Offprint from

Rethinking Israel

Studies in the History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel in Honor of Israel Finkelstein

edited by

Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot, and Matthew J. Adams

Winona Lake, Indiana
Eisenbrauns
2017

www.eisenbrauns.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Lipschitz, Oded, editor. | Gadot, Yuval, editor. | Adams, Matthew, editor. | Finkelstein, Israel, honoree.
Title: Rethinking Israel : studies in the history and archaeology of ancient Israel in honor of Israel Finkelstein / edited by Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot, and Matthew Adams.
Description: Winona Lake, Indiana : Eisenbrauns, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017042497 (print) | LCCN 2017043890 (ebook) | ISBN 9781575067889 (ePDF) | ISBN 9781575067872 (cloth : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Palestine—Antiquities. | Israel—Antiquities. | Middle East—Antiquities. | Bible. Old Testament—Antiquities. | Bible. Old Testament—Criticism, interpretation, etc. | Excavations (Archaeology)—Middle East.
Classification: LCC DS111 (ebook) | LCC DS111 .R48 2017 (print) | DDC 933—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017042497

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984. ♾™

Contents

EISENBRAUNS
Offprint from:
Rethinking Israel: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Ancient Israel in Honor of of Israel Finkelstein

The Rise and Fall of Josiah

Thomas Römer
Collège de France, University of Lausanne, and the University of Pretoria

In many publications, Israel Finkelstein has emphasized the importance of the time of King Josiah for the origins of biblical literature, which, according to him, was written in many cases as propaganda for the king's religious politics of centralization and also for his military politics of expansion. This is especially the case in his worldwide bestseller "The Bible Unearthed," written in collaboration with Neil A. Silberman. In this book, the authors present the time and the reign of Josiah as "the climax of Israel's[1] monarchic history" (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 275).

According to Finkelstein, Josiah's reform was based on the book of Deuteronomy, the first edition of which was identical with the book of the Law mentioned in 2 Kgs 22 (p. 281). The book of Deuteronomy would fit extremely well with the various reforms that Josiah undertook (p. 280), and even the law of the king in Deut 17:14–20 would fit this reform since it "had both the sins of the kings of Israel and the righteousness of Josiah in mind" (p. 286). Josiah benefited from the decline of the Assyrian empire, which enabled him to enforce his "reform," but he underestimated the strength of Pharaoh Necho II, who had, after Psammetichus, succeeded in controlling the Levant as far north as Phoenicia. Necho II was also the king who brought Josiah's rule to an abrupt end by killing him at Megiddo. Finkelstein and Silberman point out that the books of Kings and Chronicles offer very different accounts about Josiah's end. They leave the question about the historical and theological circumstances of Josiah's death open and state that the Deuteronomist who reported Josiah's death "was clearly at loss to explain how such a historical catastrophe could occur and left only a curt, enigmatic reference to Josiah's death" (p. 291).

In the following essay, I would like to interact with this understanding of the time of Josiah and offer some other perspectives on the question of the historicity of Josiah's reform, the relationship between the king and the book of Deuteronomy, and the enigmatic accounts about his end in 2 Kgs 23 and 2 Chr 35.

The Historicity of King Josiah's Reform

It has often been argued, especially in German scholarship, that the whole story about Josiah's reform is an invention from the exilic or postexilic times. The main arguments are that there is no allusion at all to such a "reform" in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and that Josiah's successors are all accused of having done evil, like their fathers, without any mention of Josiah's cultic righteousness, which implies that there was no cultic centralization in Jerusalem (Würthwein 1976; Levin

1. It would have been better to use "Judah" here.

1984; Niehr 1995). The question, however, then arises as to why later redactors would have invented such a "reform" and why they were mostly concerned with depicting the abolition of cultic objects related to Assyrian religious practices.

Some scholars, as pointed out by Finkelstein, try to point to "archaeological evidence" for verification of the reform, especially the sanctuary at Arad (p. 288); but there is neither clear evidence for destruction nor of an "abandonment" of the cult place. According to Aharoni, the armies of Josiah destroyed the sanctuary in order to enforce his politics of centralization (Aharoni 1969). According to Ussishkin, the sanctuary was not established until the seventh century and remained in use until the sixth century, which would not fit at all with politics of cult centralization (Ussishkin 1988). Herzog claims that we must date the construction of the sanctuary and its retaining wall to the middle of the eighth century. The fact that the two horned altars and the *maṣṣēbôt* were carefully placed on the ground actually seems to mean that they were probably being hidden in the place where they were found (Herzog 2001). It is therefore difficult to use the sanctuary of Arad as a witness for the reform of Josiah. The case of Bethel is also difficult. According to 2 Kgs 23:15–20, Josiah destroyed the altar of Bethel, but this passage is often considered to be an addition that was inserted in 2 Kgs 23 in several stages (Würthwein 1984: 460–61). Verse 15 wants to show that Josiah did indeed bring an end to the "sin of Jeroboam," who is accused of having built the Northern Yahwistic sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan. Verses 16–18 refer back to the story of the man of God from Judah who announced the profanation and destruction of the altar by Josiah (1 Kgs 13:2–3) and who was buried together with a prophet from Bethel in Bethel (1 Kgs 13:30). The redactor who added 2 Kgs 23:15–18 emphasized the fact that Josiah, when destroying the altar of Bethel, was fulfilling the prophecy of 1 Kgs 13. 2 Kgs 23:19 may be an even later addition intended to suggest that Josiah not only destroyed Bethel but all the high places of Samaria. This passage is probably a Judean anti-Samaritan polemic and may reflect Judean hostility against the former Northern Kingdom, in a vein similar to 2 Kgs 17:24–41.

There is no archaeological evidence for the destruction of Bethel by Josiah. James Kelso, who published the results of the (somewhat chaotic) excavations that were carried out between 1934 and 1960, argued that Bethel was destroyed by the Babylonians or at the beginning of the Persian period (Kelso 1968: 51). For this reason, several scholars argue that Bethel was an important sanctuary during the Babylonian period, taking the place of the Jerusalem temple, which the Babylonians had put to ashes (Blenkinsopp 2003). On the other hand, Finkelstein and Singer, who analyzed the published pottery from of the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE, came to the conclusion that the material evidence speaks against the theory of ongoing cultic and economic activity during the Babylonian, Persian, and early Hellenistic period (Finkelstein and Singer 2009). This conclusion fits with the fact that Bethel is infrequently mentioned in prophetic texts from the Babylonian or Persian period.[2] One would, however, also have expected that the prophets from

2. The only possible example is Zech 7:2, but here Bethel may refer to a deity; see Amsler (1988: 113).

Judah would have applauded the destruction of Bethel by Josiah if such an event had taken place. It seems therefore more plausible to understand 2 Kgs 23:15–20 in the context of Josiah's annexation of Benjamin, to which Bethel belonged, without the destruction of the sanctuary. The existence of the shrine of Bethel after the fall of Samaria is acknowledged by a late Dtr redactor in 2 Kgs 17:24–28, who admits that a Yahwistic cult continued after the fall of Samaria (Knoppers 2013: 57–63). It is possible that, under Josiah, Benjamin, and therefore also Bethel, became part of Judah. There is indeed a very strong probability that Benjamin became part of Judah during the seventh century BCE, as can be seen by the fact that, according to the book of Jeremiah, the prophet comes from Benjamin but is living in Jerusalem and that, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, the Babylonians established the Judean government at Mizpah. It is therefore quite possible that the kingdom of Judah was able to incorporate Benjaminite territory under Josiah. This would also fit with the fact that the conquest account in the book of Joshua deals mostly with Benjaminite territory, so that one could understand the accounts in Josh 3–8* as legitimating the integration of Benjamin into Judah (Nelson 1981; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 94–96[3]). If the theory according to which Benjamin became part of Judah during the seventh century BCE is plausible, this does not however imply that Bethel was destroyed. Thus, archaeology cannot prove the historicity of the Josianic cult centralization.

A comparative approach can at least show that religious reforms in the ANE took place quite often and that kings (or their counselors) tried to enforce the cult of one specific deity by changing the official cult of their kingdom (Na'aman 2006). In Egypt, Akhenaton (1353–1337) undertook a kind of "centralization of worship" in which he decreed the veneration of a single god (for the question of the so-called monotheism of this king, see Cannuyer 2014). When capturing Babylon in 689 BCE, the Assyrian king Sennacherib destroyed the temples and statues or deported them. Against Babylon, he raised the royal city of Assur and tried to promote the god Assur to the place of the highest god. He had the creation epic *Enuma Elish* rewritten in order to replace Marduk with Assur, who becomes the "god of heaven and earth." His successor Esarhaddon, however, restored the worship of Marduk and other Babylonian divinities. Nabonidus (556–539) apparently tried to impose an exclusive worship of the lunar deity, Sin. His long stay at Teima (553–544) remains mysterious. Did he want to create a new capital for Sin in this place (for a discussion, see Beaulieu 1989)? All these reforms, which aim at elevating a divinity to the rank of a principal deity, proceed from the initiative of a king or his counselors. The fact that the reform of Josiah did not last is quite comparable with the cases of the "reforming kings" we just mentioned.

The best evidence for a political and religious reform under the reign of Josiah comes from the cultic symbols and practices that were banned from the Jerusalem temple (Uehlinger 2005). Some of the actions described in 2 Kgs 23 refer to the astral cult that was an important part of neo-Assyrian religious ideology. The refer-

3. Although they are much too optimistic in attributing texts such as Josh 1:7–9 or 8:30–35 to the Josianic Deuteronomist. These texts clearly belong to the very latest additions to the books.

ence to the horses and chariots of Shamash (v. 11) is historically plausible in the context of an Assyrian influence on the Judean cult.[4] The reform report also mentions a special class of priests called *kəmārîm*. According to v. 5, Josiah "suppressed the *kəmārîm* whom the kings of Judah had established to burn incense on the high places of the cities of Judah and the area around Jerusalem. He also suppressed those who burned incense in honor of Baal, the Sun, the Moon, the constellations, and also the army of the heavens" (2 Kgs 23:5). The *kəmārîm* (the word is probably of Aramean origin) seem to have been a group of priests particularly connected with the cult of astral deities; they were perhaps a class of priests "imported" into Judah in the context of the Assyrian occupation. The comment in v. 12 that "the king demolished the altars in the chamber of Ahaz that the kings of Judah had made on the terraced roof" may be a reference to a cult devoted to the army of the heavens whose rituals were practiced on the roofs of Jerusalem. King Ahaz had been a vassal of the king of Assyria, and it is possible that he had erected a place of worship on a terrace to show his loyalty (2 Kgs 16).

The destruction of the symbol of the goddess Ashera (2 Kgs 23:6) seems also quite plausible, especially if this goddess can by identified with the "Queen of Heaven" mentioned in Jer 44. This text shows that the Judeans who fled to Egypt understood the destruction of Jerusalem as vengeance by the goddess whose cult Josiah or his advisers had tried to prohibit (Jer 44:16–18). The elimination of the goddess fits well with the monolatric tendency that accompanied the idea of centralization. It is possible that the "historical" reform was more concerned with Jerusalem than with the destruction of other sanctuaries. It was probably an attempt to transform the city of Jerusalem, which had grown tremendously during the eighth century (Gadot 2015), into a real capital. There may also be tax issues behind the idea of centralization (Niehr 1995).

The attempt to centralize the cult of YHWH in Jerusalem can be related to a graffito from Khirbet Beit Lei, which is often dated to the seventh century BCE and whose inscription one can reconstruct and read according to Naveh as follows: "YHWH is the god of the whole land (earth?), the mountains of Judah belong to him, to the god of Jerusalem" (see also Lemaire 1976; Naveh 2001; for a discussion of different readings, see Zevit 2001: 421–27; Lemaire 2011: 50). If the above reconstruction and translation is correct, the graffito attests to the fact that there were indeed attempts to transform the "YHWH of Jerusalem" into the only god of Judah.

The elimination of the Assyrian cult objects from the temple of Jerusalem may not so much reflect an "anti-Assyrian" policy as it is often argued (for instance Arneth 2007); it may simply be the consequence of the fact that the Assyrians had abandoned the Levant, which came again under the control of Egypt, of which Josiah probably became a vassal. In this respect, the "cleansing" of the Temple could

4. The importance of this sun-cult in Jerusalem is also indicated in a passage from the Book of Ezekiel: "At the entrance to the temple of YHWH between the vestibule and the altar, there were about 25 men who turned their backs to the temple of YHWH and their faces to the east; they prostrated themselves toward the east before the sun" (8:16).

also be understood as a sign of "good will" toward the Egyptians. In a way, this would be just the opposite action of the "cult reform" of Hezekiah, who after 701 became again an Assyrian vassal. According to 2 Kgs 18:4, he destroyed "the bronze serpent which Moses had made." This serpent, attributed to Moses,[5] is probably a sign of Egyptian influence (Keel 2007: 422–29), and the fact that Hezekiah eliminated this image may reflect his forced reversion to the status of vassal of the King of Assyria. Thus, it might have seemed politically wise to get rid of this Egyptian symbol (Swanson 2002).

The historical reform of Josiah was probably limited to Jerusalem. Its aim was to take into account the new status of the city on a symbolic and economic level. Since Jerusalem was to become the only legitimate place of Yahwistic worship, YHWH was transformed into the only god to worship (monolatry). The elimination of the Assyrian-inspired cult objects reflected the decline of the Assyrians in the Empire, which allowed Josiah to annex the territory of Benjamin. This annexation was probably first tolerated by the Egyptian king, who later, however, brought the reign of Josiah to an abrupt end. According to the biblical record, Josiah ascended to the throne at the age of eight (2 Kgs 22:1). This means that he did not really rule for the first ten years but was under the custody of his advisers.[6] The real authors of the reform were probably the two groups associated with the state-officer Shaphan and the priest Hilkiah. This reform indeed reflects interests of Yahwistic priests as well of state officers, both of whom were interested in a reduction of royal power.

The Book of Deuteronomy and the Reform of Josiah

According to 2 Kgs 22 the reform starts with the discovery of a "book" that is read to and by the king and initiates the cultic changes that are described in 2 Kgs 23. It has often been argued that this book should be identified with the first edition of the book of Deuteronomy, and this is certainly right in the sense that the *Ur-Deuteronomium* was written under Josiah. But in the present form of 2 Kgs 22–23, the reading of the "book" in 2 Kgs 22–23 may in all probability allude to the Pentateuch. Some scenes in the reform account, often suspected to be additions, support this view. The eradication of the cult of Molech (23:10) is not based on a law in Deuteronomy but on prohibitions in the book of Leviticus (18:21; 20:2–5). Equally, the *teraphim* (23:24) are not mentioned in Deuteronomy but appear as "pagan idols" in Genesis (31:19, 34–35). The expression "book of the covenant" appears in Exod 24:7 but not in Deuteronomy. This means that 2 Kgs 22–23 were revised and expanded during the Babylonian and Persian periods in order to transform the report about the reform into a story about the origins of the Pentateuch.

The story of Josiah's reform in 2 Kgs 22–23 is indeed a complex text whose first edition might stem from the Josianic period. Nadav Naʾaman has argued that the

5. The late texts in Num 21:4–9 attempts to give a theological interpretation for this serpent.

6. See the parallel in 2 Kgs 12 (a text that may have inspired the presentation of Josiah's restoration of the Temple), where the young Jehoash comes to the throne at the age of seven: the state affairs are handled by the priest Jehoiiada.

story of the discovered book, the so-called *Auffindungsbericht*, was part of the oldest form of the story, an independent narrative, which was used by the Dtr redactor of the books of Kings (Na'aman 2011). This discovery of the book was absolutely necessary for the original account, which needed a starting point for Josiah's reform. But in the parallel account in 2 Chr 34–35, Josiah undertook his reform without any book, which was found only ten years later. In the Chronicler's account, the book is not needed for the reform; Huldah's oracle is sufficient.

Furthermore, the mention of the discovered book in 2 Kgs 22:8 interrupts the scene in vv. 7 and 9, which deal with the money that is given to the craftsmen and the workers, a fact that also supports the idea of a later insertion (Levin 1984). In the narrative context of 2 Kgs 22, the finding of the law book is also somewhat astonishing, since there is no story in the Former Prophets or elsewhere that tells how this book had been lost.

The discovery of the book and its public reading transforms the literary *topos* of the discovery of the temple's foundation stone that is largely attested in many Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions. In 2 Kgs 22, the foundation stone is replaced by the book, which has become the "true" foundation of the Yahwistic cult. In 2 Kgs 23, Josiah purifies the temple of all cultic symbols and transforms it into a proto-synagogue, a place where the book of the Law is being read to the people. The replacement of the traditional sacrificial cult by the reading of the Torah in 2 Kgs 22–23 constitutes a strategy underlining the importance of the written scroll. The editors of Josiah's reform prepare for the transformation of Judaism into a "religion of the book." 2 Kings 22–23 in its final form is about the disappearance of the king in favor of the book. As Françoise Smyth has said, "The monarchy established according to the rigour of the written Law of YHWH has no other proper future except that of the blind peace of the tombs. . . . There remains the scribe . . . the true servant of the book that was read" (Smyth 2000: 356–57).

The first edition of the scroll of Deuteronomy, however, was written in order to provide ideological support for the reform. The strong parallels between the earliest texts of the book of Deuteronomy and the Loyalty Oath of Esarhaddon (VTE) suggest that the authors of the "Ur-Deuteronomium" knew this text. This means that we can establish a terminus a quo of 672 BCE for the first edition of Deuteronomy. A certain number of scholars prefer, however, to date the origins of Deuteronomy to the Babylonian period (Pakkala 2009), with the argument that the idea of cult-centralization would be a utopian invention of the exilic period. It is, however, not clear why later authors or redactors would have been interested in adapting a Neo-Assyrian treaty. The recent discovery of a copy of VTE in the temple of Tell Tayinat (Lauinger 2012) "confirms the Assyrian employment of this text with its western vassals" (Levinson and Stackert 2012: 132) and makes it very plausible that there was a copy of this treaty in the temple of Jerusalem (Steymans 2013).

In a seventh century BCE context, Deut 6:4, which insists on the fact that YHWH is "one" (*Yhwh ʾḥd*), could indeed be understood as the motto of the so-called Josianic reform: there is only one YHWH, and this is not the YHWH of Samaria, of Teman and other cultic places, but the YHWH of Jerusalem. This opening of the first edition

of the scroll of Deuteronomy was probably followed directly by the oldest layer of the centralization law in Deut 12:13–18, which in its primitive form stated that YHWH had chosen his *maqôm*[7] and probably even mentioned the name of Jerusalem, which later in the process of the promulgation of the Pentateuch was omitted in order to make Deut 12 also acceptable for the Samarians (Römer 2005: 58–61).

Josiah and the "Law of the King" in Deuteronomy

Contrary, however, to Finkelstein's and Silberman's opinion, the "Law of the King" in Deut 17:14–20, although often dated to the seventh century BCE (e.g., Levinson 2001; Dutcher-Walls 2002), does not belong to the first edition of the "Josianic Deuteronomy." On the contrary, this passage is probably a very late, post-Dtr insertion in the context of the revision of Deuteronomy in order to make it the last book of the Torah (Römer 2013; Rückl 2016: 295–318). It can easily be demonstrated that the author of this passage already knows the Deuteronomistic History in its exilic edition. The opening in Deut 17:14 ("when you have entered the land and you say: 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me'") foreshadows the first story about the installation of monarchy (1 Sam 8:5). The author of 1 Sam 8, however, was apparently unaware of Deut 17:14–20, since Samuel is presenting a quite different description of kingship in 1 Sam 8:10–18. The divine election of the king in 17:15 ("you shall surely set a king over you whom YHWH your God chooses") alludes to 1 Sam 8–12 (see 1 Sam 10:24, but also YHWH's election of David and Saul's rejection in 1 Sam 16–2 Sam 6). The prohibition of placing a foreign king on the throne (17:15) may allude to the "Phoenician" (influenced) kings of Israel or even to foreign wives, who are considered in the books of Kings as a threat to the Davidic dynasty. Or we might ask whether this is a polemic against the discourse of Second Isaiah, who presented Cyrus as YHWH's messiah. The combination of horses and Egypt (17:16) refers to various attempts by Israelite and Judahite kings to ally with Egypt, alluding to the end of the history of the Israelite and Judahite monarchy. Albertz has suggested that the prohibition against making the people return to Egypt refers to Jehoiachin's attempt to send mercenaries to Egypt in order to make Pharaoh his ally (Albertz 2009). This does not, however, provide a *terminus ad quem* for this passage, since Judean mercenaries are attested in Egypt during the entire Persian period, as shown by Elephantine and other texts. The prohibition of "many wives" in 17:16 ("He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself") is a clear allusion to Solomon's love of foreign women (1 Kgs 11: 1–3) and his wealth. But again, the report of 1 Kgs 11 was probably written without knowledge of the "law of the king," since Deut 17 is not quoted, although Solomon is heavily criticized. All these prescriptions do not give any privilege to the king;

7. According to Schenker, the Samaritan text is supported by textual witnesses from the LXX, the Old Latin, and Coptic, suggesting that we clearly do not have a late sectarian revision but a tradition that competes with the Massoretic one (Schenker 2008). The Samaritan reading is also supported by Neh 1:9, which presents itself as a quote from Moses' speech and uses the *qatal* form.

instead, they are all restrictions and contrast with what we know about royal power against an ANE background.

The conclusion in 17:18–20 stipulates that the king "shall write a copy of this Torah in presence of the Levitical priests. It shall remain with him and he shall read it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear YHWH his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes." This means that, according to Deut 17, the king is a scribe in his own way but not the mediator of the Law. The king continues copying the Mosaic Law, as Joshua had already done after conquering the land (Josh 8:32). The fact that the king shall read the book of the Law is probably an allusion to 2 Kgs 22–23 and Josiah's reading of the book. But Josiah (and all the other kings) is no longer a mediator of the Law and the covenant (as in 2 Kgs 23); in Deut 17 he has to read it for himself and to obey to it just like all the other members of the nation.

In sum, Deut 17:14–20 was inserted into Deuteronomy by a "Pentateuchal redactor" who wanted to concede the possibility that Israel may be ruled again in the future by a king; it was written for those who dreamed of restoring the Davidic dynasty—although in quite restrictive ways.

If this analysis is correct, the conclusion is that the original scroll of Deuteronomy did not contain any passage about the role and function of the king. How can this be explained? I see two possibilities: the first is that in the *Urdeuteronomium* the speaker was not yet Moses[8] but the king (Josiah), and the short form of Deuteronomy was a manifesto of his reform that was constructed in parallel to the loyalty oath of Esarhaddon. If one does not want to retain this interpretation, one could see the absence of any mention of the king as an indication of the fact that the reform of centralization was not so much Josiah's idea but more the program of the high officials of Jerusalem (especially the Shaphan family), who also wanted to strengthen their own power and to exercise some control over the king.

The End of Josiah

The end of king Josiah is reported by later Deuteronomists in a quite laconic way: "In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him; but when Pharaoh Necho met him at Megiddo, he killed him. His servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb".

This very short note contrasts with the glorious report of Josiah in 2 Kgs 23:25 and does not really explain precisely what happened. Sometimes it is argued that Josiah fell in a battle against the Egyptian king (Spieckermann 1982: 138–53) but such a battle is only mentioned in 2 Chr 35:20–25, and it is quite clear that the account in Chronicles was composed in order to make some sense out of the obscure report in 2 Kgs 23 (Römer 2016). 2 Chr 35 retells the story of Josiah's death by adopting a theology of retribution. According to the Chronicler, Necho transmitted

8. It has often been pointed out that the seventh-century BCE edition of Deuteronomy was not constructed as a fictive testament of Moses (e.g., Blanco Wissmann 2008: 204–6; Otto 2012: 263), so that the question of the original speaker must be asked (YHWH?, the king?)

a divine word to Josiah not to wage war against him, but Josiah, nevertheless, "did not listen" to the Egyptian king. The idea that Pharaoh is the mediator of a divine message fits the end of the book of Chronicles, where the Persian king Cyrus sends the exiles back to Jerusalem in the name of YHWH (2 Chr 36:23), which reflects the universalistic theology of the books of Chronicles. 2 Chr 35:20–27 wants to make Josiah responsible for his death because he did not conform to the divine warning. This passage should therefore not be used to reconstruct the historical circumstances of Josiah's end. The fact that the author of 2 Kgs 23:29–30a is so imprecise could suggest that he did not know what "really" happened at Megiddo, or—and this is more plausible—that he did not want to report it. If the historical Josiah did indeed remove Assyrian cultic symbols from the Jerusalemite temple, as argued above, he could have done so because he had meanwhile become a vassal of the Egyptian king (Talshir 1996: 217), so that his "reform" would have been tolerated by Egypt. Apparently, the politics of the annexation of Benjaminite territories and the strengthening of Jerusalem appeared to Necho as a sign of Josiah's disloyalty, so he summoned and killed him (Pfeiffer 1969: 306; Schipper 2010: 218). It is also possible that Necho II, who succeeded Psammetichus II in 610 BCE, wanted Josiah to swear a loyalty oath to him during his march to Syria-Palestine in 609 BCE in order to assist his Assyrian ally against the Babylonians (Na'aman 1991: 51–55) and, for whatever reasons, he did not find the Judean king trustworthy and killed him. The fact that Necho was opposed to the decision of the Judean aristocracy to put Jehoahaz on the throne, making another son of Josiah, Eliakim, king of Judah (2 Kgs 23:30b–34), shows that the Pharaoh was still in control of Judah. Interestingly, according to 2 Kgs 23:34, Necho "changed his name to Jehoiakim." The change of the name is of course a way to demonstrate Pharaoh's power and authority, but, if this is historical information, it would also mean that the Egyptian king respected the fact that YHWH was the deity of the ruling king.

Short Conclusion

Although the so-called "Josianic reform" did not immediately produce clear results, it was the beginning of a new status for Jerusalem, which later became the "ideological center" of Judaism. The historical Josiah was perhaps not as influential and powerful as Finkelstein and many others think, as is shown by his inglorious end. He was probably controlled a great deal by his political, economic, and religious advisers, so that it is perhaps better to speak of a "Shaphanite" reform rather than a "Josianic" reform (if the Shapahn family indeed played a major role). Be that as it may, during the reign of this king, there was much that set the stage that would later allow for—after the events of 587 BCE—a rethinking of the traditional way of national and religious identity.

Bibliography

Aharoni, Y. 1969. Arad: The Israelite Sanctuary at Arad. In: Freeman, D. and Greenfield, J. C., eds. *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*. Garden City, NY: 25–39.

Albertz, R. 2009. A Possible *terminus ad quem* for the Deuteronomic Legislation? A Fresh Look at Deut. 17:16. In: Galil, G., Geller, M. and Millard, A., eds. *Homeland and Exile: Bibli-*

cal and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded (VTSup 130). Leiden: 271–96.
Amsler, S. 1988 (2nd ed.). Zacharie 1–8. In: Amsler, S., Lacocque, A. and Vuilleumier, R., *Aggée, Zacharie, Malachie* (CAT XIc). Geneva: 41–125.
Arneth, M. 2007. Die antiassyrische Reform Josias von Juda. In: Achenbach, R., Arneth, M. and Otto, E., eds. *Tora in der Hebräischen Bibel. Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte und synchronen Logik diachroner Transformationen* (BZAR 7). Wiesbaden: 246–74.
Blanco Wißmann, F. 2008. *«Er tat das Rechte»: Beurteilungskriterien und Deuteronomismus in 1 Kön 12–2 Kön 25* (AThANT 93). Zürich.
Blenkinsopp, J. 2003. Bethel in the Neo-Babylonian Period. In: Lipschits, O. and Blenkinsopp, J., ed. *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*. Winona Lake, IN: 93–107.
Cannuyer, C. 2014. La religion d'Akhénaton: monothéisme ou autre chose? Histoire et actualité d'un débat égyptologique. In: Lebrun, R., Devos, J. and Van Quickelberghe, E., eds. *Deus Unicus* (Homo Religiosus II/14). Turnhout: 77–117.
Dutcher-Walls, P. 2002. The Circumscription of the King: Deuteronomy 17:16–17 in Its Ancient Social Context. *JBL* 121: 601–16.
Finkelstein, I. and Silberman, N. A. 2001. *The Bible Unearthed: Archeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts*. New York et al.
Finkelstein, I. and Singer-Avitz, L. 2009. Reevaluating Bethel. *ZDPV* 125: 33–48.
Gadot, Y. 2015. In the Valley of the King: Jerusalem's Rural Hinterland in the 8th–4th Centuries BCE. *Tel Aviv* 42:
Herzog, Z. 2001. The Date of the Temple at Arad: Reassessment of the Stratigraphy and the Implications for the History of Religion in Judah. In: Mazar, A., ed. *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (JSOTSup 331). Sheffield: 156–78.
Keel, O. 2007. *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (Orte und Landschaften der Bibel Bd. 4, 1). Göttingen.
Kelso, J. 1968. *The Excavation of Bethel* (AASOR 39). Cambridge, Mass.
Knoppers, G. N. 2013. *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations*. Oxford.
Lauinger, J. 2012. Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary. *JCS* 64: 87–123.
Lemaire, A. 1976. Prières en temps de crise: les inscriptions de Khirbet Beit Lei. *RB* 83: 558–68.
Lemaire, A. 2011. Le «Dieu de Jérusalem» à la lumière de l'épigraphie. In: Arnould-Béhar, C. and Lemaire, A., eds. *Jérusalem antique et médievale. Mélanges en l'honneur d'Ernest-Marie Laperrousaz* (CREJ). Paris /Louvain / Walpole, MA: 49–58.
Levin, C. 1984. Joschija im deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk. *ZAW* 96: 351–71.
Levinson, B. M. 2001. The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of the Torah. *VT* 51: 511–34.
Levinson, B. M. and Stackert, J. 2012. Between Covenant Code and Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty: Deuteronomy 13 and the Composition of Deuteronomy. *JAJ* 3: 123–40.
Otto, E. 2012. *Deuteronomium 1–11* (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament). Freiburg i.B.
Na'aman, N. 2006. The King Leading Cult Reforms in His Kingdom: Josiah and Other Kings in the Ancient Near East. *ZAR* 12: 131–68.
Na'aman, N. 1991. The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah. *Tel Aviv* 18: 3–71.
Na'aman, N. 2011. The «Discovered Book» and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform. *JBL* 130: 47–62.
Naveh, J. 2001. Hebrew Graffiti from the First Temple Period. *IEJ* 51: 194–207.
Nelson, R. D. 1981. Josiah in the Book of Joshua. *JBL* 104: 531–40.

Niehr, H. 1995. Die Reform des Joschija. Methodische, historische und religionsgeschichtliche Aspekte. In: Groß, W., ed. *Jeremia und die «deuteronomistische Bewegung«* (BBB 98). Weinheim: 33–56.

Pakkala, J. 2009. The Date of the Oldest Edition of Deuteronomy. *ZAW* 121: 388–401.

Römer, T. 2005. *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction*. London.

Römer, T. 2013. La loi du roi en Deutéronome 17 et ses fonctions. In: Artus, O., ed. *Loi et justice dans la Littérature du Proche-Orient ancien* (BZAR 20). Wiesbaden: 99–111.

Römer, T. 2016. Der Pharao als Gotteswortvermittler: Josia und Josef. In: Jenni, H. and Saur, M., eds. *Nächstenliebe und Gottesfurcht. Beiträge aus alttestamentlicher, semitistischer und altorientalischer Wissenschaft für Hans-Peter Mathys zum 65. Geburtstag* (AOAT 439). Münster: 339–49.

Rückl, J. 2016. *A Sure House: Studies on the Dynastic Promise to David in the Books of Samuel and Kings* (OBO 281). Fribourg – Göttingen.

Schenker, A. 2008. Le Seigneur choisira-t-il le lieu de son nom ou l'a-t-il choisi? L'apport de la Bible grecque ancienne à l'histoire du texte samaritain et massorétique. In: Jokiranta, J. and Voitila, A., eds. *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*. Leiden: 339–51.

Smyth, F. 2000. When Josiah Has Done his Work or the King Is Properly Buried: A Synchronic Reading of 2 Kings 22.1–23.28. In: de Pury, A., Römer, T. and Macchi, J.-D., eds. *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (JSOTSup 306). Sheffield: 343–58.

Steymans, H. U. 2013. Deuteronomy 28 and Tell Tayinat. *Verbum et Ecclesia (online)* 34: 13 p.

Swanson, K. A. 2002. A Reassessment of Hezekiah's Reform in Light of Jar Handels and Iconographic Evidence. *CBQ* 64: 460–69.

Talshir, Z. 1996. The three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography (2 Kings XXIII 29–30; 2 Chronicles XXXV 20–5; I Esdras I,23–31). *VT* 46: 213–36.

Uehlinger, C. 2005. Was there a Cult Reform under King Josiah? The Case for a Well-Grounded Minimum. In: Grabbe, L. L., ed. *Good Kings and Bad Kings: The Kingdom of Judah in the Seventh Century B.C.E.* (LHB/OTS 393). London New York: 279–316.

Ussishkin, D. 1988. The Date of the Judaean Shrine at Arad. *IEJ* 38: 142–57.

Schipper, B. U. 2010. Egypt and the Kingdom of Judah under Josiah and Jehoiakim. *TA* 37: 200–226.

Würthwein, E. 1976. Die Josianische Reform und das Deuteronomium. *ZThK* 73: 395–423.

Würthwein, E. 1984. *Die Bücher der Könige. 1.Kön 17–2.Kön. 25* (ATD 11,2). Göttingen.

Zevit, Z. 2001. *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*. New York.