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The Function of the City of Jezreel and the Symbolism of Jezreel in Hosea 1–2

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Introduction

In Hosea 1–3, "we can rarely identify people and events with confidence."[1] This makes it difficult to define the rhetorical goals of the speeches in these chapters and to identify the historical circumstances during which they were composed and redacted.[2] Despite these challenges, a well-founded scholarly consensus has emerged that situates Hosea's activity in the middle of the eighth century, beginning in the last years of Jeroboam II.[3]

But with regard to the relationship between Hosea's original words and the redactional strata in chapters 1–3, no such consensus has emerged. Full surveys of the range of views are presented by Kelle and Daniels.[4] At one end of the spectrum is the minimalist position

[1] Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary,* AB series (Garden City, NJ, 1980), 73. This difficulty obtains in studying any part of Hosea but is exacerbated in these three chapters by the wealth of metaphor and lack of clear historical references. Birch notes no particular historical connections in these chapters, as he does in 5–14, and Davies sees in them no connections to wars or foreign policy (Bruce C. Birch, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, Westminster Bible Companion [Louisville, KY, 1997], 9; Graham I. Davies, *Hosea* [Sheffield, 1993], 39). All references to chapters and verses in Hosea follow the system used in *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and in other editions of the Masoretic Text (MT). This system differs from that found in many English language Bibles, which include in chapter 2 the verses which the MT editions label 1:9–11. Citations from the MT are from M. Breuer's edition *Torah Neviim Ketuvim*, based on the Aleppo Codex (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1992). The abbreviation COS 2 refers to *The Context of Scripture: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World,* ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (vol. II; Leiden, 2000), and KAI to H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (3 vols.; Wiesbaden, 1962–64).

[2] A range of dates has been suggested for the historical setting of these chapters. Kaufmann and Ginsberg argued that they were composed in the ninth century B.C.E. (H. L. Ginsberg, "Hosea," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 8 [1971]: 1010–24; Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, abridged and translated by Moshe Greenberg [Chicago, 1960], 368–72). The views of more recent scholars, who posit a redactional process spread over the eighth to sixth centuries, are discussed below.

[3] Andersen and Freedman restrict Hosea's activity to the years 750–740 (Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea,* 34–37). Wolff argues that the picture of destruction in 2:18–25 reflects the deportations of 733–732 (Hans Walter Wolff, *Hosea*, ed. Paul Hanson and trans. Gary Stansell, series Hermeneia [Philadelphia, 1974], 48), and this view is accepted by James L. Mays, *Hosea*, series OTL (Philadelphia, 1969), 3–4. Sweeney argues that the book as a whole "was written largely in the period following the death of Jeroboam and prior to the Assyrian assault in 735–732, in an effort to convince Israel to abandon its alliance with Assyria" (Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, Berit Olam series [Collegeville, MN, 2000], 3).

[4] Brad E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, Academia Biblica 20 (Atlanta, 2005), 9–11; Dwight R.

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advocated by Yee, who attributes only parts of 2:4–5 and 2:7, as well as 2:12, to Hosea.[5] The center of the spectrum is represented by Vermeylen, who sees substantial portions of these chapters as deriving from Hosea but argues for extensive Deuteronomistic and postexilic editing.[6] A maximalist approach is presented by Andersen and Freedman, who argue that "Hosea 1:2–2:25 is a literary whole. . . . On careful examination the apparent confusions and inconcinnities fall into place as parts of a highly artistic arrangement."[7] Andersen and Freedman base their argument on the "intricate network" of word repetition and interwoven themes in 2:1–25 noted eighty years ago by Cassuto.[8]

This intricate network includes:

a. symmetrical repetition in the introduction to the passage (vv. 1–3) and in the conclusion (vv. 23–25);[9]
b. antithetical parallelism in the second (vv. 4–6) and penultimate (vv. 18–22) units in the chapter;[10]
c. word repetition in the third (vv. 7–10) and fourth (vv. 11–15) units of the chapter.[11]

The parallels between the opening and closing units, as well as those between the second and penultimate ones, suggest that the chapter is designed using a sort of extended concentric parallelism. These parallels, as well as the ones between the third and fourth units, demonstrate the intentionality of design in chapter 2 and militate in favor of its literary cohesiveness. The literary analysis presented later in this article, in the section entitled "Jezreel as an Evolving Symbol in Hosea 1–2," supports the position advocated by Andersen and Freedman, namely, that not only Hosea 2:1–25 but all of 1:2b–2:25 forms a "literary whole." The toponym Jezreel, which is mentioned first in 1:4–5 and then repeated in 2:2 and 2:24, is an integral but previously unrecognized part of this intricate network, and a more informed understanding of the literary function of Jezreel in this passage supports the argument for its literary coherence. I illustrate this first by examining the unique way in which Jezreel functions in this literary unit, then by questioning some of the

Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History: The Early Traditions of Israel in the Prophecies of Hosea*, BZAW 191 (Berlin, 1990), 23–28.

[5] Gale A. Yee, *Composition and Tradition in the Book of Hosea: A Redaction Critical Investigation*, SBL Dissertation Series 102, (Atlanta, 1987), 55.

[6] Jacques Vermeylen sees in this unit three literary strata: the compositional stratum, a Deuteronomistic redaction, which is responsible for such elements as the statement "I will end the kingship of the house of Israel," (1:4b), and a later Persian period redaction ("Os 1–3 et son histoire littéraire," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 79 [2003]: 23–52).

[7] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea,* 141. Wolff takes a position between that of Vermeylen and that of Andersen and Freedman, arguing that 2:4–17 is a single speech from Hosea, while 2:18–25 form "a loosely knit series of sayings and fragments of sayings," which "form a genuine unit" (Wolff, *Hosea*, 33 and 47). Clines argues that "the whole unit vv. 4–25 . . . now clearly forms an integrated poem, no matter whether v. 18–25 originally was attached to vv. 4–17 or not" (David J. A. Clines, "Hosea 2: Structure and Interpretation," in *Studia Biblica 1978 I. Old Testament and Related Themes. Sixth International Congress on Biblical Studies, Oxford, 3–7 April, 1978,* ed. E. A. Livingstone, JSOT Supp. 11 [Sheffield, 1979], 83–84, republished in David J. A. Clines, *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays 1967–1998,* JSOT Supp. 292 [Sheffield, 1998], 1:293–94.)

[8] Umberto (Moshe David) Cassuto, "The Second Chapter of the Book of Hosea," *Biblical and Oriental Studies,* vol. 1, translated by I. Abrahams (Jerusalem, 1973), 101–40. Andersen and Freedman present this network in *Hosea,* 132–40. A similar argument is advanced by Avraham Biram, "Hosea 2:16–25" (in Hebrew), in *Sefer Orbach* (Festschrift for Eliyahu Orbach) (Jerusalem, 1955), 116–39.

[9] Cassuto ("The Second Chapter," 104–105) calls both units "transformations of Israel's destiny." Both begin with the formulation והיה and both foresee the events of a specific day. The phrasing and emphases of both passages are similar. The land (ארץ) is at the center of both passages (in v. 2 and repeatedly in vv. 23, 24, 25) and in both cases, the mention of the land leads to the mention of Jezreel (vv. 2b and 24). Both include a reversal of the names Lo-ammi (in vv. 1, 3, 25, in all cases through speech) and Lo-ruhammah (in vv. 3 and 25).

[10] These two units connect marital loyalty to the condition of the land, with vv. 2–6 connecting disloyalty to ruin, while vv. 18–22 connects loyalty to revival of the land. There are a series of linguistic parallels and thematic antitheses: "I am not her husband" in v. 4a stands opposed to "you shall call 'my husband'" in v. 18; "she shall remove her harlotries from her face" in v. 4b stands opposite "I shall remove the names of the Ba'alim from her mouth" in v. 19; v. 5 describes the destruction of agriculture in the land and its desertification ("I will cause her to die of thirst"), while v. 20 describes the revival of the land and turning it into a secure place of settlement; v. 6 declares "I will not show love (לא ארחם) to her sons, for they are sons of harlotry," while in vv. 21–22 the same voice declares that he will betroth the woman "with love" (ברחמים v. 21) and "in faithfulness" (v. 22).

[11] Cassuto ("The Second Chapter," 108–110) argues that vv. 7–10, 11–15, and 16–17 are each distinct units, each defined by the opening word לכן. There are number of striking word parallels between vv. 7–10 and vv. 11–15. Verses 7 and 11 both contain the formulation "my wool and my flax"; verses 8–9 and 12–14 focus on the tension between איש and מאהביה, with vv. 8–9 mentioning the chase after the lovers, whereas vv. 12–14 describe the forcible disrobing of Israel and the inability of any man to save her. Both units conclude (in vv. 10 and 15) with a mention of the בעלים, to whom Israel has offered its wealth.

ways the term has been understood in scholarship, and then by adducing archeological and comparative textual evidence to develop a new understanding of this toponym.

The Uniqueness of Jezreel

The three symbolic names of Hosea's children (Jezreel, Lo-ruhammah, and Lo-ammi) recur repeatedly in 1:2b–2:25. In two central ways, Jezreel is unique among these three symbolic names. First, it is a toponym and necessarily must function differently than the declarations Lo-ammi ("not my people") and Lo-ruhammah ("unloved").[12] Thus, in the initial exposition of the names (1:4–9), Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhammah are each given a single explanation (in 1:6 and 1:9, respectively), each of which is a declarative judgment,[13] while the toponym Jezreel appears first as the cause of the judgment ("the bloods of Jezreel," 1:4) and then as the location of the judgment ("I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel," 1:5).[14] Subsequently, in 2:2, the names Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhammah drop the element of negation and reappear as declarative sentences, while Jezreel retains its form as well as its toponymic meaning in the phrase "the day of Jezreel." Finally, in 2:24, Jezreel is mentioned again as a toponym, while in 2:25, Lo-ammi/Ammi and Lo-ruhammah/Ruhammah all appear, with Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhammah functioning as names and Ammi and Ruhammah as declarative judgments. In its four mentions (1:4–5; 2:2; 2:24), Jezreel is the only one of the three names that does not change its form.

Second, and perhaps more significantly, the names Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhammah belong to the semantic field of relationships. They refer to particular aspects of the relationship between YHWH and Israel in 1:6–1:9 and 2:25, while in 2:4 they refer to familial relationships. In contrast, the significance of Jezreel in each of its appearances is overtly political. Each mention refers to military defeat or leadership change.[15]

The unique nature of "Jezreel" is important for understanding the passage as a whole. As a toponym, it clearly has symbolic value, unlike the declarative nature of "Lo-ammi" and "Lo-ruhammah." And because it refers to political or military change, scholars have tended to explain its symbolic value as a reference to discrete and specific historical events. This tendency does not fit with the character of Hosea 1–3, which "is not the sort of text to contain many references to a specific historical situation, but rather consists of images and symbols and names used as signs."[16] No phrase in Hosea 1:1b–2:25 is widely regarded as referring to a specific historical event, except for the mentions of Jezreel in 1:4–5, 2:2, 2:24. As I illustrate below, there is no consensus on which historical event is referred to in these verses. Furthermore, the narrative of 2:1–25 avoids mentioning any definable

[12] The name Lo-ruhammah means "unloved" ("she has been expelled from a relationship of love"), as is suggested by Andersen and Friedman *Hosea*, 187–88. "Love" is a standard meaning of the root *rḥm* in Aramaic (cf. J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the Northwest Semitic Inscriptions* [Leiden, New York, 1995], 1068, and references there), and the use of an Aramaism in northern Biblical Hebrew is hardly surprising.

[13] 1:6: "For I will no longer love (*rḥm*) the House of Israel; rather, I shall carry them away." The "carrying away" of Israel is a declaration that Israel will be exiled. But the secondary connotation of such "carrying away" is divorce. In Jer. 3:8, divorce is described using the D-stem verb *šlḥ*, which means "to send out." Here, the carrying away of Israel is an actualization of such a "sending out." Moreover, the root *nś'* used in this verse, as the opposite of *rḥm*, seems to evoke the similar-sounding verb *śn'* (to hate or reject), used in divorce formularies in Biblical Hebrew (cf. Deut. 24:3). These two meanings (exile and divorce) are connected: just as the divorce is the end of a loving relationship between husband and wife, so is exile from the land the result of the negation of the loving relationship between the landowner (God) and the tenant (Israel). In 1:9, the explanation of "Lo-ammi" is also a declarative judgment: "For you are not my people, and I shall not be for you." The statement begins to negate the covenant formula "I shall be for them a God" (Gen. 17:8; Exod. 29:45; Ezek. 37:27) but trails off before completing the negation. This is a threat to vitiate the covenant, but only a threat.

[14] With Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 132–140, I deny the commonly-held position that 1:5 is an editorial gloss, a *vaticinum ex eventu* inserted by an editor in the seventh century B.C.E. The connection between the phrase ושברתי את קשת ישראל ("I will break the bow of Israel") in this verse and the awkward syntax וקשת וחרב ומלחמה אשבור ("I will break bow, and sword, and war") in 2:20 suggest that the phrase in 2:20 is based on that in 1:5. Yet nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible are the nouns חרב or מלחמה used as objects of the verb שבר: with the noun מלחמה, one would expect the Hiph'il verb שבת, as in Ps. 46:10, or the Hiph'il of כרת, as in Zech. 9:10. Thus, the syntax וקשת וחרב ומלחמה אשבור in 2:20 can only be understood as deriving from the phrase ושברתי את קשת ישראל in 1:5. If 2:20 is part of the original text, as I argue below, then 1:5 cannot be an editorial gloss.

[15] 1:4 ("I shall make an end of the kingdom of Israel") and 1:5 ("I shall break the bow of Israel") refer to military defeats, and 2:2 ("they will appoint over themselves a new leader") refers to a leadership change. Below, I demonstrate that the final mention of Jezreel in 2:24 also has political implications.

[16] R. Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery*, Studia Semitica Neerlandica 40 (Assen, 1999), 167.

historical event. Jezreel in these verses is not solely an encoded reference to an event.

It is methodologically untenable to argue that when toponyms are used as symbols, they necessarily refer to a historical event or events. When used as symbols, toponyms (like other symbols) do not always have a single valence. They often encapsulate other symbolic values, such as the demographic patterns associated with the site they designate, the topographic and hydrological features characteristic of that site, and the types of economic activities practiced in and around it.[17] In Biblical usage, such symbols include Gilead in Jeremiah 8:22 ("Is there no balm in Gilead?"), which refers to Gilead's role in the production of balm, and Lebanon in Isaiah 37:24 ("With my many chariots, I have ascended the peaks of mountains, the farthest reaches of Lebanon, and cut down the highest of its cedars, the choicest of its junipers. . ."), which refers to Lebanon's forests and the centuries-old boasts of Assyrian kings.[18]

I contend that Jezreel is not solely a coded reference to specific historical events, all of which happen to have taken place in and around a certain location, but a reference to a real city and valley, whose historically-grounded function and identity give meaning to the symbol "Jezreel" in Hosea 1–3. The military function of Jezreel (discussed below in "Jezreel in Hosea 1:4–2:25: The Geographic Dimension"), in particular, is key to understanding the symbol and to the interpretation of Hosea 1–3.

Review of Scholarship

Before presenting my understanding of the term "Jezreel" and of the text, I will review the previous scholarship. Earlier generations of scholars had little data at their disposal in considering the reality of the city designated by the toponym, and therefore tended to interpret each mention of Jezreel in 1:4, 1:5, 2:2, and 2:24 as referring to a historical event or series of events, rather than a place. Such a tendency necessarily results in a different historical referent (and therefore a different meaning) for each mention. Little attention has been paid to the possibility that the toponym has a consistent meaning from verse to verse, and that the symbolic value of the toponym lies in its enduring geographic character and not only in the events that occurred at this location.

This tendency can easily be seen in reviewing scholarship on 1:4, 1:5, 2:2, and 2:24:

(ד) ויאמר ה׳ אליו: קרא שמו יזרעאל כי-עוד מעט
ופקדתי את-דמי יזרעאל על-בית יהוא והשבתי ממלכות
בית ישראל

(1:4) The LORD said unto him: Name him "Jezreel," for a little longer, and I shall visit the bloods of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and I shall bring an end to the kingship of the house of Israel.

Most scholars understand this verse as a reference to Jehu's massacre of the House of Ahab and to the narration of this event in 2 Kings 9–10.[19] However, Vermeylen sees it as a reference to the end of the Jehu dynasty in 747 B.C.E.[20] A somewhat more nuanced view is taken by Mays, who focuses less on a specific event, noting that 1:4 evokes "ominous historical memories of incidents."[21] Similarly, Andersen and Freedman understand it as referring to a concatenation of historical events.[22]

A similar tendency is evident in the interpretation of the subsequent mentions of Jezreel in these chapters. These are often seen as part of a complex redactional process in which the mention of Jezreel in 1:4

[17] In modern usage, too, toponyms function as symbols in two ways. Some, such as "Waterloo" (in British English) and "Hiroshima" (in American English) refer to a single historical event. Others, such as "Kansas" (in *The Wizard of Oz*, and in the popular expression "You're not in Kansas anymore"), refer to homesteads and a general feeling of hominess. Toponym symbols such as "the Beltway," or the Taj Mahal (all in American English) all refer to more enduring situations or to facets of daily life in the toponym.

[18] On these boasts, see A. Malamat, "Campaigns to the Mediterranean by Iahdun-lim and Other Mesopotamian Rulers," *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger,* Assyrological Studies 16 (Chicago, 1965), 368–69; Peter Machinst, "Assyria and its Image in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 723–24; and Shawn Zelig Aster, "What Sennacherib Said and What the Prophet Heard: On the Use of Assyrian Sources in the Prophetic Narrative of the Campaign of 701 B.C.E." (in Hebrew), *Shenaton Le-Mikra* 19 (2009): 105–24.

[19] Examples of such views include Wilhelm Rudolph, *Hosea,* Kommentar zum Alten Testament XIII 1 (Gutersloh, 1966), 51–52; Jörg Jeremias, *Hosea und Amos: Studien zu den Anfängen des Dodekapropheton* (Tubingen, 1966), 31–32; Wolff, *Hosea,* 18. For full bibliography, see Thomas E. McComiskey, "Prophetic Irony in Hosea 1,4: A Study of the Collocation פקד על and Its Implications for the Fall of Jehu's Dynasty," *JSOT* 58 (1993): 93 n.1.

[20] Vermeylen, "Os 1–3," 24.

[21] Mays, *Hosea,* 27.

[22] "Much blood flowed in Jezreel. First there flowed the blood of Naboth and of his sons. . . . Later Ahab's blood flowed there; finally, Jezebel's did." (Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea,* 176).

was reinterpreted by the later authors of 1:5, 2:2, and 2:25, each of whom gave the term a new historical referent as they added to the original prophecy:

(ה) והיה ביום ההוא, ושברתי את-קשת ישראל בעמק יזרעאל

(1:5) And it shall be, on that day, I shall break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

Vermeylen holds that this verse is a later reinterpretation of 1:4. He sees this verse as referring to a break in the hostilities between Judah and the Samaritans in the Persian period, in which the term "Jezreel" was used simply as a connector to the previous verse.[23] Wolff understands it as "an independent saying of Hosea secondarily inserted into the older narrative," referring to a battleground in the Assyrian campaign against Israel in 733 B.C.E, and Mays and Davies take similar positions.[24]

But it is not clear why the "valley of Jezreel" should be mentioned in this verse if we see it as a reference to the Assyrian campaign of 733 B.C.E. Although the Jezreel valley was a historic battleground, and although the archeological record shows that at least one site in the valley was destroyed in this campaign,[25] the Biblical and Assyrian texts locate the major battles farther to the north and do not describe Jezreel as a site of major battles in the campaign of 733.[26] The choice of Jezreel as a toponymic symbol for this campaign requires explanation beyond that provided by Wolff and Davies.

(ב) ונקבצו בני-יהודה ובני-ישראל יחדו ושמו להם ראש אחד, ועלו מן-הארץ, כי גדול יום יזרעאל

(2:2) The Judahites and the Israelites will gather together and appoint over themselves one leader, and go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

Here too, the geographic aspect of the name is relegated to second place in most scholarly interpretations, which emphasize a historical aspect. Mays understands "the day of Jezreel" as the day when "Israel will regain the promised land in a decisive battle against those who have occupied it."[27] In discussing the connection between this verse and 1:5, Mays notes further that: "It is in Jezreel that disaster comes, disclosing Yahweh's rejection of Israel and its kingship (1.4ff.). Appropriately, it will be a great victory at Jezreel which will manifest Yahweh's resumption of his relationship to Israel."[28] Wolff interprets the verse similarly, arguing that it ought to be understood as a reference to a future Israelite victory, in which the Israelites would gain the land that had, to a considerable degree, become part of an Assyrian province.[29]

Besides the problematic interpretation of the toponym, these interpretations also raise syntactic and lexical difficulties. The syntax *yom* + GN in the Hebrew Bible refers to the day on which the location

[23] Vermeylen, "Os 1–3," 24.

[24] Wolff, *Hosea*, 19–20. Mays calls this verse "probably a Hosea fragment introduced by the redactor into the narrative because of the common catch-word, Jezreel" (Mays, *Hosea*, 28). A similar tone appears in Davies's comment that this verse is a transitional formula that "links on a once separate saying," of Hosean authorship (Davies, *Hosea*, 55).

[25] Archaeological evidence for this campaign is seen at Hazor (Stratum V) and at Rosh Zayit, both of which are far north of the Jezreel valley. On Rosh Zayit, see Z. Gal and Y. Alexandre, *Ḥorbat Rosh Zayit: An Iron Age Storage Fort and Village*, Israel Antiquities Authority Reports 8 (Jerusalem, 2000), 201. The evidence for this campaign affecting the Jezreel valley comes from Megiddo IVA. It is generally accepted that Megiddo IVA was destroyed by the Assyrians in 732, although the pottery of this stratum (notably the late holemouth jar and the "torpedo" storage jars) shows affinities to both late eighth-century and seventh-century pottery. Yigal Shiloh ("Megiddo," *New Encyclopaedia of Archeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 3:1021) argues for a destruction in 732, an argument accepted by I. Finkelstein ("Hazor and the North in the Iron Age," *BASOR* 314 [1999]: 63).

[26] *Assyrian Evidence:* Calah Annals 18 of Tiglath-Pileser III records the conquest of Aruma and Marum, as well as *Ia-aṭ-bi-te* (presumably Biblical Jotbah, 2 Kings 21:19, later famous as Jotapata of Josephus) and *Hi-na-tu-na* (Bibl. Hannaton). These sites are located in the lower Galilee, close to the east–west route known as Darb el-Hawarneh. They are more than ten miles to the north of the Jezreel valley, and both Mount Tabor and the Hill of Moreh divide them from the city of Jezreel. See Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III* (Jerusalem, 1994), 82–83, lines 5′–7′, with bibliography on site identifications. *Biblical Evidence:* 2 Kings 15:29 records the conquest of Ijjon, Abel-beth-maacah, Kedesh, and Hazor, all of which are located along the main north–south road leading north to the Beqa'a valley, a considerable distance from Jezreel. The only Biblical record of the events of 733 in the Jezreel valley comes from Isa. 8:23, in which the phrase **גליל הגוים** should be interpreted as "the region of the nations," in parallel with "the ploughed area of the nations" in Judges 4:2. (See further Yohanan Aharoni et al., *Carta Bible Atlas* [Jerusalem, 2002], 110.) Even this phrase, however, does not imply that the Jezreel valley was the site of a battle but only that the Assyrians passed through it on their way southward.

[27] Mays, *Hosea*, 33. This is one of the few interpretations to consider the geographic aspect of the toponym, but it fails to consider the status of Jezreel before 733, as I discuss below.

[28] Mays, *Hosea*, 33.

[29] Wolff, *Hosea*, 28.

designated by the geographic name was defeated or destroyed. This can be seen from the phrases "the day of Midian" (Isaiah 9:3), which refers to the day of Midian's defeat, and "the day of Jerusalem" (Psalms 137:7), which refers to the day of Jerusalem's destruction.[30] Thus, the "day of Jezreel" necessarily refers to a defeat of Jezreel. This highlights the importance of understanding the geographic aspect of the toponym.

(כד) והארץ תענה את-הדגן ואת-התירוש ואת-היצהר.
והם יענו את-יזרעאל,

(2:24) And the earth will produce grain and wine and oil, and they will cause Jezreel to produce.[31]

While scholars agree that the final mention of Jezreel in 2:23–24 cannot be understood as a reference to a past event, they nevertheless often see it as a reference to a single historical episode and ignore the geographic meaning of the toponym. Thus, Wolff sees it as a reference to the feeding of the starving people.[32] Similarly, Anderson and Freedman interpret this verse as a reference to the union of Israel and Yahweh. They note the comparison to the sexual union of Hosea and Gomer but do not deal with the geographic aspect of the toponym.[33]

To summarize the above survey: the de-emphasis of geography in interpreting this toponym is methodologically problematic and creates exegetical difficulties. Having interpreted the initial mention in 1:4 as a reference to a specific historical event, scholars feel bound to interpret subsequent mentions as similar references to discrete historical events. The result is a series of perplexing discontinuities, with Jezreel functioning in these chapters as a continuing reference to a series of disconnected historical events.

To illustrate this point, we note that according to Wolff's interpretations of the four relevant verses, a single toponym refers to Jehu's revolt, to Tiglath-Pileser III's invasion, to the return of the exiles, and to feeding the hungry. In the absence of any clear connection between these discrete events, why is a single toponym used to evoke them?

Scholars have tended to solve such discontinuities by positing a complex redactional process. But the basis for such a position lies in interpreting Jezreel solely as a historical reference. In so doing, scholars effectively extract a number of "days in the life of Jezreel" from the reality of life in Jezreel and ignore the more enduring aspects of the city and valley. Engaging this ongoing reality allows for a more complex and consistent symbolic value for the toponym.

"Jezreel" in Hosea 1:4–2:25: The Geographic Dimension

The Jezreel valley contains fertile alluvial soil, and the importance of its agricultural bounty is attested in an Amarna letter and in other Late Bronze Age texts.[34] For this reason, rulers sought to possess lands in the valley.[35]

While the political and economic functions of the valley have long been clear, those of the city have only been clarified by recent excavations of the Jezreel enclosure, the salient archaeological feature of Tel Jezreel.[36] These show that the enclosure at Tel Jezreel served as a military headquarters in the second half of the ninth century B.C.E. Constructed in the middle of

[30] For a modern parallel, we have only to consider *jour de la Bastille,* the day when the Bastille fortress, with all its symbolism, fell.

[31] The translation "cause to produce" is found in Ibn Ezra, and, based on Eccles. 10:19, is supported by Biram, "Hosea 2:16–25," 121.

[32] Wolff, *Hosea*, 54.

[33] Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 284–90.

[34] The annals of Thutmose III, carved on the wall of the temple of Amon at Karnak, mention a very substantial grain harvest from the areas around Megiddo (see "The Asiatic Campaigns of Thutmose III," trans. John A. Wilson [ANET³, 238]). EA 365 also refers to the importance of the area's grain harvest to the Egyptian king (Anson F. Rainey, *El Amarna Tablets 359–379*, AOAT 8 [Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978], 29).

[35] Alt argued that these bountiful fields were considered crown lands in the Amarna age, and Na'aman raised the possibility that they were also considered crown lands in the Iron Age (Albrecht Alt, "Neues über Palästina aus dem Archiv Amenophis IV," *Palästinajahrbuch* 20 [1924]: 34–41, republished in his *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel,* 3 vols. [Munich, 1959], 3:169–75; Nadav Na'aman, "Royal Lands in the Valley of Jezreel in the Late Canaanite Period and in the First Temple Period" [in Hebrew], *Eretz-Israel* 15 [1981]: 140–44).

[36] A long-term excavation project at Tel Jezreel was initiated in 1990 by the Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University and the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (now the Kenyon Institute). Preliminary excavation reports, by David Ussishkin and John Woodhead, were published as follows: First Preliminary Report: "Excavations at Tel Jezreel," *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992): 3–56; Second Preliminary Report: "Excavations at Tel Jezreel," *Levant* 26 (1994): 1–48; Third Preliminary Report: "Excavations at Tel Jezreel," *Tel Aviv* 24 (1997): 6–72.

the ninth century B.C.E., the enclosure was destroyed at the very end of that century.[37]

Below, I summarize the evidence the excavators cite for these conclusions,[38] and provide further evidence to support this conclusion by comparing the Jezreel enclosure to contemporary structures in other parts of the Near East, and by offering a new interpretation of 1 Kings 21:1 and 2 Kings 10:1–3 relevant to the military character of Jezreel. I then return to Hosea and discuss how to apply the information gleaned about Jezreel in understanding Hosea 1–2.

Summary of Relevant Archaeological Evidence

The Biblical narratives describe a royal residence at Jezreel, but the function of this residence, and its relationship to the capital at Samaria, remained unclear. Speculative suggestions as to the relationship between Jezreel and Samaria were raised by Alt, Yadin, and Wolff.[39] The recent excavations allow this discussion to shift from speculation to consideration of the evidence.

Rather than developing over time, as urban settlements generally do, the Jezreel enclosure was constructed according to a specific, predetermined, rectangular plan, suggesting a royal building with a defined purpose. Its specifically military character is suggested by three distinct features:

a. The enclosure has very strong fortifications, the building of which must have required enormous effort. The site is surrounded, at least on the northern, eastern, and southern sides, by inner and outer casemate walls. The casemate walls were exposed along the south wall of the site, and each wall was 1.5 m wide, with a distance of 2 m separating one from the other. A wall 1 m thick connected the two casemate walls.[40] The effort made to fortify and defend the site suggests a fortress or military headquarters.[41]
b. The relatively minimal use of ashlar in building the enclosure and its buildings demonstrates a relatively low level of aesthetic concern. The walls served a functional purpose.[42]
c. A third feature is the large size of the site and the enormous and unusual effort made in making it level.[43] It seems that leveling was an end in and of itself, and not a basis for further construction.[44]

[37] The construction of the enclosure took place early in the Omride period. Its destruction is discussed in note 56 below.

[38] David Ussishkin, "The Fortified Enclosure of the Omride Kings at Jezreel" (in Hebrew), *Eretz-Israel* 25 (1996): 1–14.

[39] Based on the cultic dualism of Israel under the Omrides, Alt suggested that the center of the Ba'al cult was in the city of Samaria, while Jezreel served as the center of worship of YHWH ("Der Stadtstaat Samaria," *Kleine Schriften* 3: 265). Yigal Yadin suggested that Jezreel was built to enable Jezebel to indulge in the Ba'al cult ("The House of Ba'al of Ahab and Jezebel in Samaria, and that of Athalia in Judah," in *Archaeology in the Levant: Essays for Kathleen Kenyon*, ed. Roger Moorey and Peter Parr [Warminster, 1978], 129). Based on Alt, Wolff suggests an ethnic model to explain the cities' functions and proposes that, while Samaria served as the capital for the Canaanite segment of the population, Jezreel served this function for the Israelites (*Hosea*, 18).

[40] The western side of the enclosure has not yet been excavated. A moat with a thickness of between 8 and 12 m, cut into the rock, surrounds the site on its southern, eastern, and western sides. There is no moat on the northern side, because the escarpment makes this unnecessary. Towers were built at the northeast and southeast corners of the site for lookouts (Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" [First Preliminary Report], 10; and "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" [Third Preliminary Report], 13, fig. 10).

[41] There are similarities between the casemate walls here and those enclosing the acropolis at Samaria. The walls themselves are of roughly the same thickness. However, at Samaria, the space between the walls was about 7 m, and the cross walls form long, narrow rooms (John W. Crowfoot et al., *The Buildings at Samaria* [London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1942], 11; Nahman Avigad, "Samaria," *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* [Jerusalem, 1993], 3: 1303). At Jezreel, the walls were much closer together, and the space between them was filled with reddish-brown fill (Ussishkin, "The Fortified Enclosure," 5). This preference for thicker and stronger walls at Jezreel may be due to the military character of the site.

[42] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" (Second Preliminary Report), 47; Ussishkin, "The Fortified Enclosure," 11. In at least one of the walls in the gatehouse (wall 105), the bottom courses are of unsmoothed rubble stones, while the top course is of ashlar (Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" [Third Preliminary Report], 20).

[43] The length of the moat and escarpment is 332 m along the south side, and 184 m along the east and west sides, giving a total area of 6.1 hectares. A huge effort went into creating a level surface on the site so as to raise the level of the lower areas, which were closer to the casemate wall, to the level of the central part of the enclosure. The builders dumped large amounts of brown soil, the natural soil of the area, on the slopes (Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" [Second Preliminary Report], 21, 44–45). Debris from earlier settlements was used for construction fill near the gatehouse (Orna Zimhoni, "Clues from the Enclosure-Fills: Pre-Omride Settlement at Tel Jezreel," *Tel Aviv* 24 [1997]: 83). Perhaps the builders sought to remove settlement remains projecting above the desired surface level for the site.

[44] At the northeastern corner of the site, in Area D, a structure was incorporated into the fill, "quite possibly intended for supporting the fills rather than for carrying the superstructure of a building" (Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" [First Preliminary Report], 52).

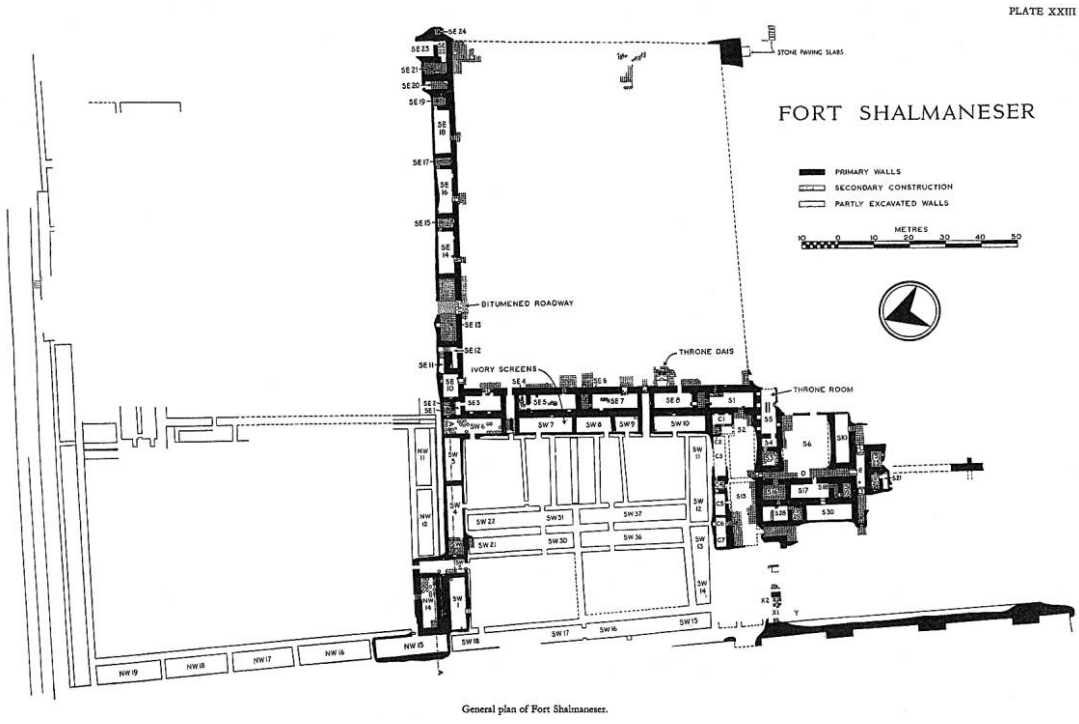

Figure 1: Plan of Fort Shalmaneser at Calah (D. Oates, "Fort Shalmaneser," 99).

> Ussishkin and Woodhead described the whole enclosure as a very large podium.[45] Such a podium would chiefly be useful as a site for military training and as a parade ground for troops.

Thus, the roles of Samaria and Jezreel as royal residences may be understood as follows: Samaria was the royal capital, with the main royal palace and cultic center; Jezreel was the military headquarters, where the royal chariotry and cavalry were kept and trained, and a provincial royal residence was built there.[46]

Comparative Evidence for the Function of Jezreel

Other important evidence supports the excavators' tentative conclusions. The level podium at Jezreel suggests a comparison with "Fort Shalmaneser," an Assyrian structure contemporary with the Jezreel enclosure whose military function is well-known. Adjoining the main citadel at Calah, which contained the royal residence, was a separate and distinct mound in the southeast. Scholars refer to it as "Fort Shalmaneser," the "arsenal," or the "review palace," but the Assyrian documents call it *ēkal mašarti* (lit., the great storehouse).[47] The *ēkal mašarti* served as a mustering center and staging ground for military campaigns, and cavalry reviews would have been a part of this process.

The parallels between Fort Shalmaneser and Jezreel are as follows:

1. Fort Shalmaneser lay within a walled enclosure of 300 m by 200 m, almost exactly the size of the Jezreel enclosure.
2. Much of the space of the *ēkal mašarti* was taken up by three large courtyards, as appears from Oates' plan[48] (see fig. 1). An inscription of Esarhaddon,

[45] Ussishkin and Woodhead "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" (Second Preliminary Report), 44, 47.

[46] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" (Second Preliminary Report), 47. This was first suggested by Menashe Harel, who focused on the appropriateness of the eastern Jezreel valley (the area around the city of Jezreel) for exercises of chariotry and cavalry, due to the availability of grain (needed for feed) and flat land (needed for exercises) ("The Chariots of Israel and its Horsemen" [in Hebrew], *Mehkere Yehuda Ve-Shomron* 3 [1993]: 29–44).

[47] Similar *ēkal mašarti* palaces were built at Dur-Šarrukīn and at Nineveh, where the *ēkal mašarti* is located in the mound of Nebi Yunus, next to Kuyunjuk. There was likely a military base at Nineveh in the ninth century, but the *ēkal mašarti* at Nebi Yunus that has been uncovered by archeologists was built by Sennacherib in the seventh century. I therefore focus on the *ēkal mašarti* at Calah as the closest contemporary of the Jezreel enclosure.

[48] David Oates, "Fort Shalmaneser—an Interim Report," *Iraq* 21 (1959): 99.

detailing the need for space in a different *ēkal mašarti,* explains that this was needed "to muster the expeditionary forces, to check horses, mules, chariots, weaponry, implements of war," and it is extremely likely that the large courtyards of the *ēkal mašarti* at Calah were also used for the king to review troops conducting these types of maneuvers.[49] The large amounts of empty level space in the Calah *ēkal mašarti* are reminiscent of the excavators' find at Jezreel. The creation of a level flat podium area was an end in and of itself, worthy of enormous effort, even if buildings were not erected upon this podium. At Jezreel and at the *ēkal mašarti* in Calah, the relevant king created "parade grounds" on which cavalry troops could be reviewed. Similar needs led different kings in the same period to create similar structures.

3. The *ēkal mašarti* was not just a military site; inside it was a royal residence, separate from the public spaces, as well as residences for a variety of male and female officials of the royal household and for high-ranking officers, some of whom maintained residence there throughout the year.[50] This too, is similar to Jezreel, which according to 1 Kings 22:1 contained a royal residence.

The *ēkal mašarti* at Calah may parallel the function that Jezreel served under the Omrides. Jezreel's geographic emplacement makes it ideal for the mustering, equipping, and sending out of troops to fight in Aram and in Transjordan, which were the sites of all of the Omrides' military activity. Located near the head of the Harod valley, from which an important road led to Beth-shean where the Jordan could be crossed, Jezreel was ideally situated as a point of departure for troops battling in Transjordan (in Moab, for example).[51] Furthermore, it is located close to the main route leading towards Hazor, Dan, and the Beqa'a valley, which would be taken by troops headed towards Aram.[52] The agricultural potential of the valley (as well as any crown lands it may have contained) would have been of great use in provisioning troops without requiring transport of foodstuffs.

Biblical Evidence Bearing on the Function of Jezreel

Besides the archeological and comparative evidence cited above, two Biblical passages (aside from Hosea) support the idea that Jezreel served as a mustering center and military headquarters. First is the name of Ahab's center at Jezreel. It is called "the היכל of Ahab" (1 Kings 21:1), while his home in Samaria is never so called. In Biblical Hebrew, היכל generally refers to the Jerusalem Temple, or to an abode of God into which the worshipper may enter.[53] This term is not used to refer to the palace of an Israelite king.[54] The unusual usage in this verse therefore requires explanation, and the Akkadian term *ēkallu*, the linguistic source of the Hebrew היכל, may provide this. In the ninth century B.C.E., the period of Ahab, this Akkadian term was used to designate the structure at Calah later known as the *ēkal mašarti*.[55] The Hebrew designation for the Jezreel enclosure may have been based on the Akkadian designation for a similar installation.

Second, an important Biblical passage from the prophetic narrative about Jehu's revolt helps explain the function of Jezreel. The passage, 2 Kings 10:1–3, ought to be interpreted in a manner different from that usually found in the scholarly literature:

(א) ולאחאב שבעים בנים בשמרון ויכתב יהוא ספרים וישלח שמרון אל-שרי יזרעאל הזקנים ואל-האמנים אחאב לאמר. (ב) ועתה כבא הספר הזה אליכם ואתכם בני אדניכם ואתכם הרכב והסוסים ועיר מבצר והנשק. (ג) וראיתם הטוב והישר מבני אדניכם ושמתם על-כסא אביו והלחמו על-בית אדניכם.

(1) Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. So Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria, to the elder officials of Jezreel, and to the Ahab

[49] Published in R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien*, AfO Beiheft 9 (Vienna, 1956), 59 V 42–43; translation appears in *CAD* T 47.

[50] Oates, "Fort Shalmaneser—an Interim Report," 123–24.

[51] David Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore, 1991), 110–12.

[52] The route passes to the north of the Hill of Moreh and south of Mount Tabor, before turning due north at a point south of the Horns of Hattin. Since Jezreel is about 3 km south of the Hill of Moreh, and one can bypass the Hill of Moreh either on the east or on the west, this route is easily accessible from Jezreel. See further Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, 94–96.

[53] It refers to the Jerusalem Temple in 1 Kings 6–7, 2 Kings 23, Ezek. 41, Ezra 4, and Neh. 6, and to an abode of God into which the worshipper may enter in Jon. 2, Pss. 5:8, 65:5, and 138:2, *inter alia*.

[54] The sole exception is in Hosea 8:14, where היכלות is used in parallel to ערים בצורות. The parallel suggests that היכל in Hosea 8:14 refers to a building used primarily for military purposes, and that its meaning is therefore similar to that proposed for this word in 1 Kings 21:1.

[55] Joan and David Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (London, 2001), 192.

guardians saying: (2) "Now, when this letter reaches you, seeing as with you are the sons of your master, and with you are the chariots and the horses and the fortified city and the weapons, (3) you shall choose the best and most suitable of your master's sons and place him on his father's throne and fight for your master's house."

In verse 1, the phrase שרי יזרעאל, which we expect to mean "officials of Jezreel," is quite difficult. Jehu is writing from Jezreel. Why then would he send a letter to Samaria to address the officials of the city of Jezreel? The Lucianic recension of the LXX removes the phrase "to the officials of Jezreel," substituting "to the officials of Samaria." RSV has "to the rulers of the city," leaving out its name but clearly implying Samaria. But there is good reason here to prefer the *lectio difficilior* in the Masoretic Text.

Jehu's message is sent to two groups:

1) שרי יזרעאל הזקנים, the elder officials of Jezreel; and
2) האמנים אחאב. Although the phrase is awkward, the function of this group of officials is clear. אומן is used elsewhere (Numbers 11:12) to indicate those who raise children, and the phrase seems to refer to the officials of the royal household who raised the sons of Ahab. An idiomatic translation might be "the guardians of Ahab's children."

In treating the problem of the שרי יזרעאל as one of textual corruption, scholars ignore a similar anomaly in verse 2. The recipients of the letter are said to have with them:

1) בני אדניכם, "the sons of your master," that is, the children of Ahab; as well as
2) הרכב והסוסים ועיר מבצר והנשק, "the chariotry and horses, the fortified city, and the weaponry."

It is somewhat bizarre that a single group of officials should have charge of raising children and of deploying military equipment. These responsibilities belong to two different spheres. The list "chariotry and horses, fortified city, and weaponry" is closely parallel to Esarhaddon's description of the function of the *ēkal mašarti*, cited above. The officials in charge of the mustering center would have charge of the "chariotry and horses, fortified city, and weaponry" but would not have charge of the children of the king, and האמנים אחאב would have charge of the children of the king but not of the "chariotry and horses, fortified city, and weaponry."

It makes more sense, therefore, to differentiate between the two types of responsibilities mentioned in verse 2, the children of the king on the one hand, and the "chariotry and horses, the fortified city, and the weaponry" on the other. Responsibility for each of these is vested in one of the groups mentioned in verse 1. האמנים אחאב are obviously responsible for the children of Ahab. The officials of Jezreel, on the other hand, are responsible for "the chariotry and horses, the fortified city, and the weaponry." The officials of Jezreel are those responsible for the city of Jezreel, the mustering center, and they are military officials. It is easy to understand why they were at this point in Samaria; presumably they had escaped from Jezreel along with some of the military equipment and cavalry, when Jehu's revolt began as narrated in 2 Kings 9, and had taken refuge in the primary capital, Samaria. Their control of the capital is indicated by including the "fortified city" (referring to Samaria) in the list of things they controlled.

Thus, archeological, comparative, and Biblical evidence all point in the same direction. The city of Jezreel functioned as the military headquarters of Israel in the Omride period and probably continued to do so until the end of the ninth century.

Jezreel as an Evolving Symbol in Hosea 1–2

The evidence that, during the Omride period, Jezreel served as the military headquarters of Israel—more specifically as a center for mustering and cavalry reviews—brings us to an understanding of the symbolism of Jezreel in Hosea. It is most reasonable to understand the repeated connection between Jezreel and changes in the political leadership of Israel as the result of Jezreel's military function. Even after the city of Jezreel was destroyed (presumably in the Aramean invasions under Hazael at the end of the ninth century),[56] Israelite military centers continued

[56] On the destruction of Jezreel, see Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" (Second Preliminary Report), 46, and "Excavations at Tel Jezreel" (Third Preliminary Report), 71–72. They suggest that it was destroyed at the time of Jehu's revolt in 843–842 B.C.E. It is more reasonable to suppose that the destruction of Jezreel took place during one of the many Aramean campaigns against Israel between 843 and the end of the ninth century, which are narrated in 2 Kings 13:3, 7, and 22. Na'aman argued that the destruction should be dated to the conquests of Hazael of Aram, in the years preceding 796 B.C.E. ("Historical and Literary Notes on Tel Jezreel," *Tel Aviv* 24 [1997]: 124–27). But there is

to be located in the valley of Jezreel. Niemann argues convincingly that "Ta'anach III probably took over Jezreel's military function after the destruction of Megiddo VA–IVB (850–830 B.C.E.). Later, Megiddo IVA features increased administrative, economic, and—perhaps replacing Ta'anach—military functions."[57] Na'aman has suggested that the military center moved directly to Megiddo, as the Level IV material suggests.[58] Megiddo is about 15 km west of Jezreel, and Ta'anach is located a similar distance to the southwest; both are located along the southern border of the valley of Jezreel. Military centers continued to be located in the Jezreel valley for the same reasons that the area was chosen in the time of the early Omrides: the availability of agricultural produce and the proximity to major roads. Thus, it is entirely plausible that a mid-eighth century prophecy would make reference both to the city of Jezreel, which as a historical toponym was well remembered, and to the valley of Jezreel, which continued to house Israelite military centers until 733–732 B.C.E.

In the discussion below, I analyze the four mentions of Jezreel in Hosea 1:2b–2:25 (in 1:4, 1:5, 2:2, and 2:24) in light of this understanding of the function of Jezreel. I argue that Hosea 1:2b–25 is an internally coherent unit, at the center of which lies a vision of change in the function of Jezreel. The prophecy envisions the utter destruction of any military center in the city or valley of Jezreel, together with the elimination of foreign military alliances as well as of any Israelite dynasties who rely on such alliances. Although the prophecy envisions political and military destruction, it frames this destruction as part of a salubrious process. Israel had come to rely on political and military forces to provide power and wealth, and their elimination led to an exclusive reliance on YHWH as provider of Israel's needs, a reliance Hosea saw as desirable. YHWH was to provide these needs by means of agricultural bounty, and in so doing would return Jezreel to its premilitary role as an agriculturally productive area. The change in Jezreel's role mirrors a change in Israel. As Jezreel shifted back from a military headquarters to an agricultural breadbasket, Israel's focus shifted from reliance on military power and foreign

no reason to assume, as Na'aman does, that the events described in lines 1–7 of the Tel Dan stele took place during a single campaign. Like many royal inscriptions, the Tel Dan stele is ordered synoptically rather than chronologically, and it may summarize several campaigns of Hazael, among which was a campaign to Gath mentioned in 2 Kings 12:8. (In the addendum to this article, I defend the view that the author of this stele was indeed Hazael.) In placement and in content, it can be compared to the Assyrian "stelae of victory and annexation," which commemorate major battles at sites on major roads. (The Assyrian stelae were categorized by Danielle Morandi, "Stele e statue reali assire: Localizzazione, diffusione e implicazioni idelogiche," *Mesopotamia* [Rome] 23 [1988]: 105–155.) On the archeological evidence for Hazael's campaign to Gath, see Aren M. Maier, "Tell Es-Safi/Gath," *IEJ* 53 (2003): 244–46, and "The Historical Background and Dating of Amos VI 2: An Archaeological Perspective from Tell es-Safi/Gath," VT 54 (2004): 319–34.

[57] Hermann Michael Niemann, "Core Israel in the Highlands and Its Periphery: Megiddo, the Jezreel Valley, and the Galilee in the 11th to 8th centuries B.C.E.," *Megiddo IV: The 1998–2002 Seasons*, ed. Israel Finkelstein, David Ussishkin, and Baruch Halpern, Tel Aviv University Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 24 (Tel Aviv, 2006), 825; see further in the schema on pp. 833–34. Niemann's interpretation of Ta'anach III as a military center is based on the fort and bastion in the northeast corner of the mound. It contains towers and offsets and is positioned at the corner of the town in a low protruding terrace. Furthermore, an outer line of defense works extended along the northern side of the mound. Nigro concludes that the fort and bastion sheltered a garrison (Lorenzo Nigro, "The 'Nordostburg' at Tell Ta'annek: A Reevaluation of the Iron Age IIB Defense System," *ZDPV* 110 [1994]: 168–80, especially 174–75). Nigro, following earlier excavators, dates Ta'anach's expansion to the second half of the ninth century. Nieman (p. 824) gives the probable historical context of this dating: Ta'anach was fortified by an Israelite king in the second half of the ninth century (he suggests Joash or Jeroboam II) to replace Jezreel after its destruction.

[58] "Historical and Literary Notes," 127. It is entirely probable that Megiddo and Ta'anach functioned simultaneously as military centers for some time. Megiddo IVA existed over a long period of time, and the later phase of this stratum (called level H-3) continued to exist until the Assyrian conquest in 733–732 (following the views of the most recent excavations, contra that of Aharon Kempinski, *Megiddo: A City-State and Royal Center in North Israel* [Munich, 1989], 98–100). Megiddo IVA was a well-planned city, and most of the area of the site (80 percent) was devoted to public buildings in this period. Salient features of the site include City Wall 325 and its gate, the pillared buildings, and the water system (Israel Finkelstein and David Ussishkin, "Archaeological and Historical Conclusions," *Megiddo III: The 1992–1996 Seasons,* ed. Israel Finkelstein, David Ussishkin, and Baruch Halpern, Tel Aviv University Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 18 [Tel Aviv, 2000], 597). Deborah O. Cantrell and Israel Finkelstein have interpreted the pillared buildings as stables and describe how the site was almost wholly devoted to horse raising. They raise the possibility that the site served as an Israelite chariot corps center but think it more probable that the horses were sold to Assyria and neighboring countries ("A Kingdom for a Horse: The Megiddo Stables and Eighth Century Israel," *Megiddo IV*, 643–65), where they were used for military purposes. Therefore, Megiddo would have been seen by Israelites in the second third of the eighth century as a military center.

alliances to reliance on YHWH who provided agricultural bounty.

The "bloods of Jezreel" in 1:4 does indeed refer to bloodguilt, and the visitation of this bloodguilt upon the house of Jehu will lead to the end of the "kingship of the House of Israel."[59] This imputing of bloodguilt is largely an indictment of the massacre by Jehu of the Omrides at their military capital, Jezreel. Schniedewind has shown that the political background to the Jehu revolt lies in an alliance alluded to in 1 Kings 19:15–17 but is not discussed in the story of Jehu's revolt in 2 Kings 9 and 10.[60] Based on a comparative study of the Biblical and epigraphic evidence, Schniedewind convincingly argues that an alliance was formed between Jehu, the Israelite general and soon-to-be usurper, and Hazael, the usurper king in Aram-Damascus. Acting with tacit or active Aramean support, Jehu assassinated the Omride king Jehoram in Israel and his ally Ahaziah of Judah (who had family ties to the Omrides) and took the kingship of Israel for himself.[61] Hazael had a clear interest in encouraging a non-Omride to seek the throne of Israel, in order to change Omride Israel's anti-Aramean policy.

This political background allows for a religious evaluation different than that found in 2 Kings 9–10. While the author of 2 Kings 9–10 glosses over the Aramean collusion in Jehu's revolt, portraying the revolt as motivated solely by religious zeal, Hosea takes a more critical view and puts the killing of the Omrides during Jehu's revolt in a very different light. He sees these killings not as a justifiable act of anti-Ba'alism but rather as a bloodbath motivated by the calculations of two colluding usurpers, each of whom sought to maximize his political advantage.[62] In Hosea 1–2, the revolt is seen as a treacherous act of calculated regicide, which brought political ruin and no religious advancement to Israel.

This judgment is based both on the military defeats Israel suffered at Aramean hands shortly after Jehu's revolt,[63] and on Hosea's view that Ba'alism persisted even after the revolt.[64] Hosea sees the Jehu dynasty as having been born in bloodshed, which was not justified by intent or by results. The bloodguilt derives not only from a specific event (the collusion with Aram and the killing of the Omrides) but also from Jehu's larger political program, which was based on a politi-

[59] Jörg Jeremias has argued that the "blood of Jezreel" cannot refer to "bloodguilt" for an event that occurred in the distant past (*Der Prophet Hosea,* ATD 24/1 [Göttingen, 1983], 30). But this does not take into account the usual meaning of the verb פקד, which refers precisely to punishment for an event in the distant past, as in Exod. 34:7 "On the day when I visit, I will visit upon them their sin," and in the phrase "visit the sin of the fathers upon sons and on the third and fourth generations," in Exod. 20:5, Num. 14:18, and Deut. 5:9. The usage in Hosea 2:15, "I shall visit upon them the days of the Be'alim, when she used to offer incense to them," also reflects punishment for a historical practice. The unusual lexeme ממלכות in the phrase ממלכות בית ישראל should be understood as referring to the reign of the dynasty of the House of Jehu (A. Caquot, "Osée et la royauté," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 41 [1961]: 127–30), and not as "kingship," referring to the end of the Israelite monarchy. The lexeme is similar in meaning to the more usual form ממלכה, from which it differs only in the *-ut* ending, known from Aramaic, and typical of postexilic and northern Hebrew. (See the discussion in Avi Hurvitz, *Ben Lashon leLashon* [*The transition period in biblical Hebrew*; in Hebrew] [Jerusalem, 1972], 82, on מלכות as indicating postexilic Hebrew.) ממלכה usually refers to the reign of a specific king, as in 1 Sam. 13:13–14.

[60] William M. Schniedewind, "Tel Dan Stele: New Light on Aramaic and Jehu's Revolt," *BASOR* 302 (1996): 83–85.

[61] Schniedewind's argument is motivated partly by the difficulty in understanding the proposed reading "[and I killed Jo]ram son of [Ahab,] king of Israel and [I] killed [Ahaz]iah, son of [Joram, kin]g of the House of David," in lines 7–9 of the Tel Dan inscription. Recently, Rainey and Notley have argued persuasively that the verbs Schniedewind read as *'qtl,* "I killed" ought to be read as G passives (*qtyl,* "was killed") or as 3mp perfect (*qtlw,* "they killed," with the plural serving as a locution for the passive) (Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* [Jerusalem, 2006], 212–13). However, Schniedewind's argument for an alliance between Jehu and Hazael is entirely compatible with this new reading of these verbs. The entire context of the extant portion of the Tel Dan stele narrates the accomplishments and bravery of its author. He clearly sees the killings of Joram and Ahaziah as demonstrating his power and adding to his credit. It is most logical, therefore, to understand that these kings were killed by his allies, supporters, or vassals, if not by him. Furthermore, positing that Jehu was allied with Hazael when the former seized power explains the political background to the enigmatic statement in 1 Kings 19:17, in which Hazael and Jehu are named as allies of Elisha, in fighting Ba'al worship. Positing an alliance between Hazael and Jehu simply and cleanly solves a series of textual difficulties, while creating none.

[62] Schniedewind sees Hosea's condemnation of Jehu's acts as resulting from similarity to Pekah's acts in the Syro-Ephramite crisis. While this is certainly possible, it is not necessary to assume that Hosea 1–3 were written as late as 738–733 (the range of possible dates for the Syro-Ephramite crisis). Jehu's pointless and condemnable slaughter stands without the comparison to the aspirations of Pekah.

[63] The hostile Aramean control of Israel after the brief alliance is narrated in 2 Kings 10:32–33 and 13:3–4. Israel's loss of territory to Aram in this period is narrated in the opening lines of the Tel Dan stele, which summarizes Hazael's major accomplishments over a period of several years.

[64] Hosea's view that Ba'alism persisted after Jehu's revolt is evidenced by Hosea 13:1–3.

cal alliance with Aram and on military power, which unjustly replaced reliance on YHWH. In Hosea's critique, the emphasis on such considerations is encapsulated in the term "Jezreel":

(ה) והיה ביום ההוא ושברתי את-קשת ישראל בעמק יזרעאל.

(1:5) And it shall be, on that day, I shall break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

The connection between 1:4 and 1:5 is both linguistic and thematic. The linguistic connection derives from the resumptive use of the symbolic toponym Jezreel, which is mentioned in 1:5 as the location of the utter ruin of Israel's military might.[65] Obliquely and secondarily, 1:5 may refer to the destruction of the city of Jezreel by Hazael at the end of the ninth century, a destruction which highlights the folly of Jehu's alliance with Aram (since the Aramean king upon whom he relied became the enemy of his dynasty). But this is not the primary referent of the verse, which does not speak of the destruction of a city, but of the breaking of Israel's military might. By the middle of the eighth century, when this prophecy was composed, Israel's military might had been built up again, and the valley of Jezreel was again home to Israelite military centers.[66] The prophecy envisions not only the end of the reign of the House of Jehu (in 1:4) but also the elimination of Israel's military force (in 1:5). The primary referent of 1:5 is the vision of breaking the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel, that is, destroying Israel's military might at the very location of its military nerve center.

The thematic connection between 1:4 and 1:5 lies in the concept of the "salubrious destruction." While 1:4 envisions the end of the Jehu dynasty, 1:5 goes beyond the specific dynasty and speaks more generally about the extirpation of Israel's military power. The destruction of Israel's military force is, for Hosea, a necessary part of the process of renewing Israel's positive relationship with God. Throughout the book, Hosea sees the acquisition of military equipment, and specifically the reliance on foreign alliances, as undermining Israel's relationship with God. Three passages in which the quest for military hegemony is portrayed in opposition to Israel's submission to YHWH are Hosea:

i. 8:14: "Israel forgot its Maker, and built *hekalot* (see note 54), while Judah made many fortified cities. I shall send fire against their cities which will destroy their palaces," in which there is a direct connection between military equipment and "forgetting" YHWH;
ii. 11:5: "Assyria is his king; they refuse to return," in which submission to Assyria precludes "return" to YHWH; and
iii. 14:4–5: Returning Israel states: "Assyria will no longer save us; we will not ride on horses; we will no longer say 'Our God' to the creations of our hands. For in you will the orphan receive mercy." YHWH responds: "I shall heal their backsliding, I shall love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them." Emerging clearly from this dialogue is the sense that a rejection of foreign alliances and of military equipment is a prerequisite to a return to YHWH.

As elsewhere in the book, turning away from foreign alliances and the acquisition of military equipment is also a prerequisite to reestablishing a productive God-Israel relationship in Hosea 1–2.

Thus, the events prophesied in 1:4 and 1:5 are necessary parts of the process of renewing Israel's positive relationship with God. The destruction of the House of Jehu (1:4) will eliminate the dynasty that came to power through a foreign alliance, and the destruction of Israel's military force (1:5) will eliminate the possibility of Israel relying on military power.

(ב) ונקבצו בני-יהודה ובני-ישראל יחדו ושמו להם ראש אחד ועלו מן-הארץ כי גדול יום יזרעאל.

(2:2) The Judahites and the Israelites will gather together and appoint over themselves one leader, and go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

This verse makes it even clearer that Hosea sees the elimination of Israel's military force as both necessary and salubrious. As discussed above, semantic parallels to the phrase "day of Jezreel" in this verse show that this phrase must refer to the day on which Jezreel is conquered, defeated, or destroyed. The verse clearly refers to a future event, since "the day of Jezreel" serves as catalyst for a process which leads to a more positive relationship between YHWH and Israel. Therefore, the verse does not refer to the destruction of the city of Jezreel, which lay in ruins by the eighth

[65] See Nahum Waldman, "The Breaking of the Bow," *JQR* 69 (1978): 82–88.

[66] On Megiddo IVA, see note 55 above.

century. But, as we have seen in 1:5, Jezreel need not refer specifically to the city of that name. It is preferable to understand "the day of Jezreel" in 2:2 as a reference to the impending destruction (mentioned in 1:5) of the military center in the valley of Jezreel.

This destruction would lead to a greater reliance of Israel upon YHWH. To achieve this, Israel had to escape the mire of military reliance and foreign entanglements into which it had sunk. The main goal of the "day of Jezreel" was not the military defeat *pro quo* but rather the elimination of the might on which Israel relied for its security and sustenance. Relying on might prevented Israel from fully relying on YHWH and distanced Israel from recognizing YHWH as the source of its sustenance and security. Therefore, the destruction of this might was viewed as salubrious.

Three steps towards this goal are described in 2:2. Israel and Judah would reunite and appoint a leader whose title, ראש, harked back to the premonarchic period (as in Judges 11:8–9). This narrates a sort of reversal of history, in which first the split of the kingdom, and then the institution of monarchy itself were negated. The third step in this reversal of history is the statement ועלו מן הארץ, which can best be understood as "they will go up from the land," indicating a temporary departure from the land of Israel.[67] This reversal of history set the stage for a new desert sojourn, described in 2:5–2:17, which would prepare Israel for the jubilant reentry into the land described in 2:23–25.

The new sojourn of Israel in the desert, described in Hosea 2:5–2:17, was meant to be redemptive. Its goal was to purge Israel of reliance on other sources of sustenance, and to cause Israel to recognize YHWH as provider and sustainer. This is explicit in verses 8–9a, which serve as a response to verse 7, and in verses 11–15, which serve as a response to verses 9b–10. The idea of a sojourn in the desert reflects Hosea's conception of the Exodus and Wandering periods as the idyllic beginning of the relationship between YHWH and Israel.[68] The passage clearly references the traditions connected to these periods by reusing geographic descriptions connected to them. In 2:16, the "wilderness" is spoken of as a place where YHWH can woo Israel, and in 2:17, the reentry of Israel from the wilderness into the land, via the Valley of Achor, explicitly parallels the entry of Israel into the land as narrated in Joshua.[69]

In Hosea's description of Israel's new desert sojourn, the military might and foreign alliances which were to be rejected are mentioned obliquely, rather than explicitly. Those who competed with YHWH for Israel's loyalty are labeled מאהבים ("false lovers") in verses 7 and 9. This metaphor allows for a clear oppositional relationship between YHWH, who is described as "luring" and "wooing" Israel (v. 16), and the alternative providers on whom Israel had come to rely.

But who are these מאהבים? Because Ba'al is mentioned in verse 10 and verse 15, most scholars identify them with the Be'alim.[70] But the conclusion to this unit suggests that the metaphor has a double valence, referring both to Be'alim and to military might and alliances. This is suggested by verses 18–20, which form a sort of "first conclusion" to the unit. Verses 18–19 describe the removal of "the names of the Be'alim": Israel would recognize YHWH and cease to identify Him with "Ba'al." But verse 20 envisions replacing Israel's reliance on military might and alliances with reliance on her covenant with YHWH.

(כ) וכרתי להם ברית ביום ההוא עם-חית השדה ועם-
עוף השמים ורמש האדמה וקשת וחרב ומלחמה אשבור
מן-הארץ והשכבתים לבטח.

(2:20) And I will contract for them a covenant on that day, with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky, and the creeping things of the ground. And bow, and sword, and war I will break from the land, and will cause them to dwell securely.

This verse is similar to Leviticus 26:6b ("I shall eliminate evil animals from the land and a sword shall not pass through your land") in that both promise divine protection from war and beasts. But as Wolff noted, our verse emphasizes the enactment of a covenant, a

[67] Various understandings of ועלו מן הארץ are suggested in Rudolph, *Hosea,* 57–58, and Ehud Ben-Zvi, *Hosea* (FOTL; Grand Rapids, 2005), 50–52. The simplest understanding of these words is that which parallels their meaning in Exod. 1:10, "to leave the land." Hosea 2:4–19 describes a new journey of Israel in the desert, which ends when Israel reenters the land and establishes a new relationship with YHWH based on the original meaning of Jezreel.

[68] In Hosea 11:1, the Exodus is seen as the period in which Israel's filial relationship with YHWH was formed, and in 9:10, the wilderness is portrayed as the site in which YHWH first "found" Israel.

[69] In Joshua 7:25, the Valley serves as one of the first stations after Israel's entry into the Promised Land.

[70] Wolff, *Hosea*, 35; Mays, *Hosea*, 40, as well as the traditional commentaries, such as Ibn Ezra on 2:10.

concept which is not mentioned in Leviticus 26:6b.[71] The first part of the verse uses the language of covenant to emphasize that YHWH can protect against dangers against which military might and alliances are powerless. The second part of verse 20 speaks of the elimination of all swords and bows from the land. This includes the weapons of Israel and its allies. In the period of the new entry into the land, after the "day of Jezreel," Israel will need neither foreign alliances nor military equipment.[72]

The second conclusion of the unit, 2:23–25, uses the symbolic names to further develop the message found in 2:20. While 2:20 emphasizes the nonmilitary character of Israel's reliance on YHWH, 2:23–25 emphasizes the specifically agricultural character of the bounty that He provides.

(כג) והיה ביום ההוא, אענה נאם-ה׳, אענה את-השמים, והם יענו את-הארץ. (כד) והארץ תענה את-הדגן ואת-התירוש ואת-היצהר, והם יענו את-יזרעאל. (כה) וזרעתיה לי בארץ, ורחמתי את-לא רחמה, ואמרתי ללא-עמי עמי-אתה, והוא יאמר א-להי.

(2:23) And it shall be on that day, I will cause to produce, says the LORD, I will cause the sky to produce, and it will cause the earth to produce. (24) And the earth will produce grain and wine and oil, and they will cause Jezreel to produce. (25) And I shall plant her in the land, and I will love Lo-ruhammah; and I shall say to Lo-Ammi: You are My people; and he shall say: My God."

Verses 23–24 are a description of agricultural abundance provided by YHWH. Here, YHWH is described as a fructifying force, and He thus stands in opposition to Ba'al, the storm-and-fertility deity.[73]

This aspect of YHWH's activity is identical to the literal meaning of the toponym Jezreel: *'El* will sow. In this conclusion to the prophecy, the valley of Jezreel resumes the signification for which it is named, with YHWH as *'El*. Historically, it was a site of agricultural abundance, and with the removal of the military emplacements, this aspect once again becomes paramount. Thus, the destruction of the military emplacements, which is called "the day of Jezreel," causes the resumption of the "old" meaning of this very toponym. The name's meaning, "God will sow," is reinterpreted to refer to YHWH's acceptance of Israel's new reliance on Him. This is indicated by verse 25, which contains a God-Israel dialogue of mutual commitment (see above).

In verses 24–25, the symbolic names of Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhammah are reversed.[74] While the name Jezreel retains its form, its significance is reversed, not solely because of the dawn of a new age, but because of a new geographic reality: the economic geography of the valley of Jezreel changes, and as a result, the symbolic meaning of the toponym changes as well. Instead of a military emplacement, symbolizing the reliance on force, it becomes an agricultural zone, testifying to YHWH's reliable covenant with Israel. More globally, the change Hosea envisions in the function of Jezreel, and the consequent change in the meaning of the symbol, encapsulates the message of Hosea 1–2. Divine salvation will not take the form of providing military equipment (as stated in 1:7 and 2:20), but rather of providing agricultural bounty (2:23–24). The changes in economic geography thus underlie the literary structure of Hosea 1–2 and express a theological message. Understanding the symbolism of the toponym is critical to grasping Hosea's thought.

Addendum

My argument for understanding Jezreel as a toponym does not depend on attributing the Tel Dan stele to

[71] Wolff, *Hosea*, 50–52.

[72] In verses 21–22, the covenant is characterized by terms (צדק, משפט, חסד, רחמים, אמונה) with parallels in political terminology. But in these verses, the terms refer to the noncontingent aspect of this covenant. Unlike in political treaties, the party who contracts with Israel (here, YHWH) is not contracting in order to advance His own political interests, but out of purer motives.

[73] The rains attributed to Ba'al cause the land to produce food; here, Hosea emphasizes that YHWH causes the land's fertility. This opposition between YHWH and Ba'al may also be reflected in 2:10, which should be understood as indicating Israel's failure to acknowledge YHWH as providing the fertility of the land: "But she did not know that I gave her the grain, the new wine, and the olive oil, and I gave her much silver but [in return] they made gold for Ba'al."

[74] Just as the name "Jezreel" indicates the end of reliance on military power, the reversal of the names "Lo-ammi" and "Lo-ruhammah" in 2:25 indicate the end of reliance on foreign alliances. The reversal of these names in 2:25 is more significant than that in 2:3. In 2:3, the speaker is Israel, while 2:25 is divine speech. Since it is God who gave the original names of rejection in 1:6 and 1:9, His speech must reverse these names. Thus, the use of Jezreel, רחמה and עמי in 2:2–3 can best be termed a "pseudoreversal," in which a feint at positive implications for these names is made, while the real reversal is to be found after the desert sojourn, in 2:24–25.

Hazael. However, this attribution certainly supports my argument, as I note in footnote 56. Recently, George Athas has questioned this attribution.[75] Athas's conclusions have been questioned by Hess and by Schniedewind on both archeological and paleographic grounds and on broader grounds by Victor Sasson.[76] But there are also literary justifications for attributing the stela to Hazael. Lines 1–5 contain a patent "justification" of the writer's reign. They specify that Hazael's father "lay down, went to [his ancestors]," that Hadad made the author king, and that Hadad went "before" the author and accorded to him victories greater than those of his predecessors. Hazael was clearly a usurper, based on the reference to him as *mār la mamman* (son of a nobody) in an inscription of Shalmaneser III,[77] which describes how Hadad-ezer passed away whereupon Hazael took the throne (*kussê iṣbat*). Justifications such as those noted in the Tel Dan inscription are usually found in the royal inscriptions of usurpers and are identical to those which appear in the "Apology" of Hattušili III.[78] Similar justifications appear in the inscription of Zakkur of Hamath (KAI 202, COS 2.35), in which the writer ignores his father but claims that Ba'al Shamayn is said to have made the writer king and granted him victories; Zakkur was certainly a usurper.[79] Similar justifications appear in the inscription of Kilamuwa of Sam'al (KAI 1; COS 2.30) who, while not mentioning the gods, emphasizes that "what I achieved, my predecessors had not achieved." Landsberger viewed Kilamuwa as a usurper,[80] and, in any case, he was certainly not the obvious successor to his father.[81] A fuller discussion of the fictional autobiographical styles used in Northwest Semitic royal inscriptions appears in Tremper Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography* (Winona Lake, IN, 1991), 73–76. These styles show that Yamada's view that Hazael "could have regarded his predecessor Adad-idri as his 'father' in the broad sense"[82] is correct but insufficiently cynical: Hazael claimed descent from Adad-idri as a means of legitimating his own rule.[83] This understanding of Hazael's claims eliminates some of the bases for Nadav Na'aman's argument that the "father" mentioned in the Tel Dan inscription was Ba'asa of Beth-Rehob.[84]

[75] George Athas, *The Tel Dan Inscription: A Reappraisal and a New Interpretation*, JSOT Supp. 360 (New York, 2003).

[76] R. S. Hess, review in *CBQ* 67 (2005): 305–306; W. Schniedewind in *RBL* (October 2003) (http://www.bookreviews.org); Victor Sasson, "The Tell Dan Aramaic Inscription: The Problems of a New Minimized Reading," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 50 (2005): 23–34.

[77] A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 BC)* (Toronto, 1996), inscription A.0.102.40, 118 i 26.

[78] "Apology of Hattušili III," translated by Th. P. J. van den Hout in *The Context of Scripture,* ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Leiden, 2003), 199–204, text 1.77, especially lines 15–21.

[79] Hélène Sader, *Les Etats Araméens de Syrie depuis leur fondation jusqu'à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes* (Beirut, 1987), 216.

[80] Benno Landsberger, *Sam'al: Studien zur Entdeckung der Ruinenstätte Karatepe* (Ankara, 1948), 51.

[81] Sader, *Les Etats Araméens de Syrie*, 175.

[82] Shigeo Yamada, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire*, CHANE 3 (Leiden, 2000), 312.

[83] Rainey and Notley in *The Sacred Bridge,* 210, offer the conjectural but plausible suggestion that Hazael "may have been a son of Hadad-idri (his predecessor) by some minor wife and thus the half-brother of Ben-hadad whom he murdered," a murder narrated in 2 Kings 8:15. In all likelihood, we will never know whether Hazael was the legitimate son of the previous king, an illegitimate son, or unrelated to the previous king, but we do know the reasons for which he makes this claim.

[84] "His origin from 'Amqi (i.e., Beth Rehob) well explains why a certain Assyrian scribe, when describing him as Adad-idri's heir to the throne of Damascus called him 'son of nobody' (*mār la mammana*)." Nadav Na'aman, "Hazael of 'Amqi and Hadadezer of Beth-rehob," *UF* 27 (1995): 387. In the first place, it is far from clear that Hazael hailed from 'Amqi; Na'aman bases this on the Samos inscription, but this inscription may not refer to Hazael's origins. Secondly, and of greater relevance for our discussion, the appellation "son of a nobody" seems to be an attack on Hazael's claim of descent from the previous king or chieftain of Damascus who fought against Israel (presumably Adad-idri). We know of this claim from the Tel Dan inscription, but it was likely part of the royal ideology propagated by Hazael to justify his rule, and the Assyrian scribe mocks it.