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DID JERUSALEM RELOCATE?

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THE PROBLEM

Biblical history makes a magnificent Jerusalem the capital of the realm of David and Solomon, but intensive archaeological research has found nothing remotely resembling such a city in the relevant stratum of the site. Therefore the question is posed: Was Jerusalem somewhere else at the time?

Finding a Capital City

“World systems” for a very small world.

For a basic understanding of the nature of the kingdom of Israel ca. 1000-925 BCE, a method of analysis called "world-systems theory" will be applied, as elaborated later of this paper by the “Palace” model of social and political structure.

World-systems theory analyzes historical development in economic terms, particularly in terms of trade and taxes, with individual areas being labeled "cores" ("centers") or "peripheries" according to their positions in the system.1 The key relationship is identifiable patterns of exploitation, such that the “core” is one definable element that is exploiting specifically identifiable other elements of the realm or state system.

That a realm as small as Israel should qualify as a "system" may seem strange, but another part of world-systems theory is the existence of "mini-systems." And in fact most political systems before 800 BCE, excluding Egypt with its Nile connection and the short-lived empires in Mesopotamia, were quite small and impermanent in modern terms [Kohl 1987: 23].

The kingdom of David and Solomon included not only the Israelite tribes themselves (by no means united) but also the Canaanite city-states of the lowlands, the tribal kingdoms across the Jordan River, highland cities belonging to non-Israelite peoples (e.g. the Jebusites), and who knows how many tribal fragments left over from the migrations of the previous thousand years. There were many peoples to be exploited, and much suggestion, to be discussed later, that Solomon's system increased this number. Moreover, Israel is probably the most
intensively studied set of realms in all the Iron Age, and the time under discussion is the most heavily studied of all. "We are, in short, better informed about this period than any comparable one in Israel's history [Bright 2000: 184]."

The theory postulates several kinds of world system, one of which seems particularly appropriate:

The tributary mode of accumulation entails the use of physical coercion to mobilize labor. A ruling class establishes control over some essential social resource and then uses this control to extract 'surplus product' from direct producers. ... [In this system,] capitalist activities were always embedded in a larger tributary structure and subordinate to it. [Hall and Chase-Dunn 1996: 16, 17]

The kingdom of Solomon would seem an ideal candidate for such study. There was a concentration of wealth heavily centered on and controlled by the throne; "Solomon himself, enriched by the income from his trading and industrial monopolies and from crown property, became an enormously wealthy man" [Bright 2000: 217]. A large part of the crown's "income" was mobilized (corvéé) labor [I Kings 5:27-30] and a large part of its army was called-up militia. Corvéé labor is well known from earlier centuries in the area [Ahlström 1982: 31]; in Israel, it seems to have been instituted by David to apply only to non-members of the twelve tribes, but Solomon may in his later years have expanded it to include Israelites as well for the great construction projects [Mettinger 1971: 132-139; Yadin 1963: 287].

In such a case the burden on individual Israelites would have been increasing as more people found themselves being demoted to peripheral status. Mettinger further suggests that it was the militia levy that formed the basis of conscription of forced labor of the Israelite people themselves under Solomon [Mettinger 1971: 136], which would mean that military expertise was being lost in favor of construction work in the later part of Solomon's reign. Another important point is the recently tribal nature of the Israelite state. The nature and status of the "twelve" "tribes" are in hot dispute, both in general and during every particular event. "The possibility cannot be ruled out that the twelve-tribe ideology was the creation of the Davidic and Solomonic monarchy, designed to legitimate rule over groups that had not previously come under a central authority [Rogerson 1989: 31]."

Solomon seems to have been very conservative in organizing his administrative areas with a minimum of disturbance to the tribes
[Mettinger 1971: 126], and at least under David, chiefs still existed of each individual tribe [I Chronicles 27:16-22]. But other sources suggest that the United Monarchy tried to weaken the tribes (for example Bright 2000: 221, 222; Reviv 1979: 137). Presumably during the roughly 75 years of the United Monarchy (not counting the reign of Saul) there were many occasions for policy revisions and political expedients; Cross mentions the building of the Temple as “an innovation conceived by Solomon alongside his other reversals of Davidic policy and practice” made under a façade of continuity [Cross 1998: 94].

In modern times the word “tribe” carries an ethnic connotation; in the situation now under discussion, a more appropriate term could be “post-ethnic”: Ethnic units were used as a basis of organization to impose structure on a very miscellaneous population. For the moment, note that the tribes continued to be important after Solomon's reign. Under the Divided Monarchy "the Kingdom of Israel consisted of many tribes, the generally accepted reason for the weakness and political instability of the Northern Kingdom" [Reviv 1979: 143]. This suggests the tribes continued to exist in some influential status.

The organization, mobilization, taxes, and ideology set up by David and Solomon were not universally welcomed.

In any event, Yahweh's choice of Zion and of David certainly received stress in the cult; and from this there issued theological consequences of profound significance. On the one hand, the process that was to bind all the hope of Israel to Jerusalem, the Holy City, and give to the note of promise indigenous to Israel's faith a new and normative form of expression, had been set in motion. ... The temptation was inevitable to hallow the state in the name of God and to suppose that the aims of the state and the aims of religion must necessarily coincide. ... To suggest that [the state] could fall would be regarded as tantamount to accusing God of breach of covenant -- as more than one prophet would learn!

For better or for worse, Israel had been committed to the monarchy. ... [But some people], especially in the north ... refused to accept the principle of dynastic succession and rejected the claims of the Davidic house to rule in perpetuity. Many of them raged against the tyranny of Solomon, whom they regarded as the embodiment of all that a king ought not to be, and, far from viewing the state as a divine institution, regarded it as intolerable. [Bright 2000: 227-228]

Therefore, as administered at the end of the reign, Israel was a throne-centered tributary structure in which an increasing number of the
tribute-payers had something to complain about. And at a minimum, there still existed both idealized memories of the earlier tribal organization and some survivors and immediate heirs of the people who once embodied it. Besides these centers of discontent there were other people who accepted kings in principle but disagreed with this one specifically, or with the dynastic principle. The realm still had many alternatives to a monarchy whose practices were coming increasingly under question.

Jerusalem and Judah: the "wild south."

Jerusalem has been excavated again and again -- and with a particularly intense period of investigation of Bronze and Iron Age remains in the 1970s and 1980s...at the city of David, the original urban core of Jerusalem. Surprisingly...fieldwork there and in other parts of biblical Jerusalem failed to provide significant evidence for a tenth century occupation. Not only was any sign of monumental architecture missing, but so were even simple pottery sherds. The types that are so characteristic of the tenth century at other sites are rare in Jerusalem. Some scholars have argued that other, later massive building activities in Jerusalem wiped out all signs of the earlier city. Yet excavations in the city of David revealed impressive finds from the Middle Bronze Age and from later centuries of the Iron Age -- just not from the tenth century BCE. [Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 133]

Lemche remarks on Finkelstein’s work that “according to the ceramic chronology recently proposed, there would probably not have been a city at all called Jerusalem situated in central Palestine in the tenth century B.C.E. [Lemche 1998: 78]”

This lack of physical evidence does seem to be accepted. "In the view of most archaeologists, Jerusalem is an archaeological blank in the tenth century [Gottwald 2001: 182]." "Although Jerusalem became a thriving cosmopolitan center ... during the reign of Solomon, the material remains of that period have never been recovered [DeVries 1997: 204]."

And the same applies to Judah as a whole, which “remained relatively empty of permanent population, quite isolated, and very marginal right up to and past the presumed time of David and Solomon [Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 132-133].”

- "Settlement was intensive in Ephraim and Manasseh and the eastern part of Benjamin, while it was much more sparse in the region of Jerusalem, and even more so in Judah [Mazar
Movement into Judah seems to have been by individual families, such that "[t]he concept of a 'tribe' for Judah lacks any concrete content, and seems to be a late, artificial application to the history of the families which settled in the Land of Judah. [Ofer 1994: 117]"

Moreover, tradition names other tribes, the Calebites, Kennizites, Kenites, and Simeonites, as having existed in this territory; "[s]imilar traditions have not survived for the [territory of] the northern tribes" [Na’aman 1994: 280].

Finally, during the late eleventh and the tenth centuries BCE "[t]he population tended to concentrate in large and protected sites, indicating a significant external threat" [Ofer 1994: 102-104]. The settlement process in the Judean Hills may not have ended until the ninth century BCE [Ofer 1994: 109].

Judah, it would seem, was something of a "wild south," a frontier of settlement, certainly in David's time and probably later.

Thus, in Judah, in sum, there may have been no established tribal organization for the monarchy to use for government, or at least not the one the government did in fact use; archaeology suggests a continuing military threat; and Finkelstein analyzes the milieu as poor and isolated. Placing one's capital on such a frontier can be good policy when the developed heartland is content and in no danger of amputation -- but such was not the case for the kingdom of David and Solomon.

The settled north: the (still continuing) Bronze Age.

Jerusalem and Judah were not the only places belonging to the presumed Israeliite realm. This has created a dispute, between a "mainstream" school identifying various sites as Solomonic and a "minimalist" school suggesting that all the developed sites now identified as Solomonic may actually be a hundred years younger. The dispute is ongoing; even the latest data (from the site of Tel Rehov, near the Sea of Galilee) are held by both sides to vindicate their positions. If in fact all major sites are confirmed to be later than Solomon's time, this would solve the problem of Jerusalem's lack of archaeological remains by saying that the entire period was imaginary. If, on the other hand, there was a realm more or less resembling the Solomonic dominion of tradition, then regardless of the lack of remains at Jerusalem itself, those other sites should reflect this.

The mainstream viewpoint of the situation ca. 1000-925 BCE, that
is during the United Monarchy, is as follows:

[During the early tenth century, under David,] very little seems to be going on in the highland hamlets and villages until, suddenly, somewhere around the mid-tenth century BCE, everything changed. The burnt-out ruin heaps of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer were radically transformed into roughly comparable complex fortified governmental centers. [Holladay 1995: 371]

These so-called "royal cities" [Mazar 1990: 385] are key: Hazor, north of the Sea of Galilee, Megiddo, on the plain of the same name (also called the Valley of Jezreel or Esdraelon), "at the intersection of four major highways...one of the key cities of Palestine [DeVries 1997: 216]" and administrative center of the "grain barns" of the kingdom [Mazar 1990: 380], and Gezer, in the south on the border of Philistia. Hazor and Gezer seem to have been at least partly "fortress cities" on the frontiers of the kingdom [Miller and Hayes 1986: 214-215], with walls different from that at Megiddo [Barkay 1992: 307]. Solomonic Gezer has been only minimally reported, but Hazor provides an enlightening sequence. Stratum XI of Hazor (immediately pre-Solomonic), for example, was only a "small unwalled village" but had "a structure of an obvious cult-nature" [Yadin 1972: 132-134]. However, for the entire remaining Israelite occupation (strata X-IV), there is no mention of the word "temple," or "palace," in Hazor, only ones like "citadel/fort" and "store-room" [Yadin 1972: 135-191].

Megiddo, however, was not on the frontier but in the deep interior. If one draws a line between the presumed frontier forts of Hazor and Gezer, then Megiddo would be only slightly offset from the middle of the line.

- "In every period in which circumstances would seem to militate against the presence of a major town, Megiddo stands out against the trend [Halpern 2000: 551]."
- The site’s position in Near Eastern thought patterns may be adjudged from one pharaoh’s saying, even when it was not formally a regional capital, that “the capturing of Megiddo is the capturing of a thousand towns” [Yadin 1953:103].

Major excavations in the relevant stratum of the site, called VA-IVB 2 (five-A/four-B), have been made only peripherally [Mazar 1990: 380 (Fig. 9.8); Finkelstein et al. 2000: 4 (Fig. 1.2), 11 (Table 1.1)]; a later occupation still obscures the central remains. Therefore we do not really know what is there, only that the buildings on the edge of this
construction level were substantial enough that archaeologists call this stratum "a city of palaces [Halpern 2000: 558]" -- not of fortifications and storerooms. If one were to inventory candidates for primate city of Solomon's realm just on the basis of archaeological remains and geographic position, Megiddo would easily be at the top of the list.

But there are other considerations, ones specific to the time and region at issue. This means especially the thought patterns and technological abilities that a state of the tenth century BCE would have had to use. Megiddo was a city of palaces: The word "palace" carries a special meaning during this period, or more precisely, during the immediately preceding Bronze Age. "Palaces" were not merely political, administrative, (and, especially in this case), religious centers. They were the centers of the economy. A description from Bronze Age Crete will illustrate.

The palatial centers were, without doubt, the principal manufacturing centers, controlling all production -- whether this took place within the Palace or further afield. Pottery must have been one of the most basic needs...[Bronze] ingots had the "oxhide" form which was one of the acceptable standards throughout the central and eastern Mediterranean. Cloth production may also have taken place on a large scale ...It was in luxury products that the Minoan craftsmen excelled...[Wardle 1994:215].

That Solomon's kingdom was Palace-centered in this specifically Bronze Age sense has already been proposed:

The palace is still very much a structuring concept in the Iron Age. The clearest example is given by the emerging state of Israel. All the effort of David and Solomon...strives to create a territorial state, centered on a city where the royal palace and the main centre of worship are located. ... Solomon went a step further [than David] in recreating a traditional palace system. First of all he built a palace, which was not only his residence but the centre of power as is shown by the inclusion of the Hall of Judgment in the structure. He then built a temple conceived on the traditional model of Syrian temples: a "megaron" type of architecture that can be traced back to the Early Bronze Age site of Halawa on the Euphrates and is also known from Middle Bronze Age Ebla and Late Bronze Age Emar to mention only a few examples. Solomon also set up an administration, recreating the palatial elite of the second millennium, and engaged in commercial activities. Even the terminology used to describe Solomon's diplomacy finds parallels in the second millennium. [Bunnens 2000: 13, 15]
A Palace-centered manufacturing and distribution system has not yet been uncovered by archaeology in any Solomonic city; however, recent work suggests that Megiddo of the next layer up, Stratum IVA, had something of a very close sort.

The mass production of pottery, produced in central workshops and then carried to the boundaries of the kingdom via an extensive distribution network, most likely started in Judah only in the eighth century B.C.E., according to the latest pottery studies. Less work has been done inside the Israelite kingdom, but the preliminary reports from the key site of Megiddo indicate that similar mass production was already up and running in Israel in the mid-ninth century. [Marcus 2000: 132]

Since Megiddo was not the capital during the ninth century this could not have been a Palace economy strictly speaking, but it does demonstrate that central production and distribution were well enough known in Israel shortly after Solomon’s time to imply a possibility of existence there during that period.

This would seem to raise a problem. The Palace economy was a phenomenon specific to the Bronze Age, and the Bronze Age ended in a wave of violence all around the eastern Mediterranean ca. 1200 BCE, some 250 years before Solomon's reign. A study of Syria reports that the catastrophe destroyed all but one of the Palace kingdoms there, so thoroughly as to leave "no trace of their capitals and cities in the surviving toponyms of the Iron Age. ... When our sources resume some two centuries later, new states had [appeared] which not only bore different names but occupied different territories. [Sader 2000: 61]."

However, the problem is only apparent. One Bronze Age state was left standing, if in somewhat reduced condition. The Hittite provincial center at Carchemish on the Euphrates survived the collapse of the Bronze Age inter-regional system and could therefore perpetuate, well into the first millennium, the methods of the palatial states of the second millennium. Carchemish lost control over most of Syria but remained a prosperous state which could offer a model, in the common sense of the word, to other communities trying to reconstruct an organized state. This is probably why so many monumental inscriptions found in Syria were written in Luwian, an Anatolian language used to the exclusion of any other in the Carchemish inscriptions. [Bunnens 2000: 17]

In Syria during the tenth century "the Hittite traditions were still viable, and the vitality of an organized population was certainly
strong" [Klengel 1991: 193]. There is a, possibly late, tradition of a Hittite immigration into Judah ca. 1200 BCE, i.e. contemporaneous with known population movements consequent to the catastrophe of that time [Mazar 1994: 71-72; Ofer 1994: 118], and David began his kingdom-building in Judah. II Samuel 24:5-7 (Septuagint version) mentions as conquered by David a "land of the Hittites," probably a city-state and associated territory east of the Sea of Galilee [Noth 1958: 191]. The neo-Hittite kingdom of Hamath in Syria sent a princely diplomatic mission to David, possibly while he was still conquering the north, and established "friendly relations" [Ahlström 1993: 483-484]. II Kings 7:6 mentions soldiers of the "kings of the Hittites" fighting alongside Israel as late as the middle ninth century BCE. And the neo-Hittite states are commented upon as "commercially wealthy, economically developed and artistically and technically sophisticated" [Kuhrt 1995:416], so would have been capable of being tutors. Thus Solomon did not have to resurrect a model that had been gone for a quarter of a millennium.

This is not to say that the Israelite Palace state was an uncritical copy of the neo-Hittite version. For example, Israel seems to have used the Hittite formula in creating its concept of covenant, but "its function is totally transformed," becoming a relationship between Israel and God rather than between people and king [Flanagan 1988: 63, citing Mendenhall 1970a].

Emphasis on such a central institution as the Palace would seem to increase the importance of the capital city of the realm even more. Since archaeology suggests Megiddo to have been the only city of the time to stand out so thoroughly, this only reinforces the case for its having been the capital.

The question of the nature of the realm, Palace state or not, leads to the further problem of security. In Davidic and Solomonic Israel this problem may have been particularly acute. In David's early years, "[t]he nation of Israel was badly divided and anarchy characterized political trends in the north" [Davis and Whitcomb 1980: 289]. Even later, "it seems obvious that Solomon inherited a kingdom from David that was by no means unified in spirit. Perhaps the fact that Solomon was able to hold the kingdom together throughout his reign was one of his major accomplishments. [Miller and Hayes 1986: 199]"

The realm of David and Solomon, however well developed in some ways, had a very unstable government. This may be confirmed by any quick reading of II Samuel 15-24 and I Kings 1-2. Whether or not hisss...
actions were justified, Solomon gained the throne by means of a “court intrigue”…“[wh]en Solomon’s kingship was established, it had neither popular support nor the consent of the majority of senior officials but only the backing of his faction which consisted of part of the courtiers and professional soldiers” [Ishida 1982: 179-180].

Present opinion interprets I Kings 12 that when Solomon's son Rehoboam became king, he had to make an unprecedented trip outside the capital to be acclaimed; and the trip was a failure ending in loss of most of the realm.

Even beyond this, I Kings 11-13 suggests plenty of cause for concern besides dynastic succession disputes. In a manner left over from the time of the Judges, wandering prophets could still go around designating people to be God's choice as the next king. Any ruler who wanted to keep his crown would need a security system efficient enough to put down trouble while it was still in an embryo condition, but also well enough controlled that the security chiefs could not easily aspire to the throne themselves.

In this respect, the technology available for keeping security becomes important. Physical technology was primitive in the tenth century BCE. There was an obvious technological upgrade in process; “only in the tenth century BC was there a real spread in the use of iron [Garbini 1988:32].” Iron objects found in Palestine, counting weapons, armor, and tools only, jump from 19% of all metal objects in the 11th century to 58% in the 10th century [Frick 1985: 176-179]. “[I]t seems possible to reach the tentative conclusion that iron was approaching something like common use throughout the eastern Mediterranean for both weapons and agricultural tools by the end of the 10th century B.C. and never really lost this position thereafter [Waldbaum 1980:87].”

This seems to be the result of technological innovation. Carburization, alloying with as much as one percent of carbon to make steel, is necessary for iron to be as hard, therefore as useful in working objects, as bronze.

Such intentional steeling of iron appears not to have become the rule until early in the tenth century. It is in this century then that iron tools came to outnumber, though not to replace, those of bronze. … Of the eleven pieces from a tenth century context (at the single site of Ta’anach, near Megiddo), six show consistently detectable carburization [Frick 1985:187-188].

That this should have occurred within the boundaries of and roughly contemporaneously with the kingdom of David and Solomon is sug-
gestive, but the data need to be refined before any conclusions are drawn. However, it is further suggestive that Palestine seems to have led the way in this innovation. “Until as late as the ninth or even eighth century BC...the manufacture of iron tools and weapons was still at a fairly primitive stage...[even in] Nimrud (capital of Assyria during the ninth century BCE), where one might have expected a reasonably high standard of craftsmanship [Sawyer 1983:129].” Nor was this unusual; the major power of the region, Egypt, greeted the Iron Age by refusing to participate [Liverani 1987:71]

On the other hand, it is also thought that the refining technique was foreign to Israel and so was the word adapted into Hebrew for “iron,” and the resulting metal was so poor that both it and the blacksmiths were the objects of considerable prejudice [Sawyer 1983].

But another technological problem may have been more influential. Modern security depends on efficient communications. However, in the Near East, although the horse and particularly chariotry are know from the previous millennium, the first rapid courier system is not attested until the eighth century BCE, in Assyria [Saggs 1984: 196-7]. Communication remained slow and unless security forces were so numerous that individual units would not constitute a threat to the center, control of those security forces had better be kept close to the royal hand.

Jerusalem does not seem to have been well positioned to do this. It not only shows no signs of occupation but was in "the most remote part of the hill country, isolated by topographical and climatic barriers [Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 157]." In such a situation, would it be any part of sanity for the king to keep his residence and official buildings in a remote, backward, sparsely populated area of the kingdom while a fortified site elsewhere in a particularly restive area, which was also the center of trade routes and at least one center of the economy, was given over to subordinates?

Rather, any viable candidate for capital would be just such a strongly central place, naturally or artificially fortified (or both); and under the Palace sociopolitical theory and with the reigning technology, the only certain way to hold it would be to be there. And the archaeological evidence says that the only site matching this description in the time of Solomon is, again, Megiddo. ³

Megiddo also has one other qualification specific to the Biblical record, one of the same ones as has been proposed as behind David’s
choice of Jerusalem. The reader may want to read the following quotation twice, the second time substituting "Megiddo" for "Jerusalem."

In the first place, the fact that Jerusalem had been conquered by David and his professional army meant that it became, in effect, crown property, "the city of David." The Jerusalemites had not voluntarily anointed him their king following negotiations or with stipulations of any sort. He became their king and they his subjects by conquest. Moreover, this style of monarchy would have been in keeping with the traditions of the Jerusalemites. Jerusalem, being one of the old Bronze Age cities that survived into the Iron Age, would have had a long history of autocratic and hereditary rule. Other Palestinian cities with this heritage eventually fell to David also -- Shechem, Megiddo, Hazor, and others. Thus, while the clans and villages of Ephraim/Israel and Judah remained an important constituency of David's kingdom, they ceased to be the vital center of his monarchy. His was a Jerusalem-based kingdom which took on more and more the character of one of the old Bronze Age city-states. ... David's kingdom was to become, if not during his own reign then certainly under Solomon, an extended Jerusalemite city-state. [Miller and Hayes 1986: 173, 186]

A situation in which the entire kingdom was "an extended city-state" would both fit the presuppositions of a Palace state and magnify the importance of the central place even more.

Finally, it is worth noting that even if one does not accept the "Palace" model for the Levantine kingdoms of the later Bronze and earlier Iron ages, the basic archaeological interpretation of Near Eastern kingship at the time remains much the same. The massive constructions at Hazor, Gezer, and especially Megiddo were not merely "buildings."

- The great monumental buildings, palace-temple complexes, fortifications and public buildings, which characterised early states, were an important means of reinforcing and manifesting the social differentiations upon which royal power depended. These structures, which required a massive investment of state resources, displayed the authority, security, and permanence of royal rule. ... The Solomonic fortifications at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer with their impressive gates not only symbolised the authority and military power of the monarchy, but also signified the politically significant urban centre with its hierarchical relationship with the rural hinterland. The direct and more sub-
tle symbolic aspects of these structures addressed the same issues of royal power and its maintenance in the face of opposition that are made more explicit in the literary deposits which have been the traditional focus of biblical and Near Eastern specialists. [Whitelam 1989: 133].

- Usually the kings of the ancient Near East were great builders. Government buildings, such as palaces, temples, store cities and fortresses, were expressions not only of a king’s duties or of his dreams about power and might; the building programs were at the same time an expression of his position as the god’s viceroy, the one who should shepherd the people. In this way the king carried out the god’s demands for making his [the god’s] realm well organized, strong and grand. This was, then, part of the wisdom of the king. [Ahlstrøm 1993: 507]

- Even in modern times, it would seem strange to have these major symbols of centralized authority all placed in a location far away from the center, as if the United States had established a capital in Washington and then placed all its national monuments in New York or Cleveland.

In sum, with an archaeologically invisible Jerusalem out of the picture, Megiddo becomes the dominant site known from the realm of Solomon. No other place even approaches it. Since dominance is a key feature of Palace monarchies, and since Solomon's finances seem to have been based on state monopolies and licensed trade -- very much a Bronze Age pattern -- and the realm is commented to have been an "extended city-state," only such a strongly central site would appear to qualify.

Creating a public identity: the "House of Peace."

The question then remains: toward the end of David's and during Solomon's reign, was "Megiddo" in fact "Jerusalem?"

The Egyptian diplomatic files called the Amarna letters, 400 years earlier, include both Megiddo and a city "Urusalim" in Egyptian Asia. This implies that these were two separate contemporaneous locations, that whatever may have been the case in the tenth century BCE, Megiddo was not "Jerusalem" in the fourteenth century. Beyond this, the possibility of different locations raises one other rather severe question.

If archaeology says the site of present-day Jerusalem was vacant at the time of David and Solomon, and this paper says the capital was
actually at Megiddo, then did the seventh-century redactors of these events consciously perpetrate a massive fraud in trying to present "Jerusalem" as the capital during the United Monarchy?

There is another possibility: that we are trying to impose an assumption of our own times onto a situation in which that assumption did not yet exist. The fact that this name is firmly bonded to a particular piece of geography now should not be taken as a requirement that the same situation maintained then. This paper will suggest that, by the definition existing ca. 1000 BCE and earlier, the name "Jerusalem" did not refer to any particular city at all. The reader should think of such words as "citadel": "Jerusalem," at the time, referred to something inside a city.

There are two problems involved, one multi-civilizational, and the other possibly a core question for understanding the reign of Solomon.

The first is such a commonplace that no one ever even thinks about it. As a name, "Jerusalem" appears to fit into an extremely well known genre. Next door in Egypt per'aa, "Great House" (nowadays read as "pharaoh") became the term of reference for the seat of rule and thus also for the ruler.

This is the most famous early instance of the name of a key government establishment standing in as the name of the government itself, but the usage may be much older. Ca. 3000 BCE at almost the beginning of writing, the term for "palace" in the Sumerian city-states was égal, "house(hold)-great," and the particle "é" was also plentifully used to name other official (especially temple) complexes [Oates 1979: 26, 47]. By 2600 BCE the term "palace" had come to mean not just the building but "the organization headed by the city ruler" [Saggs 2000: 52].

A similar colloquial usage is very widespread in our own time, such that "White House" may be used as a generic label both for the presidential authority and for whatever residence or command center the President happens to be using at the moment, or even for one that he might occupy sometime (as in "the summer White House" or "the flying White House"). Such special terms of reference for seats of authority seem to be almost human nature. Officials shifting from one site to another would use the same label for the royal center in the new one as in the old; such an action would seem so much a part of this kind of name as to pass without comment.

Applying this to the present case, "Jerusalem," by definition, was the seat of rule of the Davidic dynasty; but this was an active definition.
It worked in both directions. The city of David, wherever located, by definition was Jerusalem.

But this is insufficient. "White House" and its modern congener are merely nicknames that happened to become popular. It is not credible that this could be the whole story, because the books of the Bible were not redacted in the seventh century as a registry of historic nicknames. A popular practice demonstrates how easy it is to create and appreciate this kind of label; but for the name to have survived as an official designation it must, at least by the seventh century, have become official itself. More than that, the particular officials who cherished it must have been the same ones responsible for writing those books.

If the name "Jerusalem" applied first to (Megiddo) and then to (Jerusalem), and the relocation was accepted without any comment that made a permanent record, then the name must have applied to something rather more portable than an official capital city. This paper will suggest that it applied to a concept, and beyond that, to what in the highly developed forms that exist nowadays would be called the physical embodiment of an ideology. That an ideology was developed during this period for the combination (God [=Law] + people + land + capital + dynasty + Temple) is a staple of Israelite historiography [Bright 2000:227; see quotation above]. This analysis will suggest that, probably at least from the beginning of the reign of Solomon, it expanded well beyond those six ingredients.

The etymology of the name "Y'rushalayim" is obscure. At some unknown but early date the second part of the word became attached to the root "shâlam" meaning "to be safe"; that root nowadays means "peace" or "peaceful" and is primitively connected to judgment and prosperity. The first part of the word has been variously connected to such concepts as "foundation" and "city." [Strong 1996: 395-396, 538; www.bible-history.com] The formula "House of Peace" is suggested here mainly because it meshes so well with modern conventions; the thought patterns of the tenth century BCE may have given the word very different connotations. But the primitive connections of "shElam" to judgment and prosperity are enough to suggest the beginnings of exegesis.

So how is the term "House of Peace" connected specifically to the age of David and Solomon? This paper will suggest that the name "Solomon" by itself does that. The Hebrew is "Shêlômôh," roughly "peaceful" [Strong 1996: 538], from that same root [Ahlström 1993: 504]. "The picture of Solomon as a king of peace who spared his empire..."
from devastating wars is one of the basic components in his presentation as a great and wise ruler [Ahlström 1993: 522]." Ahlström also suggests that "Solomon" may have been a throne name, that is, a political announcement, superseding a personal name "Jedidiah" [Ahlström 1993: 498-500; see also Strong 1996: 385]. The names of the king and the capital city were both based on the same, heavily ideologized, root.  

This possibility that "Jerusalem" was originally a concept (movable) rather than a location (fixed) also solves an old problem, one caused by anomalous appearances of names similar to "Jerusalem" in Egyptian documents dating long before the United Monarchy.

This happens three times.

The most recent, from the Late Bronze Age, has already been dismissed from consideration; "[t]he name ‘Shalem’ appears in a topographical list of Ramesses II, but it is doubtful whether the name refers to Jerusalem [Mazar 1994: 70n1]".

Of the other two, the earlier involves the "Execration Texts," names inscribed on, for example, potsherds, probably left over from magical ceremonies in which the intent was that the city whose name was inscribed on the pot would be smashed as the pot was smashed [Callender 2000: 167].

The earlier (Berlin) group of such texts, dated variously to 2000/1950 BCE [Kempinski 1992: 160] or approximately 1900 BCE, includes the name “Rushalimum,” generally interpreted to be Jerusalem [Mazar 1990: 186; Pritchard 1987: 33]. Unspecified “ceramic remains” have been found at Jerusalem from this time, but no settlement is mentioned [Kempinski 1992:183]. The reference could correlate to the Middle Bronze Age settlement, but both the timing and the size are wrong. That settlement belongs to Middle Bronze IIB, which began ca. 1800 BCE at the earliest [Mazar 1990: 193-194], possibly only ca. 1750 BCE [Kempinski 1992: 161].

The settlement lasted only some 100 years [Auld and Steiner 1996: 29] and Mazar suggests this overlapped 1650 BCE [Mazar 1990: 196]. Even if one assumes that this time difference of at least 100 years is within some acceptable margin of error, the site was no more than a small town, measuring less than 5 hectares...the provincial outpost of a more powerful city-state. ... For reasons unknown the town ceased to exist after a mere hundred years. ... Historically it would be surprising, not to say unbelievable, to find that such a small provincial town as the [Middle Bronze Age] Jerusalem that has been uncovered by excavation would have bothered the mighty Pharaoh of Egypt or required execra-
tion on his behalf [Auld and Steiner 1996: 24-29].

Moreover, Egyptian interest in Canaan is known to have emphasized the coast. Several unidentified sites are also in the Berlin group, but if “Rushalimum” does in fact refer to the present site of Jerusalem, then it would be “the only site of the Canaanite interior” in the group [Kempinski 1994: 160].

The other appearance is the “Urusalim” mentioned previously, found in missives from or regarding a king Abdi-heba in the Amarna letters of the first half of the fourteenth century BCE. These are even more problematic. Amarna correlates archaeologically to the period Late Bronze IIA (1400-1300 BCE).

No remains of a 14th century city have yet been discovered in any of the large-scale excavations conducted in Jerusalem, not even a sherd of pottery. Archaeologically speaking, Jerusalem was not occupied at all during the Late Bronze Age. [Auld and Steiner 1996: 29]

Abdi-heba’s presumed realm outside Jerusalem in the Judean Hills likewise has “an almost complete gap in occupation,” with the closest thing to a significant settlement having an area of just two hectares [Ofer 1994: 100]. It may have been official Egyptian policy to keep things just this way [Lemche 1998: 70].

The same situation maintains for an early occupation mentioned in the Bible, the presumed Jebusite city conquered by David. This would have existed during Iron Age I, ca. 1200-1000 BCE. But Iron Age I has yielded only “a few sherds...and a few building remains. ... The lack of Iron Age I remains in the City of David is difficult to explain. [Mazar 1994: 72-73]” The references to the Jebusite city in Joshua and Judges also seem debatable and are dismissed with such statements as “[t]he majority of scholars treat this as a later gloss, devoid of historical value [Mazar 1994: 71].”

Thus, historical records report “Rushalimum” and “Urusalim” and “Shalem” and a Jebusite city in periods for which archaeology finds no evidence of settlement at the present site. This is an anomaly. But if “Jerusalem” was no more than a concept at the time, then its presence in a record while any particular site remained empty is entirely comprehensible. That the name should have occurred 900 and 400 and 250 years before the age of the United Monarchy does, however, lead to an additional implication: that at least some basic form of the concept existed in Canaanite society long before the United Monarchy itself was created.

Such an ideologized definition would not have been unique to
Canaan. However, the most obvious example that predates even the “Rushalimum” of 1900 BCE involves a capital exalted not for excellence but for extent of rule. A king tied to this idea claimed not merely judgment and prosperity; he claimed empire.

The Sumerian King List, “compiled, in its present form, not before the late nineteenth century [BCE],” seems to assume as an ideological premise that “kingship” over all the Sumerian city-states at once was a legitimate status to which every city-state might aspire, and which had existed from time immemorial. The King List itself was probably created by amalgamation of multiple parallel local lists into serial order to show that all these local dynasties had actually occurred sequentially. The list “seems fairly reliable as far as royal names and lengths of time ruled are concerned” as of about 2500 BCE, i.e. when empire became an actuality in Mesopotamia and so a justification for it would have become desirable. [Kuhrt 1995: 29-31]

Thus the concept of a world-state, of general rule based in a single capital, may have been part of regional ideology for centuries before even “Rushalimum.” So long as the occasional king claimed this, elaboration would continue all through the time before David. The Abdi-heba of the Amarna letters does seem to act like an aspirant overlord: “he frequently attacked other cities, trying to steal their land, and many princes complain about his behaviour in their letters to the Pharaoh [Auld and Steiner 1996: 29].”

Given the etymology and later uses of the idea “Jerusalem,” the Canaanite version of the idea would probably have involved a legitimation of royal control. It is easy to understand why David would have seized upon it to express the position he wanted for his new kingdom 6. Some new wines are best put in the oldest bottles, as modern Israel exemplifies. And when the developed concept was cemented into place as one brick in the Davidic construction project, that placement became permanent.

That the attachment of Jerusalem to the official ideology occurred under David has been a given; “Yahweh's choice of Zion and of David certainly received stress in the cult.” The traditional interpretation has been that the historic form of the ideology was attached to a pre-existing location; this paper suggests that the process was rather the reverse, that the location was attached to a pre-existing ideology, and was not the first place to be so. One other (Megiddo) has been so designated in this paper; at least two more widely separated in time are known (“Rushalimum” and “Urusalim” and some variants) for a pre-Davidic
version of the concept; and there may have been others between and before those. As a name not yet bonded to a specific place, "Jerusalem" may have relocated not once but many times.

How the City Was Lost

Ca. 925 BCE: The Making of the King.

If the capital of Israel was once at Megiddo, then later at Jerusalem, this implies some cause behind the move. Two recorded events seem especially relevant to the question. The first is the conference at Shechem which cost Rehoboam the ten northern tribes [I Kings 12]. This is presently interpreted to have occurred immediately after that king's accession, but the text does not actually say that. The other event comes two chapters later:

Now it came about in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak the king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house, and he took everything, even taking all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. [I Kings 14:25-26]

This paper will contend that if these two events are combined as part of a chain of causation, this will explain the move.

Shishak was the Egyptian pharaoh Sheshonq (ca. 945-924 BCE), "a determined man of very different stamp from most of the rulers of the preceding century... There was to be no [divided rule] in Egypt in his time; one supreme ruler of Egypt only! [Kitchen 1997: 112]" And he seems to have been -- consciously, publicly, formally, in meticulous imitation of Ramesses II -- trying to restore an Egyptian overlordship of Palestine that had become at least partially a direct rule during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE [Singer 1994]. He left his own report of this campaign, in the form of a victory inscription in a temple in Egypt. It lists some 180 towns and fortresses in Palestine [Edelman 1997: xviii] as having been made "subject" [Manley 1996: 102]. It may be noteworthy that Jerusalem is not listed; Egyptian kings were anything but economical in the claims incised on their monuments. There were two apparently separate campaigns, one into Israel proper, the other into the Negev [Pritchard 1987: 96-97]. The main force went through not Judah but the northern highlands, then counterclockwise to Megiddo and the coast [Cline 2000: 79-81; Manley 1996: 102-103].

Megiddo was certainly seized and looted [Holladay 1995: 372]; Sheshonq set up his only known victory stele of the expedition there.
The low number of burned buildings may mean that the capture was "probably swift and may even have been accomplished without the need for a siege or protracted tactical maneuvers [Cline 2000: 82]," and the main destruction may have been later, by the Israelites themselves [Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 161n]. Possibly ten other sites are suggested to have been demolished [Mazar 1990: 398]; however, we have no actual incontrovertible proof that any specific site was destroyed at this specific time [Barkay 1992: 307].

One may conjure any number of scenarios to explain all this. The following is merely a speculation which would reconcile the present proposal with known data. That the actual sequence of events was precisely as outlined is unlikely -- there are too many possible variables -- but the point of the exercise is to demonstrate that the proposed line of development is possible, not that it is fully understood.

Solomon is dead. It is the fifth year of Rehoboam, so everyone has become familiar with the new king's people and practices. Some parts of Megiddo VA-IVB seem to have been destroyed while still under construction [Halpern 2000: 558], so evidently Solomon's building program is continued by his son.

Brought up in the Davidic ideology, Rehoboam may honestly believe (though this specific wording is Christian) that his throne is a trust from God that no human can deny, restrict, or rescind. He may have been restrained initially, but as of the meeting at Shechem his stated policy is to increase the burdens already laid on by Solomon, and his preferred enforcement method is to "discipline with scorpions" [I Kings 12:14]. This adds to the discontent that had already been growing under Solomon.

Nearby in Egypt, the pharaoh Sheshonq has spent twenty years reestablishing some unity in what for two centuries had been a fragmented land under heavy barbarian infiltration; he is of barbarian stock himself. Egypt had traditionally been overlord of the Mediterranean coast; but during the time of Solomon, Sheshonq had to stand quietly by while an independent kingdom flourished in a traditionally Egyptian sphere of influence. With all the Nile Valley now under his hand, that situation could become subject to change. Moreover, his own restive lieutenants would have no objection to shares in the looting of a rich neighbor.

However, one must not confuse this Egypt with the mighty empire of Thutmose III and Ramesses II. At no time during the Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BCE) did Egypt regain such status.
Sheshonq’s venture against Israel may have had a great potential for glory; but if conditions in surrounding reigns are any indication, it was a very risky affair that required use of every resource, including ones that prior pharaohs would have rejected as beneath the divine dignity.

Also in Egypt are political exiles, including one Jeroboam, one of Solomon's officials who was designated "next king" by a local prophet and so found it advisable to remove himself from Solomon’s reach. The Septuagint suggests that he even married a daughter of Pharaoh, though Ahlström judges this to be “rather unbelievable” [Ahlström 1993: 545n1]. In modern times, Sheshonq would use these exiles' contacts for advance subversion of the target. Subversion is not mentioned in the texts, but neither is there any report of special military resources available to Sheshonq but not to his (very weak) successors. So one may infer that Sheshonq was very good at using what he had.

By the fifth year of Rehoboam, Sheshonq feels able to move. There may have been a casus belli, raids by nomadic tribesmen from the Negev Desert across Sinai [Kitchen 1986: 294]. This would seem an odd pretext for an attack on Israel, but it may have been less a pretext than the opening move of a campaign that depended as much on outsmarting an enemy as on overwhelming him. The pretense of a massive retaliatory strike against desert raiders would be a good cover first for military preparations, then for Egyptian troop movements into Sinai that are loudly not aimed at Israel. The opening attack would then have been that separate strike into the Negev. The main army, the best units, would have moved across Sinai in small packets behind the front action. With enough such diversions and reassurances, Rehoboam may have been left uncertain of Egypt’s actual intentions until the last minute. Only at that last minute, with his forces all in place and the target realm still visibly unprepared, does Sheshonq give the order for an attack on Israel itself.

An invasion by the traditional route, up the coast road, would mean an approach to Megiddo through one of three mountain passes, of which even the best is so formidable that a surviving "Egyptian civil service exercise...explicitly expects that an official serving in Canaan would be intimately familiar with the ambushes here" [Halpern 2000: 535].

Instead, he moves into the northern highland region that is the foundation of Israelite power, and thence into the Jordan Valley. The militia troops, even if still effective after decades as construction workers, find their own homes threatened and are not anxious to abandon them to fight for the unpopular king of an oppressive regime. Israelite
cities and forts fall one after another. As Sheshonq circles to approach Megiddo from the side toward the plain, Rehoboam loses faith in divine lightning bolts and flees inland. Sheshonq seizes Megiddo and loots the palace and Temple.

Whether the city became local capital of the pharaoh's new realms in Asia is now moot; but Stratum VIIA of the city had probably already been a center of administration for Egyptian Palestine during the previous occupation, in the 12th century BCE [Ussishkin 1998: 197, 214]. This would be an obvious source of emulation for a consciously backward-looking pharaoh. In any case Sheshonq erects a victory monument there and presumably does not mean it to be destroyed in the immediate future by a resurgent Israelite state. Besides this, since one aim of the expedition is to crush any further Israelite threat to Egyptian control, he loots and destroys elsewhere as seems appropriate to the task. The methods used at this time to consolidate the Egyptian conquest are not recorded; but the Ramessids whom Sheshonq was imitating had already intensified their military control "enormously" over earlier periods, and one of the Amarna letters notes that even at that earlier time Egypt was practicing deportation in Canaan intensively enough that population replacement was needed [Kuhrt 1995: 327, 328].

Finally, he wants to rule the parts of Palestine that are not directly annexed through a suitable proxy in the traditional Egyptian style. When the Egyptians finish destroying resistance in the highlands, they leave behind a power vacuum into which Jeroboam moves with a will, opening formal contacts with the local leaders of the surviving tribal structure.

I Kings 12 reports only one conference involved in the fall of the United Monarchy, but the present analysis suggests there were two. This first one would have been conducted under the shadow of Egypt and so with careful attention to the watchful eye of Sheshonq. It seems unlikely that Rehoboam would recognize, let alone attend, an assembly held under such auspices. Jeroboam points out that now would be the best time to get rid of a king who has worn out his welcome; and if they are uncertain whom to install in his place, under whatever title, they should remember that, besides that prophetic designation, he has the ear of the pharaoh who is currently ransacking the country. If they are in further doubt, he may have Pharaoh's swords at his disposal as well.

But his government-building is interrupted. Sheshonq dies the next year; "and all his grandiose schemes died with him [Kitchen 1986: 302]." The situation is transformed.
Whatever plan the pharaoh had for a new Egyptian Empire in Asia, it vanishes completely. Henceforth, so far as the east coast of the Mediterranean is concerned, Egypt seems not to care. Even diplomatic contacts are maintained regularly only with the north Phoenician port city of Byblos [Taylor 2000: 336]. The new Pharaoh Osorkon seems to coast through a 35-year reign, near the end of which he manages to send a military expedition against the, from archaeological evidence, still weak kingdom of Judah. This expedition is defeated so thoroughly that even from the decidedly unobjective Egyptian court chroniclers "we have no trace of a triumphal relief of Osorkon to adorn anew the temple walls of Egypt" [Kitchen 1986: 309]. Conditions in Egypt during the remainder of the dynasty may be judged from the game of "who was king, who was not king" played by modern historians trying to unravel the period (see for example Kitchen 1986).

Jeroboam's connection to Egyptian power probably vanishes with Sheshonq's death. At least there would have been a major reshuffling of Egyptian court politics; he would not have been in Egypt to join the maneuvers; and the results were greatly against Sheshonq's ideas. Any Sheshonq loyalists still holding important positions in Egypt would have much more immediate concerns than the future of a viceroy left behind in an abandoned conquest. Jeroboam is on his own.

Therefore he must cultivate local support. Even ruling for the Egyptians, he would have needed local help to create a government. One obvious group from which to recruit was the government already there. Some may have fled with Rehoboam; but others, faced with a choice between cooperation and deportation, would make a peace of necessity with the new overlords. Another available group may be called traditionalists, people against dynastic rule in general and the Davidites especially.

But in all these people's eyes, even in the kindest interpretation, Jeroboam would never have become ruler but for Egyptian force of arms. And now the Egyptians are gone. Members of the old administration who made a peace of necessity with the new one find they now have other options. Even traditionalists may reconsider whether a former Egyptian agent is the best candidate to keep the old dynasty out. By the rule of prophetic designation anyone can become king, and one may assume that quite a few anyones at least begin to entertain the thought. The word "Byzantine" is an accurate descriptive from a derivative situation; to the Byzantines as to Israel, specific and very retractable divine designation of each and every ruler was part of their basic constitution.
It was assumed that whoever had tenure of the throne was there by God’s will, until the moment he was deprived of it, which was by God’s will also. Therefore, succession by coup was necessarily by God’s will, i.e., legitimate. Such a coup befell Jeroboam’s successor within two years after his death, with another rapidly following it.

With Egyptian swords no longer present to clarify the situation, another claimant re-enters the lists. Rehoboam had been the legitimate holder of the crown of Israel. He is the obvious default candidate for the kingship. At least some of the new government, the pro-dynasts who joined out of necessity, would in principle welcome this. In practice, there are snags.

Rehoboam has obligations to the supporters who joined him in exile. Given his attitude in I Kings 12:10-15, he probably also has a decidedly jaundiced view of those northern officials who chose to stay and defect. As a presumed appointee of God he may find the sudden evaporation of the Egyptian conquest a sterling exercise of divine intervention in his royal favor. Even pro-Davidites hesitate before restoring someone who thinks of them as branded traitors against God. They will, at the least, equivocate long enough to get very strong guarantees of their future positions. And for the traditionalists, now speaking from inside the power structure, there is the very sore point of the legitimacy of dynastic succession in the first place. Rehoboam’s claim as the already-crowned king is strong, but the kingship of Israel does not simply revert to the previous holder. It becomes an open question that requires very delicate handling.

Finally, given the fate of armies of occupation that try to evacuate suddenly, probably the Egyptian departure was as orderly and prioritized as possible. Garrisons would be withdrawn from exposed interior positions, e.g. the Jezreel Valley and the highlands, first of all. Key sites like Megiddo and Gezer and the port cities would be kept until the end. Attacks by fractious Israelite groups would be handled very roughly, if only to discourage repetitions, but the withdrawal would continue any way. Jeroboam chooses not to leave with the occupation forces and finds himself in the unpleasant position of a man trying to keep his footing in a swamp, stepping on hummocks any of which may suddenly prove not to be there.

This paper will suggest that these considerations are likely background for the conference at Shechem. An entry in the Septuagint (but not in the Masoretic text) suggests it is Jeroboam who calls this meet-
ing [Knoppers 1993: 214-218]. Once word spreads of the Egyptian withdrawal, he must, and quickly, do something visible and startling simply to pre-empt a total collapse of his position. At the same time, he must convince the Egyptians that his move is useful to stabilize their withdrawal, not an organization of forces to destroy the evacuating troops. He may consider himself lucky (and efficient) to prevent tribal secessions even before the meeting convenes.

Rehoboam’s presence at Shechem is merely reactive. Rehoboam’s whole position is that the kingship is not an open question; he owns it and that is that. He may have acquiesced in the conference because of a precedent. II Samuel 19 chronicles events some fifty years earlier. Miller and Hayes interpret it to the effect of a spontaneous electoral assembly: The revolt of Absalom had forced David to flee across the Jordan; but Absalom died and his supporters, lacking alternative candidates, gradually turned back toward David. A sufficient number of delegates from all over Israel and Judah finally assembled at Gilgal and legitimated the restoration of David to his throne. [Miller and Hayes 1986: 177-178]

No trace remains of the Shechem deliberations, but I Kings 12 suggests that in the result the conference offers to recognize Rehoboam as King -- but only under terms that would end the Solomonic exploitation. However, Rehoboam decides his position is strong enough to claim absolute rule. The words put in his mouth in the record suggest he never meant Shechem to be anything other than a recognition of his family’s divine right: “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions. [I Kings 12:14]”. This misfires so badly that his envoy is stoned by the delegates. Rehoboam goes from overconfidence to panic and once again abandons the field, “made haste to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem” in the text. This creates a simple default situation. With Rehoboam’s departure, Jeroboam is King -- at least for the moment. 11

Unmaking the United Monarchy.

Rehoboam’s flights to safety explain how the Davidic dynasty came to the site with which it is historically associated. But they do not explain how the previous association with Megiddo was so thoroughly erased from the record. This was a matter of the development of the northern crown.

With no dynastic principle to stabilize the succession, the govern-
ment of the truncated kingdom of Israel was extremely shaky. The first twenty years after Jeroboam saw three changes of dynasty by military coup. There is no reason to think that Jeroboam ever considered his position secure. So one would think that the enterprise highest on his priority list would be the total elimination of the obvious competition, that is, the former dynasty? This was standing practice in the northern kingdom after later coups. Considering the disparity revealed by archaeology between the new kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Jeroboam should have been able to finish the Davidites easily. He did no such thing.

This may have been a simple question of balancing forces. If Jeroboam were killed, i.e. if the situation in the north became visibly, dangerously unstable, the logical response would be to restore the former stability by restoring the former dynastic principle. But this logic is less attractive when the legitimate dynast is someone who carries grudges and disciplines with scorpions. So long as Rehoboam remains conspicuously available in his snug, impoverished backwater, Jeroboam has a firewall at least against simple assassination. This does not last forever, but it gives him a breathing space in which to establish a stable personal regime. He also maintains a level of tension that prohibits dangerous reconciliations. I Kings 14:30 reports that “there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually”; but again given the disparity between Israel and Judah during these years, one must suspect that the war was exceedingly desultory at least on the northerner’s part.

However, no such considerations protect Megiddo. How much Sheshonq left standing of Solomon’s Palace is moot. But any survival of those buildings would invite the Davidites to plot a return of Solomon’s system, into whose established positions they could insert themselves as if returning from a vacation. Destroying such a physical nucleus of the old ideology is an obvious precaution, as well as a project that would appeal to the traditionalists. Any remains that Sheshonq left standing are leveled to the ground. The same may have applied to associated buildings, and this means essentially the entire city. This seems rather more than a simple destruction of military usefulness as would have been done by Sheshonq. The buildings found by archaeology were destroyed or greatly changed, their expensive ornamental stonework recycled into very different constructions; and when the new Stratum IVA city rose on the site possibly fifty years later, it was with a "marked change of building technique" and even the walls remodeled [Kempinski 1989: 95].
The largest structures inside [the Stratum IVA city] are the northern and southern ‘stable complexes’, and their interpretation largely determines whether we think of Megiddo at this time as a store-city or, as seems preferable, a military base with a strong chariot force. Even on the latter view other buildings...will probably have been used for the storage of provisions and military equipment. [Davies 1986: 96-97]

One may assume that any monuments of Egyptian rule were similarly attended to, especially any that linked Jeroboam with Egypt; the only surviving piece of Sheshonq’s victory stele was found in a context that suggests landfill. The same definitely applied to the Solomonic system that went with the buildings; Jeroboam, while carefully maintaining royal power, consciously tried to "de-Solomonize" the polity, especially the religious institutions centered at the Temple [Tadmor 1982: 254-256].

With Megiddo politically impossible to reoccupy, Jeroboam needs a new capital. He rebuilds Shechem and other sites [I Kings 12:25]; Shechem being another of David's crown conquests is not under tribal law. As a cult site dating back to Abraham and as the presumed site of Jeroboam's election to be king, it could also provide legitimacy. And it is close enough to Rehoboam to scotch any moves north that king may eventually choose to make.

Rehoboam returns to the back country and settles in his family's home area. The obvious site of refuge would be Hebron, one of the earliest Iron Age settlements in Judah and "the natural centre of the Judean Highland" [Ofer 2001: 15, 26]. This was also the site at which David became king of Judah.

But since that time it had been the seat of the revolt of Absalom against David; "following the revolt, Hebron suddenly disappears from the biblical description of the history of Israel" [Ofer 1994: 114] and so was no longer available to be capital. 12

In its place he settles in the very defensible position that is now Jerusalem. But part of that site’s defensibility is its isolation; it historically had little control over nearby trade routes and, even if it was occupied, played no important part in the affairs leading up to the monarchy [Ishida 1977: 119-121]. This suggests a refuge rather than a possibly threatening command center.

But he does not just cower there. He augments this isolated fortress with some fifteen additional positions, "placing loyal family members at key places throughout the realm, particularly in fortified cities with
abundant supplies. ... Even the Chronicler seems to connect the fortified cities with internal security: 'So he held Judah and Benjamin.' [Miller and Hayes 1986: 238]" Not much magnificence should be read into the words "fortified cities"; "[in] biblical times, however, any place built by royal initiative or housing a representative of the central authority, even a small site or isolated fort, was called a city [Barkay 1992: 329]."

Beyond this, with the original hub of the royal ideology conveniently no longer in existence to compete, Rehoboam begins to rebuild. In the circumstances splendor is out of the question, but Cross suggests there was a longstanding preference among the Israelites for a "Tent of Yahweh" as erected by David, as against Solomon's Temple [Cross 1998: 85-90]. So the Davidites may have made a virtue out of a necessity. He gives this establishment the name that officially goes with said complex: Jerusalem. Jeroboam worries that a temple in the south could become a focus of dissent and so creates his own alternatives [I Kings 12:26-30]. But this does not mean a new central temple; what he builds is two separate "shrines" at sites "at the farthest corners of his kingdom -- at Bethel in the far south and Dan in the north" [Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 151], as distant as possible from the capital. No single religious place in the northern kingdom ever again enjoys the central position of the old Temple.

There is dispute over how rapidly Rehoboam's area developed after this. One source reports that during "the last quarter of the tenth and the first half of the ninth centuries, both Judah and Israel witnessed unparalleled growth and prosperity [Holladay 1995: 374]"; another suggests that "the population of Judah became sufficiently stable to support a comprehensive regional political entity...at the earliest during the course of the ninth century [Thompson 1992: 312]." But the dynasty transferred its permanent sense of identity to the present site; and, possibly rather as Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire even if it happened to be located on the Bosporus, it became important for legitimacy that the new site should continue the old identity. Since the northern kingdom had no interest in claiming that particular heritage and since there was no pre-existing named city around the royal refuge, this may have been easy. Eventually Judah had a surge of development that is in fact reflected in archaeology in the eighth century BCE [Barkay 1992: 367]. This created the situation that found its way into the Bible.

The end of the United Monarchy produced another effect that is predicted by world-systems theory. The particular case in evidence comes from the end of the Bronze Age in Syria, a few centuries earlier:
The Syrian system of the Late Bronze Age was based on a convergence of interests held by the king and the class of high functionaries (maryannu, scribes and administrative personnel, merchants, etc.) and dependent upon a particularly crude exploitation of the village communities. At the apex of the crisis, the royal palace could not rely on the (mainly economic) support of the villages, too crudely exploited in the past, or that of the aristocracy (mainly military). Moreover, the particular concentration in the Palace of all the elements of organization, transformation, exchange, etc. -- a concentration which seems to reach its maximum in the Late Bronze Age -- has the effect of transforming the physical collapse of the Palace into a general disaster for the entire kingdom. [Liverani 1987: 69]

Israel (the northern fragment-kingdom) deliberately rejected the new ideology/theology and even after the Egyptian withdrawal was unable to build stability. Judah was too small and primitive to rebuild a Palace system, however much the Davidites may have wanted to do so. Therefore, Solomon's polity vanished just as thoroughly and possibly as suddenly as Sheshonq's. Two very different kingdoms became the new reality, although one did maintain and develop the theory behind the system -- which became important for future reference.

Conclusions.

This paper has suggested three new ideas:

• that the capital of the kingdom of David and Solomon was not located at the site presently called "Jerusalem";

• that the name "Jerusalem" originally applied to an ideological concept rather than to a location;

• and that, if one uses world-systems theory and the Palace model, then the kingdom of David and Solomon may usefully be analyzed as a late-surviving polity from the Bronze Age.

The remainder of the paper is essentially supporting evidence and discussion. However, beyond this, the paper does suggest an unexpected change of demarcation.

Jeroboam's coup marked the end of the sociopolitical organizational form (Palace + city-state + empire). The post-Solomonic northern kingdom of Israel had floating capitals and royal residences separate from those capitals and an economic center no longer at a capital, and was founded on an outright rejection of the Solomonic ideology. For Judah to have called itself a (Palace + city-state + empire) would for centuries have evoked only laughter. The new empires that were rising and necessarily that means Assyria -- practiced state-building with
will, including measures that nowadays would be denounced as ethnic cleansing or worse. In terms of social history, the fall of Megiddo VA-IVB marks the true end of the Bronze Age.

This paper will close with a question which is not meant to be answered, since it is really intended as an introduction to a further paper. Was the kingdom of David and Solomon a revolutionary state?

The standard perception has long been that the monarchy represented a decisive break with premonarchic Israel. The assumptions of this statement are widely shared and permeate textbook and specialist monograph alike. [Coote and Whitelam 1987: 139]

Just what caused such a break in continuity is moot; with the lack of hard information about decision-making (even about who actually made the decisions), explanations are necessarily vague. But for present purposes that half of the problem may be left alone. The general acceptance that there was a critical change of ideology will do for now, because sudden changes of ideology are known to be a hallmark of revolutions.

Not all revolutions are radical in the way exemplified by the Marxists. The Meiji Restoration in Japan, the Parliamentary victory in the English Civil War, the official and uncontested establishment of Islam as the governmental system of all Arabia (and other places) by the caliphs Abu Bakr and Umar, all left the old social system more or less in place while changing the formal basis of government, the ideology, into something that became very different from earlier experience. This paper therefore additionally proposes that in Israel the "decisive break" was the result of imposing Bronze Age social and economic forms under a suitably modified theology onto a people accustomed to very different ways, creating in historical terms not just a new religion but a theological constitution for a newly created state. The new constitution was based on a divine designation of an entire people that is at least reminiscent of the positions of the Arab conquerors and the Meiji Japanese in the decades after their revolutions. The "revolution" was repudiated in Israel by the core areas of the polity, surviving only on the frontier -- but surviving there for a very long time. If, in fact, a revolution is what it was.

ENDNOTES
1. The analytical system is actually more detailed, but these terms will do for an introduction. See for example Rowlands 1987
2. Finkelstein and his school consider this stratum to be post-Solomonic. "This proposal, however, is beset with major problems [Lemaire 1999: 118]."

3. Suggesting that the capital was Megiddo raises a problem of "story line." When David conquered Jerusalem, he is supposed to have done so through a "water tunnel" [II Samuel 5:8], a tunnel-and-shaft water system known to have existed in the Middle Bronze Age settlement at Jerusalem [Marcus 2000: 86-89]. But this technique of protecting a water supply is actually well known around the area. Megiddo, the defended site that was always occupied, would seem at least as good a candidate for a long-developed protected water supply as contemporaneous Jerusalem. Possible remains of protected water systems are known from Megiddo in strata VIA and VA/IVB [Davies 1986: 71-72, 92-93]. A well-preserved tunnel-and-shaft system in Megiddo dates to the reign of Ahab (874-853 BCE); "similar arrangements" are known from five or six other towns of the period, and "it is as yet impossible to fix their dates" [Yeivin 1979: 141]. Moreover, it is an axiom that heroic background events are subject to amendment, recasting, relocation, and compositing when final editions are redacted, and it is presently impossible to disentangle the threads.

4. The ideology presumably went well beyond this; with the exception of the not-divine status of the ruler -- and Talmon suggests the official royal status was a very near thing to divinity, very much under the influence of Mesopotamian and Canaanite ideas [Talmon 1979: 19] -- it seems not greatly different from that which prevailed even as far away as China in ancient times.

Yahweh’s covenant with the tribes of Israel was narrowed in focus to Yahweh’s covenant with David, or the house of David, as Israel’s representative. Yet this reformulated covenant language is relatively rare -- despite its frequency in scholarly literature. The language of divine sonship, adoption of the king by the deity, is the preferred “high Judaean” royal ideology, preferred even by the Deuteronomist. [Cross 1998: 20-21]
Thus, specifically in Israel, if the king "fulfilled [his] duties then even nature would respond to the upholding of divinely willed order by providing plentiful sustenance [Isserlin 1998: 105]." It would seem that the associations with "judgment" and "prosperity" still held. See Hord 1987 for discussion.

5. "Rushalimum" is also mentioned in the second (Posener) group of Execration Texts, but these are roughly contemporaneous with the Middle Bronze Age settlement and so are not anomalous, though see Auld and Steiner's comment in the main text regarding likelihood. And of course, if the Middle Bronze settlement is identified with the "Rushalimum" of the Berlin group of texts instead, then the Posener listing in turn would become anomalous.

6. The figure "Melchizedek," "king of righteousness," may be part of this. (The) Melchizedek (a title?) is mentioned only in passing in Genesis 14, as "king of Salem," but became important enough in tradition that David claimed to be "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" [Psalms 101:4]. During Hellenistic and Roman times, works that never became canonical were still being composed in the name of Melchizedek. Even a thousand years after David, St. Paul was still referring to such an order [Hebrews 6:20-7:4]. There is insufficient information to say what was actually involved.

7. All Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

8. Many entries on this list are not readable; but the names seem to have been listed geographically, and any entry for Jerusalem would have been in the readable parts of the list [Kitchen 1986: 298n298].

9. Garbini suggests that the assignment of the invasion to Sheshonq's next-to-last year is based purely on external considerations; it may reasonably have occurred any time during the last half of that pharaoh's reign [Garbini 1988: 29].

10. From Kitchen's description, work on Sheshonq's many construction projects seems to have stopped almost in mid-hammerstroke [Kitchen 1986: 302n321].
11. It may be important that the text uses a different term, "'ëdâ,'" found only this once in Kings but common in later writings, for the "assembly" that elected Jeroboam to be king. The term used everywhere else in Kings is "qâlât." [Malamat 1970:167-168] But the nature of the difference at that time is not known.

12. The natural advantages of the site continued; it was one of the fifteen places in Judah listed as garrisoned by Rehoboam in II Chronicles 11:5-10. This list may, however, be anachronistic [Ahlström 1993: 559-560]. The name "Hebron" is also found on eighth-century seals on jars, but may signify something other than the city [Mazar 1990: 457].

13. "Those that survived I slaughtered. ... I burnt their cities with their inhabitants. ..." (From the annals of Ashur-dan II, 934-912 BCE) [Kuhrt 1995: 480]. One wonders if the redactors of the Hebrew entry into Canaan had the Assyrian model of how to do it in mind.

14. For an introduction to the interaction between the old Palace institution and the new state in the neo-Assyrian imperial system, see for example Lumsden 2001. Mendenhall has also noted that when the new empires rose, "notably Assyria, the structure of the covenant by which they bound their vassals is entirely different" from the old Mesopotamian-Hittite form [Mendenhall 1970: 31].

15. The complexities of political theology in the English Republic are a subject for another paper. But it is noteworthy that, as in Israel, the religious revolution was abjured in the core area (England -- which did, however, hold fast to the vital point of Parliamentary supremacy) but maintained and developed for centuries in the thinly populated frontier (New England -- with, by universal agreement, major consequences for the development of thought patterns in the future United States).

WORKS CITED


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