backing of his Damascene patron, Mesha took over Horonaim (and erected a stela there – the Kerak Inscription) and then expanded from the land of Dibon to the *mishor*, taking over the Israelite forts of Jahaz and Ataroth as well as Israelite Madaba and Nebo. This was the first time that Moab ruled over the territories both south and north of the Arnon.⁷⁷ The border between Moab and Israel was established near the northern edge of the Dead Sea, and it remained there until the fall of the Northern Kingdom. This Moab – on both sides of the Arnon – is the one known to the late monarchic author and referred to so accurately in the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa 15; Jer 48:1–6, 21–24, 30–37). Mesha imposed his deity, Chemosh,⁷⁸ over this entire territory and because of the expansion to the north may have moved his capital to Dibon.

Ninth-Century North Israelite Memories in Numbers and Kings

The existence of ninth-century “memories” in Num 21–22 and 2 Kgs 3, and their incorporation into much later texts, should come as no surprise. We have recently suggested that the earliest layer in the Jacob narrative – which deals with the delineation of the border between Israelites and Arameans in the Gilead – reflects pre-eighth-century Gileadite traditions.⁷⁹ And outside of the Pentateuch, the same can be said for, e.g., the memory of Shiloh as an early Israelite shrine, which must come from the late eleventh century (archaeology shows that the site had been destroyed then and did not recover in the Iron II) but which was incorporated into Judahite polemics centuries later.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ NA'AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11); IDEM, “Campaign of Mesha” (see n. 15); for a different interpretation, see LEMAIRE, “La dynastie Davidique” (see n. 1); RAINEY, “Following Up” (see n. 15).

⁷⁷ NA'AMAN, “King Mesha” (see n. 11).

⁷⁸ The Mesha Stela claims that he destroyed a sanctuary of YHWH and perhaps also another one, if *dwd* refers to a deity as it does in the original text of Amos 8:14; see T. RÖMER, *L'invention de Dieu* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 2014), 152–153; English translation, *The Invention of God* (trans. R. Geuss, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 114–115.

⁷⁹ I. FINKELSTEIN and T. RÖMER, “Comments on the Historical Background of the Jacob Narrative in Genesis,” *ZAW* 126/3 (2014), 317–338.

⁸⁰ Especially in the so-called ark narrative in 1 Sam 4–6 and the oracles about the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in the book of Jeremiah (Jer 7 and 26), where Shiloh appears as the first sanctuary chosen by YHWH.

The book of Numbers, although the latest in the Pentateuch,⁸¹ therefore preserves shreds of Israelite traditions regarding the conquest of the *mishor* by a late-Canaanite king who ruled from Heshbon, the later takeover of the area by the Omrides, as well as “memories” about the existence of an early to mid-ninth-century BCE Moabite kingdom further south, which included what we would call (to use a term from the Mesha Stela) the land of Dibon, land of Kir, and land of Horonaim.⁸² These traditions must have first been transmitted in the Northern Kingdom⁸³ orally (they may have originated from the temple of YHWH at Nebo, referred to in the Mesha Stela) and were probably put in writing in the first half of the eighth century – in Penuel, Bethel, or Samaria. This is when complex writing appears for the first time in Israel – at Kuntilet Ajrud and Tell Deir Alla.⁸⁴ The compilation/memorization of these traditions may have been carried out during the reign of Jeroboam II, whose days were characterized by reorganization of the cult in Israel and promotion of the two foundation myths of the kingdom.⁸⁵ Promotion of the memory of Israelite presence in northern Moab could have served northern territorial ambitions in the first half of the eighth century BCE; such territorial ambitions were fulfilled in the area of Ramoth-gilead (the conquest of Lidebir, Amos 6:13), but for reasons unknown to us were not accomplished in Moab.

The now-written early northern Israelite traditions regarding Moab came to be known to Judah in the decades after 720 BCE and still later were incorporated into Judahite/Yehudite works and given a southern orientation. This scenario agrees with the idea that a large number of Israelites settled in Judah in the decades after 720 BCE.⁸⁶ Our colleague and friend Nadav Na’aman has recently

⁸¹ For the idea that Numbers was created as a late “bridge” between a priestly “Triteuch” and the book of Deuteronomy, and as the last occasion to integrate different (non-Dtr and non-Priestly) traditions, see T. RÖMER, “Israel’s Sojourn in the Wilderness and the Construction of the Book of Numbers,” in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (VTSup 113; ed. R. Rezetko; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 419–445; ACHENBACH, *Die Vollendung der Tora* (see n. 22).

⁸² This is a typical territorial disposition in the semiarid areas of marginal agriculture and pastoral activity in southern Transjordan.

⁸³ For a northern origin of the conquest accounts in Numbers, see also D.E. FLEMING, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah’s Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 114–132.

⁸⁴ FINKELSTEIN and SASS, “West Semitic Alphabetic Inscriptions” (see n. 39), 149–220.

⁸⁵ I. FINKELSTEIN, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel* (Ancient Near East Monographs 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 141–151; FINKELSTEIN and RÖMER, “Comments” (see n. 79).

⁸⁶ M. BROSHI, “The Expansion of Jerusalem in the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh,” *IEJ* 24 (1974), 21–26; W.M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); I. FINKELSTEIN and N.A. SILBERMAN, “Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, the Remaking of Judah and the Rise of

opposed this theory;⁸⁷ yet this is the only way to explain the dramatic settlement and demographic transformation of Judah in a short period of time in the late eighth century and early seventh century BCE.⁸⁸ Several features of Israelite material culture suddenly appear then in Judah. Transmission of Israelite texts to the south should be seen as a no-less-important characteristic of this process.

It is also possible that the integration of some of these memories in the late book of Numbers and in passages belonging to pentateuchal or hexateuchal redaction was favored in the middle of the Persian period (or even later⁸⁹), when the Pentateuch was promulgated. In this context the emphasis on northern traditions could tentatively be understood as “Samaritan input,” focusing on territories that the Samaritans may have considered to belong to their province. Recent European research rightly points out that the compilation of the Torah cannot be understood as an exclusively Judahite phenomenon. The northern/Samaritan contribution to it was probably much stronger than texts such as Ezra 7 or Neh 8 want us to believe. There is no doubt that the northern conquest traditions in Numbers are older, but contrary to the Jacob and other northern traditions, their integration can be understood as a concession to the Samaritans or as a claim by the Samaritans in postexilic times. But where were these traditions kept? Unfortunately, we do not have much information about the political and religious situation in the former Northern Kingdom between 722 BCE and the Persian period. Note however that 2 Kgs 17, although written from a southern perspective,⁹⁰ admits an ongoing (syncretistic) cult of YHWH⁹¹ and therefore the

the Pan-Israelite Ideology,” *JSOT* 30 (2006), 259–285; K. VAN DER TOORN, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 339–372.

⁸⁷ N. NA’AMAN, “Dismissing the Myth of a Flood of Israelite Refugees in the Late Eight Century BCE,” *ZAW* 126 (2014), 1–14.

⁸⁸ I. FINKELSTEIN, “Migration of Israelites into Judah after 720 BCE: An Answer and an Update,” *ZAW* 127 (2015), 188–206.

⁸⁹ The context of the Hasmoneans could constitute a perfect historical setting for some of those texts, both ideologically (they expanded to the areas of Jazer and Madaba) and archaeologically (see above on occupation of the six sites mentioned in Num 32). This observation again raises the question of the *terminus ante quem* for the latest revision of the Torah. The late second century is probably too late for inserts of important textual passages into scrolls of the Pentateuch. The case could be different in the book of Joshua, for which KNAUF, *Josua* (see n. 22), has detected a redactional layer from the Hasmonean period.

⁹⁰ The diachronic analysis of 2 Kgs 17 reveals an old layer from the seventh century BCE and two or three revisions from Babylonian and Persian times; see B. BECKING, *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study* (SHANE 2; Leiden: Brill, 1992), and J.-D. MACCHI, “Les controverses théologiques dans le judaïsme de l’époque postexilique: L’exemple de 2 Rois 17, 24–41,” *Transeuphratène* 5 (1992), 85–93.

⁹¹ 2 Kgs 17:32: “They also worshiped YHWH and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.” See also RÖMER, *L’invention* (see n. 78), 234–238; IDEM, *Invention* (see n. 78), 176–179.

existence of one or more Yahwistic sanctuaries (2 Kgs 17:28 mentions Bethel, which may be more ideological than historical, and 17:32 a temple [?] and high places).⁹² Although most of the northern traditions certainly came to the south after 722 BCE, it seems logical that scrolls and traditions continued to be read and kept in the north, too.

All this shows that the Bible – the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets – contains traces of early traditions that go back at least to the early days of the Northern Kingdom in the early ninth century BCE. Other materials may contain even earlier memories,⁹³ for instance in the contexts of the exodus narrative,⁹⁴ the early Jacob traditions,⁹⁵ traditions about the sanctuary of Shiloh, and positive memories of the house of Saul.⁹⁶ Most of these early layers come from the Northern Kingdom. They should probably be understood as local traditions, which – at least in the early days – were memorized in regional shrines. We would refer, for instance, to Gileadite (early Jacob) and Ephraimite (later Jacob, still in the Iron Age) texts from Penuel and Bethel, respectively; Balaam, possibly at Succoth; and Omride traditions about Moab at Nebo. In the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE – and also later – these early Israelite traditions found their way into Judah. There they acquired later layers of Judahite/Yehudite/Judean (including “pan Israelite”) ideologies. They were integrated into scrolls that became the Torah and the Prophets and are now embedded in what can be described as “accumulative memories” (or “traces of memory,” according to Jan Assmann⁹⁷), which – as read today – include layers that represent many centuries of transmission – oral and later written – and redaction.

⁹² The MT has the strange expression *בְּבֵית הַקְּבוּרֹת*, which may reflect a dogmatic correction for “in a temple and in high places.”

⁹³ The fact that old traditions can show up in very late contexts can be demonstrated by the case of Manetho, who in the third century BCE refers to events from more than a thousand years before his time, like the Hyksos or Akhenaten; see G.P. VERBRUGGE and J.M. WICKERSHAM, *Berosos and Manetho Introduced and Translated: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

⁹⁴ See, e.g., D.B. REDFORD, “An Egyptological Perspective on the Exodus Narrative,” in *Egypt, Israel, Sinai: Archaeological and Historical Relationships in the Biblical Period* (ed. A.F. Rainey; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1987), 137–161; R. HENDEL, “The Exodus in Biblical Memory,” *JBL* 120 (2001), 601–608; N. NA’AMAN, “The Exodus Story: Between Historical Memory and Historiographical Composition,” *JANER* 11 (2011), 39–69.

⁹⁵ FINKELSTEIN and RÖMER, “Comments” (see n. 79).

⁹⁶ FINKELSTEIN, *Forgotten Kingdom* (see n. 85).

⁹⁷ See, for instance, J. ASSMANN, *Moses der Ägypter: Entzifferung einer Gedächtnisspur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998).

