

# Tel Dan Stela: New Light on Aramaic and Jehu's Revolt

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*Two new fragments of the Tel Dan stela were found in 1994. These new fragments provide a more certain historical context for the mention of the "house of David" in the first fragment. The reconstructed fragments refer to the death of both Joram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of the "house of David." These new data indicate that Hazael was the author of the inscription and suggest that Jehu's revolt was undertaken in collusion with Hazael. The language of the stela also fills a gap in the dialect continuum that stretched from northern Syria to Canaan.*

The discovery of an Old Aramaic inscription at Tel Dan from the ninth century B.C.E. has been met with a great deal of interest and has already spawned a growing literature. It is, first of all, an important contribution to our knowledge of Old Aramaic. The discovery of additional fragments of this inscription during excavations in the summer of 1994 (Biran and Naveh 1995) allow us to ascertain its historical context with more certainty. It seems that the stela was erected by Hazael in the late ninth century B.C.E. and refers—at least in part—to events surrounding the revolt of Jehu in 841 B.C.E. This interpretation of the stela necessitates a revision of the biblical description of Jehu's revolt and may also explain some enigmatic fragments of biblical literature.

Undoubtedly the most sensational—and controversial—aspect of the inscription has been the reading of  $\text{בִּית דָּוִד}$  as "house of David" in line 9 of the first fragment (e.g., Ben Zvi 1994; Cryer 1994; Lemche and Thompson 1994). Since the initial publication a small but vocal minority has objected to this interpretation, arguing that it was based on a "fundamentalist" reading of the inscription in light of the biblical text. One might think that the new fragments would put to rest some of this controversy; however, that is hardly likely.<sup>1</sup> The considerable debate over the reading "house of David" has arisen—supposedly—because of the "missing" word divider (e.g., Davies 1994; Ben Zvi 1994; Rendsburg 1995). In this context it should be noted that if the reconstruction of  $\text{מַלְכֵי־רְאֵל}$  in lines 3–4 is correct,

then the word divider is again omitted in a construct chain. This illustrates the fact that the missing word divider was irrelevant to the real issues of the debate. In fact, the so-called missing word divider was just as much a problem for the alternative readings. The real issue concerns the underlying probability of a ninth century inscription referring to David or, in this case, the "house of David" (note Davies 1994; Freedman and Geoghegan 1995). However, there is sufficient archaeological evidence from the early tenth century B.C.E. to indicate that there was a centralized administration in Palestine (Halpern 1994: 63; cf. Mazar 1990: 371–98). Archaeological evidence, coupled with a relative vacuum of power in Syria–Mesopotamia and Egypt in the Iron Age IIA, gives little reason to dismiss David or the Davidic monarchy as a late fiction. The fact that further support for the reading "house of David" is now found in the nearly contemporary Moabite Stone has yet to quell the debate (*KAI* 181:33; cf. Puech 1994: 227; Lemaire 1994a).<sup>2</sup>

If revisionist historians were more straightforward in laying out a guiding historiographical philosophy, there might be more to discuss on the theoretical level. The *Annales* school,<sup>3</sup> for example, which has focused on the underlying "social history" or the *longue durée*, has ended up in the ironic situation of denying that events are meaningful or even that they happened at all. This is illustrated by the recent studies of François Furet and Alfred Cobban, who argue that the French Revolution did not take place but was



Fig. 1. Electronically generated image of the Tel Dan inscription (Fragments A, B1, B2)

an illusion born from ignorance of the social processes (cf. Rancière 1994: x–xiv). This type of approach might seem to be behind some recent writing on biblical history; however, the application of this approach is far from explicit. The heart of the matter is the fact that many revisionist historians are still von Rankian—that is, they are traditional in their methodology.<sup>4</sup> For example, Thomas Thompson is still tied to a von Rankian model as is evident in his statement, “When historiography functions ‘scientifically,’ it attempts to discover *what did happen*” (1992: 61 [emphasis mine]). His dismissal rather than critical use of the book of Kings cannot be described as “objective” or “scientific.” There is simply too much technical detail in the biblical historical writing, much of it corroborated by archaeological and Near Eastern sources, to dismiss biblical histories as Persian-period fiction. There were indeed sources for the biblical narratives; the question is how to evaluate them. At this point it is worthwhile to recall the comments of the historian Robert Fogel:

A judge and jury, indeed, would go mad if they had to decide cases on evidence which will often seem

more than satisfactory to the historian. But there is no escape; the historian, if he is to interpret at all, will try and convict on evidence which a court would throw out as circumstantial or hearsay. The victims of the historical process have to seek their compensation in the fact that history provides them with a far more flexible appellate procedure. The historian’s sentences are in a continuous condition of review; few of his verdicts are ever final (Fogel 1983: 15).

This analogy reflects the general shift away from the natural sciences toward law as the standard for historical evidence. It is the jury and court system, not the scientific laboratory, that provides an analogy to the modern discipline of history (see also Brettler 1995).

Using this analogy then, I wish to make a case for an alliance between Jehu and Hazael. In making such a case I am looking for evidence and *disinterested* statements by witnesses. What do we mean by “disinterested”? In terms of the biblical text, we shall take two avenues. First, we must pay special attention to those things that do not apparently serve the political and ideological interests of the biblical narrative or author. Second, we must look for narrative

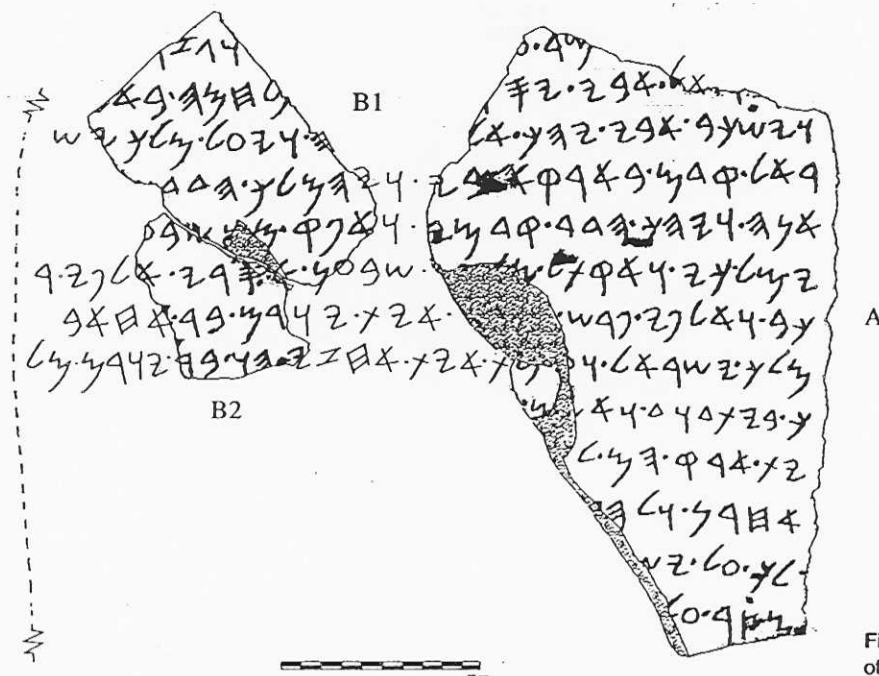


Fig. 2. Computer-aided drawing of the Tel Dan Inscription (Fragments A, B1, B2).

fragments that are not well integrated into the compositional framework of the biblical text.

THE TEXT

The publication of the Tel Dan inscription was both prompt and remarkably precise,<sup>5</sup> but there is room for some new suggestions. The drawing and transcription were made from photographs from Avraham Biran. The images were electronically digitized and manipulated. Although there is a distinct possibility that there was a larger gap between A and B1/B2 and the join between fragments A and B1/B2 must be considered only a working hypothesis, a slight rotation of the fragments makes the lines match better and renders a more convincing join.<sup>6</sup> The drawing (fig. 2) is done on the basis of the electronically manipulated photo (fig. 1). Fragment B1 has been rotated 2 degrees counter-clockwise, and B2 is rotated 1½ degrees counter-clockwise.

Transcription

- 1 [ ? ] מר.ע[ל . וגזר.] [
- 2 [ . . . ] אל. אבי.יסק[ן. עלוה. בה] חלמה. באב[ל ]
- 3 וישכב. אבי.יהכ. אל[ן. אבהו]. ויעל. מלכ[ינש]
- 4 ראל. קדמ. בארק. אבי[ו]. יהמלכ. הדד[ן]. א[ית].

- 5 אנה. ויהכ. הדד. קדמי[ו]. אפק. מנ. שבע[ת. ---]
- 6 י. מלכי. ואקתל. מל[כ]ו[ן]. [שב] ענ. אסרי. אלפ[יר].
- 7 כב. ואלפי. פרש. וקתלת. אית[יר]. רמ. בר. א[חאב].
- 8 מלכ. ישראל. וקתל[ת]. אית. אחז[ו]. יהו. בר[ו]. יורמ. מל[
- 9 כ. כביתודוד. ואשמ. ארק. המ. ? . . . [קר].<sup>7</sup>
- 10 [ ית. ארק. המ. לש[ממה]. ? . . . ]
- 11 אחרו. ולהפ[ן]. כ. כל. ערי. המ. ? . . . ויהוא. מ[
- 12 [ לכ. על. יש[ראל]. . . . ]
- 13 [ מצר. על[ן]. . . . ]

Translation

1. [ . . . ]MR<sup>c</sup> [ . . . ]and cut/made (a treaty) ?[ . . . ]
2. [○○○]-el my father, went up [against him when] he was fighting at A[bel ?]
3. and my father lay down; he went to [his ancestors.] Now the king of Israel entered
4. formerly in the land in my father's land; [but] Hadad made me myself king,
5. and Hadad went in front of me; [and] I departed from [the] seven [ . . . ]
6. of my kingdom; and I slew seve[nty ki]ngs, who harnessed thou[sands of cha]/riots
7. and thousands of horsemen. [And I killed Jo]-ram, son of A[hab,]
8. king of Israel, and [I] killed [Ahazi]yahu, son of [Joram, kin]/g

9. of the House of David; and I set [their towns into ruins ? . . . the ci]/ties
10. of their land into de[solation ? . . . ]
11. . . . other and to over[turn all their cities ? . . . and Jehu]
12. [ru]/led over Is[rael . . . ]
13. siege upon [ . . . ]

#### PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE TEL DAN STELA FRAGMENTS

The first fragment (A) and the two subsequent fragments (B1 and B2) have been published in a timely manner by Biran and Naveh (1993; 1995). Fragments B1 and B2 make an obvious join; however, their relation to fragment A is less certain. The archaeological contexts of these finds would *a priori* suggest that they should be related. The fact that the fragments are of the same material, show similar palaeography and language, and may be related in content, should remove almost all doubt that the fragments are related. According to Biran and Naveh (1995), the new fragments can be joined below the surface at line 5 (fig. 1), although the letters do not form a direct continuation from fragment A to B. This join forms a readable text with relatively minor difficulties. The drawing fills in some selected lines that indicate both the suitability of the proposed reconstruction and some of its difficulties.

In further support of Biran and Naveh's reconstruction, note that as a memorial inscription it is almost certain that the expression in lines 4–5—*ויהמלכ הדרד[.] א[ית]. אנה* “And Hadad made me king”—belongs toward the beginning of the inscription. Memorial inscriptions usually begin with prefaces that describe the succession of the king. For example, the preface to the Zakkur inscription contains a statement similar to the Tel Dan inscription (*KAI* 202A: 3–4): *והמלכני בעלשמ[ינב.] / [ח] זרכ* “And Ba'alshamayn made me king in Hadrach.” The Mesha Stela uses a more typical introduction, *אבי מלכ על מאב . . . ואנכ מלכתי אחר אבי* “My father ruled over Moab . . . and I ruled after my father” (*KAI* 181: 2–3). The use of the *Haphel* conjugation of the verb *מלכ* highlights the unusual succession of the usurper Hazael. That is, the deity Hadad made him king rather than Hazael's receiving the office from his father. In two other places Biran and Naveh's placement of the new fragments also seems convincing. Lines 3–4, *ויעל מלכני [ש] / ראל קדא בארק*, *אבי* “Now the king of I[s]rael entered formerly in my father's land,” form a continuous text re-

quiring the restoration of only one letter. The use of the stock phraseology in lines 6–7 also makes Biran and Naveh's reconstruction compelling: *וואקתל מל[כנשב] ענ אסרי א[לפיר] / כב ואלפי פרש*. [“and I slew [seve]nty ki[ngs], who harnessed thou[sands of cha]/riots and thousands horsemen [.” First of all, “seventy” is quite commonly used in biblical literature and is also employed in other northwest Semitic inscriptions (cf. Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 113; e.g., 2 Kgs 10:6–7; Judg 1:7; 9:18; Aramaic, *KAI* 215: 3–4; Ugaritic, *KTU* 1.4: VI:46). The reconstruction, *א[לפיר] / כב ואלפי פרש*, also seems most plausible since the terms *רכב* “chariot” and *פרש* “horseman” appear as a pair in biblical literature (e.g., Gen 50:9; Exod 14:9; 2 Sam 10:18; 1 Kgs 1:5; 2 Kgs 18:24) and in the Zakkur inscription (*KAI* 202B: 2).

The inscription seems to narrow slightly towards the top right edge of the stela (figs. 1–2). This suggests that the inscription was rounded at the top, not unlike the Mesha Stela. Consequently, we should assume a similar narrowing on the top left. In the drawing, the left margin of the stela is reconstructed to illustrate the plausibility of the proposed reconstruction (fig. 2). The first few lines in the first fragment also tend to droop below horizontal, whereas the later lines tend above horizontal. This creates some difficulty in matching the lines and placing the angle of fragment B with fragment A. This is, of course, complicated by the fact that the inscription is incomplete. There may have been, for example, some iconography in the stela that might account for the orientation of the text, but this can only be mere speculation until further fragments are found.

Although palaeography offers only a relative date, the similarity of the script to the Kilamuwa, Bar-Hadad, and Zakkur inscriptions suggest a date ca. 825 B.C.E. (± 75 years; cf. Tropper 1993: 398–401; Lemaire 1994b: 89–90). Historical content in this case offers a more narrow chronological framework than palaeography.<sup>8</sup>

#### EPIGRAPHIC, PHILOLOGICAL, AND RHETORICAL NOTES

##### *Line 1*

*מר* [ . Alternatively, Biran and Naveh have reconstructed, *ו[א]מר ע* “and he said” (1993: 90). Ahituv follows along these lines, reconstructing *ע[מר] מרי* “ . . . and Om[ri] sa[id]” (1993: 225). Puech has the rather elaborated reconstruction, *על ארק[?] אר[?] מ* [ .

מרי]ע[מר.א "du territoire (?) d'Ara]m a parlé O[mri" (Puech 1994: 219–21). They all read the broken letter preceding the *resh* as a *mem*. However, it seems possible to read a *šin* rather than a *mem*. This is also indicated by the fact that the *mem* in this inscription is tilted to the right with its head rising sharply on the left, whereas the *šin* is written more vertically. Note in figure 3 that the left stroke of the *mem* always tilts to the right, whereas the left stroke of the *šin* generally tilts slightly to the left. For this reason, Tropper tentatively suggested the reading, מ[יק]תשר.ע[מ] (1993: 401). In Hebrew we have the idiom התקשרו עליו "Jehu conspired against him" (2 Chr 24:25–26; cf. 2 Kgs 9:14). There would apparently be an attempt here in the beginning of the inscription to account for the unorthodox succession of Hazael to the throne.<sup>9</sup> However, it must be conceded that the verb קשר is known from Hebrew, not Aramaic.<sup>10</sup> An additional difficulty with Tropper's reading is that the *taw* would then seem to be too close to the *šin* (fig. 3).

#### Line 2

[ באב[ל] ? ] Biran and Naveh (1993) observe that the last broken letter of line 2 may only be read as either a *bet* or a *pe*. In favor of the reconstruction of a *pe* is the biblical reference to conflicts between Aram and Israel at Aphek in Galilee (which probably should be identified with Khirbet el-Asheq, located within Kibbutz en-Gev).<sup>11</sup> There were, however, a number of places with the name "Aphek" (Hebrew אפק = "stream") in ancient Palestine; and even if Aphek is the correct reading, we could not rule out the possibility that Aphek on the Yarkon river (just east of Tel Aviv) was intended since Hazael evidently campaigned against Judah (2 Kgs 12:17–18). In spite of Biran and Naveh's allowance that the stroke might be a *pe*, it appears slightly too high on the line to be a *pe*. Perhaps this is the reason Biran and Naveh actually prefer the reading Abel (beth-Maakah). This certainly would seem to be a logical reading because of the site's proximity to Tel Dan and its importance in Assyrian records (cf. Dever 1986).

#### Line 3/4

מלכי[ש]ראל "king of Israel." The word divider is missing between the *kap* and the *yod*, just as in line 9 ביתדוד "house of David."<sup>12</sup> It brings us to the natural conclusion that the word divider was some-

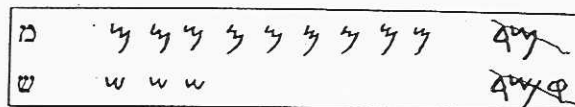


Fig. 3. Comparison of *mem* and *šin* readings (line 1).

times omitted in construct expressions. Although it is helpful here to compare the scribal practice in the Tel Dan stela with other inscriptions, a complete uniformity cannot be assumed.

#### Line 4/5

והמלכ.הדר[.א]ית.אנה "[And] Hadad made me king." Two ticks from what appears to be a *yod* precede the *he* of והמלכ. Biran and Naveh (1995: 15) suggest that the אנה after the reconstructed first person [ית]א is for emphasis." They admit that this is awkward, but see no other suitable alternative. Normally, the first person pronoun is attached as we have in the Zakkur inscription (KAI 202: A:3, והמלכני | בעלשמין). Cryer (1995) reads, והמלכ.הדר. [ "king Hadad"; however, there is first of all no reason to expect a Canaanite definite article; and second, the letter preceding the *he* appears to have two ticks that can be read as a *yod* but cannot be a word divider.

#### Lines 7–8

והקת[. . . / . . . וקתל], "[I killed] PN . . . and I killed PN." These lines mark a rhetorical transition in the inscription, which now moves from general introduction to specific events. Instead of the generic claim of killing "seventy kings" (line 6), there is the specific claim of killing Joram, the king of Israel, and Ahaziah, the king of the house of David. If we judge by the Mesha inscription (cf. Smelik 1992), the rhetorical shift probably would have been marked by a different verbal form, namely the shift from the prefix preterite (*yaqtul*) to the suffix conjugation (*qatal*). We must reconstruct the *qatal* form in line 7 (against Biran and Naveh who suggest the *yaqtul*), and this shift would have been continued in line 8, והקת[.ת.אית.אחז]יהו. "and [I killed Ahaz]iah."<sup>13</sup>

בר.א[חאב]. "son of A[hab]." On left edge of fragment B2 two indentions can be seen. Electronic imaging indicates that these marks are consistent with the two legs on the right edge of an *alep*. The distance between the two indentations matches

exactly what would be expected in the *alep* and thus lends a little more credence to Biran and Naveh's reconstruction of the name Ahab.

[י]רמ.בר.א[האב.], “[Jo]ram, son of A[hab]”; [אחז]יהו.בר[.יורמ], “Ahaziah, son of [Joram].”<sup>14</sup> Biran and Naveh suggest reconstructing full Yahwistic theophoric components for the kings of both Israel and the house of David. Yet, even though the full theophoric component is there for the king of the house of David (in line 8), there is no reason to assume it would be there for the king of Israel (in line 7). Onomastic evidence suggests that northern Hebrew names reduced the theophoric component to the prefix *-י* and the suffix *-י*; for example, in the Samaria Ostraca we find שמריו (i, 1/2), ידעיו (i, 8; xlii, 2), and גריו (ii, 2; vi, 2; xxx, 2; xlii, 3) and the seals and bullae show the shortened forms (e.g., יועשה, יונתן, וישע).<sup>15</sup> The use of the components *-י* and *-י* alleviates some of the problems for line length in both lines 7 and 8. In line 7, it allows space to reconstruct the conjunction *waw* in וקתלת (which Biran and Naveh omit for lack of space). In line 8 it makes the reconstruction more plausible (fig. 2) without assuming the haplography of a *mem* as Biran and Naveh suggest to solve the problem.

#### Line 9

ביתדוד. “house of David.” Undoubtedly this reading has been the most controversial aspect of the inscription. Alternative readings have been suggested. The expression *bytdwd* may be read as a geographical name, i.e., to an otherwise unattested place in Syria-Palestine; or as referring to the temple of *Daud*, i.e., to a deity virtually unknown in Syria-Palestine; or as referring to the temple of Uncle Yahweh, i.e., an eponymic referent to Yahweh as Godfather (cf. Cryer 1994; Davies 1994; Thompson 1995a). None of these alternatives seems particularly compelling. As scholars we should always entertain alternatives, yet the reading “house of David” always was the most historically and linguistically plausible. The new fragments only confirm Biran and Naveh's initial reading.

To some extent, however, the occurrence of the expression “house of David” in this inscription must still be considered surprising and unexpected. Even in biblical literature, the expression “house of David” is unexpectedly limited, occurring only 25 times.<sup>16</sup> One plausible explanation has been offered by Victor Sasson, who notes that the age of David and

Solomon has always been considered a golden age consisting of a sprawling empire. Sasson is probably not far from the mark when he suggests that an Aramaean conqueror might have taken “the occasion to brag about the devastation he had inflicted on Judah”—that is, the expression “house of David” is employed precisely because it aggrandized the Aramaean victory over a once powerful enemy (Sasson 1995: 22). In further support of this reading, Puech and Lemaire independently reached the reconstruction of ב.ה.ד[ד] “the house of David” in the Mesha Stele (Puech 1994: 227; Lemaire 1994a; cf. *KAI* 181:33).

It is worthwhile at this point to explore how the expression “house of David” is employed in biblical literature. The earliest occurrences of the expression are contextually determined by the civil war with the “house of Saul” (cf. 1 Sam 19:11; 20:16; 2 Sam 3:1, 6). That is, the “house of David” here refers to David's family and supporters, not to a political dynasty. The idea of a “house of David” is certainly implicit in YHWH's promise to David (cf. 2 Sam 7:1–16). It was commonplace for ancient Near Eastern monarchs to claim that a deity granted them kingship (e.g., *KAI* 202:3). Moreover, the relative antiquity of this dynastic promise is indicated by the interpretative history of the prophetic promise within biblical literature. Unlike the later reuse and recontextualizations of the Dynastic Oracle, which emphasize the prominent place of the temple, 2 Sam 7:1–16 is primarily a political text that justifies the Davidic monarchy. Its later interpretations and recontextualizations in the context of the Josianic religious reforms (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:15–21) and in the Exilic and post-Exilic periods (e.g., Jer 33:15–18; 1 Chr 17:1–14) necessarily emphasized the priesthood and the temple at the expense of the Davidic monarchy.<sup>17</sup>

The earliest explicit references in biblical literature to the “house of David” as a political dynasty are related to the aftermath of the Syro-Ephraimite war (e.g., Isa 7:2, 13). These references should be understood in the broad context of Isaiah 6–11, which exalts the Davidic dynasty at the expense of the northern kingdom. These texts, i.e., Isa 7:13–14; 9:1–7; 11:1–3, are usually discussed with heavy theological overtones, while the historical and political issues addressed by the author are often overlooked. These include, first of all, the Syro-Ephraimite alliance against Judah and second, and more to the point, the legitimate dynastic leadership of the sons of David (which the northern kingdom had left). This

last issue can be illustrated in the conclusion of the famous “Immanuel” oracle in Isa 7:17,

The LORD will bring upon you and your people and your ancestral house days such as have not come *since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah*—the king of Assyria [emphasis mine].

For the author of the narrative, time was measured in terms of the northern kingdom’s departure from Judah (also cf. 1 Kgs 12:19; 2 Kgs 17:21). This is also most likely the issue underlying the controversial references to David and the Davidic dynasty in the early prophetic works of Hosea (3:5) and Amos (9:11). The superscriptions of these works (Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1) place their context in the eighth century B.C.E. Rather than proposing that the references to David in these works are late additions (cf. Freedman and Andersen 1980: 306–7), it seems better to view them as political assertions of the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty in the aftermath of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis and the fall of Samaria.

#### Line 11

[...? כ.ל.ע.ר.י.ה.מ.], “and to over[turn all their cities?” Biran and Naveh (1993:87) transcribe ]-לה. The top right corner of the letter following ]-לה. is visible and can only be a *bet*, *pe*, or *res*. Puech (1994: 218–20) has suggested the reading ]-להפ[.כ.ל.א.י.כ.ל. “et chan[ger (?) il ne put pas.” While ]-להפ[ seems to be a most plausible suggestion, further reconstruction beyond this is pure guesswork.

#### THE DIALECT

The language of the inscription is a dialect of Old Aramaic. The somewhat unexpected appearance of the prefixed preterite or *yaqtul* adds a new wrinkle to our knowledge of Aramaic as a few scholars have noted (e.g., Emerton 1994; Halpern 1994: 64–65; Muraoka 1995; Tropper 1993: 404–5; Kaswalder and Pazzini 1994), but should not change our linguistic evaluation. The new fragment (B1) adds another particularly important example to those known from fragment A (ראשם, ואקתל, ויהכ, וישכב, יסק). Line 3 in the fragment is completed by line 4 in fragment A; ויעל מלכי[ש]/ראל.קדם באר.אבי “and the king of Israel entered *formerly* into my father’s land.” This reconstruction would remove all doubt about the use of the *yaqtul* preterite in this southern dialect of Aramaic.<sup>18</sup>

Examples of the *yaqtul* preterite in Aramaic are few, but they are not limited to the recently published Tel Dan inscription. Other apparent instances of the *yaqtul* preterite are found in the Zakkur inscription:

ן[מי]לש[מי]לש “And I lifted my hands to Baalshamayn” (KAI 202A:11).

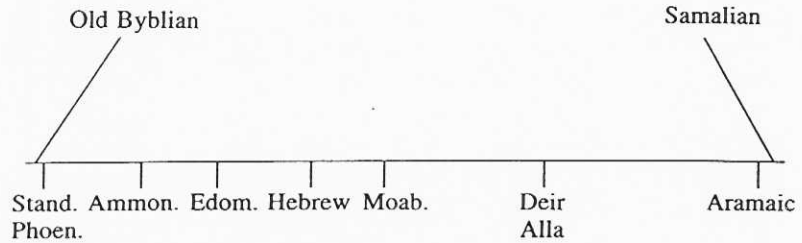
[ ]ענני בעלשמין “Baalshamayn answered me” (KAI 202A:11).

ן[י]אמר “And he spoke to me” (KAI 202A: 15).

In these examples we have what appears to be the *waw*-consecutive (or, more historically correct, the preterite continuative), which is typical of biblical Hebrew but also appears in other Canaanite inscriptions.<sup>19</sup> However, the use of the preterite continuative is not typical of Aramaic in general, nor of this inscription in particular (Degen 1969b: 76–77, 114–16).<sup>20</sup> Even the Old Aramaic inscriptions from Zenjirli, whose dialect exhibits the influence of Canaanite, do not use the *waw*-consecutive. On the other hand, the quasi-Aramaic dialect of the Deir ‘Alla Plaster Text uses the *waw*-consecutive (Hackett 1980: 117–19).<sup>21</sup> As Degen points out, both a long and a short form of the prefix conjugation appear in Old Aramaic (especially in the Sefire inscriptions), and he identifies them with the imperfect and the jussive (Degen 1969a). Thus, the conditions for a *yaqtul* preterite existed in Old Aramaic and we should not be too surprised to find a survival.

The *yaqtul* preterite here sheds new light on the discussion of the prefixed forms in the Zakkur and the Deir ‘Alla Plaster Text. Hackett (1980: 117) argued, “The verbal system of the Deir ‘Allā text provides the strongest arguments in favor of a South Canaanite classification for the dialect.” In light of the Tel Dan inscription, however, this assertion can no longer be maintained.<sup>22</sup> Its appearance at Tel Dan forces upon Northwest Semitic a new paradigm—a paradigm already suggested in the debate over the dialect of the Deir ‘Alla text (e.g., Lemaire 1979; Kaufman 1980; Pardee 1991; Müller 1991). Although remnants of the West Semitic *yaqtul* preterite survived in Canaanite (cf. Rainey 1986; 1990), the former almost completely disappeared in Aramaic. Consequently, Old Aramaic grammars have essentially described the verbal system in the same manner as Imperial Aramaic (and especially biblical Aramaic) with only two indicative tenses: perfect and imperfect (Degen 1969b: 114–16; Segert 1975: 244–51, 263–69). The Tel Dan inscription now can

Fig. 4. Garr's diagram of the dialect continuum (Garr 1985: 231).



refine our knowledge of the Old Aramaic verbal system. Perhaps the use of the West Semitic *yaqtul* preterite in Tel Dan inscription reflects a peculiarity in the Aramaic dialect from Damascus, which held on to the *yaqtul* preterite much longer than other Old Aramaic dialects, as Halpern also suggests (1994: 64–65). Alternatively, the use of the *yaqtul* preterite in these texts could be seen as “Canaanizing,” but since the *yaqtul* preterite belonged to the West Semitic substratum it seems better to view them as survivals.<sup>23</sup> In northern Aramaic dialects the *yaqtul* preterite dropped out as early as the tenth century B.C.E., as we know from the Tell Fekherye inscription (cf. Muraoka 1983–1984). However, this new evidence suggests that in the earliest period a *yaqtul* preterite survived in southern Aramaic dialects. Remnants of the *yaqtul* preterite seem to have survived in those Aramaic dialects that were geographically closer to Canaan.

It is no longer possible to posit a sharp break between Canaanite and Aramaic until a later period when Aramaic becomes standardized, as advocated by Garr (1985: 229–35). In a thoroughly researched and carefully argued book, Garr has described the “dialectal continuum” in Syria-Palestine from 1000 to 586 B.C.E. In many ways this work breaks new ground in the study of northwest Semitic dialectology. If there is one shortcoming of the book, it is in the false impression it creates concerning the place of Aramaic in the dialect continuum. This may be illustrated by the graphic Garr uses to illustrate the dialect geography of Syria-Palestine (fig. 4). This sketch suggests a sharp break between the Aramaic and Canaanite dialects. But how true is this picture, and more important, when is it true? It should, first of all, be recognized that Old Aramaic became a *lingua franca* of the Near East after 745 B.C.E. This historical fact coincides with the expansion of the Assyrian empire, which adopted Aramaic as a more suitable *lingua franca* for dealings with the west (cf. Tadmor 1982). Moreover, the establish-

ment of a *lingua franca* from a north Syrian dialect of Aramaic naturally meant that southern Syrian dialects of Aramaic declined (cf. Greenfield 1981: 115). Therefore, in discussing a dialectal continuum of Old Aramaic (OA), we must separate two distinct periods: 1000–745 B.C.E. (OA<sup>1</sup>) and 745–500 B.C.E. (OA<sup>2</sup>).<sup>24</sup> There is a break in the dialectal continuum between Canaanite and Aramaic, as is attested in 2 Kgs 18:26 (also Isa 36:11), which suggests that by 700 B.C.E. Judaean Hebrew and Aramaic were not mutually intelligible. However, this break was apparently facilitated by the adoption of Aramaic as the *lingua franca* of the Assyrian empire, which coincides only with OA<sup>2</sup>. Our knowledge of OA<sup>1</sup> is limited and exists primarily of north Syrian texts (e.g., Tell Fekherye, Sefire, Tell Halaf, Sam<sup>2</sup>al). The Tel Dan inscription is by far the most substantial Aramaic inscription with a southern provenience, and now begins to fill this geographical gap in the dialectal continuum of OA<sup>1</sup>.

The paradigm offered by Garr, then, is more true for the later period (OA<sup>2</sup>) than for the earlier period (OA<sup>1</sup>). It is also ill served by the geographical distribution of the Aramaic inscriptional evidence, which is predominantly from northern Syria. The difficulty in describing the dialect of the Deir <sup>2</sup>Alla inscription (e.g., Lemaire 1979; Kaufman 1980; Pardee 1991; Müller 1991; Greenfield 1991; Rendsburg 1993), likewise can be understood as resulting partly from a deficient understanding of the dialectal continuum of Old Aramaic. The difficulties in Garr's paradigm underscore the fact that diachronic analysis and synchronic analysis can never be completely divorced in a field where there is such a limited corpus.

#### JEHU'S REVOLT

Several historical contexts have already been proposed for this stela, ranging from the initial opinion of Biran and Naveh (1993), which placed it in the early ninth century, to the rather curious proposal of



Lemche and Thompson who date it to the late eighth or even early seventh century B.C.E. (Lemche and Thompson 1994; Thompson 1995a). There are three separate aspects to reconstructing the inscription's context: archaeological context, historical context of its erection and destruction, and historical content of the inscription.

An adequate description of the archaeological context was given with the publication of the finds (Biran and Naveh 1993: 81–86; 1995: 2–9). In short, the first fragment (A) was found in a piazza whose associated finds indicated a late ninth to early eighth century B.C.E. date of construction. Fragments A and B1 were given a *terminus post quem* by the Assyrian destruction of Tiglath Pileser III (ca. 733 B.C.E.). Fragment B2 was built into the foundation of a wall that most likely was constructed in the late ninth or early eighth century B.C.E. As Biran and Naveh recognized, the broken stela appears to have been used in the building projects of either Joash (ca. 798–782 B.C.E.) or Jeroboam II (ca. 782–753 B.C.E.). As Halpern recognized (1994: 63–80), the historical context for the destruction of the stela must be placed at a time when the power of Aram over Israel was waning. The decline of the Aramaean states in the late ninth to early eighth century B.C.E. was heralded by the rising power of Assyria and in particular, Adad-nirari III (806–782 B.C.E.).

Jehu was a general of Israel who came to the throne in the year 841 B.C.E. by assassinating king Joram (or, Jehoram). Whether we term this traumatic change of power a conspiracy or a revolution is, of course, a matter of perspective. To king Joram it was a treacherous conspiracy (cf. 2 Kgs 9:21–24). The narration of these events in the book of Kings, however, depicts Jehu as a liberator, freeing Israel from the domination of a foreign queen-mother, Jezebel. This portrait is pervasive enough that some have proposed an apologetic record dating from the time of Jehu; supporting his claim to the throne underlies our present text of 2 Kings 9–10 (e.g., Campbell 1986). According to the biblical account, Jehu comes to the throne with prophetic support (2 Kgs 9:1–13). He is cast in the Deuteronomistic History as a religious reformer. The mixed evaluation he ultimately receives in the Deuteronomistic History results from the fact that he merely eliminated the foreign cults of the Phoenician queen-mother, Jezebel. Clearly, this was less than the ideal of the Josianic reformers and those who wrote the Deuteronomistic History.<sup>25</sup> There are some noteworthy

fragments in the biblical accounts that make the official Deuteronomistic account less than satisfying.

Jehu's bloody extermination of the royal family, including the elimination of the Phoenician queen-mother Jezebel, could only be seen as a direct affront to Ahab's Phoenician alliance. Schneider's recent proposal to make Jehu a descendant of the Omride royal family certainly explains some of the curious aspects of Jehu and his revolt, i.e., the Assyrian references to him as "the son of Omri," his long patronymic in biblical literature, Jehu's association with the royal family, and the destruction specifically of the "house of Ahab"—not *Omri* (Schneider 1996). One wonders why, however, this was not mentioned in biblical literature, though it is not difficult to see why it might have been unimportant and perhaps unknown to later Judaeian redactors. By virtue of Jehu's *coup d'état* then, the alliance with Phoenicia must have been dissolved and Jehu would be seeking new alliances. The one that presents itself, of course, is an alliance with Aram under Hazael.

1 Kgs 19:15–18 suggests that there was just such a collusion between Aram and Israel:

15. Then the LORD said to (Elijah), "Go, return on your way to the steppeland of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Aram.

16. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi to be king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah to be prophet in your place.

17. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill.

18. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

The later descriptions of Hazael's and Jehu's rise to power are also strikingly similar (2 Kgs 8:7–15; 9:1–13)—both are reluctant leaders (8:13; 9:11) who receive unexpected prophetic support (8:14; 9:11). Commentators have noted that Hazael and Jehu are depicted side by side in biblical accounts, but this observation is then left wanting. Morton Smith, for example, describes 1 Kgs 19:17 as an "unexplained saying" that is nevertheless significant because it "equates Elisha with King Jehu . . . and King Hazael of Syria" (Smith 1971: 25; see also Miller and Hayes 1986: 287). The Tel Dan stela suggests that the Aramaean king Hazael took credit for the deaths of Joram

and Ahaziah. Rather than simply dismissing the biblical text as inaccurate or as a fictional account, the fragmentary prophecy in 1 Kgs 19:17 already has suggested a preferable solution—"Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazeal, Jehu shall kill. . . ."

But why should we believe the testimony of the biblical witness on this point? Because it is not well integrated into the Deuteronomistic History and does not serve later deuteronomistic historians' interests. A prophecy-fulfillment scheme is one of the hallmarks of the Deuteronomistic History (von Rad 1966). The framework for this scheme is outlined in Deut 18:21–22. A parade example of the rigid adherence to this principle is the prophecy of Josiah's reform in 1 Kgs 13:1–2, whose fulfillment in 2 Kings 23 is underscored by the explicit citation of the earlier prophecy (cf. vv 5–18). Typically, the fulfillments are noted by the prophetic fulfillment formula, "according to the word of the Lord" (e.g., 1 Kgs 14:18; 15:29; 16:12, 34; 22:38; 2 Kgs 1:17; 2:22). In contrast to the typical deuteronomistic scheme, there is actually no literal fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy from 1 Kgs 19:16. Elijah never anoints Jehu as king over Israel. It is not surprising then that there is no prophetic fulfillment formula used in 2 Kgs 9:1–13 when Jehu is anointed king by an anonymous man of God. Likewise, the other elements of the prophecy in 1 Kings 19 also go without notation of their fulfillment. This includes the anointing of Elisha as prophet (which is immediately fulfilled; cf. 1 Kgs 19:19–21), the anointing of Hazeal (which is done by Elisha; cf. 2 Kgs 8:7–15), and the tripartite slaughter by Hazeal, Jehu, and Elisha. In the last instance, it is unclear who exactly was to be killed—"Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazeal, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill" (1 Kgs 19:18). The fragmentary nature of the prophecy in 1 Kgs 19:15–18 has troubled commentators, to be sure, but no solution has been found. Cogan and Tadmor describe 1 Kgs 19:15–18 as "an independent formulation which has not been harmonized with the Elisha cycle in 2 Kgs 8:7–15, 9:1–10" (Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 92; see also Noth 1960: 229). Whatever its origin, it is clear that 1 Kgs 19:15–18 must predate the Deuteronomistic History. It is obviously not deuteronomistic and there can be no plausible explanation of it as a postdeuteronomistic addition. As a predeuteronomistic fragment, it should play a role in our reconstruction of Jehu's revolt.

Contemporary Assyrian records yield a parallel to the problem of the multiple claimants to the

killing of Joram and Ahaziah. According to the Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III, during the Assyrian king's sixth campaign (*palû*) to the west the inhabitants of the region of Balih killed their own lord, Giammu, who had opposed Shalmaneser and entered into a vassal relationship with Assyria:

<sup>NĀR</sup>*idīqlat e-te-bir a-na ālāni ša <sup>M</sup>gi-am-mu*  
<sup>NĀR</sup>*balihi aq-ti-rib pul-ḥat-at bēlū-ti-ia na-mur-rat*  
<sup>GIŠ</sup>*kakkē-ia iz-zu-te ip-la-ḥu-ma ina kakkē ra-ma-*  
*ni-šu-nu <sup>M</sup>gi-am-mu bēli-šu-nu i-du-ku*

I crossed the Tigris river and approached the cities of Giammu along the Balih river. Then they became afraid of terror radiating from my overlordship and the splendor of my weapons, and—with their very own weapons—they killed Giammu their lord.<sup>26</sup>

In an annals text of Shalmaneser III written about 15 years later, however, the Assyrian monarch makes the direct claim to having killed Giammu:

*ina 6 palē-ia a-na ālāni ša ši-di <sup>NĀR</sup>ba-la-ḥi aq-ti-*  
*rib <sup>M</sup>gi-am-mu bēl āli-šu-nu adūk (GAZ)*

In my sixth *palû*, I approached the cities on the banks of the Balih river. I killed Giammu their lord.<sup>27</sup>

The difference between these two texts can be easily understood. The Monolith Inscription was written soon after the events it recorded. The return from this campaign was evidently the occasion for the inscription. Consequently, its account of Shalmaneser III's sixth *palû* is more detailed. Later annals' texts are much more laconic (Schramm 1973: 70–105).<sup>28</sup> But there is more to this discrepancy. Shalmaneser III is deliberately vague in his later annals to claim more credit, and in other places he is simply aggrandizing. For example, he increases the number of those slain in battle from 14,000 in the Monolith Inscription to 25,000 in his later annals. Shalmaneser also uses different names for places in the west so that it does not appear that he is returning to the same place. In this case, the use of the GAZ logogram for *dakû* seems intentionally vague and the context—which uses only first person verbs (e.g., *aqtirib*, *erūb*)—would lead us to believe that Shalmaneser killed Giammu. It is only with recourse to the Kurkh monolith inscription that the exact details of Giammu's death may be ascertained. The tacitly false claim by Shalmaneser III that he killed Giammu may be justified because the people acted in fear of and on behalf of their overlord, Shal-

maneser III. This example can serve as an analogy to the situation involving Hazael and Jehu. Hazael may have viewed Jehu as his agent whom Hazael supported in a coup against Joram, king of Israel. This hypothesis fits with certain details preserved in the biblical account.

The alliance between Jehu and Hazael would have revived a previous alliance between Israel and Damascus that was apparently disrupted by Hazael's *coup d'état* in 845 B.C.E. The Kurkh monolith inscription of Shalmaneser III describes in detail a coalition in which Israel and Damascus fought side-by-side against the Assyrians at Qarqar in 853 B.C.E. Although Shalmaneser's descriptions of later campaigns in 849, 848, and 845 B.C.E. are more circumspect referring to the coalition as "the twelve kings of the seacoast," it seems likely that Israel was included in the coalition. It is only after the rise of Hazael after 845 B.C.E. that this coalition breaks up and Shalmaneser III is successful in his western campaigns (Pitard 1987: 145–51). It must have been a result of the breakup of this coalition that Jehu, at that time a general under Joram, found himself militarily engaged with the Aramaeans at Ramoth-Gilead (2 Kgs 8:28–29; 9:14) and at that time he hatched a conspiracy against Joram who was healing back in Jezreel. Assuming this to be generally accurate, the conspiracy almost necessarily would have had to have the help of the Aramaean commander at Ramoth-Gilead. Jehu had to leave the military confrontation at Ramoth-Gilead, essentially withdrawing from battle, to confront the royal regent in Jezreel and then contend with the political aftermath of regicide. Practically speaking, this could only have been accomplished with the tacit approval, if not the direct assistance, of the Aramaean leader—i.e., Hazael.

A collusion with the treacherous Aramaean Hazael would explain the unbridled hostility toward Jehu expressed in a later prophetic text. The enigmatic text in Hos 1:4–5 was written in the aftermath of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis:

And the LORD said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel" (Hos 1:4–5).

The enigmatic reference here to "the blood of Jezreel" apparently refers to the bloody coup that accompanied Jehu's rise to power. The reference to Jehu seems out of place since Hosea seems to be

talking about events 100 years later. Freedman and Andersen try to explain this by suggesting that perhaps the "dynasty of Jehu"—i.e., Jeroboam II—is meant here. However, the "blood of Jezreel" seems to refer explicitly to events in Jehu's reign (2 Kgs 10:1–27). Therefore, Freedman and Andersen (1980: 178) acknowledge, "It is difficult . . . to square the statement in Hosea that the blood of Jezreel will be visited upon the house of Jehu with the strong theological support of that bloodbath given elsewhere in the Bible." However, when we understand the revolt of Jehu as analogous to the situation of the later Syro-Ephraimite crisis this difficulty fades. The later author of Hosea saw Jehu's revolt as a collusion between Israel and Aram that resulted in the slaughter of the king of Judah and even some of his family (2 Kgs 10:12–14). This picture has obvious similarities with the Syro-Ephraimite crisis (Isaiah 7).

As a result of Jehu's vassalage to Hazael, Aram acquired disputed areas that formerly were under Israel's control (2 Kgs 10:32–33). This is indicated not only by the biblical text, "In those days the Lord began to trim off parts of Israel. Hazael defeated them throughout the territory of Israel: from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aro<sup>er</sup>, which is by the Wadi Arnon, that is, Gilead and Bashan" (2 Kgs 10:32–33), but also by some limited archaeological evidence in the Golan region (Pitard 1987: 145–60).

## CONCLUSIONS

In sum, this inscription should be attributed to Hazael. It was not "an emergency display inscription" (*contra* Halpern 1994: 74), but a memorial stela much like the Mesha Stela (Miller 1974). It was intended as propaganda boasting of Hazael's victories on the northern border of Israel. What does the Tel Dan stela teach us about our use of the book of Kings as an historical source? Kings is selective and political/ideological in nature, but it is also a redacted work that used earlier sources. At the beginning of this article I suggested that we need to look for "disinterested" statements, i.e., those things that do not apparently serve the political and ideological interests of the biblical narrative. To some extent, even a text like 1 Kgs 9:15–18 is not "disinterested"; that is, it can be explained as serving the political and ideological interests of an earlier source, perhaps as part of an apologetic for Jehu's revolt. Yet, it cannot be explained easily within the style and

ideology of the later deuteronomistic editors. It is evidently truncated from its original source. By looking for such truncated motifs, we also can find fragments of earlier sources, which can fill in the gaps left by the selective editing and political/ideological agenda of the later redactors.

Additionally, this inscription should refocus our attention to the political dimensions of the "house of David." Biblical scholarship has tended to be overly

enamored with the theological idea of the "house of David" and has tended to read all references to David in prophetic literature as late or as reflecting eschatological and utopian ideals. The Tel Dan inscription should remind us that the "house of David" was first a political designation and only much later did this political idea by its association with the temple and priesthood take on theological and ultimately eschatological dimensions.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For example, Thomas Thompson impugns not only the conclusions but also the integrity of the excavators when he writes, "Even if we were to ignore that the inscription is hardly likely to have been found *in situ* or in the way that Biran has claimed . . ." (Thompson 1995a: 59).

<sup>2</sup>Emile Puech (1974) and Andre Lemaire (1994a) independently arrived at the reconstruction of בַּת־דָּוִד "the house of David" in line 33 of the Moabite Stone. Rhetorically, their reconstruction of the "house of David" has much to commend it. Mesha makes a transition in line 33 of the inscription where he turns from discussing his conquests against Israel on his northern border to speaking about his southern border—in particular, the city Harounen. Mesha's enemy on that front was the southern kingdom or, as he apparently refers to them, "the house of David." No other interpretation of this section of the Moabite Stone during the last 100 years warrants consideration.

<sup>3</sup>The *Annales* school emerged after World War I under the leadership of Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel, and Marc Bloch. They severely critiqued the Hobbesian "royal-empiricist" historiography, which dealt with the manifest content of history, namely the deeds of kings and states. The heirs of the *Annales* group have dominated historical studies over the entire European continent.

<sup>4</sup>It is interesting that the dismissal of biblical historical records has been coordinated with an appeal to archaeological evidence. This has been done without a real knowl-

edge of archaeology or what it may offer the historian. Material remains, no matter how well preserved or well excavated, lend themselves to socioeconomic and techno-environmental reconstruction, that is, to the *longue durée* and not to the traditional stuff of history writing. Thus, archaeology may be able to describe for us in general terms the settlement history or the cultural influences of a place like Tel Dan; but it is only with the written sources from the Bible and Assyria that we can identify an event like the destruction of Dan in 732 B.C.E. by Tiglath-Pileser III. Material culture and written records tell different parts of the story; by dismissing one or the other we do not get a more "scientific history" but rather only a more limited history. To get the whole picture there must be a dynamic interaction between textual and artifactual data (Dever in press).

<sup>5</sup>A number of studies have already been undertaken on this inscription. Here, these notes take as their starting point the *editio princeps* of Biran and Naveh (1993; 1995) and the fine discussion by Baruch Halpern (1994).

<sup>6</sup>The inflammatory remarks of T. L. Thompson (1995b) about this join are difficult to comprehend. In any case, he exaggerates the "dissonance" and wrongly bases his perceptions on the published photographs as if they were an absolutely precise positioning of the fragments. The gaps between and sizes of letters vary even within fragment A, but my work with computer imaging suggests they are similar. Again, even within a single line (e.g., fragment A,

line 3; compare first word with the rest of line) and within the same fragment (e.g., compare fragment A, lines 2 and 9), the stela does not maintain a consistent horizon. In my judgment the physical similarities along with the archaeological context require the working hypothesis that Biran and Naveh present: that the three fragments (A, B1, and B2) come from the same inscription.

<sup>7</sup>This follows the suggestion of Halpern (1994: 68).

<sup>8</sup>Differing interpretations have been offered as to the palaeography of the inscription. The initial dating by Naveh in the early ninth century B.C.E. was certainly too early, but the attempt to date the inscription to the late eighth century B.C.E. (*à la* Cryer 1994; Lemche and Thompson 1994) is also not convincing.

<sup>9</sup>Hazael was a usurper by both biblical and Assyrian accounts, which give him the epithet *mār la mamana* "son of a nobody" (Schneider 1996; Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 89–93). Later in the inscription, the unorthodox succession is implied by the use of the construction [י.י.המלך.הדרד]; for example, Biran and Naveh (1995: 15) point out that the verbal root מלכ is employed in both the Zakkur inscription and the Barrakib inscription to indicate unnatural succession and in the Hebrew Bible the verb להמליך "to cause to rule" often occurs when there is dissension concerning the succession.

<sup>10</sup>קשר does appear in Old Aramaic with the meaning "to bind," but not "to conspire" (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 1039–40).

<sup>11</sup>1 Kgs 20:26–30; 2 Kgs 13:17. Preliminary excavations at Khirbet el-Asheq were carried out in 1961 and demonstrated that the site was heavily fortified with a six-foot-wide wall and was occupied from the tenth to the eighth century B.C.E. Additionally, evidence of Aramaean influence was indicated by an Aramaic bowl inscription that should be dated to the ninth century B.C.E. (B. Mazar et al. 1964).

<sup>12</sup>On word dividers in Aramaic, see Rendsburg (1995).

<sup>13</sup>The infinitive absolute would also be possible וקחתי [אקחתי.אחז] יהוה "and I surely killed Ahaziah," but this would make little sense rhetorically.

<sup>14</sup>There has been an attempt to dismiss these identifications (e.g., Cryer 1995; Thompson 1995b), although they seem self evident. For example, *[rm.br]* must refer to a personal name, probably that of a king. It is natural, given the geographical context, to look for ancient Israelite kings to posit possibilities, though obviously other possibilities should be entertained. The fact is that there is an Israelite king whose name ends with *-rm* and who fits into the historical parameters. It is difficult, then, to understand Cryer's dismissal of this reconstruction as "nonsense" as anything other than a refusal to consider any relation to biblical history. In fact, extrabiblical inscriptions (Mesha Stele, Shalmaneser III's annals) confirm the chronology of Israelite kings (naming Omri, Ahab, and Jehu) and thereby allow little room to *a priori* dismiss the use of the biblical records in this case.

<sup>15</sup>For a convenient list of theophoric personal names with their provenience, see J. Tigay (1986: 47–63, "Appendix A").

<sup>16</sup>Most of these references come from just a few early contexts (1 Sam 19:11; 20:16; 2 Sam 33:1, 6; 1 Kgs 12:19, 20, 26; 13:2; 14:8; 2 Kgs 17:21; Isa 7:2, 13; 22:22; Jer 21:12) and a limited number of late contexts (Zech 12:7, 8, 10, 12; 13:1; Pss 122:5; Neh 12:37; 1 Chr 17:24; 2 Chr 8:11; 10:19; 21:7).

<sup>17</sup>There is an immense literature on the Dynastic Promise which cannot all be brought to bear here. See M. Fishbane (1985: 394–96, 465–67) and the literature cited there.

<sup>18</sup>J. C. L. Gibson, for example, expressed some skepticism about the possible *yaqtul* in the Zakkur inscription; he remarks, "The most interesting isogloss, however, is what seems to be a number of instances of *Waw* consecutive with the imperf. in A 11f., a construction known elsewhere only from Hebr. and Moabite. I confess to some skepticism about this however. . . ." (1975: 7). It is a tribute to the scholarship of the late Jonas Greenfield that he had already recognized before the publication of either the Deir 'Alla Plaster Text or the new Dan fragments that the Zakkur inscription did not "suffer from Canaanite admixtures" (Greenfield 1981: 111).

<sup>19</sup>Most notable are the Mesha inscription (see Andersen 1966) and the Deir 'Alla Plaster Text (Hackett 1980). Mark Smith suggests that the *waw*-consecutive was "a shared feature of several first millennium NWS languages" (1991: 18). However, the evidence in Old Aramaic is at best limited to the Zakkur inscription, the Tel Dan inscription, and perhaps the Deir 'Alla Plaster Text (the one example from a papyrus in Demotic script that Smith cites is rather dubious evidence). In sum, the *waw*-consecutive was certainly not a regular feature of Old Aramaic (Garr 1985: 185–86).

<sup>20</sup>Contrast KAI 202: A 3, 4, 9, 10; B 4, 6, 10.

<sup>21</sup>Examples include *wyhz* (I, 1), *wy<sup>2</sup>tw* (I, 1), *wy<sup>2</sup>mrw* (I, 2), *wyqm* (I, 3), *wy<sup>c</sup>l* (I, 4), and *wy<sup>2</sup>mr* (I, 4/5).

<sup>22</sup>Hackett also regards the use of the Niphal in the Deir 'Alla text as "Canaanite;" but as Hackett admits, the Niphal is a survival from northwest Semitic and proto-Semitic, and not a Canaanite innovation. Thus, the Niphal appears in Ugaritic and a remnant may perhaps be detected in Aramaic. For example, Segert (1975: 257) regards the form *טשחם* in the Elephantine papyri as a Phoenicianism, but the form may just as well be considered a survival from northwest Semitic.

<sup>23</sup>Cryer (1994) has argued that the inscription should be classified as "Danite," largely on the basis of the appearance of the *yaqtul* preterite; he would see it as a pidgin/creole dialect related to Canaanite. However, since the *yaqtul* preterite is a survival from West Semitic and not a Canaanite innovation (Rainey 1986; 1990), it should not be considered determinative for linguistic classification. Finally, the designation "Danite" implies the existence of either a political or a geographical center at Dan which did not exist.

<sup>24</sup>Halpern also recognizes the importance of this diachronic distinction in Old Aramaic; however, I would not connect it with archaeological periods, e.g., Iron Age IIA (ca. 1000–925 B.C.E.), as Halpern does, since these are associated with Israelite rather than Aramaean history. Beyer (1986: 10–14) also recognizes a minor break in OA, which he places at about 700 B.C.E.; in addition he notes that a distinction has to be made between northern and southern Aramaic dialects. Beyer's date probably more accurately reflects the implementation of a standard imperial dialect; I use the date 745 B.C.E. to coincide with the rise of Tiglath-Pileser III and the beginnings of the process of standardization (Tadmor 1982).

<sup>25</sup>Although the debate over the composition of the Deuteronomistic History continues and no doubt will continue, minimally the arguments for a Josianic redaction seem compelling. It also seems likely that there was an earlier stage in the compositional history of Kings dating to the period of Hezekiah (see most recently Halpern and Vanderhooft 1991; see also Schniedewind 1996), but this stage will be more difficult to recover.

<sup>26</sup>The Monolith Inscription, line 79. The text was originally published by Craig (1887); see Schramm (1973) for publications of Shalmaneser's annals. This inscription dates to ca. 852 B.C.E. and is the earliest known inscription of Shalmaneser III. It records the military exploits of Shalmaneser III up until his sixth year.

<sup>27</sup>This text is designated as Recension E by Schramm and abbreviated Ann. FS (1973: 77–79). The sixth *palû* is described in col. ii, lines 13–15. The transcription follows E. Michel (1954) and the translation is mine. The original publication with photographs was done by F. Safar (1951).

<sup>28</sup>The FS Annals apparently served as the basis for the much later Black Obelisk, which mentions Jehu. From the Monolith inscription one has the impression that the battle at Qarqar was essentially a stalemate (cf. Elat 1975). In the Safar annals, the number of those slain in the battle increases from 14,000 to 25,000 and the first unequivocal claim is made that Shalmaneser defeated the coalition (II:22 *ii-bu-ni ii-te-šû-nu am-daḥ-ḥi-iṣ tapdâ-šû-nu* "I fought with them, I inflicted a defeat upon them" [Michel 1954: 32]).

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