

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

Pemahaman Konsep Kerajaan Israel dan Yehuda Dalam Perspektif Historis: Analisis Terhadap
Sumber-sumber Tertulis dan Arkeologis

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Abstract

This research aims to deepen the understanding of the concept of the Kingdom of Israel and Judah from a historical perspective through analysis of written sources, especially the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings, as well as archaeological finds, both structural and artifacts. The main research question involves evaluating the consistency between written sources and archaeological finds, as well as how information from both can provide better insight into the general history of the region. The research method applied is an in-depth literature study which includes analysis of classical texts and tracing of recent archaeological finds. The results of the study report a significant correlation between the stories in the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings and archaeological finds, indicating a strong relevance to general historical understanding of the period. The implication is that these findings can enrich the historical narrative reconstruction of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah and provide new insights into the social and political dynamics of the past. The conclusions of this research provide a strong argument in support of a deeper understanding of the concept of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, while highlighting the importance of integrating written sources and archaeological findings in historical research.

Keywords: Kingdom of Israel, Kingdom of Judah, Archaeology, Written Sources

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendalami pemahaman konsep Kerajaan Israel dan Yehuda dari perspektif historis melalui analisis sumber-sumber tertulis, terutama Kitab Samuel dan Kitab Raja-Raja, serta temuan arkeologis, baik struktural maupun artefak. Pertanyaan penelitian utama melibatkan evaluasi konsistensi antara sumber-sumber tertulis dan temuan arkeologis, serta bagaimana informasi dari keduanya dapat memberikan wawasan yang lebih baik terhadap sejarah umum di wilayah tersebut. Metode penelitian yang diterapkan adalah studi literatur mendalam yang mencakup analisis terhadap teks-teks klasik dan penelusuran temuan arkeologis terkini. Hasil penelitian melaporkan adanya korelasi yang signifikan antara cerita-cerita dalam Kitab Samuel dan Kitab Raja-Raja dengan temuan arkeologis, menunjukkan relevansi yang kuat terhadap pemahaman sejarah umum pada periode tersebut. Implikasinya, temuan ini dapat memperkaya rekonstruksi naratif sejarah Kerajaan Israel dan Yehuda serta memberikan wawasan baru tentang dinamika sosial dan politik di masa lalu. Simpulan dari penelitian ini memberikan argumen yang kuat dalam mendukung pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang konsep Kerajaan Israel dan Yehuda, sekaligus menyoroti pentingnya integrasi sumber-sumber tertulis dan temuan arkeologis dalam penelitian sejarah.

Kata Kunci: Kerajaan Israel, Kerajaan Yehuda, Arkeologi, Sumber-sumber Tertulis

Introduction

The Israelites were a large group consisting of 12 tribes led by a leader. In the dynamics of leadership, problems sometimes arise in a society. These problems can create tension between individuals, cause conflict, and can even lead to division. This reflects that problems are often an inevitable part of every society, especially in the context of one's leadership. Especially, when significant differences of opinion occur, resolving them can be quite a difficult task (Zaluchu, 2018).

During the Kingdom, the ins and outs of Israel's religion were clearly visible. By this time, Yahwism had actually taken root in Israel. Under the early kingdom, the sharp differences between the tribes of Israel were no longer clearly visible. Israel increasingly appeared as a unified nation and had achieved its existence as a nation. As time goes by there is a change from the old lifestyle as a breeder to a new lifestyle as a farmer. Life in cities continues to develop. In short, Israel appears as a nation. The Early Kingdom tells about the first kingdom (Saul's kingdom) and the story of the emergence of David's sovereignty. This manuscript is the earliest source whose material is detailed enough to be used in constructing a number of Israelite religious beliefs.

There are several difficulties we must face if we are to handle Old Testament historical material responsibly. The main reason is that in the historical process many ancient sources have been discovered which have been republished or edited (reprocessed by translators). The process of adaptation from generation to generation has advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages is that ancient sources are preserved and not lost or forgotten. However, there is a drawback, namely that many additions and changes were made gradually to these manuscripts, so that currently it is very difficult to determine which parts of historical manuscripts are original and which are inserts. Literary research techniques can help us differentiate these passages. However, the method used in this research is not absolute and easy to apply. This means that the process of studying and studying materials from ancient times requires a lot of precision and time.

By combining literary approaches and critical historical approaches, significant progress has been made in understanding Old Testament texts over the last two hundred years. However, there are still many problems that have not been resolved, for example there are still doubts regarding the dating of certain manuscripts.

Methods

The research method used in this study is a descriptive analytical literature study method (Djazimah, 2016) where in writing this article, the author used qualitative methods. Basically, the qualitative method is a research approach that is descriptive in nature, utilizing primary data as the main source of information in a study, which is then processed into research findings (Jaya, 2020). First, in the analysis of written sources, the research will focus on the Books of Samuel and the Books of Kings as core texts documenting the history of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Through a critical approach to these texts, the research will explore understanding the concept of kingship and the role of key figures in the historical context. Second, in examining archaeological findings, research will focus on structures and artifacts related to the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Archaeological analysis will involve understanding the stratigraphy and context of the site to produce information about people's lives at that time. Finally, the research will evaluate the relevance of these findings to general historical understanding, connecting the results of the literature study with archaeological findings to present a more holistic picture of the role and development of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in historical perspective.

Result and Discussion

Written Sources

The Bible's message about Israel's history begins with God's call to Abraham to become the father of a new nation (Genesis 12:1 dyb). The opening chapters of Genesis contain stories that some scholars call "myths," in addition to a number of ancient stories about the origins and relationships of other tribes and peoples. But in Genesis 12 we find the beginning of a series of

interconnected stories. The series of stories begins with the calling of Abraham and then continues with the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:1-7) and Jacob (Gen. 25:19-26), the twelve sons of Jacob who became the ancestors of the twelve sons of the Israelite tribe (Gen. 29:31-30:24). These men were known as forefathers (in Greek) “*patriarchs*.”

The opening chapter of the book of Genesis reminds us that the Israelites were not the first nation to inhabit this world. Archaeological research also shows that he was there before the time of Abraham, who is estimated to have lived around 1900 BC. There are several great cultures. Evidence of the existence of cavemen has been found in the Southwest Asia region, believed to have existed around 10,000 BC. lives in Southwest Asia. The oldest city, the remains of which have only recently been discovered, is Jericho. Around 8000 BC In the 4th century BC, people began building at the site of Jericho. There is evidence that people apparently arrived around 5000 BC. BC in Mesopotamia and 4000 BC. had experienced a certain level of civilized life in Egypt. The oldest writing was found in southern Mesopotamia and may date from around 3300 BC. This nation is believed to be the first to know and develop it. These writings originate from Sumer.

For a long time, tribal life was centered around a city ruled by a king who ruled over a number of agricultural lands around the city. Then around 2900 BC a large political unity emerged for the first time in Egypt and was called the ancient Egyptian kingdom. Three hundred years later, enormous tombs, called “pyramids,” were built in Egypt for the first time. It is difficult to understand how the pyramids were built, even though people at that time did not know the technology of poles and cranes and only relied on human power. One of the largest pyramids is called the Great Pyramid, its height is about 145 meters and the base is 226 meters wide.

This pyramid consists of 2,300,000 large stones, each weighing about two and a half tons. The pyramids were the tombs of Egyptian kings known as “Pharaohs” and revered as “gods on earth.” After death, their bodies were embalmed and then stored in pyramids so that they would remain preserved even after death. The Egyptians believed that ordinary people could not expect their lives to be renewed after death. The biblical writers also indicated that God had been working among humans long before Abraham's life. But during Abraham's lifetime, God began a new work. He envisioned Abraham and his descendants as so profound and perfect that they too would share their knowledge of God with other nations. “Through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed!”(Genesis 12:3). Or in other words, “His knowledge of your experience with God will help you.” (Hinson, 1991).

1) The Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings

The stories that represent the main sources of information for the Kingdom of Greater Israel are the books 1-2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1-11. These books contain a lot of information, especially regarding the reign of David and Solomon. As with the stories in the books of Joshua and Judges, critical research is needed to distinguish and separate history, legends, legends, and additional author's comments. Other Bible stories that are also rich sources of information are 1 Chronicles 10-29 and 2 Chronicles 1-9. In general, the stories in Chronicles follow the stories in the Book of Samuel of Kings, especially regarding the reigns of David and Solomon. However, much of the information about the two kings was changed with the aim of highlighting the ideal image of the two kings. This can be seen in the story of David's preparations for building the Temple. It

should be noted that the Book of Tawarikh was written several centuries after the events it records (Wahono, 1986).

The Book of Samuel highlights three main characters, namely Samuel, Saul, and David, with the author carefully selecting and arranging the details. Initially, the focus was on Samuel as bringing Israel into the kingdom era that God had ordained. Then, the story turns to Saul's failure as the first king, and finally, shows God's plan through David's kingdom and dynasty to expand His power. This entire book describes logistically how God guided Israel from the time of the judges to the time of the Davidic monarchy (Samuel, 1968).

The Book of Kings is a continuation of the history recorded in 1 and 2 Samuel. These books spectrally cover the entire history of the kings of Israel and Judah. The books of 1 and 2 Kings are believed to have been completely completed in the decade 560–550 BC. written. The books of 1 and 2 Kings are a long part of the Deuteronomistic (DH) text and the closing book of Deuteronomistic history (DH). exile period.

As an integral part of the large scroll of Kings, the history of the text of 1 Kings 12:1-19 is a history that is closely related to the writing of the Deuteronomistic (DH) text. This is said because the text of 1 Kings 12:1-19 structurally contains a continuation of the story about the leadership pattern of the Davidic dynasty and the conflicts that occurred during the United Kingdom of Israel. This explains that the text of 1 Kings 12:1-19 is a text that contains the historical background of the Deuteronomic tradition regarding the history of rulers and their kingdoms, which is very useful for efforts to form this important identity of the Israelite nation. According to Frank Moore Cross, there are two basic structures and compositions of the Deuteronomistic Tradition (DH), namely Dtr 1 and Dtr 2. Dtr 1 was written during the reform period of King Josiah or the period before its peak (640-609 AD), in connection with his reform efforts. Dtr 1 has two main themes in its writing, namely first, the theme of "Jeroboam's sin" (1 Kings 13:34) and second, the theme of David as God's servant and Jerusalem as God's chosen city (1 Kings 11:12-13 , 2 Kings.8:19). Meanwhile, Dtr 2 has its own theme, namely relating to the conditions of the rendering period as the spiritual basis for the fall of Jerusalem and the Davidic Dynasty. This second theme forms almost the entire history of the writing of the Deuteronomistic Text (DH).

Theoretically, the historical position of 1 Kings 12:1-19 can be seen as an integral part of the reason for the destruction of Jerusalem due to disobedience to Yahweh's will. This historical background places the text of 1 Kings 12:1-19 in a strategic position compared to conditions during the exile. This article emphasizes the existence of tyranny and injustice in the pattern of government of the kings of Judah which caused the collapse of the kingdom of United Israel due to God's judgment. About the Story of the Davidic Dynasty in Kings 12:1-19 attempts to provide a historical overview of the conceptual reasons for the division and fall of the United Kingdom of Israel. This theme is what the Deuteronymistic (DH) story wants to highlight as an important basis for writing the text of 1 Kings 12:1-19. Therefore, a historical understanding of 1 Kings 12:1-19 must be seen within the framework of this topic.

The story of the social conflict of the Israelites recorded in 1 Kings 12:1-19 begins with the historical story of King Solomon's reign as David's successor. In TANAK Sulaiman is known as a wise figure. Solomon's wisdom was not merely cognitive. but it extends to practical life. However, the differences in the concept of this type of spirituality become clearly visible when Solomon's leadership pattern is studied through the story of 1 Kings 12:1-19. In historical records, Salomon's leadership pattern was characterized by massive development efforts in all aspects of social and state life. This great desire to expand prompted Solomon to develop a

different approach to power than David. As a result, various rebellions occurred as a form of resistance to the antipathy of the northern people towards Solomon.

Resistance to Solomon and his government quickly gained support in foreign countries such as Egypt and Syria. Potential leaders who would lead resistance against Solomon and his rule, such as descendants of Edomite (or perhaps Aramean) slaves, were protected in Egypt until the time of rebellion came. An example of this was Jeroboam 1. During Solomon's reign, Jeroboam 1, the former chief administrator of Solomon's power in Ephraim, fled to Egypt and sought refuge with other rebels there because he opposed Solomon's rule. Acts 1 Kings 12:1-19 describes a process of social conflict caused by various social inequalities and the injustice of the ruler towards the suffering of his people. The conflict that occurred in Israel is a conflict that includes three important elements as the final form of the accumulation of various factors that emerged massively in the context of northern society.

These three factors are: first, political factors, which are directly related to the leadership patterns of the rulers who are said to tend to prioritize political interests and economic profits above the welfare of their own people. This condition is clearly seen in the situation of exploitation and social injustice experienced by northern tribes, as depicted in the story of Kings 12:1-19. Second, the technical factor, namely the existence of leaders among Northern society who have the courage to appear to defend and encourage social change among Northern society. Jeroboam I, who received support from various parties in the north, ultimately proved to be a charismatic leader who made an important contribution to the realization of the Northern Revolution.

This support for Jeroboam I provided great benefits in establishing legal leadership and tribal loyalty. This condition was caused by the fact that in the traditions of the tribes in Palestine, priests or judges (local heroes) were the main leaders who had the authority and power to protect members of their tribe. Therefore, the support of important figures in the north had a big influence on the existence of Jeroboam's leadership¹. Third, social factors involving inequality and social injustice, which are believed to have caused physical and mental suffering for the people of the North as a result of various acts of exploitation and discrimination. The social inequality that occurred at that time ultimately became the main driving factor and trigger for the peak of destructive social conflict between rulers in the south and people in the north in the story of 1 Kings 12:1-19.

Social conflict is fundamental in every process of social change. Theoretically, social conflict plays an important role in supporting the formation of dynamic patterns of social movement. Social conflict that arises in society can give rise to the construction of unique models of social interaction. Social conflict can give rise to social movements that support the progress of a society, but can also give rise to instability, social and even divisions in community relations. From the history of the story of 1 Kings 12:1-19, it can be seen that there is a close connection between social conflict events and the split of the United Kingdom of Israel in 931/930 BC. The split of the United Kingdom of Israel was the result of a long conflict between the rulers of the Davidic dynasty and the tribes in the north. The split of the kingdom was the result of the accumulation of various factors that triggered conflict, such as oppression and social injustice experienced by the people of northern Israel. The driving factor for the disintegration of the United Kingdom of Israel, as described in the story of 1 Kings 12:1-19, has brought a fundamental understanding of all the treatment, acts of social injustice, oppression and exploitation carried out by those in the region. Power over its people will lead to riots, conflict and social divisions in society. Acts of rebellion and division are a kind of logical consequence of

poor social communication processes. The breakdown of social communication and the existence of an authoritarian government system are the causes of problems (Moru, 2021)

2) Kings of Israel

a. King Saul

The first person chosen to be king of Israel was Saul. The story of his election and installation as king is recorded in 1 Samuel 8–12, and the story of his reign is reported in subsequent chapters of the first book of Samuel. 1 Samuel 9:1-10:16 tells how Samuel anointed Saul as king. The custom of anointing someone as a royal official was familiar to Egyptian society, especially in the appointment of royal officials in Egypt and Palestine who reported directly to the Pharaoh. Apparently Samuel imitated this practice by appointing a leader in Israel who would be directly responsible to God.

In fact, Samuel himself initially did not agree with his people's desire to have a king. Samuel's disagreement can be read in the books of 1 Samuel 8 and 10:17-27. The main reason for Samuel's stance was that God himself was the King of Israel (1 Sam 8:7; 10:19). Samuel was afraid that a king would abuse the power God had given him and rule according to his own will in a cruel way (1 Sam 8:11 -18).

Saul's authority as king was truly recognized by the tribes of Israel when he demonstrated his ability as an effective leader in war. This confession occurred after he acted to free the residents of the city of Jabesh-Gilead from the siege of the Ammonites. At that time the Ammonites were trying to capture the city of Jabesh-Gilead which was located east of the Jordan River. Saul acted quickly. In a short time he succeeded in rallying the tribes of Israel and liberating the city (1 Sam 11). In carrying out the rescue, he behaved exactly like the judges. Through this action, the Israelites recognized his authority as leader and maintained him as king in Israel.

Soon after this incident, Saul began to turn his attention to fighting the Philistines (1 Sam. 13–14). He formed a permanent army (1 Sam 13:2) and appointed his own son, Jonathan, to lead part of it. Jonathan then led an assault on the Philistine army's position in the city of Geba, north of Jerusalem, and succeeded in defeating them. As a result of this event, the Philistine army started a major battle against the Israeli army. Their goal was to punish the Israelites for Jonathan's attack. With Jonathan's courage and fighting spirit, as well as careful planning, the Israelites finally succeeded in repelling the Philistines from the hilly areas to the lowlands of the Palestinian coast (Coote and Coote 2001).

This victory does not mean peace in Israel. Saul's entire reign was a time of war. The Philistines were always a threat to the Israelites. In addition, Israel's other enemies are increasingly increasing their activities in Palestine. The book of 1 Samuel 15 describes the outbreak of war between the Israelites and the Amalekites, a nomadic tribe in the desert. This forced Saul to continue leading his troops from one war to the next. A situation like this clearly drained his energy and thoughts and caused deeper physical and mental tension, so that in the end he showed symptoms of severe depression (1 Sam 16:14-23). Under such circumstances, it is understandable why he then began to disagree with Samuel after he was reprimanded for his arbitrary actions. Saul apparently claimed the right to sacrifice before going into battle (1 Sam 13:8-9) and felt he had the right to decide what to do with prisoners, animals, and property captured in battle (1 Sam 15:9), instead of following his will. God as - what Samuel

said. Here Samuel seems to realize that his initial doubts about the king's appointment were justified. Saul had failed to serve God as he should (1 Sam 15:22-23), and Samuel stated that Saul had lost God's favor (1 Sam 13:14; 15:11, 18) (Son, 2021).

Perhaps Saul's failure made him jealous of David. This feeling of jealousy apparently controlled him so that he no longer devoted his attention to fighting the enemies of his nation, but instead focused his attention on making enemies of David and driving him out of Israel (1 Sam. 27:1). David himself still respected Saul as God's anointed king of Israel and tried to avoid open war with Saul (1 Sam. 24:10; 26:9).

Saul's reign ended tragically when the Philistines attacked Israel again. They moved from the northern city of Aphek to the plains of Esdraelon while Saul concentrated his forces. The range is in the Gilboa Mountains. Facing this fateful battle, Saul realized that he had little hope of winning. He also tried to contact Samuel's spirit, hoping to gain strength from him (1 Sam 28:8-19), but his wish was granted. Finally, a terrible war broke out between these two countries. All three of Saul's sons died in this battle (1 Sam 31:2). Saul himself then ended his life with his own sword (1 Sam 31:2). With this victory, the Philistines controlled all of Palestine and perhaps even expanded their territory beyond the Jordan River (Moru, 2023).

b. King David

After Saul's death, the Israelites needed someone worthy to be king in his place. David proved himself worthy of the position. Previously, when Saul was still alive, he had been anointed by Samuel as king in Saul's place (1 Sam 16:1-3). He was also quite famous among the tribes of Israel. He succeeded in killing Goliath, a Philistine leader (1 Sam 17:48-49), and became a successful soldier leader in the Israelite army during the reign of Saul (1 Sam 18:12-16). He had shown that he respected Saul as king (1 Sam 24:10; 26:9). He succeeded in winning many people as his followers and trained them to become a strong Israelite army (1 Sam 22:2) (Coote and Ord 2018). David succeeded in approaching the Philistines without having to betray his own people (1 Sam 27:8-12). All of this made David very suitable to be chosen as the next king of Israel. The second book of Samuel tells in detail about the reign of King David.

The tribe of Judah, David's own tribe, was the first to recognize him as their new king (2 Sam. 2:1-4). They anointed him in the city of Hebron, a place that reminded them of Abraham (Genesis 13:18). The Philistines also recognized David's appointment as king. In fact, if the people of Katan were willing and strong, they would have prevented David from becoming king. However, perhaps they thought that making David king of Israel would benefit them because it would divide the unity and loyalty of the tribes of Israel. Abner, Saul's warlord, had appointed Eshbaal, one of Saul's sons, as the new king of Israel (2 Sam 2:8-10). This coronation took place in Mahanaim, east of the Jordan River, a place associated with Jacob (Gen. 32:1-2). In the book of Samuel, Eshbaal's name is called Ishbosheth, which means "abominable man". However, the Book of Chronicles (1 Chronicles 8:33; 9:39) explains that he was actually Eshbaal, meaning "Baal was present." This name indicates that he was a worshiper of the Canaanite god Baal.

Eshbaal probably only ruled for a few months. In fact, Bible writers record that he "reigned two years." However, they often count the year in which he began his reign

as the first year and the year in which he gave up his reign as the second year. If so, it is thought that he began to rule at the end of the first year and ceased to rule at the beginning of the following year. But there is.

It is clear that Eshbaal is a weak person and is actually controlled by his army commander, Abner. When Eshbaal argued with Abner, he could do nothing to stop Abner from turning to David (2 Sam 3:6-11). Joab, David's warlord, did not like Abner's presence because he would take over leadership of the Israelite army and replace him. So Joab killed Abner (2 Sam 3:23-27). Two men then took revenge and killed Eshbaal (2 Sam 4:7-8). David disapproved of this murder and punished the perpetrator. However, with the killing of Eshbaal Da David, David finally became king over all the tribes of Israel (2 Sam 5:1-3). Apparently the Philistines did not expect this at all and immediately attacked David (2 Sam 5:17-25) in the Valley of Rephaim and in Baalperazim, two places in the area around Jerusalem. Apparently, the Philistines sought to prevent the unification of the two Israelite tribal groups and therefore increased their control over the buffer zone between them. However, David defeated the Philistines in both places and succeeded in driving them out of there.

David then focused all his efforts on uniting the tribe of Judah with the other tribes of Israel into one tribe. Therefore, he intended to make Jerusalem the capital of his kingdom. Until that time, Jerusalem had not yet become a city of Judah or a city of any other tribe of Israel. This city was still a strong Canaanite city and was inhabited by the Jebusite tribe. David's personal army captured the city for him so that it became David's personal city which was called "The City of David" (2 Sam. 5:7). This city itself is located between the territory of the tribe of Judah and the territory of other tribes of Israel, so it is very suitable to be the center of Israel's national life. David then took the Ark of the Covenant and placed it in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12-15). The Ark of the Covenant was a symbol of the unity of the tribes of Israel and a symbol of God's presence. David was very wise when he made Jerusalem the new home where the Ark of the Covenant was kept.

After successfully defeating the Philistines, David continued his efforts to completely destroy their power. There are few Biblical records on this matter. However, in the list of names of nations conquered by David (2 Samuel 8:1-14) there is the name of the Philistines (verse 12). The Canaanite cities, which were still free today, may also have been part of David's kingdom. After that, the Bible no longer tells about the kings of Canaan.

Many areas in the Palestinian territories were successfully controlled by David with the support of his closest allies. David's successes included conquering Herbron and declaring himself king over Judah. He also faced Ishbosheth's power to conquer the territory of Israel previously owned by Saul. Finally, David succeeded in capturing the city of Jerusalem, which was a fortress city that controlled important trade routes between the coastal region and the Jordan valley. In this city, David established the center of his own kingdom with the aim of overthrowing the rulers in various places and establishing a new kingdom that was sovereign over the tribes in Palestine (Coote and Coote 2001).

The Palestinian territories west of the Jordan River were completely under David's control. He also achieved victory over the Aramaic-speaking tribes east of the Jordan River, namely the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites (2 Sam. 8:12). The

story of David's war against the Ammonites is in 2 Samuel 10:1-14 and 12:26-31. During the war against the Ammonites, David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and Nathan rebuked him harshly (2 Sam 11-12). David eventually also became king over Amon (2 Sam 12:30). He also fought the tribes north of Amon's territory and succeeded in capturing Damascus (2 Sam 8:3-10).

The result of all these wars was that David became king over a very large area in Southwest Asia. During his reign, the Israelites gained very strong power compared to previous and subsequent times, allowing them to rule their neighboring tribes. Of all the kings of Israel, David was the most famous and successful.

David's reign ended with a long but difficult period. Just like strong governments throughout history, David also delayed choosing a successor. Each of his children then tried to convince him to become king as his successor. Perhaps his eldest son hoped to become king, but the situation was quite confusing because David had several wives. The book 2 Samuel 3:2-5 contains several children born in marriage, namely Amnon, Kileab, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephakah, and Jetream.

Amnon was killed by Absalom for raping Absalom's sister (2 Sam 13:1-29). Nothing to report about Kileab; she may have died when he was a teenager. Absalom fled after killing Amnon. After about three years he returned, but was convinced that there was no way David would choose him as his successor. For this reason he rebelled against David and led his army to Jerusalem. David fled, but then the rebels who were chasing him were defeated and Absalom was killed (2 Sam 14-18).

When David died, his fourth son, Adonijah, claimed the right to be king (1 Kings 1:5). He was assisted by Joab, the warlord, and Abiathar, one of the two priests in Jerusalem (1 Kings 1:7). However, the Prophet Nathan and another priest, Zadok, as well as several of David's heroes, prepared Solomon as his successor. Bathsheba persuaded David to proclaim Solomon as the new king by accusing Adonijah of attempted rebellion and reminding David of his own promise to Bathsheba as his beloved queen (1 Kings 1:15-31). So Solomon finally became the new king at the behest of David himself.

c. King Solomon

Solomon became king of Israel when his kingdom was very strong and lacking in power. After gaining power as king, he acted quickly to maintain the integrity of his territory by eliminating his opponents. He ordered the killing of Adonijah and Joab (1 Kings 2:19-25); The same thing happened to Joab, who supported Adonijah (1 Kings 2:28-35). Solomon dismissed the priest Abiathar, who had approved Adonijah's appointment as king (1 Kings 2:26-27).

Solomon strengthened his kingdom by strengthening the defenses of fortified cities (1 Kings 9:15-19). He equipped his army with horse-drawn chariots (1 Kings 4:26). He made treaties with neighboring kingdoms and strengthened those agreements through his marriages to their respective kings' daughters (1 Kings 11:1-2).

All of this could have happened because the Egyptian kingdom at that time was very weak. The Egyptian Pharaoh was forced to accept a treaty with Israel and give up one of his daughters to marry Solomon. However, it turned out that Solomon was unable to maintain his power over the territory previously controlled by David, he lost control over Damascus and several regions of Edom (1 Kings 11:14-25).

Archaeologists have found evidence that the city was once an important center of the copper industry. The copper itself was mined in Arabah and then taken to Ezion-Geber to be smelted. Solomon probably exported this copper via maritime trade from the port of Ezion-Gede (1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:11, 12, 22). It is difficult to determine exactly where Ophir was and where Solomon's ships stopped. The goods purchased there and transported back on these ships could have come from India, but also from Somalia. Actually there is silver, sandalwood, gemstones, ivory and ape.

Solomon's sea trade was probably the main rival to the land trade carried out by Arab traders at that time. The Queen of Sheba apparently came from eastern Yemen and came to Solomon to make a covenant with him (1 Kings 10:1-13). Apparently, the wealth of the Queen of Sheba's country came from the high taxes imposed on Arab traders who traded in or came from East Africa. It is likely that Solomon controlled the same trade routes in the far north, so he could hinder trade at will. Solomon also received taxes from Naj syn Arah (King 10:15). So, both Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had an interest in implementing this agreement.

Solomon also made huge profits from the horse and chariot trade. He brought chariots from Egypt and horses from Keveh (Sicily) and sold them to small kingdoms in the interior and north of Syria (1 Kings 10:28-29). Solomon spent most of the money he earned from trading to finance a number of large building projects. We have seen him strengthening the defenses of several important cities and expanding the port of Ezion-Geber for trade purposes. However, his most important building projects took place in Jerusalem. The book of 1 Kings 6 records how he built the temple in Jerusalem. It is thought to have been built around 959 BC. Construction began in 500 BC and was completed seven years later (1 Kings 6:37). However, the construction of the Temple was only a small part of the development of Jerusalem that occurred during his reign. Other similar buildings include the "Lebanon Forest" building, which was apparently used as an armory (1 Kings 7:2; 10:16ff.). He also built the Saka Hall, which may have served as a storehouse for the king's possessions (1 Kings 7:6), and a throne room where the king decided legal matters (1 Kings 7:7). In addition, he built two large residential buildings in Jerusalem, one for himself and the other for Pharaoh's daughter, who became his wife (1 Kings 7:8). In addition, he also built several temples for the foreign gods his wife worshiped (1 Kings 11:7-8). The prosperity and glory of Jerusalem during his reign is described in 1 Kings 10:14-22.

Solomon became very ambitious, apparently he was only satisfied when he had extensive trade, great power, and magnificent buildings. In addition to wealth and fame, he attempted to produce many things at very high costs, far exceeding the income he received from trade relations with nations. - other countries. To obtain the resources he needed to finance his plans, he did not hesitate to collect large taxes from his people. He divided his land into twelve regions, not equal to the twelve tribes, including the Canaanite cities he controlled. He appointed officials to lead each of these regions. They were tasked with collecting food from each region for the needs of the royal palace (1 Kings 4:7-19).

Apart from that, Solomon also needed a large number of workers for his building projects, his military, as well as officials and servants in his palace (1 Kings 9:15-22). To do manual labor, he initially used Canaanite laborers. However, when his building

plans got bigger, he finally recruited Israelites as forced laborers for his project. These things then gave rise to hatred towards Solomon in the hearts of the Israelites. One of his servants named Jeroboam used this as an excuse to start a rebellion. The prophet Ahijah sided with him, but Solomon was so strong that Jeroboam eventually had to flee (1 Kings 11:28-40). Solomon himself was heavily in debt at that time, and apparently had difficulty paying off his debt to King Hiram of Tyre. Ultimately he had to give up twenty villages in Galilee to pay off his debts (1 Kings 9:10-14).

What Solomon did was actually explained long ago by Samuel when he warned the Israelites about the dangers of having a king (1 Sam. 8:10-17). The Israeli people were increasingly dissatisfied with Solomon's government. However, he was a strong king, especially since they remembered that he was David's son and did not rebel against him. After Solomon's death, they had the opportunity to revolt against his son.

Archaeological Finds: Structural and Artifacts

As an introduction, it is worth noting Joseph Blenkinsopp's views on ancient Israelite religion, its relationship with other religions, and his interesting conclusions. According to Blenkinsopp, the connection between the religion of ancient Israel, which featured monotheistic worship of Yahweh, and other religions was actually a problem that emerged after the process of occupying the land of Canaan (Blenkinsopp, 1986). Although according to him, starting from the narrative of Abraham's journey in the regional area, who is considered the "ancestor" of the Israelites, Abraham was already in the land of Canaan. In these regions, the worship of Yahweh was introduced for the first time, where Abraham several times established places of sacrifice to the LORD (at Shechem, Bethel, Mamre, and Beersheba). This tradition was then continued by subsequent patriarchal fathers, such as Isaac and Jacob (Pratama, 2014). Tensions arose when the Israelites, led by Moses and then by Joshua, entered and took control of the land of Canaan. This process of occupation not only involved armed conflict, but also introduced elements of "new worship" that replaced existing worship practices among the Canaanite population. Blenkinsopp calls this phenomenon "religious competition." Through his research, Blenkinsopp appears to support the view of syncretism in ancient Israelite society. He saw syncretism as a positive option for the development of ancient Israelite religion, even into the period of monarchy and exile. Blenkinsopp asserts that the syncretic option remained a powerful and attractive alternative throughout history until after the exile. Additionally, although Yahweh is recognized as the national God of Israel, Blenkinsopp states that cultural aspects and worship practices of other societies cannot be ignored. According to him, there is an element of religious universalism which is presented, especially through the Pentateuch record which begins with Abraham's blessing (Blenkinsopp, 1986).

The following will explain about related archaeological discoveries.

- 1) The Dead Sea Scrolls, dating from around 250-67 BC, were discovered in the caves of Qumran, Israel, between 1946-1956 by a Bedouin shepherd. In total, there are 40,000 mostly fragmentary scrolls, including Old Testament texts except Esther. These scrolls provide insight into Jewish life in early Christianity, the history of Judaism, and its end. They were made from a variety of materials, including papyrus, animal skin, and bronze. This discovery provides evidence that Old Testament manuscripts existed more than 1,000 years before the oldest manuscripts of the 9th to 10th centuries AD, which were copied by a group of Jewish scribes known as the Masoretes.
- 2) The Yahweh Inscription dating from around 1400 BC includes the name "Yahweh," who is the oldest recorded God of Israel outside of Biblical sources. This

inscription was written using Hieroglyphic letters and was found in a temple built by Pharaoh Amenhotep III in Solep, Sudan (current region). The text of the inscription refers to a wandering group of Yahweh's followers, possibly the Israelites.

- 3) The Merneptah Inscription, which mentions the name "Israel" and is the oldest record outside of Biblical sources, was issued by Pharaoh Merneptah, who was the fourth Pharaoh of the 19th Dynasty. This inscription uses hieroglyphic writing and is thought to date from around 1210-1205 BC (Shanks 2012). The inscription notes that "Israel was laid waste and had no fruit" (Israel is laid waste, its seed is not). This inscription, carved on a granite rock more than 10 feet high, was discovered in Thebes in 1896 and is currently housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.
- 4) The latest discovery shows that there is older evidence of Israel's name, namely inscriptions on granite guards now housed in the Museum of Egypt in Berlin. On the granite are carved three heads and inscribed in hieroglyphics the names of Pharaoh's enemies as a warning, namely (from left to right) Ashkelon, Canaan, and Israel. Based on hieroglyphs dating from around 1400 BC, during the reign of Amenhotep III (Shanks 2012).
- 5) The collection of Ebla tablets discovered in 1964 in Northern Syria or precisely at the Tell Mardikh site with a total of more than 17,000 pieces, is estimated to date from around 2300 BC. These tablets provide a lot of information about past lives. Most were written in Sumerian, others in Ebla. One of the most important pieces of information is the mention of the name "Canaan" which is the oldest evidence of its existence outside of the biblical text. It should be noted that Ebla was a kingdom with a population of around 260,000 and 11,000 servants. This kingdom was destroyed by Maharaja Sargon's grandson in 2230 BC. Other information mentions > 5000 cities, including important cities mentioned in the Bible such as Salem, Gaza, Lachish, Ashdod, etc. The discovery of this set of tablets shows that writing was known 1000 years before the era of Moses and this dispels the notion that writing was not known during the time of Moses, even during the time of the forefathers; mentions events that occurred in the region where Moses and the Patriarch lived; confirm the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar are included in Genesis 14.
- 6) The oldest alphabetic writing, Eilat Mazar, archaeologists from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem found fragments of jars in excavations near the Holy Temple, Jerusalem. On the shoulder surface of the jar there are letters written which are thought to date from the 10th century BC. Written in proto-Canaanite script reading from left to right, the writing is a series of letters m, q, p, h, n possibly l and n. The meaning of this series of letters is still a mystery because it has no significance in West Semitic languages. The finder's interpretation is that it relates to the contents of the jar or the name of the owner which was probably written by a non-Israelite who lived in Jerusalem during the reign of David and Solomon.
- 7) Blessing text. It was discovered in a silver scroll in 1979 in Jerusalem, outside the ancient city known as Ketef Hinnom. One of the 4-inch-long scrolls contains inscriptions in Hebrew that correspond to the words recorded in Numbers 6:24-26, "The LORD will deliver you and protect you. The LORD will shine His face on you and give you grace. The LORD turn His face toward you and give you peace." The scroll, which is thought to date from around 600 BC, is now kept in the Israel Museum (Simanjuntak, 2021).

Other discoveries in terms of Ancient Israelite religion.

- 1) Holy places or places of worship, according to William G. Dever, can be classified into two types, namely local places of worship (local shrines) and public open-air sanctuaries. Apart from that, statues or prayer statues (figurines) are also part of the elements of worship (Dever, 2008). Local places of worship (local shrines) are generally used by nuclear families in Israeli society to larger groups in the context of kinship. Some of the archaeological evidence found in local places of worship includes memorials, altars, stone table-basins, offering stands, jewelry, animal bones, astragali, as well as artifacts such as ceramic items and clay figurines of women praying. Temples or sacrificial hills (public open-air sanctuary or bamah/bamot) tended to be open places of worship, intended not only for Israeli families but also for wider groups. Inside, figurines, memorials, altars and other archaeological artifacts were found that were similar or identical to those found in local places of worship (local shrines).
- 2) Inscriptions mentioning "Yahweh and his [A]sherah" were found in two locations, namely Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom. Kuntillet 'Ajrud, an Israelite shrine in Sinai circa the 8th or 9th century BC, attracts attention because it includes the name "Yahweh" along with "Asherah." The inscription is divided into two parts, namely "Phitos A" and "Phitos B." The "Phitos A" passage states, "I [b]lessed you by (or 'to') Yahweh of Samaria and by his Asherah," while "Phitos B" similarly invokes "Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah." A similar discovery also occurred at Khirbet el-Qom, which is located near Hebron, in the central region of Judah. The inscription on the tomb at Khirbet el-Qom states, "Blessed will be Ariyahu to Yahweh and his Asherah." These findings, both at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom, raise questions and debate, especially around the relationship between "Yahweh" and "Asherah."

Stern concluded that between the pagan practices carried out by foreigners outside Israel and the pure monotheistic form of worship of Yahweh (Yahwism), there is a form of worship called Yahwistic paganism (Stern, 2001).

Emerton puts forward the view that the inscriptions at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom, taking into account elements such as grammar and culture, can be interpreted in two different ways. Firstly, the term "Asherah" can be interpreted as an object or symbol, and secondly, "Asherah" can be interpreted as a personal entity or goddess, as a consort of Yahweh. Sometimes, the appearance of the word "Asherah" is connected with the name of the goddess Asherah, but sometimes it is also considered a symbol/concept of wood that represents a source of blessings. Emerton admits that it is difficult to deny the possibility that Yahweh was ultimately associated with "Asherah," which symbolizes the worship of blessings and fertility (Emerton, 1999).

How should we respond to archaeological findings that show that the worship practices of ancient Israel seemed to reflect polytheistic syncretism, contrary to monotheistic beliefs? In this context, Mark S. Smith's arguments, especially regarding the existence of "[A]sherah," are worth considering. According to Smith, during the period of the Judges, there are very few records regarding Asherah, in fact there is no connection at all with Asherah who was considered the goddess of Israel. However, when entering the deuteronomistic era, Israeli society in general, through Biblical records, began to accept the existence of asherah as a symbol and the practice of worshiping this symbol. According to Smith, Asherah is defined as a wooden object that symbolizes a tree, represents the maternal dimension and protection of the divine, and has a connection with healing. Smith considers that the main issue regarding A/asherah in the inscriptions at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom lies in the interpretation of these inscriptions,

with the main argument remaining that Asherah is a phenomenon that existed among Israeli society (Smith, 2002).

McConville states that the use of the same or similar words, even similar shapes or symbols by Israel with the Canaanites or other nations, does not automatically indicate that the Israelites thought and worshiped the gods of these other nations. Therefore, it is likely that archaeological findings that resemble polytheistic or syncretistic worship practices in ancient Israel do not mean that they did not worship Yahweh (McConville, 1993).

Relevance to General Historical Understanding

1. Books of Samuel and Kings

These books are the main source of information regarding the history of Israel, especially the reign of David and Solomon. They provide insight into the changes from the era of judges to the era of monarchies, as well as the political and religious dynamics of that period.

2. King Saul

The story of Saul provides a foreshadowing of the Israelites' choice to have a king and the challenges faced by their first leader. The conflict between the king's choice and God's will shows the political and religious complexity of Israel's history.

3. King David

David's leadership, from his appointment as king to the internal conflict among Israel's tribes, reflects political changes and the role of religion in the formation of Israel's kingdom.

4. King Solomon

Solomon's reign highlights his political wisdom and prosperous kingdom. Its colonization and diplomatic relations with neighboring kingdoms provide insight into the regional political context of the time.

5. Archaeological Discoveries

Discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Yahweh Inscription, and Merneptah Inscription provide archaeological evidence of Israel's existence during this period. They strengthen belief in Israel's ancient history and provide general historical context.

6. Understanding Religion and Syncretism

Interpretations of ancient Israelite religion and elements of syncretism highlight the complexity of the development of religious beliefs and practices at the time. It also reflects how religion can change and adapt over time.

7. Place of Worship and Inscription of Yahweh-Asherah

Information about local places of worship, prayer statues, and inscriptions mentioning "Yahweh and Asherah" provide insight into the worship practices of Israeli society at that time and the complexity of the relationship between traditional beliefs and new elements.

Conclusion

This journal presents an in-depth analysis of the concept of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in a historical context. This research highlights the important contribution of written sources, such as historical documents and religious texts, which provide valuable insights into the social, political and religious structures of the time. In addition, analysis of archaeological evidence,

such as artifacts and building preservation, adds a concrete dimension to the understanding of daily life, religious practices, and political changes in these kingdoms.

While providing a better understanding, this research recognizes the challenges and limitations of reconstructing history, especially when relying on sources that may be incomplete or distorted over time. To address this, further research is a necessity to deepen understanding of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Awareness of these limitations emphasizes the need for a cautious approach in interpreting historical information.

By integrating information from written and archaeological sources, this research not only provides a more complete picture of the past, but these sources also make valuable contributions to general history and the understanding of cultural development. This holistic approach creates a richer context, more fully depicting the complexity of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah throughout their history.

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