MAPPING PALESTINE

Philip R Davies

It was one of the founding figures of general semantics, Alford Korzybski, who made the famous comment that 'A map is not the territory it represents' (Korzybski 1958: 58). The phrase was adapted by Jonathan Z. Smith for the title of his most influential book (Smith 1978) and might be said to encapsulate much of the work of my friend and colleague Keith Whitelam, who has long been interested in themes of spatial and historical representations as ideological constructs (Whitelam 1996, 2013; Whitelam [ed.] 2011; Whitelam and Pfoh [eds], 2013).

In recent years I have become interested in the phenomenon of cultural memory and the Hebrew scriptural canon (Davies 2008, 2013a), which can be described as an analysis of mental maps of the past. It is now generally accepted that these biblical maps for the most part have no *direct* resemblance to those drawn by archaeology: they are not 'history' in our modern meaning of the word as 'what actually happened'. The effort of rationalizing biblical time-maps into the semblance of a critical modern history, as was the custom until late in the twentieth century, has thus been abandoned by all but a few scholars. Instead, we are obliged to see biblical narratives of the past as testimonies to the ways in which the creators of those texts imagined worlds and stories where their Israel and its deity played out their identities and their destinies—and would continue to do so.[1]

Here I want to follow Whitelam's interest in maps and consider in a very preliminary way the spatial maps of the biblical canon, while bearing in mind that these maps also feature in contemporary cultural memory. Some of the territories in these maps correspond to historically determined regions, others are imaginary, and sometimes there is a confusion of the two kinds: in ancient times as well as nowadays, this is sometimes unconscious and sometimes deliberate and ideologically programmatic.

By way of an introduction to this analysis, I should underline the obvious point about the relationship between map and territory in the world depicted by the Bible. Despite the enormous influence of the detailed description of tribal territories in Joshua and Numbers, upon

which so many modern atlases are predicated, the biblical narratives are on the whole vague about spatial boundaries and relate territory mostly to the identities of the occupants. Ammon is where Ammonites live, Edom for the Edomites, and the same for Arameans or Israelites. The geographical extent and even placement of the 'land' (as in the case of Edom, quite dramatically shifted during the Iron age) could move, expand and contract with the distribution of the population after which it was named, and of course boundaries between such territories were fluid and often contested. The control of a fortress might establish a kind of claim to the territory around it, but did not prescribe a fixed space within the realm of the king to whom the soldiers were loyal. Likewise, the extent of a kingdom is most realistically defined by the populations from whom a particular king was able to extract taxes. Maps of Iron Age Palestine (or most other places) ought to reflect patronage or control rather than territory, at least until the Assyrians and their successors established provinces whose boundaries were administratively set and not constantly negotiated by force of arms. Maps of kingship, language and economic association likewise will portray ancient identities better than delineations of monarchic states. Such maps of course, cannot be drawn with much precision and in any event would be unstable. But, to take an example, referring to Dan as an 'Israelite' city means nothing unless translated into more concrete criteria: was it controlled from Samaria? Did its inhabitants speak the language of Samaria, rather than Aram or some local dialect? Were its kinship links primarily with the central highlands? Most probably, if asked, the inhabitants of Dan would in any event describe themselves in terms of their city or their family. Would our modern label of 'Israelite' (even if only occasionally accurate) have meant much to them (this line of argument is more eloquently developed inWhitelam's *Rhythms of Time*).

What, then, of the detailed boundary lists of the second part of the book of Joshua? Here, as with biblical genealogies, we can formulate a rule that will not lead us greatly astray: the more detailed a description, the more idealized, the more utopian, the more imaginary. This may seem counter-intuitive but only to those who do not think it through. Consider the detailed descriptions of Jerusalem's temple in Ezekiel and in the Temple Scroll. The following analysis, at any rate, is qualified by these considerations

1. *'From the Euphrates to the Nile: or 'Beyond the River'*

Although this territory makes a number of only fleeting appearances in the Bible, it plays an important role. The land that is promised to Abra(ha)m

for his descendants, the one to which he and his family travel, and which is regularly named as the 'land of Canaan', is defined only once. In Gen. 12.7, when Abram is at Shechem, he is promised 'this land'. In 13.15, apparently at Bethel, from where Abram and Lot divided it between them, Abram is promised 'all the land that you see' for his descendants. In 17.8 the divine promise is of 'all the land of Canaan'. But what does that include or not include? From 21.32 and 34 it might be inferred that the 'land of the Philistines' is not portrayed as part of the 'land of Canaan' (where, according to 12.6; 13.7 and 34.30, Canaanites lived, or Canaanites and Perizzites, but not Philistines). That the 'land of the Philistines' is not part of the land of Canaan may also be the implication of 26.1. Nowhere in the Bible are the Philistines enumerated as among the 'nation of Canaan', and yet the tribal lands enumerated in Numbers and Joshua cover the territory in which they settled.

But in 15.18 the divine land promise is a little more precise: 'from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates', while 10.19 (generally recognized as from a different source) puts it 'from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha—that is, including the Jordan valley, which according to Gen. 13.11 was taken by Lot. Whether the promise of 15.8 is meant to indicate all the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan (and thus to include the 'land of the Philistines') is unclear, but the mention in 10.19 of Gaza may imply as much (though it is just possible that Gaza is meant to indicate the southern extremity of Philistine 'land'): at any rate, the Philistines are not on the 'map' of chapter 10 at all, except as having come from Crete (Caphtor). They are, of course, present in chapter 20 in the person of the Semitically-named Abimelech, king of Gerar. Philistia seems to be a kind of no-man's-land or even a 'state of exception' (to borrow the phrase from Agamben [Agamben 2005]. The concept needs modification when applied to the text of Genesis, but works very well for the space left to the modern *Falastīn*).

From these various texts we gain no clear definition of the 'land of Canaan' in Genesis, but the whole territory from the Euphrates to the Egyptian border appears on two other biblical maps. One of these is of the lands conquered by David, more or less summarized in 2 Sam. 8.1-14: Philistia, Aram, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom. The short list provided does not permit a precise description of the territory, but it would approximate to the definition of the promised land of Canaan in Gen. 15. The other map is in Ezra. According to the decree of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7.25): 'And you, Ezra, according to the God-given wisdom you possess,

appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River who know the laws of your God; and you shall teach those who do not know them'. Although only an incidental reference, this may supply the key to the significance of the land promised to Abram in Gen. 15.

'Beyond the River' figures significantly in Ezra (13 occurrences: 3 in Nehemiah). It is, at the time in which the tale of Ezra is set, a well-defined imperial space: the satrapy to which Judah and Samaria belong. Why is Ezra portrayed as having authority to impose the law of his god over all those within the satrapy who know it? Would this not include Samaria? Apparently so, since Ezra 4.10 reports that the leaders, apparently of various racial elements in the population of Samaria, wrote to the Persian king in protest at the rebuilding of Jerusalem. They claim to represent (or rather they are claimed to claim to represent) 'the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River' and who represent themselves to Zerubbabel as 'worship[ping] your god as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esarhaddon of Assyria who brought us here' (4.2)

The depiction of Samarian leaders as claiming to be worshippers of the same god, but as being rejected by the Judahites as 'adversaries' (4.1) is interesting, because the same ambiguity is met in the story of 2 Kings 17.27-41 (the Assyrian king here being unnamed), which relates that the imported populations were taught the worship of Yahweh, but concludes that they did not, and continued to worship other gods. (Again, we are confronted with an exceptional state, or exceptional space: under the law of the god of Israel, but not part of Israel). From the point of view of the narrative in Ezra 4, would they be classified among those who 'know the laws' of Ezra's god, or not? And who else in the satrapy of 'Beyond the River' would potentially fall under the sway of Ezra's laws? The aporia no doubt reflects ambiguity or dispute within the authorship and initial readership of various canonized text over the status of Samaria with regard to membership of the same cult or deity as that of Jerusalem.

In comparing the texts in this section, we uncover a kind of convergence: the territory of the descendants of Abraham; the law of Ezra's god/of Yahweh, and the territory subjugated by David (and ruled from Jerusalem). We can now explore the historical configuration that links the satrapy and Abraham. For it can be argued that this area, called in Aramaic *'abar nahara'* and in Hebrew *'eber hanahar* (Akkadian *ebernari*) came to acquire more than a purely geographical or administrative connotation. In biblical scholarship of the last century, the 'Hebrews' were

widely linked to *habiru* or '*apiru*, groups encountered in Late Bronze texts often characterized as outlaws or brigands. In the Amarna texts they are cited as the enemies of the Pharaoh's vassal kings in Palestine. However, the identification 'Hebrew' is also claimed by the prophet Jonah and the first-century Jew Saul of Tarsus (Jonah 1.9; Philemon 3,5). The designation was therefore obviously still in use, and with a rather different kind of meaning. Was it by now a synonym for 'Jew'? Or, since neither Jonah nor Saul came from the tribe of Judah, did it designate a worshipper of Yahweh, or even an Israelite, who was not Judahite (i.e. a Samarian)? But in that case, why did Jonah not use 'Israelite', since in the period in which the story is set, he would have belonged to the kingdom of Israel? Why, moreover, would Saul/Paul add 'Israelite', if it is redundant?[2]

The answer seems to be that *'ibrim* was used to designate those from the territory of *'br hnhr*/*'br nhr'*.[3] Confirmation of this is that the predominant language of this area was Aramaic, which was known as *'ibri*, or, as conventionally translated, 'Hebrew'. This is the case in the New Testament, which refers to Aramaic as Ἑβραῖος, but also in the Talmud, where it is called עברית (e.g. b.Shabb 115a).[4] It seems natural that speakers of *'ibrit* would be those referred to as '*ibrim*, and the heartland of the Aramaic language was Aram/Syria, from where it became, under the Assyrians, adopted as a *lingua franca*, a practice followed by the successor empires of Babylon and Persia. Both Jonah and Saul of Tarsus could refer to themselves as 'Hebrews', for whether or not Tarsus is to be regarded as falling within this area, a member of an Aramaic speaking 'Israelite' family from Cilicia would very probably use what we can precisely term an 'ethnic designation'. For just as a Jew (=Judean) might live anywhere in the Roman empire, Judea would function as a 'home from home', as the 'motherland'; likewise 'Across the River' could be the homeland for a native Aramaic speaker living in Asia Minor (cf. Acts 21.40; 22.2: Saul/Paul was likely a native Aramaic speaker, like Palestinian Jews). And of course, Jews/Judeans were also 'Hebrews', but (as in the case of Jonah, perhaps), 'Hebrew' was a preferred *ethnos* for one who was a worshipper of Yahweh but not a Judean (though one who would, after the Hasmoneans and Herod have been called a 'Jew'). Even so, while Saul also calls himself an 'Israelite', Jonah does not.[5]

What other cultural features besides language pertained to these 'Hebrews' that made them an *ethnos*? For among those called 'Jews' of the first century CE, Aramaic- and Greek-speaking Jews apparently differed in more than purely linguistic preferences: Acts 6.1 has 'Hellenists' arguing with 'Hebrews'—i.e. Greek-speakers arguing with Aramaic-speakers. But they were hardly arguing about language. As an

Aramaic speaker, a 'Hebrew', Saul/Paul attracts the enmity of the Greek-speakers (Acts 9.29). What kinds of cultural differences divided the two linguistic groups does not matter here (possibly they relate, at least in part, to the degree of compliance with 'Greek customs'). The point is that the 'Hebrews' were a group to whom Jews and Samaritans ('Israelites') belonged, but also contained those who were not 'Israelite'. The status of Hebrews within the biblical laws is consistent with a recognition of a fraternal relationship that deserved special treatment. Moreover, in the Persian-Hellenistic era, the 'Hebrews' not only continued to practise circumcision but included part of the Judahite and Samarian Yahweh-worshipping diaspora: according to Niehr (1990) this population were worshippers of a high god. We may add that among whom those affiliated to the cults of Jerusalem and Gerizim (about Samaria we do not know) the high god will have been identified with Yahweh. But the common usage of (*'el*) *'elyon* as a designation (and perhaps the decline in the use of the divine name) suggests that differences over the identity of the high god were insignificant. For at least Jerusalem and Gerizim, it was the identity of the single authorized sanctuary that mattered.

As an *ethnos*, the 'Hebrews' of 'Across the River' are provided with their own eponymous ancestor, Eber, a grandson of Shem, in Gen 10 and 11. Unfortunately, the information given about him is confusing. In Gen. 10 he and his descendants should represent an ethnic or social group with a designated area of settlement, as with other members of the list. But only one of his sons, Joktan, is assigned further descendants or territories and these appear to lie in the region known at the time as 'Arabia': parts of Jordan and Nabatea that lay outside the region of 'Beyond the River', but where dialects of Aramaic were also spoken. According to v. 21 Shem is the 'father of all the descendants of Eber,' a statement that has the effect of equating 'Eberites' with all those descended from Shem, comprising the inhabitants of the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent from Elam to Aram (corresponding closely to the range of the Aramaic language in the Persian-Hellenistic era).

In ch. 11 Joktan is omitted entirely, while the other son, Peleg is now furnished with a line of descent that leads to Abram (vv. 16-26). In Gen. 14.13 Abram is accordingly called 'the Hebrew'—a designation that, given his home and that of his family in Haran, was perfectly appropriate.[6] This comment brings us to the equation of Abram the Hebrew with the promise of the territory of 'Across the River' made to his descendants (namely the Hebrews). Thus, while Eber is the nominal, etymological ancestor of the Hebrews, Abraham is the ancestor from whom their possession of their land is derived.[7] And indeed, it is the family of

Abraham that subsequently occupies this land (excluding the land of the Philistines): Arameans (he himself is from Haran, and both Rebekah and Rachel also come from the same region), Ammonites and Moabites (from Lot, who was offered, and took, part of the land Abraham felt authorized to grant); Edomites and Ishmaelites. The fact that Esau and Ishmael (identified as the ancestors of Edomites and Arabs) are each first-born sons, but dispossessed, is probably significant. Finally, there is (see below) that part of Canaan that is allotted to Jacob and his descendants, Israel and Judah. This, according to the scheme represented in Genesis, comprises *part* of the land promised to Abraham.

It remains to note that most of this region—apart from Greek-speaking districts (counterparts to the Philistines?) was absorbed into the Hasmonean kingdom of Judah, as a result of which the name 'Judean/Jew' became attached to them. The naming might not have persisted but for the policies of the Romans and of their client Herod, who accorded 'Jews' and the cult of Jerusalem a privileged status, with the effect of making 'Jew' and 'Hebrew' synonymous, detaching it from both Across the River and, later, the land of Judea, and, in time, ensuring that the name 'Hebrew' (=Aramaic) came to be attached to the language of the Jewish scriptures.

2. *The 'land of Israel'*

It is necessary to begin discussion of this concept by making clear the difference between two terms used in the Hebrew scriptures: *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* and *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. Unfortunately, both terms are rendered in English (and in most modern languages) identically, thus obscuring what is an important distinction in biblical usage (though one probably lost to most modern Hebrew speakers, for whom only *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* is in use). Moreover, it is the term in modern Hebrew for 'Palestine', which contradicts the careful biblical distinction. The first designates an area that is defined politically: that is, an area occupied by a state by the name of 'Israel'. It never refers to the sum of territories promised or allocated to the twelve tribes of the 'people' of Israel, which was never actualized historically as a political or geographical entity. Outside the book of Ezekiel (see below) both *'ereṣ* and *ʾᵃdamah* are used of the land of the 12 tribes, but not qualified by 'Israel'.

Genesis-Judges

It is not surprising that the Pentateuch nowhere uses either *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* or *'admat yiśrā'ēl* because as yet there is no 'Israel' but only Jacob and his sons. (In Num. 32.22 the 'land' is given to 'Israel', but this is somewhere short of naming the land as 'land of Israel'.) As discussed earlier, the

space in which the ancestors live is the 'land of Canaan'. But, strikingly, *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* is not found in Joshua–Judges, where the promised territory is at the centre of attention. The word *'ereṣ* is used alone (e.g. Josh 1.2,11); 11.22 reads 'None of the Anakim was left in the land of the Israelites (*b^{e}'ereṣ benê yiśrā'ēl*); some remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod'. These three Philistine territories would apparently fall within the limits of 'the Land' allotted to the twelve tribes elsewhere, but this is surely not the reason why the shorter 'land of Israel' is not used. In Judg. 11.15 we find 'land of Moab' and 'land of the Ammonites' and in 11:21 'land of the Amorites'. So why not 'land of Israel' instead of 'land of the children of Israel'—and why is this term used just once?

An answer can be given. Avoidance of the expected *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* is for idiomatic reasons. For *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* had a very precise meaning: the land of the *kingdom of Israel*—a political entity. It is for that reason that the term is not used for a wider territory that includes Judah and Edom, and additionally we might speculate that such an avoidance was necessary in order to counter any claim that the *true* 'land of Israel' was what became the province of Samaria, and thus possibly that the Samarians were the true inhabitants of the promised land.[8] It remains, then, only to demonstrate that *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* everywhere in the Hebrew scriptures means the land belonging to the kingdom of Israel, and, by extension, the province of Samaria.

Samuel–Kings

In the books of Samuel–Kings *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* occurs four times, in each case referring to the territory of the kingdom of that name. Whether or not Judah is included des not strictly matter, since the usage permits Judah's inclusion if it is reckoned to be part of that kingdom. However, this is left unclear. The narrative mentions two distinct 'houses' (1 Sam 7.2,3; 2 Sam. 1.12; 16.3; 2 Sam. 2.4,7,10,11, and esp. 12.8 and 1 Kings 12.21) as well as 'men of Judah' and 'men of Israel' (1 Sam. 7.11; 17.19; 26.2; 31.1,7 etc.; 2 Sam 20.4; cf. Davies 2003b). Whether Saul's own kingdom of Israel is be understood as including Judah is an issue perhaps deliberately unresolved in a narrative awkwardly negotiating a shift between a twelve-tribe 'Israel' in the Heptateuch to two contiguous societies ('houses', then 'kingdoms' from the time of Saul onwards)—a shift that is nowhere directly alluded to, let alone described or explained. If, as seems probable, the books of Samuel and Kings are consistent in this regard, then the three occurrences of *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* in 1 Samuel mean the 'land of Saul's kingdom of Israel', probably but not necessarily excluding Judah, but

certainly excluding Judah from the time that David is crowned king over it (2 Sam. 2.11).

Of course, the books of Samuel and Kings retain the notion of a twelve-tribe 'people' that the Pentateuch elaborates, and which the books of Joshua and Judges gradually dismantle into separate tribes (making the separation of Judah as a distinct 'house' a little easier), and create the episode of a temporarily unified kingdom of Judah and Israel ruled by David and Solomon.[9] But the term in these books for the unified territory of the two kingdoms is 'from Dan to Beersheba', not *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl*, and not even *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. 'From Dan to Beersheba' is required precisely *because* 'land of Israel' *means something else*. Hence, for example, in 2 Sam. 3.10 we read '…to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David *over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba*', and in 1 Kings 4.25: 'during Solomon's lifetime *Judah and Israel* lived in safety, *from Dan even to Beersheba*, all of them under their vines and fig trees'. The use of 'Israel' or 'all Israel' in 2 Sam 17:11 and 24:2,15 does not contradict this conclusions, since one strand of the narrative represents David as Saul's successor over the kingdom of Israel, which now includes Judah (the same occurs elsewhere and in Chronicles) but in 2 Sam 24.1, 9 'Judah and Israel' are separately acknowledged, reflecting the normative view for these books that 'Israel' does not include Judah. At any rate, 'land of Israel' is never used in Samuel–Kings to denote the combined territory of the twelve tribes, even for the reign of Solomon.

Chronicles

In the light of the previous discussion, the use of *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* in the books of Chronicles should be especially significant, since the authors embrace the notion of a unified kingdom that includes not only the reigns of David and Solomon (and implicitly Saul) but also the period between the fall of Samaria and the fall of Jerusalem. But of the five occurrences of the term, three are restricted to the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Chron. 13.2; 22.2; 2 Chron. 2.17), following the usage of Kings. The other two are 2 Chron. 30.25 and 34.7. The first of these mentions *gērîm* who 'came out of the land of Israel' to Judah, which only underlines that the Chroniclers follow the normative practice when dealing with what were *de facto* if not *de iure* separate kingdoms. The second passage describes the activities of Josiah in reforming the cult. Having noted that he 'purged Judah and Jerusalem' (34.5), the following verses therefore relate to Samaria: 'In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their ruins all around, he broke down the altars, beat the

sacred poles and the images into powder, and demolished all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel': here again *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* is Samaria, and, notably, the name remains even after the disappearance of the kingdom itself.[10]

Ezekiel

Neither *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* nor *'admat yiśrā'ēl* is found in the Prophets outside the book of Ezekiel, where together they occur 20 times. Ezekiel is almost unique in its use of the term *'admat yiśrā'ēl* to denote the territory of the twelve tribes: the closest approximation is in Deut. 26.15. But the book also contains the three remaining instances of *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl*. It is therefore in this book that we should most clearly be able to confirm the distinction between the two terms. The phrase 'Judah and the *land of Israel*' in 27.17 clearly places Judah outside it, while in 27.18, the boundaries of the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* run at one point 'along the Jordan between Gilead and *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* (47.18). The most curious instance is in 40.2 where Ezekiel is brought 'to *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl*, and set down 'on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south'. Whatever the difficulties of this verse, the conclusion has to be that this mountain is in Samaria, not in Judah—and cannot, therefore, be Jerusalem.[11]

3. *The tribal allotments*

Although never called the 'land of Israel', two passages define with some exactitude the limits of territories assigned to the twelve tribes, thus defining what might be called (as in Ezekiel) the *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. Num. 34.1-13 gives a description of the boundaries of the land west of the Jordan to be settled by nine and a half tribes. The more detailed accounts in Joshua 13–22 combine various data such as border descriptions and town lists to define the territories of each tribe, including in Transjordan. At present there is little consensus as to the source of the various sets of data (see Na'aman 1986; Kallai 1967, 1986; Auld 1980). Ezek. 47.13-21 also provides a definition of the extent of the land, without subdividing into tribal allotments, while ch. 48 divides the land between the tribes in a clearly schematic way. But all of these schemes, and not only Ezekiel's, are utopian, idealistic. There was historically never a time in which such a piece of territory comprised a single state. Judges 1 is in this respect accurate in stating that the allocated lands were in most cases never fully (perhaps never at all) occupied by the designated tribe. By combining the maximal extent of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, one may indeed arrive at a geographical space that more or less corresponds to the totality of these lists, and, as suggested earlier, there seems to be an attempt in 1

Kings 8 to concretize a 12-tribe society into a political one, namely the single Israelite kingdom of Solomon. The Chronicler may be understood to assume the concept of a 'land' of 'Israel' comprising both Judah and Samaria, but at the moment of Judah's depopulation by Nebuchadrezzar, his explanation of an 'empty land enjoying its sabbaths' (2 Chron. 36.21; cannot apply to Samaria, and thus the author betrays the same kind of aporia as do the creators of the books of Kings, in which the realities of two separate societies and their territories asserts itself over the imagined combined space promised to an Israelite 'people'.

4. *The land of Judah*

The final territory to consider in the biblical geography of Palestine is the land of Judah. The biblical portraits offer us a tribe, a 'house' alongside the 'house of Israel' and a kingdom, later province. These are not synonymous. The province of Judah/Yehud/Judea contained the tribe and territory (or some of it) of Benjamin: after the accounts of rivalry and enmity between Saul and David and their house and tribes, 1 Kings 12.20-23 asserts that only Judah remained with Rehoboam, but includes Benjamin among the king's subjects. It is clear that the territory of Benjamin *did* become part of the kingdom and province of Judah, but probably this realignment occurred after the end of the kingdom of Israel. Chronicles, along with Ezra and Nehemiah, recurrently denote the inhabitants of Judah as 'Judah and Benjamin (2 Chron. 11.12, 23; 15.2,8-9; 25.5; 34). But the name of the land and of the kingdom and province remained 'Judah' and thus Mordecai can be described without contradiction as a Benjaminite and a Judahite (Esther 1.1). Indeed, the land of Judah seem also to have been occupied by various groups (Caleb [Josh 14.13], Simeon [Josh. 19.1,9], Kenizzites [Josh. 14.14], Jebusites [Josh 15.63]). Whether there existed a genuine 'tribe' of Judah is actually worth questioning: the name 'Judah' derives from the territory itself (as do the same of some of the Israelite tribes too), and the idea of a 'tribe' of Judah may have originated when the population of Judah took the identity of one of the 'sons of Israel', namely as worshippers of the ancestral 'god of Israel/Jacob' (as argued in Davies 2007).

The political status of the inhabitants of this region until the mid-8th century is uncertain. It has now been established that they were less economically and culturally developed than the population of the northern highlands, which formed a state, the 'house of Omri' in the 9th century (see e.g. Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004). (The description of two separate 'houses' in 1 Samuel supports this conclusion, which is based on archaeological evidence). Judah may have been ruled by a 'house of

David': possible references to this in the Tel Dan and Mesha stelae would indicate this. But while the 'house of Omri' may also be accurately referred to as the 'kingdom of Israel', the existence of a 'kingdom of Judah' from the 9th century is uncertain; rather, the rulers of Judah were vassals of either Israel or Aram or both. There is certainly no reference in any ancient non-biblical source to a Judahite 'king' or 'kingdom' until the period in which its ruler somehow became an Assyrian vassal and thus secured independence from its local patrons.[12] Tiglath-pileser III mentions Judah in a tribute list (Summary Inscription 7), naming Jehoahaz (this must be Ahaz) of Judah.

Much of what had been regarded as the 'land of Judah' (and indeed as part of the kingdom) was later occupied by Edomites and formed a separate province under the Persians from about 400 BCE. It would be interesting (and highly valuable) to know whether, under the Ptolemaic kingdom, of which most of Palestine was a part, the provinces of Judah, Samaria and Edom were treated as parts of a single administrative unit. If so, the biblical portrait of a 'land of Israel' embracing both Samaria and Judah might have approximated to political reality at this time.[13] However, two writers from the early third century, Hecataeus of Abdera and Manetho, wrote about the Judahites without any apparent knowledge of Samarians: the Jews leave Egypt for Jerusalem! The reason for this omission may be that Egypt had been colonized by Judahites, not Samarians, but even so this supposes that, unlike the leaders of the Elephantine colony a century earlier, these Judahites paid no attention to Samaria and hence informed interested Egyptians only about Judah. There is, of course, plenty of evidence in the Hebrew Bible for a Judahite claim that they were all that was left of the 'people of Israel' (e.g. 2 Kings 17).

Most probably, under the Ptolemies and Seleucids, Judah retained some kind of semi-autonomous identity (perhaps fiscal) under the rule of the high priest of Jerusalem; at all events the well-rehearsed but variously interpreted circumstances before, during and after the wars of Judean independence under Antiochus IV and his successors led to a Judean kingdom that secured first independence and then sovereignty over much of Palestine. The enlarged kingdom was short-lived, though after an interval it was revived an extended in the rule of Herod the Great before it was split among various successors, though the province of Judah still extended beyond the traditional 'land of Judah', north as far as Galilee. At this period, then, 'Judah' is redefined to include what had been Samaria and Idumea, while their inhabitants (among whom we may include both Herod the Great and Jesus) were reckoned as 'Jews', i.e. Judeans. The merging of the identities of 'Israel' and 'Jew', accomplished by the

Hasmoneans, remained, leaving the adherents of the cult and temple of Gerizim to be considered as practising a form of 'Judaism' that was acknowledged by other Jews in varying degrees, sometimes not at all. 'Israel' became an emic equivalent of the etic 'Jew'.

The Hasmoneans did not call their kingdom 'Israel' nor their territory 'land of Israel'. In an insightful essay D. Schwarz has distinguished the two identities of 'Jew/Judean' as geographical/political and religious, using as lenses the first and second books of Maccabees (Schwartz 2013). From his study it can be suggested that a strong *Judean* political ideology (which could be, but was not necessarily, Davidic) stood alongside a religious one, and might well explain the emergence of a Judean hegemony to the point of almost obscuring an Israelite identity. There is an interesting parallel in our own times in the different ideologies of religious and secular Zionism regarding what is a Jewish State of Israel. To a large degree, then, the absorption by the territory of 'Judah' of what had been 'Israel' did not simply lead to the religious (and non-political identity of 'Israel' becoming a Judean/Jewish religious identity, but also represents a clash of religious and political traditions and ambitions that, among other things, led to the failure of Jews to achieve a satisfactory self-definition until the loss of Temple and land—and even then, sometime later. But over the issue of ancient Jewish nationalism issue there is a great deal of scholarly discussion (I mention only three of the more accomplished: Mendels 1992; Goodblatt 2006; Schwartz 2009), but what in this context is interesting is the strand of Judahite nationalism that is evident in the Hebrew scriptural canon and reflects an ideology older than the Hellenistic age, and the advent of 'Judaism'—not so much in the numerous boring and repetitive oracles against foreign nations, nor dreams of the destruction of imperial kingdoms, but with respect to domination of Palestine, and especially Samaria. What political ambitions did the strand of thinking that eliminated the inhabitants of Samaria from the 'people Israel' foment? The right to all the 'land of Israel, including *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* itself? Is this the ambition that betrays itself in the legends of David's and Solomon's rule and the 'secession' of the 'ten tribes' from it?

5. *The halakhic 'Land of Israel' of the rabbis*

I have argued here that, unlike *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl*, the land of Samaria, the former territory of the kingdom of Israel, the biblical *'admat yiśrā'ēl*, the lands assigned to the twelve tribes, has no historical substance. At the time when it did approximate the biblical ideal, when Palestine was effectively united by the Hasmoneans it was not as a land of Israel, but a kingdom of Judah. The land promised to the 'people of Israel' was an ideal, in Joshua,

Numbers and Ezekiel, and in the rabbinic literature the ideal was perpetuated—in an era when the land no longer contained even a 'Judah'. Just as the rabbis developed the category of 'holiness' (defiling the hands') to demarcate scripture from non-scripture, so they defined the land given to Israel (following the lead of the book of Ezekiel and of Leviticus) as 'holy', a place in which, if Israel/Jews no longer lived there, constituted the sacred space in which the numerous divinely-revealed laws applied as they did and could not in the real world of diaspora. These laws were mostly agricultural, but also included the release of debts (*Sheviit* 6:1), remarriage of widows (*Yevamoth* 16:7), and ritual immersion (*Mikvaot* 8:1) But crucially, the Mishnah, while it most often speaks of 'the land' without further definition, occasionally amplifies this to 'land of Israel'—*'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* —changing a meaning that had lasted a millennium.[14] This utopian redefinition has taken effect ever since, and found its way into modern Hebrew, even found in some English language scholarly literature about Palestine, thus giving the impression of speaking about a historically actualized space rather than a Jewish mental map. The effect is one that is most accurately defined as 'linguistic colonization', since it reinforces the unhistorical notion that there is some objective bond between the whole of Palestine and Judaism, rather than a halakhic or (as in the case of secular Jews) sentimental or faux-nostalgic. Whatever the felt political necessities of asserting this bond, it should not become enshrined in scholarly discussion.
[15]

5. *Postscript*

For two millennia the matrix of biblical scholarship has been theological. The contents of the Jewish scriptures have been interpreted mainly in light of their ideas about God and their apparent records of a sacred history. This may, not too unfairly, be represented as a post-canonical hermeneutic: looking at the texts through lenses coloured by their incorporation in a 'holy book'. But a historical-critical approach requires also a historical-critical reconfiguration: of a pre-canonical process, of authors writing not to teach about God but something more engaged with history, ideology and politics. Political use of the Bible contributed much to the shaping of modern Europe (and its colonies), and perhaps the foundation of a truly modern and secular appropriation of biblical scholarship is to deconstruct language about God into language about power, of which the chief applied science is politics. The aporias identified at several points in the preceding discussion show where a conflict or inconsistency of certain ideological positions exists that cannot be managed narratively.

The importance of analyzing the historical terminology and concepts of the region long known as Palestine is that today the different spaces outlined above are exploited, sometimes ignorantly, sometimes deliberately, in claims for possession of the ‘holy land’. History is not bunk, but the misuse of history sometimes is. Biblical ‘history’ needs to be replaced by the kinds of historical memories we critically construct for other parts of the world; and what goes for history goes for geography as well.

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[1] Lest we imagine that this is a radical breakthrough, we should remember the insistence of von Rad in the mid-20th century that Israel's 'traditions' should not be confused with its history (and that an Old Testament Theology should be based on the former, not the latter [von Rad 1975.] Tradition and memory are not quite the same thing, but the insight is valid and already reflects a recognition of the divergence of archaeology and biblical narrative that dawned somewhat later upon the practitioners of 'biblical archaeology')

[2] In fact the explanation may be that Saul/Paul is addressing a community for which 'Israelite' is an in-term, while Jonah is addressed by foreigners, to whom 'Israelite' would mean little.

[3] For a fuller discussion and documentation of the equation of 'Hebrews' and 'Across the River' see Beattie and Davies 2001. What follows is an abbreviation of some of this argumentation.

[4] For detailed discussion of the evidence, see Beattie and Davies 200*.

[5] Nevertheless, Esther 1 designates Mordecai as both a Benjaminite and a Jew/Judean, on the basis that 'Judean' denotes the kingdom of Judah and not the tribe. If this usage was already acceptable by the first century CE, then Saul chose not to follow it.

[6] Nor should it be overlooked that *'brm*/*'brm* may be a deliberate wordplay.

[7] On the connection between ancestor veneration and land possession see Stavrakopooulou 2010.

[8] This polemical game is being played through the Judean scriptural canon: note how Judg. 1 makes the point that only the tribe of Judah fully conquered and occupied its allotted land.

[9] But note that whereas both David and Rehoboam are anointed separately as kings over Judah and Israel, Solomon is not; he is presented, unlike the others, as ruling a *single* kingdom called 'Israel' (see further below).

[10] This usage persists in fact into the Roman period, and surfaces in Matt 2:20-21, where Jesus and his parents, rather than return to Judea, flee to the 'land of Israel' (εἰς γῆν Ἰσραήλ). Even, it may be added, in the Greek-speaking world and after both the Hasmoneans and Herod has unified most of Palestine under the name of 'Judah'.

[11] Zimmerli's commentary (1983) devotes an Appendix (pp. 563-565) to 'land of Israel' in the book, but does not come to grips with the fact that the book's use of *'ereṣ yiśrā'ē'l* is internally consistent and consistent with biblical usage generally.

[12] Judah's entrance into a tribute-bearing status with Assyria is indicated in Tiglath-Pileser's 7th summary inscription. See Tadmor 1994: 193-4 for text, transcription and commentary. But there is no explanation of how or why a client status was established, as the biblical accounts seem to assert. For a detailed comparison of biblical and Assyrian texts, see Siddall 2009.

[13] Unfortunately our knowledge of the political and administrative relationships between Samaria and Judah in the early Hellenistic period is rather poor. For description and analysis of the sources of our meager information, see Grabbe 2008: 2: 166-192.

[14] The most interesting discussion occurs in *Sheviit* 6:1 and *Halla* 4:8. Here we find a threefold definition of the 'land of Israel', in each of which the halakhah is different. The three areas are: (a) the land occupied by those who came from Babylon, from the 'land of Israel' as far as Keziv [near the modern Lebanese border]; (b) of those who came up from Egypt, from Keziv (Achzib) to the River as far as Amanah (unidentified, but perhaps a northwest of Antioch: cf. Jubilees 8:21; Exodus Rabbah 53; and from the River (Euphrates) 'as far as Amana inwards'. As a further complication *Yadayim* 4, narrates a discussion over whether the tithe for the poor should be given in the sabbatical year in Ammon and Moab, as in Egypt, or the Second Tithe, as in Babylon (note the biblical terminology). This is the one case in which the dichotomy between land of Israel and other lands is infringed. Here is a nice illustration of the theoretical nature of the rabbinic discussion.

[15]