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Sixteen Strong Identifications of Biblical Persons (Plus Nine Other IDs) in Authentic Northwest Semitic Inscriptions from before 539 B.C.E.

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New Inscriptions and Seals
Relating to the Biblical World

NEW INSCRIPTIONS AND SEALS
RELATING TO THE BIBLICAL WORLD

edited by

Meir Lubetski

and

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Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta, Georgia

NEW INSCRIPTIONS AND SEALS RELATING TO THE BIBLICAL WORLD

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ABBREVIATIONS

A	Aleppo Codex
AASOR	The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
<i>AHw</i>	<i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . W. von Soden. 3 vols. Wiesbaden, 1965–1981
Akk.	Akkadian
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972–
A.0.	A = Assyrian Periods; 0 = Dynasty Inapplicable (RIMA 3:xiii)
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3d ed. Princeton, 1969
Aram.	Aramaic
AS	<i>Aramaic Studies</i>
AuOrSup	Aula Orientalis Supplementa
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
<i>b. cAbod. Zar.</i>	<i>Abodah Zarah</i>
<i>b. Giṭ</i>	<i>Giṭṭin</i>
B	Bulla (City of David)
BA	Biblical Aramaic
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAH	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
BAR	<i>Biblical and Archaeological Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1906

BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BO	<i>Bibliotheca orientalis</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago, 1956–2010
CDA	<i>A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> . J. Black et al. 2d ed. Wiesbaden, 2000
CDOG	Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by W. W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden, 1997–2002
CPJ 2	<i>Corpus papyrorum judaicorum</i> . Vol. 2. Edited by V. Tcherikover. Cambridge, 1960.
CPJ 3	<i>Corpus papyrorum judaicorum</i> . Vol 3. Edited by V. Tcherikover. Cambridge, 1964
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
DBH	<i>A Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew</i> . M. Z. Kaddari. Ramat-Gan, 2006 (in Hebrew)
DCH	<i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by D. J. A. Clines. Sheffield, 1993–.
<i>Deut. Rab.</i>	<i>Deuteronomy Rabbah</i>
DNWSI	<i>Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions</i> . J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling. 2 vols. Leiden, 1995
DOM	<i>Domitianus</i>
EABS	European Association of Biblical Studies
ErIsr	Eretz-Israel
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–2000
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
Heb.	Hebrew
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>

IBP	<i>Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E.</i> Lawrence J. Mykytiuk. SBL Academia Biblica 12. Atlanta, 2004
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ID	identification
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.</i> Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford, 1910.
ISBE	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.</i> Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Fully rev. ed. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, 1979–1988
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEOL	<i>Jaarbericht ex Oriente Lux</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
KAI	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.</i> H. Donner and W. Röllig. 2d ed. Wiesbaden, 1966–1969
KTU ²	<i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit.</i> Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. AOAT 24/1. Neukirchen–Vluyn, 1976. 2nd enl. ed. of <i>KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places.</i> Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster, 1995 (= CTU)
L	Leningrad Codex
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
<i>Lev. Rab.</i>	<i>Leviticus Rabbah</i>
LXX	Septuagint
<i>m. 'Erub</i>	<i>Mishnah 'Erubin</i>
MDOG	<i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</i>
MO	Moussaieff Ostrakon
MT	Masoretic Text
NABU	<i>Nouvelles assyriologiques breves et utilitaires</i>
NB	Neo-Babylonian

Nbk	<i>Inschriften von Nabuchodonosor, König von Babylon (604–561 v. Chr.)</i> (Babylonische Texte). J. N. Strassmaier. Leipzig, 1889
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NF	neue Folge
NJPS	<i>Tanakh—The Holy Scriptures: The New Jewish Publication Society Translation</i> . Philadelphia, 1985
NS	New Series
OB	Old Babylonian
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PEQS	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly Statement</i>
Phoe.	Phoenician
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
PSE B-Word	Poetic Semantically Equivalent B-Word
r.	reigned
RA	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RefR	<i>Reformed Review</i>
RH	Rabbinic Hebrew
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> . Edited by Erich Ebeling et al. Berlin, 1928–
RIMA	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian Periods
RIME 2	D. R. Frayne, <i>The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Early Periods Volume 2: Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334–2113 BC)</i> . Toronto
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAWW	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte
SEE-J	<i>Scandinavian Evangelical E-Journal</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
Sem	<i>Semitica</i>
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</i>
SHANE	Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>

TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterweck et al. 15 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–2006
TLOT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by E. Jenni et al. 3 vols. Peabody, 1997
TUAT	<i>Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments</i>
UET VII	<i>Ur Excavation Texts: 7</i> . O. R. Gurney. London: British Museum Publications Ltd for the British Museum, and the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1974
Ug.	Ugaritic
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UNP	<i>Ugaritic Narrative Poetry</i> . Edited by S. B. Parker. Atlanta, 1997
UT	<i>Ugaritic Textbook</i> . C. H. Gordon. AnOr 38. Rome, 1998
VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WSS	<i>Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals</i> . N. Avigad and B. Sass. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997
<i>y. Ber.</i>	<i>Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot</i>
<i>y. Mo'ed Qat.</i>	<i>Jerusalem Talmud Mo'ed Qatan</i>
YI	Yeho'ash Inscription
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZAH	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebräistik</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZfA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>

CHAPTER THREE
SIXTEEN STRONG IDENTIFICATIONS OF BIBLICAL PERSONS
(PLUS NINE OTHER IDENTIFICATIONS) IN AUTHENTIC
NORTHWEST SEMITIC INSCRIPTIONS
FROM BEFORE 539 B.C.E.

Lawrence J. Mykytiuk

The goal of this paper is to report the strongest results of a complicated book, as now corrected and updated in a recent journal article, because almost half of these strongest results do not appear among the book's conclusions.¹ The book is titled *Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539*

1. I dedicate this paper to collegial acquaintances among the scholars on the continent of Europe whom I have been privileged to meet or communicate with directly: Bob Becking, C. H. J. de Geus, Josette Elayi, Viktor Golinets, Martin Heide, Izaak J. de Hulster, Jens Bruun Kofoed, Reinhard G. Lehmann, André Lemaire, Gotthard G. G. Reinhold, Paul Sanders, Henry Stadhouders, and Peter van der Veen. I wish to thank our Section Chair, Meir Lubetski, for permission to have a substitute present this paper due to my unavoidable absence from the 2007 SBL International Meeting in Vienna. I am especially grateful to Peter van der Veen for very graciously agreeing to present this paper on my behalf. Since the meeting, besides revising and updating this paper, I have inserted "(Plus Nine Other Identifications)" into the title as a reference to the identifications (IDs) in sections 4, 5, and 6 below.

I hope for as fair and open a consideration of this paper in written form as it received at the Vienna meeting. In his insightful 2006 review of *IBP*, C. H. J. de Geus offers a plea for openness: "The book under review deserves to be received as a very serious ... piece of research.... [S]everal colleagues will push a work like this aside as an impossible project. However, the author deserves better than such a 'nihilistic' attitude.... Mykytiuk is well aware of the problems.... [He] has seen almost everything that is relevant for this subject.... [He] goes to great lengths to develop a workable and acceptable method of identifying names/persons. But his real opponents are not the 'nihilistic' academics, but enthusiastic authors who come with quick and premature unwarranted identifications" (C. H. J. de Geus, review of *IBP*, *BO* 63 [2006]: col. 356.)

B.C.E. (henceforth *IBP*), and the article, which appeared in *Maarav*, is designated below as Mykytiuk, “Corrections.”² This presentation of results is needed in order to gather the strongest identifications (below, *identification* is abbreviated as ID) within the parameters of its title from three sources: *IBP*’s conclusions, *IBP*’s appendixes, and Mykytiuk, “Corrections.” Because of circumstances that affected the arrangement of its contents,³ *IBP* actually obscures five of its strongest IDs, found in its appendixes.⁴ Below, these are briefly described along with some of the IDs treated in Mykytiuk, “Corrections.”⁵ All told, seven of the sixteen strongest IDs described below do not appear among *IBP*’s conclusions.

Readers who are interested only in “new” inscriptions should see below under the heading “Four Identifications that Currently Hover between Two Grades.” Two bullae discovered in 2005 and 2008 are treated there.

CURRENT TOTALS OF RESULTS AND SCOPE OF COVERAGE

From among inscriptions published as early as 1828 and gathered by Diringier,⁶ through others published until July 2002, *IBP* attempts to glean all pre-Persian-era, Northwest Semitic inscriptions that seem to refer to figures in the Hebrew Bible. Within these same parameters, Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” covers discoveries made through July 31, 2008. By subjecting all potential IDs in gleaned inscriptions to certain criteria, *IBP* and Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” place them in various

2. Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, *Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E.* (AcBib 12; Atlanta: SBL, 2004); idem, “Corrections and Updates to ‘Identifying Biblical Persons in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of 1200–539 B.C.E.’” *Maarav* 16 (2009): 49–132.

3. The SBL Academia Biblica series in which *IBP* was published had a rule stipulating that no substantial change from the content of the dissertation should be made in the content of the book. Therefore, updates and expansions beyond the original dissertation are confined to *IBP*’s footnotes, appendixes, and bibliography.

In *IBP*, 197–98, the conclusions chapter lists only nine biblical persons from before the Persian era having reliable IDs in inscriptions of known authenticity. These nine are discussed within the main body of text, specifically in *IBP*, 95–163. But besides these, *IBP*’s appendixes B and C include five other IDs, also in authentic inscriptions, which are reliable to certain but *not* mentioned in the conclusions chapter. These additional IDs do not receive any discussion in the main body of text and have frequently gone unnoticed.

4. Viz., Hazael, Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael, Sennacherib, Tiglath-pileser III, and Sargon II.

5. The strongest of these are IDs of Hadadezer and Ben-hadad, the son of Hadadezer.

6. David Diringier, *Le iscrizioni antico-ebraiche Palestinesi* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1934).

grades, according to the degree of reliability or unreliability of the IDs and non-IDs they offer.

Now that the corrections article has improved on *IBP*'s results, more accurate numerical results are available. From among eighty-four persons⁷ named in ninety-four gleaned inscriptions,⁸ by judicious use of *IBP*'s evaluation protocols, one can discern strong IDs of sixteen biblical persons in Northwest Semitic inscriptions that are authentic. These sixteen strong IDs are graded from reliable to certain, as reflected in the title of this report. Four other IDs appear below that are reasonable and potentially strong, along with three other IDs that are classified as reasonable but not strong, plus two of literary and religious value, whose historical value is unclear.

There are four limits on coverage. First, this report covers no IDs from the Persian era onward, which in Palestine began in 539 B.C.E. Second, it treats IDs in inscriptions written only in Northwest Semitic languages (exceptions, in Egyptian and Akkadian, are mentioned in footnotes). Third, this report does not consider IDs in inscriptions of unknown authenticity, that is, those that are inscribed on unprovenanced (alias marketed) epigraphs, nor does it include those that show signs of having modern additions inscribed on genuinely ancient epigraphs to create fakes. Inscriptions of unknown authenticity must not serve as a basis for any conclusions. At best, they render conclusions unreliable and suspect, and at worst, they can lead to completely erroneous results. Because someday they might be authenticated, it is worth noting them, as in *IBP*, 153–96. But one must protect the pool of authentic inscriptional data from possible pollution by forged data by separating such inscriptions from those of known authenticity.⁹ Therefore, this

7. Seventy-nine biblical persons appear in the list in *IBP*'s Appendix B (*IBP*, 211–43), as noted in *IBP*, 243 n. 111. A footnote names one more person mentioned in Scripture (*ibid.*, 260 n. 54), two appear in Eilat Mazar, "Did I Find King David's Palace?" *BAR* 32 (2006): 26, and two more appear in idem, "The Wall that Nehemiah Built," *BAR* 35 (2009): 29, for a total of eighty-four persons.

8. Considering only published epigraphs, ninety-four gleaned, mostly unprovenanced Northwest Semitic inscriptions seem—before being evaluated—*potentially* to refer by name to eighty-four persons whom the HB places in the period before the Persian era. In some instances, two or more inscriptions refer to the same person. (Ninety-four is the total of ninety-one inscriptions in the list in appendix B [*IBP*, 211–43], one in a footnote [*ibid.*, 260 n. 54], one in E. Mazar, "Did I Find King David's Palace," 26, 70 n. 11, and one more in idem, "The Wall that Nehemiah Built," 29.)

9. This approach to the proper basis for conclusions follows the example of Nili S. Fox, *In the Service of the King: Officialdom in Ancient Israel and Judah* (Monographs of the Hebrew Union College 23; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 2000), 32. Later, Rollston's five principles for the handling of data from unprovenanced materials led to the major reorganization of *IBP* envisioned in Mykytiuk, "Corrections," 51–62 (Christopher A. Rollston, "Non-Provenanced

paper, which is intended to present the strongest conclusions in *IBP*, generally omits data from unprovenanced inscriptions.¹⁰

The only exceptions to the rule against using unprovenanced materials to reach conclusions are inscriptions that have socio-politically and chronologically appropriate paleographic details but were acquired before appropriate paleographic details became known to anyone, including both scholars and forgers. Normally, these inscriptions were acquired in the nineteenth century.¹¹ This logic

Epigraphs I: Pillaged Antiquities, Northwest Semitic Forgeries, and Protocols for Laboratory Tests,” *Maarav* 10 [2003]: 135–93).

10. Possible forgery is the first reason for this paper’s exclusion of an ID of Jezebel, queen of Israel (r. ca. 873–852; 1 Kgs 16:31, etc.), in the unprovenanced, iconic stone seal “*yzbl*” or “[*lyzbl*” (WSS no. 740), proposed by Marjo C. A. Korpel, “Seals of Jezebel and Other Women in Authority,” *Tidskrift vir Semitistik / Journal of Semitics* 15 (2006): 349–71; idem, “Queen Jezebel’s Seal,” *UF* 328 (2006): 379–98; idem, “Fit for a Queen: Jezebel’s Royal Seal,” *BAR* 34 (2008): 32–37. Besides the real possibility that this seal might be forged, Rollston, “Prosopography and the יזבל Seal,” *IEJ* 59 (2009): 86–91, indicates several additional ways in which such an ID is very precarious. Cf. the grade 1 “Doubtful” classification of such an ID in this seal in *IBP*, 216 no. (8), *IBP*’s description of grade 1 IDs (*IBP*, 77–79), and its observations on the absence of particular kinds of identifying marks (*IBP*, 21–22). *IBP*’s structured approach implies a firm rejection of making IDs in an *ad hoc* manner, which can be a facile path to desired results. To avoid such practice, one should first establish sound principles and criteria for comprehensive application, as *IBP* attempts, and then vet potential IDs (see below, under the heading Identification Methodology, and *IBP*, 9–89).

11. There is at least one unprovenanced seal published in the twentieth century that might potentially be shown to be authentic. Using chronologically appropriate paleographic details that were not known in 1940, it might be possible to demonstrate authenticity of the stone seal “Belonging to ‘Ushna’ [or ‘Ashna’], minister of ‘Ahaz” (king of Judah), purchased on the antiquities market during 1940 or earlier (Charles C. Torrey, “A Hebrew Seal from the Reign of Ahaz,” *BASOR* 79 (1940): 27–29; WSS, no. 5; *IBP*, 163–69, 200, 220 seal [23], 249 seal [23]). Although Ahaz, son of Jotham, king of Judah (r. 742/1–726), can be identified in a summary inscription of Tiglath-pileser III (r. 745–727; *IBP*, 167), demonstrating this seal to be authentic would be the final step in establishing the first ID of him in a Northwest Semitic inscription of known authenticity. At least part of such an argument for authenticity of the seal of ‘Ushna’/‘Ashna’ would be that Frank Moore Cross’s series of three foundational articles on Hebrew paleography, published in the early 1960s, had not yet been written. These are: Frank Moore Cross, “Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth–Sixth Centuries B.C.: I. A New Reading of a Place Name in the Samaria Ostraca,” *BASOR* 163 (1961): 12–14; idem, “Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth–Sixth Centuries B.C.: II. The Murabba’at Papyrus and the Letter Found near Yabneh-yam,” *BASOR* 165 (1962): 34–46; idem, “Epigraphic Notes on Hebrew Documents of the Eighth–Sixth Centuries B.C.: III. The Inscribed Jar Handles from Gibeon,” *BASOR* 168 (1962): 18–23; all three reprinted (possibly with light revisions by Cross?) in *Leaves from an Epigrapher’s Notebook: Collected Papers in Hebrew and West Semitic Palaeography and Epigraphy* (HSS 51; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 114–15, 116–24, 125–28, respectively.

To demonstrate that the chronologically appropriate or indicative paleographic details

is nothing new; it underlies Patrick D. Miller's observation over two decades ago in support of the authenticity of the Mesha Inscription, "The form of the letters is consistent with other inscriptions of the ninth century B.C.E. and could not have been known when the stone was discovered."¹² Below, under ID 10. Uzziah, two unprovenanced stone seals of King Uzziah's ministers are accepted as authentic on similar grounds.

The fourth limit concerns the strength of the IDs that appear here. This paper considers only published IDs in inscriptions of known authenticity in the following two groups:¹³ 1) strong IDs, a term that embraces those that are reliable, virtually certain, or certain. All strong IDs are in *IBP*'s grades S or 3, which are explained below. 2) IDs that are reasonable but not known to be certain. These are in *IBP*'s grade 2, also explained below. Weaker IDs, as well as non-IDs, are not covered herein.

IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGY

A summary of the identification protocols (*IBP*, 9–89) is as follows: As a precondition, avoid circular reasoning. Three decades ago, J. Maxwell Miller observed, "Obviously, when a written source has served as a determining factor in the interpretation of any given archaeological data, it is misleading to cite the interpreted archaeological data as 'proof' of the accuracy of the written source."¹⁴ Therefore, *IBP*'s identification protocols first attempt to interpret a given inscription in light of authentic inscriptions and avoid as much as possible the use of biblical data to interpret them. Only *after* interpreting the inscriptional and the biblical data separately, using well-grounded data, should one compare them.¹⁵

contained in the seal of 'Ushna'/Ashna' were not known in 1940 would require an exhaustive search of publications on Hebrew and West Semitic epigraphy and paleography before 1941. It would also be necessary to demonstrate fully that this seal's paleographic traits are suitable for the period of the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah, mid-to-late eighth century (see *IBP*, 164–66).

12. Patrick D. Miller Jr., "Moabite Stone," *ISBE* 3:396.

13. The overall schema for grading IDs appears in *IBP*, 212–13.

14. J. Maxwell Miller, *The Old Testament and the Historian* (GBS OT Series; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 47.

15. *IBP* first uses authentic inscriptions as the basis for interpreting the thirteen inscriptions it treats in detail, before going on to compare inscriptional and biblical data. Because of space considerations, *IBP*'s appendixes and Mykytiuk, "Corrections," however, offer only preliminary evaluations of potential IDs and do not include this step. In many instances, these would be simple parallels to items already interpreted using data from inscriptions of known authenticity.

After this precondition, *IBP*'s identification protocols lead researchers to ask three questions, which serve as a matrix¹⁶ for evaluating IDs:

- Are the initial data reliable, in the sense that epigraphic data are authentic, not forged, and that biblical data are well based in the ancient manuscripts, as determined by sound text criticism?¹⁷
- Do the settings (time and socio-political “place”) of the inscriptional person and of the biblical person *permit* a match? They should normally be within about fifty years of each other and members of the same socio-political group, for example, late-eighth-century Israelite.
- How strongly do identifying marks that help to specify an individual, such as name, patronym, and title, count for or against an ID? For a reliable ID, they need to be sufficient to insure that the inscription and the biblical text are not referring to two different persons.

This third question is to distinguish between contemporaries in the same society who happened to have the same name, keeping them from being mistakenly identified as one and the same person. The number of matching identifying marks of an individual is built into the grade number of IDs in grades 3 (for three or more marks), 2, 1, and 0 (zero). Of course, IDs having more of these marks are better established than those having fewer marks. Another kind of ID, made on grounds of singularity, is defined in section 3.1 below. IDs of this last kind are strongest of all and are placed in grade S (for singularity).

STRONG IDENTIFICATIONS OF SIXTEEN BIBLICAL PERSONS

The sixteen strong IDs that result from using the above identification protocols appear in the lists below, each with brief mention of the answer to the third question: the identifying marks of the individual. Question 1 has already been answered in the affirmative for all of the IDs below, and question 2 above some-

16. I wish to thank Bob Becking for this descriptive term and especially for demonstrating that these three questions can be used as a quick and effective means to establish an ID (Bob Becking, “The Identity of Nabu-sharrussu-ukin, the Chamberlain: An Epigraphic Note on Jeremiah 39,3. With an Appendix on the Nebu^osarsekim Tablet by Henry Stadhouders,” *BN NF* 140 [2009]: 38–39).

17. This question has grown from its original form by adding biblical text criticism in response to de Geus, review of *IBP*, col. 357, with my thanks to the reviewer. Although text criticism has not affected any IDs that I have evaluated thus far, this requirement is of course necessary.

times requires long answers, which are available in *IBP* for most of the persons whose IDs are listed below. Therefore, as a space-saving expedient, the list below generally omits questions 1 and 2.

IDENTIFICATIONS MADE ON GROUNDS OF SINGULARITY

The following ten biblical figures, all kings, can be identified with certainty, because their IDs are made on grounds of singularity. Singularity involves the connection of the person to a singular circumstance, such as participation in a particular historical event. In order to have an ID based on singularity, the biblical and/or inscriptional data must refer to one and only one person, and the correspondence between the biblical and the inscriptional data must *require* that the ID be made.

For example, the Ashur ostrakon (*KAI* 233) names Sennacherib, king of Assyria (r. 704–681). The singular feature evident in this inscription, according to both Assyrian and biblical records, is that he can only be the same Sennacherib who besieged King Hezekiah in Jerusalem (see ID 6 below).

These, the strongest IDs, result from the presence of at least one singular feature, sometimes called a point of singularity, in the following *loci*: 1) in both the inscriptional data and the biblical data; 2) in the inscriptional data alone; or, 3) in the biblical data alone. Accordingly, such IDs are listed below in three categories: singularity that is inscriptional and biblical, only inscriptional, and only biblical. Within each category, they are in approximate chronological order.

Identifications Based on Singularity in Inscriptional and Biblical Data

1. David, founder of the dynasty that ruled Judah (r. ca. 1010–970), 1 Sam 16:13, etc. (*IBP*, 110–32, 265–77; Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 119–21). Terms that incorporate his name in monumental Northwest Semitic inscriptions, leading to IDs, are as follows:

- a. David’s name is an element in the phrase *bytdwd* in the Tel Dan stele, line 9.¹⁸
- b. David’s name is also an element in the phrase *bt[d]wd* in the Mesha Inscription, line 31, though its presence is unclear at *prima vista*, due to the fragmentation in that line.¹⁹

18. Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, “An Aramaic Stele from Tel Dan.” *IEJ* 43 (1993): 81–98; idem, “The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment.” *IEJ* 45 (1994): 1–18; *IBP*, 110–32.

19. André Lemaire, “La dynastie Davidique (*bytdwd*) dans deux inscriptions ouest-sémitiques du IXe s. av. J.-C.,” *SEL* 11 (1994): 17–19; idem, “‘House of David’ Restored in Moabite Inscription,” *BAR* 20 (1994): 30–37; with the agreement of, among others, Anson

Aramaic usage of *b(y)t* + personal name in a variety of Aramaic sources, including the Tel Dan stele, is a way of indicating a dynasty by a phrase pattern that incorporates the name of its founder.²⁰ That this phrase pattern has this significance is especially clear in instances where the incorporated personal name is known to be a royal name or where the phrase is known to refer to a kingdom. Since a dynasty governs a territorial realm, *b(y)t* + personal name is also a geographical name referring to that territorial realm.²¹ Thus, this term in the Tel Dan stele incorporates a conventional phrase pattern that indicates that the David to whom it refers was the founder of a dynasty. This point of singularity is also found in the biblical text: both the Bible and the inscription refer to the one and only David who was the founder of the dynasty of Judah.

F. Rainey, "Mesha' and Syntax," in *The Land That I Will Show You: Essays on the History and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East in Honor of J. Maxwell Miller* (ed. J. Andrew Dearman and M. Patrick Graham; JSOTSup 343; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 293–94; *IBP*, 265–73. Moreover, there is no convincing alternative to Lemaire's reading of line 31. It was one full year after it was published that Baruch Margalit's reading actually appeared ("Studies in NWSemitic Inscriptions." *UF* 26 [1994]: 275–76). It attracted no significant support and seems quite forced (*IBP*, 272 n. 19, 273). Pierre Bordreuil, "A propos de l'inscription de Mesha' deux notes," in *Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion*, vol. 3 of *The World of the Aramaeans* (ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, John W. Wevers, and Michael Weigl; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 162–63, states no more than that some experts could not confirm Lemaire's reading. This statement is not a resounding refutation. More significantly, it offers no viable alternative reading.

20. Gary A. Rendsburg, "On the Writing בִּיתְדָן in the Aramaic Inscription from Tel Dan," *IEJ* 45 (1995): 22–25; Kenneth A. Kitchen, "A Possible Mention of David in the Late Tenth Century B.C.E., and Deity *Dod as Dead as the Dodo?" *JSOT* 76 (1997): 38–39. George Athas rejects any indication of a dynastic founder in this term. He does find that in line A9 of the Tel Dan Inscription, "at least one other king was mentioned alongside the king of Israel. The most logical solution to this is to understand the second king as the ruler of a place called בִּיתְדָן." But he contends that בִּיתְדָן is a reference to Jerusalem and is strictly "a toponym and not a reference to a Davidic dynasty. Although this label may have had an etymology going back to a Davidic dynasty, this is not how the author of the Tel Dan Inscription used it" (George Athas, *The Tel Dan Inscription: A Reappraisal and a New Interpretation* [JSOTSup 360; Copenhagen International Seminar 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003], 225, 226, emphasis his). Still, in Athas' view, "The Tel Dan Inscription provides us with good evidence for the historicity of David which is in line with biblical testimony, and suggests the reliability of the biblical record" (idem, "Setting the Record Straight: What Are We Making of the Tel Dan Inscription?" *JSS* 51 [2006]: 241, Abstract). Athas, *The Tel Dan Inscription*, appeared too late for *IBP* to discuss it, as noted in *IBP*, 110 n. 34.

21. "Bit-Dawid (like Bit-Khumri [Omri]) is the name of a state, and therefore is also a geographic entity.... In my JSOT 1997 paper [Kitchen, "Possible Mention of David"], I listed a whole series of Bit-names all round the 1st-millennium Near East in various geographical locations" (K. A. Kitchen, review of *IBP*, third paragraph from the end, emphasis his).

Also, it can then be argued, from internationalization of this Aramaic usage and resulting—or simply parallel—Moabite usage, that *bt* + personal name in line 31 of the Mesha Inscription contains the same point of singularity. Besides such inscriptional-biblical singularity, the fact that there is only one David in the biblical king lists, which purport to be complete, gives his ID also what can be called biblical singularity.

c. An inscription written within about forty-five years of David's lifetime by Pharaoh Sheshonq I sheds additional light on "the house of David" mentioned in the Tel Dan stele as a possible geographical reference to the territory ruled by "[the kin]g of the house of David." Sheshonq's inscription contains the phrase *hadabiyat-dawit*, "the heights (or highland) of David." According to the geographically organized sequence in the inscription, this area should be in the southern part of Judah or the Negev, where the book of 1 Samuel places David when he was hiding from King Saul. An ID of King David as the person whose name is included in this phrase is entirely plausible, both in view of Kitchen's research into the rendering of the name and in view of other ancient Hebrew phrases, such as "the city of David" and "the house of David," which include a geographical dimension. It seems extremely doubtful that we shall suddenly discover some other, previously unknown David who was famous enough to have lent his name to the region mentioned in Sheshonq's timely inscription.²²

2. Omri, king of Israel (r. 884–873), 1 Kgs 16:16, etc., in the Mesha Inscription from Dhiban, lines 4–5 (*IBP*, 108–10). The point of singularity in common between the inscription and the biblical text is that both refer to only one Omri as the founder of the Israelite dynasty against which Mesha rebelled. A second, biblical-only point of singularity is that in the Bible's lists of Hebrew kings, which purport to be complete, only one Omri appears.

3. Mesha, king of Moab (r. early to mid-ninth century), 2 Kgs 3:4, etc., in the Mesha Inscription from Dhiban, line 1 (*IBP*, 95–108). The singular feature in common between the inscription and the biblical text is that both refer to the only Mesha, king of Moab, who ever successfully rebelled against the Israelite dynasty of Omri.

22. Looking briefly beyond the scope of Northwest Semitic inscriptions, I find an eminently reasonable grade 2 ID of the biblical King David in this Egyptian inscription. See Kitchen, "Possible Mention of David," 39–41; idem, review of *IBP*, *SEE-J Hiphil* 2 (2005): fourth paragraph from the end, cited September 7, 2005, online: <http://www.see-j.net/index.php/hiphil/article/viewFile/19/17>; and the evaluation in Mykytiuk, "Corrections," 119–21. That same paragraph of Kitchen's review also mentions what I agree is a good case for a strong, grade S ID of the biblical Shishak in Egyptian inscriptions that name Pharaoh Sheshonq I.

4. Hazael, king of Aram at Damascus (r. 844/42–ca.800), 1 Kgs 19:15; 2 Kgs 8:8, etc.; 2 Kgs 13:3, etc., in the Aleppo-area Zakkur stele (*KAI* 202), line 4, which refers to “Bar-hadad, the son of Hazael, the king of Aram” (*IBP*, 238).²³

The interpretation of the Zakkur stele, dated to ca. 780, is according to several inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria, which refer to Hazael, “son of nobody,” as a successor (not necessarily the immediate successor) of Hadadezer to the throne of Damascus.²⁴ Singularity arises partly from the fact that there was only one king on the Damascus throne at a given time. The point of singularity in common between the Zakkur stele and the biblical text is that both refer to only one Hazael, king of Aram at Damascus and father of Bar-hadad (Hebrew: Ben-hadad), during approximately the last four decades of the ninth century as his regnal years.

5. Ben-hadad, son of Hazael, king of Aram at Damascus (r. early-eighth century), 2 Kgs 13:3, etc., in the Aleppo-area Zakkur stele (*KAI* 202), lines 4–5 (*IBP*, 240). On the interpretation of the Zakkur stele, see the entry on Hazael immediately above. The singular feature in common between the inscription and the biblical text is that there was only one Bar-hadad, son of Hazael, king of Aram at Damascus, during the early-eighth century.

6. Sennacherib, king of Assyria (r. 704–681), 2 Kgs 18:13, etc. in the Ashur ostrakon (*KAI* 233), in a list of Assyrian kings and the locations from which they deported prisoners, line 16, restoring the first two consonants of his name (*IBP*, 241–42). The singular feature evident in this inscription, according to both Assyrian and biblical records, is that he can only be the Sennacherib who besieged King Hezekiah in Jerusalem.²⁵ Also, inscriptional singularity arises from

23. *IBP*, 238–39, lists other inscriptions in which are found IDs of Hazael that are generally not as strong as the ID in the Zakkur stele: 1) Hazael is named in three inscribed bronze pieces for a horse bridle (a frontlet and two blinders), war booty “from Umqi,” which the deity “Hadad gave to Lord Hazael.” 2) Two ivories inscribed with Hazael’s name were found in Assyrian contexts at Arslan Tash (ancient Hadattah) and at Nimrud (biblical Calah), and are presumably war booty from Aram.

24. A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC, II (858–745 BC)* (*RIMA* 3; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996), 118, A.O. 102.40 (an inscribed, fragmentary statue of Shalmaneser III from Aššur), lines i 25–ii 6. Other references to Hazael in Shalmaneser III’s inscriptions appear in *ibid.*, 48, 49, 60, 62, 67, 77, 78, 151. On Hadadezer as “the king of Aram” in 1 Kgs 22:4–2 Kgs 6:23 and his son Ben-hadad in 2 Kgs 6:24–8:15, see IDs 11 and 12 below and Myktyiuk, “Corrections,” 69–85, IDs no. 15 and 16.

25. Several Assyrian inscriptions record Sennacherib’s account of the siege of Hezekiah’s Jerusalem (see the ancient final edition of the Annals of Sennacherib, found in the Oriental Institute Prism of Sennacherib [and in the Taylor Prism], trans. Daniel D. Luckenbill, lines ii 37–iii 49 in *ANET*, 287–88; *COS* 2.119B:302–3; *TUAT* 1/4:388–90).

there being only one Sennacherib in the Assyrian king list, which purports to be complete.

Identifications Based on Singularity according to Inscriptional Data Only

7. Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria (r. 744–727), 2 Kgs 15:19, etc. (*IBP*, 240). A total of four Northwest Semitic inscriptions refer to him. In the Ashur ostrakon (*KAI* 233), he is named in a brief list of Assyrian kings and the locations from which they deported prisoners, line 15. In addition, three Aramaic monumental inscriptions from near Zenjirli, north Syria, refer to him:

- a. the monument in honor of Panamu II (*KAI* 215), lines 13, 15, 16
- b. Bar Rekub inscription 1 (*KAI* 216), now in Istanbul, lines 3, 6
- c. Bar Rekub inscription 8 (*KAI* 217), now in Berlin, with the first four consonants of his name restored in lines 1–2.

The singular feature that underlies the ID in the Ashur ostrakon is that after the death of Tiglath-pileser II in 935, there is only one Tiglath-pileser in the Assyrian king list, which, as observed above, purports to be complete. Therefore, the singular feature that is evident in the Panamu II and both Bar Rekub inscriptions is that there is only one Tiglath-pileser during that period who could have invaded Syria-Palestine, as also explicitly corroborated in this Assyrian king's cuneiform inscriptions.²⁶

8. Sargon II, king of Assyria (r. 721–705), Isa 20:1 (*IBP*, 240–41).²⁷ In the Ashur ostrakon, a list of Assyrian kings and their deportations refers to Sargon

26. Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria* (2nd printing with addenda et corrigenda; *Fontes ad Res Judaicas Spectantes*; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2008), 9 and 273–82 for discussions, inscriptions *passim*. Beyond the scope of Northwest Semitic inscriptions, in the realm of Assyrian Akkadian inscriptions, an ID of Tiglath-pileser III based on inscriptional and biblical singularity is found in his military campaigns in Galilee and conquest of “the entire region of Naphtali” (2 Kgs 15:29). These invasions are recorded in 2 Kgs 15:29 (cf. 1 Chr 5:6, 26 HB versification) and in Tiglath-pileser III's Calah Annal 18, lines 3'–7' with parallel Calah Annal 24, lines 3'–11' (*ibid.*, 80–83, esp. 81, n. re. 3'–7' and Ann. 24:3'–11'). For a synopsis of biblical and Assyrian texts about Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns against Israel in 733–732, see Tadmor's “Supplementary Study G,” *ibid.*, 279–82.

27. Within the purview of this article, i.e., Northwest Semitic inscriptions, this ID is correctly classified as one based on inscriptional singularity. To look briefly beyond Northwest Semitic inscriptions, however, there is a point of singularity in common between Assyrian Akkadian inscriptions and a biblical text, in that there was only one Sargon (II), king of Assyria, who (in the year 712/711) presided over the conquest of Ashdod, as stated in Isa 20:1 and, along with other inscriptions, in lines 90–109 of his Khorsabad Summary Inscription, dated ca. 707 (*Annals*, lines 249–62, trans. Daniel D. Luckenbill, *ANET*, 286; *COS* 2.118A:294, 2.118E:296–7; *TUAT* 1/4:383–5; Mordechai Cogan, ed. and trans., *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating the Ancient Israel* [Jerusalem: Carta, 2008], 82–89). Norma Franklin describes

II.²⁸ Mention of him there also involves singularity, in that the Assyrian king list, purportedly complete, has only one Sargon in the period between 1000 and the year 609. Thus, this identification is made on grounds of inscriptional singularity.

Identifications based on Singularity according to Biblical Data Only

9. Jeroboam II, king of Israel (r. 790–750/49), 2 Kgs 13:13, etc., in the iconic stone seal *lšm' / 'bd yrb'm*, “belonging to Šema', / minister of Yārob'am” discovered at Megiddo (WSS, no. 2; *IBP*, 133–39, 217). In seals and bullae, the title *'ebed* signifies that the master of the *'ebed* is a monarch or a deity. In this Hebrew seal from a royal administrative complex at Megiddo, Yārob'am is a king of the northern kingdom of Israel. From the ninth century onward, there is only one Jeroboam in the biblical king list, which purports to be complete. An ID of his tenth-century namesake, Jeroboam I (r. 931/30–909), seems most unlikely in this seal, for two reasons. First, according to the discoveries currently known to epigraphers, during the ninth century and earlier, Israelite, Aramaic, and Phoenician epigraphic seals and bullae are either rare or possibly non-existent.²⁹ Second, it is an eighth-century seal. Ambiguities in stratigraphic dating are resolved by paleographic considerations, especially regarding the two *mems*, which date it to the eighth century B.C.E. (*IBP*, 133–37).

10. Uzziah, king of Judah (r. 788/7–736/5), 2 Kgs 14:21, etc., in two iconic stone seals, the first of which is inscribed *l'byw 'bd / 'zyw*, “belonging to 'abiyaw, minister of / 'Uziyaw” and the second of which is inscribed (obv.) *lšbnyw*, “belonging to Shubnayaw” (rev.) *lšbnyw ' / bd 'zyw*, “belonging to Shubnayaw, minister of / 'Uziyaw”³⁰ (WSS, nos. 4 and 3 respectively; *IBP*, 153–59, 219). The fact that

the inscriptions that include references to Sargon II's presiding over the conquest of Ashdod on p. 260 of her illuminating essay, “A Room with a View: Images from Room V at Khorsabad, Samaria, Nubians, the Brook of Egypt and Ashdod,” in *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (ed. Amihai Mazar; JSOTSup 331; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 257–77. On whether Sargon II conquered Ashdod specifically by sending his *turtānu/tartānu* (Hebrew: *tartān*) on that mission, as stated in Isa 20:1, see Tadmor's approach (1958) as briefly summarized in *COS* 2.118A:294 n. 14.

28. KAI 233, line 15, as “Sarkon;” *IBP*, 240–41.

29. Christopher A. Rollston, “Prosopography and the ירבל Seal,” 88, point 4, contra David Ussishkin, “Gate 1567 at Megiddo and the Seal of Shema, Servant of Jeroboam,” in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence E. Stager; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 419–24; also contra Gösta W. Ahlström, “The Seal of Shema,” *SJOT* 7 (1993): 208–15.

30. Pierre Bordreuil, *Catalogue des sceaux ouest-sémitiques inscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale, du Musée du Louvre et du Musée biblique de Bible et Terre Sainte* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1986), 45, 46.

there is only one Uzziah in the purportedly complete biblical king list (disregarding his common alias, Azariah), gives this ID singularity based on biblical data.

Note that these IDs are made in two unprovenanced but presumably authentic inscriptions published in 1858 and 1863, respectively. These dates are long before forgers or anyone else could have known the appropriate paleographic details of the formal cursive script used in the kingdom of Judah during the early to mid-eighth century.

IDENTIFICATIONS MADE ON THE BASIS OF THREE OR MORE IDENTIFYING MARKS OF AN INDIVIDUAL

The following six biblical persons, three father-and-son pairs, can each be identified by at least three marks pertaining to an individual (such as name, relationship, and title), therefore, they are called grade 3 IDs. These marks do not provide absolute certainty, but enough likelihood for the IDs to be considered either reliable or virtually certain.³¹

11. Hadadezer, king of Aram at Damascus (r. early-eighth century), nameless in the Hebrew Bible, which calls him only “the king of Aram”;³² 1 Kgs 22:4, 31; 2 Kgs 5; 6:8–23, and

12. Ben-hadad, son of Hadadezer, king of Aram at Damascus, whom Hazael assassinated; 2 Kgs 6:24; 8:7–15; in the Melqart stele, from Bureij, 7 km. north of Aleppo (Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 69–85³³). In line 2, Hadadezer’s name appears

31. To note a grade 3 ID outside of Northwest Semitic epigraphs, in July 2007, Michael Jursa discovered a Babylonian reference to the biblical “Nebo-Sarsekim, Rab-saris” (*rab ša-rēši*, chief official) of Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 604–562). The three identifying marks are name, title, and royal master. The biblical reference in Jer 39:3 is to the year 586. Jursa identified this official in an Akkadian cuneiform inscription on Babylonian clay tablet BM 114789 (1920-12-13, 81), dated to 595 B.C.E. See Michael Jursa, “Nabû-šarrūssu-ukīn, *rab ša-rēši*, und ‘Nebusarsekim’ (Jer. 39:3),” *NABU* 2008/1 (March): 9–10; Becking, “Identity of Nabu-sharrussu-ukin,” 35–46; Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 121–24, re *IBP*, 242.

32. On the anonymity of some royal personages in scripture, see Robert L. Hubbard Jr., “‘Old What’s-His-Name’: Why the King in 1 Kings 22 has No Name,” in *Biblical Studies in Honor of Simon John De Vries* (vol. 1 of *God’s Word for Our World*; ed. J. Harold Ellens; JSOTSup 388; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 294–314.

33. The detailed, extended discussion in Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 69–85, regarding IDs nos. 15 and 16, corrects *IBP*, 237, 237–38 n. 89, 261, by accepting Cross’s paleographic dating of the Melqart stele to between 860 and 840 and by adopting Cross’s and Reinhold’s virtually identical readings of the Melqart stele. These are found in Cross, “Stele Dedicated to Melqart by Ben-Hadad of Damascus,” in *Leaves from an Epigrapher’s Notebook*, 173–77, repr. with rev. from *BASOR* 205 (1972): 36–42; Gotthard G. G. Reinhold, “Zu den Stelenbruchstücken der altaramäischen Inschrift von Têl Dân, Israel,” in *Bei Sonnenaufgang auf dem Tell, At Sunrise on*

as a hypocoristicon, the patronym ‘Ezer. The name of the son of Hadadezer and author of the Melqart stele, Bar-hadad, is in lines 1–2.

The three identifying marks for each of these two individuals are:

- a. the name of the son, Bar-hadad,
- b. the name of the father, (Hadad)ezer, and
- c. the son’s self-designation “the Damascene,” which occurs in line 2 of the

Melqart stele.

13. Shaphan the scribe, who served Josiah, king of Judah (r. 640/39–609), 2 Kgs 22:3, etc., and

14. Gemariah the official, son of Shaphan the scribe, Jer 36:10, etc., in the aniconic city of David bulla *lgmryhw / [b]n špn*, “belonging to *G^mmaryāhū*, / [so]n of *Šāfān*” (WSS, no. 470; *IBP*, 139–47, 228, 232).

The three identifying marks for each of these two individuals are:

- a. the name of the son, the seal owner, Gemaryahu,
- b. the name of the father, Shaphan, and
- c. the striking provenance, namely, a public archive within 250 meters from where the Bible depicts the official activities of both men.³⁴ The infrequency of

the Tell: Essays about Decades Researches in the Field of Near Eastern Archaeology (Remshalden, Germany: Bernhard Albert Greiner, 2003), 129; idem, “The Bir-Hadad Stele and the Biblical Kings of Aram,” *AUSS* 24/2 [Summer 1986]: 115–126, esp. 117–21, 123; *ibid.*, cited September 30, 2008, online: via the “Archives” link at <http://www.auss.info/index.php>. Their reading is contra that in Wayne T. Pitard, *Ancient Damascus: A Historical Study of the Syrian City-State from Earliest Times until Its Fall to the Assyrians in 732 B.C.E.* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 141–43; idem, “The Identity of the Bir-Hadad of the Melqart Stela,” *BASOR* 272 (1988): 3–21. It should be noted that Reinhold directly examined the stele itself, over a considerable period of time, as Pitard did. For a fuller list of Reinhold’s many publications that treat this stele, see Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 71 n. 68.

34. “A recent examination of this bulla and the one mentioned immediately below [which is also mentioned immediately below in the present chapter] has demonstrated that these bullae were made of the particular kind of clay locally available in Jerusalem. Therefore, these bullae were not attached to documents from elsewhere. Rather, the officials who made them, namely, Gemariah ben Shaphan and Azariah ben Hīlqiyahu, were physically present in the city of David. The petrographic analysis [of the fifty-one bullae discovered in Shiloh’s 1982 excavations in the city of David, including the bullae of Gemaryahu ben Shaphan and Azaryahu ben Hīlqiyahu,] revealed that the entire group of bullae from the City of David in Jerusalem ... was made of terra rosa soil, having the same mineralogical composition of silt and sand temper.... Moreover, this composition is identical to the fabric of the numerous local pillar figurines from the City of David.... Therefore, the entire set of bullae from the City of David may be regarded as the local production of this site.” (Eran Arie, Yuval Goren, and Inbal Samet, “Indelible Impression: Petrographic Analysis of Judahite Bullae,” in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin* [ed. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na’aman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011], 10.)

the name Shaphan both in the Bible and in Hebrew inscriptions strengthens this ID. Further, it is most likely that the group of fifty-one bullae, which included this one, formed a government archive,³⁵ which is consistent with the royal administrative positions of both father and son, as mentioned in Scripture.

Note that paleographically, the distinctive form of the Hebrew letter *nun* in [b]n clearly narrows down the date to the late-seventh to early-sixth century, precisely the period in which the book of Jeremiah places Gemariah.³⁶

15. Hilkiyah the high priest, 2 Kgs 22:4, etc., and

16. Azariah, son of Hilkiyah the high priest, 1 Chr 5:39; 9:11; Ezra 7:1 in the aniconic city of David bulla *l'zryhw b / n ḥlqyhw*, “belonging to ^azaryāhū, so/n of / Ḥilqīyāhū” (WSS, no. 596; *IBP*, 148–52, 229)

The three identifying marks for each of these two individuals are:

a. the name of the seal owner, Azaryahu,

b. the name of the father, Ḥilqiyahu, and

c. the striking provenance, namely, a public archive within 250 meters from the Jerusalem temple precincts, where the Bible depicts the official activities of the priesthood.³⁷

Although both father and son have common names, the combination of these two specific names, in a father-and-son pair in which Ḥilqiyahu is the father and Azaryahu is the son, is not nearly as common. This combination of names, along with the additional limits of provenance and date, greatly reduces the possibility of confusion with other persons. Regarding date, in the lower register, the paleographically distinctive form of the Hebrew letter *he* in *-yhw* of the patronym narrows down the date to the late-seventh to early-sixth century.³⁸ According to 2 Kgs 22:3, 4 and 1 Chr 5:39–41 (6:13–15 in English and German translations),

I thank Peter van der Veen for pointing out this finding and publication.

35. As Shiloh observed, “The fact that the names do not overly repeat themselves, as would be expected in a private or family archive, . . . would indicate that this find may represent a public archive, located in some bureau close to the administrative centre in the City of David” (Yigal Shiloh, *Excavations in the City of David I, 1978–1982: Interim Report of the First Five Seasons* [Qedem 19; Jerusalem: The Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University, 1984], 20, quoted in *IBP*, 146). Arie, Goren, and Samet further observe that “both in Jerusalem and Lachish the bullae were found in rooms together with standard weights.” This fact that strengthens their assumption that “these rooms may have functioned as the place where legal affairs physically took place and where the documents were written, sealed, and stored (Arie, Goren, and Samet, “Indelible Impression,” 13)

36. Vaughn, “Palaeographic Dating,” 54–55.

37. See notes 34 and 35 above.

38. Vaughn, “Palaeographic Dating,” 47, 52–53.

the biblical Hilkiah and his son Azariah lived and worked at that particular location during precisely this same, relatively narrow time period.

These six IDs that are virtually certain to be reliable, based on three identifying marks of an individual, plus the ten IDs listed above that are certain, based on singularity, bring the number of strong IDs in inscriptions of known authenticity to sixteen. To mark the end of this group, the strongest IDs, the numbering of biblical persons below does not continue from 16.

FOUR IDENTIFICATIONS THAT CURRENTLY HOVER BETWEEN TWO GRADES

The following four IDs are at least grade 2, reasonable, because they are based on two identifying marks of an individual, but they might turn out to be grade 3, reliable to virtually certain. It would be premature to settle on a specific grade at this time, because the grading of these IDs may potentially depend on new data or understanding from the ongoing excavation in the city of David that is being directed by Eilat Mazar. These four IDs receive as complete a treatment as currently available data allow in Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 85–100, regarding its IDs no. 17–20. As with the bulla of Azaryahu treated immediately above, the bullae of Yehukal and of Gedalyahu below both contain a distinctive letter *he* that dates them to the late-seventh or early-sixth century.³⁹

1. J(eh)ucal, son of Shelemiah (Jer 37:3 and 38:1), and

2. Shelemiah, father of J(eh)ucal (Jer 37:3 and 38:1) in city of David bulla *lyhwkl b / [n] šlmyhw /bn šby*,⁴⁰ “belonging to *Y^hhūkal*, so / [n] of *Šeemyāhū*, / son of *Šōbi*” (Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 85–92)

For both IDs, the two identifying marks of an individual that are thus far available are:

a. the seal owner’s name, Yehukal, and

b. the patronym, Shelemyahu.

3. Gedaliah, son of Pashhur (Jer 38:1) and

39. Ibid.

40. Eilat Mazar, “Did I Find,” 26; idem, *Preliminary Report on the City of David Excavations 2005 at the Visitors Center Area* (Jerusalem: Shalem, 2007), 67–69; idem, *The Palace of King David: Excavations at the Summit of the City of David: Preliminary Report of Seasons 2005–2007* (Jerusalem: Shoham Academic Research and Publication, 2009), 66, 67, 69.

4. Pashhur, father of Gedaliah (Jer 38:1) in city of David bulla *lgdlyhw / bn [p]šḥwr*,⁴¹ “belonging to *G³dalyāhû*, / son of [P]ašḥûr” (Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 92–100).

For both IDs, the two identifying marks of an individual that are thus far available are:

- a. the seal owner’s name, Gedalyahu, and
- b. the patronym, [P]ashḥur.

The last four bullae above, belonging to Gemaryahu ben Shaphan, Azaryahu ben Ḥilqiyahu, Yehukal ben Shelemiyahu, and Gedalyahu ben [P]ashḥur, were discovered within a few dozen meters of each other along the eastern edge of the city of David, and all date between the late-seventh century and the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E, the time of the last generation in the kingdom of Judah. It is appropriate to ask whether the fact that these IDs were discovered so close to each other might strengthen the IDs they offer. Although such mutual strengthening cannot be argued with airtight, inexorable logic, as pointed out in Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 96–100, nevertheless, the proximity of these four bullae to each other suggests that they may be scattered remnants from sealed records in a royal administrative center. Thus, without changing the objectively determined grades of the eight individual IDs they offer, their collocation plainly seems to imply a common origin that strengthens their plausibility (cf. Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 100, second-to-last paragraph).

THREE REASONABLE BUT UNCERTAIN IDENTIFICATIONS IN AUTHENTIC INSCRIPTIONS

The following IDs of three biblical persons are reasonable but not certain. They should be treated with varying degrees of tentativeness. These persons are identified by the same two marks of an individual in both the inscriptional and biblical data.

1. Shebna, overseer of the palace (Isa 22:15–19; probably the scribe of 2 Kgs 18:18, etc., before being promoted) in a Silwan epitaph, line 1, in which the name is effaced except for its very common theophoric ending on many Hebrew names, “[]*yhw*” (IBP, 225).

The two identifying marks of an individual are:

a. The inscriptional title, *šr l hbyt*, matches the title *šer ‘al habbāyit* in Isa 22:15.

41. Mazar, “Wall,” 29; idem, *Palace of King David*, 68, 69, 71.

b. This epitaph is carved over the entrance to a rock-cut tomb in a hill near Jerusalem, which corresponds to Isaiah's description.

2. Jaazaniah or Jezaniah, son of the Maacathite (2 Kgs 25:23; Jer 40:8), in the iconic Tell en-Nasbeh seal *ly'znyhw / 'bd hmlk*, "belonging to *Ya^azanyāhū*, the king's minister" (WSS, no. 8; *IBP*, 235).

The two identifying marks of an individual are:

a. The seal owner's name, Yaazanyahu, corresponds to the biblical name in 2 Kgs 25:23.

b. The biblical Jaazaniah died at Mizpah. This seal was discovered at that site, but, oddly, in a Roman-era tomb.

Note that, as with some inscriptions listed above, paleographically, the distinctive form of the Hebrew letter *he* in this seal, in the word *hmlk*, narrows the date to the late-seventh to early-sixth century,⁴² the same time period as that of the biblical Jaazaniah.

3. Baalis, king of the Ammonites (Jer 40:14), in a Tell el-Umeiri ceramic cone (bottle-stopper?) with an Ammonite sealing on the larger end: *lmlkm'wr / 'b / d b'lyš*.⁴³ (WSS, no. 860; *IBP*, 242 no. (77) in [89]).

The two identifying marks of an individual are:

a. seal owner *Milkom'ūr*'s title is *'ebed*, which here implies that he is the minister of a king (*IBP*, 207–10).

b. the royal master's name is *Ba'alyiša'* or *Ba'alīša'*, if the vocalization here is correct, but the precise Ammonite vocalization may be unavailable to us. The differences between the king's name in this seal impression and the biblical rendition, *Ba'alīs*, have been debated and are not irreconcilable.⁴⁴ They can be understood as variant dialectical renderings of the same name.

This ID seems quite likely, but it is not entirely secure without an ancient Ammonite king list that purports to be complete and includes the monarchs of the early-sixth century. King lists being developed by modern scholars cannot currently be known to be complete.

TWO IDENTIFICATIONS IN AN INSCRIPTION LACKING

42. Vaughn, "Palaeographic Dating," 47, 52–53.

43. Larry G. Herr, "The Servant of Baalis," *BA* 48 (1985): 169–72.

44. See the bibliography in M. O'Connor, "The Ammonite Onomasticon: Semantic Problems," *AUSS* 25 (1987): 62 paragraph (3), supplemented by Lawrence T. Geraty, "Back to Egypt: An Illustration of How an Archaeological Find May Illumine a Biblical Passage," *RefR* 47 (1994): 222; Emile Puech, "L'inscription de la statue d'Amman et la paleographie ammonite," *RB* 92 (1985): 5–24.

CLEAR HISTORICAL VALUE

1. Beor, father of Balaam (Num 22–24, etc.), and
2. Balaam, son of Beor (Num 22–24, etc.) in the Tell Deir ‘Allā inscription on plaster, combination 1: *bʿr* in lines 2, 4 and *blʿm* in lines 3, 4⁴⁵ (*IBP*, 236, 252; Mykytiuk, “Corrections,” 111–13).

The three identifying marks of an individual are

- a. name of son, Bilʿam,
- b. name of father, Buʿur, and
- c. the son’s abilities as a seer of divine visions.

The genre of this inscription, which recounts a vision, renders the IDs of the biblical Balaam and his father Beor in the inscription without clear historical value. No date appears in its content, and the epigraph itself is dated to ca. 700 B.C.E., whereas biblical reckoning dates Balaam and Beor to several centuries earlier. Therefore, it is not possible to date this pair of inscriptional persons within fifty years of the biblical persons. As a result, according to *IBP*’s identification protocols, no historical ID can be established. The match between the biblical geographical setting and the Transjordanian provenance of the wall inscription, hence of the folk tradition, suggests but does not establish historicity of this father and son.

The question of an ID or a non-ID *per se*, although useful in historical study, is not limited to the field of history. Many scholars, following Hackett’s lead, readily assume the IDs of the Balaam and Beor of Numbers chapters 22–24 in the folk tradition found in the Tell Deir ‘Allā inscription. All in all, because a date is lacking, it is best to transfer these two IDs to a newly created, nonhistorical, folk-tradition category.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the texts of authentic Northwest Semitic inscriptions, using sound protocols (based on the three questions above and detailed in *IBP*, 9–89), one can identify with certainty at least ten biblical persons from before the Persian era who are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Another six such persons can be identified

45. Jo Ann Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ‘Allā* (HSM 31; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), 29, 33–34, 36; idem, “Some Observations on the Balaam Tradition at Deir ‘Allā,” *BA* 49 (1986): 216–22; P. Kyle McCarter Jr., “The Balaam Texts from Deir ‘Allā: The First Combination,” *BASOR* 239 (1980): 49–60.

reliably or with virtual certainty. The IDs of these sixteen persons deserve to be counted among the known, fixed points in the biblical presentation of history, not least because archaeological data verify their historical existence.

Two other authentic inscriptions, bullae discovered recently in an ongoing excavation, offer four more IDs, two in each bulla, which are at least to be included among reasonable grade 2 IDs and might potentially come to be recognized as stronger IDs. The future verdict on this possibility should become clear as more data and interpretive insights into their archaeological context become available from the excavation that has unearthed them. If they turn out to be stronger, that is, grade 3 IDs, they would be reliable enough to be added to the sixteen above-mentioned strong IDs, raising that number to twenty.

Three other authentic inscriptions offer an additional three IDs which, while not quite certain, are reasonable IDs and can be used as reasonable hypotheses.

The total of these IDs, from a minimum of sixteen to possibly as many as twenty-three, currently approximately doubles the nine biblical persons whom *IBP* presents as most clearly identified in inscriptions of known authenticity in its concluding chapter (*IBP*, 197–98).

The direct significance of the twenty-three IDs above relates only to the historical existence of the biblical persons identified, variously including such data as their name, title, ancestry, location, sociopolitical group, and approximate date. Their indirect significance, however, is suggestive of the *activities* of identified individuals. Except for narrative inscriptions, such as that of Mesha, usually the most that can be said is that persons named both in the Bible and in inscriptions were at one time *in a position* (usually indicated by setting and title or lineage) to do what the Bible says they did. From a purely inscriptional standpoint, compatibility between the person's position as observable in inscription(s) and his or her biblical actions can ... make the biblical narratives plausible.⁴⁶

Of course, the IDs reported above, being within specified time and language boundaries, are only one part of a larger picture. Footnotes 22, 26, 27, and 31 above mention just five of a significant number of biblical persons who can be identified in Akkadian and Egyptian inscriptions of known authenticity from before the Persian era. Such additional IDs in inscriptions written in languages outside the Northwest Semitic group, as well as others from the Persian era, only increase the number of biblical persons who deserve to be recognized as known points in history. A conservative estimate is that the current, overall grand total of strong and of reasonable IDs of persons whom the Bible places between 1000 and 400 B.C.E. in inscriptions of known authenticity reaches well beyond forty.

46. *IBP*, 201–2.

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