

Competing Histories, Competing Theologies, and the Challenge of OT Interpretation

EFCA Theology Conference 2015

Three Required Qualifications

- Ancient Literary Competence
- Theological Comprehension
- Historical Criticism

What is (ancient) historiography like?





Photo and Painting by Richard Robinson







Jerusalem —
The Old City from the Mount of Olives
V. Philipps Loney Nov, 1963



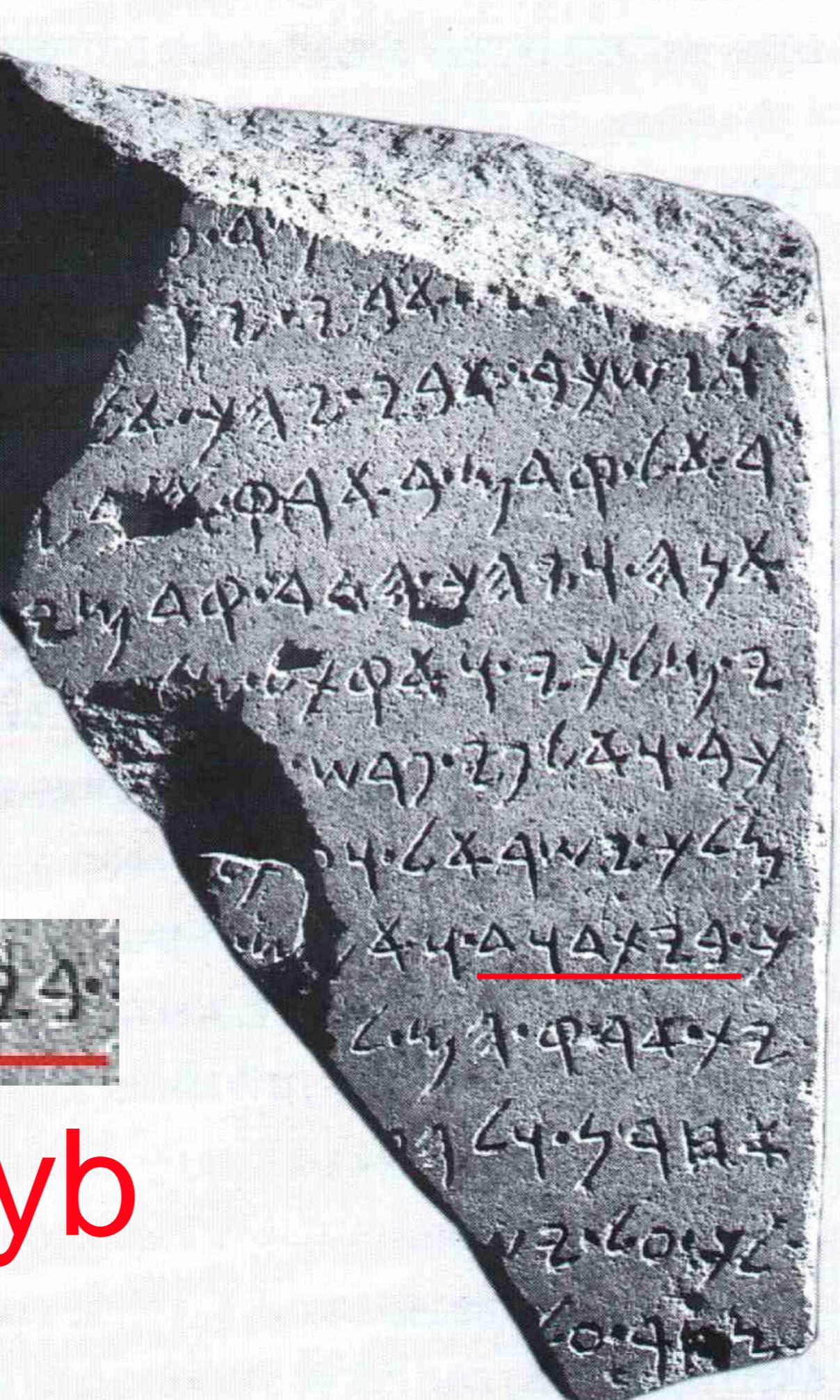












dwdtyb

Kings of Israel or Judah mentioned in Assyrian sources (sampling only)

<i>In an inscription on the ↓</i>	<i>the Assyrian king ↓</i>	<i>mentions ↓</i>	<i>as ↓</i>
Kurkh Monolith (COS 2.1 3A)	Shalmaneser III (ca. 858–824)	“Ahab the Israelite”	an opponent at the Battle of Qarqar (ca. 853)
Black Obelisk (COS 2.1 3F)	Shalmaneser III (ca. 858–824)	“Jehu the Omride”	a tributary (ca. 841)
Tell Al Rimah Stela (COS 2.1 4F)	Adad-nirari III (ca. 819–783)	“Joash the Samaritan”	a tributary (ca. 796)
Calah Annals (COS 2.1 7A)	Tiglath-pileser III (ca. 744–727)	“Menahem the Samaritan”	a tributary (ca. 738)
Summary Inscription 4 (COS 2.1 7C; cf. COS 2.1 7G)	Tiglath-pileser III (ca. 744–727)	“Pekah” “Hoshea”	overthrown (ca. 732) Pekah's replacement
Summary Inscription 7 (COS 2.1 7D)	Tiglath-pileser III (ca. 744–727)	“Jehoahaz the Judean” (=Ahaz)	a tributary (ca. 732)
Cylinder Inscription (COS 2.1 8H; cf. 2.1 8E, etc.)	Sargon II (ca. 721–705)	“Samaria and all the land of Beth Omri” (= the northern kingdom)	conquered and some population removed
Nimrud Inscription (COS 2.1 8I)	Sargon II (ca. 721–705)	“Judah which lies far away” (= the southern kingdom)	Under Sargon the “subduer”
Siege of Jerusalem (COS 2.1 9B)	Sennacherib (ca. 704–681)	“Hezekiah the Judean”	“locked up within Jerusalem ... like a bird in a cage” a tributary (ca. 701)
Prism B (ANET 291)	Esarhaddon (ca. 680–669)	“Manasseh king of Judah”	one of 22 kings required to bring building materials to Niniveh (ca. 674)
Cylinder C (ANET 294)	Ashurbanipal (ca. 668–627)	“Manasseh king of Judah”	** (ca. 666)

ANE rulers mentioned in the Bible (sampling only):

From **Egypt**:

Shishak (Shoshenq I)

Necho II

From **Aram** Damascus:

Hazael

Ben-Hadad I, II, and III

Rezin

From **Moab**:

Mesha

From **Assyria**:

Tiglath-pileser III (called Pul)

Shalmaneser V

Sargon II

Sennacherib

Esarhaddon

From **Babylon**:

Nebucadnezzar II

So what?

The point of this far from exhaustive sampling is this: wherever archaeological inscriptional evidence is available, comparison of the biblical and extra-biblical data tends to confirm that the Bible is correct with respect to the names, sequence, and time-frame of its kings and, indeed, of the kings of its neighbors, when named.



Michelangelo's “Moses” in the Church of St. Peter in Chains, Rome



CANONICI REGOLARI LATERANENSI

BASILICA DI SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI

ORARIO DI APERTURA

8:00-12:30 15:00-18:00
19:00 (h. legale)

ORARIO CELEBRAZIONI EUCARISTICHE

FERIALE	PREFESTIVO	FESTIVO
8:00	8:00	8:00
12:00	12:00	11:00
	17:00	

DURANTE LE SANTE MESSE SONO VIETATE LE VISITE GUIDATE
DURING HOLY MASS IT IS FORBIDDEN TO VISIT THE CHURCH FOR PURPOSES OF TOURISM
DURANTE LAS MISAS ESTAN PROHIBIDAS LAS VISITAS DE LOS TURISTAS
DURANT LA CELEBRATION EUCHARISTIQUE LES VISITES TOURISTIQUES SONT INTERDITES
KEINE BESICHTIGUNG WAHREND DER HL. MESSE



Grabbe's two results from his comparative experiment

“First, the text is reasonably accurate about the **framework**. From the mid-ninth century all kings attested in external sources are not only found in the biblical text, but they are found in the same sequence and even the approximate chronological period.”

“Secondly, we can have little *prima facie* confidence in the **details**. Sometimes they seem accurate, but at other times they are demonstrably misleading or wholly inaccurate and perhaps even completely invented.”

Old Testament picture

1. *Ahab*

Ahab fights the Arameans

Assyrians not mentioned

Ahab weak

2. *Mesha*

King of Moab and vassal of Ahab

Mesha rebelled after Ahab's death

3. *Jehu*

Nothing about the Assyrians

4. *Jehoash/Joash (of Israel)*

No reference to the Assyrians

5. *Azariah/Uzziah*

No reference to the Assyrians

Ancient Near Eastern texts

Ahab

Ahab allied with the Arameans

Enemies are the Assyrians

Ahab strong

Mesha

King of Moab and vassal of ~~Omi~~ and
Ahab his son's

Mesha rebelled during ~~Ahab's~~ lifetime

Jehu

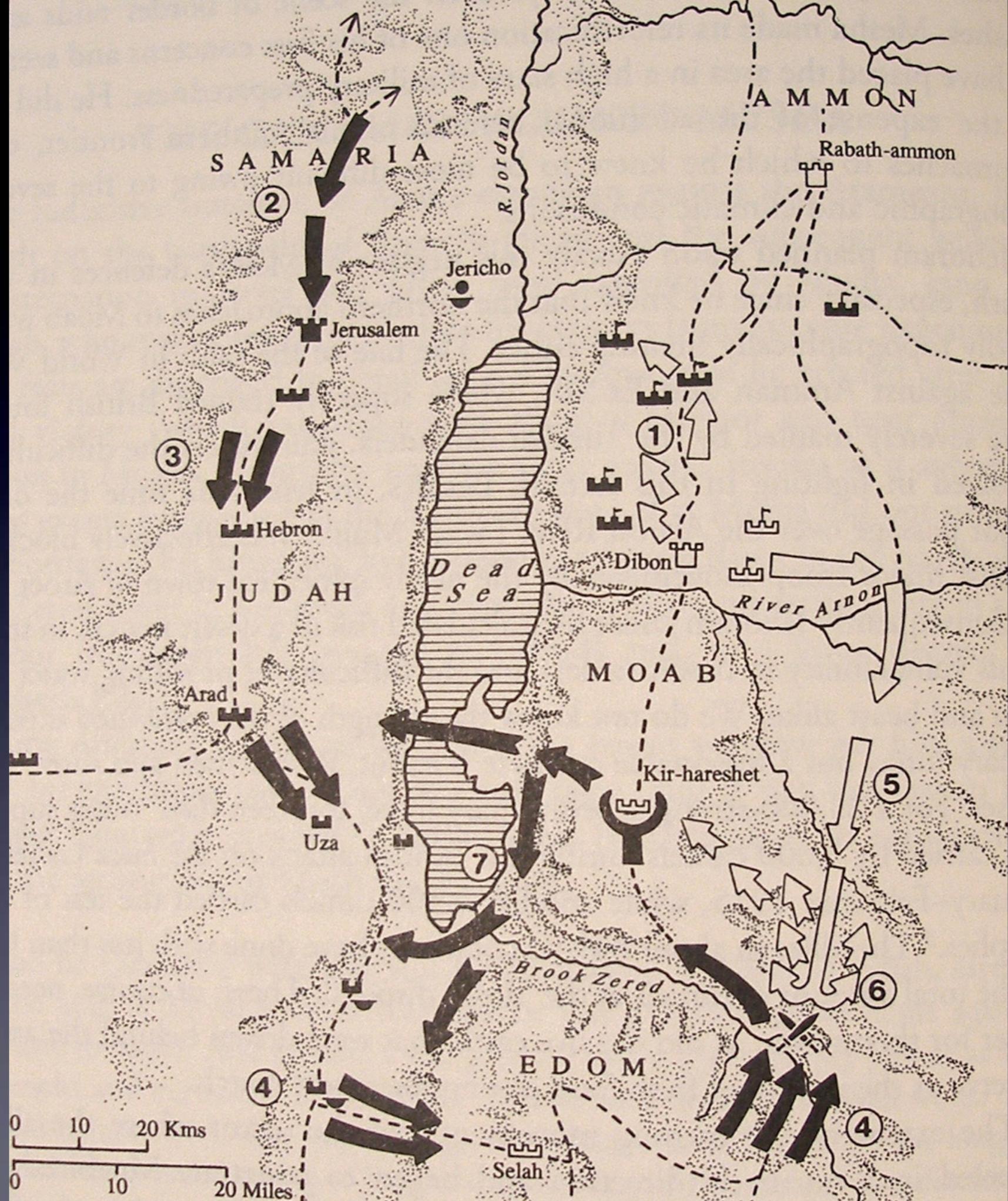
Jehu submits to Shalmaneser III

Jehoash/Joash (of Israel)

Pays tribute to Adad-nirari III

Azariah/Uzziah

Pays tribute to Tiglath-pileser III?



An incorrect detail in 2 Kings 3?

2 Kgs 3:9 So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the **king of Edom** set out; and when they had made a roundabout march of seven days, there was no water for the army or for the animals that were with them.

2 Kgs 8:20 In his days **Edom** revolted against the rule of Judah, and **set up a king of their own**. 21 Then Joram crossed over to Zair with all his chariots. He set out by night and attacked the Edomites and their chariot commanders who had surrounded him; but his army fled home. 22 So Edom has been in revolt against the rule of Judah to this day. Libnah also revolted at the same time.

1 Kgs 22:47 There was **no king in Edom; a deputy was king**.

