ONE

ON RUINS, THEN AND NOW

Rooftops in ruin, towers tumbled down.
Gate-locks lie broken, frost chokes the lime,
Ceilings sapped with age, the high hall loftless.
The mortar is moldy, the master-builders are gone,
Buildings and brave men in the clutch of the grave.
A hundred generations have passed away,
Princes and peoples now forgotten
The ruddy wall-stones are stained with gray,
Rocks that have outlived the reign of kings,
The crash of storms, the crush of time.[1]

On the grounds of the Nymphenburg Schloß in Munich lies a small hermit-age, the Magdalenenklause, nestled within a grove of trees among the well-manicured gardens that surround the palace. Though somewhat hidden away along the winding paths of the park's pavilions, the building itself is unmistakable when one draws near. Composed of a disarranged collection of tiles, plaster, and stone masonry, the hermitage gives the impression of being quite antiquated, its slow decay offset by the repairs made to it over the centuries that have left its façade dilapidated but sound. The interior of the building is no less peculiar, with its southern quarter placed on what appears to be an ancient grotto and its northern end modeled on monastic chambers edged into the

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[1] Anonymous, "The Ruin," in *The Complete Old English Poems*, trans. C. Williamson, 582–83 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017 [ca. 8th–9th centuries CE]).

4 Magdalenenklause exterior. Nymphenburg Schloß, Munich. Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons CC0 1.0 universal public domain

rock. One imagines that perhaps the Bavarian rulers of old built their palace adjacent to what had been a sacred site long before their arrival, their piety expressed by preserving the venerable sanctum near the royal estate that was soon to emerge.

Or so it seems. The hermitage's history is rather a more recent one, having been built in 1725 CE after much of the nearby palace was complete. Designed as a place of contemplation for the elector of Bavaria by the court architect, Joseph Effner, the Magdalenenklause represents the "artificial ruin" or "folly" architectural form that had gained popularity among rulers throughout Europe at the time.[2] Some examples, such as Frederick the Great's Ruinenberg at Sanssouci or the Ruin of Carthage at Schloß Schönbrunn in Vienna, could even draw on a more ancient, Greco-Roman past in their designs, though

[2] Kai-Uwe Nielsen, *Die Magdalenenklause im Schlosspark zu Nymphenburg* (München: Tuduv Verlag, 1990), 18–26. For broader studies of these architectural forms, see especially Susan Stewart, *The Ruins Lesson: Meaning and Material in Western Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), esp. 212–25; Reinhard Zimmerman, *Künstlichen Ruinen: Studien zu ihrer Bedeutung und Form* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989); and Andrew Siegmund, *Die romantische Ruine im Landschaftsgarten: Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis der Romantik zu Barock und Klassik* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006).

5 Portrait of Ruinenberg (foreground) at Sanssouci Palace. Potsdam, Germany. Carl Daniel Freydanck, 1847. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain

such architectural remains had never been unearthed at these locations and were not indigenous to the regions in which they now stood.

Made to look ancient in spite of their recent appearance, the forged ruins of European estates convey a number of sentiments and impressions. Prominent among them is the aspiration to display connections with a world of ancient predecessors, affiliating the authority of a ruler to an idealized past. To take in the remains of supposedly distant ages was to be mindful of the great works of imagined forebears, above all those of Rome, and to be proximate to the power – political, cultural, aesthetic – that their ruins still conveyed to the audiences who would view them.[3] But fake ruins were also designed to be didactic, intimating the lesson that time attenuates what is created, even the most monumental and opulent of our achievements. This theme of loss would soon resonate among the Romantic poets,[4] perhaps most famously in Percy Shelley's

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[3] On this theme, see especially Julia Hell's reflections on ruins, mimesis, and power in *The Conquest of Ruins: The Third Reich and the Fall of Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 10–32. Cf. Stewart, *The Ruins Lesson*, 220–25.

[4] Nicholas Halmi, "Ruins Without a Past," *Essays in Romanticism* 11 (2011): 7–27; Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Modalities of*

"Ozymandias," which was composed during this era: "Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!" the crumbling inscription of the great pharaoh declares in the poem, though all that remains of the ruler's accomplishments, the speaker tells us, are a statue's two trunkless legs and its head half sunken in the sand.[5]

Though the manufacture of counterfeit ruins would reach its height in the eighteenth century CE, the practice of faking antiquities was already an ancient one. A striking example comes to us from the site of Tell Abu Habba, known in antiquity as the city of Sippar, located approximately 30km southwest of Baghdad in modern Iraq. On February 8, 1881, the eminent Iraqi-Assyrian archaeologist Hormuzd Rassam had a letter sent to the British Museum in London, on whose behalf Rassam was leading his excavation at the time. In his dispatch, Rassam writes of the recovery of a collection of inscribed objects found enclosed in a brick construction located in a palatial room made conspicuous by its bitumen floor.[6] The finds consisted of two terracotta cylinders nearly flawlessly preserved and, located beneath them, an "inscribed black stone, 9 inches long cut into the shape of a wheel of a treadmill, and ends [sic] at the top and bottom in the shape of a cross."[7]

When the writings on the item and associated cylinders were deciphered, the latter were found to be clearly from the time of Nabonidus, a Neo-Babylonian ruler of the sixth century BCE. But the stone object was more mysterious. Written on it was a text attributed to a ruler named Maništušu, third king of the Old Akkadian dynasty, who reigned in the late third millennium BCE – or some 1,500 years before the time of Nabonidus.[8] The purpose of the cruciform object, it appeared, was to commemorate details surrounding renovations made to the great Ebabbar temple at Sippar – a sanctuary that served as the domain of the region's solar deity, Shamash. Preserved in the inscription were details surrounding the extensive construction measures undertaken at the site during Maništušu's reign, including the generous funds and offerings bestowed on its priesthood by the ancient Akkadian ruler. For such reasons, the item came to be known among scholars as the "Cruciform Monument of Maništušu," an artifact valued as an important witness to the language and history of the era surrounding this lesser-known figure of the Old Akkadian period.

Fragmentation (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); Sophie Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[5] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias," in *The Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Vol. II, 62 (New York: Gordian, 1965 [1818]).

[6] For a recent overview of this discovery, see Irving Finkel and Alexandra Fletcher, "Thinking outside the Box: The Case of the Sun-God Tablet and the Cruciform Monument," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 375 (2016): 215–48.

[7] Excerpts from Rassam's letter are quoted in Ibid., 218.

[8] For translation and discussion, see Leonard King, "The Cruciform Monument of Manishtushu," *Revue d'assyriologie* 9 (1912): 91–105.

6 Cruciform Monument of Maništušu. Neo–Babylonian, sixth century BCE. Creative Commons Attribution–Noncommercial–Share Alike 4.0 international (CC BY–NC–SA 4.0) license. © The Trustees of the British Museum

Three decades after its initial publication, however, a series of studies demonstrated that the object was a forgery fabricated long after Maništušu would have ruled.[9] In a detailed discussion of how the Cruciform Monument may have emerged, Irving Finkel and Alexandra Fletcher write of how the item was likely manufactured by the Sippar priesthood at a moment when Nabonidus' personal devotion to Sîn, the lunar deity, was viewed as a potential threat to their sanctuary and livelihood. During a renovation to the Ebabbar sanctuary, those who worked at the temple seized on the moment to bring to Nabonidus' attention an ancient item they had "found" during the building's restoration. On it was a venerable inscription from a distant king that happened to document strong royal financial support for the Sippar cult.[10] To further the ploy, the object was intentionally distressed to make it look antiquated, though enough of the cuneiform signs, carefully excised in an archaic cuneiform script, were safeguarded from impairment so that the claims of the inscription could still be read aloud by expert scribes before the ruler.[11] By all accounts, the gambit was successful. Nabonidus made extensive renovations to the temple and circulated copies of the monument's inscription throughout the region, suggesting that the object's authenticity had been accepted and, in time, even promoted by the ruler.[12]

But the ruse was also successful because it was realized before Nabonidus. Of all the great rulers of the long history of the kingdoms located in regions of Mesopotamia, it is Nabonidus who stands out for his fascination with the ruins of his predecessors.[13] Nabonidus even takes on the title as the one "into whose hands [the deity] Marduk entrusted the abandoned tells ($DU_6^{meš}$ *na-du-ti*),"[14] identifying himself as the divinely appointed caretaker of the ancient ruins

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[9] I. J. Gelb, "The Date of the Cruciform Monument of Manishtushu," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8 (1949): 346–48; Edmond Sollberger, "The Cruciform Monument," *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 20 (1968): 50–70. Cf. Marvin A. Powell, "Naram-Sin, Son of Sargon: Ancient History, Family Names, and a Famous Babylonian Forgery," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 81 (1991): 20–30; F. N. H. Rawi and A. R. George, "Tablets from the Sippar Library. III. Two Royal Counterfeits," *Iraq* 56 (1994): 135–48.

[10] Finkel and Fletcher, "Thinking outside the Box," 241. The connections between the production of this text and the famous book-finding incident during King Josiah's reign in 2 Kings 22–23 have been noted by scholars. See, for example, Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Discovered Book' and the Legitimation of Josiah's Reform," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130.1 (2011): 47–62.

[11] Finkel and Fletcher, "Thinking outside the Box," 242–43.   [12] Ibid., 245.

[13] For a discussion, see G. Goossens, "Les recherches historiques a l'époque néo-babylonienne," *Revue d'assyrologie* 42 (1948): 149–59; Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556–539 B.C.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 137–43; Irene Winter, "Babylonian Archaeologists of the(ir) Mesopotamian Past," in *Proceedings of the First International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 2, eds. P. Matthiae et al., 1787–1800 (Rome: La Sapienza, 2000).

[14] Stephen Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* (III:8) (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 2012), 274.

strewn across the Babylonian empire. At over a dozen cities Nabonidus fulfilled this vow by renovating nearly thirty buildings during his relatively brief reign (556–539 BCE)[15] – a preoccupation with restoration that was driven by a strong interest in the past and in his royal predecessors. Among the cylinders that Rassam discovered near the Cruciform Monument, for example, we read of Nabonidus' efforts at the Ebabbar temple at Sippar:[16]

> He [Nebuchadnezzar II] rebuilt that temple but after forty-five years the walls of that temple were caving in. I became troubled, I became fearful, I was worried and my face showed signs of anxiety . . . I cleared away that temple, searched for its old foundation deposit, dug to a depth of eighteen cubits, and the foundation of Narām-Sîn, the son of Sargon, which for 3200 years no king before me had seen – the god Shamash, the great Lord, revealed to me the [foundation of the] Ebabbar, the temple of his contentment.

For our purposes, a number of details stand out from this section of Nabonidus' inscription. The first is the lengths to which Nabonidus' workers went in an effort to rebuild the sanctuary. Though the ancient renovators lacked our technological capacity, the inscription claims that the massive structural remains from the large building site were cleared away, and the location was excavated to a depth of around 10m. This undertaking followed those from a generation before, it is further reported, when Nebuchadnezzar II had similarly attempted to renovate the ancient temple but, apparently, had done so unsuccessfully – a recurrent problem for rulers attending to temples that were already well over a millennium old and structurally unsound.[17] Lastly, what is perhaps of most interest is the expressed aim of the operation. The inscription describes Nabonidus' primary intent as one of locating an ancient artifact, the *temennu*, or foundation deposit of the sanctuary, which no ruler had viewed for over 3,000 years. Even if this calculation substantially misses the mark (the distance between Narām-Sîn and Nabonidus was around 1,700 years), what is clearly conveyed in this text is an awareness that buried beneath the ground were artifacts from distant predecessors that could be unearthed and recovered.

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[15] Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus*, 1; Hanspeter Schaudig, "The Restoration of Temples in the Neo- and Late Babylonian Periods: A Royal Prerogative as the Setting for Political Argument," in *From the Foundations to the Crenelations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, eds. M. Boda and J. Novotny, 141–64 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010).

[16] Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften*, 2.12 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 422–38.

[17] For a discussion of the many renovations made to the Ebabbar temple in the first millennium BCE, for example, see Gerdien Jonker, *The Topography of Remembrance: The Dead, Tradition and Collective Memory in Mesopotamia*, trans. H. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 153–71.

Such discoveries and their attachments to previous ages were not restricted to Sippar alone. Nabonidus states that, at the city of Ur, he undertook similar renovations to those taking place nearly simultaneously at the temple of Sîn.[18] Once more, his workers came across items from many centuries before. Unearthed among the temple remains was a (presumably authentic) stele from the time of Nebuchadnezzar I (late twelfth century BCE) with an elaborate image of the high priestess who had once served the sanctuary, in addition to descriptions of rites and ceremonies that had been connected to the venerable temple. A further inscription details that when Nabonidus learns of the artifact and examines the image, he orders the long-abandoned office of the high priestess to be restored, installs his own daughter in the role, and gives her an archaic, ancient Sumerian name: En-nigaldi-Nanna.[19]

That a putative monument from long ago could deceive the king is not then surprising, so sensitive was Nabonidus to the possibility that items from the past were resonant with meaning for the present. Nabonidus' numerous digs have even led scholars to label him an early "archaeologist,"[20] driven by a fascination with more distant periods and predecessors that had especially taken hold among rulers in the Neo-Babylonian period (ca. 626–539 BCE). This "antiquarian interest," as Paul-Alain Beaulieu terms it in his study of Nabonidus' reign, could be expressed through different activities and representations, including what was one of the first recorded restorations of an ancient artifact when a nearly two-millennia-old statue of Sargon the Great was refurbished.[21] Though Nabonidus is known as the "Mad King" who famously withdrew from Babylon at the height of his reign to reside at the oasis of Teyma, he was nevertheless also a scrupulous ruler who exercised vast resources to recover and safeguard materials from former times, often in an attempt to connect himself with more venerable forebears.[22]

At the outset to this study, the example of Nabonidus reminds us that we are not the first to be drawn to ruins and to wonder about what they signify, nor are we the first to locate traces of previous generations beneath the ground. And, though there is nothing in the Hebrew Bible that corresponds to the rich descriptions offered by Neo-Babylonian rulers of their attempts to unearth older structures and collect their relics, a similar fascination with distant

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[18] Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids*, P4, 590–94.   [19] Ibid., 2.7, 373–77.
[20] Winter, "Babylonian Archaeologists," 1792; Francis Joannès, *The Age of Empires: Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BC* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 131–32.
[21] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus,* 139.
[22] Winter, "Babylonian Archaeologists," 1794. On this point, see also Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 137–43; Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of His Steles from Harran and Babylon," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories and Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, eds. M. Heinz and M. Feldman, 137–66 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

ancestors and origins is also found across the biblical writings, as is a recognition that individual mounds (תל) and sites of wreckage (חרבת) among other ruins, are the vestiges left behind by former populations. The Hebrew scribes responsible for the biblical writings, as with the Neo-Babylonians, and as with us, were aware that they were latecomers to a world inhabited long before.

There is much, then, that connects our experience of ruins with experiences from antiquity.[23] But the divide between then and now that this chapter pursues also pertains to the example of Nabonidus, one whose attempts to disinter older buildings and recover relics can feel so similar to our own efforts at archaeological excavation today. A usurper to the throne, Nabonidus was confronted by questions of legitimacy that dogged him throughout his reign. He was also by all accounts pious, a devotee of the deity Sîn in ways that could make him politically vulnerable within a capital city and empire whose chief god of the pantheon was Marduk.[24] The motivations at work in Nabonidus' renovation efforts, accordingly, were often driven by political calculation and personal devotion rather than by a historical interest in how previous populations – whether at Sippar, Ur, or elsewhere – once lived.[25] Having ascended to the throne via a coup, Nabonidus was eager to demonstrate his royal authority by situating himself among the great rulers of old, rebuilding what they had built and carefully attending to those remains – inscriptions, sculptures, temples – that they had left behind. Materials from the past were drawn on by Nabonidus to solidify claims of being able to rule in the present.

But what we do not find expressed within Nabonidus' inscriptions is what Hanspeter Schaudig, in his extensive study of these texts, terms an "awareness" of historical development and change.[26] Instead, Schaudig argues that what permeates these writings is a mostly "unhistorical worldview" rendered "anachronistically," whereby past and present are depicted as predominantly coincident and deeply connected, with Nabonidus' rule portrayed in such a way as to foreground an abiding continuity with more ancient rulers of the region.[27] It is for such reasons that Nabonidus resolves to reinstate the practices described

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[23] On this point, see again the rich discussion in Winter, "Babylonian Archaeologists," 1787–1800.

[24] Beaulieu, *Reign of Nabonidus*, 183–85, 203.

[25] On the religious dimensions of Nabonidus' renovation efforts, see Goossens, "Les recherches historiques," 149–59. On the political, see especially Schaudig, "The Restoration of Temples," 155–61.

[26] Hanspeter Schaudig, "Nabonid, der 'Archäologe auf dem Königsthron': Zum Geschichtsbild des ausgehenden neubabylonishcen Reiches," in *Festschrift für Burkhart Kienast*, ed. G. Selz, 447–97 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003), 492. Schaudig writes, "Even in our own culture it took a long time until an awareness emerged of the changes that occurred in times past." ("Auch in unserer eigenen Kultur hat es lange gedauert, bis sich aus dem Bewußtsein über vergangene Zeit eine Erkenntnis der dadurch entstandenen Veränderungen ergeben hat.")

[27] Schaudig remarks, "The worldview was at its core unhistorical and 'history' was often perceived with an anachronistic displacement of the present to the past." ("Das Weltbild war

in the Cruciform Monument at Sippar and to reestablish the role of the high priestess at Ur, rather than relegating these conventions to past societies whose practices are now obsolete.

From this perspective, the similarities between Nabonidus' digging activities and those excavations undertaken today, Schaudig argues, are superficial.[28] Nowhere in these royal writings is there a historical sense of the asymmetries in lived experience that distinguish past from present, of how different life under the Sargonids in the third millennium BCE would have been, for example, from that of the sixth century BCE when Nabonidus ruled. Instead, these inscriptions view the distant past as an exemplar for the present, the practices and customs of previous ages serving as an ideal to which the present should return. In short, what induced Nabonidus' efforts to excavate old buildings were desires and motivations other than those that would arise in the eighteenth through nineteenth centuries CE, a period that developed a distinct historical mindset toward material remains not long after the time when the Magdalenenklause's fake ruins had been completed.[29]

The intent of this chapter is to chart these changing attitudes toward ruins by investigating the worlds in which they arose. This study begins in antiquity, where I draw on past decades of archaeological research to survey the landscapes that would have been visible to the biblical writers and their contemporaries. What comes to light through this investigation is an ancient terrain that enclosed ruins from two millennia of settlement activity, leaving the lands familiar to the biblical writers populated by the remains of both distant and more recent societies. Of course, passages scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible recognize the belatedness of the Israelite people and their communities in Canaan (i.e., Num 13–14; Deut 26:1–9; Judges 1; Pss 78, 105). Yet only with the advent of archaeological research has it become clear that these texts were written down within an already ancient landscape, of fallen Bronze and Iron Age settlements that still bore the traces of those communities who had once inhabited them.

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im Kern unhistorisch und 'Geschichte' wurde oft mit anachronistischer Übertragung der damaligen Gegenwart auf die Vergangenheit wahrgenommen.") Schaudig, "Nabonid," 491.

[28] Ibid., 492. Trigger, in his expansive overview of archaeological thought, concludes in a similar vein that in antiquity "nothing resembling a discipline of archaeology emerged in any of these civilizations." Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31. This argument is also found in Rojas's recent study of Anatolian remains examined and unearthed by later Roman inhabitants: "Referring to situations in antiquity as evidence of 'archaeology' (and, as is also frequently done, labeling ancient individuals 'archaeologists') obscures cultural and historical specifics and poses a teleological trap." Felipe Rojas, *The Pasts of Roman Anatolia: Interpreters, Traces, Horizons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 6.

[29] Schaudig, "Nabonid," 492.

But, though these writings depict cities and objects of ruination that archaeologists – thousands of years later – would unearth, their descriptions of these remains depart from our understanding of them in a fundamental detail. This point of disconnect, I will argue, is the temporal framework within which ruined sites are situated in the biblical accounts. Despite the recognition in these writings of the venerable character of many ruined settlements, how ruins are located in time is frequently opposed to how we think about the history of these remains today.

The final movement of this chapter is focalized on an era when an understanding of ruins takes a decisive turn. Following what Reinhart Koselleck describes as the *Sattelzeit* period,[30] this investigation examines a transitional or bridgelike era that stretched from roughly 1750–1850 CE, when pivotal new experiences of time and history emerged. This century finds significance for our study because it also marks the moment when ruins came to be thought about differently. François René de Chateaubriand, whom we will encounter later on a visit to Pompeii, describes this experience vividly in his memoirs from the early nineteenth century CE, remarking, "I have found myself caught between two ages as in the conflux of two rivers, and I have plunged into their waters"[31] What awaited Chateaubriand and those of his generation across this waterway was unknown, but what was clear to these individuals was that there was no retreat to a time before: "Turning regretfully from the old bank upon which I was born," Chateaubriand writes, he advances "towards the unknown shore at which the new generations are to land."[32]

For Koselleck, the significance of this timeframe resides in how those who lived within it expressed a feeling of dramatic acceleration in the spheres of economics, politics, and technology, wherein the "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation" were felt to be increasingly torn apart.[33] Said differently, the past became progressively unbound from the present during this century, Koselleck contends, no longer able to serve as a paradigm for how future societies should order themselves and flourish. The lives of those in previous generations became ever more detached from contemporary

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[30] Reinhart Koselleck, "Einleitung," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-soziale Sprache in Deutschland*, Vol. I, ed. O. Brunner, W. Bonze, and R. Koselleck, XIII–XXVII (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), XV. From a much different theoretical vantage point but with arguments about this time period that are in many ways similar to Koselleck's, see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1966]), esp. pp. xii, xxv, 235–39, and 400–6.

[31] François René de Chateaubriand, *The Memoirs of François René, Vicomte de Chateaubriand*, trans. A. Teixeira de Mattos (London: Freemantle, 1902), xxiv.

[32] Ibid., xxiv.

[33] See "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation'" in Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. K. Tribe, 26–42 and 255–76 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

experiences, it is maintained, reduced to something distant and unfamiliar. This chapter concludes by reflecting on what Paul Ricoeur terms, in his own reading of Koselleck, our "historical condition," a horizon against which the remaining chapters of this book, devoted to the experience of the ruins in antiquity, will be set.[34]

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The lands the biblical writers inhabited were already ancient. Among the remains left behind from populations come and gone were those of monumental cities that had fallen long ago, their appearance – like the Roman ruins described by Anglo-Saxon poets in the poem that begins this chapter – conveying a world of "master-builders" from distant times, whose practices could appear more advanced than those of the present. Other remnants were of ancient temples built for deities no longer worshipped and of cultic objects whose meanings had been lost. Visible, too, was the wreckage left behind of the many kingdoms and empires who sought to control the narrow strip of land in which the biblical stories are set, a region positioned on the strategic crossroads located between the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian Desert. Remains from the lengthy periods of Egyptian involvement in the southern Levant would have been apparent, for example, as were the traces of Aramean campaigns from the north and local resistance to these incursions. But most resonant for those behind the biblical writings were the ruins that arose from the later Assyrian and Babylonian invasions of the region, their conquests bringing the Iron Age to a close and, with that, the end of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

In the current chapter, we journey amid this landscape of ruins, taking in the remains that would have been visible to those who wrote and revised those texts that came to be included in the Hebrew Bible. Because these documents were composed over the course of a thousand years – extending, roughly, from the beginning of the first millennium BCE to its end – this investigation proceeds by considering key sites of ruin that existed during these centuries. We begin by examining Bronze Age ruins (ca. 3100 BCE–1175 BCE) that would have endured into the first millennium BCE, including at several locations that are referred to in the Hebrew Bible itself. This circuit then leads to another, where we investigate Iron Age ruins (ca. 1175 BCE–586 BCE) that arose nearer to the time when the biblical writings were first being composed, culminating with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian Empire.

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[34] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 281–342. On this concept, see also the penetrating remarks of Hayden White, "Guilty of History? The *Longue Durée* of Paul Ricoeur," *History and Theory* 46 (2007): 233–51.

That ruins were familiar to those behind the Hebrew Bible is evident throughout their writings. With hundreds of references scattered across nearly every scroll now included in this corpus, the frequency and variety of allusions to older remains in these texts attest to a widespread awareness among its authors of older locations and objects that had fallen into disrepair.[35] It is a persistent feature of these writings, furthermore, that the ruins described are not vestiges of a mythic past or located among the domains of the gods,[36] such as when the messengers of Baal descend to the ruin mounds that mark the entrance to the Kingdom of Death in the Ugaritic epic that bears this deity's name (*CAT* 1.4, viii 4).[37] Rather, in the Hebrew Bible ruins are portrayed consistently as the remains of human activity, affiliated most often with what has been left behind from the destruction or abandonment of inhabited sites.

My aim here is to consider the ruined terrain that is reflected in these writings. In turning to what archaeologists have unearthed in the lands of the southern Levant, we are offered a more robust and detailed impression of the landscapes that the biblical writers and their contemporaries would have known, landscapes that will feature as well in Chapters 2–4.[38] What becomes

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[35] There are fourteen distinct lexemes in the Hebrew Bible that have connotations associated with ruins or material remains the biblical writers identify with destruction or decay. Some are *hapax legomena*, such as in Amos 9:11, where it is proclaimed that the sukkah of David will be raised up at a moment in the future, including the rebuilding of "its ruins" (הרסתיו), a nominal form of the more common verbal expression "to tear, break down (הרס)" that occurs only in this passage. Other terms appear sparingly, as in Psalm 89, where the poet speaks of how Yahweh had "broken down the walls" of the anointed one and "laid his strongholds in rubble" (מחתה) [Ps 89:41]), and, in another psalm (74:3), where a request is made that this deity be directed toward the "enduring ruins" (משאות נצח)of Mt. Zion. Both expressions, though rare, nevertheless share affiliations with emotions of dismay (חתת)or devastation (שאה) that appear with more frequency in biblical writings. The bulk of references to ruins in the Hebrew Bible are, however, expressed through words derived from three roots, חרב√ שמם√ and שחת√, and three terms that appear only as nouns (עוה)עי√), תל(תלל√), and גל(גלל√). For further discussion, see Daniel Pioske, "'And I Will Make Samaria a Ruin in the Open Country': On Biblical Ruins, Then and Now," *Revue Biblique* 129.2 (2022): 161–82.

[36] On the various mythic understandings of ruins among Greco-Roman societies, for example, see the discussion in Rojas, *The Pasts of Roman Anatolia*, 61–103.

[37] For a study of this passage, see Matthew Suriano, "Ruin Hills at the Threshold of the Netherworld: The Tell in the Conceptual Landscape of the Ba'al Cycle and Ancient Near Eastern Mythology," *Die Welt des Orients* 42.2 (2012): 210–30. On this broader distinction, see Robert Kawashima, "Covenant and Contingence: The Historical Encounter between God and Israel," in *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination*, ed. D. Callender, Jr., 51–70 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

[38] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith makes the crucial point that the ruins visible to the biblical writers were assuredly more prevalent and encompassing than what we can ascertain through our current knowledge established by way of archaeological surveys and excavations (personal communication). That is, in addition to the many sites discussed below, the ruins of further settlements would have also been apparent in antiquity. What we perceive of the ruined landscapes visible in the first millennium BCE, in other words, is only a partial glimpse into a world that featured far more remains than what we currently know.

apparent through this survey is that the depictions of ruins found in the biblical corpus are a product of lived experience, of real and meaningful encounters with the remains of past communities strewn throughout the terrain of the southern Levant.

1.1 BRONZE AGE RUINS

1.1.1 The Early Bronze Age II–III (ca. 3100–2500 BCE)

The antiquity of the ruins encountered by those living in the first millennium BCE could be considerable, reaching back into even the Neolithic and Chalcolithic eras, when some of the first settlements in the region, such as that at Jericho, were founded. But many of the oldest ruins still visible to the biblical writers would have descended from the Early Bronze Age (EBA) II–III periods (ca. 3100–2300 BCE). Around 3100 BCE a new settlement network appeared for the first time in the history of the southern Levant, one characterized, as Raphael Greenberg describes it, by a "permanent, fortified entity separated from its surroundings."[39] Some of these early locations were marked by simple mud-brick walls set on stone foundations – a type of architecture that was either replaced in later centuries or slowly weathered over time.

But at certain sites more impressive fortifications persisted. At Tell el-Far'ah (North) (biblical Tirzah), a stone rampart was positioned alongside an older mud-brick one in the EBA II period, creating walls 6m thick that were further augmented with a city gate flanked by towers that reached 7m high.[40] At Tel Beth Yerah, located just southwest of the Sea of Galilee, three successive walls enclosed an impressive 20ha settlement with paved streets situated on a grid pattern.[41] And the EBA fortifications at Tel Yarmuth (biblical Jarmuth) exceed even these.[42] In the most expansive EBA fortification system unearthed from the region, an initial stone wall came to be modified in time to include another enclosure built 20–30m in front of it, creating a massive rampart that stretched to 40m wide in certain sections. In the final phase of the EBA site, monumental stone platforms were placed in the space between the two walls, most likely

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[39] Raphael Greenberg, *The Archaeology of the Bronze Age Levant: From Urban Origins to the Demise of City-States, 3700–1000 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 71.

[40] Pierre de Miroschedji, "Far'ah, Tell el-(North)," in *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Volume II, 437.

[41] Raphael Greenberg, Sarit Paz, David Wengrow, and Mark Iserlis, "Tel Bet Yerah: The Hub of the Early Bronze Age Levant," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 75.2 (2012): 88–107; 91–95.

[42] Pierre de Miroschedji, "Yarmuth: The Dawn of City-States in Southern Canaan," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 62.1 (1999): 2–19; Pierre de Miroschedji, "Excavations at Tel Yarmouth: Results of the Work from 2003 to 2009," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l année – Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (2013): 759–804.
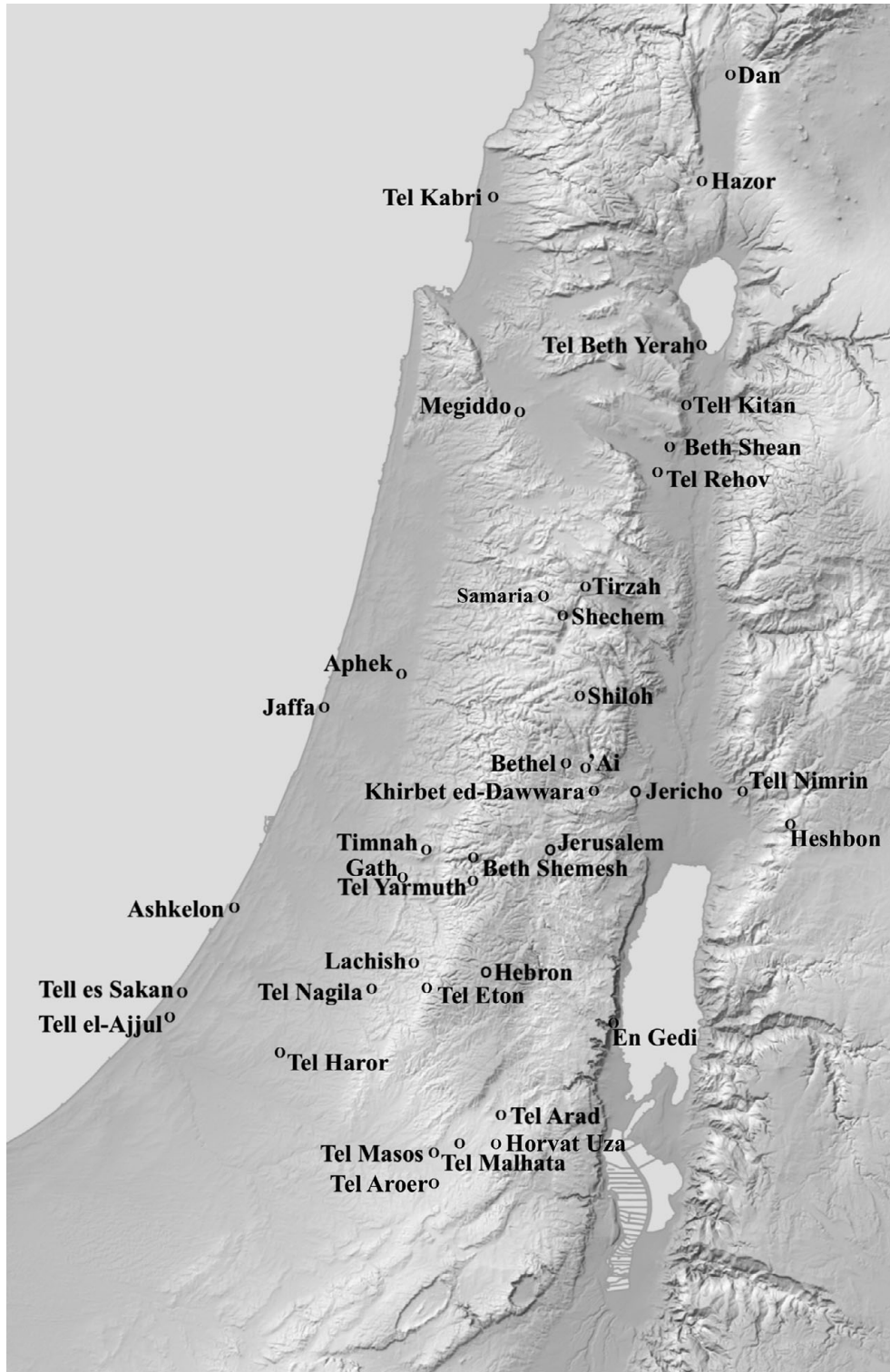
7 Map of sites of ruins discussed in this study. Author map

supporting citadels or large towers that helped guard the city. To this day, the plastered, outer wall stands to a height of 7m.[43]

Tel Yarmuth is of particular interest because it is abandoned at the end of the EBA period and left to ruin. Around a thousand years later the acropolis of the site experiences some traces of settlement activity and more definite architectural features in the Iron I period, but the extensive lower city bears few indications of rebuilding after it was deserted.[44] The small Late Bronze Age (LBA) and Iron Age communities that existed at the location would have therefore lived among the ruins of the imposing EBA center, including the remains of the impressive Palace B and the old fortifications that enclosed this lower area of the city.[45] For these later residents who came to live atop the ruin mound, daily affairs would have been shaped by the monumental debris left behind from communities who had settled Tel Jarmuth a thousand years before, and whose building projects and public architecture far exceeded what early Iron Age communities were able to muster.

Encounters such as these with ruins from an EBA past would have been a widespread phenomenon among later populations in the southern Levant. The large city of Tel Beth Yerah mentioned above, for example, is abandoned for over 2,000 years, apart from a brief moment in the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) period when archaeological evidence suggests that a potter's community plied their trade among the ruins from many centuries before.[46] The impressive site of Tell es Sakan, located just south of Gaza near the Mediterranean coast, is similarly abandoned after the EBA when new settlements are founded nearby within view of its ruins.[47] To the east, Khirbet ez-Zeraqun, situated on the Irbid Plateau in the Transjordan region and protected by walls over 3m thick, shares a similar fate, being abandoned along with its palace around 2700 BCE and never resettled.[48]

That these EBA ruins left an impression on later populations is evident in the fact that a number of these sites are referred to in the Hebrew Bible. Jarmuth, for example, is characterized in the Book of Joshua as one of the great Amorite cities of Canaan (Josh 10:3, 5, 23; 12:11; 15:35; 21:29) even though the location would have only been a modest town in the Iron Age and Persian period when the biblical stories about it were first written and revised. Two other EBA settlements also mentioned in the Hebrew Bible stand out. The first is the city of Arad, situated at the site of Tel Arad in the eastern Negev region and referred to

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[43] de Miroschedji, "Yarmuth: Dawn of the City-States," 6.   [44] Ibid., 3, 17.
[45] Ibid., 10–12.   [46] Greenberg et al., "Tel Bet Yerah," 104.
[47] Pierre de Miroschedji et al., "Les fouilles de Tell es-Sakan (Gaza): nouvelles données sur les contacts égypto-cananéens aux IVe–IIIe millénaires," *Paléorient* 27.2 (2001): 75–104.
[48] Ibrahim Moawiyah and Siegfried Mittmann, "Zeiraqun (Khirbet El)," in *Archaeology of the Jordan II.2: Field Reports, Sites L–Z*, eds. D. Homès-Rederiq and J. B. Hennesy (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 641–46; Greenberg, *Archaeology of the Bronze Age*, 97, 102.

8 Tel Arad. Ruins of Iron Age fortress (background) and Bronze Age Arad (foreground). Wikimedia Commons. Released into the public domain by its author, אסף.צ at the Wikipedia Project

in a number of biblical texts that describe it as a prominent Canaanite city (i.e., Num 21:1; 33:40; Josh 12:14; Judges 1:16). Over the course of eighteen seasons of excavation a large EBA settlement came into view at the location, its community flourishing in conjunction with the copper trade that passed by it during these centuries.[49] EBA Arad was enclosed by an impressive double-gated city wall that ran 1,200m in length and featured at least eleven semi-elliptical towers to guard the settlement. One of the great fortified cities of the Levant, Arad oversaw a key trade route that coursed through the region.

But as with those other EBA locations, Arad was finally abandoned around 2600 BCE and was not resettled for over 1,500 years, until, ca. 950 BCE, a small Iron Age community arose amid its ruins.[50] The LBA city referred to at moments in the Hebrew Bible, much like the city of Jarmuth, did not then exist. But what was present at these locations were monumental ruins from an EBA past.

[49] Ruth Amiran and Ornit Ilan, *Early Arad: The Chalcolithic and Early Bronze 1B Settlements and the Early Bronze II City: Architecture and Town Planning* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1996), 140–47; Ruth Amiran and Ornit Ilan, "Arad," in *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Volume I, 76–82.

[50] Amiran and Ilan, *Early Arad*, 147; Amiran and Ilan, "Arad," 82.

9   Bronze Age ruins of Tel Yarmuth. Bukvoed, photograph. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license

A similar relationship between ruins and biblical storytelling occurs in conjunction with the site of 'Ai (et-Tell). Situated 15km to Jerusalem's northeast and mentioned in a number of biblical texts, 'Ai features most prominently in an extended narrative in Josh 7–8 that recounts how it was destroyed by Israelite forces. As with other EBA cities, 'Ai was settled initially in the EBA I era and subsequently grew into a large, fortified location at the beginning of the EBA II period.[51] Remains of monumental public architecture, both palaces and temples, were located on the acropolis of the city, and in time the walls of 'Ai expanded in successive building phases to become 8m wide. During this time, 'Ai was the principal city of a region that, a thousand years later, Jerusalem would come to control.

Yet – much like Jarmuth, Arad, and other EBA centers – 'Ai was destroyed around 2500 BCE and abandoned for well over a thousand years. In the Iron I period a small settlement came to be built on the old terraces along the ruins of the acropolis, but this village was also soon deserted, and 'Ai was never again resettled. The biblical stories told about a great LBA city refer, therefore, to a legendary settlement that was abandoned long before the period when these biblical stories were set. But once more what prevailed at 'Ai when the biblical writers told stories about it were monumental ruins from a distant past – ruins that came to define even the location's name in Hebrew: 'Ai, the city of "the ruins" (העי), built and fallen long ago.

Remains unearthed across disparate regions of the southern Levant indicate that "prominent ruins" from the EBA "were visible to the inhabitants of the country in later periods," as Amihai Mazar observes in his overview of this

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[51] Joseph Callaway, "New Evidence on the Conquest of 'Ai," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87.3 (1968): 312–20; Joseph Callaway, "Excavating Ai (Et-Tell): 1964–1972," *Biblical Archaeologist* 39.1 (1976): 18–30; Joseph Callaway, "Ai," in *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Volume I, 39–45.

era.[52] The biblical references to Jarmuth, Arad, and 'Ai offer further evidence of this visibility, attesting to how the biblical writers were familiar with the ruins of EBA locations. Their descriptions of these sites as imposing fortified cities suggest that these stories were shaped by the EBA remains that persisted at these locations – the remnants of ancient city walls, palaces, and temples, amid other debris, giving rise to narratives that recounted how these locations had fallen in a more distant past. Though these cities were abandoned at least a thousand years before any biblical text was written down, their monumental ruins left a deep and lasting impression on those later populations who came across them, a point apparent in the fact that the biblical writers told stories about these locations long after their demise. The distance in time between 'Ai's downfall in the EBA and the Book of Joshua's story of its destruction likely approached two thousand years, or a similar distance that separates us from the Roman conquest of Britain.

But what these biblical references to EBA cities also reveal is that the actual antiquity of these settlements was lost on their later storytellers. The scribes who composed these narratives appear to have been unaware that the ruins located at these sites preceded even the era of Abraham, according to biblical chronology. None of these accounts, that is, depict EBA cities as sites that came to ruin in the mid-third millennium BCE. Even 'Ai's name suggests that the original identification of the site fell out of local memory, lost in the millennium that passed after its EBA destruction and abandonment. When stories were told about these ancient locations, the time period when these sites were destroyed was conflated with much later eras, a point to which we will turn below. Unable to distinguish between historical periods on the basis of stratigraphy, as archaeologists do today, the blurred and vague temporal framework attached to these ruins arose because knowledge of how to date these remains did not exist in antiquity, nor, for that matter, did a depth of historical time needed to account for these ancient predecessors.

1.1.2 The Middle Bronze Age II (ca. 1800–1600 BCE)

Though EBA ruins would have been part of the visible landscape of the first millennium BCE in the southern Levant, it is the ruins of the MBA II period that would have been most distinct. "If the second millennium can, in its entirety, be characterized as the Canaanite millennium," Greenberg writes, "then the MB II must be its high-water mark, in terms of settlement expansion and the flowering of a recognizable and distinct cultural idiom."[53] Indeed, what

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[52] Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible 10,000–586 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 144.
[53] Greenberg, *Archaeology of Bronze Age Levant*, 224.

is significant about this era for our purposes is that it represents the "zenith of urban development" in the long Bronze Age period,[54] a timeframe when impressive monumental urban centers emerged that would, at many locations, not be surpassed until the Roman era over fifteen hundred years later.

Among MBA sites, it is once again the ruins of their fortifications that would have been most conspicuous.[55] Mazar comments,[56]

> During the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries B.C.E. the art of fortification reached a level of unparalleled sophistication ... The idea was to surround the city with steep artificial slopes which will raise the level of the city wall high above the surrounding area and locate it as far as possible from the foot of the slope so that siege devices such as battering rams, ladders, and tunneling methods would not be effective. Two major types of fortifications were adopted, both of which were intended to achieve the same effect: the earth rampart and the glacis.

The result of these immense construction projects was the utter transformation of the southern Levant's landscape, where city walls came to be elevated on artificial earthen embankments that rose above the terrain and appeared across the horizon as settlements set on artificial hills.

At Shechem (Tel Balatah), for example, a massive earthen rampart was created by the site's engineers that still stands to the height of nearly 10m in its northwestern sector.[57] At Hazor, the city expanded to a remarkable 80ha during this time, or roughly twice the size of Vatican City, with its new MBA rampart rising 30m above the plain in which it sits.[58] Timnah (Tel Batash), also situated on a low alluvial plain, had its nearly precise square rampart carefully oriented toward the cardinal directions,[59] and a massive rampart, 70m in width, enclosed the city of Ashkelon on the Mediterranean coast.[60]

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[54] William Dever, "The Middle Bronze Age: The Zenith of the Urban Canaanite Era," *Biblical Archaeologist* 50 (1987): 149–77; 150.

[55] For a detailed study of these fortifications, see Aaron Burke, *Walled up to Heaven: The Evolution of Middle Bronze Age Fortification Strategies in the Levant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), esp. 48–73. Cf. Joel Uziel, "Middle Bronze Age Ramparts: Functional and Symbolic Structures," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 142.1 (2010): 24–30.

[56] Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 198.

[57] Edward Campbell, *Shechem III: The Stratigraphy and Architecture of Shechem Tell Balâtah*, Vol. 1 (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2002), 105–43; Edward Campbell, "Shechem," *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Volume IV: 1349–51; Dever, "The Middle Bronze Age," 155–56.

[58] Burke, *Walled up to Heaven*, 65–70; David Ussishkin, "Notes on the Middle Bronze Age Fortifications of Hazor," *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992): 274–81.

[59] Amihai Mazar, *Timnah (Tel Batash) I: Stratigraphy and Architecture* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1997), 249–50.

[60] Lawrence Stager, "Introduction," in *Ashkelon 6: The Middle Bronze Age Ramparts and Gates of the North Slope and Other Fortifications*, eds. L. Stager, J. D. Schloen, and R. Voss, 3–23 (North Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018).

10 Tel Lachish, 1936 CE. G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection. Library of Congress. Public domain

At other sites, too, including even those of a more modest size, such as Shiloh (Khirbet Seilun) or Tel Nagila, we find the construction of substantial earthen works to support new walls that encircled these settlements.[61] The result of these monumental construction projects was a landscape that suddenly featured great mounds, artificially built, on which cities now stood.

Remains of these monumental cities would have therefore endured long after they had come to ruin. Prominent among these ruins was the cyclopean masonry used to construct city walls. Consisting of stones that could reach 3m in length and over a ton in weight, Hazor, Shechem, Jerusalem, Jericho, and Hebron – among other sites[62] – all incorporated these massive boulders into walls built during the MBA period, many of which, because of their sheer size, can still be found at these locations today. In addition, new monumental gates and towers were constructed that far outpaced their EBA antecedents in terms of size and the sophistication of their engineering.[63] Flanking these gates were often large bastions or towers, though both architectural forms could appear throughout the course of a location's city wall. At Gezer, a half-dozen towers

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[61] Ruth Amiran and Amir Eitan, "A Canaanite-Hyksos City at Tel Nagila," *Archaeology* 18 (1966): 113–23; Israel Finkelstein and Zvi Lederman, "Area H–F: Middle Bronze III Fortifications and Storerooms," in *Shiloh: The Archaeology of a Biblical Site*, ed. I. Finkelstein, 49–64 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1993).

[62] Burke, *Walled up to Heaven*, 55, 234, 271, 282, 307; Dever, "The Middle Bronze Age," 154.

[63] The six-pier gate is most typical of MBA cities, constructed on a direct-axis passageway and typically incorporating two sets of doors that permitted entry into these sites, such as examples recovered from Gezer, Megiddo, and Shechem. On this gate, see Burke, *Walled up to Heaven*, 68.

11 Tel Nagila. Amos Meron, photograph. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 unported

were unearthed along its lengthy MBA enclosure, though it originally included many more,[64] and the remains of a number of impressive towers were also recovered from the MBA fortifications at Beth Shemesh, Hebron, and Jericho.[65]

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[64] Ibid., 260–63; Dever, "Middle Bronze Age," 156–57; Joe Seger and James Hardin, "Cultural and Historical Summary: Synchronic and Diachronic Study of the Fortifications at Gezer," in *Gezer VII: The Middle Bronze and Later Fortifications in Fields II, IV, and VIII*, eds. J. Seger and J. Hardin, 12–36 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 13–15.

[65] Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, "Solving a Century-Old Puzzle: New Discoveries at the Middle Bronze Age of Tel Beth-Shemesh," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 145.1 (2014): 6–24; Burke, *Walled up to Heaven*, 276–81; Jeffrey Chadwick, "Hebron in Early Bronze III and Middle Bronze Age II: Fortification Walls in Area I.3 of the American Expedition to Hebron (Tell er-Rumeide)" in *Tell It in Gath: Studies in the History and Archaeology of Israel. Essays in Honor of Aren M. Maeir on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. J. R. Chadwick et al., 167–86 (Münster: Zaphon, 2018); Nicolo Marchetti, "A Century of Excavations on the Spring Hill at Tell es-Sultan, Ancient Jericho: A Reconstruction of Its Stratigraphy," in *The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C. II*, ed. M. Bietak, 295–321 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003), 312.

12 Cyclopean stones used in Middle Bronze Age II wall and tower. Hebron (Tell er-Rumeideh). Jeffrey Chadwick, photograph. Used by permission

Within the confines of these MBA cities, the ruins of elite residences and temples would have been conspicuous. Frequently built on a monumental scale, such public architecture contributed to the idea of these settlements as an "*axis mundi*," Greenberg remarks, "linking the nether worlds to the celestial through the mediation of the man-made (or at least improved) mountain."[66] At Tel Kabri in the western Galilee region, an elaborate 6,000m² palace, larger than the White House, was constructed in the eastern part of the city and was notable, in part, for its large audience hall adorned with rich frescoes and paintings that bear a relationship to Minoan and Theran forms.[67] Excavations at Lachish have similarly located a large MBA palace with walls 2m thick, ashlar masonry used in its design, and rooms built with cedar wood imported from

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[66] Greenberg, *Archaeology of the Bronze Age Levant*, 226.

[67] Assaf Yasur-Landau and Eric Cline, "The Four-Dimensional Palace: The Middle Bronze Age Palace of Kabri through Time," in *Space and Time in Mediterranean Prehistory*, eds. S. Souvatzi and A. Hadji, 231–46 (New York: Routledge, 2014); Assaf Yasur-Landau and Eric Cline, "Looking Ahead: Strategies for Moving forward and Synthesis of Stratigraphic Sequences," in *Excavations at Tel Kabri: The 2005–2011 Seasons*, eds. A. Yasur-Landau and E. Cline, 335–40 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 336–38.

13 Gezer Stelae. Mboesch, photograph. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 international license.

the far north in Lebanon.[68] Large palatial buildings were similarly located at Aphek, Megiddo, Tell Ajjul, and Jericho, among other sites.[69]

Of the temples constructed during this era, the most famous are the *migdal* or tower-temples that were positioned on raised platforms and could be seen from a great distance.[70] Examples include those unearthed at Hazor, Megiddo, and Shechem, the latter of which had walls 5m wide that supported two large towers at its entrance hall.[71] At Tel Haror, located on the Wadi esh-Sharia, a fine temple of similar form had features that were partially preserved in situ

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[68] David Ussishkin, "Area P: The Middle Bronze Age Palace," in *The Renewed Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)*, Vol. 1, ed. D. Ussishkin, 140–87 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2004).

[69] Moshe Kochavi, "The History and Archaeology of Aphek-Antipatris," *Biblical Archaeologist* 44.2 (1981): 75–86; 77; Lorenzo Nigro, "The 'Nordburg' of Megiddo: A New Reconstruction on the Basis of Schumacher's Plan," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 293 (1994): 15–29; Holly Winter, "Tell el-'Ajjul Palaces I and II: Context and Function," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 150.1 (2018): 4–33; Lorenzo Nigro, "The Built Tombs on the Spring Hill and the Palace of the Lords of Jericho ('dmr Rha) in the Middle Bronze Age," in *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, ed. J. Schloen, 261–76 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009).

[70] Matthew Sussnow, *The Practice of Canaanite Cult: The Middle and Late Bronze Ages* (Münster: Zaphon, 2021), 54–65.

[71] Campbell, *Shechem III*, 145–51; Campbell, "Shechem," *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Volume IV: 1349–51. Dever, "Middle Bronze Age," 166–68.

because of an earthquake that collapsed the structure. But Hazor stands out, once again, not only for its large "Southern Temple" that stems from this period but also for a cultic precinct located to the southeast of this building that featured more than thirty standing stones in what appears to be an open-air sanctuary.[72] A large open-air sanctuary was also present at Gezer, featuring ten imposing megalithic stelae, some over 3m tall, coordinated along a north-south axis.[73]

For our purposes, the great cities of the MBA find significance because of how their remains left a lasting imprint on the southern Levant's terrain. Aaron Burke observes how the ruins of this era are distinguished by being "still visible across the landscape," surviving "like the pyramids of Egypt" four thousand years later due to their "impressive size" and the "enormous quantity of material and labor" that were required for their formation.[74] But, as with the demise of EBA cities, so, too, did the MBA period come to a close through a series of widespread destructions and abandonments, most occurring during the decades around 1600 BCE.[75] At a few sites, such as Aphek,[76] Jaffa,[77] Hazor,[78] and Jerusalem,[79] renewed or continued settlement persisted in the centuries after. Yet, as with a number of EBA settlements, many MBA sites went unoccupied for hundreds of years after their downfall, and some for millennia, leaving their monumental ruins lying largely uninhabited. Geographically, these deserted sites could be found across the southern Levant: The large palatial estate at Tel Kabri is destroyed in the seventeenth century BCE and is not resettled until a small fortress appears in the Iron IIA period some seven centuries later;[80] Tell Nimrin, a prominent site in the Jordan valley located 16km east of Jericho, is abandoned for over five centuries

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[72] Sharon Zuckerman, "The Temples of Canaanite Hazor," in *Temple Buildings and Temple Cult*, ed. J. Kamla, 99–125 (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2012), 111–13. Sussnow, *Practice of Canaanite Cult*, 52.

[73] William Dever, "The Middle Bronze Age 'High Place' at Gezer," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 371 (2014): 17–57.

[74] Burke, *Walled up to Heaven*, 3.   [75] Greenberg, *Archaeology of the Bronze Age Levant,* 263.

[76] Moshe Kochavi, "The Aphek Acropolis in Context," in *Aphek-Antipatris II: The Remains on the Acropolis*, 592–603 (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications, 2009).

[77] Aaron Burke, "Early Jaffa: From the Bronze Age to the Persian Period," in *The History and Archaeology of Jaffa*, Vol. 1, 63–78 (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2011).

[78] Amnon Ben-Tor et al., "The Late Bronze Age Strata XV–XIII (Strata XV–XIII)," in *Hazor VII: The 1990–2012 Excavations, The Bronze Age*, ed. A. Ben-Tor et al., 66–144 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2017).

[79] Joe Uziel, Yuval Baruch, and Nahshon Szanton, "Jerusalem in the Late Bronze Age – The Glass Half Full," in *The Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Southern Canaan*, ed. A. Maeir et al., 171–84 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

[80] Meir Edrey et al., "The Iron Age Lower Settlement at Kabri Revisited," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 152.2 (2020): 94–120.

after its MBA destruction;[81] and the MBA fortifications at Tel Malhata and Tel Masos, both situated in the Beersheba Valley in the Negev, are also destroyed and deserted for half a millennium.[82]

Yet from the perspective of the biblical writings, the most meaningful MBA site is that of Jericho. Though preceded by a number of earlier settlements in the long history of the location, in the MBA Jericho was rebuilt on a more massive scale, expanding well beyond the confines of the EBA settlements that had once resided there. Like other locations of its time, Jericho came to be encircled by a rampart built of cyclopean stones, creating a fortification line that included the spring on which Jericho was originally founded ('Ain es-Sultan) and which enclosed a large palatial building, termed the "Hyksos Palace" in earlier excavations.[83] An impressive temple from the Spring Hill area of the settlement has also been recovered just inside the city gate of the upper city, as has a domestic quarter from the lower area of the city.[84]

The history of Jericho was nevertheless a volatile one. Destroyed three different times in the MBA, the city was much reduced in the centuries that followed the final assault against it. An administrative text suggests that some activity was carried out at the site a few hundred years later in the fourteenth century BCE,[85] though physical remains of this settlement are modest and much reduced from its previous MBA stature.[86] After this period of occupation, Jericho was again abandoned apart from faint traces of activity in the Iron I period and not rebuilt until sometime in the tenth through ninth centuries BCE, or well over half a millennium after the large MBA city had been destroyed.[87]

[81] James Flanagan et al., "Tell Nimrin: Preliminary Report on the 1993 Season," *Annual of the Department of the Antiquities of Jordan* 38 (1994): 205–44.

[82] Izthaq Beit-Arieh and Liora Freud, *Tel Malḥata: A Central City in the Biblical Negev*, Vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Amery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2015), 739; Itamar Singer, "The Middle Bronze Age Fortified Enclosure," in *Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen auf der Ḫirbet el-Mšaš (Tel Masos), 1972–75*, 186–97 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983).

[83] Burke, *Walled up to Heaven*, 275–82; Lorenzo Nigro, "The Built Tombs on the Spring Hill and the Palace of the Lords of Jericho," 361–76; Lorenzo Nigro, "Tell es-Sultan 2015: A Pilot Project for Archaeology in Palestine," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79:1 (2016): 4–17; 5, 14–15; Lorenzo Nigro, "The Italian-Palestinian Expedition to Tell es-Sultan, Ancient Jericho (1997–2015): Archaeology and Valorisation of Material and Immaterial Heritage" in *Digging up Jericho: Past, Present and Future*, ed. R. T. Sparks et al., 175–214 (Oxford: Archeopress, 2020), 196–202.

[84] Marchetti, "A Century of Excavations on the Spring Hill at Tell es-Sultan," 312–14; Nigro, "Tell es-Sultan 2015," 14–16; Nigro, "The Italian-Palestinian Expedition to Tell es-Sultan," 202.

[85] S. Smith, "Report on a Tablet from Jericho," *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 21 (1934): 116–17.

[86] So Burke: "To date there has been no evidence for the fortifications of Jericho during the Late Bronze Age." Burke, *Walled up to Heaven*, 282.

[87] Nigro, "Tell es-Sultan," 16–17. In the Iron IIC period (late eighth–early sixth centuries BCE), Jericho flourished, expanding beyond its walls for the first time in its lengthy history. Nigro, "The Italian-Palestinian Expedition to Tell es-Sultan," 206.

For the biblical writers, Jericho was therefore a site of ruins. These remains would have descended from successive cities built and destroyed over the course of two thousand years prior to when the biblical stories about the location were first written down. Even the notable late Iron Age settlement that eventually arose at Jericho would have been surrounded by prominent ruins from a MBA past, particularly from the massive rampart and defensive fortifications that had once guarded the city. If the large and monumental city of the LBA portrayed in the famous story about its downfall in the Book of Joshua did not, then, exist (Josh 6), what was apparent at Jericho during the time of the biblical writers were ancient ruins from a distant past.[88] The stories told about the conquest of this site would have been in keeping with those told about the EBA cities whose ruins also gave rise to biblical accounts of how they came to be.

Among locations that continued to be occupied in the centuries after the MBA ended, the ruins of this period would have stood out to later inhabitants. Many such settlements, in fact, were located in the heart of the central hill country where a number of biblical stories are set. Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel, Jerusalem, and Hebron, for example, all contained communities who lived among the ruins left behind from the MBA period. At Shechem, later residents attempted to reuse what they could salvage of the MBA fortification system in the centuries that followed,[89] and recent excavations from Hebron suggest that the large MBA rampart was still in use in the Iron Age II period many centuries later, with new fortification elements added to it at this time.[90] Shiloh's Iron I community built into the ruins of the MBA wall that encompassed the site to support their new structures,[91] and later residents of Jerusalem inhabited a location whose "very large" MBA wall would have been a striking feature of the landscape, attesting to Jerusalem's importance hundreds of years before Iron Age populations occupied the site.[92] When stories were told about Israel's early past in Canaan, this is to say, they were often performed and written

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[88] Nigro writes in a similar vein, "The ruins at Tell es-Sultan are far older than the alleged date of Joshua's conquest . . . Nonetheless, the already famous ruins of Jericho were exploited by the biblical author giving them an everlasting fame." Nigro, "The Italian–Palestinian Expedition to Tell es-Sultan," 204.

[89] Campbell, *Shechem III*, 169.

[90] David Ben-Shlomo, "New Evidence of Iron Age II Fortifications at Tel Hebron," in *The Last Century in the History of Judah: The Seventh Century BCE in Archaeological, Historical, and Biblical Perspectives*, eds. F. Capek and O. Lipschits, 63–88 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2019).

[91] Israel Finkelstein, "Conclusion," in *Shiloh: The Archaeology of a Biblical Site*, 383–84 (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv, 1993).

[92] Aren Maeir, "Assessing Jerusalem in the Middle Bronze Age: A 2017 Perspective," *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region* 11 (2017): ★64–★74. Cf. Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, "A New Segment of the Middle Bronze Fortification in the City of David," *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): 141–53; Alon De Groot and Hannah Bernick Greenberg, *Excavations at the*

14 Cyclopean wall. Jericho (Tell es-Sultan), 1900 CE. G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection. Library of Congress. Public domain

down in the shadows cast by the ruins of the region's Middle Bronze Age centers. The impression left by these physical remains is perhaps most evident in the story recalled about the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6 and the miraculous collapse of its great wall. But the lesser-known accounts of the Anakim at Hebron (Num 13:22; Josh 11:21), the covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem (Josh 24), or Samuel's early career at Shiloh (1 Sam 1–3) were stories also set at

City of David 1978–1985 Directed by Yigal Shiloh, Vol. VIIA (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2012), 148–54.

sites where monumental ruins from the MBA period endured.[93] When David conquers Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6–9), later audiences of this story could have envisioned David surmounting the city's old walls and occupying what remained of ruined structures from long ago, though these individuals would not have known who was actually responsible for the ruins that were visible at the site or how they came to be. Of the great cities of the MBA, the biblical writers knew little of their origins or their demise.

1.1.3 The Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1175 BCE)

The settlements that appeared in the centuries that followed the MBA were often much diminished from their predecessors, both in terms of their infra-structure and the size of their populations. The traces these locations left on the landscape of the southern Levant were therefore more sporadic and less evident than those of their predecessors, at moments enclosed within the larger EBA or MBA ruins that surrounded them or lodged at sites that would become more imposing during later centuries. Nevertheless, certain remains from LBA sites would have been visible in the centuries that followed.

Some of these ruins were those left behind from Egyptian rule. During the course of the fifteenth century BCE, Egyptian incursions into the Levant brought much of the region under its control, its jurisdiction continuing for three centuries until Egyptian power finally receded with the waning of the LBA international system of which it was involved.[94] It is a feature of Egyptian policy during this era, however, that, though an Egyptian presence "was pronounced" culturally, it was "structurally limited," its authority often exer-cised via intermediaries and local leaders loyal to Egypt rather than through the destruction and reconstruction of locations that Egypt sought to command.[95] The result of this strategy was that the material assemblages found among LBA sites in Canaan could evince an abundance of Egyptian wares or those

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[93] Ronald Hendel, for example, has called attention to biblical stories that identify giants located at sites where monumental Bronze Age remains were present, thus accounting for the massive building projects from centuries before. Ronald Hendel, "The Landscape of Memory: Giants and the Conquest of Canaan," in *Collective Memory and Collective Identity: Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History in Their Context*, eds. J. Ro and D. Edelman, 263–88 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021). For a similar argument about the early Iron Age period and the great ruins at Gath, see Aren Maeir, "Memories, Myths, and Megalithics: Reconsidering the Giants of Gath," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139.4 (2020): 675–90.

[94] Aaron Burke, "Canaan under Siege: The History and Archaeology of Egypt's War in Canaan during the Early Eighteenth Dynasty," in *Studies on War in the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays on Military History*, ed. J. Vidal, 43–66 (Munster: Ugarit Verlag, 2010); Mario Liverani, "The Great Powers Club," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, eds. R. Cohen and R. Westbrook, 15–27 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2000).

[95] Greenberg, *Archaeology of the Bronze Age Levant*, 262.

influenced by them but provide less evidence of more pronounced Egyptian architectural forms.[96]

At two sites familiar to the biblical writers, however, the material footprint of Egypt was more apparent. The first is the port city of Jaffa on the Mediterranean coast (Josh 19:46; 2 Chron 2:16; Jonah 1:3; Ezra 3:7). Conquered by the Egyptians during the reign of Thutmose III (ca. 1482–1428 BCE), Jaffa was turned into an Egyptian harbor in the late fifteenth century BCE and remained under Egyptian control for the next three hundred years.[97] Of the remains left behind from the Egyptian garrison stationed there, the most significant known to us is the large gatehouse attached to a fortress that existed at the city during this time. The monumental façade is the most striking feature of this structure, bearing a large inscription of Ramesses II that was positioned along a passageway over 4m high and guarded by two large towers. After its destruction ca. 1125 BCE, the Ramesses Gate area evinces few traces of settlement activity until the Persian Period many centuries later, though some ephemeral Philistine material remains suggest these new inhabitants constituted a "squatter occupation" among the ruins that followed Egyptian withdrawal.[98]

The second LBA city that preserved Egyptian ruins is that of Beth-Shean. Located at the confluence of the Jordan River and Jezreel Valley, the site came under Egyptian control in the fifteenth century BCE and was used as the principal administrative center for Egyptian activities in Canaan at the time.[99] In the Ramesside period of the thirteenth century BCE, Beth-Shean was rebuilt on a more monumental scale with new temples, public buildings, and

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[96] Ibid., 282. Cf. Anne Killebrew, "New Kingdom Egyptian-Style and Egyptian Pottery in Canaan: Implications for Egyptian Rule in Canaan during the 19th and Early 20th Dynasties," in *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World: Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford*, eds. G. Knoppers and A. Hirsch, 309–43 (Leiden: Brill, 2004); M. A. S. Martin, "Egyptian and Egyptianized Pottery in Late Bronze Age Canaan," *Egypt and the Levant* 14 (2004): 265–84; Bernd Schipper, "Egypt and Israel: The Ways of Cultural Contact in the Late Bronze and Iron Age," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 4 (2012): 30–47; Katharina Streit, "Archaeological Evidence for the Presence of Egyptians in the Southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age – A Reappraisal," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 21 (2019): 68–87.

[97] Burke, "Early Jaffa," 68–70; Aaron Burke and Krystal Lords, "Egyptians in Jaffa: A Portrait of Egyptian Presence in Jaffa during the Late Bronze Age," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 73.1 (2010): 2–30.

[98] Aaron Burke et al., "Excavations of the New Kingdom Fortress in Jaffa, 2011–2014: Traces of Resistance to Egyptian Rule in Canaan," *American Journal of Archaeology* 121.1 (2017): 85–133; 128.

[99] Amihai Mazar, "Tel Beth-Shean: History and Archaeology," in *One God – One Cult – One Nation. Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*, eds. R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann, 238–71 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Amihai Mazar, "The Egyptian Garrison Town at Beth-Shean," in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature*, eds. S. Bar, D. Kahn, and J. J. Shirley, 155–89 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

15   Replica of inscribed Ramses Gate among Egyptian ruins. Jaffa. Ricardo Tulio Gandelman, photograph. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 generic license.

a residential quarter, featuring monuments erected on behalf of Seti I and, later, of Ramesses II. The final phase of the Egyptian center (twelfth century BCE) was characterized by still more widespread Egyptian monuments and inscriptions – "unparalleled elsewhere in Canaan,"[100] its excavator observes – that may have been fashioned in an effort to promote strength and authority during a period when Egyptian power was actually under threat.

The twelfth century BCE garrison town would soon fall, but the ruins left behind of the Egyptian center remained: In the eleventh century BCE Canaanite settlement that followed, Egyptian monuments were carefully preserved and situated within and outside the northern temple of the site, including a large statue of Ramesses III, established, perhaps, to venerate the location's past Egyptian heritage among inhabitants who, nevertheless, were no longer Egyptian.[101]

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[100] Mazar, "Egyptian Garrison Town," 171.
[101] Mazar, "Tel Beth-Shean," 260–61; Robert Mullins, "The Late Bronze and Iron Age Temples at Beth-Shean," in *Temple Building and Temple Cult Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.)*, ed. J. Kamlah, 127–58 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012).

16 Ruin mound of Beth-Shean (background), ruins of Scythopolis (foreground). Author photograph

17 Ruins of Late Bronze Age Egyptian governor residence. Beth-Shean. Author photograph

But the most impressive LBA city is that of Hazor. One of a handful of MBA sites in the southern Levant to escape destruction, the city transitioned into the LBA period rather seamlessly, it appears, and without major disruption.[102] The acropolis of the site was, however, reorganized in the LBA, with two of the temples in the ceremonial precinct intentionally put out of use and carefully filled with earth, including the open-air sanctuary of standing stones situated outside of the South Temple, in addition to an earlier palace.[103] In their place a massive ceremonial residence was constructed in Area A of the site, replete with a fine colonnaded courtyard, basalt orthostats that lined the main hall's inner walls, and cedar beams that were incorporated into the brickwork throughout the structure. Nearby, another monumental building has been unearthed in the adjacent Area M, most likely a further palatial building.[104] These grand structures of the acropolis overlooked a city that retained its impressive 80ha size from centuries before, with Hazor easily the largest LBA settlement in the southern Levant.

18 Ruins of entrance to Late Bronze Age ceremonial center. Tel Hazor. Author photograph

[102] Amnon Ben-Tor, "The Ceremonial Precinct in the Upper City of Hazor," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 76.2 (2013): 81–83; Amnon Ben-Tor, *Hazor: Canaanite Metropolis, Israelite City* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2016), 78–89.
[103] Ben-Tor, "Ceremonial Precinct," 81–83; Ben-Tor, *Hazor*, 88–89.
[104] Ben-Tor, "Ceremonial Precinct," 85–91. Sharon Zuckerman, "'The City, Its Gods Will Return There . . . ': Toward an Alternative Interpretation of Hazor's Acropolis in the Late Bronze Age," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69.2 (2010): 163–78.

Nevertheless, the public buildings of the upper city came to a fiery end in the latter half of the thirteenth century BCE, at which time the extensive lower city was also abandoned.[105] Hazor became a monumental city of ruins in the time that followed, its acropolis strewn with remains of its massive buildings and its lower city never reoccupied. When later communities came to the city, they preserved the burnt remains of the acropolis, living among the ruins from centuries before. For five centuries, it appears, "the ruins of the Canaanite palace remained standing as a desolate hilltop,"[106] with Hazor's later residents carefully safeguarding the ruins by prohibiting any new building activity in this area of the site.

The fall of Hazor coincided with the destruction of a number of other LBA sites in the southern Levant, including both Jaffa and Beth-Shean, but also areas of Megiddo, Aphek, and Bethel, among others.[107] Lachish, the dominant city of the southern Shephelah – and one that flourished under Egyptian influence – also falls around 1130 BCE and is abandoned for over 200 years.[108] Located to Lachish's southwest, the fortified site of Tel Nagila is deserted near the same time, later becoming only a "hamlet or village" that was positioned amid the ruins of the old mound.[109] At Tell Kitan, located along the west bank of the Jordan River 12km north of Beth-Shean, monumental temples built near the center of the site were of such a size that there was little room for homes at the location, suggesting that the location may have functioned as a "ritual center for the surrounding settlements."[110] During the LBA, however, Tell Kitan was destroyed, perhaps by Egyptian forces, and lay in ruins for two thousand years until it was resettled in the Early Arabic period.

[105] Sharon Zuckerman, "Anatomy of a Destruction: Crisis Architecture, Termination Rituals and the Fall of Canaanite Hazor," *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 20 (2007): 3–32; Amnon Ben-Tor and Sharon Zuckerman, "Hazor at the End of the Late Bronze Age: Back to Basics," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 350 (2008): 1–6.

[106] Doron Ben-Tor, "Hazor at the Beginning of the Iron Age," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 73.2 (2013): 104. Cf. Sharon Zuckerman, "Ruin Cults at Iron Age I Hazor," in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin*, eds. I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman, 387–94 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010).

[107] For Megiddo, see David Ussishkin, "The Destruction of Megiddo at the End of the Late Bronze Age and Its Historical Significance," *Tel Aviv* 22.2 (1995): 240–67; on Aphek, Yuval Gadot, "The Late Bronze Egyptian Estate at Aphek," *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): 48–66; for Bethel, see Israel Finkelstein and Lily Singer-Avitz, "Reevaluating Bethel," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 125.1 (2009): 33–48.

[108] David Ussishkin, "A Synopsis of the Stratigraphical, Chronological, and Historical Issues," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)*, Vol. I, Part I, ed. D. Ussishkin, 50–122 (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass, 2004), 62–70.

[109] Itzhaq Shai, David Ilan, Aren M. Maeir, and Joe Uziel, "The Iron Age Remains at Tel Nagila," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 363 (2011): 25–43.

[110] Emmanuel Eisenberg, "The Temples at Tell Kittan," *Biblical Archaeologist* 40.2 (1977): 77–81; Emmanuel Eisenberg, "Tell Kitan," *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Volume III: 878–81.

At certain locations scattered throughout the southern Levant, then, ruins from the LBA would have been part of the visible landscape for those who lived in the centuries that followed. Some of these sites would have borne the traces of earlier Egyptian involvement in the region, from monuments to past pharaohs[111] to the more ubiquitous Egyptian scarabs, glyptics, faience, and pottery remains. Other locations, such as at Hazor or Tell Kitan, would have enclosed monumental remains that lay undisturbed for many centuries after the LBA ended.

In terms of the biblical writings, two features of the LBA stand out. The first is the complete absence in the Hebrew Bible of references to Egyptian control of Canaan during these centuries. Though the exodus from Egypt is the pivotal narrative of the entire biblical corpus, and though the Hebrew Bible contains a number of stories that are set in the LBA spanning from the Books of Numbers to Judges, there is not a single mention in these writings of an Egyptian presence in the Levant. This omission may be the result of the more ephemeral footprint of the Egyptians in a region that was permitted to act under the impress of local authorities and harbored few monumental Egyptian buildings outside of the administrative centers the Egyptians established. Yet, in light of the lengthy period of Egyptian hegemony in the region, the dearth of allusions to Egyptian rule among the stories told in the Hebrew Bible is remarkable. It may be that knowledge about much of this period, too, was lost by the era when the biblical writings were being formed.[112] How residents of the region understood the Egyptian ruins they would have come across in the centuries that followed Egyptian withdrawal is not conveyed in these later texts, unless these experiences were somehow woven into the strains of storytelling that pertained to the exodus story, which was said to have taken place centuries before.[113]

But alongside this absence are faint glimmers of a LBA horizon that perhaps can be discerned in these writings. Stories surrounding Hazor (Josh 11), Shechem (Judges 9), Bethel (Judges 1), and Lachish (Joshua 10), for example, all situate the destruction of these locations, roughly, within the closing moments of the LBA in which they fell. Such narratives do not demonstrate that the biblical stories communicate information about what had once taken place at these sites, particularly given that the agents behind the destruction are

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[111] Giulia Tucci, "Egyptian Royal Statues and Stelae from Late Bronze Public Buildings in the Southern Levant," in *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. S. Bickel, 87–102 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016).

[112] On this point, see Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Conquest of Canaan' in the Book of Joshua and History," in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, eds. N. Na'aman and I. Finkelstein, 218–81 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 223, 241–47.

[113] See, for example, the argument of Nadav Na'aman, "The Exodus Story: Between Historical Memory and Historiographical Composition," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 11 (2011): 38–69.

historically unknown and that the fall of Hazor and Lachish, to cite only one example, took place a century apart and not months, as the narrative in Joshua 10–11 suggests.[114] Unlike the ruins of EBA and MBA sites, however, it may be that remnants of a few LBA locations were associated with vague memories of a past that had endured with the ruins and persisted over time at these locations, memories pertaining to a violent end long ago that brought down impressive cities in the region.[115]

1.2 IRON AGE RUINS

When we enter the Iron Age period, we encounter a time when many biblical texts were first written down.[116] The ruins that arose in this era would have been more immediate to the storytellers behind these writings and, consequently, the outcome of events was often experienced by societies of which the biblical writers were part or had more recently descended. Nevertheless, it is the case that Iron Age texts would have been revised and reworked further in the generations that followed this period, whether these writers resided in the Persian (ca. 530–330 BCE) or Hellenistic (ca. 330–60 BCE) eras. And for these later communities, the ruins of Jerusalem, destroyed in 586 BCE, would be the most significant for the texts they developed.

1.2.1 The Early Iron Age (Iron I–IIA, ca. 1175–830 BCE)

In the wake of Egyptian withdrawal from the Levant in the twelfth century BCE, the settlements that emerged in the early Iron Age featured predominantly small, unwalled towns and villages set apart from the larger centers located on or near the coastal plain.[117] The ruins left behind from these sites would have been mostly negligible, therefore, particularly in comparison to monumental Bronze Age remains that persisted throughout the region. And though these centuries would witness unrest, the skirmishes that occurred

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[114] For Hazor, see Zuckerman, "Anatomy of a Destruction," 3–32; on Lachish, see Ussishkin, "Synopsis," 70–72.

[115] For this argument, see especially Zuckerman, "Ruin Cults," 393; cf. Brendon Benz, "The Destruction of Hazor: Israelite History and the Construction of History in Israel," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44.2 (2019): 262–78. This point on memory and ruins will be developed at length in Chapter 2.

[116] See, for example, discussions in William Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 48–63; Seth Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 103–56; David Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 355–85; Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, trans. L. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 53–70.

[117] For summary, see Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988), 237–91; Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 335–48.

were typically of a local variety rather than by the design of larger empires, the terrain of the Levant being less marked by these hostilities than by those that would take place in the centuries to follow.

For our purposes, a few ruins from this period are nevertheless meaningful. Megiddo, Shechem, and Bethel, for example, were all destroyed in the Iron I period.[118] Though Megiddo was quickly resettled, Shechem and Bethel would not be rebuilt for at least a century. And even after, neither settlement would regain its monumental stature from the centuries of the MBA.[119] At Shiloh, an Iron I community arose on the MBA ruin mound that had been abandoned since the sixteenth century BCE. This Iron Age settlement would be short-lived, however, as it was destroyed in the late eleventh century BCE after perhaps only a few decades of existence.[120] Remnants of other small, abandoned highland sites may have also endured in the region, such as the modest Iron I/ early Iron IIA fortress at Khirbet ed-Dawwara[121] or the fortification tower at Giloh,[122] both situated not far from Jerusalem but also, like Shiloh, abandoned after this time. Tel Rehov, a comparatively large 10ha settlement located just south of Beth-Shean, falls in the mid-ninth century BCE, and is finally abandoned a century later.[123] In the Shephelah region further to the west, the fortified site of Khirbet Qeiyafa is destroyed in the early tenth century BCE and is thereafter deserted,[124] and the impressive Iron I city of Ekron falls near the same time, with its extensive lower city not resettled for 250 years.[125]

[118] Israel Finkelstein, David Ussishkin, and Baruch Halpern, "Archaeological and Historical Conclusions," in *Megiddo IV: The 1998–2002 Seasons*, Vol. 2, eds. I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin, and B. Halpern, 848–51 (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications, 2006); Israel Finkelstein, "Shechem in the Late Bronze and Iron I," in *Timelines: Studies in Honor of Manfred Bietak*, Vol. 2, eds. E. Czerny et al., 348–56 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006); Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz, "Reevaluating Bethel," 37–38.

[119] On the possibility that a MBA temple continued in use until the Iron I period, see L. E. Stager, "The Fortress-Temple at Shechem and the 'House of El, Lord of the Covenant,'" in *Realia Dei: Essays in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Edward F. Campbell, Jr. at His Retirement*, eds. P. H. Williams, Jr., and T. Heibert, 228–49 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

[120] Finkelstein, *Shiloh*, 168–73.

[121] Israel Finkelstein, "Excavations at Khirbet ed-Dawwara: An Iron Age Site Northeast of Jerusalem," *Tel Aviv* 17 (1990): 163–208.

[122] Amihai Mazar, "An Early Israelite Settlement Site near Jerusalem," *Israel Exploration Journal* 31 (1981): 1–36.

[123] Amihai Mazar, "The Ladder of Time at Tel Rehov: Stratigraphy, Archaeological Context, Pottery and Radiocarbon Dates," in *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating*, ed. T. Levy (London: Equinox, 2005), 193–255; Amihai Mazar, "Tel Reḥov in the Tenth and Ninth Centuries BCE," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 85.2 (2022): 110–25.

[124] Yosef Garfinkel et al., "King David's City at Khirbet Qeiyafa: Results of the Second Radiocarbon Dating Project," *Radiocarbon* 57.5 (2015): 881–90.

[125] Seymour Gitin, "Philistia in Transition: The Tenth Century and Beyond," in *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition: Thirteenth to Early Tenth Centuries BCE*, eds. S. Gitin et al., 162–83 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 167.

19 Ruins of Early Iron Age gate complex. Khirbet Qeiyafa. Author photograph

But it is the city of Gath (Tell es-Safi) that would have left behind the most impressive ruins from this era. Located 45km southwest of Jerusalem, Gath flourished during the EBA, MBA, and Iron I–IIA periods.[126] Of these eras, however, it would be during the early Iron Age when Gath would reach its greatest prominence, becoming one of the largest cities of its time at around 40–50ha in size.[127] Recent archaeological evidence suggests that Gath's status in the early Iron Age was derived from its role in the copper trade that originated in the Arabah region and flowed through the Elah Valley to the coast,[128] in addition to the extensive tracts of agricultural land Gath commanded from atop the hill on which it was positioned, some of which were used for olive oil production.[129] From this perspective, not only was Gath an

[126] For an overview of these remains, see Aren Maeir, "The Tell es Safi/Gath Archaeological Project 1996–2010: Introduction, Overview, and Synopsis of Results," in *Tell es Safi/Gath I: The 1996–2005 Seasons, Part I: Texts*, ed. A. Maeir, Ägypten und Altes Testament 69, 1–88 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012); Aren Maeir, "Introduction and Overview," in *Tell es Safi/Gath II: Excavations and Studies*, eds. A. Maeir and J. Uziel, 3–54 (Münster: Zaphon, 2020).

[127] Maeir, "Introduction and Overview," *Tell es Safi/Gath II*, 21; Aren Maeir, "Memories, Myths, and Megalithics: Reconsidering the Giants of Gath," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139.4 (2020): 675–90.

[128] Ibid., 28–29.

[129] Assaf Yasur-Landau, *The Philistines and Aegean Migration at the End of the Late Bronze Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 288.

20 Iron Age fortifications of the lower city in Area D East, Gath (Tell es-Safi). M. Eniukhina, photograph. Courtesy of the Tell el-Safi Archaeological Project and Aren Maeir. Used by permission

imposing fortified city during an era when few existed in the southern Levant, but it was also an affluent one.

For such reasons, Gath was targeted by the kingdom of Damascus when its ruler, Hazael, swept south in the ninth century BCE and ravaged regions of the southern Levant. After laying siege to the location, the Arameans finally conquered Gath and destroyed it ca. 830 BCE, ending its long history of regional authority.[130] Throughout the site, evidence of Gath's destruction has been unearthed, where an 80cm layer of ash and debris has preserved vestiges of Gath's downfall.[131] After the Aramean conquest, Gath is abandoned for around a century until a smaller settlement emerges in the upper reaches of the ruined city toward the end of the eighth century BCE. This community, however, is also quickly ended when the Assyrian Empire invades the Levant at this time.[132] Subsequently, Gath is deserted once more and never rebuilt.

The ruins of Gath would lie exposed for centuries after the city was destroyed and abandoned, taking their place among the monumental remains

[130] Maeir, "Introduction," *Tell es Safi/Gath I*, 47–49.
[131] Dvory Namdar et al., "The 9th Century BCE Destruction Layer at Tell es-Safi/Gath, Israel: Integrating Macro- and Microarchaeology," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 38.12 (2011): 3471–82.
[132] Maeir, "Introduction," *Tell es Safi/Gath I*, 50–56.

of the great Bronze Age centers that had been overthrown before. Some Bronze Age fortifications at Gath, as at Hebron, appear, in fact, to have continued in use into the Iron Age, making the city's defenses a composite of formidable architectural features from many centuries.[133] Aren Maeir writes of how the city's former status would have been apparent to later visitors, who would have been able to view the "impressive and still visible physical remains of the city's extent, its massive fortifications, and other architectural features."[134] Among the wreckage present at the site would have been the remains of these fortifications and the debris of homes left exposed to the windblown sediments that had accumulated on them, the deep trenches and other remains of the siege system implemented by the Arameans at the time of Gath's fall, and scattered human remains of those who were not buried after Gath was overrun.[135]

Gath's stature before its fall is also apparent in the biblical writings, particularly in relation to stories surrounding David in the Book of Samuel, whose connections with the city of Gath and Gittite individuals form a significant theme in his rise to power (e.g., 1 Sam 21, 27; 2 Sam 6, 15).[136] Gath's destruction after the long period of its dominance would have been a seismic event in the early Iron Age, demonstrating to later visitors that even the largest and wealthiest of cities in the region could be overrun. Much like references to Shiloh's former standing (e.g., Josh 18–22; 1 Sam 1–4) or the brief account of Bethel's capture (Judges 1:22–26), stories connected to early Iron Age locations can be found within the biblical writings, even if the accounts as we have them now are more the creation of the centuries that followed Gath's destruction than when it stood.[137]

But one explanation for the appearance of these narratives is the ruins that prevailed. At both Gath and Shiloh, monumental remains stood among locations otherwise mostly abandoned, both also positioned on key transit routes that cut through the terrain of the southern Levant. It is perhaps not surprising,

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[133] Maier, "Introduction and Overview," *Tell es Safi/Gath II*, 21.
[134] Maier, "Memories, Myths, and Megalithics," 686.
[135] Maeir, "Introduction," *Tell es Safi-Gath I*, 43–49.
[136] Yigal Levin, "Philistine Gath in the Biblical Record," in *Tell es Safi/Gath I: The 1996–2005 Seasons, Part I: Texts*, ed. A. Maeir, 141–52 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012); Daniel Pioske, "Material Culture and Making Visible: On the Portrayal of Philistine Gath in the Book of Samuel," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43.1 (2018): 3–27. On the role and identity of Gath in biblical storytelling, see also the incisive observations in the forthcoming work of Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, *Scribal Representations and Social Landscapes of the Iron Age Shephelah* (New York: Oxford University Press).
[137] Edward Greenstein, "The Formation of the Biblical Narrative Corpus," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 15.2 (1990): 165–78; Na'aman, "The 'Conquest of Canaan,'" 218–23; Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 64–90; and Daniel Pioske, *Memory in a Time of Prose: Studies in Epistemology, Hebrew Scribalism, and the Biblical Past* (New York: Oxford, 2018), 30–54.

then, that the remains of both sites are referred to explicitly in later biblical texts. In the Book of Amos, for example, the leaders of Israel and Judah are summoned to "go down to Gath of the Philistines" to see what had become of it a century after its fall (Amos 6:2), its great ruins serving as a warning of what might become of Jerusalem and Samaria. Later, the Book of Jeremiah provides a similar directive to visit Shiloh and take in its remains, the already ancient ruins of the city offering a sign of Jerusalem's impending fate (Jer 7:12).

But what the archaeological record also discloses is that other remains of the early Iron Age left less of an impression on the stories that would be told about this time, particularly of an Iron I (1175–980 BCE) landscape that featured smaller settlements and villages. If Shiloh is recalled as an important settlement in the biblical writings, we are nonetheless never told how Shiloh was destroyed or by whom, nor, for that matter, are we told who resided at the fortresses of Khirbet Qeiyafa, Khirbet ed-Dawwara, or Giloh, or the circumstances surrounding the fall of Iron I Megiddo. Even an event as pivotal as David's capture of Jerusalem in the early tenth century BCE comes to us in rather cryptic form, voiced in proverbs and difficult sayings that make it challenging to reconstruct how the biblical writers understood David's acquisition of the city.[138] The impact registered by the ruins of smaller early Iron Age sites on biblical storytelling was often, in this sense, a rather modest one.

1.2.2 The Late Iron Age (Iron IIB–IIC, ca. 830–586 BCE)

The ruins of the late Iron Age mark the final stage of this overview. The remains left behind from this era were the result of two empires and their incursions into the southern Levant that took place a century apart. The first was that of Assyria. Beginning in the mid-eighth century BCE, the Assyrian Empire pursued a more aggressive policy under Tiglath-Pileser III toward lands in the Levant, culminating in the conquest of the kingdoms of Aleppo, Hadrach, and Damascus, among others, during the decade of the 730s BCE.[139] Israel, resisting Assyrian rule alongside Damascus in a coalition they had formed, lost the northern part of its kingdom (Galilee) in 734/733 BCE and, after a subsequent revolt, was finally conquered in 721 BCE.[140] Left in the wake of the Assyrian advance was a decimated kingdom. Avraham Faust observes that nearly all settlements in Israelite territory "show signs of

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[138] Daniel Pioske, "Prose Writing in an Age of Orality: A Study of 2 Sam 5:6–9," *Vetus Testamentum* 66 (2016): 261–79.

[139] Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–300 BC*, Vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1995), 458–72.

[140] Bob Becking, *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 95–104.

destruction, damage, and decline, and most did not recover at all."[141] Of forty-two excavated sites, a full twenty-seven were not reoccupied or were occupied only by a handful of squatters among the ruins after the Assyrian invasion, and a further twelve locations were vastly reduced in size and population in the decades after.[142] It appears that well over 90 percent of sites in Israel were affected by the Assyrian campaign, resulting in substantial demographic upheaval and the depopulation of entire regions. For those who journeyed through Israelite lands in the aftermath of Assyria's attack, the former kingdom would have appeared, as the Book of Jeremiah describes it, like a kingdom "in ruins" (Jer 2:15).

The fallen remains of this territory would have been apparent in all quarters of its former holdings. The city of Hazor is destroyed once more at this time and evinces only "sporadic" occupation in the subsequent centuries, with a few later residents constructing poor, flimsy homes among the wreckage of the ancient city.[143] Beth-Shean is set aflame and is not settled again until the Hellenistic period half a millennium later.[144] Bethel, too, is "sparsely settled"[145] after the Assyrian advance, being rebuilt on a larger scale only centuries later during the Hellenistic period. After being subdued, Dan, Megiddo, and Tirzah are rebuilt and reoccupied afterward, though what dominates these locations are large Assyrian residences constructed by the victors to oversee the region.[146]

Two decades later, the Assyrians would attack Judah. Spurred once more by revolt among their vassals in the southern Levant, the Assyrian ruler Sennacherib invaded territories in Phoenicia, Philistia, and Judah in the final years of the eighth century BCE to bring them back into the Assyrian orbit.[147] The campaign in Judah was particularly devastating. In the fertile Shephelah region in the western part of the kingdom, Sennacherib claims to have destroyed forty-six fortified settlements in an inscription recounted about this

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[141] Avraham Faust, "Settlement, Economy, and Demography under Assyrian Rule in the West: The Territories of the Former Kingdom of Israel as a Test Case," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 135.4 (2015): 765–89; 774.

[142] Ibid., 775.

[143] Débora Sandhaus, "Hazor in the Ninth and Eighth Centuries BCE," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 76.2 (2013): 110–17; Ben-Tor, *Hazor*, 167–70.

[144] Mazar, "Tel Beth-Shean," 266.

[145] Finkelstein and Singer-Avitz, "Reevaluating Bethel," 41–42.

[146] Faust, "Assyrian Rule in the West," 768–71. On the Neo-Assyrian governor's residence at Dan, for example, see Yifat Thareani, "Imperializing the Province: A Residence of a Neo-Assyrian City Governor at Tel Dan," *Levant* 48.3 (2016): 254–83.

[147] Mordechai Cogan, "Cross-examining the Assyrian Witnesses to Sennacherib's Third Campaign: Assessing the Limits of Historical Reconstruction" in *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography*, eds. I. Kalimi and S. Richardson, 51–74 (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
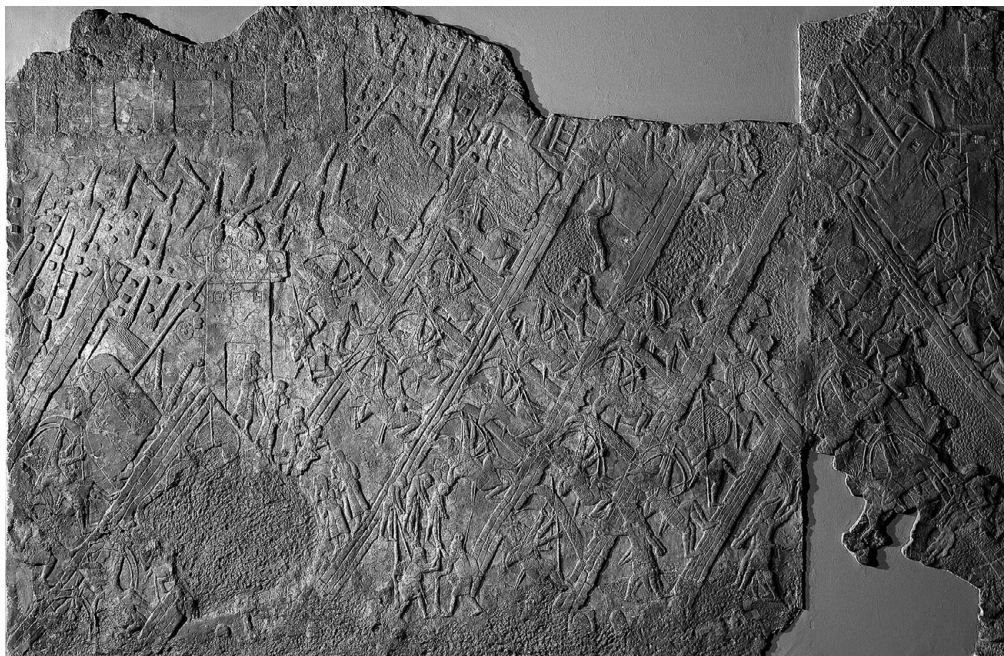
21 Assyrian siege of Lachish relief panel, Southwest Palace. Nineveh. Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 international (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license. © The Trustees of the British Museum

campaign. Azekah,[148] Beth-Shemesh,[149] and Tel Eton (Eglon),[150] among others, all bear witness to Sennacherib's invasion. The most prominent site to be overrun was, however, that of Lachish,[151] with its grim downfall depicted among the famous reliefs found in the Assyrian royal palace at Nineveh.[152]

But it would be the Babylonian Empire that would finally bring Judah and its royal center, Jerusalem, to an end.[153] With the fall of Nineveh in 612 BCE and the defeat of Egypt at the battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE, Babylon took control of the Levant, including the kingdom of Judah, which was made its vassal. After a rebellion by the Judahite king, Jehoiakim, the Babylonians laid

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[148] Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot, and Manfred Oeming, "Four Seasons of Excavation at Tel Azekah: The Expected and (Especially) Unexpected Results," in *The Shephelah during the Iron Age: Recent Archaeological Studies*, eds. O. Lipschits and A. Maier, 1–26 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017).

[149] Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, "The Final Destruction of Beth Shemesh and the *Pax Assyriaca* in the Judean Shephelah," *Tel Aviv* 30.1 (2003): 3–26.

[150] Hayah Katz and Avraham Faust, "The Assyrian Destruction Layer at Tel 'Eton," *Israel Exploration Journal* 62.1 (2012): 22–53.

[151] Ussishkin, "Synopsis," 88–90.

[152] David Ussishkin, "The 'Lachish Reliefs' and the City of Lachish," *Israel Exploration Journal* 30 (1980): 174–95.

[153] For a detailed discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem, see Chapter 4.

22 Ruins of Iron Age pillared house. Jerusalem. Author photograph

siege to Jerusalem in 597 BCE, resulting in the deportation of an elite contingent of the city's residents but not in the destruction of the city itself. Ten years later, a further rebellion brought Babylon to the gates of Jerusalem once more. This time, the city was not spared. Archaeological evidence for the destruction of Jerusalem has been found throughout different areas of the ancient city,[154] from the Jewish Quarter excavations[155] to a number of sites unearthed in the City of David.[156] As the biblical description of the destruction suggests (2 Kings 25; Jer 39), much of Jerusalem was burned to the ground at the time and its fortifications dismantled. The royal city that had stood for over a thousand years in the highlands was, finally, laid waste.

In addition to Jerusalem, large swaths of Judah were also either destroyed or abandoned, joining those ruined sites in the Shephelah that had been devastated a century before. Consequently, nearly every Judahite settlement was

[154] For summary, see Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 210–11.

[155] Hillel Geva, *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad 1969–1982. Vol. I: Architecture and Stratigraphy: Areas A, W, and X–2, Final Report* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 155–59.

[156] See, for example, Yigal Shiloh, *Excavations at the City of David*, Vol. I (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1984), 18–19; Margreet Steiner, *Excavations by Kathleen Kenyon in Jerusalem, 1961–1967, Vol. III: The Settlement in the Bronze and Iron Ages* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 108–15.

affected during these late Iron Age invasions, from the lowlands in the west to the central hills south of Jerusalem to fortified settlements located still further south in the Negeb region. Hebron,[157] Arad,[158] Lachish,[159] Jericho,[160] and En-Gedi[161] were all destroyed or abandoned near the time of Jerusalem's downfall, with much more modest populations reoccupying these ruined sites in the century after. To the far southwest, Kadesh Barnea is overrun,[162] and, across the Jordan to the east, the city of Heshbon also falls,[163] both of which are sparsely settled in the Persian period. But other locations were abandoned far longer. The southern fortresses of Aroer[164] and Horvat Uza,[165] for example, were deserted for many centuries after Judah's end. The result of the Babylonian campaign was that most of the Iron Age kingdom of Judah, save the settlements just to the north of Jerusalem in the Benjamin region, was destroyed and depopulated. Demographically, the territories of Judah were so depleted that they would not recover to their former Iron Age levels for five hundred years. Much like Israel after the Assyrian campaigns of the late eighth century BCE, Judah also became a land of ruins.

The devastation wrought by the Assyrian and Babylonian empires brought the era of the Iron Age to a close. To those living in the time that followed, the landscape of the southern Levant must have appeared forlorn, its terrain featuring scores of ruined settlements that had arisen over the course of the previous two thousand years. Many of the biblical references to ruins are informed by this late Iron Age era of widespread destruction, including those in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, whose visions often surround Jerusalem's fall. Descriptions of Jerusalem's ruins are, in fact, the most abundant in the biblical corpus, found in the Books of Kings, Lamentations, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Nehemiah, Ezra, and certain Psalms. In the Book of Nehemiah,

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[157] Jeffrey Chadwick, "Discovering Hebron," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 31.5 (2005): 70.

[158] Ze'ev Herzog, "The Fortress Mound at Tel Arad: An Interim Report," *Tel Aviv* (2002): 3–109; 102.

[159] Ussishkin, "Synopsis," 90–95.

[160] On the few remains from the settlement in the early Persian period, see the discussion in Lipschits, *Fall and Rise*, 232–33.

[161] Benjamin Mazar, "En Gedi," in *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Volume II, 402.

[162] Israel Finkelstein, "Kadesh Barnea: A Reevaluation of Its Archaeology and History," *Tel Aviv* 37 (2010): 111–25.

[163] Lawrence Geraty, "Hesban," in *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, Vol. III, 18–22 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[164] Yifat Thareani, "The Judean Frontier in the Seventh Century BCE: A View from 'Aroer,'" in *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the Negev and Edom in the Iron Age*, ed. J. Tebes, 227–65 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014).

[165] Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, *Horvat 'Uza and Horvat Radum: Two Fortresses in the Biblical Negev* (Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications, 2007), 48–56.

written at least 150 years after the Babylonian campaign, Jerusalem is portrayed as still "in ruins" and its gates "burned with fire" (Neh 2:3, 17).

1.3 THE HEBREW BIBLE AND THE RUINS THAT REMAIN

It is within this world of ruins that the biblical writers worked and lived. As with other ancient authors, such as Herodotus or Pausanias,[166] the texts composed by the biblical writers are imprinted with their descriptions of older landscapes. Perhaps the most salient feature of the ruins identified is their venerable character. This association with the past is imparted in a number of passages, such as in the references to the "ruins of old" (חרבות עולם) mentioned in Is 58:12 and 61:4, or the "enduring ruins" (משאות נצח) named in Ps 74:3. In Jer 44:6, the "waste and ruined" spaces from earlier in Jerusalem's history are said to have persisted "still to this day" (כיום הזה), and in Amos 9:11 the promise is made to rebuild certain ruins so that their restored structures would appear "as in the days of old" (כימי עולם). In Ps 9, the enemies of Yahweh are described as having "disappeared into lasting ruins (חרבות לנצח), their cities you [Yahweh] have uprooted," the destruction of these sites being so total and lasting that the memory of them had, much like those who had resided at 'Ai, "perished" (Ps 9:7).

This sense of the past is also framed by the storyteller's present. The large rock on which the ark once rested in the field of Joshua of Beth-Shemesh (1 Sam 6:18) or the altar fashioned by Gideon at the village of Ophrah (Judges 6:24), among many other artifacts, are described in these writings as being visible "to this day" (עד היום הזה), suggesting that some time had passed between when these objects had been in use and the narrator's own later context when stories about them were written down.[167] In Josh 11:13 and Jer 30:18 we come across depictions of ruin mounds that had formed long before the accounts that mention them, and in the great poem of Job 3 the poet evokes the rulers and counselors of the earth "who rebuild ruins for them-selves" (Job 3:14), the renovated structures composed by the affluent couched in the language of death and degeneration that calls attention to how these

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[166] For an overview, see Alain Schnapp, "The Poetics of Ruin in Ancient Greece and Rome," in *The Archaeology of Greece and Rome: Studies in Honour of Anthony Snodgrass*, eds. J. Bintliff and K. Rutter, 382–401 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); James Porter, "Ideals and Ruins: Pausanias, Longinus, and the Second Sophistic," in *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece*, eds. S. Alcock, J. Cherry, and J. Elsner, 63–92 (New York: Oxford: 2001). For an incisive account of how later Roman and Greek writers reflected on ruination, see Julia Hell, *The Conquest of Ruins: The Third Reich and the Fall of Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 37–108.

[167] On these descriptions of ruins and the language of "to this day," see the discussion on "presence" in Chapter 3.

restored ruins will, nevertheless, come to ruin once more.[168] But even those stories that recall the settlements that once existed at Hazor or Shiloh or Gath (e.g., Josh 11; Josh 18; 1 Sam 1; 1 Sam 27), each destroyed and abandoned in a more distant past, attest to an awareness of older locations that were in ruin when these documents were produced.[169]

It is significant that those behind the biblical writings also recognized that a ruin mound (תל) is a product not of nature but of a settlement destroyed and, at moments, rebuilt over time.[170] This practice of building on a formerly ruined settlement is attested in the Book of Jeremiah, where the promise is made that "the city will be rebuilt atop its ruin mound" (עיר על תלה) (Jer 30:18). But more frequently the biblical writings call attention to ruin mounds that remain uninhabited. In Deut 13:17 the Israelites are commanded to burn down towns that apostatize against Yahweh, leaving them a "perpetual ruin mound" (תל עולם) never to be rebuilt, and in Josh 8:28 its eponymous leader "burned 'Ai" and made the city, once more, a "perpetual ruin mound." In Num 21:1–3, a Canaanite city is renamed "utter destruction" (Hormah) after the invading Israelites destroy it (cf. Judges 1:17), a name that continued in use for some time afterward, it appears, or which was applied to other sites that had come to a similar end (Deut 1:44; 1 Chr 4:30). Micah's famous prophecy of Jerusalem's future downfall demonstrates, too, an awareness that ruin mounds not resettled could be given over to agriculture and that a number of such locations in the southern Levant were likely used for this purpose. Thus, Zion is envisioned as one day being "plowed as a field" (Micah 3:12), and, in a later vision from the Book of Isaiah, Jerusalem becomes the place where the "fatlings and kids shall feed among the ruins" (Is 5:17).

The ruins the biblical writers depict are most frequently those of a location's defenses. Fortresses (מבצר) are repeatedly brought to such an end, not only those of foreign locations such as Moab (Is 25:12; Jer 48:18) or Edom (Is 34:13) but also the strongholds of Judah (Lam 2:2; Jer 5:17) and Israel (Is 17:3; Hosea 10:14). The walls (חומה) that comprise fortifications are also depicted in a state of ruin across a number of biblical texts, perhaps most famously at Jericho (Josh

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[168] On this reading, see especially Choon-Leong Seow, *Job 1–21* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 358–60.

[169] This awareness is also found in Assyrian and Babylonian texts. In a royal text from Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE), for example, the ruler mentions "abandoned cities, which during the time of my predecessors had turned into ruins (*a-na* DU$_6$ GUR-*ru*)." RIMA 2, A.0.101.30, 79. This retrospective sense of ruination will be taken up further in Chapter 2.

[170] "Ruin hills" (*tillu*) are also referred to in a wide collection of Akkadian texts, and the term is also used adverbially, both as *tillāniš* and *tilliš am*, as in making a site "into a tell." All derivations are written either syllabically or with the logogram DU$_6$, corresponding to Sumerian DUL. On this, see CAD T, 405, 408–10; AHw, 1359. In addition to this term, *ḫarābu/ḫarbu* (to lay waste/devastated) and *anāḫu/anḫūtu* (to be in disrepair/dilapidated) also appear with some frequency.

6:20), though a similar fate awaits the great walls of Tyre (Ezek 26:4) and Babylon (Jer 51:44) and, of course, the city wall brought down around Jerusalem when it was destroyed (2 Kings 25:10). Dismantled, too, are the battlements (פנה) (Zeph 3:16) and towers (מגדל) that would have projected above these ramparts (i.e., Judges 8:17; Is 30:25; Ezek 26:9), including the greatest tower of them all at Babel, left to ruin after its builders had been scattered across the earth (Gen 11:8).

Within the confines of settlements, the phenomena most commonly associated with ruins are temple and cult. Already in 1 Kgs 9:8 we read of a warning voiced to Solomon that if he or those of future generations should not keep the commandments and ordinances set forth by Yahweh, then the temple in Jerusalem would come to ruin.[171] Indeed, throughout the Hebrew Bible threats are levied against cultic features and sanctuaries, such as those built for the worship of Baal (Judges 6:25) or used among what is described as other, foreign religious practices (Ex 34:13; Judges 2:2). In a striking example, Jehu is said to have brought down the Temple of Baal in Samaria atop its worshipers and turned it into a "latrine, as it is to this day" (2 Kgs 10:27).[172] Yet even cultic items connected specifically to the worship of Yahweh, such as the altar at Bethel (2 Kgs 23:15), or ostensibly wedded to its cult, such as those features recorded in Leviticus (Lev 26:30), are characterized as falling into ruin or potentially coming to such an end. In Amos 7:9 it is declared that the "high places of Isaac will be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel ruined" (מקדשי ישראל יחרבו), and in Hosea (12:12) it is announced that the altars of Gilgal will become "like heaps of stones" (כגלים) in an alliterative wordplay on the location's name. An extended description of the destruction of putative Yahwistic cultic items is found in the story of Hezekiah's reign in 2 Kings (18:4), and in Is 64:10 the warning voiced to Solomon long before becomes realized, with the "holy and beautiful" temple being burned with fire and all the pleasant places of Zion turned to ruins.

Finally, it is significant that older material remains are also portrayed as part of the broader countryside within these writings. Saul, David, and Absalom are all said to have erected monuments (יד, מצבת) at various sites earlier in Israel's history (Mt. Carmel, 1 Sam 15:12; the "river," 2 Sam 8:3; King's Valley,

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[171] A number of traditions, including the MT and OG, preserve "exalted" (עליון) in place of ruins (עיין), though this term, as M. Cogan points out, is "contextually impossible" at this moment in the narrative (Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings* [AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001], 296). The Targum, however, offers a double reading that harmonizes these elements: "and this house that was exalted will be ruins" (וביתא הדין דהוה עילאי יהי חריב).

[172] The desecrated shrine area recently recovered at Lachish, dated to the era of Hezekiah and replete with a toilet seat positioned in the inner sanctuary, offers archaeological evidence of such practices. Saar Ganor and Igor Kreimerman, "An Eighth Century BCE Gate Shrine at Tel Lachish, Israel," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 381 (2019): 211–36.

Jerusalem, 2 Sam 18:8), and in 2 Kings 23:17 King Josiah spots a large grave marker (צִיּוּן) near Bethel that would have been nearly three centuries old when he comes across it, according to the chronology of the story. Furthermore, pillars and heaps of stone are frequently raised by various figures to commemorate past events – from the monoliths established by Moses at Sinai (Ex 24:4) to those boulders that marked the crossing of the Jordan River by the Israelites (Josh 4:5–7). In addition, the ruins of tombs (1 Sam 10:2; 2 Sam 3:32), altars (Josh 8:30, 22:10; Judges 6:24), and old, deserted towns (Is 17:9; Ezek 36:4) are depicted in the biblical writings as part of the countryside that could be encountered by those traversing this territory.

For our purposes, what matters about these biblical references is that they provide descriptions of ruins that we would recognize as ruins today. Whether in terms of the material remains archaeologists have recovered from the southern Levant (i.e., buildings, cultic items, monuments) or in these writings' awareness of the antiquity of certain sites (i.e., being "of old" or "persisting to this day"), portrayals of ruins in the Hebrew Bible conform to our own encounters with older remains. There are even instances when we can be reasonably confident that certain ruins now in view – the MBA wall of Shechem, the LBA remains of Hazor's acropolis – were also visible during the centuries when the biblical writings were being composed, providing a point of contact between ancient experiences of the southern Levant's land-scape and our own. Though we are separated from the composition of the Hebrew Bible by over two millennia, we can nevertheless experience something of the world behind these writings by encountering the ruins that their authors also encountered.

1.3.1 Ruins and the "Temporalization of History"

Such points of affinity, however, give way to a key disparity between how ruins are represented in the Hebrew Bible and our current understanding of them. Already in the discussion of Bronze Age sites in Sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, it became apparent that the biblical stories of Arad or Jericho's downfall, for example, were fundamentally at odds with how we now date the destruction of these locations. Though these Bronze Age settlements and a number of others referred to in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Jarmuth, 'Ai, Shechem, Hebron) came to ruin at various moments in the EBA and MBA periods, the biblical accounts collapse some fifteen hundred years of ruination into essentially one era – that of the LBA II period (ca. thirteenth–twelfth centuries BCE) – when, according to accounts in the Books of Numbers, Joshua, and Judges, the Israelites conquered and settled the land of Canaan. This tendency to locate so many sites of ruin to a particular LBA horizon is all the more arresting in light of the fact that EBA and MBA sites would often have been more

impressive than those that had appeared during later centuries. The thirteenth through twelfth centuries BCE were not some watershed moment, in other words, that witnessed the downfall of numerous monumental cities whose remains displaced or sublimated what had survived from earlier eras. If one period were to be singled out for its ruins, we would expect it to be located by the biblical writers in the centuries of the MBA. But of the ruins from this era, the Hebrew Bible says little.

How we date the ruins of ancient settlements in the southern Levant often diverges from how the biblical writers account for these remains. Rather than locating ruins in distinct ages that stretch ever further back in history (EBA, MBA, etc.), as is our practice, the biblical writings tend toward a more uniform vision.[173] Apart from those late Iron Age destructions that occurred closer to the time when these texts were initially produced, the more venerable remains described in the Hebrew Bible occupy a temporal framework that frequently resists our manner of sequencing. Even sites that we know had been destroyed more recently, such as Kadesh Barnea and Heshbon in the late Iron Age, could be cast back in time by the biblical writers (Josh 10:41; Num 21:25–30) so as to correspond to that late LBA horizon when so many other settlements were said to have been destroyed. Accounts of Shechem's downfall (Judges 9) or Bethel's (Judges 1:22–26), furthermore, can have an almost timeless quality about them, devastated long ago, according to biblical storytelling, but without reference to a specific chronological marker that would help us situate these stories in time. The result of this practice is that ruins from EBA, MBA, LBA, and even certain Iron Age contexts appear as the outcome of one epoch.

What becomes clear when reading the biblical references to ruins is that the time attributed to them by the biblical writers can depart substantially from how we conceive of their duration. If we theorize this point of disconnect, what is absent in these ancient accounts is a more acute sense of what Reinhart Koselleck, in his study of the semantics of historical time, terms the "temporalization of history" (*Verzeitlichung der Geschichte*).[174] By this phrase, Koselleck

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[173] My focus here is on the dating of ruins. To be sure, a sense of periodization can be expressed in the biblical writings, perhaps most famously in the Book of Daniel and its vision of a statue made of differing materials that represent successive kingdoms across time (Dan 2:31–46). But even the impression of the era of the patriarchs and matriarchs, the exodus, the judges, etc., expresses some awareness of ages in the past (see, for example, Gary Knoppers, "Periodization in Ancient Israelite Historiography: Three Case Studies," in *Periodisieriung und Epochenbewusstein im Alten Testament und in seinm Umfeld*, eds. J. Wiesehöfer and T. Krüger, 121–45 [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2012]). The issue, as will be taken up below, is not the idea of periodization, but how these periods are distinguished in time.

[174] Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), esp. 19, 188–207; Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. K. Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 4, 11, 137–42.

describes a perspective in which time "gains a historical quality,"[175] as he puts it, defined not according to the movement of heavenly bodies or the reigns of rulers, as was frequently done in antiquity, but of human developments that could be distinguished as time advanced. Conceiving of time in this manner afforded the possibility of locating human activity "in time," so to speak, whether our interest lay in technology (i.e., the Neolithic period), politics (i.e., the Roman Empire), culture (i.e., the Renaissance), or some amalgamation of these interests and others. Crucially, what this framework afforded was the possibility of discerning discontinuities in lived experience that arose between eras, guided by the conviction that successive ages could be differentiated from what had preceded them and what would come after, including one's own. When we situate the biblical writings in the Iron Age, Persian Period, or Hellenistic era, we are driven by this assumption, one that holds that these epochs are separate, distinct, and identifiable. But this outlook would have held little meaning to the biblical writers themselves.

For Koselleck, the key assumption that we share is that as the centuries progress significant transformations occur in lived experience. The forward flow of time is for us a "dynamic and historical force in its own right,"[176] Koselleck comments, producing futures that we presume will be far different from the presents we happen to occupy. This premise is informed by our own space of experience (*Erfahrungsraum*) that has given rise to the belief that what the future holds (*Erwartungshorizont*) is unforeseeable, made uncertain by rapid technological and social developments.[177] To cite one small example of the phenomenon that Koselleck details, those of us born in the 1980s began our childhood educations in classrooms with typewriters and chalkboards, and now as adults we conduct classes fully online through technology that even a decade ago would have been unimaginable.[178] The pace of change has been breathtaking. And we are conditioned to assume that other advancements will soon take hold, further fracturing past experiences from future ones.

But this sense of the relationship between past and present has not always been so. In the opening pages to *Futures Past*, Koselleck draws our attention to the famous portrait of the *Alexanderschlacht* by Albrecht Altdorfer (1529 CE). What is curious about this painting is how images of sixteenth century CE

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[175] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 236.   [176] Ibid., 236.   [177] Ibid., 255–76.

[178] This sense of acceleration has been felt throughout the modern period, of course, and is not restricted to our own technological moment. In a famous observation from 1933, Walter Benjamin writes: "A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds." Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflection*, ed. H. Arendt, 83–110 (New York: Mariner, 2019 [1968]), 84. Hartog, too, draws attention to those who experienced World War II and their similar sense of an acceleration of time. François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, trans. S. Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 3–7.
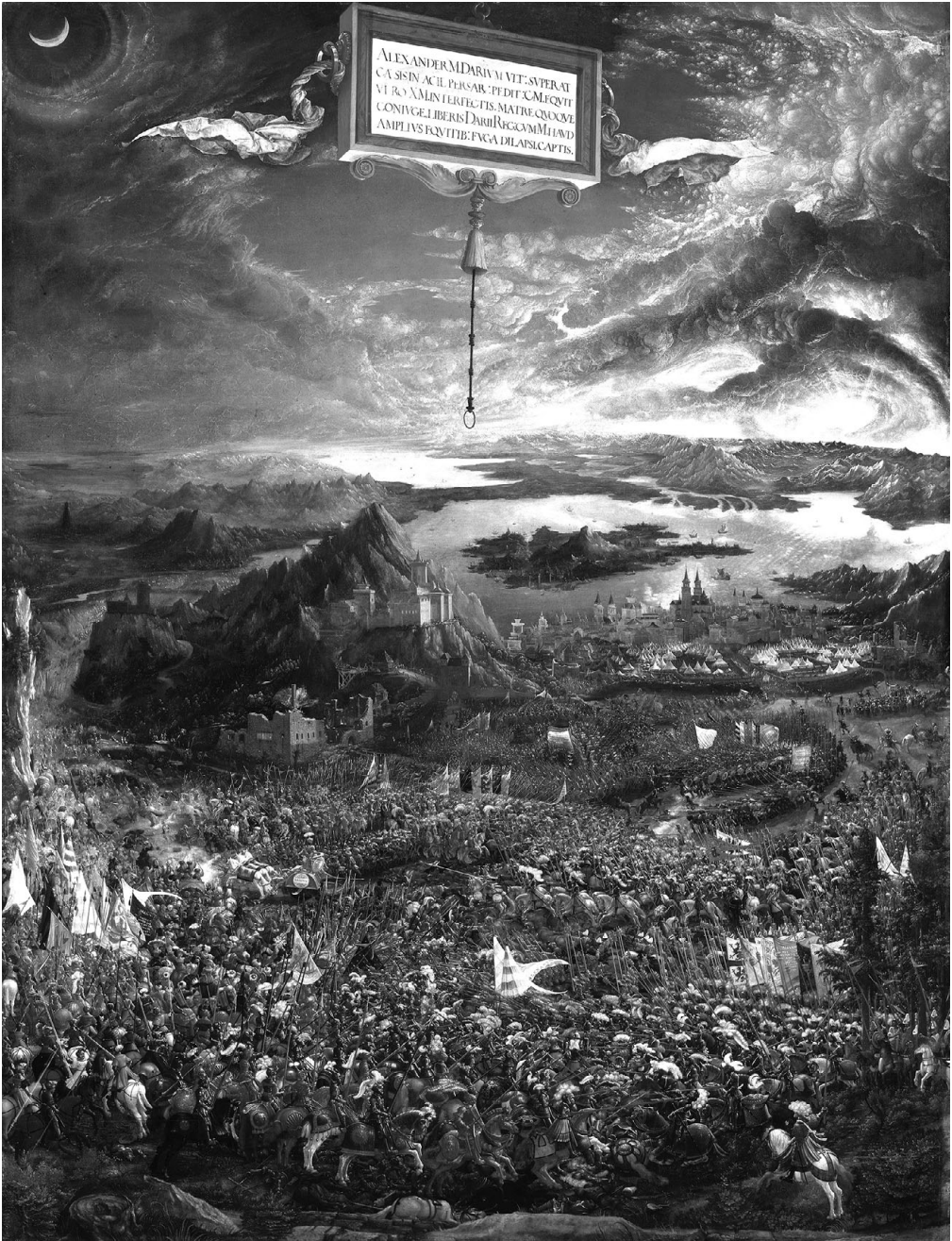
23 *Alexanderschlacht*. Albrecht Altdorfer, 1529. Public domain

combatants from the Holy Roman and Ottoman Empires are found fighting alongside fourth century BCE Persian and Macedonian forces.[179]

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[179] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 8–11.

The effect of this rendering, Koselleck writes, is an impression of time in which the "present and the past were enclosed within a common historical plane," producing an image of the ancient Battle of Issus that was "at once historical *and* contemporary" for Altdorfer's audience.[180] To further this temporal effect, statistics of those who fell in battle are detailed in faint numbered columns that appear on banners, but one number is omitted: the year the Battle of Issus actually took place (333 BCE). Altdorfer's "battle thus is not only contemporary," Koselleck comments, but also "simultaneously appears to be timeless."[181]

Yet it is precisely the "timelessness" of Altdorfer's work that is so jarring to those of us who view it today. Though Altdorfer was aware that the Battle of Issus took place long ago in regions far away from Vienna, his painting is often indifferent to such matters of historical context. Depictions of Alexander, Darius, battle formations, and dress are instead clearly transposed onto a sixteenth century CE setting. "Temporal difference was not more or less arbitrarily eliminated," Koselleck remarks on this feature of Altdorfer's portrait. "It was not, as such, at all apparent."[182] Past and present are woven tightly together in this portrayal, bound without regard for the obvious historical inaccuracies that would inevitably arise through such a depiction or for the concerns of misrepresentation that might occur. To our knowledge, none of Altdorfer's contemporaries were troubled by the manifest historical errors that were strewn throughout the painting. But when Friedrich Schlegel comes across the portrait three centuries later, he is astonished at the "marvel" of Altdorfer's work, of how it captured the mindset of a previous age that no longer existed. "[T]here was for Schlegel, in the three hundred years separating him from Altdorfer, more time," Koselleck writes, "than appeared to have passed in the eighteen hundred years or so that lay between the Battle of Issus and his painting."[183]

The *Alexanderschlacht* becomes meaningful for our study because it represents a perspective of time similar to that found in the biblical portrayals of ruins. In both, temporal difference is effectively elided by collapsing distinct eras into a vision that is more uniform. The biblical description of Arad's destruction (ca. 2500 BCE), for example, as occurring near the same time as Hazor's (ca. 1250 BCE) and Heshbon's (ca. 600 BCE), produces a narrative effect that is akin to Altdorfer's portrait and his blurring of Hellenistic and late Medieval worlds. In these renderings, historical disparities between time periods are effaced in a manner that is noticeable to us today who are sensitive to these differences, we who are aware of the many dissimilarities that would have separated fourth century BCE Persian forces from sixteenth century CE

[180] Ibid., 10. (my italics)   [181] Ibid., 10.   [182] Ibid.   [183] Ibid.

Ottoman fighters, or who date the ruins of cities in the southern Levant to much different centuries in time on the basis of variations in their material remains. But in both the biblical narrative and in Altdorfer's portrait, this temporalization of history is absent.

Less absorbed with the asymmetries in lived experience that arise as time unfolds, Koselleck's theory of temporalization offers a constructive explanation for the disinterest expressed in the biblical writings about those who had once inhabited the ruins they describe. Nowhere in these ancient texts, that is, is there any indication that one could examine these remains to discover how cultic practices or the design of buildings, beliefs about the dead or the defense of settlements, food consumption or the production of textiles, may have been practiced and experienced *differently* in the past. To be sure, various biblical accounts can refer to those who once resided at destroyed sites as being distinct from Israelite populations, presumably carrying out cultural and religious practices that were believed to deviate from the biblical writers' own. But at no place in these texts do we read of the possibility, much less the act, of digging among ruined sites to learn about those who had once resided at Jericho or 'Ai or Shiloh.

But this idea is so commonplace to us that we rarely reflect on why we hold to it, or when it came to be. Our lack of reflection on this development is in some sense an outcome of the incredible success of archaeological fieldwork over the past two centuries, in which manifest differences between populations have been revealed again and again. These remains attest to how the affairs of small highland settlements of the Iron I period, to cite one example, were quite distinct from those in the larger MBA cities that preceded them or, again, from the late Iron Age centers that would emerge hundreds of years later.[184] Apart from brief comments on sporadic religious reforms, the biblical writers, however, rarely discuss broader social or cultural changes that had transpired during these centuries, and never do they draw attention to idiosyncratic or peculiar material artifacts – an Egyptian inscription in Jerusalem, a cyclopean stone at Shechem – that would suggest past experiences at odds with the present. When celebrants walk by a "house of David" in Jerusalem in the Book of Nehemiah (Neh 12:37), no mention is made of how this structure would have been at least five centuries old when the procession occurs, a remnant of a past world that had been mostly lost by the time of Nehemiah's governorship. The Jerusalem temple was refurbished on a number of occasions according to a collection of biblical texts,[185] but no passage reflects on how much different

[184] See, for example, Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Israelite Ethnicity in Iron I: Archaeology Preserves What Is Remembered and What Is Forgotten in Israel's History," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122.3 (2003): 401–25.

[185] Peter Dubovsky, *The Building of the First Temple: A Study in Redactional, Text-Critical and Historical Perspectives* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), esp. 28–108.

the sanctuary must have appeared during the time of Zedekiah (597–586 BCE) in contrast to the period of Solomon's reign (ca. 950 BCE) from nearly four centuries before. The careful reader will be hard pressed to notice any differences between the portrayal of David's Jerusalem in the Book of Samuel from Josiah or Jehoiakim's capital depicted in the Book of Kings or the Book of Jeremiah, though the former city had roughly one-tenth the population that occupied an inhabited area not half the size of the latter.[186] Tenth century BCE Jerusalem was a much different place than its seventh or fifth century BCE successors, in other words, but no biblical text considers what these differences would have meant for how life was experienced within the highland city over the generations.[187]

What is key to Koselleck's theory of the temporalization of history, then, is a sensitivity to anachronism that emerged in tandem with it. By anachronism, I mean an awareness of time being "out of joint," as Annette Barnes and Jonathan Barnes describe it, such as when "a clock strikes in *Julius Caesar*" or when the Virgin and Child "receive devotions from fifteenth century Venetians" in a painting that adorns a cathedral wall.[188] To draw on Zachary Schiffman's definition in his study of this phenomenon, our sense of anachronism derives from the realization that "the past is not simply *prior* to the present but *different* from it,"[189] with our predecessors living in a world disparate from what we experience today.[190] This awareness drives our historical desire to situate phenomena from the past into their specific historical contexts and to identify those moments – Moses commenting on Twitter, Esther responding to Mordechai by quoting Sartre – when something has been misplaced, dislodged from its proper historical period and situated elsewhere in a time that it does not belong in. Our pronounced sensitivity to anachronism – the great "sin against the holy spirit of history"[191] – is "second nature" to us, Schiffman writes – an outcome of a presupposition we hold about how the past is utterly distinct from the present. But as Schiffman's book-length study

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[186] Jane Cahill, "Jerusalem at the Time of the Monarchy: The Archaeological Evidence," in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*, eds. A. Vaughn and A. Killebrew, 13–80 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

[187] For a study of these different Jerusalems and the influence of their landscapes on biblical storytelling, see Daniel Pioske, *David's Jerusalem: Between Memory and History* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[188] Annette Barnes and Jonathan Barnes, "Time out of Joint: Some Reflections on Anachronism," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47.3 (1989): 253–61; 253.

[189] Zachary Schiffman, *The Birth of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 2. (author's italics)

[190] For the classic treatment of "the sense of anachronism," see Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), esp. 1–2, 138–45.

[191] Constantine Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 6.

makes clear, this presupposition has a history, ours being the product of a much more recent mindset.[192]

This argument, however, requires some nuance.[193] In the Hebrew Bible there are, in fact, a number of passages where older customs or terminology is recognized as outmoded or even obsolete. In 1 Sam 9:9 the narrator remarks in an aside that "formerly in Israel, anyone who went to inquire of God would say, 'Come, let us go to the seer,' for the one who is now called a prophet was once called a seer." A similar comment appears in Ruth 4:7 ("now in former times this is how redeeming and exchanging happened") and in 2 Kings 17:34, 40 ("to this day they continue to practice their former traditions"). In addition, various biblical texts comment on how certain locations had been renamed in the past, such as Hebron ("Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba" [Josh 14:15; Judges 1:10]) or Debir ("the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher" [Judges 1:11]). Older texts not found in the biblical writings are also alluded to in a number of passages (e.g., Num 21:14–15; Josh 10:13), perhaps detailing a past that was distinct from the biblical writers' present, particularly given the possibility that some of these documents were older royal annals that recorded information from generations before.[194]

The biblical writers were aware, then, of certain practices that belonged to a bygone world. Yet, as with the ancient Greek writers Schiffman examines, the appearance of these references in the Hebrew Bible are quite isolated and never lead to a more concentrated reflection on what these older ways of life might indicate for the relationship between the past recounted in biblical storytelling and the biblical authors' present.[195] Instead, Schiffman observes, texts from antiquity note incidents of anachronism "only in passing, for specific rhetorical purposes, after which the ancient authors set them aside, effectively relegating them to oblivion."[196] It is not, then, that the biblical writers were unaware of anachronisms. It is that they did not find them meaningful.

It is perhaps for similar reasons that other examples of anachronism receive such little attention within these writings. It is rather unsettling from our

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[192] Schiffman, *Birth of the Past*, 144–52.

[193] From a comparative perspective, see also the important arguments that Greco-Roman authors did exhibit a sensitivity toward anachronism in Tim Rood, Carol Atack, and Tom Phillips, *Anachronism and Antiquity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), esp. 8–32. However, as these authors admit, the idea of anachronism present among these ancient authors succumbed to a "radical transformation of the concept in the course of the nineteenth century" (22). It is that transformation that is at issue here.

[194] There are thirty-four references to older annals or royal writings in the Hebrew Bible, most found in the Book of Kings.

[195] See also Burke's strong thesis: "Their [Jewish] linear interpretation of history was a metaphysical one . . . which did not involve any empirical sense of anachronism or change." Burke, *Renaissance Sense of the Past*, 141.

[196] Schiffman, *Birth of the Past*, 6.

historical perspective, for example, to read of Philistine populations appearing on the coastal plain (Gen 21:32, 26:1) half a millennium before we know, archaeologically speaking, they had settled in the southern Levant,[197] or to find Abraham saddling his camels (Gen 24:10) centuries prior to when they were domesticated in the region.[198] In Deuteronomy the narrator refers to an Israelite conquest that had already been completed before it began (Deut 2:12), and certain "cities of Samaria" (1 Kings 13:32) are referred to in the time of Jeroboam I, decades before Samaria is said to have been built as the royal center of the Omrides (1 Kings 16:24). In Samuel, Israelites make payments to Philistines in a weight system that would not exist until hundreds of years after the time period in which the story is set (1 Sam 13:21),[199] and later David walks into a Jerusalem temple that had not yet been built (2 Sam 12:20). In the Book of Chronicles, David receives money for the sanctuary in a coinage introduced by the Persian Empire five hundred years after he died (1 Chr 29:7),[200] and Asaph sings a hymn on behalf of exilic populations (1 Chr 16:35) when the exile was still four hundred years in the future. Later in the book, temple personnel and liturgical practices are carefully ordered by David (1 Chr 23–27) in ways that reflect practices of the Second Temple and not those of the early Iron Age cult that would have been more familiar to those living half a millennium before. And to these instances can be added our study of ruins that appeared over the course of nearly two thousand years but are portrayed largely as the outcome of one era in the biblical corpus, without comment on the differences that would have marked their appearance and forms to those who encountered them.

This rather indifferent attitude toward anachronism matters because it provides further insight into why the biblical writers make no mention of digging among the ruins they describe. If past and present were experienced as deeply connected by those behind the Hebrew Bible, if ways of life were

[197] On the appearance of the Philistines, see Lawrence Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. M. Cogan, 152–71 (New York: Oxford, 1998); Aren Maeir and Louise Hitchcock, "The Appearance, Formation and Transformation of Philistine Culture: New Perspectives and New Finds," in *The Sea Peoples Up-to-Date: New Research on the Migration of Peoples in the 12th Century BCE*, eds. P. Fischer and T. Bürge, 149–62 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017).
[198] Lidar Sapir-Hen and Erez Ben-Yosef, "The Introduction of Domestic Camels to the Southern Levant: Evidence from the Aravah Valley," *Tel Aviv* 40 (2013): 277–85; Lidar Sapir-Hen, "Human–Animal Relationship with Work Animals: Symbolic and Economic Roles of Donkeys and Camels during the Bronze and Iron Ages in the Southern Levant," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 136 (2020): 83–94.
[199] Raz Kletter, *Economic Keystones: The Weight System of the Kingdom of Judah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 42–48.
[200] Christine Mitchell, "David and Darics: Reconsidering an Anachronism in 1 Chronicles 29," *Vetus Testamentum* 69 (2019): 748–54.

thought to exhibit some coherence across the generations, then the impulse to excavate ruins and index what was distinctive about conditions in previous times would have been muted. Old debris strewn beneath the ground and the present buildings above it could be viewed as predominantly complementary, as materials of a world, past and present, that held much in common. If we think otherwise, it is because we are bound to a particular impression of time, whereby "expectations have distanced themselves evermore from all previous experience,"[201] as Koselleck describes it. This sense of the past as distant and alien has been reinforced by two centuries of archaeological excavations that have demonstrated, in a decisive manner, the discontinuities that separate one period from the next.

If we return to the ancient site of Sippar and examine once more Nabonidus' attempt to excavate the great Ebabbar temple with his team of workers, a similar set of questions can be posed. Schaudig had already pointed the way forward, as noted in the opening to this chapter, by remarking that Nabonidus' efforts at excavation were not driven by an interest in learning about the past as such but by a desire to demonstrate continuity between more ancient rulers and his present, granting him legitimacy at a moment when it may have been in question. Nabonidus' "worldview," Schaudig argues, was fundamentally "unhistorical," with the connection between past and present being maintained in a manner that was "anachronistic."[202] This was a worldview that sought cohesion across time and space in spite of the substantial changes that had transpired in the two millennia that separated the reign of Sargon the Great from Nabonidus' own. The past was once experienced as unbroken and repeatable, Koselleck argues in this vein, functioning as the *magistra vitae* that offered lessons to be imitated in the present, a past that was to be returned to and emulated whenever possible.[203] From this perspective, Nabonidus did not dig in order to discover foreign cultic practices and ancient beliefs that separated the Old Akkadian period from his own Neo-Babylonian context. He wanted to demonstrate that his rule was akin to those of the great rulers of old, consistent with their practices and ways of life.

Though there is no mention of it in their writings, it cannot be discounted, then, that contemporaries to the biblical writers or the biblical writers themselves sifted among the ruins that surrounded them. It is apparent that individuals in the first millennium BCE could reuse older materials found at ruined sites (*spolia*).[204] The famous Tel Dan inscription, for example, was found in

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[201] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 11, 263.   [202] Schaudig, "Nabonid," 491.

[203] See "Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process," in Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 26–42.

[204] On this point, see the extended discussion in Chapter 3.

three pieces,[205] each fragment located in secondary construction contexts. The builders who reused these stones were apparently "unaware" that the pieces were "part of a broken stele erected by an Aramean king," the excavators write,[206] or, at the very least, they had little interest in the historical significance such fragments held. After Jerusalem's fall, archaeological evidence suggests that squatters lived among the ruins of the capital in the decades after and reused materials from destroyed buildings[207] – a phenomenon also witnessed elsewhere in the region after various calamities.[208] Items of value could also be buried and returned to, such as the silver hoards found at Ekron or Eshtemoa.[209] Perhaps, like Nabonidus, relics from the past were similarly sought at certain locations, even if for destruction, as when Josiah is said to have demolished the old altar at Bethel and those cultic items connected to it (2 Kings 23:15), including certain graves in Bethel's vicinity.

But such practices are not what archaeologists undertake today. Beyond the retrieval or reuse of specific items of value found buried in the ground, the aims of contemporary excavations are now more encompassing and systematic, given over to exposing broad swaths of a settlement so as to better understand the lives of those who inhabited it across centuries and even millennia.[210] "The archaeologist's use of his [sic] stratified relics depends on his conceiving them as artifacts serving human purposes," R. G. Collingwood writes, "and thus expressing a particular way in which men [sic] have thought about life."[211]

[205] Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, "An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan," *Israel Exploration Journal* 43 (1993): 81–98; Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, "The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment," *Israel Exploration Journal* 45 (1995): 1–18.

[206] Biran and Naveh, "The Tel Dan Inscription," 8.

[207] De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg, *Excavations at the City of David 1978–1985, Volume VIIA*, 176.

[208] E.g., Amihai Mazar, "Tel Rehov in the Assyrian Period: Squatters, Burials, and a Hebrew Sea," in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin*, eds. I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman, 265–80 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011); Maeir, "Introduction and Overview," 21; Ido Koch, "Religion at Lachish under Egyptian Colonialism," *Die Welt des Orients* 49.2 (2019): 161–82; 163. On this phenomenon, see more detailed comments in Chapter 3.

[209] Raz Kletter and Etty Brand, "A New Look at the Iron Age Silver Hoard from Esthemoa," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 114.2 (1998): 139–54; Amir Golani and Benjamin Sass, "Three Seventh-Century BCE Hoards of Silver Jewelry from Tel Miqne-Ekron," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 311 (1998): 57–81.

[210] Commenting on Nabonidus, among other examples from antiquity, Thomas writes: "Yet while these cases demonstrate an awareness of the remains of the past surviving into the present, there is no sense in which these remains were being used as evidence in the construction of a systematic knowledge of a past society, or of the diversity of humankind . . . they were not practicing archaeology." Julian Thomas, *Archaeology and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2004), 4.

[211] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, rev. ed., ed. J. Van Der Dussen (London: Oxford University Press, 2005 [1946]), 212.

But this interest in a "particular way" of conceiving the world is dependent on a fundamental assumption, one that presumes historical particularity and a belief that how we understand ourselves and our environment is contingent on the places and periods in which specific human purposes are carried out. To us, ruins are evidence of these particularities and contingencies, illustrating the divisions in technology, taste, and lifeways that separate one era from the next. But nowhere in the biblical writings are ruins described as such.

The question is when this sense of ruins transforms. In Section 1.3.2, we turn to a period that Koselleck terms the *Sattelzeit*. In this era, stemming from roughly 1750 CE–1850 CE, Koselleck contends that overarching impressions of time, drawn out from the writings of leading figures of this era, begin to be described differently, including the identification of the present as a "new time" (*neue Zeit*) that is severed from all that came before. For our purposes, what matters about this era is that it coincides with novel understandings of ruins that also emerge.

1.3.2 Ruins Now

On January 11, 1804, François René de Chateaubriand visited the ruins of Pompeii.[212] In a journal he would later publish as *Travels in America and Italy*,[213] Chateaubriand describes the excavations being carried out at the site, now already in their fifth decade by the time of that warm January day. It is within these journal entries that Chateaubriand records what areas of Pompeii had been uncovered and what structures unearthed, providing us with a snapshot of how the location appeared at this time. But what makes Chateaubriand's journal of special interest are his reflections on the techniques used by the laborers to dig up the site's remains. Of these efforts, Chateaubriand writes that the men "remove whatever they discover" in the buildings they clear, from simple household utensils to the more elaborate furniture and statuary they have retrieved within the settlement's ancient enclosures.[214]

Though such practices were commonplace at the time,[215] Chateaubriand is nevertheless troubled by what he witnesses. "What is present done seems to me lamentable" he remarks, a sentiment precipitated, it appears, by how

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[212] For a rich discussion of Chateaubriand's visit and its implications, see Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 92–139. See also the discussion of ruins and Chateaubriand in Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, 88–96.

[213] François René de Chateaubriand, *Travels in America and Italy*, Vol. II (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 248–54.

[214] Chateaubriand, *Travels*, 252.

[215] For an overview of these early excavation techniques, see Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, 52–67.

24 *Temple of Isis at Pompeii*. Francesco Piranesi, 1788. Creative Commons (CC0 1.0). Cleveland Museum of Art

Pompeii's artifacts were "promiscuously carried" off to the royal palace at Portici to be stored away for its benefactors to possess, "buried in cabinets where they are no longer in keeping with surrounding objects."[216] Rather than extracting antiquities from the site and sending them away, Chateaubriand writes that these items should be "preserved on the spot," the structures' roofs and ceilings, floors and windows, "being carefully restored" in an effort to safeguard these remains.[217] The result of such practices would be to preserve a Roman city in its entirety, offering insights into "the domestic history of the Roman people" that would surpass in its details "all the books of antiquity."[218] Yet, unable to prevent the workers from their pilfering, Chateaubriand stands removed, voicing a final question for an audience whose time had not yet come: "Why not have left these things as they found them, and where they found them?"[219]

Chateaubriand's writings have received considerable scholarly attention because of the turning point they represent,[220] exhibiting "a rather more

[216] Chateaubriand, *Travels*, 252, 54.   [217] Ibid., 252–53.   [218] Ibid., 253.
[219] Ibid., 253.
[220] See, for example, Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*, 92–139; Peter Fritzsche, "Chateaubriand's Ruins: Loss and Memory after the French Revolution," *History and Memory* 10.2 (1998):

complex relationship to the past than had been seen before,"[221] as Peter Fritzsche remarks in his study of this era. Much of what makes Chateaubriand's discussion of ruins peculiar for their time is their sensitivity to what we would now describe as these remains' archaeological context, or the desire to understand artifacts in situ, interpreted historically within the broader, undisturbed framework in which certain objects are found. What matters about Pompeii's ruins, from this vantage point, is the historical information they convey. Rather than seeing items of high worth wrested from excavations to be sold to wealthy benefactors or clients, as was the dominant practice at the time, Chateaubriand expresses the desire to study Pompeii's ruins in order to learn about the more mundane details of how the ancient inhabitants of the city once lived. Such insights, as Chateaubriand describes them, are necessary for understanding the "domestic history" of the Roman population that had perished at Pompeii, a history that required the city's material remains to be left in place so that they could be examined where they were found.

Though nothing had changed about Pompeii's ruins in the decades since their discovery, Chateaubriand suddenly sees them differently than did those who came before.[222] Why he does so is connected to the broader historical circumstances in which Chateaubriand was embroiled, above all the French Revolution and the transformations to French society that Chateaubriand and his royalist allies had attempted to halt.[223] Fritzsche writes,[224]

> What is crucial here are not the ruins themselves, for they did not change, but the new historical field in which they were seen and apprehended. Like Simmel's stranger, the ruins appeared all at once, and they stayed in view. They were rendered visible by *new structures of temporality* based on

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102–17. For a further assessment of Chateaubriand's importance for new conceptions of historical thought in the nineteenth century, see Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, 65–96; Ivanna Rosi and Jean-Marie Roulin, eds., *Chateaubriand, penser et écrire l'histoire* (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2009).

[221] Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*, 101.

[222] The great art historian Johann Winckelmann had also critiqued the haphazard and secretive collection of artifacts from Herculaneum and Pompeii, writing a highly popular "letter" that publicized the finds to a broader European audience. But never did Winckelmann suggest that the remains of these sites be left in place to be studied, nor did he evince much interest in the mundane, daily life of these locations' residents. See Johann Winckelmann, *Letter and Report on the Discoveries at Herculaneum*, trans. C. Mattusch (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2011 [1764]).

[223] See also the argument of Hartog, who also emphasizes the experience of the rupture of time at this moment: "This man, so squarely on the losing side in the French Revolution, nevertheless had a deeper understanding, when all is said and done, of the emergent temporal order of modernity than many of his contemporaries. And he managed to transform his experience of a break, rift, or breach in time into the very mainspring of his writing." Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, 65–66.

[224] Fritzsche, *Stranded*, 106. (my italics)

disorder and rupture, concealment and half-life, that emerged with revolution in France. The power of ruins in the nineteenth century was to depict the violence of historical movement without imputing necessity to its direction. They challenged the absoluteness of the present with counterfactuals of the past.

Witnesses to a movement that sought a sundering with France's past, Chateaubriand and his contemporaries began to consider ruins from perspectives that had not been regarded before. In part, Fritzsche argues, this new lens for contemplating material remains was occasioned by how ruins were affected by the French Revolution. The National Convention's decision to destroy old castles, estates, and churches left an indelible impression on those who sought to safeguard France's past, a practice that perhaps reached its height when the royal tombs at Saint-Denis were exhumed so that the cadavers could be desecrated and dumped in a common trench.[225] The attempt to erase the past, in other words, suddenly brought it sharply into relief for those such as Chateaubriand, giving rise to a new "historical field" and novel "structures of temporality" that enabled individuals to look at older remains in ways no one had looked at them before.

To these ruins of revolution would be added those that arose in the wake of Napoleon's advances in Europe soon thereafter, where territories outside of France also experienced ruination at a scale not before encountered. The manufacture of artificial ruins such as the Magdalenenklause, so common on royal estates in the early decades of the eighteenth century CE, now gives way to a new sensibility a century later. What emerges in the nineteenth century is an interest in the historical provenance of ruins and their preservation, the material remains of locations valued for their connections to a national heritage and their capacity to shed light on how forebears once lived at a particular site or within a territory, as Chateaubriand's journal intimates. Ruins become dense with history in this period, their materials seen as traces of singular and unrepeatable past events that offered "evidence of counter lives"[226] who occupied ages other than one's own. Ruins can no longer be faked and found meaningful. They need to be excavated, studied, and conserved. It is only now, in the nineteenth century, that widespread efforts at the preservation of ruins takes hold.[227] Work on the Cologne Cathedral, abandoned to ruin in 1473 CE, is suddenly resumed in 1842 CE.[228]

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[225] Ibid., 97–98.   [226] Ibid., 104.

[227] Pope Pius II issued the first decree (bull) for the protection of ancient ruins (in 1462 CE), but broader regional and national efforts at preservation do not appear until the nineteenth century CE. See "Bulle de Pie II relative à la conservation des monuments antiques (28 avril 1462)," in *Les Arts á la cour des papes endant le XVe et le XVIe siècle: Recueil de documents inédits tirés des archives et des bibliothèques romaines*, 3 vols., ed. Eugène Müntz, 1:352 (Paris, 1878–1882).

[228] Fritzsche, *Stranded*, 108–10.

Why Chateaubriand and those who followed began to look at ruins differently is a phenomenon that is certainly more complex than what one catalyst can explain, however momentous. To political revolution can be added rapid industrialization and the maturation of capitalist market economies, intensive practices of colonialism by European powers, and the rise of technologies that would forever alter lived experience (e.g., synchronized clocks, international railway systems, the telegraph). But more important for our study than the reasons for this change in perspective is the perspective itself that took hold. An interest in ruins, Fritzsche observes, was now "marked by a new historical sensibility that scrutinized differences" among the remains encountered, galvanized by a "concern with context and curiosity about 'how people lived.'"[229]

Chateaubriand's long life spanned nearly the entirety of Koselleck's *Sattelzeit*, from his birth in 1768 to his death in Paris in 1848. For those from this era, Koselleck argues, a displacement or rupture in the sense of time became a central part of their experience.[230] In the writings of Immanuel Kant, one reads of a new conception of "progress" (*Fortschritt*) by which the future is increasingly distanced from past practices and ideas; for de Lamartine, the "rapidity of time" (*La rapidité du temps*) contributed to the sense that "there is no more contemporary history," his present era made immediately obsolete due to the dramatic social and political changes that were occurring in such quick succession.[231] In this period, German writers begin to speak of a "new time" (*neue Zeit*), characterized as more than one of simple succession but qualitatively novel, a time never experienced before, and, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century CE, the composite expression *Neuzeit* is used widely as the term that signifies the modern period in its entirety.[232]

There was something about this era that was "new" to those who lived during it, in other words, and what was novel was the experience of time itself. Koselleck, for his part, describes this moment as the "dawning of a new temporality."[233] In his reading of accounts from this era, Koselleck writes,[234]

> Progress thus combined experiences and expectations, both endowed
> with a temporal coefficient of change. As part of a group, a country, or
> finally, a class, one was conscious of being advanced in comparison with

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[229] Ibid., 100–1.
[230] On this point, Foucault similarly writes of the "Age of History," "The last years of the eighteenth century are broken by a discontinuity similar to that which destroyed Renaissance thought . . . a discontinuity as enigmatic in its principle, in its original rupture, as that which separates the Paracelsian from the Cartesian order." Foucault, *Order of Things*, 235.
[231] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 267, 210.   [232] Ibid., 225.
[233] Ibid., 31; Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 47.
[234] Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft* , 266–67.

the others . . . What was new was that the expectations that reached out for the future became detached from all that previous experience had to offer. Even the new experience gained from the annexation of lands overseas and from the development of science and technology was still insufficient for the derivation of future expectations. From that time on, the space of experience was no longer limited by the horizon of expectations; rather, the limits of the space of experience and of the horizon of expectations diverged.

Born into a world whose future was increasingly unknown and whose past was becoming increasingly unrecognizable, new perspectives on ruins arose in tandem with lived experience coming undone and being recast afresh.[235] With time experienced as accelerating at ever greater speed, leaving a long series of obsolete cultural and political formations in its wake, a sensitivity toward historical differences emerges that elicited novel understandings of ruins and the archaeological record. Our desire "to investigate those past lives through the medium of material remains," Julian Thomas observes in his study of the rise of archaeological practices, "is itself distinctively modern."[236] If we were not descendants of this particular period and its experiences, "it might not occur to us to do archaeology at all."[237]

For Koselleck, it is in this period that a sense of the temporalization of history begins to solidify, and with it a more acute sensitivity to anachronism and historical sequencing. Even the very terminology for history transforms during this time, Koselleck observes, from a concept that posits a plurality of past experiences specific and unique to various territories, to history as a collective singular, a notion of "history itself" (*die Geschichte selber*) that is universal and global, encompassing all events within a shared human past.[238] "This is the master category, the condition under which the time of history can be thought," Ricoeur remarks in his reading of Koselleck. "There is a time of history insofar as there is one single history."[239] The idea of history we hold today, and our experience of its specific temporality, is born in this moment.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that toward the end of the *Sattelzeit* period the ruins of the southern Levant come to be explored in ways never witnessed

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[235] Koselleck comments further: "Two specific temporal determinants characterize the new experience of transition: the expected otherness of the future and, associated with it, the alteration in the rhythm of temporal experience: acceleration, by means of which one's own time is distinguished from what went before." Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 241.

[236] Thomas, *Archaeology and Modernity*, xi.   [237] Ibid., xi.

[238] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 33–42. Koselleck quotes Droysen to this effect, "Beyond histories there is History" (33). For a similar argument from the perspective of the advent of absolute, Newtonian time, see the classic study of Donald Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), esp. 16–82.

[239] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 298.

before.[240] In 1838 CE, we find Edward Robinson and Eli Smith setting out for Palestine to document the region and investigate sites of ruin that may represent locations named in the Bible, driven by a curiosity to recover an ancient landscape they believed had been lost.[241] In the words of Robinson, their efforts were[242]

> *a first attempt* to lay open the treasures of Biblical Geography and History still remaining in the Holy Land – treasures which *have lain for ages unexplored*, and had become so covered with the dust and rubbish of many centuries, that their very existence was forgotten.

The sense of novelty underscored by Koselleck in his theory of temporalization is, in this passage, readily apparent. Standing on the threshold of "scientific exploration," Thomas Davis comments in his study of these travelers, but still of a mindset beholden to "the days of pilgrimage" from centuries before,[243] these liminal figures provide the first historical geography of eras associated with the Bible, identifying a number of locations that, in time, would come to be excavated. Robinson and Smith's remarkable achievements were however hampered by their inability to understand what the terrain could at moments indicate. Encountering strange hills without visible ruins on their surface, Robinson and Smith bypassed a number of these mounds because they failed to fathom a defining feature of the landscape that the biblical writers had recognized millennia in the past: namely, that certain hills were artificial, the creation of successive cities built and destroyed.[244]

When this insight was recovered is debated. Some link it to the excavations carried out at Hissarlik by Heinrich Schliemann in the early 1870s, where various strata were exposed and differentiated in order to locate the specific layer that represented Homer's Troy.[245] But in Palestine, a clear recognition of how ruin mounds preserve the layered remains of distinct settlements is found in the writings of Sir Flanders Petrie. In 1890, after a number of seasons of excavation in Egypt, Petrie arrived at the site of Tel el-Hesi, 25km east of Gaza.[246] Drawing

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[240] On the explosion of interest in the lands of Palestine, including the establishment of institutions (such as the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1865) devoted to their study, see Paul Michael Kurtz, "The Silence on the Land: Ancient Israel versus Modern Palestine in Scientific Theology," in *Negotiating the Secular and the Religious in the German Empire*, ed. R. Habermas, 56–100 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019).

[241] On this expedition, see Haim Goren, *"The Loss of a Minute Is Just So Much Loss of Life": Edward Robinson and Eli Smith in the Holy Land* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020).

[242] Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838*, Vol. I (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1841), xii–xiii. (my italics)

[243] Thomas Davis, *Shifting Sands: The Rise and Fall of Biblical Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

[244] Davis, *Shifting Sands*, 7.   [245] Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, 291.

[246] W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Tell el Hesy (Lachish)* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1891). Cf. William Dever, "Archaeological Method in Israel: A Continuing Revolution," *Biblical Archaeologist* 43 (1980): 42.

near the site after a heavy rain had washed away an edge of the mound, Petrie observes striations that have become visible. In this moment, Petrie comes to the realization of something that will be essential to all archaeological efforts in the region that follow, writing that the "mound, for over 60 feet of its height, *consists of successive ruins of towns piled one on the other.*"[247] A sensitivity to historical difference is now applied to the material remains of the southern Levant through the idea of archaeological strata, forever altering how excavations will be carried out in the region.

The early efforts of Robinson, Smith, and Petrie give rise to an ever-increasing number of digs in the early decades of the twentieth century CE. Alongside Petrie's observations on stratigraphy will be added W. F. Albright's refined analyses of ceramic typology,[248] and, in time, the Wheeler-Kenyon method of excavation that still prevails today.[249] But with these advancements in archaeological method will come the realization that what had been unearthed could depart from how the biblical writers once described these same ruins in antiquity, a point drawn out at a number of moments in our discussion of Bronze and Iron Age settlements (Sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3). So it is that we come once more to the site of 'Ai (et-Tell) in the 1960s and find Joseph Callaway struggling to understand the historical implications of what the location's archaeological evidence suggested. Rather than a great city conquered and destroyed in the waning moments of the LBA by the Israelites, as the Book of Joshua suggests, the archaeological evidence from 'Ai indicates instead that its downfall took place a thousand years before in the EBA period. "'Ai is simply an embarrassment," Callaway writes in an unguarded moment of reflection, to those who take "the biblical and arch-aeological evidence seriously."[250] Ruins then, ruins now.

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The ruins have not changed, but how we look at them has.[251] This shift in perception is most apparent in our inclination today to excavate the remains of ancient settlements in order to learn about the lives of those who once inhabited them – an act and interest not found in any of the many references to ruins located in the Hebrew Bible. The divide around which this chapter is organized centers on this discrepancy, and how to account for it.

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[247] Petrie, *Tell el Hesy*, 12. (my italics)
[248] For an overview, see the chapter on the "Albright Watershed," in Davis, *Shifting Sands*, 47–94.
[249] For discussion, see P. R. S. Moorey, "Kathleen Kenyon and Palestinian Archaeology," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 111 (1979): 3–10; Dever, "Archaeological Method," 44–45.
[250] Joseph Callaway, "New Evidence on the Conquest of 'Ai," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87.3 (1968): 312.
[251] Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*, 106.

What our survey of Bronze and Iron Age settlements demonstrated is that the biblical writers inhabited a world in which ruins were visible throughout the landscapes familiar to them. It does not matter where these scribes were located nor, for that matter, the specific time period in which they were active. From Hazor in the north to Arad in the south, from the city of Jericho in the Jordan Valley to sites scattered along the coastal plain, those living in the southern Levant in the first millennium BCE occupied a terrain in which the remains of numerous Bronze and Iron Age sites were in view. Even at locations that had not been destroyed, more venerable ruins, centuries old, would have often featured as part of the urban landscape, such as at Hebron, Jerusalem, and Megiddo, among other settlements. If the biblical writings express little interest in what lay buried, it is not because material remains of past populations were unknown to them.

Rather, what is striking about these biblical accounts is their consistent recognition of ruins and their antiquity. Frequently, ruins are depicted as the outcome of wanton acts of destruction that took place in the past or simply as remains left behind from former events or practices, wearing away as time progresses. Whether in the fallen fortifications of a settlement or buildings long abandoned, the ruins the biblical writers depict are frequently the items that archaeologists, today, unearth.

These points of continuity dissipate, however, when turning to matters of time. What separates our experience of ruins from those behind the biblical writings, I have argued, is how we locate material remains within the sweep of history. To us, it is the variations of material forms preserved in the archaeological record that provide the possibility of situating their remains within distinct eras, the forward flow of time giving rise to new developments that can be distinguished from what came before. Changes in architectural style and ceramic assemblages, foodways and ritual practices, among other instances, allow us to peg these remains within certain periods in the Bronze or Iron Age, and at moments even in specific centuries.

The biblical writings, however, conceive of the temporality of ruins differently. Like Altdorfer's portrait, the biblical writings are less sensitive to the discontinuities that mark the passing of time, where the world in which David acquired Jerusalem is not too distant from the ones Jeremiah or Ezekiel knew many centuries later. In the Hebrew Bible, the material remains that arose in the past are principally attached to one age, an age whose ways of life are mostly consistent with the biblical writers' own. The time that ruins convey to these scribes is something other than our sense of the depth of history and the developments that have taken place across the millennia. To us, the MBA is a decisive moment in the history of the southern Levant, leaving behind monumental ruins that are some of the most impressive remains from antiquity. The collapse of this society then gives way to centuries of Egyptian hegemony and

the construction of Egyptian outposts at Jaffa and Beth-Shean, among other instances of Egyptian involvement. But of the great cities of the MBA or Egyptian control of the region during the LBA, much less the eras that came before, the biblical writings show little awareness or interest.

At work in a world in which past experiences and present ones were believed to have much in common, the inclination to scour ruins for the differences that marked out the lives of forebears was, I contend, less pronounced for the biblical writers. Yet for us this impulse is a guiding presupposition, our sense of the past marked above all by an awareness of discontinuity, of time fractured into distinct periods by changes in technology, taste, politics, and commerce. Ruins are evidence of the developments that have taken hold over the course of time, the EBA II ruins of ca. 2500 BCE being distinct from MBA and LBA settlements that arose hundreds of years after them, let alone from the still later Iron Age, Persian, or Hellenistic communities that would emerge. But this way of looking at ruins is quite recent. The point is straightforward but no less meaningful: The discipline of archaeology is born late, the product of a rupture in the experience of time.

For Ricoeur, this experience speaks to our "historical condition." By *condition*, Ricoeur writes of a twofold meaning: the first, that of being situated, implicated, enclosed; the second, that of something that makes possible a way

25 Catharine Wolfe expedition to Sippar (Tell Abu Habba). John Henry Haynes, photograph, 1884. Sterrett Collection of Archaeological Photographs. Photographs of Asia Minor, #4776. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. Public domain

of being in the world. In contrast to those who came before, "[w]e make history, and we make histories," Ricoeur writes, "because we are historical."[252] The claim is not triumphant. Ricoeur will write of the "burden" of history and later of the "devastating effect" that the "*historicization* of all human experience" occasions, drawing near to the arguments of Friedrich Nietzsche from a century before.[253] Nevertheless, this condition is ours, something that is "insurmountable," Ricoeur writes, unable, as we are, to think otherwise or beyond it.[254] Our "ambivalence" to this mode of temporality, Koselleck writes in a similar vein, is an experience we cannot outpace.[255]

But if our understanding of ruins is inescapably historical and our practices of excavation recent, the question that emerges is how ruins were experienced otherwise by those behind the biblical writings. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4, we take up this question.

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[252] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 284.
[253] Ibid., 303. Italics original. For Ricoeur's reading of Nietzsche on this theme, see 287–92. "One can wonder," Ricoeur comments later in a key passage, "if the idea of truth, but also the ideas of the good and the just, can be radically historicized without disappearing." Ibid., 304. On this point, see the final reflections in Chapter 4.
[254] Ibid., 284.   [255] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 104.