The Birth of Israelite Historiography*

A Comparative Study of 2 Kings 13–14
and Ninth–Eighth-Century BCE Levantine Historiographies

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The first wave of Assyrian expansion in the ninth and eighth centuries brought important changes in the ancient Near East. Besides political changes, these centuries witnessed variegated scribal activities including the composition of historiographic corpora. In this paper I will focus on regions that experienced the coercion or blessing of Assyrian expansion, namely Urartu (Assyria's arch-enemy), Suḫu (competing with Assyria for territorial control), Hamath and Moab (partially or fully independent kingdoms), Sam'al (Assyrian vassals), and Til Barsip (the annals of Assyrian governor Šamši-ilu). These regions were chosen, first, because of the variety of their relations with Assyria; second, because of differences in their proximity to and relations with Israel; and third, because they produced important historiographic corpora that can be compared with 1–2 Kings. The textual remains of these diverse kingdoms will illustrate how the new political situation made its way into historiographies. Since only a few documents from Israel have been unearthed, and none of them can be classified as Israelite royal annals, the fundamental question is, When did the Israelites begin to reflect on their past?[1] Comparing a range of ancient Near Eastern historiographies with 1–2 Kings, I will argue that Israelite reflection on its own past started during the first period of the Neo-Assyrian expansion, i.e., in the late ninth and early eighth century.

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[1] For a review of previous studies, see Alexander Rofé, "Properties of Biblical Historiography and Historical Thought," *VT* 66 (2016): 433–55; Rainer Kessler, *Sozialgeschichte des Alten Israel: Eine Einführung*, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008); Shmuel Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008); H. G. M. Williamson, *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: T&T Clark, 2007); Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel*, trans. Chiara Peri and Philip R. Davies, BibleWorld (London: Equinox, 2005); Abraham Malamat, *History of Biblical Israel: Major Problems and Minor Issues*, CHANE 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

A. Similar Historical Milieus and *longue durée* Theory

Fernand Braudel's analysis of climatic change in the Mediterranean basin gave birth to the concept of *longue durée*. In his monumental trilogy[2] he argued that certain climatic conditions tend to produce similar cultural and sociological responses. The concept of *longue durée* has also been applied to the political and sociological domains of the ancient Near East.[3] So, the first step in our investigation is to explore whether there was a historical period in the ancient Near East that could generate historiographic narratives. It is generally accepted that the first phase of Assyrian expansion, namely the late ninth and early eighth century, profoundly altered relations among ancient Near Eastern kingdoms. The extant documents attest that this new political and cultural milieu was a fruitful ground for generating historiographic writings.

I. The Levant under Assyria in the Ninth–Eighth Century

In the ninth–eighth century Assyria expanded in all directions.[4] Some kingdoms fiercely resisted, while others opted for submission and enjoyed the protection of Assyria. The Levantine kingdoms were no exception. The Assyrian sources report that the Levantine kings formed an anti-Assyrian coalition that attempted to stop an Assyrian army led by Shalmaneser III (858–824) from marching through Syria (RIMA 3 A.0.102.2 ii 86–89). Despite the defeat of the coalition at Qarqar in 853, twelve Levantine kings continued to oppose Assyria and thus Shalmaneser III organized four more campaigns against the west in 849, 848, 847, and 845.[5] Israel participated or was forced to participate in at least three of these campaigns.[6] Even though Assyria was unable to subjugate the Levant, the Assyrian campaigns destabilized the region.

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[2] Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde méditerranéen à l'epoque de Philippe II*, 3 vols. (Paris: A. Colin, 1949).

[3] The application of the *longue durée* methodology has been extended to different regional and historical situations; see, for example, Ignacio Olabarri, "'New' New History: A *Longue Durée* Structure," *History and Theory* 34 (1995): 1–29; Ahmed Fekry Ibrahim, "Rethinking the Taqlīd Hegemony: An Institutional, *Longue-Durée* Approach," *JAOS* 136 (2016): 801–16.

[4] See in this volume Alice M. W. Hunt, "Materiality and Ideology: Negotiating Identity across the Neo-Assyrian Imperial Landscape," 146–61, and the remarks by Eckart Frahm in "Texts, Stories, History: The Neo-Assyrian Period and the Bible," 163–81, and by Israel Finkelstein in "Northern Royal Traditions in the Bible and the Ideology of a 'United Monarchy' Ruled from Samaria," 113–126. Assyria became a world empire only during Tiglath-pileser III's reign; see Mario Liverani, *Assiria: La preistoria dell'imperialismo* (Bari: Laterza, 2017), ix–xviii.

[5] Shigeo Yamada, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmanesar III (859–824 B. C.) Relating to His Campaigns to the West*, CHANE 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 165–85.

[6] The annals record various types of campaigns against the west. The Aram-led coalition consisting of twelve kings along the sea is mentioned in the campaigns of 849 (RIMA A.0.102.6 ii

The year 842/841 marked a decisive turn in Assyrian control of the Levant.[7] After the death of Hadad, Hazael (ca. 842–800) usurped the throne and for four decades became the most important player in the Levant.[8] Shalmaneser III marched against the Aramean usurper. After the Assyrians defeated the Aramean troops at Saniru, Hazael took refuge in the fortified city of Damascus where he was "imprisoned";[9] meanwhile the Assyrians looted and devastated the country.[10] The defeat at Saniru did not terminate Hazael's expansionistic policy, and three years later, in 838, Shalmaneser III marched again against Hazael (RIMA 3 A.0.102.13 r.4′–11′; 14:102–104). A series of revolts that began near the end of Shalmaneser III's reign in 827 and continued until 821, however, reduced Assyria's territorial holdings.[11] The inscriptions of Shalmaneser III's successor, Šamši-

62), 848 (RIMA A.0.102.6 iii 4–5), and 845 (RIMA A.0.102.10 iii 14–25). The coalition is mentioned in the description of the battle at Qarqar (RIMA A.0.102.2 ii 95) and Ahab of Samaria is listed among the twelve kings. In the rest of Shalmaneser III's inscriptions there is no longer a full list of kings, and the coalition is variously designated in the royal inscriptions. They are usually referred to as "twelve kings on the shore of the sea" (12 MAN.MEŠ-*ni ša ši-di tam-di*; RIMA 3 A.0.102.6 ii 28) or simply "twelve kings" (12 MAN.MEŠ-*ni*; RIMA 3 A.0102 14:91). But sometimes they are also called "twelve kings along the seashore" (12 MAN.MEŠ-*ni šá a-ḫat* A.AB.BA; RIMA 3 A.0.102.28:30), "twelve kings along the seashore and the banks of Euphrates" (12 MAN.MEŠ-*ni šá a-ḫat tam-ti* [*u a-ḫat*] ˹ID˺.A.RAD; RIMA 3 A.0.102:30:23–24), "the twelve kings of Hatti on the shore of the sea" (12 MAN.MEŠ-*ni ša* KUR *ḫat-ti* [*šá ši*]-*di tam-di*; RIMA 3 A.0.102.16:78′–79′), or only "twelve kings of Hatti" (a reconstructed text reads 12 MAN.MEŠ *šá* [KUR] *ḫat-*[*t*]*e* [xxx]; RIMA 3 A.0.102.24:15), or just "twelve princes" (12 *mal-ki*.MEŠ; RIMA 3 A.0.013.40:15). The designations that include geographical references indicate that these terms referred to anti-Assyrian coalitions formed in the western Levant. Since the first occurrence of this term refers to the coalition at Qarqar, of which Israel is listed as a member, it is reasonable to suppose that when the Assyrian scribes mentioned twelve kings/princes, they intended the coalition created in 853, including Israel. Moreover, since Israel was under Aramean influence during this period, it is likely that Damascus asked Israel to participate in the anti-Assyrian coalition.

[7] Yamada, *Construction*, 185–95. This analysis relies on an evaluation of the sources collected in Shuichi Hasegawa, *Aram and Israel during the Jehuite Dynasty*, BZAW 434 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 84–147; Manfred Weippert et al., *Historisches Textbuch zum Alten Testament*, GAT 10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 242–84; and Omer Sergi, "The Battle of Ramoth-Gilead and the Rise of the Aramean Hegemony in the Southern Levant during the Second Half of the 9th Century BCE," in *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Andreas Schüle, Angelika Berlejung, and Aren M. Maeir, LAS 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 81–97.

[8] Cf. RIMA 3 A.0.102.40 i 26. According to 2 Kgs 8:7–15, Hazael killed his father and then became king in Damascus.

[9] RIMA 3 A 102.8:16″. The verb *esēru* is often used in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions to indicate that the Assyrian besieged the city but did not conquer it (cf. RIMA 3 A.0.102 5 i 4, iv 4, v 2).

[10] RIMA 3 A.0.102.8:1″–27″; 9:1′–9′; 10 iii 45–iv 15; 12:21–30; 16:122′–137′. For a shorter version, see RIMA 3 14:97–99. A small cylinder (RIMA 3 A.0.92) mentions booty taken from Damascus.

[11] Luis R. Siddall, *The Reign of Adad-Nīrārī III: An Historical and Ideological Analysis of an Assyrian King and His Times*, CM 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 129.

Adad V (824–811), do not mention any campaign or conflict in the Levant that would have provided Hazael with an opportunity to expand his reign.

The constant Assyrian pressure on Syria and the dynastic change in Damascus resulted in the disintegration of the Levantine anti-Assyrian coalition.[12] Nevertheless, Hazael's military campaigns enlarged Aramean control over Israel, allowing him to establish a more powerful Aram-Damascus kingdom than any of his predecessors did.[13] Hazael's kingdom at its peak incorporated parts of Israel, Philistia, Judah, and Transjordan as echoed in the biblical narrative (2 Kgs 10:32; 12:12–18; 13:2, 22) and as attested in the destruction layers of some Israelite and Judahite cities.[14]

The death of Hazael around 800 and Adad-nirari III's accession to the throne (811–743) changed the political equilibrium in the Levant. Adad-nirari III conducted four campaigns against the west.[15] It can be concluded from the inscriptions that the rulers of Samaria were no longer allying themselves with Aramean kings against Assyria.[16] Aram-Damascus itself, however, was still a center of resistance that had to be eradicated. Adad-nirari III's major achievement in the west was his victory against Aram-Damascus in 796. This victory gave him access to the Mediterranean Sea. Toward the end of his reign, Adad-nirari III described himself as the conqueror of the entire west (RIMA 3 A.0.104.8:11–14). Obviously, there is no evidence that he conquered the southern Levant, but it is likely that the "regions showed some form of submission by paying tribute by the end of the 790s."[17] Although most Levantine kingdoms submitted to Assyria, they were still ruled by local administrators. The presence of seemingly autonomous local administrators, the so-called "four strong men," was not a sign of

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[12] Hazael's accession to the throne marked the end of the strong coalition between Hamath and Damascus. It seems that after 841 Hamath joined the Assyrians and made a treaty with them, since Hamath is not subsequently mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. Michael C. Astour, "841 B. C.: The First Assyrian Invasion of Israel," *JAOS* 91 (1971): 384. Combining the biblical sources with the Tel Dan stele, it is reasonable to conclude that due to constant Assyrian pressure, Hamath was no longer able to resist Assyria and left the anti-Assyrian coalition. Omer Sergi suggested that sometime in this period Joram invaded Aram-Damascus and was defeated. Jehu's revolt thus toppled the Omride dynasty when it was at its nadir. Sergi, "Battle of Ramoth-Gilead," 91–93.

[13] Aram-Damascus expanded under Hazael's reign, and it seems likely that 2 Kgs 8 echoes this period of Aramean supremacy; cf. Liverani, *Israel's History*, 113–16.

[14] The destruction layers dated to this period were unearthed in Tell el-Hammah, Hazor (Stratum IX), Megiddo (Strata VA–IVB), and Tell es-Safi (Stratum IV). Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*, ANEM 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 119–22.

[15] The campaigns targeted Guzana in 808, north Syria in 805–803, Lebanon and Arwad in 802, and Aram-Damascus in 796. Siddall, *Adad-Nīrārī III*, 63–64; Walter Mayer, *Politik und Kriegskunst der Assyrer*, ALASPM 9 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 293–96.

[16] The campaign conducted in 847 (RIMA A.0.102.6 iii 16–20) mentions Paqarhubuni (close to Sam'al), and it is difficult to assume that Israel would have provided military support for this anti-Assyrian resistance.

[17] Siddall, *Adad-Nīrārī III*, 68.

Adad-nirari III's weakness but a strategic plan. The "four strong men" and the king's mother Sammu-ramat (Semiramis)[18] helped him to control the western Levant. As a result, after 796 this region was free from rebellion and Adad-nirari III could concentrate on the northern and eastern regions. As Luis Siddall observed, "In this way Sammu-ramat and the magnates were key figures in the maintenance of the empire."[19] In reality, the operative freedom given to local administrators aimed at assuring Assyrian control over the volatile regions of Syria-Palestine.

Even though we have only a few texts from the later period, it is still possible to deduce that Assyria continued to play an important role in the western Levant. According to the Eponym Chronicles, Shalmaneser IV (783–773) conducted campaigns in 775 to the Cedar Mountain and in 773 against Damascus.[20] His successor Ashur-dan III (773–755) marched against Hatarikka in 765 and 755 and against Arpad in 754.[21] This relative independence in the Levant ended under Tiglath-pileser III.

II. The Levantine Political Ballet

Hazael and his fierce opposition to Assyria was only one example of how ancient Near Eastern kingdoms negotiated their relationships with Assyria. The spectrum of reactions varied from animosity to submission. Five Urartian kings maintained their independence, and Assyria is not mentioned at all in their inscriptions. Two kings of Suḫu also maintained their independence from Assyria, and Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur, a governor of Suḫu, organized his own military campaigns and provided military support to anti-Assyrian movements. Levantine kingdoms such as Hamath, Sam'al, and Israel negotiated with Assyria and some paid tribute.[22] Moab, located beyond Assyria's reach, took advantage of

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[18] Luis R. Siddall, "Sammu-Ramāt: Regent or Queen Mother," in *La famille dans le Proche-Orient ancien: Réalités, symbolismes, et images. Proceedings of the 55th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Paris, 6–9 July 2009*, ed. Lionel Marti (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 502.

[19] Siddall, *Adad-Nīrārī III*, 129.

[20] Alan R. Millard (with a contribution by Robert Whiting), *The Eponyms of the Assyrian Empire, 910–612 BC*, SAAS 2 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1994), 39.

[21] Shuichi Hasegawa attributes the last campaign of the king to the first campaign of his successor, thus the campaign in 772 is attributed to Ashur-dan III and the campaign in 754 against Arpad is attributed to Ashur-nirari V. *Aram and Israel*, 135.

[22] It remains unclear whether Zakkur, king of Hamath, became an Assyrian ally. Hamath is not listed in the Nimrud Wine Lists, so there is no evidence that Hamath's kings were vassals who brought tribute to Assyria. Nevertheless, Hamath is never mentioned among Assyria's enemies. Moreover, neither Hamath nor Zakkur are mentioned in a small fragment found in Nineveh (RIMA 3 A.0.104.4) that lists enemies of Adad-nirari III. Zakkur, however, is mentioned on a stone stele (RIMA 3 A.0.104.2:4–8) that describes how Adad-nirari III and his field marshal Šamši-ilu settled the boundaries between Zakkur and Ataršumki. This stele indicates that Assyria had enough power to impose such an important decision upon Zakkur, and thus we

the changing equilibrium and recovered territories lost to Israel. Finally, one of the "strong men," Šamši-ilu, Assyrian governor of Til Barsip, also organized his own campaigns, obviously under the auspices of Assyria. Along this spectrum of reactions we may locate the political games of the Israelite king Jehu and his successors (the Nimshide dynasty) and compare Israel with the kingdom of Sam'al. Relations between Israel and Assyria in the ninth–eighth century can be divided into four phases that are paralleled in the contemporary relationship between Assyria and Sam'al.

1. Israelite Political Games

The Israelite political ballet can be divided into four phases.

Phase 1: Anti-Assyrian resistance. The Assyrian sources report that in the ninth century, Samaria entered into open conflict with Shalmaneser III and allied with Phoenician and Aramean states. Omri's dynasty allied with Phoenician states through a diplomatic treaty sealed by the marriage between Jezebel and Ahab (1 Kgs 16–19), and Omri's son Ahab joined the anti-Assyrian coalition in the battle at Qarqar in 853.

Phase 2: Pro-Assyrian submission. The change on the throne in Damascus overlapped with a military putsch in Samaria (842/841). Omri's dynasty was eliminated and Jehu usurped the throne (2 Kgs 9–10). In 841, when Shalmaneser III decided to attack Hazael, Jehu together with Sidon and Tyre opted to ally with Assyria (RIMA 3 A.0.102.8:24″–27″). Even though the biblical accounts do not mention Jehu's submission to Assyria,[23] the inscription on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (RIMA 3 A.0.102.88) and the accompanying relief depicting Jehu prostrate before the king confirm that Jehu looked for support from Assyria. However, neither Shalmaneser III nor Šamši-Adad V was able to rescue Israel and Judah from Hazael's clutches.[24] So, until ca. 800 the Nimshide dynasty lived in the shadows of Hazael's expansionistic politics.[25]

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may conclude that Zakkur was an Assyrian ally who had to acknowledge Assyrian control of the region; nevertheless, he was free enough to behave as an independent king and to make his kingdom prosper (contra John C. L. Gibson, *Aramaic Inscriptions*, vol. 2 of *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1975], 6).

[23] Omer Sergi argues that the biblical silence regarding Jehu's submission to Assyria is unsurprising because the last Omride king, Joram, had already sided with Assyria. "Battle of Ramoth-Gilead," 93–94.

[24] For a summary of this period, see Finkelstein, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 119–28.

[25] The Aramean presence in Israel is attested at Tell eṣ-Ṣafi (Gath; cf. 2 Kgs 12:17, 18) and possibly at Bethsaida, Tel Hadar, and Ein Gen. Aren M. Maeir, "Can Material Evidence of Aramean Influences and Presence in Iron Age Judah and Israel Be Found?," in Schüle, Berlejung, and Maeir, *Wandering Arameans*, 55–61. Destruction layers in Israel have been attributed to Hazael on the basis of radiocarbon dating. Israel Finkelstein and Eli Piasetzky, "Radiocarbon, Iron IIA Destructions and Israel–Aram Damascus Conflict in the 9th Century," *UF* 39 (2007): 261–79.

Phase 3: Assyrian alliance and freedom to expand. The Israelite pro-Assyrian policy was continued by Jehoahaz (817–800), Joash (800–784), and Jeroboam II (788–747). An inscription of Adad-nirari III found at Tell al-Rimah and dated around 797/796 confirms that the Israelite king Joash maintained his loyalty to Assyria together with the Phoenician states and Damascus (RIMA 3 A.0.104.7:8). Further evidence of the pro-Assyrian stance of the Nimshide kings comes from the administrative accounts preserved in Nimrud. The wine list ND 6212, dated to the early part of the eighth century, reports that Samarian ambassadors brought tribute to Assyria.[26] As argued above, Adad-nirari III entrusted his loyal "strong men" with the task of keeping the region under control while he conducted a campaign in the east, and his subordinates evidently prospered and even conducted military campaigns. Thus, the Assyrian policy in Syria-Palestine and the end of Aram-Damascus's supremacy in the southwestern Levant allowed Israel to thrive politically and economically. Jehu and his four patrilineal successors reigned in Samaria for almost one hundred years (842–747), becoming the longest dynasty in Israel. According to the Bible, Israel rose from the ashes, began to prosper, and conquered Judah.

Phase 4: The end of independence. The relative freedom of Israel ended with the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III. His first series of campaigns was directed at northern Syria; after a revolt orchestrated by the Syro-Ephraimite coalition, Assyria conducted three campaigns in the southern Levant in 734–732. The campaigns reduced Damascus to an Assyrian ally. The next wave of rebellions was severely punished and Samaria was fully integrated into the Assyrian administrative orbit during the reigns of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II.[27]

2. Kulamuwa of Sam'al – Suspicious Similarities

The small city-state of Sam'al (Zincirli), which had hardly any contact with Samaria, went through the same four phases that Israel experienced in the ninth–eighth century.[28]

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[26] Frederick Mario Fales, "A Fresh Look at at the Nimrud Wine List," in *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East. Papers of a Symposium Held in Rome, May 17–19, 1990*, ed. Lucio Milano, HANE/S 6 (Padua: S. A. R. G. O. N., 1994), 370.

[27] Bob Becking, *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study*, SHCANE 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Gershon Galil, "The Last Years of the Kingdom of Israel and the Fall of Samaria," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 52–64; John H. Hayes and Jeffrey K. Kuan, "The Final Years of Samaria (730–720 BC)," *Bib* 72 (1991): 153–81; Nadav Na'aman, "The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 BC)," *Bib* 71 (1990): 206–25; Peter Dubovský, "Tiglath-Pileser III's Campaigns in 734–732 B.C.: Historical Background of Isa 7, 2 Kgs 15–16 and 2 Chr 27–28," *Bib* 87 (2006): 153–70; Luis R. Siddall, "Tiglath-Pileser III's Aid to Ahaz: A New Look at the Problems of the Biblical Accounts in Light of the Assyrian Sources," *ANES* 46 (2009): 93–106.

[28] K. Lawson Younger, *A Political History of the Arameans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Polities*, SBLABSt 13 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 390.

Phase 1: Anti-Assyrian resistance. Both Samaria and Sam'al first opposed Shalmaneser III. Ironically, both anti-Assyrian coalitions also included traditional enemies: Israel allied with its enemy Aram and Sam'al with its oppressor Que. Both coalitions were defeated.

When Shalmaneser III started his campaigns against the west in 858, the Sam'alean king *Hayyyānu* aligned himself with other Neo-Hittite states against Assyria (RIMA 3 A.0.102.1:53′–64′).[29] The anti-Assyrian coalition consisting of Carchemish, Bit-Adini, Pattina/Unqui, and y'dy/Sam'al was defeated.[30]

Phase 2: Pro-Assyrian submission. Shortly after the defeat both Sam'al and Israel surrendered to Assyria during Shalmaneser III's reign and paid regular tribute to Assyria.

After the defeat of the anti-Assyrian coalition, Sam'al was no longer listed among Assyria's enemies.[31] Kulamuwa claimed that the city was oppressed by Que.

Phase 3: Assyrian alliance and freedom to expand. Both Samaria and Sam'al experienced a period of liberation from their oppressors followed by a period of thriving.

A Phoenician inscription recovered in Sam'al (*KAI* 24) describes a shift in Sam'alean international politics. King Kulamuwa (ca. 840/835–815/810) claimed to engage the Assyrians

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[29] The Iron Age kingdom of Sam'al adopted Neo-Hittite iconography, but it "was not neo-Hittite in a political and cultural sense. Its non-Hittite rulers employed prevailing Neo-Hittite symbols of royal power but they presumably did so not to show allegiance to Carchemish or any other truly Neo-Hittite polity but to bolster their own authority." J. David Schloen, "The City of Katumuwa: The Iron Age Kingdom of Sam'al and the Excavation of Zincirli," in *In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East*, ed. Virginia Rimmer Herrmann, J. David Schloen, and Anna R. Ressman (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 36.

[30] The first target of this campaign was La'la'te of Bit-Adini. The people escaped and the Assyrians destroyed the deserted city before advancing on Til-Barsip. The next target was Burnar'ana. The Assyrians surrounded and conquered it, then crossed the Euphrates and moved to Gurgum. After receiving tribute Shalmaneser III directed his forces toward Lutibu, belonging to the Sam'alean king *Hayyyānu*. The Assyrian army approached the kingdom of Sam'al from the north, crossing the Maras plain. *Hayyyānu* formed a coalition with Sapalulme of Patin, Ahuni of Bit-Adini, and Sangara of Carchemish. The coalition was defeated, but the annals do not mention that the city was captured. It seems that the coalition somehow survived the Assyrian aggression, a sort of tactical victory for the Assyrians. Next, the Assyrians approached the city of Alimuš, a fortified city of Sapalulme of Patinu/Unqi. The coalition was reformed and four kings, together with four other kings – Kate of Que, Phirim of Hiluka, Bur-Anate of Yasbuq, and Adanu of Yahan – once again faced Shalmaneser. Shalmaneser defeated the new coalition at Alimuš. Shigeo Yamada, "Qurdi-Assur-Lamur: His Letters and Career," in *Treasures on Camels' Humps: Historical and Literary Studies from the Ancient Near East Presented to Israel Ephal*, ed. Mordechai Cogan and Dan'el Kahn (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2008), 296–311.

[31] Probably the kingdom was too small to oppose Assyria and preferred to collaborate and pay tribute to the empire (RIMA 3 A.0.102.1:92′–95′).

against his Danunian enemies, i.e., the kingdom of Que.[32] Kulamuwa's decision to become an Assyrian vassal brought positive results, since the territory of Que (Danunians) and Gurgum was placed under his jurisdiction.[33] The period after the death of Kulamuwa is immersed in fog. The inscriptions mention a king QRL; however, it is not clear whether there was another king between Kulamuwa and QRL.[34] Despite these uncertainties, extant Assyrian administrative documents prove that Sam'al was a loyal Assyrian vassal during this period.[35] Sam'al is mentioned in wine list no. 8 (ND 10047 r.18), just three lines after Samaria (r.15).[36] The tribute was brought to Kalhu around 803.[37] Thus, during Adad-nirari III's reign, neither Samaria nor Sam'al was identified as participating in an anti-Assyrian coalition,[38] and both continued to bring regular tribute to Assyria (see the Nimrud wine lists) until the first half of the eighth century. Submission to Assyria brought prosperity to the people (*KAI* 24) and allowed Kulamuwa and his successors to undertake important building projects (*KAI* 214, 216).[39] German excavations unearthed a flourishing settlement with a strongly fortified lower and upper city and *bit-ḫilani* buildings.[40]

Phase 4: The end of independence. In both Israel and Sam'al the situation changed during Tiglath-pileser III's reign. Both kingdoms went through a turbulent period of rebellions, and the pretenders to the throne sought help from Tiglath-pileser III. Both kingdoms were conquered and turned into Assyrian provinces during the reigns of Shalmaneser V and Sargon II; the eponym lists report the names of the governors of the Assyrian provinces of Samaria and Sam'al.

The last important shift in the history of Sam'al took place during Tiglath-pileser III's reign. In the middle of the eighth century, a usurper rose in Sam'al and killed Panamuwa I's son *Barṣūr*. The rebellion aimed to suppress the pro-Assyrian faction in Sam'al. Tiglath-pileser III confirmed Panamuwa II (*Barṣūr*'s son) as king. This support made the

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[32] Kulamuwa's decision to bribe Assyria probably took place around the time when Shalmaneser III campaigned against Que and Tarsus in 834/833.

[33] Héléne S. Sader, *Les états Araméens de Syrie: Depuis leur fondation jusqu'à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes* (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1987), 178–80.

[34] Sader, *Les états Araméens*, 175–77.

[35] RIMA 3 A.0.102.16:268′–286′. When the rebels in Patinu/Unqi murdered the pro-Assyrian king and organized resistance against Assyria, Sam'al did not join the rebels. The Zakkur inscription, however, states that when Hazael organized a new anti-Assyrian coalition with the support of Urartu, Sam'al joined it in 790/780 (*KAI* 202:4ff).

[36] There is another fragment mentioning both Samaria and Sam'al (ND 10025) but it is heavily damaged and it is impossible to be sure about the reconstruction of the toponyms. J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Nimrud Wine Lists: A Study of Men and Administration at the Assyrian Capital in the Eighth Century B.C*, Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud 1 (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1972), 111.

[37] Kinnier Wilson, *Nimrud Wine Lists*, 93.

[38] It is difficult to determine whether Sam'al joined the anti-Assyrian coalition mentioned in RIMA 3 A.0.104.3:11–15.

[39] Josef Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli: Neue Edition und vergleichende Grammatik des phönizischen, sam'alischen und aramäischen Textkorpus*, ALASP 6 (Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 1993), 11–13.

[40] The University of Chicago is conducting new excavations under the direction of David Schloen at the site. Only preliminary studies have been published to date: Schloen, "City of Katumuwa"; Hans-Peter Mathys, *Das Astarte-Quadrat* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2008).

vassal kingdom of Sam'al even more dependent on Assyria (RINAP 1 14:10–12; cf. also 27:2–7; 32:1–12; 35 iii 1–23; 47 r.6–13). Panamuwa II brought tribute to Tiglath-pileser III in 738,[41] and he died while participating in Tiglath-pileser III's campaign against Damascus in 733/732. His son *Barrākib* was involved in large building activities. The kingdom of Sam'al ceased to exist at the turn of the eighth–seventh century.

III. Implications

The Assyrian campaigns forced Levantine kingdoms to negotiate their relationships with Assyria. Some kings opted for military resistance, others for vassalage. The close similarity between the political histories of Sam'al and Israel in the ninth–eighth century shows that what happened in Samaria followed a normal pattern in the Levant under Assyrian rule.[42] Kingdoms that submitted to Assyria, such as Israel, enjoyed a certain degree of freedom and could directly or indirectly rely on Assyrian support while fighting their neighbors. Returning to Braudel's model, we may suggest that the rise of the Assyrian Empire in the ninth–eighth century generated an unprecedented state of affairs in the ancient Near East, namely a political *longue durée* during which the historiographies of the ninth–eighth century were born. Since Israel lived in the same political and cultural climate that gave birth to historiographies in the ancient Near East, can we determine whether Israel also at this moment began to produce its own historiography?

B. Events Worthy of Commemoration

However appealing Braudel's model might seem, we should ask a question: Is a political and cultural milieu a sufficient reason to conclude that Israelite historiography was also born in the ninth–eighth century? Israel Finkelstein has argued, based on analysis of the written material unearthed in Israel, that in this

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[41] Tropper, *Inschriften von Zincirli*, 14–16.

[42] A similar pattern can be observed in the political history of Hamath. Both Hamath and Samaria formed part of the anti-Assyrian coalition at the battle at Qarqar in 853 (RIMA 3 A.0.102.2 ii 88). During Hazael's reign, both kingdoms suffered under the iron fist of Aram-Damascus. After Hazael's death and a series of Assyrian campaigns in the western Levant, both Hamath and Samaria expanded their territories at the expense of Aram-Damascus. Neither Zakkur's inscription nor the Bible mentions that Hamath and Samaria surrendered to Assyria; nevertheless, there are sufficient reasons to suspect that both Samaria and Hamath negotiated their territorial control with Assyria. Whereas Samaria became an Assyrian vassal obliged to pay regular tribute, Hamath probably maintained a higher level of independence from Assyria. Both Hamath and Samaria inflicted a defeat upon Aram-Damascus and expanded their territory. Finally, the independence of both kingdoms ended during the second wave of Assyrian expansion, i. e., under the kings from Tiglath-pileser III to Sargon II. For more details see Younger, *Political History*, 425–500. Essentially similar successions of political events can be observed in other Neo-Hittite kingdoms such as Arpad and Bit-Adini. Cf. Younger, *Political History*, 307–72, 501–48.

period there were a sufficient number of scribes capable of composing a historiographic work.[43] However, in the absence of significant political events worth recording, the *longue durée* argument and the presence of scribes capable of writing is not a sufficient reason to conclude that Israelite historiography was born during the Nimshide dynasty. Thus, it is necessary to investigate the typical content of ninth–eighth century historiographic inscriptions elsewhere in the ancient Near East.

I. Motives for Writing a Historiographic Work

Using the example of the Zakkur stele, I will illustrate that military campaigns and building projects constituted two topoi regularly commemorated in ancient Near Eastern inscriptions.

1. Motives for Writing the Zakkur Stele

After the demise of Hazael around 800 and the Assyrian campaigns in the west,[44] Zakkur, king of Hamath, profited from the weakening of Aram-Damascus and founded a new dynasty.[45] He attached the territory of Lu'ash, which was previously under the control of Aram-Damascus, to his kingdom and founded the city of Hazrach as his new capital.[46] Obviously these military and political maneuvers did not pass unobserved by Bar-Hadad (Ben-Hadad III), Hazael's son. Bar-Hadad mobilized seventeen[47] kings and their armies and attacked Hazrach (*KAI* 202:4–10).[48] Zakkur successfully defended himself against the attackers. This event was commemorated by carving an account of Zakkur's victory upon a royal stele (Zakkur A). The inscription on the left side of the stele (Zakkur B) praised Zakkur for rebuilding Hazrach and its fortifications, the city of Afis, some shrines, and a series of strongholds.[49]

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[43] Anat Mendel-Geberovich et al., "A Brand New Old Inscription: Arad Ostracon 16 Rediscovered Via Multispectral Imaging," *BASOR* 378 (2017): 113–25; Israel Finkelstein, "A Corpus of North Israelite Texts in the Days of Jeroboam II?," *HeBAI* 6.3 (2017): 262–89.

[44] Namely in 796, 775, 773, 765, and 755; cf. Millard, *Eponyms*, 39.

[45] Hélène Sader, "History," in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*, ed. Herbert Niehr, HdO 1.106 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 33–34.

[46] Gibson, *Aramaic Inscriptions*, 6–7.

[47] Following Alan Millard's restoration in *COS* 2.35.

[48] It is possible to identify Hazrach with modern Tel Afis, where the stele of Zakkur was found. Frederick Mario Fales and Giulia F. Grassi, *L'aramaico antico: Storia, grammatica, testi commentati* (Udine: Forum, 2016), 126–27.

[49] In the first half of the eighth century the prosperity of the kingdom of Hamath reached its peak. Archaeological excavations at Tell Mishref, ancient Qatna, revealed the organization and the glory of one of the district capitals. Sader, "History," 34. Tiglath-pileser III listed nineteen districts that were under Hamath's control (RINAP 1 13:9–10; 31:5).

2. *Main Topoi in the Ancient Near Eastern Inscriptions*

The two motives for creating Zakkur's stele – to commemorate his military victory and to record his building projects – are hardly unique to that stele; indeed, they are pervasive in ancient Near Eastern texts.[50] The celebration of military victories, whether defensive or offensive, became the main theme of first-millennium historiographic writings.[51] Thus, Mesha, king of Moab, defeated Israel (*KAI* 181:1–8), Kulamuwa put an end to the oppression of Danunians (*KAI* 24:1–8), Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur defeated the Aramean tribes (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.1:15–43), Šamši-ilu led a successful campaign against Urartu (RIMA 3 A.0.104.2010:11–18), and the annals of Urartian kings inscribed on rock faces and monuments are filled with countless accounts of successful campaigns.[52] The same was true for the commemoration of royal building activities.[53] Thus, Mesha celebrated his rebuilding of numerous cities, including Ataroth, Karchoh, and Aroer (*KAI* 181); Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur rebuilt the *akītu* temple and constructed two palaces (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.1:4–14); Kulamuwa claimed that he made his land prosper; and his successor Panamuwa commemorated in a long inscription the reconstruction of the kingdom and building projects (*KAI* 214). Urartian kings also carved numerous inscriptions celebrating their building projects.[54] Reading through the selected historiographic corpora reveals that another theme occurring often in ancient Near Eastern inscriptions is the renewal of cultic activities (cf. RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.3 iv 5′–8′; *CTU* A 3–1).[55]

The inscriptions show that royal deeds were presented in superlative language. The campaigns were always a great success and the splendor of new

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[50] We can also add the Tel Dan stele (*COS* 2.39) and Hazael's booty inscriptions (*COS* 2.40), which are poorly preserved. The Luwian inscription Karatepe 1 also presents similar topoi. Annick Payne and H. Craig Melchert, *Iron Age Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions*, WAW 29 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 21–42.

[51] See Megan Bishop Moore, "Fighting in Writing: Warfare in Histories of Ancient Israel," in *Writing and Reading War: Rhetoric, Gender, and Ethics in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Frank Ritchel Ames and Brad E. Kelle, SBLSymS 42 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 58–60. As Jacob L. Wright explains, "One of the reasons why ancient kings were so fond of depicting themselves as great warriors is that their power-bases commonly viewed victories on the battlefield as divine confirmation of the king's rule." "Military Valor and Kingship: A Book-Oriented Approach to the Study of a Major War Theme," in Ames and Kelle, *Writing and Reading War*, 38.

[52] Cf. the inscriptions of Išpuini and Minua (*CTU* A 3–4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11); Minua (*CTU* A 5–1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, etc.); Argišti I (*CTU* A 8–1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13); and Sarduri II (*CTU* A 9–1, 2, 3, etc.).

[53] Under the heading of building activities fall the (re)construction of cities, temples, palaces, walls, or canals, as well as planting trees or gardens, etc. (note, for example, the miscellaneous building activities listed by Šamaš-reša-uṣur in RIMB 2 S. 0.1001.1).

[54] Cf. the inscriptions of Sarduri I (*CTU* A 1–2), Išpuini (*CTU* A 2–9, A 2–10), Minua (*CTU* A 3–1), and Argišti I (*CTU* A 8–15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27–41, etc.).

[55] Other themes occurred only rarely, such as the introduction of honeybees in Suḫu (RIMB 2 S. 0.1001.1 iv 13–v 6).

constructions was often beyond compare.[56] Although hyperbolic language was used in the royal inscriptions, it is impossible to conclude from the extant inscriptions that these events were completely invented. The scribes might magnify the significance of an event or glorify a building, but they were hardly making things up.

II. Achievements of the Nimshide Kings

Given that military achievements and construction activities were the main topoi of ancient Near Eastern historiographic writings, can we identify similar achievements of the Nimshide kings that could have become the subject of historiographic writing?[57]

1. Military Achievements of the Nimshide Dynasty in Context

The first series of notes on the achievements of the Nimshide kings are in 2 Kgs 13:25, 14:25, and 14:28.[58] Contrary to the long descriptions of Israelite–Aramean wars in 2 Kgs 6 and 8, the Israelite victories over Aram are summarized in these three verses. Even though it is difficult to verify the historicity of these verses,[59] they perfectly capture the expanding–shrinking model of Levantine kingdoms: when one of two warring kingdoms was enfeebled, the other expanded its territory at the former's expense, as illustrated by Moabite–Israelite relations in the ninth century.

According to the Mesha Inscription, the Israelite king Omri and his unnamed son subjugated Moab.[60] When Assyria started exercising power over Israel

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[56] Išpuini, king of Urartu, claimed of the fortress he constructed that nothing of such perfection had ever been built (*CTU* A 2–1; cf. also A 5–34).

[57] Cf. Burke O. Long, *2 Kings*, FOTL 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 162–70; T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC 13 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 162–65, 176–78; Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige: 1. Kön. 17–2. Kön. 25*, ATD 11.2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 359–76.

[58] "When King Hazael of Aram died, his son Ben-hadad succeeded him. Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz took again from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the towns that he had taken from his father Jehoahaz in war. Three times Joash defeated him and recovered the towns of Israel" (2 Kgs 13:24–25). "He (Jeroboam II) restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah" (2 Kgs 14:25). "He (Jeroboam II) recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah" (2 Kgs 14:28).

[59] For excellent reviews of the political situation in the Levant after the death of Hazael, see Hasegawa, *Aram and Israel*, 107–49; Younger, *Political History*, 632–40. For more recent studies, see the series of articles dedicated to Jeroboam II in *HeBAI* 3 (2017). The expansion of the Northern Kingdom is probably reflected in the reconstruction of Area T at Tell Dan; cf. Andrew R. Davis, "Area T, Stratum II: An Eighth-Century B. C. E. Cult Site," in *Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context*, ed. Andrew R. Davis, SBLABSt 20 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 89–93.

[60] Historical reconstructions of this period based on the Mesha Inscription and its reconciliation with biblical and Assyrian data led to controversy over the chronological problems of

and Aram, Moab was not listed among the empire's adversaries. Moab's geographical distance from the Levantine anti-Assyrian movements helped Moabite tribes to maintain their independence. When the political balance in the Levant changed after 853 due to Assyrian invasions and Aram-Damascus's raids on Israel, Mesha took advantage of a weakened Israel and not only recovered territories lost to Israel, but also expanded his territory. Moreover, he rebuilt several cities that were in ruins, fortified his capital, constructed a series of fortresses, and set up a centralized government.[61] The traditional model of nation-states applied to Moab has recently been challenged and replaced with a tribal kingdom model.[62] Iron Age Moab was a highly polycentric society whose dynamics were generated from the cooperation and tensions among tribes.[63] Mesha the Dibonite attempted to reshape the tribal structures of Moab into a tribal kingdom after his victories over the Moabite archenemy, Israel.[64] The Moabite kingdom maintained its independence[65] until Tiglath-pileser III's reign, when it became an Assyrian vassal paying regular tribute.[66]

In the same way, when Aram-Damascus weakened at the beginning of the eighth century, Israel and Hamath expanded their territories and absorbed cities

events described in the Mesha Inscription. See John A. Dearman, "Historical Reconstruction and the Mesha' Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. John A. Dearman, SBLABSt 2 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 159–64.

[61] Udo Worschech, "Enviroment and Settlements in the Ard Al-Karak: Remarks on the Socio-Ecological and Socio-Economic Conditions in the Iron Age," in *Studies on Iron Age Moab and Neighbouring Areas in Honour of Michèle Daviau*, ed. Piotr A. Bienkowski, ANESSup 29 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 48–50.

[62] "In the 'tribal kingdom' model, the tribes in the Iron Age of Transjordan would have been kin-based, partially range-tied and nomadic and partially land-tied and settled, with a mixed economy of pastoralism, agriculture, trade, protection and copper-mining, the balance changing according to circumstances." Piotr A. Bienkowski, "'Tribalism" and 'Segmentary Society' in Iron Age Transjordan," in Bienkowski, *Studies on Iron Age Moab*, 9.

[63] A discussion of the polemics regarding the nature of Moabite society in the Iron Age is beyond the scope of this paper. See Piotr A. Bienkowski, ed., *Early Edom and Moab: The Beginning of the Iron Age in Southern Jordan*, Sheffield Archaeological Monographs (Sheffield: Collins, 1992); Bienkowski, *Studies on Iron Age Moab*; Bruce E. Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology, Archaeology, Culture, and Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Erasmus Gass, *Die Moabiter: Geschichte und Kultur eines ostjordanischen Volkes im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr*, ADPV 38 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009).

[64] Routledge, *Moab*, 139–41; Eveline van der Steen and Klaas A. D. Smelik, "King Mesha and the Tribe of Dibon," *JSOT* 32 (2007): 145–51.

[65] The independence of Moab and its expansion into Ammonite territory can be deduced from a note on Ammonite captives. John A. Dearman, "Moab and Ammon: Some Observations on Their Relationship in Light of a New Moabite Inscription," in Bienkowski, *Studies on Iron Age Moab*, 103–13.

[66] Moab became an Assyrian vassal during Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns into Syria-Palestine in 734–731 (RINAP 1 47 r.10', *Salāmānu* of the land of Moab) and remained a dependent kingdom during the reigns of Sennacherib (RINAP 3/1 4:37, *Kammūsu-nadbi* of the land of Moab) and Esarhaddon (RINAP 4 1 v 56 mentions *Musurī*, king of Moab). See also the references to Moab in letters: SAA 1 110 r. 7; XI 33:4; XIX 8:13; 29:4; 159 r. 7.

that were previously under the control of Aram-Damascus. Similarly Judah, after recovering under Amaziah's reign, expanded its territory at the expense of Edom. In sum, this "accordion" pattern governed international relations before Tiglath-pileser III, and so we have no reason to question that 2 Kgs 13:25, 14:25, and 14:28 reflect moments of Israelite expansion.

An Israelite military achievement that is recorded in more detail in 2 Kgs 13–14 is the defeat of the Judahite king Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:8–14) by Joash. According to Mario Liverani, during Omri's period the tiny Judahite kingdom was an Israelite vassal.[67] Once the political balance had changed due to Assyrian interventions in the Levant and the demise of Hazael, the Judahite Amaziah consolidated his kingship by eliminating potential adversaries (2 Kgs 14:5).[68] Fueled by his success, Amaziah tried to escape Israelite control by declaring war on Samaria (2 Kgs 14:8–10). The Israelite-Judahite war ended in the military subjugation of Judah. The biblical description of the event is divided into two parts: the Israelite victory at Beth-shemesh (2 Kgs 14:11–13a) and the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 14:13b–14).

1.1 Defeat at Beth-shemesh

The biblical account summarizes the Israelites' overwhelming victory in two lines. The battle took place at Beth-shemesh and the Judahite troops were defeated and dispersed.[69] The historicity of this battle can be indirectly verified from a destruction layer unearthed at Beth-shemesh. This site was excavated in 1911–1912 by Duncan Mackenzie and in 1928–1933 by Elihu Grant and G. Ernest Wright, and the excavations were renewed in 1990 by Shelomoh Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman. The city suffered a severe destruction witnessed in Grant and Wright's Stratum IIB, which corresponds to Bunimovitz's Level 3. Bunimovitz examined the possible interpretations of the destruction of Level 3. He and his team concluded that the "public buildings were destroyed by a fierce fire and showed signs of human agents of destruction (e. g. smashed vessels thrown all over the "Commercial Area" and in the "Pillared Building," clean floors under a thick layer of ash, apparently a result of the evacuation or heavy looting prior to destruction)."[70]

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[67] Liverani, *Israel's History*, 113.

[68] For a reconstruction of the political events, see Hasegawa, *Aram and Israel*, 109–10.

[69] The phrase וינגף יהודה לפני ישראל וינסו איש לאהלו is repeated word for word in 1 Sam 4:10, which describes the Philistines' overwhelming victory over Israel. The word לאהלו can be vocalized לְאֹהָלָיו or לְאֹהָלֹו. The similarity between the account of the Philistines' victory and that of Jehoash's capture of Jerusalem lies not only in the syntax but also in the consequences of military success: the capture of the ark (1 Sam 4:10) and the plundering of the temple (2 Kgs 14:14). These similarities underline the importance of Joash's victory.

[70] Shelomoh Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, *Tel Beth-Shemesh: A Border Community in Judah. Renewed Excavations, 1990–2000: The Iron Age*, 2 vols., SMNIA 34 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 2:382.

Moreover, the team of archaeologists determined the date of the destruction by comparing the pottery from Beth-shemesh with Stratum A3 at Tell eṣ-Ṣafi/ Gath and Stratum III at Lachish and concluded, "From an archaeological point of view, we would therefore date the destruction of Level 3 to the early 8th century BCE."[71]

For this reason Bunimovitz linked the destruction of Level 3 with the clash between Joash and Amaziah.[72]

1.2 Conquest of Jerusalem

Once the Judahite troops were defeated and the king was captured, Judah was paralyzed and could offer no resistance to the advancing Israelite army. Joash easily entered Jerusalem and tore down four hundred cubits (about two hundred meters) of the northern city walls – approximately 20 percent of the circuit surrounding ancient Jerusalem – leaving the city indefensible. In addition, the temple and the palace were looted, which forced the king to settle in Lachish after his return (2 Kgs 14:19). Finally, Jerusalemite hostages were taken to Samaria to assure that the city and its leaders would never again oppose Israel.[73] This event had to represent one of the most important achievements of the Israelite kings, especially in light of the continuous tension between Judah and Israel (2 Kgs 14:15).[74]

The historicity of this event can be argued only indirectly. First, it is difficult to imagine later Judahite scribes inventing a story that belittles Judah and describes with sympathy an Israelite king who looted the temple.[75] Second, the destruction of a city's walls was a customary measure to guarantee that a rebel would no longer be able to pose any resistance.[76] Third, a similar destruction of Jerusalem

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[71] Bunimovitz and Lederman, *Tel Beth-Shemesh*, 2:369.

[72] Bunimovitz and Lederman, *Tel Beth-Shemesh*, 2:50.

[73] The expression בְּנֵי הַתַּעֲרֻבוֹת is a hapax legomenon. It can be etymologically linked with the Akkadian *erubbātum*, "pledge, security" (*CAD* E, 327), also derived from the root ʿrb, and rightly translated as "hostages." This etymology underscores that the Jerusalemites taken to Samaria were not normal deportees but probably representatives of the high-ranking social strata. To take them as hostages had a double effect. First, the hostages should guarantee the good behavior of the king, in this case Amaziah, who was allowed to remain on the throne. Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 11 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 156. Second, the city was deprived of people who could possibly organize a new conflict between Samaria and Jerusalem, especially when there was a revolt against the king (2 Kgs 14:19–21). If any new conflict took place, the hostages in Samaria would pay dearly.

[74] Joash may have imposed some restrictions on Judahite maritime trade; if so, after his death, during the reign of Jeroboam II, the restrictions were removed and Uzziah was allowed to build Elath and renew Judah's participation in trade. Nadav Na'aman, "Azariah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel," *VT* 43 (1993): 227–29.

[75] Hasegawa, *Aram and Israel*, 109.

[76] Immanuel Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Könige*, KHC 9 (Freiburg im Breisgau: J. C. B. Mohr, 1899), 165.

took place during the first Babylonian conquest in 597/596.[77] Given that the Babylonian chronicles mentioned this conquest of Jerusalem (*ABC* 5:11–13), it makes sense that a much smaller kingdom such as Israel would also have considered the conquest of Judah an achievement worth putting in writing. Fourth, new excavations in the Giv'ati Parking Lot near the City of David showed that there was a gap between stratum XII, dated to Iron Age IIA, i.e., the ninth century, and stratum XI, dated to Iron Age III.[78] The missing stratum IA IIB would correspond to the early Assyrian period. This points to the abandonment of some neighborhoods in the city, or at least a shrinking of its territory.

2. Rebuilding Israel

The second important theme in ancient Near Eastern commemorations of royal deeds was real estate: expansion of territorial holdings, foundation of new cities, and (re)construction of towns, palaces, walls, and temples. Table 1 lists similar activities attributed to the Nimshide kings:

Table 1. Territory conquered or reconquered by Nimshide kings.

4 Regn 13:5 LXX^Ant (Jehoahaz)	καὶ ἔδωκε Κύριος σωτηρίαν τῷ Ἰσραηλ καὶ ἐξήγαγεν αὐτοὺς ὑποκάτωθεν τῶν χειρῶν Συρίας καὶ ἀπεστράφη ὅριον Ἰσραηλ αὐτοῖς (cf. 2 Kgs 14:25 MT)	And the LORD gave Israel deliverance, and he brought them out from under the hands of Syria, <u>and he restored the border of Israel to them.</u> (NETS, modified)
2 Kgs 13:25 MT (Joash)	וישב יהואש בן־יהואחז ויקח את־הערים מיד בן־הדד בן־חזאל אשר לקח מיד יהואחז אביו במלחמה שלש פעמים הכהו יואש וישב את־ערי ישראל:	Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz <u>took again</u> from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the towns that he had taken from his father Jehoahaz in war. Three times Joash defeated him <u>and recovered the towns of Israel.)</u>
2 Kgs 14:25 MT (Jeroboam II)	הוא השיב את־גבול ישראל מלבוא חמת עד־ים הערבה	He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah.
2 Kgs 14:28 MT (Jeroboam II)	ויתר דברי ירבעם וכל־אשר עשה וגבורתו אשר־נלחם ואשר השיב את־דמשק ואת־ חמת ליהודה בישראל הלא־הם כתובים על־ספר דברי הימים למלכי ישראל:	Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he fought, <u>and how he recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah,</u> are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?

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[77] Peter Dubovský, *The Building of the First Temple: A Study in Redactional, Text-Critical and Historical Perspective*, FAT 103 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 46–47.

[78] Doron Ben-Ami, *Jerusalem: Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley (Giv'ati Parking Lot)*, IAA Reports (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2013), 3–4.

Even though it is impossible to confirm the individual deeds celebrated in these verses, three aspects of the renewal of Israel can be traced in the archaeological record: territorial expansion, economic prosperity and reconstruction projects, and reorganization of the cult.[79]

After reviewing archaeological material from the ninth–eighth century, Shu-ichi Hasegawa concluded that important construction projects were accomplished during the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam II.[80] The expansion of the Northern Kingdom is also reflected in the reconstruction of the cultic area in Tell Dan.[81] Furthermore, the Samaria ostraca reflect a burgeoning bureaucracy in this period, and the analysis of seals and seal impressions also points to an increase in the activity of Israelite officials in the economic sphere.[82] The expansionistic ambitions of Israel in Judah can be observed at the recently excavated Tell el-Asāwir/Tel Ēsūr, dated to the early eighth century. According to the excavators, this site points to the tendency of the Israelite kings to control the Shephelah.[83]

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[79] Finkelstein, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 129–40; Finkelstein, "Corpus."

[80] These projects are discernible in Strata II and III in Tel Dan, Stratum VI at Hazor, Stratum II in Tel Kinrot (a pillar building that could have served as a fortress for Jehu's dynasty), Strata P-8-7 in Beth-shean (Stratum P-8 was destroyed, reflecting Jeroboam II's conquest of the valley; P-7 has impressive buildings dated to the period of Jeroboam II), Stratum III at Tel Rehov (new buildings and a massive fortification wall), Area L in Megiddo (monumental stables attest that international trade [i.e., in horses] was practiced during this period), Stratum XII of Tel Yoqne'am (gallery wall, towers, piazza, perimeter street), Stratum IV of Tel Ta'anach, Stratum IV of Samaria (buildings were repaired and renovated in this period), Stratum VIId of Tell el-Far'ah (a flourishing city), and Strata VII–VI of Tel Gezer (the heyday of the site; the city was enlarged and a new outer wall was built). Hasegawa, *Aram and Israel*, 140–47.

[81] "One of the most important changes to Area T in Stratum II is the new prominence of T-Center. In part, this shift can be demonstrated simply by comparing the size of T-North and T-Center. In the preceding Stratum III there was no question that the podium dominated Area T; with its large size and height it presided over the entire cultic area and also displayed the finest masonry of all the area's buildings. In this same period, the central platform was a relatively modest structure. Although it was made of ashlar blocks, they were not worked as carefully as those that made up the podium. In Stratum II, by contrast, the importance of T-Center becomes more pronounced, and it even seems to have eclipsed the podium as the architectural center of Area T." Davis, "Area T, Stratum II," 89.

[82] William H. Shea, "The Date and Significance of the Samaria Ostraca," *IEJ* 27 (1977): 16–27; Izabela Jaruzelska, *Amos and the Officialdom in the Kingdom of Israel: The Socio-Economic Position of the Officials in the Light of the Biblical, the Epigraphic and Archaeological Evidence*, Seria Socjoloia (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1998), 115–18; Roger S. Nam, "Power Relations in the Samaria Ostraca," *PEQ* 144 (2012): 155–63.

[83] This newly established settlement differs from similar settlements founded in this period. Tell el-Asāwir/Tel Ēsūr has a fortified tower and a tripartite building used as a storage facility. These elements point to a royal administrative center in the Shephelah. Yiftah Shalev and Shay Bar, "An 8th Century B.C.E. Administrative Centre at *Tell El-Asāwir/Tel Ēsūr*," *ZDPV* 133 (2017): 135–40.

III. Implications

The Nimshide kings' military and domestic actions were typical of the achievements commonly commemorated in ancient Near Eastern historiography of the ninth–eighth century. The archaeological record corroborates or at least renders plausible the biblical claims that the Nimshide kings defeated Aram-Damascus (cf. 2 Kgs 13:3–5, 25), and that Israelite troops proved victorious in the battle at Beth-shemesh, conquered Jerusalem, and looted its temple and palace (cf. 2 Kgs 14:11–14). Moreover, the Nimshide kings expanded their territorial holdings and reconstructed some cities (cf. 2 Kgs 14:25, 28). Finally, a short notice in 2 Kgs 13:6 refers to Joash's cultic reform. These three types of achievement – military victories, building projects, and the renewal of cult – were precisely the accomplishments that motivated ancient Near Eastern scribes to compose their historiographic works. Can we conclude that these achievements of the Nimshide kings were put in writing shortly after they occurred?

The application of Braudel's model showed that the ninth–eighth century was a fruitful period for writing historiographies in the ancient Near East. Moreover, Israel possessed trained scribes capable of composing historiographic works. Finally, the Nimshide kings accomplished deeds that were normally commemorated in writing. Can we therefore conclude that Israelite historiography was born in the ninth–eighth century? Two objections can be raised. First, celebrations of royal achievements could have been composed later than the deeds they record.[84] Moreover, there were many other ancient Near Eastern kings who accomplished great deeds but left no written traces. So not all royal achievements made their way into writing.

C. Literary Features Common among
Historiographies of the Ninth–Eighth Century

Burke O. Long demonstrated that the biblical scribes used different literary forms such as notices, reports, accounts, and historical stories in 2 Kgs 13–14.[85] More recent studies of ancient Near Eastern literature have shown that to celebrate the king's achievements, scribes adopted literary styles characteristic of certain historical periods and regions.[86] Therefore this section investigates

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[84] Cf., for example, 1 Kgs 5–6 (Solomon's deeds), 2 Kgs 18–19 (Hezekiah's deeds), and the Luwian inscriptions of Azatiwadas and Warikas. Payne and Melchert, *Iron Age Hieroglyphic Luwian*, nos. 2.1.1 (Azatiwadas) and 2.1.2 (Warikas).

[85] For division into different literary strata, see, for example, John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary*, 2nd ed., OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 591–617.

[86] Mario Liverani, "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires*, ed. M. T Larsen, Mesopotamia 7 (Copenhagen: Akademisk

whether the literary forms and genres adopted in 2 Kgs 13–14 match those found in ancient Near Eastern historiographies of the ninth–eighth century.

I. Shorter Literary Forms

The shortest historiographical form is the one-sentence report, also called a notice or a brief report.[87] The concise style of such a report, usually composed in the third-person singular,[88] is best suited for curt summaries of royal achievements (cf. 2 Kgs 13:25; 14:12–14, 25). Besides summarizing royal deeds, the brief reports in 2 Kgs 13–14 provide readers with information indispensable for understanding the political situation in Israel and Judah. Thus, we learn about the oppression of Israel (13:4, 7, 22; 14:26) and a conspiracy against Amaziah (14:19–20).

These brief reports are normally incorporated into larger narrative units. For example, a notice on the liberation of Israel (2 Kgs 13:5) is inserted into an oppression-liberation account (13:3–5), Joash's victory over Aram is summarized in one verse (13:25) and incorporated into a more elaborate report (13:22–25), and information about Jeroboam II's restoration of Israel is first communicated in an example of the oracle-fulfillment genre (2 Kgs 14:25) and later reprised in a concluding formula (2 Kgs 14:28–29). A brief report on the construction of the Asherah in Samaria is inserted into the theological evaluation of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:6),[89] notices on continuous war between Judah and Israel are inserted in the midst of concluding formulas (2 Kgs 13:12; 14:15; cf. also 14:22), and a brief report on regular raids conducted by Moabites is included in Elisha's testament (2 Kgs 13:20). A report on Judahite victories over Edom forms the narrative background for the story of the Israelite–Judahite war provoked by Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:7–14).

1. Ancient Near Eastern Reports

The brief report is the literary form most frequently used in historiographic texts of the ninth–eighth century.[90] In some cases reports existed as independent

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Forlag, 1979), 297–318; Paolo Merlo, "Literature," in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*, ed. Herbert Niehr, HdO 1.106 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 109–25.

[87] Long, *2 Kings*, 312.

[88] In memorial inscriptions and annals, the reports of the king's deeds are phrased in the first-person singular. In some cases the inscription oscillates between the first- and third-person singular (cf. *CTU* A 5–1; RIMA 3 A.0.104.2010).

[89] The lengthiest sections of ancient Near Eastern inscriptions are dedicated to the construction of temples and cultic installations. Since the construction of the Asherah was considered idolatry, it is inserted into the negative evaluation of King Jehoahaz.

[90] Besides the examples listed in Table 2, see, for example, *CTU* A 3–5 Ro:4–8; A 5–10; A 8–39; RIMB 2 S. 0.1001 ii 17'–26'; ii 37'–41'; RIMA 3 A.0.104.2012:2'–8'. A similar genre of ancient Near Eastern inscriptions is comprised by the memorial inscriptions that, when combined

inscriptions,[91] but in most cases reports were incorporated into larger units.[92] Table 2 provides examples from biblical and other ancient Near Eastern sources.

Table 2. Comparison of examples of the literary form of the report in 2 Kgs 13–14 with examples from other ancient Near Eastern historiographies.

	Reports on Royal Achievements
2 Kings 13–14	When King Hazael of Aram died, his son Ben-hadad succeeded him. Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz took again from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the towns that he had taken from his father Jehoahaz in war. Three times Joash defeated him and recovered the towns of Israel. (2 Kgs 13:24–25) He (Jeroboam II) restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah. (2 Kgs 14:25) He (Jeroboam II) recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah. (2 Kgs 14:28)
Mesha (Moab)	I have built Aroer, and I made the military road in the Arnon. I have built Beth Bamoth, for it was destroyed. I have built Bezer, for [it lay in] ruins (*KAI* 181:26–27)
Kulamuwa (Sam'al)	Now the king of the Danunians was more powerful than I, but I engaged against him the king of Assyria. (*KAI* 24:7–8)
Zakkur (Hamath)	Then Bar-Hadad son of Hazael, king of Aram, organized against me an alliance of [seven]teen kings – Bar-Hadad and his army, Bargush and his army... . All these kings laid siege to Hadrach, they put a rampart higher than the wall of Hadrach, and dug a trench deeper than its moat. (*KAI* 202 A:3–10)
Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur (Suḫu)	With regard to the people of Ra'il (and) [their] rebels, they had [rebell]ed against my father, but my father had defeated them. At the beginning of my governorship, when I ascended the throne of my father, the people of Ra'il revolted against me, but I defeated them. (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.2 iv 15'–19')
Šamši-ilu (Til Barsip)	Šamši-ilu, the field marshal, ... put a strong force of soldiers into those mountains... . He (Argištu) abandoned his troops... . He (Šamši-ilu) captured from him his camp, his royal treasure, (and) his ... (RIMA 3 A.0.104.2010:17–18)

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with specific architectural features shared across the ancient Near East, such as lion motifs and palace architecture, served to convey royal ideology. Martin Weber, "Two (?) Lion Reliefs from Iron Age Moab: Further Evidence for an Architectural and Intellectual *Koiné* in the Levant?," *BASOR* 377 (2017): 97–99.

[91] See, for example, the Urartian inscriptions *CTU* A 1–1, 2–1.

[92] An examination of a large and broad corpus of ancient Near Eastern literature shows that historiographic texts can be found within many genres, such as royal annals and chronicles, letters to the gods, and memorial and dedicatory inscriptions, as well as treaties, royal apologies, queries, prayers, and exhortations. This demonstrates that the presentation of royal achievements was a function of the literary form and genre in which they were inserted.

This short comparison shows that the literary form of brief reports and notices employed in 2 Kgs 13–14 was the most frequently used literary form in ancient Near Eastern historiographies.

II. Longer Literary Forms

A comprehensive study of ancient Near Eastern historiographical literary forms, genres, language, and ideology is far beyond the limits of this paper. I refer the reader to Mario Liverani, a pioneer in this field.[93] The following discussion treats two types of longer literary forms, namely, accounts and historical stories. An account is longer than a report and normally consists of a few brief reports or even fragments of a story. According to Long, "Accounts may aim at some degree of explanation rather than a simple narration of events. Like reports, however, accounts show a matter-of-fact third-person narrative style and few literary, imaginative, or artistic features."[94] Another literary form found in 2 Kgs 13–14 is the historical story. Long defines a historical story as "a self-contained narrative ... with more literary sophistication" than a report or an account. It normally contains at least a rudimentary plot with an introduction, complication, and resolution.[95]

1. Oppression-Liberation Accounts

Second Kings 13–14 contains three accounts of how a Nimshide king-savior liberated Israel from Aramean oppression. These passages can be classified as oppression-liberation accounts.

The first oppression-liberation account occurs in 2 Kgs 13:3–5 (Table 3). The events are organized in chronological order through a series of sequential *wayy-iqtol* forms: Once God became angry with Israel, he consigned the people to the hands of Hazael. The reversal of the deplorable Israelite situation took place when God had been appeased. The king pleaded with God, who listened to him and saved Israel. Once Israel was liberated, the people returned to their normal life. The primary protagonist was God, who delivered, saved, and liberated (cf.

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[93] Mario Liverani, "Storiografia politica hittita – I. Sunassura, ovvero: Della reciprocità," *OrAnt* 12 (1973): 267–97; Liverani, "Ideology"; Mario Liverani, "Mesopotamian Historiography and the Amarna Letters," in *Historiography in the Cuneiform World: Proceedings of the XIVe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Part I: Harvard University*, ed. I. Tzvi Abusch and Paul-Alain Beaulieu (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2001); Mario Liverani, *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, Studies in Egyptology and the Ancient Near East (London: Equinox, 2004).

[94] Long, *2 Kings*, 291.

[95] Burke O. Long, *1 Kings: With an Introduction to Historical Literature*, FOTL 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 250.

LXX^{Ant}). The only deviation from a straightforward sequence of events is a subordinate clause (13:4b) that explains what it meant to be in Hazael's hands.

Table 3. Analysis of the oppression-liberation account in 2 Kgs 13:3–5.

1. Divine anger	ויחר־אף יהוה בישראל	3a The anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel,
2. Oppression	ויתנם ביד חזאל מלך־ארם וביד בן־ הדד בן־חזאל כל־הימים	3b so that he gave them repeatedly into the hand of King Hazael of Aram, then into the hand of Benhadad son of Hazael.
3. King's prayer/ appeasement	ויחל יהואחז את־פני יהוה	4a But Jehoahaz entreated the LORD,
4. God's response (plus a subordinate clause)	וישמע אליו יהוה כי ראה את־לחץ ישראל כי־לחץ אתם מלך ארם	4b and the LORD heeded him; for he saw the oppression of Israel, how the king of Aram oppressed them.
5. Salvation	ויתן יהוה לישראל מושיע	5aα Therefore the LORD gave Israel a savior,
6. Liberation and aftermath	ויצאו מתחת יד־ארם וישבו בני־ ישראל באהליהם כתמול שלשום	5aβ–b so that they escaped from the hand of the Arameans; and the people of Israel lived in their homes as formerly.

The second oppression-liberation section occurs in 13:22–25 (Table 4). A reconstruction of the editorial and textual history of this passage (discussed in detail below and summarized in Table 12) reveals that the original account was a straightforward narrative organized in chronological order. It opened with a *waw*-PN-*qatal* clause (2 Kgs 13:22) that describes the narrative background of the account, namely, Hazael's oppression of Israel,[96] followed by *wayyiqtol* forms (13:24–25) describing the reversal of the situation and the peaceful present:

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[96] If the clause καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τὸν Ἀζαηλ (LXX^{Ant}) is assigned to the OG, then there is a narrative break between vv. 24 and 25, underlining a new beginning that started after the death of Hazael.

Table 4. Analysis of the oppression-liberation account in 2 Kgs 13:22–25.

וחזאל מלך ארם לחץ את־ישראל כל ימי יהואחז:	²² Now King Hazael of Aram oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.
(Verse 13:23 opens with a *wayyiqtol*, form but it is a later addition; see below) ויחן יהוה אתם וירחמם ויפן אליהם למען־בריתו את־אברהם יצחק ויעקב ולא אבה ה שחיתם ולא־השליכם מעל־פניו עד־עתה	²³ But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them; he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them; nor has he banished them from his presence until now. *Stage 3*
וימת חזאל מלך־ארם	^{24a} When King Hazael of Aram died,
וימלך בן־הדד בנו תחתיו:	^{24b} his son Ben-hadad succeeded him.
וישב יהואש בן־יהואחז	^{25aα} Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz (took) again
ויקח את־הערים מיד בן־הדד בן־חזאל אשר לקח מיד יהואחז אביו במלחמה	^{25aβ} from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the towns that he had taken from his father Jehoahaz in war
שלש פעמים הכהו יואש	^{25bα} Three times Joash defeated him *Stage 2*
וישב את־ערי ישראל	^{25bβ} and recovered the towns of Israel.

There are two digressions that introduce divine elements (additions in Stage 2 and 3). The original account (Stage 1) was centered on the king and his liberation of Israel. An insertion (v. 25bα, Stage 2) linked the account with Elisha's story. A subsequent insertion (v. 23, Stage 3) adds that the liberation was motivated by God's mercy and faithfulness.

The third oppression-liberation account is in 14:25–27 (Table 5). Even though the main theme remains liberation from Aramean oppression, this account differs from the previous ones. The account is not organized chronologically but has a concentric structure. Parts A and A′ share the liberation theme, even though expressed in a different way. Their grammatical subject is Jeroboam II. Parts B and B′ regard the divine word and share the root דבר. Their grammatical subject is God. The central part is a retrospective that resumes the oppression theme from 13:4b and presents it as a past event.

Table 5. Analysis of the oppression-liberation account in 2 Kgs 14:25–27.

A Liberation	הוא השיב את־גבול ישראל מלבוא חמת עד־ים הערבה	^{25a} He restored the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah,
B Divine element (God's word)	כדבר יהוה אלהי ישראל אשר דבר ביד־עבדו יונה בן־אמתי הנביא אשר מגת החפר:	^{25b} according to the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which he **spoke** by his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.

C Retrospective	כי־ראה יהוה את־עני ישראל מרה מאד ואפס עצור ואפס עזוב ואין עזר לישראל:	[26] For the LORD saw that the distress of Israel was very bitter; there was no one left, bond or free, and no one to help Israel.
B' Divine element (God's decision)	ולא־דבר יהוה למחות את־שם ישראל מתחת השמים	[27a] But the LORD had not **said** that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven,
A' Liberation	ויושיעם ביד ירבעם בן־יואש:	[27b] so he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Joash.

1.1 Ancient Near Eastern Oppression-Liberation Accounts

Most ancient Near Eastern historiographies focusing on the king's achievements briefly present the king's deeds without any additional reference to the political or religious context.[97] Some inscriptions provide the reader with a brief comment on a rebellion or an enemy invasion to contextualize the campaign.[98] When this brief introductory comment describes a foreign oppression the "just" king was exposed to, we can speak about an oppression-liberation pattern. The ancient Near Eastern accounts of this form, similar to the first two biblical oppression-liberation accounts (2 Kgs 13:3–5, 22–25), recount events in chronological order, as can be illustrated by Šamaš-reša-uṣur's inscription (Table 6):[99]

Table 6. Analysis of the oppression-liberation account in Šamaš-reša-uṣur's inscription.

Context (introducing the conditions and reason for the campaign)	Four hundred of the Tu'mānu came and rose up against the town Ribaniš.
Military intervention (the reaction of the king to the challenge; the bravery of the king is often underlined)	I had gone to the New City for the festival and when in the town Baqa I heard (of the uprising), I crossed over (the river) to the landside with the palace troops who were with me and I pursued them.
Result (a summary of the defeat, description of booty, etc.)	When I crossed over (the river), I defeated them at Qaqqaru-aradātu. I killed 350 soldiers among them (and) let the remainder go free to (spread the news of my) glory.

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[97] Most Assyrian inscriptions focus on the kings' victories (e. g., Shalmaneser III, RIMA 3 A.0.102.1; Šamši-Adad V, RIMA 3 A.0.103.1; Adad-nirari III, RIMA 3 A.0.104.3).

[98] The majority of Urartian inscriptions focus on royal achievements and only rarely mention difficulties preceding royal campaigns (*CTU* A 3–4; A 5–11A; A 8–1d, 8–3 V; A 9–3 IV).

[99] RIMB 2 S. 0.1001.1 ii 17'–26'. The chronological organization of the ancient Near Eastern account can be observed across borders; cf. the inscriptions of Assyrian king (RIMA 3 A.0.102.5 iv 1–5), Assyrian governor Šamši-ilu (RIMA 3 A.0.104.2010:11–18), Assyrian vassal-king Kulamuwa (*KAI* 24:2–8), Zakkur, king of Hamath (*KAI* 202 A 1–17), Assyrian archenemy Urartu (*CTU* A 3–4).

The oppression-liberation motif represents one of the most frequent literary forms in the ancient Near Eastern historiographic inscriptions; although it is elaborated in multiple forms, they all follow a detectible three-step pattern.[100] This three-step pattern organizes events, chronologies, lists, and other shorter literary forms in a larger historiographic narrative. Depending on the purpose of a given inscription, some steps can be expanded while others can be reduced to skeletal form.

I. The dark past and the gloomy starting point. Ancient Near Eastern scribes laid out the hostile situation – oppression, war, military aggression, and so on – that a king had to face. This was achieved by employing, for example, a notice, a longer report,[101] direct speech,[102] or the repetition of an oppression theme. Liverani rightly pointed out that the scenario in which one just king is oppressed by many evil enemies frequently functions as a narrative justification of a military campaign.[103]

II. The reversal of the situation. Under a new king the situation changes radically. The previous kings' incapacity to resolve the problematic situation stands in clear contrast with the capacity of the new king, who reverses the hostile situation by means of a political maneuver[104] or military action. The scribes underscored the reversal of the situation by employing metaphors that accentuated the king's bravery.[105] Given the religious background of historiographic texts, the description of the reversal was often filled with divine interventions, such as revelatory dreams, prophecies, diviners' reports, responses to prayers, and so on.[106] Thus the new king was successful in two spheres: in the divine sphere the

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[100] Merlo, "Literature," 115–16.

[101] "At that time Argishtu, the Urartian, the number of whose forces is huge like a thick cloud ... rebelled and assembled the people together at the land of the Guti. He put his (forces for) battle in good order (and then) all his troops marched into the mountains for battle" (RIMA 3 A.0.104.2010:11–13).

[102] Cf. the Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur inscription (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.3 i 7'–19') and the Mesha inscription (*KAI* 181:6).

[103] Liverani, *Assiria*, 113–21. The presentation of the dark past need not be related to a political situation. This pattern is sometimes used as an introduction to dedicatory inscriptions. Thus, Argištu I described as desert and empty land the site where he subsequently constructed a temple (*CTU* A 8–21).

[104] In order to resolve his problems, Kulamuwa allied with the Assyrians: "When the king of the Dunanians became too strong for me, I hired against him the king of Assyria" (*KAI* 24:7–8). It is important to notice that Kulamuwa presents himself as a king who can hire the Assyrians, whereas the reality was quite different: Kulamuwa became a vassal king who paid tribute to the Assyrian empire.

[105] Šamši-ilu adopted a typical Assyrian metaphor: "With the great roar of *drums (and)* weapons at the ready which reverberate terrifyingly, he (Šamši-ilu) rushed forth like a terrible storm. He let fly the stormy steeds, harnessed to his chariot, against him (Argishtu) like the Anzu-bird and defeated him" (RIMA 3 A.0.2010:15–16).

[106] Zakkur received a confirmation from the god Ballshamayn (the Lord of Heaven): "And I lifted up my hands to the Lord of [Heaven], and the Lord of Heaven answered me, [and spoke] the Lord of Heaven to me through seers and astrologers, [and said to me] the Lord of

king was a pious ruler who trusted the gods and followed their advice; in the ter-
restrial sphere the king stood out as an extraordinary military leader and savvy
diplomat who fulfilled the orders of the gods.

III. The prosperous present. The reversal of the political situation permitted
the king not only to consolidate his kingdom but also to undertake important
construction projects such as temples, palaces, and cities (see Table 2 above).
After the defeat of the enemy, the whole kingdom prospered, even its neediest
members.[107] New horizons opened in front of the people after liberation provided
opportunities for new development and prosperity.[108]

A comparison of the biblical oppression-liberation accounts (2 Kgs 13:3–5, 22–
25) with the ancient Near Eastern oppression-liberation accounts shows that
they share the same literary form. Both biblical and ancient Near Eastern ac-
counts follow a similar pattern: oppression-reversal-liberation. Moreover, both
types of accounts are organized in chronological order and written in a simple
style with few digressions. Finally, both types reflect similar religious concep-
tions: the gods liberated their people/king from the hands of the oppressors. In
some cases the divinity's intervention marked the turning point of the narrative,
as in the Zakkur inscription; in other cases it was not mentioned at all, as in the
Kulamuwa inscription.

1.2 Non-Chronological Forms and Mixed Genres

Geographical proximity as well as political similarities between Moab and Is-
rael suggest that Moabite and Israelite historiographies may share numerous el-
ements. The Mesha Inscription was found at Dhiban in 1868, and it is generally

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Heaven: Fear not, for I have made [thee king, and I will stan]d by thee, and I will deliver thee
from all [these kings who] have set siege against thee" (*KAI* 202 A lines 11–16). Ninurta-ku-
durru-uṣur adopted a typical Assyrian phraseology: "I questioned the god Apla-Adad, the great
lord, my lord. At the command of the god Apla-Ad[ad], the great lord, my lord, I went up to
the steppe against them" (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.1:31–32); similarly Šamši-ilu: "At the word of the
father Ashur, the great lord, and the lofty mother Esharra ... Šamši-ilu ... put a strong force of
soldiers into the mountains" (RIMA 3 A.0.2010:13–14). For a study of this Assyrian topos see
Liverani, *Assiria*, 3–18.

[107] Kulamuwa claimed: "But I was to some a father; and to some I was a mother; and to
some I was a brother. Whoever had never possessed a sheep, I made a lord of a flock. Whoever
had never possessed an ox, I made owner of a herd and owner of silver and lord of gold. Who-
ever from his childhood had never seen linen, now in my days wore byssos" (*KAI* 24:10–12).

[108] For example, "I, Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur, ... discovered land (capable of being) cultivated
on the top of a cliff and conceived the idea of building a town (there). I laid a stone founda-
tion, reinforced (it), built a town upon (it), and named it Kar-Apla-Adad" (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.2
iii 22'–29'). Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur's father introduced beekeeping to his domain: "I, Shamash-
rešu-uṣur, governor of the land of Suḫu and the land of Mari, brought down from the mountain
of the people of Habhu the bees which gather honey – which none from among my forefathers
had seen or brought down to the land of Suḫu – and I established them in the gardens of the
town Al-gabbari-bani" (RIMB 2 S. 0.1001.1 iv 13–16).

agreed that it was composed in the second half of the ninth century BCE, prob-
ably around 835.[109] The inscription can be divided into three parts:

1. Introduction (lines 1–4a); this part reports information that is typical of memorial in-
   scriptions (and, in part, dedicatory inscriptions):
   a. The king's name (Mesha), his patronym (the son of Kemosh[-yatti]), and his titles
      (the king of Moab, the Dibonite);
   b. Details about the stela: the name of the deity to whom the stela is dedicated (Ke-
      mosh), the object dedicated to the deity (a high place), and the location where the
      stela was erected (Karchoh);
   c. The reason for erecting the stela (salvation from enemies).
2. General summary of the king's military success (lines 4b–7): historical background and
   Mesha's victory (Israelite oppression and Mesha's victory).
3. Summary narratives of the king's accomplishments (lines 7–34): the recapture of the
   land of Medeba; the conquest of Araroth, Nebo, and Jahaz; and construction projects
   in Karchoh, Aroer, Arnon, Bet Bamoth, Bezer, and Horonaim.[110]

The structure of this inscription has implications for our study. First, in the Me-
sha Inscription, the oppression-liberation pattern represented in part 2 was in-
corporated into a larger unit, as in the case of the oppression-liberation sections
in 2 Kgs 13–14.

Second, the Mesha Inscription can be classified as a memorial inscription[111]
that presents the king's achievements. Memorial inscriptions, even though they
record the king's deeds, do not necessarily organize them in a chronological
or geographical order,[112] contrary to other historiographic genres such as royal

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[109] *COS* 2.137.

[110] The structure of the Mesha Inscription is assessed differently by Klaas A. D. Smelik and
Simon B. Parker. Smelik divides the inscription into five parts:

Part I	lines 1–4	Introduction
Part II	lines 4–21	Military operations
Part III	lines 21–28	Building activities
Part IV	lines 29–31	Conclusion
Part V	lines 31– ...	Appendix

Parker identifies four sections:

Section A	lines 1–4	Introduction
Section B	lines 4–21	Expulsion of Israel
Section C	lines 21–31	Building and other activities
Section D	lines 31–34	Expulsion of Judah

Smelik, *Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography* (Leiden:
Brill, 1992), 60; Parker, *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narra-
tives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University
Press, 1997), 44–46.

[111] The literary genres of the historiographic inscriptions vary. For our purposes, it is impor-
tant to note the chief difference between a dedicatory inscription and a memorial inscription:
in the former the king is spoken of in the third person, in the latter he speaks in the first-person
singular. But several Levantine inscriptions prove that the two genres can easily be combined;
cf. Joel Drinkard, "The Literary Genre of the Meshaᶜ Inscription," in Dearman, *Studies in the
Mesha Inscription and Moab*, 139.

[112] Drinkard, "Literary Genre," 154.

annals, chronicles, or diaries. The structure presented above shows that the events described in the Mesha Inscription are organized in a cyclic pattern with some retrospective sections, comparable to 2 Kgs 14:25–27. The stele starts with the description of Mesha's rebuilding of the high place for Kemosh (lines 3–4). Then, it presents a retrospective narrative of the oppression and liberation (lines 5–7) and continues to list royal achievements with occasional retrospective notices (lines 10, 18, 31).

Third, the oppression-liberation section of the Mesha Inscription (KAI 181, lines 4–9), similarly to 2 Kgs 13:22–25, combines various literary elements and reports in an account (Table 7). Both the biblical and Moabite reports start with a summary of the oppression. Moab was afflicted for "many days" by Israel, and Israel was oppressed for "all the days" of Jehoahaz by Aram-Damascus. In each case the reversal of fortune is introduced by a theological justification of the rebellion against the oppressors. The timing of the liberation is also similar. In both cases, the oppressed king seizes the opportunity to revolt just after the oppressor-king dies and his son becomes king. The change in the oppressor's court allows the oppressed king to recover and free his kingdom. In both cases the report finishes with a short summary7 of liberation.

Table 7. Comparison of the oppression-liberation accounts in 2 Kgs 13:22–25 and the Mesha Inscription.

Elements	*2 Kgs 13:22–25*	*Mesha Inscription, lines 4–9*
Oppressor-father	וחזאל מלך ארם לחץ את־ישראל כל ימי יהואחז	עמרי. מלך. ישראל. ויענו. את. מאב. ימן. רבן
Divine elements	ויחן יהוה אתם וירחמם ויפן אליהם למען בריתו את־אברהם יצחק ויעקב ולא אבה השחיתם ולא־השליכם מעל־פניו עד־עתה[113]	כי. יאנף. כמש. בארצה
Change on the oppressor's throne	וימת חזאל מלך־ארם וימלך בן־הדד בנו תחתיו	ויחלפה. בנה. ויאמר. גם. הא. אענו. את. מאב בימי. אמר...
Liberation	וישב יהואש בן־יהואחז ויקח את־הערים מיד בן־הדד בן־חזאל אשר לקח מיד יהואחז אביו במלחמה שלש פעמים הכהו יואש וישב את־ערי ישראל	וארא. בה. ובבתה וישראל. אבד. אבד. עלם ... וישבה כמש בימי

Finally, the oppression-liberation section of the Mesha Inscription (lines 5–6), like 2 Kgs 13:3–5, uses the motif of divine anger as a theological justification for explaining why Israel and Moab were oppressed (Table 8). The divine anger

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[113] A part of this "divine element" is a later insertion, see below.

motif can be found in various ancient Near Eastern cultures.[114] The function of the divine anger section in the Mesha stele and in 2 Kgs 13:3–5 is similar to a "local" logic contrary to the Neo-Assyrian imperial logic.[115] In Babylonia this pattern was continually employed from the twelfth century until the sixth century. Divine anger was invoked to explain the submission of Babylonia to other nations, similar to the function of divine anger in 2 Kgs 13:3–5. The Babylonian accounts did not end with the notice about oppression but followed up by recounting the reversal of the situation. Like the Babylonian accounts, both the Mesha Inscription and 2 Kgs 13:3–5 describe how a new king-savior transformed the negative past/present into a new glorious present/future, although the sequence of elements differs between the Mesha Inscription and the biblical narrative.

Table 8. Comparison of the motif of divine anger in 2 Kgs 13:22–25 and the Mesha Inscription.

Divine anger pattern	2 Kgs 13:3–5	Mesha Inscription, lines 4–7
Salvation		כי. השעני. מכל. המלכן. וכי. הראני. בכל. שנאי
Oppression and divine anger	ויחר־אף יהוה בישראל ויתנם ביד חזאל מלך־ארם וביד בן־הדד בן־חזאל כל־הימים:	עמרי. מלך. ישראל. ויענו. את. מאב. ימן. רבן כי. יאנף. כמש. בארצה ויחלפה. בנה. ויאמר. גם. הא. אענו. את. מאב ...בימי. אמר
Divine mercy	ויחל יהואחז את־פני יהוה וישמע אליו יהוה כי ראה את־לחץ ישראל כי־לחץ אתם מלך ארם:	
Salvation	ויתן יהוה לישראל מושיע ויצאו מתחת יד־ארם וישבו בני־ישראל באהליהם כתמול שלשום:	וארא. בה. ובבתה וישראל. אבד. אבד. עלם

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[114] Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann, eds., *Divine Wrath and Divine Mercy in the World of Antiquity*, FAT II 33 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Jörg Jeremias, *Der Zorn Gottes im Alten Testament: Das biblische Israel zwischen Verwerfung und Erwählung*, Biblisch-Theologische Studien (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009); Peter Dubovský, "Boží hnev v mezopotámskych kráľovských nápisoch a v Knihe Exodus," *StBiSl* 2, no. 2 (2010): 112–22; Stefan Wälchli, *Gottes Zorn in den Psalmen: Eine Studie zur Rede vom Zorn Gottes in den Psalmen im Kontext des Alten Testamentes und des Alten Orients*, OBO 244 (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2012); Dankwart Kirchner, *Vom Zorne Gottes und vom Zorn des Menschen: Plädoyer für eine nachbiblische Emotionalität* (Frankfurt am Main: PL Academic Research, 2013).

[115] Cf. Peter Dubovský, "From a Textual History to a History of Israelite Divinity: The Oppression-liberation Pattern in 2 Kings 13:1–9," forthcoming.

2. Historical Story (2 Kgs 14:8–14)

The Israelite scribes sometimes elaborated short reports into a historical story (cf. 1 Kgs 12:1–20). The story recounted events as they occurred, but structured them according to a rudimentary plot containing a tension and its resolution.[116] Joash's conquest of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 14:8–14) represents an example of such a historical story. Using Freytag's pyramid as a model,[117] we can distinguish the following stages of the narrative (Table 9).

Table 9. Narrative analysis of 2 Kgs 14:8–14 according to Freytag's pyramid.

Exposition	[7] He (Amaziah) killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm; he called it Jokthe-el, which is its name to this day.
Conflict	[8] Then Amaziah sent messengers to King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face."
Rising action	[9] King Jehoash of Israel sent word to King Amaziah of Judah, "A thornbush on Lebanon sent to a cedar on Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son for a wife'; but a wild animal of Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thornbush. [10] You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Be content with your glory, and stay at home; for why should you provoke trouble so that you fall, you and Judah with you?"
Climax	[11] But Amaziah would not listen. So King Jehoash of Israel went up; he and King Amaziah of Judah faced one another in battle at Beth-shemesh, which belongs to Judah.
Falling action	[12] Judah was defeated by Israel; everyone fled home. [13] King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah son of Jehoash, son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh; he came to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, a distance of four hundred cubits.
Denouement	[14] He seized all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, as well as hostages; then he returned to Samaria.

The historical story of the destruction of Jerusalem consists of a series of short reports. It starts with a report on Amaziah's victory over Edom (exposition)[118] and finishes with a brief summary of the defeat at Beth-shemesh, the capture of the king, and the destruction of Jerusalem (falling action and denouement).

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[116] Long, *2 Kings*, 301.

[117] Gustav Freytag, *Freytag's Technique of the Drama: An Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art by Dr. Gustav Freytag*, 3rd ed., trans. Elias J. Macewan (Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1900), 115. Even though this model has been further nuanced in numerous studies on biblical narrative, I will refer to Freytag's articulation of it, since it is useful for the analysis of 2 Kgs 14:8–14.

[118] Second Kings 14:7 thematically belongs to Amaziah's reign; however, in terms of genre it is different from the theological justification presented in v. 6. It has the same literary style as vv. 11b–14.

While the exposition, conflict, and rising action are well developed, the climax, falling action, and denouement merge, emphasizing the final results of the war rather than the war itself. The rising action comprises the largest part of the story. It is presented in the form of a confrontation between Joash and Amaziah. This dialogue conveys a strong negative judgment on Amaziah, portrayed here as an arrogant and pretentious king who disregarded the history of Judah.[119]

2.1 Ancient Near Eastern Historical Stories

Reports and accounts dominated ancient Near Eastern historiography in the ninth–eighth century, and historical stories were less frequently used. An illustrative example is provided by Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur's defeat of Aramean enemies. Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur was a governor of Suḫu, and despite being close to Assyria he enjoyed independence from the ninth–eighth century Assyrian kings.[120] The story narrates how Aramean tribes invaded the Laqe region. The regional governors begged Ninurta-kudurri-uṣur for help. He intervened and defeated the Arameans.[121] The first version of the story has been preserved on two clay tablets (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.1) and presents a long account of the king's victorious campaign (lines 19–43).[122] This straightforward chronological account was later turned into a historical story charged with narrative suspense (RIMB 2 S. 0.1002.2–8). The story starts with a short exposition and conflict describing the invasion of the Arameans in the third person. Then the story elaborates three independent threads of the plot (rising point). The first thread describes in the first person the despair of the governor of Laqe who suffered from the Aramean

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[119] Namely, when God stopped Rehoboam from fighting against Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:21–24) or put an end to fratricidal wars between Asa and Basha (1 Kgs 15:16–21, 32).

[120] Salvage work in the region of Haditha, on the middle Euphrates, revealed several inscriptions that have been published by Antoine Cavigneaux and Bahija K. Ismail, "Die Statthalter von Suḫu und Mari im 8. Jh. v. Chr.," *BaghM* 21 (1990): 321–456. The inscriptions covered the reign of Šamaš-reša-uṣur and his successor Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur, who were in office in the first two-thirds of the eighth century (RIMB 2, 275). The kingdom of Suḫu was defeated by Ashurnasirpal II and paid tribute to Assyria during the reigns of Shalmaneser III, Šamši-Adad V, and Adad-nirari III. However, Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur acted as an independent governor of Suḫu. He defeated Aramean tribes, raided an Arabian caravan, and rescued the city of Anat. These events were put into writing, representing an important historiographic corpus of an independent governor during the first wave of the Assyrian expansion. The period of Suḫu's independence ended with Tiglath-pileser III.

[121] For more details, see J.A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158–722 B. C.*, AnOr 43 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1968), 183–84; Cavigneaux and Ismail, "Die Statthalter"; Dominique Charpin, "La 'toponimie en miroir' dans le Proche-Orient amorrite," *RA* 97 (2003): 3–34; Jean-Marie Durand and Lionel Marti, "Chronique du Moyen-Euphrate: Une attaque de Qaṭna par le Sûhum et la question du 'pays de Mari,'" *RA* 99 (2005): 123–32; Nadav Naʾaman, "The Contribution of the Suḫu Inscriptions to the Historical Research of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah," *JNES* 66 (2007): 107–22.

[122] This version does not describe other events and, as is the case in most Assyrian inscriptions, it can be dated before the rest of the corpus.

attack. The second summarizes how the governor of Ruṣapu became afraid and did not fight the Arameans. The third gives the reader a sense of the mood among the Arameans. Some were afraid, but the local hero Šama'gamni delivered a decisive speech that lifted Aramean morale, concluding: "Then we will go and attack the houses of the land of Suḫu" (1002.2 i 25–26). All these threads meet at Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur. Will he back out as the governor of Ruṣapu did? But Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur runs to fight the Arameans. The description is full of metaphors and hyperbole that communicate Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur's smashing of the Arameans.[123] This decisive victory is to be celebrated in present and future times.

Both the biblical story about Joash's defeat of Amaziah and the story about Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur's defeat of the Arameans develop parallel threads of the narrative, employ direct speeches to increase suspense, and follow a linear plot structure like that described by Freytag. Both stories start with the description of an invasion and both indicate their sympathy with the victorious king.

Another element to be noticed is the description of the capture of the king. Capturing the enemy king or the head of the rebels represents an important theme in ancient Near Eastern inscriptions.[124] If the king was not captured, he could have easily continued his subversive activities after the battle. Second Kings 14:13 emphasizes the capture of Amaziah through a syntactical change: the chain of *wayyiqtol* forms is interrupted by the anticipatory object (*waw*-X *qatal*). This syntax emphasizes the object (the captured king Amaziah). This is the first time in history when an Israelite king captured a Judahite king. Similarly the capture of Šama'gamni, the Aramean leader, occupies a separate section (RIMB 1002.1:40–43).

Finally, both stories convey directly or indirectly the scribes' judgement. Second Kings 14:9 displays the arrogance of Amaziah's aspirations through an impressive tale and a direct quotation of Amaziah's words.[125] Ninurta-kudurru-uṣur's scribes referred to the Aramean leader "who [was] thoroughly imbued with falsehood" (RIMB 1002.2 i 12) and also allowed the reader to hear his arrogant words.

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[123] "I brought about a [cloud]-burst over them and from inside my chariots I washed them away like ch[aff]. Arrows quivered like locusts over [my] forces, (but) no one person among my forces fell ... I fell upon them like a blazing fire ... I made their blood run like the water of a river ... I filled the mountains and wadis with their skulls ... I inflicted such a defeat as none among my ancestors had inflicted. My ancestors had defeated the enemy ten times, but they did not achieve as much as I. I inflicted a single defeat (of such an extent that) I surpassed my ancestors" (RIMB 2 1002.2 ii 1–28).

[124] Cf. Shalmaneser III's defeat of Damascus (RIMA 3 A.0.102.13 r.4'–11'; 14:102–104).

[125] Mesha's scribes allowed Omri's son to speak in order to make clear that the Israelites persisted in their arrogant and unjust oppression of Moab (*KAI* 181:6).

III. Implications and Comparison with Ancient Near Eastern Literary Genres

Two important observations can be drawn from the comparison between 2 Kgs 13–14 and other ancient Near Eastern historiographies. First, there was no fixed literary genre for these historiographies. On the contrary, ancient Near Eastern historiographic texts, 2 Kgs 13–14 included, employed several literary forms. Second, literary analysis showed that the genres of reports, accounts, and historical stories used in 2 Kgs 13–14 were also used in the ancient Near Eastern historiographies of the ninth–eighth century. Third, some important themes such as divine wrath, the chronological organization of events, and so on were literary and religious topoi shared across the borders in the ninth–eighth century. Finally, the biblical brief reports, accounts, and stories manifest the flaws and virtues of all ancient Near Eastern brief reports.[126]

So not only the content but also the styles and themes of narratives about the Israelite king's achievements correspond to the historiographies of the first millennium. Can we conclude that Israelite historiography started in the ninth–eighth century? Political conditions were conducive to this development, there were important deeds of Israelite kings to be commemorated, there were scribes able to put those deeds in writing, and finally the literary themes and genres employed by the scribes of the ninth–eighth century can be traced in 2 Kgs 13–14. Yet literary themes and forms extant in the ninth–eighth century could have been used by scribes writing original accounts of the Nimshide kings in later periods. Is it possible to demonstrate (or establish to a high degree of probability) that the accounts in 2 Kgs 13–14 examined above were composed not long after the events they describe?

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[126] First, a great king was expected to do certain deeds to be a respected king, for example, to name a city after himself. Thus Amaziah's renaming of the conquered Edomite city Sela (Petra) as Jokthe-el makes his victory resemble those of major ancient Near Eastern kings. Second, the king's military victories were presented as total, although that was not always an accurate picture (cf. Kulamuwa's and Zakkur's achievements in *KAI* 24 and *KAI* 202). Thus, Jehoahaz, Joash, and Jeroboam II saved Israel (2 Kgs 13:3–5), but their successes fell far short of a lasting victory (cf. 2 Kgs 13:7, 22 and chs. 15–17). Third, reports contained hyperbolic language, as illustrated by the example of Amaziah's invasion of Edom, when he claimed to have killed ten thousand Edomites (2 Kgs 14:7). This exaggerated number corresponds in scale to the numbers used in the Assyrian annals (cf. RIMA 3 A.0.102.2:91). Finally, the extent of territory controlled by the ruler after the victory was often exaggerated. Thus, Jeroboam II was said to have expanded his territory up to Lebo-hamath in the north (2 Kgs 14:25, 28; see below). Similar exaggerations can be observed in Šamši-ilu's inscription: "[Šamšī]-ilu, the field marshal, the great herald, [the administrator of] temples, chief of the extensive army, governor of the land Ḫatti (and) of the land of the Guti and all the land Namri, conqueror of the mountains in the West, who lays waste [...], (10) who overthrows the lands Musku and Urarṭu, who pillages its people, who devastates the lands Utiû, Rubû, Ḫadalu, (and) Labdudu, who defeats them" (RIMA 3 A.0.104.2010:8–11).

D. Preexilic Sources and Postexilic Redaction

To conclude our investigation, we shall attempt to determine whether there is any evidence that the passages that use the literary forms studied above to describe the Israelite kings' achievements could have been composed in the preexilic period. Thus the last step of our analysis addresses the integration of the biblical sources into the final editions of the MT (2 Kgs 13–14) and the LXX (4 Regn 13–14). To this end, I will focus on unusual synchronistic formulas, on the redaction of 2 Kgs 13:1–9, 13:22–25, and 14:8–22, and on specific vocabulary that may betray an earlier or later scribal hand. Comparing the results of this study with ancient Near Eastern scribal activities, I will argue that 2 Kgs 13–14 contains passages belonging to the earliest historiographic compositions in Israel.

1. A Repeated Succession Formula and a Unique Synchronistic Formula

The concluding formula at the end of the account of the reign of the Israelite king Joash/Jehoash in 2 Kgs 13:12–13 is repeated in 2 Kgs 14:15–17. The repetition occurs in the middle of the regnal account of the Judahite king Amaziah. This repetition of Joash's concluding formula has no parallel in the book of Kings. The repetition, however, is not an exact duplication. A closer examination of 2 Kgs 13:12–13 and 14:15–16 shows that the Hebrew text uses different phrases to describe the succession of Joash's son, Jeroboam II: ישב על כסא versus תחתיו וימלך (Table 10).

Table 10. Comparison of the succession accounts of Jeroboam II and Jehoash.

Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 13:13)	*Jehoash (2 Kgs 14:16)*
וירבעם ישב על־כסאו ויקבר יואש בשמרון עם מלכי ישראל:	ויקבר בשמרון עם מלכי ישראל וימלך ירבעם בנו תחתיו:
So Joash slept with his ancestors, and Jeroboam sat upon his throne; Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.	Jehoash slept with his ancestors, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; then his son Jeroboam succeeded him.

A comparison of the MT and the Greek witnesses adds another level of complexity to the problem. LXX[B] presents a different text in 13:12–13[127] and LXX[Ant] places the concluding formula after 2 Kgs 13:25, not after 13:11. Moreover, in LXX[Ant] the succession formulas are exchanged: the Greek formula corresponding to ישב על כסא appears in 14:15–16, and the traditional formula תחתיו וימלך follows 13:25. I have argued elsewhere that the Old Greek text was preserved in

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[127] LXX[B] reads: καὶ ἐκοιμήθη Ιωας μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ καὶ Ιεροβοαμ ἐκάθισεν μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν Σαμαρείᾳ μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν Ισραηλ.

LXX^{Ant}.[128] The Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Old Greek had only one concluding formula after 2 Kgs 13:25, it did not include 14:15, and it had an unusual wording in 14:16, namely ἐκάθισεν = וישב, instead of the expected ἐβασίλευσεν = וימלך. At some point this text was corrupted, as can be partially seen in LXX^B; the corruptions were corrected and resulted in the readings of the MT and LXX^A and other Greek manuscripts.

Moreover, 2 Kgs 14:17 introduces a new synchronizing formula that occurs nowhere else in 1–2 Kings: ויחי אמציהו בן־יואש מלך יהודה אחרי מות יהואש בן־יהואחז מלך ישראל חמש עשרה שנה.[129]

In sum, the concluding regnal formulas in 2 Kgs 13–14 contain four unusual features. First, the concluding formula of Joash is repeated in the account of Amaziah's reign. Second, the Hebrew formula describing Jeroboam's ascension to the throne uses the verb ישב, which occurs only here in the MT as part of a concluding formula but whose Akkadian cognate was used in the Babylonian chronicles to describe a royal succession.[130] Third, there is a new formula that links the reign of the Judahite king Amaziah to the Israelite king Joash. Finally, the wording and position of the formulas differ in the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, and the MT represents, in this case, a later development of the text. These elements cannot simply be dismissed as scribal mistakes; rather, they seem to have been intended to establish a new synchronism between the chronologies of Judah and Israel.

The importance of this new chronological coordination between the two kingdoms can be seen from the context. The description of the Judahite king Amaziah starts in 2 Kgs 14:1–3 with an introductory formula typical of southern kings. Immediately after the description of Amaziah's defeat and the conquest of Jerusalem, the scribes introduced Joash's second concluding formula (2 Kgs 14:15–16). According to the Old Greek it contained the verb ישב, which normally does not occur in concluding formulas. Moreover, scribes established a new synchronistic system in 2 Kgs 14:17 in order to coordinate the reign of the conquered Judahite king Amaziah with that of his overlord, the Israelite king Joash. This new system

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[128] Peter Dubovský, "'Typical' and 'Atypical' Concluding Formulas in 2 Kgs 13–14: A Reconstruction of the Old Greek and its Implication," forthcoming in *Biblica*.

[129] Another potential synchronizing formula appears in 2 Kgs 14:22: "he rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his ancestors." Is "the king" the Israelite king Joash or the Judahite king Amaziah? The text allows for both interpretations. Some less important Greek manuscripts add the name of Amaziah, suggesting the following interpretation: "He (Azariah, son of Amaziah) rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king (Amaziah) slept with his ancestors." But interpreting the verse as a synchronizing formula that establishes a temporal relationship between the southern king and the northern king is also possible, and in my view preferable: "He (Amaziah) rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king (Joash) slept with his ancestors." This opinion can be supported by the fact that an addendum after the concluding regnal résumé normally describes the reign of the previous king (in this case, Amaziah) and not that of his successor (Uzziah).

[130] Cf. *ABC* 1 i 10, 13, 28.

synchronizing the Israelite and Judean kings could not have been invented after the fall of Samaria or during the Babylonian exile and can rightly be considered the first sign pointing to the preexilic date of the text.

II. Oppression-Liberation Narrative 1 (2 Kgs 13:3–5, 7)

Also important for dating the biblical text are oppression-liberation narratives. Second Kings 13:3–5, 7 has often been compared with a similar pattern in the book of Judges, and several scholars concluded that the Judges parallels belong to the Deuteronomistic stratum that can be identified in 2 Kgs 13:2.[131] Despite similarities with the book of Judges, however, the Deuteronomistic origin of 2 Kgs 13:3–5 cannot be sustained. First, the condemnation of the king in v. 2 is a standard part of the regnal introductory formula;[132] although it appears to supply the cause of the divine anger described in v. 3, divine anger in the book of Kings is not always explicitly justified, nor is the cause of Chemosh's anger against Moab explained in the Mesha Inscription. Moreover, vv. 2 and 6 are organized in a chiastic pattern that functions as a literary frame for the oppression-liberation narrative in 13:3–5.[133] Finally, a comparison of 13:3–5 with the similar oppression-liberation pattern in the book of Judges reveals important differences:
- Whereas in the book of Judges the oppression-liberation passages belong to the framework in which the narratives about the major judges are embedded, in 2 Kgs 13 the oppression-liberation account is the center of the narrative.
- In the book of Judges this pattern has been applied to several major judges, but in 1–2 Kings it is used only here; no major Judahite king is ever called a "savior" or said to have "saved" Judah.

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[131] Albert Šanda, *Das zweite Buch der Könige*, EHAT 9.2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1912), 153; James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951), 433; Würthwein, *Könige*, 360–61; Dennis J. McCarthy, "2 Kings 13:4–6," *Bib* 54 (1973): 409–10; Georg Hentschel, *2 Könige*, NEchtB (Würzburg: Echter, 1985), 59; Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 427; Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 355; Marco Nobile, *1–2 Re* (Milan: Paoline, 2010), 371.

[132] Compare the introductory formula for Jehoahaz with those of Joash and Jeroboam II:

Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:2, 6)	Joash (2 Kgs 13:11)	Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:24)
² ויעש הרע בעיני יהוה	¹¹ ויעשה הרע בעיני יהוה	²⁴ ויעש הרע בעיני יהוה
וילך אחר חטאת ירבעם בן־נבט	לא סר מכל־חטאות ירבעם בן־	לא סר מכל־חטאות ירבעם בן־
אשר־החטיא את־ישראל לא־	נבט אשר־החטיא את־ישראל	נבט אשר החטיא את־ישראל:
סר ממנה:	בה הלך:	

⸱⸱⸱
⁶ אך לא־סרו מחטאות בית־
ירבעם אשר־(החטי) [החטיא]
את־ישראל בה הלך וגם
האשרה עמדה בשמרון:

[133] This and the following assumptions are based on Dubovský, "From a Textual History to a History of Israelite Divinity."

- In the book of Judges this pattern conveys a negative evaluation of Israelite behavior, but 13:3–5 evaluates Jehoahaz positively; the negative shadings are produced by the story's Deuteronomistic frame (13:2, 6).
- The word "savior," which links 13:5 with the book of Judges, does not occur in the earlier versions of the text (cf. LXX[Ant]) and was added only later (see MT).
- Whereas 13:4 uses the root חלה to describe how the king appealed for divine aid, in the book of Judges the Israelites regularly cry out for help (זעק and צעק). Thus the root theological concept in 2 Kgs 13:3–5 is different. The angry divinity had to be appeased (חלה) by a human being. Such appeasement was normally achieved by presenting sacrifices (1 Sam 13:12[134]). No such concept occurs in the book of Judges.

All things considered, these arguments show that the oppression-liberation pattern in 2 Kgs 13:3–5 belongs to a self-contained unit that was later incorporated into a historiographic framework (13:2, 6). This framework judged all northern kings unfavorably, and it can be attributed to the Deuteronomist(s).[135] Originally, however, 2 Kgs 13:3–5 presented a positive view of an Israelite king who delivered Israel from the hands of its oppressor. The oppression-deliverance pattern used to praise Jehoahaz was never adopted by Judahite scribes to glorify kings such as Hezekiah or Josiah; it was applied only to the Nimshide kings (cf. 13:5, 17; 14:27). Once 2 Kgs 13:3–5 was incorporated into the Deuteronomistic framework, the original positive pattern was turned into a negative one, and indeed the resulting narrative suggests that Jehoahaz provoked divine anger through his own behavior. In this way Judahite scribes subverted the positive Israelite historiography and invited the reader to contextualize the Nimshide achievements in light of the eventual fall of Samaria. In conclusion, 2 Kgs 13:3–5 bears the pre-Deuteronomistic stamp.

III. Oppression-Liberation Narrative II (2 Kgs 13:22–25)

Scholars have convincingly argued that this account is the result of several scribal interventions. On the basis of previous studies,[136] I propose that the MT represents a later version that was preceded by two previous stages (see Table 12 below). In

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[134] In the ancient Near Eastern tradition, appeasement of the gods entailed rebuilding sanctuaries and reestablishing proper cultic activities and offerings (cf. RIMB 2 B.2.4)

[135] Cf., for example, Baruch Halpern and David Vanderhooft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7th–6th Centuries B. C. E.," *HUCA* 62 (1991): 179–244.

[136] See, for example, Rudolf Kittel and Wilhelm Nowack, *Die Bücher der Könige* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), 259; Klaus D. Fricke, *Das zweite Buch von den Königen*, BAT 12.2 (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1972), 166–75; Gwilym H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings: Based on the Revised Standard Version*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1984), 2:499.

Stage 1, Jehoahaz is linked with his son Joash not only chronologically but also literarily (vocabulary common to the two passages is indicated in gray):

⁴ᵇכי ראה את־לחץ ישראל כי־לחץ אתם מלך ארם
²²וחזאל מלך ארם לחץ את־ישראל כל ימי יהואחז:

The narrative was later enlarged by the addition of a prophecy-fulfillment pattern (Stage 2). The secondary nature of this addition is conspicuous not only because of its vocabulary, but also because the insertion of the disjunctive fulfillment clause in the oppression-deliverance narrative resulted in an unusual syntactical shift (Table 11).

Table 11. Development of the prophecy-fulfillment pattern in 2 Kgs 13:19, 24–25. Additions to the text are indicated in gray.

	שלש פעמים תכה את־ארם	Elisha's prophecy (13:19)
wayyiqtol forms	וימת חזאל מלך־ארם	Fulfillment of the prophecy
	וימלך בן־הדד בנו תחתיו:	in 13:24–25
	וישב יהואש בן־יהואחז ויקח את־	
	הערים מיד בן־הדד בן־חזאל	
Subordinate clause	אשר לקח מיד יהואחז אביו במלחמה	
Intrusion	שלש פעמים הכהו יואש	
wayyiqtol form	וישב את־ערי ישראל:	

The prophecy-fulfillment pattern is a sign of the editor's effort to link the oppression-liberation narrative with the career of Elisha and can be safely attributed to the redactor who integrated the Elisha narratives into 1–2 Kings.[137]

The final stage of the account follows different courses in the Greek and Hebrew texts (Table 12). LXXᴬⁿᵗ contains 13:23 but places it after 13:7 (Stage 3a). Furthermore, LXXᴬⁿᵗ expanded the account of Hazael's oppression (at the end of v. 22) and linked the Aramean defeat with the word of God (at the end of v. 24). MT and LXXᴬ, ᴮ added 2 Kgs 13:23 (Stage 3b). As most scholars have concluded, this verse is a later addition. It is absent from LXXᴬⁿᵗ, which reflects more closely the Old Greek and thus the Hebrew text preceding the current MT. The vocabulary of this verse also points to a later date of composition. The shift from oppression to liberation is worded ויחן יהוה אתם וירחמם ויפן אליהם, recalling, for example, Solomon's prayer (1 Kgs 8:50). If we read this phrase in light of the toponyms occurring in 2 Kgs 14:25 and in light of the new enthronement vocabulary in 2 Kgs 13:13 (which uses the phrase ישב על כסא),[138] we can strengthen the

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[137] Bernhard Stade and Friedrich Schwally, *The Books of Kings: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), 246; Šanda, *Könige*, 158.

[138] This formula refers mainly to Solomon as the successor of David (1 Kgs 1–2; 3:6; 8:20, 25), then to Elah (1 Kgs 16:11), and especially to Jehu's dynasty (2 Kgs 10:30, 11:19, 13:13, 15:12). See also 1 Kgs 22:10, 19.

conclusion that 2 Kgs 13:23 is a later addition. By means of this addition, a later editor hoped to present the Nimshide dynasty as a dynasty that aspired to share the glory of Solomon's reign. Second, the reason for God's mercy is expressed through the theology of the covenant with the ancestors,[139] which links the Nimshide oppression with the Pentateuch.[140] Finally, regarding ולא־השליכם מעל־פניו עד־עתה, a similar expression, השליכם מעל־פניו עד אשר, occurs in 2 Kgs 17:20, where it is used to explain the fall of Samaria. Thus it may rightly be concluded that this phrase in 2 Kgs 13:23 was inserted after the fall of Samaria to reassess the importance of the Nimshide victory in the light of later events.[141]

As a result of this analysis, we may conclude that stage 1 of this account represents the earliest stratum of Israelite historiography in 2 Kgs 13:22–25 for the following reasons: First, this stage contains no Deuteronomistic vocabulary. Thus, stage 1 preceded the Deuteronomistic redaction of the book of Kings. The original text was reworked during stage 2 to link it with the Elisha story and to add Deuteronomistic and post-Deuteronomistic theology. Second, stage 1 made no reference to God's intervention but focused on the king; only in stage 3 was the short narrative expanded to include a reflection on divine mercy. Third, the territorial growth and liberation of Israel described in stage 1 is corroborated by textual and archaeological evidence, and so the original account could hardly have been invented by Judahite scribes centuries after the events it records.

IV. Oppression-Liberation Narrative III (2 Kgs 14:25–27)

The concentric structure of this passage suggests that it underwent a different process of formation. The only signs of preexilic origin are in 2 Kgs 14:25a (הוא השיב את־גבול ישראל), which has a parallel in LXX^Ant, 4 Regn 13:5, and 2 Kgs 14:27b (ויושיעם ביד ירבעם בן־יואש).[142] Some elements of these verses occur also in the Mesha Inscription and suggest that the oldest layers of this section drew from

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[139] These three names are linked in different ways: (1) in references to the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5); and (2) in references to the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 2:24; cf. the variant in Lev 26:42); here we may also list references to the promise of the land: Gen 50:24; Exod 6:3, 8; 33:1; Num 32:11; Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5; 30:20; 34:4. The three ancestors are invoked by Moses when he intercedes on behalf of the Israelites in Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27. Deut 29:12 refers to God's oath that he will be Israel's god.

[140] Cf. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 171; Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 360.

[141] It has been characterized as a DtrN insertion (Würthwein, *Könige*, 369) or a secondary redactional comment (Gray, *I & II Kings*, 601).

[142] Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1957), 75; Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk*, FRLANT 108 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), 110–12. These verses were, however, cited and reworked by a Deuteronomistic redactor. Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 66.

Table 12. Redactional stages of 2 Kgs 13:22–25.

Stages of the account / Elements of the account	Stage 1 (pre-Dtr text)	Stage 2 (Reconstructed Old Greek, pre-LXX^Ant. B)	Stage 2 (a proposed Hebrew text based on the OG)	Stage 3a (LXX^Ant; gray shading indicates later additions)	Stage 3b (MT, LXXA)	Stage 3b (LXXB)
1. Narrative introduction	22 וַחֲזָאֵל מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם לָחַץ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּל יְמֵי יְהוֹאָחָז׃	καὶ Αζαηλ* ἐξέθλιψεν τὸν Ισραηλ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας Ιωαχας	22 וַחֲזָאֵל לָחַץ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּל יְמֵי יְהוֹאָחָז׃	καὶ Αζαηλ βασιλεὺς Συρίας ἐξέθλιψε τὸν Ισραηλ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας Ιωαχας Καὶ ἔλαβεν Αζαηλ τὸν ἀλλόφυλον ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ θαλάσσης τῆς καθ᾽ ἑσπέραν ἕως Αφεκ	22 וַחֲזָאֵל מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם לָחַץ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּל יְמֵי יְהוֹאָחָז׃	καὶ Αζαηλ ἐξέθλιψεν τὸν Ισραηλ τὰς ἡμέρας Ιωαχας
2. Reversal a. divine element (God's mercy)					23 וַיָּחָן יְהוָה אֹתָם וַיְרַחֲמֵם וַיִּפֶן אֲלֵיהֶם לְמַעַן בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְלֹא אָבָה הַשְׁחִיתָם וְלֹא־הִשְׁלִיכָם מֵעַל־פָּנָיו עַד־עָתָּה׃	καὶ ἠλέησεν κύριος αὐτοὺς καὶ οἰκτίρησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐπέβλεψεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς διὰ τὴν διαθήκην αὐτοῦ τὴν μετὰ Αβρααμ καὶ Ισαακ καὶ Ιακωβ καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησεν κύριος διαφθεῖραι αὐτοὺς καὶ οὐκ ἀπέρριψεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ

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* LXX^B lacks βασιλεὺς Συρίας.

Stages of the account / Elements of the account	Stage 1 (pre-Dtr text)	Stage 2 (Reconstructed Old Greek, pre-LXX^Ant. B)	Stage 2 (a proposed Hebrew text based on the OG)	Stage 3a (LXX^Ant; gray shading indicates later additions)	Stage 3b (MT, LXXA)	Stage 3b (LXXB)
b. Death of Hazael	וימת חזאל מלך 24 ארם וימלך בן הדד בנו תחתיו:	καὶ ἀπέθανεν Ἀζαὴλ βασιλεὺς Συρίας καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν υἱὸς Ἀδερ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἀντ᾽ αὐτοῦ	וימת חזאל מלך 24 ארם וימלך בן הדד בנו תחתיו:	καὶ ἀπέθανεν Ἀζαὴλ βασιλεὺς Συρίας καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν υἱὸς Ἀδερ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἀντ᾽ αὐτοῦ	וימת חזאל מלך 24 ארם וימלך בן הדד בנו תחתיו:	καὶ ἀπέθανεν Ἀζαὴλ βασιλεὺς Συρίας καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν υἱὸς Ἀδερ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἀντ᾽ αὐτοῦ
		[καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τὸν Ἀζαήλ.]*	]חזאל ויהי אחרי מות[	[καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τὸν Ἀζαήλ.]		
c. Liberation	וישב יואש בן 25 יהואחז ויקח את הערים מיד בן הדד בן חזאל אשר לקח מיד יהואחז אביו במלחמה	καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν Ιωας υἱὸς Ιωαχας καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰς πόλεις ἐκ χειρὸς υἱοῦ Αδερ υἱοῦ Αζαὴλ ἃς ἔλαβεν ἐκ χειρὸς Ιωαχας τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ	וישב יואש בן 25 יהואחז ויקח את הערים מיד בן הדד בן חזאל אשר לקח מיד יהואחז אביו במלחמה	καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν Ιωας υἱὸς Ιωαχας καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰς πόλεις ἐκ χειρὸς υἱοῦ Αζαὴλ ἃς ἔλαβεν ἐκ χειρὸς Ιωαχας τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ	וישב יואש בן 25 יהואחז ויקח את הערים מיד בן הדד בן חזאל אשר לקח מיד יהואחז אביו במלחמה	καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν Ιωας υἱὸς Ιωαχας καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰς πόλεις ἐκ χειρὸς υἱοῦ Αζαὴλ ἃς ἔλαβεν ἐκ χειρὸς Ιωαχας τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ
d. Divine element (fulfillment of a prophecy)		τρὶς ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν Ιωας	שלש פעמים הכהו 25 יואש	τρὶς ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν Ιωας κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα Κυρίου	שלש פעמים הכהו יואש	τρὶς ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν Ιωας
3. Present state of affairs	וישב את ערי ישראל	καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν τὰς πόλεις Ισραηλ	וישב את ערי ישראל	καὶ ἐπέστρεψε τὰς πόλεις Ισραηλ καὶ ὅσα ἔλαβεν	וישב את ערי ישראל	καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν τὰς πόλεις Ισραηλ

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* It is difficult to establish whether this section, which appears only in LXX^Ant, belonged to the OG. Thus the text is enclosed in brackets.

a common linguistic pool of the ninth–eighth century. For example, the equivalent of עני occurs in lines 4–5 of the Moabite text (את. ויענו. ישראל. מלך. עמרי). Similarly, the root ישע occurs in lines 3–4. Finally, lines 8–9 read בה.(9)וישׁ. Most scholars understand this word as a *hiphil* form of the verb שוב with a feminine suffix, i. e., "Kemosh caused it (the land of Medeba) to return."[143] Even though the *hiphil* of the root שוב is common in the MT, it is used to describe the restoration of land only in 2 Kgs 13:25; 14:22, 25, 28; and in the anachronic statement in 2 Kgs 16:6.[144] It does not occur in later texts. In all these cases the *hiphil* describes the restoration of a lost territory to the original owner. Both the Mesha Inscription and 2 Kgs 13–14 share a similar context: territory was taken by an oppressor and recovered by a new king, and both use a *hiphil* form of שוב to describe the recovery of the territory.

The linguistic features of 2 Kgs 14:25–27 suggest that the account drew upon an old tradition but was heavily reworked.[145] Jeroboam II not only continued recovering the territories lost to Aram, but expanded his territory up to Lebo-hamath in the north and as far as the Sea of the Arabah in the south (2 Kgs 14:25, 28).[146] The lack of evidence for Israelite expansion into northern Syria suggests that the toponyms are symbolic. A similar Judahite-Israelite occupation of territory up to Lebo-hamath, identified with *Lbwh*, is mentioned twice: first in the period of the judges (Judg 3:3), and then during Solomon's reign (1 Kgs 8:65).[147] Since neither Judg 3 nor 1 Kgs 8 refers to a real expansion of Israel, it seems that the later editors of 2 Kgs 14 wanted to compare the new Israel, restored during Jeroboam II's reign, with the ideal Israel under Solomon and the territory to be conquered in Judges.[148] In other words, the Nimshide dynasty,

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[143] *COS* 2.137; George A. Cooke, *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic Nabataean, Palmyrene, Jewish* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), 9; Ahituv, *Echoes*, 403. Kent P. Jackson proposed to amend the text to וישׁב בה "he lives there," citing lines 13 and 19; see "The Language of the Mesha' Inscription," in Dearman, *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, 110. The reading וישׁבה is to be preferred, however. The Mesha Inscription distinguishes between the addition of newly conquered cities to Mesha's domain (lines 21, 29) and the recovery of lost cities. Only in the latter case is the verb שוב used. Furthermore, 2 Kgs 14:22 has the same form (וישׁבה) as in the restored lines of the Mesha stele, and in both texts it is associated with the verb בנה, "to build."

[144] Cf. also 2 Chr 26:2 and *DCH* 8:294.

[145] Gray, *I & II Kings*, 614–17. Hentschel proposed that the basic story (2 Kgs 14:23–25a, 28–29) comes from the earlier Deuteronomistic redactor (DtrH). This frame was enlarged by a prophetic layer in 14:25b (DtrP). The last Deuteronomistic redactor was responsible for editing the oppression sections in 14:26. *2 Könige*, 66.

[146] The Sea of the Arabah is mentioned in Deut 3:17; 4:49; Josh 3:16; 12:3 and thus points to a later editor. Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 66.

[147] A similar vision is described also in Ezek 47:13–48:35, in particular 47:20 and 48:1.

[148] Jacques Briend, "Jéroboam II, sauveur d'Israël," in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. André Caquot and Mathias Delcor, AOAT 212 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 41–49; Hasegawa, *Aram and Israel*, 128–30. For a different opinion see Menahem Haran, "The Rise and Decline of the Empire of Jeroboam Ben Joash," *VT* 17 (1967): 282.

despite its inauspicious beginnings, was able to restore the might of the legendary Israel. This expansion was part of the divine plan announced by the prophets Elisha (2 Kgs 13:14–19) and Jonah (2 Kgs 14:25), in the same way as David's and Solomon's glory was approved by the prophet Nathan. Another sign of the Deuteronomistic redaction is the expression ואפס עצור ואפס עזוב ואין עזר לישראל describing the oppression of Israel in 14:26. A similar phrase occurs in other Deuteronomistic passages (Deut 32:36; 1 Kgs 14:10; 21:21; 2 Kgs 9:8). In 14:26, the phrase elaborates the oppression described in 13:3–5, 22 in different language.[149] Finally, the expression ולא־דבר יהוה למחות את־שם ישראל מתחת השמים in 1 Kgs 14:27 links Jeroboam II with Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:13), and it reflects an explicitly Deuteronomistic concept (cf. Deut 9:14; 25:6, 19; 29:19).

By clothing Jeroboam II's prosperity in Deuteronomistic language, the final redactors of the book of Kings conveyed a warning message to later readers. The glory of the Nimshide dynasty was similar to that of Solomon. It was endorsed by a prophet, nevertheless Samaria collapsed. The Nimshide kings prospered under the auspices of Assyria, but ironically it was Assyria that conquered Samaria. According to Deuteronomistic theology, just as God brought down Samaria, so could he also let Jerusalem collapse. This didactic intention may be one reason why the final editors of the book of Kings dedicated only seven verses to the most successful Nimshide king.[150]

V. Dating the Story about the Conquest of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 14:8–14)

Scholars have presented several convincing arguments that the story of Joash's conquest of Jerusalem is of northern origin and that it was composed before the fall of Samaria.[151] First, the note in 2 Kgs 14:8 describing Beth-shemesh as belonging to Judah fits better with an Israelite source than with a Judahite one, and can hardly have been invented in the Persian period.[152] The second argument depends on the contrast between the customary Deuteronomistic depiction of northern and southern kings in 1–2 Kings and the inversion of that pattern in 2 Kgs 14:8–14. In typical Deuteronomistic fashion, 14:1–7 presents the Judahite Amaziah as a good king who observed the torah of Moses and expanded the territory of Judah, contrary to the Israelite Joash, who was a bad king (2 Kgs 13:11).[153] A sudden shift takes place in 14:8. The Judahite king Amaziah becomes an arrogant, bellicose king, whereas the Israelite king Joash becomes a wise

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[149] Probably to be assigned to the last stratum of 2 Kgs 14:25–27. Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 67.

[150] Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, 443–45.

[151] The use of the *weqatal* form in 14:8 led some scholars to the conclusion that while the whole section is of Israelite origin, v. 8 comes from Judahite archives. Hentschel, *2 Könige*, 63.

[152] Benzinger, *Könige*, 164; Šanda, *Könige*, 165.

[153] Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, 440.

king. This scribal assessment of the two kings contradicts the Deuteronomistic viewpoint.

The most important argument that 2 Kgs 14:8–14 represents preexilic Israelite historiography rests on its presentation of the destruction of Jerusalem.[154] While Joash's conquest of Aramean oppressors is in accord with biblical ethical standards, the conquest of Judah is in complete dissonance with the Judahite viewpoint. The results of this war were impressive. Judah was defeated, Amaziah was taken captive, the walls of Jerusalem were torn down, and the city and its temple were looted (2 Kgs 14:12–14).[155] The authors of the story, however, viewed the humiliation of Judah as justified and regarded the dynasty of the destroyers of Jerusalem and the looters of the temple as saviors. This positive portrayal of Joash could hardly have been written by a postexilic scribe whose sympathies lay with Jerusalem. The text's attitude toward Israel's defeat of Judah, its justification of the destruction of the city walls and of the looting of the temple, and the complete absence of Deuteronomistic vocabulary are the main reasons to assign this story a northern provenience and a date near the end of the eighth century.

But how is it possible that Judahite scribes editing the synchronistic history of both kingdoms included this story in the book of Kings? The later editors inserted 2 Kgs 14:8–14 into a Deuteronomistic context, creating new links. Amaziah was a stubborn king and sent his messengers to challenge the Israelite king Joash. Similar topoi are used to describe the arrogance of Ben Hadad (1 Kgs 20) and Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18–19), who also sent their messengers to humiliate Israel and Judah respectively and were both punished by God. Thus, Amaziah assumes features of Ben Hadad and Sennacherib. Moreover, 2 Kgs 14:9 employs a fable to describe Amaziah's absurd aspirations. The fable creates an important link with the book of Judges. In the Bible, there are only two fables: Jotham's warning to the Shechemite leaders (Judg 9:7–15) and Joash's reply to Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:19). Both use talking trees and shrubs to demonstrate the absurdity of someone's political aspirations. Since neither the Shechemite leaders nor Amaziah were willing to heed the fable, they were defeated and their cities were destroyed. In this way later scribes justified the conquest of Jerusalem and pointed out the theological links between the destruction of Jerusalem by Joash and Nebuchadnezzar.

VI. Implications

This analysis demonstrated that 2 Kgs 13–14 went through a long process of redaction. The final composition bears undeniable signs of Deuteronomistic

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[154] Gray, *I & II Kings*, 602–3.

[155] The deterioration of Judah continued after Amaziah returned from Samarian exile; confronted by a revolt in Jerusalem the king escaped to Lachish, where he was murdered (2 Kgs 14:19–21).

vocabulary and theology.[156] The Deuteronomists used ancient sources that did not correspond to their worldview, and by inserting them into a new frame they changed the meaning of the original texts. Thus, the unique synchronistic formulas in 13:12–13, 14–15, 16 as preserved in the LXX[Ant] and in the MT point to a synchronization of the chronologies of Judah and Israel that conflicts with later Judahite synchronisms. Moreover, the oppression-liberation accounts (13:3–5, 22–25) reflect a pre-Deuteronomistic source. Verses 14:25–27, 28b drew upon a similar source, but they were substantially reworked. Finally, the historical story in 14:8–14 is the longest historical narrative that can be assigned to the pre-Deuteronomistic period. As demonstrated above, these passages could hardly have been invented in a later period; on the contrary, later redactors had to correct them in light of subsequent events, namely, the fall of Samaria and Jerusalem.

E. Conclusion

Selected geographic areas of the ancient Near East, such as Assyria, Urartu, Suḫu, Hamath, Sam'al, Damascus, and Moab, provided a diverse set of samples to establish the cultural and historical milieu in which arose the most important historiographies of the ninth–eighth century. In each of these regions, the first wave of Neo-Assyrian expansion created a new political and cultural atmosphere in which significant historiographic compositions were produced. Was Israel an exception? I have argued that after Jehu usurped the throne in Samaria he allowed Israel to become an Assyrian vassal, contrary to the international politics of the Omride dynasty, which joined an anti-Assyrian coalition led by Damascus. According to the Bible, Israel rose from the ashes and started to prosper in this period. The Nimshide kings took advantage of the Assyrian expansion and not only recovered territories lost to Aram but also conquered Judah, captured King Amaziah, and looted Jerusalem and its temple. Some of these achievements, such as the battle at Beth-shemesh and Nimshide expansion and building activities, can be corroborated by archaeological evidence. Comparable royal achievements normally were a sufficient reason for composing historiographic texts during the ninth–eighth century. So the achievements of the Nimshide kings, such as the conquest of Aram and Judah as well as new construction, would have been a sufficient motive for composing a historiographic text in Israel during the ninth–eighth century.

In the next phase of my investigation, I examined the literary styles of the biblical passages describing Nimshide achievements. This study demonstrated that the scribes employed three literary forms: the report (2 Kgs 13:3b, 7, 22, 24–25;

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[156] Matthieu Richelle, *Le testament d'Élisée: Texte massorétique et Septante en 2 Rois 13.10–14.16*, CahRB 76 (Pendé: Gabalda, 2010).

14:25, 28b), the account (2 Kgs 13:3–5, 22–25; 14:25–27), and the historical story (2 Kgs 14:8–14). These literary forms, along with motifs and themes such as divine anger and the oppression-liberation pattern, were generally employed by ancient Near Eastern scribes in historiographic texts of the ninth–eighth century.

Finally, I investigated the Hebrew and Greek versions of these texts in order to determine whether the redactional history of these passages supported the hypothesis that the ninth–eighth century literary forms and themes present in the texts were indeed indications of their early composition, and were not introduced by later writers. Beneath a thick layer of Deuteronomistic redaction, these passages contain substantial evidence of a pre-Deuteronomistic composition, such as a new synchronization of the royal chronologies of Judah and Israel, oppression-liberation stories, and salvation vocabulary current in ninth–eighth-century ancient Near Eastern historiography, namely the Mesha Inscription. None of these elements could have been invented by a Judahite scribe in the postexilic period. I have furthermore argued that later redactors needed to correct the positive assessment of the Nimshide dynasty embedded in the earliest stratum of these texts in light of the fall of Samaria. Putting together all these data, I believe we can safely conclude that Israelite historiography started during the Nimshide dynasty in the ninth–eighth century. It followed the historiographic conventions used in that period throughout the ancient Near East, focusing mainly on royal military achievements. The passages studied above bear witness to the most ancient historiography of Israel.