A HISTORY OF GESHUR
IN THE LATE BRONZE AGE AND IRON AGE PERIODS

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of
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ABSTRACT

Timothy M. Crow: A History of Geshur in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Periods.

The principal aim of this study is to explore the Late Bronze and Iron Age horizons of Geshur, and seek to define the nature of Geshur as an historical entity based on limited textual and archaeological evidence. The thesis is structured around six chapters which provide the framework for understanding Geshur:

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to Geshur, and sets forth the methodological issues of how the thesis views the use of historical sources and the archaeological record. The author proceeds on the premise that an independent use of both data sources followed by their convergences will enhance the understanding of Geshur.

Chapter 2 studies the landscape of Geshur, the quality of the land and its impact on the flow of history in the region. The topography and environmental factors of Geshur reveal that the area to the east of the Sea of Galilee was an ideal locale for the emerging of a socially complex entity, with the necessary rain and natural resources to sustain life.

Chapter 3 is an overview of the grander political landscape of the ancient Near East in the LB-Iron Age. A proper understanding of Geshur begins with placing it contextually in its geopolitical environment. The analysis, though brief, of sociopolitical structures over a broad range of spatial and temporal contexts helps to frame a perspective on any localized event.

Chapter 4 in many ways was the "point of origin" for this investigation. The only reason why this research project is called a "History of Geshur" is the biblical references which exist for Geshur. This chapter offers an analysis of all the direct citations of Geshur in the Bible, which are found in the Deuteronomistic History. However, also explored are areas from the Bible where one might expect a citation of Geshur, but there is none. Even after all direct references mentioning Geshur end, there is ongoing activity recorded in the Bible in this area.

Chapter 5 is an analysis of textual data which derives from non-biblical sources. Since Egypt and Assyria used Palestine as a travel corridor and their kings were known for campaigning in the southern Levant, one assumes that there may be references to either Geshur or the area around Geshur found in these sources.

Chapter 6 moves the research from the textual data to the archaeological record. The archaeological data with which an analysis of LB-Iron Age Geshur is constructed derives from the empirical assessment of the stratigraphy and of the archaeological record of sites and surveys in its region. After this, the second half of the chapter utilizes a "ground plan approach" to explore if there are indicators in the archaeological record that may point towards or reflect upon the social, political, and perhaps religious spheres of Geshur.

All six chapters when combined reveal that Geshur was ideally situated in an environmental and political landscape by which it benefitted. By combining the textual and archaeological record it seems possible that Geshur may have started emerging in the Late Bronze Age, followed by an observable socially complex Iron Age polity, with its end possibly coming during the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III in 733/32 B.C.

Acknowledgments

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T.M.C.

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Chapter 1

Geshur: an Introduction

1.1 Introduction

How does one study the history of any place, people or polity that is named in a literary source, and thus, perhaps, serves as a possible textual source to be explored? Can ancient so-called historical sources provide a window into understanding places that may be named in them? Should the study of any place, people or polity cease with the study of the textual source? Would hermeneutical issues of possibly embedded ideological elements in the source material modify the "read" of the textual source? These are a few introductory questions that historians and archaeologists may struggle with when trying to illuminate an ancient people, especially if there are few extant references, and the references that exist are found embedded in the writing of another people.

This thesis begins with many of these questions waiting to be probed, as it explores Geshur, a place mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. This thesis will explore the Late Bronze and Iron Age horizons of Geshur, and seek to define the nature of Geshur as an historical entity based on limited textual and archaeological evidence. Even in stating that the explicit problem to be explored is the nature of Geshur as an historical entity presumes that Geshur existed as a people, place or polity. It may be that Geshur existed as merely construct in the greater narrative of the Hebrew Bible, and care is needed in finding the conversation between the place of Geshur in the Hebrew Bible, and possibly the people, place or polity that may have, or not, emerged in the space to the east of the Sea of Galilee in the Late Bronze and Iron Age periods.

There are no rigidly prescribed systems which dictate how to embark on a study of an ancient people, place or polity. In 1961 Benjamin Mazar, the doyen of Israeli

Biblical Archaeology, wrote an article, "Geshur and Maacah," which has become the standard reference article for Geshur.[1] However, no one has undertaken a careful study of Geshur, one that goes beyond retelling the events of the Hebrew Bible. Therefore there is no body of research with which to interact. Conventional studies on polities in antiquity have a series of chapters on topography, environmental or political landscape, textual sources by periods, perhaps an archaeological focus, religion, art, literature, institutions, and so on, if one is fortunate to have the necessary data. This approach falls into a comprehensible paradigm which satiates our desire for at least an appearance of logic and order. This way forward creates areas of knowledge which can be conveniently integrated into the current patterns of study, and will serve as a foundation for a more nuanced, and perhaps sophisticated, exploration of Geshur, as more data becomes available.[2]

1.2 Towards a definition of Geshur

A cursory read of the Bible portrays Geshur as a polity east of the Sea of Galilee, north of the Yarmuk river, south of Mt. Hermon, and perhaps west of the plains of Bashan (Joshua 12:4-5; 13:11-13). While this area is more accessible today, in antiquity the geographical area was on the periphery of the major Levantine trade routes. The word

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[1]See Mazar, B. 1961. "Geshur and Maacah." *JBL* 80: 16-28, reprinted with revisions in Mazar, B. 1986. *The Early Biblical Period: Historical Studies*. Jerusalem: IES, pp.113-25; more recently, M. Kochavi has conducted excavations in the "Land of Geshur", but has yet to publish a final report, see Kochavi, M. *et al.* 1992. "Rediscovered! The Land of Geshur." *BAR* 18/4: 30-44, 84-85; Kochavi, M.. 1996. "The Land of Geshur: History of a Region in the Biblical Period." Pp. 184-201 in Geva, H. (ed.) *EI* 26 (*Joseph Aviram Volume*.) Jerusalem: IES.

[2]See for example the recent volumes by Routledge, B. 2004. *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press and Schloen, D. 2001. *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

גשור in Hebrew means, "bridge" or "land of bridges", and is, also, a common noun in Modern Hebrew for "bridge."[3] It can be used as a *gentilicium* referring to a people, הגשורי, the Geshurites (Deut 3:14; Josh 12 5; 13:11-13), or as the genitive in a construct phrase for "land", e.g., מלך גשור (2 Sam 3:3, 13:37). In Akkadian the verb *gašāru(m)* means "to be(come) strong, powerful" and used in Bab. M/NA of deity, king, lion or weapon.[4] The Akkadian noun, *gišru*, means "bridge"or "toll (payable for the passage of a boat through a floating bridge)."[5]

It has been commonly accepted, perhaps through the influence of *BDB,* that besides the Geshurites who dwelt east of the Sea of Galilee there was another "Geshurite people" who dwelt near Philistia, this will be addressed in chapter 4.

1.3 Towards a methodology

While one can advance the argument that archaeology and ancient history are two disciplines, two totally different monoliths, which do not and, possibly, should not converge – with the first based on *realia* and the second texts. It is my belief that they can share equitable status in constructing the history of an ancient society.[6] A historical argument which weds texts and archaeology, in search of dialogue, needs diligence not

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[3]See *BDB*, p.178.

[4]See Black, J., George, A., and Postgate, N. 2000. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian.* (2nd corrected edition) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, p. 91.

[5]See Gelb, I. (ed.) 1956. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. G. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 107-08.

[6]This debate continues in many fields of research, for areas concerning Greece and Rome see the essays in Sauer, E.W. (ed.) 2004. *Archaeology and Ancient History: breaking down the boundaries.* London: Routledge; see also the essays in Knapp, A.B. (ed.) 1992. *Archaeology, Annales, and Ethnohistory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, and with a "biblical perspective" see Millard, A.R. and Hoffmeier, J.K. (eds.) 2004. *The Future of Biblical Archaeology.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Dever, W. 2001. *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

to let the one influence the other lest the whole research agenda ends in circular reasoning. As noted by A.E. Glock, "To say that archaeology "confirms" one's interpretation of texts or that texts "explain" one's analysis of the archaeological record proves nothing, because the two statements are made to say the same thing."[7] Thus, the danger is that if texts and material culture agree in their findings, then both may be correct or both may be incorrect. Therefore, it is critical where written sources exist that they and any possible archaeological counterpart be studied independently, then synthesized. Naturally, many archaeological research proposals, in the historical period, begin with an *a priori* grid, e.g., here a research agenda which studies the history of Geshur versus the settlement pattern east of the Sea of Galilee in the LB-Iron Age. Albeit, it is imperative that the research needs to develop two separate sets of hypotheses, then the process of inter-connectivity can commence. Archaeological data, the evidence which is "given" by excavations and surveys, will never be complete; the data is forever evolving, creating new questions and new problems. Textual sources will never allow one to enter the archaeological landscape, they are limited and serve a distinct purpose within the society. However, wedded, they may help more fully understand a place, people or polity.

1.3.1 The Historian's Text

The historian in many ways is at an advantage due to the nature of written sources; sources provide the needed information as to names of kings, places, and events. However the historian bears a responsibility to handle the sources with great

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[7]Glock, A.E. 1983. "Texts and Archaeology at Tell Ta'annek." *Berytus* 31: 57-66, here p. 57.

hermeneutical precision.[8] History in its profanest definition is the study of what people have done, said, and thought in the past. The historian has to skillfully "read" the ancient sources in reconstructing any ancient polity. With ANE historians, it was, perhaps, W.W. Hallo who introduced the dictum of the Dutch scholar, Jan Huizinga, "History is the intellectual form in which civilization renders an account to itself of its past," but most likely it was "popularized" by John Van Seters in his book, *In Search of History*.[9] It is valid to "read" any ancient accounts to better understand how ancients viewed themselves, and how they wanted to be viewed by the reader. When handling ancient texts Liverani states, "The thing to do should be to view the document not as a "source of information," but as information in itself; not as an opening on a reality laying [sic] beyond, but as an element which makes up reality...not as an informer, but as a member of the community under study."[10] Thus, a comprehensive reading of the text is required where one reads it from the vantage point of the situation in which the author(s) lived, and understands the text first on its own terms before any modern hermeneutic of

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[8]On the theory of hermeneutics in ancient studies, see Schloen 2001: 7-28.

[9]See Hallo, W.W. 1978. "Assyrian Historiography Revisited." *EI* 14: 1-7; Van Seters, J. 1983. *In Search of History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, here p. 1; Huizinga, J. 1936. "A Definition of the Concept of History." Pp. 1-10 in Klibansky, R. and Paton, H. (eds.) 1936. *Philosophy and History*. Oxford: Clarendon, here p. 9; Redford, D.B. 1986a. *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals, and Daybooks*. Mississauga: Benben; Grayson, A.K. 1980. "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: Assyria and Babylonia." *Or* 49: 140-94; Hoffner, H. 1980. "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites." *Or* 49: 283-332; Tadmor, H. and Weinfeld, M. (eds.) 1984. *History, Historiography and Interpretation*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press. A quick perusal of the essays in Millard, A.R., Hoffmeier, J.K. and Baker, D.W. (eds.) 1994. *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, reveals that Huizinga's definition is the starting point for much of ANE historiography.

[10]See Liverani, M. 1973. "Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts." *Or* 42: 178-194, here p. 179.

reconstructing the past is derived from the text – or today, deconstructing the text to seek possible unacknowledged preconceptions or assumptions which may be embedded in the text. In the end, the historian needs diligence not simply to "proof-text" or extract any stray piece of historical data from the text without first understanding the whole. The historian needs to understand the immediate context of the ancient author(s), which includes the greater context[11], in order to ascertain motive and manners of the text, from all vantage points. Furthermore Averbeck notes,

> In the study of a historical text there are four distinct foci that are possible: (1) the events and circumstances of the past with which the author of the document has concerned himself, (2) the account that the author has produced and that is now the immediate object of investigation, (3) the scholar's understanding of the account itself, and (4) the scholar's reconstruction of the events and circumstances that were past from the point of view of the author of the document...Numbers two and three are the crux, making the philological, literary, cultural, and historiographical finesse of the scholar the heart of the process of doing history today.[12]

Unfortunately, for the history of Geshur there are no existing indigenous written sources. So, data about Geshur is culled from neighboring "contextual sources" whether from distant kingdoms, like Assyria or Egypt, or from nearer political entities, like Israel and Judah or, possibly, the Neo-Hittite or Aramean kingdoms.[13] The use of another's national history writing when retrieving history about a polity presents another set of

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[11]See Hallo, W. 1980. "Biblical History in Its Near Eastern Setting: The Contextual Approach." Pp. 1-26 in Evans, C. *et al.* (eds.) 1980. *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method.* Pittsburgh: Pickwick, here p. 6.

[12]See Averbeck, R. 1994. "The Sumerian Historiographic Tradition." Pp. 79-102 in Millard, Hoffmeier and Baker 1994, here p. 83, n. 12.

[13]See Kitchen, K.A. 2002. "The Controlling Role of External Evidence in Assessing the Historical Status of the Israelite Monarchy." Pp. 111-130 in Long, Baker, and Wenham 2002; cf. Sader, H. 1987. *Les États araméens de Syrie.* Beirut: Franz Steiner; Dion, P. 1997. *Les Araméens à l'âge du fer: histoire politique et structure sociales*. Paris: Gabalda.

hermeneutical questions. If a local polity lay outside the panoramic sphere of larger hegemonic interests of a greater power, then one would not expect to find a reference to that polity. As noted by Millard, following Liverani[14], who stated, "Ancient writers deliberately set out the reports of military campaigns in paradigmatic form, demonstrating sequences of events, actions, and their consequences, which they saw repeated and accepted as conforming to certain patterns."[15] So, if a polity was outside one boundary or perhaps acquiesced to the hegemonic interests of the state, i.e., by obedience and/or giving tribute, then one would not expect to find any referential citation to that polity, perhaps more so in light of the nature of the paradigmatic form of conquest genre.[16] Hence, absence of citation is no proof that a polity did not exist.[17] However, where a direct citation is made, it should be understood in the context of the author and his objectives, and then be assimilated into the historical grid of the target study.

1.3.2 The Archaeologist's Text

While the historian needs to be critical in understanding the textual sources, the modern ancient-historian who uses archaeological data needs to understand how the archeological sources have been created. The historian uses "texts" which were created

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[14]See Liverani 1973: 182-83.

[15]See Millard, A.R. 1994c. "Story, History and Theology." Pp. 37-64 in Millard, Hoffmeier and Baker 1994, here p. 41.

[16]See Younger, K.L. 1990. *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing.* (JSOTSupp 98) Sheffield: JSOT Press.

[17]The absence of "x" country from "y" country's historiography is not a new phenomenon, even for larger political entities. A case in point is Assyrian references to Egypt. From Assyrian sources there appears the acknowledgment of gifts from the "king of Musri" ca. 1070 B.C. during Assur-bel-kala's reign, but then, a 220 year gap of any references to Egypt until the reign of Shalmaneser III, when soldiers are reported by him in 853 B.C. Then, another 130 year gap until Egypt appears in Sargon II's texts for 722 and 720 B.C.(Communicated in a lecture given by K.A. Kitchen).

by archaeologists. These "texts" generally fall into one of five categories, each with a specific genre, authorial intent, and target audience, all shaping them. These categories in their evolutionary line are:

1. The Preliminary Report. A short descriptive report usually written by the field director of the excavation for a popular or specialized journal. Often this report takes a stream of conscience form that rehearses the description of the excavations and activities conducted in any given "season." It may contain random pieces of information that can be extracted by the specialist, in any given research field. Generally, there is the aforementioned warning that any and all information in the report is preliminary and the author retains the right to modify the report's findings, thus, one uses the information "at his own peril." Of course, the value of this report is that data is quickly distributed to the wider scholarly community.

2. The Popular Report. This report targets the "lay public." It is usually a well-produced picture-filled report which describes a site or several seasons of excavations. There is a tendency to connect the report to a historical event of interest to the periodical's constituency. Such reports can take various forms, but in the area of the southern Levant one can find them in periodicals such as *Biblical Archaeology Review* and *Near Eastern Archaeology*.

3. The Oral Report. This report is given, usually, by the chief archaeologist of any multi-phase/discipline site at a conference or a public lecture after the excavation season has closed. The oral report can often serve as the "testing ground" for information, which the archaeologist may revise in written form. The oral report is also very descriptive, here there is the ability to postulate about the

site and advance theories without them being "codified." It gives the opportunity for all interested parties to discuss the findings with their peers.

4. The Specialized Professional Report. Almost every major excavation project is now carefully "stratified" into a multi-layer interdisciplinary team where each member is responsible for his area of expertise. The team-members of the multi-phase one-site excavation write these reports in their area of expertise. They are the typological reports which may be embedded in larger reports and they may describe, classify, date, analyze the architecture, sculpture, jewelry, pottery, glass, bones, flint and any other related object to the larger excavation. The one who writes these reports is not responsible to synthesize his findings in the context of the excavation; that is the responsibility of the chief archaeologist.

5. The Final Report. This is the final synthesis of the results of the excavation project. This report is usually undertaken by the director of the excavations who interprets the various specialized reports. Unfortunately, this report frequently never materializes, due to many reasons, thus one is left with a combination of the first four reports, which naturally includes the warning about the final accuracy of them.

All of these reports need to be used with caution, and with a general understanding of each one's hermeneutical import. These reports like any "textual read" if not carefully used can lead to erroneous interpretations, this is especially a caution for the "non-dirt" historian who may not be familiar with the process of writing

archaeological findings.[18] Colin Wells illustrates this:

> Historians who are not themselves also archaeologists tend often to accept the conclusions of an excavation report when evaluating the evidence; more often, perhaps, they take their archaeology from summaries prepared for largely the historian's benefit. From this a number of dangers arise. An archaeologist claims for instance to have found 'no evidence' for, shall we say, Augustan occupation at a particular site; the earliest pottery and coins were Flavian. The unwary historian repeats, 'This was not an Augustan site, but was first occupied in Flavian times', and uses this to elucidate Flavian strategy. Fuller study of the excavation report might however show that the archaeologist only dug in narrow trenches and over a very limited area of the site, and stopped when he got to the earliest stone buildings, with which he found Flavian pottery associated.[19]

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The common tendency in Near Eastern history and archaeology has been to argue from individual sites to cultural areas or from assemblages to people. Historians have tended to work with urban-oriented texts, and have used these to identify "ethnic" people through onomastic studies, including classifications in social hierarchies through titles, class designations, and other legal transactions. If the problem this thesis explores is the Late Bronze and Iron Age horizons of Geshur with a view to define the nature of Geshur as an historical entity, then it is prudent to integrate the archaeological data, the information gleaned from sites, surveys and excavations, with geographical and environmental studies, combined with the textual sources in order to reach a framework to understand Geshur. In order to understand the possible structure of Geshur in the LB-Iron Age period fully it is necessary to understand the areas surrounding Geshur. The relationship which existed between socio-political realities on the one hand and the ecological and socio-cultural systems can be better understood through the various

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[18]See Dever 2001, especially chapters 2 and 3.

[19]Wells, C. 1984. *The Roman Empire*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, here pp. 47-48.

archaeological surveys which have been conducted. Reconstruction of a sequence of events in the LB-Iron Age periods in the Levant may suggest a number of explanations for Geshur's presence then possible disappearance. The geographic location of any people, place, or polity will have a tremendous impact on its development, thus it is necessary to understand the relations of smaller powers vis-à-vis larger political powers. The goal(s) of this research will be carried out in five chapters, plus introductory and concluding chapters. One chapter will be given to an environmental/geographic study, one chapter to the greater context of the ANE in the LB-Iron Age periods, two chapters to the textual sources, and one chapter to the archaeological data.

Chapter 2 studies the landscape of Geshur, the quality of the land and its impact on the flow of history in the region. It is common to place a topographical/environmental study of any polity at the beginning of the research. However, in reality, and particularly here, the general boundaries of Geshur were provisionally established through the study of textual and archaeological data first. However, only when the topography and environmental factors of Geshur are properly understood can one begin to understand its place in the LB-Iron Age southern Levant.

Chapter 3 is an overview of the grander political landscape of the ancient Near East in the LB-Iron Age.[20] A proper understanding of Geshur begins with placing it contextually in its geopolitical environment. The analysis, however brief, of socio-political structures over a broad range of spatial and temporal contexts helps to frame a

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[20]It is generally understood that scholars vary on their chronology, for this thesis, the author has followed the chronological tables which are found in Bienkowski, P. and Millard, A. (eds.) 2000. *Dictionary of the Ancient Near East*. London: British Museum. . In matters regarding Egypt the author follows the low chronology of K.A. Kitchen. 1996. The Historical Chronology of Ancient Egypt: A Current Assessment. *Acta Archaeologica* 67: 1-13.

perspective on any localized event. This was Marfoe's point concerning his research in the Lebanese Biqa' valley when he stated:

> We must confront not only the recurring patterns of apparent abandonment and urban domination of Syria-Palestine, but also the alternation of fragmented nomes and unified kingdoms in Egypt, and of city-states and larger empires in Mesopotamia. The transformation of the Syro-Palestinian social landscape from a patch-work of city-states to larger territorial states, in other words, is part of the larger phenomenon of the rise and fall of Near Eastern civilizations. There is no reason to believe that various regions of the Near East underwent these changes synchronously. Yet the almost cyclical regularity of the patterns strongly suggests a complex process of socioeconomic change that cannot be explained by such facile postulations as climatic changes or barbarian migrations.[21]

Chapter 4 in many ways was the "point of origin" for this investigation. The only reason why this research project is called a "History of Geshur" is the biblical references which exist for Geshur. This chapter offers a detailed analysis of all the direct citations of Geshur in the Bible, which are primarily found in the Deuteronomistic History. However, also explored are areas from the Bible where one might expect a citation of Geshur, but there is none. Even after all direct references mentioning Geshur end, there is ongoing activity recorded in the Bible in this area.

Chapter 5 is an analysis of textual data that derives from non-biblical sources. Chapter 3 bears witness that the region around Geshur, especially to its east, was part of the greater southern Levantine "trade routes" which were an interest to Egypt and Assyria. Thus this chapter explores any direct references which may exist to Geshur or, in this case, LBA Garu (EA 256) in Egyptian sources. From the Egyptian sources it is shown that Garu was outside of Egyptian hegemonic interests in Canaan. Additionally,

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[21]Marfoe, L. 1979. "The Integrative Transformation: Patterns of Sociopolitcal Organization in Southern Syria." *BASOR* 234: 1-42.

the Assyrian sources have been investigated. Though the Assyrian kings beginning in the ninth century B.C. began to campaign in the southern Levant, at present, there is no certain direct citation to Geshur in the Assyrian sources. Any possible pertinent Egyptian or Assyrian source is studied for help in understanding Geshur.

Chapter 6 moves the research from the textual data, which can only can take one so far, to the archaeological record. It is imperative to "read" the archaeological data from any given area independently, as much as that is possible, when doing historical research. The fundamental data with which an analysis of LB-Iron Age Geshur is constructed, derives from the empirical assessment of the stratigraphy and of the archaeological record of sites and surveys in its region. This chapter explores the data primarily from the area east of the Sea of Galilee, commonly called either the Golan or Southern Syria. After the various sites are surveyed, the chapter follows the research model of Kent Flannery and the so-called "ground plan approach" exploring if there are indicators in the archaeological record that may point towards or reflect upon the social, political, and perhaps religious spheres of Geshur.[22]

In the end, the thesis will no doubt raise more questions than it answers. The common assumption that Geshur existed as a bounded polity during the archaeological horizons of the Late Bronze and Iron Age periods may be further enhanced, or may need a correction. Since this area of the Levant has been overlooked, for whatever reason, this is the beginning of understanding Geshur and a people who may have lived east of the Sea of Galilee in the LB-Iron Age. Hopefully it will also represent a "way forward" for

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[22]See Flannery, K. 1998. "The Ground Plans of Archaic States." Pp. 15-57 in Feinman, G. and Marcus, J. (eds.) *Archaic States*. Sante Fe: School of American Research Press.

understanding ancient places, and the people that occupied them: a method that seeks to engage and integrate environmental, historical, textual, and archaeological data in order to better understand the history of an ancient people.

Chapter 2

Geshur: Natural Environment

> A historian, who has never left the towns and their archives, would be surprised to discover the existence of (the mountains).
>
> – Braudel 1972: 29

2.1 Introduction

Syria during the second millennium B.C. was a melting pot of culture, tradition and peoples.[23] This is apparent in the pottery assemblages where coastal, inland, and the Euphrates pottery all differ. [24] The central part of Syria between the coast and the eastern desert can be divided into three areas: 1) Damascus; 2) Homs; and 3) Aleppo. Another distinct area, which has been overlooked, is the region south of Mount Hermon, the focus of this chapter. The neglect for this region can be attributed to: 1) the state of modern politics, 2) the method which predominates in much of archaeological research, i.e., text to tell, 3) lack of a major textual attestation, and 4) the geographical terrain. This chapter will focus on the natural environment of southern Syria, the Golan, and northern Jordan.

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[23]For the imprecision of the term, Syria, see Hitti, P. 1957. *History of Syria.* (2nd ed.) London: Macmillan, pp. 57-59; Buccellati, G. 1967. *Cities and Nations of Ancient Syria.* Roma, pp. 11-24. "Syria" should not be understood in its modern sense of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, which includes areas east of the Middle Euphrates. Here Southern Syria consists of the area east of the Sea of Galilee which includes the Golan Heights (Epstein and Gutman 1972) and the Hauran (Braemer 1984), from Mt. Hermon south to the Yarmuk river basin. For recent overviews of the archaeology of Syria, see Ackermans, P. and Schwartz, G. (eds.) 2003. *The Archaeology of Syria.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Bunnens, G. (ed.) 2000. *Essays on Syria in the Iron Age.* Louvain: Peeters.

[24]See Dornemann, R. 1987. "Some Observations on the Geographical Extent of Cultural Areas in Syria and the Transjordan." *SHAJ* 3: 275-278; Chavalas, M. 1997. "Inland Syria and the East-of-Jordan Region in the First Millennium BCE before the Assyrian Intrusions." Pp. 167-78 in Handy 1997; ibid. 1992. "Ancient Syria: A Historical Sketch." Pp. 1-21 in Chavalas, M. and Hayes, J. (eds.) *New Horizons in the Study of Ancient Syria.* Malibu: Undena; Klengel, H. 1992. *Syria 3000 to 300 B.C., a handbook of political history.* Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

2.2 Topography

2.2.1 Southern Syria

Southern Syria can be divided into three geomorphological parts: 1) the Jebel Druze, 2) the Hauran, and 3) the Golan. The Jebel Druze, also called the "lava-lands", is a fertile plain bordered on the west, north, and east by large tracts of lava-flows and extinct craters, remnants of prehistoric volcanic activity.[25] The volcanic activity in the northeastern corner of the Hauran produced an area ca. 136 x 72 km of low mountains ca. 112 km south-southeast of Damascus with the highest point, Tell Guineh, at 1,798 m. The lava-flows created two volcanic plateaus. To the northwest of the Jebel Druze is the Leja ("the refuge"), an area of 484 sq km and elevation of 6-9 m above the plain. To the east is Qura, 40 km long tongue-shaped plateau, which stretches into the eastern desert, with more lava spills in the area of al-Safa. To the west of Leja is yet another lava-field which spreads northwest and northeast of Qunaytra and curves around the southern foothills of Mt. Hermon.[26] These lava-tracts separate the Damascus region from the Hauran plain to the south, and historically served as a natural geographic barrier. Near the Leja and Jebel Druze the surface is lined with shallow wadis falling westward from Jebel Druze. The soft decomposed lava is fertile supporting the growth of cereals.[27] To the west of Jebel Druze is the Hauran which is bounded in the north by Mt. Hermon, on the east by Jebel Druze and Leja, on the west by the Jordan valley and the Sea of Galilee,

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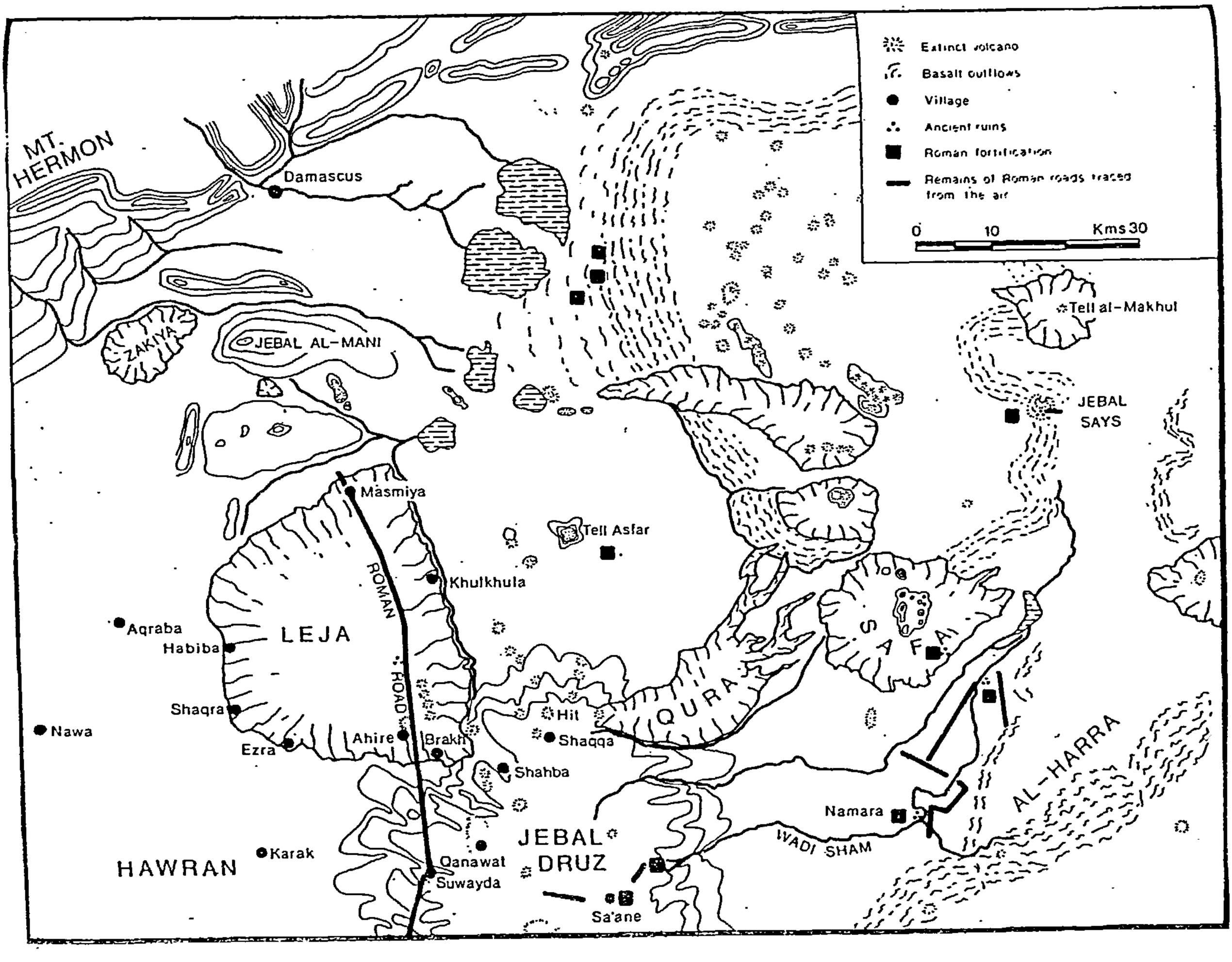
[25]See map 2.1, from MacAdam, H.I. 1986. *Studies in the History of the Roman Province of Arabia: The Northern Sector* (BAR International 295). Oxford, p. 63.

[26]Ibid., p. 48.

[27]See Great Britain. Admiralty. Naval Intelligence Division. 1943. *Geographical Handbook Series (B.R. 513), Syria.* London: H.M.S.O., pp. 29-31.

and on the south by the Yarmuk. This area can be divided in two with the area west of nahal el-'Allan considered the Golan. The northern Hauran consists of two main mountain ridges, Jebel Maani, a basaltic ridge running from north-west to south-east immediately south of the Awaj, and the Jebel Khiyareh which runs parallel ca. 5 km to the south.[28] Southward the area is marked with numerous wadis which flow west from the Jebel Druze, the area towards the east is fertile and can be cultivated once cleared of rock.



Map 2.1 Partial map modification of Southern Syria (From MacAdam 1986: 63)

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[28]Ibid., p. 32.

2.2.2 The Golan Boundaries

A study of the textual sources (see chapters 4 and 5) seem to indicate that Geshur may have been localized in the Golan region. Thus, a closer study of the topography of the Golan is needed to better understand Geshur. Two of the four boundaries of the Golan, i.e., the western and southern, are natural, and to a limited extent so are the northern and eastern borders.[29]

In the south, the Yarmuk river basin carves a clear topographical boundary. The river passes through a geological rift which divides the northern basaltic Golan plateau from the southern limestone plateau in Jordan. The severity of the slope which the Yarmuk carves was investigated by Urman:

> The Golan rises here between 375 m. and 300 m. above sea level, while the Yarmuk flows beneath it between 60 to 200 m. below sea level. The difference in height above the meeting point of Wadi er-Ruqqad with the Yarmuk (coordinates 2210 2387) is therefore 435 m. over a distance of two kilometers, that is to say on a slope of 218%. As Y. Ziv emphasizes, at the Mukheiba observation point (coordinates 2129 2935) which is south of the village of el-ʿUlyûn, the difference in the height approaches 420 m. over a course of only 800 m., in other words, a slope of 525%! Above the point where the Yarmuk gorge opens toward the Jordan Valley (coordinates 2099 2325) the Golan rises for about 500 m. over a distance of 2.25 km., i.e. a slope of 220%.[30]

Thus, the geological contour of the Yarmuk river basin is a formidable natural boundary in the south.

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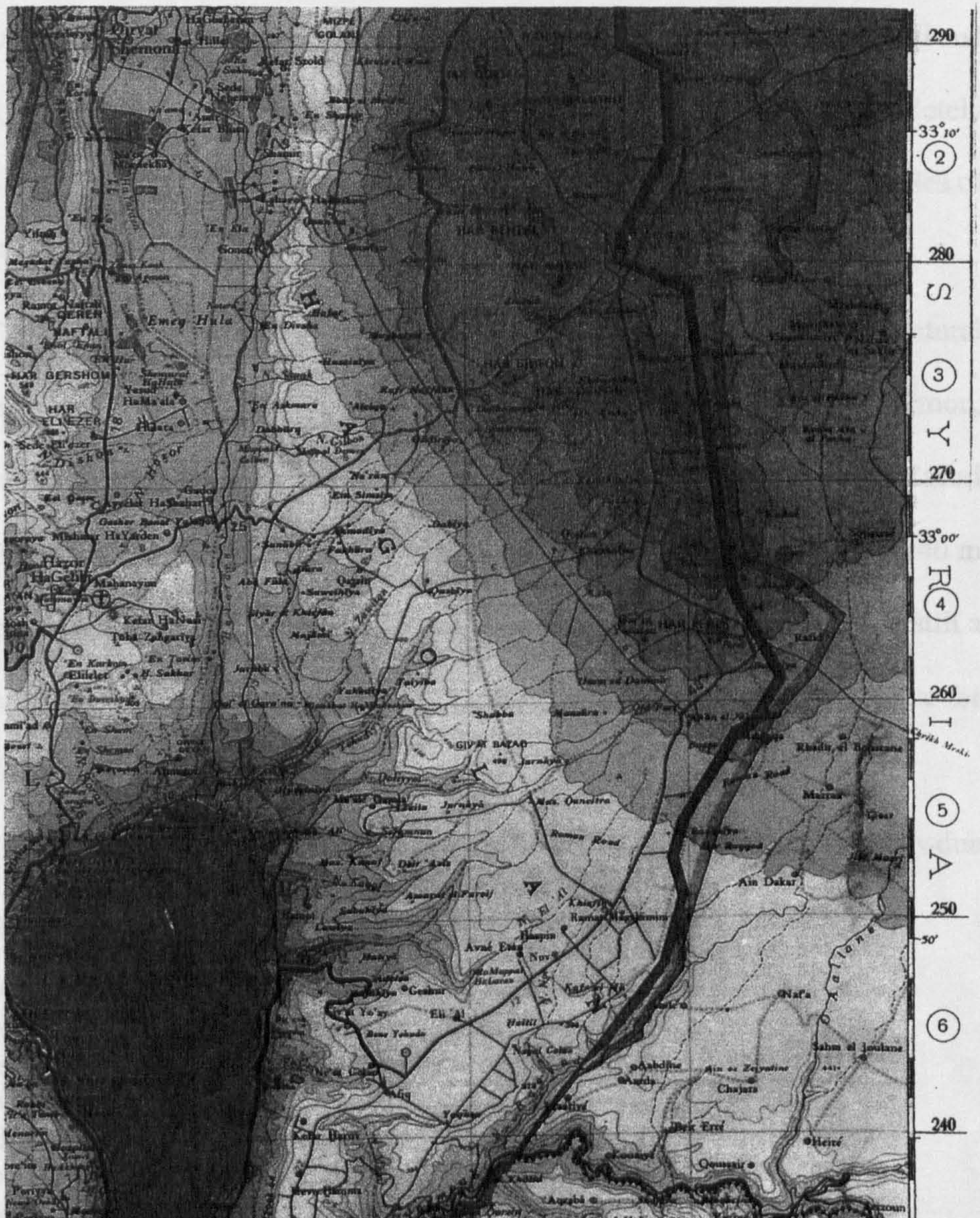
[29]See map 2.2, from the Survey of Israel 1:250,000 map, 1961; see also www.mapi.gov.il.

[30]Urman, D. 1985. *The Golan. A Profile of a Region During the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (BAR International 269). Oxford, p. 33.



Map 2.2 The Golan (from the Survey of Israel map 1:250,000, 1961)

The Jordan rift valley is an east-west divide in the southern Levant. For the Golan, the western boundary stretches from the confluences of the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers, includes the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and the Buteiha (Bethsaida) valley area

in the north. The Buteiha valley resulted from the hydrological drainage system of the basaltic upper Golan plateau which brought the settlement of large quantities of soil and minerals, and created an area of swamps and lagoons.[31] Thus, creating a completely different type of natural border, deterring settlement and travel routes north of the Sea of Galilee.[32]

The northern extent of the Golan is difficult to ascertain. Wadi Sa'ar is a natural geological boundary in the north, dividing the Golan from the base of Mount Hermon, with basaltic cliffs on its south and limestone cliffs to the north, creating the Ya'afuri Valley. From the Mt. Hermon base to Banias the river descends from 950 m to 340 m in 7 km creating a slope of 86%.[33] While not as steep as the Yarmuk valley, it is still a clear natural barrier and not conducive to settlement, but perhaps an area conducive for non-settled agro-pastoralists.[34]

The eastern boundary of the Golan is the most difficult to delineate, primarily due to no clear natural topographical feature. Urman elaborated on this:

> When one examines the hydrographic network of the region, it can be seen that Wadi er-Ruqqad drains, almost exclusively, in its upper and middle sections, the eastern slopes of the eastern line of volcanic mounds which stretches from Ya'afuri Valley in the north to the village of Butmiyye in the south. These slopes are clearly turning toward the Bashan plains and are higher than the latter by tens of meters. In the continuation of its course, Wadi er-Ruqqad drains the southern end of the western line

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[31]See Shroder, J. and Inbar, M. 1995. "Geologic and Geographic Background to the Bethsaida Excavations." Pp. 65-98 in Arav and Freund 1995; Shroder, J. *et al.* 1999. "Catastrophic Geomorphic Processes and Bethsaida Archaeology, Israel." Pp. 115-173 in Arav and Freund 1999.

[32]See Barkay, G. *et al.* 1974. "Archaeological Survey in the Northern Bashan." *IEJ* 24: 173-184, where no evidence was found for LBA or Iron Age settlement.

[33]Urman 1985: 32.

[34]Barkay 1974:173-184.

> of the volcanic mounds of the Golan in the area of Tell el-Jukhadar and Tell es-Saqi until the river enters its deep canyon (its lower section) which begins not far from Tell es-Saqi near the village of ʿEin Dakar.[35]

To the east of Wadi er-Ruqqad in its southern extreme where it enters the Yarmuk, is nahal el-Allan, which drains to its east. Urman identified this area as part of the physical-geographical area of the Bashan, and not the Golan based on the 400 m deep canyon which stretches from ʿEin Dakar to the point where the er-Ruqqad enters the Yarmuk.[36] Moving eastward is the Hauran and Jebel Druze which is largely covered with basaltic boulders and difficult to navigate, thus, if one accepts the place of Geshur in this landscape, the area provided a strong natural defense for Damascus to the north and Geshur to the west.

2.2.3 Golan Internal Physiographical Division

The Golan has several internal physiographical units. M. Enbar divided the Golan into nine regions: 1) the foothills of the Hermon, 2) the basins of the Huleh rivers, 3) the volcanic cylinder cones, 4) the basins of the Buteiha rivers, 5) the southern Golan, 6) the Ruqqad and the Yarmuk, 7) the Kinneret cliffs, 8) the Buteiha valley, and 9) the canyon gorge of the Jordan.[37] Brawer, Ziv and Ilan proposed a two-fold division of the Golan into an upper and lower part, influenced by research which divided the Galilee into upper/northern and lower/southern parts. [38] Urman follows with a two-fold division,

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[35]Urman 1985: 34.

[36]Ibid.

[37]See Enbar, M. 1971. "Physiographic Units of the Golan." *Teva va-Aretz* 13:158-61, as cited in Urman 1985: 58.

[38]See Brawer, A.J. 1949. *Eretz-Israel*. Tel Aviv. (Hebrew); Ilan, Z. 1972. "The Lower Golan and the Upper Golan." *Sali'it*. 88-89. (Hebrew); Ziv, Y. 1970. "Golan Landscapes." Pp. 2-59 in *The Golan Collection of Articles*, Tel Aviv. (Hebrew), as cited in Urman 1985: 59. This division has its roots in the Mishnah that states, "...from Kefar Hanania upwards, wheresoever sycamores do not grow, is upper

upper and lower Golan, but then sub-divides the lower Golan in five units. Thus, Urman basically has six physiographical subdivisions: 1) the upper Golan, 2) the slopes of the lower Golan descending to the Huleh valley, 3) the center of the lower Golan, 4) the southern Golan, 5) the Bethsaida Valley, and 6) the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.[39]

The slopes of the lower Golan in the north and east of the Jordan consist of cliffs and gorges carved by rivers as they descended to the Huleh valley. The southern Golan plain is bounded by slopes which descend to wadi er-Ruqqad, wadi Mas'aud, and the Yarmuk in the south, the Sea of Galilee in the west, and wadi Samak in the north. It is largely a volcanic plateau rising some 250 m in the southern portion, and has rich soil for cultivation. The western part of the southern Golan plateau descends 150 m to the Sea of Galilee's eastern shore. The slopes of the southern Golan are the natural boundary on the east, the shore on the west, wadi Kanaf in the north, and perhaps this unit extends to the Yarmuk in the south. North of the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is the Buteiha (Bethsaida) valley, a river basin where many of the Golan rivers drain. The valley is surrounded on the north, east, and south by the lower Golan slopes.[40] Finally, somewhat determined by the other four previous physiographic divisions is the center of the lower Golan. This central area is constituted of numerous river gorges which descend into the valley. The central Golan characterized by rocky gorges has a tendency for soil erosion, and was unsuitable for cultivation.

Galilee; from Kefar Hanania downwards, wheresoever sycamores grow, is Lower Galilee." *Shevi'ith* 9:2. Ilan (1972: 89) applies this to the Golan, "Wheresoever Tabor oak grows – Lower Golan, and wheresoever Tabor Oak does not grow – Upper Golan", as cited in Urman 1985: 61.

[39]Urman 1985: 63-65, fig. 11.

[40]Shroder and Inbar (1995: 65-98) further subdivided the Bethsaida valley into nine physiographic units.

Urman's subdivisions are adequately descriptive of the area's topography; they are not as fine as Enbar[41] or Shroder and Inbar[42]; however, in the end Urman emphasized the twofold division of the upper Golan and lower Golan.[43] While from a strictly geomorphological point of view this may be accepted, the division of the lower Golan into its five subdivisions is beneficial in understanding possible settlement patterns, or possible areas for non-settled pastoralists to occupy.

2.3 Soils

The geomorphological subdivision of the region suggest that there is more than one soil type.[44] Yet, the Golan is generally characterized by the presence of basalt, beyond this there are some soil distinctions. In the upper Golan, where the elevation is the highest (ca. 900 m) on the slopes oriented towards the Mediterranean, brown Mediterranean soils dominate the uneroded areas and lithosolic basaltic soils the eroded areas.[45] In the lower Golan, where there is greater geomorphological diversity, there is diversity in soils. In the southern Golan the vast majority of the soil is "basaltic protogrummusols in eroded areas and brown grummusols in uneroded areas."[46] On the steep basaltic slopes in the north and center of the western Golan there is the presence of basaltic protogrummusols and lithosols, but on the slopes on the western and southern parts above the Yarmuk gorge there are light rendzinas created on the sand, chalk, and

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[41]Enbar 1971.

[42]Shroder and Inbar 1995.

[43]Urman 1985: 65.

[44]See Adler, R. *et al* (eds.) 1985. *Atlas of Israel* (Third Edition, English - Hebrew). New York: Macmillan, sec. 9.

[45]Urman 1985: 54-57, esp. Fig. 10.

[46]Ibid., 57.

limestone outcroppings.[47] Along the Sea of Galilee and in parts of the Yarmuk valley is found a mixture of alluvial-colluvial soil together with brown soil and grummusols appearing in the uneroded areas with the addition of the light rendzinas.

2.4 Climate

Due to the short distance between the Golan and the Mediterranean Sea and the fact that the Golan rises towards the coastline, the Mediterranean Sea has a direct impact on the Golan's climate.[48] In the northern Golan the average annual temperature is 13.5 C. with the mean temperature in August at 22 C. and January 5 C. In the southern Golan, which is less oriented towards the Mediterranean, the average annual temperature is 17.5 C. with the temperature in August at 26 C. and in January 9 C. Thus, the temperatures of the Golan are relatively temperate without huge swings between the summer and winter months.

	Daily Range		Mean Daily Avg		Minimum Temp		Maximum Temp	
MONTH	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A
January	7	7	9	5	5	2	12	9
February	10	9	10	6	5	2	15	11
March	11	11	12	9	7	3	18	14
April	14	13	17	13	10	6	24	19

[47]Ibid., pp. 55, 57.

[48]See Chart 2.1, p.22; also Urman 1985: 37-42 and literature there. MacDonald (2000: 33-34; 2001: 595-601) warns that present climate is not indicative of past climates in all periods, and also admits that modern understanding of ancient climates is lacking. Goodfriend (1999) notes that the reconstruction of past climates is dependent on the identification of residual markers which are several steps removed from the process being reconstructed, thus paleoclimatic interpretation contains some degree of ambiguity (cf. Baruch 1986). Thus, a caution is needed when using modern climatological charts for the past.

	Daily Range		Mean Daily Avg		Minimum Temp		Maximum Temp	
May	16	12	20	16	12	9	28	24
June	16	15	23	20	15	12	31	27
July	15	14	25	22	18	15	33	29
August	14	14	26	22	19	16	33	29
September	16	15	25	21	17	13	33	28
October	14	13	22	17	15	10	29	23
November	11	11	16	11	10	6	21	17
December	8	8	11	7	7	3	15	11

Chart 2.1: Mean Daily Maximum and Minimum Temperatures, Mean Daily Temperatures and Temperature Range (˚C), for Months, at Golan Exp. Station (A) and Avne-Etan (B). (Adapted from Gat, Horovitz, and Checkik 2001:5)

The Golan's Mediterranean orientation also impacts the relative humidity.[49] The breeze which comes from the sea passes over the Galilee ridges in the late morning then descends ca. 800-1000 m down the Jordan rift valley, as it warms and loses humidity. Conversely, when the wind reaches the Golan plateau it picks up moisture and cools, especially in the north.

	20:00		14:00		08:00	
MONTH	B	A	B	A	B	A
January	69	82	61	69	75	81
February	68	80	59	65	74	80
March	66	75	52	57	69	71
April	62	68	44	50	65	61
May	56	64	36	40	60	49

[49]See Chart 2.2, p. 23.

	20:00		14:00		08:00	
June	54	62	34	36	60	44
July	62	71	39	42	69	55
August	63	69	40	40	72	56
September	60	70	37	38	65	53
October	55	64	37	39	54	52
November	57	68	43	48	58	65
December	65	79	56	64	70	78

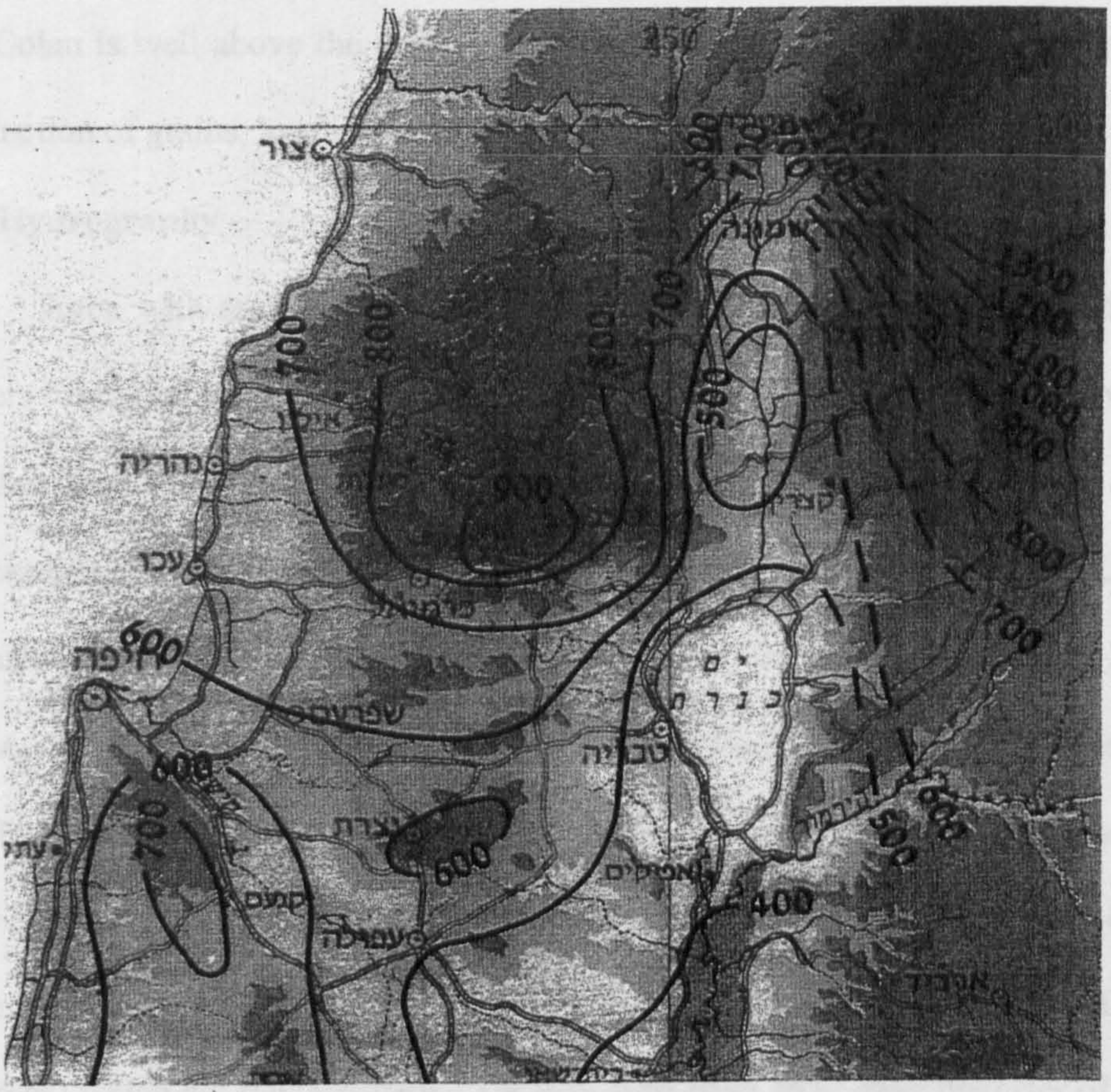
Chart 2.2 Mean Daily Relative Humidity at 08:00, 14:00, and 20:00 hours (%), for Months, at Golan Exp. Station (A) and Avne-Etan (B). (Adapted from Gat, Horovitz, and Chechik 2001:6)

This phenomenon also gives rise to a high level of average rainfall for the Golan. In the north the perennial average amount approaches 1200 mm. whereas in the south it is 500 mm.[50]

	Avne-Etan (B)		Golan Exp. Station (A)	
MONTH	Seasonal (%)	Monthly (mm)	Seasonal (%)	Monthly (mm)
September	1	1	1	3
October	3	17	5	41
November	11	68	10	92
December	21	124	19	172
January	22	130	21	188
Febraury	19	113	19	163
March	17	100	16	145
April	7	40	8	75
May	1	4	1	9
Seasonal Total	100 %	596 mm	100 %	888 mm

[50]See Chart 2.3 and Map 2.3.

Chart 2.3 (above) Average Rainfall Amounts (mm), and the % from the Average Seasonal Amount, for Months, at Golan Exp. Station (A) and Avne-Etan (B). (Adapted from Gat, Horovitz, and Chechik 2001:8)



Map 2.3 Golan annual rainfall (from Gat, Horovitz, and Chechik 2001:8)

Urman summarizes the differences in these amounts:

> The great difference between the amount of rainfall in the north and that in the south is the result of four factors: a) In the climate of Palestine, as a rule, the further north a place is located, the greater amount of precipitation it receives. This rule applies to the Golan also. b) The factor of orientation toward the Mediterranean Sea. c) The topographical height, which in the Golan increases toward the north from 300 m. to 1200 m. above sea level. d) Mount Hermon, which rises sharply above the northern parts of the Golan and therefore causes the maritime breeze with its high humidity to climb faster toward the northern Golan resulting in additional rainfall.[51]

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[51]Urman 1985: 41-42.

Naturally with the increase in precipitation and cooler temperatures in winter, in the higher elevations in the north, especially at Mt. Hermon, there is the presences of snow. Thus, the Gȯlan is well above the average precipitation required (250-300 mm) for reliable production of grains, legumes and olive trees.[52]

2.5 Hydrography

Even with an average annual precipitation between 500-1200 mm. the Golan suffers from a lack of water. This is due largely to the Golan's basaltic surface where the basalt is unable to absorb large amounts of precipitation, and instead of acting as a aquifer, the precipitation runs off the surface through a system of streams and rivers. Due to the Golan's geomorphological composition, the smaller streams and rivers empty into the broader geophysical markers, i.e., er-Ruqqad, Sea of Galilee, and the Huleh Valley, which are the principal drainage basins – the upper Jordan gorge and the Yarmuk are secondary drainage bases.[53] Where there is no natural outlet for rain runoff, and the soil conditions have a mixture of basalt and clay, there has been the creation of many natural cisterns (birkehs) which dot the landscape. These birkehs have an average diameter of 50-75 m with an average depth of 4-6 m, and hold water throughout the year.[54]

Another important source of water is the subterranean collection and drainage centers. Urman noted, "in the Golan there are fracture springs and strata springs which are common phenomena not only in those areas covered by basalt but also where there is

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[52]See Arnon, I. 1992. *Agriculture in Dry Lands*. Amsterdam: Elsevier, here pp. 323-24; Eyre, C.J. 1995. "The Agriculture Cycle, Farming, and Water Management in the Ancient Near East." *CANE* 1: 175-189.

[53]Urman 1985: 46.

[54]Ibid., pp. 47-49.

exposed limestone as is common all over Palestine and Syria."[55] The quality of the spring water was tested and found good for consumption.[56] This, however, does not include the water from the thermal springs in the southern part of the Golan at 'Ein Gofra, 'Ein Nuqeib, and Hammat Gader.

2.6 Flora

There are "2682 plant species within Israel's boundaries on the vegetation map in an area of 29,600 sq km...this number includes some 200 species that occur in the Mt. Hermon area and are absent in other districts of Israel."[57] This represents a high species richness of 9.06 species for 100 sq km. The Bible refers to the "oaks of Bashan" and the "cedars of Lebanon" (Isa 2:12-13). The biblical prophets write of a region in Bashan known for its lush and fertile forest of oak where divine judgment will bring destruction of its natural wonder (Jer 22:20; Nah 1:4; Zech 11:2). The oak from Bashan was a commodity used in ancient commerce at Tyre for the construction of boat oars (Ezek 27: 3-6). Besides the oak of Bashan, the Bible alludes to the area's fertility as an ideal place for grazing animals (Amos 4:1).

The biblical references seem to correlate with the Golan's modern floral composition. Urman noted that "... the Golan flora is characterized first of all, by maquis and forests of different kinds of oak trees."[58] The floral areas often referred to as "rich pastures" are most likely deforested areas where different flora has developed, replacing

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[55]Ibid., p. 46.

[56]A majority of the bottled water today in Israel is labeled as coming from the natural springs of Qatzrin, in the central Golan.

[57]See Danin, A. 1995. "Man and the Natural Environment." Pp. 24-39 in Levy 1995, p. 24.

[58]Urman 1985: 50.

the oak forest.[59] The Golan's floral distribution can be divided into two main regions primarily based on the altitude and climate. In the upper/northern Golan there is the presence of mixed oak maquis and forests, and in the central and southern Golan there is the tabor oak maquis and forests.[60] Another floral sub-section in the Golan, broom bush, i.e., juniper (*retama Roetam*) and Russian thistle (*Salsola vermiculata*), is found on the limestone cliffs east of the Sea of Galilee, extending to the Yarmuk. While these two are more common in desert areas, the poor soil conditions and high temperatures combined with the rocky cliffs aid these to thrive. Amongst the broom bush there exists the *poterium,* a thorn, that is also found in the limestone cliffs of the Golan. The nature and density of the thorn bushes provides an excellent natural defense for the Golan plateau.

Mt. Hermon with its peak at 2800 m creates environmental conditions different from the rest of the Golan plateau. Due to the lower temperature at high elevations precipitation in much of the area falls as snow. The elevation and location also increases the wind velocity on the slopes. From the altitude of 200 to 1200 m are found evergreen maquis dominated by *Quercus calliprinos*, from 1300 to 1700 m are found mountain forest primarily deciduous, i.e. *Quercus boissieri and libani,* as well as perennial grasses and plants, and at elevations greater than 1800 m the spiny cushion plant dominates.[61]

The Buteiha valley has a different floral composition. One finds hydrophilic vegetation here due to the nature of the valley as a major terminus for rain run-off from the upper Golan and the build up of soils which has created swamps and lagoons. The valley is home to various forms of papyrus and reed vegetation as well as oleander, willow

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[59]Ibid., p. 51.

[60]Ibid., p. 52.

[61]Danin 1995: 30.

and Abraham's balm.

2.7 Travel routes

A study of travel routes, whether land or water, around Geshur must consider three factors: topography, settlement conditions, and historical sources. These factors when combined can help provide information about the travel routes used in Geshur. As Gal points out:

> It is important to clarify and clearly organize the data upon which one can base the existence of Iron Age roads. All too frequently, one tends to rely on the chain of roads established in later periods and to deduce the existence of ancient roads from the later one. The implication being that the natural conditions remained the same throughout history. However, even if the physical conditions were unchanged, political, economic, and even social factors can influence the existence or nonexistence of specific roadways.[62]

The international coastal highway was the principal road which connected Egypt and Mesopotamia via the Levant. The road followed the coast of Canaan from Gaza to Aphek then headed north along the eastern edge of the Sharon Plain until it reached the Carmel range. From there it passed through Megiddo to the plain of Acco. As noted by *inter alia* Aharoni, there were two principal routes which branched from Megiddo.[63] The first passed through the Chesulloth valley between the hills of Moreh and Tabor heading north past Qarn Hattin then descended to Tell Kinneret. From here the route headed north through the Jordan valley to Hazor then to Damascus. The second branch turned eastward through the Jezreel valley to Beth-shean then crossed the Jordan to Ashtaroth where it joined the main Transjordanian longitudinal route. This second branch had a secondary

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[62]Gal, Z. 1992. *Lower Galilee during the Iron Age*. (trans. M.R. Josephy) Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, p.7.

[63]Aharoni, Y. 1979. *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*. (2nd edition, revised and translated by A.F. Rainey.) Philadelphia: Westminster, p. 53.

branch which followed the Jordan valley's north-south axis and from Beth-shean it traveled north to Tell 'Ubeidiya[64] then north on the western side of the Sea of Galilee.

The other major international travel route was the "King's Highway" (Num 20:17; 21:22), the main north-south route in Transjordan which connected Arabia to Damascus, and beyond.[65] The topological and hydrological features of Transjordan are such that the route went between the western and eastern watersheds, east of four major wadis which are some 40-48 km long and characterized by deep canyons.[66] These wadis have commonly been understood to serve to divide Transjordan into both geographical and territorial groupings. This route avoids the rough topography, i.e. the wadis, and was near the eastern desert. There was another parallel western route following the watershed which Aharoni noted:

> This one has the advantage of passing through a region replete with settlements and water sources, but it suffers the disadvantage of the difficult fords across the large wadies. The various historical records and especially the remains of settlements prove that the western course was the main one during most periods and that the fords crossings, such as the Arnon trail, received special attention. At Rabbath-ammon the two lines meet, hence the decisive position of that city for ruling the King's Highway.[67]

The area around the "King's Highway" was not as densely settled, like the coastal highway, due to its distance from the coast and position next to the desert. The route was

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[64]For the identification of Tell 'Ubeidiya as possibly Yenoʿam, see Na'aman 1977.

[65]Though the acceptance of the "Kings Highway" as a major north-south travel route is being reevaluated, and is not beyond criticism, see Bienkowski, P. 2003. "The north-south divide in ancient Jordan: ceramics, regionalism and routes." Pp. 93-107 in Potts, T., Roaf, M., and Stein, D. (eds.) *Culture through Objects: ancient Near Eastern studies in honour of P.R.S. Moorey*. Oxford: Griffith Institute.

[66]Aharoni 1979: 54.

[67]Ibid., p. 55.

primarily used as a traveling corridor for nomadic groups. However, Transjordan's principal settlements (extending north to south they were: Naveh, Karnaim, Ashtorath, Ramoth-gilead, Gerasa, Jogbehah, Rabbath-ammon, Heshbon, Medaba, Dibon, Madmen, Kirhareseth, Sela, and Bozrah) were along this route.[68] The route provided a valuable economic link for commerce, and was prized by both Israel and Damascus during Iron II. There is also the implication that it, or perhaps simply a north-south travel corridor, was a conduit for Assyria to Arabia, as seen when Ashurbanipal in his ninth campaign in the mid-seventh century B.C. lists places where he waged battles from Syria to Edom.[69]

During the Bronze Age, traffic passed mainly in a north-south direction between Syria and Egypt. In the Iron Age, Gal noted that the topography and settlements in the lower Galilee indicate it was part of a conduit which connected the northern coastal plain and the northern Jordan valley.[70] Gal isolated three networks of routes which connected the Acco plain with the Sea of Galilee: 1) the northern route connecting Damascus to the coast via the Litani river and Banias, 2) a central route connecting Damascus to Acco via Quneitra and the Benot Ya'aqov Bridge, and 3) a southern route connecting Damascus to Beth-shean via Rafid, Afiq and Zemah.

The northern route ran between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains in northern Israel and served as a passage linking Egypt and the city-states of northern Syria, and beyond, to Mesopotamia.[71] The route was west of the Jordan river and passed through Hazor to Kinneret.

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[68]Ibid., p. 56.

[69]Bienkowski 1992b: 4-5.

[70]Gal 1992:7.

[71]See Dorsey, D. 1991. *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel.* Baltimore: JHUP, p. 93.

The existence of the central route, advocated by Aharoni[72] and Avi-Yonah[73], has been challenged due to the lack of evidence of any pre-Roman settlement.[74] Epstein and Gutman stated, "The lack of settlements from the Middle and Late Canaanite periods and from the Israelite period on the Upper Heights necessitates a reexamination of the ancient road courses in the Golan during these periods."[75] Epstein and Gutman concluded that the eastern branch of the "Via Maris" did not follow this direction but rather crossed the Jordan south of the Sea of Galilee.[76]

The Bashan-Acco road, known as Darb el-Hawarna during the Ottoman period, connected the Golan, with its grain producing fields, to Acco, a port city. A. Saarisalo studied the topography, ancient literary sources, settlement distributions, and ethnoarchaeological signs (camels carrying corn from Hauran to Acco) to show the importance of this route beginning in the LBA.[77] Saarisalo stated, "The Syrians came along this road in Ahab's time and probably also the Assyrians, when they advanced by Damascus."[78] The road is mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi I and EA 8 as an international travel route.[79] B. Oded emphasized its economic importance for the region, especially

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[72]Aharoni 1979: 53.

[73]Avi-Yonah 1973.

[74]Epstein and Gutman 1972: 262-69. Though caution is needed when interpreting possible settlement patterns in "rocky" areas as not all ancient settlements leave an "archaeological footprint."

[75]Epstein and Gutman 1972: 246-47, as translated in Urman 1985: 109.

[76]See Epstein and Gutman 1972: 247; Urman 1985: 109, also Barkay 1974 came to the same conclusion.

[77]Saarisalo, A. 1927. *The Boundary Between Issachar and Naphtali: an Archaeological and Literary Study of Israel's Settlement in Canaan.* Helsinki, pp. 23-24.

[78]Saarisalo 1927: 23-24; 1 Kings 20: 26, 30; 2 Kings 13:17.

[79]Aharoni 1979: 61, also Na'aman 1988b. "Biryawaza of Damascus and the Date of the Kamid el-Loz 'Apiru Letters." *UF* 20: 179-193.

for the distribution of grain, dating from the LBA.[80] Oded also connected the road to Assyrian campaigns to Damascus, Phoenicia, and Palestine, and believes that many of the battles in the Bible between Israel and Damascus were fought for control of this route and its environs, i.e. the cereal resources of the Bashan.[81]

Kochavi has suggested that a common way to cross the Jordanian rift-valley during LBA and Iron Age was to sail across the Sea of Galilee from either Tell Hadar or 'Ein-Gev to Tell Kinneret.[82] Though, Kochavi admits that the land route to the south of the Sea of Galilee through the valley of Jabneel, which joined the main highway between Tell Qarne Hittim and the valley of Tur'an, may have been used, even with difficulty of fording the Jordan. Kochavi's conclusions were based on a cluster of tripartite pillared buildings found near the shore of the Sea of Galilee, two at 'Ein-Gev (9th-8th century), one at Tell Hadar (11th century) and one at Tell Kinneret (8th century), which he suggested marked crossing points on the lake for shipments.[83]

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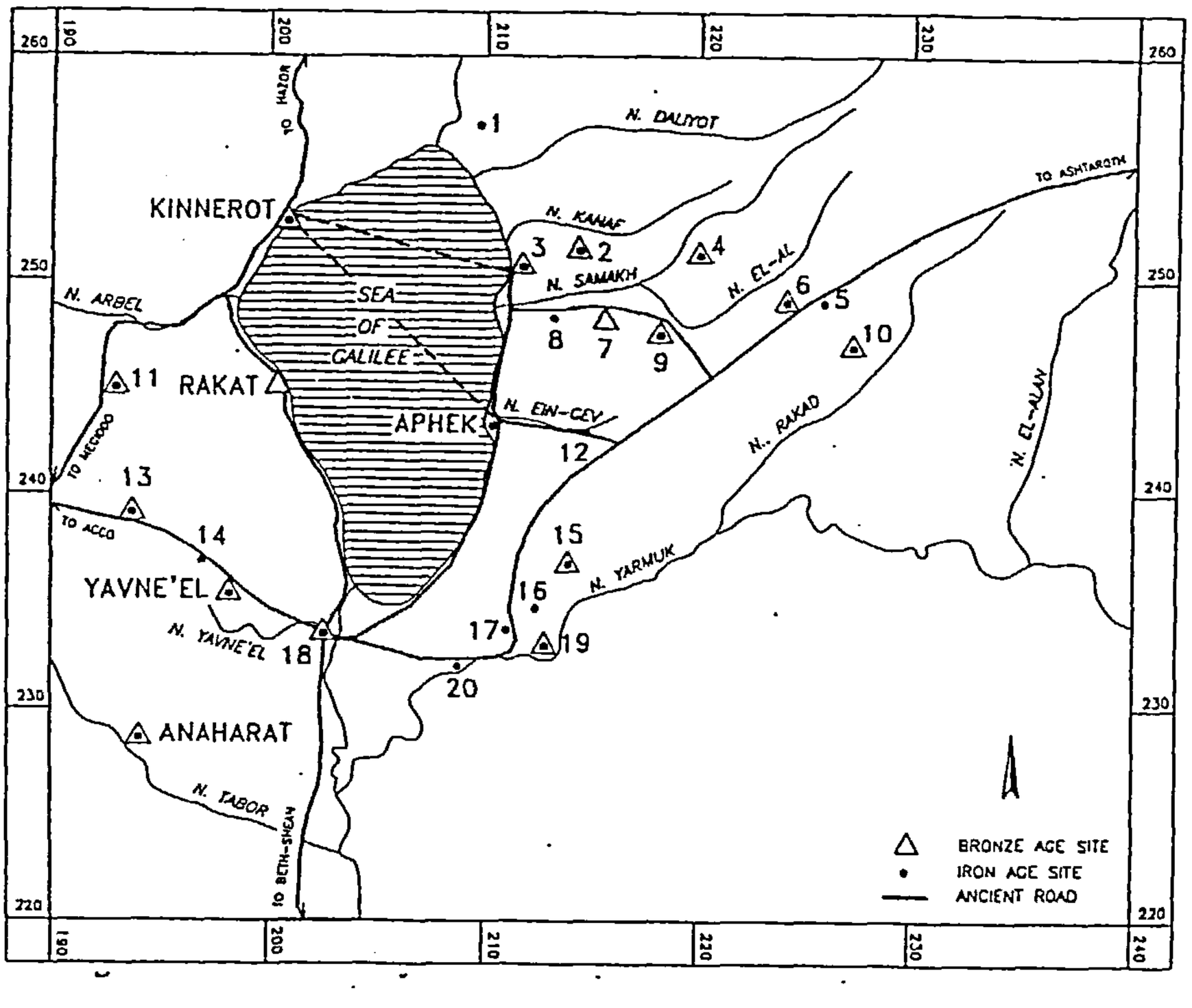
[80]Oded, B. 1971. "Darb El-Hawarneh – An Ancient Route." *EI* 10: 191-197 (Hebrew), English summary pp. xv-xvi; Dorsey 1991: 103- 116.

[81]Oded also believed that the archaeological remains of 'Ein Gev, Tell er-Rumeith, Tel Dan and perhaps Hazor reveal that Damascus controlled the area of the northern Transjordan north of the Yarmuk. This may be an oversimplification of both the literary and archaeological sources. It was common, and still is, to read anything in this area which is not "Israel" as "Aramean." Of course, my argument is that it may have been "Geshurite."

[82]See Kochavi, M. 1998a. "The Ancient Road from the Bashan to the Mediterranean." Pp. 25-48 in Eskola and Junkkaala 1998, p. 32.

[83]See Map 2.4 above. Naturally an interesting connection can be made between the possible activity of transporting grain across the Sea of Galilee and the Akkadian cognate for Geshur, *gišru*, meaning bridge or toll (Gelb 1956: 108).



1. Tel Beit-Saida
2. Shuqayyif
3. Tel Hadar
4. Site No. 152 (Golan Archaeological Survey)
5. Tell Abu Zeitun
6. Tel Nov
7. Khirbet el-Hutiyye
8. Khirbet el-Khashash/ Khirbet Dajajiyye
9. Tell Abu Mudawwar
10. Site No. 177 (Golan Arch. Survey)
11. Qarney Hittim
12. Tel Soreg
13. Tel Adami
14. et-Tulul (Site No. 3.12, Lower Galilee Archaeological Survey)
15. ᶜUyun
16. Site No. 206 (Golan Arch. Survey)
17. Tell eth-Thuraya
18. Tel Ovadiya
19. Tel Hamat Gader
20. Tel Dover

Map 2.4 The Golan Travel Routes (Kochavi 1998a: 32)

From the Golan plateau there are three principal routes, which seem to follow the natural course of the Golan wadi system, leading to the eastern shoreline of the Sea of

Galilee. The northernmost route followed wadi Samakh which descends 550 m over the course of 10 km connecting with Tell Hadar. An alternative to this may have been the route following wadi Kanaf where Tell Shuqayif was settled in the MB II, LB I and Iron II periods.[84] Coinciding with 'Ein Gev's rise in Iron II there was a route which followed wadi 'Ein Gev. The southernmost route followed the Ruqqad river where it meets the Yarmuk and descends into the steep walls of the gorge. This route encompasses the greater part of the flat plateau, and Kochavi noted that "no ancient site is known along the road as it traverses the plain, but some were detected along the descent into the Yarmuk gorge."[85]

2.7 Conclusion

The natural environment of any place or polity often determines the destiny of its people. It has a bearing on resources, trade and exchange, political relations, settlement patterns, travel routes, and "borders." The study of the natural environment of Geshur, if situated in the Golan, and its environs helps one understand the possible settlement history of the region. Only when one begins to explore the natural environment can issues related to settlement and history be better understood for this region during the LBA and Iron Age. This area offers some distinct advantages to peoples who would desire to settle here, as well as any possible non-settled pastoralists. The geomorphological characteristics of the area in all directions provide natural barriers which aid in protecting the sites and settlements. While these geomorphological traits would not guarantee

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[84]See Epstein and Gutman 1972: 281-282, site 137; Epstein, C. 1993b. "The Cities of the land of Ga-Ru-Geshur Mentioned in EA 256 Reconsidered." Pp. 83-90 in Heltzer, M. *et al* (eds.) *Researches in the Archaeology and the History of Eretz-Israel*. Haifa: Haifa University Press, pp. 87-88.

[85] Kochavi 1998a: 33, see figure 8. For Iron Age sites south of the Yarmuk in Jordan, see Herr, L and Najjar, M. 2001. "The Iron Age." Pp. 323-346 in MacDonald, Adams, and Bienkowski 2001.

security from the threat of "foreigners" they certainly would serve as a deterrent. The area was rich in natural resources which provided needed sustenance for livelihood, from a rich soil capable of cultivation to the necessary precipitation requirements to sustain life. The area was a distance from the main Transjordanian travel route which perhaps provided another layer of security for people who, in one way or another, occupied the landscape.

Chapter 3

Geshur: Global Environment

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 explored one facet which may have contributed to Geshur's history, i.e., its natural environment. This chapter will overview another facet, its political environment vis-à-vis the panoramic context of the ANE in the LB-Iron Age, as no state develops in a vacuum. There is a synergistic dialogue which occurs within the shifting development of states in their local, regional, and global spheres. The fortune of any state in the ANE was partially dependent on the political context of the greater political powers. Throughout this time, a few major states controlled, at various times and extent, the ANE: Mitanni, Hatti, Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt. This chapter will briefly overview the historical framework of these powers, and how their histories may have impacted smaller peripheries, whether people, places or polities, like Geshur, in the southern Levant.

3.2 Mitanni

Mitanni occupied northern Syria between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the Khabur Valley, and was also called Hanigalbat, Nahrina, or "the land of the Hurrians" depending on the point of origin, e.g., Assyria or Egypt, and whether the reference was to the polity, the location, or the people.[86] The capital, Washshukanni, has not been identified though Wilhelm noted that Tell Fekheriyeh is a possibility, this awaits further

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[86]See Wilhelm, G. 1989. *The Hurrians*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips; ibid. 1995. "The Kingdom of Mitanni in Second-millennium Upper Mesopotamia." *CANE* 2: 1243-54; Van de Mieroop, M. 2004. *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 142-145; Na'aman, N. 1994a. "The Hurrians and the End of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine." *Levant* 26: 175-187; Hess, R. 1997a. "Hurrians and Other Inhabitants of Late Bronze Palestine." *Levant* 29: 153-56.

investigation.[87] The lack of internal written sources hinders a clear understanding of its history, with much of its early formation still ambiguous. The main sources of information cóme from archives found at Nuzi, Alalakh, and Amarna. The territories of northern and central Syria and Mesopotamia were subject to Hurrian penetration during the later MBA, and by the mid-fifteenth century Mitanni had expanded and included areas to the Mediterranean Sea, as well as Alalakh, Aleppo, Assyria, Kizzuwatna, Nuzi, and Terqa. While there are traces of "northern influences" in Canaan in MB IIB it was not until the mid-fifteenth century BC that Hurrian names appear in the Taanach tablets, perhaps a large enough concentration for the Egyptians to refer to the Canaanites as Hurrians.[88] Na'aman analyzed the Amarna corpus onomasticon and was able to "conclude that there is a marked predominance of "northern" names on both sides of the Syro-African rift, i.e. in the Bashan and the Anti-Lebanon areas to the east and in the Lebanese Biqa'a and south of it...the names of most of the inland southern Syrian and northern Palestinian rulers are of "northern" origin...On the coast of Lebanon and in southern Palestine on the other hand there is a great majority of West Semitic names."[89] Na'aman believes there was a large-scale Hurrian migration to Canaan at this time due to the wars in northern Syria.

During the fifteenth century, Mitanni and Egypt struggled for control of Canaan, but during Artatama I's reign (ca. 1400-1390) the two powers came to a peaceful understanding sealed by dynastic marriage when Artatama I sent his daughter to Thutmose IV.[90] During the Amarna period from about 1365 to 1335 Mitanni underwent a period of

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[87]Wilhelm 1995: 1249.

[88]Na'aman 1994a: 176-177.

[89]Ibid., p. 178.

[90]Wilhelm 1995: 1249.

internal and external struggles: internally for the throne, which led to a split in the royal line, and externally with the strengthening of Hatti in the region. Part of Mitanni was absorbed by Hatti during the reign Suppiluliuma (ca. 1343) and the rest was eventually annexed by Assyria under Shalmaneser I (ca.1274-1244).

3.3 Hatti

Hatti was a kingdom, of still unknown origin, in central Anatolia. The first onomastic evidence derives from Old Assyrian documents from the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries.[91] Hattusas (modern Boğazköy), the capital, has yielded thousands of clay tablets which aid in the understanding of the kingdom.[92] These sources revealed that Hatti had two periods of strength traditionally split into "Old Kingdom" (ca. 1750-1600) and "New Kingdom" (ca. 1420- 1180). During the Old Kingdom, two of Hatti's kings, Hattusilis I and Mursilis I, campaigned to Arzawa in the west and northern Syria and Babylon to the south and east (ca.1595). After Mursilis I died, the state declined or collapsed with its status uncertain.[93] However, Hatti's influence in the region revived under Tudhaliya II (ca. 1420-1370), founder of the New Kingdom, who reasserted Hittite rule over central and southern Anatolia. Hatti's greatest period of expansion started with the accession of Suppiluliuma I (ca. 1370-1330) and extended to the end of Hattushili

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[91]See Hoffner, H. 1994. "Hittites." Pp. 127-155 in Hoerth 1994; ibid. 1992. "The Last Days of Khattusha." Pp. 46-52 in Ward, W and Joukowsky, M. (eds.) *The Crises Years: The Twelfth Century B.C.* Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt; Gurney, O.R. 1990. *The Hittites*. (2nd ed.) Baltimore: Penguin, pp. 15-21; Hawkins, J.D. 1974. "Assyrians and Hittites." *Iraq* 36: 69-83.

[92]The Hittite capital moved over the course of its history, first it was at Kushshar (Hoffner 1994: 128) then it moved to Hattusa, and perhaps due to over extension in Syria Muwatalli moved the capital to the southern Anatolian city of Tarhuntassa (Van de Mieroop 2004: 149).

[93]Hoffner 1994: 130.

III's reign (ca. 1239).[94] Suppiluliuma solidified control over Anatolia then expanded to Mitanni capturing its capital and making it a vassal; followed by extending control over Ugarit, Kadesh, and Amurru, with all sealing vassal treaties with Hatti.[95] Egypt sought Hatti as treaty partner after the death of Tutankhamun when a request was made for Tutankhamun's widow to marry one of Suppiluliuma's sons, however this ended in the death of the son.[96] A period of intermittent battles ensued between the states. Hatti had extended its control into Syria almost as far south as Damascus, which brought it into conflict with Egypt at Kadesh (1275), after which Syria was under Hittite hegemony.[97] After this, diplomatic peace occurred when Hattushili III and Ramsesse II made a treaty which included the giving of a Hittite princess to Ramsesse, which helped stabilize the borders.[98] This treaty remained intact from ca. 1239-1180, contemporaneous with Assyria's reassertion in the region under Shalmaneser I and Tukulti-Ninurta I. Hoffner noted, "Despite all the welcome and new evidence bearing on the last years of Hattusha, we still cannot identify precisely what political or social forces (or combination of both) brought about the fall of Hattusha."[99]

3.4 Assyria

The name Assyria carries both a geographical and political meaning. Geographically Assyria was bounded by the Kurdish mountains in the north, the Tigris

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[94]See Van den Hout, T. 1995. "Khattushili III, King of the Hittites." *CANE* 2: 1107-1120.

[95]Van de Mieroop 2004: 147.

[96]See Macqueen, J.G. 1995. "The History of Anatolia and of the Hittite Empire." *CANE* 2: 1085-1105, here p. 1093. Caution is needed here as the Egyptian equivalent of the Hittite name for the Pharaoh mentioned in the letter to Suppiluliuma is unknown, and the equation with Tutankhamun is still supposition.

[97]Klengel 1992: 157-60.

[98]See *RITA* II 242:5-256:1; *HDT* No. 15.

[99]Hoffner 1994: 131.

river to the west, and the Upper Zab river to the east, flowing to the Tigris at the southern tip.[100] Modern scholars use a tri-partite division for Assyria's political history: Old, Middle, and New. It was not until Ashur-uballit's reign (ca. 1365-1328) and the nation's rise as one of the great powers of the ANE that the name, Assyria, was used in both a geographical and political manner.[101] Ashur-uballit consolidated the city-states and turned Assyria into a territorial state, out from under the shadow of Mitanni. Adad-nirari I (ca. 1307-1275) built on the success of Ashur-uballit and undertook two successful campaigns against Mitanni which eventually led to its partial incorporation – realized in Shalmaneser I's reign (ca. 1274-1244).[102] Yet, diplomatic acceptance of Assyria into the league of great states was slow. After Adad-nirari partially controlled Mitanni he wrote to Hatti's king and referred to him as "brother"; the Hittite king was indignant and responded, "Do those who are not on good terms customarily write to one another about brotherhood? On what account should I write to you about brotherhood? Were you and I born from one mother?"[103] Assyrian expansion was not limited to the west, but included areas to the north in eastern Anatolia, e.g. Nairi/Uruarti, as well as areas to the east, e.g. the Gutians and Subarians.[104] Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1244-1208), son and successor of Shalmaneser I, expanded Assyrian control to Babylon, an ally of Hatti, when he defeated Kashtiliash IV. Tukulti-Ninurta was also able to defend the Assyrian controlled parts of Mitanni, previously seized by Shalmaneser I, and shifted peoples from northern Syria to Assyria. After the assassination of Tukulti-Ninurta, Assyria declined and Babylon was able to

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[100]Grayson, A.K. 1992a. "Mesopotamia, History of (Assyria)." *ABD* 4: 732-55.

[101]See *RIMA* 1, A.0.73.

[102]See *RIMA* 1, A.0.77.1.

[103]*HDT* No. 24A, pp. 146-47.

[104]Grayson 1992a.

regain control of its territory.[105]

With the accession of Ashur-resh-ishi (ca.1133-1114) Assyria regained internal stability and consolidated the core of its heartland. Tiglath-pileser I (ca. 1115-1077) capitalized on Ashur-resh-ishi's work, and expanded control from the Mediterranean to Babylon. During his reign the Mushki were a source of continual conflict which brought him to the west; he also crossed the Euphrates twenty-eight times to fight the Arameans.[106] However, ultimately, Tiglath-pileser I's successes, perhaps, led to the disintegration of the empire, due to overextended borders and a new external threat in the Arameans, after his death. Thus, Assyria was reduced to little more than its heartland along the Tigris for 150 years.

During Ashur-dan II's reign (ca. 934-912) internal control over Assyria was reestablished and expansionistic campaigns conducted for the first time in a century, inaugurating the Neo-Assyrian Empire.[107] Adad-nirari II (911-891) continued his father's policies and reduced the problem of the Arameans, who brought tribute to him.[108] Adad-nirari also introduced the external control features of garrisons and storage depots which in subsequent reigns were bases for the Assyrian provincial system. Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884) succeeded his father and consolidated much of the empire. His annals were the first to state the cause of his campaigns as provocation by the enemy.[109]

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[105]See Tadmor, H. 1979. "The Decline of Empires in Western Asia ca. 1200 B.C.E." Pp. 1-14 in Cross, F. (ed.) *Symposia celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900-1975)*. Cambridge, MA: ASOR.

[106]Grayson, A.K. 1991a. *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114-859 BC)*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, here pp. 5-10; *RIMA* 2, A.0.87.3.

[107]Grayson 1992a: 741.

[108]Grayson 1991a: 142; *RIMA 2,* A.0.99.2.

[109]Ibid., p. 163.

Grayson noted two high-points in the Neo-Assyrian period: one inaugurated with the accession of Ashurnasirpal II called the Calah kings and the other called the Sargonid period.[110] Ashurnasirpal witnessed revolts on the outskirts of his kingdom prompting a series of fourteen campaigns where he struck swiftly and effectively to lesson any chances of fracturing his empire. He took booty and hostages to prevent further rebellion; they supplied the resources to build Calah, his new capital. Ashurnasirpal's son and successor, Shalmaneser III (858-824), inherited a kingdom stretching from the Mediterranean and Taurus mountains to the Zagros mountains. Shalmaneser consolidated and extended the empire conducting thirty-four campaigns, directed at, amongst others, Damascus and Urartu.[111] In his sixth year (853) he marched west and encountered resistance from a coalition of "twelve kings of Hatti" led by Damascus and Hamath. From 832 onwards Shalmaneser sent his generals (Akkadian *turtanu*) on campaigns credited to him, and in his last years internal strife led to civil war. Shamshi-Adad V (823-811) succeeded him, and spent his early years quashing rebellious cities.[112] He was succeeded by his son, Adad-nirari III (810-783), who inherited an empire weakened by the aforementioned rebellion. The Eponym Chronicle records his campaigns to the east, against Mannea and Media, and the south, against the Chaldeans.[113] Regarding the political achievements of Adad-nirari Grayson noted, "...on the basis of scanty evidence, there seems to have been the continued submission of Chaldea, a treaty relationship with Babylonia, the suppression

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[110]Ibid., p. 189.

[111]See Yamada, S. 2000a. *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (859-824 B.C.) Relating to His Campaigns to the West*. Leiden: Brill.

[112]Grayson 1982: 269-71.

[113]See § 5.2.2; Millard, A. 1994a. *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire 910-612 BC* (SAAS 2) Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.

of the Arpad rebellion, the fall of Damascus, the vassalship of Hamath and the payment of tribute by Israel, Phoenicia, and Nairi."[114] Grayson also noted that during Adad-nirari's reign Assyria appeared strong, but was in the beginning stages of decline, "the interval" of the Assyrian empire. The decline was attributed to the vastness of the Assyrian provincial system and the difficulties of controlling a large empire. During this time some of the governors assumed power[115], and the Eponym Chronicle attests to rebellion with the phrases, "in the land" or "revolt," when the king was busy with internal matters.[116]

Assyria revived under Tiglath-pileser III (744-727), who took the throne after a revolt in Nimrud (746). Tiglath-pileser militarily patterned his rule after Ashur-dan II and Ashurnasirpal II by consolidating the kingdom and embarking on a series of campaigns to reclaim control over its former empire (see § 5.2.3). Assyriologists have noted that since Tiglath-pileser's reign was occupied with continual campaigns, he was unable to embark on extensive building projects; though, he began building a palace at Nimrud.[117] On the walls of this palace were reliefs and inscriptions detailing his military victories, which were difficult to reconstruct due to their secondary use by Esarhaddon (680-669), the first known example of this from an Assyrian king.[118] The campaigns of Tiglath-pileser are credited with the destruction in northern Galilee and areas east of the Sea of Galilee in 733/32.

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[114]Grayson 1982: 273.

[115]Ibid., p. 276.

[116]Millard 1994a: 58-59.

[117]See Tadmor, H. 1994. *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria: Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary.* Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, here pp. 9-20.

[118]Tadmor 1994; Grayson 1991b: 84.

3.5 Babylonia

The name Babylonia can be used as both a geographical and political term.[119] Geógraphically Babylonia's boundaries were south of modern Baghdad on the alluvial plain of the Tigris-Euphrates valley to the Persian Gulf, and from the Syrian and Arabian deserts to the Zagros mountains. Since there were no formidable natural barriers Babylonia was susceptible to invasions of people. Politically Babylonia functioned as a city-state system, shaped by the ancient course of the rivers, during much of its history with only brief periods of unification.[120] Before the time of Hammurabi the northern section above Nippur was called Akkad, and the southern section Sumer, with the geographical phrase "the lands of Sumer and Akkad" in use long after the division had any political reality. Babylonia for most of its history had a few great periods of unification and political power, e.g., the reigns of Hammurabi, Kurigalzu, Nebuchadnezzar I, and the Neo-Babylonian Empire, in between were long periods of weakness and instability. This is reflected in the political structure of the city-states which expanded into territorial states, e.g., Akkad, the Third Dynasty of Ur, the First Dynasty of Babylon, the Kassites, and the Neo-Babylonian empire.

During the third millennium, if not earlier, Babylonia began its long history of amalgamating ethnic groups, and was settled by Sumerians and Akkadians. At the beginning of the second millennium, the *Martu* or *Amurru* started a sequence of migrations into the region. The fall of Ur (ca. 2004) marked the end of Sumerian civilization, and in 2017 B.C. the Amorites established the Dynasty of Isin, the beginning

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[119]See Grayson, A.K. 1992b. "History and Culture of Babylonia." *ABD* 4: 756-77; Saggs, H.W.F. 1995. *Babylonians*. London: British Museum Press.

[120]See Roaf, M. 1990. *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*. Oxford: Facts on File Ltd, p. 109.

of Babylonian civilization.[121] Over the next two centuries these "Amorites" settled Babylonia, adding to the ethnic composition, began new cities and settled old ones with inter-state feuding and no one city-state able to dominate the rest, with Isin and Larsa the two notable powers.

The study of the early Old Babylonian period is often eclipsed by Hammurabi's rule (1792-1750) which unified Babylonia, mostly through diplomacy and not military power in his early years. However, as noted by Munn-Rankin, the Mari documents reveal a multiple city-state system with each group of city-states composed of a number of satellite city-states, e.g., Hammurabi, Rim-Sin of Larsa, Ibal-pi-El of Eshnunna, Amut-pi-il of Qatna and Yarim-Lim of Yamhad (Aleppo).[122] In his thirty-first year (1763) Hammurabi started a five-year campaign against Larsa finally absorbing it and unifying the southern part of Babylonia, the first time southern Mesopotamia had been unified since the Ur III Dynasty. After this, the friendship-alliance between Hammurabi and Zimri-Lim ceased when Hammurabi mounted a two-year campaign against Mari and gained control of northern Mesopotamia, with only Aleppo and Qatna remaining outside of his sphere. After Hammurabi's death, his son and successor, Samsu-iluna, came under pressure from Rim-Sin II of Larsa, the Sea-land people, and the Kassites.[123] In 1595 the Hittite king, Murshili I, swept south conquering Aleppo, Mari, then Babylon. He had no intention of governing the area, so gave the Kassites the opportunity to rule Babylon, which they did for the next four centuries.

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[121]Grayson 1992b: 759.

[122]See Munn-Rankin, J.M. 1956. "Diplomacy in Western Asia in the early second millennium BC." *Iraq* 18: 68-110, here pp. 108-10.

[123]See Sommerfeld, W. 1995. "The Kassites of Ancient Mesopotamia: Origins, Politics, and Culture." *CANE* 2: 917-30; Brinkman, J.A. 1980. "Kassiten." *RLA* 5: 464-73.

The Middle Babylonian period (ca. 1595-1000) was divided between two ruling dynasties: Kassite and Second Isin.[124] The Kassites were the longest ruling dynasty in Babylonian history when Agum II, the first "Kassite Dynasty" king, became king after Mursilis I, the Hittite king, defeated Babylon (ca. 1595). Agum II was known for returning Marduk's statue from the place where the Hittites had taken it, but after his reign a period of two centuries followed when little is known. During this period, Babylonia declined and Assyria became the major kingdom in the ANE. This is attested when Ashur-uballit sent his daughters to marry a Babylonian king but when the Babylonians rebelled and replaced the king with another, Ashur-uballit intervened and put yet another man on the throne.[125] The grandest building era of the Kassite Dynasty was under Kurigalzu who secured the borders and embarked on building Dur-Kurigalzu, a complex of temples and palaces with the ziggurat still standing today.[126] After a period of obscurity in Babylonia's history the "Second Isin Dynasty" was founded. Nebuchadnezzar I (ca. 1126-1105), the best known king of the dynasty, successfully campaigned against the Elamites at Susa and returned Marduk's statue to Babylonia. After this he declared that Marduk was the king of the Babylonian pantheon and placed the statue in the renovated temple of Esagil where it remained undisturbed until 689 B.C.

At the start of the first millennium the political situation in the ANE had changed considerably. Babylonia had its western borders hemmed in by the Arameans, who had

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[124]Grayson 1992b: 761.

[125]Grayson 1992b: 762 admits some discrepancy exists from the information from two documents. See Van de Mieroop 2004: 164-65 for a different reconstruction.

[126]Roaf 1990: 104-105.

gained power in the region, and there are no attested contacts with Assyria or Elam.[127] While little is known of Babylonia in the tenth century, Brinkman noted that the Arameans were a source of conflict, though trade continued with Assyria.[128] During much of the ninth century Babylonia and Assyria were on friendly terms, stemming from joint efforts against the Arameans.[129] Nabu-apla-iddina (ca. 870-855) had a treaty with Ashurnasirpal II (883-859) which was followed by a treaty between Marduk-zakir-shumi I (ca. 854-819) and Shalmaneser III (858-824).[130] In accordance with the treaty, when rebellion occurred at the end of Shalmaneser's life, his one son, Shamshi-Adad V (823-811), sent and received help from Marduk-zakir-shumi, but was embarrassed because Babylon portrayed him as the lesser king. This led Shamshi-Adad V to conduct three campaigns against Babylonia forcing it to pay tribute.[131] At the beginning of Adad-nirari III's reign (810-783), Assyria controlled Babylonia; however due to external pressure from Urartu, Assyria could not control two fronts, and Babylonia entered a new period with the Chaldeans in power. Brinkman stated that "much of the political history of Babylonia between c. 1000 and 748 B.C. may be described as a transition between Kassite and Chaldean hegemony accompanied by active harassment from Aramaean and, later, Assyrian forces."[132]

3.6 Egypt

Before the LBA in the Levant, Egypt was in a period of political unrest at the end of its Thirteenth Dynasty, commonly called the Second Intermediate Period (1700-1540).

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[127]Brinkman, J.A. 1982. "Babylonia *c.* 1000-748 B.C." Pp. 282-313 in *CAH* 3.1 (2nd ed.) Cambridge.

[128]Ibid., p. 296.

[129]Ibid., p. 301.

[130]Brinkman 1982: 303 stated that the two kings did not have a treaty, *contra* Grayson 1992b: 763.

[131]Grayson 1982: 269-71.

[132]See Brinkman 1982:288.

This was the period between Egypt's Middle and New Kingdoms, also called the "Hyksos period" as Dynasties 15-17 were ruled by the Hyksos according to Manetho.[133] While the arrival of the Hyksos in Egypt remains unclear and debated, there is an emerging consensus that they originated from western Asia.[134] The Hyksos ruled over a century and were expelled in the fifteenth year of Ahmose I, when he defeated Avaris.[135] The expulsion of the Hyksos coincided with MB IIC destruction levels in Palestine which led to the interpretation that they were responsible for this collapse.[136] However, this is difficult to prove and recently Hoffmeier ignited a debate when he challenged the scholarly consensus over the MB IIC destruction levels in Palestine due to lack of evidence.[137]

The New Kingdom Dynasties 18-20 (1550-1100) sought to control the Levantine coast and *Via Maris* to expand northward. Tuthmose III was a coregent with his aunt, Hatshepsut, the wife of Tuthmose II and daughter of Tuthmose I, for twenty-one years and shortly after her death he campaigned in western Asia. The campaign (1479) was precipitated by the geopolitical coalescing of western Asian kingdoms with the king of Kadesh, and after a seven-month siege at Megiddo Tuthmose was the victor. Thus began a new pattern in Egyptian foreign policy whereby Egypt was committed to involvement

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[133]See Hoffmeier, J.K. 1994. "Egyptians." Pp. 251-290 in Hoerth 1994, here pp. 270-271.

[134]See Redford, D.B. 1992. *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 114-115; Oren, E. (ed.) 1997. *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum; Bietak, M. 1995. *Avaris: The Capital of the Hyksos*. London: British Museum Press.

[135]Hoffmeier 1994: 271.

[136]Redford 1992: 138-139.

[137]For entrée into the literature of this debate see Hoffmeier 1994: 272, n. 141; Na'aman 1994a.

in western Asia (EA 109:44). The actions of Tuthmose III were met with resistance from various states, e.g., Kadesh and Tunip, and eventually led to an Egyptian presence in the north for over a half-century.[138] Tuthmose III also turned further north to attack Mitanni and bring it under his submission with the Egyptian empire reaching its greatest extent in Asia.[139] Egypt and Mitanni came to peace and made an alliance which was sealed by dynastic marriage when Tuthmose IV (1400-1390) married a daughter of King Artatama.[140] Murname noted that "cordial relations between Egypt and Mitanni removed barriers to trade between their territories and helped to expand commercial and diplomatic contacts with other regions, notably Cyprus, Hatti, Assyria, and Babylon."[141]

Amenhotep IV succeeded his father, Amenhotep III, changed his name to Akhenaten, and elevated the sun-god, Aten, as the supreme deity. In the process of changes in Egypt, he moved his capital to Akhet-Aten, modern El-Amarna, and alienated much of Egypt by closing and destroying the temples of the old gods. Akhenaten's actions may have been one part of the ongoing disintegration of the empire, though as noted by Hoffmeier the process had begun during Amenhotep's reign.[142] The Amarna letters, e.g., EA 256, may indicate the extent of the problems in the Levant with Egypt losing territories. Contemporaneous with Egyptian internal strife, the geopolitical powers in the north were shifting with the accession of Suppiluliuma I and Hatti gaining power.

Seti I (1294-1279) addressed the territorial disputes between Egypt and Hatti and regained control over parts of the Levant. Ramsesse II succeeded Seti I and was one of

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[138]Redford 1992: 155-160.

[139]Ibid., p. 160.

[140]Ibid., pp. 163-166; also see Schulman 1979.

[141]Murname, W. 1992. "Egypt, History of (Dyn. 18-20)." *ABD* 2: 348-53, here p. 349.

[142]Hoffmeier 1994: 275.

Egypt's most celebrated kings and prolific builders.[143] Ramsesse II while retaining capitals at Thebes and Memphis, built a new one, Pi-Ramsesse, in the northeast delta, which was strategically positioned to western Asia. In his fourth year he campaigned in Palestine, and the following year he campaigned in Kadesh where he was ambushed by Muwatalli and needed reinforcements, only to come to a draw against the Hittite king.[144] The hostilities and stalemate between Hatti and Egypt continued, but, perhaps due to the rising power of Assyria, the powers would again come together through dynastic marriages when Ramsesse II would marry no fewer than two Hittite princesses.[145] Perhaps due to pressures and preoccupation with Hatti, the western boundaries of the delta were overtaken by Libyans, and Ramsesse II's son, Merneptah, had to campaign against the Libyans, which possibly included "Sea Peoples" as well. Merneptah was victorious and the victory provided relief and renewed prosperity in western Asia.[146] After the death of Merneptah the Nineteenth Dynasty struggled internally and after 30 years ended with Queen Tewosret's reign. Ramsesse III, a notable king of the Twentieth Dynasty, was preoccupied with protecting Egypt's borders from Libyans and Sea Peoples.[147] He was able to defend Egypt but not its interest in western Asia, which was settled by the Sea Peoples.[148] Late in Ramsesse III's reign Egypt was plagued with labor strikes and

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[143]Kitchen 1982.

[144]Ibid., pp. 43-64.

[145]Ibid., pp. 73-95; also Schulman 1979.

[146]Murname 1992: 351.

[147]See Kitchen, K.A. 1985. "Les suites des guerres libyennes de Ramses III." *RdÉ* 36: 177-79.

[148]For the discussion on the circumstances of their resettlement see Wood, B. 1991. "The Philistines Enter Canaan – Were They Egyptian Lackeys or Invading Conquerors." *BAR* 17/6: 44-52; Singer, I. 1992. "How Did the Philistines Enter Canaan? A Rejoinder." *BAR* 18/6: 44-46.

inflation, and his successors ruled a state with internal strife and external weakness.[149] By the last pharaohs of the Twentieth Dynasty, at the beginning of the so-called Third Intermediate Period, Egypt lost its ability to be a dominant power in the ANE.[150]

The Dynasties which followed the fall of the New Kingdom were characterized by decentralization, lack of united monarchy, and an incursion of foreigners.[151] Though, as Kitchen showed, it was a period far from chaotic and not "merely 'intermediate', but significant in its own right."[152] The "Tale of Wenamon" alludes to the Egyptian situation at this time with dual control of the kingdom and lack of presence in the grander geopolitical setting.[153] This lack of political presence was, perhaps, one factor in the emergence of states in the Levant at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. In Judah, David's rise and his expansion into Edom (1 Kings 11: 14-22) led Hadad, the Edomite, to seek refuge in Egypt during the reigns of Amenemope and Osorkon at Tanis.[154] Following the reign of Osorkon, Siamun continued supporting Hadad, and after David's death, Siamun positioned his army north into Philistia and supported Hadad's return to Edom.[155] During the Twenty-Second Dynasty, Shoshenq I associated with the religious center at Thebes while staying loyal to his base at Tanis, and he united Egypt by his fifth year.[156] With Egypt united, Shoshenq concentrated on foreign affairs, and campaigned to his north where he capitalized on instabilities in Israel after Solomon's death.[157] Whether

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[149]Murname 1992: 352.

[150]Hoffmeier 1994: 279; Kitchen 1986.

[151]Spalinger, A. "3D Intermediate-Saite Period (Dyn. 21-26)" *ABD* 2: 353-64.

[152]Kitchen 1986: xi-xiii.

[153]See *COS* 1.41.

[154]Kitchen 1986: 272-75.

[155]Ibid., pp. 279-83.

[156]Ibid., pp. 287-92.

[157]Ibid., pp. 292-302.

his intent was one of conquest or economic inflow (1 Kings 14:26) is difficult to discern[158], but in the end "he left behind two very much sobered (and impoverished!) petty kings in Judah and Israel, and not a few burnt or damaged towns."[159]

3.7 Conclusion

I could not pretend to synthesize the entirety of the scope of such a chapter in a limited dissertation framework. The nature of the ANE at the end of the LBA showed that there were once large political entities which impacted smaller entities. The history of Geshur, or any other people or place, is better understood when viewed against this backdrop. During the LBA, western Asia became a part of intensive commercial, cultural and political interrelations between the larger states.[160] Preceding the LBA there seems to be limited evidence of a Hurrian migration into northern Canaan as reflected in the Amarna corpus and onomastic evidence of possibly a Hurrian element in Garu. Towards the end of the LBA, most scholars agree, that there was a collapse of the great powers, followed by what has become popularly termed the *"Crises Years."*[161] At this time, ca. 1200 B.C., the Hittite empire collapsed, which had reverberations into southern Syria, and the "DMZ" between Hatti and Egypt. A few decades later, Egypt, which had interests stretching into northern Syria, suffered from internal conflicts beginning after Ramsesse II's reign. It was this grander political milieu, or vacuum, which may have contributed to the formation of smaller states in the southern Levant, and perhaps allowed Geshur to establish itself, or strengthen, and move towards something that could possibly be viewed

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[158]Redford 1992: 312-15.

[159]Kitchen 1986: 300.

[160]See Liverani, M. 2001. *Prestige and Interest: International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC.* New York: Palgrave.

[161]See essays in Ward and Joukowsky 1992.

as an archaic state in the region.

The transition from the LBA to the Iron Age is murky due to this collapse of the great states and the paucity of written sources from the 12th-11th centuries B.C. By the early first millennium "all Egyptian evidence for relations abroad is limited and fleeting", with the primary written source the topographical list of Shoshenq; though Kitchen allows for Egyptian influence on art in Transjordan at this time.[162] By the time Assyria reasserted itself in greater geopolitical affairs in western Asia towards the end of the 10th century B.C., it had to contend with the emergence of various smaller Neo-Hittite and Aramean states.[163] Under Shalmaneser III, Assyria would again exert its power in the affairs of southern Syria, including areas around Geshur. Then, almost a century later, Tiglath-pileser III campaigned in the southern Levant, and brought the area under the Assyrian yoke. After Tiglath-pileser's reign the southern Levant continued to develop and change based on the greater geopolitical powers; however currently, the sources for Geshur all but cease.

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[162]See Kitchen, K.A. 1992. "The Egyptian Evidence on Ancient Jordan." Pp. 21-34 in Bienkowski 1992a, here pp. 29-30.

[163]See Hawkins, J.D. 1982. "The Neo-Hittite States in Syria and Anatolia." Pp. 372-441 in *CAH* 3.1 (3rd ed.) Cambridge.

Chapter 4

Geshur: A Textual Approach – the Biblical Perspective

> Ancient Israel lived in a world of many nations and it had to interact with them. The Bible tells a certain amount about some, very little about others. Some appear briefly, then disappear; others recur through several books and clearly had a major impact on Israel's history.
>
> —A.R. Millard[164]

4.1 Introduction

The lack of indigenous written sources from Geshur, forces one to turn to written sources of other so-called kingdoms in the ANE for help in exploring Geshur. The use of external historiographic sources is always precarious since sources come with distinct ideological strands. Trigger notes that problems of misunderstanding early civilizations are greatest when one utilizes written information of an early civilization recorded by outsiders, and he states that "written records produced by early civilizations never provided comprehensive or unbiased information. Literacy was severely restricted, and writings tended to reflect the interests and preoccupations of institutions, administrators, and the upper classes."[165] This is likely the case with attempting to explore Geshur. Yet, without the following external writings this research would not be a study on Geshur, as it is the external written sources where the term, Geshur, appears. Further complicating the use of the external sources is the nature of these sources, and at what level they can possibly help if they are not primary[166], in a modern sense, and embedded with religious and ideological narratives.

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[164]Millard, A.R. 1994b. "Foreword." Pp. 9-10 in Hoerth 1994.

[165]Trigger, B. 2003. *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 54-62.

[166]On the use of oral transmission of knowledge in non-literate early civilizations, see Trigger 2003: 603-07.

An investigation of the toponym Geshur as recorded in the Bible reveals that it is primarily mentioned in the Deuteronomistic History (DH), the name to designate the section of the Bible from Deuteronomy through the former prophets, i.e., Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings. The use of this material raises questions concerning the reliability and nature of the evidence for exploring Geshur. There are several issues that are part of the discussion in regards to the use of the DH: 1) the composite nature of the corpus, 2) the author (s)/editor(s) who produced the material, 3) the dating of the material, 4) the didactic focus of the material, and 5) its historical usefulness.[167]

The issue of author/editor and the date of the production of the DH is far from settled, and is widely debated within biblical studies. It was M.Noth who advocated that the section of the Bible from Joshua to Kings contained similar language and ideology, whereby Noth concluded that one person wrote the DH.[168] This person, the Deuteronomist (Dtr), composed the DH from existing traditions, which reinforced the purpose of the writing, s/he had collected, and unified them into one common chronological structure. Noth dated the DH to the middle of the 6th century B.C. after the final event recorded in it, i.e., the release of Jehoiachin from prison (562 B.C). Noth's initial study has served as a starting point for later modification by other scholars. One point of discussion stemming from Noth's initial theory was the idea of ascribing the whole DH to one author/editor. Frank Cross concluded that there were two editors

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[167]The literature on the Deuteronomistic History has become vast, and is by no means quiescent, for entrée into the discussion see the seminal essays by the major contributors in Knoppers, G. and McConville, G. (eds) 2000. *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

[168]For an English translation of Noth's thesis, see Noth, M. 1991. *The Deuteronomistic History*. (2nd ed.) Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

behind the final form of the DH: 1) Dtr1 who admonished his audience to obedience to the Mosaic covenant that was being renewed under the leadership of Josiah, and 2) Dtr 2 who "updated" the work of Dtr 1 during the exile, and who blamed the failure of the Josianic reforms on the wickedness of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:10-25).[169] It was the Dtr 2 who included such passages that would: 1) indicate a conditionality of the Davidic covenant, and 2) stress the idea of repentance as a cultic way forward. In the end, many scholars who were trained under Cross adopted his theory in principle, and held to a DH which was composed primarily in the Josianic era. In Europe, R. Smend was also developing a multiple redactor theory for the DH.[170] In principle Smend adopted Noth's theory of the Dtr, and referred to the major portion of the DH as Dtr *Grundschrift* (DtrG). Smend argues that the DtrG was modified by DtrN who added texts that indicated that Israel did not displace from the land all its occupants, and these people remained in the land until the time of the DtrN (see Joshua 1:7-9; 13:1-6; Judges 1:1-2:9, 17, 20-21, 23). Another redactional level was labeled, DtrP, which included added accounts about prophetic figures in the DH that brought literary strands emphasizing fidelity to Yahweh. This approach become the basis of the so-called "Göttingen School" for the literary origins of the DH, and the theory would deny any pre-exilic strands in the DH.[171] Recently, McCarter has amalgamated to some extent Cross's theory with some of the literary insights of the Göttingen School, and proposed that there was a pre-

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[169]See Cross, F.M. 1968. "The Structure of the Deuteronomic History." Pp. 9-24 in *Perspectives of Jewish Learning* (Annual of the College of Jewish Studies 3) Chicago: College of Jewish Studies; ibid. 1973. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

[170]See Smend, R. 1970. *Yahweh war & tribal confederation: reflections upon Israel's earliest history.* Nashville: Abingdon Press.

[171]See Klein, R 1983. *1 Samuel.* WBC 10. Waco: Word, esp. xxviii-xxxii.

Deuteronomistic level of redaction done from a prophetic perspective.[172] McCarter understands much of DtrP as the work of a prophetic historian who collected the so-theorized oldest sources underlying the Samuel narrative: the Ark narrative, Saul narrative, and an apology for David. In 2 Samuel McCarter argues for an old source behind the so-called "Succession Narrative."[173] The prophetic historian used the existing traditions and formed them into a chronological narrative. Due to the texts acceptance of the Davidic dynasty and orientation toward Judah as the future of Israel, McCarter dated the material to the end of the 8th century, shortly after the fall of Samaria.

Besides the two major multiple redactor theories, there exists a theory that the DH was composed by a "deuteronomistic school." This school is theorized to have consisted of possible northern prophetic circles who regrouped in Judah after the recorded events of the destruction of the Israel around 721B.C.[174] It places the writing of tn DH using existing traditions that produced an early form of Deuteronomy, during the reign of Hezekiah in the 7th century with further editing of the Joshua through Kings material in the first half of the 6th century B.C.[175]

Until recently this brief sketch has represented the ongoing dialog in mainstream biblical scholarship regarding the nature of the DH, especially related to any possible historical merit; however, recently, other views have entered the debate: 1) that the DH

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[172]See McCarter, P.K. 1980. *I Samuel*. AB 8. Garden City: Doubleday, pp. 18-23. For a similar treatment that an older text tradition was behind the composition of Samuel, see Halpern, B. 2001. *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

[173]See McCarter, P.K. 1984. *II Samuel*. AB 9. Garden City: Doubleday, pp. 9-16.

[174]See Weinfeld, M. 1972. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; ibid. 1991. *Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 5. Garden City: Doubleday

[175]Weinfeld 1972: 25.

was a literary construction composed during the Hellenistic period[176], and 2) that the DH was a literary construction composed during the Roman period.[177] Both of these views are new to the biblical scholarship landscape, and are currently entering the ongoing dialectic of how the DH should be viewed.[178]

Another aspect that Deuteronomistic scholars have engaged is trying to delineate the theological perspective of the Dtr, and integrating a possible theme of the DH. Noth argued that the DH was composed to explain why the people were in exile – namely, the idolatry of Israel's kings and people.[179] Thus, the DH served as a theological justification for what Yahweh did and why the people were in exile. A few years after Noth's research, von Rad balanced Noth's approach and argued that while themes of judgment were present, the DH also had a theological theme of "grace."[180] This grace was represented in the idea that there was an element of hope based on the Davidic covenant, and von Rad argued that Jehoiachin's release from prison (2 Kgs 25) provided a futuristic hope for the exiles, albeit not explicit. Wolf criticized the viewpoints of both Noth and von Rad, and argued that it was inconceivable that the Dtr composed the DH for the purposes of revealing to his audience that basically they were getting what they deserved.[181] Wolf argued based on the overall length of the DH that the purpose was in

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[176]Davies 1992.

[177]Thompson 1992.

[178]For a review and critique of these views, though admittedly somewhat polemical, see Dever 2001. Also of note, are the literary approaches to the DH which focus on all or part of it, see for example, Polzin, R. 1980. *Moses and the Deuteronomist*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

[179]See Noth 1981.

[180]See von Rad, G. 1962. *Old Testament Theology*. New York: Harper & Row.

[181]See Wolfe, H. 2000. "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work." Pp. 62-78 in Knoppers and McConville 2000.

essence a call to repentance, as outlined in Judges 2. All three of these early DH scholars show the complexity of attempting to state one given *mitte* for the DH. All three demonstrate one possible strand of an overarching theme that weaves throughout the DH.

Perhaps the problem of stating one theme reflects the complex compositional nature of the DH. One possible way forward is to argue for an overarching view that the DH is embedded with multiple themes. This approach was advocated by Weinfeld, who argued for several themes:

- The struggle against idolatry,
- One centralized cult,
- The election, exodus, and conquest themes,
- The monotheistic ideal,
- The observance of torah,
- The inheritance of the land,
- Material reward and retribution,
- The fulfilment of prophecy,
- The election of David and his dynasty,
- The distrust of anything foreign.[182]

Even in permitting the possibility of multiple themes embedded within the DH the scholar is still operating in a "modern" framework of trying to find "meaning" in the text. More problematic to the DH is asking the question if there is any meaning in the text(s)? Perhaps there is no *one* meaning or perhaps there is *no* meaning in themselves, and the meaning only begins at the point of connection between the reader and the text. If so, then meaning is reader-dependent, and a multiplicity of readings may be teased from any text contingent on readers.

In the end, the question remains as to what level can the DH be used in exploring any "historical reality" embedded within it. As stated in chapter one, it was Van Seters who "popularized" the dictum of the Dutch scholar, Huizinga, and showed that the Dtr

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[182]See Weinfeld 1972.

had a purpose behind the composition of the DH in order for Israel to have a source to render an account of its past. The idea that the Dtr may have been both a writer and editor in shaping various traditions into the DH does not mean that the modern reader should abandon it as a possible data source. The way forward seems to be to read the DH critically, noting possible streams of unity, disunity, and redactional elements, in order to better explore the possibility of any historical strand(s) behind the work.

It is in this context of the DH, that Geshur receives its identity. Not only does one have to be cognizant of the problematic nature of the DH, but more critically, how does the DH shape Geshur's identity. One may ask if Geshur is only a minor character in the grander framework of the DH to serve the greater purposes of some later scribe/editor? There are ten direct references to Geshur in the Bible, which seem to refer to either a land, a polity, or a people, i.e, the Geshurites. This chapter will explore these texts:

1. Deuteronomy 3:14
2. Joshua 12: 4-5
3. Joshua 13:2
4. Joshua 13:11-13
5. 1 Samuel 27:8
6. 2 Samuel 3:3, cf.1 Chron 3:2
7. 2 Samuel 13: 37-39
8. 2 Samuel 14: 32
9. 2 Samuel 15: 8
10. 1 Chronicles 2:23

To aid in exploring Geshur, it is prudent to go beyond the texts with direct citations, and to explore contiguous lands, peoples, and regions near Geshur, e.g., Bashan, Gilead, Havvoth-Jair. Also, though more elusive, there are texts that should be viewed where one might expect Geshur to be mentioned but it is not (e.g., 2 Samuel 8, 10; 1 Kings 11, 15, 20, 22).

4.1.1 Deuteronomy 3:14

The first text which mentions the Geshurites is Deuteronomy 3:14:

> Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called it, that is, Bashan, after his own name, Havvoth-jair, as it is to this day.

Of the ten texts which mention Geshur, nine are within the DH which suggests Geshur was not part of an earlier conception or association of the national identity of the Israelites, the other was from the Chronicler. This is best seen in the pre-Deuteronomistic boundary list(s) where Numbers 34 delineates the border of Israel up to the Jordan river as the eastern most border. As pointed out first by B. Mazar,[183] followed by R. de Vaux,[184] the borders of Israel corresponded to the precise province of Canaan in the Egyptian New Kingdom, and it is clear from Numbers that Canaan did not extend east of the Jordan (Num 32: 29-30; 33:51; 34:2; 35:10).[185] Numbers 34:1-15 does not refer to Geshur and delineates an eastern boundary extending to "the slope of the east side of the Sea of Chinnereth." In the north the land demarcated to Israel included Lebanon and Damascus, but the eastern boundary follows a southwesterly trajectory from Damascus, hence the area east of the Sea of Galilee was not included in the boundary (cf. Ezekiel 47: 13-18, esp. 17-18. This is seen in the Ezekiel boundary list where Block concluded that much of the descriptions are dependent on Numbers 34).[186] When the Gadites and

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[183]Mazar, B. 1954. "Canaan on the Threshold of the Age of the Patriarchs." *EI* 3: 18-32 (Hebrew); ibid. 1946. "Canaan and the Canaanites." *BASOR* 102: 7-12.

[184]de Vaux, R. 1968. " Le pays de Canaan." *JAOS* 88: 23-29.

[185]See Milgrom, J. 1989. *Numbers*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, p. 501.

[186]See Block, D. 1997. *Ezekiel, chapters 25-48*. (NICOT) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 712. The question from Ezekiel 47: 16 is whether Geshur would be part of the "border of Hauran"? In Ezekiel 47:17 there is the naming of Beruthah, perhaps a city of Hadadezer of Aram-Zobah, then also in the north is the naming of Hazer-hatticon with the identification remaining obscure but the author adding the explanatory comment: "which is on the border of Hauran." As for Hauran, the term, only occurs twice in the Bible (Ezekiel 47: 16, 18) but is attested in Nineteenth Dynasty Egyptian documents as *Hu-ru-na*, and in the Assyrian annals of Shalmaneser III as *Ha-ú-ra-ni* (see *RIMA* 2, A.0.102.8, l. 18; *ANET* p. 280); This text states that

Reubenites wanted to settle Transjordan, and not in the "promised land," this was considered rebellious, against Yahweh's plan, and was only accepted after obligations were fulfilled – a gift on condition, to subdue the promised land (Num 32:14-15, 20-23; Joshua 22). Weinfeld noted that according to Numbers 21 the Transjordan was not the destination of the Israelites, the southern Transjordan was conquered only to reach Cisjordan.[187]

However, in the DH the idea that the Jordan river was considered the eastern boundary of the promised land is not accepted, and the Dtr accepted the ideal(istic) borders of the promised land as outlined in Genesis 15:18-21. Thus the southern Transjordan which provided entrance into Cisjordan was considered part of the land to be subdued and not as a secondary land or an unclean land (cf. Deut. 2:24-25). Weinfeld concluded, "What was in Numbers a marginal settlement outside the borders of the promised land becomes in Deuteronomy a legitimate inheritance of land with vast territories."[188]Milgrom stated, "The contrast between Deuteronomy and (the priestly material in) Numbers could not be sharper. Deuteronomy has accommodated itself to history; Numbers has not. The priestly tradition consistently adheres to the map of

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Shalmaneser III advanced *šadî māt ha-ú-ra-ni* which may be a reason that Geshur/Garu is not mentioned in these texts. Hauran may have also been mentioned in Tiglath-pileser III's sixteen districts of Aram, see Tadmor 1994: 205-207; *Misc.* I,1.14). Aharoni (1979: 37-38) claimed that under Shalmaneser III Hauran was one of the possible administrative districts in the southern Levant, and can be identified roughly with the modern Jebel Druze separating the Bashan from the desert. An irony is that Gilead, not within the boundary, was settled by Israelites, but Damascus and Lebanon while within the boundary were not settled.

[187]Weinfeld 1991: 174.

[188]Ibid., p. 177.

Canaan as it existed up to the thirteenth century and does not admit to its slightest alteration in the light of subsequent events."[189]

> When was this tradition fixed? It seems that the final crystallization of this tradition can easily be put in the Hezekianic or Josianic period, the period of its historical antecedents. The real periods of expansion in the Transjordanian area started in the Davidic and Solomonic period, as the list in the Solomonic provinces attest (1 Kings 4:7-19). But it was the ideologist of the Hezekianic-Josianic period, the so-called Deuteronomic author or school, who fixed an ideology about the extent of the promised land. Until his days the sources cling to the Numbers 34 idea that Transjordan is not an integral part of the promised land.[190]

The Dtr in Deut. 3:14 viewed Geshur as having a geographical boundary of some significance. In Deuteronomy 3:14 the gentilics of Geshur and Maacah are joined suggesting a known relationship existed between them, i.e., most likely neighbors with shared borders. The context of this text was the movement of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan (Num. 21:21-35) and the allotment of land to the Transjordanian half-tribe of Manasseh.[191] The tribal movement was from south (from Aroer on the edge of the valley of Arnon, where Sihon the king of Heshbon reigned[192]) to north following the so-called King's Highway (Numbers 20:17, 21:22) which ran the length of the Transjordan highlands until it reached Damascus – with the northern section referred to as "the way of Bashan" (Num 21:33; Deut 3:1).

4.1.1.1 Bashan

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[189]Milgrom 1989: 501.

[190]Weinfeld 1991: 177.

[191]The Transjordanian half-tribe of Manasseh is the progeny of Manasseh's Aramean concubine, Asriel (1 Chrn 7:14-17; cf. Num 26:28-34; Josh 17:2).

[192]On the discussion of the reliability of the "Sihon Traditions", see Van Seters, J. 1972. "The Conquest of Sihon's Kingdom: A Literary Examination." *JBL* 91: 182-197; Bartlett, J.R. 1978. "The Conquest of Sihon's Kingdom: A Literary Re-examination." *JBL* 97: 347-51.

Bashan was considered to have covered the area north and northeast of the Yarmuk within several topographical regions: 1) the Golan Heights, east of the Sea of Galilee, stretching north to Mt. Hermon, 2) the al-Nuqra plain, 3) the Leja, and 4) Jebel Druze, east of the Golan.[193] The Bashan consisted of vast basaltic fields which created a fertile soil allowing the region to become a center of grain production.[194] The Bible portrays this region as rich in pastures (Deut 32:14, Amos 4:1, Ps 22:12) with forests of Oak (Is 2:13; Ezek 27:6[195], Zech 11: 2).[196] The greatness and vast resources of the Bashan is characterized by the tradition which states that it is an area with "sixty (great) cities with high walls, gates and bronze bars" (Deut 3:5, cf. 1 Kings 4:13). The term Bashan seems to mean "smooth" or "stoneless plain" which described the fertile plateau which was surrounded by basaltic mountains and hills of the region.[197] MacDonald interprets the name from modern Arabic *betene* meaning a "stonefree place good for grazing."[198] The plateau rises to ca. 610 m above sea level and was ideal for agriculture

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[193]See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the topography of this area.

[194]See Oded 1971; Kochavi 1998a; ibid. 1998b. "The 11th Century Tripartite Pillared Building from Tel Hadar." Pp. 468-478 in Gitin, S. *et al* (eds.) *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition*. Jerusalem: IES; Borowski, O. 1987. *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

[195]Note the possible economic relations between Bashan and Tyre. Did the Tyrians use only oak from the Bashan for its "oar production?" Not only was oak used from Bashan for oars, but fir wood from Senir was used for planks. Also, there seems to be a clue that Israel has alliances with both Geshur and Tyre. With economic relations good between Tyre and Geshur it seems logical that David joined this alliance. The phrase, "until this day" in the DH also links the northern region of Cabul as this was the territory which Solomon sold to Hiram, see Geoghegan, J. 2003. " 'Until This Day' and the Preexilic Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History." *JBL* 122/2: 201-227, here p. 218; also see Childs, B.S. 1963. "A Study of the Formula 'Until This Day.'" *JBL* 82: 279-92.

[196]See Chapter 2.

[197]MacDonald 2000: 130.

[198]Ibid.

and herding animals. While the Cisjordan suffered under the Egyptian campaigns during the reign of Ramesses II (c. 1279-1212 B.C.) especially in the aftermath of Kadesh, the Bašhan was not the subject of any Egyptian incursions.[199]

The Transjordanian conquest is summarized in Deut 3:8: "And we took at that time the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan from the valley of Arnon to Mt. Hermon." The Dtr extended the territory in the north conquered עד־הר חרמון which constituted the furthest northern boundary of the "idealized" boundaries. In a parenthetical comment the Dtr clarified that Hermon was called by other names: Sirion by Sidonians and Senir by Amorites (Deut 3:9). Sirion was considered part of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range and is attested in Ugaritic, Hittite, and Assyrian sources.[200] The Dtr further clarified that Bashan stretched from Edrei (modern Derʿa) in the west to Salcah (modern Salhad) in the east (cf. parallel tradition of Og the King of Bashan in Deut 3:1-3 and Num 21:33-35).

The next geographical location was the northern Transjordanian city of Edrei located on the Yarmuk river. In Albright's 1925 survey of the region he found pottery dating from the EBA to the present with the Iron Age particularly well represented here.[201] At Edrei the Israelites confronted Og, the king of Bashan (Num 21: 33-35, Deut 3:1), and also captured sixty cities and all the region of Argob.

4.1.1.2 Argob

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[199]See Giveon, R. 1965. "Two Egyptian Documents Concerning Bashan from the Time of Ramesses II." *RSO* 40: 197-202.

[200]See Baker, D. W. 1992a. "Senir." *ABD* 5: 1087-88; ibid. 1992b. "Sirion." *ABD* 6: 51-52. Also see, Weinfeld 1991: 183; *CTA 4.6:18-21* "to Lebanon and its trees, to Sirion and its choice cedars." Cf. Psalm 29: 6; Ezek 27:5; 1 Chr 5:23.

[201]See Albright, W.F. 1925. "Bronze Age Mounds of Northern Palestine and the Hauran." *BASOR* 19: 5-19.

Thompson states that the etymology of the term, *'argōb*, is most likely related to *regeb*, meaning "clod of earth" perhaps in reference to a tract of land.[202] The term appears four times in the Bible and is always preceding by the word, *hebel,* which may indicate this is a specific region within Bashan (Deut 3:4, 13, 14; cf. Solomonic district list 1 Kings 4:13-19) which was east of the Golan extending from the Ruqqad river to the desert. However, de Vaux stated, "Le sens de *hèbèl* est incertain: bande de terrain, lot déterminé au cordeau, confédération."[203] The geographical-syntax of the relationship between Argob and Bashan is unclear. MacDonald believes that "the Deuteronomic author/editors appear to have been uncertain about what territory was included in the whole region of Argob and what was its relation to Bashan."[204] The identification of Argob with Trachon or Trachonitis (the stony region), the basaltic fields of the Leja, from the Targumim (*Tg. Yer.*) though a possibility is uncertain. Cogan and Tadmor state that most pre-critical scholars considered *'t 'rgb w't h'ryh* (2 Kings 15:25) names of two Gileadite warriors, and do not translate the phrase.[205] Stade suggested that the phrase "Argob and Arieh" in 2 Kings 15:25 of the MT was a gloss since written in close textual proximity to Gilead both here and in 15:29 whereby the scribe mistakenly placed these place names in 15:25 instead of 15:29.[206] Geller translates the phrases as "by the eagle and lion" viewing them as portal figures at the gates of Samaria.[207]

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[202]See Thompson, H. 1992. "Argob." *ABD* 1: 376.

[203]See de Vaux, R. 1973. *Histoire ancienne d'Israël: la période des Juges.* Paris: Gabalda, here p. 97.

[204]MacDonald 2000: 127.

[205]See Cogan, M. and Tadmor, H. 1988. *II Kings*. AB 11. Garden City: Doubleday, p. 173.

[206]See Stade, B. and Schwally, F. (with notes by P. Haupt). 1904. *The Books of Kings*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, as cited in Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 173.

[207]See Geller, M. 1976. "A New Translation for 2 Kings XV 25." *VT* 26: 374-377.

4.1.1.3 Havvoth-jair

Havvoth means "tent-village" and is a cognate of Arabic *hiwa*, meaning "circle of tents."[208] In Akkadian it is compared to the word, *hija*, a W. Semitic word for "watchtower."[209] Beside the reference in Deut 3:14, *Havvoth Jair until this day*, is cited in Judges 10:4 speaking of Jair the Gileadite: "And he had thirty children who rode upon thirty donkeys, and they had thirty towns. These they named Havvoth Jair until this day which are in the land of Gilead." There are some considerable differences in these two texts with Deuteronomy assigning Manasseh an area with sixty fortified cities and a more northerly location in the Bashan, north of Gilead. In the pre-Deuteronomistic tradition the villages conquered by Jair, son of Manasseh, were in Gilead (Num 32:40-41) which agrees with Judges 10:4 and contain only thirty cities (cf. 1 Chron 2:21-22, where sixty is the age of Hezron when he had children with the daughter of Machir, the father of Gilead, which produced Segub, the father of Jair, who had twenty-three cities in Gilead, not thirty. In Joshua 17:1 Machir is called the "first born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead and Bashan" – though Judges 5:14 may have viewed Machir as part of the western tribes).[210] This is further confirmed by the Solomonic boundary districts (1 Kings 4:13-19) where there is a definite distinction between the district of Gilead with the towns of Jair and the region of Argob in Bashan.[211] It appears that the Dtr expanded this area to

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[208]See *BDB*, p. 295; also Wienfeld 1991: 180.

[209]See Gelb, I. (ed.) 1956. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. H. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 168-9.

[210]See Boling, R. 1966. "Some Conflate Readings in Joshua-Judges." *VT* 16: 293-98. Also note that in the genealogy of 1 Chron 7:14 the lineage came through an Aramean concubine, and included a sister named Maacah.

[211]*Contra* de Vaux (1973: 97) who stated, "Les douars de Yaïr = Argob seriaent la région entre le massif de 'Adjlûn et le Yarmuk. C'est la région la plus au nord qu'aient atteintes les Israélites, qui n'ont pas traversé le Yarmuk, et cette occupation a dû se faire à partir du territoire de Makîr, tard dans la période des Juges."

the north and linked it with the Bashan (cf. Joshua 13:29-31).[212] Japhet stated, "In 1 Kings 4.13 'the villages of Jair' are mentioned in the district of 'Ramoth-gilead' under Solomon's administrative system. We should therefore attribute this note to the waxing of the power of Aram in Transjordan, sometime in the ninth century."[213] Regardless of the date of the taking of the area, two issues are important: 1) "havvot", tent encampments, were taken from Jair, and not most-likely walled cities, and 2) the "buildings" or structures of Kennath were taken.

Weinfeld concluded that Judges 10:4 is the older text-tradition and that the Dtr had the tendency to expand the territory of Havvoth Jair from thirty to sixty villages and extend the boundaries north into the Bashan – an area important to the Dtr.[214] Geoghegan's study agrees with Weinfeld based on the geographical groupings of "until this day" where the bulk of these so-called redactional additions appear in the south.[215]

The phrase, *until this day*, has been the subject of a number of studies which aid in dating the text. Studies partially center on "who" and/or "how many" redactors were involved creating the DH. Childs concluded that the phrase originates from many different redactors; however, more recently, the trend has been to understand one or two redactors in forming the DH. Geoghegan concluded that "there are compelling reasons to assign this phrase to one redactor: the Deuteronomistic Historian (Dtr), who employed

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[212]Even in the pre-Deuteronomistic writings expansion into this area of the Transjordan occurred when Nobah went into the southern Bashan and "took" Kenath (Num 32:42).

[213]Japhet, S. 1993. *I & II Chronicles*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, p. 81.

[214]Weinfeld 1991: 180.

[215]See Geoghegan 2003 where this phrase is used to aid in dating, but the conclusions are different with Childs (1963: 292) noting that Joshua 15:63 and 16:10 point to the tenth century whereas Geoghegan proposes a Josianic era date (c. 640-609).

"until this day" as his own personal witness to geographical, political and cultic realities mentioned in his sources that still existed at the time of his historical enterprise."[216] Geoghegan's study supports the earlier study of Cross which indicated that the Dtr most likely was active during the Josiah's reign and represented the interests of the Judean monarchy and the Levitical priesthood.[217]

The phrase "until this day" then was added to an already existing tradition which pointed to something which existed at the time of redaction. The question of how many redactors is not important for this study, however the chronological nature of the phrase, i.e. whether it is Hezekian (ca. 715-687 B.C.) or Josianic (ca. 640-609 B.C.), is important. This will have implications for establishing a possible Geshurite presence in the region, and may help modify the current hypothesis that holds: 1) Geshur came to an end with the destruction of the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, and 2) Geshur was assimilated into a greater Aram (cf. 1 Chron 2:23; 2 Sam 15:8).[218]

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[216]Geoghegan 2003: 202.

[217]See Cross, F.M. 1968. "The Structure of the Deuteronomistic History." Pp. 9-24 in *Perspectives of Jewish Learning* (Annual of the College of Jewish Studies 3) Chicago: College of Jewish Studies. See also, Cogan, M. 1978. "Israel in Exile– The View of a Josianic Historian." *JBL* 97: 40-44; A number of scholars argue for an earlier Hezekian milieu, see Halpern, B. and Vanderhooft, D.S. 1991. "The Editions of Kings in the 7th - 6th Centuries B.C.E." *HUCA* 62: 179-244; Provan, I. 1988. *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History.* Berlin: de Gruyter.

[218]Personal discussions with R. Arav. If Geshur had been assimilate into Aram, then why did the Chronicler keep it independent of Aram? If the Chronicler kept an independent Geshur then it could be argued that Geshur kept its autonomy until at least the late fourth century B.C. 1 Chronicles 2:23, 3:2 has no editorial note that Geshur was assimilated into Aram, and it is questionable if Aram was able to control extensive regions much after 720 B.C. Millard (1992: 347) states, "Sargon II of Assyria crushed the revolt of Hamath led by Yau-bi'-di (720) and with that blow extinguished any flickering hopes of Arameans nationalism. All the former Aramean territories had already become provinces of the Assyrian empire...Arameans continued to live in them, but their identity was diluted by the Assyrian deportations...The adjective 'Aramean' continued in use as a description of individuals after all the Arameans had disappeared...the term probably came to denote one whose native

While the phrase, "until this day," occurs in every source of the DH and is spread in northern and southern and annalistic and literary contexts, it is clear that the overwhelming occurrences of the phrase are in a *southern geographical context*. Geoghegan highlights this:

> In fact, its use betrays a detailed knowledge of the south. For example, "until this day" confirms the persistence of: (1) a pile of stones near the Jordan River (Josh 4:9), (2) a pile of stones in the valley of Achor (Josh 7:26), (3) the scattered remains of the city of Ai (Josh 8:28), (4) a pile of stones over the king of Ai (Josh 8:29), (5) a pile of stones covering the mouth of a cave at Makkedah (Josh 10:27), (6) a single rock in a field at Beth-Shemesh (1 Sam 6:18), (7) a spring at Lehi called "Spring of the Caller (Judg 15:19, and (8) a monument in the King's Valley called Absalom's Pillar (2 Sam 18:18).[219]

In contrast to the numerous occurrences of the phrase with a southern perspective are the five occurrences with a northern location. Geoghegan notes, "Four of the five northern sites said to exist "until this day" have clear Deuteronomistic associations: Havvoth Jair (Deut 3:14; Judg 10:4), Geshur and Maacah (Josh 13:13), the altar at Ophrah (Judg 6:24), and the (destroyed) temple of Baal at Samaria (2 Kings 10:27)."[220] Three of the five times that "until this day" is used in a northern area, the phrase has as its antecedent a large geographical area consisting of numerous cities (Deut 3:14; Josh 13:13 and Judges 10:4) – this includes the area of Cabul which is not included in the Deuteronomistic associations. Halpern argues that Cabul was important to the northern Levitical priests with the Gershonite priests losing about one-third of their territory when

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language was Aramaic." On the identity of the Chronicler, see Levin, Y. 2003. "Who Was the Chronicler's Audience? A Hint from His Genealogies." *JBL* 122/2: 229-245, who concluded that the Chronicler lived in Yehud in the mid-fourth century B.C. and was connected to the temple due to the extent of knowledge and interest in the cult with regards to the Priestly and Levitic genealogies.

[219]Geoghegan 2003: 202.

[220]Ibid.

Solomon sold the area to Hiram of Tyre (1 Kgs 9:13).[221] The Levitical northern interest also included the areas east of the Sea of Galilee where there was continual pressure from Damascus during the ninth century B.C. Geoghegan states:

> The relationship between these two northern regions and "until this day" is not mere coincidence. As we noted above, the Dtr places the notice of the Levites' inheritance in the context of this same region (Josh 13:13b-14a): "And Geshur and Maacah live in the midst of Israel *until this day. Only to the tribe of Levi he did not give an inheritance* [...] " This reference would fit more naturally at the beginning or end of the inheritance lists, yet it appears here, exactly where we would expect it if Halpern's analysis is correct — in the context of the allotment of the far north, in particular, the Bashan (Josh 13:8-12). That is, the Dtr inserts a notice about the Levites lack of an inheritance in the context of the description of the territory they once occupied but have since lost.[222]

4.1.1.4 Gilead

The other major land boundary the Dtr recorded was Gilead (Deut 3:15-17, cf. Num 32:30-40). Though the precise etymological meaning of Gilead is unknown, Ottoson, believes that the root derives from *ğ'd,* meaning "curly (of hair), difficult (of terrain)."[223] Thus Gilead may be named after geographic features of the Transjordanian mountain landscape as seen in the phrase, *har gil'ād* or *har haggil'ād* referring to the mountains of the region (Gen 31:21, 25; Deut. 3:12; Judg 7:3). Gilead was located on the eastern side of the Jordan river extending to the desert, and stretched from the Yarmuk to the Arnon rivers. Gilead was divided by the Jabbok river, and in Numbers 21 only the southern half was considered Gilead, but the Dtr extended the border north of the Jabbok to the Chinnereth (Josh 12:5).

4.1.2 Conclusion

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[221]See Halpern, B. 1974. "Sectionalism and Schism." *JBL* 93: 519-532.

[222]Geoghegan 2003: 218.

[223]Ottoson, M. 1969. *Gilead: Tradition and History.* Lund: Gleerup, pp. 16-17. Following Leibel, D. 1963. "Two Onomastic Notes." *Yedi'ot* 27: 204 (Hebrew).

With two successful military exercises resulting in the deaths of Sihon and Og the Israelites controlled the Transjordan from the Arnon to Mount Hermon occupying the tableland, the whole of Gilead, and all of Bashan (Deut 2:26-3:8). This territory was allocated to the two and a half tribes of Israel, i.e., Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (Deut 3:8-17), contingent on their commitment to help in the conquest of Cisjordan (Deut 3:18-22). If the tribes did indeed take control of the Transjordan as far north as Mt. Hermon (including the eastern city of Edrei), where then, did the Geshurite boundary begin? Unfortunately there is not sufficient geographical data to delineate nor distinguish the boundaries of Bashan, Geshur, and Maacah. Concerning Transjordanian boundaries Kallai notes, "Transjordan is uncommonly difficult, chiefly because of the paucity of material, the employment of what appears to be general and inexact terms, and the contradictions seemingly in evidence amongst the various texts and their parallels."[224] The Transjordan was not part of the original Israelite land delineation, but the Dtr incorporated it. In the midst of the Israelite subjugation of the northern Transjordan, the Dtr limited the lands possessed to the boundary of the Geshurites and Maacathites. But, unfortunately does not give the reader any more precise geographical notices.

4.2 The Remaining Land

> "...as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites..." - Joshua 12:5
>
> "This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and all those of the Geshurites." - Joshua 13:2
>
> "But the sons of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites and the Maacathites; for Geshur and Maacah live among Israel until this day." - Joshua 13:13

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[224]Kallai, Z. 1986. *Historical Geography of the Bible: The Tribal Territories of Israel.* Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, p. 241.

The book of Joshua contains two primary and distinct literary sections: 1) the conquest accounts, chapters 1-12, and 2) the tribal allotments, chapters 13-24. The first part consists of diverse conquest traditions concluding in a summary of the borders of the conquered land (Josh 12). These borders composed the territorial boundaries for the allotment of the land to the tribes in the second half of Joshua. The relationship of these two parts has been debated within biblical scholarship with some seeing the first half as an original J source dating to the 10th century B.C., and the second half as attributed to P.[225] Noth proposed that the second half of Joshua had an independent transmission and redactional history before it was incorporated into the book. Noth believed that a great deal of the literary material was already formed when the Dtr used it in Joshua, e.g. chapters 2-9 and their origin, and he understood a "collecter" (*der "Sammler"*) arranged the units sometime around 900 B.C. from a Judean perspective.[226] Noth concluded the tribal geography (Joshua 13-21) came from two primary sources: 1) an old list of tribal boundaries from the Judges period, and 2) a list of cities of Judah from the ninth century recorded during Josiah's reign (ca. 640-609 B.C.). Thus, Joshua 13-21 contain pre-Deuteronomistic elements unrelated to other sources.

4.2.1 Joshua 12:5

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[225]See Boling, R and Wright, G.E. 1982. *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary.* AB 6. Garden City: Doubleday, pp. 59-66. For the analysis of Noth I have depended on Boling and Wright and have taken note of the criticism of Fohrer, G. 1965. *Introduction to the Old Testament.* [tr. D.E. Green] New York: Abingdon.

[226]E.g., Joshua 11: 10-15 where the writer understood the stature of Hazor and referred to the "northern kings."

Joshua 12 serves as a conquest summary of the first half of Joshua, usually attributed to P, with a deuteronomic tone similar to portions of Deuteronomy (Deut 3:8-14,.12:2-4).[227]

> Deut 3:14 – Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites and called it, that is, Bashan, after his name, Havvoth-jair, as it is to this day.
>
> Joshua 12:5 – And ruled over Mount Hermon and Salecah and all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites and half of Gilead, as far as the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

Joshua 12:1-6 serves as a summary description of Moses' Transjordanian campaigns. The author linked the traditions surrounding the deeds of Moses with the new leader, Joshua, and the transitory nature of kings and kingdoms. Joshua 12: 7-24 is devoted to the kings defeated through Joshua's military campaigns, and lists kings along with their territories. This chapter reinforces the claim of chapter 11 that in fact "the whole land" was occupied by Joshua's campaigns: "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war" (11:23, 14:15).

While similarities exist between Joshua 12 and the rest of the DH, Fohrer observed that this chapter did not belong to the earliest DH "because it lists kings and cities that were not mentioned in the rest of the book and contains a conception of the conquest of the land that does not agree with the account in 1-11: Palestine was ruled by thirty kings, whom Joshua defeated one after another."[228] Boling concluded that chapter 12 may be part of a secondary stage of the book's formation where the additional

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[227]Ottoson 1969: 118-119 who follows Noth 1953: 69ff.

[228]Fohrer 1965: 203-204.

information helps in understanding the gaps in the first edition by "calling attention to the larger Israel of the east-west axis which had existed before the Transjordan territories were lost to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah beginning in the ninth century."[229]

For this study, there are key passages which mention "the Geshurites and the Maacathites." Greenspoon, following Margolis, notes that the LXX B turns the Geshurites into Girgashites where the MT reads *hgswry* the OG regularly read *hgsyry* but LXX B mistakenly turns them into Girgashites.[230] Thus here and in 13:13 Greenspoon concluded that the Old Greek is an "error induced by the gentilic."[231] The gentilic forms, the Geshurites and the Maacathites, refer to two groups of people who occupy territory on the eastern borders of Israel not incorporated in any tribal claims. The text is stating the parameters of the conquered territory of Og, king of Bashan. There are no definitive boundaries, but the territory Og ruled would stretch as far north as Mt. Hermon and as far east as Salecah. His rule included Bashan as far as the territories of Geshur and Maacah to the east, and he ruled the northern half of the Gilead to the territory of Sihon of Heshbon.

4.2.2 Joshua 13

The strategy for possessing Canaan was clear: "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places ...'"

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[229]Boling and Wright 1982: 322, cf. Josh 1:12-18 where there is no mention of the political nature of Transjordan.

[230]See Greenspoon, L. 1983. *Textual studies in the Book of Joshua.* Harvard Semitic Monographs 28. Chico: Scholars Press, pp. 136-137; Margolis, M. 1931. *The Book of Joshua in Greek.* Paris: Guethner

[231]Margolis 1931: 258, as cited in Greenspoon.

(Numbers 33: 51-52).

The idea of "crossing the Jordan" is a metonymy for possessing the territorial boundaries of Canaan with both literal and figurative features. The tension remained that the Geshurites, and others, remained in the land. Plus, there seem to be conflicting statements in Joshua of the *total* conquest of the land when compared with the land the Israelites occupied.[232] Joshua 11 recounts Joshua's northern campaign and ends with a victory statement : "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war "(Joshua 11:23). Joshua 12 summarizes the kings who were defeated, listing their names and their territories. Thus chapter 12 reinforces the preceding chapter that "the whole land" was occupied by Joshua's campaigns.

After a dramatic list of conquered kings (Joshua 12: 9-24), the text reverts to narrative in chapter 13. Joshua 13:1 begins with a waw-disjunctive, ויהושע זקן, now Joshua was old, which underscored Joshua's age in relation to the land which remained to be taken. The reader is given another picture of the conquest: Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the Lord said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed." This would apparently contradict the statement in Joshua 11:23 and chapter 12. How much of the land still needed to be possessed? "This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and all *those of* the Geshurites" (Joshua 13:2). [233]

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[232]See Hawk, D. 1991. *Every Promise Fulfilled. Contesting Plots in Joshua.* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox. For the use of hyperbole in ANE conquest accounts, see Younger 1990.

[233]Cf. Judges 3:1-7 lists the "foreigners" in the land, but Geshur is not mentioned.

Joshua 13:1-14 continued the Transjordanian tradition in Joshua 12, and thus is part of an older tradition which included the area east of the Jordan, and not just the Josianic ideal of Israel west of the Jordan. Concerning the placement of Joshua 13:1-14, Boling argues, "This introduction to the allotment of the land served the purpose of emphasizing to later exiles that Yahweh had at the outset designated the entire region – east and west – as Israel's fief. It thus affirmed that the true Israel is better represented by Moses' expectations than by Joshua's actual accomplishments ."[234]

4.2.2.1 Joshua 13:2

> "This is the land which remains all the districts of the Philistines and all the Geshurites." - Joshua 13:2

In Joshua 13:2 the LXX does not have the two occurrences of "all," which some suggest is a later amplification of the Hebrew text.[235] Boling partially agrees with the LXX reading (i.e., as a dittography), and omits the second "all" but preserves the initial one.[236] However, it could be argued to preserve the second "all" and understand an editorial ellipsis of a second גלילות (i.e., a haplography) with the writer skipping the word and proceeding to הגשורי. The LXX also indicates the translation as Γεσειρεί (B), Gezerites, where the MT reads הגשורי, which the LXX transcribes as Γεργεσεί (B) in 12:5.

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[234]Boling and Wright 1982: 337.

[235]See Butler, T. 1983. *Joshua.* WBC 7. Waco: Word, p. 145.

[236]Boling and Wright 1982: 333.

Variant Readings of הגשורי in Joshua 12:5 and 13:2			
	MT	LXX	
. Joshua 12:5	הגשורי	Γεσουρί (A) Γεργεσεί (B)	Γεσουρε (Luc.)
Joshua 13:2	הגשורי	Γεσουρί (A) Γεσειρεί (B)	Γεσουρεί (Luc.)

Chart 4.1 Variant Readings in Joshua 12:5, 13:2

The LXX also adds the phrase: "and the Canaanites" probably under the influence of 13:3. The LXX reading then would view the second people, the Gezerites, as neighbors to the north of the Philistine pentapolis, and thus, not confused with the previously mentioned Geshurites (12:5) or the "northern Geshurites" who will be mentioned in 13:11. However, the reading of the MT is the preferred reading as will be demonstrated.

The natural question which arises from Joshua 13:2 is what (if any?) is the geographical relation between the region of the Philistines and the Geshurites? The Philistines are not mentioned as one of the seven peoples to be removed from the land (cf. Joshua 3:10), and they appear only here in Joshua – though in Joshua 11:22 three of the towns: Gaza, Gath and Ashdod, are occupied by the Anakim, and these towns later composed part of the Philistine territory (13:3). This would seem to indicate that the addition of the Philistines is a later editorial shaping of the text. The Philistines were one of the Sea Peoples from the Aegean basin which seem to have arisen from disturbances and subsequent migration of people from the Mycenaean civilization at the end of the thirteenth century B.C.[237]

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[237]See Dothan, T. 1995. "The 'Sea Peoples' and the Philistines of Ancient Palestine." *CANE* 2: 1267-79; Dothan, T and Dothan, M. 1992. *People of the Sea:*

Most commentators understand Geshur in Joshua 3:2 as a reference to a "southern Geshurite enclave."[238] This is based on the LXX reading, Γεσειρεί (B)/Gezerites, where the MT reads "Geshurites." Boling understands them as "Gezerites" who were neighbors to the north side of the Philistine pentapolis, and should not be confused with the Geshurites of the northern Transjordan in 3:11.[239] While Howard notes that Boling's argument is unconvincing and that the Old Greek spelling for Gezer is not *geseirei*, he stated, "The 'Geshur' here is almost certainly not the same one mentioned in 12:5; 13:11, 13, which was northeast of the Sea of Kinnereth...."[240] Kallai does not directly address the presence of Geshur in 13:2, which would be part of his division of the 'remaining lands,' but clearly identifies them in with the so-called conquest lacunae.[241] Butler states, "The Geshurites are normally located in Syria north of the territory conquered by the Trans-Jordan tribes (Deut 3:14; Josh 12:5; 13: 11-13)...In the present context, northern Geshurites can not be intended."[242] B. Mazar raised the possibility that Joshua 13:2 refers to the Geshurites in the Transjordan and stated, "It is difficult to decide whether this is simply a gloss referring to Geshur in the Transjordan, or whether the Geshurites in the south are meant."[243]

If one accepts a later forming of the text with the addition of the Philistines then

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The Search for the Philistines. New York: Macmillan.

[238]Boling 1982; Butler 1983; Howard, D. 1998. *Joshua*. (NAC) Nashville: Broadman; Woudstra, M. 1981. *The Book of Joshua*. (NICOT) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Hess, R. 1996b. *Joshua*. (TOTC) Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, here p. 230 seems to understand the Geshurites here as Transjordanian – but one senses that the brevity of the commentary may have precluded all research findings.

[239]Boling and Wright 1982:337.

[240]Howard 1998: 298.

[241]Kallai 1986: 304-05.

[242]Butler 1983: 148.

[243]Mazar 1961: 21.

why not also understand the "Geshurites" in 13:2 as an editorial shaping of the text; and thus, as the northern people who lived east of the Sea of Galilee, which harmonizes better with the argument of Joshua 12 -13. A natural reading of the text could be undertaken if the writer had composed an effective geographic sphere, a geographic merism, where two geographic opposite locales are joined together to indicate the totality of the territory, similar to synecdoche where there are two opposite geographic points to describe the whole. Even though Joshua had some success, this was not complete and the land was not fully occupied in a real or even "idealized" nature. This type of literary construction is utilized when the Dtr refers to the completeness of the throne of David in both Israel and Judah from "*Dan to Beersheba*" (Judges 20:1; 2 Sam 3:10, 24:2,7).[244] It is also seen in Joshua 11: 17: "from Mt. Halak, that rises toward Seir, even as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon..."[245] On this, Howard notes, "This summary of territory conquered serves as a summary of the northern campaign and a general summary to tie off the entire section (chaps. 9-11). The Israelites had now, for all practical purposes, conquered the entire land. Verse 16 mentions the regions that were

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[244]Also of note is Numbers 13:21 where Joshua sent his spies on the eve of the conquest from "the wilderness of Zin to the House of Rehob of Lebo Hamath"; 1 Kings 8: 65; 2 Chron 7:8: "So Solomon observed the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, and a great assembly from the *entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt*...." Kallai (1998:163) states, "The stylized tribal terminology figures in many other texts to denote territorial extent. This may be seen for instance in the Song of Deborah, in the call to arms of Gideon, or in the enumeration of tribal areas mentioned with regard to the activities of Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah (II Chron 15:9; 30: 10-12; 18; 34:5-6). When Jeroboam constructed his kingdom he placed a cultic center in the south at Bethel and another in the north at Dan (2 Kings 12:29). As Aharoni(1979: 86) stated, "Borders were fixed according to the four points on the compass in one of the following ways: the fixing of terminal points or the recording of points along the border. The first method, which adopts the formula, "from...to...", is known outside of the Bible from treaties between ancient kingdoms of the middle East."

[245]See also Joshua 12:7 where this is repeated adding the concept of the kings which were defeated.

conquered, and v. 17 gives the northern and southern limits of the territory."[246] Hence, the Dtr employed a literary device to express the idea of the totality of the land, and this in the context of Joshua has been done in the form of summary statements with a possible expansion of the statement.[247]

Deuteronomy 3:14 located Geshur in the region of Bashan which is east of the of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan river and north of the Yarmuk river extending to Mt. Hermon – roughly corresponding to the modern southern Golan. The Philistines were directionally diagonally south-west of this region on the Mediterranean Sea roughly between the Besor river on the south and the Sorek river to the north. The point is made: after the campaigns recorded in Joshua 1-12; the whole land was not taken, and areas from the south to the north remained.

In short, Joshua 13:2 serves as an overall summary of the land which remained or was not occupied. Joshua had not taken the whole land. The writer emphasizes this by taking a geographical southern point, Philistia, and joining it with a northern point, Geshur, to construct a literary merism that the land had not been taken. From this title/summary the writer then lists areas starting in the south and continuing to the north which need to be taken. Therefore, one should not read a "southern" Geshur in the text as a neighbor of Philistia, but the emphasis should be on the most natural reading of Geshur which is found here in the surrounding context.[248]

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[246]Howard 1998: 272.

[247]See Hess 1996b: 230 for a similar approach to the summary statements being employed in Joshua.

[248]This harmonizes with the same literary pattern seen in Joshua 1:2-4, the account of Israel's entrance and conquest of the land followed by the unfolding of the summary in chapters 1-12. Thus, in both 1:2-4 and 13:2 the totality of the land is in view, which rules out understanding Geshur as a "southern enclave." Furthermore, Judges 1 uses a similar south-to-north geographic arrangement of tribal episodes to foreshadow the outworking of the Judges cycles (3:7-16:31), see Younger, K.L. 1994.

Thus, as Joshua 13 unfolds the reader learns of the lands yet to be occupied. If Joshua 13:2 serves as a merism for the whole land which remains to be occupied, then 13:3-6 amplifies this and expands the area. This is done in the same south-north pattern as 13:2 which seems to underscore the writer's point: the conquests did not take all the land.

4.2.2.2 Joshua 13:11-13

Joshua 13:8-13 is part of the larger section (13:8-33) which surveys the Transjordanian distribution of land to Reuben, Gad, and "eastern Manasseh." This was the first thorough survey of this area (Num 32, Deut 2:26-3:17) and may validate the idea that Israel had a legitimate inheritance in the Transjordan. Joshua 13:8-13 is similar to Joshua 12:1-5 and Deut 3:8-14 thus possibly indicating a common source with the passages being secondary additions.[249] Similar to Joshua 13:1-7 the description of the territory in the Transjordan begins with a summary: "The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh had already received the land that Moses, the Lord's servant, had given them; it was on the east side of the Jordan River" (Joshua 13:2). After the summary, the writer expands it by naming places starting in the south then moving north: Aroer, the plateau from Madaba to Dibon, Heshbon, Gilead, Geshur and Maacah, Mount Hermon, then the area in Bashan to Salecah. The writer claims that all these Transjordanian lands/peoples were driven out (Joshua 13:12). This is similar to Joshua 12 where there was a survey of defeated lands, only to list the lands which remained (13:2); now in Joshua 13:13, after the list of Transjordanian lands taken, the

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"Judges 1 in its Near Eastern Literary Context." Pp. 207-227 in Millard, Hoffmeier and Baker 1994.

[249]Boling and Wright 1982:339.

author states, "However, the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah; they still live in Israel."

. In Joshua 13:11-13 the author repeats the statement found in Joshua 12:5 that the Israelites went to the borders of Geshur (cf. Deuteronomy 3:14). And, they did not dispossess the Geshurites and Maacathites who live among Israel "until this day." Halpern noted that this area in northern Transjordan was critical to the Gershonite priests: "And to the sons of Gershom, one of the families of the Levites, from the half-tribe of Manasseh, they gave Golan in Bashan, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasture lands, and Be-eshterah with its pasture lands: two cities" (Joshua 21:27).[250] Joshua 13:14 indicates that the Dtr places the inheritance of some Levites in this area – in the area of the far north, the Bashan, where the Geshurites and Maacathites also habited. The northern parts of the land were given away by Solomon's trading the territory of Cabul to Hiram of Tyre (1 Kings 9:13). Halpern notes that "the Cabul, which comprised much of the older tribal allotment of Asher contained at least three Mushite Levitical cities, Abdon, Rehob, and Mishal. Possibly Helkath was also included. Their loss meant the loss of one third of the Gershonite cities, a blow of no small proportions to clan prestige."[251] Any further encroachment by more northerly or Aramean peoples would threaten the inheritance of the Gershonite Levites.

Thus, the Israelites viewed the Geshurites as living in their allotted land not yet occupied. The text refers to the Geshurites as an independent cultural/ethnic people with their own geographical boundaries. The three parallel texts previously studied agree that Geshur was bordered by Mt. Hermon on the north, Bashan on the east and Gilead on the

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[250]Halpern 1974: 523.

[251]Ibid.

south (Joshua 12:5, 13:11).

There are no more references to Geshur in Joshua. The natural borders of the Jordan river and the Sea of Galilee took precedence when tribal delineations were given to Naphtali (Joshua 19:32-39) and Gad.[252] When the half-tribe of Manasseh received their Transjordanian allotment it was referred to as the land of Bashan, though it is doubtful if this reached much past the Yarmuk valley.

Naturally, one wonders what happened to the Geshurites who remained in Israel "to this day." There are the conflicting statements that Yahweh gave Israel all the land which was promised (Joshua 21:43), yet the regions of the Philistines, the Geshurites, and many Canaanite cities remained unconquered. Why were the Geshurites missing from such lists that are found in the book of Judges that delineate unconquered places (cf. Judges 1:27-36)? Were the considered too powerful to overthrow? Did they not pose a threat to the expanding Israelite culture and were therefore allowed to stay as a peaceful neighbor (Joshua 21:44)?

4.3 The Kings of Israel

As the Israelites moved from a tribal system towards nationhood, they requested a king "like their neighbors" (Deut 17:14-15; 1 Sam 8:1-9). The first Israelite king was a Benjamite, Saul (1 Sam 9:2). While he was divinely appointed king over Israel (1 Sam 9:17) and had been publically installed (1 Sam 10: 17-26), there still was a small group of people who did not endorse him (1 Sam 11:27). In the ANE the king led his nation in battle and expanded his territory, often, by conquest, and it was natural for Israel to

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[252]An interesting, yet unconvincing, argument links the archaeological excavations of Bethsaida to the tribal allotment of Naphtali. See Arav, R. 1995. "Bethsaida, Tzer and the Fortified Cities of Naphtali." Pp. 193-202 in Arav and Freund 1995.

want a king like its neighbors; one who would secure peace and prosperity. The first military action Saul undertook was the conflict at Jabesh-gilead where he defeated the Ammonites.[253] This military success guaranteed his authority before the people and silenced any internal detractors (1 Sam 11). Following the success at Jabesh-gilead, Saul fought against *all* the enemies bordering his kingdom: Moab, Ammon, Edom, Zobah, and the Philistines.[254] Wherever Saul turned he inflicted punishment; he defeated the Amalekites and delivered Israel from those who plundered them (1 Sam 14:47-48). However, just like the loose confederation of tribes which preceded the kingship in Israel, the newly appointed king found that the Philistines continued to be a problem. During Saul's reign Transjordan was both a concern and a target of his energies; yet, there is no mention of Geshur in the Saul texts. However, the "kings of Zobah" are mentioned. Zobah was thought to be located to the east of the anti-Lebanon mountains to the north of Damascus, into the plains of Homs, then eastward to the desert.[255] This was a strategic area since the *Via Maris* and the so-called King's Highway crossed near Zobah. There is a textual problem in 1 Sam 14:47 concerning the exact nature of Zobah. According to McCarter Zobah was an important city-state and had a single monarch.[256] The only king of Zobah, who is known from the Bible, was Hadadezer, the son of Rehob (2 Sam 8:3).[257]

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[253]See Long, V.P. 1989. *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: a Case for Literary and Theological Coherence*. Atlanta: SBL Dissertation Series.

[254]While allowing for the use of hyperbole in the text, one can still note that Geshur is not mentioned, especially since they will enter the narrative with David's rise.

[255]See Pitard, W. 1992a. "Zobah." *ABD* 6: 1108; Lipinski, E. 2000. *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*. Leuven: Peeters, Dion 1997, and Sader 1987.

[256]See McCarter, P.K. 1980. *I Samuel*. AB 8. Garden City: Doubleday, p. 255.

[257]See Dion 1997: 172-76; Lipinski 2000: 330-345, with discussions.

To what extent Saul waged military campaigns is hard to discern, but as Long highlights, 1 Sam 14:47-51 serves as a type of "royal summary" to Saul's reign.[258] The reader is given the impression that Saul was constantly in warfare with surrounding nations for his kingdom, but Geshur is not mentioned as a target kingdom.

4.3.1 The David Narratives

Even under the newly emerging kingship of David the Philistines were adversarial in Israel's development; though in the near-term more to the benefit of the wise new king. David established his credibility to rule by his early victories over the Philistines (1 Sam 17; 18:20-30), but due to conflicts with Saul David fled to Gath (1 Sam 27:3) and received asylum (along with his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail) from its king, Achish, son of Maoch.[259] David received Ziklag as his administration center where he stayed "a year and four months"[260] and from there conducted military raids: "David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites for they were inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur even as the land of Egypt" (1 Sam 27:7-8). McCarter states:

> The granting of landed properties to favored servants was a common part of the feudal economy of the city-states of the ancient Near Eastern Bronze Age. The practice seems to have been perpetuated in the Philistine principalities of the Iron Age, just as it was under the Israelite monarchy (see 18:14; cf. 22:7). In the present case the grant is evidently made in return for certain services at arms – a true military fief – as the

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[258]Long 1989: 129-131.

[259] Note the resemblance between this name Maoch, מעוך, and the spelling of his name in the 1 Kings 2: 39, מעכה, with the name of David's Geshurite wife, Maacah, מעכה (2 Sam 3:3). It is clear from the Hebrew scriptures that Maacah was a common name, for men and women, an epicene personal name. There may be a slight irony/foreshadowing that David would find help in Gath from Maoch then in Geshur find help from a marriage to Maacah. This also shows that ethnicity can not be understood by this name, i.e., a person bearing the name is not necessarily a "Maacathite."

[260]LXX has four months omitting ו ימים, perhaps due to homoioteleuton.

> materials that follow show. All such grants were permanent and inalienable, and the parenthesis at the end of v 6 traces the fact that Ziklag was in the writer's time a special crown property in Judah ....[261]

. In reverse order of their appearance in 1 Sam 27:8, the first place David raided was Amalek. Amalek was one of the "chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom" (Gen 36: 15-16). The term Amalekite came to represent descendants of Eliphaz who were linked to the land of Edom, much like Esau.[262] Mattingly believes that the Amalekites were a nomadic or semi-nomadic group of people who were highly mobile and roamed transitional zones in southern Canaan and Judah.[263] The Amalekites had a long history of conflict with the Hebrews (Ex 17:8-13, Num 13:26-29; Judg 3:13; 6:3-5) as seen in the Saul narratives where Saul strikes victoriously against Amalek (1 Sam 15: 4-5; cf. Deut 25: 17-19). This victory was short-lived as he failed to enforce the *herem* and was defeated by the Amalekites (2 Sam 1:1-10). The tension continued with David who raided the Amalekites (1 Sam 27: 8-9) and bore the brunt of retaliatory raids (1 Sam 30:1-2; 11-20).[264] David's final offensive against the Amalekites (30:11-20) may have stopped further threats from them since they are not mentioned again in the David story.[265]

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[261]McCarter 1980: 414.

[262]See Bartlett, J.R. 1989. *Edom and the Edomites*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.

[263]See Mattingly, G. 1992. "Amalek." *ABD* 1:169-71; *contra* Edelman, D. 1986. "Saul's Battle Against Amalek (1 Sam 15)." *JSOT* 35: 71-84, who located Amalek in northern Samaria, but located Geshur near Philistia, see Edelman, D. 1988. "Tel Masos, Geshur, and David." *JNES* 47/4: 253-58.

[264]The time-marker in 1 Sam 30: 1-2 states that David and his men were gone for three days when the Amalekites raided the Negev and Ziklag. It appears that David's campaigns were sustainable for a minimum of at least three days if not longer for campaigns further from Ziklag, e.g. Geshur.

[265]See Finkelstein, I. 1988b. "Arabian Trade and Socio-Political Conditions in the Negev in the Twelfth-Eleventh Centuries B.C.E." *JNES* 47/4: 241-252, who emphasizes that David desired to secure the vital Transjordanian commerce route which linked Arabia with the north. In 2 Sam 8:14 David "put garrisons throughout

David, also, raided the Girzites. There is a textual note with the *ketîb* of the MT reading *girzi* whereas the *qerê* has, *gizri*, i.e., Gezerites. Ehrlich rejected the *qerê* reading since Gezer "lies much too far to the N to fit the context of this passage."[266] On a reading of the LXX, McCarter argued there exists a conflation of sources where one has to choose either Geshurite or Gezerite, and since Gezer is "too far north" of Ziklag, he preferred Geshur, on the basis of a dittography.[267] Thus translating the text similar to LXX B, *epi panta ton geseiri kai epi ton amalekeiten.*[268] It is true that the Girzites are only mentioned here in the Bible, and due to its textual proximity to Geshur a possible conflation of texts may have occurred. However, at present, it seems premature to conclude that the Girzites did not exist, even if we are not able to currently identify them with any certainty. While McCarter's translation of 1 Sam 27:8, "David and his men went up and made raids against the Geshurites and the Amalekites [...] ", mirrors the LXX, and creates a "geographic merism" (similar to Joshua 13: 2) which reflects the whole of the Transjordan under David's control, it is best to read the MT with Girzites.[269]

Finally, the Geshurites were named in 1 Sam 27:8. From this text the location of the Geshurites is ambiguous. The Geshurites were linked with the Philistines in Joshua

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all Edom." This trade route was an important part of Solomon's economic plan which controlled the southern part and connected both political and economic ties with Arabia. As noted by Eph'al, I. 1982. *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th - 5th Centuries B.C.* Leiden: Brill, pp. 63-64, there is archeological evidence for settlements in southern Arabia at the beginning of the first millennium B.C., and he suggests that the spice trades were in operation at that time.

[266]Ehrlich, C. 1992. "Girzites." *ABD* 2: 1028.

[267]See McCarter 1980: 413, of course, this assumes a "southern Geshur."

[268]If the text is written from a "Judean" perspective then the geo-political/cultural affairs of "foreign" lands *could be* unfamiliar to the scribe, which may cause confusion about the name of Geshur/Gezer. Naturally, this assumes a limited knowledge of geopolitics.

[269]McCarter 1980: 411.

13:2 – and now in 1 Sam 27:8. Concerning their identity in 1 Sam 27:8, McCarter states that they are, "A little known people, geographically associated with the Philistines and the Avvim, who were ancient inhabitants of the Gaza area (Deut 2:23); they are not to be confused with the people of the Transjordanian state of Geshur (Deut 3:14; Josh 12:5; 13:11, 13), though some historical connection unknown to us may exist."[270] Gordon, following McCarter, states that Geshur is "a location in the Negev, quite distinct from the 'Geshur of Aram' of 2 Samuel 15:8 [...]"[271] Klein, agreeing with McCarter adds that, "Another Geshurite people is in Transjordan (Deut 3:14; Josh 12:5; 13:11, 13; 2 Sam 13:37) and hence irrelevant for this context."[272] Halpern, however, splitting with scholarship claims that David's opponents "may in fact be the denizens of Gezer here."[273]

The bases of scholarly opinion concerning the location of Geshur in 1 Sam 27:8 seem to center around: 1) the southern location of David's refuge city, Ziklag; 2) the proximity to the Amalekites; and 3) the textual reading of Joshua 13: 2. It is difficult to determine which of these three influences the interpretation more. I have already dealt with the meaning of Joshua 13:2 and concluded that it is best to view a more natural "Transjordanian Geshur."[274] It is clear from 1 Sam 27:7-8 that David, while in the current safe surroundings of the "Anti-Saul" Philistines, used this *16 months* to begin securing the boundaries of his future kingdom. This would mean the defeat of the Amalekites in the southern portions of Canaan, stretching from Edom to the southern Negev. David's battle with the Amalekites (1 Sam 30) records both sides sharing in victories and defeats.

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[270]McCarter 1980:415.

[271]Gordon, R. 1986. *1 & 2 Samuel.* Exeter: Paternoster, pp. 191-192.

[272]Klein, R. 1983. *1 Samuel.* WBC 10. Waco: Word Books, p. 264.

[273]Halpern, B. 2001. *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 23.

[274]See 4.2.2.1.

A key chronological marker is when the Amalekites attacked David when he and his men were away with Achish at Aphek, a journey of some *three days* from Ziklag (1 Sam 30:1). This may indicate that: 1) David had a plan to secure the land for himself by campaigning away from Ziklag, and 2) David and his men were accustomed to taking multi-day campaigns away from Ziklag. If this is the case, a very likely scenario could have been David securing victory in Amalek then continuing north in the Transjordan to Geshur, thus making certain that the whole of the Transjordan from the south to the north would be accessible to him. Consequently, the objection that "Transjordanian Geshur" was too far from David's base in Ziklag falls.

In regard to David's strategy to expand his nation, his shrewdness and cunning was shown by his response to his host, Achish. When asked, "Where have you made a raid today?", he responded, with an interest to build his kingdom, by stating he struck at Judahite territory when he had not (1 Sam 27:10-12). McCarter states, "...the Ziklag pericope functions in the larger narrative as a further example of David's ingenuity and ability to succeed in the most hostile circumstances...we shall see that Achish is another of those like Michal and Jonathan who, despite the suspicions of others, give their whole-hearted loyalty to David and seem always willing to help his cause."[275]

In summary, 1 Samuel 27:8, when viewed against the background of David's rise, reveals that David was intentionally building his future kingdom during his tenure at Ziklag. While not having to worry about internal matters with Saul and external problems with the Philistines, David embarked on a campaign targeted at securing the Transjordanian travel corridor. As shown for Joshua 13:2, the author has used a "geographic merism" whereby David campaigned from the Amalekites, in the south, to

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[275]McCarter 1980: 416.

the Geshurites, in northern Transjordan – which may have served as the introductory foundation for the future marriage alliance with Maacah. This further strengthens my argument that the Geshurites were not a "southern enclave" of people who possibly might have had connections with those of the north, but in fact, they are a strategic part of David's "Transjordanian plan" to build his kingdom.

4.3.1.1 David's "ally"

As Saul's reign was ending (1 Sam 31), David strengthened his rule over Judah (1 Sam 30:26) and moved his headquarters to Hebron (2 Sam 2). In the north, Saul's kingdom passed to his son, Ish-bosheth, who reigned from Mahanaim in Transjordan (2 Sam. 2:8). Ish-bosheth was "made king over Gilead, over the Geshurites, over the Jezreel, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, even over all Israel" (2 Sam 2:9). Of the six places where Ish-bosheth is stated to rule, the MT uses the preposition אל for the first three but על for the last three – the LXX uses the preposition *epi* for all six. Besides the switch in the preopsition 2 Sam 2:9 has conflicting variant readings for "Geshurites." The MT has האשורי, the Ashurites, identified as either the Assyrians or perhaps the Asherites of Judges 1:32, which is supported by Targ. *dbyt 'šr*. The Syriac has *gšwr* and the Vulgate has *Ges(s)uri* which point to *hgšwry*.

	MT	LXX	Syriac	Vulgate	Targ.
2 Samuel 2:9	האשורי	Θασιρι	*gšwr*	*Ges(s)uri*	*dbyt 'šr*

Chart 4.2 Variant Readings 2 Samuel 2:9

One can rule out the Assyrians,[276] and since there are no other references in the Bible to "Ashurites", the reading of the Syriac and Vulgate is preferred as it has a more natural geographic fit. Of course, the difficulty with understanding "Geshur" is that it had a king at this period. Soggin stated that "it is hard to see, in fact, how the reduced kingdom of Israel could have had any designs on the kingdom of Geshur, much less carry them out, and the independence of that kingdom is, in fact, clearly presupposed shortly afterwards by David's marriage to the daughter of one of its kings, 2 Sm 3.3,16."[277] However if one understands the MT use of the prepositions as territory he ruled "up to" and not "over" then the readings of the Syriac and Vulgate fit perfectly the geographic landscape.[278] This reading also harmonizes with the other Geshurite texts which clearly identify the Israelites extending to Geshur. The fact that Ish-bosheth had at least limited control in the Transjordan is clearly indicated in the text by David's actions. David was diplomatically maneuvering to secure the support of Transjordan, by sending well-wishers to Jabesh-gilead (2 Sam 2:4-7) and by entering into an alliance with Geshur's king of (2 Sam 3:3). David was the consummate "politician" seeking control over all Israel. Soggin departs from the "Geshur reading" and understands the area of Asher on the coast included as part of Ish-bosheth's territory, though this seems quite a distance from Mahanaim.[279]

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[276]For an explanation of how "Assyria" entered the corruption see Soggin, J.A. 1975. "The Reign of 'Esba'al, Son of Saul." Pp. 31-49 in *Old Testament and Oriental Studies*. (BibOr 29) Rome: Biblical Institute Press, here p. 42. For a southern break-away enclave theory of the tribe of Asher see Edelman, D. 1985. "The 'Ashurites' of Eshbaal's State." *PEQ* 117: 85-91.

[277]Soggin 1975: 41.

[278]Granted that the MT can use these prepositions interchangeably, there does seem to be limited evidence that על can be translated in the sense of "up to or at" (2 Kings 2:7), for אל see Jer 41:12.

[279]Soggin 1975: 41.

The extent of the reign and control of Ish-bosheth is questionable, Anderson notes:

> At first sight, it would seem that this territory included Transjordan (Gilead), Galilee (Asher), the Plain of Esdraelon (Jezreel), and Central Palestine (Ephraim and Benjamin). However, there are some problems. Since the defeat of Saul at Gilboa, the central highlands must have passed into Philistine control. This would explain why Abner, Ish-bosheth, and their men resided in, and operated from Mahanaim. Also the plain of Esdraelon could hardly have been dominated by the Israelites; there were no doubt, Canaanite enclaves (cf. Judg 1:27) and, probably, a Philistine garrison in Bethshan.[280]

As Gordon summarizes, "In fact, the areas listed in this verse may represent no more than the territories to which Ish-bosheth laid claim, irrespective of whether he actually exercised control over them."[281]

It is in the context of the division between Israel and Judah we learn that David grew in strength and Saul's house weakened (2 Sam 3:1). 2 Samuel 3:1-5 reveals that David's house was strengthened while ruling in Hebron by the birth of six sons:

> Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually. Sons were born to David at Hebron: his first born was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; and his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David at Hebron.

Naturally, this contrasts with the death of Saul's sons and the ineptitude of Ish-bosheth as heir to Saul's throne.

While David's first two sons were born of women to whom the reader had been already introduced, the third son, Absalom, was born to a previously unmentioned

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[280]Anderson, A.A. 1989. *2 Samuel.* WBC 11. Waco: Word, p. 34.

[281]Gordon 1986: 214.

woman, Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. The last three sons will not become an active part of the David story, with the last two not mentioned again. The names of David's sons born in Jerusalem appear without their matronym (2 Sam 5:13-16) – 1 Chronicles 3:1-9 combined both lists. The point of 2 Sam 3:1-5 was to show the strength of David's line and perhaps outline the line of succession.[282]

For Absalom the added textual information with a more complete genealogical lineage of name, mother's name, mother's line, and grandfather highlighted his birth and set him apart as the only son mentioned with royal ancestry. When compared to the editorial information for sons 4-6 this is an extensive addition, and may serve to foreshadow Absalom as David's successor. The added information that Absalom was the grandson of the king of Geshur creates a "geographical" tension with 2 Samuel 2:9 whereby Ish-bosheth is reigning up to Geshur – at the same time, perhaps in the south, David is married to the daughter of the king of Geshur, and producing heirs.

There is no textual data about the marriage of David and Maacah, and it may have occurred while he was still in conflict with Saul. One way David could strengthen his control over the region, and bring defeat to Saul and Ish-bosheth, was to conduct military campaigns and secure allies through diplomatic marriage arrangements. K. Spanier states:

> Royal marriages attested in the Bible and other ancient Near Eastern cultures were usually motivated by political, economic, and strategic considerations. In the polygamous royal household some native women achieved primary status because they belonged to prominent families that represented powerful factions within the state, while foreign royal women were brought into the court as a result of diplomatic marriages that constituted a part of a comprehensive treaty agreements. The status of each woman in the household was determined by the terms of her marriage agreement and the balance of power between her ancestral home

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[282]Anderson 1989: 50.

> state and that of her husband. One of these women was designated as the chief, or favorite, wife. This title not only afforded her a superior position in her husband's court, but brought about the selection of her son as the heir apparent to the throne, sometimes without regard to his chronological placement among his agnatic brothers.[283]

Åhlström, following Malamat, suggested that "Geshur became an ally to David during his time as king of the territory Judah in Hebron. The alliance was probably directed against Saul's son and successor, Eshbaal. The treaty was sealed by David's marriage to a daughter of Geshur's king, Talmai."[284] This treaty with Geshur placed Ish-bosheth in the middle of a newly formed regional alliance of Judah and Geshur. Thus by securing his position in Judah David consolidated his power when he outflanked and surrounded those loyal to Ish-bosheth and Israel. Perhaps, David's near-term goal was to surround Israel at the same time he "also enhanced his reputation in the international sphere and engendered the goodwill of the neighboring Aramean populations to the east and north."[285] While this may be true, it would seem that the building of strong alliances to the south of the Aramean states would be a cause of concern for any neighboring Aramean populations and not a gesture of goodwill.[286] Malamat understood the marriage

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[283]See Spanier, K. 1999. "The Two Maacahs." Pp. 295-306 in Arav and Freund 1999, p. 295; In Spanier, K. 1994. "The Queen Mother in the Judean Royal Court." Pp. 186-195 in Brenner, A. (ed.) *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, Spanier stated, "[...] her name recalls an ancestral, probably matriarchal, connection with the district of Maacah." (here p. 189.) However, in her 1999 essay, she no longer clearly states the possible connection to the territory of Maacah.

[284]Åhlström, G.W. 1993. *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest*. (JSOTsupp 146) Sheffield: JSOT press, pp. 399-400; Malamat, A. 1963. "Aspects of the Foreign Policies of David and Solomon." *JNES* 22: 1-17, here p. 8, reprinted in Malamat, A. 2001. *History of Biblical Israel: Major problems and minor issues*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 210-11.

[285]Spanier 1999: 297-98.

[286]The exact relationship between Geshur and Aram, still is unclear, but it is certain that in David's Ammonite wars that Geshur was not part of the Aramaean contingent.

with Maacah as a "neutralization of Geshur during the later conflict between Israel and Aram."[287] A careful reading of the text reveals that David: 1) was outflanking Ish-bosheth and 2) was seeking to establish an ally in Geshur against the Aramean north, which had already come in conflict with Saul (1 Sam 14:47). Levenson and Halpern conclude that David and Maacah's marriage "was more peripheral. But it was precisely in his ability to play the peripheries off against the center that David's political genius lay."[288] In the end, Geshur was a beneficial ally in the region to serve David's purposes.

2 Samuel 3:3 is a key text in solving the "two Geshurite" theory. How did David even know of Geshur? This text is clear that the Transjordanian Geshur is in view; though a "southern Geshur" would have been physically and practically more efficient for David to have entered into a marriage alliance. This dilemma is solved with my understanding of Geshur in 1 Sam 27:8. When David conducted military campaigns in Transjordan, first against the Amalekites, he soon "went up" to raid the Geshurites. Earlier I proposed that Geshur in 1 Sam 27:8 fits better the "geographic/strategic" nature of David's rise; now 2 Sam 3:3 confirms that it was most likely when he "raided" Geshur that he entered into an agreement with its king, Talmai, and sometime later married Maacah.

2 Samuel 3:3 also offers the first glimpse of the limited Geshurite onomastica with three names: Absalom, Maacah, and Talmai.[289] The name Talmai appears in the Bible as one of the three sons of Anak (Joshua 15:14).[290] Together with, Sheshai, it

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[287]Malamat 1963: 8.

[288]Levenson, J. and Halpern, B. 1980. "The Political Import of David's Marriage." *JBL 99/4*:507-518, here 518.

[289]See Hess, R. 2004. "'Geshurite' Onomastica of the Bronze and Iron Ages." Pp. 49-62 in Arav and Freund 2004.

[290]Perhaps, a subtle irony, Anak is from Hebron (Joshua 15:13), either a coincidence or an ingenious irony, that David, who was based in Hebron, would marry

appears to be a "Hurrian or Anatolian name attested at Nuzi, where Talmai is found in the forms of *tal-mu-ia* and *da-al-mu* [...]."[291] Hess also notes that "the name appears in both alphabetic texts (as *tlmyn* or *tlmyn)* and syllabic cuneiform texts from Ugarit ...and the Late Bronze age Alalakh (level IV) preserves many examples of *talm-* names."[292] The meaning of *tal(a)mi* is "great" and can appear in common nouns as well as proper nouns and is attested in names like *talmi-teshub*, "Teshub is Great," who until recently was one of the last known kings of Carchemish (ca. 1200 B.C.).[293]

The name Maacah, Talmai's daughter, appears in the Bible as an epicene personal name. Lipinski writes that "despite the preformative *ma-*, Maaka is no place name but a personal name that occurs several times in the Old Hebrew literature [...] ."[294] Lipinski does not see two Aramean kingdoms waging war with David in 2 Sam 10: 6, but "Maaka is the proper name of the king who came with the people of Tob, and no princedom of Maaka is mentioned in the text."[295] *Ma-(ak-)ka-a* is attested in cuneiform texts and the Bible.[296] The Execration Texts reflect the political situation north of the Huleh basin, and in the Brussels texts there is the toponym *M'ky* (E 37, 62), which may be the northerly Maacah which appears with Geshur (Josh 12:5, 13:13).

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into the Talmai family, which has paternal literary/linguistic roots to Hebron

[291]Hess, R. 1996a. "Non-Israelite Names in Joshua." *CBQ* 58: 205-214; Gelb, I. *et al* 1943. *Nuzi Personal Names*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 262.

[292]Hess 1996a: 211.

[293]On the geopolitical role of Carchemish and its neighbors see Kitchen 2002: 118-123.

[294]Lipinski 2000: 333-36.

[295]Ibid., p. 334.

[296]As noted in Lipinski 2000: 336, n. 83. However, this attestation is from the Neo-Babylonian period with the ע not marked, as noted by Professor A.R. Millard (personally).

In Genesis 22:24 Nahor's fourth and last son by his concubine Reumah, Maacah, is listed as the eponymous ancestor of the Arameans who settled south of Mt. Hermon, south and west of Aram Naharaim (cf. Josh 13:11, 2 Sam 10:6, 8). Spanier notes that "several women by that name were affiliated with different tribal groups. One was the concubine of the Judaean Caleb (1 Chron 2:48), another was the wife of the Manassehite Machir (1 Chron 7:16), yet another was the mother of Gibeon the Benjaminite (1 Chron 8:29, 9:35)."[297] Ironically for the present study, Maacah was the name of the father of Achish, king of Gath (1 Kings 2:39) where David planned his future kingdom and conducted a campaign "up to" Geshur (1 Sam 27:8).[298] Maacah was also the name of the father of Hannan (1 Chron 11:43) and the father of Shephatiahu the Simeonite (1 Chron 27:16). Finally, Maacah was the favorite wife of Rehoboam, king of Judah (1 Kings 11:21), and mother of Abijam/Abijah and *gebirah* of Asa,[299] also kings of Judah (1 Kings 15:2, 10, 13), and also, the daughter of Abishalom/Absalom.[300]

The third name, Absalom, was a son borne to David and Maacah. It seems that the "full" vocalization of the name is reflected in LXX *abessalom* for MT *'bslwm* = *'abisalom* with the vocalization reduced or lost.[301] Lipiński notes "that the name of

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[297]Spanier 1999: 302.

[298]D.N. Freedman, in Cogan 2000: 179, interprets this as a papponymy, so this Achish (1 Kings 2:39) is the grandson of David's patron.

[299]The ambiguity surrounding the text which listed Abijah as the father of Asa, and Maacah the mother of both (1 Kings 15:2, 10; 2 Chron 11:20; 15:16) is best understood that Maacah was the mother of Abijah, and when he died prematurely, she did not step down as the "queen mother." So, she retained her role as the queen mother during the first years of her grandson's, Asa, reign. Thus, the term *gebirah* was used for her official position not her maternal one. See Spanier 1994:193; 1999:301, and literature cited.

[300]There is some question concerning the identity of this Abishalom, see Schearing, L. 1992. "Maacah." *ABD* 4: 429-30.

[301]See also, "Abiner" (2 Sam 2:8) and "Aminon" (2 Sam 13:20).

Absalom, borne by David's third son, does not appear in the Bible and in Hebrew inscriptions as the proper name of another person, while the name *A-bi-sa-la-mu* is borne towards the end of the tenth 10th century B.C. by the Aramaean king of Bēt-Baġyān...."[302]

In summary 2 Samuel 3:3 offers a glimpse into the possible role of Geshur at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Geshur was established to the point that another nearby kingdom sought an alliance through dynastic marriage. Geshur provided a means for David to secure the main transportation routes in the Transjordan, and secured for him an equally important ally in the region – whether in the immediate situation with Saul or in the future as political tensions were created to the north of Geshur and Israel. Though unknown from this text, one wonders how this alliance impacted kingdoms to the north of Geshur. The onomastica in 2 Sam 3:3 indicate the presence of Hurrian as well as North-West Semitic elements which may help to identify the Geshurites – and perhaps indicate a cultural change in the area. It appears from this text, as constructed by the Dtr, that Geshur had a part in the socio-political world of the tenth century B.C., and one that may have had origins in a distant land.

4.3.1.2 Transjordanian Conquest and Geshur's Absence, part I

The struggle for a single king over Israel climaxed with the assassinations of Abner and Ish-bosheth, allowing David to claim kingship over all Israel and Judah (2 Sam 5). After David's successful campaigns against the Philistines (2 Sam 5:17-25), he began to restore Israelite religious order (2 Sam 6:1-7:29) and turned his energy, again, toward Transjordan. David brought the Moabites under his authority (2 Sam 8:2), then perhaps Edom (2 Sam 8:13-14), and entered into conflict with the Arameans. Saul's

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[302]See *RIMA 2*, A.0.99.2, p. 153, line 101. Lipinski seems to have overlooked the Abishalom in 1 Kings 15:2. For later attestations of the name among Arameans of Upper Mesopotamia, see Lipinski 2000: 74, n. 73, with references cited.

enemies (1 Sam 14:47) were the same ones David had to contend with for his kingdom: "Then David defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob king of Zobah, as he went to restore his rule, i.e., erect his stele, at the River" (2 Sam 8:3).[303]

This text's ambiguous language raises the question who exactly was "erecting a stela" at the river, David or Hadadezer?[304] Traditionally David was viewed as the victor and extending his kingdom to the Euphrates – based on 1 Chronicles 18:3 and the *qerê* of 2 Samuel 8:3. As Halpern notes, "... the only logical interpretation is that David was *en route* to the Euphrates when he encountered Hadadezer. After all, Hadadezer's kingdom lay to the north of David's nearer to the Euphrates. If Hadadezer was on the way to the Euphrates when he and David clashed, David was heading in the same direction, behind him."[305] Furthermore, McCarter states:

> It is quite possible, moreover, that the occasion for David's march was his victory at Helam over the Aramean coalition (10: 15-19), which may have preceded the events of vv. 3ff. In the present chapter...This victory cost Hadadezer his allies, including forces from beyond the Euphrates (10:16), and left him vulnerable to a final blow. David was now at Helam with new allies to the north and east (10:19) and, therefore, with his way open to the Euphrates.[306]

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[303]MT (*qerê*), mlt Mss, LXX, and 1 Chron 18:3 add "Euphrates" to river where it is omitted in the MT (*ketîb*). Shalmaneser III noted that Tiglath-pileser I (1104-1087) captured Pethor and Mutkinu, on either side of the Euphrates, in an attempt to control the crossing (*RIMA* III, A.0.102.2, p.19, lines 35-38; A.0.102.10, p.51, lines 40-43; A.0.102.14, p.64-65, lines 38-40; A.0.102.16, p. 74, lines 16-17). While the distance to the Euphrates would seem beyond the scope of battles, it does seem that in ANE traditions one measured success by reaching the Euphrates and the Western Sea. Tuthmosis III boasted that in his eighth campaign he reached the shores of the Euphrates near Carchemish and erected a stela; thus, following in the foot-steps of Tuthmosis I a generation earlier (see *COS* 2.2B, p.15).

[304]See de Groot, J. 1935. *II Samuel*. Groningen: Wolters; van den Born, A. 1956. *Samuel*. (Boeker van het Oude Testament IV.1) Roermond en Maaseik, as cited in Halpern 1996: 59.

[305]Halpern 2001: 165, *contra* Malamat 1963:3.

[306]McCarter 1984: 247.

Finally, 2 Sam 8:13 states, "David made "*shem*" when he returned from his smiting Aram (in the Valley of Salt)."[307] Yet, even with the identification most probably David, there still is the uncertainty surrounding which river did he reach? The Yarmuk, Orontes, and Jordan have been proposed – of course, any of these would drastically minimize David's kingdom. Åhlström argues that "the *nhr,* river, mentioned in 2 Sam 8:3, where David put up a stela (*yad,* 'hand'), must then refer to another river, and could be the Orontes on the border between Hamath and Aram-Zobah."[308] McCarter, however, writes that the Euphrates in the Bible is referred to as "the River Euphrates" or "the Great River" and "most often, simply *hannāhār,* 'the River'."[309] Thus, as Anderson noted, following Budde[310], the addition of "Euphrates" is an unnecessary expansion.[311] Gordon noted that "Because of its strategic and commercial importance, this area attracted the attention of all the great near eastern powers at one time or another during the last two millennia B.C."[312]

The summary description, 2 Sam 8: 4-6, details the success and extent of David's campaign:

> And David captured from him 1700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers; and David hamstrung the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots. And when the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 Arameans.[313] Then David

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[307]On the textual difficulties on identifying Aram or Edom see discussion in McCarter 1984: 246 and Lemaire, A. 2001. "Les premiers rois araméens dans la tradition biblique." Pp. 113-143 in Daviau 2001.

[308]Åhlström 1993: 484.

[309]McCarter 1984: 248.

[310]Budde, K. 1902. *Die Bücher Samuel.* Tübingen: Mohr.

[311]Anderson 1989: 130.

[312]Gordon 1986: 243.

[313]On the size of these military units McCarter 1984: 249 suggested that "An *'elep* ("thousand") of infantry may have had about a dozen men." De Odorico in a study of "the use of numbers" in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions while allowing

put garrisons among the Arameans of Damascus, and the Arameans became servants of David bringing tribute.

The Bible is a primary source of information for Zobah,[314] and it indicates that Zobah was a powerful kingdom ruled by Hadad-ezer with extensive territory – to the border of Hamath (2 Sam 10:6; 1 Chron 18:3) with interests in Transjordan (1 Chron 19:6-7).[315] David's victory secured his claim to rule an extensive territory – including Transjordan and north to Damascus and Zobah.[316] David's military power probably was communicated throughout the region, and he had "made a name for himself." This phrase was interpreted by McCarter as the constructing of a monument to celebrate his victory which was similar to 1 Sam 3:3.[317] While a stela may have been erected, the context suggests an interpretation of the idiom as David's military prowess has been made known. This is illustrated when, liberated from Zobah's rule, Toi, Hamath's king, became an ally with David (2 Sam 8:9-11),[318] and Ammon again aligned with David (2 Sam 11:1; 12:26-31).

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allowances for exaggeration states, "...we have no good reason to doubt their basic veracity...Even if exaggeration occurred, it is noteworthy that most quantifications remain in the field of feasibility" (1995: 161-162). Also see Wenham (1967), Millard (1991a), Fouts (1994).

[314]Zobah may be mentioned in Assyrian sources and the Tell Dan stela, see Kitchen, K.A. 2003. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, here 96, 100-101 and literature cited.

[315]The standard resources for the Aramean states are Dion (1997), Sader (1987), Lipinski (2000), also helpful are Lemaire (2001), Pitard (1987) and Halpern (2001).

[316]See Kitchen 2002: 114 for a clarification on David's territories which were 1) subject-ally, 2) tributary lands and annexed areas, and 3) home territories.

[317]McCarter 1984: 251, Halpern agrees with McCarter and explains, "The report of the erection of stelas is yet another theme of Middle and Neo-Assyrian historiography: such texts lay particular stress on the location of monuments in the countryside" (2001: 195-196).

[318]*Contra* Malamat 1963: 6-7 who understood Hamath as under the suzerainty of Israel. Cf. *inter alia* Åhlström 1993: 483-84, Kitchen 2002: 114.

In these campaigns of David the Dtr does not mention Geshur. Geshur was neither listed as a target nor a partner of his campaigns. This may be because Geshur did not exist as a people or place, let alone a political entity; however, this seems remote given the previous ability of the Dtr to place Geshur in the DH. Perhaps Geshur was not mentioned here because it may have occupied a neutral or friendly position, and did not come directly under the political sphere of either Israel or Aram. Naturally the military route that David used is crucial in fully understanding the relationship among the varying political entities. Did he advance north through eastern Transjordan or remain west of the Jordan? If he took a western route then the absence of Geshur is better understood. But, the Ammonite war suggests he took a Transjordanian route. In the end, the reader would not expect David to have campaigned against Geshur due to his marriage with Maacah.

4.3.1.3 Transjordanian Conquest and Geshur's Absence, part II

A cursory reading of 2 Samuel 8-12 reveals a literary purpose behind the final form, especially related to the military campaigns in 2 Samuel 8 and 10. Gordon states:

> An insult delivered to the newly-crowned king of Ammon brings him into conflict with David, who, it may be judged, was not adverse to expanding his empire in an eastward direction, especially since outright subjugation of the Philistines to the west appears to have been unfeasible. However, because of the Arameans' rallying to support the Ammonites, attention finally fixes on the Aramean state whose subjection to David has already been noted in 8:3-8. Since it is difficult to imagine how there could have been a recrudescence of Aramean activity in the aftermath of the defeats in 8:3-8, the relationship with that passage to the present chapter is problematic. One theory is that 8:3-8 and 10:15-19 are parallel, but considerably discordant, accounts of the same events. An alternative view which accommodates the respective sets of data more satisfactorily

relates 8:3-8 to a third, and final Israelite campaign against the Arameans.[319]

2 Samuel 10 covers various military conquests with intermittent glimpses of their grander sociological purposes, e.g., the establishment of the cult in Israel. McCarter states, "In all probability this account of David's Aramean and Ammonite conquests (10:1-19 + 8:3-8 + 11:1 + 12:25-31) derives from contemporary (Davidic) annalistic sources ...Whether it was drawn from a single report of consecutive events or compounded from two or more archival entries is debated."[320]

In 2 Samuel 9 David is portrayed as a military hero fresh from victory; a picture of a balanced decentralized leader who is willing to extend goodwill to his former rival's house.[321] Thus, there was a shaping of the text juxtaposing David as victor in battle and compassionate and loyal at home – whether David's intentions were to gender goodwill from the Saulides or other motives is difficult to discern.

Beyond the thematic link of David extending kindness (as a moral leader), there exists a more subtle connection between 2 Samuel 9 and 10. Until this point in the narrative, the nature of the relationship between David and Ammon was unknown. While Ammon was subdued by David (2 Sam 8:12), the subsequent relationship with Ammon is unclear – was Ammon an ally, vassal, or annexed territory? In 1 Samuel 11 Saul conquered Ammon which helped to legitimize his kingship, thus when David replaced Saul the Ammonites may have been sympathetic to David, and, perhaps, pay their respects as a vassal. McCarter states, "Outside of the present passage nothing is said of a relationship between David and Nahash except in 17:27, where we are told that a son

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[319]Gordon 1986: 250.

[320]McCarter 1984: 275.

[321]On the name Mephiboseth/Meribaal see the discussion in McCarter 1984: 124-125.

of Nahash named Shobi was among those who received David in Mahanaim and provided for him during his flight from Abishalom."[322] After David's act of *hesed,* when he sent emissaries for condolence at Nahash's death (2 Sam 10:2), a sense of "national paranoia" amongst the Ammonite leaders is, perhaps, indicated, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because he has sent consolers to you? Has David not sent his servants to you in order to search the city, to spy it out and to overthrow it" (2 Sam 10:3)? Whether one argues that 2 Samuel 8 and David's campaign to the north preceded this, or whether David's reputation had preceded him, 2 Samuel 10:3 reveals that David was known as an "expansionist" in the region.

Because of the treatment which the Israelite emissaries received from the Ammonites (2 Sam 10:4),[323] the two sides engaged in battle:

> The sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men. When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men. And the sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, while the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in a field. (2 Sam 10: 6-8)[324]

Beth Rehob was north of Dan in the southern Beqa' valley as clarified in Judges 18:28, "in the valley that belonged to the House of Rehob", and in Numbers 13:21 where Joshua sent spies from "the wilderness of Zin to Rehob of Lebo Hamath." Thus, Rehob was just north of Israel and south of Hamath. Halpern states, "Historically, however, the house of Rehob's geographic extent was never great, as the entity does not register outside of the Bible, except in the disputed references in Shalmaneser III's Kurkh

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[322]Ibid., p. 270.

[323]See McCarter 1984: 270-271 and Anderson 1987: 146-147 on the nature of the humiliation.

[324]On *casus belli* see Oded 1992.

Monolith. It was probably a city-state."[325] Lipiński understood Rehob as the founding clan or dynasty of Zobah that was introduced in 2 Samuel 10 by confusion with the cisjordan city of Rehob, south of Bashan.[326] McCarter states, "The fact that it is mentioned here before Zobah, the larger state that led the coalition, suggests that Beth-rehob was in some sense the ranking member of the group. This might be explained by the reference to the patronymic of Hadadezer *son of Rehob*, the king of Zobah, which was taken by Malamat and others to indicate that Zobah was ruled by a dynasty from Beth-rehob."[327]. To be noted, was that Rehob was not attested as participating in the Aramean war in 2 Samuel 8. This seems to harmonize with David's intent to reach the "Euphrates," and thus not have Rehob in his line of focus, and therefore encounter Zobah. Also, perhaps, the scribe's intent in 1 Samuel 10 was to expand the Aramean/Ammonite coalition to include not only Zobah, but smaller states, no doubt, in an effort to raise the "Davidic" military *persona*.

Zobah was apparently the most powerful Aramean state in the beginning of the tenth century B.C., before the rise of Damascus. Pitard states, "The accounts in 2 Samuel/1 Chronicles suggest that Zobah was the dominant state in central and S. Syria during the latter part of the 11th century and that it was the center of a small empire that encompassed most of the minor states surrounding it."[328] Malamat stated that, "In his heyday Hadadezer ruled over vast territories, founding an empire of complex political structure, comprising even Aram-Damascus and other vassals and satellites, such as the

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[325]Halpern 2001: 174-175, naturally, one should be careful in assuming a political entity's geographic extent based on the absence of collaborative data.

[326]Lipinski 2000: 332, see also Kitchen 2002: 116, Dion 1997: 172-76, Lemaire 2001: 127-129, and Malamat 1963: 2-3.

[327]McCarter 1984: 271.

[328]Pitard 1992a: 1108.

kingdom of (Aram-)Maacah, in upper Gaulan, and the land of Tob, somewhere in northern Transjordan...In the south his sphere of influences reached as far as Ammon, while in the north-west he was checked by the kingdom of Hamath (2 Sam. 8: 9-10)."[329]

Joining with the 20,000 strong Aramean force were two smaller kingdoms in the region. Maacah was a small kingdom east of the Jordan river and south of Mt. Hermon, most-likely situated to Geshur's north to north-west. It was an independent kingdom at this time, but was in a geographically vulnerable position with the expanding Aramean presence to its north, and an expanding Israel to the south. The Maacathites were listed with the Geshurites as occupants who continued to live in Canaan (Joshua 12:5; 13:13). Since they provided a relatively small number of troops to the battle this may reflect on their smaller size. The second kingdom mentioned as a coalition partner with Zobah is Tob.[330] Tob may have taken its name due to the characteristic of its land, i.e., a fertile land which is good. Kallai states, "According to the scant data available, the land of Tob is surmised to be in the region of the eastern Yarmuk, on the border between north-eastern Gilead and Bashan, in the vicinity of 'et-Tayyĭbeh to the east of Edrei."[331] Lipiński rejects this identification of Tob and states, "There is no historical connection between Bēt-Maaka and "king Maaka and the men of Tob"...The question is whether this land of Tob, intervening in David's Ammonite war, should be identified with *T-b-y* in the

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[329]Malamat 1973: 141-42, though see Lipinski 2000: 334 who rejects the idea of a two Aramean states, a northern state of Zobah and a southern Rehob, and also feels that Malamat's idea of Hadadezer's *personalunion* of these two states can not be substantiated.

[330]The parallel version (1 Chron 19:7) does not list Tob as a coalition partner or the number of troops sent by Maacah and Tob; though, the total number of troops in 1 Chron 19 is only 1,000 "chariots" shorter than 2 Sam 10.

[331]Kallai 1986: 296, also Lemaire 2001: 125 states, "Le localisation du pays de Tob et son territoire sont encore plus difficiles à cerner...on identifie généralement Tob avec et-Taybeh, entre Bosra et Dera'a, mais cette proposition mériterait une confirmation archéologique."

geographical list of Thutmosis III and with *Tu-bu* of the Amarna correspondence."[332] Lipinski identified Tob near Ammon either west of the Jordan river in the area of Tūbās, or settled in the province of 'Amman (cf. Judges 11:3, 5).[333] Regardless of the location, Tob was a medium size contributor to the Ammonite coalition, supplying 12,000 men.[334] If identical with the Tob in Judges 11, then it was close to Israel and not under its political sphere, nor Aram's control.

The Ammonites, cognizant of David's growing strength, forged a geo-political strategy involving the Arameans, whereby they "hired" an Aramean-led coalition of 33,000 soldiers (2 Sam 10:6-8). 1 Chronicles 19:6 states that the Ammonites "sent 1,000 talents of silver to hire themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Aram-maacah, and from Zobah." McCarter points out, "The intervention of the Zobah coalition in the Israelite-Ammonite conflict is not implausible; on the contrary, it is consistent with what seems to have been an Ammonite policy of seeking alliances with Israel's rivals in order to neutralize the Israelite threat, and it is a strategically reasonable move on the part of Zobah in view of the growing conflict of interest in the region between the new Aramean and Israelite powers."[335]

The coalition was met by "Joab and all the army, the mighty men" (2 Sam 10:7). Joab took the best of the Israelite army to confront the Aramean coalition in the field, and the rest of the army was under the control of Abishai to attack the Ammonite city-gate. Joab's military plan seemed to match strength with the enemy forces (2 Sam 10:11-12).

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[332]Lipinski 2000: 336-37.

[333]See Milik, J.T. 1966. "La patrie de Tobie." *RB* 73: 522-530.

[334]Though, McCarter (1984: 272) understands the number 12,000 as the combined strength of Maacah and Tob with Tob as subject to Maacah at this time (cf. Boling 1975: 197).

[335]McCarter 1984: 271.

Yadin suggested that Joab made a tactical military mistake when he marched his troops through Jericho on his way to Rabbah, thus, being surrounded on two fronts.[336] Yadin writes, "Joab was saved from certain annihilation by his brilliant leadership, lightning decisions, and the offensive spirit. Splitting his army into two, sending one against the Ammonites in front of him, and leading the other against the Syrians at his rear, he decided immediately to go over to the counter attack."[337] Joab's strategy prevailed against the Aramean coalition in the field – producing a psychological impact on the Ammonites who withdrew, as well, upon seeing the retreating Arameans (2 Sam 10: 13-14). Now the question is: Where was Geshur in the midst of these Ammonite wars? Maacah, presumably a near neighbor of Geshur, was involved, and surely troop movements utilized the Transjordanian travel corridor – if not even direct troop movement to Geshur's south to Rabbah. While the texts are silent, it would seem that Geshur at this time remained loyal to David, by not joining the Aramean coalition. Geshur was a neutral geo-political state in the midst of the tenth-century B.C. power struggle of the expanding kingdoms of Israel and Zobah.

In the second military episode (2 Sam 10: 15-19), Hadadezer regrouped his troops and sent for reinforcements from "beyond the river." The scribe does not name "the river" perhaps because it is commonly understood in the Aramean context as the Euphrates, here this is the only logical choice.[338] In the tenth century B.C., Arameans were settled in the middle and upper Euphrates and northwest Mesopotamia, and it is likely that Hadadezer recruited from Transeuphrates kingdoms.[339] With the Arameans

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[336]See Yadin, Y. 1963. *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, pp. 272-75.

[337]Ibid., p. 274.

[338]See previous discussion on the identification of "the river", pp. 97-99.

[339]See Malamat 1958: 100, n. 19; B. Mazar 1962:102; and Kitchen 2003: 94.

battle-ready, David led his troops (2 Sam 10:17) in battle at Helam. On the location of Helam, Aharoni simply placed it in northern Transjordan[340], McCarter states:

> • The location of the known cities of 1 Macc 5:26 where Alema is probably identical to Helam, suggests a site in northern Transjordan. In 1 Macc 5:26 moreover, Alema is proceeded by "in" (*en)* rather than "at" (*eis)*, which precedes the other place-names, suggesting that "in Alema" is an attribute of the preceding city, Bosor (Goldstein 1976: 301), the location of which is known (Busr el-Harîrī, forty-five miles east of the Sea of Galilee on the Transjordanian plateau). It follows that Alema/Helam was a region, not a city, and this is consistent with the battle in vv. 17-18, which describes a clash in open country rather than the siege of a city.[341]

The text indicates a contingent of 40,701 Arameans marched from parts of the most northerly Aramean controlled outposts.[342] They, probably, traveled on "the way of Bashan" (Num 21:33; Deut 3:1) which linked Damascus to Rabbath via Astaroth and Ramoth-gilead. Tactically this was advantageous for the Arameans as they could come from the north and their allies could advance from the south. David gathered "all of Israel" and led them to the military arena in Helam where he killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 horsemen of the Aramean forces. The commander of the Aramean forces, Shobach, died in battle, but Hadadezer escaped. It is clear that Hadadezer did not enter this battle with just the troops from Zobah as it is stated, "When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them" (2 Sam 10:19). From this Malamat concluded that, "David took over Hadadezer's realm not only territorially, but also structurally. That is to say, the diverse political entities of Aram Zobah were absorbed by Israel with no change in status which

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[340]Aharoni 1979: 296.

[341]McCarter 1984: 273, following, Goldstein, J.A. 1976. *I Maccabees*. AB 41. Garden City: Doubleday, p. 301.

[342]On the use and accuracy of large numbers in ANE written sources, see De Odorico 1995: 6 who states, "The larger a number is the more its exactness will be relevant: thus, *25, 34,* or *16* do not appear "exact," at least not as much as *16, 020* or *100, 225* do..."

they previously held – a practice which seems to have not been uncommon in the international relations of the ancient Near East."[343]

. 2 Samuel 10:16-19 does not mention further Ammonite involvement. Having weakened the expanding Aramean forces, David stopped any possible Transjordanian Aramean-Ammonite coalitions as "the Arameans feared to help the Ammonites anymore." Indeed 2 Samuel 12: 26-31 recorded another battle with the Ammonites at Rabbah where David was victorious, with no mention of Aramean involvement.

In summary, 2 Samuel 8-10 contains three battle scenes which McCarter places in this order: 1) The Aramean incursion into the southern Transjordan in response to the Ammonite invitation (2 Sam 10:6-15); 2) The Aramean engagement with help from other Transeuphrates troops at Helam (2 Sam 10:16-19); and 3) the battle in the north at Zobah (2 Sam 8:3-8).[344] Only the second battle in 2 Samuel 10 included Arameans, in their extended geographical sphere. Similarly in 2 Samuel 8, the Aramean king was Hadadezer of Zobah, the, apparently, primary Aramean power. There is no mention of the king of Maacah or Tob aiding in this battle.

The question, related to this research, is: "Where was Geshur, if it existed at all, in the midst of a battle near its periphery?" The battle at Helam was, in all likelihood,

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[343]Malamat 1963: 3. Other scholars are more skeptical of Malamat's assertions regarding the extent of David's control. See Miller and Hayes 1977: 183, others taking a "minimal" view of David's empire include *inter alia* Garbini, G. 1988. *History and Ideology in Ancient Israel*. New York: Crossroads, pp. 21-32; Davies, P. 1992. *In Search of "Ancient Israel."* JSOT 148, Sheffield: JSOT Press, p. 69; Thompson, T.L. 1992. *Early History of the Israelite People from the Written and Archaeological Sources*. SHANE 4, Leiden: Brill, pp. 331-34; for a moderate view see Na'aman, N. 1997. "Cow Town or Royal Capital? Evidence for Iron Age Jerusalem." *BARev* 23: 4, pp. 43-47, 67; Halpern 2001: 208-226; and for a cogent response see Kitchen 2002: 111-30.

[344]McCarter 1984: 274-275, though see Kitchen 2002: 114 for a slightly different ordering.

just to the east and south of Geshur. The advancing Aramean troops most likely passed to Geshur's east on the "way of Bashan." 2 Samuel 10:15-19 is another passage which indicates, though Israel and Geshur were connected through marriage, Geshur was able to remain, seemingly, uninvolved in the regional geopolitical arena in the tenth century B.C. Evidently Geshur was not under pressure from its Aramean neighbors to join them. Perhaps the marriage alliance allowed Geshur the freedom of neutrality in the greater Levantine struggle at this time. In the end, the reader is reminded that the DH existed for a specific purpose related to biblical Israel, and not for recording events of any people embedded in it.

4.3.1.4 The end of David's reign: 2 Samuel 13: 37-39

David's reign ended with internal struggles: "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife" (2 Sam 12:10). During David's years of military expansion, Geshur was not mentioned even though situated near the arena of military activities. However, as David's reign waned, Geshur again enters the biblical narrative, as a refuge for Absalom:

> Now Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. So Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur, and was there three years. And the heart of King David longed to go out to Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead. (2 Sam 13: 37-39)

Absalom avenged the rape of his sister, Tamar, by murdering his half-brother, Amnon, and then fled to his enatic grandfather's home in Geshur. The MT of 2 Samuel 13:37a may have a scribal error as explained by McCarter:

> This intelligence is out of place. It probably arose from a correction of v. 38a, which is haplographic in the text of MT, to which other witnesses have been conformed. In a text identical to that of v. 37a, a scribe's eye skipped from *wylk* to *mlk* (homoioteleuton), leaving *w'bšlm brh wylk*

> *gšwr*, the present text of v. 38a. This was corrected by supralinear insertion of the longer original, but the correction was incorporated erroneously into the text as v. 37a.[345]

If one accepts the emendation by homoioteleuton, and removes 2 Samuel 13:37a then the object of David's mourning is no longer Absalom, but Amnon. These verses add another name to the small Geshurite onomastica, Ammihud (MT *ketîb* = Ammihur), Talmai's father. Besides appearing here the name is ascribed to a number of Israelites: the father of Elishama and great-grandfather of Joshua (Num 1:10; 1 Chron 7:26), the father of Samuel (Num 34:20), a father Pedahel from the wilderness generation (Num 34:28), and Uthai a returnee from exile in Babylon (1 Chron 9:4). The name is composed of two North West Semitic elements, roughly translated, "my kinsman is majesty."[346] The origin of his name challenges Lipiński's hypothesis that since neither Maaka nor Talmai are Aramaic names the kingdom was not Aramean.[347] It is clear with the introduction of Ammihud and from the limited onomastica that one cannot ascertain a national or ethnic line of descent for Geshur.

The focus in the David story shifts between the tension of Israel and Aram to the tension between David and Absalom. Absalom found refuge in Geshur, and remained there for a period of three years. Geshur which remained "outside" of the David story during his military campaigns, has re-entered the scene by providing safe-haven for Absalom. Clearly, then, the fact that Geshur was not mentioned in 2 Samuel 8 & 10 cannot be used as evidence that the kingdom did not exist – and furthers the evidence that Geshur remained politically uninvolved in the regional power struggles. The fact that Absalom remained in Geshur also suggests that Geshur was not a vassal of David, as

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[345]McCarter 1984: 332.

[346]See *BDB*, p. 770a.

[347]Lipinski 2000:336.

vassals were usually required to return fugitives to the suzerain.[348] Given the political tensions between Aram and Israel and familial tensions with Absalom and David, it is important to note that Absalom's period in Geshur was adequate enough that had he wanted to take over David's kingdom he could have sought help from the Arameans. Thus it seems he was content in Geshur.

4.3.1.5 Geshur or Jerusalem: 2 Samuel 14: 23, 32

While Absalom was in Geshur, David wanted him to return to Jerusalem (2 Sam 14:1), so he sent Joab to retrieve him (2 Sam 14:23). However, after a two-year period in Jerusalem without seeing David, Absalom was discontent and requested a meeting – which he finally secured after committing arson (2 Sam 14:28-31).[349] Absalom's contentment in Geshur is stated in 2 Samuel 14:32, "Behold, I sent for you, saying, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me still to be there."' While being *persona non grata* in Jerusalem Absalom realized that life in Geshur was better. It is difficult to understand what is meant by this, was Absalom commenting on the physical differences between Geshur and Jerusalem or struggling with the isolation of being an outsider to David's court.[350]

4.3.1.6 Absalom's Vow: 2 Samuel 15:7-8

After Absalom returned to Jerusalem and won an audience with David, he began a plan to replace his father. Absalom capitalized on internal grievances amongst the

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[348]With appreciation to Professor Millard for this observation (personal communication).

[349]See Gordon 1986: 269 who notes the stories "air of reckless hilarity."

[350]R. Arav understands that Absalom was at Bethsaida, the "capital of Geshur," and it was grander with a more ideal setting than Jerusalem (personal communication).

Israelites over administrative or judicial affairs (2 Sam 15: 2-6).[351] 2 Samuel 15:7-8 has to be understood in its contextual setting whereby Absalom had begun preparations for a *coup d'état*. Absalom desired to be king and was becoming a great political strategist, like his father. To what extent David was aware of internal problems or Absalom's desire is not mentioned. But, even if David had the slightest idea of internal troubles and struggles, Absalom's words in 2 Samuel 15:8 are instructive to his strategy: "For your servant vowed a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram (בגשור בארם), saying, 'If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD." The question has to be asked: What did Absalom mean when he stated "Geshur in Aram?" McCarter translated the phrase, "in Aram-geshur"[352], and Lipinski states that "Geshur was the royal residence of Bēt-Maaka. This city is said explicitly to be 'in Aram.'"[353] Interestingly Absalom's statement connected Geshur and Aram. This is the first time in the Bible these two entities, whether they are geographical regions or political entities, are mentioned together. Heightening the curiosity of the connection is that in David's campaigns against the Ammonites and Arameans (2 Sam 10), where one would expect to see the connection, there is no mention of Geshur – though even the nearby kingdom of Maacah is allied with the Arameans. Lipinski, the lone commentator I found addressing this phrase, turned Geshur into a city in Aram.[354] Naturally in the context of the David story where Geshur is identified as a kingdom, this interpretation has to be rejected for a more normal reading. In a context where Absalom was conspiring to overthrow his father, this should not be a construed as a reference to a city or the

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[351]See Weingreen, J. 1969. "The Rebellion of Absalom." *VT* 19: 263-66.

[352]McCarter 1984: 353.

[353]Lipinski 2000: 336, see also Dion 1997: 81; Lemaire 2001: 124.

[354]Lipinski 2000:336.

possibility that Geshur was part of an Aramean expansion.[355] Perhaps, Absalom intentionally linked his enatic home-land, David's long-time ally in the region, with Aram in a form of manipulation, i.e. a threat, to accomplish his purposes. By doing so, Absalom was in effect using the internal struggles of David's kingdom and any paranoia to breed more paranoia, i.e. not only does David have to worry about internal matters, but maybe his allies are shifting allegiance, and the Arameans may be a problem as well. This interpretation better harmonizes with the role of Geshur in the David story.

With heightened tensions between David and Absalom, the scene eventually led to a military confrontation at Mahanaim – which had been Ish-bosheth's capital (2 Sam 2:8). Of course, there was great irony that David was accepted in the former capital of his rival during the current struggle with Absalom, and David's future as king. In one decisive battle, the struggle between David and Absalom ended in Gilead, with its dense forest (2 Sam 18:8). Absalom died not in battle, but afterwards when he got caught in the branches of an oak tree and became a helpless target for Joab (2 Sam 18:14-15). In this short account, there is the possibility of yet another Geshurite participation on two accounts: 1) The battle between David and Absalom occurred to Geshur's south, and 2) Absalom in an effort to advance his mission might have been able to find help from Geshur. However, the text is silent regarding Geshur's involvement in the political affairs of Israel, even with Absalom, an enatic son.

4.3.1.7 The Davidic Census: 2 Samuel 24

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[355]This would have some validity except the military campaigns in 2 Samuel 8, 10 would have dealt a serious blow to any southerly expansionistic tendencies. Even if Zobah had desired to expand, it is dubious whether it would have come into the near region of Israel.

One of David's last recorded activities was ordering a census of Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba (2 Sam 24:2). David sent Joab to take the census starting in Aroer.(24:5) in southern Transjordan (Deut 4:48; Josh 12:12). From there the census took a northerly route through Transjordan, Gilead, and to the land of תחתים חדשי, *Tahtim-hodshi* (24:6), which Skehan emended to read, הרמון, *hrmwn* for *hdšy* and identified with Mt. Hermon.[356] From Hermon the boundary extended westward to Dan then southward to Beersheba, basically circling Israel's land under David. Aharoni states "within the framework of the kingdom one must distinguish between the conquered regions in Transjordan now governed by commissioners or vassal princes – Edom, Moab, Ammon and the various other Aramean states – and the 'land of Israel.'"[357] In the census boundary, Geshur became "island-like" with Israel's boundaries circling its borders; yet, Geshur is not mentioned in the census – as one would expect.

4.3.1.8 Conclusion

The history of Geshur during David's reign is enigmatic because of the nature of the source material. Trying to understand the history of one territory through the historiography of another is always difficult. This is heightened by the nature of the random citations of Geshur which are woven into the David story. With that caveat, Geshur seems to be portrayed as a kingdom which existed prior to David's reign and provided him with a useful ally. The marriage between Maacah and David most likely sealed a critical treaty between the two kingdoms. Even with this dynastic marriage,

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[356]This seems to fit the "geographic context" of the census, see Skehan, P.W. 1969. "Joab's census: How Far North (2 Sam 24,6)." *CBQ* 31: 42-49, following Ewald, H. 1878. *The History of Israel*. Vol. 3. *The Rise and Splendour of the Hebrew Monarchy*. (ed. and trans. from German [1866] by Carpenter, J.E.) London: Longmans, Green, & Co., p. 162 n. 3. For the possible reconstruction הרחתים קדשה, see the discussion in McCarter 1984: 504-05, n. 6, who adopts Skehan's view.

[357]Aharoni 1979: 297.

Geshur remained out of regional geopolitical affairs, i.e. the emergence of the two mini-powers at the beginning of the tenth century B.C., namely, Zobah and Israel. This "neutrality" may have been afforded by its somewhat geographical isolation away from the major Transjordanian travel routes which connected Israel and Zobah. Furthermore Geshur was not mentioned in David's wars with Ammon and Aram, which pulled in lesser kingdoms in its area. As the David story changed and the narrative focused on internal issues, Geshur is reintroduced as the place of Absalom's refuge. Absalom returned to his enatic grandfather's kingdom and prospered, only to be brought back to Jerusalem where he remained isolated for two years. As in the wars with Aram and Ammon, Geshur is not named as a participant in the battle between David and Absalom, even with the geographic and obvious familial connections. With Absalom's death there are no more explicit attestations of Geshur in the Bible. When David commissioned the census, Joab's route circled Israel and seemed to surround Geshur, but not include it, which may suggest that Geshur was an independent kingdom contiguous to Israel.

4.3.2 Geshur and Solomon

After David's reign, Israel's borders seemingly surrounded Geshur (2 Sam 24: 1-8; 1 Kings 4: 1-19). With Solomon's enthronement and reign no direct references to Geshur exist. Like David, one of Solomon's first acts as king was to strengthen his nation's security through dynastic marriage(s) (1 Kings 3:1; 1 Kings 11:1-3). In 1 Kings 4 the historian outlined the internal structure of the Solomonic districts in their various geographical distributions. These twelve districts served for the purpose of administering and improving the tax-collection for the maintenance of the kingdom.[358] There are two

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[358]See Aharoni 1979: 309ff.; The twelve-district administrative list was critically studied first by A. Alt (1913) more recently, see Aharoni, Y. 1976. "The Solomonic Districts" *TA* 3: 5-15; Hess, R. 1997b. "The Form and Structure of the

locations listed in Transjordan: 1) Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead (the towns of Jair, the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead were his: the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with wall and bronze bars were his) and 2) Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan (1 Kings 4:13, 19). These regions comprised the area of northern and southern Gilead with this type of boundary marker already appearing in the Bible (Joshua 13:30; Deuteronomy 3:13-14). David's census seemed to surround Geshur, but the Solomonic administrative boundaries seem to have reverted to pre-Davidic areas. Thus in 1 Kings 4:7-19 Israel's most eastern and northern points were the towns of Havvoth-Jair, south of the Yarmuk toward the eastern Bashan, leaving the area to the north, i.e. the region of Geshur, outside of the Solomonic boundaries – unlike David's census which extended to Mt. Hermon, if one accepts Skehan's emendation (2 Sam 24). While Geshur was never portrayed as under David's rule, and here it is not under Solomon's administration, the borders no longer include the area north of the Yarmuk to Mt. Hermon. The change in the boundaries may reflect a change in the relationship, perhaps a treaty sealed by marriage, between Geshur and Israel, when David and Maacah were married. Now, that both David and Absalom have died, Geshur and Israel are no longer under any relationship obligations, this is reflected in the Solomonic districts.

Further evidence that Geshur was no longer part of any treaty-relationship with Israel was the disintegration of Israel with one-time vassals breaking away. This is seen

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Solomonic District List in 1 Kings 4:7-19." Pp. 279-292 in Young, G.D., Chavalas, M.W., and Averbeck, R.E. (eds.) *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons.* Bethesda: CDL; ibid. 2001. "Typology of a Late Bronze Age Administrative Tablet from Hazor." *UF* 33: 241-243. Hess has shown how the district list harmonizes with other known antecedent lists in the Late Bronze Age (*contra* Ash, P.S. 1995. "Solomon's? District? List." *JSOT* 67: 67-86.)

in 1 Kings 11 where Hadad, Edom's king, who lacked nothing in exile in Egypt, returned to Edom to re-establish its national identity.[359] Even though Solomon was married to one of Pharaoh's daughters (with treaty obligations assumed), the Pharaoh did not stop Hadad, who was also married to a daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings 11:19-20), from returning to re-establish control. Solomon lost a large portion of Edom, but retained control over the strategic port cities of Ezion-geber and Elath (1 Kings 11:14-22; 1 Kings 9:26-28).

Following 1 Kings 11:19-20, the narrative contains another account of geopolitical troubles for Solomon:

> God also raised up *another* adversary to him, the son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah. And he gathered men to himself and became leader of a marauding band, after David slew them of *Zobah*; and they went to Damascus and stayed there, and reigned in Damascus. So he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, along with the evil that Hadad *did*; and he abhorred Israel and reigned over Aram. (1 Kings 11: 23-25)

Earlier in Solomon's reign Israel's far northern borders were still under his control. Solomon was considered a great builder and consolidator of his kingdom: "Then Solomon went to Hamath-zobah and captured it. And he built Tadmor in the wilderness and all the storage cities which he had built in Hamath" (2 Chron 8:3-4; 1 Kings 9:18).[360]

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[359]Lipinski 2000: 368 views "Edom" as a textual-corruption due to ongoing confusion of *d/r* with the names of Edom and Aram, cf. Lemaire 2001: 130-133.

[360]Most versions including 2 Chron 8:4 read the *qerê* תדמר instead of the *ketîb* תמר. In Chronicles, Solomon's expansion northward including conquering Hamath-zobah prefers Tadmor, the ruins of Palmyra, as the better reading. However, in Kings, Tadmor seems out of place within the southern context, and Tamar is preferred, especially when the translators add "in Judah." Cogan, M. 2000. *1 Kings*. AB 10. Garden City: Doubleday, p. 302 prefers Tamar based on the phrase "in the Steppe, in the land" as a reference to Judah. Of course, this same phrase is used in 2 Chron 8:4. It seems better to understand תדמר, then the totality of the land under Solomon is in view (see 1 Kings 4:21). See Williams, P.J. 1997. "*TMR* in I Kings IX 18." *VT* 47/2: 262-65; Kitchen 2003: 120-21.

Solomon is portrayed as able to freely move about and had the finances to extend his building projects to the perimeter of his borders.[361] Aharoni may have been correct when he viewed the fortifying of Tadmor as a necessary action in lieu of the expanding power of Damascus which severed trade routes from Solomon.[362]

Along with Edom, Damascus challenged Israel's hegemony. On the changing geopolitical situation at this time Cogan notes that Damascus:

> ...like the other Aramean kingdoms that were formerly submissive to Hadadezer of Aram-Zobah, had recognized David's hegemony (2 Sam 10:19); but unlike the more distant Aramean kingdoms that maintained their autonomy, Damascus had come under the direct Israelite administration (8:6). If, as the present notice indicates, Rezon abandoned Hadadezer after the latter's defeat in order to establish himself in Damascus, he may have gained and maintained a foothold in the city as a servant of David.[363]

While weaker at that time, Damascus had the good fortune to lie on critical trade routes.

In 1 Kings 11: 23-24 it seems Damascus' rise was a consequence of David's defeat of Zobah and the subsequent movement of Rezon and "company" to Damascus. Rezon's identification has been an on-going debate revolving around whether the Rezon in 1 Kings 11 and Hezion, grandfather of Bir-Hadad I (1 Kings 15: 18-19), may have been the same person. This discussion was prompted by the reading of the ruler's name in the LXX (1 Kings 11:23). The Lucianic manuscripts read the name, 'Εσρων, which possibly could represent Hebrew חזרון. Thus some scholars at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century A.D. suggested that the names Hezion and Rezon were corruption of the original name, Hezron.[364] Pitard summarized the views succinctly:

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[361]On Solomon's wealth, see Millard, A.R. 1997. "King Solomon in His Ancient Context." Pp. 30-53 in Handy 1997, and literature cited.

[362]Aharoni 1979:307.

[363]Cogan 2000: 335.

[364]See Kraeling, E.G.H. 1918. *Aram and Israel*. New York: Columbia University; Unger, M. 1957. *Israel and the Arameans of Damascus*. London:

Kraeling thought the original name in 1 Kings 11 was Hezion and that the form of Rezon was secondary. Unger followed Kraeling, suggesting that the corruption came through the confusion of the name with the later Aramean king, Rezin. Mazar identified the two by suggesting that Hezion was the ruler's real name, while Rezon, a name that is related to the root *rzn*, with a derived noun *rāzôn* and participle *rōzēn*, both meaning 'ruler', was his throne name. Malamat suggested that the two forms are merely phonetic variants of the same name and thus identical. Not everyone, however, was convinced that these two names refer to the same person; Dupont-Sommer assumed that they are names of two individuals, as did W.F. Albright.[365]

At this point, this may be a case were textual criticism overrode simple common sense, and the MT reading of Rezon and Hezion, as two individuals, should be kept.[366] Thus Rezon, with a new band of people, grew stronger beginning during David's reign and continued as "an adversary of Israel all the days"of Solomon (1 Kings 11: 25). It seems that Rezon's main adversarial relationship with Solomon probably came during Solomon's early years. In 1 Kings 11:23-25 Rezon ruled Damascus, seemingly a burgeoning geopolitical power, and would dominate Aram and Israel.

In conclusion, during Solomon's reign there are no references to Geshur. It seems that the administrative lists in 1 Kings 4:7-19 are similar to the boundary descriptions in the "pre-Davidic" era where Geshur was not included. The change in the boundary delineation may be due to the death of David, who by marriage had ties to Geshur, and the death of Absalom, the son of a Geshurite princess, Maacah. In the middle to latter half of the tenth century B.C., the geopolitical world in the region changed with the weakening of both Israel and Zobah, and the strengthening of Damascus. The Transjordan was no longer under Solomon's control from Edom to Damascus (reversing David's efforts, 1 Sam 27:8), and Geshur in the mid-tenth century B.C. faced geopolitical

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Clarke.

[365]Pitard 1987:101.

[366]For discussion see Pitard 1987:100-104; Sader 1987:251-254.

unrest in all directions with Damascus, to Geshur's north, becoming the dominant power.

4.4 Identity vis-à-vis Israel and Aram

4.4.1 From Rehoboam to Ben-Hadad I

Toward the end of Solomon's reign geopolitical pressures came from Edom, Damascus, and Egypt, which provided refuge for Hadad and Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40). It was a time when kingdoms previously under Israel's jurisdiction were seeking autonomy. After Solomon's reign, Israel was divided when Rehoboam, Solomon's son, lost control over Israel after Jeroboam returned from exile in Egypt (1 Kings 12:2, 20). The author(s) of Kings recorded Israel's decline over 200 years of co-existence, followed by Judah's 135 years of nationhood alone.

Israel and Judah under the reigns of Jeroboam (928-907) and Rehoboam (928-911) respectively became steadily more hostile to each other until civil war occurred (1 Kings 14:30). War weakened both resulting in the loss of previously controlled areas of David and Solomon. These conflicts impacted the remaining kings of Israel and Judah until their final days. The exact nature of Transjordanian territories at this time is uncertain.[367]

In the midst of this turmoil, exists a biblical "footnote" which intersects with Geshur. In Judah, Rehoboam, after his enthronement, married Maacah, Absalom's daughter,[368] and bore a son, Abijah. The chronicler records:

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[367]The Mesha stele shows that Moab was a kingdom. See Bienkowski 1992 for essays on Moab and Edom, e.g., Miller, J.M. 1992. "Early Monarchy in Moab" Pp. 77-91; also Routledge 2004; LaBianca, Ø. and Younker, R. 1995. "The Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab, and Edom: The Archaeology of Society in Late Bronze/Iron Age Transjordan (ca. 1400-500 BCE)." Pp. 400 - 415 in Levy 1995.

[368]There are conflicting traditions regarding Maacah. In 1 Kings 15:2 and 1 Chron 11:20 Maacah is said to be the daughter of Absalom. Yet in 1 Chron 13: 2 the mother of Abijah is "Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah." Josephus (*Ant.* 8.249) states that the mother of Maacah was Tamar, daughter of Absalom (2 Sam 14:27) thus

> And after her (Mahalathah) he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom, and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. And Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom more than all his other wives and concubines and fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah as head and leader among his brothers, for he intended to make him king. (2 Chron 11: 20-22)

Rehoboam selected Abijah as his successor, even though he was not the direct heir, and provided posts in the kingdom for the more direct heirs (2 Chron 11:23). One can only theorize why Rehoboam "loved" Maacah more than his other wives and chose Abijah to succeed him. Though the historical data does not provide a one-to-one correspondence with this Maacah and David's (2 Sam 3:3), there seems to be a parallel literary shaping of the text where, perhaps, Rehoboam is portrayed as a type of David by following David's political strategy in forming his kingdom. Limited proof of this is evident by some of his actions, i.e. he fortified several cities along his borders (2 Chron 11:5-12) and gained support from the religious leaders of both kingdoms (2 Chron 11:13, 17). After this he promoted Maacah to most loved status – disregarding the chronological line of succession, much like David when he passed over Chiliab after the death of Amnon (2 Sam 3:3). While there is no direct mention of Geshur or Maacah, it seems plausible that there would be some line of familial communication, and a possible ally to the north in Geshur. If true, Rehoboam, like David, would have secured a northern front by marrying a member from the line of Geshur. As in David's era, Aram was a growing threat. Spanier stated, "Maacah's ancestry and familial connections made her a particularly desirable wife. Her association with the kingdom of Geshur and the district of Maacah[369]

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for him Maacah is the offspring of Uriel and Tamar, the granddaughter of Absalom.

[369]Though the chronology is difficult to discern, at this time Jeroboam revived the cultic center in Dan(1 Kings 12: 25-30), near the region of Maacah. Spanier's connection with Maacah and the district of Maacah may be exaggerated. The story of David's Maacah does not connect her to the territory of Maacah – the Bible keeps Geshur and Maacah distinct.

provided protection on the eastern border of Judah as well as a staging area for preemptive attacks along the northern reaches of the Israelite kingdom."[370]

· When Abijah (911-908) ascended to the throne (1 Kings 15:1) Maacah became the "king's mother," a position held after his death and into Asa's reign (908-867).[371] After Abijah's short reign, Asa, his son, succeeded him and reigned forty-one years. Asa was a reformer (1 Kings 15:11) who removed Maacah because she was a catalyst in the promulgation of the Asherah cult in Judah (1 Kings 15:13).[372] The chronicler notes Asa's religious reform whereby he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the sacred pillars, and cut down the Asherim and reinstated the cult of Yahweh in Judah (2 Chron 14:3-4). On this, Spanier states, "The manner of Maacah's banishment speaks eloquently to the great extent of her authority. She was confronted by the king on a ritual occasion and was formally ousted from her official post. Her cult was then ceremonially destroyed. This constituted the climax of a sweeping wave of political and cultic reforms...."[373] Asa's reforms aimed at establishing exclusive Yahwism in Jerusalem, led

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[370]Spanier 1999: 300.

[371]For a comparison with other ANE sources see Andreasen, A. 1983. "The Role of the Queen Mother in Israelite Society." *CBQ* 45: 179-194; Arbeli, S. 1985. "Maacah as the Queen Mother in the Reigns of Abijah and Asa and Her Removal from This Exalted Position." *Annual for the Study of the Bible and the Ancient Near East I.* (ed. M. Weinfeld) 9: 165-178; Ben-Barak, Z. 1991. "The Status and Right of the Gebira." *JBL* 110: 23-34.

[372]Assuming Maacah's familial connection with Geshur, even if removed several generations this would harmonize with the cultic finds at Bethsaida. The religion of the Geshurites is better understood today because of the Bethsaida excavations. The figurines of a male wearing Atef headgear, the female with the Hathor hairdressing, and the Egyptian figurines of Pataekos may indicate that the Geshurites had a syncretistic religion much like her neighbors (Arav 1999: 107). On the Bethsaida stele see, Bernett, M. and Keel, O. 1998. *Mond, Stier, und Kult am Stadttor, Die Stele von Betsaida (et-Tell).* Freibourg: Göttingen; Ornan, T. 2001. "The Bull and Two Masters: Moon and Storm Deities in Relation to the Bull in Ancient Near Eastern Art." *IEJ* 51/1: 1-26; Zevit, Z. 2001. *The Religions of Ancient Israel, A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches.* London: Continuum, pp. 152-53.

[373]Spanier 1999: 301.

to further consolidation of power and added "defectors" from Israel. The tension between the two territories continued until civil war (1 Kings 15:16, 32).

. After being deposed, one wonders if Maacah could have possibly settled in Geshur. If so, what consequences this might have had on the relationship between Judah and Geshur? While the text is silent on this, one of Asa's next actions was sending emissaries to establish diplomatic relations with Damascus (1 Kings 15:18; 2 Chron 16:7-10).[374] One treaty condition was the nullification of any obligations between Aram and Israel (1 Kings 15:19). It seems Asa's payment, שחד,[375] was larger than Baasha's, "So Ben-Hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah and all Chinneroth, besides the land of Naphtali" (1 Kings 15:20). Asa's payment and new alliance with the regional power Damascus, proved to have immediate benefits as Ben-Hadad swept into the northern Galilee and brought "destruction."[376] This area west of the Sea of Galilee linked Megiddo-Hazor-Damascus and gave Damascus control of the major economic routes. Asa's treaty with Ben-Hadad, which seemingly included military intervention, was made due in part to the pressure from Baasha and also, perhaps, it was a way to strike territories in northern Israel that identified closely with Maacah. Ben-Hadad's control of northern Israel probably was short, as Biran notes the possibility that the archaeological evidence from Dan and Hazor reveals the area was in Israel's control by Ahab's tenure, perhaps

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[374]See Cogan 2000: 400 for a discussion of the syntax as related to the establishing of the treaty.

[375]As noted in Cogan (2000: 400) the basic meaning of Hebrew שחד is "bribe" rather than "present" or "gift." On the use of a שחד in a Mesopotamian literary context see Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 188.

[376]Destruction levels at Tel Dan (Stratum IV; Biran 1994: 181-83) and Hazor (Stratum IX a and IX b; Yadin 1972: 142-46; Ben-Tor and Ben-Ami 1998) are associated with this campaign of Ben-Hadad I.

as little as fifteen years later.[377] At both sites the architectural style of buildings resembled those at Samaria and Megiddo.[378]

Before Ben-Hadad the ruler of Damascus was Rezon (1 Kings 15:18; 1 Kings 11:23-25). The succession Aram's kings is hard to delineate because 1 Kings has the only two references for these reigns. With uncertainty over Rezon's identity, perhaps stemming from a corruption of Hezron and the theory that Rezon was a royal title, Mazar understood Hezion as the ruler who founded the Damascus dynasty, with a royal title Rezon.[379] When these two texts are combined a succession of kings for Damascus follows: Hezion, Tabrimmon, and Ben Hadad. However as noted by Pitard:

> The genealogy of 15:18 need not be a complete list of the kings of Damascus from the gaining of its independence, nor a complete list of the dynasty, even if the dynasty came to power after Rezon. The use of two patronyms to identify a king was common practice in first millennium Syria-Palestine, and this verse follows the practice; it was not meant to be a complete chronological listing of the dynasty. One may note the practice, for example, in the inscriptions of Šipti-Baʿl, the Yeḥawmilk inscription, and the Ammonite Tell-Sīrān inscription. There is no reason to assume that the kings mentioned in these inscriptions belonged to the third generation of their dynasties. Similarly, kings who identified themselves with only one patronym were not necessarily the second of their dynasties.[380]

There is no reason to force a harmonization of the known Damascus kings and construe

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[377]See Biran, A. 1993. "Tell Dan." Pp. 323-32 in Stern 1993, here pp. 327-329 where he attributes the Iron II (stratum III) fortification system and the *bamah* B to Ahab's time. For Hazor, see Yadin 1972: 165-72 with discussions on the city wall, postern gate, and citadel (stratum VIII).

[378]For the current state of archaeological research and chronology at Megiddo and Hazor see Finkelstein, I. 1999. "Hazor and the North in the Iron Age: A Low Chronology Perspective." *BASOR* 314: 55-70; Ben-Tor, A. 2000. "Hazor and the Chronology of Northern Israel: A Reply to Israel Finkelstein." *BASOR* 317: 9-15.

[379]See the previous discussion, pp. 102-03. This presupposes that the ancient scribe recorded a straight historical succession for modern readers; unfortunately, a problem arises in reconstructing the succession due to lack of sources, thus, gaps may exist and Rezon may not necessarily be Hezion.

[380]Pitard 1987: 103.

Rezon and Hezion to be the same individual for the sake of clarity of succession. If Rezon reigned during Solomon's time then his reign occurred ca.955/931 B.C. Aram's next king with a firm synchronism is Ben-Hadad with Baasha and Asa. If Baasha reigned from 906-883 B.C. then there were some forty years for two kings, Hezion and Tabrimmon, to have reigned in Damascus after Rezon and before Ben-Hadad.

It is difficult to ascertain Geshur's status at this time from the literary sources. The Bible is clear that after Asa removed Maacah as queen mother he made a treaty with Ben-Hadad. While this caused a chain of destructive events in Galilee the text is silent about any incursions further east toward Geshur. My conclusion is that Geshur due to its isolated geographic location benefitted from being off the major travel routes, thus unimportant, and not a target of Ben-Hadad. Of course, it is possible that Geshur had already been conquered by Ben-Hadad, so there was no need to state the obvious. Either way Geshur remained unnamed in the surviving records of geopolitical affairs of the region at the end of the tenth century B.C.

4.4.2 The Aramean and Israelite Conflicts: 1 Kings 20-22

4.4.2.1 1 Kings 20

The next historical marker which illuminates Geshur was the battles between Israel and Aram: "Now Ben-Hadad king of Aram gathered all his army, and there were thirty-two kings with him, and horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and fought against it" (1 Kings 20:1). It is unclear whether this Ben-Hadad is the same as the one in Asa's reign. Pitard states:

> 1 Kings 20 and 22 describe a major conflict between Israel and Aram-Damascus during the reign of Ahab, and 2 Kings 5-8 ostensibly concern themselves with various dealings between Aram and Israel during the reigns of Ahab's sons, Ahaziah and Joram. In four of these chapters the name of the king of Aram is given as Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 20; 22; 2 Kgs 6: 24-7:20; and 8:7-15), and during the past half-century controversy has

raged concerning the identity of this king. W.F. Albright (1942) argued that he was Ben-Hadad son of Tab-rimmon, to whom he attributed a reign of over forty years. Others (cf. Mazar 1962) identified him as a successor to the latter and designated him as Ben-Hadad II (thus making the son of Hazael Ben-Hadad III).[381]

The identity of this Ben-Hadad is not crucial for this study, but the fact that Aram was portrayed as a mighty military state able to build a coalition and invade at will is important. Aram turned south towards Israel at this time, perhaps, to access trade-routes, as Ashurnasirpal (883-859) and Shalmaneser III (858-829) had cut off the northern one, and to gain allies. In the first battle Ben-Hadad II conquered Israel with the help of thirty-two kings (1 Kings 20: 1-21). Concerning these "thirty-two kings" Mazar concluded that, "There is no reason to assume that the number thirty-two was invented by the author. Ben-Hadad's vassals were apparently not only the rulers of small states in southern Syria and Transjordan (as for instance Geshur and perhaps even Ammon), but also tribal princes from all over the Syrian Desert as well as the Aramean kings of northern Syria."[382] The victory over Ahab and his territory was short-lived, perhaps due to over-indulgence (1 Kings 20:16), and Ahab with his select army of 232 men slaughtered the Arameans, though Ben-Hadad II escaped (1 Kings 20: 20-21).

The second battle reveals that even when the "better military experts" make tactical plans, they sometimes fail (1 Kings 20:26ff.). Ben-Hadad's captains probably rightly strategized that it would be better to draw Israel's troops out of Samaria into a

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[381]See Pitard, W. 1992b. "Ben-Hadad." in *ABD* 1: 663-665; Pitard, W. 1988. "The Identity of the Bir-Hadad of the Melqart Stela." *BASOR* 272: 3-21; Mazar 1962: 106; Cogan 2000: 474. For an analysis of 1 Kings 20/22 see Tertel, H.J. 1994. *Text and Transmission: An Empirical Model for the Literary Development of Old Testament Narratives.* Berlin: de Gruyter, esp. pp. 184-236, 292-97.

[382]Mazar 1962: 108, also noted by Cogan 2000: 462, see the use of "kings" for sheikhs in Num 31:8; Judg 8:5; Jer 25:24. While the premise of Mazar's argument most likely is true, there is no evidence that Geshur was part of this Aramean coalition.

distant arena. Ahab though less powerful than the Damascenes outwitted them, and used the element of surprise to defeat them at Aphek.[383] Aphek, a fortified city in the northern part of Transjordan, served as an excellent military-post.[384] Perhaps Aphek's environs and unfamiliar landscape worked against Ben-Hadad. In one day the Israelites, who resembled "two little flock of goats"(1 Kings 20:27), defeated 100,000 foot-soldiers. Wiseman states that "the casualties at a *hundred thousand* may be symbolic of a massive number...the 'thousand' (*'elep*) might be revocalized without a change of consonants to 'officer' (*'allûp*). One hundred casualties a day in ancient warfare was heavy."[385] If correct, then the battle at Aphek saw 100 professional foot-soldiers die, plus another 27 when Aphek's wall fell on them (1 Kings 20: 30). After Ben-Hadad's defeat, a treaty with Ahab contained at least two stipulations: 1) the return of land and villages which were taken during Omri's reign (1 Kings 15:20) and 2) to have "streets in Damascus" which allowed Israel's merchants and traders access to northern trade routes.[386] Malamat stated that this treaty "grants Israelite merchants preferential rights in Damascus, like those enjoyed previously by the Arameans at Samaria."[387]

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[383]On the identification of Aphek with 'Ein Gev see Kochavi *et al*. 1992: 43-44; even before Kochavi arrived at his conclusions see Mazar, B. *et al.* 1964. " 'Ein Gev: Excavations 1961." *IEJ* 14/1-2: 1-49; cf. Aharoni 1979: 335.

[384]Kochavi *et al*.concluded that 'Ein Gev was established in the tenth century B.C.E., and stated, "During the earliest phase a solid defensive wall surrounded the lower city; a more complex wall-system served both to protect the acropolis and to retain its extensive earth fill. The first city was destroyed by fire in the course of the tenth century, but a new one was erected on its ruins. Now the lower city was defended by one of the strongest casement walls ever excavated in Israel"(1992: 42-43).

[385]Wiseman, D. 1993. *1 and 2 Kings*. (TOTC) Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, p. 178, following Wenham 1967.

[386]See Cogan 2000: 469 for comparisons of חוצות to the *kāru,* "harbor or trading station."

[387]Malamat 1973: 144.

These events may reveal a change in the regional geopolitical sphere as Aphek, if indeed at 'Ein-Gev, has gone from being in the territory of Geshur to being a part of the northern Israelite territory. This is the first recorded event of Aram or Israel staging operations from an area thought to be within Geshur. In David's wars with Aram, Geshur is not mentioned, but in all likelihood Aram's troops marched east of Geshur.

4.4.2.2 1 Kings 22

The next conflict between Aram and Israel came after three years of peace (1 Kings 22:1). During this time the expansionist tendencies of Assyria were beginning to be felt in the region, and the two one-time warring factions became part of a coalition to stop Assyria's westward expansion. When Shalmaneser III became king (858) he continued Assyria's territorial expansion which begun with his father, Ashurnasirpal II. In Shalmaneser's sixth year (853) his annals recorded another western campaign to Qarqar, but after receiving tribute from Aleppo, he faced a twelve king coalition led by Adad-idri, leader of Damascus, which halted his advance.[388] Concerning this coalition, Yamada concluded that "the geographical extent of the coalition is quite large, including the countries of the whole of central and southern Syria. All these countries were united against Assyrian aggression, which menaced their political and economic independence."[389] While the Assyrian sources record a victory,[390] Yamada concluded that the coalition successfully halted the Assyrians, as they failed to advance further to Hamath and Shalmaneser returned to Qarqar in his 10th (849), 11th (848) and 14th (845) year to fight against the same forces with no more success.[391]

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[388]See Yamada 2000: 143-163.

[389]Ibid., p. 161.

[390]*RIMA* 3: A.0.102.2, ii 86b-89a.

[391]Yamada 2000: 163.

It was during Shalmaneser's three year hiatus from campaigns in Aram and Israel that the two states again battled over shared territories. Malamat concluded that it would seem improbable that Israel and Syria's next conflict would happen so soon after their joint efforts against Assyria.[392] However, there was sufficient time for the Israel-Aram alliance to have changed if the battle recorded in 1 Kings 22 is considered a minor local conflict and not a prolonged war. Thus, later in Ahab's reign, Jehoshaphat made peace with Israel (1 Kings 22:44), and instead of aligning with Aram, Ahab and Jehoshaphat allied to regain Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:29-40). By controlling this strategic city, the two nations controlled the trade route and could use the location as an eastern "front"to assure greater security from any aggressive attacks from the north, as well as monitor Transjordanian territories, e.g. Moab and Edom. However, the battle to regain Ramoth-gilead ended in defeat with Ahab being killed and the allied forces retreating (1 Kings 22:36).

Ramoth-gilead and Aphek were key strategic cities for Aram and Israel.[393] The peace treaty made at Aphek three years prior to the siege of Ramoth-gilead collapsed when Aram became the new regional power in Transjordan. It is difficult to discern how the different political powers impacted the population of these cities, the text is silent about any population shifts, and hints that the purpose of controlling Transjordan was economic. It would seem, based on the strategy of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, that Ramoth-gilead was more strategic than Aphek, situated within Geshur, but these two kings lost their attempt to control Transjordan.

4.4.3 The Reign of Hazael of Damascus

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[392]Malamat 1973: 144, n. 27.

[393]This is seen when Solomon made Ramoth-gilead the center of his northern Transjordanian administrative district (1 Kings 4:13).

Jehoram, Ahab's son and successor, dealt with invasions from Aram (2 Kings 6: 24) and ongoing skirmishes between Aram and Israel were part of their history for much of the rest of the ninth century B.C. Not only did Aram and Israel have conflicts, but Moab rebelled, ultimately gaining independence from Israel (2 Kings 3).[394] At the end of Ben-Hadad's life, Elisha traveled to Damascus troubled by its line of succession:

> And Hazael said, "Why does my lord weep?" Then he answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the sons of Israel: their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword, and their little ones you will dash in pieces, and their women with child you will rip up. (2 Kings 8:12)

Elisha foresaw Ben-Hadad's death and Hazael's enthronement. Hazael was incredulous and responded to Elisha, "But what is your servant, who is but a dog, that he should do this great thing" (2 Kings 8:13). Hazael preceded to lie to Ben-Hadad when he stated that Elisha said that he would recover (2 Kings 8:14). With that said, Hazael murdered Ben-Hadad by suffocation and usurped the throne of Damascus (2 Kings 8:15).

When Hazael ascended to the throne (ca. 842) the political powers of the region were changing.[395] Assyria had ceased efforts to expand in the region providing opportunity for the tensions between Israel and Aram to renew. The Dtr records new skirmishes between these two kingdoms, and in 2 Kings 8-9 Israel and Judah are allied against Aram:

> Then he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead, and the Arameans wounded Joram. So King Joram returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Arameans had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael King of Aram. Then Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see

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[394]See Miller 1992: 77-91; also Bartlett, J.R. 1973. "The Moabites and Edomites." Pp. 229-58 in Wiseman 1973.

[395]See Lemaire, A. 1991. 'Hazaël de Damas, roi d'Aram', dans Charpin, D. et Joannè, F. (eds.) *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs. Ètudes sur la civilisation mésopotamienne offertes à P. Garalli.* Paris: ERC, 91-108.

Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel because he was sick. (2 Kings 8:28-29)

The same event is recorded in 2 Kings 9:14-16:

> So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. Now Joram with all Israel was defending Ramoth-gilead against Hazael king of Aram, but King Joram had returned to Jezreel to be healed of the wounds which the Arameans had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Aram. So Jehu said, "If this is your mind, then no one escape or leave the city to go tell it in Jezreel." Then Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was lying there. And Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram.[396]

The struggle to control Transjordan continued after Ahab's death. The text is not clear what precipitated this latest battle and two hypotheses are reasonable: 1) Joram seized the opportunity early in Hazael's reign to retake Ramoth, or 2) Hazael could have used his new power (i.e., his vast army) to expand his control of territories to his south, especially the Transjordanian travel route. Either way the outcome was the same, Hazael struck Joram and Israel retreated, along with its weaker ally Judah, as they were no match for the stronger power of Aram under Hazael.[397]

In 841 B.C. Shalmaneser III reappeared in central Syria, but this time there was no strong central Syrian coalition of 12 kings to oppose him, and the brunt of his campaign was directed at Damascus. The inscription of Shalmaneser III (Summ. 19, I 26-35) records the rise of Hazael[398] and his defeat by Shalmaneser:

> (26) m *Haza'il mār lā mammāna* (27) giš *kussâ isbat ummānšu mā'du* (28) *idkâ ana epēš* (29) *qabli u tāhāzi ana irtīya itbâ* (30) *ittīšun amdahhis*

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[396]Cf., 2 Chron 22: 5-7

[397]For an alternative view, see Astour, M. 1971. "841 B.C.: The First Assyrian Invasion of Israel." *JAOS* 91: 383-89. Astour states this was a battle between Assyria and Israel after Shalmaneser III finished with Damascus and Hauran, he proceeded to attack Israel. Joram was wounded when he attacked the Assyrians, whereby, Jehu assassinated him, and brought tribute to Shalmaneser at Ba'li-ra'ši.

[398]The biblical and Assyrian texts concur that Hazael was a usurper, see Dion 1997: 191-92; Pitard 1987: 134 ff.; Sader 1987: 233, however Wiseman 1993: 214 does not think that *Haza'il mār lā mammāna* necesarily means he was a usurper.

(31) *aškun dūr ušmānīšu ēkimšu* (32) *ana šūzub napšātīšu* (33) *ēli adi* (34) uru *Dimašqi* (35) *āl šarrūtīšu ardi*

Hazael, son of a nobody, took the throne. He mustered his large army and came against me to wage war. I fought with him and defeated him (and) took off the wall of his camp. Hazael fled to save his own life. I pursued (him) as far as Damascus, his royal city.[399]

Most likely, due to Shalmaneser III's pressure against Hazael, Israel experienced an easing of conflicts from Damascus. The Syrian coalition which previously existed and included *inter alia* Israel, Judah and Hamath had disbanded, and Hazael was alone to defend his territory. He was defeated at his fortress at Mt. Senir and retreated to his royal city, Damascus, to defend his position. Shalmaneser failed to conquer Damascus but destroyed the "orchards" and gardens which surrounded the city.[400] From the hinterland of Damascus Shalmaneser traveled south and raided towns ("without number") in Hauran.[401] Naturally, for this research, the question is: Where in Hauran did Shalmaneser operate? Also, did his destruction include possible areas in Geshur?[402] When Shalmaneser headed south from Damascus to Hauran he could have campaigned in Geshurite cities, but the literary evidence limits this hypothesis.

Even after the siege of 841 B.C. Aram was not under Assyrian control. Shalmaneser campaigned there again in his 21st year, and conquered the fortified cities of Danabu and Malaha.[403] The exact nature of the attack on Damascus in the 21st year is

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[399]See Yamada 2000: 188; Cf. *RIMA* 3 A.0.102.40, 25-34.

[400]*RIMA* 3 A.0.102.40, A.0.102.10; See also Dion 1997: 196-197; Sader 1987: 231ff.

[401]*RIMA* 3 A.0.102.16

[402]This is developed in chapter 6.

[403]*RIMA* 3 A.0.102.16, pp. 78-79; Cf. Yamada 2000: 205-209; Dion 1997: 198; The location of Malaha is uncertain, Sader 1987: 266 notes a number of possible sites in both the area of Damascus and Hauran. Lipinski 2000: 350-351 states Malaha is Hazor. Lemaire 1991: 100-101 situated Malaha and Danabu in the Bashan; Cf. Na'aman 2002: 205-207.

unclear, and Yamada states:

> Unable to win the submission of Damascus, Shalmaneser abandoned further confrontation with Aram-Damascus in the following years in favour of campaigns to other fronts. This presumably enabled Hazael not only to endure political isolation from the Syrian states, now under Shalmaneser's suzerainty, but also re-establish Damascene hegemony over his neighbours, especially after the start of the domestic revolt in Assyria in Year 33 of Shalmaneser
> (826).[404]

Israel experienced dynastic change with Joram's death, the slaughtering of Ahab and any sons, and the subsequent cultural and religious purging of any possible connections with Baalism (2 Kings 10). Cogan and Tadmor believe that the dynastic change was brought about by murder in order to guard the national interests of Israel and they state, "Violent dynastic changes in Israel can frequently be traced to dissatisfaction with foreign military policies, which led army officers to take matters into their own hands (e.g., 1 Kgs 16:8-10, 15-18; 2 Kgs 15:25)."[405] This is a case where the seemingly complete slaughter of any rivals was practiced as in the ANE; Wiseman notes, "the elimination of rivals was customary in biblical times in Israel and among her neighbors and conforms to the historian's philosophy."[406] However, Jehu's power was met with a new confrontation from Hazael:

> In those days the LORD began to cut off portions from Israel; and Hazael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel: from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites and the Reubenites and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the valley of the Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.
> (2 Kings 10: 32-33)

The lapse of Assyrian pressure and instability in Israel were two key factors in

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[404]Yamada 2000: 208.

[405]Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 119-20, perhaps Hosea 1:4 is a condemnation of the bloodshed of Jehu.

[406]Wiseman 1993: 224.

Hazael's Transjordanian conquest.[407] The Dtr portrays all of Transjordan under Hazael's control, including areas east and south of Geshur. The note in 1 Chron 2:23 that "Geshur and Aram took control of Havvoth-Jair from them and Qenath and its villages, sixty towns" may be set in this period – though the absence of chronological pins makes any conclusions hypothetical. After Jehu's death (ca. 814) Hazael campaigned in central Israel and Judah:

> Then Hazael king of Aram went up and fought against Gath and captured it, and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things and all the gold that was found among the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and he sent them to Hazael king of Aram. Then he went away from Jerusalem. (2 Kings 12: 17-18)

The Bible reveals that Hazael subjugated the area from Damascus to Philistia (cf. 2 Kings 13:22),[408] Judah and Israel, and areas in Transjordan.[409] Damascus was a principal regional power and controlled the two critical trade routes. Hazael moved freely in the area and revisited parts as needed, dominating the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:3) and demolishing Israel's military might (2 Kings 13:7).

In response to Jehoahaz's request for relief from Hazael's domination, Yahweh

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[407]See also Dion 1997: 199-201.

[408]The Lucianic manuscripts of the LXX of 2 Kings 13:22 contain the addition, "Hazael seized Philistia from his hand from the Western sea to Aphek." As noted by Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 149 most critics take this addition as genuine though it has caused some difficulties identifying "Aphek." The Aphek east of the Sea of Galilee is not favoured due to the fact that Philistia never ruled that far north – hence the Aphek in the Sharon on the way to Gath is preferred – though, this would represent an interesting echo to the conquest account in Joshua where the land "which remains" extends from the Philistines to the Geshurites (Joshua 13: 2). Thus, the irony would be that Aram is in control of "the land" and not Israel.

[409]The issue of Damascus as the political-center for "Greater Aram" where it expanded its power base to the north was advocated by Mazar 1962 and Jepsen 1941-45; however, the evidence is lacking and thus doubted *inter alia* by Pitard 1987: 152-160.

provided a deliverer which eased the burden of the Damascene yoke (2 Kings 13: 4-5). The idea that Yahweh provided "a deliverer" recalls the summoning of a leader to rescue Israel from oppression in Judges (2:18; 3:9, 15). In the contemporary Aramaic inscription of Zakur of Hamath there is a similar deliverance of Zakur from the siege of Hadrach by Bar-hadad.[410] The deliverer has been variously identified as one of the following: Joash, Jeroboam II, Elisha, Adad-nirarii III, and Zakur of Hamath.[411] Wiseman concluded that "The deliverer was not Elisha, nor even Jehoash (vv. 17, 19, 25), nor Jeroboam II who was later to roll back the oppressors (14: 25-27), but Adad-nirari III of Assyria who in 802 and 796 B.C. marched back to the Mediterranean and took heavy spoil en route."[412] The end of Hazael's domination of territories south of Damascus is uncertain. Wiseman concludes, "In old age he was a vassal of Adad-nirari III (c. 805/798) who referred to him as *mari'i*. This could be a title or a personal name, abbreviation of Mari'-Hadad, for an inscribed ivory from Arslan Tash (Til Barsip) reads 'lord Hazael' (*mr'n hz'l*)."[413] The Bible may hint at Hazael's last days as Pitard summarizes:

> The best evidence that is available is the biblical notice in 2 Kings 13:22 which reads, "Now Hazael the king of Aram oppressed Israel all the days of Joahaz." This passage implies that Joahaz and Hazael died about the

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[410]As noted by Millard, A.R. 1973. "Adad-nirari III, Aram, and Arpad." *PEQ* 105: 161-64, here 163; ibid. 1990. "Israelite and Aramean History in the Light of Inscriptions." *TB* 41: 261-75. Though an Assyrian intervention is commonly assumed, any number of a possible explanations can be made.

[411]See Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 143, and the references cited there for the varying views.

[412]Wiseman 1993: 240, cf. Millard 1973: 162.

[413]Wiseman1993: 214. See Millard 1973: 163 for a possible variation; Cf. Millard, A.R. and Tadmor, H. 1973. "Adad-nirari III in Syria: Another Stele Fragment and the Dates of His Campaigns." *Iraq* 35: 57-64; Dion 1997: 203-04; Bron, F and Lemaire, A. 1989. "Les inscriptions araméennes de Hazaël." *RA* 83: 35-44; Epha'al, I and Naveh, J. 1989. "Hazael's Booty Inscriptions." *IEJ* 39: 192-200, Pls. 24, 25.

same time. 2 Kings 13: 24-25 also seems to suggest this, since it refers to the accession of Bir-Hadad and then immediately states that Joash, the son of Joahaz, recovered the cities lost to Aram during Hazael's reign.[414]

- In conclusion, Hazael was the dominant power in the region of Geshur during the latter half of the ninth century B.C. Hazael surpassed the successes of his predecessor, Ben Hadad, and expanded Damascene hegemony throughout the southern Levant. Early in his reign he built a multi-state alliance to thwart Shalmaneser III's advances. Benefitting from Assyrian internal strife and political changes with some of the southern Levantine states, Hazael was able to expand his territory and ruled some of his former coalition partners. His expanded rule included Philistia, Judah, Israel and parts of Transjordan. Unfortunately, there is no biblical reference to Geshur for this period. While the Bible gives the impression that Hazael controlled the southern Levant *en bloc* it is difficult to discern to what level his control influenced the history of any one of these territories by leaving an "Hazaelean" footprint on the people and society. While Geshur may have been part of the Damascene geopolitical sphere, the extent it was possibly "absorbed" or embraced a new "Aramean" politic is not revealed in the literary sources.[415]

4.4.4 The End of Ninth Century B.C.

Ben-Hadad inherited a kingdom in the midst of changing political powers in the ANE. Assyria during Adad-nirari III's reign (810-783 B.C.) reasserted itself in Syria. According to the Assyrian Eponym Chronicle, Adad-Nirari III campaigned four or five times to this region over a decade: to Arpad (805 B.C.), to Hazaz (804 B.C.), to Ba'ali' (803 B.C.), to the Sea (802 B.C.), then to Mansuate (796 B.C.).[416] Though Damascus

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[414]Pitard 1987: 159.

[415]Cf. 1 Chron 2:23 where Geshur, though identified with Aram, seems to remain as an independent territory in the chronicler's history.

[416]See Millard 1994a. The location of Mansuate is still uncertain, see Lipinski 2000: 304-310 who locates it, with reservation, with Masyaf, "fourty-five km west-

is not mentioned, it appears that Adad-nirari's intent was to subdue Arpad in the north and Damascus in the south. The Calah stele clarifies that Damascus was in view, "I marched to Damascus. Mari, king of Damascus, I confined in Damascus, his royal city."[417] The Tell al-Rimah stele summarizes Adad-nirari's campaigns, "In one year I subdued the entire lands of Amurru (and) Hatti. I imposed upon them tax (and) tribute forever [...] the tribute of Mari, the Damascene. I (text "he") received tribute of Joash (Iu'asu), the Samaritan, (and) of the people of Tyre (and) Sidon."[418] Assyrian internal struggles during Shalmaneser's later reign, which allowed Damascus to prosper, reversed with Adad-nirari III's advent who extended Assyrian hegemony in the Damascus region. Cogan and Tadmor noted that "The extrabiblical data render the deliverance of Jehoahaz and Joash intelligible."[419] Coinciding with Assyrian pressure on Aram at that time, Israel sent tribute to Assyria and liberated themselves from Damascene control (2 Kings 13:25). Thus when Joash ascended to the throne he seized his opportunity to regain territories, which were probably in Cisjordan, with another battle at Aphek in Transjordan (2 Kings 13: 17).

Assyrian and biblical texts shed some light on Geshur. In the history of Israel and Aram there has been an ongoing struggle for control of the region around Aphek. In 1 Kings 20:26 ff. the much smaller contingent from Israel was victorious over Ben-Hadad, but when Hazael began his expansion into the southern Levant he most likely controlled

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southwest of Hamā," Dion 1997: 174-75 suggested Baalbek, see also Na'aman, N. 1999. "Lebo-Hamath, Subat-Hamath, and the Northern Boundary of the Land of Canaan." *UF* 31: 417-441, here pp. 426 ff.

[417]*RIMA* 3, A.0.104.8, p. 213; Tadmor, H. 1973. "The Historical Inscriptions of Adad-nirari III." *Iraq* 35: 141-150.

[418]*RIMA* 3, A.0.104.7, p. 211; Tadmor 1973: 141-44 classifies these as "summary inscriptions."

[419]Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 152.

Aphek. Finally, Aphek was the location for another battle when Israel regained control of territories lost to Hazael. While Aphek was the center of battle, it, again, is difficult to discern from the literary sources how the changing regional powers may have impacted Geshur. In many ways, Geshur, at that time, bridged these two powers. For much of the ninth century B.C. the geographical boundaries between Damascus and Israel were in flux, and their fortunes were intrinsically linked to Assyria.

4.4.5 Changing Political Landscapes in the Eighth Century B.C.

Philip King noted that with the advent of the eighth century B.C. the political landscape and powers of the ANE were again changing:

> Several events converged at the beginning of the eighth century to catapult Israel and Judah into prominence. The defeat of Aram-Damascus by Adad-nirari III about 796 BCE liberated Israel from Aramean oppression. As Aram's power waned, Assyria, in turn, experienced a half a century of decline when it had to contend with its own internal affairs as well as with threats from Urartu, its greatest rival in the eighth century. At the same time, Israel and Judah expanded their territory, and profited from their relationship with Phoenicia, which controlled trade in the Mediterranean world.[420]

Geshur's history has to be understood in the context of the greater geopolitical environment of the ANE, especially related to Aram and Israel. After Hazael's reign Damascene hegemony diminished under Ben Hadad III.[421] While the *terminus ad quem* of Ben Hadad's rule is uncertain, he probably was not reigning in 773 B.C., and Arpad was a regional power.[422] The Assyrian Eponym Chronicle lists campaigns against Damascus and Hatarikka in 773-2 B.C.; though little is known of these campaigns, the

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[420]King, P. 1989. "The Eighth, the Greatest of Centuries?" *JBL* 108/1: 3-15, here p. 3; Cf. Noth 1960: 250.

[421]Dion 1997: 204.

[422]Millard 1973: 163-64.

Pazarcik stele lists tribute from Hadianu, king of Aram, to Shalmaneser IV.[423]

The Assyrian pressure against Damascus allowed Israel the freedom to prosper at the beginning of the eighth century B.C. During the reign of Joash, Israel freed itself from Damascene power (2 Kings 13:5) and regained territories lost to Hazael (2 Kings 13:24-25). During Jeroboam II's reign (ca. 788-747) Israel prospered benefitting, most likely, from the weakness of Damascus. Though little is known about Jeroboam II's reign, he was credited with restoring Israel's boundaries from "Lebo-Hamath as far as the Sea of Arabah" (2 Kings 14:25). In 2 Kings 14:28 is recorded the recovery of Damascus and Hamath,[424] thus restoring the boundaries as recorded during the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Kings 8:65). The historian accentuated Jeroboam's forty-one year reign with seven verses which reflect the glories of Israel's extended territory as in the time of David and Solomon.[425] The chronology of these events is uncertain; Haran claims that the expansion occurred during Jeroboam's final years when Ashur-nirari V reigned (754-745).[426] Gray, who minimizes the extent of Jeroboam's territory, places the chronology earlier, sometime in Ashur-dan III's reign (772-55 B.C.).[427] The lack of secure textual information hampers a secure date.

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[423]Millard 1994a: 58; On the translation and commentary of the Pazarcik stele see *RIMA* 3 A.0.105.1, pp. 239-41. Hadianu's identity is uncertain, some say he is Ben-Hadad III. See Hawkins 1982: 405; Dion 1997: 208-09.

[424]On the difficulty of establishing Israel's borders during Jeroboam II's reign see Haran, M. 1967. "The Empire of Jeroboam." *VT* 17: 266-84. On the problem of "Judah" appearing in 2 Kings 14: 28 Haran's study concludes with a discussion on the possible confusion of the conjunction *waw* and preposition *bet*.

[425]I would view the verses as acting like a "summary" of Jeroboam's reign.

[426]Haran 1967: 279.

[427]Gray, J. 1979. *I and II Kings*. (OTL. 3rd ed) Philadelphia: Westminster, p. 617.; Cf., Tadmor, H. 1961. "Azriyau of Yaudi." *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8. Jerusalem: Magness Press, pp. 232-271, here 240; *contra* (!) Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 164.

Following Jeroboam II's reign were Zechariah's (2 Kings 15:8) and Shallum's (2 Kings 15:10), both short-reigns. Menahem assassinated Shallum and took Israel's throne (747-737) when the geopolitical powers were changing again in the ANE:

> Pul, king of Assyria, came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver so that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his rule. Then Menahem exacted the money from Israel, even from all the mighty men of wealth, from each man fifty shekels of silver to pay the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria returned and did not remain in the land. (2 Kgs 15: 19-20)

Pul is a hypocoristicon of the Assyrian king's name, Tiglath-pileser III, as noted by Brinkman who states, "That these two names were used to designate a single ruler is no longer seriously called into question. It cannot, however, be assumed, as has often been done, that "Pulu" was the king's official name in Babylonia and "Tiglath-pileser" his name in Assyria, since the source distribution does not bear this out."[428] Tiglath-pileser was a usurper and began his reign with rebellion at Kalhu. The Eponym Chronicle records his revolt the year before his reign began in 746 B.C.[429] At the time of his accession Urartu was the major political force in the region. However, as Tadmor notes, the geopolitical power structures were:

> utterly changed by Tiglath-pileser III, who in the course of his eighteen-year reign reshaped the map of the ancient Near East. Beginning with wars on Assyria's traditional borders, in northern Babylonia, along the Tigris and the Zagros, Tiglath-pileser shifted his sights to the north-west and the west. In 743 the Urartian army was routed, Arpad fell (after three years of siege) and was annexed to Assyria, and Ulluba, south of Urartu followed. From then on, as in an inexorable chain reaction, a swift though intricate process of conquest and annexation brought the rich north Syrian states of Unqi (Pattinu), Hatarikka/Hadrach and Simirra within the

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[428]Brinkman, J. 1968. *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158-722 B.C.* (AnOr 43) Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, p. 62; See also Tadmor, H. 1994: 280, n. 5; Millard, A.R. 1976. "Assyrian Royal Names in Biblical Hebrew." *JSS* 21, p. 7.

[429]Millard 1994a: 59.

borders of the Assyrian empire.[430]

Tiglath-pileser adopted a modified provincial system where the conquering king arranged his·conquered territories into administrative units which had a foreign governor and military unit stationed on the land. Tiglath-pileser also embraced a pan-empire system of population shifts. Oded notes:

> Mass deportations from states and regions such as Nairi, Babylonia, Bit Adini, Unqi, Hamath, Damascus, Samaria, Judah and the Philistine cities were intended to weaken recalcitrant countries and sources of potential danger, and to remove obstacles in the way of Assyrian expansion [...] It is also no accident that the wide use of mass deportation in the time of Tiglath-pileser III coincides with the great upsurge of the Assyrian expansionist policy in his reign. This policy involved the liquidation of political bodies and national groups, the annexation of large territories as provinces of Assyria, and the setting up of a permanent and efficient imperial administrative organization in the occupied territories.[431]

This administrative framework provided a more centralized system of control over the conquered lands and enhanced Assyria's objectives by weakening the indigenous composition thus limiting the ability for states to rebel. The newly deported were dependent on Assyria in adjusting to their new environment.[432] In effect the people were considered part of the Assyrian state: *itti nišēmat Aššur amnūšunūti* (I counted them as Assyrians).[433]

After Tiglath-pileser conquered the northern corridor of Syria to the Phoenician

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[430]Tadmor 1994: 9.

[431]Oded, B. 1979. *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, p. 43; See also Grayson, A.K. 1995. "Assyrian Rule of Conquered Territory in Ancient Western Asia." *CANE* 2: 959-68; Na'aman, N. 1993. "Population Changes in Palestine Following Assyrian Deportations." *Tel Aviv* 20: 104-124; *ibid.* 1995a. "Province System and Settlement Pattern in Southern Syria and Palestine in the Neo-Assyrian Period." Pp. 103-115 in Liverani 1995.

[432]This is not to deny that even amongst the deportees there existed socioeconomic stratification. See Oded 1979: 75-115.

[433]For a study on this phrase see Oded 1979: 81-91.

coast, he turned his attention to central and southern Syria.[434] In 738 he campaigned in the area of Hamath where he defeated Azriyau and received tribute from Damascus and Samaria[435], then he made three campaigns reaching the Egyptian border (734) and Damascus (733, 732).[436] Cogan and Tadmor state, "It is not clear whether the initiative for these campaigns was the desire to extend Assyrian hegemony over the profitable trade centers of Philistia or was undertaken in response to hostile moves on the part of a coalition of area states, among them Damascus, Tyre, Israel, Gaza."[437]. In actuality, the results would be the same as break away territories would be counter-productive to Assyria's economic endeavors. Grayson summarizes Assyria's main intentions vis-à-vis the territories conquered: "Assyria's rule of conquered territory was in essence a military matter, and its main motivation, apart from defense, was greed ... it was the acquisition of wealth, by force if necessary, that compelled Assyria to conquer and rule foreign territory."[438] In the end, one may say that Assyria usually preferred peaceful arrangements of the vassal-treaty type, but would conquer rebellious or hostile kingdoms.

Contemporary with Tiglath-pileser was Rezin, king of Aram, who is mentioned in biblical texts and in Tiglath-pileser III's inscriptions.[439] Rezin's lineage is unknown

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[434]Tiglath-pileser campaigned in 743 against an Urartian based coalition which included Arpad, then against Arpad over several years (742-740) and then in Urartu on several occasions (743, 739, 738, 736). See Millard 1994a: 59; cf. Grayson, A.K. 1991b. "Assyria: Tiglath-pileser III to Sargon II (744-705 B.C.)." Pp. 71-85 in *CAH* 3.2 (2nd ed.) Cambridge.

[435]Tadmor 1994: 274-78.

[436]Millard 1994a: 59.

[437]Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 177-78.

[438]Grayson 1995: 967-68.

[439]Assyrian= Rahianu. On Rezin see Oded, B. 1972. "The Historical Background of the Syro-Ephraimite War Reconsidered." *CBQ* 34: 153-65; Na'aman, N. 1995. "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead." *ZDPV* 111/2: 105-117; Dion 1997: 211-16; Pitard 1987: 179-189.

and it is assumed he usurped control of Damascus.[440] His accession is obscure with the first chronological pinning of his reign as one of the Syro-Anatolian kings who paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser in years 740 and 738 B.C.[441] It seems that during these years Rezin was forming a coalition of Syro-Palestinian kings to thwart the possibility of any Assyrian incursions. While the biblical evidence is unclear about the timing of Israel's decline after the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam II, it seems that Aram had regained strength over its southern neighbor.[442] At that time, Israel's foreign policy was to pay tribute to Assyria while Rezin resisted Assyrian hegemony and created a coalition to stop any future Assyrian campaigns – most likely during the three year window (737-735 B.C.) when Tiglath-pileser campaigned in the north and east (2 Kings 15:37; 16:5-9; Is. 7:1-9). With dynastic change in Israel from the pro-Assyrian rule of Menahem (2 Kings 15: 19-20) and Pekahiah, Rezin most likely sought an alliance with Israel during Pekah's rule (736/5 B.C.).[443] While the historian is silent as to the motive for Pekahiah's murder, it possibly could have been supported by a pro-Damascene contingent in the Gilead (2 Kings 15:25).[444] The anti-Assyrian forces were also attempting to force Judah into the

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[440]Based on the reading: [...] *-ha-a-da-ra bīt abi-šú ša mRa-hi-a-ni kurŠá-imēri-šú-a+a* (*ITP* Ann 23:13, p. 80) where his hometown was x]hadara and not Damascus.

[441]See Tadmor 1994 *ITP* Ann. 23:13'; Summ. 9:r.5; Ann. 21'4; Ann. 23: 1'; Ann. 18:9'; Ann. 24: 13'; Ann. 13:10; Ann. 3:3; Ann. 26:9; Ann. 27:1; Misc. I, 2:9; Ann. 27:13.

[442]Though Na'aman 1995a: 106 sees an indication in 2 Kings 14:28 that Israel was in decline, this is based on his emendation of 2 Kings 14:28 where he reads "...and the war(s) of Judah against Israel." This emendation seems contextually disruptive. Cf. Na'aman, N. 1993b. "Azariah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel." *VT* 43: 227-234.

[443]The succession of kings in Israel: Shallum, Pekahiah, Menahem all come from the Gilead – noted for its strategic position and agricultural resources – and recovered by Jeroboam II from Aram (2 Kings 14:25). On the chronological problems with Pekah's twenty year reign see Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 173-74.

[444]See Na'aman 1995b: 107-110 for a discussion of Pekah's conspiracy and assassination of Pekahiah and Damascus' involvement.

regional alignment against Assyria: "In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah" (2 Kings 15: 37). In 2 Kings 16: 5-6 the historian further records, "Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to wage war; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, and cleared the Judeans out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans came to Elath, and have lived there to this day."[445] The intent of this attack on Ahaz is revealed in Isaiah 7:1-9 where the two kings wanted to overthrow him and replace him with "the son of Tabeel."[446] If the Damascene coalition seized Judah this would be one less problem in dealing with the greater threat of Assyria, but they failed to take Jerusalem (2 Kings 16: 6). However, they were in control of the major Transjordanian travel route to Elath which, possibly, could help prevent any Judean elements from possibly being positioned in Edom.

The inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser reveal that Rezin's "Syro-Ephraimite" coalition included other smaller kingdoms besides Aram and Israel: Hiram of Tyre (Summ. 9:r.5; Ann. 27:2), Mitinti of Ashkelon (Ann. 24.12'; Summ. 7:r.11'; Ann. 18:8'), and Samsi, queen of the Arabs (Summ. 4:19'-34'; Summ. 8:24'-27'; Summ. 7:r.1'-6'; Summ.9:r.17- 22; Summ. 13:3'-16').[447] Rezin, apparently, had enough power in the Levant to convince these states to join him against the Assyrians. Na'aman, however, offered another possible motivation for the alliance:

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[445]Reading the MT ארם instead of אדום. See Malamat 1973: 146; Ottosson 1969: 235; Wiseman 1993: 261; *contra* Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 186-87.

[446]See Noth 1960: 259-60; Miller and Hayes 1977: 421-41; Bright 1971: 271-72. Most scholars follow J. Begrich that Aram and Israel were allies and his label for this as "Syro-Ephraimite"see Begrich, J. 1929. "Der syrisch-ephraimitische Krieg und seine welt-politischen Zusammenhänge." *ZDMG* 83: 213-37.

[447]The queen of Arabia who paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser in 738 B.C. was Zabibē (Ann. 3:6; Ann. 27:8), see Eph'al 1982: 82-92 for discussion on Arabia during Tiglath-pileser's reign.

> How could an alliance of such poor military potential hope to stand against the enormous Assyrian war machine? The only explanation that may be offered is that Egypt was also actively involved in the negotiation and that the two leaders had reasonable hopes for Egyptian military aid. This may well explain the reaction of the Assyrian king to the new danger in the west: a campaign to the Egyptian border...in order to block the possible advance of the Egyptian troops to the coast of Philistia.[448]

The impotence of the Damascene coalition was highlighted by its inability to overthrow Ahaz of Judah which, ultimately, was the undoing of Rezin as "Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, 'I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram, and from the hand of the kings of Israel who are rising against me.' And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria" (2 Kings 16: 7-8; Is 7:4-5). Ahaz's tribute and message to Tiglath-pileser may have encouraged Assyria to aid Judah as a loyal vassal and deal with rebellious territories.[449] Oded concludes that:

> The motive which causes the Assyrian king to intervene on behalf of those who have pledged their allegiance to him is not purely a legal obligation on his part, viz., his duty to supply military aid in return for an oath of loyalty and annual tribute or his adherence to the principle of legitimation. Rescue is *damiqtu* (a favour), not a legal or moral duty. The actual motive for the campaign of 'deliverance' arises from the concept that injury done to the loyal protégé is in effect an offense against the political and economic interests of the Assyrian empire itself.[450]

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[448]Na'aman 1991: 92-93, following Begrich 1929: 218. For the unlikely ability of a strong Egyptian reinforcement see Kitchen 1986: 356-361. Note that tribute was sent from Egypt to Assyria which may have indicated that Egypt would not be an active member in the Damascene coalition (*ITP* Summ. 4:8'-15'; Summ. 8:14'-19').

[449]On treaty relations and the role of the dominant power see Parpola, S. and Watanabe, K. 1988. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. (SAA vol. II) Helsinki, here esp. xv-xxv; Tadmor, H. 1982. "Treaty and Oath in the Ancient Near East: A Historian's Approach." Pp. 127-152 in Tucker, G.M. and Knight, D.A. (eds.) *Humanizing America's Iconic Book*. Chico: Scholars Press.

[450]Oded, B. 1993. "Ahaz's appeal to Tiglath-pileser III in the context of the Assyrian policy of expansion." Pp. 63-71 in Heltzer, M. *et al.* (eds.) *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Ancient Israel*. Haifa: Haifa University Press, here pp.

According to Grayson[451], Assyria wanted to assure the economic trade routes would remain under its control and reclaim supremacy of the Assyrian territories. While the Bible gives the impression that Tiglath-pileser campaigned in the Levant due to Ahaz's message, the reality was more complex and more to do with power and greed – which is not a concern for the biblical historian – than helping Judah.[452] Regarding Tiglath-pileser's campaigns in 734-732 Na'aman states that they:

> can probably be taken as one continuous expedition in which Tiglath-pileser was determined to remodel the South Syrian-Palestinian area according to his own plans, just as he had remodeled the Anatolian-North Syrian area during his campaigns of years 742-738. Indeed, the Judaean historiographer described the episodes as one event in which the Assyrian monarch marched to rescue and attacked the king of Judah, thus telescoping the campaigns of 734-732 to one expedition [...].[453]

In the end, Ahaz's request worked against Judah's sovereignty as recorded by the chronicler, "So Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him. Although Ahaz took a portion out of the house of the LORD and out of the palace of the kings and of the princes, and gave it to the king of Assyria, it did not help him" (2 Chron 28:20-21). Tiglath-pileser's campaign to Philistia in 734 would have accomplished among other things:

1) Reasserting his supremacy as king over the territory from the Tigris/Euphrates to the great sea,
2) Bringing under submission territories which broke their treaty with Assyria,

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70-71.

[451]Grayson 1995: 959-68.

[452]See Pitard 1987: 185-87. Millard 1990:266-67 compares this account with "The Inscription of Kilamu of Sam'al" where Kilamu, hailing from a smaller kingdom, claims that he "hired" the king of Assyria against the king of Damuna." Millard states, "Surely the prince of so small a state as Sam'al would not have expected so powerful a ruler to do as he asked! That opinion, in fact, seems to show too narrow an appreciation of the politics of the time, for obviously the Assyrian emperor would only comply if it suited him to do so, which is evidently did" (See also *COS 2, 2.*30, pp. 147-48).

[453]Na'aman 1993a: 93.

3) Preventing any possible interference of Egypt in the southern Levant,
4) Impacting psychologically the armies of Damascus and Israel.[454]

Tiglath-pileser understood the difficulty of conquering Damascus, therefore by going to Philistia first he accomplished many of the same purposes as a direct assault on Damascus. The campaign to Philistia succeeded, resulting in Hanunu, ruler of Gaza, fleeing to Egypt:

13' ...] I accepted their plea to [forgive] their rebellion (lit.sin) and s[pared] their country.
14' ... Han]unu of Gaza feared my powerful weapons and [escaped to Egypt.]
15' [The city of Gaza...I conquered/entered. x talents] of gold, 800 talents of silver, people together with their possessions, his (i.e. Hanunu's) wife, [his] sons, [his daughters...
16' ...his property (and) his gods I despoiled/seized.] A (statue) bearing the image of the great gods my lords and my (own) royal image out of gold [I fashioned.]
17' [In the palace of Gaza I set it up (and) counted (it) among the gods of their land. The]ir [...] I established. As for him (i.e. Hanunu), like a bird [he flew (back)] from Egypt.
18' [...I returned him to his position. His ...] I turned (into an) Assyrian [emporium]. My royal stele [I set up] in the City of the Brook of Egypt, a river [-bed...].[455]

The might of Tiglath-pileser was so great that, if Tadmor's restoration is correct, Egypt recognized it and sent tribute to him:

23' [...who] had not submitted to the kings, my predecessors, and [had never sent them any messages]
24' ...] heard about [the conquest of the land of Hat]ti. The terrifying radiance of Ashur, my lord, [overwhelmed him]
25' [and fear seized him; he sent him; he sent his envoys] to my presence, to Calah, [to do obeisance.][456]

With Philistia under control and the rest of the southern Levant aware of his power, Tiglath-pileser was able to turn his attention to Damascus.

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[454]Grayson 1995: 961 notes the use of rhetoric as a weapon in the Assyrian arsenal.

[455]*ITP* 1994: 177-79. Summ. 8:13'-19'. Cf. Summ. 9: 13'-16'.

[456]*ITP* 1994: 176-179. Summ. 8:23'-25'.

4.4.6 Campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III in 733 - 732 B.C.

The records of Tiglath-pileser's campaigns in 733 and 732 are fragmentary at best. They are "summary inscriptions" which emphasize the geographical over the chronological relationship.[457] Annal 23 records Tiglath-pileser's campaign to Damascus against Rezin. In this report Rezin, "in order to save his life, fled alone, and entered the gate of his city [like] a mongoose" (Ann. 23: 8'-9'). Rezin is portrayed as a desperate man who was trying to save himself, even leaving behind *ašarēdūti-šú*, his chief ministers, ending in their death. The strength of the Damascus' city-wall was realized when Tiglath-pileser stayed camped outside it for 45 days without breaching it – instead he destroyed the land around Damascus (Ann. 23: 11'-12'). Annal 23: 15'-17' lists the following cities as being captured: Hadara,[458] Kurussa, Sama, and Metuna and another 591 cities in the 16 districts of Damascus he destroyed "like mounds of ruin after the Deluge."

Due to the nature of the inscriptions, it is difficult to discern whether Tiglath-pileser first attacked Damascus then Galilee or, following his 734 campaign to Philistia, whether he attacked Galilee then Damascus.[459] Following Tadmor's chronology[460], after Tiglath-pileser campaigned in Damascus he turned toward Galilee and Gilead as recorded in 2 Kings 15:29: "In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon, and Abel-beth-maacah and Janoah and Kedesh and

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[457]See *ITP* 1994: 279-282 where Tadmor has coordinated the annals and summary inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser with the relevant biblical data. For the Eponym listing see Millard 1994a: 59.

[458]As noted by Tadmor 1994 :80, Forrer (1920) suggested that Hadara be identified with Hadar, 53 km south-west of Damascus.

[459]Tadmor 1994: 279 understands Damascus then Gilead and Galilee; but Na'aman 1995a: 109 reverses the order.

[460]Tadmor 1994: 279-80.

Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria."[461] The Dtr records the campaign of Tiglath-pileser starting southward through the Lebanese Beqa', through all the fortified cities of Naphtali then into the lower Galilee and the Transjordanian Gilead – the Dtr understood that Gilead was part of Israel at the time of Tiglath-pileser's campaign, and not part of Damascus under Rezin.[462] This campaign of Tiglath-pileser may also find an indirect reference in Summ. 13: 17'-18': [The land of Bit-Humria (Israel),] all [of whose] cities I had [devastated] in my former campaigns, ...]its livestock I had despoiled and had spared Samaria alone – (now)[they overthrew Peqa]h, their king..."[463] This summary clarifies that Tiglath-pileser made multiple campaigns against Israel, and not just one campaign.[464] After the campaigns to Galilee and the conquests of "the entire region of Naphtali," Tiglath-pileser concentrated on Damascus. While Damascus remained difficult to conquer, Tiglath-pileser slowly conquered the former Syro-Ephraimite territories and the region surrounding Damascus. With his kingdom in ruins, Rezin was "caged up like a bird" behind his city walls. The fall of Damascus is recorded succinctly in 2 Kings 16:9: "So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried

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[461]Cf. 1 Kings 15: 20 where Ben-Hadad sent his armies against Israel and seized cities in the same area. This, may, underscore the fact that this area was situated on the strategic route leading from the northern Sharon Plain toward the Lebanese Beqa'.

[462]See Na'aman 1995b who argues that Gilead is under Damascene control at this time based on his new reading of *ITP* Summ. 4:5'-7', see below.

[463]Tadmor 1994: 203.

[464]The archaeological picture harmonizes with the biblical record with Hazor in the eighth century B.C. (Level V). Due to the pressure from Aram and Assyria, Hazor was in a steady state of decline with poorly constructed walls and buildings at this time. Both Yadin's and Ben-Tor's excavations at Hazor reveal a destruction level datable to the time of the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser. Though Ben-Tor notes that the city wasn't devoid of inhabitants even after the campaigns, with fragmentary walls post-dating the campaigns(Level IV), see Ben-Tor, A. 1999. "Excavating Hazor Part I: Solomon's City Rises from the Ashes." *BAR* 25/2: 26-37.

away the people into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death." From the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser there is a (fragmentary) note concerning the fall of Damascus, "The wide [land of Bit-]Haza'ili (Aram) in its entirety, from [Mount *Leb*]*anon as far as the cities of Gilea*[d, Abel...[on the bor]der of Bit-Humria (Israel) I annexed to Assyria. [I placed] *my* eunuch [over them as governor.]"[465] The Assyrian sources are silent to Rezin's fate. From the above texts, Tadmor reconstructed the borders of "Beth Hazael" extending from Lebanon to Gilead and Abel-beth-maacah. Thus on the eve of its destruction Aram included within its boundaries the territories of Bashan and Golan as far as 'the town of Gilead' – probably Ramoth Gilead (Tell er-Rumeith), the chief city in the area.[466] Tadmor's edition and interpretation were accepted without challenge, until recently. Tadmor admits that uru A-bi-il-x-x may refer to Abel-Shittim in southern Gilead in wadi el-Kefren, east of Jericho, but held to a more northerly interpretation for the extent of Aram.[467]

Na'aman has proposed a new translation of Summ. 4:5'-7':

(a) "[From] the town of Kashpuna which is on the shore of the Upper Sea [as far as the town of *mi'-in'*] *ni-ti,* the town of *ga-al-'a-[a]-[di]* and the town of *a-bi-il-sit-ti* which in on the border of *Bīt-Humri*, the widespread [land of *Bīt Hazai*]*li* in its entirety, I restored to the territory of Assyria..." (III R 10,2).

(b) "The widespread [land of *Bīt*] *Hazaili* in its entirety, from the t[own of Kashp]una as far as the town of Gilea[d and the town of *Ābē l-Šitti* which is on the border of *Bī t-Humri*, I [restored] to the territory of

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[465]Tadmor 1994: 187. Summ. 9:r.3'-4', cf. Summ. 4:5'-8'. In Summ. 4:6'. Tadmor 1994: 139 suggested that one might restore *Qa-ni-te* as biblical Kenath (Num 32:42; 1 Chron 2:23), modern Qanawat, in the Hauran as a leading choice.

[466]See Tadmor, H. 1962. "The Southern Border of Aram." *IEJ* 12: 114-22.

[467]Following Schrader, E. 1872. *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament.* Giessen, pp. 145-146, who was the first to suggest that this is Abel-beth-macaah of 2 Kings 15:29. On the identification of Abel-Shittim see Weippert, M. 1972. "Review of S. Parpola, Neo-Assyrian Toponyms." (Kevelaer/Neukirchen-Vluyn 1970) Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen 224: 150-161.

Assyria..." (ND 4301 +).[468]

Na'aman's proposal shifts Damascus' southern border from Ramoth-gilead to Abel-Shittim; hence during Rezin's time Damascus would have controlled all of Transjordan to Abel-Shittim. Na'aman states:

> that this analysis of Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions contests the scholarly consensus about the extent of the borders of Israel in the third quarter of the eighth century B.C. It calls for a reexamination of the role of Rezin (*Rəṣīn*) in the events that preceded the Syro-Ephraimite war or a reappraisal of numerous biblical border descriptions that show similarity to the location of the borders in the Assyrian sources.[469]

The *claim* to rule over Transjordan has changed from Israel and Aram several times in Iron Age II. I think that due to the nature of the changes and the forming of the Transjordanian kingdoms, it is difficult to state with any certainty who "officially" controlled the area.[470] Even if Aram or Israel is portrayed in the literary sources as the controlling party, the questions are: 1) What did that mean? and 2) How sure can one be of the claims? Here is a case where the Bible clearly states that Israel controlled the land, but the Assyrian sources, reading Na'aman's new translation, places Aram over the land. In the end, both could be right or wrong.

With Damascus under Tiglath-pileser's control, he turned toward Israel and Pekah, Rezin's ally. In Summ. 4:17'-18' and 9:r.10' Tadmor restored the relevant missing fragment which speaks of the fate of Pekah: *[i]-du-[ku-ma]* or even *[a]-du-[uk-ma]*, 'they/I killed' (1994: 140-41; 188-89). The latter reading switches the culpability of Pekah's death from Hoshea (2 Kings 15:29) to Tiglath-pileser. In this context and then in Summ. 9:r.9' Tiglath-pileser replaced Pekah with Israel's new king, Hoshea. Tadmor

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[468]Na'aman 1995b: 105.

[469]Ibid., p. 106.

[470]It seems that Edom, Moab and Ammon kept their autonomy at this time, see discussions in Bienkowski 1992b, Millard 1992b, Routledge 2004: 201-209.

elaborates:

> The crucial word describing what happened to Peqah is mutilated (see note on Summ. 4: 17'), but the biblical record states clearly that Hoshea assassinated Peqah and seized the throne. There can be little doubt that Peqah's fall resulted from the defeat of the 'Syro-Ephraimite League' and the capture of Damascus. It likewise stands to reason that Hoshea headed a moderate 'pro-Assyrian' faction within Samaria, for his elevation was supported by Tiglath-pileser (Summ. 4:17'-18': 'I installed Hoshea [as king] over them'). This undoubtedly means that Hoshea swore allegiance to Assyria in the nick of time to save Samaria from annexation to the Assyrian empire.[471]

From the summary inscription, Tadmor has deduced that after Hoshea was appointed king he brought tribute to Tiglath-pileser at Sarrabanu, southern Babylonia (Summ. 9:r.10'-11'). This text provided a chronological peg for Hoshea's accession because Assyria sieged Sarrabanu in 731 B.C.; hence Hoshea was ruling either at the end of 732 B.C. or the beginning of 731 B.C.[472] Hoshea's kingdom was greatly diminished due to the systematic deportation of people after Tiglath-pileser's campaign.

With victories in Damascus and Israel, Tiglath-pileser established provincial districts and placed governors over Aram and parts of Israel. The sixteen districts of Aram-Damascus were divided into four Assyrian provinces: Hauran, Qarnini, Mansuate and Subite. These provinces changed little during the subsequent Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian rule in Syria.[473]

4.4.7 Conclusion to Geshur from 928 B.C. to 732 B.C.

Geshur is not named in the internal portrayal of events in the Bible from the mid-

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[471]Tadmor 1994: 281.

[472]See Borger, R. and Tadmor, H. 1982. "Zwei Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft auf Grund der Inschriften Tiglatpilesers III." *ZAW* 94: 244-49 (as cited in Tadmor 1994: 278) where they offer a synchronism between Assyria and Israel. Hoshea's tribute at Sarrabanu occurred when Tiglath-pileser was campaigning in this Chaldean tribe of Bit Shilani in 731.

[473]See Pečírková, J. 1987. "The Administrative Methods of Assyrian Imperialism." *ArOr* 55: 164.

tenth to eighth century B.C. However, even if taken at face-value the Bible portrays the greater political affairs of the region as volatile during this period. If Geshur existed at all as an entity outside of the DH, then there may be the possibility to understand it better through the material culture. In other words, is it possible to find material remains that may harmonize with the portrayal of regional strife, e.g., defensive structures or settlement patterns? The fortunes of all political states are interwoven with one another, which may have benefitted or deterred the achievements of any one state.[474] The marriage of Rehoboam to Maacah may have linked the ruling families of Geshur and Judah. While it is difficult to discern from the texts how Maacah's "so-proposed" Geshurite heritage influenced her religious practice, it is clear that in the end her worship of Asherah precipitated her removal as queen mother, and perhaps return to Geshur. After Maacah's removal, Judah sought a northern ally, Damascus, which would have placed Geshur in between the two. This new political arrangement broke an existing treaty between Damascus and Israel. From that point, Geshur and surrounding areas were scenes for several battles between Damascus and Israel, with the battle at Aphek waged, perhaps, in the region of Geshur. Ahab, apparently using the topography to compensate for his weaker forces, was victorious, though Aram would regain control of the region at Ramoth-Gilead. The struggle for dominance of Transjordan continued during Hazael's reign and, while he was successful and a dominant force in the region, soon Assyria under Shalmaneser III would again play a part in the geopolitical realm of the southern Levant. Shalmaneser III campaigned there and brought most of the territories under Assyrian hegemony, thus isolating Damascus. Shalmaneser's campaigns, and their path

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[474]Routledge 2004: 184-212.

of destruction, may have included Geshur, as the archaeological record may reflect.[475]

Early in the eighth century, Israel under Jeroboam II restored its boundaries as they were recorded during the reigns of David and Solomon, though with Tiglath-pileser III's accession both Damascus and areas to its south came under his scourge with subsequent deportations and the establishment of administrative provinces. From the Assyrian and biblical records, historians know that Tiglath-pileser III campaigned in Galilee and its environs. Whether his campaigns also included areas directly east of the Sea of Galilee, i.e., in Geshurite territory, or not, the texts are silent, and will have to wait for further enlightenment either from new texts or archaeological investigation.

Thus, after the reigns of David and Solomon, all direct references to Geshur end. From the biblical sources, it seems that Geshur may have been in the midst of greater geopolitical interests. To what extent any one of these kingdoms impacted the governance or daily life of Geshur is not discernable from the texts. In the end, Geshur during this period would have served as a bridge between Damascus and Israel.

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[475]See chapter 6.